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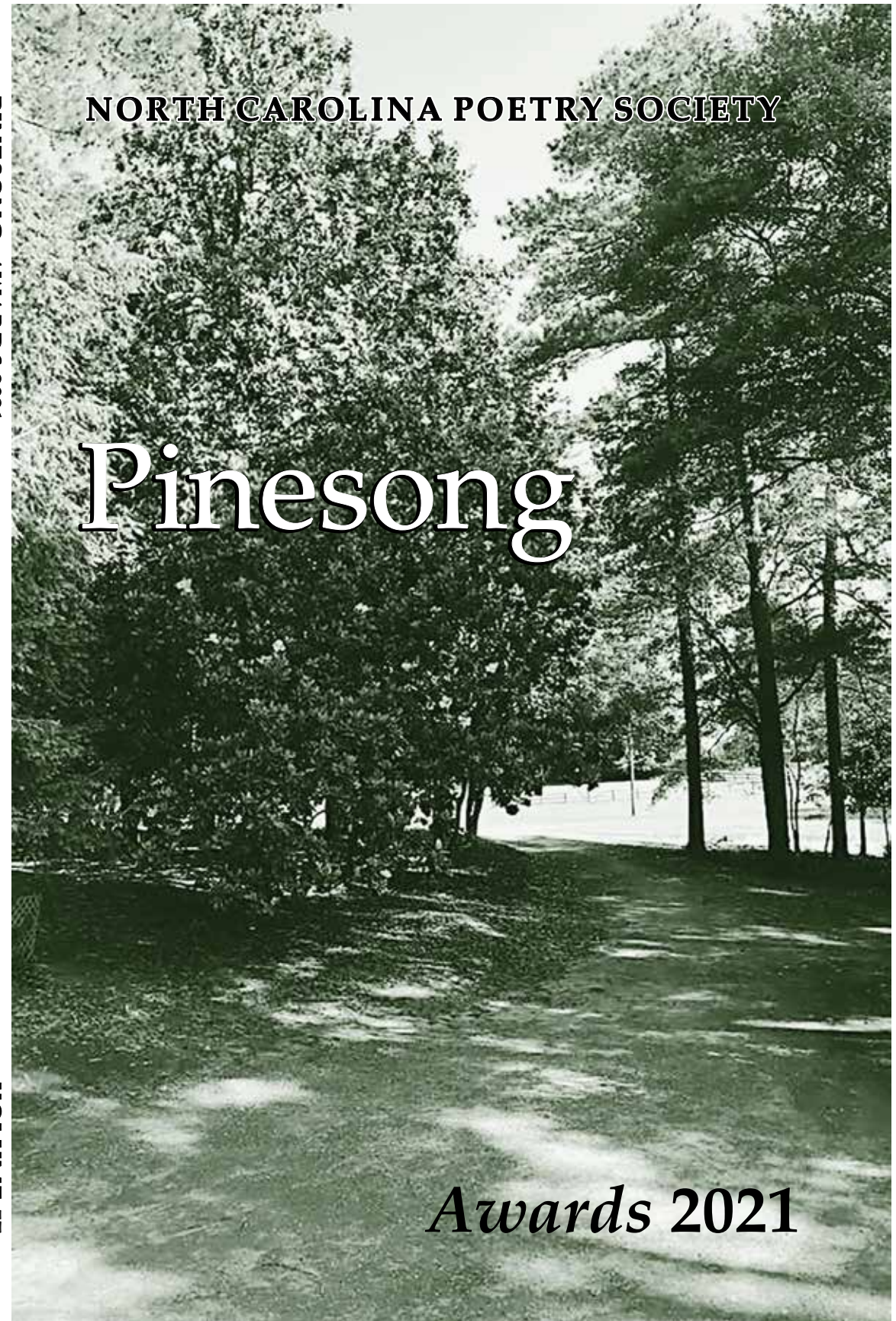
PINESONG: AWARDS 2021

NORTH CAROLINA POETRY SOCIETY

Pinesong

VOLUME 57

Awards 2021



North Carolina Poetry Society

Founded 1932

Pinesong

Awards 2021

Volume 57

North Carolina
POETRY
SOCIETY

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For detailed information about NCPS membership fees and benefits, annual contest guidelines, current Board of Directors officers and committees, meetings, sponsored events, and the mission, bylaws and history of this non-profit literary arts organization, please visit us online: www.ncpoetrysociety.org

Meetings are held at the beautiful and historic
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A STATEMENT FROM THE EDITOR

I am so thankful to have walked into 2021 with poetry awaiting me. Your words have ridden in my car, been spread across my kitchen table and slept beside me on my nightstand. These poems feel like old friends chatting over coffee. I have learned from them, smiled with them and cried for them.

Please continue to write and share your words, believing they will travel far. Teachers, a special thank you for sharing your students and the gift of their poetry with us. I see poetry alive in their words and know they will remember this time with a new-found appreciation for this spoken art. I would personally like to acknowledge and celebrate with Benjamin Cutler and his daughter Abigail who are both winning contest poets this year. I understand this is the first *Pinesong* anthology in which a parent and child are each a winner in the same issue.

Until next year, be well and be happy. May poetry find you in the most delightful and unexpected way.

Sherry Pedersen-Thrasher, Editor

2021 PINESONG DEDICATION

The 2021 North Carolina Poetry Society Pinesong Dedication Committee is proud to present as the 2021 Pinesong Dedicatee: David Treadway Manning

A slender, somewhat grave-appearing man approaches the lectern. Matter-of-fact, even a bit reticent. With only the briefest introduction he begins to read and now you're suddenly jolted by verse that is tart as some strong organic acid. Or wickedly funny. Or so tender, so filled with love, that you are transported into that realm where poetry is earth and imagery is air. You hope Dave will read another.

The North Carolina Poetry Society is honored to dedicate this 2021 edition of *Pinesong* to David Treadway Manning. Dave has encouraged, furthered, and celebrated the art and craft of poetry in North Carolina and brought countless listeners, readers, and writers to its greater appreciation. He has supported NCPS by many hours of service on committees, at meetings, through workshops, by his generous donations, and most especially by inspiring us to strive, to create, to imagine. At the first NCPS meeting I attended at Weymouth, before I had written a decent poem myself, I listened to Dave read at open mic and said to myself, "Oh, yes!"



Since that first encounter, I have read every new collection David has released, culminating with *Sailing the Bright Stream, New and Selected Poems* (Press 53, 2020). In each of these poems, which span decades, mystery hovers at the edge. They introduce us to wonder. No aspect of our human situation or our confounding universe goes unnoticed. David's artistry gathers a desert landscape, a snatch of opera, a funky conversation and weaves from them, with perfect sense and sensitivity, an affirmation. When I reach the final page, I feel that I have entered the domain of truth.

David Manning's many creative endeavors include convening the Friday Noon Poets of Chapel Hill and editing the group's anthology. He won the NCPS Poet Laureate Award three times, *Crucible's* Sam Ragan Award, and the Longleaf Chapbook Award. He has sponsored the NCPS Carol Bessent Hyman Poetry of Love award. And David

Treadway Manning is the first person to whom the annual NCPS anthology *PineSong* has been dedicated a second time.

Bill Griffin, Dedication Committee

David Manning has been supportive of countless poets who have attended Chapel Hill's Friday Noon Poets. For fifteen years the group has thrived under David's wise, humorous, humane leadership. His dedication to keeping the group both intellectual and funny inspired excellent poems. Dave's duties have included roles as secretary, parliamentarian, and contributor to and editor of *Poetry Under the Stars* and *Always on Friday*, two anthologies of members' work. He also kept an updated list of members that has been an important resource.

David had a 100% attendance record at the Jade Palace, Hamilton Hall, and Amity Methodist Church. He commuted from the far end of Cary every Friday until just before the pandemic pushed the group to Zoom.

The Friday Noon Poets' supportive approach to poetry is mirrored in David's work. The simplicity of reading in the round, one poem at a time, no critiques and with limited introductions, started forty-three years ago with the founders, Betty Bolton, Dr. Eugene Grace, and Mitchell Lyman. Geography and time limitations meant that eventually this trio needed just the right poet-leader to take over. Dave has been the glue that held the group together through many membership changes.

Books were published, poets found their voices, and consistent friendships blossomed under Dave's leadership. Friday Noon Poets owes a lot to David Manning. The group consistently sees members live past the age of ninety. By making the meeting fun, productive, educational, and supportive David has generously given back to poetry, the craft and practice he excels at.

Doug Stuber, Friday Noon Poets member

THE POET LAUREATE AWARD

Final Judge: *North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green*

Jaki Shelton Green, ninth Poet Laureate of North Carolina, is the first African American and third woman to be appointed as the North Carolina Poet Laureate. She is a 2019 Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellow, 2014 NC Literary Hall of Fame Inductee, 2009 NC Piedmont Laureate appointee, and the 2003 recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature. Jaki Shelton Green teaches Documentary Poetry at Duke University Center for Documentary Studies and has been named the 2021 Frank B. Hanes Writer in Residence at UNC Chapel Hill. Her publications include: *Dead on Arrival, Masks, Dead on Arrival and New Poems, Conjure Blues, singing a tree into dance, breath of the song, Feeding the Light*, and *i want to undie you*. On Juneteenth 2020, she released her first LP, a poetry album, *The River Speaks of Thirst*, produced by Soul City Sounds and Clearly Records. Jaki Shelton Green is the owner of SistaWRITE, providing writing retreats for women writers in Sedona, Arizona; Martha's Vineyard; Ocracoke, North Carolina; Northern Morocco; and Tullamore, Ireland.

Pre-Judge: *Taylor Byas*

Taylor Byas is a Black poet and essayist from Chicago. She currently lives in Cincinnati, where she is a second year PhD student and Albert C. Yates Scholar at the University of Cincinnati. She is pursuing her degree in Creative Writing (Poetry). She is a reader for both *The Rumpus* and *The Cincinnati Review*, and the Poetry Editor for *FlyPaper Lit*. Her work appears or is forthcoming in *New Ohio Review, Borderlands Texas Poetry Review, Hobart, Pidgeonholes, The Rumpus, SWWIM, Jellyfish Review, Empty Mirror*, and others. She also loves hugs.

CONGRATULATIONS TO the 2021
POET LAUREATE AWARD FINALISTS

"The Children's Section" by Laura Alderson

"Synagogue 1964" by Joanne Durham

"Compost" by Janet Ford

"Garage" by Maura High

"Fruit" by Jo Ann Hoffman

"The Day After Christmas" by Sandra Pope

"Lessons in Applied Etymology" by Celisa Steele

"Orphaned" by Andrew Taylor-Troutman

"Standing at the Fence Staring into Cow Eyes Waiting for a Sign"
by Lucinda Trew

THE POET LAUREATE AWARD

WINNER: *Susan Alf*

Piecework

you live with me one week
with your dad the next

It is Wednesday morning, in the hour between
trespass and first light, when we shoulder
the carrier bags filled with fliers
—the weekly *Ad Pak*—
mastheads bold in plastic sleeves
and walk your first job once again.

when you're not here I walk the route
to hold your place
on your return I walk with you

Sometimes we are called to hang a small offering,
a tea bag, hand lotion, a sample box of cereal,
upon each doorknob—once,
a roll of toilet paper sized for a doll. This day
we keep our distance and skim our lesser news
across each porch.

how do I feel when you're not here?
the high hot ache of it
without

I keep to the paths. You cut across the grass.
I pause at a vacancy in the dark.
A tall mast looms. The shadow deep as divorce
becomes a pine, its scent locked in the chill.
You dash on past the spider-bush house.

each Friday back, you rebuild the world

Yard sales, jobs from home, rooms to let,
a few pennies for each paper thrown:
we are in the rhythm of the route.
You are in sight.
When you're not here, I see you still.
Our job this day is done.

the world's too much to ask of you
the carrier bag ballast enough
(I must not ask for more)

What little is this to offer you:
a needle from a longleaf pine,
the way the dawn resolves
from ink-smudged gray to blue,
this patchwork life.

