A Message from the ISPS President

As we drift into late summer and all seasonal topics seem to have been exhausted like the last blooms, perhaps it will be time to try some other ideas to fill our poetry journals. As mentioned in past “Messages,” there are many approaches, topics and outcomes that are waiting for us to explore.

Recently, another poet questioned whether it was okay to write poems on political topics, often ones that require closer scrutiny and then take a personal point of view. The history of poetry verifies the embracing of this subject and how, in many cases, it doesn't have to “shout” or de-fame in order to get its messages across. Some pieces by Linda Pastan or Adrienne Rich offer examples. This kind of poetry can also help the writer explore a particular issue and find a venue for objecting to or supporting an idea or event including an array of environmental topics.

Another variation of a past discussion in this forum relates to personal heritage. The present United States poet laureate, Juan Felipe Herrera, fills much of his poetry with his historical interest in and personal connection to immigrant life. He spent his youth helping his parents work in other peoples’ farm fields and has drawn from those Chicano experiences. We too can explore our heritage to further interpret how it might directly or subtly influence our mannerisms, thinking and even unexplained proclivities for certain places, music or food. Like writing music, setting our distant past and more recent stories to poetry can provide new insights and encourage possible fresh styles. Miguel de Unamuno said, “From your work you will be able one day to gather yourself.” Stepping out of our usual poetic endeavors by looking to our family background might offer the next personal new horizon.

With our poetry contest postmark deadline of September 10, we have a wonderful opportunity to submit recent and past work for eight categories. Be sure to note the new choices and check the ISPS website for guidelines.

Happy writing, Susan T. Moss
Spotlight on ISPS Poet Thomas Chockley

Before retirement, Tom Chockley made his living as an educator—a high school teacher, guidance counselor, an assistant dean at several community colleges in the Chicago metropolitan area. He also taught in Germany and China. Now, Chockley keeps active traveling to Europe to visit extended family and inventing his apprenticeship as a haiku poet. He lives in Plainfield.

How long you have been writing, Tom, and what inspires your poetry?
I started to write seriously in 2010. Curiosity and the challenge of the haiku form inspire me. I’m a visual thinker by nature, so a lot of my haiku comes from events I’ve seen or emotional images that express inner views.

Where have you published your poetry?
I’ve had haiku published in a couple of print journals, Frogpond and Modern Haiku, and also in online journals such as A Hundred Gourds, UTHS Cattails, Shamrock Haiku Journal, and World Haiku Review.

What advice can you give poets interested in writing or improving haiku?
Get a good haiku writers’ manual. Read haiku anthologies and poetry journals. Go to TheHaikuFoundation.com, study their essays, and post your haiku on their beginners or advanced forums. Find other haiku poets and get feedback from them on your haiku.

Do you have any advice about how to get published?
For me it’s a matter of dumb luck, what the journal editor reads into or likes in one of my submitted haiku. . .and dumb luck.

In addition to ISPS, what writing groups support your work?
For the last two years I have had the good fortune to work with a small group of Chicago-area haiku poets and to attend Lee Gurga’s Chicago study group. I also correspond with some haiku friends in other states.

Have you developed a habit of writing regularly?
My writing was a bit sporadic; hence, I’m trying to write on a consistent basis. And, I go back to things I wrote a few months before to revise and edit them.

What projects are you working on now?
I work continually on improving my haiku craft skills. I enjoy writing haibun (micro fiction with haiku). I also produce haiga (photo/haiku collages) each week. I would like to produce a chapbook in the next 12 months.

Tell us more about creating haiga.

When I learned about the haiku-related form of haiga, I immediately took to it. I don’t do Asian-style brush painting, but I make haiku-photo collages with the large stock of digital photos from my travels. One concession to the Asian painting tradition is my use of stamps (document seals or “chops” in China). The primary one I use I got in China. It was carved by a student’s grandfather, using an ancient set of seal characters for my name. Over time, I have made other small glyphs that I also add to the haiga.

Haiku and Haibun by Tom Chockley

among redbud petals
da blank piece of paper
haiku-sized
—Bottle Rockets, #27

morning mist...
the pond still reflects last night
—Modern Haiku, 2012, #1

new cover letter
refolding blankets
full of old dreams
—Frogpond, 35.2

falling leaf
I catch her smile
passing me
—Kernels Online, #1

winter fog
the driver ahead on his iPhone
—Shamrock Haiku Journal, #25

blue poppies
the temperature of twilight on Tibetan snow
—Cattails, May 2014

double black moon
a fourth scotch darkens the decree
—A Hundred Gourds, June 2014

tea-red sunset
wind forages among sugar maple leaves
—Cattails, Winter 2015

yin moon
the beauty spot on my shady ego
—Frogpond, 38:2

American Road Songs

I had slipped around the guy blocking the left lane and passed the three trucks in the right lane. Now, good driver that I am, I’m in the right lane again but fast approaching another slower car ahead. I signal to shift left. However, the left-lane blocker has picked up speed, and he’s beside me—exactly beside me. After a bit, I shut off my turn signal and slow to the speed of my friend ahead. I listen to Holly Williams singing her country & western hit, “The Highway.”

