



California State Poetry Society

Post Office Box 7126, Orange, California 92863

2016 No. 1 *Poetry Letter*, a publication of the California State Poetry Society

CSPS Poetry Letter

Dear Poets, CSPS Members and Friends of the *Poetry Letter*!

In this 2016 No. 1 *Poetry Letter*, we thank Howard Lachtman for his part in founding the *CQ* back in the early 1970s. We have published two of his more recent poems in the current issue of the *CQ* (Vol. 42, No. 1).

Recent past editors also wish to thank the contributors who have used our website, www.CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org for submitting their texts. Please be so kind as to continue, or begin, submitting to it, as it makes editing so much simpler if we have digital copies! If you do not use email or the Internet yourself, *surely* you have a friend or a relative upon whom you can prevail to send poems and receive emails on your behalf.

Also, please renew your CSPS membership on the same website, or by directly contacting Richard Deets, our Vice President/Membership, at rdeets@att.net.

And here, for the *Poetry Letter* to feature your previously published poems, as always, is my email: umsaine@gmail.com.

A few days ago, we received an email from a recent two-time *CQ* contributor, Rachel Blum:

It's nice to connect with you, Margaret; thank you for your kind message. I also have been very much with the morning birds this week. I am glad they are bringing you delight. Me, too!!

I am happy ANGEL was accepted, too. You and CQ have been very kind to me.

Good wishes and good writing to you as well.

*Peace,
Rachel*

So here is wishing you a Happy Spring and Easter season, with gastric—and *creative*—juices flowing,

Margaret Saine
UMSaine@gmail.com



Our first poem is by long-time CSPA contest participant and *CQ* contributor Von S. Bourland:

JORDYNN'S GUARDIAN ANGEL

A loving angel hovered ever near
as *fearless girl* went over, round and through
all obstacles without a conscious clue.
Each day presented challenging frontier.
She jumped, she pranced like nimble leaping deer.
Adventuresome and special child—she grew
to greet new challenges—possessed the view
that life could offer naught for her to fear.

Her teenage years convey confusion—fling
new doubts, new fears in adolescent mind.
Disorders diagnosed with drugs as their
solution add to paranoia—bring
no ease for souls of family. Remind
her angel standing near to guard with prayer.

Von S. Bourland, Happy, Texas

First Prize, 2015 CSPA November Monthly Contest

Von remarks that this is a Petrarchan sonnet, with (1) the two quartets (making an octet) and the two tercets (making a sextet) each written together and (2) the rhymes *abba* and *cde* repeated in each group, respectively. The Petrarchan sonnet can also be written in four stanzas, each quartet and tercet appearing separately, as distinct from the Shakespearian sonnet, which consists of twelve and then two verses.

The November contest theme, by the way, was *Family, Friendship, and the Human Condition*.



Rhymed or unrhymed, what counts is the content of the poem. Here we have our second selection, one by Thomas Feeny:

REMEMBERING MARRIAGE

July, 1990
Heat leadens the
rice-white sky,
shimmers in lush gardens
We're caught in a dog-day swelter
that peels papers from walls,
sets the bedroom air conditioner
groaning, throbbing
poking fun at the pair of
us—still greedy lovers
drunk with love
fools for flesh and magic
all hours of the day.

Afternoon lull
Pink baby's cooing
on the side porch
Across the kitchen step
bathed in sunlight
sprawls the fat yellow pup
who smells my shoes.

Whimpering caress
dreaming no dogfights
idly he thumps his tail.

Thomas Feeny, Raleigh, North Carolina

First published in the *Piedmont Literary Review* of 1999



And, because I'm waiting for more of your repeat submissions, I'm publishing here a delightful poem by the great American poet, Elizabeth Bishop, whom I've been rereading lately along with William Carlos Williams. I used to tell my California State University Fullerton Hispanic literature students that, before writing one poem, they ought to read twelve. I still keep to this precept. ☺

ONE ART

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

---Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

Elizabeth Bishop, 1911-1979

And here, finally, is another plea, *begging* you to send us any old *California Quarterly* issues from the period 1972-1992! They will be valuable contributions to the CSPS Archive at the California State Library in Sacramento.

