

2020 POETRY CONTEST

AWARDS CEREMONY

SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS COLLEGE

RED BUD CAMPUS



Poetry Contest 2020 Recognition Ceremony

Southwestern Illinois College

Red Bud Campus

Performing Arts Room

Introductions

Amy Brockman

Director of Student Life

Southwestern Illinois College

Announcement of Winners

Roselyn R. Mathews, Waterloo

Continuing Education Instructor & Author

Pat Robert, Red Bud

Retired Red Bud Elementary

Instructor & Author

Reading of Poems

Contest Winners

Please join us for refreshments in the Lobby

at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Poetry Contest History

The Red Bud Campus Poetry Contest began during the Fall 1994-95 Semester. Over the years, the contest has grown from a handful of entries to more than 300 poems this year.

The judges, who had the unenviable task of selecting the three best entries from each category, were Roselyn Mathews and Pat Robert. Mathews and Robert co-authored and published an anthology called *Orchids in the Cornfield*, a collection of writings of the Heartland Women's Writers Guild.

The top winners in each division receive:

First Place

\$50
Barnes & Noble
Gift Card

Second Place

\$25
Barnes & Noble
Gift Card

Third Place

\$15
Barnes & Noble
Gift Card

Red Bud Campus would like to thank everyone who submitted an entry! The continued, enthusiastic participation of all the entrants has made the contest a wonderful success year after year.

Congratulations to this year's award-winning poets!

2020 Poetry Contest Winners

4th Grade

1st	Place	Marlie Caby
2nd	Place	Eli Congiardo
3rd	Place	Vanessa Greene

5th Grade

1st	Place	Aleah Eggemeyer
2nd	Place	Logan McDonald
3rd	Place	Nathan Jany

6th Grade

1st	Place	Jonathan Hayer
2nd	Place	Erin Liefer
3rd	Place	Genevieve Nadziejko

7th Grade

1st	Place	Luke Schuwerk
2nd	Place	Kolton Jany
3rd	Place	John Walsh

8th Grade

1st	Place	Noah Boyer-Edwards
2nd	Place	Nicholas Ellrich
3rd	Place	Alex Wittenbrink

High School Division

1st	Place	Kate Wexell
2nd	Place	Khiana Wilkinson

Adult Division

1st	Place	Yvonne Meckfessel
2nd	Place	Randy Halleran
3rd	Place	Sandy Baum

Vanessa Greene
3rd Place
4th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

Volleyball

3 hits
that's all we need;
they spike the ball over the net...
the ball is satisfyingly spinning to one of the other players.
The first player bumps a nice high past
almost touching the ceiling,
but not quite.
It goes to the server spot,
but it's not quite there;
instead
the middle back player sets it.
The third his is here...
somebody needs to hit it over before the game's over.
Two people run for it,
but only one can get it;
so the front person shuffles to the ball...
approaching the ball.
It's the highest jump a person could ever see...
then they spike the ball over the net.

BAM! BAM!

It hits the floor on the other side of the court;
we get the point!

BUZZZZ!!

cheering
clapping
for the point
for the win of the game.

Eli Congiardo
2nd Place
4th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

Monsters

Monsters, monsters, monsters...
I love them all
as you will soon learn!
Monsters
big...small,
vicious...kind,
clawed...spikey
water monsters...lava monsters,
Bigfoot...Loch Ness Monster, not fantasy, oh, no!
The yeti a myth, I think not!
Frankenstein,
Wolf Man,
Invisible Man,
dragons,
trolls, orcs, and ogres
mutants and aliens,
grotesque and slimy,
monsters by night... man by day
things that lurk in the shadows...
in the basement...
or the one under the bed!
One eyed monsters and even no-eyes monsters,
furry or scaly,
scary monster movies vs. cheesy monster movies
gremlins or giants
1..2..3..4..5..6..7 or 8, even 9 headed monsters!
mud or rock monsters
MONSTERS, MONSTERS, MONSTERS...
I love them all,
as you can probably tell!

