

# Art Tales

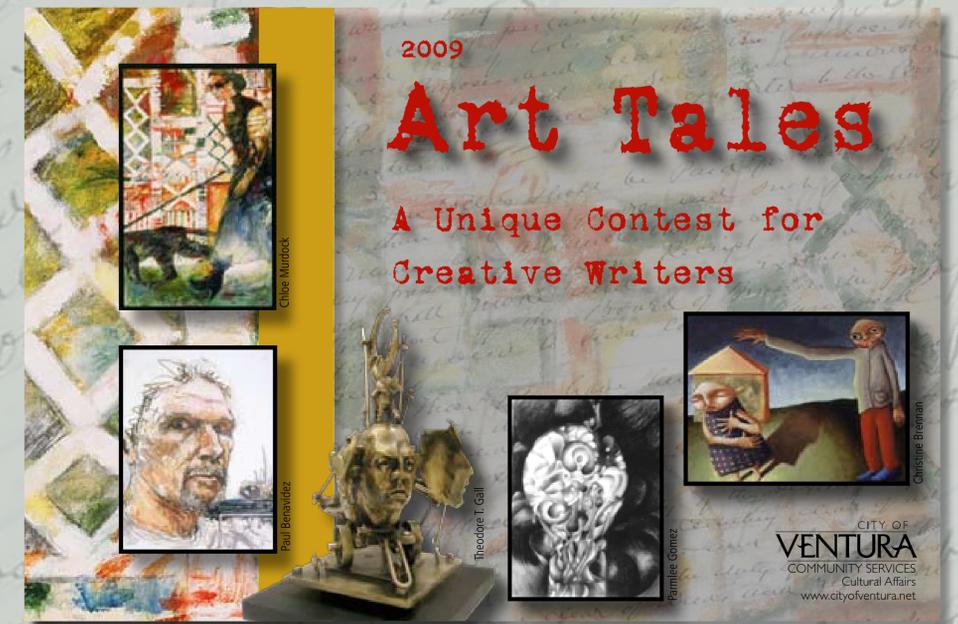
## About the Contest

Beginning in 2008 the City of Ventura, in partnership with E.P. Foster Library, has sponsored “Art Tales,” a creative contest for local writers inviting them to submit an original short story or poem inspired by selected works from the Municipal Art collection on exhibit at the Library.

In the contest writers are asked to interpret an artwork broadly using a technique called *ekphrasis*. This method, which literally allows one work of art to inspire another, has been in practice for over 2,500 years, giving a fresh “voice” to art and offering a unique and symbiotic exchange between two creative and inspired minds.

Using this method, for example, a writer in 2011 could compose a poem or story that interprets the enigmatic smile on the *Mona Lisa*, painted more than 500 years ago.

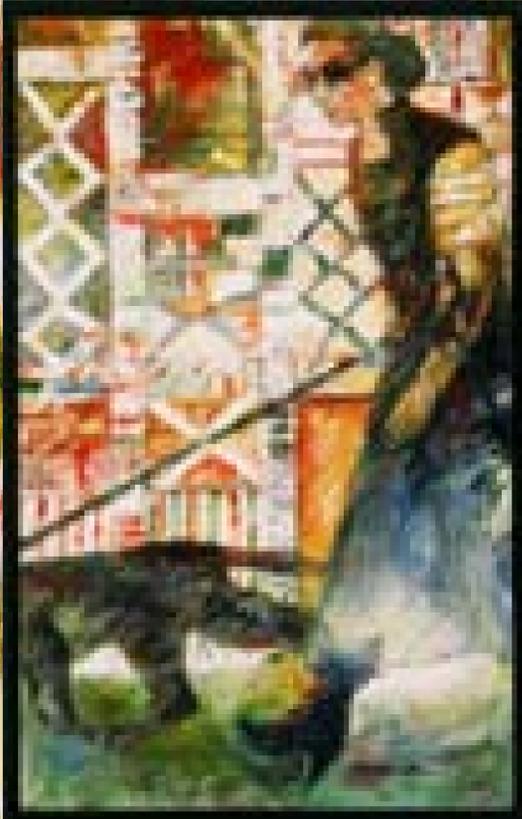
Winners over the past two years have risen effectively to this challenge, producing some extraordinary literary responses, including the seven prize-winning works of literature included in this exhibit.



