

2014 Amy Awards

The 2014 Amy Award recipients are Jerie Choi, Alexandra Smyth, Lindsay Stern, and Jeannie Vanasco. Below are excerpts from their winning entries.

Alexandra Smyth

Bloom

Sixteen, heavy with the scent
of sex and cotton candy, I sat in
their basement rec room,
studying the wood paneled walls
while the TV talked to itself and
the children slept upstairs.
Sisters, they knew well enough
to be frightened of me, shrieking
with giddy horror each time my
cream colored bra strap snaked
its way out from beneath my shirt.
They sensed this dangerous ripeness,
the incessant blooming that was
without control. I fed them toaster
waffles and melting ice cream,
begged them to let me French braid
their hair. They shrank from my touch,
fearing my ceaseless burgeoning
was contagious. I sat in lonely fever,
my body a barrier separating me from
the rest of the world. Later, walking
home, I listened to the crickets and
cicadas catcalling, fingered the
twenties in my pocket, tried to forget
their father's hand lingering
on my back just a second too long.

Alexandra Smyth lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and their black cat, Bandini. She is a graduate of the City College of New York MFA Creative Writing Program. Her work has appeared in *Poets and Artists*, *Sixfold*, and *Word Riot*, among others. She is the 2013 recipient of the Jerome Lowell Dejur Award in Poetry and is currently at work on her first poetry manuscript.

Lindsay Stern

Louisa Whitman's Lullaby
To infant Walt

Fresh from the other place, still wet, the sky
no longer moonless, you remember well
the black, unchanging tides from which you fell,
evicted from that ocean into "I"

(imperfect home, you know—why ever else
would this rough pealing colonize your lungs,
each as a lone candlefish flung
gasping upon a bank of drying shells).

That pealing is the only honest sound,
vowel of a language ours will teach
you to resign. Dauntless, you will pursue
in ours what ours—as yet—has never found:
that sea still innocent of speech
where everything is you.

Lindsay Stern's first book, *Town of Shadows*, was adapted into a dance in 2013 by Loud Hound Movement, a collective based in New York City. A former Watson Fellow, she received her B.A. in English and Philosophy from Amherst College in 2013. Her work has appeared or will appear in *DIAGRAM*, *Fairy Tale Review*, *PANK*, *American Circus*, *CASE*, and *The Faster Times*, among other publications. Her second book, *Lüz*, is forthcoming in 2015 from Ravenna Press. Find her at www.lindsay-stern.com.

Jeannie Vanasco

Art Lesson*

The butcher teaches anatomy to children. Sunday afternoons they crowd his back room where chickens hang like chandeliers. This week's topic, the skeletal system of puppies. The tallest boy cries; he spent his Saturday posting Lost Dog signs around town.

No one will ever find your dog, the butcher says, unless you can draw him accurately. Now start with the ribs.

He hands the boy a stack of fresh butcher paper. The boy presses his pencil so hard he chips the lead.

Idea.

To capture the town's attention, make wings.

* "Art Lesson" first appeared in *Little Star Weekly*

Jeannie Vanasco is a 2014 Emerging Poets Fellow at Poets House. Her writing has appeared in *the Believer*, a McSweeney's anthology, *Tin House*, and elsewhere. She is writing a memoir involving a necronym, psychosis, and an artificial eye. She is also working on a book of prose poems and collages.