



Illinois Poets

News of the Illinois State Poetry Society

January - February 2021

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President's Message



After a brisk winter walk in lightly falling snow here in Northern Illinois, I am reminded of how nature holds the power to sooth worry and stress. Sitting here at my desk and grateful to be distanced from the pandemic, I am also aware of what a perfect moment can be, one that should not be overlooked or denied. This gift is what poetry can look to for inspiration—a silent connection with creative forces and gratitude. Literary history is replete with poetic insight responding to a moment. Presently, there is a need to call for hope, peace and healing, to offer words of solace that carry us beyond this time and place toward a oneness with self and the world. Perhaps we need to look inward and find strength to keep moving forward and respond to the question Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem asks, "...where can we find light in this never-ending shade?" It's in the creativity of our art that we overcome some of the fear and helplessness where we sometimes see ourselves starting to sink. We need to write our own poem to the future and the abundant possibilities of now.

Our society is going strong in spite of limited in-person gatherings. Brewed Awakening continues to offer featured readers and open mic with virtual monthly events, and several chapters Zoom critique sessions with great success. We celebrated the end of 2020 with the publication of *Distilled Lives, Volume 5* and send congratulations to the ISPS annual contest winners. Also, the website continues to offer opportunities to share our work. We poets are a wellspring of positive forces that can offer the motivation to keep moving toward better days ahead. May the new year bring good health, serenity and abundant creativity.

Happy writing,
Susan T. Moss

ISPS Member News

ISPS member Charlotte Digregorio will present a "Write & Publish Great Poetry" workshop through Winnetka Public Library on Zoom, 2 to 3:30 p.m., Sunday, April 18. All invited. It is free. For details, contact Charlotte at c-books@hotmail.com. Register at:

<https://winnetkalibrary.libcal.com/calendar/events/?cid=3782&t=d&d=2021-04-18&cal=3782&inc=0>

William Marr, poet and past president of ISPS, has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Marquis Who's Who. William can be reached at marrfei@gmail.com.

ISPS has a current total of 145 poets. Below are brief profiles for two recent new members, with their emails. If you want to welcome or contact a member with a note or card, your chapter facilitator should be able to furnish you the street address.

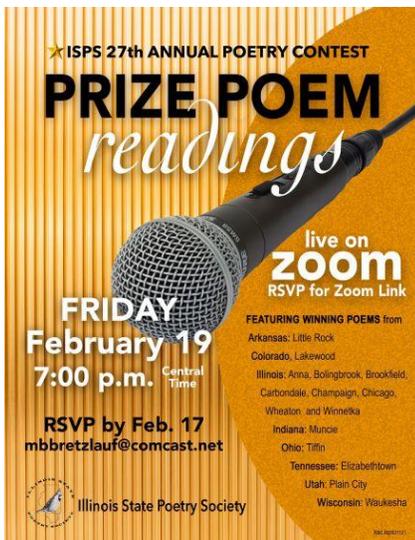
California-based poet **Donald Lyles** joined ISPS at the Benefactor level. "Ask what poetry is and I will not have a ready answer for you," states Lyles, who has been publishing poems for decades. He believes poetry "must be tasted, chewed, swallowed and, hopefully, digested." The Vietnam Veteran's poems have been published in weekly newspapers, online domain webpages, and anthologies. Lyles' first poetry anthology, *Published and Selected Poems: 1964 to 2018*, was published late in 2020.

Daniel Weinberg, At-Large member and resident of the Chicago area, has worked as a librarian/cataloger in a public library for the past 19 years. For more than twice that long he also has read poetry at open mics. He brings his poems to life with humor and journalistic methods. Contact Daniel at mnwisdoc@charter.net.

Zoom ISPS Prize Readings a "First"

This month marks a milestone—the first Zoom-based reading by prize winners of our ISPS annual poetry competition. ISPS may have had in-person readings in the past, but they were likely to involve only poets residing in or near Illinois. We are pleased to welcome to the virtual podium twelve Illinois-based prize-winning poets, seven out-of-state prize-winning poets, and five additional out-of-state poets whose work will be presented by ISPS readers with the permission of each winning poet. All of the 2020 first–second–third-place winners were invited to read at the virtual event. (If Honorable Mentions had been included, the event would have lasted for hours!)

If you receive online notifications from ISPS, you probably have seen this engaging image, created by Kathy Cotton, facilitator of the Southern Chapter. Note that the reading date rapidly approaches. If you wish to be in the Zoom audience **on Friday, Feb. 19** at 7 p.m., contact Mary Beth Bretzlauf, mbbretzlauf@comcast.net, by Feb. 17 **at the latest**, so she can send you the link.



Poet Laureates Update

The search for the fifth Poet Laureate for the State of Illinois culminated in the appointment of Chicago poet **Angela Jackson** by Governor Pritzker. She will work to promote poetry at the state and national levels. ISPS members look forward to learning more about her work and plans.

The U.S. National Poet Laureate, **Joy Harjo**, will continue for another year in her post, as her duties have been hampered by the pandemic.

And how about the first National Youth Poet Laureate, **Amanda Gorman**, who read at the Inauguration of President Biden and at the 2021 Superbowl pre-show? Such an inspiring young star!

