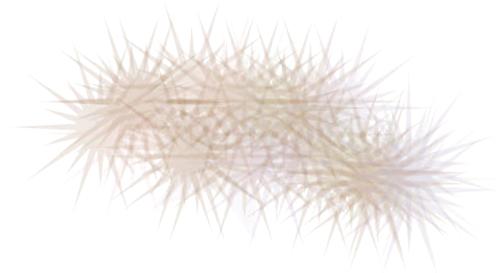


# Sol Magazine



**2004  
Poet  
Laureate  
Special  
Edition**



April 2004

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## **DEDICATION**

**By Mary Margaret Carlisle, Managing Editor**

We dedicate the 2004 Poet Laureate Edition to those who have worked with us these past four months to put together this, the seventh annual spotlighting of our best poets. Sponsors, Nominating Committee Members, Judges, Proofreaders, Staff-- your enthusiastic suggestions, spirited debates, energetic efforts and monetary contributions helped to make this project the best we have completed. Thank you so much! And Poet Laureate Candidates, we also thank each of you for entrusting us with your best work.



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## Sol Magazine's Poets Laureate

- SuZanne C. Cole** - Poet Laureate 2004
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- Lois Lay Castiglioni** - Poet Laureate 2001
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- John E. Rice** - Poet Laureate 1999
- Betty Ann Whitney** - Poet Laureate 1998

# POET LAUREATE 2004

## SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

### BIOGRAPHY

SuzAnne C. Cole, a retired instructor in English at Houston Community College, is an award-winning poet and writer, and has published more than 270 essays, plays, poems and short stories in at least 170 different publications including commercial and literary magazines, anthologies, newspapers and the poet-favoring *Sol Magazine*. SuzAnne was a juried poet at the Houston Poetry Fest in 2003 and will be a featured guest poet at the 2004 event. She has won a *Writer's Digest* personal poetry contest and a haiku festival in Japan. She also published To Our Heart's Content: Meditations for Women Turning 50. SuzAnne and her husband have three grown sons and one grandson. They enjoy hiking vacations, most recently in the Yorkshire Dales in England; future plans include Patagonia.



SuzAnne C. Cole

### Favorite Quote:

"But the nature of man is not the nature of silence.

Words are the thunders of the mind." —Mary Oliver, "The Leaf and the Cloud"

### The Trucker's Story

On the bridge approach, another car going too slow.  
I pull around to pass, look over. Driver's a woman,  
maybe young, dark hair hanging over her face.  
Checking the mirror, I see her car stop on the bridge.  
She gets out, moves fast toward the barrier.  
I swear, stomp hard on the brakes.

Running fast, I'm there just as she pulls herself up,  
stands on the crossbar. No, no, I shout, no, don't,  
reaching, grabbing a handful of her pants.  
Silk or something, they slip right through my grip.  
There, on the damp railing between my hands,  
the print of her bare feet remains for a couple of breaths,  
then disappears.

Sometimes there's just nothing you can do.

© 2004 SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

## COMMENTS

SuzAnne C. Cole is a powerful poet equipped with a master's set of well honed tools. Her suggestive, strong and original voice shares material shaped with rich language, as her words turn on clear imagery to create honest portrayals. Beautifully crafted original themes are woven with many layers of meaning. The reader's imagination is captured with a net of well-woven poetic mechanics such as subtle rhythm and alliteration, enjambment, careful word selection, humor, irony and contrasts. Exceptional writing with small details pulled from everyday life give readers something concrete; yet while this poet also leaves an impression of something lost, something being searched for, she can also give a sense of closure. Vivid, witty strings of hyperbole combine with more serious passages. Unafraid to unpack powerful emotional experiences with which she stamps images on our minds, this poet is a fine, well-practiced craftswoman, who teaches writing with every line. In "Bridging: A Woman's Life," SuzAnne deftly handles metaphor in the way a welder handles a welding iron, with care and strength. She gives a remarkably candid, painfully honest and insightful description of life's cycle, highlighted by a powerful allegory at the poem's stellar ending. The imagery is startling in its

