

The Betty Drevniok Award Results 2010

First Prize

whispers of a fragrance
my sister loved
evening in spring
Ellen Compton
Washington, DC

Second Prize

snowflakes...
all the little
self-indulgences
Francine Banwarth
Dubuque, Iowa

Third Prize

star gazing...
one frog answers
another
Carole MacRury
Point Roberts, Washington

Honourable Mention

night comes early --
the last of the potatoes
have eyes
Alice Frampton
Seabeck, Washington

Indian paintbrush --
the myriad colours
of a fire rainbow<
Pamela Cooper
Montreal, Quebec

the long day
a maple key's twirl
wherever
Roland Packer
Hamilton, Ontario

intermission --
a fly on the piano
walks a full scale

Carole MacRury
Point Roberts, Washington

morning hush
the fisherman casts
a thread of sunlight
Catherine J.S. Lee
Eastport, Maine

spring evening --
playing my piano
for all the street to hear
Marilyn Potter
Toronto, Ontario

daylight moon
the chrysanthemums
have covered your name
Ellen Compton
Washington, DC

4-way stop --
everyone waits
for the red corvette
Alice Frampton
Seabeck, Washington

Judge's Comments

The winning haiku. The 1st prize haiku, with an element of synaesthesia, achieved with muted personification, invokes as many as four senses with the phrase “whispers of a fragrance” while the nature of the scent itself is left an enigma. This, with the past tense in the second line, creates an air of nostalgia, without being maudlin.

Added to this, the line “evening in spring” is the title of the last of Richard Strauss’s “Four Last Songs”, a personal favourite, and among the greatest of German lieder.

The 2nd place haiku, “snowflakes”, is notable for its lack of verbs. Its “little self-indulgences” can refer to the speaker or to snowflakes. All snowflakes are individuals, and that, when transferred to the human and animal worlds, with elements of volition and conscious will, is definitely a luxury.

The 3rd prize haiku, simple and pared down, suggests the quest for intelligent life beyond earth and humanity. The hope, perhaps futility, of this search for higher meaning is compared with the frogs’ approach, their songs on a clear spring evening.

The honourable mentions are all fine haiku. All eleven winners suggest the season; all, except one, avoid blatant simile or metaphor, and one way or another go beyond the uniformity that’s creeping into haiku. Many haiku were eliminated on the basis of an excess of images, articles and/or adjectives. The simplest edit might have put some of these at the top.

Grant Savage

Grant Savage won the Drevniok Award in 1999. He wrote *The Swan's Wings* (renku with Ruby Spriggs, Groundhog Press, 1994), *Their White With Them* (Bondi Studios, 2006) and *Finding a Breeze* (King's Road Press, 2009).