

(207)

Eng 1 of 3  
5 of 6

# DECEMBER DINNER, MANHATTAN ISLAND

Embossed and tasseled menus offer sole,  
Fresh-caught, sauteed with lemon, chives and dill,  
For fifteen dollars. I'm not hard to sell.  
My mind flies back to offshore Maine: A shrill  
Breeze blows; two fishermen are braced until  
A wave plows by. One checks the last end-knot  
In seven-hundred pounds of ice-caked net.

The day drains into dark, an eerie glow  
On bitter spindrift near Three Dory Ridge.  
The pair make ready for the longest tow.  
The hungry net flares out to form a bridge  
With mud-slime ninety fathoms deep, to nidge  
Through ancient green dimensions. Spools unwind,  
The dragger boat aims high into the wind.

Dan begs the cable not to twist. "All down!"  
He cries, his teeth bared in the salty cold.  
The trawl will prow! the bottom until dawn.  
Five hours on a northerly course, a bold  
Approach near the ridge's curse. Jarl can hold  
The dragger true if anybody can;  
One eye is cocked on weather, one on Dan.

They keep their senses honed on winter, knowing  
No one else is out, slipping into troughs  
More calm than either side, and always going  
For the fissures between storms. Jarl coughs,  
A brine-hack, one of fishing's ons-and-offs.  
When seas are warm and docile, all the boats  
Come plying, trailed by waves of white wing-beats.

The price of fish sinks like a weighted trap.  
Now grays will bring a buck a pound or more.  
But then it drops to thirty cents like tripe.  
If these two drag luck's lap enough before  
She rolls away and orders them to shore,  
They'll own their boat. Moon dirties comber caps  
As numb lips hover over coffee cups.

(cont.)

GLENN HOLLOWAY  
913 E. Bailey Road  
Naperville, IL 60565

DEAR MR. HOLLOWAY,

Thank you for the letter of the 11th. I'm not hard to sell. My mind flies back to offshore fishing. A sharp breeze blows, two fishermen are placed until a wave blows by. One checks the last end-hook in seven hundred pounds of ice-cold net.

The day drains into dark, an eerie glow. On either side of the net, three dark ridges. The rain falls ready for the lowest row. The hungry net rises out to form a bridge. With mid-air ninety-nine thousand deep, to ride through ancient green dimensions. Spools unwind. The dragger boat aims high into the wind.

Handed the cable not to twist. "All down!" He cries, his chest bare in the early cold. The crew will growl the bottom until dawn. Five hours on a northerly course, a bold approach near the tide's curve. Lark can hold the dragger, true if anybody can. One eye is cocked on weather, one on Dan.

They keep their senses honed on winter, knowing no one else is out, slipping into troughs. More calm than either side, and always going for the fissures between storms. Lark coughs. A blue-back, one of fishing's one-and-alls. When seas are warm and boogie, all the boats come flying, trailed by waves of white wind-prints.

The price of fish sinks like a weighted trap. Now crabs will bring a buck a pound or more. But then it drops to thirty cents like ripe. If these two drag larks' lap enough before the rolls away and orders them to shore. They'll own their boat. Moon dries copper caps. As hump lips hover over coffee cups.

(cont.)



(207)

E 17 2 of 3  
546

The latest catch stinks illing-sweet, no matter  
 How hard the blowing scours the culling pens.  
 Afoot in mucus, ice and offal-spatter  
 On a writhing deck, Dan guts fish, and pins  
 The rattling tarps, working out his back pains.  
 A sprawling hillock angle-slaps the bow;  
 He almost slips. He wipes his spray-stung brow.

Their thoughts are never easy in the bag  
 They tow. They're after flounder, giant hake,  
 Gray sole and other flatfish if they're big.  
 Is this place right? The time? They watch their wake,  
 And wonder. Far below did something break?  
 A different dip and shudder in the pull,  
 Uneven drag. They don't believe it's full.

They man the winches, play the cable, reel  
 The snarled mouth of the mesh maw up. They set  
 Their own jaws, wrestling with the plates of steel  
 To free them. Spirits start to rise with net;  
 It isn't ripped! They see enough to whet  
 Their hopes again. The back half holds its fill!  
 Enough good ones, maybe they still won't fail.

The struggling sack is pierced with bony fins,  
 A single gasping monster hoisted high  
 To dangle and then burst into the bins  
 As Jarl yanks on the knot. With sharp know-how  
 Dan wades the mound, outlandish alien who,  
 With crystal in his hair and beard, assort  
 The flapping gourmet silver from the quartz.

The North Atlantic pickets round their craft,  
 Hurls foam invective. Jarl shoves in the throttle,  
 Eyeing shifty winds. Dan shouts from aft,  
 "Mostly grays! We pay off the Aristotle  
 Tomorrow!" Pre-dawn brings a bluish mottle,  
 Bias-lighted clouds. Spume climbs the hull.  
 But grins crack tension as Dan works the haul.

