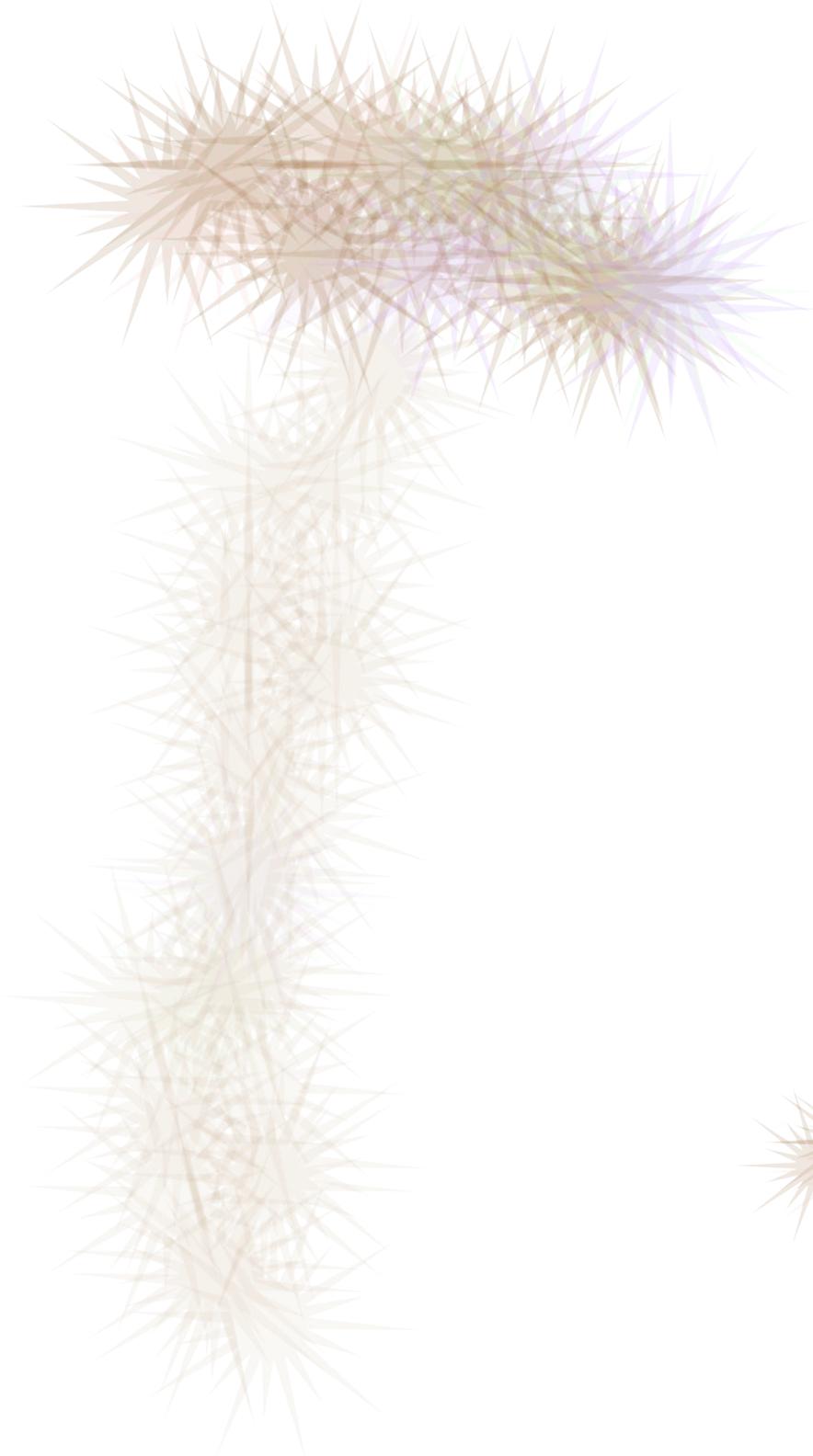
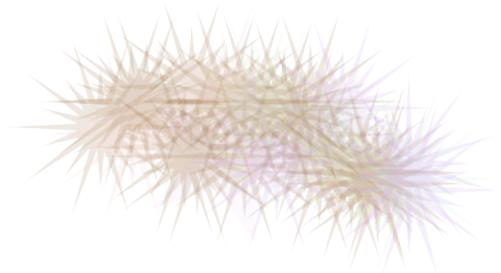


Sol Magazine

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2003 Poet Laureate Special Edition



June 2003

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Sol Magazine's Poets Laureate

Elizabeth Barrette	- Poet Laureate 2003
Martha Kirby Capo	- Poet Laureate 2002
Lois Lay Castiglioni	- Poet Laureate 2001
John E. Rice	- Poet Laureate 2000
John E. Rice	- Poet Laureate 1999
Betty Ann Whitney	- Poet Laureate 1998

DEDICATION

By Mary Margaret Carlisle, Managing Editor

"Dedicated" is a word that applies to each and every person who worked on this immense project over the last six months. Dedicated, devoted, enthusiastic, keen, committed, what else can you say about the extraordinary efforts of each judge, editor, manager, proofreader, or volunteer who worked on this, our sixth annual Poet Laureate Competition?

We, the Staff of Sol Magazine, dedicate this Poet Laureate Edition to each person who worked so very hard on this project. Mind to mind, spirit to spirit, and heart to heart — we thank you. You are wonderful.

POET LAUREATE 2003

ELIZABETH BARRETTE, CHARLESTON, IL, USA



ABOUT ELIZABETH

Managing Editor for PanGaia and the Assistant Editor of SageWoman magazine, Elizabeth Barrette says, "You can dream about anything and everything," and implies that her life has been a poetic dream, beginning when she, at the tender age of five, dictated her first poems to her parents. Like Elizabeth Barret Browning, Elizabeth Barrette has been steeped in grand poetic tradition for her life; perhaps it is due to this that she became a poet; she admires Ms. Browning's powerful rhyme and rhythm, as well as its imagery. Elizabeth enjoys acrostics for the form is subtle, expressive, and flexible, encouraging the reader to look at the world a little sideways. When the desire for a longer poetic form strikes, Elizabeth turns to pantoum, enjoying the repetitive weaving of lines to create an emphasis on the critical ideas of a poem. She says some poems pop into her head fully formed, and advises new poets to "Do strange things." To everyone else she says, "Poetry uses language to make the ordinary extraordinary." Elizabeth harbors a dream of meeting Enheduanna, an ancient Sumerian poet whose verses are the oldest writings whose author is known.

COMMENTS

Elizabeth Barrette is a master of metaphor. The visual imagery in her work appears to be effortless - how well we know otherwise - giving stimulus to many, if not all, of her readers' senses. She "paints" with clarity and coherence, so that the reader moves from one scene into the next with a growing awareness as her subjects develop and her poems expand. Every word is made to count, as colors, actions, similes, metaphors and even visual arrangement are employed to enrich the experience of this fine work.

Clearcut

bare mud everywhere
forest gone and bluebells crushed
nothing lives here now

bald eagle perches
talons grip one twisted branch
heaped wood still smolders

nest scattered on ground
eagle opens her wings wide
and soars toward sunset

Elizabeth Barrette, Charleston, IL, USA

Celadon Sciences

Knowledge tempts us with a scent headier than perfume,
Drawing us outward and inward, upward and onward.
It teases us with Klein bottles of chaos and possibility.

We stack sciences like celadon dinnerware until the whole
Thing comes crashing down in a cacophony of flying cups and
Saucers. Told not to play in the house, we didn't listen.

Information, like fire, is a mixed blessing: careless, we
Find ourselves facing consequences instead of
Frontiers. Physics and metaphysics collide.

We can't put the genie back in the bottle.
All that remains is to make what mosaic we can
From the broken green glass of gnosis.

Elizabeth Barrette, Charleston, IL, USA

Earthtones in Terracotta Time

I am the arched back of the brindled hills rising high
Against the horizon as twilight tiptoes down into night.

The wide river writes my name in letters of red by the road
But no one can read them now; all my scholars have gone.

I am a wind of swallows, and the sun they catch on the wing.
I am a waft of blossoms, and the petals they shed in death.

You build your houses from my bones and blood; I call it
Good and give you all that I have, all that I am, and more.

I am the sand that empties itself in the wilderness and yes,
That same sand in fragile glass counts out your hours now.

Color and substance are my gifts to you, softness of clay
And sharpness of bone; what you do with them is up to you.

How could I help but love you to life? You are my children.
I wish you would remember me sometimes, calling, writing.

Elizabeth Barrette, Charleston, IL, USA

ROUND THREE - FIRST PLACE
Sunset on the Arctic Ocean

One
ocean,
half
frozen,
where sunset's
a rare
treat
but lasts
for days – now,
not even the
aurora
can match
flame
mirrored
onto ice,
over
waves,
into
night.

