



## NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY

# Language of Enchantment

Spring & Summer 2010

### *From The Desk of Bonnie K. Rucobo, President, NMSPS*

I would like to report to you the events of the February meeting of the Board of the New Mexico State Poetry Society. We discussed and voted on the prospect of making a bid to host the 2012 convention of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. here in Albuquerque. We carefully reviewed all responses to the survey on this subject in the last *Language of Enchantment*, and we thank you for all of your contributions. The upshot of our discussion on this topic was that we have decided not to undertake sponsoring the national conference in 2012. This decision was reached after much contemplation and debate. It was based on multiple factors: our membership has diminished considerably, our income is reduced, and the number of members expressing an interest in taking an active organizing role was limited. We recognize that Albuquerque is a wonderful venue for poets and the arts of all kinds, and we voted to consider the prospect of hosting a NFSPS conference in 2015 once we have shored up our membership base.

The Board discussed two courses of action that would increase our visibility and involvement statewide and beyond. First, we would like to design a NMSPS website so that we can post events, poetry, and links to the NFSPS' website. We have formed a committee and are taking bids from three web designers. Also, in the next year, we would like to sponsor or co-sponsor a day-long poetry event with one or more poetry groups from Albuquerque or across the state.

Finally, I would like to mention that I along with several other NMSPS members attended "Do Remember Me," a celebration of the life of Dr. Maisha Baton on February 21st at UNM's Student Union. Baton, born in Pennsylvania, lived and worked for many years in Albuquerque. She was a poet, playwright, educator, professor, historian, and photographer. She was exceptional in each of these areas. Three years ago she addressed a NMSPS Annual Meeting, and she often held poetry workshops at senior centers throughout the city. In introducing Baton, Rita Powdrell, the organizer of the event, gazed out over the audience and marveled at "all the communities that Maisha walked in."

The following poem is taken from *Sketches*, the volume of poetry that Baton wrote during her final illness.

#### A Left-Handed Black Kid

She grew up in a time when schools did not tolerate  
black folks nor left-handers,  
in a place where orange school buses full  
with cussin' and cryin' kids  
passed swiftly through cornfields of shattered dreams.

She was the only black kid in the first grade.  
And paid the price.  
Cuz a teacher's hate looms large  
in a first-grade classroom  
punishing left-handed ways with a relentless ruler  
and dire predictions of futures filled with no-good men  
and back alleys of crying babies.

And still she writes with her left hand  
and stores her anger in the right hand  
pocket of her imagination.

Dr. Maisha Baton

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