

# Illinois Poets

News of the Illinois State Poetry Society

May - June 2022

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## President's Message



It's already May, and birds are up at daybreak to chatter and sing their greetings to the world. With more light, we poets can also observe our surroundings and perhaps respond with our own verbal expressions, like ekphrastic poetry, where a combination of personal observations reflected in paintings, music, sculpture and any other art form can lead us to interact rhetorically.

This spring of reawakening from the worst of Covid, now hopefully in the past, Illinois State Poetry Society was fortunate to have received three invitations from artist associations to join them in sharing their creative endeavors of collages and paintings and our poetic responses. Addison, Downers Grove and Elk Grove were destinations for reading members' work and immersing ourselves in expressive writing efforts. The concept of ekphrastic poetry has taken an upward turn in popularity and provides an imaginative means of "talking" with or relating to another art form. There is no right or wrong interpretation nor limit to imagination.

Imagine a collage of two geishas and a pagoda, mounted and framed, and a poet choosing to write a corresponding conversation. All kinds of possibilities await such as researching the history of geishas and their dying art of entertaining and the pagodas of the past that didn't allow women to participate in the rituals. The poet can do as little or as much as desired to find a satisfying way to interact with the art piece and move into a place that brings new insights to writer, artist and those who view all in totality.

Another way to approach this kind of poetry is to simply converse with our personal artistic belongings such as a hand-carved statue, a photograph, recorded music or like John Keats did, write a poem titled "Ode on a Grecian Urn." There is something energizing about having these "conversations" that provide imaginative awakenings.

We can look around us and see poetry everywhere with other genres of art and build written bridges to a new way of viewing creativity.

Happy writing,

Susan T. Moss

# ISPS Manningham Poetry Contest Finalists for 2022!

This year's campaign "Are You on the Map...the Manningham Map?" was successful in increasing the number of high school student poem submissions. Further, there were quite a few submissions from smaller cities and towns in Illinois that required contest coordinators to look them up on Google Maps! As always, narrowing selections down to the final ten in each division was extremely hard. Special letters of encouragement were sent to those budding poets who didn't make the final cut. This year's Manningham State Finalists are:



Image on right: Students from A-C Central High School

## Junior Division:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Lela Hansen, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Alone I Sit"  
Independence Jr. High, Palos Heights  
Pam Peters, Teacher
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Leah Rodriguez, 7<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "His Silhouette"  
Union School, Joliet  
Sara Mavrakis, Teacher
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Rebekah Warren, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Music"  
Union School, Joliet  
Sara Mavrakis, Teacher
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place: Gia Homolka, 7<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Hand In Hand"  
Union School, Joliet  
Sara Mavrakis, Teacher
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place: Audra Davidson, 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Smile"  
Trinity Lutheran School, Springfield  
Ms. Erin Picon, Teacher
- HM #1: Lia Hulslander, 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "First Frost"  
Elmwood Elementary, Elmwood  
Ms. Jenny Davis
- HM #2: Abigail George, 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Nightmares"  
Union School, Joliet  
Sara Mavrakis, Teacher
- HM #3: Cayla Prohaska, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Peace of Mind"  
Independence Jr. High, Palos Heights  
Pam Peters, Teacher
- HM #4: Hannah Stone, 7<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Cats"  
St. Paul's Lutheran School, Milford  
Mary Smith, Teacher
- HM #5: Skyler Sandstedt, 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Kindness"

## Senior Division:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Payton Marr, 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Loss"  
A-C Central HS, Ashland  
Liz Sinclair, Teacher
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Erin Ardaugh, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "One Last Hug"  
Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet  
Dr. Maria Fischer, Teacher
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Vivica Bofah, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "I Am The Darkskin Woman"  
Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet  
Dr. Maria Fischer, Teacher
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place: Addie Gallina, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Old Guitar"  
A-C Central HS, Ashland  
Liz Sinclair, Teacher
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place: Bryton Butler, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Dear Baseball"  
A-C Central HS, Ashland  
Liz Sinclair, Teacher
- HM #1: Kaylee Leinberger, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Untitled"  
A-C Central HS, Ashland  
Liz Sinclair, Teacher
- HM #2: Zach Pekol, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem, "The End of an Era"  
Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet  
Dr. Maria Fischer, Teacher
- HM #3: Allsion McCarthy, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Empty Halls"  
Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet  
Dr. Maria Fischer, Teacher
- HM #4: Belle Carlock, 12<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "My Mother"  
A-C Central HS, Ashland  
Liz Sinclair, Teacher
- HM#5: Lillian Budny, 11<sup>th</sup> grade  
for the poem "Deck of Unwanted Cards"  
Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet  
Dr. Maria Fischer, Teacher

