

# SPARE MULE NEWSLETTER



MSPS Newsletter | Vol 27 No. 01 | 01 October 2022

Photographer & Guest Editor: Josey Murphy

## Local Chapters

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- **AUTHOR UNKNOWN**  
Bolivar, Missouri
- **THE MERRY BOMBADILS**  
Cuba, Missouri
- **LEBANON POETS' SOCIETY**  
Lebanon, Missouri
- **ON THE EDGE**  
De Soto, Missouri

Come read our newsletter to learn what exciting things are happening in the Missouri State Poetry Society!

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# President's Corner

*From the President's Desk:*

I have gotten away from writing this summer. So many activities: two trips to Ohio, one to the National Federation of State Poets Societies, and one to see the Air Force Museum in Dayton.

Kiddos are back to school, into a routine. What about you and me? I need to get back into the routine of reading and writing poetry. Savor the colors, smells and tastes of Fall. And then write about it.

Regards,

Nancy

# Editor's Column

Dear MSPS Poets,

Hello, everyone! I'm Josey Murphy, an English major at Southwest Baptist University, and before 2021, I had never considered poetry as a potential part of my life. I've been writing consistently since the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, but only short stories. However, one day, I stumbled upon Todd Sukany's poetry workshop on campus, and I discovered a whole new world of creativity. I began working on poetry seriously for the first time and sharing it with other creators. Two years later, I'm now a member of Author Unknown and MSPS – *and* your guest editor!

In Author Unknown, I've had the opportunity to create many poems, including "Missing in the Maize," which won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in SBU's 2021 Writing Contest. Although my time spent with poetry is still in its infancy, I'm excited to continue exploring it.

Even more so than writing poetry, I enjoy reading poetry, and my internship with MSPS has allowed me to do just that. By reading the poetry of local artists and fledging poets, I can see the full scope of the genre and its many forms and uses.

What I especially like about poetry is its capacity to hold hidden meanings. I've always been fascinated with secret messages. Did you know that, if you write in lemon juice and then hold the paper next to a hot lightbulb, your formerly invisible words will appear? What a trick! Hidden messages are thrilling to write *and* to find – which is why I want to make it a **challenge**.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to write an acrostic poem. To make an acrostic poem, all you must do is spell out a word or phrase with the first (or the first AND last) letters of each line of your poem. A wonderful example of an acrostic poem already lies within this newsletter!

Along with my challenge, you'll have more prompts to respond to very soon. This year, October 6<sup>th</sup> is National Poetry Day, and to celebrate, we will be hosting a social media blitz on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter until the end of the month. Please, stay connected with us to view the prompts and participate!

I'm delighted to be a part of MSPS and delve even deeper into the world of poetry with all of you. Thank you for allowing me to be your editor.

With blessings,

Josey Murphy

# **MSPS Contest & Convention**



# Summer/Fall Contest 2022

**\*\*DEADLINE EXTENDED\*\***

**Deadline:** Postmarked 15 October 2022

**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, seasonal 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.

**Mailing Address** *(for poems and fees):*

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 December 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.

*This information comes from the Summer Contest page on the MSPS website at:  
<http://mostatepoetry.com/summer.html>.*

# MSPS Convention

The Annual MSPS Convention met in Lebanon, MO, on Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. At the meeting on Friday, **Miho Nonaka** acted as the keynote speaker, and she gave a craft lecture the following morning.



**Miho Nonaka** is a bilingual poet and translator. She recently published a poetry collection, *The Museum of Small Bones*, in 2020. While she is an Associate Professor of English at Wheaton College, she is also a native of Tokyo, Japan. Her work has appeared in various publications, such as *Religion & Literature*, *The Southern Review*, *The Christian Century*, *Kenyon Review*, *The Missouri Review*, and Cambridge University Press. Nonaka's creative works often have to do with being in-between, exploring issues of translatability, home, dream, and language. Beyond poetry, Nonaka is interested in the lyric essay, memoir, Japanese literature, surrealism, and modern European literature.

# Chapter Updates



## **The Merry Bombadils**

The Merry Bombadils are happily writing Triolets and Rondelets in a Round Robin that will continue until the end of the year. Pat Laster will compile a chapbook of poems by the poets who are contributing. They are Marie Asner, Pat Laster, Teresa Klepac, Carol Louise Moon, and our newest member, Lydia Cheatham. Each poet sends triolets or rondelets for critique by those participating through USPS. This is the third year for our annual project. We would also like to introduce our new Merry Bombadil member, Lydia Cheatham.