Elizabeth Barrette,
Charleston, IL, USA

Nevermore

Poe wrote the perfect poem
And in so doing, spoiled the art
For the rest of us. What editor now
Listens to rhythm and rhyme?
They all want free form,
Devoid of compelling cadence.
A successor to Shakespeare
Will be heard nevermore –
For now we all write in
The Raven's shadow.

Elizabeth Barrette,
Charleston, IL, USA

Cookout

It comes to this – peace snared an hour before dawn,
Soft feathers of hope plucked out, a skewer of justification
Thrust through the empty cavity, on a bare battlefield where
Calm soldiers roast doves over open fires.

Elizabeth Barrette, Charleston, IL, USA

FINAL ROUND - FIRST PLACE

Who What When Where Why How

She came into our class like a gust of autumn wind,
Wild and colorful. She told us all about her job as
A newspaper reporter – the morning deadlines,
Standing in the rain to get a story, talking with
Crazy people on the phone. She taught us
About writing in pyramids, about the five
Sisters of storytelling: who, what, when,
Where, why ... and the stepsister how.
That third-grade afternoon stands out
As an exclamation point in a year of
Boring periods. Whenever I start to
Tell a story, in poetry or prose, I
Remember what she taught us
And build pyramids that have
Nothing to do with Egypt.

Elizabeth Barrette, Charleston, IL, USA

SECOND PLACE

TANYA RUTH LARSON, KAMLOOPS, BC, CAN



ABOUT TANYA

Tanya Ruth Larson began writing poetry at the age of twenty-five. She cites her father's influence as being extremely important in her life, for he always listened to her read poetry, and even bought her a computer to facilitate her productivity. She regrets that her everyday job does not involve poetry or writing, but is happy in the knowledge she always has it waiting at home for her. She enjoys writing haiku, citing its vivid imagery in so few lines. When she feels the impulse for a longer poem, Tanya turns to free-form poetry, loving how it releases a poet's self-expression for the world to read.

COMMENTS

Tanya Ruth Larson leads us through deftly described scenes and delights the reader with alliteration, internal rhyme and excellent diction. She captures each vision in finely painted word-pictures. Her writing is kinetic, full of action and movement. She writes like Picasso painted - disparate pieces pulled together, seemingly at the last moment, by a swift stroke of perfect unity. She seems to look inward for the source of poems, songs and frustrations. She comes perilously close to identifying that which is unnameable, and in so doing, creates art. She uses a combination of poetical elements such as alliteration, assonance, rhythm, rhyme, and descriptive language to connect the color, shape, and design of her vivid scenery. This poet knows the craft of writing. We are grateful for her sharing it with us, the reader.

Saltspring Island

eagle-mates leave nest
highest branch to thunder sways
cliffs echo rumble

waters slosh below
silver-sequined salmon skip
talons sliver take

fog patches unite
fish-bones fly through leafless air
triplet eaglets wait

Tanya Ruth Larson, Kamloops, BC, CAN

Neighbourhood Melody

I blink into myriad scintilla of remnant sun,
as a dove floats by on an undulate breeze; transient
as ripples in the front-porch flags, she swirls for peace
in the whirls of melody being aired by the wind-bells.

Tanya Ruth Larson, Kamloops, BC, CAN

Stucco's Jades

The mid-seventies were the era
of the long-neck 7-UP bottles
slanting sunward. Coppertone children
cartwheeled, ponytails flailed. We danced to The Eagles,
took turns leap-frogging through
the sprinkler, and slid down streams in the grass.

Our long-haired, sandaled dads took five
from finishing the brand new house to shatter
recycled years of empties into the gravel
and lime plaster, creating juts of broken green
glass, man-made jade embedded in the, now retro, stucco.
Today, the shack still sparkles like 7-UPs in the sun.

Tanya Ruth Larson, Kamloops, BC, CAN

The Irony and Nightmares of Life's Sorrows

It's nostalgic incense, this spiraling Patchouli of India.
Sorrow lunges as lapis sashes of smoke swirl the room.

A convict-clown's permanent fangs bloody usual nightmares.
Escaping by wind, he floats, all balloon-shackled and horns.

Eagles seize vision from the sky, but goats see horizontally
from land. I am a goat on edge, haunted by things that fly.

I climbed from the quicksand of another lover's pit.
Using his head for elevation, I never witnessed him again.

Grandma and Grandpa, plaques embedded side by side
in flower beds, are unreachable beneath the only snowbank.

Cover the ultimate lightbulb, the sun through dusty drapes;
encores for our lust silence, as fog becomes breath to us.

Camouflage will take on my aura, when I become ashes.
I chose to be ash-blonde, not the ash-powder of extinction.

Tanya Ruth Larson, Kamloops, BC, CAN

Twilight's Spill

When
red wine-
stained
twilight
spills its glass
on waves,
I
drink the
cumulus
Pacific's in-
toxicant,
dripping
down
fuschia
ambrosia
to my
eyes'
servi-
ette.

Tanya Ruth Larson,
Kamloops, BC, CAN

The Devil and the Raven

Their distorted wings hang;
Gargoyle-like, slope concrete walls.
The key to Hell's spa hidden
Inside the Raven's wings, they wait
For the scrapes of knuckles
Down corridors, batons along bars.
Moons after shadows
Ambushed shadows, blood-sockets
Claw-slivers, their figures are still climbing
Barbedwired moonlight.

Tanya Ruth Larson, Kamloops, BC, CAN

FINAL ROUND - SECOND PLACE

Shell Beach: The Album

A page turns into its midst,
and there I lay, twenty-nine and golding!
The half-moon bay grins
arbutus tree to evergreen: a garland for the tide.
Spread-toed, I sift
shell as fine as sand
in contemplation of my newest dream - never leaving
this behind: cliffs', twirling a skirt of ocean,
echoes of the song on the Bejen radio,
beams playing on purpled-starfish
glommed to pummeled rock, and still waters dimpling,
where orcas spray the sun.
Swept away by the tides of other dreams, I hold
the memory up to glum city light, looking for my footprints.

Tanya Ruth Larson, Kamloops, BC, CAN

THIRD PLACE

DEBORAH P. KOLODJI, TEMPLE CITY, CA, USA

ABOUT DEBORAH

Deborah P. Kolodji set the scene for her future life as a poet very early in life; when in elementary school, she wrote a poem in which she said that "lightning zores," whereupon her teacher insisted it was "soars." Deborah insisted in turn that "zores" was the proper word for lightning. She says, with a smile, "It was much later that I realized I was just exercising poetic license at an early age." She also fondly remembers her high school teacher, Ms. Marie Tollstrup, who helped Deborah find discipline in writing, and encouraged Deborah's enjoyment of keeping a journal (repository of thoughts and starter poems) as well as her love of writing extended metaphors. Deborah has a passionate love of the American Cinquain, and began a mailing list devoted to the form, which evolved into the webzine and print journal, "Amaze: The Cinquain Journal." When she is not writing in Cinquain, Deborah also enjoys haiku and sonnets or ballads. Deborah loves spring as a topic and as a season because "there is so much hope in the newness of new life, of rebirth, of resurrection, and of discovery." She utilizes haiku in a unique way, as a sort of travel log when she takes a trip; jotting down haiku for various places helps her to look back and remember, and often is a source of inspiration. She also takes what she calls "journeys of inspiration," trips which inspire poems. Her definition of poetry is "open windows of insight masked by curtains of images."



ROUND ONE - 1st PLACE

Channel Islands

empty skies
without eagle wings
to fill them

fast sea dives
eaglet talons splash
dripping fish

pink sunrise
majestic shadows soar
over gentle waves

Deborah P. Kolodji,
Temple City, CA, USA

COMMENTS

Deborah Kolodji's poetry waxes visionary, revealing or exposing deeper meanings using everyday imagery. Memories are windows to the future, tears invoke strength for journeying on, and the trash of discarded Coke cans and warrior helmets are history's pyre from which the phoenix of renewal arises. Here is a poet whose earthbound verses take the reader into the cosmos of life's mysteries and truths, a majestic feat indeed. Deborah's language is mystical in its revelry in sight, sense, and taste. She brings a true love of the language to her writing as she narrates scenes, giving the feeling of a "once-in-a-lifetime" adventure. It is easy to get lost in these minutely detailed, metaphorical settings.

Choice for a Kingdom

Peace, a white-winged dove, nests
in the discarded iron helmet of war,
discovered in a bareheaded king's quest
as he decides against the sword.

Deborah P. Kolodji, Temple City, CA, USA

I am the Earth

winding trail through the High Sierras
a glint of sun from the discarded Coke can
crashing waves on Santa Monica Beach
broken sunglasses wash up on the shore
dead fish float in rivers of pollution
one more species on the endangered list
the void left by vanishing rain forests
charted against corporate revenue reports
somewhere wildflowers bloom in a junkyard
a bird drops a seed that sprouts into a tree
the wings of a condor in a California sky
a mother watches her child take his first step
counting the rings of a Giant Sequoia
the sun rises again for I am the Earth.

