

2016, ISSUE 6
EDITOR, KATHY COTTON

Also available
on our website
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WANTED: PHOTOS, NEWS

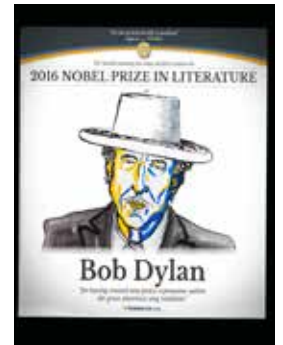
Your editor is looking for fresh ideas for feature stories, interviews and writing prompts, as well as news and photos of chapter meetings and poetry events.

Email photos (jpg or tiff) or an idea or news for consideration to kalcotton@gmail.com. Please send photo files as attachments.

"I'm a poet, I know it, hope I don't blow it."

In October, songwriter Bob Dylan was the surprise 108th winner of the world's most prestigious literary award. For "having created new poetic expressions," Dylan received the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature. He was also a 2008 Pulitzer Prize winner for his "extraordinary poetic power."

Fifty-two years ago a Dylan song proclaimed, "I'm a poet, I know it, hope I don't blow it." As poets, you have unique opportunities afforded by your gifts. You can encourage and challenge, promote and chronicle change, push boundaries, and make a difference in a world that needs all the good thinking and beauty it can get. Don't blow it. -Kathy Cotton, Editor ✍



A Message from the ISPS President

It's the time of year when we feel changes, whether it's in the weather or an awareness that diminishing light marks shorter days and longer nights. Sometimes these shifts kindle wishes to keep the easier lifestyle more warmth offers. They can also influence how people can feel a sense of sadness or other seemingly indecipherable emotions.

People often say to a poet that he or she should write a poem about whatever is concerning them, such as a reoccurring dream or perhaps something that is hidden from consciousness. While the suggestion is meant to be helpful, it isn't always that easy to discover the pervading issue and wrestle it into a meaningful and creative written piece.

The concept of trying to write such a poem has its merits, however. Even the attempt to capture what is really behind a prevailing concern is a therapeutic exercise that can lead to positive results, both internally and on the page. Like any effort to create poetry, the deeper work is in finding the intention behind an idea. One can write about a trip or childhood event, but what further comments can be made evolve from discovering the shock, resentment, disappointment or longing, among other emotions that accompanied the initial situation.

In the "doing" of getting words on a page, the journey begins and can take us to previously unknown places. When deeper insights are mined, the poem has the potential to speak back to us and begin to write itself, so to speak. The aha moment opens doors to revelations that intimately speak first to the poet and then at some other personal level to the reader.

For instance, many poems, such as those of Richard Blanco noted in a previous newsletter, have related to the concept of home, the concrete version of a building and also events that have occurred within those walls or places on a map. Thus, location is the first level of description in the poem, and what happened in that space comes next. However, that alone seems rather simplistic although sometimes entertaining. A deeper question might regard why some poets have been drawn to this topic. In pursuing the answers, they have learned much about what they miss or don't miss in relationship to home—the people who are gone, shared and innocent fun, security and wellbeing, among other things memory brings back in both positive or perhaps negative ways. The range of emotions that accompanies these insights can be better understood with the help of the poems speaking back to them and us in continuing internal conversations and what appears on the page.

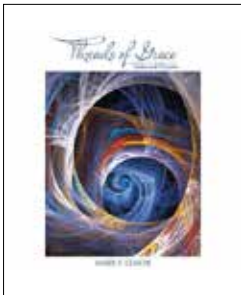
As we near November 6 at 2:00 a.m. CST, we will again be thrust into even earlier darkness, but our poetry can light the way!
Happy writing, Susan T. Moss ✍

ISPS New Members / Members' News



JENENE RAVESLOOT of Chicago announces publication of her new poetry collection, *Sliders*. It will soon be available at Amazon.com.

Congratulations to three ISPS poets who were winners in the 2016 Massachusetts State Poetry Society contests. **WILDA MORRIS** won two firsts and a third place. **GAIL DENHAM** won a first place and two second-place awards. **MARK HUDSON** won a second place.



MARY F. LENOX of Chicago is a new at-large member. Dr. Lenox says she enjoys the daily privilege of writing poems inspired by

nature and events. Her book of poetry, *Threads of Grace: Selected Poems* was completed in 2015. She has traveled widely in the United States, Canada, Europe, Africa, and Brazil. She retired from her academic career in 2009.



MARCIA PRADZINSKI (right) of Skokie was a September featured Brewed Awakening poet, pictured here with poet Christine Swanberg.

