

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
and
POETRY FOUNDATION
present



2009 National Finals

April 27–28

**George Washington University Lisner Auditorium
Washington, DC**



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation
deserves great art.

The National Endowment for the Arts is the largest annual funder of the arts in the United States. An independent federal agency, the NEA is the official arts organization of the United States government, dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts—both new and established—bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education.



The Poetry Foundation is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. The Foundation publishes *Poetry* magazine, sponsors a variety of public programs, and supports creative projects in literature.

MID ATLANTIC
ARTS FOUNDATION



Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation supports the richness and diversity of the region's arts resources and promotes wider access to the art and artists of the region, nation, and world.





Photo by Kevin Allen



Photo courtesy of the Poetry Foundation

Welcome to our nation’s capital and the Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest National Finals.

This year, nearly 300,000 students joined the contest and we congratulate all of them. Fifty-three contestants have reached the National Finals—one from each state, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. They wouldn’t be here without their own passion, discipline, and hard work, as well as the tremendous efforts of State Arts Agencies, teachers, and parents across the country. We salute everyone who has worked to make Poetry Out Loud a success.

One of the most important elements of the program is that the students discover personal favorites from an anthology of approximately 600 works. Although you may hear the same poem recited more than once, listen for the unique interpretation each student offers. These differences are part of what it means to know a poem by heart and suggest an essential premise of Poetry Out Loud: that poems are given life by those who read, memorize, and recite them. Most poets would agree that there are few honors more meaningful than a reader who has committed their work to memory.

The poet and thinker Lewis Hyde has observed that poetry is a gift, first given to the author through inspiration, and then conveyed to the audience through reading and recitation. It is not depleted as it is used, but rather gains in value as it is passed on from one listener to another, from one generation to the next. So as you listen to each recitation, think of yourself as being part of a long chain of listeners, receiving gifts of verse that have traveled a long way to arrive at your ear and, we hope, your heart.

Good luck to all contestants.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patrice Walker Powell".

Patrice Walker Powell
Acting Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Barr".

John Barr
President
Poetry Foundation

Prizes

National Finals

1st place	\$20,000 award
2nd place	\$10,000 award
3rd place	\$5,000 award
4th-12th place	\$1,000 award

The schools of the top 12 finalists will receive \$500 for the purchase of poetry books.

State Finals

1st place	Student received \$200 award and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC School received \$500 for the purchase of poetry books
2nd place	Student received \$100 award School received \$200 for the purchase of poetry books

**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.*

**Prepare to be reminded
why poetry has survived
around the globe for so
many millennia.**

ANNIE FINCH

National Finals Program ■ April 28

Musical Prelude

The Joe McCarthy Quartet

Presentation of the State Champions

Welcome

Patrice Walker Powell, Acting Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

