

The Bridge 2009 – Honorable Mention

Marilyn Peretti - Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Pads People

*(Dedicated to the late Barbara Brent
who developed the fine P.A.D.S. program
for the homeless in DuPage County,
Illinois, just west of Chicago.)*

Every night, when it's cold,
they find the place.
They drive broken cars,
take reliable trains
rolling only east or west,
or walk, burdened with their
plastic bags of life support,
to arrive at a church, a holy place,
made sacred by their presence,
the meek.

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Blessed are the meek, for they
shall inherit the earth, and
blessed are those on the council
who discussed and voted to
Let them in, to share the
padded concrete floor,
donated hot dishes,
squeamish doubts.
Stories of no jobs, unplanned
pregnancies, victims of tough-love
and worse: mental disorders,
minds battered on
unintended battlefields –

seep into the veins of the
churched, blood mixing with
blood, unlikely communion
made in heaven.