



Dear NFSPS Poets,

Spring has arrived, bringing with it the warmth of the sun and the vibrant bloom of spring flowers. I'm excited to invite you all to join us at the NFSPS Annual Convention and BlackBerry Peach SLAM in Albuquerque, New Mexico—more details about this exciting event can be found in this issue.

As we embrace the season of renewal, let's also take a moment to remember our responsibility to manage our finances. This is the time of year to review our financial standing, plan for paying taxes, and ensure we have a strategy in place to meet our financial obligations now and in the future.

NFSPS has survived over the past 66 years by balancing revenues and expenditures and keeping a reserve for rainy days. Let's spend some time now reviewing where we stand as an organization from a fiscal point of view.

According to our Treasurer, Linda Harris, we need to make some changes to increase revenues or cut back on our expenses if NFSPS is to be around for another 66 years. Last year, we spent more than we took in, to the tune of minus about \$10,000. Although we have reserves, we cannot survive if we continue to lose money at that level.

We now have a Finance Committee, chaired by Steven Concert, our 1st Vice President, and consisting of NFSPS past Presidents, Susan Chambers, Paul Ford, Julie Cummings, our Treasurer Linda Harris, and myself. We have been meeting monthly to draft an annual balanced budget for NFSPS, and to adopt policies that protect our financial resources for now and into the future.

It is apparent that we are going to have to make some changes if we want to balance our budget. There are a number of areas that we are considering and I welcome your thoughts on how best to proceed. The first and most obvious thing we need to do is adopt an annual budget that balances revenues and expenditures.

On the revenue side, there are several ways we could increase revenues. We could raise the amount our State Chapters pay to NFSPS for annual dues, currently set at \$3 per member. If the dues were raised to \$5 per member with approximately 3,500 members, we would see an annual increase in revenue of about \$7,000, which would be a big help.

Another approach would be to increase the number of States that are members of NFSPS. We currently have 35 states as members. If we increase that number to 40 States, we would be well on our way to a balanced budget. Russell Strauss and Susann Moeller are working on increasing the number of member States, targeting the Carolinas, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Another way to increase revenue would be to raise the entry fees for the 55 annual contests. The demanding workload for administering these contests has required hiring a paid coordinator at \$500 per month, a new and additional expense

beginning this fiscal year. We will need to look carefully at our contest procedures to see if we can afford to continue to maintain the current contest structure.

At this point, there is no desire to cut our existing programs. My personal approach would be to increase revenues to balance our budget. Please let me and Steven know if you have ideas about how to balance our annual budget. We welcome your input and ideas. Contact me at president@nfspd.net or Steven at steven.concert@nfspd.net. Thank you for your help and support.

Peace, love, and poetry,

~ Joe Cavanaugh, 36th NFSPS President

2025 NATIONAL CONVENTION/SLAM "Enchanting Words"

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies and the New Mexico State Poetry Society warmly invite you to join us in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for the annual convention and BlackBerry Peach Individual Poetry Slam from July 23 to 27, 2025. You'll be inspired by the renowned Naomi Shihab Nye as she delivers the keynote address on Sunday evening and enjoy a special showcase from Lauren Camp at the New Mexico event.

This year, we're excited to offer a hybrid convention, building on the successful model introduced by the Ohio Poetry Association. Whether you choose to attend in person or online, there are so many opportunities to engage with esteemed poets, participate in insightful panel discussions, and hear the award-winning poems from over 50 categories in the 2025 contest. Don't miss the chance to connect with NFSPS board members and fellow poetry lovers. NFSPS business takes place during the plenary session, open to all members.

For just \$125, you can access the entire convention, except lodging and meals. If your schedule only allows for partial attendance, we offer flexible one day registration options at lower rates.

Discover the opportunity to sell your books and other items in the Book Room while also finding unique titles that you won't find in any store!

Our convention hotel, the Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, is conveniently located, but note that lodging is not covered in your registration fee. Meals such as lunch and dinner will be available for an additional fee; however, if you stay at the hotel, breakfast is complimentary!

As in years prior, there is a Convention Madness contest to "win your way to convention. Go to nfspd.submittable.com for details. Attending in person is truly a memorable experience filled with growth and camaraderie. The connections you will make here could ignite your passion for poetry in ways you can't imagine. Join us in Albuquerque, you might just find yourself coming back year after year! ~ Susan Chambers, NFSPS Convention Chair

The Registration Form for mailed in registrations is included in this issue. The online registration is at nfsp.net. We are using an online system that is free for us to use but will charge you a fee if you do not change the amount when checking out. Please pay attention to the details when checking out. There are no refunds for that fee.

2025 BLACKBERRY PEACH NEWS

The Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam returns, and it will again be held in conjunction with the NFSPS annual convention in July. In addition to cash prizes for all finalists, this year's winner will serve as the U.S. representative at the 2026 World Poetry Slam. The annual Blackberry Peach Youth Festival will also be held during the convention. Youth are invited to participate in free poetry workshops hosted by three former Albuquerque Poets Laureate and group activities with lunch provided. As part of the festival, a youth poetry slam will be held with medals and cash prizes available. Complete details are available at nfsp.net/blackberry-peach

If you have any questions about the Blackberry Peach programming, please contact the BlackBerry Peach Director, Kelsey Bigelow at kelsey.bigelow@nfsp.net ~ *Kelsey Bigelow, BlackBerry Peach Director & Appointed NFSPS Spoken Word Board Member*

2024 BARBARA STEVENS AWARD GOES TO POET FROM MUMBAI

2024 was the 30th year of NFSPS poetry book manuscript competition. Named for the late Barbara Stevens, a past NFSPS president who made a substantial bequest to ensure its financial viability, it has enabled the publication of 30 emerging poets' words, selected by as many distinguished poets serving as guest judges.



In 2024 the guest judge for the Barbara Stevens Competition was Diane Seuss, author of *Modern Poetry* (2024), a finalist for the 2024 National Book Award for Poetry; *frank: sonnets* (2021), winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award; and four earlier collections of poems. Her selection was a first for the competition: a manuscript by an overseas poet. The winning manuscript, to be published by NFSPS Press this June, is *They Gather Around Me, the Animals*, by Kunjana Parashar, a young poet from Mumbai. It will be her first book.

Reading and re-reading Parashar's manuscript, I found myself deep in a world of fellow creatures both familiar and strange, a world conjured by richly textured language. In poem after poem, Parashar's language drew me into rapturous celebration of animals, and, in a stark series mostly of prose poems, gave me a devastating vision of life without them.

The opening poem, "Dedication," reveals at once this poet's love for a teeming natural world. It begins,

To pollen. To gadfly. Beetle of red.
Green crown of leaf. To strawberries.
And mulch. Squelchy soles of boots.
To bogs. To the ancients who live in them.

The exuberant litany continues through another ten packed lines. Another poem, "Invocation," summons wild creatures of the night, "the hour of slow loris," as in this passage:

Awake, cricket. Awake, cereus. Bear and
honey badger, awake. Mark the air
with your solitary cry, o wolf, hyena,
purple frog. It is your hour....

