



February 2025 – Take II

Here we are, nearly at the end of February. Hope you had a love-filled Valentine’s Day. As poets, we sort of have a head start on the subject, don’t we?

Please note: The deadline for the next Magnolia Muse will be **May 15**. If you have publication news or a short verse to share, please email it to me at [MaryBethMageeWrites@gmail.com](mailto:MaryBethMageeWrites@gmail.com) with “For Magnolia Muse” in the subject line. Keeps it from getting lost in the tidal wave of emails.

Let’s kick off this newsletter with a reminder that the deadline for NFSPS annual contest entries is March 15, 2025 (online at [Submittable.com](http://Submittable.com) or postmark for snail mail entries). As the fairground barker used to shout, you can’t win if you don’t play. Please consider entering, if you haven’t already.

I’d like to issue an invitation to all members. If you are on social media, please share information about our organization and your activities within. We have a Facebook Page: Mississippi Poetry Society. On that page, we try to share upcoming meetings and events, as well as publication opportunities. Members can also share their successes! Please

Celebrate the newly announced North Branch quarterly winners:

Category I	1st place	Mary Beth Magee	The Writer's Lament
	2nd place	John Crawford	A Tiger's Dream
	3rd place	Brenda Finnegan	The Perfect Gift
Category II	1st place	Brenda Finnegan	A Pinebark Stable
	2nd place	Lee Anna Mitchell	We Moved
	3rd place	Sharlee Shumpert	Shooting Star Reflections
Category III	1st place	John Crawford	Mama's Kitchen
	2nd place	Sharlee Shumpert	My Kitchen
	3rd place	Jerri Hardesty	Houseguest

Thank you to Ann Carolyn Cates for her judging and congratulations to the winners. Also, a big thank you to all who entered. We couldn’t have a contest otherwise!

The May contest has been announced, per Janice Canerdy:

I. Traditional (identify form/type), any topic

NOTE: When identifying the form/type, please be more specific than “Rhyming.” “Rhyming” just means it’s not free verse or blank verse. Not all rhyming forms have a name, but MANY do.

II. Free Verse, any topic

III. Monthly Topic The May contest topic is flowers. Your approach to the topic may be general or specific. Any poetic form/type is acceptable. Please don’t use the topic as your title.

(2) You may submit one unpublished poem per category. Submission guidelines:

\*\*Poems and all information should be typed on 8 ½ x11 white paper in Times New Roman 12 point. No illustrations, images, etc., should be included unless the poem is ekphrastic.

\*\*Submit two copies of each poem. On both, type the contest month and the category identification in the upper left corner; on one copy, type your name, address, phone number, and email address in the upper right corner.

\*\*Maximum length per poem is 40 lines; only lines of poetry will be counted. The limit of characters per line is 55. Please staple two-page poems.

(3) The submission fee is \$3 per poem except for students in grades 9-12 (MPS members), who may enter for free. Entry fees are to be mailed with the entries to Janice Canerdy at P. O. Box 613, Potts Camp, MS 38659 (no online entry or payments for these four contests). Please don’t fold the poems. The postmark deadline for each contest will be the first Saturday of the contest month. Poems won’t be returned. When I receive your entry, I will notify you by email.

(4) Prizes for the top three per category will be \$15, \$10, and \$5 and a certificate. Judges are not obligated to choose three winners. Also, Honorable Mentions will not be awarded. Judging of a category will not take place unless there are at least seven entries. Entry fees, (checks made out to MPS, Inc.) from unjudged categories will be returned~~or shredded, with entrant’s OK. Send cash at your own risk.

(5) Poems that place will be published in the contest journal. (May winners will be in the ’26 journal.) Fifty percent of any profits will go to the Society Treasury; the other 50, to the coordinating branch. After each contest is finalized, Emory Jones, the North Branch Treasurer, will send Daniel Pickett, MPS Treasurer, a check in the amount of half of the contest profits. Careful records will be kept and shared. Sharlee Shumpert will judge the May entries, which MUST be postmarked by Saturday, May 3 (earlier would be good) and mailed to me. I’ll mail Sharlee the poems about mid-May.

