

It's my honor to introduce the third place essay for this year's PPW Awards: "The World's Best Quitter" by James Paul. This essay was written for Sam Pittman's Writing with Style course, and style is exactly what drew me to this piece upon my first read.

Here, the author guides us through a first-person exploration of that baddest of bad habits: smoking. *And* its cooler, younger sibling: vaping. Throughout the essay, James employs a stylish writerly voice flush with wry humor and a disarming bluntness.

As he chronicles the story of his own nicotine-quitting woes, the writer also delivers a fascinating micro-history of the vape, how it was invented, patented, and ultimately over-marketed to become the public health morass it is today.

This essay embodies one of the foremost rules of first-person narrative that a creative writing professor taught me years ago: "Don't be precious about anything or anyone—especially yourself." Congratulations once again to James Paul.