

## BSFS Poetry Contest 2020 Winners

### Wake

Even water babies grow old.  
With slime-slicked hair  
and slug-white skin,  
wrinkled and puckered,  
they nap on bottom muck.

Shrieks and splash startle them,  
stirring silt and sludge.  
They peer through murky water  
toward the light  
at thrashing color and firm flesh.

Sometimes they reach.

“It’s just a fish,” swimmers say  
at that unexpected touch.  
Most kick away.

But want and grasp perish last.

Shoreliners shake their heavy heads.  
“He was such a strong swimmer.”

Liz Hufford  
1st Place – © 2020  
Phoenix, AZ

### Depths of Time and Innumerable Stars

My father discovers the universe  
of my books, and grows small again.  
He is seventy, and nothing in his life  
has prepared him for these paperback

beasts, armed with serifs lean  
as paring knives, squalor of other worlds,  
vast armadas crossing the void  
to land in these volumes of Heinlein,

Butler, Tolkien, Le Guin.  
He picks up *The Silmarillion*,  
heavy as a debt, spine soft  
as an old pair of boots, and begins

to read. Lamps are lit in the forests  
of Arda, and my father, watching  
from a distant shore, a child among  
monsters, a mouse among owls,

looks wildly about.

Preston Stone  
2nd Place – © 2020  
Baltimore, MD

### Light Voyager

Across the universe, I travel in the form of light, visiting your planet,  
pausing to touch the leaves and grasses, splashing to settle there  
a moment, tangling my particles and waves with those of the full  
moon, lighting this lover’s glade, that poet’s tea party, and the  
midnight TV screen of a lonely librarian petting her cats.

Roaming her night-yard  
seeking foxes, she finds heart:  
her own moon and star

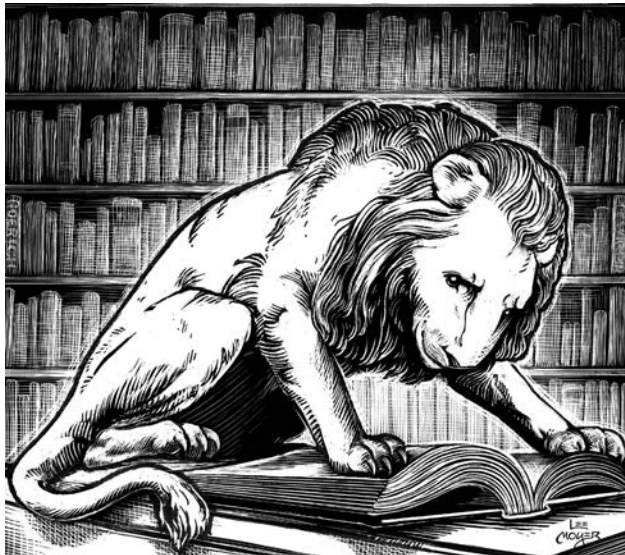
Adele Gardner  
3rd Place – © 2020  
Newport News, VA

## BSFS Poetry Contest 2020 Winners

### Lilith

She strides through fires with bare feet  
 And silent eyes  
 Her taloned fingers slice through the darkness  
 And claim it for her own  
 She finds what makes you human  
 And whispers it to you  
 With a voice like your favourite song  
 With a voice like a chilling battle cry  
 Until you climb the walls  
 Her smiles are sadistic  
 They send shivers up your spine  
 She treats pain like  
 A precious artefact  
 She has the secrets of the universe  
 Wrapped around her body like tinsel  
 She has steel-capped teeth  
 That drip with prayer  
 Her serpent tongue tastes the air  
 And her eyes flare wide  
 You have never seen anything more terrifying  
 Or more beautiful  
 Than this girl

Quinn Brown  
 Special Young Writers Award – © 2020  
 Adelaide, Australia



Library Lion

© 2020 Lee Moyer

### Valkyrie Before Rain

She was a plain Jane bird  
 Silvery-blue billed crow  
 Who croak sang like a damp  
 Wind through a snapped pond reed  
 Her faithful audience  
 Was a half-dead, contorted tree  
 Internally deaf to all her ponderings  
 The day she took to wing  
 A gray rain soaked the tree  
 Ousting her to freedom  
 And she learned that the sky  
 Was better company

Megan M. Yu  
 Honorable Mention – © 2020  
 Lawrenceville, GA

### Good Night

The moon's bones  
 protrude through pale skin.  
 Wind plies its bow  
 across the tree-branch violins.  
 A wolf howls from everywhere but near.

Pale light never seemed more itinerant.  
 And stars appear like sinking river stones.  
 A shape moves through a wilderness  
 more dreamlike than memory.  
 It melts into your retina  
 a moment before sleeping.

John Grey  
 Honorable Mention – © 2020  
 Johnston, RI

## BSFS Poetry Contest 2020 Winners

### About the Winning Poets

**Liz Hufford** (*First Place*)—As a creative writing teacher, Liz Hufford felt compelled to explore multiple genres to better serve diverse student aspirations. As a result, she has published poetry, flash fiction, articles, creative nonfiction, essays, and short stories. Her work has appeared in venues from trade magazines to SF anthologies to literary journals.

Speculative fiction/poetry intrigues her. In 2017 she was a finalist for the Roswell Award for Short Science Fiction. In 2019 she published a SF poem in *Palu Texni* and was nominated for a Pushcart prize for her flash fiction.

Curiosity is her prime directive.

**Preston Stone** (*Second Place*)—Preston Stone holds an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College, and was a 2005 Winter Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. In 2013, he was shortlisted for the Montreal International Poetry Prize. He lives in Baltimore.

**Adele Gardner** (*Third Place*)—Adele Gardner ([www.gardnercastle.com](http://www.gardnercastle.com)) is the award-winning creator of over 400 published poems, stories, illustrations, songs, and essays. She's a professional member of writing and art organizations that include SCBWI, SFWA, HWA, SFPA, Sisters in Crime, and the Hampton Arts League. With master's degrees in English literature and library science, she's a professional editor and librarian, as well as literary executor for her father, Dr. Delbert R. Gardner.

**Quinn Brown** (*Special Young Writers Award*)—Quinn Brown is a 17-year-old author based in Adelaide, Australia. When he is not fretting about the state of the world or bingeing Netflix, he writes for young adults. His work is based in the genres of fantasy, horror, and romance. He has previously been published by Write4Fun, Stormy Island Publishing, North Eastern Writer's Inc, and *F\*EMS zine*. His poetry has also been featured at Draw Your (S)words, the Feast Festival, the Fringe Festival, and local protests defending the rights of marginalised groups.

**Megan M. Yu** (*Honorable Mention*)—Megan M. Yu currently resides in Georgia with her husband, their child and cat. She earned a BA in English Writing and continues to ponder the meaning of the universe. Sometimes she even manages a poem.

**John Grey** (*Honorable Mention*)—John Grey is an Australian poet and US resident. He was recently published in *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Dalhousie Review* and *Qwerty* with work upcoming in *Blueline*, *Willard and Maple* and *Clade Song*.