



RHYME ON 2021

Poetry Writing Contest

Loudoun County Public Library

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Morning Light

Silver light slips from the clouds
Bare trees fill the woods,
dancing gracefully in the light
Calling me home.

Quickly moving in the cold air,
past the meadow grasses swaying
The path winds forward; the sun slowly rises
Onward, a warm hearth waits.

Tiny wisps of fog linger in the air
Sunlight slides between the silver
Lights the dancing trees
Brings the promise of a new day.

Silver light slips out of sight,
giving way to the daylight dawning
Anticipation in every step forward
Along the winding path home.

Sarah Entsminger

Windows

Windows in Paris

Taller than me

Wavy glass,

Paned in chipped paint and dressed

In velvet drapes

And set behind two leather chairs

Rough with wear and time

On a floor

Rough with wear and time

In a building

Rough with wear and time

And each child takes a turn,

Leaning, looking

What might you see in Paris on a Monday

Out a window

Dressed in velvet?

Teeny cars

Fancy clothes

People with purpose

Awnings shading cafes

For croissants for our morning

and aperitifs for our evening

A place to watch Paris move past

A window on a fourth floor

And a window under an awning on the street

Windows in London
Baby windows
In a baby courtyard
In the mews
A stable turned
By an architect and a photographer
Into a space where dreams
Are realized and invented
A baby grand
God's delight
As the boy's tender fingers pound Liza
Into its memory
Like he'd been playing a baby grand
Against a brick wall and wood floors and art
And family pictures
And Balinese treasures
And antique teacups and saucers
From the market on Portobello Road
A walk away
Notting Hill
Can you hear him play
Out this baby window
On the baby grand?
Pastel houses
Play a different note
Color a song

To amble, stroll, skip, bounce

Past window boxes

Streaming flowers

Notes of purple, pink, yellow, orange, white

And listen to that music lift

from the keys

Straight to the soul spot

Where memories are made

Memories are stored

Mary Mitchell

Spring Is.

Spring is sunshine

Air that smells like hope.

One crocus bud blooms

And we're golden, glowing.

Spring is warm rain

Puddles that are just about

Deep enough to drown insecurities

And we can do hard things.

Spring is Blue Jays,

Cardinals.

Spring knows we can't fly

But gives us wings

Of possibility anyway.

Elena Capofari

Nigh Eve of Growth

White, unstained bed sheets
Sheltered us in the fort of childhood
Soft, plush carpets licked at our bodies,
unshaped by society's standards
A charcoal tarp overhead protected us
from the stormy world outside our own.
But we didn't look up.
Someday, we knew, that grey cloud above
would spring a leak
and become
Unfixable
Torrents of reality would rain upon us.
But in those moments,
We made believe
In a land of child-like innocence.

Paige Chester

Funniest Poems

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Sonnet XVII: To the French Fry

Though steadfast love be scarce, your love is not,
For though you vary in your shape and size,
Your golden form so lovely never dies
And one can trust you're almost always hot;
Though good men can be rather hard to find,
You never are. When days run long and rough
A thousand embraces of yours are quite enough
To gorge through grief and leave my greens behind.
You never say a word; you simply wait
To come o'er wall and chink to my lap here
With ardour like your French-kin fond of wine;
And like arachnids eaten by their mate,
So are you, my love, my precious dear,
O Fry—forever in me, ever mine.

Mary Clare Young

To My Garden Pests

A warning to all you hungry rabbits:
I'm aware of your nasty habits.
Honestly, you make me crazy
Feasting on my pretty daisies.
Don't think just because you're cute
That I do not give a hoot.
Keep out! Keep out! I'm warning you!
I'll make you into rabbit stew!

See the gentle, graceful deer.
You think that you are welcome here.
You try to be so surreptitious,
But I am getting quite suspicious.
I know what you like to eat.
You think my pansies are so sweet.
Here's a warning: If you're smart,
You'll take your pals and depart.
Winter's cold, and I'm on a quest
To get myself a deerskin vest.

See the beetles Japanese
Eating my roses whene'er they please.
You dine with your buddies in a bunch.
Know this: I love to hear you crunch!
I'm not one of those mild-mannered ladies.
I'd sooner see you roast in Hades!

