Congratulations to our winners, Robyn Corum (Fiction), Stacey Balkun (Poetry), and Jeanne Choy Tate (Creative Nonfiction). Competition was

stiffer than ever. According to our early readers, this year brought in the highest quality submissions. Ann Benoit, a nonfiction reader said, "This year saw a lot of repeat submissions, which we are happy about. The quality has gone up and the reading was really enjoyable." Fiction judge Ellen Urbani said, "'The Coffin-Maker' stood out for the captivating story and the author's graceful writing style." Brenda Knight, poetry judge, said, "The very title of the winning poem drew me in as it promised a dreamscape and did not disappoint. What struck me most was the economy of language, each word chosen with care." Congratulations go also to you who mustered the confidence and organized yourself to submit! Remember, except for first place winners, the WNBA National Writing Contest is open for you to resubmit in future years.

On the topic of "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," Dana Goia, president of the NEA, told a story once about a kid who had competed in Poetry Out Loud, the NEA's program for high school students. The kid got to the finals but lost two years in a row. The third time he won the National Championship! BIG NEWS: This year's four winners in each category will appear in a special anthology to be published by C&R Press. The anthology's publication date will coincide with our centennial hands of the reading public. a village.

celebration in October and will include all the past five years' winners. It is our hope that this publication will create community, expose you to wonderful writers, and find its way into the Running the contest has been a labor of love for us here at WNBA. As the saying goes, it takes Thank yous: To my trusted intern, Elaine Ruth Boe, who while handling a full load of college classes,

helped distribute the record number of submissions to our early readers, coordinated the three teams of early readers, and worked closely with me for several months. Thank you to Annie Stone, the contest cochair, who helped with social media. This year's early readers in Fiction: Susan Larson, Nicole Ayers. Nonfiction:

Ann Benoit, Stephanie Koehler, Katie Chapman. Poetry: Alice Sanford, Harriet Shenkman, Carol Dorf. And of course a huge hug to our judges--the inimitable Brenda Knight, author of <u>Women of the</u> Beat Generation and president of WNBA-SF; Ellen Urbani, novelist and author of When I Was

Writers and author of the award-winning memoir <u>Don't Call Me Mother</u>. To the *Bookwoman* editors who put this special edition together: Rhona Whitty and Nicole Ayers. Please support these wonderful authors by sharing this issue with your friends and family and social network. And remember, too, that all of your submission fees go to support WNBA's programs, which encourage and support literacy and the joy of reading! Happy Reading!

We look forward to seeing you next year. Joan Gelfand **WNBA Writing Contest Chair WNBA Development Chair** joan@joangelfand.com

Back to top **5th Annual Writing Contest Judges**

Poetry

Join us!

Brenda Knight Ellen Urbani **Fiction** Back to top **Network** by joining a chapter near you (network membership available for those outside of

chapters' immediate locations.) Or to set up a new chapter in your area contact Joan Gelfand at: joan@joangelfand.com. **Promote** your books and services on our national site and in our national newsletter, <u>The</u> Bookwoman. **Learn** about trends and issues in the book industry through chapter events, chapter media, and Back to top **WNBA'S Centennial Celebration** Since 1917, we have connected, educated, advocated, and led in the literary community. In our 100th year, we salute all the ways in which

deductible donation.

the most horrible thing I ever saw.

Read the entire story <u>here</u>.

into fist I held a knife (a bread knife)

still hot on the stove so I stripped it

until the yellow eyes at my window understood

so-carefully constructed bicultural identity.

(knitting needles) I made toast

flour clumped under fingernails

was burning

or I hadn't paid the light bill

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DONATE Back to top Winner – Fiction The Coffin-Maker By Robyn Corum Read the entire story <u>here</u>.

My daddy made the coffins. Uncle Sawyer cut the wood and brought it over. He stacked it up in piles as high as the house; the whole place smelled like pine. They asked my daddy 'cause he was the best carpenter around these parts . . . well, I hadn't thought about it till now; but I guess he mighta been one of the only carpenters left, too.

