

# THISTLE-DOWN

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

Issue 1

\*\*\*\*\*

anticipating the meeting of January 13, 1996

\*\*\*\*\*

January writing assignment/suggestion:  
Topic: Janus is the idea behind the words  
40 line limit - any form  
Bill Johnson has charge of the day's writing workshop

Meeting: Saturday, January 13  
VINCENT WANG RESTAURANT  
820 South Front Street  
Mankato, Minnesota

#####

11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch  
Chinese or American food. Reservations not needed.  
Guests always welcomed. Programs planned  
to start promptly at 1 p.m.



A poem should be motionless in time  
As the moon climbs  
Leaving, as the moon releases  
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,  
Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,  
Memory by memory the mind -  
A poem should be motionless in time  
As the moon climbs  
  
Ars Poetica  
Archibald MacLeish

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

MEMBERSHIPS run from January to January. Fees are \$10 for adults; \$3 for students.

Dues may be mailed to our Treasurer:

Elinor Schmidt  
1122 Marsh Street  
Mankato, MN 56001

Dues for the League of Minnesota Poets (LOMP) may be mailed to Shirley Ensrud, Treasurer,  
208 S. Main St., Blue Earth, MN 56013. Dues for LOMP (which carry with them a year's membership in the  
national federation of poets (NFSPS) are \$15 or \$8 for students. Membership is open to all. If you haven't  
paid up before now, the Poor Poet says "Put on your skates or skis and join us for our Winter Games!"

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Upcoming meetings will include:

\*February 10, 1996: Nancy Dauer, Study of a Poet-Speaker's Choice  
and the assignment is The Road Taken-Journeys, real, imagined or  
symbolic. Free Verse, 40 line limit - #18 in the '96 NFSPS contest.

\*\*March 9, 1996: Ron Arsenault, musician, Writing Lyrics and the  
assignment is: A sonnet expressing the spiritual impact of great music.  
This is #30 in the 1996 NFSPS contest.

\*\*\*If you are superstitious, keep in mind that while our meeting is on the  
13th, it has missed Friday by the degree of 24 hours. Also a thought to  
hold, it is not only March that contains the Ides. January has them, too.  
However, there is nothing to beware except the weather. Come if you  
possibly can. Poets need the spiritual communion of a kindred soul.

Look **INSIDE** for news about all  
of us  
and for **ITEMS OF INTEREST**  
to everyone.

A calendar of coming events  
Personal achievements  
Questions posed  
Maybe even some answers

THANK YOU MAVIS!

As you can see, Mavis has already worked out most of this month's newsletter as well as the two months past. Her creativity is wonderful, and her help is much appreciated.

DON'T FORGET March 15th  
NFSPS ANNUAL CONTEST  
50 CONTESTS  
(1 Student contest, too)  
Rules on our contest table

## JANUARY PROGRAM

### "WHY POETRY?"

Our own life-time member, Bill Johnson, the LOMP Poet Laureate and a Poet-in-the Schools will lead this writing workshop and help us answer this question, so be sure and bring your pen and paper and he will help us get those creative juices flowing.

*Sue Chambers says thank you for all the cards and letters over the Christmas season regarding her family, your love and concern have been a great source of strength for her and her mother.*

PRAIRIE LAKES REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL announces McKnight Individual Artist Grants. This year eight \$800 project grants are available. Contact 1-800-298-1254 for a new 1996 application.

**PLEASE HELP LOMP PASS THE WORD ABOUT OUR STATE STUDENT CONTEST!**

Make copies of the enclosed announcement and distribute it to your local schools--for students in grades 6 through 12) Mail or give a copy to your nieces & nephews, grandchildren, children, neighbors, church members, any one you can think of!



# League of Minnesota Poets

## ATTENTION STUDENT POETS

The League of Minnesota Poets proudly presents the

### TWELFTH ANNUAL POETRY COMPETITIONS

(Postmark Deadline: March 15, 1996)

STATE AND NATIONAL AWARDS

No Entry Fee

Two categories: Junior Division (Grades 6 through 8)  
Senior Division (9 through 12)

All students in Minnesota schools—public, parochial, private—are eligible.

### RULES FOR SUBMISSION

1. ONE original poem per student
2. Typed or neatly printed on standard typewriter paper, with one photocopy
3. On the TYPED sheet, poem and title only
4. On the COPY only, add:
  - (1) student's name and complete home address
  - (2) student's grade level
  - (3) school and its complete mailing address, with zip code and school phone number
  - (4) this statement, typed (or printed) and signed: "This is my original work."

Previously published poems and those which have already won other awards ARE eligible.  
Mail all entries to The League of Minnesota Poets student contest chairperson:

CHARMAINE P. DONOVAN  
4091 HARTLEY DR. N.W.  
BRAINERD, MN 56401

Nationally recognized out-of-state poets are selected to judge this state contest. The top ten winners in each division will be forwarded to the NATIONAL MANNINGHAM STUDENT POETRY TRUST COMPETITION to be judged with entries from all other participating states. Minnesota students have honored our state by garnering eight top national awards in eleven years! Help us keep Minnesota in the winning circle by your continuing participation. The League commends our teachers and students for making this program a growing success.

*"Poetry is our expression of awareness in our culture in our time."- Wilfred M. Johnson*

GOOD LUCK AND GOOD WRITING

# It's that time of the year:

Mark your calendar as a reminder.

## MSU GOOD THUNDER READING SERIES:

**January 18, 1996 - Robert Wrigley - Poetry**

With four books to his credit, this NEA fellowship recipient teaches at Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston, Idaho.

**February 8, 1996 - J. Otis Powell - Poetry & Performance**

Powell is a published poet who has performed at the Loft in Minneapolis.

**February 29, 1996 - Lynn Emmanuel - Poetry**

This NEA Fellowship recipient has two books published, has been a participant at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference and teaches at the University of Pittsburgh.

**April 9-12, 1996 - Phyllis Barber - Fiction & nonfiction**

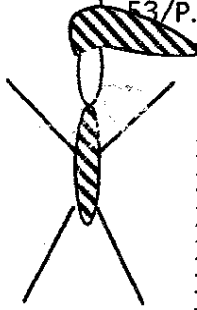
**May 2, 1996 - PattiAnn Rogers - Poetry**

Rogers has six books published, is a Pushcart Foundation winner and an NEA Fellowship recipient, and teaches at the University of Arkansas.

**May 23, 1996 - Ron Hansen - Fiction**

This series is usually held on Thursday with a writing critique in the afternoon and a reading, open to the public, in the evening. Richard Robbins, MSU English Dept, is director of the series: MSU 53/P.O. Box 8400, Mankato, MN 56002 (507) 389-2117 Fax (507) 389-5887.

whence... \*\*\*\*\*



I looked in my heart while the wild swans went over;  
And what did I see I had not seen before?  
Only a question less or a question more;  
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.  
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying!  
House without air! I leave you and lock your door!  
Wild swans, come over the town, come over  
The town again, trailing your legs and crying!

Wild Swans  
Edna St. Vincent Millay

(Clearly, a case of cabin fever!! says the Poor Poet )

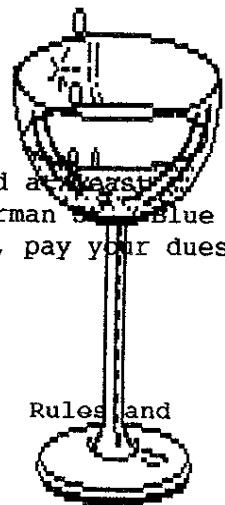
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July 1996 is the deadline for submissions to the Moccasin. Send a maximum six-six poems of 24 lines or less to Editor Meridith Cook, 427 Gorman St., Blue Earth, MN., 56013. If you are not a League of Minnesota Poets member, pay your dues first since you must be a LOMP member to be included

AND

July 31, 1996 is the deadline for the LOMP 12th national contest. Rules and regulations are at our booktable each meeting.

