

Perry County Poet Laureate

Ribbit Flute (Frog Orchestra) Samantha McAlicher

Deer dance at dusk
Rabbits dance at dawn
To the music
Of the frog's flute
Of the frog's song

Deep bass
High pitched flute
All will be part of the orchestra
That will meld as one
Setting the stage

“What shall we play?”
That is the question
The amphibians mutter
As they prepare for the ballad
Of the frog's song

They remove
The grime from
Their slimy bodies
And swim to erase the blemishes
Revealing their glistening skin
And spotless tuxes

The altos and sopranos
Warm their vocal chords
The strings test the tension
Of their music makers
The wind instruments blow
Testing the clarity

It has begun
The company gathers
All are here
All for the frog's concert
For the frog's song

The evening conductor
Quiets the crowd
With his songs
That seems to speak of magic
The moon smiles at his back

The fox claim the night seats
The coyote makes reservations
For the early morning melody

Some dance
Others listen
Mainly listening

Their harmonies
Of chirps, peeps, and rumbles
High and low singing
It rises, climbs
It lowers, tunneling

The symphonies grow louder till
They go softer
The singing becomes fainter, the lights dim
The moon shuts her doors
The sun starts to open her curtains

Applause thunders
Then gradually fades
The crowds slowly disperse
The song of the frogs still repeating
In their heads

The instruments are placed in the cases
The creatures stop their dancing
The light of day stretches and awakens
Waiting for the next night
Of the frog's song

First Runner Up

Objects Are Closer Than They Appear Kenneth J. Little

I stopped for the first time
tonight at a stop light in
Perry County—a green beacon
at the intersection of time.

Do we move ahead with others?
Will we never return to slower
times with no crimson blinking
eyes in our rearviews?

Is just this one enough?
Someone else is asking these
same questions. Someone with
more moral authority than I.

On top of the pole you can
see their blind eye—camera's
collecting this segment in
stop action snippets of history.

Are they there to take shots of
speeders or to catch derelict
light runners? Are they there to
montage images of times gone by
or are they there to freeze-frame
Guinea pig reactions from
backward folk—demeanor that
we can never return to again?

With wide open eyes, clutching
the wheel, pretending to be
annoyed at the encroachment
of change, I stopped today for the
first time at the crossroads of
servility—I smiled and waived
good-bye or was it to say hello?

Second Runner Up

Afternoon Breezes Tony Oliveri

Brittle noises
fill the woodland
with every breath of breeze.

A hard headed bird
pounds the hollow top
of a nearby hemlock.

Trees litter the ground
shedding summer dress
in this colder, slower time.

Sounds not quite heard
hint of beasties
moving ceaselessly about.

A glint of sunshine
reflected up from the creek
breaks through the thinning crowns.

Shadows juggle
racing along edges
of brighter ferny patches.

One tree rubs another,
(set askew in a summer storm)
musically embracing as they sway.

Brittle noises
fill the woods,
creating next year's soil.

Third Runner Up

Though We Tread Samantha McAlicher

Though we tread
The paths of old,
The paths of golden wisdom,
We have yet to find the treasures of
The past.

Our hearts are never here,
They are busy traveling future trails
Though we are convinced
That's where they lie.

We may find
Our thoughts trick us
To believe the present routes;
What we think is
Our destiny.

Yet it is not so;
Time changes the course,
The direction
Of the thoughts and present lanes
We were told to believe.

We knew from the beginning
That those preceding routes were true
Inlaid with insight,
Because destiny,
Though planned,
Is never the actual thought.

We just chose not to listen
To their call
Dare we walk those trails now?

The paths are laid,
It is our choice to tread
The paths of old,
Of golden wisdom.

They will guide our fate
Of present and future
If we listen to their voice
Saving us from despair.

The time has come
To hike the roads,
To choose the way,
Of our fate

Honorable Mention

Spirit Lost Marlin Peters

The Buddhist chants morning rituals.
I have thoughts of erotic pleasures.
She continues in things believed.
My lover disappears as smoke
in a warm summer breeze.

The rain has slowed its pace
like a jogger on a steep incline.
The clouds have no shortness of breath.
They're waiting for me
to walk out from my shelter.

Longing for something I've rarely understood.
Glimpses of it pass behind my eyes
only to be forgotten in the next breath.
Where are you,
Oh lost spirit of mine?

