

Language of Enchantment



August 2012

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The August issue of *Strophes* is now on the web on the NFSPS website at

www.nfmps.com. This issue contains the list of prizewinners announced at the 2012 Annual Convention in Indiana.

We're on the Web!

More news/photos at

www.nmpoetry.com

President's Message: *What's up in 2012-13?*

I cannot tell you how happy I was to give the State President's Report for New Mexico at the 2012 NFSPS Annual Convention in Indiana in June. It is obvious that our Society is doing a whole lot of things right and is one of the most vigorous state societies in the Federation. There is so much happening that, in the interest of brevity, this "message" will have to be more of a list.

1. For the members who don't have e-mail, I'll review some things I sent out in my last online Update from the President. We have some new NMSPS officers:

Joanne Bodin (ABQ Chapter) is now NMSPS Vice President

Charles Trumbull (SF Poetry Trails) is NMSPS Secretary

Chuck Russell (Roswell) and Chandra Bales (ABQ) are new Chapter Chairs.

Michael Smith (SF) is the Project Leader (PL) for Youth; he will focus on poets of high-school age while Larry Castillo-Wilson continues with younger grades.

Karen Balch (Socorro) is PL for Contests, with Carol Borsello (T or C) as backup.

2. I had not yet appointed Lisa Hase-Jackson (ABQ) as PL for Social Media when I last wrote you, but I am happy to welcome her to the Board. Her newly forming Social Media Project is designed to keep all of us up to date with poetry happenings involving our Society members only. She will start with a monthly "eBuzz" of upcoming events that will be directly emailed to NMSPS members only. Future

developments may include a blog, Twitter, etc. Lisa's team will include Sari Krosinsky (ABQ), who already does our calendar, Karen Balch (Socorro), who will start with a blog for the Convention, and Debbi Brody (SF), who will monitor our FaceBook page.

3. It became clear this spring that a quarterly newsletter (i.e., Language of Enchantment)



Photo by Georgia Santa-Maria

could not keep pace with our fast moving Society. While the Social Media Project takes off on the Internet, Webmaster Debbi Gutierrez and I will compile a quarterly newsletter (online and in print) containing features with a longer shelf life. Chapter chairs are invited to contribute short pieces and photos to NMSPSnewsletter@nmpoetry.com about events and programs in which their chapters have been involved. The guideline here is that the Language of Enchantment will be about what has already happened or continues unchanged. Upcoming and time-sensitive information

should be sent to Lisa for the eBuzz each month. Also welcome are items about (poetry/literary) awards, honors, etc. accorded our NMSPS members. Individuals so honored are invited to submit their information directly, rather than relying on their chapter chairs to relay it to us.

4. Check out our new logo at the top of the page! It's a compilation of ideas and feedback we got at the state convention. Thanks to Mike Thompson for the finishing touches.

5. Karen Balch (Rio Abajo Poets in Socorro) is leading a team that includes Stewart Warren (ABQ) and me to put together an electronic press kit (EPK) for potential donors and for members alike to get to know what the NMSPS is about and to prepare for the national convention next year.

6. It won't be long until our October Membership Sweepstakes. This year's prize is free registration for the 2013 NFSPS Annual Convention right here in Albuquerque, a \$75 value. Watch for your member dues invoice in email or snail mail in late September.

Please sign up during October, and invite a friend to join, too. Only state society members can attend the NFSPS Annual Conventions, so you must pay 2013 dues to register for the convention in Albuquerque next June. We just topped 150 NMSPS members; let's see if we can be 200 strong by then!

Dear Poet:**How do I make my poetry 'sing' ?**

A common complaint from editors of poetry publications is that they get too many submissions of “prose that’s chopped up to look like poetry.” What do they mean by that? Probably that the language is flat and dull and just “clunks along.” It does not “sing” (musical elements such as meter and rhyme are missing) and does not embody enough other poetic elements such as imagery and metaphor. In this column we’ll look at the important element of imagery.

Poetry without images, or with too few, seems vacant, generalized, and un compelling. Images serve as a poem’s evidence, its proof that the experience depicted is authentic.

