

## Judges' Selections from 2013 Poetry Challenge

This Muses' Gallery features the selected poems from the 2013 Poetry Challenge. This year's challenge asked poets of all ages to write haiku or poems about either sports & games or pets. Charlotte Digregorio, the Midwest Coordinator for the Haiku Society of America, judged the haiku submissions. Local writer Janet Tabin judged the other two categories. With over 150 submissions, the decisions were difficult.

Enjoy & keep on creating!

Highland Park Poetry is always interested in ideas for future contests, challenges and our Muses' Gallery. Send your inspiration to [jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org](mailto:jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org).



James Paradiso, Photographer

winter walk  
looking for a sign...  
bare trees

By Pamela Larson  
1st Place - Haiku  
Adult Non-Resident

Silent. Still. The flakes  
drift down to frost my lashes.  
Blink, and they are gone...

By Carol Spielman Lezak  
1st Place - Haiku  
Highland Park Resident



Gail Goepfert, Photographer

the wind blows  
the child wonders  
about her secret

By Morgan Brooks  
1st Place  
Haiku  
Student

alabaster snow  
leaden sky lets fall to earth  
shattering silence

By David W. Knapp  
2nd Place - Haiku  
Highland Park Resident



Bianca Milligan, Photographer

## Free Throw

By Carol L. Gloor

1st Place - Sports & Games  
Adult Non-Resident



A young guy, tallest in high school,  
now stands alone in hot television light,  
tattooed vines encircling his brown arms,  
his uniform red as blood from battle,  
stands fifteen feet from a metal hoop  
hung with a string net,  
stands holding, bouncing  
the game in his hands.

He does not care that millions  
out there can barely breathe.  
His eyes are arrowslits  
in the castle of himself,  
moated, unbothered by thousands  
of enemy banners waving,  
the lances of their arms  
taunting him to miss, their boots  
stomping defeat. He pulls in  
one breath, shoots, feels the swish  
of victory as the ball leaves his hands.

## hoops

By Regan McAllister

2nd Place - Sports & Games  
Student

dribbling very fast  
she shot the ball in the air  
firing up the crowd!!!

swinging the bat  
the ball goes up  
hurray we win the game

By David Friedland

Honorable Mention - Sports & Games  
Student



James Paradiso, Photographer

For just a brief moment I was twelve again.  
Not in a film reel click-clicking in my head,  
blowing out birthday candles in 60's tie-dye.

And not as the result of a carefree act,  
chasing bubbles with the neighbor's child,  
acutely aware that I possess a middle-aged

body, middle-aged mind, middle-aged life.  
Something about how the hot hazy sun fused  
with the sticky suburban air and saturated my skin.

The pure, earthy aroma of fresh cut grass,  
the thick warm wind that cooled my face  
as long as I was moving fast;

the old but familiar muscle memory of  
pedal, pedal, pedal, then coast.  
It was only a moment.

But in that slice of time, a small raw gash  
in the fabric of my space-time continuum  
revealed a summer long ago, inviting me in.