Opening Remarks

Scott Simon, Host

First Round

Remarks

John Barr, President
Poetry Foundation

Second Round

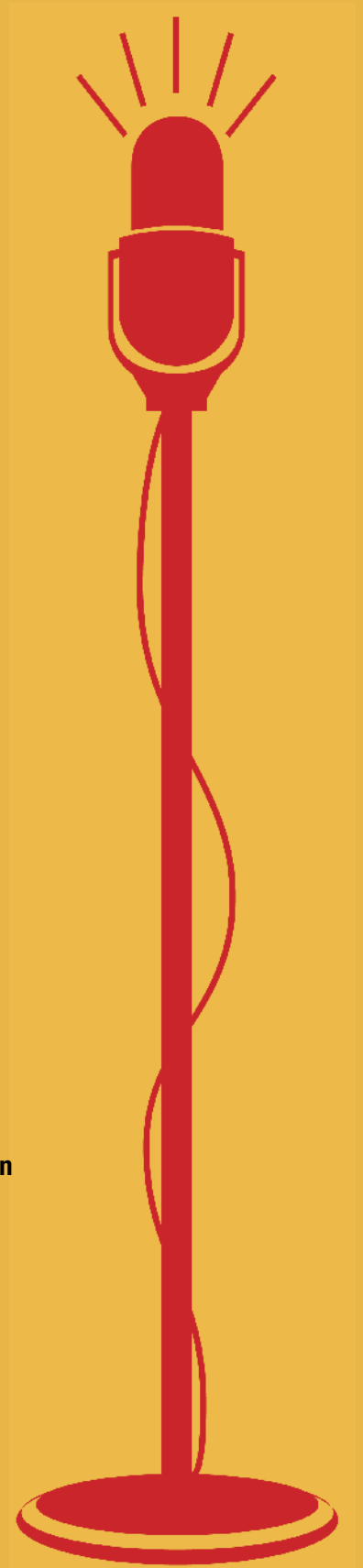
Performance by Natalie Merchant

Intermission

Announcement of Five Finalists

Final Round

Announcement of Poetry Out Loud National Champion



Semifinals Program ■ April 27



Semifinal One

9:00 am

Semifinal Two

1:00 pm

Semifinal Three

5:00 pm



Welcome and Introductions

Leslie Liberato

Stephen Young

Hosts

Bill O'Brien

Josephine Reed

First Round

Second Round

Third Round

Top eight competitors in each semifinal will recite a third poem

Awards Presentation

Announcement of Finalists

Top four competitors in each semifinal will advance to National Finals

Host and Judges for National Finals

Host

Scott Simon, a Chicago native, brings a well-traveled perspective to his role as host of National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition Saturday*. During his career he has covered ten wars, from El Salvador to Iraq, and he has won numerous prestigious awards in broadcasting, including the Peabody, the Emmy, and the duPont-Columbia. Simon also accepted the Presidential End Hunger Award for his series of reports on the 1987–1988 Ethiopian civil war and drought. He hosts the quarterly PBS series, *State of Mind*, and the public television series, *Voices of Vision*. His books include bestseller *Home and Away: Memoir of a Fan, Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Baseball*, and the novel, *Pretty Birds*. His most recent novel, *Windy City: A Novel of Politics*, was a *New York Times* bestseller and was chosen by *The Washington Post* as one of the best novels of 2008. Simon will be touring with the paperback of *Windy City* in spring 2009.

Judges

Jeffrey Brown is a senior correspondent for the *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* (PBS). In studio interviews and field reports, he covers a wide range of domestic and international stories, and as arts correspondent, he has profiled and interviewed numerous leading writers, musicians, and other artists. His work as both producer and correspondent has garnered an Emmy Award, four Cine Golden Eagles, and other honors. Brown earned an undergraduate degree in Classics from the University of California at Berkeley and a master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He studied law at the UC Berkeley School of Law.

Tyne Daly is an award-winning film, television, and theater actress. She studied at Brandeis University and the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. Daly's New York and regional theater credits include *Jenny Kissed Me*, *The Birthday Party*, *Ashes*, *The Butter and Egg Man*, *Rabbit Hole*, and *The Seagull*. Daly received a 1990 Tony Award for her portrayal of Rose in *Gypsy* as well as numerous Emmy Awards for her television roles in *Cagney and Lacy*, *Christy*, and *Judging Amy*. Recently, she performed in Edward Albee's *Me, Myself & I* at the McCarter Theatre Center, *Agamemnon* at the Getty Villa's Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater, and *Love, Loss, and What I Wore* at the DR2 Theatre in Manhattan.

Garrison Keillor is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Lake Wobegon Days*, *The Book of Guys*, *Love Me*, *Homegrown Democrat*, *Pontoon* and most recently, *Liberty*. He is also the creator, host, and writer of the radio variety show *A Prairie Home Companion* and *The Writer's Almanac*, heard on public radio stations across the country. He won a Grammy Award in 1987 for Best Spoken Word for the audiobook *Lake Wobegon Days*. Keillor is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. A documentary portrait of his life and work, *Garrison Keillor: The Man on the Radio in the Red Shoes*, was released in June 2008 and will be broadcast on PBS in July 2009.

