

# The Carson McCullers Literary Awards



**Prizes:** The Carson McCullers Literary Awards offer prizes for **Georgia and Alabama high school students** in fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, expository essay, playwriting and screenwriting: with \$300 for first place in each of those categories, \$200 for second place, \$100 for third place.

Prizes are awarded to **CSU students**, including the Sara Ayres Jordan Awards in fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction, as well as prizes in expository essay, playwriting and screenwriting, with \$300 first place, \$200 second place, \$100 third place.

**Submission Deadline:** January 26, 2026  
You may submit one entry per category.

[High School Student Submission Form](#)

[CSU Student Submission Form](#)

Award ceremony will take place on Saturday, February 21, 2026.

[Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians Website](#)

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## 2026 CMLA Winners

[CMLA Anthology 2026](#)

High School Student Award Winners  
**Dr. Carey Scott Wilkerson Prize for Poetry**

**1st Place:** Lleyton Kane, "Algorithm"  
**2nd Place:** Allie Rezek, "Infliction"  
**3rd Place:** Cecily Turner, "Fuji Fallen to Earth"

**Susan Schley Gristina Prize for Expository Essay**

**1st Place:** Novelle Dennis, "Ardenti Lacrimis"  
**2nd Place:** Annie Lee, "Redefining Revolution: Dosan Ahn Chang Ho and the Power of Moral Reform"  
**3rd Place:** Cailey Dritchas, "I Have a Dream / Letter from Birmingham Jail"

**Dr. Joseph Francavilla Prize for Fiction**

**1st Place:** Kaylee Duncan, "Resting Upon Open Hands"  
**2nd Place:** Novelle Dennis, "Spine"  
**3rd Place:** Dean, "Project SYVORTKA"

**Dr. Jim Owen Prize for Screenwriting**

**1st Place:** Chanwoo Lee, "A Boy and His Bugs"  
**2nd Place:** Phaedra Temmis, "Trailer Treasures"  
**3rd Place:** Shazneen Sayed, "Crash Course in Life"

**Melissa Pritchard Schley and Dr. Philip Schley Prize for Creative Nonfiction**

**1st Place:** Myra, "My Grandma's House"  
**2nd Place:** Laronda Furlow, "Five-ish Nights at Bradley's"  
**3rd Place:** Michelle Antony, "Regret is the Real Failure"

**Andrew Ruhs Prize for Playwriting**

**1st Place:** Symara Seward, "Star Troop"

**2nd Place:** Tamay Yarwaye, "Behind the Scenes"

CSU Student Award Winners

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Poetry**

**1st Place:** Rowan Swank, "A Ladybug"

**2nd Place:** Cynthia Short, "Time is the Living's Luxury"

**3rd Place:** Emma Silverstein, "Rotten Peach Twang"

**Dr. Daniel William Ross Prize for Expository Essay**

**1st Place:** Erin Billiot, "Soul's Beauty, Body's Beauty, and the Prevailing Narratives of Women in Literature"

**2nd Place:** Emma Silverstein, "Tumultuous Tempest: The Transformative Nature of the Ocean in Shakespeare's Pericles and The Tempest"

**3rd Place:** Brande George, "A Vision of Moloch: The Shamanic Journey in Allen Ginsberg's 'Howl'"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Fiction**

**1st Place:** Huda Sayedzada, "When the Hijab Slips"

**2nd Place:** Savannah McGill, "Perfect Babe"

**3rd Place:** Ivory Alexander, "Charm for when the Sandman falls for you"

**Dr. Patrick McHenry Prize for Screenwriting**

**1st Place:** Evie Fletcher, "A Family Under Attack"

**2nd Place:** Theodore Pound, "Die Extrengfckt, or, the Allegory of the Rat King"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Creative Nonfiction**

**1st Place:** Sal Woessner, "The First and Last"

**2nd Place:** Evie Fletcher, "Re-Birth-Day"

**3rd Place:** Theodore Pound, "Truth n Comedy"

**Dr. Barbara J. Hunt Prize for Playwriting**

**1st Place:** Theodore Pound, "SK(eLe)TOR!"

**2nd Place:** Sal Woessner, "Her Still Singing Limbs"

## 2025 CMLA Winners

### [CMLA Anthology 2025](#)

High School Student Award Winners

**Dr. Carey Scott Wilkerson Prize for Poetry**

**1st Place:** Allen Moore, "Orange Picking," UMS-Wright Prep School

**2nd Place:** Arin Joshi, "I couldn't go further. Sorry.," Johns Creek HS

**3rd Place:** Emily Nguyen, "An Ounce of Filial Piety," Global Impact Academy

**Susan Schley Gristina Prize for Expository Essay**

**1st Place:** Lily Choy, "Why You Should Boycott Shein: An Essay," Rainey-McCullers SotA

**2nd Place:** Trinity Williams, "Banned," Rainey-McCullers SotA

**3rd Place:** Abigail Heiss, "Swallowed Tears," Columbus HS

**Dr. Joseph Francavilla Prize for Fiction**

- 1st Place:** A. James, "Do Not Take the Train," Paideia School  
**2nd Place:** Adi L. Wright, "Color in the Form of Suffering," Harris County HS  
**3rd Place:** Kai M. McMichael, "Pentobarbital," Central HS

