

CSPS
Poetry Letter
No. 2, June 2021

Edited by Maja
Trochimczyk

Poetry Letter

California State Poetry Society



CSPS Annual Poetry Contest – Submissions Due by July 31, 2021

California State Poetry Society is pleased to announce that the Annual Poetry Contest 2021 is now accepting submissions, with the deadline of July 31, 2021. We are delighted that a distinguished poet and experienced editor, Georgia Jones-Davis, agreed to serve as CSPS Annual Contest Judge, while Joyce Snyder continues in her role as the Annual Contests Chair. The cash awards are \$100, \$50, and \$25 for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places respectively, plus publication in the *California Quarterly* 47: 4 (2021 Winter). Please upload poems and pay the contest reading fees via our website <http://www.californiastatepoetrysociety.org>, OR Send a cover letter with all poet information and a list of the submitted poems, plus one copy of each poem with no poet identification to: **CSPS Annual Contest Chair, 3371 Thomas Drive Palo Alto, California 94303**. Reading fees: Members of CSPS and other NFSPS societies, \$3.00/poem; Non-members, \$6.00/poem 80-line (two-page) limit/poem. You may also send fees for the contest to PayPal, to CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety@gmail.com, with a note about the purpose of the fees for Annual Contest, since we also receive monthly contest fees at this address. We posted this information on our blog, along with an interview with Georgia Jones-Davis about poetry reading, writing, polishing, sharing, and more...

Our Annual Contest Judge, Georgia Jones-Davis, grew up in northern New Mexico and southern California. She attended UCLA, where she studied art history, film and graduated with a degree in English and History. Georgia worked as a writer, reviewer and editor at the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* and Assistant Book Editor of *The Los Angeles Times*. Georgia freelanced for many publications, including *The Washington Post*, *New Mexico Magazine*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Chicago Tribune*. She is the author of two chapbooks, *Blue Poodle* (2010) and *Night School* (2015), both issued by Finishing Line Press. Her poems have appeared in numerous publications including *West Wind*, *Nebo*, *Brevities*, *California Quarterly*, *The Bicycle Review*, *Eclipse* and *South Bank Poetry*, London. Georgia currently lives and writes in Santa Fe, New Mexico. To find out more about Georgia, read: <https://www.californiastatepoetrysociety.com/2021/05/meet-georgia-jones-davis-csps-annual.html>



Poems by Donna Emerson

We occasionally receive submissions of poems to be included in the *Poetry Letter*. These are previously published poems that the authors would like to see in print again, and the readers would enjoy. This time we received a nice package from Donna Emerson, with the following note: "I came to know CQ in 2007-8, when I had some poems accepted and then a few months later, was asked by one of the editors to send poems for what they called "Best of the Best." They liked those poems (chose one) so much the two editors asked me to send to the *Poetry Letter* and I had 2 more poems posted there. Terry Ehret encouraged us a year or so ago in Sonoma County to consider sending poems again." Ms. Emerson wrote notes to each poem, as well:

1. "The Train to Bath," published by Ibbetson Press, summer, 2008. This event happened to me as I was vacationing one summer in England. I'd stayed with my cousin at Oxford University, then took the train to Bath because Bath is the name of my grandmother's town in western New York. I wanted to see why the Bath, New

York name was chosen. What an adventure. The train trip was most eventful, when I encountered the young man I later wrote about.

2. "Wild Mercy," published by *Schuykill Valley Journal*, and then by the award winning Sixteen Rivers Press anthology, *The Place That Inhabits Us, poems of the San Francisco Bay Watershed*, 2010. I also added it to my chapbook *Wild Mercy*, published by Finishing Line Press. 2011. The poem was inspired by visiting Yosemite Valley in winter, knowing its history for many years.

3. "Vernal Sap," published by *Chicago Quarterly Review*, Winter, 2020, was inspired by our family's tapping of our sugar maple trees on the family farm in Bath, New York. We tapped 15 trees to secure 40 gallons of sap, out of which came one gallon of syrup. A tradition begun by earlier generations of my mother's family, in the nineteenth century, when they used horses and a sugar shack. The maple tree is New York's state tree.

Wild Mercy

Our relentless Lady of Mercy
offers none today, makes waterfalls
from three directions across her broad
back, froth on her face,

her force carving Yosemite Valley,
rolling her rapids—Class IV and V
—in spite of Cook's cows and horses,
the railroad, sugar pine logging, dams.

I lose track of her down the thousand foot
drop to Mariposa, lost in the highway's
descent, I don't see her veer north until I feel
the prick of winter almonds near Planada.

