

# Spare Mule



Missouri State Poetry Society  
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## REPORT from Our President

Fellow poets and MSPS members,

This will be my last message to you as President of the Missouri State Poetry Society.

It has been rewarding in many ways, to serve in different offices of the Society, but I am happy to say, I am handing the office of President off to a very capable young woman.

Carla Kirchner was nominated and voted into the office at our annual convention this weekend. Besides being a talented poet, she is also working on a Ph.D, and I think we are very lucky to have her.

Again, I feel very privileged to have served in different offices of Missouri State Poetry Society over the years. I will continue to participate, but only in an advisory capacity and in my association with members. I am an "Honorary Lifetime Member," so as they say in the song "Hotel California," "You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave," and since we're speaking about our poetry society--I wouldn't want to.

The Missouri State Poetry Society is a great organization to belong to and I will continue to point folks its way.

Dale Ernst,  
Former MSPS President

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Greetings fellow MSPS poets!

I am delighted to be your new president and am looking forward to a year of contests, kudos, and poetry promotion in our local communities. I am a member of the Author Unknown poetry group in Bolivar, MO. In addition to being a poet, fiction writer, and writing professor at Southwest Baptist University, I live with my family in Springfield and play tuba in the 135<sup>th</sup> Army Band.

For me, poetry is a lull in my sometimes stormy life. As poet Aaron Belz stated at this year's MSPS Conference, one purpose of poetry is to slow us down and allow us room to breathe in a fast-paced world. My wish for you this year is that you find solace, silence, and stillness through poetry. As always, you have several opportunities to do so with MSPS. Make sure to mark your calendars for next year's MSPS Conference, tentatively scheduled for September 14-15 in Festus, MO. Also, check out the quarterly *Spare Mule* newsletter, enter the MSPS poetry contests, look for a larger MSPS presence on social media, and keep writing poetry!

Warmest wishes,



Carla Kirchner

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## ARTICLE from Jim Barton, President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies

### Ekphrastics: The Poetry of Art

From the earliest accepted example of ekphrastic writing in poetry, Homer's detailed description of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*, to modern works such as William Carlos Williams's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus," readers have been fascinated by the melding of art and writing. Today, we have more access than ever to works of art via not only physical museums and galleries, but also through the virtual galleries of the internet.

Ekphrastic poetry is poetry that takes its cue or prompt from a work of art, usually a painting, but also from photographs, sculpture and drawings. For those of us who sometimes suffer from the horrors of the "Blank Page Syndrome," this method of jump-starting the creative engine is ideal.

The word 'ekphrasis' derives from the Greek, and it means, in modern terms, "description." Many poets take this literally and write poetry based on a work of art which merely describes what they see in the picture. This, however, does a great injustice to the genre. Quality ekphrastic poetry delves more deeply . . . (continued below)

## SUMMER CONTEST Winners

### Category 1 (Rhymed/Blank Verse)

1<sup>st</sup> *Refrains* Von S. Bourland Happy, Texas MSPS Member

2<sup>nd</sup> *Going Under: Convention-al Wisdom* Meredith R. Cook Blue Earth, MN

3<sup>rd</sup> *Quinceañera, Birthday Party for Natalia* Pauline Mounsey Sun City West, AZ

1HM *Limerick* Becky Alexander Cambridge, Ontario Canada

2HM *The Purple Heart* Janet Lombard Athens, GS

3HM *Sunflower* Carol Louise Moon Sacramento, CA MSPS Member

### Category 2 (Free Verse)

1<sup>st</sup> *A Winter Dream* John J Han Manchester, MO On the Edge MSPS

2<sup>nd</sup> *The Smell of Rain* Von S. Bourland Happy Texas MSPS Member

3<sup>rd</sup> *The Neglected Gift* Karen Kay Bailey Blanchard OK MSPS Member

1HM *The Proposal* Pauline Mounsey Sun City West, AZ  
2HM *Back Home* John J Han Manchester, MO On the Edge MSPS  
3HM *Never the Same* Pauline Mounsey Sun City West, AZ

