

WASHINGTON STATE ARTS COMMISSION

PRESENTS

POETRY OUT LOUD 

2024

**WASHINGTON STATE
FINAL**



TACOMA LITTLE THEATRE

MARCH 9, 2024

 **ARTSWA**

Welcome to Poetry Out Loud 2024

When the Poetry Out Loud program first started in 2005, 8 schools in a single Washington county participated. This year, 42 schools from across Washington State participated in *Poetry Out Loud*.

After classroom-level competitions and school-wide competitions, these schools sent their top students to participate in one of four regional finals, held virtually this year in Central, Eastern, Northwest, and Southwest.

In addition, eight students from around the state registered for Poetry Out Loud Virtual, under the coordination of Tacoma Little Theatre. This program is available to individual students from non-participating schools, and home-schooled students. These students participated in their own final competition.

Top scoring students from each of these finals are competing today for the title of 2024 Washington State Poetry Out Loud Champion.

The winner of the State Final will receive \$200, and the winner's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The second-place finalist will receive \$100, with \$200 for their school library. The state champion will represent Washington State in the National Finals in Washington, D.C. April 30 – May 2, 2024.

The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the National Champion.

Tacoma Little Theatre recognizes that they teach and perform on Indigenous land: ṙukʷədiitəb ṙuhigʷətəb čət txʷəl tiit ʔa čət ʔal tə swatxʷixʷtxʷəd ʔə tiit puyaləpabš dxʷəstətlils gʷəl ʔutxʷəlšucidəbs həlgʷəʔ. “We gratefully acknowledge that we rest on the traditional lands of the Puyallup People where they make their home and speak the Lushootseed language.”

About Poetry Out Loud



Poetry Out Loud invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the classroom.

The National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation partner with State Arts Agencies across the United States to support Poetry Out Loud, a program that encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. This program helps students to master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

Over 9,000 students from across Washington participated in the program this school year, reciting poems selected from an anthology of more than 1,100 classic and contemporary poems.

Thank you to everyone who has come to enjoy great poetry and to support our state finalists. Enjoy!

About ArtsWA



The Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) is a state agency, established in 1961, whose purpose is to conserve and develop the State's artistic resources, as essential to the social, educational, and economic growth of the State of Washington. One of our strategic goals is to strengthen K-12 arts education as part of, and fundamental to, basic education. For more information, visit arts.wa.gov.

The Washington State Arts Commission is committed to values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and creative expression.

We believe in diverse forms of artistic expression, and we believe in access to arts and arts education for all individuals in our state. The arts can and should play a role in addressing inequities, modeling inclusion, and teaching empathy.

Washington State Regional Champions

Leki Albright

Liberty Bell High School, Okanogan County

Selah Burrowes

Lincoln High School, King County

Gregory Chvany

Mercer Island High School, King County

Sydney Frost

Mt Spokane High School, Spokane County

Kate Gemmell

Kamiakin High School, Benton County

Nascha Martinez

(POL Virtual) Kingston, Kitsap County

Elizabeth McAleer

Battle Ground High School, Clark County

Blaze Rowan

Olympia High School, Thurston County

Kaylin Warner

Selah High School, Yakima County

Washington State Final Program

Welcome and Introductions

Emcee: Asha Berkes

Introductions and Program Information

Presentation of the Washington State Regional Champions

Recitations - Round One

All Students recite their first poem

SHORT INTERMISSION

Recitations - Round Two

Guest: Mateo Acuña, Seattle Youth Poet Laureate

All Students recite their second poem

ArtsWA Executive Director: Karen Hanan

Announcement of Three Finalists

SHORT INTERMISSION

Recitations - Round Three

Finalists recite their third poem

Announcements and Acknowledgments

Announcement of 2024 Poetry Ourselves winners

Announcement of the 2024 Washington State

Poetry Out Loud Champion

Student Poem Selections

Student recitations are conducted in alphabetical order, by last name. For the first round of recitations, we go A-Z. In the second round, we start at the center of the alphabet and go to Z, followed by A-L. The finalists who advance to the third round are presented in a randomly chosen order. All poems were selected from the Poetry Out Loud anthology, available at poetryoutloud.org.