Before I miss her roar, I'm at the neon
Modesto Knife and Saw;
she slides noiselessly under my feet
on her way to San Pablo Bay.

Like ladder rungs from Route 49, the Merced,
Tuolumne, Mokelumne and Stanislaus meet
the wide San Joaquin, pushing their lives
to the sea, long before the orchards with their

white painted trunks, before the first people,
before the people who conquered
those people, before gold, the sprawl
of Modesto, Turlock's blinding lights.

California, easy to lose, bound with rivers.

~ Donna Emerson, *Petaluma, California*

The Train to Bath

In praise of the boy who
rode the train to Bath
and gazed at me 'til Wallingford:
he sat tall and straight, his shaggy head
across from mine, higher than mine.

He was England, youth of promises, decrees,
beveled cheekbones of the Royals,
hollows where I could lay my temple.

Arching to see him go, I watched
his long back. Silence. I slumped in my seat.
Then the train whistle, the lurch,
and to my surprise, his return
with an armful of yellow roses.

He will take them to his love.
We looked. Or his mother. We smiled
at the same time, knees almost touching,
jostling along, without words.

We stopped at Bath. We glanced,
our eyes close, as I stood up.

He handed me the yellow flowers.
His smile stretched around me
for the rest of my life.

~ Donna Emerson, *Petaluma, California*

Donna Emerson retired from college teaching and her clinical social work practice in 2016. She's been nominated for two Pushcarts, "Best of the Net," received two Allen Ginsberg awards (2015, 2017). Emerson published four chapbooks and two full length poetry collections.

Vernal Sap

We run with our pails to the sugar maples.
Marked last summer, when leaves were easy
to read, tree crowns high and wide.
Daughter taps the spile in place
midst several versions of *ahh*
as clear sap drips out.

We discover an unexpected bush of sugar maples
across the road from the original trees.
Their seedlings must have blown straight across the road,
so that nine young trees stand equidistant,
most too young yet to tap.

In a day, fifteen trees are tapped, named, embraced
for their beauty and life force, given freely to us,
as long as we protect them from harm.

As did my mother, uncles, grandparents
and great grandparents
over the last two hundred years, in these woods.

This marks the start of Spring,
when we see water flow for the first time, under the ice
on the road.

Daughter finishes her work, hugs the tree
and names it "Eldest Granddaughter."

The gushing older tree by the old farmhouse
we name "Grandmother." Her bark thick,
scarred, lumpy in spots like a darned sock,
holds a frozen bit of sap where a vertical,
waist- high crevice sits.
It must have access to her heartwood.

~ Donna Emerson, Petaluma, California



Paradise One, digital integration image by Susan Dobay. SusanDobay.com

A Brief Poem by a Nine Year Old Poet – Sophie Rundus



Santa Clarita

Sunny hot weather

Wild wind whistles thru valley
Dry high desert home

~ Sophie Rundus, age 9
Santa Clarita, California

Musicscape12 by Susan Dobay (1996), 36"x 48"
mixed media on canvas

Poems by Jeanine Stevens

We occasionally receive submissions to the Poetry Letter by mail, and it is a pleasure to read through a poet's favorites; also recognized by awards given to these poems. Jeanine Stevens's ekphrastic verse is so vivid that it creates images even without being able to see her inspiration, the photographs she writes about. Enjoy!

New Delhi

She is the brick wall that defines her,
the thin arms under the sari.
She is the madras pattern
of marigold orange and olive green.
She is the littered ground,
the ground scattered with bricks and refuse.
One brick is her table. She entertains
simply. There are no spoons,
only hands to mix grains and river water.
The street is her open window,
her furniture, the battered chair tipped
on its side, a cupboard of sorts for bent pans.
She is the smoke stained wall
and crouches under a large sign
in English, "Choice Shampoo."
She is the big toe that grips the ground.
Nearby, are bits of denim,
foreign labels, and one bright, upright yellow pear.
Back straight, she does not slouch,
looks directly at the camera in a half smile.
She is the pierced diamond
carried in the side of her nose
and the red spice she holds to mix
with her evening meal. She is
the memory of golden flocks on hilly flanks,
the darkness of things being burnt,
surrounded by things already burnt.
Her only book, a book of matches,
her tablet: the wall, her pen: bits of charcoal.
She doesn't worry if her seeds
are not planted by the spring equinox.

