

## *The Muses' Gallery - Summer 2009*

*We are very pleased to present our Summer Gallery featuring poetry and art. There was no specified theme this season - poet's (or artist's) choice). Enjoy!*

*Highland Park Poetry always welcomes submissions of poetry and photography for this gallery. Please send poems or photographs electronically to [Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org](mailto:Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org).*

*And to all poets - keep on writing!*



Miranda Dotson, Photographer

### **Apres Midi**

**By Robert Klein Engler**

How easily my vision gets lost in the lazy shade  
of the garden: an obscurity that flashes in the gold  
fish pond, shadows skirting zinnias, and the deep  
blue of draped wisteria. Summer is earth half asleep.

No one is here to share this, so I ask you, dear reader,  
come, follow this imaginary flagstone path of words.  
And bring along Jerry, who has nothing more to do.  
There are glasses of iced tea on the patio table, too.

## Boy On A Swing

By Charles Schwartz

once your eyes were open,  
once you reached for the sky,  
once you swung high and free,  
your toes pointing to the blue.

grip tightly, young boy, fly high,  
and dream of heaven,  
swing until you close your eyes,  
swing on and on, up and down.

with sun warming your face,  
and a wind on your back,  
breathe in a prayer,  
endure summer's embrace.

defy warning bells as you fly high,  
before you lay down, before you fall,  
your bronze image on a swing,  
no parallel shadows to dent the ground.



Jan Burke, Photographer

## Champagne Days

By Judith Bernstein

Nothing becomes a summer day  
Like sipping Champagne  
With a straw  
Right out of the icy bottle,  
Recumbent in a hammock  
Stretched between two trees,  
Filling up on hollow rhinestones  
Spinning free in an alcoholic haze.

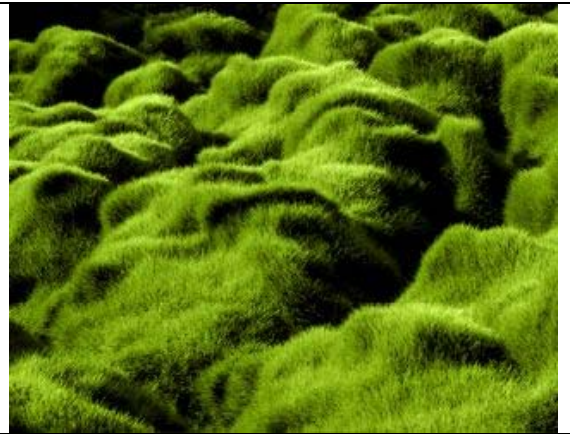
Pop, pop, pop,  
The bubbles burst  
Inflating me.  
Rotund I float  
Out of the hammock,  
Over the fence,  
Above the trees,  
Until I'm face to face  
With the gawking crows.

Beyond the highway  
Across the pond,  
Snagging my shirt  
On the steeple spire,

Looking down on  
The shopping hordes,  
Tagging the clouds  
With my fingertips,  
I float the afternoon away.

Burp, burp, burp  
To my despair  
I begin to deflate,  
In lurching steps  
I slowly descend  
From my lofty heights,  
Settling into the  
Crown of a leafy maple,  
One foot in a robin's nest  
One arm in an acorn filled hollow.

Stuck like a kite,  
Stranded like a cat,  
I pull out my cell phone  
And call  
For a fireman to rescue me.



Ken Dusynski, Photographer

## **Aria**

**By Clara Berman**

Soaked in sunshine, garlanded in flowers  
The emblem-blue sofa breathes, vibrant  
Where he once sat  
Happily ensconced in the Northern corner  
Drenched in warm, Western light

One garden behind him, one beyond  
Mirrored in vivid impressions on the oaken walls  
The long, old Palmer stereo system stretching along one wall

flanked by new speakers,  
decorated with rows of family attitudes, and newer technology  
CDs of Domingo, Callas, and Tucker's Kol Nidre along the top  
while racks of vinyl jealously guarded to one side  
speak of worlds beloved,  
along with golf clubs, cane and red socks cap and jacket  
once the materials of life revolved around and used  
like numbers and momentos carefully saved and kept  
now symbols in memory  
of a fine  
and well-lived life

## **Fireflies**

**By Ellen Savage**

Lingering fireflies  
Floating lanterns,  
Lilliputian lighthouses rising in darkness  
Leading hope for longevity  
To safety of soft sand  
Free to realize dreams.



