



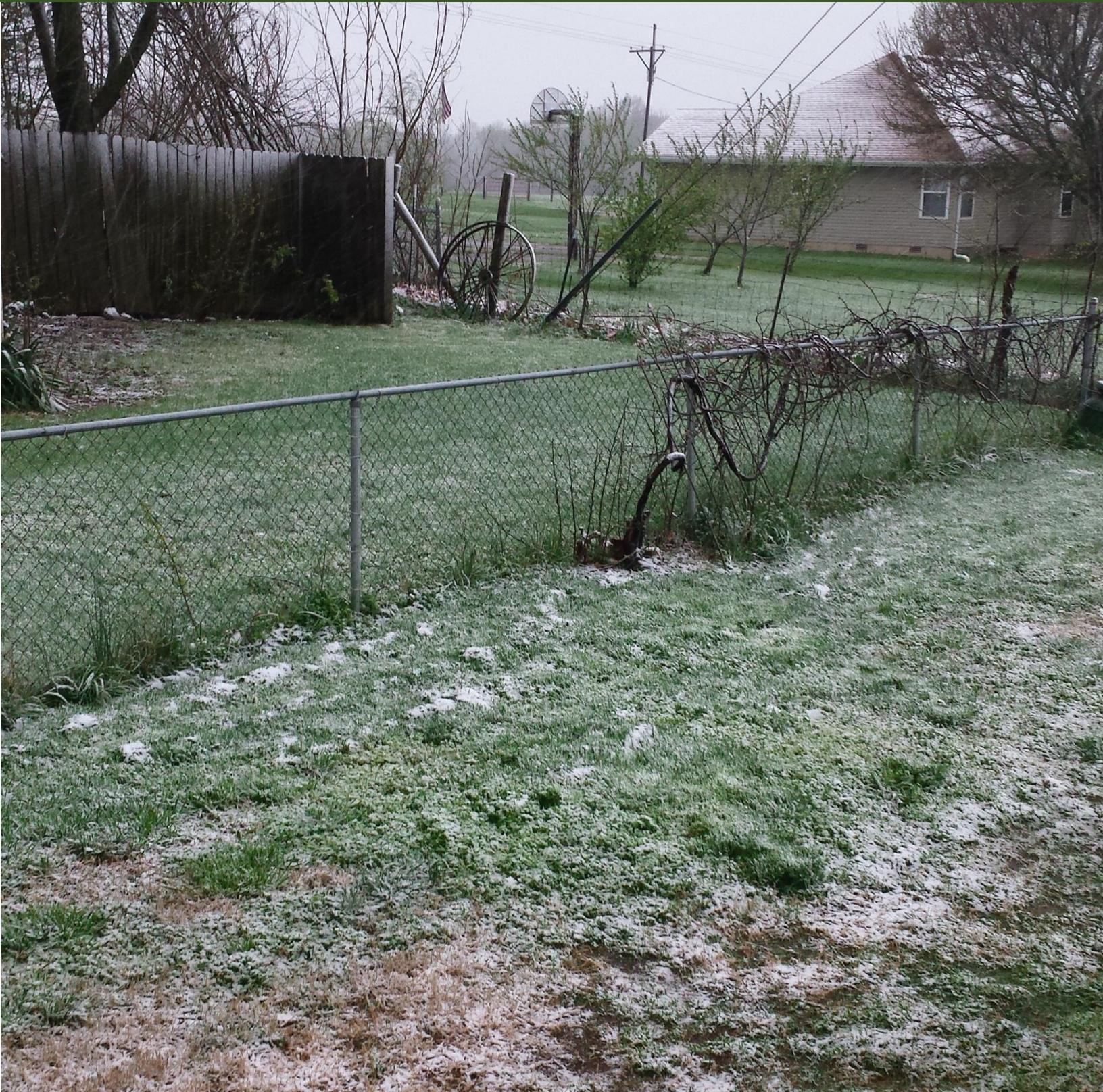
# SPARE MULE

*Newsletter of MSPS*

11 Feb 2020

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# Table of Contents



Table of Contents.....	2
President's Corner.....	4
MSPS Winter Contest 2020 .....	6
Chapter Updates .....	8
President's Challenge - Ekphrastic.....	10
Elgin Plantation – Terrie Jacks.....	12
Camellia, Elgin Plantation—Todd Sukany .....	13
Other Poems .....	14
Sisters – by Terrie Jacks .....	15
Graceland Tour—Terrie Jacks.....	16
Mr. Smooth—Marie Asner .....	17
The Skater – Marie Asner .....	18
Beauty is Everywhere—Janice Canerdy .....	19
Together, But Private—Pat Durmon .....	20
OF THESE THREE—Carol Moon.....	21
Listening—Frank Adams .....	22
Los Brazos de Dios—Todd Sukany .....	23
Prayer at the End of Day – Teresa Klepac.....	24
Faerie Critique – Teresa Klepac.....	25
Musing in My Sixties (a Haibun) – John J. Han .....	26

# President's Corner



Hello MSPS Poets!

I'm sitting by my kitchen window and looking at the dusting of snow on the ground. Surely there's a poem there, and hopefully I'll find it if I sit long enough! The new year brings new snow, new challenges, a new editor for the *Spare Mule*, and new changes to MSPS.

Southwest Baptist University student Brittany Gilbert is our newsletter editor this semester. MSPS members should have already received Brittany's email correspondence. Along with this issue, Brittany will be putting together a spring/summer newsletter that will come out in May. She'll also be creating a MSPS Twitter account and providing a larger MSPS social media presence this semester, especially when poetry month (April) comes around. Please welcome her to the MSPS family and address all newsletter concerns to her at [sparemulenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sparemulenewsletter@gmail.com).

