

2019 Royal Palm Literary Award Winners



PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

The Devil's Bookkeepers Book 1: The Noose

Historical Fiction. Mark H. Newhouse

He will risk everything to save his loved ones as the Nazi noose tightens around the Lodz ghetto, in Poland, in a passionate story of love and sacrifice based on real events.

Mark H. Newhouse, FWAY Chairperson, the son of Holocaust survivors, won awards, including RPLAs, for his children's comical mysteries featuring the lawyer for mythical monsters in Monstrovica.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **H_NGM_N**. Mystery OR Crime. JC Gatlin
- 2nd Runner-Up. **One Black Shoe**. Mystery OR Crime. Loren Colden
- 3rd Runner-Up. **Two Spoons of Bitter**. Mainstream OR Literary. Sonja S. Mongar
- 4th Runner-Up. **The Earl in Black Armor**. Historical Fiction. Nancy Blanton

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

Hating Jesse Harmon

Young Adult Fiction. Robin Mimna

An angry teenage girl must overcome her struggles with self-image in order to gain independence and accept the friendship of the popular boy who likes her.

Robin is a proud Florida writer with an interest in Florida history. Robin's work has appeared in the Orlando Weekly and Deep South Literary magazine.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **A Self Divided**. Young Adult Fiction. Melissa Abrehamson
- 2nd Runner-Up. **Touch the Dead**. Mystery OR Crime. Elle Thornton
- 3rd Runner-Up. **Lost Scrolls of Archimedes**. Historical Fiction. Tom Roberts
- 4th Runner-Up. **A Paris Flapper and the Ragtime Dudes**. Historical Fiction. Richard Gartee

Best Children's Book

Bluebirds in the Garden

Children's Picture Book. Rita M. Boehm

Colorful photographs and simple text capture the charming story of a bluebird pair who chose the author's garden to raise their family.

Rita Boehm is an author and amateur photographer. She has self-published four novels and one children's picture book and enjoys riding and competing her dressage horse in her spare time.

The Dahrís Clair Memorial Award for Plays

Murder at the Butcher's

Stage Play. Al Pessin

A dead body can't simply get up and walk away, can it? No! Of course not. That would be ridiculous!

Al Pessin is the author of *Sandblast*, a thriller coming in spring, 2020 from Kensington Publishing Corp. Al turned to writing fiction and plays after a 39-year career in journalism.

BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Unpublished Blended Genre

- Gold. **Luther and the Lamppost**. R.N. Walters, L.M. Walters. An accident victim ends up in limbo where he overhears an assassination plot and vows to stop it with the help of a few new friends. Death is an adventure.

- Silver. **The Nile Crocodile and the Blackbird.** Joan S. Sosin. NYC attorney Hannah Merchant battles scandal at her law firm and seizure of family lakefront property while discovering buried secrets, lies, personal betrayal and unforeseen love.

Published Blended Genre

- Gold. **Light a Candle: Chase the Devil Away.** Chris Holmes. An aspiring horror author signs a contract with a promotional agency with a reputation for skyrocketing clients to fame and fortune—if they don't die in the process.
- Silver. **A Year of Extraordinary Moments.** Bette Lee Crosby. It's a new life, and Tracy Briggs is taking it moment by extraordinary moment as she deals with her hearing-impaired son and a budding romance.

Unpublished Fantasy

- Gold. **Shifting Sands.** Chad Parsons. To heal the rift between human and Drayyga, Avia must discover the truth behind magic's disappearance, a grudge that's kept hate alive for generations.

Published Fantasy

- Gold. **Debriefing the Dead.** Kerry Blaisdell. Hyacinth Finch has got one foot in the grave, the other kicking ass. To rescue her nephew and save the world from destruction, she must steal a powerful relic from Satan himself.

Unpublished Historical Fiction

- Gold. **Lost Scrolls of Archimedes.** Tom Roberts. In 34 B.C., Marcus holds scrolls with advanced, world-changing technology. When Roman Empire agents steal the knowledge, can he foil the Empire's plans to weaponize the technology?
- Silver. **A Paris Flapper and the Ragtime Dudes.** Richard Gartee. A Paris flapper, a shell-shocked war veteran, and three ragtime dudes face the impending death of one of their number with warmth and humor.

