

Connecticut Poetry Society



December 2025

CPS website is <http://ctpoetry.org>.

Contact us at ctpoetryline@gmail.com

While you're online, *Friend us* on Facebook.

CPS Honorary Board

Antoinette Brim-Bell, Connecticut Poet Laureate

Margaret Gibson, Connecticut Poet Laureate, 2019-2022

Marilyn Nelson, Connecticut Poet Laureate, 2001-2006

Vivian Shipley, CSU Distinguished Professor Emerita

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Membership: Patti Fusco

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Newsletter: Ginny Connors

POP Director: Jim Finnegan

Publicity & Social Media Director: River Ripa

Youth Chair: Amy Gray

CPS, an affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS), is dedicated to the promotion and enjoyment of poetry.

CPS Fall Festival: A Celebration of Words and Community

On November 22, at the historical Blackstone Library in Branford, CPS members once again gathered—a blending of artistic expression, good food, genuine connection, and a lively open mic that left everyone inspired. A sense of camaraderie filled the room as we shared our love of the written and spoken word. As always, the highlight of the event was the open mic, which included new members and first-time open mic readers. Hot off the press copies of the *My Hometown* anthology, published by Orenaug Mountain Press, were available featuring poems by talented CPS members about their "hometown." The variety of styles and interpretations represented in this collection is a tribute to their talent and creativity.

The anthology is available through Orenaug Mountain Publishing. All proceeds go directly to CPS, so grab your copy, if you haven't already, and pick up an extra for your local library. You can learn more about this CPS fundraiser and how to get a copy at www.orenaugmountainpublishing.com/books

President's Message December 2025

Dear CPS Members,

I decided that it was not wisdom that enabled poets to write their poetry, but a kind of instinct or inspiration, such as you find in seers and prophets who deliver all their sublime messages without knowing in the least what they mean. –Socrates

It's been quite a year for CPS, and I am so grateful to you for being part of our community, one that grows stronger every year through our shared love of language. Your passion, participation, and generosity have helped shape a vibrant and welcoming space where everyone has a place. I believe that we are gifts to each other, bearers of joy, compassion, and kindness.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for *all* the work they do, *all* year long, donating their time and talents to ensure the success of CPS. It is because of them that we can accomplish so much. Without their dedication we could not exist. I hope you will take the time to visit our website and read about our amazing Board, our "Poetry Angels."
<https://ctpoetry.org/cps-board/>

Poetry is such a vital force in our lives. As you move through this season of celebration, may you find moments of stillness to write, to read, and to rediscover the inspiration that first brought you to poetry.

Sincerely,
Pat Mottola, President



Enjoying the Fall Festival

Poetry Workshops at the Avon Library

Christine Beck is starting a series of poetry workshops, sponsored by CPS, at the Avon Public Library. They will take place on Wednesdays from 10:30-noon. The workshops will feature discussions of well-known poets and will offer easy writing prompts. On January 28, Mary Oliver will be the focus. The next two workshops will be held on February 25 and March 25. Contact Christine for more information: christinebeck90@gmail.com.

Riverwood Poetry Series at RAW

Riverwood Poetry Series will host **Jeffrey Harrison** and **Charles Douthat** on Wednesday, December 10, 7 pm at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor Street, Hartford. An open mic will precede the featured readers.

CPS Chapters & Presidents

If you want to know more about meeting with a specific chapter, please get in touch with the chapter president.

Bethel

Michael Garry

mgarry1955@gmail.com

This chapter meets at the Bethel Library on the second Saturday of each month, from 1-2 pm. Bring copies of a poem to discuss.

Farmington Valley

Debbie Gilbert

debbiewgilbert@hotmail.com

This chapter meets on the first Monday of each month, from 7-9 pm. Meetings are held in person at One Huntington Glen Road in Avon. Bring ten copies of your poem to share for critique.