Those flood waters were mean, I tell you. I ain't never seen nothing like it. Mister Walter

hurricane tore the front side off the Post Office and all that mail was found as far away as Milk Bend. And the whole town of Belle Glade is gone, I reckon. But worst of all was the

dead people. I went into town with Daddy when the waters first started going down to see if we could help out. They were pulling bodies out of the water two and three at a time. It was

Mrs. Sylvia Reed, from down at the Methodist Church? She was one of the bodies they pulled

Dillon's house floated right off its foundation and wrecked into houses two blocks down. That

out. The waters had beaten her so bad she didn't have any clothes on and she was black and blue. Right then and there my daddy got real quiet. He told me to get on home, but it was okay, 'cause I wanted to. He didn't let me go back again after that. He worked helping in town for most of the morning times, then he would come home and work on building those coffins for the rest of the day. Most times he'd work way on into the night and he'd pound those nails like the devil was after him. My daddy was the finest carpenter you ever saw. Where it would take another man four or five whacks to drive a nail, my daddy could do it with one blow. Them men in town used to take bets on it and come out to see, but he wasn't doing it for show, now. He'd take two long

boards for each side, though depending on the size of the planks my Uncle Sawyer cut,

sometimes he could use just one board for them long side-pieces. Every one of them coffins

had to modify them dimensions somewhat. He'd let me help a little with building the coffins.

Winner – Poetry

When I Am Red and the Moon Full By Stacey Balkun (NOLA) It was a tall tale it was a wolf's tail a tortilla stuck to the window dishes piled high the grimy sink I locked the doors triple-checked I heard howls felt a hunger deep belly growl fur raised at neck's nape knuckles strained

a scarf

but that beacon shone

and rattled the cold panes the lights went out like a ghost story

in my window the moon only a tortilla-moon and the skillet

I held two needles

from the glass

pan-flipped until both sides bubbled

my worth

the wind blew

was burnt already and wanting skulked away. for a tougher fight Back to top Winner— Creative Nonfiction/Memoir **White Woman Passes** By Jeanne Choy Tate (SF) Read the entire piece <u>here</u>.

"White Woman Passes for Black." A little over a year ago, this headline burst across the frontpage news. A white woman, Rachel Dolezal, so longed to be black, that she lied, not just to others, but to herself in order to access power in the African American community's fight for racial justice. Her story disturbs my morning coffee and roils the placid waters of my own oh-

Chinese-identified in the world of whites. In Chinatown, I am Caucasian, forever the race. My outward appearance both defines and confines me. The color of my skin speaks shifting mix of East and West, foreign and familiar, rootedness and ever-emerging being. where I most feel a sense of belonging. A Navy child, perpetual outsider, with each new school--thirteen in all--I peered through chain-link diamonds on the playground fence, father over social change, I dropped out of my southern woman's college and crossed the continent in my cousin's top-down red TR. The year was 1964, one year after Kennedy's assassination and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Bob Dylan had just released his "The Times They Are A-Changin'." I was nineteen. came to live and work as a church volunteer in San Francisco's Chinatown. Its own small

Second Place – Fiction **Dancing on a Stump** By Karin Fuller Read the entire story <u>here</u>. I saw magic. It wasn't a parlor trick, either, but honest-to-God magic, right here in my bar. soup from a can. No one complains.

redone the whole building. Even put flowers in the old window boxes, making me wonder for a while if he wasn't a little light in those size-14 loafers. Then I hired Jenny, which soon put to rest any question about Tate twirling batons. I wasn't looking for help, but one day in walks this girl. Well, not really a girl. She's female all right, but so skinny and small she's more like a kid, although I expect she's pushing forty.

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Freezing rain pinged the skylight

after the late news,

trap the hungry insects.

Read the entire piece <u>here</u>.

Read the entire story <u>here</u>.

turned the page of my book.

anyone named Harry."

wheeling a stroller to show them a

first like a fat tongue overhead

the sound at

would remember the game the ball somehow inflated

checkers trembled

baby just born

trying to articulate

something

blocked out the noise and turned another page.

other has her ball stolen by a boy daily.

