

Aline B. Carter Poetry Prize Winners Reception and Readings
April 27, 2019, 10:30 a.m.
Maverick Carter House stairway and vestibule

Elizabeth Johnson will set up light refreshments on the porch.

Carter will welcome everyone, representing the family, and tell the group about Aline B. Carter as a poet who served as the first Poet Laureate of Texas and created the Aline B. Carter Peace Prize for Aspiring Poets during WWII. The Carter family is happy to resurrect the award for aspiring San Antonio poets.

Carter reads one of Aline's poems of his own selection.

Carter introduces Alexandra van de Kamp, executive director of Gemini Ink Literary Arts Center, which administered the competition.

Alexandra thanks students for submitting poems, addresses quality and variety including number of distinct forms. Looking forward to hearing the winners read their poems.

Beforehand she wants to emphasize the experience of the judges and the esteem with which they are held in the literary community. They are San Antonio Poet Laureate Octavio Quintanilla, Mobi Warren and Anthony "The Poet" Flores.

Welcome Mobi to the "stage." Give her background if you have it. She reads.
Welcome Octavio and give his background. He reads.

Alexandra then announces the winners form prizes. Winners read poem, receive check with photo taken.

- Cameron Monteith, "My Mother Tongue" -- best free verse poem, East Central High School
- Nani Villalvazo -- "De Donde Soy" -- best bilingual poem, high school not provided
- Caitlin McKneely -- "Fiesta Sunrise" -- best poem in form, Winston Churchill High School
sonnet

Alexandra announces third, second and first prize winners. Each reads his/her poem then Alexandra presents check. Photographer shoots each check presentation.

- Mia Saucedo -- "Nights Like These" -- third prize, Young Women's Leadership Academy
- Clarissa Longoria -- "Two Cities" -- second prize, LEE High School
- Dharma S. Suárez-Palacios -- "La Tierra del Rio Verde" -- First Prize, Northside Health Careers HS **Carter shows video.

Alexandra thanks everyone for coming and invites them to have refreshments.

My Mother Tongue 1

My Mother Tongue

You slipped out your tongue
and handed it to me
so I could know how the words hang
like in those gardens, how mouths burn
with cayenne and thyme
in your foster home.

I try to learn the language
from inside your open arms,
like the business man sitting alone
white-knuckling his brew in the booth
or the woman who collects
her beads of sweat
to add to her rosary

but I can only hear the echoes
of the bricks laid by missionaries
and the crackling embers of immigrants
who came to seek their own visionary,
the traffic like cattle drives
and the rise of the obelisk

My Mother Tongue 2

that is a pin in a knitted tomato
bleeding an intoxicated red.

I can not speak like I am yours
but I may listen and trace the verse,
the ghosts upon the stones,
the hair drifting towards the linoleum.
My chipped teeth the chipped paint
outside Momo's barbershop, her voice,
like the shake of an old friend's hand,
is not mine, but could be.

My mother, back arched over dough
spread by the rolling pin, singing
her soundtrack of dreams
like the others in your home
could soon be me,
will soon be

Nani Villalvazo

De Donde Soy Poem

Soy de "Let's rodeo San Antonio"
From cowgirl boots to "cumbias"
I am from late night drives at tower view
To six A.M. practices and math reviews
I am from loud family game nights
And endless makeup and clothes fights

I am from power walks in the morning
And from puns no matter how corny
I'm from the "Sabe lo todo"
And the "no entres con lodo"
I'm from a love that has no borders
And from working hard but still having to count quarters

I am from every tournament and practice my dad never missed
From dairy queen booths and bananas splits
I am from sunsets painted like a canvas
From having to continuously work on my Spanish

I am from a red brick house filled to the brim
From Sunday mornings singing every hymn
I am from loving neighbors that treated me as their own
From hearing "dinner's ready" on the megaphone

I am from not only one tree but a whole forest
From roots that run deep even at their poorest
Most importantly I'm from the best family ever
From two sisters whose love could never sever

Fiesta Sunrise

Where sun and sol collide in symphony
The essence on its own fills endless skies
With Cedar Floats on Rio Destiny
— They fly in clouds confetti over high

A mockingbird did perch this morn to wake
My heart from winter slumber, cold and stale
The question, fresh as dawn, “Could this be fate?”
As bluebonnets pave way my homeward trail

Down Broadway Street and East Pecan, they row
Downstream: the river paints a vibrant sight
— A path for God to find the home I know
To lead Him to the place my heart ignites

Look up, Fiesta Sunrise because I
Have yet to fathom this eternal sky

Nights Like These

I live for nights like these
Nights set afire by the glowing lights surrounding the Riverwalk
The same fire that dances and twinkles in the river's reflection

I live for nights like these
Nights filled with mariachi bands and
Abuelos y abuelitas, primos y primas,
singing los canciones of their native tongue
Communing with their ancestors through rhythms and beats
That ricochet in my head and permeate my soul

I live for nights like these
Nights marked by the stomping of feet and the wind
Whipping from brightly colored folklórico skirts
Dancing the night away in Hemisfair Park

I live for nights like these
Nights spent con mi familia
Walking the illuminated streets of downtown
After filling our bellies at Mi Tierra

I live for nights like these
Driving down Nogalitos and
Smelling the sweet smell of agua frescas
From Los Valles
As I soak in the flavor of my city,
Mi San Antonio

[Second Place]

My mother was raised by this city.
She knows these streets like the back of her hand,
or at least she knows what they used to be.

Back when she explored San Antonio
from the back of her father's raspa truck,
While her mother sewed the folklorico skirts I would eventually wear.

Back when that supermarket was my tio's house
And my mom and her siblings climbed onto the roof
To watch the fireworks on the Fourth of July

But that house is gone and my mother no longer lives on that street
that held generations of Puente turned Flores turned Garcia
And my mother, a Longoria now

With children who don't know their history
anymore than my mother recognizes the new city
And I don't know the landscape of my own hands

My view of the city is limited to what can be seen
from the backseat of a minivan.
My grandma's folklorico skirts go unused for most of the year.

But every summer I go back to Woodlawn Lake
for raspas, folklorico, and climbing onto my father's truck bed
to watch the fireworks on the Fourth of July.

"
Two Cities"
Clarissa
Longoria

[First Place]

La Tierra del Río Verde

Dharma S.

Suárez-Palacios

De miles de mundos, uno solo.

Portón a la vez a this land y a esta tierra-

Esto significa San Antonio.

Tierra de un ruido a la vez insoportable e insoportablemente querido.

Nuestro San Antonio nunca se calla, nunca se detiene.

En las noches se oyen las voces pesadas de los hombres,

En las calles sus maldiciones familiares y hasta estimadas.

San Antonio es tan ajeno y es tan mío.

Va tapizado de canciones-

Ritmos que por las esquinas acechan, y tanto en chamba como en pachanga chismean.

Todo sigue su camino independiente,

Pero la cacofonía de pasos, gritos, risas y cantos

Se revuelven hasta formar una concordia confusa.

Harmonía de enemigos, orquesta sin conductor.

Camioncito de tacos en la esquina.

Restaurantes de tierras lejanas.

Comida mestiza.

De miles de mundos, uno solo.

Río verde y desgastado, pisado y marcado por las huellas de los botes,

Deja que de ti la historia cante y que de ti la vida brote.