The biggest part of being best is knowing  
 When to leave and live for next-time risks.  
 Now in the wheelhouse they begin renewing  
 Silent pride in their boat, their skill. Whisks  
 Of rain accent aloneness. Panel discs  
 Of light ignite their eyes. I long to rub  
 Their poor shocked hands and draw them a hot tub.

(cont.)

(207)

Erg 3 of 3  
56/6

My husband doesn't know, nor does my brother,  
How much I miss them now, how much I pray.  
I should have known there couldn't be another  
Place for me. My most is in Boothbay.  
My plans swirl by in mounting disarray.  
Our New York waiter pours our fancy wine;  
I watch his hands instead of drinking mine.

He spoons the ritual lemon butter on  
My sole as my companion nods and smiles  
And I would give up everything I own  
To put behind me all the stubborn miles  
Between the spot where ocean reconciles  
Ambition, love and discontent. I hear  
Another diner say the price is dear--

I long to say he only pays a fraction  
As he complains that sole should cost much less.  
Beneath my skin I feel the rising friction,  
And tell the man I'm with: "I can't say yes.  
I'm sorry, but more time won't help. I guess  
The job is not for me. That sounds insane  
I'm sure. Good night. I'm going home to Maine."



(207) B  
2076

#### AFTERNOON AMONG THE ARTIFACTS

I almost missed it among the flamboyant displays,  
almost didn't notice the thing that changed the world.

It's called The Fat Man-- a bulbous unarmed twin  
of Nagasaki's Nemesis-- obsoletely catching dust  
in an aircraft museum on the fringes of Milwaukee.

Hard to think it a bomb or even a weapon--  
more like a time capsule-- maybe filled with swatches  
of our century's first third-- a beaded flapper dress,  
a megaphone, a rumble seat, a tub for making gin.  
All things before my time but no more alien  
than this bulging precedent shadowing the floor--  
forerunner of smaller packages of streamlined rage.  
We went from atomic to hydrogen to nuclear  
with sinister interstices filled with equations  
that don't translate the same in all languages.

I'm curiously detached. This is simple abstract art,  
this huge clumsy egg. It should be seething  
with metaphor. It should shout with the voice of Isaiah  
above the wails of hell. I'm missing something.

Maybe we stood too close to that first blast.  
Maybe it damaged our inner ears and eyes, jarred spaces  
in our cortex so we can't relate one thing to another.  
A cerebral non sequitur.

I wander among the airplanes, mostly wings of war.  
Fifty years of progress in flight. I pause  
beneath an ultralight, stare at a lunar lander.  
By the time I return to The Fat Man, a kid has scrawled  
an obscenity in yellow crayon on its dark bulk.  
It won't rub off; it only smears. Maybe Eliot  
was too elegant. Maybe the world ends without bang  
or whimper, just one final blurted scatological curse.

The Fat Man is supremely indifferent. I try to multiply  
thousands of lives by millions of next time, by megatons  
of now. How far past kill is overkill? What is now?  
When is today-- is it the decade or the afternoon?  
Or the last minute?

207<sup>C</sup> 30/6

# TRUMPET MAN

It isn't written. He's raveling this music  
out of me. There on the treble periphery  
he's making sound and light into one  
then blistering the alloy and peeling  
solid gold butterflies off the parallax.  
I don't know how three ribs and a funnel  
can unwind my double helix, gather all  
my possibilities in a single premise  
beyond jazz or blues or the whole spectrum,  
to pour out this delicious cruelty,  
its rhythm insinuating against thin membranes,  
vibrating pink filaments. Contrapuntal wings  
he's freed follow him to the cutting edge  
of turquoise, flutter into smoking fragments  
then coil back in the bell of his horn  
to revel in their experience with fire.

(207)

D

4 of 6

# BEE HIVE BY NIGHT

My honey mills wind down in aftercool  
of autumn-staging sunlight's rapid plunge.  
All day productive order was the rule,  
now workers rest before their first waves lunge  
at morning ripeness waiting in the clover.  
Moon-time awakens hulking stealth with claws,  
just like a Choctaw spirit passing over  
sleep-dark weeds and logs on brazen paws.  
Old Bruin knows the dynamo is dormant;  
he knows he needn't fear sting-barbs or shot.  
He raids as if he's cued by an informant,  
then wanders off to some deep woodland spot,  
my precious topaz beaded on his chin:  
His tongue will find it, tell him where he's been.

So he'll be back. He needs no workers' dance  
to point him toward his coveted reward.  
Once found, his black brain memorized each chance  
he took and won. He's proved himself the lord  
of night, of fields and salmon streams, wild bees  
besides. Now mine, compared, make easy prey.  
Each raid, he's also seen my apple trees;  
he'll soon gorge twice at my expense. By day  
I don't believe old tribal kin return  
as bears. By sun I count compounded loss  
and load my double-barreled vengeance, burn  
with educated scorn for tales that cross  
the years. Through hunter's sights his powers pose  
against the moon, my aim. He's safe. He knows.