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thanks to the Appalachians damming the air from New England. Patti first hears the crack of the thin Bradford pear branches, then the boom of a collapsed transformer. Then another. She tastes the silent furnace hum. The battery-operated radio says power could return within the hour.

Prize nominee her work has appeared in the *News and* while inside the eight- and three-year-old Observer, The Broad River Review, The Pedestal overturn tables and etch suns Magazine, Soundings Review and in numerous journals with Sharpies on the carpet. and anthologies. When she's not editing or writing, Alice is an Irish dancer who plays guitar and violin. At 7:12 a.m., her husband's recall-free Toyota She lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with her attempts to escape their glassy driveway, husband, two children, four loud birds and Mr. swaying and spinning like a drunk dinosaur Nibbles, the guinea pig. until the laws of friction engage. You may contact Alice at <u>aliceosborn.com</u>. She is a plastic bag in May waltzing across bare parking lots, her neighborhood's tarred up telephone poles drenched in sepia and creosote

"Mama, what were all those pink hats about?" We were driving to my eight-year-old's piano lesson when she lobbed that bomb over the front seat, just days after I returned from the Women's March on Washington. We'd already looked through my pictures and talked about my experiences in DC, and I'd explained a few of the reasons women, including myself, were marching--that some people don't offer women the same respect offered to men, that women's rights are human rights, and that women have had enough of victimhood. And my girls got it. Both of them had their own playground stories about being treated unfairly by boys. One is never picked to play soccer because she's a girl, and the

Second Place – Creative Nonfiction/Memoir

Pink Hats By Nicole Ayers (Charlotte)

My eight-year-old is precocious and curious, so I'd been expecting her question about the pink pussy hats, but I still had no answer prepared. Long ago when she was growing under my heart, I promised her I would never lie to her. Other than the requisite parental lies about Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy, I've kept that promise. So what was I going to say? How do I tell her that a man's words--our country's president's words--caused such a visceral reaction I wept at headlines? How do I look at her and say, "This is Mama's way of taking the pussy back," when my whole life I've never been able to bring myself to say pussy. The p-word, a close cousin to the c-word, has always been off-limits. A vulgarity that I never use even though I curse sometimes. Okay, often. But I think that's where I'll have to start. So I do. "You know how cats are sometimes called pussy cats? Well, pussy is also used as slang for a women's vagina . . ."

"Ma'am," she repeated and took a sip from the wine glass in her hand. Looking at the golden liquid I wished I'd thought to order a glass at the lobby bar before coming outside. "I suppose I definitely am a 'ma'am.' No doubt about it." I tried a smile. "I didn't mean anything by that. I just don't know Harry." "That, my dear," she announced, "is very much your loss. Harry is a gentleman. A perfectly lovely gentleman." She took another sip and then placed her wine on the glass-topped table in front of our sofa. "He isn't particularly big, you know, but he still has a presence." Read the entire story <u>here</u>. Back to top

Third Place — Poetry

Beyond (New York University Press). on boards in the next village over eyes lifted to sky a bomb like a dot You may contact Andy at far away andimuse@gmail.com. Adhan for the dead: names of women children brothers chanted over rooftops up to lunar silence boys still living

wheels of the stroller

the round bright

Living near the Atlantic Ocean during my entire youth was a blessing. On hot summer Long Island Sundays, my father would drive our family to the beach at Point Lookout. After parking the car, we would unload the lunches, the jug of lemonade he'd made, and the beach paraphernalia-folding chairs, beach blankets, pails, shovels, and our multicolored striped umbrella. We'd hike across the concrete onto the beach, where I'd wiggle my toes in the white soft sand, delighting in the immense freedom from the constraint of shoes. After marking our spot close to the water's edge, Dad would set up the chairs and plant the umbrella pole, pushing and pulling it back and forth--first north to south, then east to west-until it made a hole deep enough to support the umbrella against the strongest wind. My sisters and I would peel off our shirts and shorts, hang them on the umbrella's spokes, and run as fast as we could into the ocean, giggling with excitement. Read the entire piece <u>here</u>.

