

2022

Royal Palm Literary Award Winners



Grand Awards

PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

The Awakening of Jim Bishop: This Changes Things. Mainstream or Literary. A compelling story of one man's struggle to find himself after hitting bottom that explores relationships, selflessness, and the healing power of a generous heart.

Ben Sharpton. Ben Sharpton is a award-winning author of five novels and over one hundred magazine articles and short stories. He holds an MFA degree from Queens University in Creative Writing.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **Dead Woman's Pond.** LGBTQ+ Fiction or Nonfiction. Elle E. Ire.
- 2nd Runner-Up. **Get Strange.** Mystery or Crime. J.C. Bruce.
- 3rd Runner-Up. **The Road Remembered.** Blended Genre. Kaye D. Schmitz
- 4th Runner-Up. **Have Scalpel—Will Travel.** Autobiography or Memoir. Peter G. Roode, MD

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

My Daughter's Mother. Women's Fiction. When Poppy Dexter conceived a child using an egg donor, she vowed to keep it a secret. She was reassured that she'd never meet the woman who donated the eggs—but now that the donor is dying of leukemia, all bets are off.

Daphne Nikolopoulos is a multi-published, award-winning author of historical fiction and thrillers, as well as editor-in-chief of *Palm Beach Illustrated* magazine. She holds an MFA in creative writing from University of California, Riverside.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **Hold On Till the Sun Goes Down: Essays of Love and Loss.** Anthology, Primarily Poetry or Primarily Prose. Eileen Vorbach Collins.
- 2nd Runner-Up. **The Branches We Cherish.** Educational or Informational. Linda R. Sexton.
- 3rd Runner-Up. **The Sea Glass Road.** Women's Fiction. Susan Dobson.

- 4th Runner-Up. **I Live You Forever**. Autobiography or Memoir. Meredith Rutter Marple.

BEST CHILDREN'S BOOK

Nobody Kills Uncle Buster and Gets Away With It. Middle-Grade Fiction. Uncle Buster is dead, and for twelve-year-old Sam Parsons, Ashe County, North Carolina, is filled with potential murder suspects.

Susan Koehler is the author of two middle-grade novels, *Dahlia In Bloom* and *Nobody Kills Uncle Buster and Gets Away With It*, and numerous other books for teachers and children.

THE CANDICE COGHILL MEMORIAL AWARD FOR YOUTH

Icarus. Unpublished Poetry, ages 16 to 17. Icarus in the climb.

Isabel Mestey-Colon. A current junior, Isabel has a fascination for all things historical and mythological. Whether through verse, paint, or song she seeks to bring new perspectives to commonly told tales.

Genre Awards

Published Book-Length Fiction

Published Blended Genre

- Gold. **The Road Remembered** by Kaye D. Schmitz. Love and humanity triumph amid the atrocities of World War II.
- Silver. **The Fault Between Us** by Bette Lee Crosby. April 18, 1906—a devastating earthquake rocks San Francisco, and a young woman fears the baby she has been praying for and her husband will be lost forever.
- Bronze. **Get Strange** by J.C. Bruce. First, they poison his okra, then they try to frame him for murder. This is what reporter Alexander Strange gets for covering news of the weird.

Published Historical Fiction

- Gold. **The Heart of the Run** by Craig Pennington. During a perilous voyage to America in 1764, young Alexander Moorhead tells the 100-year, five-generation saga of the soldiers, smugglers, scholars, and whisky makers who came before him.

- Silver. **The Whistling Galilean: Shai's Journey** by Jennifer Bjork. A boy in the first century experiences Jesus' growing ministry. As he matures, his trust in this man he befriends changes relationships—family, friends, and a potential girlfriend.

Published LGBTQ+

- Gold. **Dead Woman's Pond** by Elle E. Ire. Construction worker Flynn Dalton and her famous psychic girlfriend must end the curse of Dead Woman's Pond before they become its next victims.
- Silver. **The Santorini Setup** by Becky Bohan. Swept into intrigue and danger on a Greek island, a vacationing professor must use wit and courage to save the enchanting windsurfer who has captured her heart.

Published Mainstream or Literary

- Gold. **The Awakening of Jim Bishop: This Changes Things** by Ben Sharpton. A compelling story of one man's struggle to find himself after hitting bottom that explores relationships, selflessness, and the healing power of a generous heart.
- Silver. **Remember Who You Are** by William Delia. Three generations, two families, one terrible truth. Suki Hayashida's family lost everything when confined in a WWII internment camp. Seventy-five years later, she has a chance to right that wrong.

