



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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October 2025



Friends and Fellow Poets,

Fall is in the air and with the change of seasons we say good bye to our summer vacations and look forward to the faster pace of another beautiful autumn.

The NFSPS Board will resume regular monthly meetings and our committees will be busy carrying out their respective programs. If you are interested in participating in carrying out the work of NFSPS as a committee member or if you have suggestions for new programs or ideas about how to improve our existing programs, please let me know. We thrive on the talents and valuable ideas of our member poets.

This Fall we will be nominating our choice for the Nobel Prize in Literature for the third time. I am appointing Holly Brians Ragusa, President of Ohio Poetry Association and Mark Andrew James Terry, President of the Florida State Poets Association to work with me as members of a new Nobel Prize Nominating Committee.

One of the new program areas I hope to develop is to explore the end of life concept (EOL). As I celebrate my 84th birthday this Fall I am becoming more aware of this great gift of life they we all share, but also that our time here in this life is limited to a finite number of years. My age group is experiencing the loss of friends, family and fellow poets. This leads us to seriously consider how we can approach our end of days positively without apprehension and how we can accept the inevitable and focus on living well in the time remaining.

Although I am not a practicing Hindu, I embrace the concept of "Karma" and believe that working on producing good karma is the best way to prepare for what could be a potentially difficult time as we approach the end of our days. In my mind good karma is the result of good works and practicing loving kindness for ourselves, our families, our friends and everyone in the world.

There are probably ways this can be done through our poetry. I want to explore this idea in practical ways during the last nine months of my term as President of NFSPS. I also see the opportunity to support the future of a financially secure NFSPS by considering a financial contribution as part of my EOL planning. For this part I think we need professional legal assistance to establish an easy to use a financial vehicle for those who choose to participate. We have seen the value of this approach in our highly successful Stevens Manuscript Program that was established and has been sustained for 30 years by the generous financial gift of former NFSPS President Barbara Stevens.

Please let me know by email if you have an interest in working with me, have questions or need additional information on this exciting project.

Peace, love, and poetry,

~ Joe Cavanaugh, 36th NFSPS President

NFSPS 2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas



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!** Check NFSPS.net for updates.

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

- **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 ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ⊗

ANNUAL CONTEST BROCHURE UPDATE

**I REGRET THAT I MADE A MISTAKE IN THE 2025
CONTEST BROCHURE PRINTED IN THE LAST ISSUE.**

**CONTEST 14 MARY COLLAR MEMORIAL AWARD
SUBJECT SHOULD BE FRIENDSHIP.**

THE CORRECT WORDING IS:

14. Mary Collar Memorial Award

Sponsors: Paul Ford and Marie Andrews.

Subject: Friendship. Form: Persona poem.

Line Limit: 40.

1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$60. 3rd Prize: \$40.

~Contest Chair, Julie Cummings

MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

RULES: 2026 ANNUAL COMPETITION

Ten prizes will be awarded in each division: First Place - \$75, Second Place - \$50, Third Place - \$40, Fourth Place - \$35, Fifth Place - \$30, and five Honorable Mentions - \$10 each.

All winning poems will be published in the NFSPS Student Poetry Award Anthology. Winners will receive complimentary copies. The schools of each winning student will receive a complimentary copy for the school library. There is no entry fee.

1. There are two divisions: Grade 6-8 (Junior Division) and Grades 9-12 (Senior Division). Competition is open to all qualified students. Poems may have been previously published and/or have won previous awards.

2. The competition is open to all USA students in grades 6 – 12. Public, private, and homeschooled are eligible for entry by individual submission. Individual poets may only submit one poem.

3. All entries must be entered through Submittable, and the proper application form must be completed, indicating poet's contact information, school attended, and grade student is currently in. All students can open a Submittable account for no cost and there is no entry fee for the contest. Go to www.nfspd.submittable.com and check the appropriate grade level to submit.

4. Each poem must be neatly typed or computer-generated and should appear on a single sheet. In order to fit on the page line width limit is 60 characters, including punctuation marks and spaces between words. Lines longer than 60 characters will be wrapped with a hanging indent by the editors.

Any poem that exceeds the 60-character limit may be disqualified.

Because our printed format will be a 6 x 9 book, some winning poems may end up printed on more than one page. The decision of the judge and/or editor is final. There should be no large or unusual fonts or illustrations. Times New Roman is the suggested font. 12-point font should be used.

