



**The Pennsylvania Center for the Book**  
502 Paterno Library, University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: 814-863-5472  
[www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu](http://www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu)

For Immediate Release

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**2015 Hopkins Poetry Award winner announced**

University Park, PA— Penn State University Libraries and the Pennsylvania Center for the Book are pleased to announce the winner of the 2015 Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award. This year's winner is "The Crossover" written by Kwame Alexander, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books. The award and a \$1000 prize, courtesy of Lee Bennett Hopkins, will be presented at Penn State in the fall.

One judge remarks, "'The Crossover' is light on its feet—fast, smart and gripping." Another comments, "The fast-paced, hip hop story is a fresh example of poetry that evokes action and emotion in a way traditional writing could not." And from another, "Kwame Alexander's writing set a perfect pace to tell the complicated relationship of twin boys who share a love for basketball along with their devoted yet stubborn father. He has given us a book that even the most reluctant reader can't resist. We learn some things about basketball, but a lot more about life."

Additionally, judges gave an honor award to "Firefly July," poems selected by Paul B. Janeczko, illustrated by Melissa Sweet, and published by Candlewick Press.

Established in 1993, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award is presented annually to an American poet or anthologist for the most outstanding new book of poetry for children published in the previous calendar year.

This prestigious award is named for Lee Bennett Hopkins, the internationally renowned educator, poet, anthologist and passionate advocate of poetry for young people. Selected by a panel of teachers, librarians and scholars, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award was the first award of its kind in the United States. The Pennsylvania Center for the Book, the Penn State University Libraries and Lee Bennett Hopkins share joint administration of the annual award.

The judges for this year's Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award are Chair, Dr. Tim Wadham of Puyallup, WA; Kathy Barco (Library Consultant, Retired Children's Librarian/Early Literacy Coordinator) of Albuquerque, NM; Andrea Cheng (Children's Book Author) of Cincinnati, OH; Cindy Judd (Associate University Librarian, Learning Resources Center, Eastern Kentucky University) of Berea, KY; and Heather Roney (Owner of Sweets N' Stories Bookstore) of Oakes, ND.

For more information about the Hopkins Award, contact Caroline Wermuth at 814.863.5472; [cwv1@psu.edu](mailto:cwv1@psu.edu), or visit the web site at [www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu/activities/hopkins/](http://www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu/activities/hopkins/).