



2011 Love Poetry Contest



Love Poetry Contest Winners

In Touch

By

Ellen Savage

1st Place Adult Resident

In this brain-boiling summer
I feel like an outcast--
You, a long-suffering Catholic
never waver at my whines
for air conditioning, so I am stuck
silent in all the heat-talk,
for if I feel bold and let on to the truth
of cold showers, fans and curtained windows--
the most awful, silent, stares.

But, while neighbors sit indoors
losing touch, we're lounging out back
where the orange skipper goes about
his secret in the glimmering grass
and the hummingbird noses
in the pines for spider mites.

As we laugh about losing count
of the laps that crazy butterfly took
around the yard, in a flash I see
our past, present and future
in your simmering green eyes.



Ed Kaufman, Photographer

Lunching

By

Tom Roby
Chicago

1st Place
Adult Non-Resident

Water reflections fracture
the surface, blur the bottom
of the pool where shadows
of elms, leaves, sunlight lie.

You sail late to my table,
white dress billowing over
black fishnet pantyhose.

You're hungry. I propose
salmon salad. You order
chopped steak, then you

say you won't go to Crete
with me. A gull creaks in
sudden fog like a rusty mast,

you leave a half-eaten
hamburger, I choke on
a fishbone while Carl
Milles' Merman drowns

in the Art Institute's
garden fountain.



James Paradiso, Photographer

Writer's Love

By

Maya Behn

2nd Place
Adult Resident

The syllables fall neatly into place
To script loose ends and braid rough edges frayed.
No scratching pen can mar the pretty face
Of permanence and structured ink inlaid.
Ideas to pen, to paper freely flow
From open mind and open heart alike.
All words can cause a quick response, ergo
The scream, the desperate breath, the pulse's spike.
But poetry is often times applied
When love is sought and wooed in gentle ways.
In gardens do the bleeding hearts reside,
For letters keep a strong and steady gaze.
Of anyone, the writer surely knows
The heart will always beat iambic prose.



James Paradiso, Photographer

Never Gone

By

Colleen McManus Hein
Riverwoods

2nd Place

In the dream we're at a family
gathering, a backyard barbecue, and
you're alive. You smile sheepishly, one
hand tucked in your pocket, embarrassed
by the mistake, everyone thinking
you were dead. I want to grab you,
but no one else seems to know
that you were ever missing, so I

Adult Non-Resident

just eat you with my eyes. I follow
your familiar gestures like the best

theater; pushing up your glasses
with one finger, wrinkling your nose,

the way your eyes narrow in mirth as
the corners clench in cleft crinkles. I

want to say it hasn't been any good
without you, but it doesn't matter now.

You're back. You used to be the
nameless ache when I awoke. You were

the moment between moments of a
dropped call, when you realize there's

no one at the other end. I used to
wander in the fog between where you

went and where I was, my hand held out
like empty headlights, blind palms

scanning the labyrinth of framed
dead-end memories. But now,

you're back. We exchange secret
smiles, tilt our heads shyly,

agreeing to pretend
that you were never gone.



Heidi Betts, Photographer www.birdwatchinglady.com

Frosty, Delicious

By

Judith M K Tepfer

***3rd Place
Adult Resident***

First published in East On Central

Like the soothing sense of cold,
when first teeth try to puncture gums,
and Mommy offers the frosty ring
right out of the freezer;

or the child's first
moments in the snow,
as he lifts a portion of
the soft, white mystery
to his curious lips,
the elusive substance melting
down the thumb of a red,
woolen mitten;

or the taste of a sundae
on a brutal July day,
slaking the fever that
began at the brow,
flushed the face
and settled in the teeth;

or the iced latté
I now sit and sip,
awaiting your imminent arrival;

this is my anticipation:
the delicious heat of your lips
on mine.



Ed Kaufman, Photographer

Cyber Sonnet

by

Pamela Larson
Arlington Heights

3rd Place
Adult Non-Resident

At twenty-five I've given up on fate,
no god has sent "the one" running to my arms.
I'll enter a profile, try an online date,
tone down my nerves while I turn up my charm.

*A painter looking for honesty. Please
respond. We can chat for hours on end.*
The odds of finding someone has increased,
if I don't find her, I might like her friend.

I've fallen deep. I cannot believe she
is everything I want. A love that's true.
I suggest it's time we meet. Maybe coffee?
She says we can meet at Café Ballou.

Now I have to figure out how to ditch her,
cause she looks nothing like her profile picture.