5. The poem submitted must not have ID information. There should be no indication of prior awards granted or publication information. Winners may be asked for that information to be provided at the time of publication.

6. Each entrant must make a declaration of originality. The statement will be included in the Submittable application "I certify that this poem is my original work and has not been copied in whole or part from any author's poems in print or posted on the Internet. Signed: _____"

7. Entries must be received on Submittable between September 15, 2025 and November 15th, 2025. Notice of winners will be sent to each winner's member state society (President and/or Manningham Youth Chair). Awards (certificates, checks, anthologies) will also be mailed to the student. Each member state is responsible for celebrating their state's winners. The top winning poems will be read at the Annual NFSPS Convention held in 2026.

Literary Standards. While we honor the First Amendment right of free speech, be aware that the winning poems will be published and distributed to school-age children. The use of inappropriate language could disqualify an entry. The decision of the judge is final.

Any questions can be directed to secretary@nfspd.net.

REVISING POETRY AND "GETTING SHOVED OFF A CLIFF"

Revision is a topic that concerns me as a poet, because at times I don't do much of it and feel sloppy, or I have done it and then feel disappointed in the result, as if the poem I am working on has become something not quite itself, something a little contrived; so, for me, at times it seems to be a question of either under- or over-revising. The word "revision" comes from the Latin, "revisionem," which means "a seeing again." Revision is not essentially about fixing mistakes but about increasing the poem's impact. In this article, I will not discuss many aspects of revision, but I will take on three that I am thinking about in relation to a poem I am writing today. Abstract vs. concrete language is one topic for revising, as well as sound, and questions of "voice," another topic to consider.

1. Abstract vs. Concrete Language

There seems to be general agreement that in the twenty-first century concrete language is best in a poem, rather than abstraction. In my poem, I am considering allowing Hate to be personified. The poet laureate of Dallas Mag Gabbert said in her interview with *The Coachella Review*, "Concepts are so broad on their own that they end up meaning almost nothing to us." The question in my poem is whether I want to allow Hate to remain as an abstraction. "The Red Wheelbarrow," a poem by William Carlos Williams, illustrates the importance of concrete language and things or objects, which forms the basis of his artistic vision. He famously said, "No ideas but in things." It reads:

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens

He wanted his poems to feel like pictures of the world, giving the reader direct experience of objects or scenes. Some of the themes of this poem include the "value in things that we normally take for granted," and a sense of nostalgia (Smith). Lest I make one point too clearly, let me muddy it up. What of Emily Dickinson? Or Wallace Stevens? They used abstraction to great effect. In "Hope Is the Thing with Feathers," Dickinson personifies hope using an analogy to a bird, but even in this analogy we see concrete details: it never asked "a crumb" of her, and the bird sings "sweetest – in the Gale..." In Wallace Stevens's "Sunday Morning," he gives the personified abstractions physical things to do...Death "strews the leaves/Of sure obliteration on our paths/" and, as well, "She makes the willow shiver in the sun." But, in general, modern poetry rarely uses words

like Grief and Love, as was more prevalent in the nineteenth century, among Victorian poets.

2. Voice

Ada Limon has said that poetry allows a poet to explore the “voice underneath the voice” (Windsor), focusing on the unspoken complexities of identity and feelings. In particular, she refers to her ideas about an identity in an interview with Gene Demby, on *Code Switch*. They discuss whether or not she feels compelled to write from the identity as a Latina, especially since she is the first Latina poet laureate of the United States and she declares “... I am less interested in discovering an identity than I am in removing any kind of labels or identity that anyone wants to put on me.” As this relates to the topic of voice or the speaker of a poem, the conclusion for me is that her voice reflects the complexity that is the truth of who we are as humans. And Demby replies, “So there is this ineffable Ada underneath all of these layers of subjectivity.” And she answers, “Yeah.” He remarks on her attempts through poetry to “get to the quintessential you,” and then asks her how she knows when she has gotten there, and she replies “...when I write a poem.” Mag Gabbert defines her current voice and style in terms of what she calls her ‘object project,’ the guidelines of which are to write about a noun, such as ‘toilet’ without using punctuation, the point of which is to make the poem full of “potential for ambiguity” and “layers of meaning.”