## Bike Ride

By

Elizabeth Surlin Gordon

2nd Place - Sports & Games  
Adult Non-Resident



## Plant Safety Tribute

By Marilyn Gehant

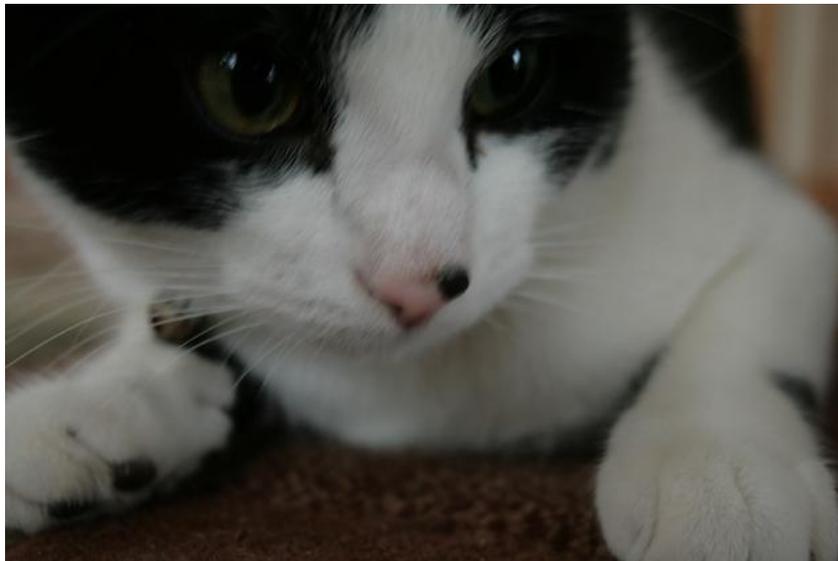
1st Place - Pets  
Adult Non-Resident

Big JoJo died; a wild-eyed, free roaming guard  
who lived dangerously in a huge messy place,  
where container board, used paper  
shredded, baled, and bundled in stacks  
stood in the gritty shadow of conveyors;  
and pieces of metal strapping webbed the floor.

He padded through it all,  
grew larger for the rodent foraging  
and sleeker for the miles he stalked  
criss-crossing the warehouse floor.  
Some days he slowed his rounds  
to check in on sales or purchasing.

Big JoJo found pellets of poison  
in a small De Con package  
dropped from a roll-off bin  
and likely meant for a mouse.  
That was the scene closer  
for a cat with recycled lives.

Those who loved him  
remember the days when he spread  
full length across the six-foot oak desk  
One by one, the grey, black and tawny  
climbed onto his furry back;  
a feline pyramid snoozed in safety.



Bianca Milligan, Photographer

The cat languishes  
in a stripe of sun, stretching  
full on the warm rug

By Tamara Tabel

2nd Place - Pets  
Adult Non-Resident

**Animal Wisdom**

By Terry Loncaric

Have you ever darted  
around a propelling tail,  
chased a breathy pant,  
lived inside a vibrating purr,  
felt the gentle beam  
of an animal's comforting gaze?  
They always collapse  
in our most pillowy parts,  
convince us  
in this moment,  
this peacefulness, their wisdom  
the only cushions we need,  
the rest of life is static.

3rd Place - Pets  
Adult Non-Resident

**Dog**

By Donita Ries

Asleep,  
tail wagging and thumping my thigh.  
Muffled barking, muscles twitching.  
High canine adventure without leaving  
the house.  
No mud or dead fish stench or ticks or  
burrs to pick.  
Just one sweet old dog,  
dreaming.

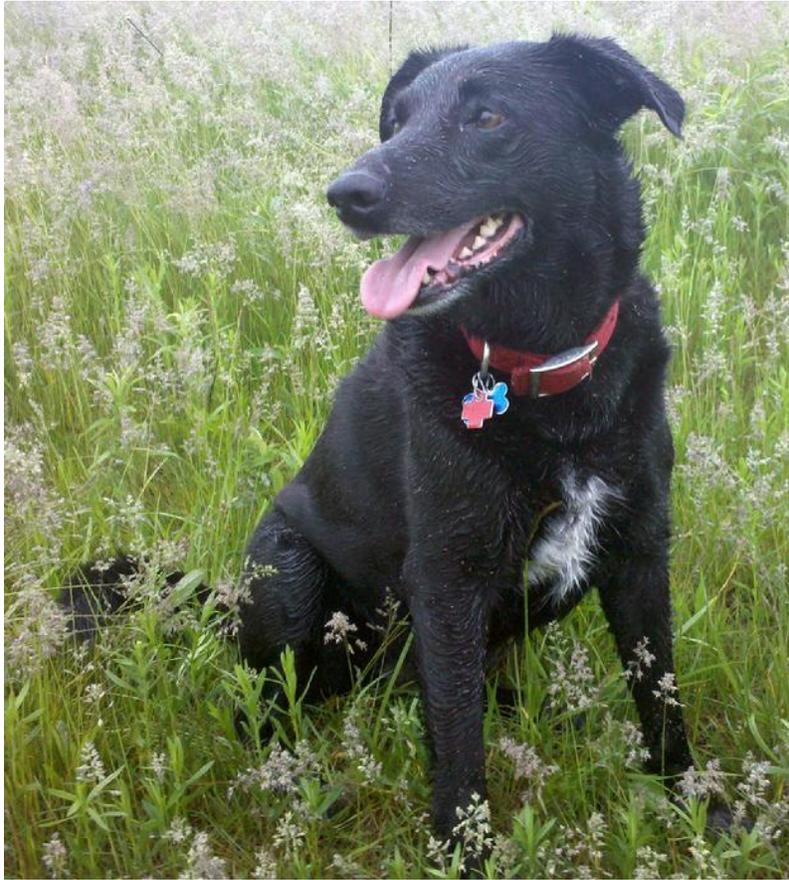
Honorable Mention - Pets  
Adult Non-Resident