Published Mystery or Crime

- Gold. **Get Strange** by J.C. Bruce. First, they poison his okra, then they try to frame him for murder. Weird news reporter Alexander Strange needs help, not just to solve this mystery, but to stay alive.
- Silver. **Hidden Gem: The Secret of St. Augustine** by M.S. Spencer. An eccentric professor and the owner of an antique map store search for a key hidden fifty years before, a key to a treasure worth killing for.
- Bronze. **Sleeping Dogs Lie** by Gail Hulnick. Writer Lillian Howe stumbles on the body of a beautiful dog in her favorite park and won't rest until she finds the killer.

Published Novelette

- Gold. **Runtley Goes Rogue** by J.L. Hagen. Ed Grimwald hates dogs. One day his schoolteacher-wife Margot asks him to buy a pet for the kids with horrendous and hilarious consequences.

Published Romance

- Gold. **A Season to Remember** by Rebecca Heflin. A woman must face the repercussions of an impulsive weekend in Las Vegas.
- Silver. **Pari and the Ghost Whisperer** by Dianna Dann. Who will win Pari's logical heart? Staid accountant Eric? Or scruffy Sam, whom she caught on his hands and knees peering under her office door looking for a ghost?

Published Thriller or Suspense

- Gold. **Shock Wave** by Al Pessin. With thousands of lives at stake, a reluctant hero is thrust into action. But whatever success he achieves may be fleeting, and he wonders—Was the price too high?
- Silver. **Quantum** by T. Milton Mayer. The United States faces a catastrophe far worse than the Wuhan pandemic of 2020. This new threat is not simply another virus. It is a powerful device that is already embedded in cities throughout the civilized world. When activated, billions could die.
- Bronze. **Shallow Water Predator** by William S. Russell. Disgraced officer Commander Scott was ordered, by the U.S. President, to conduct clandestine operations against the Iranian Government. Will he lose his ship, his crew, and the woman he loves?

Published Women's Fiction

- Gold. **When I Last Saw You** by Bette Lee Crosby. Margaret Rose, one of nine children, doesn't know what happened that fateful night. But it is her search for the answers that reunites her family.

Published Book-Length Nonfiction

Published Autobiography or Memoir

- Gold. **Have Scalpel—Will Travel** by Peter G. Roode, MD. Stories of roughly ninety patients I cared for. Many uplifting, some humorous, a few tragedies, but all full of human interest.
- Silver. **Whistling for Hippos** by Scott Corey. Africa has a way of luring you in. It begins with a flash of dark eyes in the firelight and ends with lifelong fascination.
- Bronze. **Little Brother** by T.J. Swift. The author's fondest memories and worst fears collide as she puts her younger brother's final affairs in order and locates his collection of original Katharine Hepburn photographs.

Published Educational or Informational

- Gold. **Mission Omission, Exposing Invisible Lies and the Ace Up Evil's Sleeve** by Jeff Seeley. Everyone hates being deceived. But the most seductive and virulent deceptions begin with lies that we are never told and do not see: the invisible lies of omission.
- Silver. **Responsible Kids: Six Steps to Creating Them in an Irresponsible World** by Judy Harmon Holmes. Conflict with our kids? Six steps to short-circuit power struggles and teach children and adolescents how to become responsible for their decisions and behavior.
- Bronze. **Crafting and Revising Dialogue** by Allen Gorney. This is a guide for novelists, playwrights, and screenwriters, and uses acting and dramatic techniques to create realistic and naturalistic dialogue that maximizes character development.

Published History

- Gold. **Silent Valor** by Rick Greenberg. This touching true story is about Lance Corporal Don Talbot and the Marine Corps squad members of Echo Two and their attempt to save fellow Marines surrounded by the North Vietnamese.
- Silver. **The East River Ripper: The Mysterious 1891 Murder of Old Shakespeare** by George R. Dekle, Sr. History says Amir Ben Ali, framed for murder, spent eleven years in prison until crusading reporters secured his pardon. He wasn't framed, and he wasn't pardoned. Was he guilty?

Unpublished Book-Length Fiction

Unpublished Blended Genre

- Gold. **Suggs in Space** by Sharon Keller Johnson. A failed police recruit, a teacher from a backwoods colony, and a giant spider join forces to stop a galaxy-trotting serial killer. But when the killer realizes who is following him, the hunters soon become the hunted.
- Silver. **Second Chances in Hollywood** by Sarah Hendess. When a young nurse lands a role in a television Western in 1959, she reluctantly falls in love with a co-star, but a tabloid scandal threatens to tear them apart.

