



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
AND POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENT

POETRY

**OUT
LOUD**



TM

**2021
NATIONAL
FINALS**

WEBCAST AT
arts.gov

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 the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov) to learn more.



The **Poetry Foundation**, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative partnerships, prizes, and programs.



Mid Atlantic Arts was established in 1979 to promote and support multi-state arts programming in a region that includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia, and West Virginia. It is one of six regional arts organizations in the United States, and works in close partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and its member state and jurisdictional arts agencies. Mid Atlantic Arts distinguishes itself through its work in international cultural exchange, model programs in performing arts touring, its knowledge and presence in the jazz field, and its support of folk and traditional arts.

Cover photos: 2018 Poetry Out Loud Champion Janae Claxton, 2016 Poetry Out Loud Champion Ahkel Togun, 2019 Poetry Out Loud Champion Isabella Callery, and 2011 Poetry Out Loud Champion Youseff Biaz. Photos by James Kegley

In 2005, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation partnered on a program that would help students master public speaking, build self-confidence, and learn more about literary history and contemporary life, all through a dynamic poetry recitation competition. The program was piloted in Washington, DC, and Chicago, Illinois, and spread nationally during the 2005-2006 school year through partnerships with the state and jurisdictional arts agencies. Today, Poetry Out Loud is in all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa, with more than four million students participating over the past 16 years.

Want to learn more about Poetry Out Loud? Free materials, including the online anthology of poems, are all available at poetryoutloud.org along with contact information for each state on how to sign up for the 2021-2022 program.

BILLY COLLINS

The poet with the most number of different poems recited at the National Finals since 2005

4.1 MILLION

Total number of students participating in POL since 2005

17,000

Total number of schools participating in POL since 2005

“CAGED BIRD” BY MAYA ANGELOU

The most viewed poem on poetryoutloud.org during the 2020-21 season

EMILY DICKINSON

The most searched for poet on poetryoutloud.org during the 2020-21 season

“DOVER BEACH” BY MATTHEW ARNOLD

The most recited poem during the Poetry Out Loud National Finals since 2005

“There’s a poem that you will connect with and you will feel a really deep relationship with no matter who you are.”

—2019 Poetry Out Loud National Champion Isabella Callery

SEMIFINALS PROGRAM • MAY 2

Welcome and Introductions

Lauren Miller
National Endowment for the Arts

Justine Haka
Poetry Foundation

12:00 pm ET **SEMIFINAL ONE**

Hosted by Felicia Curry

3:00 pm ET **SEMIFINAL TWO**

Hosted by Sarah Anne Sillers

6:00 pm ET **SEMIFINAL THREE**

Hosted by Josephine Reed

*Each Semifinal will follow
this schedule:*

First Round of Recitations

Second Round of Recitations

Announcement of Regional Finalists

(Top eight competitors in each semifinal will
recite a third poem)

Third Round of Recitations

Announcement of National Finalists

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



HOSTS



Photo by DJ Corey Photography

Felicia Curry is a Helen Hayes Award-winning actor, singer, and performer in the DC area and the new host for *WETA Arts* on PBS. She is a Resident Company Member at Everyman Theatre and Factory 449, as well as an Artistic Associate at Ford's Theatre. She can currently be seen in Studio Theatre's streaming production of *Until the Flood*. She was nominated for two Helen Hayes Awards in 2020 for *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and *Agnes of God*. In the DC area, she has performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Arena Stage, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Round House Theatre, Signature Theatre, and at numerous other venues.



Photo courtesy of Josephine Reed

Josephine Reed is the media producer for the Public Affairs office at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). She produces and hosts the NEA's weekly podcast, *Art Works*, a program that features interviews with artists and

creative thinkers. Before coming to the NEA, Reed directed XM Satellite Radio's book and contemporary theater channel and hosted the program *Writers on Writing*. In partnership with the NEA, Reed also created the series *The Big Read on XM*. Passionate about language, she has interviewed writers of all genres throughout her career, including novelists, historians, playwrights, and poets.