**Rotten Dog**

By Judith Bernstein

Rotten Dog  
*But he's so beautiful.*  
He pees on the carpet  
*Just stroke his fur,*  
After he's drunk from the toilet?  
*Look into those deep brown eyes!*  
There's even dog hair in the bread box.  
*Feel his silky ear!*  
He pulls diapers out of the garbage!  
*And that honest doggy smell.*  
Then he looks at you like he's so proud!  
*He knows he can get away with anything.*  
Trip over him as he stands guard in the  
front hall.  
*Rotten dog*  
But he's so beautiful.

1st Place - Pets  
Highland Park Resident



Donita Ries, Photographer

my dog Dobby  
is cute  
chocolate lab

By  
**Gavin Treschl**

2nd Place - Pets  
Student

**The New Master**  
By Marjorie Rissman

Sometimes a pet is far more  
than a smart aleck alley cat or a  
goldfish won at a fun fair game.  
Sometimes a pet is your lifeline

Ella, My Dog

Ella jumping up  
to get her great yummy treat  
to eat it nicely

By **Bobby Coleman**

Honorable Mention - Pets  
Student

**Rascal**  
By Clara Berman

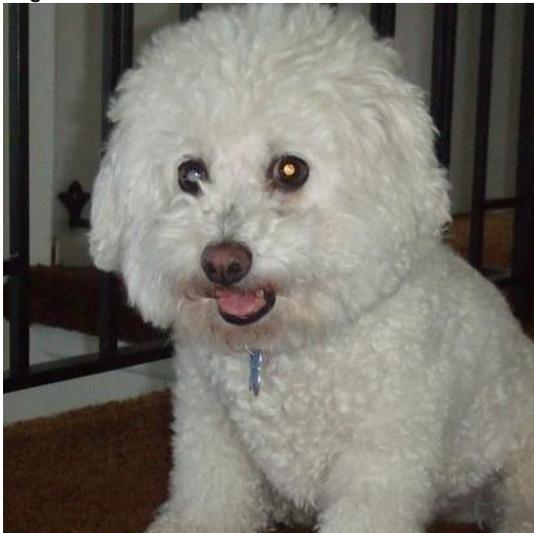
Rascal  
The most recent, may you go on living:  
Loving, leaping and running, jumping and  
digging,

to the past, people who have come  
and gone and left you too.

And so it was with Petey  
never really mine but more.  
I took him in when she could  
no longer cope with his care  
promising to give her pet a good life  
with lots of walks to the park  
and hours to spend on my lap,  
countless bowls of kibbles  
a variety of treats and soft  
words of love whispered into  
well groomed hair.

She lived on for me in daily deeds  
of loving kindness toward this dog  
even when he bit people who ignored him  
even when he got sick and also needed  
extra care. I didn't have to say goodbye  
dear friend as long as Petey was by my side,  
reminding me of her devotion, reminding me  
how much I loved my friend.

2nd Place - Pets  
Highland Park Resident



Marjorie Rissman, Photographer

Playing rapidly with friends, negating any  
fence

-A white streak in the fading garden-  
Lost in deep snow; a new speed of light.  
Loving heights and climbing, walking on  
tables,

Walking on the trim around the house,  
Leaving small tracks almost birdlike-  
In the brand-new red brown paint.  
Barking abrasively, too long and too loud,  
Barking at birds, deer, neighbors, and other  
dogs

-at any invader.

The perfect burglar deterrent,  
White hair curling into buff

Smiling black eyes and button nose  
An image from the circus, following clowns  
Circling incessantly before settling down;  
Loving to burrow into blankets and hide-  
Sleeping in forts under tables,  
Snuggling and cuddling, offering dog kisses  
and licks

How did you open

Both ends of the parmesan cheese, get into  
the brownies;

Chew up the cell phone and the DVD? Isn't  
that metal?