- Bronze. **The Devil’s Bookkeepers Book 2: The Noose Tightens.** Mark H. Newhouse. He will risk everything to save his loved ones as the Nazi noose tightens around the Lodz ghetto, in Poland, in a passionate story of love and sacrifice based on real events.

Published Historical Fiction

- Gold. **The Devil’s Bookkeepers Book 1: The Noose.** Mark H. Newhouse. He will risk everything to save his loved ones as the Nazi noose tightens around the Lodz ghetto, in Poland, in a passionate story of love and sacrifice based on real events.
- Silver. **The Earl in Black Armor.** Nancy Blanton. In 1635, an Irish clansman spies on the English Lord Deputy in Dublin and discovers the man’s true intentions for Ireland are more terrible than anyone imagines.
- Bronze. **Goat with the Glass Eye.** Allen Balogh & Joanne Wetzl. Pirates, slaves, voodoo follow Mobutu, an African chieftain into the darkness of 17th century Triangular Trade. The backstory of Blackbeard's infamous quartermaster springs to life.

Unpublished Humor OR Satire

- Gold. **Gator Bait.** K.C. Bonner. A Florida probation officer teams up with a cop to take on a murderous separatist group when they set up shop in her hometown.

Published LGBTQ+

- Gold. **Bloom Where Planted.** Wendy Samford & April Carothers. This book chronicles the life story of Ava, a girl caught up in “the system.” This story illustrates the hidden world of abuse and the challenge of overcoming adversity.
- Silver. **Building Us.** Rick Bettencourt. To pay the bills, Evan and Dillon cast their dog in a Hollywood production being filmed in town. Their marriage is tested when the lead actor takes to Dillon.

Unpublished Mainstream OR Literary

- Gold. **Shadows of the Chimney.** Swea Nightingale. A will provision compels two sisters to stay at the estate of relatives they never knew, only to find the century-old house inhabited by a dark force packing a family vendetta.
- Silver. **The Great Pine.** Paul Iasevoli. Albert, an autistic albino, becomes the victim of the prejudices in his rural 1930s Alabama town.

Published Mainstream OR Literary

- Gold. **Two Spoons of Bitter, a story of love, betrayal & redemption.** Sonja S. Mongar. Art therapist Ella Donovan flees her troubled past for a dream job working with teen addicts. Agency corruption triggers moral dilemmas. Family secrets threaten to ruin her life.
- Silver. **The Yiddish Gangster's Daughter.** Joan Lipinsky Cochran. A journalist's life is endangered when she discovers her father was a member of the Jewish underworld. This book explores the precarious world of 1940s and 50s Jewish mafia.
- Bronze. **Haven to Heaven.** Ninsavang Pravisay. Leading her family's daring escape from Communist Laos, Kim Champa fights for their survival in a lawless refugee camp in Thailand, seeking freedom and safe haven in the USA.

Unpublished Mystery OR Crime

- Gold. **Touch the Dead.** Elle Thornton. Eden Sinclair searches for her missing cousin in a Florida beach community's fluid world of sex, drugs, and shady deals, risking her life to unmask a killer.
- Silver. **Blood Moon Rising.** Richard Conrath. In a dark and brooding voice, Cooper, philosophy prof turned PI, guides readers as he searches for his abducted young son as well as other people's children.
- Bronze. **Sweet Deal Concealed.** Judith A. Barrett. Retired teacher, owner of a donut shop, convicted felon. Threatened by a violent man who is murdered. Her nightmares foretell the second murder. Will she be the third?

Published Mystery OR Crime

- Gold. **H_NGM_N.** JC Gatlin. A crime reporter returns home to attend the funeral of a childhood friend and suspects murder when she receives text messages from the deceased.
- Silver. **One Black Shoe.** Loren Colden. After escaping the hands of a serial killer, a teenaged girl grows into a woman seeking to live a normal life. Unable to escape horrifying memories she becomes a killer herself.
- Bronze. **Karieth.** Michael Lawrence Cohen. Karieth, is cruelly put to death. Dead, she returns across hundreds of years seeking unfulfilled vengeance.

