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Welcome!

NEW MEMBERS

Nancy Cross Dunham, Madison
Anneliese Finke, Sheboygan
Cristin Jacque, Middleton
Patrick Kane, McFarland
Lindsay Maruszewski,
Shorewood
Alexis Santiago, Green Bay
Natalie Serna, Delavan
Carla Staab, South Milwaukee

President's Message

I'm writing this on what was supposed to be the weekend of our spring conference in Sheboygan. Obviously, that isn't happening. What is happening is that thanks to the many efforts of devoted and creative WFOP members, the world of Wisconsin poetry continues to spin. This message is devoted to recognizing and thanking everyone responsible. If I leave someone out, please forgive me.

In these times of distancing, digital/virtual communication has become top priority. Instead of the usual presentation of contest awards at the conference, the results of both contests are posted on the WFOP website, along with judges' comments and winning work. You can even hear some of the winners reading their poems! Thanks to **Annette Grunseth, Fred Kreutz, and Jerome Jagielski** for processing entries and overseeing all the details of these contests. The business affairs of WFOP were handled by the board of directors via email on May 2. All the reports usually included in the conference folder (thirteen of them!) are posted on the website under "Resources/Minutes." Please take a look and review them to stay current on the many activities and projects taking place and the folks who make them happen. Thanks to our web guru **Tori Grant Welhouse** for handling all this extra work. Tori has also created a section under "Resources" called "Poetry to the Rescue" where a variety of virtual poetry experiences can be found, as well as links to online workshops and video reading opportunities and poetry events.

Social media continues to play an important role in staying connected. The WFOP Facebook page has over 700 "likes" and continues to grow. A no-fee submission opportunity was featured every day during National Poetry Month, and these can still be accessed.

As an organization, WFOP is actively publishing the work of poets in Wisconsin. *Bramble* is published three times a year under the direction of **Christina Kubasta, Tori Grant Welhouse**, and guest editors. The 2021 *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar* will be released in late summer 2020, the result of the hard work of editors **Gillian Nevers, Nancy Jesse, and Keesia Hyzer**. And a new publication, yet to be officially named, was approved by unanimous vote of the board of directors at the May 2 "meeting." You can read more elsewhere in this *Museletter*. Thanks to **Kathleen Serley** for originating the idea that has grown into a timely project that helps create community and stay connected.

I hope you are finding more time to write in these difficult times. I hope poetry is proving to be a solace, a comfort, and a way to express and record your personal response to a troubling global situation.

Looking forward to the time when we can meet and greet and even exchange a hug!

Best,
—Jan

**A Note from the
Membership Chair**

We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions regarding membership! Please contact Naomi Cochran at wfopmembership@gmail.com or mail to W1598 Lee Rd, Hayward WI 54843.

**Triad Contest
DEADLINE**

August 15



Info in this issue, or
wfop.org/annual-contests/

What's Happening in Your Region?

All events free & open to the public unless stated otherwise.

CENTRAL-FOX VALLEY

VPs: Cathryn Cofell, ccofell@gmail.com &

Christina Kubasta, ckkubasta60@marianuniversity.edu

Your regional VPs wish to share your news! Please send. Email **Cathy Cofell** to be added to the area events list.

Carol Lee Saffioti-Hughes has a poem, “Fog Along the River,” in the Winter issue of *Bramble*.

EAST

VP: Ed Werstein, wersted@gmail.com

Sadly, as everyone knows, the Spring Conference had to be canceled. The good news is that we have re-booked the Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan to host the Spring Conference April 30–May 1, 2021.

David Southward, Milwaukee, received the Lorine Niedecker Poetry Award from the Council for Wisconsin Writers.