Marlie Caby
1st Place
4th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

The Beach

Arriving at the beach
I race to the water
the hot and squishy sand
warming my feet
feeling good to my toes;
Waves
big and bubbly
advancing slowly
washing over my ankles.
Seagulls flying over me
squeaking
eating fish from the shore.
Sandpipers everywhere
running across the sand.
Crabs racing sideways
up to the water's edge.
Day is done...
leaving the beach
I race to the condo.

Nathan Jany
3rd Place
5th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

Night

It's nice to look at stars in the night sky...

I see...

bright stars in the dark blue sky,
glowing moon, reflecting light back to me.

It's nice to look at the stars in the night sky,

so as

I go to sleep,

dreaming of...

the dark blue sky,

millions of stars,

one big bright moon,

a lovely night sky.

It's nice to look at stars in the night sky...

Logan McDonald
2nd Place
5th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

Reading

Reading is important for your brain...
your understanding of the world.
Reading can take you places that you did not know even existed...
Hogwarts,
Middle-earth,
Narnia.
Reading can be your way to travel and
learn more about the real world...
Mexico,
China
Netherlands.
Also
pick up a volume from the bookshelf,
settle yourself comfy
and read.

Some people want to read dictionaries...
some people have.
Reading stretches your brain.
It can help you spell words like mispronounce and technology.
Reading helps you learn and understand the world around you,
and escape reality for awhile.

Reading can take you places that you did not know even existed...

Aleah Eggemeyer
1st Place
5th Grade – Chester Grade School

Mother Nature

The sun is bright as can be.
The sun looks down at me.

Moon, the thing I see at night.
The moon is like a big light.

Stars, the tiny things across the dark sky.
Shooting stars are bursting before my eyes.

Boom! That's lightning!
It is so frightening!

Thunder is loud.
It makes a powerful sound.

Clouds are fluffy like cotton balls.
If we stand on them everyone falls.

Rain drip drops on the roof.
I wonder if my roof is waterproof.

Look in the sky; it's a rainbow!
Doesn't it put off a beautiful glow.

Snow is as white as flour.
You can make a snow tower.

Hail is frozen rain.
Hail is so insane!

Hurricanes form over warm water.
Hurricanes happen in places that are hotter.

Grey tornadoes twirling.
They never stop swirling.

Wildfires are so hot.
They can burn down a whole lot.

Dust storms are very sandy.
A face mask could come in handy.

Earthquakes are shaking the shed.
"Go under the table!" I said.

Genevieve Nadziejko
3rd Place
6th Grade – Immaculate Conception School

Sunset

Sunset's fiery purple eyes
Following a trail of fireflies,
As they light up then dim down
Moving with the flow that mocks the clouds
Running in the grass of her backyard
Drinking lemonade from Manson jars
Playing tag with her sister
As the sunset goes in the night

Erin Liefer
2nd Place
6th Grade – Chester Grade School

Cheer Competition

Our first cheer competition,
we're so nervous!
After warming up our tumbling, stunts, and jumps
we waited to take the floor.
We stood there for ages...

Finally, it was our turn.
Marching out in a straight line like soldiers
Our parents high in the stands, holding encouraging signs.
Cheering for us
"CGS, lets go!"

At last, we hear "Chester, you may now take the floor."
Into our positions we go, then
BOOM!
Music hits us like a slap in the face,
blaring out of the speakers.
Arms as straight as arrows
Jumps as high as the clouds
With flips that defy gravity
Voices as loud as sirens.

Everything is going well until...
THUMP!
Someone hits the floor.
OH, NO!

We recover, we continue,
our smiles as big as the sun,
Trying to make up for the mistake.
The music ends, the crowd erupts like a volcano!
We bounce off the floor and out the door.

Our time to shine is over...
And now we wait...and wait...and wait...
Until the judges announce our score.
Will they reward our hard work?

Jonathan Hayer
1st Place
6th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

Seasons On the Farm

Summer
wake up...
feel the summer breeze running through your hair,
till the garden and
plant the
golden small seeds of tomatoes
used for a snack on a long summer day.
Feed the horses small apples from the bountiful red apple tree in the yard.
Mow the large green, luscious five acre yard.
Go fishing with the neighbor's son
In the afternoon in the crystal blue waters of the pond.

