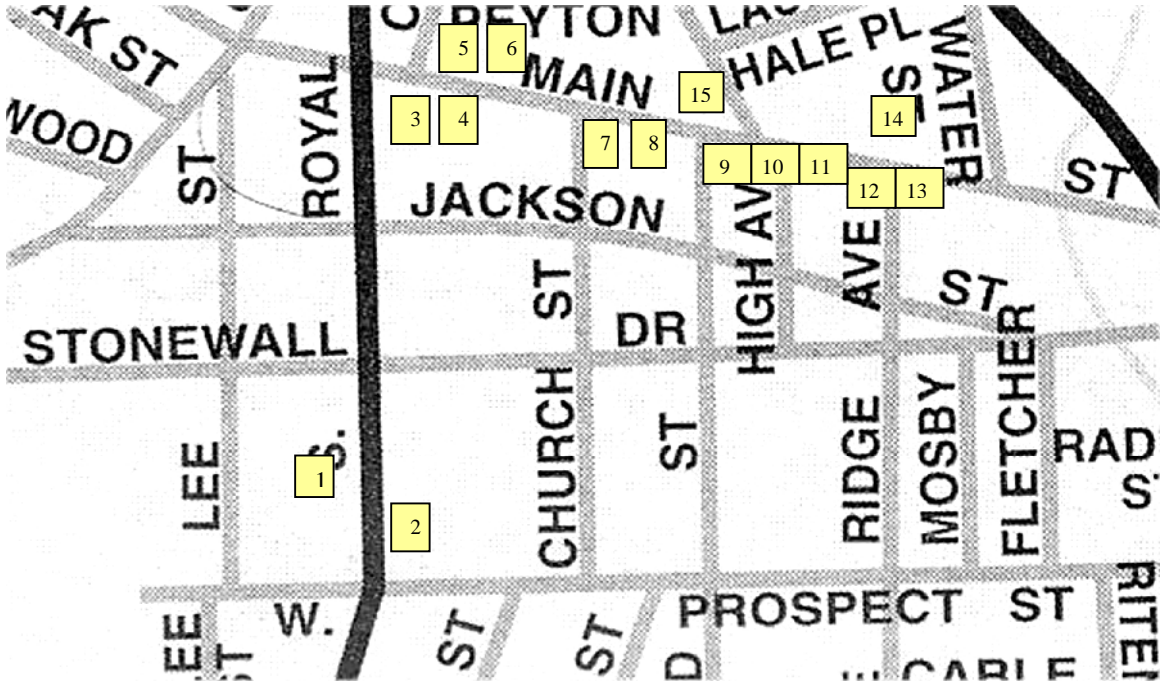
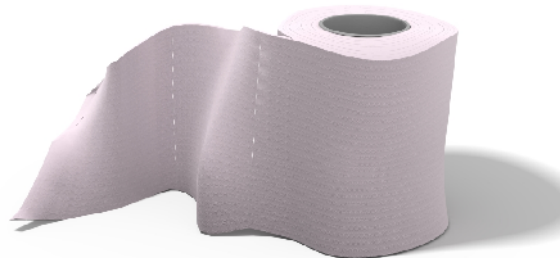


Front Royal Bathroom Poetry Project



Winning Poems and Locations

1. Royal Oak Books—*Blindness* by Shelby Vollten, student
2. Element—*Faster Daddy* by Kevin Seabrooke
3. Delilahs—*Come Out Empty to the Night* by JoEllen McNeal
4. Wine and Duck—*Touching Joel's Back* by Julia Campbell Johnson
5. Vino E Formaggio—*Lie* by Shelby Whetzel, student
6. Around Your Kitchen—*The Hunt* by Clythie Clarcken
7. Lucky Star Lounge—*This Love, This Depression* by Faith Gaile, student
8. Listhus Gallery—*Twilight Windows* by Joanne Cherefko
9. Daily Grind—*Winter Is Here* by Cat Kensho
10. Valley Finds—*The Big One* by Jose Padua
11. Jeans Jewelers—*My Fantasy* by Felicia Hamilton, student
12. Hands to Create—*To Hear the Whippoorwill* by Cathie Johnson
13. Ridgeline Designs—*Lead the Lost Souls Home* by Lynne Lewis
14. The Mill—*Laundry on the Line* by Jane A. Kane
15. Soul Mountain—*Ocean* by Olivia Campbell, student



