

## (2) Honorable Mention

Julia Morris Paul - *Manchester, CT*

### **Flaco's Mother**

Her fingers prod the black beads  
of the Rosary. Hail Marys  
flutter at her lips. She catches  
her breath only when she reaches  
Amen. If you watch her from behind  
you might think she's crying.  
The truth is, she prays for my son.  
She stands at a window that overlooks  
the dirt lots of her neighborhood,  
where a white boy is as alien  
as a ChemLawn truck.  
She calls him Blanco. He lives  
in the junked Taurus in the back yard.  
She's given him blankets from  
Flaco's old room. It's below zero tonight.  
The world is frozen solid.  
Even the old newspapers and plastic bags  
won't rise off the ground at the wind's command.  
Flaco's mother prays that the Holy Family  
will watch over Blanco. She kisses  
the crucifix, returns the Rosary to the drawer  
in the base of the plastic Virgin.  
She wishes she knew my name.  
She would tell me that she's walked  
in my shoes. She is certain I must  
be praying, too. She'd say to me:  
*Sometimes that is all a mother can do.*