

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Jo-Anne Hirshfield Memorial Poetry Awards

Sunday, April 30, 2006
2 p.m.
Evanston Public Library
Community Meeting Room

Program

Welcome: **Neal J. Ney**, Library Director

Introductory Remarks: **Karen Terry**, Library Board Vice-President

Remarks by 2006 Poetry Judge **Jared Smith**

Presentation of the 2006 Awards and Prize Money

Elementary Age Students
High School Students
Unpublished Adults

Poetry Reading **Jared Smith**

Meet the Award Winners
Refreshments Immediately Following the Program

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

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WINNERS

First Place

Troy Nelson

Rhodes Magnet School, Eighth Grade

Cellist

This is how I sing.

Leaning into light brown
Red brown
Gold brown
Wood
Wood that sings
Wood that weeps
If trees can't feel,
How do you explain my cello?

It feels.

I feel.
I feel the song.
It's in my hand
My fingers
My heart.

A crescendo is written on the
Snow-white page.
I sing it out
My cello sings along
Growing into
An explosion of sound and spirit.

I sing alone
Apart
Inadequately
Compared to the throbbing voice of
My cello.

So I stop.

I stop and let the music fill me up until
I'm an overflowing coffee mug
Of liquid darkness and light.

This is how I sing.

Second Place

Tara Cleveland

Chute Middle School, Eighth Grade

Forked River

Miner of Iron,
Seller of Cranberries, Lure for Tourists,
Producer of Nuclear Power, Lifeguard for Surfers,
Joyful, laid back, Two-faced,
City of Advertisements,

She has many faces, I know, for I have been lured into
her Tourism.

People warn about her cruelty, I have see it, seen the effects of
her chemicals spreading like Cancer through your Air.
And I have felt the strong push and pull of her picture perfect
Ocean waves.

She has a motherly warmth, never making you feel completely
alone.

Her sisterly love makes everything joyous, carefree, and
comfortable.

She is content with her Life.

Distracting, Encouraging,
Tricking, Deceiving, Selling, Cheating,
Changing,

Her eyes reflect crystal clear blue, green ocean.
Her hair, the golden brown of the sand sparking in the sun.
Her laugh clinking like wind chimes in soft breezes,
All together making Paradise.

Smiling and Grinning behind her mask of trickery and deceit.

Smiling and Grinning,

Smiling a proud smile a young reckless mother smiles when she knows
She has done her job and made her mistakes.

She is happy to be

Miner of Iron,
Seller of Cranberries, Lure for Tourists,
Producer of Nuclear Power, and
Lifeguard for Surfers, her Children.

*Ode to "Chicago" by Carl Sandburg

Third Place

Sally Decker

Nichols Middle School, Eighth grade

In the Clock

~inspired by Lorca

In the clock everyone is dreaming. Everyone.
Even the bugs, the fairies, the girls, the boys
They are all taking a breather
from their little clock lives
to dream
and forget about the bullies that won't quit bothering them
the daisies who frowned every day that week
the endless rain
or the aching feet

Everyone is dreaming. Everyone.
They all know life isn't as good
as their dreams
or as bad- some of their dreams were about
sharp, shiny knives dissecting the insides of apples
or moths choking on dust
But whether they wake up
crying or laughing
frightened or happy

Dreams aren't true
They never are.

In the clock everyone is dreaming.
Until the clock stops.

Honorable Mention

Susan Scheid

Nichols Middle School, Sixth Grade

Worry

The wind shifted and there were loud rolls of thunder
But people wanted quiet
The perfect time to stop and plunder

A plane in the sky the clouds it was under
All below scared for the pilot
The wind shifted and there were loud rolls of thunder

One person shouted that was a blunder
The people started to riot
The perfect time to stop and plunder

“Be still,” cried the city founder
They just became violent
The wind shifted and there were loud rolls of thunder

They all looked at the clouds out yonder
Then all was silent
The perfect time to stop and plunder

All stared in wonder
They regretted it
The wind shifted and there were loud rolls of thunder
The perfect time to stop and plunder

Honorable Mention

Alicia Mayen

Lincoln School, Fourth Grade

Alicia

Alicia

Sister of Picos, Luice, Becky, Paula, and Julia.

