The Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2017 GLCA New Writers Award for fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction. Now in its 48th year, the New Writers Award confers recognition on promising writers who have published a first volume in one of the three genres. Winning writers receive invitations to visit GLCA member colleges, where they give readings, meet and talk about writing with students and faculty members.

The 2017 winner for Poetry is Nate Marshall, *Wild Hundreds*, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Our GLCA judges note:

> The poetry explores an urgent topic – the experience of adolescence in the roughest part of Chicago's South Side, the Wild Hundreds – with an impressive skill and searching wordplay. This book is urgent in its brave exposures: “kids are beaten. they crack/open, they’re pavement. they don’t fight, they die.” Marshall brackets deep feeling within traditional forms – sonnet, ghazal, sestina – and invented ones. The collection is framed, for instance, by two poems, both titled “repetition & repetition &,” the last composed of the same lines as the first, but this time in reverse order, meditating on repetition, both within the context of poetry and love. These poems, indeed, are love songs to imperiled young black bodies in America. Marshall’s poems work both on the page and as spoken word – high velocity, slapdash, anguished, bittersweet, apocalyptic. Code-switching not just racially and culturally, but in terms of negotiating the poem both written and spoken, Marshall offers up a voice both polyphonic and all the poet’s own. There is a powerful fusion in his vision as well. For this 21st century world that no one has yet figured out, Nate Marshall is at least starting to find the words.

The 2017 winner for Fiction is Charles Boyer, *History’s Child*, published by New Issues Poetry and Prose. Our GLCA judges note:

> *History’s Child* tells the coming-of-age story of a Polish boy born in a village in eastern Poland in 1931, whose childhood is torn apart, first by the Soviet invasion from the east, then by the German invasion from the west, and ultimately by repressive grip of Stalin that sends him to the gulag and subsumes his homeland into the Soviet republic of Belarus. The novel engages – bravely – with an unfashionable place, a chunk of land that is sometimes Belarus, sometimes Poland. History makes cruel visits, and there is sometimes brutal local treatment of outsiders and minorities. And yet the book is told in terms of individual fates, betrayals and survivals. This work has many of the characteristics of the big novel: a historical backdrop, a world war, resistance, hunger. The narrative is riveting, the writing lucid, and the characters compelling. Boyer reveals
what it means to remain a moral human being in the face of totalitarian power and brutality. This is a novel that reminds us of the power of fiction to teach us empathy and to help us understand how precarious freedom truly is. It is a masterful novel, one that is necessary for our times.

The 2017 winner for Creative non-fiction is Randall Horton, *Hook*, published by Augury Books. Our GLCA judges note:

Randall Horton's memoir, *Hook*, is an intriguing modern take on a classic American tale of self-reinvention, as in Horatio Alger's nineteenth-century rags-to-riches stories. Horatio Alger's heroes never become international drug lords and cocaine smugglers, though. Also they never go to jail, exploit prostitutes, or critique paradigms of race and governance in their journal. But, like Horton, they do end up thriving in the very structures that once made them feel marginalized. Randall Horton delivers careful, rough-hewn, poetically-charged language at the service of a memoir that runs against the grain of a typical "recovery" narrative. What results is searing commentary, social critique under the guise of a memoir within a memoir. Because his life has been truly intersectional: from college student to homeless drug addict to international cocaine smuggler to inmate and finally college professor, this text has the potential to speak to people for generations. Through a bravado performance of structure and sentence, Horton gives his readers an unsentimental and important view into how a person works to rebuild after a downward spiral, showcasing how literature can be part of that recovery.

Judges of the New Writers Award are faculty members of creative writing and literature at GLCA’s member colleges.

The judges of the 2017 award in Poetry were:
   - Daniel Bourne, The College of Wooster
   - David Caplan, Ohio Wesleyan University
   - Diane Seuss, Kalamazoo College

The judges of the 2017 award in Fiction were:
   - Eric Freeze, Wabash College
   - P.F. Kluge, Kenyon College
   - Margot Singer, Denison University

The judges of the 2017 award in Creative non-fiction were:
   - Samuel Autman, DePauw University
   - Matthew Ferrence, Allegheny College
   - Rhoda Janzen, Hope College

For more information on the New Writers Award, please contact Gregory Wegner, director of the New Writers Award ([wegner@glca.org](mailto:wegner@glca.org)), or Maryann Hafner, coordinator of the New Writers Award ([hafner@glca.org](mailto:hafner@glca.org)).
Additional information is available on the GLCA web site: www.glca.org.