

I
BELIEVE
IN
SUPER
HEROES!



Winning Poems
from the 22nd Annual
John Gardiner Community Poetry Contest

Courtesy of
Friends of the Laguna Beach Library

Front cover design by Tina McMullen

Dedicated to the memory of



John Abbot Gardiner

Photo courtesy of Mary Hurlbut, used with permission.

John Abbot Gardiner 1947 - 2017

John Gardiner was born in Hawthorne, California, and was proud to be a fifth generation Californian. He studied at UC Irvine where he received a BA in theater arts and he was an early cast member at South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa. He lived in New York for several years, where he pursued his acting career. John loved acting in Shakespeare's plays. He appreciated the complexity of the language and, much to the delight of those who knew him, could recite passages and speeches from numerous plays from memory.

John was a long-time resident of Laguna Beach and was widely appreciated as a poet, actor, teacher and raconteur extraordinaire. He read at numerous venues throughout Southern California and was invited to read his poems in Prague, St. Petersburg, and Rio de Janeiro and especially treasured the invitation to read in Ireland, home of the Gardiner clan.

John was the much-beloved leader of the Laguna Poets Workshop for the last 15 years and emceed the library's annual Community Poetry Contest for many years. He was working on his 13th collection of poems when he died on October 24, 2017.

- Ann Brillhart and the Laguna Poetry Workshop

Mike Sprake
Master of Ceremonies
Public Reading of Winning Poems



Mike Sprake was born in Winchester, England. He studied at Winchester College of Art (1966-67) and studied sculpture at St Martin's College of Art, London, under the tutelage of many 'New Generation' sculptors (1967-70). He went on to study and make Lutes for some of the renowned lutenists of the time including Anthony Rooley and Nigel North. He has been involved with painting and writing since living in the USA, over forty years ago, and is a member of the Laguna Poetry Workshop. He has poems published in anthologies by Tebot Bach and Moontide Press and is currently working on a collection of his poems.



What is different about this year's competition you may well ask, the poets have a subject to evoke their creativity, they have their own solitude, a pen and paper just the way it has been since Shakespeare.

But because it is a competition for the community culminating in a social event to launch the booklet of winners, and we cannot, as you all know, rub shoulders at the library as we check out books or sit crammed around tables to study the treasures we pulled from the shelves, this year's virtual event is vastly different.

I have to congratulate the library staff for putting together this year's virtual poetry reading of the winning poems. There was never any doubt about how important it is to keep this creative spark alive in the community, to encourage creative contemplation and writing.

Hopefully, the recording will inspire younger writers to submit their work for next year's competition.

- Mike Sprake

**22nd Annual John Gardiner
Community Poetry Contest
Winners 2020**

Adult

1st Place:

Lojo Simon

Petition for a Homecoming

2nd Place:

Julie Angus

True Hero

3rd Place:

Rosalia Rodriguez Mattern

Where is Superman?

Ninth – Twelfth Grade

1st Place:

Daphne Boyd (*10th grade*)

Praise Be to Our Silent Heroes

2nd Place:

Christopher Lee (*9th grade*)

Super Haiku

3rd Place:

Grace Wilson (*11th grade*)

what we know to be superb

Sixth – Eighth Grade

1st Place:

Lili Bazargan (*7th grade*)

A Hero

2nd Place:

Owen Saukkola (*6th grade*)

Untitled

3rd Place:

Siena Lee (*8th grade*)

Superheroes

Third – Fifth Grade

1st Place:

Sophia Peca (*5th grade*)

Taking after Rose Lavelle

2nd Place:

Julia Cabral (*3rd grade*)

The Big Fight

3rd Place:

Ava Hulett (*4th grade*)

Pancakes

Preschool – Second Grade

1st Place:

Carter Chen (*2nd grade*)

I Believe in Superheroes

2nd Place:

Addison Lillestrand (*Kindergarten*)

Surat

3rd Place:

Owen Offield (*Kindergarten*)

GhostRider

Adult: 1st place



Lojo Simon

Petition for a Homecoming

You need not slay monsters, defy gravity, consume fire,
transform or teleport, time-travel, shape-shift, disappear and
reappear at will, nor read my mind;

You need not answer every question,
solve, fix, placate or erase my pain,
nor exhibit the force of a thousand horses, hauling the whole
of me;

You need not tire from tirelessness, grow weary from worry,
crush yourself with constant concern for the herk-and-jerk of
my daily tumble. Let leave of your need to be a superhero and
simply love me;

Love me more ordinary: your hand in mine, your head a tilt,
seeing, seeking, listening, ear-to-ear, eye-to-eye, lip-to-cheek,
lingering a moment in that breathing-in place before you leap.

