



California State Poetry Society

Post Office Box 7126, Orange, California 92863

2017 No. 2 *Poetry Letter*, a publication of the California State Poetry Society

CSPS Poetry Letter

Dear Poets, California State Poetry Society (CSPS) Members, and Friends of the *Poetry Letter*!

Now we are in plain summer: July 2 is exactly the middle day of a normal year. The two weeks of the longest days of the year, and soon a whole month, on either side of the summer solstice, are already behind us. June finished up the Annual Poetry Contest of the CSPS and we hope you sent a few good poems our way.

The following paragraph is a repeat from three months ago, which might be useful:

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 ***California Quarterly (CQ)*** has one foot in each camp: a website, CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org, to which I urge you to submit, and a beautiful, 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, and October through December.

As long as Facebook postings are only to membership pages, the postings are not official or *bona fide* publications and most poetry publications—including the ***CQ***—accept work that may already have appeared on Facebook.

Wishing you a wonderful summer and much good writing, I remain

Your *Poetry Letter* Editor,

Margaret Saine
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Our first poem is an ecological childhood reminiscence:

LESSON

New York City, 1971:

Caught in the act of
Tossing a candy wrapper onto the sidewalk,
Mommy smacks me to pick up the wrapper
I threw down and points to a curbside
Rubbish can.

She tells me:
“You see that? That’s where you put it.
Not on the ground.”

Small hand
Sticky wrap
Open hope
Canfeed
Where it all began for me—

On the street
Her earthy wisdom
Passed into my ear
And remained embedded
Within me for all time—

Consciousness
Environment
Earthcare
Greenthought
Cerebral seed
From which
Love for her grows—

A giant owl
A giant talking bear
A sorrowful native tribesman
Shedding a tear over fields of trash
Where his home once stood
Each told me



Through television that only I can stop
Fires & pollution.

My mother had gotten to me before they did.

Dee Allen, Oakland, California
First appeared in the book *Feather Floating on the Water: Poems for Our Children*, Studio Saraswati/Jambu Press, Rajkot, India, 2014.

Our next poem is by Diane Lee Moomey, who has dedicated a sonnet to that wonderful American sonnet writer, Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950). Did you know that *St. Vincent* was the name of the hospital where Edna was born? They gave it to her as a middle name. Unusual . . . :

SONNET FORTY-THREE AND ONE HALF . . .

But I remember every lip, and where,
and *all* the hands that ever cupped my cheek;
recall the day and season bringing each
and bearing each away: our mingled hair,
an arm across me in the night, the wary
promises we may have meant to keep;
remember canyons far too wide to leap
and lips, unkissed, that smiled across. This heart

has been no wide equator—endless vine
and leaf whose suns move gently south to north,
timeless zone of valleys, verdant bowls
of fruit—but is the sleepless summer, time
between the thaw and freeze, brief bringing forth
of tiny berries, lights above the poles.

Diane Lee Moomey, El Granada, California
First appeared as “2015, on reading Millay’s #43 . . .”
Honorable Mention, Sonnet Category
2016 Soul-Making Keats Library Contest
Published in *Mezzo Cammin*, 2017





Our last poem is about love, having won First Prize in our February 2017 Monthly Contest, (the Monthly Contest chair is long-time CSPS VP/Communications Keith Van Vliet). I guess it could also be considered a road poem:

ROAD SONGS

He sang to me on our first date,
driving back from Oklahoma City,
where he wanted to show me
the Cowboy Hall of Fame,
but it was closed.
No one had ever sung to me before.

He told me later he had run out
of conversations. Flustered,
he did not know what else to do.

He had a repertoire of serious, silly,
and slightly risqué songs.
When he belted out a rollicking rendition
of *San Antonio Rose*
in his East Texas twang—
I also heard the twang
of Cupid's bow string.

Oh yes, call it cliché—
but love's arrow still shot
right through my heart.
He has been singing to me ever since.

Barbara Blanks, Garland, Texas
1st Place, CSPS Monthly Poetry Contest,
February 2017