openness, yet at the same time leaves a sense of reticence, of something still being held back. Word choices are splendid, with a nice development of the "bridge" motif as the poem progresses through time, drawing the reader ever onward, encouraging thought about woman's role in family and society. In "The Trucker's Story," strong visual content of the narrative holds interest and stirs the imagination through a complex experience of tension, mood and anxiety. Excellently crafted alliterative language. Wonderful writing, fine storytelling. "Eating War" shows SuzAnne's writing strength as she uses a well thought out metaphor to powerfully deliver this poem's stark message. Unafraid to face repulsive topics, Suzanne shows a fine control over language. "In My House" poses an interesting question to the reader. Is this a moment of honesty leaking out of the back yard midden to darken the glittering brass of the public persona of this poet? Or is this the imagination of the poet hard at work creating yet another seemingly intimate world for her readers to explore? We may never know, for Suzanne is a strongly forthright yet disturbingly reticent poet who leads her readers in a new direction with each new poem. What an amazing journey! Thank you, SuzAnne C. Cole, for the remarkable ride.

### Bridging: A Woman's Life

In the beginning, to her husband her body is a  
bridge of gold drawn up against the hordes.  
For her children she becomes a bridge to the world,  
their guide from familiar to foreign,  
her strength a footbridge across chaos.  
Later, her body-bridge, stretched thin,  
sags as grown children march on. On the other  
side the youngest waves, kneels, flares a match.  
Weary cross-beams, trusses blaze.

© 2004 SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

### Eating War

Blood stains my hornlike beak, soils my glossy breast  
I have been eating war.

Far below survivors stumble on, dragging  
salvaged goods, eyes downcast, disbelieving.  
Homes, young men gone. . . daylight going.

I swoop down to dine on carrion.  
My beak savages unresisting flesh,  
greedily devouring a nation in gobbets.

When I lift my yellow-eyed head, spread my wings  
to soar, my meal of war weighs me down.

© 2004 SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

### Water Bug Skates the Stream mindless of the miracle.

If, proud of its performance, it paused to ponder,  
would it sink?

Water bug skates the stream, perceiving liquid as a solid--  
we experience memory, family, society, as reliable--  
two species sliding on water.

© 2004 SuzAnne C. Cole, Houston, TX, USA

### In My House

Tiny empty squares of an incorrectly translated file march in rows across my  
monitor. Blocky little rooms in abundance but no content. Emptiness. House  
as the self, dark teeming basement unconscious, kitchen brain perpetually  
cooking, master bedroom denying mastery of sexuality, hard varnished front  
door with glittering brass the public me, back yard garbage midden, rusted car  
resting on blocks. In my house are many rooms for all the I-am parts, each no  
greater no grander no dirtier no less than another although some I do not like,  
some I adore. Inhabitants, roomers of the self, often incorrectly translated.

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## SECOND PLACE

### Shannon Riggs, Victoria, BC, CAN



#### BIOGRAPHY

Shannon Riggs has a Master's degree in Professional Writing. She writes poetry, fiction, essays and articles, and teaches college writing. Her work has appeared in many magazines including FamilyFun, ByLine, and Writer's Digest's Personal Journaling. She currently serves as editor of the Victoria Writer's Society literary magazine. Shannon lives with her US Navy officer husband and their two children in Victoria, Canada.

Website: <http://shannonriggs.com>

Favorite Quote: "I am large; I contain multitudes,"  
—Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

#### COMMENTS

Shannon Riggs quickly draws readers into scenes, and engenders instant intimacy with clear spare writing that is honest, insightful and reflective. She presents interesting word pictures and vivid descriptions. Autobiographical in nature without being too revelatory, and well grounded in sense of place and family, Shannon uses personal experience to make poems accessible with easy to understand concepts that are nonetheless layered with significance. Her conversational tone is a welcome change from modern trend toward "detached" writing. She stirs the imagination with sharp imagery and sound textures, concise word selections, and

imaginative metaphors. Good use of detail in each scene. "Hotel Rooms" invites the reader to recall not just the room, but also the trips and the memories they create. Compelling in its honesty, this poem shares an old twist on how a soul impresses itself on its surroundings, with a fleeting thought very well-captured in a few choice words. In "Winter Widow in the Woods," the visual similarity between the words "widow" and "window" adds interest, while tree symbolism, assonance, alliteration and nuanced cadences give an overall richness and depth. "Sunday Mornings on East 45th Street, Brooklyn" is a powerful autobiographical narrative, with well developed characters. Exceptionally good writing all around.

