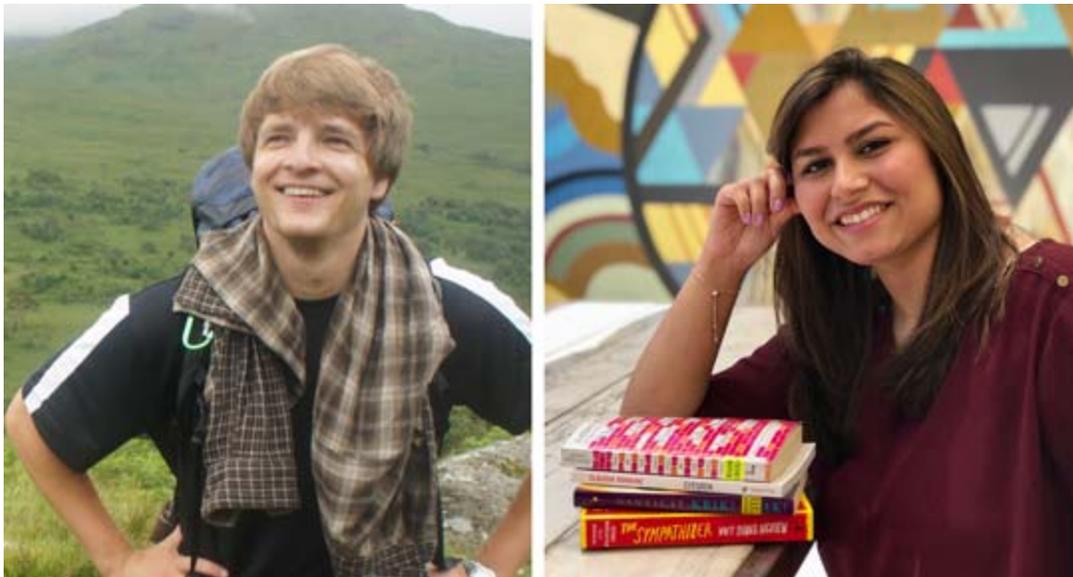


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**ARKANSAS WRITERS
JOSHUA IDASZAK AND ANUSHAH JIWANI
WIN MAUREEN EGEN WRITERS EXCHANGE AWARD**

*Prize Includes All-Expenses-Paid Trip to New York City,
Meetings With Publishing Professionals,
Month-Long Residency*



Joshua Idaszak (left) and Anushah Jiwani (right) are the winners of this year's Writers Exchange Award. Credits: Caroline Beimford, Hannah McGrew.

New York, NY -- June 15, 2018 -- Poets & Writers announced today that the winners of the 2018 Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award are **Joshua Idaszak** for fiction and **Anushah Jiwani** for poetry. The prestigious award, which aims to provide promising writers a network for professional advancement, has helped to launch the careers of **Sue Monk Kidd** (*The Invention of Wings*, *The Secret Life of Bees*), **Lidia Yuknavitch** (*The Book of*

Joan), **Bryn Chancellor** (*Sycamore: A Novel*), **David Mura** (*Turning Japanese: Memoirs of a Sansei*) and others.

Each year, Poets & Writers selects one state (or Washington, D.C.), and invites writers from that jurisdiction to apply for the Writers Exchange Award (WEX). For 2018, the state of Arkansas was chosen. This year's judges were **Porochista Khakpour** for fiction and **Cheryl Boyce-Taylor** for poetry. Excerpts from the winning manuscripts can be found at at.pw.org/wexaward.

The Writers Exchange Award offers winners an unusual opportunity. Poets & Writers will ask Mr. Idaszak and Ms. Jiwani to identify agents, editors, authors, and others in the literary field that they would like to meet. Then, over the next several months, staff will work to arrange appointments with as many of these individuals as possible. In October, the two winners will travel to New York City, all expenses paid, and representatives of Poets & Writers will accompany them on a round of visits to gain insight and advice and to establish professional contacts. As a direct result of these meetings, past WEX winners have had their books published, received fellowships, secured teaching positions, and laid the groundwork for their professional lives as writers. To date, one-hundred-and-one writers from forty states have participated.

Joshua Idaszak's fiction has won *Boulevard's* 2016 Short Fiction Contest for Emerging Writers, was named a finalist for the 2015 *Chicago Tribune* Nelson Algren Literary Award, and has been cited as distinguished by *Best American Mystery Stories 2017*. His stories appear or are forthcoming in *Ploughshares*, *Kenyon Review*, *TriQuarterly*, and elsewhere. He is a recent graduate of the MFA program in Creative Writing and Translation at the University of Arkansas.

Anushah Jiwani graduated summa cum laude from Hendrix College with a B.A. in English-Creative Writing and International Relations. She took honors at the Southern Literary Festival Competition, placed third at the statewide 2017 Jeannie Dolan Carter Memorial Collegiate Poetry Contest sponsored by the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas, and won the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Short Story Contest sponsored by the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center. She has worked with the Reader's Map of Arkansas project, *Oxford American*, and PEN

America. Much of her writing centers on the duality of her Pakistani-American identity and aims to provide a space for the immigrant voice. She has lived in Pakistan, New York, and most recently, Arkansas.

The judges also cited first runners-up **Julia Paganelli Martin** (in poetry) and **Jane V. Blunski** (in fiction), and second runners-up **Erin Griffin Collin** (in poetry) and **Emily Hoffman** from (in fiction).

Poets & Writers will sponsor a reading and reception for Mr. Idaszak and Ms. Jiwani during their visit to New York. In addition, the winners will be offered a one-month residency at the Jentel Artist Residency Program in Wyoming. A complete list of past winners can be found at at.pw.org/wexaward. The Writers Exchange Award is generously supported by Maureen Mahon Egen, a member of the Poets & Writers Board of Directors.

ABOUT POETS & WRITERS

Founded in 1970, Poets & Writers is the nation's largest nonprofit literary organization serving poets, fiction writers, and creative nonfiction writers. Our work is rooted in the belief that literature is vital to sustaining a vibrant culture. We focus on nurturing literature's source: creative writers. Our mission is to foster the professional development of poets and writers, to promote communication throughout the literary community, and to help create an environment in which literature can be appreciated by the widest possible public.

We accomplish this through *Poets & Writers Magazine*, an award-winning bimonthly publication; pw.org, a website that provides trustworthy advice, information, and a lively online community for writers; the Readings & Workshops program, which pays writers fees for giving readings and leading workshops throughout New York and California, as well as in eight cities outside these states; Poets & Writers Live, a series of live events designed to bring writers together to strengthen their communities; and awards for writers including the \$60,000 Jackson Poetry Prize, the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award, and the Amy Award. Learn more at pw.org.