June 21-25, 1996  
NFSPS Annual Convention  
Dallas, Texas  
Deadline for submission is  
March 15, 1996  
A bus is planned if enough poets  
sign up to attend. Talk to Susan  
Chambers or Bill Johnson



UPCOMING OPEN MIKE POETRY READINGS

Share your poetry, and tell the audience about SMPS!

Barnes & Nobles Bookstore, across from the Riverhills Mall, Mankato is holding a reading on Saturday, January 27th, 1996 at 8:00 p.m.

Maggie's Restaurant 1600 Monks Avenue, Mankato has an open stage once a month. January had not yet been set. Call 625-2659 after the 5th for information.

The Coffee Hag 329 North Riverfront, Mankato has an open reading on Friday, January 26th at 8:30 p.m.; a Poetry slam/competition on Feb. 1 at 7:30 p.m. and an open reading on February 22 at 7:30 p.m.

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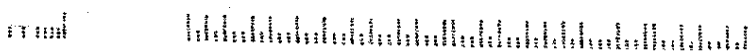


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2207  
Am*

Thistledown Editor  
Sue Chambers  
RR3 Box 86  
Good Thunder, Mn.

CAROL DAHLIN  
648 PERRY AVE.  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55429

TELETYPE  
ST. KNOWN  
FEB 1 1996



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SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

Issue 2

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anticipating the meeting of February 10, 1996

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February writing assignment/suggestion:  
Topic: The Road Taken - Journeys Real,  
Imagined or Symbolic - Free Verse 40 line limit  
No. 18 in the 1996 NFSPS Contest  
Program: Nancy Dauer - Study of a Poet

Meeting: Saturday, February 10, 1996  
**VINCENT WANG RESTAURANT**  
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11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch  
Chinese or American food. Reservations not  
needed.  
Guests always welcomed. Programs planned  
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Glory be to God for dappled things -  
For skies of couple-colour as a branded cow,  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow and plough,  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.  
All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.  
*Pied Beauty*  
Gerard Manley Hopkins

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### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Upcoming meetings will include:

\*March 9, 1996: At this writing, our program is: Ron Arsenault, musician, in a discussion about writing lyrics. The assignment is: A sonnet expressing the spiritual impact of great music. This is #30 in the 1996 NFSPS contest.

\*\* What is there to say about February? The Middle Gloom in a Field of Three Glooms & thus, something like the third witch of Macbeth. When all is said & done, perhaps much ado about nothing, except for all the birthdays of so many nice people. "Endurance" is the game we all play. Have you heard of it? A little like "Monopoly," asks the Poor Poet, "since it seems to go on forever?"

\*\*\*Please come to share a new poem. Give us, too, your gift of insight to bring some charm to an old nag of a question or a limping state of being or just a day without sunshine. When you no longer know if the six weeks from Groundhog Day is a good thing or a bad thing, poetry is the answer!

Look **INSIDE** for news about all of us and for **ITEMS OF INTEREST** to everyone.

A calendar of coming events  
Personal achievements  
Questions posed  
Maybe even some answers

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This NEA Fellowship recipient has two books published, has been a participant at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference and teaches at the University of Pittsburgh.

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Noon. Hunger is the only thing  
singing in my belly.  
I walk through blossoming cherry trees  
on the library mall,  
past the young couples coupling  
... to the Lake Street McDonald's.

I wait in the greasy air.  
All around me people are eating -  
the sizzle of conversation,  
the salty odor of sweat,  
the warm flesh pressing out of  
hip huggers and halter tops.

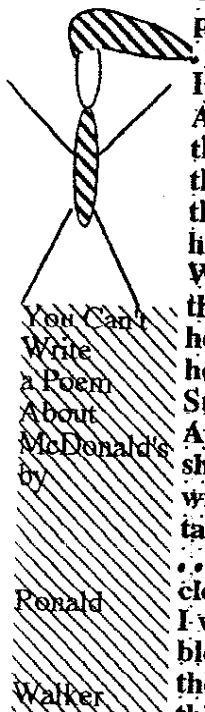
When I finally reach the cash register,  
the counter girl is crisp as a pickle,  
her fingers thin as french fries,  
her face brown as a bun.  
Suddenly I understand cannibalism.

As I reach for her,  
she breaks into pieces  
wrapped neat and packaged for  
take-out.

... We leave together, her warm aroma  
close at my side.

I walk back through the cherry trees  
blossoming up into pies,  
the young couples frying in  
the hot, oily sun,

... singing, my ear, eye, and tongue  
fat with the wonder  
of this hungry world.



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NFSPS Annual Convention  
Dallas, Texas

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Poets will not be held as originally scheduled since  
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ELAINE ANDERSON, RR1 Box 43, Trimont, Minnesota 56176 will be our new Treasurer. Send your dues to her.

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FOR THE CHILDREN: Wednesday, February 28th at 7:30 p.m., Angelina Griffen of Minnetonka Mn. will read for about 40 minutes from her November 1995 poetry book "The Norwegian Lady Smiles". She will be available to autograph books. Sunday, February 25th at 2:00 p.m. spelling bees (all poets should know how to spell!)—1st & 2nd graders, 3rd & 4th graders, and finally 5th & 6th graders. Winners will receive a gift certificate.

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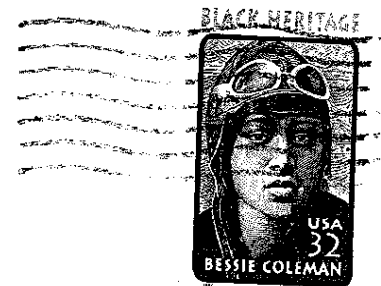
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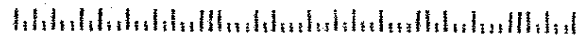
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Carol Dahlin  
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Minneapolis, MN 55429



Carol

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SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15 Issue 3

\*\*\*\*\*

Anticipating the meeting of March 9, 1996

\*\*\*\*\*

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Any form 40 line limit.

#19 The New York Poetry Forum Award

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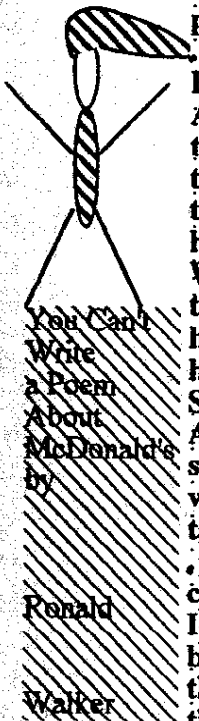
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I wait in the greasy air.  
All around me people are eating -  
the sizzle of conversation,  
the salty odor of sweat,  
the warm flesh pressing out of  
hip huggers and halter tops.  
When I finally reach the cash register,  
the counter girl is crisp as a pickle,  
her fingers thin as french fries,  
her face brown as a bun.  
Suddenly I understand cannibalism.  
As I reach for her,  
she breaks into pieces  
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KEEP CHECKING WITH:

BARNES & NOBLE

MAGGIES

THE COFFEE HAG

THE LIBRARY

FOR POETRY EVENTS.

THE TOOLS OF A POET ARE:

ONE BIC PEN -- ONE PAD OF PAPER -- A LIBRARY CARD

A MODEST INVESTMENT TO BE RICH FOR LIFE!

## Achievements Reported

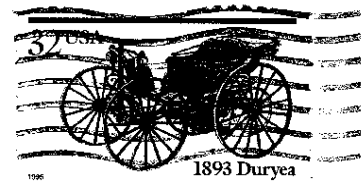
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SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

Issue 4

\*\*\*\*\*

anticipating the meeting of April 13, 1996

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April writing assignment/suggestion:  
Poet's Choice  
April Program: We will critique the poems we exchanged at the March meeting.  
There is no SMPS meeting in May; hence no assignment

Meeting: Saturday, April 13, 1996

VINCENT WANG RESTAURANT

820 South Front Street

Mankato, Minnesota

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11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch  
Chinese or American food. Reservations not needed.