Hotel Rooms

Specters  
linger, mingle  
like snapshots in a drawer.  
I wonder who remains when I  
check out.

© 2004 Shannon Riggs, Victoria, BC, CAN

Winter Widow in the Woods

In the cold gray light of morning, the leafless trees stand nude and waiting, their only aegis, silver bark in the wind. Sun rises behind more snow clouds, withholding the hope of color and warmth. The widow throws her curtains back anyway, takes what light there is. Sweater cinched, she nods toward sister soldiers. Stalwart, their roots run deep. Together, they'll weather winter's final days.

© 2004 Shannon Riggs, Victoria, BC, CAN

Sunday Mornings on East 45th Street, Brooklyn

While my father slept it off, Mom took me outside and walked me along the curb in front of our apartment as distractedly as one walks a dog.

Maybe she was searching the avenue for escape routes-- I only know for sure she never found one.

I was busy looking for the felled coins of drunks with loose pockets who stumbled from the bar next door into their cars.

When I found some, Mom took me to the bar's foyer and we bought pistachios from their bubble gum machine. She didn't notice that they turned her fingers red, or that they stained mine, too.

© 2004 Shannon Riggs, Victoria, BC, CAN

## THIRD PLACE

### Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

Avonne Griffin loves both the traditional genteel voice of Southern poets and the experimental yet familiar tone of California poets, believing both have influenced her approach to poetry; she is fascinated by parallels and contradictions, and finds delight in form poetry as well as free verse. Her favorite poets range from John Donne and Emily Dickinson to Mary Oliver, Linda Pastan and Billy Collins. Avonne's poetry has appeared in *Sol Magazine*, *Emotions*, *LeMewz*, *American West*, *This Hard Wind*, *Writer's Quill*, *Times Ex*, and Austin International Poetry Festival's 2001 [a-di-verse-city odyssey](#). Avonne Griffin is from Southern California, but now lives in South Carolina with her husband, close to their six children and ten grandchildren.



Favorite Quote: "The soul selects her own society, / then shuts the door / to her divine majority," —Emily Dickinson, [Collected Poems](#)

#### COMMENTS

Avonne Griffin creates powerful poems with a sharp control of words without being too restrictive. Her writing is beautifully lush when the occasion merits, and shows an understanding of how poetic tools of structure and sound (rhyme, alliteration and assonance) can support a chosen topic. She brings a new air of beauty to normal events, portraying subjects effectively with the use of subtle patterned repetition, original similes and metaphors, and interesting topics. Her Cinquain, "Nuit de la Tulipe," shows a clever use of homophone, and says so very much in

five short lines. Good use of alliteration and fine word play in the first and final lines, and a beautiful use of language to create a compact flowing work. "If You Ever Heard a Loon" lifts readers into another world. Charming in its almost-childlike simplicity that marvels over a simple bird's cry, the poem becomes almost mystical through uses of comparisons such as "his laugh like a lover / lost in island mist." Wonderful alliteration throughout, and a marvelously philosophical closing concept stated in a direct, uncomplicated way. Fine writing.

Nuit de la Tulipe

Tulips  
on the nightstand,  
shadows in candlelight  
waiting for a willing curve, just  
two lips.

© 2004 Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

If You Ever Heard a Loon  
Are you charmed, too  
by the magic of a loon?  
Imagine his cry  
from across the lake  
when the moon breaks free  
from a tangle of pine,  
his laugh like a lover  
lost in island mist.

Do you wonder, too  
and desire to hold his song  
in your throat, on your lips  
for a silent, starless night  
forever? You would wait  
suspended, susceptible  
for the tender next verse,  
praying it's the same, and it is.  
But you never would be again.

