

**2016 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest  
Second Place: Mary Haapala**

**Wind**

I see change rolling in  
thunderclouds, high winds.  
Anticipation sticks to me  
as I breath in the humid air,  
counting the time before my world  
unsettles and change pours down.

But the ground has been getting dryer by the day,  
and a little rain could help something grow.

## **Exhale**

Some people think  
the most soothing part of an exhale  
is the letting go.

But, I think that  
the best part of an exhale  
is knowing that an inhale follows.

## Stars

Sitting on a roof with you  
under a summer sky,  
wishing we could see more stars  
through the city lights.

We brought a couple pillows,  
but your shoulder works just as well,  
watching the clouds drift by  
listening to what silence tells.

Below tiny people walk about  
to their nights around and out  
and I am glad that I have hours  
above with you and the stars.

My eyes are closed.  
My mouth is smiling.  
You say you saw a shooting star,  
and I laugh in disbelief.  
You still insist that it is true  
and in my heart, I hope  
that you are  
the right one.

## Amber

Nothing really has changed,  
but when I look back  
everything is different.

Golden light sings through the amber droplet of my memory  
dodging the odd bubbles distorted with time  
and full of frozen air,  
frozen words.

There's something trapped there,  
beneath the polished surface.  
I lift the stone to the sun of today  
and see it  
behind a crack that refracts the light,  
acting like  
the bright side of the shadow.

And there it will stay  
contained in the stone  
collecting dust on my bookshelf.  
I still marvel at it sometimes  
but mostly,  
I let it be.

## Magic

When my mom reads a book out loud,  
the whole world pauses

I'm in the kitchen helping dad with the dishes.  
My siblings are in the living room organizing old books.  
My mom starts to read,  
and we all listen  
without realizing it. She begins to  
weave the web of words around us  
in a voice hushed enough to hold our  
wonderment, but strong and clear she starts  
spinning the haystack story into pure gold thread.  
We cling to every syllable.

She is patient with her words, letting the pauses peek out  
from behind their louder companions.  
Somehow she knows how to articulate a smile  
and how to pronounce a frown.  
She has the same magic as a sunset on a glass lake  
and snowflakes falling thick under  
a midnight sky.

She stops in the middle and we silently will her  
to continue  
and she does.  
And the world spins on  
more smoothly than before.