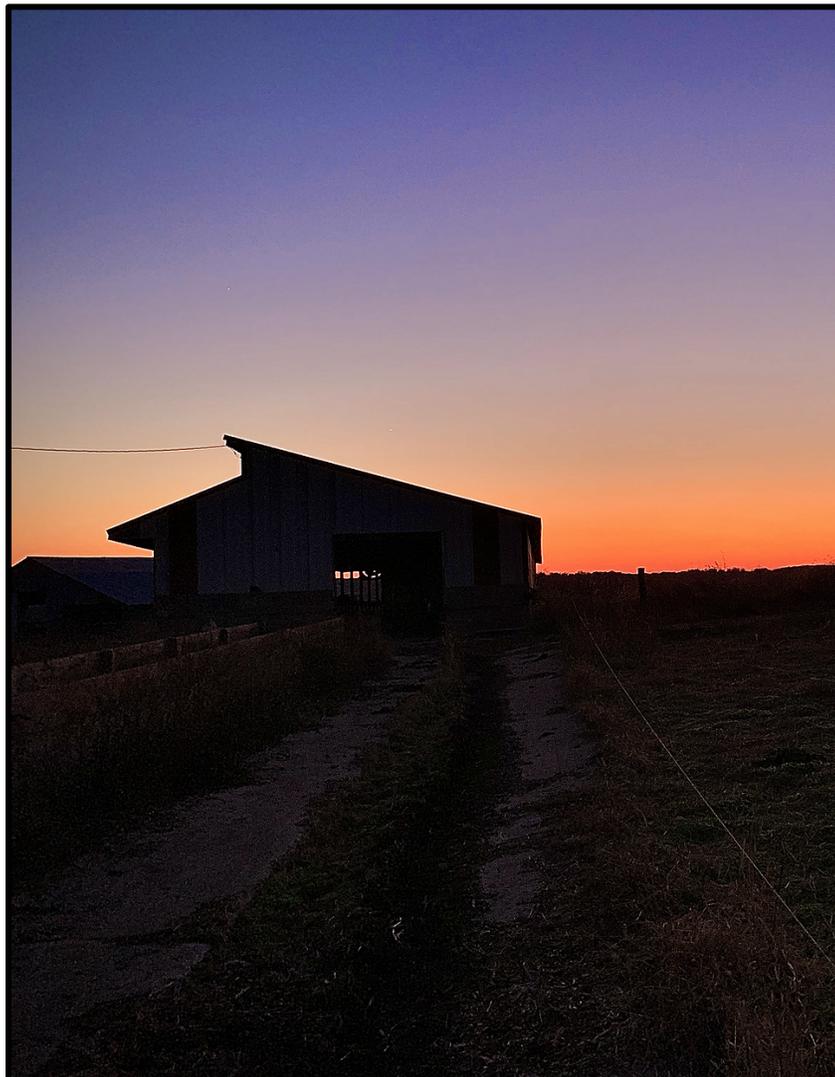


SPARE MULE NEWSLETTER



Newsletter of MSPS | Vol 24 No. 01 | 30 April 2021 | www.mostatepoetry.com
Photographer and Guest Editor: Brittany Gilbert
New MSPS Logo Designer: Rebecca Foltz



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

For those who missed it, buckle up for a reveal of the new MSPS logo on the next page! Also, the pictures used in this newsletter will be seen somewhere else, soon...

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello MSPS Poets!

It's been nearly a year since the last President's column, and what a year it's been. Not only has Covid prevented MSPS meetings, workshops, and conventions, I've also found it very difficult to find my writing voice during this pandemic. Whether you're struggling with your own writing or have easily found your voice, this last year has been rough for all of us, both personally and professionally. Thus, Poetry Month seems an appropriate time to again touch base with poetry friends and bring you another round of the MSPS newsletter. As you know, MSPS has been without a Spare Mule editor and without a media/social media director for the last several years. I am grateful that Southwest Baptist University student Brittany Gilbert is again our newsletter editor for this issue so that I may have the opportunity to "speak" to all MSPS members.

