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Blackaby wins *The Lion and The Unicorn* Poetry Award

Susan Blackaby has been named the winner of *The Lion and The Unicorn Award for Excellence in North American Poetry* for her collection *Nest, Nook & Cranny*. The journal, published by the **Johns Hopkins University Press**, has honored one book of children's poetry each year since 2005.

Blackaby, a Portland, OR, resident, published the 21-poem collection in 2010 along with illustrations by **Jamie Hogan**. The animal-themed poems are arranged according to habitat – desert, grassland, shoreline, wetland and woodland.

“(The poems) do not instruct us in virtue or depravity, exemplify categorical boundaries, or present us with animals singing merry gibberish,” judges **Michael Heyman, Michael Joseph** and **Joseph T. Thomas, Jr.**, write in the essay announcing the award. “Rather, they aim to convey incisively some information about the animal, or about the experience of observing or thinking about the animal.”

The book is published Charlesbridge Publishing and is aimed at readers ages 9-12. A prolific author of many types of books for children, Blackaby's 2002 book *Rembrandt's Hat* was named one of the top 10 picture books of that year by *The Washington Post*.

The judges also chose two Honor Books: *Weekend Mischief* by **Rob Jackson** with illustrations by **Mark Beech** and *City Kids: Street & Skyscraper Rhymes* by **X.J. Kennedy** with illustrations by **Phillipe Béha**.

The essay announcing the winner appeared in Volume 35, Issue 3 of the journal, published earlier this year. The judges use the essay as an opportunity to discuss “the varied terrain of North American children's poetry.”

While the judges discuss the books which produced a “missed opportunity” either by strong prose mixed with bad design or vice versa, they also paint a hopeful picture for future works based on the three books honored.

“Blackaby's collection, alongside our honor books, reminds us that no matter how large or small its subject, North American children's poetry remains as vital and vibrant as ever,” they wrote.

About The Johns Hopkins University Press

Founded in 1878, The Johns Hopkins University Press is recognized as one of the world's finest and most accomplished scholarly publishers. Today, in addition to a broad catalog of titles, The Press publishes more than 70 scholarly periodicals and more than 200 new books each year in the arts and humanities, technology and medicine, higher education, history, political science, and library science.