

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
AND POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENT

POETRY

**OUT
LOUD®**



2024

**National
Finals**

May 1-2, 2024

Lisner Auditorium, The George Washington University
Washington, DC

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and the state and jurisdictional arts agencies of the United States. The Poetry Out Loud National Finals are administered by Mid Atlantic Arts.



Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is an independent federal agency that is the largest funder of the arts and arts education in communities nationwide and a catalyst of public and private support for the arts. By advancing equitable opportunities for arts participation and practice, the NEA fosters and sustains an environment in which the arts benefit everyone in the United States.

Visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov) to learn more.



The Poetry Foundation recognizes the power of words to transform lives. The Foundation works to amplify poetry and celebrate poets by fostering spaces for all to create, experience, and share poetry.

Follow the Poetry Foundation on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and *Poetry* magazine at [@PoetryMagazine](https://twitter.com/PoetryMagazine).



Mid Atlantic Arts supports artists, presenters, and organizations through unique programming, grant support, partnerships, and information sharing. Created in 1979, Mid Atlantic Arts is aligned with the region's state arts councils and the National Endowment for the Arts. We combine state and federal funding with private support from corporations, foundations, and individuals to nurture diverse artistic expression while connecting people to meaningful arts experiences within our region and beyond.

Visit [midatlanticarts.org](https://www.midatlanticarts.org) to learn more.

THE NATIONAL FINALS ARE
STREAMING LIVE AT

[arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov)





Welcome to the Poetry Out Loud 2024 National Finals!

This special evening is a culmination of months of hard work from our finalists. They have carefully studied their poems, rehearsed and refined their performances, and now they will perform on a stage that has hosted musical icons, distinguished writers, and former presidents.

While these students stand alone under the spotlight tonight, we know that Poetry Out Loud is not a solitary endeavor. Teachers, mentors, family, and friends have all lent their time and wisdom to our competitors, and we thank them for the support they have shown these students and, by extension, the Poetry Out Loud program.

Engaging with poetry can be a challenge—meaning is not always evident on the surface, and familiar language is employed in new and unexpected ways—but that is what makes it so rewarding. Working through a poem helps us to think differently, forging new and deeper connections with people, places, and ideas. For young people, the skills gained through the thoughtful study and expression of poetry equip them to navigate the complexities of life while also appreciating its beauty.

Since the program began in 2005, more than 4.4 million students and 81,000 teachers from 20,000 schools across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud, but even as we approach the 20th anniversary next year, we continue to be surprised and delighted by the students' performances. They use their unique talents to reveal new facets of poems, and, lending their personal passions to recitations, bring these words—some written centuries ago—to life.

We look forward to many more years of Poetry Out Loud, including our National Finals, and extend our thanks to the state and jurisdictional arts agencies that make it possible. We also thank you for joining us and for celebrating these talented young people who are our future storytellers and change makers.

Photo by Aaron Jay Young



Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD
Chair, National Endowment for the Arts

Photo courtesy of the Poetry Foundation



Michelle T. Boone
President & CEO, Poetry Foundation

May 1

Semifinals Program

9:00 a.m.

Semifinal **ONE**

1:00 p.m.

Semifinal **TWO**

5:00 p.m.

Semifinal **THREE**

First Round

Remarks

Lauren Miller
Justine Haka

Second Round

Intermission

Awards Presentation

Announcement of Regional Finalists

Top eight competitors
in each semifinal will
recite a third poem

Third Round

Announcement of National Finalists

Top three competitors
in each semifinal will advance
to the National Finals



HOSTS AND JUDGES

Semifinal **ONE**

Host



Photo courtesy of the Artist

Helen Hayes Award Winning actress **Rayanne Gonzales** has appeared on Broadway (*Phantom of the Opera*) and film and TV (*In the Heights*, *Sound of Music Live*). Select theatre credits include: *Into the Woods* (2023 Broadway Tour); *Mystic Pizza* (Ogunquit Playhouse and La Mirada); *A Christmas Carol* (Ford's Theatre); *In the Heights* (Olney Theatre Center, Walnut Street, Sacramento Music Circus); *Carousel* (Arena Stage), *Daphne's Dive* and *Sweeney Todd* (Signature Theatre).