Here is a rundown of all the MSPS business you need to know from the last eleven months since we've been in touch:

1.) Grist 2020 is now available through The Book Patch @ <https://www.thebookpatch.com/>. Thanks to editor Nancy La Chance for another great anthology!

2.) The lists of Youth Contest 2021 winners, MSPS Summer Contest 2020 winners, and MSPS Winter Contest 2021 winners appear in this newsletter! Congratulations to all winners and thanks to Youth Work Director Terrie Jacks, MSPS Vice President Anna Wells, and MSPS Treasurer/Secretary Bill Lower for overseeing these contests.

3.) Because we are still unsure what fall will have in store for traveling, gathering, and bringing in poets, we will hold the MSPS Convention online this year. Participants will be able to watch videos of the featured poet's readings/workshops and attend meetings, get-togethers, and read-arounds via Zoom (or like system). This year's convention will occur in September or October. More information will be announced as it becomes available.

And now for the President's Poetry Challenge. My last challenge asked you to write a poem in the style of Samuel Taylor Coleridge by imitating his Romantic masterpiece, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." As I think we are all trying to find joy through poetry these days, for this next challenge I'd like you to write a found poem. Found poems take existing texts (the more non-poetic the text, the better!) and "find" the poem hiding there by reordering, repeating, and/or deleting pieces of the original. Found poetry is a great way to kickstart creativity and overcome poet's block. There is no one "right" way to create a found poem, but if you desire help, all you need do is Google "how to write a found poem" for practical advice and examples.

Happy "poeting" to all!

Carla Kirchner

MSPS SUMMER CONTEST

Deadline:

* Postmarked 15 August 2021

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.

* We do not accept online submissions at this time.

* 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.

MSPS CONTEST WINNERS



SUMMER CONTEST 2020

WINTER CONTEST 2021

YOUTH CONTEST 2021

SUMMER CONTEST 2020

CATEGORY 1 RHYMED OR BLANK VERSE

1. Nick Sweet (Shepherd, TX) "Redamancy, If"
2. Dr. Emory Jones (Iuka, MS) "Sacred Music"
3. Jenna Pashley Smith (Richmond, TX) "The Lonely Tourist's Guide to Urban War Zones"
4. Dr. Emory Jones (Iuka, MS) "Heavenly Peace"
5. Pat Laster (Benton, AR) "Le Litterateur's Jardine"
6. Faye Adams (Cherokee Village, AR) "Moonlight Dance" a Kyrielle Sonnet

CATEGORY 2 FREE VERSE

1. Lorraine Jeffery (Orem, UT) "A Tidy Burial"
2. Becky Alexander (Cambridge, Ontario) "Passage"
3. Barbara Blanks (Garland, TX) "Daisies for Mom"
4. Claire Scott (Oakland, CA) "Almost Eighty"
5. Nick Sweet (Shepherd, TX) "Garage Band Rehearsal, 1966"
6. LaVern Spencer McCarthy (Blair, OK) "Patterns"

CATEGORY 3 HUMOROUS VERSE

1. Von S. Bourland (Happy, TX) "A Hound Dog's Dilemma"
2. Wanda Sue Parrott (Monterey, CA) "A Nudist Bill of Rights"
3. LaVern Spencer McCarthy (Blair, OK) "What's That You Say"
4. LaVern Spencer McCarthy (Blair, OK) "A Need For Speed"
5. Barbara Blanks (Garland, TX) "Here's Looking Ah-Chooo!"
6. LaVern Spencer McCarthy (Blair, OK) "Old Man From Arden"

CATEGORY 4 SUMMER SUBJECT ANY FORM

1. John Han (Manchester, MO) "Summer Haiku" (a sequence)
2. Terrie Jacks (Ballwin, MO) "birdsongs"
3. Karen Kay Bailey (Blanchard, OK) "Summer Sunrise"
4. Jerri Hardesty (Brierfield, AL) "Coasting"
5. Marie A. Asner (Overland Park, KS) "Curfew"
6. Nancy LaChance (Lebanon, MO) "Beauty to Behold"