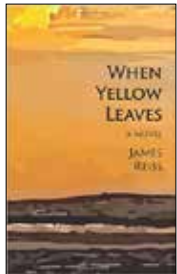
CONRAD SELNICK, Skokie, is a new member of our Haiku Chapter.

GEORGE GEROLIMATOS of Barrington, is a new member of our Haiku Chapter.

MICHAEL AND JUDY GALATI of Lemont, are welcomed back to the Lisle Chapter.



MICHAEL WELCH of Chicago was a featured reader at Brewed Awakening. His chapbook won the 2016 NFSPS Kahn Award.



JIM REISS of Wilmette announces release of his seventh book, *When Yellow Leaves*. To see all of Reiss's books, visit his website, www.jamesreiss.com.

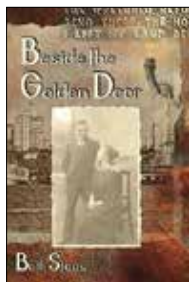
SUSAN AULD of Arlington Heights, was a Brewed Awakening reader. Auld is the facilitator of our Haiku Chapter and a member of the ISPS board.



TOM ROBY IV and JENENE RAVESLOOT, "Chicago's Poetry Power Couple," were inter-

viewed by Jennifer Dotson of Highland Park for the Poetry Today series. See the video feature on highlandpark-poetry.com.

MICHAEL TALAGA, of Elmwood Park is a new member of the Darien Chapter.



BETH STAAS of LaGrange Park was a winner in two categories of the 2016 Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs Fall Rendezvous Poetry Contests. She is the author of "Beside the Golden Door," available on Amazon.com. ✍

Poetry Challenge: Share Your Writing Rituals

Across centuries, poets have been known to have unusual aids to writing, like the following, gleaned from mentalfloss.com. Do you have a unique or helpful writing ritual? Submit a description for our next newsletter (kalcotton@gmail.com).

SAMUEL JOHNSON reportedly drank 25 cups of tea in a single sitting.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, the "Hoosier Poet," would rent a hotel room and strip down to do his writing; being naked kept him from going to the bar.

D. H. LAWRENCE liked to climb mulberry trees in the buff because it tickled his imagination.

EDITH SITWELL was known for lying in an open coffin to prep for writing.

MAYA ANGELOU rented a hometown hotel room by the month as a dedicated place to do her writing.

EDGAR ALLAN POE wrote "Annabel Lee" and "Ulalume" with his beloved cat, Catarina, sitting on his shoulder.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was inspired by setting out on foot at all hours of the day to clear his mind, and even went on a walking tour of France.

AMY LOWELL, a Pulitzer Prize winner, chain-smoked cigars, which she claimed were preferable to cigarettes because they lasted longer and therefore allowed her to focus on writing.

GERTRUDE STEIN wrote on scraps of paper in the quiet of a parked car.

T.S. ELIOT, after the success of *The Waste Land*, started writing as "Captain Eliot" or "The Captain" and was fond of wearing green face powder and lipstick to look like a cadaver.

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER let apples rot under the lid of his writing desk and would lift the lid to let the stench lead him to brilliance. ✍

Spotlight on ISPS Poet Marcia Pradzinski



Marcia Pradzinski, a retired ESL instructor to international teaching assistants, lives in Skokie with her husband. The JoAnne Hirshfield Memorial Contests, Highland Park Poetry competitions, and Journal of Modern Poetry have honored her with awards. Pradzinski, author of the poetry collection, "Left Behind," also writes memoir and fiction.

When did you first begin writing poetry, Marcia?

I started writing poems in high school, where I received encouraging words from an English teacher and a classmate. I published several poems around 1983, but didn't actively submit poems

until 2007, when feedback from Second Saturday Poets of the Northwest Cultural Council bolstered my confidence.

What inspires you to continue writing?

Other poets, both published and unpublished, inspire me. I create some poems by imitating ones I've read. Neophyte painters copy the masters; so, too, novice poets can imitate published ones to get a feel for the art. I also keep a notebook of lines that impress me from published poets so I can use them to compose a cento.

Where can our readers find your poetry?

My poems have appeared in many print journals, in anthologies, and online. My 2016 publications include the *Chronicles of Eve* anthology of Paper Swans Press UK, *Blue Heron Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Haibun Today*, *Olentangy Review* and *East on Central*. I have a poem forthcoming in *Pirene's Fountain*. In 2015, Finishing Line Press published my first chapbook, *Left Behind*.

Are you active in poetry groups or in other ways of supporting poets and the craft?

Poetry groups spur a poet's growth. I attend a weekly group and a monthly one. Without the clear-sighted critiques and support of fellow poets, I don't believe I could've been successful at publishing.

What advice would you offer to aspiring poets?

