

2015 Royal Palm Literary Award Winners



PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

*Out of Sight, Out of Mind:
A Writers' Guide to Mastering Viewpoint*

Educational/Informational. Ken Pelham. A manual for writers of fiction and nonfiction, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* teaches through example how to spot and fix all errors, great and small, in viewpoint. **Ken Pelham** likes candlelit dinners and long walks on the beach at sunset. Wait, that's the wrong bio. He writes stuff and yells at cats.

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR

Adrift

Mystery. Margaret Browning, writing as Micki Browning. Marine scientist Mer Cavallo struggles to debunk paranormal explanations after a ghost-hunting documentary leader on her dive vanishes from a Florida Keys shipwreck. **Micki Browning** worked in law enforcement for more than two decades and retired as a division commander. She splits her time between Colorado and the Florida Keys.

THE DAHRIS CLAIR MEMORIAL AWARD

Graceland Express

Screenplay/Stage Play/Teleplay. C.J. Godwin & Marie Vernon. Ten years since Elvis' death, Vangie O'Toole is determined to make a pilgrimage to Graceland, but she has to balance life with love and family issues, plus criminal activity. **C.J. Godwin** is a ghostwriter for small businesses in St. Augustine, Florida. She won a short story prize in *The New Yorker*, and has lived happily ever after. **Marie Vernon** has authored *Speaking of Our Past*, *The Garrison Church*, and novel *Graceland Express* co-authored *Deadly Lust*, *Deadly Charm*, *Above the Fold*, *Deadly Listings*, and award-winning short stories and poems.

BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Unpublished Historical Fiction

- 1st **The Hero Engine.** Dennis Cooper. When plans for the world's most dangerous weapons are stolen from the Library at Alexandria, it's up to the inventor's granddaughter, Petra, to recover them before it's too late.
- 2nd **The Saga of Asbjorn Thorleikson.** William Speir. A young Viking dreams of glory in battle. Trapped in an unfriendly land when his longship is burned, his dreams of glory give way to a fight for survival.

Published Humor/Satire (Fiction)

- 1st **Boca Undercover.** Miriam Potocky, writing as Miriam Auerbach. Harley-riding, wisecracking female private eye Dirty Harriet goes undercover in a posh drug-rehab spa to investigate the mysterious deaths of teenage patients.

Published Mainstream/Literary

- 1st **The Clock Strikes Midnight.** Joan C. Curtis. Full of twists and surprises, The Clock Strikes Midnight is a race against time in a quest for revenge and atonement.
- 2nd **St. Nic, Inc.** Sam Staley, writing as SR Staley. Nicole Klaas must save her vast North Pole operation from an assault by a rogue Drug Enforcement Agent convinced it's an international drug cartel.
- 3rd **Passing through Perfect.** Bette Lee Crosby. It's 1946. A time of war and upheaval. When Benjamin Church feels the sting of social injustice he learns Perfect is a place you only get to pass through.

Unpublished Mainstream/Literary

- 1st **Lie Very Still.** C.J. Godwin. On the fringe of the Everglades, a young woman falls in love with a married painter. When an Indian from her past threatens, she has to fight for her life.
- 2nd **The Road Back From Broken.** Carrie Morgan. A wounded soldier's estranged relationship with his family can be healed only by confronting the very memories he wants to forget and by accepting his role in a comrade's death.
- 3rd **Diamond Ridge.** Daniel Dundon. A Midwest lawyer becomes involved in a confrontation with a white supremacy group following a tense standoff between the FBI and a survivalist family that explodes into a national story.

Published Mystery

- 1st **Evangeline's Miracle.** Lisa Buie-Collard. Evangeline didn't know she was waiting for a miracle, until one found her.
- 2nd **Martini Regrets.** Phyllis Smallman. This is a "before you start this book, make sure you have time to finish it in one sitting" book. The suspense is overwhelming and just when you think Sherri's situation can't get any worse, it does. *Martini Regrets* is a fantastic crime drama.
- 3rd **Workshop Til You Drop.** Evelyn Sabbag, writing as E. Sabbag. Rex dreams of publication. But a heartless critic was murdered and Rex is the prime suspect. Can he find the real killer? Or will his books be written from jail?

Unpublished Mystery

- 1st **Adrift.** Margaret Browning, writing as Micki Browning. Marine scientist Mer Cavallo struggles to debunk paranormal explanations after a ghost-hunting documentary leader on her dive vanishes from a Florida Keys shipwreck.
- 2nd **Grey to Black.** Susan Boyd. When PI Sam Troop discovers his partner's car accident was murder, his investigation delves into the underbelly of high society and two more killings.
- 3rd **AppleJacked!** Liz Boeger. Forced to investigate the murder of a teacher, a headstrong school principal learns that while it may take a village to raise a child, it may also take your life.

