

The Heart of the Indianapolis 500

We've hoped for clear blue skies
For a hundred years
Waving from the stands
Our world awash in cheers
Searching for familiar faces
This is our beloved race, this is
The Indianapolis 500

As Back Home Again in Indiana
Is sung straight into our hearts
I know there's nowhere else I'd rather be.
Revvng motors in taut lines
Ache to see that green flag fly
At the Indianapolis 500

And they're *off!* around the track
We pray our favorite leads the pack
Whizzing past us fast and faster than we can see.
A blur of colors take maneuvers
Past the stallers and slow-movers
At the Indianapolis 500

Oh, the joy at the finish line!
The checkered flag drops and it's over
A victory lap or two as the crowd goes wild.
A quart of milk is drunk and spilled
No greater feeling than that chill
At the end of the Indianapolis 500

We'll be back again next year
For the tailgating and cheers
To see our favorites—those heroes we adore
Great ghosts of winners long ago
Watch over race fans, for they know
They're the heart of the Indianapolis 500

—Jenny Kalahar, Elwood, IN

From the author: *The people who support the racers, from the folks at home listening to their radio with a keen ear to every lane change and zoom, to the tailgaters and folks cheering in the stands -- these are the heart of this Hoosier tradition, and they were my inspiration.*

Jenny Kalahar is a used & rare bookseller in Elwood with her husband, Patrick. She is the treasurer of the Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs, a board member of Brick Street Poetry, and she helms Last Stanza Poetry Association in Elwood. She is the humor columnist for Tails Magazine. Jenny has published two novels set in a used bookshop that fosters cats, and has a collection of poetry titled One Mile North of Normal and Other Poems. Her new novel, This Peculiar Magic, is a fantasy set in central Indiana.