What Does Imagery Include?

What do you think of when you hear the words “image” and “imagery”? Probably the idea of something visual comes to mind, but the term in a broader sense refers to anything that stimulates the senses. And it can even go beyond the five senses.

The five types of sensory imagery are **visual** (sight), **auditory** (sound), **tactile** (touch), **olfactory** (smell), and **gustatory** (taste).

Poems that use a lot of **visual** imagery are numerous. Two that come to mind are D. H. Lawrence’s “The Enkindled Spring” and William Carlos Williams’ “The Widow’s Lament in Springtime.” More than just pictures of trees and flowers, they use visual imagery to show the effect images can have on the human spirit. The widow of the Williams poem and Lawrence’s “I” are forced to confront something inside themselves when they look at the landscapes around them.

An example of a poem that uses **auditory** imagery is Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Bells,” a favorite poem of mine when I was growing up. I could *hear* “the tintinnabulation of the bells.”

Tactile imagery expresses, for instance, hardness, softness, wetness, heat, and cold. An example is Robert Hayden’s “Those Winter Sundays” in which he describes “the blueblack cold” of the rooms in winter before his father makes “banked fires blaze.” (Incidentally, in that poem “banked fires” can also be read as a metaphor for the suppressed angers in the family.)

Examples of **olfactory** imagery can be found in T.S. Eliot’s “Preludes” (“The winter evening settles down / with smells of steaks in passageways”) and David Allan Evan’s “The Story of Lava” (“Every time I smell Lava soap it is 1948”).

Gustatory imagery is prominent in William Carlos Williams’ poem “This is Just to Say,” in which he describes the plums his wife was probably saving for breakfast as “so sweet and so cold.”

We can expand this list to include **organic** imagery that deals with internal sensations such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, or nausea, and **kinesthetic** imagery, having to do with movement or tension in the muscles or joints.

How Do We Make Images Vivid?

The impact of any image will ordinarily depend on how specific it is and on the poet’s use of effective detail. Sometimes a bit of surprise in the imagery can add to its vividness. Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poem “The Eagle” describes the eagle’s talons as

“crooked hands,” a vivid detail that is exact, yet a bit surprising.

William Carlos Williams advocated using what he called “concrete particulars.” For instance, rather than “bird,” say “cedar waxwing” or “rose-breasted grosbeak.” Instead of “department store,” try saying “Macy’s” or “Penneys” or “Belks.” (“Belks” would situate the poem in the South, incidentally.) If it’s a “midwestern city,” tell us whether it’s Lincoln or Sioux Falls or even a town we’ve never heard of. Whether we know exactly what a particular place is like, hearing it named “shows” it to us, gives us a way to imagine it. Let us **recognize** it. Of course there are times when the general word serves the purposes of the poem better than the concrete term would, and that’s something you, the poet, will have to determine. But as a general rule, avoid the vague and general and give us the vivid, specific detail. The eagle with crooked hands.



Poetic Laurels to...



Members of NMSPS who have won honors in the literary (especially poetry) community are invited to send up to 100 words to NMSPSnewsletter@nmpoetry.com describing the award or achievement for inclusion in the *Language of Enchantment* newsletter. Just the facts, please (no blurbs or testimonials). Anyone may submit these items, but they require the permission of the honoree to be published. (*Because so many scams involving bogus awards plague writers worldwide, the editor reserves the right to verify the credentials of the awarding entities.*)

Jim Raby, chair of the Santa Fe Poetry Trails chapter of NMSPS sent the chapter's monthly newsletter with this item:

Barbara Rockman's collection of poems, "Sting and Nest," has won both the New Mexico Press Women's 2012 Poetry Book Prize and the National Federation of Press Women's 2012 Poetry Book Prize. She also received two Pushcart Prize nominations. She was named Associate Artist and awarded a 2012 summer residency by the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. A great year!

Big Events Ahead!