As the presence of animal and plant life is richly invoked in such lines, its absence is starkly envisioned in a series of prose poems titled "Poem with No ... in It." Diane Seuss, in her comment on Parashar's manuscript, praises how, through watching and listening to "the actual world," the poems' speaker knows "That in the absence of birds, '[w]e break our binoculars in grief.' That in the absence of howls, in a poem without dogs, 'we lost our vowel sounds.' How the lyric itself, the music of our consonants and vowels, is contingent upon the voices of animals."

I asked Kunjana Parashar what experiences had shaped her poetry. In response, she described her trips to Sanjay Gandhi National Park, "where I have sat by the Dahisar River watching kingfishers, have gone up the rock-stairs of Kanheri Caves, and have spotted many a coucal, peacock, drongo, and sunbird." These experiences, she explained, were vital in forming her love for the natural world. It is through their language and prosody that the poems in *They Gather Around Me, the Animals* convey Parashar's love for the natural world. Diane Seuss notes that they are "written in a diction which opens the lexicon to the language of the ecological imagination." When I asked Parashar about her passions, she responded, "A passion much older than reading or writing poetry is listening to music." And she described her process of writing as "hammering away at a poem with my ear, trying to listen to and build upon the music of the line."

From her dual attentiveness—both to the natural world in all its abundance and peril and to the medium of language and line—comes the power of Parashar's poetry.

They Gather Around Me, the Animals will be available this summer at the NFSPS Convention in Albuquerque, as well as online and in bookstores worldwide. ~ Eleanor Berry, Stevens Award Chair

FELLOWSHIPS HELP WITH COSTS OF ATTENDING CONVENTION

NFSPS Conventions are a wonderful opportunity to connect with poets from all over the country, and attending in person provides a far richer experience than Zoom. Informal conversations, unscheduled get-togethers to share poems, one-on-one chats with presenters—these and many other rewarding encounters are only possible at the in-person gathering. However, the travel and hotel costs can be challenging or prohibitive. That barrier to attendance is what Convention Attendance Fellowships are intended to overcome. Instituted during the 2014-2016 Board term, they have been offered every year since, except for 2020, when the Convention was canceled because of the COVID pandemic, and 2021, when it was entirely virtual. They are funded by the NFSPS portion of profits, if any, from the prior year's Convention, plus what can be prudently drawn from the General Fund.

Although they can't cover full costs for anyone, they can supplement travel budgets by a few hundred dollars. If such a supplement might enable you to attend the 2025 Convention in person, do consider applying for a fellowship. The more members that attend, the more valuable the Convention can be for everyone.

Applications for this year's Convention Attendance Fellowships will soon be available online at <https://nfsps.net/>. All members of affiliated state societies are eligible to apply EXCEPT those who received fellowships for the past two consecutive years. The deadline for applying is May 18. We're aiming to notify applicants by May 30. ~ *Eleanor Berry for the Convention Attendance Fellowship Committee*

**NFSPS, Inc and New Mexico State Poetry Society
Co-Hosted Annual Convention
Sheraton Airport Hotel Albuquerque, New Mexico
Wednesday, July 23 through Sunday, July 28, 2025
All times Mountain Time Zone
Events/Times subject to change.
For workshop descriptions visit nfsps.net**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23

9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Registration table opens
10:30 - noon	Open Mic Poetry Reading *
Noon	Lunch on your own
10:00 am - 3:00 pm	Bookroom Opens (set up only)****
2:00 -- 3:00 pm	Slam Orientation
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm	Mini Workshop Sampler
3:00 pm – 5:30 pm	NFSPS, Inc. Board Meeting
5:30 pm	Pizza Party!
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Reception Cash Bar
6:30 pm – 11:00 pm	Blackberry Peach Poetry Slam
	ROUND ONE

THURSDAY, July 24

8:30 am - 10:00 am	NFSPS Inc Contest Awards
9:30 am – 5:00 pm	Registration table opens
9:30 am – 12:00 pm	Book room (set up only, no sales)****
10:00 -- 12:00 pm	PANEL DISCUSSION
	Rainbow Welcome
	Moderator: Mary Oishi
	Julie Cummings, Steven Concert,
	Palowski Moore, Scott Wiggerman
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:00- 4:00 pm	Book Room opens for sale of books
1:30 – 2:00 pm	Janet Ruth: <i>The Villanelle: Musicality of Rhyme and Repeated Lines</i>
	Jules Nyquist: <i>Sestina Sampler</i>
2:00 – 2:15 pm	Break
2:15 – 2:45 pm	Janet Ruth: <i>The Villanelle: Musicality of Rhyme and Repeated Lines</i>
	Jules Nyquist: <i>Sestina Sampler</i>
2:45 – 4:00 pm	Write and Share
4:00 pm	Break
4:00 – 5:00 pm	Book Room – authors/book signings
5:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Reception Cash Bar
5:00 - 6:15 pm	OPENING Dinner
5:00 pm	Invocation Contest Winner
6:00 pm	Convention Madness Winners read
6:30 pm – 11:00 pm	BLACKBERRY PEACH POETRY SLAM ROUND TWO
11:00 pm-Midnight	Open Mic Poetry Reading *

FRIDAY, July 25

7:30 - 8:30 am	Open Mic Poetry Reading*
9:00 - 5:30 pm	Book Room Open
8:30 – 10:45 am	NFSPS Inc Contest Awards
10:00 - 11:00 am	Youth Poetry Workshop
11:00am - 11:15am	Break
11:15 am – 12:15 AM	Youth Poetry Workshop
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Writing Workshop for Adults
	Diane Glancy <i>A Smorgasbord</i>
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Luncheon: Taco Party! Youth and Adults
12:25 pm	Invocation Poem
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Barbara Stevens Manuscript Award
2:15 pm - 2:30 pm	Break for adults
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Fun activity/fellowship for Youth
2:45 pm – 4:15 pm	YOU BE THE JUDGE**
3:15pm - 4:15 pm	Youth Poetry Workshop
4:15pm – 4:30 pm	Break
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Youth Poetry Slam
	and open mic for all

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADULT SLAM FINALISTS

6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 pm	Poem by Invocation Contest Winner
7:20 pm	Poem by Youth Slam Winner
7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	CUP Winners
8:30 pm - 8:45 pm	Break
8:45 pm – 10:00 pm	Open Mic Poetry Reading*
10:00 pm – 12:00 pm	NU PIC (slam event all are welcome)

SATURDAY, JULY 26

7:30 - 8:30 am	Open Mic Poetry Reading*
9:00 - 5:30 pm	Book Room Open
8:30 - 5:00 pm	Registration Open in Bookroom
8:30 - 9:45 am	NFSPS, Inc. Contest Awards
9:45 – 10:00 am	Break
10:00 – 10:50 am	State Presidents' meeting
11:00 – 12:30 pm	Plenary Session (<i>elections, reports, delegate votes</i>)
10:30 – 12:15 pm	Performance Poetry Workshop
	(for those not attending Plenary) SETH
12:30 - 1:45 pm	Luncheon
12:30 pm	Invocation Poem
1:15 pm	Manningham Winners
1:45 - 2:00 pm	Break

