



2013/14 Writing Contest Special Edition

April 2014

[www.wnba-books.org](http://www.wnba-books.org)

## Introduction

**Introduction**

By Joan Gelfand (SF)  
Annual Writing Contest Chair



Welcome to the 2nd Annual Edition of the Women's National Book Association Writing Contest. We are so excited about the entries that came in this year.

We hope that you will enjoy these stories and poems and that you will take a moment to share a link to this issue on your Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Two years ago, the WNBA National Board decided that it was time to honor emerging writers. We just needed to find them! This year, calls for submissions were sent to over 100 MFA programs; ads were placed in *Poets & Writers*, *Winning Writers*, *Creative Writing Opportunities*, the *Review Review* and *Poetry Flash*. Overall we reached thousands of poets and writers.

The well-placed notices allowed us to cast a national net and by the time the contest closed, we had a large number of entries from which to choose.

In the poetry category, Molly Peacock chose her top four, and made a special request that we mention two "runners-up:"

1. [Late October Light](#) ~ Rebecca Olander
2. [Demeter's Lament](#) ~ Kate Hovey
3. [The Night a Woman Died on My Street](#) ~ Amy Schmitz
4. [Milk](#) ~ J.H. Yun
5. [The Snake Librarian](#) ~ Arne Weingart
6. [Nesting](#) ~ Molly Prosser

In the fiction category, judge Meg Waite Clayton had this to say to about the winning entry:

*"There is so much to admire about this spare 1400-word story. "Uncertainty" takes two elements that are polar opposites--the magic of Tarot cards and the magic of math--and stirs them together with the magic of Google search in a story about the longing to have a child. The narrative voice is distinct. The humor is lovely, as is the friendship delivered by phone. The arc of the story is graceful from beginning to end."*

The top four in fiction are:

1. [Uncertainty](#) ~ Gayle Towell
2. [Place Settings](#) ~ Susan Doherty

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Honorable Mention*Five O'Clock Somewhere*

By Julia Tracey

(WNBA-LA)

**Poetry**Winner*Late October Light*

By Rebecca Olander

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By Amy Schmitz

Honorable Mention*Milk*

By J.H. Yun

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**Promote** your books and services on our national site and in our national newsletter, [The Bookwoman](#).

3. [Katie Earnhardt's Theory](#) ~ Tracy Sottosanti
4. [Five O'Clock Somewhere](#) ~ Julia Tracey

As you might imagine, it takes a village to run a National Writing Contest. I'd like to thank everyone who helped make this contest a success:

Thank you to the coeditors of *The Bookwoman*, and editors of this issue, Gloria Toler and Rhona Whitty. And thank you to the web team, Bebe Brechner and NC Weil.

We are eternally grateful to our fabulous, qualified team of early readers:

Linda Philips, Carol Baldwin, Emily Pearce and Emily Marchese. Our talented readers helped to make the transition to the judges seamless.

Our gratitude to our very, very busy judges, [Molly Peacock](#) and [Meg Waite Clayton](#). Meg has just signed a contract for a new novel and Molly is traveling and teaching. Please check out their websites, their books and write to them and tell them how much you appreciated them taking the time to help the WNBA.

And, of course thank you to our members: chapter presidents who helped spread the word about the contest at meetings, at events, and to local bookstores and libraries. And thank you to all of our members who polished your own work for submission, told friends and colleagues and shared information with writer's groups.

As you know, all proceeds from the contest go to support WNBA programs. So as a final note, thank you for supporting literacy, reading, books and the Mission of the WNBA: To support the role of women and men in all aspects of the world of the book.

Congratulations!

**Joan Gelfand**  
**WNBA Writing Contest Chair**  
**WNBA Development Chair**

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**Learn** about trends and issues in the book industry through chapter events and *The Bookwoman*.

**Find** a chapter near you by going to our [website](#), or to set up a chapter in your area, please contact WNBA Development Chair, Joan Gelfand at [joan@joangelfand.com](mailto:joan@joangelfand.com).

