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Winners of the 2007 Oregon Book Awards

by **Jeff Baker**

Monday December 03, 2007, 8:17 AM

Alison Clement was looking at a list of [Oregon Book Award](#) finalists earlier this year, deciding whether to order some of their books for her school library in Corvallis, and was surprised to see her name among the finalists for the Ken Kesey Award for the Novel.

[Clement](#) was even more surprised Sunday night when her novel "Twenty Questions" won an Oregon Book Award at a sold-out ceremony at the Portland Art Museum. Clement said she had long wanted to write a novel about "personal and political violence and the connection between the two."

The title of "Twenty Questions" comes from the familiar children's guessing game. The novel is about a grade-school cook who avoids being murdered through chance and becomes involved in the lives of the children at her school.

Like many of the winners (see the list after the jump) at the 21st Oregon Book Awards, Clement said she did not expect to win and did not prepare a speech. Her short, modest thanks were typical of an evening filled with sincere thanks, serious remarks about writing and appreciation for the local writing community. Category judge Antonya Nelson chose Clement's novel over two other finalists, "Clown Girl" by [Monica Drake](#) of Portland and "When All Is Said and Done" by [Robert Hill](#) of Portland.



[Charles D'Ambrosio](#) of Portland won the H.L. Davis Award for Short Fiction for "The Dead Fish Museum." Nelson, the category judge, chose no other finalists.

[Garrett Epps](#)' "Democracy Reborn: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Fight for Equal Rights in Post-Civil War America" won the Frances Fuller Victor Award for General Nonfiction over a strong field that included "All God's Children" by Rene Denfeld, "Naked Imperialism" by John Bellamy Foster, "Desiring Donne" by Ben Saunders and "American Methods" by Kristian Williams. Epps teaches at the University of Oregon School of Law.

"The Sky Position" by Tom Blood of Portland won the Stafford/Hall Award for Poetry. Blood said he'd spent the previous night on tour in a van in Big Sur, Calif., and "came home to clean up" before the ceremony. The other three finalists, all from Portland, were Kathleen Halme ("Drift and Pulse"), Paul Merchant ("Some Business of Affinity") and Floyd Skloot ("The End of Dreams.")

[Lee Montgomery](#)'s "The Things Between Us" won the Sarah Winnemucca Award for Creative Nonfiction. Montgomery is the editorial director of Tin House Books in Portland and has just published a collection of short stories, "Whose World Is This?"

[Shannon Riggs](#) of Salem won the Eloise Jarvis McGraw Award for Children's Literature for "Not in Room 204" and [Susan Fletcher](#) of Wilsonville won the Leslie Bradshaw Award for Young Adult Literature for "Alphabet of Dreams."

Mark Mizell, a teacher at Seaside High School, was given the Walt Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award and Kim Stafford, a Portland poet, essayist and writing teacher, was given the Stewart H. Holbrook Literary Legacy Award. Mizell takes students on trips around the Northwest to meet writers they've studied and told a hilarious story about a visit to Kesey's farm in Pleasant Hill.

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