Deborah P. Kolodji, Temple City, CA, USA

Malibu at Dusk

Pinks
turning
rose,
the sun
over waves
crashing
on
the shore.
Pacific
Ocean sunset,
sky palette
dripping
on
western
horizons,
deeper
hues
coming
now.

Deborah P. Kolodji, Temple City, CA, USA

Peridot Divorce

cascading rivers of olivine
inside the crater of Mt. Waialeale,
the tears of Pele blending into mine --
snapshots of a honeymoon couple

the delicate hand-blown green vase,
an old wedding gift on the mantle
suddenly shattering into shards --
betrayal of our vows

sweeping up the green glass bits
of my broken heart,
I slip off the diamond ring
and put on the peridot

Deborah P. Kolodji, Temple City, CA, USA

The Shade

Midday tingling of her neck,
faint whistle of wings above
as she finishes her volume of Poe.
Dark-winged shadows skim
the cement patio around her chair.
Weak, she sips chamomile tea,
gently tapping the rim with her fingertips
as the span of darkness lengthens.
Casting her eyes, she expects the raven or the wind
but not Lenore.

Deborah P. Kolodji, Temple City, CA, USA

FINAL ROUND - THIRD PLACE

Climbing

stone chiseled steps
carved into the side of the mountain.
Ascending through rainbows, I once hiked
the Mist Trail in Yosemite. Years have passed
yet each day I climb small steps through
the mist of everyday things.
The spray of the water pushes me
towards the crowning glory of Vernal Falls
or even further to the pounding exhilaration
of Nevada Falls.
Some days I stumble
yet memories force me
to take the next step.

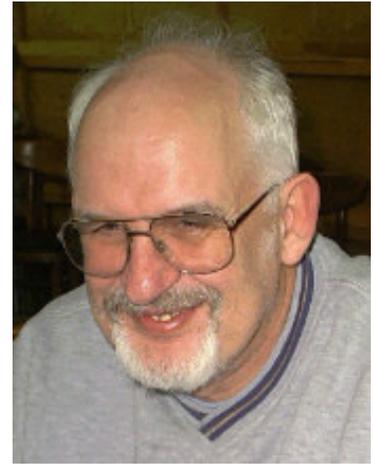
Deborah P. Kolodji, Temple City, CA, USA

HONORABLE MENTION

GARY BLANKENSHIP, BREMERTON, WA, USA

ABOUT GARY

Gary Blankenship's thanks go to Mary Hazen-Stearns for her willingness to both encourage and publish his first work (penned starting when he was 56) - as well as give him an introduction to the wild and wonderful world of online workshops. Retired from the US government, Gary enjoys exploring various forms of poetry; he finds the lyricism of the tanka to be a true attraction for him, citing it the most lyrical of the non-rhyming short forms, allowing for more emotion and a greater range of subjects. Not to limit himself, he also enjoys free verse forms in stanzas, usually with a set syllable count per line - admitting that this discipline helps since he considers himself "meter deaf." Sestinas, he vows, give him a headache.



Santiam Wilderness

eagle talons lock
freefall
short of destruction

above Santiam's flow
a lone eaglet
drops from her nest

last fight over
white feathers
drift towards a campfire

Gary Blankenship,
Bremerton, WA, USA

COMMENTS

Gary Blankenship's poetry draws the reader into a world of beauty and of occasionally unsettling images. He pulls no punches in prophetic poetry, yet he soars serenely in natural scenes from his beloved Pacific Northwest. Firmly rooted in reality, yet questing for deeper meanings, his poetry is well-worth the read. From the exquisite detailing of the eagle talons to the almost-confessional tenor of deep emotions not examined by light of day for a long time, Gary's ability to capture the minutest of the minute is what drives his poetry. He has the ability to state things in clear everyman language without sounding pedantic. Images come from his pen in a whole manner, clear as Venetian crystal, ready to be read, understood, digested, and lived. He speaks plainly, and in its elegant simplicity, language becomes beautiful. He often portrays colorful events through a series of introductory scenes to longer passages containing unusual experiences and feelings, such as "a drinking glass, broken at a party, or lost or stolen by your crazy cousin..." Gary Blankenship is simple yet eloquent in his work. He makes no apology, opens his hands and says, "here it is." We read what he offers and respond, "Yes, it is."

Olive's Gift

a set of eight emerald drinking glasses,
Venetian crystal from Neiman-Marcus,
treated with the same care as we treated our marriage

One broken roughhousing at Robert's first birthday,
another at a drunken Thanksgiving pushing for pecan pie.
The third lost

or stolen by your crazy cousin hocked for a bong,
the fourth accidentally bundled off to a daughter's college,
some still in storage from the times we moved in and out.

The last, chipped and glued, sits on the mantel,
a reminder of when the family was whole,
ready to toast Aunt Olive on her hundredth birthday.

Gary Blankenship, Bremerton, WA, USA

Terra Firma's Chat Log

In long valleys, where radishes grew as large as turnips,
parking lots, box stores, condos sprout like Georgia kudzu.

I must ask my moon what she dreams in her undisturbed sleep.
Does she sweat or shiver recalling our separation?

Your clock moves to midnight; soon, my skies will erupt.
Through the winter, I'll miss sunsets and crocus most.

A dead leaf falls, green explodes across fields,
petals cover a pond. Do you taste the fruit?

I love the Sahara sands and Antarctic's icy floes;
but miss the dodo and Neanderthal. They held promise.

Gone are the humpback's call, bluebirds and night silence.
My ears itch with your chat-chat, burn as you talk of war.

Some wonder if these signals will replace you, the gods;
but will they ever write poems to wives and lovers?

Gary Blankenship, Bremerton, WA, USA

A Vacation One Day Too Long

Peace
blankets
the
Paci-
fic shore as
the last
light
melts like
ice in dis-
carded plastic.
Too many
warm beers,
too
much sun,
and wind, we
dream prawns
and
oysters
war.

Gary Blankenship,
Bremerton, WA, USA

The Last Willamette Spring

A dark shadow rides the valley's currents
over mint, iris, and winery,
mill, factory, and headstones
the shade of an aged bird's neck plume.
One yellow eye searches for a lost mate,
the other, nearly blind, a quick meal.
The trickster's children no longer squabble
in hazelnut stands along the river's edge;
the old raven wheels south for warmer winds
and a quiet roost for his final rest.

Gary Blankenship, Bremerton, WA, USA

On This Quiet Day at the Edge of The City

you can hear pheasant and pigeon call if,
beneath the din of hammer, saw and backhoe,
you can find a quiet day as the city moves its edges.
Remember when our fun came from the barrel of a 22
dropping robins and jays along pastures
now orderly cul-de-sacs and designer lawns?
The rifle and that life finished before Momma died,
you shooting elephants in Nam
as I fled in other directions.
When you clear for your sanctuary,
leave a bird-sown cherry
or an oak sapling to sit under as we remember
the quiet found in the barrel of a gun.

Gary Blankenship, Bremerton, WA, USA

As Peace and War Skirmish

caged doves nest in shredded treaties,
newsprint, and inauguration speeches,
their voices unwanted
as a hand-delivered telegram.

Gary Blankenship, Bremerton, WA, USA

HONORABLE MENTION

KATHY KEHRLI, FACTORYVILLE, PA, USA

ABOUT KATHY

Kathy Kehrli loves her fifth grade teacher, Ms. Obele-nus, for reserving free time every Friday afternoon for creative writing, and for encouraging Kathy's to-this-day habit of journal keeping. Kathy is fortunate enough to be a freelance editor and writer, and is paid to do what she has loved since she was started writing short stories at the age of 10 and poetry at the age of 13. From haiku (her favorite short poetry form) to sonnet (her favorite long form), she embraces the brevity and the lengthy rhythm of all forms, but balks at "free form" poetry since she prefers the challenge of structure.



COMMENTS

Kathy Kehrli has a mastery of the English language and the poetic craft, plus a familiarity with the fine arts that lends an exquisite air to much of her poetry. Kathy's poetry often features a reserved poignancy, evoking shared memories in poet and reader alike. Her word choices and alliteration weave a magic spell of enchantment around and in between the very lines of her writings. She teaches and encourages, and artfully crafts a parallel world for us to view. She is gifted in luring the reader to live life with her, see it through her eyes, and feel it with her heart. Her poetry is concentrated in detail—sound and shape explored through the use of skillfully crafted language and spirited phrases as she transforms the "ordinary."

Disney World

soaring free he rides
tufts of thermal smog and haze
stark anomaly

beyond outstretched wings
Orlando tourist trappings loom
ever threatening

bald accipiters
reigned swampland kingdom supreme
long before one mouse

Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

Bound for Home

Like the mourning dove whose wail
Plaintively echoes my grief;
Mercifully released, your soul takes flight,
Intuitively guiding you home.

Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

Peridot Pastorale

Tinted silica, cut-crystal equivalent
1930's rationers' centerpiece attraction
Economic slowdown — adagio

Candy dish to junk container carryall
1970's spendthrifts making do with what they had
Creeping insect inflation — tardando

Cedar-lined shelf dust collector
Me-generation opts for bigger and better
Deficit denial — decrescendo

Broken shards of depression-era green glass
Packing peanuts for Y2K-exiled boxes
Wall Street's swan song — perendosi

Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

Creation from Modern Standpoint

Dusky dewdrops sprinkle wicked wariness
Inking daylight ignorance with ebon splats of fear

Chasm widens, an unbridgeable abyss,
Between flawless salvation and fallible humanity

Avant-garde warriors wage revenge on land and sea alike
Erasing topography's invisible great divide

Fluorocarbons focus atmospherically
Depleting sunshine's melanotic shield

Oil slicks and PCB pollutants prove
Both aquatic and avian antagonists

Man in his sovereign, supernal similitude
Dictatorially claims dominion over all of me

My seventh day once sanctified, somniferously upheld,
Now relegated to reversing quotidian transgressions

Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

Atlantic Enchantment

Flushed
coral
streaks
lapis
cupola.
Combers
wax
then wane,
rise, fall in
soporific
cadency.
The man
in
the moon's
hypnotic
ascent
calls
me by
name.

Kathy Kehrli,
Factoryville, PA, USA

Etiolating Eclipse

Rugosa petals, tear dewdropped, drizzled
Like saline Godspeeds from my torrential fingertips.
Technicolor memories flashed across life's screen
In full-hued, piquant vibrancy.
Decades churned, grief-stricken soil harrowed,
Whereby the raven slowly spread his ailerons.
Vivid scenes of reminiscence
Now cast in achromatic umbrage,
I cling to flickering sepia swirls—
All that remains of you.

Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

Blood, Sweat and Years

Honeyed scents of provender, sweet clover, timothy tinged,
Permeate each memory-clad breath of untainted air.
Solar shafts of stroboscopic lumen hang suspended,
Pulsating retina-then versus now-in paramnesiac surrealism.
Patinated slivers edge the ashen oak-hewn planks,
Suggestive of great-grandpa's splintered palms
As he hand-raised this haymow's timeless façade.
Pensile beams, spring-back rods, fording loft and decades,
Reverberate porcine joviality
When cannonballs in downy ricks evoked squeals
From three siblings: Richard, Bobby and me.
Outlasting great-grandfather, outliving grandpa,
Enduring long past my own innocence,
These well-veined barn walls course with four generations
Of kindred lifeblood; in them our lives captured
immortally.

Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

HONORABLE MENTION

MAUREEN WOOD, BELLEVILLE, ON, CAN

ABOUT MAUREEN

Maureen Wood began penning her verse at the tenderly succinct age of 9 or 10 years old; then, as now, she preferred short forms to long, citing the "quick sense of accomplishment." Short forms notwithstanding, she finds haiku to be "painful," but has the verve to attempt every other form at least once. Her varied career spanned the positions of cashier, lab technician, nurse, and retail manager - but now she has settled at home and turned her full attentions to her writing. Kudos go to her high school English teacher, Mr. Latimer, who encouraged her writing by positive comments and compliments.



COMMENTS

Maureen Wood's eclectic style reveals the wealth of resources a world traveler can weave into her work. This talented poet has much to offer. Her penchant for unique words, as well as for asking the unanswerable and often trying to answer her own questions, brings an air of ever questing to her writing. Her poetry is acutely sensitive, no-holds-barred, to the point, and she helps us feel at home in the worlds she creates. A careful observer who makes use of internal rhyme and metaphorical images, Maureen does an excellent job of rendering this well-structured work.

Kaministiquia

frosted sky
glistens behind eagle wings
freedom flight

blue shadows
cast along fading terrain
eagle watch

snow marred tracks
rabbit frolicking in snow
eagle prey

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

When We See It

Does a child hold the answer to peace?
Unfettered, the dove carries the laurel leaf,
Our reminder that peace is yet to come,
Like a child's smile, given to everyone.

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

ROUND TWO - FIRST PLACE

Jaded Life

The constraints of my life
lie before me,
like the sharp edges
of green glass.

Absinth fairy has left me with
all the pieces,
to pick up and fit
together.

Shards knick and cut at
my fleshy fingers,
as I try to make sense
of my direction.

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

Listen to the Mother

My energy was meant to comfort you when you felt lonely,
confused or just didn't know what to do.

Everything you could possibly need to sustain yourselves
is available freely to you and your offspring.

My arms are strong enough to provide you with shelter
and warmth, yet you cast the needy out into the cold

The provision of food in abundance is available to all,
but it is given to the many and the few continue to starve.

My heart burns with the love, created for you but often
you turn away and leave me feeling used.

Unheard whispers flow into your ears with each gentle
caress, when you visit the mouth of my shores.

My children will regret the day they turned their
backs on the mother who gave them everything.

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

Veloma (Good-bye)

The
sun made
love
with the
Indian
Ocean
my
last day
on the coast,
Madagascar.
I shadow
danced in
the
glow and
shed goodbye
tears for
my
new found
love.

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

Wisdom's Well

At the break of day,
Odin's raven-spies cast shadows
over the land. The cries of Thought
and Memory seal the pact, marked for
death by the hunter's bow. Lone warriors
be wary of the bitter frost,
for the one-eyed God always finds his mark
and slain warriors find their rest in the
halls of Valhalla. Stand tall and
embrace your fate.

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

Fragment

Grampa minds the wispy
haired toddler while gramma and
mother try their luck at the
B.I.N.G.O. palace.
She straddles grampa's knee
while he sorts puzzle pieces
on the coffee table;
triangle peanut butter and
jam sandwich in one hand,
glass of Kool-Aid in the other.
Scattered glimpses of the past
warm the heart but never
seem to be enough.

Maureen Wood, Belleville, ON, CAN

OTHER FINALISTS

BETTY DOBSON, HALIFAX, NS, CAN

ABOUT BETTY

Betty Dobson's full-time job is "all about numbers" so she escapes before and after work into writing, and has run a writing and editing business on the side since 1998. When she emerges from the working world, and dives into the writing world, she embraces tanka for its ability to pack a lot of meaning into very few words, as well as enjoying free form for its freedom of expression. Since she was 15, Betty has loved words; with chagrin, she says, "I often feel as though all the good rhymes have been taken." Betty also remembers with fondness Jenni Blackmore, "teacher, friend, writer, and artist," who helped her tap into "intuitive writing." Avoiding ghazals for now, she hopes to continue trying to master this elusive form.



COMMENTS

Betty Dobson had excellent control of those techniques that add much to a poet's work, such as effective linebreaks, mention of various senses, a keen understanding and light touch with metaphor and personification. Throughout this body of work, she threads a Southern diction in a purity of tempo, slow and languishes, but her imagery is crystal-clear and leaves nothing to be mistaken. The words like "lingers," "nestled," roll off the tongue. Her poetry is comfort food for the soul. She creates small worlds within the larger poem-world, and lovingly inhabits each with the souls of perfectly chosen words.

Whitehead River

late snowfall lingers
river erodes icy banks
waking world subdued

distant bald eagle
soars above jagged pine stand
endangered species

April's hatchlings cry
nestled against graying sky
in nature's decay

Betty Dobson, Halifax, NS, CAN

White Feathers

Benign flyers on featherless wings
plunged without will into unsuspecting hearts;
stalwarts crumble to the ground, piece by
peace, like doves from a poisoned sky.

Betty Dobson, Halifax, NS, CAN

Khaki Memories

Roasted lamb served on chipped green
Depression glass, jaundiced from my
low perspective, a child not heard
above a whisper, too shy to ask for

more, too scared to simply take.
Father at the table's head, bleating
orders at his unenlisted soldiers
and cursing the uselessness of youth.

His uniform now folded neatly at the
bottom of mother's hope chest, useless
as a chipped green plate that finally
cracked from too many years of use.

Betty Dobson, Halifax, NS, CAN

I, Mother Earth

I dwell among the stars, though they seem so far away,
and in all lives that cling to me on the journey.

My heart burns with timeless love, kindred to the
distant sun--a father of sorts yet a stranger.

I dance in tight formation with little sister Luna,
sharing both her radiance and her darker aspect.

Ancient secrets fill me, unseen by all but few.
Life springs eternal from my fertile womb.

My music plays high and low, varied in texture,
pure of tone, and resonating throughout the ages.

I feel no deeper pain than my children's neglect.
May they learn the truth--my life is in their hands.

My tears flow freely, nourish my thirsty children
and give them power to decide their own fates.