**Dr. Jim Owen Prize for Screenwriting**

- 1st Place:** Phaedra Temmis, "Your First Breath Took Mine Away," Columbus HS  
**2nd Place:** Rachel Davis, "Delivery 1," Rainey-McCullers SotA  
**3rd Place:** Tamay Yarwaye, "A Mother's Lament," Columbus HS

**Melissa Pritchard Schley and Dr. Philip Schley Prize for Creative Nonfiction**

- 1st place:** Chloe Bullard, "My Experience with a Flawed Treatment System," Columbus HS  
**2nd Place:** Charlise Evans, "My grandmother," Heritage HS  
**3rd Place:** Rachel Davis, "Rumination of Self," Rainey-McCullers SotA

**Andrew Ruhs Prize for Playwriting**

- 1st Place:** Trinity Williams, "Pointing Fingers," Rainey-McCullers SotA  
**2nd Place:** Hunter Richardson, "Piano Man," Harrison HS  
**3rd Place:** Jay Magee, "Smoke and Mirrors," Northview HS

## CSU Student Award Winners

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Poetry**

- 1st Place:** Emma Silverstein, "Eclipse"  
**2nd Place:** Ivory Alexander, "Kill the Sublime Stranger"  
**3rd Place:** Cynthia Short, "Rancid Reminiscence"

**Dr. Daniel William Ross Prize for Expository Essay**

- 1st Place:** Ransom May, "To Be Poisoned by a Book: Oscar Wilde and The Picture of Dorian Gray as a Lens for Censorship"  
**2nd Place:** L'Anita Heiss, "Tell My Story: Defending Ophelia 's Suffering in Hamlet"  
**3rd Place:** Zagreus Rivers, "You're Going in the Camps Too: Blaire White and The Futility of Being 'One of the Good Ones'"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Fiction**

- 1st Place:** Evie Smith, "The Hunter Next Door"  
**2nd Place:** Nadia Jacobs, "That Which Is Only Living"  
**3rd Place:** Emma Silverstein, "Cavity"

**Dr. Patrick McHenry Prize for Screenwriting**

- 1st Place:** Nadia Jacobs, "OXYMORON"  
**2nd Place:** Evie Fletcher, "Eclipsed Survival"  
**3rd Place:** Madeline Ginter, "Set in Motion"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Creative Nonfiction**

- 1st Place:** Sal Woessner, "Institutionalized"  
**2nd Place:** Evie Fletcher, "Military Wife"

**3rd Place:** Gianna Cabrera, "The Silver Lining"

### **Dr. Barbara J. Hunt Prize for Playwriting**

**1st Place:** Katelyn McCormick & Emma Gaines, "Let them be Sea Captains"

**2nd Place:** Nadia Jacobs, "An Exploration of Time"

**3rd Place:** Gianna Cabrera, "Everything Will Be Better Tomorrow"

## **2024 CMLA Winners**

### [CMLA Anthology 2024](#)

High School Student Award Winners

#### **Brick Road Greear Prize for Poetry**

**1st Place:** Lily Wilson, "Nightmares of the Exuviae," Alabama SoFA

**2nd Place:** Elizabeth "Eddie" Young, "A Xenobiologist Finds God," Hallie Turner Private School

**3rd Place:** Gene Yoon, "The Mudbug's Burrow," Columbus HS

#### **Dr. Joseph Francavilla Prize for Fiction**

**1st Place:** Gene Yoon, "Anchor of Hope," Columbus HS

**2nd Place:** Cole Hearted, "Dumpster Fire," Rainey-McCullers SotA

**3rd Place:** Angel Cotte, "The Grafting," William H. Shaw HS

#### **Melissa Pritchard Schley and Dr. Philip Schley Prize for Creative Nonfiction**

**1st place:** Gene Yoon, "Bung-Eo-Ppang: Sounding Like Me," Columbus HS

**2nd Place:** Emmanuela Ejoga, "Operation AA: Academic Attack," North Cobb HS

**3rd Place:** Mickie Cerda, "How I Found Theatre," Rainey-McCullers SotA

#### **Susan Schley Gristina Prize for Expository Essay**

**1st Place:** Gene Yoon, "The Legacy of Korean Picture Brides," Columbus HS

**2nd Place:** Daniel Troy, "China's Guanxi Culture and its Influence to a Global Superpower Status," Auburn HS

**3rd Place:** S. Maysa Johnson, "Lessons Learned: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study," Columbus HS

