



2010
Royal Palm
Literary Awards



PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

***Swimming with the Sharks* by Debbie Reed Fischer** (Young Adult)

Torn by her conscience, yet seduced by the chance to be popular, high school junior Peyton gets sucked into a cruel bullying campaign aimed at the frumpy new girl.

Debbie Reed Fischer is the author of Swimming with the Sharks (Flux, 2008) and Braless in Wonderland (Dutton, 2008). She sometimes plays hooky at the beach instead of writing.

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

***Red Sky at Night* by Heather Nickodem** (Romance)

Star-crossed lovers on a U.S. Navy ship thwart al-Qaeda terrorists while trying to find a little paradise of their own.

Heather Nickodem is a Navy veteran, Navy wife, and teacher of the Gifted. Tours of duty include Saudi Arabia, where she learned Arabic culture, customs, and language.

BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Fantasy (Published)

FIRST PLACE

***Promise* by Kristie Cook.** Alexis Ames has a life full of promise ... but not all promises can be kept.

Fantasy (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE (TIE)

***The Last Chronographer* by Trevor T. Faulkner.** A young man meets a mysterious girl from a secret world and is accidentally thrown into a conflict between her and a group of immortal killers as old as time.

***Wizard's Refrain* by Randy L. Austin.** The wizard's oath has protected the world for a thousand years, but an evil force is bent on destroying peace and conquering the world. Only Darion's sacrifice can stop it.

SECOND PLACE

***Daughter of a Fallen Angel* by John Boyle.** A fallen angel decides her daughter needs a husband who'll ignore her tiny little flaw and appreciate her special abilities. If Matthew survives, his life will never be the same.

Historical Fiction (Published)

FIRST PLACE

***Ben's Tale* by Arnold Patrick Parker.** America's most notorious traitor explains himself to his doctor, Theodophilus Wilbrey, who stitches together an account of General Benedict Arnold's life from his war stories.

SECOND PLACE

***Montooth and the Canfield Witch* by Robert Jay.** Four teenage friends in 1950 Florida join with a swamp-dwelling, witch-rumored recluse to battle a ruthless gang of treasure hunters led by "The Cuban," a Tampa cigar industrialist.

Historical Fiction (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

***The Dega* by Shaun M. Darragh.** Former Peace Corps volunteer turned Special Forces soldier leads tribal irregulars in Vietnam, contending with revolt, inter-ethnic rivalries, and revenge killings, unaware that his lover's ancestor is his principal adversary.

SECOND PLACE

***Cracker Justice* by Janet Schrader-Seccafico.** In 1880 there was no law in Florida. Jesse Pruitt moves to Arcadia from Texas to ranch. When he rescues a little girl, he gets a lesson in *Cracker Justice*.

HONORABLE MENTION (TIE)

Major Malfunction by Mary McCay. When freezing weather causes launch centers and contractors to play a deadly game of chicken over scrubbing a shuttle launch, the loser is the Orbiter California crew.

A Tiger's Heart by Eugene Orlando. A plantation owner's daughter is disowned for abolitionist sentiments and gets revenge by participating in the Civil War as few other women dared: as a captain in the Union army.

Horror / Dark Fantasy (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Ascent of Evil by Michael Brim (penname Michael Goldcraft). Anthropologist Steven Atticus found more than a preserved Viking corpse in that cold Canadian lake. He discovered the progenitor of the vampyre race, and that vampyres are real, genetically altered predators.

Horror / Dark Fantasy (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

The Sinner by K. Trap Jones. A lone farmer is chosen by God to test the boundaries of the seven deadly sins and their associated demons. The following are his translated entries.

Humor / Satire [Fiction] (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Vampire ... Control ... White House by David P. Lafayette. Patriotic vice president attempts to create an army of evil vampires as weapons to defend against terrorism and save the lives of American soldiers.

SECOND PLACE

Never Accept a Job from Men Wielding Chainsaws by Ann Meier. A consultant with a reputation for calamities struggles to open an under-construction, ghoulish attraction that is as disaster prone as both the movies it showcases and she is.