Lorraine Brown, Photographer

To My Only Child

by

Susan B. Auld
Arlington Heights

Honorable Mention
Adult Non-Resident

*First published in Visiting
Morning and Other Quiet
Places (The Tradewinds
Company, 2008)*

I zipped your blue jacket
that early fall day and sent
you outside to play

your red bucket with the yellow handle
dragged across the concrete patio
as you carried it toward the yard
crowded with oak-woods

I watched you collect scattered acorns
each one carefully tucked into your pail
each one touched like a treasured friend

and when your red bucket overflowed
you stuffed them into your pockets
eager to save them all
eager to fill yourself full of their company

afraid to leave

even one

alone



Heidi Betts, Photographer www.birdwatchinglady.com

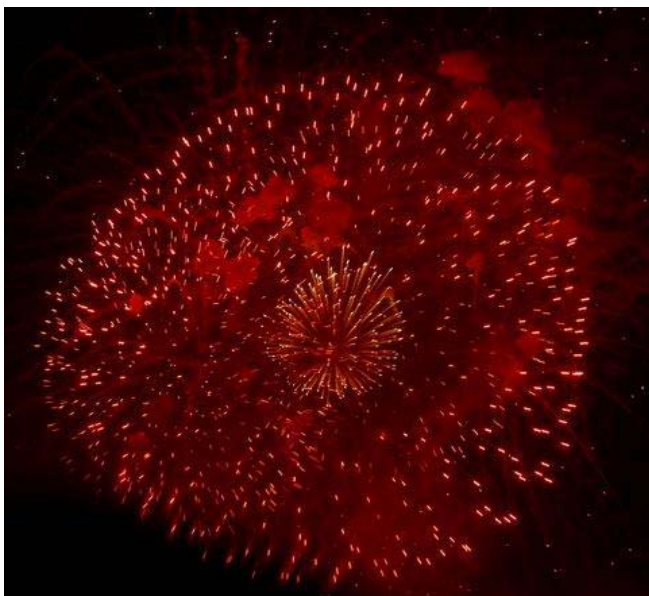
**It's All Been Said
Before**

by

**Carol Spielman
Lezak**

*Honorable Mention
Adult Resident*

What is there to say of love
that's not been said before?
It hurts. It heals. It scars. It bonds.
You're empty; you're fulfilled.
You embrace it, then push it away.
A mass of contradictions.
Who needs it? Sign here.



Ed Kaufman, Photographer

Moonstreams

by

Marilyn Peretti
Chicago

Honorable Mention
Adult Non-Resident

Moon made a difference
across the log bed,

slightly lighting the dark
we shared, bathing

the floating sheet
in soft powdered white,

its smooth globe unintrusive
but delicately delivering

pale streams of consent.



James Paradiso, Photographer

To My Father

by

Marjorie Rissman

*Honorable Mention
Adult Resident*

Snow falls
Upon familiar fields
And sends
An icy silence through the air.
So cold
So crystal clear
I kneel
To brush away
Your fate.



James Paradiso, Photographer

Love, What Makes Me Free

by

Maggie Stewart

Lake Forest

*Honorable Mention
Adult Non-Resident*

This is what I'd do for you if I could,
I would be embodied in someone you care about
more than me, in a different way.
And I would see you in the hall and stop you and
tell you how beautifully you play guitar.
How your fingers move as softly and surely
as low tide against pink shells.
And I would talk this way until your shoulders straightened

and your head lifted and you walked away
as sure as you play that guitar.

If I could, for you,
I'd talk an angel into appearing in front of you.
I'd pluck one out of the Heavens with lacy wings and long hair and bright eyes.
Not at night when you are under the blue down comforter.
But maybe at 9 a.m. while you're pumping gas at the Shell by the entrance ramp
on a dirty, grey February day.
- Just to make sure there is no doubt. That, really, you'll see -- You can talk to angels. See -
They are by your side even when you put 25 bucks in the tank and grab a Diet Coke.

For you, I would take back
all the times I've thought "you're annoying," or screamed "Shut up" in my mind,
or given you a roll of the eyes behind your back
Because I know you read these things on my skin,
quietly and to yourself as I stir the pasta.

If I could, for you.
while you are at your desk alone,
I'd move your hand to your head and let you dream.
I'd free up your messages, paper work, your doubts. And let you dream.
Keep your hand to your head
because this is what make me free.
This, if I could do for you.