"You Jesus," Leticia said. Leticia exhaled the words, her heart having started rattling in her chest and her throat gone dry. He smiled and nodded, his clean brown hair reflecting the light. Leticia could only stare. "Oh," Leticia said. "You waitin' on me, ain't ya?" Leticia stepped toward the man, her legs suddenly shaking. She reached her trembling hand out, sure that when she tried to touch Jesus's hand, he would exist only in her mind. She aimed her right arm parallel to the floor. Then she curled her fingers. The warmth of Jesus's flesh was all the proof she needed. "You real," she said.

The man who looked exactly like Jesus silently reached out his right hand.

By Anna Hernandez-French Read the entire poem <u>here</u>. A tide once pulled me out to sea, my mother says. I picture her Arms made buoyant by saltwater, Looking down, down into the deepening blue. I see it all electric blue Light caught Along the teeth and scales of armor-plated fish.

Back to top Read the entire piece <u>here</u>. "There's an animal head in my refrigerator!" and called out to the cook for an explanation.

It surprises me

At five years old.

In those days, she says.

That she would be allowed to swim so far

Children were watched differently

We were hardly watched at all.

Memoir Winner "White Woman Passes" By Jeanne Choy Tate (SF) Second Place "Pink Hats" **By Nicole Ayers (Charlotte)** Third Place "Climbing Back Up" By Sarah Birnbach **Honorable Mention** "Doubling Back" By Joanne Godley *Elena* and *Landfall*; and Linda Joy Myers, founder of the National Association of Memoir contributors Back to top **President**

By Robyn Corum

"Dancing on a Stump"

"Taking Care of Harry"

"Since Letitia Williams Saw Jesus"

Poetry

"When I Am Red and the Moon Full"

By Stacey Balkun (NOLA)

"Southern Ice Storm"

By Christine Eskilson

Honorable Mention

By Patty Somlo

Winner

Second Place

Third Place "Aleppo"

"At Sea"

by Alice Osborn

By Andy Young

Honorable Mention

By Anna Hernandez-French

Creative Nonfiction/

Second Place

Third Place

By Karin Fuller

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available on the national website. Back to top **Sustaining Members 2016/17** Books for Pannell Award Sponsor

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Back to top we have done that, and invite you to join in! Please explore our <u>Centennial website</u> to learn more about our history and our Centennial programs, such as Bookwomen Speak. You can also support WNBA's ongoing programs, as well as our Centennial activities, with a tax

Robyn Corum writes from a small

town in North Alabama, where she

fabulous children, a son-in-law, and

one utterly perfect granddaughter.

and Haiku Anthology, Observations

She also has a historical romance

anthologies with other authors:

draws inspiration from three

She's created two poetry

<u>Pieces of Her Mind</u>

available through

and Insights.

Crimson Romance entitled Melinda Heads West. All her stories are character-driven, as she attempts to figure herself out. You may contact Robyn at http://robynsrules.blogspot.com had to be seven foot long, thirty inches wide and twenty-five inches deep. Later on, when the bodies were so bloated and changed, Daddy

> Stacey Balkun is the author of Eppur Si Muove, Jackalope-Girl Learns to Speak &

Lost City Museum . A Finalist for the 2016

as well as the Center for Women Writer's 2016 Rita Dove Award, her work has

appeared in Crab Orchard Review, Muzzle,

A 2015 Hambidge Fellow, Stacey serves as

Chapbook Series Editor for Sundress Publications. She holds an MFA from Fresno State and teaches poetry online at

Bayou, and others.

The Poetry Barn.

You may contact Stacey at www.staceybalkun.com.