Read, read, and read some more. Read poets you enjoy and ones that challenge you. Find other poets or a workshop so you can critique and be critiqued. I've learned a lot from reviewing other poets' work.

What favorite poets or poetry books have been important to you?

e.e. cummings first caught my eye because of his playfulness; another influence was Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" because of the imagery and sounds. Other favorites: Ted Kooser, Stuart Dybek, Dorianne Laux, Kay Ryan, Natasha Trethewey, and William Carlos Williams, among others. Texts that have prompted me: *The Poet's Companion* by Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux, *Writing the Life Poetic* by Sage Cohen, *The Practice of Poetry* edited by Robin Behn and Chase Twichell. These books help me get started when I'm stuck.

Do you set aside a regular time or have a regular place for writing?

I write three to four times a week at home when I'm working on a poem. Other times, I set a timer for ten minutes and do a free-write on a prompt or idea I want to explore. Often my writing continues past the ten-minute limit.

What are you working on now?

I'm putting together poems for another chapbook with the working title, "Stalking the Muse." It will include imitations, centos, and other poetry-inspired poems. ✍



Poems by Pradzinski

Cairns in Ellison Bay, Wisconsin

white-gray
faces reach up
in sun
at dusk they nudge
shadow-spirits
that reside here
to begin
their silent steps
through trees
where loons choir
leaves mimic
streams
pines anoint the air
and insects
buzz
to elevate rock-
piles to cathedral status.

—*The Blue Heron Review*, Winter 2016

After Reading "Nantucket" by William Carlos Williams

Rowhouses on the street
brown brick and ocher

framed by oak shutters—
Fragrance of roses

Of dusk—
On the wooden shelf

A toothbrush, its bristles
bent, near it

a gold ring rests

And the stark white bed.

—*Rhino*, 2008

The Room

Where the sun splashes
holes onto your bed

Where the bed holds a jumble
of toys and a box of crayons

Where the crayons lie still without
a hand scribbling lines on paper

Where a folded crane sits crumpled
next to a photo of you

Where you no longer lie
with a batman quilt in sleep

And your sleep does not break open
in the morning light

—*Ephemera* 2012

ISPS Gala at Park Ridge, November 5



Lee Gurga



Mark Dvorak



Joan Colby



Gail Goepfert

The ISPS Gala will feature Lee Gurga speaking on contemporary haiku, musician/story-teller Mark Dvorak's presentation on Illinois poet Carl Sandburg, and a panel discussion on publishing led by Joan Colby, Gail Goepfert and Lee Gurga.

- 9:00–10:00 Check-in at Park Ridge Country Club
Continental breakfast
Book swap set-up
- 10:00–10:15 Welcome by ISPS President Susan Moss
- 10:15–11:15 Contemporary Haiku, Lee Gurga
- 11:30–12:30 Buffet luncheon
- 12:45–1:45 Carl Sandburg, by Mark Dvorak
- 2:00–3:00 Panel discussion on publishing by
Lee Gurga, Joan Colby and Gail Goepfert
- 3:15–4:00 *Distilled Lives* anthology readings
and open mic, as time permits ✍

Find Legitimate Contests, Not Scams

Don't be scammed by poetry contests and disguised vanity publishers that profit with questionable charges and bogus awards. Winning Writers (winningwriters.com) offers a list of contests and services to avoid, and following are some trusted resources for contest information.

NFSPS. Check the list of state links. Many states offer annual contests.

THE WRITE LIFE provides listings of reputable, well-reviewed, free writing contests for poets and other writers.

POETS & WRITERS vets competitions, contests, awards and grants to make sure they're following legitimate practices and policies. It's worth checking out regularly as it features both annual and one-time contests.

CATHY'S COMPS AND CALLS. Writer, poet, and editor Cathy Bryant sources legitimate, free-to-enter writing contests and calls for submission. She releases a new list of contests and calls each month, so check back monthly for new opportunities. ✍

New NFSPS Contest for Performance Poets

NFSPS will add a new big-prize category to its 2017 contests: The BlackBerryPeach Prizes for Poetry: Spoken and Heard. The competition, funded by donations, hopes to attract "everything from slam and spoken word to dramatic renderings of formalist poetry and free verse."

The top three winners will receive cash prizes: first place, \$1,000; second, \$500; and third, \$250; plus publication of performances on YouTube and in a perfect-bound 6" X 9" chapbook marketed on Amazon.com.

Many fine poets are *not* also fine presenters. But, for those whose skills fall in both camps, this new contest is a great opportunity. Submission of audio (not video) files will be accepted on the NFSPS page at Submittable.com. Watch for details in *Strophes* newsletters.