HONORABLE MENTION

There's No Grapefruit Juice in a Mai Tai by Ann Meier. After an accident kills her boss, a woman hopes to escape trouble on a cruise, but stumbles over a body and a scheme that turns unsuspecting passengers into diamond smugglers.

Inspirational Romance (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Breathless by Kathryn J. Bain. Lydia Frederickson has enough on her mind without being attracted to Matthew Winters, a motorcycle-riding preacher. However, a killer intends to see that their union never occurs.

SECOND PLACE

Obedient Heart by Janet L. Rockey. A worldly airline pilot and a young Christian widow reluctantly agree to a blind date. Jennifer struggles between her feelings for Jack and her determination to locate her missing brother.

Mainstream (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Love Tag by Peter Shianna. With megabucks and reputations at stake, a father's ambition and an adopted son's search for his biological parents converge with explosive consequences.

SECOND PLACE

Finding Frances by Janice M. Van Dyck. Frances Baldwin is ready for a good death, free from medical heroics. She asks her son to fight the medical system that wants to keep her alive at all costs.

Mainstream (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Secrets of the Charles by Susan Boyd. Three women solve the cold case of a relative murdered over fifty years ago, with the assistance of two Boston Police Department detectives. The victim's death intertwines the lives of her family with her lover and his wife.

SECOND PLACE

God Doesn't Love Us All the Same by Nina Guilbeau. A self-centered young woman is forever changed by an unexpected encounter with a homeless woman who shares her life story.

HONORABLE MENTION

Laps(e) by Fred Jaskowski. Chaos rules when a semi-dutiful son comes home to check on his semi-rational parents and ends up swimming on the edges of his own sanity.

Mystery (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Stuff to Spy For by Don Bruns. *Stuff to Spy For* is a natural choice for lovers of Carl Hiaasen or Tim Dorsey. This fast-paced and suspenseful novel is a wacky mystery with laugh-out-loud infectious humor.

Mystery (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Murder in Black and White by N.L. Quatrano. When PI/photographer A.J. Buchanan finds her missing client dead in the crosshairs of her camera lens, she must unravel ancient family secrets and hope she can survive the truth.

SECOND PLACE

Ring Around the Moon by Mike Scott. A fallen ex-cop with more secrets than Victoria searches for a ruthless serial killer with a vendetta and an eye for women's shoe fashions.

HONORABLE MENTION

How We Became Nancy and Bess by Ellen Klarpp Herbert. After an American man signs up with an unscrupulous Eastern European marriage bureau, his sister rushes to Krakow to stop him from making a stupid mistake, only to discover his mistake could be deadly for both of them.

Romance (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Red Sky at Night by Heather Nickodem. Star-crossed lovers on a U.S. Navy ship thwart al-Qaeda terrorists while trying to find a little paradise of their own.

SECOND PLACE

Bloodsworn: Bound by Magic by **Kathy Lane**. A prince from a world of magic must convince a no-nonsense lady research chemist from Earth that she is helping his prophecy bride while keeping her safe from sword-wielding assassins.

Science Fiction (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Flight of the Golden Harpy by **S.C. Klaus**. On a futuristic jungle planet, Kari, a young woman, unravels the mysteries surrounding the harpies, feral winged creatures with beautiful humanoid bodies as Shail, the male golden monarch of the harpies, faces mankind and its cruel human hunters, hoping to save his flock from extinction.

SECOND PLACE

Algorithm by **Arthur Doweyko**. A gold medallion found in a lump of coal leads two scientists on an adventure of discovery, culminating in staggering revelations about the purpose of Man on Earth.

HONORABLE MENTION

Vicious Circle by **Lisa Iriarte**. Assassins, audible healers, roguish pirates, evil demons, and unexpected romance combine in *Vicious Circle*—a science fiction/space opera with a touch of magical fantasy.

Thriller / Suspense (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Dead Air by **Deborah Shlian and Linda Reid**. *Dead Air* is a spellbinding, page-turning, top-notch medical mystery spackled with death and suicide in which spunky college talk-show host Sammy Greene turns detective to uncover the truth.