#### **Dr. Jim Owen Prize for Screenwriting**

**1st Place:** JG, "Eternity at Sea," Central HS

**2nd Place:** Phaedra Temmis, "My Best Friend and Dead Celebrities from the 90s," Columbus HS

**3rd Place:** Jordan Strobel, "The Hermit," Gwinnett Online Campus

#### **Andrew Ruhs Prize for Playwriting**

**1st Place:** Jade Magee, "The Thing," Northview HS

**2nd Place:** Wil, "A Trip to the Future," Rainey-McCullers SotA

**3rd Place:** Lucien Jervis, "The Supernatural Seekers Club," Rainey-McCullers SotA

CSU Student Award Winners

#### **Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Poetry**

**1st Place:** Cynthia Short, "Piercing"

**2nd Place:** Nadia Jacobs, "3/27"

**3rd Place:** London Van Every, "Best Friends"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Fiction****1st Place:** Sal Fleischer, "March to the Sea"**2nd Place:** Molly Thomas, "Screaming Beautiful Things"**3rd Place:** Samira Hibbler, "Everything Good Comes to an End"**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Creative Nonfiction****1st Place:** Gianna Cabrera, "All the Love Under the Sun"**2nd Place:** Melanie Miller, "Land of the Sown Salt"**3rd Place:** K.D. Buckner, "My Eyes Were Watching God: An Essay Inspired by Joan Didion's The White Album"**Dr. Daniel William Ross Prize for Expository Essay****1st Place:** Sal Fleischer, "The Panopticon of Gender: A New Foucauldian Critique of 'I Sexually Identify as an Attack Helicopter'"**2nd Place:** Molly Thomas, "God is a Woman: The Feminine in Anne Bradstreet's Poetry"**3rd Place:** Melanie Miller, "Honeysuckles Embracing the Thorns: Bronte Sisters' Protofeminism"**Anbessita Productions, Inc., Prize for Screenwriting****1st Place:** Starr, "Change My Mind"**2nd Place:** Christina Ricks, "Back to You"**3rd Place:** Guérin Asante, "Onion"**Dr. Barbara J. Hunt Prize for Playwriting****1st Place:** D'Miya Richburg, "Outlived"**2nd Place:** London Van Every, "The Naming of the Dolls"**3rd Place:** Dvn Dsn, "The Hell that is Human Interaction"**2023 CMLA Winners**[CMLA Anthology 2023](#)

High School Student Award Winners

**Brick Road Greear Prize for Poetry:****1st Place:** Sujana Vangala, "Coin Flip," Northview HS**2nd Place:** Mark Harris, "The Choir," Heritage HS**3rd Place:** Oluwatumilara Owolabi, "Oh Mama," Mount Pisgah Christian**Dr. Joseph Francavilla Prize for Fiction:****1st Place:** Ivie Kirby, "Adoring and Ignoring," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts**2nd Place:** Sujana Vangala, "Your Mother Was a Girl Once," Northview HS**3rd Place:** Eva J. Hammonds, "Mirum: The Volcano," Columbus HS**Dr. Jim Owen Prize for Creative Nonfiction:****1st Place:** Benjamin Badgett, "Brothers," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts**2nd Place:** Peyton McRae, "This Is My Neighborhood," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts**3rd Place:** Alexandra Boyd, "Journey Paved With Imagination," Heritage HS**Susan Schley Gristina Prize for Expository Essay:**

**1st Place:** Gene Yoon, "The Ann Arbor Black English Case Revisited," Columbus HS

**2nd Place:** Princess (Ainani) Graham, "Interracial Relationships in 19th-20th Century South," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

