

Poetry

1st Place (tie)

Chore Time

Clutching his cup,
he steps out into the dark cold.
Almost five a.m.
and he's starting late again.
But does it really matter he wonders?
Could he ever catch up anyhow?

Fresh snow sparkles in the moonlight,
crunching underfoot as he trudges on.
For twenty years he's walked to his barn,
cared for his cows,
never getting much in return.
Learning not to hope for more
than just to get through another year,
thinking the next should be better,
knowing it couldn't be worse.
Feed price up, milk price
down, round and round and round...

The barn looks warm and inviting.
The amber light from its windows
falling across the frozen yard.
Like a refuge standing alone on the plain.
His refuge, his shelter
from the constant din of the storm
that circles unrelenting around the little farm.
Threatening to tear it apart,
to scatter it across the dark and desolate fields.

All heads rise, taking notice
as he forces open the door,
then fall as he pulls it shut,
the frost on the latch biting his fingers.
It's warm inside and he pauses,
fingering his cup. The feed is down,
and tie chains softly clang
as the heads of the cows rise and fall.
The barn is different in the morning,
peaceful and still.

The soft click of pulsation
keeps a steady time
to the droning hum of the pump,
while somewhere in the back
Neil Young is crooning,
"old man look at my life,
I'm a lot like you were."

The boy has started already.
Looking up from behind a cow
his eyes meet his fathers.
Nothing is said,
nothing needs to be said
as he ducks down again to pull a milker.
It's too early for chatter,
and that's not the stuff of men anyhow.

He pulls open the milk house door
and the cats quickly scatter.
They will have to wait for milk.
Diligence will be rewarded.
That has been their experience.
That has become his hope and his prayer.
The cats creep off to lie in the straw,
as chores have only just begun.

by **Stephen Petherbridge**

1st Place (tie)

The Unworn Dress

Her pillow had two phases, wet and dry.
Getting up from bed, she walked through the tar.
Day by day she passed the long white dress bag.
She pushed it to the back of her closet...
With a force and with a finality.

by Heather Moszer

Grandpa's Piano

As I lay my hand on the cold white keys,
I see the markings my grandpa had made.
Playing "Amazing Grace" while the marks fade,
I think of using them while on his knees.

He wrapped one arm warmly around my middle;
The other he used to guide my stiff hand.
We laughed at the slip-ups and tried again.
I long for those days when I was little.

by Heather Moszer

3rd Place

She.

Her eyes, silent and seducing,
Rounded hips exaggerating her moves.
She's lovely and wild,
a thrilling combination.
Her touch excites
as much as it soothes.

Planning and clever
She knows she has the look;
How she makes me feel
inside, deeper than my skin.
One kiss and I'm hooked.
She's like a good drug
addictive as sin.
Yet every drug has its low.
She left me
wordless and empty,
my heart and bed are alone.

by **Jessica Fabre**

Blooming Bamboo

Someone moved my tree, one day,
to bloom a budding lily.
The bud absorbed all the sun
that shone in from the window.
Wedged in the kitchen corner
and hindered by furniture,
the leaves turned brown and brittle.
When I finally noticed,
my bamboo tree drooped while that
lily never, even bloomed.

by April R. Faucett

The Last Poem

If this poem does not make sense
After reading it a couple of times
Go out to steal six pence
Though the words simply make the rhymes
The rhyme so simply mixed with time
Echoes closely in my ear
Enough to make one thin dime
But it's only for you my dear
I will make it simple, short and sweet
Though my hand yearns for more
To ears it is a sugared treat
Unless you are an enemy for sure
So come my dear friend with me
To take my hand into the light
And take this poem for it might be
The last poem you read tonight

by Derek Davis

I Hear the Church Bells Ring

I hear the church bells ring
As it silences the cry of the young
Walkers pass by while the choir sings
But nobody hears who has really sung

I see the priests walk on by
As it blinds the begging of the young
Walking on the ground of dry
But nobody cares who has really sung

I feel the church member's skin
As they take away the elder Son
Not knowing he is a part of their kin
But still they notice while the others shun

