

PRESS RELEASE

North Carolina Literary Review

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East Carolina University Department of English

Greenville, NC 27858-4353

Contact: Margaret Bauer, Editor; bauerm@ecu.edu; (252) 328-1537

Christina Clark's "Gritty" Poem Wins the 2017 James Applewhite Poetry Prize

Christina Clark of Durham is the winner of the 2017 James Applewhite Poetry competition for her poem "Adrift in the Port City"; and another one of her submissions, "Big Bad," was selected for Honorable Mention. Clark will receive a prize of \$250 from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association; and her poems, including a third poem from her submission also named as a finalist, "Fairytale Rules for the 21st-Century Woman," will be published in the 2018 issues of the North Carolina Literary Review (NCLR).

Clark earned her MFA in creative writing from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, and she is now pursuing a master's degree in speech-language pathology from North Carolina Central University. She also teaches creative writing privately on the side. Her poems have previously appeared or are forthcoming in journals such as *Off the Coast*, *Cactus Heart*, *The Poet's Billow*, *Calyx*, *cream city review*, and *New South*. This is her first time submitting to the James Applewhite Poetry Prize competition.

The James Applewhite Poetry Prize was established by the North Carolina Literary Review in 2011. This year, 237 poems were submitted, by 70 poets, twenty-five percent more poets than have submitted to the competition in previous years. Of the twenty poets who had poems selected as finalists, almost half of them have not published in NCLR before. North Carolina poet James Applewhite selected Clark's poems from 29 finalists (by 20 poets) selected by NCLR Poetry Editor Jeffrey Franklin for publication in the NCLR 2018 issues. When informed that he had selected two of Clark's poems for honors, Applewhite noted that these poems are both "gritty and real feeling and share an aesthetic."

Applewhite admired the expansive range of the finalists sent to him: "It really is an impressive array of work." He named "May 1954" by Priscilla Melchior for second place and "Billy Collins Pours Me a Beer" by Catherine Carter for third. Melchior, who grew up in Wilson, North Carolina, and lives now in Highland County, Virginia, is a retired Senior Associate Editor of the *Greenville Daily Reflector*. She was a finalist in 2016, and that poem was published in NCLR 2017. Carter teaches in the English Education program at Western Carolina University. She is the author of two full-length poetry collections, and her work has appeared previously in NCLR.

Among the other finalists, Applewhite highlighted five additional Honorable Mention poems: "After My Brother Dies, I Leave for Italy" by Diana Pinckney; "Amelia Speaks of Open Waters" by Jo Taylor; "Body Between Mirror and Wall" by Kathleen Jones; "Jackson from the Third Floor" by Sally Mohny, who also had a second poem, "In Your Mother's Foothills," selected as a finalist; and "Severance" by Annie Frazier, whose two other poems submitted, "Farm Nights" and "Driving with Lucretius," were also selected as finalists.

The other finalists to be published in NCLR's 2018 issues are "In the Chapel" and "Children on Mertie Road" by J.S. Absher, "Buckeyes" by Laurence Avery, "Clear Ice" by Richard Betz, "Composition" by Kenneth Chamlee, "Brown Fedora" by L. Teresa Church, "Denial in the Garden" and "Hurricane" by K.E. Duffin, "Infrastructure" by Janet Joyner, "Chopping Weeds" by Lenard D. Moore, "Feb 25" by Jon

Obermeyer, "Leaving Lake Summit" by Kimberly O'Connor, "Because I Won't Be There When He Dies" by Danye Romine Powell, "Love Letters and Wedding Dress Ashes" and "Curse of Uncle Johnny" by Marty Silverthorne, "Portrait: Wesley and Elvina Settling, 1901" by Nicole Stockburger.

1992 by East Carolina University with additional funding from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association. Beginning with the recently released 2017 issue, ECU is collaborating with the University of North Carolina Press to publish NCLR. Find submission and subscription information on the website at www.nclr.ecu.edu.

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