Betty Dobson, Halifax, NS, CAN

Seaforth on the Atlantic

red-
orange sun
dips
into
horizon
yacht slips
off
trailing
persistent
hum in its wake
mingled with
wind-born
waves
breaking
foam nimble
fingers
play
over
stones

Betty Dobson, Halifax, NS, CAN

Knowledge and Memory

winged aspects of a one-eyed god
ravens cast over the earth
cast shadows black
as wing and head--
one for knowledge
one for memory--
together, etch their findings
across the minds of history
like quills fresh from deep black wells
across the barren page

Betty Dobson, Halifax, NS, CAN

OTHER FINALISTS

TIM FLOTO, SCOTTS VALLEY, CA, USA

ABOUT TIM

Tim Floto thanks his Mom for helping his poetic spirit - she accepted his first poems, dedicated to her, and also inspired him in painting, and writing. He loves her for caring enough to be his second-toughest critic - he cites himself as the toughest. Even though his current job as computer engineer doesn't allow much leeway for creative writing, he does find refuge in haiku and villanelle, enjoying the challenges inherent in both. Tim does admit his attention span is too short to write anything longer than a villanelle or a sonnet - but as long as Mom's around to critique, he says he'll be fine.



COMMENTS

Tim Floto's poetry is rich in metaphor and simile, and alive with rhythm, great writing, and excellent craftsmanship. His vivid imagery is interlaced with interesting arrangements of melodic sounds.

Mendenhall, Alaska

perched atop spruce
surveying its frozen realm
eagles lonely vigil

black on white specter
glides over glacial plane
bald eagle's shadow

frigid river's mouth
spawning salmon's gauntlet run
eagle's harvest feast

Tim Floto, Scotts Valley, CA, USA

A Spring Wish

Like the rose blossom opening in spring,
attracting bees to its purpose,
the dove unfurls its wings,
asking for peace on earth's surface.

Tim Floto, Scotts Valley, CA, USA

FIRST PLACE – ROUND TWO Jade Memories

He played in the sand
danced with the tides
and he tempted the sea.

A fist of a wave thrashed and
grasped him, shook out his life
and swept him away.

His body, a corked bottle, drifted
on currents then dashed on shore
but the message was lost.

Like broken jade green glass
discovered on shore, only
memories of the vessel remain.

Tim Floto, Scotts Valley, CA, USA

Earth Observes Time's Passage

Time counts eons while my molten core spins round the sun.
Time counts eons to come while this cooling ember winds down.

A fragile crust forms on my churning inferno in cold space.
An agile molecule twists its helical spiral on cooling crust.

Time counts eras as great species evolve, rule, disappear.
Time counts seconds as debris impacts, rearranges, explodes.

Humans evolve and arise up, surviving as nature's fittest.
Humans wander the planet as families, tribes and societies.

Time counts a million years surviving on the planets gifts.
Time counts a million more organizing the earths resources.

Great civilizations grow, flourish and eventually die.
Great dreams are born, realized and eventually forgotten.

I, the planet, count in eons, each solar revolution a blink.
I, the planet, count in eons, watching as time hurries past.

Tim Floto, Scotts Valley, CA, USA

ocean on fire

waves
aflame
sun
drops dance
on whitecaps
ocean
on
fire
liquefied
golden slurry
Pacific
gives in
to
twilight
Maxfield
Parrish
sky
peaceful
sea

Tim Floto, Scotts Valley, CA, USA

the messenger

the dark form effortlessly
slips over the landscape
no stone or bush impedes
the gliding ghost
its form contorts to smother
the ground's contours
closing in on the other self
the raven meets its specter
in a fury of feathers
and "caws" its presence

Tim Floto, Scotts Valley, CA, USA

OTHER FINALISTS

ROY SCHWARTZMAN, MARYVILLE, MO, USA

ABOUT ROY

Roy Schwartzman enjoys haiku and related Oriental forms. He says, "They force us to encounter the subjects of our writing directly and appreciate them as they are." He also enjoys free verse, for its ability to embrace and beautify the "apparent disorder" of everyday life. When pressed for a significant early influence in his writing life, he cites his fourth-grade teacher, Ann-Louise Hatfield; she believed in the inner voice of everyone, even young children, and insisted on disciplined expression. Roy is a professor of communication, encompassing the fields of professional research and teacher of writing; he believes every poetic form has something to teach, but does caution that rigid rhyme schemes can be trite, and sacrifice content for the sake of form.



COMMENTS

Roy Schwartzman sustains the use of alliteration and interior rhyme in his poetry. His imagery is consistently fresh, and there is a sense of immediacy throughout his work. These poems are packed with color, sight and sound. He writes sparsely yet gives careful attention to details, and his work touches universal feelings that we have experienced but have not expressed.

Squaw Creek

ice-rimmed marsh pond
snow geese one solid white mass
dark wings overhead

circle circle dive
strike goose atop muskrat mound
white feathers floating

yellow talons clench
snow geese swarm skyward honking
lone blood-streaked eagle

Roy Schwartzman,
Maryville, MO, USA

Mourning Dove

You weakly coo your wordless epitaph,
a contented child boasting its own fragility.
You waddle underfoot, trampled, ignored,
smothered by our blanket of national insecurity.

Roy Schwartzman, Maryville, MO, USA

(ROUND TWO - THIRD PLACE)

Absinthe Shards

I clumsily uncork the cracked bottle
of rescripted memories, fractured acts
stretching tendrils of breakage unattended.

Flecks of cork freckle my tongue,
glass splinters of regret lie on my lap.
I cannot bleed or swallow.

Fingertips of sunlight poke through
slats of faded jade Venetian blinds,
sparkling shards dance the decadence

of slick leafy unfoldings, drab olive disillusion,
jaded expectations, drunken dissolutions.
Absinthe-stained scraps scatter as I stumble.

Roy Schwartzman, Maryville, MO, USA

Poe-try in Motion

Conventional symbols sour my stomach. Ravenous
Poe's ghost hoarsely croaks as I trample
marching metrics, Hallmark rhymes. No:
when ravens fly by, the sun slips me an inviting wink.
My raven perches wordless, casts veils of silence
over my clenched lips. I scavenge specters
of flyaway eloquence, peck at dead metaphors.
My arms ache from embracing afterimages.
I laugh at phantoms, but check the windowsill
for black feathers—just in case.

Roy Schwartzman, Maryville, MO, USA

Seven Confessions

I'm the apology lodged in the closet of your throat:
you know—magical reversal from regret to forget.

Sometimes saccharine sympathy squirts from your mouth,
stammering "I know how you feel" when you don't, can't.

Maybe the face that doesn't stare back from the mirror: un-
lived potential shed sweating through scripts others wrote.

Deflate cosmic pretenses of contrition, confession;
just tally mounting deficits between "could have" and did.

Scar-faced soldier, silently bled his way through Vietnam,
calmly napalmed forests, sobs: "Pa never said he loved me."

Hearing hollow eulogies for someone you almost loved,
I whisper, remind you: funerals are for the living.

Telltale signature of self-inflicted wounds:
"If only..." punctuated with unwept tears.

Roy Schwartzman, Maryville, MO, USA

Pacific Dusk: Laguna Beach

Scarred
rocks slash
black,
jagged
gashes, dim
sunken
sun's
after-
glow. Burnt sky
singes coastline,
water bleeds
orange.
Brown
kelp fronds
sway, wave, fade,
vanish.
Quenched
or drowned
day.

Roy Schwartzman,
Maryville, MO, USA

OTHER FINALISTS

ANDREA M. ZANDER, ROCHESTER, MN, USA

ABOUT ANDREA

Andrea M. Zander was born with the writing bug and can't remember a time when she wasn't reading and writing at least a little bit. This tendency was encouraged and supported by her mother, who also wrote. Andrea grew up writing without any real knowledge of form, so free form remains her favorite style of writing for both short and long poems. Not surprisingly, she finds most rhymed poetry to be trite or contrived; her daily work requires a more technical bent, as she is usually a technical writer by profession. While she is a poet at heart, Andrea is also working on being a novelist.



COMMENTS

Andrea M. Zander uses vibrant imagery throughout her collection of poems, and paints word pictures with the deft touch of a master Impressionist. Her unique voice presents ideas in an interesting and memorable way. Her range is diverse, from well-crafted yet wry observations, to poems that reveal she is a true lover of nature.

Copper Country

talons crack branches
at Superior's edge
and curl against winter

shot from spring sky
rise again on wings spread wide
fish caught in talons

eaglets in autumn
teeter on nest edges
testing their wings in wind

Andrea M. Zander, Rochester, MN, USA

Clay Pigeons

Doves released at Olympic games
sped into the sky in a blur like confetti.
Now they flutter about as the world cries
"Pull!"

Andrea M. Zander, Rochester, MN, USA

Chartreuse Storm

Sun is setting through Jolly Rancher green
glass, a sour apple sky
with a forked tongue where the beer
leaked out onto the beach sand.
We pile stray driftwood
for the bonfire.

Above the flames now the dark sky swims
with clouds as if shaken in a bottle,
then bursts in a crack of lightning.
Rain spills down, licking its fingers
to pinch at the fire where the heat
slagged the beer bottle together again.

Andrea M. Zander, Rochester, MN, USA

Life within a Life

I am an egg with a molten yolk that bursts
through my shell and showers me with fire.

The liquid heat of my core is a boiling heart
pushing blood through my granite veins.