I'd like to encourage people to consider donating to Woodland Pattern. The store has been closed for several weeks and is relying on phone in orders and donations to balance their operating budget. Please consider assisting them through this crisis. You will find five different ways you can contribute, here: woodlandpattern.org/support

Finally, as newly appointed Treasurer of the Poet Laureate Commission, I'd like to encourage donations to the work of the Commission. Shortly we will be entering into the selection cycle for our next Wisconsin Poet Laureate. A large portion of our budget goes to support the activities of the Poet Laureate in promoting poetry around the state. Please consider a gift; visit the website here: wisconsinpoetlaureate.org/two-ways-support

MID-CENTRAL

VP: Kathleen Serley, kserley@dwave.net

Joan Wiese Johannes had poems on *Your Daily Poem* and in *Portage Magazine*.

Patricia Williams had poems published in *Carmina Magazine*, “Dark of Dawn—Dark of Midnight”; *Your Daily Poem*, “Futile Struggle”; *The Avocet*, “The Midwinter Night is Long”; *Weekly Avocet*, “Talk of the Day”; *Poems from The Lockdown Anthology* (Willowbrook Books), “Thoughts at the Time of the Virus.”

Linda Aschbrenner had the poems “Sun Tea” and “Snow-locked Morning in April” in *Poetry Hall 7*, and the poem “Sylvia Plath” in *Sage of Sac Prairie*. Her nature poem “Marshmallow Clouds in a Chocolate Sky” won an honorable mention in the California Federation of Chaparral Poets Contest.

Sue Twigg had a haiku published in the Sound Collage Public Collaboration with Alan Nakagawa, *Social Distance, Haiku and You!*, commissioned by the Orange County Museum of Art in Santa Ana, California. It is available to listen on Sound Cloud.

Michael Kriesel's collection of occult-themed abecedarians, *Zen Amen*, was recently reviewed at goodreads.com/review/show/3286394688.

NORTHEAST

VP: Tori Grant Welhouse, torigw@twc.com

Annette Grunseth offered a poetry reading and education session for UWGB's Lifelong Learning Institute in Green Bay (January 8, 2020) with her *Becoming Trans-Parent* book of poetry. She had two poems, “Fishing” and “Love Song” published in *Poetry Hall 7*, and a poem, “Sutured In Silence” along with an interview in *Portage Magazine*. A video reading of her poem “Theory of Choir” was in *Poetry Unlocked's* “virtual reading” for Poetry Month.

The Fort Atkinson Public Library, through the kindness of Friends of Lorine Niedecker, welcomed **Kathryn Gahl**, the 2019 Niedecker Award Winner, to their first virtual poetry reading on April 28. The Zoom event was hosted by Amy Lutzke, Assistant Librarian, and included poetry paired with paintings, screenshots of Gahl's current *PandemicPostCardPoems*, and a preview of Gahl's *The Velocity of Love*, to be released by Water's Edge Press in late summer.

NORTHWEST

VP: Nancy Austin, austin10929@gmail.com

Elizabeth Tornes' poem “Epitaph for Bijou” appeared in the March 15 *Boston Literary Journal*, and *Solstice Literary Magazine* published her “Rez Town” in its Spring issue.

Diana Randolph, Drummond, had a poem published in the Redbery Books, Cable, e-newsletter, had her poetry read on WOJB-FM by a radio announcer, and had one poem published in **Jude Genereaux's** poetry e-newsletter.

Naomi Cochran's poem “Anyone Can Be President” was featured on *The Writer's Almanac* with Garrison Keillor on May 5.

Jan Chronister has three poems in the current issue of *The Thunderbird Review*. Her poem “Captains of Industry” appears online in the Holocaust Remembrance Day issue of *Poetry SuperHighway*. Her poem “What If” is published in *Capsule Stories' Isolation Edition* and “Thoughts While Subbing at a High School” in *Red Cedar* (UW–Barron).

Peggy Trojan was a guest poet on the Carol Koby radio program, *All About Living in Madison*. Her poem “Noon Hour” was featured on Ted Kooser's *American Life*

in Poetry. She was the guest speaker for a program at the Art and Wine shop in Eau Claire. She also read at a book club and for friends and neighbors at River Plaza Apts.