The following is included by request:

Dear Mary Beth,

I am John Davis Jr., a Florida poet who has led many seminars, workshops, and conferences over the two and a half decades. In addition, I've been awarded the Florida Book Awards bronze medal for my 2021 collection, *The Places That Hold* (Eastover Press), the Sidney Lanier Poetry Prize, and multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. I've also taught creative writing and English courses for various Florida colleges, and I am the author of Keiser University's Creative Writing program. My writing history includes 5 books of poems (the first of which was published by Negative Capability Press out of Mobile, AL) and hundreds of publication credits in literary magazines large and small. *Salvation South*, *The Common*, *Deep South magazine*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, and other esteemed literary venues have all carried my work over the last 25 years. More info on my background can be found at [my website](#).

I am reaching out today because I am launching an opportunity that I feel MPS members would greatly appreciate. Each month, I am sending out by mail a single poem of mine with an explanation of how it was inspired and the writing process it went through before arriving at its final state. By doing this, I hope to inspire other poets by showing them where and how poems can be generated. Some of these poems will be formal, and others will be free verse. Some will be newer pieces, and others will be established, older poems that have been anthologized or recognized in other ways. And with these pieces will be a tutorial guide that shows fellow poets the path toward that happiest of all moments: the creation of a new poem of their own. In this way, what I've created here is essentially a generative mini-workshop by mail.

The result of these monthly mailings will be greater understanding of craft, motivation for finding one's own poems, and helpful pointers toward refining already-written poems that haven't yet found a home. I hope that you'll encourage MPS members to join me on this journey; I am eager to share the techniques and practices that have helped me for the last quarter-century. Here's the link to subscribe: [John Davis Jr.'s Mini-Workshops by Mail](#).

Mississippi has always held a special place in my heart because some of my mother's people are from Hattiesburg, and I'm also a scholar of that foremost of Mississippi writers, Eudora Welty.

Thank you so much for giving this opportunity your earnest consideration. I wish MPS all the best in its future, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially,

John Davis Jr., MFA, M. Ed.  
Tampa, FL

- New Beginnings Poetry Contest: <https://www.instituteforwriters.com/product/ifw-new-beginnings-poetry-contest/>

Please note: the above-mentioned newsletter is a subscription with a monthly fee attached. My mentioning it here should not be construed as an endorsement. Please make your own informed decision.

- Branch news:

With only South Branch reporting, this is a short report. We are continuing to pursue opportunities to share poetry workshops with libraries and senior citizen centers. The holidays slowed the process down, but we are back in gear and hope to have several events to report soon. Our session at the Pascagoula Senior Center was well received and we want to repeat the experience with other venues.

And now to the fun stuff!

I wish we had more publications to announce, but these are all I received. If you have items for the next issue, please email them to me at [MaryBethMageeWrites@gmail.com](mailto:MaryBethMageeWrites@gmail.com) with "Magnolia Muse" in

the subject line. (I won't be offended if you doublecheck with me about receiving it, I promise. Email can do some strange things!)

I also appreciate any short verse you may want me to share.

- **Janice Canerdy** – North Branch

Three poems, *Spirit Fire Review*, November

2<sup>nd</sup> HM, PRA (Ark) November members-only contest

2<sup>nd</sup> place, Rhymed Verse or Free verse, Missouri State Poetry Society Summer contest

3<sup>rd</sup> place, Massachusetts State Poetry Society, November Poets Choice Award

One poem, Society of Classical Poets website, December 18

2<sup>nd</sup> HM, PRA December members-only contest

3<sup>rd</sup> place, Mississippi Poetry Society's November members-only contest

HM, Society of Classical Poets annual contest, Feb 1

- **Brenda Finnegan** - South Branch:

Submitted three poems to the MPS North Branch February contest (Editor's note: see above results); submitted 21 poems to the MPS Spring Festival Contest, and submitted three poems to the Annual Women's Poetry Contest sponsored by Kelsay Books. No results yet! I'm currently working on submissions to the NFSPS annual competition, and helping research possible venues for the MPS 2026 Spring Festival.