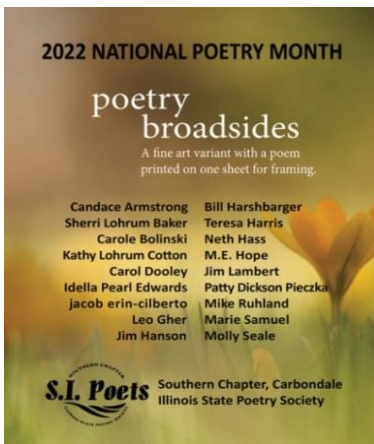
# ISPS Chapter News

**ISPS Darien Chapter** will meet on **Saturday, May 7**, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the **Indian Prairie Library**, 401 Plainfield Road, Darien. Please bring copies of 1 or 2 poems (about 8 - 10 copies of each), plus a food item to share, and a drink for yourself. We meet on the 2nd floor in the board room. Facilitator: Caroline Johnson. Any questions, e-mail Caroline at: [twinkscat@aol.com](mailto:twinkscat@aol.com).

**ISPS-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter** held its bimonthly Zoom chapter meeting, April 24, 2022. Those who attended were: Jo Balistrieri, Tom Chockley, Jeanne Cook, Janice Doppler, Susan Farner, Jeff Kressmann, William Ledder, Michael Nichols-Wisdom, Jim O'Brien, Leslie Peet and, Jennifer Thiermann. We began the meeting looking at examples from the *Frogpond 45.1* issue. We examined the collaborative tan renga and split sequence, linked-verse forms. Then we moved on to the workshop conversation of draft haiku from participants, who wanted feedback regarding their poems. Each haiku was presented anonymously and discussed. **Our next Haiku Chapter Zoom Meeting: Sunday, June 12, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CDT.** The deadline for RSVPs to attend will be Tuesday, June 7. Contact Tom Chockley ([tomzhaiku@outlook.com](mailto:tomzhaiku@outlook.com)) to attend the Zoom meeting and to receive further information.

**ISPS Northern Chapter** will hold its next meeting is **Sunday, May 15**, the third Sunday to allow us all to celebrate Mothers' Day. Meeting time is 1:00 p.m. The group is still unable to meet in person at the Northbrook Library, so we will continue to meet on Zoom for now. We can discuss the future of in-person meetings at that time. Contact Mary Beth Bretzlauf at [mbbretzlauf@comcast.net](mailto:mbbretzlauf@comcast.net) to RSVP and receive the Zoom link.

**ISPS Pontiac Chapter** and the Pontiac Art Center collaborated on an exhibit that was featured at the Pontiac Art Center through the month of April. Our members wrote poems to inspire the artists and the artists did works inspired by our poetry. Visitors could both view the art and read the poetry. The exhibit opened on Saturday, April 2, with a reception in the Joe Bailey Gallery and a poetry reading during the reception. The Pontiac Art Center is located at 209 West Madison Street, Pontiac, IL 61764.



**ISPS Southern Chapter** members celebrated poetry month with poetry broadsides display at the Carbondale Library. A display case featured members' publications.



**ISPS Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)** will meet on Zoom at 1 p.m. on **Sunday, June 5**. Email [wem@ameritech.net](mailto:wem@ameritech.net) for the link. You may email up to three poems for critique by the group (*preferably in one doc or docx file*). We may or may not have time to critique all the poems submitted.

## Procedure for Posting ISPS Member Poems on Website

Alan Harris has announced a new procedure for posting poems/haiga written by ISPS members on the ISPS website. Instead of a bi-monthly posting of all poems submitted, he will do a posting every month for about 1/4 of the membership, based on the member's last initial. For May 2022, poems/haiga submitted by members whose last name begins with E - H will be posted; for June, I - M; for July, N - Z; for August, A - D, etc. To discover the months your poem/haiga can be submitted, and to read our other submission guidelines, see [illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm](http://illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm). The net effect of this change will be that a member may submit one poem and/or haiga every four months instead of every two months. The submission period has been reduced from 14 days to 7 days (the first 7 days of each month).

# Welcome New Members – Debbi Brody & Karian Markos

**Debbi Brody** is an avid attendee and leader of poetry workshops throughout the USA's southwest. She has been published in numerous national and regional journals,



magazines and anthologies of note including *Poetic*, *Broomweed*, *Sin Fronteras*. Her newest full length book, *In everything, Birds*, (Village Books Press, OKC, OK 215) which received an inaugural Margaret Randall Book Prize for poetry and her chapbook, *Walking the Arroyo* (Cyberwit, 2019) is available at independent bookstores, on-line book sources and through the author

for signed copies at [artqueen58@aol.com](mailto:artqueen58@aol.com). Debbi is a new member at large.

