



School of Social Work
308 North Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242

<http://clas.uiowa.edu/socialwork>

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA School of Social Work

National Poetry Contest for Social Workers



Valerie Hardy/*Woman Writing on Porch*
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www.valeriehardy.com



2014 Second Edition

If you would like to make a donation to the School to provide scholarships for Creative Writing Seminar students or to support the poetry contest, you can do so online at <http://www.givetoioowa.org/socialwork>

The judges for the 2014 contest were Ellen Szabo, M.Ed., founder and director of *Write Now*, www.writenow.bz, a veteran writer, writing coach, instructor, and facilitator of creative writing workshops; Sara Deniz Akant, MFA in Poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 2012, Kristin E. Gilchrist, a 2003 graduate of the Writers' Workshop and Marcia Bollinger, public art coordinator for the city of Iowa City, including the Poetry in Public project.

About The University of Iowa and the School of Social Work

About the National Poetry Contest for Social Workers

Iowa City is the home of the world-renowned Iowa Writer's Workshop, the International Writing Program, the annual Iowa Summer Writing Festival, The Patient Voice Project, the Iowa City Book Festival and the Iowa Youth Writing Project. On November 20, 2009, UNESCO designated Iowa City, Iowa, the world's third City of Literature, making the community part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Our annual Creative Writing Seminar for Helping Professionals began in the early 90's when School of Social Work Director at that time, Tom Walz, hired a Writers Workshop graduate to teach creative writing to social workers. Today, the seminar teaches both writing skills and applications of writing for healing and social change.

The National Poetry Contest for Social Workers was started in 2013 by Development Coordinator Jefri Palermo, and faculty member Mercedes Bern-Klug, with support from Ed Saunders, current Director of the School of Social Work. Questions about the contest or creative writing at the School of Social Work can be made by calling 319-335-3750 or by email at jefri-palermo@uiowa.edu.

For those interested in participating in the 2014-15 Poetry Contest, online submissions can be made at www.uiowa.edu/~socialwk/creativewriting/onlinesubmission.shtml

The University of Iowa is a major national research university located on a 1,900-acre campus in Iowa City in southeast Iowa, on the Iowa River near the intersection of U.S. Interstate Highways 80 and 380.

Iowa is composed of 11 colleges, the largest of which is the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, enrolling most of Iowa's undergraduates. More than 30,500 students enroll at Iowa each year. The University both provides and attracts a wide variety of cultural opportunities, Big Ten athletic events, and a number of business endeavors resulting from scientific and educational research that originated at Iowa. All year major poets, writers, artists, historians, scientists, and others speak or perform in University venues or read at local bookstores. Excellent public schools, close, safe, and comfortable neighborhoods, and a highly educated population mean that Iowa City frequently appears high on "best-place-to-live" listings in national magazines.

Established in 1847, Iowa has won international recognition for its wealth of achievements in the arts, sciences, and humanities. Iowa was the first U.S. public university to admit men and women on an equal basis and the first institution of higher education in the nation to accept creative work in theater, writing, music, and art as theses for advanced degrees. It established the first law school and the first educational radio station west of the Mississippi, broadcast the world's first educational television programs, and developed and continues to hold preeminence in educational testing.

The University of Iowa **School of Social Work** in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the oldest and largest school of social work in Iowa. The school is noted for providing programs that serve the entire state through distance education, part-time programs to facilitate the education of employed social workers, the professionalization of undergraduate social work education, and the origination of in-home family preservation services.

Our MSW program has been continuously accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1951. The undergraduate major in social work became available in 1962, was recognized in 1970 when CSWE began regulating undergraduate social work curriculum and received full accreditation in 1974. The UI PhD program is the only social work doctoral program in the state of Iowa. It admitted the first cohort of students in 1998 and graduated its first PhD in 2004. Fifty-two percent of our 6,000 alumni live and work in Iowa.