Event Horizon Science Poetry Competition

Living Story (WipfandStock 2013) along with personal stories that stretch from a segregated childhood to the Chinatown community of the 1960s, her thesis creates an important conversation around the impact of individualism and cultural diversity on American society. It explores how living stories of culture and faith, dynamic and filled with diversity, create healthy families, bind a society together and speak to the deep hunger of Americans who long to

> Karin Fuller's stories have appeared in Ladies' Home Journal, Family Circle, Woman's World, and Appalachian Heritage, among others, and her newspaper columns appear weekly in the Huntington (WV) Herald-Dispatch and Clarksburg (WV) Exponent-Telegram. She's a two-time first place winner of the Shepherd **University Fiction** Competition, placed first in Writer's Digest's short genre

fiction category on two occasions, and her columns

Society of Newspaper

calls herself a writer.

have been selected as best in the U.S. by the National

Columnists. Yet she often still

feels like a fraud when she

You may contact Karin at

<u>karinfuller@gmail.com</u>.

Alice Osborn's past educational (MA in English, NCSU and BS in Finance, VA Tech) and work experience is unusually varied, and it now feeds her work as a poet-singer/songwriter, book coach and

Nicole Ayers has been working

many jobs in her life, including

counselor, telemarketer, print

teacher, editing is her favorite

because she combines her love of reading with the fun of

shop lackey, bartender, and

with words as long as she can remember. While she's held

stints as a server, camp

wordplay.

Nicole created Ayers Edits in 2013. She can now add writer to this list. "Pink Hats" is her first award-winning essay. You may contact Nicole at www.ayersedits.com .

Christine Eskilson received

honorable mentions in the 2012

WNBA's First Annual Writing Contest and Al Blanchard Short

Crime Fiction Contest. Her stories

have appeared in *Blood Moon* (Level Best Books 2012), Rogue Wave (Level

Best Books 2014), Red Dawn (Level

Street Rag 2015), Over My Dead Body

(December 2015) and Why? (Zimbell

Best Books 2015), the Bethlehem

Writers Roundtable (September 2014), Creatures of Habitat (Main

House Publishing 2017).

You may contact Christine at christineeskilson@comcast.net.

Andy Young's poetry collection All Night It Is Morning was published in 2014 by Diálogos Press. She teaches at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and is a writer for Heinemann Publishing.

Her work has appeared recently in

Red Sky: Poetry on the Global Epidemic of Violence

Against Women (Sable Books, 2016) and is

forthcoming in Women Rising: Resistance,

Revolution, and Reform in the Arab Spring and

Voluble, One, storySouth,

spanning four decades-as a bank vice president, a licensed clinical social worker providing therapy to families in the juvenile justice system, and a human resource management consultant helping organizations to be more successful-Sarah has taken a leap of faith and begun an "encore career" as a full-time writer. She has just completed her memoir, A Daughter's Final Gift, of which five chapters have won awards from the **Soul-Making Keats Literary** Competition, an arm of the National League of American Pen Women. Sarah is a Certified Journal Therapist who loves the outdoors and spending time with her six grandchildren.

Patty Somlo's most recent books

(Spuyten Duyvil), a Finalist in the **2016 International Book Awards**

and the 2016 Best Book Awards, and Even When Trapped Behind Clouds: A Memoir of Quiet Grace

received an Honorable Mention

book, Hairway to Heaven Stories, will be published by Cherry **Castle Publishing in Summer**

She has received four Pushcart

nominated for storySouth Million

Writers Award, and had an essay

Review, Under the Sun, Guernica, Still Point Arts Quarterly, and

Prize nominations, been

American Essays 2014.

selected as Notable for Best

Her work has appeared in

journals, including the Los Angeles Review, the Santa Clara

Sheepshead Review, and in

numerous anthologies.

are *The First to Disappear*

(WiDo Publishing), which

2017.

in the 2016-17 Reader Views Literary Awards. Her fourth

You may contact Sarah at

sarah49@live.com.

You may contact Patty at www.pattysomlo.com.

