

The **12th Annual Laguna Beach Library Poetry Contest** was once again a huge success, with more than 100 people in attendance at the Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony. This year we had more than 200 total entries for our 7 categories. Each of the First, Second, and Third Place Winners in our 7 categories read their winning poems to an appreciative audience. Winners in the contest were awarded a beautiful Winner's Certificate along with a gift certificate. **The Laguna Beach Library's 12th Annual Poetry Contest was funded by the Friends of the Library**, a non-profit organization that supports programs and special events for the Laguna Beach Library.

Adult Category

First Place - Joan Ross "***The Dog Collar***"

Second Place - J. Hilary "***Me in my brand new hiking boots —***"

Third Place (Tie) - Jennifer Donnell "***Kiss the Sun***"

Third Place (Tie) - Sarah Vogel "***Becoming Mom***"

High School Category

First Place - Laura Pusey "***Casual Questions Like This***"

Second Place - Sarah Stoll "***We Architects of Greatness***"

Third Place - Sean Pigden "***Personify Me***"

6th, 7th, 8th Grade Category

First Place - Lily Greenberg Call "***The Edge***"

Second Place - Braden Johnson "***Freedom***"

Third Place - Rebecca Stoll "***A Letter to Cody***"

4th, 5th Grade Category

First Place - Gabriela Goffman "***Shot***"

Second Place - Sydney Pardo "***Bat Pie***"

Third Place - Helene Mahmood "***Carnival***"

2nd, 3rd Grade Category

First Place - Avalon Greenberg Call "***Poem Number Two—No One's Home Main St.***"

Second Place - Jack Manor "***The Little Sky***"

Third Place - Ella Judd "***The Tangles in My Hair***"

1st Grade Category

First Place - Clara Becker "***On The Swings***"

Second Place - Jackson Golden "***Beach***"

Third Place - James Dobbs-Hildreth "***My Cat***"

Pre-K & Kindergarten Category

First Place - Cole Judd "***My Crazy Cat Dizzy***"

Second Place - Sienna Arrobio "***I Was a Cat***"

Third Place - No Entries for Third Place

**Adult
First Place
By Joan Ross**

The Dog Collar

I can't afford to return
to where starfish clung
to pilings and June bugs
gathered on window screens

I left the dog's collar on
the patio table along with
an open magazine

The temperature was 75 degrees
when the clock we had forgotten
to detach from the wall
chimed twelve times and
the moving van rumbled up

I wanted to take walls,
ceilings, doors and windows
with me but the truck held
only things – trinkets
clinking in cardboard
 pots & pans, dishes,
 paintings, scouring pads,
 jars...

I forgot to pack
the old wooden beams from
the ceilings, the scuffed oak
floors, the elm tree my father
planted thirty years ago
It stays rooted, holds my
childhood on a branch
that scrapes the bedroom window

The trucker
carrying cardboard boxes
stops
calls out
 “Don't forget that dog collar”
and drives away

**Adult
Second Place
By Jane Hilary**

Me in my brand new hiking boots—

Down through Morro Canyon
with Al the Bluesman pointing out black sage
and the best kindling, nibbling

young mustard leaves and laughing
at the kick. And him so proud showing me
the Indian ways where arrowheads and abalone

still lie undisturbed and small brown rabbits
bold as brass with white-winged kestrels
dropping from the sky

And me so glad to see the spring, glad
to breathe and happy to be walking
down to Crystal Cove.

And him remembering—
one year he climbed the cliff and found
a skeleton, red with ochre, upright in fetal position

as if to watch the changing sea. And me
thinking how those dead eyes so many years
must have tracked a thousand whales, watched

for their spouts as they wove the solitary path
from Baja to the Bering Sea. And on that thought
I turned—

and saw the whole humongous whale
held in a freeze-frame of whale and air and shimmering silver
massive above the vast ocean

**Adult
Third Place (tie)
By Sarah Vogel**

Becoming Mom

All those years ago
at sleepovers
where we shared secrets and stories
 late at night,
making attempts at confessing
 who we would grow up to be,
as if we could imagine it
from the turbulence of our adolescent lives,
which, looking back,
were really quite carefree,
removed as they were from the decisions we would
 one day
 eventually
grow in to.

How very strange, now, it seems to me
that as children
we thought about the children we would have,
teasing one another about numbers, and genders, and names,
all the while wondering
how old we would be when we'd first become Mom?

Imagine,
seeing past these thoughts
that rose from us like a cartoon bubble
from the script of the futures we were so intent to lay down.

I'm old enough now
to laugh
at the teenage girl
I once was
because the children I invented
in that long-ago script,
shared in the dark,
with girlfriends no longer known,
were not at all the children
who one day
were the children
who made a mom out of me.

