



California State Poetry Society

Post Office Box 7126, Orange, California 92863

2017 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*!

I hope ***California Quarterly (CQ)*** Vol. 43 No. 1 has come to you this April to be a part of your enjoyment of National Poetry Month (celebrated in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom)! We apologize for the delay of this issue; in fact numerous poets have already asked what has happened their copy. We are an association of volunteer poets; any problems that come up must be solved by all of us, as we have no staff. We also apologize that for a while (see the 2017 No. 1 *Newsbriefs*) our CSPS website was inaccessible to the increasing number of you who wish to submit their poems electronically—and we thank you for *continuing* to use the website! ☺

I would also like to correct a mistake in the issue I made when I indicated the original language of the poet Abdulkadir Musa. I wrote it was Arabic, knowing full well that Mr. Musa writes in Kurdish and lives in Berlin, where he translated the poem into German. I apologize to Mr. Musa, and thank him again for his lovely poem, “Ten Moons in a Hand.” By the way, those of you who might enjoy the poem in German (“Zehn Monde in einer Hand”) can find it at <http://www.lyrikwelt.de/gedichte/musag1.htm>.

Poetry is everywhere on the Internet. The number of Web poetry journals by now exceeds that of hard-copy poetry magazines. Would you believe that, while the huge multinational publishers increasingly neglect to publish any new poets, there are over one thousand (1,000) poetry magazines in English? Almost all now have electronic submissions. The ***CQ*** has one foot in each camp: a website, CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org, to which I urge you to submit, and a hard-copy journal. Our editors are individuals with diverse backgrounds; you will find an astonishing breadth in editorial philosophy among us. Poetry is in flux, and hopefully always to some extent experimental.

Please remember a poem doesn't exist until *you* create it! I urge you to submit to the ***CQ***, although please do so only once every three months. We collect submissions quarterly—from January through March, April through June, July through September, October through December.

There are also poetry sites on Facebook (FB). It's always a good idea to get the opinion of other poets and to read them. When I joined FB in 2010, my aim was to learn Italian and “meet” Italian poets; after teaching Spanish for thirty years, I expected it would work. I was invited to participate in the poetry marathon of 2017; instead of just for seven days, I decided to publish poets for all thirty days of April—and I have more good poets to continue into May! Some FB sites are *POETS OUT OF THIS WORLD* and *HARD-WORKING POETESSES*. Needless to say, the latter site also welcomes posts by male poets. Because FB is by membership only, these postings are not official publications, so you may still submit them to poetry journals.

Wishing you a wonderful spring season and rest of the year,

Margaret Saine
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Our first poem is by Beth Staas of La Grange Park, Illinois. Her poem won second place in the “Poets Anonymous” category of the annual contest for the 2013 *Mississippi Poetry Society Spring Festival*.

Other Voices

We reach for words, formed around lips,
the tongue finding fricatives, labials,
throat reverberating pitch and tone,
neither symphony, fugue nor leitmotif,
just phonemes, morphemes, robust and strong.

Think of the quiet in a country drive,
tires pulsating over asphalt,
corn tassels presenting a ballet entendre,
distant houses blinking like footlights
under the grapefruit sun,

the hushed cadence at bedtime,
each room emitting its own rhythm,
a baby’s breath with barely a ripple,
a boy twitching for a dreamed-up toy,
my love stretching out his arm nest,

the back yard on an August night,
wind wafting pellets of grassy perfume,
the ocean caressing the sand,
or a fountain in its giddy dance
as it echoes its primordial past.

These things speak of themselves,
affirmed by the human voice,
no less real when named and said aloud,
the words revealing their *whatness*
while we quiver in recognition.

Beth Staas, La Grange Park, Illinois
First appeared in the 2013 *Mississippi Poetry*
***Journal* contest issue (2nd Place winner –**
“Poets Anonymous Category”)





Here is a funny poem that will make you laugh. It won second place in the CSPS August 2016 Monthly Contest, the theme for which was *Humor, Satire, Joy of Life*. Katharyn Machan is a widely appreciated poet who has been published many times in the *CQ* and has won a number of our Annual Contest and Monthly Contest prizes, as well.

Firm

Dickinson, Millay, Rossetti and Moore
set out to study law.
They roomed together, shared hats and shoes,
read lengthy tomes with awe.

Emily baked gingerbread
and swatted buzzing flies
as Vincent kept their parlor bright
with candles ranged by size.

Christina kept the canary fed
and coaxed his heart to sing
while Marianne imagined gardens
around a batter's swing.

They memorized; they passed the bar;
they opened an office downtown:
the only graduates in the Hundred Best
with skirts beneath cap and gown.

Katharyn Howd Machan, Ithaca, New York
**2nd Place, CSPS Monthly Poetry Contest, August
2016**

Once again, I want to take a moment here to thank the Chair of the Monthly Contest, poet and long-standing CSPS board member, **Keith Van Vliet**, who faithfully sends me prize-winning poems every month. **I, and we, thank you, dear Keith!**





Our last poem won first place in the CSPS November 2016 Monthly Contest, which had the theme of *Family, Friendship, Human Relations*. Jane Stuart is a well-known poet who has been frequently published in the *CQ*:

In Lethe's Shadow

The soul that lingers on in winter's shade
flies back to cross the Lethe
where spirits rest in painted boats
that have no sails, in waters that are calm,
where life that was is only reminisced
and never talked about when evening comes.
At dawn, we find the Milky Way
where stars are woven into galaxies
that sleep by day and shine at night.
Time's myth is strong inside this starry sky
that fills with souls and all our dreams
so that in Heaven we have Earth again
and time to live and time to find our dreams.
When winter goes away, a summer breeze
blows back to fill the forest with our sighs.
When morning comes, the rested spirit flies
on to Heaven's love and bluest skies.

Jane Stuart, Greenup, Kentucky
1st Place, CSPS Monthly Poetry Contest,
November 2016

And, once again, please send us your or your relatives' old *California Quarterlies*, especially from the period 1972-1992. Send them to me at 327 N. Fern St., Orange, CA, 92867.

Your *Poetry Letter* editor,

Margaret Saine
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