Suji Kwock Kim's first book of poems, *Notes from the Divided Country*, was selected by Yusef Komunyakaa for the 2002 Walt Whitman Award and won the Addison Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Poems from her forthcoming second book, *Disorient*, have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Slate*, *The Nation*, and *The New Republic*. *Private Property*, a multimedia play she co-wrote, was produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and was featured on BBC-TV. She is a 2008 NEA U.S. / Japan Creative Artists Fellow and teaches in the MFA program at the University of Massachusetts–Boston. Kim was educated at Yale College; the Iowa Writers' Workshop; Seoul National University, where she was a Fulbright Scholar; and Stanford University, where she was a Stegner Fellow.

Tim McCarty is the founder and Artistic Director of Quest: arts for everyone. For 21 years, McCarty worked in a variety of positions at Gallaudet University's Model Secondary School for the Deaf. For the last eight years, he served as the Artistic Director for the school's internationally acclaimed Performing Arts Program. McCarty is the author of nine plays and has regularly written articles and columns about arts and arts education for nationally and internationally distributed publications. His theatrical work often explores visual interpretations of poetry. McCarty's play, *I Carry the Flag*, is an adaptation of Rainer Maria Rilke's long poem, *The Lay of the Love and Death of Cornet Christopher Rilke*. His work has been seen throughout the United States and in 22 countries. In 1993, McCarty was honored as a White House Presidential Scholar Outstanding Teacher.

Luis Rodriguez is a poet, memoirist, and activist. He has published several collections of poetry, his latest being *My Nature Is Hunger: New and Selected Poems 1989–2004*. He has also created a CD of original music and poetry, *My Name's Not Rodriguez*, released in 2002 by Dos Manos Records. His popular 1993 memoir of gang life, *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.*, won a Carl Sandburg Literary Award and was a *New York Times* Notable Book selection. It was also named one of the 100 most censored books by the American Library Association. Rodriguez's other honors include a Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Writers' Award, a Lannan Fellowship for Poetry, a Paterson Prize for Books for Young People, and a Sundance Institute Arts Writing Fellowship. Rodriguez was one of 50 citizens globally selected as "Unsung Heroes of Compassion," presented by the Dalai Lama.

Patricia Smith's most recent book of poetry, *Blood Dazzler*, was a finalist for the 2008 National Book Award. Her other volumes of poetry include *Life According to Motown*, *Close to Death*, and *Teahouse of the Almighty*, winner of a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award and a Paterson Poetry Prize. A selection of Smith's poetry was produced as a one-woman play by Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott and performed at both Boston Playwrights' Theatre and the historic Trinidad Theatre Workshop. Previously she wrote *Africans in America*, a companion volume to the groundbreaking four-part PBS history series. A four-time individual champion in the National Poetry Slam, Smith has also been a featured poet on HBO's *Def Poetry Jam* and has performed her work around the world. She is a Cave Canem faculty member and has held the Bruce McEver Chair in Writing at Georgia Tech University.

Hosts and Judges for Semifinals Program

Hosts

Bill O'Brien is the director of the NEA's Theater and Musical Theater Department. O'Brien designs and directs national leadership initiatives, such as the NEA New Play Development Program, hosted by Arena Stage. Before coming to the Endowment, O'Brien served for seven years as producing director and managing director for Deaf West Theater, where he received a Tony and a Drama Desk nomination for producing the Broadway sign language production of *Big River*. O'Brien also returned in all seven seasons as Kenny (Marlee Matlin's voice/interpreter) on NBC's Emmy and Peabody award-winning series *The West Wing*.

Josephine Reed is the managing audio producer for the NEA's Communications Department. Before coming to the NEA, she directed XM Satellite Radio's book and contemporary theater channel and hosted the program, *Writers on Writing*. In partnership with the NEA, she also created the series, *The Big Read on XM*. Motivated by her passion for books and for the stage, she has interviewed all types of writers throughout her career, including novelists, historians, playwrights, and poets.