After 21 years of hosting the Creative Writing Seminar for Helping Professionals, in 2012 the School expanded its efforts to reach social workers and showcase their creativity through a national poetry competition. For more information about creative writing at Iowa, please go to page 42.

Yue Xu, University of Chicago

Start from you, not me

In the purple sea of no definition
or the dark corner of the past
the bell rang, but all I could see
was the shadow of her soul
I told myself to reach her,
at the soundless of colorfulness
where the rainbow of her mind grow

Joyce Ellen Rose-Romm, New York University

Dead End

Society Taboo
No one gets out alive
Deny the inevitable
Numb and dumb
Heart ripped apart
Tears stain my lap
Dead End - begin anew

Angela Gomez, University of Houston

Remember and Refuel

Frustration sits within me.

Assignments, work, bills, and little stomping feet wait for my attention.

I sit on the heated worn leather seat of my car, Mario,

Thinking about my upcoming internship and my reasons to

Continuing the journey into an often forgotten profession.

I look at the steering faces around me, and I remember.

Then, rockin' to my empowering booster playlist, I refuel.

FIRST PLACE WINNER

Jonathan Knight Palley, University of California- Berkeley

Production Lines

This wide, wild, gritty human field in which we till

A complex of intertwined, hard to visualize systems

Were we dentists, we'd be sculpting silent mouths with precision tools

Or GI Docs, probing inner mysteries fiber optic, Oh such clarity!

But no, we are professional people persons

Our selves: our plows; Listeners to heart sounds

Producing communities of care for others, for ourselves.

SECOND PLACE WINNER

Sarah Pettit Dawson, University of South Carolina

Tell Me

And she lays the story down.

Just drops the bag she's been carrying

and it spills out, in rivulets of pain.

How she escaped, how she rediscovered kindness;

moored herself against the tides of sorrows

I'd never even imagined.

Her eyes tracking mine, expecting judgment; finding none.

3rd PLACE WINNER

Catherine Crandall, University of Georgia

2440 S. Henderson St.

Come again, anytime! --he called out-- as we waved,
thanking him for showing us the view from his living room,
the potted ferns glowing in the warm afternoon light,
the crock-pot on the counter and the comforter pulled
neatly over his pillow, where the threadbare blanket
of his dignity, lay smoothly folded, the one he slept with
each night on the street-- now at the foot of his bed.

Amy Elizabeth Urich, West Virginia University

Am I a number?

You see the bruises on my face

You think you hear the screams that I make.

It is my blood that has been spilled and my bones that
break.

Do you know the direction I need to take?

But who am I to you, am I weak or do I have strength?

Am I just another victim to be saved?

Is my reality too hard to take?

William Kersting, The University of Iowa

We all begin life as a miracle,

but all too soon our fallibility shows,

and our lives morph quickly into callous disbelief.

Efforts to survive consume our daily striving.

If ever we are to break free of the ties that bind,

we need to expect a rebirth, and return

to the Source from which our true good is derived.

Lisa Hutchinson, The Metropolitan University of Denver

The Encounter

Leave judgment at the door, now compassion can pour
into the space where peace and justice embrace
With the elimination of discrimination there's a blossoming of
Self-actualization
receiving from the encounter the embodiment of self-realized
power
defining courage, strength and healing
Living in bold
Diving deep within the sunken grief to behold a treasure
worth more than gold.

Elizabeth Reed, New York University

Queening the Underworld

Layered, earthy and thick, your abuses: The front door
framed father holding a belt.

Mom idled in the driveway, but you ran the wrong direction,
into dad's rage.

More fearful than entering this darkness, I am afraid for you
to be alone.

So we scavenge containers for chaos in the riverbed of the
Styx, and, seeking mastery here,

Embroider my therapist's chair into a throne for Persephone.
We catalogue the

Stones of hell with archival numbers. I anticipate your
reunion with Demeter, Daisies, Daffodils,

Sage, and resource you with pomegranate limbs to lift ladders
up to Spring.

