

2023

Royal Palm Literary Award Winners

Grand Awards

Published Book of the Year

All the Salt in the Sea by Tammy L. Harrow

When a controlling surgeon's wife discovers his illegitimate child, she flees to Italy to heal. Along the Amalfi Coast, she finds love. But freedom may cost someone their life.

Tammy Harrow is a solo traveler, author, and photographer. Her work has appeared in Woman's Day, Budget Travel, local magazines, Bacopa Literary Review, and on CNN, MSNBC, and National Geographic.

Runners-Up:

1st Runner-Up: **She Fell** by Wendy Weiss

2nd Runner-Up: **Slate—A Band of Friends Mystery** by Joan Wright Mularz

3rd Runner-Up: **Parts of a Whole: A Pit Bull Love Story** by Janet Franks Little

4th Runner-Up: **Discovering Florida's Coast: From the Emerald Northwest to Miami's Biscayne Jewel and Beyond** by Doug Alderson

Unpublished Book of the Year

Twelve Sinners by Henry James Kaye

A man undertakes a crusade to sacrifice twelve sinners to find favor with God. Unfortunately, FBI agent Malcolm Gee and girlfriend Valerie are determined to stop him.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Henry has produced multiple Collections stories and two RPLA winners. Married to Nancy, they have 3 children and one grandchild. He lives in Longwood, Florida.

Runners-Up:

1st Runner-Up: **The Tonsorial Palace** by Thomas E. Stahl

2nd Runner-Up: **NewshoundZ** by Judy Lindquist

3rd Runner-Up: **The Timber Ghost** by K.M.K. Sanford

4th Runner-Up: **Marquis James: A Biographer's Life** by John Mallon

Children's Book of the Year

Skunk & Rabbit's Best Counting Book Ever by Eileen Rajala Meyer

Skunk loves numbers and dreams of making a counting book but when Rabbit and his expanding family get involved, things don't always add up. Soon Skunk discovers what really counts.

Eileen Meyer writes picture books and poetry for young readers. Her most recent book, The Superlative A. Lincoln, won the silver medal - Older Children's Literature in the 2019 Florida Book Awards.

Best Short Prose of the Year

Swamp Justice by Brooke Terpening

Two down-on-their luck brothers discover the Everglades hold more dangers than alligators in this tale of murder and swamp justice.

Brooke Terpening is a Florida attorney, who lives in Colorado. When she's not enjoying the mountains or writing, her therapy dogs provide emotional support to patients, police, and trauma survivors.

Best Poem of the Year

The Solace of Summer Songs by Elsie H. Bowman

The Solace of Summer Songs invites the reader to revisit the carefree and lighthearted memories of their childhood and to reignite the hopefulness and the joyful possibilities of those moments.

Elsie H. Bowman, a psychotherapist for forty years but a poet at heart. Several Tapestry awards published with Guideposts and a few other publications. Novel in progress. Love to inspire and encourage readers.

NextGen Writing Excellence Award

Helena's Canyon of Lies by Alexis Ollick

Sorrel Silene is a burnout writer traveling to the previously radioactive Helena Canyon, but when she gets there, she finds that what she's been told is far from the truth.

Alexis Ollick is 11 years old. She is in seventh grade and takes four high school classes. She loves to draw and write and has an obsession with cats.

This award was established in memory of Candice Coghill, who was an active member of the Florida Writers Association, and a youth writing advocate. She was instrumental in the establishment of FWA's Youth program.

Genre Awards

Published Book-Length Fiction

Blended Genre

Gold – **Veil of Thorns** by Chris Holmes. Some things in the past are better left buried . . . forever.

Fantasy

Gold – **Harsh Reality** by Elle Ire. After demon elementals destroy Sheriff Cali McCade's town in 1891, the last thing she expects is to be transported to 2019 with a chance to stop history from repeating itself.

Historical Fiction

Gold – **Journeyman: Heart of Tempered Steel** by Frank A. Mason. Will Yelverton is a master gunsmith who only wants to marry his sweetheart, go to the frontier, and live his life. He is inexorably pulled into the American Revolution.