Fall...
beautiful orange and gold leaves falling from the large oak tree
while my sister and I
try to rake as many as we can before more leaves fall.
Getting colder and the need to wear coveralls
for warmth and boots for dryness.
Building hay forts in the barn
and putting spare glass in where we want windows.
Fishing is good.
Putting fresh hay for animals to lay on in the barn.

Winter...
beautiful white glaze on everything for miles.
Putting heaters in horse troughs and small fish ponds.
Replacing cats' water hourly.
Hay supply getting lower by the day.
Below zero, time to take cats into the house.
Saving for a brand new winter coat.

Spring...
new life everywhere,
brand new animals
running around.
Playing with kittens, foals, and calves.
Apple trees blossoming along with the rose bushes...
pinks everywhere
Bright grass sprouting from the ground.
Fishing getting better. Birds on the feeders and on the fence posts.

Summer...
the cycle of seasons begins again.

John Walsh
3rd Place
7th Grade – Red Bud Elementary

Force of Nature

My soul is unpredictable,
Sometimes losing control.
My anger is like fire,
And it spews everywhere.
Sometimes my soul is stunning,
Shocking everyone around with its beauty.
But when I get upset,
Everyone should run for their safety.
I have good days and I have bad days,
When I get angry,
I can pollute the ecosystem surrounding me.
No matter what, whether I am vexed or happy,
My soul is truly a sight to behold.

Kolton Jany
2nd Place
7th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

Basketball Moment

We are down by two,
Ten seconds left,
Coach calls a timeout,
We go over our play,
The ref blows his whistle, *twEEEEet*
Time to play,
I'm bringing the ball up the court,
10...
9...
8...
The crowd is on their feet,
7...
6...
The nervousness is starting to settle in,
4...
3...
I set my feet,
2...
I shoot,
swishhhhhh
1... *ernnnnnntttttttt*,
The crowd goes crazy.

Luke Schuwerk
1st Place
7th Grade – St. Mary Help of Christians

The Forest

Birds chirping
squirrels barking...
another day in the forest begins.
leaves crunching
under my feet
as I walk
looking at the
forest.
I see
deer walking by,
and
squirrels climbing trees...
walk to the stream
to see minnows and crawfish;
I
hop
across
rocks covered in. moss
and
admire the **tall**, old trees stretching to the sky.
I see a fox *creeping* under the bushes,
rabbits and quail hiding in the **tall** grass...
then I reach the end of the forest.
I am *sad*,
but I remember...
there's always next weekend.

Alex Wittenbrink
3rd Place
8th Grade – Red Bud Elementary School

Holocaust Museum

Washington D.C.
National Monuments in the distance
Reminders of freedom and democracy

Holocaust Museum looms ahead
New identity assigned
Now Leo Hanin from Vilna, Poland
Quickly ushered through narrow gates
Suffocating fear, worry in question
Commotion, noise, screams, and yells
Move along! Move along!
Soldiers yell, “Mach Schnell!”

Tighter spaces
More people cramming
Like a hallway
Like a tornado drill
Millions of shoes so empty now
Never to have feet in them again
Giant hole of death
Bodies stacked like logs
Skeletons wrapped tight with skin
Are they still human again?

Sorry, sad, scared, silent faces
Screaming from the grave
New awakening, disbelief

Holocaust
How could people do this to people?
Cold, hard, zombie-soldiers following orders
That never should have been.

Nicholas Ellrich
2nd Place
8th Grade – Columbia Middle School

Words are People

Words
are People
They laugh
They cry
And sing

Words carpool
On a single page
Going to work
Doing their job:
Describing things, and
Managing each other; being

They take you to a dance
Cradle you in their arms
And seduce you in the daylight

After dark
In the moonlight
They sing at your window
Beckoning you to take a peek
At the inside cover
And read

Noah Boyer-Edwards
1st Place
8th Grade – Columbia Middle School

The War-Worn Poets – Part The First

Three years before the fight began,
The Lord of Walkdrose lay,
To a guard, in a glistening uniform
He beckoned close that day,

Said he, “A fight must soon begin,
Great Walkdrose ‘gainst the Nore,
For my death marks an age of blood,
No bring the Poet of War.”