What characterizes your voice as a poet? ‘What is the tone, style, or subject matter of your poems? The English poet Ted Hughes had a voice deeply rooted in nature, primal energy, and particularly in animals, which often reflected human emotions and experiences. These were his frequent subjects. What is distinctive about your voice? In the introduction to *The Poem Is You*, by Stephanie Burt, she says that good poems do one of two tasks: 1.) “embody a compelling or attractive individual consciousness” (3-4), or “keep the world, and the language, weird,” by turning upside down or making us aware of habits or assumptions that accompany language and/or by using language unusually (4). In writing this poem, I was focused on the consciousness of the speaker. There are times when I feel critically about the consciousness of the speaker in some of my poems. I have discussed it in my weekly writer’s group, where they have tended to chide me good-naturedly for my self-criticism; however, I think that it is acceptable to ask of oneself as a writer: what don’t I like in the tone, attitude, or stance, in the speaker of this poem? As a teacher of college English, I was used to critically examining writing. I can see the voice on the page and tell you what I don’t like about it if there is something there I don’t like. In a poem I am currently writing about issues facing the LGBTQ community with respect to the military, I find the voice strident; the speaker wants to teach you something. There is a part of me that reacts to violence in nature and violent language in poetry with revulsion, and by violent language, I mean the language of judgment, criticism, and demands. This is an idea I ran across taking an online course in nonviolent communication and reading a book about it by Marshall Rosenberg, who founded this concept and who has worked in prisons with gangs, and in troubled parts of the world, including the Middle East with opposing factions and political diplomacy, and also in secondary school systems in the U.S. teaching this kind of speech, in hopes of resolving conflicts. That is, that language which speaks of judgment and is perceived as critical or as making demands, is violent communication. Whereas, the language of speaking of feelings and making requests, is the language of

nonviolence. What I felt was violent in my poem was the judgment implicit in my tone and the demand I was making of the reader to view the LGBTQ community with nonjudgment and to treat them fairly, equally, and my intention also to upset them, which I don’t entirely disavow, necessarily, but recognize as an aspect of violent communication. I am usually repelled by forcefulness, despite context. What attracts me to Limon is her nonviolent attitude towards herself and about life. So, the stridency of the voice in my poem bothers me. (It is currently titled, “Drag Queens Are Soldiers.”) I want the speaker to be less forceful with the reader. I don’t want her to hit anyone over the head, metaphorically speaking. Oscar Wilde has described the object of art as to create a mood, not instruct or call to action. So, I fault myself for attempting to teach people that banning drag shows or preventing trans people from serving in the military is unfair. I want to reimagine the purpose of my poem as creating a mood. I want to create another less violent poem and then compare the two and reflect on them. What would I like that mood to be? What is the tone of the speaker that I would find more appealing? So, in revision, it is to take on those questions. Limon, in her interview with Gene Demby, comments that in a way, poetry is more expressive of the unknown, the mystery of life than prose or fiction, which is where we go “when we have kind of figured out the story....” So, how can I make this speaker more curious and less full of righteousness on this topic? How can I allow her to invite the reader in to the topic and to be thoughtful and ask questions, rather than to invite the reader in to be pushed or bashed around.

3. Sound

Rhythm...Hughes uses violence to explore the apparently chaotic forces of nature, which he thinks we should acknowledge and understand. Lately, in my poetry I have been exploring chaos, resisting order and form, to do with rhythm, and this shows up in the way I have not been using lines or meter in some of my poems, but rather almost crocheting the sentences together with line breaks not based on meaning or a visual pattern, and adding rhyme in a random way. So, I suppose I am writing prose poems. They read sort of like improvisational jazz, which leaves you with a sense of ‘unpatterned’ energy, which for me, feels a little unpleasant. I often avoid improvisational jazz in the music world, or at least don’t usually prefer to attend an improvisational jazz performance if I could instead go to hear a different kind of jazz; however, this sort of disorderly vibe is the way the world feels to me and has suited the themes of some recent work. It’s an experiment.

Conclusion

Ada Limon, in closing remarks of the interview with *Compose*, says:

I write to help me reconnect with the world. I write to feel grounded, and alive, and real, and breathing, and right here. And hopefully, as I work on that process, my poems might help others do the same. I’m not saying that they offer a tonic or a salve, but I am trying to wave from my own leaky boat.

I like her goal in writing. She is not trying to teach me something, about which I am apt to feel rebellious. She is not sentimental, trying to help me escape some difficult reality. She isn’t defining her voice in a narrow way, as she doesn’t see the world in a narrow way, but as complex and in many ways ineffable, and so reaches into that

complexity that I am, and helps me identify my own vulnerable, mysterious, and beautiful being, who struggles and wishes to better understand, and then learns to sit in the questions presented by living with a sense of whatever my emotion is and, too, at some level, eventually, a sense of acceptance and wonder.

