



# MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY

## 2025 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**Eligibility** - Poems must be original and unpublished and should not have won or placed in any poetry contest, other than honorable mention.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 the same 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, there is a small processing fee (please see below).

**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 steps enumerated below.

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

1. Enter your information into the form.
2. Click the **Upload** button to upload your document.
3. Hit the **Submit** button.
4. After submitting your poems, scroll to the bottom of the page, where you will find the Payment Button. Click that and a dialog box will open. Enter the correct amount for the number of categories you are submitting to and your membership status (Member or Non-Member). **Check the little box to add in the cost of processing.** Then click the yellow **Donate with Paypal** button or the **Donate with Debit or Credit Card** button.

#### ***Additional guidelines for online submissions:***

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

***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.

***What to include in your document:*** The document should include one copy of each poem, arranged in order of category number. Indicate, for each poem, which category the poem is being submitted to. You need not include any personal 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 2024-2025 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, but no personal information. 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  
246 Twin Lakes Drive  
Canton, MS 39046

Make checks payable to  
“Mississippi Poetry Society, Inc”.

If you submit via USPS, send us an email and let us know to be on the lookout. If it doesn’t show up, we can let you know and try to make other arrangements!

**Awards** - Certificates and monetary prizes will be presented to winners at the MPS Spring Festival to be held April 25-27, 2025 at Lake Tiak O’Khata. Details to be announced! 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](http://www.misspoetry.net) All poems that place first, second or third will be published in the 2025 Mississippi Poetry Journal. (a copy of the journal is included with an annual membership!)

**Deadline** - Entries must be **received** by Saturday, February 1, 2025. Please note that this date is a “must be received by” date, not a postmark date. No entries arriving after February 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](mailto:ms.poetry.central@gmail.com) **We are thrilled you are entering Mississippi Poetry Society’s 2025 Spring Contest! We hope you enjoy yourself! We all look forward to some great contest poetry!**

### ***Submit only unpublished poems (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. This rule applies to everyone, and to be fair we must enforce it. 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. If a previously published poem is recognized after the journal is published, the poet who was 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 would no fun for anyone and a lot of work for the contest coordinators. So, please take care that you submit only unpublished poems.



**Check the box!!**

**If you pay submission fees online, please check the little box to add in the cost of processing!!!**

# 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 2025 Award**

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

Judged by Sam Kealhofer. Form: open. Subject: Mississippi Origins. Line Limit: 100.

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

### **Category 2: MPS North Branch Award**

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

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

### **Category 3: MPS Central Branch Award**

Sponsored by MPS Central Branch. (*Open to MPS Members only*) Judged by Terry Woosley.

Form: Quadkuul - That's our name for a series of four haikus that together make a single poem. Also, place your title at the end, as a kind of surprise reveal of the subject matter. Subject: open.

Line Limit: 12. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20. Honorable mentions as merited.

### **Category 4: MPS South Branch Award**

Sponsored by MPS South Branch. (*Open to MPS Members only*) Judged by Rene Penrose.

Form: Acrostic. Subject: Open. Line Limit: 20. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20.

Honorable mentions, 3.

### **Category 5: Past President's Award (Open to MPS Members only)** – Sponsored by Emory Jones,

Jeanne Kelly, Brenda Finnegan, Ann Carolyn Cates, Michael Shelton, Linda Owen, Patty Butkovich and Janice Canerdy in memory of Past President Judy Davies. Judged by Ann Carolyn Cates. Form: open.

Subject: open. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$60, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$40, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20. Honorable mentions: as merited, up to 3.

### **Category 6: Mississippi Heroes Award** -- Sponsored and judged by Dr. Emory Jones.

Form: open. Subject: The greatest person in Mississippi, past or present. Line limit: 40.

Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$15, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$5. Honorable mentions: 5.

### **Category 7: Grands Award** -- Sponsored and judged by Dr. Emory Jones. Form: Open.

Subject: Grandparents or grandchildren. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$15, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$5.

Honorable mentions: 5.

**Category 8: Love of Country Award** -- Sponsored by Tanya Whitney. Judged by Lara Taylor. Form: open. Subject: patriotism. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$30, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$20, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions as merited. Sponsor's note: The feeling of love, devotion, and a sense of attachment to a country or state: it can be a combination of different feelings for things, such as the language of one's homeland, and its ethnic, cultural, political, and historical aspects.

**Category 9: North Star Award – in memory of Leona Viola “Levi” Prisock** -- Sponsored by Mary Jane Andol. Judged by Catherine Moran. Form: similar to a villanelle, but there are differences. The poem should consist of 5 tercets, followed by an ending couplet. Line 1 of the first tercet is the last line of tercets 2 and 4. Line 3 of the first tercet is the last line of tercets three and five. Lines 1 and 3 of the first tercet make up the ending couplet. There are no rhyming requirements. Subject: If you had a compass that pointed to your heart's desire, where would it point: it can be a person, place or thing? Line limit: exactly 17 lines. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$100, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$75, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$50. Honorable mentions: as merited, up to 3. Sponsor's note: The form is inspired by a poem written by my daughter, Levi Prisock. She had a great sense of humor but was very intentional in her work. Be serious, be humorous, but follow the specified form. Voluntary use of a specific meter or rhyme will not count for or against the poet.