(207) A  
10/6

THE HUNGER MOON

Summer is sweet on the tongue,  
soft on the shoulders as kachina clouds,  
unlasting as the corn god's shades of green.  
Yesterday when the sun centered on my roof,  
the red-tailed hawk reeled around  
the hot yellow forcing shut my eyes,  
tightening his circle and pouring down  
his cries on my doorstep.

He is back with the dawn.  
Down and down he hurls his keening  
like splinters of cold. That hawk  
is a prophet of the hunger moon--  
the time of no more corn--  
a time when the deer goes far,  
making no tracks to a place no man finds.  
And before he sleeps, the bear  
eats bark and small things that crawl.

None of us will starve, not even the hawk.  
For me, famine is of the spirit  
while the body fuels on dried fare  
and sweets that come in jars.  
The wings are first to wither,  
then the deep singing.

Someday I will follow the hawk.  
I will climb past wilding mounds  
of dead-gold buckwheat. My foot  
will rattle shards of ancient lava,  
startling a lizard into range  
of talon and beak.  
I will face the she-wind  
angering in the cinder cones, prying  
at broken shadows of the sacred peaks.

There in the secret heights I will master  
the proper maintenance of wings.

680

*Second Place*

2

## CIRCUS MAN

Ma warned me, said there'd always be three rings  
that meant more than the one he wore-- that is,  
if I should ever get him to that stage.

But I fell into step with prancing boots,  
the big drumbeats, the trombones' sassy slides.  
Parading colors, rhinestones, epaulets  
enticed me like his grace and daring eyes.

His elephants do two-steps on command  
while jealous tigers roar from rolling cages.  
He'd never lay a whip on animals  
or me-- just gives the word and we obey--  
I guess that's love. He married me, all right,  
in center ring in Syracuse. Oh Ma,  
I wanted you to come but you refused.

I always knew the big top was illusion,  
the sweaty, gritty side was no surprise.  
The tears I've cried have mostly been for you  
who said you didn't want me hurt. But Ma,  
I understand. I found your old scrapbook  
before I left-- the pictures of a girl  
up on a horse behind a costumed rider--  
it wasn't Pa your arms were wrapped around.  
I saw your smile-- the one you lost before  
we ever met. It makes me sad to think  
your dream went wrong-- for everybody needs  
some sequins with their sawdust. Make mine red.

I'll take my lion tamer and his flaws,  
take midnight trains to one-track towns because  
I share the laughter in between the frowns.

*Glenn Holloway*

Judge's comment: I get a  
slight sense of abruptness in the  
way the poem ends. Could it  
not have been extended a bit more?

CIRCUS MAN

Ma warned me, said there'd always be three rings  
that meant more than the one he wore-- that is,  
if I should ever get him to that stage.

But I fell into step with grinning boots,  
the big drumbeats, the rumpuses, sassy slides,  
parading colors, chinestones, capulists  
enticed me like his grace and daring eyes.

His elephants do two-steps on command  
while his lion tamer goes from ring to ring

He'd never lay a whip on animals  
or me-- just gives the word and we obey--  
I guess that's love. He married me, all right,  
in center ring in Syracuse. On Ma,  
I wanted you to come but you refused.

I always knew the big top was illusion,  
the swazy, giddy side was no surprise,  
the tears I've cried have mostly been for you  
who said you didn't want me hurt. But Ma,  
I understand, I found your old scrapbook  
before I left-- the pictures of a girl  
up on a horse behind a costumed rider--  
it wasn't as your arms were wrapped around.  
I saw your smile-- the one you lost before  
we ever met. It makes me sad to think  
your dream went wrong-- for everybody needs  
some sadness with their sadness. Make mine sad.

I'll take my lion tamer and his lions,  
take midnight trains to one-track towns because  
I share the laughter in between the towns.

William H. H. H.



*First Place*

681

## THE STAR SALESMAN

I'm native to this territory's scene  
Like mini-calculators, cabs and booze.  
I sprawl the king-size hotel bed and stare,  
My all-wool alter ego hangs alert,  
Fresh pressed and waiting for the morning's cue.  
My forty dollar name-designer tie  
Most likely has a spot that must be sponged  
Before I sleep. My Gucci shoes are shined  
For each rehearsed approach. But there's no role  
For sweet success tomorrow. Or next week.

A dozen times a month I play this lead--  
Instead of hotdogs, dine on haute cuisine.  
The bottom line is (How I hate that line!)  
Our customers aren't clapping for our number.  
However primed and powdered or threadbare  
They make it sound, their script says NO, a word  
Of lead and ice that lodges in soft parts  
Beneath my vest, attacking gourmet spoils.  
(I'm sure you note the comic undertones  
That permeate this neo-classic farce.)

Still, I provide expected locomotion  
For this fine costume to complete the plot,  
To make the entrance and escort the client  
To lunch, silk lining iridescent wit,  
Lapels well-tailored with sincerity,  
Pants creased with confidence. Bright anecdotes  
Emerge from pockets, practiced protocol  
And uptown jokes, a little charge card magic--

Then when the show plays out, the wound-up mime  
Propels the props to yesterday's airport.  
And there this woven retinue, almost  
Adept enough to give its own performance  
Will go inanimate back in the plane,  
At last unfolding in home's terminal  
To wait in line in Ma Bell's crowded alley,  
And from the slept-in depths yield change enough  
To call-- report the bust to amateur  
Directors of these high-camp one-act flops--  
And maybe learn I don't still head the cast.

