



Proctor Academy's Laurie Zimmerman reads her prize-winning poem "Husband" at an April reception hosted by the Lake Sunapee Region Center for the Arts, which sponsored a local competition in celebration of National Poetry Month. Zimmerman also read the winning poem "Landscapes" written by her student, Proctor senior Sawyer Meegan, who was on a school field trip at the time. Photo and caption: Larry Chase

Laurie Zimmerman and Her Student Capture Poetry Prizes

Laurie publishes Bright Exit in August

By Larry Chase, for the *Beacon*

A Proctor Academy English teacher and one of her students are among the eight winners in the third annual poetry competition sponsored in March by the Lake Sunapee Region Center for the Arts.

Writing on this year's theme, "Creating art from life experience," Andover resident Laurie Zimmerman was one of two adult winners for her poem entitled *Husband*. In the high-school category, one of the two winners was Zimmerman's student Sawyer Meegan, a Proctor senior and Newbury resident, for his poem *Landscapes*.

The winners were honored at an April reception at the Lake Sunapee Protective Association's Knowlton House in Sunapee Harbor, where

their winning entries were read. The winning poems were also published in a 12-page program, and the winners received an award certificate and a gift card for book purchases provided by the New London Rotary Club and the Morgan Hill Bookstore in New London.

Zimmerman's winning effort will be included in her first full-length poetry collection, entitled *Bright Exit*, scheduled for publication by the Quercus Review Press in August.

In addition to the adult and high-school categories, elementary- and middle-school winners were also honored at the reception. Overall, there were more than 50 entries, according to the Center for the Arts. The winning entries were selected by New Hampshire poet Martha Carlson-Bradley, whose five collections of work include the 2013 volume *Sea Called Fruitfulness*. 

LANDSCAPES by Sawyer Meegan

The slight red blotch of a kite on the bright mix of white and light blue in the sky with the fresh smell in the air of yellow and brown leaves covering the ground running in the wind like tumbleweed ever rolling across the landscape on the red dry dirt of the Midwest causing an ever-growing brown cloud of dust that continues to grow until it dominates the horizon with its girth, an intimidating menace that expands until you can no longer observe it but only exist within it like a plane flying through a rainy dark cloud at 20,000 feet, full of drowsy people simply waiting for time to pass as they sink further into their seats settling down in the dent that has been slowly ground into the gray musty cushion through years of travelers sitting bored or asleep waiting for the sleek jet to soar over thousands of miles of land to reach its destination.



HUSBAND by Laurie Zimmerman

After you picked fruit all morning
in the orchards of your new family
you walked under the wet poplars
into town, opened your book
at a small podium on a worn brown desk
and began to teach conversational English.

I'm angry you had to walk miles in that
cold rain, angry you stood on your feet
for eight hours of classes, then walked home
in the freezing dark to eat potato broth.
My memories of you are old:

a head full of dense curls, lean body
hunched over your guitar or
crouched behind homeplate.

For many years you've been ill, and for
many years you haven't been my husband.

When light rises each day on my side
of the ocean and touches your empty side
of the bed, I open my eyes and think

you've already lived more
than half my day to come.

It's a comfort, this way you've always had
of walking ahead of me. I get up,
step through each minute, move

across the gold floorboards, this minute
dress, this minute wash my face, this minute
drink coffee you sent for Christmas, this minute
stand before the peeling window, see how
the vapors lift almost invisibly from the patches
of ground you used to seed for us each spring.

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