

# THISTLE-DOWN

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15 Issue 11

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anticipating the meeting of February 8, 1997

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Meeting: February 8, 1997  
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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### FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Ike will conduct the program on "structure in poetry." This month's assignment is a free verse poem on your favorite book: NFSPS Contest 42, Plains Poets Award. No line limit--anything goes.

From *Writing Essays about Literature* by Kelley Griffith:

You can find definitions of many fixed forms by looking them up in handbooks of literature--ballad, ode, heroic couplet, Alexandrine stanza, rhyme royal stanza, Spenserian stanza, and so forth. But since poets do not always use fixed forms, and since there are many ways to give poetry structure, you should try to answer this question: What devices does the poet use to give the poem structure? Does the poet use rhyme scheme, stanzas, double spaces, indentations, repetition of words and images, line lengths, rhetorical organization? As with rhythm and sound, a follow-up question is of equal consequence: How does the poem's structure emphasize or relate to its meaning? An example of such a relationship is the final stanza of "Dover Beach," in which Arnold uses end rhyme to emphasize opposing worldviews:

Ah, love, let us be true	a
To one another! for the world, which seems	b
To lie before us like a land of dreams,	b
So various, so beautiful, so new,	a
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,	c
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;	d
And we are here as on a darkling plain	d
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and	
flight,	c
Where ignorant armies clash by night.	c

The rhyme scheme of the first four lines is almost the same as the next five lines; the only difference is the addition of the fifth line. This similarity divides the stanza in half, and the difference in rhymes corresponds to the difference of the ideas in the two halves.

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## MSU Good Thunder Reading Series:

### February 13, 1997--Ted Kooser, poetry

TED KOOSER'S poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Poetry*, and many other journals. Three volumes of his poems are currently in print, including the recent *Weather Central* and *Sure Signs: New and Selected Poems*, which won the Society for Midland Authors prize upon publication. His work has been compared to that of Edgar Lee Masters, Robert Frost, and William Carlos Williams. The critic Dana Gioia went further to claim, "Kooser has written more perfect poems than any poet of his generation." The poet lives on an acreage near Garland, Nebraska and makes his living as the vice president for communications and public relations for two affiliated life insurance companies.

### March 6, 1997--Jule Selbo, screenwriting/production

JULE SELBO'S feature film *Hard Promises* starred Sissy Spacek and William Peterson. She has produced and written over 50 hours for television, including work for George Lucas's *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, ABC's *Life Goes On*, CBS's *Touched by an Angel*, Aaron Spelling's *Models Inc.*, PBS's *Voyage of the Mimi*, and Fox's *Space: Above and Beyond*. Her theatrical writing has been produced off-Broadway as well as in theaters in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Louisville. Her short fiction has appeared in *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*. She has recently finished writing the sequel to Disney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and is at work on *Frankenstein* for Disney Animation. Her feature *Careful What You Wish For* is slated for production in 1997.

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### From the Editor:

Greetings SMPS. Mother Nature is certainly showing her authority this winter season. I am thinking about writing a poem entitled "Stir Crazy in Minnesota," or "Surviving Siberia, or "Thank God for Thermal Underwear and Four Wheel Drive." Bet we could all come up with something along those lines about now. Hope to see many of you at this month's meeting, that is if our tempermental and unpredictable weather cooperates. 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.

continued--

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

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

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### *Achievements Reported*

*The biggest achievement reported for January is the fact that three members of SMPS actually made it to Vincent Wang's Restaurant for the meeting: Ike, June, and Bill--considering weather conditions were terrible that day--that's dedication!*

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### E.Y.I

Notice: **March 15th is the deadline for NFSPS contests**, so tarry not, and submit your winning entry now.

Some of you veteran poets may remember Esther Wick of North Mankato, who recently passed away; he was a member of SMPS in its early years of organization.

News Rivers Press is holding its 17th annual Minnesota Voices Project Competition for new and emerging writers of **poetry (40-60 pgs of text)**, short stories, fiction, novellas, personal essays, memoirs, and other forms of creative prose. The contest is open to MN, ND, SD, IA, and WI residents. Deadline for entries is April 1, 1997. Winner receives \$500 and publication of 1,200-3,000 copies. For details write to: New Rivers Press 420 North 5th Street / Suite 910 / Minneapolis, MN 55401 or call 612-339-7114

**Poetry Reading** Saturday, February 1, 1997 at Coffee Hag 329 N. Riverfront Drive / 507-387-5533  
Open to all! Bring your own, someone else's, or just come listen.

