

# Dear Em

By: Diane Passero

*Undergraduate Honorable Mention Poetry Prize Winner*

Dear Em . . . sometimes, but only once, I fell asleep chewing gum. The next day I walked through a spider's web. It clung stubbornly to my moist flesh. Mexican beer and cigarette smoke made it all better. I can't go to work. Management changed the dress code. We can't wear blankets . . . of snow . . . in the garden. Is octopus the name of a flower? If not, it should be . . . long vines climbing downward until they reach the beach, attaching themselves to the sand. Witches or bitches. They're both the same. Only I can dance with witches. Their long luminous nails get tangled in my hair, but wash out with a little formaldehyde. That octopus is 49 years dead. Bury it with your father's ashes . . . your mother's body. You sold the ashes? Now sell your soul. But only if it's Thursday and the apple cider is still warm like toast. Yes. A toast to gardens of moist flesh and flowers, as ashes blow through the air like snow and land on the painting of the dead hand holding a rose.