Judges

Francisco Aragón is the director of Letras Latinas, the literary program of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. A member of the Institute since 2003, Aragón is the author of the poetry collection *Puerta del Sol* and editor of the anthology *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry*. His poems and commentary on poetry have appeared in a range of anthologies and literary publications, including *Crab Orchard Review*, *Chelsea*, *Jacket*, *Poetry Daily*, and most recently, *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. He serves on the board of the Guild Literary Complex and the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP). Aragón is also the editor of *Canto Cosas*, a book series from Bilingual Press featuring new Latino and Latina poets.

Holly Bass is a writer, choreographer, and performer. A Cave Canem fellow, her poems have been published in *Callaloo*, *nocturnes (re)view*, *Role Call*, and *The Ringing Ear*. Critics have praised her one-woman-show, *Diary of a Baby Diva*, as "mesmerizing" (*Village Voice*) and "indisputably funny" (*The Washington Post*). Her essay on women and hip-hop theater appears in the contemporary feminist anthology *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism*. She studied modern dance under Viola Farber and creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College before earning a Master's in Journalism from Columbia University. She is one of twenty artists to receive the 2008 Future Aesthetics grant from the Ford Foundation/Hip-Hop Theater Festival. Currently, Bass is the poet-in-residence at Busboys & Poets (Penn Quarter location).

Jean Lindquist Bergey is director of the History Through Deaf Eyes project at Gallaudet University and Outreach Liaison for the College of Professional Studies and Outreach. She is co-author, with Douglas C. Baynton and Jack R. Gannon, of *Through Deaf Eyes: A Photographic History of an American Community*. In addition to her publication, exhibition, film, and website work, Bergey has more than 25 years experience as a certified sign language interpreter with an extensive list of theatrical interpreted performances. She has been very involved with the arts integration efforts of her local elementary school and served as chair of the parent arts integration committee for five years.

Gigi Bradford is the inaugural recipient of the Elizabeth Kray Award for Service to Literature. She has directed the Academy of American Poets, the Folger Shakespeare Library Poetry Program, the NEA Literature Program, the NEA Heritage and Preservation Division, Millennium Projects at the NEA for Chairman Jane Alexander, and the Center for Arts and Culture, the first think tank for the arts. She graduated cum laude from Trinity College and received an MFA in Poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She has taught extensively, and her books include *Writing America* and *The Politics of Culture*. Currently, Bradford is president of the Folger Poetry Board and serves on the board of the Emily Dickinson Museum. She teaches poetry in Washington, DC, and works with literary organizations across the nation.

Kenneth Carroll's poetry and plays have appeared in numerous publications, including *Black Literature Forum*, *In Search of Color Everywhere*, *Beyond the Frontier*, *The Washington Post*, and *American Poetry: The Next Generation*. Carroll is the author of a book of poems, *So What! For the White Dude Who Said This Ain't Poetry*. Carroll is the Heads Up site director of Charles Hart Middle School and the former Executive Director of DC WritersCorps, an arts and social service program founded by the NEA and AmeriCorps that was honored in 1999 by the national Coming Up Taller Awards. Carroll served on the board of directors of the Poetry Committee of Greater Washington and is the past president of the African American Writers Guild. He was awarded a 2006 Literary Fellowship from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Patricia Gray heads the Poetry and Literature Center at the Library of Congress and is the founder and coordinator of the Library's Poetry at Noon series, which celebrated its 15th anniversary this month. A series of themed poetry readings, Poetry at Noon has successfully drawn a diverse new audience for poetry in the nation's capital. Gray recently moderated the panel on "Poetry, Celebrity, and the Public" in the Robert Burns at 250 program at the Library of Congress. Her poems have appeared widely in journals and anthologies, and her collection, *Rupture*, was chosen by the *Montserrat Review* as one of the best books of poetry published in 2005. Gray has been granted several artist fellowships for poetry from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the most recent of which was in 2006. She received an MFA degree in poetry from the University of Virginia in 1983 and was awarded the Academy of American Poets prize that year.

