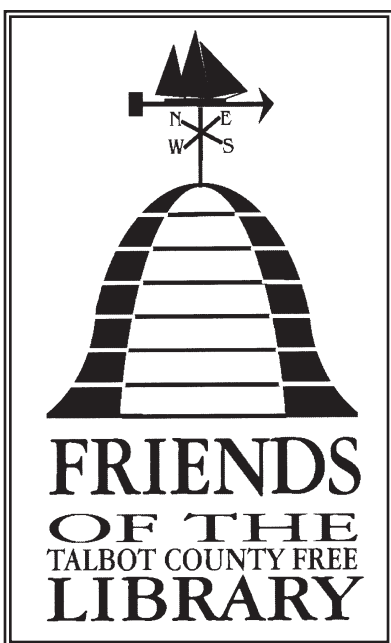


19th Annual
Poetry Contest
2009

Sponsored by



With
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF TALBOT COUNTY

This annual Poetry contest
is dedicated to...
Gilbert Valliant Byron
July 23, 1903 - June 25, 1991
"The Voice of the Chesapeake"

Through his simple but moving
style of writing, Gilbert Byron,
a native of Maryland's Eastern
Shore, celebrated and chronicled
the Chesapeake Bay region and
its people for more than fifty years.
He was among the earliest to
recognize the impact of
development upon the Bay's
ecology.

Eventually, his essays, short
stories, novels and poems
became as much a part of
the region's culture and heritage
as his subject matter. His writing,
lifestyle and birth date earned
him the reputation as the
"Chesapeake Thoreau."

His affinity with nature and
the environment is reflected
in his favorite short poem:

Evening Marshes

Marsh grass is golden
Under a late sun,
and wild ducks' wings
Whistle with the wind.
We are one.
Wild duck and setting sun,
Marsh grass around the pond,
Earth smells and shadows,
Coming cold and early night.
Evening star and this
Great emptiness
Within me.

The FRIENDS are pleased to present
during National Poetry Month the awards
and honorable mention winners in the...

19th Annual Poetry Contest 2009

April 4, 2009

Over 250 entries were received from
students and adult citizens of Talbot County.

The Friends sincerely thank all who
submitted poems and hope they will continue
their interest in poetry.

Special Thanks to...

Poetry Contest Judges

Shirley Henry

Assistant Manager, St. Michaels Branch
Talbot County Free Library

Amateur Photographer

Kelley Malone

Works with Developmentally Disabled Adults
Dabbles in poetry

Emily Miller

Writer

Retired Public Health Servant

Winner

Tribute to Gilbert Byron

Byron lived on the Chesapeake
in a cabin
on a cove
Alone.

Odd to neighbors
True to self
One with nature.

Sun and sand
Geese and swan
Inspiration from the environment.

Waterman for companions
Happy Dog for family.
Voice of the Chesapeake,
Pen to paper spoken from the heart.

Emily Walter
Saints Peter and Paul School

Winner

Blackface

Black-on-white actors in antebellum minstrel
shows
Darkly smeared fair faces with blackface
make-up
Made from burnt cork
Mimicking the 'down on the farm' lifestyle
Of plantation slaves
Layered racism drawn with exaggerated
hackneyed features
Demearing dialect dancing on staged strings
to entertain oppressors
Peculiarly popular and widely acceptable in
its time

Reconstruction brought minstrels to
vaudeville
Where authentic African-Americans applied
blackface
Disguising their own blackness
Behind another, somehow more tolerable,
blackness
So the audience would think it was a white
person
(No sir, no Negroes allowed on *our* stages!)
Amusing them behind the burnt cork mask

When movies on the big screen came to the
grand theater
Black persons were forbidden entry
Except as the separate movie house
Across town
Until the 1960s when the white theater held
back its velvet ropes
And made a segregated entrance
Allowing previously-banned black
moviegoers
To pour into the seats of the balcony,
Peering over at culled whites on the first floor

Blackface continued on next page

Decades later, the old theater still stands in
all her glory
The pop! of the champagne cork resounds
At openings for big names and fêted
celebrities
Blackface scrubbed away
Whites Only and *Colored Entrance* signs
destroyed
Front doors flung open wide
Yet, the persistently light-faced audience
Celebrates in a 'whiteface' comfort zone of
privilege
Too many blacks have not returned since the
days of their youth
When they were relegated to the balcony
The bang of the back alley door echoes
Across a threshold that stings with the stain
of burnt cork

Ann E. Dorbin

Winner

"I Wish"

Alex gazed up
at the sky.
His shoulders
looked like they
were going to
fall out of his chest.
He sighed and
spoke like a man
who lost all of
his money by gambling.
He said,
"I wish
I could do that,"
as he looked up in
the sky.

