

**EDITORS' NOTE****Marion Kingston Stocking**

Marion Stocking, who died this May just shy of her eighty-seventh birthday and her hundredth review for the *BPJ*, offered us a home in poetry, as she did for hundreds of others—students, contributors to the journal, and devoted followers of her reviews among them.

For us, that home consisted of a welcome—in 1976 and 1987—as full participants into the workings of a journal whose rituals had already been well and amicably established when Marion joined the staff in 1954. One of those rituals was a weekend-long quarterly editorial session during which everything flowed in abundance—most particularly, poems to read, comment on, and finally choose in a marathon session in which we recited all poems still in contention. We took meals at Marion’s table, which filled with two or three different soups, breads with crust and texture, cheeses, Marion’s dilly beans or cucumbers sliced thin and marinated in rosewater, and homemade pies. The table talk—about poetry, politics, birds, opera, teaching, blueberries, cattle-breeding in Australia—also had crust and texture. Like all good conversation it began in one place and ended up, surprisingly, in another. For these occasions, Marion was the welcoming host—discerning, attentive, and appreciative of every passion her guests offered up. Her capacity for delight seemed inexhaustible. She licked the whipped cream from the bowl.

For thirty years, Marion and her husband, David, did most of the day-to-day work of the journal; after Dave’s death in 1984, Marion assumed full responsibility. She kept track of subscriptions and finances, ferreted out cover images, negotiated with the typesetter and printer, read every transcript that came in over the transom, and corresponded with poets. All the while, Marion kept up with dozens of other journals and the books that poured into her house for possible review. Between 1968 and 2009 she wrote ninety-eight reviews for Books in Brief, including almost every review the journal published from 1978 onward. When the two of us took over the bulk of the editorial tasks in 2003, just after Marion’s eightieth birthday, we learned by doing just how heavy a responsibility she had been carrying. Or call it rather Marion’s—now our—devotion, a life in poetry that cycles poetry back into the world.

That devotion had its methods and guiding principles: Read manuscripts as soon as they come in, out of respect for the poets and to keep the piles from becoming mountains. When reading, stay