In loving memory of

Jo-Anne Hirshfield
who found pleasure and delight in poetry

Her family has dedicated funds entrusted
to the Evanston Public Library
to award prizes for outstanding new poetry writing.

It is our hope that poets of all ages
will be inspired and encouraged,
and that the funds will serve
to reward excellence in poetry writing
as a memorial to Jo-Anne.

–Dr. and Mrs. Hyman Hirshfield
daughters, Laura, Leslie, and Deborah, and
grandson Justin Garrick

with special remembrance of

Brian Garrick

The
Thirty-Fifth Annual
Jo-Anne Hirshfield
Memorial Poetry
Awards

Evanston Public Library Community Meeting Room
Sunday, April 21, 2013, 2:00pm
In loving memory of

Dr. Hyman Hirshfield
1921-2010
Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to contributors of this year’s awards

Hope Arthur
Elaine and Bernard Bell
Elliott and Laura Dudnik
Victoria Eckstein
Mitchell and Yetta Frank
Andrea and Marty Freed
Billie Rosman and Family

Contributions

Contributions to the Jo-Anne Hirshfield Memorial Poetry Fund are welcomed, and will enable this program to continue.
 Gifts may be forwarded to:
 Library Director
 Evanston Public Library
 1703 Orrington Avenue
 Evanston, IL 60201

The prizes in poetry are awarded in memory of:

Sara (Suki) Kandell
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George Kapsis
Sari Kumer
Dr. Minnie Frank Lustgarten
Sylvia Nissenson

The Middle School Awards are endowed by:

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Welcome Karen Danczak Lyons, Library Director

Introductory Remarks Lesley Williams, Head of Adult Services

Remarks by 2013 Poetry Judge Bruce Guernsey

Presentation of 2013 Awards and Prize Money

Elementary Age Students
Middle School Students
High School Students
Unpublished Adults

Poetry Readings Bruce Guernsey

Refreshments Immediately Following the Program
Meet the Award Winners

Past Judges

1979 - Eloise Fink
Lisel Mueller
1980 - Mark Perlberg
1981 - Mark Perlberg
1982 - Daryl Hine
1983 - Eleanor Gordon
1984 - Mark Perlberg
1985 - Dennis Brutus
1986 - Lisel Mueller
1987 - John Dickson
1988 - Eloise Fink
1989 - Gertrude Rubin
1990 - Reginald Gibbons
1991 - Angela Jackson
1992 - Richard W. Calish
1993 - Beatriz Badikian
1994 - Maxine Chernoff
1995 - Martha Modena Vertreace

1996 - Effie Mihopoulos
1997 - Mark Turcotte
1998 - Mark Turcotte
1999 - Allison Joseph
2000 - Sterling Plumpp
2001 - Richard Jones
2002 - Susan Hahn
2003 - Julie Parson-Nesbitt
2004 - Dr. Haki R. Madhubuti
2005 - Paulette Roeske
2006 - Jared Smith
2007 - Averill Curdy
2008 - Janice N. Harrington
2009 - Janet S. Wong
2010 - Bobbi Katz
2011 - Janet S. Wong
2012 - Laura Purdie Salas

A native New Englander, Bruce Guernsey is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Eastern Illinois University where he taught for twenty-five years. He has also taught at William and Mary, Johns Hopkins, and Virginia Wesleyan where he was Poet in Residence for four years.

His four collections and seven chapbooks include January Thaw from the University of Pittsburgh Press and, most recently, New England Primer from Cherry Grove/WordTech. He is a former editor of The Spoon River Poetry Review.

The recipient of fellowships from the NEA, the MacDowell Colony, and the Illinois Arts Council, Guernsey has been a Fulbright Senior Lecturer in American Poetry in Portugal and Greece. He has also twice sailed around the world as a faculty member with Semester at Sea.

He and his wife divide their time between their homes in Charleston, Illinois and Bethel, Maine.

