



passager

2022 POETRY CONTEST



7 25274 23719 7

7.3>

THIS MOMENT

I open my eyes and know I am
what remains

The tree in the garden after a storm
covered with pearls
glistening in the sun
in the dead of winter

Always the large ship is sailing
toward this country carrying me
my father mother brother

And I am what is left
the others all in the ground
air full of spirit
scattered snow on the grass

The wood in the firepit waiting to be burned
The leather of a boot shaped by my foot

This work of time on me

Margaret Lloyd

HOWARD JOHNSON'S OFF RT. 95, JACKSONVILLE, FL

We never talked about it –
how we waited at a rest stop and were never seated,
nothing was said, we were pressed into shadows,
the Florida sun glinting off my father's star.

Patiently, we waited, but were never seated.
My baby brother escaped and scampered in the tulips,
the Florida sun glinted off someone's star,
searing my twelve-year-old cheeks.

We giggled as my baby brother trespassed the tulips,
while a crowd of families lined up quietly.
Something seared my twelve-year-old cheeks.
No one was discourteous.

The crowd of families lined up quietly,
not the second or third but tenth group behind us called to sit.
Though no one was discourteous,
we were pressed into shadows.

When not the second or third but tenth group was called,
nothing was said, we were pressed into shadows,
the Florida sun glinting in the shape of stars.
We never talked about it –

Ivy Schweitzer

18

still young enough to believe
the world was an elegant egg
to crack open,
a gift that couldn't be diminished
by an indolent argument,
vacant stares,
bugs in the machinery.
still young enough
to believe in impromptu rapture
love is all you need flower power
passion capsizing the way
it used to be –

still young enough to
forget to render a route while
fearlessly hitchhiking up the coast
to Cape Cod to touch the ocean –
still young enough to believe in
the kindness of strangers and
fearlessly settle on a stool
at a Truckstop counter
in a town whose name
is a long-lost memory –
still young enough at first

to be diminutive to go
unnoticed – then boisterous
still young enough to
use the well-polished art of
sizing up the best who
for the next leg of the trip –
still young enough to
believe Delicate was not
in her DNA.

Linda Joy Burke

THE LAST SLEEP

Of sleep's many episodes,
the last one is the best,
the one that brings refreshment,

if refreshment comes at all.
It does not pull me down
into the dark depths of dreams

where eyeless fish make their hobbled way,
where I painfully break
into wakefulness and effort.

Unlike sleep's early episodes,
the last one does not insist
that I relive the final exam

for the class I never attended
or defend myself against
the enemy who's found my hiding place.

No, the last sleep is the best sleep
because it wraps me in dreams
through whose thin walls I hear

the unmelodious rattle of the day
and feel, like a leaf, the dawn's swift
occupation of the sky.

THINGS ARE OPENING UP HERE, AGAIN

Walking across the parking lot of our local mall
past a boarded up savings and loan,
I spotted dozens of fallen cones,
most of them about ten inches long,
at the base of an old pine tree.

The grounds hadn't been tended in over a year
is my guess, and the cones were an unexpected sight,
nestled in a bed of dried needles,
waiting for their chance to split open
and be tossed here and there.

I read once that German coal miners
found three pine cones embedded in rock
dating from 120 thousand to 15 million years,
and when put in water, the scales of the cones opened
slowly, but they opened.

What I saw scattered at my feet
was the patience I've longed for, the thing
that will outlive us if we let it, past the pandemic,

the rising waters and all the rest,
and I think so often it comes down to this –

recognition of the possible
and the wisdom to leave things where they fall.

Jerome Gagnon

BEAUTY, BEAUTY

If I repeat myself, it's called anaphora.
If I repeat myself it's called a theme.
If I repeat myself it's called *I didn't
get it right the first time, so I try again.*
I've never had that much to say,
not like my friend the engineer, who says
*the history of textiles is the history of man,
John Marshall had one year of education,
I am going to Japan.* That's why
I've spent my life in listening.
I'm filled with other people's words,
the beauty of them insurmountable.
I have a story too, and I repeat it
when I can. It's beautiful
just after rain when air is clean
and trees are fed and every blade of grass
is unashamed to wear its tears.
The beauty part as I have said before
and I will say again is lying with my head
upon your chest, my favorite place,
a joy no afterlife could even try
to understand.

Joyce Schmid

Passager

2022 Passager Poet
David Bergman

Honorable Mentions:

Liz Abrams-Morley
Gilbert Arzola
Joyce S. Brown
Christopher Buckley
Linda Joy Burke
Paula Colangelo
Ray Copson
Lisa Couturier
Margaret Flaherty
Martha Fox
Len Freeman
Leslie Gabel-Brett
Jerome Gagnon
Laura Gamache
Mary Hennessy
Nancy Jean Hill
Gabrielle LeMay
Margaret Llowdy
James McGrath
Marjorie Schratz McNamara
Mary Padgen Michna
Constance Norgren
Lenett Partlow-Myrick
Sue Gibson Parks
Julie Pratt
Beth Brown Preston
Jaque Reed
John Romagna
Arthur Russell
Joel Savishinsky
Joyce Schmid
Willa Schneck
Ivy Schweitzer
Bob Shapero
Anastasia Vassos
Susan Walton
Todd Williams
James K. Zimmerman

