Westland Writes
2012

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Westland Writes ...

2012

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

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Westland Public Library
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Westland Writes ... is in its 4\textsuperscript{th} 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
Mas que a mis
Ojos ti quero mas
Porque mis ojos ti veron
Yo soy

(interpretation)
It’s me
More than my
Eyes I love you
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 cruelness
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 ply 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.
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 tales 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 Slauter

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
Jacqueline 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
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, “Reeeebeeeecaaaa.” 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.

“Reeeebeeeeeecaaaa” 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)
*1st 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)
*3rd 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)
*2nd 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,
Averring 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
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!