LGBTQ+ Fiction

Gold – **Choosing Yellowstone** by Carol Anne Douglas. Elaine and Pam, an older lesbian professor couple, were set to work with refugees in Jordan. Elaine gets a chance to be writer in residence at Yellowstone. She chooses Yellowstone. Pam, annoyed, chooses Jordan. What will happen during their summer apart?

Silver – **Harsh Reality** by Elle Ire. After demon elementals destroy Sheriff Cali McCade's town in 1891, the last thing she expects is to be transported to 2019 with a chance to stop history from repeating itself.

Mainstream or Literary

Gold – **The Mayor of Pudding Hill – 100 Years Out East** by William Delia. Titanic. Bluenose. Springhill mining disaster. Shag Harbor UFO. Swissair 111 crash. 9/11 in Gander. How could one man be part of every big event in Nova Scotia's last hundred years?

Mystery or Crime

Gold – **She Fell** by Wendy Weiss. During spring break, twin sisters Emily and Jessica traveled to the Grand Canyon. But then, while taking a selfie on the edge of a cliff, Jessica suddenly vanished. Did she fall, or was it a selfie gone horribly wrong?

Silver – **White Noise Whispers** by Tracy Tripp and Edward Mickolus. Sometimes, the hardest criminal to find is the one hiding in plain sight.

Bronze – **The Grave with Greener Grass** by DL Havlin. A descendant of one of Florida's first families pursues a family ritual with the promise of a treasure at its solving. Annually, the senior living female of the heritage line is obligated to stand in front of a gravestone and recite from a letter passed from mother to daughter. The major clue: the grass covering the grave is always greener than those around it. But why? And after over a hundred years, is the clue meaningless?

Romance

Gold – **Parts of a Whole: A Pit Bull Love Story** by Janet Franks Little. He is now disabled. She always has been. Parts of Noah and Kerry don't always work, but a pit bull helps them be whole again with each other.

Science Fiction

Gold – **Not Like Us** by Doc Honour. Terrifying global war looms, using Jake's own antimatter bomb. Can he and Zofia escape to a free country and build a new technology in time to save the world?

Thriller or Suspense

Gold – **The Day of the Dead** by William Speir. Anna Barrichello survived the attack that wiped out her family. She must stay hidden so no one will know she's still alive and seeking retribution against all those responsible.

Silver – **The Price of Revenge** by Rita M. Boehm. Cathy was the perfect prey; until she escaped and framed her predator for murder. After twenty fearful years on the run, she'll face a final confrontation with a revenge-filled monster.

Bronze – **The Second Life of Arthur Blade** by Richard Drummer. Arthur Blade is the ultimate CIA spymaster, and he is dying. He agrees to an experimental procedure to save his life while his enemies take aim.

Women's Fiction

Gold – **All the Salt in the Sea** by Tammy L. Harrow. When a controlling surgeon's wife discovers his illegitimate child, she flees to Italy to heal. Along the Amalfi Coast, she finds love. But freedom may cost someone their life.

Silver – **Two Truths** by Emlynn McDermott. When a chance encounter destroys a woman's trust, she must open her heart to believe in magic and befriend a total stranger before two truths can heal her.

Bronze – **Reinventing Rita** by Nancy Christie. Reinventing Rita is about a midlife woman who, facing unexpected personal and financial challenges, must find her inner moxie so she can reinvent herself and pursue her dream.

Unpublished Book-Length Fiction

Blended Genre

Gold – **The Timber Ghost** by K.M.K. Sanford. Death and disharmony converge on a remote cabin where Pam must use ancient knowledge and mountain lore to defend her found family and the man she loves.

Silver – **The Spill** by Keith Abbott. Oil—the lifeblood of our world is threatened by a supervillain determined to take it. Our dependence is absolute. Can he be stopped? What happens when the spigot is turned off?

Historical Fiction

Gold – **Minorcan Boy** by Leonard Owen Pellicer. Danny, a high school kid living through the racially turbulent mid-sixties, is pulled one way by family and friends and another by Fish Red, a local black fisherman.

Silver – **The Roosevelt Conspiracy** by Daniel Dundon. A reporter uncovers evidence that the explosion of the USS Maine was not an act of sabotage but the result of a serious design flaw in the battleship's design.