Lucy Tyrrell had several poems published recently: "Advice from a Red-backed Vole" in the "lairs and layers" issue of *Alaska Women Speak*, "Buffalo—Grass Dance" in *The Thunderbird Review*, "When I visited Mount Rushmore" in *Red Coyote*, and "plainswoman" in *Red Cedar*. Her poem "Corona and Mary O's" was read on a virtual Irish music session broadcast from NYC on March 30 (read by Irish accordion player John Redmond). Her poem "Song Zhu Mei" received second place in Wilda Morris's Poetry Challenge for April (topic: dealing with stress). Lucy received a grant from the Chequamegon Bay Arts Council and a special projects grant from WFOP for her two projects featuring poetry and art to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, for which she also received matching funds from the Bayfield Carnegie Library and the Friends of the Apostle Islands NL. These projects are slightly delayed because of the pandemic. Lucy served on the editorial committee for the WFOP *Leaves of Peace* anthology. She hosted a Zoom virtual Poetry Evening on April 29 sponsored by the Bayfield Carnegie Library to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day and the close of National Poetry Month.

SOUTH CENTRAL

VP: James P. Roberts, jrob52162@aol.com

Margaret Benbow's poem "Young Gloria Swanson as The Lion's Bride" was a recipient of The Fantastic Ekphrastic Award 2020 from *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Gillian Nevers' poem "Two Girls with Gila Monster" received second place in Wilda Morris's January Poetry Challenge.

Jeanie Tomasko and **Gillian Nevers** had a collaborative poem, "Fire", in *Street Cake Magazine* in January.

Gillian Nevers, Lynn Patrick Smith and **James P. Roberts** had poems in the new issue of *Portage Magazine*.

James P. Roberts had a poem published in *Rosebud*.

Robin Chapman held an art reception and poetry reading from her new collection, *The Only Home We Know*, at the Pyle Center in Madison on February 8.

The 2020 Winter Festival of Poetry had to cancel the final two readings due to COVID-19. The South-Central members who did read this year were **Guy Thorvaldsen, Pauline Witte, Beth Workmaster, Joseph Lutz, Richard Merelman, Kathy Miner, Gay Davidson-Zielske, Paul Creswell, Dominic Holt, Amanda Werhane, Gillian Nevers, Sandy Stark, Ronnie Hess, Mary Rowin, Nydia Rojas, and Ginny Scholtz.**

F. J. Bergmann was interviewed for *Luna Station Quarterly*, lunastationquarterly.com/conversations-with-speculative-poets-f-j-bergmann/, and *blood orange*, patreon.com/posts/interview-8-f-j-33371726. "Daniel Boone," "Thomas Jefferson" and "George Washington" appeared in *misery tourism*, miserytourism.com/george-washington/, "Secession" in *Dreams and Nightmares* 115, "Regarding" in *Polu Texni*, polutexni.com/?p=10589, "Remorse" in *Unlost*, unlostjournal.com/fjbergmann/, "Evil Clowns" in *The Were-Traveler*, the-were-traveler.weebly.com/current-issue/evil-clowns-by-fj-bergmann, "Assumption" in *Star*Line*, "Half-Mourning" in *Rune Bear Weekly*, runebear.com/weekly/half-mourning/, and "Astray" and "Retrieval" in *Spectral Realms*. "Happy Childhoods" was a Winning Writers contest finalist, winningwriters.com/past-winning-entries/happy-childhoods. "Envoy" and "New Stars" were also nominated for the SFPA Rhysling Award.

WEST CENTRAL

VP: Sandra Lindow, lindowleaf@gmail.com

Presently local writing groups are sharing their poems online. We will resume face-to-face meetings when it is safe to do so. Under most circumstances we meet first Thursdays and third Tuesdays. Contact **Sandra Lindow** at lindowleaf@gmail.com for more information.

Jane Bahr has published three poems, "Birthday Greetings (42 Days After)," "Your Garden (70 Days After)" and "Restoration" in *Red Cedar*. She also had "On the Brink" chosen for the Leaves for Peace Project.

Yvette Flaten's poems "Driving the Car" and "Girl in the Apple Tree" appear in *Red Cedar*, and she read her poems in the online book opening.

