

**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.