

Westland Writes 2015

Poetry and Fiction

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Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, contest judge

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POETRY

Annette Rochelle Aben

For Allison

If you want to step into a whole new world, step into the eyes
of a little girl.

Her laughter is like a river of dreams and with stars for shoes,
she glides on moon beams.

Flowers are her friends and she knows all the bird's songs.

Little things can break her heart so loyal and strong.

**One day building castles in the sand; in a blink you're holding
a woman's hand.**

WORTHY

DO YOU KNOW JUST HOW WORTHY YOU ARE

WELL, JUST LOOK ABOUT YOU

LOOK CLOSE - LOOK FAR

YOU'LL SEE TREES, LAKES AND MOUNTAINS

SUN, MOON AND STARS;

THAT MY FRIENDS IS HOW WORTHY YOU ARE

KNOW IN YOUR HEARTS THIS PARADISE GOLDEN

WAS CREATED FOR YOU IN TIMES SO LONG AGO, OLDEN

AND THERE WAS NO TEST YOU HAD TO TAKE
TO KNOW IF THIS YOUR HOME YOU SHOULD MAKE
FOR THE CREATOR KNEW IN THE MASTER PLAN
THAT A SPACE NEEDED TO BE OH SO WORTHY OF MAN
YET THERE ARE TIMES IN THIS SPACE WE FEEL SO LOST
AS **THOUGH WE HAVEN'T THE MONEY TO COVER THE COST**
OF THE SPLENDOR AROUND US, THOSE VAST OPEN SPACES
WE LONG TO RETREAT TO OUR HIDEAWAY PLACES
WE WANT TO PUNISH OURSELVES FOR WE KNOW WE ARE
LESS

THAN ALL THAT SURROUNDS US, WITH ALL WE'VE BEEN
BLESSED

AND THEN WE GET TO FEELING SMALLER THAN SMALL
WORRIES AND BURDENS LOOM SO VERY TALL

IT'S HARD TO REMEMBER TO JUST CLOSE OUR EYES

AND GO TO THAT STILL, SMALL PLACE INSIDE

TO FIND THE PEACE AND LOVE THAT WE TRULY SEEK TO
GO BEYOND THE ILLUSION OF BEING WEAK

FOR YOU **ARE THE CONTAINER FOR WORLD'S GREATEST**
RICHES

HELD TOGETHER WITHOUT STAPLES OR STITCHES

FOR YOU WERE ENTRUSTED WITH A SPIRIT, WITH A SOUL

TRULY MORE VALUABLE THAN ALL THE WORLD'S GOLD

MORE PERFECT AND AWESOME THAN ALL WE CAN SEE

FOR YOU ARE BLESSED WITH OPPORTUNITY JUST TO BE
LIFE IS MOST INTOXICATING OF PERFUMES AND YOU THE
FINEST OF JARS
AND THAT MY FRIENDS, IS HOW WORTHY YOU ARE!

Barbara Aimone

Announcing!

Pregnant buds bursting forth

Anxious now, to come alive.

Breezes chill in early morn

Warmed, with the rays poured from
the sun

Green tips peek out from
winter's home

The grounds astir as new life takes root.

Gone soon the pall that winter laid

Light breaks through the dark and lingers.

Soon, now the land will wake with
mighty force!

Spring's come! Long endless
night is over!

Delano Alexander

Not Him

I'm NO junior
I'm NOT my father's son
I DO NOT bear his last name
I DON'T bear any resemblance
I'll NEVER be my father at all

Lisa Amine

Precious

Let me live another day
Many task, many favors to repay
I have sunshine on a cloudy day.
I have a little cottage
Nestled on a hill

All the squirrels come and sit on my
Window sill.

Birds in the meadows

My song trickling in a stream

I have one restful hour to sit and

Day dream.

Bees in my orchards looking for

Nectar, all of my windchimes

Look like reflectors.

I ask that you be patient

As to when I come home.

Wait until I'm old and weary

Sad of heart and all alone.

Let me finish in what needs to be done

Wake me with your blessings

In the morning sun!

Sisters

I have such a lovely sister

She holds so much beauty within

She's tender, loving, and caring,

I don't know where to begin.

Her compassion is a given in

Everything she says and does.

You can't help but be with her she

Explains a lot with love.

I have so many funny memories

I hold deep inside of me

Those special memories

That only her and I can see,

So my advice to you is stay as

Close as you can be!

I hope you have special memories

That only the two of you can see

I have my special sister for

No one **but me, can't you see**

I love you, Faye

Love, Lisa

LeeAnne Baumdraher

Whole Again

You resplendent flame
Licking your uncertain wounds
With a spicy, blue tongue
I've fed you
Volumes of poetry
On bland, caloric parchment
Watched your belly rise
With hungry heat
Still, you starve somehow
Withering in spirit
And I see your soul
Is like a gingerbread man
Dying on catalytic coals

How I wish I could do more
Throw a few more logs on
Pages full of how I feel
In your red, embracing embers
But, wooden words are not fuel
Damp and heavy with blood
They weigh down our warmth

And it takes turning to ash
To realize the best thing to do
Is absolutely nothing
Let the wind whisper into you
Until you've grown fat enough
To swallow me whole again

It Spoke To Me

I threw your hand away
Like refuse
It hung there, limp
Visibly confused

As it worried
And limply hung
To my fingers, still
A shadow clung

It spoke to me quite secretly

Its ironic giggle
Emitted, black

I blindly groped
To pull your hand back

Yet, the peach was dry
Dehydrated palm
It brusquely refused
With eerie calm

It spoke to me with mastery

My apologies were lost
In barbed vice
Locked tightly within
A rusted device

Handshake severed
In wishbone grip
Pale and drained
Its deserted lip

It spoke to me most savagely

The pain, it seeps
I am made to regret
Begetting this burden

This endless debt

Miming farewell

At last, to fall

It whispered justice

To a fair dead wall

It spoke to me in poetry

Christian Charette

New Day

Tomorrow's a new day,

I will start in a different way,

I don't know what the future may hold,

I'll learn to try,

I am strong even when I cry,

If I fall I don't care,

Because I know Mom is always there,

Tomorrow is a new day,

I am strong and I will pray,

And sing my song,
Tomorrow I will look back at today,
I am stronger in every way,
I have learned something new,
Really powerful, and something true,
I shall take responsibility and start anew,
Tomorrow is a brand new day,
There's brand new hope,
If you have trouble,
Ask god to cope.

Faye Charette

Taken away in love

Mister tomorrow, I'm longing to see,
Are you coming tonight, are you coming
For me? I do not know what my future
Holds, I will live and love as my
Life unfolds. I put myself in your
Loving hands, I trust in you, who
Understands. I have this yearning
Strong in my heart, that you're the

One, from the very start.

I'll leave my outcome in your care,

I'll listen to your voice, you'll guide

Me there.

Don't you know, I strive in vain,

I know you'll protect me in health

And pain.

My prayers are many and so often

Not just words, unspoken.

They are whispered in my tears,

By a heart, that is truly broken.

Please teach me to be patient in

Everything I do, give me the peace

And serenity that I owe to you.

Give me your trust and a lot of your

Wisdom as I follow after you.

I raise up my eyes to the infinite

Skies, just to watch the night vanish

As a new day is born.

I hear the birds singing to the one

I will always adore.

With you touch so gentle and tender,

You will wrap up the night and softly

Tuck it away with splendor.

Nature's greatest forces are found in

All things, softly falling snowflakes,
Drifting down on angel's wings,
God comes closest to us when our
Souls are in repose.
How this happens, nobody knows.
So when you are feeling tired,
Discouraged and really blue,
Always remember there's one door
That is always open for you.

The Bear

Spring has sprung
After a long winter's nap.
Searching the forest
For that sweet honey sap.
The sun is shining warm on their
Face, mom and dad stop for a
Long summer's embrace.
Soon little cubs suddenly appear
Rolling around and showing no fear.
They go to the stream to see what
Could be found. Watching and waiting
Without any sound.

But the day is coming and time is
Short, the cubs get bigger and leave
The fort.
Summer has passed, fall is here,
They are getting ready to snuggle for
Another year.
They will have a family of their own
Nestled in their cave
A place they call their home
Waiting to awake them from a long
Winter's nap.

Robert Cohen

The Cure

We shared childhood experiences,
Questioned the truisms our doctors levied on us,
Broke through the shadows of the asylum,
Then swung on the rings of Saturn,
Fell into the arms of Venus,
But you didn't reach out
And kept falling into oblivion.

Shadows of the asylum returned,
Dams of truths began to fill.
The haze of distortion is back.

Past Loves

The ventricles of the mind house the past,
Some, dark sins, other secret memories
Of loves lost.
Never their name vibrating vocal cords or dancing
On the tongue pushing each cheek outward
Into a smile as when she was seen
Coming near.
The memories of past loves are
Deeply embedded though never spoken,
Periodically surface as one's
Mate deteriorates to
Shrunken gray mass of adipose.

Tisha Cole

Rising from the Ash Heap (1791-1864; a true account)

She rises from the ash heap

"Today I will be a princess.

Has it not been done before?

Has not an Ella come from cinder?"

A cobbler's daughter, a servant girl

Unseen, alone, a wary soul

Dirty work, dirtier hands, today it ends

"This day I will be a princess."

