

2011 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Liz Spencer

Rubber Band

It's not that I didn't want to go.
I had to go.
I procrastinate, slowly shuffling through my room.
I pause at the door, deep breath for courage,
grab the handle and slowly turn.
The door silently opens; it's hinges in hushed shock.
I depart,
telling my legs to move, thinking through each step.
Reaching the stairs, I discover my held breath.
Sounds of released air barely cover the twang
of weapon fire.

A rubber bullet whizzes past my arm.
I turn to face my would-be assassin,
the tall, gangly youth from down the hall
busy loading more ammo.
I scoop up his failed attempt and fly
down the stairs,
but slower than my assailant.
Two simultaneous shots, one hit.
Proudly my assassin rushes off to inform the RA of my defeat
and to learn his next target.
By the rules, he had won.
I am dead.

A bright red sting appears on my skin.
My battle wound.
I see the motionless loop of tan rubber laughing at my defeat
from the dormitory floor.
My enemy's forgotten weapon.
I pick it up, the rubber almost gripping back,
like thousands of tiny insect legs sticking to my finger,
as I stretch the circle,
creating thinner and thinner ovals.
I let fire.

The loop flies past my finger, splatting against the wall,
hitting three bricks down and two bricks right of my intend stone target.
Amused by my lack of aim,
I head to class and eagerly anticipate the next round of the game
Assassin.

A Great Depression

Herds of people muddle about in the rain, drenched and waiting. The dogs hide inside, the cats cower under porches, even the bugs won't come out today; just packs of soggy citizens with water gluing hair to their faces, dripping off their noses and weighing down their clothes. It pools below them, filling their shoes and covering the streets, making its way slowly to the gutters. The packs of weather-worn strangers wander without destination. They have no homes with merrily taunting flames in stone fireplaces, no roof surrounded with walls to keep them dry. No one has work for them, or money to pay. The soup kitchen's all closed when their funder's became the homeless hordes. Hope has almost burnt out, like the last street lamp's flame, struggling to survive the storm. These droves of miserable masses pass slowly by, searching for a miracle, never seeing the fat man laughing in the window.

FXB Skylight

Morning sunlight streaming through a skylight, leaving barred shadows, a jail cell drawn across the floor, a vast expanse of modern art.

Rainbow colored small stones pressed into larger unicolored flat tiles.

Unordered, unsymmetrical, unpatterned

What is the purpose of trapezoidal and triangular tiles covering a rectangular floor?

Incomprehensible to my patterned mind.

Shapeless infinite mass passing across a skylight, staining the chaotic, artistic floor in shadow.

Freeing it from its prison.

I watch the condensed water constantly flowing across the sky, with consistency and order in its movement.

Should I thank the wind or the clouds for this rhythmic migration that eases my patterned mind?