© 2004 Avonne Griffin, Greer, SC, USA

## FOURTH PLACE

### Maryann Hazen Stearns, Ellenville, NY, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

Maryann Hazen Stearns, author of poetry collection "Under the Limbo Stick," has poetry appearing in over 360 e-publications, and in print publications throughout the US, Canada, Switzerland, India, and Britain, including the following anthologies: Alchemist, Best of Map of Austin Poetry, Best of Melic Review, Envelopes of Time, Kimera, Listening to the Birth of Crystals, Louisville Poets' Guild, Manifold, Mind Mutations, Moonshade, Niederengasse, Portals Poetic Passages, Red Booth Review, Taj Mahal Review, Visions, Warrior Poets, and When I Was A Child. Maryann is Associate Editor of *MindFire Renewed*, occasional poetry competition judge, an active member of The Alchemy Poetry Club, the Woodstock Poetry Society, and *Poets & Writers*. She is currently listed in *A Directory of American Poets and Fiction Writers* and occasionally teaches Poetry as Pastime at Sullivan County Community College, NY.



Favorite Quote: "Ink runs from the corners of my mouth. / There is no happiness like mine. / I have been eating poetry." —Mark Strand, "Eating Poetry"

#### COMMENTS

Maryann Hazen Stearns expresses experiences with an artistic slant. Her introspective reflections draw the reader into thoughts which are well-worth divining, and how precious are our memories. Food descriptions break up the usual train of sight and sound details, reminding readers of smells, flavors, textures. With words straight from the everyman's English dictionary, the average becomes something beautiful in these lines. The ability to capture the smaller nuances of life is neatly balanced by an overriding sense of something larger than life itself. Well structured work merges mechanics with content to create skillfully crafted poetry with easy to grasp metaphorical images. Richly suggestive language creates a depth beyond the surface. The work is well thought out and contains careful subtle use of alliteration and

good detailed word usage to describe each scene. Compact language, gentle flow. With a remarkable premise for a title and poem topic, "The Bone Hunters' Vacation" rises to the occasion with a shrewd yet emotionally honest look at why families do the things they do, saying it is not so much from ritual as it is from a need to revisit the meanings underneath everything. Excellent phrasings and compartmentalization of the everyday things that comprise life, and the good use of alliteration all add to the "read me aloud" invitation implied by the poet. This well thought out piece is rife with subtle nuance. Excellent opening and closing lines, that include a clever word play of the first word in the final line. Brief, calm comparison between bones and shells, life and sea highlights a fine use of detail. The penultimate line has good internal rhyme and a rhythm reminiscent of a small wavelet breaking on the beach. Nicely done!

The Bone Hunters' Vacation

We go to the shore to find the bones of our lives.  
To remember why we're happy together,  
to remind ourselves the reason for all we do  
between the rise and fall of days, weeks, months.

I place a pot of jelly on the table in the sun.  
The newspaper remains sheathed outside the door.  
The maid will get a better tip if she passes our room today.  
Skeletons rattle beneath sheets; shells upon the beach.  
Muscles rest upon the salt-sprayed back of rising tide.

© 2004 Maryann Hazen Stearns, Ellenville, NY, USA

## FIFTH PLACE

### Lynne Craig, Terrell, TX, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

Lynne Craig is a member of a poetry guild near Dallas, where her work has won several awards. Lynne is the managing editor of a small college newspaper. As a full-time reporter and editor, Lynne has written and published hundreds of news articles, interviews, and features. She has a BS in Elementary English, and an MS in English. She also writes children's books, with several under publication consideration now. Although a native Texan, Lynne has lived in several states. She has one son, and two grandchildren who live close enough to visit regularly. She is thrilled that both are interested in poetry.



#### Favorite Quote:

"And after that maybe you'll begin to comprehend dimly / What I mean by too much metaphor and simile." —Ogden Nash, "Very Like a Whale"

#### COMMENTS

Lynne Craig thoughtfully weaves textured words that dance across the page and into the fiber of the reader. A powerful sense of nostalgia pervades her work, choices made or taken away as time passes. Rustic details highlight fond depictions of country life with clear sharp diction and no wasted verbiage. Lovely mental images. Lynne has a wise way with words, and carries a good set of tools to the work table to make her points. The poem "Springing" shows excellent percussive assonance, alliteration and internal rhyme, leaving the reader with a picture-postcard look and feel about the

wonder and miracle of life itself. This poem is amazingly vivid, with word choices that fairly leap from the page much like the subject of the poem, and there is excellent craftsmanship in the phrasings and direct parallels to the season. Splendid usages of rarely-seen words such as "gamboling" and "convulse" - yet the words seem to fit so perfectly, no others could possibly have done. The interplay of internal rhyming and rhythm combined with strong images is well done, and the description of children and their movements as they play is nicely presented. Excellent writing.