Published Novella

- 1st **Sewing Holes.** Darlyn Finch Kuhn. A Southern Gothic novel set in the 1970s Jacksonville about a girl grappling with complex family relationships, death, and desertion, with characters that ring true and a story that transcends time.
- 2nd **The Roman Phalera—The Vines of Bordessi, Book One.** Roberta-diane Perna, Ph.D., writing as Robbi Perna. Will the wisps of a dream and a lovely woman help Carlo overcome his grief or is his destiny a life alone.
- 3rd **Manteo.** Laura Andrews, writing as Elle Andrews Patt. 1587. Roanoke becomes ground zero in the cultural clash between English colonists and Native Americans. The alien probe, Prometheus, watches as native Manteo's love and loyalty is shredded between them.

Unpublished Novella

- 1st **Eclipse of the Souls.** Patricia Crumpler. If earth folks wanted to control the plague-mutated individuals they dispatched to the interstellar ship *Benevolence*, they shouldn't have sent Arlen Rowell to be the freaks' Liaison Officer.

Published Romance

- 1st **The Rivergrass Legacy.** John Chaplick. A Colombian drug cartel's use of a Florida tropical fish hatchery to launder dirty money forces a Boston aristocrat to join forces with rural Southern farmers to solve a mystery.

Unpublished Romance

- 1st **Allure of the Incubus.** Evelyn Sabbag, writing as E. Sabbag. Jennifer has found love. Unfortunately, an incubus has found her. Does Jennifer possess the strength to resist his evil advances? Or will she join him in dark desires and death?

Published Science Fiction

- 1st **Carnival Tricks.** Amelia Waters, writing as Jade Kerrion. A mercenary who hates mutants falls in love with a secret telekinetic who needs his help to stay alive.

Published Thriller/Suspense

- 1st **Lily of Peru.** David C. Edmonds. A USF professor's struggle to get the woman he loves out of Peru during the dark days of the Shining Path insurrection.
- 2nd **The Care Card.** Darryl Bollinger. After his fiancée unexpectedly dies in a Florida hospital, a determined hedge fund manager searches for answers and battles insurance companies to expose the rationing of health care.
- 3rd **Deadly Loop.** Keith Gockenbach. Fired caddy Andy Marsh's friend Tim is murdered. With the help of Tim's lovely sister, Andy struggles to regain his confidence, rescue a kidnapped girl, and find the killers.

Unpublished Thriller/Suspense

- 1st **We All Fall Down.** Kim Hackett. A young woman trying to win over her fiancé's mother discovers she's a criminal. Instead of gaining her approval, she makes an enemy and becomes a target.
- 2nd **The Girl in the Glyphs.** (tie) David C. Edmonds. A young archaeologist struggles to unravel the mysteries of a glyph cave she discovers in Nicaragua, resolve her love interests, and outwit a nasty band of tomb looters.
- 2nd **The Purple Canary.** (tie) Kimberly Park. A female EPA scientist engages in a David vs. Goliath battle against a biochemical giant to save honeybees whose extinction would wipe out two thirds of our food supply.

Published Women's Fiction

- 1st **Always Magnolia.** Dianna Dann Narciso, writing as Dianna Dann. Jack Beaumont has forgotten everything...even Magnolia. Wanting him back, she reweaves his life for him. But not every bad thing can be fixed by telling a different story.

Unpublished Women's Fiction

- 1st **Sprinter.** Bria Burton. An Olympic race. A murder. A daughter without a mother who dreams of professional running. But no matter how fast she runs, Riley Sprinter can't escape her past.
- 2nd **First Class to America.** Faun Joyce Senatro. An Italian immigrant mother, seeking protection from an abusive husband, devises ways to make a better future for her children, with conflicting help from friends and a man named Jakob.
- 3rd **The Year Mrs. Cooper Got Out More.** Meredith A. Rutter, writing as Meredith Marple. An agoraphobic empty nester, in a small town in southern coastal Maine, unwittingly plants a seed of information in the wrong soil on her first attempt to get out more.