Artist, Robert Cote

## A Farmer's Lullaby

By Robert Cote

Sound arrived as the light was leaving  
I was resting from daytime heaving  
At first in a trickle like starlight glistening  
or louder in waves as my efforts listening

Who are these players who come and sit  
Loyally each night to follow the conductor moon  
Who find their positions in the orchestra pit  
And begin to play the sweetest tune  
We'll not look upon them or their likeness see  
Although their song is sweet and slight  
The horrid creatures that they be  
Are hidden behind the curtain of night

Toad and Cricket, Beetle and Worm  
Whose forms and face have made us squirm  
With bassoon base, viola, and pipe and peep  
Lull our lids to dream and sleep

## Dog Nap

*for Scout*

By Arlyn Miller

Oh to surrender to the afternoon  
light, lie your honey colored  
self down on the oak floor boards,  
the sun blessing you in a quilt  
of shadowed window panes.

April shines her countenance  
upon you. The kitchen hums  
in shades of amber. The yard waits patiently,  
a bounty of rabbits and tennis balls.

## Mist

**By Edward Kaufman**

The moon was veiled in mist  
as it floated in the velvet skies.  
Catching my heart by surprise,  
mist also began to cover my eyes.  
My thoughts filled with you.  
The music of your laughter,  
the warmth of your smile.  
Yes, it is true,  
the embrace of your eyes,  
and the tenderness of your  
your sweet lips,  
which I have joyfully kissed  
brought from above that mist  
to my eyes,  
as I peered at the  
lush night skies  
Whenever I am not with you,  
you are dearly, dearly missed.

**Jan Burke,  
Photographer**



**Bialystok Impasse**

## By Lois Barr

This poem first appeared online at The New Vilna Review:  
<http://www.newvilnareview.com/poetry/bialystok-impasse.html>

I. I awaken from a nap in schul

*--Alyssa has twinned  
the rabbi says,  
with Anya Planik  
from Bialystok  
who never  
had a bat mitzvah.  
At ten she was taken by train  
to die  
at Auschwitz.*

I would go to Bialystok  
I think  
To know what the  
grit tastes like  
under my nails  
if I made a mud pie.  
To shiver with cold in a dingy outhouse.  
Are there still outhouses?  
To taste Bialystoker  
tea  
and float down  
a chilly river  
on a hot summer day.  
Is there a river?  
To wander crooked  
streets and get lost  
to hear Bialystoker  
Polish all around me  
on market days.  
If there is still a market.  
To look for small signs of Yiddish  
any marker  
to say my  
bubby's family  
lived here once.  
To see the  
kind of light they  
saw in early morning  
to smell herring in oak barrels  
and smoked pork sausage.

II. I walk on the treadmill

*--My family was from Bialystok,  
I tell Marek, a man from the Centre Club.  
--What was their name?  
--Kagan.  
He wrinkles his eyebrows, *Not a Polish name.*  
--Jewish, I say.  
--There used to be some Jews in Bialystok,  
he says as I walk on the treadmill*

and he sweats away on the transport.  
--Yeah, I say, *Over fifty thousand*.  
He smiles and increases the resistance.

I won't ever go to Bialystok.  
Won't ever know  
what Yiddish sounded like  
on Bialystoker tongues.  
Eat a warm Bialy  
or freshly churned butter  
on a potato just pulled from the earth.

III. I gather flowers

I pick a *margaritkale*  
and pluck its petals  
I go  
I stay  
I go  
I stay  
I go  
I stay  
Go!  
Stay!  
Daisies without petals---  
graves without covers.  
Go.