NEW MEXICO SHOWCASE

2:00 - 3:00 pm	John Roche: <i>Punctuate Your Poem for Punch</i>
3:00 - 4:15 pm	Lauren Camp Readings
4:30 – 5:00 pm	Autograph signing at book room for speakers
5:00 – 8:00 pm	Reception Cash Bar
5:00 - 6:15 pm	Dinner
5:00 pm	Invocation Poem
5:45 pm	Lauren Camp
6:30 – 11:00 pm	New Mexico Poet Laureate Address
	FINALS
	BLACKBERRY PEACH SLAM
11:00 pm	Open Mic Poetry Reading*

SUNDAY, JULY 27

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Open Mic Poetry Reading*
9:30 - 2:15 pm	Book Room Open

9:30 - 11:45 am	PANEL DISCUSSION Every Culture has a Poem - Moderator Naomi Shihab Nye, Diane Glancy, Lauren Camp, Hakim Bellamy, Kayleigh Stevens, Damien Flores
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Luncheon
12:00 pm	Invocation Poem
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Blackberry Peach Spoken and Written Poetry Winners
2:30 - 4:30 pm	Naomi Shihab Nye Reading and book signing
4:00 to 5:30	Bookroom-pick up all books (no sales)
6:00 – 8:00 pm	Cash Bar
6:00 - 8:30 pm	Gala Dinner
6:00 pm	Invocation Poem
7:30 - 8:30 pm	KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Naomi Shihab Nye
8:30 - 8:45 pm	Break
8:45 pm to finish	NFSPS Inc Contest Awards
10:00 pm	Open Mic Poetry Reading (begins after contest awards)

MONDAY, JULY 28

9:00 am - noon Optional Tour and safe travels!

***Open Mic Readings: First half hour no more than 3 minute poem. Second half hour, longer poems allowed (no essays, readings of non-poetry)**

**** You Be the Judge- Audience will choose winners**

*****All Workshop Descriptions will be available at NFSPS.net**

******Are you attending convention and want to sell books in the bookroom? The guidelines and forms will be available Mid-April on the convention website at nfsp.net**

IN MEMORIAM

NFSPS is deeply saddened to announce the passing of Billy Pennington and Valerie Martin Bailey. Billy was a dedicated member of the Poetry Society of Oklahoma and a long-time NFSPS Webmaster. He and his wife, Mikki, who passed away before him, played crucial behind-the-scenes roles in the success of NFSPS. Valerie was a longstanding member of the Poetry Society of Texas. As the Encore Editor before 2016 and an elected board member, she was also an essential part of NFSPS's achievements. They will both be profoundly missed.

CUPDATE! COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE POETRY COMPETITION WINNERS

This year's CUP Competition had 35 submissions from 24 colleges and universities in 18 states, our largest and most diverse group of entries in recent years.

Our winners are *Confessional* by Azula Margaret Dubbs Jaggar from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and *Girlish* by Kimberlyn Vasil from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

This year's judge, Anthony Robinson, said of the winners:

"*Girlish* is a dervish of youthful energy, exhilarating and foreboding at once. These are poems of a studied, frantic life so far lived and an atlas of tomorrow. They wrestle with angels, the urban landscape, and fraught personal history. Somewhere in here are insects and trains and sad guitars and television static and an ever-present many-personed God. Vasil traces a linguistic wonderland of a particular sort of Alice from birth to adolescence to tentative adulthood, playing out in scarred and barred landscapes, inventive formally and imagistically. *Girlish* has fangs! There is such strangeness and tenderness and mystery here as well. *Girlish*, at last, is a journey of discovery for the speaker of these words and the auditor of these poems: I'm doubly and gleefully glad to discover this new poet."

"Part ekphrastic exorcism and transformation, part unfinished love story, part personal exegesis, *Confessional* combines high mimesis and trenchant commentary in taut, spare lines teeming with evocative language and razored imagery. From a retelling of the akedah—the binding of Isaac—to the consideration of the poems of Frank O'Hara, this confessional is a museum of its own, giving life through art that informs and helps to create the human many-ribbed life of the speaker. Made of mythology, fine art, and contemporary life, Azula Margaret Dubbs Jaggar's words sing of quiet possibility in the wake of a (possibly?) lost love and a crisis of faith. They both reflect on the recent past and forge a path into a limitless future, brimming with a mature confidence that's rare to find in a young poet. Here's to more."

Please join us in congratulating these student/poets! *Confessional* and *Girlish* will launch at convention in July and will be available for purchase in person or via Amazon. ~ Jessica Temple, 2nd Vice President & Youth Chair

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

THE FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION is busy planning their Spring Fling, scheduled April 11 and 12 at the San Pedro Center in Winter Park, FL. With the theme "Song of Myself," music as poetry, in poetry, and inspired by or inspiring poetry will be an integral focus throughout the convention. Among the sessions, we will experience both metal and wooden tongue drums, bass, crystal and Tibetan singing bowls, sitar, Native American and Arabic flutes, tribal percussion, harmonica, and other instruments. We are starting a tradition of a member spotlight as well as presenting our much loved generative workshops by members and guest poets, open mic opportunities, and time to socialize. More information about this event can be found in *Of Poets and Poetry*, at flpoets.org. ~ Diane Neff, Secretary

The SUNFLOWER POETRY SOCIETY OF KANSAS continues its commitment to making poetry accessible to all, poetry education and community outreach.

Combining visual art and poetry, members of SPSK participated in Arts on Fire (an annual fundraising event for The Interurban

Arthouse in Overland Park, Kansas). Artists and poets donate works to be sold during the event. These monies provide vital programming for the season and support a space that nurtures and encourages creativity from marginalized populations. This event has served as a wonderful way to build community and share poetry for a good cause.

We hold monthly workshops as part of The Sunflower Poets' Roundtable series. SPSK workshops are a safe space for poetic expression. We have members of varying skill levels. Constructive criticism is key. Our workshops aim to nurture creative expression and elevate the importance of embracing your poetic voice. Works in progress are encouraged. Honing one's craft can be a difficult journey and input from community is vital in that pursuit. It is also important to provide an embracing space for exploration, errors, challenging themes, conflicting ideologies, etc. All participants are encouraged to provide respectful and constructive feedback that will improve the quality of the poem and assist the poet in achieving their goal. In the first quarter of 2025, the workshops have centered on themes mirrored in the Poets for Peace Anthology by utilizing visual and poetic prompts to inspire poetry as well as submissions for the anthology. Some participating poets presented poems for feedback that were submitted to the anthology.

SPSK serves as a fiscal agent for The Poets for Peace Anthology Sunflowers Rising. In that spirit, M. Palowski Moore has financed a social media/promotional campaign via his Silver Lion Facebook page to encourage international submissions as well as increased awareness in North America. Additionally, he has contacted The Gloucestershire Poetry Society (UK) to assist with these efforts.

Vice-president Ana Wilkins has proven to be a dedicated outreach advocate. She has promoted SPSK and NFSPS during many speaking engagements throughout Kansas. Highlights of her efforts were observed as a participant during the African American Read-In event at the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, as a judge/ spoken word presenter for The Living The Dream Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Poetry contest and as a featured author for Local Author Fair at Barnes and Noble Topeka.

