



MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY

2024 SPRING CONTEST

RULES AND CATEGORIES

Eligibility - Poems must be original and unpublished and should not have won or placed in any poetry contest, other than honorable mention. A poet may not enter the same poem in more than one category and may not enter more than one poem in a single category. Also please do not submit poems to the MPS contest and other contests (such as NFSPS contests) at the same time. Note that Categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are open to MPS members only. Take care that all entries meet the form requirements, line limit and any other instructions specified for the category. Spaces between lines do not count as numbered lines.

Entry Fees

The entry fee is \$1 per category for MPS members, with a maximum of \$10 to enter all categories. For non-members, the fee is \$3 per category, with a maximum of \$30 to enter all categories. For online submissions, a small transaction fee will be automatically charged to cover the cost of processing.

Submission Process – Poems and entrance fees may be submitted either through the mail or online. Details for each option are given below.

Online Submission

To submit entries and pay submission fees online, compile your entries into a single electronic document (such as a MS Word doc). Then visit the MPS website contest tab (link below), and complete the following steps:

<https://www.misspoetry.net/contests.html>

Poet information and document upload:

1. Enter your information into the form.
2. Click the Upload button to upload your document.
3. Hit the Submit button.

Submission fee payment.

4. After submitting, scroll to the bottom of the page, where you will find the payment section. Enter the correct entrance fee, **click the checkbox to add in the cost of processing**, then hit either the yellow “Donate with Paypal” button or the “Donate with Debit or Credit Card” button.
- 5.

Additional guidelines for online submissions:

File format: Poems may be submitted in any easily editable file format such as MS Word, Libre Writer, or a simple text document (such as that produced by Notepad). Please do not submit pdf or image files (e.g. png, jpg, etc.), as these are more difficult to edit for the journal.

Please submit a single document containing all of your poems. Do not submit separate documents.

What to include in your document: The document should include one copy of each poem, arranged in order of category number. That’s it! You need not put any identifying information. All of that information is in the submission form.

Submission by Mail

Submit entries on regular 8.5” by 11” paper, produced with a computer printer or typewriter, and submitted in an 8 ½ x 11 or 10 x 13 mailing envelope. Submit two copies of each poem, with the following distinctions: (1) The first copy must show the poet’s name, complete US mailing address, phone number, email address (if available), and “MPS Member” or “Non-member” in the upper right corner. (MPS members include all entrants who have paid dues for the 2023-2024 year, including at-large members.) The category number and category title should appear in the upper left corner. (2) The second copy must show only the category number and category title in the upper left corner. If a poem runs more than one page, please staple the pages together on each copy. Mail entries and entrance fees to the address below:

Jason Ervin Make checks payable to
246 Twin Lakes Drive “Mississippi Poetry Society, Inc”
Canton, MS 39046

If you submit via USPS, send us an email and let us know to be on the lookout. Last year, someone’s entries were sent to the Interval Revenue Service! They arrived months too late! The poet addressed their envelope correctly. Weird things just happen!

Awards - Certificates and monetary prizes will be presented to winners at the MPS Spring Festival to be held April 26-28, 2024. The location of the festival will be announced separately (keep a watch on the MPS website, and on your email!). Please cash prize checks within 45 days of their awarding. The winning entries and their author’s names will be posted on the MPS website, www.misspoetry.net All poems that place first, second or third will be published in the 2024 Mississippi Poetry Journal. (a copy of the journal is included with an annual membership!)

Deadline - Entries must be **received** by Friday, March 1, 2024. Please note that this date is a “must be received by” date, not a postmark date. No entries arriving after March 1 can be accepted. If you decide to submit via the postal service, please be aware of potential delays, and allow plenty of time for transit. Should you have any questions or issues, don’t hesitate to contact us via email at ms.poetry.central@gmail.com **We are thrilled you are entering Mississippi Poetry Society’s 2024 Spring Contest! We hope you enjoy yourself! We all look forward to some great contest poetry!**

A special note from the Contest Committee (very important!)

As stated above, poems submitted to the contest should be unpublished. By this we mean that the poem should not be accessible anywhere online or in print. Unfortunately, at least three poems in the 2023 contest journal had already been published: two in print, the other online. This was not discovered until after the journals had been printed and prizes had been awarded. It was decided that nothing could be done at that point to rectify the situation. However, the following policies will be in place beginning with the 2024 contest. If a previously published submission is discovered during judging, the person who submitted the entry will be notified that his/her poem has been disqualified. Records of the incident will be kept for future reference. If a previously published poem is recognized after the journal is published, the poet who was unwittingly honored for the published poem will be asked to return the certificate and/or prize check. The affected honors will then be given to those who should have received them, and amends will be made in the next journal. This will be an unpleasant experience for all involved and create a lot of work for the contest coordinators. So, please take care that you submit only unpublished poems—those that are **not available anywhere online or anywhere in print**. Keeping careful records of our submissions, publishing credits, and contest honors will help us all avoid breaking the rules. As a reminder, do not ever—for ANY reason--submit a poem written by someone else.