Daughter of Juan and Roseann.

Likes cats, dogs, all colors, her friends, art, reading, writing, homework, school work, and lots of other things.

Loves her family and her pet cats.

Fears ISATs, sharks, big spiders, and really not much more.

Would like nothing much but A plusses in every subject.
Resident of Evanston, Illinois and Lincoln School
Mayen

Honorable Mention

N.S. Barker

Crumbhaven Academy (homeschool), Sixth Grade

Fragile

A death of a loved one
A breaking mother
A comforting father
A sobbing grandpa
A bit of sand, in the form of people
A bouquet of carnations
A comforting pat
A happy remembrance
A smell of flowers
A river of red
A sea of tears
A tinkle of music
A memory of long ago
A recollection of joy
A last goodbye
A birth into poverty
A birth into sorrow
A childhood of hardship
A childhood of danger
A father in the mines
A mother at home
A prayer for safety
A prayer for deliverance
A job at a young age
A job not well paying
A decision to move
A new start for life
A waitress at a lunch counter
A meal with a buddy
A friend of a friend
A fateful meeting
A blossoming love
A wedding to recollect
A beautiful child

A little home
A tiny white dog
A marriage of more than fifty years
A child now older
A child now married
An infant soon coming
A bringing of new life
A granddaughter beloved
A batch of fresh cookies, lovingly made
A squeal of joy on a tiny young face
A set of wooden blocks
A room full of castles
A smile of satisfaction
A passing of years
A circle of pets
An accident damaging
A fall from the stairs
A pulmonary collapse
A wheelchair needed
A helping hand
A caring family
A sickening in winter
A downhill slope of health
A caregiver kindly
An inability to move
A refusal to eat but a piece of cheesecake
A final degrading
A leaving of the soul
A body still surviving, though not for long
A last movement
A departing breath
A stillness
A sob emerging from those around her
A refusal to let her go
A funeral fit for a queen
A sending off for good
A look down from Heaven
A granddaughter writing
A tear falling on the page
A memorial of words
A poem spun of memories

To my grandmother, Penny Schultz

HIGH SCHOOL WINNERS

First Place

Esther Kim

Buffalo Grove High School

Orchard Blossoms

The man grunts as he settles
into the wooden bench
marked with splinters hidden
by dried leaves from the orchard
that coast just above the silence
that kept him awake
for so long

He traces his black cane
running his wrinkled fingers
over the contours of melted passion
that stung his wrist in steam.
His orchard bends over to create
a canopy over his graying crown
but the chain of his dog tags scrape
against his neck
moving up and down in time
with his pulse.

The man tips his hat to Mrs. Winslow
as she walks by reciting
her grocery list: lettuce, carrots, butter
“Good day, m’am.”
She gives him a wide smile
before pecking him on the cheek.
Mrs. Winslow sits besides him
and she murmurs as
the leaves fall into her lap.
I wandered lonely as a cloud...

He takes her dry hand
and makes a contract
underneath the wreaths
of the orchard.
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
She leaves him
with his dog tags in her hand
and he thinks he sees

the breeze cling to her
cinnamon spice tinged with
orchard blossoms.

** I wandered lonely as a cloud/That floats on high o'er vales and hills* was taken from
William Wordsworth's poem *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

Second Place

Goni Sondak

Evanston Township High School

today

is a fly floating on its back in my dark drink
swooshing in my mouth as i take a sip
and out again
its translucent still crisp wings almost
getting stuck between my next to two front teeth

the metal toes of the chairs
gripping the carpet with unrivaled strength

today
is secret obsessions that you hide from yourself
and the hard dead skin cracked around the nail
peeling and bleeding

working from a crumbling picture
it is what you can not say today is
what you don't think

the thoughts that capture us and chain us down
by nothing stronger than
static electricity
today is thinking
about ice cubes and shelves and
glove compartments that open from
the outside in
and lock
from the inside out

today is
too much elbow room
on the subway
when you can

look the bum in the eyes
and both ask each other

what are we doing here?

Third Place

Natalie Myers

Buffalo Grove High School

Closet

You wait in the darkness, shadows wrap
Around your tan legs, wrap them up like blankets. You
see the soft dark comfort of blankets, wrapping you in
warmth, keeping that Saturday night, those phone calls,
in the folds of what you know.

