

The Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest



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Where “WWW” means “Wretched Writers Welcome”

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2010 Contest Winners

Winner



-  For the first month of Ricardo and Felicity’s affair, they greeted one another at every stolen rendezvous with a kiss – a lengthy, ravenous kiss, Ricardo lapping and sucking at Felicity’s mouth as if she were a giant cage-mounted water bottle and he were the world’s thirstiest gerbil. — Molly Ringle, Seattle, WA

The winner of the 2010 Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest is [Molly Ringle](#) of Seattle, Washington. The author of one published and two soon-to-be-published novels, Molly Ringle only writes bad fiction when she fails at good fiction. She’d rather not say how often this happens. She lives in Seattle with her family, and her vices include uncalled-for moments of sarcasm, excessive consumption of Nutella, and an unladylike avidity for the raunchy films of Mel Brooks.

Molly Ringle is the 28th grand prize winner of the contest that that began at San Jose State University in 1982. She is also the second consecutive Washingtonian to win the contest, last year’s being [David McKenzie](#).

Runner-Up:

- Through the verdant plains of North Umbria walked Waylon Oggleshorpe and, as he walked, the clouds whispered his name, the birds of the air sang his praises, and the beasts of the fields from smallest to greatest said, “There goes the most noble among men” – in other words, a typical stroll for a schizophrenic ventriloquist with delusions of grandeur. — Tom Wallace, Columbia, SC

Winner: Adventure



- The blazing equatorial sun beat down on Simon's head and shoulders as he dug feverishly in the hot sand with the ivory shoe-horn his mother had given him before the homecoming game with Taft, when the field was so wet that he'd lost his low-tops seven times in the cold sucking mud. — Adam McDonough, Reedsburgh, WI

Runner-Up:

- When Hru-Kar, the alpha-ranking male of the silver-backed gorilla tribe finished unleashing simian hell on Lt. Cavendish, the once handsome young soldier from Her Majesty's 47th Regiment resembled nothing so much as a crumpled up piece of khaki-colored construction paper that had been dipped in La Victoria chunky salsa. — Greg Homer, Placerville, CA

Winner: Children's Literature



- "Please Mr. Fox, don't take your magic back to the forest, it is needed here in Twigsville!" pleaded little Isabel, but Mr. Fox was unconcerned as he smugly loped back into the woods without answering a word knowing well that his magic was only going to be used to make sure his forest would be annexed into the neighboring community of Leaftown where the property values were much higher. — Pete Watkins, Broken Arrow, OK

Winner: Detective



- She walked into my office wearing a body that would make a man write bad checks, but in this paperless age you would first have to obtain her ABA Routing Transit Number and Account Number and then disable your own Overdraft Protection in order to do so. — [Steve Lynch](#), San Marcos, CA

Runner-Up

- As Holmes, who had a nose for danger, quietly fingered the bloody knife and eyed the various body parts strewn along the dark, deserted highway, he placed his ear to the ground and, with his heart in his throat, silently mouthed to his companion, "Arm yourself, Watson, there is an evil hand afoot ahead." — Dennis Pearce, Lexington, KY

Winner: Fantasy Fiction



- The wood nymph fairies blissfully pranced in the morning light past the glistening dewdrops on the meadow thistles by the Old Mill, ignorant of the daily slaughter that occurred just behind its lichen-encrusted walls, twin 20-ton mill stones savagely ripping apart the husks of wheat seed, gleefully smearing the starchy entrails across their dour granite faces in unspeakable botanical horror and carnage – but that’s not our story; ours is about fairies! — Rick Cheeseman, Waconia, MN

Winner: Historical Fiction



- In Southwestern Germany just east of the Luxemburg border and north of France where history pitted various related Hapsburg Royals against each other and the Archbishops of Trier, the Abbots of St. Maximin, various members of the nobility, and mobs of axe-bearing villagers, there stands a ruin whose building stones mostly were carted off to build other buildings. — Mary Ann R Unger, Ewing, NJ

Runner-Up:

- The band of pre-humans departed the cave in search of solace from the omnipresent dangers found there knowing that it meant survival of their kind, though they probably didn’t understand it intellectually since their brains were so small and undeveloped but fundamentally they understood that they didn’t like big animals that ate them. — Mike Mayfield, Austin, TX

Winner: Purple Prose



- The dark, drafty old house was lopsided and decrepit, leaning in on itself, the way an aging possum carrying a very heavy, overcooked drumstick in his mouth might list to one side if he were also favoring a torn Achilles tendon, assuming possums have them. — Scott Davis Jones, Valley Village, CA