**Adult
Third Place (tie)
By Jennifer Donnell**

Kiss The Sun

One day I'll walk about
with an imported
umbrella hat,
which will keep the sun
from my eyes,
and not mind that in
a hat like that
no one will notice
they are blue.

At the beach
I'll wear my swim suit of wrinkles,
but won't compare
my thighs
to thighs that haven't
earned the title.

I'll pick up driftwood,
keep it.
I won't get lost in guilty rationalization
about how, if everyone took a piece,
there wouldn't be any left.

I'll place the driftwood on my mantel,
make up a story
about wrestling it away from
a mermaid,
enjoy it for what it is.

I'll bet kids that they
can't skip stones
further and faster than I will.
I'll win and
laugh.

**High School
First Place
By Laura Pusey**

Casual Questions Like This

when at home
there are more
silences
than
arguments
you know
the conversation is coming

and now
as i sit on the couch
and the
cold tense silence
shrieks in my ears

they tell me

* *

the good news is
when my dad moved to his own apartment
he got me a cat
i named him
Purring
don't laugh
it's what you name your cat
when you're four

my grandma
keeps wanting to know
"who would you rather live with—
your mom or your dad?"

her tone is casual
as she tosses
the next pile
of smelly clothes
into the washing machine

her off-hand tone
makes the question worse
i know
she doesn't care
about the answer—
it is
one more dirty piece of laundry
she is tossing into the wash

i know
whatever i say
my answer
will come back to haunt me

and so
as soon as she looks away to
pour the bleach
i press my back against the wall
like a stealthy soldier in a movie
and slide away
a silent shadow

in my room,
i try
to look busy with my dolls

too busy
to answer
casual questions
like this.

**High School
Second Place
By Sarah Stoll**

We Architects of Greatness

A crack of blue sky blazes
Through a comforter of burning snow
Every five minutes
My mom's anxious muffled voice cracks the silence
"Is everyone okay? Can everyone breathe?"
"Yeah, mom..."
"Yup,"
"Uh-huh,"
We reply, exasperation rumbling through our voices
As our mittens scratch against snow
How could she understand that we were Architects of Greatness?
Creating the labyrinth of our imaginations
In a humble backyard
All she could see were
Three children burrowing in the snow

The stench of hot fleece mixes with my hot dragon breath
Steaming in clouds
I pause for a snack—Snowballs a la Ground
Bitter on my tongue, stinging my teeth
Until they ache with cold
I munch on, with the obliviousness of a child
Refusing to stop, even when
My dish trickles inside my mittens, freezing my fingers
Into fish sticks

Personify Me

In Front
Of my house
There is a
Tree

It's tall
With
Long branches
Says my father

He says
It's useless
For it bears
No fruit

I dare not
Say so now
But there will
Be the day

When the shade
And the life
Does not satisfy
My mediocre needs

The nightmare to me
In which we all must face
Is doing the most practical thing
When I've become full grown

Where the wood is
My sky
And the warmth to my
Skin

Until then I gaze
At my tree
And wonder if
I could remain a tree

Only one question
I have yet to answer is,
"Do I look at the trees?
Or do the trees look at me?"

**High School
Third Place
By Sean Pigden**

**6th – 7th – 8th Grade
First Place
By Lily Greenberg Call**

The Edge

She walks over
To the edge
“Come! Come!” it says
But I will fall (she thinks)
“Come! Come!” it says
And so she steps to the edge
And so.

**6th – 7th – 8th Grade
Second Place
By Braden Johnson**

Freedom

The vast endless sapphire liquid shimmers into eternity
As the waves engulf laughing children like the huge hand of God

A grass green boat sleeps in a hammock of water
Only to wake up when a wave rolls by

An old man with a white beard
That could swallow the Empire State Building
glumps on the boat
A fishing line in one hand
Hope in the other

He groans and throws his line in the dull gloomy water
and waits for a fish

The man looks out to the fading horizon and at the sparkling sea
And for a minute, he felt free

For him, freedom is
The ocean

**6th – 7th – 8th Grade
Third Place
By Rebecca Stoll**

A Letter to Cody

I see your bandit eyes
Staring at me from beneath the refrigerator
How small you are—no bigger than a bread roll
I remember the first week we met you
Your feet never touched the ground
We carried you around as if the ground were hot lava
Here's what I love about you:
The excitement in your eyes when I open the door
Your jingling collar
Your paws patting the ground
You barking at me when I'm annoying you like a big sister should
You smell like puppy—like Kibbles 'n Bits and warm fur and dirt
Mixed together it smells wonderful
Your wiry fur
Your warm, wet tongue lapping at my feet
Your nails scratching my legs
“Cody! Cody!”
You are our gift from Holland
You bark with a Dutch accent—I just know it

**4th – 5th Grade
First Place
By Gabriela Goffman**

Shot

One day, my mother cried, “It’s time to get a shot!”
So I ran for my life and begged I wouldn’t get caught

But of course she caught me fair and square
But I was so mad I pulled her hair

She dragged me to the car and locked me in the trunk
And then she screamed, “YOU WIMPY LITTLE PUNK!”

