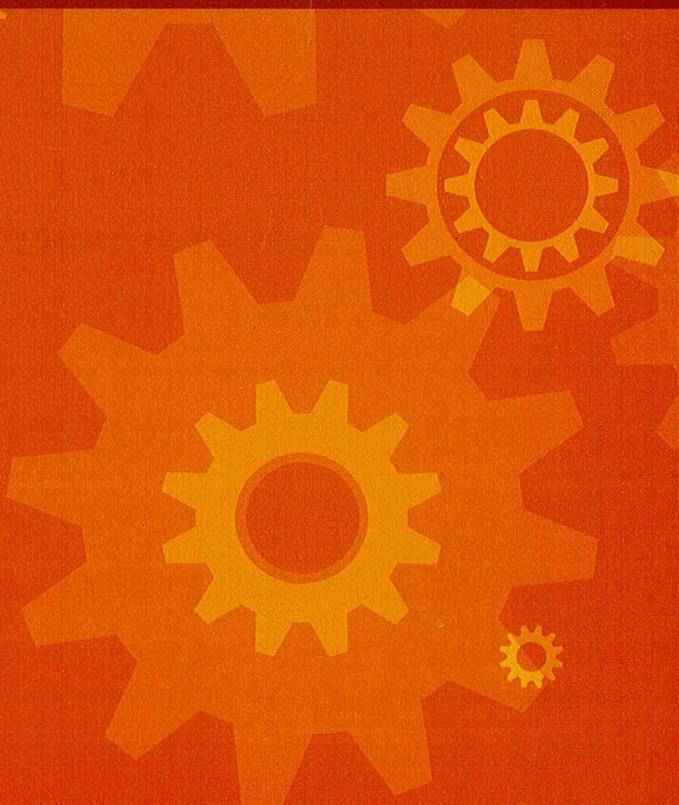


# Westland Writes 2012

*Andy Schuck, editor*  
*Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, co-editor*

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# **Westland Writes ... 2012**

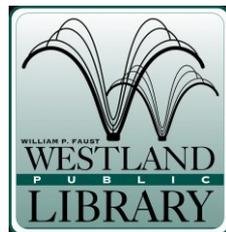
**Poetry and stories from local  
writers, as collected by the  
Westland Public Library.**

**Editors:**

**Andy Schuck**

**Cheryl Vatcher-Martin**

**Westland Public Library  
6123 Central City Parkway  
Westland, MI 48185  
[www.westlandlibrary.org](http://www.westlandlibrary.org)**



**Westland Writes ...** is in its 4<sup>th</sup> annual installment. We include new poets every year and have our cherished regulars. Poems are accepted during National Poetry Month (April) every year, so if you did not have a chance to include your work in this year's book, please look for submission notices in the library next April.

The rights of each poem and story in this collection revert back to the author.

Poems included are in Century Gothic font. Poet names are in Brittanic Bold.

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# **POEMS**

## **Eric Alder**

### ***haiku***

Dappled round ripples  
Denoting unseen fish play  
Laughter on water

### ***Ode To A Wrecking Ball***

Some people decry letting old places die  
Cringing at the thought when bulldozers are  
brought  
To knock down the walls of decrepit dance halls

With their voices raised, and eyes wet and  
glazed  
They bemoan this 'great loss' like it's Jesus on  
the cross  
They simply cannot see that all stories are History

Sentiment for old shelves is us trying to save  
ourselves  
Trying not to be forgotten when our children  
plant new cotton  
New buildings and new dreams replace those  
old, dry-rotted beams

These vast empty shells where dust and ghosts  
dwell

Do no good for the living and that's their  
misgiving

Heart-felt, emotional pleas against hard  
financial realities

Stuck in once-upon-a-time, aging starlet past  
her prime

Once glorious and new, now forgotten like an  
old shoe

Better to remember May and forget November

Turn-of-the-century wonder will soon be torn  
asunder

As its Art Deco charm falls without much alarm  
Architecture is divine when the taxes are not  
mine

Buildings aren't meant for the dead, but for  
those left in their stead

To use as long as they're needed, 'til the  
usefulness is exceeded

Then, best that they be replaced than just left  
there to go to waste

## LeeAnne Baumdraher

### *This is a Party, But I'm Not a Piñata*

There are men out there  
Who can recognize a woman

I notice them too

Men who would slay my darkest dimple  
And lay its carcass at my feet  
Just because I asked

Men who chance losing the ocean  
And drown in the challenge  
Of touching treasure at the bottom

Men who would squeeze the sunrise dry  
And grind down the bones of dusk  
Just to afford my love

Men who are beaten with desire  
Until their insides pour out

Like candy

***A Pugilist's Pain***

I'm not a natural born fighter  
But I've wrapped my heart  
Dipped it in shards of us  
To inflict further damage  
I'm throwing punches now  
Aiming for stale, black eyes  
Jabbing busted, blistered lips  
And craving the copper kisses  
Tongues snake through gaps  
Carved by sugar-coated fists  
Fading in and out of your scent  
Ears nibbled by noxious words  
Eyes swollen shut by secrets  
Rolling up congealed sleeves  
Simply to bare the wounds  
Sharks vultures men circling  
Searching for the softest meat

## Regan Byers

### *Dear Mary*

I'm writing this letter  
to tell you how marvelous you are.  
You're warm as love  
more graceful than flight  
stronger than cancer.  
And when I think of you  
all I can do is pray. Pray  
for your health and determination  
pray for your faith and courage, pray  
that you forgive me  
for not picking up the phone, pray  
I could be  
brave and beautiful like you.