*Glenna Holloway*

Judge's comment - This is a good  
game. Third time around, I think

THE STAR SALESMAN

I'm native to this territory's scene  
Like mini-calculators, caps and boots,  
I saw the king-size hotel bed and state  
My all-wool after ego hangs alert,  
Fresh pressed and waiting for the morning sun,  
My forty dollar name-designer tie  
Most likely has a spot that must be sponged  
Before I sleep. My Gucci shoes are shined  
For each rehearsal approach. But there's no role  
For sweet success tomorrow. Or next week.

A dozen times a month I play this lead--  
Instead of hotdogs, fine on haute cuisine.  
The bottom line is (How I hate that line!)  
Our customers aren't clapping for our number.  
However trimmed and powdered or emaciated  
They make it sound, their script says so, a word  
Of lead and ice that lodges in soft parts  
Of my chest, attacking pointed spots.  
(I'm sure you note the comic undertones  
That permeate this neo-classic farce.)

Still, I provide expected locomotion  
For this fine costume to complete the plot,  
To make the entrance and escort the client  
To lunch, silk lining litching wit,  
Napoleonic well-tailored with sincerity,  
Pan-a-dressed with confidence. Bright anchors  
Emerge from pockets, practiced protocol  
And upturn jokes, a little charge card magic--

When the show plays out, the wound-up line  
Propels the props to yesterday's airport.  
And there this woven routine, almost  
Adapt enough to give its own performance  
Will do inanimate back in the plane,  
At last unfolding in home's terminal  
To wait in line in his Bell's crowded alley,  
And from the sleep-in depths yield change enough  
To call-- report the past to amateur  
Directors of these high-camp one-act flops--  
And maybe learn I don't still lead the cast.

Blanche Hollander

17  
Face down in snow  
the fallen tombstone  
buries the family name.

4/5/9

4th HM

Post Anthony  
Judge  
Thanks for sharing

Nice flow - great "turn" of the  
haiku from the objective incident  
to the "ah"! Crisp and clean -  
it's obvious you're comfortable with other  
than 57/5. There is much here - the idea of  
"fallen" - the disgrace of shoddy maintenance - as well  
as the tombstone "burying" the family "name" - a second  
death - the whole muffled in snow's stealth. So  
much room for the reader to share with writer!



1st Prize

56

My boyfriend's devoted to crows.  
He taught one to bring me a rose.  
And he taught it to talk--  
I'm impressed but I balk  
When it tells me to take off my clothes!

Congratulations!

Great limerick!

I'm still laughing.

Judge Mary Ann Baudamer

## SPACE QUEST

## Hymn to the American Desert

113  
Come traveler,  
be rid of recycled air and weighted shoes,  
(though you may want a heat shield by day).  
Come out on earth's sueded curve  
blown beige and bare, let light scour  
civilization from your eyes  
enough for you to enter the lavender  
and cerulean fourth dimension foyer.

Read the coded map of the night walkers  
and the sidewinder's graven intaglio  
like shadows of a spiral galaxy. Leave  
footprints on granulated layers of always  
where ocotillos comet their reds across solar wind.  
Find a flowering century plant rising like Venus,  
riding a vertebra of the planet's arched chine,  
offering salvers of beaded gold to the jealous sun.

Climb to the sculpted apogee built of itself  
without a spine except for cactus,  
borrowed bones and hoarded powder  
from other millenia's seas. Follow  
Hogarth's curve downward, sunsetward  
to the perigee valley, clinging to the rim  
of the possible, just this side  
of sapphire's incisive edge.

Come wade an ocean of light,  
sail its flood before the nearest moon steals  
its roar, before blossoming cosmos withdraw  
fuchsia rays, and the skink surrenders its warmth  
to the owl. Let the weightless part of you  
stalk coyote and badger through orbiting night  
and obsidian reflection, keeping tethered  
to rhythms only your blood remembers.

Track Orion through creosote bush and saguaro,  
share his potluck until the life star  
returns to silence dark's movers and shakers  
with nails of morning, tonnage of light.  
And soon, if you come naked and alone enough,  
you can exchange all your learning for truth.

*Lots of good imagery here!*  
*Judge Casser*

(X)

2

SONNET FOR HIS NAMESAKE  
(DuPage River, Illinois)

Some nights when fog crawls up the river's flanks,  
A sleepy mallard sudden-turns its head  
As cycling waves soft-smack the muddy banks  
Recalling rhythms of an age long dead.  
The water holds old songs in many keys:  
(Stacatto notes from flying hoofs and paws  
Or dancing moccasins and tune-slapped knees,  
The drumming, humming steeped in every clause  
Of time. Tonight a Frenchman called DuPazhe  
Inspects his traps for beaver, muskrat, mink;  
He moves with shade and bough for camouflage,  
Then squints at streetlights, lingers at the brink  
Of bubbling passage, doffs his hood at fame,  
And disappears once more, leaving just his name.



