

“In a profile that amused us and moved us,” the judges wrote about the first-prize winner, the writer sees the world with her subject’s sharp, generous eye, so we come to understand how his personal experiences with racism have shaped his approach to his job, which he considers, at heart, to be making connections with people. As a doorman at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Steadley is stationed in his outdoor “six-by-six workplace,” a junction of tourists, residents, students, and homeless people. Evocative descriptions of the neighborhood and the secondary characters who inhabit it also contribute to this empathetic portrait of a black man who stands, symbolically, outside the doors of a predominantly white world. “Starting around six a.m., drunks in last night’s clothing stumble down the street and residents in pajamas walk their dogs. Steadley starts his shift ... just in time to clear away any sleeping drifters and to wave to the neighbors ambling back from the park. Even their dogs seem to know Steadley as they wag their tails and give him a friendly bark in passing.” For her student, Ms. Cranston has chosen *Last Stories* by William Trevor. First prize goes to *Opening Doors: A Profile of Steadley McQueenie*, written by Leyla Ewald.

One of the second-prize profiles, the judges said, gracefully navigates complex source material, as well as the social nuances of the subject’s position among the customers he services. It’s the portrait of a fascinating, multi-talented individual, who, they remarked, “comes alive in these pages, unlocking our hearts and imaginations as congenially and efficiently as the moneyed doors of Beacon Hill.” Depicting this easy-going locksmith with “sapphire blue eyes,” the author writes, “Time for my favorite part,” he says, extending his arms out as though he were an airplane and flying over to his toolbox, ‘getting paid.” In the author’s perceptive character analysis, the judges find “a quiet affirmation of hope and resilience in the face of potential disappointment.” Ms. Getchell has chosen *Feel Free* by Zadie Smith for her student. Tied for second place is *When Life Gives You Locks: A Profile of Bob Whitelock* by Klara Kuemmerle.

The judges awarded another second prize to a profile that captures its subject’s complex, imperfect character and her occasionally outrageous behavior—but without judgment and even amusingly, at times. They praised the piece for its description of work that augments our understanding of Niva, an Israeli-born, exacting piano teacher. The writer’s eye for detail and ear for dialogue create memorable moments among teacher, students, and their

parents, and the writing itself the judges called “phenomenal, with delightful turns of phrase.” Describing a lesson, the author writes, “The music suddenly breathes with Shidong’s touch. He caresses the keys, the notes ebbing and flowing between his hands. ‘Like tides,’ Niva says as she sways with the cadence. From these waves emerges a theme soaring in the highest keys. The pulse set in his hands, Shidong maneuvers his fingers around the bends and turns of the wistful melody.” For her student, Ms. Krauss has chosen *Warlight* by Michael Ondaatje. Tied for second place is *Striking a Chord: A Profile of Niva Fried* by Avik Sarkar.

In awarding third prize to this profile, the judges commend the writer’s crisp attention to detail and determination as an observer and reporter who manages to capture a reluctant subject’s story. They note that the writer vividly conveys the subject’s character traits “not just through dialogue but through descriptions of her movements and the spare decoration of her shop.” In depicting this brusque nail salon owner who as a child escaped the Communist regime in Vietnam, the writer cleverly transitions between the shop and Kelly’s background, sustaining a clear narrative. “‘I like America and I want more freedom,’ she states. ‘For my future.’ Minutes later, Kelly holds a foot in one hand and a callus file in the other, shaving dead skin from her client’s heels.” For her student, Ms. Getchell has chosen *Fruit of the Drunken Tree* by Ingrid Rojas Contreras. Third prize goes to *Tough as Nails: A Profile of Kelly Nguyen* by Laila Shadid.