

**2011 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Fourth Prize: Pooja Desai**

Golden Light

A golden light shines ahead
Holding our eyes to its glow.

Yet, the sea behind calls us back.

Starting off with a seductive touch
Racing leopards crash onto shore,
Melting into light blue silk
That glide toward our feet.
Wrapping around our awaiting heels
The silk lingers for a moment
Tinkling our skin with a feathery caress,
Before receding back into the sea.

The sound of whales then erupts,
Their distant moans riding in the winds
That blow into our left ear
While the lull sounds of the waves
Softly massage our right.
But the whales soon dive back down
And the waves come to a still
As the sun plunges back into the sea.

Wisps of water then arise from their bed,
Vaporizing into thin air.
The air creeps up behind us
Crawling inside our twitching noses
And onto our soft tongues
With salty smells
And tastes of fresh sea meat
Before condensing back to the sea.

Yet our eyes can only see a golden light
That shines ahead.
We can't see the enchanted sea
That lies out behind us
Spread across with unknown beauties.

We look only ahead, to the golden light.

The Laid Steps

Sitting alone on the bottom of my porch
I turn back and look
At the steps I've tripped upon
To land down here.

In the beginning I was sixteen
When my parents made their
Biggest step for me:
I was given to a man I never knew.

Rich, handsome, and intelligent
Was matched with
Humble, pretty, and obedient
Fights and fire were rare
As ice molded between us
And the years went by.

Our fears were never shared,
Our hearts were never opened,
Our house never gathered dust.

We were two caught in an orbit
Encircling one another forever
But never too close to touch.

Oh, I tripped over steps
To land down here
Steps that weren't my own
But were there to lead me down.

Rosalina

Deep in a church lies a young girl in sleep
As echoes of footsteps are lost in dust.
Folk come softly, for one quick profound peep
But linger, eyes caught in a web of lust.
The girl's golden hair glows around her head
Brushing against her dress of twilight's sky
As her cheeks bloom a tint of misty red
Below closed eyes singing a painful lie.
This must be a doll, many say in shock
While others wait for the small girl to wake
But she will always be still as a rock
Her body preserved for her parents' sake.
What spells keep her beauty over the years?
A mystery intertwined with many fears.

Broken

This puzzle should have had a swan's grace
A fountain sprinkled water in the air
Amidst a garden bathing in sun's grace
With flowers soaked in colors bright and fair.
From far away, the lines did not appear
The pieces were droplets in a sea
Even when one tries furiously to peer
An eye cannot get the I out of We
Yet, the picture's beauty has escaped most
A big black dot lies on a smooth white wall.
Eyes look past the good to a shady ghost
The source of the puzzle's tragic downfall.
The heart of this work holds a gaping hole
One missing piece shatters a puzzle's soul.

Beloved Sperm Whale

Born seconds before a deadly attack
Orcas give the calf its earliest scars.
Before the pack drives the two killers back
And journey south under the misty stars.
In a dark canyon, the teen disappears
Roaming silently in search of some food.
As fish run and hide, bathing in their fears
The whale finds one squid in an angry mood.
They unite in a tight, painful embrace
But the squid finds its end in its foe's mouth.
The whale goes off to mate with a proud face
Battling with other males in the south.

After forty years, the waves rest the whale
On a quiet coast with a ghostly sail.