Judges



Photo courtesy of the Artist

LeJuane (Ei'Ja) Bowens is an award-winning spoken word artist, poet, speaker, and author. He has worked with the

Kennedy Center; performed at numerous festivals, such as the Arts in the Heart of Augusta Festival and Big Ears Festival; and headlined the Book'em NC Book Festival, Homegrown Festival, and National Folk Festival. He coaches the Detour Slam Team in Fayetteville, North Carolina, which ranked fourth at the 2023 Southern Fried Poetry Festival. Bowens is featured on the PBS documentary *Talking Black in America: Performance Traditions*, as well as on Poetry Slam, Inc. and All Def Poetry on YouTube.



Photo by Cassidy/DuHon

Dan Brady is the author of the poetry collections *Strange Children* (Publishing Genius, 2018), *Subtexts* (Publishing Genius, 2022), and *Songs in E---* (Trnsfr Books, 2023)—winner of the Barclay Prize for Poetry—along with two poetry chapbooks. Previously, Brady served as the editor of *American Poets*, the Academy of American Poets journal, and worked in the literature division at the National Endowment for the Arts, where he

received a Distinguished Service Award for his work on the NEA Big Read. He is currently the poetry editor of *Barrelhouse*.



Photo courtesy of the Artist

Kristen Jackson serves as associate artistic director and director of connectivity at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Under her leadership, Woolly's connectivity department launched the Core Partner Program, which promotes equitable exchange with DC-area organizations predominately serving communities of color. Jackson previously worked on- and off-Broadway for Ostar Productions and Playwrights Horizons in producing and casting, and as a teaching artist and performer for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and Actors Theatre of Louisville. She earned a BA in theatre studies and English from Duke University and an MA in performance as public practice from University of Texas at Austin.

To access the full text to the selected Semifinals poems, please go to:
<https://www.poetryoutloud.org/2024-poem-documents/>



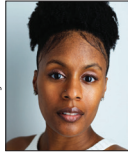
Photo courtesy of the Artist



Ada Vilageliu-Díaz received her PhD in English from Howard University and her BA in English Philology from Universidad de La Laguna, Canary Islands. Her poetry has been published in *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, *Al Pie De La Casa Blanca: Poetas Hispanos de Washington, DC*, American University's *Festival Latino-Americano de Poesía*, *Knocking on the Door of the White House: Latina and Latino Poets in Washington, DC*, and *Community Literacy Journal*. Vilageliu-Díaz's creative writing explores her indigenous Guanche ancestry through myths and stories about women in the Canary Islands.

Semifinal TWO Host

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Hailing from Southern Maryland, **Aunye Boone** is a SAG-AFTRA actress, published writer, member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and former full scholarship runner for Virginia Tech. Currently, Aunye is a Writer-Editor for the National Endowment for the Arts. Aunye's stage credits include Lateesh in the Compass Rose Theatre's productions of *If I Hold My Tongue* and Jory in *Disgraced*, for which she received a Helen Hayes Award recommendation. Her multiple commercial credits include MedStar Health, Guinness, DoorDash, Giant, and Connections Academy. On television you may have seen her as Olivia Walker in BET Network's *Criminals at Work* and as Shakina Feazell in TV One's *For My Man*. Other credits include Sonya Bell in the aspireTV network short film *The Catcher* and numerous voiceover roles.

Judges

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Matt Bassett is the theater department chair of the Metropolitan School of the Arts. Bassett also serves as artistic director of the Hub Theatre, an award-winning professional theater company in Northern Virginia. His directorial work has garnered multiple Helen Hayes Award nominations for direction and outstanding production. Bassett's work as a playwright has been seen at Columbus Children's Theatre, Flying V Theatre, and Arts on the Horizon. He has also taught at Montgomery College, the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts, and Imagination Stage. Bassett earned an MFA in acting from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Photo by Stan D. Henry-Smith



Taylor Johnson is the author of *Inheritance* (Alice James Books, 2020), winner of the 2021 Norma

Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America. His work appears in *Poetry Magazine*, the *Paris Review*, the *Baffler*, and *Scalawag*. Johnson is a Cave Canem graduate fellow and a recipient of the 2017 Larry Neal Writers' Award from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, as well as the 2021 Judith A. Markowitz Award for Emerging Writers from Lambda Literary. Johnson was the inaugural 2022 Poet-in-Residence at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. He is the Poet Laureate of Takoma Park, Maryland.

