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Poetry Challenge: "Honor the miraculousness of the ordinary"




Sir Andrew Motion, a knighted English poet and decade-long UK Poet Laureate, has a writing tip you might find useful for this year's ISPS Poetry Contest (deadline Nov. 15). In a BBC interview,* he suggests that poets "celebrate the ordinary." Try applying his advice to the Ida Kotyuk Award category for a poem about "any small item we see or use daily." Sir Andrew says:



Honour the miraculousness of the ordinary. What we very badly need to remember is that the things right under our noses are extraordinary, fascinating, irreplaceable, profound and just kind of marvellous. Look at the things in the foreground and relish stuff that can lose its glow by being familiar. In fact, re-estranging ourselves to familiar things seems to be a very important part of what poetry can do.



And, of course, writing about the ordinary isn't limited to a contest category. I challenge you to submit your poem or poetry excerpt about an ordinary item; email to kalcotton@gmail.com. Selected passages will be included in the new year's first issue. —Kathy Cotton, Editor

* Interview by Alison Feeney-Hart, BBC News, bbc.com 




A Message from the ISPS President

The first thing I would like to do is welcome Kathy Robinson who will be the facilitator of a new ISPS chapter starting in Champaign. This is our seventh one, and as always members can attend any or all critique groups. The first meeting will be December 3 at the Champaign Library. The group will meet from 1:30 until 4:00 p.m. Thank you to Kathy for leading this chapter that will gather every month.

Writing poems sometimes includes words, quotes and phrases from other sources. This approach plus many other potential legal issues were addressed recently by Barry Irwin, vice president of Lawyers for the Creative Arts and adjunct professor at Notre Dame Law School. The informative program, held at the Indian Prairie Public Library, spawned many questions and lively discussions about such topics as what content can be copyrighted, how to register a copyright, cases of copyright infringement and legal defenses, and issues of fair use of copyrighted material, among several other topics. Of special interest to poets who are considering self-publishing, Barry described the key provisions of publishing contracts and self-publishing services. For details on the total presentation, go to his website www.irwinip.com/presentations and scroll down the page to "Legal Issues in Poetry."

As leaves begin to turn in my neighborhood and cooler evenings play havoc with porch time, I can feel myself draw a little more inward. Creativity starts to shed summer lethargy and begins to percolate fresh poetic ideas. Maybe it's the crisp air that awakens new energy or seeing things in a different light, but each of these fresh points of view offers further conversations with myself leading to the potential for another poem. It's in the writing and rewriting that we can find voices not heard from before and other insights to ourselves and the world.

Happy writing, Susan T. Moss 

ISPS New Members / Members' News

SHAHEEN ASHRAF-AHMED of Lisle, is a new member of the Southwest Suburban Chapter.



JOSEPH CAREY of Glencoe was a featured poet at the September Brewed Awakening in Westmont. Carey's new collection of travel poems, "Back to the Black Forest:

A Poetic Journey Through Germany," was selected as the first-place winner in the travel category for the 2017 Paris Book Festival.

MIKE KOZUBEK of Chicago is a new member of the Haiku chapter.

KATHY ROBINSON recently returned to poetry after a career built on writing and editing for technical and scientific groups, as well as a national organization of English teachers. Her poems are reveries on community and family life, and gardening in all its many senses. She also is a spatial designer, making beautiful use of interior and

fresh-air "rooms." She is very active as a student and committee member in the University of Illinois branch of the Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning (OLLI), where she concentrates on classes in poetry, philosophy, and art history. Kathy is an optimist and chooses to see the best in everyone and everything. She and her husband Howie are based in Champaign-Urbana. ✍

Brewed Awakening Party

ISPS and the Brewed Awakening Coffee Shop (19 West Quincy, Westmont) will host a holiday poetry party from 12:30–2:00 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 26, with special refreshments and poetry activities. Prizes will be awarded for the best spiritual or religious holiday poem, the best secular holiday poem, the best Thanksgiving or gratitude poem, and the best humorous winter or holiday poem. The cover charge of \$10 includes beverage and snacks, as well as participation in the contests and other activities. ✍

Members Respond to the Poetry Challenge

In September we asked our readers, How does the process of writing poems personally benefit you?