The story goes: a coastal town discovered her

Washed ashore—she praised her Alla-Tallah god

**They whispered, "Princess Carraboo from the island of
Jvasu."**

Her persuasive words gushed forth quite foreign

As they welcomed this hypnotic beauty

With exotic dress in enchanting fashion

Jewels dangled richly from a plumed head dress

As her dark cryptic eyes now saw renown

Princess Carraboo lived secretly in plain view

As the days and nights turned into months

And folks of high station bowed to her whims

As great history was made in their midst

But, alas, fairytales do end; the royal's glass slipper broke

The cobbler's daughter dirt did show

For it couldn't be hidden what one recognized

As only a false-hearted servant girl

So the princess sailed the ocean blue

From England to America and back again

Though she envisioned a large entourage

The New World beheld her not so

Somewhere in her dreaming heart

Mary Baker had lost her way

She will be known only as a cobbler's daughter

But be Princess Carraboo for eternity

Long Last Love

She heard her name whispered

In the way that it kissed her

This sweet sound she's always known

It was her lover. Had her soldier come home?

Breathless, she turned; a shadow, a slender form

She couldn't be mistaken; her thoughts swarmed

Challenging times had rushed in from all sides

The oceans, the wars became their greatest divide

It seemed like eternity; still he did not move

Hand to her face, with trembling voice, "It's you."

"When did you arrive? I never heard.

No one told me. Not one single word."

She heard her name whispered

In the way that it kissed her

Opening her eyes from that long ago storm

She turned and placed sweet flowers on his stone

Patrick Franks

Bedtime Story

I took her up in my arms
And would rock her
In the old rocking chair
How we might have looked
I did not care

I'd tell her fantastic stories

Some new
Some old
Some half true

I'd tell her such tales

About magical midgets
And mystical whales
Yes, very tall tales, (some pretty deep)
Great tales of whales
With very great tails
A whale of a tale

Until heaviness would creep
Upon her lids

She was then set
Slow adrift
In deep silent sleep

I hoped then that she'd dream

Not so much of the story that was said
But of the teller of the tale
The one still holding her hand
And that strokes her sleeping head

So someday, when she wakes
May she realize
Those stories that all dealt
With hope, loyalty, and love
Were alive
And awake in him (for her)
As she drifted off to bed
And is now looking down
With a small smile
Just inches above her head
Now her day is spent
And I am content
That I was there

Holding her near
At least at that time...
That one, good, year.

Reptile Smile

The crocodile smiled
At the native
Standing by the Nile
Come on in
Swim with me
It will only be
For a little while

Rick Gallmeyer

Letter to My Sister (For Karen Ward)

Now I lay me down to sleep,

I point a pistol to my head,

I pull the trigger now I'm dead,

Forever deadalways dead.

(Bedtime prayer for the suicidal)

Dear Karen,

Someday, you, into the dark, I will follow.

Somehow, you, into the light, I will lead.

Your body swings from a cedar loft.

You have joined your hero.

You left us in your wake.

We are debris bouncing to and fro in the eddying trails churned
up by your hasty crossing.

We are particles of dust swirling in the draft of your passing.

We are scattered bits of sand dancing in the breeze of your
demise.

You were a ship lost at sea; drifting through existence; aimless in purpose, fragile in your reason for being; searching for somewhere to cast anchor.

We are the chalky residue of your childhood; we are the narcotics you ingested before you met cocaine.

We are the pennies you dropped on the carpet of a cheap motel room; strewn to and fro, not worth the effort of being gathered. We are the cigarette butts you left smoldering in the ash tray on the night stand. We are the wisps of smoke circling upward towards the ceiling fan. We are the haze dissipating into gentle currents of wind circling above your head. We hover breathlessly, futilely, as you hasten towards the exit.

Oblivious, you check out on us; as if we are not there.

You don't turn in your key. You don't close the door. You leave the TV on. You don't turn off the ceiling fan.

We hover. We hover and wait **for you to come home.... but, you** never do.

On a rainy day in June, you sprinkled angel dust on our heads; then stepped out onto a creaky balcony overlooking a silent yawning abyss;

And you leaped into the unknown.

I watched you fall.

You cried out to me before you leaped; but I could not hear you.

You reached out to me before you crossed; but I did not take your hand.

Your cry was muted by my own.

Your plea was lost in the din of my own thunderstorm.

Forgive me Karen. I was listening closely, too closely, to my own pain.

I should have listened more closely to you.

Last summer, the last time we saw each other, we sat side by side.

We sat, side by side, on the living room sofa at our parent's home. You had been away for over a year.

I remember everyone had left. Dad was out back working in his garden. Mom was in the kitchen baking a cake. Your kids and grandkids had gone home. Just like when we were kids, you sat with me as I watched TV.

After a while, you leaned in close to me and whispered softly in my ear.

"I have a hero." You mumbled. "I have someone I adore."

"A hero?" I remember repeating absently. I was keeping both eyes on the football game.

"My hero is a little girl," you confided.

I remember glancing at you. You seemed content; your smile was gentle, your manner was serene.

"She's a little girl with my same name." You confessed.

"mah saaame naame," I had mimicked back, mocking the way you stretched out the vowels.

I remember teasing you. I repeated again, "mah saaame naame," with your same soft breathy tone. "What's that supposed to mean?mah saaame naame."

Then I half turned towards you and smirked. I rolled my eyes, shaking my head. I muttered, "ditzzy blonde." It went back to our childhood. I kept watching the game.

"She and I have the same name," You had repeated it emphatically, "The little girl and I, **we have the SAME NAME.**"

So reluctantly I set down the remote control, and this time, I looked directly at you. Our eyes met, your face brightened. You had gotten my attention.

Quite clearly you said: "She asphyxiated herself while her parents were at the store. I heard it on the news."

And then I asked you, feigning deep sincere interest, "**WHO** asphyxiated herself?"

I looked back at the TV. I wanted to watch the game.

"My hero," you whispered. You had rested your chin on my shoulder.

"She is my hero." You said again, very softly, in my ear.

I said nothing. And you sat with me.

Quietly, serenely, you sat with me.... as **I** watched the game.

Forgive me, Karen, I could have listened more closely to you.

I should have listened.... more closely....to YOU!

The aroma of coffee and burnt toast floats into your apartment from the neighbors across the hall, lingering in the air, mingling with the scent of sadness;

senseless, you cannot smell.

The sounds of running water and heavy footsteps rumble through the floor boards from the apartment above, invading the stillness, coaxing the noose faintly to and fro;

still, you cannot hear.

The sight of vivid green rolling hills and tall firs draped with mauve colored cones, crowned by golden sunlight bursts through your picture window, bringing with it warmth and hope;

hopeless, you cannot see.

Fibers of rough hemp rope gouge into your pale white skin, tearing and rupturing, penetrating deep into my psyche;

but, no matter, you cannot feel.

Bile and blood rise up from your belly, acrid and salty, parching your mouth and tongue, drying up my will to live;

but, no bother, you cannot taste.

Your body sways in the morning breeze, as I flail in grief.

Anguish is pulling me under; I am drowning in your wake.

Your body hangs from a cedar loft; you have joined your hero.

I must swim, or soon I will join you, you and your hero in the dark.

Someday, Karen, I will follow you into the dark.

Somehow, Karen, I will lead you into the light.

Without you, what good is my salvation?

Without you, I cannot go on, you must come with me.

How can I rejoice, if you cannot rejoice with me?

Someday, you, into the dark, I will follow.

Somehow, you into the light,..... I will lead.

I will **always** be your older brother.

I miss you sister.

Sincerely,

Rick

"Rejoice in the Lord, for he is good.

He forgives our iniquities. His mercy endures forever."

*Again I say.... **"Rejoice!"***

Diana Hage

Jack

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick,
Jack tried to jump over the candlestick.

But the wax was warm and so very gooey,
That Jack was stuck and he was screaming for Louie,

Whose Louie, we all asked at once,
Oh he's just one of my friends, the Dunce.

Jack, my dear grandson who knows my phone number,
I'm making this up as I go along so there might be a blunder.

I love you very much as you are one of eight,
Who thinks of me often and then listens to my gait!!

Luv,

SITTU

John Kelly

Thee Enchantment of Life

(This spell is the **antidote to the spell entitled "An Evil Witch's Incantation"**)

LIFE, LUMINOSCITY, LOVE, LAZARUS

I give this power to you to dazzle us

For true love we always shared

I give to you life that no one dared

Gone the afflictions that mired the land

Across the world to untouched sands

Life abounds now around and sea

I banish death forever be

The innocent will now cry in victory

As their mothers stop crying incessantly

Love is the greatest power be

To change the world for an eternity

The Fairies of the Glistening Lake

With wings of shimmering iridescence
Of magic, of no absence

Floating through the misty ether
Giving the water itself a humorous blur

With bodies of water, air and magic
Born of everything beautiful, good and cosmic

They exist in cold, in heat, and never fool
Doing good to the unsuspecting, never cruel

Granting wishes always to man
Never letting anyone be overrun

Are hiding from the sight of everyone
Never letting their magic be undone

The Fairies of the Glistening Lake talked to me one day
Wishing upon me never to be cliché

I write this poem to you to convey to you, to ever stay true in
writing

Magic, fairies, and writing are real

Mary Lindsay

Cozy

Warm weather, bright light

A stripe of sun on the floor

Claimed by drowsy dog

Rainstorm

Dark sky releases

Soft and wet, fat drops create

Spotted sidewalk art

Jennifer McPherson

Sunset

Orange, yellow, violet
Dusk falls quietly over
Forest, wildlife, me

Lake Huron

Silent ripples move
Moonlight on water shimmers
Quiet, peaceful, calm

Lyn Mau

Mariphasa

Werewolf came
Tore out my crocus
Not his midnite bloom.