FICTION FOR YOUTH

Published Chapter Book

- 1st **Wayward Cat Finds a Home.** Dianna Dann Narciso, writing as Dana Trantham. Wayward Cat goes home from the adoption center with Miss Lady, one of the volunteers. But she already has a cat. Can Wayward convince Squeakers to let him stay?
- 2nd **Ship Shape.** D.G. Stern. When a boat is reported missing from the boat show, Upton is recruited to apply his detective skills. He wastes no time sniffing out clues leading to a surprising discovery.
- 3rd **Bennie & Bonnie.** Darrell House. Bennie and Bonnie, twin beetles, are transported far from home. Complicated by distance and predators, new friends and self-reliance allows them to mature and ultimately succeed in their quest.

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

- 1st **Within Emerald Forests.** Heather Hamel. When a boy is lost in the woods of a cryptozoological vortex, he is kidnapped by the Florida Bigfoot, and must battle the secrets of the swamp to return home.

Unpublished Middle-Grade Fiction

- 1st **The Hero Engine.** Dennis Cooper. When plans for the world's most dangerous weapons are stolen from the Library at Alexandria, it's up to the inventor's granddaughter, Petra, to recover them before it's too late.
- 2nd **The Milky Way Rising.** Sharon E. Johnson. Cassie longs for a permanent home. But when she discovers an old mansion, Cassie realizes that the key to her future lies in the secret of her family's past.
- 3rd **Under Sapphire Skies.** Heather Hamel. After her brother and sister are kidnapped by cryptozoological creatures, their older sister must find the famed unicorn horn in order to reunite her family.

Published Young Adult / New Adult

- 1st **The Saffron Crocus.** Alison McMahan. Venice, 1643. Isabella wants to sing in Monteverdi's Choir, but only boys are allowed. Isabella's singing teacher, Margherita, is murdered. Now the killer wants Isabella and Margherita's handsome son, Rafaele.
- 2nd **Ananais and the Sawgrass Mysteries.** Carol Kline. When twelve-year-old Ananais is kidnapped, his three buddies find themselves in deep trouble. Is there truth to the Legend of Wolf Girl? Did she save him?
- 3rd **Valthea: I Read People.** C.K. Mallick. Will sixteen-year-old Valthea's ability to see visions of people's past help or harm finding her natural parents, rising to circus stardom, and falling in love?

Unpublished Young Adult / New Adult

- 1st **Cow in the Doorway.** Gino Bardi. Gony's goals for his freshman year were simple: escape the draft, get high, find a girlfriend. But then his life happened.
- 2nd **Expectation Blvd.** Jennie Jarvis. A high school senior is recruited by a former Hollywood superstar to shoot a film over spring break, but the experience isn't as glamorous as he thought it would be.

SCREENPLAY/STAGE PLAY/TELEPLAY

Unproduced

- 1st **Graceland Express.** C.J. Godwin & Marie Vernon. Ten years since Elvis' death, Vangie O'Toole is determined to make a pilgrimage to Graceland, but she has to balance life with love and family issues, plus criminal activity.

- 2nd **Native Land: Lost in the Mystery of Time.** Nadine Vaughan. Williams. *Native Land: Lost in the Mystery of Time*, follows Catherine into a darkly beautiful Florida forest, where she must confront racial intolerance, find human resilience, and reclaim her lost life.

BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

Published Autobiography/Memoir

- 1st **One Woman, Four Decades, Eight Wishes.** Marilyn Murray Willison. A memoir that examines a former journalist's self-created mantra and how it affected her life and career.

Published Educational/Informational

- 1st **Out of Sight, Out of Mind: A Writers' Guide to Mastering Viewpoint.** Ken Pelham. A manual for writers of fiction and nonfiction, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind* teaches through example how to spot and fix all errors, great and small, in viewpoint.
- 2nd **Crafting the Character Arc: A Practical Guide to Character Creation and Development.** Jennie Jarvis. A practical guide to character creation and development that helps a writer navigate a character's growth as they journey through a narrative.

Published Travel

- 1st **Postcards From Poland.** Joseph Kuhn Carey. A multi-generational family journey to Poland in 2011 is captured in 41 fascinating, colorful "travel poems" that celebrate the sights and sounds of mysterious, magical Krakow and Zakopane.

GENERAL CATCH-ALL

Published

- 1st **The Strange Case of Lord Byron's Lover.** Victor DiGenti, writing as Parker Francis. Mary Shelley recounts a series of perplexing events during her visit with Lord Byron—a visit that resulted in the creation of the Frankenstein novel, but also uncovered a remarkable mystery.

SHORT FICTION

Published Children's

- 1st **I Beg Your Pardon, But This is My Garden!** Stephen Kindland. Paul Irving Pickett, a very wise cricket, settles an argument by a group of bugs who each claim to own the garden they all depend on for food and shelter.

