

**2012 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
First Prize: Mark Rudolf**

Stochastic Love

Do we find each other by the rolling of a die?
A romance of collisions, chance encounters begging to be had,
But subject to stochastic dance?
Are energetic souls controlled like particles of frenetic gas,
Combining after random walks, one tick forward, two ticks back?
What does it mean for king and queen to have no say what hand is dealt,
Confronted with a shuffle's nonchalance,
The way unconscious minds uncover dreams?

Yet somewhere, deep inside my ears, among the tufts of microscopic hair,
A miracle in cacophonous storm;
That aimless chaos, thermal noise, that chorus of discordant horns,
Is thwarted as I listen for a chime:

That subtle sound, a signal that my lover is around,
The pairing of two words that somehow rhyme.

June

How odd to think we'll see seventy Junes;
Some more, some less, but only a fool would
Dare squander thirty endless afternoons
And not escape at sea like drifting wood.

When summer's effervescent breath beckons
And hazy lights adorn the crowded pier,
Fuchsia waves, reflecting every second,
Deliver bottled message souvenirs.

The coral reefs and submerged shells compel
To search for hidden treasure like a sleuth;
Enchanting beauty casts a fragile spell,
Unearthing buried sentiments of youth.

It pains to wait another dozen moons
Before we rediscover what is June.

Summer

To reminisce in lemniscates
With lightning bugs for candle wicks—
Our summer flings and movie flicks
Create the perfect mood, I think.

With curly hair in humid air
We promenade through city squares.
How splendid is the time we share
When days are long and feet are bare!

Enduring dusks and early dawns,
We pass the time with busy yawns.
The flowers bloom, the salmon spawn,
Musicians tune, and suitors fawn.

Then ripened hearts will take their chance,
To ask a silhouette to dance,
Emboldened by the summer's trance,
Emboldened by the summer's trance.