Doug Herbert administers several national-level grants and departmental initiatives in arts education, as well as communications and outreach on behalf of the Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. In addition, Herbert is a co-founder of the Department's Student Art Exhibit Program, which features award-winning works of student art in the lobby of the Department's headquarters. From 1992 to May 2004, he was the Director of Arts Education at the National Endowment for the Arts. Under his leadership, the Arts Endowment partnered with the U.S. Department of Education to include the arts in The Nation's Report Card and to create the Arts Education Partnership. He was a 2005 recipient of the Arts in Education Service Award presented by the National Arts & Learning Collaborative.

Paul Shaffer is the founding director of the Log Cabin Literary Center, which received the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2006. In 2005, he received the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in Arts Education. He is a founding board member of the national Writers in the Schools Alliance. He has taught as adjunct faculty at Boise State University and Albertson College of Idaho. From 1984 to 1989, he edited *The Berkeley Monthly*, and in 1989 became the founding editor of the *Idaho Statesman's Scene* magazine. He is a recipient of the Hearst Award for feature writing. His national publication credits include *Newsweek*, *Utne Reader*, *High Country News*, among others, and he has ghostwritten two books. He served for nine years on the Boise City Arts Commission. For 15 years, he studied, performed, and composed for the classical guitar. His compositions have been performed in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.

Special Guest

Natalie Merchant began her musical career as the lead vocalist and lyricist of the pop music band 10,000 Maniacs and released two platinum and four gold records with the group between 1981 and 1993, including *In My Tribe*, *Blind Man's Zoo*, and *MTV Unplugged*. In 1994 Merchant began her solo career with a self-produced debut album, *Tigerlily*. In the years following, she released *Ophelia*, *Natalie Merchant Live*, and *Motherland*. In 2003 she independently released an album of traditional and contemporary folk music, *The House Carpenter's Daughter* on Myth America Records. In 2007 Merchant was appointed by the governor of New York to serve as a member of the New York State Council on the Arts. Merchant's most recent recording project is a collection of songs adapted from the works of various classic and contemporary poets, due for release in fall 2009.

