



2026 EKPHRASTIC POETRY WINNERS – SAN ANTONIO MUSEUM OF ART

Artwork: Statue of *Cybele*, 1st-2nd century

Adult Winning Poems (in no particular order)

I, Mother of Stone and Lion

I was born from the mountain's rib,
and the lions came to my hands willingly.
Cities rise like circlets upon my brow—
their walls remember who guards them.
In my bowl, mortals poured their trembling,
blood and honey mixed with fear.
My drum once summoned frenzies
that burned the names off dancers' tongues.
My hollow eyes are not emptiness—
they are chambers carved for prophecy.
I see through bone, through lineage,
into the place where your oldest terror kneels.
Do not mistake stillness for absence.
I am the pulse beneath the world.
All paths bend back to me.

Aurora Storm

Cybele, Magna Mater

Eyes of black glass lost
and hollowed, now your gaze
bores deep. Erased are the tawny
golds and terracotta reds
that polychromed your body.
The fertile Earth is blanched,
the mountain forests shaved,
the lions tame as kittens.
Your drum beat has receded
and yet, paused before you,
I feel your ferocious plea—
Restore the wild meadows,
let rivers ring the hills.
I have been your Mother,
Dance again with me.

Mobi Warren

To a Statue of Cybele

Oh, great mother, Magna Mater, your sad hollowed-out eyes
show how much you miss the city you once protected
symbolized by your walled crown by the ages worn down
now use your powers to protect your new home, San Antone
reform your crown with our famous missions or the Alamodome
and use those two lions that share your seat
as a leonine force to keep peace in the streets
then people will dance to the rhythm of your tympanum
though in San Antonio the rhythm is rock 'n roll or conjunto
we will offer our libations from your *patera*
but not the olive oil or wine of your time
offered to the gods of your ancient town
here we'll offer Lone Star or Big Red
poured onto our own sacred ground
to remember loved ones passed away and say, "presente"

Mark Christal

The Statue of Cybele

I heard somewhere that marble weathers an inch per thousand years, depending on its surroundings...

At present, I am indoors, in oddly chilly air and raised on a podium (as I should be) bathed in false, yellow light.

The upper half of my visage is both faint and stippled, but my noble nose and the firm line of my mouth are still recognizable as such. (Is that a smile? Wouldn't you like to know...)

My eyes are gone, but they were never marble anyway... Regardless, the lions at my side are still present and ready to pounce... the lines of my linen are still crisp if you squint. I still draw crowds...

Strangers pose beside me, then bend down to learn my name.

I was, I AM, Cybele.

I am a GODDESS.

I was here long before they were born, I will be here long after they are gone.

Your ancestors knew how to treat me; many fell madly in love with me (it was really quite cute). Perhaps your lineage will once again bring offerings of drink and dance wildly with me.

After all, at this rate, I'll be here for a long, long time. PS, might I get a glass case with underlighting?

Emily Clark

Youth Winning Poems (age 12 and under)

Ode To A Mother

She sits atop a throne of marble
Lions making way for her tired arms
They know her struggle -
Providing support for everyone
People worship her out of duty
But, She is exhausted
She hides it really well
But the golden streaked animals know
Who She is – behind the mask
The Mother Earth
Trying to quell the world's wrath
To make it as it was once before
And yet we underappreciate Her
Take Her for granted
And all mothers that give life to this world.

Shloka Janhavi Subramanian