



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

An educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing
and appreciation of poetry in America.

Strophes

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Dear NFSPS Poets,

I am writing to report that our annual national NFSPS convention was a success, whether you attended in person or virtually via Zoom. The NFSPS annual Convention was held this year in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 23-28, 2025. The theme of this year's Convention was "Enchanting Words."

We were treated to 5 days of outstanding poetry and the opportunity to meet and share poetry with fellow poets from across the country. It was one of the most exciting and fun gatherings ever for those who were there in person or who joined through our virtual network.

This convention had the first ever Form Slam, where every poem had to be a form submitted prior to the event and was vetted by a form judge. Each competitor will be published in an anthology published by Buster Bodhi Press. First Place was Lydia Gates, Second Place was Christopher Clauss, and Third Place was Julie Cummings.

We were inspired by the renowned Naomi Shihab Nye, who delivered the keynote address on Sunday evening. We also had a chance to see and hear the BlackBerry Peach National Championship Poetry Slam, the winner of which will represent the United States at the World Poetry Slam Championship next year. Black Chakra was named the 2025 champion with Nate Lovell a close second. This was a memorable experience and an exciting opportunity to see 48 of the country's finest performance poets at their best.

Whether you chose to attend in person or online, there were so many opportunities to engage with esteemed poets, read your poems, participate in insightful panel discussions, and hear the award-winning poems from over 50 categories in the 2025 contests.

The 2025 NFSPS Convention Committee, headed up by Susan Chambers, together with our cordial and energetic New Mexico State Poetry Society, with special thanks to Shirley Blackwell and President Bernadette Perez, was an event to remember, whether you were there in person at the convention or a part of the action from the comfort of your own home on Zoom.

I look forward to next year's Convention which will be hosted by the Sunflower Poets of Kansas. With their heartland spirit and poetic passion, we are sure it will be another extraordinary event. Hope to see you there.

Peace, love, and poetry,

~ Joe Cavanaugh, 36th NFSPS President

NFSPS 2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION



We're excited to announce that the **2026 National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) Annual Convention and BlackBerry Peach SLAM** will take place in **Overland Park, Kansas, and will be co-hosted by NFSPS and the Sunflower Poets of Kansas!** While the planning committee is still finalizing details, updates will be shared as they become available—so stay tuned! Check NFSPS.net for updates before the next issue of Strophes and often after that.

In the meantime, now's a great time to prepare for upcoming opportunities available at NFSPS.Submittable.com/submit

- **Barbara Stevens Manuscript Contest**
Submission window: August 15 – October 15
- **BlackBerry Peach Spoken and Written Word Contest**
Submission window: January 1 – March 15
- **50 Annual NFSPS Poetry Contests**
Submission window: January 1 – March 15

⚠ ⚠ ⚠ ⚠ IMPORTANT NOTICE ⚠ ⚠ ⚠ ⚠

SCAM AND PHISHING EMAILS ARE NOT FROM NFSPS

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) is committed to protecting the privacy and trust of our members and community. Unfortunately, like many organizations, our name is sometimes used in scam or phishing attempts by cybercriminals trying to deceive people into giving away personal information, money, or access to their devices.

These scam emails are *not* from NFSPS. We never solicit sensitive information via unsolicited emails, and we will never ask for money, account credentials, or urgent action in this manner.

We do ask for continued sponsorship of annual contests and membership dues. If you suspect the request is a scam, please email admin@nfspd.net or President@nfspd.net and ask for clarification. Do not reply to the email.

🚩 What Do Scam or Phishing Emails Look Like?

Phishing emails often appear convincing. They may include the NFSPS name or mimic a real officer's name or email address, but there are always red flags to watch out for:

Common Warning Signs:

- Urgent or threatening language

("Your account will be suspended," "Act now to avoid charges.")

- Requests for sensitive information (Bank account numbers, passwords, Social Security numbers.)
- Unusual attachments or links These may lead to malicious websites or download harmful files.
- Email address doesn't match the organization Look carefully—scammers often use addresses that seem close to official ones but include extra characters or odd domains (e.g., nfspssupport@randomdomain.com). Official communication from NFSPS comes from NFSPS.net email addresses. (Check Strophes for current email addresses.)
- Generic greetings
- ("Dear user," instead of your name.)
- Spelling and grammar errors Many scam messages have awkward or unprofessional language.

✓ How to Protect Yourself

- Always double-check the sender's email address If something feels off, it probably is.
- Do not click suspicious links or download attachments Especially if you weren't expecting an email.
- Verify any unexpected request with us directly If you receive an odd message that *looks* like it's from NFSPS, forward it to us at admin@nfspss.net and ask.
- Update your passwords regularly And don't reuse the same password across multiple sites.
- Use spam filters and security software These can help catch common phishing attempts.

✉ Official Communication from NFSPS

All official emails from NFSPS will:

- Come from a clearly identifiable NFSPS email address
- Be professionally written and specific
- Never ask you to send sensitive information via email
- Provide direct contact information if action is required

If you're ever unsure, don't engage with the email. Instead, contact NFSPS directly at admin@nfspss.net

📢 Help Us Spread the Word

Phishing attacks can happen to anyone. Please share this information with fellow poets, writers, and members of your local poetry society. Staying informed is the first step toward staying safe. Together, we can protect our creative community.

~ National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS)

BLACKBERRY PEACH SPOKEN WORD 2025 POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

The winners of this year's BLACKBERRY PEACH SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORD POETRY COMPETITION were chosen by this year's contest judge, Junious "Jay" Ward from Charlotte, NC. The winners were announced by the Contest Chair, Benjamin Gardea. First place winner Meliza Banales, from Hawthorn, CA. Second place went to Christian Perfas aka Soul Stuf from Reseda, CA. Third place was awarded to Jennifer Hambrick of Worthington, Ohio. They were followed by 4 Finalists: Dana Hammer from Anaheim,

CA. Connie Patton from Fresno, CA and Soul Kismet from New Orleans, LA. Poets were asked to pick their 4 best poems and submit them in Written and Spoken (audio) form to be eligible for the prizes.

All of the 7 finalists will be included in a video to be produced and placed on YouTube, and have their poems published in a book, published by NFSPS titled Blackberry Peach Written and Spoken Word Poetry Prizes 2025. The book includes links to audio versions of the winning poems which will be available on SoundCloud at www.soundcloud.com/blackberrypeach 2025.

Please consider entering next year's competition by following the guidelines outlined on the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) website. Entries will be accepted from January 1 to March 15, 2026. If you have any questions, comments, or need additional information, please contact Kelsey Bigelow at Kelsey.Bigelow@nfspss.net ~ Kelsey Bigelow, Blackberry Peach Chair



2025 BLACKBERRY PEACH NATIONAL POETRY SLAM RESULTS

After two nights of preliminary rounds and an incredible final stage, the BlackBerry Peach National Poetry Slam crowned its national champion. Black Chakra (Maryland) won our first-place prize of \$2000. Nate Lovell (California) won second place and \$1000, True Kwene (Massachusetts) garnered third place, winning \$500 and Skyelyn Riggs-Davis (Arizona) earned fourth place, winning \$250.

Each poet in the competition competed in a preliminary bout on Wednesday night and another on Thursday night. Each prelim saw every poet perform two poems each night with the top twelve poets advancing to the Final Stage on Saturday night. Final Stage was comprised of three rounds of poems, with 4 poets eliminated each succeeding round.

Taking place on Friday was our Youth Mini-Festival, where we witnessed young writers be brave in getting on the mic to share their poems and stories in a room full of adults.