country roads
autumn field rows return to mud
—The World Haiku Review; 2014
ISPS New Members / Members' News

GLEN S. BISHOP, JR., of Jonesboro is a Civil War historian and lecturer, an artist and photographer. His paintings have been exhibited in regional and national shows and are in private and public collections. His love of poetry and natural gift for critique brought him to the ISPS Southern Chapter. He hopes his membership will help to "reprime the pump" of writing poetry that was part of his younger days.

THOMAS H. CHOCKLEY of Plainfield is a new at-large member and haiku poet. Read his feature on page 2.

WILLIAM MARR of Downers Grove has recently published his trilingual (Chinese/English/French) poetry anthology, Chicago Serenade, in Paris. The French portions of the anthology were translated by Athanase Vantchev de Thracy, the renowned French poet and president of Poets of the World Movement. Chicago Serenade is a follow-up to Marr’s publications in Paris last year, which included two bilingual (Chinese/French) poetry anthologies, Songs of You and Me and Day Brighter than Day, the latter consisting of Chinese translations of Mr. Thracy’s poems.

MARR has also published several books in Taiwan, including a collection of essays entitled Chicago, the City of Big Shoulders (2014). His Collected Love Poems (Chinese/English) has just been released as an eBook by Chinese Literature, an online publisher based in Shanghai.

MARY REYNOLDS of Northbrook is a new member of the North Suburban Chapter. She is a retiree who taught Latin, English literature and composition, and English as a second language in a north suburban high school for 33 years. After teaching primarily college-prep essay writing, Reynolds is eager to explore the creative power of writing through poetry.

BARBARA SHERMAN of Downers Grove is a new member of the Southwest Suburban Chapter.

Poet Laureate to Visit

Juan Felipe Herrera, who was named the 21st Poet Laureate of the United States in June, plans a free reading in Illinois in October. Herrera, the son of migrant workers in California, is the nation’s first Latino appointed to the position. He will sign books and perform his works at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Museum in Springfield at 6:00 p.m., Oct. 6.

New Board Member, Tom Moran

At their fall meeting, the ISPS board will welcome new member Tom Moran of the West Suburban Chapter. He joins Sheila Kirscher of North Suburban Chapter as the board’s at-large members. Kirscher and historian Carolyn Jevelian, also of North Suburban, have each accepted another term as board members.

On the agenda are proposals for a spring state convention, a 2016 ISPS anthology, the Manningham contest, a possible new chapter, and future poetry readings and poetry/art events.

September 10 Deadline for Expanded ISPS Poetry Contest

The 22nd Annual ISPS Poetry Contest offers eight categories:
1. Any subject, free verse
2. Formal verse, any set form
3. Haiku, traditional or modern
4. "A Happy Memory," free verse
5. "Enjoy Illinois," free verse
6. "Summertime," eteree
7. "Hope," any form
8. "Cup o’ Java," any form

Poems must be original work, unpublished, and cannot have won monetary awards. Poems (except haiku) must be titled, written in English, no longer than 40 lines, and typed in 12- or 14-point in a plain font.

Submit two copies of each poem, with one poem per 8 ½ x 11 page. Include on the first copy your name, address, e-mail, phone number and category in the upper left-hand corner. Second copy should include category only.

ISPS members pay a reduced rate of $8 for up to 8 poems; $1 for each additional poem. Make checks payable to Illinois State Poetry Society and mail submissions with your check to: ISPS Contest, % Judith Tullis, 6455 Big Bear Dr., Indian Head Park, IL 60525.

Check www.illinoispoets.org for full details.
Mark your Poetry Calendar for September/October 2015