2009 State

Alabama

Sohaila Nikoufar

*Loveless Academic Magnet
Program High School*

Alaska

Caitlin Woolsey

Sitka High School

Arizona

Erik Hollis

Tucson Magnet High School

Arkansas

Shenequa Page

Hamburg High School

California

Spencer Andrew Klavan

Laguna Blanca School

Colorado

Kaleena Rose Kovach

General William J. Palmer High School

Connecticut

Natalie Antenucci Weaver

Daniel Hand High School

Delaware

Tonisha Jones

Middletown High School

District of Columbia

Wesley Wilson Mann

St. Anselm's Abbey School

Florida

Monique Alexandria Henry

Douglas Anderson School of the Arts

Georgia

Elijah Pedro Orengo

Westlake High School

Hawaii

Sarah E. Welch

Home Schooled

Idaho

Devin Bean

Sugar-Salem High School

Illinois

Kareem Sayegh

University Laboratory High School

Indiana

Derek C. Kaellner

Broad Ripple High School

Iowa

Mia Pierson

Roland-Story High School

Kansas

Madeline E. Roger

Baldwin High School

Kentucky

Barbara Gooding

Western Hills High School

Louisiana

Jasmine Haynes

Zachary High School

Maine

Will Whitham

Bangor High School

Maryland

Amanda Jackiewicz

Baltimore Lutheran School

Massachusetts

Wilmene Hercule

Prospect Hill Academy

Michigan

Daniel Bellomy

Cass Technical High School

Minnesota

Thandisizwe Jackson-Nisan

Minnesota Transitions Charter School

Mississippi

Shaniqua Wesley

Water Valley High School

Missouri

Peter Winfrey

St. Louis University High School

Montana

Sara Larson

Butte High School

Champions

Nebraska

Edson de Oliveira
Ewing Public School

Nevada

Emily Orellana
Rainshadow Community Charter High School

New Hampshire

Cote Laramie
Concord High School

New Jersey

Ijeoma A. Egekeze
Piscataway High School

New Mexico

Santana Shorty
Santa Fe Indian School

New York

Catherine Woodard
Syosset High School

North Carolina

Nadia Nasir
Cedar Ridge High School

North Dakota

Kaley Schwab
Mandan High School

Ohio

Mido Aly
Upper Arlington High School

Oklahoma

Renae Perry
Stillwater High School

Oregon

Tiffany H. Hill
Oregon School for the Deaf

Pennsylvania

Molly Stoltz
DuBois Area High School

Puerto Rico

Viviana Bonilla López
Cupeyville School

Rhode Island

Amber Rose Johnson
Classical High School

South Carolina

Shannon Laribo
Ashley Hall

South Dakota

Wiyaka His Horse Is Thunder
Little Wound School

Tennessee

Stacey Padilla
Hardin Valley Academy

Texas

Stanley Andrew Jackson III
Carver Magnet High School

United States Virgin Islands

Tabari H. Davis
Charlotte Amalie High School

Utah

Janna Tessman
East High School

Vermont

Audrey Kiely
Peoples Academy High School

Virginia

William Farley
Washington-Lee High School

Washington

BreAnna Jones
West Valley High School

West Virginia

Jasmine Lewis
Spring Valley High School

Wisconsin

Caitlin Marie Snodgrass
La Crosse Central High School

Wyoming

Danielle Renae Kathryn Then
Guernsey-Sunrise High School

Semifinal One, 9:00 am

Connecticut

Natalie Antenucci Weaver

“The Flea” by John Donne

“Scary Movies” by Kim Addonizio

Delaware

Tonisha Jones

“Battle Hymn of the Republic” by Julia Ward Howe

“the mother” by Gwendolyn Brooks

District of Columbia

Wesley Wilson Mann

“Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold

“I Am!” by John Clare

Maine

Will Whitham

“The Secret of the Machines” by Rudyard Kipling

“Mingus at the Showplace” by William Matthews

Maryland

Amanda Jackiewicz

“We Wear the Mask” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

“Madmen” by Billy Collins

Massachusetts

Wilmene Hercule

“Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

“a song in the front yard” by Gwendolyn Brooks

New Hampshire

Cote Laramie

“Writ on the Steps of Puerto Rican Harlem” by Gregory Corso

“The Glove and the Lions” by Leigh Hunt

New Jersey

Ijeoma A. Egekeze

“Walking Down Park” by Nikki Giovanni

“Writ on the Steps of Puerto Rican Harlem” by Gregory Corso

New York

Catherine Woodard

“A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General” by Jonathan Swift