I picked the lock while we were on the road
I could only beg that her car would explode

I ran to my grandma’s house for protection from my mom
But instead of siding with me, Grandma dropped a bomb

“Little squirt, you need to obey your mom in all things
No matter how much torture this rule brings

And that includes going to the doctor to get a shot.”
So then I cried, “I THINK *NOT!*”

“Grandma Puckingsworth, I cannot go to the doctor today.
I am ashamed of you for talking this way.”

So then I ran right out of the house
And promptly got bitten by a vicious rabid mouse

And now that I got rabies on the spot
I know why I had to get that treacherous shot

**4th – 5th Grade
Second Place
By Sydney Pardo**

Bat Pie

Miss Ima Kidding of Crazy Cad
Makes the best Bat Pie I've ever had

Inside it are three juicy bats
As well as twenty purple cats

Two squares of toilet paper, ripped up well
My, oh my, isn't this pie swell?

A sprinkle of water from the pond next door
A little dirt from her mucky kitchen floor

Thirty-three dung beetles fresh from a rotting log
And three quarts of super smelly smog

A few liters of fresh ground pepper
A bite of skin from a moldy leper

A bear's growl, a rat's howl
Isn't this pie deliciously foul?

**4th – 5th Grade
Third Place
By Helene Mahmood**

Carnival

The noise of the rides sounds like thunder
With whooshes of air
We gobble ketchupy hot dogs, hot buttery popcorn
And cold cookie dough ice cream
As we walk inside a big balloon
Of noise and people shoving and cold
I am shoved by fuzzy sweaters,
Short purses and long purses and backpacks
It was really cold
I could taste the mist
I had to wear two jackets
A scarf, a hat, and mittens

**2nd – 3rd Grade
First Place
By Avalon Greenberg Call**

No One's Home On Main Street

Walking by the old family home,
I remember a house full of people.

With my mother calling my name.
And my sister playing on the lawn.

My Dad roasting dinner in the backyard.

But now there's just coals.

Orchids bloom.

But now there's just dirt...
leaves blowing through the sunlight.

I remember the red door with the golden knocker.
I remember the red pick up truck.

I remember my mother.
fading away like dry ice.

With my mother's last goodbye,
the leaves came rushing into the room.

No one's Home on Main Street.

**2nd – 3rd Grade
Second Place
By Jack Manor**

The Little Sky

I bounce the giant bright ball of the sun
Scorching the cement and burning my fingers
The cold sky weeps 'cause she lost the sun
Her tears drip on my head like a leaky hose
“I’m sorry,” I say to the sad little sky
I give the sun back and the sky turns bright
Despair flees
The grass sizzles
And the warm air is sweet strawberry pie

**2nd – 3rd Grade
Third Place
By Ella Judd**

The Tangles in My Hair

I can't get them out.

Those painful tangles in my hair.

When I try to brush them out,

They hurt so bad I shout about.

Oh, those painful tangles in my hair.

Just let me rip my hair out.

**1st Grade
First Place
By Clara Becker**

On the Swings

On the swings
there is a wind blowing
through my face
and through my hair,
wind blowing everywhere

When I close my eyes
I feel like I am
in outer space

I hold on tight
with all my might
preparing for my flight!

**1st Grade
Second Place
By Jackson Golden**

Beach

Kayak on rock

surfboards are in the water

The water crashes

**1st Grade
Third Place
By James Dobbs-Hildreth**

My Cat

My Cat

He is black as night

His claws are sharper than knives

Silky coat, it shines.

**Pre-K & Kindergarten
First Place
By Cole Judd**

My Crazy Cat Dizzy

My crazy cat Dizzy is either
a small lion or a big cat.

I can barely lift him.

I have to say, I have to say,

Somebody get me a tractor.

He's also crazy, very crazy.

He's way fast and not at all lazy

**Pre-K & Kindergarten
Second Place
By Sienna Arrobio**

I Was a Cat

I was a cat and I
sat on a mat
I was in the sun
Because my lunch was all done

**Pre-K & Kindergarten
Third Place**

**There was no Third Place entry for this
category this year.**