Poet's Choice

Welcome to the Winter 2014 Muses' Gallery. The poets included here found inspiration all around them - weather, architecture, games, scientific journals, and relationships.

Enjoy & keep on creating!



Marilyn Peretti, Photographer

Icy Path

Ву

Marilyn Peretti

It's heading to Big Rock, this path covered with snow, and I won't make it all the way today. Some melts in sun, then refreezes, making ice underfoot, slippery traveling in the woods. Just glory in the brilliance of the white-out beneath the slim brown verticals of bare trees, froth of dry plants' yellow below, like a bed of hay to comfort chilled animals.

The temperature is up to 35, so lovers of trees hurried to be here, finished their shopping and filling the tank, to retreat to this wooded wonderland speaking its welcome voice of silence.

Pam Larson
Arlington Heights

snow storm ducks gather at the pond...

all flights canceled



Pamela Larson, Photographer

Two White Snow Geese

By

Joseph Kuhn Carey

Glencoe

Two snow-white snow geese, standing on a solitary sand bank somewhere between Muscoda and Boscobel along the wide but shallow Wisconsin River, thinking each other's thoughts, nibbling on whatever's closest at hand, looking at the colored canoes full of boy scouts skimming by and later making camp on a big, flat sand island across the way, two white snow geese meditating on the fall, the changing colors of the leaves on the river bank trees, the drop in temperature at night, the need to fly south to survive another bitter Midwest winter, two white snow geese snuggling amidst an avalanche of quiet and soft bubbling river currents, finally flying off in beautiful long, limber fashion with majestic high honks and silky smooth wing-flaps, soaring like tiny white jets into the clear, crisp, impossibly blue early morning sky.



Ann Lamas, Photographer

Photograph

By

Ann Lamas

Chicago

A boy in the snapshot springs out to squint-eyed mornings. He bounds down concave stairs, heavy steps and thoughts rounding inward, his private and glorious life. Brushing past bright-blue flowers, never looking back at a solitary shadow in the doorway. Every day she waves from her heart the leave-taking of a nearly grown boy running out of view, carelessly changing.



Joe Glaser, Photographer

Nixed

By

James Reiss

Wilmette

I offered my colleague a lift. He said, "I'm good." Good for what, I wanted to know. For the road?

In my lobby I held out an ad for free donuts. My doorman raised his hand like a stop sign and said, "I'm good."

Upstairs my nine-year-old said, "I'm good" when I bent to plant a how-are-you kiss on his forehead.

Only my partner guffawed after glimpsing my pinecone bouquet. She shook her head, "No thanks."

Denial

Ву

Judith Tullis

Indian Head Park



Don't say goodbye, I begged, my mouth full of medical anecdotes, biblical quotes and other magical thinking. We'll meet next month at the Strawberry Fair, eat shortcake and complain about calories. Not chemo.

I'll be blind to outward signs, a forever friend seeing you still in pony tail and poodle skirt. Though I chuckle with many, we always laugh till our sides hurt. Not now.

Others have vanished with their scents of lavender or pipe tobacco, leaving an odorless void.

Don't you withdraw the waft of sun-dried bedsheets and hot apple crisp. Not you.

Judith Tullis, Photographer

The Sun Over Lake Michigan

By

Charlotte Digregorio

Winnetka

2013 Second Place Winner (Lake Michigan Category) of Poets & Patrons 57th Annual Chicagoland Contest



James Paradiso, Photographer

Wind strokes us, a gull cries, tilting at lake's edge.

On a wayward afternoon, oars measured like wings, we sail in tandem over

the lull of ripples, deepening blue. Evergreens steady us from a distance.

Ashore, walking in down boots, I unspool my memories of his breezy smile.

Branches, scented yesterday with cherry blossoms, are stripped bare.

Sunlight sails over arctic waves, piercing the ice ledge.

Sunbeams change course, soften my stiff face, awaken my dark eyes. I melt into winter.

What's in a Name

By

Joe Glaser

Today I learned that bottle-nosed dolphins have their own names.

Persons of the sea *I will call them mersons!* these precocious creatures possess intelligence to perhaps rival our own.

The sociodolphologists say self-naming occurs after birth in chirps and squeaks and whistles forming a unique signature and a dolphin will trill back its name when addressed by other dolphins or even a lyrical human.

There is no guarantee that every merson addressed by a person will answer to its name for he or she may be snooty or still nursing a teenage sulk or even flirting for an inter-species tryst.