~after a photograph, National Geographic

~ Jeanine Stevens, Sacramento, California

First Place: MacGuffin Poet Hunt, 2014
Published in *The MacGuffin*, 2014

Frida in a White Dress

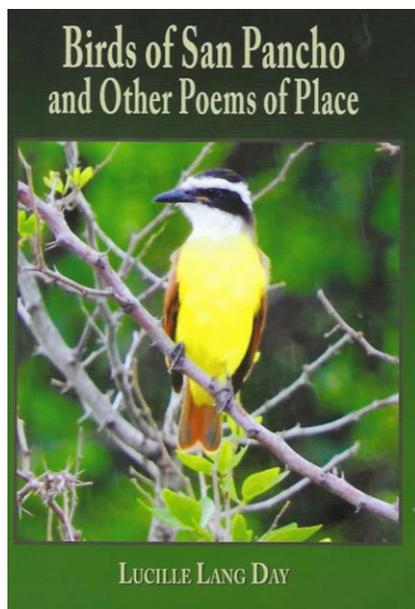
~a black and white photo

More beautiful than self portraits
with monkeys and snakes,
in pristine lace, like a
communion dress, you are all
purity and grace.
The cigarette, casually
caught in your left hand,
the tip rosy, glowing,
seems to mock the girlish
eyelet, the puffy sleeves.
Overlarge beads mask
the gorget at your throat,
reminiscent of the spiraling sun,
iridescent, like the patch of armor
on the neck of a hummingbird.
You flick grey ash
into the three-legged bowl,
a replica of ancient sacrificial
lamps, the kind now used for salsa.
Dark palms blur
against the stucco wall—
as they must
from cradling so much light.

~ Jeanine Stevens, Sacramento, California

First Place in The Ekphrasis Prize, 2009
Published in *Ekphrasis*, 2009

Book Review by Alice Pero: *Birds of San Pancho* by Lucille Lang Day



Lucille Lang Day, *Birds of San Pancho and Other Poems of Place*. Blue Lights Press, November 2020, 126 pages. Paperback, ISBN 978-1421836645

Lucille Lang Day takes us on a journey around the world in *Birds of San Pancho and Other Poems of Place*. Starting in Mexico we are immersed in the colors of jacaranda and roses; we sit on a red tile floor and feel green. Day is a master of sense; perceptions float through her and then on to us, the readers. We are challenged by her knowledge of birds and stay with our fingers alert to Google: “kiskadee,” “cacique”, “chachalacas,” all chosen for sounds and the colors that move in and out of her poems like music.

The poet wanders through Central America and as far as the Galápagos before leaping across the pond to Europe. We dine with her in Greece, float on the Aegean, feel the dry air and get dizzy looking over the cliffs at distant villages. The modern and ancient merge as the poet weaves her personal narrative in with that of the gods.

“I order baklava to share with my husband, age
seventy-six, who waits, neither sick nor well,
back in our hotel room, and I complain
to the moon that even the gods are fleeting,
but I like that story. The tree. The goddess
who holds her own against the sea.”

We arrive in France, visit Monet’s “Water Lilies,” “Vincent’s Bedroom in Arles.” The poet has “entered the painting/to stand on the Japanese bridge/framed by bamboo” and so have we, personally involved as if we were reading a novel awash with colors and sensations. “Iris are out/in white and purple ruffles... Poppies swish red skirts/like flamenco dancers.” In Arles we are in Vincent’s bedroom, imagining the artist going “mad dreaming of sunflowers.” Again the poet’s own life intertwines with place as she describes trying not to panic when her husband drove away in Sarlat, France, inexplicitly not coming back for hours. We go through prehistoric caves, mourn the death ten-thousand-year child. In Belgium we find Pygmalion. Again art melds with the present reality in a way that never jars.

“A plant sprouts from her head; a flower
floats before her. She is abundance,
a garden. A man in a black hat and coat
hurries by the way men do, doesn’t notice”

We glide through Spain, stopping to view paintings and eat small green olive s. “The Lark’s Wing, Encircles with Golden Blue, Rejoins the Heart of the Poppy Sleeping on the Diamond-Studded Meadow After a painting at Funació Joan Miro, Barcelona” is only a title, but is a poem in itself. This poem is tight and rhythmic and resonates with beautiful images. “The lark’s wing: a black oval/floating, buoyed by/a patch of blue sky/small as an inner tube/in the sun’s yellow pool.” European voyages, having also visited Belgium and Amsterdam, end in Italy where “White chrysanthemums/bloom on the broken/terrace painted by the bed.”

