

Third Prize 2022

**The Lord sends our roots rain**

**by Margaret Wilmot**

It's warm this evening, and the grass smells of dusk.  
No rain for weeks but at this green hour

the air is light as breath,  
light as song.

Thrushes, blackbirds,  
and a voice from the era of gramophones –

it scatters its notes in droplets  
from some other where.

I lean out the window, catch them on my face . . . .  
Softball in the vacant lot until we couldn't see.

Stepping out into the city street after an office day.  
Each image strays down its own trail.

Sheep on a dust-track baaing toward the stone-and-bramble pen –  
tufts snag on thorns – good for blisters, we used to say.

Small figures move against the light as if on screen,  
Bubble of laughter, clink of glass.

*Summertime, and the living . . .*  
was never easy.

The voice is a kite, dipping, lifting all my hours –  
even the time a wren

perched on this open sill as I drank tea.  
When did I slip across some great divide?

My old dog would stop, look puzzled  
if I pressed on, willed our loop wider, wider.