

## Acknowledgments

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.

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ing.ucdavis.edu), but who also used his killer design skills to create this year's bold cover.

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 always asking good questions at the student author events.

I also want to thank all the instructors who encouraged their students to submit their work to *Prized Writing* and to those who use the book in their writing classes. And thanks to all the students who submitted their essays and papers for consideration—it's your hard work and your courage in allowing that work to be scrutinized that we're celebrating in this volume.

After six years as editor, I will be stepping aside in fall 2010 (my colleague Amy Clarke will be taking over), and I owe everyone mentioned here an enormous thank you for helping to make this experience the highlight of my career so far.

—*Pamela Demory, Editor*

## Preface

IN 1989, SEVERAL LECTURERS IN THE COMPOSITION PROGRAM came up with the idea for a writing contest that would focus just on academic writing—something that would allow undergraduate students in all disciplines at UC Davis—from Art History to Zoology, and everything in between—to be recognized for their achievements in writing—not just with an A or an approving comment by an instructor, but with *publication*.

So every year starting in 1989, hundreds of students have submitted their papers, faculty have judged these submissions blindly in a series of rounds, and the top-scoring pieces have been published in an anthology that is then sold at the UCD bookstore and used as a textbook in writing classes. Because the contest draws from the entire campus, the resulting publication is always eclectic, including technical and scientific papers, research papers, scholarly analyses, journalism, personal essays, and various sorts of creative nonfiction, presented in two parts: I. The Essay and II. Scientific and Technical Writing. Over the years, the program has expanded—now, once the book is published, the students have the opportunity to present their work in public at a series of Student Author Events held throughout the academic year, and their work is eventually made available on the web for an even broader audience.

This year's volume includes seventeen papers in the essay section (more than usual, as we had a number of excellent short essays) and ten in the scientific and technical section. The disciplines represented include anthropology, architectural design, art history, atmospheric science, avian science, biology, business, cancer research, computer science, environmental law, evolution, film studies, history, international relations, journalism, literature, medicine & healthcare, philosophy, sociology, sports medicine, theater, veterinary medicine, and women and gender studies.

The essays and papers are organized, generally, by genre. And although the book isn't necessarily meant to be read from front to back, the sequencing of these pieces reveals a number of intriguing pairings. The book begins with four journalistic essays—two articles on local Davis restaurants, a feature article on record-collecting (records as in music albums), and an investigative report on local healthcare crises. Next are two personal essays that, in different ways, address health and illness from a much more personal perspective. Next are five research papers—one corporate history paper, two architecture papers, and two

film studies papers—and then three literary essays: one poetry explication and two comparative analyses, of Holocaust memoirs and South African literature, respectively—both dealing in some way with the intersection of gender, politics, and history. The essay section of the book ends with three somewhat experimental pieces: one paper that juxtaposes a fictionalized first-person historical narrative of a Cherokee woman with factual information gleaned from secondary research (yet another look at gender and history), one paper that uses the ancient form of the Socratic dialogue to ponder the ethics of abortion, and one quasi-poetic rumination on the experience of Iraqi refugees in Jordan.

Part II of the volume begins with three pieces aimed at general audiences: a paper explaining the concept of *preadaptation* in evolutionary theory, a research paper explaining mobbing behavior in birds, and a narrative case study based on an interview with a breast cancer survivor. Four scientific review articles aimed at specialist audiences follow—all generally within the area of medical research, but covering four quite different topics: breast cancer research, foot-and-mouth disease, plague virus, and whether or not runners ought to wear shoes. The next two papers are also aimed at specialist audiences, one on the programming involved in the SETI (search for extra-terrestrial intelligence) program, one on the legal debate between environmentalists and alternate transportation enthusiasts in Santa Cruz. The book ends with a two-part analysis of how changes in Arctic sea ice are affecting climate here in North America: one part a review of literature aimed at atmospheric scientists, the second part presenting the same basic scientific information for a general audience.

Every year, *Prized Writing* (to modify a phrase from Robert Atwan in his annual Forewords to the *Best American Essays*) features a selection of the year's outstanding academic papers. This year's volume has everything from the very large (global climate change) to the very small (cancer molecules), from far away (outer space) to here at home (Davis), from highly theoretical (evolution and philosophy) to resolutely concrete (birds, buildings, and motorcars), from emotionally wrenching (violence, war, death, aging, illness) to emotionally fulfilling (record albums and cupcakes). It shows us what we're particularly concerned about in 2010—healthcare, the environment, the economy, war—and what the academy is always concerned with, whether in science, technology, cultural studies, or the arts: understanding who we are and the world in which we live.

—Pamela Demory, Editor