Photo by AM | CO Arts & Design

Sarah Anne Sillers is a Helen Hayes Award-nominated actor and vocalist based in the Washington, DC area. Sillers has performed at over a dozen venues throughout the region including Signature Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, NextStop Theatre Company, Monumental Theatre Company, Imagination Stage, the Music Center at Strathmore, and others. Find her on Instagram @sarah.anne.sillers or on her website, www.sarahannesillers.com.

JUDGES

SEMIFINAL ONE



Photo by Sharon Gottula

Hadara Bar-Nadav's most recent book of poetry is *The New Nudity* (Saturnalia Books, 2017). Her previous books include *Lullaby (with Exit Sign)* (Saturnalia Books, 2013), awarded the Saturnalia Books Poetry Prize; *The Frame Called Ruin* (New Issues, 2012), runner-up for the Green Rose Prize; and *A Glass of Milk to Kiss Goodnight* (Margie/Intuit House, 2007), awarded the Margie Book Prize. She is also the co-author with Michelle Boisseau of the best-selling textbook *Writing Poems*, 8th ed. (Pearson, 2011). Her awards include a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship and the Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America. She is a professor of English and teaches in the MFA program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.



Photo by ElNatan Melaku

Pages Matam is an international artist, writer, event coordinator, and educator from Cameroon, Central Africa, currently residing in Washington, DC. He is the author of the award-winning

collection of poetry *The Heart of a Comet* (Write Bloody, 2014) and has received fellowships with 202Creates, Callaloo, and DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. A National Poetry Slam Champion, he has over a decade of experience in creative writing, performance education, and event programming. Matam has also been featured on various renowned platforms and venues such as the NAACP, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the Apollo Theater.



Photo courtesy of Kiki Petrosino

Kiki Petrosino is the author of four books of poetry: *White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia* (2020), *Witch Wife* (2017), *Hymn for the Black Terrific* (2013), and *Fort Red Border* (2009), all from Sarabande Books. She holds graduate degrees from the University of Chicago and the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. Her poems and essays have appeared in *Best American Poetry*, the *Nation*, the *New York Times*, and *Tin House*, among others. She is a professor of poetry at the University of Virginia. Petrosino is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize, a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, and an AI Smith Individual Artists Fellowship from the Kentucky Arts Council.



Photo by Bear Guerra

Jake Skeets is the author of *Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers* (Milkweed, 2019), winner of the 2018 National Poetry Series. From Vanderwagen, New Mexico, he holds an MFA in poetry from the Institute of American Indian Arts. He is the recipient of a 92Y Discovery Prize, a Mellon Projecting All Voices Fellowship, an American Book Award, and a 2020 Whiting Award. He is from the Navajo Nation and teaches at Diné College.

SEMIFINAL TWO



Photo by Cassidy Duhon

Dan Brady is the author of the poetry collections *Strange Children* (Publishing Genius, 2018) and *Subtexts* (forthcoming from Publishing Genius, 2021), as well as two chapbooks. Brady is the poetry editor of *Barrelhouse*, a magazine and small press based in Washington, DC. Previously, he served as the editor of *American Poets*, the journal of the Academy of American Poets, 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.

SEMIFINALS PROGRAM • MAY 2



Photo by Kai Coggin

Roy G. Guzmán is the recipient of a 2019 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship and is a 2017 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellow. Their debut collection, *Catrachos*, was released by Graywolf Press on May 5, 2020. They are also the recipient of a 2017 Minnesota State Arts Board Initiative grant and the 2016 Gesell Award for Excellence in Poetry. Their work has been included in the *Best New Poets 2017* anthology, guest-edited by Natalie Diaz, and *Best of the Net 2017*, guest-edited by Eduardo C. Corral. Raised in Miami, Guzmán lives in Minneapolis.



Photo courtesy of Kristen Jackson

Kristen Jackson currently serves as connectivity director for Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in Washington, DC. She earned her MA from University of Texas-Austin in performance as public practice and a BA in theater studies and English from Duke University. In 2016, Jackson was recognized as an exceptionally talented early-career leader of color by the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for professional theater, and was selected to participate in TCG's inaugural Rising Leaders of Color program.



