

2018, ISSUE 3

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Also available on our website
illinoispoets.org/news

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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, Hoopston
 Wilda W Morris, Bolingbrook
 Marjorie Rissman, Highland Park
 Curt Vevang, Palatine
 Linda Wallin, Palatine



MARY JO BALISTRERI of Waukesha, WI, has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses, 43rd Edition, for her poem "Winter Sunset, Naples, Florida" from Chicago Poetry Press' publication, *The Poetry Writer's Guide to the Galaxy*, Journal of Modern Poetry 20.



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.



MARDELLE 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 Care-giver*, 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. ✍



Poet Jim Green in County Clare, Ireland

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)

Spotlight on Poet Jim Green

Jim Green has worked as a naval officer, deputy sheriff, high school English teacher, professor of education, and administrator in public schools and universities. Recipient of two Fulbright grants, he has served as a visiting scholar at the University of Limerick in Ireland and the National Chung Cheng University in Taiwan. In addition to academic publications, including three books, Green is the author of the award-winning sonnet series, *Stations of the Cross*, and his poetry has appeared in literary magazines in England, Ireland, and the USA. Green holds BA and MS degrees in English and education, a PhD in education, and an MFA in creative writing.

Tell us how you began writing poetry.

Being raised on a farm, I was surrounded by nature—the rhythm of seasons, the cycle of life, the raw physical sensation of it all—as well as ample time and space for solitude. Also, I was the beneficiary of teachers whose own love of poetry was contagious. Therein might be the origin of my creative process: paying close attention to nature in all its forms, reflection, and experiencing great literature.

What most inspires your writing?

More than anything else, other poets inspire me to write poetry. While life experiences give me the grist for my poems, it is reading and listening to other poets that gives me the courage to probe my experience and attempt to express what is only on the verge of language. It is as if I say to myself, “If they are brave enough to risk it, why shouldn’t I?”

Who are some of your favorite poets?

Oh, there are too many to list. Frost and Roethke helped me appreciate poetry as a way of exploring the interior self. Of the poets I keep returning to, Dickinson, Hopkins, and Wordsworth (his later work) hold a special place. Among today’s, I find that Mark Doty and Mary Oliver have much to teach me.

Recommend to our readers a few books about the craft of poetry.

Some favorites are David Lehman’s annual *The Best American Poetry*, a reliable one-stop source for keeping up with trends; books on craft by Mary Oliver; Edward Hirsch’s books on reading/writing poetry; and *Poets Teaching Poets*, edited by Gregory Orr and Ellen Voigt.

Tell us about your experience of poetry in Ireland.

My wife and I divide time between homes in Tinley Park, Illinois, and County Clare, Ireland. I am pleased by the level of interest shown for poetry in Ireland. When I’m there, I will attend readings and read myself as often as possible. Here, poets and poetry enthusiasts are becoming a rarified society. But in Ireland, a poetry reading will draw a much more diverse crowd. Once I read in a pub in Limerick and the house was full—not because I was reading, mind you; it is a weekly event that always has a full house, with poets whose day jobs range from farming to factory work to shop keeping.

What advice would you offer poets about improving their skills?

The best way to learn to write is to read a lot of good writing; then, write yourself and seek feedback from other accomplished writers. Workshops and even MFA programs are helpful, but to learn to write, you must write with a readership in mind.

What are you working on now?

I recently completed a set of poems on Rembrandt’s art, titled “The Color of Prayer: Poems on Rembrandt Painting the Bible,” which has been accepted for publication by Shanti Arts. At present I am working on a series that plays off Greek myths; in each poem I am letting the story be the springboard to the poem. ✍

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 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:

- Triple membership: Illinois State Poetry Society PLUS National Federation of State Poetry Societies PLUS any of the ISPS chapters.
- 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 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.



GAIL GOEPFERT of Palatine is a poet, photographer, teacher and an associate editor at RHINO Poetry. Her first chapbook, *A Mind on Pain*, was released in 2015, and

a second book, *Tapping Roots*, will be released in early 2018 by Aldrich Press. Her first full-length book of poems, *Get Up Said the World*, will be published in 2019 by Červená Barva Press. Recent publications include *Kudzu House*, *Rattle*, *Minerva Rising*, *Red Paint Hill* and *Switchgrass Reviews*, and *Beloit Poetry Review*. Read more at her website, gailgoepfert.com.