Unpublished Fantasy

- Gold. **City Elemental** by Kim A. Holland. Magic has secretly been leaking into St. Petersburg, Florida, for twenty years. Now Diana Wells has a piece, but would love to give it back. Magic is nothing but trouble.

Unpublished Humor or Satire

- Gold. **Boom, Boom, Boom** by Ian Kirkpatrick. A Ukrainian You-Tuber living along the Russian border is visited by foreign sponsors who give him military explosives and the opportunity to make his channel explode.

Unpublished Mystery or Crime

- Gold. **Fog City** by Claire M. Johnson. Maggie Laurent's day starts off with her trying to cover for her boss, detective Nick Moore, because, like always, his yen for dumb-as-dirt blondes whose curves make men chase sin has backfired on him.
- Silver. **East of Evil** by Joni M. Fisher. A young woman inherits a trust fund and becomes the target of someone who will do anything to get it.
- Bronze. **It Takes a Rocket Scientist** by MDMcKai. Spirits, fine art, and murder. Not the usual routine for a rocket scientist, unless you are Dr. Andrew (Drew) Wallace.

Unpublished Novelette

- Gold. **Twenty-one Days and a Wake-Up** by Stephen Leitschuh. Steve doesn't have a clue what Viet Nam will be like. When he finally finds out, he needs to do one thing and one thing only: Survive!
- Silver. **Maruchi's Tangerine Dreams** by Robin Collison. Maruchi lives in Communist Cuba where everything is rationed, and rules are harsh. When her aunt escapes to Miami, Maruchi and her boyfriend decide to defect, too.

Unpublished Romance

- Gold. **Captive Attraction** by Patricia Crumpler. A prince buys a beautiful slave and gets more than he expected. When he learns she is a high princess, he prepares for war.

Unpublished Thriller or Suspense

- Gold. **Dirty Hazel and the Cat Woman** by Dana J. Summers. Porch pirate Cat Cavendish discovers that bad things come in small packages when she steals a box that propels her into a world of guns, greed, and a badass granny.
- Silver. **East of Evil** by Joni M. Fisher. A young woman inherits a trust fund and becomes the target of someone who will do anything to get it.
- Bronze. **Body Man** by Al Pessin. In this cold look at the hot mess of America today, one character emerges a national hero, another a horrible villain. Which is which depends on your point of view.

Unpublished Women's Fiction

- Gold. **My Daughter's Mother** by Daphne Nikolopoulos. When Poppy Dexter conceived a child using an egg donor, she vowed to keep it a secret. She was assured that she'd never meet the woman who donated the eggs. But now that the donor is dying of leukemia, all bets are off.
- Silver. **The Sea Glass Road** by Susan Dobson. When a silent enemy disrupts the familiar chaos of Angela Carson's life, the road to recovery lies in the courage to confront the weight of buried secrets.
- Bronze. **Hereafter** by Julie Weary. Death did them part. Or did it?

Unpublished Book-Length Nonfiction

Unpublished Autobiography or Memoir

- Gold. **I Live You Forever** by Meredith Rutter Marple. Both spouses speak in this riveting story of his triple dementia. He denies it, and she transitions across nine years from shrugs to concern to mutual protection. Their love persists.
- Silver. **As Normal Changes** by Rita Angelini. A story of love and acceptance as a family struggles to accept life after a devastating illness.

Unpublished Educational or Informational

- Gold. **The Branches We Cherish** by Linda R. Sexton. How complicated or awkward is it to raise an adopted child with the birth parents in the picture? If you love that child, be brave enough to find out.

Published & Unpublished Literature for Youth

Published Children's Picture Book

- Gold. **Miranda and the Golden Frogs** by Bonnie T. Ogle. In Panama, where Miranda lives, the people love the Golden Frogs. The frogs had bad luck. Now there are none left in the wild. Can Miranda help them?
- Silver. **Sixth Sunday** by Arielle Haughee. It's time for Mom to break the rules and have an exciting, silly, fun-filled day with her son!

- Bronze. **American Pie** by Lynne Marie. Watson the Wombat can't wait to celebrate his first 4th of July in the U.S.A. His quest for apples brings everything he wanted and more in this sweet celebration of America and friendships.

