

*The
Thirty-Ninth Annual
Jo-Anne Hirshfield
Memorial Poetry
Awards*



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SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017, 2:00PM

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In loving memory of
Dr. Hyman Hirshfield
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The prizes in poetry are awarded
in memory of:

Javier Perez Cuevas

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The Middle School Awards are endowed by:

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P rogram

Welcome Karen Danczak Lyons, Library Director

Introductory Remarks Karen Danczak Lyons, Library Director

Remarks by 2017 Poetry Judge Susan T. Moss

Presentation of 2017 Awards and Readings of the Winning Poetry

Elementary School Students
Middle School Students
High School Students
Unpublished Adults

Poetry Reading Susan T. Moss

Refreshments Immediately Following the Program

Meet the Award Winners

PAST JUDGES

1979 - Eloise Fink	1998 - Mark Turcotte
Lisel Mueller	1999 - Allison Joseph
1980 - Mark Perlberg	2000 - Sterling Plump
1981 - Mark Perlberg	2001 - Richard Jones
1982 - Daryl Hine	2002 - Susan Hahn
1983 - Eleanor Gordon	2003 - Julie Parson-Nesbitt
1984 - Mark Perlberg	2004 - Dr. Haki R. Madhubuti
1985 - Dennis Brutus	2005 - Paulette Roeske
1986 - Lisel Mueller	2006 - Jared Smith
1987 - John Dickson	2007 - Averill Curdy
1988 - Eloise Fink	2008 - Janice N. Harrington
1989 - Gertrude Rubin	2009 - Janet S. Wong
1990 - Reginald Gibbons	2010 - Bobbi Katz
1991 - Angela Jackson	2011 - Janet S. Wong
1992 - Richard W. Calish	2012 - Laura Purdie Salas
1993 - Beatriz Badikian	2013 - Bruce Guernsey
1994 - Maxine Chernoff	2014 - Kevin Stein
1995 - Martha Modena Vertreace	2015 - Allison Funk
1996 - Effie Mihopoulos	2016 - John Rybicki
1997 - Mark Turcotte	

Elementary School Students

First Place:

Sommer Stone
Kingsley Elementary School

Beauty

Goes deeper than the skin,
All the way to the soul.
From the way she acts,
To the way you move.
she doesn't know
If it's right or wrong,
To look like a model.
she should know
That there are more nice than pretty people
In the universe.
I am a victim of the wrath,
Used to be pretty and mean,
Now pretty and nice.

Elementary School Students

Second Place:

Perrine Tran
Orrington Elementary

The Words

The words you spoke
to me as you left
the words you said
when everything was gray,
I shall never forget.

Elementary School Students

Third Place:

Jacob Bennett
Lincoln Elementary School

Mountain Covered in Snow

On a snowy morning
The sun peeks out of
The mountains like
A firefly waking up
In a field of darkness
The beautiful blue and yellow
Shimmering and reflecting off
Of the fresh powdery snow
The white, green
And brown pine trees
Stick out of the
Mountain like hairs
On someone's head
The slippery ice
And freezing snow
Cover the town, forests
And lakes
Streetlights, lamps
And Christmas lights
Turn on like the
Sun turned on in the morning.

Elementary School Students

Honorable Mention

Naomi Alemayehu
Kingsley Elementary School

We Are All Different

We are all born
In a different way
How we look and
What we say
From different countries
Around the world of different
Genders boys and girls of many sizes
And colors too the things we like
And the things we do we're sure
Glad it works this way
the world is so colorful everyday
If everyone were the same,
You see you wouldn't be you and i wouldn't be me!

Elementary School Students

Honorable Mention

Charlotte Hurst
Science and Arts Academy

Me

I'm as silly as a taunting monkey
I'm as sharp as the tip of a pencil
I'm as clear as a crystal ball
I'm as fierce as a wild bear
I'm as hyper as a jumping jellybean
I'm as nice as my dog
I'm as sly as a fox
I'm as bold as a dragon
I'm as daring as a confident bull
I'm as stubborn as a mule
I'm as drowsy as my bed
I'm as loved as love it self
I'm needed by family like soap is needed for hands

Middle School Students

First Place:

Lily Shure
Haven Middle School

She Was Born

She was born in her room
On the first of June
In the heart of Summer
On the brisk of noon

While her peers were playing
With toys in the park
She was thinking and thinking
Under the bridge's arc

She was full of stories
That kept her up at night
Her brain was a bulb
That was shining bright

When she picked up a pen
And began to write
Ideas flowed through her
Like wind through a kite

Everybody ignored her
They called her insane
But she kept on working
Working through the pain

One day she was noticed
When writing what she saw
They read over her shoulder
Their faces in awe