- Candace Armstrong, Murphysboro: Writing takes the words out of my head by putting them onto a page.
- Carol Dooley, Carbondale: It's a pause in life, a chance to think, to consider, and, occasionally, to be surprised by facts and feelings.
- Michael Escoubas, Bloomington: I have written and given to both of my brothers poems that healed divisions between us. My writing process healed me because putting my feelings into a specific form was the impetus I needed to show love to my brothers.
- Neth Hass, Anna: The same way getting up to pee in the middle of the night personally benefits me.
- Marie Samuel, Carterville: As a catharsis of imagery for conflict or reactions to life. ✍

ISPS Members Take Wins in Poets & Patrons Contests and Schaible Sonnet Contest

SONNET CONTEST

Special Recognition:

Candace Armstrong, Murphysboro, IL
Beth Staas, Oak Brook, IL

RELIGIOUS POEM CONTEST

1st, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
2nd, Linda Wallin, Palatine, IL
2nd HM, Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL

HUMOROUS POEM CONTEST

2nd, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL

FORMAL VERSE CONTEST

1st, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
1st HM, Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL

FREE VERSE CONTEST

1st Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL

SOCIAL CONSCIENCE CONTEST

1st, Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
2nd HM, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
3rd HM, Mark Hudson, Evanston, IL

MINIATURE POEM CONTEST

3rd, Kate Hutchinson, Palatine, IL
1st HM, Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL
2nd HM, Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL

NATURE CONTEST

1st, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
3rd, Curt Vevang, Palatine, IL
1st HM, Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL
3rd HM, Kate Hutchinson, Palatine, IL

MIDWEST THEME CONTEST

1st HM, Bonnie J. Manion, Hoopeton, IL
3rd HM, Gail Goepfert, Palatine, IL

SHAKESPEARE CONTEST

3rd HM, Mark Hudson, Evanston, IL

SPECULATIVE POETRY CONTEST

3rd, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
1st HM, Marjorie Rissman, Highland Park, IL
3rd HM, Gail Denham, Sunriver, OR

LOVE CONTEST

1st, Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL
3rd, Gail Goepfert, Palatine, IL

CHICAGO, THE ARTS CONTEST

1st, Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
1st HM, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
2nd HM, Jenene Ravesloot, Chicago, IL
3rd HM, Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL

CHICAGO CONTEST

1st, Bonnie J. Manion, Hoopeton, IL
2nd, Beth Staas, Oak Brook, IL
3rd, Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL
1st HM Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL
2nd HM Marjorie Rissman, Highland Park, IL

THE POETRY OF GWENDOLYN BROOKS

1st HM, Sheila Elliott, Oak Park, IL
2nd HM, Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
3rd HM, Kate Hutchinson, Palatine, IL ✍



Spotlight on ISPS Poet Jill Angel Langlois

Jill Angel Langlois, a poet and short-story writer, is the author of *Scattered Petals*, a poetry collection exploring the healing power of nature. Her work also appears in literary magazines, anthologies, Chicago-area newspapers, and her blog, jillangellois.wordpress.com. Langlois holds a B.A. in English and American Literature from Governors State University and lives in Yorkville with husband Aaron, her birth mother Sue, and their cats.

How did you begin to write poetry?

At the age of 12, I wrote a pretend love note to a boy in school, but I never gave it to him because I really liked the way it sounded. That's when I knew I could write.

What inspires your writing now?

My most consistent inspiration comes from nature and the changing seasons and cycles of life. Sorrow, sadness, loss, and fall and winter have inspired many poems, as when my mother-in-law passed away right before Christmas several years ago and I wrote out my grief for months. Also, my husband is a professional musician who continues to inspire me to write while listening to new and classic music.

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

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot basically shook my world as a high school student, and I've never turned back. Other poets I enjoy include Wallace Stevens, Sylvia Plath, Anne Waldman, Anne Sexton, Li Po, Li-Young Lee, Stephen Dobyns, Dylan Thomas, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Mary Oliver, C.K. Williams, Angela Jackson, Phillip Larkin, James Dickey, and many of the "older greats."

I would recommend books by any of these poets, but I have to also recommend *On Writing* and *Secret Windows*, both by Stephen King, as well as *One Writer's Beginnings* by Eudora Welty and *Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg. These have all helped me to loosen the gates and let the words come.