Revision sometimes feels as if it is undoing the whole that has been created. At times, I have thought first thoughts and efforts are often best. But revision is the thing that provides some of the most pleasure I get from writing poems, a sense of having done better at creating a certain effect for the reader. Getting better is a good thing, one of my most favorite things about writing poetry. Getting validated by being more published is not a reason for doing it, but being rewarded for the effort could make me more courageous as a writer. Ada Limon says that in her interview with *Compose*: “External validation can serve as a catalyst to become even braver as an artist. It’s a shove off the cliff in some ways....” I am reminded that poetry is a milieu that well lends itself to questions and the unknown. I like being in the realm of mystery and taking leaps.

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NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

COLUMBINE POETS, INC recently held their much-anticipated annual Poet Fest at the Lafayette Public Library, with the incredible George Kalamaras as our featured poet. George captivated the audience with a dynamic two-hour generative workshop titled “*Metaphors Be With You*,” guiding us through the art and magic of metaphor creation. His energy and insight sparked creativity in every attendee, and later, he enthralled us with a moving poetry reading that left everyone inspired.

The Poet Fest was also the thrilling moment when we announced the winners of our annual members contest, celebrating the finest poetic voices within our community. Their winning poems were shared aloud, filling the room with powerful emotion and artistry. To add to the excitement, we held an open mic session where poets from all levels stepped up to share their own works, making the event a vibrant and inclusive celebration of poetry.

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~ Sarah Wood, *Poetry Society of Texas*

NFSPS MEMBER STATE HISTORIES TO BE DIGITIZED AND POSTED

Nancy Baass, former President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) and its dedicated current Historian, is embarking on an ambitious and vital project to preserve the rich legacy of our organization. She is passionately working to have every member state’s unique history fully digitized and beautifully showcased on the official NFSPS.net website. This initiative will create an accessible, vibrant digital archive that celebrates the diverse stories and contributions of each state’s poetry community.

Don’t miss the chance to be part of this exciting journey to preserve and celebrate the rich tapestry of poetry across our nation. Send your updated histories to Nancy Baass at nancy.baass@gmail.com today and help keep the spirit of NFSPS alive and thriving! ~ Julie Cummings

In addition to our Poet Fest, Columbine Poets has embraced a new home at the Brewing Market in Lafayette, gathering there on select Saturdays throughout the month. Our commitment to growth and l

earning shines through our weekly workshops—two sessions via Zoom and two or three in-person, depending on the number of Saturdays in a month. Each month, members eagerly volunteer to lead workshops, diving deep into their chosen topics and emerging as experts, sharing their newfound knowledge with the group.

Looking ahead, we’re buzzing with excitement as we plan our annual winter party on December 20—a perfect occasion to gather, celebrate, and reflect on a year of poetic achievement. We’ll also honor the winners from the recent NFSPS annual convention, shining a spotlight on their outstanding accomplishments. Stay tuned for more inspiring events and join us in celebrating the power of poetry! ~ Julie Cummings, *President*

FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION enjoyed a serene weekend for Spring Fling at the San Pedro Spiritual Development Center, incorporating nature and music with poetry in our theme, "Song of Myself." All attendees were given a personal journal with Whitman's poem included as inspiration. Presenters included

Wandering Spiral, a duo with sitar, drums, crystal bowls and more, presenting "Musicality in Poetry;" Dr. Rajni Shankar-Brown leading an

interactive session on "Creating Justice: Poetry as Shakti;" and our own Vice President Sonja Jean Craig guiding us in "Writing Your Song."

To preserve our Florida State Poets Association legacy, our historian, Elaine Person, created a partnership with the Winter Park (FL) library. They will maintain archives of our magazine, *Of Poets and Poetry*, and annual anthology, *Cadence*.

We are exploring a potential partnership with the Florida Storytellers Association. Sonja Jean Craig has taken the lead to determine what benefits there may be for both organizations, and how we can collaborate to reach wider audiences and potential members.

