

The Bridge 2009 – Honorable Mention

Eileen Malone - Colma, CA

CARDBOARD SIGN

Prepares to sleep not on
but under the bus stop bench
speaks loudly to no one
in particular, chatters as he digs
a burrow, almost a foxhole
into the plastic bags and rags
the stink of old shoes
dashed hopes, says tomorrow
that incomparable day
no one will ever see again on earth
will be Easter all afternoon
by evening it will change
and become almost Christmas eve
curls himself up tight
in the socket of the blind warm eye
of shops shutting down their neon
traffic pulling away
--artillery ceasing to fire
pulls his soul's cloak around
himself and sleeps like a soldier
lightly, resembling a dead man
but aware, his cardboard sign
resting on his chest, the words:
disabled veteran will work for food
forming a dulled, old bullet-ridden
Bronze Star.