

Winner of 2023 Barbara Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition

Guest judge Edward Hirsch selected *Let's End This Now*, by Jessica Barksdale of Vancouver, Washington, as the winner of the 2023 Barbara Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition. He gave the following statement on his selection:

Let's End This Now is a courageous, haunted, bracingly honest book. In these stylistically spare and emotionally unsparing poems, a woman confronts the hard truths of her own life. She will not look away from her complicated experiences as a sister and daughter, a wife and mother, and states things, often against herself, that others would not say. The result is an unremitting, utterly trustworthy, and unforgettable testament.

Let's End This Now is due for release by NFSPS Press in June 2024.

Jessica Barksdale is a prolific writer and widely published author. *Let's End This Now* will be her third poetry collection. It will join 16 novels and a short story collection. Her previous poetry collections are *Grim Honey* (2021) and *When We Almost Drowned* (2019). Her latest novel, *What the Moon Did*, was published by Flexible Press, and her short story collection, *Trick of the Porch Light*, by Mouthfeel Press, both in 2023. She has taught at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, California, and continues to teach for UCLA Extension and for Southern New Hampshire University's online MFA program.