From the Editor

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As we end our 2009 publication cycle, we pay tribute to John Stone who died this past year. As an eminent cardiologist, esteemed poet, and devoted teacher, John touched an incalculable number of lives: patients, readers, students, and those of us in the field of medical humanities who often turned to him for wisdom and to his writing for truth. John also inspired and nurtured countless other young (and not so young) poets by giving of his time and energy to the William Carlos Williams Medical Student Poetry Competition as a judge. For years, he sifted with care through submissions by medical students who themselves were straining “to hear the voice of the patient / in the thin reed of his crying” and learning “to see most acutely out of the corner of [their eyes],” as John encourages them to do in his valediction address, “Gaudeamus Igitur.”

There is a perfect grace, then, with Richard Berlin’s introductory and commemorative essay, “Drinking Deep: A Tribute to John Stone,” for Richard not only donned the mantle of judge this past year and selected the winning poems for the 27th annual William Carlos Williams Poetry Competition, but he also discovered poetry as a medical student himself because of John Stone. Thus, we are delighted to honor Richard as well as this year’s winners. Our congratulations and best wishes to:

- Jason Paluzzi who is a second-year student at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. Jason graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a major in biology and minors in music and writing. He plans a career in neurosurgery, delivering healthcare across language barriers and to the underserved and uninsured. His poem, “Dandelions,” placed first in this year’s competition.
- Jenna Le who is a fourth-year medical student at Columbia University. She has published poetry in national literary magazines and scholarly articles in medicine and mathematics. In 2008, she won first place in the Alpha Omega Alpha poetry competition. Her poem, “Tire Swing,” placed second.
- Apoorva Balakrishnan who is a second-year medical student at the University of Manitoba Medical School in Winnipeg. She has always written poetry, finding that it has become a way to make sense of the world and her place in it. Her poem, “march 1973,” placed third, and she describes it as an attempt to reconnect with her father’s immigrant experience.

Therese Jones, on behalf of the editorial board.

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