- **Michelle Holifield** – Central Branch

Poem "Camerawoman: Letters Home" in *Ponder Review*, Fall 2024

Short Fiction "Gillian: Stained" in *The Blue Mountain Review*, December 2024

Two poems "Omelet" and "Her 77th" in *Boudin*, November 2024

Book Review "Expectation Navigation: A Review of Alecia Gabrielle's *When You're Stuck in Traffic*" in *Whale Road Review*, Winter 2024 (Alecia is also a member of MS Poetry Society.)

Poem "Frontiers" in *Libre Lit*, January 2025

Poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Clue Board" in *Dangerous To Go Alone! 2: Another Anthology of Gamer Poetry*, February 2025

I'm not sure if this is appropriate news, as it's not a publication, but my poetry manuscript *Camerawoman* was long-listed for the Dzanc Books' 2024 Poetry Prize.

- **Dr. Emory Jones** – North Branch

"Recycle" won First Place in Category #8 (Pat Barer's Celebration of Life) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2024 Contest

"Bones Die Hard" won 2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention in Category #5 (Red Rock Writers Founders Award) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2024 Contest.

"Squawks from up above..." won 2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention in Category #31 (Haiku) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2024 Contest.

"Sacred Music" won 2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention in Category #26 (Kolette Montague Memorial) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2024 Contest

"Survivor" won Third Place in Category #4 (Windmill Potes Award) of the 2024 Oklahoma Poetry Society Annual Contest.

"The Courtyard" was published in *Magnolia Muse* Spring 2024 Edition.

“Survivor” won Third Place in the March 2024 Contest of the Poetry Society of Oklahoma.  
 “Deep Freeze” was published in the April 2024 edition of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*.  
 “Deep Freeze” was included in Member’s Poems of the 2024 Connecticut Poetry Society.  
 “Injured Angel” was one of the workshop poems of the 2024 edition of the Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas.  
 “Cloister: A French Sonnet” won First Place in the 2024 Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration Contest of the Poets’ Roundtable of Arkansas.  
 “Tennessee Williams” won First Honorable Mention in Category #20 (Mississippi Heroes Award) of the Mississippi Poetry Society’s 2024 Annual Contest.  
 “Jewel Bush” was published in the May 2024 edition of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*.  
 “Spring Haiku” was published in the May 2024 edition of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*.  
 “The Resting Place” won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Jesse Bartlett Memorial Award of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society’s 2024 Contest and was published in *Prize Poems 2024*.  
 “Her Photograph” won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Eleanor B. Lapham Memorial Award of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society’s 2024 Contest and was published in *Prize Poems 2024*.  
 “Deep Freeze” won First Place in the Bobbie Drobeck Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of Tennessee’s 2024 Poetry Festival Contest.  
 “Border Country” was a Finalist in the Tennessee Voices Contest of the 2023-2024 PST Festival Contest.  
 “Catlett Tipton: Sevier County Criminal” won Honorable Mention in the Tennessee Villains Category of the Poetry Society of Tennessee’s 2024 Poetry Festival Contest.  
 “Living Lantern” was published in *The Avocet*, Summer 2024. Print edition.  
 “Summer Hummm” was published in *The Avocet*, Summer 2024. Print edition.  
 “Deep Freeze” was published in the April 2024 issue of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*.  
 “Survivor” won 3<sup>rd</sup> Place in the March 2024 Poetry Society of Oklahoma Members Contest.  
 “Living Lantern” was published in the June/July 2024 edition of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*.  
 “Poor Ted is Dead” was published in the June/July 2024 edition of *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*.  
 “Eagle Snow” won 2<sup>nd</sup> Honorable Mention in the May 2024 Open Contest of The Poetry Society of Colorado.  
 “Rain Regiment” was published in *Pasques Petals* Volume 98.1/Spring 2024.  
 “Poetic Banquet” was published in *Pasques Petals* Volume 98.1/Spring 2024.  
 “Summer Hummm” was published in the Summer 2024 edition of *The Avocet: A Journal of Nature Poetry*.  
 “Sanctuary” was published in *Agates 2024* of the League of Minnesota Poets.  
 “Divine Sculpture” was published by The Connecticut Poetry Society 2024.  
 “Deep Freeze” was published in the 2024 edition of *Distilled Lives* of the Illinois State Poetry Society.  
 “The Piano” was published in the 2024 edition of *Distilled Lives* of the Illinois State Poetry Society.  
 “Reclining Poetry” was published in *Ink to Paper* (vol. 8, 2024) of the Poetry Society of Indiana.  
 “Old Smokies” was published online by the Illinois Poetry Society.  
 “Pine Song” was published in *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices* August 8, 2024.