## **On the Edge**

*"On The Edge Report"*

We meet and share  
discuss woes and cares  
review our verses  
hopefully to be  
more terse  
and definitely  
not worse

Our meetings are fun  
and before we know it  
done

## **Author Unknown**

Having returned from summer break, Author Unknown is currently focusing on the different genres of poetry – lyric, narrative, and dramatic. We have already challenged ourselves to write narrative and dramatic poems with diverse results, both in topic and in length.

# Member Updates & Kudos



Merry Bombadil member **Harold Asner** is busy this autumn as a volunteer math tutor at a local community college.

For the summer of 2022, **Marie Asner** has had two haiku published in the Charlotte Digregorio Blog Spot, one poem published in the anthology *75*, and two poems in the upcoming anthology *Distilled Lives*. Marie was asked to be a guest poet as part of a Zoom Poetry Reading from the Kentucky State Poetry Society.

**Lydia Cheatham** writes prose, poetry, and plays. A few pieces have received varying degrees of wins in local contests. She is rediscovering her passion for poetry after working on short stories and other projects. She lives in Benton, Arkansas with her cat, Luna Cuddlebuckets. She is a member of a writers' group, W to the 4, as well as the Writers Colony at Dairy Hollow, Poets Roundtable of Arkansas, and historian for Saline County Poets Roundtable of Arkansas.

**Teresa Klepac** is active in a local writers group critiquing and writing weekly for publications and contests. The Columbia Writers Group will celebrate a 3-year group anniversary in November 2022. Since joining the group, Teresa has considerably increased her publication acceptances. She is currently working on a fantasy novella, exploring writing various poetry forms, and submitting poetry to contests. She received a 3<sup>rd</sup> Honorable Mention for her poem "Shattered Memories" in the free verse category of the MSPS Summer Contest and 3<sup>rd</sup> place for her poem "The Surge of the Sea," Poet's Choice, Members Only.

**Carol Louise Moon** announced her win in a Poetry Soup Triolet Contest. She placed 2<sup>nd</sup> for the triolet after Thomas Percy's poem "Weep No More, Lady."

**Frank Adams**, a Member at Large, had a chapbook, *Waiting for Sunrise*, published by Between Shadows Press, Denville, New Jersey, on September 1, 2022.

**Pat Laster** has been busy since May 20, 2022. She has:

- Written more than a hundred new works, including weekly newspaper columns.
- Won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Poets Roundtable of Arkansas (PRA)'s June contest and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the September contest.
- Garnered a 2HM and 3HM in the White County Creative Writers recent conference.
- Published over a hundred pieces, including monthly haiku or cinquain calendars.
- Received 3<sup>rd</sup> place in MSPS' Summer Contest for Rhymed or Blank Verse and 1<sup>st</sup> place for the MSPS Members Only, Poet's Choice Category.

**John Crawford** has received several honors since our last edition. In June, he placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Naomi Cherkofsky Memorial Contest put on by the Massachusetts State Poetry Society; he also received an Honorable Mention from the Arkansas Writers Conference and was inducted into their Hall of Fame. In July, he received 1<sup>st</sup> place in Arizona State Poetry Society's Member Contest. Two of his poems were published in the Mississippi Poetry Society Anthology in August, and he received an honorable mention in *Ouachita Life's* August Haiku Contest in Arkansas.

**John J. Han's** latest book is titled *The Wind-Soaked Bamboo: Chinese Poems from Premodern Korea* (Cyberwit, 2022; 144 pages). It is a translation of select Chinese-language poems written by Korean poets from ancient times to the beginning of the 20th century. In July 2022, Han led a haiku workshop at Webster Hills United Methodist Church and gave a poetry reading at Webster Arts, Webster Groves, Missouri.

We were saddened to learn that one of our Merry Bombadils, **Freda Baker Nichols**, passed away peacefully on February 26, 2022. Freda wrote a blog called *That Banner Mountain Girl*, and she published frequently, including two children's books, *Little Bug Eyes* and *Badfellow the Bull*, a poetry chapbook, *Tigers and Morning Glories*, and a mainstream novel, *Call of the Cadron*.

# Poetry Submissions



## Education through Life — John W. Crawford

One need not stop in learning facts of life  
When high school ends with twelve years spent in time.  
The mind can outlast loads and loads of strife  
Though ups and downs may seem to be the prime.

Not even when one comes to college end  
Is he or she then forced to close the mind.  
Inquiring folk can use spare time to send  
In searching for the facts they want to find.

Like Edison, who spent such time in thought  
And got sent home for caring none for book --  
Just look what his great mind in time did wrought.  
His wall had no degree for those who look.

