Winners of the 2016 Lincoln County Poetry Contest

**Adult Category**
1st place – Aurora Newman, Libby for “Mistress”
2nd place – Tom Lyons, Libby for “Island Lake”
3rd place – Robert DeBorde, Libby for “The Plow”
Honorable mention – Julie Waters-Barcomb, Libby for “Words”

**Youth Category**
1st place – Rowan Lentz, Troy for “One Day I’ll Fly Away”
2nd place – Tim Carvey, Libby for “The Life of a Chainsaw”
3rd place – Austin Swartzenberger, Libby for “Spring”
Honorable mention – Rowan Lentz, Troy for “Nothingness”
Honorable mention – Alyssa Bales, Libby for “Skeletons”

**Junior Category**
1st place – Peyton Scofield, Libby for “Springtime”
2nd place – Lucia Schermerhorn, Eureka for “To Have 4 Arms”
3rd place – LaTasha Chase, Libby for “Life as a Cowgirl”
Honorable mention – Annie Barnes, Libby for “Flowers”
Honorable mention – Phoenix Vincent, Libby for “Eiffel Tower”
Mistress
by Aurora Newman

She can’t help that she loves
taken things. Her heart is a trinket box
full of shoplifted lusts and loves,
borrowed whispers, plagiarized
clutching. Full with being chosen.

Sometimes, she imagines a future where the mouths
of all those wives, lipstick-creased and bitter,
lean near the ears of their children. They whisper her name.
The children take up arms—little toy shovels, cap guns, lighted swords.
A small, angry army descending on her doorstep,
their mothers’ honor a shield on their thin chests.
They want to hate her, their milk teeth exposed in a snarl.

She sees their acrimony, but is unafraid. She urges them,
tiny defenders of matrimony, to remember:
Mommy said it’s good to share.
They are confused. She welcomes them inside, offers
milk and cookies, candies and cakes. Satiated,
high on sweetness, sugar-drunk, they let slip:
Sometimes mommy is too bossy. Sometimes, mommy has too many rules.
She smiles, licks the icing from her finger,
remembers their fathers.
Island Lake
by Tom Lyons

For the moment mirrors
the ivory and mauve approaching storm.
Gasses smelling of decay
rise and bubble with the liquid yellow
of perch surfacing for bugs.

Ripples weave the green trees
together with the darkening sky.
A train distantly thunders and I imagine
it's a train traveling
the track that once ran among
the trees just west of the lake.

Shadows of ancestors' gather  cattail roots
with sticks and slimy toes; others nearby
fish with nets.

Tonight, I'll share my catch of perch
with their Ghosts.
The Plow
by Robert DeBorde

Warm breezes melt the winter snow.
New grasses reach toward the sun
that bathes the sky and all below
to signal plowing time’s begun.

The Big Gray stands and paws the sod,
impatient for the start of toil.
His dappled flanks and shoulders broad
pull straight, true furrows in the soil.

The steel blade of the turning plow
lies shining in the morning light.
The blacksmith’s hammer did endow
its power to take the turning bite.

The plowman grips the handles’ wood,
worn smooth from toil ‘neath guiding hands,
that cleared this place where trees once stood
to till where there was meadowland.

the ready blade bites sure and deep,
and brings to light the resting soil
that holds the gift it cannot keep
to feed new roots as they uncoil.
The sharp blade cleaves the rich dark earth
as ships’ bows plow the ocean waves,
releasing scents of life’s rebirth—
aromas that the plowman craves.

Now soaring birds with darting wings
arrive to taste the fresh-turned sod,
and find a feast of many things
that hide within each broken clod.

And all is well, the plowman thinks;
there’s treasure in each new plowed row.
But nature’s lost another link—
the worth of trees and green meadows.

For with each gain, some treasure’s lost.
And who’s to say what’s right or wrong,
or judge the benefit or cost
of lush plowed fields or wild bird’s song.
Words
by Julie Waters-Barcomb

Words are no longer my friends;
they do not come to me willingly....

I have forgotten old acquaintances,
those with rich, round vowels and sharp consonants,
one's tasting like soft smooth pudding..
those that melted like meringue

I used to know what it is that holds tea,
what sound rustling leaves make,
and what that cold, white drink is called

I delighted in knowing that special word,
smiled at quirks and oddities of language,
relished new expressions....

but now,

Now I am so sad, so fearful.
I have lost more than nouns.
I have lost my name
One Day I’ll Fly Away
by Rowan Lentz

One day I’ll fly away
far away from here
to where the skies crack
where only wind holds me back

I’ll sprout my wings
small and beautiful
colorful and light
up I’ll go
into the night

In the treetops I hide
That’s where I’ll reside

Fluttering
Wondering
oh lovely
adventuring

Pixie dust
and magical might
I’ll be
one little sprite

I’ll sleep in the flowers
and play in the grass
my eyes will reflect off the water
just like glass

My excitement’ll grow
as I travel higher
no situation
too dire
With the world at my side
never will I cry

One day
I’ll fly away
just like
the other fey
The Life of a Chainsaw

by Tim Carvey

The life of a chainsaw is pretty easy.
I just sit here in my dark case.
That smells of gas, oil, and pine chips.
I get extremely lonely sometimes,
I just want to get out and cut some wood.