Most if not all of you already know about the membership and *Grist* changes implemented last fall, but I'll reiterate them here. In order to meet NFSPS requirements, we've overhauled our membership system. Effective October 2019, MSPS purges its membership roster each Dec. 31. This means that all names were removed from our list of members at the end of last year. Poets wishing to be members of MSPS in 2020 paid their membership dues to their chapter president (or designated representative) between Oct. 1 and Dec. 15, 2019. All chapter presidents were responsible for sending their membership lists (including the names of all Lifetime Members) and dues to Bill Lower no later than Dec. 31, 2019, for inclusion in the list we send to NFSPS in early January. If you did not send in your dues by Dec. 15, you may still join MSPS at any time! Send membership applications and dues to Bill throughout the year; however, only poets paying dues by Dec. 15, 2019, were included on the MSPS membership list sent to our national organization. Late-comers will not be able to participate in NFSPS 2020 contests or the convention. Membership dues are the same price whether you belong to MSPS for an entire year or only part of one.

Other changes include a new *Grist* editor and new *Grist* policies. Our annual *Grist* anthology is fully digital and is now available as a print-on-demand publication. Thanks to Nancy La Chance of Lebanon Poets' Society for editing *Grist*; Terri Jacks for becoming the new Youth Work Director; and to our treasurer, Bill Lower, who has also agreed to take on the difficult task of membership coordination. I appreciate all you do for the society! All MSPS officers and board members fill strictly volunteer, unpaid positions. If you would like to volunteer for MSPS, we can always put you to work. Please let me know if you are interested.

I know you all will want to send in poems for the MSPS Winter Contest (deadline Feb. 14)! More information about the contest and contest categories can be found in this issue of *Spare Mule*, on our Facebook page, and on the website. The MSPS Youth Contest also has a deadline of Feb. 14. See Facebook and the website for more information.

