

Italy Writes 2015 – excerpts from winning pieces

JCU's annual creative writing contest for Italian high school students whose primary language of instruction is not English.

JCU announces [Italy Writes 2016](#). Deadline for submissions has been extended to **15 April** (formerly 1 April 2016). Finalists will be invited to meet with a JCU professor at the Writing Center to select a brief excerpt from their work to be read at the Award Ceremony during the Institute for Creative Writing and Literary Translation Summer Institute on 16 June 2016. Awards will be presented by 2016 Writer in Residence Susan Minot. Download the [application form](#) at our website.



Italy Writes 2015 Winners.

Fiction Category:

- 1st Place, €300 gift certificate – Tommaso Murolo, Liceo Scientifico Amadeo Avogadro, Rome, for '2:00 AM'
- 2nd Place, €200 gift certificate – Anna Brugnattelli, Liceo E. Setti Carraro dalla Chiesa, Milan, for 'Blame'
- 3rd Place, €100 gift certificate – Angel Grace P. Condes, Liceo Scientifico Amadeo Avogadro, Rome, for 'Bonfire'

Non-Fiction Category:

- 1st Place, €300 gift certificate – Emanuele Frascadore, Liceo Niccolò Machiavelli, Rome, for 'Rising Above Oppression'
- 2nd Place, €200 gift certificate – Michele Arena, Liceo Scientifico Sant'Anna Falletti di Barolo, Rome, for 'My Goal'
- 3rd Place, €100 gift certificate – Orly Nemni, Liceo Scientifico Renzo Levi, Rome, for 'A Just Begun Trip'

'2.00AM'

Fiction

1st Place

by Tommaso Murolo,
Liceo Scientifico Amadeo
Avogadro, Rome

"I stayed there, under the moon, breathing heavily. As much as I thought about what I had seen, I couldn't come up with a rational, plausible explanation for that shadowy figure in



the corner. I've always considered myself a very pragmatic person: I've never had a tendency to call anything I didn't understand, or couldn't scientifically explain, supernatural. Certainly, I wasn't going to start believing in ghosts, fairy tales or

'Rising above Oppression'

Non-Fiction

1st Place

by Emanuele Frascadore
Liceo Niccolò Machiavelli, Rome

Being different and having fear of rejections is something we all experience at some point, even those living in the avant-garde European continent. Stereotypes of beauty are grounded in every spot



constituting this world of ours, reaching countries like Italy and US as well as African nations. "Still I Rise," a poem by Maya Angelou in 1978, expounds the indomitable spirit of black people, who have risen from slavery and every kind of humiliation. In it, the writer

IMPORTANT DATES

- Italy Writes 2016 deadline: **EXTENDED TO April 15th**
- High School Teachers: Register for Italy Reads 2016-2017 *The Glass Menagerie* at italyreads@johncabot.edu.
- **22 April**, 10am-4pm, Teacher Training Workshop.
- receive your free copy of Tennessee Williams's masterpiece.

Find out about: [Summer Camp](#)
<http://www.johncabot.edu/admissions/studenti-italiani/studenti-liceo.aspx>



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'Blame'

2nd Place Fiction
by Anna Brugnattelli,
Liceo E. Setti Carraro dalla Chiesa,
Milan

"Prince Charming won't come and save you, look for your fairy tale elsewhere. You were my Prince Charming, but you didn't agree. It was my fault, obviously, and I believed you.

I love you because of what you think, not because of the way you look. I got it, I'm ugly. You just want a part of me, right? I try to stop you. Wait! There's one thing you need to know before I get too numb. I let it out in a whisper. I want to become a walking skeleton. You can't be serious. When will you listen? I urge you to understand. If you can't realize what's happening in my mind, I'll make it clear for you.

I'll turn myself into a mess of bones and scars.

Your lips pressing on mine, suffocating my sobs. The sound of the ripped fabric. I stand before you, in the most helpless way ever. Finally you see me and you push me away. I can't find my balance, I fall on the floor."



'My Goal'

2nd Place Non-Fiction
by Michele Arena,
Liceo Scientifico Sant'Anna Falletti di Barolo,
Rome

The first car ever made was created by an American car manufacturer, Henry Ford, in 1908. He was looking for something you can use to move from A to B, but he didn't know that he was about to start a new era. And that everybody would want to buy a car.

Twenty years later, the first car race in the world was born, and from that race, something special began.

Everybody was trying to reach the highest speed possible; in fact, the Jaguar E-type reached the speed of 200km/h on the A1.

On the streets however, fear of speed moved in, so the government decided to put a speed limit to slow down cars.



Speed is something that sets your heart and even your brain bumping, all your muscles are tense, everything you see in front of you is smaller and changes very quickly, you hear only your heart beating: you can hear the engine sound only if you think about that.

I wanted to know and research everything about cars, I found out how cars work and that was beautiful for me.

'Bonfire'

3rd Place, Fiction
by Angel Grace P. Condes,
Liceo Scientifico Amadeo Avogardo,
Rome

I had promised my little Nana that I would've brought her to the end of the river to see the huge waterfall. "That's where the rainbow comes from, brother" she kept telling me. That's what my little sister wanted to see. ...