Sometimes I go four or five days
Or at least till the weekend
Before my owner loads me up
With the gas I need to run.
He sharpens my teeth to razor points.

Off we go deep into the dark woods.
Down an old bumpy dirt Forest Service road
Searching for a tree not too big or too small.
We find the perfect tree standing tall on a hillside.
Now it is time for me to go to work on this perfect tree.

Brmm, Brmm my owner starts me up nice and easy.
I feel the fuel and oil rushing through me.
I feel my teeth ripping through the tough side of the tree.
The tree starts to saw and tip, then it falls down the hillside
Towards our old beat up Ford pickup truck.

I cut the tree into blocks that we can put in our fireplace,
That will keep us warm during the long cold winter nights.
My owner shuts me off and starts to split the wood.
Back in the dark, damp, and musty-smelling case I will go
‘Til the next time that my owner finds another perfect tree.
Spring
by Austin Swartzenberger

The wooden logger sat high upon his post
Overlooking the green fields spotted with dandelions.
   The sun shines high above all,
As a soft, gentle breeze carries the birdsongs
   To the students trying to capture the spirit
      Of the spring.
The creek flows gently over the rocks
   As the whistling wind carries the birds
High above the students trying to capture the spirit
      Of the spring
Nothingness
by Rowan Lentz

I died screaming
but no one heard my wails

I was lost
and never found

I was a broken toy
that could not be fixed

they clipped my wings
before I could fly

I shattered and fell
up not down

Into the thin air
into the stars
Into the dark
where I belong

Ghost of wings
wrap around me
surround me
heal me

My spirit soared
deeper into the abyss

We only have ourselves
and the nothingness
Youth

Skeletons
by Alyssa Bales

We are all just skeletons
Man, woman, black, white
One step away from hellions
Gay, straight, all of life

We have the same structure
Blood, skin, and bone
We all deserve a future
And sometimes feel alone

I’ve had enough of prejudice
Humans love to hate
When will someone listen to us?
Will somebody open the gate?

We are all just skeletons
One step away from hellions.
Springtime
by Peyton Scofield

It is spring, it is spring where the blossoms bloom the grass is green.
Where there is roses there is love.
When you think of spring you think of flowers blossoming in a prairie.
When you think of spring you think fresh blue water and waterfalls in the distance.
When you think of spring you think of animals and flowers all around you.

It is spring, it is spring
To Have 4 Arms
by Lucia Schermerhorn

It would be hard to have four arms but at the same time fun.

You would bump into things but you sure would get more done.

When you are playing baseball you could be holding two bats.

You could be holding two types of hats.

Having four arms would be hard but who knows?

It sure would be easier to tie bows.
Life as a Cowgirl
by LaTasha Chase

It was late in the afternoon.
Just the animals and me,
But late at night there was the glow of the moon.
I forgotten about all those buzzin’ bees,
They been in that tree since way back when.
My horse Bluejeans has been in that barn since forever now,
In the barn there be ten talkative men.

There be about 10-20 cows.
We all go dancing on Friday nights.
At the cowgirl and cowboy dance we all bow,
You might hear that old wolf howl at night.
That silly little cat always meows,
I have my animals, my cat, dog, horse, cows and my sheep.

Sleeping under the stars at night.
You might see a tumbleweed,
Sometimes you might have a nice little campfire at midnight,
You might even see a little girl making a necklace out of beads.

Sometimes at night my Bluejeans and I go on little rides
And we go on little rides up mountains.
When we’re tired we usually stop and take a nap,
Sometimes we even stop by water fountains.

Do you ever wonder how many stars there are in the sky.
Have you ever just stopped somewhere and looked at the view.
The last time I’ve seen the sky this bright was in the late August afternoon.

I just bought a mule.
That old mule looked very sick, tired and worn out like he’d had no food.
I gotten’ him from my neighbors that live down the road from here. The mule I bought from
my neighbors had died a few months after I got him.
The dogs were barking just because they missed the old mule.
**Flowers**  
by Annie Barnes

flowers  
sweet, tall  
buzzing, bending, growing  
bees, flies, spiders, bugs  
living, watching, making  
pollen, smelly  
plant
Eiffel Tower
by Phoenix Vincent

The Eiffel Tower will be there forever and beyond as cool as the wind, as high as the clouds, as beautiful as a bird, as pretty as a flower.