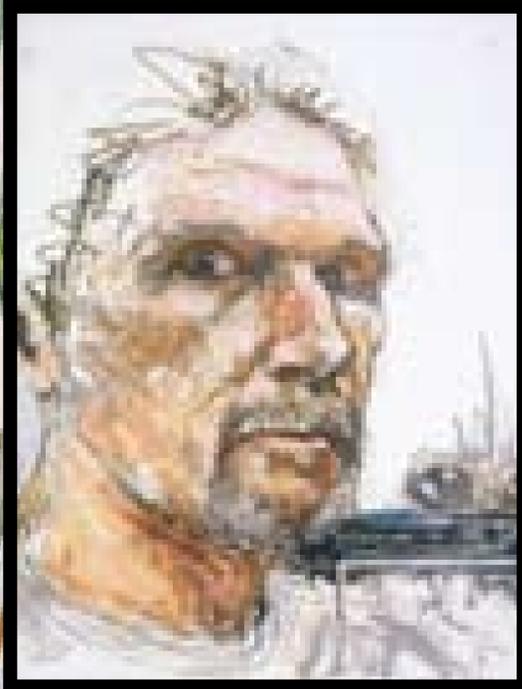
2009

# Art Tales

A Unique Contest for  
Creative Writers



Chloe Murdock



Paul Benavidez



Theodore T. Gall



Parmlee Gomez



Christine Brennan

CITY OF  
**VENTURA**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES  
Cultural Affairs  
[www.cityofventura.net](http://www.cityofventura.net)

2010  
Second Annual

# Art Tales

A Unique Contest for  
Creative Writers



Steven Schafer



Horace Bristol



Donna Granata



John Clewis

CITY OF  
**VENTURA**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES  
Cultural Affairs  
[www.cityofventura.net](http://www.cityofventura.net)



John Nichols

2011  
Third Annual

# Art Tales

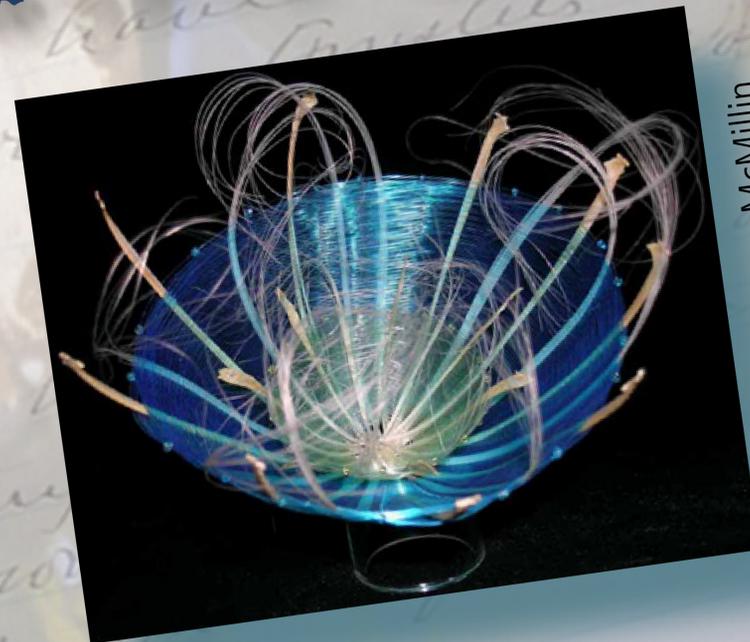
A Unique Contest for  
Creative Writers



Duane Simshauser



Hanna Lore Hombordy



Gerri Johnson-McMillin



Duane Simshauser



Connie Jenkins



Jack Farquhar Halbert

**Art Tales 2009**

Honorable Mention

Youth Poetry

**They speak the Names  
of the Mysterious  
Rainbow over her head**

**By Matthew Hammond, Grade 6**



The Shining Rainbow of Dreams and Ideas flow like a clear river through  
the mind

It is the color that shows all shades

It's the Sound of All Things, the harmony of the Universe

A face appears, some of the colors seep from the black curls

She feels the colors and lets them wash over her, they are soft, yet hard,  
solid,

