

Dedication

The staff of the 2009-2010 edition of *The Lyricist* would like to dedicate this edition to Mrs. Judy Robbins and to Dr. Frank Vaughan.

Mrs. Judy was the Administrative Assistant to the English Department for twelve years, and during that time she also played the roles of friend, co-conspirator, and mother at various times for nearly every student who passed through the department. She is the real brains behind every operation in which she is involved, and as the new Administrative Assistant to the President, when changes come to Campbell from now on we'll know who will really be behind them. We love you, Mrs. Judy.

Dr. Vaughan has taught at Campbell for thirty years. A brilliant and maniacal madman, he has laughed at the panic of *Lyricist* staffers for twenty-six of those years. He has dedicated forty years to the study of William Blake and the Romantics. He is infamous throughout campus for his rigorous classes, but those who complete them come out with a knowledge not only of British literature but of human nature itself. Although his retirement has been long-coming and is well-deserved, all future students taking English classes will be deprived of an experience that those whom he taught will remember and cherish for the rest of their lives. Good luck, Dr. Vaughan. You will be missed.

The Lyricist

Spring 2010 Volume XLIV

Cover Art: "Pilgrimage Year: July" by Cindy Morefield.
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The Lyricist Contest Winners

Student Poetry Contest

Judge: Mrs. Susan Norris

First Place

"On Bread Alone," Madison Helman

Second Place

Untitled: "Here, amidst the cattails," Madison Helman

Honorable Mention

"Golden, Falling Leaves," Jon Cheney

Statewide Poetry Contest

Judge: Mr. Nicholas Bowden

First Place

"Boots," Andrea Bates

Second Place

"Ebay Deposition," John Kincheloe

Honorable Mention

"The Black Wall," Jack Grace

Short Prose Contest

No winner was selected.

Editor's Note

The 2010 edition of *The Lyricist* represents a coalescence of the past and the present. It was difficult to find one theme that fit the magazine this year. The poems and stories can all be grouped into one classification or another, but there didn't seem to be an obvious overarching theme. It was particularly difficult this year because there were fewer entries submitted, and even fewer accepted. As a result, we decided to do a reprisal of sorts—we went back to past editions of *The Lyricist* and picked poems and stories to republish. Our cover was even something of a reprisal, as it is strongly reminiscent of the cover of the 2009 edition. As we were looking at these things, it hit us that we were actually looking directly at our theme. The result of this reprisal—this fusion of the past with the present—is the magazine you hold in your hands.

Read on and rediscover the past while experiencing the present.

Acknowledgements

Our eternal gratitude belongs to Mrs. Cindy Morefield, whose cover painting inspired the theme of the magazine; to the staff of Barefoot Press for their always-impeccable work; to Samantha Farmer and Ashley Maheu, who were only on the staff for one semester but whose contributions were nevertheless invaluable; to former editor Stephanie Ricker for her patience and assistance; to Dr. Tiago Jones for lending us his expertise in elucidating the complexities of the Spanish language; and to our judges, former editor Mr. Nicholas Bowden and former high school English teacher Mrs. Susan Norris.

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Driving Back

I know it's not the case, but let's say this sky is my father's winter overcoat, heavy on a hanger in his closet. The full moon smells like wool and sweat, the clouds like his galoshes.

The sky is waiting for a man to come and, sleeve by sleeve, to put it on and get into the Chevrolet. (It always was a Chevrolet, and dark to match the hearses.)

The sky is just the sky, I know. But driving underneath the woolen black, looking up at rough lapels – this lets me say tonight how small it feels to be a son.

No one knew exactly when he fell.

John Kincheloe

Educated

With blanched hair and butterscotches, he was never less than old. Mornings cultivated naps and poppy gardens, and evenings seldom lacked Mark Twain.

At seventeen, Sylvie asked her father for more than Huckleberry adventures. She kissed his head, moved to college, and put commas in all the right places.

But her father still meant to follow the Mississippi, and he christened his craft Memento Mori (because it was bound to happen).

When he left finally, Sylvie put away her Cooper for home. She planted poppies in the graveyard because he slept and he died and she remembered.

Rachael Traylor



I washed coffee stains off my parents' bedsheets wondering what other stains inward – invisible were washed away with these.

Am I unborn or are they – as our roles reverse – the care, the humbling helpless care of washing, wiping, careful feeding – slow walking all of it backwards.

Time travel is not invented – it happens as we watch; washing stains we didn't make washing away our so careful roles – undoing the worlds that've been done, things inward – invisible,

washed away with these.

Luke Morales

Growing Older

Childish laughter helps remind me
Of a time I used to know
A time when all excited me
And I hoped I'd never grow

I would lay and point at clouds of cotton
And hold the sun in my hand
And I'd study a marching line of ants
And dig my feet into the sand

And so the hourglass spins in circles
The hands of time unceasing
The face of a man emerges
The child within releasing

I fall asleep to my mother's voice And splash in puddles of rain Memories of so long ago Stay nestled in my brain

Is it better to be old or young?

I prefer the latter

When the past was simply innocent
And the future didn't matter

Joseph Powell

Recount

You told the same story, Yesterday and yesterday. (But not on purpose.) So I didn't store it, Didn't hold it close, (Can't remember it.) It didn't matter. You'd tell it again. (But now you can't.) Stories of work, war, and home, You told again and again. (And I didn't listen well.) I knew you'd repeat, And I'd roll my closed eyes. (Then the stories were gone.) You don't know the stories. You don't know your name. (You don't know me.) But though you won't store it, Though you won't remember, Know this: (I will not forget you.)

Laney Whiteman

Bildungsroman

Her chubby fingers diligently prodded through the box of crayons for the perfect blue to color the little bird perched in the tree in her coloring book. Navy blue was already broken in half, and she had already used the robin's egg blue for the sky. The tweed material of the couch scratched the back of her knees as she shifted her weight to peer in the box more closely. In the corner of the living room, the small brown television with the foil antennae blared the bright and gaudy music of a game show, yet the reverie of the little girl's color world could not be interrupted. The tip of her tongue wriggled out of her tightly pursed mouth in concentration; a hint of her lunchtime bologna sandwich remained in the corners of her lips. The final decision required a sharp gulp of air into her round cheeks, puffing them out with the expanse

"All of the animals of the earth and the birds of the air were colored to perfection"

of captive breath, then letting it out in one quick burst. Maybe the bird would look better in purple, but the tip of her favorite plum colored crayon was too worn and blunt to fill in the tiny feathers of the wing.

Her grandmother shuffled into the living room to pick up her cup of water from lunch. The resourceful old woman poured the rest of the water in to the pot of African violets perched among dusty knickknacks and yellowed doilies on the windowsill, bent over to pick up a dark red afghan she had been

working on, and settled into her recliner to the left of the child. The pair sat together, immersed in their work; the older female twisted her large knotted hands around the needles in her lap while the younger tightly gripped her verdict of cerulean in her right hand, poised for action. Boisterous cheering rang out from the television audience without penetrating the quiet camaraderie present in the room.