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## Prosperity Doesn't Suit Everyone

One year when our cotton crop was good  
and watermelons hit the market high  
a circuit-riding tailor came to town.  
My father felt the time had come to buy

a proper suit of clothes. He was measured  
with flourishes. It came by mail. Impressed,  
we could only stroke the striped serge,  
still boxed. But when Sunday came at last

so did our kin, to see the grand display.  
The pants and coat engulfed him like a child.  
He wouldn't talk or go to church that day,  
and no one in our family blinked or smiled.  
By: Jimmy Carter

From: Always A Reckoning and Other Poems  
Times Books Random House c1995

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

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Dues may be mailed to our Treasurer: Elaine Anderson, RR 1, Box 43, Trimont, MN 56176

Dues for the League of Minnesota Poets (LOMP) may be mailed to Shirley Ensrud, Treasurer, 208 S. Main St., Blue Earth, MN 56013. Dues for LOMP (which carry with them a year's membership in the national federation of poets (NFSPS) are \$15 or \$8 for students. Membership is open to all. "I know why I can't find the latest copy of the Lomplighter," says The Poor Poet. "I haven't paid my dues!"

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Re: Upcoming meetings - the word is:

\*There will not be a May meeting in Mankato. Instead the League of Minnesota Poets will convene Saturday, May 11, at the Radisson-Harbor View, 5th and Superior, Duluth. The registration and reservation deadline is April 27. Hotel phone is (218) 727-8981. The \$10 registration fee includes lunch and should be sent to Verna Holappa, 6236 Lakewood Rd., Duluth, 55804.

\*\* Our annual Poor Poets' Picnic will be June 8 at the home of Mavis Christensen, 2115 Cottonwood Lake Drive, Windom. Details inside.

\*\*\*"Membership in our group benefits whenever we bring a friend to a meeting," says our stalwart mentor Bill Johnson. So, "Do it, do it, do it," cheers the Poor Poet through a poet-sized megaphone!

Look INSIDE for news about all of us and for ITEMS OF INTEREST to everyone.

A calendar of coming events  
Personal achievements  
Questions posed  
Maybe even some answers

# It's that time of the year:

Mark your calendar as a reminder.

MSU GOOD THUNDER READING SERIES:

April 9-12, 1996 - Phyllis Barber - Fiction & nonfiction

May 2, 1996 - PattiAnn Rogers - Poetry

Rogers has six books published, is a Pushcart Foundation winner and an NEA Fellowship recipient, and teaches at the University of Arkansas.

May 23, 1996 - Ron Hansen - Fiction

This series is usually held on Thursday with a writing critique in the afternoon and a reading, open to the public, in the evening. Richard Robbins, MSU English Dept, is director of the series: MSU 53/P.O. Box 8400, Mankato, MN 56002 (507) 389-2117 Fax (507) 389-5887.

in Just -

by e.e. cummings

in Just-

spring when the world is  
mud-luscious the little  
lame balloonman  
whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come

running from marbles and  
piracies and it's  
spring  
when the world is

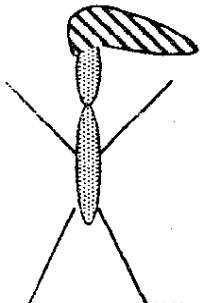
puddle-wonderful  
the queer

old balloonman whistles  
far and wee  
and bettyandisbel come dancing  
from hop-sotch and jump-rope

and  
it's  
spring  
and  
the

goat-footed  
balloonMan whistles

far  
and  
wee



A most sincere thank-you is extended to Ron Arsenault & William Lertzman for the most enjoyable program of song they brought to us in February.

June 21-25, 1996  
NFSPS Annual Convention  
Dallas, Texas

A bus is planned if enough poets sign up to attend. Talk to Susan Chambers or Bill Johnson for ride-sharing to this event as well as to Duluth in May.

The Poor Poets' Picnic on June 8 is a potluck event. Bring a dish of your choice to share. Mavis will provide dishes, silver, drinks and buttered buns with meats and cheeses. To find 2115 Cottonwood Lake Drive, take Highway 60 south from Mankato and go about 60 miles. As you enter Windom, you will pass Caldwell's Meat Packing on the righthand side and at that point, the highway turns to four-lane through town. Go another mile or so until you see the Toro Plant on the right (just after the junction with Highway 71 North). At the Toro Plant intersection, you will turn left on 16th Street. There is a pizza shop, a laundromat and a big truck stop on the other corners of the intersection. Follow 16th street over the railroad tracks and approx. another half mile to a T intersection with Cottonwood Lake Drive. Turn left, pass the public beach and picnic grounds on your right, go around the curve and the lake will be on your right. Number 2115 is the fifth house on the lake side of the road after passing the public beach. It is a white rambler with yellow trim. If you arrive between 11:30 and noon, we will be able to eat about 12:30. Bring plenty of poetry to share.

July 1996 is the deadline for submissions to the Moccasin. Send at least six-6-six poems of 24 lines or less to Editor Meridith Cook, 427 Gorman St., Blue Earth, MN., 56013. If you are not a League of Minnesota Poets member, pay your dues first since you must be a LOMP member to be included

AND

July 31, 1996 is the deadline for the LOMP 12th national contest. Rules and regulations are at our book table each meeting.

## Calendar continued -

The Coffee Hag, 329 N. Riverfront Drive, Mankato (507-387-5533)

An Open Mike for Poetry Reading is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, at 7:30 p.m. with a possibility for a Poetry Slam to be included as well.

Barnes & Noble Bookstore, River Place Centre, 1859 Adams Street, Mankato

(507-386-0110) Almost everything you may have ever wanted in poetry programming is taking place here this month. "First of all," said Erika Lech, spokesperson, "April has been designated as the first annual National Poetry Month by the Academy of American Poets." (584 Broadway, Suite 1208, N.Y., 10012 Phone 212-274-10012, Fax: 212-274-9427) "Since this is the first such month, the Academy is making a real effort to involve libraries, schools and bookstores in the observance, and we have done our best to comply."

The store's first event is a Poetry Night instead of an Open Stage. This complete focus on poetry will be at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 13 with readers invited to prepare 10 minutes of their original verse or a program from favorite writers. The second evening is at 8 p.m. Friday, April 19, when the members of the MSU River Review literary magazine will present the works of Sylvia Plath. Then, at 7 p.m. Friday, April 26, students from Mankato West High School will read their original works. The final event is Monday, April 29, when the regular story hour readings will include children's poetry.

## Achievements

### Reported

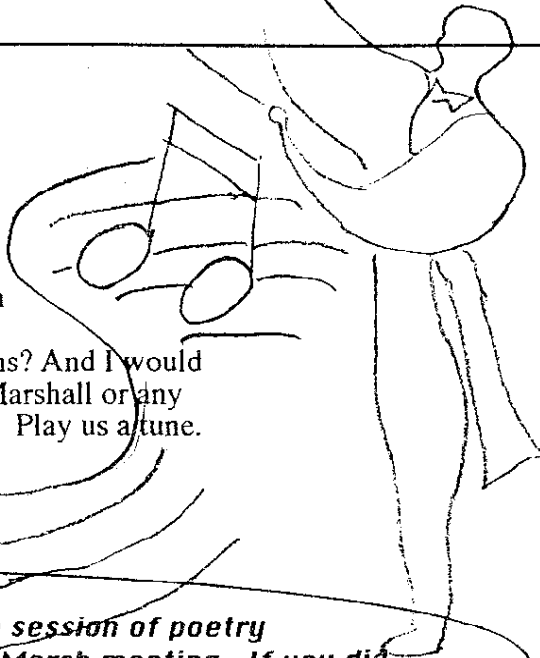
Poetry-related achievements by our members for the period ~~from the holidays through~~ include the following:

**President Loraine Mueller** may be establishing a new trend in poetry togetherness. She is a partner in three endeavors that cry out to be labeled "Poetic Pen Pals." One of the persons Loraine is helping in his poetry venture is a resident of a correctional institution. She is also lending her expertise via the mails to an elementary student in Jamestown, N.D., who is "doing very well," she says. A third postal adventure takes place in correspondence between Loraine and a poetry group of about 14 members that is led by Evelyn Boehmlehner. The poetic mailings have been among the bright spots for Loraine during this long winter.