And the Lord’s breathing turned quite thin,
As he waited on his bed,
He wished no more than to be done
With his wisdom-riddled head.

And soon, a man swept through the room,
‘Twas his son, Lameldarore,
But the Lord turned away his weary head,
Said, “Bring the Poet of War.”

Lameldarore then left the room,
As lightning struck outside,
And a jagged smile cracked the Lord’s own head,
For he thought that he had died.

In came a woman, young and fair,
The great Lord's seventh wife,
But all said to her was this:
"Let the Poet end this strife."

Well, the woman beseeched him with all her might,
But he got her to leave,
And a second great bolt split the sky,
And his soul, he thought, was cleaved.

And finally, in swept a wizened old man,
Who had much more in store,
For he was the man for whom was clamored;
He was their Poet of War.

And the Poet knelt by the old Lord's head,
And whispered in his ear,
And a third bolt struck the sodden ground,
And the old Lord's eyes went clear.

After a moment, the Poet stood,
As the storm clouds dissipated,
For the Poet had known how this would end,
How Walkdrose's future was fated.

'Twas 1304, the Ides of March,
When the Lord was Lameldarore,
And the Poet plotted with all his might –
Halbrambi, their Poet of War.

Khiana Wilkinson
2nd Place
High School – Cahokia High School

Memories

Like a flower that has bloomed
The petals will begin to fall off one by one
Until it is nothing
Everything has to die
I am a seed that was never supposed to grow
It was a secret that I was never supposed to know
I am nothing but blood and dust
There is no place for me in this world
Fire and water bring death and life
I scream as I'm being burnt alive
My screams fade away
As water fills my throat
It will be okay
A voice says
You must fight and stay
You can make it, break it, and take it
I want to soar above the skies, but I chose to live
I spit up the water on to the fire that is burning me alive
I am blood and dust
But I will survive another day
Everything always will die
But I will be okay

Kate Wexell
1st Place
High School – O’Fallon Township High School

Tire Pot

His one true love, his one true life, the girl with a universe in her mind,
told him at the beginning, “Let us live together in peace,
far from the clutches of society.”

She weaved tales of earth and wood,
and them approaching the burdens of parenthood.

And then when he would look her in the eyes,
he’d see the color of the Western sky.

“Wyoming, or Nebraska, or let’s run to the sea,
and then we can live in harmony.”

His darling, his lovely, his everything, all,
told him, “We’ll run in the meadows and dance in the fall.”
Then they’d sit and think of watching their child crawl.

She could see the child, the small dove of white,
her hair like the sun, her eyes like the night.
She’d run her fingers through her new daughter’s hair,
and curls of silk would fly everywhere.

She could picture a cabin in the woods, and stated,
“I’d run from the world if I could.”

He softly agreed and held her hand,
promising that he’d whisk her away to a magical land.

But alas, since they were merely kids in town,
they looked at each other and shrugged and then frowned,
before on her left hand he bestowed a crown.

“Forever and always, you will be mine,”
he said to her before she described every sign
that they were meant to be together at last,
with darkness coming ever too fast.

“You are my dream, you are my destiny,”
he’d text her in the morning before she woke to see.
But her mind was always encompassed by that fantasy house,
the one where they could defy time and make him her spouse.

She was surrounded by images floating through,
of her in a white dress and leaves sprinkled with dew.

They were happy together, him and her,
as best friends, as lovers, as their certainty was that they were to last forever,
“Just you and me.”

So when the winter emerged into spring into summer,
and their romance was that of crashing thunder,
of passion, of love, of sweet delicacy,
he spent his time without her establishing something of eloquence.

