

## Announcements:

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Annual Panel Critiquing Session! Russell Strauss, Howard Carman, Jr., and Diane Clark were our panel; we had 11 poems from 9 different individuals. A few key takeaways from the critiques:

- When writing, be aware how you are engaging with your reader – is your poem jumpy? easily accessible? confusing?
- Be conscious of your grammar/verb tenses in your poems; if transitioning through time, plan stanzas, etc. to help your reader. Grammar, grammar, grammar.
- If something is new or difficult (subject matter, a term, etc.) don't hesitate to use an epigraph or a footnote to define (again, help your reader).
- Are you being redundant? Look for "fluff" and edit your lines.
- Look for inappropriate enjambment – while necessary for rhymed/metered forms, it is not always needed in other forms; do not end lines with articles ("a", "the") or separate modifiers from nouns unless you are trying to make a point.
- Beware long lines! Howard advised that if a poem is published, a long line may be edited/modified by the anthology editor and may not look the way you want it to when published. Most contests provide a guideline.
- Titles and first lines are keys to capturing your reader. They need to draw the reader in, engage him/her. If the title or first line are not engaging, the poem will struggle.

One week left for Student Contest...please encourage elementary grade students to submit. All grades are open for Eye Poems. Submissions due 2/15.

If you are interested in volunteering for any board or other volunteer positions, please contact William Hill (for PST-West Tennessee) or your respective chapters.

We are starting to coordinate sponsorships for the 2021 Festival Contest — please start thinking about your subject/form, contest amounts, contest name, etc. Expect to see a sponsorship form shortly!

Soliciting feedback on Patron Poems. One of the perks of contributing a Patron Donation to PST is the ability to submit 3 poems to the anthology's Editorial Board, and they will select one poem for publication. The Anthology Task Force has received a question of whether a poor quality patron poem could adversely impact the literary quality of the anthology. We are soliciting feedback from PST (all chapters) on how to handle Patron Poems, or if we should continue this perk.

Russell's Critiquing Challenges for March:

1. NFSPS #15 Poet's Work Award, Subject: Life as Other. Form: Persona Poem (personification)
2. NFSPS #5 Georgia Poetry Society Award Subject: Life in the Future, beyond Earth or on it. Form: Any rhyming form; slant acceptable, no nonce forms, identify form on entry. 40 line limit.

Members Only Contest for March: Sponsor: Ruby Jones, Subject: Justice, Form: Any, Lines: 40 max

A new contest Challenge: A Tennessee Residents only contest is related to the following picture. Submit an original and unpublished poem related to Janet Qually's Artwork. Must be received by March 1, 2021.

Next Poetry Reading: February 18, 7 pm central

February Poetry winners:

Sponsor/Judge: Russell Strauss, "Get a Job", on work, retiring, etc.

1st Place	Howard S. Carman, Jr.	Blountville, TN	"To My Career"
2nd Place	Lori Goetz	Germantown, TN	"Tedium"
3rd Place	William Hill	Southaven, MS	"Discourse on the Relative Merits of Employment"

Honorable Mentions;

1 HM	Mark Hudson,	Evanston, Ill.	"Alcoholic Plumbers"
2 HM	Dr. Emory Jones	Iuka, MS	"Jobs"
3 HM	Ann Carolyn Cates	Southaven. MS	"Changing Careers"