

The Winners Are...

Three poems

**Tarpley Hitt, Samantha Ostrowski, and
Willow Maya Giannotti-Garlinghouse**

We are pleased to print here the winning poems from the 2011 New Haven Free Public Library Poetry Contest. Tarpley Hitt, Samantha Ostrowski, and Willow Maya Giannotti-Garlinghouse won in the teen, adult, and youth categories, respectively.

—The Editors

Othniel Marsh

When Othniel sat on the Green, did his
fingers dig—
did the roots of his forked beard
bury themselves
and did they find each other
meeting soupy gristle and soupy gristle
When Othniel sat on the grass, blue and blurry
did he lie.

His sacred place was a
constellation—
dotted with Orion's bones and
dressed in the silks of dead fires
Quiet and still and
pulling roots into its revolution

As the sassafras juice trickled from
his mouth like arson
did Othniel wonder what it meant to
name something that
was already gone—

—Tarpley Hitt

Elm 1638

The quills, squeaking, and typewriters clack like keys
Today, the sounds have never left. They rise,
Renewed, each time we write or crack the spine
Of favorites on our shelves. I revel in it.
We are not known for any famous greats,
Like Dickinson or Poe, anthologized,
But many more have passed this way, beneath
The elms and down the streets, appreciating
Books built into stone, concrete, and slate.
A history of words combining, piling,
Remembering each syllable's design.
Their presence lingers, we know this to be true.
New Haven, like a book, absorbs its wards,
Remanding to the ceaseless current, time
And time again, that flows along its streets.
There is nothing to say. To do. To moderate.
Embrace it, smell the paper, and dive in.

—Samantha Ostrowski

From

I'm from black and white film,
and finger paints and chicken soup.
I'm from rainboots,
and Saturday afternoons at East Rock Park.
I'm from sunblock and woodchips
and rusty swings which sing their bittersweet song for whoever will listen.
I'm from the lavender and sage
that grow in their own bed,
with rose that I tried to pick with my round child's fingers,
but it drew blood.
I'm from melting popsicles,
and homemade hot chocolate with Mexican vanilla
and banana-peanut butter sandwiches.
I'm from secondhand sun dresses,
and homemade halloween costumes.
I'm from baby powder and cumin,
and cinnamon that I tried to eat by itself.
I'm from paperback books,
read until their pages fall out.
I'm from photo albums full of memories,
pictures snapped at Lighthouse Point and the Green,
lost but never forgotten
forgotten but never lost.

—Willow Maya Giannotti-Garlinghouse