Greater Hartford

Pegi Deitz Shea

pegideitzshea@aol.com

This chapter will meet on the second Tuesday of each month (except for July and August) at 6:30 pm, via Zoom, and will be managed by Pegi Deitz Shea. We welcome all current CPS members of towns in the Hartford area. If you would like to join, please contact her at pegideitzshea@aol.com.

Haiku Chapter

Tony Fusco

cpshaiku@gmail.com

Members of the group share haiku in response to a prompt. The chair collects the poems in advance. Poems are due by noon on the 15th of the month. Send poems to Tony Fusco with "CPS Haiku for (month & year)" in the subject line. and then look for them on our website at the members' poems page. <https://ctpoetry.org/member-poems/> Make sure you sign your name as you

want it to appear. This program is for CPS members only!

Manchester

Victoria Dubiel

victoria.dubiel@hotmail.com

Manchester's Wit and Wisdom group meets on the second Saturday of each month from 1-3. They meet at the Manchester Historical Society, 175 Pine Street in Manchester.

New Haven

Tony Fusco

tfusco357@gmail.com

The New Haven chapter meets on the third Saturday of each month from 10-12. Presently they meet via Zoom.

Oreana Chapter: Woodbury, Watertown, Southbury, Roxbury, Bethlehem

Sandy Carlson

oreanaugchaptercps@gmail.com

The Oreanaug chapter meets in person on the second Saturday of each month at 9:15 am. Meetings occur at Hollow Park from June-September and at St. Paul's Church in Woodbury from October-May.

Wilton

Ed Ahern

salmonier@aol.com

The Wilton Workshop meets from 2-4 on the third Saturday of each month at the Wilton Library. Email a copy of your poem to Ed in advance, or bring copies when you attend the meeting.

Poet in the Spotlight: Edwina Trentham

“Poetry is basically my life. It gives me enormous joy to read and write poetry. I do not think I could survive without it,” says CPS member **Edwina Trentham**.

She began writing poetry as a youngster. “I used to write poems to my father, who kept them in an old copy of Dr. Zhivago, which I still have. At the Bermuda High School for Girls we read poetry all the time, and I learned to love poetry of all kinds.” Once she married, however, to a writer, she stopped writing her own pieces and concentrated on sending out her husband’s work. Later, after her divorce, she went to college, where she found her voice again. Some of her poetry was about her childhood in Bermuda, and although she had always considered herself to have had a happy childhood, she was startled to find that many of the poems were sad. Currently she is writing mostly politically-oriented poems. This is a reaction to the terrible events happening in the world.

Trentham was a featured reader at the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival and has given readings throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. She is the founding editor of a national poetry journal, *Freshwater*. For 27 years she was a Professor of English at Asnuntuck Community College. She also taught courses in women’s poetry, memoir and political poetry as a visiting instructor at Wesleyan University.

The qualities Trentham values in poems, those of hers and those by others, are honesty, passion, rich imagery, and courage. Presently

she is reading *You Better Be Lightning* by Andrea Gibson and a chapbook by Jose Enrique Medina called *Haunt Me*. She also loves the work the work of Danusha Lameris; the poem “Small Kindnesses,” by Lameris is a favorite.

Trentham is a fulltime caretaker for her beloved husband. As well as caring for him, she enjoys sitting on the deck to watch birds, and she likes doing Tai Chi and going to the gym. She always looks forward to visiting with friends, most of whom are poets, so that they can talk about poetry.



Edwina Trentham

Poets at Large

At The Vanilla Bean Cafe, 450 Deerfield Road, Pomfret, you can enjoy the work of some outstanding poets. Readings begin at 7 p.m. and include an open mic. On February 21 **Sean Patrick Forbes** will be the featured reader, and on March 21 **Christopher Reilley** and **Carla Schwartz** will share some poetry.

Coming Soon! Member Book Reviews!

If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?

–Emily Dickinson

Starting January 1, 2026

We know that the Connecticut Poetry Society has among our members some of the finest poets in the country writing some of the finest collections of poetry. Have you read a book written by a CPS member lately? Did it make you say **WOW!**?

Let us know about it!

