Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Selecting the 2014 Poetry Contest Winners

Alexis Rhone Fancher · Wednesday, September 24th, 2014

The 2014 Cultural Weekly Open Submission period, featuring the 2014 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize, has ended. The winners and finalists decided. All the poems were read blind, i.e., the poet's name was removed from the poems and substituted with a number. I had no idea if the poem I read was written by a man or woman, young or old, no clue as to race or country. Only the poem. How liberating to be freed of any preconceptions. I highly recommend it.

Cultural Weekly's first poetry contest, in 2013, generated over one hundred poems from one hundred poets. This year's contest, now called the Jack Grapes Poetry Prize (named after the esteemed poet and teacher), saw four times as many poets entering, and close to one thousand poems submitted.

I was impressed with the high quality of much of the work. It is heartwarming to see poetry alive and thriving in today's world where few seem to have the time for contemplation. This year's poems made me laugh, cry, shake my head in awe or dismay. So many touched my heart, made me think. Opened my eyes.

Whittling down one thousand poems to three prize-winners and seven finalists was no easy task. Here are the poetry contest winners:

First Place Winner ($250 and publication in Cultural Weekly): Beate Sigriddaughter, "Archer"

Second Place Winner ($100 and publication in Cultural Weekly): Judy Brackett Crowe, "As If There Were No Steel"

Third Place Winner ($50 and publication in Cultural Weekly): Mike Masen, "Mistaken"

Our seven finalists (in alphabetical order), to be published in the next issue of Cultural Weekly are:

Megan Dobkin, "Anthem For The Open-Hearted"
Peter Gordon, "Pantheon"
Shira Hereld, "Photographs of Me and My Mother"
Holly Hunt, "Alfalfa"
Cece Peri, "Why Dish Ran Away with Her Spoon"
Scott Silsbe, "Pinball, 1983"
John Smith, "Bullfights (for Valerie)"

Our thanks to everyone that entered, or even thought about entering. Next year's contest (July 1, 2015 – August 31, 2015) promises to be extraordinary, so stay tuned. And thanks to everyone who reads the poetry we publish at Cultural Weekly. A poet without an appreciative audience would be lonely, indeed.

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