

# GAZETTE POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

The judges of the 2nd annual **Gazette** Poetry Contest have come to a decision. Elissa Barnard received first prize for the "fight." Joyce Ronkin received second prize for "Wild Roses" and third prize went to Doug Watters for his poem "Tabula

Rasa." The judges - Dr. Wayne Wright of the English Department, Mike Wile of CKDU and Deidre Dwyer of the **Gazette** - would like to thank this year's co-sponsors - the Nova Scotia Poetry Society - for their contributing part of the prize

money. Honourable mentions go to Elissa Barnard's "Crazy Old Women," Phillip R's "Scissors and Stone" and Kelly Smith's "The Attack" and "Lonely Drifter."



## The Fight

Sangria and Eliot and a cigarette  
prepare no one for the couple fighting next door.  
Reading by electric light casts impenetrable shadows,  
a fog of soot and blood,  
on reality.  
There is no entering and no leave taking  
Only ashes thrown in the eyes,  
Relevance is the couple fighting next door.

I knew it not from reading  
this would come one day;  
the bearded, booted creature  
and the nagging, dark-haired girl,  
the couple fighting next door.  
In the point of her polished nail,  
cursing him for all his faults,—  
for lying full length on the couch before the TV,  
for rising at noon and drinking beer,  
all in one day's unemployment cheque,  
for tickling her and not washing his hair;  
while she makes the bed and feeds the cat,  
cooks and cleans,  
chatters over meat and potatoes, his mouth full,  
and after dishes and during commercials,  
but cannot unyoke the day in words.  
She puts on make-up everyday  
and goes to work the switchboard at four  
but loves him,  
rough the bitter nights,  
when stars are small and blister  
serenity blue.  
Then she is a child in darkness unsung,  
meek and mild, deserving the kingdom of heaven,  
stroking the curve of his nose with her eyes full bristling.  
When the sun has permanently set  
her love is a crocus growing,  
a twisted stump that cannot straighten without the flush  
of the light of day.

It had to come out one night.  
'Talk to me, please talk to me.  
I hate you, I hate you.  
Get out, Get out.'  
Then the wrench of the door,  
the clomp of workmen's boots  
up the stairs to the old rusted car  
with a hole in the floor and no brakes  
And sobbing, sobbing,  
she is sobbing,  
who, living next door,  
borrowed my cake pan  
—'Thanks a million'—  
and was gone.

We are not of the same class,  
bred apart, live in different worlds.  
I understand passion in words  
and she in the cool touch of a man's hand.

I do not know you  
I should not care  
I cannot help you  
But, whether I later hear your voices in unison or not,  
Eliot lies tossed on the floor.  
Whispering of dawn,  
it deserves no more  
than cold tea and a wet rag of bread.

Elissa Barnard