

**2017 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Keenan Rebera**

A Bus Station. Before Christmas

This blizzard tugs my collar,

 slaps me to the side.

Thin ice below complains the strain of many hundred feet.

Not a rushing bird but

faces dye a flashing technicolor zoetrope that flicks before my frozen eyes glued open
as if sighs and shuffles ticked in time with Clockwork, Orange.

Shoulder after shoulder jars my vision blurring crimson hats attack with scarves boots
a frown

and eyes surround these looks abound with green and brown and blue and hazel –

black.

Hat from head to chin, he bares only thin lips, ajar like the
bedroom door I didn't lock.

Giant candy-cane in hand, he pokes the rushing, many-bodied beast and
enters with a confidence of kings.

The blind man saunters by as I crumple

a receipt for the marbles in my sockets and push
my fists against my pockets, pining for a hat like his.

Smear my face with dirt and wash me in the waters of Siloam,

Then lead me to the nearest Goodwill.

Veterinary Clinic, Midsummer

The words 'vise grip' eluded my comprehension but then - My father turns slow his
sandpaper hands

and lets me wield the silent

steel to rend one weld from its body,

and 'bare bones' bore words well until I claw -

a fur-bag to behold this bleached jaw that sighs in the apricot-translucent
sweat between my thrumming fingers,

and 'godspeed' squeezed through one needle, a rattling-know the now of these mental
catacombs.

Electricity flees from her frightened chest faster than a bullet in
reverse.

If cliché were my story-

Know I held that paw in a vise grip, with my hope in a noose-slip,
Praying for godspeed to invert,
As if gravity might be prevented.

Telephone-Wire Sneakers

Dear hungmen,

Slack-neck staring in the rime, paring apart...

Show me trial transcripts

Did it hurt?

Dear outstretched hand,

Tippy-toes crunch shattered snowflakes.

I'd strain to pull you down from heav'n,

in stile Creazione di Adamo

If I weren't so small.

Dear assholes of the world,

Sometimes we can't undo our shoes.

Ever try to write away a stain?

Her,

every time.

Dear Newton's urban cradle,

I saw a boy and a girl today

On a crosswalk

I wonder what it looked like

Their noses touching from above.

Rock and Rabbit

Is it dead? She said.

I tossed a stone through stillness just to see.
Falling down, her question crowned in lead,
The answer bent at some oblique degree.

Rock meets fur, earth roars.
Lamentation dripping down my neck,
Like raindrops I could disassemble.

My hands,
his fur,
tremble.

After the Veterinary Clinic

The saddest waffle I ever ate tasted like 25 cold minutes of,
"please, just die already,
so I don't have to kill you".

A nurse exchanges a newborn for your still-warm body. Circle
of life, I guess.

You bury your head in our collective lap, trusting us to save you from the
needle.

Seven years, now.

Fifteen more seconds to go.

She forces bluish liquid through your veins
And inside I'm seeing it expand

as it squeezes out your soul like sandy toothpaste.

How sickly dark your eyes roll, but they aren't yours any more - just dirt.

Where did you go?

The best doughnut I ever ate definitely wasn't one that fueled
a motorized wander through the night.

"It's not about the doughnut", she said. "It's about the drive".

I lower the glass,
and thrust my head into the darkness. The wind erodes ego to atoms.
I am something going fast and going dark.
I now understand why you loved that so much.

The four-way stop is empty like your favorite sofa-chair. Shut the door and dance against
the silence.

Watch my shadow punch through headlight beams in contrast - protest.

Where did you go?

You lived longer than you died,
and I think you would agree,

It's not about the doughnuts.

It's about the drive.