

2023 Winning Adult Poems

Listen, Sisters, for the Drum!

Vast the prairie, vast the mountains,
Vast the spirit of her tribe.
Dancing for the generations,
Surging, swaying, all as one -
 "Listen, Sisters, for the drum!"

Small, not fragile; young, yet strong.
Like the feathers of the eagle,
Taking flight at spirit's call,
Motion born in rhythmic hum -
 Drawn together by the drum!
 - Donna S. Richey

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Sun Beats

That day by all measures, like any other,
Its length, its rhythms, its minutes and hours,
Awakened by whispers and a sweet forehead kiss,
This day would be special for what it's filled with.
The Earth told us now we will dance for the sun,
My mother told me, just listen for drums.
Wary of blunders to show what I've learned,
Played out in my head, turn after turn.
How will I know and when will they come?
These sounds in the air, these fatherly drums,
She touches my chest on top of my covers,
You listen right here and not to another,
The day was a dream, the harvest of summer,
By the end of that day I was my own drummer.
 - Gilbert De La Rosa

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Trail, Unending

Not so wild,
This abandon,
But a rehearsed joy,
Because underneath
Brightly woven fabrics
And intricate, studied steps,
The drum beats
In time
With the heart.

An echo.

Unending longing
For stolen lands...
True home.

- *C.M. Bratton*