Beat fists on fur
Pulled on tattered ears

Crocus not the cure !

Shock for him

Blood lust surge

Next full moon !

Catherine M. McKenzie

When You Looked at Me

When you looked at – you stared

When you smiled – I knew you cared

When you held my hand – you left a memory

When you touched my thoughts – you stirred eternity.

The Wind Whispers I Love You

The wind whispers I love you

The trees bow to their call

Together they dance in the moonlight

To a song they are singing for all.

Wilma Lee Murphy

Sweet William's Dance

There are flowers growing at the
Edge of the woods,
Sweet Williams are their names.

There is a man living at the
Center of my heart,
Sweet William is his name.

I've danced the dance of life with him
For all of fifty years.
We've danced the dance of Joy
With just a scattering of tears.

I've followed him to the end
of the earth,
Where we danced with
Little tuxedoed penguins.

We danced over mountains high
And valleys deep.

We once danced under the sea
So you can see quite easily
Why Sweet William means so much to me.

Casheena Parker

Still have Wings

For too long I have allowed other view of me to determine
what I see when I look at me

Their voice and their disappointment of me

Challenged what God himself wanted for me

No More

I am

More than what they think of me

More than what they speak of me

More than what they want of me

I am

A child of God

Blessed and Beautiful in His image

It's through Him and Him alone that I flourish

He gives me all that I need and want

I don't need false Gods of glory

I don't need to impress other and allow them to determine
my worth

For I am worth far more than the price they would place upon
me

I am

Priceless; in this world

It's my voice and my voice alone that has power over my life

For the power of my Father lies within me and through Him I
have been blessed with the same powers as He

No longer will I listen to the lies Satan has whispered to his
serpents to tell me over the years

Their words don't matter, and they hold no power over me
anymore

I am

More than a mother

More than a writer

More than what you see

I am

A force to be reckoned with

Powerful and beautiful

Brilliant and amazing

And it's time that people stop viewing me as the muddled
Angel

And notice the simple fact that I among all these fallen
Angel's around me

still have my wings

I can and still take flight

Though it may not be in front of your eyes

It happens

And one day when you see me fly, you will forget the day you
ever doubted that I could

For I am an angel that still has her wings

DeAndre Roberson

Alone

Mind body and sould

Spirit free with a closed heart (alone)

I stand alone

No guard no temptation

But my guard is up

Lower the windows of the soul

Out pour clouds
Raining down fear
Desire, pain, and hope (I stand alone)
Shun sunlight
Light as a lion
As the cool summer breeze
Sweeps a cold morning
Mourning of black, of white
50 shades of gray
That represents wisdom
Like a 50 year old.

I look at the man in the mirror
As he stares back

With a devil's grin

But he is a friend or a foe
If two of us
But I turn around
And I stand alone

That's the true meaning of alone

Void, darkness, eternal, space
So my journal is internal
Of my exterior, inferior, to the ego

It's better to be alone in the desert
(the wilderness) than to be with a Jezebel spirit

-Alone-

just me myself and I
Independent, freedom
Freedom for me
Lord I need freedom for me

Freedom

Part I

1712 to the 1800s
Couple shots of 1800
In my stomach
As I hear the sounds of the trumpet
7 seals break
7 eyes of the Lord (Eloheem)
Reveal to the eyes of the public
The veil uplifted
Never break the oath
Or the truth of the covenant
Tabernacle
Locked in shackles
Planking
Stiff as statues
Statue of limitation (emancipation) proclamation

Take a look in the mirror (if that's you)

Couldn't run fast enough

Look how fast they catch you

How fast they snatch you

Cause your brethren

Was tired of a hut

And wanted a castle

Europeans wanted to tax you

Part II

Fa the melanin in yo skin

Skin tone (deep bones)

Stronger than any men

Many men

Preach on (deep songs)

But we a never be again

What we own

(the throne)

Get Dethrone

Fa tobacco / gun powder / and some cheap stone

(young ninja preach one)

"Decapitated"

(Blood ties, if you leach on)

(Do I really have to speak on)

what's been known

unknown lands

that's what we on

(Really what do we own)

But our words in our song

Till the day the we gone

Dream on

Lean on

But my people I'mma lead home

Part the sea

Pardon me

Part III

Can see tomorrow

Cuz future hard to see

Prophecies

Rob Peter to pay Paul

Probably

But faith never shaking

Or wobbling

Now I travel

Across seas
To the Mecca
Or the wall (to pray peace)
With the penniless Prince
In Jerusalem
As I kneel to the King
To kiss the ring
Got ya hot
I know sizzling

Then it's back to Sicily

Mob ties sippin' Mai Tais

Now I going moti
No lie
Match with the hankerchief
You guys no match
For my guy
That's why
I need freedom

Part IV

Lord
I need- freedom
Lord-
I need

Freedom
Freedom for me
Freedom for me

Lord I need freedom for me

Andy Schuck

Fringe

Hang whimsically frayed, orange mostly, some green
Punctuated by match sticks at the roots The smooth
greeting, the practiced scrape Slide parallel,
slice lines in open spaces As a business suit,
black with white open collar The church pews are empty,
pick a spot grab the diminutive minister
who garbles a prayer On a wire not tight enough
to hold beatitude improving its ratio to open land by
the day
Into a shiny chrome corner of my own making
To move around in, much less practice forgiveness
Long glances into future verisimilitude unimpeachable
horizon, always on the rise Forgotten lest I remember
Dairy Queens and diet confetti Only you tried
to stand up, sit down, walk around

Denise Sedman

Remnants

*I carry a deep sadness of the heart which must now
and then break out in sound – Franz Liszt, Educator,
Pianist and Songwriter (1811-1886)*

i.

I saw his death suit
in the closet
with a pair of

red socks
in the breast
pocket of his jacket.

I'd never see
those red socks
inside the coffin.

He had a certain
destiny, which

was in Hell.

I prayed
the Devil
would let him in,

wanting, waiting
to toss him
in the bonfire.

ii.

He only
told
white lies

Harmless
and
well-intentioned.

He cheated
on his wife,
more than once.

Left a mess
of his
children.

Any scar
or bruise
meant nothing

Whiskey-breath
alcoholic stink
to the end.

iii.

A grease moth
swaddled
in silk lining,

a velvet rose,
full of thorns,
in his hands.

The hands
that never stopped
gripping like a vice.

iv.

His cycle is complete.
I'm done with the past.
Even so,

v.

the past isn't
done
with me.

Unfolding A Pure Idea

to Diane Decillis, "Strings Attached"

**"finally the personal is all that matters, / we spend years
describing stones, / chairs, abandoned farmhouses – / until
we're ready."** – Looking for Stephen Dunn.

I read your poems with a box of Kleenex by my side;
the smell of menthol and eucalyptus under my nose.
Tea long gone cold, my white cup waiting
while that blue pen circles my favorite lines.
I can lose track of time
when I thumb back again;
with emotion, the stir in my heart,
because your words are ordered
everywhere and anywhere,
I live through you,
the natural creator
of all that matters.

Linda Sparkman

Tis Treasure Yer Aft

Aye ye lubbers, so `tis treasure ye seek.

Then follow on **through crack `n creak.**

`Tis thar the prize ye yearn for lay,

Might fate allow, ye not betray

What others did, `n had to pay.

Look farst for **biggins' skull me says.**

Tis left, no right of the purple pez.

Don't touch the temptin' sweet pack though.

One did **before but `e n'ere let go.**

Five paces less one fer measure,

If ye still long ta git the treasure.

At the door before ye now,

Find the coat what's made of cow.

Look in **it's side, me forgets which one,**

Grab the key, `tis best ye run.

Now yer close, but **danger's too.**

Don't fall down what `ere ye do.

Pass by the mates who've gone before,
They failed, that's why they're on the floor.
But ye press on, heare me well,
Go past the place where mates have cried
Now search for crumbs from ovens fell,
Then under `ere the water lie.
Tis thar you might fin'ly find,
The treasure `tis been on yer mind.

Kaitlyn Stabile

Insomnia

1:52

The walls whisper
soliloquies
of their life before me,
shaking
and
shuddering

from decades old
aches and pains.

2:34

My lover whistles
a jovial tune
in my ear.

The blankets encase me
in a discomfoting warmth,
swaddling me
to the edge of sleep,
but
forbidding me to leap.

4:57

The floodgates open,
and my mind becomes
a reservoir of unsettled worries.
Lincoln, Franklin, and Johnson
chatter through my thoughts,
arguing about
stability and security.

6:02

My lover whistles another tune,
but this time
matching rhythm
with my avian friends at the window.
A symphony is held in my honor,
but I do not care for the music.

7:15

My alarm echoes
against the vaulted ceiling.

Something Borrowed, Something Blue

I lay beneath this cavern,
Swallowed by taffeta and lace,
Clasping lilies enshrined in satin ribbons.
My hair falls in soft curls,
Pinned away like a child's.
I wear a mask of black and silver,
And my lips polished like an apple
Given to a respected teacher.