And now for the President's Poetry Challenge. I've tested you with forms and given you topics or pictures. Now I'm going to challenge you to imitate another poet's style. Specifically, I want you to imitate the style of E.E. Cummings. I'm thinking of his poem "l(a" which is particularly apropos for fall and winter (check it out at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L\(a\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L(a))). But there are, of course, many other examples of his wonderful play with words and form to be found. Good luck and keep writing!

Carla

## **MSPS Winter Contest 2020**

**Deadline:** Postmarked by Feb. 14, 2020

**Format:** Submit two copies of each entry, category number and category name in upper left-hand corner of both copies, poet's name and address in upper right-hand corner of one copy. If you are a member, put "Missouri State Poetry Society" below your address. Put "Non-member" if you are not. Note that there are special rules for student submissions.

**Limits:** Poems may be 40 or fewer lines. They may be unpublished or previously published if the poet retains the rights to the poem. Poets may enter each category as many times as they wish. No poems will be returned.

### **Categories:**

- 1. Rhymed verse or blank verse** (unrhymed iambic pentameter)
- 2. Free verse**
- 3. Humorous verse**
- 4. Any form, winter subject**
- 5. MEMBERS ONLY:** Poet's choice: any form (including open-field, shaped, or concrete poetry), any subject.

Fees for Categories 1-4:

\* Non-members pay \$2.00 per poem. Members pay \$1.00 per poem.

Fees for Category 5 (Members only) \$2.00 per poem.

Make money order or check payable to MSPS and mail to

Bill Lower  
21010 S. Hwy 245  
Fair Play, MO 65649.

Include an SASE on an index card or your e-mail address for a list of the winners.

**Prizes:** \$25, \$15, \$10, and three honorable mentions in each category.

**Membership:** If you do not belong to one of our local chapters but wish to join Missouri State Poetry Society, pay the \$14 annual member-at-large fee and enter the contests by paying a member's reduced contest fees.

*The Missouri State Poetry Society*

*Invites Youth, Grades 6-12*

*to participate in our annual*

*Youth Poetry Contest*

*Deadline Feb. 14, 2020*

*For rules & Submission Guidelines, see our Website*

*<http://mostatepoetry.com/youth.html>*

# Chapter Updates



At the moment the On the Edge reporter is sitting on the edge of her chair with her feet on the edge of the chair legs and she is trying not to bite her nails or misspell any words or misplace any commas, periods, or any other form of punctuation in this article. As for the group this reporter is reporting on, the On the Edge poets, some have been busy writing haiku, senryu, limericks, and other forms of poetry/verse. Others have claimed their computer has malfunctioned and they were unable to produce anything legible for us to review at our monthly meetings.

We all got together in December for a rousing breakfast and were joined by Billy and Faye Adams. It was delightful to see the Adams. They were off afterwards to parts unknown. Even they didn't know where they were going.

John Han is always busy writing various articles and books. He's also is producing online chapbooks, *Fireflies Light* and *The Right Word*, as well as the Missouri Baptist Literary Magazine, *Cantos*. Several of our group are published in these publications. Thank you, John.

Carol and Don Horstman due to various reasons, car trouble and the rain, have missed several of our meetings. So more on them the next time.

Terrie Jacks have had some success in other states poetry contest; collected a few Honorable Mentions. Also, a first-place win in the MSPS summer contest, humorous category. She also keeps on appearing at open mics. The audience seems to laugh at her, I mean, at her poetry. That keeps her coming back to the stage. (Does she have a new career in performing? Nay, she is just a ham.)