A Northern California native, Anna Hernandez-French first came to the

Massachusetts before moving to New

York City in 2009. Anna has worked in

Oxford University Press for nearly five

voracious devil's ivy that snakes around her desk. Anna lives in Brooklyn which

East Coast to attend college in

the Journals Editorial division of

years, time well measured by the

has become, in due time, home.

anna.hernandezfrench@gmail.com.

You may contact Anna at

"Oh, how nice." Tabaskie (known as Ede in the States) is the most celebrated of the Muslim holidays and is a big deal in my husband's family. Tails and balls. Cheick had told me that was how you distinguished the best sheep. One sought out the animals with the longest tails and the biggest balls. According to the Koran, Allah had asked Abraham to sacrifice one of his sons to demonstrate his love and loyalty. Just before "I will use it to make a nice Pepper Pot soup," she said. "After I singe off all the hairs." "Just don't bring the head to the table." Please. Back to top **Important Copyright Information** We only accept articles written by the author or copyright holder. The Bookwoman, website, and other publications of the Women's National Book

Back to top Third Place – Creative Nonfiction/Memoir Climbing Back Up By Sarah Birnbach Read the entire piece here. I sank to the kitchen floor, sobbing, unable to open the can of formula to feed my son. I looked around the townhouse I had just entered. It was completely empty but for the lone bag of groceries sitting on the counter. How could I have forgotten to buy a can opener? me.

Back to top **Honorable Mention – Fiction** Since Letitia Williams Saw Jesus By Patty Somlo Read entire story here. Leticia Williams shook hands with Jesus on her very last day of rehab. The handshake occurred an hour before group and moments after she'd finished combing her hair. She had taken an extra minute to admire her reflection in the mirror, pleased at how her cheeks had filled out and her

eyes had cleared. About to turn around and take a last look to make sure she'd packed up all her things, Leticia Williams saw Jesus, standing behind her reflection in the far right-hand corner of

The breath left her, almost as if she'd been punched in the stomach. At first, she feared those crazy damned hallucinations she'd had back in detox were coming back. The only thing to do, Leticia

Her back to the mirror, Leticia saw the wavy brown hair and the off-white robe she'd just seen

the mirror.

reflected.

knew, was to turn around.

"You real, ain't ya'?" Leticia asked.

what in heaven's name she ought to do now. Still staring at her hand, she silently asked herself what a woman was supposed to do after she had shaken Jesus's hand. Read entire story <u>here</u>. Back to top Honorable Mention – Poetry At Sea

Honorable Mention – Creative Nonfiction/Memoir **Doubling Back By Joanne Godley**

I had risen late and missed eating breakfast with my husband and children. Now, well rested and ready for caffeine, I opened the refrigerator door in search of milk for my coffee. A monstrous hairy thing-with eyes-glared at me from within the box. I slammed the refrigerator door "Josephine!" In the States, having a cook screams bourgeois! Employing someone to cook for you is a luxury and signifies wealth. But, here, in Cote d'Ivoire, everyone in the ex-pat community employed at least a cook, housekeeper, and gardener. Josephine was our most recent hire. She was young, demure, and a quick study. Upon hiring her, I requested she prepare local African fare for our meals and she had not when she heard my frantic exclamation and rushed back into the kitchen. up in there. this afternoon?

disappointed. Each day, she walked to the market to choose the produce and meat for the evening meal. She was halfway out of the house The kitchen was an expansive room with a surround of white geometric surface tiles, white walls, and a white floor. The stark absence of color imparted a sterile coolness to the kitchen. It created an icy ying that contrasted with the yang of the hot spicy concoctions she brewed "Josephine! There's a head . . . " I tried hard not to whine or accuse. Nonchalance was the tone I was seeking. I tried to relinquish any emotional involvement with the thing sitting in my fridge. I could have been talking about the weather. An animal's head. Maybe it will rain "It is alright, madame." I recognized Josephine's tone: she represented the mother soothing a fussy infant. She explained that my in-laws had brought by the newly sacrificed lamb's head early that morning. It was their gift to us for Ede, the biggest Muslim holiday. A delicacy. Her tone was calm and she spoke slowly so that I could decipher her French.