**Karian Markos** is a Greek American poet, fiction writer and nonprofit attorney living with her husband and three children in the western suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. She spends three months a year living and working in Platamona, Greece. She donates much of her professional time to charitable

organizations that work with children locally and abroad. Her work has been published in *Prairie Light Review*, *Beyond Words Literary Magazine*, and *Bombfire*. Karian is a new member of the Darien / West Suburban Chapter.

## Pamplona Aftermath

windswept hair fell still / in slow motion / I saw the  
crushed geraniums bleed crimson onto slick cobblestones  
dirt scattered amid fragments of clay pots left too close to the roadside  
the ground quivered beneath your bare pigeon-toed feet as the bulls approached  
you were never a fast runner

© Karian Markos

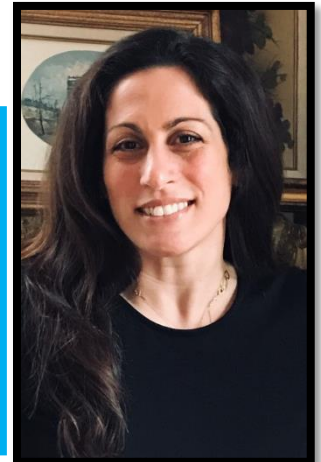
## Break Down and Communicate

In the dark of creations cradle,  
Full of seed where stones hold secrets,  
Interstices, pockets of water and ephemeral  
Mycelia, eating, breaking down all things;  
Rock, seed, creation, swallows carbon  
Into the between spaces of hypha  
Underground, speaks to its closest ally,  
Trees, helps them see and nurture  
Far off offspring. And what do we see,

Us above ground dwellers? The fungi  
Equivalent of a flower, the least  
Lasting, tastiest, possibly poisonous  
Portion, spreads life, spores, taken  
In at every breath by every land dweller,  
Taken down, down into the dank dark,  
Ensuring those up top, rich soil and plenty.

Mushrooms, here long before us,  
Will live on long after, give rise  
To adaptive species; more octopi,  
Cockroach and alligator toughness.

©Debbi Brody



## Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* Program

On April 23, 2022, ISPS members enjoyed a performance by Paddy and Jon Lynn of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*. The costumed pair played various parts from the poems Masters wrote based on thinly veiled epitaphs of real people the poet knew in Fulton County Illinois. This Zoom production included a question and answer post session and many insights to this famous Illinois poet who wrote about living in 1915 in sometimes scandalous situations. It wasn't until 1974 that the local libraries lifted the ban on his collection.



# ISPS Member News



“Awakening,” an exhibit of art works by members of the Midwest Collage Society (MCC), culminated in a poetry reading by ISPS members in response to the art on April 29 at the Downers Grove Public Library. The event was coordinated by Joan Lucht and Adrienne Austin for the MCS, Grace Goodwin for the library and **Wilda Morris** for ISPS. Nancy Swingle of the MCS coordinated refreshments. Twenty-eight poets submitted work, and seven ISPS members were present to read all the poems. Here is the group of ISPS members who read theirs and absent poets’ poetry. The names from viewers’ left to right in front row are: **Beth Staas, Rene Parks, Susan T. Moss**; back row, left to right are **Lennart Lundh, Caroline Johnson, Wilda Morris** and **Diane Lotko Baker**. Photo taken at the Downers Grove Library on April 30, 2022.

On April 30, ISPS joined the Artists’ Association of Elk

Grove Village for a reception at the Elk Grove Public Library. The “Colors in Nature” collaboration included twenty-nine poets with six present to read the submissions. Tammy Haman, member of the artists’ association, and **Susan T. Moss** coordinated the event. Pictured at the Elk Grove Library from left to right are: **Susan T. Moss, Michael Escoubas, Patrice Boyer Claeys, Mary Beth Bretzlauf, Bakul Bannerjee, and Judith Tullis**.



**Marie Asner**, celebrated April Poetry Month with a poetry reading of 19<sup>th</sup> century poems and Asner’s poetry. The poetry reading began a Concert, Monday, April 4, 2022 at Asbury Methodist Church, Prairie Village, Kansas. Following the poetry reading was a concert by the Landlocked Opera Company, Inc. with selections from *Madame Butterfly* and *La Nozze di Figaro*. Marie Asner has also participated in the Addison Library’s poetry and poet presentation and the Downer’s Grove Library combining artist’s work with poetry.

