

The Muses' Gallery

Welcome to Highland Park Poetry's Muses' Gallery for Spring 2010. The following poems were selected by our judges - Fred Gordon, Charles Schwartz, and guest judge, Charlotte Digregorio - from submissions to our 2010 Poetry Challenge. We asked poets to find inspiration from superheroes - in honor of D.C. Comics 75th Anniversary - or from the writing prompt, "In my deepest heart."

**2010
Poetry
Challenge**

Enjoy!

And to everyone - keep on writing!

Superman

By

Robert Cote

1st Place - Adult Superhero

What if I were Superman
My son asked me today
I could solve every problem
And simply fly away
Of course I'd look a little different
This much would be true
I might look a little stronger
A little taller too
I might have a little more
Hair upon my head
It would be dark and wavy
With a little curl instead
I could see through all the bad stuff
With my X-ray sight
Then everything I'd do
Would always come out right
But that's not how it is
I'm really not that strong
I'm often a bit short sighted
I often get it wrong
I just face each problem
That comes up every day
Because I know I never
Get to fly away



Gail Goepfert, Photographer

Superman

By

Amy Leppert Shannon

Honorable Mention - Adult
Superhero

I was Cat Woman
and you were Superman,
at least that is what
our daughter thought.

Cat Woman suits me
just fine. You always
thought I looked good
in black.

And yes, Superman
fit you as well.
Strong and kind, until
cancer became your

Kryptonite.

**Muse On A Gray
Day**

By

Gail Goepfert

1st Place - Adult In My
Deepest Heart

Pluck a gardenia to plant behind one ear.
Catch a glimpse of a cedar waxwing's feast in
the crabapple's arms.

Weave a basket from coconut fronds.

Sing campfire songs as flames illumine the
stars.

Sand down a peach pit to make a ring.
Study the fishing bobber attached to the line
on grandpa's bamboo pole.

Crank the rusted handle on the homemade ice
cream freezer.

Lattice the top and crimp the edges of the
rhubarb pie.

Ignore the mess of making cutout cookies.

Dry off in the afterglow of swimming a mile.
Uncurl the fingers from the handlebars at the
end of an all-day ride.

Pamper the feet that hiked 17 miles for a
Mississippi catfish dinner.

Kiss the apple of the baby's cheek and inhale
the scent of her skin.

Stroke the matted teddy in the rocking chair.
Reread letters penned by well-remembered
hands

On a gray day lest we forget.



Gail Goepfert, Photographer

**From My Deepest
Heart, I Reach For
Heaven**

By

Sandy Strauss

2nd Place - Adult In My
Deepest Heart

An undulating chain of birds
Trails into the last smear
Of pink sky,
As daytime wraps itself
In the black,
Sequin-studded cloak of night,
Preening in the mirror
Of the moon.
The wind erupts
As brittle needles
Stabbing the darkness
With its icy chill.
The love embedded
In the sunshine's warmth,
Shrivels,
Folding into convoluted ribbons,
Tucking itself into dusty crevices,
Waiting silently for dawn.

I press my face against the window,
Watch as my breath fogs the glass
And peer into silvered emptiness.
My mind whirs as I stand alone,
My thoughts intersperse layers of now
With layers of before.

The shape and the color of flesh
Are not visible in the darkness,
Only the sound and intention
Of thoughts
Reach the ears of Heaven.

The Shadow

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows!

By

Herb Berman

Wearing the cloak of invisibility
defying gravity
unknotting every puzzle
wooing or not wooing Margo Lane

2nd Place - Adult Superhero

(it was never clear)
playboy Lamont Cranston had *the power to cloud men's minds*
bewilder master criminals

Wearing Daddy's ratty old raincoat
I longed to master invisibility
float into Belknap Elementary
pinch Betty Lou
cackle maniacally and sail away
unseen

I believed in goodness
honest crime-fighters
showing off to a doting girlfriend
and brilliant playboys with endless funds

I believed in
dodging bullets with a quip and a whirl of my cape
halting crime with magic and logic

I wouldn't gallop into the sunset with a tongue-tied
sidekick
guns blazing, bust down doors
slap villains silly,
my shadowy mental powers enough to win the day and
the girl

The Shadow:
hero for a brainy kid
spooked by horses
clamor
and muscle-bound bullies



Superman

by

Matthew Loarie

2nd Place - Elementary
Superhero

He is as caring as a mother is to her child
He is as fast as a sonic boom and strong like a brick

He flies far from fog

He is cool but not a fool
He is as helpful as Ms. Colbert

Kind as a flower blinking at you
A soaring bird
Unbelievable and undefeatable
When he is there, and with no despair,

he disappears.

