

2014 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Fourth Place: Eric Horst

Forefather's Root Sprouts

Sand stone grains sway,
tidal pools knead
us into cut wrung doughy structures,
spoolish clumps; enlarged.
Culled by a marked dock.

Sea warmth laps
over molded
bodies as we lay.

A jolt,
 a sudden shove,

pressurized waves of light
tell us who we *aren't*, *are*.

Whispers from
behind me, "Rise Up."

Stone seems to bend here,
here even light has weight,
here you keep in cadence.
With the encroaching deep.

I glance ahead;
to see
a steady succession of beads running,
gathering, gushing, gaping mouths
into palpable darkness.

Cut the pace,
bewildered I fumble
and stomp my foot
to stop the stumble,
see my father and his father's father.
His trunk seems well rooted in the flow of time
at least in my mind.

My yells sucked off my tongue.

How I'd rather chew on fresh mint, dazing in the shade of an evergreen limb.

My Stomach Drops

when I walk across a broken bridge
that binds two beyond the precipice.
I feel the breath of love.

A craggily crack that partitions souls.
Each board constructed with care for the other.
Its comfortable distance protecting us from harm.
Everyone should construct a bridge like this
but take care of it.

Once I reach the warm streets
I feel a crisp sigh from the looming distance
that prickles my neck a little.
Leaves laughing blowing on the quaker ground
cobble stones compound collateral steps
damaged by my hurried frightened bounds,
but I reach that familiar rosewood door and open it with a tug.

Warmth, banana walnut muffin caresses
me and me alone and I roar over
endless sinusoidal hills. The critters quiver
and I shake my mane and embrace
the only woman I will need.

Looking through our liquid prism
I fear the concentration is thick and that one more thing
will cause a raucous, a fractal explosion,
a pent up gel that won't move as we
do through time.

Undertail and the Plutonium Spank

Geiger counters tap to a faint beat,
their own form of scat.

Carroll County bird gets the lazy day blues;
quite simply, quite easily.
Cornfields stretch out under
wing and roll his warm tubby tongue back
to expose the roof of his chalk-black-brittle-beak.

Swooping down closer he inspects
a rusty crippled swing set leaning for support on
a browning sign, spotted, sickly peeling off from
the rusty iron frame which so gallantly held it.
Seen only by avian eyes,
some apron-wearing broad posing next to a fancy chrome dishwasher:
Please let your wife come into the living room

An aura overcomes the bird and his heart sputters into submission.
bird hasn't been this way before.
Blundering rolls of nausea and a painful counter
send tickling jabs through his head
telling him to turn.
Scavenging for scraps,
He needs to go on.

A halo of cement, cavernous, but not empty.
Even the shrillest of cries lost in crackling, gray spackle.
Forever ago pillars of white smoke would support
us and our endeavors.
Now a hole for large rodents to assimilate.
Hypnotized by the beat and his primal instinct,
the bird free-falls. Deep down in a drain of light,
he feels awkwardly warm.

Piercing his talons onto the unstable gravel,
he looks for what he can get.
A rat of monstrous proportion lays away,
a mound that keeps his kin
and his kin's kin's kin alive
but next to the mound he discovers it:

a tarnished gray obelisk that glints at him.
He looks at it,
it takes his sight.

He tries to touch it,
it takes his scaly leg.
He tries to pick it up,
it turns his beak to dust.

We All Are Fallen

When an angel falls from Heaven it falls like a statue to the ground.

A shrill wind bellows through the empty sky.
Wraps its slick moment around this dull white.
The curt breeze's forked tongue flicks
At marble skin.
It leaves cold lines of spit,
Ripples of shivers,

"Farewell keeper of grace."
Those full ruffled plumes mean nothing.
They just itch the back.

This lofty body
Falls to human depths.
Each stark white feather pierces the skin like a syringe
Filled to tips with morphine, they clog noble pursuits.
With each quenching
Pluck brings back reality.

Tight back muscles pop, buckle from the soar, it's a long way,
Ask Lucifer.
Bringer of Dawn, shine to your pleasure.

Left to shine,
Make shadows or burn bright.
Your place on Earth is your choice.
This hand can hold scalpel or pen,
Save life or wonder,

And you don't need to be an angel for that.

Part i

... be all there is in this blue drop

Mom screamed, sheets of anger

covered my body like plastic wrap,
squeezing joy like tree sap to the
roots,
all I could do was prepare for a blow.
Hide,
save face.

Small burrows of joy flourished and grew
In the safety of rooty nooks
and crème brûlée dirt.
I lived in the dirt,
played handfuls of it,
climbed the backs of stegosauri,
made bounds in it.
I couldn't be hurt in it.

And then I was washed and slapped
and bruised and cleaned and told
that my life would change forever.

A one-way ticket folded twice at the midway point.
Placed like a firm handshake in my clenched hand.

A hardening process began and the
tree had to
fit the joy that brewed and aged in its burrows.
I needed the tree to fit me.
So I changed it

By effervescence,
vapors poured
out into rage that forced
pistons to move.

Pressure built.
The more I lived the more I needed to
run in the o-fivehundred, swim in
gasps and sweat
out the pressure.

*You will never be perfect.
Du wird niemals perfekt sein.*

She found me when I wasn't expecting

anything, from anybody.

Sudden light leaves popped into

vision.

Leaves that took the sun's

shine and made me warm.

A meditative state overcame
me as I grabbed around a bolder jutting out
fifty meters above the ground.
I only let friends belay me then.
But, I also wasn't afraid to climb
alone.

A friend who favored my life, saved me from the non-home,
that final hand-hold. He knew me.

Adventurous vibes rocked my head,
shook my foundation

I made the climb to Gehmpen
every-weekend.
Shaved the Matterhorn's shaggy
beard with a straight razor made of
wood and aluminum. Drove my blade in the Rein, furious with me.
I never went home.

In Llorret Del Mar I blunted into
octopus' colour shifting expression,
purple brim with contempt, my hand burnt
with vain

stark against the masses of algae
congealed to sandstone.

Algae that braved that middle ground
between sea in suspension and
bliss caught in the wind.

Life can turn, *umdrehen*,
become slippery. Without a
home you find hold in drink and pain
and run and dirt again. Travel and
move on.
To India. There will be life enough there
to kick you

It was time to see a few things:

One, a heart.

Not the kind people love from,
the kind that spurts its own life
crucor, and nestles up with fat like
fire to wood.

Two, I needed a trail on a much walked path,
a journey that once led a thousand lives to enlightenment,
a trail that led me to myself.
Somewhere in tangled limbs of two hundred hands and arms of trees
and vines that seem to pulse with life in the forests of Thailand.
Where ferns grow trunks and the shadows glint orange eyes.
I
leaned against my body to let my mind
wonder through worn stone.
Up steps in caverns,
drops of echoes
and smile up at colossal stone slabs etched in grin pose.
His folded toes
 painted gold
 fit my back.

A fault that I fasted in
and knew.

Three, I needed to face black tip reef sharks,
eye to eye.
In the plumes of brain coral, sharp
fans erupted from sea floor.
sting my lips as I kissed the waves .
play patterns on the light.
In some northern part of Sri-Lanka, I learnt to stare down
my fears.

I too feel the pull of a tide that
buckles my body some nights
and peels away my mind to far off places that I haven't been.
I float and soak it in.

End of Part i