

2020

Royal Palm Literary Award Winners



PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

The Orphan of Pitigliano

- Historical Fiction. Marina Brown

Set in 1938 Italy, this is the story of Giuliana and her two cousins, who are torn apart as they try to conceal their Jewish identities. Etruscan tombs, unholy plotting & il malocchio, the Evil Eye, are dangers far greater than the Nazi threat.

Marina Brown is a journalist and author. Winner of two Gold Medals from FAPA for her novels, *Land Without Mirrors* (2013) and *Lisbeth* (2017), she won the RPLA Silver Medal, also for *Lisbeth*. She won a 2019 RPLA Silver Medal for her poetry volume, *The Leaf Does Not Believe It Will Fall*. She has won numerous awards for short stories and poetry. She is a painter, a cellist a sailor, and a traveler.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **Scotland's Knight: The Hand of Fate**. Novella. Anne Hawkinson
- 2nd Runner-Up. **City in a Forest**. Mainstream OR Literary. Ginger Pinholster
- 3rd Runner-Up. **The Young Adult Writer's Journey**. Educational OR Informational. Janet E. Post
- 4th Runner-Up. **Vamped: The Turning**. Blended Genre. Chris Holmes

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

Boomerang

- Mainstream OR Literary. Susan Dobson

Two pre-teen boys discover the pitfalls of interracial friendship, misadventure, and revenge in this Australian coming-of-age story.

Australian writer **Sue Dobson** has travelled widely, working as a physical therapist in her native country and Europe.

Runners-Up:

- 1st Runner-Up. **Shadow House**. Young Adult OR New Adult. A.R. Silverberry
- 2nd Runner-Up. **Simon Crumb and the Ghost of Blaine Street**. Middle-Grade Fiction. Dana J. Summers
- 3rd Runner-Up. **Buried Seeds: a novel**. Women’s Fiction. Donna Meredith
- 4th Runner-Up. **The French Tenor**. Historical Fiction. Joyce Wagner

Best Children’s Book

Gabriel Goes Up

- Children’s Picture Book. Amy Nicolai

Gabriel is a curious boy who decides to explore the places above. His creativity and imagination lead him from climbing trees all the way to outer space as each destination propels him to the next.

Amy Nicolai’s interests and background in psychology, education, and travel fuel her pieces, as does her most important and fulfilling role: being a mother.

The Candice Coghill Memorial Award for Youth

Blue and Black

- Unpublished Poetry, ages 12 to 15. Jacqueline Cook

As a woman buttons up her dress, she hides what’s underneath, and when she’s done, it’s as if the bruises aren’t even there.

Jacqueline Cook is an award-winning writer who enjoys writing very much, has been published several times, and attends Osceola County School for The Arts for creative writing.

BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Published Blended Genre

- Gold. **Vamped: The Turning**. Chris Holmes. A socially inept computer geek longs to become a sexy, powerful vampire. A “be careful what you wish for” story filled with vampires and romance.

- Silver. **The Florida Motel.** Jay Gilbert. A college freshman tries to escape the crazy life of his family's motel biz. His path to normalcy is college. But his plan goes awry when he meets a girl.
- Bronze. **Bishop Takes Knight.** McKenna Dean. A gutsy heroine, a reluctant hero, a cute dog... and three rival shifter gangs on the hunt for mysterious artifacts. What could go wrong?

Unpublished Blended Genre

- Gold. **The Parts that Show.** Tamatha Cain. Set in the world-apart atmosphere of the Florida Keys, *The Parts That Show* is both a page-turning mystery and an emotional journey exploring the aftermath of loss, the line between superstition and reality, and the depths we sometimes reach to find our own voices. Unconventional, ultimately uplifting and redemptive, the story tempers drama with humor and hope.
- Silver. **Buried Seeds: a novel.** Donna Meredith. Angie's leadership in the teachers strike jeopardizes her marriage, but activism surges through the family. Her ancestor Rosella fought for women's right to vote and control their own destinies.

Published Fantasy

- Gold. **Waking the Dead.** Kerry Blaisdell. Hyacinth always assumed dying would simplify her life. Apparently not.
- Silver. **The Orion Chronicles—The God Stones.** R.L. Keck. A modern-day pirate must sacrifice everything to save the daughter he never knew he had—problem is, she lives 200 years in the past.