### **Category 3 (Humor)**

1<sup>st</sup> *Enough* Janice Canerdy Potts Camp, MS MSPS Member  
2<sup>nd</sup> *Innocuous Forgetfulness* John J Han Manchester, MO On the Edge MSPS  
3<sup>rd</sup> *Wakkerjobby* Becky Alexander Cambridge, Ontario Canada  
1HM *Tasting Thin* Sara Gibson Scott, AR  
2HM *Suicide Toe* LaVern Spencer McCarthy Blair, OK  
3HM *Avoiding a Chore on a Summer Morning* Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

### **Category 4 (Summer Subjects)**

1<sup>st</sup> *The End of Summer Garden* Sally Clark Frederickburg, TX  
2<sup>nd</sup> *While Children Play* Karen Kay Bailey Blanchard, OK MSPS Member  
3<sup>rd</sup> *1954 Drought* Marilyn K Smith Fair Grove, MO MSPS Member  
1HM *Old Mulberry Tree* Jaren Kay Bailey Blanchard, OK MSPS Member  
2HM *Instructions for Summer* Janice Canerdy Potts Camp, MS MSPS Member  
3HM *In My Hammock* LaVern Spencer McCarthy Blair, OK

### **Category 5 MSPS Members (Any Form)**

1<sup>st</sup> *The Cobbler* Nick Sweet Shepherd, TX  
2<sup>nd</sup> *An Encounter with a Spring Bird* John J Han Manchester, MO On the Edge MSPS  
3<sup>rd</sup> *Sizzle* Velvet Fackeldey Columbus, NM  
1HM *Daybreak Departure* Nick Sweet Shepherd, TX  
2HM *Song from a Madhouse* Velvet Fackeldey Columbus, NM  
3HM *Cruel April, Depraved May* Jean Marie Purcell Eugene, OR

## **CHAPTER Reports**

Once again it is time to report what **On the Edge** has been doing. Boy, this came around fast, it seems. We met twice since the last report. One session was

**Author Unknown** has begun operations without the direction of its founder, Mark Tappmeyer. Mark and Linda retired in May of 2017. They have shifted their vacuum

cancelled due to everyone was busy or sick. We are all better now. We have met and review some of our work, occasionally, making suggestions.

We are all busy writing, being creative and living our lives. The Horstman's were at the Art Fair at Queeny. Terrie Jacks has some art and poetry on exhibit at the Manchester Art Exhibit till the end of September. It's a short report this month. Short is good. Not too much assorted, miscellaneous clutter to read. Stay well and take care.

--Terrie Jacks

cleaner to a location nearer to short people who call them names . . . of endearment.

We miss them greatly and hope to continue their love for Letters here on SBU's campus.

--Todd Sukany

## KUDOS for Members

I was the winner of the William D. Barney Chapbook Contest sponsored by the Fort Worth Poetry Society--but I had to disqualify myself since I had actually withdrawn my entry from the competition. The contest chair failed to remove my manuscript before sending entries to the judge. I won--but I didn't. :-)

The Winner? Oh, she's fine with it! In fact, Ann Howells was the speaker at our meeting Sat., and we exchanged books--her winner and my withdrawn/expanded winner/not-winner. She said another of her books had come in second but was published anyway. Doesn't hurt her feelings at all.

--Barbara Blanks

M. Siddiqui, Maryland, used two of my haiku on the subject of lonely/loneliness in his recent Season's Greetings Letter for 2018.

--Pat Laster

## Jim Barton . . .

("Ekphrastics" continued . . .) into the meaning and the personal interpretation of the artwork being described in the poem. It is for this reason that most contests which ask for an ekphrastic poem also ask for a copy of the visual work which inspired it.

The local poetry group to which I belong has frequently been asked to visit the Arts Center and choose works which strike our creative centers, then compose poems based on the works. Our poems are often posted next to the artwork as a bonus for gallery attendees. We have also read our poems standing next to the specific works. This boosts not only the artist's work, but ours, as well.