SECOND PLACE

The Gaelic Letters by **R. Thomas Roe**. A retired attorney becomes involved in a genealogical search for his Irish ancestors and falls prey to the internecine forces involved in the Irish conflict, which leads to tragic results.

HONORABLE MENTION

Shadow Cay by **Leona DeRosa Bodie**. Already reeling from maritime disasters, a war, and international terrorists, a vigilante and an amateur detective are destined for even darker days when they investigate the world's most profitable enterprise.

Thriller / Suspense (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Unintended Consequences by **Marti Green**. Attorney Dani Trumbull has only six weeks to save the life of George Calhoun, who's set to be executed for a crime he claims was never committed.

SECOND PLACE

Shroud of Sin by **Cory Madison**. A genetic scientist discovers how to clone dead people and is forced to clone ancient DNA by a Catholic Bishop who uses the discovery to further his own ambitions.

HONORABLE MENTION

Valley of Darkness by **Janet Schrader-Seccafico & Gabe Thompson**. If you could save lives with a magic gem, would you? *Valley of Darkness* takes you into Cleopatra's tomb and across Egypt in a tale of biological terrorists and love.

Women's Fiction (Published)

FIRST PLACE

The O'Malley Trilogy by **Janice M. Van Dyck**. Eve and her mother trace their family troubles back five generations, and Eve learns that growing up to be her mother might not be so bad after all.

Women's Fiction (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

What's Cooking in the Faculty Lounge by **Donna Meredith**. Forty-year-old widow Molly Culpepper takes care of her sons and alcoholic father while her teaching job places more demands on her. Prejudice simmers below the surface of her school and throughout her small town—and even in subtle ways within her own heart.

SECOND PLACE (3-WAY TIE)

Spare Change by **Bette Lee Crosby**. Olivia never wanted children, but when a young boy shows up claiming to be her late husband's grandson, he opens her heart to a love she never knew she had.

Once by **Melissa Kosciuszko**. He is her first but also her once. Rebecca needs to find the strength to be herself, but the man who helps her loses himself in the process.

Songs in the Night by **Dottie Rexford**. Searching for God, Bethany steps onto a dark path of long-ago pain and unresolved relationships. As she walks towards the light that will bring solace and resolution, she discovers love.

HONORABLE MENTION

Amazing Grapes by **Kate W. LeSar**. A seventy-three-year-old woman with inoperable cancer travels to Russia and learns that it's never too late to change oneself and make amends.

JUVENILE FICTION

Children's Picture Books (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Do Clouds Have Feet? by **Phyllis McKinley**. *Do Clouds Have Feet?* is a "learn-to-read" book for young children with curious minds and short attention spans. It fosters word recognition and simple literary skills.

SECOND PLACE

Cookies in Heaven by **Charlene Anne Meeker**. This is a true story of a grandfather and granddaughter's relationship. When a challenge presents itself, Lindsey decides to do something about it. *Cookies in Heaven* conveys hope and love.

Children's Picture Books (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Harry O'Larry Moe Garrio by **Phyllis McKinley**. *Harry O'Larry Moe Garrio* is a monologue from a little braggart/hero who doesn't let his small size diminish his personal stature in the realm of neighborhood adventure.

SECOND PLACE

PARIS ABCs: A Photographic Sampler by Margo L. Hill. From “Arc de Triomphe” to “Zut!” *PARIS ABCs* takes a fond but irreverent look at the City of Lights, introducing children to the beauty, history, and mystery of Paris.

HONORABLE MENTION

Abigail and the Vanishing Clothes by Margo L. Hill. Abigail’s excuses for her vanishing clothes—a bear needed the sandals, a baby dragon the shorts and a pig the T-shirt—are highly imaginative ... or are they?

Elementary / Middle-Grade Fiction (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Blue Rock Rescue by M.R. Street. Thirteen-year-old Andy must overcome his fear of a raging river if he is to save the life of a friend. This action-adventure for tweens earned a five-star review from TeensReadToo.com.

SECOND PLACE

The River Rats—Riddle Me a Mystery by Hank Racer. A skeleton’s hand, a huge creature with red eyes, and a riddle written in blood draw the River Rats into a mystery dating back to the Civil War.

