

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## 2014 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize Winners

Cultural Weekly · Wednesday, October 8th, 2014

We are proud to announce the winners of the 2nd annual Cultural Weekly poetry contest, now officially called the Jack Grapes Poetry Prize. Our Poetry Editor, Alexis Rhone Fancher, [explains](#) the process of choosing the winning poems.

And now, on to the 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.

Enjoy the top three poems in order.

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### ***Archer* by Beate Sigriddaughter**

She has always wanted to belong. Now  
it looks like she does. Dad offers  
a sip of his beer. She giggles, shakes

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her head. Heartthrob Rogelio nods,  
his dark eyes gleam with admiration. First  
time he looks at her like that. Nobody  
says the dread words, "for a girl."  
The men offer to skin and gut  
the deer. She ponders this, accepts.  
She still feels the sinew of the bow,  
her strong and steady arms, the whistle  
and velocity of death. The wounded eyes  
film over, lifeless, without accusation.  
"Well done," someone says. She wants  
to ask back: "Have you ever looked  
into the eyes of a deer?" Their calm  
and dark acceptance, shy round  
innocence with just a hint of question.  
And the bold nose. But no words come.  
She is in a different league now.  
Tomorrow she will be sixteen.  
They promise her first taste  
of the meat. She feels empty, silenced,  
betrayed. No one explained triumph  
would feel like this. She remembers  
wide surprise in eyes so black that  
they could make you weep. The finches  
in the juniper have lost their charm.



*Beate Sigriddaughter lives and writes in Silver City, New Mexico, Land of Enchantment. Her work has received three Pushcart Prize nominations. She has also established the Glass Woman Prize to honor passionate women's voices.*

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### **As If There Were No Steel by Judy Brackett Crowe**

Deep inside this height  
 this warren of steel  
 concrete  
 glass  
 fluorescent lights  
 false air  
 no windows  
 perpetual electrical  
     hum  
 pathetic prayer      plant  
     in the corner  
 high above Earth  
 street  
 dirt  
 far from water  
 years beyond water  
 she waits.

Hopper could home in on that woman  
 in that sparse room, could give her  
 a clean rumpled nightshirt, could paint  
 a sad glow, could paint a window for her,  
 could paint the sea beyond that window,  
 with a smudge of red on a far-off wave,  
 as if there were no steel, no concrete  
 in this world,  
 no glass.

She would still be lonely, though,  
 and there would still be stale air  
 and cold light,  
 fading.



*Judy Brackett Crowe was born in the midwest, moved to California as a child, and has lived in a small town in California's northern Sierra Nevada foothills for many years. She is a member of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers and has taught creative writing and English literature and composition at Sierra College.*

*Her stories and poems have appeared or are forthcoming in egg, China Grove, The Lake, Dos Passos Review, Canary, West Marin Review, Miramar, Subtropics, The Waterhouse Review, The Untidy Season: An Anthology of Nebraska Women Poets (Backwaters Press), and elsewhere.*

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***Mistaken by Mike Masen***

I loved her like  
I read my bible  
Wide-eyed and under the  
Impression that miracles could  
Just manifest themselves like  
Fish before the needy throng.  
And I was many.  
but was I mistaken?  
I thought that her shadows  
Were as beautiful as she was  
Simply because they bore her likeness.  
I thought loving her shadows  
Would help me bludgeon my own.  
But they were many.  
Or was I mistaken?  
I loved her like  
I took my first step  
In the house I grew up in  
Where everything I knew  
Saw me and proudly stood up  
Their applause locked my heart in amber and  
Sent friendly tremors across the floor  
So much so that I lost my balance  
And every innocent inch of my small world  
Was filled past its brim  
But the world grew  
And the inches were too many  
And I still live in the house I grew up in

I sense that I am mistaken  
Because a ballet dancer moves gracefully on fractured toes  
Because a man is served his favorite meal before graduating death row  
Because all that we are is all that we spend our time getting to know  
And I need your eyes to see me  
so please tell me I am mistaken  
Tell me there is another way  
That we are tightrope walkers and  
when we can trust our balance  
We will be made brave  
Tell me that if we both stepped into a river  
It would yield to my ankle  
In much the same manner as yours  
Tell me I am mistaken  
Tell me you've been mistaken too



*Mike Masen is a 25 year old Copywriter from suburban Detroit, MI. He attended Wayne State University where he studied History and English. Hailing from a family of ten, he bears the namesake of a happy guild of artists, musicians and amateur theologians. As he sees it, his association with poetry is closely connected with his attempts to make sense of his humanity and to affirm the various kinds of positive lifework we engage on a day-to-day basis. This makes him a student of the everyday and a guerrilla fighter in the battle against hopelessness and misunderstanding. He has been writing poetry since high school and has shared his work at various poetry slams and artisan gatherings in the Ann Arbor and Detroit areas.*

*Featured image by Alexis Rhone Fancher*

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