Photo courtesy of Seema Reza

Seema Reza is the author of *A Constellation of Half-Lives* (Write Bloody, 2019) and *When the World Breaks Open* (Red Hen Press, 2016). Based outside of Washington, DC, she is CEO of Community Building Art Works, a multi-hospital arts program that encourages the use of the arts as a tool for narration, self-care, and socialization. Her writing has appeared in print and online in *The Washington Post*, *McSweeney's Entropy*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and the *Nervous Breakdown*, among others. She has performed across the country at universities, theaters, festivals, bookstores, conferences, and one fine mattress shop.

SEMIFINAL THREE



Photo courtesy of Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis

Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis is the curator of Asian Pacific American Studies for the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center and founding director of the Washington, DC-based arts nonprofit the Asian American Literary Review. He serves as lead organizer for the Asian American Literature Festival, co-hosted by the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, and Poetry Foundation, and is a co-founder of the nomadic Center

for Refugee Poetics. His fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction have appeared in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *Ploughshares*, *Gastronomica*, *Kenyon Review*, *Amerasia Journal*, *AGNI* online, and *Fiction International*, among others.



Photo courtesy of torrin a. greathouse

torrin a. greathouse is a transgender, cripple-punk, MFA candidate at the University of Minnesota. Her work is published in *Poetry*, *New England Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Kenyon Review*, and *Best New Poets 2020*. greathouse recently received a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, and they have also received fellowships from the Effing Foundation, Zoeglossia, and the University of Arizona Poetry Center. greathouse was a special mention for the 2020 Pushcart Prize, and she is the youngest winner of the Poetry Foundation's J. Howard and Barbara M. J. Wood Prize. Their debut collection, *Wound from the Mouth of a Wound*, winner of the Ballard Spahr Prize for Poetry, was published in 2020 by Milkweed Editions.



Photo courtesy of Darrel Alejandro Holnes

Darrel Alejandro Holnes is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship and the author of forthcoming titles

Stepmotherland (Notre Dame Press, 2022) and *Migrant Psalms* (Northwestern Press, 2021). His poems have appeared in the *American Poetry Review*, *Callaloo*, *Best American Experimental Writing*, and elsewhere. Holnes is a Cave Canem and CantoMundo fellow who has earned scholarships to institutions including the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. He is an assistant professor of English at Medgar Evers College and a faculty member of the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University.



Photo by Fid Thompson

Gowri Koneswaran is a queer Tamil-American writer, performing artist, teacher, and lawyer. Her advocacy has addressed animal welfare, environmental protection, the rights of prisoners and the criminally accused in the U.S., and justice and accountability in Sri Lanka. She is poetry coordinator at the nonprofit arts organization BloomBars and a fellow of the Asian-American literary organization Kundiman. Previously, she was a poetry events host at Busboys and Poets, senior poetry editor at *Jaggery*, and co-editor of *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. Koneswaran has performed her poetry at Lincoln Center Out of Doors, the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Capital Fringe Festival, SpokenWord Paris, and universities in the U.S. and Canada.

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 Eve L. Ewing 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 highlighted at the National Finals on May 27.



Photo by Mercedes Zapata

Eve L. Ewing, PhD, is a sociologist of education and a writer from Chicago. She is the award-winning author of the poetry collections *Electric Arches* (Haymarket Books, 2017) and *1919* (Haymarket Books, 2019) and the nonfiction work *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* (University of Chicago Press, 2020). She is the co-author (with Nate Marshall) of the play *No Blue Memories: The Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*. She also currently writes the *Champions* series for Marvel Comics and previously wrote the acclaimed *Ironheart* series, as well as other projects. Ewing is an assistant professor at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration. Her work has been published in the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times*, and many other venues. Her first book for young readers, *Maya and the Robot*, is forthcoming in July 2021.

