

## *First Place* (\$100)

weathered graffiti  
the boulder now  
speaks for itself

*Brad Bennett,  
Arlington, Massachusetts,  
USA*

## *Second Place* (\$50)

scrub jay  
nothing left of the blue  
in dad's jeans

*Debbie Strange,  
Winnipeg, Canada*

## *Third Place* (\$25)

holding the bouquet  
an extra moment...  
the cashier

*Mary McCormack,  
La Grange Park, USA*

## *Honourable Mentions*

(in random order)

night shift—  
the lights change  
in a bus driver's eyes

*Barry George,  
Philadelphia, PA, USA*

first snowfall . . .  
my children become  
builders of cairns

*Julie Schwerin  
Sun Prairie, WI, USA*

thaw  
someone's paper boat  
floats past me

*Nikolay Grankin,  
Krasnodar, Russia*

pruned frangipani  
my grandfather too  
just bones

*Sankara Jayanth Sudanagunta  
Hyderabad, India*

father's will  
I inherit the things  
between the lines

*Srinivasa Rao Sambangi,  
Hyderabad, India*

ours  
to touch  
small parts of the wind

*Gary Hotham,  
Scaggsville, Maryland USA*

## Judges Notes:

### First Place: weathered graffiti

We humans wreak such havoc on the world. The graffiti on a rock in this poem illustrates our tendency to claim the non-human natural world as ours. But Nature has weathered the graffiti off the boulder, which once again can bear its own “boulder” (“bolder?”) message. A good reminder that Nature is still stronger.

### Second Place: scrub jay

The Florida scrub jay is listed as a Threatened species; reportedly fewer than 10,000 remain. The poem’s first two lines warn that the jay’s brilliant blue could vanish forever. Line 2 joins the non-human realm with the human, as in Line 3 the jay’s blue becomes the blue worked, worn, and washed out from “dad’s” jeans. This poem makes us ask ourselves: Should life be about exploitation or care? About consuming or sustaining?

### Third Place: holding the bouquet

In a description of one deeply layered moment, this poem tells a tender story about the human heart. A grocery store cashier scans a bouquet of flowers and, for a split second before handing them back to the customer, imagines herself (himself, herself) as the recipient. The flower bouquet image is concrete, but it’s a stand-in for what the heart truly desires: not a bouquet, but a relationship with someone who might

give a bouquet. Not flowers, but the love the flowers embody.

### HMs:

Full wonder of life inhabits these poems: Children delight in a snowfall; a frozen season thaws to new possibilities; traffic lights glow in a bus driver’s tired eyes; we see life and death of family members, cultivated plants; and all around us the wind, ever-changing, yet always there.

### *The Betty Drevniok Award, est. 2002*

Betty was a past President of the Society. Contest coordination, and layout of "Weathered Graffiti" is by Pearl Pirie. Photo by Maria Hoffman / Alamy Stock Photo.

### Our 2024 Judge:

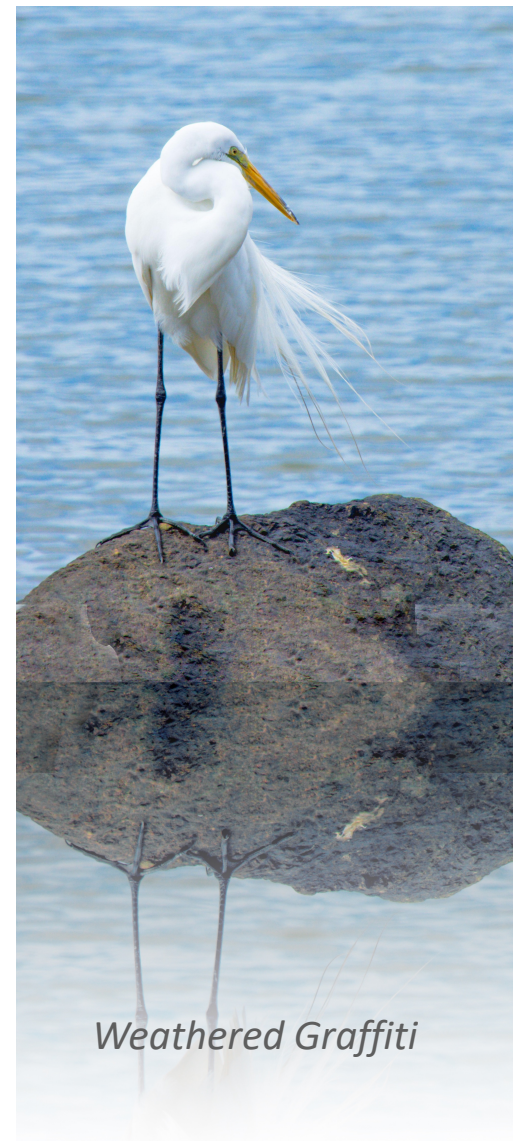
Jennifer Hambrick is the author of the *Joyride*, winner of the Marianne Bluger Book Award, and of two other award-winning poetry collections. Her full-length haiku collection *a silence or two* is forthcoming from Red Moon Press. Hambrick has won many competitions & awards. She lives in Columbus, Ohio. [jenniferhambrick.com](http://jenniferhambrick.com).

### Submission Guidelines:

Details of when to send your unpublished haiku are at: [www.haikucanada.org](http://www.haikucanada.org)



## The 2024 Betty Drevniok Award



*Weathered Graffiti*