It creeps up to you like an insect, a spider waiting
above your curved fingers in the dark
of a closet you cannot escape.

The spider hides beneath,
moves closer to your painted nails
manicured to smooth moons, inviting
one leg onto the nail the finger the hand.

Delicate like the tightrope walker
balanced on top of a string
that glimmers before it breaks.

The dancer moves up the arm, past the
birthmark only seen in tank tops
over the thread necklace she wears
as the only reminder of the girl
she was outside of this closet.

He dances over the chin,
around the cheek, too copper
for winter sun, not pausing on the
eyebrows the lashes the hair.

The tightrope moves into a strand of
hair, straying across the lashes darker
than everything else except the shadow
it sits in.

The dancer, sitting on the rope, waits to
step. One of eight in front of the others.
A water bead foot, placed against the golden
rope, steps down. Drips onto the copper skin
below. You discover the dancer

to be a snare. Falls hard on the ground below,
dashes around your panicked feet,
through the chaos to a darker corner.
It waits for another moment to remind you
that the closet is not safe.

Honorable Mention

Emma Furman

Evanston Township High School

(The guitar stands)

I must have
touched a string
for instruments do not begin
by themselves.

A tune is plucked
from somewhere out
in the ocean,
where fluorescent lights
converge.

I do not begin myself,
so some hands must have
kissed me.

The guitar stands
Pregnant in the darkness.

Honorable Mention

Nicolette Applebaum

Buffalo Grove High School

Happy Birthday II

Part 1: Vindictive, Part 2: Vindicated

Laughing against the wind on an infant
August night, but the air is so tense I can't see
through you. The weather's still warm enough
To fall asleep thinking you'd kiss me tomorrow.

It hurts to lean back against the trunk of your Camry, with
our bony spines pressed flat into the window,
but this position is not natural for humans, much less
my roughened feet dangling above the cheap blacktop,
between the expired-butter lines designating
This spot to your car.

The sky is too early to find any stars.
All the dentists' offices and Starbucks this side
of Rand must still be occupied.

"There's one! And there."

Your words, a sea of sand, spill onto broken
bits of the hourglass, all desperate not to touch the
fallen fruit-punch popsicles beneath our toes.
A foggy breeze ruffles the hair on my arms and
I turn to fold tighter against you, a soldier
in the Vietnam war, hiding from the enemy, or just
covering my right brain's body from the chill.

I hope you think of me tonight when you
buy those Kools in accordance with the
law. And when you meet Greg on the woodchips
behind number 201, for a bag of fresh
white rhinos. Or when she's lying naked
under your covers, make sure to zoom in
close. Her nose will grow rounder, her eyes will darken
three shades, and my face will cloud
your viewfinder. Now it's you, Etnies burned thrice
from dropped cigarettes, and rust
for a jacket on the bearings of your board.
Now it's me, Kristen and me
and Adam Lazarra, as we scream out the words
and mean every single one.
She'll tie the noose, I'll raise the cross,
because you want it all.
Promise you'll wonder what I'm doing
when the sweet, blue-tinged smoke
fills your lungs, and as
you laugh into the wind like we used to
come summer.

Honorable Mention

Lainey Kahn

Buffalo Grove High School

Threads

It's the calm.
You sit up tall and stare across the horizon looking for me.
I'm right here,
gazing through the dark smoke
incomprehensible.
You exert a mist around my cheeks
as you feel for my jawbone.
You're rough as I run my fingers up your back.
You can't feel me through I know all about you,
insignificant as a speck of dust
sitting on a star.
But from here, I can't see your threads;
the fibers melt together to form your walls.
Sweat drips from your shoulder
and I taste the salty bitterness of your wrinkles.
You brush the dirt off of your lungs
as you gasp for clean air.
I hear you whispering my name.
Sound waves echo down my legs.
You jump back when I come into focus
and I feel your stare rumble the earth under my toes.

ADULT WINNERS

First Place

Maureen Tolman Flannery
Evanston

A House Painter Considers the Influence of Color

I cut the edges with a steady hand.
Two colors, where they meet, transmute the light.
The sea's teal blue is sheerer near the land.

