

SPARE MULE NEWSLETTER



Newsletter of MSPS | Vol 23 No. 02 | 15 May 2020 | www.mostatepoetry.com
Photographer and Guest Editor: Brittany Gilbert



Local Chapters

Author Unknown

Bolivar, Missouri

The Merry Bombadils

Cuba, Missouri

KC Metropolitan Verse

Kansas City, Missouri

Lebanon Poets' Society

Lebanon, Missouri

On the Edge

De Soto, Missouri

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>PRESIDENT'S CORNER</i>	3
<i>MSPS SUMMER CONTEST</i>	4
<i>YOUTH POETRY CONTEST WINNERS</i>	5
<i>EDITOR'S COLUMN</i>	6
<i>CHAPTER UPDATES</i>	7
<i>KUDOS</i>	7
<i>PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE</i>	8
polling the department chair — T. A. Sukany.....	9
shape — M J Becco	10
Secrets — Marilyn K. Smith	11
(style of e e cummings in haiku) — Marie Asner	12
ON e. e. cummings — Harold Asner	13
<i>OTHER POEMS</i>	14
Weather Forecast— Marie Asner	15
Jagged pieces — Eldonna DeWeese	16
The Rock and the Vow — Carol Louise Moon.....	17
In the World — Frank Adams	18
<i>NATIONAL POETRY MONTH</i>	19
WEEK 1 – Twitter Challenge.....	20
WEEK 2 – Why You Write	21
WEEK 3 – Who Inspires You?.....	22
WEEK 4 – Favorite Memory	24



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello MSPS Poets,

The view outside my window has changed little over the last few months of sheltering-in-place, though February seems so long ago. It seems there is much to worry over. Sometimes I misplace time: day of the week, month, whole mornings and afternoons. I have found it difficult to write in these strange times, but I've enjoyed seeing your work on our MSPS social media channels. A story starts with confusion and its cousin, fear, and I'd argue the same could be said of poetry.

It is good that we had April as National Poetry Month to explore our disorientation and anxiety. Literature, after all, helps us make sense of the world. I hope you are finding a safe place in poetry. It is now May, and poetry continues, though our intern and guest editor, Brittany, will leave us at the end of the spring semester. I will miss her enthusiasm, fresh ideas, and poetry challenges. MSPS, however, still provides several poetry opportunities. I hope you will enter our Summer Contest (see the Call for Submissions in this newsletter). We are still planning for our annual MSPS Convention in the fall, which will also be the season of *Grist* submissions.

Another way to continue with poetry is through this issue's President's Challenge. Last time, I asked you to imitate E.E. Cummings's unique way with words and form. This time, I ask you to write a poem in the vein of Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. A high point in my day is watching and listening to the "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" Big Read, a multi-media art and reading project that offers readers a piece of Coleridge's poem daily at www.ancientmarinerbigread.com.

If Coleridge's albatross ("Water, water everywhere, / Nor any drop to drink") or his opium-induced *Kubla Khan* is not your style, perhaps you'd like his 1817 sonnet, "Fancy in Nubibus":

O! it is pleasant with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twi'x crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light
Beheld the Iliad and Odyssey
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

I hope that you will look further into Coleridge's work, which might lead you to Wordsworth or Blake or Poe. There are no rules to this challenge—you decide what to take (or leave) from your reading.

Good luck, stay safe, and keep writing!

Carla

MSPS SUMMER CONTEST

Deadline:

* Postmarked 12 August 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.

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 or published.

* Please, poems that have won an MSPS contest in the past may not be resubmitted for contest consideration.

Categories:

1. Rhymed verse or blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), any subject, serious or humorous
2. Free verse, any subject, serious or humorous
3. Humorous verse, any subject
4. Any form, summer subject, serious or humorous
5. MSPS members only: Poet's choice:

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

Fees:

* Non-members pay \$2.00 per poem. Members pay \$1.00 per poem. Make money order or check payable to MSPS

* Mail poems and fees to

Anna Wells
10632 St. Andrew's Ct.
Festus, MO 63028
acrobwel@aol.com

* Include a SASE for a list of the winners, OR check the October 1st issue of the Spare Mule Online for a list of winners.

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.

See [Members-at-Large](#).

