

ADULT DIVISION POEMS:

FIRST PLACE, LUCILLE MORGAN WILSON AWARD:

SNAPPING TURTLE BLUES

The first encounter takes me by surprise
your craggy head rising silent

from dark water
hump of algaed carapace behind -

the Loch Ness monster
of an Iowa farm pond.

Stretching a long neck to surveil your surroundings
you see me sitting still among the cattails

and for an inquisitive moment
we gaze into each other's eyes

before you slide quietly away -
an apex predator with fish on your mind.

We share the pond that summer
me watchful near water's edge

you basking on the surface
for morning sun.

And when fall cold settles in
you sink soundlessly into sheltering mud -

a lonely winter ahead.

Susan J Koch
Iowa City

SECOND PLACE, LUCILLE MORGAN WILSON AWARD:

“GENESIS

or, God is a man and he owns you. You were bad. Put on some got-dang clothes.” — Morgan Parker

one thing clear, i am neither of my two grandfathers
i mean, my family has raised me well on stories of a kindness only holy
men could achieve, but the inferno hath no fury like me
i mean i am not your priest and i won't forgive or absolve you
of your sins i mean rage has held space for me when no one else would
i mean women don't have a place in my church like men do i mean church is
the only place a man has confidently told me i'm a disgrace
to God because of my nose
ring, i mean i am descended from eve and used to pray in temples
while dirty, while bleeding i mean she used to pray
while naked, while pregnant, while replacing
a rib i mean jesus died for everyone's sins except
hers i mean adam was naked too but he blamed her first so she'll never be
forgiven i mean the church still curse her first
mother and berate her today everytime she gets
naked, then condemn her for covering and adorning clothes
i mean they said it was vain i mean i wanted to tell that man
my piercings are 1) mine and
adored 2) none of his got-dang business

Arsema Berhane
Grinnell

THIRD PLACE, LUCILLE MORGAN WILSON AWARD:

MY MISTAKE

Cardboard digs into my side as I shift my weight
pushing open the door to the stairs.
A hand catches my elbow, with a smile
he grabs the door for me.
“Why all the boxes? Moving?”
I explain that it’s my yearly Kerouac clean-out,
I purge 1/3 of my belongings to free my mind.
He squints, “Is that a thing?” No, it’s just my thing.
We walk down the stairs, empty boxes clunking,
hollow echoes against the railing with each step down.
He offers to help, but I reject it.
Stubbornly independent.
As he holds open the next door, he can’t help himself,
“You know what Kerouac said about the girls
in Des Moines?” Without meaning to,
I shoot him down, and say I live in West Des Moines.
He says that’s the same thing, really, and I say
It’s not. Really.
We reach the parking lot, part ways,
quietly he says, “My mistake.”

Heather Ann G Clark
Winterset

FIRST PLACE, HUMOROUS VERSE:

NO PAIN—ALL GAIN

My chances of actual weight loss
Are really very slim
I practice resistance training
By refusing to go to the gym

Jan Blankenburg
Donnellson

SECOND PLACE, HUMOROUS VERSE:

SPUD LOVE

He gazes into the dark green eyes
Imagines the future that will unfold
With caressing, tender, caring hands
Embraces skin, and buries his Yukon Gold

Steven Thompson
Osage

THIRD PLACE, HUMOROUS VERSE:

A SUNNING REGRET

Long ago lived a teenager named Jan
Who was determined to get a great tan
 She basked in the sun
 Till the baking was done
Now needs a dermatology plan

Jan Logan
Van Horne

FIRST PLACE. GRANT WOOD POETRY PRIZE:

“SPRING IN TOWN—1942”

If wise Eve had never tasted that sweet fruit,
She would still be in the garden, but not this garden,
The one in which we toil and sweat over the ordinary tasks
Of beating and mowing, tilling and fixing.

Never knowing winter, Eve could not guess the joy of the hot sun warming
Our backs, the feel of the breeze refreshing our quilts and souls,
The fragrance we shake loose from a young cherry tree.

If Eve had not chosen life over perfection,
Our sons and brothers and fathers would be here,
Sharing our work and living out their days in the sweetness of
Our little Iowa town.

But Eve chose. She took a bite, and we became human, God beaming
At us from the four-eyed steeple,
Making the sun rise on the evil and on the good,
and sending rain on the just and the unjust.