Sandra Lindow's poems "Laughing Green Heart the Pirate" and "October" appear in *Red Cedar*. She read "Laughing Green Heart" as part of the *Red Cedar* May release video celebration. Her poem "Seventy Year Moon" appears in the Leaves for Peace Project, "walking in March" in *Haikuniverse* March 22, and "Darning" in the May/June *Asimov's SF*.

Karen Loeb's poem "In the Age of the Virus I Still Do This" appears in *Quaranzine*, issuu.com/thequarantinezine/docs/quaranzine_publish. Loeb was interviewed by the *Eau Claire Leader Telegram* on creative writing during the pandemic. "Creative Outlet" appears in the May 5 edition. She is also participating in a poetry postcard sharing project.

In House: for sharing information on members in transition. Please contact Michael Belongie at poetpow@gmail.com if you have news of a significant move, such as to another city or state, or care facility, by a WFOP member.

Publications by Our Members

From Granitehead to Cheesehead, a chapbook by Steven D. Hogdon, 2020. 38 pp. \$9.99 + \$2.50 shipping. PayPal to forestpondcampground@gmail.com

Snow on the Roof, a mini-chapbook by Gary C. Busha (Wolfsong Publications, 2020. 28 pp. \$5 incl./shipping; check to author, 3123 S Kennedy Dr, Sturtevant WI 53177.

NOTE TO MEMBERS WITH NEW BOOKS

Surely the point of publishing your book is for others to be able to read it? There is little point in listing books here without making it possible to buy them. When you announce a new book, send title, publisher, date, # of pages, price, and a place to buy the book, or your email, to wfopmuseletter@gmail.com

WFOP's Literary Journal

Bramble, WFOP's literary magazine, is guest-edited by WFOP members and open to all Wisconsin poets. For queries about artwork, guest editing, etc., email bramble@wfop.org. *Bramble* is now web and print. The Fall issue will open for submissions August 1. In keeping with WFOP's mission, the *Bramble* team will work with college students for a special issue. Full guidelines at:

wfop.org/bramble-lit-mag/how-to-submit

Postal submissions (*only* if unable to email) to:

C. Kubasta
Bramble submission
2312 Oregon St
Oshkosh WI 54902

New Poetry Pages editor needed starting with the 2020 Winter (November) issue of the *Museletter*. Contact Jan Chronister at wfoppres@gmail.com if interested.

Museletter submissions: Send news to your regional VP or to wfopmuseletter@gmail.com (include region!), in body of e-mail. Please format as in *Museletter*; no .pdfs or press releases.

Poetry news only; send only poetry publications, *not* acceptances; don't bother including WFOP awards or *Museletter* or *Calendar* appearances. **Please** don't double-space after periods.

Community & Connection Anthology

A Project of WFOP & Bent Paddle Press

Seeking poems in any form & style, narrative or lyric, serious or humorous, reflecting our lived experience during this time of social distancing. The purpose of the anthology is to give voice to the fears and frustrations, as well as the gratitude and hope felt as we adjust to isolation and search for community. Editors: Kathleen Serley, Bruce Dethlefsen, & Angela Voras-Hills.

Submission Details:

- Open to all Wisconsin poets and members of WFOP
- Send 1–3 poems, no more than 5 pages total (as .doc, .docx, or PDF) to bramble@wfop.org with "CCAnthology" in the Subject Line
- Include bio & contact info
- Previously unpublished poems only
- Simultaneous submissions OK, but please withdraw immediately if accepted elsewhere
- Deadline **August 15, 2020**

For those unable to submit electronically, please mail to:

C. Kubasta
CC Anthology
2312 Oregon St
Oshkosh WI 54902

The *Ariel Anthology* is now open for submissions of poetry by Wisconsin adult poets. Deadline is July 1. Please email arielanthology@gmail.com for theme and complete guidelines before submitting.

From the Archivist

Please send WFOP correspondence, photos, conference/workshop programs/handouts, regional memorabilia, personal mementos, etc. Returnable; postage reimbursed!