Fold and bag, aim and release,
each Wednesday's task mends our weeks
together:

this breaking news.



Adult Contests



THE ALICE OSBORN AWARD

Poems written for children from 2-12 years of age

Judge: *Corrie Williamson*

Corrie Williamson was born on a small farm in southwestern Virginia. She is the author of two books of poetry, *The River Where You Forgot My Name* (Crab Orchard Series/SIU Press 2019) and *Sweet Husk* (Perugia Press 2014). She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia, with a BA in Poetry and Anthropology, and her MFA in Poetry from the University of Arkansas, where she was a recipient of the Walton Fellowship, and a Director of the Writers in the Schools Program. She has taught writing at the University of Arkansas, Helena College, and Carroll College, and worked as an educator in Yellowstone National Park. She was the 2020 resident of the PEN Northwest/Margery Davis Boyden Wilderness Writing Residency, spending seven months off-grid along the Rogue River in southwestern Oregon. Her poems have appeared in journals such as *The Southern Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *AGNI*, *Poetry Daily*, *Shenandoah*, and many others. She lives in Montana.

Shelly Reed Thieman

A Bucket List for Spring

We'll cut some yarn for mother birds
to use while building nests,
then wait for babies to emerge
in feathers, smartly dressed.

We'll blow a dozen pink bubbles
with sticky wads of gum,
then pluck the first ripe apple orb
while bees around us hum.

We'll take a hike and bend to smell
perfume of wild flowers,
then try to name the lovely stripes
in rainbows after showers.

We'll picnic in the poppy field
and bring our kites to fly,
then leap and skip like happy frogs
when monarchs flutter by.

We'll treasure sun this springtime,
go barefoot when we can,
and read a poem before we nap
beneath the ceiling fan.

Nancy Swanson

Flying Lesson

When the bicycle takes off to the bottom
of the hill, it has no sense of where not to go:
into a ditch, under a low-hanging branch,
over rocks that send you into the air.

But you have to let go.
First your feet,
 flinging them out from spinning pedals,
then, your hands,
 one at a time,
 on the same plane as your legs.
With time, you learn control
by leaning into or against a swerve.

Not art, but joy, it's worth
the chance, especially if you
heal fast, forget falls, and fly again.

 THE ALICE OSBORN AWARD

Jeffery Beam

COW LULLABY

In the night	dark as wind
Falls the snow	white and thin
Through the trees	sound of bells
Fox asleep	within her den
Rabbits warm	huddled close
Across the ice	cattle lope
Owl sighs low	above the field
Through the trees	sound of bells
Tinkling far	coming near
Many hooves	crunching snow
Tingle tingle	brass and iron
Sound of bells	ringing sky
Snow falls thicker	all is quiet
Through the snow	the cattle choir
God of Cold	Goddess of Light
Ever present	guard this night
Take your humble	cattle in
To their home	roofed with tin
Keep the snake	curled under straw
Sleek and holy	safe and warm
In the night	deep within
See the light	ever clear
Through the fog	through the rain
Through the snow	in everything
God of Warmth	Goddess of Night
Ever present	ever bright
Lead your humble	cattle in
Through the snow	bells ringing

HONORABLE MENTION

*Carmen Dressler Ward***SUPPOSE**

Suppose, said the Flibbertigibbet, waving her hat,
“that is this and this is that”

Suppose, she continued, as the children drew near,
you had eyes in your mouth and teeth in your ear!
Wide-eyed and laughing, they listened with delight;
she soon had them imagining a magical sight:

Suppose you walked on the ceiling instead of the floor
and went out the window instead of the door?
Suppose only spinach was all we could eat
and hair grew not on our heads but our feet?

Suppose that, like cows, we grew horns on our heads,
and we slept in trees and not in beds!
Suppose only animals talked and danced,
while humans were silent, watching entranced?

Suppose the sky was green and grass was blue
and leaves on trees were a pinkish hue?
Suppose piano keys were not black and white,
but all kinds of colors that lit up at night?

And then—she gave them a new thought to think,
as she softened her voice and gave a quick wink:

Suppose each one of you found a way
to do a kind deed for someone each day,
And instead of fighting and fussing and daring,
you all helped one another—and even liked sharing!

Then she tapped on her nose and became very still:
Suppose it could happen—and maybe it will. . . .

KATHERINE KENNEDY MCINTYRE LIGHT VERSE AWARD

Judge: *Amie Whittemore*

Amie Whittemore is the author of the poetry collection *Glass Harvest* (Autumn House Press) and the 2020 Poet Laureate of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Her poems have won multiple awards, including a Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Prize, and her poems and prose have appeared in *The Gettysburg Review*, *Nashville Review*, *Smartish Pace*, *Pleiades*, and elsewhere. She is the Reviews Editor for *Southern Indiana Review* and teaches English at Middle Tennessee State University.

*Ana Pugatch***Vespers**

Even in
the city

I can find
a praying

mantis,
undulating

beneath
a wet

branch.
How I

missed
you,

little
cannibal!

Mary Alice Dixon

Her Kitchen Hands Make Love

in Betty Crocker cakes
broiled to bacon crisp,
potatoes in the toaster
pepper in her eyes.

Her biscuits smoke like
charcoal, her oven serves
up flames.

She kneads her kitchen hot,
she sets the house afire,
spoons her old man to her
then fries his Frosted Flakes.

Martin Settle

Soliloquy of a Couch Potato

Tuber or not tuber that is the question:
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and eros of Wheel of Fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of products,
 And by opposing end them. To diet, to eat—
 No more—and by what we eat to say we end
 The heart attack and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. To diet, to eat;
 To eat, a potato with sour cream; Ay, there's the rub,
 For in that spud of death what dreams may come
 When we have shuffled off this mortal foil,
 Must give us pause. There's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life.
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of eating out,
 The oppressive prong, the overpriced consommé,
 The pangs of hunger, the slaw's delay,
 The insolence of waiters, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes
 When he himself might his quiet time take
 With a bare sofa? Who would fart in chairs
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the hope of something after work,
 The undiscovered cable from whose bourn
 No traveler returns, nuzzles the will
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus television makes cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of sitcoms,
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment
 With this remote their currents turn awry;
 And lose the name of action.—Soft you now,
 The fair Oprah. Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remembered.

HONORABLE MENTION

*Les Brown***Back Yard Conundrum**

Moles with their fossorial feet, tiny eyes,
 down-soft fur, and piggy nose
 have tunneled
around my raised bed garden
 beneath wiry Bermuda sod,
on into my lawn, raising a maze
 of soft writhing ridges,
occupants unseen by cat and hawk.
 They dig and dine in darkness.
Worm and grub fear their
 sharp teeth and super sense of smell.
My mother stood watch in our garden,
 statue still—
with hoe in hand, looking
 for heaving earth
where a mole may make way
 among her vegetable roots,
rip them in search of grub and worm
 aerating earth, loosening soil,
helping vegetables grow,
 destroying others—
until arching arm and blade swung down,
 ending the conundrum.
I will allow the moles in my yard to run
 beneath my feet, increase their maze,
annoy my neighbor's sense of aesthetic lawn,
 to find the pests that chew flower and fruit.
I stand, watch the earth
 at tunnel's end for motion,
think of the creatures living below.
 Content, I walk away, leave them safe
 from talon, claw and hoe.

*Earl Carlton Huband***The Art of Fishing**

A clever angler
will exploit her skill
as a fly-fisher,
casting lines with bait
her true love. Her loves,
who swallow so much
of her angling, snap
at extended hooks.
Pavlovian fish,
they cannot see how
an insouciant line
will meander, land
still another mouth
in flip-flopping love.
She will hold them up
and will toss them back—
all the gasping fish,
one by one—then turn,
choose another hook
line and sinker, plop.

BLOODROOT HAIKU AWARD

Judge: *Tanya McDonald*

Tanya McDonald is known for her bright plumage and her love of birds. Her haiku, renga, and haibun have appeared in various journals. She judged the 2014 Harold G. Henderson Haiku Contest (with Michael Dylan Welch), the 2016 Haiku Poets of Northern California Renga Contest, and the 2018 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Haiku Invitational (with Jacquie Pearce and Paul Chambers). Last year, she edited the 2019 Haiku Society of America's members' anthology, *A Moment's Longing*, which prepared her for the launch of her new, print haiku journal, *Kingfisher*, in 2020. A Touchstone Award winner and a New Resonance poet, she lives near Seattle, Washington.

Anne Curran

emerald sheen
in the turn of a leaf—
tui song

BLOODROOT HAIKU

Jay Friedenber

boa tank
the tight squeeze
of my son's hand

SECOND PLACE

Debbie Strange

a split keel
only these waves
of grass

BLOODROOT HAIKU

Seren Fargo

the dry bellies
of pastured horses
summer rain

Judge: *Robin Anna Smith*

Robin Anna Smith is a writer and artist whose work has earned numerous accolades, including The Touchstone Award for Individual Poems (2020), First Place in the UHTS Fleeting Words Tanka Contest (2019), and nomination for the Pushcart Prize (2018). Their work focuses on disability, gender, and systems from a neurodiverse perspective. Robin has two chapbooks and two mini collections: *Fire Rainbow* (Human/Kind Press, 2020), *Forsythia* (Turtle Light Press, 2020), *Systems Askew* (Yavanika Press, 2019), and *Controlled Chaos* (Sonic Boom, 2019). Robin is the Founder and EIC for *Human/Kind Journal* and Press.

Lucia Walton Robinson

Storms

Reading Marilyn Nelson's G. W. Carver poems—
how her Tuskegee Airman father prepared to fly
into the storm of combat over Europe even
as the great plant professor/inventor lay winging
out of this life—I think of my own father,
who longed for sea duty all through that war,
finally riding home from Pearl in a battleship—
how he lashed himself to a stanchion on deck
in a storm because he wanted to experience
it, to know what it was like; and I remember
that first labor, the constant lashings, the hand
of God lifting me up and slamming me down
like great waves flung at a rocky coast, and I think
I too have experienced a storm at sea,
been anchored to this earth by a small survivor.

*Emily Wilmer***On Hope**

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child—traditional Negro spiritual

Buried deep in the body, hope
struggles to stay alive,

stretched beyond viability,
deprived of oxygen.

It huddles barren, thirsty like a parched land
eager for the wettest, longest rain.

Bruised, stiff, torn,
it once thrived in the heart

nourished by crimson streams
pulsing through its chambers.

It resides elsewhere now, migrated
to parts benumbed, hides in coils

and corners of organs or nerves.
Is it caught in the diaphragm,

blocked in the intestines,
snagged in fallow Fallopian tubes?

One more pandemic stillbirth
in this shriveled

womb? Or does it rest alongside courage,
twins waiting to be born

again—ancient, enfleshed,
thick with wisdom?

 POETRY OF COURAGE AWARD

Diana Ewell Engel

Ode to Epilepsy

"praise begins where pain transfigures itself." Paisley Rekdal

From the medulla oblongata,
 queen of my fragile realm,
 the vagus nerve
 snakes through heart, esophagus, lungs,
 jumpstarts a sensory soiree
 so, I hear the whippoorwill calling night,
 intone *Amazing Grace*,
 savor sweet basil,
 swing to *Bad Romance* with my daughter.

