

**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.*