

**2014 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest  
Honorable Mention: Kaleb Pifer**

**All the Always**

All the always

I am Lancelot

And she is Guinevere

Reaching out to cup my chin

Barely letting her fingers brush my face before the kiss arrives.

All this time

I am Jesus

While she is Judas

Reaching out, but not taking my hand

Barely skimming my cheek to lay that traitorous kiss.

All the while

She is Guinevere

But I am Arthur

Reaching out to grasp her hand and pull her close

Barely long enough to kiss her brow before she turns away

All the always

She is God

And I am Adam

Reaching out to touch, feel, this one who moulded me

Barely-not-kissing fingers before she turns away and leaves me.

## **I Thought I Saw You**

I thought I saw you

When I stopped writing, looked up.

I guess I was wrong.

There wasn't anyone there to see,

Just a few leaves in the wind.

## **The Shoe**

A shoe, untied.  
Laces dripping  
Dribbling over the edge.  
Cloth snakes squirming  
In the open air  
Trying to untie their tails  
From the base.  
They're trapped.  
They gasp for air  
As I strangle them.  
After the struggle  
They lie dead.  
I've killed the  
Untied shoe.

## A Tale of Pandora

She asks Husband  
What to do  
He tells her to go away.  
She does.

She comes back later  
Asks again.  
Husband responds  
The same.

Her heart is heavy  
Small  
Yet dense  
A neutron star of pain.

She doesn't go back again.  
Doesn't want to see Husband again.  
Decides to stay in the room  
She thinks they share.

She sits  
On the edge  
Of the bed  
They bought together.

Her head drops into her hands,  
Fingers pushing strands of hair  
Out of place.  
She doesn't care.

She closes her eyes...  
... feels as though something...  
... something should be happening.  
But... no.

Nothing happens  
Nothing changes  
Just...  
Just emptiness.

For an hour...  
More than an hour  
She just sits  
Like this.

Eventually  
She falls asleep  
Head sliding  
Off her palms...

Awakened by a ringing bell  
It takes a moment,  
But then she remembers  
It's the door's call.

She painfully stands  
And stretches legs out  
Out past one another  
Until she finds herself walking to the door.

She tries to  
Go on.  
But a hand from nowhere  
Stops her.

"No.  
Stay here."  
Husband's voice  
Low and gruff.

She does as he says  
But still she watches  
She sees  
The door open.

She sees the man there  
The one with the package:  
Brown and cardboard,  
Marked with translucent tape

She sees the exchange.  
Bulging envelope  
For dull  
Brown cardboard.

The door closes.  
The man is gone.  
The envelope is gone.

But the package remains.

Husband lifts the box.  
Looks at her.  
“Open the door,”  
Husband commands.

She does  
Just as he says.  
She opens the closet,  
And he sets it inside.

He takes a lock  
Out of his pocket.  
Puts it on the door.  
Turns the key.

“Go away,”  
Husband says  
In his voice.  
She does.

Later that night,  
Hours later,  
She lies awake  
In their bed.

Cannot sleep  
Not without knowing.  
Not with Husband right there.  
She decides.

She takes the key.  
Out of his drawer.  
Creeps out of the door.  
Creeps down the hallway.

She unlocks the closet.  
She opens the door.  
She splits the tape  
With the key’s sharp edge.

The flaps pull up.

She looks inside.  
And then...  
Then it happens.

The feeling that  
She'd had before returns.  
But it features now  
What was missing.

The tears drip silently  
Out of her eyes.  
Now she knows  
What happened.

She closes the box.  
She locks the door.  
She places the key  
Back in his drawer.

She grabs her favourite jacket,  
With it's deep, wide pockets.  
Pockets just wide enough  
For the granola bars she shoves inside.

A second of hesitation  
Before paper from Husband's wallet  
Joins the granola  
On her way to the door.

The very same door,  
Where the delivery man stood  
And brought the package  
Into his house.

She opens the door.  
She feels the breeze.  
She opens the door.  
And she steps outside.

## Headlights in the Distance

Far away,

Down past the "Do Not Pass,"  
I see the lights of your car.

Coming out of the *only* sound  
Of the night-road  
I see your pinpricks.

It's twelve past nine,  
And I'm heading home,  
So, I assume you, too  
Are heading back to family.

You're probably returning,  
After a long day at...  
(Work?)  
(School?)  
Something or another.

By now,  
White pinpricks are  
White floodlights,  
Throwing  
Confusion into  
My vision.

Happily blinded  
I don't see your face  
Or your family  
Or your emotions  
Or your troubles  
Or your past  
And definitely not your future.

And then white floodlights  
Become red ones  
As front becomes back  
As forward keeps on going

As I drive, and  
As we go on not seeing each other.

A quick glance in my mirror  
And a suspicion confirmed,  
Red floodlights  
Become red pinpricks  
As you pull farther away.

And the *only* sound  
Of the road  
Again becomes  
The only thing.

As I watch you  
And you watch me  
Disappear

As that hill behind me  
Behind you

Obscures.