Unpublished Novelette

- Gold. **Goldilocks and the Fourth Bear.** Mark McWaters. Goldilocks has gotten away with her crimes for far too long. The wretched little thief is going to pay and Uncle Bear has come out of hiding to set things j-u-s-t right.

Published Novelette

- Gold. **The Orchid Man.** Charles A. Cornell. During the Vietnam War, an extraterrestrial becomes trapped in a deadly fire. A story of desperate survival in a time of conflict, as seen through the eyes of an alien.
- Silver. **Her Midnight Ride.** Bria Burton. Sixteen-year-old Sybil Ludington longs for a chance to prove her worth to the cause of American Independence and volunteers for a dangerous mission, one she may not survive.
- Bronze. **Annie Karenina.** Veronica H. Hart. Elizabeth Killington flies to England to claim her late husband's estate. As she meets characters from her favorite books, she learns a wonderful secret from her maid.

Unpublished Novella

- Gold. **The Vacant Lot and the Locked Room.** Daniela Banks. Lonnie and Freddie find a strange glowing orb in a vacant lot—a discovery that leads them into grave danger.
- Silver. **Scrubbed.** Christopher Malinger. A man reprogrammed with a new identity faces a new world and new problems.

Published Novella

- Gold. **Cold Case.** Marie Brack. Deputy Sam Arnold searches for the truth about the disappearance and death of an old woman whose body was found in a freezer years later.
- Silver. **Tribulations of Yonah, the Prophet.** Walter Joseph Schenck, Jr. Set during Biblical times, Yonah is tasked with a mission from God to preach to the Ninevites. During his circuitous route, Yonah encounters many characters, both human and spiritual.
- Bronze. **Ten-Thirteen.** Marie Brack. A citizen shoots three bank robbers, local kids. Someone shoots the desk deputy and a man in the holding cell. When a little girl is caught burglarizing the pawnshop.

Published Romance

- Gold. **Glass Promises.** Janet Franks Little. When a widowed young mother finds love again and her unknown father's family, she must confront an interfering ex-wife as well as a jealous relative to find happiness.
- Silver. **Worry Stone.** Skye Taylor. Is love enough to heal a soul-wounded Marine?
- Bronze. **A Season to Dance.** Rebecca Heflin. After the death of her mother, a talented ballerina must return to her hometown where she is confronted by loss, regret, and the only man she ever loved.

Unpublished Science Fiction

- Gold. **The Bootlegger Broadcast.** David M. Pearce. A reality show crew must deliver contraband medicine to a planet in the throes of a foreign occupation.

Published Science Fiction

- Gold. **A Hero.** Stephen Arseneault. A hostile alien species becomes the scourge of humanity with the invasion of human space. Our military hasn't fought a war in centuries. Politics pervades our failing response.
- Silver. **Global Tribal.** Dr. A.K. Stanfield. In a dystopian future, Kya is pregnant but not licensed to conceive. She flees into the wilderness but is pursued by the Guardians. Can she survive among the Solypts?

Unpublished Thriller OR Suspense

- Gold. **River of Gray.** Aimee Hill. When two abusive mothers turn up dead in a small Florida town, psychologist Lexi Stone is called upon to help with the investigation.
- Silver. **D.I.T.T.O.** Chet Meisner. An ex-Marine takes on a runaway Artificial Intelligence program and a band of anti-government terrorists to save her fiancé and keep the world from descending into global chaos.
- Bronze. **West of Famous.** Joni M. Fisher. Kidnappers mistake a woman for a celebrity. Those who know where she is don't value her life. Those who do, don't know she's missing.

Published Thriller OR Suspense

- Gold. **Dead Odds.** David Ryan. FBI agent Conrad Keane confronts his dysfunctional past when the death of estranged brother leads to the realization that he never really knew his sibling—and to a serial killer.
- Silver. **The Company of Demons.** Michael Jordan. Decades ago, the Torso Killer murdered thirteen victims and then disappeared without a trace, eluding even Eliot Ness. What if the killer returned for one last act of vengeance?