- **Doris Jones** – At Large

“Words on Words” and cover photo – “Streams of Consciousness” anthology

- **Mary Beth Magee** – South Branch

“The Writer’s Lament” – North Branch February Contest, Category 1, 1<sup>st</sup> place  
“Sister-in-Love” – Facebook  
“Mama Went Away Today” – RedRoseThorns Journal  
“STEAM Girl” – Facebook  
Proofing “Tending the Light,” POY book

- **Sharlee Shumpert** – North Branch

My poem "I Am Ambitious" placed 2nd in Itawamba Community College's writing contest, which means it will be submitted to the Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association's annual writing competition.

I am still writing weekly articles for the Horse Review magazine, and one of my articles is set to be the cover story of the April edition

Thank you all. Keep writing!

Offerings from our members:

A winter Daydream~~an Etheree by Janice Canerdy – North Branch

Mild  
breezes  
of springtime  
fragrant flowers  
songbirds’ lilting trills  
increasing verdant green  
lengthy, pleasant morning walks  
in comfy light-weight shorts and tees  
writing and reading in the porch swing--  
How I long for these on cold winter days!

## *ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY 2025 SPRING CONTESTS*

### 1. ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY SPRING CONTEST (Sponsored by ASPS)

\*THIS CATEGORY IS OPEN TO PAID MEMBERS ONLY

\$75, \$50, \$25, \$10, and 3 Honorable Mentions in order of merit

Any form, Any subject, No line limit.

### 2. OTIS DEES POETRY AWARD (in honor of Otis Dees, Mvskoke, father of sponsor Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees)

\$400 - Svhmkat (1st), \$300 - Svhokkolat (2nd), \$200 - Svtuccenat (3rd), \$100 - Sostat (4th)

Subject: Native Americans

Any form, No line limit.

Indigenous Poets and Poets of Color are especially encouraged to enter, but all are welcome.

### 3. A CHILDHOOD MEMORY (Sponsored by W Roger Carlisle)

\$100, \$75, \$50, and Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion.

Subject: A Childhood Memory

Any form, no line limit.

### 4. SHORT PROSE POETRY CONTEST (Sponsored by Sue Brannan Walker and Sandra Scribner Grace.)

\$100, \$50, \$25 and 3 Honorable Mentions

Form: Prose Poems no longer than 20 lines

Any subject, Line limit 20.

### 5. BIBLE STORIES (Sponsored by Renee Palmer)

\$70, \$30, \$15

Subject: Poem based on Bible story or Bible verse. Note chapter and verse at start of poem.

Any form, Line limit 30.

6. THE "HOPE AGAINST HOPE" AWARD (Sponsored by Susan Luther)

\$50, \$50, \$50 (Three equal awards), Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion

"Fear and hope are bound up with each other. Losing hope, we lose fear as well -- [we feel] there is nothing [left] to be afraid for." -- Nadezhda Mandelstam, from her memoir of Stalinist Russia, *Hope Against Hope*.

Subject: Respond positively to Mandelstam's words, explicitly or implicitly. For example, the poem might describe an instance of survival against great odds; it could be a direct address to fear and/or hope; or it could explore the theme in other, non-despairing ways.

Any form, Line limit 55

7. THE "ANYTHING GOES" AWARD (Sponsored by Susan Luther)

\$50, \$40, \$30, \$20, \$10 and Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion

Any form, Any subject, Line limit 40.

8. "ONE WAY STREET AWARD" (Sponsored by Mike Wahl)

\$50, \$35, \$25 and 3 Honorable Mention

Subject: One Way Street, taken in whatever context that will most inspire your poem, such as actual, emotional, spiritual, dreamt, or combinations thereof.