Pamela A. Correll, The University of Iowa

WELFARE OFFICE, FIRST OF MONTH

You never forget the smell
Unwashed bodies intermingled with hope forsaken
Children crying, mothers exhausted, powerless
The scent of shame, humility
How to begin to fill the void
Money alone won't begin to confront
The overwhelming need.

Timothy L. Fuller, Goshen College

SO NEAR I will BE THERE

The dark black dismal night is so **near**

How alone she feels knowing the end is **near**

Why why does it have to be why is the end so **near**

Why does she feel this way she can see the end so **near**

The end is so **near** but yet so far away so far away

I will be there I will be there

Just ask for **Help** and **I will be THERE**

Bryan Hutchinson-Reuss, The University of Iowa

A Brief History

Trembling seventeen can't get cigarette lit

Blood beach slumped head tree-tied Japanese officer

Leering sergeant fired howitzer ordered the body

Buried foxhole deep sand-covered memory

On second thought soldier leave it there to rot.

Not wife not sons not anyone until ninety-three,

Trembling, he told me what they had done.

Bonnie Myhre William, The University of Iowa

Solace?

Allie is 3, her blonde piggy tails framing her mother's face and smile.

Her shirt is spattered with hearts. Her dolly has no name.

We drive to the Big Horn County Jail where her mommy "lives."

They talk gently, mommy reminding Allie to wear a life vest when boating.

They kiss, lips separated by glass, lives separated by mother's choices.

The time is up. Walls, locks, and bars cannot contain Allie's sobbing.

Is there any solace for a child whose mommy is in jail and whose dolly has no name?

Carmen White, The University of Iowa

Have you ever gone for a ride in the country and passed a vacant house

with weeds grown up, broken windows, the roof caving in and wondered....

Who once filled the house with life, and cut the grass and sang?

Have you ever gone for a walk on a city street and passed a broken man in crumbled clothes,

with sad, sad eyes, and empty pocket and wondered.....

What once made him laugh, and go to work, and want to face tomorrow?

I have.

Sara Staggs, University of Houston

Social Worker's Greatest Honor

time was

I was

you: insecurity fear hurt pain

wondering which face to present

now, it is my privilege to share with you this--

you are worthy, whole--enough!

today. just as you are.

Rachel Ruiz, San Diego State University

Two Hands Grasped

When you give the poor man a helping hand, you will see color behind a grey curtain.

Sunlight in the early morn. Bridge before the dawn.

The Silence in the stoplight before I go I think.

The crushing weight. The taste of your strife.

Pretending to bleed like you with green in my pocket. Trained to feel the truth.

Un-frame me from your urban woes.

Connections I betrayed. Help me see the real you.

Earl Kelly, St. Louis University

Colors

A person enters cautiously touching the desk not knowing what happens in the room.

The empty sad face belies a spirit long crushed between day and night.

I am not here.

I left years ago after the darkness arrived.

Now a shadow on the wall I search to be colored in.

The new light through the window is a prism of colors warm and soft hues that rest on me.

The warm colors embrace me and take me to a new promise.

Tracy Beveridge, The University of Iowa

Born out of Ash

An unexpected volcanic explosion of your heart occurred one Wednesday morning;

Leaving you scarred from the hot lava that took its course through your body.

You are left destroyed, demolished, broken, and lifeless.

The irrevocable damage of the lava continues to burn at the most unexpected times.

You are left grasping at your chest to release the pressure of the pain.

You long for the day that the lava will recede;

And only then will you see the beauty that can grow from the volcanic ash that has covered your heart.

Sr. Fidelis Marie Lanowich, University of San Diego

Observation

The human race has become a food chain.
Tear down the weak, build up the strong.
What truly makes a human being a person?
Can that be answered without open immersion?
Into the soul of another individual
Who breathes the same air as you
and makes life original.