Photo by Angel Valant



Peggy Kyounghwon Lee, PhD (she/they) is an interdisciplinary scholar, researcher, and creative writer. She is currently an assistant professor of English at Georgetown University, where she teaches contemporary U.S. ethnic literature and poetry, Asian American studies, and performance studies. Their research has been supported by awards from the University of California President's

HOSTS AND JUDGES

Postdoctoral Fellowship at Berkeley, Mellon Foundation, American Council of Learned Societies, and University of Pennsylvania. Lee was a 2022 Lambda Literary Fellow in speculative fiction and 2023 Tin House Summer Workshop alum in the novel.

Photo by Hilary Dubie



Leslie Sainz is the author of *Have You Been Long Enough at Table* (Tin House, 2023). The daughter of Cuban exiles, she is the recipient of a 2021 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship. Her work has appeared in the *Yale Review*, *New England Review*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *AGNI*, *jubilat*, and *Narrative*. A three-time National Poetry Series finalist, Sainz has received scholarships, fellowships, and honors from CantoMundo, the Miami Writers Institute, the *Adroit Journal*, and the Stadler Center for Poetry & Literary Arts at Bucknell University. She is the managing editor of the *New England Review*.

Semifinal **THREE**

Host

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Don Michael H. Mendoza is Founder of DMH Mendoza Productions and Co-Founder and Executive Producer of LA TI DO Productions. Through both entities he's produced on Broadway (*Smash*, *Suffs*, *Here Lies Love*), Off-Broadway (*Hazing U*), and hundreds of cabarets, concerts, theatrical shows, and events nationally since 2012. Concurrently, he is an independent marketing professional who served as the first Director of Marketing & Media for the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles. Mendoza attended the Commercial Theater Institute in New York City, and holds a BA in Musical Theatre & Journalism and an MA in Strategic Communication from American University.

Judges

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Thomas Dooley is the author of *Trespass*, a winning selection for the National Poetry Series (Harper Perennial, 2014). He is the founding artistic director of Poetry Well, an organization dedicated to promoting poetry as a vital part of our individual and collective wellness. A practitioner of narrative medicine, Dooley is the inaugural resident poet at the T. Denny Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion at University of California San Diego and he directs the humanistic medicine program for Atlantic Health System.

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Kristen Dupard is an associate at Jenner & Block based in Washington, DC. Before starting at the firm, she worked as a public defender for the Prisoner and Reentry Legal Services Division at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. While

at Columbia Law School, she served as a member of the Frederick Douglass Moot Court Team, the Black Law Students Association, and as an editor for the *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*. Dupard is the 2012 Poetry Out Loud National Champion (Mississippi).

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Rebecca Pelky, PhD is a citizen of the Brothertown Indian Nation and a 2023 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow. As an assistant professor at Clarkson University, she teaches film, literature, and creative writing. Pelky is the author of poetry collections *Through a Red Place* (Perugia Press, 2021), which won the 2021 Perugia Press Prize, as well as of the *Dog Woman* (Saint Julian Press, 2020). She further collaborated on a translation of Chilean poet Matilde Ladrón de Guevara's collection, *Desnuda* (Redhawk Publications, 2022) and a hiking guide for Michigan's Upper Peninsula (Falcon Guides, 2015). She holds a PhD from the University of Missouri and an MFA from Northern Michigan University.



Eliseo Valerio is an artist, educator, and school programs manager at Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, DC. Previously, he worked with the Alley Theatre, the New Victory Theater, and Second Stage. Valerio graduated with honors from Stanford University and is a member of the BIPOC Critics Lab at the Public Theater. He is currently pursuing an MEd at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, where he's building a venture to provide theater-based educational programming specifically for emergent bilinguals to help develop motivation for learning, foster creativity, improve social-emotional awareness, and complement the early phases of language acquisition and identity building.

