

Announcing the Results of the 2024

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 eighty-eight poems submitted by forty students were judged anonymously by Dr. Carrie Shipers, a professor of English and creative writing at Rhode Island College and the author of several books of poetry, including her most recent, *Family Resemblances*.

First prize: “Blind Leading the Blind” by Nyles Minner

Second prize: “Suburban Dream” by Juno Janson

Honorable Mention: “The Poetic Thief” by Nathan Khouri

Honorable Mention: “I.d-entity” by Uriah Binder

Honorable Mention: “Hail Mall St.” by Tim Browdy

You can read all five of these wonderful poems on the [SLUH website](#).

Blind Leading The Blind

I am a black man.

I don't say boy because I was taught

That it demeans me.

White people are raised to walk on eggshells

Around people who look like me

Because of the things they did to people who look like me

I was raised to hate whites.

Because of the things they did to our ancestors

But I'm confused.

Why should I hate the people of now

For what others did in the past

Simply because they share the same pigment?

Beat racist by being racist

I find it paradoxical.

But I keep that to myself.

Because I fear they'll hate me like they hate them

It might seem unfounded

But the people who judge me most for my blackness

Are the people who look like me.

They brand me.

Like cattle.

Oreo.

Uncle Tom.

White washed piece a' trash.

So I keep my thoughts to myself

And I listen to what the adults teach me.

My mama told me
“Don’t let anyone ever demean you boy
Know you’ll be a great black boy
You be proud of your skin black boy
Don’t concern yourself with some heffa black boy
You’re the whole package”
Since I’m the whole package
I took a box cutter and cut myself to the bone
Because you can’t be more open than this.
I do this in the hope that we can finally communicate
Get around miscommunication and over misunderstanding
And then get rid of the hate
The fakes
The funeral dates
Because I refuse to have someone cut short my days
Over pigment with a muzzle flash.

—Nyles Minner, First Place

Suburban Dream

We are all pretty comfortable
In our 3 story white homes.
We shimmy into our 80 dollar white spandex
To walk our small white dogs around the block.
Crust seems to infest itself in the inner corners
Of their eyes.

Sunday is the Lord's day
And we love the lord.
The women place their white pearls
Around their necks.
Slip on their closed toed heels,
And consume bread and wine
Until they are clean.
The men are there too.

We might buy a white frosted donut
Or a Starbucks
Or a rice cake
if the right
Or wrong

neighbors are wheeling their carts
Down the same aisle as us.

We lock the front doors
But not the back.
Just to be safe.

We decorate our kitchens
With quotes like
Just smile!
Or
In this house,
We hug often.

Bill just
Moved out and
Sarah is hysterical
About Emily telling
Anne who will tell
Beth who will tell

Lynda who will tell
Abigail who will tell
Mary who will tell

Jennifer who will tell
Carol who will tell
Kate who will

Eventually find herself hooked
On Xanax once her kids
Finally move off to college.

We go to bed early
And when we wake up
We do it all over again.

—Juno Janson, Second Place

The Poetic Thief

Why is poetry important,

A question that can be answered by poetry being a great way to express yourself through various ways,

But having students focus solely on poetic elements eliminates the meaning of a poem through various ways,

As I studied a poem about children refugees in Syria,
caring about the poem wasn't the criteria
because I missed that one onomatopoeia,

Why is poetry important?

The remarkable words of a person,
drowned in the analysis of personification,

Why is poetry important?

The heartfelt comparison containing a piece of the poet's soul diminished when it met a fork,
Named metaphoric in touching the reader's soul,

Why is poetry important?

The greatest hardships faced by the poet cursed for all eternity,
To be perceived as exaggerations from the analysis of hyperboles,

Why is poetry important?

Allusions iluding the significance of the poet's best life experience from creating an illusion that the
experience can just simply be classified as an allusion,

Why is poetry important?

The poet's incredible comparison as good as dirt after the similarity is now called a simile,

Why is poetry important?

After all this, my answer remains the same but now it is clear what is to blame for a poem's words losing
significance..

—Nathan Khouri, Honorable Mention

I.d-entity

A Golden Shovel after Emily Dickinson

“How dreary to be somebody!”

My I.D a cage of me, oh how
the world can see. This world dreary
it drains me.

I.d like to see what entity to
be for the world, my face changing be-
-ing someone else.

My I.D-, entity that's me, somebody!

—Uriah Binder, Honorable Mention

Hail Mall St.

where concrete curb married suburb bypass
we whistled and kicked until we conquered Mall St.
where sprawl killed people
we built empires

the moat, cheesesteak and perfume beckon
sizzle and sirens move us like mountains beyond mountains
street tar, the scar of youth love and clique war

that court, ours
that girl, mine
those retails, the gods

the adults had it wrong,
pillage the teddy bear,
best the jeans,
and mustn't we forget
to always hail Mall St.

—Tim Browdy, Honorable Mention