The Fall Convention in late October will be held at the Bok Tower Gardens in Lake Wales, Florida, with poetry sessions by Brian Turner, Sean Sexton, M.B. McLatchey, Mark Andrew James Terry, and Diane Neff. Further details may be found in our bi-monthly magazine, *Of Poets and Poetry*, available to read online at flpoets.org or purchase from Amazon.com. ~Diane Neff, Secretary

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY The new ISPS board met last month and has begun working on collaborating with community colleges. ISPS member and author Charlotte Digregorio will be giving a presentation on how to "Publicize Like A Pro" on Saturday, September 27th via Zoom and then on Wednesday, October 8th at 7p, Amy Haddad of Ex Ophidia Press will share with members what publishers look for in poems and poets and answer questions about publishing. ~Mary Beth Bretzlauf, President

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY We started our August meeting with a Workshop led by Roberta Hung about how our life choices and decisions have affected our lives, e.g., 1) direction to hobbies, living environment, relationships, 2) influence of opportunities, learning new skills, etc., 3) inner values, character changes. Each choice, like a pebble in a pond, has rippling effects. Attending poets wrote about a variety of topics.

Sponsors are needed for our National Poetry Day Contest. Minimum \$30 for 3 prizes. Request an application from Roberta Hung at robette02@yahoo.com. ~Beverley Barnes, Reporter

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY: We're having a golden jubilee celebration in the silver state! The future of the Nevada Poetry

Society is looking extremely bright and favorable. As such it was entirely appropriate for our June 2025 meeting to have been on the summer solstice where



we welcomed special guest Crystal Barker up from Las Vegas to Reno. Crystal came all the way from Las Vegas to help plan, curate and edit our 50TH ANNIVERSARY ANTHOLOGY. The book will serve as a commemorative representation of the Nevada chapter within the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

We're all greatly looking forward to the submission of our work!

In addition to all members physically present at the meeting, we also have Dian Barnett, Anne Conibear, Patsy Gehr, Margie Klein & Dr. Emory Jones on board for the project, as well as previous members whose submissions will be included in a special memorial section of the volume. The commemoration of the Nevada chapter's 50th anniversary will also tie into the celebration of the United States of America's 250th anniversary celebration and be a substantial reason for wide reflection and commentary.

Our usual summer hiatus will give members near and far time to edit and curate submissions for the anthology as well as the creation of new work to share at our September meeting. ~ Jesse James Ziegler, Communications

The **SUNFLOWER POETRY SOCIETY OF KANSAS** continues to improve community outreach, foster poetry education and facilitate opportunities for poetic growth. Through monthly workshops and mentorships, our members have been active participants in community events across the state of Kansas.

Vice-President Ana Wilkins served on the Aaron Douglas Art Committee for the Aaron Douglas Art Fair in Topeka, Kansas on 27 September. This community event showcases diverse and emerging artists. President M. Palowski Moore was a featured artist at the Johnson County Library/IUAH Story Harvest Artists Showcase. In October, Mr. Moore will be a featured Poet during the KC Rainbow tour "Queer Writers Read Out!" celebration of LGBTQ History Month and National Coming Out Day. On 10 September, SPSK members presented poems during the 12th annual Words Save Lives in Lawrence, KS.

Two poetry collections were released by SPSK members. *Those 60s Boys: Memoirs of a Decade* by Lon Wartman was released in September. *Between The Tracks & The River: Life in North Kansas* by Iris Craver is also available. Details regarding purchases and other inquiries are available via email at sunflowerpoetrysociety@charter.net

The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas mourns the loss of founding member and former vice president Jeff Meredith. Jeff was instrumental in establishing SPSK. His vision was a vital gift. We celebrate his life and cherish his memory. ~ M. Palowski Moore, President

WYOPOETS Selects Acclaimed Poets for 2026 Workshop

Mark your calendar! WyoPoets is excited to host a captivating poetry workshop in Casper, Wyoming, on April 24-25, 2026.

As a community of writers established in 1977, WyoPoets has a rich history of fostering poetry in the state; five of our members have even served as Poet Laureates of Wyoming. We are dedicated to keeping the art of poetry alive, and we're thrilled to welcome two acclaimed poets, Veronica Golos and David Pérez, as the presenters

of our 2026 workshop. Join us for a weekend that promises to uplift and embolden your creative spirit. Veronica Golos is the author of four poetry books including the most recent, *GIRL* (3:A Taos Press, 2019), which focuses on young girls and women in different cultures. CMarie Fuhrman, co-editor of *Native Voices: Indigenous American Poetry, Craft and Conversations*, described the book as “a complex symphony of voices, part memoir, part allegory, [that] exposes truths of growing up in cultures where young girls and young women often fall prey to societal expectations and harm...Bittersweet and sensuous.”