I hear the church bells ring
As they get ready to take care
Of the elder Son so he won't sing
About the fate they will face never

I see the priests walk on by
As they walk by the tortured Son
As his blood sheds on the ground of dry
Not knowing their feet are bloodied by their run

I feel the pain of the elder son
As he slips away to his home land
I knew his work was not done
And watch him fall into the sand

by **Derek Davis**

Bon Voyage

I just bought a ticket I want you to know
To a wonderful place, I just have to go
I've dreamed of this place many a days
to see the far away world of blues and greys
This trip is so very special you see
For the only things I will need are my ticket, God, and me!
I don't need to pack any worries or fears
But I will have my memories throughout my years
My ship is coming from the heavenly blue
Always know that I am forever with you
I am so excited I can barely eat
This trip for me is such a heavenly treat
As I board the ship be sure to wave
With God as my captain, I know I am safe
Be strong in whatever you go through
Even when I leave I will be there for you
If I could send a postcard I truly would
so I will say Bon Voyage! All is good!
Today my ship came and I jumped with glee
For now I can finally live completely carefree
Don't be sad, we will soon meet again
when you buy your ticket to heaven
Remember the tears, joys, laughter, and fun
Now my dear loved ones I must sail towards the Son!

by Sara Henderson

A Loss

Darkness overcomes the day
And a soldier returns from the fray
But all he tells us of his stay
Is how he died and on what day

We will not meet tomorrow
And he cannot hear our cries
He will never know our sorrow
Now that we've shut his weary eyes

by **Jake Mertes**

Rawr!

I am a dinosaur.
My teeth
are sharp; my arms
short
my brain the size
of a peanut.

I spot my foe,
a smaller Rex;
he giggles at my ferocity.
Stifling laughter, we shout
our battle cries
and start our mighty battle.
Afterwards I know
I've been defeated.
This 3-year old has kicked my Jurassic tail.

"Auntie Jess! I'm hungry!" he growls.
And the battle is over.

by **Jessica Fabre**

A Day with Dad

A rise in the road causes the golf club clinking.
Bringing an excited twinkle to my eyes.
My foot presses down in anticipation.
Sunshine, a new spring breeze outside, warmth in my heart;
But the stop light is too long, the path obstructed by other cars.
At last I arrive at my destination.
I jump out smiling at my dad,
Whose time for me brings me joy.
We walk and talk shouldering our long-stored clubs.

by Heather Moszer

Kiss

Long before the 'we' broke
And your handsome face
Became plain,
Before your words
Became slow, boring
There was *this*,
And hands that spoke,
A scruffy neck
That held your smell
Little moments of
Perfect waiting
So long, and so short
Your cat-clock eyes
Flicking back and forth
Between mine
Tic-tock, tic-tock
I-want-to-know
I-want-to-know

by Geneva Rockeman

A Dance

The crickets played their midnight song
And chirped so sweetly to the trees
They heard the tune and paused not long
Before they swayed to notes and breeze
I felt the wind blow cold and damp
And worried some that it might freeze
Then crawled to bed – put out the lamp
And bade farewell to dancing trees

by **Jake Mertes**

Mutilated

It's bruised, broken, beaten, and bleeding,
was it really necessary to rip it out like you did?
I do not know how long it will take
to fix everything that you have done to me.
You were the one my mom warned me about!
Why didn't I listen to her?
Now I sit,
bruised, broken, beaten, and bleeding.

by **Dani Phares**

Dance of Fate

Thieves dance through the night
To see, to feel the joyous glance
Of the ones who only see the fright
This torture, this endless dance

They come and go, but have no place
To stay, only for a song or two
And they sing with pseudo-grace
While the fires grow potently blue

I run and hide, but how I fail
They see through me as my shadow shows
And they tug and tug at my vulnerable toil
And then my spirit goes

For now I am a part of this all
As I dance to no control, while my body lies
I feel my own mind fall
While my own spirit, at this prom dies

by **Derek Davis**

My Devotion to You

My dear, oh how long ago
It was since we last danced
To the beautiful beat
To the beating of the drum
And never once did you let me go