Rascal

3rd Place - Pets  
Highland Park Resident

a school of minnows  
in a pocket of water  
fanning silt and sand

By

**Jenene Ravesloot**

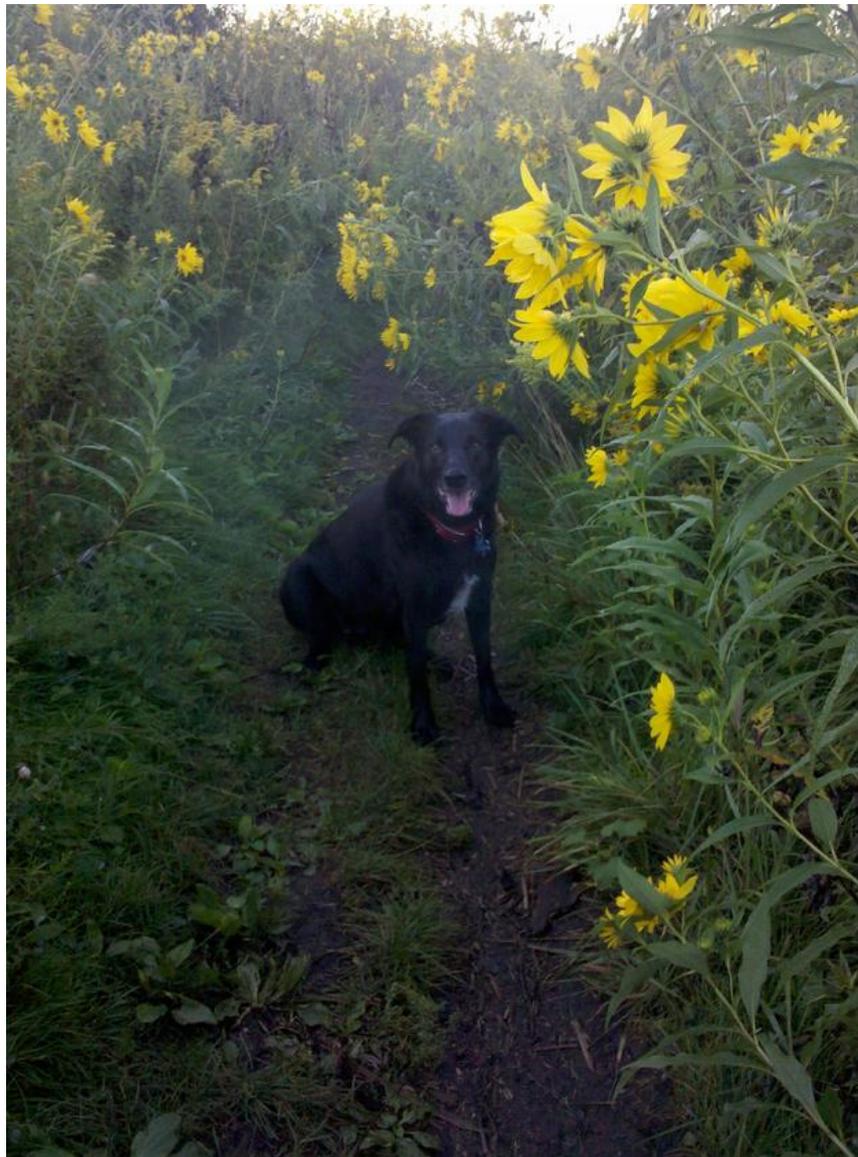
2nd Place - Haiku  
Adult Non-Resident

**Memories**

**By Isabella Sutter**

memories fill me  
of my fish, of death, of fright  
none are overlooked

Honorable Mention - Haiku  
Student



Donita Ries, Photographer

## Games With My Tomboy Sister

By

Charlotte Digregorio

3rd Place - Sports & Games  
Adult Non-Resident



James Paradiso, Photographer

She had leaves in her thick, cropped hair,  
bruises under her raccoon eyes,  
and scratches on her scrawny legs  
from scaling the oak to the tree house.

She was my shadow, hopping  
ahead of me with brittle bones.  
I followed her tracks in dirt and dust.

Despite her slight build,  
she was stronger than I,  
pushing me high on my swing  
so I could grab at clouds.

We stalked the neighbor boys  
in the alley, camouflaged in the hedge.  
We jumped out laughing, brandishing  
our pocket knives, watching them flee.

When it rained, we played inside,  
forgetting our boyish ways.  
We dressed up Barbie, Ken, Midge  
and Skipper, draining poor Dad's budget.

Summers at the beach, we searched  
for sand dollars and seaweed  
and built tunnels to Africa.

In our shared bed, under  
Nonna's quilt, buried beneath  
countless stars, we hid from spiders.

