

2012 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Poetry Category

Second Place: “*Enlightened,*” by Caitlin Jones

Erratic emotions building
Slowly merging with each other
Happiness, love, helplessness, fear
They seem to contradict one another

Constantly fighting misconception
‘cause I want to correctly perceive
Life the way it should be
But I’m not sure what to believe

When entering past relationships
I’m not sure what I expected
Not Prince Charming or a knight in shining armor
But I’d hoped to feel more loved than neglected

Degraded, manipulated,
Abused, and tossed aside
Stripped of all my dignity
And my sense of pride

An ominous cloud of confusion and failure
Engulfs my heart and mind
It is gloomy, hazy, somber, and bleak
Rendering me blind

Suddenly a glimpse of light
Emerges from the dark
It’s my knight in shining armor
Who creates an immediate spark

Just as I thought I’d reached a dead end
Or was somehow led astray
He came to me with a map and torch
To guide and light my way

Erratic emotions building
Fully merged with each other
And for the first time in my life
They makes sense with one another

I was constantly fighting misconception
But there's no need to correctly perceive
The statements and actions of a person
I fully trust and believe

I know this one is different
Than the others in the past
But what do I think
Will make this one last?

I don't feel confusion
Helplessness, or fear
Doubt, worry
Or a little unclear

It may come unexpectedly
And may be out of your control
But you know it is right
When your heart feels completely whole

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

"Enlightened" chronicles the author's past experience with unhealthy relationships and her subsequent falling in love with someone who treats her respectfully. The author also describes the confusion of seemingly contradictory emotions and coming to a better understanding of her feelings while using a satisfying rhyme scheme.

Elissa Cahn was the contest judge. She is an MFA Fiction student at Western Michigan University, where she teaches composition and serves as the nonfiction editor for Third Coast. Her work has appeared in: NANO Fiction, Midwestern Gothic, Harpur Palate, and Quarterly West. She is currently at work on a story collection.