Matthew Calderon
The Country School

Winner

Nature

I am the water
undulating
up and down.
The fish live here.

I am the wind
blowing trees
side to side,
rising birds into the sky.

I am the rock
supporting the trees,
giving roots
a place to grow.

JD Fowler
Chapel District
Elementary School

Winner

Distracted by Beauty

Gaze at the Taj Mahal,
stare at its gigantic dome,
four anchoring towers in every corner,
a narrow reflecting pool,
all of that clean, white marble.
Not paying attention,
then slip, slip,
I fell down the marble stairs.
Face turning red,
but what can I say?
I was distracted by the beauty.

Ella Joshi
The Country School

Honorable Mention

Spring

The sweet grass just coming up
from their long winters nap.
Just waiting to get a breath
of fresh air from above.
Fairies flying high in the sky above them.
Fairies tinkling laughs
Reminding them of happiness
love and peace
The trees stretching their branches.
The sun warming their thoughts
and smiling down on them.
Flowers blossoming gracefully from the earth,
and happiness to all
who live in one with nature.

Marley Matthews
Homeschooler

Honorable Mention

Happiness is light yellow
It tastes like a lemon
It smells like a field of yellow roses
It's as soft as a baby kitten
It sounds like nature
Happiness is a beautiful sun

Taylor Wass
The Country School

Winner

Darfur

The air is filled with smoke
The sky is grey with sorrow,
The promise made by the mother to her
 daughter,
Had disappeared by the next tomorrow.
Where is she now?
Where is she now?

The little girl hides beneath the Milky Way,
Guided by the stars,
With other children refugees,
Who own unwanted scars.
The little girl stares into the misty sky,
And wonders why,
And wonders why.

A tear slides down her mother's face,
As the men grab their whips.
The woman lets out a fearful cry,
Under the cold and forgotten sky.
But the little girl will never forget,
About war's painful ways,
The little girl will never forget,
Her mother's final days.
The air is silent,
The air is silent.

The woman lies beneath the ground,
Tears stained on her face,
By wonders of how she died,
In battles of lands and race.
In the burning bush,
Reduced to blacken ashes
The air is filled with smoke and sorrow,
As the daughter longs for a new tomorrow.

**Anna Marks
The Country School**

Winner

The Hockey Game

Skating quickly
Chasing the puck.
We're down by one
We need some luck.
It's the 3rd period
A minute more,
The clock's ticking
We need to score.
I get the puck
With lots of speed
Trying to score
The goal we need.
I take a slapshot
With an echoing boom.
It's going fast,
I made it zoom,
I score the goal,
It's not a dream.
Too bad we just tied
The last place team.

Kent McLaughlin
Saints Peter and Paul School

Winner

The Chesapeake Bay

I stand upon the spot,
Where the sand and water meet.
The tide is cool and fresh,
As it flows over my feet.
The sand itself is soft,
And the sky lit by the moon.
Not long I stood in sunlight,
How did it change so soon?
The air is sweet yet salty,
A scene of perfect bliss.
A splendid work of nature,
Or a heaven gone amiss?

Logan Smith
Saints Peter and Paul School

Honorable Mention

Door

At first glance, there's not much to be seen.
A hard, wooden plank, as white as blank
 paper;
A copper knob, as cold as ice;
And a hinge, colored in treasured gold.
All coming together,
Forming something known forever
As a door.
But if you look a little harder,
If you look a little farther,
There's so much more
Than just a door.
You can almost see that swirling whirling
 vortex that hypnotizes you,
That shimmering blue and purple portal that
 mesmerizes you.
That passageway to another land
That forms between the walls.
As you glide towards the allure of the
 extraordinary vortex of swirls,
Dare to step foot into its magnificent coloring
 of whirls,
You cannot help but wonder
What's on the other side.

Shereef Abdel-Gawad
The Country School

Honorable Mention

I Am From . . .

