

FOR MAILCHIMP

PARTING REMARKS FROM OUTGOING PREMIER POET, SARAH E. MORIN

Hi PSI friends! Wow! Has it been three years already? I have had a wonderful but very odd tenure as your Premier Poet. My intentions when I was first named as PP in late 2019 was to travel the state and visit every club. A little thing called Covid interfered, and my family circumstances changed two years ago when we moved my MIL in with us to help care for her. In fact, I call myself your PPP - Pandemic Premier Poet. While the pandemic cost us much in chances to gather together, and sadly in lives as well, I was glad that I was able to head up several virtual Spring Flings and Fall Rendezvouses. We all, myself included, learned a lot about what it meant for artists to connect online and keep the poetic community alive. I was thrilled last Spring Fling, when we finally met again in person, to see that PSI had weathered the storm. You have a talented and excited Board of Officers, and you are about to meet your new Premier Poet, and I know you will continue to thrive under their leadership.

I discovered part of the fun of being Premier Poet is each one of us gets to put our own spin on it. I have most enjoyed giving workshops and especially setting your poetry to images and music for social media. It allowed me to really get my hands in your work, appreciate your style, and form my own interpretation. I like to think of it as finding the right setting for a diamond in a ring to best show it off. In Spring 2020, when we were still under lockdown, I was thrilled that so many of you participated in our virtual Round Robin, as well as contributors from as far away as Ireland and Israel. Because I so enjoy putting your works to images and music, that's what I am doing in lieu of a live presentation. Remember the Ogden Nash presentation I did last spring? I took the poems you wrote as part of that and put them into a video. You will be able to find it on our PSI webpage.

I want to thank each and every officer from 2019 to 2022. You included me in decisions when you did not have to and showed me the utmost consideration and kindness. I really felt like part of the leadership team. I want to thank my husband, Spike, for being so supportive. He heard the planning process behind every online workshop and often was the one offscreen hitting the important buttons. And I want to thank you, the membership, for being so utterly welcoming and thoughtful. It has been an honor to serve you.

## ANNOUNCING OUR NEW PREMIER POET

**PSI welcomes our new Premier Poet, Jenny Kalahar!** Jenny was named Premier Poet at Fall Rendezvous 2022, and will serve for three years. The Premier Poet's job is to promote poetry in Indiana. While each Premier Poet interprets this a little differently according to their own skill sets, here are some common duties the PP does:

- Presents a session at every statewide meeting (Spring Fling and Fall Rendezvous)
- Sets parameters for and judges the Premier Poet category in PSI's Annual Contest. All Premier Poets, current and past, are welcome to help fund the prize money for this category.
- Sets parameters for and judges the Member Contest in the PSI newsletter.

Beyond this, Jenny will encourage poetry and our member poets using her own unique and ample talents.

The PSI President, 1st Vice President, and current Premier Poet served as the selection committee for the new Premier Poet. Candidates could either nominate themselves or be nominated by members. Their application included a record of past service to PSI and 10 poems written in the past two years. The PP Selection Committee was faced with a daunting challenge as some excellent names were put forward for consideration. We thank everyone who submitted the materials for our consideration. Although we can only choose one new Premier Poet, we were honored to know we had such talented poets and dedicated members to choose from. PSI is lucky to have you.

I have served with Jenny for many years as an officer and to be honest I thought she deserved the title more than me three years ago. I am thrilled to pass the baton on to her. Jenny is a humble and generous soul. When Patrick Kalahar, Jenny's husband, first attended a meeting of my club, Noble Poets, he told me, "I'll bring my wife next time. You two would really hit it off." He was dead right. From the first Jenny impressed me with her gentle humor, insightful observations of the human condition, and humility. Her poetry is superb. My favorite examples are what I call her character sketches, which describe people with poignancy and compassion. Her work often leaves you with a smile, sometimes with an ache, and always with a question. As I got to know Jenny more, I was

also thoroughly impressed with her work ethic! Jenny readily encourages other poets of all abilities, through her work as editor of *The Last Stanza Journal*, as leader of her club, the Last Stanza, through her many offices and behind the scenes work. She is a prime example of the proverbial duck whose feet are paddling madly while from the top the duck appears to be gliding effortlessly.

At many times over the years, Jenny has been the “duck feet” for PSI. She served as PSI Treasurer. She has a special heart for encouraging the next generation to get involved in poetry. For two years she served as our Youth PSI Chair and published one YPSI anthology. She has utilized her skills as a publisher many, many times to help PSI members get their works out into the world, helping not only individuals prepare and publish chapbooks, but editing and publishing our annual *Ink to Paper* editions, as well as our PSI 75th Anniversary anthology, *Diamonds*. She co-chaired/hosted previous Spring Flings with other *Last Stanza Poetry* group members, created certificates for various PSI contests, and even created various graphics for PSI, including the Indiana Bicentennial “blue” PSI logo. For these and many more reasons PSI named Jenny an Honorary Member in 2021.

As a writer Jenny is skilled in not only poetry but prose. Her Amazon author page lists 26 distinct titles, including *Lumi's Curiosities*, *Shelve Under C*, *The Soggy Doggy*, *I Imagined a Dragon*, and many more. Her real-life love of vintage books and pets find their way into several of her works. She was nominated for the Indiana State Poet Laureate position, a Best of the Net, and twice for a Pushcart Prize in poetry. Check her out at <https://jennykalahar.blogspot.com/>.

I know Jenny will serve PSI poets exceedingly well in the next three years. How she does so is up to her, but she gave us some insight in her application packet. She said, “The position is about sharing the joy of writing, keeping poetry at the forefront of PSI members’ awareness with Facebook posts and prompts, and about helping PSI board members maintain a sense of community within the group. Outreach and the welcoming of potential new members are also important. Writing is the loneliest art, and I certainly felt lonely as a poet before attending poetry groups, forming my own group, and eventually joining the state society. I’d love to help make more lonely poets aware of PSI. It changed my life for the better. As the editor/publisher of a poetry journal, I’ve been surprised (and yet not surprised, remembering my own first journal acceptance) by poets’ stories of how much it means to them to have the poems they’ve carried in their proverbial pockets set free. I’m interested in continuing with the journal

and publishing polished and experienced poets, but I'd also like to spark an interest in poetry in those who have never given creative writing a real go.”

I look forward to seeing what Jenny has in store for us in the next three years, and wish her the best.