

Hello All and Happy New Year!

PST-West Tennessee started 2019 with a wonderful program presented by Janet Qually on the Tanka. See information on this fascinating form below and in our meeting minutes (attached). Lots going on, so please read through this entire news update!

### **Tanka**

The tanka is a Japanese, 5-line form, traditionally understood to be a set syllabic pattern 5/7/5/7/7. However, because the Japanese actually differentiate syllables differentially than we do in English (for example, they will differentiate between long and short sounds), modern tanka has shifted to a more flexible, balanced form which has the following elements:

- instead of strict syllabic limits, a pattern of short/long/short/long/long lines
- the entire tanka is generally 20-21 syllables, but can range shorter or longer
- satori: definite distinctive break/juxtaposition between two thoughts (similar to haiku)
- a sense of mystery or intellectual challenge — the reader has to figure out how ideas are linked
- a lot of flexibility in formatting to help present the satori, the final punchline, or even convey a non-verbal image related to the poem: left justified, center justified, offset lines

Janet explained that many people find both emotional and intellectual pleasure in working with tanka, as working in such a short form can be challenging, and requires innovation and a lot of attention to poetic devices. She advises practice, practice, practice...just as with other poetic forms. And for those who want to broaden their wings with the tanka, there are also tanka sets, tanka sequences, tanka prose (similar to the haibun), and tanka art. She suggests that people look to the Tanka Society of America (<http://www.tankasocietyofamerica.org/>) for more information.

### **West Tennessee Critiquing Panel (February Meeting)**

February is PST-West Tennessee's annual critiquing panel. If you have a poem you would like reviewed, please send it to Russell Strauss ASAP. Any subject, any form is welcome for comment. We are not looking for award-winners, but poems in progress... Send them to Russell at 18 S. Rembert St., Memphis, TN 38104.

A 3-person panel will review these poems during PST-West Tennessee's February meeting as part of the educational portion of our program. Attendees will also be able to provide feedback. If you are present, you can learn **a lot** about how others read, hear, and interpret your poetry. If you are not present, a scribe will take down the panel's (and the audience's) comments and send you an email PDF with comments back.

Russell Strauss is chair of the panel; William Hill and Leslie Blakeburn are also on the panel. Lori Goetz is an alternate.

This is a great program to attend — don't miss it! And get your poems to Russell for consideration!

### **2019 PST Annual Contest Sponsorships Needed!**

Believe it or not, we can see the PST annual festival and contest on the horizon! That means it's time to get your contest sponsorships in! I've attached/enclosed a sponsorship form. Please return those to Lori Goetz, 2153 Wood Creek Drive, Germantown, TN 38138 no later than March 15, 2019. As William

Hill pointed out last year, if you have a business, your business can sponsor a contest...you may be able to take it as a tax deduction! Just saying!

### **PST Student Contest**

Frances Cowden reminds us that Elementary (Grades 1-5) and Eye Poem contests are still open, deadline February 15. These contests are open to all Tennessee students. See details at <http://www.tnpoetry.org/blogs/post/Student-Contests-2018-2019/>.

### **Chapter News**

PST-NE had a holiday potluck on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, with a “favorite poetry share”, held at the Samadhi Healing Arts Center in Johnson City. Eight members and four visitors were in attendance, and in addition to great food, some lovely poems were shared. They’re looking forward to 2019! Their meeting minutes are attached.

No minutes from PST-Knoxville.

PST-West Tennessee is coordinating readings at Café Eclectic, to be scheduled on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month. Russell Strauss is heading this up. We are currently coordinating publicity, but are encouraging all West Tennessee members to participate. We are hoping to advertise across multiple platforms, including the Memphis Flyer, Facebook, Nextdoor, MeetUp, and a poster to be placed at Café Eclectic.

### **January Members-Only Contest**

No winners announced yet; judging still ongoing.

### **February Members-Only Contest**

Sponsor: Russell Strauss

Subject: any Elvis song. Identify the song title, but DO NOT use the song title as your own title.

Any form, line limits 10-30. Please get those poems to Pete Harris by 1/20. Pete’s address is 1645 Faxon, Memphis, TN 38112.

### **February NFSPS Prep Critiquing Session**

Nope – not the same critiquing session. This is 30 minutes before the regular meeting, and the selected poem is NFSPS #3, Walk a mile in the experience of another. Any form, 32 lines. As always, bring 10 copies to share. If you’re not in town, you can send 10 copies to Lori Goetz, 2153 Wood Creek Drive, Germantown, TN 38138, and I’ll scribe any comments and PDF them to you.

Have a great month!

- Lori