I'm writing to say  
I love you  
you're a joyous part of my life.  
You surprise me with wicked humor  
you inspire me with wisdom and you taught me  
the Zen of a good pedicure.  
I know the hour is late,  
it took me so long to know what to say  
and the words don't stick to the paper  
like they do in my throat.  
Thank you for loving me.  
Sincerely.

***My choice, my body***

They try to tell me I'm not good enough.  
television says my butt isn't perky enough  
magazine says my teeth aren't white enough  
radio says my face isn't smooth enough  
billboard says my body isn't thin enough

and Hollywood wraps it all up  
in one shiny evil shallow glittery package:

You'll NEVER be good enough.

the cream is curdled  
the padding falls flat  
this surgery creates a monster  
there's poison in the vanity

I don't need your hair dye  
I'm keeping the Christmas tinsel  
in my head all year long.

I don't need your skinny jeans  
I fit just fine  
into my own.

I don't need to be fixed  
this body  
created and cared for two marvelous sons  
delights a loving husband

houses a mind and spirit  
of faith, optimism and love.

don't need the solutions  
to the problems  
you've invented

don't need your skin  
I fit just fine  
into my own

there's poison in the vanity

## Tisha Cole

### *Nature Haiku*

On wings of freedom  
Geese pass over water's face  
Ripples softly roll

Webbed feet touching down  
The smooth water obliges  
Catching wild geese

The electric cries  
Of seagulls flight in blue skies  
Echoes of longing

The seagull's ballet  
Exalting wild and free  
Their songs rise higher

### *Spanish Cinquain*

(inspired from a Spanish song)

Soy yo	<i>(interpretation)</i>
Mas que a mis	It's me
Ojos ti quero mas	More than my
Porque mis ojos ti veron	Eyes I love you
Yo soy	Because my eyes have seen you
	I am

## Jesse Ewing

### *Happiness*

Life is a cruel mistress  
Giving us a taste of happiness  
Only to take it away just as  
Quickly

We drown ourselves in liquid  
Poison when we can't handle  
The lows

The euphoria we feel cannot  
Last through long bouts  
Of droughts of emotions  
We promise not to forget

But as time goes on  
Our memory fades and  
We've forgotten the details  
Of the fall and wished

We can make up  
For what's been lost  
But life in all its cruelty  
Will not grant that wish.

## **Escape**

I'm drowning can't you see?

This life is too much to handle  
To see an addict's escape  
Would be far too easy for me

I've suffered enough  
From another's actions  
Can't you see?  
I have no escape

Want an escape?

What's an escape when I know  
I have to go back?

Who will be there when I  
Take my final escape?

Who will see me onto my next life?

When I'm drowning  
Who will save me?

Who will stand beside me  
To pull me up?

## **Patrick Franks**

### ***Mundane Miracles***

That the norm that's formed  
Is more the bore  
Because it is the norm  
(and so in doesn't cause such chaos)  
But the norm deformed  
Because it is abnorm  
Is something that does  
Intrigue us

### ***Get Away***

I took off  
Very early morning  
Quiet fishing  
  
Alone  
Still, serene  
Then,  
Sudden strike!  
Drama, commotion

Large

Large mouth bass

On the line.

And then,

I thought of you

## Rick Gallmeyer

### *From all this....*

From all this I take the good and make it  
something better.

I extract it from the sludge with old rags, tired  
hands, and faith.

I squeeze it out of this dismal hour in the day of  
my existence.

I wrench it from rotting timber and decaying  
pieces of my life.

I pry it from tragic moments and hopeless planks  
of wood.

I yank it with all my strength from fallen eaves of  
time.

From all this I take the good, and make it  
something better.

From this mire of sin and filth and crud, I pull out  
blocks of stone.

From this refuse in my heart, I recover scraps of  
love.

From this meager pile of broken rock, I construct  
my life anew.

From this wasteland of lies in which I live, I  
create something true.

From this barren earth of "barely holding on," I  
scratch to raise my **"Self"**.

I sift through my piles of rubble and waste  
redeeming any fragments of fortitude that  
remain.

I refit the windows and the doors of my soul,  
and re-open them to the sun and breeze.  
I reattach the fallen shelves and fill them again  
with aspirations.

Then with my shaky limbs flailing in the evening  
gusts, I gently lift up my "**Self**".

From all this I take the good and make it  
something better.

I extract it from the sludge with old rags, tired  
hands, and **Faith**.

From all this I take the good and make it  
something better.

From all this I take the good, and make it  
something better.

### ***Julissa***

She has a silent way about her.  
Her quiet spirit draws you in.  
She charms you with her brevity.  
She casts a spell without intent.

Mystery becomes her.  
It shrouds her in sublime.  
Her illusion leaves you breathless.

You long her presence near.

She's beauty in enigma.

She's a riddle wrapped in silk.

She's a query robed in enchantment.

She's bewilderment in an alluring gown.

You love her without knowing.

You only know when she's a **ghost**.

Just when you seem to have her,

She's a specter vanishing in the haze.

Just when you think you know her,

She's a shadow fading in the night.

Her caresses linger in your memory.

Her soft sighs wander through your dreams.

Her passion trespasses your solitude,

and haunts your lonely **heart**.

Julissa has a silent way about her.

Her quiet spirit draws you in.

And you long her presence near

as her incantation breaks your **heart**:

"You're crazy" are her magical words,

"You're crazy and I have to go."

"You're crazy ....and I have to go."

## James Jeziorowski

### *Finding Work*

One day I lost my job  
I was so upset that I began to sob  
At first I was very sad but that turned into being  
Very mad  
They had no right to have me get out of their  
sight  
Not caring about my plight  
All they were concerned about was their  
bottom line  
But----what about mine?  
Now I search for work day and night  
Trying to find the one that's right  
Will I ever find work again to get back to where I  
once have been?  
I don't know, it's hard to say  
All I can do now is talk with God and pray

### *Tornado*

The sky begins to darken  
The lightning comes in streaks and bolts  
The wind starts to whirl, turn and twist  
And you wonder "what the hell is this"?