Watch the scientific mind spin as the egg of alien intelligence cracks open right here on Earth.

And watch for vast computers to be datamining the myriad sounds of the seven seas in search of linguistic insights while sea creatures fret their loss of privacy.

Like a Cathedral Arch

By

Jill Charles

Chicago, IL



Jennifer Dotson, Photographer

The old professor scolded her "You can never be an architect Women have no sense of spatial reasoning."

She showed more sense than he.
Studied her way into two colleges,
Under cedars in Seattle,
By Denver's Rocky Mountains.
She sketched and unwound lines
On her easel pad and computer screen
Sure as threads on a loom.

She made her own way to Rome
Prayed in the Vatican garden
Traced the curve of the Colosseum
Smiled at Bernini's elephant.
She sipped espresso and wine
And fresh water bubbling
From fountains built two thousand years ago.

Under the Space Needle mushroom She went to work on the courthouse Added wheelchair ramps, Equal entry for all.

She designed a rain roof
Across a school playground
For hopscotch under drumming drops
And a science lab
Between four old pine trees
With windows on three sides
Where other girls and boys could look out and dream.

Her small white hands Raised buildings up With hidden strength Like a cathedral arch.



Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Photographer & Artist

My Seasons

By

Kathy Lohrum Cotton

Anna

Two pale-green decades of limber shoot unfolding, stretching skyward, lean and windblown in mottled shade of family canopy.

A pair of glossy, frenzied decades, sturdy limbs claiming space, toiling every sunlit moment, turning light to leaf. Then decades

of letting go, shedding the emerald mask to reveal deep red and glistening gold, finally tossing even those last trinkets to the wind. Now this:

thick, deep rooted winter, my bared frame, its storied scars, its initials carved in heart shapes, clear at last against a vast horizon, my old treasures tucked inside, ring within ring,

unafraid of axe blade or blaze on an unknown hearth.



Laurence Segil, Photographer

Winter Ghazal Variation

Stale words hang in the evening air. Hours of light are rare; thoughts drift.

Ву

The river mirrors one flying crow. Things come and go; thoughts drift.

Jenene Ravesloot

Slow black smoke rises in a clearing. I comb your lovely hair; thoughts drift.

Chicago

A locust tree is stripped. Light is gone. You say *I never cared;* thoughts drift.

To think you said you would never leave. Gray snow begins to fall; thoughts drift.



Carol L. Gloor, Photographer

Chicago: Late February

By

Carol L. Gloor

Savanna

At five the afternoon sky is still a fading, miraculous blue; in the next hour the day shifts through seven shades of gray rose twilight. Even the shrunken, filthy snow piles glow.

The Poles flock to this city, at first cleaning houses, hanging wallboard, saving money, because its climate is like Warsaw's: cold snowy winters and hot humid summers, the climate of a city embedded deep in a land mass too big for it to understand, its only beauty the brief transitions, the way one utterly forgets the other season, so it comes always as surprise, a new lover with strange caresses, right now the longed for, light touch of that ever returning strumpet, Spring.



Cynthia Hahn

Lying in Wait

Ву

Cynthia Hahn

Inspired by Herb Berman

Cool winter sun rises a clear blue,

Its rays lie on the snow.

Bone-white moon

sows the ice,

skates in its own light.

Neither sun nor moon, I tend the spring simmer, crackle of green shoots.

Grapple

By

Marjorie Rissman

Highland Park

I have been grappling with grapple Envisioning white coated botanists Grafting the globes of holiday grapes

With honey crisp apples Making the new fruit

Round and shiny, juicy and sweet

Red on the outside Pink on the in.

There is a Washington apple Claiming to taste like a grape Stealing this word for it name.

Here in Chicago
When weathermen do not know
What is falling from the sky
They also grapple with grapple,
A mixture of rain, snow, sleet and hail
Falling in irregular pellets
Like rabbit food or its aftermath,
A fine English mixed grill
Of frozen precipitation
That sting on contact
With human skin
And pings upon landing
On car rooftop or hood,
We grapple with grapple
Sometimes by the shovelful.



Pamela Larson, Photographer

Hidden Order

By

As I indulge the prairie, sipping tea, I spy my book in insect company,

For trudging through the plain of on

For trudging through the plain of open page

Is but an ant an eye can barely see.

Khalid Mukhtar

I wonder how the letters must appear To one who is to them so very near, Like patches of the earth about the snow, Irregular and varied in area.

But crawling so, my little friend can't tell That every page is framed in dual el, All bound into submission by a spine, All born and cut from one material.