She was my breezy companion  
to tell secrets and recite rhymes to,  
yell and toss feather pillows at.

Carried by winds through childhood,  
she was unknown to Dad and Mom.

## the case of the missing starfish

By Gail Vescovi

Honorable Mention - Pets  
Adult Non-Resident



James Paradiso, Photographer

my cats ate my starfish  
unlikely and somewhat unbelievable  
the starfish were long dead  
calcified & dried like old leather  
not a thing temptingly tasty about them  
they lay upon my bookshelf  
unobtrusive, gentle  
cascading their stellar stories  
among poetry and knickknacks  
pale, lumpy terra cotta-hued sea memories  
apparently fishily fragrant enough  
to attract my feline huntresses  
adept at finding so many treasures  
that seem to go missing at but a moment's  
notice in this house  
(doubtless an eclectic stash sits jettisoned in  
some damp basement recess)  
why those frisky kittens  
could not just toy with those lovely sea stars  
as they do with the occasional mouse  
who finds its way into the warmth and  
refuge of our abode in the colder months  
those I find well licked and stiffly curled,  
discards that fail to meet any long-term  
nutritional or entertainment quotients  
imperiously rejected without a care or  
twitch of the whiskers  
no, my starfish, costly and decorative  
were carefully selected to gnaw and grind  
down to sandy grit  
ingested without any evidence of gastric  
upset  
scarcely leaving behind a few pale clay  
colored  
dusty crumbs  
on the shelf

Diehard

By

Michael P. Wright

Bawler bums  
Scribbled scorecards  
Ebbets edifice  
Bantering bluffs

Howling Hodges  
Foment fandom

1st Place - Sports & Games Ornerly outs  
Highland Park Resident Afficianado's abstracts

Raucous rallies  
October's octave  
Clutching catches  
Delusional dilettante

Fan favorites  
Hey hey  
Bleacherite bugler  
Promised pennant

## Hockey Rush

By Roy Steinberg

I'm so excited  
for the hockey game today  
I am nervous too

I go through the doors  
And into the locker room  
Where I get ready

Knee pads, socks and skates  
What about that handy stick?  
Now I am ready

I am on the ice  
I am exhilarated  
Playing in the game

I have the puck now  
I am intensely nervous  
About the outcome

My blood is pumping  
My adrenaline is high  
I am so nervous

I shoot the puck to the goal  
Oh no! He saved it  
My fast heart slows down

I take the rebound  
I shoot the puck and it....  
scores into the goal!!!

1st Place - Sports & Games  
Student

## Football

By Connor McKenzie

Football is a game with lots of bone breaking  
If you were a linebacker, you would feel lots of shaking  
If you were a quarterback, you would throw a bunch  
But if you got tackled, you might hear a crunch

Runningbacks do their job running and dodging  
If you were a rookie, you'd need to do a lot of jogging  
A wide receiver is the man who catches the ball  
But when he catches it, let's hope he doesn't fall

The trainer is the one who makes them all great  
I hope the team has good fate  
The owner is the most important man on the team  
If the team loses, let's hope we don't crush his dream

3rd Place - Sports & Games  
Student

## Beach Volleyball

By

Wilda Morris

Honorable Mention -  
Sports & Games  
Adult Non-Resident

Like Caribbean waves, his body is all motion.  
His feet are never still; his hands shift, stretch  
for the ball coming over the net. His feet propel  
him into air. He slaps the ball with open hand,  
waits for it to come steaming back into his court.  
Beads of sweat roll and bounce from his browned  
skin  
to white sand. His muscles glisten. Diving low  
for the spiked orb, he sprawls, rises powdered with  
sand.  
He hasn't yet learned life isn't winning or losing,  
but volleys with sudden unexpected turns he can't  
control.  
It sometimes soars, sometimes bounces,  
shatters hours or years into grains of sand.

## Monopoly

By Noah Gordon

Monopoly is so fun  
You try and get some cash  
Anyone can learn  
Play it at a birthday bash

Run to play it with some friends  
Get the \$500 bills  
If you hate this game  
You should go and take some pills

There are different versions  
With some different cards  
When you play the original  
It can get really hard

I love getting a Chance card  
There is also Community Chest  
They are usually good  
You can get really obsessed

I want to but some property  
But when I lose money  
It is very sad  
But then it is very funny

I don't want bad cards  
Like when I go to jail  
I really don't like that

## Hopscotch

By Luke Semrad

I play hopscotch  
My chalk is blue  
If you're a hopscotch hater  
I don't care for you

I play by myself  
And take a lemonade break  
Rain washes it away  
But I don't care, I love to draw, love to make

Hopscotch is my jam  
I play it everyday  
When it gets boring  
Inside I do stay

All I want  
Is for people to know  
That hopscotch is fun  
You can even play it in the snow

But no one listens  
All I can do is pout  
And all you know is  
I was here, but now I'm out!