Veronica’s book *Rootwork* (3:A Taos Press, 2015) has themes in American history, particularly the lives of abolitionists John Brown and Mary Day Brown. Writer Layli Long Soldier, author of chapbook *Chromosomory* (2010) and *Whereas* (2017) writes, “As a Lakota reader and as a writer in a constant skirmish between emotion and reason...Golos is not imposing a cure; what she is doing, first, is looking at the root. Her poems examine, open-eyed. With careful touch, they seem to query, *What hurts?*...In this approach, there’s room for me, the reader, to listen...Connection to others is the healing tincture.”

Her book *Vocabulary of Silence* (Red Hen Press, 2011) won the 2011 New Mexico Book Award. In *Silence as a Place of Linkage*, an article published in IN QUIRE, July 10, 2012, Veronica said, “I attempted to meld history and the personal, to combine the political and the psychological in *Vocabulary of Silence*. I spent a good year reading translations of Arab poets, both Arab Americans and internationally. How they blended in their social awareness into image and form, but used poetic forms...In my book, my poetic stance is one of being a witness-from-afar to the wars...I am not there—I am here, seemingly safe, seemingly afar...Silence is a place of linkage in a poem, a place of entering in, I think...In addition, I tried in *Vocabulary of Silence* to point whatever fingers there are to point, to myself. In the poem *Samaria*, the last line is: ‘I am the core through which the bullet fires.’”

Her book *A Bell Buried Deep* (Story Line Press, 2003), winner of the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize, was nominated for a 2004 Pushcart Prize by Edward Hirsch, and adapted for stage at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California.

Her chapbook, *No Ordinary Women*, was performed as HER: A Poetry Drama at the Pulse Theatre on New York’s 42nd Street. In 2002, Veronica co-founded The Domino Effect, a multiracial quartet of spoken word artists. Their collaboration led to the poetry/drama, *Evolving Into Skin*, which premiered at the H.E.R.E. Theatre in New York.

Our second presenter is David Pérez – a writer, journalist, editor, actor, teacher, performance coach, radio host, and author of two memoirs. He is also the husband of Veronica Golos, and they share a home in Taos, New Mexico.



His two memoirs *WOW!* (11B Press, 2011) and *WOW!2* (Nighthawk Press, 2016), are based on his childhood in the South Bronx. *WOW!* is a Gold Medal winner for

“Multicultural Non-Fiction” in the Global EBooks Awards and one of the winners in the Comedy Category of the 2012 Latino Books into Movies Awards.

In an interview with Blog Critic, May 2, 2011, David said, “*Wow!* is a memoir of a smart, funny and somewhat naïve Puerto Rican boy (me) growing up in the South Bronx in the 1960s, living in the projects and navigating his way through a Catholic elementary school populated by a trio of desperadoes known as the Brothers of the Sacred Heart...I called my book a ‘memoirito’ because of its novella length (128 pages). Its episodic writing style also reminded me of the telenovelas that Latinos watch, or those popular pocket paperback novellas in Spanish with illustrations. *Wow!* has illustrations too, done by my brother George Pérez, an internationally acclaimed comic book artist. He drew the cover as well.”

David’s “Read Your Work Aloud” workshops have been featured at the Taos Writers Conference, Gemini Ink Writing Conference in San Antonio, Texas, and the Tupelo Press Poetry Conference, among others. His acting roles range from Othello to Santa Claus. Among his awards, just recently, David won best radio personality in New Mexico. He is the creator of The Legacy Project, helping people write, speak, or produce their legacies to their families and beyond.

WyoPoets National Poetry Contest Now Open

WyoPoets' Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest opened on October 1st and closes December 31, 2025. This contest is open to all poets. Go to <https://www.wyopoets.org/shea-contest.html> for more details

WyoPoets Members Showcase Their Books at Presenzza

We're delighted to announce a fantastic opportunity for our members to showcase and sell their poetry books! Presenzza Variety Store in Cheyenne, Wyoming, has agreed to feature the books of WyoPoets members in their Heritage Lounge area on the second floor of their store for one year. This is a commission-based opportunity for our poets, and authors will receive a 75% commission on the retail price of their books sold.

