

Winning Poems in 2022 CFCP, Inc., Annual Contest

7. California, Second Place

His Only Poem

This group was progressive,
but even those Berkeley types
grew tired of an old smelly man
who came to their meetings
like it was his job
to recite the same poem
over and over

The seasoned Bay Area poets
took their turns to perform
their fancy free verses,
but I was disappointed
until I heard
an unkempt old man
in soiled pants
scanning his plain rhymed lines.

A tribute to a late friend
who saved him in the sixties
on the Shasta summit.
“Stiffer” was his only poem.
The real thing
written by the homeless man
on a bench in Berkeley,
who forgot his name,
who drove crazy the group of seasoned poets
by reciting over and over
the same rhymed piece.

He disappeared at the end of the year.
Some say he went South,
some say they saw him
on the Shasta summit.

Helen Kanevsky
Charottesvile, VA