G. Hallaway

SONNET FOR HIS NAME  
(Hudson River, Illinois)

Boat lights when fog crawls up the river's rim  
A sleepy rindard sudden-turns its head  
As cycling waves soft-smack the muddy bars  
Healing the name of an eye long dead  
The water no old songs in many keys  
(Scattered notes from living hoots and paws  
Or dancing moccasins and turn-stepped trees  
The brimmed, humming seemed in every clasp  
Of time. Tonight a fireman called Debra  
Inspects his traps for beaver, muskrat, mink  
He moves with hands and legs for camouflage  
Then glances at streetlights, fingers at the drink  
Of popping passage, both his hood at flame  
And disappears once more, leaving just his name.

CUTTING A FINGER ON OBSIDIAN  
to Georgia O'Keeffe

1st Hm

3

Searching,  
plodding in sand-filled shoes  
through shimmers of heat,  
we never met.  
Yet I knew you, Georgia,  
in veinous ways--  
in behind-the-eyes ways  
where light strikes  
mirrors in the secret vaults  
of knowing.

Exclaiming aloud and alone  
when the desert showed me its bones,  
its spiny life-- still and green  
or sidewinding,  
I knew you.

(cont.)

We passed at angles on the parallax  
of light out on Hogarth's curve  
blown beige and almost bare--  
palimpsest for colors and shapes,  
some knee-skinning, some cheek-soft,  
seeping in and out of each other  
under the mallet of light.

You are willful and wild  
as a spirit hawk. You are  
lava glass trapping fire  
beneath conchoidal wrinkles.

You are hands brushes eyes  
no longer peeling light,  
feeling its pulse,  
shedding it like snakeskin  
to dry and iridesce on canvas--  
but still living  
where I know you.



1/10/1941

We passed at angles on the parallel  
of light out on Hester's curve  
blow before and almost bare--  
gaiters for colors and shapes,  
some knee-skimming, some cheek-salt,  
sweeping in and out of each other  
under the mallet of light.

You are willful and wild  
as a spirit hawk. You are  
laid there trapping life  
beneath conchoidal wrinkles.

You are hands brushes eyes  
no longer seeing light,  
feeling its pulse,  
shedding its live anarchy  
to dry and black on canvas--  
but still living  
where I know you.

IN HONOR OF EXCELLENCE

Art - Letters - Music



THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN, INC.



proudly presents

*Gemma Holloway*

with this Certificate of Achievement in LETTERS  
Poetry Contest 1989 Second Prize SKILL

*Eleanor Pankow* *June 17, 1989*  
Branch President Date

IN HONOR OF EXCELLENCE

Art - Letters - Music



THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN, INC.



proudly presents

*Jenna Holloway*

with this Certificate of Achievement in LETTERS

Poetry Contest 1989 2nd Honorable Mention SKILL

*Eleanor Pankow* *June 17, 1989*  
Branch President Date



1st page

63

## CIRCUS MAN

Ma warned me, said there'd always be three rings  
that meant more than the one he wore-- that is,  
if I should ever get him to that stage.

But I fell into step with prancing boots,  
the big drumbeats, the trombones' sassy slides.  
Parading colors, rhinestones. epaulets  
enticed me like his grace and daring eyes.

His elephants do two-steps on command  
while jealous tigers roar from rolling cages.  
He'd never lay a whip on animals  
or me-- just gives the word and we obey--  
I guess that's love. He married me, all right,  
in center ring in Syracuse. Oh Ma,  
I wanted you to come but you refused.

I always knew the big top was illusion,  
the sweaty, gritty side was no surprise.  
The tears I've cried have mostly been for you  
who said you didn't want me hurt. But Ma,  
I understand. I found your old scrapbook  
before I left-- the pictures of a girl  
up on a horse behind a costumed rider--  
it wasn't Pa your arms were wrapped around.  
I saw your smile-- the one you lost before  
we ever met. It makes me sad to think  
your dream went wrong-- for everybody needs  
some sequins with their sawdust. Make mine red.

I'll take my lion tamer and his flaws,  
take midnight trains to one-track towns because  
I share the laughter in between the frowns.

Well done! The appeal of the Circus is  
universal and the imagery in this poem  
is skillfully handled. Judge Stella works

The judges were impressed with the quality and quantity of poems submitted for the poetry contest of the Watauga Branch of the National League of American Pen Women.

As with previous poetry contests, your poems were judged by members of the English department of a local university. Each poem went to the judges with only a number for identification. I kept the cover page. You will find the name on the page with a poem has been eliminated.

Thanks to all who have participated. Reading your poems has been a pleasure to all who have been involved in this project.