Notes at Idle:

*Mavis Christenson*

As the newly appointed editor of this newsletter, I want to encourage everyone to act as reporters. My address is 2115 Cottonwood Lake Drive, Windom, MN, 56101 - phone (507) 831-2638, and if you come across a bit of news or a piece of information, please take the time to write a brief note and drop it in the mail to me. Include your name and phone number so I can check it with you if I need to do so. Nancy Dauer, could you find out what is going on at the New Ulm Library for the spring and summer months? And I would like to include poetry news and events from Southwest State at Marshall or any other school in our Southern Minnesota area. Poetry is our music. Play us a tune.



*The April program has been planned as a critique session of poetry contributions we were to have handed in at the March meeting. If you did not attend in March, maybe it is not too late. At any rate, come prepared by bringing a submission with you.*



Duluth Seminar Rules

All poetry for the seminar should be sent to:

Patricia Cornel Johnson, 214 North 61st Ave. W, Duluth, MN 55807.

Send 2 copies of one poem (any subject, any form) 24 lines or less on 8 1/2 x 11 typing paper, double-spaced. No onion skin.

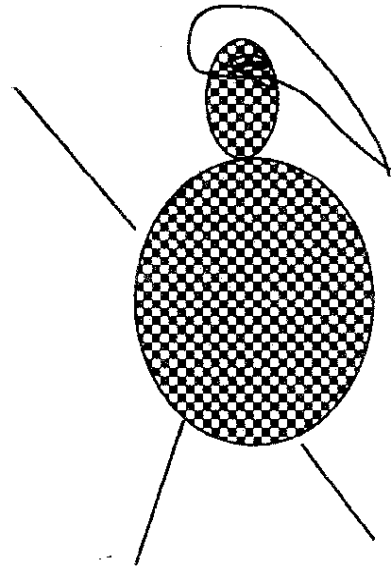
On one copy only, place your name and address and type of poem in upper right. On both copies give the

form of the poem, i.e., Sonnet, Villanelle, Free Verse, etc. in upper right corner. Awarded prizes will be divided into Free Verse and Fixed Form.

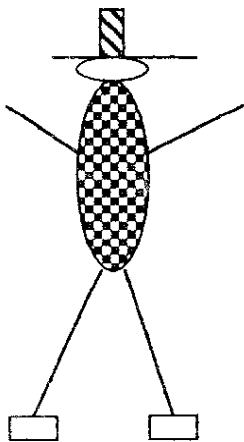
Any in-state member who cannot attend should enclose with the submission a self-addressed, stamped envelope

for return of poem and critique. Poems from out-of-state members will be accepted only if the member plans to attend.

The deadline is April 27.



MAVIS CHRISTENSEN  
THISTLE-DOWN SMPS  
2115 COTTONWOOD LAKE DR.  
WINDOM, MN 56101



The  
*Poor*  
*Poet*  
suggests  
a  
terza  
rima  
as the  
form for  
the picnic  
assignment

**Carol Dahlin**  
**5648 Perry Ave.**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55429**

# THISTLE-DOWN

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

Issue 5

\*\*\*\*\*

anticipating May, 1996 & the first fall meeting Sept. 14, 1996

\*\*\*\*\*

There will be no regular meeting during this month of May. Instead, poets will convene Saturday, May 11 at the Radisson-Harbor View, 5th and Superior, Duluth.

The annual Poor Poets' Picnic will take place the 8th of June at the home of Mavis Christensen, 2115 Cottonwood Lake Drive, Windom, MN. (507) - 831-2638 at 11:30 a.m. Bring your favorite dish (or two if you are ambitious) to share for a potluck meal. Beverages, dishes, silver, sandwiches provided.

Leave Mankato on Highway 60 and arrive in Windom where you pass Caldwell Meat Packing on the right at town's edge. Enter the four lane and go another mile or so passing the Highway 71 junction and a Toro Plant, both on the right. Turn left on 16th St. just after Toro. Go over the railroad tracks and approx. another half mile to a T intersection with Cottonwood Lake Drive. Turn left. At the public beach, count five houses on the right along the lakeside. Stop at the white rambler with yellow trim.

Fall meetings will begin Sept. 14, 1996  
**VINCENT WANG RESTAURANT**  
820 South Front Street  
Mankato, Minnesota

#####

11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch  
Chinese or American food. Reservations not needed.

Guests always welcomed. Programs planned to start promptly at 1 p.m

*Time, you old gypsy man,  
Will you not stay,  
Put up your caravan  
Just for one day?  
Ralph Hodgson*

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

**MEMBERSHIPS for SMPS** run from January to January. Fees are \$10 for adults; \$3 for students. Dues may be mailed to our Treasurer: Elaine Anderson, RR 1, Box 43, Trimont, MN 56176

Dues for the League of Minnesota Poets (LOMP) may be mailed to Shirley Ensrud, Treasurer, 208 S. Main St., Blue Earth, MN 56013. Dues for LOMP (which carry with them a year's membership in the national federation of poets (NFSPS) are \$15 or \$8 for students. Membership is open to all.

Achievements reported at the April meeting include the following:

Susan Chambers judged the Utah Memorial Competition.

Monica Haack read for the Fiesta Village Style Show at Mission, Texas. She also had poems in several issues of Living Waters, a prayer group newsletter, and published her book, Catch Me a Poem. Monica also did the final critique of an Oklahoma grade school poetry contest sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of America. In addition, she also demonstrated/displayed her homemade - and poetic - Christmas cards for the CDA.

Look **INSIDE** for news about all of us and for **ITEMS OF INTEREST** to everyone:

A calendar of coming events  
Personal achievements  
Questions posed  
Maybe even some answers

Editor's Notes:

\* Our sad news at the April meeting was that Bill Johnson had a heart attack on Easter morning and was

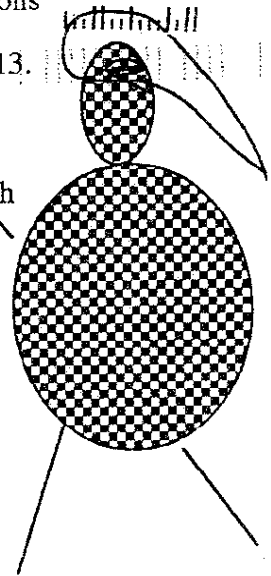
then a patient in the Veterans' Administration Hospital in the Twin Cities. However, following a double angioplasty procedure, Bill was released a week later with instructions to do no heavy lifting for two weeks. However, his subsequent prognosis was that he could resume all former activities and had sustained less than 5% heart damage. We are all so pleased and gratified that Bill is safely back at home, still telling his little "gotcha!" jokes, and planning to bring his usual tasty contribution to the June picnic.

Bill also wants everyone to know that there are three ride-sharing spaces open for the trip to Duluth. Call him at (507) 387-3730 if you are interested. Those planning a trip to the national convention in Dallas should also be in contact about ride-sharing.

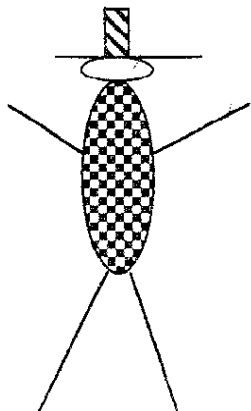
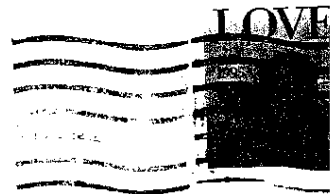
\* A reminder from Meredith Cook is that the actual deadline date for submissions to the Moccasin is July 13. She asks that each contributor send at least six poems of 24 lines or less to: Editor Meredith Cook, 427 Gorman St., Blue Earth, MN 56013. Warning: If you are not a League of Minnesota Poets member, you must pay your dues first. July 31, 1996 is the deadline for the LOMP 12th national contest.

\*We all were pleased to see Rachel Gilbert, 10th grade, and Melissa Elfert, 7th grade, as guests at our April meeting.

