Adult

Poetry
1st Place

Kaitlyn Conley

“Living Remnants”

Grief is like a large tree planted in the middle of
your home, entangling its limbs into every room.
As gripping as it can be to face it at every corner
you turn, you embrace it as the only living
remnant you have left. In the kitchen, you mind
the flame of the stove careful not to brush a
branch with fire. In the bathroom, you mind the
time so that you don't drown the roots. In the
living room you worry if there is enough sun or
shade on any given day In the dining room, you
thank it for whatever blessing it yields. It covers
your window better than blackout curtains. It
collects your tears and grows. You learn to live
with it. It can remind you of beautiful memories
and haunt you with shadows and darkness. You
may leave it for work, for life or for love but you
return every night to be blanketed by its'
branches.

Adult

Poetry

2nd Place

Kaitlyn Conley

**« Shipwreck »**

My heart set sail at sea

about four years and many moons ago,
shoddy and strong,
ambitious and light.

My journey was long like my memory.

Through all the waters

all blue, black and green

both shallow and deep

both awry and serene

crisp and clear like my memory.

Night and day

I tended to the sails

and I have discovered many shores

I’ve learned excitement

and fear

all of which has adhered to my memory.

My ship still shoddy, now worn

my sails tethered and tom

all in pieces on shore
in a world still new
and yet to be discovered.

I am frightened to find

I am now alone and alive
standing unstable on stable ground
whence I stood tall on the rocky waters,
where it is all I have ever known.

My heart now empty and bare
with a ship to repair,

I am counting the moons it will take
to weather those memories.

Adult

Poetry

3rd Place

Steve Tennant

H-P-I?

Gondoliers

We slide through life

Like midnight gondoliers,

Creatures of matter and moment

And movement,

Log oar pushed

Into soft canal bed

Stirring silt

And sigh,

Mute ecstasy

Of love’s brief glance.

Slow-shimmering wake

Trailing,

We call out

Warnings at corners

Blind

Voices echoing

Into salient, saline air

Hanging suspended in

Adriatic moonbeam

On ropes of stars.

We sing familiar

Glissading arias

lb distract

From rats’ scratching

Claws along the ledges

Above high-water line,

Steady the sway

Of now-lithe vessel

Aware of peril

Below in the shallow

Black putrescence.

Still, the timeless waters

Reflect love’s strung lanterns

Ashore and aboard.

All will be lost one day

In these rising, timely tides

That breathe us clean

And closer to ruin,

But tonight

We slip the prayers of San Marco

Prow pointing

Toward the Grand Canal,

Stern to the patient

Exhaling sea.