

2013 Northeast Texas Poetry Contest Student Winners

First Place

\$400

Alisha Richardson



"A Fairy-Tale Land of Northeast Texas"

When I walked around the spring path that circled the pond, I had seen,
a parade of beautifully random wild flowers marching.
The trees were vibrant, arrayed in cloaks of a thousand shades of green.
And the woods, livened by the light of the sun, were singing.

The placid waters of the pond reflected the trees like a looking glass,
their curled and knotted arms reaching out across the smooth surface.
Whatever those arms sought, it seemed to be forever out of their grasp.
But, from her fingertips, mimosa laid blossoms around the pond like a necklace.

The vibrant greens of the leaves died away when autumn arrived.
And the leaves turned wispy, as their softness also died.
No longer the gentle cloaks the trees relished, the leaves were discarded well,
and they flickered goldenly in the sun's light as, to the pond, they fell.

The golden leaves, with light feet, touched the water and stood, floating.
Then, Wind turned toward the pond and blew his breath upon her, gloating.
For Wind hated calm things like the placid pond, whose name was Water.
He hated Water for he, always blowing, could never rest like her.

Wind's breath tickled Water's face and because of it, she stirred and turned.
And the leaves began to spin in circles, as Water's every movement, they learned.
Even rudely roused, Water's motion was slow and graceful - Wind's eternal opposite.
And because of Water, the leaves became lithe fairies dancing with fiery spirit.

The golden fairies danced, following the graceful lead of the water maid,
and Wind fumed, frustrated that his attempt to disturb her had failed.
Then, Wind turned toward the pond and blew his breath upon her, sadly laden.
For Wind, always blowing, loved his eternal opposite: the water maiden.

Leaving Water and Wind to their ways, I came to a grove of pines.
The trees were tall and thick, and some enveloped by thorny vines.
Here, Earth wore a fragrant blanket of pine needles and slept beneath the trees.
And through the peaceful woods came Fire, striding with careless ease.

Fire then sneezed and, catching a great pine ablaze, hastened to put it out.
But the tree fell and woke Earth, and finding it, she gave an angry shout.
As Fire could not douse his own flames, the tree had burned until it fell, wilting.
And Fire, knowing it was not the tree's time, scratched his head, guilty.

But Earth scooped up a handful of soil and doused the tree, as it was still ablaze,
and Fire, who could only start more fires, watched her douse one, amazed.
The flames slowly and softly died out beneath Earth's gentle hand,
and then, on Fire's own flaming head, Earth rubbed the soil of the land.

Earth smiled playfully, showing him forgiveness for the burned-down tree,
but, Fire only looked away and frowned, crossing his arms indignantly.
Then he realized her hands were still in his flaming hair, seemingly unburned,
and he grabbed them to see if they were hurt, finding himself concerned.

Earth laughed, her voice like leaves in the wind, and pulled her hands free.
"Now, Fire, promise me you will not burn, untimely, even one more tree."
An intense red came to Fire's yellow cheeks, as he did not mean to burn the pine,
But he did not defend himself, as he could not always speak to one so divine.

Earth then left him in her pine tree grove, and Fire wordlessly watched her go,
thinking to himself, how long will I love her and how long will she not know?
Leaving Fire and Earth to their ways, I at last returned home, filled with wonder.
This fairy tale land in Northeast Texas, a place I often escape to throughout the year.

Second Place

\$300

Zachary Davis

Sensations of the Sun



The sun has just recently capped the horizon
And the illuminated shadow of countless clouds dot the sky
They drift aimlessly as the world below them sleeps
Suddenly the silent land bursts to life
A myriad of birds wake, crying out to each other and the world
As if to say the day has begun

A lone buck stands in a field
verdant and sparkling from recent rain
He silently beckons for others to follow

Grasshoppers flee by the hundred
As hooves hit the ground

Small white flowers dot the landscape
sending off wafts of onion
The breeze is warm
As the mahaya sways
In tune with the rhythm of a land
Both changed and preserved by the generations
Who've witnessed its beauty

The sun stands at its full height
Beaming down as much heat as light
The humidity rises and shade is sought by most
On the shore of a pond a single frog is croaking
Lamenting the loss of its log to a smug cottonmouth

A great tree, ancient and gnarled
Has at long last lost its struggle with age
And now lays on the ground it once shaded
It's brothers tall and ringed from the wire they've overtaken
Mourn their loss with the creaking groans of age

A single ant marches on; single-minded in its search
Soon the ground will be ablaze with the reds and blacks of its sisters
In a nearby thicket Cicadas can be heard
Their distinct call like humidity given a voice

The day has been long as the sun begins to set
A patchwork of color blankets the sky as dusk creeps in
The land slows and becomes dark
My home grows silent as I close my eyes
preparing myself for when the world once again bursts to life

Fourth Place

\$100

Noah Griffin

Morning Glory



A stream of light, no, a flood

Crawling over the horizon with unyielding resolve
I sit and gaze at the startling beauty before me
I can't help it, who could refuse such a masterpiece?
The tops of the Texas pines cannot withhold the suns' majesty
As the celestial relic rises ever higher
The night's leftover shadows retreat into shade
They slink back mysteriously like a Spider withdrawing into her tunnel of web
As the last of the darkness continues to slither away
My eyes are turned upward to the heavens
The clouds change color as the sun progresses
First blue, then a sudden explosion of red, yellow, and pink
I stare in amazement at the tapestry of color above my head
How can light and water accomplish such art?
It is as if each cloud were a sponge dipped in paint
And then Splattered across the eastern sky
The splendor is breathtaking, but it doesn't last for long
As the hue of the firmament changes, so does the atmosphere
What started out as a cool and brisk morning has now turned into something else
The sun no longer embraces the horizon, for he hangs aloof in brilliant solace
The clouds no longer shine in color, for they have faded to white
The air has begun to sear and the ground has begun to bake
And so, just as the sun has risen, I too must rise in confidence and glory
So shall I rise

Honorable Mention
Ricky Huitema
Rite of Passage



I sit and wait
Listening to all the sounds of night
Crickets chirp and mosquitos buzz yet I remain still
The darkness is all around
There is no moon
The clouds have covered her up
I wait for hours
Being sung to sleep by the insects of night
As I nod off a shrill scream pierces the darkness
I stir with adrenaline all urges to sleep have disappeared

The insects have stopped their melody
I hear only two sounds now:

A steady rustle of leaves
Growing louder with every minute
And my heart pounding
As the sound moves closer and closer
Terror grows within my body
I clutch my weapon tighter
And stare in the direction of the sound

Minutes pass and the rustle turns into a rumble
Then there was silence
Worried, I illuminated the forest around me
There stood two dark figures
I raised my weapon
The flash blinded my eyes
The roar deafened my ears
The dark figures disappeared into the forest
I follow them in

Now the hunt is over
The celebration begins
Friends and family feast on the wild boar
Complements warm my spirit
Warm food fills my stomach
I am no longer a boy, but a man.