The service has ended,
And I cling to his shoulders,
Waiting to dance together for the first time.
The quilted blanket enshrouds his body,
A gift borrowed from my sister,
And I place my lips on his.
His cobalt edges are
The only color askew his pallid cheeks.

Here I lay,
With my promised groom,
One heart echoing beneath the chestnut box.
We really shall love,
Till death do us part.

Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, M.A.

Salad of Stems

Salad of stems,

Dandelions as nature's feast

Creatures growing without censorship,

As the wildflower, detested by so many,

Had a distinct native flavor,

Yet has been tossed as a sacred gem from Mother Earth,
While early man enjoyed them as they scavenged for food,
and Natives lived on a salad of them with

berries, corn, and

Wild potatoes.

With gourds eaten or carved out that could be used as part of
war dance;

Woodlands were the sanctuary as well as the homeland,

Wolves, buffalo and hundreds of deer roamed freely,

Yet spied the scent of man,

Wearing the hide of a deer, with dried blood only the

Wild wanderers could discern;

Yet for him, a wind would blow the scent of the wolf,

A warning;

Where stealth would provide him an advantage,
For being caught in the jaws of the mammoth beast
Would bring a certain demise.

Winter in Spring

Winter in spring, the reality of blankets of snow,
With a hidden frozen tundra beneath,
Burying the bulbs to the point of extinction,
Without breath, or a warmer air mass to survive,
Spring's youth is left behind as the chill continues on as
another Ice age
Fiercely engages our days and coal filled nights;
As the tender touch of a daffodil or Easter Lilly has not
blossomed
With the snowcap still intact,
One wonders what is next?
Will the rhubarb and Iris plants evolve over time?
The longing of the Hosta to thrive has been stuck in the
darkest part of the tundra,
A yearly evolution that has turned to dust,
As the perennial is no more,

With harsh winters destroying the hardiest of these plants,
Where only the sickly don't come back, but the death by snow
and frozen earth, and the cold that never ends,
The sensation of a Violet flavored flower that centers the
Evergreen leaves,
Showcasing the beauty of this plant in its simplicity,
Yet a vital part of spring's rituals where bees and the
Monarch's gather for food and pollination of what
needs to be fed,
Waits to be freed.
As Spring's season marches on without the warmth normal for
April the birth of many flowers are
dormant and hoping for a May release.

Shari Welch

Procrastination

I have to exercise ----I know this is
true
But I can think of a million other things
to do

Watching the early morning TV shows

can't miss the news

That bike in the basement is old and
used

Writing the checks to pay the bills and
when

I'm done with that, I'll catch up on my

journal again

To help de-**stress, I'll listen to music for**
relaxation

Get on the phone and catch up on the latest
communication

Now I've got some knitting to complete and

a good book too

I know I should exercise so what am I going
to do?

Put it off for another day

or

Get off my buns and get underway

Retirement

Rest is something that you will be able to

Enjoy because there will be plenty of

Time to assess, plan, and

Initiate some fun things and creative projects

Remember to sleep in and get up when you get ready

Even though you will have to be on time for your cruise

Move as if you have all day because you do

Even though **you don't work anymore, there is plenty to do**

Never forget to thank God that you are free and

That each new day will be filled with joy and adventure

Tammy White

MORE THAN

MORE THAN WHAT MEETS THE EYE

MORE THAN, DO YOU WANNA KNOW WHY?

MORE THAN MY WALK, MORE THAN MY TALK

MORE THAN MY MIND, ONE OF A KIND

I'M MORE THAN

MORE THAN THE HAIR ON MY HEAD, NAPS AND ALL
ENOUGH SAID

MORE THAN THE SMARTS I POSSESS, SHEER CREATIVITY
WHEN PUT TO THE TEST

**CAN HOLD A BROTHER DOWN, IF HE'S TRUE AND NOT A
CLOWN**

I'M MORE THAN

MAKE A THUG DUDE, SING A SONG'S INTERLUDE

THEN SEDUCE HIM AND PUT HIM IN THE MOOD
HOW

BECAUSE I'M MORE THAN

MORE THAN YOU EXPECT AT FIRST GLANCE,
CAN BE A RIDE OR DIE, IF GIVEN A CHANCE

QUIET YET FIESTY, KNOWS HOW TO HAVE FUN

YOUR BEST FRIEND, YOUR LOVER, THE NERDY ONE

**I'LL BE ALL YOU NEED AND EXTRA, NEVER FIND ANOTHER
LIKE ME I BETCHA**

WHY

BECAUSE I'M MORE THAN

Linda Willman

Haiku

Volcanoes burst red
Fiery mountains glowing
Flaming bombs destroy

Haiku

Lightning flashes bright
Searing heat tears through the flesh
Jolts of fire burn deep

Valerie Wilson

Miracles

Miracles come in all shapes and sizes
Some as big as the ocean
Some as small as a rain drop

To gaze at a miracle is to see
The Order Of The Universe
To know all is set right

We experience a miracle when
We change our perceptions
We see things through a new light
We take a step back and observe

Take a moment to breathe today
See today what you could not see yesterday
For you are the creator of your life
And you have the power to create miracles.

Prayer For The Coming Day

The sun sets over the water
Creating a rainbow of colors
As the little angel
Prays for the coming day

A day full of answered prayers
Of grace and beauty
As the warmth of love
Spreads over the land

A day when we remember
The magnificent beings we are
And all we know
We can accomplish

A day that is sent to us
Directly from God
So we may experience
Heaven Here and Now.

Kenneth J. Zinski, III

I Remember

I remember when my life was whole.

Things were great

Then somebody stole

It must have been fate

I will never lose faith

Or sight of my goal,

To find the soul

I call my mother,

MOM.

SHORT STORIES

Gary Charette

Story

Once upon a time long ago, there was a little boy, he was very sad as both his parents had recently passed away. Nobody wanted him as he walked aimlessly through the woods.

He walked for mile and miles going deeper into the forest. Soon dusk came and the little boy sat down by a tree and cried.

Suddenly, he heard a strange noise just a few feet behind him.

There in a trap he found white baby rabbit struggling **desperately to free herself from a hunter's trap.**

The little boy was heart-broken because he loved animals, he adored them because they were pure in heart.

The little rabbit was crying because she knew she would never see her family again. In the morning, the hunter would show up and take her life away just so somebody could have her fur for a coat.

In desperation, the rabbit pleaded with **the little boy, "Little boy, please free me from this trap."**

The boy was surprised because the little rabbit talked. But you see this was a magic rabbit.

The little boy freed the rabbit and the little rabbit was so happy she cried with joy.

The **rabbit then asked, "If I jump in your pocket, can you please take me home? I can point the way."**

The little boy agreed and they were off together. They had traveled mile through the dark forest until they saw a faint light in the distance.

As they got closer, they realized that the light was a candle tat the rabbit family had left burning so their lost daughter could find her way home in the dark. They had never lost faith that they would see their daughter again.

When the little boy reached the rabbit **family's house, the** little baby rabbit jumped from his pocket and ran to the arms of her mother and father who were still up waiting.

Her little brother and sister rabbits came running from the nest to embrace their lost sister.

Tears of joy ran down the whiskers of all the rabbits as they hugged and kissed the little rabbit.

They were all so thankful to the little boy for returning the little rabbit.

The mother and father then offered the little boy any wish he wanted as a reward.

Remember these were magic rabbits and anything was possible with them.

The little boy thought hard- he had one wish and only one to make.

He knew he could have anything- all the gold the world had to offer if he wanted.

Do you know what he wished for?

He wished to become a little baby rabbit so he could become part of their family.

Even today, if you listen hard enough on a clear, silent night, you can hear him frolicking with his brothers and sisters in the woods.

Keith D'Alessandro

And So the Madness Begins

Stewart **jumped into his father's car with as much** speed and agility as an uncoordinated fifteen year old adolescent of six-nine could muster and shut the car door behind him. He turned to his father, took in his disapproving gaze, and wondered if there was anything he could do that would not end up irritating him.

"You in a hurry to get away from your friends?" his father asked him in a mocking tone.

Stewart figured his dad's current aggravation with him had to do with having to be the one to come pick him up

from the game and replied, "It's nothing. Just stupid stuff. Theodora and I can't be just friends, we must be going at it like animals every chance we get. Lewis thinks he's a comedian. It's my fault he's a five-foot-five butterball and couch potato."

One thing Stewart Black appreciated about his parents was that when he told them him and Theodora were just friends on account of the fact that her Dad would not allow them to date they were as sympathetic about his disappointment over this fact as they were willing not to force him to say another word about it. He also appreciated the fact that the things he did choose to tell them about Theodora, whether in frustration or a brief lapse into impropriety, were never met with a warning as to watch his language or how he spoke to them.

"Well, Anthony doesn't sound any better, the things you've said about him. Why do hang out with either of those two?"

Stewart waited for his father to pull away before replying, **"Anthony's not so bad."**

Which his friend made him regret saying the very next moment. As Stewart turned his eyes to the rear window

mirror he saw Anthony fall into hysterical giggles after Lewis pinched his upper and lower lips together, pulled them in opposite directions and began darting his tongue in and out of his mouth. Stewart checked to see whether or not his father had seen Lewis do this, blew a relieved sigh when he **verified that father's eyes were straight on the road before him, and continued, "Lewis, I don't know. Good question."**

His father had been working midnights, so the fact that his father was dressed in the denim shirt and black denim jeans that he usually wore when he went in, even if it was a Friday night like tonight was, caused Stewart to ask, **"You're going to work tonight?"**

His dad seemed to contemplate the thought and then replied, "Yeah."

