

**The Bridge 2009 - Honorable Mention**

**Annette Schwartz - Houston, TX**

**PAINT CAN**

Long white curls dangled  
from a tight, knit cap  
above an emaciated body.  
Her eyes, in a pock-marked  
lean face, begged.

I leaned toward the faded lady  
who crouched near the curb  
clutching a paint can  
and handed her a dollar.

"Here" she said,  
holding up the dented can  
she had wiped  
with the hem of her dress.

I whispered, "No, thank you."  
"Then take the words with you" she said.  
I read, on the side of the can,  
"Like a baby's breath or a mother's touch,  
your soul soars on wings of love."