Dear Poets, CSPS Members and Friends of the Poetry Letter!

In this 2016 No. 1 Poetry Letter, we thank Howard Lachtman for his part in founding the CQ back in the early 1970s. We have published two of his more recent poems in the current issue of the CQ (Vol. 42, No. 1).

Recent past editors also wish to thank the contributors who have used our website, www.CaliforniaStatePoetrySociety.org for submitting their texts. Please be so kind as to continue, or begin, submitting to it, as it makes editing so much simpler if we have digital copies! If you do not use email or the Internet yourself, surely you have a friend or a relative upon whom you can prevail to send poems and receive emails on your behalf.

Also, please renew your CSPS membership on the same website, or by directly contacting Richard Deets, our Vice President/Membership, at rdeets@att.net.

And here, for the Poetry Letter to feature your previously published poems, as always, is my email: umsaine@gmail.com.

A few days ago, we received an email from a recent two-time CQ contributor, Rachel Blum:

"It’s nice to connect with you, Margaret; thank you for your kind message. I also have been very much with the morning birds this week. I am glad they are bringing you delight. Me, too!!

I am happy ANGEL was accepted, too. You and CQ have been very kind to me.

Good wishes and good writing to you as well.

Peace,
Rachel"

So here is wishing you a Happy Spring and Easter season, with gastric—and creative—juices flowing,

Margaret Saine
UMSaine@gmail.com
Our first poem is by long-time CSPS contest participant and \textit{CQ} contributor Von S. Bourland:

\textbf{JORDYNN'S GUARDIAN ANGEL}

A loving angel hovered ever near
as \textit{fearless girl} went over, round and through
all obstacles without a conscious clue.
Each day presented challenging frontier.
She jumped, she pranced like nimble leaping deer.
Adventuresome and special child—she grew
to greet new challenges—possessed the view
that life could offer naught for her to fear.

Her teenage years convey confusion—fling
new doubts, new fears in adolescent mind.
Disorders diagnosed with drugs as their
solution add to paranoia—bring
no ease for souls of family. Remind
her angel standing near to guard with prayer.

\textit{Von S. Bourland, Happy, Texas}
First Prize, 2015 CSPS November Monthly Contest

Von remarks that this is a Petrarchan sonnet, with (1) the two quartets (making an octet) and the two tercets (making a sextet) each written together and (2) the rhymes \textit{abba} and \textit{cde} repeated in each group, respectively. The Petrarchan sonnet can also be written in four stanzas, each quartet and tercet appearing separately, as distinct from the Shakespearian sonnet, which consists of twelve and then two verses.

The November contest theme, by the way, was \textit{Family, Friendship, and the Human Condition}.
Rhymed or unrhymed, what counts is the content of the poem. Here we have our second selection, one by Thomas Feeny:

REMEMBERING MARRIAGE

July, 1990  
Heat leadens the  
rice-white sky,  
shimmers in lush gardens  
We’re caught in a dog-day swelter  
that peels papers from walls,  
sets the bedroom air conditioner  
groaning, throbbing  
poking fun at the pair of  
us—still greedy lovers  
drunk with love  
fools for flesh and magic  
all hours of the day.

Afternoon lull  
Pink baby’s cooing  
on the side porch  
Across the kitchen step  
bathed in sunlight  
sprawls the fat yellow pup  
who smells my shoes.

Whimpering caress  
dreaming no dogfights  
idly he thumps his tail.

Thomas Feeny, Raleigh, North Carolina  
First published in the Piedmont Literary Review of 1999
And, because I’m waiting for more of your repeat submissions, I’m publishing here a delightful poem by the great American poet, Elizabeth Bishop, whom I’ve been rereading lately along with William Carlos Williams. I used to tell my California State University Fullerton Hispanic literature students that, before writing one poem, they ought to read twelve. I still keep to this precept. 😊

ONE ART

The art of losing isn’t hard to master;  
so many things seem filled with the intent  
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster  
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.  
The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:  
places, and names, and where it was you meant  
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother’s watch. And look! my last, or  
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.  
The art of losing isn’t hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,  
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.  
I miss them, but it wasn’t a disaster.

---Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture  
I love) I shan’t have lied. It’s evident  
the art of losing’s not too hard to master  
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

Elizabeth Bishop, 1911-1979

And here, finally, is another plea, begging you to send us any old California Quarterly issues from the period 1972-1992! They will be valuable contributions to the CSPS Archive at the California State Library in Sacramento.