

THE 2013 DELL MAGAZINES AWARD

Although it was raining when I landed in Orlando, Florida, for the 2013 International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, the weather soon brightened. This was a relief for the Dell Magazines Award for Undergraduate Excellence in Science Fiction and Fantasy Writing finalists who had chosen to spend their spring breaks at the conference. As usual, my co-judge, Rick Wilber, and I had picked our finalists from a huge pool of talented authors. The winner receives an expense-paid trip to Florida and a five hundred dollar first prize that is co-sponsored by Dell Magazines and the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts and is supported by the School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida. The award is given out each year at the conference.

The finalists are determined by a blind read, but we were thrilled to discover that this year's first prize went to a very familiar face. While Lara Donnelly received the 2013 award for her powerful tale about settlers going "To the Dogs" this was her fifth year to "medal" in the contest. Lara was an honorable mention in 2009, 2010, and 2011, and she was last year's third runner-up. Lara graduated from Wright State University in June 2012, and promptly attended the Clarion Writers Workshop. She was eligible for our award because her entry was written during the spring of her senior year. Lara is now working on an urban fantasy novel and has recently moved to Louisville, Kentucky.

Our first runner-up, Alexandra Gürel of Princeton University, was unable to collect her certificate for "Fantasmas Maravilhosas" in person. Fortunately, Rich Larson, our second runner-up, was able to make the trip all the way from the University of Alberta. Rich was born in Galmi, Niger, and raised in Maradi until his family moved to Canada when he was ten. A student of French and Spanish, Rich has already sold fiction to several professional markets. We were pleased to encourage his nascent career with our award for "Atrophy."

Our third runner-up, Caitlin Higgins, is a senior studying physics at Cornell University. Although she may eventually study finance or law, Caitlin would like to be an author like her favorite writers, Robin Hobb and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. She received her award for "The Changling."

Unfortunately, two of our four honorable mentions could not be in attendance—William Tarnell is a student at Vanderbilt University and the author of "Pig and Plume" while Therese Arkenberg studies at Carroll University. Therese had to miss the conference because she was on a student study tour to Ghana, but was excited to place with "The Astrologer's Telling." Luckily, we were able to meet our two other finalists. Alissa Hartenbaum is a third-year student at Georgia Tech studying computational media. Her major includes courses in computer science, computer graphics, and communications. She heard about the Dell Award in a course on creative writing with Kathleen Ann Goonan. We were pleased that that introduction gave us the chance to read her story "The Boy in the Bell Tower." Rachel Lister, a student at High Point University, was already planning to present a paper at the conference on "A City of Front and Back: Duality and the Pursuit of Identity in Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean's *MirrorMask*" when she discovered that she would also be attending to collect her award for "The Boundary Wall."

Last year's moving award-winning story by Rebekah Baldrige, "The Superposi-



Photo credit: Francesca Myman, Locus Publications.

Left to right: Rachel Lister, Alissa Hartenbaum, Rick Wilber, Lara Donnelly, Sheila Williams, Caitlin Higgins, and Rich Larson

tion,” is now up on our website at <http://www.asimovs.com/pdfs/Stories/Su-perposition.pdf>.

Our new award recipients were shown the ropes by three former finalists, Miah Saunders, Rebecca McNulty, and E. Lily Yu. They were also warmly welcomed by conference guests of honor Neil Gaiman and Kij Johnson as well as a number of leading authors. They dined with Kit Reed, Kathleen Ann Goonan, Joe Haldeman, and Nick DiChario. In addition, they had the chance to meet James Patrick Kelly, Suzy McKee Charnas, Robert J. Sawyer, Ted Chiang, Stephen R. Donaldson, Andy Duncan, John Kessel, Peter Straub, Delia Sherman, Patricia McKillip, Will Ludwigsen, David Lunde, Steven Erikson, Theodora Goss, James Morrow, Ellen Klages, Sandra McDonald, Christopher Barzak, and many others.

You can visit with previous finalists and current writers at our Facebook site. Search for the **Dell Magazines Award** or go directly to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/manage/#!/pages/Dell-Magazines-Award/177319923776>

We are actively looking for next year’s winner. The deadline for submissions is Monday, January 6, 2014. All full-time undergraduate students at any accredited university or college are eligible. The award is not limited to unpublished authors, but all submissions must be previously unpublished and unsold, and they should be from 1,000 to 10,000 words long.

Before entering the contest, contact Rick Wilber for more information, rules, and manuscript guidelines. He can be reached care of:

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Next year, our twentieth award winner will be announced at the 2014 Conference on the Fantastic, in the pages of *Asimov's Science Fiction* magazine, and on our website.