YOUTH POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

List of Winners 2020:

Junior Division

1. Daniel Morris – Archie R – V – Mrs. Dana Martin
2. Thomas Janssen – Archie R – V – Mrs. Dana Martin
3. Summer Roberts – Archie R – V – Mrs. Dana Martin
4. Lilia Oulamine – Parkway West Middle School – Ruth Oliver
5. Emma King – Archie Middle School – Mrs. Dana Martin
6. Josephine Althoff – Good Shepherd Catholic School – Mrs. Rhonda Chiles
7. Audrey Zeck – Rockwood Valley Middle School – Mrs. Perkins
8. Briar McIntire – Archie R – V – Mrs. Dana Martin
9. Brendan Smith-Hynes – Good Shepherd Catholic School – Mrs. Rhonda Chiles

Senior Division

1. Anya Spurgeon – Jackson High School – Abigail Beckwith
2. Micaela Smith – Troy Buchanan High School – Brittany Hosmer
3. Emma Silliman – Jackson High School – Allison Centanii
4. Jasmine Mercurio – Jackson High School – Jennifer Lipe
5. Gracie Metzger – Jackson High School – Jennifer Lipe
6. Lara Oliver – Jackson High School – Katherine Geis
7. Logan Kammerer – St. John Vianney High School – Terri Fisher-Reed
8. Elle Justice – Nixa High School – Haylee Anderson
9. Emma Stockton – Nixa High School – Haylee Anderson
10. Tyler Cawthra – Nixa High School – Haylee Anderson

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Hello MSPS Poets,

Before this semester started, I never would have thought I would be an editor for a society centered around poetry. Poetry and I have never had the best relationship, as I really only ever liked Edgar Allan Poe. Then my professor suggested that I run the MSPS newsletter and social media for class credit, and everything changed.

After reading dozens of poems from contemporary poets such as yourselves, something began clicking in my anti-poetry mindset. Between past newsletters and the poems some of you sent in for National Poetry Month, I discovered a newfound love for poetry. The poems you all write are both fun and inspiring. It made me want to pick up a pen and write something.

I also sincerely enjoyed getting to know all of you. Between the autobiographies some of you sent in and the emails we have exchanged, I realized the intense impact poetry has. It creates community and bonds between people who would otherwise be strangers. Now I wonder why I ever hated poetry.

I want to say thank you to everyone for letting me experience this process with all

of you. I feel I should point out that I have done research on other poetry societies, and none of the ones I found are as member oriented as MSPS. They don't post poems in their newsletters or even talk about their members. I love how MSPS and Spare Mule are different in that aspect.

Also, thank you for helping me make the most of the trying times we are all in. Social distancing has been rough, but I love how we could all stay connected through email and participating with the rest of the world in National Poetry Month.

Lastly, I have to say goodbye for now. I exceedingly enjoyed being the editor for the Spare Mule, and I am sad to leave, but summer has arrived, and my semester is over. However, I do suspect I will be doing this again next Spring, if my senior year allows me to do so. You can hopefully expect some updates to follow regarding other aspects of MSPS.

Goodbye for now,

Brittany Gilbert

CHAPTER UPDATES

Author Unknown went on Spring Break March 13th and should resume meetings in AUGUST?!?

Yes, we collectively decided that having a circle of poets in a room, week after week, is healthy to poems. Healthy poems are published poems and we wanted to open the electronic arena for others to fill . . . six feet apart, masked, and with no more than ten in a group. Okay. THAT is the real reason why we don't meet . . . we are greater in number than ten.

We will still send poems off to be published by the second week of May. We will still create a video record of our best poem from the semester. We will return in the Fall for another round of MSPS critiquing. Have a great summer and keep on writing.

KUDOS

Marilyn K. Smith was the 3rd place winner, out of 32 entries, in the spring Springfield Writers' Guild writing contest for "Remembering Little Ellie."

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE



Excerpt from Spare Mule's February 11, 2020 Edition

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

polling the department chair — T. A. Sukany

“fire-”

e.e.

find you

“some”

cummings?

About the Poet

Todd Sukany, a Pushcart nominee, lives in Pleasant Hope, Missouri, with his wife of over 37 years. His work recently appears in *The Christian Century* and *Tanka Origins*. A native of Michigan, Sukany stays busy running, playing music, and caring for four rescue dogs, a kitten, and one old-lady cat.

shape — M J Becco

!UP!

p

o

p

dandelions.. ! SURPRISE!