"You doin' okay over there, baby?" the old woman called out, without looking up from the quick and constant motion of her hands.

"I'm okay!" the child chirped, sinking deeper into the rough cushions of the couch with a content sigh of relief. She scrutinized the work before her, her round brown eyes pouring over every detail of the picture, from the tiny carnation pink worm in the ground to the wide expanse of her robin's egg blue sky. All of the animals of the earth and the birds of the air were colored to perfection. Her page seven was good. They both jumped as the screen door slammed forcefully against its frame. The gnarled and weatherbeaten man wheezed his way into the room, catching his foot on the doormat and cursing silently while lumbering to his threadbare and stained recliner. He quickly sank into his throne without acknowledging anyone, and concentrated on the television before him with furrowed eyebrows. His mountainous chest rose and fell with the thunder of his breath. His wife glanced at his heavy work boots, clumped with short grasses and mud, then looked back down at the task of her rapidly moving hands.

"You're back home early, and I didn't fix you any lunch. I thought you'd eat with the boys," she stated slowly. He didn't respond. "Did you want somethin' to eat? I can get you a sandwich or somethin'. I know you must be tired from huntin' 'cause I can

"The gnarled and weatherbeaten man wheezed his way into the room, catching his foot on the doormat and cursing silently while lumbering to his threadbare and stained recliner."

shore hear heavy breathin' from your direction."

The tired hunter finally attempted to speak over his laborious breathing. "I'll get somethin' directly. I just won't feelin' too good out there, like my chest was...kinda funny feelin'. The boys wanted me to come back...for a little bit and...rest my legs." This lengthy burst of speech required even more gasps of air, so that the old man's struggle overpowered the lively music emanating from the television set. The little girl looked up from the coloring book in her lap, curiously watching his green coveralls expand and contract with the power of his massive chest. The excitement of a fresh, blank page in her coloring book distracted her for the moment, and she gingerly held the corner of her finished product between forefinger and thumb, lifting the colored leaf up to reveal a new arrangement of empty black lines, careful not to rip the edges in her haste.

"I might want a little somethin' to drink after all. My mouth is tastin' funny," he announced loudly and abruptly over the noise-filled silence of the room. The woman sprang to her feet, concern etched in the lines on her face. She frowned as she looked at him, but he wouldn't meet her gaze. "I'm fine, just thirsty," he barked.

She turned her attention to her duties in the kitchen. "I think we have some Mountain Dew, is that okay?" she called on her way out of the room.

"Yep."

The old man and the little girl remained in the living room with the midday sun pouring in through the blinds and glinting off the sweat gathering on the hunter's forehead. He concentrated on catching his breath while the girl was caught up in the search for the perfect color in her box once again. This time, she rummaged around for a brown hue to color in the fawn's body. She had seen deer before, but only after they were already dead from the fire of her grandfather's gun. The young artist craned her neck to see the stuffed deer head behind her head on the wall, trying not to look at its blind glassy eyes. It was always hard to match the colors in real life.

The recliner groaned as the man pushed on its arms for support. He lifted himself out of the chair, stood for a moment to gather his breath again, and took a few painstaking steps toward the door. His sudden movement surprised the girl; she watched, with legs crossed in her seat on the couch, as his massive, hairy arm reached around for the small pocket on the left side of his coveralls. Then he fell. Like when they had chopped down the old pine tree in the backyard, his entire body tipped backwards and crashed to the floor in one quick motion. The whole house shuddered beneath the weight. The girl's legs became glued to the couch, and the shrill cry of the old woman pierced through the yells of the television audience as she sprinted through the doorway.

"Where is the phone? Where is the phone, do you know where it is, baby?" the woman frantically beckoned to the girl as she sat immobile on the couch. She crouched over her husband on the floor, listening for sounds of life. The child did not stir from her position; she could only grip her crayon tighter and stare at the huge man on the ground. He appeared to be in deep slumber, yet the child sensed that something bigger was happening.

The old woman finally located the telephone in a jumble of hunting magazines on the side table near his chair and began to make calls. The little girl looked down at her coloring book, but the lines became too

"He appeared to be in deep slumber, yet the child sensed that something bigger was happening."

blurry for her to decipher all the shapes. She realized with dismay that her chubby hands had broken yet another crayon; the brown for the fawn's coat remaining in her tight grip was snapped in half.

It took the power of three grown-up men to lift her grandfather onto the metal stretcher they wheeled in the front door. And the grandmother could only point to the girl and numbly repeat, "She saw what happened. My little one here saw everything, she knows. I can't tell you exactly how it went. I told him I'd get him a drink, and I left. But my baby here, she was with him till the end. She knows."

The child simply nodded and looked up from her coloring book, pushing back a strand of stubborn hair that had come loose from her ponytail.

Holland White

On Bread Alone

Life, you've killed off the faces of my childhood. The old man who, with shaky hands outstretched, reached over Formica countertops to place peppermint sticks and butterscotch rounds in my tiny hands, was shot to death ten years ago.

I hope the money set well in their pockets.

.45 stole a hundred dollars, seventy years, a husband; put a hole in the fruit-stand wall and left a bullet wound in my toddling soul, because a child cannot understand why there are no more peppermints.

And a week ago life laid to rest the man who made me consider my last name. Who, every Saturday with the thickest of accents carried me across the atlantic to the ruins of Augsburg, the hills of Garmisch, the streets of Munich, with but a bite of Brochen.

Who, hands coated in flour, would sculpt for strangers intricate strudels, from water and rye, and delicately slip such treasures into plain paper bags.

And I, ten years later, cannot understand why there is no more bread.

Madison Helman

A Toast for the Traveled

It must have followed us across the Atlantic. And all through the bus ride we spent sleeping off our jet lag, winding through the Italian countryside. We just didn't know it then.

Even before we unpacked, we'd traded our favorite shoes for black leather boots. We drank cheap wine, too-strong coffee, and chain-smoked too many packs of cigarettes.

We tried to change, but felt the same. We even pretended to fall in love. Blushing as we received two insufficient kisses, one on each cheek, though they somehow never added up to the real thing. And we sat on trains reading about famous monuments, learning everything that we could, but realizing that it didn't bring us any closer to it.

We got lost in the middle of cities we couldn't pronounce. We bought souvenirs in currencies and conversions that we didn't understand. We sat on benches, in parks, eating the food that we thought that we should, with the chatter surrounding us of too many languages being spoken all at once. And we took pictures, posing anxiously with huge first-day-of-school grins.