\* A welcome note came from Meg Kramer whose address is now C-25, The Truman Lutheran Retirement Home, Truman, MN 56088. Meg says that she has been asked to be a regular contributor of seasonal poetry for the newsletter The Messenger. Meg tells us in her cheery little note that she has made a good adjustment to living in a community residential setting, but that she has kept her home in town and goes there often to spend time and share holidays with her four children, their spouses and grandchildren. Also, she says that especially welcome among her guests are her former students, and that she has once again begun to "write a little poetry." We are so happy to have heard from you Meg. Write again.



MAVIS CHRISTENSEN  
THISTLE-DOWN SMPS  
2115 COTTONWOOD LAKE DR.  
WINDOM, MN 56101



The  
*Poor*  
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suggests  
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Carol Dahlin  
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# THISTLE-DOWN

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

Issue 6

\*\*\*\*\*

anticipating the first fall meeting Sept. 14, 1996

\*\*\*\*\*

The air - night and morning - cups the cool tang of change. Birds bunch into flocks. Butterflies pause in migration, and the Monarchs compete in their vibrant colors with the tangled, late-summer showing by the zinnias. Indeed, the flower beds in the hazy, diffused light of Fall appear as if the zinnia blossoms have become airborne. All of this means that our poets in the many-striped coats of their own various & colorful intensities are called to meet once again.

The months of summer have wrought changes, and we shall learn of them in September. Our president, Lorraine Schwanke Mueller, has called for a meeting of the executive board immediately following the September meeting in order to plan the year's programs. Sue Chambers has offered meeting space in the "chambers" of her law office on Belle Avenue.

As to the first program with its roster still open, Lorraine has some plans and ideas in her poet's pocket and will bring them along. She says, "I would especially like to have those who attended the NFPS convention in Texas share something that they learned ...something new that all of us might wish to use."

Fall meetings will begin Sept. 14, 1996  
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820 South Front Street  
Mankato, Minnesota

#####

11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch  
Chinese or American food. Reservations not needed.

Guests always welcomed. Programs planned to start promptly at 1 p.m

*There will be discussion of the Woodtick Weekend, and everyone should bring new poetry to read - or at least be prepared with one or two old favorites - bring something that has a new twist to old words or an old twist to new words - language is always in flux. Do your part. It's poetic party time!*

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Minnesota achievements at the NFPS convention included many contest winners by poets familiar to all of us. A complete report is given in the summer issue of LOMPLIGHTER, so a mention of their names will refresh our memory. They are: Susan Stevens Chambers, Char Donovan, Claire vanB. Downes, Pj Doyles, Shirley Ensrud, Jeanette Hinds, Diane Glancy, Margaret Hasbargen, Vivian Liners, Maxine Russell, Barbara Stevens, Paul Walsh, Laurel Winter.

*Hail to thee, blithe spirit! Bird thou never wert, That from heaven,  
or near it, Pourest thy full heart in profuse strains of  
unpremeditated art.*

*To A Skylark  
Percy Bysshe Shelley*

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and for **ITEMS OF INTEREST** to everyone:

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Maybe even some answers

# It's that time of the year:

Mark your calendar as a reminder.

## MSU GOOD THUNDER READING SERIES:

Thursday, Oct. 3, 7:30 p.m. - Mary Swander,

Professor of English at Iowa State University, Ms. Swander will present readings and discussion of poetry and non-fiction. She has published several works including *Out of This World*, a work about women and the Amish, three books of poetry and a book of literary interviews. This series is usually held on Thursday with a writing critique in the afternoon and a reading, open to the public, in the evening. The complete schedule for 1996-97 will appear in our next issue. Richard Robbins, MSU English Dept, is director of the series: MSU 53/P.O. Box 8400, Mankato, MN 56002 (507) 389-2117 Fax (507) 389-5887.

When I Heard the Learn'd  
Astronomer

by: Walt Whitman

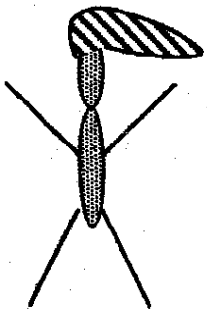
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*When I Heard the Learn'd  
Astronomer,  
When the proofs, the figures  
were  
ranged in columns, before me,  
When I was shown the charts  
and  
diagrams, to add, divide, and  
measure them,  
When I sitting heard the  
astronomer  
where he lectured  
with much applause  
in the lecture room,  
How soon unaccountable  
I became  
tired and sick,  
Till rising and gliding out  
I  
wandered off  
by myself,  
In the mystical moist night air,  
and  
from time to time,  
Looked up in perfect silence  
at the stars.*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*



Remember?

**Seeds in a  
dry pod, tick,  
tick, tick ...  
what little  
iambics,  
While  
Homer  
and Whitman  
roared in  
the pines!**

*Petit, the Poet*  
By: Edgar Lee  
Masters

The LOMP fall meeting will be held Oct. 18-19 at the Hopkins House Hotel, 1501 Highway 7, Hopkins, MN 55305. A complete registration form is included in your copy of the August issue of the *Lomplighter*. The form includes menu choices for the Friday dinner and the Saturday luncheon, and should be mailed with a check for the total amount by October 7 to Helen Desich, 115 2nd Ave. S. #602, Mpls, Mn 55401. Helen's phone for further information is: (612) 343-0944.

Poetry submissions for the seminar contest at the League of Minnesota Poets fall meeting must be postmarked no later than September 21. Send two copies of one poem (any subject, any form) 24 lines or less on 8 1/2 by 11 paper - no onion skin - double spaced. One copy only should show your name and address at the upper left. On both copies write the name of the form, i.e., sonnet, free verse, villanelle at the upper right. Awards will be given in two categories: Free Verse & Fixed Form. If not attending, include SASE for return of submission and accompanying critique. Mail to: Val Bump, contest chairperson 1109 Como Place Fl 1 St. Paul, MN 55103

The committee of regional vice presidents unanimously elected our own Sue Chambers as Minnesota's new poet laureate. All agreed she exemplifies the criteria sought. As quoted from the August issue of the *Lomplighter*, Sue is "dedicated to the art of poetry ... she generously shares her thorough knowledge of that art, as well as providing leadership and service to our organization."

The nominating committee of the Southern Minnesota Poetry Society must also plan to meet soon to prepare a slate for the November elections, according to President Lorraine Mueller. There will be new dues for next year as well, and members are reminded to be thinking of them. Other reminders come from the editorial desks of the *Lomplighter*, i.e., the Moccasin needs help in \$\$\$\$\$\$ to defray publication and mailing costs. Contact Bill Johnson, 732 Garfield Ave., Mankato 56003 or Meredith Cook, 427 Gorman St., Blue Earth 56013.

## Guest of the Month:

(Editor's Note: This page will be filled for the September 1996 issue by my Associate Editor in Charge of the Mailing Department. Most of you know him under his alias as Bill Johnson, past Poet Laureate, relayer of the occasional quotable quip, man of many practical talents, beginning-to-be- renowned teacher of poetics, and person of the all-around-helpful attitude. If there is anyone among the readership of this newsletter who would like to contribute a guest column at any time, this is the page for it. It is fairly easy to hold this newsletter to two pages, i.e., four "faces" of print, but we often have one blank face left to fill. And this is it!! Here, we have space for the last minute additions, an original poem in the making with the poet's own notes and questions or cry for help, a short essay, an editorial. Whatever. Charge on, Bill, this one is all yours.)

**NOTICE** There will be a short board meeting to establish our '96-'97 program agenda -- Another school year just sneaked up on us and **BEWARE!** the price of crosswalk violations is staked at \$700!!! (this should get errant drivers attention. Of course we should be careful anyway.

Speaking of school, I am open to poetry teaching residencies, one to six weeks has been the norm in the past. Or for a smaller fee I would give a one day program explaining the value of poetry. The Minnesota State Arts Board placed me on their roster of artists in education. If a school or teacher submits a grant application to the state arts board, my residency may be fully funded. I spent eight years teaching poetry-in-the-schools and a number of my students have won national awards and been published.