Morning light strobing Deep River Road,
 rock repeating rock on a Beech Mountain hike—
 such beauty overloads my circuits.
 Muscles convulse. I careen,
 lie momentarily captive in a silent vault.

Without this prankster
 tripping my electrical box,
 felling me like a pine chain-sawed by a surveyor,
 would I realize every day I am dying,
 cry out to God, "Give me a higher purpose,"
 see the hawk, a circling messenger,
 witness each sorrow and joy
 as an ephemeral valentine
 to be held close,
 prayed over?

This malady forges soul into steel.
*I work out my own salvation
 with fear and trembling.**

**New International Version Bible, Phil.2.12*

HONORABLE MENTION

Anne Maren-Hogan

You, a Vessel

holding us
in the white frame farmhouse,
while winter winds buffeted and screech
owls filled the night with eerie sound.
Holding the screen door open, receiving us
from scorching summer afternoons, fresh-baked
biscuits pulling us in.
Leaving tornado-darkened skies behind,
descending basement stairs in prayer,
we paraded with blessed candles.
Revealing love in laundry wrung and dried
in all weather, few words, quiet shelter.
Living daily with worry, a farming family with tractors
and inexperienced, risk-taking kids.
Watching each of us trickle to nearby farms and college,
holding on by way of telephone, listening, listening.
Your turn had arrived to board the boat
journeying away from familiar fields,
loved faces.
Out of reach of sons holding your hands,
daughters kissing your forehead.
Lightweight now, shedding piece by piece,
down to bone, Spirit.
Behind your departing vessel, bubbling,
and drifting, washing, swirling us in whirlpools
of remembrances.
Your eyelids close dreamily, water falling, falling
behind the boat carrying you. Breezes blow across
the bow of your sleep, waking and sleeping till
all your life trails out, in a path of calm light
where we bob in your wake.

HONORABLE MENTION

POETRY OF COURAGE AWARD

Nancy Young

Nestlings

Her mom named her Opal, an unlucky gem.
More baby bird than baby, she rests
on my chest, her monitors beeping
if I dare to speak. I barely breathe.

The red flash flings me back
to my own early bird,
our daughter Sarah, splayed naked
in a plastic box, bound by tubes.

Weeks we watched her heart beat
in the NICU'S hostile whiteness.
Home, she opened one eye only,
registered crib bars, locked us out.

Later, both eyes open, Sarah studied
patterns through blinds, through branches,
through my hair on her face. At last,
she left the shadows and looked at me.

But this grand girl I hold today rips off
constricting I.V.s and eye patches,
fights the final tether of her feeding tube.
In the dim quiet, she glares and grips my finger.

Opal makes her own luck.
Defying predictions, gaining gram
by milliliter, she's no longer
an undone preemie, but newborn.

Judge: *Kristina Erny*

Kristina Erny is a third culture poet who grew up in South Korea. Her poetry has appeared in *The Los Angeles Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Yemassee*, *Bluestem*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from the University of Arizona, and her work has been the recipient of the Tupelo Quarterly Inaugural Poetry Open Prize and the Ruskin Art Club Poetry Award. Her manuscript *Wax of What's Left* was a finalist for Tupelo Press's Dorset Prize, Ahsahta Sawtooth Poetry award, and the Colorado Prize for Poetry. After many years of teaching internationally, she currently teaches creative writing at Asbury University and lives in Kentucky with her husband, sons, and daughter.

Jeanne Julian

Blank Billboard Blues

It's been ages since we had word,
a message meant for us.
Still we wait, like fields trying to recall
their crops. What was first, cotton?
Cotton, tobacco, corn, soybeans, now
nothing.

Scars of the old plow, the harrow.
Harrowing. Now atangle with bindweed,
thistle. The huge white page hovers overhead.
Even cunning Connor never bothers
to climb with a can of Krylon to fill in the
blank.

What comes next, what will be sold to us
from the sky with its deceptive restless clouds?
Cars we can't afford, burgers, Romans 1:20.
Far-flung conglomerates and potentates
believe we're captives of particular rural
emptiness.

We have always worked from home.
With our heyday past, we need
another payday. Turn our cornfields
into mazes? Harvest sunshine? Or sell.
We're just waiting for a sign from
above.

JeanMarie Olivieri

Assume the Position

First position: stand in line

Learn this in kindergarten. Do it to death.

Try not to do it in a police station.

Second position: hands in the air

Use one hand if you're a student.

Use two if you're in front of a gun.

Third position: head between your knees

Essential for turbulent flights and hangovers.

It may also be necessary in hostage crises.

Fourth position: kneel

Do this to propose, or protest police brutality.

Do not do this on someone's neck.

Fifth position: bend over

Touch your toes for a light stretch.

Take a deep breath for the strip search.

Kathleen Calby

Whose Garden Is It?

Rusted rebar, a thread of sequins,
stray red bricks, broken necks
of beer bottles, a fluorescent
tennis ball chomped in halves.

Violets here grow beyond
their means; locust saplings shove
for sun, knock the leaves out
of others; wild strawberries scatter
their young and sprawl.

I crave order.
The young anarchist in me laughs.

I cannot do much for the world now
but rake, hoe, shovel
and plant. Cultivate and tend.

The rubber Godzilla stays.

Joyce Brown

White Harvest

I remember
defoliant season—
the pungent chemical smell,
the piles of dead worker bees
at the hive box entry.

The planes flew low
with plumes of poison.
which spread onto the cotton fields,
drifted over to the clover
and honeysuckle
in meadows and woods,
playgrounds,
lawns

where the bees
were busy gathering
the poisoned pollen.
Many made it home
before they died.

CAROL BESSENT HAYMAN POETRY OF LOVE AWARD

Judge: *Lindsay Rice*

Lindsay Rice is a writer, tutor, and creative individual who loves to share the joys and challenges of writing. Lindsay has been writing poetry and prose since middle school and won a National Scholastic Writing Award at a young age. Her poem “Elementals I” was recently published in the *Green Hills Literary Lantern*. Lindsay studied poetry and fiction at The University of Iowa and draws inspiration from her international and domestic travels. She has just completed her first novel, *Birdenwheel*, which encompasses magical realism and historical fiction. Lindsay is currently the president of Whispering Prairie Press in Kansas City, MO.

Jenny Bates

Love in Black and White

reminiscence for a Cow

I remember when you heard your name,
looked up for the very first time.
A moment, you afforded yourself a feeling
most of us spend our whole lives acquiring.

Love, we pile it up
circumstance and relationship
upon circumstance and relationship.
But you had only one chance
to share that feeling with someone
very different from you.

I was lucky. I trusted you to do it.
You reciprocated with minced vocals,
a montage of moos.
That uncommon act of recognition,
love in black and white.

It was a long affair,
regular as the daily mail.
Each day you would look up for me
to come down the hill,
clockwork communion.
We spoke, cuddled, caught up
on neighborhood news.

Lingering looks as I headed back into the forest.
Away from your field, back to my home.
We threaded that gaze, different as grass to tree
forfeiting view.

Margie Emshoff

Summoning My Grandmother in Dream

Her recipe card for sand tarts is brown now,
edges curled.

I run my finger over small grease smudges,
over careful cursive,
one pound flour, one box brown sugar.

I hold the small bible she held, turning
tissue thin pages. A red ribbon marks
the Book of Job.

The sorrowful laments are underlined
with a fine spidery hand.

Her delicate white bottle
of Yardley's Hand Creme
has a flower shaped stopper.

Even after seventy years
a trace of rose scent
drifts up.

She has not come in a year or more
Perhaps she is too far away now.
Perhaps I am too near her own age,
and she does not recognize me
the granddaughter
who needed her most.

*Gary Phillips***Ruby and Darling**

Ruby, I'm not your daddy. You shouldn't introduce me like that.

Darling, you're the closest thing to family I got. Would you rather I said sugar daddy?

Ruby, I'm not even close to being your sugar daddy. You pay the rent and almost all the bills around here. I'm just kind of a hanger-on with benefits.

Benefits? Every time your Social Security check come in we get dressed up and go out to dinner on it, don't we? So I have some benefits too. And ain't nobody in my life ever give me an all-over hot bath like you. It makes me wiggly just to think about it.

Wiggly? Is that some way to talk to an old man? And keep your hands on that steering wheel! You know it pleasures me to make your bath, to see all of you relaxing in that big tub and under my hands. Ruby, sometimes I can't believe what a sweet life I fell into in my old age, after everything I've been through.

There, you said it. Was that so hard? I fell in love with you when I was 12 years old and you come to visit my real daddy, who wasn't worth a shit compared to you. You gave me a kind of attention that woke me up and made me think about who I am. Who cares about all the years in between? They told me you were getting out of jail and I borrowed my brother's Cadillac and drove two hours to the penitentiary at 6AM in the morning, not my usual time to do anything. So I got you-here you are, sitting right here. But a little too far away. Scooch on over closer. I like to feel your heat.

Woman, you are a wonder. So what's on tonight? The Supper Club? I got just enough change in my pocket to buy us a good steak and two beers.

No honey, I don't want to see anybody tonight but you. I brought all my spa tools home from work; we are going to give your aching feet exactly what they deserve. You don't know how much I'm looking forward to that.

And what am I going to do for you, Ruby?

Silly. You are going to choose the music while I set up, something with a talking saxophone please, and you are going to open up the biggest bottle of red wine we have in the house and you are going to make dinner for us like you do almost every night, maybe a hot gumbo-file to give us strength, and after all that you are going to let me cry a little while I work on your feet and tell you my stories.

When we're through you can comfort me any way you feel like. Is that okay?

Sounds like a dream, baby. You want white rice or dirty?

*Hilda Downer***Bowerbirds**

The plain bowerbird,
deep in the tropical rainforest,
uses art to capture the female's adoration.
He collects shapes of color,
berries and hulls,
with such care
that a beetle's slight displacement
of the tiniest seed
is put back just so.

After you leave, driving back 13 hours,
it seems you have disappeared forever.
The spot on the couch where you sat
refuses to materialize you.

All we want is to make art
and be together,
but we cannot find the way
when the responsibility of the people we love
is stronger than love.

I wish we were bowerbirds
in the Appalachian rainforest.
I would help you out—
suggest an arch of broom sedge
lit by the stained glass
of bluets and violet petals.

I would pause and listen to the forest depth—
luxurious orange tendrils,
mist twining dense foliage.

From a limb above,
you would await my inspection
and watch my beak dip a hickory nut shell
for a pearl of water.

HONORABLE MENTION

Pam Baggett

Milkshakes in May

Everything makes you cry: faded wildflowers,
road-kill possums, a black snake crushed on the asphalt,
another meal for the vultures. Radio's news
as you drive the same stretch of road every day
to see your mother. You can't hold sorrow in,
it leaks out over things you can't mend.

Your mother's weaned herself off
meat and vegetables. At her nursing home,
you spoon in a few bites of gray puree,
but when she shakes her head, makes a face,
you mix peanut butter into ice cream,
add chocolate milk, and she sucks down
a whole milkshake, sometimes two.

Happiness is seeing her little wrinkled mouth
wrapped around the straw. Such joy today
when you told her you made her a milkshake,
and in a childlike voice she said,
I'll make you one, too.

It's hard to imagine what comes next,
how you'll live without her. You try not to picture
an empty wheelchair, bed stripped of its sheets,
her clothes folded, stacked in trash bags
for the trip to the thrift shop.

JOANNA CATHERINE SCOTT AWARD

Judge: *Leatha Kendrick*

Leatha Kendrick is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *And Luckier* (Accents Publishing). Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Exit 7*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *New Madrid Review*, the *Southern Poetry Review*, the *James Dickey Review*, *Still: An Online Journal*, the *Baltimore Review*, *The Southern Women's Review*, and in anthologies including *The Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume 3—Contemporary Appalachia* and *What Comes Down to Us – Twenty-Five Contemporary Kentucky Poets*. She lives and writes in Lexington, Kentucky.