HONORABLE MENTION

My Purrfect Persian by Janet Sierzant. A show cat named Gizmo was born with a defect. He feels unloved and ignored until one day a little girl finds beauty in his homeliness and adopts him.

Elementary / Middle-Grade Fiction (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Address Unknown by Charles Warren. Marshall and his mother and sister become homeless. A bully, an irate girlfriend, a state investigator, an intuitive old woman, and a robbery complicate his life and add to his self-reliance.

SECOND PLACE (TIE)

J.R. Timble and the Whiffler’s Dream by Christopher Day. A boy struggles with willpower and the sacrifice needed to fulfill his destiny, which helps save children from a pandemic that robs them of their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.

Johnny and the General by Mary Lois Sanders. Johnny’s parents say he’s too young and irresponsible for the Continental Army. A meeting with Washington gives him a chance to prove his woodsman-skills useful in the fight for Independence.

HONORABLE MENTION

Who Killed Mr. Bulk? by Mark Newhouse. Twelve-year-old Hiram, sent to live with his peculiar uncle, a lawyer for mythical monsters and fictional folk, becomes involved in a comical mystery only he can solve.

Young Adult (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Swimming with the Sharks by Debbie Reed Fischer. Torn by her conscience, yet seduced by the chance to be popular, high school junior Peyton gets sucked into a cruel bullying campaign aimed at the frumpy new girl.

SECOND PLACE

Bad Latitude—A Jack Rackham Adventure by David Ebright. Fifteen-year-old surfers discover an ancient and dangerous secret, one that will force them to choose between fortune and friendship and change their lives forever.

HONORABLE MENTION

Run for It! by Tom Bender. *Run for It!* is a coming-of-age story. Witnessing a murder in Chicago in 1939, boys run for their lives. Their odyssey plays a part, however small, in U.S. entry into war.

Young Adult (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

Vanishing Act by Joe Iriarte. Most adolescents feel invisible from time to time. For Chris Westbrook, though, it’s really true. Too bad his con-man father can’t see him as anything more than a meal ticket.

SECOND PLACE

Underground by Julie Riddle. A small town exacts revenge upon the people who live in it. Three teenagers must unearth a secret that has festered underground for generations before anyone else goes missing.

HONORABLE MENTION (3-WAY TIE)

Safe Passage by Sam Posey. On his grandparents’ isolated North Carolina farm, Nate comes face to face with the restless spirit of an ex-slave ancestor and a terrorist looking to prove his innocence. To help them both, unlikely allies must unite to resurrect the farm’s Underground Railroad to safe passage.

The Vision Seeker, A Tale of the Tuscarora by Mary Lois Sanders. The Carolinas, 1711-1713: Running-Girl, thirteen, a young Tuscarora, sees visions of war and destruction that few in her village believe. When their enemies attack, she is the oldest of twenty survivors. Following her visions, she leads the children west, away from their enemies, looking for the home promised to them by her Guardian Spirit.

Storm Bay by Janet Schrader-Seccafico & Gabe Thompson. *Storm Bay* is set in a dystrophic world where the rules of nature have changed and magic abounds. Three teens must fight for survival against witches, zombies, cannibals, and werewolves.

SHORT FICTION

Flash Fiction (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

“Lily” by Donna M. Kohlstrom. Love goes beyond the physical realm, continues in spirit, and is reborn even in death.

SECOND PLACE

“A Love Story” by Ria Falkner. A mother has a forbidden love affair with a young man who leads them to their destruction.

HONORABLE MENTION

“To Go” by June Lands. An escape even into fantasy is an escape.

Short Story (Published)

FIRST PLACE

“Peg” by Mary Lois Sanders. Peg, fourteen, remains behind when other slaves escape. The small daughters of her dying mistress need her care. But can she save them and herself from starvation or Quantrel’s Raiders?

SECOND PLACE

“The Day Hemingway Died” by Victor DiGenti. A man thinks he’s Ernest Hemingway. Maybe he’s confused, or maybe his brand of reality can teach a young girl about the meaning of life.

