

PRESS RELEASE

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### **Debra Kaufman Wins James Applewhite Poetry Prize with Poem Inspired by Emma Bovary**

Debra Kaufman is the winner of the 2015 James Applewhite Poetry competition for her poem "To Be Emma Bovary." Kaufman will receive a prize of \$250, and the poem will be published in the twenty-fifth issue of the *North Carolina Literary Review* in 2016.

Kaufman grew up in the Midwest but has lived in North Carolina for over twenty years, currently in Mebane. She is the author of six poetry collections, including, most recently, *Delicate Thefts*, published by Jacar Press of Durham, NC, in 2015. She has been a finalist in two previous Applewhite competitions, in 2011 and 2013, and she is also an award-winning playwright. Her play *Harbor Hope* was produced in June 2015 at Common Ground Theatre in Durham.

Active in the North Carolina literary community, Kaufman has served as president of the board of the North Carolina Writers' Network and arts committee chair of the Alamance County Arts Council, and she is a member of the North Carolina Writers' Network, the North Carolina Poetry Society, Playground: A Theatre Co-operative, and the Greensboro Playwrights Forum. She has also taught creative writing workshops for Durham's Creative Arts in the Public Schools program; High Point University's Phoenix Festival; Our Stories in Focus, sponsored by the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and the UNC Humanities Program; as well as for libraries and writer's groups.

James Applewhite selected Kaufman's poem from 17 finalists whose poems had been selected for publication by *NCLR* Poetry Editor Jeffrey Franklin. Franklin reports that he and Applewhite agree "this year's submissions were, as a batch, the best we've received," adding, "We hope it's a trend."

Applewhite calls "To Be Emma Bovary" "a delicate and strong linguistic ballet that pirouettes on the page in its slender stanzas and remains in the reader's mind. The persistence of it in my visual and aural imagination convinces me of its fitness for first prize. This poet has a vivid grasp of past great literature as alive in the present." He adds, "This poet has taken Emma Bovary's story as somehow her own, in vivid imagination. Her very selective retelling constitutes a recreation in personal terms, making a slender and lovely and sorrowful aesthetic object from this literary monument from another place and time."

This year, 195 poems were submitted by 55 poets. Applewhite also selected Annie Frazier's poem "Waterfall" for second place and Madison Garris's "Where the Neuse Leads" for third place. This year was these two poets' first year participating in this competition. Three poems were noted by Applewhite for honorable mention: "Wide Awake" by Richard Betz, "At Blue Banks" by Florence Nash, and "We Could Call This Church" by Marty Silverthorne. All three of these poets had more than one poem among the finalists. Other finalists include JS Absher, Peg Bresnahan, Lila Church, Marilyn Hervieux, Robert Hill, Joan McLean, Benjamin Pryor, C.G. Thompson, Jennifer Weiss, Nancy Womack, and Marly Youmans.

Published since 1992 at East Carolina University, the *North Carolina Literary Review* has won numerous awards and citations, most recently the 2014 Phoenix Award for Significant Editorial Achievement from the Council of Editors of Learned Journals. The James Applewhite Poetry Prize competition is supported with funding for *NCLR* from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association. For subscription information, go to [www.nclr.ecu.edu/subscribe.html](http://www.nclr.ecu.edu/subscribe.html).