In addition to Scattered Petals, where has your work been published?

I have many poems published in literary magazines, journals, websites, and anthologies including *Surprise Me*; *Feathers, Fins and Fur*; *Earth Beneath, Sky Beyond*; *A Kiss is Still a Kiss*; abyssapexzine.com; Highland Park Poetry; illinoispoets.org; *Possibilities*; Poets and Patrons; *The Poetic Bond*; and *Distilled Lives*.

From your own experience, what advice would you offer to other poets?

Read at least four poems a day from many different authors, websites, etc. Read novels, memoirs, non-fiction, horror, romance—anything that will inspire you to write. Keep a journal of your poems, thoughts, phrases, sentences, ideas, memories. These will be your foundations to start your next poems. Don't stop reading and don't stop writing. Tell your inner critic to keep its mouth shut because you have to write and that's what you have to do. It doesn't have to be perfect as you're writing it. Get it down on paper and then edit later. But you have to write it down.

What are you working on now, Jill?

I am working on my second book of poems, "Whiskey Nights," which was inspired by music and... whiskey! I am also working on my memoir, "Tell Me the Story." After re-uniting with my birth mother a few years ago, it became obvious to me that I should tell my story of what it was like growing up adopted and then the awesome feeling of re-uniting with my birth mother. It's a deeply emotional story and I'm sure it will take a while to write. Just have to get it right! ✍

Poems by Jill Angel Langlois

Before the Snow Flies

Before the snow flies
and covers the unsuspecting grass;
before the cold bears down
and destroys the fragile flowers;
before the frost bites into my thoughts,
and the ache of dead-end winter
settles in my mind and bones;
before the ice freezes over land
and captures random beauty,
holding her in an amber moment;
before I pray for warmth
amidst the crystallizing breath
that hangs mid-air as it escapes
in a scream;
before the night calls to end
the long orange and yellow days,
I will watch the sugar maples
caramelize in the dying summer sun.

Piece

Laughing in silence
A life in slow motion
A life on hold
A few pictures
Don't even begin to tell the story
Of how we loved
And lost
And went without
Perhaps I'll paint a picture
A relentless note keeps pounding
Yet the piano has been retired
I still hear the familiar melody
And rush to gather in the parlor
Where we played together
And learned of life and love
And sorrow
Because, of course
Sorrow must always intrude
And you were there to hold my hand
And kiss my face
Before you went away
Now what is left is sadness
And lamenting
A sour note held for all eternity ✍

Focus on ISPS Chapters: Champaign and Carbondale



Facilitator Kathy Robinson

NEW CENTRAL ILLINOIS CHAPTER OPENS

ISPS is pleased to announce the formation of the society's seventh local chapter. The poetry group, to be facilitated by new board member Kathy Robinson, will meet monthly at the Champaign Public Library, 200 W. Green Street. Poets are invited to bring 12 copies of poems to share for critique at the first session of the new Central Chapter, Champaign,* on Sunday, Dec. 3, at 1:30 p.m.

*Note: The region for our Pontiac Chapter, formerly known as Central, has been renamed as North Central, Pontiac. ✍

"IGNITING THE SPIRIT OF CREATIVITY," FREE BOOKS PROJECT BY SOUTHERN CHAPTER



ABOVE: Poets Candace Armstrong, Carol Dooley, Neth Hass, Jim Lambert, Marie Samuels, Charles Klayman, and Carole Bolinsky peruse free poetry books at the September meeting.

FAR LEFT: Poet Patty Pieczka and husband Johnny of Carbondale open cases of books and journals donated to them for distribution to the chapter.

ABOVE: Southern Chapter facilitator, Kathy Cotton of Anna.

At their September meeting, ISPS Southern Chapter offered the first selections of a dozen cases of free poetry books and journals. Portions of the donated materials will be made available at each chapter meeting and event and through National Poetry Month projects until the entire collection is disbursed.

