

**2010 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Adriana Blazeski**

The Hunt

Among the leaves and blades—
the outgrowth recoiling from a rain spell,
we reached into the green for their bodies.

Suction resisted
when we pulled the brown shells
-- spirals defending little slugs.

We filled our bucket with the silent masses,
counting the numbers, looking to see
which one would come out
(oh what it meant to crawl
over one's own).

The smell of earth a reminder:
dirt all around us, dirt underneath
all we had built, under
every step and roll.

We went home
with wrinkled fingers
to warm the house and hear
the sound of snail sizzle.

Return

I return to the same places,
climbing staircases to see
how steep they really are.

I look for signs of previous visits:
a corner bent in a book,
the steam ring of my cup.

I eye the new specials, lean
my elbows on the countertops, look
down the streets I've tried to remember.

(The fountain waters once touched my feet;
that statue my hands.)

I find them,

the corners where I waited,
the churches I ignored,
the cafes I didn't frequent
and realize I might.

I ask if someone knows me,
if anyone remembers
how I took the same way home.

In all my convolutions,
I am like a bee
tracing slowly
which way to fly.

Pardofelis

I am trying to expose the white feline
underbelly of an Idea
that slinks underneath the
the golden backdrop and dark circles
of marbled fur

a miniature clouded leopard,
that feeds
on bats
birds
all things close to the sky

and leaps through the trees
knowing that heated muscle
and primal teeth
are not to be wasted
on grounded things

Opening its eyes days
after birth,
it spends the rest looking
through the dark

If I provoke its aggression, awaken
a tense mood,
it reveals its mark, lowering an ear
to expose the white spot

Is it rare because I have never seen it
or understood its habits?

Or is it the trees and night
that have hidden it all along?

Ars Poetica (Imitation of Sylvia Plath's Lady Lazarus)

I have met the end again.
One blue period in every few
I sense it—

A runny canvas, my mind
Spotted as an aging still life,
My crafting hand

A glazed shard,
My intuition a deadened, empty
Bowl.

Shake off the sleep
O muse.
Will you inspire?—

The palm, the tendons, the delicate fingers?
The trained movement
Has vanished away.

Too quickly, too quickly the vision
My fine eye captured will be
Lost on me

And I a hungry visionary.
I am the instrument.
And like a counter I have few times to click.

This is Count Seven.
What a mistake
To anticipate such luck.

What a waste of strokes.
The trinket-hoarding set
Gathers round to hear

Them admire my hand and eye—
The masterwork revealed.
Gentlemen, ladies,

This is my brush,
My knife.
They may be still and waiting,

Nevertheless, I am the same, identical creator.
The first time they halted I was twenty.
It was a youthful burnout.

The second time I meant
To give it up and not come back at all.
I halted outright

As a dropped fork.
They had to wind and wind
And touch the cogs in me like little pins.

Art
Bends to temperament, like everything else.
I bow exceptionally well.

I bow so no one can tell.
I bow so no one feels lost.
I guess you could say I've a call.

It's painless enough to bow for a crowd.
It's painless enough to bow and stay put.
It's the isolated

Kneeling in the dark
To the same hand, the same trace, the same deep
Cranial hum:

"A failure!"
That gets me undone.
There is a price

For the bending of my knee, there is a price
For the baring of my pain—
It really has been paid

And there is a price, an extended price
For a glimpse or a thought
Or a burning idea

Or a view of what could come out.
So, so Mistress Muse.

So, Mistress Mood.

I am your space,
I am your treasure.
The new waiting silence

That expands to a roar.
I kneel and feel.
Know I wait for your big reveal.

Hands, hands—
You move and steer.
Skin, bone, there is something there—

A stroke,
A sweep,
A worthy move.

Mistress Fate, Mistress Destiny,
Appear
Appear.

Out of the static
I awaken to clear
And I know how to steer.