Lewis Bosworth, WFOP Archivist
2829 Barlow St, Madison WI 53705-3621
lewisabosworth@gmail.com ~ 608-238-3648

WFOP volunteer position open: high school/college student or older adult needed to assist the WFOP archivist by scanning documents using existing software and scanner. Must be able to perform duties at the near west side of Madison home of archivist. Typical time commitment: 3 hours/twice a month. WFOP is a not-for-profit organization. For more information and interview call Lewis Bosworth, **608-238-3648** OR email to lewisabosworth@gmail.com.

2020 WFOP TRIAD POETRY CONTEST RULES

1. Contestant must be a current WFOP member in good standing (dues current).
2. There is no entry fee. Do not send SASE. Entries will not be returned.
3. Contest opens on **June 1**. Entries must be *emailed* by **August 15**. Snail mail entries will be accepted from people who have no access to email; deadline for *snail mail* is **August 7** because the poems will have to be retyped into the file going to the judges. **PLEASE DO NOT SNAIL MAIL IF YOU HAVE EMAIL!**
4. Contestant may enter only one original, unpublished poem in each category. To clarify: “published” includes any print or electronic presentation except copies of drafts shared with critique groups. The same poem may not be entered in more than one category. Categories are described on the Entry Form.
5. Manuscript must be typed on 8½"x11" white paper, one side only, one poem to a page. **Type the category in the upper left corner.** Writer’s name should **NOT** appear on the page with the poem. Please do not center poems. Fonts will be standardized before poems are sent to judges. Put poems in body of email, or attach .doc or .docx in case of unusual formatting.
6. Send the poems together in one email to **jjohannes7@gmail.com**. The subject line should read: “Triad Entry from Last name, First name.” In the body of your email, include your name, address, email address, phone number, and the category, title and first line of each poem, and the following statement: “I am a current WFOP member. The poetry submitted is my original, unpublished work not under consideration elsewhere. If I am entering the Emerging Poet category, I meet the criteria.”
7. Only the winners will be notified prior to the Fall Conference, where the presentations will be made. The names will be posted on **wfop.org** and included in the *Museletter* following the conference.
8. The First Place winner in each category will be ineligible to enter that category the following year.
9. Prizes will be awarded only if there are sufficient entries and the judge determines that an entry warrants an award.
10. Sorry, but WFOP cannot accept responsibility for lost manuscripts, and there will be no notification if an entry is disqualified for failure to follow the rules. Author retains all rights to their work.
11. Please do not post your entries on your webpage until after the contest has been judged.
12. For each category, prizes are \$100, \$50, \$30. Theme: Humor; Poet’s Choice; Kay Saunders Memorial New Poet.

About Your Membership

All memberships are CALENDAR YEAR—January through December. Only new memberships October–December are automatically extended through the following year. **Renewal payments** are due by **December 31** each year. Your membership expires at the end of the year on your *Museletter* mailing label. Contact **wfopmembership@gmail.com** with any questions. To receive reminders and official news, make sure we have a current email address.

NB: *If you lapse, then renew, you will be entered as a new member. Continuous membership is required for service awards.*

If you vacation elsewhere, mail must be sent first class in order to forward. We are charged for returned bulk mail. Signing up for e-mail-only *Museletter* (.pdf online) saves WFOP \$ and arrives 2 weeks before the print *Museletter*. Notify **wfopmuseletter@gmail.com** to opt out of print delivery.

The Events weekly e-mailing is a separate opt-in list; to receive it, notify **wfopmuseletter@gmail.com**. Send all address changes or *Museletter* delivery inquiries to **wfopmuseletter@gmail.com**.

2020 TRIAD CONTEST ENTRY FORM ~ Email deadline **August 15**: see other side for instructions

Use this form **only** for postal entry (**August 7 postmark deadline**)!

Printed Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____ E-Mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I am a current member of WFOP. The poetry I am submitting is my original unpublished work and not under consideration elsewhere.

Signature _____ Date _____

You may enter only one poem in each category. Complete for each category you enter.