NATIONAL FINALS PROGRAM • MAY 27

Welcome

Shaun Taylor-Corbett

Roll Call of State Champions

Introduction of Nine Finalists

National Endowment for the Arts Remarks

Ann Eilers, Acting Chairman

First Round of Recitations

Poetry Foundation Remarks

Michelle T. Boone, President

Second Round of Recitations

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Remarks

Pam Breaux, Executive Director

Announcement of Three Finalists

Final Round of Recitations

Announcement of Poetry Out Loud National Champion



HOST



Photo by Ashley Garrett

Shaun Taylor-Corbett was in the original production of *In the Heights* on Broadway and closed the show in the role of Sonny. He played Frankie Valli in the 2nd National Tour of *Jersey Boys*, Juan in *Altar Boyz* Off-Broadway, and Usnavi and Sonny from *In the Heights* on the First National Tour as well as in the Broadway company. He performed in Bedlam Theatre Company's acclaimed production of *The Crucible*, as well as playing the role of Slender/Duke of Burgundy/Bassanio in *Bedlam: the Series*. His original Native American musical, *Distant Thunder*, will receive its first production in 2022 at Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City. The show is based on Taylor-Corbett's deep connection with the Blackfeet community in Browning, MT. He is a proud company member of Native Voices at the Autry, and performed with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for three seasons. Taylor-Corbett co-narrated *There There* by Tommy Orange which was nominated for an Audie Award in 2019, and recently narrated *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones, also nominated for an Audie this year. Other TV and film credits include *Hi-5*, *Discovery Kids*, *Supremacy*, *Gamer's Guide*, and *All My Children*.

JUDGES



Photo by Jess X. Snow

Cathy Linh Che is the author of *Split* (Alice James Books, 2014), winner of the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America, and the Best Poetry Book Award from the Association of Asian American Studies. Her work has been published in the *New Republic*, *McSweeney's*, and *Poetry*. She has received awards from MacDowell, Poets & Writers, and the Asian American Literary Review, among others. She is working on a poetry manuscript and a creative nonfiction manuscript on her parents' experiences as refugees who played extras in *Apocalypse Now*. She serves as executive director at Kundiman, a national nonprofit dedicated to nurturing writers and readers of Asian-American literature.



Photo by Matt Valentine

Eduardo C. Corral is the author of *Guillotine* (Graywolf Press, 2020), longlisted for the 2020 National Book Awards, and *Slow Lightning* (Yale Series of Younger Poets, 2012), selected by Carl Phillips as the winner of the 2011 Yale Series of Younger Poets Competition. He is the recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award, a 92Y Discovery Prize, a National

Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, and a Hodder Fellowship from Princeton University. A CantoMundo fellow, he teaches in the MFA program in creative writing at North Carolina State University.



Photo courtesy of Gabriel Cortez

Gabriel Cortez is a Black biracial poet, educator, and organizer of Panamanian descent. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, *Huffington Post*, and more. He is a National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures grant recipient and winner of the Judith Lee Stronach Baccalaureate Prize. Cortez is a member of the artist collective Ghostlines and co-founder of the Root Slam, an award-winning poetry venue dedicated to inclusivity, justice, and artistic growth, as well as Write Home, a project working to challenge public perceptions of houselessness and shift critical resources to houseless Bay Area youth through spoken word poetry. Cortez currently works as director of programs at Youth Speaks.



Photo by Mercedes Zapata

Idris Goodwin is an award-winning scriptwriter, breakbeat poet, educator, and director of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College. He

was recently named a 2021 United States Artist Fellow. In addition to *Can I Kick It?*, he's had several publications from Haymarket Books including *Inauguration* co-written with Nico Wilkinson, *Human Highlight: Ode To Dominique Wilkins*, and the play *This Is Modern Art*. He has appeared on Nickelodeon, *HBO Def Poetry*, *Sesame Street*, NPR, BBC Radio, and the Discovery Channel. His plays include *And In This Corner Cassius Clay*, *How We Got On*, *Hype Man*, and *Jacked!*



Photo by Rose Lincoln

Elisa New is the director and host of *Poetry in America*, director of Verse Video Education, and Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University. New created *Poetry in America*, a public television series, to bring poetry into living rooms and onto screens of all kinds. The show can be seen on public television and streaming platforms, in schools and libraries, and on airlines. Guests have included Shaquille O'Neal, Bono, Herbie Hancock, Sonia Sanchez, Li-Young Lee, Katie Couric, and President Joe Biden. Along with the series, New produces educational materials on American poetry for all ages—from middle school students and K-12 teachers through lifelong learners—distributed by Harvard University, Amplify Education, and Arizona State University.