We have launched our 2nd annual Voice of Tomorrow competition. All students currently enrolled in a public Kansas high school who identify as BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) are eligible. There is no entrance fee. Prizes are: 1st place \$100, 2nd place \$75, 3rd place \$50, and three poems will be selected as honorable mention and each poet will be awarded \$25. Each award recipient will receive an annual membership in The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas (a value of 25 dollars).

It is with a heavy heart that the Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas (SPSK) announces the passing of founding member Ronda Jae Miller. A dedicated poet and educator, Ronda actively participated in poetry events across Kansas and authored five published books. She taught creative writing to incarcerated individuals, promoting catharsis through expression. Ronda was instrumental in shaping our group during its early years. Donations in her honor are accepted at The Transformative Language Arts Network, The Lawrence Humane Society, and The Kansas Land Trust. The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas has created a memorial page on our website <https://www.sunflowerpoetrysociety.com/>. ~ M. Palowski Moore, President

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY: Congratulations to our Book of the Year Winner, James Lowell Hall for his book, *Prairie Roots* and BOTY Runner Up, Jim Wilkerson for his book, *Winter Poems*! A special thank you to our judge, Elaine Person from The Florida State Poets Association!

Last week, we had a wonderful Winter Word Warmer with poets from the Ohio Poets Association! Thank you to OPA President Holly Brians Ragusa and Stephanie Harrell, her indispensable right hand! We may be doing another combined reading with Ohio and other states soon. ~ Mary Beth Bretzlauf, President

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY: Our previous meeting in October hosted by CREW Poets included a Poetry Travelogue of Winthrop-by-the-Sea scenic highlights such as first dawn, Victorian homes, water tower, Dean Winthrop House, beaches, driftwood, sea fog and Black Crowned Heron and Osprey birds. Many poems were read in celebration of National Poetry Day. Our National Poetry Day Contest Brochure featuring 25 contests is now available, deadline August 1st, entry fee, \$10 for members of MSPS, \$15. for non-members. Send for brochure from Contest Chairman Roberta Hung, 22 Salisbury Rd., Wakefield, MA 01880 with SASE or by email roberte02@yahoo.com. ~ Beverley Barnes, Strophes Reporter

LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA POETS: The League of Minnesota Poets opened a press and purchased a bulk quantity of ISBNs and established a consultation and referral service to assist members with publishing their books. This is mainly for members who'd like to self-publish and use the League of Minnesota Poets Press publisher's imprint.

The League then hosted a Publishing Workshop Series on Zoom detailing important aspects of self-publishing. All workshops are free and open to the public. The final two workshops will be in April and May.

Workshops will be held on the second Saturday of the month from 10:00 am to 11:30 am Central Time. They are free and open to the public. If you're interested in attending, please email leagueofmnpoets@gmail.com to request the Zoom link.

Apr 19, 2025 Marketing II. How is social media best utilized for marketing? Where can you sell your book? How can you contact retailers? How can you book readings?

May 17, 2025 Financial Considerations. What costs are associated with finding a publisher or with self-publishing? What are the tax implications? Are there potential liability risks? How much money can you make?

Any League member interested in using the League of Minnesota Poets Press services must first have a completed manuscript ready to submit. The manuscript must be submitted with a completed form that details a plan for publication. To view a copy of the form in advance, send a request to: leagueofmnpoetspress@gmail.com. A member of the Press' Review Board will send a link to a google doc that details the questions you will be required to answer on the form when you submit your manuscript.

When a manuscript is accepted by the 3-member League of Minnesota Poets Press Review Board, a \$25 consultation fee will be charged as a clear and affordable path to self-publication is laid out

for the poet. The fee is only charged after the manuscript is accepted and the publication agreement is signed. At that time, an ISBN will be assigned, and the publication plan can be executed. This opportunity is available to all members of the League of Minnesota Poets.

Steven Concert is curating Penned Poets 5th Wednesday Reading Series for the April 30th edition. The theme is: Poetry from the Appalachians to the Rockies (or) Contemporary poets whose work Steven admires. Featuring: Chuck Salmons (OH), Valerie Szarek (CO), and Carol Clark Williams (PA). The hour long reading starts at 7:00 pm Central Time. If you like to join us, drop an email request for the link to pennedpoets@gmail.com

Chuck Salmons (Ohio) is a poet and has served as a leader for the Ohio Poetry Association for more than a decade. His poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, including: Chiron Review, Pudding Magazine, The Fib Review, Evening Street Review, The Ekphrastic Review, Main Street Rag, and I Thought I Heard a Cardinal Sing: Ohio's Appalachian Voices. He has published three poetry collections: Stargazer Suite (11thour Press), Patch Job (NightBallet Press), and The Grace of Gazing Inward: Poems in Response to the Art of Alice Carpenter (Dos Madres Press). Chuck received a 2018 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award for poetry, and he performs with the poetry trio Concrete Wink. Chuck has worked in a variety of fields, including construction, education, and retail. He loves science, which often influences his poems, and works as Communications Manager at the Ohio Geological Survey. Learn more at his website: chucksalmons.com.

Valerie A. Szarek (Colorado is an award-winning performance poet) and Native American flute player. She teaches soul-centered writing workshops monthly and creates ceremonies for any occasion. She performs and teaches at events around Colorado. Her poems are healing, present, political, and Shamanic, and cross between the seen and unseen worlds effortlessly. Val believes we all just want to be seen and feel something real and her approach to this is to share a short poem everyday, usually with a "stranger". Whether doctor, IRS agent, cop, or grocery clerk, all receive a quickly recited poem and they often cry and then share a hug. She is also a Shamanic Practitioner and a leather artisan and owns Breezy Mountain Leather. Val has four books of poetry, and you can find her at www.poetval.com

Carol Clark Williams (Pennsylvania) is from a town so small it could fit inside a snow globe. As a young English teacher, she migrated to York, where she was appointed poet laureate, and founded the Poetry Spoken Here literary tent for the open-air YorkFest Arts Festival. Her first collection of poems, *Stories of the Tribe*, describes her work with the homeless population of York, for whom she helped local churches provide hot meals at city parking lots. Her second book, *Unpacking for the Journey*, won NFSPS's 2021 Barbara Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition.

Carols poems have appeared in PA Bards Against Hunger, Broadkill Review, Welcome to the Resistance, Fledgling Rag, Grasslimb, Mad Poets Review, Margie, Byline, Prize Poems (PPS), and Encore (NFSPS).

Steven Concert (Pennsylvania) Queer American poet and practicing creative writer more than four decades, Steven is founder of North

415 Press. He serves on Executive Boards for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, the Pennsylvania Poetry Society, the Ohio Poetry Association, and leadership team for the River Poets. His full-length manuscript earned finalist status in NFSPS's 2021 Stevens Poetry Manuscript competition. Published in print and online anthologies, his credits include: Agates, Common Threads, Discretionary Love, One Art, Poets Live, and Word Fountain. Steven has published four chapbooks—Too Blind to See, Standing in the Chaos, No Mortar Required, Break the Silence: Book of Queer—and one full-length collection, Steer into the Skid, was published in 2022. ~ *Amanda Bailey, President*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY: North Branch is completing plans for the MPS Spring Poetry meeting at scenic Lake Tiak O'khata in Louisville, MS. The meeting, set for April 25-27, will feature two workshops by Jeri Hardesty, who will also have a reading of her work with discussion during our Saturday night banquet.