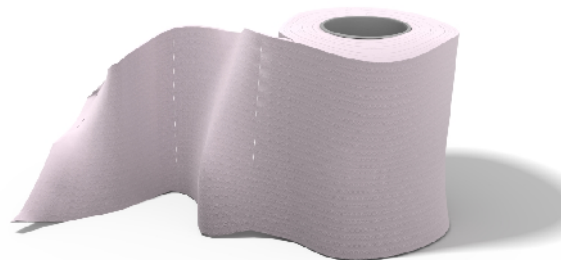
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Blindness

by Shelbie Vollten, student

All my life I've lived like a blind person. Always hearing what people say and
not seeing
it for myself. I don't know if it's true or not, but it's about time someone moved
my hands so I can
see.

Now I see how low down you are. You can't keep your mouth shut. Your
tongue keeps
moving with the untruly words it makes. Why don't you stick with your own
ways, and
stop worrying about mine



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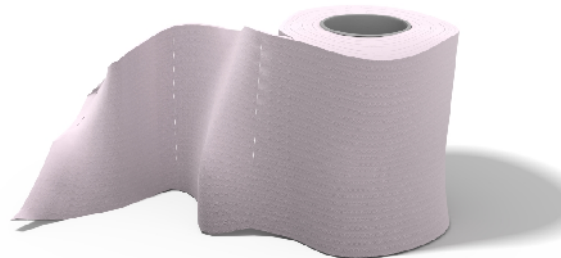
Faster Daddy
by Kevin Seabrooke

"Faster, Daddy, faster!"
My hands close over his small shoes and I
Push as his smiling face recedes.
The chains pull taut,
Ending his arc away from me and he laughs
Rushing forward, feet outstretched.

"Faster, Daddy, faster!"
I give it all I have, an older father, with something
to prove.
Did I push too hard?
The chains slacken and he jerks
Swinging forward, head back in
Ecstasy.

"Faster, Daddy, faster!"
Stepping back I'm mesmerized by the motion.
Back and forth,
The magician's gold watch
Back and forth,
Grandfather's pendulum.

"Faster, Daddy, faster!"
I hear a silent ticking.
Is it the beating of my heart or his?
Even now I can feel these days in the park
Are numbered and softly I say
"No, son, go slowly, go slowly."



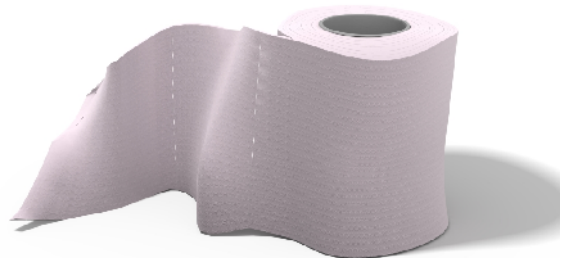
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Come out empty to the night
by Joellen McNeal

Sit down beside the old dog
and listen as he does
to the wind's breath in the leaves.
Feel its cool touch on your skin;
lift your face to the wind battered clouds
and smell their gift of rain.

Turn toward yourself then,
ignore the busy voices that beckon
back into the warmth and the light
of the familiar home where
your husband bends his head
over tomorrow's tasks and
the tea kettle whistles for you.

Listen instead to these other voices
calling from the unimagined depths
of the turbulent night.
This other urgency recognized by the clouds
etched in the moon's silver reflection
and the fingers of your hand
buried deep in the golden dog's fur.

