

Guidelines for the 2024 WILLA Literary Award

Capturing the Diversity of the Women's West

Applications Accepted ONLINE ONLY – \$65 per entry

Entry Period November 1, 2023 – February 1, 2024

The WILLA Literary Award honors the best in literature *featuring women's or girls' stories set in all North America* west of the Mississippi and includes Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, and Mexico. Women Writing the West (WWW), a nonprofit association of writers and other professionals writing and promoting the Women's West, underwrites and presents the nationally recognized award at the WWW Annual Fall Conference. The award is named in honor of Pulitzer Prize winner Willa Cather, one of America's foremost novelists.

- Entries for The WILLA Literary Awards are open to all persons worldwide and are not limited to WWW members or women specifically.
- All authors or publishers of books that feature women's or girls' stories set in the North American West during any time period may enter.
- Each entry must be submitted and paid for online. A completed entry consists of three (3) copies of the book sent to the applicable Category Coordinator along with a printed copy of the online form.
- For WILLA eligibility, works submitted for this competition must have been **FIRST** published during the 2023 calendar year with the **FIRST** copyright in 2023 or the **immediate** prior year.
- Entries sold solely as eBooks must be submitted in bound, printed form. Spiral or trade paperback bindings are acceptable. Loose manuscript pages, three-ring-binders, emailed copies or online links to books are NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- No title may be entered in more than one category.
- WWW reserves the right to add or delete categories according to the entries received and to move entries to another category as appropriate.
- Entries received with incomplete submission packages and/or postmarked after the February 1 deadline will not be acknowledged nor will any part of the package, including the entry fee, be returned.
- Professional librarians who are not affiliated with WWW are the final judges who select Winners and Finalists.

- WWW reserves the right to not name a Winner or Finalist in any category should the final judges determine that no entry merits an award.

Categories for The WILLA Literary Award

To ascertain what types of entries have merited honor, please review prior Winners and Finalists submissions at WomenWritingtheWest.org.

Multiform Fiction: Titles featuring women's or girls' stories set in the North American West, this category draws a variety of genre books except for Historical and Romance, which have their own categories.

Historical Fiction: Titles featuring women's or girls' stories set in the North American West prior to contemporary times. WWW defines Historical Fiction as any story set a minimum of 50 years prior to the publication date.

Romance: The central focus of the plot is the development of a relationship between two people. The plot builds toward an optimistic conclusion without including the use of erotica or erotic themes. Note: Stories which focus mainly on other plot topics, and simply add a bit of romance, are better suited to other categories.

Creative Nonfiction: Includes autobiographical works.

Scholarly Nonfiction: Entries are typically academic or educational. Scholarship, research, organization, and presentation are important judging criteria. Includes edited diaries and anthologies.

Poetry: Individual collections or anthologies.

Children's Fiction and Nonfiction: Titles featuring women's or girls' stories set in the North American West including women's stories written for children.

Young Adult Fiction and Nonfiction: Entries can range from young adult books with mature themes to picture books and graphic novels; from fiction to nonfiction to poetry.

Please direct any questions to Chair Lynn Downey,
WILLA@womenwritingthewest.org