As the dust and dirt climb up in the air  
You say to yourself that this is just not fair  
When you see houses blown completely apart,  
cars tossed  
Like rockets across the street  
Your heart feels the pain and you think that  
This is so insane  
Some people die, some people cry  
Some people despair and, still, some just don't  
care  
The treasures they have lost and to rebuild "Oh,  
what a cost"  
Why did this have to happen it is not known for  
houses and cars to be  
Hundreds of miles fully blown  
The pain and awe will forever mark what we  
saw  
Please help us recover and be at peace once  
again

## John Kelly

### FATE

Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos...Three  
Measures for what's a man's to be.  
Or do I, Myself, plot my way  
With things I do and words I say?  
With wits, my mind, my soul to be  
The only magic given me.

No spinner, needle, and or knife  
Shall guide my ever-precious life.  
Gone the temples which we adorn  
With food, with voices that did roar.

Now I travel with plans in hand  
To guide across this wretched land.

I seek the knowledge from forgotten ages  
Which I converse with holy sages.

I learn from thieves, from thugs abound  
Just when is right to make a sound.

I read from books on arcane themes  
From Isaac Newton to noxious steams.

With wits, my soul, my mind aligned  
I don't need the lucky signs.

For the Fates had not the power  
To make proud men bow down and cower.

I stand alone, profound and free  
To be, to go just where I please.  
The Fates now fade from humankind,  
Never to be seen again.

### ***The Lovers In The Wind***

Across the land and seven seas  
is where our love will surely be.  
In a special place and time  
is where our arms be intertwined.

Even through the sea of air  
my soul doth fly to be right there.  
To caress your body with gentle touch  
to show I love you very much.

My body bound in corporeal state  
yet spirit flies at wondrous rate.  
Our spirits touch in ecstasy  
on mountains, in air, or in sea.

Warmth and beauty engulfs us all  
we hear the love, in sacred call.  
Our souls now glow and radiate  
with gentle love and not from hate.

Our love now spent, it's time to weep  
tears not fall and gently seep  
Through by soul and sting like sin  
I know in end that we will win.

## Ralph Koschnitzke

### *All about her*

He sees her standing  
On the side of the road  
Stung by emotional entrapment  
She has no jacket,  
    and chewing gum,  
Out in the winter cold.  
Twisting her tattered hair  
Staring oddly out of place,  
With a single finger  
Ripped through multicolored yarn.  
"I think she wonders," says he,  
"About what I don't know."  
With a blink of her eyes  
She starts to sing  
A conversation with herself.  
As her gaze meets him  
Across his field of vision.  
It's on his mind of what's in her head.  
She sways herself with a quirky grin.  
There's no reason to leave.  
It's all about her, standing there,  
Not in his world, but all alone anyways.  
All she knew, were promises  
That everything is all right.  
He didn't mean that tonight  
It was just his way.

Just a bit of fun.  
The wrapper falls  
The trap is sprung.

### **Why?**

It's not so much that I'm looking to change.  
It's more like now that things are different,  
What am I supposed to do next?  
Waiting patiently has become a career.  
Strangely I loved every minute, but sometimes...  
I just miss all the little things  
You know them well.  
You know me better.  
So I wonder as I look for spare change  
To place into my jar, preserving a future.  
For all that God is doing, and has done,  
For all of the lies of the enemy,  
For every moment I have loved you,  
I have spared an equal amount of dreams.  
Each the same as the first.  
Before thousands of words trailed from my  
heart,  
Drawing conclusion to only one truth.  
Love doesn't change.  
And being in it  
Is the reason why.

## Tom Kozma

### *Dreaming of You*

I dreamed of you again last night.  
This time you were a nurse,  
at least I thought you were.  
It is hard to tell with dreams.

But you were involved in the effort  
to replace my ruined skin,  
and you seemed to know what you were doing,  
as far as I could tell.

Later, as you laid beside me,  
you whispered not to touch your Cesarean scar.  
Not yet, anyway.

When you removed your clothing,  
I saw the tattoos,  
and knew you were the woman  
from Thanksgiving, four years ago,  
the one named after the martyred president.

It wasn't too long after that,  
but it is hard to tell with dreams,  
that I realized you were just my neighbor Ted,  
who sells insurance for a living,  
and I was disappointed once again.

## **Six Words**

This poem begins with six words,  
fewer than I would have hoped.  
Thirteen was more like the number I had in mind.  
You would think the poet could have done  
something about that.

If this poem were a portrait,  
it would be just a line here or there,  
hinting at some facial features,  
suggesting a nose or an ear,  
wisps of an anonymous countenance.

If this poem were a guitar,  
it would only have three strings,  
its melodies would be incomplete,  
its compositions compromised,  
missing crucial notes.

If this poem were a building,  
it would be painted asylum white,  
with cold lighting,  
austere open space,  
and no furniture to sit on.

If this poem were a tree,  
its blossoms and leaves would have fallen off,  
and all its branches shorn,  
leaving a stark trunk

puncturing the skyline.

If this poem were our conversation,  
it would be one-sided,  
I'd speak and you'd pretend to listen,  
or maybe it would be, instead,  
the other way around.

You would think the poet could have done  
something about that.

**Catherine McKenzie**

***FAREWELL'S SIGH***

Life begins and ends with hello and goodbye

It's only farewells that leave a sigh

Within the heart of minds wandering thirst

We're left in search of what was first.