Char Donovan of Brainerd is the new chairman of the League of Minnesota Poets annual student poetry competition. The winners of this contest are forwarded to the National Manningham Student Trust awards. In the past decade, Minnesota students have won nine of these national awards. Please help spread the word and keep Minnesota in the winner's circle.

Wilfred M. (Bill) Johnson

**ATTENTION, THIS IS YOUR PRESIDENT. LORAIN MUELLER SPEAKING!**

**Assignment: "Poet's choice. October: Autumn Terza Rima.**

**IN MEMORIAM** - Berneal's husband, Robert Schindle, past away June 24th after a long illness. He received the Bronze Star for meritorious service in WW 11. A successful business man in Mankato and longtime member of the Masonic Lodge and VFW and the American Legion. His funeral was at Woodland Hills Cemetery with full military honors, June 29, 1996. A card of sympathy was give to his wife and family. Some SMPS members attended the service.

Editor's Notes:

\* A fresh literary and artistic effort is taking place in the historic setting of The Dayton House, 1311 4th Ave., Worthington, MN. A support group for writers and artists has been formed under the wing of MarJean O'Laughlin with meetings taking place from 7 to 9 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month.

O'Laughlin and her father, 92-year-old M.J. Gjertson, a Worthington resident since the 1940s, are restoring the house built by George Draper Dayton, once a banker in the Worthington community. Construction took place between 1883-1886. The Dayton family resided there for 19 years, according to Ms. O'Laughlin, and then Dayton moved to Minneapolis and went on to found the Dayton chain of stores and affiliates.

The formation of a group of artists, poets and writers in all fields comes naturally to Ms. O'Laughlin. She is a published illustrator, and prior to her involvement in the Dayton House restoration, was vice president of the Black Hills Writers' group and a member of the Western Women in the Arts, a juried association for the promotion of the arts in the Black Hills area.

The new group has been meeting since May and, according to O'Laughlin, the number attending has varied between 12 to 16. "We already have an interested body of 30 people who come when they can," she said. "They read their work to each other and we have mutually helpful critique sessions. We plan to display artistic works of merit in a gallery planned in the house. So far, we have had writers attend from Clayton, Worthington, Lakefield, Windom and other surrounding areas."

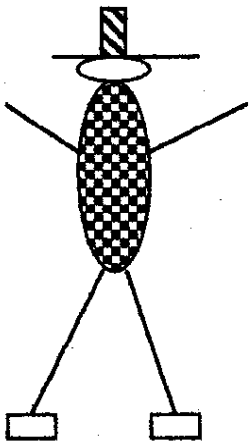
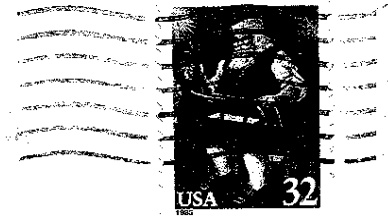
Dues for the year are \$12, and include mailed minutes of the meetings. Further information may be had by calling 507-372-7874 or 507-372-5207.

\*At this writing, the Barnes and Noble program for September is not yet available. For information on Open Stage and Poetry Slam dates at the bookstore in River Place Centre, 1859 Adams St., Mankato, call Ann Marie at 507-386-0110. The Coffee Hag, 329 N. Riverfront Drive, Mankato, reports no dates for September, but promises October scheduling in conjunction with MSU literary groups. For information call 507-387-5533.

*\*And for those old enough to have been aware during WWII., there came this quote. The G.I. Faustus who was everywhere strolled home again. "What was it like outside?" Asked Can't, with his good neighbors Ought and But and pale Perhaps and grave-eyed Better Not. For Kilroy means: the world is very wide. He was there, he was there, he was there! And in the suburbs Can't sat down & cried.*

*...from Kilroy by Peter Viereck*

MAVIS CHRISTENSEN  
THISTLE-DOWN SMPS  
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Carol Dahlin  
5648 Perry Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55429

# THISTLE-DOWN

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15

Issue 7

\*\*\*\*\*

anticipating the meeting of October 12, 1996

\*\*\*\*\*

A terza rima might be the delight of an Italian tourist says John Drury in his book, *Creating Poetry*, but for those of us who wish to write one as fulfillment of the October suggested assignment, there is more to know. Drury lists essentials as: three-line stanzas (tercets) with a rhyme scheme of ABA BCB CDC etc. Judson Jerome in *The Poet's Handbook* gives us more detail when he says the form has been used with lines of various lengths and the pattern can be extended indefinitely. "Sometimes," he says, "poets end it with a single line, set off, rounding off the rhyme from the middle of the final stanza as  
in  
y z y, z." And he quotes Shelley for an example:

### Ode to the West Wind

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they die cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odours plain and hill;

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;  
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!

Jerome says Shelley's "group of 14 lines (a variation on the sonnet) is a stanza containing four terza rima units concluded by a couplet that finishes off the rhyme from . . . the last unit."

#### MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

Memberships for SMPS run from January to January. Fees are \$10 for adults; \$3 for students. Dues may be mailed to Treasurer Elaine Anderson, R.R. 1, Box 43, Trimont, MN 56171. However, ATTENCIONE! Dues for the League of Minnesota Poets are now \$20 or \$12 for students. Membership is open to all. Dues for LOMP - which carry with them a year's membership in the national federation of poets (NFSPS) - may be mailed to Shirley Ensrud, Treasurer, 208 S. Main St. Blue Earth 56013.

Meeting: October 12, 1996  
VINCENT WANG RESTAURANT  
820 South Front Street  
Mankato, Minnesota

#####

11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch  
Chinese or American food. Reservations not  
needed.  
Guests always welcomed. Programs planned  
to start promptly at 1 p.m

Our program as planned for this October meeting will include - in addition to reading - our new terza rimas on a fall theme - a presentation on the ballad form. and the November suggested assignment will then be to write a Ballad Supreme in accordance with the NFSPS guidelines for Contest #20, The Harp-Strings "Poetry to Remember" Award, for submission to the 38th annual convention in 1997.

We will also be thinking a week ahead to the Fall Meeting of SMPS at the Hopkins House, 1501 Highway 7, Mpls. on October 18-19, and that will start off a busy year for our poets. So sharpen your pencils and your wits in defense of the deep and numbing chill that is on its way. Winter needs your warmth!

Look INSIDE for news about all  
of us  
and for ITEMS OF INTEREST  
to everyone:

A calendar of coming events  
Personal achievements  
Questions posed  
Maybe even some answers



## Calendar continued -

(Our own SMPSP calendar for the year is planned to contain the following elements:)

### November:

Assignment: Ballad Supreme, #20 in the NFSPS contest categories. Bill will conduct a writing workshop. The nominating committee will report.

### December:

Assignment: Christmas/Winter poem. Election of officers. Special seasonal music.

### January:

Assignment: A work in the style of Spoon River, #22 in NFSPS contests. Writing Through Winter by Susan. New officers take charge.

### February:

Assignment: Favorite Book # 42 NFSPS, free verse. Panel Discussion "Structure in Poetry" Ike Sarmas moderator.

### March:

Assignment: Journey/journeys The Road Taken # 18 NFSPS. Poet study by Nancy Dauer.

### April:

Assignment: April Fool - Zany poem - Woodtick - 40 lines. Susan will provide discussion on Barnes & Noble either this month or for May - also May is Spring Convention.

### May

Assignment: Mother's Day/Family Roots/A family member. Traditional Form, not free verse

## Achievements

### Reported

**Monica Haack:** had an interview with Ronnie Burtun on Cable TV as a new Senior Summit Center Member. She has also joined forces with her friend Carol Gappa who plays guitar and sings. They are combining poetic and musical talents to present a program called "Homespun Harmony." Their debut at the Summit Center birthday banquet was a hit!

**Lee Cummings** a.k.a. "Leonard Lee Loki" has been published twice in the *Melting Tree Review*.

**Berneal Schindle:** Berneal's poem "In My Own Time" will be used as a handout for a hospice grief group. Two of her poems "Giving Back" and "Of Life and Rainbows" were used as part of the service at her husband's funeral.

**Loi Rochovitz:** reports that she has signed a contract to write a career development for lessabled reading adults with publication set for Fall 1997.

