

Adult Poetry

1st Place

Gary M.

Armstrong

silent scene

beyond a frosty window grille

an orphan, just shy of eight,

stared statue still

at winter's wizardry in ballet mode,

fall's flitter having yielded

to that of the cold,

a show as was nature's nature to put on

performed by wind and water

whose role it was to don

frocks of frigid chill,

and if wind, to loosen the lingering leaf

yet clinging closely to stem until

pirouetting away

from treetop tower

to frozen sod, perhaps to stay,

but if water, for variety's sake,

to spend some time as a spike of ice

or cascade to earth as a crystalline flake

if only to dance a pas de deux

with another fleck of floating freeze

or singly swirl as some would do,

continuing on to inevitable end,

when a sliver of stillness

began to descend

upon a silent scene and boy,

just shy of eight,

adopting its joy

Adult Poetry

2nd Place

Sarah Dayan

Mueller

One Thousand Times

I thanked the skies one thousand times
For sending me your love
And in the clouds that burst with rain
Droplets of tomorrow trickled from above

I thanked the moon one thousand times
For shining on your dreams
For in the night your hopes can soar
Where nothing is as it seems

I thanked the Earth one thousand times
For giving you a place to explore
A world of beauty, a world of wonder
A home that will always give you more

I thanked the ocean one thousand times
From the cresting shore to its sandy bluff
As the waves kissed your fingers and your toes
Knowing one thousand times would never be enough

Adult Poetry

3rd Place

Tori Kassel

spirited ghosting

my mind's a cemetery
for all the boys i've sent away
or the ones who untied
their strings and went drifting.

between headstones etched
with our failed fairy tales,
i play poker with poltergeists,
planting flowers at their plots.

don't be misled –
no one is *actually* dead;
just us
and the way we were once.

i'll haunt these plain pages,
working words different ways
until they sound like
what i mean to say.

i'll keep my last name
if i ever marry
in case you come looking
for where we are buried.

what an eerie existence to live
between the now and the then,
between the seconds i felt everything
but dead beside you.

Adult Poetry Honorable Mention

Jeff Brierton

Brothers

Where do you find all the courage
in the terrible dark of the night?
How do you find the strength you need
to steel yourself for the fight?

At your back the sun's descending
the shadows are growing tall.
You know when the daylight fades to black
they'll rage through the breach in the wall.

What do you say to your soldiers
who remember their brothers who died?
What if they knew just how scared you are
that your stomach is churning inside?

You can't help but stare cross the sand bags
and try not to count all the dead
You notice the look in your soldiers' eyes
and you try not to mirror their dread.

How do you tell them
you'll carry the day
and pull them back from hell's door?
When they know that too many have already died
and you can't lose a single man more.

So you scream that it's time
to lock and load
and saddle up for the fight.
You tell them they're all going home soon
that the dying is done for the night.

Where do you find all the courage?
Does it come from a place deep inside?
From a place only history's heroes have known
where bravery and terror collide?

We learned where we found all the courage
in the terrible dark of that night.
We found it alongside our brothers
back to back in the thick of the fight.

Adult Poetry
Honorable
Mention

Lori Beckham

Two

Two-car garage

Two chairs

By the tiny table

One cup of coffee, steaming in the morning light

A paradise, ecstasy

Always as the sun rises

Two bathrooms

Two chairs

On the front porch

Cooled in the shadow of the noon light

A fortress, safety

Always as the sun looms high

Two spare rooms

One loveseat

In the living room, the light breaks apart from the blinds

The TV is black, no sounds emitting

A daydream, fantasy

Children laugh in the distance outside

As the sun rays die

Two stands

One queen-sized bed

A worn lampshade bleeds red

A shell, a tomb

Two pillows and a sea of sheets

Too close, too bad

Too much room