Rejections and Obligations

Ted Geisel was walking home, carrying a manuscript that had just been rejected the 27th time, when he bumped into an old acquaintance who that morning had become a children’s book editor at Vanguard. That day, the publisher bought his first “Dr. Seuss” book. Geisel’s eventual 44 books have now sold more than 600 million copies worldwide. The moral of this out-sized story is clear: If you want your poems to be published, don’t be deterred by rejections. . .and watch for those unexpected opportunities to share your poetry.

You might well counter, Why bother? After all, making submissions is tedious and frustrating and there is small chance for poets to find fame or fortune. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser answers that "people who have the ability to write have an obligation to offer something of use to their chosen readers." Have you met your obligation to share your poetry recently? Try our ISPS website submission, June 1–15, for one easy step. –Kathy Cotton, Editor

A Message from the President

It has been a pleasure to participate in or observe many of the April Poetry Month celebrations ISPS, as well as other sources, has been offering. These include reading opportunities, members’ poetry displayed in 16 libraries (see page 4), the Lemont Art Center evening with artists and poets, and the April 28th Poetry Fest at Harold Washington Library in Chicago.

We have a solid, growing society with new ideas currently taking shape. Before noting some of these forthcoming plans, I would like to thank Carolyn Jevelian for all her creative efforts to compile four archival boxes of ISPS history. As historian, she also served on the board and contributed many ideas to help us move in fresh directions. Carolyn has decided to open her position to a new person who is yet to be named. Another thank-you goes to Tom Moran for his hard work as our Manningham contest chairman for two years. This position is another one we need to fill.

In keeping with our efforts to chronicle ISPS history, always in the making, the process of digitally documenting all the accrued data Carolyn compiled has been undertaken by our board member at-large, Frank Hubeny. Plans for accessing and adding to the files will be further explored.

If you haven’t sent in some of your poems for the fourth volume of Distilled Lives, you have until April 30 to join other members in sharing another collection of exciting poetry. This anthology is an opportunity for members to put their poetry into the world, in some cases to be published for the first time.

Another special event will be our third Gala planned for Saturday, Nov. 3. A day starting with continental breakfast will also include programs and buffet lunch at the Park Ridge Country Club. Transportation from the local train station will be available this year. The last event was well attended and offered a variety of interesting presentations, a book giveaway, and an opportunity to meet members from various chapters around the state.

With spring come many changes from barren soil supporting fresh sprouts to exchanging heavier clothes for a lighter wardrobe. In this season of beginnings, what may be useful is a reassessment of how much quiet time we have or desire. It’s often in still moments that a dormant idea can be nurtured and then grow into a new poem about something never explored before. Like the adage “take time to smell the roses,” it might be elucidating to delve into the silence we carry within.

Happy writing, Susan T. Moss
ISPS New Members / Members’ News

15 ISPS MEMBERS have poems included in the newly released Dear Mr. President Anthology of the Journal of Modern Poetry. A copy of the journal will be mailed to the White House.

Jocelyn Ajami, Chicago
Emma Alexandra, Highwood
Candace Armstrong, Murphysboro
Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna
Jennifer Dotson, Highland Park
Sheila Elliott, Oak Park
Jacob Erin-Cilberto, Carbondale
Joe Glaser, Chicago
John J. Gordon, LaGrange
Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs
Bonnie J. Manion, Hoopeston
Wilda W Morris, Bolingbrook
Marjorie Rissman, Highland Park
Curt Vevang, Palatine
Linda Wallin, Palatine


CHARLOTTE DIGREGORIO of Winnetka presents a haiga exhibit, May 1 through July 7, at Moats Gallery, 675 N. North Court, Palatine.

MAUREEN TOLMAN FLANNERY grew up on a sheep and cattle ranch in Wyoming and now lives in Chicago where she is an English teacher, wood-carver and Home Funeral Guide. Among her eight books are: Tunnel into Morning, Destiny Whispers to the Beloved, and Ancestors in the Landscape. Her poems have appeared in multiple journals including Connecticut River Review, North American Review, Xavier Review, Border Senses, Birmingham Poetry Review, Calyx, Pedestal, Poetry East, Atlanta Review, Arroyo, Comstock Review, and Green Hills Literary Lantern. Watch for a spotlight feature on Flannery in our next issue.

MARYDELLE FORTIER of Lisle announces a new poetry chapbook, Moon Fire: Poetry of Skating, to be published this year by Finishing Line Press. Fortier is a former ISPS president.

"POETRY PAIR" JUDY AND MICHAEL GALATI of Lemont were featured poets, reading at the March Brewed Awakening.

JAMES GREEN is a new member of West Suburban Chapter, Darien. He and his wife, Sheryl, divide their time between homes in Tinley Park, IL, and County Clare, Ireland. Read more about Jim in the Spotlight Poet feature on page 3.

SUSAN GUNDLACH of Evanston is a new member of the North Suburban Chapter in Northbrook.

CAROLINE JOHNSON will have a May 19, 2:00–4:00 p.m., book signing for her new poetry collection, The Caregiver, at the Oak Brook Public Library.

