

2009 Northeast Texas Poetry Contest Student Winners

Sponsored by Elliott Chrysler Dodge of Mount Pleasant

Adult Winner: Angela Wylie's

All That Remains Are the Flowers

Old homesteads dot the by-ways
And clearings along the East Texas country roads.
Silent sycamores stand guard over jonquils
And tangled hawthorn,
Different from the encroaching woodland.
Not native, are these plants which bloom
In the warming earth.
Released from winter's cold sleep,
They rise again, withstanding the storms,
Emerging to grow and bloom as they return
To sun-dappled shadows beneath the spreading trees.
Once they were brought from another place and time
To give shade and beauty to where a house once stood.
The house, built with care and expectation of life,
Like the flowers, have watched dreams and lives
Blend into yesterday.
Here in the shade of the past,
Wisteria climbs high, feral and loosed into the woods,
As wild and errant as the dreams and lives
That have merged into time.

A shy, trembling young man
Plucked a blossom for his sweetheart,
His heart racing as she lifted her smiling eyes and
Fragrance surrounds a first gentle kiss.

Chubby, small, soft child-hands plucked flowers
To give to Mamma as she hangs out the wash.
With a sweet smile, her slender fingers delicately
Placed green stems into a wellwater filled fruit jar.
Flowers grace the center of the worn table,
The soft scent of daffodils blend with
Fried pork with mustard greens,
And cornbread cooked in an iron skillet,
Sustaining hard-working people who till the land.
The land that cradles the past and nurtures the future.

A woman wearing the worn wrinkles of life
Beneath soft, snowy hair
Sits on her porch in her rocking chair.
The rhythmic creak of the slow rocking
Matches the rhythm of her world as
She gazes out upon the blossoms about her
And remembers.

Soft memories, sweet and yet sad.
Time had gone by and she knows not how.
Now
She watches her small grandchild pluck a blossom
The stem broken short beneath the petals,
Held and offered with a dirt- stained hand.
The woman accepts the flower
With a sweet smile
Content
Surrounded by her flowers and the love of her family
And the gift of the grandchild
Who will carry a part of her
Forward into the awakening spring of the future.

Once people worked, loved, lived, and died.
Built, created, and planted in the soil.
Yet, now grass and weeds cover their labor
Their houses and barns are recycled into the earth.
Reclaimed and erased from the landscape.
The earth has vanquished the toils of mankind,
Who thought themselves valiant and strong.
Forcers, controllers, and movers of mountains
They once thought themselves to be.
Gone now are their earnest endeavors
Gone to shadows in the silence of the sleepy glade.

Yet the flowers remain.
Deep-rooted now in the loamy lost yard,
Planted by some gentle woman to beautify her world.
Brought from her mother's garden
A bit of her childhood planted with care.
A bit of the past brought with her into her new life.
Precious gift from generations of mothers to daughters
They remain now,
The flowers.
Established and unrestrained, returning each spring
Yellow and white they bloom among the weeds,
Scenting the silent air with soft whispers of a world now gone.
As soft as a whispered dream they remain
Fragrant in the dappled shadows of Spring.
Testimony of a long lost time.
And now all that remain are the flowers.

First Place Student: Shelby Parker

East Texas Paradise
Laying in a field of wildflowers
I breathe in the air
Filled with the scents of
Honeysuckle and just a hint

Of oncoming rain

Walking toward the barn
I admire the deteriorating décor
Peeling red paint and
A broken door

Beating down on my face
I shade my eyes from the shining sun
Slowly being covered by
The unpredicted storm

Falling to the ground
I smile as the
Cool drops relieve
My sun-kissed skin

Knowing the reality
I proudly walk through the pasture while
The cows and horses
Graze on the hay

Pushing open the rusty gate
I splash up the walk leading to my childhood home
Which has been passed down to me from years forgotten

Dripping wet
I take one step at a time
Savoring the moment and
Cherishing this eastern paradise

Looking out from my porch
I gaze at that lone star
Flapping majestically in the breeze

Second Place Student: Adriana Lopez

Through the Eyes of the Land

Time is meaningless
A cycle of growth, death and rebirth
Every moment a bond made and promises broken
Ever changing-a dizzying pace
Constant only is my place
Each footprint blending with the next
Naïve each brand of ownership
Abuse and comfort in every touch
Sometimes everything becomes too much
Can not move-trapped and confused
Time is meaningless-forever patient
I wait

Once untamed yet raised into obedience
Each rebellion of-crying, screaming, and silence-ignored

Third Place Student: Peighton Huse

Expressing myself as an ethnic Texan
Yet standing apart from status quo
Have they forgotten, do I simply remember
Urban visitors take majority
Suffocating the Texan culture and vibe

Unjustified feelings of shame and abnormality inflict
Caused by music choice, lifestyle and dress
Folk, Gospel, Twang, Bluegrass
Stetsons, Boots, Buckles, Wranglers
Ranching, Rodeo, Church, Harvesting

Last of a dying breed they say
Most not sorry to say goodbye
Fighting for every next blessing of breath
Slowly succumbing to the minority
Losing the battle of mere appreciation

Nature disappearing all around
Chasing an over-rated dream to urbanize
Exchanging trees for concrete
Methods of improvement become disaster
Environments dying
Forgotten cowboys replaced with CEO's
God replaced with economic power
Better lies in the eyes of the beholder
How do we reach a common ground
For now, we lie stuck in bitter co-existence

Honorable Mentions:

Ron Bowden
Kristen Branch
Caleb Burkhalter

Judges

Anna Elliott
Chuck Hamilton
Jim Swann