“She wants a cabin in the woods.
She wants to acquaint me with fatherhood.
She wants a bouquet of flowers of blue,
the hue of my eyes and the ocean too.
She wants a place to run with me,
to sit and contemplate the world’s mysteries,”
he thought with a smile as he bent down to work,
next to the bog where small creatures lurk.
“I’ll build her a cabin, as good as a self-erected cabin can be,
and we’ll enjoy it together beneath the trees.
It’ll be right next to the pond,
so that I can fish and she can tag along.
And when my arm is strained and the sun is growing long,
I’ll tuck behind her ear a daffodil frond.”

So he got started behind his house in the trees,
creating a place, “Just for you and me.”
Long hours passed, and wood was stacked up,
a tireless effort that nobody could disrupt.
Day by day passed, and night came again,
bearing kisses and smiles and shiny white grins.
But when they would part and bid farewell,
he’d work in a trance and was under a spell.
The sweat would gleam on his metallic white skin,
as sheets of aluminum were set as a roof paper thin.
Burning summer days were like the fire in his heart,
and he listened to her laugh next to him like a lark.

Within him he carried this secret so well,
of this fortress he was building and never would tell
a single soul until it was done,
only the trees and the moon and the setting sun.

The heat burned like flames wafting in the air,
but the sun continued setting without a care.
It played out the very last melody,
and she kissed him and whispered softly,
“I’ll be back. Don’t worry, my love. It’ll only be two weeks that I am gone.”
So he told her goodbye and gave her a kiss,
and every single second after that missed
the woman he’d let go,
as she spread her wings as far as they’d go.
He watched his lover disappear,
into the air, flying to a place far from here.

“Two weeks,” he told himself. “That can’t be bad.”
But every day she told him news that made him sad.
She told him of her travels abroad,
his lover, his life, and how she’d discovered another,
and he thought, “Maybe she won’t be my wife?”
She told him of the Gothic towers and bows,
and how she’d discovered a world that was harmoniously loud.
It was a world that was beautiful and bright,
and he stayed up sobbing every day until midnight.
They fought like tigers and yelled with fear
that the end would soon be drawing very near.

So in his attempt to God to draw her back at last,
he became determined to erect a sculpture to his future and past.
Every day she was gone spouting tremulous shrieks,
his legs were becoming ever so weak.
For while she was out claiming to fool around,
he was at home making their fort by the pond.
“Maybe if I finish it she’ll come back to me,”
and sank into the mud with despair,
gripping his scalp and his curly white hair.

For how foolish was he to imagine that a girl,
who with her pinky could hold the whole world,
would want to be with him for more than a day?

Surely she was never meant to stay!

The universe called to her, coaxed her, pleaded,
and in that his infinite love was defeated
He had done wrong, made her unsatisfied
with his simplistic life, so maybe that's why
she'd found an older boy with brown hair and blues eyes
to be with as those two weeks of travel passes by.

But if there was even a chance he could draw her near,
and reel her in like a cowboy roping a steer,
perhaps the solution would be right here,
in this three-dimensional mural of which one day she'd peer.
For Lord, if there was a god up above,
He'd send her back with all of her love.

So every day she was gone, he worked and he worked,
until their cabin became a palace fit for the Turks.
It had nooks and crannies and shelves made of logs,
every piece fit together like miniscule cogs.
But she only ascended farther away,
though he begged God to let her stay.

She ran through the mountains and sang to the trees,
and they fought every night, until half past three.

And her world was changing every night-
she claimed that this land had unveiled her sight!

"No, you fool," he wanted to scream.

"You are blind to your fate, blind to you dream,
blind to the life that you've given to me!"

So as the very last measure rang
of the greatest love song ever sang,
he admired his completed work from afar,
and on his heart it bore a magnificent scar.

One thing was missing from finality-
a pot filled with flowers flowing wild and free.
A pot filled with blue flowers with elegant folds.
A pot filled with flowers that at their wedding she'd hold.
He dug up the dirt and spoiled their roots,
and found an old tire beneath his foot.
He shivered and trembled as he planted them with care
and murmured, "Honey, you make me so very scared.
I do not like that other world out there,
the one that took your soul, only now with a tear."
But in the moment of truth
he knew what to do.
His darling, his love that had been oh, so true,
would now wear his pain within her own shoes,
and would later hear her say, "No amount of pain will make me stop loving you."
But he did not hear her, not then, not now,
only silence and wiping the sweat from his brow.
For in that moment his heart gave a twist,
and nothingness embodied him, only apathetic bliss.
For he was utterly alone in this world,
never to be destined with the right type of girl.