Photo courtesy of Branden Wellington

Branden Wellington is an actor best known for his work on *Orange Is the New Black*, *When It All Falls Down*, *Gotham*, *Younger*, and *Blue Bloods*. He has written and starred in several spoken-word poetry projects for the NBA, and he won a non-news program Emmy Award for writing *TV Dreams in a World of Sports – Kids Day Open*. He also served as the New York Mets' in-game host for five seasons and a sideline reporter for the NBA G-League. When he is not acting, Wellington enjoys playing and watching basketball and spending time with his family. In 2007, Wellington placed second at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals.

POETRY

**OUT
LOUD**



2021

**STATE
CHAMPIONS**

These are the 2021
Poetry Out Loud
State and Jurisdictional
Champions.
Congratulations to all!

Alabama
Soojin Park
Auburn High School

Alaska
Asya Gipson
West Anchorage High School

American Samoa
Audrey-Rose Sevaaetasi
Samoana High School

Arizona
Aliyah Chutkan
Xavier College Preparatory

Arkansas
Katelyn Grace Doyne
Wilbur D. Mills University Studies
High School

California
Delali Bruce
Live Oak Academy

Colorado
Aidyn Reid
Fountain Valley School of Colorado

Connecticut
**Shermya Sly-ann
Dover-John**
The Ethel Walker School

Delaware
Rebecca Wisniewski
Milford Senior High School

District of Columbia
Saquoya E. Gorham
Duke Ellington School for the Arts

Florida
Flavia Nunez
School for Advanced Studies - North

Georgia
Karma Hudnall
DeKalb School for the Arts

Guam
Tristha Garcia
St. Paul Christian School

Hawaii
Taylor Cozloff
Kamehameha Schools Kapālama

Idaho
True Leavitt
Xavier Charter School

Illinois
Catherine Herrera
William Howard Taft High School

Indiana
Lucia Walker
Bloomington High School South

Iowa
Elijah M. Thiessen
Marshalltown High School

Kansas
Garrett McLaughlin
Shawnee Mission West High School

Kentucky
Emma Robison
Allen County Scottsville High School

Louisiana
Jacob Simmons
Covington High School

Maine
Emily Paruk
Gorham High School

Maryland

Kate Maerten

Gerstell Academy

Massachusetts

Rose E. Hansen

Norwell High School

Michigan

Madison Ganzak

Roosevelt High School

Minnesota

Sophie Kuether

Columbia Heights High School

Mississippi

Morgan Love

Mississippi School of the Arts

Missouri

Mattie Mills

Notre Dame de Sion

Montana

Brady L. Drummond

Belt High School

Nebraska

Alexandra Rose Zaleski

Skutt Catholic High School

Nevada

Eakjot Kaur Sekhon

Robert McQueen High School

New Hampshire

Lilla Bozek

Newmarket High School

New Jersey

Lilian Myers

Cinnaminson High School

New Mexico

Zoe Sloan Callan

Native American Community Academy

New York

Zaida Rio Polanco

White Plains High School

North Carolina

Meziah Smith

Knightdale High School

North Dakota

Kylie Howatt

Northern Cass High School

Ohio

Montserrat Tlahuel-Flores

St. Francis DeSales High School

Oklahoma

Stephanie Thanscheidt

Bethany High School

Oregon

Tabarjah Neal

Oregon Charter Academy

Pennsylvania

Taha Vahanvaty

Stroudsburg High School

Puerto Rico

Matías Coss Hernández

University High School

Rhode Island

Virginia Keister

Chariho Regional High School

South Carolina

Emily Allison

South Carolina Children's Theatre

South Dakota

Rahele Megosha

Washington High School

Tennessee