Millions of placentas sink their roots in me.
They are the trees that nourish my offspring.

My fetuses develop outside of my body,
glommed onto my skin, dividing and growing.

My children are my body, each one a cell
coursing about its business, a part of the whole of me.

I am a cell of the sun I orbit with my companion planets.
We are the body of this singular solar system.

We are a speck in the Milky Way, here and gone in a breath.
We are an egg in another universe until our yolk bursts.

Andrea M. Zander, Rochester, MN, USA

One-sided Conversation

Three-dimensional silhouette,
a black brush stroke
of a bird, flapping
unhurried across the sky,
talking to itself in a guttural voice,
taking notes on the ground below
where its shadow puppets
the movements of the raven
in the sky and chatters along
in silence.

Andrea M. Zander, Rochester, MN, USA

Midnight at Noon

Eye
of the
wak-
ing world
dips below
hori-
zon,
tucked in
beneath thick
sheets of ice and
polar bears
for its
six
month slum-
ber in the
Arctic
O-
cean dark-
ness.

Andrea M. Zander,
Rochester, MN, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

S. J. BALDOCK, DALLAS, TX, USA

COMMENTS

S. J. Baldock writes about nature with both tender regard and intelligent observation. Her alliterated stanzas suggest mastery of technique, while a strong style and voice are established in the consistency of her nature themes. She has a love of layered meanings, as in her usage of "brood" at the end of "Nature Preserve," and occasionally ends her work by asking the unanswerable. She also possesses the ability to speak voluminous thoughts in simple sentences, short conceptualizations of massive concepts. Her poems provoke the reader to active thought, not to passive contemplation.



Nature Preserve

Broken predator
Breast bearing buckshot now healed
Soars upon thermals

Bald eagles nesting
Captive bred captive born brood
Hope for tomorrow

Bird sanctuary
Haven for nature's decline
Noblesse oblige

S. J. Baldock, Dallas, TX, USA

Lip Service

Much as a dove will fake a broken wing
So fledglings can elude a deadly captor
Nations exist whose leaders call for peace
Within whose breast there beats heart like a raptor

S. J. Baldock, Dallas, TX, USA

Lesson in Green

Green ... I was too green to know
That act speaks love, not word
Naïvely, I assumed as fact
Each promise that I heard

Green, my innocence so green
And me so much in lust
When he said if I loved I would
I knew at once I must

Green, so green, so gullible
Him gutless to the last
Gravid, I am dustbin bound
Like broken emerald glass

S. J. Baldock, Dallas, TX, USA

Earth is Bleeding Out

Daybreak: nocturnal coyotes wander city streets
in search of food mid persons one time feared.

Slashed and burned, endangered rainforest
heralds demise of flora never typed.

Rising temperatures are resident upon a continent
where once immobile ice starts moving toward the seas.

Bereft of coral, the multicolored reefs
are boneyards of an ecosystem in decline.

Tectonic plates grumble and groan as they
elbow their way to the front of the fault line.

Virulent mosquitoes convey kiss of death, the
chemicals to control them are more deadly still.

Too much; too little; too late - will humankind ever realize
that someone should have stanchd the flow of lifeblood?

S. J. Baldock, Dallas, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

LYNETTE BOWEN, LEAGUE CITY, TX, USA



COMMENTS

Lynette Bowen's poems are enchantingly sensorial, forcing the reader to feel, taste, smell, see, hear - not just to read, but to experience the very things she writes about. "Talons tear," "leaves decompose," "river swells," and "smoldering forests" are just a few examples of her in-the-moment diction. She chooses words to move the reader, as the reader is often so certain they moved the author upon their choice.

Skykomish River

eagles come south
collect on bare branches
beaver builds dam

talons tear salmon
leaves decompose
nourished wings sail

trees blossom
river swells with melt
winds disperse snowy heads

Lynette Bowen, League City, TX, USA

Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All Living Things

Avian messenger of the Greek Earth Mother, she coos at dawn
mourning the day her naïve fledglings will traverse
smoldering forests, toxic waters and dwindling relatives
looking for listening hearts, she coos each dawn, crying for peace

Lynette Bowen, League City, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

KATHY LIPPARD COBB, BRADENTON, FL, USA

COMMENTS

Kathy Lippard Cobb explores her subjects sharply and elegantly with rapidly changing imagery. Her work is full of dense particularity, a source of much enjoyment. Combined rhythm, alliteration, metaphor and sound echoes throughout her vibrant poems.



Crawford Notch

frozen brook
eagle feathers spiral
between branches

broken sleigh
two bald eagles glide
through silence

snowmelt
eagle talons tighten
on bare branches

Kathy Lippard Cobb, Bradenton, FL, USA

Death of a Friend

Just as yesterday,
a white dove guards your marble stone.
My heart lightens because I realize
you are not alone.

Kathy Lippard Cobb, Bradenton, FL, USA

Emerald Spite

Shattered bottle . . .
the scent of Obsession,
as emerald green fragments
splinter the sun;
manipulating shadow and light
on white marble tile.

Bits and pieces,
to be swept and tossed
in the wastebin.
A few drops of blood,
as a wayward shard slices my finger
out of spite.

Kathy Lippard Cobb, Bradenton, FL, USA

Eye of the Beholder

A torrid sun blisters my rocky canyon walls;
the surrounding, lush greenness has faded away.

The winter moon reflects itself in liquid blackness,
as foamy waves thrash themselves against my shore.

There lies my great white oak, splintered in the road;
a wealth of floodwater clouds drifting lazily by.

My masterpiece, Niagara, still doing her rush and tumble,
and there is still an abundance of local flora and fauna.

Black ink is drowning once iridescent waters,
as oily Pelicans struggle upon my mucky sand.

While a wildfire did rage itself upon my forest,
there are clovers sprouting from beneath the ash.

Things seem unbalanced when disaster befalls me;
yet, forgotten when there is rain on the wildflowers.

Kathy Lippard Cobb, Bradenton, FL, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

SUZANNE C. COLE, HOUSTON, TX, USA

COMMENTS

SuzAnne Cole uses effective, vivid, almost surrealistic imagery to develop her ideas, and gives the reader something unusual to see or hear. She leaps into a poem, and does not let go until the reader's come along for the ride. Her diction is startlingly realistic, kinetic in its constant movement. Her poetry is full of fire, contrasts, highs and lows (both real and fictional) and many other exercises in opposites. She meshes all seamlessly to form a circuitous breath.



Chilkat Valley

eagle in pine tree
ripping apart carcass
fledglings shrieking

struggling aloft
chum salmon clenched in talons
bald eagle death grip

eagle gliding
silhouetted against
sunset gleam

SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

Hope Rising

Rising above the cataclysmic flames a dove,
wings folding into themselves all opposition,
hope beating strongly in soot-singed breast.
As long as she yet flies, so live we all.

SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

LINDA L. CREECH, BELLEFONTAINE, OH, USA

COMMENTS

Linda L. Creech effectively uses assonance and imagery, and her metaphors speak vividly. Her focus on nature is exquisite in detail. She creates beauty to counter-balance agony, and in so doing, brings the reader works which mirror our souls.



Sandusky County

he sweeps cloudy sky
wings spread wide brushing heaven
winter melts away

eagles calling dawn
voices steeped in revery
earth song laboring

shrill screams echoing
through dusty hunting fields
death stalks bald eagles

Linda L. Creech, Bellefontaine, OH, USA

Tranquility

Doves call dawn with mantras
like honey bees soft droning
sings new life into being
while time drifts on.

Linda L. Creech, Bellefontaine, OH, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

SHELLEY L. CULVER, WICHITA, KS, USA

COMMENTS

Shelley L. Culver illustrates a well-paced organization of language that provides variations of natural rhythms. Her poems are thickly packed with familiar images and symbols, and she creates thoughtful tension in her work by means of allusion and reference.



Alaska, Baja

Soaring on thermals
Migrating conservation
Kettle of eagles

Stabilization
Tail feathers control the dive
Eagle captures prey

Eagles sail direct
While lesser birds rock and tilt
In violent winds

Shelley L. Culver, Wichita, KS, USA

Look to the Skies

A Rock Dove flew from Caesar's hand
Her color was a message of war
Bloody battles raged for days until
Her white cousin flew for peace

Shelley L. Culver, Wichita, KS, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

AVONNE GRIFFIN, GREER, SC, USA

COMMENTS

Avonne Griffin has wonderful poetic control. Beautiful images shine in her calm, clear work, often with comfort in the words and ideas. Lovely writing, and the reader may find them "smooth and clear as emeralds."



mount shasta

eagle circles
beneath shimmering sun
wildflowers

long whistle
echoes back to nest
heads cock

poppy trembles
above decayed grass
meadow mouse

Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

At Last

Peace arrives like a dove
in mourning. Where lilies sigh
and realize depth beyond all ties,
conflict remains -- unheard of.

Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

Emerald Memory

From high in the Sierras
clouds tumble low across the lake
and rumble through valleys.

