2010 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest  
Third Prize: Kristine Kruppa

Playground

golden-haired  
with palms the size  
of a kitten's head  
a child  
loosens his grasp on the  
worn weathered ropes  
that frame his soaring body  
hands red from clinging  
to the swing  
he lets go  
legs stretch into air  
arms spiral like  
falling blossoms  
a single moment  
suspended in time  
and  
for just this inexplicable  
innocent instant  
he flies...

old library

musty  
books slowly rot  
on shelves long forgotten  
splattered with dust, worms, and stories  
unread

control

When ears refuse to hear what my heart wants  
And tongues will never speak the lines I need  
The blatant power you so boldly flaunt  
Followed by hatred surrender to greed

To come and watch my helpless struggle through  
To tease and taunt without the shame you lost  
My swollen knee, my bleeding brow have few  
True value for the life and death it cost

See now how I rise up against my fear  
And push away your startled grasp so strong
I will not weep, my eyes have no more tears
To fall for your harsh punishment so wrong

Never again will I allow this sin
Too long your toy my fragile heart has been

*Confetti by moonlight*

I watch
as planes scream high over the rooftops
shaking loose tiny parachutes
like the seeds of dandelions in the summer
when I try to blow away all of them
in only one breath
they drift solemnly down toward earth
in an elaborate dance
a party intended just for me
set to the staccato rhythm
of machine guns
flashing like sidewalk fireworks
and setting my dandelions
aflame

*Memories in the snow*

the air fogs in front of my face
like gray smoke fleeing
from the fires of my destruction
the world looks upon me one final time
knowing I will not be the same
when I walk here again
if
I walk here again
birds are silent
the wind is still
as if wondering holding their breath
for what will happen next
fresh snow quietly creaks
under my uncaring feet,
clinging as if to beg
'please don't go'
I ignore it
turn away
my glance scarcely lingering
on the precious spectacle
nature has prepared for me
I pause for an instant
and walk through the door
to face myself