

# Skepticism About Single-Winner Prizes

by Richard Kostelanetz (June 2015)

My opinion of the practice of giving a medal to any poet over the age of ten is not high.

– Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden* (1971)

Randall Jarrell spoke a half-century ago of the Age of Criticism; I've written about the concluding decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as the Age of Grants. Now that our National Endowment for the Arts is scarcely funding individuals, we have entered the Age of Prizes, with every institution in sight offering them and everyone over the age of ten asked to desire them (especially if the aspirants can pay enough entry fees to finance the reward). [more>>>](#)