

2014 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Poetry Category

First Place: “*That Place*,” by Lizzieigh Enos

They don't understand.
It's not a world of pure darkness,
It's an endless expanse of white
As pure as can be,
Stretching out from horizon to horizon.
It's not dark,
It's painfully blinding.

I see the people.
Hazy specters wandering the landscape
Only partially aware of my existence.
I hear the voices,
Like whispers barely reaching
The far reaches of a quiet room,
But the meaning reverberates through the soul.

But there is still that Cimmerian shade,
An emptiness more complete
Than the spaces between the celestial bodies
That burrow deep and take root
Anchoring itself among the echoes
Of pain, fear, sorrow, and anger,
Numbing, desensitizing, slowly killing.

And every morning
I relinquish myself to the glaring white

As I wonder how I made it through another day
Or if I will survive again to see another tomorrow.
And every night
Is an acknowledgment that the whispered lies
That have been thrown at me, are truth.

Sticks and stones
Cannot terrify more than words,
Hurt more than dying piece by piece,
Stab and cut as deeply as the knowledge
That I am nobody, nothing, worthless
Cannot cripple more than knowing that I exist
Only to be broken.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

“Like whispers reaching/ The far reaches of a quiet room” is an excellent line. “Sticks and stones/ Cannot terrify more than words” echoes T. S. Eliot’s use of nursery rhyme to interpret daily existence. I think the opening line could be cut and some lines later could be trimmed but the poem is utterly sincere.

Jim Fatka served as judge for the 2014 contest. Mr. Fatka is a recently retired MCC English instructor who taught numerous writing and literature courses, including creative writing.