They asked how she did it
How she did it so well
She said it was a talent
There was nothing to tell

They encouraged her to write
Write more, write more
So she wrote until her hands
Were blistered and sore

That day she realized
That she had a skill
That could change the world
If she had the will

So she wrote about
What she cared about
And people listened
To what she blurted out

So she wrote more, wrote more
Until there was nothing left to say
Until she left the world
On a summer day

She died in her room
On the first of June
In the heat of Summer
On the brisk of noon

But that's not the end
It didn't end with age
Her story lives on
On this very page

Middle School Students

Second Place:

Lucia Goldberg
Haven Middle School

2017

*I am I.
My living, breathing person.
My life is not posted online.
You can't encompass my feelings with emojis.
I live in the moment, I don't record moments so I can relive them
later
Again and
Again and
Again like a broken record.
The device tries to turn my heart into a 'less than' sign and a 3
But I won't let it.
I play outside
Not in a bright screen
That tears through my eyelids
And spreads its darkness around my brain
Consuming my thoughts
And trying to turn them
Into something they're not
So they will fit
On that bright little screen
So that I
Am no longer I.*

Middle School Students

Third Place:

Safiya Blount
Nichols Middle School

Why

Why am I hiding
Sinking deeper into me
Trying to figure out
What is wrong with me
Why I am scorned
& tormented
Constantly on the run
It must have something
To do with that word
That word I must have
Used wrong
LOVE
All I said was
I love her
That's it
That's all I said
Maybe it's because of
Me
Brown haired
Brown eyed
Me
Deep down inside
I think I know why
It's because I'm a

GIRL

Middle School Students

Honorable Mention:

Cherie Animashaun
Chute Middle School

Unity

Break the walls that divide us,

Peace should be used to unite us,

Hatred is a disease that is never used to please.

Some ignore the right and do the wrong,

But as a nation we should sing our song

Hands raised high we are the change we hope for.

Inside us lay a diamond shining bright.

Inside us, we contain the light to pierce through the night.

Why fight when we can unite?

Middle School Students

Honorable Mention:

Carly Johnson
Haven Middle School

Just hold on

Hold on to The world
even if it spins all around
hold on to family
even if they're nowhere to be found
Hold on to light
even your shadowed
Hold On To Love
even if it's a battle
Hold on to the mirror
even if you don't like what you see
Hold On To Life
Even if you still don't have the key

High School Students

First Place:

Margaret Blackburn
Interlochen Arts Academy

Seasonal Farmers Market

Kale - 1. the sun knocks gently on a classroom window. the teacher closes the blinds. an artificial winter, meant to bring the mind to life. 2. the wind nips at the exposed skin of your legs. your mother warned you not to wear shorts today. 3. the world hesitates between the tick marks on the edge of the clock. you blink, and we are in motion again.

Rhubarb - 1. dad rolls out the dough for a pie no one will eat. the cinnamon is wasted here; better to save it for when the strawberries come in. 2. iced tea comes into season again. you visit Starbucks after school. "one mango black tea lemonade, please. light ice." 3. you are a balloon, straining against your string. your final exams are decidedly pointy.

Strawberries - 1. the sun stains your hair a lighter shade and your limbs an itchy pink. you abandon sunscreen because it gives you breakouts. melanoma is far away, anyway. 2. you splash around on the beach. you make drip castles. you find sand in your swimsuit later. 3. "stay hydrated," your mother calls. "stay hydrated," your counselors call. "stay hydrated," the birds call. you invest in a glass of lemonade.

Cherries - 1. you tie stems into knots with your tongue. you line pits up in a row and flick them into the sink. 2. there are brown patches on your lawn. there are brown patches on everyone's lawn. Mrs. Lawson has no brown patches. you wonder about the nature of her fertilizer. 3. the morning chill leads you to believe pants are a good idea today. you sweat from behind your knees. you name it Lake Patella.

Blueberries - 1. you stagnate like the puddles of water in your yard. mosquitos lay eggs in you. dogs lap you up. you dry up under the sun. 2. your mother begs you to open the curtains. you wonder why she made them if she didn't want you to use them. she calls you bitter, and you agree. 3. you find blue stains on your last white shirt.

Zucchini - 1. grilling makes such a pleasant sizzle. you stand by your father and brave the patio barefoot to watch grease bubbles pop. 2. the fireworks started months ago. now, there are flags to match. you are an overstuffed bookshelf of reasons not to go to the parade. you go anyway, to cast dynamite cloves at the ground. snap! 3. summer is well buttered. you dig your nails into your palms, hoping to gain some traction.

