

FOURTH PLACE WINNER

Owen Gable
Spanish River High School
11th Grade

Songbird

Nestled on a old tree,
The songbird sings so subtly
Of rising winds to lift above,
While diving down to share the love.

Grasses glimmer to fluttering wings:
Shifting shimmers of wonderful things.
Gleaming down to grace the ground,
And greet the ants atop the mound.

The shine of the sun dances around,
As susurrus trees stun and astound.
The songbird lives to enjoy the world;
Every life to see, every sound and word.

It brightens me to know this bird,
To see a smile in the songs to be heard.
No life could compare to what I have seen:
A beautiful bird that loves to sing.

Our appreciation to Dr. Blaise Allen for all her work with the high school principals, teachers, students, and poets in our community.

FIFTH PLACE WINNER

Samantha Marshall
A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts
12th Grade

Elegy for Evangeline

A slice of light fell through the air
and must have seen you standing there,
for through the dusky dim of dawn
it cleaved the night and bade it gone.
Across your face it cut in two
and turned you into something new.
You left your shadow on the floor;
you didn't want it anymore.

From town to town, same place each week—
Carolina, the coast of Crete.
What placelessness pervades the earth!
We've searched and searched so long, since birth,
for fabled locales once so clear
and higher powers to revere.
We should have been two spineless things
encased in shells sans dreams of wings.

Through Babylon you lead us east
toward the sea, toward the beast.
The light still ringing round your face
and all the spectres of this place
call, "Evangeline, have you seen?
The leaves back home have all gone green."

All's bathed in light, without reprieve
all's made separate as dawn recedes.
I hold you close, but still you go
out where the deep, cold waters flow
down so far no light can reach
and all is quiet on the beach.

Leave not your shadow on the ground
it still needs you to get around.

**2017**

**Palm Beach County
High School Poetry
Contest Winners**

**2017 Palm Beach Poetry Festival
High School Poetry Contest Winners**

First PLACE WINNER, Juliana Romero, Wellington High School, 11th Grade, for "A moment"

SECOND PLACE WINNER, Haleigh McGirt, Jupiter High School, 12th Grade, for "TO THE BOY IN MY FOURTH PERIOD DEBATE CLASS WHO, UNPROMPTED, TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO PROCLAIM 'RAPE CULTURE DOESN'T EXIST'"

Third PLACE WINNER, Aleah Searfoss, Wellington High School, 11th Grade, for "The Great Egret"

FOURTH PLACE WINNER, Owen Gable, Spanish River High School, 11th Grade, for "Songbird"

FIFTH PLACE WINNER, Samantha Marshall, A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, 12th Grade, for "Elegy for Evangeline"

FIRST PLACE WINNER

Juliana Romero
Wellington High School
11th Grade

A moment

A tall ghost in front of a mirror,
 combing the sparse hairs on her head.
 In mourning
 the great grandmother has sat in her room,
 collecting dust since seventy eight.

The grandfather, el abuelo,
 El Doctor.
 He speaks all the languages of Europe,
 a genius among his books and
 paper.

In the living room,
 my cousin,
 beer bellied and drunk,
 sleeps of the futbol game.

The maid,
 off key, sings along to the music
 of a reluctant radio.

In the kitchen,
 rice
 beans
 chorizo
 plantains

whiskey.

Special thanks to Dr. Jeff Morgan, Lynn University, for serving as our Judge for the twelfth year. We would also like to thank Lorraine Stanchich-Brown for serving as our pre-selection committee.

SECOND PLACE WINNER

Haleigh McGirt
Jupiter High School
12th Grade

TO THE BOY IN MY FOURTH PERIOD DEBATE CLASS WHO, UNPROMPTED, TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO PROCLAIM "RAPE CULTURE DOESN'T EXIST"

You, Vast Thing, with ferocious mouth and violent jaw and dripping snarl-
 how does it feel to reign over this classroom? Do you enjoy the
 scent of prey, of blood?
 My breath catches in my throat like all of our daughters' birthday
 candle wishes
 as I watch how he jives on the shattered glass of female survival.
 You, Shadow Monster of our Light- how does your kind of living
 taste? All take, no give.
 When I finally regurgitate a defense, spit it on your satisfied shoes,
 no storm rages from my throat, no vocal thunder strikes back,
 little more than a whisper in the hungry wind of your steam engine
 being.
 I turn to protect the Mother Earth beneath my skin, or, I crumble
 back in on myself
 like I've been taught to. It all begins to look the same when you
 are being toothpicked from a Wolf's bite.
 Now I, self-proclaimed "woman", am being magic tricked back
 into girl sitting in the belly of the throat of the beast.
 I reverse rabbit-out-of-the-hat and am suddenly prey, am
 suddenly small thing to be devoured, sitting pretty,
 sitting duck, on the fine china.
 Trapped, with the sound of the Hunter's boots creating the death
 march symphony rising to a crescendo in my ears,
 I gnaw my own leg off, swallow the remains and scurry off to lick
 my wounds.
 Or, I think of my sisters, who, by one in five chance, have had
 entire bodies chained prisoner, see their pretty pelts and
 lucky feet,
 see the men who have devoured their flesh and turned profit out
 of the rest,
 I think of witch being burned at the stake for being too magic, too
 woman while monsters dance in the shadows of the
 flames,
 I think of statistics, I think of names, I think of faces,
 until thought can no longer nourish lung and I escape to the
 nearby dark office, where I cower in the silence and try
 to backwards remember the formula for breathing.
 It took all of 7 minutes for the mind to remember it was not dying.
 Or, rather, re-convince itself.
 How foolish of me- silly, devourable, girly thing.
 What fatal mistake to perceive drowning as anything other than
 Survival.

THIRD PLACE WINNER

Aleah Searfoss
Wellington High School
11th Grade

The Great Egret

Wings doused in crushed diamonds
 Sea spray, stinging
 You walk along the ocean that engulfs your
 Rhythm. Under a sky sleek and smooth
 Soaring Egret, let the wind
 Dance around your delicate frame.

You breathe in crisp breezes on bare sand.
 Crouched in the pure white silk of your wings.
 The sand giving way around your body,
 Shells tracing your stance.

You rest on land, then join the sea
 Gliding into the seamless air currents
 With grace
 Slowly becoming a silhouette propagated
 In the clouds.
 A forgotten vision

Poets & Writers
We are grateful to Poets & Writers who have generously awarded a one-year subscription to all contest winners of the Annual High School Poetry Contest.