Bronze – **The Perryhawkin Murder Trial** by Patricia Walker. When the preacher is shot and his daughter's boyfriend confesses, it's an open-and-shut case – or not. More than a handful of locals want to kill Preacher Bradshaw.

Mainstream or Literary

Gold – **The Tonsorial Palace** by Thomas E. Stahl. Grady Coleman must heal the hole in his head before turning into a Goody Goody Goon monster, like his father while struggling to discover who he really is.

Mystery or Crime

Gold – **Twelve Sinners** by Henry James Kaye. A man undertakes a crusade to sacrifice twelve sinners to find favor with God. Unfortunately, FBI agent Malcolm Gee and girlfriend Valerie are determined to stop him.

Silver – **Defending Death** by Brooke Terpening. An ex-prosecutor reluctantly agrees to defend a man accused of killing his lover, only to find her investigation convinces her of his guilt, endangers her life, and reopens past traumas.

Bronze – **City Lights** by Claire M. Johnson. As Maggie Laurent struggles to keep the Moore Detective Agency afloat, she ends up stepping on the toes of some powerful people who'd prefer her silent or dead. Preferably dead.

Novelette

Gold – **A Cinematographer's Conscience** by David M. Pearce. A cinematographer must choose between his mission and the life of a teenager.

Silver – **The Antique Book Dealer** by Patricia Crumpler. When a Manhattan book dealer's Bentley breaks down in upstate New York, he turns to strangers who live in a ruined estate that holds ghosts who have a mission.

Romance

Gold – **You're to Blame** by Cassandra Alexander. Charlotte doesn't know that the loudest online critic of her proposed school board policy is also the teacher she's falling for in real life.

Thriller or Suspense

Gold – **Alligator Jacks** by Scott Rosch. Some locals hunt game, others hunt people. A protective father camping with his daughter on the remote rivers of northern Florida struggles to know the difference.

Silver – **Collateral Damage** by Stephen Leitschuh. When Daniel, an ex-assassin, comes home to find his wife raped and murdered, sorrow and rage lay claim to his emotions. He would make everyone responsible pay the ultimate price, no matter how powerful they are.

Women's Fiction

Gold – **Isla Magic** by C.I. Jerez. Veteran Catalina LaSalle and her young son return to Puerto Rico seeking healing and redemption from the tragedies of war after she kills a nine-year-old suicide bomber in Iraq.

Published Book-Length Nonfiction

Autobiography or Memoir

Gold – **Mise en Place, Memoir of a Girl Chef** by Marisa Mangani. *Mise en Place* is the rollicking memoir of Marisa Mangani, a talented chef who takes readers on her journey through the mostly men's club of restaurant kitchens as she travels from Hawaii to New Orleans, Australia, and Florida.

Silver – **A Year in Middle America** by Manijeh Badiozamani. In 1961, 17-year-old Manijeh Golbabai traveled from Tehran, Iran, to Avon Lake, Ohio, for a year as a 12th-grade exchange student. She wrote frequent Aerogram letters back to her family detailing her struggles, successes, frustrations, and breakthroughs.

Bronze – **Elephants in Paris** by Scott Corey. *Elephants in Paris* is Scott Corey's entertaining and insightful account of his life in Paris.

Educational or Informational

Gold – **Discovering Florida's Coast: From the Emerald Northwest to Miami's Biscayne Jewel and Beyond** by Doug Alderson. Everyone knows the beaches of Florida are a top spot for locals and tourists alike, but many natives or visitors might not know the intricacies of Florida's coast. Broken down into roughly 12 parts, the entire coast of Florida and the Keys offer beachgoers a unique experience in any part of the state.

Silver – **Scent: A Natural History of Fragrance** by Elise Vernon Pearlstine. What inspires jasmine to make its iconic fragrance? Why are frankincense tears calming and healing? Ecology and ethnobotany provide answers for these and other scented plants.

Bronze – **Water Yoga** by Christa Fairbrother. Water Yoga is a clear and concise guide to yoga in the water. While emphasizing teaching techniques, it includes practice classes and is fully illustrated for all levels.

Unpublished Book-Length Nonfiction

Autobiography or Memoir

Gold – **Eight Septembers: Woman on Wall Street—9/11 to Lehman** by Jane Buyers. Eight Septembers traces Wall Street banker Jane Buyers Russo's journey from helping to keep the industry afloat in the wake of 9/11/01 to making the infamous Lehman Brothers \$5 billion margin call on 9/11/08.