On the Edge hopefully will keep on keeping on. Hopefully, all of you readers will keep on keeping on. As for this reporter, her nails have been nibbled to the quick or maybe the slow, her feet are cold, and it is getting late. I think I heard the sidewalks roll up. Time for bed.

~~~~~

**Author Unknown** is experiencing a growth spurt! We are proud of our nine new members. These bright poets will soon be filling the pages of Spare Mule, *Grist*, the annual contests, and perhaps a spot awaits us in the Pushcart world.

We should be prepared for anything the new semester sets before us: Casebolt Project, April Poetry Month Celebration, Spring Celebration of Creative Writing, Writing Contest awards, and sending works out for more publication. Please feel invited to attend our meetings Fridays at 10 am.

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#### Update on The Merry Bombadils Chapter of the MSPS

The Merry Bombadils had several members participate in an EIEIO Circle. The EIEIO form was created by Carol Louise Moon. For a year, participants wrote 5-line poems that started with EIEIO and rhymed, though without meter. Each poem was critiqued and honed. At the end of year, a chapbook of the creations was created to commemorate each poet's contribution to the Circle. Those participating included Pat Laster, Carol Louise Moon, Harold Asner, Marie Asner, Dawn Harmon and Teresa Klepac. We were able to get to know each other better and to help each other with our writing. The Merry Bombadils are now in the process of creating 49 syllable poems, 7 lines each with 7 syllables. It is a 49er poem challenge. Wish us luck! Pat Laster is engaged in an MFA program Poetry Workshop, and, in addition, is busily creating a year-long perpetual haiku flip calendar. Marie Asner continues to do reviews. Harold Asner is tutoring at a local college tutor center. Both are getting back into the poetic spirit and looking forward to writing more poems.

# President's Challenge - Ekphrastic





Feel free to reference the photo as little or as much as you wish in the poem. As always, I'm all for bending rules, circumventing expectations, and approaching topics in new ways. The only thing I ask is that you give your poem the title "**Camellia, Elgin Plantation**" so that we can clearly see the variety of poems we get from the same prompt.

Happy Poetry Month to all!  
Carla Kirchner

## **Elgin Plantation – Terrie Jacks**

camellia

Elgin Plantation

a coy photo

an attempt to conceal

my splendor from view

### **Camellia, Elgin Plantation—Todd Sukany**

Camellia, not unlike her pink cousin,  
blushes behind a veil of green.  
She must be pining for Li Po  
and his wine-inspired dance routines.

--T.A. Sukany

## Other Poems



## **Sisters – by Terrie Jacks**

I'm being a sister  
a sister to my sister  
a slight aggravation  
as sisters sometime are

If I were a big sister  
I'd let my little sister know  
that having me as a big sister  
is the bestest thing, by far

But I'm just the little sister  
as my big sister often says  
and as the little sister  
I like being bizarre.

## **Graceland Tour—Terrie Jacks**

Graceland, here we come

Route Interstate 55, wheels turn, wheels burn

Announcing Peabody's Famous Duck Walk

Club W. C. Handy on Beale Street

Everything Elvis, everywhere

Last row of the bus, giddy-up bounce

Another, oh no, gift shop

Next, dinner at Uncle Lou's

Southern Kitchen

Dance ol' feet to the Elvis beat

The first day, after Beale Street, the Pink Palace

Qoff to Elvis's mansion, but first wait for the shuttle

UR Here, that map indicates, I'm lost

Return to Sender, homeward bound

## **Mr. Smooth—Marie Asner**

They don't argue anymore.

Sun up and they listen to local radio for news.

After eggs and toast, she washes the dishes  
as he goes to weed the garden,  
tossing poison ivy into a neighbor's yard.

His voice, weakened by age,  
is cloaked in an old shirt of pride,  
not believing that time is running past.

As a kid, he used to slide coins  
from the collection plate  
into his side pocket...smooth as ice.

But now, those slick moments are like  
hour glass sand...slowly trickling downward.

Marie Asner

Merry Bombadils Chapter

## **The Skater – Marie Asner**

Difference between average and perfection  
is the last fractional second of the last spin...

Longing to stand on the winner's platform  
with gold around her neck.