Leki Albright

(First Recitation in Round One)

Meditation at Lagunitas by Robert Haas

The Greatest Grandeur by Pattiann Rogers

The Seekers of Lice by Arthur Rimbaud

Selah Burrowes

A Daughter Named After Nina by Elizabeth Acevedo

Dawn by Ella Higginson

won't you celebrate with me by Lucille Clifton

Gregory Chvany

Where the Wild Things Go by D. Gilson

In the Desert by Stephen Crane

Thoughtless Cruelty by Charles Lamb

Sydney Frost

My Therapist Wants to Know about My Relationship to Work

by Tiana Clark

The Rights of Women by Anna Laetitia Barbauld

Weighing In by Rhina P. Espallat

Kate Gemmell

(First Recitation in Round Two)

[Sonnet 1](#) by [Sir Philip Sidney](#)

[To have without holding](#) by [Marge Piercy](#) **

[All This and More](#) by [Mary Karr](#)

Nascha Martinez

[Charles Sumner](#) by [Charlotte L. Forten Grimké](#)

[There are no kings in America](#) by [Aileen Cassinetta](#) **

[Bright Copper Kettles](#) by [Vijay Seshadri](#)

Elizabeth McAleer

[All Thirst Quenched](#) by [Lois Red Elk](#)

[After the Disaster](#) by [Abigail Deutsch](#)

[It was not Death, for I stood up, \(355\)](#) by [Emily Dickinson](#)

Blaze Rowan

[\[What horror to awake at night\]](#) by [Lorine Niedecker](#)

[History Lesson](#) by [Natasha Trethewey](#)

[Epitaph](#) by [Katherine Philips](#)

Kaylin Warner

[The Farmer](#) by [W.D. Ehrhart](#)

[\[What horror to awake at night\]](#) by [Lorine Niedecker](#)

[A Country Boy in Winter](#) by [Sarah Orne Jewett](#)

**** These poems are not permitted for live streaming.**



"Poetry Out Loud pushes me to be creative because you have to read so many poems in order to pick. I read through dozens and dozens before I found the ones [I chose] and I found so many poems that—even if they weren't for me—were amazing."

Matthew Valentine, 2023 Washington State Champion

Photo by Pavel Verbovski

"I love the fact that students are not just reading a poem or reading words, but they are actually sharing a part of their identity, sharing what's important to them. The poems that I chose share a different facet of what I believe in, who I am."

Sreepadaarchana Munjuluri, 2023 National Champion



Photo © James Kegley

Poetry Out Loud Biographies

Asha Berkes, Emcee

Asha is a poet and educator in Tacoma. They have taught workshops all over Tacoma, in middle and high schools, with the Tacoma Public Library, at SOWA annual Bridge Conference, and more. Berkes serves as the Director of Educational Partnerships at Write 253 and teaches poetry at Tacoma School of the Arts. Berkes studied English, Gender and Queer Studies, and African American Studies at the University of Puget Sound. Their senior thesis, a collection of poems entitled “Lesbo Island” was a finalist in the Stories Award for Poetry at Not a Cult Media.

Heidi Aijala, Judge

Heidi has over a decade of classroom experience at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Heidi holds a Ph.D. in English and a master's degree in teaching. Her scholarly work and pedagogical focus are invested in issues of equity, inclusion, and social justice. Moreover, as a first-generation college student, Heidi is passionate about advocating for the economic, social, and civic benefits of education.

Michelle Avitia, Judge

Originally from Los Angeles, Michelle moved to Washington to live and work in Olympia in 2018. She holds a B.A. from San Jose State University in English and Professional Technical Writing. Michelle spent many years writing and editing for independent literary magazines, held an editorial internship with Bitch Media, and a column with Catalyst Wedding Co magazine. In her free time, she enjoys linocut printmaking, playing every NYT word game, crushing her partner in sudoku, and volunteering at Community Print Olympia. Michelle currently works at ArtsWA as the Art in Public Places Program Coordinator.

Lou Oma Durand, Judge

Lou Oma Durand is a lifelong poetry lover. Over the years, she has produced numerous poetry events both live and for broadcast on public radio. This includes a curated series of original poetry by 30 young poets in high school across the state. She has also juried Poetry on the Bus for

King County, and for the selection of the WA State Poet Laureate. She has served on the boards of Copper Canyon Press, Poetry Northwest Review, Seattle Review, and Jack Straw Cultural Center. Lou Oma currently serves as a Commissioner for the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA).

Heide Fernandez-Llamazares, Judge

Heide Fernandez-Llamazares is the Manager for My Public Art Portal at ArtsWA. She manages the online presentation of the State Art Collection. Previously, Heide managed a private collection, worked in Education at Tacoma Art Museum, and worked as a technical writer. She is passionate about art and collections, and loves working in an environment that includes art on a daily basis.

Jasmine Mahmoud, Judge

Jasmine Mahmoud is Assistant Professor in Theatre History and Performance Studies at the University of Washington. A performance historian, her work engages the Pacific Northwest arts sector, racial equity, and cultural policy. Jasmine has worked as a musician, theater artist, arts critic, and as a TeenTix Mentor and Teaching Artist. She serves as Board Vice President of On the Boards. She earned her PhD in Performance Studies from Northwestern University, MA in Arts Politics from NYU, and BA in Government from Harvard College. Jasmine currently serves as a Commissioner for the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA).