Kendall Grimes

Battle Ground Academy

Texas

Samuel Eluemunoh

St. Mark's School of Texas

U.S. Virgin Islands

Kaden A. Hughes

Antilles School

Utah

Brynne Burgess

Legacy Preparatory Academy

Vermont

Irén Hangen Vázquez

Burr and Burton Academy

Virginia

Azhane Pollard

Hopewell High School

Washington

Lucy Shainin

Anacortes High School

West Virginia

Ben Long

Notre Dame High School

Wisconsin

Lauren Broman

Wrightstown High School

Wyoming

Ray Jones

Natrona County High School

SEMIFINAL ONE

May 2 • 12:00 pm ET

Maryland

Kate Maerten

“Once the World Was Perfect” by Joy Harjo

“No, I wasn’t meant to love and be loved”
by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib

New Jersey

Lilian Myers

“Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud” by John Donne

“Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

North Carolina

Meziah Smith

“American Smooth” by Rita Dove

“The Song of the Feet” by Nikki Giovanni

Maine

Emily Paruk

“Fairy-tale Logic” by A.E. Stallings

“Once the World Was Perfect” by Joy Harjo

New Hampshire

Lilla Bozek

“Where the Wild Things Go” by D. Gilson

“No, I wasn’t meant to love and be loved”
by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib

West Virginia

Ben Long

“Istanbul 1983” by Sheila Black

“An Autumn Sunset” by Edith Wharton

Connecticut

Shermya Sly-ann Dover-John

“Eagle Plain” by Robert Francis

“The Ocean” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Massachusetts

Rose E. Hansen

“Emily Dickinson at the Poetry Slam” by Dan Vera

“Barter” by Sara Teasdale

Delaware

Rebecca Wisniewski

“Domestic Situation” by Ernest Hilbert

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

U.S. Virgin Islands

Kaden A. Hughes

“Cartoon Physics, part 1” by Nick Flynn

“I Am the People, the Mob” by Carl Sandburg

Virginia

Azhane Pollard

“Black Boys Play the Classics” by Toi Derricotte

“Enough” by Suzanne Buffam

Vermont

Irén Hangen Vázquez

“Caminitos” by Carmen Tafolla

“[‘Often rebuked, yet always back returning’]”
by Emily Brontë

Ohio

Montserrat Tlahuel-Flores

“The True-Blue American” by Delmore Schwartz

“The Only Mexican” by David Tomas Martinez

District of Columbia

Saquoya E. Gorham

“Ebb” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

“A Celebration of Charis: I. His Excuse for Loving”
by Ben Jonson

South Carolina

Emily Allison

“I Know, I Remember, But How Can I Help You?”

by Hayden Carruth

“Fate” by Carolyn Wells

Pennsylvania

Taha Vahanvaty

“Brother, I’ve seen some” by Kabir

“If They Should Come for Us” by Fatimah Asghar

Rhode Island

Virginia Keister

“Always Something More Beautiful” by Stephen Dunn

“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”
by William Wordsworth

New York

Zaida Rio Polanco

“El Olvido” by Judith Ortiz Cofer

“No, I wasn’t meant to love and be loved”
by Mirza Asadulla Khan Ghalib

SEMIFINAL TWO

May 2 • 3:00 pm ET

Michigan

Madison Ganzak

“Violins” by Rowan Ricardo Phillips

“Tarantulas on the Lifebuoy” by Thomas Lux

Tennessee

Kendall Grimes

“America, I Sing You Back”

by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke

“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” by John Donne

Oklahoma

Stephanie Thanscheidt

“Famous” by Naomi Shihab Nye

“The Poem You’ve Been Waiting For”