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For further information on the National Board, Chapter Presidents, Committee Chairs, please go to the WNBA [website](#).

You may also download a pdf of the information [here](#).

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**Winner – Fiction**

**Uncertainty  
By Gayle Towell**

"I need someone with magic powers who can give me the freakin' answer already," I tell Mary.

"Hmm," she ponders on the other end of the line, "I've got tarot cards."

"Serious? Tarot cards work." I take my feet off my office desk and sit upright. I hear sifting sounds on the other end of the line as I bite my pinky finger.

"Okay," she says, "I'm putting you on speaker phone. Think about your question while I shuffle."

"Uh, yeah," I say. I move the mouse to kick my computer out of sleep mode and see that it's a quarter till ten. I have a meeting in fifteen minutes. On my screen, a dozen tabs remain open in Google Chrome all searching for some definitive answer.

*Oh great internet, where is my monthly menstruation? Could I be pregnant even if the noble pee stick says no?*

And the internet answers back: *Maybe. Only time will tell.*

I'm an electron waiting for my turn in a Stern-Gerlach experiment. Spin up or spin down? Knocked up, or let down?

"All right," says Mary's speaker-phone voice, "I'm dividing the deck into three stacks, one to my right, one in the middle, and one to my left. Which one do you want on top?"

"Right," I say.

"And next?"

"Middle, then left."

There's more card shuffling sound.

I've been doing nothing all week but overanalyzing every sign my body gives me. Only problem is, early pregnancy and PMS are identical. I keep going back and forth between knowing I am and knowing for sure that I'm not. Really I don't know a damn thing. I've never been good at living with uncertainty.

"Oh, wow," she says. "The first stack of cards are supposed to represent your question and where you are. The Empress is on top."

I open Google and search *4 days late negative pregnancy test* like I haven't already done so every hour today.

"Okay," I say. "That means?"

Twelve minutes until my meeting.

A bunch of question and answer boards pop up on my screen. Someone wants to know if they might be pregnant under such circumstances and the first dozen respondents chime in with some variation of "me, too."

Mary talks about symbols of femininity and fertility.

Someone on one of the message boards relays anecdotes about her sister who was three months pregnant before a piss test ever showed positive. No one seems to know what the relative odds are on such things.



**Gayle Towell is a writer, drummer, and physics instructor from North Plains, Oregon. Her stories have appeared in *Menacing Hedge*, *Colored Chalk*, and the *Warmed and Bound* anthology. Her short story "Paper" is slated to be in the *Burnt Tongues* anthology edited by author Chuck Palahniuk due out by Medallion Press in August of 2014. She writes the column *Edit My Paragraph!* for [Litreactor.com](http://Litreactor.com).**

**For more information you can visit her website at: [gayletowell.wordpress.com](http://gayletowell.wordpress.com).**

I ask Mary, "Does that mean yes, or no?"

The websites with the experts only offer vague statements about how negatives could mean that your body just isn't producing enough human chorionic gonadotropin yet and you should test again in a week. A whole freakin' week.

"Could mean anything," Mary says. "These are just supposed to guide you, not give an answer."

"Right," I sigh. "What else?"

There are sites that say stressing about it can delay your period, and then there are sites that say stress can only delay ovulation which then delays your period, but if you weren't stressed at the time of ovulation, then your period should come on schedule. Plenty of anecdotal evidence supports both possibilities.

Mary tells me about the card with the fool on it--some blindfolded guy about ready to fall off a cliff. This can mean not knowing where you are going. Being blind, oblivious to what's around you.

"I don't mean to rush you," I say, "but I've got a meeting in eight minutes."

"Okay, okay," she says, and talks faster.

Yesterday I found a site that said ovarian cysts can cause missed periods and mimic pregnancy symptoms. So I spent all afternoon panicking about ovarian cysts, except they're apparently no big deal and resolve on their own. It's a vicious cycle. I can't help but think a definitive answer must exist somewhere in the present, yet I keep searching and all I find is, "Wait."

