

**2010 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest  
Second Prize: Mark Rudolf**

*Language of Love*

I overheard you speak your mother tongue.  
The purring R's, they rolled around my head.  
Wooed by the sounds that you had softly sung,  
I was oblivious to what you said.  
The consonants echoed in graceful swells,  
Evoking chills of distant, northern lands.  
Your moving mouth a deep, inviting well;  
A call to fall inside and understand.

I wish your tongue would wrap me like a word,  
So I could soak in tantalizing spit  
Till line between your voice and breath is blurred,  
And you would form me with your foreign lips.

An accent unacquainted, yet sincere;  
A spoken brush to paint my tickled ear.

*The Martyr*

You will not see the erect steeple,  
Nor give thanks among the  
Bouquet of stained glass  
Sunlight on the floor.  
You won't hear the choir  
Of bronze pipes, the blaring  
From their ranks as they sing  
Hymns of triumph yet to be achieved.  
Yours is the unfinished business.  
You'll pour your life in a ditch  
Before you can finally  
See a reflection.  
You'll taste blood,  
But never the holy body,  
For it is you who must sacrifice  
Till your desire's blaze burns you to ash.  
Then they'll spread you in the garden.  
But you can start it, make it possible,  
Take the cornerstone.  
Lay it down.

*Railway Visions*

I chugged along  
Across the map,  
From crystal lakes  
To forests black.  
The towns would wave  
As I drove past,  
Innocently.

And to the west,  
My silver lance  
Would dash across  
The hills of France.  
I sampled once  
The local wine,  
A novelty.

A scenic world  
Of fairytale,  
Fictitious life  
Atop the rail,  
Until it hit;  
An iron spike,  
Reality.

The horrid sight,  
It lingers still.  
The violent red  
On windowsill.  
Though not my fault,  
I can't escape  
The memory.

So hard I've tried  
To run away,  
But ghosts can fly,  
The demons stay.  
Mercy! I cried,  
But even that  
Not blamelessly.

On endless rails  
So parallel,  
I sent a man  
Straight down to hell.

I chugged along,  
But that display  
Remains with me.