Unpublished Children's Picture Book

- Gold. **Cous Cous the Moroccan Cat Finds His Calm** by Amy Mouharir. Cous Cous the cat forgot where he's meeting his best friend for lunch! He'll learn how to calmly navigate the cities of Morocco with the help of some new friends.
- Silver. **Blink! Blink!** by Shutta Crum. The last of Mama Possum's little ones won't stop clinging to her until he discovers his courage while helping another.
- Bronze. **Poof the Magic Dragon** by Joan J. Harris. Poof is a green dragon with an unusual ability. If he sneezes or says "Poof," whatever is in front of him temporarily disappears.

Unpublished Early Reader or Chapter Book

- Gold. **Three Horses for the Mikado: When Ulysses Grant Sailed to Japan** by J.C. Kato. On Independence Day, 1879, Ulysses Grant meets the Meiji in Japan, merging their friendship with one defiant handshake, benefitting from a common source of courage: horses.

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

- Gold. **Nobody Kills Uncle Buster and Gets Away With It** by Susan Koehler. Uncle Buster is dead, and for twelve-year-old Sam Parsons, Ashe County, North Carolina, is filled with potential murder suspects.
- Silver. **Finding Family Treasure** by Jane R. Wood and Kathryn L. Knight. A class of diverse fifth graders research their family histories and discover the melting pot that is America. They also learn about historic events that some of their relatives experienced.
- Bronze. **Adventure Tales from Florida's Past** by Peggy Sias Lantz. Each of these ten stories takes place during some historical event in Florida in which a young person is involved. All are true or contain well-researched fictionalized historic truth.

Unpublished Middle-Grade Fiction

- Gold. **Wingfinger of Dragon Valley** by Thornton W. Blease. When Wingfinger, a Wyvern dragon, is confronted by a Basilisk, he must gain confidence and lead an army to save Dragon Valley from invasion or lose his homeland forever.
- Silver. **The Rise of Ninja Cat** by Thornton W. Blease. Ninja Cat must find the Magic Sword before the Redstar Clan, or he will lose his dojo forever. In the process he learns that teamwork is necessary and there is more to becoming a ninja than just physical prowess.

Unpublished Young Adult or New Adult

- Gold. **I've Got a Secret** by Melissa Abrehamsen. When Beth Sommer's panties are stolen from her swim locker, this sexual abuse survivor sets out to nab the culprit, not kill him.
- Silver. **Sergio the Ninja** by Dan Fuchs. Some victims of bullying dream of gaining superpowers. Thanks to the Ninja Movement Academy, Sergio, the biracial son of a Dominican mom and a white father, may have found his.
- Bronze. **A Dress to Remember** by K.L. Small. Strong-willed princess strikes a deal with a mysterious dressmaker for a special ballgown. When raiders attack the kingdom, the princess must use the magic dress to save her people.

Published & Unpublished Miscellaneous

Published Anthology: Primarily Poetry or Primarily Prose

- Gold. **Sixties: A Journey Through and To** by Donna Parrey. Come along for the fifty-year journey of a lifetime! From the 1960s to being in our sixties, it's a universal portrait of the baby boomer experience.
- Silver. **The Dedicadas** by Reinfred Dzedzorm Addo. This is a collection of poems, each having its own mood, yet all in harmony through a shared connection: poems dedicated to the forces and beings that inspired them.
- Bronze. **Cerberus: Tales of Magic and Malice** by A.R. Silverberry. A mysterious case, a witch, a devil cat, tea, and the shadow of a menacing terror conjure a brew of magic and malice.

Unpublished Anthology: Primarily Poetry or Primarily Prose

- Gold. **Hold On Till the Sun Goes Down: Essays of Love and Loss** by Eileen Vorbach Collins. Her daughter's suicide leaves a mother's life in turmoil. Not until her son is an adult does she begin to write, turning her grief into a bearable sorrow.

Published General Catch-All

- Gold. **Sorrow: The Legacy of Cio-Cio-San** by Paul Anthony. Cio-Cio-San has taken her own life—Pinkerton lives on—Sorrow, their son, engulfs all of their lives.

Unpublished General Catch-All

- Gold. **Where Do Balloons Land?** by Jill Morgan Clark. Listen to the pop of joyous balloons in this eclectic array of classroom humor, activities, and homage to literacy that builds healthy and full-of-thought learning perspectives.