Peaches - 1. cookouts send laughter shooting up to meet the rising moon. you wonder if the stars mind such a noisy neighbor. 2. you let handfuls of sand drift through your fingers and pretend you are not running out of time. 3. the nights are fuzzy, easy to snuggle into and fall asleep.

Corn - 1. you hold a strand of silk up to your head. your father laughs as he shucks. 2. you wonder about starting summer homework. you get a papercut opening the textbook. 3. you sweat until about 6:30. the sun retires early, protesting a need for beauty sleep. you welcome the sparkbugs.

Apples - 1. someone tie-dyed the trees while you slept. 2. you have already lost half of your pencils, so you write the date on the top of the page in green ink. you are fond of the number nine, the way it curves in on itself but does not circulate. 3. you bite into the season and find it crisp and tart. a season for eating, to be sure.

Pumpkins - 1. you pack away your shorts and swimsuits. at least once, your mother suggests donating some of them. 2. the pies are everywhere! the pies are delicious. the pies are multiplying. 3. you joke about your costume that year, "a ghost of your former self." you hope they do not notice your feet floating above the ground.

High School Students

Second Place:

Emily Cho
North Shore Country Day School

Each Morning

Was polluted with the absence of star stuff,
empty bits of night scattered across the fields. Each day
found itself in another human, voicing caving
into the rhythm of an isolated universe, notes
moving through the dense smog of dreams and decay.
There we woke, purged from the cycle of breathing,
the habit of dawn another reminder
of the salt around our feet, the feel of wet tips
of sunshine as they broke against our faces.
Summertime collided with our scraped knees,
vessels of old automobiles led our voices
astray into the well-worn boulevards.
Each morning we stood, toes curling against
the familiar feel of neighborhood ground,
watching each and every sun
rise and fall,
memorizing each motion
as if we were not lost things.

High School Students

Third Place:

Kara Jackson

Oak Park and River Forest High School

little red ride in hood

"I say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet."
-Andrew Lang, *The Blue Fairy Book*

a white girl caught. herself walking down my block. never saw that girl a day in my life. she carried a small basket. ball. the only hood she knew. smothered her head. I asked her if she could lay. up. I went to the court. anyway. I didn't mess with white girls much. I had myself a caramel. she had a boyfriend up north. her boyfriend knew how to sever. wood. all the wolves got a shot. though. the white girl watched me play a game. white girl said I named her edible. sent some boys for our bones. you know the tale. when the boy whistles. his way to heaven.

High School Students

Honorable Mention: Leah Kindler
Oak Park and River Forest High School

The Job

The job lurked in every family photo, grinning, a strand of my mom's hair caught in its mouth. The job lounged in the seat next to me, every night at dinner, its breath an aftertaste, its legs flung open across the conversation.

Over time, I rubbed elbows with it, learned about its home life that filled in the blanks of ours, its clock that thieved ten hours of ours.

After a year and a half of unemployment, it has scratched its face out in frames, kicked back at the table, left the front door a gaping reminder.

Without it, the house mourns. My mom sinks into a swatch of light in the living room, maps out her life in advance without the job there to steady, to engulf.

The first summer she spends at home is the first that I don't. I learn to swallow myself until my voice is a fingernail scratch

in my throat. Working in
customer service is learning that
what I want doesn't matter.
It is the bells on the door
rattling with all the want.

I find out about the Orlando
shooting from flurries of texts
during my break. I walk back
into the bakery where I work,
my heart wrangled up and
knotted around my ponytail
because I'm not allowed to wear
my hair down or my emotions
where the customers can see.

Did my mom ever feel the job's grasp?
Did she know how many t-ball games
and opening nights it had devoured?

She drives me to my job, which
stinks up my room with coffee beans
but rarely finds its way to family dinners.
In the car, her voice snags, "I don't know
if I'm going to find a new one."

The malicious job slides out the window,
its canines softened, its lanky legs
turned graceful, its pervasiveness not
a burden, but something to grab at night.
Unemployment is a clawed safety.
It doesn't rip out pieces of my mom's life,
it just suggests she doesn't deserve them.

First Place:

Maureen Tolman Flannery
Evanston

Path to the School bus

Surly, persistent, unseasonal squalls
roared away any tender intentions
in the first days of that merciless May,
caused half the herd to calve early.

Slime of afterbirth glistened crimson atop
drifts we watched through fern-frost
on the clattering cabin windows.
Momma kept running out to grab a calf,

warm it on the wood stove's open door
until she could surmise it might live,
then carry it out again to its mother
and run in with another, just born.

Hungry steers, desperate for shelter,
their hides glistening white with hoarfrost,
pounded cold noses against windows and door.
Their thumping became the cabin's heartbeat

in the wheezing white noise of blizzard wind.
When it stopped we walked the lane
across frozen carcasses of cattle in a strange
new-day quiet to wait for the school bus.