IRYNA KLISHCH was born in Nadvirna, Ukraine, but grew up in Glenview, IL. As a Denison University senior, completing a BA in English (Creative Writing), Klishch received the 2018 National Federation of State Poetry Societies Edna Meudt Award for her debut chapbook, A Monster the Size of the Sun. Her work has also appeared in various literary magazines.

WILLIAM MARR of Downers Grove announces his first collection of bilingual poems and paintings, The Art World of William Marr. Visit www.meipian.cn and click on the down arrow (↓) to expand the page.

JOSEPH J. SOLBERG of Hudson is a new patron member of the North Central Chapter at Pontiac. Solberg grew up in Oak Park, a suburb of Chicago, and moved to the Bloomington/Normal area in 1982 to take a job with the State’s Attorney’s office. In 1987, he began a teaching career at Illinois State University, where he worked until 2016. Solberg now teaches at Illinois Wesleyan University. He and his wife, Patty, have five children and seven grandchildren. He enjoys reading and writing poetry and says he looks forward to membership in the Illinois State Poetry Society.

April 30 Deadline for Distilled Lives Anthology Submissions

Submission period for the fourth volume of the ISPS Distilled Lives anthology is Monday, April 30. Poets with current (2017–2018) ISPS membership whose submissions meet all guidelines will have poems on one or two pages of the collection.

Submit up to four pages of your best original poems: one poem or up to five haiku per page. For poems previously published, include publication name.

Email your submissions to isps.submissions@gmail.com, or mail them with your order form and payment to ISPS c/o Judith Tullis, 211 Wildflower Lane, Willow Springs, IL 60525. Submission fee is $6, which includes one copy of the anthology. Order forms are available on our website, illinoispoets.org.
She Tastes the Salt
Lot's wife looked back, and she thereupon turned into a pillar of salt.
Genesis 19:26 (KJV)

Sounds of the city’s buildings collapsing into the hiss of flames, shrieks of panic muted by the blare of alarms echo up the canyon road to Zoar, where Lot and his wife rest, bone-weary from the burden of cooking pots, hastily collected, and the weight of silent regret for kin and a few old neighbors also worthy,
left behind without any warning or good-bye. She remembers the goat-hair dolls she made for her daughters, now grown and who soon will carry burdens of their own, and the table she did not finish setting for dinner, fresh peeled vegetables, still fragrant, also left behind, the robe set aside for mending a week ago, the stoop she meant to sweep the day before two visitors came, the day before she overheard them warn her husband not to look back when leaving, advice she thought was strange.
Lot surveys the site where they will make camp for the night, tugs at the sides of the hood he has pulled over his head extending the sides as blinders, arranges blankets on the leeward side of a boulder, dusts away ashes falling like fine dry snow, then cautions again his daughters not to look back no matter what.
She listens until silence comes, until a tear moistens her dust encrusted cheek and courses to the corner of her mouth where she tastes the salt.

Published in Time of Singing (2006) also in Stations of the Cross (2008)
Surrealist Poetry Challenge: Break from Traditional Thoughts

For the ISPS 2017 Poetry Contest, Pam Larson sponsored a new category, surrealist poetry. To engage the subconscious and free the imagination, surrealist poets utilize techniques such as dreams, automatic writing, incongruous juxtaposition, cut-ups (rearranging words cut from printed text), palindromes (lines reading the same forwards and backwards), and fantastical imagery.

The first- and second-place winners were ISPS members, Kate Hutchinson and Mary Jo Balistreri. Hutchinson developed her poem, "Fever," from a workshop exercise, where ten unusual words were assigned, along with the topic of cooking/food. She says, "The word 'unmoored' brought to mind a ship in a storm and the [incongruous juxtaposition] poem took off from there."

We challenge you to unleash the power of your unconscious thought: write a surrealist poem.

FEVER
Unmoored, marooned, the ship lurched and we clutched the railing, momentarily forestalled in our desperate quest to find the source of the smell—glimmering onions and mushrooms, voluptuous vegetables—sautéed by some magician below. Three days after escaping brutal pirates, we few survivors, slowly starving, awakened dreaming about home and sun and the great periwinkle sky barely visible through louvered windows in the stifling cabin where we had found meager refuge. Then that savory incense pinched us, reeled us in—hypnotized, unbearded and naked with hope. Whispering prayers, we made the descent, deep into the marrow of the iron beast, where at last we discovered great fires popping with the brilliantine slick of olive oil. Outlined by the blaze in the blackness was a taut, tattooed chef, preening like some La Scala diva and brandishing machetes like ginsu knives, his wry smile daring us to step forward and eat . . . or be eaten.

Kathryn (Kate) Hutchinson
1st Place Winner

ISPS and Brewed Awakening to Sponsor 12th Anniversary Open Mic and Two ISPS Poets

Last Sunday readings are held from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. at Brewed Awakening, 19 West Quincy, Westmont. Cover charge of $10 entitles attendees to a beverage and snack.