Unpublished Women's Fiction

- Gold. **A Light Too Far Away.** John Chaplick. A neurosurgeon takes an unconventional journey to save the life of a twelve-year-old patient she didn't want.
- Silver. **After Kilimanjaro.** Gayle Woodson. A young surgeon takes a break year working in Africa and finds out who she really is.

Published Women's Fiction

- Gold. **Emily Gone.** Bette Lee Crosby. A novel of three mothers, unconditional love, and a secret that binds them.
- Silver. **Portrait of the Artist as a Wife and Mother.** JW Robitaille. Rita Pearson, an elementary school art teacher with two small children, a self-absorbed husband, and an alcoholic father, struggles to reclaim her identity as an artist.

BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

Unpublished Autobiography OR Memoir

- Gold. **Safest Place in Iraq.** Paul Linzey. When they said where I was going, it was the safest place in Iraq, but by the time I got there, heat, danger, dust, and death formed the context for the job I was sent to do.
- Silver. **Surviving: A Kent State Memoir.** Paula Tucker. A naïve young woman discovers her hidden strengths as she survives the 1970 Kent State shootings and the unexpected death of her abusive husband.
- Bronze. **A Bittersweet Goodnight.** Linda C. Wright. When my 90-year-old stepmother fell into the blackness of dementia, I couldn't ignore my father's dying words to me 25 years earlier. Take care of my Junie.

Published Autobiography OR Memoir

- Gold. **Phylis: Tales of a Jewish Child during the Great Depression.** Phylis Goldberg. *Phylis* is a collection of fun, funny, and unsparingly truthful stories by 90-year-old Phylis Goldberg told entirely from the perspective of her precocious 4- to 9-year-old self.
- Silver. **Dandelion Child: A Soldier's Daughter.** Margaret Best. Military children grow like dandelions blown by the wind. This is a story of such a child.
- Bronze. **Are You Ready? The Story of a Runaway Girl and a Persistent God.** Felicia Clarke. A coming-of-age spiritual memoir where the author tells of her dark and harrowing journey to find God, love, grace, and mercy.

Unpublished Educational OR Informational

- Gold. **Reimagining Adoption: What Adoptees Seek from Families and Faith.** Gayle H. Swift & Sally Ankerfelt. Reimagining Adoption, aligns personal experience, trauma research, expert insights and adoptee interviews into adoption-attuned strategies to support adoptees and their families.

Published Educational OR Informational

- Gold. **Writing the Cozy Mystery: Expanded Second Edition.** Nancy J. Cohen. A precise writing tool that will help you write a mystery and maintain a long-running series.
- Silver. **Disney's Secret Sauce—the little-known factor behind the business world's most legendary leadership.** Mary Flynn. A Disney insider details the little-known factor that serves as yet another piece of Disney's transformational thinking on leadership and culture.
- Bronze. **Memory Lane.** Margaret Wacker. *Memory Lane* uses prompts to trigger memories. Structured questions built around common dollhouse objects prompt guided discussion and shared memories through group interactions.

LITERATURE FOR YOUTH

Unpublished Children's Picture Book

- Gold. **Gary's Nest.** Annette Masters. Ignoring ridicule while he sits on an abandoned nest of eggs, a young rooster's soft heart and steadfast determination prove he's the bravest chicken of all.
- Silver. **Grand Gertie.** Annette Masters. Gertie, a young hen, wants to do the rooster's work of waking the farmer and protecting the flock, but first she must prove she's the right girl for the job.
- Bronze. **The Ladybug Known as Lil.** Robert Z. Hicks. Ladybug Lil, star singer at the Pumpkin Club, rides her roach through the night to find sheriff Bugaboo, and ride with the posse to save Pumpkin Town from the Aphid Gang.

