2012 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Fourth Prize: Hannah Cheriyan

Rhapsodies in Gossamer

Hazy, lazy summer
And the sunrise
Casts bright tangerine shadows
On the wall

Staring into the window to the world,
A wall of shivering green
Whispers in the hush,
“Masterpiece, masterpiece”
As the maple trees
Shimmer emerald green

Perspective is everything.

For instance, the monument,
When you lie flat against it and look
Up,
Turns into a road.
And if only you could manage to
Run vertically,
You could find the rainbow at the end

And if you peered inside
A hydrangea bush,
You would see dewdrop fairies
Frantically composing minuets, waltzes, rhapsodies
In gossamer
Presented to them by those spiders you fear the most
Who are, indeed, patrons of the arts

But perhaps the wall and the bushes intersect,
Somewhere near the
Path to the Sun,
That scintillates in gold on the waves
Beneath the sunset

And perhaps the clouds are reality,
And we are floating
This side of the gossamer,
Underwater,
The wispy clouds, ripples
In the calm sea of the sky
My Song

A song caught me today
Tangled in my hair,
Flying in halos around my feet
It perched on the edge of my eyelash

Songs don’t let go easily
This one jumped into my keyboard
Danced on my bacteria cultures,
And conducted an orchestra inside my head

What am I to do with you, song?
It laughed as my piano tried to capture it,
Defying my flute,
And twirling through my books.

And for one day, music was everywhere
I saw the theater ghosts on the wall
Heard the ballad of the paintbrushes
Tasted the notes of the molten sunlight

Oh, song,
I know now-
As I walk through tunnels
Of golden, leafy canopies
And music floats around me,
You found me, my song, so-

I sing.
The Inconvenience of Running in Slippers

How exhilarating
To whisk down the
Gradually
    sloping
    hall
Faster and faster and faster
As if you might
Sprout wings and

Fly

And just in mid-leap,
Before you burst into blossom,
Your slipper flies off

The momentum is
Lost
Your footfalls no longer airy
But elephantlike, clumsy, and
You trip,
Stumble,
And burn your knees on the
Rough, unsympathetic carpet

What madness!
Ah, there it sits, foolish slipper,
Taunting your nearness to the heights,
Your searing fall
Pain perches on your knee all day in reminder
With sharp pecks, whenever you’re not
Expecting them

It’s not as if it’s a useful fallen slipper

Princes are rare nowadays,
And they only pick up glass slippers anyways
Forgotten F(all)

It is raining.

Summer
gasps
as gravity pulls it underwater,
So that emerald is frozen without a hint of a blush,
And the lines between green and gray are blurred.

Everyone is gray, walking,
    falling,
    floating.

I don the orange hat,
Cheerily glowing golden,
And defy the rain
But under the hat
I am just as gray as any of them.

We have forgotten

How to burn our costumes in vermillion flames,
Shed our coverings,
And bare the branching skeletal roots of our souls.
Because despite masks of green, vibrant life,

Under the stifling blankets of snow
We are dead anyway.

I am choking on an overdose of irony and green leaves.
The Music of Life

A trumpet fanfare, sounding loud,  
Heralds the rising blooms of sun  
Leaves drip gold in dewy clouds  
To mourn the summer, so undone

Audio-graphic stains are framed  
Upon the mind, thus laid bare  
Moments caught and memories claimed  
By roses, yet the thorns are there

The keening of a violin  
Into words such feelings pound,  
An almost-waltz, what could have been  
Had the glass slipper been found

Yet onward, those persistent drums  
Lifting wings into the sky  
Silent breath, a heart-string strums  
A smiling melody of bright eyes

Symbolic, shimmering red-gold tones  
Embrace at last the rising sun  
The lurking monsters merely bones,  
In truth, the play has just begun