The Members Only contests that began last summer are well received, and are a great way for members to share their work.

All MPS branches have regular meetings in various venues and continue outreach to have poetry appreciation events in our communities. ~ *Patsy Twiner, Secretary*

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY: On Saturday, October 5th, the picturesque Virginia Street Bridge in the heart of the Biggest Little City in the World (Reno, NV) was transformed into an elegant dining venue that combined multiple art experiences, hand-crafted cocktails, and a delicious multi-course dinner all as part of our first ever Dinner on the Bridge fundraiser.

The inaugural event was put on by the Sierra Arts Foundation in collaboration with the City of Reno and incorporated contributions from many local artists including displayed poems by NPS Members. Being the current Poet Laureate for the entire region, I was commissioned by SAF to write an original poem which expressed the importance of arts education and experience for all, while simultaneously conveying my own personal passion for arts integration and access within the community at large. To see the full recording of the piece "UNTIL" scan the QR code. Video Credit: Amanda McHenry my beautiful wife and plus one for the event ~ Jesse James Ziegler, City of Reno Poet Laureate (Jan. '24-Dec. '25) and Communications Liaison for the Nevada Poetry Society.



The 40th National Cowboy Poetry Gathering (My first) was one for the books! Before it was even over, I could easily tell this annual get together in Elko, NV is something very special. So many wonderful storytellers through music and poetry gather in eastern Nevada along with artisans, volunteers, community organizers and historians to help this rich tradition come to life

for each and every eager audience of fans. Thank goodness for @cowboypoetrygathering. My gold level annual membership allowed me to attend "Diehards Die Hard" Doris Daley • Hot Club of Cowntown • Waddie Mitchell • Brigid & Johnny Reedy as well as the VIP backstage meet and greet for the event.

I was able to have email correspondence with Doris Daley as a result of the meet and greet and she was gracious enough to send my favorite poem of hers "One Hundred Years From Now". I was able to share the piece with my local chapter of the NFSPS as well as my weekly open mic Monday Night Poetry.

In addition, I was able to attend "Cattle Calling & Mountain Hollering" with Gary & Kurin Haleamau • Kristyn Harris • Wylie & the Wild West and "Youth Buckaroos" open mic with a rendition of Home on the Range by a twelve year old boy who brought the house down.

Just as the National Federation of State Poetry Societies runs all across the United States of America, Poetry Out Loud is a national organization as well. On March 15th, 2025, I was able to attend the Nevada State Finals for the organization. **FEATURING THE 2025 NEVADA POETRY OUT LOUD FINALISTS:**

Summer McGill, Carson County
Ava Torres, Clark County
Alyssa Edie, Douglas County
Kyara Hernandez-Duarte, Elko County
Mari Basaca Fuentes, Lyon County
Ana Manrique, Storey County
Rayann Hijazi, Washoe County

The representative from Storey County unfortunately was unable to attend the event, which therefore had six contestants.

The day's Nevada State Finals were breathtaking! Poetry Out Loud has been going strong in Nevada for 20 years, thanks in large part to the Nevada Arts Council and many other contributors. It takes a team of brilliant individuals dedicated to the arts including students, families, teachers, coaches, volunteers, coordinators and community liaisons to make such a program and organization run smoothly. Thank you to everyone involved!

CONGRATULATIONS TO KYARA HERNANDEZ-DUARTE OF ELKO COUNTY! Kyara will represent Elko High School and the entire State of Nevada at the national competition in Washington D.C.

Our state finals were held on the same day as many other states and I was very pleased to communicate with all three presentation judges, the prompter, accuracy judge, event host as well as the representatives of the Nevada Arts Council. I have done many of the roles myself at various levels of the competition over the years including prompter at last year's state finals.

The experiences I continue volunteering for allow the name of the Nevada Poetry Society as well as the National Federation to be held in even higher regard with statewide organizations and a veritable sea of fellow educators and volunteers.

I'm honored to serve as Communications Liaison for the Nevada Poetry Society as well as Poet Laureate for The City of Reno in collaboration with the Reno Arts and Culture Commission as the 5th to do so since the creation of the position. My tenure will run from January 2024 through December 2025. ~ *Jesse James Ziegler, Communications Liaison*

The **OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION** (OPA) convened its most recent annual conference in October 2024 on the Oregon coast in Newport, Oregon, with the theme "Lines in the Sand." The conference featured keynote addresses by renowned slam poet Marcus Lattimore and esteemed poet and educator Annie Lighthart. Poetry workshops were conducted by Tiel Ansari, Dale Champlin, Lisa Kagan, Renée Roman Nose, Eva Sheehan, Colette Tennant, Emmett Wheatfall, and Nicole Zdeb. The open-mic session included a special reading by the recently appointed Oregon Poet Laureate, Ellen Waterston. Emmett Wheatfall was honored with the Patricia Ruth Banta Award, which recognizes an individual or group that has made a substantial contribution to Oregon poetry and the OPA's mission.

In October 2024, the newly elected board members Ty Brack, Amelia Díaz Ettinger, Julia Gaskill, Dr. Isabel Jaén Portillo, and Steve Slemenda joined the existing board members Aaron Erhardt (Treasurer), David Goodrum, Sharon Johnson, and Bob Sterry (outgoing president). The board subsequently appointed David Goodrum as its new president and Steve Slemenda as Secretary.

The Mid-Valley Poetry Society (a unit of OPA) received on February 25th a grant from the Marion Cultural Development Corporation in Oregon to support MVPS Poetry in Performance events ("Native American Traditions," "Spoken Word Traditions," and "Dead Poets Return," the first two with associated workshops) and the MVPS's outdoor poetry box located in Pasture Park at the Bush Barn Art Center in Salem, Oregon.

In early 2025, the OPA board established several key activities for the upcoming year: the 25th *Cascadia* Youth Poetry Contest and its accompanying anthology, publication of the 29th *Verseweavers* anthology featuring winning verse from 2024 contests, and conducting the 2025 Spanish Poetry Contest, an April National Poetry Month contest exclusively for OPA members, and the multi-category Summer/Fall Contest for both members and non-members. The board also voted again this year to help support sending the *Slamlandia* Grand Slam poet winner to the national competition in New Mexico this summer. Lastly, The annual conference will be held once again on the Oregon coast in early October 2025 with the theme "Waves of Peace."

OKLAHOMA POETRY ASSOCIATION: In 1934, Zoe A. Tilghman put out a call to the poets of Oklahoma with the goal of organizing the Oklahoma Poetry Society. The goal of the group was "promotion of interest and the recognition of Oklahoma Writers." Tilghman's first love in the literary world was poetry. She wrote poetry through every phase of her life. In order to encourage new writers as well as the existing members the organization held an annual poetry contest.

Tilghman was effective in accomplishing her goal in creating this society. She was able to encourage beginning writers as well as promote and secure recognition for Oklahoma poets who had been in the literary world for years. Throughout her life the one constant was poetry. The Oklahoma Poetry Society allowed Tilghman to share her love of poetry with the whole state as well. The distinguished members of the Poetry Society of Oklahoma have defined themselves as masters of words, and the poems in our anthology, Answering the Call are like jewels flashing their light, and hearts shall stir and pulses quicken. Each poem lingers long and vivid as one hesitates to turn the page, albeit anxious to savor yet another.

