GREENVILLE, NC--Leah Hampton of Waynesville, NC, is the winner of the 2012 Doris Betts Fiction Prize competition for her story “The Saint.” Hampton will receive a prize of $250, and her story will be published in the *North Carolina Literary Review’s* 2013 issue.

Leah Hampton teaches English at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, where she currently serves as the Associate Director of WCU's Writing and Learning Commons. She is a native North Carolinian and a longtime resident of the Blue Ridge Mountains. She lives in Waynesville with her husband Joel.

NCLR Fiction Editor Liza Wieland selected Hampton’s story from twelve finalists, saying “I chose 'The Saint' as winner of the 2012 Doris Betts Fiction Prize because I was moved by the quiet, deliberate voice in the story, as well as by the energy of the language. I was also impressed by the story’s experiment with chronology, its demonstration that grief can dismantle time and thus in some way make time useful to us. This is a story that is both disarmingly wise and breathtakingly beautiful.”

Eighty-nine stories were submitted to this year’s competition. Wieland also noted Ronald Jackson’s “The Shower,” Kathryn Lovatt’s “A Cure For Dreams,” and Gregg Cusick’s “Entanglement” for honorable mentions, each of whom is an NCWN member. Other finalists were NCWN members Leah Berkowitz and Kermit Turner, as well as Allison Reavis, Nancy Richard, Beth Hatcher, Faith Holsaert, Haley Edwards, and Susan Walker.

Read Liza Wieland's comments on the Honorable Mentions here .

"The past year has been full of surprises and learning experiences," said Hampton."My background is in technical writing, so I've always been rather shy about my creative side. Recently I'd been intensely focused on some challenging work-related writing projects, and I was feeling really burned out. I became determined to take some time for myself and finally submit this story, which had been on the back burner for some time. It felt so good to finish it, to feed that part of myself. I am so thrilled and fulfilled by this whole experience."

NCWN member Thomas Wolf of Chapel Hill won the 2011 Doris Betts Fiction Prize for his story, "Boundaries."

Published since 1992 by East Carolina University and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the *North Carolina Literary Review* has won numerous awards and citations. Fiction editor Liza Wieland is the author of three novels and three collections of short stories.

The nonprofit North Carolina Writers' Network is the state's oldest and largest literary arts services organization devoted to writers at all stages of development.