Academic Spree Day and Fall Fest

May 17th, 12:00 AM - 11:00 PM

Prentiss Cheney Hoyt Poetry Contest

Clark University, English Dept

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First Place
Hannah Ortiz ’23

Hannah Ortiz writes poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction. She has participated in workshops such as the Bread Loaf Writers Conference, the Juniper Institute for Young Writers, and the Young Writers Workshop at Bard College.

Ode to Moses

Come split this sea down its hairline / to give everything I give everything / I’ll put my hand in the hand / saltwater is a gritty wash against my callouses / at the bodega the men salute God with Coronas / a cat tail rounding one of them like an anklet / you’re all like, There’s a club across the street / and I can say somebody got shot / There, / we waste time mining television / children fly above their parents like airplanes / tiny arms and legs soaring / and the kid is usually laughing / gurgling / well I want everything inorganic growing from the ground / I want a house with its driveway circling / a beast never settling / well we all know Moses was a murderer / instead of a pistol whip it was a wave / it was the Red Sea / but if we banish wheels and chariots to the drain / wheels spinning silently to the sky / it isn’t as if they were real / righteous / at first I say don’t come around / the mice are following every wire outward / they circle your feet like a tumbleweed / the bottle is a glittering threshold / we argue if beer or piss smells worse / I tell you I hear drag races in the parking lot / I let them drive / I think living this way is a constant cycle of not my business / I think I want green grass and sunflowers gilding my foundation / but how can I tell you to go when your saliva is flooding my mouth / your eyelashes frame your eyes like coronas / well Moses parted the Red Sea with nothing but his hands / and when I walk through the doorway of any bodega / of any bus / everything and everyone recedes for me

Second Place
Ruth Fuller ’20

Ruth Fuller is a senior studying Sociology with a minor in Women’s and Gender Studies. She loves cookie dough, crossword puzzles, and talking to strangers. Some of her favorite poets include Adrienne Rich, Ocean Vuong, and Tommy Pico.

Panic

It goes like this:
the mistake—left instead of right—
trips the wires in my brain. No one knows
because the detonation is internal. No one knows
because they are all in
their tiny worlds,

A Lot of Stress. Next,
the rabid howling,
the great aftermath of decades-old violence. Several acquaintances
whose middle names I don’t know witness this carving out
of myself at the bottom
of the stairwell. Trust me when
I say it is a carving—
a re-interpretation of the violence
of my father screaming at my brother
screaming at the hole
in the wall that my mother
tried for years to

fill and sand down
and back in the stairwell the truth
admits itself—
I am not human and now
everyone knows.

the spectators are afraid
so they call in reinforcements. I lie
to the police officer when he asks
my name because he is a man
with a gun.
I say the right words, the ones

fear taught me at a young age, words like
yes and thank you.
I re-embODY my limbs

and become trustworthy again,
not like the kind of girl
you’d find hanging in a closet,
un-pretty and blue.
If I must be exceptional,
I will rail against you
and prove you right.
Exceptionally

psycho. Exceptionally

tragic. Watch me win
the Trauma Olympics
And swallow the
gold medal. Go ahead,
try to revive me

in this absurd position.
Asphyxiated,

howling, mad.

Third Place
Danielle Black ’21

Danielle Black is a junior Psychology major with minors in Creative Writing and Women’s and Gender studies and a concentration in Comparative Race and Ethnic studies.

Truths Split

lips, my lips,
pull apart like gum stretched from sidewalk to shoe.

skin, my skin,
kissed darker by my ancestors,
bends and blurs into the pockets of rooms purged of furniture.

I’m sometimes prized, exoticized,
other times neglected, rejected,
depending on the night, on the drink,
if I’m pretty for a black girl.

nonstop validating,
talked through not talked to.
stuck between choosing me or you.
you want them
I’m not like them.
you don’t like me,
you just want to try me.

a statistic, a grade,
another face for the school website.
target practice,

ego boost,

a desk chair
swapped for a jail bed.

—dry lips.
drying, dying
from low use,
too much use.