Part II “Between the Two Shining Seas” no less eloquently sings us through the USA. “Names of the States” is a resounding validation of the Native American roots of our great country: The poet lists the 29 state names that have Indian derivations. As these poems weave through our own country, the love of family, loves and losses come more into them. Yet the power of the natural world permeates throughout. Lucille Lang Day is a wonderful poet who brings shivers of amazement. Her reverence for all that is living and that which has passed away makes us feel more alive.

"I am redwoods and rain,
stomata like green lips opening
for a kiss on the underside of leaves,
a leopard leaping high as a house,
it fur glowing with black-gold roses."

~ Alice Pero, Los Angeles, California

Book Review by Kathy Lundy Derengowski *Flourishing - Florescence* by Elizabeth Yahn Williams

Flourishing - Florescence by Elizabeth Yahn Williams with Art by Marion Wong and French Translation by Edith Jonsson-Devillers. Guidelights Productions, 2020. 130 pages. ISBN 978-0-9967170-4-5

Poet and California State Poetry Society member Elizabeth Yahn Williams is premiering her new bilingual collection, written in English and French in collaboration with her gifted translator Dr. Edith Jonsson-Devillers. A display of the mastery of free verse and rhyme, *Flourishing - Florescence* includes evocative haiku and senryu, along with other poetic forms. Here, Elizabeth Yahn Williams investigates the many ways that life, enhanced by poetry, encourages each of us to FLOURISH.

Whether, as a reader, you are looking for inspiration or for motivation, one or more of her offerings will speak to you in words both lyrical and stimulating. With vivid imagery Elizabeth creates poignant vignettes that will relate to your own life in unexpected ways. You will find humor in the rhymes of "Perusing the Parrot," pathos in "Grand Piano," and a mix of emotions from haiku that capture, with brevity, illusions of time and space. With haunting and vivid language, Williams has a gift for choosing the right word for the right place. Opening with *Flourishing's* backstory:

in mid-winter's snow
birds eat berries, groundhogs dream
all await spring

Williams and Wong reveal Phoenix Preflight paired with:

from paucity
fresh visions for an era
arise with phoenix

Time comes for this parallel reader's mascot, Rare Bird, to announce:

"Victoire, le temps est venu!"
Spring has blossomed, buds appear,
Life renews, the future's here.

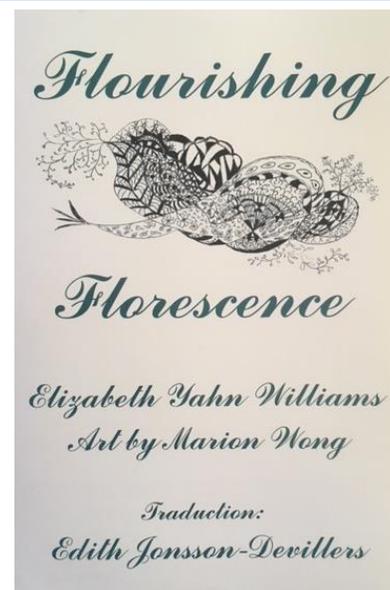
It's also time to enjoy one's special secrets that may arrive at dawn as in "I Have Loved Mornings." ...And mornings seem to be a favorite theme throughout the year, whether written in Santa Fe at Easter:

poppies bedeck hills
golden at sunrise
Easter morning

or at the poet's Oceanside home in Yuletide:

dawn's rose light softens
fronds that fringe valley's cradle
Oceanside Christmas

Her senryu on "Mornings at Oceanside Harbor" lead to another frequent theme of water —whether at a dock or on a river where the author contemplates life's changes in "Celebrating Mid Century" as she writes from a paddleboat



in the wake of years
of white-capped currents;
and, as the stack's steam dissipates,
our concerns do, too.

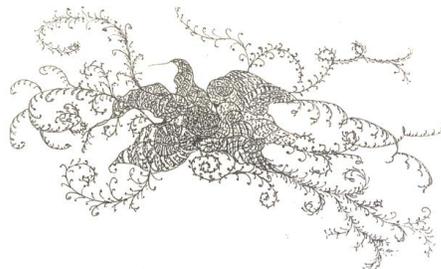
Changes occur in relationships, too, as one sees in "Watching the Water" and "My Reign in Spain":

He's giving up his hike today
to meet my plane.
I've been away
and, perhaps, missed?