Poet Alan Britt, who teaches poetry/creative writing at Towson University, along with the editors of *Osiris Journal*, provided through ISPS member Patty Pieczka the first cases of materials for chapter give-aways. Britt wrote, "May the joy of experimentation, of imagination on the prowl ignite the spirit of creativity." Another ten cases of poetry books and journals from the estate of the late Philip Egelston were donated to Southern Chapter by ISPS member Glen Bishop of Steeleville. ✍

November 15th Deadline for ISPS Poetry Contest

The submission deadline nears for our 24th annual ISPS Poetry Contest, featuring ten categories. New awards have been added for poems with themes of "rural America," "any small item we see or use daily," and "horror or dark humor," as well as the forms of surrealist poetry and short poems of eight or fewer lines. Also, the annual haiku category has been expanded to separate awards for traditional and modern haiku. For more information and contest guidelines, visit our website, illinoispoets.org. ✍

Copyrights. . .and Copying

At our three-hour Legal Seminar for Writers, October 8 in Darien, Burr Ridge lawyer Barry Irwin and an associate covered numerous topics and fielded audience questions. Here are a few notes from ISPS board member Judith Tullis. Detailed information on these topics is also available at copyright.gov.

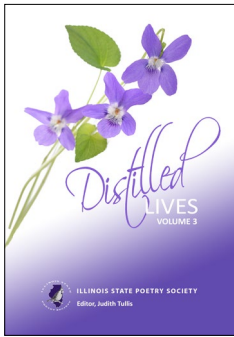
Copyrights. It is easy and cheap to acquire copyright. A single registration can be used for multiple works at one time if the owner is the same. Use the copyright symbol on printed work so that no one can claim they didn't know the work was copyrighted.

Copying. Is it infringement or fair use? Direct evidence of copying, proven access to original work and substantial similarity are qualifications for infringement. Fair use determination is based on four combined factors:

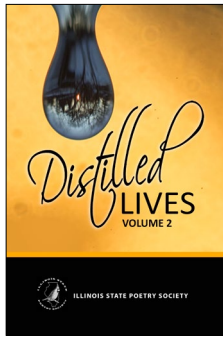
- Purpose and character of work: Commercial? Educational? Transformative (new expression, meaning or message)?
- Nature of work: Fictional? Factual?
- Portion used
- The use's effect on the potential market for the copyrighted work

Judith's take-away was that you should be especially careful if you make any money on the work or borrow from a successful, well-known author. ✍

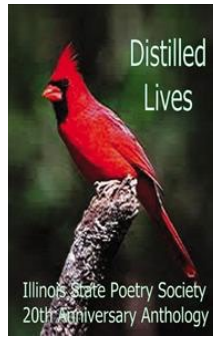
Plans Begin for ISPS Anthology, Volume 4



Volume 3, 2016



Volume 2, 2014



Volume 1, 2011

At the October board meeting, discussion began about our fourth ISPS anthology. Our two newest board members, Central Chapter facilitator Kathy Robinson of Champaign and at-large member Frank Hubeny of Northbrook, along with president Susan Moss and at-large member Sheila Kirscher, volunteered to serve on a committee. Watch for upcoming information; no timeline has yet been approved.

"Where Poets Improve Poems": Tips for Critiquing at Your Chapter Meeting

The ISPS slogan, "Where Poets Improve Poems," is a cornerstone for the critique process at our chapter meetings. We listen attentively to the reading of a poem and write comments in silence before sharing them with the poet. Here are tips to help us help each other.

Jon Land at writingroom.com suggests that "critiquing is not about analyzing the poem; it is about helping the poet to become a better writer." He encourages the critiquer to:

- Always use "I" and "I feel" not "You" and "Your poem is" to describe how you feel.
- Be positive and constructive. Always start with something positive.
- Add value. Offer suggestions from the point of the view of the reader. Make your advice as concrete as possible. If you can't think of something to offer in form of structure or content, let the writer know your interpretation of the poem. Letting them know how it made you feel is just as helpful.

Sherryl at eBooks for Writers offers critiquers questions to ask ourselves as we workshop a poem:

- Is it a good title? Does it add something more to the poem?
- Does the first line work? Does it pull the reader into the poem, make the poem inviting or engaging right from the start? Or is it a bit weak or explanatory?
- Does the poem use strong language and imagery? Does it use strong, specific nouns and verbs, or does it over-rely on adjectives and adverbs? Does it create word pictures or ideas?

