The League of Minnesota Poets

presents

42nd Annual Minnesota Poetry Prizes Contest Awards

2026 Fall Conference Gala

Gala Award

CATEGORY 20

Prize amounts	$25 $15 $10
Subject:	Celebration
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	30
Sponsor:	Poetry Contest GALA
Judge:	Donna Giese

Gala Award

CATEGORY 20 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Donna Isaac

Party

6TH

Paula Sweeney Kowszik

I’m Listening

5TH

Kathleen Pettit

To Aila

4TH

Jerri Hardesty

Mardi Gras

Gala Award

CATEGORY 20 Winners

3RD

Laura Hansen

At the Request of Our Hosts

2ND

Mary Rudbeck Stanko

When Confetti Falls

1ST

Deborah Goschy

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Heartland Poets Award

CATEGORY 19

Prize amounts	$25 $15 $10
Subject:	A Place Poem
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	30
Sponsor:	Heartland Poets
Judge:	Gail Denham

Heartland Poets Award

CATEGORY 19 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Marilyn Weber Gonrowski

My Secret Place in the Deep Woods

6TH

Irene Alderson

Hospital Cafeteria

5TH

Dr. Emory Jones

Saturday

4TH

Kathryn Schmeiser

Up On Cabin Porch

Heartland Poets Award

CATEGORY 19 – Winners

3RD

Matthew Feeney

Milestones

2ND

Erin Sim

Dancing With You in the Kitchen

1ST

Ann Glumac

Monument To a Town, US Steel Duluth Works

Coral Peterson Memorial Award

CATEGORY 18

Prize amounts	$30 $20 $10
Subject:	Seasons
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Linda White
Judge:	Philip Levin

Coral Peterson Memorial Award

CATEGORY 18 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Sara Gipson**	Apples from My Orchard
6TH	**Henry Panowitsch**	Equal Day and Night
5TH	**Kathleen Pettit**	March 2026
4TH	**Victor Klimoski**	Autumn Walk

Coral Peterson Memorial Award

CATEGORY 18 - Winners

3RD

Daniel Pickett

Januarys

2ND

Erin Sim

Winter’s Tale

1ST

Shelby Johnson

Green

Great River Award

CATEGORY 17

Prize amounts	$30 $20 $10
Subject:	Water
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Great River Poets
Judge:	Paul Ford

Great River Award

CATEGORY 17 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Nicole Buchholz

“rose milkweed triolet”

6TH

Nancy Simmonds

Drought Summer 1934

5TH

Nancy Cook

Waiting Out the Storm

4TH

Susan Chambers

Who Owns the Pond?

Great River Award

CATEGORY 17 - Winners

3RD

Rebecca Rae

Waves

2ND

Ariel Bugosh Boswell

Anniversary on the Paddlewheel

1ST

Julie Martin

Water from Water

Travel Award

CATEGORY 16

Prize amounts	$30 $20 $10
Subject:	Travel
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Ruth Schmidt-Baeumler In Honor of Hellmut Schmidt-Baeumler
Judge:	Robert Burgess

Travel Award

CATEGORY 16 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Jerri Hardesty**	Drive-About
6TH	**Gail Denham**	Jerome
5TH	**Lorraine Jeffery**	To Go
4TH	**Terry Jude Miller**	Pilgrimage

Travel Award

CATEGORY 16 - Winners

3RD

Gail Speckmann

Ireland, My Heart Home

2ND

Tanya Whitney

Imaginary Travels

1ST

Roger Brezina

Rolling Across America

Steinography Award

CATEGORY 15

Prize amounts	$50 $20 $10
Subject:	Ekphrastic – Artwork at steinography.com
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Steinography
Judge:	Jessica Temple

Steinography Award

CATEGORY 15 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Jennifer Hernandez

An Ever-Expanding Heart

6TH

Becky Boling

Bones of Trees

5TH

Tanamá Kao

Dance of the Monarchs

4TH

Maureen Baldwin

Haiku

Steinography Award

CATEGORY 15 - Winners

3RD

Terry Jude Miller

Fire and Ice

2ND

Linda Payne

Gordian Tree Knot

1ST

Laura Hansen

Seven Degrees of Verdigris

Positivity Award

CATEGORY 14

Prize amounts	$50 $30 $20
Subject:	A Triumph
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	35
Sponsor:	Susan McMillan
Judge:	Bernadette Perez

Positivity Award

CATEGORY 14 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Tanya Whitney

Don’t Need Much

6TH

Mehar Behl

Willow Trees

5TH

Laura Hansen

Hope is a Flame

4TH

Crystie Cook

Song Sparrows Fly Through All Four Seasons

Positivity Award

CATEGORY 14 - Winners

3RD

Mike Wahl

Beyond

2ND

Laura Kozy Lanik

Generations of Grandmothers

1ST

Shelby Johnson

A Beginning

John & Helen Pappas Memorial

CATEGORY 13

Prize amounts	$50 $30 $20
Subject:	Voice of a Relative
Form:	Persona Poem
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Charmaine Pappas Donovan
Judge:	Debbi Brody

John & Helen Pappas Memorial

CATEGORY 13 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Becky Boling

My Mother Explains Heaven to Her Daughter Who Doesn’t Believe in an Afterlife

6TH

Constance Hodder

Now Then

5TH

Amanda Bailey

Ever Been to a Low Country Crab Boil?