Mark Smith-Soto

Lost Poem

Tragic: the sonnet plunged into the screen
like a skiff into an ocean trench, leaving
not a ruffle in its wake. Or now, unseen,
it sails electronic waves forever weaving

into space, toward alien shores. No excuse:
I knew I'd better save, I fully meant
to save, was just about—But, what's the use
in pounding on my chest, all penitent,

or crying *Why me Lord, why me?* Who knows,
maybe it's for the best, an ill-wrought raft
destined to founder, mere rhyme-warped prose,
an old mind's exercise in labored craft.

Still, still. How far might it have taken me,
tall-masted, full-sailed, across the wine-dark sea?

Gary Phillips

Field Peas-A Mirrored Poem

Shelling southern field peas
 What a porch meditation
 Each tight leathery jacket
 Only a fingernail can separate
 This is a spiritual ritual for me
 Necessary, nourishing, *tending*
 I call in my bold grandmothers
 Singing, tasting the atmosphere
 Opening a line to the ancestors

Crowders-purple hulls-cowpeas- "African peas"

Opening a line to the ancestors
 Singing, tasting the atmosphere
 I call in my bold grandmothers
 Necessary, nourishing, *tending*
This is a spiritual ritual for me
 Only a fingernail can separate
 Each tight leathery jacket
 What a porch meditation
 Shelling southern field peas

S.L. Cockerille

Near Sonnet for Full Revelry

Skinny as a cooked green bean,
this overdue baby unnerves a control freak
who wears his white smock with a dozen years' proof
that a sharp mind overrides a tired mother's hunch.
But what can this stranger know about the plans
of heaven's latest, and the human who grows a human.
The expert thinks himself a hero but the baby
proves prepared without a smock's intervention.
Proves destiny and determination, proves momentum itself.
Exhales life into the room, escorted by that agent of it all—
a mother's full power, by something like an ocean
of strength, arriving fresh skin against forced air.
 Knowing well the sound of her voice,
 the baby eyes her like she's God herself.

JOANNA CATHERINE SCOTT AWARD

Richard Ramsey

frosted brown weed patch
drained ewe and steaming twin lambs
coyote pups yap

HONORABLE MENTION

Benjamin Cutler**Petition**

*I don't believe in an interventionist god,
but I know, darling, that you do.*

~Nick Cave, "Into My Arms"

If there is to be a heart, cavern the heart: tunnel
the rhythmred red muscle into a deep and unmapped cave
where something wild might wander, find shelter—clawed
yet gentle and unafraid of the dark. If there is to be dark,

body the dark—limb the darkness: tireless
legs that this shade might follow or carry the day-
weary traveler into rest, broad hands that it might cover
an anguished mouth. If there is to be a mouth,

flower the mouth: petal the lips and every tooth
and make of the tongue a bright stamen that it might call
to the winged gatherers who search the day for sweetness—
call with vibrant, soundless music. If there is to be music,

let it not be hymn, psalm, or lament—but music, music,
and only music. Let it sing. Let it deepen. Let it beat.

MARY RUFFIN POOLE AMERICAN HERITAGE AWARD

Judge: *Davis McCombs*

Davis McCombs is the author of three collections of poetry, *Ultima Thule* (Yale 2000), *Dismal Rock* (Tupelo 2007), and *lore* (University of Utah Press 2016). His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *The Missouri Review*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *American Poetry Review* and many other publications. A recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation, McCombs directs the Program in Creative Writing and Translation at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where he has taught since 2001.

*Mary Hennessy***What is at stake.**

*All these things entered you as if they were both
the door and what came through it*

~Seamus Heaney

One small bird swallows a smaller bell.
Another swallows a stone. Late
moonflowers, all parachute silk and drag,
circle a turquoise footstool stranded
by high water in the middle
of the bridge. Clouds going
in the wrong direction seductive as hell.
Jasmine twined with faded prayer flags
tries to keep things tied together.
But what ever the question,
can joylessness ever be the answer?
And you with the same moon you
left with—tucked
like the morning paper under an arm.

Laura Alderson

Glory

In the sweltering tropics,
a mother engages in the last breath of August
a seamstress to produce
a fashionable long wool coat
for her northbound freshman daughter.
A startled afterthought, like a silver dinner knife
dragged by a sleeve
thuds off the table and is quietly returned.

In the bottom of a cheap footlocker
the coat rides the bus north for three days
and is retrieved
by a daughter on her first cab ride.
It folds itself under the dormitory bed.
The radiators come on in October.
In January, sleet drops all day
and encases yesterday's snow.

Unfurled at midnight, the soldier blue coat,
cinches its wide belt around the girl who
slips out to explore the campus.
The trees creak with crystal
which her helmet of thin rabbit fur declines
to muffle. In an hour,
the glue of her boot soles sees no point
in holding. The wool's summer weave
forgets to warm. Late-arriving moonlight fails
to create a cameo. Decades later a smile.
The winter never returns the girl.

*Les Brown***The Barn**

The tin roof rusts blood
that runs, stains the ashen
gray walls. Square nails lift
from split boards which spring
from skeletal beams, to fall,
returning the wood to earth,
Lean-to sheds flanking the barn
wilt like weary wings.

Spirits in overalls brush by
as I climb the foot-worn ladder
into the loft. The scent of hay
and bourbon lingers, mingles
with voices of men shucking corn.
Wide chestnut boards creak
as dusty children run among shucks
lie down in soft, dry straw. Shadows
from lantern light play on the walls
until they slump in slumber.

The dead drift—they warm the winter,
chill the summer, continuing the tasks
that will never end: sowing, reaping
harvesting, hauling. Their wagon is still
in the wide alley flanked by rows
of stalls sheltering tired wraith mule,
horse, and lean cows that stand still
as blue-white milk pulled from swollen
udders fills hammered tin pails
where cat meows fill the gloom.

Jo Ann Hoffman

Morning Walk in a Small Coastal Town

The pugs and I like to walk down Gordon Street
where soft-touch holly bushes line the path
with good dog smells—

the special scent of Liesel, the flashy boxer,
Bella, the sweet chow mix,
and the two prissy papillons
who scorn my tough twin sisters.

Ellie Mae, their Golden friend, has moved away,
but, loyally, they sniff her trees.

We stop to chat with Mr. Jim, the artist, who porch sits
every morning sipping coffee when we pass.

The Carneys have painted their house light green
and bought new purple cushions for the porch.

For honor's sake, we growl at the life-size
ceramic St. Bernard who guards the Beckman's door,
and admire their antique wagon piled with red geraniums.

We round the corner on Front Street,
gulp long draughts of salt-tang breeze
rolling in from the channel.

The rosemary bushes at the Willard's dock
have gone wild! I pull a long frond through my palm
and slow to sniff my piney perfumed fingers.

My girls tug the leash toward a colony of ibis
rooting on a waterside lawn. They yap a joyful noise
to flush the mythic birds who lift like a slow white cloud,
dropping lucky feathers at our feet.

Jonathan Humphrey

the moonlight
continues its room service
cliff dwellings

THOMAS H. MCDILL AWARD

Judge: *Virgil Suárez*

Virgil Suárez was born in Havana, Cuba in 1962. At the age of twelve he arrived in the United States. He received an MFA from Louisiana State University in 1987. He is the author of eight collections of poetry, most recently, published by University of Pittsburgh Press. His work has appeared in a multitude of magazines and journals internationally. He has been taking photographs on the road for the last three decades. When he is not writing, he is out riding his motorcycle up and down the blue highways of the Southeast, photographing disappearing urban and rural landscapes. His 10th volume of poetry, *The Painted Bunting's Last Molt*, was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in the spring of 2020.

Don Ball**The Children's Memorial: A Blueprint**

(for L who had the idea)

On the green space at the other end of The Mall
down from the brooding Lincoln Memorial;

MLK, Jr.'s sober face; and The Wall mirroring thousands
of darkened names; and the Washington Monument

spearing the sky—The Children's Memorial is always open.
A slow-spinning carousel and whirl-about windchime

musically around a splurging fountain—helpers push
the wheelchair kids and piggyback them up Peace Mountain,

easing them deftly down an enormous slide. Everyone
loves the trolley called I Think I Can that powers around

the borderless rim of memory, drops at times underground,
and then emerges with the youngest child ringing a silver bell.

And at night (when the tour buses have all gone), the parents,
sisters and brothers, grandparents living and dead, uncles,

aunts, cousins and neighbors, the best friends sometimes huddle
around the fire pits murmuring stories, prayers, and songs--

and calling out names until all the missing children descend
around them in the smoke—amid a loving family many

never had but always prayed for in blanket-less rooms—
the children: the forgotten, dirty and ignored, beaten and denied,

the broken, whipped and scarred, the caged, shunned, bullied
and burned, the abandoned, cut, choked, and despised—

THOMAS H. MCDILL AWARD

the paralyzed, the raped, the murdered--every child--descending
now with backs straight, bellies satisfied, and hands clapping softly

in the thick mist crowding in off the long Reflecting Pool
and from the black Potomac ebbing nearby just out of sight.

*Ana Pugatch***The Stone Wall**

The car idled for a moment's return to the old ranch with its six rooms, once again a starter home. The woodpile was gone but the stone wall

remained. Do they have children yet. Do these small children wake up to the mourning dove on the sagging wire, ring-necked,

a constant. My mother ironed my uniform at night and slathered on my creams. I scratched until the cotton sheets were stained with flecks

of blood. I didn't know who had balanced the rocks to form a wall, although the house had been in the family. But this new family:

they cut down the white spruce before they could hear the past shuffling of needles. In the scuffle we had rolled beneath it—fights are quieter

than you'd think. He was the same age, smaller, stronger. I remember the flare of his cowlick, how my eczema had spread. Every limb

I kept covered since their scales flaked like lichens on the low stone wall. He had a fist of my hair and I was losing badly. The dirt

and my mouth and the tree were dry and its fallen needles pricked through my clothes when I thought of the pocketed pencil—

He is grown now, the boy. Does he still have the lead lodged next to his eye. If I had managed what I'd set out to do this would be

a different story. When the house was in the family, stones dug up from rocky soil were stacked to build a wall. Some cousins

raked leaves into a pile on one end, invited a "slow" girl to jump in. Did they hear the crush of leaves. No one cared to recall

THOMAS H. MCDILL AWARD

how hurt she was and the white spruce remained silent. At night
I scratched and asked questions until I was told it never happened.

Before we moved I raked my own little pile next to the wall.
I watched as leaves blew onto the stones. But I did not hide

their faces, the patches of lichens. That bruise of a dove
was not an omen, and by then my skin had healed.

*Joseph Mills***Epiphany**

In a packed railroad apartment in Chicago,
as Petty songs alternated with Guns N' Roses,
I stumbled to the bathroom and saw a postcard
of Sammy Davis Jr. thumbtacked above the towels.
I assumed it was retro ironic, a joke mocking
our parents' generation in a way similar
to the flippant comments we would make
about the things they valued, religion or politics,
our blasphemies as casual and cheaply bought
as the votive candles we burned on headboards.

He had been a member of the Rat Pack
a Las Vegas companion of Sinatra and Martin,
and by the time I saw him on TV, he was a relic
of a bygone era, playing a parody of himself,
famous for being famous, willing to be the butt
of cheap racial jokes, but seeing that picture
in which he had jumped several feet off the ground
and tucked his feet underneath, I suddenly realized
how Sammy Davis Jr. had become Sammy Davis Jr.,
the strength, the talent, the control, the force-of-will.

