

## Acknowledgements

PUTTING TOGETHER A PUBLICATION like *Prized Writing* involves the efforts of many people, and I'd like to acknowledge their gifts of time and expertise.

Funding is provided largely by the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and by the Dean of HARCS (the Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies division of the College of Letters and Science), and so I would like to extend my gratitude to Vice Provost Pat Turner and Dean Jessie Ann Owens, without whose generous and enthusiastic support there would be no *Prized Writing*. I would also like to thank John Lescroart for his generous gift to support the Prized Writing student authors this year.

Judging this competition took all year, and I am extremely grateful to the following UC Davis instructors who volunteered umpteen hours to read submissions: Cynthia Bates, Mary Bly, John Boe, Marlene Clarke, Elizabeth Davis, Dale Flynn, Laurie Glover, Gary Sue Goodman, Jared Haynes, Brad Henderson, Andy Jones, Lauren Liets, Pamela Major, Sean McDonnell, Jim McElroy, Donald Meisenheimer, Janet Papale, Kevin Roddy, Rebecca Sammel, Eric Schroeder, Victor Squitieri, Erin Steinke, John Stenzel, Christopher Thaiss, Jean Thaiss, Jayne Walker, Karma Waltonen, Shannah Whithaus, and Carl Whithaus. Thanks also to those who helped with the painstaking job of copy-editing—Cynthia Bates, Jared Haynes, Evan Fletcher, Gary Sue Goodman, Sean McDonnell, James McElroy, Don Meisenheimer, Eric Schroeder, Chris Thaiss, Jean Thaiss, and Jayne Walker. And a huge thank-you to Lauren Liets, who not only trekked across campus to read submissions but who also volunteered her expertise with Photoshop and graphic design to help me with the cover art. I am also grateful to Andrea Khoo for allowing us to use her image on our cover, and to Florence Low, for granting permission to use her photographs.

None of this would be possible at all without the exceptional management skills of Dee Shannon, who not only oversaw all the submissions and made the arrangements for the reading and the reception, but who—throughout the year—fielded questions from students and faculty, handled all the announcements and mailings, tracked down apparently-missing people, and provided unfailingly cheerful and enthusiastic support. Thanks also to all the other staff members who pitched in: Terry

Antonelli, Cindy Dufern, Paula Goldston, Jeanene Hayes, Lynda Jones, Elliott Pollard, and Tara Porter. I am also grateful for all the work put in by graduate student Erin Steinke, who organized the Student Author Events and helped me with various projects, and *Prized Writing* intern Whitney Carpenter, who maintained the billboard, handled correspondence, and who did a great deal of background work on the *Prized Writing* website.

Thanks also to the fine folks at Reprographics, especially Debbie Luna, account manager, and Andrew Larsen, designer, for getting *Prized Writing* into print, and to Kristin Taggart at the UCD Bookstore for making sure the books get on the shelves. And many thanks to Paul Takushi for getting the books into people's hands at the reception and for all his help and ideas on the student author events.

Finally, I would like to thank all the instructors who encouraged their students to submit their work to *Prized Writing*, and—most of all—to the hundreds of students who sent in their essays and papers. It's your work that we're celebrating in this volume: thanks for making our work such a pleasure, and Congratulations!

—*Pamela Demory, Editor*



## Preface

EVERY ACADEMIC YEAR STARTING IN 1989–90, the Writing Program has sponsored the *Prized Writing* contest: Students submit papers they have written in courses across campus, a panel of writing faculty judge the submissions, and the winning pieces are published in a book that is available for purchase at the UCD Bookstore. Thus *Prized Writing* (to borrow a phrase from Robert Atwan in his annual Forewords to the *Best American Essays*) features a selection of the year's outstanding academic papers. A prize-winning piece must be clearly written and interesting; it must demonstrate sophistication of thought and effectively use evidence appropriate for its subject, purpose, audience, thesis, and disciplinary field. Most importantly, it must be an outstanding example of its genre—whether that is a scientific review article, an autobiographical essay, or an art history paper. This year, more than 330 papers were submitted to the contest; 46 papers made it to the final round; and of those 23 were eventually chosen as winners. The papers that made that final cut are printed in this volume; the remaining papers from the final round constitute the list of Honorable Mentions—and I do want to stress that getting a paper into that round is an honor.

This year's *Prized Writing* features papers from American studies, art, cultural studies, evolution & ecology, film studies, genetics, history, law, literature, medicine, molecular biology, music, neurobiology, physics, and queer studies. You'll find papers on animation, advertising and chew-toys; bats, dogs, and horses; bodybuilding, genetics, and vision; STDs, suicide, and cancer; Shakespeare, 19th-century painting, 21st-century poetry, and Japanese comics; feminism, forests, and fencing; patents, prisons, and plastic; Venice and Vietnam.

Yet with all this variety, some patterns emerge. Eleven of the pieces in the volume have something to do with *health*—we've got profiles on bodybuilding and fencing; reports on depression and animal therapy; analyses of our health care system, the dangers of BPA, and the relatively new issue of gene patents; and scientific review papers on cutting-edge medical research. Five of the essays have to do with *poetry*, some of them traditional literary analyses, some looking at the historical, cultural, and sociological role of poetry, and one re-imagining a classic poem as a film. And four of the pieces fall into the category of *cultural studies*, with analyses of prison iconography, soap advertisements, Japanese comics, and

rock songs. In terms of form, nine of the pieces are what might be called traditional *academic essays*, relying on library research and textual analysis—though the “texts” investigated here include popular newspapers and magazines, blogs and other internet sites, advertisements, Japanese comics, and rock songs, as well as the more traditional historical documents and literature. Six of the pieces are *journalistic essays*, feature articles and profiles that combine original research with first-person reportage. Another six pieces are *scientific review articles*, one is an *experimental research report*, and one is a *mixed-genre* piece: part shooting script, part essay. At this risk of sounding cliché: there’s something for everybody here—so turn the page, browse, read on.

Finally . . . a word about the cover. Specifically, the cover design refers to the first piece in the volume, Michelle Jones’s profile of Andrea Khoo, a professional bodybuilder and teacher. We chose these images of Andrea Khoo for this year’s *Prized Writing* cover not only because the photographs (by Florence Low) are so beautiful, but because they convey ideas and feelings that seem appropriate to the diverse collection of writing contained here. “Strength” (top photo) and “Grace” (bottom photo) are the titles of these photographs—words that could apply equally well to the prose style of our prize-winning students. The photographer has captured Ms. Khoo apparently floating in mid-air. It’s a moment frozen in time—we look at her and we know she had to have come immediately back to earth, but all we see is that beautifully composed moment in time. I like to think the pieces in this volume are similarly preserved in time—beautifully composed, perpetually present.

—*Pamela Demory, Editor*