CATEGORY 5 MSPS MEMBERS POET'S CHOICE

1. Terrie Jacks (Ballwin, MO) "slow footing"
2. Barbara Blanks (Garland, TX) "Ancestors"
3. John Han (Manchester, MO) "Thirteen Ways to Look at a Cat" (Haiku)
4. Harold Asner (Overland Park, KS) "Writer's Block"
5. Wanda Sue Parrott (Monterey, CA) "in great grandpa's time" (a senryu)
6. John Han (Manchester, MO) "Spring 2020: Haiku"

WINTER CONTEST 2021

CATEGORY 1. RHYMED OR BLANK VERSE

1. "The Taste of Salt," Catherine Moran, Little Rock, AR
2. "Heavenly Peace," Dr. Emory Jones, Iuka, MS, MSPS Member
3. "Revival," Pat Laster, Benton, AR, MSPS Member
 - 1st Honorable Mention, "The Preacher and the Paperboy", Nick Sweet, Shepherd, TX, MSPS Member
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, "Travesty, Pat Laster", Benton, AR, MSPS Member
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, "The Cobbler," Nick Sweet, Shepherd, TX, MSPS Member

CATEGORY 2. FREE VERSE

1. "Connections," Pat Laster, Benton, AR, MSPS Member
2. "Southern Sonata," Terry Jude Miller, Richmond, TX
3. "January," Steven Leitch, West Jordan, UT
 - 1st Honorable Mention, "Wild One", Jerri Hardesty, Brierfield, AL
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, "When I Was 8," Velvet Fackeldey, Columbus, NM, MSPS Member
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, "Poppycock Before Lunch," Terrie Jacks, Ballwin, MO, MSPS Member

CATEGORY 3. HUMOROUS

1. "Shocking," Steven Leitch, West Jordan, UT
2. "Face Masks: A Senryu Sequence," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
3. "At a Doctor's Office," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
 - 1st Honorable Mention. "Too Slow, Too Fast, Too Slow," John J. Han, Manchester, MO, MSPS Member
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, "Deathbed Reading," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, "Thirty Below," Faye Adams, Cherokee Village, AR, MSPS Member

CATEGORY 4. WINTER SUBJECT

1. "The Garden in St. Pierre," Marie Asner, Overland Park, KS, MSPS Member
2. "Smattering of Snow," Terrie Jacks, Ballwin, MO, MSPS Member
3. "Ode to a New World," Terry Jude Miller, Richmond, TX
 - 1st Honorable Mention, "Alone with the Cold," Catherine Moran, Little Rock, AR
 - 2nd Honorable Mention, "Poet's Winter," Steven Leitch, West Jordan, UT
 - 3rd Honorable Mention, "Winter's Last Gasp," Faye Adams, Cherokee Village, AR, MSPS Member

CATEGORY 5. POET'S CHOICE, MEMBERS ONLY

1. "Returning Home," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
2. "Tanka Collection," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
3. "America, the Land of 'Great Expectations'," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
 - 1st Honorable Mention. "My Father's Woodpile," Nick Sweet, Shepherd, TX MSPS Member
 - 2nd Honorable Mention. "Autumn Dreams," John J. Han, Manchester MO, MSPS Member
 - 3rd Honorable Mention. "A muse's thoughts on writers, rooms, etc.," Terrie Jacks, Ballwin, MO, MSPS Member

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS!

Thank you to everyone who entered, and please enter our future contests. Remember our Summer Contest. Entry info can be found at: <http://mostatepoetry.com/summer.html>

YOUTH CONTEST 2021

SENIOR DIVISION

1. Micaela Smith - Troy Buchanan High School - Brittany Hosmer 1st Place
2. Katie Johnson - Jackson High School - Joyce Thiess 2nd Place
3. Haven LaClair - Abigail Beckman - Jackson High School 3rd Place
4. Alex Sterling & Jennifer Lipe - Jackson High School 1st HR
5. Allison King - Myriah Miller - Jackson High School 2nd HR
6. Kris Johnson & Abigail Beckman - Jackson High School 3rd HR