Abraham did this, Allah told him to substitute a lamb for his son. Traditionally, the holiday began with the sacrifice of a lamb. Read the entire piece <u>here</u>.

Association adhere to all local, national and international copyright laws. By submitting an article to us you are granting permission for its use on our website in our resource library (articles), in our member resources area and/or in our magazine and newsletters. Contributing authors retain all copyrights to their individual works.

Like Rachel, I feel passionate about racial justice. I too have tried to leave my racial heritage Jeanne Choy Tate writes of life lived behind--the cobblestone beliefs of my colonial hometown, where to be a border state referred, along cultural borders, in the tension not to Mexico, but to the Civil War and "coming out" meant cotillions, white gloves, and stiff between individual and community, net formals. In my longing to participate fully in the fight for civil rights, borrowing another between the longing to belong and culture's story was easier than claiming painful contradictions in my own white culture's deep being one's self. Her writing builds divides. With Rachel's exposure, the burden of whiteness I have tried so hard to leave behind on her life experiences as a bilingualreturns to haunt me. So, while I don't condone Rachel's lie, I identify with her desire for a bicultural early childhood educator, passport to a different racial heritage. lay pastor, partner in a biracial marriage, parent, and now Racially Caucasian, ethnically, I am a hybrid, a mestizo mix of cultures: biracial marriage, grandparent, of a bicultural child. parent of a biracial-bicultural adult child, white person in the Chinese-American community, Published as <u>Something Greater</u>: foreigner. In broader San Francisco and in my East Coast homeland, I am white, the defining Culture, Family, and Community as volumes. It shouts of privilege, dominance, oppression. White outside, inside I am some ever If I cling too closely to the Chinese-American community it is because, oddly enough, this is separated from the promised land of peer acceptance. Tired of constant arguments with my Wanting to live as far away as I could get from my family and still be in the United States, I find meaning in something greater than the individual self. Jeannie lives town within the larger city, Chinatown then-as in its earlier history-was still largely a bounded with her husband, Buddy Tate Choy, enclave of Cantonese-speaking immigrants with a burgeoning population of secondin San Francisco where, in addition generation youth. It was just starting to spill into the streets of North Beach, crossing over to writing and working with urban Broadway-that previously rigid dividing line where, not many years before, Italian and churches, she enjoys being a Chinese youth lined on either side to hurl taunts across the thoroughfare. grandparent. A Chinese-American church took me in a stranger and offered hospitality. Invited to eat at the table of another culture, I found myself starving for balance to my diet. Here in Chinatown, You may contact Jeanne at where everyone was connected or in some way related, I found the community I longed for. choytate@gmail.com. Read the entire piece <u>here</u>. Back to top This place is just your average neighborhood watering hole. Gritty floor. Beer logo mirrors. Christmas decorations that tend to stay up year-round. It's a guy's place. I sell sandwiches bought from a deli and Tate is something of a fixture here. When I get busy, he lumbers behind the counter to help. Instead of saying, "What'll you have?" he just jerks his head, and the customers say what they want. He's never been a talker--I don't even know if Tate is his first name or his last--but he's a good guy. Works hard. Minds his business. Just plants his linebacker-sized self at the end of the bar and listens as

the rowdy conversations get going, especially later at night. He lives a few doors down, above his locksmith shop. I live above my bar. My place is small and dark, but I'm long past bringing home women, so it works okay. Tate never stops working on his place. He's So in she walks with a puffy split bottom lip, bruises under her eyes--and a fierceness suggesting her lip-splitter likely looked worse. Tate wasn't around that night, and the bar was busier than it most ever is. The union drivers had won their softball finals and were in to celebrate. I was having trouble keeping track of their tab. Jenny stood near the door for a minute or two, and then stepped behind the counter, kicked her gym bag into an empty spot, and started fixing drinks like she's worked here forever. Quick-witted and sassy, she had the guys from the start. She's no beauty, but a woman behind the bar was a novelty. I sold more beer that night than any since I'd opened. Can't say it was all her, but I can't say for sure that it wasn't. Read the entire story <u>here</u>. Second Place – Poetry **Southern Ice Storm** By Alice Osborn

