

Haiku Contest Winners By Laura Stoll

April was National Poetry Month, a time to celebrate verse in all forms. From Shakespeare's sonnets to Amanda Gorman's "The Hill We Climb," poetry can be filled with rhyme and rhythm, love and despair, and enlightenment and confusion. Not all poetry is easy to read and comprehend, making it a difficult genre to read.

Haiku is a form of poetry that is accessible and easy to understand. Haiku is a short form originally from Japan. Traditional haiku consist of three phrases or lines in a syllabic 5-7-5 pattern, including a kireji, or "cutting word", and a seasonal reference.

In honor of this unique form of poetry, we invited the public to write their own haiku and enter them into a contest. Instead of the traditional subject of nature, we asked that poets make their work about their love of books, stories or the library; something they've missed over the past year; or something special to our area.

The creative juices were clearly flowing this spring because we received more than 120 entries! Poems were divided into three age groups: children, tweens and teens, and adults. They were reviewed by KTL patron, Clinton resident, and published poet Phil Memmer. His most recent book, "Pantheon," was published in March 2019.

Phil chose these grand prize winners.

The children's division was won by 9-year-old Sebastian Meyers. He wrote:

Snuggled in my bed
tired, sleepy, reading away
I become the book

The tween/teen division had a lot of competition but Phil chose this poem by Noah Grant:

Like a calm blue sky,
The sea has called me homeward.
I step on the sand

The winner in the adult category was Lisa Bohling, who took note of the birds who ominously fly above the KTL:

Turkey vultures watched
Library patrons clutched books
Glad to be alive

After Phil chose our grand prize winners, Library Director Anne Debraggio awarded several more. Here are a few of those selections.

Eight year-old Simon Terrell was given the "KTL Prize" for this poem which asks a question many neighbors must have:

The lib'ry tower
Which reaches high in the sky
What is inside there?

I have to admit I have a little bias for this poem, written by Clinton eighth grader Sophie McKee, and given Anne's "Village Award":

Stunning Cider Mill
Apples and desserts galore

Only in the fall

In the adult category, I found myself thinking a lot about Fiona Helmuth's poem which received Anne's "Library Prize." In a time when we were all physically and socially distant, people still came to the library for books and conversation and connection.

A community
holds on to their connections
through the library.

The haiku from our contest show our connection to so many other things: Zumba, the Clinton Arena, school, sports, family, painting, and much more. Here are a few of my favorites:

Beautiful beaches
Sand, water, shells, umbrellas
The sun shining down

By Skylei Brewer

I enjoy sleeping
It makes me feel so good
I love taking naps

By Sam Hepler

My ducks ran away
From my dog, he's a bully
I hope they come back

By Elena Cook

Inspired by books
At KTL pre-covid,
Concepts to canvas.

By Ruth Kennedy Grant

The Library is grateful to everyone who submitted an entry. As you can see, there were so many clever poems to choose from that it was difficult to name winners. To read all of the entries, stop by the KTL and pick up a copy of the collection.