

OVERLOOKING WILLAMETTE FALLS
By Wendy N. Wagner – Honorable Mention

In the park,
mostly dog
walkers, but also
a couple love-dancing
between benches,
and a man with pockmarks,
cigaretting through another morning.
I wobble over ancient
rocks, my secondhand
shoes still shaped
to someone's
life not so much cast aside
as dislocated.

These settling houses, historian-gilt,
divide desirable
from strip mall.
Below the bluff, a white
shop will sell you
coffee, alchemically spun
from moon dark and velvet,
beans as foreign
to the river
as the street
names.

Crouched at the waterline
the unspeakable
mill grins in broken
glass and ghosts
finger a spur line
clad in sinkholes
and saplings.
Every wall is stained
with spray
paint or waterfall, time
turning to flakes
that flutter
like the seagulls,
hungry
above the fish ladder.

(beginning of new stanza)

Somewhere in the next town,

a woman braided to the river
by these cables
turns on the light
and begins to dress
for the day shift.