Springing

Crayon-colored calves hover near mothers  
until they convulse in fits of energy,  
chased by flocks of dragonflies  
that send them erratically gamboling  
over the Easter basket grass. Suddenly  
stopping, they stare with shy, liquid eyes,  
transfixed, as if surprised at their own being  
alive in a moment of paradise.

© 2004 Lynne Craig, Terrell, TX, USA

## HONORABLE MENTION

### S. J. Baldock, Lancaster, TX, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

S. J. Baldock has been writing since grammar school as a means of communicating what she is otherwise unable to communicate. She has been published in *Cigar Lifestyles*, *International Toastmistress Magazine*, *Emotions Literary Journal*, *Scribe and Quill*, *SEEDS* and *The Fisherman's Guide*, and in these E-Zines: *Sol Magazine*, *A Writer's Choice*, and *WritersBlock*. Ms. Baldock and her husband live in east Texas on a small acreage she affectionately refers to as: "our little cottage in the woods."



#### Favorite Quote:

"Though his burial was slated (meow, meow, meow), he became reanimated..." —Anon., "Señor Don Gato"

#### COMMENTS

S. J. Baldock brings to the table emotions ranging from moody to pessimistic to morbid, and honestly exposes opinions of those aspects of life that most keep secret. This poet is not afraid of harsh topics. Spare, clean language and imagery add to the elegiac quality of this work, and she clearly understands the power of the last line. Unflinching attention to life's less pleasant details, from the personal to the historic. Profound skill in transforming something destructive into something creative. Good use of enjambment to carry the flow. Gripping images remain plastered to the reader's eyeballs long after turning the page. Tightly woven sentences, with good line breaks and pauses. Sensational, contrasting, sometimes shocking hyperbole combined with alliterative language creates interest. Serious, strong work, well thought out and planned. Very good use of simile and metaphor. Internal rhyme plays a part, as well, in moving this

poet's work. Nice choice of descriptive words. "Of Cats and Canaries" is a well developed, insightful and sharply allegorical story of past love that has now fallen. Within the parallel between man and beast, the poem flares with stellar writing. Unusual twists of phrase, such as "I was burned into his bones," bring a feeling of pain to the reader, if only for the brutal honesty. So very well written within the spirit of enjambment, this poem shows a very creative use of language, a fine use of alliteration, simile and metaphor, topped with a masterful closing sentence. We read this powerful emotional piece and hope it's not autobiographical, but know it must be...yet poets are not above taking the lives of their friends as grist for the poetry mill. How is the reader to tell, when a story is told so convincingly? This poem was voted "most favorite individual poem," by a majority of the judges.

Of Cats and Canaries

He loved me once. More than he loved himself for

I was burned into his bones, imprinted upon his  
Cells and spliced into his DNA--as fundamental  
To his existence as eating, sleeping, breathing,

Believing. Back then; I thought that fairy tales sprung  
Full-grown from his thighs...but now? Each morning  
Brings more pain into the house: "I love you but you

Don't love me!" we think, floundering about  
Like fragile, fallen birds whose wings have not yet  
Learned to fly. Divorce waits like a patient cat

Hoping to devour us

© 2004 S. J. Baldock, Lancaster, TX, USA

## HONORABLE MENTION

### Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

Kathy Kehrli's avocation is writing, and she operates a business called The Flawless Word. While her professional endeavors often take her into the realm of technical minutiae and business-oriented writing, her love for words and poetry remains close at heart. Her confidence in her poetic abilities came in 8th grade when she received an A+ on a poetry-writing assignment on the book Sounder. Kathy's poetry has been featured in a variety of publications, both online and in print. Kathy's poetry and book reviews have appeared in *Sol Magazine*, *Fantasy*, *Folklore and Fairytales*; *Suite 101*, *Wordweaving*, *Straight from the Heart*; *Spellbound Magazine*; *Inscriptions*; and *Scottish Radiance*.