Than mist, all blending together

She hears whispers, shouts, harsh voices, calm words

They speak the Names of the Mysterious Rainbow over her head

She listens carefully to some of the Names

Imagination, Creation, Thoughts, The Unseen, The Unknown, The Universe,

Beginning, End, Light, Night, All, Everything, Shining Star, Glowing Moon,

Bright Sun, The World, Peace, War, and many other Names that could go  
on

until the hand that tosses the Hourglass of Time from one hand to the  
next

slips and destroys Time

She also sees visions, The Constitution of All, Everything Equal

She sees how Everything no matter how small or big is a part of That  
Rainbow and helps complete it

## Art Tales 2010

Honorable Mention

Youth Short Story



### Tony's Pizza

By Lupita Perez, Grade 6

People are walking in and out of the pizzeria. The pizza smells magnificent. There is a girl outside on a bench, alone, eating pizza. The trees as green as broccoli. Then comes a guy and starts talking to the lovely girl. They fall in love. The pizzeria is painted red and yellowish. There is an "OPEN" sign. Small little place, but with delicious pizza. Bushes, trees, plants, so beautiful surroundings. Tables and chairs being used. Benches outside waiting to be sat on. About 85 degrees. People inside the pizzeria having a wonderful time. Now people are even doing karaoke. Looks like palm trees are waving in the breeze. No grass just dirt. There's a puddle from the rain. Now someone just invited me for some pizza. I'm enjoying it. It's as delicious as ice-cream with whip cream.

Inspired by *Tony's Pizza* by Stephen Schafer

**Art Tales 2010**

First Place

Adult Poetry



## **American Dreams**

**By Dominga Zambrano**

American dreams  
Dissolve to dust  
On furrowed brows  
Weathered with shame

Battered hands  
Seek empty-pocket  
Shelter  
Vain attempt  
To outsmart the devil

What life is left  
To sign away  
The young go  
Hollow, hungry, and bare

Cry out  
To something greater than pain  
Humbled hearts  
Cry out, cry out

Inspired by *Joad Family Applying for Relief* by Horace Bristol

# Art Tales 2010

Second Place

Youth Poetry



## Large Ball - Fagan Canyon

by Misael Ponce

In a valley lies a lonely wrecked ball  
beside it sits an ancient shack  
They've both been abandoned, like  
bullion that's lost its flavor  
When it was new  
the wrecking ball was a worker of  
demolition  
big as an elephant or strong as an ox  
Now it's just junk  
The shed, when first built  
had  
hoped to last for life  
with a proud owner  
Now they lie empty  
with only each other for company

Inspired by *Large Ball – Fagan Canyon* by John Nichols

# Art Tales 2010

Second Place

Adult Poetry

## Hosanna

By Maggie Westland

As filled with grace  
As apse your arches  
Arch

Clasp cars embrace  
In graceful curve  
Reflecting  
Church

The wash you splash  
More to adorn than  
Bless

Is reminiscent  
Of a holy font  
Confessional

This place of  
Chrome desire  
Now whistle  
Clean

Absolves all, cruises  
Avenues renewed  
In light



Inspired by *Carwash on the Avenue* by Stephen Schafer

## Interpretation of "Life Self-Portrait Study I of II"

By Joan E. Day

- I. You appear to take yourself in stride, comfortable down to your white T-shirt. How have you become the person you are?
- II. Your eyes call me to stop as I walk by. I am amazed at your freeness to give yourself away to others; a strong shoulder here, a commanding look there, your eyes, holding a small glint in the hope that I will discover the softer side of you hidden behind the chalk dust of a furrowed brow, determined chin.
- III. Smart to show lips full with the generosity to hold your tongue, yet leave enough emphasis of shading to allow me to catch the years in your life without apology.
- IV. Ah, and such a good idea to chisel nose, sketch high cheekbones and maintain a stoic expression as an illustration of how your machismo, your pride have seldom allowed you to let your guard down.
- V. And the slight hint of a rebellious hairline as to not be considered outdated, out of touch in this new generation of high tech art, while your glasses and the of shadows under your chin keep the secret of your mystery.

I am afraid and cannot ask if you have been bruised, burned, blown up by the experience of standing too close to fire, or rewarded by a lifetime of living on the edge with such a creative soul.

Do you know what a precious gift you have been given? Layers of tissue to be gently discovered, unwrapped sheet by sheet, appreciated, until the essence of you radiates the room? Sure there must be others that delight in you, your work, I stand back, rewarded by the strong presence of you on paper.

Inspired by Life Self-Portrait I of II by Paul Benavidez