The Youth Mini-Festival, organized by Youth Festival Chair Caleb "The Negro Artist" Rainey of Iowa, featured workshops by top-notch poets. Damien Flores, Manuel Gonzalez, and Katrina Kaye (all of Albuquerque) led sessions covering different aspects of writing creation, composition, and performing. While all of the youth were engaged and excited, the Spirit of Poetry Award went to Jun Silva (New Mexico) and first place for the youth slam went to Sam Brown (Arizona). NFSPS Chancellor & BlackBerry Peach Director Kelsey Bigelow also addressed the youth attending the festival. ~Kelsey Bigelow, Performance Poetry Advocate

2025 NFSPS CONTEST AWARD WINNERS**1 NFSPS Founders Award (to honor Mary B. Wall)****Judge:** Dr. Michael Lavers # **Entries** 368

1st Place Anita Jepson-Gilbert Westminster, CO

"Our Passover Seder in a Year of Corona"

2nd Place Susan Maxwell Campbell Mansfield, TX

"The Green Bellman"

3rd Place Prosser Stirling Washington, DC

"What's the Matter With Tony?"

HM1 Kathryn Merry Carrollton, TX

HM2 Janet Ruth Corrales, NM

HM3 Minnie Wu Princeton, NJ

HM4 Julie Cummings Conifer, CO

HM5 Julianza Shavin Fountain, CO

HM6 Pat Underwood Colfax, IA

HM7 Lynda La Rocca Salida, CO

2 Social Critique Poetry Award**Judge:** Dr. Sue Brannen Walker # **Entries** 163

1st Place Holly Antoun Golden,

CO *"Dona Quixote"*

2nd Place Dennis Patton Alexander,

AR *"A Christmas for Heroes"*

3rd Place S. Evan Walters Lebanon,

IN *"Blood on the Page"*

HM1 Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX

HM2 Judith Rycroft Oklahoma City, OK

HM3 Michael Strosahl DeKalb, IL

HM4 Mary Rudbeck Stanko London, Ontario

HM5 Richard Hurzeler Tyler, TX

HM6 Joy McDowell Springfield, OR

HM7 Linda R. Payne Ramsey, MN

3 The Margo Award**Judge:** Dr. Diane Clark # **Entries** 114

1st Place Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL

"A Dark Age"

2nd Place Janice Freytag Souderton, PA

"Where They Tell Me Who I Am"

3rd Place Christopher Clauss Chesterfield, NH

"All the Better to See You With"

HM1 Lorraine Jeffrey Orem, UT

HM2 Catherine Moran Little Rock, AR

HM3 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

HM4 Thayne Tuason Wolf Point, MT

HM5 Terry Miller Richmond, TX

HM6 Cade Huie Grand Prairie, TX

HM7 Elizabeth King Elgin, IL

4 Donald Stodghill Memorial Award * (Members Only)**Judge:** Alan Perry # **Entries** 146

1st Place David Bond Del Rio, TX

"Reluctant Subject"

2nd Place Collette Tennant Salem, OR

"I Want to Spend My Evenings in Italy"

3rd Place Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

"Painting the River"

HM1 Constance Hodder Princeton, MN

HM2 Mary Rudbeck Stanko London, Ontario

HM3 Nancy Breen Loveland, OH

HM4 Srinivas Mandaville West Hartford, CT

HM5 Prosser Stirling Washington, DC

HM6 John Coppock Tuttle, OK

HM7 Sandra McGarry Fort Collins, CO

5 NFSPS Board Award**Judge:** Dr. Jessica Temple # **Entries** 131

1st Place Stephanie DuPont Sugar Hill, GA

"30 January 1969"

2nd Place David Bond Del Rio, TX

"Postscript: After Katrina"

3rd Place Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

"Genesis"

HM1 Karen Morris Pensacola, FL

HM2 Mike Wilson Lexington, KY

HM3 Elaine Zimmerman Hamden, CT

HM4 Terry Miller Richmond, TX

HM5 Laurie Kolp Beaumont, TX

HM6 Sarah Morin Fishers, IN

HM7 Jim Brosnan Assonet, MA

6 Winners' Circle Award**Judge:** Anamarie Wilkins # **Entries** 164

1st Place Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO

"The Mourning Dove"

2nd Place Vivian Wyatt Pascagoula, MS

"Cry Anyway"

3rd Place Gurupreet K. Khalsa Mobile, AL

"You Say You Can't Carry a Tune"

HM1 Donna Geise Owens Cross Roads, AL

HM2 Patricia Barnes Wyandotte, MI

HM3 Sandra McGarry Fort Collins, CO

HM4 Adelaide Sendlenski Brooklyn, NY

HM5 Rita Cassell Lakewood, CO

HM6 Mark Terry Orlando, FL

HM7 Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX

7 Poetry Society of Texas Award * (Members Only)**Judge:** Connie Jordan Green # **Entries** 144

1st Place Susan Maxwell Campbell Mansfield, TX

"Another Venus"

2nd Place Daniel Liberthson Cottage Grove, OR

"Will it be the Last?"

3rd Place Terry Miller Richmond, TX

"Perchance to Dream"

HM1 Pat Underwood Colfax, IA

HM2 Elaine Zimmerman Hamden, CT

HM3 Betsy M. Hughes Oakwood, OH

HM4 Caroline Johnson Willow Springs, IL

HM5 Cheryl Van Beek Wesley Chapel, FL

HM6 Eleanor Berry Dallas, OR

HM7 Elizabeth Horrocks Wilmslow, UK

8 Jim Barton, Bard of the Pines Award**Judge:** Marleine Yanish # **Entries** 73

1st Place John Mannone Oak Ridge, TN

"Lady in Waiting"

2nd Place Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

"Alligator Tale"

3rd Place Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI

"Borrowed from a Story on Page Three of the Daily"

HM1 S. Evan Walters Lebanon, IN

HM2 Elaine Zimmerman Hamden, CT

HM3 Stephanie Dupont Sugar Hill, GA

HM4 Gurupreet K. Khalsa Mobile, AL

HM5 Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL

HM6 Sara Gipson Scott, AR

HM7 Christine Irving Denton, TX

9 Lucille Morgan Wilson Memorial Award**Judge:** M. Palowski Moore # **Entries** 139

1st Place Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL

"St. Francis in the Garden"

2nd Place Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

"Poems of the Gardener"

3rd Place Kathy Cotton Anna, IL

"Becoming Flowers Again"

HM1 Grace Diane Jensen Glenwood, UT

HM2 Terry Miller Richmond, TX

HM3 Michael Spears Sandy, UT

HM4 Gurupreet K. Khalsa Mobile, AL

HM5 Laverne Spencer McCarthy Blair, OK

HM6 Tina Sacco Orlando, FL

HM7 Connie Green Lenoir City, TN

10 The Countee Cullen Poetry Prize**Judge:** Barbara Blanks # **Entries** 44

1st Place Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

"The Time After Aids"

2nd Place Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX

*"Alphabet Salad"*3rd Place Lynne Schmidt Norway, ME *"Alternate Universe Where My Family Supports Me"*

HM1 Mary Oishi Albuquerque, NM

HM2 Charles Firmage Eloy, AZ

HM3 Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL

HM4 Mary Beth Magee Poplarville, MS

HM5 Dan Fitzgerald Pontiac, IL

HM6 Carla Jordan Conifer, CO

HM7 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

11 Jim Barton Memorial Award * (Members Only)**Judge:** Jon Sebba # **Entries** 138

1st Place Julie Cummings Conifer, CO

"Because of this War"

2nd Place Marleine Yanish Denver, CO

"The Undercurrent of War"

3rd Place Diane Rex Lafayette, CO

"Spirit and Water"

