

2018 Roger M. Jones Poetry Content
Fourth Place: Katie Bertcher

Teacher

If angels were real they would be like her,
Heart like a lighthouse illuminating the way back home.
Radiating happiness and love to the open sea
While standing tall and humble against the rocky outcrop.
I flew free in the specter of her smile
On wings of borrowed hope she never expected returned.

She taught me if you dance enough with palms outstretched
You won't feel the rain,
If you laugh loud enough you become the laughter,
And if you cry do not be ashamed of your tears.
There are frigid days and starless nights
But you are the warmth you need to press on,
To separate the darkness and find your way to the light.

A mother of three she had magic for every possibility,
How to conjure hope from desperation,
How to summon determination's fire from inspiration's sparks,
How to transform sworn enemies into best friends,
Band-aids for scraped souls and casts for broken hearts.
I would have placed mine in her hands,
Implore she enchant it's beats with all her understanding,
But she knew that path was mine alone to take.

She held my hand and guided me as far as she could
But in the end our roads diverged
As I left the harbor and returned to life's tempestuous seas.
Though I am years gone and leagues away,
I still feel her magic, her warmth, her light.
My compass: emblazoned with her lessons, points true.
To brave new worlds I have followed it,
And at the end of the journey it leads me back home
To where my angel stands, shining out to the sea.

To notice life

Think.

What have you seen today?

What have you heard today?

What have you smelled, tasted, felt today?

What have you not?

What have you stepped over or walked past?

What joys lie just beyond your appreciation?

Your eyes may be open, but you are not seeing.

You breathe without smelling,

Eat without tasting,

Touch without feeling,

Hear without understanding,

Exist without living.

There is so much more to today than you thought there was

And even more remains to be unveiled.

Beyond today you must seize tomorrow.

Every second bursts with infinite possibility:

An endless orchard awaiting your exploration.

Climb through the trees,

Feast on the fruit,

Revel in the decadence of treasured imperfection

Because nothing here is perfect.

And so what?

Perfection is only a lense for expectation.

If you love what already surrounds you the world becomes beautiful.

Smile and approach life with open arms.

Saying "This is what I got and I'm gonna love it!"

If too often the morning means nothing but traffic jams, then

Look at the cars, at the road, at the double yellow line dancing down the asphalt.

Smell a new perfume: Ode d'Exhaust .

Hear the symphony of car horns played by an orchestra of commuters

Featuring the twitter of the odd bird.

This is not a traffic jam,

This is a traffic JAM and everyone is the lead singer, guitarist, and drummer all at the same time:

A melodious cacophony of epic proportion.

Your life awaits you;

What will you notice next?

The common stories of the weary traveller

The story

My mother

tells me about a weary traveller entering a village.
He seeks food and shelter from two

Men

Women

One man
lets him in.

One man
turns him away.

One woman
lets him in.

One woman
turns him away.

However, the traveller is actually

a Magician
in disguise, and

a Rapist
in disguise, and

rewards

punishes

assaults

cannot assault

the man,
who is now

the woman,
who is now

wealthy
and praised
for taking in

Poor
and chastised
for forcing away

Traumatized
and blamed
for letting in

Unharmd
and unnoticed
for being cautious about

a weary traveller.

I am told:

But my mother tells me:

Be kind to strangers;
you don't know their story.

Anyone could hurt you;
you don't know their story.

When the traveller comes to my village
What am I supposed to do?