ISPS Prize-Winning Poems To Be Read (as of Feb. 11)

<p>1. Free Verse Award 2nd Place <i>The Wind Rivers</i> Michael Spears, Plain City, UT 1st Place <i>Isaac Returns to the Mountains</i> James Green, Muncie, IN</p>	<p>8. Sword and Plowshares Award 3rd Place <i>Scapegoats</i>, Carol Kanter, Chicago 2nd Place <i>Song For A Missing Year</i> Patty Dickson Pieczka, Carbondale 1st Place <i>The Wings of Peace and Justice</i> Catherine Moran, Little Rock, AR*</p>
<p>2. Formal Verse Award 3rd Place <i>A Time for New Beginnings, Palm Sunday 1865</i> Benjamin Dugger, Elizabethtown, TN*</p>	<p>9. Love and Marriage Award 3rd Place <i>Holding Hands</i> Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL 2nd Place <i>For Sixty Years</i> Bud Powell Mahan, Dallas, TX* 1st Place <i>Touching the sky with one I love</i> Catherine Moran, Little Rock, AR*</p>
<p>3. Traditional Haiku Award 1st Place <i>Moth's thrumming orbit</i> Amy Wray Irish, Lakewood, CO</p>	<p>10. Nature Award 3rd Place <i>UNFETTERED</i> Maggie Kennedy, Brookfield 2nd Place <i>Painting the Buffalo</i> Bud Powell Mahan, Dallas, TX* 1st Place <i>Advanced Civilizations 101</i> Melissa Huff, Champaign</p>
<p>4. Modern Haiku Award 3rd Place <i>end to caregiving</i> Charlotte Digregorio, Winnetka 1st Place <i>covid spikes</i> Mary Jo Balistreri, Waukesha, WI</p>	<p>11. Southern Chapter Award 2nd Place <i>Twilight</i> Donna Pucciani, Wheaton 1st Place <i>Stillness, April 2020</i> Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL</p>
<p>5. Board Award 3rd Place <i>The House of Dr. Gachet of Auvers, Paul Cezanne, 1872</i> Donna Pucciani, Wheaton* 2nd Place <i>Woman of Nepal</i> Mary Jo Balistreri, Waukesha, WI 1st Place <i>The Bread Basket</i> Bill Reyer, Tiffin, OH</p>	<p>12. Highland Park Award 2nd Place <i>Pandemic Spring</i> Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL</p>
<p>6. First Responders Award 1st Place <i>Where It Begins</i> Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook</p>	<p>13. Down Home Cinquain Award 3rd Place <i>Youthful Pleasure</i> Benjamin Dugger, Elizabethtown, TN* 1st Place <i>Reining in five kids</i> Catherine Moran, Little Rock, AR*</p>
<p>7. Morris Award 3rd Place <i>My Doggoned Dogwood</i> Benjamin Dugger, Elizabethtown, TN* 1st Place <i>Real Men Don't Eat Quiche (Sunday Solecism)</i> Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL</p>	

*Read by an ISPS member, with the poet's permission

Zoom Audience, please RSVP by Wednesday, Feb. 17

to Mary Beth Bretzlauf, mbbretzlauf@comcast.net.

The Zoom link will be emailed on Feb. 18 to all who respond by the deadline.

More Member News

Poets Reading and Open Mic, 2/28

Two poets will be featured Zoom readers on Sunday, February 28 from 12:30 to 2:00 pm at the Last Sunday of the Month Reading sponsored by ISPS and the Brewed Awakening Coffee Shop in Westmont, Illinois. There will be an open mic. Email Wilda Morris at wem@americtech.net for the Zoom link. There is no charge but donations will be solicited to support the coffee shop, which has long supported ISPS with these popular monthly readings.

Haiku Publishing Opportunity

Member Jim O'Brien of Urbana is soliciting entries for the *Champaign Urbana News-Gazette* weekly haiku challenge. In 2021, the focus for the entries is *Hope*. Says Jim, "What does hope mean to you? How do you see, hear, feel hope in your life?"

Your submission is not required to include the word *hope*, though of course it may. Metaphors, synonyms, and poetic descriptions of hope are encouraged.

If your piece is timely for a specific date or event (Mothers' Day, or a full moon, for instance), be sure to submit as far in advance of that as possible. Each Sunday's haiku is selected by the preceding Tuesday.

The typical English-language haiku format of 5-7-5 syllables in three lines is not required, but space is limited. Submissions must be made via email to cupoetry@gmail.com with "C-U haiku" in the subject line. In the body of your email, include your name and city of residence, as these are printed with the selected haiku.

The project is sponsored by two groups in Champaign-Urbana—CU Poetry, and CU Haiku.

If you have bio updates to share, send to [oasis@alharris.com](mailto: oasis@alharris.com); for possible member news, send to ISPS newsletter editor, Kathy Robinson, at krobdzyns@gmail.com. The ISPS website is at: illinoispoets.org.

Chapter Contacts

While Covid-19 gathering restrictions are in place statewide, please contact the chapter facilitator for more info on possible meetings online and how to access them.

Any ISPS member is welcome at any monthly meeting (space permitting) after first contacting the facilitator.

Southern Chapter (Carbondale)

Contact Kathy Cotton, facilitator
kacotton7@frontier.com

Central Chapter (Champaign)

Contact Kathy Robinson, facilitator
krobdzyns@gmail.com

West Suburban Chapter (Darien)

Contact Caroline Johnson, facilitator
twinkscat@aol.com

Haiku Chapter

Contact Tom Chockley, co-facilitator
tomzhaiku@outlook.com

Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)

For the Zoom link, contact Barbara Eaton
Eatonb1016@aol.com
or Wilda Morris
wem@americtech.net

North Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)

Contact

Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator
mbbretzlauf@comcast.net

North Central Chapter (Pontiac)

Contact

Kathleen Murphy, facilitator
kathleenzmurphy@mail.com