"So why didn't mom pick me up then?"

His father contemplated this question even longer before finally answering, **"I wanted to come get you. I need to tell you something."**

His father's behavior should have sent off all kind of alarm bells in his head, but this was just the way his father

was. Stewart had been burned more times than he could ever count thinking that his father, based on the way he was acting, was about to unveil some horrible truth. Only to be **eventually told things in the range of 'Allie says you've been spying on her' or 'your mother and I have discussed it and we think it's about time you start doing some more chores around the house'.** So while his dad on the surface would seem to be gearing up for some big revelation, Stewart figured it was going to be another statement of little relevance to him.

His father took another moment to gather his thoughts and proved just how wrong Stewart was by stating, **"I filed for divorce today."**

His father turned his eyes to his to gauge his **response and found nothing there, as Stewart didn't know** how to respond. Other than to say, Wait. What? But feeling **his father's gaze he know he had to say something, so he finally replied, "Ok,"** with the same level of emotion he would have given to the announcement that going forward his dad would be leaving for work an hour earlier, so he would have to adjust his nighttime bathroom routine accordingly.

"I just can't take it anymore," his father informed him. "With the way your sister has been acting lately..."

Wait. What? Stewart again thought to himself. 'With the way your sister's been acting?' How has she been acting any different?

Stewart would have granted his father that, yes, when Allie started sixth grade she had turned from the 'goody-good' she had been the previous school year into a little bit of a rebel. Which his parents had actually had the nerve to tell him one time was in part due to the fact that she had tried competing him academically, and when she couldn't...well, that only proves that we don't favor her over you'. And he would have granted his father that, yes, his sister had continued to rebel all through her two years of middle school. But hadn't they just spent half this past summer going to California and back in a motor home? He sure didn't remember any behavior on her part during their family vacation that fell into the category of 'Your sister's gone berserk, so I have to leave. I can't take one more moment of this'.

School started less than a month ago. What the hell has Alexis been doing that I haven't been aware of?

"And then your mother, Miss Independent..."

'Miss Independent'? Based on what? I'll grant you that maybe Allie has a secret life I'm too dense to have picked up on, but when did mom suddenly become Miss Independent? I know that she seems more and more aggravated these days with all of us, Allie included, but how does that make her 'Miss Independent'? She doesn't even work, and that's both of your decisions.

"With the way your sister has been acting, just like your Aunt Gina used to..."

Well, at least Stewart had seen that coming from a mile away. He had to figure that as proud as his Dad was of his teen-age rebellions, any and all rebellion he or Allie showed would go straight into a "Just like Aunt Gina" analogy, much as his mother had filed all his escapades in the "Just like your father" file she was constantly updating.

"Your mother and I need to be working together. But she's gotta be the one to run the show. She's the one that has to be in charge. Your sister running around like a maniac, your mother's like 'Relax! She's just a teen-ager. Let her do her own thing. Let her do what everyone else is doing!'

All Stewart could think was, Yes, things are fairly loose around the house. And regardless of what Allie is doing, **no matter how right or wrong it is, you're just as responsible** for the way things are as mom is. Are you saying that you **want to be a 'disciplinarian' like Grandpa William was, and you've spend the last fifteen years mocking and criticizing him** for? Do you want to start to make making jokes about what a little Hitler you are, how funny it is to beat up your children?

Well, I guess you started doing that a little bit **already, haven't you?**

But the thing was, as his father drove him home on a path that was clearly not the straightest line from point A to point B, that was clearly being taken to provide his father as much time as he could spare before heading to work to give him his side of the story before his mother could give hers, all Stewart could think was How could I not see this coming?

Through the years, he had known a lot of kids with divorced parents. These days, you were almost an anomaly if **your parents weren't divorced. And the way his parents had** fought through the years, the way it suddenly occurred to him only now just how much his Dad had worn his mother down,

she was not the same woman she had been ten years ago, of course his parents would eventually get divorced had crossed his mind. In fact, he remembered his mother telling him and Alexis on more than a few occasions when her and their Dad were going through one of their tough patches that she wanted to wait until they both out of high school before she filed. So maybe that was why he felt so blindsided by this. Maybe subconsciously he had just been expecting that this would be occurring a few years further down the road.

But, no, he knew it wasn't that. His parents getting divorced was always one of those things you think about and prepare for like you do any other event that could possibly **happen, but probably won't. So you lose your focus on** worrying about that and bring your mind back to some other more pressing problem.

And the fact of the matter was, if they did get divorced, it was going to be because his mom had had **enough of his father's antics. It was not supposed to be about** what Alexis was doing. And what in the living hell had his sister been doing lately that was any different than what she had been doing the past three years. And if what she had been doing was such a problem, why now? Why no warning?

Why hadn't he seen this coming?

So he sat there in a daze listening to his Dad tell him what a torture it had become being married to his mother. **How she had turned against him and thought he didn't have any rights in the matter of how Allie was acting.** She was a **'Miss Independent', just like all those** other independent bar flies his mother called friends. Get divorced so you could go to the bar and sleep with every sleaze ball at the place.

"You know these guys, these married guys," his father began explaining to him. "They go to the bar with their wedding rings on, they tell all the floozies, 'me and my wife, we have an understanding'. Those are the types of scumbags her friends like Noelle and Pam are; go out to the bars and **screw so they can show how 'independent' they are. Those are the kind of sluts your mom's taking advice from. Telling her what a bastard she's married to."**

Stewart was well aware of the line his father had drawn that he was dying to cross, and would cross once he **got to work and was no longer talking to the woman's son.** But because Stewart knew the levels his father could sink, no matter how much his dad apologized for it afterwards, or blamed you for making him do what he had just done to you,

he sat there deciding what he would do if and when his father crossed it.

In an attempt to, maybe, diffuse the situation and prevent that very thing, Stewart broke his silence by saying, "You mean, Pam Blanchard, who teaches at a Catholic school?"

His father shot him a disgusted look and asked, "So what?"

"I don't think Ms. Blanchard is like that."

"The hell she isn't. I know that she's always been nice to you, and because of that, you like her..."

"I do," replied Stewart.

"...but that doesn't mean she isn't hanging out at the bar just like all the other 'independent' women. Just look at her daughter, Jenny, who's running around wild just like your sister. With your sister."

And that that brought Stewart back to his sense of what had been going on around him, and how had he not been aware of it?

“And she’s running around wild, just like your sister, with your sister, because Pam kicked Jenny’s dad out so she could be Miss Independent and raise Jenny on her own. And now that’s what your mom wants to do.”

“But you said you’re the one who filed.”

His father contemplated this for a moment, trying to see a way out of the logical hole he had dug himself and finally gave in by saying, “I have no choice. I just can’t take it anymore.”

It occurred to Stewart to ask that if he was so concerned about Alexis going nuts on them, and was so convinced **that his mom’s solution was to just let her daughter run wild as Jenny Blanchard was supposedly doing**, how did he think getting divorced and leaving was going to solve that? But he kept that question to himself. For as convinced as his parents were that he was the goofiest person that had ever lived, **he had come to the belief long ago that his father’s line of reasoning was by far goofier than anything he had ever done.**

But Stewart broke from such thoughts when he heard his father shift in his seat as he shifted the direction of the

conversation, "I just want to say, Stewart, that none of this is your fault."

"I know that."

And, boy, did he ever. That was one thing he was sure of. Not one speck of this was his fault. Not then, not now, not ever.

"And I know that I don't say it enough, but I do love you. I love both you and Allie."

Stewart knew he should tell his Dad that he loved him, too, but he was just not up to it at the moment. His dad had dropped too big of a bombshell, spent too much time trying to imply that his mother was something he knew better than to name to him. He was just too dazed over the fact that this was happening to say anything meaningful in response to **his father's statement.**

"And I know I haven't told you this enough, either, but you're not just a really smart kid, you're a really well behaved one, too. Unlike your sister, who is acting just the way your Aunt Gina acted when she was fourteen."

Or the way, you have so often bragged, you behaved during your time as a teenage rebel. To the point where Grandma Evelyn had to plead with that Juvenile Court judge not to send you to juvie. Crying hysterically until he finally agreed to give you one last chance to straighten out, and you nearly busting a gut every single time you told Alexis and I this story.

“The lawyer said that this will take about a year, since you and Allie are involved. And I won’t be moving out, not yet at least, because someone needs to keep your sister in line and your mother won’t.”

So you’re getting divorced, but we’re all going to live in the same house for a year. Something about that doesn’t make sense in the slightest.

But all he could think to say, once again, was, “OK.”

Diana Hage

My Wild and Crazy Day

This day started out very quiet and uneventful. Picked up Ray as his son and wife took off and he hasn't heard from them for over a week. We went to the MJR Westland and had two free tickets and decided to see Selma. Quite good but too long and overheard someone say that the Chinese and Japanese like long movies so that is why most are now over two hours long. YUK!!