Published Historical Fiction

- Gold. **The Orphan of Pitigliano.** Marina Brown. Set in 1938 Italy, this is the story of Giuliana and her two cousins, who are torn apart as they try to conceal their Jewish identities. Etruscan tombs, unholy plotting & il malocchio, the Evil Eye, are dangers far greater than the Nazi threat.
- Silver. **The Devil's Bookkeepers 3: The Noose Closes.** Mark H. Newhouse. The trains are taking thousands from the ghetto to an unknown destination. What would you do to save your loved ones as the Nazi noose closes?
- Bronze. **Flamenco in the Time of Moonshine and Mobsters.** David C. Edmonds. A flamenco dancer in Tampa's Latin district is on the run from mobsters, moonshiners, and the feds. Her only hope for survival is in Gypsy magic.

Unpublished Historical Fiction

- Gold. **The French Tenor.** Joyce Wagner. After witnessing, first-hand, Nazi atrocities in pre-WWII Germany, a famous opera star goes into deep cover for the American OSS and loses all vestiges of his formerly charmed life.
- Silver. **The People of the Other Fire.** James R. Glover. A man's past and future collide as he tries to bring peace to the Florida Territory.
- Bronze. **Murder in the Palace of the Dey.** Yusuf DeLorenzo. The Commissioner and his wife work together to identify a headless corpse and find the murderer, only to discover that the palace rebellion was aimed at him, Chief Commissioner Muhammad.

Published Humor OR Satire

- Gold. **Tales from the Beach House.** James Aylott. Tales of Love, lust, and crazy from the “Man-Bites-Dog” land of South Florida!

Published Mainstream OR Literary

- Gold. **City in a Forest.** Ginger Pinholster. Hidden in the heart of Atlanta, a pristine forest shimmers with magic, but an unscrupulous developer plans to flatten Silver Park—unless two brave women can stop him.
- Silver. **Resurrecting Rain.** Patricia Averbach. Deena's house is being auctioned off at sheriff's sale, and her marriage is falling apart. She loses a house, but will she find a home? Maybe the crows know.
- Bronze. **You Don't Know What I Have Done.** Sheila B. McNaughton. The horror of Alzheimer's played out in struggles of one woman to remember her past and run away from it. How does her family deal with the illness and secrets revealed?

Unpublished Mainstream OR Literary

- Gold. **Boomerang.** Susan Dobson. Two pre-teen boys discover the pitfalls of interracial friendship, misadventure, and revenge in this Australian coming-of-age story.
- Silver. **Resorting to Fraud.** Gail Hulnick. When rock star Rickey T decides he hates his life, he comes up with a unique way to deal with his problem.

Published Mystery OR Crime

- Gold. **Ghost.** Elle Andrews Patt. When archivist Andrea Kelley's resident ghost goes on the haunting offensive, she discovers a convicted mother might be innocent and the true killer living as close as next door.

- Silver. **Celtic Knot: A Clara Swift Tale.** Ann Shortell. In a series debut, a teenaged Irish immigrant housemaid & amanuensis named Clara Swift solves the great Canadian murder mystery: who assassinated Canadian Father of Confederation T. D'Arcy McGee?
- Bronze. **A Bird in the Sand.** Gail Hulnick. When a priceless heirloom disappears during filming on a movie set and suspicion falls on her father, veteran journalist Nevada Leacock steps up to find the missing bird pendant.

Unpublished Mystery OR Crime

- Gold. **The Domain of the Moon.** Yusuf DeLorenzo. In 1797 Algeria, Chief Commissioner Muhammad and his wife risk the safety of their family to shelter a battered woman and bring her abuser to justice.
- Silver. **Dead Natural.** Urs A. Boelsterli. A reckless scientist and a smart fruit vendor together unravel the secrets behind a mysterious series of deadly poisonings that keep a Southwest Florida town in suspense.

Unpublished Novelette

- Gold. **Guilty Treasures.** Mark McWaters. Something pulled Ellen into the Guilty Treasures emporium that day. What she bought there began to change her the moment she stepped inside—and not for the better.

Published Novella

- Gold. **Scotland's Knight: The Hand of Fate.** Anne Hawkinson. Sir Lennox Brodie relegated his life as a powerful knight to the past and embraced the peaceful rhythm of the seasons with his family at Brodie Manor. Then, fate steps in.

Unpublished Novella

- Gold. **Rhea's Raincatcher.** Dennis Dunigan. An updated, generation-skipping riff on Homer's Odyssey set in the Caribbean.

Published Romance

- Gold. **Anna's Refuge: Wrackwater Bridge, Book One.** Kerry Reid. Desperate to protect her, a young man marries the girl his brother debauched...knowing Anna still loves his brother, and the child he must raise is not his own.
- Silver. **A Season to Love.** Rebecca Heflin. A woman finds she must seek forgiveness from the very man she swore never to forgive.