THEME: Humor (75 lines maximum)

Poem Title: _____

First Line: _____

POET'S CHOICE: Any subject/form (75 lines maximum)

Poem Title: _____

First Line: _____

***KAY SAUNDERS MEMORIAL EMERGING POET: Any subject/form** (75 lines maximum) **This category is reserved for emerging WFOP poets, those poets who may have started to publish their poetry and/or participate in workshops and classes, but have not won 1st place in a contest as an adult.**

Poem Title: _____

First Line: _____

**I meet the criteria (restricted; see rules) for this Triad contest.* Signature: _____

Mail entry postmarked by **August 7** to:

Jeffrey Johannes
800 Ver Bunker Ave
Port Edwards WI 54469

Membership Renewal Form **KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT.**

All renewals are due by December 31. Expiration year follows your name on the mailing label. Dues **MUST** be current to enter WFOP contests, be in the *Museletter*, receive mailings, and to have a page on wfop.org. Contact **wfopmembership@gmail.com** if you are not sure when your membership expires.

SAVE POSTAGE and renew or join online at wfop.org
or mail to: Colleen Frentzel, 1410 N Wuthering Hills Dr, Janesville WI 53546
Please make checks payable to: WFOP

Active \$30.00
Student \$15.00
***** 5 for 4 Deal *****
\$120 paid now will give
5 years of membership
for the price of 4! Save \$30!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip+4 _____

E-mail address _____

- Check to get weekly Events e-mail.
- Willing to help WFOP save \$?
- Check to get *Museletter* via e-mail.

2020 MUSE POETRY CONTEST WINNERS (83 entries)

1st place: “All Along the Junction Trail,” Sandra J. Lindow

2nd place: “Driving to the Diagnosis, and After,” Gail Sosinsky

3rd place: “Instead of a Bicycle at Christmas” Susan Martell Huebner

Honorable Mentions:

“First Night (I Leave you at Memory Care),” Peggy Trojan

“Bird (I’m Always Amazed),” Judy Kolosso

“Prelude to the first day of Kindergarten,” Paula Schulz

“Kirby Puckett Has A Big Butt,” Thomas Erickson

“Losing Purchase,” Bruce Dethlefsen

Judge Lisa Starr says: “I just wanted to share a few thoughts about my experience reading the poems and judging the contest. One of the most important roles of poetry in our lives, I think, is to cultivate community—to use the beautiful medium of poetry as a way to bring people together. Though Coleman and I were with you all so briefly a few years ago, I sensed the fellowship of your poetry community immediately. There was such joy in the gatherings, such beautiful listening during the Open Mic. It was wonderful to bear witness to, and I got another dose of that warmth reading these poems.

“There are a number of themes that recur in the body of the work as a whole, and they are the themes, as we now know more than ever, that are the bones of humanity: reverence for the natural world, respect for each other, and in particular for our elders, even as we become elders ourselves. I read through these poems many times before I could place even one of them in my “Not this time” pile. If you have the opportunity, please tell each and every Wisconsin poet who submitted a poem to the contest that their words filled my heart during a time of fear, uncertainty, bewilderment and grief. Please thank them all for me for sharing their gifts with me.”

*Submitted by Fred Kreutz,
2020 Muse Contest Coordinator*

2020 WFOP CHAPBOOK CONTEST WINNERS

1st place: *Rented Chickens*, Candace Hennekens

2nd place: *Everything About Breathing*, B J Best

1st Honorable Mention: *Benedicton & Baseball*, Ed Werstein

2nd Honorable Mention: *Bird Religion*, Jan Chronister

Congratulations to our poets! Since we are unable to announce the winners in person this year, please visit wfop.org/s/Judges-Comments_2020-Chapbook-Contest_Taneum-Bambrick.pdf to read more about each poet, hear one of their poems, and read comments from our esteemed judge Taneum Bambrick. Thank you to everyone who entered; Taneum indicated she was very impressed with the many fine chapbooks that were submitted.