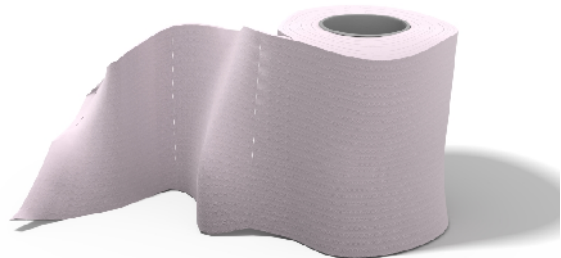


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Touching Joel's Back by Julia Campbell Johnson

The first time I saw you
in that sterile room of monitors
and sounds and lights -- the room
reserved for only the sickest newborns --
I could touch you only by placing
my hand through the hole in
your plastic box, rubbing your back,
holding it there until my arm ached.

I write this because now that
your heart is sound, when I rest my hand
on your grown back --
at a movie, say, or as we talk, --
when I rest it there, though I say nothing,
my arm still aches.



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Lie

by Shelby Whetzel, student

It has no cushion for reality
Only truth it reflects

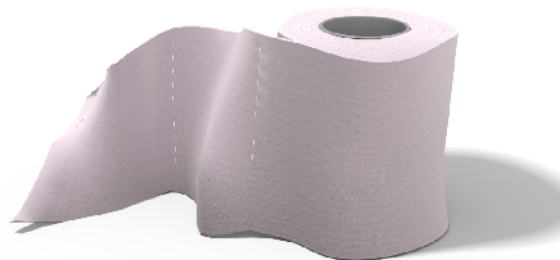
You hate it for showing
Things you don't want to see
What reflects in your eyes
Envy and cruelty
Disappointment and shame
Your rotten emotions
There is no disguising their
Reflection in your eyes

You love it for showing
Things you're desperate to glimpse
You preen and you pluck
To get your soft, wavy hair
Try out your coy smile
Your practiced emotions
A hard outer shell

Beauty is ugly
Ugliness is beautiful
Can you stand to see
What is reflected back at you?

Mirror, mirror on the wall
You can't deny the truth
Don't pretend you can't see your reflection

After all
Its common knowledge
Mirrors always show the truth

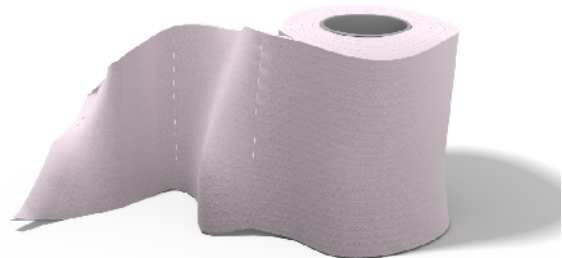


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The Hunt

by Clythie Clarken

Chased by sprinkles and sunshine
Scent of warm wet earth tickling nostrils
Leaves crumple underfoot
Head down
Cold mountain air and warm rays
graze my neck
Eyes scan the forest floor
Trillium unfold, petals curled in a trumpet
Mayapple stand sentinel
Bloodroot relax with violet
Ladyslipper prepare for
glorious entry
Quietly
amidst these friends
Morel awaits my gaze



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This Love, This Depression
by Faith Gaile, student

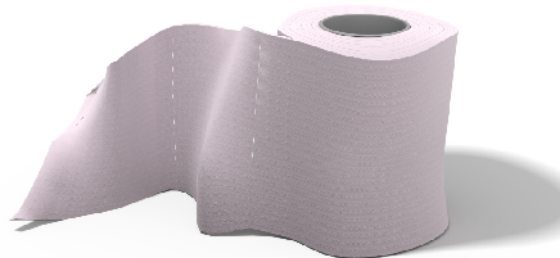
Trembling words, Play in your mind
Flickering candle, Depression binds
Do I love you?
Never to say
Will you love me?
Perhaps today

Whispers screaming in the dark, pain cascading through my heart, touch me, feel
me, let it burn,
Life moves on, last scar, last turn

Fingers cold, Death holds me in
Fear condemns, won't try again
Do I love you?
Never to say
Will you love me?
Perhaps another day

Memories haunting, bind you down, lies repeating, mocking sound, kiss me
breathless, let me
Feel, use me, bruise me, love's slowest kill