I felt as if a magic eye puzzle had snapped into focus,
suggesting there was more to my parents' tastes
than I had bothered to imagine. And there was
something else as well. About race, about sexuality,
about transcendence. I stood, disoriented, staring
at the image. I didn't yet know what had happened
or why, but I understood I would leave that bathroom
having been changed, irrevocably, by a cheap postcard,
with its extraordinary vision of a beautiful man
levitating his body and shaping it against the sky.

THOMAS H. MCDILL AWARD

Andrew Weatherly

The Caryatids

an extreme cultural expression
women holding up roof
chained in place by lintels and cornices
women held down by weight of sky
some strident claiming places in the world
fist firm head lifted
others shouldering weight
like ten thousand water jars
carried to supply their homes, fields, families
with the essence of life
other statuesque women near falling
crumbling under mass of
expectation weighing down futures
knowing stiff upper backs
cannot carry original sin with pride
but with guilt, sorrow, rebellion
Shouldering first woman's guilt
absolving her just as women share stories,
griefs, burdens helping each other
weave cloth to decorate and cover
folds and curves of marble
woven by their mothers bearing the weight
What do we expect of these women
who hold up the halls of the gods?
Are they to welcome strangers
with stiff digits and open staring pupils
Are these caryatids who hold up the sky
expressions of our true hopes and aspirations
of women holding up the sky
like grandmothers did
so we can play within their safety
under their care

HONORABLE MENTION

Judge: *Barbara Sabol*

Barbara Sabol's second full-length book, *Imagine a Town*, was awarded the 2019 Sheila-Na-Gig Editions poetry manuscript prize. She is the author of *Solitary Spin* and two chapbooks, *Original Ruse*, and *The Distance Between Blues*. Her poetry has appeared widely in Journals and anthologies. Barbara conducts community-based poetry workshops. She contributes poetry book reviews for *The Ohioana Quarterly*. Barbara received an MFA from Spalding University. Her awards include an Individual Excellence Award from the Ohio Arts Council and the Mary Jean Irion Poetry Prize. She lives in Akron, OH with her husband and wonder dogs.

Jane Shlensky

Old Man with Old Dog

The old dog skulks away
on a mission, sniffing around—
air, ground, his food pans,
picks up speed, thinking rats
in the barn. He'll stop,
forget. Thought leaves

him, same as me. Leaves
us staring far away.
Ghost memory opts
to ignore us, a round
of scurrying like rats
until new winds snap.

I watch him as he pans
the yard, alert to leaves
falling, the morning star
erased, looking for a way
to play. I call him around
to breakfast, rattle pots.

Dawn is tops
in our book, ideas snap
like new elastic, a round
knot on our *raveled sleeve*
of care gone away
for now, two old tars

run aground, navigating by a star,
the ocean tethered to a porch post,
a sea wind blowing away
time. Praise God for naps,
when I can dream of all that leaves:
you, me, and soon this dog, cycled around.

I toy with the words of a round
I learned as a boy, *Star*
in the East—its tune leaves
me somber, but I won't stop
conjuring the words. A cold snap
and nature has its way.

Leaves fall as the old dog rolls around.
I put away regrets, wish on the Dog Star.
He shakes off time, opts for joy in his brief span.

Jeanne Julian

Bird Counts

I'd heard about the snowy owl for weeks this winter,
feathered spectre, haunting our cove unseen—
by me, at least. I hoped, but wasn't really looking
for it. I was cleaning house and went out
to shake a scatter rug. There it was, unaccountably,
upon the railing, a solemn ample finial, eyes

behind the white *bauta* mask meeting my eyes
with a frozen gaze of curiosity, of winter
in the mind, as Stevens said. I counted
my quickened heartbeats as the visitor posed. Seen
so close, it seemed unbirdly, emissary sent out
from some angelic world, perhaps looking

for prayers rather than prey, or simply looking
to number her human neighbors the way sharp-eyed
Auduboners tally the wild winged. Later, out
to fetch the mail, I encountered one such winter
birder on her morning walk. I told her I had seen
the snowy—did she want my sighting for her count?

She, oddly, balked. Perhaps it doesn't count
unless you observe it yourself. The looking
must be intentional; an unsought miracle seen
accidentally by others could be a trick of the eyes.
But, this is the season of sacred story. In winter,
we need to trust witness, unwilling to venture out

ourselves to follow some uncharted star popping out,
randomly, in the cold and suspect sky. We must count
on legend. And so I offered to, throughout winter,
continue my untutored backyard looking
and leave notes on the mailbox if before my eyes
a wren or cardinal flitted, some critter that I'd seen

before (unlike the owl), so my naming could be seen
as sure. Before such generosity, she had no out,
though I detected in her possessive eyes
reluctance, doubt. Only her count counts,
I guess. But the anticipation, the looking,
will fill the idle hours of my own flightless winter.

Meanwhile the owl eyes us all from a nearby pine, unseen,
camouflaged (and maybe unreported), until the winter's out.
And I wonder whether counting matters as much as looking.

Erica Reid

Cloud-Reading: A Sestina

How much sunshine tomorrow? Allow me to read the clouds,
the soft slate runes clattering across the sky
with promises and portent. Quick, before winds change
their favor against us. Our futures are not
hard like clay, but soft like cloud. If it hurts
to see what you've been given, wait for rain.

All looks dry now, but in the Colorado summers, rain
can drop its quick fist even when clouds
appear gentle. I can tell you how it hurts
to be caught in the downpour of hail, the sky
chucking nickels. But now to our purpose, let's not
waste this future-map. Open yourself to change.

This cloud here—do you see it? In the changing
light I see the rabbit of your wealth, your own rain-
maker. His hind foot is injured, he will not
be hard to catch. And here, this bank of clouds
just near the sun must be your happiness, the sky
bursting with so much captive light that it hurts

to look upon. But wait. There, a dark place. A hawk is hurt-
ling across this cloud's face. Feel how this shadow changes
the reading, alters the glad mood of the whole sky.
What shapes do you make out in this lurking rain-
mass? Is it a leap to suggest this dingy cloud
is the same shade as shame? Your cirrus of joy is not

every woman's joy, your white rabbit of wealth is not
each man's to hunt. The body of the sky is hurt,
bruise-purple. We don't all see the same clouds.
This rolling dark is a canvas raring for change
even at the cost of a picnic day, even if rain
scours the last bit of calm from the sky.

HONORABLE MENTION

You came to be reassured by a constant sky.
You did not plan to speak the names, did not
come for the list, only a forecast for the rain.
Staring at the sun hurts; looking at the truth hurts
more. If we could all breathe, the wind would change,
and one exhalation together could move any cloud.

Let me read the clouds thumb-smudged across the sky.
They say that some things change, and more do not—
that it never hurts to ready yourself for rain.

Susan Willey Spalt

My Will Turned Into A Sestina

It is time to revise our wills
to figure out what we have in this world
and where it should go when our time
has come. It once seemed simple, far away
but now the accumulated memorabilia of life
complicates the art of planning with anything like grace.

It is not easy to live with grace,
it is never just a matter of will.
Sometimes challenges wear us down in life,
still I am glad to be in this world.
The future is never really far away.
No one knows their measure of time.

So now I give you, while I still have time,
stories of love and laughing with grace
to make heirlooms worth tucking away.
You can do with them what you will
as you live in the ever-changing world.
Memories take up less space in life.

What I wish for you is a happy life
and maybe when you have the time
you'll unpack the things that filled our world
and fill your kitchen and grace
your shelves, unless you have the power of will
to throw them all away.

Or maybe you will just put them all away
waiting until that time of life
when you find a use for them as you know you will.
Then you can pass them along when it is time
with more memories of love and grace
to enrich or clutter the world.

So many problems trouble our world.
Pandemics, wars, anguish, no longer far away.
To save ourselves will take more than grace.
But isn't that what we do in life—
work for change while there is time,
making a sort of living will.

So take this world as you will.
Laugh with grace while there is time.
Give away what you want to keep in life.

Melinda Thomsen

The Healing Miles

Manhattan definitely loves us walkers
padding through its neighborhoods.
(Think of *Godspell*'s cast in the area
of Wall Street dancing funky laps.)
When I lived there, I strolled my miles
each day between work and home

and called a one room apartment home.
For more space, I also chose to be a walker.
My job was in Queens, so I trekked a mile
to the subway that went to neighboring
Long Island City. Coffee made my laps
to 59th Street really nice. I loved that area!

As a teenager, swimming offered an area
of peaceful sloshing. I felt safe at home
in a pool where I swam lap after lap
letting songs fill my head like *Walk
This Way*, and in the neighborhood
of about thirty laps—my half mile

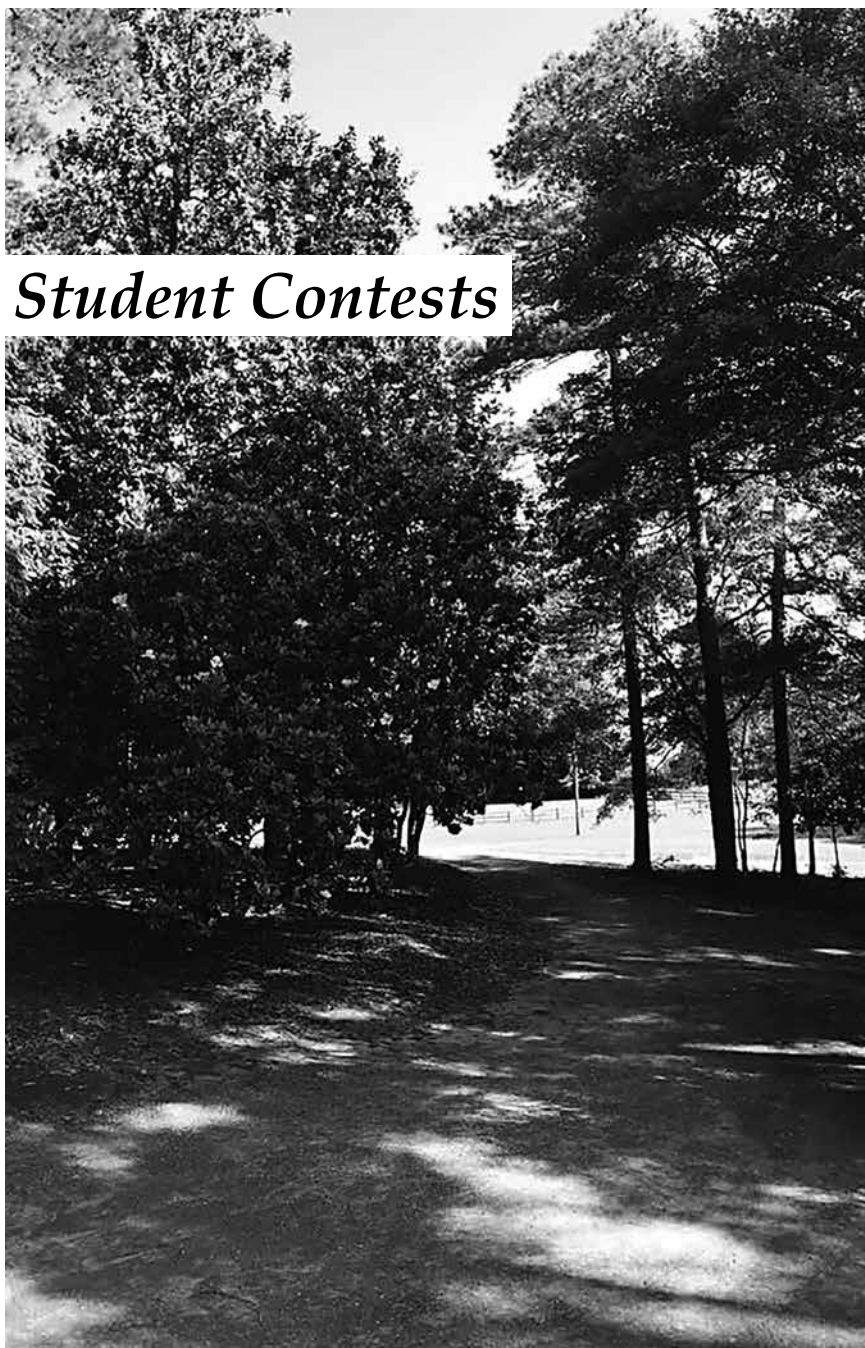
point—I changed to *I Can See for Miles*.
I sang myself through the tough areas.
On September 11th. My neighbors
covered their mouths as they left home,
and so did I. I also carried my Walkman,
playing *Day by Day*, and took my laps

listening to *Save the People*. The laps
near the hospital were my healing miles,
as my body and mind fused from walking.
That day, we lined up in a receiving area
to donate blood before going home.
Later, signs appeared in my neighborhood

trying to locate more missing neighbors.
Their smiling faces started overlapping
other tear-off flyers, but the tabs of home
phone numbers stayed untaken for miles
in every direction. Now, we live in an area
where the sky spans all around as we walk

our neighborhood for several miles.
Like the waves lapping the shore, this area's
celestial home lets even its stars sleepwalk.