*Submitted by Annette Grunseth,
2020 Chapbook Contest Coordinator*

Submission No-Nos

1. Plagiarism. The one thing for which editors permanently and completely blacklist a writer. And they notify each other.
2. Explaining a poem in any way, or even stating why you think it’s suitable for the journal. If an explanation is necessary, revise the poem until it is not.
3. Replying to a boilerplate rejection with insults, demands for rationale, requests for critique (aka “advice”), or any reply whatsoever, including thanks for the rejection, which makes it seem like you’re wearing a sign saying “KICK ME.” Unless you’ve been sent a reply intended for a different poet, in which case an inquiry is wise. DO thank an editor who takes the time to send specific suggestions for your work.
4. Groveling in the cover letter: “It’s such an honor to be considered,” etc. Groveling in an acceptance response is nearly as bad. Your writing is a product, with value. Never forget that editors are beggars (in the case of paying publications, wholesale buyers) just as much as they are gatekeepers.
5. Bragging, or praising your own work. If your bio includes publications and awards, good for you, but don’t make your cover letter or bio sound like a publicity self-promo or a blurb. And do not include others’ praise of your work!
6. Lavishly praising the publication you’re submitting to. If you really like a poem and want to briefly mention that, fine, but obvious flattery has an immediate negative effect.
7. Not paying attention to editorial focus: is it a political or experimental journal? Is there a theme? Don’t waste the editor’s time because you didn’t read guidelines or look at what they publish (journals without online samples have no one but themselves to blame for unsuitable submissions). Not reading what’s already been published is a huge mistake; your submission should make clear that you’ve selected appropriate work for that venue.
8. Including any kind of copyright statement. Nothing screams “Noob!” louder than this.
9. Including unrequested illustrations. Especially if they are not your own art or photos.
10. Submitting far oftener than requested. Trust me, having the editor think “Oh. HIM again...” (these are always male, FYI) does not enhance your chances of acceptance. The convention for most lit journals is sending a group of 3–5 poems once a quarter or so—again, read their guidelines.
11. Using an email address (e.g., Earthlink, hotmail, yahoo, aol) known for delivery problems. Gmail is your best bet.
12. Misgendering the editor. Misspelling the editor’s or the publication’s name. Sending to an entirely different journal. These are easy errors to make, especially when copying and pasting boilerplate—but some editors lack tolerance.
13. NEVER bulk-email submissions—that is, send a submissions email addressed to more than one editor, even BCC, even if they allow sim subs. This is really disrespectful. And don’t spam—e.g., add editors to your newsletter or FB group.

—F. J. Bergmann

Poems BY Our Membership

—ELMAE PASSINEAU, EDITOR

EAVESDROPPING: Take a phrase, sentence, or snippet of conversation you overhear in a restaurant, supermarket, theater, anywhere ... and build a poem around it. Maximum 18 lines.

PICK 'N' SAVE'S NEW JOB DESCRIPTION

Four self-checkout aisles are ka-chinging along happily while only one of the eight regular checkout aisles is operating, as five of us wait our turn in line there.

A checkout clerk (whose job description evidently reads: Assist the company in eliminating your job), shouts from the self-checkout lanes: *I can teach*

someone how to checkout over here. No one moves.

The customer two ahead of me says: *No thanks, I don't work here.* And the person ahead of me says: *Don't you think*

you could be more helpful by opening aisle two?

The clerk smiles and stays put, apparently content to know that she is doing her job.

—Ed Werstein, Milwaukee

POETRY AMID THE PANDEMIC

We're all in this together.

Take some time to be present.

With the new normal—sheltering in place—we're learning who we are.

Take some time to be present.

Be well; do good work; keep in touch.

We're learning who we are, and Hope is a thing with feathers.

Be well; do good work; keep in touch.

April is the cruelest month, and Hope is a thing with feathers.

So, reach out on Zoom.

April is the cruelest month.

With the new normal—sheltering in place—reach out on Zoom.

We're all in this together.

—Jan Bosman, Woodstock, IL

WHAT'S THE LEAST WE CAN DO?