One of the poems I wrote was based on art, "Mr. Jimmy," hung in the South Arkansas Art Center during an exhibition several years ago by Garbo Hearne's Fine Art of Little Rock. It was based on a painting of the same name by Evita Tezeno. When I saw the painting, I was drawn not just **to** it, but **into** it. On the surface, it is a folk art painting which features an old African American man seated outside in a straight back chair. The colors, the setting, . . . (continued below)

## MEMBER Poems

### THE MOUNTAIN RANGE

We rarely cross the cordillera  
that divides our valleys from theirs  
and when we do  
they smile and kill us.  
They don't visit our lands often  
and when they do  
we smile and kill them.  
Before the arduous journey  
we don't study the maps  
and when we get there  
we find their primitive ways shocking  
and when we do

### Clean-Up on November 1

How great a fortune will young people spend  
on bathroom tissue, and how much will be  
sashaying in the breeze from my tall trees  
November 1? Perhaps this year I'll see  
enhancements have not been provided by  
the local teens. Oh, yes, let this be true!  
I hope to give sweet treats to costumed kids  
and in return get nothing worse than "BOO!"  
But I'll just be relieved if nothing worse  
than clean-up is required. The kids who toss  
those tissue rolls aren't vandals. They just love  
a little mischief, causing no real loss.

they smile and kill us.  
When they file through the treacherous passes  
they deride our heathen ways  
and when they do  
we smile and kill them.  
As we barricade the foothills against incursions  
they defend themselves in mountain fastnesses  
and we smile  
and kill each other.

--Laurence W. Thomas

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## Leaves Fall

autumn  
weather turns cold  
leaves turn  
colorful and bold  
trees are stunning  
never grows old  
then it's over  
rakes are sold

--Terrie Jacks

\*\*\*\*\*

Sometimes true criminals come out that night;  
their actions overshadow what should be  
a time of fun for candy-loving kids.  
Let's pray this Halloween is evil-free.

## A Christmas Nonet

newborn Savior in stable manger  
O that precious, holiest sight  
calm envelops all around  
unique scene, sky so bright  
hosts of angels sing  
profundity  
of silence  
on that  
night

--Janice Canerdy

\*\*\*\*\*

## Target Practice

sometimes people need everything and then more,  
it's rough on the knees to pray without ceasing  
by this canopied place, I make my own village,  
safe from love  
I speak the words, do the motions,  
enter rooms, leave rooms, dress, undress, sweat, bathe  
and yet the part isn't exactly mine  
the velvet arrow circles and circles  
and circles back to the bowed heart  
to be loved is aware of something clear  
beyond the shadows

## **BEFORE SEVEN A. M.**

The  
certain  
slant of light  
that Frost mentioned  
lays on this early  
morning like a muted,  
eerie torch hidden by a  
blanket. Stillness reigns except when  
rush-hour traffic roars by, marring the  
day's peace. A thunderstorm brews from the north.

--Pat Laster, Bombadil

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## **Swear Jar**

Once upon a time,  
lives a church girl with curly hair,  
whose favorite, worst pastime  
is swears.

Her jar overflows  
with each dime-store  
cussword, round talk  
stacks like nickels, a  
greasy tower of Pisa  
to St. Peter's gates.

## **Sister**

The shadow of you passes through me  
whenever I see kindness directed  
toward strangers  
I used to watch you comb your hair  
and hoped you would never fall  
into a crevasse of life and death  
pressed flowers, prom dresses  
those moments...emblazoned on the eye  
places of worship are silent  
and mourning passes through the night  
and into day while somewhere  
beyond clouds and just...over there  
on the other side of the wind,  
you are in another room  
a ghostly presence  
dancing around moss-covered graves  
and teasing that dark moon into a smile

--Marie Asner  
Crawford County Bombadils

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## **Innocuous Forgetfulness** (Haibun)

Old Poet #1 brought an excellent poem to a weekly critique meeting. Old Poet #2 suggested he send it to a journal by the deadline, which was three days away. Old Poet #1 asked Old Poet #3 to remind him to submit it on time. Old Poet #3 agreed to, asking Old Poet #2 to remind her so that she wouldn't forget to remind Old Poet #1.

Despite their good intentions, Old Poets #2 and #3 forgot about the poem. Old Poet #1 didn't remember to submit it,

He checks a clipboard.  
"Not good enough." A  
hairy knuckle points  
down. "Ticket price  
is forty pieces of  
silver, paid in full."  
She is shocked,  
speechless.

Her tower tips,  
crashing nickels on  
her ears. But her tongue  
remains mute. A voice from  
heaven says, "Keep the change."