Adult: 2nd place



Julie Angus
True Hero

Bone-tired, so weary,
Running on empty and caffeine.
Barely human, just functioning,
A life-saving machine.

Head covered, face obscured, while tired blue eyes,
Gaze intently above,
A determined mouth masked,
But not in disguise.

Healing hand swathed safely with blue plastic glove,
Caring, capable touch,
Slays fear and confusion,
With compassion and love.

Good battles evil, but not fought out on screen.
Blood cells duel valiantly,

Against most villainous virus,
As epic battle rages on, stealthily, unseen.

While the real-life superhero,
Wields the ultimate superpower,
And fearlessly rescues,
Hour after hour after hour.

Adult: 3rd place



Rosalia Rodriguez Mattern
Where is Superman?

Boom! Kapow! Bop! The battle to save the human race raged on.

From Metropolis to New York, Gotham to Wuhan,
From every corner of Earth people called for their comic
book heroes.

The CoronaVillain replicated with lethal ferocity.
Its powers seemed undefeatable,

Microscopic Invisibility and Total Infiltration decimated the
host body.

How do Earthlings fight this? Who will save them?
They looked to the clouds for a cape-wearing crusader.

But the skies were empty. The people lived in fear and anxiety.

Up, up and away! Out of the suffering and illness,
Rose a new brand of champion, not super beings from other planets.

Fellow Humans picked up the shield and bore the work of survival.

Their wardrobe: scrubs, delivery uniforms, grocery aprons, lab coats.

Sweaty Masks disguised the true heroism beneath.

Doing ordinary work in extraordinary circumstances.

Like Megazord interlocking together and towering above,
Leaving no one alone, onward together with diligence and compassion.

Declaring to the Universe that Planet Earth has its own Superheroes.

Ninth – Twelfth Grade: 1st place



Daphne Boyd

Praise Be to Our Silent Heroes

Masks cutting through their cheeks like knives
Leaving deep red dents in their wake
Their eyes droop and their hands are shaking
But onward they move
Sacrificing their wellness
Working tirelessly to save
The weak
The ill
The vulnerable

And no, they cannot fly
But they are healers
Their steady hands
Have saved more lives than magic ever could
We hope that soon
They may rest their weary bones

Knowing all the good they've done
But for now they keep fighting
As we watch on in awe
Forever grateful for our quiet heroes

Ninth – Twelfth Grade: 2nd place



Christopher Lee
Super Haiku

I believe in superheroes.
They've always been around-
Since long ago.

William Shakespeare-
Expanded our language,
And influenced writing.

Isaac Newton-
Drove science forward,
During a time of darkness

Ludwig van Beethoven-
Made music for the world,
While he was deaf

Pablo Picasso-
Protested violence with paint!

Against Nazis.

Martin Luther King Jr.,
Fought for civil rights using peace
To reach a dream.

That is why I believe.

Ninth – Twelfth Grade: 3rd place



Grace Wilson

what we know to be superb

do you believe in superheroes? or villains of the night?
do you believe in Santa Claus? or superstitious fright?
a billowing cape as red as Dorothy's shoe
or a self-made vine of silk out of the blue
are what we know to be superb, through and through.
a radioactive bite or faded kryptonite;

but you don't need to live in Gotham or turn green with
sudden rage
so what qualifies one to pick up a shield against evil or save
the damsel from a cage?
who are we to say what mask is right
the ink of a pen can equally start and end a fight;

because maybe it's even me or you
who can be superheroes, through and through.