4TH

Richard Terrill

Death Bed

John & Helen Pappas Memorial

CATEGORY 13 - Winners

3RD

Forest Gray

Blink

2ND

Nancy Cook

Poets' Retreat

1ST

Nick Sweet

Galveston Flood, 1900

The Yarn Spinner Award

CATEGORY 12

Prize amounts	$50 $35 $20
Subject:	Tall Tales & Shaggy Dog
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	50
Sponsor:	American School of Storytelling
Judge:	BJam

The Yarn Spinner Award

CATEGORY 12 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Annette Gagliardi

Give me a Solid Base, Buddy

6TH

Laura Kozy Lanik

He walked on water

5TH

Mary Rudbeck Stanko

A Parable of Honor, the Elephant & Further, The Flea

4TH

Sara Gipson

Led to Jazz

The Yarn Spinner Award

CATEGORY 12 - Winners

3RD

Crystie Cook

How Sándor the Puli Sheepdog Saved the Sheep of Wamsutter, Wyoming

2ND

Henry Panowitsch

The Secret Lives of Shoes

1ST

Roger Brezina

Defenseless Against the Pensive Moon

SMPS Award

CATEGORY 11

Prize amounts	$50 $30 $20
Subject:	Any
Form:	Narrative
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Southern MN Poets Society
Judge:	Polly Opsahl

SMPS Award

CATEGORY 11 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Jan Chronister

At a Mexican Restaurant in December

6TH

Pawel Buda

Sitting Next To You

5TH

Denise Anderson

Too Late?

4TH

Mardi Knudson

It’s Icy Outside

SMPS Award

CATEGORY 11 - Winners

3RD

Ariel Bugosh Boswell

In Vitro

2ND

Kait Quinn

Heartbreak Sounds a lot Like Love on a Piano Bench

1ST

Megan Chambers

Gaia

The League of Minnesota Poets

presents

Intermission

Sassy.Image Award

CATEGORY 10

Prize amounts	$50 $30 $20
Subject:	Erotica
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Sassy.Image
Judge:	Karoline Jarr

Sassy.Image Award

CATEGORY 10 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Dr. Emory Jones**	Striptease
6TH	**Nick Sweet**	While She Slept
5TH	**Terry Jude Miller**	Sex and Celebrity
4TH	**Dominique Miller**	Embrace My Uniqueness

Sassy.Image Award

CATEGORY 10 - Winners

3RD

Susan Chambers

Washing Your Back

2ND

Becky Boling

A Thin-Bright Lie

1ST

Jennifer Hernandez

Fruitfulness

Florence Hynes Willette Memorial

CATEGORY 9

Prize amounts	$60 $40 $25
Subject:	Humor
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Mary Willette Hughes
Judge:	Susann Moeller

Florence Hynes Willette Memorial

CATEGORY 9 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Forest Gray**	Ode to a Simple Life
6TH	**Julie Martin**	A Quiet Rebellion
5TH	**Laura Hansen**	What Our Family Does When We're Together
4TH	**Annette Gagliardi**	Woody’s No Friend of Mine

Florence Hynes Willette Memorial

CATEGORY 9 - Winners

3RD

Jean Prokott

Temporary Nocturne, Solar Eclipse

2ND

Deborah Goschy

How to Catch a Cat

1ST

Becky Boling

Postmortem

Woodtick Poets Award

CATEGORY 8

Prize amounts	$65 $50 $30
Subject:	Loss
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	50
Sponsor:	Woodtick Writers Retreat
Judge:	Steven Concert

Woodtick Poets Award

CATEGORY 8 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Lynda La Rocca

The Country He Loved Best

6TH

Becky Boling

Lost Touch

5TH

Matthew Feeney

Caged Erotica

4TH

Kait Quinn

All the Places I've Lost Myself

Woodtick Poets Award

CATEGORY 8 - Winners

3RD

Murray McCartan

Super Moon

2ND

Amanda Bailey

Shared Roots

1ST

Dennis Maulsby

Haiku

Before I Lie Award

CATEGORY 7

Prize amounts	$100 $40 $10
Subject:	Honesty/Truth/Vulnerability
Form:	Free Verse
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Dralandra Larkins
Judge:	Brenda Wildrick