SUNDAY, MAY 27
The 12th anniversary of ISPS/Brewed Awakening monthly readings will be celebrated with an open mic contest session. Prizes will be awarded for the best poem in each of the following categories:
- Mothers (or a mother)
- Humorous spring poem
- Spring nature poem
- Memorial Day poem
- Best recitation of a memorized poem of your own

SUNDAY, JUNE 30
Two ISPS members, Caroline Johnson and Gail Goepfert, will be featured readers at the June Brewed Awakening.

CAROLINE JOHNSON of Willow Springs is the author of two poetry chapbooks, Where the Street Ends and My Mother’s Artwork, and has more than 100 poems in print. A nominee for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, she has won numerous state and national poetry awards, including the 2012 Chicago Tribune’s Printers Row Poetry Contest. Her poetry or short stories have appeared in Lunch Ticket, Rambunctious Review, Origins Journal, The Quotable, Encore, and many other journals. She served as president of Poets and Patrons of Chicago for four years and leads poetry workshops for veterans and others in the Chicago area. An English teacher for 20 years, she now works as a community college academic advisor. Her first full-length collection of poems, The Caregiver, was inspired by years of family caregiving and is now available from Holy Cow! Press. One of her favorite activities in the past was watching James Bond movies with her father.


ISPS Membership Renewals
Due by June 30

To continue all the benefits of belonging to a great group of poets and poetry supporters, don’t let your ISPS membership lapse. For the annual small investment of $20 (optional $30.00 for Patron status or $50.00, Benefactor status), your renewal dues support poetry in Illinois and offer you all these perks:
- ISPS bimonthly newsletter plus email notices of poetry events.
- NFSPS quarterly Strophes newsletter.
- Special submission rates for annual ISPS and NFSPS contests.
- Free admission to ISPS seminars and lectures and poetry.

A copy of the membership form is on page 6.
ISPS Joins the World’s Largest Literary Celebration: National Poetry Month

An annual Poetry Month project for ISPS is displaying members’ poetry at area libraries. This year we had 16 exhibits:

- Aurora Eola Road Branch
- Aurora Santori Library
- Aurora West Branch
- Bloomington Library
- Carbondale Public Library
- Evanston, North Branch
- Glencoe Library
- Gurnee Warren Newport
- Highland Park Library
- Hinsdale Library
- Indian Prairie, Darien
- Lake Forest Library
- Northbrook Library
- Pontiac Library
- Northfield Library
- Wilmette Library

Our poets also participated in the Spark 3 ekphrastic event reception at Lemont, and poetry readings at Evanston North Branch Public Library and other venues throughout the state.
Deadlines & Events: Mark Your Poetry Calendar

- **APRIL 30**, deadline for members' submissions for Volume 4 of the *Distilled Lives* anthology.
- **MAY 1–JULY 7**, Charlotte Digregorio's haiga exhibit at Moats Gallery, 675 N. North Court, Palatine.
- **MAY 12**, ISPS board meeting.
- **MAY 12**, 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Gail Borden Library, Elgin and **MAY 19**, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m., Blackard Skatepark, Batavia: Fox River Spring Cleanings and Celebrations, with community celebrations that will include poems, stories, and music.
- **MAY 15**, 10:00–12:00 p.m., Watercolor with Words, Winnetka Women's Exchange. 620 Lincoln Ave., Winnetka.
- **MAY 19**, 2:00–4:00 p.m., Caroline Johnson's book signing for *The Caregiver*, at the Oak Brook Public Library, 600 Oak Brook Road.
- **MAY 27**, 12:30–2:00 p.m. Brewed Awakening, 19 West Quincy, Westmont.
- **MAY 31–June 3**, The Columbine Poets of Colorado host the NFSPS convention in Denver, featuring speakers, workshops, readings, and contest winners at the Denver Renaissance Hotel at Stapleton. For reservation information, see columbinepoetsofcolorado.com.
- **JUNE 1–14**, submission period for our website, illinoispoets.org.
- **JUNE 2**, 4:30–6:30 p.m., Poetry reading at Cultivate Urban Rainforest & Gallery, 704 Main Street, Evanston. Readers include ISPS member Mau- reen Flannery.
- **JUNE 17**, submission deadline for Gwendolyn Brooks Youth Poetry Awards (GBYPA) contest for Illinois students grades K through 12, with prizes and an awards ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 25, at the Poetry Foundation in Chicago. Details at ilhumanities.org/poetry.
- **JUNE 30**, 12:30–2:00 p.m., Brewed Awakening, 19 West Quincy, Westmont.
- **SEPTEMBER 1**, deadlines for Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest and the Poets & Patrons Annual Chicagoland Poetry Contest. Send submissions to Barbara Eaton, P.O. Box 936, Downers Grove.

ISPS Membership Application


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

**VOTING CHAPTER** (check one)

- **Central, Champaign**
- **North Central, Pontiac**
- **North Suburban, Northbrook**
- **Southern, Carbondale**
- **Southwest Suburban, Lisle**
- **West Suburban, Darien**
- **Haiku, Northbrook**
- **At-Large**

**Name**

Address

Phone (home or cell)

Email

Mail to Judith Tullis, 211 Wildflower Lane, Willow Springs, IL 60525