--Janetta Lower

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### **TRIPLE FEATURE**

'Shane was morning, dew on the leaves  
where a doe nibbled in the garden, Saturdays  
the unfenced manifest west. Then I walked  
out to the monotone glare of 'High Noon'  
to assume debt, duty, scrutiny, obligation  
and the judgment of politicians up north.  
Now, Fred and Ginger on Sunday afternoons.  
I'll tell you all that life begins at seventy.

--Henry M Spottswood, Cincinnati

either, and didn't remember that he had asked Old Poet #2  
to remind him.  
So it was all good.

a trip to the garage—  
he wonders why  
he came

### **Confusion on Highway 55**

—An Etheree written at Terrie Jacks' Expense

The  
way to  
a diner  
down the highway...  
I follow her car,  
which gives me clear signs. Then,  
her left turn signal is on  
for no reason. Now her right turn  
signal blinks for a few seconds, though  
there's no exit and we're in the right lane.

-- John J. Han, On the Edge

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### **Dog Named Triolet**

Around and round he spins,  
my dancing dog, my Triolet.  
With him is where the fun begins  
as round and round he spins.  
Good dancers all, these mini-pins.  
I love the way he plays and stays  
around. Around he spins  
the dance, my dog, my Triolet.

--Carol Louise Moon

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### **What an Educated Mother-in-Law Told Me**

That one strand of pearls is plenty  
That lace curtains need to stay open  
That milk baths and Cold Cream pay off later  
That red silk pajamas feel like luxury  
That chin hairs must be plucked  
That books on shelves can become family  
That "Horsefeathers!" is a fun word  
That an apron can save a dress  
That knotty hands need touch too  
That Movements often maim families  
That good bras and good shoes keep you balanced  
That curvaceous antiques must be considered  
That Latin should be mandatory in high schools  
That forsythia, spirea, japonica are names  
That *Bridge* is a clever, clever game  
That *the Twist* will mess up hips and minds  
That needle and thread are creative tools  
That a redbird brings joy to bones  
That you'll use whatever you put in your heart  
That the North star stays in place  
Even when everything under it is restless.

--by Pat Durmon

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### **"ASK THE LONELY"**

When Vonda Shepherd sang this song  
back in the nineties, she touched on  
the pangs caused by sheer loneliness  
when life is dampened by lost loves.

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### **RENEWAL**

Her gentle fingers  
delicately probe  
the root ball of  
a young pansy  
spreading fibers  
into warm, soft soil  
these are the fingers  
that ripped the roots  
free from 50 city years  
of noise and neon  
to find a new home  
where pansies bloom

--Dewell H. Byrd

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### **FROM OREGON TO MT. RUSHMORE BY CHARTERED BUS**

We came to see carved faces on that hill,  
aware of spirited feelings they'd instill.

A weary busload of mix-matched souls

Sadly, this inevitable  
sadness will come to all humans  
at some juncture in their lives  
when losses are experienced.

At all ages, life is fragile ...  
Relationships can falter,  
the body itself will decline,  
taking our cognition with it.  
Meanwhile, friends and family die,  
All marriage ties will be dissolved  
by the cruel hand of passing time.  
Our sphere of life diminishes.

But no matter how dismal life,  
It's the most precious thing we have.

--Ted Badger

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## **An Apt Space**

She stood there boldly on the wooden stage  
like hard Queen Dido with her Trojan catch.  
The audience, eyes glued to every move,  
ears clinging to her every spoken word,  
responded with great passion like the dole  
who cheered the gladiators to their demise.

A gracious lady Terry was by day, but  
chameleon-like she transformed on the stage  
to Juliet about to draw the sword.  
She occupies an apt space now in town.  
From quiet tomb in St. Paul's Church,  
she spies new actors plying bold theatrics,  
each striving hard to win his own first place  
on that great stage bringing world-wide fame.

who'd struggled across prairie dog's dug holes.

The chummy "dogs" upright on their hind feet  
viewed us as though their sole role is to greet.

The Badlands looked like an abandoned hell  
worn out. Our guide was keen to tell

us that the 'faces" need washing, like ours;  
but they require a steamy jet that scours.

A few of us agreed we'd like to stay--  
to spend more time living the Dakota way.