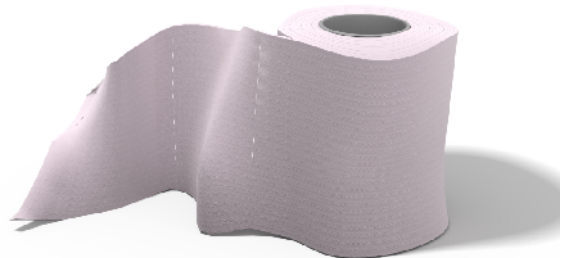
Scent deceiving, Wilted black rose
Truth to harmful, written in prose
Do I love you?
Never to say
Will you love me?
In your own way
Breathing labored, your grip too tight, hateful gaze, tells me I was right, say you
love me as I die,
Close the door with no goodbye



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Twilight Windows by Joanne Cherefko

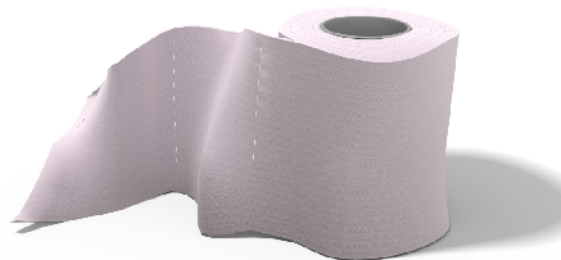
Brows that lean from windows
Are cast in wonder from
A thousand lonely rooms.
Eyes linger in lived-in shadows
That beckon strands of light
From dusty sills
Where she gazes,
Shirtsleeves raised slightly
To permit the advantage of light
From distant portals.
Starless, she wonders at
The rampant whirl of emotion
Caught below in timeless exposure
As she bemoans her
Collection of chairs,
Disarming and still in
These twilight scenes.
Lint falls from her
As light traces the pattern
In the air that swirls
Her in a raptureless cocoon.



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Winter is Here by Cat Kensho

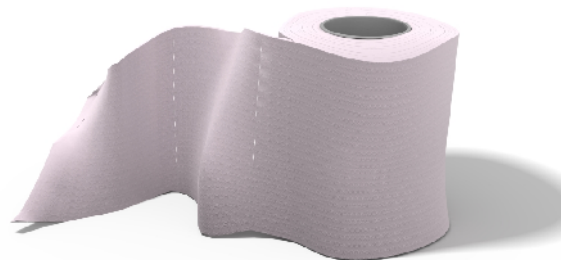
The Juncos are back.
I watch them pecking and scratching
through bits of bird droppings to uncover a
seed snack, or two. They stamp around
unhurried intent on finding what is theirs by
grace.
Grace and the Visa Debit card presented to the
toothless checkout clerk at Southern States.
He and me performing miracles at \$35.00 a bag.
Nut and Fruit Bird Select, a high brow mélange
found on
the bottom shelf are delights for the Cardinal
and his wife,
the Carolina Chickadees, Blue Nut Hatch, Mr.
Tit Mouse
and the Juncos. For a moment I feel like a god.
But then I'm reminded,
winter is here.



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The Big One by José Padua

My bonds to failure are stronger
than my bonds to triumph.
But I promise not to tell this
if you promise not to listen
when I break all my past commitments
and finally win The Big One.



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My Fantasy

by Felicia Hamilton, student

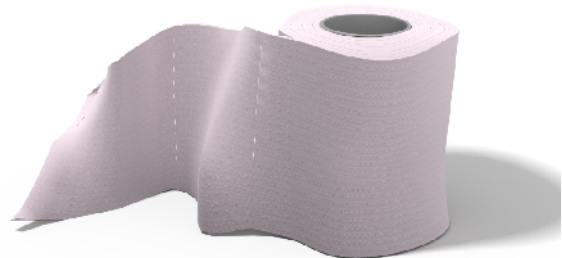
Captivate my enchanted kiss
Where I was once in solitude
Mesmerize what was once a wish
Give me my romantic prelude

Tenderize the only thing
That I keep in my core
It waits for you're answer
It stays wanting more

When I was once alone
I dreamed of the feel
The stroke of your hand
I imagined it was real