We wanted to look happy, because we were happy. Only it maybe wasn't so simple just then. But we knew that we wanted to remember, and that this is what we'd remember it by. Easter came and went, and the birds started to wake us up, robbing us of our sleep, as the sun rose over the rooftops setting fire to the city's outskirts and one-way streets.

Grumpy and groggy, we would stumble into the kitchen cursing the cold tile floors beneath

our bare feet, filling our cups with coffee, too bitter and too strong. And together we'd complain –

about the birds and their staccatos, and the way the time was going by too fast, much too fast – making distasteful facial expressions, whining and nodding just for the simple sake of agreeing.

But every night the windows stayed open as we slept, though we could very easily have kept them closed, kept out the birds. Maybe because this

is what we'd wanted, we had come to see the world.

Kerrin Tracy

I thought towards the East till I arrived at the West again.

My teacher spoke that either becomes something else, both the left and the right, when pushed beyond moderation.

When I came back my bearings failed. And I, in broken love and hate — fears of the moving and of the still, grew an Eastern heart that stemmed a Western mind. Love that enveloped love not content with what is home no more not content with familiar affections — comforts grown foreign to the touch.

And I, in hate and grief that almost ruled, was, broken bearings, moved (I cannot say how – moderations unsure) from fear to love from West to East – reoriented – to a place unbrokenly broken a place I did want to hate but love – must love.

Luke Morales

Negro y Blanco y Amarillo

Con ahínco y con tesón

Combinemos las Razas

Delineando con Potencia que Fibra Cósmica Sois

Juntamiento viene con la Fe

Juntamiento viene con la Luz

Juntamiento viene con la Paz;

Alzamiento viene Respetando el Ser

Viendo en los demás esa Chispa de vida

Que nos hace dignidad

Y Potencias en Combinación con Dios

Alzamiento de Razas indica que hay combinación

De la Sabiduría y el Entendimiento

Que nos hace respetar a los demás.

Juntamiento viene con la Fe

Juntamiento viene con la Luz

Juntamiento Viene con la Paz.

Astra Gass

Black and White and Yellow

With eagerness and with perseverance

We would combine the Races

Powerfully showing which Cosmic Fiber We Are

Coming together with Faith

Coming together with Light

Coming together with Peace;

A rising up which Respects the Being

This Spark of life coming with the others

That gives us dignity

And Powers in combination with God

The rising of the Races shows that there is a combination

Of Wisdom and Understanding

That makes us respect others.

Coming together with Faith

Coming together with Light

Coming together with Peace.

Translated by Samantha Lisk and Dr. Tiago Jones

Vanilla

I —

he interrupted, staring; unlike the defecating dog not breaking eye contact; trained by grandfather who knew the streets, waiting for death; endless, blacked-out waiting for coins, waiting for help to drop in a Chinese-made plastic bucket I'd buy for a buck and throw away; oh God make him leave—; seven-year-old swaying, his bare feet bent back, bruised in wrong places, nails growing sideways; wearing old-man weary face; clothes—hanging dirty, bleached, browned —urine—disgusting; waiting; —God—; Asia staring, finding you white and utterly rich; waiting—; knuckles ripped back at birth—clotted drinking water, crying baby, bad vaccination— mother waiting, bruised in wrong places; plastic bucket, staring

— wanted to buy ice cream.

Gave him a coin – maybe a nickel's worth. Sufficient. His handler, not more than five, pushed him on. Face bruised beyond youth.

Not children. Wrong. I—

For an hour rode the bus home; bought ice cream and didn't weep didn't retch – didn't quake – paused, though, to choose the flavor to fit the present mood.

Luke Morales

The Tourist

You told me about the cows in Oklahoma and your layover in the Chicago airport. I pointed out Orion's belt and tried to explain about the different types of cold. And somehow it was all understood, through the wrong tenses and mis-conjugated verbs. And I was glad. I was glad to peek in through the painted glass windows of the two big churches. To knock on the doors of the the bakeries, with the panettieri already busy at work, begging for a fresh-out-of-the-oven late night treat. And then, to stop and sit on a ledge overlooking all of the cities' lights and empty one-way streets. We watched the night connect to the morning and waited in the early stillness for the rest of the world. But later, in the kitchen, it was understood. Side by side, leaning with our backs against the countertop blowing on our mugs of tea that had already grown cold. Next door, maybe, or from somewhere up above, faucets were running, someone splashing water on their face, getting ready for the day. And all the while we'd only been two people interested in hearing what it was that the other had to say.

Kerrin Tracy

Nomad

Two men are sitting in a slick vinyl booth at a twenty-four hour dining establishment. One older -50 or so. The other, younger -20 or so. They are eating late into the night. The older man talks, preaches with a wave of his fork and a mouth full of eggs and sausage. He points the prongs of his instrument towards the younger man to illustrate his more grandiose insights.

A fine meal can make a man feel like he owns this town.

I tell you, my boy, I've travelled my share.

I have. And whenever I dine upon a grand platter,

I always take the time to breathe in the aroma.

It's always breakfast, or a steak, or some kind of soup,

or barbeque - chicken or swine. No matter.

It's the people. It's what makes them function, my dear boy.

It's their sustenance – what makes their women beautiful and their children dream.

I'm merely a guest, a passerby in a town, but you (or, moreover, your people),

have prepared for me this meal.

And, in many ways, given to me a bit of themselves.

He wipes the corners of his mouth with a stained napkin.

Lights a cigarette with the snap of a matchbook. Continues.

I suppose you want me to thank you?

Well, just know that I am grateful, but

as sure as the sun sets I'll be gone tomorrow.

In another place, talking to another soul,

feasting upon another meal.

And I'll own that town too, my boy. I will.

So, inasmuch as a man of my persuasion can, I do thank thee (his laugh turns into a cough).

What's your name? Would you like a postcard from wherever I might be?

Sure, it'll amuse you, my boy, to see where a man with no education,

no sweetheart,

no family,

hell, no worries

ends up.

It will, and you'll see, my dear son, I truly see more than most any domesticated sap.

You'd do well to keep up.

The younger man doesn't answer. He smiles. He thinks this fellow is strange.

Perhaps they were both lonely in their own way. Yes, that was it.

Tyler Douglas

Resentment's Song

Fierce and Piercing Violinist: you must cease Existence. Your wail preludes and presents Carolina Humidity.

Cicada.

The word is soothing syllables wronged.

Siren of August.

I know your shriek and so by and by
I know plenty about you.

It's better your bug veins show so everyone knows you're just as alive. Conniving, on see-through, complacent wings

From your iridescent skin I glean, "offensive green."
Saw blade sound first clowns, but then drowns attention.

The drive of your life is to jolt the hosts below from dreams, yet

snug, nestled, they wake up to paradise anyway, trudging through your air to ignore

you, or past summer love or eyes unmet

but blatantly, you forget to pass a spare shred of care.

