

**2013 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Pooja Desai**

Her Wish

The woman marched across stretches of land
To reach the well defiant of fire.
Unfolding an old paper with her hand
She slowly began to write her heart's desire.
Tears oozed out of the corner of her eye
As the troubles of home shadowed her face.
The question that lurked above all was why?
Why are they always caught in some race?
Burdened by the growing passage of time
She swiftly said her last words to her God,
Hoping He will forgive her for her crime
And greet her wish with a powerful nod.
Dropping the paper into the magic well
The words '*Save my Son*' sank in a dark cell.

Looking Above

The smooth arc of the moon,
Lurking high in the heavens,
A place only our souls can reach to,
To hang onto our dreams
That soar so high up in the sky.

Folk tales speak of men walking on it,
Leaving behind detailed footprints
Framed in a moment of time
Before being washed away
By bursts of cloaking dust.

The tales say the men came back too
Sweaty, smelly, and sleepy
But still as heroes and conquerors
In the eyes of the entire earth.

Most don't believe in these stories,
Thoughts of a crazy man, they say.

But if our dreams can go so high,
Shouldn't there be a way
We could follow too?

Yearning

If we could be back to the pb and j we were
That go together so fine
I would have a smile so wide
It would be like a crescent up in the sky.
We laughed so easily
Talking for hours in the night.
Our room was my second home,
Warm with your presence.
But sometimes things fade away
Like the colors of an old painting
When we talk, it doesn't flow
And silences that used to be peaceful
Are awkward, tense, and miserable.
We've grown since then
In different directions
Like a branch splitting into two
I just hope that one day
Even for a moment,
It could be like it was.

The Rickshaw Ride

Waiting for a rickshaw in the corner
As rain softly fell to the earth
I let myself close my eyes
Letting water softly kiss my skin
As I listened to the chaotic symphony
Of a typical Indian street.

The drivers viciously honked their horns
Dogs barked as they wrestled in mud
Kids yelled in the alley
And in the backdrop
The steady sound of water hitting the ground.

I was home.

The moment was broken
As a rickshaw swung away
From the flow of traffic
And came my way.
Climbing into the dry interior
I gave the driver my destination.

His eyes settled on my t-shirt
From America?
I nodded as he turned his eyes on the road
Leaning back, I watched the world whirl by
Drivers keeping a hand constantly on the horn
Beggars on the sidewalks, their hands out for food
Tailors working in their little shops, furiously weaving clothes

The moment was broken again.
A heart wrenched sob broke from the driver
His shoulders shaking and tears running down his face
Alarmed, I look outside but no dead bodies or car crashes
What happened? I ask
Silence fills the rickshaw
A silence keeping the noise of the world at bay
Wiping away his tears,
He tells me a story of his wife dying
She was hanging clothes on the roof
While he was down helping his kids with schoolwork
Suddenly, he hears a yell
And all he is left with is a body on the ground
Head slit open and red blood everywhere

I have nothing to say
So when we get to a stop
The only thing I can think to give him

Is all the cash in my wallet.
But as I'm about to leave
The driver smiles at me
With a malicious tint
And he leaves
Leaving a muddy trail in the road.

Bowing Branches of Tears

*The stars gaze upon a single tree,
Standing all alone upon the meadow;
Its branches hung low toward the ground,
Broken, burdened, and weighed down
By the blowing winds that unfurl in winter
And the clatter of falling clear rain in spring
And the long years of waiting for new growth
But today,
This night,
The tree gleamed
With a sad loveliness
As it held the weight
Of many bundles of snow
Hardened into white tears.*