HELLO

***DRIVIN' DOWN GEDDES ROAD***

Drivin' down Geddes Road

in a dark, deep winter's freeze

kind of day

When the sun came out

kissed my soul...

and

warmed my heart...

With Love...

From God

## **Blair Miller**

### ***Seussaholic***

Parrot Bay rum  
never again

Still not quite sure  
just where I've been

I hurt in places  
too numerous to list

A dark bruise swells under my eye  
from the girl I had kissed

My car's in the lake  
my house is on fire

There's a card in my hand  
from a lawyer I've hired?

No shirt, no shoes..  
but I think I'm alright

Even with the pain in my head  
man, what a night.

## You

The din of noise surrounds me  
anchoring my soul

Firmly set upon my pain  
with nowhere left to go

I tried to run from everything  
and hide wherever that I can

Weighted by my tormented fears  
I beg you, allow me to stand

Darkened clouds engulf my mind  
cutting off my hope

Dozens of friends surround me  
yet these people, I do not know

They claim to care, claim to love  
but I don't think that that is true

They cannot help me  
I see that now

Because, none of them are you.

## **Julie Moffit**

### ***PERCEPTION***

Epiphany comes  
Essential perception  
Fighting for what you believe in  
Standing up for the ones you love  
Never giving up HOPE  
Even in the darkest of days  
Not dwelling in the past  
Moving forward each and every day  
Fighting for what you know is true  
Regardless of what others think  
Trusting yourself  
As the wind blows  
So do hard times  
Leading to a new understanding  
Believing in possibility  
Always -

### ***ILLUSIONS***

Opening of Pandora's box  
Revealing a truth forgotten  
Wisdom is deep

Betrayed by time  
Building a fortress  
Inside

Screaming of sorrows  
Losing hope  
A string dangling faith

Taking no blame  
The agony of this fire  
Extinguished once and for all

Stories unfold  
Page by page  
A novel of life

Requesting kindness  
Not a mind of doubt  
Valued is forgiveness

A virtue of patience  
Behind a veil of darkness  
A craving to be uplifted

Illusions live in dreams  
What peril awaits  
Contesting all failure

## **Tobi Nelson**

### ***The Hurt Will Go Away***

Time and forgiveness  
help hurt go away.  
Even though it feels  
that it's here to stay.

There's only so much  
hurt a man can stand.  
So, put everything in  
Jehovah's strong hands.

He will help make  
the hurt go away.  
He will strengthen you  
more each and every day.

### ***Even Though***

Even though it seems the world has forgotten  
you;  
keep Jesus close to your heart.  
Even though it seems that things are closing in  
on you;  
keep Jesus close to your heart.

Even though it seems that your loved ones have  
forsaken you;

keep Jesus close to your heart.

Even though it seems that there's no strength to  
continue;

keep Jesus close to your heart.

For the Son will keep on shining.

Your prayers will be heard.

Your reward will not be dying.

The Lord will keep his word.

## Casheena Parker

### *Hidden Love*

I was goin' to write you a letter  
But my thoughts got the best of me  
Making my pride stand stronger than the  
feelings I actually have for you  
So I'm goin' to say my peace this way  
Standing tall and strong while holding a child  
that I was told shouldn't belong  
By a guy who never wanted us to be more than  
what we were then  
And if he did he never took that time to let the  
words spill  
From his mouth like water from a broken jar  
Uncovered yet filtered like a painter using the  
canvas floor  
Untouched yet completely open and  
vulnerable  
Like the thoughts and feelings that I thought for  
sure I didn't have  
Until my heart showed me otherwise  
And I begin to see things as I wanted to instead  
of what was in front of me  
Reminding me of the time I fell before  
Like a dove with a broken wing  
Who shattered itself on the concrete below

While still holding up hope that someone  
somewhere would come to its rescue  
I fell in the thought process  
That left me alone and heartless  
Without an excuse or reason to feel anything  
but what I felt  
Cause my guard was up  
And I wasn't recruiting any help to break them  
Yet they were secretly falling to the ground like  
broken clay pots filled with something precious  
I sit back and wonder while picking up the tiny  
pieces  
Thinking aloud  
How bad this might be  
Not realizing that I was actually talking about  
me  
But I folded unconsciously  
Letting dips of faded thoughts take me without  
thinking of the consequences that would follow  
Not for one minute thinking  
That my heart could be anything but hollowed  
But it was  
And in that moment I begin to see things as my  
heart saw them  
Blinded by the light of something completely  
pure  
I cried  
Cried for the feelings found that were once  
again only shared by one

To the son I spoke askin' him questions about  
how they could once again be revoked  
But he never answered  
Sitting silently  
Watching me go insane  
With thoughts of how quickly things seem to  
change  
Never once pointing the blame  
At you  
The one whose mind games brought me to the  
point of no return  
The unfocused thoughts that breaks my back  
and makes my heart burn  
Leaving me broken, open and empty  
Just like those before you  
Who didn't know  
Nor understand the worth  
Of a mother of four  
Whose blessing comes with every opened door  
Speaking yet not hearing the words coming  
from their own mouths  
Quickly retreated like a scared timid mouse  
My love is too powerful for their minds to  
comprehend  
So why pretend that we were only just sexual  
friends  
Who wanted more but never took the words  
seriously enough to actually say them  
Knowing that with them

Things would need to change  
With change comes growth  
Though not every man is worth  
What he actually believes he is  
They stand up to loudly shout how great they  
truly are  
Without realizing they're nothing without the  
one woman that could make them shine  
brighter than the northern star  
I was that woman for a guy like you  
But you couldn't see it  
'Cause your pride wouldn't let you  
Now it's too late and the gates have once  
again been closed  
Will they open again you ask  
Only god himself knows.

