

2024 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award Results and Poem

Andrea England, a poet from Kalamazoo, MI, is the winner of the 2024 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, sponsored by Carlow University's Madwomen in the Attic Creative Writing Workshops.

Named for the late poet and Carlow professor Patricia Dobler, who directed the Women's Center for Creative Writing and the Madwomen in the Attic workshops, this annual contest is open to women writers aged 40 and over who have not published a full-length book of poetry.

England's poem, "Portrait of Endangered Sturgeon Release Party," with its singular, distinct voice and its willingness to risk, distinguished itself from a field of 486 entries by 204 poets.

Poet Jan Beatty, the judge of the 2024 Dobler Award, wrote this about England's poem:

"'Portrait of Endangered Sturgeon Release Party' is a poem of unpredictable turns and surprising language. The question is asked: "Are words a part of the body?" In these lines of cutting precision, the answer is a clear yes. From head transplants to shoulders ripped from sockets, it's otherworldly to find ourselves swimming with our own imperfections, pondering our river of losses in this bold, extraordinary poem."

As winner of the 2024 Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, England will receive \$1,000; a public reading in Pittsburgh, PA, with judge Jan Beatty in Spring 2025; round-trip travel and lodging for her public reading; and publication of her winning poem in *Voices from the Attic*,

2024's honorable mentions are "Collector of Teeth" by Lindsey Stinnett from Knoxville, TN; "New World Disorder" by Linda Cooper from Ronald, WA; and "Stepping out of the shadow" by Karen Lee Hones from San Francisco, CA.

The remaining 2024 finalists are: "It Only Happened One Time" by Kelly Q. Anderson from Glencoe, IL; "I know I'm supposed to believe the body is not an apology" by Elliott batTzedek from Philadelphia, PA; "A Black Woman's Cry" by Carmen dela Cruz from Spokane, WA; "Mama Took Grandma to Vote for Kennedy" by Monic Ductan from Cookeville, TN; "I Want: A Cento" by Dr. Shari Crane Fox from San Jose, CA; "What We Bear" by Anya Kirshbaum from Seattle, WA; and "Drowning" by Sasha Reese from Pittsburgh, PA.

Andrea England is the mother of daughters, dogs, plants, and other miscellaneous ideas. She is co-editor of the anthology *Scientists and Poets #Resist* (Brill Press, 2019) and the author of two chapbooks, *Other Geographies* (Creative Justice Press, 2017, winner of the Creative Justice Poetry Prize), and *Inventory of a Field* (Finishing Line Press, 2014). Her work has most recently appeared or is forthcoming in the *I-70 Review*, *Potomac Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Comstock Review*, and *Cutthroat, A Journal of the Arts*. She teaches

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graduate literature and creative writing for Southern New Hampshire University's College of Online and Continuing Education and is the writing specialist for Western Michigan University's athletic department. If looking and listening closely, you can find her running 5ks, hiking in the woods, and singing to her dog.

Jan Beatty is the author of seven collections of poetry, most recently *Dragstripping*, *The Body Wars*, and *Jackknife: New and Selected Poems*, which won the Paterson Poetry Prize. Her memoir, *American Bastard*, won the Red Hen Nonfiction Prize. Beatty worked as a waitress, in abortion clinics, and in maximum security prisons. She is professor emerita at Carlow University, where she directed the MFA and creative writing programs and the Madwomen in the Attic writing workshops.

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Portrait of Endangered Sturgeon Release Party

Spine with an S-curve, that question mark of bone or
the cartilage of nose pierced by hoops and studs.

I have a dream in which my dying mother rips
her shoulder from the socket like a zombie and

throws it in the laundry chute. Are words a part
of the body? Bottom feeders make the most

expensive caviar. When Mary was born, I wished
(in secret) for an extra digit. I wear a muska around

my neck even though I know it's cheating.
What about head transplants? I've had that dream

too, the one in which a body wakes on a steel slab
in the coldest of waters, and the head unhinged,

flies with the lightness of a kickboard, face-plants
in my hands, the surgeon screaming, *don't drop*

it, I'll be ruined! Mothers stitch each fissure of their
daughters' skulls, queens of the dinosaurs. In my aluminum

bucket, three sturgeon raised in plastic tubs.
Notochords, barbels, the parts that summon

song in the thickets of throats. The scutes
of our (im)perfections released into the river.