**3rd Place:** Mark Harris, "The increased Need for LGBTQ Support in Schools," Heritage HS

**High School Prize for Screenwriting:**

**1st Place:** Mickie Cerda, "The origins of Jimmy," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

**2nd Place:** Kady Moore, "Bigger Than The Whole Sky," Heritage HS

**3rd Place:** Lily Choy "The Future is a Terrible Place," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

**Andrew Ruhs Prize for Playwriting:**

**1st Place:** Kady Moore, "Hesperia," Heritage HS

**2nd Place:** Mariella (Mickie) Cerda, "Untitled Ghost Monologue," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

**3rd Place:** Ella Jervis "Sock Puppet Slasher," Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

CSU Student Award Winners

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Poetry:**

**1st Place:** Ana Dinis Perez, "Upside Down"

**2nd Place:** Jonathan Stringfellow, "In Love"

**3rd Place:** Youbin Park, "the Beauty [and] the Beast"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Fiction:**

**1st Place:** Dallas Curry, "Yearly Traditions"

**2nd Place:** Theo Pound, "The Obelisk Without a Story At the Bottom of the Crimson Manor"

**3rd Place:** Youbin Park, "Honey!"

**Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Creative Nonfiction:**

**1st Place:** Melanie Miller, "Might as Well"

**2nd Place:** Youbin Park, "Coffee Pot"

**3rd Place:** Les Anderson, "Control"

**Dr. Daniel William Ross Prize for Expository Essay:**

**1st Place:** Melanie Miller, "Ophelia: A Secret Feminist"

**2nd Place:** Cynthia Short, "The Black Girl As A Vehicle for Poetry"

**3rd place:** Theo Pound, "The Good, The Bad, and The Storytellers"

**Anbessita Productions, Inc., Prize for Screenwriting:**

**1st Place:** Dallas Curry, "Ammonia"

**2nd Place:** Les Anderson, "Fall from Grace"

**3rd Place:** Alexis Barron, "Coffee House"

**Dr. Barbara J. Hunt Prize for Playwriting:**

**1st Place:** Dallas Curry, "The Infinite Coffee Theorem"

**2nd Place:** Les Anderson, "Jackpot"

**3rd Place:** Theo Pound, "The Death of Jerry Farber, or the Jerry Farber Story"

## 2022 CMLA Winners

### CMLA Anthology 2022

#### High School Student Award Winners

##### HS Poetry Winners:

**1st Place:** "The Teenage Fallacy," by Sujana Vangala, Northview HS

**2nd Place:** "Pretty People," by Kady Moore, Heritage HS

**3rd Place:** "ebony sun," by Kyra Richardson, Alabama School of Fine Arts

##### HS Fiction Winners:

**1st Place:** "My Soundtrack," by Madison Hoar, Alabama School of Fine Arts

**2nd Place:** "The Unexplored 95%," by Izzy Cox, Alabama School of Fine Arts

**3rd Place:** "The Words of the Devil" by Ella Jervis, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

##### HS Nonfiction Winners:

**1st Place:** "Satsuma," by Joseph Barns, LAMP High School

**2nd Place:** "Memory Bread," by Sarah Phillis, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

**3rd Place:** "Mitosis," by Izzy Cox, Alabama School of Fine Arts

##### HS Playwriting Winners:

**1st Place:** "A Play in Progress," by Jocelyn Peebles, Harris County High School

**2nd Place:** "Gay Polyamorous Cowboys," by Ella Jervis, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

**3rd Place:** "Lorelei," by Sarah Phillis, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

##### HS Screenwriting Winners:

**1st Place:** "Emily," by Dylan Black, Harrison HS

**2nd Place:** "Seen," by Elizabeth Webb, Heritage HS

**3rd Place:** "Look Away," by Khayla Truitt, Rainey-McCullers School of the Arts

##### HS Expository Essay Winners:

**1st Place:** "Thoughts on Healthcare," by Izzy Cox, Alabama School of Fine Arts

**2nd Place:** "The Crucible: How Fear Perpetuates Suffering in a Community," by Emma Delaney, Heritage High School

**3rd Place:** "Gone but NEVER Forgotten," by Samuel Mansi, Heritage High School

#### CSU Student Award Winners

##### CSU Poetry Winners: Sara Ayres Jordan Prize

**1st Place:** "Neville to Percival," by Bailey Parker

**2nd Place:** "And You Fall in Love With Them Both," by Sidney DuCleroir

**3rd Place:** "Fear," by Youbin Park

##### CSU Fiction Winners: Sara Ayres Jordan Prize

**1st Place:** "Out By the Tracks," by Zagreus Rivers

**2nd Place:** "Sir Lancelot and the Red Villa of Cortenova," by Jessica DeMarco-Jacobson

**3rd Place:** "Purple Prose and Other Clichés," by Bailey Parker

##### CSU Nonfiction Winners: Sara Ayres Jordan Prize

**1st Place:** "Snapshots of a Silent Composer," by Ana Dinis Perez

**2nd Place:** "Freedom From Speech," by Youbin Park

**3rd Place:** "Death