### ***Soul Mate Love***

As sure as the watchmen wait for the morning  
I will wait  
And no longer participate in actions that are  
less like you  
Wasting time and energy with those who aren't  
focused on the simple glory of you  
Crying while they constantly demand of me  
things that I'm unable to completely give

Knowing that they're not ready for the  
commitment they get from being so persuasive  
Leaving me alone with children I raise on my  
own  
With tears flowing from too much emotion  
shown  
Breathing the lies of life and seeing a reflection  
that looks nothing like the one I actually own  
Taking in all of me as I sit back to continue to try  
to patiently wait  
On you my one and only  
Who supplies everything I need and would ever  
want from thee  
You the only one whose ever been completely  
faithful  
Who knows me like all of the contents of my life  
has been spread out on the table  
With you I know that I'll have all that I deserve  
from the man you'll choose for me  
Caring, compassionate and kind  
He'll smile at the thought of being all mine  
With me he'll never hold he tongue to any  
thoughts that come to mind  
Treating me and mine like precious jewels and  
gems worldwide  
Carefully planting seeds of nothing but  
happiness and peace  
He'll be mine a blessing from you the God who  
created me from the rib with which he breathes

My one and only soul mate  
One of a kind king to my throne  
Taking away all memories of those who had  
never belonged  
So for this I'll wait  
No matter how long it takes  
Though unconsciously I've gone astray and left  
my heart at heartbreak bay  
I went back to rescue her and lock her away  
She'll be needed later when that man finally  
comes to really stay  
He'll come completing me and filling a space  
that I never knew was there  
Making me even better than I was before  
Walking through simply to be able to hold open  
my blessed door  
My husband  
My soul mate  
My one and only  
Blessed by a man much greater than all those  
ever known  
Who waits for me patiently,  
Knowing that I'll always bow down to his throne  
Even when my mind goes astray and my  
feelings are torn apart by another guy I let  
come and play  
Deep within I go to him and kneel before him,  
giving my all to him

Knowing when he's ready he'll bless me with  
the one thing my heart wants  
And I know I truly deserve  
A man that will love me as much as I Love You  
Without pause to consider his own pride and  
thoughts of selfishness and flaw  
To love without considering what he'd change  
to fit me into his world  
But change to fit into mine  
Loving me enough to submit to my design  
Knowing that love comes with the sacrifice and  
without the pride  
And the comfort of knowing that you're not  
falling in the tide alone  
But with someone who has given just as much  
to be on the ride with you  
I want my soul mate love

## Sever Pederson

### **BRAINSTORMING SOME THOUGHTS**

BRAINSTORMING SOME THOUGHTS  
BRING FLASHBACKS FROM EARLY DAYS  
THAT UNRAVEL PLOT

AS THE PLOT THICKENS  
EVENTS PILE UP FOR SORTING  
WHO WAS THE KILLER

DEAD AS DEAD CAN BE  
HER BODY WET FROM THE BLOOD  
WAS SO SAD TO VIEW

MY MIND HAD QUESTIONS  
GRIEF HIT ME LIKE A BULLET  
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN

WHERE IS GUILTY ONE  
WHY DID HE LEAVE THE BODY  
WILL WE EVER KNOW

I KNELT BESIDE HER  
I'M SOBBING BEYOND CONTROL  
WHEN SOMEONE TOUCHED ME

ALTHOUGH IN DEEP SHOCK  
I FELT TAP ON MY SHOLDER  
SOMEONE DID APPEAR

WOULD HE HAVE ANSWERS

MY NEIGHBOR WAS A WITNESS  
HE SAW IT HAPPEN

AS MY QUESTIONS CAME  
HE SAID IT WAS HIT AND RUN  
THE DRIVER DROVE ON

MY DOG AND BEST FRIEND  
WAS KILLED THAT DAY BY A CAR  
AS A LAD I CRIED

**DOC SAYS**

DOC SAYS  
TSUNAMI NEAR  
YOU CAN SIT RIGHT HERE OR  
GET OUT OF THE WAY SO YOU DON'T  
GET HIT!

GUESS WHAT  
I MADE A CHOICE  
TO GET MOVING RIGHT NOW  
I AM WALKING FOURTY MINUTES  
EACH DAY!

I WILL  
MOVE AWAY FROM  
THE COMING TSUNAMI  
I AM EATING LESS TO LOSE WEIGHT  
IT WORKS!

IT IS  
NOT A FUN THOUGHT  
FACING A TSUNAMI  
POWERFUL ENOUGH TO KILL YOU  
BIG TIME!

DOC WILL  
BE SO HAPPY  
I DID LISTEN AND LEARN  
WHEN GIVEN CHOICE TO SIT OR MOVE  
I MOVED!

FEELING  
BETTER LIGHTER  
MY BELLY DECREASING  
HUNGER IS LESS INTENSE THESE DAYS  
I FIND!

NO ONE  
SHOULD BECOME A  
TARGET FOR TSUNAMI  
SO START WALKING UPHILL BOTH WAYS  
TODAY!

