

Honorable Mention. The Hoffer Award – Excellence in Independent Publishing.

***Tessa's Heart*, Jackie Lewis, Flying Horse on Fire Books** - Funny, poignant, sad, and exhilarating, this book tells the story of Tessa, a gifted, imaginative, strong child who transcends her often frightening and unsupportive environment, while developing both through fantasy and reality. For Tessa, everything in the world, and even what is not in the world, is alive and speaks to her. Nature represents the "forever time," allied against the coldness of tract houses and the emptiness of the people who inhabit them. Both magical and gothic, family ghosts and narratives affect, and sometimes define, nearly all the central characters. These characters are both realistic and well-developed enough that they can powerfully interest the reader. Though multi-faceted, very few provide stability or guidance for the heroine, who must grow herself up through her intelligence, curiosity, and innate joy and humor. Family and its significance are not forgotten, but they are transformed; and the reader is confident the negative cycle will be broken.