HM1 Lorrie Wolfe Ft. Collins, CO

HM2 Martha Ralph Millville, UT

HM3 Catherine Moran Little Rock, AR

HM4 Virginia Mortenson Des Moines, IA

HM5 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

HM6 Marilyn Klimcho Reading, PA

HM7 Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI

12 Alabama State Poetry Society Award**Judge:** Susan Stevens Chambers # **Entries** 94

1st Place Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI

"Winter, Unleashed"

2nd Place Janet Ruth Corrales, NM

"Bleak"

3rd Place Connie Green Lenoir City, TN

"Tonight Is a Room"

HM1 Mike Wilson Lexington, KY

HM2 Kathy Cotton Anna, IL

HM3 Chris Boldt Temple, TX

HM4 Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN

HM5 Susan Wurtzburg Salt Lake City, UT

HM6 Rita Geil Carson City, NV

HM7 Eleanor Berry Dallas, OR

13 Land of Enchantment Award**Judge:** Charmaine Pappas Donovan # **Entries** 115

1st Place Cheryl Van Beek Wesley Chapel, FL

"Through Vincent's Eyes"

2nd Place Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO

"On Drawing Circles Around Ants"

3rd Place Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX

"Gleaner of the Dead Palm Fronds"

HM1 Pam Tucker Washington, UT

HM2 Amy Irish Lakewood, CO

HM3 Jim Brosnan Assonet, MA

HM4 Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN

HM5 Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL

HM6 Mary Rudbeck Stanko London, Ontario

HM7 Alison Chisholm Merseyside, UK

14 Mary Collar Memorial Award**Judge:** Nancy Flynn # **Entries** 1211st Place Lynne Schmidt Norway, ME *"I Heard that Columbine's Walls Still Harbor Bullet Holes"*

2nd Place Terry Miller Richmond, TX

"The Olive Farmer"

3rd Place Janet Ruth Corrales, NM

"Seduction in Blue"

HM1 Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

HM2 Deborah Goschy Eagle Lake, MN

HM3 Mary Ellen Orvis Ponte Vedra, FL

HM4 Adrienne Braun Geneva, NY

HM5 Connie Green Lenoir City, TN

HM6 Joy McDowell Springfield, OR

HM7 John McPherson Searcy, AR

15 The Listening Poem Award**Judge:** Leith Jones # **Entries** 147

1st Place Laura Bylenok Fredericksburg,

VA *"Epigenetics"*

2nd Place Paul Bucheit Chicago, IL

"Of Sounds Within and Afar"

3rd Place Caroline Johnson Willow Springs, IL

"Self Portrait as Music"

HM1 Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX

HM2 Connie Green Lenoir City, TN

HM3 Matthew Feeney Moose Lake, MN

HM4 Christopher Clauss Chesterfield, NH
 HM5 Alison Chisholm Merseyside, England
 HM6 Susan Maxwell Campbell Mansfield, TX
 HM7 Susan Chambers Mankato, MN

16 Mildred Cummings Memorial Award

Judge: Valerie A. Szarek # **Entries** 106
 1st Place Helen Gu San Jose, CA "*Family Gathering as Mother's Pregnancy Cravings*"
 2nd Place Amy Wray Irish Lakewood, CO
"The Sweetness of the Thorn"
 3rd Place Genevieve Watson Los Angeles, CA
"Last Supper"
 HM1 Lorrie Wolfe Fort Collins, CO
 HM2 Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO
 HM3 Laura Bylenok Fredericksburg, VA
 HM4 Martha Balph Millville, UT
 HM5 Tina Sacco Orlando, FL
 HM6 Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL
 HM7 Mike Wilson Lexington, KY

17 Poetry Society of Indiana Award

Judge: Susan Maxwell Campbell # **Entries** 106
 1st Place Russell Strauss Memphis, TN
"Decisions After Midnight"
 2nd Place Lorrie Wolfe Ft. Collins, CO
"It Was All For You"
 3rd Place Polly Opsahl Oscoda, MI
"There's Something About Death"
 HM1 Brenda Wildrick Fort Morgan, CO
 HM2 Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL
 HM3 Patricia Barnes Wyandotte, MI
 HM4 Diane Glancy Gainesville, TX
 HM5 Dennis Patton Alexander, AR
 HM6 Sarah Morin Fishers, IN
 HM7 Robert Schinzel , Argyle, TX

18 Power of Women Award

Judge: Nancy Susanna Breen # **Entries** 158
 1st Place Maria Szymanski Mansfield, MA
"Educate a Girl"
 2nd Place Jeff Ward Trinity, TX
"Lighting Teena"
 3rd Place John Mannone Oak Ridge, TN
"Ode to a Woman"
 HM1 Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN
 HM2 Barbara Funke St. George, UT
 HM3 Jerry Buchanan Johnson City, TN
 HM4 Stephanie Dupont Sugar Hill, GA
 HM5 Charles Firmage Eloy, AZ
 HM6 Caroline Johnson Willow Springs, IL
 HM7 Diane Kendig Canton, OH

19 The Virginia Corrie-Cozart Memorial Award

Judge: Karen Kay Bailey # **Entries** 113
 1st Place Cheryl Van Beek Wesley Chapel, FL
"Sway"
 2nd Place Vaughn Neeld Canon City, CO
"You are Cordially Invited"
 3rd Place Christine Irving Denton, TX
"Amnesty"
 HM1 Susan Maxwell Campbell Mansfield, TX
 HM2 Ann Marie Fore Loveland, CO
 HM3 Terry Miller Richmond, TX
 HM4 Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL
 HM5 Lisa Kamolnick Blountville, TN
 HM6 Jim Brosnan Assonet, MA
 HM7 Marleine Yanish Denver, CO

20 Mildred Vorpahl Baass Remembrance Award * (Members Only) Judge: Lorrie Wolfe # Entries 89

1st Place Marianne Klekacz Eddyville, OR
"Conundrum"
 2nd Place Laura Rodley Shelburne Falls, MA
"Stalwart Knight"
 3rd Place Laura Mahal Fort Collins, CO
"The Cat I Form Three Times a Week"
 HM1 Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO

HM2 John Mannone Oak Ridge, TN
 HM3 Terry Miller Richmond, TX
 HM4 Alison Chisholm Merseyside, England
 HM 5 Joy McDowell Springfield, OR
 HM6 Julianza Shavin Fountain, CO
 HM7 Mark Terry Orlando, FL

21 League of Minnesota Poets Award

Judge: Frank Iosue # **Entries** 138
 1st Place K. Hamblen Baton Rouge, LA
"When We Can No Longer Complain"
 2nd Place Susan Maxwell Campbell Mansfield, TX
"The Lake in Maine"
 3rd Place Mary Ellen Orvis Ponte Vedra, FL
"Saved from Drowning"
 HM1 Nancy Simmonds Fort Wayne, IN
 HM2 Janice Freytag Souderton, PA
 HM3 S. Evan Walters Lebanon, IN
 HM4 Elaine Zimmerman Hamden, CT
 HM5 Holly Antoun Golden, CO
 HM6 Virginia Mortenson Des Moines, IA
 HM7 Terry Miller Richmond, TX

22 Jessica C. Saunders Memorial Award

Judge: Markay Brown # **Entries** 84
 1st Place Mary Shaw Indianola, IA
"Prodigal Daughter"
 2nd Place Linda R. Payne Ramsey, MN
"The Queen (inspired by the Taming of the Shrew)"
 3rd Place Elizabeth Horrocks Wilmslow, UK
"Storm"
 HM1 Laurie Kolp Beaumont, TX
 HM2 Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI
 HM3 Jocelyn Ajami Chicago, IL
 HM4 Catherine Moran Little Rock, AR
 HM5 Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX
 HM6 Betsy Hughes Oakwood, OH
 HM7 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