We ate at Red Lobster as Ray had a gift certificate for that place. Then took him to Meier's to get a haircut and a few other things. Dropped him home and took off for my home and when I opened the back door of the car to get my groceries I shut the door and all of them locked and I didn't have my car keys or house keys. But I didn't panic too much as I knew where I had one hidden in the back. Tried to gingerly climb the back porch as there was loads of ice there this noon. Grabbed the magnetic key holder **and figured "all** was safe and sound.....HA! No key inside....who the heck took it and why wasn't it there??!! Knocked on my neighbor's (Bob) and almost broke it down as I pounded on it. Little did I know that some people go to bed at 6:30PM so he had to put some clothes on before he could answer the door. As I was

relaying my misery to him I then relayed my misery to “my favorite son” who was well into a game at CHS. He agreed to come over and bail me out but would have to run back to CHS. What a sweetheart that kid is! Then I decided to put the magnetic key holder in my purse andWALLA...the key to my back door fell to the floor! I thanked Bob with all my heart and tried to call Marc but he was already on his way.

Gingerly walked over to my back door and was extremely cautious so as not to slip on the ice. Put the key in the back door and IT OPENED!!! Just about then Marc cruised into the lot and I threw him a kiss and waved GOODBYE!!

Casheena Parker

Sasha's Betrayal

Storm clouds roll overhead as Sasha sits in her living room wondering aloud “did he ever really love me? And if he did why was it so easy for him to just walk away leaving me feeling empty.” But the only answers these words will receive is the crack and boom of the thunder as lightening briefly brightens the sky, followed immediately by the pounding of

the rain as if her questions opened the skies and released it own personal hell fury to match her sullen mood.

She pets her cat, Whiskers as she gets up to walk to the window. Wisp, her blue pit and husky mix puppy gets up from his comfortable spot in front of the fire to keep her company by the window. He was never one to wander too far from Sasha, no matter how much privacy she thought she needed.

They stood there for a moment listening to the wind pick up and the rain pound down on the house while watching it all take place outside. It was in that moment that **Sasha decided she didn't care about the rain and wanted to sit outside on her porch.** She wanted to not just hear and see the rain but to feel it spray her skin as well.

Slipping on her most comfortable tennis shoes and her favorite hoodie she stepped on the porch with Wisp close at her heels. She sat down on the rocking chair her grandfather made her and watched the storm unleash itself. From her position she was tucked away enough to not get drenched but close enough to the end of the porch to get the mist from the rain; Just what she wanted. Wisp sat in his usual spot right next to her. Now she could sit among Gods rath as she felt like placing a little rath of her own.

All she could think about was Antonio and all the time they spent. Or rather all the time that was wasted while being with someone who was playing the whole time when she had given him her all.

She was broken out of her depressed trance by laughter and the slamming of a door. Looking up across her yard she caught a glimpse of Kali her neighbor and friend since they were in grade school. Even though most people thought she was **weird and wouldn't be bothered with her**, she was friends with her anyway. She ignored the many rumors she was told about Kali and her family legacy. Now she watched with her eyes and mouth wide open as Antonio **ran with Kali to the woods as if they hadn't** broken up.

She couldn't believe her eyes. Here he was gallivanting around with another girl not even thirty minutes after breaking up with her as if all they had meant nothing. And with her friend Kali of all people when just yesterday he was telling her **that they were in this together and he wasn't** going to leave and abandon her. Watching him now it was as if he never was with Sasha let alone loved her. She watched in horror as he picked her up swinging her around happily and placed her down while kissing her deep and passionately. The same way he used to kiss her. They walked hand in hand toward the forest and though her eyes were now blurred with

her own tears as well as the rain that now beat on her head she could have sworn she saw Kali look over at her giving her an evil grin. Running to the end of her yard while wiping her eyes and pulling her hood up over her head she squinted so she could get a better view she confirmed that she was indeed looking at her friend Kali and the love of her life and recent ex Antonio. From her view she could see that they were not only together but Kali was looking directly at her giving her an eerie smile that made the hair on the back of her neck stand on end.

Just then Sasha felt a buzz from her cell phone that was safely tucked in her pocket, she took it out glancing at it expecting it to be her parents calling her from their business conference and instead realized that it was coming from Kali's house. This confused her because Kali's mother was also out of town on the very conference that her parents were on in fact. She remembered that vividly because she kept hearing her mother talk about how she didn't like the fact that Kali's mother Raven was going to be in the same hotel as they were and how she didn't trust that woman and her scheming ways. Her father just laughed telling her not to worry and that she could only use her scheming ways on men who cared enough to pay attention.

So if her mother was gone and Kali was currently heading into the forest with her ex boyfriend, who was calling **her from the house phone. Puzzled she glanced at Kali's** house that stood dark, empty and looming with a bigger mystery than anyone cared to know about that seemed to be lit only by the candles now sitting in each window. **Sasha decided to answer to see who it was, maybe it was Kali's** mother calling and wanted to know where she was, it may have just been a coincidence that she received a call at the very moment she saw Kali leave.

Hands shaking more from the nerves than the cold wet rain she pushed the button accepting the call and slowly raised the phone to her ear. At first she heard nothing, then as she listened more closely she could distinctly hear **breathing. "Who is this? Hello? Who is this? I can hear you breathing."** Sasha said voice quivering while still sounding loud and strong. The only answer she got was in a harsh **whisper "That's more than your current ex will be doing** shortly. You should be more careful who befriend. **Hopefully you'll listen to this warning from someone who knows her best"**

Listening to the voice on the end of the phone **Sasha's feet uncousciously begin to move toward Kali's house. Before she knew it she was in Kali's backyard glancing up at**

the house to see if she could see any shadows moving inside the house, because now she was not only sure it wasn't Kali's mother but that this person whoever it was, was calling her from inside Kali's house. The very house that Kali and Antonio just left from, or did they. She wasn't quite sure, Sasha didn't see where they came out of she just heard the loud slam of a door. But why would the door slam when they never do any other time. Kali wasn't mad and the wind wouldn't have slammed the door. Sasha was beginning to think Kali seen her come to the porch and slammed the door so she could get her attention, but that would only mean that she wanted me to see her with Antonio. But if that was Kali and her mother Raven was still at the conference then who was talking with her from inside the house. " Who Who is this?" Sasha stammered the response she got was " The enemy of my enemy is my friend" then the line went dead just as she glanced up to see a figure of a woman standing in the attic window.

Terrified she tore off into the woods after Kali and Antonio, she didn't know what she would find or even if there was anything to be worried about but something within her didn't agree with her logic that was attempting to calm her down. She ignored all the warnings rushing through her brain and rushed into the woods with Wisp close at her heels.

Once in the woods she could easily see which way they took because the damp earth easily showed their footprints. As she neared the creek and waterfall reveine a sick feeling began to creep into the base of her stomach and she begin to remember all the rumors about Kali and her mother being some kind of demon witch that seduced men who were currently in love to make themselves younger and leave the women they left behind bitter making them easily want to join their clan.

She kept on ahead until she heard **Antonio's voice** and what she heard made the warnings in her mind grow **louder. "Kali what am I doing here? We were supposed to be helping you plan a surprise for Sasha. How did I get here? The last thing I remember is being introduced to your sister and trying her homemade lemonade. What are you doing with that knife?"** Laughing Kali responded, **"Don't try to play coy now Antonio i seen the way you look at me and you're supposed to love Sasha so much. Yeah right. I figured I would help you out and give you the chance to do what you've always wanted before I sacrifice you to the water demon in exchange for my youth and beauty."**

Sasha rushed into the clearing just as Antonio said, **"Get off of me. How am I going to explain this to Sasha I love her and you're supposed to be her friend."** There right in front

of her eyes was Kali sitting a top Antonio with his pants at his knees and she could only imagine what had already occurred. **"her friend, yea right I was only playing her to get to you. As i always do. You're not like the rest though and that makes you special. Most guys don't awake from the potion until the job is done, I guess you really do love her as much as you say you do."** And with those words she pulled the knife over her head and plunged it into his chest while reciting her incantation **"Take this man as a sacrifice, releasing his soul into your darkness. Allowing his seed to live through me as it enhances my youth and beauty."**

Before Sasha realized it she was screaming out in agony and rushing toward them forgetting about her delicate state. But she was too late and as she reached out to touch him his body disappeared right before her eyes. Shaking her head Kali blew sleep sand in her face, **"Sorry darling you've seen too much."**

Sasha awoke in the hospital a few days later. When the nurse realized she was awake she left and came back carried two baby boys. She sat confused because she was only having one. She got her answer shortly, Raven came in behind her and asked to be excused. Then she told her what happened. **"Kali's plan didn't go as expected and because you were present and he wasn't who she thought he was- she**

paid with her life. When she breathed into you to knock you out what she also did unknowingly was transfer his child into you as well as her power while breathing her last breath.

The call you received was from Kali's daughter and apprentice Kalisa, she had been trying to warn her that he wasn't the right one but in Kali's jealousy of you she didn't listen. Our

spell only works on men who are confused between their love for their woman and their lust for one of us. But your Antonio **was different, he wasn't confused with lust and love he loved only you.** He was excited about your little bundle there and he was planning on marrying you, he had already asked your father for permission. You may not believe this but though Kali looked it she was nowhere near your age, she was actually 67 years old. Just as I am not the age you think I am, i am have lived for over 150 years. Her daughter Kalisa was the youngest of her children born through the youth ritual.

She was to take Kali's place as the spirit drainer, because

when one does the ritual we all benefit. Her older sisters made the same mistake Kali did and turned to ash. Now **it's** just us. It was your dog Wisp that went and got Kalisa who called the ambulance and told them you were knocked out by **the waterfall so that's how you were rescued it was a good** thing he was there or you and your children would have died.