Unpublished Romance

- Gold. **Love to the Rescue.** Janet Franks Little. A free-spirited woman falls for a by-the-book accountant, but their lifestyle differences create a chasm that can only be bridged by a shared love of dachshunds.

Published Science Fiction

- Gold. **Lunar One.** Daniel T. de Lill, PhD. A dystopian adventure about a young woman's quest to unlock the ghastly secrets behind life on her lunar home.

Unpublished Science Fiction

- Gold. **Shadow House.** A.R. Silverberry. In a false utopia, a youth enters a deadly rite to prove his innocence.
- Silver. **Of Time and Place.** Mark Chick. The navy commander needs the countess's knowledge. The spy wants her dead. The fate of Britannia depends on who gets to her first.
- Bronze. **Evalee Anders Is Still Here.** E.J. Wenstrom. The Directorate's departure dates are part of an exacting system to eliminate all pain from society. But 17-year-old Evalee's assigned date came and went, and she's still here.

Published Thriller OR Suspense

- Gold. **Flamenco in the Time of Moonshine and Mobsters.** David C. Edmonds. A flamenco dancer in Tampa's Latin district is on the run from mobsters, moonshiners, and the feds. Her only hope for survival is in Gypsy magic.
- Silver. **A Cure for Deceit.** Margie Miklas. A sudden spike in patient deaths persuades an impassioned ICU nurse to launch a clandestine investigation targeting a powerful cardiac surgeon, whose corrupt connections could destroy her career.
- Bronze. **Over the Borderline.** Dr. Leanna Floyd. Brooke is swirling in dangerous waters with the killer lurking in her life. Who will be the next victim? Will Brooke's knack for profiling be enough to keep her safe?

Unpublished Thriller OR Suspense

- Gold. **A Desperate Race.** Michael Jordan. When Axis saboteurs threaten America's nuclear program, ex-Marine James Coloradas, a Mescalero Apache, must join forces with his ex-fiancé and her mother to defeat the deadliest agents in the world.

Published Women's Fiction

- Gold. **If She Had Stayed.** Diane Byington. Kaley gets a second chance to change a decision she's always regretted when she finds Nikola Tesla's journal on time travel.
- Silver. **Resurrecting Rain.** Patricia Averbach. Deena's house is being auctioned off at sheriff's sale, and her marriage is falling apart. She loses a house, but will she find a home? Maybe the crows know.

Unpublished Women's Fiction

- Gold. **Buried Seeds: a novel.** Donna Meredith. Angie's leadership in the teachers strike jeopardizes her marriage, but activism surges through the family. Her ancestor Rosella fought for women's right to vote and control their own destinies.

BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

Published Autobiography OR Memoir

- Gold. **In Black and White: Memories of Racism, Innocence, and Revelation.** Robert Pearson. A story about growing up in post-war America that contrasts the innocence of youth with such collective fears as nuclear annihilation, homosexuality, and a black family moving next door.

Unpublished Autobiography OR Memoir

- Gold. **Coming Round Right: Navigating Family and Race.** Denise Hart. Returning to the U.S. from Trinidad as a child leads Denise to seek out the relatives left behind and the reasons why her family passed for white.

Published Biography

- Gold. **Witness for My Father.** Barbara S. Bergren. *Witness for My Father: A World War II Story of Loss, Hope, and Discovery* is the story of how a Jewish survivor and a black lieutenant prevailed against genocide and racism.

Published Educational OR Informational

- Gold. **The Young Adult Writer's Journey.** Janet E. Post. *The Young Adult Writer's Journey* is a "Must Have" at your fingertip reference for anyone who writes (or wants to write) for or about kids.

- Silver. **“Say it ain’t so, Joe!”** Jack L. Hayes. Baseball transcends different eras. It is filled with many heroic, heartrending, and fascinating stories. The game also has a dark side. And this is what this book is about.
- Bronze. **Power Your Decisions Self-study Workbook: An Up-To-Date Guide to Dr. Barker’s Revolutionary Classic.** Dr. Pamela Grey. To ensure a powerful universal truth is not lost upon new generations, a masterful study in decision making shows spiritual thinking always wins the day!

Published History

- Gold. **An Ocklawaha River Odyssey; Paddling Through Natural History.** Elizabeth Randall. Liz Randall spent two years exploring Florida’s ancient and enchanting Ocklawaha River. Her journey provides an inside look at the rich recreational resources of the river, its wildlife, and the people, past and present, who contributed to its history and welfare.
- Silver. **Six Capsules: The Gilded Age Murder of Helen Potts.** George R. Deckle, Sr. Carlyle Harris had a headache—his secret wife. She had chronic headaches. Did he have a capsule which would take care of both their headaches?