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
- Northfield Library
- Pontiac 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.



Highland Park Library



Aurora West Library



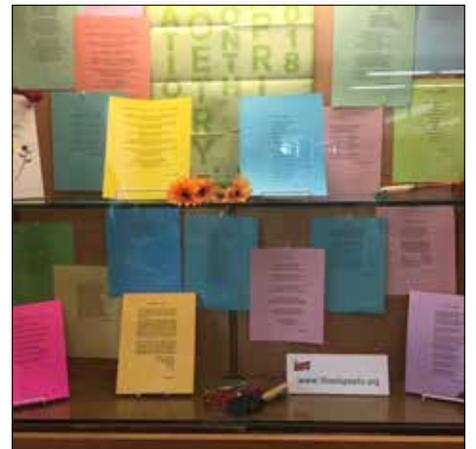
Caroline Johnson, Hinsdale Library



Santori Library, Aurora



Aurora West Library



Wilmette Library



Aurora Eola Branch Library



Candace Armstrong and Carole Bolkinski
Carbondale Library



Aurora Santori Library



Indian Prairie Library, Darien



Chapter Meetings

CENTRAL CHAPTER, CHAMPAIGN

1:30 p.m., Sundays, May 6 & June 3
Champaign Public Library, Room 222
200 W. Green St., Champaign, IL
217-403-2000

Any beverage must be in a cup with a cover.
No snacks in Conference Room. Bring 12
copies of a poem if you wish to have a critique.

HAIKU CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, June 17
Northbrook Public Library, Civic Room
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
847-272-6224

Bring 12 copies of up to 6 haiku for critique, one
haiku that mystifies and one that delights, pub-
lication celebrations, and resources to share.

NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

1:00 p.m., Saturday, June 9
Pontiac Public Library, 815-844-7229
211 E. Madison St., Pontiac, IL

NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, May 20
Northbrook Public Library, 847-272-6224
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
Bring 8-10 copies of poems for critique. No
food/beverages allowed in this room.

SOUTHERN CHAPTER, CARBONDALE

2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, May 6
Carbondale Public Library, 618-457-0354
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL
Bring 10-12 copies of poems for critique.

SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, June 10
Lisle Public Library, 630-971-1675
777 Front St., Lisle, IL (enter lot off Kingston)
Bring your beverage, 20 copies of poems for
critique, and a snack to share.

WEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, DARIEN

1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Saturday, May 5
Indian Prairie Public Library, 630-887-8760
401 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL
Please bring a snack to share plus your own
beverage and 10-12 copies of one or two
poems for critiquing.

ONLINE CRITIQUE GROUPS

To request a copy of the guidelines or to join
an ISPS Email Critique Group, contact coordi-
nator Wilda Morris at wildamorris@ameritech.
net. Put "ISPS Email Critique Group" in the
subject line of the email. ✍

Deadlines & Events: Mark Your Poetry Calendar

- **APRIL 30**, deadline for members' sub-
missions for Volume 4 of the *Dis-
tilled 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., Black-
ard 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., Watercol-
or with Words, Winnetka Women's
Exchange. 620 Lincoln Ave., Win-
netka.
- **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, West-
mont.
- **MAY 31–June 3**. The Columbine Poets
of Colorado host the NFSPS conven-
tion in Denver, featuring speakers,
workshops, readings, and contest
winners at the Denver Renaissance
Hotel at Stapleton. For reservation
information, see columbinepoetsof-
colorado.com.
- **JUNE 1–14**, submission period for
our website, illinoispoets.org.
- **JUNE 2**, 4:30–6:30 p.m., Poetry read-
ing 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 Illi-
nois 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**, dues expire for the 2017–18
ISPS membership year.
- **JUNE 30**, 12:30–2:00 p.m., Brewed Awak-
ening, 19 West Quincy, Westmont.
- **SEPTEMBER 1**, deadlines for Helen
Schaible International Sonnet Con-
test and the Poets & Patrons Annual
Chicagoland Poetry Contest. Send
submissions to Barbara Eaton, P.O.
Box 936, Downers Grove.



ISPS Membership Application

RENEW NOW! 2018–2019 NEW YEAR BEGINS JULY 1.

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

VOTING CHAPTER (check one) Central, Champaign North Central, Pontiac
 North Suburban, Northbrook Southern, Carbondale SW 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