HONORABLE MENTION

“The Feast of Stevens” by Kristen Stieffel. On a space station far from Earth, animal liberationists inadvertently jeopardize thirty-eight innocent turkeys. The station’s cook, Stevens, ensures the fowl shall not have died in vain.

Short Story (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

“Why Me?” by Michael Ray King. A man out of his element revels in his fantasy when he beds a beautiful woman, only to find she’s not who she seems.

SECOND PLACE

“Blind Faith” by Marie Vernon. The story was inspired by an actual event in which a young man I know adopted a blind dog, but otherwise is pure fiction.

HONORABLE MENTION

“Fast Time, Slow Time” by Luke Francis Georgette. A content young man wakes from an accident to discover he hates everything in his life. He tries to relive experiences from his meticulous journals to find his old self.

BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

Autobiography / Memoir (Published)

FIRST PLACE

***Crossing the Elde Bridge* by Maria Clark & David Lapham.** An aristocratic teenager’s fairytale existence is shattered by the German invasion of Poland, and she learns first hand the heartbreak, brutality, and devastation of war.

SECOND PLACE

***Unintended Consequences—Lessons from a Life Almost Lost* by Bill Shaner.** One man’s story of surviving a near-death experience, overcoming paralysis, and the subsequent life lessons.

Autobiography / Memoir (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

***Wife Number Six, the Secret Life of a Realtor* by Thelma De Waal-Thompson.** *Wife Number Six* recounts Thelma’s experience with psychics, and one prediction in particular about a man with dark brown eyes, wearing a ring given to him by his father.

SECOND PLACE

***Cageliners* by Robert Hart.** Light-hearted vignettes based on personal experience about strange and various incidents and relationships between pet owners, pets, veterinarians, and their staff.

HONORABLE MENTION (TIE)

***Charting the Unknown: Family, Fear, and One Long Boat Ride* by Kim Petersen.** After the death of her daughter to SIDS, a woman attempts to face her fears by building a boat and crossing the Atlantic Ocean with her husband and two teenagers.

***Chuck and Bonnie’s War* by Charles Watt.** Chuck’s coming-of-age story set in the 1960s includes tragedy, sadness, humor, and much personal insight as he fights to learn who he is and what love and manhood mean.

Biography (Published)

FIRST PLACE

***Sharecropper’s Son—the Story of Doc Garland Granger* by Susan D. Brandenburg & Doc Garland Granger.** Doc Granger’s biography is brimming with rich tidbits of “Tobacco Patch Wisdom.” Chronicling nine decades of tenacity, tears, and triumph, it is a classic twentieth century American success story.

Biography (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

***Life’s Rough Roads* by Carol Jones.** A young Jewish actor struggles through mental illness and becomes a college professor, and his eventual wife, a Catholic nun, battles her desire to leave the convent for a “normal” life.

Educational / Informational (Published)

FIRST PLACE

***The Writer’s Guide to the Courtroom: Let’s Quill All the Lawyers* by Donna Ballman.** Everything fiction and nonfiction writers need to inspire their writing, help their characters navigate the civil justice system, and get their story right.

Educational / Informational (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

***Business Fraud: From Trust to Betrayal* by Jack L. Hayes.** Internal fraud costs U.S. companies nearly \$1 trillion annually. To make matters worse—no business is immune. In this revolutionary book, you will discover a new way to combat fraud.

SECOND PLACE

***Loose Change, Simple Ideas That Can Support Your Family* by Michael Lee, PhD.** Insights into revenue-generating ideas to support a “simple lifestyle.” Few of the ideas require a degree or lots of cash to start up. Some 550 valuable Internet links are included.

History (Published)

FIRST PLACE

***St. Augustine Enters the Twenty-First Century* by Karen G. Harvey & contributors.** The transformation of St. Augustine and the county is described with references to the past, present, and future. Topics include archeology, back history, culture, historic sites and landmarks, and changing religious concepts.

