

## Top Honorable Mention

**Carol Saul Bayma** – Norfolk, VA

### Foot Washing

Gingerly, I peel thin gray and hole-y sport socks  
from fresh blisters on the topside of her toes  
and that soft place where the ball of bone  
becomes an arching ache. I drop them  
in the trash -- she starts and gasps,  
they are her last pair  
and, though now stiff with sweat and dust,  
they fill a need. Could they "just be  
washed out" with her feet?

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Lemon dish soap, laced with bleach,  
bubbles concrete grit from flat black feet;  
stings the shiny, weeping place  
above his ankle. He wore  
a sore where the oversized shoelace  
was tied.

III

Anxious eyes yield to a shy smile;  
day labor muscles flex  
and release their tension  
through sinewy toes into terry cloth fingers.  
(Later, I would wipe a greasy hair stain  
from the wallboard where his chair had been.)  
*Scrub that callous harder, dear,  
it don' hurt none.*