by Tarfia Faizullah

Louisiana

Jacob Simmons

“End of Days Advice from an Ex-zombie” by Michael
Derrick Hudson

“The Conqueror Worm” by Edgar Allan Poe

Puerto Rico

Matías Coss Hernández

“Infelix” by Adah Isaacs Menken

“We Are of a Tribe” by Alberto Ríos

Florida

Flavia Nunez

“At the city pound” by Vincent O’Sullivan

“A Country Boy in Winter” by Sarah Orne Jewett

Indiana

Lucia Walker

“The Art Room” by Shara McCallum

“Ah! Why, Because the Dazzling Sun” by Emily Brontë

Alabama

Soojin Park

“Mingus at the Showplace” by William Matthews

“Say Grace” by Emily Jungmin Yoon

Georgia

Karma Hudnall

“That’s My Heart Right There” by Willie Perdomo

“I am Trying to Break Your Heart” by Kevin Young

Mississippi**Morgan Love**

“**genetics**” by Jacqueline Woodson

“**The Paradox**” by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Wisconsin**Lauren Broman**

“**At the city pound**” by Vincent O’Sullivan

“**When You Are Old**” by William Butler Yeats

Kentucky**Emma Robison**

“**Immortal Sails**” by Alfred Noyes

“**The Children’s Hour**” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Nebraska**Alexandra Rose Zaleski**

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

“**On An Unsociable Family**” by Elizabeth Hands

Illinois**Catherine Herrera**

“**The Collar**” by George Herbert

“**Bright Copper Kettles**” by Vijay Seshadri

Arkansas**Katelyn Grace Doyne**

“**The Song of the Smoke**” by W.E.B. Du Bois

“**I look at the world**” by Langston Hughes

Kansas**Garrett McLaughlin**

“**Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent**”
by John Milton

“**Emily Dickinson at the Poetry Slam**” by Dan Vera

Iowa**Elijah M. Thiessen**

“**Beautiful Wreckage**” by W.D. Ehrhart

“**Rondeau**” by Leigh Hunt

Missouri**Mattie Mills**

“**Pity the Beautiful**” by Dana Gioia

“**To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time**”
by Robert Herrick

SEMIFINAL THREE

May 2 • 6:00 pm ET

Idaho

True Leavitt

“Dyed Carnations” by Robyn Schiff

“Emily Dickinson at the Poetry Slam” by Dan Vera

Nevada

Eakjot Kaur Sekhon

“Love Song” by Dorothy Parker

“No, I wasn’t meant to love and be loved”
by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib

South Dakota

Rahele Megosha

“I Am Learning to Abandon the World”
by Linda Pastan

“Fairy Tale with Laryngitis and Resignation Letter”
by Jehanne Dubrow

Alaska

Asya Gipson

“What Women Are Made Of” by Bianca Lynne Spriggs

“Say Grace” by Emily Jungmin Yoon

Washington

Lucy Shainin

“Fairy Tale with Laryngitis and Resignation Letter”
by Jehanne Dubrow

“American Solitude” by Grace Schulman

Minnesota

Sophie Kuether

“I think I should have loved you presently”
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

“To have without holding” by Marge Piercy

American Samoa

Audrey-Rose Sevaaetasi

“Dyed Carnations” by Robyn Schiff

“An Apology For Her Poetry”
by Duchess of Newcastle Margaret Cavendish

California

Delali Bruce

“Negative” by Kevin Young

“The Chimney Sweeper: When my mother died I was very young” by William Blake

Utah

Brynne Burgess

“The Pull Toy” by A.E. Stallings

“Invictus” by William Ernest Henley

Arizona

Aliyah Chutkan

“Advice to a Prophet” by Richard Wilbur

“Cartoon Physics, part 1” by Nick Flynn

Montana

Brady L. Drummond

“The Children’s Hour” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“Heart Butte, Montana” by M.L. Smoker

