



Midwest Writing Center Press

c/o Midwest Writing Center

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*For more information about the Midwest Writing Center
and the MWC Press, please visit our website at
www.midwestwritingcenter.org.*

Note from the Midwest Writing Center:

We would like to extend a special thank you to this year's contest judges: Lisa Zimmerman (national), Laura Madeline Wiseman (regional), and Richard Stahl (Upper Mississippi River Valley themed). A judge's decision is always difficult, and we appreciate their time, effort, and invaluable contribution to this year's contest and anthology.

Once again, thank you to all of our contributors for your wonderful poetry, and for your patience; we are proud to feature such quality writing in Off Channel and we hope you are all proud of the finished product.

2013 marked the 40th anniversary of the Mississippi Valley Poetry Contest, and we are thrilled to celebrate this remarkable milestone with this installment of Off Channel. While it has been a challenging time for us in dealing with several setbacks to the contest's logistics, in the end we believe this anthology is more than worthy of such a landmark occasion.

—Midwest Writing Center

This volume is dedicated to Max Molleston, for his decades of hard work and support of the Mississippi Valley Poetry Contest. Without Max, this Contest would never have run for 40 years, and his efforts have been inspiring to everyone who has worked with him. We are so thankful for his contributions to this Contest, to the Midwest Writing Center, and to poets and writers in his community.

NATIONAL WINNERS

Selected by Lisa Zimmerman

1ST PLACE

The Widd'er Woman | Jessica Glover

15

2ND PLACE

For wrapping trees in cellophane | Xan Roberti

16

3RD PLACE

Novena for the Nameless | Kelly Rae Lynn

17

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Phoenix | James K. Zimmerman

18

Doing the Dishes, 1966 | Julia Meylor Simpson

20

FINALISTS

A Father's Favor | Leland James Whipple

21

Pictured You Again | E.P. Schultz

23

From My Grandfather's Journal: June | Susan Brown Norris

25

Poetic Alchemy | Gayle Rein

26

Spinster | Constance Snyder

27

Wild hearts | Nancy Ann Schaefer

28

Last Present: for My Daughter, Alex | Nan Trahan

30

Nothing Sacred | Jessica Glover

32

The museum of truth to you | Xan Roberti

35

Vengeance | Nancy Cook

36

Relation | Salvatore Marici

38

shark's teeth | kerry rawlinson

39

fear of falling | kerry rawlinson

41

REGIONAL WINNERS

Selected by Laura Madeline Wiseman

1ST PLACE 45
On Stieglitz's Gable and Apples | Beth McDermott

2ND PLACE 46
Will | Beth McDermott

3RD PLACE 47
Cow blessing | Nancy Ann Schaefer

FINALISTS

49
Gather at the river | Betty Benner 51
Colliding Spheres | Gayle Rein 52
Build a bridge | Gayle Rein 54
Everything is Burning at the Wayside Stop | Tony Ledtje 56
Winneshiek Homecoming | Tony Ledtje 58
Sea Wrack | Timothy Walsh 59
Threshing Day | Ellen Kelley 62
Garden Musings | Ellen Kelley 66
Connected with Her Own Skin | Nan Trahan 68
Bee Charmer | Kelly Rae Lynn 69
Blood Memory | Nancy Cook 71
Why Some Things Never Hatch | Nancy Cook 74
The Verdigris Wind Vane | Salvatore Marici

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER VALLEY

WINNER & FINALISTS

Selected by Richard Stahl

WINNER
Fireworks | Therese Guise 77

FINALISTS
Cedar Road | Beth McDermott 78
Reorienting | Nancy Cook 79
Foreclosure | Nancy Ann Schaefer 81
Behind the museum at Sibley Park Zoo, Mankato,
Minnesota | Betty Benner 82
Miracle at the Main Street Tap | Jean Tucker 84
Rutherford County | Jean Tucker 85

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For wrapping trees in cellophane

Xan Roberti

I've only hunted
tadpoles. Unless you count lovers.

For now, let's pretend you don't
count—make a library of exemptions.

The first house I built was
shattered against the wall
of the 7th grade shop building.

Please don't tether me, I'm crafty
with knots.

I'd like to lose
my escape route maps.

Every kite I unreel
is preparation.

Novena for the Nameless

Kelly Rae Lynn

Saint Louis, 1983—

For the blood of the lamb
For the basement bathed in a butane flame
For the flash of flesh—cold copper pipes
For the cherried nails—sparks in a bale of tinder
For the wrists—bound behind a bald confluence of legs
For the stain—a sunset melting down her yellow shirt
For the neck—dead-ending in a halo of mold
Four-foot-ten (without her head), sixty pounds, eight to eleven
For nine months on ice, waiting
For someone to claim her
For the strangers with their fingers laced
For the walk to the grave
For the sky-white box
For the black-cloaked priest, arm signing the cross
For whosoever believeth in me will never die
For the next thirty years beneath the runway hum
For the dead unmoored by rapacious roots
For the woods and the scrub that have swallowed her bones
For the sentinels, the wire-choked telephone poles
For the bottles, the garbage, the billboards, the junk
For the tombstones nodding diurnal salute
For the fox nursing kits in a hollow stump
For the lily-fledged doves the following spring
For the fury in this cracking clay
For the girl, once lost, now lost again
For the ones who seek
For the nameless a name