## Andy Schuck

### *Rivet to rivulet*

Rivet to rivulet, bolt to thunderbolt  
The weight you carry is enough  
Before they have a chance to make you sing  
Settle in above weakening eyes  
Drive from the entanglement of splayed posts  
and jutting wire  
Who has your unborn ambition in his sight  
Parents rehearse (and then curse) future  
mediocrity  
I couldn't pull them apart, too sticky being  
bartered  
I've darted far from home  
Because they were words I needed  
Over pleasing charred in the middle  
making you feed modern, trenchant, trip  
No good for the soul but nobody sees it anyway  
On top of a pew, propped up by bony elbows  
Start 'er up, hear the engine grumble  
Cheese goes straight to your middle  
Noodles wiggling their tails in rows of ten  
Sucked into a dry, enervated piece stashed  
On the lip of the Lutheran on your porch  
In the dark, in the tiny surplus blanket  
Blocking out the lone pine, the  
cones and the needles  
She forced it on me, I ate it for desert

That attention never lasts  
Blue-green and blinking

***Rolling in from the depths***

With stringy fur, shaggy at the eaves  
tear away the edge, the soft curve  
A wick licked black between two fingers My  
agoraphobic felines panicked by the pitter patter  
Circling the shed where we drank The rain  
scatters my thoughts into dust, as it should  
Trying to decipher the weight and depth of it  
Feeding me whiskey is the only way I talk  
Send the maitre' d out for a bucket I must have  
some imprecision wired in my brain Don't walk  
any further or you'll curl up in ache The leaden  
business of my days insinuated into my blood  
I want them to run, scatter, get fed from some other  
forgotten palace  
Balding men with cargo forearms bellow  
All I want is a drink Behind the shed where cats slip  
in the shiny slick treads Holding together a dull  
sheen  
Miniscule sentiments not meant to be seen

Having spent too much time in cold and moldy  
places

With a white apron meant for peripatetic  
napkins

Chattering my teeth in order to garner some service  
the stultifying mix of liquids about to save my face

Rolling in from the depths to crush all of the  
barrier reef.

## **Matthew Slaughter**

### ***American In Beauty***

Paint for me pictures  
Of autumn in Maine  
The long distant future of New Mexico in flames  
When brilliance is shown on the desert below  
To a rushing of winter over the Rockies in snow  
Please lure my mind to spectacular heights  
Away from the blackness the blindness of life  
The raw savage beauty of Alaska in cold  
An Oregon coastline its stillness foretold  
Of herons on prowl an Au Sable shore  
A Superior owl or Wisconsin fiord  
To witness the thunder of an Okeechobee  
dawn  
Sprung from the slumber of an Everglades fawn  
A gray morning mist the Atlantic in blue  
Of falcons in flight with a Grand Canyon view  
To Zion in the evening as fire comes to rest  
A blanket of fog over a Wilmington eagle's nest  
Trade for me pleasures past forest of green  
To rivers overflowing or delicate streams  
From ancient volcanos  
Kilauea's savage flow  
The mighty Mississippi or a northern light show  
A lasting of heaven on earth's velvet ride  
To a warm summer rain  
Falling at my dockside

***The Lost Beauty Of***

Witness from heaven  
The brilliance of snow  
Falling on quiet the wintry below  
A rhapsody of nature a small winding stream  
The nurturing sights of childhood it seems  
For willows and chestnuts play to the breeze  
As falcons soar steady a forgotten tease  
When bees buzz the porch swing on lazy  
summer nights  
The oak and dead pine speak to the rise  
As stillness brings morning little bountiful song  
Few birds on the wire the wind of what's wrong  
When silence becomes  
The call of the land...

We understand

## **Cheryl Vatcher-Martin**

### ***Early Spring***

Daffodils flavor

March blossoms pleasant surprise

Winds dip open bloom

Field of dandelion dream

Robust fragrance of rhubarb

### ***Nature's Way***

Bird's nest under roof

Splattered egg nearby a loss

One less she will feed

## Jacqueuline Ward

### *I Gave My Love Away*

I gave my love away  
The day I gave  
My love away  
There once was a day  
Not so long ago  
When I wasn't truly  
And really strong

I did not trust myself  
That day I found love  
I did not trust myself  
That he really loved me  
I only wish  
I could go back  
And find the love  
I lost.

My heart now longs  
For my lost love  
You see  
He loved me  
But I couldn't see  
For I didn't  
Love myself

I did not

Love myself  
Enough to know  
That he was  
My true love  
He was the love  
I was meant  
To spend my life with  
I cherish the time  
I had with him  
Just friends  
He wanting more  
But I did not know  
Oh but now  
I know now

True love was mines  
Mines for the asking  
Mines for the taking  
You see  
He took my breath  
AWAY!!  
I called him my true love  
We met  
Not so long ago  
Oh how I adore  
That man of mines

Because HE  
Was meant for me

And I was meant  
For him  
But!  
I gave my love away  
The day I gave  
My true love away

## **Shari Welch**

### ***Prince of Darkness***

The vampire is lurking while  
night is approaching.  
Slither among innocents  
bestowing the unnatural.

Endless time continues  
weaving centuries into  
harvesting beings in need.

Supernatural power unleashed  
commanding domain unsuspected  
that only the day can arrest.

### ***Seniority***

Knowledge  
Experience  
Getting the job  
Done

Patience to  
listen  
Knowing when to

express  
Pulling it all  
together  
as it should be

Concluding  
the significant  
details in short order  
and  
Still have room to  
Laugh

## Imelda Zamora

### *DOUBT*

Have you ever imagined my heart expanding?

Pressing hard against my rib cage?

Have you ever pictured it bursting?

Splattering bloody tissues everywhere?

Have you ever thought of my fear?

Hearing its thunderous explosion?

Have you ever considered the work?

Cleaning that place of lifeless remains?

Have you ever ... loved me at all?

### *EXISTENCE*

It was the way he looked at me

Was what I most remembered.

The words had all been said

There was no need for more.

Besides they could be heard  
The walls had ears you know  
No intimacy there  
No privacy for us.

It was the way he looked at me  
Was what I most remembered.  
His touch I did recall  
Was there to comfort me  
To give me warmth and love  
When I would need it most  
Saddened I am to say  
He has been gone for years.