JUNIOR DIVISION

1. Lola Davis - Good Shepherd Catholic School - Mrs. Rhonda Chiles 1st Place
2. Ava Sizemore - Good Shepherd Catholic School - Mrs. Rhonda Chiles 2nd Place
3. Liam Wengert - Good Shepherd Catholic School - Mrs. Rhonda Chiles 3rd Place
4. Marianne Bullock - Good Shepherd Catholic School - Mrs. Rhonda Chiles 1st HR
5. Charleigh Hall - Good Shepherd Catholic School - Mrs. Rhonda Chiles 2nd HR
6. Sofia Perez - Archie RV School - Dana Martin 3rd HR
7. Bryson Wilkins - Archie RV - Dana Martin 4th HR
8. Kyleigh Wilson - Archie RV - Dana Martin 5th HR
9. Abigail Sutton - Archie RV - Dana Martin 6th HR

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Hello MSPS Poets,

I want to start off by saying thank you so much for letting me return as the student editor for you all! I have definitely missed running the social media platforms and the Spare Mule newsletter email. I love getting to know you all and reading the different poems you write. I especially loved hearing your mini autobiographies and testimonials of how MSPS has played a part in your journey as a writer. It has just honestly been an extreme privilege to be allowed the opportunity to work with you all.

I am actually graduating this May, and I have yet to know what I'm doing with my life after this. I have plans to pursue a life of missions, but that can't start until a couple years from now when the process we're working on speeds up some more. I will say, though, that after working with you all and MSPS as a whole, I am very intrigued in running a journal of sorts. Granted, I have no idea how to do that, but I'm excited to try, nonetheless. I'm also going to be using my experience with this society when I start my ministry. For the company I'm helping start, we're going to need a social media marketer and editor of sorts for the website, so I'm really excited to see how I can apply on there what I've learned here.

On another note, in case you missed it, MSPS does have a new logo! That is actually all thanks to graphic design student, Rebecca Foltz. I got the opportunity to speak in front of the graphic design class at Southwest Baptist University, asking for a new design for the MSPS logo. All the students created a mockup of their submission, and from those, Carla Kirchner, Todd Sukany, and I all unanimously decided on the logo displayed on page 2. On top of that, I have also created a mockup of a new website, which I really hope you all love as much as I do. That will be published on a to-be-determined date.

Lastly, I don't know how much longer I will be involved with MSPS and the Spare Mule, but I'm definitely going to hold on for as long as I can because of how much I love the experience.

Blessings,

Brittany Gilbert

CHAPTER UPDATES

THE MERRY BOMBADILS CHAPTER UPDATE:

Members of The Merry Bombadils include Marie Asner, Harold Asner, Pat Durmon, Teresa H. Klepac, Pat Laster, Carol Louise Moon, Freeda Baker Nichols, Frieda Risvold, and our lifetime member, Dawn Stiller Harmon, former GRIST editor and chapter President. Dawn Harmon has stepped back from leadership of the Bombadils and asked Teresa Klepac and Marie Asner to represent the group with MSPS.

Harold Asner was Fourth Honorable Mention in the MSPS Summer 2020 Poetry Contest for Members Only, Marie Asner was Fourth Honorable Mention in the MSPS Summer 2020 Poetry Contest Summer Theme and The Rockford Review Winter 2021 Edition, published Marie Asner's poem, "High Flyer," which was a contest winner. So excited for the Asners and their contest wins.

Pat Durmon has her own web site and blog at <https://www.patdurmon.com/>. She has written three books: *Lights and Shadows in a Nursing Home*, *Push Mountain*, and *Women, Resilient Women*. She is a free verse poet.

Pat Laster is working on her third poetry chapbook. She has written 100 new pieces, both prose and poetry, this calendar year, and she was published 100 times this calendar year. We are excited about Pat's exceptional productivity and her accomplishments.

Teresa H. Klepac is a member of a workshop writers group called Columbia Writers Group. The group reviews and critiques each other's prose, poetry, non-fiction and encourages each other to submit for publication. Teresa was published in ArtAscent October 2020 issue. The theme for this publication was Isolation. Her piece is called *Counting Stars, Counting Crows*. Stillpoint Arts Quarterly published her flash fiction piece *Catbird Seat* March 1, 2021, and *Safe Person* will be included in an anthology called Hard Times Happen.

Our members, Marie Asner, Pat Durmon, Harold Asner, Teresa H. Klepac, Pat Laster and Carol Louise Moon each contributed poems to GRIST 2020.