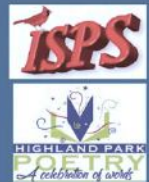
WyoPoets Bookmarks Hit Libraries and Bookstores

WyoPoets' new promotion committee has been focused on increasing the organization's visibility. They recently delivered bookmarks promoting the organization to all 23 public libraries and 16 bookstores in Wyoming, aiming to reach poets in every community across the state.

ISPS US250 PERSONA POEM PROJECT

Seeking poem submissions for Highland Park Poetry & Illinois State Poetry Society's US250 Persona Poem Project exploring U.S. history from about 1765 - 1800 history leading up to the American Revolution and the creation of the United States of America. This is a big story and we know there is more to it than what we were told. We want to meet the heroes, heroines, villains, the witnesses, including those not included in history books.

Project includes publication of an anthology in May 2026; \$250 Prizes to be awarded to three poets as determined by a guest judge; and possible creation of a story theater performance using select poems from the anthology. Deadline is December 1, 2025. Visit www.HighlandParkPoetry.org to download submission guidelines and entry form.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

Organized October 17, 1959

Mary B. Wall, Founder

Honorary Chancellor: Ihor Pavlyuk

EXECUTIVE BOARD ~ 2024-2026

Elected, NFSPS Convention, June 2024

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steven.concert@nfspss.net

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Kelsey.Bigelow@nfspss.net

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Membership Co-Chair Columbus, OH

smoeller@nfspss.net

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49512 SE Weber Rd., Sandy, OR 97055-7425

treasurer@nfspss.net

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7316 Huntington Dr., Oscoda, MI 48750

secretary@nfspss.net

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Paul Ford

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E. 10265 S., Sandy, UT 84092 paul.ford@nfspss.net

APPOINTIVE BOARD

Board Liaison to State Societies, Membership Chair:

Russell H. Strauss 18 S. Rembert St.,

Memphis, TN 38104 RSTRpoet@cs.com

Strophes Editor, stropheseditor@nfspss.net

Webmaster and Electronic Media Assistant

Contest Chair: C/O Julie Cummings, 5858 Pintail Way,

Frederick, CO 80504-9668 ~ contestchair@nfspss.net

admin@nfspss.net

Judges Chair: Melvin Palowski Moore, 11916 Lakeside

Drive, Apartment 1622, Overland Park, KS 66213

judgeschair@nfspss.net

9428 Fallen Rock Rd., Conifer, CO 80433

stropheseditor@nfspss.net

Encore Editor: McKenna Hall

Historian: Nancy Baass

408 E. Warren Ave., Victoria, TX 77901-4847

nancy.baass@gmail.com

Legal Counselor and Parliamentarian,

Convention Coordinator: Susan Stevens Chambers

700 Agency Trail, Unit 202 Mankato, Minnesota 56001

schambersmediator@yahoo.com

Librarian: Catherine L'Herisson

518 Grinnell Dr., Garland, TX 75043

catherinepoet@juno.com

Poetry Day/Poetry Month Liaison Co-Chair:

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Mechanicsburg, OH 43044

Publicity Chair: Bernadette Perez

19645 Hwy. 314, Belen, NM 87002

bpburritos@aol.com

Stevens Manuscript Competition Chair:

Eleanor Berry 2230 SE Laura Lane, Dallas, OR 97338

stevenschair@nfspss.net

Strophes Associate Editor: Julie K. Shavin

8435 Ermel Rd., Fountain, CO 80817

julianza@comcast.net

NFSPS MEMBER STATE SOCIETIES

AND PRESIDENTS

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Dargan Ware, President ~ 2154 Highland Avenue South,

Birmingham AL 35205 ~ authordarganware@gmail.com

ARIZONA: Arizona State Poetry Society

Katie Zale ~ President, 4477 W. Pyracantha Dr.,

Tuscon, AZ 85741 ~ katiezale.pres@azpoetry.net

ARKANSAS: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Christine Henderson, President PO Box 9122, Searcy,

AR 72145 ~ my1stdraft@yahoo.com

CALIFORNIA: California State Poetry Society

Dr. Maja Trochimczyk, President ~ P.O. Box 4288,

Sunland, CA 91041 ~ Maja.Trochimczyk@gmail.com

COLORADO: Columbine Poets of Colorado

Julie Cummings, President ~

president@columbinepoetscolorado.com

CONNECTICUT: Connecticut Poetry Society

Patricia Mottola, President ~ 390 Maple Ave.,

Cheshire, CT 06410 ~ patriciamottola@yahoo.com

FLORIDA: Florida State Poets Association

Mark Terry, President~300 East Miller Street

Orlando, FL 32806 ~ markajerry@gmail.com

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Barbara Barry-Nishanian, President

