



California State Poetry Society

Post Office Box 7126, Orange, California 92863

2015 No. 1 *Poetry Letter*, a publication of the California State Poetry Society

CSPS Poetry Letter

Dear CSPS Members, Friends of Poetry, CQ Readers and CQ Contributors,

A joyful welcome to the New Year, our 41st of Publication! Not many poetry journals have such a long tradition.

We are communicating with the periodicals Librarian at the California State Library in Sacramento to see whether they would be willing to serve as an archive for the publications of the California State Poetry Society, including the CQ and the CSPS Poetry Letter. We are happy to pursue this, because we have had neither archivist nor an archive storage facility in over 40 years (now) of publishing. We've also had rather a hard time keeping track of older issues. Right now they are dispersed at least all over the state and likely all over the country.

We would like to ask those of you who have been members for a long time to inform us of any older issues in your possession. We are particularly interested in the first three decades, the CQ issues from Vol. 1 No. 1 to Vol. 30 No. 4. Please email me at umsaine@gmail.com with information on any issues from those years. Right now, we'd like to assemble or locate as complete a set as possible.

Please continue submitting your poems, but just one set of them in any three-month period. Each set will be considered for publication in the issue of the CQ taking submissions at the time the set of poems is submitted. I urge you strongly to consider participating in the monthly contests and especially the big CSPS Annual Contest, which will accept submissions March 1st through June 30th. There is also information on the Facebook site **California State Poetry Society CQ**.

I wish you a happy spring season and a wellspring of creativity for your endeavors in poetry! Happy springtime and a creative, inspiring 2015 – and with good writing, of course – from

Your ***Poetry Letter*** editor,

Margaret

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As our first poem, I present “Emma” by a regular CQ contributor, Thomas Feeny. It amounts to an interesting male perspective on sewing:

EMMA

Soft-haired Emma made it through the month letting out seams.
Nip, tuck, sweet keeper of cats, chaser of rats, by the
thirtieth she'd be reheating the stew. Yet content
edging around corners, till the day the new man, long
and thin, came to rent the upstairs. Neighbors, nailed to
window panes, eyed his tooled leather valise. They
watched as he mounted the steps, erect, distinguished,
pressing hand to mouth to feed himself breath mints. And
wondered what in the world this Mr. Right might find to
feed Emma—kumquats, bonbons—stuffing her full of the
fruits of spring.

It was a Tuesday. A nervous street breeze kept fingering
the kitchen curtains. Out on the stoop, not a soul heard
the unboxed cry that startled the pomegranate tree. Leaves
swirled, they fell and he fell, strewn across the asphalt.
Upstairs, red hearts splattered white walls. Emma swallowed
hard and, with a sigh, bent to retrieve an errant thimble.
Wiping her scissors, she snipped a bit of thread, set to
fussing with another tricky hem.

Thomas Feeny, Raleigh, North Carolina

First published in POTPOURRI Vol. 8 No. 2

Our CSPS 2014 November Monthly Contest yielded two interesting poems on mothers—one by Barbara Blanks, a “Marianne sonnet variation” according to the poet, and one by Lisha Perini in free verse. They make a fine juxtaposition:

THE FAMILY MEETING

For my mom, Mary Winklebleck

My mother raised us by herself, a brood

of three—outnumbered, yes, but she was
shrewd.

When we were old enough to have some sense
of sharing, fairness, morals she imbued,



she formed the household meeting. Things got
tense
when siblings squabbled. Teasing just foments
protests of “MOM, he said,”—“But MOM...”
Indeed,
the meetings cleared the air of each offence.

Whoever cut the cake chose last, so greed
was nipped. And Mom made chores more fun,
agreed—
as we washed dishes, dusted, swept the floor—
to read to us. Now we all love to read.

We learned respect, the three of us concurred,
because although she had the final word,
Mom listened—made us proud that we were
heard.

Barbara Blanks, Garland, Texas
CSPS 2014 November Monthly Contest –
1st Place

while distraught and grieving i recalled
the words in a sympathy note
sent by the nursing home
*we will forever miss her sweet voice
singing out over the chaos here*

i listened to that one
cricket solo emerging clearly
over the chorus of insect song—
mother’s soprano voice
or so it seemed to me—
*let go all is well
right where I am now*

we lost her over a long time
word by word still
she calls us—my sister and me—
still mixing up our names

Lisha Perini, Arroyo Grande, California
CSPS 2014 November Monthly Contest –
2nd Place

DISEMBODIED

my mother’s voice is out here
i know as i climb the hills
it will rise
just like the magnetic hum
that grows louder as you come
close to high-tension wires
spanning long distances
like my mother’s voice

she sings the great arias of Verdi
she rolls nicknames for me in butter
and sugar as they bake
their warm scent wafts aloft
and offers me a teasing trace

one day in a field suffused
with fading light she sang to me
through crickets



And I know you couldn't live without your steady diet of villanelles for dessert! Our last poem, an artfully crafted one—with five triplets (or tercets) and a quatrain in only two rhymes, AB—is by Jane Stuart, another regular CQ contributor:

TONIGHT BRINGS BACK THE WORLD THAT WAS

You listened to the moon; I talked to stars.
Last night was young, you said, and we were free.
A fiddle in the wind! A soft guitar

Joined all that still was near and what was far
away so life shone from its mystery,
you listened to the moon, I talked to stars.

Inside a world both small and circular—
we became all that we could ever be—
a fiddle in the wind! A sad guitar.

When time was easy, moments a memoir,
and love filled both with laughter and our glee,
you listened to the moon, I talked to stars.

We were alike—we were dissimilar,
part of decision and cold destiny—
a fiddle in the wind! A quiet guitar,

Part of all that was pointless and ajar,
yet part of life's unplanned discovery.
You listened to the moon; I talked to stars—
a fiddle in the wind! A slow guitar.

Jane Stuart, Greenup, Kentucky
CSPS 2014 September Monthly Contest – 2nd Place

Your *Poetry Letter* editor,

Margaret (Ute Margaret Saine)
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