Student Contests

TRAVIS TUCK JORDAN AWARD

Students 3rd - 5th Grades — Judge: Clark Holtzman

Annabel Haynes

5th Grade, Morehead Montessori, Durham, NC.

Teacher: Jennifer Harrison

Circle of Light

A moon flower opens faster than you want it to.

The sun slowly makes its way through the clouds.

Orange and pink lights combine with the sun, three differences
come together to create a sunset.

A signal that after the night everything will be better.

Sunset,

Sunrise,

Darkness,

Light,

A hope for tomorrow

An endless hope.

An endless circle of light.

Clio Dunmire

5th Grade, Tiller School, Beaufort, NC.

Teacher: Cristina Quattrone

Where I'm From

I am from flowers
like paper, the shiny kind
that you can't write on.

I am from mouthfuls
of freshly picked stars,
plucked from a tree
flooded with emeralds.

I am from tip-toe hopping
over burning concrete,
and staring into the light
dancing under the water.

I am from a small cat
that hated everyone,
and scratched and bit,
even if you were only trying to pet her.

Then again, maybe her father had left
and she did not
have a mother like mine
to protect her.

I am from the realization
that books are so much easier to read
than people.

From deciding that hating someone
would at least spare me
the full wave of sadness
to break on the shore.

TRAVIS TUCK JORDAN AWARD

Emerson Lane

4th Grade, Pleasant Grove Elementary School, Raleigh, NC.

Teacher: Erin Lane

The Wolf's Song and the Tree's Dance

I sing with the stars, said the wolf
While I run in the foggy haze
I sing with the stars, said the wolf
And that makes most of my days

I dance with the leaves, said the tree
While my branches keep swinging east
I dance with the leaves, said the tree
Then I will sleep after I feast

THIRD PLACE

Selah Steele-Cobb

4th Grade, Frank Porter Graham Bilingual, Chapel Hill, NC.

Teacher: Cristina Bryan

A Crown of Blue and Green

Black and gray the clouds stand high
As I wave a last goodbye
Butterflies and birds, all creatures of flight swoop upon me
Carrying me away far far away
Where a land of beauty awaits

Rolling hills
Green, a color of beauty
Blue, the sky that surrounds me
Far above in the branches I lie
A crown to the world
A call of dismay
Blue and green the colors of beauty
The colors of me

TRAVIS TUCK JORDAN AWARD

Levi Shelton

4th Grade, Jeffreys Grove Elementary School, Raleigh, NC.

Teacher: Mariela Quiros

Nature

Let the fire warm you,

let the drift flow from the roof,

let the wolf howl you to sleep,

let the wind make you at peace,

I love nature.

Grace Letchworth

4th Grade, Pleasant Grove Elementary School, Raleigh, NC.

Teacher: Amber Bell

Alive

I let the cold attack me
a hawk calls
then silence falls
I let the wind bite me
a hound bays
and silence sways
I let the rain slap me
I embrace it all
happy to be
alive

JOAN SCOTT ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

3rd through 8th Grades—Judge: Grace Ocasio

Annabelle Nichols

4th Grade, Adams Elementary School, Cary, NC.

Teacher: Shavone Wilkins

Autumn Daydreaming

The glow of sunshine shining through green and orange leaves
Beyond the cracking fire
Burgundy in the flame of a bonfire
Beyond my cup of chili
My mother's steamy bowl of chili.

Pale illumination through my window
Brown leaves and all their imperfection
Light patterns on my auburn blanket
Acorns falling to the ground are the color of toasted marshmallows
They sound like someone typing on a rainy day.

Feeling the warmth of the blanket
I am watching a documentary about squirrels
Like the squirrels outside my window
The cold air is outside
I am safe from it.

The fire is crackling near me
Crisp leaves beneath the squirrel's feet are crunching
As he scurries to gather more nuts
For the cold winter ahead
I wish I could store up chili like they store nuts.

FIRST PLACE

Michael Liu

8th Grade, Kennedy Middle School, Charlotte, NC.

Teacher: Xiaobin Chen

Earthrise

Gripped in space,
Earth lies in the wake of darkness,
under all its dense and churning clouds
and hidden in an ocean blue.

Through the tint of atmospheric whites,
the cold night glares at our leaders, who look away from
the lines of factory smoke that curl into the sky
and down onto the bears and bulls of stock exchange lines.

Still, all the numbers
and city lights flash into space,
swallowed by the crying winds of Jupiter
and captured in the infinite rings of Saturn.

So, the night sky tells the species of earth,
from the polar bears with fur white like arctic caves
to grand sea turtles swimming under Pacific blues,
that after millennia pass,
plastic in the oceans, fallen trees, melting ice
will be left to die with time,

as will humans.

As the sky looks at us with its cruel eyes,
at all our intelligence and pride,
it sees that we have yet to realize
We are but guests of this paradise.

Liam Larson
5th Grade, Brooks Museums Magnet Elementary School,
Raleigh, NC.
Teacher: Susan Howard

The Salmon Mission

I am lumbering into the white water
Splashing in the waves

Watching the rest of my family
Stalk out of the caves

I snap my jaws shut
As a salmon
leaps out of the tide.

I missed it! Again?
I missed it,
Even though I tried

I try again,
Snapping my jaws.

I got it!
I got it!
Clapping my paws

I will never let go
I will never let go

I finally got it!

What do
You know?

I am fierce,
Strong and proud.

I am fierce,
Roaring aloud.

Annabel Haynes

5th Grade, Morehead Montessori School, Durham, NC.

Teacher: Jennifer Harrison

The Mockingbird

A mockingbird sat on the old oak tree
A cricket chirped quietly as if not wanting to be heard
A rabbit hopped quickly out of the bushes and then back in again
It was nearly pitch black
The only light came from the nearly full moon the color of silver
It shone on an army of ants
The grass was spotted with dew
Suddenly the mockingbird called out and a cold burst of air hit my skin
I pulled my jacket on tighter
There was a flash of light
The bird transformed
It dove into the river as fast as rushing waves
I opened my eyes and saw a swan-like creature but bigger
It was the same color as the moon
Its eyes were a blueish grey
A faint mist was swirling around it
It had to be magic.

Leah Silliman

4thGrade, Tiller Charter School, Beaufort, NC.

Teacher: Cristina Quattrone

An Invitation from a Cheetah

Come with me,
Away from all those city streets

Speed through the savanna
Work for your meal

Feel the sundrenched sand between your toes
The fiery ball of the sun hanging loosely from the sky above you

Watch the clouds roll in, then out
Lie in the shade of the giant baobab

Feel the warm breeze wrap around you
And see what you've been missing

Reese Noel

3rd Grade, The Oakwood School, Greenville, NC.

Teacher: Molly Hostetler

Storm Cycle

The sun is snoring
Dark clouds forming
Lightning flashes
Raindrop splashes

Clouds fade away
The moon lays down to start another day
When the storm passes
There are wet mushy grasses.

Light winds draft by
The ground is not nearly dry
Mist fills the air
Fog follows after — with care.

MARY CHILTON AWARD

Students 6th through 8th Grade — Judge: Allison Hutchcraft

Josiah Oakes

6th Grade, Franklin School of Innovation, Asheville, NC.

Teacher: Anne Moren Hegan

Dentistry is Heavy Construction

The dentist does roadwork on my mouth.
He climbs up into the cab of a steamroller,
ready for some flattening fun. I settle into
the road to get the repair done.

He pressure-washes, and jackhammers,
digs and picks. He paves my teeth, fills all
the holes with silver and gold.

He adds bright rubber cones and shining guard
rails, straightening things up. He's John Henry
swinging the nine-pound hammer, blasting my tight
teeth apart, hammering them back perfect.

He's Boss Man demanding answers, my mouth
a loaded-up dump truck, bits of gravel spilling
out, roadwork tools jumbled inside. I wink
and throw him a nod, unable to speak a simple
yes or no.

When he's done, I come out a Cadillac
with a gold grille.

MARY CHILTON AWARD

Abigail Cutler

7th Grade, Swain Middle School, Bryson City, NC.

Teacher: Curtis Sikes

I Ask Dad How I Should Live My Life

After Mary Oliver

He says, don't let go of my hand
while we're walking through the glistening mountains with the sunset
over our heads. You're my Princess, Sugar bean, Cupcake, and Moogaloo.
You will grow up to love and cherish the precious poems that hold memories
with each of us. He says, I love you.

SECOND PLACE

Chance Biehn

7th Grade

Carolina Friends School, Durham, NC.

Mentor: Joan Barasovska

The Movie of My Life

When I see my past, I view a movie with lost scenes.
I could attempt to search for these missing reels,
but as we produce our films, it helps to cut bad shots.
If only I could delete the scenes when I was bullied
at school and dreadful sequences of breaking rules.

I miss shots of my original location in Houston
montages of childhood freedom and innocence.
I miss the peace before adolescence's debut,
without stage fright in party and school scenes.
My movie is imperfect, but then so am I.

MARY CHILTON AWARD

Sanjana Solanki
6th Grade, West Cary Middle School, Cary, NC.
Teacher: Tara Hill

Snowfall

Snowflakes silently touch the ground,
White fluffy blankets all around.

Trees covered in silvery frost,
When seen all thought is completely lost.

The Earth is covered, everything is under,
Dancing snowflakes are a wonder.

Icicles hang over pure white snow,
Chilly winds swirl and blow.

Juncos peck at snow for food,
Cardinals are sure to lift your mood.

Children play, laugh, and call,
For it is the time of the snowfall.

SHERRY PRUITT AWARD

Students 9th Grade through Undergraduate — Judge: Leslie Rupracht

Christina Polge

11th Grade, Cary Academy, Cary, NC.