Elizabeth "Lizzle" Grace Davis

Becoming

We are brittle people Compressed in time present. We are impaled between What was, and what shall be. Our whole life we pursue the void The hollow void of the future. Our shadow follows us And our destiny foreshadows us. We are trapped between What was and what shall be. The present must always be annihilated For life to go on, And so there is always grief Of what there once was. I am becoming-Born of every moment.

Mark Gretch

In Servants' Quarters

Awake at 3 A.M., I run my fingers across walls; feel bumps, hills, valleys, cracks; track time; rake vibes of former days; trace almost a century. How many coats cover what lies underneath? These floors creak from years of wear by those who cared for others. Writers come, scavenging whispered words from bedroom, bathroom, study, kitchen, up and down stairs.

What others left, we gather, listen, put on paper.

Sandra Ervin Adams

Delight

The petaled sea called him and me, to play in lion's teeth; we slept through nightly dew and woke our faces to the morning.

Caught a universe beneath the skies and closed our eyes to see the stars—claimed perfect, simple galaxies both miniature and ours.

I and he, my friend and me, laughed away an end, then launched our dandelion balloons into the fleeing wind.

Rachael Traylor

Sonnet: "When we have but the time"

When we have but the time in this life's age we ought to consecrate our eyes wherefore what lies beneath will grow worthy and sage gazing into Stygian skies. Once more from the stillness of dark night will shine out the truth that here, here lies the salient display of revealed eternity. Shout from blue solace – my life is not yet spent! The fissure in this inky, dreamless sky that has been forever closed to all Men will open and we will not, cannot, die because our souls must be hallowed when eternity is finally unsealed and Truth to holy eyes only revealed.

Edward Blessing

Dandelion

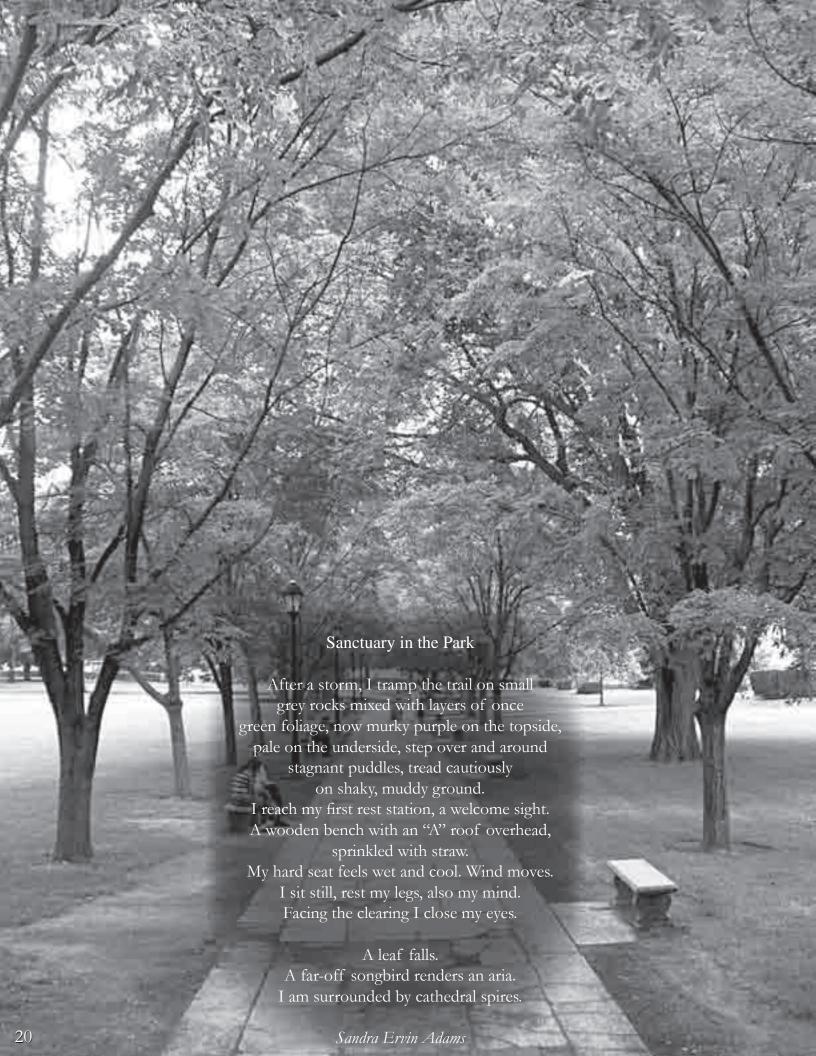
You know how you lost her: letter by letter.

The poem of her unlaced; like a chain of dandelions you whispered to, blew away their tiny parachutes. Early, too early. Not even in time to meet the honey bees.

And some of them flew, found a spring.

Walk through the meadow, dear; wonder which were yours.

Kaitlyn Elkins



Winter Lines

(inspired in part by the poem "Poor North" by Mark Strand)

Air is ice
Summer winds are frozen in the black skeleton arms.
Tattered expanse, dirty sky,
no birds to tease the silence.

Cold windows gape from the summer cottage its dwellers gone while autumn's barren lawn stares to the woods alone wearing whiskers of snow.

Hard dark at late noon, the forest is early to sleep.

Stilled in time
trees surrender
to their frigid collars
and icicled breath.

Jubilee Meehan

We Danced to The Miracles

We're written in the stars – you and I.

Stitched in the blanket of darkness.

Where the ram parades and the gods watch.

Above the sea we are peppered, twinkling all the while.

Children wish upon us, closing their eyes tight amidst a whisper.

Radio waves from the Motor City swirl past us.

We dance to The Miracles.

My dear, we are indeed scribed across the heavens.

Our existence little, save two pinholes.

Do you see it? You must.

We are in the eyes of lovers peering through twenty-five cent binoculars.

In photographs, we shimmer and brighten old tired faces.

High above what we know to be true.

We dance to The Miracles.

Galileo saw us and lambasted our beauty.

Magellan used our glow to find his way home.

The crickets sing for us –

An orchestra of nature's sweet pitch.

We shine in silent adoration for one another.

Just as the day we were born, unknowing.

We linger there, upon that blanket.

Do you see it? I ask. You must!

Forrest Birkett

Elixir

Pour a draft of autumn breeze and add a dash of blazing leaves, a woven cap, a knit cocoon, the tonic chill, the gilded moon.

Infuse the dose with wakened zest, the life and peace of spearmint rest.

Drink richly, deeply of the draught to mend the soul with chamomile thought.

Rachael Traylor

To A Wildflower

Low buttercup, you gold and green excite,

Mellowing my soul.

In silence you stand,
your tallowed wings defense.

Erect or wind-bent —

You know freedom in the field.