It got more disturbing
As time went on
I became obsessed
And more led on

To think of this day
Where my dream is now true
It brought me to say
I love you



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To Hear the Whippoorwill

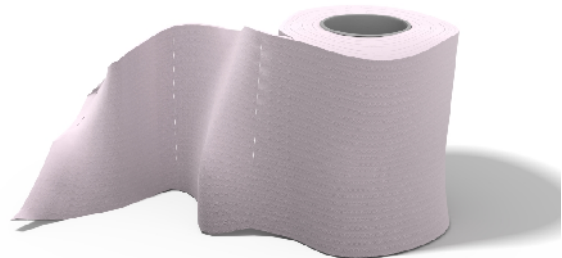
by **Cathie Johnson**

When I was a child I'd run and play
with not a care from day to day.
I was too young
to hear the whippoorwill

Teenage years came furious and fast
the fun and freedom would not last.
Life was too hectic
to hear the whippoorwill

As an adult working out in the world
responsibilities all around me swirled.
I was too busy
to hear the whippoorwill

In later years now I lay in bed
Memories and love around me spread,
It is my joy to hear
to hear the whippoorwill.



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Lead the Lost Souls Home
by Lynne Lewis

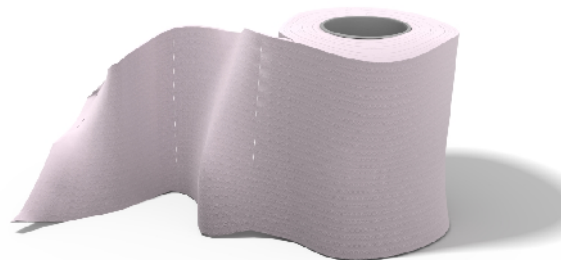
As desert dawn crowned mourning mountains
Life-gift flowed down skin to earth
Anointing, blessing, keening, bleeding
Ruby prayers for soul's rebirth.

Chanting low called they thru Time
Enchanted hands oer medicine wheel
To lost hearts, empty lonely souls,
To the trapped, with eyes of steel.

Soul flutes breathed a haunting cry,
Entwining echoes wove the wind,
Pressed gently on the threads of sky,
Made wide the pathway Home again.

Through the homing portal shining
Awakened hearts and souls divining,
Wonderment upon their faces
The Source's love their fear erases,
Each one reaching back to take
The hand of those who hesitate
And as exultant larks they fly
Homeward
into morning's sky.

[Yaqui "Freeing of Souls" ceremony
at dawn, Palm Springs, CA]



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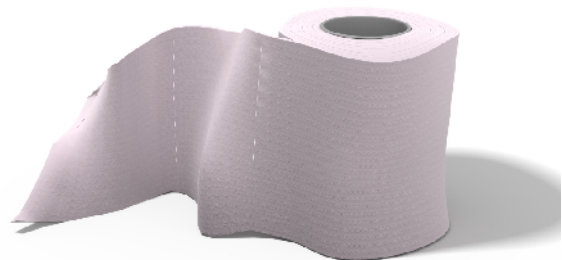
Laundry on the Line

by Jane A. Kane

I remember Mom with wooden clothespins in her mouth.
Her hands hanging sheets, towels, shirts and dresses on the line.

The clothesline was strung in a square surrounding a sprawling weeping willow.
My cousin and I called it our airplane tree. It could take us anywhere.

On wash day the four billowing snapping walls of cloth could be a fort or castle.
Lake Michigan zephyrs kindled fantasy in the warm summer sun.



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Ocean

by Olivia Campbell, student

The sky a deep blue,
no clouds in sight.
a little bit of sun peeking up behind the horizon.
A kiss from your lips to his.
A cool breeze from the ocean.
Warm water rushing in and out to sea,
barley touching the tip of your toes.
Watching an older couple walk the shore board.
As you sit there on the cool summer sand,
a tan line crosses over your shoulder!
You close your bright hazel eyes, listening to the waves
crash
in the distance.
The sun has risen above head as you smile into the ocean,
You write forever in the sand only for it to soon be
washed away...