Honorable Mention - Sports & Games  
Student

I just want to go and wail

It is the best game  
It takes very long  
But when you win  
You sing a victory song

Honorable Mention - Sports & Games  
Student

On Wednesday afternoons  
We are a gaggle of girls  
meeting in the intimacy  
of our oversized rooms.  
Sometimes one, sometimes two  
tables round or square  
with chairs - four or sometimes five-  
perch in anticipation.  
Noshes of nuts, red licorice vines,  
coffee cups balanced in neat little towers,  
cookies or cake adorning platters,  
tiles and racks stand ready for the game to begin.  
While walls are arranged the gossip unfolds  
Of who divorced who,  
what store opened or closed,  
which book to read, the film to see,  
a vacation taken, a good meal consumed,  
the newest grandbaby,  
local news to report,  
until  
the call of the tiles silences the flock.  
And so the afternoon speeds by  
game after game, quarters into the pot.  
Winners do not take all  
but the satisfaction  
of having outsmarted the others.  
All too soon we fly away  
to more important activities of the day.

Haiku by

**Jo Stewart**

3rd Place - Haiku  
Adult Non-Resident

**Mah Jongg**

**By**

**Marjorie Rissman**

3rd Place - Sports & Games  
Highland Park Resident

Purple hangs  
against the glow  
sundown



Emma Kowalenko, Photographer

the autumn wind

By Chance Martin

the autumn wind  
blows calmly  
where am I

2nd Place - Haiku

Student

Groove to the Beat

By Jordana C. Hozman

I make a routine  
clap step down then turn around  
it is show time now

3rd Place - Haiku  
Student



Donita Ries, Photographer

**Sweet Sorrow**

**By**

**Joan Morse Vistain**

Honorable Mention -  
Pets  
Adult Non-Resident

Not only do the willows weep  
this spent summer evening,  
as the peepers sound vespers  
and I sit alone becalmed  
in the center of the pond,  
a prisoner between  
splintering oars

but the maddening stillness  
presses to suffocate  
a dozen years  
of fresh morning walks  
and evening benedictions.

My fingers long for velvet ears  
and I strain to catch that  
familiar pant, but there is  
no muddy paw upon my foot,  
no captain at the bow.

I do not wish him  
back into the realm of pain,  
but somehow in the shrouding dusk,  
I hope he knows... I still stand  
at his grave and weep.

## Cute Little Puppies

By Saumya Malhotra

Soft and silky fur  
Lovely, cuddly and cute  
The most playful pups

Sleeping safe and sound  
Never letting out a snore  
Quiet through the night

Giving licks of love  
It's drooling with happiness  
Smile on its visage

Fetching the paper  
Running so very quickly  
Please don't rip it up

Good gentle puppy  
Behaviour is followed  
Oh, this is my joy!

3rd Place - Pets  
Student

## Dogs

By Chris Bush-Moline

Are reliable  
They give you comfort and love  
Loyal companion

They make you happy  
They give you calmness and joy  
They will protect you

Full of energy  
The epitome of good  
They can give you pride

Can choose bad or good  
Some might bite, but some might lick  
Some are tentative