Yes, 2024 marked the 90th Year Anniversary of the Poetry Society of Oklahoma! And in the spirit of celebration, each member was invited to submit three poems for the publication of this anniversary anthology. In addition, members could submit a one-page poem in honor of the Society's founder, Zoe A. Tilghman.

Then, in September PSO held a celebratory dinner commemorating our 90th year Anniversary and our PSO Anthology Answering the Call. Remember! Come and Grow at PSO! ~ *Patti Koch, Past President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE: Winter workshops included Jake Lawson (group work), Adam Lambert (confessional poetry), and Cathy Hollister (ghazal). Members have access to replays. Jake Lawson chairs.

Small groups met monthly for readings, open mics, and workshops (various members lead).

Winners of the society's inaugural collegiate poetry contest are

- 1st: Tate Haugen for *Still*
- 2nd: Kelsey Ann Guy for *East TN Autumn*
- 3rd: Kiersten Paxton for *Thistle's Crime*
- Honorable Mentions: Major Joshua Frerich II for *Citico* and Erika Perez Cortazar for *Chipped Front Tooth*

Several contests closed during this period (coordinator/chair noted):

- 68th Annual Poetry Festival Contests (Deborah Adams).
- Tennessee Visions Cover Art Contest (Cynthia Storrs).
- PST Student Contests for grades 2-12 (Seth Grindstaff). High School Division only)

The society celebrated members' contest placements and publications. They also announced a variety of poetry-focused opportunities from across Tennessee and beyond.

PST is preparing for a hybrid in-person/Zoom event for their 68th Annual Poetry Festival to be held April 25-26 in Murfreesboro, TN. PST's web-based bookstore continues to add member authors. The society also promoted member authors' recent book releases. A new membership page is also available.

Learn more at our website (www.poetrytennessee.org), blog (<https://poetrytennessee.com>), or on Facebook and Instagram (handle: @poetrysocietyoftennessee). ~ *Lisa Kamolnick, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS: In January, PST had their Memorial Program to remember our members who passed away in 2024. We lost several outstanding poets, including Patrick Lee Marshall and Valerie Martin Bailey of San Antonio, who hosted the NFSPS Summer Convention there in 2006, and who was also editor of the NFSPS Encore for several years. After that was concluded, we had our annual Poem-a-Thon, in which those in attendance on our Zoom meeting read a poem of their choice. The opening reception for Art Meets Poetry, a collaboration between The Art Club of McKinney and the Mockingbird Poetry Society chapter in McKinney, took place on the last day of January. On February 1st, the program was held where artists and poets paired together spoke briefly about their work and read their poems. There were 46 art and

poetry pairings, and both events were well attended. Our February PST speaker was Diane Glancy, winner of the 2024 Catherine Case Lubbe Manuscript Contest, who told us how the book came into being and read a few of the poems. We will be hearing more from her at our summer conference. On March 29th, the Fort Worth Poetry Society will be presenting the Second Annual Quicksilver Poetry Festival at the Grapevine Public Library. It is open to the public, is free, and attracted new poets last year. In April, at the PST monthly meeting, the winner of the 2025 William D. Barney Memorial Chapbook Contest will be announced. This contest is offered by the Fort Worth Poetry Society in cooperation with the Poetry Society of Texas. Our chapter in Denton, Denton Poets' Assembly, is busy making plans for hosting the PST Summer Conference July 17th through noon on July 19th. ~ *Catherine L'Herisson, President*

2025 MANNINGHAM STUDENT TRUST POETRY CONTEST RESULTS

I am pleased to announce the results of the 2025 Manningham Student Trust Poetry Contests. We had 205 total entries from 27 states. I would like to thank our judges for this year's contests, Steven Concert, from Pennsylvania – Senior Division, grades 9-12, and Patricia Barnes from Michigan – Junior Division, grades 6-8. They gave their time and expertise to read all these poems and make the difficult decisions of selecting the winners.

Congratulations to all the students who entered this year and to their teachers, who helped them learn how to express their feelings in such creative ways. Please keep writing and submit to the contest again this year for the 2026 contest. The submission period will be September 15, 2025 through November 15, 2025 for the 2026 contest. Guidelines can be found on our website: www.nfspd.net. Click on the Manningham Trust Student Poetry contest. Winners will be notified in 2026.

Here are the students who were selected by our judges for the 2025 Contests:

Junior Division:

- 1st place: "Time" Ashlyn Stratil, Slavens School, Denver, Colorado
- 2nd place: "Ghosts" Hazel Decker-Smith, Slavens School, Denver, Colorado
- 3rd place: "Rain" Jane Zhang, Buckingham Browne & Nichols School, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 4th place: "The Rivers and Streams" Matilda Estep, Mendenhall Elementary School, Mendenhall, Mississippi
- 5th place: "Night" Keeley Cozza, Falcon Creek Middle School, Aurora, Colorado
- 1st HM: "Winter" Sydnee Nystrom, Vernon IB World School, Portland, Oregon
- 2nd HM: "Misunderstood" Giselle Hill, Mendenhall Elementary School, Mendenhall, Mississippi
- 3rd HM: "The Last Song" Vanessa Angelier, Slavens School, Denver, Colorado
- 4th HM: "The girl and the robin" June Emerson, Home Schooled, Saint Charles, Missouri
- 5th HM: "New School Year" Aden Buckley, Mendenhall Elementary School, Mendenhall, Mississippi
- Citations of Merit: "Freedom We Must Keep" Greg Illich, St. Francis de Sales School, Houston, Texas
- "The Mask" Vee Vitello, Slavens School, Denver, Colorado

Senior Division:

1st place: “Into Unknown Waters” Ben Clemenz, Walnut Hills High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

2nd Place: “Echo” Tsedenia Bezie, Century High School, Rochester, Minnesota

3rd Place: “Burning Poem”

Lewis Clark, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School, Houston, Texas

4th Place: “Post-Tropical Depression”

Juliet Lee, Bergen County Academies, Hackensack, New Jersey

5th Place: “Mountain Winds”

Joseph Kohrs, Massanutten Regional Governor’s School, Quicksburg, Virginia

1st HM: “The Ugly Pumpkin”

Alex Rodriguez, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School, Houston, Texas

2nd HM: “How to Live Inside a Wire”

Aarya Patel, Homestead High School, Cupertino, California

3rd HM: “When Summers Lasted Forever”

Donovan Eddards, Streater Township High School, Streater, Illinois

4th HM: “Mango”

Rebecca Yang, Orange County School of the Arts, Santa Ana, California

5th HM: “Death’s Gentle Sigh”

Adam McCulloch, Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School, Houston, Texas

Citations of Merit: “I Can Metabolize Everything But My Hips”

Olivia Romano, Loyola School, New York, New York

“Galatea Asleep”

Angela Wang, Westtown School, West Chester, Pennsylvania

Congratulations again to all the students who received recognition in the 2025 Manningham Student Trust Poetry Contests and to all those who entered! ~ Polly Opsahl, Manningham Chair

NFSPS ENCHANTING WORDS SPEAKER BIOS

NAOMI SHIHAB NYE describes herself as a “wandering poet.” She has spent more than 40 years traveling the country and the world to lead writing workshops and inspiring students of all ages. Nye was born to a Palestinian father and an American mother and grew up in St. Louis, Jerusalem, and San Antonio. Drawing on her Palestinian-American heritage, the cultural diversity of

her home in Texas, and her experiences traveling in Asia, Europe, Canada, Mexico, and the Middle East, Nye uses her writing to attest to our shared humanity.

