

2017 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Poetry Category

Honorable Mention: “This Dystopia” by Reed Warnke

Scarred earth and shattered dreams
Worsen as days go by.
Tattered clothes on a dirty child,
Building crumble beside her.
Her teddy in hand, stuffing wanders out.
Half a world away, we see these things,
Yet few truly care, as it's not us.
It's not our home, our family, our country, or our problem
More importantly, our fault.
“We couldn't stop it,” people say.
They just look the other way.
Politicians feed on these disasters, pretending,
“No War!” “I'll pull the troops out!”
All hollow promises, just wanting useless victory.
On the other coast, blood still flows,
The open wounds on teens and kids
Bullet holes in families, black and white.
Riots over cops trying to protect and serve.
“Black Lives Matter” plays the card
That the pot used on the kettle.
This dystopia that we call a world
Is a ticking bomb that we all should dread.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS:

“This Dystopia” is an appropriate name for this poem. It describes a world which seems initially to be a post-apocalyptic future. As the poem progresses, we begin to suspect it describes our present moment. That suspicion is confirmed with the reference to “Black Lives Matter,” seeming to make a specific political statement, though its meaning is opaque. The poem makes effective use of imagery, such as “tattered clothes on a dirty child,” to show the effect of the “hollow promises” and “useless victory” that characterize this dystopia.

Dr. Joel R. Brouwer is retired from teaching English and Communication for 47 years, the last 21 on the faculty at Montcalm Community College. During that time, he taught creative writing and

mentored numerous aspiring authors. He also coordinated the statewide LAND Creative Writing Contest for many years. For an example of his writing, consult his travel blog, <https://hippieroadtrip.wordpress.com>