OPERATING SYSTEM POLICY on BOOK PRIZE and/or OTHER AWARD SUBMISSIONS
[Updated November 2018]

It has become clear to us that it is necessary to include within our author resources not only our policy and process around award/prize submissions, but also a statement regarding the OS's relationship to this system of valuation.

Firstly, please know that the OS staff is not necessarily any more familiar with awards or prizes to apply to than you are — in fact, we might be less so. Because, too, of the ways in which this system is out of sync with our mission, it is unlikely that anytime in the near future we will choose to use our scant and valuable volunteer labor hours educating ourselves more about this.

If you're looking to learn about awards, a good place to start is the sizable Writing Contests, Grants, and Awards Database at Poets & Writers. There also seems to be a decent list of poetry awards as well as more general literary awards on Wikipedia.

Secondly, know that the OS will support you in whatever way we can if you choose to apply to awards. However, that doesn't mean that we will be able to financially support prize applications, nor are we able to necessarily supply review copies of books for awards.

Unless the Operating System's financial structure changes in the years ahead, we simply publish too many books to be able to provide copies and or financial support for award submissions across the board, and so **moving ahead in an interest to be fair to all our authors, we will not be submitting or financially covering applications for award or prize consideration.**

However, we are happy to sign off on any submissions you choose to put forward, to write you a recommendation or letter of support (given a reasonable time frame to do so), and are happy to provide books at the author rate for this purpose. If we have significant extra stock of your title, we may offer to donate those copies, but this will be on a case by case basis. We will also provide you upon publication with a special, smaller resolution review pdf of your book including the cover which you can send to reviewers and/or prizes that request a digital version.

Thirdly, philosophically, and most importantly, we will admit readily that we take a rather anti-prize stance, given the way in which their receipt botches, confuses and pretends to some sort of objective "value" while in fact being based on a totally random, usually privilege-driven set of circumstantial conditions leading to those who have money and time submitting for prizes and drumming up attention for authors.

"Best-of" lists and any other "bests" are entirely subjective, illustrative of often myopic, highly biased, deeply political, often performative relationships of organizations, publications, and committees to the highly limited pool of applicants who are 1) able to spend the time, energy, and money needed to apply, and, 2) who are even aware that the award exists (ie: who has access to certain resources, who has a certain professional education, social capital, community ties, etc.).

While we understand entirely the usefulness of 'official recognition' within our professional landscape, (even one that comes without financial renumeration, which is many, for the person who 'wins') it would be entirely anathema to the goals of this organization either to chase the tail of this broken system, or to encourage our community members to do so. Your value does not come from this validation, and perpetuating illusory hierarchies of creative worth via prizes and awards continues to encourage the sort of scarcity-economy mindset that the OS has been founded with the intent to break down and forge alternatives to. If this is a point of contention, we're sorry to hear that and wish you the best of luck with another organization / publisher.