My dear, oh how we have aged
Together with such strength
But life will go on
And death will be an event
So I read this passage to you so sweetly

My dear, oh how I went crazy
When they told me of your fate
My heart ripped away
My soul shaken up
So I pray for myself and your soul

My dear, oh how I long to see
Your eyes and yourself glowing
Your heart still beating
My love still aching
Taking the love I had within you

My dear, so here you still lay
Where you laid before your fate
Never touched by anyone
Hoping they will never find you
So they cannot take you away from me

My dear, if they do find you
Where you are at this moment
Pray they take me away
Pray we will be buried together
Or I will commit a folly in care of you

by **Derek Davis**

La Azteca

The Aztecs, before conquest, were known to conduct sacrifices where the heart of the victim was cut out of their body and offered to the Sun god so that it would have the strength to continue its battle across the sky.

How wicked the blade you bring down
Again and again, cutting, reaching
Your thirst driving you for more
Blood to feed your journey across the sky
Heart, stolen in fear and selfish anger

And how those captives pant, breathless
With the fear and desire you breed
Your uncaring hand scarring, caressing
Without distinction, only necessity.
Heartless, wounded woman.

by **Geneva Rockeman**

You Never See Me Hurt

You never see me hurt,
You seem to just pass me by
The only one who sees it,
Just holds me when I cry.
Even he, at times,
Needs a little help
And I'm the one behind him
Who seems to understand
That even when you are strong
We all are just the same.
We need that one to hold us tight
Who can help us through thick & thin
And just be there at night to hold you
When things don't turn out right.
Sometimes it is nice to have that one person
Who will be with you through everything
Even if it comes to stepping back
And watching from afar
A friend will always be one sitting in his car
Waiting for that moment to run off into the night
To carry you away from everything you fight
When you need a hand to hold
Or someone to be true
He will always be there
For me up until I'm old ...

by **Miranda Mae Beier**

Sunrise

Everything quiet,
crickets bid the night goodbye
through the dark stillness.

Horizon smudges
firmament leaving terra
firma for the day.

Light overflows the
containment of clouds to bring
end to night and sleep.

Songbirds awaken,
calling and squalling in the
weak newborn sunshine.

Inhale and exhale.
Wake to love and learn and grow.
Day is beginning.

by **Rebecca Baltrusch**

Sunset

Inhale and exhale.
Reflect on the long day and
ready the mind for sleep.

The sun burns bloody,
deep into the ground for night,
resting from labor.

Flowers close shop,
the bees finish collecting
pollen for honey.

Songbirds return home,
yielding their music to the
denizens of night.

Bed and sleep await,
the weary must be ready.
Night comes anyway.

by **Rebecca Baltrusch**

Seasons

The bloodied leaf swings,
falters in the bone-chilled breeze,
drops in yearly death.

Glistening crystals
frozen hard, yet fluffy soft
invite children: play!

Buds and blooms and growth
drifts like glaciers melt, and then
kids feed friends mud pies.

Heat to bake a cake
yet all crops grow without qualm
lazy summer haze.

Time makes seasons wax;
enjoy good, tolerate bad, for
then all seasons wane.

by **Rebecca Baltrusch**

Up From His Nap

I can hear him chattering to himself
before I even reach the stairs.
As I climb his babbling grows
with the creak of each step
announcing my arrival.

The old door squeaks on its hinge
as I swing it in, and my boy squeals in reply.
He peeks over the top of the crib to see,
to see if it's me, his daddy,
coming to take him down.

He turns, and dives back into bed,
and buries his head in his blanket,
squealing again as he feels me reach for him.
His little feet pound the mattress
like pistons, as he squirms.