Humor / Satire (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Motherhood Is Easy ... As Long as You Have Nothing Else to do for the Next 50 Years by **Rebekah Hunter Scott**. Full of humorous anecdotes and tongue-in-cheek advice, this book is all about encouraging moms to laugh out loud at the hilarious lunacy of motherhood.

Travel (Published)

FIRST PLACE

Sea Fare: A Chef's Journey Across the Ocean by **Victoria Allman**. *Sea Fare* is the delicious tale of a wandering chef aboard a yacht. Filled with food-driven escapades, this unique story is a look at the adventurous life of yachting.

SHORT NONFICTION

Creative Nonfiction (Published)

FIRST PLACE

"Meeting the Enemy" by **Bob Lee**. Northeast Florida's most notorious "monkey fisherman," Roger Gunter, sits down for an interview with his former law enforcement nemesis. Me.

SECOND PLACE

"Love in the time of Cupcakes" by **Mary T. Wagner**. After baking "theme" cupcakes for twenty years as her family grew, the author watches the last batch depart for a high school tennis meet and reflects on the ties that bind.

HONORABLE MENTION

"An Answer, Without Question" by **Ruth E. Jones**. Questioning a life marred by multiple tragedies, including the deaths of her parents, miscarriage, and adoption mayhem, the author's prayers are answered with miracles and meaning.

Creative Nonfiction (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

"I Used to Believe" by **Olivia Bissell**. Memories of spiritual life as a seven-year-old girl prepares for First Confession and First Communion.

SECOND PLACE

"Lessons From the Pot Room Lady" by **B.T. Petro**. Working as a dishwasher at a cafeteria is hard and can get harder when you're assigned pot room duty. If you ask her, the Pot Room Lady has some answers.

HONORABLE MENTION

"Northern Lights" by **Renée Anduze**. A woman comes to terms with her failed marriage when she steps back into the cosmos and encounters the Big Bang.

Essay (Published)

FIRST PLACE

"The Silver Lining" by **Mary W. Bridgman**. The author relates her experience with unexpected unemployment and offers several constructive suggestions for those in a similar situation.

SECOND PLACE

"Collaborative Learning Communities" by **Kristi Cheyney**. With teachers directing their own professional growth, Collaborative Learning Communities rekindle motivation and offer an effective model for bridging the great divide between theory and practice in early childhood education.

Essay (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

"The Height of Power: Petite Women Speak of Stature" by **Suzette Standring**. This essay is about petite women and offers inspiring and humorous views about navigating the world at armpit level.

SECOND PLACE

"Unprincipled Antipathy" by **Muriel McKinlay**. An environmentalist has to resolve conflicting emotions in the ongoing war with ants.

HONORABLE MENTION

"The Garbage Man" by **Shara Pendragon Smock**. A garbage man experiences the unpredictable—ranging from keeping the truck from catching on fire to finding body parts.

POETRY

Poetry (Published)

FIRST PLACE

"Melody of a New Dawning" by **Michael Ray King**. "Melody of a New Dawning" explores the joy of realizing one possesses the power to overcome adversity as well as determine a positive outlook on life.

SECOND PLACE (TIE)

"No One's There" by **Michael Ray King**. "No One's There" is a poem that explores the struggle with sadness related to the woes of love.

"Still Hear Your Words" by **Christian M. Barraclough**. A poem designed to resonate with anyone who has lost a parent, to give thanks and express gratitude for all they have done.

Poetry (Unpublished)

FIRST PLACE

"some small thing" by **Phyllis McKinley**. The poem "some small thing" is from a sequence of poems celebrating special times, special places.

SECOND PLACE (TIE)

"Crickets" by **Phyllis McKinley**. The poem "Crickets" is from a sequence of poems celebrating the natural life of Florida, particularly around the poet's retreat on Deer Lake.

"Mother, do you know me?" by **Deborah Shlian**. A daughter expresses anguish at her mother's loss of memory with accelerating dementia, wondering if her mother has now forgotten who her daughter is.

HONORABLE MENTION

"One Ordinary Moment" by **Phyllis McKinley**. The poem "One Ordinary Moment" is from a sequence of poems exploring the path from grief and loss to healing and rejuvenation.