

**2013 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Lena Sutter**

Transparency

i see right through your blood
into that crater made of
expectation
empty space
intangibility
and just a touch of shabby silver love
i see right through your flesh
into that shadowy tangle of
what is real
what is not
and what just might be if you keep
contorting and convulsing at all the right times
i see up and down your vertebrae
the way your weakening spine
quivers
quakes
and shakes
with too much emotion for your solitary bones to handle
i see right through you
but my heart holds fast against my will
and i cannot fear you
the way I should
when i see right through you

Mortality

This violence, though stemming from differences,
does not discriminate. Death chooses not just the criminal,
not only the miscreants, but the harmless, the intellects, the lovers,
too. The loathing— though we do not know why we loath so— erupts
from our guns, their guns. The body count rises. Lands defiled and stained
today and evermore with the life of the guiltless. Hearts occupied
today and evermore with death's gruesome gravity.

So take,
take like
we are gods,
but do not
weep for your
own mortality.

What is Fragile

The window frosted up around the edges
like a rounded, hazy frame for the vacant treetops,
and a crow, or perhaps a raven,
perched on a slight branch just outside
is obscured by the chilly streaks and droplets.
Inside, the cold tile floor makes her curl her toes
and balance on the outside of her brittle feet
almost precariously.
A fraction of magnificence lingers,
a sense of once-was and could-be,
like the fragrance of a lover suspended in the air
days after they have vanished,
forfeit.

The frost begins to melt and starts to run
and tiny puddles form on the windowsill,
still cold, gently reflecting the hues of the room.
The raven, or perhaps the crow, departs
leaving a trembling branch behind it.
Another comes to greet her.
The line between the inside and the outside blurs
as she connects the beginnings of the day
fastening them with feeble thread:
sewing her morning gingerly.

She opens the window,
nice and wide.

Buddha Eyes

He had a wine-colored soul
peeking through those Buddha eyes,
just sometimes.

Otherwise, he was vaguely catatonic
and spoke in fragments of syllogisms.

Perhaps he was eternal winter,
frozen pipes for veins,
barren trees for bones.

Or perhaps he was ancient Rome,
sun-bleached and weather-worn,
but still with unique allure.

He was unimaginable containment
or ultimate catharsis.

But he had that wine-colored soul
peeking through his Buddha eyes,
just sometimes.