**Lina Busekist:** finds putting out her cookbook "Health-Wise" is more than a pinch of this and a dab of that, and Lucille Nitzkowski simply continues to find a demand for copies of her old poems.

**Bill Johnson:** has just received his 135th assignment to judge a national contest. He also visited a newly formed group of writers who meet in Worthington.

**Coraine Mueller** serves as mentor to her own special "satellite" group of poets. She sends guidelines and poetic forms from text books for emulation to John Wunder in Howard, S.D., John Dumke in Missouri, Laura Runge in Iowa and Heather McDougall in Jamestown, N.D. She also keeps in touch with poets who meet regularly in Wheaton.

**Carla R. Kraft:** winner of 1st and 2nd place in the Texas Poetry Society College Awards.

**Meg Kramer** won a blue ribbon for two of her books of poetry entered in the Martin County Fair. The books, entered by the activity director at the Truman Retirement Home where Meg now lives, are titled "First Fruits" and "Dancing with all my Might." Meg's poem "Repeat Performance" was also used in a recent issue of the Mankato State University alumni newspaper *Today*. Meg is also working on poems about the retirement home. She reports that she has almost enough to fill a chapbook. Her address is Truman Retirement Home, C-25, Truman, MN 56088. She would love to hear from any or all of you. Drop a line, send a poem, take in a smile. Meg will reward you in kind.

In my notes,

I have the title "Awakening the Poet Within" by Ann Gasser. I can't remember why I wrote this down. It sounds like a book we could all appreciate. Will someone please remind me as to why I wrote it down and/or who told it to me?

# It's that time of the year:

Mark your calendar as a reminder.

## MSU GOOD THUNDER READING SERIES:

### October 24 - Kyoko Mori - fiction/nonfiction/poetry

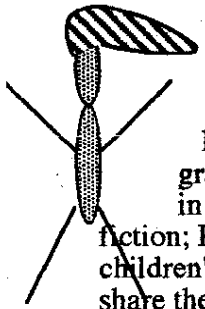
Born in Kobe Japan, Mori has lived in the Midwest for 20 years and holds degrees from Rockford College and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Individual poems and works of prose have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She is the author of two novels, a poetry collection and a memoir. Mori is associate professor of English and writer-in-residence at St. Norbert's College.

### November 14 - Sherman Alexie - fiction/poetry

Alexie is the recipient of fellowships from the Washington State Arts Commission & the National Endowment for the Arts. His book of stories, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, was winner of both the PEN/Hemingway Award & the Great Lakes Colleges Association Award for best first book of fiction. He has written seven other books of prose and poetry. He lives and writes in Seattle.

This series is usually held on Thursday with a writing critique in the afternoon and a reading, open to the public, at 7:30 in the evening. Richard Robbins, MSU English Dept, is director of the series: MSU 53/P.O. Box 8400, Mankato, MN 56002 (507) 389-2117 Fax (507) 389-5887.

The 15th annual Mankato State University Robert Wright Minnesota Writer's Conference will be held Saturday, October 19 in the MSU Student Union.



Minnesota poet Bill Holm will be the keynote speaker appearing at 1 p.m.

Mentors of this conference are all MSU graduate students or recent graduates of its Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing. They are Melissa Gish, fiction; Ramona Czer, nonfiction; Laurie Lykken, children's writing; Matt Mauch, poetry. They will share their expertise in four workshop sessions throughout the day.

For details contact the MSU English Department, Josh Moehling, coordinator.

A little white space goes a long way if you know how and when to use it. Unfortunately, . . . too many poets treat it casually or not at all during composition, missing opportunities to enhance their work. The stanza helps poets express their ideas or express them in complex ways. In fact, a lot of funky things can happen off the page in the white space of a stanza.  
- Michael J. Bugeja

### The Art and Craft of Poetry

## Tenth-Year Elegy

Careless man, my father,  
always leaving me at rest-stops,  
coffee shops, some wide spot in the road.  
I come out, rubbing my hands on my pants  
or levitating two foam cups of coffee,  
and can't find him anywhere,  
those banged-up fenders gone.

It's the trip itself that blinds him,  
black highway like a chute  
leading to the mesmerizing end,  
his hands locked on the wheel  
and following, until he misses me,  
steers wide on the graveled shoulders,  
turns around.

This time he's been gone so long  
I've settled in here - married,  
built a house, planted trees for shade,  
stopped waiting to see him pull into the drive -  
though the wind sometimes makes a highway roar  
high up in the branches, and I stop  
whatever I am doing and look up.

- Neal Bowers

### Doggone It!

The thin-tissue  
rustle  
of the breeze  
against the leaves  
in the summer  
garden  
is gone.

Fall  
climbs into  
my sensitivities,  
beds down on brown  
windfall,  
snuggling there  
and nosing  
into the blue  
October air,  
luxuriating  
happily like a  
fat, warm puppy.

Its rains  
cover  
my lapful  
of late zinnias  
and salvaged mums.

In the morning,  
there is ice.

By: MGC  
From:  
The Enclosed Gardener  
(Song of Solomon 4:16)

Since we have been trying to get the terza rima written beginning with last spring, I have done some research. To completely complete the bogging of the mind there is the following found in *The Princeton Handbook of Poetic Forms*, edited by Alex Preminger. As they say in the vernacular, this sounds like a real winner! As they say in Scotland, "Hoots, mon!" Or whatever. Here it is:

Terza Rima: A verse form composed of iambic tercets rhyming aba, bcb, etc., the second line of the first tercet supplying the rhyme for the second tercet, the second line of the second tercet supplying the rhyme for the third and so on, thus giving an effect of linkage to the entire composition. In t.r., the conclusion of a formal unit is generally signified by the occurrence of a single line which completes the rhyme structure by rhyming with the middle line of of the preceding tercet, thus: xyx y.

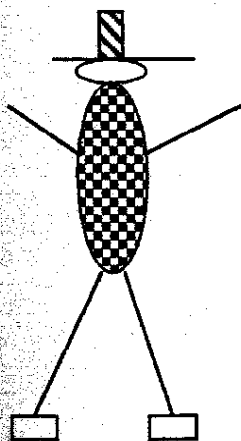
T.R. was invented by Dante as an appropriate form for his *Divina Commedia*; the symbolic reference to the Holy Trinity is obvious. Furthermore, the intricate harmony which Dante achieves through his mastery of the form gives to the poem a structure at once massive and subtle, a structure which can only be suggested by any passage taken out of context. Most probably, Dante developed t.r. from the tercets of the *serventes* but whatever the origins of the form, it found popularity with Boccaccio and Petrarch. The implicit difficulty of the form, however, discouraged its widespread use after the 14th c. The form makes even greater demands on poets who write in a language less rich in rhymes than Italian. T.R. was introduced into Eng. by Chaucer in his *Complaint to his Lady*. Some of the Eng. romantics experimented with the form, Byron in *The Prophecy of Dante* and Shelley in *Prince Athanase* and *The Triumph of Life*. The latter poet's *Ode to the West Wind* is composed of five sections, each rhyming aba bcb cdc ded ee. In the 20th c. the form has been used, among others, by W.H. Auden (*The Sea and the Mirror*) and, with marked variations, by MacLeish (*Conquistador*).

*And from the same source there was this following:*

Terza Rima Sonnet: A term sometimes used to describe a quatorzain (q.v.) whose rhyme scheme makes use of the interweaving characteristic of terza rima (aba bcb edc etc) Thus a pattern aba bcb cdc ded ee (the form of each section of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*) is not unlike the development of the Spenserian sonnet with its couplet ending; but there is an excess of interweaving for so short a poem, and a theoretical demand for a five-part division instead of the normally expected four. Moreover, the principal charm of the t.r. - its cumulative melody - is lost in so short a passage. It is, however, of interest to note that the Sicilian sonnet has been suggested as the source of the t.r. as such.

Ahem.