On July 27 and 28, members of the Board and of the 2013 Convention Steering Committee met at Shirley Blackwell's home in Los Lunas for some long-range planning and brainstorming. Our Board will be looking at the role of the NMSPS in the next 3 years, as ideas are percolating among NM poetry groups about prospects for having a State Poet Laureate by 2014 and an International Poetry Festival in about 2015.

The opening event will be the June 2013 NFSPS Annual Convention. The program lineup is amazing, and this convention could well have historic importance for the Federation as well as New Mexico poetry. The Steering Committee is complete, but volunteers will be needed for lots of small jobs. So far, the Convention Steering Committee and their chapter affiliations are:

Steering Committee for 2013 Convention

To help with any of these jobs, please email volunteer@nmpoetry.com.

Shirley Blackwell, Coordinator (RGV Poets)

Georgia Santa-Maria, 1st Assistant Coordinator (RGV)

Andrea Watson, 2nd Asst. Coordinator and Program Chair (Walking Rain, Taos)

Debbi Gutierrez, Treasurer (RGV)

Louis Blackwell, Registrar (RGV)

Stan Thompson, Asst. Registrar (Turtleback Mtn. Poets, T or C)

Candace Russell (High Plains Poets, Roswell), Co-chair for Publicity

Joanne Bodin (ABQ), Co-chair for Publicity

Sharon Hoefflin (Turtleback Mtn. Poets), Hospitality Chair

Gale Lauradunn (ABQ), Co-chair for Book Room (Who can help her? Prefer someone in ABQ)

Jeanne Shannon (ABQ), Contest Chair

Fil Peach (Bosque Poets, Corrales), Tours and Transportation Chair.

Know Your NMSPS Board

Elected Board (Officers and Chapter Chairs)

Shirley Blackwell
President
505-565-1806
president@nmpoetry.com

Joanne Bodin
Vice President
505-861-0634
vicepresident@nmpoetry.com

Debbi Gutierrez
Treasurer
505-864-3256
treasurer@nmpoetry.com

Charles Trumbull
Secretary
secretary@nmpoetry.com

Bonnie Rucobo
Chancellor
505-889-4672
chancellor@nmpoetry.com

Chandra Bales, Chair
Albuquerque Chapter
505-277-3622 ext. 243
ABQchair@nmpoetry.com

Chuck Russell, Chair
High Prairie Poets (Roswell)
575-622-4062
HPchair@nmpoetry.com

Barbara DuBois, Chair
Rio Abajo Poets (Socorro)
575-835-3437
RAchair@nmpoetry.com

James Raby, Chair
Santa Fe Poetry Trails
505-955-9067
SFchair@nmpoetry.com

Bernadette Perez, Chair
Rio Grande Valencia Poets
505-991-1376
RGVchair@nmpoetry.com

Susan Paquet, Chair
Bosque Poets (Corrales)
817-597-9539
BPchair@nmpoetry.com

Andrea Watson, Chair
Walking Rain Poets (Taos)
303-249-4731
TaosChair@nmpoetry.com

Carol Borsello, Chair
Turtleback Mountain Poets
(Truth or Consequences)
575-895-7153
TorCchair@nmpoetry.com

Appointed Board (Project Leaders)

Karen Balch
PL for Contests
505-716-5415
NMSPScontests@nmpoetry.com

Princess Ifeoma Aachusim
PL for Membership
505-856-8565
membership@nmpoetry.com

Larry Castillo-Wilson
PL for NM Children's Poetry Project
505-892-6396
childpoetryproject@nmpoetry.com

Lisa Hase-Jackson
PL for Social Media
816-500-8614
eBuzz@nmpoetry.com

Michael G. Smith
PL for Youth
505-695-4693
YouthPoetry@nmpoetry.com

Debbi Gutierrez
PL for Web Presence
webmaster@nmpoetry.com

Non-Board Positions

Sari Krosinsky
NMSPS Calendar
NMSPScalendar@nmpoetry.com

MEMBER BOOK MARKET WEB PAGE

<http://nmpoetry.org/nmsps-market.shtml>

Want your book included in the Members' Book Market? Look for the submission guidelines on the NMSPS website. A \$10 set-up fee lets you list up to three books with links to where your books can be purchased.