It was the way he looked at me  
Was what I most remembered.  
His eyes had reached my soul  
Where words or touch could not.  
I heard their silent voices  
I felt their unseen hands  
They came and stayed with me  
In secret timelessness

# SHORT STORY

## **Jennifer Miller**

### ***The Night Hag***

Climbing into her bed, Rebecca knew it was going to be a rough night. The wind was blowing ferociously, whipping around the small house. Rebecca hated the wind. She would never be able to get to sleep. And if she did, she knew the nightmares waited there for her.

She considered putting in a dvd, just for noise to drown out the sound. But it was 11:30 and her husband was already fast asleep (obviously the wind wasn't a problem for him). She would just have to try to think of something else, block it out of her mind. She lay there on her back staring up into the darkness and pulled the blankets up tight. Taking a deep breath she closed her eyes and tried to concentrate. She thought about all the things that needed to be done the next day, but she could still hear it, blowing through the trees, the faint jingle of a

neighbors wind chime. Maybe she could focus on the sound of her husband's snoring instead.

The clock read 12:10. Ugh! Restless, she rolled onto her side and yawned. She was so tired. Please let sleep come quickly, but soundly.

The branches scraped against the house like fingernails trying to claw their way in. Rebecca could feel herself drifting... slowly succumbing to the night...

Suddenly she was walking through the park. The wind tangling her long hair, making it cover her face. Red and gold leaves swirled all around her. Holding her hair back with her hand, she kept walking. Her feet crunching on the leaves as she followed a small path through the trees. She couldn't shake the feeling that she was being watched, being followed. Turning, she saw no one. But it was wrong. It all felt wrong.

She started to run but the wind blew hard against her, making her feel like she was moving

in slow motion. The path seemed to go on forever. Then it called to her in a soft, grating voice, "Reeeebeeeeccaaa." She turned again and this time saw a dark figure behind her. She was frantic. She began to run even faster. It was coming for her... again. The night hag was chasing her.

"Reeeebeeeeccaaa" the wind whispered again.

Veering off of the path she thought she might lose him but in her haste she tripped over a fallen tree branch. That was all he needed. In a moment he was upon her. The night hag was sitting on her chest, holding her down. She desperately tried to fight it but she was paralyzed. They began to sink down into the dirt, the leaves falling around them, filling the hole and covering her. She tried to scream but couldn't, she was drowning in the leaves. She was in a panic. She was being pulled down, sucked into the earth and the hag was still heavy on her chest. He was pushing her down

further, taking her back with him to the realm of never ending nightmares.

“Rebecca”

She heard her name again and felt hands tight on her arms, shaking her. She tried to push away but he was too strong. Again she tried to scream but there was no sound.

“Rebecca! Wake up! It's just a dream. You're ok. It's just a dream.”

Her eyes shot open to see her husband trying to wake her. Looking around, she recognized her room. She was in her bed.

“It's ok. It was a dream. You're awake now. I'm right here” he said as he held her arms.

She sat up and hugged him close, her heart still racing. “It was terrible... I tried to get away, I tried to scream... I couldn't” she sobbed.

“It's over. You were whining and mumbling in your sleep. I tried to wake you but

you pushed me away. You're alright now. I'm right here. It was just a bad dream."

He held her until she was somewhat calm and finally Rebecca laid back down. She was afraid to close her eyes again. Her husband continued to hold her hand as he fell back to sleep, his touch soothing her. Her breathing started to slow and she wiped the tears from her face. She was fine. It was just a dream. She settled back into the pillows and rolled toward him, feeling safer the closer she was to him. Brushing her hair back over her ear with her hand she felt something strange. She closed her fingers around it and brought it up to her face to see what it was. A leaf!

This time Rebecca did scream... and the sound was deafening.

**Ekphrasis  
Contest  
Poems**

## Faye Charette

### *The Pilot*

Inspired by *Allies Day* (Childe Hassam)

*\*1<sup>st</sup> place poem*

Red rover, red rover  
The sky is blue –  
Come in! Come in!  
I can't hear you.

I'm on my last mission,  
I'm thinking of you –  
While soaring like an eagle  
Into skies of blue.

Visions of happiness  
Danced in my head,  
Of you and our children  
On our little homestead.

Suddenly shots rang out  
And struck my plane.  
I tried to eject,  
But all in vain.

They captured me  
On my last day out  
And tied me up  
To a bamboo mount.

They keep me here  
In solitude,  
Torture me  
When they're in the mood.

My country says  
The war is over,  
But what about me,  
Their blue sky rover?

They work us hard –  
There is no hope.  
They tie us down  
With yards of rope.

They tell us  
We've been forgotten  
And feed us rice  
With maggots gone rotten.

Years have passed  
And time stands still,  
I will escape –  
I have the will!

Then one day  
I made a break –  
Dashed for home

In freedom's wake.

I finally hold you,  
oh so tight.  
Our children sparkle  
With delight.

Daddy's home  
And safe at last.  
No more worries  
Of the past.

A tear of joy  
Runs down my face,  
Wet the ground  
On homestead place.

In my arms  
On that first night,  
We fell asleep  
By candlelight.

But in the morning  
I awoke to find  
I had never escaped  
But lost my mind.

## ***My Father's Farewell***

Inspired by *Autumn Landscape*  
(Louis Comfort Tiffany)

The river of life  
Can go a long way.  
How much time we have  
Nobody can say.

The doctor came in  
And shook his head  
Plenty of fluids  
And stay in bed.

You might be back a time  
Or two.  
But in reality there's  
Nothing we can do.

You are very sick  
I don't think you knew  
All tests show  
Your body is through.