Secrets — Marilyn K. Smith

adrift on a sea of love
with sweet melodies playing within my heart
while waves of great passion
wash over me
our soft harmonious sounds
meld us together
and we become lost in each other's arms
forever
I awaken to the morning light
and glance only momentarily
for fear even one breath
of your fragrance
will detain me
before slipping
quietly away
I cannot look back
or this will all disappear
you are unaware of my identity
or how I came to be
in this place
at this time
let the air hold my secrets
let the wind blow them away
allowing my freedom
another day

About the Poet

Marilyn K. Smith has written a weekly column, "A Tale or Two" in the Buffalo Reflex newspaper since October 1986. Other writing credits include The Ozarks Senior Living newspaper, Journal of the Ozarks magazine and others. Her books include, "A History of Highway 65," "Window Pane Inn and other short stories," "My Red Convertible, a love story," "Bessie's Secret and other short stories," Ozark Recipes, Momma's Mine and Others', "After a Hard Day on the Farm," "Those Were the Days on the Farm," and "Poetic Thoughts."

(style of e e cummings in haiku) — Marie Asner

write in e e cum
mings style no punctua
tion so go for it

About the Poet

Marie Asner has balanced the careers of film critic, free-lance writer and church musician for most of her life. Marie received a grant from the Kansas Arts Commission to do a poetry chapbook on "Amelia Earhart." She received the Gold Key to the City of Shawnee, Kansas for 20 years as a film critic and newspaper writer. Marie's mother was a church musician and Marie began playing for church services at age 14. Marie was on live National Public Radio-Kansas City for 25 years as a film critic panelist, and one of the guests was the late Charlton Heston. Marie relaxes by writing poetry and invites the reader to join her on a journey of words. Marie Asner is a member of the Merry Bombadils.

ON e. e. cummings — Harold Asner

To read e. e. cumming
s for me is mind-numbing
He would say what the heck
to grammar and spell check
His message i fear
is often unclear
But maybe that's me
Others say that he
writes poems with great MEAN
ing and that he's a poetic GEN
ius

About the Poet

I am a former federal employee who retired in 1996 and soon began working at our local community college as a math tutor. I retired from that job in 2018. My wife Marie is a long-time poet who got me interested in writing after my second retirement. I have been writing poetry ever since then

OTHER POEMS



Weather Forecast— Marie Asner

Many thousand days past
we had joy in the warmth of yellow suns
and dreamed away silken nights

...dreams meant so much then...

Orange butterflies danced over illusions of summer
and aspens began to spin gold webs
with color explosions of carmine and sapphire
twined in Van Gogh spirals

Flamed with the sight
we reached out for vermilion apple, amethystine grape

It will not come again...youth

In the chill turn of the wind
we move with mistrals in our eyes

Jagged pieces — Eldonna DeWeese

Jagged pieces
of thoughts scraps
of memory salvaged pieces
of family history
a battered folder; no time
now for proper attention
folder sinks beneath detritus
of neglected mail
notes to file
things should throw away
no time to entertain thoughts intriguing
no need for folder

The Rock and the Vow — Carol Louise Moon

Here in the land of rolling waving grass
lies Pawnee Rock, an outcrop one can see
far across the prairie—a large flat stone
'mid prairie dog holes and a cottonwood tree.

Here lovers come and stand atop the rock
to claim what lasts—a childhood life that brings
life dreams alive out here on the plains—
exchanging gifts of trust, a vow and rings.

A Horned Lark sings a witness to their vow.
Then, down from the rock they step away
knowing for true their love will last and last
—“always and always” as the prairie folks say.

About the Poet

Carol Louise Moon is a Simulated Client Actor and an award-winning poet from Northern California. She has been published in three state poetry anthologies and many local poetry journals and has served as a contest judge. She is a regular contributor to Medusa's Kitchen blog spot of her poetry and photography. She is a proud member of Merry Bombadils.

In the World — Frank Adams

We think no one sees us
that we aren't heard -
our actions are insignificant
unaware our presence is felt-

our words are heard - the child
called fat, ugly, stupid at age 8 -
recalls the words 50 years later
and recalls who said them. The
waitress remembers her one *good tip* -
and sees the face of the person who left it.

