

Her Kind Poem Contest Winners

Ages 8-12

1st

Jenna Crowell, Salina OK

Ages 13-17

1st

Michael Austin Smith, Bixby OK

2nd

Jenna Koehn, Bixby OK

3rd

Logan Mauldin, Grove OK

Ages 18 and up

1st

Whitney Schmidt, Broken Arrow OK

2nd

Helen Patterson, Broken Arrow OK

3rd

Sydney Aerin, Oklahoma City OK

1st Place, Ages 8-12

The Tale of the Little Witch

Little Dorcas Good was doing
Witchcraft with her mother
Who she loved like no other.
One day they were found,
And now they are bound,
Several years in jail.
Her dad won't pay her bail.
Prison left her insane,
So she remained in pain.
She was unthrilled
That her mother was killed.
Never confess to being a witch
Or else you will have a guilty itch.

--Jenna Crowell
Salina OK

1st Place, Ages 13-17

The Medicine Woman

Her knuckles curl and crack
Her face a field of canyons, dry and wrinkled
Plains crumbled and celled
Her eyes yet gentle, calm, and warm
Fire ashes, dawn fallen to dusk
A knee felled
An arm bowed
She brings out the alloy, mixing it with secrets and honey
Shimmering gold
Gentle breeze
She bends down to the child's knee
Red and raw
Her hands a forlorn mercy
She sings the words, old and new
Each verse a sway of the hips, a washing of hands, a mashing of maize
A story
She places her hands on the child
His sorrow stops
She is an angel
No hag or terror
As the strange is often called
Her magic works in ways unknown
A sorceress in the ways taught her by her mother
Taught to her by her mother
And her mother before
The child's fear taken
Held away in a forgotten place
She is kind
Witch, mystic to her grandchild
Magic, in his eyes

--Michael Austin Smith
Bixby OK

2nd Place, Ages 13-17

The Witch's Cottage

She hangs herbs from my rafters
Stacks salves and tinctures on my shelves
Paints sigils on my walls
Hangs a horseshoe above my door

She doesn't know that I watch over her
That her magic gave me life
I don't need her praise
I'd still protect her without complaint

The villagers come by the night
Torches and pitchforks march through the night
Stones flying through the air
Only to bounce off my stonework harmlessly

She storms out of my walls
A spell on her lips
But the mob swarms her
And I can do nothing but watch

Her garden is overgrown
My rafters covered in cobwebs
All alone in these woods
I patiently wait for her return.

--Jenna Koehn
Bixby OK

3rd Place, Ages 13-17

Witches in the Night

Witches in the night,
Flying high on their broomsticks,
Searching for something.

Witches in the night,
Searching for ingredients
For potion brewing.

Witches in the night,
Their cauldrons flow with magic,
Ready for potions.

Witches in the night,
Their cauldrons reek of strange herbs,
Potions nearly done.

Witches in the night,
Caught kidnapping young townsfolk
For testing potions.

Witches in the night,
To be consumed by the flames,
Burning at the stake.

Witches in the night,
Consumed by an inferno,
Cursing all around.

--Logan Mauldin
Grove OK

1st Place, Ages 18 and up

Disguises

In the photograph, I clutch a plastic jack o'lantern
and a toy broom. Under the black pointy hat
a wig streaked with silvery gray rests on my shoulders.
The dress, black with orange lining and tattered hems,
has been sewn by my aunt or grandmother, a skill
my mother never learns. Someone tells me what to say.
A camera snaps mid-word. Lipsticked mouth open,
my five-year-old face splits in a silent vowel,
green pancake makeup cracking into crow's feet
around my eyes, blacked with shadow.

Days after Halloween, Child Protective Services knocks
its own Trick or Treat. A neighbor has called
about the little witch's brother, who has only one
black eye. An accident. He's a regular Houdini, that kid.
Tried to climb out of his crib and bumped his noggin.
They ask again about my dislocated shoulder
from their first visit when I was two. An accident.
Could happen to anyone. She tried to run away,
Mother had to grab her. To keep her safe. I do not know
whether I was home after Halloween to echo these tales.

Perhaps that was the day I missed recess to explain
why I'd crayoned the carpet in red and told my classmates
it was blood. Perhaps I'd already transferred to Montessori
kindergarten where I was fed Ritalin in spoonfuls of honey,
where I cried with hands covered in paste for papier-mâché.
Or perhaps I was home. Perhaps by then I knew her kind,
women with clipboards and questions, witches in disguise,
like the Witch of the West who pretends to be a grieving sister,
like the Evil Grizelda who steals toys I don't pick up
by bedtime, who pretends to be my mother.

--Whitney Schmidt
Broken Arrow OK

2nd Place, Ages 18 and up

Burn the Witch

Widow in the woods--an easy scapegoat:
Her worn hands grind poultices
Brew bitter teas
Her gray eyes look straight ahead
Never flicker down
Her tempting wealth of land
What right has a crone to outlive her husband and sons?

They come--armed with muskets and the Good Book:
Her house has no chicken feet to carry her to safety
Her pestle and mortar sit silent in the corner
Her black cat, no familiar,
Bleeds and dies
Like any mortal beast
The mob drags her away.

They bind her to the stake and call it righteousness.
In her screams
They hear dark incantations
In the sour stink of burning skin
They smell purification
Her overbold eyes
Dribble down her ruined face
The fire renders her down to fat, ashes, bone.

The next Sunday, hands scrubbed clean,
They sit smugly on frigid pews,
Mimicking Godliness.

--Helen Patterson
Broken Arrow OK

3rd Place, Ages 18 and up

I've Been Burned Before

From the age of 15,
Men have been afraid of me
The blood that comes from my body
The words that come from my mouth
The ideas that come from my mind

Men call me weak and try to make it so
Try to convince me that it is true
They fault me for being childless and single
Fault me for being stubborn and strong
Fault me for being female and me

Men call me 'witch' like it is a bad thing
To know my power and to use it
To be alone and enjoy it
Burn me at the stake of their ignorance
For the sake of their ignorance

But I've been burned before, so my wick is longer now
I have my coven of fellow witches
My black dog familiars
My muchness and my magic
My power and my pride

I control my present and my future
I will right their wrongs but writing new endings for them
I will restore power to its rightful place
I will brew self-love potions for all
Cast a spell of enchantment over the world

I will remind men that Glenda is a good witch
That magic and equality are meant for all
That we are more powerful together
I am monster, myth, legend, lore
I am worthy, witch, and woman.

--Sydney Aerin
Oklahoma City OK