Published and Unpublished Literature for Youth

Published Children's Picture Book

Gold – **I Feel Afraid When I See a Spider** by Karen White Porter. A spider follows Cal and Ada in the house. They do not know how to cope with their fear of this spider. Ben helps them cope in a responsible way.

Published Early Reader or Chapter Book

Gold – **Titanoboa, The Late Great Snake** by Bonnie T. Ogle. Could Titanoboa win a battle with T-rex? Was the 48-foot-long snake venomous? What happened to this giant snake who lived 64 million years ago?

Silver – **Mya and Crash and Their High-Flying Right Whale Adventure** by Katie Petrinec. Mya and her dog Crash go on a high-flying adventure searching for the endangered North Atlantic right whale.

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

Gold – **Mrs. Peppel's Pillows** by Mary Flynn. In this enchanting tale of Magical Realism, Lacy Medina gets more than she bargains for as she tries to find the secret that the mysterious Mrs. Peppel is hiding.

Silver – **Charlie’s Song** by Susan Koehler. Ten-year-old Dahlia never wins against Rosie Blevins, but when Uncle Ennis falls into Rosie’s trap, it’s up to Dahlia to set him free, and maybe free herself in the process.

Published Young Adult or New Adult

Gold – **Slate—A Band of Friends Mystery** by Joan Wright Mularz. An American-born teen, with Russian rock-star parents who can only visit, faces serious threats connected to the celebrity and wealth of his parents and copes with courage, brains, and friends.

Unpublished Children’s Picture Book

Gold – **Skunk & Rabbit’s Best Counting Book Ever** by Eileen Rajala Meyer. Skunk loves numbers and dreams of making a counting book, but when Rabbit and his expanding family get involved, things don’t always add up. Soon, Skunk discovers what really counts.

Silver – **When Moon Disappeared** by Amy Nicolai. Moon has disappeared, and Riley is terrified without her. Riley must confront her fear and find a way to bring back Moon or face scary nights ahead forever.

Unpublished Middle-Grade Fiction

Gold – **Ran and the Curse of Njordr** by Thornton W. Blease. When Njörðr sends ravishing storms to her village, Rán, a 12-year-old girl with Myotonic Dystrophy, must find the strength and courage to turn herself into a mermaid and confront him.

Silver – **Fake Friend Fiasco** by Jill Watson. A fifth-grader with awesome advice-giving and writing skills has a classmate who focuses on her deafness. If she doesn’t solve her own problem, she could lose a newspaper mentorship opportunity.

Unpublished Young Adult or New Adult

Gold – **NewshoundZ** by Judy Lindquist. When journalists Z and Sandra, decide to cover the local election, they must rely on their investigative skills as they rush to solve the mystery before someone ends up dead.

Silver – **The Thrift Shop** by Steven Charles. When the past is your enemy, the future is your only friend.

Bronze – **The Infected** by Bill Griffith. What if the greatest atrocities in human history were not caused by a flaw in human nature...but something more insidious?

Published & Unpublished Miscellaneous

Published Anthology Poetry

Gold – **Washed Over** by Reinfred Dziedzorm Addo. Washed Over contains identity, chaos, autumn colors, exile, people learning from the universe itself...this collection is an exploration of the experiences of someone washed over by life’s many inspirations.

Published General Catch-All

Gold – **The Crystal Beads, Lalka’s Journey** by Pat Black-Gould. A Star of David necklace or a rosary? In Poland, 1939, a Jewish girl must accept one and surrender the other without understanding why. Will this exchange keep her safe?

Silver – **Wondering How to Publish a Book? A Guide to Traditional, Independent, and Self-Publishing** by M.R. Street. This eBook provides a short overview of three types of publishing (traditional, independent, and self-publishing), including the pros and cons of each. Advice from a small, award-winning independent publisher.

Bronze – **The Turtle Thieves** by Brenda M. Spalding. Inspired by events in Charlotte County. Two boys get mixed up with ruthless freshwater turtle traffickers willing to kill to protect their profits. The FWC is out to stop them.

