



December, 2018

The Connecticut Poetry Society Newsletter

The CPS website is <http://ctpoetry.net/>.

While you're online, *Friend us on Facebook.*

CPS Honorary Board

Rennie McQuilkin, Connecticut Poet Laureate,
2015-2018

Marilyn Nelson, Connecticut Poet Laureate,
2001-2006

Vivian Shipley, Connecticut State University
Distinguished Professor at SCSU

CPS Officers

Co-Presidents: Tony Fusco & Pat Mottola

Vice President: Victor Altshul

Secretary: Christine Beck

Treasurer: Mark Sheridan

Contests: Joan Hofmann

Webmaster: Tony Fusco

Membership: Tony Fusco

CRR Editor: Ginny Connors

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

Outreach: Mark Sheridan & Christine Beck

Program Director: Victor Altshul

Board Meeting Coordinator: Julia Paul

Interested in Getting More Involved?

We are looking for someone to take over as Membership Chair and we'd also like a Publicity Chair. Contact Tony Fusco or Pat Mottola if you can help.



Celebrate the Holidays with CPS

The annual Connecticut Poetry Society Holiday Party will take place on Sunday, December 16th from 1-4 pm at Middlesex Community College in Chapman Hall. The address is 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown.

Festivities will include light refreshments, door prizes, an open mic, and a short program honoring recently deceased nationally-known poets Lucie Brock-Broido, Donald Hall, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, JD McClatchy, Tom Clark, and Tony Hoagland. This gathering is free and you are welcome to bring a friend.

Should Your Poem Be on the CPS

Website?

The CPS online Poetry Page features two poems by members each month. Send one poem for consideration, no longer than 60 lines, using the online submission form here:

<http://ctpoetry.net/members-only-poetry-submission-form.html>

CPS Chapters & Presidents

Danbury

Liz Massey
finchwhistlehaven@gmail.com

The Danbury chapter meets at Bethel Library, 189 Greenwood Avenue, on the second Saturday of each month, from 2:00 - 4:00 PM. Bring 6 to 8 copies of a poem for the workshop, or just come to listen and respond. To receive an e-mail reminder each month, contact Liz.

Farmington Valley

Terence McCaffrey
860-416-6684
tmccaff24@hotmail.com

This chapter meets one Tuesday of each month in the library at Tunxis Community College from 6-8 pm. Contact Terrence to get more information and to get on the email notification list. Bring copies of your poem if you want feedback.

Greater Hartford

Julia Paul
Julia.Paul@cox.net

The Greater Hartford chapter meets on the 2nd Sunday of each month, Sept. through June from 2-4 pm at Welles Turner Library, 2407 Main Street, Glastonbury. Bring copies of a poem to share if you want feedback on your work.

Manchester

Linda Richardson
wwpoetryclub@gmail.com

The Manchester chapter meets from 1-3 pm on the second Saturday of each month from September through June at The Arbors, 403 West Center Street in Manchester. Bring ten copies of a poem to share, although we do not give serious critiques of the poems. The chapter meets informally in July and August at the same location.

Middletown

Pamela Guinan
860-563-5761
Pamela.cps@hotmail.com

The Middletown chapter meets at the Russell Library, 123 Broad Street at 6 pm on the last Wednesday of each month. Bring copies of a poem for reading and critique.

New Haven

Vic and Laura Altshul
lauraaltshul130@gmail.com

The New Haven chapter meets on the third Saturday of the month at the Friends Room at Miller Memorial Library, 2901 Dixwell Ave., Hamden, from 10:15 am-12:15 pm.

Southbury

Marion McGauhy
860-354-2157
Mcgauhy@aol.com

The Southbury Chapter meets on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2 pm. Meetings are held at the Southbury Public Library, 100 Poverty Road. New and prospective members should contact Marion for summer meeting schedule times as the library's hours change during the summer.

Wilton

Ray Rauth
Rayrauth@optonline.net

This group meets every third Saturday from 2 to 4 pm in the Wilton Library, 137 Old Ridgefield Road. Members bring in copies of poems to distribute to all of the attendees. The poems should be no more than 40 lines.

No chapter in your area?

Consider starting one! All that's required is a regular meeting time, a place to meet, and a willingness to work with CPS poets.

Presidents' Message

—Tony Fusco and Pat Mottola

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

– Helen Keller

We, as poets, know that a poem is at its most exquisite when it is felt with the heart. During this holiday season let us all be blessed with the ability to feel deeply and touch gently. May we, as kindred spirits, inspire and support one another and bring hope and love for the coming year.

Let us be ever grateful and give thanks for the holidays. We would like to share with you the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Holidays

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The holiest of all holidays are those
Kept by ourselves in silence and apart;
The secret anniversaries of the heart,
When the full river of feeling overflows;--
The happy days unclouded to their close;
The sudden joys that out of darkness start
As flames from ashes; swift desires that dart
Like swallows singing down each wind that blows!
White as the gleam of a receding sail,
White as a cloud that floats and fades in air,
White as the whitest lily on a stream,
These tender memories are;--a fairy tale
Of some enchanted land we know not where,
But lovely as a landscape in a dream.

