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.

Jerie Choi

<u>Gift</u>

You give me bracelets of little eggplant bruises sowing my skin with my favorite color And in my garden they grow in hungry, malignant shades mustard yellow, avocado green, the pregnant black of mold And with your hands you water them You do not know that the little tendrils of their plant toes have penetrated my bones, snaking deeper towards my coveted marrow You do not know that my pure white bones become more precious every day as your children chisel them with the agonizing imagination of an archaeologist Who will one day split open an entryway to the forbidden catacombs of my chromosomes

Jerie Choi was born in New Orleans and completed her education in Hong Kong, Spain, and Los Angeles, CA, earning a BA in Poetry Writing from the University of Southern California. Since moving to New York in 2007, she has performed at the First and Second Annual New York Poetry Festivals, as well as the Brooklyn Folk Music Festival as a member of the Brotherhood of the Jug Band Blues. She lives in Brooklyn where she continues to thrive as a poet, country blues musician, and herbalist.

Alexandra Smyth

<u>Bloom</u>

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.