

Midwest Writing Center Press

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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

The Widd'er Woman Jessica Glover	15
2 ND PLACE For wrapping trees in cellophane Xan Roberti	16
3 R D 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

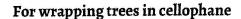
Selected by Laura Madeline Wiseman

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER VALLEY WINNER & FINALISTS

Selected by Richard Stahl

PLACE On Stieglit's Gable and Apples Beth McDermott	45	WINNER	7'
		Fireworks Therese Guise	•
2 N D PLACE Will Beth McDermott 3 R D PLACE	46 47	FINALISTS Cedar Road Beth McDermott Reorienting Nancy Cook Foreclosure Nancy Ann Schaefer	73 79
Cow blessing Nancy Ann Schaefer		Behind the museum at Sibley Park Zoo, Mankato, Minnesota Betty Benner	8
		Miracle at the Main Street Tap Jean Tucker	8.
		Rutherford County Jean Tucker	8.
FINALISTS	49		
Gather at the river Betty Benner	51	MVPC Sponsors	8
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		
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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 The Verdigris Wind Vane Salvatore Marici	74		





Novena for the Nameless

Kelly Rae Lynn

Saint Louis, 1983-

For the nameless a name

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

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.