Sylvia Hawranick Senften, West Virginia University

WHEW

ETHICS

HUMAN BEHAVIOR

SOCIAL JUSTICE DIVERSITY

ENGAGE ASSESS INTERVENE EVALUATE

PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT RESEARCH

HUMAN RIGHTS

POLICY

Nicole Gause, University of South Carolina

In Session

Days slip past and you look for a cloud in the sky,
a rainbow, some sign of promise from the Father
and you feel sick until death.
You cannot carry this loss, so you pray
“take the desire, the taste away”.
You wonder if a 12 step program can help you let go
of a dream.

Gina Lynn Pearson, Rutgers

I’ve always been told to face my fears

It’s ironic because most of those telling me this are the root
of my hopelessness and tears.

Love is forever; at least it’s supposed to be.

How could you kick me out of your home, I thought you
were a (foster) mother to me?

It’s going to be alright, they say to pull myself up by my boot
straps.

Do you know that philosophy isn’t true, considering I was
walking down the street with what little clothes I could
pack?

In the end I know it’s going to be okay because it’s always
social workers who have my back!

Holly Hauser, Adelphi

Recognition

When the rain turned to ice, the frantic holiday shopping stopped

People taking baby steps as if learning to walk for the first time

they took shelter under awnings, grasping hand rails, each other

We all want home to be here

This afternoon we all walk without sure footing on this slippery path

This afternoon, time, sidewalks, and streets, froze

and the recognition that we are here, and we are home flowed like water

Stormy Lower, Chadron State College

His New Home

His little heart pounds as they walk to the door—a large oak swings at the turn of a bolt;

Warm wet kisses; cheerful greetings from a floppy-eared dog

Inside is a family just for him.

Embraced by her warm smile, the moment she glanced his way—

A young soul searches to find courage; to know love.

Suddenly realizing this is what he's always wanted— tangled emotion erupts.

Through wet eyes he ponders: How do you tell your feet not to run?

Jennifer Gerlach, Southern Illinois U- Edwardsville

Just Social Workers

We will fight with you. Fight for you.

Empower you to fight for yourself.

Listen to you, see you, and fight for your right to be seen and heard

We can seem like your best friends and your worst enemies

Teachers, doctors, lawyers, and even angels all in one.

But we're not.

We're just social workers

Marie Jackson, Brown University

Empathy's Secret

I experience life through the troubles of others,

believing the truth is what I uncover.

Cliché it's become after all these years

I'm the change agent of injustice and fear.

Same stories, different times, and different places,

have taught me the truth.....

It's me I see when I look into their faces.

Kirby Peterson, University of Houston

The anti-Social Worker

Did you help someone today?

she says, ever so casually.

Help is relative, subjective, and individualized,
is all I can reply.

Was it worth your time?

another gentle nudge from Mom.

If they're a step closer to who they are, we're moving forward.

Linda Ai Phu, San Diego State University

Community [Childhood] Development

This picture is not right, can't you tell?

When alleys are safer than parks

When children play in sandbox filled with cigarette butts and litter.

Graffiti is not a colorful painting or storytelling; what it does do is speak profanity to our innocents.

Tell me what I'd say when they, these children, ask *Why?*

When their playground lights are shattered, metal covers stolen and never replaced.

Should I tell them their childhood's are stolen every second because us adults no longer care?

Martha Schut, The University of Iowa

cosmic custodian

like Orion he dips the rag
into the warm water in the wooden bucket
wringing it out, stoops low then
reaches on his tip toes
finds all corners of the slate board
wipes it clean, making space for
comets, asteroids and reluctant stars

Anna Forbes, Bryn Mawr

Home Visits

"Somewhere in you is that free person I'm talking about. Locate her and let her do some good in the world." Toni Morrison, from Home: a Novel

"Got paid today. My kids ate good tonight," the woman says.
"My boy got back last week." The old man's voice betrays relief.
I can help, misunderstand, or leave – that's it.
They have their strength. Today, my words just validate my trip.
"Say 'Bye, Miss Anna'." Little girls wave shyly as I leave.
They've learned that sometimes I bring news that helps their mom relax.
I've learned from them that choosing to live free is never safe.

