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Telegram & Gazette Staff

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## Writings of Harry Houdini to be read at Nick's

The Hangover Hour, which meets twice-monthly at Nick's Bar and Restaurant in Worcester, has a fairly distinctive gimmick: Host Dave Macpherson invites local writers to come and read a full-set of the work by a writer who has passed on. Sometimes the writer was famous, sometimes less-so. Usually its poetry that's covered, although the likes of children's author Beatrix Potter, food writer M. F. K. Fisher and sports writer Red Smith have been covered.

But Sunday promises to be something – ahem – magical as local poet Sarah Sapienza reads the writings of Harry Houdini. Sapienza, a member of the current Worcester National Poetry Slam Team, wrote a whole manuscript of Houdini inspired poems for her thesis when she received her MFA in poetry from New England College in Henniker, New Hampshire, so it's clear she's got some affinity for the subject. It's that combination of a talented performer and a surprising subject that makes this one a captivating prospect.

### Prize winners

It's award season for the Worcester County Poetry Association.

First up, poet and teacher Emily Ferrara of Worcester won the WCPA's Frank O'Hara Prize for her poem "On the Morning of the Third Supermoon."

The award, named for the acclaimed mid-20th century poet Frank O'Hara, who grew up in Grafton, was judged this year by author Dawn Potter. The top prize was \$100 and publication in The Worcester Review literary journal. The runners up, whose work will also be included in the literary journal, include Anne Marie Lucci of Worcester, John Eisner of Worcester and Jennifer Freed of Holden.

Ferrara is the author of "The Alchemy of Grief," a collection of poems which won the Bordighera Poetry Prize, which promotes "the literature of the Italian diaspora and its languages." She is on the faculty at University of Massachusetts Medical School, and runs The Heart Aroused series at the Heart Well Institute in Worcester, which features performances by poets and musicians.

Potter and the contest winners will read their work at 2 p.m. Sept. 27 in the Bancroft Room of the First Unitarian Church, 90 Main Street, Worcester.

The WCPA also announced that poet Michael D. True of Worcester is the first recipient of the Stanley Kunitz Medal, awarded through a bequest from the two-time Poet Laureate of the United States, Pulitzer Prize winner and Worcester native Stanley Kunitz.

According to the WCPA, "The medal is awarded to a person with a strong Worcester County connection who best exemplifies Stanley Kunitz's life-long commitment to poetry and poets. The award recognizes the total commitment to poetry as Stanley lived it: teaching poetry, mentoring poets, speaking poetry, publishing poetry and supporting organizations which nurture poetry."

True was one of the founders of WCPA in 1971 and was the founding editor of The Worcester Review. He is professor emeritus of English at Assumption College, and his books include "Plain Songs and Other Poems," "Worcester Poets, With Notes Toward a Literary History," which included an introduction by Stanley Kunitz, and "Worcester Writers, 1680-1980."

An award ceremony is scheduled to coincide with Kunitz's birthday celebration at his boyhood home, 4 Woodford St., Worcester, at 2 p.m. July 26. RSVP to [rodgerwriter@myfairpoint.net](mailto:rodgerwriter@myfairpoint.net), as seating is limited.

### Book signing

Writer and artist Judith Ferrara will sign her book "The little O, the earth: Travel Journals, Art and Poems," at 6:30 p.m. June 2 at the Italian-American Cultural Center, 28 Mulberry St., Worcester.



Harry Houdini, in 1899 ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

## Correction

This article has been amended to correct the location for Judith Ferrara's book signing.

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