Teachers: Palmer Seeley and Michael McElreath

Manifest destiny

There is a woman with hair as gold as the blood that runs through her veins
 paving the way for her children to follow
 her footsteps imprinting themselves in the earth
 crushing the bones of anyone standing in her path
 There is a man in a house as white as the snow that settles on skin
 who packages his wars up in pretty words
 asking the people on the hill for declarations
 of something that's already begun
 There is a soldier with hands as red as the blood spilt on lost soil somewhere
 in between the dream and reality
 where boys become men who
 suddenly become six feet under
 There is a people with tears as blue as the winters they freeze in when
 they are herded like cattle to make
 room for those who are hungry
 for something you cannot eat
 There is a dream with hope as iridescent as the shining seas it longs for
 sitting just out of reach on a hill
 you cannot climb without standing
 on the back of others you have betrayed
 There is a nation with words as starry as the flag they live under
 who believe in the promise of tomorrow
 but are afraid of facing their own reflections
 because they know they will see shadows
 There is a poem as lost as the path we took instead, when
 history is rising from its grave to haunt
 the nation that is always wanting more
 because we do not know how to be full
 This is that poem of destiny because it doesn't have to be one dream
 we are a patchwork people with frayed
 edges and we can make our own destinies
 instead of what the golden lies say

FIRST PLACE

SHERRY PRUITT AWARD

Jessica Fan

10th Grade, Hickory Ridge Highschool, Harrisburg, NC.

Teacher: Krista Hodsden

Passing

My sighs are carried by the crane
West-bound, is my sorrow in vain?
A tattered map my fingers worn
Is there a you, in what is torn?
I raise my pen to write to you
But to where I haven't a clue
Night by night I beseech the moon
Asking if you'll be returning soon
Would it reach you from afar?

Those blossoms in spring once adored
Day by day they wither more
The wind is drawn with the branch's shroud
The moon is lined by dying clouds
I raise my pen to write for you
Yet cannot describe an autumn's blues
Outside the window falls the rain
Tapping over again and again
Is it raining where you are?

Blame I must the wind and moon
The spring's last breath, the autumn's ruin
For the leaves and flowers are no more
And cold blossoms have formed from the pour
I raise my pen to write of you
But forget all words I ever knew
To the you that's far away
Do you know it's nearing winter's days?
Can you not see the fleeting birds?

SHERRY PRUITT AWARD

Ink cannot from tears form
Nor can you come, though I yearn
But, I'll wait for next spring's storm
When you'll be reminded to return
For then the words I cannot down
Will, with your presence, be refound
Till that time comes, I'll remain
Trying again and again
To guide my pining into words

SHERRY PRUITT AWARD

Saran Wenmueller

12th Grade, Gaston Day School, Gastonia, NC.

Teacher: Hazel Foster

Off

After the poem "From" by A. Van Jordan

Off (->) adverb. 1. Away from a location: As in, Her mind had wandered off; she was no longer focusing on her AP Chemistry textbook. She wished she was off her couch, turning off at Eastman Road on a Friday night.

2. Removed or away from work: She longed for days where she would be off: snow days, Saturdays, teacher work days. On the off days, she could breathe deeply. There was no overthinking her light-washed jeans and headband, the way she uttered "Good. How about you?" to an adult, or the way her raincoat clamored when she took it off. She didn't like the glaring, pixelated assignments and to-do lists. Like a sea-sick violinist, she tried to scratch out each assignment like a melody. When her mother was off at work, she skipped dinner and slipped frozen pork chops off into the garbage.

3. Not functioning or to stop operating: She wanted to sit and turn her phone off. Turn off the screens that flashed photos of "sexy" girls that had a bigger chest and tinier waist than she did. How did they shave off pounds so effortlessly? She thought, dejectedly lifting up her loose-fitting t-shirt and sucking in her waist, only to result in coughing fits from the dry air she sucked in.

Adjective. 1. Feeling unwell or out of sorts: Most days she felt off; her self-confidence was fleeting, her assignments piled up like fall leaves, and her phone never seemed to buzz. When she felt off, she found herself asking, "Does anyone care?"

Brigid May

11th Grade, Holly Springs High School, Holly Springs, NC.

Teacher: Amanda Kain

Remembering Summer Nights

your hands were freckled like the firefly sky

and your laugh was afraid of my frown that was mimicking yours

you were always the worst kind of liar

(but the stars were brewing and stirring and this,

 this was what you meant when you said life was worth
dying for)

and the porch swing swung and the lightbulbs flickered on

and our mothers were searching for us like forgotten words—

we could melt into this twilight

make a moment mean a memory

mean a lifetime

SHERRY PRUITT AWARD

Shaun Kawalec

9th Grade, R. J. Reynolds High School, Winston-Salem, NC.

Teacher: Pamela Henderson-Kirkland

It Matters

A cold and brisk wind whips over the treetops
Carrying birds
Cooling the woods

A mountaintop rock shifts ever so slightly
Stirring fauna
Topping walls

A government passes key legislation
Hurting people
Backing themselves

A person on twitter posts outrages online
Gaining traction
Opening eyes

A powerful force creates powerful change
Bettering lives
Or fueling fire

A smile, a comment, a gesture, a rally
Lifting spirits
Moving forward

A small little movement matters as much
For real progress
Doesn't heed size

Ellie Kim
Sophomore, Duke University
Professor: Enn-Ling Chen

Dreams of an Elementary School Friend

You peeled your tangerine
and pressed it to my face
rough fleshy side inward.
You said it heals skin
so we left them on like
the Original Korean Face Mask
till the next morning
when they dried
curled up like dead insect bodies
limbs folding inward
heads bowed in deep sleep.

I remember everything
from your skinny chicken arms
to your skin that had seen more
of the Sun than mine ever would.
You delighted in scaring me
with Bongcheon gwishin
so I couldn't bear to tell you how
the babyless mother with the frantic
eyes haunted my dreams
for the next week.

Now I sit in my bedroom and wonder
if you would recognize me if you saw me
in the street. I am taller, perhaps wiser,
but in my dream, you shake
my hand and tell me I look the same.

SHERRY PRUITT AWARD

When I last spoke to you,
you never mentioned your new look,
your eyes that now fold twice,
your white smooth fingers that encircle
mine. But in my dream, your grip
Is the same as always.

Allison Hutchcraft—Mary Chilton Award

Allison Hutchcraft is the author of *Swale*, published in November 2020 by *New Issues Poetry & Prose*. Her poems have appeared in *Boulevard*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and *The Southern Review*, among other journals. A 2017-2018 fellowship recipient from the North Carolina Arts Council, she teaches creative writing at UNC Charlotte.

Clark Holzman—Travis Tuck Jordan Award

Clark Holzman studied for an MFA in Poetry at Indiana University, where he also received a BA and MA in English and American literature. He earned a doctorate in literary theory at Saint Louis University and taught literature and writing at Saint Louis University, UNC, UNCW, and Auburn University. He writes and publishes poetry and nonfiction, and coordinates *Wednesdays@One*, a poetry writing salon. His blog is at <http://clarkspetryblog.blogspot.com/>.

Grace Ocasio—Joan Scott Environmental Award

A three-time Pushcart Prize nominee, Grace C. Ocasio's second full-length volume of poetry, *Family Reunion* (Broadstone Books), received honorable mention in the Quercus Review Press Fall 2017 Book Award Contest. She also placed as a finalist in the 2016 Aesthetica Creative Writing Award in Poetry.

Leslie Ruprecht—Sherry Pruitt Award

Leslie M. Ruprecht has work published/accepted by *Gargoyle*, *Chiron Review*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *AIOTB*, *Kakalak*, *moonShine review*, *Poetry in Plain Sight*, and more. She authored *Splintered Memories* (Main Street Rag), served as *Iodine Poetry Journal's* longtime senior associate editor, and twice edited *Pinesong*. She hosts Waterbean Poetry Night at the Mic in Huntersville, NC.

BIOGRAPHIES: ADULT CONTEST WINNERS

The responsibility for kindling the fire anew lies with *Pinesong*, which has published the poems of **Laura White Alderson** in 2017, 2019, and 2020. Her chapbook and a broadside were published by the Bellevue Press through an NEA grant. Feeding the flames are five Notorious poets who gather in Raleigh, plus mentors Carolyn Kizer and Rosanne Cogglesall. A freelance in Raleigh for eons, she is a native Virginian who earned a BA at UNC-Chapel Hill and a Masters in English Writing at Hollins University. She thanks all those who make Weymouth such a welcoming hearth.

Susan Alff, of Cary, has worked in independent bookstores for nearly 30 years, the last 20 at Quail Ridge Books, in Raleigh. She had a poem published in English and Russian in *Earth and Soul: An Anthology of North Carolina Poetry*. More recently, she has been published in *Wraparound South*, *Flying South*, and *Pinesong*. Her work will be displayed in this year's Poetry in Plain Sight project.

Pam Baggett is author of *Wild Horses* (Main Street Rag, 2018), a runner-up for the Cathy Smith Bowers Chapbook Contest and honorable mention for the Brockman-Campbell Award from the North Carolina Poetry Society. Other awards include a 2019-20 Fellowship in Literature from the North Carolina Arts Council. She lives in Cedar Grove, NC.

Don Ball is a native of Durham and a proud member of the world's best poetry group, The Poet Fools. Years ago he was lucky enough to be mentored by Peter Makuck and Donald Justice; some of it took.

Jenny Bates, North Carolina. Member of Winston-Salem Writers. NC Poetry Society, NC Writers Network. Published books include *Coyote with Coffee* (Catbird on the Yadkin Press, 2014), *Visitations* (Hermit Feathers Press, 2019) *Slip* (Hermit Feathers Press, 2020). Known local animal whisperer to Donkeys, Coyotes and "Crow Folk."

Jeffery Beam is the author of over 20 award-winning works including *The Broken Flower*, *The New Beautiful Tendons*, *An Elizabethan Bestiary: Retold* and a collaboration with Welsh painter Clive Hicks-Jenkins, *Spectral Pegasus / Dark Movements*. In 1992 he founded the program Winter Stories for UNC Libraries, which he wrote, produced, and

performed for twelve years, and is still going on. The song *_Cow Lullaby_* will one day be part of an illustrated book of winter lullabies.

Joyce Compton Brown has published in journals such as *Blue Mountain Review* and *Broadview Review*. Her two books are *Bequest* (Finishing Line) and *Singing with Jarred Edges* (Main Street Rag). She lives in Troutman, NC, with her husband and cat.

Les Brown, retired biologist's short stories appear in several journals, including *Pinesong*, *Avalon Literary Review*, and *Kakalak*. His visual art has been featured in regional journals including *Moonshine Review* and *Broad River Review*. Les, a 2019 Pushcart Nominee, is author of *A Place Where Trees Had Names*, published by Redhawk Publications, 2020. He lives in Troutman, NC.

Kathleen Calby is a recovering corporate writer and avid gardener. Awarded an adult student placement in the 2021 Gilbert-Chappell Distinguished Poet Series, she has published in *Kakalak 2019* and *Kakalak 2020*, winning an Honorable Mention for her poem "Cider Press."

S.L. Cockerille is an award-winning poet in New Bern, North Carolina. She is the Vice-President of Nexus Poets. This is her third appearance in *Pinesong*.

Anne Curran writes short verse forms, mostly haiku and tanka, from her home in Hamilton, New Zealand. She remains excited by the possibilities of this writing form, and grateful to all friends who have supported her in this work.

Benjamin Cutler is a poet and the author of the full-length collection of poems, *The Geese Who Might be Gods* (Main Street Rag, 2019). His poems have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize numerous times and have appeared in publications such as *The Carolina Quarterly*, *EcoTheo Review*, and *The Lascaux Review*, among many others. Benjamin is also a high school English teacher in the mountains of western North Carolina where he lives with his family and frequents the local rivers and trails.

Mary Alice Dixon lives and writes in Charlotte, NC, where she is a longtime hospice volunteer. She has been an attorney and a professor

BIOGRAPHIES: ADULT CONTEST WINNERS

of architectural history who taught in Charlotte, Minneapolis, and Chongqing, China. Her recent work is in, or forthcoming in *Kakalak*, *The Main Street Rag*, *The Mythic Circle*, *Capsule Stories*, *Personal Story Publishing Project: That Southern Thing*, *County Lines*, *Stonecoast Review*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and elsewhere. She loves to curl up with battered old cookbooks, reading recipes the way some folks read murder mysteries. Mary Alice bakes bread almost every weekend and has been known to burn a few loaves.