Mary says something about cups and water and an eagle, all vague in meaning, except these cards have high values, so a lot of water? I need to pee. Could be a sign. Or maybe it's the coffee. Shit, should I be drinking coffee? Maybe not, just in case.

When I think maybe there's a baby in there, I name it Sarah or Sean, and stare at a calendar, trying to decide how much time to take off work.

When I think there's not, my eyes burn like I might cry despite never intending to be pregnant in the first place.

Five minutes left and Mary's getting to the end cards. There's this guy on a chariot being pulled by two lions each trying to go in different directions. But in his lap is the wheel of fate. He holds fate in his lap and just rides with it, hanging on.

"So, what's the answer according to the cards?" I say.

"They don't give an answer," she says. "They only give advice."

Only three minutes until the meeting, and I can't be late.

I close all the browser tabs, all the ambiguous answers. I tell Mary I'll let her know as soon as I know. She says how neat it was that most of the cards had something to do with uncertainty and femininity and that I should think about the chariot guy--it makes a lot of sense. Ride it out, let the lions pull you in different directions and just sit comfortably with that wheel of fate on your lap, right over your abdomen, let it sit there. Sit and wait.

"Take care," I say, and hang up. With one minute on the clock, I grab my USB drive and speed-walk down the hall.

This meeting is where I present the mathematical models I came up with for correcting for magnetic-field-induced changes in apparent temperature and sensitivity of resistive thermometers at dilution refrigerator temperatures.

Fascinating, I know.

I point at the graphs, waving my hands along the lines like there's some real purpose there. Coworkers stare, chins in hands, as I tell them, sadly, that the models are non-physical. I can't point to the coefficients in my wonderful equations and say, "This number is a measure of the quantum Hall effect" or anything, and believe me, I've tried.

"But it matches the data and has the right end behavior?" Old, bald Gary says.

"Yes," I say, and this is enough for them. It is not enough for me. I will spend the rest of the week attempting obsessively to attribute some concrete meaning to it all.

How I ended up with this job and why I did so well in school was never because of inherent intelligence. It was my impatience with uncertainty. I have to know things.

On the drive home, traffic is backed up like always. One hand on the top of the steering wheel, I bite my pinky finger on the other hand, thinking about the chariot guy with the wheel of fate in his lap. At least he had lions pulling him. He was going fast. I have a wheel in my hand, but all it does is turn back and forth. It doesn't help me move forward. Stomp on the gas right now and I rear-end somebody. I have to wait, to hold the stupid wheel in my hand and wait. I'm a photon in a Bose-Einstein condensate moving absurdly slow through a tightly packed quantum sea of uncertainty.

In the morning I pee on a stick again. I can't wait the three minutes to look. I have to watch the pink dye move across the little window in real time. But once it's all the way across, all that remains is a negative sign. I leave the thing on the counter and check back again a minute later and hold it up in the light, viewing it at different angles trying to see if there's something faint that I'm missing.

Ten minutes pass.



With a pair of scissors I pry the test apart to look at the test strip without the little plastic window in place. I hold the little strip up to the light again, ignoring the fact that the manufacturers did not intend that the test be read this way.

And there--if I half-close my eyes, tilt my head to the right, and hold the test at a forty-five degree angle with the light--is a faint line.

And sure, maybe it's just the antibody strip that the dye would have stuck to if my urine actually did contain enough human chorionic gonadotropin.

But maybe not.

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## Winner – Poetry

### Late October Light By Rebecca Olander

I didn't know light  
could be so devoid of warmth, shallow splash in the pan, empty rush  
for gold, how much can catch on a single strand, strung between the legs  
of the wicker chair and the metal chair, one that wove a basket on my  
back  
in summer, the other searing a waffle of diamonds across my thigh  
in early fall  
when days washed in this much brightness had us wearing little,  
keeping down our guard, shoulders loose, lemonade at our lips still,  
and raspberries.