I lift him up, hold him close, and he pauses
with his small head on my shoulder.
I feel his soft curls on my cheek,
and he is content to be held.
We are content to be close
as we start back down the stairs.

by **Stephen Petherbridge**

The Accident

Something horrible happened
The unpredictable, the uncontrollable
On this illuminated December day
There was nothing left for celebration
A girl crossing a street, a car in full speed
An awful twist in life
Something horrible happened
The unwished, the inconceivable
She's lying unconscious under the car
An ambulance rushing, full sirens
A home visited by the police
The pain of incredulous parents
Something horrible happened
The unjustifiable, the inexplicable
Broken bones
Wounds and scratches
Blood escaping from her ears, nose and mouth
An intensive care room
Something horrible happened
The irreversible, the unforgettable
A whole family in despair
Prayers sent to the skies,
The little girl is in coma
Fighting for her life
Something horrible happened
The intolerable, the unforgivable
But the darkest hour is the one right before the sun rise
Prayers were heard by the greatest
The little girl will live
For another angel is not needed in the skies

by **Fakira Soumaila**

Derailed

As it all happened
That night it seemed
A dark eerie scene
From a story I dreamed
The wind felt sharp
With the ice and the snow
From a worsening blizzard
At thirty below
And there in the middle
Touched by it all
Alone with no friends
Or family to call
I found myself homeless
And cold walking slow
Outside in the open
With nowhere to go

That wasn't the first time
And nowhere near last
That I had derailed
From going too fast
So I picked myself up
And shook of the dust
Checked all the pieces
Cleaned off the rust
And rolled on again
Down life's winding track
Once more with great speed
And not one quick look back

by **Jake Mertes**

Homeless Guy

He looked shabby, unkempt,
unshaven and unclean.
Standing in the median
ignoring the traffic light
as I tried to ignore him,
his sign and his plight.

Will work for food
we both say in our own way.
He, with a cardboard sign,
me, just by showing up every day.

What is it about him
that bothers me so?
I divert my eyes,
and begin to question.

What separates him from me?
This thin pane of glass
on my new SUV?
Or next week's paycheck,
layoff or bill? One refused advance?
One illness?

Or the thin line of credit
keeping me safe in my home,
in line at the restaurant, in this car
looking out and down upon others?
How long ago did he sit here like me,
confident?

The green light releases me
from my brief moment
of guilt and awareness.
Guilt for not giving, awareness
that he may well have been
just like me,
and I could still find myself,
just as he.

by **Stephen Petherbridge**

The Woods

The Road is long,
The journey hard,
Trees passing as I ran.

BANG! I hear,
Death I see,
Blood shining, in the sun.

Hunters' call,
Shots ring out,
Death among the living.

Leaves falling,
Flowers wilting,
Summers almost done.

Cold air,
Freezing wind,
Winters on the way.

Bare trees,
Frozen ponds,
Animals are scarce.

Snow melts,
Leaves appear,
Winters finally done.

The sun's shining,
Birds chirping,
Summer's here again.

The forest is alive,
I run on by,
Remembering the year before.

by **Stephany Wegenast**

Grandpa

I see a man
In fractured parts
Trying not to care
The hope that he
Will someday die
Is all that he can bear

I hold his hand
I brush his hair
He's old and weak and tired
His wife is gone
His child is grown
He says he's not retired

I hold him close
I kiss his cheek
Like Grandma taught me to
I pick him up
I drop him off
The job he used to do

He's like a child
He can't remember
He can barely walk
When I listen
To his stories
He can hardly talk

He cries and says
He misses her
Each and every day
I look at him
In wide-eyed stupor
Without a thing to say

I wish for him
His time would come
So he could live in peace
I wish for him
That day would come
So he could die in peace

by **Michele Lutz**

Collision

Screeching tires
Squealing brakes
Running a stop light
Is all it takes

Grinding engine
Bending steel
Breaking glass
Is quite surreal

Busted fenders
Crushed doors
All my stuff
Is on the floor

Lights approaching
Sirens scream
Ambulance
Is on the scene

Bleeding, crying
Disbelief
IV brings me
Sweet relief

Doctors, nurses
Lawyers, judge
I will never
Hold a grudge

Car's been totaled
Body's aching
Pills and potions
Leave me shaking

Screeching tires
Squealing brakes
Running a stop light
Is all it takes

by **Michele Lutz**