

September 2010

**Long River Run  
deadline extended  
to September 30:  
send one poem, 12  
point type in Word  
as an attachment to  
connppoetry@comca  
st.net.  
Please: no italics or  
full caps in the title.**



## *What do Judges Look for in Choosing Winning Poems?*

### Inside this issue:

<i>Open Studio Hartford Poetry</i>	2
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	2
<i>CPS Poets win at NFSPS, cont'd</i>	2
<i>CPS Member News</i>	3
<i>From the President</i>	3
<i>Poetry Series</i>	4

By Christine Beck

As the Contest Chair for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, I received about 10,000 poems this year from poets hoping to win one or more of the 50 contests run simultaneously. When the judges returned the list of winners, I asked them to tell me what qualities they look for. Here are some of their replies:

*The three poetic tools I consider most important are a suitable title, a good "hook line" to begin the poem to make the reader excited to read on, and more important, a really insightful end line. Many really fine poems were eliminated because the*

*poem went on after it could have been declared finished.*

*Another judge said: a poem should have a reason for being, not just be words on the page . . . Poetry should have a musical quality, a cadence, even if it is free verse.*

*And some warned: some entries got bogged down in sentimentality and were too predictable. I would encourage these poets to study poetic devices and craft, to venture out into the unknown and unsettling, to study major and minor poets from traditional to contemporary and to read, read, read!*

Here are the top 20 qualities (not in order of importance):



1. Concrete descriptions
2. Fresh metaphors
3. Assonance
4. Similes
5. Unexpected internal rhyme.

*Continued page 3.*

- Did you forget to renew?
- Annual dues of \$25 were due in April 2010. If you have not yet renewed, please send your check to:
- Julia Paul, CPS Membership Chair
- P O Box 792
- Manchester, CT 06045

## *CPS Poets Take Home Awards at National Poetry Convention*

Twenty CPS poets entered one or more of the poetry contests sponsored by the NFSPS this year. There were nineteen awards made to CPS poets: four received cash awards and nine received honorable mentions. This is an excellent showing for our CPS members

and we congratulate them all.

The following received prizes: First prizes to Ginny Connors and Alvin Laster.

Second prizes (2) to Joshua Conklin.

First Honorable Mentions (2)

to Tony Fusco.

Second Honorable Mention to Joshua Conklin.

Third Honorable Mention to Patricia O'Brien, Jeannine Rancourt, and Lisa Siedlarz

*Continued on p. 2*



*CPS Annual Wine and Cheese Reading returns! See right for benefit reading.*

## *Open Studio Hartford Poetry Celebration on November 6, 2-4 pm. At ArtSpace Gallery, 555 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT*

CPS member Lorna Cyr has long been active in Oil Drum Art — a traveling exhibit of sculptures made out of oil drums. CPS poets have read poetry at some of the showings, organized by Lorna.

This year, Lorna is collaborating with area artists and poets to present a celebration at ArtSpace Gallery, 555 Asylum Avenue, Hartford.

The theme is **Coming of Age**. Ten artists have created

works, and ten poets will write a poem based on one of the pieces of art. The poets will read their ekphrastic piece as well as another poem of their choice at the event.

CPS poets participating in this event are Christine Beck, Polly Brody, Lorna Morris Cyr, Ginny Connors, Bob Jacob, Ken Lundquist, Joan Malerba-Foran and Sandra Maineri.

Other poets may sign up in advance to read after the pres-

entation. The deadline to choose one of the pieces of art is **October 13**, so if you are interesting in participating in this event, contact Lorna Cyr as soon as possible. 860-584-2857. [cyrilm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cyrilm@sbcglobal.net)

## *Upcoming Events*



**Friday, October 15 — CPS will sponsor a benefit poetry reading, *Poetry For Food*, at KCK Art Gallery in West Haven, 397 Campbell Ave. Donations will benefit West Haven Emergency Assistance Task-force food bank. Refreshments at 6pm; readings by CPS poets and open microphone, 7-9pm.**

**Nov. 4-6, 11-13**—East Haddam Stage Co. presents Plays and Poetry, a 90 minute presentation of 10-minute plays and poetry. CPS poets can submit plays and/or poetry by September 15 to [info@ehsco.org](mailto:info@ehsco.org) or EHSKO, PO Box 176, East Haddam CT 06423. 860-873-3521.

**Saturday, November 6, 6:30 pm** — affiliate CPS member *Friends and Enemies of Wallace Stevens* annual Wallace Stevens Birthday Bash at the Hartford Public Library. Speaker Joan Richardson, a Stevens' biographer, will speak. Tickets are \$45. Info: Jim Finnegan, 860-508-2810.



## *CPS Poets Win at NFSPS (continued)*

Fourth Honorable Mention to Roberta Marggraff.

Fifth Honorable Mention to Joshua Conklin and Julia Paul.

Seventh Honorable Mention to Joshua Conklin, Alice E. Gross, Roberta Marggraff, and Julia Paul.

The prize winning poems will appear in *Encore*, the annual journal published by NFSPS and available next June at the annual meeting.

Please see the CPS website, which contains the First Prize poems of both Ginny Connors, *Gas, 1940*, and Alvin M.

Laster, *Bringing up Father*.

*For a full list of all winning writers and poems, check Strophes, the Newsletter of the NFSPS, or see NFSPS.com.*

## *CPS members appear at "Dead Poets Night"*

The Riverwood Poetry Series, which sponsors two monthly poetry readings at the Wood Memorial Library in South Windsor and The Buttonwood Tree, Middletown, held its third annual Riverwood Poetry Festival from June 23-27 at nine locations in the greater Hartford area.