MAVIS CHRISTENSEN  
THISTLE-DOWN SMPS  
2115 COTTONWOOD LAKE DR.  
WINDOM, MN 56101



The  
Poor  
Poet

Quinqueme  
of Nineveh  
from distant  
Ophir . . .  
with a cargo  
of ivory, apes  
and peacocks,  
sandalwood,  
cedarwood,  
and  
sweet white wine . . .  
Cargoes

by John Masefield

Carol Dahlin  
5648 Perry Ave.  
Minneapolis, MN 55429

# THISTLE-DOWN

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15 Issue 8

\*\*\*\*\*

anticipating the meeting of November 9, 1996

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Meeting: November 9, 1996  
VINCENT WANG RESTAURANT  
820 South Front Street  
Mankato, MN

11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Dutch treat lunch. Chinese or American food. Reservations unnecessary. Guests always welcome. Programs start promptly at 1:00 p.m.

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### NOVEMBER PROGRAM

Bill Johnson will conduct a writing workshop. Also, we will read our ballad assignments from last month's program.

According to Pickering & Hoepfer in *Literature*, a ballad is a short narrative poem telling of a single dramatic incident. The traditional ballad is part of our oral heritage, and one basic story may evolve into dozens of variant forms as it is recited or sung at different times to different audiences.

Because traditional ballads (also referred to as folk or popular ballads) were composed for an oral presentation before an audience, they tell simple, direct stories using dialogue, repetition, and refrains in an effort to capture the interest and attention of an audience that may, after all, be hearing the story for the first time.

Ballads tend to be objective, abrupt, and concise. The first few lines catch our interest with a question or a tense situation. Thereafter, the characters spring to life, acting and speaking with relatively little external commentary by the author.

Some ballads use the refrain for the purpose of advancing or commenting on the narrative. The themes of ballads are those of continuing popular interest: unhappy love, feats of war or bravado, shipwrecks, murder, and domestic quarrels.

**Form:** Three eight-line stanzas rhyming ababbcbC with a four-line envoy (extra stanza) rhyming bcbC. The capital letter C indicates a repeating line whose end word rhymes or slant rhymes with the end word in line c.

Membership Notes: Memberships for Southern Minnesota Poets' Society run from January to January. Dues are \$10.00 for adults; \$3.00 for students. Dues may be mailed to Treasurer Elaine Anderson, RR 1, Box 43, Trimont, MN 56171.

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\*\*\*\*\*

### MSU Good Thunder Reading Series:

#### November 14--Sherman Alexie--fiction/poetry

Alexie is the recipient of fellowships from the Washington State Arts Commission & the National Endowment for the Arts. His book of stories, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, was winner of both the PEN/Hemingway Award & the Great Lakes Colleges Association Award for best first book of fiction. He has written seven other books of prose and poetry. He lives and writes in Seattle, WA.

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\*\*\*\*\*

#### November 7--At the Coffee Hag--8:00 pm

329 N. Riverfront Drive 387-5533

Open mike, featured speaker--Jenn Studer, poetry slam

\*\*\*\*\*

#### From the Editor:

Thistle-Down's editor, Mavis Christensen has spread her wings and flown south for the winter. On behalf of the members of SMPS, we extend a generous "thank you," to Mavis for her contributions to Thistle-Down and to the group. We look forward to seeing her again in the spring of 1997, and hope she has lots of warm wintry poems to share.

As for me, when Mavis asked me to take over the job of newsletter editor, I knew it would be a "tough act to follow" (sorry about the cliché, Mavis) a former newspaper staff writer, but I said, "What the heck, I will give it a whirl." So, here I am. Do bear with me during the transition, and please feel free to send suggestions, comments, and any items of interest.

I can be reached at: **Carla R. Kraft, PO Box 216, Lakefield, MN 56150, (507) 662-5873, (507) 662-5830--fax.** Call, write or fax any time. Please leave a message if there is no answer. I am happy to be a member of SMPS (have already met so many wonderful poets, wonderful people), and I look forward to meeting all of you in the future.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Bonny Barbara Allan

Twas in the merry month of May  
When green buds all were swellin'  
Sweet William on his death bed lay  
For the love of Barbary Allan

He sent his servant to the town  
To the place where she was dwellin'  
Saying, "You must come to my master dear  
If your name be Barbary Allan

So slowly, slowly she got up,  
And slowly she drew nigh him  
And the only word to him did say,  
"Young man I think you're dying."

He turned his face unto the wall,  
And death was in him wellin',  
"Goodbye, goodbye, to my friends all.  
Be good to Barbary Allan."

When he was dead and laid in grave,  
She heard the death bells knellin',  
And every stroke to her did say,  
"Hard-hearted Barbary Allan."

"Oh mother, oh mother, go dig my grave,  
Make it both long and narrow.  
Sweet William died of love for me,  
And I will die of sorrow.

"And father, oh father, go dig my grave.  
Make it both long and narrow.  
Sweet William died on yesterday,  
And I will die tomorrow."

Barbary Allan was buried in the old churchyard.  
Sweet William was buried beside her.  
Out of Sweet William's heart there grew a rose;  
Out of Barbary Allan's a briar.

They grew and grew in the old churchyard  
Till they could grow no higher.  
At the end they formed a true lovers' knot.  
And the rose grew round the briar.  
--Anonymous

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Calendar continued--

(Our own SMPS calendar for the year is planned to contain the following elements:)

**December:**

Assignment: Christmas/Winter poem. Election of officers. Special seasonal music.

**January:**

Assignment: A work in the style of Spoon River, #22 in NFSPS contests. Writing Through Winter by Susan. New officers take charge.

**February:**

Assignment: Favorite Book #42 NFSPS, free verse. Panel Discussion "Structure in Poetry" Ike Sarmas moderator.

**March:**

Assignment: Journey/journeys The Road Taken #18 NFSPS, Poet study by Nancy Dauer.

**April:**

Assignment: April Fool--Zany poem--Woodtick--40 lines. Susan will provide discussion on Barnes & Noble either this month or in May--also May is Spring Convention.

**May:**

Assignment: Mother's Day/Family Roots/A Family Member. Traditional form, not free verse

\*\*\*\*\*

*Achievements Reported*

*Congratulations to our many SMPS members who won recognition at the LOMP convention in Minneapolis.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Inquiring Minds Need to Know*

The forty-two attendees at The LOMP convention in Minneapolis enjoyed **Claire Campbell Tokar's** presentation on how to use the voice to enhance oral presentation of poetry. Her discussion of vocal techniques included posturing, deep breathing, and the importance of a positive mental attitude. Mississippi Valley Poets hosted the convention at the Hopkins Hotel. Other poetry groups in attendance were the Heartland Poets, Root River Poets, Southern Minnesota Poets' Society, and groups from Duluth and Wheaton, Minnesota.

SMPS president, **Lorraine Mueller** will celebrate her seventy-sixth birthday in California this month with her children, The Dunlaps.

**Mavis Christensen** will spend the winter months in Arizona and will return to Minnesota in April or May.

Original art sketches in this month's *Thistle-Down* are from **Lois Jochims** of Lakefield, MN--thank you, Lois.

P.S. Members of the nominating committee **Bill Johnson, Eleanor Schmidt, and Berneal Schindle** will submit ideas for nominees to fill upcoming offices at this month's meeting.

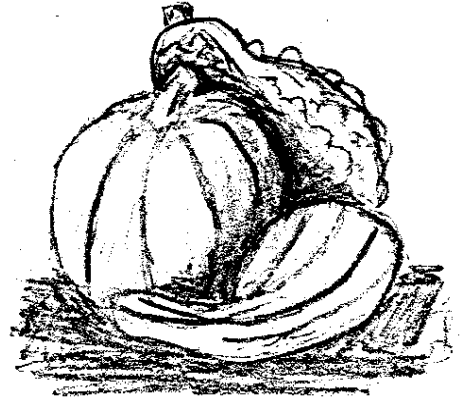
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To Autumn—John Keats (1795-1821)

I  
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom -friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel: to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

III  
Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river shallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

II  
Who hath not seen the oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wing;  
Or a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,  
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers.  
And sometime like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

**Carla R. Kraft  
PO Box 216  
Lakefield, MN 56150**

Carol Dahlin  
5648 Perry Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55429

