

Non-Fiction Writing Contest: The Catskills and the Holocaust

The Catskills represent a central facet of the American Jewish experience, most often associated with comedy, food, a unique vacation style, and upward mobility for the young Jews who worked there. Though often subtly present in fiction and memoir about the Catskills, Holocaust survivors occupy a space central to, and yet at the same time apart from, this community. Refugees of a war that decimated their European population, these survivors sought a place to live in peace, and to be with other Jews. However, when they came to America they found a culture on the rise and a nation hopeful. The Jews in America were eager to be part of the post-war boom, and survivors found themselves on the margins even in Jewish Catskills communities. While recent scholarship and fiction has addressed this Catskills legacy, there has been no focused work on the experience of the Holocaust and its immediate aftermath in the Catskills.

This contest, along with a parallel fiction contest, is part of a book project, *Summer Haven: How the Catskills Experienced the Holocaust*, edited by Dr. Holli Levitsky, Professor of English and Director of Jewish Studies at Loyola Marymount University, and Dr. Phil Brown, Professor of Sociology and Environmental Studies at Brown University, which will provide a locus for literature exploring the experience of the Holocaust in the Catskills.

There is wide latitude in the style of the essay. It might be an historical research piece on a facet of the Holocaust in the Catskills. It could be a memoir or biographical essay. Another possibility is that the author may put him/herself into conversation with an historic figure, possibly in the Catskills, who would be dealing with the subject. Maximum length is 30 double-spaced pages.

The contest is sponsored by the Catskills Institute, Jewish Book Council, the “1939” Club, the Sigi Ziering Institute at American Jewish University, Brown University Judaic Studies Program, the Jewish Studies Program at Loyola Marymount University, the Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, and AskAbigail.com.

Submissions are due July 1, 2012. The contest will be judged by a panel of eminent writers in the field of Jewish literature and scholarship. On Sept. 1, the judges’ decision will be announced. The winner will receive \$500 and up to \$500 in travel costs to present the essay at the November 11-13, 2012 Annual Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium in Miami, Florida. The essay will also be published in the Levitsky and Brown book. If no submission meets the judges’ or editors’ standards, the award will not be made. Authors retain all rights to their work.

Essays should be mailed (one hard copy) to Phil Brown, Department of Sociology, Brown University, Box 1916, Providence RI 02912 and emailed to phil_brown@brown.edu.