Taunting...the ice waits, smooth and glistening.  
Announcer finishes, music starts---deep breath,  
it is time to take that chance  
with the ice dragons of fear  
and dodge their mind slashes  
with quadruple jumps all in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time.

Marie Asner

Merry Bombadils Chapter

## **Beauty is Everywhere—Janice Canerdy**

There's beauty in the ordinary things  
like challenges and joys each season brings,  
the world of work and school, and kids at play  
between sunrise and sunset every day.

There's awe-inspiring glory to behold  
as tapestry of moon and stars is rolled  
across the sky, to gazers' pure delight  
between sunset and sunrise every night.

There's beauty at the core of humankind,  
called love, engendering our need to bind  
ourselves in strong relationships, to be  
the instruments of peace and unity.

## **Together, But Private—Pat Durmon**

In the winter  
tall trees stand straight  
and expose limbs,  
blending distinctions  
with gray bark.

Each tree holds its rings,  
not sharing one circle.  
They keep them secret  
like houses  
excluding neighbors.

In the spring, a mystery—  
mockingbird mocks,  
spotted hawk swoops past  
with an accusing eye,  
while finches and sparrows  
  
shyly poke at feed together.

## **OF THESE THREE—Carol Moon**

The ringing of a large brass bell,  
parlor cards that we would play,  
two coins tossed in a wishing well,  
of these we'd draw a parallel.

Let's decide, then, we would say:  
the ringing of a large brass bell  
or tossing coins into the well  
will determine how we pray.

*For you and me, to heav'n or hell  
will be our fate! This I say,  
let the coin-toss point the way.*

The ringing of a large brass bell  
is too predictable; we'd make it sway  
and mean what we foretell.

The coin-toss, too, is not the way.  
Alas, the card-toss--this will stay!  
We'd not ring the large brass bell,  
but read the cards by how they fell.

Carol Louise Moon

**Listening—Frank Adams**

I lie awake  
listening for  
your key  
in the lock.

For the sound  
of the door opening -

to hear your footsteps  
on the kitchen floor  
as you walk  
to the hall closet  
to hang your coat.

I lie awake  
thinking you'll come back -  
trying to forget  
you're gone for good.

### **Los Brazos de Dios—Todd Sukany**

Behind a crown of leaves, the sun burns.

The ridge of Emmons Cliff darkens a carpet of Frog Fruit.

Our stream joins another, embracing a west then east bank. We rest with feet in the coolness of its movement, the song of the breeze, the joy of the wine.

--T.A. Sukany

### **Prayer at the End of Day – Teresa Klepac**

Eventide, before the moon crests the trees,  
Implore the sun “do not end these days.”  
Ernest hands on knobby, arthritic knees.  
Intermittent light shimmers, silver rays.  
“Once again, to see morning come,” she prays.

Teresa Klepac

The Merry Bombadils

## **Faerie Critique – Teresa Klepac**

Elderberries give color to her gown.  
Illusive faerie queen forages in the clovers,  
Eager as a sunlit butterfly lands on flower crown.  
Interested in bees and flower petals, she hovers.  
Opinionated – she sniffs at what she discovers.

Teresa Klepac

The Merry Bombadils

## **Musing in My Sixties (a Haibun) – John J. Han**

The idea of aging did not occur to me until I turned 58. The fact that I would be 60 within two years made me realize I was finally entering the final stages of my life. Many of my friends in their seventies and eighties think that, at 63, I am young. However, aging is a matter of perspective. A 40-year-old may think I am old, whereas a 20-year-old may think a 40-year-old is over the hill.

senior group photo  
groans of those who can't  
unbend their knees

When diagnosed with cancer at age 39, I hoped to live up to 55 so I could see my two young daughters grow up. Fully independent now, they no longer need my support. When I say I am ready to die anytime now, they say I will have a long life. It would be nice to live long, but no one can predict one's lifespan. One thing is certain: I shall have no regrets when I die. Staring death in the face at 39 opened my eyes to the reality of mortality, making me work harder to fulfill my lifelong dreams.

my adult daughter follows me  
as a three-year-old...  
winter dream



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**Guest Editor: Brittany Gilbert**