Now all you pests, my heart is hardened.
I'm taking back my flower garden.
Hop or run or fly away.
If I see you again, you'd better pray!

Janice H. Walker

Purple Bob

When Purple Bob would do his job,
the kids would laugh and roar.

'Cause Bob put on the costume,
of Barney the dinosaur.

When asked about his future plans,
Bob said with much acuity...

"I love my job and hope to do,
this gig in purple-tuity."

Clark Kidd

Poems of Loudoun

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Silent Sentry

An ancient tree that stands alone high upon the bank of a gravel road
Became a beacon for my life, listening tacitly to all my strife
I would walk the winding way, not far from the safety of my abode
Lingering near the silent sentry, wondering how it knew about my life
Quiet majesty absorbed my fears, yet never telling and never would

Places such as this twisty way are few and far between these hectic days
Faster, bigger, smarter is all the rage, yet lost within this mantra is the need
For simple pleasures and the knowledge that life lies beyond a technological haze
This magic land is divided, half the internet, yet bucolic gem, together they succeed
For the tree stands tranquilly on that lane, locking memories away within its wood.

Martin P. Bromser-Kloeden

Loudoun Living History

John Campbell, Fourth Earl of Loudoun
Desired a county of his own
So, we broke away from Lord Fairfax
We wanted to be alone.

The Continental Army was hungry
George Washington found a solution
Our farmers gave grain to make us
“Breadbasket of the Revolution.”

In 1814 the Brits burned Washington
Such an ignoble defacement
But U.S. government documents
Were safe in Rokeby’s basement.

We hail James Monroe in doctrine
The fifth Pres of this grand nation
For the last nine years of his life
He lived at *our* Oak Hill Plantation.

During the American Civil War
We were divided sure enough
But we’ve come together to hail
The Battle of Balls Bluff

Some of us still praise Mosby
His Rebel Rangers were the most
But it remains a partisan issue
Rest in peace, "Gray Ghost."

Virginia Governor Westmoreland Davis
Was Loudoun Hunt's founder and spark
He chased foxes and reform in farming
And left us beautiful Morven Park.

A "Breadbasket" again in World War I
We supplied the Allied soldiers with fine wheat
For who can fight on an empty stomach?
Or end all wars without a bite to eat?

Our citizens have served in other wars
In World War II sixty-eight of them died
And Chief of Staff George C. Marshal
Came to Dodona Manor to reside.

There were numerous later developments
Such as Washington-Dulles Airport and Sterling
And a succession of board of supervisors
Who kept the pots boiling and people swirling.

Our official motto is *I Byde My Time*
But patient planning could not last
While rapid growth has become inevitable
We still strive to preserve our past.

Well maybe *NOT* that Confederate statue
That once stood on our courthouse lawn
We shall no longer accept racism
We are welcoming a new dawn.

Once rural, we have undergone suburbanization
And massive data centers toe the line
But open fields still are able to yield
As we toast the craft beer and wine.

We have the Blue Ridge and the mighty Potomac
Goose Creek, Dry Mill Branch and Sugarland Run
Everything from Premium Outlets to Oatlands
And we hope White's Ferry *ain't* done.

From Cascades in the east to Loudoun Valley
We enjoy capital goods and nature's bounty
In time of Covid-19, we don't go anywhere
Who needs to! We're Loudoun County!

Gregory Lalire

The Tree

Destruction arrived as day dawned
It had not been anticipated
An EF -0 skipping though the town for 3 minutes
After its random rampage
It rendered the tree a grotesque
Pillaging the tree's sturdy branches
The tree, once strong, was broken
Shattered pieces spilled into shadows
A scattering of limbs akimbo on the ground
We thought that surely the tree was
destined for the fire
Workers came and cut off the broken parts
leaving behind a tree that appeared beyond hope,
beyond life
Stunted limbs, humbled,
as if trimmed by a novice,
reached desperately into the February sky
beseeching the clouds for mercy
Winter gray transitioned into the buoyant blues of spring
Clouds like puzzle pieces scattered in the firmament
The sepulcher now arrayed in delicate blossoms
The tree's remaining branches lifted high in hallelujah
Life reaffirming a resilience we had not anticipated

Brenda Hicks

Virginia's Oak Trees

Do the Buds on these February trees
know one day they will grow into Leaves?
In their dreams are there schemes of
Flower possibilities?