of a Small Town and the Memories They Hold," by Kailey Katzfey

#### **CSU Screenwriting Winners:**

**1st Place:** "A Father's Story," by Dallas Curry

**2nd Place:** "The Games We Play," by Latisha Spikes-Brown

**3rd place:** "Room for Two," by Donni "Les" Anderson

#### **CSU Playwriting Winners:**

**1st Place:** "Dad's Not Dead," by Maja Nearing

**2nd Place:** "The Call," by Kiera King

**3rd Place:** "My Sin To Hide," by Christina Ricks

#### **CSU Expository Essay Winners:**

**1st Place:** "Text without Context:" Jessard Deal's Literary Allusions in Louis Owens' The Sharpest Sight, by Maja Nearing

**2nd Place:** "Binaries, Identity, Community, and Bridging the Gap," by Melanie Miller

**3rd Place:** "Gawain Reborn," by Sidney Ducleroir

## **2021 CMLA Winners**

High School Student Award Winners

#### **High School Poetry: Brick Road Greear Prize for Poetry**

**First Place:** Gabrielle DeWeese, "Taurean Fathoms," Alan C. Pope High School

**Second Place:** Rebekah E. Smith, "I am a Columbus Author," Rainey McCullers School of the Arts

**Third Place:** Sydney Womack, "Aesthete," Columbus High School

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#### **High School Fiction: Dr. Joseph Francavilla Prize for Fiction**

**First Place:** Macy Cardwell, "The Song We Were," Homeschool

**Second Place:** Charlotte Young, "The Invaders," Columbus High School

**Third Place:** Jasmine Drawdy, "697 Miles," Rainey McCullers School of the Arts

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#### **High School Creative Nonfiction: Melissa Pritchard Schley and Dr. Philip Schley Prize**

**First Place:** Andrew Song, "Long Way Home," Heritage High School

**Second Place:** Macy Cardwell, "I Talk to My Mother's Best Friend," Homeschool

**Third Place:** Emily Woody, "The Reality of Negativity," Heritage High School

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#### **High School Expository Essay: Susan Schley Gristina Prize for Expository Essay**

**First Place:** Andrew Song, "Treasures of Sierra Madre: A Critique of Laissez-Faire," Heritage High School

**Second Place:** Bobby Livingston, "How Should Thomas Jefferson be Commemorated in the 21st Century?" Columbus High School

**Third Place:** Khayla Truitt, "AAVE vs 'Internet Slang': Muzzling Black Voices," Rainey McCullers School of the Arts

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**High School Screenwriting:**

**First Place:** Brynn Dean, "Becoming the Department Head," Heritage High School

**Second Place:** Beth Webb, "The Rose," Heritage High School

**Third Place:** Ivie Kirby, "Bats!" Rainey McCullers School of the Arts

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**High School Playwriting:**

**First Place:** Andrew Song "Blackjack," Heritage High School

**Second Place:** Sarah Phillis, "Squirrels..." Rainey McCullers School of the Arts

CSU Student Award Winners

**CSU Poetry: Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Poetry**

**First Place:** Sidney Ducleroir, "Secrete/Secret"

**Second Place:** Jessica DeMarco-Jacobson, "From Lavinia to Creusa"

**Third Place:** Adrienne Baxter-McNeil, "Chocolate"

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**CSU Fiction: Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Fiction**

**First Place:** Gavin Moss, "Northern Lights"

**Second Place:** Jeffrey J Maynard, "Peripheral"

**Third Place:** Kiara Herron, "Shallow"

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**CSU Creative Nonfiction: Sara Ayres Jordan Prize for Creative Nonfiction**

**First Place:** Vivian Duncan, "Oxford Pre-Pandemic"

**Second Place:** Hayley Maine, "I Don't Cry at Funerals"

**Third Place:** Anayia Cook, "The (re) Creation of Joe"

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**CSU Expository Essay: Naartjie Multimedia Prize in Expository Essay**

**First Place:** Anayia Cook, "Gandalf the White in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings"

**Second Place:** Cynthia Short, "Exposed: Media and Opinion"

**Third Place:** Kayla Pipkins, "Her Philosophy"

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**CSU Screenwriting:**

**First Place:** Dallas Curry, "Projects"

**Second Place:** Donni "Les" Anderson, "Little Victories"

**Third Place:** Jeffery J Maynard, "Sunken Ship"

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**CSU Playwriting: Dr. Barbara Hunt Prize in Playwriting**

**First Place:** Theodore Pound, "Elmer and Paul"

**Second Place:** Katherine Lovern, "Phoenix"

**Third Place:** Dallas Curry, "Tone Deaf"