Note: To see a fellow NFSPS member, Rosemerry Trommer, deliver a powerful poetry performance, check YouTube for *The Art of Changing Metaphors* | Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer | TEDxPaonia. ✍

ISPS and NFSPS Anthologies Now Available



Distilled Lives, Volume 3, a collection of ISPS members' poetry, edited by Judith Tullis, will debut at the November 5th Gala at Park Ridge. Members who pre-ordered copies have received them by mail or will pick them up at chapter meetings. The anthology will also be available on Amazon.com for \$12.00.



Encore 2016, the annual NFSPS anthology of prize poems, includes winning poetry by several ISPS members, including David Bond with the top \$1,000 prize. This year, for the first time, NFSPS has made *Encore* available before the traditional attendee's copy is released at the convention (June 29—July 2, 2017, Fort Worth, Texas). See it on Amazon.com with a new price, reduced to \$13. ✍

Holiday Celebration at Brewed Awakening

Poets are invited to bring several winter and/or holiday poems to share at the ISPS co-sponsored Brewed Awakening event Sunday, Nov. 30, 12:30 p.m. Instead of featured poets, open mic readings will celebrate the season as poets "create our own warmth." There will be extra snacks and a few prizes.

Brewed Awakening is located at 19 West Quincy in Westmont, across the street from the train station. The \$10 cover charge includes a beverage and snacks. ✍



Chapter Meetings

CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

1:00 p.m., **Saturday, Dec. 10**
Pontiac Public Library, 815-844-7229
211 E. Madison St., Pontiac, IL

HAIKU CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., **Sunday, Dec. 18**
Northbrook Public Library, Civic Room
847-272-6224
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
Bring 10 copies of 6 haiku for critique.
Guest speaker Lee Gurga.

NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., **Sunday, Nov. 13**
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, Nov. 13**
Carbondale Public Library, 630-986-1976
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL
Bring 12 copies of poems for critique.

SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., **Sunday, Dec. 4**
Lisle Public Library, 630-971-1675
777 Front St., Lisle, IL
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, Nov. 5**
Indian Prairie Public Library, (630) 887-8760
401 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL
Bring your beverage, dish to share and 20
copies of poems for critique.

ONLINE CRITIQUE GROUPS

To request a copy of the guidelines or to
join an ISPS Email Critique Group, contact
coordinator Wilda Morris at wildamorris@
ameritech.net. Put "ISPS Email Critique
Group" in the subject line of the email and
be sure to include your name with your
request. ✍

Mark Your Poetry Calendar

NOV. 2, 5:30 p.m., F.L.O.W. open mic,
Harold Washington Library Center.

NOV. 5, 9:00 a.m., ISPS Gala at Park
Ridge Country Club.

NOV. 7, 4:30 p.m., From Darkness to
Light: poetry reading with Juanita
Hull, Manning, 6 S. Hoyne Avenue,
Chicago.

NOV. 8, 6:00 p.m., Creative Writing &
Poetry Workshop, Chicago Library,
3436 S. King Drive, Chicago.

NOV. 15, deadline, Georgia Poetry Soci-
ety Contest.

NOV. 19, 8:00 p.m., Al DeGenova read-
ing and open mic, Madame ZuZu's,
Highland Park.

NOV. 30, 12:30 p.m., holiday/winter
season poetry readings at Brewed
Awakening in Westmont, \$10 cover.

DEC.1-14, member submission period

for our website, illinoispoets.org.

DEC. 31, Blue Mountain Arts 29th Bi-
annual Poetry Card Contest. Details
at sps.com.

FEB. 28, 2017, deadline, Highland Park
Poetry annual Poetry Challenge: (1)
Pioneers & Prairie, (2) The Secret
Life of Insects & Spiders (3) Episto-
lary or Letter Poems. Guidelines at
highlandparkpoetry.com. ✍

Bards Against Hunger

In 2013, a Long Island, NY, poetry
group that hosts readings and publish-
es local anthologies, initiated a poetry
reading that would gather food for the
hungry around Thanksgiving as a way
for poets to give back to their local
community. Bards Against Hunger
events are now organized in fives
states. For information—and inspira-
tion—read more at bardsagainsthunger.com. ✍

Invite a Fellow Poet to be a Fellow ISPS/NFSPS Member

Share the triple benefit of belonging to the Illinois State Poetry Society PLUS the National Federation of State Poetry Societies PLUS any of the ISPS chapters by encouraging friends to join or giving a membership as a gift.

For the small investment of \$20 (optional \$30.00 for Patron status or \$50.00, Benefactor status), your dues support poetry in Illinois and beyond, through June of 2017.



MEMBERSHIP THROUGH JUNE 30, 2017

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 Haiku, Northbrook At-Large

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (home or cell) _____

Email _____

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