The whole season turned down  
an octave, the day still Technicolor bright, heightened but chill. Crisp  
shadow of knuckle and pen point on paper, the implement's tip.  
School bus shudders at the stop sign, fat squirrels trapeze the lilacs,  
overturn fallen leaves, nose and paw the mulch, dogs looking  
for buried bones.  
Sun catches on silken threads spun out overnight. These days  
hold steady above freezing, not bitter enough to down  
the webs.

The flies are still  
abundant, a singular beetle roams the patio, each brick pock-marked  
and ragged, each divot evident in the wash of late afternoon sun,  
white light, a clarity, premonition of cold, warning shivers the grass,  
V of geese a solitaire variation spread across blue and thinning clouds,  
the cards are dealt,  
laid out flush upon the table, as sure a winning hand as the fact  
that winter waits around the corner, it's just not clear when  
the snow will fly.

What makes the sound  
when squirrels do their DNA chase up the trunk of the Norway maple,  
a crazed clattering, dry fingers stirring empty shells in a wooden bowl?  
The way Aunt Betty's mauve-tipped fingers cracked and drained  
pistachios,  
clicked the counter as she fished for vocabulary, always half  
in pursuit  
of twenty-three down, eleven across, half in the world of surfaces,  
of Pall Malls, of hunger? Like her, I advance my pen, click fingers  
across keys, can't get lost in the hunt, the season  
pulls me back in, dinner needs making, the yard needs raking,



**Rebecca Hart Olander teaches writing at Westfield State University and is working towards her MFA in Poetry at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her work has recently been published, or is forthcoming, in *Common Ground Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, *Silkworm*, and *Lemon Hound*. Rebecca's manuscript received an honorable mention from Hedgerow Books earlier this year. She serves on the board of Perugia Press and on the advisory board of the "30 Poems in November!" literacy project for Center for New Americans. Rebecca lives in Western Massachusetts with her family.**

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a dog barks to be  
let out, my neighbor stuffs leaves into a bag, compresses them  
smaller and smaller, cleaning tines fast as she can, racing against  
the light.

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## Second Place – Fiction

### Place Settings By Susan Doherty

Read the entire story [here](#).

If pressed, Carly would say she didn't like Angela. She used the label "neighbor" rather than "friend." They exchanged Christmas cards, traded names of handymen and painters, bought stale candy from each other's kids for the band fundraiser at school. But Carly did not take Angela out to lunch on her birthday. She did not ring her doorbell when she went for a walk. She did not call Angela to catch a movie on a rainy Sunday afternoon. Besides, Carly assumed Angela hated the lighthearted comedies that she favored. Angela, after all, was the one who came to book group bearing discussion questions, while Carla showed up armed with wine.

Still, friendship was not a prerequisite for loyalty. So when the topic at the Wednesday afternoon coffee klatch turned to Angela and her son, Carly felt unsettled. She was grateful that the sound of hissing air, steam being forced into milk, sliced the conversation for a minute.

"The whole thing is just so sad," Laurie said as the squealing subsided.

"But really, is anyone surprised?" Barb asked while brushing crumbs from her scone onto the floor. "You have a kid who's over-indulged, a mother who lets him do anything, a dad who's not even around anymore. It was an accident waiting to happen."

"Well, I don't know about that," Carly ventured.

"Oh, come on. That family has been a train wreck for years," Barb said, "and Angela's always so clueless. Whenever her son has problems, she blames the teachers, the coach, anyone but herself." Barb took another bite of her scone.

"You have to admit, Jeffrey has a lot of problems," said Laurie, always the peacemaker.

"Because his mother is totally in denial," Barb said. "Remember when Jeffrey broke the window at school and Angela tried to blame it on the other kids? And then he got caught with that knife in eighth grade but said it was someone else's and she believed him? Angela always thinks he's so innocent, but this was clearly his fault. Looks like Jeffrey finally got what was coming to him."