I am from kids running and playing outside
I am from trees you just can't wait to climb
Where skies are infinite
And grass grows free
I am from a place that's just for me

I am from dirt roads and long walks
I am from years of drawing with chalk
From times of laughter
To years of cries
I am from a place where no spirit dies

I am from singing and dancing with joy
With two dogs and many fish, who were ever
 so coy
And many things to do and say
I am from mind, body, spirit, and play

I am from kids who sometimes act strange
I am from places where antics range
From a wonderful school and fantastic friends
The possibilities of achievement go to no end

I am from family, loving and true
I am from personalities, old and new
For I am me and me I am
I'll always be as happy as a clam

Rebecca Schisler
Saints Peter and Paul School

Winner

"Through the Vines"

Outside my apartment at twilight

Now, just as the sun sets
All ichor will drain from the sky.
And shades are traded for stars
As noontide withers and dies.

Peering from the foot of the garden,
Hands content in the dying sun.
Leaves dressed for Fall's distress,
Vines lose life and come undone.

But - through the vines I saw
A sight so sound and serene.
And voices seeming familiar
Called me into the green.

What can this be? I said
As I made use of my frow,
And leapt through the vines
With curiosity in tow.

Upon entering the scene

Through the vines I went
And stumbled into the unknown.
When emerged I found
A garden greener than my own.

Lush curtains of flowers
And growth and colors of love.
All basking in the warmth
That rained down from above.

Those who beckoned me approached,
Naked bodies glistening in the sun,
And behind me were the vines
Tightening and becoming redone!

They spoke to me, politely so:
"Welcome to our garden green."
And I was elated and amused,
For this was quite a scene.

"Through the Vines" continued on next page

I was taken to a small village,
Upon a churning brook
To a house humble and homely,
And pleasing to the look.

Led inside for supper
And given a glass of wine,
Feeling dizzy and happy,
I soon lost track of time.

Sinking down to a sleepy state,
I was shown to a bed.
They tucked me in, said goodnight
And kissed me on the head.

Waking sometime after,
I recognized my own room.
From the bedspread to the flowers;
"A dream, I should presume!"

So out of one world
And into this of old
I greeted the morning
And ran out to greet the cold.

Alex Stinton
St. Michaels High School

Winner

Living the Chesapeake

Calming waters,
life above and below.
On the surface, reflections of the sun,
oranges and reds,
purples and blues;
Each day is different,
yet the same.

The depths below,
holding the secrets of life
never to be known,
fill us with wonder.

How deep will you go?

Emily Walter
Saints Peter and Paul School

Winner

From My Apartment Window

My apartment window,
the perfect seat
to view the ceremony
in warm pride.
My father stood next to me,
crooked,
with frosty blankets of time
draped on him.
He peered out, and saw the man's skin,
caramel.
I peered out, and saw the man's eyes,
shining.

Elizabeth Ward
Easton High School

Honorable Mention

Who I Am

I
Am
Fun
Kind
Crazy
Loving
Unwise
Friendly
Beautiful
Superwoman
Trustworthy
Benevolent
Vivacious
Faithful
Focused
Poised
Happy
Real
Kid
Am
I

Asma Ali
Saints Peter and Paul School

Honorable Mention

Wandering from Eden

As I strode down the path of desire,
I felt within me a burning fire.
And sun-stroked eyes could not see
An end to burning eternity.

For the fall of man befalls me still,
And man is marred, yet still he mills -
Proof is shown, this is to be -
Bound to burning eternity.

Yet, returned I to this primrose path
That's merry and drunken and full of laughs.
All the while I seem to be
Heading, sundrenched, to burning eternity.

Alex Stinton
St. Michaels High School

Winner

Miles River School

Thirty years ago
the dock on the cove was not the lawyer from
Philadelphia's.
It was my grandparents'—
those trees that came down to the waterline
have been lost to the water.

When I was nine
it was mine, forever
risking splinters. Leaping with cousins into
the eelgrassy, nest-egg-warm water
a tantalizing little bit dangerous
with jellyfish.

The great blue heron
a pterodactyl among us moderns, stalking life
or death as we did fun,
laying down our yellow-striped towels.
The tracks of a train over a countryside
of such beauty it cannot last
it's hope: just remembered.

It is the unusually low tide
that reveals the foundation and bones, the
early education.
How much we know, and don't—
a necklace of mostly gnawed-away, old
(Indian?) beads
the companion on the mantle
to the driftwood.

Elizabeth Bastos

Winner

Crab Bash

The adolescent oyster had bigger plans
Than gripping with his sisters
Ice cold in the chest.

The mature female crabs' last appendages
are still
Well shaped. This afternoon they performed
for the last time the tragedy
Going Backwards in Red High Heels.

The Great Spirit made my embryo fisherman
not fish—
Made me un-catchable Animal
Not creeping low animal.

