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## Cal Poly Undergrad Wins Academy of American Poets Award

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- English undergraduate Dylan Bowes won first place in Cal Poly's 2008 Academy of American Poets Contest. Bowes, from Fair Oaks, will receive a $100 award for his poem "The Magic Kingdom."

Bowes' poem conveys a speaker's memory of being at Disneyland with his parents at the very moment he realizes they are not magical creatures -- but flawed human beings deserving of sympathy. This year's contest judge, poet Ralph Black, called it "a meticulously crafted poem -- so full of internal rhymes and clattering language."

"Dylan's use of sound in this poem is utterly remarkable," said Cal Poly English Professor and contest director Kevin Clark. "Not only does the music of the poem draw you in, but it enhances the poem's bittersweet experience about growing up."

Stephen Cohen, an English grad student and Santa Maria resident, earned honorable mention for his poem "Unburied." The poem, set in New Orleans, uses the image of a decaying home with a cracked foundation as a metaphor for a failing relationship. As the relationship worsens, the memory of its past virtue fades.

Black said the poem was "so full of surprises, each line takes you deeper in and farther out. When Robert Frost said 'No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader,' he had something like Cohen's poem in mind."

Clark said Cohen's poem "is marked by a wonderful, texturizing sound that helps communicate the poem's point of view."

Black is author of "Turning over the Earth" and is co-director of creative writing at SUNY Brockport and director of the Brockport Writer's Forum

The contest is sponsored by the Cal Poly English Department and the Academy of American Poets, an advocate for the art of poetry. The winning poem will be published in the next year's issue of Moebius, Cal Poly's College of Liberal Arts' literary journal.

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