First Place Winner

*Marjorie Thomsen, The Catholic University of America*

**With Mrs. Nguyen at the Senior Center**

She’ll bring you rice paper wrapped around soft pork and noodle. Her land and water intact inside the tight, foolproof rolls. For years you’ll chew her mayhem, fresh-picked mint leaf tucked in your empathy, fragrant in the space between you. She’ll describe the dark palette of war, various tints of loving a husband, children in a new country. One day she’ll wear a silk tunic and you’ll guess someone once called her hazel eyes *Aura, Tree Wind, Waterborne*. The language impasse with the local butcher is charcoal with no moonlight to guide the way when describing how to cut meat off the bone. One day she’ll look out the window and see how colors change when the world tilts. She’ll tell you to always knock with your elbows when visiting another’s home—knuckles unavailable, your hands so laden with gifts. You’ll both begin to carry an umbrella from the family of mango when there’s a chance of rain.

Second Place Winner

*Nahomi Martinez, University of Texas at El Paso*

**Friendly Fire**

She wore the uniform but she might as well have worn camo between her legs. She smiled and told me that maybe that would’ve hidden her better. Her smile transitioned to a state of flat affect, depressed mood with tearfulness. Or so I was supposed to document. Nobody was willing to say what happened but it was echoing loudly in my head. She was a soldier and she was losing the war. Someone had stripped her from her gear, rank and her body. She was a soldier yet the cameo after her service was wilting from her face and heart. She was a one-woman army and her perpetrator had hit her with friendly fire. She couldn’t bring herself to say it aloud but her records said MST. The four walls were enclosing around her, leaving her naked to the world. Her shame hung over her head where once her beret was neatly placed and worn proudly. I was supposed to give her a diagnosis when I knew what she needed was justice. Friendly fire had hit her and she was being blamed for bleeding. She was a wounded warrior but nobody called her hero.
Third Place Winner

Joel Izlar, University of Georgia

Social Welfare Politics in Four Haikus:

Soup

Ladles clang on pots,
“Pay attention, sir, your turn for soup.”
It’s all your fault.

Shelter

The laughter of children,
Comforts hearts of mothers.
A shelter safe from hate.

Bridge

Life under the bridge,
is better when it’s warm out.
Winter is coming.

Late Shift

The fluorescent lights gleam,
Onto third-shift shelves.
Rent is due in the morning.

Fourth Place Winner

Bridget Rohan Garrity, The University of Iowa

Case Note 12/15/10

This writer will note that on the above date
The Identified Patient asked about grief again.
The I.P. perseverates on this question.
Affect depressed, disoriented...how does the DSM describe it, again?

Writer will note concerns about ruminations.

What is this, around me in tiny glinting shards?
Why is it laid at my feet?
How do I remake a thing when I can’t remember what it was?
What you have to say, the I.P. asks. Please answer me.

Writer, of course, can’t tell her that she is left in dismay, too.
We don’t have time,
The hour is almost up,
She must remember to breathe
Her inner tide the one true thing.