Wind shakes ponderosa pine,
needles quiver in detachment
piercing earth's facade, and she cries.

In autumn we sailed the bay
smooth and clear as emeralds,
focused on temporal eternity;

But season and clarity passed.
Now the storm and I cling
to this bay of broken green glass.

Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

Glimpses of Earth's Journal

Wrapped in promise of rain and shade, mysteriously
I remain positioned in orbit of continued revelation.

The sun is my love and the moon, his reflection
when he is gone, and my ardor begins to cool.

They polluted the salty reservoir of my boundary, crude
and thoughtless, but I have resources not known to man.

I will yawn with indulgent deliverance, reveal my secrets
buried deep within their inheritance until appointed time.

In Donner Pass, breaking free from winter's loneliness,
the Truckee River rushes from rock to rill just to catch up.

Perhaps I will tease into disunity with seasons
and terrain, varied and unpredictable without knowledge.

Raven and wren, dolphin and trout, gazelle and groundhog,
man and woman -- all eat and breathe and say it is good!

Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

JULIE HARTMAN, MAGNOLIA, TX, USA

COMMENTS

(no photo)

Julie Hartman's work is a created in skillfully crafted language that stimulates the reader both intellectually and emotionally. She approaches each topic in a direct fashion, yet makes use of multiple meanings with unique metaphorical points of reference, such as, "Momma's white sheets floating like doves on a mission..." Her intimate style, excellent imagery and storytelling bring the reader right into her work.

lake fork

eagle's nest
holds two eggs
one trembles

open talons
break calm surface
silver fish ascending

raptor chicks
preen among
tiny white bones

Julie Hartman, Magnolia, TX, USA

Laundry

An unusually strong gust of wind
took Momma's white sheets off the line.
Up they floated like king-sized doves
on a mission to unite the world.

Julie Hartman, Magnolia, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

MARYANN HAZEN STEARNS, ELLENVILLE, NY, USA

COMMENTS

Maryann Hazen Stearns is a lyrical poet, one who uses both strong and gentle imagery in her work. She often takes her readers on a visionary journey. The internal structure of her poetry develops with the use of alliteration, metaphor, symbolism and figurative phrases. Her work goes far beyond the range of ordinary detail.



Chittanango Creek

two talon linked eagles spin
only solo noon sun
dances higher

thermal courtship disrupted
screeching couple spirals over
earthbound battle below

brittle white rabbit bones
decorate sweet green conifer sprigs
three eaglets adorn eyrie

Maryann Hazen Stearns, Ellenville, NY, USA

May We

Release these doves into the sun.
Set love of freedom on the wing.
May hearts unite as one to bring
a breeze of peace to everyone.

Maryann Hazen Stearns, Ellenville, NY, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

JANET PARKER, LEESBURG, FL, USA

COMMENTS

Janet Parker's visionary poetry calls us back to nature as the roots of our existence, the jumping off point for all human concepts and struggles. Her work soars.



Leesburg Lake

winter morning
bald eagle lands
at water's edge

loud noise
whir of rising wings
as eagle soars

atop rigid oak
sunshine seeps through leaves
eagle's nest secure

Janet Parker, Leesburg, FL, USA

Hope of Peace

Even in the shadow of war

the hope of peace
as my spirit soars
on the wings of the dove.

Janet Parker, Leesburg, FL, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

KATHY PAUPORE, KINGSFORD, MI, USA

COMMENTS

(no photo)

Kathy Paupore knows the power of crafting fine diction to making a poetic piece bold and strong. She paints poetry in eloquent but not overwritten word-pictures.

Boreal Air

pine tree apex
bald eagle flight
winter white

wingspan wide
soaring soaring
across america

flag pole perch
unblinking eyes
sol shine

Kathy Paupore, Kingsford, MI, USA

Truce

One white dove
weaving olive branches,
bloodless blanket of peace
between outstretched hands.

Kathy Paupore, Kingsford, MI, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

TERRIE LEIGH RELF, SAN DIEGO, CA, USA

COMMENTS

Terrie Relf has the talent to weave words into an exquisite tapestry. This poet gives careful attention to sounds, sights and emotions providing the readers an inner view of each topic. She displays a variety in writing skills expressing tenderness in one piece and setting up a dramatic stage in another. Each poem illustrates her remarkable ability to deliver a complex message.



Boulder, CO

light snow
eagles swoop beneath
gray branches

rushing stream
talons lock
around silver trout

warm breeze
soft gray tufts emerge
sound of pecking

Terrie Leigh Relf, San Diego, CA, USA

A Field of Doves

Stitched together by history, peace
is an heirloom quilt, where
appliquéd and embellished doves
comfort a newborn child.

Terrie Leigh Relf, San Diego, CA, USA

A Selkie's Sea Green Gift

I first saw you ride the wave's crest
like Nagarjuna on a sea dragon's back;
your sleek black hair wild and wind-tossed,
obsidian eyes reflecting each half of the moon.

Six times love had left me shattered,
with each loss I shed a tear; but it was
the ripple of the seventh that dispelled
the cursed memories of severed vows.

You tied a beaded bracelet around my wrist,
said: "Once these were bits of broken glass.
Trust the flow of time and tides, and so
will your heart be rehewn."

Terrie Leigh Relf, San Diego, CA, USA

Thanatos' Soliloquy

I am known by many names, take many forms:
Ankou, Arthume, Auraka, Azrael, Kali, and Muut.

Both male and female, I am creatrix and destroyer;
message and messenger, I am womb and shroud.

I breathe into you at birth, accept your final breath,
guide you through the portal, gatekeeper of rebirth.

Such poetry, such music, such sculptures--
celebrate, then ironically deny, my existence.

In his quest for genuine knowledge without censure,
Socrates drank a cup of hemlock tea and so continues.

Seers and mediums gaze into milky crystal depths,
where ravens hover, owls screech, winds rustle.

I still pace the earth though born before measured time;
spinning until it ends, with Protogonus, my true twin.

Terrie Leigh Relf, San Diego, CA, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

LYNNE M. REMICK, NESCONSET, NY, USA



COMMENTS

Lynne Remick has a painter's eye to frame words into picturesque visions. Her lilting verses flow well and are warmly rich in texture, and ask to be reread again and again. Of particular note is her ability to parody clichéd sayings, as in her delightfully clever line "Bites the hand that weeds it." She challenges others to write soothing, insightful poems.

Mountain Majesties

Mother nature chimes
Eagle pair hears her calling
Egg becomes eaglet

Chick stretches and grows
Freedom calls it from beyond
Youth poises its wings

Now Fledgling takes flight
Upon warm wind and prayer
May eagle survive

Lynne M. Remick, Nesconset, NY, USA

Emerald Gators

In the land of broken hearts,
There's a field of broken dreams.
Dark emerald shards,
Left behind in haste and waste,
Wait like gators,
For unsuspecting victims.

Humanity's shattered hope
Is sharp-edged, broken green glass.
Dark emerald shards,
Left behind in haste and waste
Wait like gators,
And bite the hand that weeds it.

Lynne M. Remick, Nesconset, NY, USA

Harmony on the Wing

Dove descends from the sky
Like a soft tranquil rain
Sprinkles serenity
Upon earthly terrain

Lynne M. Remick, Nesconset, NY, USA

Madagascar's Lament

The old, red earth tells silent stories,
To only those souls who might listen.

Forgotten tales of heroes and villains
And of those who can no longer speak

The old, red earth tells silent stories,
To only those souls who might listen.

Mute and alone under soil and loam
Extinction awaits its turn to speak

The old, red earth tells silent stories,
To only those souls who might listen.

Someday there'll be no one left behind
To save this ancient isle, lost in time

The old, red earth tells silent stories,
To only those souls who might listen.

Lynne M. Remick, Nesconset, NY, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

CLIFFORD THOMAS ROBERTS
FT WORTH, TX, USA



COMMENTS

Clifford Roberts powerfully crafts chilling poems with vivid details. His pen captures painful scenes forcing us to face life's grim situations. He uses stark imagery to catch the reader's imagination, as in the line "My face is caked with concrete," in his poem, "Dysfunctional Family." Strong detail work, craftsmanship and attention to word choice show the true extent of the wide-ranging talent of this poet.

Aquamarine Herald

His tiffany frog lamp, sits there each night
keeping the darkness at bay. Made from shards
of broken green glass sealed with dark gray lead
each angle another emerald hue,
but there is no sickly chartreuse of greed.

The amphibian totem shape sings out
each morning in pine renewal with jade
fertility, and olive harmony.
Each jutting plane and slanted surface
an emerald beacon blazing bright,
sure as the stars, and constant as our love.

Clifford Thomas Roberts,
Fort Worth, TX, USA

Sacrifice

It circled there between the men and sun,
a dark silhouette with outstretched wings.
It fell, bullet riddled, to the desert floor,
the dove's beak clutching an olive branch.