23 Arizona State Poetry Society Award

Judge: Dr. Michael Comiskey # **Entries** 91
 1st Place Janice Freytag Souderton, PA
"Little Bird"
 2nd Place Laura Bylenok Fredericksburg, VA
"Dream from the Sonoran Desert"
 3rd Place Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO
"Snow Dunes"
 HM1 Charles Firmage Eloy, AZ
 HM2 Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL
 HM3 Paul Buchheit Chicago, IL
 HM4 Daniel Moreschi West Glamorgan, South Wales
 HM5 Richard Ramsey Des Moines, IA
 HM6 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX
 HM7 Mark Hudson Evanston, IL

24 Nevada Poetry Society Award * (Members Only) Judge: Patricia Thrushart # Entries 156

1st Place Marianne Klekacz Eddyville, OR
"Indian Summer"
 2nd Place Terry Miller Richmond, TX
"The Cove"
 3rd Place Susan Chambers Mankato, MN
"A Stone's Strength"
 HM1 Connie Green Lenoir City, TN
 HM2 Donna Isaac Inver Grove Heights, MN
 HM3 Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX
 HM4 Lorrie Wolfe Fort Collins, CO
 HM5 Jim Brosnan Assonet, MA
 HM6 Dennis Patton Alexander, AR
 HM7 Pat Bieber (Gesene Oake) Muscatine, IA

25 William Stafford Memorial Award

Judge: Patricia Tiffany Morris # **Entries** 168
 1st Place Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX
"The Astronomer"
 2nd Place Brenda Wildrick Fort Morgan, CO
"Ugly Thread Woven"
 3rd Place Constance Hodder Princeton, MN

"The Field"

HM1 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX
 HM2 Daniel Liberthson Cottage Grove, OR
 HM3 Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL
 HM4 Candace Kubinec Greensburg, PA
 HM5 Marianne Klekacz Eddyville, OR
 HM6 Emory Jones Iuka, MS
 HM7 Jo-Anne Rowley Lafayette, CO

26 Columbine Poets of Colorado Award * (Members Only) Judge: Amy Wray Irish # Entries 87

1st Place Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX
"From Soupers"
 2nd Place Terry Miller Richmond, TX
"Where Goes My Love"
 3rd Place Mary Rudbeck Stanko London, Ontario
"The Just Man Shall Blossom Like a Phoenix"
 HM1 Marilyn Johnston Salem, OR
 HM2 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN
 HM3 Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX
 HM4 Laura Rodley Shelburne Falls, MA
 HM5 Kathy Cotton Anna, IL
 HM6 Stephanie Dupont Sugar Hill, GA
 HM7 Susan Morse Salem, OR

27 Morton D. Prouty & Elsie S. Prouty Memorial Award Judge: Julie Allyn Johnson # Entries 166

1st Place Sarah Morin Fishers, IN
"Summer Sky as Measured by a 3-hour Egg Timer"
 2nd Place Genevieve Watson Los Angeles, CA
"First Catch"
 3rd Place Lorraine Hoffower Overland Park, KS
"Mile Marker 111"
 HM1 Delores Walker Oklahoma City, OK
 HM2 Nancy Simmonds Fort Wayne, IN
 HM3 Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO
 HM4 Marilyn Klimcho Reading, PA
 HM5 Matthew Feeney Moose Lake, MN
 HM6 Tina Sacco Orlando, FL
 HM7 Johnathon Bennett Lakeland, TN

28 Birma Castle Memorial Award * (Members Only) Judge: JoLea Johnson M.Ed. # Entries 142

1st Place Amy Wray Irish Lakewood, CO
"The Ossuary at Sunrise"
 2nd Place Catherine Moran Little Rock, AR
"A Face in the Crowd"
 3rd Place Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX
"A Creek Song"
 HM1 Daniel Moreschi West Glamorgan, South Wales
 HM2 Ann Marie Fore Loveland, CO
 HM3 Shirley Kobar Loveland, CO
 HM4 Judith Rycroft Oklahoma City, OK
 HM5 Anita Jepson-Gilbert Westminster, CO
 HM6 Marianne Klekacz Eddyville, OR
 HM7 Louise Cook Sandy, UT

29 Utah State Poetry Society Award

Judge: Alicia Clavell McCall+ # **Entries** 112
 1st Place Diane Glancy Gainesville, TX
"Independent Film School"
 2nd Place Dan Fitzgerald Gainesville, TX
"Neither"
 3rd Place Kathy Cotton Anna, IL
"Two Views of the Nest"
 HM1 Laura Mahal Fort Collins, CO
 HM2 Susan Wurtzburg Salt Lake City, UT
 HM3 Marilyn Johnston Salem, OR
 HM4 Henry Panowitsch Mankato, MN
 HM5 Cheryl Van Beek Wesley Chapel, FL
 HM6 Nancy Simmonds Fort Wayne, IN
 HM7 Laura Sweeney Bloomington, IL

30 Illinois State Poetry Society Award

Judge: Catherine Moran # **Entries** 102
 1st Place Dennis Patton Alexander, AR

"A Typical Woman"

2nd Place James Neiswender Denton, TX

"White River Monster"

3rd Place Deborah Goschy Eagle Lake, MN

"Thoughts Inspired by a Sign Reading 'Cottonwood River'"

HM1 Christopher Clauss Chesterfield, NH

HM2 Tanya Whitney Sorrento, LA

HM3 Pat Bieber (Gesene Oake) Muscatine, IA

HM4 Crystie Cook Sandy, UT

HM5 Mike Wahl Athens, AL

HM6 Diane Neff Longwood, FL

HM7 Mary Beth Magee Poplarville, MS

31 The Robbie Award**Judge:** Alida Rol # **Entries** 102

1st Place Pam Tucker Washington, UT

"Technicolor"

2nd Place Terry Miller Richmond, TX

"A Passing"

3rd Place Barbara Elder Keokuk, IA

"Derecho"

HM1 Laura Bylenok Fredericksburg, VA

HM2 Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX

HM3 Emory Jones Iuka, MS

HM4 Rita Geil Carson City, NV

HM5 Patricia Barnes Wyandotte, MI

HM6 Barbara Funke St. George, UT

HM7 Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX

32 Iowa Poetry Association Award**Judge:** Pamela J Hatch, MLS # **Entries** 102

1st Place Laurie Kolp Beaumont, TX

"Trying to Focus"

2nd Place Christine Hennigan Lincroft, NJ

"Sneakers"

3rd Place Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL

"Look Closely"

HM1 Faye Smalling Guinn Jonesboro, AR

HM2 Mary Oishi Albuquerque, NM

HM3 Carolyn Scully Apopka, FL

HM4 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

HM5 Paula Sweeney Kowstick Millbury, MA

HM6 John Benson Lakeland, TN

HM7 Jiyoo Kim-Jung Goleta, CA

33 Wallace Stevens Memorial Award ***(Members Only) Judge:** Lynne A. McNamara # **Entries** 53

1st Place Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL

"We Are the Bards"

2nd Place Paul Buchheit Chicago, IL

"The Autumn Sky"

3rd Place Kathy Cotton Anna, IL

"Urgency, Greta Said"

HM1 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

HM2 Lynda Payne Ramsey, MN

HM3 Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI

HM4 Sara Gipson Scott, AR

HM5 Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO

HM6 Delores Walker Oklahoma City, OK

HM7 Crystie Cook Sandy, UT

34 Poetry Society of Oklahoma Award**Judge:** Dan Liberthson # **Entries** 64

1st Place Polly Opsahl Oscoda, MI

"The Bride"

