

**2015 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest  
First Place: Mary Haapala**

**Pyrite**

It's been months,  
golden months,  
but time all the same.

I still feel its weight  
like a hole in my rubber soul  
that's been filled with cut diamond,  
its beautiful rigidity  
replacing the air in my lungs  
making it hard to swallow,  
making it ache.

It's odd to think  
how strong the string pulls  
at my usually-steel stomach  
dragging it back towards  
my iron spine,  
making the corners of  
my eyes droop downward  
shedding mercury tears  
that laugh down my face  
with the weight of these pyrite months.

It's not that I wish it never happened  
(dusty glass can still smile from shelves).  
It's just that I never realized how hard  
it is to be so desperately homesick  
for one silver sliver in time.

## **Skyline: In the Dark**

Between the sky's branches, a light leaks through.  
A cratered egg waits to hatch, resting in its wispy moltings  
whispering inaudibly of things far away,  
things unknown.

Synthetic copycats glare back from the ground,  
greedy fingers grabbing at the nothingness just out of reach.  
They will only know curiosity and greed,  
and a frayed tail of patience,  
waiting for something digestible to emerge  
to satisfy the hunger for a while.

Most will wait for the opportune moment  
when the silence is shattered. But  
some will leap, destroying what they wished to cherish,

All because of the stars.

## **Glow**

The lone candle giggles.  
After being dark so long  
one wick cannot contain it's song.  
Through its restless joy it wiggles  
as all the cold wax sticks look on.

The warm glow spreads  
like a smile. More flames laugh  
each awoken from its wax bed  
overdressed and underfed.

And soon they all laugh together  
beaming at each other,  
grinning like fools  
drunk on air  
without a care and  
free from all rules.

Shaking and bending,  
they laugh until  
the wax cries down their sides.  
For that much joy,  
in a dark world  
simply cannot sit still.

## **Heart of Stone**

When they say that I'm their rock,  
the stability that's ready there,  
I can't help but wonder  
how I know of their pain  
and yet remain steady.

My heart must be stone.

## Brother

You were always the inspiration,  
the quiet energy,  
the words "this will really work".  
And when it did, it was the greatest thing in the world  
and we, together, would be famous in our world's eye,  
or at least in our neighbors'.

The snow castles with their ice coatings  
froze the competition in their tracks and  
buried a seed of pride that would never go cold.  
Hours of work, wet and frozen,  
feeling everything but numb  
playing engineers even though  
we didn't know what that was.  
*This will work.*

Blueprints for our Lego zoo  
drew the creator's instincts to my surface.  
*This will work.*  
Along with the blanket tents, the sidewalk cities,  
and the capture the flag battle plans.  
*This will really work.*

And even when they didn't:  
the ice rink that was as smooth as a mountain range,  
the rope ladder that never got off the ground,  
the double decker swing, the bow and arrows,  
the broken Xbox.  
It didn't seem to matter to you  
those hours of our time gone,  
bruised fingers and raw knees.  
*We really tried to make this work.*  
Failure was part of the risk, but  
never a big enough risk to pause our efforts  
especially when the work is half the fun, and  
when failing with someone else  
can be so laughable.

And that is the greatest lesson I've learned.