My father knew this was his end.  
It won't be long before his spirit  
Ascends.  
As he sat at the edge of his bed  
Weeping and crying and shaking

His head.

He couldn't understand  
Why such a short time  
Visions of loved ones  
Going through his mind.

Capturing memories of the  
Present and past  
Instilling in me "Life does not last."

As time went by he grew weaker  
Looking up to heaven's keeper.  
Reaching up with his hand  
Knowing he's going to the promised  
Land.

The man at the desk  
Let us know how long  
In a short time he'll be singing  
Heaven's song.

Then all of a sudden his time ran out  
There was nothing we could do  
But scream and shout.

As a tear ran down his fragile face  
We prayed to God to give him grace.  
Taking his last breath

His family was there  
Sending him to heaven  
With love and care.

Opening the doors we paused to stand  
Sending him off to the promised land.

All those watching could not speak  
As a single tear ran down my cheek.

So I have this memory I keep with me  
Life is short, can't you see?

Dedicated to my daddy in the heaven's above  
You taught me the importance of life,  
To love and treat every day as if it  
Was a holiday. Celebrate

I love you R.M.A.

## Tisha Cole

### ***Falling Water***

Inspired by *Fallingwater* (Frank Lloyd Wright)

\*3<sup>rd</sup> place poem

F Frank Lloyd Wright  
A allowed  
L love of  
L life to  
I incite  
N Nature's  
G grandeur.

W Water, walls, and  
A Artisan,  
T tickling  
E Earth's  
R reservoir.

### ***Freedom of Speech***

Inspired by *Freedom of Speech*  
(Norman Rockwell)

Standing in the middle of the room,  
He looks like ... should I say? ...  
That man Lincoln who spoke of freedom  
Long ago, yet still rings true today.

Tall and lean, with deep set eyes  
Kind and wise, as others look on,  
Absent, though, is that tall black hat;  
That *look*, a striking reminder of freedom.

What could this man be *speech-ing*?  
His dreams? His fears? His hopes?  
About family, God, and country?  
Let not his mouth be closed!

***Black Hawk – Sans Arc Lakota***

Inspired by *Ledger Book 1880-1881*

They must not be forgotten  
These Earth-spirits of feathers and dance,  
Now whispers in the wind,  
And ripples on the water.

They must not be forgotten  
These first peoples of a great land;  
Ascribing to them honor as honor is due  
To the inborn of an era gone by.

They must not be forgotten,  
Looked upon like camp smoke blown away  
Or like shadows lost in modernity  
Showcased only in books and film.

They must not be forgotten  
Their freedom, their singing, their forte  
Of symbols and speech, of chiseled looks;  
Ageless spirits of generations living still.

They must not be forgotten ...  
They must not be forgotten!

## Sever Pederson

### **Haiku**

Inspired by *Freedom of Speech* (Rockwell)

They looked and listened  
Then posed some pointed questions  
Challenging speaker

### **Haiku**

Inspired by *Migrant Mother* (Dorothea Lange)

\*2<sup>nd</sup> place poem

Her heart was tattered  
And clothes well worn by all  
The children sobbed

### **Haiku**

Inspired by *Autumn Landscape*  
(Louis Comfort Tiffany)

Beyond the window  
Feel a fall between the rocks  
With mountain peaking

## **Cheryl Vatcher-Martin**

### ***The Last***

Inspired by *The Last of the Mohicans*

(N.C. Wyeth)

Standing tall;  
Or alone,  
A master of his fate,  
Surrounded by vast wilderness  
Where a lone wolf emotes  
Across the way  
With a powerful sheath  
Intricately designed for battle,  
A warrior's grease paint  
Carefully etched in a lined face,  
As he stands weary,  
Yet victorious  
Surveying it all,  
He truly is the last standing tall  
Facing the darkness,  
Embracing what he has gained,  
And ultimately what is lost.

## **The Voice**

Inspired by *Freedom of Speech*

(Norman Rockwell)

Preservation of rights  
Budget issues reflective,  
Rugged amongst suits,  
Grasping implications  
Of a tumultuous truth,  
Pondering his fate  
Leaves little to debate  
As a town hall becomes silent  
With a moment's lapse  
Before the passionate dissident  
Stands firm,  
A penchant for truth,  
Risk taking as his voice's firmness speaks the  
truth,  
Averting from the wisps of others' differing  
viewpoints;  
It is the words that guide  
His daily feats.

***Single Voice***

Inspired by *Freedom of Speech* (Rockwell)

Rugged spokesman stands

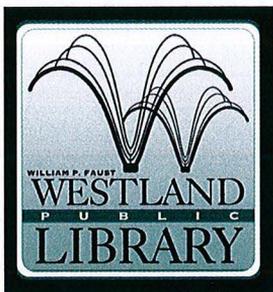
Clenched fingers on bench

Status of budget

**Thank you!**

This program (and our subsequent Book Release Party and Reading) is funded completely by **the Friends of the Westland Public Library**. We are so grateful for their continued support. Many thanks to our Writing Club leader, Cheryl Vatcher-Martin, for her help editing this year's book and also in judging our new Ekphrasis Poetry Contest, as well as encouraging her group members to submit to our book. She does great work for us throughout the year.

Andy



William P. Faust  
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Westland Writes ... is an annual program created by the Westland Public Library to promote poets and writers from our community. Each April, we accept submissions from writers in our area as well as from members of our library writing groups. We are delighted by the outpouring of poems (and one short story) for this book. In addition, we are happy to include poems from this year's Ekphrasis Contest in the collection.

Both of these programs are completely funded by the Friends of the Westland Library and we are indebted to them for their continued support.

Happy reading!



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