Kate Myre, Judge

Ms. Myre is a professor at Cornish College of the Arts and works nationally as a voice over artist and dialect coach. She has worked regularly with Pulitzer and Tony award winning playwright and director, Brian Yorkey, dialect and text coaching the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*, *Echoes*, and *The Outer Banks*. In Norway she coached the acclaimed production of *The Hamlet Complex* at the Royal Opera House, directed by Alan Oyen. She has coached for The Seattle Rep, The Seattle Children's Theatre, The Village Theater, Seattle Public Theater, Theater Schmeater, Jack Straw Foundation, and The Boston Repertory Theatre and will be dialect coaching again for ACT this spring on the *Lehman Trilogy*.

Special thanks to the Washington's 2023-24 *Poetry Out Loud* Leadership and Regional Partners

Central Washington

Yakima Valley College: Mark Fuzie, Coordinator

Eastern Washington

Spokane Arts: Shantell Jackson, Coordinator

Northwest Washington

The Skagit River Poetry Foundation: Molly McNulty, Coordinator

POL Virtual

Tacoma Little Theatre: Cassie Jo Fastabend, Coordinator

Southwest Washington

South Puget Sound Community College: Melissa Meade, and
Kathleen Byrd, Coordinators working cooperatively with ArtsWA
staff.

Poetry Out Loud Teacher Liaison

Carolyn Gilman, Olympia High School, Olympia

Many thanks to the teachers who coordinated Poetry Out Loud at their school this year:

Central

AC Davis High School, Rebecca Hoover; Bickleton High School, Silvia Navarre; East Valley High School, Kristin Morrison; Ellensburg High School, Lorraine Barlow; Kamiakin High School, Joyce Donais; Naches Valley High School; Dana Lemieux; Richland High School, Jason Allen; Selah High School, Jon McClintick.

Eastern

Lakeside High School, Alecia Sing; Liberty Bell High School, Kelly Grayum; Mead High School, Drew Lohead; Methow Valley Independent Learning Center, Sara Mounsey; Mt Spokane High School, Elizabeth Scourey; North Central High School, Courtney Hare; Okanogan High School, Dennis O'Connor; The Oaks Classical Christian Academy, Emily Woodrooff.

Northwest

Anacortes High School, Brian Backman; Crosspoint Academy, Lauren Healy; Coupeville High School, Jackie Calkins-Saia; Eastlake High School, Kristin Mannion; Innovation Lab High School, Chris deVidal; Lincoln High School, Wayne Storer; Mercer Island High School, Jane Stafford; Mount Si High School, Daniel Mancoff; Quilcene High School, Camille Hildebrandt; Shorewood High School, Tim Murray; Squalicum High School, Joe McAuliffe.

Southwest

Annie Wright Schools, Rebecca Disrud; Battle Ground High School, Heather Smithline; Capital High School, Kristin Cummins; Cedar Tree Classical Christian School, Diana Meadowcroft; Charles Wright Academy, Glenn Pihlak; Concordia Christian Academy, Nikki Shannon; Hayes Freedom High School, Mark Gardner; North River School, Barbara Thompson; North Thurston High School, Ashley Shute; Ocosta Junior-Senior High School, Mae Thomas; Olympia High School, Carolyn Gilman; Peninsula High School, Julie Bruey; River Ridge High School, Emily Ehrlich; Stadium High School, Liz Jacobsen

Production Credits

Emcee

Asha Berkes

Judges – Poetry Out Loud

Heidi Aijala, Michelle Avitia, Lou Oma Durand, Jasmine Mahmoud,
Kate Myre, (Accuracy) Heide Fernandez-Llamazares

Judge – Poetry Ourselves

Dr. Tod Marshall, Gonzaga University, 2016-18 Washington Poet
Laureate

Tacoma Little Theatre

Chris Serface, Managing Artistic Director
Emma DeLoye and Nate Lovitt, Technical Crew
Incidental music provided by Tacoma Little Theatre

Photography

Pavel Verbovski

Washington State Arts Commission Staff

Karen Hanan, Executive Director
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Kalei Matsui, Arts in Education Program Coordinator
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Michael Wallenfels, Communication Manager
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Special Thanks

[Write253](#) and Line Break Press for the creation of custom letter-
press prints to recognize this year's State Finalists.

The *Poetry Out Loud* Washington State Final is presented by the [Washington State Arts Commission](#), with support from the following partners:

National Endowment for the Arts



The [National Endowment for the Arts](#) was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$5 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector.

Poetry Foundation



[The Poetry Foundation](#), publisher of Poetry Magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring the best poetry before the largest possible audiences.

For More Information

The National Poetry Out Loud Program: [poetryoutloud.org](#)

Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA): [arts.wa.gov](#)

About Tacoma Little Theatre

In October of 1918, a group of civic-minded community members founded the Tacoma Chapter of the Drama League of America with Tacoma Little Theatre (TLT) serving as the production wing. Over a century later, TLT is the sole remaining entity of the founding chapter. The staff and Board of Directors are committed to creating quality productions and fostering meaningful interactions among all people in their community. Visit [tacomalittletheatre.com](#) to learn more.



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