Some are courageous  
Some are happy and feel good  
Some trapped in metal

Others lost in thought  
Though some are cautious and smart  
All are talented

Some are like lone wolves  
Others may rely on love  
Though they are all kin

Some of them tortured  
Trapped in a world of chaos  
All of them feel pain

Some get up to play  
All give light to a new day  
You sleep happily

Some of them homeless  
Some of them are struggling  
And some are at peace

Honorable Mention - Pets  
Student



Carol Spielman Lezak, Photographer

## Nine Holes Near Krakow

By

Joseph Kuhn Carey

Honorable Mention - Sports &  
Games  
Adult Non-Resident

Nine holes near Krakow, laid out in the countryside like soft pieces of cloth, far away from the hustle & bustle of the Rynek Glowny, a quiet gift of barely rustling grass, trees and sunlight, filled with no-one but the sleepy golf-pro and the talkative young cab driver who drove you to this Nirvana-like place in the little village of Ochmanow, nine holes of the sweetest solitude as you trudge from shot to shot, up steep hills and down the backsides of others, following the swoops and curves like a map of your life, contemplating each shot like a poem, or a lover's sigh, surrounded by gorgeous farmland, red-tile roofed houses, and occasional distant puffs of chimney smoke, you swing and feel in harmony with the earth and the birds cawing "dzien dobry" (good morning) overhead, while the groundskeeper mows the fairway grass at a steady humming pace, you look at the clouds and the horizon and think of your family and wish you could share this magnificent inner moment when time stands still and it's just you and the ball in a manicured Garden of Eden, thankful for all you have and hoping you can pass on this passion for a sport and the outdoors to your sons, so they, too, can feel the joy of one-ness in places like this, laid out like pieces of soft cloth, where Kings once hunted and deer roam free, baffled by the man who smiles and stares at the ever lightening sky.

## Sister Games

By

Susan B. Auld

Honorable Mention - Sports & Games  
Adult Non-Resident



When the moon clung  
to the dark fabric of sky

on still August nights, we lay awake  
inventing sister games.

*Clothespins*  
she whispered

and fluttery arms and legs of pajamas  
quieted like the moon's pale breath.

Still. Motionless. Barely breathing we waited  
for one of us to move— to lose the game.

Sometimes we waited so long  
we fell asleep and the stars faded to blue.

Sometimes one of us giggled  
and we started the game again.

I don't know why lying motionless  
under blankets in thick summer air was fun

nor why we chose the unyielding  
bland clothespin for our game.

But for whatever reason,  
waiting together in the night

was most important.

## The Woodlands

By Alex Bernat

Rough and moldy trees  
A threatening, short, loud deer  
Scent of the fresh dew

Gurgles past the rocks  
Heliotrope - covered rocks  
Sparkling all day

Nut-gatherers feast  
Multi-colored wings flap by  
Flourishing plants bloom

Vivid wings flapping  
Quick, beautiful, fragile too  
Soaring through the sky

## One Fish

By Isabella Sutter

Unimportant fish  
So many I can't count them  
So many, so much

One sticks out of them  
The most gold, the most happy  
Crying took all day

Driving through the rain  
Trip to Wisconsin killed her  
Why did I bring her?

Once in a long while  
I remember the three years  
She was alive, mine

Branches tall and strong  
Waving their leaves of glory  
Birds live among them

Life, sound, happiness  
Natural, has not been touched  
Flourishes always

Honorable Mention - Haiku  
Student

In the freezer  
Are the remains of my fish  
'Lizabeth Susan

A friend forever  
An awesome pet, forever  
One to remember

1st Place - Pets  
Student



James Paradiso, Photographer

**Lincoln**

**By Isabella Dickman**

his soft puppy fur  
feels like a new baby's skin  
as I hug him close

Honorable Mention - Haiku  
Student

**Unconditional Love**

**By Sydney Thomson**

Lifelong buddies, unconditional love,  
These pets are gifts from up above.

Responsibility, hard work and care,  
To not adore these creatures would just seem unfair.

Long nights of howling, or MEOWS at your door,  
Strange it can be that you're still wanting more.

The difficult ones that always need food,  
Weird it can be that you're in a good mood.

These trustworthy pets that don't leave from our side,  
They hang out from a window when you go for a ride.

They make you feel better and take away sorrow,  
The sadness and madness you won't feel tomorrow.

Throwing the ball just to get it back,  
Meanness and anger is what they all lack.

And still to this day people still are mean,  
What they do to these animals should not be seen.

Hope is out there for these friends from above,  
And always we treasure their unconditional love.

Honorable Mention - Pets  
Student



Jan Burke, Photographer

## Five Outs Away

By

Michael P. Wright

2nd Place - Sports & Games  
Highland Park Resident

My mountain top, the king Michael  
Cherish the promised land  
Welcome finally, the World Series  
Innate senses glorify it

Count those outs  
My ship has arrived  
The Cubs are in  
Magical, 3 runs in

Elation swarms me  
Five outs away  
Don't look up whippersnapper  
That infamous crazed ball

The capsized shattered dream  
Never reached pay dirt  
Legends, legacies all forgotten  
Lifetime's chance, oh so close