Though I can't say I fully understand
the subtle interplay of dull and bright,
I cut the edges with a steady hand.

The outcome isn't always what I'd planned—
a vibrant green beside a neutral white.
The sea's teal blue is sheerer near the land.

The shade we see depends on where we stand,
what hues are in periphery of sight.
I cut the edges with a steady hand,

make clean distinctions where the tasks demand,
and sponge the layers of color where I might.
The sea's teal blue is sheerer near the land,

but waves are hardly separate from their sand
and day comes moving gently across the night.
I cut the edges with a steady hand.
The sea's teal blue is sheerer near the land.

Second Place

Christine Pacyk

Arlington Heights

Sandhill Cranes

Chased down from upper Michigan,
at noon they glide over
the suburbs, carrying with them
grayer skies. My neighbor and I

in our yards, the chainlink between
us, watch the Sandhills fly over
the suburbs. Awkward, graceful,
legs kicked out behind, and bodies

suspended from feathered capes.
For a moment neither of us stirs,
considering this medieval
orchestra—garoo-a-a-a-

guided along by an ancient
compass. How far they've come; how
far have they yet to go? I consider
the distance, huddle deeper in the soft

cotton of my sweatshirt. "Snow
by evening," nods Tom,
but I can't believe him, my mind
still on falling leaves and bonfires.

Later, I find myself driving, the crane
song a fading hum pulling me
past the city limits when the first
flake taps on my windshield.

Third Place
Chad Peterson
Evanston

Easter

An Event

A miniature night,
A black coral sea.
Nude, She approaches – my city-child.
How intense this unpaved time,
Thrusting savagery into the air
To the drunken drum's tattoo,
Pulsing mahogany and churning out a desperate music
That snakes and shakes and rides
To the rhythm of the beat.
And she cuts through the frail congestion –
My little girl who shines like the highly polished night,
Piercing the smothering shroud with
Her bubbling giggles and sky-blue pops of laughter,
Perfect in her complexity.
And yet,
For me –
For my own city-child's event,
A lazy waltz with violins would do.
An escape to the garden, where the music rides forever –
Trailing hellos and good-byes
And nestled in memory,
Warm and safe.
Folded in an anodyne haze
Not bled dry of consequence and abandoned.

Could we but transpose –
Plant flowers in concrete and sow seeds of stop signs in the rich loam.
If only we could twine the bump and grind with
Swish and sigh
And not allow the music to fade.
Each tune riding the other –
Nipping at their heels, and
Driving the derision out of our consciousness.

Out of all conscience...

Cautiously,
My city child comes to me,
Her sparkle pulling splinters through my spine,
And my waltz drifts off.

Or my waltz drifts on, silently,
Leaving only the pulse of life, as we lay curled together –
Twined in a ceremony of paradox and
I can taste her sweat.
I can feel the cool softness of her palm on my neck.
I see flashes of color prick her eyes in the near dark
And there is music in it.
Music that endures past all other sound fading –
Music that disappears off the tongue –
Leaving just the echoes
To ring the season's coda.
And we sleep
As the pulse pierces the darkness and
I dream of my city-child
Dancing bare through the garden
To invisible music,
Waking my steady waltz with the bliss of her naked rhythm.

Honorable Mention

Joyce Elizabeth Norman

Hoffman Estates

Drying Corn

The hum of the corn dryer was low-pitched
without a breath
and it spun the salty air of August
throughout the night
on that farm nestled at the top
of the bluff in Southern Minnesota
in the grove of trees
that pressed against
the blades of corn
the oval leaves of beams.
“White noise” someone called it,
but that was wrong.

The purr that arose from
the steel bin
would mix with
the putts of the John Deere
tractor, the clank of the
wagons, the clicking of
the gravel road,.
So I think about that
evening melody
that I learned to
memorize under all those
stars and remember the smell
of drying kernels of corn
and I too hold my breath.