Honorable Mention

A Fairie Story Sandra Philpott

Come, Children –
walk with me –
up the Hill –
for we have gifts
to give.
For Glynn
we bring
A rhinestone –
lost
from
a little girls
ring.
For Wren
we bring
three raisins
dipped in Brandy and
wrapped
like
shiney candy.
For you see –
they demand
a price – a fee
to enter
their
forest greenery.
The Hill
is steep
and Long –
We cannot
stop to rest
but
at the crest
we'll pause.
There
purple shadow fingers
point
to the right
where
leaf filtered sunlight
lingers.
From this spot
the path
becomes
narrow and winding –
A Gordian knot
made
of prickly briars.
and here
many a soul –
has made
a turnabout –
not finding
The fairie circle
for –
enchancement
was not their
goal.

Children –
suddenly
we are there.
When you step
across
the sill of
this world
into
the will of
another,
you will feel
the change
in light –
the change
in air.
Now stand
very still
and
you will
see
Graceful, Greedy Glynn
of
Golden eyes
and
snow white
hair –
Who sometimes
drives a pair
of
Dragon-flies
with
iridescent wings,
in and out
of the clouds,
While she sings
a symphony
of colors.
and you will see
Brown, Brazen Wren –
who
lounges lazily
on a
fern tendril –
nibbling
a
sassafras leaf
with
his
sharp teeth.
It is said
that
when only
one star
is left
in the night
and
all creatures
are
most bereft –

He takes
the foot
of a
fallen Faun,
as
a Flute,
and pipes
a summons
to the
sleeping Dawn.
Inside this green
circle –
ringed by
Hemlock trees –
a screen
against
the sun –
we lay down –
our journey done –
our Dreams begun.
Hypnotized
by
swaying boughs
we sweetly drowse –
dreaming of
Blackberries –
raspberries and
wild grapes
on which to
dine –
while tiny fingers
twine
Dogwood blossoms
and
ground pine
in our hair.
They whisper
in our ears –
some – some –
for
Glynn –
some – some –
for
Wren.
Lynx eyed Glynn
needs
diamond dew beads.
Bearded Wren –
pricking us
with
his little horns –
needs
Dandelion seeds
and
honeysuckle nectar
served in
gilded acorns.

In this circle –
under the trees –
A pact is made –
years and years
of warmth
and laughter –
A path
without
a trace
is laid
for us
to follow
with
unthinking ease.

My children grow
and then
they go
from here.
I am left
alone
to walk
the hill.
Some – Some –
I need
more and more
in time
becomes a chore.

Glynn's gossamer
Dragon fly dies.
She cries
a
silver tear
and
spins and weaves
Maple and Oak –
leaves
to cover
his
tiny bier.
The clouds float
alone.
The Rhinestone
is
lost.
Wren curls up
in
his fern frond
to
wait out
the frost.
The fairie
circle
is
beyond.

My life
is here
and

Life without dreams
is
more serene.
But
in my
reluctant ear
at dawn
I hear
his flute –
and
at twilight
I hear
and know –
deep within me –
Her symphony
of
Gold and Indigo.
Memories
are hard
to resist.
I want
to see
my childrens cheeks
once more
Fairie kissed.
But what is true?
Fairies singing –
sending
fireflies winging
round
their faces.
or
briarfilled places
and
childrens legs
pricked
by Rue?
Some – Some –
more – more –
They plead.
Come back
to
the forest Glade.
and
Is that choice
already
made.

Honorable Mention

Baby Psych Tobi Graham

Mama!

No, Dada.

Mama!

Dada.

Mama!

Dada.

Mama.

Dada.

Mama! Mama!

Dada.

Mama! Mama!

Mama.

Dada??? Dada!

Yes, Dada.

Kenneth P. Allen Competition

The Snow Day Lynelle David

In the morning Joe woke to a sky filled with snow
So he jumped out of bed and ran to the window
It was snowing big flakes and the front yard was white
Down the stairs he went running, and yelled with delight:
“Come and see! Come and see! Can I go out and play?
There’s no way that we’re going to have school today!”

His black dog named Bamboozle was barking with joy:
“I’ll go with you, oh what fun, just me and my boy!”
So his mother got busy and bundled him well
In his snowsuit, his mittens, his cap with the bell.

He made snowballs to throw for the dog, who was thrilled
As they ran and they played and they never felt chilled.
Mister Frosty, the snowman, was built — oh how grand
He was lumpy and bumpy, a broom in his hand.

Well, the morning went fast; it was soon time to eat
And Joe burst through the door, snow all over his feet
After lunch it was nap-time, but that was alright
He was happy and tired, from his day of delight.
So he went right to sleep with Bamboozle held tight
And he dreamed of adventures just out of his sight.