Glancing down at the symbol worn on his left hand,
he slowly removed his silver promise band.
It was his final act, his final defeat,
and with a sigh retreated home and went to sleep.
And when he woke up, his love for her was gone.
It had vanished like a stallion galloping in the night,
along with his anxiousness and his fright.
And while her plane flew from London down,
he pictured her choking on a startled sound
to discover a text at seven tonight,
reading, "I'm sorry, but we're over. This isn't right.
I didn't want it at first, believe me so,
but now your actions have become the lowest of the low."

And so while the blue flowers drooped with colors not so bright,
they both trembled in bed that night.
And when the sun arose the following more,
he ravaged the cabin like a storm.

Sandy Baum
3rd Place
Adult Division – Waterloo

The Dream Before Christmas?

I was snuggled in bed
and began counting sheep.
I started to dream
as I fell fast asleep.....

*I was startled from my slumber.
I heard a noise in the house.
It was the night before Christmas.
Where was my spouse?*

*I looked through the rooms.
Then went down the stairs.
I looked in the kitchen,
but he wasn't there.*

*Where could he be?
Where do I look next?
Then I heard a strange noise.
It had me perplexed.*

*I snuck to the living room
and what did I see?
There was Santa,
putting presents under the tree.*

*He said, "These are for the kids.
This one's for my wife.
Sandy's a wonderful woman.
She's the love of my life!"*

*What did I hear?
What did he say?
Could my husband be Santa?
He's kidding! No way!*

*My husband is Santa?
I started to cry.
He never told me.
He's a wonderful guy.*

*I ran back upstairs
and got into bed.
I fell fast asleep,
visions of Santa in my head... ...*

And then I woke up.
Did the dream have to quit?
It was a dream...
Wasn't it?

Randy Halleran
2nd Place
Adult Division – Waterloo

Old Friend

Welcome back old friend
It's been a while since we shared with each other
I've stocked up on all of our favorite things and I'm ready
for those long-awaited evening in quiet conversations
And often just with our quiet thoughts
It is good to be together again

Welcome back old friend
I've longed for the warmth of your glow
And your voice, as you remind me of other times and
Other places we have been
And it is good to be together again

Welcome back old friend
And as I settle I for the evening, eyes heavy lidded
You will sing me to sleep and I will dream of other times
Other places, and slip slowly back
Oh, I have missed you so
It is good to be together again

Yvonne Meckfessel
1st Place
Adult Division – Troy

The Old Man

The old man was dressed like the cowboy he was
But couldn't do chores that a cowboy normally does
Instead he sat in an old leather chair
Goin' over the night he had that fight with the old white mare
he knew it wasn't her fault. He guessed it was his own
She wasn't mean or revengeful... not like that new blue roan
But here he sat... in a chair not a saddle
Watchin' TV when he'd rather get on a horse and skedaddle
His injuries were minor. In a couple days he'd be just fine
But something had changed... it was different this time.

His kids would be comin' to move him off the farm
He didn't understand but knew they didn't mean him harm
He didn't belong in the city, the country was his home
He loved to hear the thunder in the mountains where he roamed

He prayed to God to take him before his kids come 'round
He just didn't think that he could stand to live in a home in a town.
He'd rather die in the saddle, out on the prairie tall
Where he could smell the primrose and hear the coyote call

Later on that evening, when the kids drove down the lane
They could hear the rumble of the thunder as it began to rain
The old house stood silent. No lights could they see
The big black dog lay quiet as they entered with their key

The old man sat waiting, dressed in his cowboy clothes
Hat in hand and boots on... for how long no one knows
You see, God had listened and answered the old man's prayer
For now the cowboy was riding in heaven on the old white mare.



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