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### *The Kiss* by Ann Sexton

1) My mouth blooms like a cut.  
I've been wronged all year, tedious  
nights, nothing but rough elbows in them  
and delicate boxes of Kleenex calling crybaby

2) Once it was a boat, quite wooden  
and with no business, no salt water under it  
and in need of some paint. It was no more  
than a group of boards. But you hoisted her,  
rigged her.  
She's been elected.

2) Before today my body was useless.  
Now it's tearing at its square corners.  
It's tearing old Mary's garments off, knot by knot  
and see--Now it's shot full of these electric bolts.  
Zing! A resurrection!

4) My nerves are turned on. I hear them like  
musical instruments. Where there was silence  
the drums, the strings are incurably playing. You  
did this.  
Pure genius at work. Darling, the composer has  
stepped into fire.

*To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell*

Had we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, lady were no crime.  
We would sit down, and think which way  
To walk, and pass our long love's day.  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Should'st rubies find: I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the Flood,  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
And my vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow.  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze:  
Two hundred to adore each breast:  
But thirty thousand to the rest.  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate,  
But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long preserved virginity,  
And your quaint honor turn to dust,  
And into ashes all my lust.  
The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace.  
Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may;  
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour,  
Than languish in his slow-chapt power  
Let us roll all our strength, and all  
Our sweetness, up into one ball:  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Thorough the iron gates of life.  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

HAPPY VALENTINES DAY

Carla R. Kraft  
PO Box 216  
Lakefield, MN 56150

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### MARCH PROGRAM

Nancy will conduct the program. This month's assignment is a free verse poem on journeys--real, imagined, or symbolic: NFSPS Contest 18, The Road Taken. 40 line limit.

#### Traveling Through The Dark by William Stafford

Traveling through the dark I found a deer  
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.  
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:  
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car  
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;  
she had stiffened already, almost cold.  
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason--  
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,  
alive, still, never to be born.  
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;  
under the hood purred the steady engine.  
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;  
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all--my only swerving--  
then pushed her over the edge into the river.

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### SPRING QUARTER:

### April 14-17--Joe Kane, nonfiction/Eddice B. Barber, visiting writer

JOE KANE was a member of the expedition that made the first complete navigation of the Amazon River; his book about that journey, *Running the Amazon*, was a national best-seller. His writing about the Amazon for *The New Yorker* won the Overseas Press Club Award for environmental reporting and was nominated for a National Magazine Award. His book *Savages*, about the Huaorani people of the Ecuadorian Amazon and their war against American oil companies, was chosen as a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year; it is being developed for film by Columbia Pictures. Kane has written for many publications, including *National Geographic*, *Esquire*, and the *Washington Post*. He lives in Oakland, California.

### May 8--Li-Young Lee, Poetry/nonfiction

Currently a resident of Chicago, LI-YOUNG LEE was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, of Chinese parents. After a year during which his father was held as a political prisoner in President Sukarno's jails, the poet's family fled the country and traveled throughout Asia for five years before arriving in America. Lee's work has been published in a number of journals--*American Poetry Review* and *TriQuarterly* among them--and his books have received several honors, including the 1986 Delmore Schwartz Memorial Poetry Award for *Rose* and the 1990 Lamont Poetry Prize for *The City in Which I Love You*. A memoir, *The Winged Seed*, was published in 1995.

### May 29--Sandra Adelmund, Poetry

SANDRA ADELMUND'S most recent book, *Aerial Studies*, won the Minnesota Voices Project Poetry Competition (sponsored by New Rivers Press) as well as the Iowa Pen Women Grand Prize for best book published in the previous year. Her individual work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The Cream City Review* and *Colorado Quarterly*. She has served as managing editor of *The North American Review*, assistant editor with *Short Story*, and poetry editor of *Iowa Woman*. Her most recent editing projects include *Iowa Woman's Fifteenth Year Anthology* and *Voices on the Landscape: Contemporary Iowa Poets*. After many years in Iowa, where she taught for fourteen years at the University of Northern Iowa, Adelmund now lives in New Brighton, Minnesota.

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## The Second Coming by W. B. Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;  
Where anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight, somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last  
Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?

\*The title alludes to the Second Coming of Christ predicted in Matthew 24, but also symbolizes the end of one age and the coming of another.

*Happy St. Patrick's Day!*

Carla R. Kraft  
PO Box 216  
Lakefield, MN 56150

From the Editor:

Happy Saint Patrick's Day on the 17th. Here's to the luck o' the Irish and the pot o' gold at rainbow's end--and that's no blarney. *Today's dreams become tomorrow's realities. Do not belittle the practical dreamer, for he or she is the forerunner of civilization--Napoleon Hill.*

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### *Achievements Reported*

*Come on achievers, we do not need this much white space.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### F Y I

March 15th is the deadline for NFSPS contests.