This year, The Merry Bombadils will tackle a round-robin critique of poems through the US Mail. "Quilled Quintains" project will culminate at the end of the year in a little printed anthology of our work. Carol Louise Moon is spearheading our project.

On Monday, April 5, 2021, Marie Asner and the Kansas City Wind Symphony provided a Poetry Reading/Music program for April's National Poetry Month. This was done through the Kansas City Musical Club, which was organized 112 years ago and is affiliated with the National Federation of Music Clubs. The program was a Zoom performance beginning with a live poetry reading by Marie Asner and then a taped performance by the Kansas City Wind Symphony, directed by Langston Hemenway. The Kansas City Wind Symphony performance is available on YouTube.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN CHAPTER UPDATE:

Author Unknown has resumed meeting face-to-face, though socially distancing and masked. Each member will present a poem to the student body the last day of March. The theme was a response to Isaiah 50:4-10. We will join fellow artists and learn of their ekphrastic endeavors. We look forward to sending our poems out into the world for publication by the middle of May.

KUDOS

John J. Han's memoir, *Whispers from the Rice Fields: Recollections of a Life in Korea* (Cyberwit), is forthcoming in May. Since last spring, he has also published four other books: *Spousal Competition and Other Tales from Korea* (Cyberwit, 2021), *A Love Song for Young Truth-Seekers: A Story of Korean L'Abri* (a translated memoir; *The Right Words*, Dec. 2020), *Evening Glow: Haiku, Senryu, and Other Poems* (Cyberwit, 2020), and *On the Road Again: Photo Essays on Famous Literary Sites in Japan* (Cyberwit, 2020).

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE



Excerpt from Spare Mule's February 11, 2020 Edition

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." 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.

– Carla

Epitaph — Todd Sukany

“A poet lies” -- Samuel Taylor Coleridge “Epitaph”

Exchanging two letters for one might be death
or life. Two graphemes transform a breath

from the grave into a foundation, setting square
the entire structure. Linguists share the minimal pair

and hope that their “they’re” there will advance and confirm
the skills of elocution. O, jump with me dear bookworm,

be thee Christian or no, jump onto a cloud or river flow
and float away from this present present with all its woe.

Paddle out to the center, face up, drink the sweet nectar
missed by the bees, those round fellows in striped outerwear.

Death comes faster than clover
to those who roll over.

About the Poet

Todd Sukany, a Pushcart nominee, lives in Pleasant Hope, Missouri, with his wife of over 38 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.

Venusian Epitaph — Wanda Sue Parrott

Her bag of waters broke. Into the void
warm streaming fluids flowed; through space they sailed
as if they were a comet which was trailed
by droplets, space debris. When an ovoid
rock-solid mass appeared and blocked its path
the frozen ocean, drawn by cosmic force,
was sucked through gravity that changed its course.
Dead planet Venus' loss created wrath
as pelting hail rained onto land and smashed,
implanting atoms, seeding fish and tree,
transforming planetoid with primal sea.
In time new atmospheric storm clouds crashed.
 Infertile barren ground of mother Earth
 transfigured into womb of life's rebirth.

About the Poet

Honorary Life Member of MSPS and
Member of Poets & Friends, Springfield, MO
Now living in Monterey, CA

Flapping — Terrie Jacks

In morning light, I did converse
upon my breath, I read such verse.
Can't say I much did agree
being it was a sort of misery.
But here I write or click along
a verse by chance won't turn to song.
These eight lines are not a bridge
nor ode to that old poet, S. T. Col-er-idge.

OTHER POEMS



Prairie Fire— Marie Asner

Lightning strikes
and orange flames dance
an upward spear
propelled by animal voices.

Horizon silhouetted in hot ash.
South wind rides the clouds in herds,
running from a hunter's moon
who, with eyes of hot ash
and breath of smoke,
can't find his prey.

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.

Poetry Workshop — Frank Adams

The famous poet - takes my money
pats me on the head - as she calls me *honey*.
Then says, *oh yes, someday you'll be read,*
though of course, you may very well be dead.