Naomi Shihab Nye is the author and/or editor of more than 30 volumes. Her books of poetry for adults and children include 19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East (a finalist for the National Book Award), A Maze Me: Poems for Girls, Red Suitcase, Words Under the Words, Fuel, Transfer, You & Yours (a best-selling poetry book of 2006), Mint Snowball, Voices in the Air: Poems for Listeners, Come with Me: Poems for a Journey, Honeybee (awarded the 2008 Arab American Book Award in the Children’s/Young Adult category), The Tiny Journalist (Best Poetry Book from both the Texas Institute of Letters and the Writers League of Texas), Cast Away: Poems for Our Time (one of the Washington Post’s best children’s books of 2020), and Everything Comes Next: Collected

and New Poems. Her new poetry book for children is Grace Notes: Poems about Families (Greenwillow, May 7, 2024). Kirkus gave it a star and called it “Beautifully written poetry about the butterfly effect of human experience.”

Nye was affiliated with The Michener Center for writers at the University of Texas at Austin for 20 years and was also poetry editor at The Texas Observer for 20 years. In 2019-2020 she was the editor for New York Times Magazine poems. She is Chancellor Emeritus for the Academy of American Poets and is Professor of Creative Writing - Poetry at Texas State University.



LAUREN CAMP serves as New Mexico Poet Laureate. She is the author of eight poetry collections, most recently *In Old Sky* (Grand Canyon Conservancy, 2024), which grew out of her experience as Astronomer-in-Residence at Grand Canyon National Park. Camp has received fellowships from the Academy of

American Poets and Black Earth Institute, as well as the Dorset Prize and finalist citations for the Arab American Book Award, Housatonic Book Award, Big Other Book Award, and Adrienne Rich Award. Her poems appear in *Kenyon Review*, *Poem-a-Day*, *The Rumpus* and many other journals in the U.S. and abroad, and have been translated into Mandarin, Turkish, Spanish, French, and Arabic. Camp is the founder of the New Mexico Epic Poem Project. www.laurencamp.com



MARY OISHI, Albuquerque Poet Laureate (2020-2022), is the author of *Sidewalk Cruiseship* (UNM Press, 2024) and *Spirit Birds They Told Me*, and co-author of *Rock Paper Scissors*. She is also the Editor of *One Albuquerque*, *One Hundred Poets*, *Poets in the Libraries Anthology*, 2023 Winner of the New Mexico-Arizona Book Award. She served as instructor for the Taos Writers Conference and as poetry mentor for Kundiman. Her work appears in numerous anthologies and publications, including internationally in translation—currently in *Ista #4* (Uruguay). Link to Author page:

<https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B0CY8Z1WW8/about>



JANET RUTH is a New Mexico ornithologist and poet whose writing focuses on connections to the natural world. She has recent poems in *San Pedro River Review*, *Tiny Seed Literary Journal*, *Tulip Tree Review*, and *Ekphrastic Review*, and anthologies including *New Mexico Poetry Anthology 2023* (Museum of New Mexico Press).

Her sonnet, “A World That Shimmers,” won the inaugural True Concord Poetry Contest, was set to music by the 2023 winner of the Emerging Composer Contest and was performed by True Concord Voices and Orchestra in Tucson in October 2023. Her book, *Feathered Dreams: celebrating birds in poems, stories & images* (Mercury HeartLink, 2018) was a Finalist for the 2018 NM/AZ Book Awards. She currently serves as the NMSPS Albuquerque Chapter Chair. Her website is <https://redstartsandravens.com/janets-poetry/>



JULES NYQUIST, Ph.D., MFA, is the founder of Jules' Poetry Playhouse in Placitas, NM, where she publishes and/or sells poetry books, including several of her own; teaches poetry classes; sponsors a monthly Zoom open mic featuring poets or groups of poets from far and wide; and otherwise spreads the love of poetry.

Jules' *The Sestina Playbook* (Poetry Playhouse Publications) won the NM/AZ 2021 Book Award. Jules served on the Selection Committee for Albuquerque's first Poet Laureate. A longtime member of NMSPS, she has chaired its State Convention and Membership Committees and holds its Mission Award. Her website is www.poetryplayhouse.com



DIANE GLANCY is a member of the Denton Poets Assembly, a chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas. She received an appreciation award for her long membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. In 2024, Glancy won the Catherine Case Lubbe manuscript competition from the Poetry Society of Texas for *Piece*. In 2023, she won the William Barney Chapbook

Competition from the Fort Worth Poetry Society for *Jawbone*. In 2022, Blackbeard Press of Fort Worth published a chapbook, *Jigsaw*. Glancy published another poetry collection, *Quadrille, Christianity and the Early New England Indians*, in 2024. Currently she teaches a cohort on Experimental Poetry and Prose at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Her books and awards are on her website, www.dianeglancy.com.



Emeritus English Professor **JOHN ROCHE** lives in Placitas, NM, helping run Jules' Poetry Playhouse and edit Poetry Playhouse Publications. He was formerly president of Just Poets in Rochester, NY; a board member of BOA Editions; and chief organizer of the Black Mountain North Symposium. Along with editing the 5-volume *Poets Speak* series and other anthologies (e.g., *Mo' Joe*), he has published his own poetry, including *On Conesus*, *Topicalities*, *Road Ghosts*, *The Joe Poems: The Continuing Saga of Joe the Poet*, and *Joe Rides Again: Further Adventures of Joe the Poet*. His most recent book, *Tubbables*, delights in word play.



SETH Author, poet, musician and actor, SETH has carved his career experimenting with creative ways to present poetry. His mission: to make poetry more entertaining and thus more accessible to general audiences. One of the Rocky Mtn Region's best known performance poets, from 1989-2000 SETH was a member of **Open Rangers**, a network of poets, actors, musicians, dancers, and other performance artists. From 1993-2004, he performed with critically-acclaimed performance art trio **Jafrika**, combining original music, poetry & dance. From 2000-2024 SETH headed **Art Compost & the Word Mechanics**, an elastic ensemble of improvisational musicians inviting poets and spoken word artists to join their weekly jam of music and spoken word. SETH is author of the poetry collection *A Black Odyssey*, available in print and audiobook, and an award-winning satirical novel, *The Perfect Stranger*. Learn more at <https://www.wagingart.com>.

SAMPLE OF WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

RAINBOW WELCOME! YOU'RE SAFE HERE: Poets can be misfits just by being poets. But when we come together in poets-only spaces, we have an instant bond. Some of us have additional identities that can set us apart. As poets, we know that embracing those differences draws us closer—and expands us all. That's why the National Federation of State Poetry Societies recently adopted a non-discrimination policy. What exactly *is* the policy? What are the benefits of adopting it at the state level? What does it mean to be welcoming? How do we let poets know they are welcome? Get answers to these and more questions in a safe and welcoming space. You're also invited to submit your own questions for us to consider discussing in the 2nd hour.