We are ever marking our path -
someone is always watching us
hearing our words. What we say
and do is both precious and dangerous.

About the Poet

Frank Adams is a Member at Large in MSPS.

NATIONAL POETRY MONTH



National Poetry Month is a full month dedicated to celebrating poetry and all it entails. This year, MSPS celebrated by sending out weekly challenges to our members. We then posted the poems of those who participated on our three social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter). The weekly challenges went as follows:

Week 1: Twitter Challenge – Write a poem in under 280 characters

Week 2: Why You Write – Write a poem explaining why you write poetry.

Week 3: Who Inspires You – Write a poem talking about someone who inspires you.

Week 4: Favorite Memory – Write a poem describing your favorite memory.

WEEK 1 – Twitter Challenge

Twitter



CoVid-19 Instruction

Online lectures drip like honey

"Direct Objects" are such important things

but nectar to some is all bees and stings

In frustration, a student hive is a-buzz with "SUKANY"

--T.A. Sukany 06 Apr 2020

11:24 AM · 4/7/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



warm March rain

baptizes gently—

pink petals

lune—mjbecco

11:42 AM · 4/9/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



From whence cometh the wind?

And to where doth it go?

With its hands it shakes a branch.

With its breath it blows the leaves.

It passes quickly in the night

And then is felt no more.

Stella Cunningham

Second Tuesday Poets

7:59 PM · 4/10/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



Odors permeate

The membranes of our nostrils

But the aromas

From my mother's warm kitchen

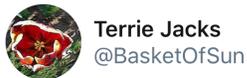
Are the memories I crave

*Tanka poetry form

Marilyn K. Smith

3:55 PM · 4/8/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

↳ You Retweeted



[@mostatepoetry](#)

life's song

repeating the echoes

the echoes

the echoes

found in life

over and over

its refrain,

a chorus,

a melody

for existence

and its these echoes

that never end

Terrie Jacks

12:03 PM · 4/7/20 · [Twitter Web App](#)



Womanhood

Audience awaits

talent sublime...lovely voice

pins hold gown in place

Immaculate suits

slick hair do and fashion purse

lettuce on front tooth

Baby coughs all day

must call to cancel theater

tickets...no refund

Marie Asner

11:42 AM · 4/10/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)



who are you to me

you're a concept my mind molds

one I'd like to know

who am I to you

an old woman spun like yarn

on your mind's young loom

we're more than poets

we are living poetry

God's Word incarnate

Wanda Sue Parrott

4:21 PM · 4/8/20 · [Twitter Web App](#)

WEEK 2 – Why You Write

Instagram

An Arkansas Girl

How I loved "Hey, Diddle-diddle,"
"Mary Had a Little Lamb,"
skip-rope jingles.

When a teacher taught Frost
and made us memorize
"Stopping By Woods...,"

I found beauty and delight.
The heat and smelly bodies
in our classroom

did nothing to deter my fondness
for rubbing words together.
So like holding hands

with a friend and running
as fast as we could.
Impossible to see

where it might lead.
As I grew old, I moved
to a river and hills

where I found irises, goats,
and arrowheads. Oh, and—
poetry splashing in mudpuddles.

Pat Durmon, Norfolk, AR
Missouri Bombadil

ladies who write poetry

The ladies who write poetry
have a special relationship with the Almighty,
who helps them as they stumble through life
with notebooks watching for that special inspiration
like a scent of Shalimar on the twilight air
or the rounded edge of a rising golden-coin moon
or Bing Crosby on the radio
or the first glimpse of the morning sun
reflected in dew on the rose
of a neighbor's bouquet tossed out in anger
from a late night lover's quarrel.

Marie Asner
Merry Bombadils

slow work,
digging rocks with a spoon--
the masters all
found time to uncover
satisfaction in a golden line

--T.A Sukany 14 Apr 2020

living breath
caught in black, stiff words--
poetry

haiku—april, 2020
mjbecco

Challenge

I write poetry because:
The birds doth sing,
The bells doth ring,
So I give them a voice.

I write poetry because:
The streams doth flow,
The winds doth blow,
So I give them a voice.