I sit and wonder if there's hope
or if I am a passing joke -
a dreamer chasing after a dream -
a person to pity not to esteem.

Still, I sit and write - in the hope
that I might- write one poem
that's worthwhile - that someone will read
with a tear or a smile

About the Poet

Frank Adams is a Member at Large in MSPS.

Snow Melt — Carol Louise Moon

This is the silent time, after snow is crisp and new, the sun shining bright on my porch. Near the house a faint tapping, crinkling and dripping can be heard, if one has the mind to stop chattering on about how gorgeous the vast landscape appears a stunning white.

Stand silent and listen as snowflakes exhale their last, as each joins the rest in watery dissolution, dripping down rocks, flowing down tree trunks--clumps falling from branches.

Soon, the green of meadow will appear and the creek will bubble over river stones--a fitting end to winter's grip as spring sneaks in from around the corner.

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*.

By The Kaw — Marie Asner

The trail was known only to us,
and in the grove we found red berries
that stained our hands
like a splattering of hot wax.

Then we heard it
rushing by willow branches,
wild waves
like Pintos on the move.

We sit in the sun
on a stone shelf,
silently clinging to earth
as though it was part of heaven,

our feet dangle in clear water,
silver and bronze fish
swim carefully underneath.

Down stream, cat tails
whisper in the wind,
while covered rocks
lie in wait for the unwary.

Ten Senryu — John J. Han, On the Edge

plenty of nuts—
two squirrels fight
anyway

theatre of the absurd...
a baby bear chases
hundreds of elk

winter restroom
too many layers of clothes
to sort them out

“snow day” sans snow
no complaints about
the forecast

almost seventy
deciding to throw away
my kids' artwork

old diary—
reading it with a smile
and a blush

pandemic boredom
watching daredevil goats
climb a dam

pandemic year
shaving cream lasts
much longer

reaching 65—
he begins to wear
two face masks

take me home, country road...
the singer looks
able-bodied

Haiku — Stella Cunningham

Brown toad hops along
 Snapping flies, stirring the dust
Finds a leaf, crawls beneath

Grey bird lands in pool
 Flapping wings, splashing water
Lifts wings for cool breeze

Toads, birds, all creatures
 It's summer in the meadow
All's right with the world

Birds wake me at dawn
 all day they eat, fly, sing, bathe
then nest for the night

Tiny hummingbirds
 drop and hover, feed at dusk
wings whirring softly

Bats fly in the night
 swooping snapping up small gnats
swooshing through dark skies

Five Cherita Poems — John J. Han, On the Edge

ancient oak tree
still strong
and sturdy

amid snow

a grandma's cracked hands
slop the hogs

*

pandemic summer

visitors flock to
the Lake of the Ozarks

from north,
south, east,
and west

*

country rodeo

a red-nosed bullfighter
takes the field
wearing

a female costume
kids go wild

*

out and back

a long, long trail
from Texas

where cowboy statues
stand tall
at sunset

*

the winding path
of a stream

the contours

of fiddle sound
from
the mountaintop

In the City of Brotherly Love – Todd Sukany

“Nor did they repent” Rev 9:21

I walk your streets today,
looking into businesses,
emptied.

