

Adult
Poetry
1st Place

Kaitlyn Conley

"Living Remnants"

Grief is like a large tree planted in the middle of your home, entangling its limbs into every room. As gripping as it can be to face it at every corner you turn, you embrace it as the only living remnant you have left. In the kitchen, you mind the flame of the stove careful not to brush a branch with fire. In the bathroom, you mind the time so that you don't drown the roots. In the living room you worry if there is enough sun or shade on any given day. In the dining room, you thank it for whatever blessing it yields. It covers your window better than blackout curtains. It collects your tears and grows. You learn to live with it. It can remind you of beautiful memories and haunt you with shadows and darkness. You may leave it for work, for life or for love but you return every night to be blanketed by its' branches.

Adult
Poetry
2nd Place

Kaitlyn Conley

<< Shipwreck >>

My heart set sail at sea
about four years and many moons ago,
shoddy and strong,
ambitious and light.
My journey was long like my memory.

Through all the waters
all blue, black and green
both shallow and deep
both awry and serene
crisp and clear like my memory.

Night and day
I tended to the sails
and I have discovered many shores
I've learned excitement
and fear
all of which has adhered to my memory.

My ship still shoddy, now worn
my sails tethered and torn
all in pieces on shore
in a world still new
and yet to be discovered.

I am frightened to find
I am now alone and alive
standing unstable on stable ground
whence I stood tall on the rocky waters,
where it is all I have ever known.

My heart now empty and bare
with a ship to repair,
I am counting the moons it will take
to weather those memories.

Adult
Poetry
3rd Place

Steve Tennant

Gondoliers

We slide through life
Like midnight gondoliers,
Creatures of matter and moment
And movement,
Log oar pushed
Into soft canal bed
Stirring silt
And sigh,
Mute ecstasy
Of love's brief glance.
Slow-shimmering wake
Trailing,
We call out
Warnings at corners
Blind
Voices echoing
Into salient, saline air
Hanging suspended in
Adriatic moonbeam
On ropes of stars.
We sing familiar
Glissading arias
To distract
From rats' scratching

Claws along the ledges
Above high-water line,
Steady the sway
Of now-lithe vessel
Aware of peril
Below in the shallow
Black putrescence.
Still, the timeless waters
Reflect love's strung lanterns
Ashore and aboard.
All will be lost one day
In these rising, timely tides
That breathe us clean
And closer to ruin,
But tonight
We slip the prayers of San Marco
Prow pointing
Toward the Grand Canal,
Stern to the patient
Exhaling sea.