(overheard at a State hearing on clean water)

what's the least we can do for clean water and air

what's the least we can do neither equal nor fair

what's the least we can do for a classroom that's safe
what's the least we can do for those left with no place

what's the least we can do to grant refuge and peace
what's the least we can do and provide on the cheap

what's the least we can do to end famine and fear

what's the least we can do and still look in the mirror

—Karyn J. Powers, Wausau

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD

I know how to make eggs roll along the countertop so they swerve at the last moment and careen into the open garbage container before my mother can see how I'm wasting perfectly good food for cheap thrills.

Like the time I poured an open box of pasta from the balcony just to hear its sound magnified on the hallway floor delicious and devastating before anyone sent it screaming into the boiling pot.

Or the ketchup episode with bright yellow accents of mustard on a wall of my room smelling so good because I really wanted hot dogs for dinner so I could design my own flavor pattern inside the bun.

—Tad Phippen Wentz, Port Washington

UPON OVERHEARING A SOLDIER

After hearing a soldier tell
another soldier, I had to ask:
Did you just say you took out
a whole platoon single-handedly?

Yes.

How many men, roughly speaking?

Thirty-eight.

In what kind of time?

Five minutes.

How? I wondered.

He stepped into an elevator and said,
turning to explain, door closing,

I have superior training.

He descended. My heart sank.

—Ann Steinbach, Milwaukee

THE CHECKOUT LINE

I hurry down the main aisle of Costco,
all the while scanning—assessing.

Which line is the shortest?

Who has the most in their cart?

How much is stacked on the conveyor?

I bet on the third line over and quickly unpack my items
expecting to be checked out in minutes.

Instead, the young man in front of me isn't moving,
though the woman first in line seems almost done.

The cashier is holding a magazine and scanning it over and over.

I begin fidgeting and checking out the other lines.

The woman says, *I picked up the magazine on impulse.*

I'm getting married soon.

The cashier holding the magazine *Brides* scans and punches.

Finally, a manager comes over; he begins scanning and punching.

Then he stops and explains, *The magazine is \$9.99.*

The woman says, *It's \$9.99!*

In a huff, I put my items back in the cart.

—Pauline Witte, Middleton

LIP BRIDGE

In the Canal Park café, I overhear mention
of *lip bridge*, register a clever way of saying *smile*.

When I grin, soft rose and glacier,
it is because I have jolted
to the sapphire realization of being alive.
A lip bridge traverses from gray floating gauze
of detached being that hangs over Lake Superior,
sullen sky seamless with the lake, to clarity
of singing golden alleluias behind six huskies.
Firecrackers blast joy down the wide white trail,
leave purple sparks on the slanting ribbon shadows of the firs.
I stand confidently on the runners, swiftly pass
snow-burdened birch, grip the sled,
amber drowning in the smile.

After I write the poem, I discover the conversation
was about the Duluth *lift bridge*.

—Lucy Tyrrell, Bayfield

*Note
that we are
far more likely
to find room
for shorter
poems!*

GRANDPARENTS DEADLINE JULY 15

Submit a narrative poem with some reference
to a grandparent—yours, someone else's, or
a fictional one. Maximum 18 lines.

Send to etp1024@gmail.com

or mail to **Elmae Passineau**
7007 Weston Ridge Dr #14
Weston WI 54476

Next Issue Deadline AUGUST 1, 2020

"Who Would Buy THAT!?"

It sits day and
night going off
and on, a utility.

Bronze woodpecker
perched between
shade and base.

Stained glass turns
bright by night
grey by day.

That pricey impulse
as whimsical as a
utility can be . . . me.

—Joan Giusto, Tomahawk

THE NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR

She walked in uninvited and asked, "Why aren't you married?"
I reluctantly explained as she said, "I don't mind if you live in sin."

I complimented her blouse then she touted it as high-end resale
She briefly eyed my furniture and asked if I was throwing any out

Her husband was ill so she'd call us to help him get around
I'd send my guy over to fix things and bring my freshly baked muffins

When I saw her assisting her bulky husband to their newly leased truck
I shouted to her that I'd get some aid and quickly headed towards my house

Behind my back I overheard her say in a not-so-quiet whisper
"The way she volunteers that man, she'll be divorced before she's married."

—Patricia McNamee Rosenberg, Burlington