Website: <http://www.TheFlawlessWord.com>

Favorite Quote: "Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light." —Dylan Thomas



#### COMMENTS

Kathy Kehrli demonstrates a strong ability to creatively develop an idea to its fullest potential through deceptively simple diction, but complex layered thoughts. Her free and easy writing style grabs the reader's attention with concrete, symbolic and figurative images. Excellent craftsmanship and word choices, with great attention to detail. The ballad-like poem, "Citrus-y Conditions," is dense with sensory references and outstanding fresh imagery; its alliterations and lilting musical phrasings tie the poem together. Very clever handling of what was surely a difficult approach to a unusual topic; the extended metaphor makes a refreshing contrast between citrus fruit and winter weather. Excellent use of rhyme and meter.

Citrus-y Conditions

Blue citrus skies of winter dawn  
Contrast the chilling cold.  
The frozen flakes that soon will spawn  
Lie in its grapefruit folds.

Pale lemon rays of winter sun  
Dodge bitter biting blows.  
Mandarin orange reflections  
Glint off the pulpy snows.

© 2004 Kathy Kehrli, Factoryville, PA, USA

## HONORABLE MENTION

### Kathy Paupore, Kingsford, MI, USA



#### BIOGRAPHY

Although Kathy Paupore started writing poetry in high school, after many years as a busy nurse, domestic engineer and mother, she rediscovered poetry and has been writing seriously for three years. Kathy has been published in *Sol Magazine*, *Amaze*, and the *Writer's Hood*. She lives in Michigan with her husband, three children and two cats.

Favorite Quote: "Starts and stops are everything. They are in themselves a beginning and an end. But more, within them lies the only pleasure life affords," —Rod McKuen

#### COMMENTS

Kathy Paupore is very capable of handling serious subjects, and concisely captures a broad range of emotions while passing along a healthy helping of single-instant snapshot images wedded with tight structure. This tension creates a constant mood of breathlessness mingled with clarity. The writing can be startling at turns, while also being almost moodily introspective at others. She has a nice command of language, and uses unusual words without being heavy-handed. While she combines various kinds of imagery, symbolism, points of view and shifts in language to convey complex experiences, at the same time she puts a great deal of care into word selection. Well planned alliteration and excellent metrics give sight, sound and action to Kathy Paupore's written words. In "For your Convenience," Kathy Paupore presents a clever survey of various everyday

windows, tied together in common theme. Excellent economy of words in this wryly sarcastic piece that succinctly and deftly captures one of the underlying corruptions in society, as well as the overwhelming need to be in constant motion until the wall looms up ahead. Excellent usage of brief sentences and short-to-the-point images to weave an image of frantic frenzy. Blunt, staccato free verse intersperses with alliteration to give an excellent commentary on fast foods, fast lanes, and finally the mundane life style. The poem builds slowly with stanzas of interesting consonantal and assonantal internal rhyme i.e., horn/honk, voice/box/sharp, backseat/bicker/bite. Uncommon use of language and meter shows great originality. Good use of sensory words to describe sound, internal pain, exhaustion, smells. Powerful finish - "...until you just run out of road."

For Your Convenience

A window, voice by box,  
tin sharp distant whine,  
wheels spin and horns honk,  
greasy bag burger and hot fat fries  
excess adipose triggers abdominal distress;

road weary, can't slow down  
crash into the chronic fatigue wall,  
pull up at another metal box,  
your gas gauge on empty,  
tin echo goodbye, next

stalled rush hour commute, roll up  
the window, block exhaust toxin cloud,  
backseat kids bicker and bite,  
crank up the radio blare, suffocate  
irritable static migraine headache;

fill prescriptions: Nexium, Prozac,  
Imitrex; optimistic pills by pharmacy  
window medicate life's mania,  
no cruise control until  
you just run out of road.