2nd Place Nancy Breen Loveland, OH

"Sunset, Fire Zouave Monument"

3rd Place Lynda LaRocca Salida, CO

"What Cannot Make You Free"

HM1 Mary Beth Magee Poplarville, MS

HM2 Trina Lee Oklahoma City, OK

HM3 Laurie Kolp Beaumont, TX

HM4 Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

HM5 Laura Mahal Fort Collins, CO

HM6 Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX

HM7 Elizabeth Horrocks Wilmslow, UK

35 Poetry Society of Michigan Award**Judge:** Michael Parker # **Entries** 85

1st Place Dennis Patton Alexander, AR

"Along Lake Ouachita Shores"

2nd Place Jerry Buchanan Johnson City, TN

"Thrill-Hearted Beater"

3rd Place Stephanie Dupont Sugar Hill, GA

"Evenfall"

HM1 Crystie Cook Sandy, UT

HM2 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

HM3 Alison Chisholm Merseyside, UK

HM4 John McPherson Searcy, AR

HM5 Wes Carrington Fairfax, VA

HM6 Mary Beth Magee Poplarville, MS

HM7 Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL

36 Poetry Society of Tennessee Award***(Members Only) Judge:** M. Palowski Moore # **Entries** 51

1st Place Vaughn Neeld Canon City, CO

"Beneath the Bois D'Arc Tree"

2nd Place Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

"Rationed in 1944"

3rd Place Jonathan Bennett Lakeland, TN

"Star's Light"

HM1 Martha Balph Millville, UT

HM2 Kathy Cotton Anna, IL

HM3 Judith Rycroft Oklahoma City, OK

HM4 Janet Ruth Corrales, NM

HM5 Patsy Twiner Brandon, MS

HM6 Mary Beth Magee Poplarville, MS

HM7 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

37 Miriam S. Strauss Memorial Award ***(Members Only) Judge:** Mary Beth Magee # **Entries** 75

1st Place Patricia Tiffany Morris Bondurant, IA

"Fickle Hearts"

2nd Place Susan Chambers Mankato, MN

"Grandma's Reward for Valiant Efforts"

3rd Place Steven Schwei HOUSTON, TX

"Jungle Advice"

HM1 Daniel Liberthson Cottage Grove, OR

HM2 Michael Strosahl DeKalb, IL

HM3 Elaine Person Orlando, FL

HM4 Nancy Breen Loveland, OH

HM5 Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN

HM6 Carolyn Scully Apopka, FL

HM7 Alyssa Darby Excelsior Springs, MO

38 Ohio Award**Judge:** Donna Salli # **Entries** 165

1st Place Amy Wray Irish Lakewood, CO

"Trapped on Asphalt"

2nd Place Mary Rudbeck Stanko London, Ontario

"Looks Like Rain"

3rd Place Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

"Twelve Hours After the Fall"

HM1 Virginia Mortenson Des Moines, IA

HM2 Lynne Schmidt Norway, ME

HM3 Emily Ellison Portland, OR

HM4 Julie Cummings Conifer, CO

HM5 Shirley Blackwell Los Lunas, NM

HM6 Sara Gipson Scott, AR

HM7 Martha Balph Millville, UT

39 The Barbara Sykes Memorial Award**Judge:** Mark Andrew James Terry # **Entries** 159

1st Place Christopher Clauss Chesterfield, NH

"ACME to Wile E. Coyote, a sestina"

2nd Place V. Kimball Barney Kaysville, UT

"Happy Hollow Nursing Home"

3rd Place Suzanne Austin-Hill Ruskin, FL

"Burma Shave Request of a Cyclist"

HM1 Alison Chisholm Merseyside, UK

HM2 Nancy Simmonds Fort Wayne, IN

HM3 Lorraine Jeffrey Orem, UT

HM4 Debra Belcher Tustin, MI

HM5 Terry Miller Richmond, TX

HM6 Kathryn Merry Carrollton, TX

HM7 Janice Freytag Souderton, PA

40 WyoPoets Award**Judge:** Sarah Wood+ # **Entries** 81

1st Place Julianza Shavin Fountain, CO

"Easterner No Longer"

2nd Place Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX

"Mountain Valley Paradise"

3rd Place Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL

"Vista"

HM1 Elaine Zimmerman Hamden, CT

HM2 Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

HM3 Mary Rudbeck Stanko London, Ontario

HM4 Mary Lux Richfield, MN

HM5 Joyce Gregor Westcliffe, CO

HM6 Lorrie Wolfe Ft. Collins, CO

HM7 Laurie Kolp Beaumont, TX

41 Florida State Poets Association, Inc. Award**Judge:** Julie Cummings # **Entries** 55

1st Place Louise Cook Sandy, UT

"Redeemed, 1869"

2nd Place Dennis Patton Alexander, AR

"Dreaming of a Coast"

3rd Place Patricia J. Koch Warr Acres, OK

"The Catastrophic Monster"

HM1 Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

HM2 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

HM3 Marc Davidson Ormond Beach, FL

HM4 Barbara Funke St. George, UT

HM5 Pat Underwood Colfax, IA

HM6 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

HM7 Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN

42 Mississippi Poetry Society Award**Judge:** Bucky Ignatius # **Entries** 93

1st Place Kathy Cotton Anna, IL

"Parting Gifts"

2nd Place Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI

"Autumn Wind"

3rd Place Mark Terry Orlando, FL

"Death's Chilled Breath"

HM1 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN

HM2 Catherine Moran Little Rock, AR

HM3 Barbara Funke St. George, UT

HM4 Judith Rycroft Oklahoma City, OK

HM5 Diane Neff Longwood, FL

HM6 Lisa Kamolnick Blountville, TN

HM7 Budd Powell Mahan Dallas, TX

43 Jesse Stuart Memorial Award**Judge:** Russell Strauss # **Entries** 143

1st Place Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL

"Builders"

2nd Place Stephanie Dupont Sugar Hill, GA

"No Punctuation"

3rd Place Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

"In the Key of Solitary"

HM1 Deborah Goschy Eagle Lake, MN

HM2 Daniel Liberthson Cottage Grove, OR

HM3 Pat Underwood Colfax, IA

HM4 Sara Gipson Scott, AR

HM5 Sheri Anderson San Antonio, TX

HM6 Marilyn Klimcho Reading, PA

HM7 Ashley Mo Saratoga, CA

44 Barbara Stevens Memorial Award**Judge:** Barbara J. Funke # **Entries** 162

1st Place Cynthia Nankee Canton, MI

"Old Graveyard"

2nd Place Barbara Blanks Garland, TX

"Boxes"

3rd Place Markay Brown St. George, UT

"Where Did I Lose My Red Slippers"

HM1 Daniel Liberthson Cottage Grove, OR

HM2 Marsha Szymanski Mansfield, MA

HM3 Elaine Palencia Champaign, IL

HM4 Janet Watson Wesley Chapel, FL

HM5 Laurie Kolp Beaumont, TX
 HM6 Matthew Feeny Moose Lake, MN
 HM7 Ed Brekke-Kramer Fairmont, MN

45 Missouri State Poetry Society Award

Judge: Michael Shoemaker # **Entries** 42
 1st Place Virginia Mortenson Des Moines, IA
"A Walk with the Show-me President"
 2nd Place Kathy Cotton Anna, IL
"The Show-me State, Showing Off"
 3rd Place Russell Strauss Memphis, TN
"The Fisher - Dreamer"
 HM1 Barry Lewis Lee's Summit, MO
 HM2 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX
 HM3 Jerri Hardesty Brierfield, AL
 HM4 Mary Beth Magee Poplarville, MS
 HM5 Paula Sweeney Kowstick Millbury, MA
 HM6 Laura Rodley Shelburne Falls, MA
 HM7 Lorrie Wolfe Ft. Collins, CO

