

Steve Miller BSFS Annual Poetry Contest 2025 Winners

Rosamond

tell me the truth & do not whisper it.

- i. she has a name, a name pressed into her hair
by the lips of her mother, sitting on the rocker,
cradling her to her chest and murmuring lullabies

she has a name which her father loudly proclaimed
as he stood at the head of the banquet table
face all flushed with wine and euphoria

— a name that was cursed with resentment that night
when the witch declared her death by spindle
at the youthful age of fifteen years old

- ii. when she pricked her finger, when she fell asleep
there was no blush to her cheeks or warm tint to her
mouth

a layer of dust was added to the sheets of her bed
and her fingers became tethered with cobwebs
and in the nearly hundred years of sleep
her dress sank further and further upon
her bony limbs, her ashen skin, her bluish lips
chapped and still parted in the poor cry of mother

- iii. he wasn't her savior
so don't call him such
it was almost the hundredth year
he just had to rush before she awoke

so don't tell me she enchanted him
that she was so beautiful he just had to
there was no knowing look in her eyes
and not telling smile in her expression
the only thing he saw and wanted
was that she couldn't run away
all she could ever be to him
was some helpless & nameless
sleeping beauty

Thehara Ubayawardena

1st Place – © 2025

Pittsford, NY, USA

The Second Drowning

Storm-wracked clouds vanish
Acid rains dissolve to mist
Sunlight scars the land
Heat-drunk oceans start to churn
Life takes root in dust
Steel machines reshape the world
Terraformers dream
Of a world reborn in green
Till the diggers find
Ruins buried in the stone
Shattered citadels
Temples crushed by molten winds
Skeletons of glass
Traced with fractured human hands
No alien past
But our own forgotten graves
Venus was our first
A garden choked by our greed
We, Ouroboros' Children

Vin enzo Veit a

2nd Place –   2025

Port Saint Lucie, FL, USA

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The Quantum Griot

In the heart of the desert, where sands thrum
with an otherworldly energy,
a griot sits, her voice weaving a tapestry
of possibility.

Her words are threads in a quantum field,
entangled and superposed,
each syllable a doorway to a new reality.

She speaks not of the past, but of futures
yet unwritten, her stories branching
and collapsing like wave functions
in the vast expanse of the unknown.

Listen closely, and you'll hear the echoes
of your own reflections,
versions of you who stayed, who left,
who never were.

The griot's voice is a mirror, a kaleidoscope,
a map of all the paths you could have taken.

Her tales are of cities that burst forth
like mirages, only to dissolve
into the sands;
of ships that sail the void
on sails woven from starlight and possibility.

As she speaks, the desert air vibrates
with anticipation,
the dunes holding their breath
like a quantum system
in a state of superposition.

And when she falls silent, the universe shivers,
waiting for the next story
to bloom like a supernova,
illuminating the dark
with the fire of what might be.

In this realm, the griot's voice is the only constant,
a beacon guiding us
through the infinite possibilities
of the quantum desert.

And we, the listeners, are the particles
in her quantum field,
our stories entangled with hers,
our futures unfolding
like the petals of a flower
in the desert sun.

Abdulmalik Ummuayman Folasade
3rd Place – © 2025
Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Caliban Bones

His body had laid in a bed of yellow sand.
I recognized him from his imagined image:
a hundred portraits in oils, greasepaint,
and latex sculpted in imitation of flesh,
overacted on the airwaves, film, and stage.

I discovered his bones in the shallows
of green-shadowed waters lapping over
the rocks and weedy strand.

He was washed in the warm sea:
smooth yellow bones, a skull, a hand

so bulky so massive, so overgrown,
so architectural in their structure
that at first, I thought a prehistoric beast
had been uncovered by the tempest's rage
and I keenly dragged the great assemblage

ashore. I hoped to make my fortune,
to trade in dragon, dinosaur, or mammoth.
I thought to auction them to a museum
or perhaps a private collector, a connoisseur,
a dilettante billionaire.

But I found he had been recently bound:
the ulna and radius were locked
by marine growths, by coral and limestone
by starfish and sea-change and pearl;
and around the wrist the broad backs

of bronze serpents curled: shackles green
with decay and welded with heavy chains
that stretched far away to join some anchor.
Still, in death, enslaved by the azure water:
full-fathom five in the shark-bite bay.