They got you here just in time and had to deliver them c-section. Though you and the babies are fine, you are now one

of us though you are a very rare breed, because most of us were made from bitter pain, but you were made from blind love. Making you the most powerful. Rest up and I will take you home. You won't be able to return to your parents they think you died in the water with Antonio. Your children are also a rare breed usually we birth girls there has never been a boy birthed though a dewitch it will be something to see how they turn out. Your son will more than likely take after you but the other one will harbor hate just like his egg host. He holds more of her traits since he was forced to mature quicker than usual. In a normal state it would take about the length of a regular pregnancy but in your case he had to be born with the current child to survive. Only time will tell what **he becomes."**

Confused she looked down at her little boys and looked into the eyes that favored their father and faces that favored both their mothers.

Jeremy Schultz

Flipping Switches

"How did you hear about this party, again" Sam asked his friend Margaret.

"I told you Sam, the guy's in my robotics class. He throws one of these for his godsister every year and we started talking in class a few weeks ago, so I got invited. Oh, and I got a plus-one so I'm bringing you; the end."

"So I'm the only person you could take to a fancy party like this on short notice?"

"No," Margaret simmered, "You're the only local guy I knew wouldn't have plans in the middle of Winter Break. Everyone else has work, homework, or went home."

"Plus, I have a car!"

"Now you're getting it!" They laughed. Sam strained to keep his eyes on the road, while Margaret stared at him, desperate to look into his baby blues again. Her bad streak continued.

"Think you'll dance with anyone there?" Margaret strained her optimism.

"You kidding? I have two left feet and a subscription to Klutz Monthly! I will be planted squarely on a barstool until I can't keep myself up anymore. You're okay to drive back, right?" Sam could tell something was going on with her, but he couldn't place it. A Hummer passed to the exit in front of him, and he immediately dismissed the curiosity.

"Sure, Sam...so you're positive no girl in there's gonna sweep you off your feet?"

"I dunno, the goggles can make funny stuff happen," Sam tried to evade her implication with his own. He hoped it would serve as an adequate distraction to change the subject.

"But when you're sober, what kind of girl would you dance with?"

"I wouldn't."

"Well, what type would you like if you had to dance?"

"Why would I have to dance?"

"Say I had you at gunpoint and screamed, "Dance Sam," then wouldn't you?"

"I guess..."

"So, what kind of girl would you ask to dance?"

"I'd dance alone."

"Sam!" Margaret turned, hurt that he refused to play along, then stuck out her hand in the shape of a gun and put her index finger to his temple. He froze.

"Mags?"

"Will you answer the question seriously?"

"Sure...I guess I would look for a girl who's nimble...one who can keep rhythm, doesn't look snooty. What about you?"

"Huh? What about me?"

"You gonna dance with our host?"

"Oh, Reggie?" Margaret laughed a tad too long.

"I can take that as a no?"

"You can. Every weekend he takes out a new girl."

"Anybody else you might want a dance with, then?"

"No, they're all complete strangers...I'd be happy just dancing with you all night."

"Well, uh...y'know, like I said, um, I'm probably just gonna talk at the bar the whole night. I doubt Reggie's party is where I'll find...my life's dance partner, or whatever."

"Then maybe you should just find a girl to be tonight's dance partner." Margaret looked out at the setting sun.

They neared the large estate and Sam slowed to a steady roll. The entire neighborhood seemed to have been invited. All the lights inside were on and every other house was completely dark. They could hear chatter over the music, and see the silhouettes of party guests in windows. Sam parked before a valet.

"Good evening, sir." Sam dropped the keys in his hand.

"Evening, boss! Could you do me a favor and keep her close on hand?"

"Shall you and the young lady be making a hasty getaway?"

"It's possible!"

"Well, I wish you luck and I'll keep it on hand. Do try not to shock Master Reginald though, if it can be helped."

"Wow Sam," Margaret finally opened her own door, "real smooth."

"Thanks, Mags."

"Don't pick up on much, do ya?"

"I get by."

The pair linked arms, and slowly entered an enormous entrance hall, white as the snow outside.

"This is his house," Sam inquired in disbelief.

"Yep, there's Reggie, let me introduce you."

"Do I have a choice?"

"No. Be nice. Reggie!"

A tall, stoic young man in a suit that put Sam's to shame turned and scanned the room, saw Margaret and in an instant came to life.

"Maggie!"

"Hey Reggie, thanks for inviting me!"

"Think nothing of it; I'm glad you could make it."

"Same! Anyway, I gotta hit the can, but this is Sam. Don't let him get plastered without me!"

Reginald realized Sam wasn't on the catering staff and became embarrassed he hadn't noticed Sam's presence sooner.

"Um, hello."

"Hey."

"Are you Maggie's date?"

"Well, I guess. Mags really only brought me to dance and drive her."

"Wonderful! Well, let me introduce you to the guest of honor."

"Your godsister?"

"Oh, Maggie told you?"

"Yeah, I wondered why a robotics major throws such a classy shindig and invites strangers to drink his booze. Speaking of, where's the bar?"

"This way, and I'm actually an engineering major. I understand your suspicions, but I trust that Maggie means a good deal to you, so I can count on you not to embarrass her?"

"Yeah, dude...she's my best friend."

Sam ordered a drink that would ensure he couldn't drive home any time soon. He held the glass up to Reginald.

"Drink?"

"Love to."

Margaret exited the bathroom with a new layer of lipstick on, the jacket she brought in from the car no longer

covering her elegant dress. Both men saw her, and stood. She locked eyes with Sam and they walked toward each other, meeting in the doorway.

"Wow. You really know how to clean up."

"Look who's talking, I dunno if you're James Bond or the maître d'!

"Have any of these other shmucks asked you to dance yet, or do I have to fill in?"

"You do. Don't trip."

They walked into the main hall two doors down, immediately swept up in a sea of swinging couples. They were spinning so fast, Margaret felt light as a feather. Sam felt like his head was spinning. When the song ended, he ran back out the room, down to the entrance hall. Margaret followed, confused.

"Sam! Where are you going," she shouted after him.

"Need some air, sorry!"

Sam wretched in front of the valet, who held out a paper bag for Sam to promptly vomit in.

"Good show making it outside, sir."

"Right, I got it. Thanks, Jeeves."

"It's Archibald, sir."

Sam slumped back inside the McMansion and looked up at Margaret meekly.

"You okay, hotshot?"

"I guess...still a little dizzy though."

"Well, you're definitely cut off."

"Thanks, Mags. Think I'm done dancing for a while, too."

"That's okay, Sam. Let's just go back inside."

Walking in far more defeated than when they arrived, Sam froze in the entrance hall. He saw a tall, pale brunette atop the staircase.

"What is it, Sam?"

"That girl, do you know who that is?"

"Yeah, I met her in the bathroom. That's Reggie's godsister, Isabelle."

"She's the birthday girl," Sam asked, laughing, "I can't believe it's her."

"Who, you know her?"

"Yeah, she's the one. She's my life's dance partner."

"What? You don't even know her!"

"I know...but I want to. I want to know everything about her. I want to make her smile, and laugh, and...happy."

"I don't get it though, you never even met. What makes her so special?"

"I can't explain it, Mags...she flips the switch in my brain that always said love was a waste of time."

Margaret crossed her arms, tears sneaking out her eyes, down her nose and cheeks.

"You jerk! I should have known you'd ruin this night!"
Margaret stormed off.

Sam was walking up the stairs to Isabelle the last time Margaret looked back at him, before running out into the hallway.

When Reginald found her, Margaret was crying at a corner table of the main hall.

"There you are, Maggie!"

"Oh. Hey, Reggie."

"What happened, I've been looking for you everywhere!"

"You have? I'm sorry, I just thought Sam and I would finally hit it off tonight, but he just seems to love messing things up."

"Well, if it's not too late," Reggie pulled her up onto her feet, "can I have this dance?"

The entire waltz, Margaret and Reginald had their eyes locked. If either of them blinked, it must have been both at once because neither of them noticed. The entire waltz, **Margaret's heart raced. She slowly realized Reggie was** the perfect height for her. He had bright red hair she loved because as messy as it got, it always stuck out in a crowd and lit up her day. His eyes were a cool relaxing brown. His lips were thin, and Margaret remembered how wide his grin became when he made her laugh in class. She began to feel his stare and knew what he was trying to say when he invited **her. He didn't just want this year's party to be different; he** wanted to dance with her. She wanted to dance too. He was just right, just not Sam. Reginald, she thought, just makes everything click into place.

Imelda Zamora*Faith, Hope, Love*

An old woman dressed in black, her head covered by a black veil was at the foot of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the side altar. She was trying to light a candle but her hand kept shaking. Aside from another woman at the back of the church, there was no one else there, so I went over and helped the old woman, who let me steady the trembling hand, holding the lit stick above the candle. A little flame quivered at first then burst forth, carrying in its heat **and light, the old woman's prayer, which** mingled among the other prayers that hovered over the flickering candles in their red votive glasses. The old woman nodded her thanks and ambled away. I lighted one myself, murmured my intentions and genuflected before going back to my seat. As I knelt down, my left shoe hit the pew and the ensuing sound broke the hallowed silence and reverberated against the walls and up the high domed ceiling.