Christine Sherrod, The University of Iowa

Awake

Moist night
Translucent decay
Porcelain prisoner
Of a
Secret
Blue
Morning

Ramon Ruiz IV, University of Houston

Agents of Change

Social Workers are agents of change
Helping guide clients towards strengths to gain
Willpower and fortitude to push past pain
Why we do what we do is complicated to explain
For better or worse many find our responses insane
This type of reaction need not result in disdain
Practicing what we preach makes it possible to maintain

Shawn Cassiman, University of Wisconsin Madison

Social Work

Passion drew us here by way of ivory towers, practicum, and disciplinarity

Scrubbed of structural critique, professionals, shiny in our surety of 'best practices'

Patching people scrutinized at every turn: demonized, dehumanized, discarded

Coping strategies unravel, borne on currents of precarity, so many filthy bandages

They catch in bare branches upraised warningly, shaking stiff arthritic fingers

We collect them, reweave the discarded into threads of solidarity and mutual aid

At last. Resistance

Jason St. Mary, University of Denver

Seated in the Street

those eyes...heartbreakingly haunting, dialectically serene
conditioned, cautious, mirroring life-long resiliency

retelling buried stories of oppressive brutality, atrocity

suffered in society

traumas unresolved; repeated truths of a historically

constructed hierarchy

covert social control; hypocrisy in the guise of legislative
policy

connective pathways, starved for change, imprisoned reality

those eyes...of youth, of family, of community

Mitsuru Ramirez, San Diego State University

Silence Spoken

Listen critically and keep your mind open
Question with passion and let evidence enlighten
Prepare for the pursuit of justice and equality
Advocate with compassion and transparent sincerity
Be ready for contention and embrace every fear
Never forget to appreciate the limit of what you or they can hear
Together for all and as one forever, silence spoken, never stop, never

Bryon R. Pearson, Ball State University

Eyes Awakening Closed Dreams

Infinite flicking the sky stained the Sun's birthmark
man's external light and miraculous energy
glowing beauty, eyes smiles the body
waking man every day for blessings from his grace.
God is the reason for the seasons of reason-ings
man's internal light and faith founding Father
flowing his love in us every day for blessings from his grace.

Marsha Woods, West Virginia University

LOOK AWAY, HURRY LOOK AWAY

Look away from the stranger on the corner begging for money
Look away from the child digging through the trash for food
Look away from the woman with the blackened eye
Look away from the smelly person in the elevator
Look away from the drunk staggering down the street
Don't bother making your mark on the world, improving anyone's life, making a difference, helping others, saving someone, lending a hand, applying the golden rule
LOOK AWAY, HURRY LOOK AWAY

Tom Dinwiddie, Virginia Commonwealth University

It followed her home,
a quiet shadow that sat on her chest,
invisible but heavy.
It flowed through her veins, cold as ice water
when the clinic called with *updates*
It followed her home, and
despite numerous attempts at eviction, stayed.

Sheryl Royer, Louisiana State University

ON CALL: KAYIA, 3:00 AM

You: an innocent bundle, full of promise,
Craving life, but lying so still. . .

She: an empty soul, full of hopelessness
Craving solace, but finding more tears. . .

He: a legacy cauldron, full of frustration
Craving to spill, but suddenly exploding. . .

And I, full of questions, craving absolution for us all. . .

Debra Walsh, University of Illinois- Urbana

The screen sleepily displays the slowly spinning circle of software that just might load

I get lost watching it grow: dot—to half—to full—it slips back to one, but slowly builds

Maybe today is the day the circle holds, swirling its courage and, in a steady whisper:

Not today. I will not be broken today. I am whole today.