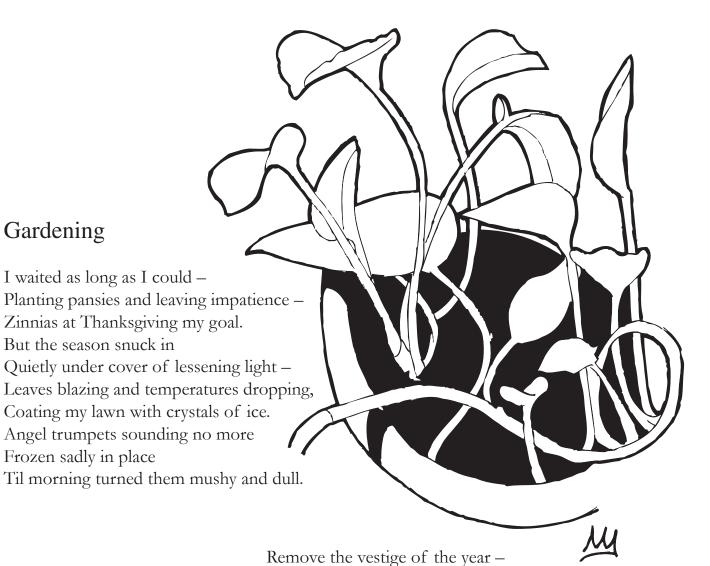
Tear not in rain, chaste flower, nor feel the child's caress. Your heritage is Time to breathe and wither Into brown.

Anne McK. Boes

Second Place Student Poetr

Here, amidst the cattails, I am so enormously small that my shadow has lost its darkness; that my soul has lost its thinness. A hundred days is a rush of nothing that courses over the heavy rocks. Webs glistening in fine silver chains, adorned by tiny violets that open for night, and night alone. Your voice is but an echo that fades in the pine branches, caught in the throats of nightingales who sing it into something new and bright, a prayer for the phosphorescent fireflies that dance in whispered dawn. Searching the crystalline surface I find wearied constellations that dissipate in nearing twilight and leave my reflection and I hidden between the stars and sky.

Madison Helman



Gardening

Frozen sadly in place

Leaves to rake and beds to tidy. Put the beds to bed. But before I pull the cover of mulch I will reach into the earth And gently place the harbingers of spring That will burst forth into glorious color. When trees are bare and grasses brown The vibrant yellows and pinks Will echo the smoldering shades of gold and red. With ivory roots that reach in the depths of loamy richness Where papery skin will grow firm and verdant With the treasures of a new season.

Angela Sox

Golden, Falling Leaves

I trace my steps back through the wood Through time and ancient trees The sun shines through the branches On the golden, falling leaves

The world for us is black and small I felt this on the eve But morning came and I could see The golden, falling leaves

If I could ask you one last time To love and care for me The only thing I'd show to you Is golden, falling leaves

We beg to God for miracles Relief from agony Sometimes the only ones we get Are golden, falling leaves

Receding quickly into night Your darkened sanity For which the only remedy Is golden, falling leaves

I lost myself unto the wood With useless bravery I always fail and all that's left Are golden, falling leaves

Jon Cheney



When the rain drips from the trees And all is moist... and damp and . . . All the dark doors are closed, I retreat into a cave warmed -By a fire of roaring and crackling Away from numb, noisy days And swift, silent nights To my Xanadu, my Shangri-la Surrounded by pictures in my mind Of happier times.

Judie Welborn

Life of the Effervescent

She was born from a flat pool ringed in blue plastic with small, sparkling drops falling from its vertical plane. The sun slid smoothly across the pool, a breath of wind came from behind it, forming a small world that detached itself, and quite suddenly she existed.

"Follow that one, see how long it lasts."

She drifted slowly on a minute air current, a tiny world mirroring the larger one below. Why, I'm flying! she thought, as she watched her sister spheres float around her. Some of them bumped into each other, fused together into one world. She was startled; how was that possible? Then she glanced down, and all other thoughts were driven out. "Two, three, four. . ."

An impossible sea of green rippled below her, fluttering with life. She came within inches of a leaf, saw the delicate veins backlit by the sun, casting a young green light on her surface. A katydid stared at her in some disbelief. I think I must be beautiful, she thought in wonder.

She sank past patchwork leaves, and then an eddy of wind blew her upward, twirling about until she was dizzy. She found herself next to bright red shutters, and stared in disbelief herself. She thought, How many colors could there be? The window that was framed by the shutters may or may not have gone on forever; she couldn't see far enough to say. The shutters were inconceivably red, with the setting sun washing them in its own hue. They nearly hurt her, they were so bright, and she had to turn away from such radiance.

A fine mist licked at her suddenly, and she spun in surprise. Far below, a marvelous spray of water was falling on thirsty flowers. Excited, she was counting the colors of the flowers when a scrap of cloud danced to the right out of the way, and the sun shone through the spray. A small rainbow arched through the garden, burying its toes in the thick green grass as the spray chuckled at its silliness. She gave up counting colors because she felt she could not hold such happiness.

I've seen so much, she thought, remembering the green patchwork and the katydid and the red radiance and the rainbow. She was beginning to feel rather thin and old. It's been such a full life, she thought contentedly. "Thirty-two seconds, so far."

She glanced around to see if any of her sisters were left, then nearly spun top over bottom as she looked up. In all of her life, she had never seen such a sight. The sun was setting with a crystal shattering of light, spilling diamond colors across the sky. The coruscating shades bled into a deep, deep blue high above her, inscrutable and tempting. One more adventure, she thought, I simply can't stop now. Catching the wind at just the right moment, she rose up towards the incandescent clouds, her glistening sides catching and throwing the light back in flickers of illumination.

"It's gone too high, I can't see it anymore."

Two girls leaned out of an open window, blowing bubbles.

Stephanie Ricker

A Misplaced Priority

Shades of grey roll over the rush of tide

Thunderheads saturate the atmosphere with empty echoes overhead.

A knife of wind swirls loose grains of sand Before the thick rain falls in slow motion to permeate the sullen landscape.

Muted tones of indigo and

syncopated shades of evening glow meld with sky-bound rumblings.

It is its own religion,

with the open window inviting light crystals in. The believers have all fallen away

except for you and me.

I could worship the lightning with you and kiss your sainted hands if only given a ghost,

a whisper of salvation –

The flickering nature of the storm surging reflected in the mirrored wall, reflecting slender white tapers, soft mood-light glow.

The veil over the window breathes with the wind Heightening a sense of reverence – I breathe with you in semi-silent prayer.

My hands would search in praise

throughout the night; your luminous skin invites a greeting, a holy palmer's kiss. An explosion, revival, and a resolution;

A formal feeling, panting peace.

I have martyred myself for you, and I am lost.

Tell me again of eternal love,

beyond the explosion. Beyond the outside storm, as shades of grey roll over the rush of ebbing tide echoing, empty overhead.

