

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner for the Bridge's 2010 National Poetry Contest:

**Carol Saul Bayma - Norfolk, VA**

### **I lost a shoe in Norfolk**

the year the lice stole all the blankets  
from church shelters. It was a good  
shoe, too,  
although any shoe with half a sole  
is apt to stroll in the night  
if you can't keep it under wraps.

Ordinarily, I would  
wrap my arms  
around my outside jacket,  
shoes safely stuffed inside  
– my pillow for the night.  
Now my head rests less  
upon recycled air  
jordans that mold  
lace ridges between the eyelets  
on my morning face.

I remember Tim  
lost a ratty wool-knit cap  
on that same night. It was his spare,  
and a southern church mouse  
declared it Jesus' justice  
in a quivering speech  
that chilled us more  
than dreaming on those drafty floors:  
"if you have two coats,  
give one to them that needs."

William holds his Bible. Faithfully,  
tenderly, his moistened  
finger kisses the comer  
of each sacred page, turning  
his repentance into sentences  
his shifty, scared eyes scan  
but cannot read. The Orkin handbill  
serves as bookmark  
when he closes both, chosen  
to repel the vermin.