

2015 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Poetry Category

Honorable Mention: “*Maria Antonia Josepha Johanna,*” by Amber Dimond

Down she stepped to native music humming
And with her trusting gait two nations’ hopes she tied
Hopes that sought not peace so much as numbing
And crept like vines about this child bride

A hallway seemed not different from the aisle
As if she simply wandered toward her brother’s room
Perhaps the church was home this blurring while
And her brother did not by proxy play a groom

An unknown land its Dauphine awaited
Offering a mere stranger’s bed to keep her warm
Soon the heat of gold her sighs abated
And she stole purple silks from an impending storm

Her inborn bridge that grew from eastern blood
Could not the evermore glowering skies constrain
Nor eclipse the ineluctable flood
That declared her treasured bridge an infected vein

But did she veer from the royal cavalcade?
Is it wrong for a Queen to walk where others trod?
How can diamonds and friends a house degrade?
And are not grander gardens than hers grown by God?

Up she stepped to the foreign sounds of drumming
Not by one falter was her flinty peace belied
Each stride promised the storm's end was coming
But her even gait crackled where the vines had dried

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

I applaud the writer's going beyond the stereotypes of Marie Antoinette. But the diction is too complicated. It gets in the way of the reader being able to experience the poem. I'd like to see it rewritten, much more simply and directly. Give us the benefits of your insights!

*Catherine Frerichs is retired after many years of teaching writing, literature, and other humanities courses at Glen Oaks Community College, Albion College, and, most recently, Grand Valley State University. She is the author of *Desires of the Heart: A Daughter Remembers Her Missionary Parents* (Cold River Studio, 2010), in which she uses her parents' letters, journals, and other research to write about her parents' 40 years of working in Papua New Guinea and the costs to their children. Currently, she is working on a book that explores her relationship with her three Sudanese children whom she foster-parented for seven years and who have remained her children.*