Janet Carl
Grinnell

SECOND PLACE. GRANT WOOD POETRY PRIZE:

HAYING SEASON

(Inspired by "Haying," Grant Wood, 1939)

The sweet alfalfa breeze blows in early summer
For just a brief season, a night or two at best
When the fields perfume the stars, and the frogs
Sing their lonely, longing song

It is then that I remember
The darkness of your farm-black soil,
Fireflies dancing, and cricket cadence
The way you captivated me
The way I wanted to crawl through you
And come out the other side, transformed

When we loved
When summer was young, and we were too
Before life called, and we each had an answer
Your path taking you away, long gone,
Only to discover mine leading me back home to our
Sweet summer winds heady with the
Twilight aroma of the freshly cut fields

I breathe in,
Inhaling you
Time and time again

Patricia Regnerus-Sandbulte
Sioux Center

THIRD PLACE. GRANT WOOD POETRY PRIZE:

SOUNDS OF SUMMER AND WINTER

(based on "January," 1940-41, <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2002.2>)

In the height of summer,
In the time of the solstice,
In the great open Out There
Were the screeching and whirring of cicadas,
The chirping of crickets,
The tittering of birds.
All these animals, calling to
Friends,
Foes,
Mates.
All proclaim the same message:
I am here.

Winter has come when what we hear instead are
Shrieks of grass buried alive under polar mounds,
The baying of the north wind,
The crunch of snow underfoot,
The vacuum of space resounding from above.
All the everything amounts to so much nothing,
Calling, calling, just to say,
You are still there.

Jim Hackett
Cedar Rapids

SPECIAL AWARD FOR FIRST-TIME ENTRANT:

SOLAR ECLIPSE SONNET

The sphere gradually hugs the wicked
Like a cool, crisp breeze cuddling the blue sky
I call to the lanterns and ask for aid
Because hope is an everlasting night.
I grab a star, and the light warms my soul
The dark burns into my mind like a flame
The crescent moon dives in the ocean
The moths claim that it'll never be the same.

The sun rises like pure yeast in a bowl
As earnest eyes sink into the dead sea
Dim shadows love to keep beliefs alive
Despair begins to boil blood like black tea.
Shady trees orbit a shy silhouette
As dusk forces the dawn sky to agree.

**Prince Harrison
Johnston**

FIRST PLACE. TRADITIONAL FORMS:

THE HISTORY OF MY BACKYARD

This land already had a people when the Europeans came
They were called "Sioux" because of miscommunication
The Oceti Sakowin, let us say their name

"Seven Council Fires", seven parts of the same
Seven tribes, now all sent to the reservation
This land already had a people when the Europeans came

They regard the Buffalo as a relative, we saw them as game
They say "Mitákuye Oyás'īŋ": All are my relation
The Oceti Sakowin, let us say their name

People don't like to talk about it - too much guilt and shame
Children ripped from mothers and force-fed a white education
This land already had a people when the Europeans came

Keeping the "pǎ́éta wakǎ́ŋ," sacred fire, aflame
Prayer and ritual bring them close to Creation
The Oceti Sakowin, let us say their name

Ugly history should make us feel uncomfortable; that's the aim
Doing better in the future is our obligation
This land already had a people when the Europeans came
The Oceti Sakowin, let us say their name

Ashley Wolfornabane
Storm Lake

SECOND PLACE. TRADITIONAL FORMS:

APOLOGY

As bright-faced children we placed hands on hearts
And pledged our faith and fealty to our land.
We studied history, colored maps and charts,
But then we did not truly understand
The searing cries of branded human beings,
Their flesh raw ribbons formed by hate-filled lash.
We did not know the fear of natives fleeing
Land ravaged, language robbed, homes left in ash.
We did not hear of children starved and penned
Because their parents came from foreign soil,
Their only wish some freedom and a friend
We were not taught their woebegone turmoil.
Much older now, we heave a troubled sigh.
For what our country did to you, we cry.

**Lori Shannon
Manning**

THIRD PLACE. TRADITIONAL FORMS:

SONNET NO. 1 SONNET TO THE REDWOODS

I waded in depths of cool crystal brooks.
Redwoods branching, my thoughts soared away.
Mother Nature's exhibits everywhere I looked:
Garter's olive stripes dappled by sun's rays,
Red spotted salamanders, timid bobcats,
High-flying marbled murrelets, black-tailed deer
Co-existing, sharing their habitats,
Nature in harmony, in balance here.
Twenty million years these treetops dominated.
World's oldest, tallest living treasures.
I wandered around, my spirits calmed, sedated.
This would always thrive, this planet of pleasures.
Yet, now, trudging through, for that past I am pining.
Wildfires rage, species in danger, redwoods declining.

Kathy Geren Christy
Oskaloosa

FIRST PLACE, HAIKU:

Hammock's swaying song
Man and dog in harmony
Pine sanctuary

Jane Jenkins
Dubuque

SECOND PLACE, HAIKU:

Dry, old bumblebee
crumbles under pumpkin's glow,
my skin yellowing

Tracy Edens
Iowa City

THIRD PLACE, HAIKU:

combs and wattles shake,
wings raised, black-striped chickens chase
beetles on red earth.