Published Children's Picture Book

- Gold. **Bluebirds in the Garden.** Rita M. Boehm. Colorful photographs and simple text capture the charming story of a bluebird pair who chose the author's garden to raise their family.
- Silver. **My Tio's Pulse.** Keith Newhouse. When Angel learned to take his pulse in gym class, he never imagined the effect that his newfound knowledge would have on his Uncle Luis...or the conversations that it would start.
- Bronze. **Grumbler.** Arielle Haughee. Grouchy Grumbler lives alone in the dump, but when he gets stuck with "love" and tries to get rid of it, more keeps coming back...along with friends!

Unpublished Early Reader OR Chapter Book

- Gold. **When Pigs Fly.** Joan Harris. Phillipe is a French pig who dreams of becoming a flying truffle pig. That would be a very difficult accomplishment for a lovable but very klutzy farmyard pig.
- Silver. **Gwendolyn: A Sometimes Grumpy Gorilla.** Joan Harris. Gwen, a large friendly gorilla, wants to find a way to be special. She tries writing a blog.

Unpublished Middle-Grade Fiction

- Gold. **The Boys on Mars.** Sharon Ketts. Two pre-teen boys on the first family Mars colony learn about friendship and courage as they have to work together to save their parents after an explosion on the station.
- Silver. **Buddy and the Big Bad Wolf.** Ann Meier. When the Big Bad Wolf starts mugging grannies in a theme park, kid detectives disguise one of their team as a granny to trap him. This time granny wins.
- Bronze. **Cloud Kingdom.** Fred M. Gray, III. On the edge of our reality where all dreams can quickly turn to nightmares, one boy's struggles will save us all.

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

- Gold. **Secret Adventures of Foxfire: Busting Walls.** John Hope. 12-year-old Sebastian escapes his unreliable stepdad with his self-drawn comic book secret agent Foxfire, who's on mission to uncover the greatest villain of all, the Devil.
- Silver. **One Small Spark.** Jackie Minniti. Growing up can be hard, but it's even harder during the birth of a nation. Mystery and history combine in this tale of how a young boy's fate changed a country's future.
- Bronze. **Abby's Attraction.** Barbara Cairns. In the 1960s, a sassy ten-year-old girl aims to please her demanding mother but causes more problems when she gets a summer job at a historical animal attraction.

Unpublished Young Adult OR New Adult

- Gold. **Hating Jesse Harmon.** Robin Mimna. An angry teenage girl must overcome her struggles with self-image in order to gain independence and accept the friendship of the popular boy who likes her.
- Silver. **A Self Divided.** Melissa Abrehamsen. Morally altered teens battle the utopian organization responsible for stripping them of their free will.

- Bronze. **Coriander Jones, On Assignment at Sabal Palm Academy.** Kim English. A thirteen-year-old girl continues her battle against ancient deities who want to destroy humanity.

PLAY

Unproduced

- Gold. **Murder at the Butcher's.** Al Pessin. A dead body can't simply get up and walk away, can it? No! Of course not. That would be ridiculous!

Produced

- Gold. **Blemished, The Stage Play.** Walter Joseph Schenck, Jr. The experimental play, utilizing surrealism, revolves around the rape of Lucretia by Sextus Tarquinius, in 509 B.C.E. and the overthrow of the Roman dictator, creating the Roman Republic.

GENERAL CATCH-ALL

Unpublished General Catch-All

- Gold. **Charlie and the Coal-Dust Dragon.** Patricia Crumpler. A boy suffers depression and can't play like other children until he receives love and help from a friend who guides him into managing his disability.
- Silver. **Whisper of Love.** Susan Lindsley. This poetry collection portrays the joys and pains of a lesbian over fifty-plus years in varied formats.
- Bronze. **The Price of Admission.** Lynn Bechdolt. Barn swallows raise a brood right outside our door.

Published General Catch-All

- Gold. **The Complete Revision Workbook for Writers.** Arielle Haughee. From messy draft to polished novel, all the tools any writer at any level needs to revise their fiction manuscript.
- Silver. **Bloom Where Planted.** Wendy Samford and April Carothers. This book chronicles the life story of Ava, a girl caught up in "the system." This story illustrates the hidden world of abuse and the challenge of overcoming adversity.
- Bronze. **My Shorts.** Arthur M. Doweiko. A collection of short stories to make you laugh, shudder and wonder.