See more about Bruce and his work at www.bruceguernsey.com

We regret any errors that may have occurred in this publication.
Troy’s Wild Hair

In Troy’s very wild hair,
there is licorice and pencils hidden in there!!
If you lived with Troy it would be a joy,
because everything you would need
would be in that hair of his!!
“Troy, i need a pen,”
“maybe a hen?”
come here Troy, “i need a fish!!”
shlosh-adee-shlish
“any good books? maybe one on how to cook?”
Troy has VERY wild hair,
I wonder what we’d find in there!
Elementary Age Students

Second Place: Katherine Koeppen
King Lab Elementary School, Grade 4

My Garden

My garden has yellow squashes,
my garden has green greens
my garden has ripe tomatoes,
my garden has yummy peas,
my garden has fresh mowed grass,
my garden has nice long vines,
my garden also has blueberries
that are really quite divine!
my yummy food is NEVER, EVER
sour!!
the only thing my garden does not have is…
flowers!!

From The Spire’s End
New England: a review
(1976)

How must it have been
behind
The sentiment, the postcard pleasantries?
Dark August hills, a trim bucolic steeple,
Weathered white of churchyard pickets, and
The horse dung, rich and dry on cracked clay roads:
How must it have been?
The forest poised still, rank, inscrutable
Still able, cougarlike, to spring,
And reared against it those young streets
Growing like topsy, like the town, haphazard
Fenced off brightly as the finger of
That tower’s raw and free Idea
Cast its still-unfaded shadows:
Shadows of young men, raw fellows, brawling
Jefferson, Carnegie (that motley
Andrew, juggling his millions)
Moondrunk Poe, Thoreau,
And platoons of teamsters, mastering mud roads
Erupting, whiplash and whiskey spill, to plow
And rut their ways and wills
Through that green time:
Raw studs
Steeple jacks,
Rapists, saints
Sowers of wilderness
Midwives of shovel and dung….}

How must it have been?
the trees on the sides, the contours and moguls all entering eyeshot for split seconds and then fading away, the countryside stretching out in all directions from the top of the hill, huge green John Deere tractors gleaming in a factory lot barely a mile away, waiting quietly for the next ignition spark, crank and turn.

Elementary Age Students

Third Place: Catherine Reed
Orrington Elementary School, Grade 5

What is Blue?

Blue is the ocean
That crashes to the shore,
Blue is the lotion
That you get at the store.
Blue is a warm blueberry pie,
And a perfectly cloudless sky.
Blue is the rain falling to the ground,
And a bubble that is perfectly round.
Blue is the wind that blows at the trees,
And the flower that attracts the bees.
Blue is the winter that freezes your toes,
That makes your cheeks red, that numbs your nose.
Blue is a feeling that makes you want to hide,
And the tears that you have just cried.
All the other colors are much, much duller,
Blue really is an amazing color.
**Elementary Age Students**

**Honorable Mention:** Kate Hjorth  
St. Athanasius School, Grade 5

"Summer"

Light Breeze,  
Blue seas,  
Musical notes,  
Little blue sail boats.

No school,  
Pool duels,  
Playing with my dog,  
Dancing in the fog.

Going to the park,  
Playing in the dark,  
Lemonade stand,  
Swimming to the land.

Even though school will start soon,  
We camp under the moon,  
And think everything we went to see,  
That’s what summer means to me.

**Adults**

**Honorable Mention:** Joseph Kuhn Carey  
Glencoe

**Greenblueblack**

Greenblueblack runs all blur  
on the ice-cold skiing slopes  
in frigid February, making eyes  
water and skin feel frozen like  
a blast from a refrigerated storage  
room in an ice cream factory  
until the bottom appears and  
you’re back on the chairlift  
hiking up high in the ski,  
bumping over each tower holding  
the metal cable that pulls your  
exposed-to-the-elements perch  
up to the top, letting you commune  
with nature for a few sweet moments,  
the sunset shooting brilliant bursts of light  
over the nearby hill, the people  
on the slope below dazzling with  
their terrain jumps, spins, soars,  
and falls, snowboarders slashing  
with swhooshing glee, creating a distant  
sound completely different from the  
peaceful side-to-side scrunch of  
skiers, all occupying the same slice  
of snow, interweaving a pattern of  
the most intricate design, aware of  
each other, but oblivious, too, to  
anything but the motion downhill,
A Portrait of the Middle-Aged, As Addict

Hearing the light tap and hushed interchange,
Remorse tugging slightly on the syringe deep in the vein,
She thanks God for small favors (like door locks),
And, resettling, shifts a cramped sole on the cold bath tile,
Footsteps of her children fading, meanwhile,
To the safety of the silence outside.

Almost a skeleton, breath rough with pleasure,
She plants the seeds of an indefinite future
In neat purple rows that grow daily
About her arms and feet.
Back bent, and arm crook’d,
She sings freedom songs while picking at balled cotton,
Lost in the incessant turning of the powerful machine.