Ronit Wiener, Artist

## **four senryu**

### **By Charlotte Digregorio**

sultry day . . .  
motorist with tattoos  
gives directions

weeding again . . .  
the garter snake  
the new neighbor

reading Boccaccio's tales . . .  
the parish priest waves  
from his convertible

clouds move in . . .  
rainy-day neighbor  
waves from a distance

## **After The Will Is Read, I Am Given Custody Of The Old Mop**

### **By Michael H. Brownstein**

I want to get regenerated into whoever I am supposed to be.

A clam perhaps.

A sea lion.

The beginning curl of a great wave stretching itself across the ocean.

Maybe just a unicorn.

These are the things I have learned:

Reflective noise,

Protein maladjustment,

Everything double sided except for the palm of my hand.

Outside the grey moon almost blue has a Spanish hue,

Olive and bran,

Strong willed and intent,

Muscle bound weather permitting.

If by some chance I fall on my head and die,

What happens to everything I never did before?

# My One Minute Before Midnight

**By Bruce E. McNutt**

It is one minute before midnight  
But I am very young

I have 60 seconds left  
Before my bell is rung

If only I had known  
That life was so short

I would have prepared better  
Done more to help the world

Is there any way out  
To extend my time on Earth

No extensions possible  
Midnight arrives  
The clock tower announcing  
The final 12 chimes begun  
The first chime rung

I must be creative  
Somehow find a solution  
To this problem catastrophic  
I hear chimes two, three and four

I suddenly wonder  
What it is like in heaven  
The clock chimes seven

What have I done to deserve such a fate  
Be given no second chance  
My faith a victim  
As the clock chimes ten

As the clock chimes eleven  
I rediscover my faith  
Beg forgiveness  
For past transgressions  
For wasting my life

The clock chimes twelve  
Silence engulfs my person  
My final thought an odd one  
Before the curtain falls  
What if my eternal destination is hell

It is one minute after midnight

I am nowhere to be found



**Laurence Segil, Photographer**

## **Roster Forever**

**By Ryan K. Sauers**

Spring-sets punctuated with toxic bliss  
urban upheavals echoing  
chants of social miscarriages  
leaving bitter/sweet rhythms to plume

like afros from swaying heads  
of '60's hippies uncharted  
oomps uncharacterized in free meters  
thunder out poignant lyricism

soaked in copper tunes  
of hydraulic blues to pump  
bruised hearts of a people  
an audience witness to archetypes

of inner rebellions awash  
with anger primed fists rise high  
in a singular movement to rattle  
against worn out songs of Congress

only to stamp out idle anger  
with purpose and causation  
garbed in canvas cargos  
and a *nearly wild* top

a trombonist blows life  
onto the backs of bold  
crisp notes freshly baked  
from the morning high

in tune with a common voice  
drum beats swell  
charging the multitude  
flooding a mesmerized crowd

bitten by inequity and frustration  
for one last time  
vocalized in every guitar riff  
ripping chords of rising up

moving  
speaking as one  
fighting forward  
not within

on the play-list for today  
a tide of change  
one voice one struggle  
a wall of sound

## It Is The Nature Of Seasons To Pass

By David J. Rogers

I.

Lazy and indifferent, a gull  
Confident of itself--white as a lily--  
Passed over the field  
Behind my house; then without a cry  
Wheeled around back  
To the placid lake.

II.

All night rain--  
Water rattled in the drain--  
Liquid pebbles.  
The alarm on the dresser rattled too.  
The sun rose over lawns--  
The pallor of dawn.  
So my life passes into and  
Out of my thoughts.

III.

At the base of a tree--sycamore I think--  
Maple?--(I don't know) grow  
Mushrooms--white and brown.  
Shimmering heat surrounds me.  
Sounds of insects in the living room flitting...  
A spider on the mailbox spinning...  
A lady bug napping on a bell-shaped flower.  
Although the sun is bright  
Every gust of wind is pleasant and cool. Yet  
I feel something is missing.

IV.