But, as children may observe, it seems some familial relationships never change, as the poet's dad displays in "Sundays Are for Preying." (Williams had to keep this fruit-filled petit theft secret until her family had safely moved from Fresno's Fig Garden, CA, back to their hometown of Columbus, Ohio.) When asked about a favorite poem, she frequently quotes the following, as she loves Dr. Edith's alliterative translation as well:

finely feathered fog
fluffs away from croaking frog
morning is broken

brouillard bigrement brouillé
un batracien bigarré se balade
aube brisée



Williams comments that she especially enjoyed writing to Wong's Birth of a Sea Princess who backs into adulthood. As to other art besides mascot, Rare Bird, she's especially fond of Treasure Eddy and Fan Flair. Also, the author values Marion's inclusion of her peaceful symbol, Bird with Sprig. It would appear that "winged things" are a theme as well. In fact, a flip through the index of illustrations reveals that one has such a title.

Enhanced by the art and illustration of Marion Wong, as well as the French translations by Doctor Edith, this collection appeals on multiple levels. Returning to pages to recapture an insight, you will want to rediscover a turn of phrase, or the hint of a memory from this skilled and acclaimed trio whose idyllic renditions will remain with you long after you have closed their book.

~ Kathy Lundy Derengowski, San Diego

Book Review by Toti O'Brien

Figures of Humor and Strange Beauty by Kath Abela Wilson

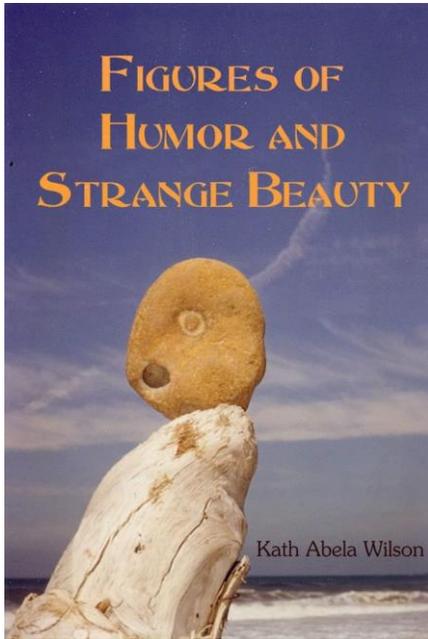
Figures of Humor and Strange Beauty, by Kath Abela Wilson, Glass Lyre Press, 2019, 68 pages, paperback with illustrations. \$16.00. ISBN 978-1941783566.

Figures of Humor and Strange Beauty is Kath Abela Wilson's first full-length collection of poetry, following two chapbooks of political haikus, and a number of poetry anthologies she curated and edited. The poems forming this original and delightful book emerged "inexorably, in this exact order," and were polished by the author for over twenty years. They describe (in eighteen variations, distinct yet intimately linked), a brief stroll the poet takes from her house to the shore, following an unvaried path, a street bordered by trees, a flight of wooden stairs. On the beach, she is attracted by stones, driftwood, flotsam that she assembles in various shapes, giving birth to strange creatures she sometimes returns to the ocean, sometimes the ocean reclaims.

Twelve drawings intersperse the poems. They are small, yet they enlarge even smaller diagrams the author sketched on her notepad as she planned her sculptures of rocks, algae, shells. Fluid shapes, spontaneous yet accurate, sometimes they are accompanied by a date, or a caption. A location, "at the ocean," or just the word "ocean," suggesting a topography, a map. Or else a dedication, an offering, "to the ocean."

On her way to the sea, on the beach, or on her way back, Wilson pays attention to things. Very small ones... the imprint of a round pebble on sand. Very large... "ocean and sky, unobstructed, as far as she could see." Beware of

the poet who carefully looks, listens, breathes in the world! More seeps into her vision than what meets the eye. If she stares too closely at anything, it turns into a poem.



There had been a week
of hot clear days
when things had been all too visible.
Everything was dry;
ready to crack open,
like those pine cones
that were popping seeds
all over her doorsteps.

As she walks, as she stops, trapped within an ecstatic moment of deeper insight, her state of receptive porousness leads her to a discovery of voices, a deciphering of calligraphies made of mineral, wood, wind and water. Stones, trees, birds, clouds, waves rhythmically crashing on sand speak a tongue that becomes intelligible by the mere act of tuning, harmonizing with the micro and the macrocosm, letting herself be a diapason. Nature's idioms, then, become poems spontaneously writing themselves in the notepad she always carries along.

Poems, or rather poem. A sole, delicate song, branching into fresh stanzas but woven with recurrent motifs, coming back to familiar choruses, such as the small stone the poet places under a red-leaved tree in "Spontaneous," then she revisits, twice, in following poems. Oh, yes, it is still there... And her notebook has the accordion shape that so perfectly lends itself to a continuum. Once unfolded, it becomes a staircase, a road, or a rainbow.