THE VILLANELLE: MUSICALITY OF RHYME AND REPEATED LINES: What do peasant dance songs and poems of the Renaissance have in common with page and stage poets in this day and age? How can rhyme and repetition, which helped troubadours remember lines centuries ago, inspire poets and speak to audiences today? Echoes, reciting mantras, the marriage of repetition and surprise. Villanelles are 19-line poems containing two repeated lines and associated rhymes. We will read examples of villanelles from different eras; diagram these poems to understand the form; and, once we know the rules, talk about how to break them. We will then start drafting our own villanelles.

SESTINA SAMPLER WITH JULES NYQUIST: Let's have fun with the sestina, a poem of six stanzas with six lines each and repeating teleutons (end words). Discover magic—even obsession—with the sestina and its many variations! We'll use some writing exercises out of Jules' renowned *Sestina Playbook*, an innovative tool that is many things: poetry collection and workbook, reference and map. It wraps up Jules' Sestina class (which she has taught for over two decades) into a neat, fun package for play. You may even find yourself in a labyrinth! During class, you will start the first stanza; and may even complete an entire poem.

PUNCTUATE YOUR POEM WITH PUNCH!: How do I punctuate my poems? Capitalize each line and end with a comma? Use dashes—like Emily — Dickinson? Scrap capitalization like e.e. cummings? Create-my-own system? That depends on your personality, what you want to convey, and whether you're a punctuation maximalist or minimalist. To punctuate is literally to "point out" by way of marks; or, to "occur at intervals throughout," suggesting close ties to rhythm. Broadly, it includes "road signs" posted for the reader: yes, the usual, plus typefaces; font sizes; spacing; line breaks; even icons, drawings, etc. (We'll do exercises inspired by such questions.)

THE SMORGASBORD: We will write a poem, brainstorm ideas for other poems, and discuss how to compile these poems into a manuscript. As we create, we often end up with many scattered pieces. Let's focus on how to connect them into a cohesive collection.

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP: Just as writing poetry is an art, so to reading and performing poetry in public. Taking a holistic approach to performing, this workshop explores incorporating body, voice, and mind into the reading of poetry. Learn the fundamentals of how to capture and hold a listener's attention. How to vary your speech patterns. How to expand the full range of your vocal apparatus. You'll also learn simple strategies for including music, theater, dance, and other poets into a multi-layered presentation. Participants should bring a short sample of their (or other) poetry, wear loose clothing and prepare to have fun.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

Organized October 17, 1959

Mary B. Wall, Founder

Honorary Chancellor: Ihor Pavlyuk

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MICHIGAN: Poetry Society of Michigan

David James, President ~ 1108 Fairway Dr.,

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MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets

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MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi Poetry Society

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NEBRASKA: Nebraska Poetry Society

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Catherine L'Herisson, President ~ 518 Grinnell Dr.,

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UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society

Michael Parker, President ~ 878 South 250 West,

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WYOMING: WyoPoets

John Roedel, President ~ johnkroedel@gmail.com

STROPHES

Strophes, the newsletter of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc., is published four times a year: August (*June 25th) ~ October (*August 25th) ~ January (*November 25th) ~ April (*February 25th). News items and information on contests may be sent via regular mail or email, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Julie Cummings, *Strophes* Editor

5858 Pintail Way, Frederick, CO 80504-9668

Stropheseditor@nfspns.net

* Submission Deadlines

Strophes is available without cost to all paid-up members of NFSPS member state societies when mailed/shipped in bulk to the president or other designated person, who is responsible for ordering the number needed by the submission deadline for each issue. Individual subscriptions are \$5.00 a year to cover handling costs. Special orders are mailed separately. To order a single issue: specify the issue ordered, include a **SASE with adequate postage for up to 12 pages** and \$2.00 per copy.

NFSPS PAST PRESIDENTS

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NFSPS DEADLINES AND DATES**Manningham Submission Period:**

September 15, 2025 - November 15, 2025

Stevens Manuscript Submission Period:

August 15, 2025- October 15, 2025

CUP Submission Period:

December 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026

BlackBerry Peach (Spoken Word) Submission Period:

January 1, 2026 – March 15, 2026

Annual Contest Submission Period:

January 1, 2026 – March 15, 2026

State Membership Lists and Annual Dues Deadline:

January 15, 2026

Updates due by March 15, 2026

Strophes Reports or Articles:August Issue Deadline: June 25thOctober Issue Deadline: August 25thJanuary Issue Deadline: November 25thApril Issue Deadline: February 25th**BlackBerry Peach SLAM Entry Period:**

Stay tuned for further information!

Contest Sponsorship Forms and Payment:March 15th for the following year**State Annual Reports:**

One week prior to convention

Board and Committee Annual Reports:

One week prior to convention or when complete in special cases. (Treasurer, Contest Chair)

State President Meetings:

Held Quarterly. Watch for emails!

Learning Central Meetings:

Held Quarterly. Watch for emails!

Quarterly Contest Submission Window

October 1-October 31

January 1-January 31

April 15- May 15

August 15 – September 15

PLEASE BE WARY OF SCAMMERS

Whenever you get an email with my name as the sender, check to see if the message is actually sent from president@nfsp.net. If it isn't, I suggest you report the email as scam/phishing to your email provider. I will never ask you for money or gift cards in an email or text message.

~ Joe Cavanaugh, 36th NFSPS President

PAST STEVENS MANUSCRIPTS

Prize-winning collections from the past may be ordered from Polly Opsahl for the prices listed on the order form available at <https://www.nfsp.net/StevensOrder.pdf>. Add to the price of the book/s mailing costs of \$2.00 for the first book and \$.50 for each additional book. Make checks payable to NFSPS. Her mailing address is on the bottom of the form.

NFSPS QUARTERLY CONTEST ON SUBMITTABLE

The NFSPS quarterly contest window will be open on Submittable from April 15 to May 15. **This Quarter the subject is Winter (again) and the form is Any. There is a 40 line limit. The Entry Fee is \$2** Poets may submit one poem. Judging will occur in May, and the top three poems will be published in the next issue. Prizes for first, second, and third place will be a percentage of the combined entry fees (\$2 per poem, 1 poem per person), at 45%, 35% and 20%. If you need assistance with Submittable, please email admin@nfsp.net and details will be sent to you.

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2024

The 2024 anthology of prize-winning poems awarded at the “Voices Set Free” NFSPS convention is available on amazon.com. All

royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS.

~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor

CONVENTION MADNESS!!

The NFSPS 2025 Convention Madness contest is officially open for submissions at nfsp.submittable.com. This exciting opportunity allows both members and non-members of the organization to participate. The contest features an enticing first prize, lodging at the host hotel during the convention! It's a fantastic chance to immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of the event. We encourage all participants to review the detailed guidelines available on the contest site, as they provide essential information about entry requirements, submission deadlines, and judging criteria. Start preparing your submissions today and be part of an unforgettable event!