Oregon

Tabarjah Neal

“Carnival” by Rebecca Lindenberg

“Y2K” by Therese Lloyd

Guam

Tristha Garcia

“Ebb” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

“Propositions” by Stephen Dunn

Colorado

Aidyn Reid

“The Days Gone By” by James Whitcomb Riley

“Tomorrow” by Dennis O’Driscoll

North Dakota

Kylie Howatt

“The Barnacle” by A.E. Stallings

“Dawn” by Ella Higginson

Wyoming

Ray Jones

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes

“Bereavement” by William Lisle Bowles

Hawaii

Taylor Cozloff

“Kindness” by Yusef Komunyakaa

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”

by Dylan Thomas

Texas

Samuel Eluemunoh

“American Sonnet For My Past and Future Assassin
[‘Inside me is a black-eyed animal’]”

by Terrance Hayes

“I Am Offering this Poem” by Jimmy Santiago Baca

New Mexico

Zoe Sloan Callan

“Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of
Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian
Rezervation” by Natalie Diaz

“To be of use” by Marge Piercy

PRODUCTION

DIRECTOR



Michael Baron is the Producing Artistic Director of Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma. At Lyric, he directed *Titanic*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Bright Star*, *When We're Gone* (world premiere), *Freaky Friday*, *Fun Home*, *Disney's When You Wish*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Assassins*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Dreamgirls*, *Mann...And Wife* (world premiere), *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* (world premiere), *Big Fish* with David Elder and Tony-nominee Emily Skinner, *Oklahoma!*, *An Inspector Calls*, *A Little Night Music* with Tony-nominee Dee Hoty, *Les Misérables*, *Triangle*, *Big River*, *Tarzan*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Call Me Madam* with Tony-winner Beth Leavel, *Spring Awakening*, *Ragtime*, *Oliver!*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Always...Patsy Cline*, *December Divas*, *The Rocky Horror Show* and the annual production of Lyric's *A Christmas Carol* (also adapted). He has directed over 95 productions at theaters across the country including the current production of *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC. Other regional directing highlights

include – ZACH Theatre: *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Spring Awakening*; Signature Theatre: *The Little Dog Laughed*, *Songs for a New World* starring Tony-winner Alice Ripley, Tony-nominee Brian D'Arcy James, Emmy-nominee Titus Burgess, and music direction by Jason Robert Brown; Adventure Theatre: *Huck Finn's Big River* (world premiere), *James and the Giant Peach* (2017 Helen Hayes nomination for Outstanding Direction), the world premiere musical *Big Nate*; Goodspeed Musicals: *Meet John Doe*; Trinity Repertory Company: *The School for Scandal*; La Mama: *The Whore of Sheridan Square* (wrote and directed, published in anthology *Plays and Playwrights 2006*). NEA: 2010-2021 Poetry Out Loud National Competition Finals with hosts John Leguizamo, Kerry Washington, and Anna Deavere Smith. Teaching: American University, Brown University, Holy Cross College, and Rhode Island College. Michael has been a theatre grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Alliance for Musical Theatre. Training: B.A.

in Theatre Arts, Wake Forest University; MFA in Directing, Trinity Repertory Conservatory. Michael served as the Associate Director of Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia—winner of the 2009 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Michael received the 2012 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Direction of a Resident Musical in Washington, DC for Adventure Theatre's production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*, the 2016 Oklahoma Governor's Arts Award, and a special award from Oklahoma City Mayor's Committee on Disabilities Concerns. He also was recognized by the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society as a 2016-2017 Top Ten "Standout Moment" by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for his ASL-integrated production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. His 2020 outdoor production of Lyric's *A Christmas Carol* at the Harn Homestead was featured in the *New York Times* and by BBC radio. He is an emeritus board member for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre.

ASL INTERPRETERS

Semifinals and Finals

Mia Engle and **Steve Phan**

Poetry Out Loud is managed at the state level by

Alabama State Council on the Arts
Alaska State Council on the Arts
American Samoa Council on Arts, Culture,
and the Humanities
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Arkansas Arts Council
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and many incredible partners



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.

POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

2019	Isabella Gallery (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 (Chicago, Illinois)

www.poetryoutloud.org

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Photos: 2013 Poetry Out Loud Champion Langston Ward, 2015 Poetry Out Loud Champion Maeva Ordaz, 2017 Poetry Out Loud National Champion Samara Elán Huggins, and 2006 Poetry Out Loud National Champion Jackson Hille. Photos by James Kegley