Justine Mikaloff

econd Place Statewide Poetr

Ebay Deposition

Bleeding sawdust from the woodworm's eucharist, Jesus de Milo – thorn-scarred, sorrowful, & broken. The cross sold in another auction,

and God knows where his fruitwood arms are now – maybe in the attic still, or in a drawer because no one knew just how to throw the arms of Christ away.

But maybe someone did at last just clean the place up – threw out the photographs of people no one knew, the papers and the silverfish, and finally that box

of candle stubs that also held, unknown to anyone, a pair of tortured hands, the splintered arms of Jesus. They're probably just gone. Delivered from the chapel

basement, hauled from the attic and the alleyway, now they embrace a wide landfill of things abandoned. And maybe those arms bend somehow to bless

the turning cloud of birds that sing to things discarded. Akimbo to the squander, they punctuate like whittled-out parentheses the hill of what we lose or chuck away,

as if to say with their transcendent grammar: time is an aside, and loss is not the final measure. A bid from Dallas bought the rest of Jesus.

John Kincheloe

One Last Time

I danced with the devil one last time today
He took his last drink of my blood
I robbed secret treasures, passed the time away
And fell I back deep in the sky
With my back to the earth

I sang like a rebel one last time today
And put my torches out for good
I rolled in the spoils, passed the time away
And then I talked low to the crowd
With my mouth to the earth

And oh, the ways that I lost out My last day as a thief I had to walk back home without The treasures I had gleaned

I slept as a lover one last time today
And awoke in lover's hold
I watched her asleep, passed the time away
And kissed I the backs of her eyelids
With my heart to the door

I ruled as a king one last time today
The filthy monarch groweth old
I played with my toys, passed the time away
And broke I my jeweled crown
With my hands to the floor

Jon Cheney

Make My Bed in the Depths

It was a hot day, albeit beautiful.

Starched white collars clung to the back of sweaty necks.

It was the type of day that old men relish,

sipping their aged whiskey from decorative crystal low ball glasses.

It was a Sunday and a new chapel was being built.

Soon, its skeleton would rise above the brick walkways.

Brushing the skyline with its stoic wisdom.

Soon, old women with moist fingers would thumb through the hymnals.

Children would crawl underneath the pews - smelling the clean carpet.

Pictures would be taken on the stone steps of embarrassed brides and faint grooms.

Scripture would echo in the rafters, released from the old biblical hand – olive-skinned and trembling.

The ones who listened would be free of burden.

The ones who ignored would be guilt-free.

Or so it seemed.

On that bright blue Sunday.

. .

The earth around the chapel was now emerald with growth.

. . .

The pastor was baby-faced and innocent.

A virgin to evil among other things.

That morning he had practiced his sermon after bathing and combing his fine blond hair.

He put his robe on over his shirt and trousers.

It was the first Sunday of many.

He stepped out into the pulpit and leaned against the podium.

He looked out at his congregation:

sinners, blue-hairs, cripples, children, mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons.

He felt powerful

And he felt loved.

He was indeed.

He sifted through the gold edges of his Bible and arrived at a dogeared section.

It was going to be magnificent.

It will be remembered for ages, this bright blue Sunday.

Making eye contact with each pale face in his flock, he read with a crack in his voice:

This is how it will be at the end of the age.

The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous.

And throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Tyler Douglas

Prophecy

Open the rift, fall into the fade.

Let your eye guide, one gift of six to harness against the touch of jade. Sink fathoms deeper into the onyx abyss.

Meet the oracle, the gatekeeper, at the arch and kiss the hand of eternal night.

Ordained rise again to quote the script with clarity and insight.

Speak of the warden who ripped ethereal metal from the Devil's kettle.

Joshua William Reinsvold

Ode: A Fearful Thief.

For a moment, there is no panic here.

From out of the swirling mist comes not the looming shadow of an unfettered foe, searching to cut down his victim with doubt, or to cast the spell of deepest despair.

For a moment, the irreproachable criminal seeks a thin, penetrable fog, that neither hides his face from the world nor the world from his.

Instead, the essence of warmth – floating away from a surface

1

25

Instead, the essence
of warmth – floating away from a surface
smooth'd through a tension broken only by
the kiss of beckoning, eager lips – brings
a moment of Eastern tranquility

15
that even an oriental prince, who,
replete in contemplative certitude
regarding the nature of True Being,
has never, nor will ever, comprehend.
And so the thief hides.

In this calm is he —
watching, waiting — poised for a long moment
with anticipation on his lips like
the song that he loves to sing to himself
when whiskey is under his breath — the words
mumbled, half-forgotten, yet twined in the

memories of yesterdays and daydreams	
of tomorrows, accompanied by a	
tune hewn from the very rocks of the earth –	
for when great fear strikes.	30
Here it will run deep—	
for what do men fear most but loss of life?	
When there is everything to be lost and	
everything to be gained in one instant	
life will be feared and rightfully feared for.	35
And so the innocent thief fears for life,	
and so the fearful man waits for new life	
in a calm moment but he – not calmly –	
knows that calamity waits in the next	
eternal second.	40
The door now opens.	
The glimpse of pale skin – a bejewelléd neck –	
she sits alone at a spot meant for two.	
Leaving his misty shroud on the table	
in a cup of fragrantly steaming tea,	45
the apprehensive thief approaches her,	
his prey, intent on soon acquiring	
that which, though precious, most deign to value.	
He coughs: she half-turns with a gentle start—	
he says, "Madam, will you give me your heart?"	50

Edward Blessing

Direction

Heaven's gate had flown agape When time untied your silhouette Where Angels mingled 'round the corner I knew I had loved you before

As a star may focus on a single dream Did I pace my gaze to glimpse My fingertips to graze your lips I knew I had touched you before

Dare I dip into this reflection
I see my soul, do you see mine?
I see the cliff from whence we fell
I knew I suffered you before

The steps that shaped the steps you make Were there before you stood Burning clear within my ear I knew I had followed you before

And I am here to follow you again

Veronica Lynn Amatucci

Coward

Lowliness dressed 'neath a wet blanket of wit Snags itself on the splinter of love Reels of film within these locks of curly hair Come undone one by one... Passion begins her story No beginning No end

From top to bottom of this hourglass
As locks uncoil, do eyelids undress?
For flesh as soft as this becomes undone
When Time tries her on for a night
Ah, but these bright lights comb honey
That will shine for all eternity
And lips that did lock secrets begin to grin
Till gasps cry out and sneak them back
Turn away when candid rhythms render
Daze upon days when life did not seem so real

Suffer the moment she leaves For this was only a dream

No beginning No end

Veronica Lynn Amatucci

As I Mend the Unraveled Sky, I Sing

I could hardly watch her leave; we wept long before I felt her last breath fall from paper lips

and those heartrending words that left me up for endless days and nights in the persistent rain still pool in the deepest hollows.