Oliver Smith

Honorable Mention – © 2025

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, UK

Eclipsing Eternity

We thought we knew the cosmos,
its vastness, a map of stars and silence.
But now, aboard Solara,
we drift through dimensions unnamed,
where space bends like thought,
and time is no longer a river but an ocean.

The hull hums with intent—
half metal, part machine,
something gifted, creative, alive.
It speaks in frequencies only felt,
vibrations that ripple through flesh.
We call it “space,”
but it is more:
a consciousness without form,
an intelligence beyond comprehension.

Each star we pass beckons us,
each nebula agrees to entertain us.
And as we travel farther from home,
we realize this journey isn't familiar,
it is a whole lot different from our studies.

What if what lies between worlds
is not emptiness,
but the infinite mind of creation itself?
What if every atom carries a fragment of truth,
and we are merely passengers on its breath?

Christian Emecheta

Honorable Mention – © 2025

Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

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The Open Secret of Doom

As vague and quiet as a plague,
Ready to drain the life from our beautiful sky,
It lingers—this anxiety we feel,
A gnawing fear that civilization will collapse.

A tender, sweet, piercing sadness,
Not just for ourselves,
But for those we have brought into the world.

Like a lump in our throats,
A whisper that it might be cancer,
Yet it tightens its noose—not just around us,
But around our children, our unborn descendants,
Pulling them toward a future darker than this.

A frightened anger,
Leaving us in mourning,
A doom we feel even while awake,
A terror that invades our dreams.

We cannot shake this unease,
This sense of impending ruin.
Our inner sanctum of normalcy is cracking,
Our worst fears are slipping into reality.

And so, the open secret of doom finds us everywhere.

It creeps through the wires, the screens, the airwaves,
A whisper in the static, a glitch in the feed.
We are watched, we are counted, we are weighed
But when the scales tip, who will be spared?

The sky dims, not with twilight, but with smoke,
Not with stars, but with satellites blinking red,
A silent countdown only the machines understand.

The cities hum with a lifeless breath,
Neon veins flickering, arteries clogged with rust.
The streets forget our footsteps,
The buildings stand like gravestones.

And still, we pretend the world turns as it should,
That the clockwork sun will rise again,
That we are not ghosts rehearsing for our end.

But in the hush before the sirens scream,
Before the ground quakes beneath the weight of its sins,
We feel it in our bones—
The unraveling has begun.

Victoria Damilola
Youth Award – © 2025
Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

About the Winning Poets

Thehara Ubayawardena (First Place)—Thehara Ubayawardena is a poet, prose writer, and essayist from New York. They have won several awards for their writing, including recognition from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and the John Locke Essay competition. Besides writing, Thehara loves cats, psychology, and Sherlock Holmes.

Vin enzo Veit a (Second Place)—Vin enzo Veit a is a speculative fiction writer exploring the intersections of technology, people, and power through the lens of haunted systems, fractured identities, and ideological collapse.

Abdulmalik Ummuayman Folasade (Third Place)—Abdulmalik Ummuayman Folasade is a 23-year-old medical laboratory science student at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho. As a poet, her work is characterized by its freestyle flair, clever use of puns, and inspiration drawn from current events and personal experiences. Influenced by the lyrical posts of YourQuote, the timeless works of William Shakespeare, and the ever-shifting tides of mood, Abdulmalik’s poetry is a dynamic reflection of her unique voice and perspective.

Victoria Damilola (Youth Award)—I have always been a lover of the novel. I started writing two years ago and I don’t think I can do without putting something down in a day.

Consistency is my key **Christian Emecheta (Honorable Mention)**—Christian Emecheta is a writer, illustrator, and computer scientist. His fiction and poetry have appeared in many online publications and magazines such as *Arts Lounge Magazine*, *Writefluence Anthology*, *9th Edition of Chinua Achebe Poetry/Essay Anthology*, *Synchronized Chaos Online Journal*, *The Decolonial Passage*, *Mocking Owl Roost*, and elsewhere. He writes songs when inspired by a tune or lyrics. Christian enjoys reading, watching movies, and getting lost in his imagination. He hopes to travel the world.

Oliver Smith (Honorable Mention)—Oliver Smith is a visual artist and writer from Cheltenham, UK. He is inspired by Tristan Tzara, J G Ballard, and Max Ernst; by the poetry of chance encounters, by frenzied rocks towering above the silent swamp; by unlikely collisions between place and myth and memory.

