

Second Place

Living With Witches

by Thomas C. ("Doc") Miller

I've been sleeping on the roof again.
Though first in the neighborhood to do it,
I'd stopped for a while
and reconciled with my lovely wife.
But, she grew shrewish once more
and my children badgered me for money,
threatening me with rubber knives
while the old lady sat in my chair
watching television. "Enough!"
I shouted. "I'm sleeping on the roof again."
"Good night," she said. "Good night."

Sometimes I roll off, catch myself
on the gutter or land in the flowerbed.
That's no place to sleep.
When it rains, I don't sleep as well
but smell the clean air, moist earth
and kiss raindrops from my lips.
But it's nights like this
when the Milky Way swirls stars like cereal
in a perfect bowl of black and light
that I dream best and longest.
Andy sits next to his chimney across the street.
At first, he watched me with astonishment
from his bedroom. Then I saw him
on his roof, sulking and muttering,
until I waved and said, "Sleep tight
and happy dreams."
Other men heard this.

I fold clothes from the basket of laundry
my wife throws up to me.
I snap towels and roll socks,
wave to my neighbors at their chores
on their roofs and listen
to the chatter of fluttering leaves.
My wife says once the boys grow older
she may let them come visit me.
I'll read them stories of Odysseus
and Elpenor on Circe's roof.
I'll warn them to be careful
living with witches.



Doc Miller is a criminal defense lawyer, handwriting expert, and poet. Miller studied English literature at Oxford University through Middlebury College. He has been hoping to publish a poem in *The Colorado Lawyer* since graduating from University of Denver College of Law in 1992.

(Photo: Judith Phillips)