I knew her

for a minute, for a lifetime, forever caught in moments before the early fall of stars.

And now, she lives in a whispered song

this threnody
I sing to myself each night
as I try to mend
my unraveled
sweep of sky.

Melinda Kemp Lyerly

Falling into Being

You, you with the clovers in your hair, your braided sun beams.

Flowers and winged things. How you'll never know the species of them, but you know them by their colors--their tiny reflected sunlights. You call them cousins by their hues: this one is robin red, this one is lily white. You touch them with your bluebird eyes.

What is the final truth, then? Is it that they live, that there's beauty in existing as you are?

Before the sun had risen, you cupped your hands around your mouth and whispered to the spiraled bud of a morning glory: why will you bloom? No answer until the morning, and then it unfurled its petals; its greeting to the day, to a lifetime. You sat and watched this little being bloom with the magnificence of purpose. It was beautiful in its silence, in its pride. You gave it the honor of breathing softly, of acknowledging its vulnerability. You knew it was weaker, less protected as a softly petaled bloom than as a bud. You saluted its courage.

And when it died in the dusk of fading lights and fading colors, you stood in reverence as you do at the funeral of a man who lived well. Shed a tear but smiled in acceptance of a gift you never intended to receive.

And by morning, you had discerned the colors of yourself. You had fallen into being.

Kaitlyn Elkins

Burn secret songs;
Consume this immense sound.
Leave this place of dark, slender winds
For a quieter where.
Shut the door behind you tightly,
But know, a silent smile will unclose it.
Off you go now, into the world.
Don't let them see your quiet soul.

Stephanie Ricker

Once Upon A Time

(we never specify What Time, it's more universally applicable that way)

There Lived A Beautiful Princess

(we also never mention all the work that she puts in to make herself Beautiful, because It Is A Truth Universally Acknowledged that no one can be Beautiful without Manageable Hair, Eyebrow Waxes, and A Lot Of Makeup)

Who Was Looking For A Handsome Prince To Marry.

(It is, of course, essential that he be Handsome; if you have to wake up to matted hair and morning breath every day, who cares that his family tree can be traced back to Charlemagne?)

One Day The Prince Came Riding Along On His White Horse

(the horse is always White, usually about As White As Snow; A Horse Of Another Color is quite unheard of)

And Swung The Princess Up Behind Him

(she would never climb up herself, and her waist is so thin from her diet that the Prince has no trouble scooping her up)

As They Rode Off Into The Sunset

(orchestral music is so much more epic when it's played at sunset, which highlights the metaphor that the movie is ending)

And Lived Happily Ever After.

(Although they have grown up as we do, once they Ride Off Into The Sunset they no longer age, but remain youthful forever.)

The End.

(Although the music has played, the screen has gone blank, and you are about to turn the page, it is necessary to declare that The End Has Come At Last.)

Samantha Lisk

Cinderella Is a Masochist

Cinderella is a masochist Snow White lives with seven men Fairy Tales of olden days Create the dreams of children. Robin Hood's deceptions Make heroes out of thieves, While Peter Pan's cross dressing Demonstrates miniskirts from leaves. Our ideals and aspirations Concocted and infused From cold reality and hard knock life By fate and chance removed Belle's finest attribute Is walking while reading a book, While Jasmine's a pro at distraction Arresting men with just one look. If the dreams we have inside us Are products of these tales, Then perhaps we're all spoiled princess brats And sexist lovesick males.

Kendra Erickson

Oh, How the Writer Wishes Smith-Corona Was Just the Name of A Girl He Knew

A troubled mind and worrisome soul is good for the fingers.

Good for the fingers because they have to peck the keys.

Bad for the heart because it has to watch them do this.

It waxes and wanes complaining with every beat, the heart does, but the fingers ignore its aching.

They push down the letters, hammering home metal and ink upon the page.

They prod and puncture until stiff and bleeding, until broken.

The words the fingers have written are jagged and jumbled.

The mind struggles to make out their meaning, while the soul relaxes in their entropy. The heart, at this point, is in turmoil.

It pulsates uncontrollably throwing rhythm to the wayside. It panics.

The ink and paper scowl back at the heart – a frightening alphabet beaten onto its white clean surface.

There is no love upon the page, quite the opposite.

Forrest Birkett

Find me

What will we do when our eyelids can no longer protect us? When the scent of our essences chokes one another And each breath makes our lashes gather dew? Will your presence become intolerable? Or can I bend my thoughts of you into origami cranes, And send them flying into the flames that separate us? I fear that you'll look disheveled, But more than that, I fear that you'll look angelic, As if the world is your puppet, And I was just a speck of dust within its joints. Our language is gradually being forgotten, And the music we shared no longer listens. It gives a shrill cry whenever I approach it, And my mouth refuses to speak another tongue. When ecstasy hands me a golden apple, I no longer have the strength to cut it in half. I devour it alone. What shall I do when our irises meet and seep into sweet memories? Will my face contort into a dark mask? Or will joy engulf us and magnetize us into an embrace? Although our pride seems to exceed our friendship, And as much as seeing you again will perturb my sanity, I ask of you one thing: Please, Find me.

Sheila Garcia

Boots

I am not marching off to war the classroom greets me, Marines and Sailors to whom I will teach grammar, fine arts of parentheses, how each story is so much more than a footnote in history.

My boots are black, Italian leather, the deep dark of mines and a longing for diamonds, their boots the color of desert, sand of tomorrows, scuff marks of doors kicked in, a body turned over with a toe.

Their boots have a long way to go to face this chalkboard, sit at a one-armed desk reminding them of a friend at Walter Reed, the one thrown like a football when his boot tripped a mine.

I say: write anything in an essay, it's okay as long as you have the details to prove it—

The Corpsman takes it as a dare, describes an ambush on a Baghdad street, detour that went awry during a call to prayer.

Most say it always happens in a flash, time stands still, time speeds up, folds in on itself and you are trapped in the envelope of your life, remembering that letter from home stuck in your back pocket, and the other

letter they will find, later, if you're not so lucky. The corpsman is no exception to this rule of time: one moment he's marching, the next he's flying through air, leaping from an invisible trapeze, his sergeant's body the net catching him.

I know you like me, Doc, but you can get off me now, The sergeant says, and when Doc rises, his cammies bloom blood roses. He cuts the laces of the sergeant's boots. At this point in the narrative I ask him: why is it important to note the blood

spurting from the boots is cherry red? His eyes don't misfire at the memory: the color indicates an arterial wound, he states, I had to lace him up tight with a tourniquet or else he would die. The essay ends with choppers lifting off to safety, a wave

from the corpsman to his buddies. I don't ask: Did anyone survive? Looking at this young guy, I think of all the others who aren't with us, but who still stand at attention, who my students tote to class in backpacks of memories I am trying to help them unload.