The huge raft had arrived several moons ago from the East onto our shore. The demons of the raft had brought terror and death with them. Their only presence made even the strongest man of the village die, and they often killed men and women by their own hands. I saw them slaying people. They killed slowly, making

'A Just Begun Trip'

3rd Place, Non-Fiction
by Orly Nemni,
Liceo Scientifico Renzo Levi, Rome

Three months ago, I visited Aushwitz, and still every day, something reminds me of this experience.

In our world people exist who are not able to communicate even if they use a billion words, and then there are people who don't need too many words, sometimes they tell you something just through a look.



There were about three hundred of us: students, five historians, and the one: Sami Modiano.

We were accompanied by a man, who step-by-step relived the unlivable.

ITALY
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'Bonfire' cont'd... their victims suffer in ways that I had never seen done not even on beasts. Before that day I had never seen a man killed senselessly. They were true demons. The same demons that my father used to mention when Nana and I didn't behave. The same demons in mama's stories. And also the same demons that took everything away from me, my home, my village, my family, my sister. I saw it with my own eyes. I saw my mother crying for desperation, begging those heartless monsters for mercy, while they were raping and killing her. My father was tortured with their strange weapons made of wooden sticks with thorns and then slowly burned with other men. And as if that wasn't enough, they also took away my sister's life... that... that was... that had been the moment when I'd realized that the world I had always known had just fallen apart. I was alone. I hadn't been able to do anything.

'A Just Begun Trip' cont'd...

Of course, his words moved us, his words were screams. His words were mourns. When Sami speaks, you hear him with your eyes, his words are not enough to understand, his face, his incredible and profound eyes go back to see what they shouldn't have already seen. He made me think of my relatives when he told us about his sister. Sami said that after months that he looked for his sister in the camp, finally one night he found her, but she was a completely different woman. He begs us to tell his story, that no one will relive what he has lived through. So no one will see the look of a sister who is about to die, so no one will pretend that he didn't understand that his dad was dying.

'Rising above Oppression' cont'd... uses the motif of the image pattern "I Rise" to illustrate the way humanity has overcome great obstacles and oppression with enduring pride, and grace, retaliating against discrimination of race and gender, and offering hope to readers suffering through the same ordeal.

In "Still I Rise," negativity does not exist. The reader sees her optimism, reminding us that the challenge to hope in a hopeless time is part of our history. Angelou's abiding confidence in finding hope no matter what situation she is in has inspired mankind and keeps inspiring modern culture. As does her challenging spirit in arousing sexual desire in those who feel unsettled by (black) women:

"Does my sassiness upset you?"(line5)

"Does my haughtiness offend you?"(line17)

"Does my sexiness upset you?"(line25)

The poet asks the people who look down on her with disdain, in an "in-your-face" sarcastic tone, leading to the poem's strong and inspirational conclusion:

"Out of the butts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise" (lines29-34)

The words Angelou uses are very particular, and she chooses them wisely, creating a system of images and metaphors to emphasize her righteous indignation and haughty demeanor. The image of rising, for instance describes the act of standing and getting back up from the 'rough ocean', emphasizing the boorish times black people have endured. The constant repetition of 'I rise' may sound useless, but in it, Angelou creates a loud and uplifting cry that stands for the hope and determination she has despite the hardships.

You would think that continents like America and Europe have come far in regards to racial tolerance, but it would be exceedingly ignorant to declare that racism has been completely eradicated, as everyday school bullying shows, for example. In diverse societies such as the US and Italy, the melting pot of culture and ethnic heritage must be acknowledged and considered at all levels. Therefore, we must embrace diversity, and, although others may criticize what we do, we must not give in to the standards or let words hurt us. We cannot force ourselves to endeavor to hide out our authentic face in an artificial countenance. We must put an effort to discover the richness of our fellow human beings. We must take pride in our differences and stand tall together. In a time when many evil acts are being committed throughout the world, we must strive for unity, like Maya Angelou has done with brazenness, dedicating her whole life in keeping the freedoms for which we have long fought.

'2AM' cont'd... magic because of what was possibly a hallucination or someone's prank.

Still, the thought of what I had seen kept hanging over me, both because of how incredibly creepy its eyes were and even more because of the irrational feeling it gave me, of something not belonging to this world. I've been a psychologist for many years now, and, despite how hard I tried, I could not think of any explanation for a rational man to have such a vision. When I managed to calm down, I decided to adopt a scientific approach to the situation. I was going to return to my room and wait for the following night, when I would get proof that I had only had a nightmare.

That second I woke up again in my bed and heard the pendulum clock strike two and saw the shadow standing in the same spot where I had seen it the night before. Since I was ready this time, I managed to observe it carefully and somewhat calmly. I couldn't make out its features because of the darkness in the room, in which the pitch dark figure was perfectly camouflaged. I did see its eyes though: they were staring at me. I could tell it was a look full of hatred. Suddenly, something changed. It started approaching my bed, keeping its otherworldly eyes fixed on me."

Italy Writes 2015 finalists, Writer in Residence Edmund White and JCU President Franco Pavoncello at the Award Ceremony

