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ECU's Award-winning Literary Magazine Provides Unique Opportunity to Art Students

The *North Carolina Literary Review* (NCLR) once again held a competition for ECU School of Art and Design illustration students to visually interpret two poems set for publication in an upcoming issue. The collaboration was organized by NCLR Art Editor Diane Rodman and ECU Art Professor Joan Mansfield. Juried by Diane Rodman, first and second place digitally submitted artworks were chosen for publication with two poems to appear in [NCLR Online 2018](#).

Joan Mansfield, an Associate Professor and Area Coordinator of the Illustration concentration in the ECU School of Art and Design, has worked with and consulted with the editors of NCLR since its beginning, including being the cover artist in 2011. She recalled that in its early years of publication, student work from the ECU School of Art and Design had sometimes been published to complement the literary content. After the quarter-century celebration of 2016, she decided to contact the editor to ask if she would be interested in publishing illustration student work in NCLR once again.

NCLR Editor Margaret Bauer and Art Editor Diane Rodman enthusiastically embraced the idea and Rodman proposed an art competition for Mansfield's fall 2016 art students. Subsequently, during the fall semester of 2016, Mansfield assigned her mid-level illustration class to respond visually to a soon to be published poem by James Applewhite, a native of eastern North Carolina. Rodman visited the class to talk to the students about the poem. The works were submitted digitally for jurying and Rodman selected the piece by Paul S. Kelly, III as best suited the poem. It appears in [NCLR Online 2017](#).

The editors and Mansfield decided to hold the competition again in fall 2017, this time with poems by two of the finalists in NCLR's James Applewhite Poetry Prize competition, which had been slated for publication in *NCLR Online 2018*. The art, for which the size and media were open, was once again juried by Rodman, who selected two top choices of student work for each poem.

For the poem "Fairytale Rules for the 21st Century Woman" by Christina Clark, a recent MFA graduate of UNC Wilmington, Rodman chose Rachel Elia's piece for first place, saying "I loved her references to classic characteristics of fairy tales in general, but more specifically to classic fairy tale themes in works like 'Aladdin and the Magic Lamp,' the Wicked Witch in *The Wizard of Oz*, the Grimm Brothers' tale 'The Spirit in the Bottle,' just to name a few. The depiction of the Death's-head Hawk Moth is a great supernatural touch. This image opens itself to limitless interpretations by the viewer."

And for "a very close second," Rodman picked the work submitted by Alec Campbell-Barner, saying, "The excellent use of vanishing point perspective, as well as the tightness of space, along with what appears to be a one-lane road, play into the theme of the poem." Clark's poem is one of three from her submission selected for publication. The other two, the competition's winning poem and another selected for honorable mention, will appear in the 2018 print issue due out this summer.

For the poem "Farm Nights" by Annie Frazier, a Raleigh native who now lives in Florida, Rodman selected Jencyne East's submission, saying, "The soft glow of the flashlight plays up the depths of the

shadows and puts more emphasis on the artist's choice of perspective – the spider, cleverly presenting the idea that the spiders are always watching, everywhere, even outside of the headlamp's beam.”

Phoebe Lewis received second place for her response to “Farm Nights.” Rodman noted of her piece, “Viewers of this work enter the scene. They stand beside the speaker in the barn, look up and out the barn door, and see far across the distant field and sky. The illusion of depth and space created by the artist is the making of her fine illustration.” Frazier’s poem is one of three selected for publication. The other two finalists will appear in *NCLR* 2018, one of which was selected for honorable mention. Frazier has an MFA from Spalding University. In 2015, one of her submissions to the Applewhite competition received second place and was published in *NCLR* 2016.

Regarding the *NCLR*/Student Art Collaboration Mansfield said, “As a class project, it has been a great opportunity for illustration students to produce work for a real-world publication with the potential to have their work published. The venue is a very engaging one that allows students to create images that complement the written word rather than to compete with outstanding writing.”

After more than 30 years teaching at ECU, Mansfield is retiring at the end of the spring 2018 semester, but the *NCLR* editors expect she will continue her involvement in *NCLR*. ###