Wind billows and sucks the screen  
Yet nothing is disturbed,  
Not the gingham curtains  
Or red table cloth;  
Not the slightest ruffle of a sleeve;  
Nor is there a voice to be carried  
From room to room--  
Only silence inside where  
Even in the breeze, like stone  
Nothing moves.

V.

A family of squirrels--  
Family they seem--  
Two large, two small,  
Are in the habit of  
Leaping from their home tree  
To my fence on some errand  
That appears exceedingly urgent.  
They hop so merrily--apparently content  
To share the field with me.

Ken Dusynski, Photographer



VI.

Wild birds calling, wild winds blowing,  
Mowers humming across fragrant grass,  
Trains rumbling--(Coal cars empty),  
Truck horns blaring, sirens screaming,  
Silly people laughing,  
Over hollow bridges footsteps thumping,  
Church bells ringing in open towers--Sunday.  
Boats dispersed on a lilting lake  
Bows pointed north, colored sails  
Sparkling in the sun--fair weather.  
Destinies resolve themselves  
Even when unattended.  
My life grows light as a feather.

VII.

A new-born finch lost its footing  
And fell out of a tree.  
But the ground was soft as sponge. Relieved,  
Its mother sang happily all day,  
Stopping at eight.  
I'm hard at work though it's getting late.  
I use an orange as a paper weight.

VIII.

Two seasons each year flocks of  
Familiar geese dine  
Punctually in the field--  
Waddling, pecking, bickering like  
Children or thieves--then a truce--  
Only a misunderstanding.  
Departing: poised, silent;  
Then torrents of wings--wings.  
I believe now I understand  
And could stay here forever,  
Passing my life

Beside the field

Under the indolent gull.

## "I'm From Highland Park"



**By Kenny Sommer**

On the road  
Meeting the people of America.  
Where are you from?  
I'm from Highland Park, Illinois.  
Oh you're a rich and powerful kid.  
Get this response all the time.  
Makes me want to say I'm from Chicago  
Or the North Chicago hood life.  
Talked with an at risk social worker  
Told him stories of overdoses and suicides.  
My parents made their money  
I have been spoiled  
It made me a careless man.  
HPHS was like a college  
Great knowledge but too much stress.  
You're Jewish, they say?  
No, I'm a mute  
Hitler on one side  
Moses on the other.  
My hometown leads in white collar crime  
So many of my friends divorce  
Their young kids left confused.  
I'm from Highland Park  
What beauty all around!  
The peaceful lake Michigan.  
The Risky Business house.  
Michael Jordan lived down the street.  
Most of our black men are sportsmen?  
A Bear or a Bull.  
Not many African Americans around.  
There are the snobs who shop, workout, dress fine and dine.  
There is Billy Corgan, the music king of the town.  
There's also all the hard working men and women  
Of different classes, religions, and race.  
As I travel  
I will continue to say  
I'm from Highland Park.  
Defend my home  
We put on are pants the same way you do.  
There are trust fund babies  
Also men and women who work 3 jobs.  
People who help the homeless and reach out.  
People who wake up at 4 am  
Run a business with the passion of the Lord.  
People who save lives.  
Americans who make freedom ring  
Teach, create, solve problems, and live straight.  
Yes, I'm from Highland Park  
Another great town of the United States.

## On the Relationship of Parts to a Whole

**By Cynthia Hahn**

The breadth of a tickle  
courses to wild fire,  
daisyed meadow arching up.

I hold this gift, bigger than a poem,  
stagger under this Achilles  
till its ripple, hum, cricket drone  
lays down a sunset.



**Ronit Wiener, Artist**

### **A Tree Glows Dark**

**By M. J. Gabrielson**

A tree stands stark  
against pale blue sky.  
It oversees a flat roof  
midday.

Each window below  
uniform  
one taller pane above  
a smaller one  
low.

Branches reach in  
three directions  
west, north  
southwest.

There is an open  
field east  
of the school.

The parking lot stirs  
bare and breathless  
at dawn.

At sunrise  
the tree beams  
bold.