"That's a bit harsh," Carly said. True, Jeffrey had a history of getting in trouble and yes, it seemed like Angela always made excuses for her son. But he didn't deserve to end up in the hospital. "Sometimes accidents just happen and no one is to blame," Carly added.

"He's totally to blame. He was drunk," Barb said.

"Do we know that? I don't think we know that." Carly tried to keep the comment measured, but she held up a pointed finger, an accusing digit that said "Stop right there," expressing the sentiment her mouth was too timid to handle. It was always Carly's hands that betrayed her, like they had their own agenda and reported to a different department.

Read the entire story [here](#).

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**Susan Doherty is a native New Englander who migrated westward, recently settling in Colorado after spending eight years in Chicago. A freelance health and fitness writer, she has forayed into fiction writing and her work recently appeared in *Composite Arts Magazine*. She is a graduate of Amherst College and the University of Massachusetts, and although she still misses Fenway Park and the salty scent of ocean breezes, she is willing to concede that life in the mountains agrees with her.**

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[susandohertywriter@gmail.com](mailto:susandohertywriter@gmail.com).

## Second Place – Poetry

## Demeter's Lament

### By Kate Hovey

#### I.

*Dreams I should never have disregarded:*

1) I deliver the perfect child, pink flannel-wrapped in the crook of my arm, ten fingers, toes, every hair on her head counted. Sacred piglet. I inhale the divine scent, feel her breath as she roots at my breast, as she sucks and sucks yet grows ever smaller--too soon, all her roundness gone, a dry husk, shriveling like Tithonus to a dust mote.

2) Same beginning. This time the child sucks until I am empty as her spent balloon collapsed in the dust--all my roundness gone, a chthonic cartoon.

3) Still perfect, grown in the fullness of my own image, sitting beside me in a hay wagon. On the horizon of this clear spring day I see the future, a black funnel cloud forming. She stands as it approaches. I cling to her thighs, my dust-rimed cheek pressed to pink knees, the flesh turning white where my arms grip her as the darkness sucks and sucks, all my might against it.

#### II.

*Signs and portents:*

1) A bright star ascending:  
Swift as Atalanta but far more single-minded, her dryad heart races, immune to golden apples. How proudly I watch, gather the laurels heaped at her feet.

2) Always the same loose robes, such a harmless armoring. I smile, perplexed by adolescent self-loathing, but let her be--never pry, never question what lies hidden.

3) When the long war commences, when food is fully weaponized, I, the All-Nourishing One, fail to nourish. In time, it is the healers who bind her wrists, pump the vital elixirs through her rage-choked veins.

#### III.

*Myths I cannot abide:*

1) She can return like spring--oh, that one is hard to swallow. Even when she is here, she is only, always, *there*, and we are all sucked down with her.



**Kate Hovey is the author of three award-winning books of poetry for young readers: *Arachne Speaks*, *Ancient Voices*, and *Voices of the Trojan War*, published by Margaret K. McElderry Books, an imprint of Simon and Schuster. She is a contributor to *Mythology and Modern Women Poets: Analysis, Reflection and Teaching*, forthcoming from McFarland. A mask maker and metal smith, she performs and conducts workshops at schools across the country in conjunction with her work as a visiting author, using poetry, myth and the art of the mask to bring the gods, goddesses and heroes of ancient Greece to life for students of all ages. Her poems have appeared most recently in *The River Styx*, *The Ledge* and *The Comstock Review*.**

Visit Kate's website [katehovey.com](http://katehovey.com), and you may contact her at: [KateHovey@socal.rr.com](mailto:KateHovey@socal.rr.com).

2) I am the dark source, anorexic  
 mother goddess, smothering, controlling,  
 rejecting, cold. In truth, my love grew fierce--  
 I'd strike any bargain, fight like a bloodied Trojan,  
 threaten, withhold--anything to reach her.

So much scorched earth lies between us.  
 These days, too many calls from hell  
 turn me to marble.