LITERATURE FOR YOUTH

Unpublished Children’s Picture Book

- Gold. **Gabriel Goes Up.** Amy Nicolai. Gabriel is a curious boy who decides to explore the places above. His creativity and imagination lead him from climbing trees all the way to outer space as each destination propels him to the next.
- Silver. **Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy.** Larissa Hardesty. Izzy is sure that school will be easy peasy lemon squeezy. However, she quickly learns that even when you do your best, things can be messy guessy lemon stressy.

Published Early Reader OR Chapter Book

- Gold. **Wayward Cat Saves the Day.** Dana Trantham. Wayward Cat’s older brother Squeakers saves him from trouble again and again, but now Squeakers is the one in need of help. Can Wayward Cat save the day?
- Silver. **A Peek Under the Big Top.** Nancy Beaulé. The circus is coming to Munchytown, but when the clowns put Chompy in their act, will his fear of clowns derail the show?

Unpublished Early Reader OR Chapter Book

- Gold. **Halloween Getaway.** Jean F. Morciglio. This is a Halloween story. When two sisters decide to get away from Halloween by staying at a mysterious B&B for a weekend, they are in for a surprise.

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

- Gold. **Franken Lizard.** Dana Trantham. Alfie Whitaker and his friends think Brian Watley has turned a brown anole into a Franken Lizard. Can they capture it before it becomes a monster and ruins their summer?
- Silver. **Dahlia in Bloom.** Susan Koehler. A young girl in 1933 North Carolina struggles to overcome fear as her family transitions to life as tenant farmers.

Unpublished Middle-Grade Fiction

- Gold. **Simon Crumb and the Ghost of Blaine Street.** Dana J. Summers. On a dare, twelve-year-old Simon Crumb takes a selfie in a haunted house and comes away with more than he bargained for, a ghost in his phone.
- Silver. **Rust Boy and the Brass Ring.** K.L. Small. When a bullied fifth-grader receives a magic brass ring, he experiences time travel on a carousel horse. The life-threatening adventures help him confront the class bully and keep a promise.
- Bronze. **Anvind the Mighty.** Jessie Erwin. Twelve-year-old champion archer strikes a deal with a Norse goddess to save his mother, but when his actions trigger world destruction, he must decide how far he'll go to succeed.

Published Young Adult OR New Adult

- Gold. **No Parents Allowed.** Melody Dean Dimick. A confrontation with her mother in the guidance counselor's office forces a high school sophomore to join a virtual reality chat room, or be forced to attend therapy sessions.
- Silver. **Devil Springs.** Faydra M. Stratton. The devil has come to Devil Springs. Except he hasn't. Not at all. But try and tell that to Mesa Crane's grandmother, Mayor Avis Kneller. The actual devil may not have come to Devil Springs, but judgment sure has.
- Bronze. **Trials by Fire.** Marie Q. Rogers. Trapped in a house fire, Fern's only escape is by a paranormal gift she never knew existed. She is transported instantly to a strange world from which she cannot return.

Unpublished Young Adult OR New Adult

- Gold. **Shadow House**. A.R. Silverberry. In a false utopia, a youth enters a deadly rite to prove his innocence.
- Silver. **Evalee Anders Is Still Here**. E.J. Wenstrom. The Directorate's departure dates are part of an exacting system to eliminate all pain from society. But 17-year-old Evalee's assigned date came and went, and she's still here.
- Bronze. **Overcooked**. Mark. McWaters. Eldridge waited twelve months in the womb to be born. It gave him a weird-shaped head, genius intellect and certain talents he was warned to keep hidden. He should've listened.

GENERAL CATCH-ALL

Published General Catch-All

- Gold. **When You Get Here**. Shutta Crum. *When You Get Here* is a collection of poems guiding us with a full heart through the landscapes of our lives with driving directions, roadside attractions, and reckonings.
- Silver. **Truth Unveiled Saddens My Heart, Thus I Laugh Before I Cry**. Walter Joseph Schenck, Jr. Shakespeare's 154 sonnets inspires 154 free verse poems touching on everything.
- Bronze. **Like Finding Water in the Desert: Re-Writing**. Jean Morciglio. This segment of an anthology about women with Latin roots describes one author's experience moving between Yauco, Puerto Rico, and Flint, Michigan, and falling from prosperity into poverty.