46 Save Our Earth Award

Judge: Deborah Peterson # **Entries** 114
 1st Place Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN
"Tennessee Fossil Plant"
 2nd Place Ashley Mo Saratoga, CA
"Los Angeles, 2005"
 3rd Place Deborah Goschy Eagle Lake, MN
"Indomitable"
 HM1 Marleine Yanish Denver, CO
 HM2 Michael Strosahl DeKalb, IL
 HM3 Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX
 HM4 Alison Chisholm Merseyside, UK
 HM5 Virginia Mortenson Des Moines, IA
 HM6 Richard Hurzelier Tyler, TX
 HM7 Elizabeth King Elgin, IL

47 Massachusetts State Poetry Society Award

Judge: Lynda La Rocca # **Entries** 149
 1st Place Connie Green Lenoir City, TN
"Trying to Describe My Husband"
 2nd Place Sylva Keefer Tucson, AZ *"Second"*
 3rd Place Pat Bieber (Gesene Oake) Muscatine, IA
"Letting Go of Time"
 HM1 Peter LaBerge Philadelphia, PA
 HM2 Elizabeth Horrocks Wilmslow,
 HM3 Barry Lewis Lee's Summit, MO
 HM4 Kathy Cotton Anna, IL
 HM5 Patricia J. Koch Warr Acres, OK
 HM6 Delores Walker Oklahoma City, OK
 HM7 Christopher Clauss Chesterfield, NH

48 Maine Poets Society Award

Judge: Sharon Sweeney # **Entries** 115
 1st Place Lisa Kamolnick Blountville, TN

"Once A Week at Unit 216 in Lemon Yellow"
 2nd Place John Blair Fort Collins, CO
"Coordination Catches Hormones"
 3rd Place Ed Brekke-Kramer Fairmont, MN
"Ode to a Single Red Tulip"
 HM1 Christopher Clauss Chesterfield, NH
 HM2 Christine Hennigan Lincroft, NJ
 HM3 Connie Green Lenoir City, TN
 HM4 Marilyn Klimcho Reading, PA
 HM5 Valerie Szarek Louisville, CO
 HM6 Laura Mahal Fort Collins, CO
 HM7 Sunny Bridge Fort Collins, CO

49 The Poets Northwest Award * (Members Only) Judge: Lennert Lundh # Entries 108

1st Place Pat Underwood Colfax, IA
"Guernica"
 2nd Place Michael Strosahl DeKalb, IL
"The Suddenness of Last Thoughts"
 3rd Place Kitty Riordan Albuquerque, NM
"Murder on a Summer Morning"
 HM1 Markay Brown St. George
 HM2 Sheila Tingley Moore San Antonio, TX
 HM3 Catherine Moran Little Rock, AR
 HM4 Robert Schinzel Argyle, TX , UT
 HM5 Russell Strauss Memphis, TN
 HM6 Joy McDowell Springfield, OR
 HM7 Delores Walker Oklahoma City, OK

50 The Hilde Award

Judge: Louise Brown # **Entries** 85
 1st Place Julianza Shavin Fountain, CO
"Mother"
 2nd Place Laura Gunnells Miller Soddy Daisy, TN
"Magnolia Blossom"
 3rd Place Russell Strauss Memphis, TN
"Breakfast Alone"
 HM1 Janet Ruth Corrales, NM
 HM2 Marleine Yanish Denver, CO
 HM3 Lorrie Wolfe Ft. Collins, CO
 HM4 Sara Gipson Scott, AR
 HM5 Barbara Blanks Garland, TX
 HM6 Carolyn Scully Apopka, FL
 HM7 John Coppock Tuttle, OK

51 Student Award Grades 9-12

Judge: Polly Opsahl # **Entries** 57
 1st Place Adelaide Sendlenski Brooklyn, NY
"Someday I'll Love Summer Again"
 2nd Place Naomi Hsu *"Grief in the Garden"*
 3rd Place Ashley Mo Saratoga, CA
"Elegy for My History Textbook Stamped with 4 Blotchy Red Letters"
 HM1 Angela Jefferson Shelbyville, TN

HM2 Bridget DeMelfi Cheyenne, WY
 HM3 Caroline Riley Little Rock, AR
 HM4 Kaviya Dhir Houston, TX
 HM5 Isabel Shen Oakland, CA
 HM6 Juliana Pan Bellevue, WA
 HM7 Rebecca Yang Rowland Heights, CA

52 Poetry in the Classroom Award Grades 6-8

Judge: Dr. Shari Crane Fox # **Entries** 69
 1st Place Trinity Hundley Denton, TX
"Arrogant Fools"
 2nd Place Danica Jaramillo Arvada, CO *"Anger"*
 3rd Place Analyce Cruz Arvada, CO *"Low Riders"*
 HM1 William Pan Bellevue, WA
 HM2 Bella Silverbrand Arlington, VA
 HM3 Shawn Darby Excelsior Springs, MO
 HM4 Silas Wolfe Ft. Collins, CO
 HM5 Katelyn DeMelfi Cheyenne, WY
 HM6 Charles Lucci Westminster, CO
 HM7 Gabriel Villegos Westminster, CO

53 Poetry in the Classroom Award Grades 3-5

Judge: Dr. Shari Crane Fox # **Entries** 12
 1st Place Alexis Comiskey Burlington, IA
"Cats"
 2nd Place Aaliyah Campbell Burlington, IA
"Flowers"
 3rd Place Blakely Beliel Burlington, IA
"I Can't Clean My Room!"
 HM1 Nora Vance Burlington, IA
 HM2 Ivy Hemmie Burlington, IA
 HM3 Lola Osbourne Burlington, IA
 HM4 Peyton Lindquist Burlington, IA
 HM5 Lillian Abbott Burlington, IA
 HM6 Gracelynn Routson Burlington, IA
 HM7 Avery Tieszen Holland, IA

Please see this issue for the 2026 Annual Contest Brochure. It is also posted at nfsps.net. You may request a copy by emailing \$2 and a SASE to

Julie Cummings,
 NFSPS Contest Chair
 5858 Pintail Way
 Frederick, CO 80504-9668

Convention Madness Winners

First Place, Sara Shea, Weaverville, NC
 Second Place, Anita Jepson-Gilbert Westminster, CO
 Third Place, Rita Geil Carson City, NV

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY: We concluded our student poetry contest in April. Our third edition of Fresh Ink is now available online. In June, we held elections for officers and Chapter Facilitators. The officers are:

Mary Beth Bretzlauf, President
 Carol Novak, Vice President
 Marjorie Rissman, Treasurer and Membership Chair
 Jim O'Brien, Secretary

Board members are: Jim Wilkerson, Historian/Communications
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 Brian Pondenis, At Large Representative~ *Mary Beth Bretzlauf, President*

THE SUNFLOWER POETRY SOCIETY OF KANSAS The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas has been very productive. Our commitment to improve community outreach, nurture, educate and facilitate opportunities for poetic growth remains a top priority. Our members have been active participants in community events across the state of Kansas. Vice-President Ana Wilkins was a presenter for the 2025 Restorative Kansas Conference: Pathways to Peace which was held from June 26-27th in Topeka, Kansas. During this event she

shared poetry focusing on themes of restorative justice practices, healing, connection and community upliftment. This event was hosted by the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, Inc.

