

**2011 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Brian Sharkey**

Bird's Eye

The eagle on his aerial throne
Views all the world as if his own.
On zephyr's arms by regal pinion
All the world becomes dominion.
Keen eyes catching every flutter
On the patchwork quilt of field, woodland, and pasture.
Each small two dimensional critter
Under the reign of the silent, solemn, avian master.

Down upon the loamy soil
Mice, rabbits, and squirrels scamper in endless toil.
Living from earth by tooth and claw,
Wary of the unseen maw.
Down here the senses capture
the textures of bark, and fragrance of pitch.
The surface yields itself to nurture
Overflowing life in every knoll, furrow, and ditch.

A foolish question comes to mind
Which fate would chafe less to bind?
To see the world from triumphant height
Lost in frigid air and ceaseless light.
Or to take abode in a small dark earth,
With warmth and company, home and hearth.

Gift

What can a poet give us?
The most valuable thing you can keep.
And what is that?
Words: Clumsy, stupid, beautiful words.
Just Words?

Mountain

It is a great and curious undertaking to climb a mountain.
The will to do something so vast and purposeless is such a uniquely human trait.
I can hardly imagine what promises and taunts those glistening peaks must offer.

Perhaps,
Hanging over the precipice,
we face the profound fear and wonder
of such a fragile, beautiful absurdity
precariously perched
on the back of something
immortal.

A Letter

First let me apologize for writing this letter-
I know, it is unsolicited and comes as some surprise,
And I imagine it is unsettling to be contacted through
Such antiquated means of communication,
Free as they are of the comforting level of uniformity
And anonymity provided by the good people at Hallmark.

Most times I see myself as a man of my age,
So perhaps this should come as a facebook, twitter, email or text.
We live in an era of verbing nouns,
But today I wanted to write a letter.
I don't mean to disparage the new methods of contact
Or rebel against the idea of endless possibility and evolving paradigms...

But-
The truth is there is a Luddite within me, or maybe a romantic,
Or maybe just some sort of sad imagined nostalgia,
Remembering an age not known to me.
I don't hold any hatred for our modern marvels,
Nor hold any pleasure in their destruction.
But today I would mourn for the passing of a forgotten inheritance,
I would write a eulogy for our abandoned wonders.

There is a simple sort of everyday magic of pen and paper,
At least the hope for magic, and 90% of magic is hope.
An alchemy of ink and fiber, the transmogrification of ideas
Into a thing with some semblance of permanence.

Oh, I know about the modern magic.
There is a powerful sorcery in waves and wires,
Of instantaneity and interconnectedness,
But it is not the sort of magic that I can claim real mastery of...

What I mean to say is that I am skeptical-
Which is to say afraid-
That the whole range of human expression can be found in ASCII code.
My fear is that the validity of that attitude no longer matters, so long as it is taken as truth.
My hope is that action is not suffocated by possibility-

Really though, I'm getting side-tracked.
What I mean to say is:
How are you?