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### Third Place – Fiction

## Katie Earnhardt's Theory on Eggs-Over-Easy and Life Experience By Tracy Sottosanti

Read the entire story [here](#).

"Good night, Mommy."  
 Parker's voice reached through the darkness and nudged Katie from her sleep.  
 Willing herself, Katie rolled toward Parker. "Good night, Sweetheart," her voice croaked.  
 Parker turned and went back to his room satisfied.  
 On her nightstand the clock said it was 3:48AM. Katie blinked heavy eyelids at the blaring numbers and turned over, wriggling quite vigorously to get comfortable again. But it was too late.

There was that pup tent again, feeling like it sprung up inside of her physically, it's stakes driven into the lining of her stomach-probably right next to her esophagus-wherein lived all the usual worries that kept her from sleep. Once the worries were awakened and flooding out of the tent into her chest cavity, there was no going back.

First she worried about the fact that there was not enough energy in her body, nor minutes in the day to accomplish all that needed to be done once the sun came up. Then she worried about whether her bank account balance would measure up to her grocery list. And without discarding or resolving the first two issues, the third worry, which always waited patiently and confidently at the end of the line because it knew it would always get addressed, followed everything else out of the tent.

Parker.  
 Would Parker be okay? Would he have a good day? Was she sure he was safe in his bed, or had he decided to take a moonlit stroll around the neighborhood?

That was it.  
 Katie was out of bed, down the hall and hovering over the lump under the covers in Parker's room. She made sure the lump was breathing and gave it a light kiss on its warm cheek.

She turned and went into the kitchen satisfied, and accepting of her sleepless fate on this inhumanly early Saturday morning. Parker needed water, and Parker needed to say goodnight after getting his water. It was one of the rules of "Parker World" with which Katie had no choice but to comply.

Katie had worked with Parker for years to get him to use his words. With each milestone met, Katie's heart would melt at the sound of his small voice.

"Can I have a drink of water?"

"French fries, please?"

"Good bye, Mommy."

"Goodnight, Mommy."

But now her autistic son was ten-years-old, and at times like this, at 4 o'clock in the morning, when Parker thought it was essential to say goodnight after getting up for a drink of water, Katie had to remind herself how much she loved hearing his small voice.



**Tracy Sottosanti (WNBA-Charlotte) got a typewriter when she was 10-years old. Now she is married, has two children, and lives in Waxhaw, North Carolina. Tracy's faith in God is her center... no matter what chaos ensues. Sometimes she waits tables, but most of the time she takes care of her husband, her daughter and her son who is diagnosed with autism. And when she has time to do what she loves, the thing that makes her come alive, she writes.**

**You may contact Tracy at:**  
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Automatically, she turned a burner on under the frying pan on the stove. In the fridge she found the last of the butter, dropped it into the pan and watched it melt.

And though she wasn't remotely hungry, she cracked one egg then another. Watching them sizzle and solidify was a good distraction. It calmed her to manipulate and shape the whites with the spatula. And it thrilled her to flip them over, because it was always felt like a miniature victory when they didn't break.

Read the entire story [here](#).

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### Third Place – Poetry

#### The Night a Woman Died on My Street By Amy Schmitz

I wished we were made of something different,  
something unleached, like soil  
layered with guano and made fertile  
into another season.

Or limestone caves wet and breathing  
honeycomb-carved by salt water's  
slow precipitation, or salt water  
deposited at the mouth of a mineral spring.

Or upwellings blown shoreward  
gifting plankton to sunfish to  
fishermen, or plankton  
that drift lightly across oceans.

Or waves that angle  
through space until, just below  
the horizon line, they break  
into new day.