Runner-Up:

- The wind whispering through the pine trees and the sun reflecting off the surface of Lake Tahoe like a scattering of diamonds was an idyllic setting, while to the south the same sun struggled to penetrate a sky

choked with farm dust and car exhaust over Bakersfield, a town spread over the lower San Joaquin Valley like a brown stain on a wino's trousers, which is where, unfortunately, this story takes place. — Dennis Doberneck, Paso Robles, CA

Dishonorable Mentions:

- Elaine was a big woman, and in her tiny Smart car, stakeouts were always hard for her, especially in the August sun where the humidity made her massive thighs, under her lightweight cotton dress, stick together like two walrus in heat. — Derek Renfro, Ringgold, GA
- The Zinfandel poured pinkly from the bottle, like a stream of urine seven hours after eating a bowl of borscht. — Alf Seegert, Salt Lake City, UT

Winner: Romance



- “Trent, I love you,” Fiona murmured, and her nostrils flared at the faint trace of her lover’s masculine scent, sending her heart racing and her mind dreaming of the life they would live together, alternating sumptuous world cruises with long, romantic interludes in the mansion on his private island, alone together except for the maids, the cook, the butler, and Dirk and Rafael, the hard-bodied pool boys. — [Paul Chafe](#), Toronto, ON

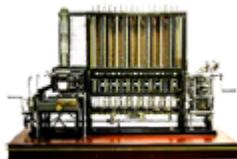
Runner-Up:

- She purred sensually, oozing allure that was resisted only by his realization as an entomologist that the protein dust on the couch from the filing of her crimson nails was now being devoured by dust mites in a clicking, ferocious, ecstatic frenzy. — [Jonathan Blay](#), Bedford, NS, Canada

Dishonorable Mention:

- Cynthia had washed her hands of Philip McIntyre – not like you wash your hands in a public restroom when everyone is watching you to see if you washed your hands but like washing your hands after you have been working in the garden and there is dirt under your fingernails – dirt like Philip McIntyre. — Linda Boatright, Omaha, NE

Winner: Science Fiction



- t’Bleen and Golxxm squelched their way romantically along the slough beach beneath the three Sommodian moons, their eye-stalks occasionally touching, and tenderly belched sweet nothings like, “I don’t think I’ve ever had such a charming evening,” and, “Say, would you like to gnaw that hunk of suppurating tissue off my dorsal appendage – it really itches.” — Greg Homer, Placerville, CA

Winner: Vile Puns



- It was a risky production unlike any mounted prior on the Met stage, the orchestra first imitating the perpetually beating heart of a man walled-in while in pursuit of wine, and then a soprano singing the plaintive aria of a barely alive woman stuffed up a chimney as her ancestral home was destroyed; however, it certainly was Opera Poe. — Amy Torchinsky, Greensboro NC

Runner-Up

- As Jeffrey Hicks, the event safety coordinator for the Renaissance Festival finished posting the revised standards for weaponry, he thought of the day an unleashed dog wandered onto the jousting field, causing the rider from Indianapolis to stop short, impaling himself on the butt of his spear, and the following day's newspaper headline which read: "Stray Injures Indy Knight, Hicks Changing Lances." — Brad Taylor, Iowa City, IA

Dishonorable Mention:

- Wearing his new slacks from L.L. Bean, and entering the pen to feed his three big dogs their usual three cans of dog food, some of which ended up on his new pants, Kevin then left the house to attend a revival screening of *Serpico* with *Alpo* chinos. — Greg Homer, Placerville, CA

Winner: Western



- He walked into the bar and bristled when all eyes fell upon him – perhaps because his build was so short and so wide, or maybe it was the odor that lingered about him from so many days and nights spent in the wilds, but it may just have been because no one had ever seen a porcupine in a bar before. — Linda Boatright, Omaha, NE