POETRY OURSELVES

Poetry Ourselves was launched in 2016 as a part of the National Endowment for the Arts' 50th anniversary celebration and is another way the Arts Endowment encourages student creativity. Each Poetry Out Loud state champion had the opportunity to submit an original work of poetry in one of two categories—written or spoken. Poet José Olivarez judged this year's submissions. Winning poems may be featured on [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov) and poetryoutloud.org. Winners and runners-up will be announced at the National Finals on May 2.



Photo by Mercedes Zapata

José Olivarez is the son of Mexican immigrants and the author of two collections of poems, including, most recently, *Promises of Gold* (Henry Holt and Co., 2023)—which was long listed for the 2023 National Book Award. His debut book of poems, *Citizen Illegal* (Haymarket Books, 2018), was a PEN/Jean Stein Book Award finalist and 2018 Chicago Review of Books Poetry Prize winner. Along with Felicia Rose Chavez and Willie Perdomo, he co-edited the poetry anthology *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 4: LatiNEXT* (Haymarket Books 2020).

May 2

7:00 p.m.

National Finals Program

Welcome

Huascar Medina

Roll Call of State Champions

National Endowment for the Arts Remarks

and

Announcement of Poetry Ourselves Winners

Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson

Chair, National Endowment for the Arts

First Round of Recitations

Poetry Foundation Remarks

Michelle T. Boone

President and CEO

Second Round of Recitations

Awarding of Medals

Announcement of Three Finalists

Final Round of Recitations

Performance

Leyla McCalla

Announcement of Poetry Out Loud Champion



Host



Photo courtesy of the Artist

Huascar Medina is a poet, editor, arts administrator, and member of the National Council on the Arts. He is the author of *Un Mango Grows In Kansas* (Spartan Press, 2020), a 2021 Kansas Notable Book. A Kansas Poet Laureate Emeritus and an Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellow, his work has appeared in the *Flint Hills Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, *KANSAS! Magazine*, *Latino Book Review*, the *New York Times*, and elsewhere. Medina is the literary editor for *seveneightfive magazine*, a staff editor at South Broadway Press, and a contributing op-ed writer for the *Kansas Reflector*.

As a second-generation immigrant living in the heartland, Medina explores and challenges the boundaries between location and identity, blurring the manufactured lines of division by creating paths toward compassion through cultural empathy. His work bridges common grounds, connecting and binding diverse members of our society through poetic discourse.

Judges



Photo courtesy of the Artist

H-Dirksen L. Bauman is a professor of Deaf Studies at Gallaudet University located in Washington, DC. Originally hired in the department of English, Dirksen was invited to join the department of Deaf Studies in 1999, where he has taught ever since as the department's only hearing faculty member. During this time, he has served as the co-editor and producer of the book/DVD project *Signing the Body Poetic: Essays in American Sign Language Literature* (University of California Press, 2006) and co-editor of *Deaf-Gain: Raising the Stakes for Human Diversity* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), among others. He is currently engaged in a collaborative book-length project featuring poetry in American Sign Language co-created with ASL poet Douglas Ridloff.



Photo by Mario McBride

Amber McBride is an assistant professor at the University of Virginia. She previously served as the media assistant at the Furious Flower Poetry Center. Her poetry has appeared in various literary magazines, including *Ploughshares*, *Provincetown Arts*, the *Cincinnati Review*, and the *Rumpus*. Her debut YA novel in verse, *Me (Moth)* (Feiweil & Friends, 2021), was a finalist for the Morris Award and National Book Award in Children's Literature, and won the John Steptoe-Coretta Scott King Award. Her sophomore novel in verse, *We Are All So Good at Smiling* (Feiweil & Friends, 2023), received a JLG Honor. McBride's debut middle-grade novel, *Gone Wolf* (Feiweil & Friends, 2023), is a finalist for the L.A. Times Book Prize. She is also the author of *Thick with Trouble* (Penguin Books, 2024).



Lupe Mendez is a writer, educator, and activist, and served as the 2022-2023 Texas Poet Laureate. Mendez is the founder of Tintero Projects, an organization that works with emerging Latinx and other writers of color within the Texas Gulf Coast Region. He is author of *Why I Am Like Tequila* (Willow Books, 2019), winner of the 2019 John A. Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry from the Texas Institute of Letters. Mendez's work has been featured in the *Kenyon Review*, *Gulf Coast Journal*, the *Texas Review*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Split This Rock*, *Poetry Magazine*, *Best American Poetry 2021*, and *Poem-A-Day* from the Academy of American Poets. He earned his MFA from the University of Texas at El Paso.