A native of Oswego, New York, she recalls stories from her hunched Jewish grandmother, how they lived on Lake Ontario, three generations following the ships of commerce editor of Wake Living magazine. from Missouri to New York. So cold mustaches froze. Heroes without Capes is her most recent collection of Patti heard last week a lake-effect snowfall poetry. Previous collections are After the Steaming of seventy-two inches last year <u>Stops</u> and <u>Unfinished Projects</u>. Alice is also the editor of trapped two people in their Toyota. anthologies <u>Tattoos</u> and <u>Creatures of Habitat</u>, both from Main Street Rag. Now the minivan's engine runs for 25 minutes, the ice chunks mocking the contained heat. A North Carolina Writers' Network and NC Both parents chip and lift the frozen Songwriters Co-op board member and a Pushcart sculpture to free wipers and headlights,

The first time I remember being grabbed by the pussy I was in fifth grade. The grabber's name was Shamar. I told my mother and she told my principal. Actually, I had to go with her and tell the principal myself. I don't remember exactly what was said in his office, but I recall feeling shame and anxiety. Needless to say, after my mother and I left Mr. Hester's office, Shamar never touched me again. I don't remember if he ever even spoke to me again. I wonder how that went down for him. You see, Shamar was black. And poor. I was a well-liked white girl. So what happened when that white male principal, who'd just been steamrolled by an angry white mama, confronted that poor black boy? This was the mid-eighties in the South. I've imagined various scenarios over the years. Maybe he was paddled. Or assigned detention. Or scared shitless by the ghost of Emmett Till. Read the entire piece <u>here</u>. Back to top Third Place — Fiction **Taking Care of Harry** By Christine Eskilson

I didn't really notice Miss Fitzpatrick when she first sat down. Out of the corner of my eye I saw that she wasn't an unattractive woman--tall and slim with a cloud of white hair--but she was old. Much older than me, I mean, even though it's been some years since I've seen the underside of forty. I filed her away in my brain under Good Hair for Someone Over Sixty and

The long wicker sofa where we sat at either end creaked when she shifted her weight. I

a Southern accent. I kept on reading. I assumed she wasn't talking to me.

"Pardon me, but have you seen Harry?" the woman asked. Her voice was light, with a hint of

"Have you seen Harry?" she asked again and this time I raised my eyes for a quick survey of

the wide porch. We were its only occupants. She must have been talking to me. I closed my

mystery, holding my place with a finger. She looked harmless enough, but nutcases come in

all shapes and sizes so I spoke slowly and carefully. "I'm sorry, ma'am, but I don't know

Aleppo **By Andy Young** When that barrel bomb fell it was as night fell minaret shadows stretching down the street where kids kicked almost deflated balls on stoops men smoked talked women talked over tea radio chatter cousins chased a kitten one came

Drying my eyes, I realized I had much to be thankful for. My two young children were safe upstairs in the master bedroom. I was glad they thought sleeping on the floor in sleeping bags was a fun adventure. Their childhood innocence obscured the implications of the barren room. That morning I had finally left my abusive eighteen-year marriage. I had walked away from the **After three successful careers** marital home to this empty rented townhouse with nothing more than my clothes and books, the children's clothes and toys, and my father's legacy: the gift of fearlessness he had given

Breath rushed from her mouth. Words were nearly lost. A smile edged out from the corners of Jesus's lips as he shook Leticia's hand. Leticia let him lift and lower her hand. The next moment, Jesus was gone. Leticia pulled her hand back and studied it. She wondered

Our sea is not blue. It is every color but blue swirled together under glass, A cats eye marble. Our sea is cold, And pools among the rocks where gather headless mouths Wreathed in soft appendages, forefathers of the flesh And bones that bend Beneath the seasons of the sun. Read the entire poem <u>here</u>.