- 2nd **Sometimes...I Blurt!** Tracy Bryan. Do you ever blurt? You say something out loud...without thinking about what you're going to say? Learn some tricks to help you when you feel like you're going to blurt!
- 3rd **Ethel the Backyard Dog.** Maddie Lock. Ethel is a lonely dog living in her owner's backyard, when she jumps the fence one day and has an adventure that brings her the love she wants.

Unpublished Children's

- 1st **Put Away Your Phone.** Tracy Bryan. Emma is an eight-year-old girl who doesn't understand why grown-ups are always looking into their phones or talking on them! Follow Emma as she counts cellphones all through the zoo.
- 2nd **Opal Octopus.** Christine Yarbour. Opal Octopus has tender feet and life on a prickly coral reef is making matters worse. This is an alphabet book with a colorful cast of sea creature characters.
- 3rd **That thing in the hole.** Linda Leggett. Join Sammy Sleuth as he "closes" another case. Finding several animals staring down into a dark hole, he uses his detective skills to help them find out what's in there.

Published Flash Fiction

- 1st **Insecurity Complex.** Amelia Waters, writing as Jade Kerrion. A ghost makes a last-ditch attempt to be noticed by a disbelieving house owner.
- 2nd **In the Eye of the Beholder.** Virginia Nygard. A man discovers that what is a boon to one is a curse to another.
- 3rd **Requiem.** Dana J. Summers. On his only day off, a man takes extreme measures with his ailing TV set, while the Army-Navy football game progresses behind flipping images and static.

Unpublished Flash Fiction

- 1st **Always a Part of You.** Amelia Waters, writing as Jade Kerrion. A "Dear Mommy" letter from a five-day-old baby.
- 2nd **Mother of Pearl.** Joan King. At the end of WWI, a woman struggles to feed her family while wondering if her husband will return from the war and still love her.
- 3rd **Elegy for Manny.** Anu Varma Panchal. Manny, the cynic among Santa's steeds, muses on the grisly incident that soured him on Christmas and ponders on the newest arrival to the North Pole.

Published Short Story

- 1st **Lilith.** Antonio Simon, Jr. A hermit's life is turned upside-down by the arrival of a mysterious woman. Only time will tell if Lilith is a heroine, a victim, or a monster.

- 2nd **The Madison Project.** John Hope. When Carter travels to a deceased scientist’s isolated laboratory, he uncovers a secret experimental project that goes deeper than he ever imagined.
- 3rd **The Pisces Affair.** Daco Aufferorde, writing as Daco. CIA operative Jordan Jakes, heroine of Daco’s #1 bestseller *The Libra Affair*, meets Prometheus when the Secretary of State becomes the target of terrorists at a lavish dinner in Dubai.

Unpublished Short Story

- 1st **The Cortical Reaction.** Linda Barbosa. Two months after falling in love with Robbie, I met his gorgeous older brother. It nearly ruined everything. How could a simple introduction threaten to knock my trajectory off kilter?
- 2nd **Steak.** Patricia A. Crumpler. Working with his quirky girlfriend, off-world rancher Ivan Cleveland faces life’s bummers to save themselves, their neighbors, and their planet from trickery and evil.
- 3rd **Everything I Ever Wanted.** Lynn E. Welsh. “Everything I Ever Wanted” is the story of once-upon-a-time best friends who have to discover where to draw the line between loyalty to the past and love in the present.

Unpublished Poetry

- 1st **Repetitions of the Insignificant.** Phyllis McKinley. Who knew there was inspiration for a poem in cleaning the toilet?
- 2nd **Seeing Life.** Virginia Nygard. A poet’s observation of the blending of past and present memories in the elderly.
- 3rd **Spring, Lisa’s First.** Karen Dillon. A springtime reverie.

SHORT NONFICTION

Published Creative Nonfiction

- 1st **Leap of Faith.** Linda Barbosa. A middle-aged scaredy-cat takes fate into her own hands by jumping out of a perfectly good airplane.

Unpublished Creative Nonfiction

- 1st **Subby Says.** Fern Goodman. Robyn thought she had finally found a real best friend, but her subconscious wasn’t so sure. Unfortunately, her Subby was right.
- 2nd **A Prom Dress for Elizabeth.** Joan Levy. Mother envisions a frilly prom gown of *her* dreams for daughter’s first prom. Unknown to Mother, daughter wants a smokin’ hot dress. A scheme, conflict, and tears ensue. Who wins?