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Jeffery Hanna
Illinois Wesleyan University

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CONTACT: Jeffery G. Hanna

Illinois Wesleyan Announces Creative Writing Award Winners

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Austin Smith, a sophomore from Freeport, Ill., and Megan Thoma, a sophomore from Wheeling, Ill., have been named the winners of the 2003 Creative Writing Awards at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Smith won the Arthur William Hinners and Louise Hinners Sipfle Prize presented by The Academy of American Poets. Smith's poetry won the competition that was judged by Martin Scott, a poet and essayist who teaches English and creative writing at Eastern Illinois University.

Commenting on Smith's poems, Scott wrote: "There is a kind of snapshot surreal nature to these poems. All his poems show a concern for fresh language and metaphor, and a boisterous imagination."

Thoma's short story, "Peels," won the Babbitt's Prize for Short Fiction which is sponsored by Babbitt's Books in Normal, Ill. The judge in this category, Robert Hellenga, a writer and teacher at Knox College, described Thoma's "Peels" as "more than a good solid short story. Like an Escher drawing, the realistic surface of the story conceals an unnerving dislocation."

Honorable mention in the poetry competition went to Emily Simmons, a junior from Dunlap, Ill., while Mac McCormick, a junior from Frankfort, Ill., won honorable mention for his short story, "Backstory."