Secrets

By

Maya Behn

1st Place - Middle School

In My Deepest Heart

Secrets there forever stay
Their fading pleas for help I shun
In my deepest heart they lay.

Sheathed behind a screen of ice
Chained to walls devoid of sun
Secrets there forever stay.

Held for an excessive price
Never will become undone
In my deepest heart they lay.

Down in the depths of sin and vice
Times of mercy number none
Secrets there forever stay.

Explanations too concise
Far from invasive questions I run
In my deepest heart they lay.

Never shall escape, never will entice
For this battle I have won.
Secrets there forever stay
In my deepest heart they lay.



Gail Goepfert, Photographer

Solace

By

Marcia Pradzinski

3rd Place - Adult In My
Deepest Heart

I look for it in the honeyed plumpness
of the golden comforter,
the cold morning bathroom tiles,
the rain of water warm then cool
that bathes my senses awake.

I look for it
in the fire and fragrance
of my son's hair
as we begin our morning struggle,
in the earthy tang of coffee
and the soft cork of the bulletin board
littered with reminders.

I look for it
in the burgundy sofa
that sighs with my weight as I listen
for the rumble of the yellow school bus,
and later
in the newspaper-reading faces on the train,
the conductor's song of stops,
the garlic-scented accents of students
in the struggle of foreign tongues
twisting their way into English
as I twist my way in and out of the day

And when it comes, it comes
not in days away, not in evenings out.
But as the day ebbs,
with dishes stacked in the sink,
clothes to be washed and lists to be made
it calls me softly into my son's room,
invites me to sit at the edge of his bed
and stroke his soft curls.
The rhythm of his breath,
the ticking of the clock,
and my breath weld the scene
and hold us
in an eggshell of space.

Imposter

By

Carol Spielman Lezak

3rd Place - Adult In My
Deepest Heart

I am not who you think I am.
I am not even who I think I am.
This facade I live behind obscures who I really must be.
But who is that?
I progress through life, always feeling false.
I dare not trust my feelings--how could they be real?
In my deepest heart lies the truth:
that I have no substance, an unformed and empty identity.
My falseness, though, is unintended.
There simply is no essence.
I play many roles, but none fit.
How can I be what others want me to be
when I am not even what I want to be.



Gail Goepfert, Photographer

Inspiration

By

**Aayush
Mahableshwarkar**

2nd Place - Middle School In
My Deepest Heart

Inspiration is the beginning and the ends,
It is the brain's very best friend,
Without it
There would be no wheel, no fire,
For inspiration is the beginning and end,
Without it life would be bare,
Life we knew it would likely tear;
Ideas always start in the mind
For inspiration is a human's fuel,
Inspiration is evolution itself,
So you better hold it dear,
Without it there would be no iPods, computers
Or pictures moving,
Only bare Earth nothing,
A vast expanse of no emotion.



The Black Eagle

By

Daniel Feldman

1st Place - Elementary
Superhero

Through the mist of the windy city
I catch a glimpse of a peculiar creature
I narrow my eyes to get a better look at this unknown
illustration
A bird?
A plane?
A thingamajig?
All the sudden I see its yellow eyes flash in the direction
of me
He stares at me and then gives me an immense grin
As fast as you can blink he swoops down beneath me
and hoists me up on his rock-solid back
He flies me around the big city
going through every cloud we can find
It feels like I'm on him for hours but I've only been upon
his back for a few minutes
Finally, he lays me right where I saw him before
For a second I am very dizzy
I feel like I can see the whole world
A pyramid
A shark
and 47 beagles

After my head stops spinning I ask him
"Who are you?"
He says proudly
"I am the Black Eagle."



