

Poetry contest winners

Joseph

Standing in a shoddy, silver "stall",
a dullness in the eye. Looking out.
Suddenly I catch - and cursing
the inability of my clumsy fingers
- this masterpiece of a look, an
idea, a feeling.

He is standing in the wind, on a
dark, dank cornfield,
The sky is deep grey.
His tall and shapeless body in
his strewn clothes
Black hair, sweeping across
his face.
His eyes are like deep brown,
glassy seas, fringed with seaweed
petals.
And the bones of his cheek stand
out, abrupt on his thin, light face.

He looks beyond, not seeing me,
intruding on his peace.
This young god of an ancient
people.
Running across my mind is a
young, glorious warrior.
In his deerskin cloth, gracing
his light body.
His chest is bare and even, his
nipples pink and alert
Spear clutched in hand,
a ferocious happiness, gleaming
on his face
He glides fleetingly across the
fertile land.

Honorable mentions -

Prizes can be picked up at the Bruns Office, Rm.
35 of the SUB.

First prize winner - Greg Betts

Main Street Fly-Fishing

Her ankles swim by
smooth as a salmon stroke
luring my fisherman's eye.
Lapped by waves
her seaweed hair is nudged afloat
strewn on the weaving current.
Lofting the line
with a quick wristflick
I dangle the horror of the hook
But
with her shy, untempted smile
abruptly
the strand breaks,
casting us adrift
as she pulls away on the tide
of her own affairs,
trailing
a dialogue of bubbles
indifferent to desire.

I wonder if his people look at
him and smile,
So innocent and sensuous,
Not dull and graceless,
Alien and out-of-place,
Not combining the worst of two
worlds.
Joseph is harmonious with the
cloudy green, and glistening
hopping blue, and the simple, sensual ways.

But dammit! deep, dark caves,
where his unknowing spirit
wanders, day in and out,
Those unhappy, bright seas will
break.

I cannot picture. . .
I could not hold.
He does not want,
Perhaps he knows.

If I could love,
Love him.
But irritating impotency,
by mine own weakness and the wall,
erected by his receding culture,
and mine own - dominant, decadent?

His voice, when I hear it, startles me,
A nice one, I think, newly deepened.
And his hands,
Between strong, brown fingers, muscles ebbing out.
I want to take them, and let
them rest in mine
While he only indifferently
clenches the warm, silver tokens.
But my hands are clumsy,
His hands are cold
The colour of cinnamon,
And mine seem like a featherless,
cultivated bird, frozen.

Kathy O'Brien

The Changing of the Guard

I have learned
excellent ways
to protect myself.

My voice becomes
as hard as stone;
my laughter as
sharp as bayonets.
I fill the air.
With feeble gesture,
hands fluttering
like tattered flags.
I make my eyes
as empty as puddles
in the barrack's square.

Every time
I change company,
there is a dull
drumming in my head,
a flicker of red serge
beneath my eyelids,
a rhythm of harsh boots.

Wanda McNally