

4 Free Verse

In memory of Margarete Cantrall

Sponsor: Beth Staas

Judge: Larry Turner, Fredericksburg VA

First Place Free Verse:

Glenna Holloway, Naperville IL

How to Get By

Since you have to start and end with something,
make it sound: the sound of caramel-colored
alto sax riffs sliding off hotcakes, trumpets
keening Amaretto and Java, pianos spraying
barbs of fire over a tough skeleton of drums.
Blend in verbena and mint from summer nights,
October moon dipped in satin-melt, fish
silvering to the surface to whisper whole notes,
quivering the lunar smear on rumpled black water.
Tune it to chiffon, warm clay, blue steel, always
keeping it malleable, infallible, indelible. Pour it
in the revved-up engine driving the solar machine.

Since you have to call it something, call it jazz,
Gershwin style, Charlie-Bird, Duke and Doc style.
Everything else insinuating into your ears,
your years, is unsound noise. Jazz comes together
as something you can move to, sit still to, kiss to,
milk cows to. You can heal to jazz, or die to it
when the time comes, easy-smiling like my Uncle Hal.

One note attracts another, forms a helix,
connects a cadence. People invented things to blow
and beat, bow and strum, concentrating layers
you can hear— never mind those you can't
or those secret increments of after-pulse
you can't quite feel,
all lending vibes to the parts you can.

Jazz harmonizes snow, lightning, gin, Jello,
a lemon look that says leave, a laugh that says love.
Some passages sing tears, ache-to-the-bone,

Love is the workings that describes this moment
uniting Mumtaz, Shah and me in Agra.
Does he know he's transformed me with this beauty?
Not one sand grain can enter holes he's chiseled.
Sandalwood made lace by an unknown artist
has centered me within a precious timepiece.

Hammer, chisel can arrest in a moment
all of the artistry found there in Agra.
Time I have learned is a piece of pure beauty.

* * * * *

her curving ribs
enhanced her
thrust
insisted that she

Second Place Formal Verse:
Glenna Holloway

In Making The River An Old Man

This river was an athlete racing south,
A healthy boy with rhythmic summer stride.
The settlers drew cool sweetness from his mouth,
And made themselves spectators on his side.
Efficiently he handled rain and thaw;
He grew their corn and cotton into fame.
His flanks became a city; all who saw
Unpacked to stay, and daily, others came.
Pure water— mallards— trout— were not enough.
Machines re-routed him, they built a dam.
They stole his power, dumped their poison-stuff,
Then cursed him for the filth where once they swam.

Now fetid, slow, a progress refugee—
He seeks a nameless burial at sea.

Supposing such abuse exacts no fee—
Oh, that's the most pathetic fallacy!

* * * * *

Second

Glenna Holloway - Naperville, IL

Bystander: The Other Columbus

I

His astrolabe lay on the window sill.
Bartholomew stood staring at the dawn
With seaman's eyes from a garret oriel.
Below, the street awakened; tunny-mongers,
Garlic stalls and honey-hawkers stirred.

To dare his brother's theories required
A firm resolve. But Cristoforo primed
Him once again with promises and prods:
"Try Henry now," he urged. "Persuade the king
of England with my charts. And speak of gold.

"If he refuses, go to Charles of France.
All monarchs and their experts can't be blind
To proffered bounty. Use you smoothest tongue
While I continue plying Isabella.
Their favor should be like a torch to hers."

Bartholomew still dreaded Cris's temper.
A riptide flaying caulk out of his hull,
St. Elmo's fire igniting in each pupil.
He hurried off at Cristoforo's bidding
But failed to gain investors for the voyage.

Perhaps his lack of faith diluted verve.
He was amazed the Spanish crowns gave in
To hoist the royal aegis over sails
Of three good caravels, provisioned, blessed
And sent to reach Cathay in half the time.

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Bystander: The Other Columbus continued

II

Bart saw them for himself, the palm-cooled isles,
The estuaries claimed. And having gained
Them, how Cris coveted his driving dream
To push ahead for that his stubbornness
Still swore was near- the glory-goods of China.

His words became a sword, to dub or slay,
He helped himself to natives like fish caught
In nets, or timber cut for ship repair.
He gathered sample people to display
In Castile's courts as one more future resource.

Where booted feet erased the bare-soled prints
Of centuries, one brother's voice proclaimed
That all was now possessed by lighter hands
Whose grasp would mutate races, cultures, gods-
And repaint continental palimpsests.

Bartholomew was not surprised to see
The ship arrive, the writ for their arrest.
The New World colony had failed. The sight
of Cris in chains disturbed him, yet his prayer
Was only to go home, make peace with God

And die.

CHALLENGE FOR A SCIENTIST

In a time men called the beginning
there was unbridled light, too pure.
too intense for any but God's eyes.
A time of mass and matter,
warring and waiting-- His playthings--
molded and willed and flung
from dawn to forever.

When you crack creation's codes,
when you tell is in detail
how Earth and Life happened, when
you prove it as no accident,
teach us the WHY.

Locate the lost language of holiness,
discover synonyms for praise. Give us
new words, wrested from granite,
born burning, tempered on glaciers,
cut and polished with diamonds.

To be spoken by men in whispers.

Glenna Holloway tops field in NFSPS Founders Award

The \$1,500 first prize in the 2006 NFSPS Founders Award went to OSPA member **Glenna Holloway** of Naperville, Illinois, a poet whose list of achievements in recent years would fill the proverbial book.

As readers may remember, Glenna was featured in the September, 2005 newsletter as the recipient of a \$7,000 grant from the Illinois Arts Commission. In the past year, she has continued to reap the dividends of her poetic endowment:

Grand prize in the Redrock Writers contest. Three first prizes in poetry in National League of American Pen Women Biennial contests. Three first prizes from the Chicago branch of the NLAPW. First prize in the *Byline* contest.

To top it off, she wrote lyrics for a choral celebration of Naperville's 175th anniversary this year.

MOTHER/DAUGHTER BANQUETS

For tonight's main course
let her remember the days I clung to her
while she shielded me from dragons:

My father's temper, nightmares when I was nine,
a nasty neighbor who thought I stole
his crab apples, a snarling Doberman
chasing me till she ran between us
with a broom. Many dragons, all vanquished.

She knows they're still out there, multiplying
by dark, roaming offices and freeways.
More kinds than she imagines. Sometimes
the fiercest of all is the one inside me
uncoiling to attack her reaching hands.

What makes daughters so razorish at times?
Why must mothers rearrange your cabinets
each visit? Rattling dishes as you juggle
your budget, blowing dust off lampshades as you
dress for a party, reinfecting that ancient cut.

Last year she gave up running marathons
and riding fast horses, but still rummages
my household shadows, roams rooms
looking for itinerant dragons.

I mention her magnificence
with the long ago Doberman. She says
she doesn't remember that at all. She sniffs
at each serving designed for her plate. We dab
at silences with monogramed napkins, clear
the dining room, cram leftovers here and there,
punish each other with after-dinner love.

In mysterious ways
these movable feasts have made us both strong.
The long table is scratched but sturdy.
And without her I would be hungry.