Honorable Mention

Jim Piper

Evanston

Mom in a Grocery Store

You say, "Now, LaTeisha, just put that back."
And you smack her right on the cheek.
And everyone looks at you two and some people blush and some others
murmur. You hold your ground, though, and keep your scowl-face right on
your precious daughter. LaTeisha looks up at you with tears in her eyes and
doesn't say a word. She holds your eyes with hers and fights her surge to cry.
She used to turn away and cry and look to the murmuring strangers for
sympathy--- but not anymore: she has learned that crying gets you nowhere.
But no matter what there's always a moment when you look into your
precious baby's eyes and feel it's time to stop the strangers'
(or, God forbid, the neighbors') stares and pick up that box or can or whatever
that precious LaTeisha has dropped because you lose your desire to shore up
pain in your baby daughter: for a weak moment you become tired of being
steadfast; and you fall back to the time of LaTeisha's birth.
She almost seemed to be smiling when she was born, didn't she?
Then you try to remember that warm summer's night when LaTeisha was conceived, but
you can't: you were a little too drunk--- and LaTeisha's daddy
is long gone.

And then, as the crowd is dispersing, and most everyone is feeling false alarm
when they see that LaTeisha's not even crying, you pick your precious baby up
to plop her in the cart.

To an outside observer you remain resolute in your scowl and your
displeasure: but LaTeisha looks up at you with mixed emotions as she reads

your scowl but feels a loving touch somewhere deep inside your hold.
And you remember now--- you remember like it was yesterday why you get so
pissed off at your precious baby girl in the grocery store: you've got to protect
her from herself: you've got to steel her for what's to come.
You were like her once: soft, playful, easy to laugh. But that didn't save you:
Not from your step-dad; not from your Uncle Willie; and it sure as hell didn't
save you from that train of boys on your 16th birthday. They wanted to get you
just a little drunk for your birthday, and you believed them: you thought they
were your brothers and that they were there to protect you...

And you usually stop right there because you catch the stares of people again.
Only this time they're looking at a mom in a grocery store who's staring off
into space while she's clutching her baby.
And so, you stop short of reliving your 16th birthday celebration and you look
at your daughter whose eyes are still locked into yours. She's looking at you
like she knows--- and you remember again what it was like to be soft and to
play and to be easy with a laugh.

Honorable Mention

Sandra Pietkiewicz

Wilmette

Reflections on Pablo Neruda

Why is it that men fear words?
Oh, out of self-defense, they'll use them
Sparingly,
Perfunctorily,
Superficially,
Commercially,
But usually, guardedly.
More comfortable exchanging
Pat phrases with other men
Than exchanging ideas with women.
It is as if they fear that women could
Steal their souls through their words.
The man who talks to women, really talks
Will always be beloved
Treasured and held in high esteem
By the fairer sex.
Poets understand this simple fact.
And need resolve
To keep word-hungry women at bay.

Poetry Judge: Jared Smith

Jared Smith's fifth volume of poetry, *Lake Michigan and Other Poems*, has just been released by Puddin'head Press. His other poetry books include: *Walking the Perimeters Of the Plate Glass Window Factory*(2001); *Keeping the Outlaw Alive* (1988); *Dark Wing* (1984); and *Song of the Blood* (1983.) Smith is a member of the Advisory Board for *The New York Quarterly Literary Review*, and Poetry Editor for *Trail & Timberline*. He is immediate past president of Poets & Patrons; a member of the Academy of American Poets, the Chicago Poets' Club, the Illinois State Poetry Society; and the Naperville Writers' Group. He is a former associate Director of Education and Research at Institute of Gas Technology, and a former Special Appointee to Argonne National Laboratory, as well as a past adviser on technology and policy to The White House Commission on Critical Infrastructure Assurance under President Clinton.

The prizes in poetry this year are awarded in remembrance of:

**Robert C. Busch
Brian Garrick**

The poetry awards ceremony is dedicated in memory of:

**Meyer Barrash
Florence Green
Laurice Levy
Mary Rubin
Richard Stillerman**

Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgement is made to contributors to this year's awards.

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Victoria Eckstein
June Lubin
Gertrude Rubin

With special thanks to Mrs. Sara Busch and the late Dr. Robert C. Busch for their support and generosity.

Contributions

Contributions to the Jo-Anne Hirshfield Memorial Poetry Fund are welcomed, and will enable this program to continue.

Gifts may be forwarded to:
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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 Hirsfield
daughters, Laura, Leslie, and Deborah,
and grandson Justin Garrick