Unpublished General Catch-All

- Gold. **Shorties: Short Poems and Their Forms**. Shutta Crum. Short poetic forms from around the world for young poets.

POETRY

Published Poetry

- Gold. **Casual Sex**. Linda Kraus. A woman of a certain age enters the world of online dating.
- Silver. **The Triceratops and his Boy**. Amy Michels Cantley. A poem about a boy told from his toy dinosaur's perspective.

- Bronze. **A Naked Emperor.** Linda Kraus. The poet contemplates the duties of a leader.

Unpublished Poetry

- Gold. **Merge.** Suzy Hart. A 12-year-old facing the morning after a father's death.
- Silver. **Perspective.** Betsy Donohue. (No logline.)
- Bronze. **One Baby Photo.** Elena Fowler. A poem about my price for freedom.

SHORT FICTION

Published Short Story

- Gold. **Ask Annie's Advice.** Cathy Rebhun. A discouraged advice columnist learns she gives good advice after all.
- Silver. **An Ordinary Patient.** Lawrence Martin. An elderly man comes to see Dr. Katz, a lung doctor, for a routine medical problem, emphysema. Dr. Katz soon realizes he is no ordinary patient, but someone truly special.

Unpublished Short Story

- Gold. **New to This.** William Opperman. Barry has never heard the story of his husband Paul's encounter with Jack, AKA Mr. Dimple.
- Silver. **The Murder of Humpty Dumpty.** Mark McWaters. After centuries of nursery rhymes and a pattern of deliberate misinformation, we finally learn the despicable truth. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. Indeed.
- Bronze. **A Minefield of Memories.** Dalton Mire. A widower goes to his 50th University Reunion looking for an old friend. Old memories disappoint, but new ones change his life.

Published Flash Fiction

- Gold. **The Magical Dress.** Amariyls Gacio Ressler. An unrepentant Victorian maiden writes a letter to her sister about the joyous loss of her virtue inside her suitor's carriage.

Unpublished Flash Fiction

- Gold. **The Sucker Stick.** Stephen Leitschuh. Eating a poison sucker was bad. Not saying anything when your little brother is blamed and his stomach is pumped is worse. Living if he finds out is doubtful.

- Silver. **Hour of Truth.** Paul Iasevoli. Two college friends meet in a Spanish cafe to settle an old debt.
- Bronze. **Snow Blanket.** Patricia Crumpler. Paula reluctantly returned home shielding herself against old memories and present dismal circumstances, but she needed to resurrect buried memories to clean her past, like the snowstorm blowing through town.

SHORT NONFICTION

Unpublished Creative Nonfiction

- Gold. **Living in Guatemala.** Leah Miller. Two young ladies embrace harrowing adventure atop a live volcano.
- Silver. **Natasha's Garden.** Angie M. Mayo. A humorous story of our beloved family dog. This story is part of my memoir-in-progress.
- Bronze. **Resonance.** Cathy Rebhun. Singing in a rainstorm transforms a reluctant young woman into a confident soldier.

Published Blog OR Article

- Gold. **Marjory Stoneman Douglas: The Writer as Champion.** Ken Pelham. How one writer honed her skills to protect a great Florida wilderness, and to spur change and action across a nation.
- Silver. **Seven Reasons NOT to Invade Iran.** Paul Wartenberg. At a moment when the nation looked to be readying for war, a blogger's seven points about why it was and still is a bad idea.
- Bronze. **Pour Out Your Words. Then Revise, Rewrite.** Lawrence Martin. To start a new book, just pour your words. Then revise, rewrite, seek feedback. Often.

YOUTH GENRES

Unpublished Poetry, ages 12 – 15

- Gold. **Blue and Black.** Jacqueline Cook. As a woman buttons up her dress, she hides what's underneath, and when she's done, it's as if the bruises aren't even there.

- Silver. **Countdown**. Carolyn Chen. The speaker contemplates their memories, both tragic and joyful, as their latest journey draws to a close.
- Bronze. **there's a 1 in 400 trillion chance you'll be here too**. Samantha Leslie. A reflection on the author's life thus far, where she has come from, where she is today, where she is headed, and what it all means.

Unpublished Poetry, ages 16-17

- Gold. **tabula rasa**. Murleve Roberts. Tabula rasa, the concept of having a blank mental slate at birth, appeals to someone as they sort through the perceptions they've internalized while growing up.

Unpublished Short Nonfiction, ages 12 – 15

- Gold. **The Republic by Plato: The Class System and Education in the Ideal City-State**. Sarah-Catherine Jackson. Education and a class system which developed out of the basic needs of its citizens are key components in Plato's ideal city-state.