Mei Ann Teo (they/them) is a queer immigrant from Singapore making theater and film at the intersection of artistic, civic, and contemplative practice. As a director and dramaturg, Teo's recent works include Madeline Sayet's *Where We Belong* (film and national tour) and the U.S. premiere of Amy Berryman's *Walden* at Theatreworks Hartford (Best Production and Director, Connecticut Critics Award). They have directed nationally, including for, but not limited to, the Public Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and the National Black Theatre. Teo received the League of Professional Theater Women's Josephine Abady Award and is the inaugural recipient of the Lily Fan Director Lilly Award. They also serve as an artistic leader at Ping Chong and Company.



Laura Tohe is Diné, Sleepy-Rock People clan and born for the Bitter Water People clan. She is the current Navajo Nation Poet Laureate. Her books include *Sister Nations* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), *Tséyi: Deep in the Rock* (University of Arizona Press, 2005), and *Code Talker Stories* (Rio Nuevo Publishers, 2012). Tohe received the 2020 Academy of American Poetry Fellowship; 2019 American Indian Festival of Writers Award; Wordcraft Circle of Native American Writers and Storytellers; the Joy Harjo & the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund Award; and was nominated twice for the Pushcart Award. Many of her poems have been translated into music for piano, guitar, and trumpet. She is professor emerita with distinction from Arizona State University.