Any form, Line limit 32

9. PRIMAVERA: THE RITES OF SPRING (Sponsored by Pat Launius)

\$50, \$30, \$30, and 1 Honorable Mention \$10

Subject: Any annual Spring event, work of art or music, or natural phenomenon.

Any form, Line limit 60.

10. THE BKC AWARD, In memory of Bettye K. Cannizzo (Sponsored by Jessica Temple)

\$50, \$30 \$20, and Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion.

Subject: Surprises from Mother Nature

Any form, Line limit 40



11. POEMS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (Sponsored by Mike Turner)

\$50, \$30, \$20 and 2 Honorable Mentions

Subject: "The Responsibility of Freedom"  
Any form, Line limit 30

12. IT'S A MYSTERY (Sponsored by Beth Sherrill)

\$50, \$25, \$15, \$10, Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion

Subject: Something that is difficult or impossible to understand  
Any form, No line limit

13. ANDRE BRETON'S SURREALIST FRANKENSTEIN (Sponsored by Lori Hamilton)

\$50, \$25, \$10, and 1 Honorable mention

Subject: Surrealist poem about losing a body part to cancer:

What if you lost a breast or another body part to cancer? What would you replace it with, and why? -- a typewriter in place of a breast, an ATM machine in place of a uterus, etc., so every time someone touched your chest, they would be typing a poem, or they would get a \$20 bill if they touched your stomach where your womb used to be.

Any form, Line limit 53 lines

14. IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER (Sponsored by Dargan Ware)

\$40, \$25, \$10, Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion

Subject: Write a poem about second acts – about how to take not doing as well as you might have liked at one thing and turning that into doing something else special. It can be about famous folks, or you personally, or someone you know.

Any form, Line limit 50

15. GRANDS (Sponsored by Dr. Emory D. Jones)

\$25, \$15, \$10, Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion

Subject: Either grandchildren or grandparents  
Any form, Line limit 40

16. DESTINY FOR THE SOUL OF MAN ( Sponsored by Myra Ward)

\$25, \$15, \$10, Honorable Mentions at judge's discretion

Subject: Destiny for the soul of man  
Any form, Line limit 28

17. THE PENNY HARDESTY MEMORIAL AWARD (Sponsored by Kirk and Jerri Hardesty)

\$25, \$15, \$10, and 2 Honorable Mentions

Subject: Partnership  
Any form, Line limit 50

RULES! (We gotta have rules, otherwise there is chaos.)

1. Deadline for entry is **April 10, 2025**. Entries must be either postmarked or received online by that date.
2. Entry Fees:
  - ASPS Members: \$1 per poem.
  - Non-Members: \$5 per poem.
  - No limit on number of poems whether member or non-member!
3. More than one poem can be submitted in any category, but only one poem per poet may win in a category.
4. The same poem may not be entered into more than one category.
5. Poems cannot have won a monetary award in a previous ASPS contest.
6. Poems cannot have been previously published, including online.
7. The line limit for each category is as stated in the contest.

Submission Guidelines:

By Mail:

Submit **2 copies** of each poem on 8 ½ by 11 paper, using plain type and fonts only.

On each copy, **put category name and number** in the *upper left hand corner*.

On one copy only, put your **name, address, e-mail, and “member” or “non-member”** in the *upper right hand corner*. (Address labels are acceptable.)

**\*\* Postmark deadline is April 10, 2025 \*\***

Submissions should be mailed to:

Jerri Hardesty, ASPS Contest Chair  
1830 Marvel Rd.  
Brierfield, AL 35035

Online:

Entries can be submitted at [alpoets.org](http://alpoets.org) until midnight on **\*\* April 10, 2025. \*\***

Create the documents as you would to mail, with two copies of each poem.

Submit your entries as a single .pdf file.

If you would like a copy of the winners list, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the contest chair.

See our website at [AlabamaPoets.org](http://AlabamaPoets.org) for additional copies of this brochure and other information.

**Questions? Complaints? Brilliant poetry-related thoughts?** Email the contest chair at [wytrabbit1@aol.com](mailto:wytrabbit1@aol.com)