Dennis Maulsby
Ames

FIRST PLACE, NATIONAL/WORLD EVENTS:

HURRICANE IAN

I'll never sit in my favorite chair
at the old wrought iron kitchen table
watching the fast-rising sun
cast purple and orange shimmers on
infinite prisms of tidal water
slipping between pilings of the harbor bridge
dicing smooth swells into choppy waves
capped with blinding white sparkles
A lifetime of quiet beginnings soon reduced
to memories seen only behind closed eyes
I'll never forget the horror as the ceiling collapsed
on the old wrought iron kitchen table
watching a deluge of water
pour through the jagged rip exposing black sky as
infinite shards of rain propelled by wind
slipped between pilings of the harbor bridge
dicing the hurricane gale
into swirling internal tornadoes with unimagined strength
A lifetime reduced to memories
as new beginnings unfurl before my eyes

Sept 28th 2022, cat 4 Hurricane Ian near Fort Myers FL killed over 160 people and is one of the costliest storms in Florida history.

Michelle Turner
Maquoketa

SECOND PLACE, NATIONAL/WORLD EVENTS:

INFINITE VIEW

Infrared eyes see
a signature of water vapor
beyond clouds
of cosmic dust.

Astronomers in ivory towers
ask if life exists
on a distant planet
would there be a perfect garden.

Dreamers striving to look beyond the skies
and past unending wars
see a spread of purples
and the light of stars just formed.

Fathers and sons
mothers and daughters
look for a moment
when the universe is born.

Prophets and poets
gaze through gates of time
and ask what humanity would do
if given a second chance.

**The James Webb Telescope has already found undetected water on a distant planet.
Solon Magazine July 13, 2022*

Mike Bayles
Davenport

THIRD PLACE. NATIONAL/WORLD EVENTS:

TIDES

There is a tamarind tree
outside the window of the Covid 19 ward
shading the brick and mortar
where my patients are dying

a virus we do not understand
invades our patients
while we learn of more tides shifting
Russia is invading Ukraine

I pause under the tree
surprised to find a solitary seashell, sun-worn with buried edges
it is beautiful
undisturbed by the trash, the state of the world, or the news

how did it get here, from its birth at sea?
a pristine linear pattern repeats apex to base
as I contemplate my own mortality, roll the shell in my hand
it has been gathering sand slowly, along with time

how did we get Here
far from where we belong
with silence and, perhaps,
a longing for home

Russia launches "special military operation" in Ukraine, Feb 24, 2022

Amanda River
Maquoketa

FIRST PLACE, POEMS FOR CHILDREN:

THE LUMP-BUMPITY ROAD

Grandma lives on a lump-bumpity road,
with potholes, tire ruts, and mud-puddled holes.
Dad doesn't like it 'cause it jars the car.
Mom says she wishes they'd cover it with tar.

But me, I like that road that goes bumpity-lump-bump.
I like how it makes our car jerk and jump.
I like how we have to drive oh-so-slow.
I can see lots more than when we go, go, go.

When we get to Grandma's, I walk down the road.
Next to a puddle sits a fat, warty toad.
Butter-yellow butterflies cluster in the mud.
In the pasture by the road, a brown cow chews her cud.

A blue dragonfly floats over a water-filled rut.
In the grassy ditch, a proud pheasant struts.
A meadowlark sings atop the sign that says slow.
The animals and I love that lump-bumpity road.

Anna Nicholas
Cedar Falls

SECOND PLACE. POEMS FOR CHILDREN:

BOSSY BIRDS

Chickadee dee dee, bossy dee dee dee
Faster! dee dee dee fill that feeder dee dee dee
I laugh out loud, hee hee hee
at you chickadee dee dee
as you bob and weave over me me me
Chickadee dee dee delights me me me!

Margaret Flint Suter
Hampton

THIRD PLACE. POEMS FOR CHILDREN:

JUST CURIOUS

Do deer and rabbits have first names?
Who makes the rules for squirrel games?
What do young minnows learn in schools?
Do mother robins have strict rules
about bedtime on summer nights?
Do teenage frogs have pillow fights?
Do chickens mourn the eggs we steal
or trout expect to be a meal?
Are wapitis aware they're elk?
Or silkworms know we prize their silk?
Do cows resent the milk we use?
Do bluebirds ever get the blues?
Do sloths intend to be so slow?
If you find out, please let me know.

Milli Gilbaugh
Iowa City