

Spare Mule



Missouri State Poetry Society
Vol. 20, No. 4
<http://www.mostatepoetry.com>
01 October 2017

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

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 135th 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

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)

1st *Refrains* Von S. Bourland Happy, Texas MSPS Member

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

3rd *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)

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

2nd *The Smell of Rain* Von S. Bourland Happy Texas MSPS Member

3rd *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)

1st *Enough* Janice Canerdy Potts Camp, MS MSPS Member
2nd *Innocuous Forgetfulness* John J Han Manchester, MO On the Edge MSPS
3rd *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)

1st *The End of Summer Garden* Sally Clark Frederickburg, TX
2nd *While Children Play* Karen Kay Bailey Blanchard, OK MSPS Member
3rd *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)

1st *The Cobbler* Nick Sweet Shepherd, TX
2nd *An Encounter with a Spring Bird* John J Han Manchester, MO On the Edge MSPS
3rd *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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sapling

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

--Todd Sukany

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:

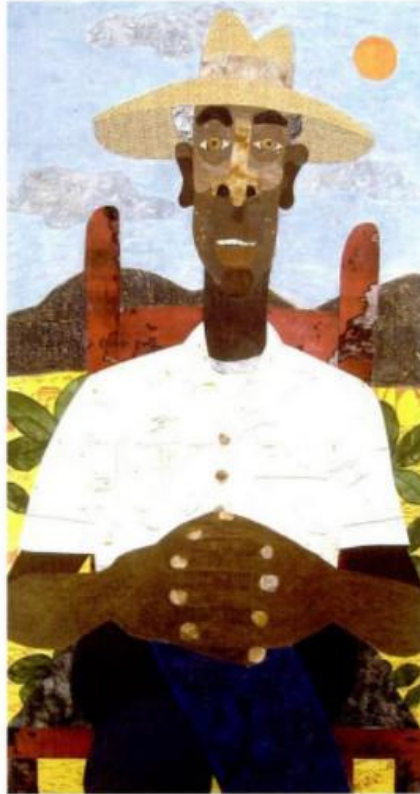
Mr. Jimmy

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"

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https://books.google.com/books?id=ZFE-oVb5zL4C&pg=PA53&lpg=PA53&dq=%22Evita+Tezeno%22+%22Mr.+Jimmy%22&source=bl&ots=trm2IHqJXE&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