

PRESS RELEASE 22nd August 2020 PRESS RELEASE 22nd August 2020 PRESS RELEASE

COUNTRY IDENTITY RACE

WHO ARE WE?

Featuring the winners of

The Cunningham Short Story Competition 2020

Available on Amazon and Elsewhere from 22ND August 2020



Ten authors, ten stories

Ching Ching Tan “Adili”, Joyce Ker “Lotus Girl”, Michael J Keeley “Zamarad”

Nick Sweeney “I Think of Ariadne when I eat Hummus”, Brianca Hadnot “Token”

Geraldine Moorkens Byrne “A Stranger Among Friends”, Kenneth Stephens “Yonder Shore”

Mary Ellen Chatwin “We’ve Come So Far”, John Pietaro “The Other Side of the Road”

and Judith Mikesch-McKenzie “A Perfect Circle Around the Moon”

The first prize of \$125 has been awarded to Michael J Keeley

Zamarad follows the lives of two couples, connected by a stunning, flawless emerald, and separated by four thousand years.

Marie and Kenneth are geologists on a working honeymoon, while Mery is a toolmaker escaping the city, who meets Ketj, a fisherman’s daughter.

Will their love outweigh the temptation of riches?

The nine other stories featured are:

- In *A Stranger Among Friends*, by Geradine Moorkens Byrne, two exiles, one a young woman from Ghana, the other old woman from Inis Thair in Eire, strike up a conversation, remembering their childhoods.
- In *The Other Side of The Road* John Pietaro explores the generational reach of racism as it affects Ruby, an African American woman, and her three children.
- In *Token* by Brianca Hadnot, Mincah seeks to fit in at school, proudly bringing her mother's Creole recipe to share, but she is quietly ignored in this story of both pervasive, and overt racism.
- In *Adili*, Ching Ching Tan, explores how a Han Chinese lecturer learns of her own unconscious racism when teaching Adili, a Uyghur Chinese, in a Public Speaking Class for non-Native speakers in America.
- Joyce Ker looks to the Chinese tradition of binding girls feet in *Lotus Girl*; how difficult is it to break the cycle of tradition and cultural pressure?
- *A Perfect Circle Around the Moon* by Judith Mikesch Mckenzie: in the shadow of The Giant Irish Deer, gone five thousand years, an American traveller feels at one with the spirit of ancient Irish myth and omen.
- *We've Come So Far* by Mary Ellen Chatwin; a young San Franciscan girl finds herself immersed in the deep south of Alabama, prior to her journey to archaeology, moving to Tblisi in Europe, fascinated by *Homo Habilis* and anthropology.
- Kenneth Stephens takes the reader back 1258 CE in his story *Yonder Shore*. A young woman, Roshini, flees Bandar Aswan (near Bagdad) as the Mongol invasion sacks the city. On her journey to freedom, Buddhism helps her find her own identity.
- *I think of Ariadne when I eat Hummus* by Nick Sweeney: love in Lefkemmi, Greece, as an "International Irishman" remembers his past.

1. For press copies in PDF format, available to media outlets for review, contact the editor, Trevor Maynard on 07966079968, or email poetry@trevormaynard.com
2. Trevor Maynard set up the Cunningham Short Story Competition in honour of his maternal grandfather Robert Hamilton Cunningham (1911 – 2006), who was a bit of a raconteur, and a decent ballroom dancer. The theme for this year's competition is "Country and Identity".
3. The first prize in the 2017 anthology "Life Dances" went to **Sandy Norris** with *No Going Back*. The first prize in the 2018 anthology "Our World, Your Place" went to **Rebecca Evans** with *Veiled*. The first prize in the 2019 anthology "Nine Frames" went to **Mike Friers** for *The Race*. The first prize in the 2020 anthology "Who Are We?" goes to **Michael J Keeley** for *Zamarad*,
4. **Trevor Maynard** is a UK based poet, writer, and editor. As well as the Cunningham Short Story Competition he is the editor of the international poetry anthology series *The Poetic Bond*, now in its tenth year. He recently edited *Poems from the Lockdown*, an anthology of 115 poets chronicling their personal experience of the Global Pandemic of Covid-19 virus. Trevor is also the author of four poetry collection, and several plays, now published, as well as working as a director and producer. Further information at <http://www.trevormaynard.com>

The biographies of the authors follow in the next page.

- **Michael J Keely (UK)**, born in Glasgow, but from age of three to ten years old he lived in Cairo; this has left him with a fascination for all things Egyptian. This is his first published story.
- **Geraldine Moorkens Byrne (IRELAND)**, poet and writer from Dublin, her first poetry collection *Dreams of Reality* is available on Amazon, and she has a children's book coming out in 2021.
- **John Pietaro (USA)**, writer, performance poet, musician from Brooklyn NY. Columnist/critic of "NYC Jazz Record" and curator of West Village Word series at Café Bohemia NYC.
- **Brianca Hadnot (USA)** is a writer and graduate of the MA English Literature program at Texas Southern University. Her work has been published in *National Council of Black Studies*, *TheCore94*, and *Pink Prods*.
- **Ching Ching Tan (USA)** is currently a lecturer at San José State University, where she is also pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing. She is the nonfiction lead editor for *Reed Magazine's* 153rd issue.
- **Joyce Ker (USA)** is a freshman at Johns Hopkins University, whose poetry has been recognized by the *TAB*, *Journal of Poetry & Poetics*, *Tule Review*, *Louisville Review*, *Boxcar Poetry Review*, and the *Lex Allen Literary Festival Poetry Contest*. A California Arts Scholar, Ker has been nominated for the Best New Poets anthology and the Pushcart Prize.
- **Judith Mikesch McKenzie (USA)** is the child of working-class parents, she left home early, and has traveled to many parts of the world, but is always drawn to the mountains and valleys of the Rockies as one of the places on the planet that feeds her soul.
- **Mary Ellen Chatwin (GEORGIA)**; born in San Francisco, moved to Trieste, Italy, grew up in south Alabama during some of key years of racial de-segregation, graduated the University of Alabama; married, moved to Switzerland, and now works in the country of Georgia, in the Caucasus, as an anthropologist, writing fiction and supporting social programmes.
- **Kenneth Stephens (USA)**, originally from India; came to the US to study at a seminary, after which he did his PhD in philosophy. He served as a pastor and professor for forty years or so and is now retired in Los Angeles County. He is the author of the epic novel, *Blaze Pascal and the Courage of Being* (Adelaide Press, New York).
- **Nick Sweeney (UK)** is a freelance writer and musician, who lives on the UK coast in Kent. His novella *A Blue Coast Mystery, Almost Solved*, on the swinging sixties and genocide, will be published in November by Addison and Highsmith. *Laikonik Express*, his novel about friendship, Poland, vodka, snow and getting the train for the hell of it, was published by UK independent publisher Unthank Books in 2011.

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