Thursday, March 13, 7:30 pm, COFFEE HAG, 329 N. Riverfront Drive, 387-5533--Poetry Slam--Leave your inhibitions at the door. The experienced and inexperienced alike are welcomed to put their skills to the test! 7:30 pm open mike. 8:00 featured reader Walker. 8:30 Slam. As always, fabulous door prizes!

Just a reminder...LOMP 13th Annual Contest deadline is July 31, 1997.

At our February meeting, members were asked to bring suggestions for a theme for the fall LOMP convention. SMPS will host the year--it will be held sometime around the 15th of October. Also, Ike gave an informative lecture on the structure of poetry. He named and discussed the six types of structure: paraphrasable, irrational, image, metrical, sound, and syntactical. He concluded by saying that structure should serve content, and that poetry should build tension because we experience relief with the release of

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### Poems by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

#### *For Anne Gregory*

Will you not turn  
me into despair  
with that great honey-coloured  
braid at your ear  
that you have put  
on for yourself alone

your yellow hair."  
Will you not get a hair-dye  
of such colour there,  
black, or carrot,  
that the men in despair  
will come for myself alone  
with your yellow hair."

Will you not, old religious man,  
ought to declare  
that you have found a text to prove  
that I am dead, my dear,  
that you have found  
that you are for yourself alone  
with your yellow hair."

#### *Leda And The Swan*

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still  
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push  
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?  
And how can body, laid in that white rush,  
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there  
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower  
And Agamemnon dead.  
Being so caught up,  
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

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### APRIL PROGRAM

Susan is scheduled to conduct the program. This month's assignment is a Zany poem: sponsored by Woodtick Retreat Poets, LOMP Contest 19, any form, any subject, 28 line limit.

#### *Youth's Progress* by John Updike

*Dick Schneider of Wisconsin...was elected "Greek God" for an interfraternity ball. --Life*

When I was born, my mother taped my ears  
So they lay flat. When I had aged ten years,  
My teeth were firmly braced and much improved.  
Two years went by; my tonsils were removed.

At fourteen, I began to comb my hair  
A fancy way. Though nothing much was there,  
I shaved my upper lip--next year, my chin.  
At seventeen, the freckles left my skin.

Just turned nineteen, a nicely molded lad,  
I said goodbye to Sis and Mother; Dad  
Drove me to Wisconsin and set me loose.  
At twenty-one, I was elected Zeus.

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#### From the Editor:

Greetings SMPS members. Now is a time of resurrection and rebirth. Religions around the world joined to celebrate the resurrected Christ on Easter Sunday, and like a symphony, nature orchestrates the resurrection of all life with the coming of spring. All around us, we see a quickening, an emergence of rebirth--birds, ducks, and geese return home, green grasses poke through the earth from underneath the melted snow, and we, ourselves, experience new vitality and energy as we synchronize with nature's new rhythms. Let us flow with this energy and get on fire for life, and let each of us resurrect the sleeping poet within--the poet whose voice rings out and sings in melodic harmony with the universe.

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.

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### Achievements Reported

Two book reviews (*Rush Hour* by Kevin Fitzpatrick and *In the Company of Women*, edited by Bonnie Watkins and Nina Rothchild) written by **Carla R. Kraft** were recently published in *The Correspondent* at Mankato State University.

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### F Y I

Notice: **April 12th is the deadline for LOMP spring seminar contest.** Spring meeting is to be held at Breezy point on May 3rd--see Lomplighter.

LOMP needs you on file. Send life sketch to **Lorraine Mueller** asap--see Lomplighter for details.

Just a reminder...**LOMP 13th Annual Contest deadline is July 31, 1997.**

At our March meeting, the decision was made to hold the fall LOMP meeting at Good Council in Mankato on September 19th and 20th. Note the change on your calendars! Our featured speaker is **John Rezmerski** "Voice; the tool and metaphor," is the topic he will address. We still need ideas for an overall theme; send ideas to **Bill Johnson**, committee chairman. "Voices of Fall," was the popular suggestion at March's meeting--so, if you have a better one, contact Bill.

Our secretary, **Nancy Dauer** is expecting her third child on April 14th; we welcome the new arrival, and wish mother and child all good blessings. Nancy says she dreamed the sexes and names of her other two children, and the dreams proved accurate; she dreamed this one was a boy, and says his name is either Benjamin or Loren--we'll see. SMPS appreciates Nancy's contributions to the group.