2024

STATE AND JURISDICTIONAL CHAMPIONS

Alabama

Emily Biaz

Auburn High School

Alaska

Mona Koko

West Anchorage High School

American Samoa

Hazel Ipuniuese Leo

Iakina Adventist Academy

Arizona

Isabel Teran

Sahuarita High School

Arkansas

Tucker Dowler

Sheridan High School

California

Riley O'Hara

Sonoma Valley High School

Colorado

Rize Simmons

Windsor High School

Connecticut

Emma Rose Frisbie

East Lyme High School

Delaware

Maiss Hussein

Paul M. Hodgson Vocational
Technical High School

District of Columbia

Nyla Dinkins

Benjamin Banneker Academic
High School

Florida

Niveah Glover

Douglas Anderson School
of the Arts

Georgia

Tiana Renee Jones

Whitefield Academy

Guam

Nikolette Jade Salas

Tiyan High School

Hawaii

Jordyn Imig

Hanalani Schools

Idaho

Emma C. Eldred

New Plymouth High School

Illinois

Yohanna Endashaw

Niles West High School

Indiana

Aalihya Banks

Pike High School

Iowa

Andrew Cusmano

Waterloo West High School

Kansas

Victoria Jelks

Horton High School

Kentucky

Lexie Wilson

Williamstown Independent Schools

Louisiana

Grisham Locke

Ruston High School

Maine

Lyra Legawiec

Mt. Ararat High School

Maryland

Madison Harris

Indian Creek School

Massachusetts

Ailin Sha

Boston Latin School

Michigan

Paige Cook

Interlochen Arts Academy

Minnesota

Ariana Kimball

Washburn High School

Mississippi

Malisha Taylor

Pascagoula High School

Missouri

Julie Clayton

Nerinx Hall High School

Montana

Molly Ogan

Butte High School

Nebraska

Elizabeth Buescher

Marian High School

Nevada

Rayann Hijazi

Coral Academy of Science High School

New Hampshire

Morgan Jane Cole

Portsmouth High School

New Jersey

Lucas Wilson

Red Bank Regional High School

New Mexico

Kaitlyn Lubega

United World College-USA

New York

Emily Wang

Horace Mann School

North Carolina

Richmond Parris

University of North Carolina School of the Arts High School Program

North Dakota

Circe Atkinson

Mandan High School

Ohio

Amanda Braig

McNicholas High School

Oklahoma

Alissa Rodgers

Lawton High School

Oregon

Katie Lineburg

St. Stephen's Academy

Pennsylvania

Sulette Lange

Hazleton Area Arts and Humanities Academy

Puerto Rico

Amir Trinidad-Vidal

Saint John's School

Rhode Island

Jennifer Shon

Portsmouth Abbey School

South Carolina

Jessie Leitzel

Charleston County School of the Arts

South Dakota

Grace Powell

Dakota Valley High School

Tennessee

Charlotte

Bollschweiler

Clayton-Bradley Academy

Texas

Oluwabori Fadairo

The Hockaday School

United States Virgin Islands

Isabell Thill

Antilles School

Utah

Anni Willes

Waterford School

Vermont

Greer Kennedy

St. Johnsbury Academy

Virginia

Milla Hartford

Deep Run High School

Washington

Blaze Rowan

Olympia High School

West Virginia

Willow Peyton

St. Marys High School

Wisconsin

Riley Grace Saenim

The Prairie School

Wyoming

Elora L. Nation

Penn Foster High School

Congratulations to all!

May 1

9:00 a.m.

Semifinal
ONE

West Virginia
Willow Peyton

"Sonnet 55: Not marble nor the gilded monuments"
by William Shakespeare
"How to Triumph Like a Girl" by Ada Limón

Pennsylvania
Sulette Lange

"Occasional Poem" by Jacqueline Woodson
"Respectability" by Tina Boyer Brown

New York
Emily Wang

"Discrimination" by Kenneth Rexroth
"Night Bird" by Danusha Laméris

New Hampshire
Morgan Jane Cole

"Life Cycle of Common Man" by Howard Nemerov
"Ode" by Arthur O'Shaughnessy

Connecticut
Emma Rose Frisbie

"Invisible Children" by Mariana Llanos
"The Wish, By a Young Lady" by Laetitia Pilkington

North Carolina
Richmond Parris

"To have without holding" by Marge Piercy
"Another One of the World's Liars" by Mohja Kahf

South Carolina
Jessie Leitzel

"Diameter" by Michelle Y. Burke
"I Remember, I Remember" by Thomas Hood

Virginia
Milla Hartford

"To have without holding" by Marge Piercy
"Oranges" by Roisin Kelly

U.S. Virgin Islands
Isabell Thill

"Where the Wild Things Go" by D. Gilson
"Siren Song" by Margret Atwood

Delaware

Maiss Hussein

"Things You May Find Hidden in My Ear" by Mosab Abu Toha
"If They Should Come for Us" by Fatimah Asghar

New Jersey

Lucas Wilson

"Diptych" by Kevin Young
"Sonnet 145: Those lips that Love's own hand did make"
by William Shakespeare

Rhode Island

Jennifer Shon

"How to Triumph Like a Girl" by Ada Limón
"The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus

Maryland

Madison Harris

"Nothing to Do" by James Ephraim McGirt
"Black Matters" by Keith S. Wilson

District of Columbia

Nyla Dinkins

"We Are Not Responsible" by Harryette Mullen
"How Dark the Beginning" by Maggie Smith

Maine

Lyra Legawiec

"The Robots are Coming" by Kyle Dargan
"Weighing In" by Rhina P. Espaillat

Ohio

Amanda Braig

"All This and More" by Mary Karr
"Amor Mundi" by Christina Rossetti

Vermont

Greer Kennedy

"Life Cycle of Common Man" by Howard Nemerov
"Dirge Without Music" by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Massachusetts

Ailin Sha

"What the Oracle Said" by Shara McCallum
"The Children's Hour" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

May 1

1:00 p.m.

Semifinal
TWO

Kentucky

Lexie Wilson

"Nurture" by Maxine Kumin

"Summer" by Chen Chen

Alabama

Emily Biaz

"One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop

"Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market" by Pablo Neruda

Indiana

Aalihya Banks

"How I Discovered Poetry" by Marilyn Nelson

"a song in the front yard" by Gwendolyn Brooks

Iowa

Andrew Cusmano

"Windigo" by Louise Erdrich

"I Remember, I Remember" by Thomas Hood

Florida

Niveah Glover

"Hip Hop Ghazal" by Patricia Smith

"We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Mississippi

Malisha Taylor

"Mansplaining" by Jennifer Militello

"I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340)" by Emily Dickinson

Tennessee

Charlotte Bollschweiler

"Snow Day" by Billy Collins

"Crepuscule with Muriel" by Marilyn Hacker

Wisconsin

Riley Grace Saenim

"Vixen" by W. S. Merwin

"Thoughtless Cruelty" by Charles Lamb

Kansas

Victoria Jelks

"Let the Light Enter" by Francis Ellen Watkins Harper

"We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Michigan

Paige Cook

"Portrait of My Gender as [Inaudible]" by Meg Day
"When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be" by John Keats