Andrea Bates

Morning News

It was in May, she said, and many watched it happen. As her husband held the weight of his dead son, police demanded that he curse the body of his boy and thank them for the killing. He refused.

They beat the man unconscious, drug the body from his hands.

They took a second son in August. They put him in a car, she said, her voice like falling leaves.

We have never found them.

Then it was September.

I took the call at work.

How are you, not so good.

I tried to kill myself, he said.

And I am falling into black with limp hands bleeding, on a street in Groznyy feeling skin and clothing pull away.

Still I'm holding the receiver.

I refuse to let his body go,
deny that it could happen
as it did.

November now and always
I hear the scuttle of the leaves,
the idle of the car.

My face is on the pavement,
the witnesses are silent,
the driver turns away,
the phone is ringing.

John Kincheloe

The Black Wall

I see a man staring at the wall.
Crying, he reaches up to touch it.
And now he is dropping down to his knees
As if to beg for mercy, for a sanctuary.

He stands there sobbing, screaming,
And I am not sure what he is feeling,
For he looks at me in silent hysteria
With his red, swollen, empty eyes.
All of the passersby do not seem to notice or care.
The same with the man;
To him, it's just me.

He motions for me to come,
And I, somewhat hesitant, agree.
The black mirror does not catch my reflection.

Face to face, the man stares into my soul
As he points with a quivering finger to the name that was so dear.

"Look," he says, "I found us."

Jack Grace

War

The rain came down like bullets that day Ripping through the air Noisily, Ceaseless It launched out of the clouds And tore

Down

- WII

Down

Down

To the unassuming realm It murdered the young, innocent green saplings And beat at the well-armored old oaks

Mercilessly

The thick gray-fingered clouds spat out their wrath on the unsuspecting novices Continuing its rampage
It gained power as it barreled down
Streets
Alleys
Plazas

Viselike

Lowlands

The storm tightened its grip and altered the usual harmonious mood of the town

Its departure was slower than its arrival It stayed to linger
In the
Air
Lakes

It toned down melted along windowpanes fell off mailboxes

streamed out gutters

The town went to sleep

and awoke exhausted to find the remains

Marissa Blake

Sandy's Eulogy

Dearest Sandy, what joy you brought me!
Your coat was not always clean
Sometimes you smelled, actually down-right reeked;
But for three and a half years
You evoked sheer happiness whenever we would meet.
When ragged and weak
Even after arthritis, cataracts, and lethargy beseeched
Still you rose to greet.

They claim that Gaylord is our mascot...

I think not!

For on your favorite grassy spot

Lies a handmade token

Left by another who, too, cherished your devotion.

Every camel knew you

And every camel can fondly recall your name;

Not so much for Gaylord.

Intelligence set you apart from others of your kind.

When weather provoked

You found shelter from heat, rain, and cold

Cleverly, in the Post Office.

You incited laughter and amusement as you patiently waited

For postmen to make a 5pm exit.

Then, with the help of a student, you would slip smooth as a criminal

Into the building.

Whereas you exemplified the loving and practical approach of a canine,

The cunning of a feline,

And the unyielding spirit of a thousand men

I offer these four stanzas.

The Creek will never again be the same

Without our furry friend.

Forever you will reside in memories of black and orange, dearest Sandy.

Oh! The joy you brought me!

Adthea Collins

Contributor's Notes

Sandra Ervin Adams is listed in *A Directory of American Poets and Writers*. She lives in Jacksonville, NC.

Veronica Lynn Amatucci is the president of WISE at UNCW.

Andrea Bates mailed her submission in with a *Honeymooners* stamp. Nice.

Forrest Birkett considers himself a modernist - he enjoys observation.

Edward Blessing is a lover of old books, Scotland (haggis forever!), and his darling dearest Katherine.

Jon Cheney is a music and theatre double major in his junior year at Campbell. He has always enjoyed writing in his free time, as well as reading the writing of others, and though he doesn't necessarily have any professional aspirations for his writing he will always continue to share what he writes with his friends and family, as well as with anyone else who might enjoy it.

Adthea Collins, a newly-admitted law school student, hails from Hamlet, NC, and dedicates "Sandy's Eulogy" to the loves of her life: nephew Derek Smith, brother Jimmy Collins, Jr., and father Jimmy Randolph Collins, Sr.

Elizabeth "Lizzle" Grace Davis is a First-Year student at Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Currently she is pursuing a major in English with two minors in Creative Writing and Secondary Education. Her poems can be found in the college's bi-annual publication of *The Arrowhead*.

Tyler Douglas has forty red, white and blue shoe strings and a thousand telephones that don't ring. Do you know where he can get rid of these things?

Kaitlyn Elkins is a biology major at Campbell University. Her work has appeared in *GlassFire Magazine*.

Sheila Garcia is currently studying at Cornell University. Her writings are memoirs, and only through poetry does she find a way for others to truly sympathize.

Jack Grace is 15 and lives in Sanford, NC. He currently attends Lee Early College – sophomore year. He hasn't been writing poetry for a long time (about a year). He writes so he can grow, and this contest will be just another measurement of how he has grown in writing.

Contributor's Notes

Mark Gretch writes eclectic, natural history essays, poetry, genealogy, historical works, etc. Poetry gets him in touch with the imaginative right side of his brain, in contrast to the analytical side he taps into at work. He is presently the director of the Scotland County Literacy Council. He lives in Laurinburg, NC.

Madison Helman is a professional lion-tamer. (Just kidding.) She actually moonlights as a trucker.

John Kincheloe works in Raleigh, lives in Durham, and on any given day would rather be in Santa Fe. He has recently compiled a poetry chapbook entitled, "Wits End."

Samantha Lisk defies gravity on a regular basis. She'll be glad to teach you how (she takes cash and checks).

Melinda Kemp Lyerly is an old artist, a joyful starsailor, a quietly noisy poet, a loving mother, way too impatient, and a steadfast wife-- not necessarily in that order, but ever all at once.

Jubilee Meehan is a First-Year Freshman at Catawba College in Salisbury, NC, and is majoring in English with a concentration in creative writing. She has enjoyed writing poetry for a long time in school; more recently she has taken a more serious approach to it in a special poetry class at Catawba taught by the writer in residence, Dr. Janice Fuller.

Luke Morales is a Campbell English grad. Some of the best poems came to him while he worked in Southeast Asia—a place to which he hopes to return.

Joseph Powell is currently a student at Campbell.

Joshua William Reinsvold is currently a senior English major at Catawba College, studying both writing and literature. He enjoys reading mythology and playing videogames in his spare time. His current residence is Mocksville, NC.

Kerrin Tracy is a junior at Elon University where she is majoring in creative writing and minoring in communications.

Rachael Traylor likes nothing better than a cup of tea and a well-placed comma.

Laney Whiteman is a senior elementary education major. She enjoys (trying) to teach children to enjoy poetry, among other things.