Super Dawg

By

Louis Olswang

2nd Place - Elementary In
My Deepest Heart

In my deepest heart I love Super Dawg
It's not a weiner
Notta frankfurter
But.....
Super Dawg!
It is big, thick, hot, and juicy with a salty outside
Whenever you pull up to the restaurant
You feel like you have arrived to meet royalty
You pull up in a parking slot and order through your own radio
A server comes to your car and presents you the food
When you take your first bite you feel like you have entered a
second life
You HAVE to order more!
You order a black cow to drink
A black cow is a root beer float (with extra root beer)
It's so refreshing it is like drinking an ice cold sweet lemonade on a
hot summer day
All of it together equals
Heaven

**On The Wings of An
Angel**

By

Lizzie Allen

1st Place - Elementary In
My Deepest Heart

The midnight stars are filled with love; the eyes aglow
from above
An angel flying in the air, smile a diamond, flowers in
hair
She says to me, "Come, child, and hush, the stars above
are in a rush."
On the wings of an angel we fly together, side by side,
As we watch the stars fly by and by
And see the beauty of the world
For what it is, a sparkling pearl
And all of us, who we are inside
Depends if we close our shell and hide.
If this is our decision, the pearl will die
But if we stand in unison our spirits high,
The world will surely have its chance
Just stand back and take a glance
At what this wonderful world of ours should be
I am sure you'll agree
On the wings of an angel...



No More War by Anonymous

I Want To Be A Superhero

By

Kenny Sommer

Wow I'm Spiderman
No Captain Kirk?
Sometimes Batman
A little Mickey Mouse!
I can turn any color
Orange, red, green, blue
I can fly, freeze you

3rd Place - Adult Superhero

Make you tell all truths.
Turn into a giant
Grow into a fruit
Stretch in any position
Make you lose your clothes.
I can play in the NBA
Any pro sport!
Fight every evil
Turn invisible.
The ultimate superhero
Alter time to save the world.
Cook any meal you love
Dress you in any clothes.
Make you happy when you're down
Cure the sick with a smile.
Feed all the hungry
Clean up the hatred and dirt.
Shelter the homeless
Teach all the lost.
Actually I am me
Me I am.
To be or not
Try to figure it out?
Take the pen and typewriter
Write some super words.

Animal Abuse

By

Ari Kohn

3rd Place - Elementary

In My Deepest Heart

In my deepest heart I care for animals
Some are stray and abused, wandering the world on
their own
Waiting for someone to come and rescue them
Save them from starvation and danger
You can think of what goes on in their heads every
single day
"Where am I going now?"
They feel like outcasts and rejects
Scared out of their minds
Sometimes people may glance at them
They might be nice enough to give them food or water
Or, they could just veto them and walk away
Little animals and big ones
Rejected and abused about a million times
Trembling with fear of being hurt, yet again
They can be scared at the sight of storms
Being sopping wet and doing whatever they can to find
shelter
Even if that means hiding in a cardboard box
They can hear the sirens

They can see the lights flashing in all directions
They can hear people and the noise of the outside
They cringe and try to drown out the sound as they
drift off to sleep
But that doesn't need to happen
If we all work together we can change that
We can rescue animals and give them the homes that
they need
Go against kill shelters
Try to help as many animals as we can find a home
That would be making a difference
A big one...



As People Walk By Me

By

**Aarohi
Mahableshwarkar**

3rd Place - Middle School In
My Deepest Heart

As I sit in the corner day and night,
As those who walk by me sometimes scream in fright.

So what am I?

Seriously misunderstood,

Or simply a little creature made out of wood.

I choose choice A and B, thank you very much.

For I am misunderstood and made out of wood.

So what am I?

Please figure it out for I can no longer handle the jeers and insults

I endure each

So what am I?

Please figure me out without a doubt and tell me my identity,

For I, to this day have yet to find out!!!

P.S. I am Pinnochio

The Hulk

By

John Schulz

3rd Place - Elementary
Superhero

The Hulk is so strong
As strong as a raging bull
But at times he's weak

He is the bravest
He is afraid of nothing
But at times he's scared

The Hulk is so big
As big as a skyscraper
At times he acts small

On the job or off
He's still a superhero
A crazy hero

Poems written by 4th & 5th place student poets do not appear on The Muses' Gallery due to space limitations.

These poems are part of the April display on the
Ruth Fell Wander Community Art Wall at The First Bank of Highland Park.
The poems are also included in the 2010 Poetry Challenge Chapbook.