Hilda Downer, a longtime member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative and North Carolina Writers Conference, received an MFA from Vermont College and has been published in many journals and anthologies over the years with two books of poetry, *Bandana Creek* and *Sky Under the Roof*. Having worked two full time jobs for 28 years teaching English as an adjunct at Appalachian State University and as a registered nurse, she currently works as a travel psychiatric nurse. She lives in Sugar Grove, NC, where she raised two sons who are both artists and musicians.

Margie Emshoff has been retired from occupational therapy for about 20 years. Since that time, she has thoroughly enjoyed many poetry classes and workshops here in North Carolina. She loves the mental exercise of writing and the stimulation of like-minded friends.

Diana Ewell Engel is the author of the chapbook *Excavating Light*, published by Finishing Line Press. Her poems have appeared in *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Flying South*, *snapdragon*, *Wild Goose Poetry Review*, *Open to Interpretation*, *Perspectives*, *The Gathering*, *Wordworks*, *fire & chocolate*, and *The Visual Poetry Walk*. As a writing tutor for Guilford Technical Community College, Diana embraces helping students to become stronger writers, and, in doing so, to uncover their unique strengths and abilities.

Seren Fargo began writing Japanese-form poetry in 2009. Shortly thereafter, she founded the Bellingham Haiku Group. Her work has won awards and has been published widely in several countries. A former wildlife biologist, Seren enjoys incorporating her past and present experiences from the natural world into her poetry.

Jay Friedenberg is President of the Haiku Society of America and former Associate Editor of the organization's journal, *Frogpond*. He has won numerous awards and published for over a decade in a variety of journals.

Mary Hennessy is a former Army nurse. Her poems have appeared in many journals and anthologies. One was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and included the play *Deployed*. One recently won the Pat Herold Nielsen Poetry Award. She won the North Carolina State Poetry Contest. Poetry is a literal lifeline.

Jo Ann Hoffman's publications include short fiction and a variety of poems in literary journals, including *The Merton Quarterly*, *Persimmon Tree*, *Pinesong*, *New Verse News*, *Kakalak*, *Red Clay Review*, *Flying South*, and *Broad River Review*, among others. She has received contest awards from the Carteret Writers, Pamlico Writers and the Palm Beach Poetry Festival. Her narrative non-fiction book, *Angels Wear Black*, recounts the only technology executive kidnapping to occur in California's Silicon Valley.

Earl Carlton Huband is the author of *The Innocence of Education* (Longleaf Press, 2018) and *In the Coral Reef of the Market* (Main Street Rag, 2020). Both are based on his experiences as a young Peace Corps Volunteer in the Sultanate of Oman.

Jonathan Humphrey's work has recently appeared in *Modern Haiku*, *Frogpond*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Contemporary Haibun*, and *The Best Small Fictions*. He was named Prize Winner of the 2020 Haiku International Association Haiku Contest. With a fondness for whiskey and whippoorwills, he divides his time between the lights of Nashville and the woods of his native Kentucky.

Co-winner of *Reed Magazine's* Edwin Markham Prize in 2019, **Jeanne Julian** is the author of *Like the O in Hope* and two chapbooks. She lives in South Portland, Maine.

Anne Maren-Hogan writes and gardens in one of the oldest intentional communities in the country, dedicated to simplicity, sustainability, and consensus decision-making. Her first chapbook, *The Farmer's*

BIOGRAPHIES: ADULT CONTEST WINNERS

Wake, was published by Finishing Line Press. Her second chapbook, *Laying the Past in the Light*, published by Longleaf Press, looks at the mystery of death and resurgent power of landscape. Last summer her manuscript, *Vernacular*, was chosen as Honorable Mention by NC Poetry Society.

A faculty member at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, **Joseph Mills** has published six collections of poetry with Press 53. He is currently working on his seventh, a manuscript of poems about dance.

JeanMarie Olivieri is a mostly-retired business writer who mostly writes poetry. She has been published in online journals and anthologies including *PineSong*. She is a co-organizer for the Living Poetry Meetup group, and an editor for the *Poems from the Heron Clan* Anthology series. Follow her at <https://jeanmarieolivieri.wordpress.com/>

Gary Phillips is the 2016-2019 Poet Laureate of Carrboro. His book *The Boy The Brave Girls* was released by Human Error Publishing in 2016. A child of Appalachia, Gary lives in a rammed earth house in Silk Hope, North Carolina.

Ana Pugatch is the '20-'21 Poetry Heritage Fellow at George Mason University. She is a Harvard graduate who taught English in China and Thailand for several years before recently returning to the U.S. Her work has appeared in publications such as *The Los Angeles Review*, *Foothill Poetry Journal*, and *Thin Air Magazine*, among others.

Richard Ramsey, now of Des Moines, was raised on a farm in southern Iowa. Vietnam veteran, lawyer, former Iowa state legislator, he also served two Iowa governors. Eighty years of age, he began writing some prose and poetry five years ago primarily for his four adult children and his friends.

Erica Reid is a Colorado poet with an Ohio heart. She is currently pursuing her MFA at Western Colorado University.

Martin Settle is a writer and assemblage artist who resides in Charlotte, NC. He has master's degrees in English and Communications and has taught for 32 years, the last 17 of which were at UNC Charlotte. He has published four books: *The Teleology of Dunes*, *Coming to Attention: Developing the Habit of Haiku*, *The Backbone Alphabet*, and *Maple Samaras*.

Jane Shlensky, a teacher and musician, has an MFA from UNC-G. Her recent poetry and fiction can be found online and in *Writer's Digest*, *Kakalak*, *moonShine review*, *Thomas Wolfe Review*, and *Nostos*. Her chapbook, *Barefoot on Gravel*, was published in 2016.

Mark Smith-Soto's poetry collections include *Our Lives Are Rivers* (University Press of Florida, 2003), *Any Second Now* (Main Street Rag, 2006) and *Time Pieces* (Main Street Rag, 2015). *Fever Season: Selected Poetry of Ana Istarú* (2010) and *Berkeley Prelude: A Lyrical Memoir* (2013) were published by Unicorn Press. Awarded a 2006 NEA Fellowship in Creative Writing, he's had work in *Kenyon Review*, *Literary Review*, *Nimrod*, *Rattle*, *The Sun*, etc.

Debbie Strange (Canada) is an internationally published short-form poet, haiga artist, and photographer whose creative passions connect her more closely to the world and to herself.

Nancy Swanson is a retired educator living just outside of Brevard. Her poetry has been published in *Broad River Review*, *Chattahoochee Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Comstock Review*, *English Journal*, and *South Carolina Review*, among others.

Shelly Reed Thieman is a lifelong Iowan and the communications officer for the Iowa Poetry Association. She is a disciple of imagery, a mistress of montage. Her mission in the art of poetry is for each poem to find its way to the eyes and heart of someone, somewhere, in need of something at a very particular moment in time.

Melinda Thomsen's full-length poetry collection, *Armature*, was an Honorable Mention in the 2019 Lena Shull Book Award from North Carolina Poetry Society and is forthcoming from Hermit Feathers Press. She lives in Greenville, NC and teaches English at Pitt Community College.

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In her eighty-third year, Indiana native **Lucia Walton Robinson** is honored and amazed to win prizes in this heavily-wooded state that shelters a fine poet behind every other tree. She has edited books in Manhattan, raised two highly-literate offspring, and taught in a Gulf Coast college, and is now enjoying retirement and writing near the Carolina coast and her daughter Addy McCulloch. Her work has appeared in *Kakalak*, *The Penwood Review*, *Split Rock Review*, *The Road Less Traveled*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology*, vol. VII, *Indiana Voice Journal*, and other venues, and has won prizes in Charlotte, Chicago, and Indiana.

Carmen Dressler Ward was born and grew to adulthood in Kansas, then lived in Texas, Indiana, Illinois, and Massachusetts before moving to North Carolina in 2000. She has been a teacher, school librarian, and college administrator. She enjoys writing poetry, playing the piano and hammered dulcimer, conversation with family and friends, and delights in the surprises of travel and lifelong learning.

Andrew Weatherly has taught in Asheville for 25 years: City, County, Charter, Parochial, Community College, ESL, and State Prison, and now middle school. He finds inspiration in dancing, baking, nature, Hawaiian shirts, sacred stories, other poets, fire, and pilgrimages to sacred mountains. He's been published in *Cordite*, *Danse Macabre*, *Axe Factory*, *Katuah Journal*, and others.

Susan Willey Spalt lives in Carrboro, North Carolina. Her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies, including *Pineong*. *Longer If It's Raining* (Red Dashboard Press, 2016) is her first chapbook. Susan is a member of the Carrboro Poets Council, which organizes and manages Carrboro's West End Poetry Festival.

Emily Wilmer (St. Joseph, MN) has been published in a variety of journals, including *Sufi Journal*, *Flying South*, *Leaping Clear* (online), and *Kakalak*. Her work has received two Pushcart Prize nominations. Her chapbook, *Shaft of Light*, was published in May 2020.

DEDICATION HISTORY OF ANTHOLOGY

Award Winning Poems AND Pinesong

- 1987 Christine Rose Sloan
1988 Carolyn S. Kyles
1989 Sallie Nixon
1990 Leon Hinton
1991 Samuel LeRoy McKay
1992 Gladys Owings Hughes
1993 Margaret B. Baddour
1994 Shelby Stephenson
1995 Sam Ragan
1996 Ron Bayes
1997 Sally Buckner
1998 Mary Belle Campbell
1999 Elizabeth Grier Bolton
2000 Ellen Johnston-Hale
2001 Marie Gilbert
2002 Ray Dotson
2003 Ruby P. Shackelford
2004 David Treadway Manning
2005 Lois Riley Holt Wistrand
2006 Marsha White Warren
2007 Susan Laughter Meyers
2008 Ann Deagon
2009 Sharon Sharp
2010 Libby Campbell
2011 Bill Griffin
2012 Guy & Carolyn York
2013 Bill Blackley
2014 Sara Claytor
2015 Pat Riviere-Seel
2016 Scott Owens
2017 Kathryn Stripling Byer
2018 Kevin Morgan Watson
2019 Ruth Moose
2020 M. Scott Douglass
2021 David Treadway Manning

CONTEST SPONSORS

YOUTH AWARDS SPONSORSHIPS

The Mary Chilton Award sponsored by Tori Reynolds

The Joan Scott Memorial Award

endowed via contributions by membership and friends

The Sherry Pruitt Award endowed by Gail Peck

The Travis Tuck Jordan Award

endowed by Dorothy and Oscar Pederson

ADULT AWARDS SPONSORSHIPS

Poet Laureate Award sponsored by Press 53 / Kevin Watson

Thomas H. McDill Award sponsored by NCPS Board members

Joanna Catherine Scott Award sponsored by Friends

Mary Ruffin Poole American Heritage Award endowed

by Pepper Worthington

Bloodroot Haiku Award sponsored by Bill Griffin

Poetry of Courage Award endowed by Ann Campanella

Carol Bessent Hayman Poetry of Love Award sponsored

by Priscilla Webster-Williams

Ruth Morris Moose Sestina Award endowed by Ruth Moose

Bruce Lader Poetry of Witness Award sponsored by Doug Stuber

Katherine Kennedy McIntyre Light Verse Award sponsored

by Diana Pinckney

Alice Osborn Award (Poetry for Children) sponsored

by Alice Osborn