Congratulations to **Bill Johnson** on the long-awaited sale of his Mankato house. Now, he says he can do the things he wants (which is to write poetry), rather than do what he has to do.

Welcome home snowbirds.

Guests at March's meeting were **Dr. Joe Eckert, Julia Bremer, and Kathy Wenniger**. We hope they will come back again this month.

At March's meeting, **Nancy Dauer** spoke about Ralph Waldo Emerson and his philosophies regarding poetry, "It is much to write sentences; it is more to arrange many general reflections in their natural order to make one homogenous piece." She read four poems by Emerson: *Give All For Love, Each and All, Concord Hymn*, and *Days*. To sum up the basis for his beliefs, she quoted Emerson as saying, "The whole of nature is a metaphor or image of the human mind."

We appreciate our new SMPS president **Bonnie Ann Wolle** as she assumes her new responsibilities as group president.

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### BACK FROM THE WORD PROCESSING COURSE, I SAY TO MY OLD TYPEWRITER by Michael Blumenthal 1949--

Old friend, you  
who were once in the avant-garde,  
you of the thick cord  
and the battered plug,  
the slow and deliberate characters  
proportionally spaced, shall we  
go on together as before?  
Shall we remain married  
out of the cold dittos of conviction  
and habit? Or should we move on  
to some new technology of ease  
and embellishment--Should I run off  
with her, so much like you when  
you were young, my aged Puella  
of the battered keys, so lovely  
in that bleached light of the first morning?

Old horse,  
what will it be like  
when the next young filly  
comes along? How will I love you,  
crate of my practised strokes,  
when she cries out: new new  
and asks me to dance again?  
Oh plow for now, old boat,  
through these familiar waters,  
make the tides come in  
once more! Concubined love,  
take me again into your easy arms,  
make this page wild once more  
like a lustful sheet! Be wet,  
sweet toy, with your old ink:  
vibrate those aging hips again  
beneath these trembling hands.

Sylvia Plath 1932-1963

METAPHORS

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,  
An elephant, a ponderous house,  
A melon strolling on two tendrils.  
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!  
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.  
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.  
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.  
I've eaten a bag of green apples,  
Boarded the train there's no getting off.

Linda Pastan 1932--

JUMP CABLING

When our cars	touched
When you lifted the hood	of mine
<del>When</del> To see the intimate workings	underneath
When we were bound	together
By a pulse of pure	energy
When my car like the	princess
In the tale woke with a	start,
I thought why not ride the rest of the way	
together?	

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### MAY PROGRAM

**Mother's Day/Family Roots/A Family Member.** Traditional form, not free verse.  
**Suggestion:** Write a poem about your mother or someone who inspired you to reach beyond your notion of yourself. The following poem by Alice Walker perhaps portrays the author's perception of her mother. **Editor's aside:** At least for the present moment, that is, until technology changes the accepted order of things, such as in-the-news events like cloning, a woman is still nature's required selection for motherhood.

#### WOMEN--Alice Walker

They were women then  
My mama's generation  
Husky of voice--Stout of  
Step  
With fists as well as  
Hands  
How they battered down  
Doors  
And ironed  
Starched white  
Shirts  
How they led  
Armies

Headragged Generals  
Across mined  
Fields  
Booby-trapped  
Ditches  
To discover books  
Desks  
A place for us  
How they knew what we  
Must know  
Without knowing a page  
Of it  
Themselves.

Membership Notes: Memberships for Southern Minnesota Poets' Society run from January to January. Dues are \$15.00 for adults; \$3.00 for students. Dues may be mailed to Treasurer Elaine Anderson, RR 1, Box 43, Trimont, MN 56176. Dues for the League of Minnesota Poets are now \$20.00 or \$12.00 for students. Membership is open to everyone. Dues for LOMP--which include a year's membership to the national federation of poets (NFSPS) may be mailed to Shirley Ensrud, Treasurer, 208 S. Main Street, Blue Earth, MN 56013.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Achievements Reported

*The membership list is done--compliments of Elaine Anderson.*

*Monica Haack read her poem "Mismatch," at a style show at Fiesta Village in Mission, Texas. Her poem about Fiesta will be published in their Pictorial Dictionary. "This Donkey's Destiny," and "Another Donkey's Destiny" were printed in the Christmas and Easter Church Bulletin at Our Lady of Guadalupe and "Bring On the Laughs," was published in "Living Waters" Prayer Group Newsletter. Monica also gave readings at Messiah Lutheran Church and Evangelical Covenant Church.*

*June Emanuel's first poem "Three Wise Men," was published for the second holiday season at The Calvary Lutheran Church in Rapidan's Sunday Bulletin.*

*Congratulations, acheivers.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### F Y I

Notice: **This edition of *Thistledown* is the final one until September; so, mark your calendars for special upcoming events.**

LOMP needs you on file. Send life sketch to **Lorraine Mueller** asap--see Lomplighter for details.

