

## NO CONTEST!

[written for an online poetry contest held to show the mindlessness of the computerized ranking of poems.]

When no one thinks, who can we thank  
in contests ruled by Auto Rank?

We can indeed congratulate  
how some made pen and paper mate  
or wedded words on screen with mouse  
(a modern keyboard's other spouse),  
but winners' prizes come by chance  
with cyber-programmed happenstance!

Our heart pounds vainly at the bank  
of mindless, artless Auto Rank!

Is there a lesson? Only one—  
which I foreknew when I'd begun—  
that poets reap their own reward  
by writing what their minds have stored,  
but gain still more when skill commends  
their works to praise from poet-friends.

So, if you think this contest stank,  
its odor reeks from Auto Rank.

— *David L. Hatton, 5/20/2018*