POETRY

Unpublished Poetry

- Gold. **Coping**. Virginia Nygard. Moments of memories one might feel after the loss of a loved one.
- Silver. **Spring Cleaning**. Karen Ann Wilson. A horsewoman watches as spring unfolds in west central Florida.
- Bronze. **The Artist**. Elena Fowler. Author's perspective on the Cuban Bay Of Pigs Invasion.

Published Poetry

- Gold. **Taylor Made: Poetry, Prose, and Reflections**. Dr. Ray Noble Taylor. A retired African American oral surgeon celebrates his family and his family's history, including stories of the "Great Migration," in poetry and prose.
- Silver. **Galaktoboureko**. Linda Kraus. A Greek dessert becomes an unexpected catalyst to honor the speaker's husband.

SHORT FICTION

Unpublished Flash Fiction

- Gold. **Three Strikes**. Kim Hackett. A man takes an interest in the lonely kid across the street.
- Silver. **Where Buzzards Soar**. Dalton Mire. The damned die in the desert.
- Bronze. **Smoky Bonds**. Paul Iasevoli. Two strangers meet in an airport smoking lounge and reveal secrets that alleviate one widower's sense of loss.

Published Flash Fiction

- Gold. **Canon in D with a Side of Tomato Soup**. Rae Printy. An elderly couple realizes that, for better or worse, there are some things that can't be forgotten.

Unpublished Short Story

- Gold. **The Thespians**. Karen Ann Wilson. Two out-of-work actors rent a room from an elderly widow with the intention of stealing her Social Security checks, as well as those of her other boarders.
- Silver. **Till Death Do We Part**. Karen Ann Wilson. An elderly widow in a nursing home sets her sights on rich husband number four, then realizes at the last minute that she has fallen in love with him.

- Bronze. **Where Shadows Attach.** Mark McWaters. A psych resident is called to consult at a crime scene where a disturbed man is quite literally afraid of his own shadow. Maybe he has good reason to be.

Published Short Story

- Gold. **Bread, and/or on Water.** Gayle Woodson. Missionary doctor is taken hostage in Afghanistan.
- Silver. **When the Hurly Burly's Done.** Ken Pelham. A Depression-era theater troupe rolls into a Florida fishing town, and the witches of Macbeth once again bend the futures of those ambitious souls that covet power and riches.
- Bronze. **My Deal with the You Know Who.** Lawrence Martin. Howard is already a successful writer, but he struggles at the piano. He started late and has no talent. What happens when he makes a deal with the You Know Who?

SHORT NONFICTION

Unpublished Creative Nonfiction

- Gold. **The Blind Date of a Lifetime.** Bethanie Gorny. Bethanie grew up in New Jersey. She retired to Florida five years ago. Writing is her passion, but sometimes golf gets in the way.
- Silver. **Romance in the U.S.A. A Cuban Girl's Story.** Amariyls Gacio Rassler. A Cuban college girl decides not to date Americans because of her parents Cuban dating rules but a young American, her former high school teacher, insists on pursuing her.
- Bronze. **The Lesson of Two Loves—A Peace Corps Story.** David C. Edmonds. A young Peace Corps Volunteer in Chile attends a lesson for girls only. What he learns changes his life.

Published Blog OR Article

- Gold. **Pursuing Pele by Air, Sea, and Land.** Clay Gish. This Thursday's Child. Pele, the goddess of fire, lightning, and volcanoes, makes her home in a boiling lava lake on the island Hawaii. With deep respect, I set out to explore Pele's lair.
- Silver. **Being There: The Writer Takes a Vacation.** Ken Pelham. The open road, rail, sea, and sky beckon to us all, and the writer's eye and pen must be on full alert to capture the finest of details.
- Bronze. **Through Different Eyes: Ray Bradbury and "the Garbage Collector."** Ken Pelham. A master of science fiction and how he made the commonplace exceptional.