



PRESS RELEASE

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Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

(<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>)

Encouraging poets and poetry in Arkansas since 1931

Affiliated with National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

(nfsp.net)

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (PRA) is pleased to announce the winners of its 2026 Pat Laster Collegiate Poetry Contest. Three of the six students read their winning poems at the Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration, an annual PRA event, held in April. PRA member, Joan Barrett Roberts served as judge. The contest is named in honor of PRA member, Pat Laster, and sponsored by PRA member, Lydia Cheatham.

1st Place (\$500)— Norman (Kyler) Like graduated from Quitman High School and is currently working towards a bachelor's degree in Mathematics Education at the University of Central Arkansas with hopes to return to teach at Quitman. His poem "I'm a Foxtail." "delves into the seemingly thoughtless brutality of a hunter's viewpoint and morphs it into a vision of considerable beauty making hunting a personal artform" says his former Quitman High teacher, Renee Clemmons.

2nd Place (\$300)— Skylar Nelsen is a senior at the University of Central Arkansas graduating this May as a dual major in Creative Writing and Film with a minor in Marketing. She has been featured in *The Vortex* literary magazine and looks forward to continuing to publish. UCA Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, Acie Clark says, "In 'morning tidings,' we see the writer's training as a filmmaker in the quatrain frames that compose the poem. This is a feat of detail and concentration, yes, but the speaker directs the motion of the scenes outward, granting action and agency to the natural world that surrounds her."

3rd Place (\$200)— Genna Crafton (they/them) is a poet, playwright, and stage manager at the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville. They are currently working toward a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Theatre Design and Technology and a minor in history. University of Arkansas – Fayetteville Teaching Assistant Professor Joe Millet says of Crafton's poem "A Graveyard, A Front Door" catches the precise moment where childhood no longer comforts us, and yet there is nothing to take its place. For all its brevity, it's a fierce and unsettling work."

First Honorable Mention was awarded to Rachel Miller for "Tarrying on Beaver Lake." Rachel is majoring in English and Theological Studies at Harding University and hopes to pursue writing and ministry after college.

Zachary Walter, a junior at the University of Central Arkansas pursuing Creative Writing, Technical Writing, and Philosophy was awarded Second Honorable Mention for his poem, "Icarus' Last Letter."

Third Honorable Mention was awarded to Caleb Givens for “Loves Greatest Cost.” Caleb is majoring in creative writing at the University of Central Arkansas.

Poets’ Roundtable of Arkansas is the oldest, non-profit poetry organization in the state, established in 1931 to encourage the art of poetry. Members are from all around the state, including past and present Arkansas Poet Laureates. Poets are encouraged to contact any PRA Branch President and visit a meeting. PRA is affiliated with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS). PRA and NFSPS sponsor educational poetry conferences and contests throughout the year for all ages. For more information, see the website listed above and like us on Facebook. Or contact PRA President Christine Henderson (my1stdraft@yahoo.com) or PRA’s Collegiate Contest Chair Karen Moulton (jkmoultons@yahoo.com).