Just a reminder...**LOMP 13th Annual Contest deadline is July 31, 1997.**

Bill Johnson wants all good poets to think about the "color" of poetry. If you have suggestions for future programs, or themes or fall convention, contact Bill.

Our secretary, **Nancy Dauer** gave birth to her third child on April 15th. As predicted in her dream, Loren Ross (last month she dreamt the baby was a boy) entered into the world at 7 lbs. and 14 oz; he was 20.5 inches long. Congratulations to Allen and Nancy Dauer on the new addition to their family.

At April's meeting, **Bonnie Ann Wolle and Bill Johnson** conducted a two-part program on poetry.

***Thistledown's* editor, Carla R. Kraft** started a new job (in addition to taking classes at MSU) with the State of Minnesota working with youth employment, and that is why this month's *Thistledown* is later than usual--my apologies, SMPS members. SMPS members, remember the picnic at **Sue Chambers's** place. For specific details, contact Sue.

**Woodtick Retreat** is July 18, 19, & 20 at the Stevens's cabin north of Brainerd. Contact **Sue Chambers** for info.

Members interested in rideshare to Biloxi, Mississippi for the annual NSFPS convention, June 19-23, are asked to contact Bill Johnson. Depending on member response, he has indicated that he may be willing to drive his van to Mississippi for the occasion.

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### *Putting Mother By--Dona Stein*

We are in her kitchen;  
we have one enormous  
pot and all the spices  
are together.

We are too tiny and take  
so long to sterilize  
the jar; finally, more

water is boiling, waiting.  
We don't have to call,  
she hears and comes  
into her kitchen.

We lift her over the pot;  
she slips into the water  
without a murmur.  
She does not try to get out.

Later, we stand on tiptoes  
and watch her inside  
the Mason jar floating  
in liquid bay leaves  
and flakes of pepper.  
Dill weed floats like  
a pine tree around her hair.

We look at each other, we  
press our noses against  
the jar and see she is more  
surprised than anything else.

Carefully we carry her down  
into the cellar; we store  
her next to the peaches and plums;  
we have her now.

## MSU Good Thunder Reading Series:

### SPRING QUARTER:

#### May 8--Li-Young Lee, Poetry/nonfiction

Currently a resident of Chicago, LI-YOUNG LEE was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, of Chinese parents. After a year during which his father was held as a political prisoner in President Sukarno's jails, the poet's family fled the country and traveled throughout Asia for five years before arriving in America. Lee's work has been published in a number of journals--**American Poetry Review** and **TriQuarterly** among them--and his books have received several honors, including the 1986 Delmore Schwartz Memorial Poetry Award for **Rose** and the 1990 Lamont Poetry Prize for **The City in Which I Love You**. A memoir, **The Winged Seed**, was published in 1995.

#### May 29--Sandra Adelmund, Poetry

SANDRA ADELMUND'S most recent book, **Aerial Studies**, won the Minnesota Voices Project Poetry Competition (sponsored by New Rivers Press) as well as the Iowa Pen Women Grand Prize for best book published in the previous year. Her individual work has appeared in numerous publications, including **The Cream City Review** and **Colorado Quarterly**. She has served as managing editor of **The North American Review**, assistant editor with **Short Story**, and poetry editor of **Iowa Woman**. Her most recent editing projects include **Iowa Woman's Fifteenth Year Anthology** and **Voices on the Landscape: Contemporary Iowa Poets**. After many years in Iowa, where she taught for fourteen years at the University of Northern Iowa, Adelmund now lives in New Brighton, Minnesota.

