



**1<sup>st</sup> Place:**

**Rosemary Jarrell**

**Clayton, North Carolina**



**Rosemary's Bio:**

A native Brooklynite, Rosemary is proud to call North Carolina home. However, at times she's still overcome by an unbearable desire to hang out at the Central Library at Grand Army Plaza.

A lover of reading, writing and writing contests,

Rosemary has placed once in WOW's top 20 and again in the top 10. Determined to someday place in the top three, she continues to hone her writing skills in general and her flash fiction technique in particular.

Currently, Rosemary is working on an early chapter book geared for boys ages 6-9, she hopes to develop it into a wacky time-traveling series. Although a sucker for anything concerning the space-time continuum, Rosemary loves writing fiction of all sorts and plans to write in as many genres as possible.

Visit her blog at <http://startyournextchapter.com/>, and follow her on Twitter [@rjarrellwrites](https://twitter.com/rjarrellwrites)

# The Williams Women

*By Rosemary Jarrell*

Mandy slides off the sagging mattress and holds her breath as Tim turns over, mumbling nonsense in his sleep. Moonlight enters the room though the faded curtains her Grandma hand-sewed when Mandy was just a girl. A shaft of light illuminates the Kennedy rocker, a prized thrift store find that once symbolized hope and optimism, but now sits forgotten in the corner. Conscious of the loose floor boards, she eases into her clothes, opens the door, and tiptoes out into the hallway. She exhales a long, shaky exhalation. Her breath puffs before her like little white clouds. She looks at the breath-clouds and wonders if she could make them rain. Shaking her crazy thoughts away, she cocks her head and listens for the reassurance of Tim's beer-induced snores. Good, he's still asleep. She thinks of every episode of *Snapped* she's ever seen and bites down hard on her lip, drawing blood. Tim should thank her—she's doing this for his sake, really. She grabs her coat and purse and slips on her worn sneakers. Her hand touches the doorknob when Tim calls out, causing her to freeze.

"Babe, hey babe?"

Once upon a time, those words could warm her to her very core. She licks her wind-chapped lips and calls back in what she hopes is a casual tone, "Yeah Tim?"

"Bring back some Funyuns and beer. Not that cheap shit you always get, but the good stuff like Sam Adams, okay?" His words slur, so it sounds more like Shamadams to her.

"Okay, go back to sleep." She holds one pale, trembling hand over her racing heart and waits for the signal to proceed. As soon as she hears the first snort of his snore, she opens the door that leads onto the front porch. Outside, the air is crisp, almost painfully cold. Mandy lifts her face up to the sky; the moon is full and bathes the yard in a soft, sepia glow. She loves this time of day best of all. It's a time of stillness, a time of infinite promise. The leaves crunch under her feet as she hurries over to Bessie, her ten-year-old Dodge. Inside the car, she shivers and wills the engine to crank.

Bessie starts like a champ. She throws the car into reverse and rolls down the cracked driveway, pulling parallel alongside the house. Before she shifts into drive she pauses, and stares at the home she's shared with Tim for the past ten years. She searches in vain for some feeling of nostalgia or loss...something, anything that would cause her to change her mind and stay. But there's nothing left, nothing but a gaping hole full of broken promises and bitter disappointments. She thinks about something her Grandma once told her when she was a little girl and was wondering where her momma had gone. She didn't understand it then, but now, it makes perfect sense. Grandma said there were two things the Williams women excelled at, making poor choices in men and leaving. Feeling two-hundred pounds lighter, Mandy shifts into first and drives into freedom.

\*\*\*

[WOW! Women On Writing Quarterly Flash Fiction Contest](#)

[WOW! Women On Writing: Workshops & Classes](#)

[WOW! Women On Writing E-zine](#)

[The Muffin](#)