Clifford Thomas Roberts,
Fort Worth, TX, USA

mind's sky

eagle glides between
palo duro canyon walls
between rocks and clouds

impassioned eagles
mating in a dead fall drop
perpetuate life

one eagle feather
carressing puma muzzle
searching empty sky

Clifford Thomas Roberts,
Fort Worth, TX, USA

Dysfunctional Family

I'm wakening to the sounds of destruction
depilating my few remaining trees.

My face is caked with concrete
and I'm finding it hard to breath.

I feel myself needing to cry but
only acid tears steam down my cheeks.

I want to scream out, but no one can hear
over the sounds of mechanization.

I can't even sleep, horrors of war
are turning the nights blood red.

Alone? Daughter moon has been raped too
and father sun burns with his anger.

Clifford Thomas Roberts,
Fort Worth, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

EILEEN SATERIALE, BOWIE, MD, USA



COMMENTS

Eileen Sateriale allows color to have a prominent presence in her work. Strong imagery springs from those colored origins, seasoned by Chesapeake Bay's briny bite. Each piece is unique and original. Lovely writing.

Medium-green Scatter

Like a traffic cop, an electronic device
is suspended in the middle of the intersection

directing traffic; green means go;
yellow signals slow, red says stop.

Today, broken green glass is scattered on
The asphalt pavement like party confetti.

There's no green light telling me to go.
Instead there's a dark hole in its place.

When the light is broken, what do I do?
I don't know because the traffic going

in the direction across the intersection
might have the "green light" signal.

Eileen Sateriale, Bowie, MD, USA

Chesapeake Bay

blinding orange sky
ancient power symbol
bald eagle caws

distant scorching sun
majestic winged flight
plunging to water

powerful claws clutch
native blue crab
tasty seafood supper

Eileen Sateriale, Bowie, MD, USA

Dove of Peace

As delicate as a mid-morning breeze,
the snow-white bird's wings gyrate.
He clenches an olive branch in his beak
appealing for the tensions to terminate.

Eileen Sateriale, Bowie, MD, USA

Lament of the Earth

There's never a still weather moment in which
nothing is happening in my ecosystem.

A drought scorches the clay soiled land making
water tables go down and drying up vibrant lakes.

Several feet of snow dumped on the south,
annoying residents but alleviating earth's thirst..

Blinding ice storms that neither man nor beast
can survive knock down bare winter branches.

Carefully manicured coastlines all over the globe being
whittled away by pounding surf and brutal sun.

The ozone layer no longer protects nature's beasts
or sun worshippers covered from head to toe.

Weather must be controlled
or it will control man and earth.

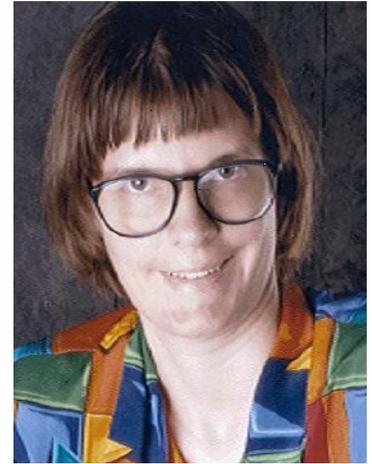
Eileen Sateriale, Bowie, MD, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

KATHERINE SWARTS, HOUSTON, TX, USA

COMMENTS

Katherine Swarts presents the work of a caring, thinking person. She holds the mirror up and forces the reader to take a good look.



Huntsville Lake

leaves fill horizon
air stirs with dawn
eagle spread wings

reflected in lake
outlined in sky
head and tail gleaming

catching the sun
climbing circling swooping
master of flight

Katherine Swarts, Houston, TX, USA

Hope In Flight

I walked through the rubble of a war-torn town,
My heart bleak as a dry winter plain.
Then a fledgling dove flew from a nest in a crumbling wall,
Life from death--hope in flight--peace from pain.

Katherine Swarts, Houston, TX, USA

Emerald Stain

I thought you would love me forever,
I trusted you with my heart of glass,
And it shattered when you dropped it.

I thought I could force you to stay,
I tried to shame you into handling my heart gently,
But jealousy proved as fragile a bond as love.

I thought the damage was irreparable,
I knew the shards would draw blood when picked up,
But at last I started to glue my heart back together.

I think my heart is the better for being broken,
For the light seeping through the remaining cracks
Fills the whole of me with a beautiful soft glow.

Katherine Swarts, Houston, TX, USA

The Earth Speaks on an Awkward Relationship

You humans look with awe on my wildernesses,
Then ruin them in the name of your personal comfort.

You humans organize conventions on preserving my beauty,
But leave the convention grounds littered with plastic.

You blame your ancestors for their indiscriminate waste,
Though they too thought only to preserve their way of life.

I will not presume to call you monsters or hopeless,
No, I will accept that most of you mean well, or want to.

But one thing I never understood about human beings--
Why do you blame everyone and everything except yourselves?

I know I haven't always made your lives perfect--
But I have made them good; may I ask as much from you?

Each of us will always have to live with the other.
I am trying to make the relationship work--will you?

Katherine Swarts, Houston, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

JAMES M. THOMPSON, BAYTOWN, TX, USA

COMMENTS

James Thompson uses particular phrasing and well-chosen words in his poetry. His work shows his observational skills and deep respect for nature. This is a strong writer with strong opinions worthy of a second read.



Mount Hood

motionless
shadow on snowdrift
bald eagle

leafless branch
scanning horizons
eagle eyes

widespread wings
silent swoop to prey
talons grip

James M. Thompson, Baytown, TX, USA

Last Dove

Its crumpled white wings
trampled underfoot
a final breath lost
in Presidential rhetoric.

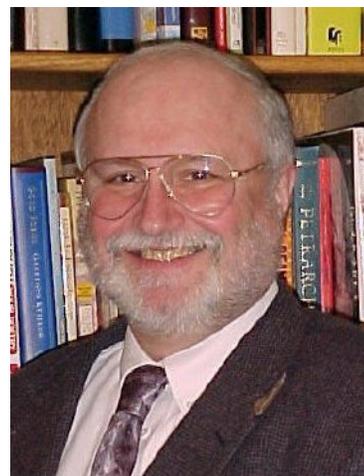
James M. Thompson, Baytown, TX, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

GARY WADE, WILLISTON, VT, USA

COMMENTS

Gary Wade faces his readers unblinking and delivers his message, pulling no punches as he does so. Gary Wade could be a candidate for Conscience.



Iowa

shimmer-air
over torrid parking lot
bald eagles ascend

in summer lake haze
lazy eagle glides then dives
careless fish dies

graceful eagle
gliding over placid water
bloody talons

Gary Wade, Williston, VT, USA

Omens?

A murder of oil-backed crows
intent on moment, not on futures,
raucous, dives at ascending, shining doves.
Soon will come vultures?

Gary Wade, Williston, VT, USA

Song of Sand and Olive Drab

We wait to go in serried ranks, bright labels to the fore,
All filled with anticipation of glory like before.
We are forms of beauty while at attention we stand tall,
We proudly hold what you hold dear, we hold it with our all.

We are the good technicians who do whatever we must
(But wonder if our leadership has now betrayed our trust).
We'll deliver shock and awe, delivering a triumph thereby
It's dust to dust, sand to sand when high projectiles fly.

Aren't we more than containers, fuller than jars of old?
Do we go to fight a corporate war, if so, how were we sold?
Will we have granite monuments, or will our story pass
From oily sands wide-littered with green broken glass?

Gary Wade, Williston, VT, USA

Soliloquy of Common Finality

I am who I am, I am one of common name,
I am part of all both high and low saving none.

Nothing is said more certain than I and the income tax,
though your tax may be rebated, I will never be.

I wait here in both darkness and light
and I take all from either to one.

The price of your maintaining life may be quite dear,
no matter if you spend your purse, I come to you for free.

Telomeres and crystal balls may be consulted
but neither will tell you my length to your run.

Those who give to others are quite blessed by giving all
but those who only take are still equal unto me.

Genetics or cosmetics may bless a person throughout life
but the fairest living face is but grave wax when I'm done.

Gary Wade, Williston, VT, USA

OTHER ENTRANTS

CLAIBORNE SCHLEY WALSH MONTROSE, AL, USA

COMMENTS ABOUT HER WORK

Claiborne Schley Walsh shows us the art of word painting as she provides succinct visual imagery. Her straightforward creative style strikes sparks in the imagination that resonate in the reader's mind, yet calls one to meditation. This poet hones the art of craftsmanship to sharp clarity and reason. Fine writing, indeed.



Snow Spectre

white speck falls
beneath frosted winter pine
headfeather in snow

two eagles fly
one sky one lake wait for
splash to make image single

mahogany wings soar
white head cocks
listens closely for fish prayers

Claiborne Schley Walsh, Montrose, AL, USA

Within Eyesight

Flutter white descends to
branch, wafts scent of olive.
Let all the world glance up,
understand the offering.

Claiborne Schley Walsh, Montrose, AL, USA

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