

*Rhymed Category • Third Place*

Recital

Rollie Polies! Tumbles too!  
So much fun dancing with you.  
Recital's done. People cheer.  
We've been waiting for this all year.  
Now let's take a bow!  
Listen to those cheers! Oh wow!

— Georgia B Wike

# The Wunderbarn's Story-in-a-Poem Contest Winners



Celebrated at a reading on  
August 18th 2023

The Wunderbarn  
2070 Kutztown Road East Greenville, PA

## About the Poets

**John Roberts** grew up in an ethnically diverse blue collar part of Northeastern Pennsylvania nestled in Lackawanna County where he still lives. He is currently writing and pursuing his Masters Degree in poetry and creative non fiction at Wilkes University.

**Susan Mannino** lives in the Lehigh Valley, where she enjoys writing music, especially Christian praise songs, shopping, and spending time with family and friends.

**Julian Matthews** is a multi-ethnic poet from Malaysia published in various journals and anthologies. He crashed into a poetry workshop six years ago. That happy accident turned into a rabid compulsion. If you wish to support his recovery, please send him Wordle answers at <http://linktr.ee/julianmatthews>

**Robert Wright** grew up in Green Lane, got married, and moved to Pennsburg. He's been writing poems since he was nine years old, with the first being about his grandmother sitting on a glider on the porch. The poem "The Old Red General Store" is his memory of Yoder's store as a child. Robert spent 45 years working as a tool and dye maker. He's always written poems, and keeps a tablet by his chair where he can jot ideas down.

**Avantika Crooke** is a 7th grade student in Southern Lehigh School District in Center Valley, Pennsylvania. She enjoys exploring the wonders of nature and tending to her pet snake Sunray.

**Georgia B Wike** is a bubbly, soon-to-be five year old who loves dancing, tumbling, and singing. She just recently finished her first year of tumbling with her sister, Daphne, which was the inspiration for her poem.

## Unrhymed Category • Third Place

### Where Magic Had Happened

I began my hike  
Trekking upward on worn paths and loose sand  
Stopping only for water as the sun blazed overhead  
I reached the rocks  
Or one endless slab of rock  
Steep and slippery  
Finally came the ledge  
Small and narrow  
A gamble with life on a cut into a sheer cliff  
But when I rounded the corner  
The gruesome hike was made worth it  
For before me it loomed above

I stood beneath it, staring upwards  
At the rainbow of sandstone  
That seemed to touch the sky  
My awe had been felt by thousands before  
For I was where magic had happened  
Underneath Delicate Arch

— Avantika Crooke

*Rhymed Category • Second Place*

The Old Red General Store

so sad the sight, alone she sits  
her doors closed years before  
a hundred years she served this town  
the old red general store

sitting at the edge of town  
she was known, to one and all  
all day long, her doors were open  
to those who cared to call

children sat on her front steps  
and watched the cars pass by  
ice cream or candy they would eat  
and no one questioned why

the hub of the community  
its gift of life and more  
the heartline of this tiny town  
the old red general store

— Robert Wright

*Unrhymed Category • First Place*

Glow on the Train

That train whistle always blows me home.  
Back down every avenue I've ever roamed or crawled.  
That whistle always blows me back, back home.  
Tone and sound of that traveling tune runs deep and clear.  
Reminds me that I'll never be alone.  
Songs sung deep through passes, over crossings of valley and river.

On summer nights or deep in winters freeze  
Home, come home it cries with baleful moan.  
No matter what is said, you can come home.  
Home to kitchen and to bed, to where dreams still live.  
To Friday night home baked pizza waiting for the man  
who tunes her song through diesel smoke and oil.

When summer's heat was quelled with cool clear waters,  
Winters dark shivers warmed by delicately stitched wool quilts,  
that whistle, the sound, the voice of my 'ol man,  
singing in exalted exhilaration calls me back with words taught as gospel.  
*Go as far as you can, as hard as you will  
remember that whistle and these Pennsylvania Hills  
The glow on the train as it glides by through time,  
Light the track from the past away from memory left behind.  
That whistle always sings sweet,  
smiles soft, never whines,  
brings you back home from the end of your line.  
Always, home*

— John Roberts

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**Grandma, Grandma**

Two grandmothers. One sweet little girl  
To both of them, she was their world  
Christmas was coming, which gift would be best?  
The gift from the rich grandma, or the one who had less?

The girl's name was Holly and she was just five  
Already she'd learned that it's wrong to lie  
But when she saw the present that each grandma gave  
She said that she liked them exactly the same

The rich grandma gave a bisque doll so fine  
It was made by an artist and was one of a kind  
The grandma with less bought some second hand cloth  
And sewed a cute doll that was cozy and soft

Holly said both were lovely, with them she would play  
But when Christmas was over, she put one doll away

30 years later both grandmas are gone  
Holly has a five year old son of her own  
But life has been hard and Holly is broke  
She needs to feed her son. And she needs hope

She doesn't have much left to sell for some cash  
Except a fancy bisque doll that for years has been stashed  
The doll brings so much money she can live for a year  
Seems the artist who made it had become quite revered

And in that year's time, Holly learns how to sew  
And copies the cloth doll she loved long ago  
She gets down to work, makes hundreds to sell  
Now Holly and her son are doing quite well

Two grandmas in Heaven, and there is no doubt  
They are smiling at each other over how things turned out!

— Susan Mannino

*Unrhymed Category • Second Place*

**Curtain**

Full glass panels, she insisted  
So we can see the grand view outside  
Then ordered curtains and rods and hooks  
So strangers can't be baited to peek inside  
Three sets to alternate annually  
Emery linen, crushed velvet  
Pinch pleated and twin panel pairs  
and a blackout one to block out the sun  
For the bay window bathroom, she opted for blinds  
But they still required dusting and cleaning  
Over time, slats refused to flip, strings snapped  
You tilt and pull, twist and shout  
Had we known when young, blinds  
and bling are just window dressing  
for a shaded world, that all the ladder-climbing  
and laundering could not wash away the tears  
That hearts don't come with drapery  
That all that matters is the light within  
Then maybe, just maybe, as the curtain call draws near  
We could have held on tighter to the cords unraveling—  
in the house we once called home

— Julian Matthews