

2017 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
First Place: Rami Farawi

Sonnet

If they found out that I couldn't lick my elbows,
They would chase me with handcuffs all the way
To the Dead Sea, trudging water sodden with
Saccharine. Whispering in my ear:
You should've seen it when it was alive.

But with you. With you I can say the things
I now keep secret: That I cannot cut
Diamond. Nor forget about gravity
For more than *one-one thousandth, two.*

If you were an egg, I'd squeeze you in be-
Tween the belly of my palms over a
Sink. They say I can't break you. And I know
That breaking you means lodged bloody shells.
Why do I keep pushing? Because I can.

Sonnet

My Star you are when roosters call,
The steam between our skins scalds none,
For lips go numb I burn my tongue,
Corona of your lips is salt,
But hands do toc as sun grows tall,
While clouds saunter into hum,
Why stars do stay although I run,
And hide behind those clouds that crawl.

As roosters sit and count their sheep,
How can I stay and gaze upon,
A strangled glow now cuffed in sheets,
What else is there for me but pause?
And so I close my eyes to sleep
And wait again for my alarm.

Anniversary

You are dead.
But darling, I can't let you die.

I scavenge about pillows and
Clogged shower sinks
For strands of auburn hair.

They make for great thread and
My needlework is far from deft and
It's not like I only have but a thousand
Of your pictures.

But now you're all stitched up.

And I can stuff you full of birthday and
Christmas gifts of months past and
This time I didn't catch the skin
On your back when I zipped up
Your dandelion summer dress.

We do only get one three year you know,
How about we get dinner after?

Foie gras?

But darling, we do have to get going.

The trailers must be ending any min —
— Ah, darn. You haven't seen my keys
Anywhere have you?

Day's A Far

My mother, she,
She gave birth to a magnet.

Coffee stained disposables
In cardboard basement boxes
Confirm my nickel epidermis.
Sheen it once held, as smooth as
Obsidian bottom. my north

Invited tongue and
Scheme. grow steady my
Top heavy, those fillings
And wiles fend the cold.

My south smiles shy,
And difference should only
Tease, yet I could always
Find ways to make
Lodestone laugh.

Not once, not once
Have I cut my skin.
And at this point
I can only assume
That it's still there.

My North,
 My South,
I cannot find loss in
These concentric ripples of
Folded metal.

My mother, she,
She raised a human.

Radio

For every time I've been hurt:
That pain carries with it, a half-life.

A common misconception about half-lives:
A half-life is the amount of time that it takes

For property A to lessen by one half,
To mutate into something,
Else.

Yet the mass of the host which contains A,
Well that, that remains constant.