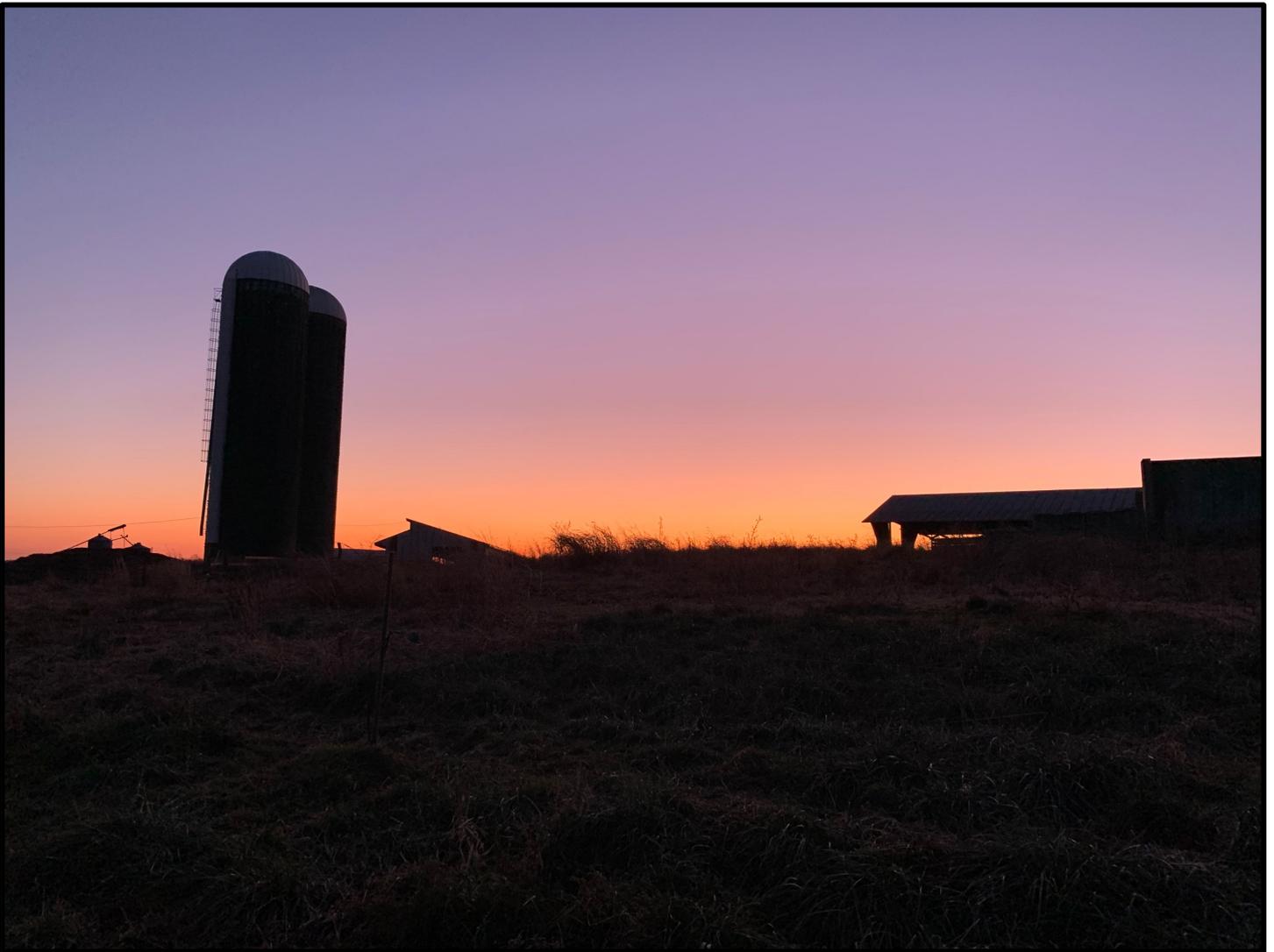
Across the lane,
a four-wheeled street sweeper
sucks glass into its craw.

To my left, a plywood canvas
bares a rattle-can’s lettering
“. . . been looted already.”

Invitation – Marie Asner

Each season invites a peaceful bliss
Into hearts that hope one finally says,
“Enter and find a special kiss
Inside this place with moonlit rays
Oh, stay no more in hours, but days.”

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 some challenges to our members. We then posted the poems of those who participated on our two social media sites (Facebook, and Instagram). The challenges went as follows:

Week 04/11-04/17—Write about how writing poetry has impacted your life OR Write about when you first were either introduced to poetry or when you start writing it.

Week 04/18-04/24—Write a reverse poem about anything you want OR an acrostic about your favorite place to write.

Week 04/25-04/30—Write a few sentences to a paragraph of your positive experience with the Missouri State Poetry Society and/or the Spare Mule.