Nebraska

Elizabeth Buescher

"Drowning in Wheat" by John Kinsella
"August 12 in the Nebraska Sand Hills Watching the
Perseids Meteor Shower" by Twyla Hansen

Puerto Rico

Amir Trinidad-Vidal

"To the Oppressors" by Pauli Murray
"The Mortician in San Francisco" by Randall Mann

Illinois

Yohanna Endashaw

"Once the World Was Perfect" by Joy Harjo
"You, If No One Else" by Tino Villanueva

Missouri

Julie Clayton

"Cathedral of Salt" by Nick Flynn
"Enough" by Suzanne Buffam

Oklahoma

Alissa Rodgers

"Oranges" by Roisin Kelly
"We Are Not Responsible" by Harryette Mullen

Louisiana

Grisham Locke

"Burning in the Rain" by Richard Blanco
"Epitaph" by Katherine Philips

Arkansas

Tucker Dowler

"Backdrop addresses cowboy" by Margaret Atwood
"Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud" by John Donne

Georgia

Tiana Renee Jones

"Love Song" by Dorothy Parker
"Poem" by Jorie Graham

May 1

5:00 p.m.

Semifinal THREE

Arizona

Isabel Teran

"Envy" by Mary Lamb

"Ars Poetica" by José Olivarez

Guam

Nikolette Jade Salas

"Love of My Flesh, Living Death" by Lorna Dee Cervantes

"Cathedral of Salt" by Nick Flynn

Oregon

Katie Lineburg

"Beginning" by James Wright

"The Pulley" by George Herbert

Idaho

Emma C. Eldred

"the world is about to end and my grandparents
are in love" by Kara Jackson

"Self-Portrait with Sylvia Plath's Braid" by Diane Seuss

Washington

Blaze Rowan

"Epitaph" by Katherine Philips

"History Lesson" by Natasha Trethewey

Wyoming

Elora L. Nation

"The Contract Says: We'd Like the Conversation to be
Bilingual" by Ada Limón

"Songs for the People" by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

South Dakota

Grace Powell

"The Gamble" by Laura Hershey

"After working sixty hours again for what reason"
by Bob Hicok

Hawaii

Jordyn Imig

"Becoming a Redwood" by Dana Gioia

"Abandoned Farmhouse" by Ted Kooser

Nevada

Rayann Hijazi

"What Women Are Made Of" by Bianca Lynne Spriggs

"The Paradox" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Colorado

Rize Simmons

“Songs for the People” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper
“Black Boys Play the Classics” by Toi Derricotte

Texas

Oluwabori Fadairo

“This is the Honey” by Mahogany L. Browne
“Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou

Minnesota

Ariana Kimball

“Mansplaining” by Jennifer Militello
“I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340)” by Emily Dickinson

American Samoa

Hazel Ipuniuese Leo

“Stepping Stones” by Albert Wendt
“Propositions” by Stephen Dunn

California

Riley O’Hara

“We Are Not Responsible” by Harryette Mullen
“Sonnet 29: When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes”
by William Shakespeare

New Mexico

Kaitlyn Lubega

“Respectability” by Tina Boyer Brown
“The Zebra Goes Wild Where the Sidewalk Ends” by Henry Dumas

Alaska

Mona Koko

“Once the World Was Perfect” by Joy Harjo
“I love you to the moon &” by Chen Chen