“One Art” by Elizabeth Bishop



North Carolina

Nadia Nasir

“Snow Day” by Billy Collins

“Blackberrying” by Sylvia Plath

Ohio

Mido Aly

“The Minefield” by Diane Thiel

“To His Coy Mistress” by Andrew Marvell

Pennsylvania

Molly Stoltz

“Sugar Dada” by J. Allyn Rosser

“Thoughtless Cruelty” by Charles Lamb

Rhode Island

Amber Rose Johnson

“The Minefield” by Diane Thiel

“If—” by Rudyard Kipling

South Carolina

Shannon Laribo

“If—” by Rudyard Kipling

“I Go Back to May 1937” by Sharon Olds

United States Virgin Islands

Tabari H. Davis

“Rough Music” by Deborah Digges

“To His Coy Mistress” by Andrew Marvell

Vermont

Audrey Kiely

“Altruism” by Molly Peacock

“Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness” by John Donne

Virginia

William Farley

“The Flea” by John Donne

“Theme for English B” by Langston Hughes

West Virginia

Jasmine Lewis

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

From “War Is Kind” by Stephen Crane

Semifinal Two, 1:00 pm

Alabama

Sohaïla Nikoufar

“Insomnia” by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

“Domestic Violence” by Eavan Boland

Arkansas

Shenequa Page

“the mother” by Gwendolyn Brooks

“The Slave Auction” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Florida

Monique Alexandria Henry

“I Go Back to May 1937” by Sharon Olds

“Salomé” by Ai

Georgia

Elijah Pedro Orengo

“Preludes” by T.S. Eliot

“The Man-Moth” by Elizabeth Bishop

Illinois

Kareem Sayegh

“A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg

“The Man-Moth” by Elizabeth Bishop

Indiana

Derek C. Kaellner

“Gitanjali 35” by Rabindranath Tagore

“The Painter” by John Ashbery

Iowa

Mia Pierson

“The Glove and the Lions” by Leigh Hunt

“Hush” by David St. John

Kansas

Madeline E. Roger

“What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why”
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

“Salomé” by Ai

Kentucky

Barbara Gooding

“Kissing Stieglitz Good-Bye” by Gerald Stern

“Progressive Health” by Carl Dennis

Louisiana

Jasmine Haynes

“Salomé” by Ai

“Sonnet XXIX: When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes”
by William Shakespeare

Michigan

Daniel Bellomy

“A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“Danse Russe” by William Carlos Williams

Mississippi

Shaniqua Wesley

“Advice to a Prophet” by Richard Wilbur

“The Unknown Citizen” by W.H. Auden

Missouri

Peter Winfrey

“Mingus at the Showplace” by William Matthews

“Detroit, Tomorrow” by Philip Levine

Nebraska

Edson de Oliveira

“Harlem” by Langston Hughes

“The Tyger” by William Blake

Oklahoma

Renae Perry

“Agoraphobia” by Linda Pastan

“On the Lawn at the Villa” by Louis Simpson

Puerto Rico

Viviana Bonilla López

“Phenomenal Woman” by Maya Angelou

“Beat! Beat! Drums!” by Walt Whitman

Tennessee

Stacey Padilla

“Dream Song 14” by John Berryman

“Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Wisconsin

Caitlin Marie Snodgrass

“Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100” by Martín Espada

“When I Was Fair and Young” by Queen Elizabeth I

Semifinal Three, 5:00 pm

Alaska

Caitlin Woolsey

“Mrs. Caldera’s House of Things” by Gregory Djanikian

“The New Decalogue” by Ambrose Bierce

Arizona

Erik Hollis

“The Bad Old Days” by Kenneth Rexroth

“I Grant You Ample Leave” by George Eliot

California

Spencer Andrew Klavan

“Madmen” by Billy Collins

“Come Up from the Fields Father” by Walt Whitman

Colorado

Kaleena Rose Kovach

“Somewhere to Paris” by Richard Blanco

“Come Up from the Fields Father” by Walt Whitman

Hawaii

Sarah E. Welch

“To the Desert” by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

“Hysteria” by Dionisio D. Martínez

Idaho

Devin Bean

“Sonnet XXIX: When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes”

by William Shakespeare

“Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes”

by Thomas Gray

Minnesota

Thandisizwe Jackson-Nisan

“A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg

“To the Ladies” by Lady Mary Chudleigh

Montana

Sara Larson

“Heaven” by Cathy Song

“Phenomenal Woman” by Maya Angelou

Nevada

Emily Orellana

“Lunar Baedeker” by Mina Loy

“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” by John Donne



New Mexico

Santana Shorty

“The Minefield” by Diane Thiel

“Poor Angels” by Edward Hirsch

North Dakota

Kaley Schwab

“Broken Promises” by David Kirby

“I Go Back to May 1937” by Sharon Olds

Oregon

Tiffany H. Hill

“Ars Poetica” by Archibald MacLeish

“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” by William Wordsworth

South Dakota

Wiyaka His Horse Is Thunder

“Salomé” by Ai

“Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” by Wallace Stevens

Texas

Stanley Andrew Jackson III

“Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

“Why I Am Not a Painter” by Frank O’Hara

Utah

Janna Tessman

“Memory As a Hearing Aid” by Tony Hoagland

“To the Ladies” by Lady Mary Chudleigh

Washington

BreAnna Jones

“If—” by Rudyard Kipling

“In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.” by June Jordan

Wyoming

Danielle Renae Kathryn Then

“Preludes” by T.S. Eliot

“Discrimination” by Kenneth Rexroth

If for no other reason, the search for “just the right poem” exposes students to such a vast array of forms and poems that the benefits are immeasurable. I heard more poetry being read aloud by students and more discussions about poems than I have heard in over 20 years of teaching!