Dreaming now, she does not know what is known about her.
She sleeps that sleep of the living which is not quite dead.
Feeling this good,
There is no world
That is not inside her.
There is neither want, nor question:
And the blood, that has finely misted the bathroom mirror,
Means nothing at all.

The Old Little Town

The Old Little Pond sits at the edge of town,
The Old Little Pond green and blue,
The Old Little Pond where we go to swim,
The Old Little Pond who is every kid’s friend,
The Old Little Pond is so very old,
My grandma remembers,
The Old Little Pond,
The Old Little Pond has been alive for centuries,
And The Old Little Pond will be alive for the next centuries.
**Elementary Age Students**

Honorable Mention:  Anika Kaushikkar  
Baker Demonstration School, Grade 5

**Sounds of Peace**

The white flag billowing in the wind

Waves rolling across the water

Roar of waterfalls

Soft pitter patter of rain drops

The gentle rhythm of a beating heart

Rustling of trees and long grasses

The harmony of sounds in a forest

Muffled footsteps in fresh snow

Gentle summer breezes and whispering winds

The sounds of peace

whirling swirling red dust danced in the air fast as a shot
wild horses running running for their lives
a mantra galloping into your head

they are real  they are real  they are real

the chant ran on and on
like horses no one else saw
you quick-folded the moment

Equus caballus abracadabra

hid it in your secret pocket
waited for your own wild life
to begin
**Giddy Up Girl**

remember back when you were a
giddy gritty city girl
your head packed full with books
full of horse love
not much horse sense

giddy up and yippee kiyay
tamed and gentled
well-trained well-bred
stuck in the car carsick
sick of nothing to do
nowhere to be
nothing to see

but a herd of relatives
in the front seat recounting the dead
remember how you pressed
your hot face
to cool green glass
counting off tree grass rock cloud

whoa nelly slow down

something moved up a hill

**Origin**

In the beginning, there was
Before my first chestnut tree, or memories
Of scraping full baby hands across white carpet, of
Struggling to stand was
Rivers, spoken by my grandmother.

The flow of Langston Hughes and there was
Significance in simple words I knew.
And a river out of one wide plastic window,
A cable car, two chairs over water
And tiled floors, saffron on snow.

There was a time I sat in origin
Watched her wrists support a gathering of bracelets
Gold like coins or speckled irises
Heavy like sun on stone at noon.
Two Cats

While the Persian's thought quite beautiful
   With its clouds of fur so soft,
   The sphynx is seen as freakish
   For it's glaring lack, thereof.

   Yes while the Persian's very pretty,
   And the sphynx may be quite frightful,
   The Persian's a bit distant,
   And the sphynx is just delightful!

   The Persian sleeps in special beds,
   The sphynx sleeps by your side.
   The sphynx'll eat potato peels
   The Persian's dining must be fine.

   The sphynx'll purr when you come home
      After an awful day.
   But the Persian takes a quick glance,
      Then looks the other way.

   So while the Persian sits upon her throne,
      Pretty as a dove,
   It's the naked, purring sphynx
      Who knows the true meaning of love.

had not wanted to end. By the sensitive tree
I watched, trying to catch and hold my breath,
and waited for the wonder Uncle Zad
would work in talking to the bees of death.

Some things a person isn't meant to see,
perhaps. If so, my uncle's face was one,
though I didn't so much see as try it on.
It offered up a lesson, and while none
was lost on me, I could easily believe
I'd only just begun the discipline
in which my uncle gave instruction: where Bonner
men go to grieve—and in what manner.
TELLING THE BEES

When someone in our family died, tradition demanded that the bees be told (lest then they try to follow) by the Bonner male nearest the one departed. Bonner men were answerable men: none disregarded this solemn charge, and no one could be found who had ever seen a Bonner man shed tears at such a time. So when Aunt Drusie drowned and had lain in the russet parlor but a day (against a more permanent repose), and her husband of forty years, my uncle Zadoc, who had watched beside her through the night, arose, touched her cheek, and stole quietly out of the house, I slipped outside and followed him down past the canning shed to where the hives lined up like stones behind a church. A slim mimosa trunk more than sufficed to hide my own sapling figure from his eye (though to speak the truth, my uncle didn’t mind the comings and the goings of such as I on the best of days). Reaching up my hand, I touched one of the delicate fronds to see it close slowly in upon itself the way my aunt would close a book that she

Home

My roots rest in a sand-crab city Curled small beside the salty sprawl Of blue Atlantic Ocean.