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

\*\*\*\*\*  
From the Editor:

Happy May/Happy Spring SMPS members. Jack Frost go away and stay away. Amen. I hope everyone has a warm, yes warm, and prosperous summer--full of fun, frolic, creative inspiration, hot love, fragrant flowers, prolific soybeans and corn, red-breasted robins, golden suntans, lush green lawns, a clean conscience, fleshy tomatoes and cucumbers, life-giving sun, meadowlarks and mourning doves, plump roses and mammoth marigolds, fishing trips, vacation spas, chicken picnics, grilled rib-eyes, iced tea and marmalade, shameless splashes in hot tubs on star-lit moonglow nights, soul stirring songs, bottles of beer and red wine, rhubarb pies with homemade ice cream, a ton of money, more beauty, crisp watermelons, new words, pristine melodies, fresh music to warm your hearts, a parade of ideas for poems, true friends, healthy families, sound minds, strong bodies, and every good thing the creator bestows upon us all. 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.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Coffee Hag: Poetry Slam--Thursday, May 15th. Leave your inhibitions at home. The experienced and inexperienced alike are welcomed to put their skills to the test. 7:30 pm--Open Mike. 8:00 featured reader. 8:30 pm--SLAM. As always--fabulous door prizes.  
ader. 8:30 pm--SLAM. As always--fabulous door prizes.

A Woman Mourned By Daughters--Adrienne Rich

Now, not a tear begun  
we sit here in your kitchen,  
spent, you see, already.  
You are swollen till you strain  
this house and the whole sky.  
You, whom we so often  
succeeded in ignoring!  
You are puffed up in death  
like a corpse pulled from the sea;  
we groan beneath your weight.  
And yet you were a leaf,  
a straw blown on the bed,  
you had long since become  
crisp as a dead insect.  
What is it, if not you,  
that settles on us now

like satins you pulled down  
over our bridal heads?  
What rises in our throats  
like food you prodded in?  
Nothing could be enough.  
You breathe upon us now  
through solid assertions  
of yourself: teaspoons, goblets,  
seas of carpet, a forest  
of old plants to be watered,  
an old man in an adjoining  
room to be touched and fed.  
And all this universe  
dares us to lay a finger  
anywhere, save exactly  
as you would wish it done.

**HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!**

Carla R. Kraft  
PO Box 216  
Lakefield, MN 56150

# THISTLE-DOWN

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15 Issue 15

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anticipating the meeting of September 13, 1997

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Meeting: September 13, 1997  
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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### SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

#### "LOMP Fall Festival Workshop"

We will finalize preparations for the Fall Poetry Festival to be held September 19-20  
Mankato. Conference theme: A Harvest of Voices. Held at the Good Council  
Education Center in Mankato. See August Lomplighter for further details.

This is a quickie newsletter comprised of the leanest of information. The list of  
programs for the upcoming year should be available and published in next month's  
newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

From the Editor:

Hello all you SMPS poets. Our president asked me to put together a brief letter to you all. Since I will be attending Mankato State University full force beginning fall quarter, I have asked someone else take over as editor of *Thistledown*. After all, I can't really be a professional student forever; I must complete this degree once and for all. It has been fun and rewarding to produce *Thistledown*. I felt that I sometimes stretched the limits of convention with my poetry selections word choices, but you all rolled with the punches in good spirit. Through the months, I received tons of positive feedback from many of you, and I thank you for the opportunity to stretch and grow writing as your editor this past season. Not only will I be intensely occupied with school this fall, I recently had an acute attack of pet mania. Almost overnight, I acquired two peach-faced lovebirds whom we call Peaches and Pears, plus two black and white, Siberian Husky pups whose names are Mike and Annie. In addition to all the new babies, we have a white Husky pup--Max, plus one dog goldfish named Stallone. As you might imagine, all these critters require lots of love and attention. I love (almost) every minute of it. Although I am taking this recess from the *Thistledown*, I can be reached at: Carla R. Kraft, PO Box 216, Lakefield, MN 56150, (507) 662-5873, (507) 662-5873 fax. Call, write, fax or e-mail any time. ckraft@lakefield.mn.frontiercomm.net Please leave a message if there is no answer.

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Loraine Schwanke Mueller won third honorable mention on her poem "When Winter Weather Called Us Home," at the LOMP Convention Seminar at Breezy Point on May 3, 1997.

Carla R. Kraft travelled to Ft. Worth, Texas in August to record a demo of two songs: I've Loved You Forever and Pink Moon. She recorded them at Access Creative with producer/composer, Ron Dilulio, whose credentials include being the recipient of a full music scholarship from Van Cliburn plus numerous collaborations with major artists such as Jewel, Charlton Heston, Whitney Houston, name a few. Mr. Dilulio recently worked on a movie score in Los Angeles, CA for the popular television show Beverly Hills 90210. Carla is currently working on a third song for the demo and will prepare the recording for radio play within the upcoming months.

Congratulations, achievers.

\*\*\*\*\*

F Y I

Bill Johnson's mother Agnes, passed away on July 2, 1997 at the age of 100.