**Karen Christensen**, Aurora Poet Laureate, shared an inspiring collaboration between Aurora Downtown and A-Town Poetics, a local writers group, for getting poetry out into a community. Karen issued a call to local poets on the theme of “Rebirth” and selected twelve poems for display in the storefront windows of downtown Aurora businesses, creating a self-guided poetry walking tour during April. Karen says this is an annual initiative and each year the theme changes.

## The Illinois State Poetry Society

Invites you  
to celebrate spring with  
The Illinois Manningham Finalists  
Young Poets of Illinois

Sunday, May 22, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.  
Via Zoom

Open Mic to follow

Please RSVP to Mary Beth Bretzlauf at  
[isps.manningham@gmail.com](mailto:isps.manningham@gmail.com)  
by noon, Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>  
A link will be sent the night before the event



## More ISPS Member News

**Michael Escoubas** of the South Central Chapter in Pontiac, Illinois, is pleased to report that he was recently published in *The Ekphrastic Review*. Michael's poem, "Starry Night at Sugar Grove," appeared in an eBook sponsored by *The Ekphrastic Review* in which all of the poems respond to Van Gogh's masterpiece, "The Starry Night." There were 300 submissions and only 50 poems (including his) were selected for the publication. Michael says that "I was totally floored to get this acceptance as I have previously submitted work to *The Ekphrastic Review* before but gotten rejections every time, until now." Congratulations, Michael! It's good to hear that sometimes persistence does pay off when it comes to getting published by your dream journal or literary magazine.

Join us for the poetry reading at **Brewed Awakening** (in person or via Zoom) at 12:30 p.m., the last Sunday of the month. In addition to two featured poets, there is always open mic where you can share one of your own poems. The cover charge is \$12 at Brewed Awakening--for which you get a snack and beverage in addition to an hour and a half of poetry. A Zoom ticket costs \$5. The link is provided on our website at [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org) at least a week in advance. Email **Wilda Morris** ([wem@ameritech.net](mailto:wem@ameritech.net)) to recommend someone as a featured poet.

**Highland Park Poetry** celebrated poetry month with a reading to recognize the poets selected by the judges in the 2022 Poetry Challenge at The Art Center of Highland Park on April 2 at 1 p.m. Several ISPS members were present including **Emma Alexandra Kowalenko, Charlotte Digregorio, Jennifer Dotson, Julie Isaacson, Lakshmy Nair** and **Curt Vevang**. Visit the website to view all of the selected poems in the Muses' Gallery through the end of May. Highland Park Poetry also offers monthly in-person poetry readings and open-mics at Madame ZuZu's, 1876 First Street, Highland Park, Illinois. All events at Saturdays at 5PM. Poets may read up to 3 poems in the open-mic. There is no cover charge but attendees are expected to purchase an item from the café. The upcoming line up includes the following ISPS members as featured poets:

- **May 14** – **Charlotte Digregorio**, author of *Ripples of Air: Poems of Healing*
- **June 11** – **Curt Vevang**, author of *Poetry of the Engineer*

For more details, please visit [www.HighlandParkPoetry.org](http://www.HighlandParkPoetry.org).

## Chapter Contacts

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

All ISPS members are welcome at any monthly meeting (space permitting) after first contacting the facilitator.

### Southern Chapter (Carbondale)

Contact Kathy Cotton, facilitator  
[kacotton7@frontier.com](mailto:kacotton7@frontier.com)

### Central Chapter (Champaign)

Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator  
[mhbretzlauf@comcast.net](mailto:mhbretzlauf@comcast.net)

### West Suburban Chapter (Darien)

Contact Caroline Johnson, facilitator  
[twinkscat@aol.com](mailto:twinkscat@aol.com)

### Haiku Chapter

Contact Tom Chockley, co-facilitator  
[tomzhaiku@outlook.com](mailto:tomzhaiku@outlook.com)

### Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)

For the Zoom link, contact  
Wilda Morris  
[wem@ameritech.net](mailto:wem@ameritech.net)

### North Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)

Contact  
Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator  
[mhbretzlauf@comcast.net](mailto:mhbretzlauf@comcast.net)

### North Central Chapter (Pontiac)

Contact  
Kathleen Murphy, facilitator  
[kathleenzmurphy@mail.com](mailto:kathleenzmurphy@mail.com)

If you have bio updates to share, send to [oasis@alharris.com](mailto:oasis@alharris.com).

For possible member news or Welcome New Member (*brief bio, photo and two short poems*), send to ISPS newsletter editor Jennifer Dotson, [Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org](mailto:Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org) (be sure to include "ISPS News" in the subject line of your email.

The ISPS website is at: [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org)