Sixth – Eighth Grade: 1st place



Lili Bazargan

A Hero

A hero is brave, a hero is strong
A hero, risks their life for the lives of others
Yet, a hero wants no medal, just a pedal
To keep the world spinning peacefully
A hero is caring, a hero is daring
A hero does anything to prevent a heart from tearing
“Where can I find a hero?” one might ask
Why I would say, “that is such an easy task”
Look around you, they are always there
No matter their age, or the color of their hair
What matters, is their heart, and what lies deep within
Look beneath the surface and love will always win
Often we are blinded, by the veils covering our eyes
But, a hero helps us through the dark, guiding us to the light
Whenever we are lost, in life’s unpredictable maze
Heroes help us find our way, and take us out of the haze
Wherever you are, a hero will be there too

Going out go their way, to make your life better, for you
We are all heroes in this world, deep inside our hearts
When someone uses that inner beauty, that's when the magic
starts
Kindness spreads through our hearts, like a leaf floating
through the sky
Spreading the message of love, reminding us all why
A hero starts the chain, that is the key
But always remember, a hero wants no medal, just a pedal
To keep the world spinning peacefully

Sixth – Eighth Grade: 2nd place



Owen Saukkola
Untitled

Some superheroes don't wear a cape,

Doing things that cost them more than a scrape,

There are unlikely forms of being super,

Like the greatest teacher, or a helpful tutor,

Regular people make the world great,

Like your mom and dad, the ones that put food on your
plate,

Saving lives, there are doctors and nurses,

And policemen that return stolen purses,

Sometimes it takes just one act of being kind,
To take away someone's bad day or to open their mind,
We need to recognize these doers of good,
Notice their deeds, they've done what everyone should
A little distinguishment is what they need,
And they'll be people's role model, we'll take their lead,
It'll make this world a way better place,
And we will all be able to embrace,
When everyone's a superhero with a special superpower,
Kindness will grow larger than the world's tallest tower,
Negativity level will go straight to zero,
When everyone is kind and, you guessed it, a superhero!

Sixth – Eighth Grade: 3rd place



Siena Lee
Superheroes

I believe in the superheroes who help us everyday:
The doctors,
The nurses,
The firefighters,
The police,
The people who risk their lives for the safety of others.
I believe their kindness,
Their hope,
Their strength,
And their compassion
Make them superheroes.
Even though they may not fly,
Teleport,
Turn invisible,
Or shapeshift,
They *are* superheroes.
They show love and care for their communities.
They make the world a better place.

Third – Fifth Grade: 1st place



Sophia Peca
Taking after Rose Lavelle

Waking up early
So excited and nervous
Tying my laces tight
Walking on the field
The sun bright and full of energy I try to take in
Seeing my teammates
I can't wait to start
The whistle blows
My teammate passes me the ball
I sprint down the field
My team starts sprinting with me
I feel like my favorite soccer player
Rose Lavelle
My superhero
I give a perfect cross
Just like Rose would do
My teammate hits the ball with her laces

And there it goes
Hitting the net gracefully
Cheers roar from all around
The clock going fast
I score with 30 seconds left on the clock
Game over
We won!

Third – Fifth Grade: 2nd place



Julia Cabral
The Big Fight

Once upon a time I looked above the sky and I saw something.

A bird, a plane... it was something small and purple.

It was swinging from building to building.

I realized it was Batgirl!

And then I saw Batman, Superman, and Bumblebee.

They were fighting against the Penguin and his penguin army.

The superheroes got knocked out so it was all up to me.

I tackled the Penguin.

Once the general was down, all the army went down.

The city was safe.

Third – Fifth Grade: 3rd place



Ava Hulett
PANCAKES

Warm and delicious
Add apples and cinnamon
Butter and syrup

Preschool – Second Grade: 1st place



Carter Chen

I Believe in Superheroes

They are trying to figure out how to stop Coronavirus
They are the stars of everyday
They might be done by the month of May

They are...Scientists

They help the city be safe
They block crowds from the park
They are brave and not scared of a bark

They are... Policemen

They help us learn languages
And grow up to be smart
Some can even teach us art!

They are...Teachers

They help people get better
I have two, mom and dad
When they go to work I am sad

They are...Doctors

Preschool – Second Grade: 2nd place



Addison Lillestrand
Surat

Funny cat
She plays with toys
Crazy trick in the air
Sleeps on the bed with me
Likes to go on the roof of her cat house
I love her a lot.

Preschool – Second Grade: 3rd place



Owen Offield
Ghostrider

Big wooden roller coaster
Click. Click. Click. Up the hill
Shoooooooooo! Down the hill
Ride with mom. Hands up!
Look at the camera. Take a picture.
Four times.
Ghostrider

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*We look forward to your participation
in next year's
23rd Annual John Abbot Gardiner
Community Poetry Contest.*

Next year's theme is

“Between the Clouds and Sea”

Booklet and Prizes
Courtesy of
Friends of the Laguna Beach Library

2020