Bill Johnson's wife Carol (formerly Carol Dahlin), attended the wedding of her son in New Mexico on June 14, 1997.

\*\*\*\*\*

**List of PLEEZ Brings: From our president, Bonnie Anne Wolle**

Pleeez bring to the September 13th meeting (if you haven't already sent it in) a short Fall poem to be used as part of our table decorations.

Pleeez bring your unwrapped door prizes.

Pleeez bring any ideas and/or materials that could be used for our fall table centerpieces.

Pleeez bring assignment poem: Theme is adverse weather or weather-related poem.

Pleeez bring yourself and reunite with poet friends of the past--and pleeez bring a friend and come meet new friends!

Carla R. Kraft  
PO Box 216  
Lakefield, MN 56150



Meredith R. Cook  
427 Gorman St.  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

THISTLE-DOWN

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS' SOCIETY

Volume 15 Issue 16

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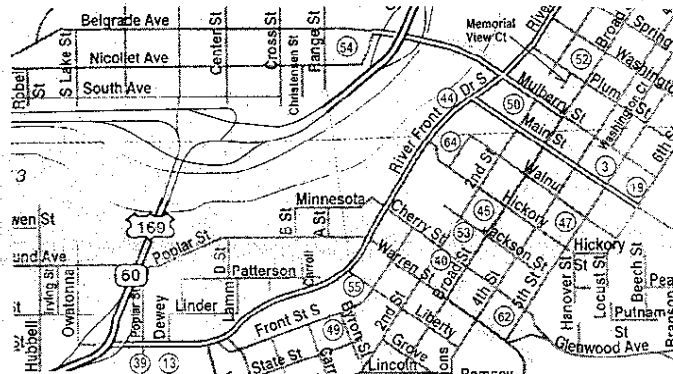
Meeting: Saturday, October 11, 1997  
11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Cafe Camarda

12 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 1655  
(OLD DOWNTOWN MALL)

Use Cherry Street Entrance and Parking Lot  
Parking is Free

Take Riverfront Drive to Warren Street (Warren is south of the Civic Center) and head southeast for two blocks. Go northeast on Second Street for one block to Cherry Street; turn left on Cherry and park in the lot on Cherry. Cafe Camarda is just inside the Cherry Street entrance to the old downtown mall.



Join us for a Dutch treat lunch. Reservations are unnecessary. The program starts promptly at 1 p.m. Guests are always welcome! Our October program will feature a presentation by Susan Chambers on the beginning inspiration stage of a poem.

Reminder: Our poetry assignment for October is a nature poem.

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**A BIG THANK-YOU** to all the faithful SMPS members who worked so willingly to make our LOMP Fall Poetry Festival a great success!

**ONCE AGAIN MEREDITH COOK** has done an outstanding job in preparing the Moccasin in time for our Fall Festival. Thanks, Meredith!

**SPECIAL THANKS** to our LOMP Fall Meeting speaker, John Rezmerski, for inspiring us with a wealth of perspectives on creating poetry. He encouraged us to use common language, but an uncommon approach. For example, in a dramatic monologue he suggested using someone else's voice or multiple voices. He also emphasized that the speaking voice is music-seeking. John played one of his lyric compositions that included overlapping voices (performed by Gustavus dramatic arts' personnel) and music combined in such a way that the listener felt transported to a world of light. This poem also illustrated the importance of hesitation and pause in reading poetry. Presentations such as

this force the writer to collaborate with others in order to produce a final product that has a life of its own because of the contributions of different personalities.

Another suggestion was to let voices from the past mingle with voices from the present, or to expand an overheard conversation. John's example portrayed two "perennial" elderly ladies discussing an old slight ("she was always that way"). The monologue ended with word pictures of fish chewing old pebbles, over and over again, and ignoring the food drifting down around them.

John gave an example of an oriental poet's method of testing his poem: he would work the poem into a conversation with his neighbor, and if she recognized that she'd heard a poem, then it still needed work.

We appreciated Mr. Rezmerski's "chin music" (teeth rattle! cheeks flap!) and his unique plays on words. Thanks, John!

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#### CALENDAR ITEMS

**October 15, 1997** - 1997 NFSPS Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition deadline. (See recent Strophes.)

**February 1, 1998** - NFSPS 1998 Edna Meudt Memorial Scholarship Fund deadline. (See recent Strophes.)

**June 18-22, 1998** - NFSPS Annual Convention in Ogden, Utah. A train from Iowa will take two days to get there. If you've never been to a national convention before, this is the one to attend!

