

In this weekend of popes, announcing our papal poetry contest winners

What better way to celebrate the canonization of Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII than by announcing the winners of Open Window's papal poetry contest!

I would love to say we were showered with entries from all corners of the globe, but I do think more than a few of you were intimidated by the entries posted to the comments section. Who wouldn't be?

Today I am delighted to introduce you to two poets in our virtual, blog-reading midst, and share their poignant, quite different tributes to our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

From RXB, we have a haiku, touching in its elegant simplicity:

**From Argentina
To the Vatican you flew
A dove to the Ark.**

Then, from Mary Ann Kreitzer, we have a brilliantly composed sonnet. I had not even thought to take on such a complex art form, yet she mastered it in a splendid poem summarizing so much of what our beloved pope has meant to the Church and the world!

**To Peter's chair he came, a big surprise
With love for Lady Poverty his mark,
Refusing pomp and trappings, he abides
In simple rooms outside the papal park.
St. Peters's has not seen his like before
Although that could be said of every pope.
Each is unique in place and time, what's more
Each offers to his age the gift of hope.
Pope Francis is God's gift for these hard days
When mankind seems intent on suicide.
He calls us to be brave, embracing ways
That call to all to rush to Jesus' side.
And while we cannot know the day or hour,**

We still can till the garden for the flower.

Wow! Thank you and congratulations to our two winners!

It occurs to me now that perhaps the contest stifled the creativity of readers who might have been inspired to write about other popes, including those two who will be canonized on Sunday.

For example, this week my brother-in-law George P. Matysek, Jr., responded to an email with this verse about John XXIII:

**'Twas a bold question to pose to a pope,
But the reporter was brave and no dope.
'How many work at the Vatican?' he asked,
holding his breath quite very fast,
awaiting his answer with some hope.**

**Good Pope John paused and reflected;
The question need not be neglected.
So smiling and nodding, the pontiff did laugh:
Then gave his response: 'About half.'**

In the true spirit of a poetry slam, I toss back:

**John Twenty-three! How can it be
You left your mark for all to see?
You may have been a country priest,
But with the strength to fight a beast
And shoulder problems as our pope.
You gave the Church a deep, deep hope.
Before your tenure was quite through
You launched that Council Number Two!
You spoke of love, and lived it out,
And so on Sunday, we will shout,
Hurrah! Hurrah! And yay! Whoopee!
For our great saint, John Twenty-three!**

And then this one on Pope John Paul II:

John Paul the Great! John Paul the Great!

**The Holy Spirit was his mate!
He fought for people to be free
And communists from him did flee.
He showed us how to age with grace
And traveled to 'most ev'ry place.
He led a life so full of love
And loves us still from up above.
And so we said, and we still do,
John Paul Two, we do love you!**

What an amazing moment in history! If you aren't celebrating by writing poetry, do you have any plans to mark the canonizations of these two beloved popes?