She had hold of its cover,
but she saw it sway,
cloudlike, toward the sea.
It seemed almost to disappear.
Her head was full of the sound
of the rising tide,
and she felt that she too might vanish.

So the secret voices of nature self-write, become words, a book, thanks to the poet's openness and surrendering. What they have to say is both mysterious and luminous. They explain how creation in its whole interacts, echoes and resonates. They articulate the connections between things, places, moments, demonstrate how all moves and transforms in concert. They bring understanding of rhythms and cycles. They bring peace.



Something else occurs, though, as the poet, during her walks and stations, deeply listens, letting her senses expand beyond the usual borders. She starts borrowing the point of view of what she is observing... She starts seeing the world through the eye of the hawk, of the heron, in the flashing light of a falling star, from "the thin curved cup of the moon." And from those levitating, shifting, mobile perspectives, she can perceive herself. A small dot, there, on the beach, shadowed by a solitary bird. Or else, in the past, moving across the maze of her memories. She can see herself as part of the universe, niched, cradled within it, simultaneously abided, and free.

Immense above:
the sky, awash with stars.
She watched until one,
with bold stroke, fell
from sky to sea,

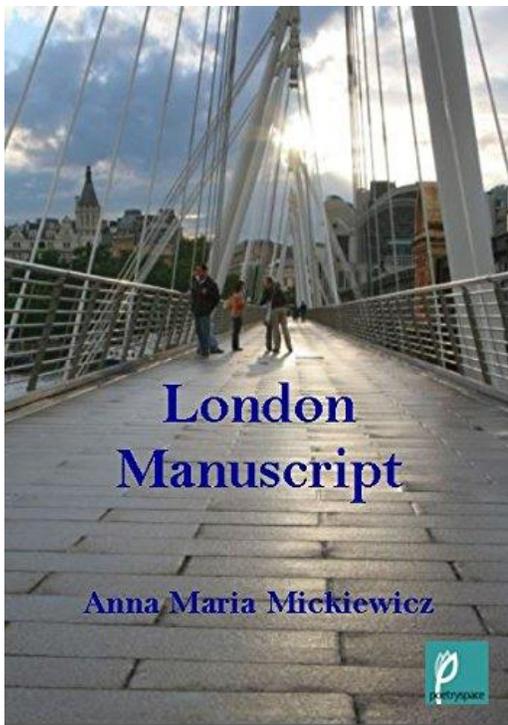
And in its flash—
she saw herself
on her rock: She was
an illumination
in her own book.

The refined, delicate surrealism of *Figures* brings to mind what Frida Kahlo used to say about her own art, “I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality.” Although Wilson’s verse has “dreamlike precision,” “dreamlike assurance,” it truly belongs “in the dark before dream,” the liminal chamber, the hinge where threads of reality come lose and a richer tapestry is woven, intertwining the mundane with the vision. Like when, at the far end of the estuary, fresh and salt water reunite, stream and ocean converge.

~ Toti O'Brien, Pasadena, California

Book Review by Ted Smith-Orr: *London Manuscript* by Anna Maria Mickiewicz

London Manuscript, by Anna Maria Mickiewicz, 26 pages, Bristol: Poetry Space, 2014. ISBN 978-1909404182



The volume *London Manuscript* by Anna Maria Mickiewicz, which was published by Poetry Space in English, is not an extensive book packed with an unnecessary number of poems only to satisfy the expectations of the publisher. The book consists of twenty-six pages, where Anna Maria shares her reflections based on poetical journeys to France, Warsaw, Lublin, Oxford, London, Arkhangelsk, and many other places. In the poem *Summer in Seaford*, the readers are offered very subtle expressions: “The sun sheds it’s golden drops / The sea devours them instantly”. Whereas in the poem *Another Alexandra Palace Spring*, she presents the readers with a panorama of the city and, laying the false trail, she ends: “We embrace”.

Her profound insight into the English culture finds confirmation in the poem *Reflected in Porcelain* arguing that everything can be solved thanks to “tea only with milk”. These poems are refined and succinct, which we expect from an experienced writer. The poetess sits us comfortably between the East and the West. In her poem *December the Thirteenth*, she thinks of this day as a dire prediction, and she lived in Poland then: “A crumbling world order cries out for help”; “The voice of The Subversive faltered and fell [...] / another empire topples, just like that / Not even sheets of paper anymore”. The volume also contains a piece titled *Chocolate*, which could be

described as multidimensional poetic prose. Based on an unfulfilled profession of love made to chocolate by a woman, the excerpt starts in the Warsaw of the 60’s, reaches America and Italy, just to go back to Warsaw at the turn of the millennium. It is rich in paradoxes: pleasure and pain, the happiness derived from waiting and the bitter taste of contemporary changes.

