



**First Place Winner  
Mergel Funsky  
Poetry Contest**

Bob Maganuco excitedly receives the “Mergel”, the highest imaginary trophy awarded for excellence in the Imaginary Arts (comparable to the “Oscar” for movies, the “Tony” for theater, or the “Ginny”, for really long legal documents).

# Winning Entries in the 2010 Mergel Funsy Poetry Contest

## First Place

MERGEL

-- Robert Maganuco

Greatest Detective of the World,  
Builder of Buildings, Lover of Pizza  
and Pickles, but only if sour;  
Man of the Big (but two-dimensional) Shoulders.

They tell me you play Monopoly and I believe them, for I  
have seen you pass "Go."  
And they tell me you are a dance champion and I answer: Yes, it  
is true as I have seen the Funsy.  
And they tell me you are imaginary and my reply is: Just because something  
is imaginary, doesn't mean it isn't real.  
And having answered so I turn once more to those who  
sneer at you, and I give them back the sneer  
and say to them:  
Come and show me another person so active (but never moving),  
and with achievements nearly unimaginable:  
Presidential Candidate Funsy, Ambassador Funsy,  
Oscar-winner Funsy, *Time's* "Man of the Year".

Living in a closet high above the city,  
yet emerging when imagined,  
Flying,  
Sailing,  
Building,  
Eating and  
Eating.  
Wearing his hard hat, smiling without  
teeth (how does he eat?),  
Smiling but not laughing,  
though others laugh when he appears,  
Appearing nowhere,  
yet everywhere imagination takes him,  
Proud to be Greatest Detective of the World,  
Builder of Buildings, Lover of Pizza and Pickles, but only if sour.

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(with thanks and apologies to Carl Sandburg)

**Notes from Mergel:** The 156 bus passes by Carl's Village (on LaSalle Street) but I never met the guy, and he's not on my mailing list. Simon says Carl Sandburg was a famous poet, but he's dead so he couldn't enter my contest. I googled him and found his poem all about Chicago. It's almost as good as Bob's winning entry, but it doesn't mention food enough (except that Hog Butchers obviously refers to bacon). So, I figured the rest of you might want to compare the two, and see why Bob won. (Bob is still alive, which gave him an advantage).

## CHICAGO

--Carl Sandburg, 1916

HOG Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I  
have seen your painted women under the gas lamps  
luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it  
is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to  
kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the  
faces of women and children I have seen the marks  
of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who  
sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer  
and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing  
so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on  
job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the  
little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning  
as a savage pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,

Shoveling,

Wrecking,

Planning,

Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with

white teeth,  
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young  
man laughs,  
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has  
never lost a battle,  
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse.  
and under his ribs the heart of the people,  
Laughing!  
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of  
Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog  
Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with  
Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

\* \* \*

## Second Place

### On Ontology

-- David Finklestein

**If Anselm, about God, were right  
Then Mergel—who isn't quite  
There—would be, thereby, less great**

**But Anselm's Proof (God knows) is unsound  
And Mergel says he's always found  
That being real is a trait  
We tend to overrate**

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**Notes from Merge1:** David is a philosophy professor, and his entry is distinguished in several respects:

First, it's the most esoteric. Would you believe, Simon actually had to tell me about St. Anselm's Ontological Proof for the Existence of God! I never learned it at the Imaginary Training Institute. God, having been imaginary far longer than any of us, was one of the chief professors there, and he refused to cover that topic. He considered it a personal affront to try to prove he's real, since, if true, then by definition he'd be disqualified from tenure.

As David implies, one of the key fallacies in Anselm's argument is the bald assumption, in one of its major premises, that Being is greater than Not Being. Apparently Anselm never even considered whether being Imaginary is greater. I bet that the many philosophers among you

are all nodding in acquiescence, and are silently re-hashing Anselm's argument in your head, thinking of how it might be illustrated in Photoshop.

And second, out of all the poems submitted, David's is the **only** entry not to mention the word 'Pickle.'

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## Third Place

(Untitled)

-- Carol Cimo

Imagination is the game.  
It's made some rich.  
It's brought some fame.  
But for one very special family --  
imagination has increased their number  
from 2 to 3.

Truly a unique and funny man --  
his name is Mergel --  
a self-imposed mini-master of the universe  
who has a following of adoring fans.  
Whenever there's a photo op "chance,"  
you'll find Mergel somewhere in the picture  
painting a rainbow or doing the Funskey --  
(Mergel's own special dance)  
dressed in his yellow hardhat  
and blue overall pants.

His likes are many,  
his dislikes are few --  
but, always, always,  
Ginny & Simon are his favorite two.  
Simon & Mergel get to play  
while Ginny works the day away.  
But after 8:00, when the dinner bell chimes,  
they sit together and together they dine.  
Dinner is a maze of Mergel "likes" --  
which consists of pickles, pizza, lambchops and juice --  
and can't forget bacon and sundaes (piled high with hot fudge) --  
a gastronomical nightmare only Mergel could love.

His talents are many,  
his mistakes very few,  
but when you're imaginary  
that's what you can do.  
His many accomplishments could fill up a book  
(and he's written one, too).  
He's a spy, plays the trombone and marches around --  
and one of his greatest accomplishments --  
he built One South Dearborn up from the ground.  
He's performed with a band and been on t.v. --  
and dappled in politics for the "blue" party.  
A Renaissance man whose feats are so magnifico  
that I've run out of flattery and so I must go.  
But I must proclaim before I do leave --  
There's only ONE Mergelman and THAT, I believe.

But just one more thing  
before I depart  
what would we all do  
-- without Simon's great art?

**Notes from Mergel:** Carol's poem is special in a lot of ways, apart from its pinpoint accuracy and unbiased assessment of its topic. First, it looks cool on the page. Second, it mentions food more than any of the other entries. Carol has a remarkable memory for so many of my historical achievements -- maybe I should use this poem as my Facebook profile.