- **SEPTEMBER 1**, deadline for submissions to Poets & Patrons 59th Annual Chicagoland Poetry Contest. Send entries and fees to: Barbara Eaton, Contest Chair, 416 Gierz Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515.
- **SEPTEMBER 10**, deadline for submissions to ISPS 22nd Annual Poetry Contest with eight categories. Details on page 3 and at [www.illinoispoets.org](http://www.illinoispoets.org).
- **SEPTEMBER 11**, 8:00 p.m. Sandy Marchetti poetry reading and open-mic at the Art Center, Highland Park.
- **SEPTEMBER 13**, deadline, Masters Poetry Competition, information at [www.mastersanthology.com](http://www.mastersanthology.com).
- **SEPTEMBER 14**, 7:00 p.m., free program by Lee Gurga on basic techniques of haiku with a slide show of contemporary haiga, Lincoln Art Institute in Lincoln.
- **SEPTEMBER 15**, deadline, Arizona State Poetry Society contest; information at [www.azpoetry.webs.com](http://www.azpoetry.webs.com).
- **SEPTEMBER 19**, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Poetry Pentathlon, Book Cellar in Chicago.
- **SEPTEMBER 25**, 12:30 p.m., Brewed Awakening, Westmont, with readings by Susan Moss and Gail Goepfert, followed by open mic.
- **SEPTEMBER 26**, 8:00 p.m., Jan Bottiglieri reading and open mic at Madame Zuzu's, Highland Park.
- **OCTOBER 6**, 6:00 p.m., Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Museum in Springfield, free poetry reading by U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera.
- **OCTOBER 9**, 8:00 p.m., Ellen Savage poetry reading, Art Center, Highland Park.
- **OCTOBER 17**, Reading of Poets & Patrons winning 2016 contest poems at Downers Grove Public Library.
- **OCTOBER 24**, 8:00 p.m., Ruth Goring reading and open mic, Madame Zuzu's, Highland Park.
- **OCTOBER 25**, 12:30 p.m., Brewed Awakening, Westmont.
- **NOVEMBER 1**, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., haiku workshop led by Lee Gurga at Starved Rock State Park, Utica.

Moss and Goepfert to Read at September 27 ISPS Co-sponsored Brewed Awakening

Poets Susan T. Moss and Gail Goepfert will be featured poets at Brewed Awakening, 19 West Quincy, Westmont. Program September 27 begins at 12:30 p.m., with music from 2:00-2:30 p.m. Cover charge of $7.00 includes coffee and a snack. Open mic readings will follow.

**SUSAN T. MOSS** of Evanston has two chapbooks, *In From The Dark* and *Keep Moving 'till the Music Stops*. She is currently serving a third term as ISPS president and is also a member of Poets and Patrons and Poets Club of Chicago. Her work has appeared in journals including *After Hours, Caduceus, and Vermont Literary Review* and has been featured on *Your Daily Poem*. Moss was granted a residency at the Vermont Studio Center and holds a master of arts degree from Middlebury College.

**GAIL GOEPFERT** of Palatine is a poet, amateur photographer, teacher, and an associate editor of *Rhino Poetry*. Her first chapbook, *A Mind on Pain*, was released this year. Goefert’s poetry has appeared in *Ardor, After Hours, Caesura, Crab Orchard Review, Florida English, Jet Fuel Review, Examined Life Journal, Vine Leaves Literary Journal,* and *Room Magazine*. Her poetry has twice been nominated for the Pushcart Prize.
ISPS Online Submissions

The next bimonthly submission period for member poetry on the ISPS website is October 1 through 14. Members may submit one piece of original work to Alan Harris at oasis@alharris.com or by mail to Alan Harris, 543 E. Squirrel Tail Dr., Tucson, AZ 85704. Poetry is viewable by poet, poem title, or submission period at www.illinoispoets.org.

ISPS Membership Form

Complete the information below and send the form with a check for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 annual dues of $20.00 (optional $30.00 for Patron status or $50.00, Benefactor status—your poet/friend (or maybe you) can support poetry in Illinois and receive all these perks:

- Triple membership: the Illinois State Poetry Society PLUS the National Federation of State Poetry Societies PLUS any of the ISPS chapters.
- ISPS bimonthly newsletter plus email notices of poetry events throughout the state.
- NFSPS quarterly publication, Strophes.
- Special submission rates for annual ISPS and NFSPS contests.
- Free admission to ISPS seminars and lectures and all chapter meetings.
- Poetry critiques at chapter meetings across the state, plus availability of online critique groups.
- Bimonthly publication of a poem submitted to the ISPS website.

For your convenience a membership form follows and is also on the website, www.illinoispoets.org. If you are unable to print the form, send your check with your name, address, email address, phone number and voting chapter (Northbrook, Darien, Lisle, Pontiac, Carbondale or At Large).

If you have not submitted a brief bio for the newsletter and website, you are invited to send one with your membership form.

We're Looking for New Members. . .and a Few Renewals

Maybe you know a poet who would be inspired by belonging to ISPS. Or maybe you are a "member" who hasn't sent in your renewal for the 2015-16 year that began July 1. For the small investment of $20—optional $30.00 for Patron status or $50.00, Benefactor status—your poet/friend (or maybe you) can support poetry in Illinois and receive all these perks:

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GIVE A COPY TO A FRIEND!

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MEMBERSHIP:

- Renewal
- New Member
- $20 Regular
- $30 Patron
- $50 Benefactor

VOTING CHAPTER (select one):

- Central, Pontiac
- North Suburban, Northbrook
- Southern, Carbondale
- SW Suburban, Lisle
- West Suburban, Darien
- At-Large

Name__________________________________________________________

Address________________________________________________________

Phone (home or cell)____________________________________________

Email__________________________________________________________

Mail to: Judith Tullis, 6455 Big Bear Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525