I still have the instinct to bite choice bait but,
I am an intelligent predator. No sea turtle
Sticking out its long thin neck, dead of
shopping bags.

And horribly moral: I'll miss what I'm killing
In the process of prying it open. Pulling out
the yellow intestines,
Marring the August
Red-checked picnic table.

Elizabeth Bastos

Winner

Everything at once...

I don't want to be
 a moth **or** butterfly,
 a beetle **or** a bug.

I don't want to flutter,
 or hover,
 or repel,
 or love.

I don't want to choose today.

I just want to sip
 and taste
 and nip
 and play!

I want to be every *thing*
 feathered, fluffy, scratchy *and* winged.

Green *and* blue.
 Red *and* pink.

Not caring at all
 what another might think!

But form holds me down,
 It says,

 "I see who you are with my very own
 eyes."

 "I see what you are, where you reside."

And I say back,

 "What do you know?"

 "With only 2 eyes and that misplaced
 nose!"

"Turn them all on yourself", I say.

"Leave me be."

"Let me play!"

I am a part
 and also the whole.

I can't be delighted
 with one lesser role.

I only answer to
 one Spirit's voice.

And it isn't yours.

That's **my** choice.

Everything at once... continued on next page

You are too small
 for my heart is wide.
Your mind is too narrow
 for this love inside.
And today the world is
 lovely and bright.
I dance around
 in Spirit's sweet light.
I am here in this body
 which is all that you see.
And it never can give
 the *whole* picture of me!

Marty Smythe

Honorable Mention

Grand-mère

As the age of passing
generation dictates respect
wrinkles denote knowledge
longevity experience.
One must not argue with the facts.
Memories alter this
confusing what lies before
and behind me.
Love is mixed with anger
at all that has transpired
within the forced appearance
of perfection.
Who to believe.
Who to respect.
Who to bury.
With dignity
admiration
love
guilt.

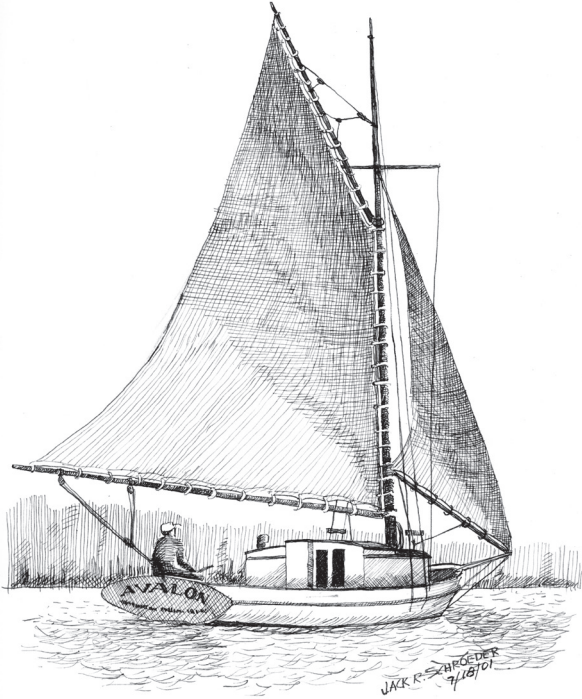
Dian Breza

Honorable Mention

Summer Carousel

Mirrored lights, boards creaking,
Colors bright, pipes squeaking -
She begins, slowly turning.
Golds, whites, reds, greens
Begin to flow, in steady streams.
Changing symbols,
Thumping drums.
Wheezing.
Tweeting.
Floating.
Speeding.
Horses, dragons,
Carts and unicorns
Parade
Amidst cacophony
Of circus music,
While children's squeals and laughter
Fill the air.
Big smiles on little faces,
Twinkling eyes and wind-blown hair
Race wildly by
In speed-blurred happiness.
On, that carousel, oh yes,
On that lovely
Summer carousel.

James W.B. Church, Jr.



I'm going to wander away, away
Where there are islands
All green with delight.
I'm going to sail on down the Bay
Without a thought for the night.

Gilbert Byron, 1920



FRIENDS OF THE TALBOT COUNTY FREE LIBRARY

Established in 1974 to assist in improving facilities and services and has been responsible for upgrading and helping the Library become a community cultural center.

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TALBOT COUNTY

was founded in 1954 to collect, preserve and interpret the history and culture of Talbot County.

Its mission is to promote public interest, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of our rich heritage as it relates to the history of the Chesapeake region and the Nation.

The society is a private, nonprofit educational organization.

All contributions are tax deductible.