Published & Unpublished Short Entries

Published Creative Nonfiction

- Gold. **Hunter's Moon** by Mary T. Wagner. When more than a year of pandemic togetherness spent exploring nature finally comes to its natural conclusion, the author watches the next full moon rise alone, with anxiety and trepidation.
- Silver. **A Hermit's Handywork** by Austin J. Bell. A long-forgotten wooden skiff returns home after forty years, shining a new light on its reclusive maker and his difficult life as a hermit in Florida's unforgiving Ten Thousand Islands.

Unpublished Creative Nonfiction

- Gold. **Mourning of the Breasts** by Nina Ward. I felt like a female Frankenstein during the long breast reconstruction process. Cancer is hard. I thought my identity would be lost without breasts till I found humor and myself.
- Silver. **The Last Free Ride 1969** by Shirley Jones.
- Bronze. **The Go Girl** by Loren Leith. Nine-year-old Lorie is bullied by a member of a female biker gang called The Go Girls. In a stunning turnaround, the two become confidants—with profound and lasting results.

Published Blog or Article

- Gold. **From Lantern Slides to Snapchat: The Key Marco Collection Rediscovered** by Austin J. Bell. Florida's priceless Key Marco artifacts—excavated from a muck pit in 1896—are still being exhibited, studied, and talked about 125 years after they were discovered.
- Silver. **Irrational** by Paul Wartenberg. The political divisions are not going away in these irrational times.
- Bronze. **My Therapist Eats Hay** by Rita M. Boehm. Therapists come in many shapes and sizes. Mine has four hooves and eats hay. He helped me wage a battle against breast cancer and win.

Published Flash Fiction or Short-Short Fiction

- Gold. **Boots** by Jessie Erwin. An unusual prisoner, Jian, attracts the notice of his guard, who is his only connection to the outside world.

Unpublished Flash Fiction or Short-Short Fiction

- Gold. **Shelf Life** by Barbara Rein. The soul floats from a body at death, only to be rebirthed into another life. Where does it go in between? And does it remember?
- Silver. **Daddy's Best Helper** by Shirley Jones.
- Bronze. **Equations** by David Spiegel. An introverted college physics student receives an unexpected invitation.

Published Short Story

- Gold. **Dr. Muller's Next Move** by Dan Fuchs.
- Silver. **We Are the People Our Parents Warned Us About** by Elaine Viets. Slightly shady Iowa auto parts salesman moves here and encounters a uniquely South Florida way to supplement his income. He has to choose between death and dead presidents.
- Bronze. **The Chateau** by Jack O'Brien. If your spouse were hospitalized with Alzheimer's, would she need the company and comfort of another man? Would you want that for her?

Unpublished Short Story

- Gold. **Fishing Hands** by Doc Honour. Marta becomes captain of the family fishing boat when her father loses his foot. Catching a tsifta is dangerous but rewarding. Gaining the mate's respect is harder.
- Silver. **Prairie Rose** by Clay Gish. In 1890s Montana, a black female stagecoach driver fends off robbers and fights to make a place for herself in the world.
- Bronze. **Ignorance Isn't Bliss** by Dave McKeon. When a woman is killed, the locals quickly suspect that the killer is the new person, for no other reason than he's not one of them.

Published Poetry

- Gold. **Let My People Go** by Mark G. Hammerschick. Our world is evolving, and now is the time to start healing our wounds and come together.
- Silver. **How Poetry Reframes the Moment** by Shutta Crum. Life events as seen through the lens of poetry—everything is metaphor.
- Bronze. **Cuban Postcards** by Linda Kraus. Three Cuban cities inspire the poet to tell the story of a country reshaping its identity.

Unpublished Poetry

- Gold. **Lesser Jewels** by Shutta Crum. The brilliance of girls who are the lesser stars of the firmament.
- Silver. **A Seafaring Reverie** by Alice Klaxton. A story of eighteenth-century sailors and how they battle the open sea and the fury of Mother Nature.
- Bronze. **The Shooting Gallery** by Paul Anthony. Aspiring young Russian ballerina falls prey to the drug culture of 1960s America.

Youth Awards

Unpublished Poetry, ages 12 to 15

- Gold. **Carpe Diem** by Athena Spiska. *Carpe diem* means to seize this day!

Unpublished Poetry, ages 16 to 17

- Gold. **Icarus** by Isabel Mestey-Colon. Icarus in the climb.
- Silver. **Gone But in Memory** by Samantha Leslie. In a desperate attempt to reconcile a broken relationship, a sentimental speaker reflects on specific memories shared and processes their influence through color imagery and noteworthy moments.