Following is the winners' list:

First place: Andrew E. Spence III, Chattanooga, Tennessee  
Second place: Stella Worley, Broderick, California  
(tie) A. Irene Polson, Chicago, Illinois  
Third place: Errol Hess, Bristol, Tennessee  
(tie) Marianne McFarland McNeil, Amarillo, Texas

Honorable Mention:

Hazel S. Helmandollar, Bristol, Tennessee  
Barbara Prewitt, Elizabethton, Tennessee  
Dorothy Bordenave, Diamond Bar, California  
Irene Blory, Alexandria, Virginia  
Cliff Ammons, Greeneville, Tennessee  
Roma B. Haggerty, Kingsport, Tennessee  
Mary Jo Craft, Portsmouth, Ohio  
Stella Worley, Broderick, California  
Miriam J. Smithers, La Jolla, California  
Errol Hess, Bristol, Tennessee  
Lucille Gripp Maharry, Creston, Iowa  
Alma C. Brown, Knoxville, Tennessee  
A. Irene Polson, Chicago, Illinois  
Margaret Ward Morland, Lynchburg, Virginia  
Glenna Holloway, Naperville, Illinois  
Marianne McFarland McNeil, Amarillo, Texas

Thelma G. Barnes  
Route #3, Box 800  
Blountville, Tennessee  
37617

*Congratulations on  
two honorable mentions.  
Your poems are delightful.*

Honorable

## HERALDRY

The old clansmen beseeched couchant northerlies  
to rise and face them,  
willing a frontal assault from the wolf-wind  
to keep their hungry scent from the king's deer.

They had to be fast. There was a death penalty  
for venison eaters, a slower one for those  
past aiming true at browsing briskets. Daily,  
more elders went slack like soiled draperies  
piled in corners. No fabric was noble or whole,  
no color. And only bellies were rampant.

Across escutcheons of hunters  
the wind pried in bar sinister crevices  
of castle and hovel. It spiraled  
around the borders of dark forest,  
carving its bearings with dirks of ice  
and sometimes on its own bias  
offering a stag on morning's white field.

✓ ✓  
Yes, child, the crest you ordered  
is elegant on mauve paper-- splendid spread  
of gilded antlers and poised hoofs, regality  
balanced with a lean and bare-fanged entity--  
panther, perhaps-- embossed with more truth  
than you were designed for.



*Hayden*  
*Honorable*

FORGETTING A MAN NAMED CLIFFORD WOODS

I think of Cliff while watching lightning split  
The tallest pines astride the ridge, then hit  
The vine-choked thicket edge with rolling fire.  
Old brush flares up, rain hisses, makes a spire  
Of smoke, a claim. I hear it pop and spit,  
Prepared to smolder all day in the pit  
Of logs and limbs. I pray the burn will quit.  
Wide streams protect me, yet when I retire  
I think of Cliff.

Each summer conjures well-aimed storms to slit  
My battered woods. I search for any bit  
Of green returning near charred wounds while liar-  
Like I hail new life as something to desire.  
All winter when my likeness seems to fit  
I think of Cliff.

✓ ✓

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## I REMEMBER SHAD

He said he couldn't write the essay I assigned on patriotism, the boy with Choctaw eyes and saddle-colored skin whose big brogans kept my 60's classroom tracked with barnyard smells. His name was Luther Shadbush and he lived on the edges of anger, sometimes at me. "You think I'm gonna gush about rights and opportunity and how I wish I had more lives to give this country?" He struggled to keep his words clean and his hands unclenched. "But Shad, don't you feel anything for America?" "Yeah. A hankerin' to do up New York, maybe even Chicago before I split for Canada."

He sent me a letter when he shipped out for Vietnam: "You know I'm not much good at writing stuff but I don't want you to think I let myself get herded off like a stupid sheep not caring about anything and no attachments. It finally sunk in I'm part of this land, going a long way back. Sort of like a needle on a lodgepole pine. I know the limbs are full of blight and the trunk's got borers but it's still the tallest, straightest tree in the forest. And it's my tree. Guess I can't help wanting to hold on to it. I don't see nothing better anywhere else, don't see other kinds propping up falling trees without taking the lame tree's land in the process. The lodgepole pine don't operate that way. Maybe if enough needles hang tight and do what we're supposed to do even if we don't like it, our tree will get well and put out some new branches. Bigger and better ones. I guess that's hope. So that's what I aim to do. Maybe that's loyalty. And if I die doing it, somebody ought to know I'm not leaving bitter, and I'm glad to be part of this old tree. I guess that's pride. And maybe all of it together is that word you wanted us to write about last year in school. Remember?"

I remember, Shad. I remember as I read your name between reflections on the shiny new monument, remember the medals you won before you finally fell all the way to the forest floor, one more needle to nurture the roots of the lodgepole pine.