PARTICIPATING TEACHER

Profiles: Three National Champions

2006 National Champion

JACKSON HILLE

Ohio



Jackson was a senior at Columbus Alternative High School in Columbus, Ohio, when he was named the first National Champion of Poetry Out Loud. He is now at Otterbein College.

Recited:

“A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General”

by Jonathan Swift

“Altruism” by Molly Peacock

“Forgetfulness” by Billy Collins

“Before the competition, poetry was strictly for bedtime stories for kids. I had never taken a poem seriously outside of a literature class before. It’s something that I’ve come to love, and I’ll incorporate it into whatever I do.”

Amanda was a senior at Duke Ellington School for the Arts in Washington, DC, when she won Poetry Out Loud. She is currently attending NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

Recited:

“Dulce et Decorum Est” by Wilfred Owen

“Ma Rainey” by Sterling A. Brown

“Unknown Girl in a Maternity Ward” by Anne Sexton

“Every day I write poetry. In order to develop my writing and myself I have to read it and read about it.”

2007 National Champion

AMANDA FERNANDEZ

District of Columbia



2008 National Champion

SHAWNTAY HENRY

U.S. Virgin Islands



The youngest Poetry Out Loud National Champion, Shawntay won the 2008 National Finals as a sophomore. She attends Charlotte Amalie High School in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Recited:

“Beauty” by Tony Hoagland

“January, 1795” by Mary Robinson

“Frederick Douglass” by Robert E. Hayden

“When you really listen to the words and recite [poetry] on stage, it comes alive and you can feel that, and you have to make sure the audience feels that too.”

Acknowledgements

What an amazing time it is for Poetry Out Loud! Over the course of five years, Poetry Out Loud has expanded from a pilot program with 4,000 students in two cities to a nationwide competition involving nearly 300,000 students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. The sense of pride and accomplishment we feel every time we witness a performance, from the school level to the National Finals, is immeasurable. Each student shares a unique interpretation of their selected poems, and reminds us of the great value poetry and art can hold in one's life.

We owe much credit for the success of this program to our great partners and friends at the State Arts Agencies. With other statewide and local collaborators, these agencies have each developed a unique Poetry Out Loud program that meets the needs of teachers and students in their state. The excitement that they have generated is the backbone of our success, and their expertise and candor in molding this program has helped us strengthen Poetry Out Loud nationwide. Our deepest thanks is offered for their creative thinking and their intelligent and passionate leadership.

We applaud the thousands of participating teachers who dared to challenge their students to try something new. The poems these students have learned will be theirs for life, and the confidence they have developed in presenting before their peers will be of immeasurable benefit for years to come. We have been dazzled by the grace and talent of these youth.

Our special thanks is extended to Karen Newell and her colleagues at Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, as well as to our event coordinator Peggy Dahlquist for the expertise and energy they put toward the National Finals. We couldn't do it without them, and it is in large part through their efforts that the Poetry Out Loud National Finals have become such a celebrated event.

The Joe McCarthy Quartet

Joe McCarthy, Drums

Mike Pope, Bass

Luis Hernandez, Saxophone

Harry Appelman, Piano

When you read and recite a poem
aloud, when you learn it by heart
and give it voice, you are its sole
vehicle, its necessary instrument.
Its spirit expresses itself through
you. I am grateful to you, speaker
of a new generation, for taking
“Poor Angels” into your body
and giving it the breath of life.

EDWARD HIRSCH

A Great Nation Deserves Great Art.

www.poetryoutloud.org