Second Place:

Christopher Thomas
Evanston

THE ARCHITECT'S DREAM

I dream endlessly of rooms
Cavernous cabinets of space
Movement without rest
Distance without dimension.

My feet in sleepless quicksand
The unfolding panoply of shades
In melodious darkness singing
Set the tale with each stony step.

Here are the rooms of cantabile.
Languid lines of aire and playing
Hanging and falling
In mercurial tangent fits.

The shadowed pantomime lifts
Lilting and loping across the vaulted
And tumbling corbels
Of Piranesian gray and black.

Silence carries the waltz forward
In a gesture poised and hanging
In the clutch of a trumpeting wall
Until in floating wordless
And upward tilting I fall.

Third Place:

Gregory Curry
Chicago

Table For One

The reservation has already been canceled

More than once

A table for one

A small room

No windows

The only luxury

Fresh cut lavender

In a small vase

Perhaps

An ashtray

A good selection of books

A twelve year malt

It will be seen differently

From the perspectives of family

Whose,

(In a just world)

Funerals I will have attended

Of the bartenders

Whose children I help put through college

Friends

Willing to forgive

Therapists

Whose inventory of remedies never did work
It won't be complicated
Simple wood is fine
Curious though
As to who
Will bear its pall

Knot the rosary round the wrist
So it won't come loose
A simple black neck tie
Tie the knot in a full Windsor
Like father taught me
Before the appearance of the first beard
Make sure it's the good black suit
A shirt made by Turnbull and Asser
Buried with the words of books
Read by Mother on the porch

Satisfied
Hated
Wanting
Abused
Loved



Table For One *continued*

Young
Confused
Outsiders are welcomed
Though not encouraged
To hasten the advent
Even questions of a shy nature
Eventually become resolved

Easier at times
Finding a lover than a friend
Or someone to call family
Sometimes
None of whom can be trusted
Again
Only curious
As to how many
Will be within reach
And who will be present
At this latest exploit
And as to who
Will be the first
To throw a handful of dirt
Table for one
Please

Honorable Mention: Karen LeMaistre
Morton Grove

One Year

I think I was ten, eleven maybe.
Strange I can't remember my age, I know.
That was the year she lost her baby.

I can recall the sadness in her touch as she lay me
down at night—during that season of woe.
I think I was ten, eleven maybe.

It hurts to recall my family—the way we
readied the house to get things just so.
That was the year she lost her baby.

I worried sometimes that my mother blamed me,
resenting my life as she watched me grow.
I think I was ten, eleven maybe.

Those days were hard. I watched her pray. We
crept around softly, our voices kept low.
That was the year she lost her baby.

The car backed out slowly so I could watch her waving.
She left for awhile; she loved us, though.
I think I was ten, eleven maybe,
in the year that she lost her baby.

Adults

Honorable Mention: Sharon Lieberman
Evanston

Ocean

Rocking head to foot, foot to head
with the heartbeat heave of ocean
I am a weightless voyeur

Sea grasses wave in silent
Hallelujah beneath me
Unlovely paisley fish
sulk against rough reef walls

Under the swells, a low groan
the thrum of rope straining between
a boat and its anchor, or
the turning of the planet with a weary creak

I am a glass-bottom body
neither above nor below
Between me and the sea
air presses down, convex
like a pirate's belly

Poetry Judge



Susan T. Moss is the author of two poetry books, *Keep Moving 'til The Music Stops* (Lily Pool/Swamp Press) and *In From The Dark* (Antrim House). She is a former English teacher, presently serving a third term as president of Illinois State Poetry Society. She is vice-president of Poetry Club of Chicago and a member of Poets and Patrons. Her work has appeared in several journals and anthologies including *Caduceus*, *Vermont Literary Review*, *After Hours*, *Siftings From The Clearing*, *Seeding The Snow*, *Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets*, among others. Susan has appeared on Highland Park cable television, WDCB-FM and WLWU-FM Wordslingers. She holds an M.A. in English from Middlebury College, Bread Loaf School of English and a B.A. in Teaching of English from University of Illinois.

Acknowledgments

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

Bridget Crowley and
Michael Rubin
Victoria Eckstein
Steffi R. Masur

Carolyn Schuman
Shira Sussman
Anonymous (1)

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions in support of the Jo-Anne Hirshfield Memorial Poetry Fund can be made to the Evanston Public Library and mailed to Evanston Public Library.

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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 Hirshfield

daughters, Laura, Leslie, and Deborah, and
grandson Justin Garrick

with special remembrance of

Brian Garrick