President M. Palowski Moore and Treasurer Toby Palowski represented The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas at the Juneteenth Peace March and Rally sponsored by Advocacy and Awareness Group of Johnson County (Overland Park, Kansas) on June 14 th . SPSK had a booth where poetry was promoted and discussed. Those attending the rally were able to experience the importance of marginalized voices and discuss the social significance of poetry. Books from various poets were offered to those interested in learning more. Additionally, SPSK was represented on the March event from City Hall to Thompson Park in honor of the ancestors who had traveled a similar path. M. Palowski Moore wrote a poem to commemorate the occasion and presented it at the event. This year's theme was Freedom Is Good for Your Health and the poem shared this title.

SPSK served as the fiduciary for Sunflowers Rising: Poems for Peace Anthology by the group Poets For Peace and published by Buster Bodhi Press. Many members of SPSK contributed poems to this worthy and important anthology. SPSK member M. Palowski Moore served as the committee chair for the project. After the NFSPS 2024 convention, Poets for Peace was created to promote peace and awareness through poetry while providing assistance to Ukraine's orphans of war. All proceeds/royalties from the creation and sales of this book will benefit orphans in Ukraine.

SPSK member Iris Craver organized the Poetry Pop-Up For The Post Office during National Poetry Month as a Poetry Love-in to show support for the Post Office on April 21 st . From 1 to 3pm, volunteers gathered to read poems in the post office lobby at 7 th and Vermont in Lawrence, Kansas and send postcards encouraging people to support their local post office.

SPSK celebrates our members who have been recognized this quarter. With pride, we share that An Angel and Other Poems by Christina Hauck was a finalist for the 2025 Poetry Chapbook Prize (The Headlight Review) Also, her poem The Company of Ghosts has been published in Last Syllable: A Longform Literary Journal. M. Palowski Moore's poem An Unexpected Gift was shortlisted for the 2025 Sejong Writing competition. This year the writing competition received a total 1,202 sijo (a Korean poetic form) submissions from across the United States and Canada. Additionally, the poems of M. Palowski Moore were selected to accompany artwork in the InterUrban/ Arthouse exhibition titled IDENTITY: Existence is Resistance which held an opening ceremony on June 20th.

The heart of SPSK's mission is to encourage poetic expression and foster a safe space for feedback. Our monthly workshops keep this spirit alive. Each month, members look forward to sharing their poetry and receiving advice/interpretations. We welcome and encourage poets of all skill levels. Our goals for a SPSK Sunflower Poets' Roundtable workshop are to share poetic expressions, creativity, the honing of the poetic visions/voices, facilitating confidence and allowing poets to become more comfortable with presentation (reading for an audience).~M. Palowski Moore, President

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY Our meeting on April 5th included a workshop entitled "Me - that used to be" regarding our many changes throughout the years. Looking for Sponsors for our 2026 National Poetry Day Contest, minimum award \$30. for three prizes. You choose category, subject, form, judge. Receive Sponsor

Form from Chairman Roberta Hung, 22 Salisbury Rd., Wakefield, MA 01880 or email robette02@yahoo.com. ~ *Beverley Barnes, Reporter*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE This spring's programs featured award-winning authors Ann Fisher-Wirth and Janisse Ray. Members have access to replays.

The society held their 68 th Annual Poetry Festival at Middle Tennessee State University on April 26, in partnership with MTSU Write and Poetry in the Boro. The event featured plenary session speaker Christian J. Collier, afternoon workshops led by John Mannone, Donovan McAbee, and Claudia Stanek, and a panel with James Croal Jackson, Bryanna Licciardi, Cynthia Storrs, and Kory Wells. Winners of the festival poetry contests and Tennessee Visions Cover Art contest were shared, and KB Ballentine was named Best of Fest winner for "Rest." A reading followed.

In May, the society announced its annual student contest winners and the final monthly members-only contests of the year. Contest sponsorships for the current year are underway. On May 20, in Memphis, the society hosted the Vagabond Poetry Tour, a project of National Beat Poet Laureate Mark Lipman showcasing working class poetry.

PST's bookstore of member authors keeps growing. The society also promoted several member authors' book releases.

Small groups met monthly for readings, open mics, and workshops (various members lead). Learn more at our website (www.poetrytennessee.org), blog (<https://poetrytennessee.com>), or on Facebook and Instagram (handle: @poetrysocietyoftennessee). ~ *Lisa Kamolnick, President*

THE POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS In April, Poetry Month, Susan Ayers, Vice President of the Fort Worth Poetry Society, announced the winner of the 2025 William D. Barney Memorial Chapbook Contest sponsored by their chapter in cooperation with the Poetry Society of Texas. Immanuel Garcia of Denton was the winner with his manuscript, *Purple-Eyed Heirlooms*. He will be reading from his published chapbook at our PST Summer Conference in mid July. Our PST election of officers was held at the May meeting on Zoom. The new slate of officers: President Holly Jahangiri, Vice President Michael Guinn, Recording Secretary Barbara Blanks, Corresponding Secretary Carol Thompson, and Directors Lynn Roberts Grice, Betty Roberts, and Catherine L'Herisson. Barbara Blanks is still serving as Acting Treasurer. The new officers start their term on September 1st.

Since no one came forward to serve as chair of the Poetry in Schools for Texas students, President Catherine L'Herisson acted as chair of that project, and over 850 entries were received. Unfortunately her computer crashed during this crucial time and her vision was hampered by a small tumor on her retina, but she was determined that that project would be completed, and it was with the help of Barbara Blanks, who created and mailed award certificates to the winners and put together the student anthology with the assistance of Holly Jahangiri. Barbara and Catherine mailed the anthologies or delivered them in person to local schools.

The Mockingbird Poetry Society, a chapter of PST in McKinney, also held their 54th Annual Collin County Poetry Contest for students and adults this spring. Their awards ceremony was packed, and winners read their poems and were presented with an anthology. Beth Ayers was the chair. Janet Tyner, editor of our 2025 PST Book of the Year, has completed its compilation, and it has been printed and is in the process of being mailed.

Our chapter in Denton, Denton Poets' Assembly has put together an outstanding program to host PST members from around the state for our Summer Conference, "Together In Poetry" July 17th through noon on July 19th. ~ Catherine L'Herisson, President

WYOPOETS Welcomes New Board, Announces Contest Winners, and Looks Ahead: WyoPoets is excited to announce its new board. Mandie Hines steps in as President, with Mary Whalen as Vice President, Chandra Watson as Treasurer, Tom Spence as Secretary, and John Roedel as Past President.

This year's Spring Workshop in Cheyenne, WY, featured poet and educator Kristin Abraham. Abraham led an insightful session, guiding attendees through contemplating poetic influences, recurring themes in their work, and considering what craft forms they frequent in their poems. She also delved into exploring caesuras in poetry. Abraham is the author of *The Disappearing Cowboy Trick* (Horse Less Press, 2013), as well as two chapbooks: *Little Red Riding Hood Missed the Bus* (Subito Press, 2008), and *Orange Reminds You of Listening* (Elixir Press, 2006).

Her poetry and lyric essays have appeared in *Best New Poets 2005*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *LIT*, and *American Letters & Commentary*. WyoPoets also announced the winners of the 2025 Members-Only Contest, judged by Connie Wanek. Wanek praised the quality of submissions, noting, "Every single poem I received has merit. At least fifteen of these poems could legitimately have been chosen, based on pure skill and heart and authenticity." John Nesbitt took first place for "Field Workers," Patricia Frolander received second for "Influenced," and Don Oakley secured third for "The Gleaner's Homestead." Honorable mentions are posted on WyoPoets' website. Looking ahead, the 2026 Spring Workshop is set for April 24-25 in Casper. Additionally, the Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest is anticipated to open Oct. 1st, 2025, with guidelines to be posted on WyoPoets' website early this fall. ~Mandie Hines, President

CHRIS ABANI NAMED JUDGE FOR THE 2025 STEVENS POETRY BOOK MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION



Chris Abani is a novelist, poet, essayist, screenwriter and playwright. Born in Nigeria to an Igbo father and English mother, he grew up in Afikpo, Nigeria, received a BA in English from Imo State University, Nigeria, an MA in English, Gender and Culture from Birkbeck College, University of London and a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing from the University of Southern California. He has resided in the United States since 2001.

