

2018 Roger M. Jones Poetry Contest
Honorable Mention: Alexander Samra

Spoons

You don't use forks to cut a steak;
You don't use spoons to cut a steak.
Says they: "no room for those mistakes,"
Says they: "no room to immigrate."

They say we have too much to handle,
They say there's too much on our plate
You don't use spoons to cut a steak;
You don't use spoons to cut a steak.

They say you grab it by the reigns
They say this life is what you make,
You don't use spoons to cut a steak;
You don't let fools just come and take.

They say "go back from whence you came"
They say this country is our place,
You don't use spoons to cut a steak;
You don't use rags to spread the plague.

They say these things, these things they say,
When natives died, then, where were they?
They were those who came and took;
They were those who drowned the lake.

You don't use forks to cut a steak
You don't use spoons to cut a steak
You need utensils, eating steak.
You need them all to then be great.

You don't use spoons to cut a steak
You don't use stitches fixing breaks
Pointless, using spoons to cut a steak,
So they suffer our mistakes.

You don't tear homes from those in need,
You don't just kill and steal and rape,
So why do you then turn your shoulder

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Why don't you just eat your steak?

Because you can't, because it's fake
There was no us, or them, or they;
There's only we, and earth our place:
The only place we have to stay.

You don't use spoons to cut a steak,
So why do *you* let others pay?

Fire Flies

The fire is within him,
The one who believes in the colors of life:
Lights that dance with the stars in the night
They fill his sight and embody his soul.

To average eyes it might breed delight,
Bugs in flight that illuminate darkness
Soar with majesty, marvelous wonders
Become divinity to others.

Those who are wise, like the child,
see this fly as his life, or her heart,
Or his goals or her drive,
Their passionate art.

The sickness, fire, or insanity you might
Just suffer, wondering strongly all times
About each, and then all of the facts of this life
Is simply curiosity, creativity so natural
That the only crazy you'll know is the casual
Life of hum and then drum and our casket;
Like apples filling an empty basket
What happy hopes, what a bountiful dream
Yet only emptied to fill up again
With disappointment, soon with dread
As you find those apples they always lead
To a hunger, for more, and then more,
Then you're dead.

Most end up quenching desires of the surface,
But never reach further to those with a purpose,
So they turn to the fire, their final friend,
Starting over is their only,
And last option...
Again.

Non Omnis Moriar

Beguiled indeed, is the poet's soul,
A story untold tantamount to sin:
Another line, then another verse,
Writing walks alongside sweet addiction.
Our curse obscures rhymes scrawled perverse,
She is truth denuded to hungry eyes;
One final listener puts down my work
My voice fades to oblivion, dies
In a cruel sunset on this love affair.
He chokes her to a last desperate breath
Indifferent; those straining gasps of air
Can't break his gaze, for he doesn't care.
One day I'll embrace the end of my fight,
Foolish dreams floating as my night it comes:
My song would never go unsung--
My song will never go unsung.

The Millennial Atlas

Fading trees, eroding sand,
A future rests in untrained hands,
So what are we supposed to do?
The answer, now, is up to you.
Only.

How could one mend a world unseen
Mixing desire with Nature? How obscene
That to one side or the other many lean;
Fateful progress dies in between
Two sides mocked in word and deed.
The ultimate story our posterity reads,
Written in the language of our own clan
Will either hasten still or stop the bleeding;
Will justify the irony of stolen lands.
Or it won't.

Weeds creeping deeper into our dreams,
Personal, personal become those screams!
It forms nightmares for children, only
Then could they hope to understand
The fate of the Native American man:
Trapped in a world of disconnect, clung
To words of intent and honest tongue
While acid Materialism surely stung
Eroded to bone dreams still restrained,
Eroded inhumane acts to fables.
Burning, slowly, then all at once
As the devil fully turns the tables
On a righteous, once heroic, land.
Forgotten.

No mission more righteous than to tame
The unbridled nature of our fellow man.
Nothing could be more confusing, insane
Terrifying or unholy than this foreign clan:
Stays blind to the destruction in their wake;
How can they drain the beautiful land?

Ignorance.

And only if unity binds us in virtue,
And only if you join hand in hand--
With friend and foe to free those chains
That tie us all to the same demand
Can we escape the corrosive rains
That killed an innocent system's plan.
This only, would cause rise to the sun
On a new age where hope and bliss withstand.

As though Everest's peak forever rung
Out sounds of peace and glory, sung
By a man whose battles have just begun--
Yes.

Our first fight has, only then, been won.

Michigan

Sun sets on lonely highway roads:
The blood of an industrial era flows
In ebbing waves of black and gray,
Construction signs and potholes.
Beauty chokes on fumes of smoke--
Her radiance loses shining hope,
Shattered rays:

Pastel colors of a stunning blaze, fading
On to baby blue and beige;
Heaven's skies in their sinful demise,
Brilliance lost beyond skulking haze.

I could lie on Oval beach forever,
Hands in that gritty squeaking sand
Wrap me in blankets like rolling dunes
As if my brothers hadn't tortured them.

Shaving those shining waving mountains
Footpaths, erosion, We the Poison, strip
Our sacred soil of its integrity,
Our slave, the Earth, of her luscious lips.
Her face is sad, but not lost to me,
As over the truth I will not glaze
She'll be lost; withering rapidly
Soon, if we don't make a change, shall
Only scraps of untouched skin remain.
Staring on to setting sun, can't forget--
And only could we try in vain:

Pastel colors of a stunning blaze, fading
On to baby blue and beige;
Heaven's skies in their sinful demise,
Brilliance lost beyond skulking haze

Her night is the worst, indigo hues take in
A moon breathing stars; her silent dominion
Calms me as I close my eyes,
Lying in the cooling grass
Of a land betrayed and so far gone.

That I should only turn my back,
These mythic sights haunt a void of black.
Night sky torn back by ceaseless corruption!
The City attacks Moon with perfect disruption,
Defenders dancing in her celestial glare
In mesmerizing patterns I can almost forget,
Try I may, but the truth is scathing:
 Pastel colors of a stunning blaze, fading
 On to baby blue and beige;
 Heaven's skies in their sinful demise,
 Brilliance lost beyond skulking haze

The retreating glory of a world we stole
And constant reminders of Her scars
Taunt the last of those concerned, like
The reflection of clouds dancing on cars.
Cellophane wrapping those beating hearts
Notifications, calls, dates-- that suffocate
A natural world slipping away like a tie,
Blue collar, white fence, end of the day;
The working man who lives to die,
An empty life of wife and kids, sighs--
Color lost behind his eyes.