WEEK 04/11-04/17

I began writing poetry when I was twelve years old. My mother wrote poetry occasionally, and her topics were seasons of the year or flowers or friendship. When she was in high school, about 1926, in an English class, the teacher started a poetry club that met for one year. From then, my mother began writing poetry, but only for herself. When I was a sophomore, my parents transferred me from a small high school to a large one in preparation for college. The new high school had a yearly chapbook published by students and consisting of short stories and poems. My friend was the editor and selected my items. We ended up at the same college, where she was editor of the school newspaper for three years and I was a weekly columnist for three years. During this time, I submitted a few poems that were published in the paper and that started me writing poetry on a semi-regular basis and submitting to publications. The first book of poems I read was by Edna St. Vincent Millay. My friend's motto was "Nothing ventured, nothing gained," and that is my motto in writing, also.

Marie Asner

I wrote a couple of poems in high school as part of an English assignment. One was good enough to be posted on the bulletin board along with those of other students. One might think that this would have inspired me to write more poetry. It didn't. Years later, after I retired from my second career, I needed to have a hobby to keep me busy. That was my inspiration to write poetry along with some prodding from my wife Marie. So, at the age of 78, I began to write poetry.

I am not as productive at writing poetry as Marie is, but I generate two or three a month. An idea for a poem usually hits me in the middle of the night, and I have to wake up and jot notes so that I won't forget some of the phrasing by morning. A few of my poems have been recognized by MSPS in contests over the past few years, mostly in the Honorable Mention section. The Merry Bombadils have also been an encouraging to me in my pursuits.

I am basically a rhymers, and my poetry is mostly whimsical. I occasionally write on more serious topics. From time to time The Merry Bombadils suggest topics or styles of poetry to try out. This has been very challenging, but it gets me started when I need a little push.

Harold Asner

Working in the Yard

I don't find poems under rocks or porches.
They don't float down from the heavenlies
or bob in some mystical swamp filled
with exotic feathers, carnivores, and dense fog.
They are not apples
hanging from limbs in some long-forgotten garden,
waiting a sudden snatch. They are more like
digging a crooked ditch the length of a sidewalk
only to discover weeds have covered the plumb line.

Todd Sukany

WEEK 04/18-04/24

April is a month for rhyming
Poems read with careful timing
Rich free verse of scenes amazing
Idylls with sheep in meadows grazing
Lovely odes our heroes praising

Harold Asner

The Poet

saying what you want, what you desire to say...
freedom and my gift to you, the reader,

take my hand and I will bring to you
a bouquet of memory,

find the poem, it's there, just waiting,
spaces between nouns, vowels....
consonants, have special relevance
what you didn't write, is what lingers...

Marie Asner

Snapping Peas

She snapped peas
all summer until sundown
when wind sang through the oaks
hoping he would return--
yellow ribbon, and all.
She loved him always,
yellow ribbon, and all.
Hoping he would return
when wind sang through the oaks,
all summer until sundown
she snapped peas.

Carol Louise Moon

WEEK 04/25-04/30

The Missouri State Poetry Society and our local chapter, The Lebanon Poets Society, have been fundamental to my growth and development—not only as a poet and writer, but as a human being. I have so many memories, starting with crying every time I read my poetry out loud to getting to present my Mobius strip poems at a state convention. In between there, we shared motel rooms, poems were written to welcome my second baby (who's now 20!!!), and so many special people entered my life. I look forward to what lies ahead with this group.

Vicki Dawn Arnett

About 15 years ago I decided to follow the foot steps of my Great Grandfather who was a minister of the gospel and a POET. He left behind his poetry, and I also inherited his prayer cards which he kept in a recipe box. I know he prayed for all of us kids, including me. Perhaps he knows now that I grew up to be a poet, just like him. Anyway, he was assigned a church in Missouri for awhile, and also in Ohio. So I joined both the Ohio Poetry Assoc. and the MSPS as part of my "journey with my great grandfather." I have really enjoyed being in The Merry Bombadils, a fine and friendly group of poets. We've done several poetry projects together.

Carol Louise Moon

Belonging to MSPS gives me the opportunity to find out about all things poetic in the "profession."
It provides an outlet for my writings as well as impetus to write regularly.

Stella Cunningham

It was my honor and privilege to be one of the founding members of the Missouri State Poetry Society along with Tom Padgett, Bill Kiene and Al Baker and I am grateful to still be alive (at 86) and writing. One reason is because the Muse was with me.

Wanda Sue Parrott