CPS Membership Chair, Julia Paul, and CPS Secretary, Christine Beck, took on the characters of Sylvia Plath and Emily

Dickinson during Dead Poets Night. They were joined by CPS member Sheri Bedingfield, who played Edna St. Vincent Millay. The presentation included dramatic skits by each poet and a recitation of poetry. Julia Paul, who organized the event, channeled Plath in reciting *Lady Lazarus*.

## *CPS Member News — New Books*

*Carol Altieri, The Jade Bower*

*Ginny Lowe Connors, Under the Porch (winner of Sunken Garden Chapbook Prize)*

*Alexandrina Sergio, My Daughter is Drummer in Rock and Roll Band, Antrim House*

## *What Judges Look for, continued*

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 6. meter that makes a poem a delight to read aloud | 12. memorable voice                         | 19. emotional punch  |
| 7. an exciting line or two                         | 13. strong subject content                  | 20. playfulness  |
| 8. skillful use of traditional form and rhyme      | 14. attention to music of the line, prosody | What to avoid: <i>Too many poems sounded the same few ideas: the bitterness of death, the details of a garden, salvation from above — valid themes of course, but when the poem then delivered no surprising angle, or worse, relied on cliché, they fell short.</i> |
| 9. fresh vocabulary                                | 15. lack of cliché                          |  |
| 10. surprising imagery                             | 16. economy of diction                      |  |
| 11. originality                                    | 17. strength of structure                   |  |
|  | 18. depth of communication                  |  |

## *From the President, Tony Fusco —*

First, let me thank Christine Beck for doing this newsletter.

I also would like to thank Editor Lisa Seidler and her assistant editor Allan Garry for the job they have done on the CT River Review. It is quite the line-up of excellent poets and poems. CRR 2010 has a stunning cover created by

Lindsey Voskowsky from a photo by Hayward Gatling. The CRR is a benefit CPS members receive along with the Long River Run. We have extended the deadline for Long River Run to September 30, so get your poems to [connpoetry@comcast.net](mailto:connpoetry@comcast.net) right away. I am happy to report that we are

still able to provide these without having raised our dues in years. Much of that is thanks to Ginny Connors, our Contest Chair. I am proud to say we continue to grow in our 35th year and now have over 200 members.

Please note changes in some the CPS poetry contest deadlines.

### **Note Changes in CPS Contest dates for the following:**

**The Connecticut River Review Contest**  
*is now August 1 to September 30, 2010 deadline*

**The Al Savard Contest**  
*is now December 1 to January 30, 2011 deadline*

**The Lynn DeCaro Contest**  
*is now January 15 to March 15, 2011 deadline*

*Check our web page for more information. You can find contest guidelines in the back pages of the CT River Review as well.*

President: Tony Fusco  
VP and Treasurer: Emerson Gilmore  
Secretary: Christine Beck  
Membership: Julia Paul  
Contest Chair: Ginny Connors  
Publicity: Lorna Morris Cyr

<http://cct-poetry-society.org>  
[connpoetry@comcast.net](mailto:connpoetry@comcast.net)

■ The Connecticut Poetry Society, P O Box 270554, West Hartford, CT 06127

**Do you have any poetry news to share in the next newsletter? Contact editor Christine Beck at [connpoetry@comcast.net](mailto:connpoetry@comcast.net) and mark in the heading "News."**

**Important:** Changes in CPS Contest Submission Dates. See page 3.

**Remember:** The National Federation of State Poetry Societies announces poetry contests sponsored by all state members. Check Strophes or online at NFSPS.com for details.

**Save the Date! Sunday, December 12, 2010, 2-4 pm. CPS Annual Holiday Reading. Location to be announced.**

## *Poetry Series Offer Opportunities to Read Your Poetry!*

There are many poetry series around the state that offer monthly poetry readings followed by an open microphone. Here is just a sampling of some places where you can meet other poets and read your work:

**Every Wednesday** — Wednesday Night Poetry Series, at "the Garage," 53 Church Hill Rd., Newtown, Ct. Host: CPS member Robin Sampson. <http://wedpoetry.net>

**1st Wednesday** — "Calling All Poets," Silas Bronson Library, 267 Grand St., Waterbury. Host: CPS Member Victoria Munoz.

**2nd Thursday** — Guilford Poetry Guild, The Greene Art Gallery, 29

Whitfield St., Guilford. 7-9pm. <http://guilfordpoetsguild.wordpress.com>.

**3rd Thursday** — The Poetry Institute, Young Men's Institute Library, 847 Chapel Street, New Haven. Open Mic. 7pm, followed by featured poet. Info: <http://thepoetryinstitute.com>. Host: CPS member Mark McGuire Schwartz.

**3rd Thursday** — The Wintonbury Library, 1015 Blue Hills Ave., Bloomfield. Host: CPS Member Marilyn Johnston.

**4th Thursday** — Riverwood Poetry Series, Wood Memorial Library, South Windsor, CT. Director Colin Haskins, <http://riverwoodpoetry.org>

**Various Mondays** — (9/13,10/18,11/15, 12/6) WordForge,

at The Studio at Billings Forge, 563 Broad St., Hartford, CT. Host: Jim Finnegan. <http://wfre readings.blogspot.com>.