Erin Rose

Love Poems

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Evening Song

I'll smooth the pillow so that you can sleep.
All we have is now. There is no scheme.
Oblivion is sure, is near, is deep.

Trust me to batten to the watch I keep,
to drink the coffee black without the cream
and smooth the pillow so that you can sleep.

We do not need to note what shadows creep
toward morning, with its sun's harsh lidless beam.
Just take oblivion as sure and deep.

Long summer gone, this is the time to reap
our only harvest of the twilight's gleam.
I'll smooth the pillow so that you can sleep.

The past erases quickly, like the sweep
of tides on lonely beaches in a dream,
so take oblivion, however deep.

I know, the cost of love is never cheap.
The note comes due which, hoping to redeem,
I'll smooth the pillow so that you can sleep,
and take oblivion, not broad but deep.

Conrad Geller

Resuscitated Heart

I met a man with a hole in his heart,
simmering, dark and knowing.
I didn't like the way he stared.
I said, should you be going?
He smiled. I shivered. What's his deal?
He curled his arm around me.
My skin aflame, a random thought
my God, somehow you've found me.
Passion flared and I succumbed
released from inhibition.
Irrevocably the girl was gone,
a womanly transition.

He said don't fall in love my dear,
though in essence we align.
My heart's been pierced by past mistakes;
that gift's no longer mine.
I'd been cocooned myself so long-
protective life decision.
Slashed from being second best
with surgical precision.
Imperfect though his heart was then
He gave me all he could.
It stopped just shy of everything.
I fully understood.

Ours was not a fairy tale,
my true prince in the wings.
No sacred words were spoken,
no flowers, no church, no rings.
A scent, a song can trigger
memories faded, bittersweet,
of care and warmth and honesty,
all his offerings, incomplete.
I loved a man with a hole in his heart.
Our souls they did entwine.
He may have had a hole in his heart
but he fixed the one in mine

Linda J. Nantz

Outside the City

Her love was a mountain
Its loneliest view
She's holding me close
She's loving me true

Outside the city
On a cool autumn night
I sat out of mind
Above all the lights

Her love was a warning
An ember's red glow
She's slowing her step
She knows and it shows

Outside the city
As a new dawn rose high
I woke still and sound
Against the calm sky

Her love was the silence
That floats in a breeze
She's going away
In patience and ease

Outside the city
Near the place where I slept
I knew what was lost
Was still to be kept

John Rowley

Rufus Wagwright

We'd never had a hound before.
And we've said we'll never have another.
He was 1 maybe 2 when we got him—
a Redbone Coonhound with his deep red
coat and that starving heart gaze,
the resident Southern Belle
on our block would stop when she saw him,
hand to her heart, and declare
him a gentleman, we think maybe he was bred
to hunt bear but probably got scared
his first time out—all that baying and shouting—
he takes residual issue with big dark dogs,
his bay sounds like bluster and bluff
with fight enough behind it
to pull my shoulder out, a time or two,
twist my ankle once—me cursing
him barking as if to say *there, there, there*
or maybe *bear bear bear*.

The first time I called the vet
they panicked, had me bring him in—
two dozen salt dough ornaments—
decorated and waiting to be hung—
glittered his poo for weeks
and when he ate the wire wreath
I thought he was done for

but the vet called back laughing,
“I didn’t realize it was Rufus, he’ll be fine.”
Neighbors with nicer dogs
cross the street when they see him
even now, old as he is,
on his tenth life as he is,
he knows what he smells is that urgent
catches me off guard
with a veer and a sink to his belly
all bones and knobs and fatty bulging tumors
but I can’t budge or reason with his
nose, tracking some deep gumption
and just when I think we’ll kill him
for some thing or another
he’ll pull some hound dog move
that saves us—like letting the little neighbor boy,
the one missing his sweet dead dog,
drape his whole self over top of him,
like the dog was a mule, the boy a heavy pack—
that hound stood still, grinning a pant,
the boy heaved a solid sigh,
said what we all sudden felt:
“Rufus, I love your kind.”

Rebecca Brock

