

# POETRY

## A Mother's Advice

by Connie Prestianni, Valley Stream, NY

### The Paradox of Time

by Patricia Spadaro, Bozeman, MT

Time is not constant  
no matter what the clock likes to say

Love moves its hands  
slowly, rapidly,  
through moments of pain or joy  
or wondering where the light has gone

Fear freezes its pointy black fingers,  
demanding attention  
from every one of our electric cells

"You're late!" it shouts and tugs, when playing  
that grumpy master of ceremonies,  
racing by on its busy way to somewhere, where?

And then, and then—unexpected,  
the mind bends, the heart opens,  
universes expand and contract  
in barely a blink

No, time is never constant.

What good is a clock anyway?



*Behind the veil of time, they wait*

### Song For My Sister

by Lynne Soulagnet, Medford, NY

O Sister,  
With bandages tight  
they make us  
take small steps  
so they will lead  
and we must follow  
behind them.

They tower over us  
like giant pillars  
so we will tremble  
and cower in their shadows.

They push us down  
and keep us "in our place"  
so they will remain  
always on top.

They deny us  
our rightful place  
at the altar of life  
taking our creations

and sculpting them  
to fit only their needs.

O Sister,  
we are bound together  
in joy and sorrow  
I too have shared your hopes,  
dreamt your dreams,  
and longed for more.  
I too have shared your losses  
cried your tears,  
and ached with the pain  
only a woman knows.

O Sister,  
I too have bled with you  
on battlefields  
where women are sacrificed  
to some nameless god  
in some foreign land  
we call home.



*Sister on a Swing*

### Devotion or Misguided

by Rhonda Weiss, Leeds, NY

Upstairs the sounds from below  
"Don't hurt my mommy"  
"Don't hurt my mommy"  
The crash  
The scream  
The silence  
The excuses

I walked into the refrigerator  
I fell over the tricycle  
I believe in God  
I honor my marriage  
Not like those other women

How can my friends tell me to leave?  
I told that woman at work  
You're the loser for leaving  
I'm good; you're bad  
How can my parents tell me to leave?  
"Don't hurt my mommy"  
"Don't hurt my mommy"

The sounds from below keep coming  
upstairs  
"No! No!"

Someone took my husband away  
They locked him in a psych ward  
In a veterans' hospital  
But I'll wait for his return

My family says to leave  
My friends have long gone  
My child now grown is ashamed of me  
Not him

"Why don't you leave, mom?  
It's not because of me  
He's confined  
You're safe now, mom  
Why do you stay?"

I took a vow  
God understands  
So I wait

Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history. – Plato

Watercolors by  
**Jan Guarino**  
JanGuarinoFineArt.com