

2023 Aline B. Carter Poetry Prize for Young Poets
Poetry Contest Winners
"Flavors of San Antonio"

Judges:

2018-2020 San Antonio Poet Laureate Dr. Octavio Quintanilla

Noted Local San Antonio Poet Eddie Vega

The annual Aline B. Carter Poetry Prize for Young Poets would like to thank the Brackenridge Foundation for their support and efforts in facilitating the contacts within the Charter Schools of Bexar County. The event awards high school students for various poetry styles each Fiesta season.

The Award Ceremony was held May 6, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Maverick Carter House (108 Auditorium Cir., San Antonio, TX, 78205).

First Place:

"Moonlight On the Ganges Riverwalk"

By Sunny Vuong

BASIS San Antonio Shavano

Second Place (tie):

"Huevo con Jamón"

By Angel Garcia Lopez

IDEA South Flores

Second Place (tie):

"Tortillas de amor"

By Alejandra Ramirez

IDEA South Flores

Third Place

"Hungry"

By Amira Guzman

IDEA South Flores

Best Bilingual Poem

"Early Morning"

By Cynthia Elam

IDEA South Flores

Best Free Verse

untitled work

By Marley Doidge

KIPP University Preparatory High School

“Moonlight On the Ganges Riverwalk”

by Sunny Vuong

Perhaps the moon bites the bullet
train into halves over the dying
horizon. Perhaps I never know

where my ghosts take their tortured
leave. Ribs blanched with waning
light. Waiting for the merciful maw

of the morning. Stray dogs
shivering by the back-exit
of the bistro love me, but

that’s about it. The mercury-vapor
lamp in the “y” flutters tearfully
so the sign reads “grocer” at twilight,

the only way the city remembers
that a human bags their cheap
cigars and plays radio-blues into

the dusk. A recluse sings along to
Sinatra on the metro, the *whoosh-clck*
of the doors symphonying her solitude.

But in a chromium-lined café
far away, I croon with her,
the waitresses hip-flipping

the jukebox so it crackles out
love’s—schemes—came true—
someday for strangers’ ears,

and the scent of sizzling
carne guisada strings between
us like a tether. A trim,

dress-shirt downtown man inhales
refuge from the tender fingers

of his steak fajitas. If hunger is an emptiness,
then to feast is defiant
intimacy. My appetite
seemed inescapable, before

I witness two lovers turtledoved
over their buñuelos, sugar
raining from their rosy lips.

A budding girl seats herself,
unaccompanied—save her
baby, mouthing at the magnetic

queso blanco that warms their
open palms. She hums along
to Sinatra's silvery soothes.

So perhaps this is true:
the way loneliness is known
by the way it never leaves.

But this evening, the whole café
choruses. The night loosens
its fist. I grow moth-eyed

to the chance that light
can be caught in this life.
We all want to wait for dawn

together.

Huevo con Jamón

by Angel O. Garcia Lopez

Some may argue that
their food has the best sazón,
but I am here to argue
my mamas huevo con jamon
has the best sazón.

Su sazón es tan buena
que cuando la gente lo prueba,
dicen maldición,
quisiera tener ese tipo de sazón.

Cuando cocina un pedazo de jamón,
se escucha el sazón.

The crack, sizzle, and pop
del jamon.

The crack, pop, sizzle
del huevo
me vuelve loco.

The poof and fluff
de la tortilla
sube y baja
como mi raza
en los conciertos del Peso Pluma.

Mi saliva

follows el ritmo
de la tortilla
y el jamón con huevo.
It rises and falls
as I see how tall
I am compared to the comal
on the estufa.

Mi saliva
finally falls
as the comida crawls
in the Comal's
finished product.

The jamon and huevo
is wrapped in the tortilla,
then destroyed by mi saliva
in my mouth.

La comida
fills us all with nostalgia.
It makes my welo
un poco nostálgico
as he remembers
my grandmothers sazón.

Mi mamas jamón con huevo
es un poco mágico
porque nos trae recuerdos

de años pasados.

That is why

my mom has the best sazón.

Because no one

can find a razón

for her food to be like

Harry Kane's world cup

penalty goal.

Tortillas de amor

By Alejandra Ramirez

Tortillas de amor

Flour, water even corn these simple ingredients
come together as one creating something wrapped with love and tradition.
La molienda de los granos, el sonido de los aplausos para hacer la masa
Y el calor caliente del comal

Con manos amorosas y Cuidado puestos en cada uno.
that can be found everywhere
They are the base of every good tortilla,
and can vary from recipe to recipe, were
You can taste the different cultures and traditions. Being held by this
Safety of softness and kindness and a sense of home all in one
Each flavor being wrapped into a soft blanket of culture.

Tortillas made with the traditions of our ancestors
And in the homes of our families.
All the love brought together
Into one soft round piece of tradition. In the homes of our
abuelos we make with little hands as kids the world of our tradition
And culture feeling as if a second nature to carry this legacy to
Always keep us together with food.

These simple yet complex pieces of our cultures are
Known throughout our gente and
Embedded into the mix of cultures of our pueblo and citizens
This piece of our cultures Are seen by many and carried
by our youth coming Together with grandparents learning
Recipes being passed on by generaciones
And putting our own twist on them.

Hungry

By: Amira Guzman

It is 6pm

I'm at my Abuela's

My mommy's at work

Tengo hambre

Pollo, tortilla de maíz, y especias flow through the air

I ate everything my Abuela made

This especially I would eat right up

I wait a few minutes then rush into la cocina

Tengo hambre

Sweat rolls down my face

Excitement rolls through my body

My grandma crushes chile for the fresh salsa

Guacamole sits at the table awaiting to be eaten

Tengo hambre

My grandma rushes me out of the kitchen

She never liked my impatience

I anxiously wait in the living room

My stomach grumbles

15 minutes pass

"MIRA!"

I run to la cocina

Tengo hambre

Guacamole, crema y salsa line the table

Popping oil burst through the air

I dodge every drop that comes towards me

My mouth salivates

I think of the meal I'll have in just 5 minutes

I grab a plate and rush towards the counter

I grab my share and run to my seat

I apply my toppings and dig in

CRUNCH

My first bite is heavenly

5 more minutes and I'm done

Flautas

Ya no tengo hambre

"Early Morning"
by Cynthia Elam

Early Morning

As mockingbirds start to chirp and sing
the sun barely started to greet the world.

BAM! The loud sound of del rodillo on the countertop table.

The smell of fresh tortillas with chorizo
seeps through every room in my house.
La receta secreta de como preparar las tortillas
has been passed by generations:

De Nueva Rosita, Coahuila a San Antonio, Texas

Early morning masamos
cuando terminamos de masar
dejamos que la masa se duerma
mientras, hacemos los frijoles con chorizo,
mi abuelo le encanta viendo a todos cocinado junto
mi familia es como la comunidad de San Antonio
¡UNIDOS!

San Antonio is a melting pot.
there's multiple cultures and flavors that are unique.

Como muchos en San Antonio
En la mañana comemos tacos
It's a BIG part of starting our día.

The soft tortilla with savory beans and chorizo
It brings communities together
and helps people feel bienvenidos to their new home.

Untitled

By Marley Doidge

My mom's friend works in the kitchen
I go there when the outside is freezing
The cashier knows me by name
The inside is filled with hand drawn paintings in frames
I ask for my usual
It's nothing too unusual
"Bean and cheese por favor."
My broken Spanish is something they're used to
I pay and go to my spot by the window
Next to the painting of a meadow
My food arrives hot and scalding
I burn my tongue every time without failing
But I think the same
My home is this place