

## **The Bridge 2009 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner**

**Susan Miller** - Arlington, Va.

### **When Worlds Collide**

It was a Wednesday I think,  
like any other  
on a busy corner on K Street.  
Two-piece suits  
shooting like torpedoes  
down the street to their 3 o'clock.  
Dazed tourists in plaid shorts  
and knee-high athletic socks,  
noses buried in Metro maps.  
Lycra-clad messengers  
giving the finger to the cabbie  
who narrowly missed their spokes.  
And there you lay, silent,  
on the still-cool March sidewalk.  
Resting your head against  
a building where eight flights up  
wing-tipped managers were  
making mergers and wondering  
if they would be home in time  
for their son's Little League game.  
You didn't catch the scent of com dogs  
oozing mustard from the vendor.  
Or hear the giggling teen-agers,  
legs drowning in baggy Levi's,  
haggling with the sunglass salesman  
over \$9 fake Ray-Bans.  
And they didn't see you, your one docksider  
and wonder where was the other one.  
They didn't ask for a stale chip  
from a half-eaten bag  
or a Marlboro from a crushed pack.  
They didn't see a worn photo  
of a tiny grandson or feel the imprint  
of a medal from a battle long ago.  
A woman walked up, maybe in her 20s,  
her mind on matters like

half-price happy hour beers.  
You locked eyes and she stood frozen,  
one Nine West heel inches away  
from your world stacked neatly  
in a cardboard box.  
You wondered if she wondered  
if she should say something,  
give you a quarter, a piece of advice.  
But you turned over, let her go,  
spilling her back into the crowd,  
bodies careening like bumper cars.  
It was a Wednesday I think,  
like any other,  
on a busy corner on K Street.