

Announcing the Results of the 2021

William George Prize for Poetry

Named for English teacher Bill George, whose poems continue to move the SLUH community with their wit, their honesty, and their generous good will, this prize is given annually to recognize excellence in student poetry at Saint Louis University High School.



First prize: \$100 and a subscription to *Poetry* magazine.

Second prize: \$50 and a subscription to *Poetry* magazine.

This year nineteen poems submitted by fifteen students were judged anonymously by Marjorie Stelmach, author of six volumes of poems, most recently *Walking the Mist* (Ashland, 2021). Her work has appeared in *American Literary Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Hudson Review*, *Image*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Prairie Schooner*, and others.

First prize: “Lost Films” by Corey Lyles

Second prize: “Persimmons” by Henry Koeller

Honorable Mention: “September 20” by Jacob Hammond

Honorable Mention: “Accutane & Adderall” by Philip Hiblovic

Honorable Mention: “Orion’s Belt” by Corey Lyles

Lost Films

valeska suratt's name stretches tiredly across the tip of my tongue
the age-rusted syllables still sweet to the taste
and evaporate into the midnight air
with no one to hold on to them
already half-forgotten between myself
and the air above me

into the dark around me

into the place where the forgotten things go
where old memories live to play
but die alone,
drowned in oceans of people
dried away long ago

into the place where faces shift and melt in the passing light
hands are invisible and voices sing unheard
as they wait silently
for the day when they may yet again sit
on the tip of a tongue
to be the thought sought out by someone
with the *snap snap snap* of forgetful fingers

under a bright saturnine spotlight shines the truth
that my story, too, will disappear one day
that what I am, they once were
and what they are now
I one day will be

—Corey Lyles

Persimmons

Dispersed on the sidewalk like points on a scatter plot,
fermented persimmons reek of uncontrolled sweetness.
Navigating through the pungent minefield is crucial
to avoid squishing their silky, slippery pulp.
Their discarded orange coat denies the chill of fall.

—Henry Koeller

september 20

seventy-four degrees and sunny

Rooted in a bed of skinny sticks and dry leaves,
a dead tree, its dark, frail branches
contorting on themselves,
a harrowing recollection of a boy
crumpled on the rough rug,
a static of white and black,
futilely clenching his head with his thin hands,
desperate to diminish the writhing pain.

—Jacob Hammond

Accutane & Adderall

Accutane & Adderall I throat with my coffee, black & poured freshly in the morning sun, beaming through the window panes, illuminating the kitchen sink— I tapped for the water to make said coffee. Before, I was tired, but now I'm just wired, & I'm still just as weird but my lips a bit drier, my brain a bit bigger, my legs a bit shaky. Why in the hell is my lower back achy? I don't really know. Is it the fútbol, the Adderall, or the burden of it all? I don't really know. Is it the ball & chain, the Accutane, or the mountain of the mental strain? I don't really know. All I know is the grass is still green & the coffee's still good, & I'm still just angsty & misunderstood.

—Philip Hiblovic

Orion's Belt

alnitak

i, in my entirety, am too, a star
from this one spot in the universe
i shine into the night sky as one among trillions
for people to remember and admire and forget for millenia

alnila

i do not shine blue or red or white with flame
i shine with thought,
invisible, hot,
and light eternal

mintaka

may no astronomer ever see more
than the light that shone within me
as i gaze at them in the silence of the aeons
after i, too, burn out and disappear

—Corey Lyles