

**2010 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest  
Third Prize: Kristine Kruppa**

*Playground*

golden-haired  
with palms the size  
of a kitten's head  
a child  
loosens his grasp on the  
worn weathered ropes  
that frame his soaring body  
hands red from clinging  
to the swing  
he lets go  
legs stretch into air  
arms spiral like  
falling blossoms  
a single moment  
suspended in time  
and  
for just this inexplicable  
innocent instant  
he flies...

*old library*

musty  
books slowly rot  
on shelves long forgotten  
splattered with dust, worms, and stories  
unread

*control*

When ears refuse to hear what my heart wants  
And tongues will never speak the lines I need  
The blatant power you so boldly flaunt  
Followed by hatred surrender to greed

To come and watch my helpless struggle through  
To tease and taunt without the shame you lost  
My swollen knee, my bleeding brow have few  
True value for the life and death it cost

See now how I rise up against my fear  
And push away your startled grasp so strong

I will not weep, my eyes have no more tears  
To fall for your harsh punishment so wrong

Never again will I allow this sin  
Too long your toy my fragile heart has been

*Confetti by moonlight*

I watch  
as planes scream high over the rooftops  
shaking loose tiny parachutes  
like the seeds of dandelions in the summer  
when I try to blow away all of them  
in only one breath  
they drift solemnly down toward earth  
in an elaborate dance  
a party intended just for me  
set to the staccato rhythm  
of machine guns  
flashing like sidewalk fireworks  
and setting my dandelions  
aflake

*Memories in the snow*

the air fogs in front of my face  
like gray smoke fleeing  
from the fires of my destruction  
the world looks upon me one final time  
knowing I will not be the same  
when I walk here again  
if  
I walk here again  
birds are silent  
the wind is still  
as if wondering holding their breath  
for what will happen next  
fresh snow quietly creaks  
under my uncaring feet,  
clinging as if to beg  
'please don't go'  
I ignore it  
turn away  
my glance scarcely lingering  
on the precious spectacle  
nature has prepared for me  
I pause for an instant

and walk through the door  
to face myself