Miscellaneous Dishonorable Mentions

- His chest glistened like a pumpkin seed, either one fresh out of the pumpkin but with all the orange strands of pumpkin flesh removed, or one straight out of the oven after being coated in just the right amount of oil and then baked; the point is that it was smooth, fairly shiny, and that color. — Jesse Kolman, Phoenix, AZ
- The life-saving salve had not arrived to help Dr. Sybil Carter dress the mutant killer bee wounds because landslides blocked roads, the rivers were jammed by earthquake debris, and even the jungle foot paths were clogged with dead bees and their victims, yet without the medicinal unguent, many more would die, so reluctantly giving in to her promise never again to speak to her aviator ex-boyfriend, she picked up the radio and begged him to fly in the ointment. — David K. Lynch, Topanga, CA
- Faintly silhouetted against the shadowy murk of a nameless Devonian sea, the Megalodont shark was unaware of trilobites foraging in the primordial ooze not far below, trilobites that unlike the shark's

cartilaginous being would become part of the fossil record of an ancient seabed that would in time heave up, dry out and go through the crusher at the Marulan Cement Works somewhere north of Sydney, Australia. — John Mackesy, Victoria, Australia

- Leaning back comfortably in a plush old chair, feet up, fingers laced behind his head, Tom Chambers inventoried his life and with a satisfied grin mused, “Ah, marlin fishing off the coast of Majorca, a bronze star for that rescue mission in Jamir, the unmatched fragrance of pastries fresh out of the oven at Café Legrande, two sons who would make any father proud ... I’ve never done any of that.” — Ernie Santilli, Drexel Hill PA
- Living next door to the Lesters for nearly twelve years now, Mrs. Nestor, fully aware of her husband’s fondness for pulchritudinous posteriors, was unable to deter Chester Nestor’s constant quest for Mr. Lester’s sister Hester’s monster keister. — Jeff Flegel, Racine, WI
- As Ethel arranged the list of company phone numbers under her clear plastic desk cover, perfectly aligning the lower right corner of the list with the lower right corner of the plastic, then swiveled her chair to file one more inter-office memorandum on trimming the budget, she considered how different her life might have been if her parents had named her Tiffany. — Judy Fischer, Prospect, KY
- As the under-appreciated autumn evening faded into yet another soft black velvet fall night, all creatures large and small had settled in except for one, Loupy, the Schipperke, whose job was to keep Anatoly, the night watchman, informed of all things pertaining to the property with her signature uninterrupted warning barks which at this very moment would not subside until her master explained, “We don’t know anyone named Timmy and we don’t have a well.” — Karen Arutunoff, Tulsa, OK
- “You ask me, ‘Why did you do it, Charlie, I could’ve been a contender?’ – I’ll tell you why: you worked your fights in too close, taking blow after unnecessary blow; I knew you were going to end up punchdrunk and need money for a nurse, and you were never a contender, you were only a referee.” — Charles Alworth, Port Aransas, TX
- After launching the last brown lump of chewing tobacco from his bulbous and stained lower lip to its new landing on the Main Street pavement below, Billy Bob couldn’t believe that what lay before him, was a spitting image of George Washington. — Heidi Vazquez, Bellevue, NE
- Oneida Revere picked at her meal and stared dully across the table at the charismatic charlatan who had seduced her with the illusion of love and tarnished her family’s sterling reputation; she was wise to his bent mind games and though it felt like a knife through her heart, she knew it was time to stick a fork in it and call it done – her days of spooning with Uri Geller were over. — Terri Daniel (Seattle, WA) and Craig Rieger (Concord, CA)

Fans, Stalkers, and Others

Mariann Simms, winner of the 2003 contest, [writes about the BLFC in her blog](#). (April 2006)

Celine Shinbutsu: [Fantasy Category winner’s blog from Japan](#).

[Suite.101.com interviews 2008 Winner Garrison Spik](#) (August 16, 2008)

[Suite.101.com interviews the Grand Panjandrum](#) (August 16, 2008)

[Guillaume Destot interviews the Grand Panjandrum](#) (2002)

[“The Great Bulwer-Lytton Debate”](#) (Manchester Guardian)

[Sticks and Stones](#) (a “new” contest, last updated August 2010)

[Bulwer-Lytton's Ancestral Estate](#)

Bulwer-Lytton's Bicentennial Birthday Celebration at Knebworth House. [With pictures](#). (May 20-23, 2003)

[Literary Locales](#): Over 1,350 picture links to places that figure in the lives and writings of famous authors

[The Eye of Argon](#) (a Sci-Fi conference classic)

[Dead White Guys](#)

[Dead Dogs](#)

[Shakespearean insult?](#)

[Bad Sex in Fiction Award](#)

[It Was a Dark and Stormy Night – the game for people who love to read](#)

[Dickens or Bulwer?](#)

“Dark and Stormy Night Cocktail” from the [Swig Bar](#) in San Francisco: Pour ginger beer into a highball glass and top with Zaya rum.

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