It's as easy as 1-2-3

- *Read a fellow member's poetry book
- *Write a brief review (75–150 words) about the book
- *Submit your piece for posting on the CPS website, along with a link to how to purchase the book.

Come January we will be sending out a form with detailed instructions. So, get reading! Get writing! And remember, poetry books make great Holiday gifts!

New Books by CPS Members

CPS member **Catalina P. Rincón**, born and raised in Ecuador, is the author of *Sabiduría: poems and reflections on life*, a compilation of poems and self-reflections. This bilingual book received the 2025 Contemporary Poetry Award from the International Impact Book Awards, the Regal Summit Book Award, and an Honorable

Mention in the Poetry-Inspiration category from The Bookfest Book Award.

Given Time is a memoir in poetry about the breast cancer of **Christine Beck's** mother and her own recent diagnosis. The collection acknowledges grief but also celebrates the unique bond of mother and daughter. \$17.99, available at www.finishinglinepress.com, Amazon.com and other on-line platforms.

Christine will read from the book at the Guilford Public Library on Thursday March 12, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Beauty & Ashes, by **Karen Warinsky**, covers the political and the personal, the destructive and the wonderful moments of life. Warinsky is an award-winning poet who has published widely since 2011. She is a Best of the Net nominee and a former finalist of the Montreal International Poetry Contest, among other honors.

On December 14th at 2 pm, she will continue her book launch at The Golden Owl Bookstore, 19 Golden Street, New London. This event will include a raffle and an open mic. Email karen.warinsky@gmail.com to reserve an open mic spot.

Two poetry books by **Pegi Deitz Shea** are scheduled for release in 2026. *Tick Tick Tick Tick*, a humorous hybrid chapbook about the deadly bloodsuckers, will be published in February by Dancing Girl Press, which makes hand-printed editions. A longer version will be published shortly after in mass paperback and ebook formats by

Impspired Press. Later in the year, Impspired will also be publishing Pegi's novel-in-verse, *Uncharted: The Personal Voyage of Jeanne Baret, the First Woman to Circumnavigate the World*.

Ciaran Berry and **Debbie Gilbert** will read from their latest poetry collections on Saturday, January 10, 1 pm at the Barney Library, 71 Main Street, Farmington Village (not the main library). Berry's book is *States*, published by The Gallery Press, and Gilbert's book is *From the Altar of the Land*, published by Grayson Books. Ample parking in the library lot off Church Street. An open mic will precede the featured readings.

Will Your Work Be in the Next CRR?

Submissions for the 2026 issue of *Connecticut River Review* will begin on February 1. Check the CPS website for full guidelines and details.

Vivian Shipley Contest Winners Announced

Congratulations to the winners of the Vivian Shipley Poetry Award! Submissions came in from around the country and across the world.

First place went to **Jennifer Tubbs** for "How to Write a Nature Poem." **Ian Hall** took second place with his poem "A Country Horse-Doctor." Third place was awarded to **Laney Nielson** for "Silage."

In addition, six poets earned Honorable Mentions: **Lindsey Warren, Jane Frazier, Jonathan Chibuikwe Ukah, Don Walicek, Jack Stallins, and Sara Green.**



CPS at SCSU!

CPS members and SCSU alumni read at Southern Connecticut State University on November 21 to an enthusiastic group of students, faculty, and aspiring writers. CPS President **Pat Mottola, Christine Beck, and Steff Sirois** shared their work and participated in a lively Q&A afterward.

Calling all Ideas to Advance Poetry in our Communities

CPS would like to assemble a poetry toolkit to help chapter presidents, community poet laureates and poetry lovers advance poetry in their communities. If you or your group has done an interesting project, presentation, or anthology we would like to document it along with any resources you found helpful so others might be inspired to replicate or modify it for their communities. **Jeanne LeVasseur** and **Pat Mottola** will convene a zoom conversation early in 2026 to share ideas. Please send an e-mail to CPS if you would like to receive the invitation to this exciting brainstorming session. Describe your project or idea in a brief sentence or two. ctpoetryline@gmail.com