Top Ten National Book Award Selections

The National Book Foundation released the titles of ten poetry books longlisted for the 2017 national award, saying, "The selections speak to the continuing value of poetry as a way to voice profoundly painful and complicated experiences in a particular yet universally moving form."

Half-light: Collected Poems 1965-2016, Frank Bidart

When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities,
Chen Chen

The Book of Endings, Leslie Harrison

Where Now: New and Selected Poems, Laura Kasischke

Whereas, Layli Long Soldier

In the Language of My Captor, Shane McCrae

Square Inch Hours, Sherod Santos

Don't Call Us Dead: Poems, Danez Smith

Afterland, Mai Der Vang

- Do you feel fully engaged throughout the poem, or are there places where your attention drops? Are there wordy or slow parts that could be tightened?
- Does the poet use metaphors and similes in original ways?
- Do the line breaks work? Has the poet broken lines effectively for rhythm, sound and meaning? Has the poet used stanza breaks? Do they work? Would the poem benefit from more or less stanza breaks?
- Has the poet used white space effectively? Do you feel there is room for you as the reader to enter the poem?
- Does the poem end strongly? What is the last line doing? Does it introduce something odd or irrelevant at the end? Does it leave you with something to think about?
- Do you understand (more or less) what the poet is trying to tell you? Or is the poem too obscure or impenetrable? Does the poem excite or at least satisfy you?

Diana Engel of the Writers Group of the Triad adds questions we might ask the poet:

- Ask about anything you find confusing. All well-written literature, including poetry, should be lucid to the reader.
- Ask the poet to expand on anything about which you want to know more.
- Ask whether everything in the poem is necessary. Taking out superfluous and repetitious words or lines can grant the poem momentum, power. ✍



Chapter Meetings

CENTRAL CHAPTER, CHAMPAIGN

Sunday, Dec. 3, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.
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, Dec. 17
Northbrook Public Library, Civic Room
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
847-272-6224

Bring 10 copies of up to 6 haiku for critique
and a haiku that mystifies or delights from a
recent journal for discussion

NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

1:00 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 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, Nov. 12
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. 12
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, Dec. 3
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, Nov. 4
Indian Prairie Public Library, 630-887-8760
401 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL
Bring your beverage, snack 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 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

NOV. 15, deadline for submissions to
ISPS Poetry Contest. See illinoispo-
ets.org for details.

NOV. 15, deadline for 2017 NFSPS Ste-
vens Poetry Manuscript Competi-
tion at nfspssubmittable.com. Visit
"Contests" at nfspss.com for details.

NOV. 26, 12:30 p.m., Holiday Poetry
Party at Brewed Awakening at West-
mont.

DEC. 1-14, submission period for ISPS
Member Poems website feature. Sub-
mit one poem to oasis@alharris.com.

DEC. 1, submission period opens for the
NFSPS College Undergraduate Poetry
(CUP) Competition at nfspssubmit-
table.com. Visit "Contests" at nfspss.
com for details.

DEC. 1, deadline for four-category Chap-
arral Poetry Forum Poetry Contest,
sponsored by Redrock Writers &
Dixie Poets, St. George, Utah. Visit

redrockwriters.org for details.

DEC. 31, deadline for Society of Classical
Poets Poetry Competition, submis-
sions@classicalpoets.org. See classi-
calpoets.org for details.

DEC. 31, deadline for Tampa Review Prize
for Poetry manuscript contest. See
ut.edu/tampareview for details.

DEC. 31, deadline for Crosswinds Poetry
Contest. See crosswindspoe.com
for details.

JAN 1, submissions open for NFSPS
BlackBerryPeach Prizes for Poetry:
Spoken and Heard at nfspssubmit-
table.com. Visit "Contests" at nfspss.
com for details.

JAN 1, deadline for Mississippi Review
Prize. See usm.edu/mississippi-re-
view for details.

JAN. 14, deadline, Colorado Prize for
Poetry. See coloradoprize.colostate.
edu. ✍

Stay with Us. . .

ISPS members who have not renewed for 2017-2018 will soon be dropped from the ISPS and NFSPS rolls. For the small investment of \$20, you can stay connected to poets and poetry opportunities throughout our state and across the nation. We hope you will stay with us.



ISPS Membership Application

MEMBERSHIP THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018

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, 6455 Big Bear Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525**