President@georgiapoetrysociety.org

ILLINOIS: Illinois State Poetry Society

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Waukegon, IL 60085 ~ mbbretzlaf@comcast.net

INDIANA: Poetry Society of Indiana

Mona Mehas, President ~ 3702 Crest Point Drive,

Westfield IN 46062 ~ mimnobreak@gmail.com

IOWA: Iowa Poetry Association

Dawn Sly Terpstra, President ~ 14410 S 72nd Ave. E

Lynnville, IA 50153 ~ dterp@me.com

KANSAS: Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas

Melvin Palowski Moore, President 11916 Lakeside

Drive, Apartment 1622, Overland Park, KS 66213

dragonpoet@charter.net

KENTUCKY: Kentucky State Poetry Society

Katerina Stoykova, President ~ 250 S. Martin Luther

King Blvd. Apt. 116 Lexington, KY 40508 ~

katerina.stoykova@uky.edu

LOUISIANA: Poetry Society of Louisiana

Ed Ruzicka, President, 744 Woodhaven St.

Baton Rouge, LA 70815 ~ edzekezone@gmail.com

MAINE: Maine Poets Society

Jenny Doughty, President ~ 31 Rustic Ln.,

Portland, ME 04103 ~ jmdought@maine.rr.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts State Poetry

Society Jeanette C. Maes, President ~ 64 Harrison Ave.,

Lynn, MA 01905 ~ msps.jmaes@comcast.net

MICHIGAN: Poetry Society of Michigan

David James, President ~ 1108 Fairway Dr.,

Linden, MI 48451 ~ dljamespoet@gmail.com

MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets

Amanda Bailey, President ~ P.O. Box 17344

Minneapolis, MN 55417 ~ leagueofmnpoets@gmail.com

MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi Poetry Society

Mary Beth Magee, President ~ 752 DuPont-Harts Chapel

Road, Poplarville, MS, 39470

marybethmageewrites@gmail.com

MISSOURI: Missouri State Poetry Society

Nancy La Chance, President ~ 14940 Hwy 64,

Lebanon, MO 65536 ~ lachancenancy@outlook.com

NEBRASKA: Nebraska Poetry Society

Charlene Pierce, President ~ Omaha, NE

charlene_pierce@icloud.com

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Sparks, NV 89431-2424 ~ nvpoetry@earthlink.net

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Belen, NM 87002~ president@nmpoetry.com

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Cincinnati, OH 45202 ~ president@ohiopoetryassn.org

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Rob Burgess, President ~ redrob2013@yahoo.com

OREGON: Oregon Poetry Association

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PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Poetry Society

Pom Benson, President ~ 257 Ashton Hollow

Catawissa, PA 17820 ~ pombenson@att.net

SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota State Poetry

Society Marcella Remund, President ~ 235 E Lewis,

Vermillion SD 57069 ~ surfaceworld@yahoo.com

TENNESSEE: Poetry Society of Tennessee

Lisa Kamolnick, President ~ 259 Cain Drive

Blountville TN 37617 poetrytennessee@gmail.com

TEXAS: Poetry Society of Texas

Holly Jahangari, President ~ 12310 Vintage Leaf Cir

Houston, TX 77070~president@poetrysocietyoftexas.org

UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society

Michael Parker, President ~ 878 South 250 West,

Orem, Utah, 84058~ note.to.mp@gmail.com

WYOMING: WyoPoets

Mandie Hines, President ~ wyopoets@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@nfspss.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 25th

October Issue Deadline: August 25th

January Issue Deadline: November 25th

April 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

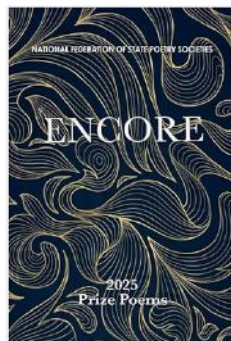
Whenever you get an email with my name as the sender, check to see if the message is actually sent from president@nfsp.net. If it isn't, I suggest you report the email as scam/phishing to your email provider. I will never ask you for money or gift cards in an email or text message. Please see the article 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 2025 anthology of prize-winning poems awarded at the 2025 Annual Convention is available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). When in Amazon, search for Encore 2025 Prize Winning Poems. 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