Contest Categories

BEST OF THE FEST

The first place winner of each category will be entered into the Best of Fest competition.

These poems will be sent to a panel of independent judges whose choices will be combined to select an overall winner. The decision will be final. A Best of Fest prize of \$250 has been contributed by Ms. Marilyn Denington in memory of her husband Michael R. (Mick) Denington.

Category 1: Mississippi Poetry Society 2024 Award

Sponsored by Mississippi Poetry Society. (*Open to MPS Members only*)

Judged by Tommy Little. Form: open. Subject: "Mississippi Mysteries". Line Limit: 100.

Prizes: 1st \$100, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$25. Honorable mentions: Up to 3, as merited.

Category 2: MPS North Branch Award

Sponsored by MPS North Branch. (*Open to MPS Members only*) Judge: Janice Canerdy.

Form: English sonnet. Subject: open. Line Limit: 14. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions: as merited.

Category 3: MPS Central Branch Award

Sponsored by MPS Central Branch. (*Open to MPS Members only*) Judge: Russell Strauss.

Form: open. Subject: "Along the Natchez Trace". Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions as merited.

Category 4: MPS South Branch Award

Sponsored by MPS South Branch. (*Open to MPS Members only*) Judge: Patty Butkovich. Form: Acrostic. Subject: Open. Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions, 3.

Category 5: MPS West Branch Award

Sponsored and judged by MPS West Branch (*Open to MPS Members only*) Form: Open. Subject: the Mississippi River. Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions as merited.

Sponsor's note: Focus on how the river has/does personally affect or inspire you.

Category 6: Biblically Inspired Award -- Sponsored and judged by Rev. Randy and Mrs. Linda Owen.

Form: free verse. Subject: Second Chances. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions as merited.

Category 7: Shelton Couplet Award -- Sponsored by Michael Shelton. Judged by Catherine Moran.

Form: rhymed couplet. Subject: open. Line limit: 24. Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions: as merited.

Category 8: Doctor's Dream Award -- Sponsored and judged Dr. Philip Levin (Doctor's Dream Publishing).

Form: Free Verse. Subject: A Memorable Provider (nurse, doctor, etc.). Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$40, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions, 3 at \$5 each.

Category 9: Ekphrastic Award -- Sponsored and judged by Dr. Emory Jones.

Form: Open. Subject: some work of art. Please identify the work of art. Including an image with your poem is okay. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$30, 2nd \$20, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions as merited. Sponsor's note: Poets are encouraged to focus your poem on works by Mississippi artists. In particular, we invite you to visit the website of the Pacesetter Art Gallery in Flowood: <https://pacesettergallery.com/> Browse the individual artists' pages, read the biographies and the information about the pieces (browsing by artwork category is a great way to explore!) Or, better yet, visit the gallery in person!

Category 10: Mississippi Writers Award -- Sponsored and judged by Dr. Emory Jones. Form: Open. Subject: Write a poem inspired by a Mississippi Writer. This can be non-fiction writers, fiction writers, dramatists, and poets. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$30, 2nd \$20, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions as merited.

Category 11: Purrfectly Pleasing Pets -- Sponsored and judged by Patty Butkovich.

Form: Open. Subject: Domestic Cats (nothing pertaining to animal cruelty). Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$30, 2nd \$20, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions as merited.

Category 12: Narrative Poem Award -- Sponsored and judged by Janice Canerdy.

Form: rhymed (meter optional), minimum syllables per line: 8, maximum syllables per line: 12.

Subject: open. Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$30, 2nd \$20, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions: up to 3, as merited.

Sponsor's note: A narrative poem combines the elements of poetry with the elements of storytelling. Every year, I must lay aside GREAT poems, because they are lyric, not narrative! A poem that lacks a plot is not narrative. Plot and characters may be fictional or non-fictional.

Category 13: All Things New, Inc. Award – Sponsored and judged by Patsy Twiner.

Form: open. Subject: New Beginnings. Line limit: 40 Prizes: 1st \$75, 2nd \$35, 3rd \$15. Honorable mentions: as merited.

Category 14: Finnanegans Award – Celebrating Antics in Honor of Finley

Sponsored and judged by Mary Beth Magee. Forms: Clerihew, Kelly Lune, Diamonte, Nonet, or Fibonnacci (please identify the form). Subject: Humorous glimpse of the antics of kids.

