



2024 EKPHRASTIC POETRY WINNERS – MCNAY ART MUSEUM

Artwork: *Houses on the Hill* (1900 – 1906), Paul Cezanne

Adult Winning Poems (in no particular order)

Forgetting the Snow

Before interludes were outlawed
they included weak light
houses that fit the soil like stone.
When warmth paused
no one feared ghost clouds
or ungroomed hills or marsh ice.
When interludes lived
fish swam the stream
and we quieted to earth and past.
Yet interludes were another time.
The hill of houses
the sublime of blue on ice
Who remembers really?

-Janice Bethany

What Comes From Memory

Childhood's so small (it's finite) and the promise of the horizon
and its infinity became debris lost among the fallen walls I lived
in in the house up on the hill. I was a boy then and confounded
by a terrible light – sometimes majestic, sometimes terrifyingly
bright – which etched itself into the expanse of those walls.
I'd spend hours trying to untangle its complex cryptography meant
only for me. Even then, though I could just read, I understood
there must be some word to describe the light, because knowing
that nameless thing intimately in the marrow of my bones
made it so. What comes from memory is the agonizing distance
that can only be measured with the silence of years, incapable
as we are to articulate the wonders and travesties of being alive.
Though no one resides anymore in the house up on the hill,
if I met them somewhere, somehow, I'd hug them each –
I've missed you so much, I'd declare. Here, take my hand.

-Mark Heinlein

run.

I still run at the same park we held hands at
Take in the views as they come;
Only now the hills are grey
Only now the houses, blue.
I still run at the same park we rode bikes at
Let out the day against pavement-
The sound of one airpod and bird song,
The giggle of a memory and foot-steps.
I still run at the same park we danced at
The paths- now paved and neat.
The horizon isn't as vast as it we made it out to be.
Only now the leaves are missing.
Only now you are, too.

-Georgie Lee

Youth Winning Poems (in no particular order; age 13 and older)

The sky is grey
Dull and dreary
I sit
The sky is grey
Unfinished yet
It is quiet
There are few homes here
I am alone
I fear.

-Julia Hammock

Daydream of a Childhood Home

It's only in the distance now, a camera in my mind that refuses to focus,
a remnant of where I was before.
shrouded by the dense haze of a fresh rainfall and memories,
The cool, morning mist rising from the water to tuck it away,
Cloud my vision, yellowing my childhood page.
A distant, languid blue eye peeks through the paper curtain,
Pondering whether the next time it would return to the gently sloping mountains,

The houses would still be there—under a foxing paper sky, nested within the pine brush, the cooing of a familiar neighbourhood.

-Anna Szalai

Youth Winning Poems (in no particular order; age 12 and under)

Hills

Pa dropped me off at Grandpas today
I love Grandpa because he tells amazing stories
Grandpa said he was going to tell me a story
A story about the Hills
How the Hills twist and turn
How they crack and snow
And the creatures the way they jump and pounce
How I love the Hills with Blue Skies
And white snow and black rock
And the stories Grandpa tells me, how I love

-Elena Ortiz

The Snowy Night

On the hill
Houses stand still
With people
inside sleeping.
With dreams within dreams.
As the night
Comes with the
Snow
One person wakes
Oh!
What will we do?
On this snowy day!
On the hill where
Houses stand still.

-Janessa A. Lopez