Before I Lie Award

CATEGORY 7 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Ann Glumac

Among Old Friends

6TH

Victor Klimoski

Left Speechless

5TH

Nancy Simmonds

The Dream of a Young Soldier

4TH

Mary Rudbeck Stanko

Testify

Before I Lie Award

CATEGORY 7 - Winners

3RD

Jean Prokott

Well

2ND

Lynda La Rocca

A Ticket for the Freak Show

1ST

Theresa Vaske

His Cat

Hermit Award

CATEGORY 6

Prize amounts	$75 $50 $25
Subject:	Treachery
Form:	Lyric
Line Limit:	50
Sponsor:	Steven & Mary Vogel
Judge:	John (Pom) Benson

Hermit Award

CATEGORY 6 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Janice L. Freytag**	The Collector
6TH	**Ruth M. Schmidt-Baeumler**	Hungry Children
5TH	**Becky Boling**	Love Letter to a Jerk
4TH	**Dee Johnson**	Chocolates and Wine

Hermit Award

CATEGORY 6 - Winners

3RD

Gangotree Mondal

Vanish

2ND

Mehar K. Behl

“K”

1ST

Kelly Travis

Paperwhite

Blizzard Writers Award

CATEGORY 5

Prize amounts	$80 $50 $30
Subject:	House and/or Home
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Blizzard Retreat
Judge:	Lynda La Rocca

Blizzard Writers Award

CATEGORY 5 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Caitlin Featherstone-Priester

Dryer Sheets

6TH

Jennifer Hernandez

A Woman’s Touch

5TH

Nick Sweet

Foreboding Abode

4TH

Gail Denham

History of the Old Home Place

Blizzard Writers Award

CATEGORY 5 - Winners

3RD

Dee Johnson

Thrown to the Curb

2ND

Irene Alderson

Call It Home

1ST

Becky Boling

A House Abandoned and an Apricot Tree

Mike Finley Humor Award

CATEGORY 4

Prize amounts	$100 $75 $25
Subject:	Satire
Form:	Free verse or Prose Poem
Line Limit:	50
Sponsor:	Poets & Pints
Judge:	Joe Cavanaugh

Mike Finley Humor Award

CATEGORY 4 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Annette Gagliardi

Charlatan

6TH

Gail Denham

Magic Wares that Clutter Our TV

5TH

Lorraine Jeffery

I Can Do This

4TH

Janice L. Freytag

Fighter-in-Chief

Mike Finley Humor Award

CATEGORY 4 - Winners

3RD

Mehar Behl

“Cooker Dear,”

2ND

Richard Terrill

Verify You Are Human (this may take a few minutes)

1ST

DE Green

My Two Cents

Audrey Wiebold Memorial

CATEGORY 3

Prize amounts	$100 $75 $50
Subject:	Prairies
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	40
Sponsor:	Henry Panowitsch
Judge:	Mike Turner

Audrey Wiebold Memorial

CATEGORY 3 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Maureen Baldwin**	Birds Look Like Words
6TH	**Jerri Hardesty**	Recharge
5TH	**Julie Martin**	Pasque Flower
4TH	**Tanya Whitney**	Boundless Prairies

Audrey Wiebold Memorial

CATEGORY 3 - Winners

3RD

Kelly Travis

Prairie Smoke

2ND

Crystie Cook

Ode to the Chestnut-Collared Longspur of Felton Prairie

1ST

Deborah Goschy

Mother Earth Cookbook’s Recipe for a Prairie

Stevens Family Award

CATEGORY 2

Prize amounts	$125 $80 $45
Subject:	Connections
Form:	Any
Line Limit:	50
Sponsor:	Stevens/Chambers Family
Judge:	M. Palowski Moore

Stevens Family Award

CATEGORY 2 – Honorary Awardees

7TH

Gail Speckmann

Deepening Connection (During the Time of Pandemic)

6TH

Ariel Bugosh Boswell

Bus Ride

5TH

Jennifer Hernandez

Contigo

4TH

Nancy Cook

A Poem in Appreciation of Earth Worms

Stevens Family Award

CATEGORY 2 - Winners

3RD

Christopher Jones

More Green

2ND

Tanamá Kao

No Contact

1ST

Laura Kozy Lanik

A Letter to My Father during the Winter ICE Occupation of the Twin Cities in 2026

Doris Stengel Memorial

CATEGORY 1

Prize amounts	$200 $150 $100	
Subject:	Any	
Form:	Any	
Line Limit:	50	Multiple Submissions allowed: up to 8 Poems
Sponsor:	Family & Friends of Doris Stengel	
Judge:	Julie Cummings	

Doris Stengel Memorial

CATEGORY 1 – Honorary Awardees

7TH	**Jean Prokott**	Nonet in Three Parts
6TH	**Jean Prokott**	First Poem of the Resistance
5TH	**Jean Prokott**	America is The Dump Truck that Broke My Windshield (Again)
4TH	**Jennifer Hernandez**	Newsworthiness

Doris Stengel Memorial

CATEGORY 1 - Winners

3RD

Annette Gagliardi

A Mosaic Poem

2ND

Laura Hansen

Prodigal in the Back Yard

1ST

Jean Prokott

School Shooting Sonnet (unfinished)