DEAR SENECA:

Our old asthmatic mentor, you discuss  
So many things we're guilty of today.  
With elegant simplicity you jab  
Our faults, incise them, hold them to the light  
Before we know we're cut. Without a pause,  
Without a blink to minimize your stare  
You zap your logic automatically  
To circuits in our brains that trigger nods.  
Bizarre beliefs, affected speech, eccentric foods,  
Cosmetic fads-- "It stems from serious  
Affliction of the spirit," you forewarned.  
Declaring "passion for the defect for  
Its own sake" as the ultimate conceit,  
The height of ostentation, you describe  
The skewed esthetics/ethics of our times:  
Contorted fashions, gross musicians, toys  
That turn the stomach, drugs, abortion, porn--  
But modern egos snort at ancient truth.  
We puff and posture in our own defense.  
Equivocation fades to vanity  
Each time you hose it down with lucid force.  
My counter-commentaries seem pale crumbs  
Of what you noted nineteen hundred years  
Ago. The thing is, what you say, once said,  
Is obvious and so damned ordinary  
It's easy to forget nobody speared  
Its nucleus before, and few have since.  
If I, with centuries of wisdom's stores  
To raid, can mount no stunning argument,  
I pity poor Lucilius. No man  
Can breathe beneath perfection's weight.  
No wonder his replies were never found;  
You left him without anything to say!

Perhaps he was a literary ploy  
For letters/essays planned for publication.  
A sweet device, your: "You will want to know--"  
Or "You have asked me--" serves a writer well.  
Humility was lacking when you said  
The correspondence would make him immortal.

It should be easy to dismiss your worth.  
The fullsome jowls and chins your sculptors show  
Befit the celebrated spartan diet.  
Except when you feared poison, you ate well.  
Your wealth and power turned three emperors  
Against you. Yours was not a stoic life.

Yet all invalidation is disarmed,  
For you admit you weren't a true adherent.  
No stoic but a brilliant moderate, and thus  
I let your words suffice: "to want"  
(Expect of you) "simply what is enough."

I ponder how serene the world would be  
If no one trespassed premises like that.



## OLD WIVES THE TALES COME FROM

Crocheting string doilies, dresser scarves, antimacassars  
no one wants, filling boxes, filling huge cotton prints,  
sleeves sloping like tents, hooks unfastened  
back of the neck, they string out  
death in rocking chairs.

Daily they fatten to fill their final boxes, paying  
out advice no one needs, paying  
out the slow twine, enlarging the old designs,  
straining fifty-odd years of wifery  
for a mite to impress the young ones  
tightening against their webs and cardboard,  
closing in with the last lid.

Frayed sheaths  
used awhile by knife-voiced kin  
who own everything in focus  
outside the net of squares and wheels.

On humid suburban evenings, on some deserted  
concrete patio, they group like toadstools,  
picking at the threads of the days' patterns,  
unraveling their mouths,  
honing their only weapons.

## KING TUTANKHAMUN: ONCE THERE WAS A BOY WHO LOVED TO WHISTLE

Young Pharaoh, I studied  
your museumed effigies catching light,  
posed on the threshold of blue and saffron,  
paused in the old dreams from the head of Horus:  
Morning renascence out of a lotus—  
Rolling across the arch of heaven on sun wheels—  
Rafting under-earth rivers near shoals of Osiris,  
wrapped in the shawls of Ptah.

Mortal eyes are splended with your accessories,  
a glut of gold and gods.  
And everywhere your face with your ankh-eyes  
reflecting on your mirror world.  
(You must have seen eyes when yours were closed,  
always on you, looking full at you from anywhere,  
a thousand replicas to fill your own.)

I saw you at the bowstring—hunter, warrior,  
hero-murals of a lord, a moral for your subjects,  
foiled with lapis, carnelian, turquoise, ivory.  
And in the end, failed by the vulturine wingspan  
and flared serpent hood.

But back in the trailing edges of light,  
beyond the artists' tales and the godsmiths' tolls,  
before you changed your name, there was a smiling boy.  
I saw him clearly through a tear in the papyrus,  
rollicking barefoot on sands old when legends began:  
You on an ungilded afternoon, learning how to whistle.

It is he beneath the priceless mask:  
Amarna child with puckered mouth framing melodies  
for the songless ibis, and turning Selket's head.  
On moon-chilled desert I can hear him  
softly behind the myth of death.

## I REMEMBER SHAD

He led the "Hell no, I won't go" part of my classroom, the boy with saddle-colored skin and big brogans tracking in barnyard smells. He spent his last term sparring with grammar and spelling, living on the edge of anger, sometimes aimed at me like arrows flying from his Choctaw eyes. His name was Luther Shadbush and I kept him after school again when he refused to write the essay I assigned on patriotism. "You think I'm gonna gush about rights and opportunity and how I wish I had more lives to give this country?" He struggled to clean his words and unclench his big hands.

"Don't you feel anything for America, Shad?"  
"Sure. I got a big urge to paint New York before I split for Canada."

