



California State Poetry Society

Post Office Box 7126, Orange, California 92863

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CSPS Poetry Letter

Dear Friends of Poetry,

Welcome to the 40th year of the California State Poetry Society's ***California Quarterly!*** We are indeed in a mood to celebrate and hope that you are, too. We want to thank all our members for having been so faithful to us and to the cause of poetry world-wide. We would also like to urge all past and present contributors to become members! As outlined in the ***CQ*** issues themselves, there are several membership categories. Please send your memberships to the CSPS at: ***Post Office Box 7126, Orange CA, 92863***; better yet, send them directly to our Membership Chair, Richard M. Deets, at: ***2560 Calabria Court, Dublin, CA 94568***. Contact him at ***RDeets@att.net*** if you have any questions.

Do keep the poems coming! Submissions to ***CQ*** 40:3 will be accepted until the end of June. ***CQ*** 40:2, by the way, is being edited by Nancy Cavers Dougherty, who has recently joined our editorial staff.

We hope soon to establish a website to facilitate submissions – and a whole lot of other stuff!

We thank all of you who have written us in praise of the ***CQ***. We agree, in all modesty, that it's truly a splendid "poetry rag" and we thank the *good* poets who *keep* submitting and *keep* getting published!

Our greetings to you as we move into spring, into longer days and warmer weather – *and* into *more* time to write!

Yours truly,

Margaret

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In the following lines, I present some of the CSPS Monthly Contest winners and honorable mentions of recent months, as well as one last poem published elsewhere.

HIDDEN THOUGHTS

These small and separate thoughts
fall onto me as dust motes
finding each their place on
yellowed childhood photos.

Thoughts that whisper haunting
words like barns and creeks and boats
in bath tub games. Tadpoles
enter in this gate through locks

in childhood flows of thought,
till what becomes the most
to me in darkish places on
cool bare shores are dreams so

photo-like. I find I'm hunting
for those skates, those childhood boots
I kept beside the fishing poles—
in little closets stuffed and locked.

Carol Louise Moon
Sacramento, California

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MY GRANDMOTHER

I never truly knew my grandmother.
She couldn't speak English,
I couldn't speak Czech,
but I remember she attended
daily Mass, came home to bake
brown loaves of rye bread
and poppy seed cakes.
She spoke to me in her native tongue.
I hung my head and didn't respond.
Did she think me dense or dull
or did she share my dilemma?
Her eyes sparkled and she smiled,
to see my passion
for her artisan delicacies I couldn't resist.
When I left, she tied silver coins
in the corner of my handkerchief
and she kissed me.
I wanted to tell her I loved her,
but she wouldn't have understood,
yet her warm embrace and my eager arms
brought us together in a bonding
beyond understanding.

Lillian Fisher
Alpine, California





THE E R

Our door bell rang . . . over and over,
out front, on the street, red lights flashing,
an ambulance, fire truck, people in uniform,
in a hurry . . . well orchestrated.

They pushed our neighbor child on a gurney,
she was lost amid the straps, covers and
the rapid haste of adults. Her grandfather, John,
was frantic, needed a friend . . . I was there.

Together we followed the ambulance,
his broken English kept me sentences behind,
“Little Jamie had a fever, 107, wasn’t breathing,
convulsing, no response, her eyes . . . stuck up.”

The emergency room; a strange flood, many
problems in waves, worried and pensive,
assorted melancholy, disheveled fear written all
over the room, so many different people . . . hurting.

John’s granddaughter, just over two years, now better,
covered with wet towels, plugged to a screen,
numbers and a graph say, “Jamie’s improving.”
when I try to leave she cries . . . wants me to stay.

In her world, I’m the neighbor who speaks English,
reads to her, plays ball, and helps her to adjust
to this different life in America. I’m her only
connection in this very scary place . . . the E R.

Bruce Crawford
Stockton, California





THE PAST

“He made me strip naked for his friends,”
Marta confided to her younger friend,
recollecting her older brother,
dead fifty years to the day,
the hurt and anger
throbbing in her voice,
raw as an open wound.

A day in August marks a death,
but so much lives within it, the shame
a ninety-four year old woman still feels
for something that happened
over three quarters of a century before,
evident in the angry sheen of her ancient eyes.

“His friends!” she spat, some unarticulated memory
causing her eyes to flash again, thunderbolts
ripping into a time that hadn’t gone away.
“How he loved those cruds.”

More than just the nude episode, Karen realized,
history bubbling up like sulfuric acid
in a beaker or a lake in Hell.
This could have happened yesterday.
It could have happened right after breakfast.

*Charles Rammelkamp
Baltimore, Maryland
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Your *Poetry Letter* editor

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*If you have news of poetry awards, publications or poetry contests for our Newsbriefs,
please email Dr. John Forrest Harrell at JFHarrell@gmail.com!*