The unicorn may never e'er be found,  
But facts within the search are ever sound.

## All In The Wrist — Marie Asner

Grandma walked to church each Sunday morning,  
carefully placing the rubber tip of her cane  
exactly in the center of the sidewalk,  
while an ivory handle moved  
easily with her wrist.

When I stepped next to her, I slowed my pace,  
helping her up and down uneven curbs.  
Inside the church, the cane was always  
by her side and I wondered  
if God had walked with a cane.  
It reminded me to pay attention,  
sit up straight and sing loudly.

I still do, even though Grandma  
is no longer here. However, I can ask  
how Death found a place  
to lay his bony hand,  
with a cane whistling past his skull  
from a strong wrist  
that was not ready to depart.

## Job Market — Marie Asner

Need a lawn man.  
Much rain and now grass is so high.  
Need a lawn man.  
Got a number, his name is Dan.  
To give a quote, he drives by – sigh,  
now call zoo, rent goat with name “Rye.”  
Don’t need lawn man.

## Day After Day — Marie Asner

Live with the rust.  
Day in and day out with no end.  
Live with the rust.  
Once had it all, now have no trust.  
Life can be straight, or it can bend  
into areas you can’t mend.  
Live with the rust...

## Ukraine — Marie Asner

Good days were here.  
You tell the child by your side.  
Good days were here.  
Button your coat and have no fear,  
join neighbors and follow the guide.  
For now, there is a place to hide.  
Good days were here.

According to Robert Lee Brewer from *Writer’s Digest*\*, a “**rondelet**” is a “French form with rhymes and refrains” that has:

- seven lines;
- a refrain in lines 1, 3, and 7;
- refrain lines with 4 syllables, while other lines have 8 syllables;
- and a rhyme scheme of *AbAabbA*.

\*<https://www.writersdigest.com/write-better-poetry/rondelet-poetic-forms>

## Reach for Hope — Carol Louise Moon

Today's a harsh and windy storm.  
The birds cry out, sound the alarm.  
Dead branches fill the roads around  
as dark, ominous clouds abound.

No morning moon, no sleep, no sun—  
I fear the storm has just begun.  
Above the pines the gathering gloom  
has pressed me in my house and room.

I'll not despair nor give in to  
the fear these trying times accrue.  
I'll reach for hope of better days  
to move us on, past this malaise.

*(Posted to PoetrySoup, 2020)*

## Storm Imaginings — Carol Louise Moon

Tonight as I harken  
to dogs that are barkin'  
the storm soaks the bark  
of the trees turning dark.

Bedroom window shaking;  
I fear for its breaking.  
I see through the window  
the leaves are aglow.

The wind is so growling;  
my old dogs are howling.  
As green moon is shining  
my old heart is pining.

My room is now shifting.  
Jagged light now sifting.  
Two stark eyes (a groove)  
in my painting now move.

## Witness to the Light — Todd Sukany

*"... and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."  
-- Luke 1:15*

Like an acorn cracking  
the surface of the earth in spring, John,  
so named by the angel before conception,  
could have been caught in a termination  
of convenience in the twenty-first century.

## Out of This World — Todd Sukany

*"Where I go, you cannot come."*

*-- John 8:21*

Sometimes saying "goodbye" does not mean "I will see you later." As the earth presented itself as a perfect rectangle under the shade-

offering tent, you were brought there without a will. Words were read, kerchiefs passed, and memories of your goodness voiced.

Your favorite flower, or so we were told, followed you down into waiting darkness. Later, Ed ran the backhoe, patted the soil

to match that surrounding landscape, and turned to leave. We might see him again, but long after the grass grows back.

## In This Place — Frank Adams

I am a stranger here  
an alien  
walking among strangers.  
I do not understand the language  
or the customs  
all I see and hear is foreign to me.  
I am aware I must be careful  
must appear normal  
to pass as one of them  
not as myself  
though I am unsure of who or what I am.  
I must question each word I say  
monitor what I wear  
how I move  
where I go.  
I have no idea  
how I came to be here  
who brought me here  
when it happened  
or where I come from.  
I wonder  
if my ignorance  
is by design  
or am I suffering a punishment  
for an event I cannot recall.  
I rely on the voice in my head  
trust its judgement  
though, I wonder if it's my voice I hear  
or the voice of someone, or some thing  
whispering to me  
observing me from within.  
Am I a robot?  
Am I real?  
Whatever I may be  
there is no escape from this place.  
My greatest fear  
is that I will not know my purpose  
that I will be found out  
imprisoned  
tortured  
killed  
dissected and discarded  
because that is what they do to aliens in this place.  
That is what they do to strangers.

