

LACC Writing Contest Poetry 1st Place

**Title : The Jungle After Dark
Entrant : Nicole Y. Johnson**

The Jungle after Dark

My bedroom is at the back of our apartment.

One story above the alley where all the tenants park.

Around the clock the squeaky garage gates open and close...open and close...open and close...

Seem like they get home at 2AM then turn back around and leave at 5AM.

...Right from under my window.

That alley sees a whole lot of traffic during the witching hour.

They all seem to crawl out only once I've retired for the night.

Derelicts and drunks; crazies and crackheads; the homeless and the hookers.

All of them party-hardy, sitting cozily on the cheap furniture left behind by the evicted.

...Right from under my window.

Sometimes 5-Oh be down there with 'em.

Rounding 'em up or just harassing 'em for general sport.

Their radios and loud voices heightens the cacophony of noise.

Seem like it takes foreva' to arrest somebody nowa'days.

...Right from under my window.

I think the other night some gangstas were roughin' up an addict.

Shakin' him down; I could hear the cussin' and shoutin'

The thwack that's made when a fist pounds on a face and body.

They beat his ass for a long minute, too. The po-po's missed out on that one!

...Right from under my window.

On extremely rare occasions – like last night – a peace falls, and there is an unusual calm.

No arguing neighbors, blastin' the Lakers' game from their surround-sound; No

helicopters swooping down like ghetto-birds, searching for suspects – nothing...

Wide-awake – I fidgeted all night long, finding no comfort in the creepy quiet.

...Right from under my window.