Unpublished Anthology Poetry

Gold – **Rio d’Ais Poems of the Indian River Lagoon** by Rose Angelina Baptista. These poems describe the unique challenges of wetlands ecosystems as they exist in the state of Florida. I am hoping that my poetry will alert and elucidate the general public about the dangers of climate change.

Unpublished General Catch-All

Gold – **Marquis James: A Biographer’s Life** by John Mallon. This is a biography of Marquis James (1891-1955). He was a biographer and company history author who was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes. Best known for *The Cherokee Strip*.

Published & Unpublished Short Entries

Published Poetry

Gold – **Rise on Up** by Mark G. Hammerschick. Overcoming adversity in a quickly changing world.

Silver – **Looking Beyond the Imperfections** by Mark G. Hammerschick. A poem about love and experience during a saber-rattling night on the sea a long time ago.

Bronze – **An Urban Old MacDonald** by Marie Brack. The characters in an urban wasteland.

Published Blog or Article

Gold – **All Which Wicked Designs** by Paul Wartenberg. The misconduct of Donald Trump - both during and after his Presidency - is at such levels we have never seen out of any earlier President and echoes the troubling behavior of historical tyrants from America's past.

Published Short Story

Gold – **The Dark Horse** by K. L. Small. Widower Mike is determined to ride every horse on the local carousel. Only the Dark Horse is left, but that one may mean his death.

Silver – **The Perfect Friend** by Dan Fuchs. A ten-year-old boy's macabre artwork points to one person: His mother has him watch classic horror movies with her on television every weekend. Will their weekly ritual survive?

Unpublished Creative Nonfiction

Gold – **Teaching Jan Austen** by Loren Leith. A college student, assigned to give a presentation on Jane Austen to her classmates, seeks the aid of the President of the Jane Austen Society--with profoundly positive results.

Unpublished Flash Fiction or Short-Short Fiction

Gold – **Changing Views** by Chris Marek. A professor’s rigid veneer crumbles when dealing with life’s imperfections. His university friend and a bird witness his struggle with one of these disorderly elements... in his own backyard.

Silver – **The Night the Stars Came to Town and the Geyser Reached the Sky** by Robin Collison. When George Burns, Gracie Allen, and Jack Benny visit Claire’s Great-grandmother Rosheen at midnight, a fire hydrant bursts, and the music blares while three-year-old Claire begs to participate.

Bronze – **Never Talk About It** by Richard Friedman. Details of a horrific event long ago are revealed to another wounded victim.

Unpublished Poetry

Gold – **The Solace of Summer Songs** by Elsie H. Bowman. The Solace of Summer Songs invites the reader to revisit the carefree and lighthearted memories of their childhood and to reignite the hopefulness and the joyful possibilities of those moments.

Silver – **Newton’s Laws :: Angles > Angels** by Shutta Crum. A poem for the small victims of mass shootings and how Newton's laws of physics apply.

Bronze – **A Writer Grocery Shops** by Amy Mouharir. Inspired by an Elizabeth Strout craft talk, the poem relays the author's love/hate relationship with writing and the toll of constantly observing.

Unpublished Short Story

Gold – **Swamp Justice** by Brooke Terpening. Two down-on-their-luck brothers discover the Everglades hold more dangers than alligators in this tale of murder and swamp justice.

Silver – **Penance** by Amariyls Gacio Rassler. A distraught priest carrying out his own penance on Good Friday receives grace in an unexpected way.

Bronze – **The Emergency** by K.M.K. Sanford. The people of Sugarland live in their own little bubble and like it that way, but when a strange fire falls from the sky, ignorance isn't bliss.

NextGen Awards

Unpublished Short Fiction – Age 12-15

Gold – **The Pull of the Road** by Alexander Brown. The Pull of the Road is about a boy named Gregg who spends too much time playing driving video games.

Unpublished Short Fiction – Age 9-11

Gold – **Helena’s Canyon of Lies** by Alexis Ollick. Sorrel Silene is a burnout writer traveling to the previously radioactive Helena Canyon, but when she gets there, she finds that what she's been told is far from the truth.

Silver – **Only in Galapagos** by Alexis Ollick. Katlyn is going to the Galapagos islands for her birthday, and what she experiences is truly special.