I write poetry because:
The storms doth roar
The rains doth pour,
So I give them a voice.

I write poetry because:
The stars doth shine,
The words doth rhyme,
So I give them a voice.

I write poetry because:
Spare Mule doth said,
"You stray, you're dead!"
So I give this danged poem a

Marilyn Smith

WEEK 3 – Who Inspires You?

Instagram

Marcia

She's a time certain person; she never looks back.
She lives in the moment and has no regrets of her past.
What has happened has happened; she's on a new track.
Her moment is real and filled with the best.
She plans in the now and will pass any test;
Tomorrow may be there if she needs to rest.

Decisions are made after research and thought;
But her choices are flexible; life's flow is not fought.
And her children are blessed with the things that she's taught.

Nancy DuPuy

Mt. Holly neighbor:

You were a stranger, mother to my daughter's friend
And you propelled yourself into my life
Because you heard my daughter's plea
And knew that I was drying up and dying in my solitude.
You came and pulled me out.

Nancy DuPuy

It's Still Precious To Me

It's still there. Or is it?
It's empty. Or nearly so.
Whatever is in it has little value.
Cobwebs are everywhere
Obstructing a clear view through the few
Dust-covered window panes the still exist.
Doors stand open, allowing the wind to pass through unobstructed.
Floors sag as they struggle to remain as solid as they were years ago.
Nooks and crannies that were places
Of pleasure and fantasy
Are now empty, desolate and deserted.
It plays such a huge part in my earliest memories.
It was always a place of activity and fun
And teasing and praying and loving.
I speak into it, but in reply I hear only echoes of the past.
Repairs are not really an option.
Is there a purpose for such a relic?
Purpose or not, I love it.
Had it not been there when I was growing up
I would not be the person I am today.
Time spent there was a pleasure available nowhere else.
Some might say "Walk away. Leave it behind."
But I can't. I don't think it would be right to do so.
I'll stay close and protect it as best I can
From further neglect and harm.
After all, nothing can ever replace
My Daddy's mind.

Bob Martin

Those Early Days

Flying through a cloud barrier over the Pacific
at 15,000 feet
from here
water covers most of the world

Men who traveled this liquid path
thousands of years ago
left no markers to follow

Other explorers ventured through the doorway
of sea and stars
into a cloud cave
where constellations are absent
and light a myth

Gone now, to betray no secrets
no metal fragments
no resurrection

Those who come after,
name their rockets
"Amelia"

Marie Asner
Merry Bombadils

To John

Impeccably groomed in black cashmere,
we wore youths night unobtrusively.
But no one knew and no one cared
that we were there.

Becoming garish with young isolation,
we garlanded our flesh with gold that shone.
Glittering then, we sensed the world
exclaiming: New stars shine alone.

Less effusive, with maturing swiftness,
we flung our false gold signs afar.
Those who passed their shallow judgments
said: Oh, fallen star!

Wizened, cashmere still, we do not fear,
for in our Golden Dawn of
lumin-essence
we know that I AM here.

Wanda Sue Parrott
May 16, 1974

The Hand of the Poet

Yuko Otomo,
your revision
into translations
has inspired me,
another ugly duckling
in press.

Must be,
previously,
Li Po
joined us
to drink in
a new moon.

—T.A. Sukany 21 July 2014

my first teacher
Making do with what we had
when times were scarce and bad,
squeezing pennies from each dollar
stretching tight to make ends meet.
Canning and drying, she stored our food,
selling eggs, cream, and garden produce;
baking bread and cakes from scratch,
sewing clothes and searching sales.
The rules she taught were few but true—
mend it, make it do, or create anew.
In good times, those pennies were saved
for she never forgot, things will change.
We never missed what was not there
for we lived under her love and care.

nonce—april, 2020
M J Becco

Woe Is Me

I wish I'd been born with a cheery disposition.
Selda, like a daffodil, sends sunshine all around;
Marian, like an organ, vibrates joy and glory everywhere;
Lynn, like a rose, is full of sweetness and blessing.

I wish I'd been born with an active attitude.
Jan, like a kitten, chases from one fun to another;
Marian, like a tiger, roams fearless to far places.

I wish I'd been born with a passion.
Charlotte flings herself into quilts and copper;
Mary pursues her vocation in law with a gentle, whole heart.