But there were later words. He sent me this letter when he shipped out for Vietnam:  
"You know I'm not much at writing stuff but I don't want you to think I let myself get herded off like a stupid sheep not caring about anything or remembering anything you tried to tell me. Finally it did sink in. I'm part of this land, going a long way back. Sort of like a needle on a lodgepole pine. I know the limbs are blighted and the trunk's got borers but it's still the tallest, straightest tree in the forest. And it's my tree. Guess I can't help wanting to hold on to it. I don't see nothing better anywhere else, don't see other kinds propping up falling trees without taking the lame tree's land in the process. The lodgepole pine don't operate that way. Maybe if enough needles hang tight and do what we're supposed to do even if we don't like it, our tree will get well and put out some new branches. Bigger and better ones. I guess that's hope. So that's what I aim to do. Maybe that's loyalty. And if I die doing it, somebody ought to know I'm not leaving bitter, and I'm glad to be part of this old tree. I guess that's pride. And maybe all of it together is that word you wanted us to write about last year in school. Remember?"

I remember, Shad. I remember as I read your name between reflections on the shiny new monument, remember the medals you won before you finally fell all the way to the forest floor, one more needle to nurture the roots of the lodgepole pine.



This is excellent  
prose, but still  
prose —

## THE SPIRAL GALAXY

My mother used to dress up and go off  
in soft fabrics I thought felt like sky,  
fanning out, smelling of moonlight  
as she walked by me.  
She pinned a diamond starburst  
on royal blue or black, close to her heart.  
I'd get sent to my room for touching things  
she had on. Only Orion ever knew I got out  
of bed when the maid began to snore, drawn  
to the magnetic field of my mother's closet.  
I'd wrap her sleeves and hems around me,  
a caterpillar making a cocoon, and quiet as.  
By feel, I knew the shade of each dress,  
every measure of her room and the night  
it held. Sometimes I saw a mirrored glint  
on top of her highboy--her favorite bauble,  
my wishing star. If I could close my fingers  
on it once, all its magic would pass to me.  
Standing on a chair I couldn't reach it.  
One night she changed her mind, rehung  
a dress, pin still in place, and put on  
something newer. For the first time,  
I couldn't wait for her to leave. My blood  
swarmed hot in my head, drained down suddenly;  
I felt myself floating to the floor.  
In Children's Hospital, the maid sat  
on my bed erasing crossword puzzle squares.  
The motion made me sicker.  
When I got home on Saturday, the jewel  
was no longer accessible nor my magic theory.  
Later I saw a picture in a book-- the explosion  
of a supernova in a spiral galaxy. It pleased me  
to decide that's what became of her in the end  
when she stopped coming home at all. Sometimes  
I still think she's up there-- flaring brooch  
on black silk breast, pirouetting  
in the eye of luminosity, radiating sparks.  
Now and then I go to the library and look;  
I know the page by heart. I gravitate  
to anything with arms that could sweep me in.

## THE ALWAYS CHILD

He handed her the pieces of the cup,  
water rolling out of his eyes.  
Silently he stood over the trash  
where she put the shards, his tears tapping  
on the sack lining the basket.  
"It's all right," she said. "You still have  
a mug with Snoopy's picture on it."

His silence turned to a moan. She took off  
his glasses and wiped them on her skirt.  
Tears clung to the stubble on his chin.  
"Come on," she said. "It's time to shave."

She put her knee across his lap to stop  
his wiggling. The sound of the razor  
always bothered him. As soon as she let him up  
he darted to the bedroom and hurled himself  
on a toy, a poodle stitched with loops of yarn.  
His fingers twisted into the fuzz. He began  
licking the face which no longer had eyes.

"Don't do that, Danny." Her voice  
had no inflection. If she allowed herself  
a different pitch or change of tone she might scream.

She waited for him to settle down  
before mopping the kitchen. The telephone rang.  
A man asked her to participate in a survey.  
"Do you have children living at home?"  
When she answered, he asked the boy's age.  
"Forty-eight," she said, closing her eyes.  
The man laughed nervously. "But seriously, ma'am, we--"  
"Yes," she said. "It's serious."  
She hung up quietly and looked at the clock.

"It's time for your shot, Danny."  
A low growl almost like a gargle began  
in his throat. He shook his head hard.  
"You know if you don't have it, you'll swell  
and hurt worse." She filled the syringe slowly.  
"Doctor" and "clinic" were words Danny could say  
plainly. He could only mumble "Mother."

She approached him with the needle. His fingers  
raced to his head. Before she could stop him  
he handed her a fistful of curly gray hair.



## EMILY; EMILY

"Like a panther in the glove," she wrote, probably after the latest letter containing her returned pages. But Dickinson's mentor was merely dull-witted, not cruel.

Whitely expectant, I open my manuscript with your critique. All my blood drains somewhere and I wonder that my dress is not soaked incarnadine. You've turned and twisted me skinless, yet still you want "a painful revelation in the modern idiom."

You dream of her, that other one, at night by your cold hearth, and sigh into your sherry when you see my like name among the pile of poems you must read.

You burn to ignite ghost fire-- you in her batiste milieu, or her Amherstness in yours, believing you understand her as a lover should.

Your passions don't mesh, professor, defender of the form, the faith, the fifth. You aren't an overthrower. You've never grasped the wildcat in tight quarters. Your perception is skewed but I come for other reasons you are blind to. Already widely published while I live is not enough. My most painful revelation will surprise you.