A large crucified Christ dominated the main altar. The pain and suffering etched on His face moved me to compassion. I had come here to ask for His. I had come to unload a burden that weighed heavily in my heart. I had **come to ask for His help.** *"Ask and the gift will come; seek*

and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7) With this on my mind, I bowed my head in all humility and beat on my chest three times.

“Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis
pacem.”*

Then I began to pray.

My knees ached. It was then I realized that I had been kneeling for almost an hour. I lifted my head, took a tissue from my purse and wiped my face. My glasses, too, was wet with tears. Emotionally drained, I sat for a few minutes before leaving.

Outside, the sun was shining brightly. When I came, the sky was leaden with the threat of snow. Now, it was a **clear crystal blue, the color of the Blessed Mother’s mantle.** The air was chilly so I adjusted the scarf on my head. Back inside the church, while lost in prayer, it had slipped down around my neck, exposing my baldness. I tried wearing a wig a few times but was not comfortable with it. Besides, I wanted to be truthful to myself, to be aware of what was real and the reality was that I had this illness, and after a certain treatment, this was what the illness looked like, nothing to be

ashamed of or to hide. Anyway, the doctor said the hair should grow back in about three weeks and so would the eyebrows.

I tied the scarf under my chin with a knot and looked up. The sun shone down full upon my face, warm and **comforting. "I shall be all right. God is good, God is love."** After buttoning the top of my coat, I went down the church steps and walked to my car.

ACROSTIC POETRY CONTEST ENTRIES

Christian Charette

*Dedicated to my grandpa, Ron McFaddern, and my uncle,
Larry Goulet*

Larry Goulet

Is

Very

Open

Not with

Interests

As I'm telling his story he shares the love he has for his brother Ron, his best friend, all their bus trips to the wilderness unknown, what a beautiful friendship they both have shown.

Linda Sparkman

Found

Under

Nubs

Inside

Nooks

The

Heart

Earns

Something

Undeniably

Neat

Michael Pereira

We

Enjoy

Shopping at

Target and

Lowe's

And eating often

Near the

Dollar Tree.

David Pereira

Westland

Erected a

Stupendously

Terrific

Library

And thankfully

No nasty

Dumps

Apurvasai Lakshmanan

W- wherever we can go

E- entire collection r great

S-superb

T- time goes away

L-lot more

A-adorable staff

N- noteworthy

D- dedicated

Govindasai Lakshmanan

W-wonderful

E-energetic staff

S-scholarly attitude

T-terrific

L-loving

A-adorable

N- necessary

D- devoted

Saicharen Lakshmanan

W-wonderful

E-Eco-friendly

S-smart

T-trustful

L-loving

A-Awesome

N-Neat

D-distinctive

Tiana Fedderman

Life as we know it

We eat, we dance
Enjoying life
Sure of another day.
Time waits for no man, so,
Life continues
And we follow blindly
Not knowing where we're going
Destination unknown.

Daniel Sample

Dreaming of *Whoppers*
Eating cheeseburgers
With a side of *Spaghetti*
Receiving *Biggby Treats*
A plate of *Lasagna* at home
With sliced *Apples*
Then at *Mght*
Dessert before be*D*

Emma Sample

Wish that
Everyday will
Sooth all your
Troubles and bring
Lasting
Animation to every
Negative
Decision you make

Terry Sample

We are united
*E*arnestly together
At this *S*pecial
*T*ime to honor
Our *L*and that
We live *A*nd
Dwell. In *M*ighttime
And *D*aylight we are one

Jen MacPherson

Walking in the park,
Eating at Leo's Coney Island,
Shopping at the mall,
Talking over coffee,
Learning at the library,
Arriving home from work,
Napping on the couch,
Doing these things in this city

Tammy White

We know that
Eventually we will
Shame ourselves
Through regretful acts
Lie, Cheat, Steal
And still we
Numb our pain
DAMN!!!

Mary Lindsay

While

Everyone tries to

Say what's

True

Liars

Almost

Never

Do

Weather changing

Ending winter

Seems only a

Tease until

Look! I see

A wondrous sight! A

New-sprung

Daffodil

Barbara A. Aimone

Wild, Bill: Fair city mayor, just
East of Canton by a hair.
Skaters vie against the Wings.
Trails to take and do new things.
Learn and lose with Buddy Up!
Amazing choice to dine and sup.
New, sparkling, shiny City Hall.
Discover goodies at the Mall.
Westland beckons, come and see.
It's a lovely place to be.

Stephanie Neilan

Motown Soul

Do not count me out
Even though I fell
Taking cleansing breaths I
Rise again once more
One step at a time
I shed what weighs me down

Toss it `way and

Move once more

I sashay toward my goal

Tisha Cole

White dress; June day

Entering an altered phase

She shares his name today

Two lives; one direction

Love portrayed; rings exchanged

Assenting faces hold their peace

No man can put asunder

Dancing down the aisle

Westward from Chicagoland way

Eyes glaze over in the Show Me State

Sup at Big Chief Café; pass Joplin and Rolla

Trekking Totem Pole Park in (Choctaw words) “okla humma”

Lounge at U-Drop Inn, Texas; on to New Mexico

Albuquerque’s find—Maisel’s Indian Trading Post

Nature’s splendor in Painted Desert, Arizona

Destination’s end! Old Route 66—Chicago to California!

Shari Welch

Storm

We

Endured

Sever

Thunder

Lighting

And

Nasty

Downpours

Yoga

Working out on

Either a

Soft mat or a

Tough Mat with

Loud colorful

Awesome designs

Necessary for a

Deserving workout

Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, M.A.

Writers club

Eager

Students

To

Learn

Analyze

New genres and

Diction

Winter's

End

Spring

Thaw

Lilly and Lilacs

Arrival

Not

December weather

Haley Carnaghi

We always

Expect to wake up the next day; that the

Sun will rise the next and

The moon will fall to rest.

Little do we realize that nothing is guaranteed.

Always live each day like they won't ever pass;

Nothing is for certain, so

Dance like it's your last.

Wandering on an
Early Sunday morning in
Search for adventure.
True to my belief, the
Land takes me on a marvelous journey,
And to my luck, it take me to
Nowhere else but the
Dauntless outdoors.

Casheena Parker

Imprisoned in Pain

Weary thoughts surface as
Evenings pass by
Silently
Though subtly withholding joy of the
Laughing passerbys
As their
Daydreams turn to living nightmares

As

No one

Dares to help you escape your demons making you

Relive it

Over and over

Making you

Understand those whose

Laughter faded

Under

Sunsets of fading memories and broken hearts

Woman Scorned

Waiting unconsciously on an

Everlasting love from the one man whose

Soul earns to be completely free, so confused with his love for her and his freedom

That he boldly tests her reserve never once thinking that she would eventually

Leave him, making the choice he refused to make giving him the freedom he secretly earns for while

Allowing the pain within her spirit to finally quiet down

Never once thinking or believing the transition will be hard
she pushed on

Desperately hoping some kind of change; while
unconsciously destroying all the hope she held

And all that her life could ever be leaving her with
Nothing but the tears in her heart that cuts too
Deep to be healed or patched closed

Reversing the dreams she once had turning them into
Ongoing nightmares that never change

Mirroring it's own hell's eye

Unleashing something inside her she never thought she
possessed, her

Lucifer of the worst kind

Uncapped and wild feeling the exact thing he had; nothing
wanting nothing but to make all men

Sacrifice as she had, for longer than she had, simply so they
could feel the same pain she had

Diana Hage

Where is the world going?

Everyone is trying to get revenge.

Somehow, somewhere there must be someone to lead
humanity,

Think what direction we're going in

Listen to your heart

Answer to that beat with optimism

Never look back , look forward as a new

Dawn is coming.....HALLALUJAH!!!

John Kelly

*Some Titles of Poems in Westland Writes Throughout Time:
A Tribute to the Season of Spring*

Why?

Escape

Spring is on Time

The Quiet Gift

Love Echoes: A Builder's Dream

As Her Memory Caresses

Nature's Way

Dreaming

Ode to a Woman in Westland

(Inspired by the poem "A Valentine" by Edgar Allen Poe)

Woman

Eidolon

Single

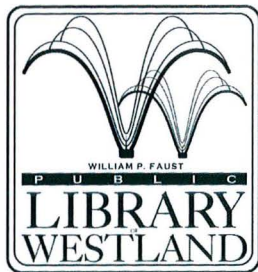
Too incomprehensible

Live free

Above reproach

Never death

Depicted



William P. Faust
Public Library of Westland
6123 Central City Parkway
Westland, MI 48185
734-326-6123
www.westlandlibrary.org

The William P. Faust Public Library of Westland is proud to celebrate local writers with this 7th annual publication of the **Westland Writes ...** series. This publication sprung to life out of a **National Poetry Month** idea to share patrons' poems in book form. This yearly series which draws from library programs, including the monthly **Writers Workshop** and **Writers Club** groups, as well as performance programs like the monthly **Open Mic**.

We are proud of the writing of newcomers and annual contributors alike. It is exciting to read new work from everyone and then be able to speak with all of the writers at our Book Release Event. This year's event is on May 28th, 2015 at the library and will feature the words of the writers enclosed in this book and the music of the Sheila Landis Trio.

If you did not get a chance to submit work in 2015, look for your chance again during National Poetry Month (April) of 2016. Until then, happy reading and writing!

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