I wish I'd been born with contentment.
Judy fills each day with caring routines;
Marjjo moves gently through each cycle of her life.

I wish I'd been born persistent.
Charlotte, fashionista, sets goals and achieves them;
Rob, like an artisan, works patiently on any major or minor task.

I wish I'd been born competent.
Carol is smart and works smart and cares for people and animals.
Carol, my daughter's other mother, faultlessly deals cards and tasks in her full life.

When old age marks our person
And we become more like ourselves each day
I can see beauty pour from these friends of mine
Into the lives of those nearby.

While grouchy old I, critical and mean-spirited,
Anxious and irritable Type A,
Crawl into a hole and hide.

Nancy DuPuy

Judy

You've been gone three years now
and missed the Coronavirus.

I recall how you'd talk about something
coming soon and changing this world.

Judy, it's here. The government tells us
to stay home for the good of all.

People watch the news. I do chores,
check on peonies and write poems.

What would a girl scout like you do?
Probably pray, sip tea, pet a dog, smile,

say "God's in charge of this too."
Today, white clouds hang low and roll east.

This is your birthday month. Not forgotten.
No crazy card. Just a little poem to say

I miss you and thank you for sharing love
and tears, for laughing so hard you'd tremble.

Pat Durmon,
Norfolk, Arkansas

WEEK 4 – Favorite Memory

Instagram

Remembering First Friends at Age 75

When I was young, not yet quite three,
the world was still inside of me;
but shortly before I turned four,
I found it outside our back door.

In Mother's garden, silken strings
were woven by eight-legged things
I heard the universe's sound
among new plants in springtime's ground:

Chirps and purrs and hums of trees—
the blend of weed wind, buzz of bees—
as sunlight candled shells so frail
I viewed each embryonic snail.

Spiders, ants and slugs were charms
I wore like bracelets on my arms;
my silvereen tattoos were hugs
bestowed in slime ink by young slugs.

Lizards, snakes and geckoes, too,
were friends who shared our backyard zoo,
the universe through which I'd roam
without one step away from home.

I lived in Eden; what is sad
was Mother swore my friends were bad,
and Dad spread poison that would kill
the gentle life forms I love still.

I rescue spiders, flies and worms
and have not yet been killed by germs,
but this is the amazing thing:
I've never yet had one bee sting.

Wanda Sue Parrott, 4/22/10

MY CHILDHOOD

Yesterday I went back to find it.
I walked around the edges of where it used to be.
I cut through the middle.
I stood still and looked all around.
I searched and examined
High and low, in and out, over and under.
I couldn't find my childhood anywhere.
It just wasn't there.
And I guess it never will be again.
That makes me sad.
Is a place ever the same after the buildings are gone
And the trees and paths have disappeared
And the ditches and creeks and roses and rocks
No longer exist?
I could not find just where home plate stood
Or where the bushes grew that provided
Indian arrows and jungle spears.
I never realized how much my childhood
Was intertwined with things and places.
But I remember how I was protected and taught
And disciplined and loved.
No matter the loss of childhood markers,
The memories are better than the places.
Sadness is inappropriate
I'll just be grateful instead.

Bob Martin

Night Rider

Ski's on snow
long sigh like
wind through pines

ice crystals
rise to greet
polished wood

black mantled hillside
evening star ascends,
tethered to Earth's belt

I reach out with my poles
and snip the star free
while a coin-shaped moon
slips from night's pocket.

Marie Asner
Merry Bombadils

A Theist Attends An Atheist Conference

I stood in line to talk to you
to know what you meant by several of your statements.
You were very nice to sign your books,
point questioners to your web site,
quick to give out your practiced responses.

I wanted to ask you what you meant by
If God would just come to my door, I'd believe.

I waited in line to talk to you
to know what you meant by several of your statements.
You were very quick to sign your books,
point questioners to your web site, smooth
in the delivery of your practiced answers.

I just wanted to know what you meant by
If God wants to know me,
since He knows everything,
why doesn't He just come to my door?

I stood in line to talk to you.
I stood in line to talk, to you.
In line, I stood, to talk to you.
To talk to you, I stood in line.
I stood . . . in line . . . to talk . . . to you.

-T.A. Sukany