Anna Maria Mickiewicz finished this period of her development as a poetess many years ago and she enriches the world of poetry generously by organizing literary events in London, editing, writing and choosing poems for publication. She accepts the challenge of translating poetry, but she is also inclined to ask Tom Wachtel to translate some of the poems. Nurturing a live memory of Poland, she simultaneously keeps discovering the United Kingdom. *London Manuscript* is a magnificent study written by a poetess – emigrant, living outside of her country but having a close look at new surroundings. Conscious of her past, she seems not to look back but tries to embrace the present and unknown future. The observations and associations of the poetess-foreigner from the post-dependent country are enlightening and bold.

~ Ted Smith-Orr, London, England

Not a Book Review by Maja Trochimczyk

We received a book of poems by Gail Wronsky for review, and I was not yet able to place it (raise your hand, if you would like to review it!). Meanwhile, I wrote a reflection based upon reading that book. Let me just say that I profoundly disagreed with its philosophical premises. So there it is, a polemical screed, almost a poem...

On Reading Gail Wronsky in this Universe

Your blindness is self-inflicted, oh, teacher of generations,
hobbled by erudition – the blind leading the blind –
into the abyss – I'd like to say, but, no, just into a ditch
by the wayside, right next to the straight, white, sandy road
leading due East. As in Easter, or better still, the Sun Rising.

How not to see the world as dying, shrouded in a fog of sophistry?
You simply have to stop cursing. You only have to bless it. Your words
transmute the air you breathe, crystallize in your water.

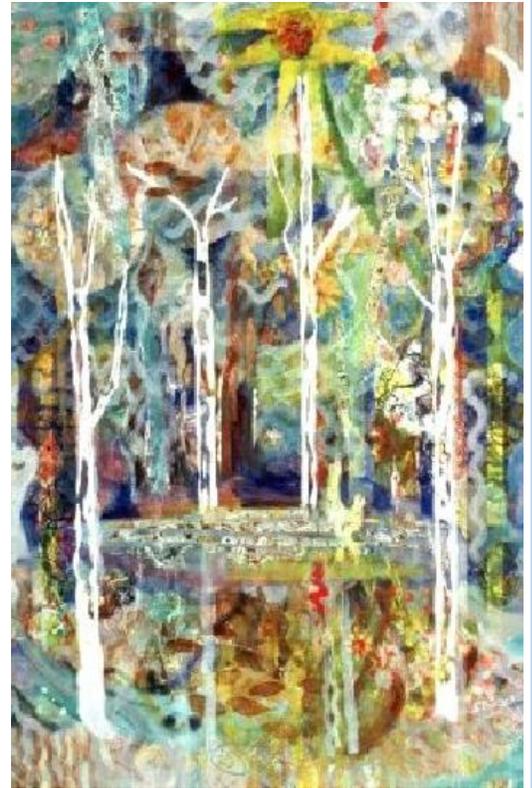
Have you ever looked at the Sun, oh, poet of a thousand metaphors,
ten thousand accolades? Have you ever listened to that quiet voice,
wordlessly singing Hosanna? The Sun is Born. The Light so Bright.
The rays so full of little hands touching, caressing, smoothing out
each particle of matter twirling in its allotted space?

Yes, I know, you have your themes – Apocalypse, aging, loss,
despair, genitalia...Yes, I know, everything has its price.
But how can you be so blind? Oh, poet of poets, the blind
leading the blind – into the abyss, I'd like to say, but, no,
into a ditch by the wayside.

The path widens. Serene sages with sky-clear eyes
shine as lucid facets of endless, rotating crystal,
the living gem of our well-ordered Cosmos –
ruby, garnet, coral, amber, topaz, jade, emerald,
turquoise, sapphire, lapis-lazuli, amethyst and diamond
light streams swirl around the pilgrims, wrap them
in auroras of the sublime. Their rainbow bodies glow
golden-white – incandescent in morning sunshine.