I remember summers spent in the turquoise house Tall, a gingerbread all grown up Full of mementos that were not ours.

My cousins and I wore t-shirts constantly Long as sundresses, the sand and water softening the edges Scoured our skin clean and stuck to our cheeks in freckles.

We threw ourselves like braided ropes in the waves Fought the waves, the solid floor hundreds of times until We relented, tired, and washed up on shore to sleep.
Of frogs and fish and weeds and let everything touch, brush, titillate me. Under into depths, up into moonlight, cool water soothing my hot body, tickling my tummy, kissing my tiny breasts.

Undoing my hair. I would not have swum to exhaustion, rolled on my back, saw the moon shine my belly. I might not have grabbed the full round moon between my legs and floated and come unknowing, ebullient, laughing out loud.

If I had not gone alone into the night I might not have slept in the soft dust of the road, not woke to birdsong at first light, doves cooing, swallows over the pond, redwing blackbirds commanding

The reeds. Wrens, goldfinch. A few butterflies nearby in the weeds. Cows bellowing in the back pasture, aching to be milked. I might not have slipped back into the house unnoticed by all but the natural world.
I had obeyed, I would have stayed in the hot farmhouse bedroom, I would not have stepped out onto the moonlit porch, closing the screen without a sound.

If I had obeyed and followed the dictum—do not go out alone at night—I would not have walked barefoot the dirt road to the pond in my long white nightgown at fifteen—the full moon flooding me.

Who had patterned and cut and sewed the cotton plisse to just my size from three hundred miles away. Dead now, was it she who smoothed my hair back and braided it loosely?

If I had kept the promise never to swim alone I would not have climbed naked up the willow and out on its fattest limb suspended over water. I would not have dived—virgin white skin—into that liquid night full of milk and stars.

Holding the Moon Between My Legs

First Place: Cele Bona Gurnee

Dream

Yesterday was a wreck
Had a lot of bad luck
I couldn't help thinking
That my life really sucked

Staying up late
For an important test
Couldn't take it anymore
So my head hit the desk

It was beyond the clouds
Above my dreams
A fairy came to me
Took me beyond the jet stream

There it was
Right before my sight
Rainbows, Leprechauns
There was no such thing as fright

Everyone had smiles
That were larger than space
Gigantic ones
That never left their faces

They all walked around
Going about their day
Never doing chores
Living the happy way

But there was one odd thing
I had to inquire
Who told you
That you had to keep the fire

Everyone looked at me
Like I was insane
And all the happiness
Went straight down the drain

I was totally scared
It'd turned from dream to nightmare
So I was feeling kind of lucky
When I fell out of the chair

Opened the lids and lifted the plugs
The alarm clock blaring
The smell of eggs
And the sun was flaring

Just then I realized
It struck me like a knife
That it's actually good
To have some bad in my life
Middle School Students

Honorable Mention: Zinnia Schwartz  
Baker Demonstration School, Grade 7

White Bed

White bed  
Strings  
Cords  
A distant beeping  
or was it my heart?  
A woman  
dressed in a white gown  
Dark hair tumbling down to her waist  
like an avalanche  
Rosy lips  
ready to kiss  
I give her the final kiss she deserves

There are no mosquito bites.  
Not a single one.  
There’ no sign of the MRSA  
that put you in a scratchy hospital gown.  
Or a pair of hands  
wrapped in latex  
heaving you forward and sitting you up straight.  
No one could guess  
that you fell down the stairs  
and never got to taste a greasy hotdog again  
because of the plastic tubes crammed in your throat.  
No one would know what you went through.  
They would only recall the balloons  
vibrant spectacles of red, green, blue, and yellow  
or a shot of homemade vodka  
paired with a thick, wool coat.

I turn the frame  
so you get a clear view of the sunset.  
I hope somehow you feel the sun’s loving embrace  
and it brings back memories  
of those warm summer days.
Sunset

The last rays of sunlight
vanish behind a silhouette of homes.
A line of orange hues
tip-toe’s past the frame
and slowly retreats to the window
just like it has for the past ten years.