Amy Schmitz has poems forthcoming in *Freshwater*, *Perfume River Poetry Review*, *Poetry International* and *Comstock Review*. She is the 2013 winner of the C.P. Cavafy Prize from Poetry International and the 2011 first place winner in the CNY chapter of the National League of American Pen Women poetry competition. Her work has been published in *The Bellevue Review*, *Folio*, *River City*, *Kiosk*, *The Baltimore Review*, *So to Speak*, *The Washington Review* and *Koktjl*. She has won awards from *Folio* and *River City*.

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### Honorable Mention – Fiction

#### Five O'Clock Somewhere By Julia Tracey

Read the entire story [here](#).

When he comes in from the garage after work, he kicks the door shut behind him with his foot and walks into the kitchen. He opens the liquor cabinet with one hand and gets out the scotch, setting it on the counter with a thump. He reaches for a highball glass and, from the freezer, fills it with ice. The cubes clink into the glass with a distinctive ring that I can hear from anywhere in the house. He untwists the cap and pours the amber liquid over the rocks until it reaches the rim.

Only then does he set down his briefcase and shuck his coat from his shoulders.

He doesn't add water or soda, no mixers of any sort. "The ice melts and dilutes the scotch," he always says. "I don't need to water it down." I'm making dinner, helping kids with homework. (It's a beautiful thing, Suburbia, where everything runs like clockwork. You get married, quit



Julia (WNBA-LA) is an award-winning writer, editor, journalist

your job, buy your house and have your babies. You send them to school; you put them in catechism, take them to soccer and tap and ballet, you volunteer for Girl Scouts, to chair the PTA carnival, to help in the classroom. After school you put your own work aside and spend the hours with the kids, doing crafts or earning merit badges. When Daddy comes home, dinner is cooking, and it's no Hamburger Helper; it's something Tuscan or Szechwan that you cooked from scratch, and there's the sourdough loaf hot from the bread machine, and the wine from Trader Joe's; there's the salad with the homemade croutons and the tomatoes, rosy and still warm from the yard. There's a bowlful of lemons from the neighbor's tree, and an apple pie, no, really, though the kids won't eat it and he'll be having a slice or two after dinner because he likes the late-night snack. It's all there in the evening when Daddy gets home, because that's what it is to be a stay-at-home mom; those are the wages of a lush life, and there's no cause for complaint.)

There's a certain face he makes when he takes his first sip - something somewhere between the pained grimace that comes with a headache and the look of a man given cool water in the desert. In Scotland, that first sip - the warmth of peat and smoke and pure water from the loch, distilled into the elixir called *uisge beatha*, the water of life, pure Scotch whiskey - it's called The Golden Trail. He relishes the sensation, loves it the way I love chocolate and Jane Austen and a good massage.

Read the entire story [here](#).

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**and activist. Her award-winning column and blog, [Modern Muse](#), has twice been recognized the San Francisco-East Bay Press Club's award for Best Independent Blogger and Best Multimedia project. Julia was the founding editor, and later, publisher, at [The Alameda Sun](#) newspaper. She is also the author of [I've Got Some Lovin' to Do: The Diaries of a Roaring Twenties Teen](#), which was followed by [Reaching for the Moon: More Diaries of a Roaring Twenties Teen](#).**

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## Honorable Mention – Poetry

### Milk By J.H. Yun

time dissolves too quick  
the man she married.  
he was the one who found her barefoot,  
parched and a little horrified there  
cradled in the hungry mouth between north  
and south. he looked very american as he  
bound the cracked landscapes of her feet,  
picked her up,  
carried her through.

decades later  
she finds him sitting with only one shoe  
smiling dimly up at her with  
the smoldering wrong end of a cigarette  
singeing his finely quivering fingers.

toothless, soft and stuttering,  
a gosling in the palm.  
if she were to cut him  
he'd bleed milk, not blood.



**J.H. Yun is a new poet who is currently finishing up her BA degree at the University of California at Davis. Her work has appeared in journals such as *The Winter Tangerine Review*, *theNewerYork*, *The Tower Journal*, *Artemis Journal*, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of the 2013 Celeste Turner Wright prize in poetry, and the Pamela Maus Award.**

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