Each one – a spark of the Divine, dressed in quarks
of the Divine Matter, for a test of the Divine Mind,
on an artery of the Divine Heart, along the ascending
road into the Divine Presence – all are jewels in the Divine
Crown – of the Here, of the Now, of We Are –

~ Maja Trochimczyk,
Los Angeles, California



Four Seasons by Susan Dobay (1995) 70"X 48"



Immersion by Susan Dobay (1994) 80"x96"
mixed media on canvas. SusanDobay.com

Monthly Contest Submissions Guidelines

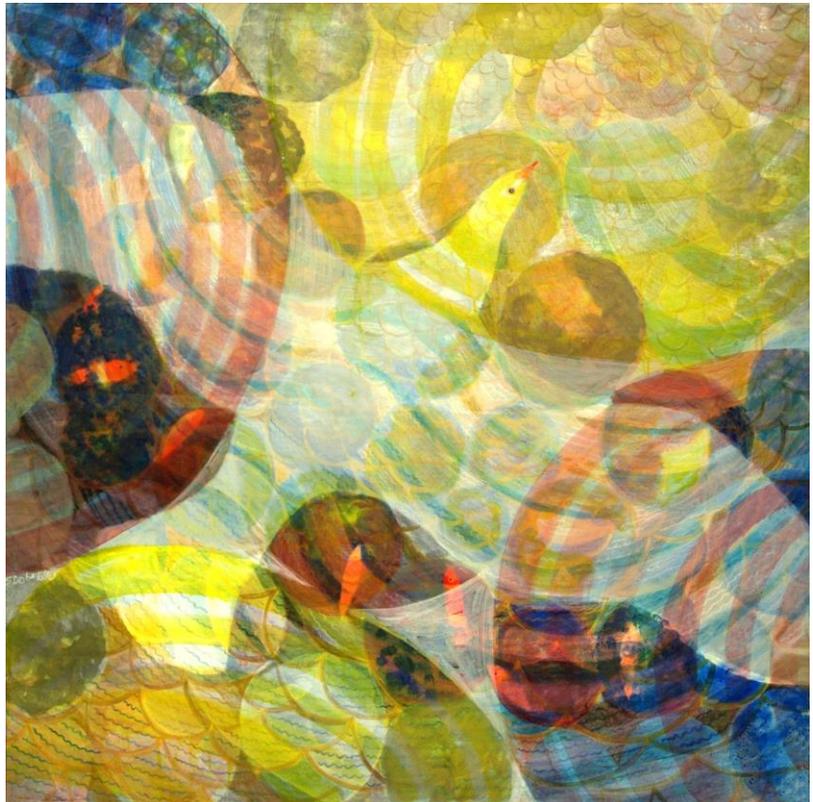
California State Poetry Society encourages poetic creativity by organizing monthly poetry contests. The contests are open to all poets, whether or not they are members of the CSPA. Reading fees are \$1.50 per poem with a \$3.00 minimum for members of CSPA and/or NFSPS societies and \$3.00 per poem with a \$6.00 minimum for non-members. Entries must be postmarked during the month of the contest in which they are entered. They must consist of a first page with all contact information (name, address, telephone number and email address) and the titles of the poems being submitted. At this time there are three ways to submit:

1. by email. Poets may submit their work by email to: SPSMonthlyContests@gmail.com (Specify Month) and simultaneously pay their contest fees by PayPal to: CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety@gmail.com.
2. by regular mail, enclosing printed copies of poems and your check, CSPA Monthly Contest – (Specify Month) Post Office Box 4288, Sunland, California 91041
3. online on our website CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org, or

All Monthly Contests are judged by Alice Pero, CSPA Monthly Contest Judge. The 1st place winner receives half of the prize pool for pools less than \$100. For pools of \$100 or more, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners receive \$50, \$10 and \$5, respectively. If there are insufficient fees submitted, the minimum prize is \$10. There are no exceptions to the prize disbursement rules. The monthly contest winners are announced as they are awarded and the winners are notified by mail. All of the winners for the year are listed in the first CSPA Newsbriefs of the following year. In addition, the first prize winner poems are published in the CSPA Poetry Letter (PDF, email, posted on website) and posted on our blog. Please note: Do not send SAE's. We do not return poems. If you win, we will let you know. Otherwise there are no notifications.

CSPA Monthly Contest Themes (Revised)

- ① January: Nature, Seasons, Landscape
- ② February: Love
- ③ March: Open, Free Subject
- ④ April: Mythology, Dreams, Other Universes
- ⑤ May: Personification, Characters, Portraits
- ⑥ June: The Supernatural
- ⑦ July: Childhood, Memoirs
- ⑧ August: Places, Poems of Location
- ⑨ September: Colors, Music, Dance
- ⑩ October: Humor, Satire
- ⑪ November: Family, Friendship, Relationships
- ⑫ December: Best of Your Best (Winning or published poems only. Indicate name of contest or publication and the issue/dates of publication/award.)



Searching by Susan Dobay, acrylic on canvas.
SusanDobay.com

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