Utah

Anni Willes

“What the Oracle Said” by Shara McCallum
“The Vacuum” by Howard Nemerov

North Dakota

Circe Atkinson

“One Girl” by Sappho
“Siren Song” by Margret Atwood

Montana

Molly Ogan

“The Strength of Fields” by James L. Dickey
“Requiem” by Camille T. Dungy

PRODUCTION AND GUESTS

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Michael Baron (director) is the producing artistic director of Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and has directed over 100 productions at theaters across the country. Most recently, he co-directed the ASL/Spoken English musical productions of *Cinderella* (ZACH Theatre), *The Music Man* (Olney Theatre), *Fun Home* (Lyric), and *Fiddler on the Roof* (Lyric). Other directing credits include *The Prom*, *Carousel*, *Head Over Heels*, *Bright Star*, *Dreamgirls*, *Assassins*, *Big Fish*, *Oklahoma!*, *Les Miserables*, *Big River*, *Spring Awakening*, *Ragtime*, the new works *King of Pangea* and *Concerto*, and the current production of *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre. He earned his MFA in directing from Trinity Repertory and a BA in theater from Wake Forest University.

Photo courtesy of the Artist



Phil Reese (DJ) has been a Washington, DC-based pop, house, and disco DJ since 2014. Reese's parties stress good vibes, a welcoming spirit, diversity, and intersectionality. When he is not DJing, Reese is a web developer for one of the area's most historic colleges.

ASL Interpreters

Mia Engle and Steve Phan

Photo by Chris Scheurich



Born in New York City to Haitian emigrants and activists, **Leyla McCalla** finds inspiration from her past and present—her music vibrates with three centuries of history and influences from around the globe. McCalla possesses a stunning mastery of the cello, tenor banjo, and guitar and, as a multilingual singer and songwriter, has risen to produce a distinctive sound that reflects the union of her roots and experience. In addition to her solo work, McCalla is a founding member of Our Native Daughters (with Rhiannon Giddens, Amythyst Kiah and Allison Russell) and alumna of Grammy award-winning Black string band The Carolina Chocolate Drops.

McCalla's new album and fifth studio recording, *Sun Without the Heat*, is playful and full of joy while holding the pain and tension of transformation. Throughout *Sun Without the Heat's* ten tracks, McCalla achieves a balance of heaviness and light with melodies and rhythms derived from various forms of Afro-diasporic music including Afrobeat, Ethiopian modalities, Brazilian Tropicalismo, and American folk and blues. *Sun Without the Heat* is available on ANTI- Records.

POETRY OUT LOUD IS MANAGED AT THE STATE/JURISDICTIONAL LEVEL BY

Alabama State Council
on the Arts

Alaska State Council
on the Arts

American Samoa Arts Council

Arizona Commission
on the Arts

Arkansas Arts Council

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Colorado Creative Industries

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District of Columbia
Commission on the Arts
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Georgia Council for the Arts

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PRIZES

NATIONAL FINALS

1ST PLACE: \$20,000 award

2ND PLACE: \$10,000 award

3RD PLACE: \$5,000 award

4TH-9TH PLACES: \$1,000 award

The schools or organizations of the top nine finalists will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials.

The fourth-place student in each semifinal competition will receive an honorable mention award of \$1,000, with \$500 to their school or organization for the purchase of poetry materials.

STATE FINALS

More than \$50,000 in monetary prizes were awarded at state final competitions.

The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes awarded in Poetry Out Loud.

Awards will be made in the form of lump sum cash payouts, reportable to the IRS. Tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners and their families.



NATIONAL
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POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

2023
**Sreepadaarchana
Munjuluri**
Indiana

2022
Mia Ronn
California

2021
Rahele Megosha
South Dakota

2020
No champion due to the COVID-19 pandemic

2019
Isabella Callery
Minnesota

2018
Janae Claxton
South Carolina

2017
Samara Elán Huggins
Georgia

2016
Ahkei Togun
Virginia

2015
Maeva Ordaz
Alaska

2014
Anita Norman
Tennessee

2013
Langston Ward
Washington

2012
Kristen Dupard
Mississippi

2011
Youssef Biaz
Alabama

2010
Amber Rose Johnson
Rhode Island

2009
William Farley
Virginia

2008
Shawntay Henry
U.S. Virgin Islands

2007
Amanda Fernandez
District of Columbia

2006
Jackson Hille
Ohio

2005 (PILOT YEAR)
Stephanie Oparaugo
Washington, DC
and
Devin Kenny
Illinois
