

**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