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September–October 2004 Issue

### A PEEK INSIDE

As the editors of *Teachers & Writers Magazine*, we are well aware of the challenges that writers face when they try to capture the creative process and the complexities of the writing classroom. We think it only fitting that the great practitioners in this field should be honored. Endowed by the Cerimon Fund, the Bechtel Prize is awarded to “an exemplary essay (or essays) on creative writing education, literary studies, and/or the profession of writing.”

In this, the first year of the prize, we received several hundred submissions from around the country and abroad. The range of topics was wonderfully diverse: bilingual education, teaching online, mathematical poetry, inventive spelling, No Child Left Behind, prison writing, odes to lost books, elegies to great educators, and Ebay-inspired grammar exercises.

This year we selected not one but two winning essays, which are markedly different: Sam Swope’s “The Tree Project” offers an attentive, tender study of 36 New York City children discovering nature in Central Park, while Mary Cappello’s “Can Creative Writing Be Taught?” provides a thoughtful discussion that strikes at the heart of creative writing pedagogy. (The Bechtel essays appear here in abridged form due to space constraints.) Read in tandem, we feel, these two essays represent the rich variety of our field.

—Christopher Edgar & Christina Davis

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