He is the recipient of the PEN USA Freedom-to-Write Award, the Prince Claus Award, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a California Book Award, a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, a PEN Beyond the Margins Award, the PEN Hemingway Book Prize and a Guggenheim Award.

His fiction includes *The Secret History of Las Vegas* (Penguin 2014), *Song For Night* (Akashic, 2007), *The Virgin of Flames* (Penguin, 2007), *Becoming Abigail* (Akashic, 2006), *GraceLand* (FSG, 2004), and *Masters of the Board* (Delta, 1985). His poetry collections are *Sanctificum* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010), *There Are No Names for Red* (Red Hen Press, 2010), *Feed Me The Sun - Collected Long Poems* (Peepal Tree Press, 2010) *Hands*

Washing Water (Copper Canyon, 2006), *Dog Woman* (Red Hen, 2004), *Daphne's Lot* (Red Hen, 2003) and *Kalakuta Republic* (Saqi, 2001).

His work has been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, German, Swedish, Romanian, Hebrew, Macedonian, Ukrainian, Portuguese, Dutch, Bosnian and Serbian.

Through his TED Talks, public speaking and essays Abani is known as an international voice on humanitarianism, art, ethics, and our shared political responsibility. His critical and personal essays have been featured in books on art and photography, as well as *Witness*, *Parkett*, *The New York Times*, *O Magazine*, and *Bomb*.

His many research interests include African Poetics, World Literature, 20th Century Anglophone Literature, African Presences in Medieval and Renaissance Culture, The Living Architecture of Cities, West African Music, Postcolonial and Transnational Theory, Robotics and Consciousness, Yoruba and Igbo Philosophy and Religion.

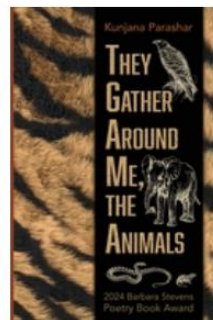
He is Board of Trustees Professor of English at Northwestern University.

STEVENS MANUSCRIPT GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Open to all poets writing in English, except for previous Stevens Competition winners. Friends, colleagues, and students of Chris Abani are asked to postpone entering until a future year.
- Original work by a single author. May contain previously published poems, but should not be a compilation of entire previously published chapbooks.
- No author identification anywhere in manuscript; no information that could disclose your identity. Do not include a bio note, acknowledgments, or blurbs. (The winner will be required to provide an acknowledgments page before the manuscript is published.)
- No content that is hate-mongering or abusive of any social, racial, ethnic, religious, or gender group. No gratuitous use of obscene or profane language.
- Include title page, table of contents, and 48 to 80 pages of poetry, counting any section title pages but not counting front matter. Notes on poems, if any, should be included in the count.
- Single-space your manuscript. Use a readable-size, conventional font such as 12-point Times New Roman. No illustrations, color type, or fancy fonts. If you write in long lines or complex formats, be aware that the winning book will be published in a 6" x 9" format, which may not allow them to be preserved.
- Number the pages of the manuscript. Begin each poem on a new page. Poems may be two or more pages in length, but do not put more than one poem on a page.
- Simultaneous and multiple submissions permitted. Notify us immediately if your manuscript is accepted elsewhere.
- No revisions after submission. (The winner will work with the NFSPS book editor to correct any typographical errors and to make any mutually acceptable minor changes.)
- Do not contact the judge. Entries from any persons found to have contacted the judge will be ineligible for the award.

THEY GATHER AROUND ME, THE ANIMALS by Kunjana Parashar, 2024 Barbara Stevens Manuscript Winner

The brilliance of Kunjana Parashar's *They Gather Around Me, the Animals* gleams through the lens of the majesty of the animals that were here, are here, and may well be disappearing, in poems jubilant and elegiac at once. Parashar's approach to language and form evolves through the course of the book, from the devotional to the surreal, from contrapuntal to pantoum, concrete poems to erasures, poems written in both the presence and the absence of the animals that are their subjects, and written in a diction which opens the lexicon to the language of the ecological imagination. "i see pictures of blue-green hexacorals / patching a floor of zoanthids like a zardozi dream / & i say listen, i love you too," she writes. Parashar's speaker is "never not listening," and never not watching, and she listens to and watches the actual world, not the world as sifted through a screen. Thus, she knows that "[w]hales slap on the coast like fingers on guitars." That "[n]ow that the birds are gone, we hang our cuckoo clocks upside down." That rain falls "like a bag of teeth on tin roofs." 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. ~ Diane Seuss author of *frank: sonnets and Modern Poetry*



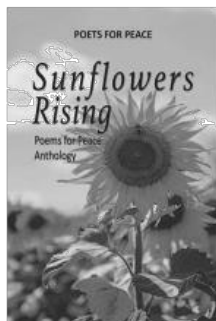
They Gather Around Me, the Animals

Parashar, Kunjana

Buy Now

Sunflowers Rising

Poems for Peace Anthology



Available for purchase on Amazon
ISBN: 9798282729511
Publisher: Buster Bodhi Press
List Price: \$15.00
Paperback: 210 Pages



All proceeds from this book will go directly to help orphans in Ukraine.

This book represents a positive step toward fulfilling our universal need for a world where loving kindness and respect replace violence and aggression. Poets know that words have power, and poetry is a sturdy vehicle to influence how people think about the world and the future of this planet that is our home.

"Poems written during war and about war are like violins, which the finest masters of craft during times of peace from trees that were once struck by lightning, yet which yearn... for happiness possible only in times of peace."

-Ihor Pavlyuk

About the Organization:

Poets for Peace was created in June 2024 following a presentation by Ihor Pavlyuk, the Peoples Poet of Ukraine, at the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Pavlyuk is a highly respected poet and was nominated this year for the Nobel Prize in Literature. After the convention, Poets for Peace was created as a vehicle to help gather resources to help foster peace and provide some assistance to the Ukraine's orphans.

Enchanting Words Candids





NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

Organized October 17, 1959

Mary B. Wall, Founder

Honorary Chancellor: Ihor Pavlyuk

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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.

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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!

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. Please see the article on page one for more information.

~ Joe Cavanaugh, 36th NFSPS President

PAST NFSPS PUBLICATIONS

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>. 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.

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS

The 2024 and 2025 anthology of prize-winning poems awarded at the are available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). All royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS. ~ McKenna Hall, *Encore* Editor

STROPHES ARTICLES

We are in urgent need of articles about the craft of poetry. There's something magical about writing poetry—but also something mysterious, messy, and deeply personal. Whether you write in bursts of inspiration or carve your lines slowly, poetry is a craft we all learn in our own way. And that's exactly why we're reaching out to **you**. Consider sending an article!

What We're Looking For

We're open to a wide range of perspectives, voices, and experiences. Your article could explore:

- Your personal poetry-writing process
- Tips and techniques for beginners or seasoned writers
- Reflections on poetic form, voice, or revision
- Exercises or prompts that spark creativity
- Thoughts on writer's block, inspiration, or discipline
- Anything else you think would help others write more boldly and honestly

Whether your tone is academic, personal, instructional, or poetic in itself—we welcome it. Send articles to Julie Cummings at

stropheseditor@nfsp.net