You had waved to the camera then,
pausing before you reach for your bag of balloons.
I can still hear the crumple of cheap plastic in your coat pocket
and the sprinklers sputtering behind you
as a gentle breeze shakes a tune from the wind chimes
or Mrs. LeClair hollering
at Mishu to stop barking at squirrels
while Maddy plunges her hand into a bowl of Doritos.

A poem for someone

Let’s go buy you brightly printed sweaters
and I’ll think every single one is ugly
but I’ll still steal them when it gets cold out
Let’s go get vanilla milkshakes
in the middle of winter on a cold Saturday night
Let’s make colorful mix CDs for each other
cause we like to kick it old school every now and then
Let’s watch our favorite movies on mute
so I can rewrite the script and you’ll call me an artist
Let’s go buy a bunch of paint
and you’ll make art on my walls
no canvas needed because imagination has no boundaries anyway
Let’s go travel the world together
and get lost in new words with new people
so that the only familiar thing we have (for a while) is each other
Let’s go to an empty parking lot
and you’ll watch me drive for the first time
and then we can sit out on the cement
as we watch the star painted sky expand above us
we can feel so small in the taciturn night
Let’s get lost in the city and take pictures of everything we like
as we spill coffee and tea on the streets
we can talk about our hazy dreams and watercolor future
so I can fall even more for your exquisite passion
Let's set up a stand selling our artwork
so that I can watch you draw and you can watch me write
and we'll trade them for stories that inspire us
Let's get lost in the Amazon and climb up the Egyptian pyramids
and explore glacial waterfalls and watch the Northern Lights
Let's find a haunted house and stay the night
and find a drive-in movie theatre
where we can watch classics in each other's arms
Let's live hand in hand
and be illustrious human beings

Lacking confidence was the bane
Of my life that drove me insane
The old me I could not regain
If any of that person did remain
Looking in the mirror with disdain
At the person which I had made
Esteem delicate as a vane
Each day I could only feign
That I felt no pain

Then from myself I awoke
Other's judgements I would not soak
My cycle of self-doubt I broke
Their power on me, I revoke
A new sort of me I evoke
Although not perfect, I won't choke
From inside myself I invoke
A defense with my gun and smoke
I created my own cloak
High School Age Students

Honorable Mention: Mariel Aquino
Lake Forest High School

My Cloak

I used to feel in between
Lost inside the social scene
Slipping into a weak mien
Feeling morally unclean
I sacrificed my inner peace
Following the greedy beasts
Feeding those who consider me
Nothing but a loyal sheep

Never having much to say,
Its not my fault I act that way
Sitting at lunch every day
Just as a cafeteria tray
I am there but fading away
I see people's action that convey
Friendships are just a power play

Feeling like a naïveté
Clinging to whatever they say
Trying to find a place where I may
Reply with something clever or, nay,
Words that get me through the day
My beliefs become shades of gray
Lack of attention leads me astray

High School Age Students

Second Place: Elizabeth Clary
Buffalo Grove High School

Wall

Walk by me.
I’m blank, I don’t care.
Now paint me an earth tone,
they say it’s soothing.
I’m pretty now,
will you look at me? no.
Stab me with a nail,
pound it in.
Hang a picture on the nail,
a place you’ve never been.
will you look at me? no.
I’m missing something.
Put a table up against me,
Put a vase of flowers on the table.
Now will you look at me?
Seventeen

The summer I turned seventeen I was
sitting on the edge of the pool
pushing the cold water around
with my pale feet waiting
for the sun to come down
and the night breeze to consume
the humid air.
The porch light glistens as I run
To the front seat of his car
Laughing with the windows rolled down
And the music blasting
Hands dangling out the window
Trying to stop time
As I leave the narrow street that
I used to ride my bike down.

The Spider and Its Web

Acquainted with the greatest skill,
Used to stun and used to kill,
Moving quickly for the thrill,
The spider and its web.

Used to hold its love and prey,
The male will not win today,
He will be her meal, decay,
The spider and its web.

Moving in an octagon,
Taking time to right the wrong,
Making an intricate song,
The spider and its web.

Holding thin fibers that quake,
It seems as though they may break,
When will you appreciate?
The spider and its web.

Passing the time, day by day,
Never can it speak, to say,
The challenges faced today,
The spider and its web.

The small fly makes a wrong turn,
It may never come to learn,
Never go for what you yearn,
The spider and its web.