

**Jesse White Announces Winners of 13th Annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition**

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White awarded poets from Chicago and Carbondale as this year's winners of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award in the 13th annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition.

Anita Olivia Koester of Chicago was awarded first place for her poem "Avowal." Faisal Mohyuddin also of Chicago received second place for his poem "Ella Fitzgerald, Entering Chicago by Train, Remembers Her Mother's Voice." Bryce Berkowitz of Carbondale is the third-place winner for his poem "Explain Yourself." The winners read their poems and received the awards during a ceremony at the Illinois State Library.

"I created the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition to promote creative writing and provide an opportunity to recognize new literary talent in the state," White said. "Illinois has a long and rich literary heritage, and these poets are adding to the tradition established by legendary poet Gwendolyn Brooks. Great poems have the ability to enrich and enhance our lives, and I'm pleased to congratulate this year's talented winners."

The competition is named for the late Pulitzer Prize-winning Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks and is co-sponsored by the Illinois Center for the Book and Kevin Stein, Illinois Poet Laureate.

The winning poems are available to read at [http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center\\_for\\_the\\_book/](http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/center_for_the_book/). Also, the winning poems will be submitted for possible publication in "Ninth Letter," "RHINO" and "Quiddity" magazines and "Poetic License Press" publications.

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