**July 18, 1998** - Moccasin deadline.

**Barnes and Noble Writers' Night** - Meets the first Wednesday of each month from 7-9 p.m. This group is led by Assistant Manager Jill Hinners. Come for support, inspiration and feedback (if desired) on your writing projects.

**Barnes and Noble Poetry Night** - This open stage event happens the second Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. Take advantage of this opportunity to hear local poets and to share your own poetry in public.

**The Good Thunder Reading Series** at Mankato State University brings readings, workshops and book-signings to the community. This year's focus is on ten Minnesota writers. All events are free and open to the public. The Free Press article didn't give times or room numbers for the events, but I believe the visiting writers offer a workshop during the afternoon and read from their works at 7:30 p.m.

This year's events include the following:

Alex Pate, fiction, October 9. Pate's first novel, Losing Absalom, was awarded Best First Novel by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association; it also won a 1995 Minnesota Book Award. He teaches poetry and literature at Macalester College and fiction at the University of Minnesota.

Thom Tammaro and Mark Vinz, poetry, October 24. Tammaro's collection of poems, When the Italians Came to My Home Town, was a finalist for a 1996 Minnesota Book Award. Tammaro is professor of Multidisciplinary Studies at Moorhead State University.

Recent books by Vinz include Late Night Calls: Prose Poems and Short Fiction and Minnesota Gothic, a book of poems enhanced by Wayne Gudmundson's photographs. Vinz is coordinator of the MFA program in creative writing at Moorhead State University.

Briefly, the other guests include these authors:

Lewis Nordan, fiction, October 30.

Susan Yuzna, poetry, November 20.

Beth Weatherby, fiction/nonfiction, January 22.

David Treuer, fiction, February 12.

Jim Daniels, poetry/screenwriting, March 5.

John Calderazzo, nonfiction/fiction, April 14-17.

Freya Manfred, poetry, May 7.

Roseann Lloyd, poetry, May 28.

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#### ACHIEVEMENT REPORT

Bill Johnson and Carol Dahlin were married on May 17, 1997. Congratulations, newlyweds!

Meredith Cook entered Jessee Poet's Poets at Work Contests and received the following places in them: First Place in Special #21, Third Honorable Mention in Special #19, Second Honorable Mention in Special #18 and Citation in Special #17.

Monica Haack gave a poetry reading at Lake Crystal Zion Lutheran Church.

Meg Kramer had a poem published in the MSU Reporter.

Sonnets by Shirley Ensrud on the New Testament were read on KBEW Radio. Poems written in Ireland were read at United Methodist Women and also at Study Club.

Loraine Schwanke Mueller was commissioned by Tracy United Methodist Church to write the poem for their 125th anniversary on October 19-20, 1997.

Sue Chambers won the First Place (\$1500) Grand Prize NFSPS Contest in June; it will be published in next year's anthology. The poem was "Review of a Living Will." She was the keynote speaker at the South Dakota State Poetry Society Spring Meeting in June and conducted a workshop on defeating writer's block. She was the keynote speaker on August 16 for the Heartland Poets on "The Genesis of a Prize Winning Poem."

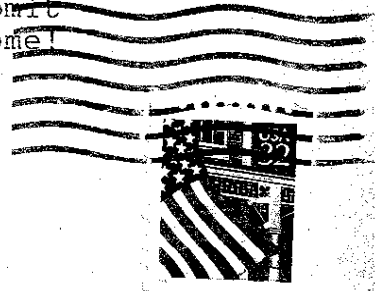
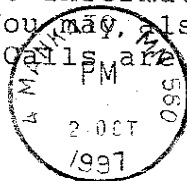
Super congratulations to LOMP Contest winners from SMPS! They include Shirley Ensrud, Sue Chambers, Meredith Cook, Loraine Schwanke Mueller, Bonnie Anne Wolle and Christina Chambers.

LOMP Seminar winners from SMPS were as follows: Fixed Form - First Place, Loraine Schwanke Mueller; Third Place, Meredith Cook; Free Verse - First Place, Wilfred Johnson. We are proud of you!

**Kudos to all!**

Do you have a poetry-related achievement we could share in the THISTLE-DOWN? Please send any achievements to your new editor, Faye Mattison, at 521 E. Main Street, #B, Mankato, MN 56001, or call me at 507-345-1174. (Please submit information at least two weeks before the next SMPS meeting.) You may also submit achievements at our monthly meetings. Calls are welcome!

Faye Mattison  
521 East Main Street, #B  
Mankato, MN 56001



Wilfred M. Johnson  
5648 Perry Ave N  
Minneapolis, MN 55429