## Interesting to Get Sick — John J. Han

After getting diagnosed with stage-3 cancer in my late thirties, I observed various reactions to the news. Not knowing what to say, some people avoided me. Others thought I would die, already counting me out. Still others asked me how I had discovered my cancer, saying that their symptoms were akin to mine. Some religious people admonished me not to fear death. Even the chaplain, who came to see me after my surgery, offered cursory words of comfort and moved on. Almost thirty years later, I no longer feel attached to this earthy life. At the time of the diagnosis, however, I wanted to live at least a few more years.

autumn solitude  
cooking noodles  
for one

According to Robert Lee Brewer from *Writer's Digest*\*, a “**haibun**” is “the combination of two poems: a prose poem and haiku,” with the prose “usually describing a scene or moment in an objective manner.”

\*<https://www.writersdigest.com/write-better-poetry/haibun-poems-poetic-form>

## Blessed Are The Compassionate — John J. Han

In Tolstoy's widely anthologized short novel *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886), the main character—a judge—dies in his forties. His colleagues find it inconvenient to attend the funeral and wonder how his death will lead to their career advancements. On her part, the widow is interested in maximizing the pension she will inherit rather than mourning her husband's passing. Other characters in the story are portrayed as shallow and selfish as well. Tolstoy is a realist novelist who does not embellish the reality as romanticists do. However, one minor character, Gerasim, stands out with his compassion. A poor peasant, he comforts and looks after Ivan as he lies on his bed of suffering. When the main character asks him why he is so kind to him, Gerasim answers that it is a human duty to be so. Gerasim is the ideal character in Tolstoy's humanist world, and one would be fortunate to have someone like him on the way to the twilight.

funeral over  
family members  
cast lots

## Once Upon a Time — John J. Han

Pearl Spurlock was a tour guide in the Branson area for decades. Her book *Over the Old Ozark Trails in the Shepherd of the Hills Country* (1936), likely based on her scripts for the clients, include many hillbilly gags. In one episode, a mountain man saw a mirror for the first time. After buying one, he looked in it. Voila, his father was there! The man hid the mirror in a secret place within the house, seeing his father several times a day. When the hillbilly was not at home, his wife discovered the hidden mirror. When she held it up, she found an old woman staring back at her. Then, confirming his infidelity with the “old woman” in the mirror, she seethed with jealousy.

married four decades  
mastering the art  
of self-talk

## BEAUTIFUL FALL — Janice Canerdy

**B**lithesome autumn comes on cue  
**E**ach year to chase the heat away.  
**A**s summer starts to fade from view,  
**U**nique fall will seize the day.  
**T**urning leaves to brown and gold  
**I**s one of autumn's specialties.  
**F**eel the air grow crisp and bold!  
**U**tmost seasonal traits please  
**L**overs of how flannel feels,  
**F**rost that glistens, "Trick or Treat!"  
**A**nd families' Thanksgiving meals.  
**L**ate autumn brings December's beat.  
**L**isten! It's carols. Fall is complete!

## Thanksgiving 1999 — Janice Canerdy

Sometimes it's hard to choose one memory to deem the most significant of all. Thanksgiving, though, is different. I find that one by far is sweetest to recall.

Thanksgiving 1999 would be the final holiday we all would share. We feasted, talked, and dozed all afternoon. The next year, there would be one empty chair.

Our dying father wouldn't make it through the holidays. Though life would never be the same, I smile remembering that last Thanksgiving all the family would see.

A Collection of Haiga by Terrie Jacks



verse: Terrie Jacks photo: John J. Han

## Through My Window — Bob Martin

Home alone  
Momma called  
She's running late  
Must not open door  
No matter what  
See the playground  
Swings and slide  
It's getting dark  
See boys from school  
They pick on me  
Yesterday they grabbed my hijab  
Threw it in the trash  
Pushed up against me  
Shouted at me  
Why don't they like me?  
It is almost dark  
Grown men gathering  
Shouting, pointing at my house  
One has a torch  
All seem angry  
Throwing things at the house  
I'm scared  
I wish Momma was here  
Some crossing the street  
One has a stick  
Or a big fire cracker  
He's running up our walk  
I'm so scared  
He's going back to the others  
Everyone is jumping and shouting  
I wish mo



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*JOSEY MURPHY – GUEST EDITOR & PHOTOGRAPHER*

*REBECCA FOLTZ – MSPS LOGO DESIGNER*

*ABIGAIL FORSYTHE – SPARE MULE LOGO DESIGNER*

*<http://www.mostatepoetry.com/>*