© 2004 Kathy Paupore, Kingsford, MI, USA

## HONORABLE MENTION

### Terrie Leigh Relf, San Diego, CA, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

Terrie Leigh Relf is an award-winning poet, the Poet's Workshop columnist for *Writers Monthly*, and an assistant poetry editor for *NGF*, an international print magazine. She also pens the *Mistress of Rhetoric* column for the *Espresso*, San Diego's Newspaper for Coffee and Cafe Culture. She teaches English part-time at San Diego City College, where she serves on the editorial board of *City Works*, a literary arts journal. Relf hosts an open mic at Santos Cafe in South Park, and has judged local poetry competitions. Her first collection, *Lap Danced by the Muse*, was released by *Writers Monthly*. Her second collection, *Metro Madness*, was released by Lucy Westenra ebooks. Recent work appears in *Sol Magazine*, *Side Reality*, *Freaky Frights*, *Aoife's Kiss*, *Star\*Line*, *Fifth Dimension*, and *Lunatic Chameleon*. Terrie lives with two children in San Diego, CA.



Websites: <http://www.writersmonthly.us> and <http://www.NFG.ca>

Favorite Quote: "I wrote a Personals ad: MUSE WANTED: INQUIRE WITHIN, and in small print, I listed the general duties, responsibilities and such." —Terrie Leigh Relf, "In Search of a Kinder Muse," *Lap Danced by the Muse*.

#### COMMENTS

Terrie Leigh Relf's imaginative writing is clear and engaging, insightful and satisfying, with an outstanding grasp of the creative force and its effects on human consciousness. Each word has been chosen for maximum impact, while metaphor gives this poet's work a smooth flow and breadth. Unpatterned echoes, whether off rhyme or true provide an overall harmony. Well-crafted narrative of simple events and the touching aspects of life engender an instant intimacy, drawing the reader into each scene, creating an atmosphere of relaxed

friendliness, with an inviting Frostian connection of sorts. In "Confessions of an Insomniac," the Pantoum makes an excellent choice of form, for its repetitive, interwoven structure matches the obsessive nature of insomnia as distracting thoughts circle through a tired brain, and lends to the feeling of middle-of-night hazy half-asleep confusion. Amusing contrast between the causes of sleeplessness, with a darkly humorous expose of what it's really like to be a writer. Rollicking fun with an undeniable undercurrent of seriousness.

Confessions of an Insomniac

It's 3 a.m., and I still can't sleep,  
even though I am totally spent.  
My mind reels with unfinished poems,  
but it could be that double mocha.

Even though I am totally spent,  
should I get up to write a bit more?  
Maybe it was that double mocha,  
But I swear that the bed is shaking.

I hear spirits can be quite friendly,  
I could use some companionship now;  
but this one thinks he's Shakespeare reborn,  
and I'm confused by his metaphors.

Even though I am totally spent,  
I stagger to my computer desk.  
Please say it was that double mocha—  
I'm not typing those words on the screen!

I stagger to my computer desk;  
my mind reels with unfinished poems.  
Words don't appear untyped on a screen...  
It's 3 a.m. and I still can't sleep.

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## HONORABLE MENTION

### James M. Thompson, Baytown, TX, USA



#### BIOGRAPHY

James M. Thompson has published poems in Texas Poetry Calendar 2004, Indian Heritage Quarterly, Frogpond, the Journal of the American Haiku Society, and Lynx. He also has poems in several online publications including Sol Magazine, Rose and Thorn, Lotus Blooms Journal, Eclectica, and Mail Call Journal. He is a construction professional, who, after a twenty-year hiatus, began writing again about seven years ago.