Two More Connecticut Towns Appoint

Poets Laureate

Two Connecticut towns have recently appointed their first poets laureate. Hartford has named Frederick-Douglass Knowles II, an associate professor at Three Rivers Community College, as their first-ever poet laureate. As Hartford's poet laureate, Knowles will act as both "a creator of poetry providing insight into our city," Richard Hollant, Hartford's commissioner on cultural affairs, wrote in a letter to the town council, "and as an advocate and connector for poetry throughout our neighborhoods."

CPS member Cortney Davis has been named Bethel's first poet laureate, after a lengthy and well-organized selection process by the Bethel Arts group and the town's first selectman. Her experiences as a nurse practitioner have informed her work. Davis's poetry has appeared in nursing and medical journals as well as in literary magazines and anthologies. Her books include ***When the Nurse Becomes a Patient: A Story in Words and Images*** and ***The Heart's Truth: Essays on the Art of Nursing***. She is the winner of the Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Poetry.

NFSPS

Members of CPS are also members of NFSPS (National Federation of State Poetry Societies). You can access their newsletter and find other information on their website

here: <https://www.nfsp.com/>

Poet in the Spotlight: Joan Kantor

Although Joan Kantor has been writing poetry since she was quite young, she didn't understand until adulthood that the writing she was doing was poetry. It was only after discovering contemporary poetry that she realized poetry did not need to be turgid, obtuse, or inaccessible. Although she has written in several genres, she says that poetry is what she loves most.

"It has been a way to express both joyful enthusiasm and despair. As such, it has helped me get through some extremely challenging times. In two of my books, *Fading Into Focus* (about Alzheimer's, death and a mother-daughter relationship) and *Holding It Together* (about mental illness), I deal with pain and disappointment as well as the opportunities for growth and the changes in perspective they can provide. My writing is honest and to the point in a way that I hope will help others coping with similar issues."

While much of her writing centers on family relationships and matters of the heart, she also writes about political and social justice issues. She enjoys ekphrasis, and nature threads its way through almost everything she writes. A strong connection to the natural world is central to her. She likes hiking, swimming, and kayaking. She also relates deeply to art. Kantor spends time in museums and enjoys photography and painting. She is a Hospice volunteer and an enthusiastic grandmother who loves sharing her interests with grandchildren.

Poetry writing is a spontaneous and intuitive process for Kantor. It comes to her in bursts, often while she is swimming or otherwise connecting with nature. The lines that form in her mind stay

with her until she's able to write them down. Then she spends a good deal of time revising her work. She likens the process to painting or sculpting with words.



Joan Kantor

She looks for several things when she is reading poetry. "Most important," Kantor says, "is that it has an authentic voice and that it be accessible. I don't mind having to reread a poem numerous times to get its full meaning, but I want to be able to extract something from that first reading. A poem is most effective for me when it uses original language that really taps into the senses. I must also admit that I'm a sucker for a strong or surprising last line."

Joan Kantor admires the work of Mary Oliver and would recommend her poetry to President Trump. She thinks that if he read it, he would begin to understand why we need to do everything we possibly can to protect the environment. She is also currently re-reading Nora Pollard's work, as well as poetry she finds online on daily poetry sites and online journals. Kantor believes that the Connecticut Poetry Society is a wonderful resource, and she loves getting updates from or about other Connecticut poets.

Nutmeg Poetry Award

The Nutmeg Poetry Award is a poetry contest open to Connecticut poets only. CPS members can enter without paying a submission fee. It costs \$10 for non-members to enter. This year the sponsor of the contest is Suzanne Niedzielska, and the contest honors the memory of Gladys Darby. Dave Capella will judge this contest. Submit up to three poems on a single document between December 1 and January 31 to enter. The winner earns \$200. A second prize of \$100 and a third prize of \$50 will also be awarded. Electronic entries only.

DeCaro Poetry Competition

Through the generous support of the DeCaro family, this contest is held yearly in memory of Lynn DeCaro, a promising young CPS member who died of leukemia in 1986. The contest is open only to Connecticut high school students. The submission period is January 1- March 15. There is no entry fee. Prizes of \$75, \$50, and \$25 will be awarded. Laura Peterson will judge this contest. Electronic entries only.

This link will take you to the CPS Submittable site through which our contests and our literary journal accept submissions.

www.connecticutriverreview.submittable.com

Winners of the Connecticut River Review Poetry Contest Announced

Daniel Donaghy, who served as judge for the CRR Poetry Contest, chose the following entries as winners:

First Place: "Jump Shots at Sixty" by Robert Claps

Second Place: "Time Rises Like a Flood" by Lynn McGee

Third Place: "A Last Visit" by Lynn Conte

Honorable mentions went to Roy Bentley and Lillo Way.

Congratulations to these poets for their fine work.

The first, second, and third prize poems will appear in the 2019 *Connecticut River Review* journal.

