

Winners of Swenson Legacy Poetry Contest celebrated

09/21/2018



Swenson Legacy Poetry Contest winners talk with Chris Eyre (center), a nephew of May Swenson, during the Sept. 18 celebration to mark the groundbreaking for the Swenson House. Poetry winners were, from left, Stacie Denetsosie, Taylor Fang, Ashley Thompson and Mark Smeltzer.

Construction of the Swenson House, an artists and writers' retreat that honors the childhood home of poet May Swenson, began with a fitting kickoff: award-winning poetry.

The four winners of the Swenson Legacy Poetry Contest were celebrated at a luncheon Sept. 18 prior to the groundbreaking of the building.

The winners are:

- First Place: Stacie Denetsosie, USU English grad student
- Second Place: Mark Smeltzer, USU English undergrad
- Finalist: Taylor Fang, Logan High School student
- Finalist: Ashley Thompson, USU English undergrad

The poetry contest was open to USU students and students of local high schools, said Star Coulbrooke, Logan City poet laureate and director of USU's Writing Center.

Entries were poems inspired in some way by Swenson. "It can have the line in it. It can have the line as a title,"

she said. Or poets could also choose their own inspiring Swenson line, she said.

Denetsosie used Swenson's poem, "October" as inspiration for her poem, "The Glowing Man," a moving reflection on her grandfather.

"Granddaddy: The Glowing Man"

Peeling an apricot, I remember my granddaddy's hand.
 His veins glowing a greenish-yellow, the color of uranium,
 Under his brown skin. My granddaddy, the glowing man.
 Granddaddy was miner. He brought home his work,
 And like any man, he left his clothes at the door.
 Grandma damned his socks, for never going after him.
 She washed his clothes in the same river
 they drank from. The first time I heard,
 Uranium contamination, was after my grandmother
 Urinated in a cup at an Indian Health Services Hospital.
 I sat in a blue fiberglass chair, next to my granddaddy,
 Who came in for trouble breathing.
 Long after, in their coffin beds, they lie beside
 each other, glowing hot coals.

By Stacie Denetsosie