After years of endlessly spinning, abuse waxing and waning and winning, repeating

Does she not deserve to be free of it for just one moment?

To use that quiet whisper against him--one we've been practicing, spinning, for years

Rebecca Stiemens, University of Houston

Being

Hope and Fear. I see it in your eyes. I hear it in your words.
Peace and Fury. I see it in your eyes. I hear it in your words.
Compassion and sympathy flow without restraint from my mouth, heart and hands.

Evaluation. Ventilator. Advocacy. Morphine. MRB. Psychosis.
Yes. Transplant. No. Silence.

When there is not anything left to do or say...

James G. McCullagh, University of Missouri Columbia

MOMMA

Phone rang. Momma died . . . returned too late. Now a body . . .
gone.

Tears, way many, for a lifetime of love and acceptance.

A beacon of hope when all gave up on me.

Returning briefly from army, travels, college, work
Momma with her smile, her Irish soda bread, a cup of tea.

Long talks.

Momma, a saint, quietly given time, and limited funds to
others . . .

My model she became for my life in social work helping
others.

James Akin, University of Arkansas

To Be A Social Worker

You need to aware, accurate and fair
Part angel, part agent, part cop
Willing to take a dare, a hard stare, and always care
Listen, listen, listen times seventy-seven
Be a comfort, be patience, be kind
Meet people where they are, show respect
Remember everyone matters, as do you.

Shauna Miller, San Diego State University

To Be Called

Look around in clarity and see the world go by:
Leave it be or fight for more; this choice is yours alone.
But it is no choice, for once you know
You must join a side.
For to leave it be
Is to let it decay
And you were meant to fight.

Angela Dickerson, Southern Illinois University of Carbondale

Angel in the Night

She holds her breath, gasps, as she leads them by hand,
hurried thoughts, in the cold midnight..."Are they coming?
God, send your grace." Torn t-shirts dirtied by familiar faces,
stomachs growling, "Almost there, please, move FASTER..."
Their anger palpable, hot against the back of her neck.
She hears barking now. "Oh no...the worst. Hurry."
They jump in, speed off, into the night...safety...safety...

Dana Rochelle Sweatt, University of Alaska-Fairbanks

In need

Compassionate to a fault,
we tend to reach out to those who may not want to be
reached,
who don't necessarily know they have a right to know them-
selves,
goals or dreams.
To be treated humanistically,
accepted right where they are to delve into their own self
determination.
We are the ones who reach out to those.... In need.

Patrick Tederick, West Virginia University

For What It's Worth

Sometimes I feel I've seen too much

Of pain and suffering and grief.

Then a small miracle happens

And I am restored in my belief

That what we do matters.

Social workers speak for those who cannot

Because everyone matters.

Annamarie Boyle, University of Oklahoma

Essence of a Social Worker

1 Cup of Kindness

2 Tablespoons of Self-Care

1 Bleeding Heart

2 \$20,000 degrees

1/2 pound of Empathy

1 Strong Ethical Background

A dash of Sass

Carla Damron, University of South Carolina

Connect

I like cutting grass. Lawn mower
drowns them demons out, he tells me.

I am not loud like his mower, not fierce like the
roar of voices in his head.

I am one voice, steady, calm, determined.

Hear me, I say. Hear me.

His smile connects us. I do.

Karen Giesecker, University of Denver

Neveah

I close my eyes and see your little body all broken and beaten,
There are no words, my little one, for those that did this to
you.

I close my eyes and hold you close,

May your abuser stand guilty of his crimes to you.

I close my eyes and know that you represent so many others,

I am saddened and sickened at what has happened to you.

Has justice been served, my little one, has justice been
served?

Cassidy Winchip, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Soup Kitchen

Looking into the souls of the ones left behind
I can see how this happens, when will it be my time?
With a smile and a hope, service is what I seek
In other people's minds, this may be perceived as weak
Can you honestly say this could never happen to you?
No one expects the worst to happen
But when it does what will you do?