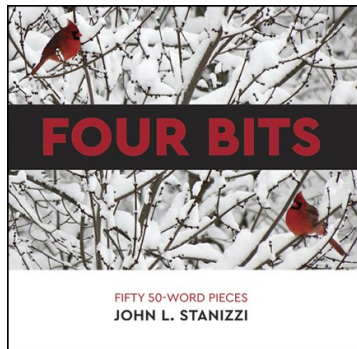
Riverwood Poetry Series at Real Art Ways

The winter season for the Riverwood Poetry Series begins December 11 with Nadia Coburn, who will present a poetry workshop in which poems from various spiritual traditions will be considered and poetry will be discussed as a contemplative practice. On January 8, Kate Rushin will be the featured poet, and she is not to be missed. Garrett Phelon will present poems from a Connecticut prison on February 12. The Riverwood Series now meets at 7 pm on the second Tuesday of each month at Real Art Ways in Hartford, 56 Arbor Street.



Poetry Books by CPS Members

Our members continue to write successfully and publish widely. Here is news on some new and forthcoming publications.



Our prolific and talented poet member John Stanizzi had a book launch for two recent publications: *High Tide – Ebb Tide* and *Four Bits: Fifty 50-Word Pieces*, which took place at the East Hartford Library on December 3rd. His book *Chants* will be out soon from Cervená Barva and a book called *Sundowning* is forthcoming from Main Street Rag. Stanizzi will be attending Manchester's Wit & Wisdom poetry meeting on December 8 to speak to the group and listen to members' poems.

CPS vice-president Victor Altshul's fourth book of poetry, *Strange Birds*, is forthcoming from Antrim House Books. Look for it soon!

Michael Lepore's book, *Vietnam Voices*, has won a bronze medal from the Military Writers Society of America. His work continues to garner recognition.

An Evening of Poetry and Music

Michael Lepore, recently appointed as Glastonbury's poet laureate, will host "An Evening of Poetry and Music" on December 21 at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main Street in Glastonbury, at 6:30 pm. Poets Julia Paul, Clare Mazur, and Richard Daigle will join Lepore to share their work. Stephen Nystrup, Emmy Award-winning guitarist and composer, will provide music. This should be

a memorable and relaxing evening. Please register in advance, as seating is limited. Call 860-633-8402 to reserve your seat.

Guilford Poets Guild's Holiday Roundtable Poetry Reading: The Seasons - Fall Into Winter

Please join the Guilford Poets Guild for its annual Holiday Round Table Poetry Reading on Thursday, December 13. Members of the Guild will read poems around the theme of "The Seasons - Fall Into Winter." The evening, presented by the Guild and the Guilford Free Library, will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the library. It begins with an Open Mic from 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. Guests are asked to bring an unwrapped children's book, new or gently used, to be donated to the Branford Community Dining Room. The Guilford Free Library is located at 67 Park Street in Guilford. This program is free and open to all. Refreshments will be served. Please register by phone, in person, or online (203) 453-8282, guilfordfreelibrary.org.

POPs: Poets on Poetry

In collaboration with the Hartford Public Library, CPS runs a monthly feature in which local poets discuss well-known poets. Christine Beck coordinates this program. The meetings are held from 10 am to noon in classroom 139 at the library on 500 Main Street.

On January 26, Christine Beck will guide a discussion on the work of Jane Kenyon.

On February 23, Joe Senno will present the work of Rainer Maria Rilke.

Guilford Poet Guild's Holiday Roundtable

The Guilford Poets Guild's annual Holiday Poetry Reading on will occur on Thursday, December 13. The theme is "The Seasons - Fall Into Winter." The evening, presented by the Guild and the Guilford Free Library, will be held from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the library. It begins with an Open Mic from 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. Guests are asked to bring an unwrapped children's book, new or gently used, to be donated to the Branford Community Dining Room.

Which New Poet Will You Discover in 2019?

Good poets read a lot of poetry. Make it a resolution to read one or more poets whose work you aren't very familiar with. Below are recent books that come highly recommended from a variety of sources.

American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin by Terrence Hayes.

Hayes is a brilliant poet, inventive and bold. In his 5th poetry collection, he uses variations on the 14-line form to explore the anxiety that comes with being a black man in America today.

Take Me With You by Andrea Gibson

Gibson's poetry is heartfelt and revealing. This collection explores sexuality and gender.

The Undressing by Li-Young Lee

Using gorgeous language, Lee explores themes of intimacy.

The Carrying by Ada Limón

This impressive collection offers meditations on how to carry the things that define us, without being broken by them. Her poetry makes us ask how we should treat each other in this precarious life.

Wade in the Water by Tracy K. Smith

The U.S. Poet Laureate's latest book is a consideration of race and American identity. If you heard her at the Sunken Garden in Farmington, you know her work is stunning.

If They Come For Us by Fatimah Arghar

The creator of the web series ***Brown Girls*** explores what it's like to be Muslim, Pakistani, orphaned and female in these poems.

Other poets to consider adding to your list are the ones that will be discussed very briefly at the CPS Holiday Party: Lucie Brock-Broido, Donald Hall, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, JD McClatchy, Tom Clark, and Tony Hoagland. Happy reading!