I swallow all this prairie with my eye, These golden, yellow flowers swaying by A stream that seems to stop, then flow again, To mirror well the canopy of sky

Where floats a fleet of clouds upon a breeze, Some gray, some peach, some white of foamy seas, Some left behind a soaring eagle's flight To humbly bow and kiss the tops of trees.

I find my crawling friend is much like me, Admirers of versatility: He cannot see the order that I do, And someone sees an order I can't see.

Truthseeker

By

Terry Loncaric

Adrift without a map,
I burrow through
superficial sound bytes,
manufactured manifestos,
cyberspace slogans,
still I crawl over hot sand
to feel despair,
sleep in a valley of tears
to soak in sadness,
stumble over madness

sleep in a valley of tears to soak in sadness, stumble over madness to understand humanity. I surrender all fears, stepping into the thrashing eye of the storm

to bare my naked flesh . . . to embrace the planet's fate as all truth seekers must.



Asif Khan, Photographer

The Winter Wind

I lean against the winter wind

the wind insists

Ву

on screeching my name

etching my fears against

Herb Berman clouds boiling high in the west

encroaching every daylight dream

my face is mottled

pink and gray

with small yellowing furrows I'd be out of the winter wind

if I found my way

to my front door warm and bright as spring

a few feet away but it's closed and the wind sings you must lean on me I'll take you wherever

you have to go

Deerfield

Lighting the Way

Ву

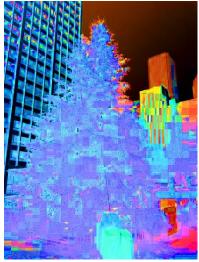
Caroline Johnson

After our family went caroling from house to Victorian house my brother lined up luminaries paper bags with candles and sand we bought from our church with my Dad's donation.

Breezes seeped through his thin skin. With scarlet cheeks, foggy breath he carefully bent down in the wind to light each one, not wanting to start a fire or wake up the ire of my father or Santa Claus.

We looked out the bay window as he worked in the snowfall and we hung each ornament each angel, each strand of tinsel, lights.

Christmas is light after all.



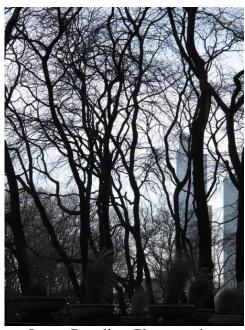
James Paradiso, Photographer

Beloved

By

Asif Khan

You are close to me like light is to moon, Make a promise and come to me soon. You are close to me like night is to day, Make a promise of not going away. You are close to me like wave is to sea, Make a promise to stay with me. You are close to me like pearl is to shell, Make a promise in my heart to dwell. You are close to me like rain is to cloud, Make a promise and say it very loud. You are close to me like tear is to eye, Make a promise before I die. You are close to me like smile is to lips, Make a promise of sending spiritual gifts. You are close to me like beat is to heart, Make a promise that we may never part. You are close to me like lyric is to song, Make a promise of a blissful bond. You are close to me like fragrance is to musk, Make a promise of loving dawn to dusk. You are close to me like body is to soul, Make a promise and fulfill my goal. You are closer to me than a jugular vein, Reveal thyself and take away my pain.



James Paradiso, Photographer

Thirteen - the

Some people hated the year 2013, Number of Bad Luck they're hoping for a much better 2014.

I guess I always roll with the punches, but for many, there were no free lunches.

A headline of the local paper states,

"Unemployment benefits axed from this state."

What, are people, going to do?

We can't protest, and we cannot sue! It's David vs. Goliath, and we're the ants, They say to be happy, but some people can't.

For some, 2013 was a disaster,

as New Year's Eve approaches faster.

So don't spend New Year's Eve whining in a tavern, In Afghanistan, we buried the dead in caverns.

As much as this country is in the red, In other countries, people are just dead. So on New Year's Eve, be grateful you are alive,

there were people this year who didn't survive.



James Paradiso, Photographer

By

Mark Hudson

Evanston

Passing the Crown

Ву

Jennifer Dotson

Highland Park

Scrabble is not just a game for our family. It is history. It is a code of conduct for fair play. It is a heritage of word-wise women and men who place their "X" on a triple word score and vault their tally of points far above the other players. It is knowing how to survive when the bag of tiles gives you only vowels. It is a measure of maturity to play with the adults, anxious to compete but absorbing the blows of superior skills. Yesterday, I beat my mother after decades of losses. She smiled, sighed and handed me her crown.