Christopher Edward Martin, South East Missouri State Univ.

A Client's Smile

A client's smile,
a challenge worthwhile.
I have not walked their path,
but I will try to empathize their mile.
Judgment and values distilled,
dignity and worth revealed.
A client's smile.

Michelle McParland, Metropolitan State University of Denver

I see

Her paintings adorn the walls, tangible proof of life 'before'

We sit in silence, her beautiful, crooked, wrinkled hand
resting in mine

I sit and listen to her tell her story, though she never utters a
single word

Her frantic eyes, an opaque blue, move from frame to frame,
image to image

Helping me see, begging me to believe that these old hands
once created beauty

I see, I hear, I know, I believe

Some may feel she is already gone, but 'before' age 94, she
was more - and still is

Lynne Saunders, The University of Iowa

Medicare Regulations

What good are all these Medicare regulations, she thought,
As she learned them during her graduate internship,
During her first job as Social Services Director at a nursing
facility,
During her graduate level job as a Nephrology Social Worker,
During her semi-retirement job as a caregiver for her 97 year
old dad,
And finally,
As she applied for her own Medicare coverage.

Robert Sanchez, Hunter College

you sit down loaded with yesterdays and today's and maybe
tomorrows
I sit across you wondering about the me somewhere inside
you and our tomorrow
before we access and discuss you have said a few things in an
unknowing dance
Silence your partner
Pen, Paper and hope mine
Let us begin...

Glenn Meuche, Columbia University

Simply Be in the Moment

Gazing out at vast expanse.
Staring blindly,
at vacant skies; ...an empty space.
Endless dreams.
Eyes fixed; ...Intent.
The blank slate; ...stands forth,
Upon which to create.

Dwight Donovan Kasuse, University of Denver

What's a life in service?

Today, now I can say "I know what I meant when I wrote we
bury the lament under the cement
Looking for serenity in these gray walls or some sort of senti-
ment to remember to never forget
Why I have taken upon this quest of vowed service to all till
my passing without regret
So yes I will walk you home in the shivering cold and in your
final days when you grow old
For it is better to give than receive so that we may settle on
the leaves and have those to grieve
For I am just one string playing the arpeggio symphony of
Madiba's acappella
In the words and games we play so that we may one day fulfill
the dreams of King and Mandela"

Rachel Odo, New York University

The Vigil

Between laughter and faith
blue smoke prayers wind, unwind
spill wildly
into the corners of your room
This is the stealing time
life spinning
into breath, light

Marissa Fielstein, Columbia University

Ghosts of Saigon

As she sleeps beneath the blankets of their quiet midnight
room,
he propels as a bullet awake. A trembling moan
torpedoes from him, the resounding vibrato of the ghosts of
Saigon.
He sweats and shakes, limps to the window,
braces his body to confront the enemy no pill has silenced.
She stirs, stretches out her wrinkled arm to touch him;
her palm lands with a thud on the cool sheet.

Tanya P. Roberts, East Carolina Univ. Greenville, NC

Feeling all alone - surrounded by doubts and uncertainty,
wanting only to belong - to feel loved, to feel secure

In who you are and who you'll be - dreaming of a fantasy.

That pain runs oh so deep - for fear of life and fear of death

Holding on for the next - fall to hurt - an eternity filled with
despair - only a moment to prepare

Fear of sadness and fear of silence

Here we are, too full of fear - fear of life and fear of death; fear
of sadness and fear of silence

Not knowing when to hope.

Rich Kenney, University of Texas at Austin

Group Work

They already knew about gunmetal rainbows

and could see, like me, in 20-20 silhouette.

They knew about archways of light collapsing

and how tomorrow was nothing more

than the night growing rich in overtime.

And so I found a way to believe in "we" -

a beginning, an ascent, a sunrise in the making.