Line Limit: as dictated by the form (see below). Prizes: 1st \$100, 2nd \$75, 3rd \$50. Honorable mentions, as merited. Sponsor's note: Share a humorous antic in a brief form – give us a laugh or a smile. [see the following links for guidance on the forms:

Clerihew - <https://poets.org/glossary/Clerihew>

Kelly Lune - <https://poetscollective.org/poetryforms/lune/>

Diamonte - <https://poetscollective.org/poetryforms/diamante/>

Nonet - <https://poetscollective.org/poetryforms/nonnet/>

Fibonnacci - <https://mylearningspringboard.com/happy-poetry-month-fibonacci-poem/>

Category 15: Dan Olive Memorial Award -- Sponsored by Trudy Olive. Judged by Mary Beth Magee.

Form: open. Subject: Enjoying grandkids – in honor of Dan's favorite occupation. Line limit: 40 (or as appropriate for the chosen form). Prizes: 1st \$100, 2nd \$75, 3rd \$50. Honorable mentions as merited.

Sponsor's note: Dan Olive's grandchildren were his pride and joy. He enjoyed every minute with them. How do you enjoy/what do you enjoy about grandkids?

Category 16: All That Could Have Been Award – Sponsored and judged by Daniel Pickett.

Form: open. Subject: Things lost or broken. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions: 3. Sponsor's note: Literally or figuratively, write a poem about something lost or broken. It can be personal or universal to all. Please, nothing overtly political.

Category 17: The Far-Flung Poet Award – Sponsored and judged by Doris Jones. Form: open.

Subject: A time when you were out of your comfort zone. Line limit: 20. Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions: as merited. Sponsor's note: Change, an ever present companion in our lives, is at times difficult to accept and respond to. Sharing can make the journey more pleasant.

Category 18: Primrose Award: in memory of Barron and Dessie Caulfield – Sponsored and judged

by Dorothy Wiman. Form: Narrative. Subject: Pastor's Family. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$75, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$35. Honorable mentions: 3. Sponsor's note: Go for the "fish bowl" in telling how you perceive a pastor's family. It should have a fair amount of humor. If you don't have a pastor, ask someone to tell you about theirs.

Category 19: Lynda Carol Memorial Award: Sponsored by Peggy and George Shumaker.

Judged by Linda Owen. Form: quatrain(s). Subject: A Life Worth Living. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$20, 3rd \$15. Honorable mentions: as merited.

Category 20: Mississippi Heroes Award – Sponsored by William Hill Art and Poetry. Judged by

William (Bill) Hill. Form: open. Subject: The greatest person in Mississippi, past or present. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions: 3.

Category 21: Mississippi Villains Award – Sponsored by Anna's Pet Sitting. Judged by William (Bill)

Hill. Form: open. Subject: The worst person in Mississippi, past or present. Line limit: 40 Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions: as merited (up to 3).

Category 22: Ruth F. Richmond Award – Sponsored and judged by Ms. Ruth Richmond.

Form: Open. Subject: Signature(s). Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10. Honorable mentions: up to 5, as merited. Sponsor's note: Include the complimentary close with signatures on letters.

Category 23: Intertwined Award – Sponsored and judged by Pete Massey. Form: rhymed and metered.

Subject: create a poem on the concept of things being intertwined. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$60, 2nd \$40, 3rd \$25. Honorable mentions: 3.

Category 24: Fifty Words for _____ Award -- Sponsored and judged by Jason Ervin.

Form: This is inspired by Kate Bush's song "Fifty Words for Snow". Give the song a listen on YouTube and follow suit! Subject: Give me your fifty words for ... whatever you like! Line limit: 50 (as with the other categories, this is a maximum. Your poem does not have to have fifty lines). Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions as merited.

Category 25: Video Award -- Sponsored by Jason Ervin. Judged by Pamela Hatch. Form: open. Subject: open. Line limit: 40. Sponsor's note: This is MPS's first ever category involving video submission! Poets should video themselves reading their poem (a smartphone is a great way to do this). All videos will be posted on MPS's brand new YouTube channel. Judging will be based 50 percent on the words, and 50 percent on delivery. Winning videos will of course receive special recognition on the channel. The texts of winning poems will appear in the MPS journal, as always. All the usual rules about originality and previously published works apply. Here are a few additional instructions:

1. Submit a typed version of your poem along with your other submissions as usual: either via the MPS website or the US Postal Service.
2. External props are not allowed. That includes music. Maybe later we can have a category that specifically focuses on blending poetry reading with music.
3. Once I receive the text of your poem, I will reach out to you with instructions on getting your video to me.
4. A separate document will be posted on the MPS website with a few tips for making videos with your smartphones. Stay tuned!