--Jean Marie Purcell member-at-large

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## **Tale of Witchy Muldoon**

I was upstairs in my room  
Awaiting a birthday cake and balloons  
Thinking of something to do  
When the clock it struck noon  
When all of a sudden appeared in a white puff of fume  
She had wrinkles and craters on her face like the moon  
It was a witch! She was riding a broom!  
I shook in my shoes  
My feet stuck like glue  
"I am Witchy Muldoon, is this the birthday boy I presume?"  
Yes, I said, my voice quivered with doom  
She scooped me up like a pea in a spoon  
Away we went in a thunderous zoom  
Into the jungle with gorillas and baboons  
Then down through the ocean passing King Neptune  
Not far swam his pet whale Shamu  
Glistening down through the water was the sun too

-- John W. Crawford

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We rose above the tree tops, over lakes with pontoons  
Higher and higher we soared, then we loomed  
I even heard a sonic boom  
Below us a volcano was erupting its plume  
Then over the desert and over the dunes  
Where camels marched by two by two  
We even flew over King Tut's tomb  
We soared into the shy passing Florida's lagoons  
Then over the vast Louisiana bayou  
All of a sudden a mighty KABOOM!  
The fog cleared and I was back in my room  
The tv was on playing cartoons  
The clock now said Two  
Had I fallen asleep? What did I do?  
Downstairs they were singing a tune  
Happy Birthday to you  
As I left I paused and turned thinking of Witchy Muldoon  
And I smiled, she was not your average goon

--Sandra L Knife

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### **Four Tree Haiku**

#### *Softwood*

Majestic full boughs  
shadowing a still farm pond  
stretching fluttering

#### *Seedling*

Patches of dull orange  
withering fall withering  
filling root cellars

#### *Hardwood*

Crabby ol' school marm  
whistling bare icy fish eyes  
chilling to the bone

### **Old Hens CAN Learn New Tricks**

She frittered off his fickelfee  
to flip and flop and fundecree,  
but fickit fruitso fought her floop  
and so this chicken flued her coop.

--Wanda Sue Parrott,  
1st poem penned in California  
June 1, 2009

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## *Sapling*

Teenage pimples pop  
slick over a greaser's crown  
broken-heart tattoo

--Todd Sukany

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## **Jim Barton . . .**

("Ekphrastics" continued . . .) the composition and the subject struck a chord with me on a deep level. The painting told me its story, and I simply recorded it:

### **Mr. Jimmy**

After Evita Tezeno's *Mr. Jimmy*

It is hard to tell where chair ends  
and Mr. Jimmy begins.  
Both are stiff and straight,  
rigid to the point  
of being one and the same.  
But it is here, where lacquer and wood  
meet flesh and blood,  
that the difference becomes plain:  
his arms are textured  
like sweat-tempered leather,  
extensions of the reins he wields  
plowing his old mule `Lijah;  
his gnarled hands worry like caged birds,  
fingers intertwined and nervous;  
his dark eyes are pinpricks, tiny doors  
opening on a wind-tossed soul;  
his weathered boots strain to hold his feet,  
even now dancing, imprisoned in their soles;

but his voice, oh, his voice!  
It pours forth like sun-cooked southern honey  
as he laughs and sings me just one last song.

--Jim Barton, 2010



Evita Tezeno, *Mr. Jimmy*, 2008, mixed media collage, 37" x 20"

53

[https://books.google.com/books?id=ZFE-oVb5zL4C&pg=PA53&lpg=PA53&dq=%22Evita+Tezeno%22+%22Mr.+Jimmy%22&source=bl&ots=trm2lHqJXE&sig=OF1vqEW\\_rcpXE42dKHj9Rbr5c0I&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjz-Lkoa\\_WAhVn4oMKHWajCJ4Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q&f=true](https://books.google.com/books?id=ZFE-oVb5zL4C&pg=PA53&lpg=PA53&dq=%22Evita+Tezeno%22+%22Mr.+Jimmy%22&source=bl&ots=trm2lHqJXE&sig=OF1vqEW_rcpXE42dKHj9Rbr5c0I&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjz-Lkoa_WAhVn4oMKHWajCJ4Q6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q&f=true)

Ekphrastic poetry is a viable and vibrant genre for today's world. By combining and intertwining the two creative forms of expression, we create synergy in our work— $1+1=3$ . The art, the poetry, and the revelation of the two, presented hand in hand can set a fire in both viewers' and readers' or listeners' hearts.

--Jim Barton, 2017

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Todd Sukany--Editor