Favorite Quote: "On the surface simplicity / but the darkest pit in me is pagan poetry / pagan poetry."  
—Bjork, "Pagan Poetry"

#### COMMENTS

James M. Thompson has a fine control over multiple sensory descriptions. He is adept at using short lines within which much is said, and makes the most of phrasings to express feelings and leave the reader to ponder the rest as magic marches through his lines. He brings a sense of coming in mis-en-scene, breathless, not quite knowing all the lines but very willing to improvise, and doing so very successfully. Startling yet interesting juxtapositions and abrupt transitions whirl the reader. Complex layering combines rhythm, meter and sound, while clear concise language and classic simplicity of phrasing shimmer with imagery. The poem selected by the judges for Honorable Mention is wonderfully titled with a word that encompasses a variety of possible meanings. An apercu can be defined as insight, a first view, a short

synopsis, or as a series of events, each of which momentarily seems like the center of an experience until the next event supplants the previous in intensity. In this poem, each meaning of "apercu" is implied in the subsequent verses. Juxtaposition of images, each sharp and clearly wrought, makes this effort sparkle. Last couplet brims over with nuance and skillfully engages the reader. A fascinating take on the topic of "strength," this painful revelation brings with it a sense of completion and triumph in the closing line. Excellent word choices, and excellent parallel to the sensation of being sunburned. Truly a unusual layering exercise, one with an ultimately successful outcome. Interesting personification of the sun. The sudden turn into dialogue both stuns the reader and solidly ends the poem.

Apercu

She peeled layers of herself  
with every word  
like sun-blistered skin,

oblivious, it seemed,  
to searing pain.

She promised agony brought strength  
then reached for the sun,  
blinding me.

"You promised," I said.  
"I know," she shined.

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## HONORABLE MENTION

### Claiborne Schley Walsh, Montrose, AL, USA

#### BIOGRAPHY

Claiborne Schley Walsh attended SpringHill College where she majored in English and minored in Art. She has held creative writing/thinking workshops for many writing societies, poetry festivals, schools and colleges, and has been a judge for poetry competitions and slams. Claiborne began her writing career when she was old enough to use a number two big red pencil and a Red Chief writing tablet. Claiborne's publication credits include Red Bluff Review, Will Work For Peace, Rattlesnake Review, di-verse-city (The anthology of the Austin International Poetry Festival), Bravo, West Florida Literary Federation Anthology, Copper Blade Review, Literary Mobile Anthology, Literary Baldwin, and Southern Breezes. In addition, her work may be read at *Sol Magazine*, *Gulf Mobile & Ohio Historical Magazine*, *Airwaves-WHIL*, *MindFire*, *Poetry Cafe*, *ShowemAll*, *Poetic Voices*, *IP Magazine*, and in *This Hard Wind*. Originally from Mobile, Alabama, Claiborne Schley Walsh has lived in New Orleans, Louisiana, Savannah, Georgia, and now lives back in Alabama on the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay in Montrose.



Favorite Quote: "Concentrate that for which there is no other use at all, boil it down, down,"  
—Thomas Lux, "Render, Render," The Cradle Place

Website: <http://members.aol.com/CLAIBIE/poetry.htm>

#### COMMENTS

Claiborne Schley Walsh blends personal observation of facts and feelings into excellent universal poetry. Creative thinking and the boldness to experiment characterize her work, and she presents strong imagery without excess verbiage. As Claiborne develops thoughts across verses, each stanza has continuity yet feels complete. She has an excellent grasp of extended metaphor and how to build a poem by elaborating on one core idea. Expressive word choices, clean diction, and good line structures, these elements alone show this poet is well worth reading, but then add in

confident imaginative writing and skilled craftsmanship and you discover a strong writer difficult to ignore. The arresting title of her poem, "Code - Do Not Resuscitate," demands immediate attention. The difficult topic is addressed in a spare way that is free of over-emotion, which adds to its impact, as concise writing catches the unknown yet creates a desire for more details, leaving the reader to reflect on possibilities. The very effective use of a third line repeat is made particularly interesting with the use of a visual or psychological twist in each stanza as "slick green," morphs into "sick green," then transitions into "silk, green." Beautifully done, extraordinary writing.

Code - Do Not Resuscitate

There were no pictures, no photos,  
no nick knacks, nothing but  
just slick green,

were no memories to be found,  
merely shiny painted walls  
just sick green.

When you saw her stilled body you  
wondered if she'd ever prettily dressed  
in silk, green.

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P.O. Box 580037  
Houston, TX 77258-0037  
281-316-2255  
[www.sol-magazine.org](http://www.sol-magazine.org)  
[Sol.Magazine@prodigy.net](mailto:Sol.Magazine@prodigy.net)