**Category 10: A Life Saved Award** -- Sponsored and judged by Dr. Philip Levin (Doctor's Dream Publishing). Form: Free Verse (no regular rhyme or meter). Subject: the saving of a life. Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$60, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$45, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$30. Honorable mentions, 3 at \$10 each. Sponsor's note: In general, the concept is a human life saved through medical intervention. However, I'll accept any life saved, human or other creature, and not necessarily medically. Could be rescued, for example. Not a religious conversion.

**Category 11: Biblically Inspired Award** -- Sponsored and judged by Rev. Randy and Mrs. Linda Owen. Form: Open – form must be specified. Subject: Voice(s). Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$30, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$20, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions: as merited.

**Category 12: Purrfectly Pleasing Pets** -- Sponsored and judged by Patty Butkovich. Form: Open. Subject: Domestic Cats (nothing pertaining to animal cruelty). Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions as merited.

**Category 13: Believe Or Not Award** – Sponsored and judged by Pete Massey. Form: Rondeau. Subject: What I believe. Line limit: 15. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20. Honorable mentions: 3.

**Category 14: Writer's Camp Award:**

Sponsored by Writer's Camp: <https://pamelajhatch.weebly.com/writers-camp.html>  
Judged by Pamela Hatch and Herb Murray. Form: open. Subject: What if ... Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$25, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$15. Honorable mentions: as merited. Sponsor's note: Let your imagination run with this one – what if I had been born in a different time or a different place. What if I had decided not to go to college and took that dream job instead. What if Trump had been reelected. What if I decided to become a foster parent. The “What ifs” abound.

**Category 15: Unheard Voices Award** – Sponsored and judged by Daniel Pickett. Form: open. Subject: Write a poem about or inspired by those who are often overlooked or underrepresented in our society. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$50, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$30, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$20. Honorable mentions: 3.

**Category 16: Phillip Kelly Memorial Award** – Sponsored and judged by Jeanne Kelly.  
Form: Triolet. Subject: Open. Line limit: 8 (required for a triolet). Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$15, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$5.  
Honorable mentions: as merited.

**Category 17: Dan Olive Memorial Award** – Sponsored and judged by Trudy Olive. Form: open.  
Subject: Grandkids. Line limit: 40 (or as appropriate for the chosen form). Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$100, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$75, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$50. Honorable mentions: up to 3, as merited.

**Category 18: 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: The Shenanigans and delights of children.  
Line Limit: as dictated by the form (see below). Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$100, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$75, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$50. Honorable mentions, as merited.

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 19: Narrative Poem Award** -- Sponsored and judged by Janice Canerdy.  
Form: Quatrains with a set rhyme scheme. Subject: open. Line Limit: 40 lines maximum, and a maximum of 14 syllables per line. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$30, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$20, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions: as merited.  
Sponsor's note: Please review the terms "narrative poem" and "lyric poem". Your submission should be a narrative poem.

**Category 20: Ann Carolyn Award** – In honor of Ann Carolyn Cates. Sponsored and judged by Dr. Emory Jones. Form: Open. Subject: Memories. Line Limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$30, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$20, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions: 3.

**Category 21: Shelton Award:** Sponsored by Michael Shelton. Judged by Bill Hill. Form: Rhymed couplets (must be end-rhymed). Subject: Open. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions: as merited.

**Category 22: All Things New Award:** Sponsored and judged by Patsy Twiner. Form: Open. Subject: Transformation (personal, cultural or societal). Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$60, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$40, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$25. Honorable mentions: 3.

**Category 23: Chester Terry, Jr. Memorial Award** – Sponsored and judged by Mary Lee Terry. Form: Sonnet (include the sonnet pattern on your entry) Subject: Vietnam Memories. Line limit: as specified by the form. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$35, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$25, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$15. Honorable mentions: 3.

**Category 24: Primrose Award: in memory of Barron and Dessie Caulfield**  
Sponsored by Dorothy Wiman. Judged by Stephanie DuPont. Form: Narrative. Subject: Humorous. Line limit: 60. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$75, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$50, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$35. Honorable mentions: as merited.

### **Category 25:**

**Ekphrastic Award** – Sponsored by Pacesetter Art Gallery. Judged by Jim Brown. Form: Open.

Subject: Write a poem inspired by a work of art (painting, sculpture, music, dance, etc.) Line limit: 40.

Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$15, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$10. Honorable mentions as merited. Poets are encouraged to focus on art works by Mississippi artists. In particular, we invite you to visit the website of the Pacesetter Art Gallery in Flowood: <https://pacesettergallery.com/> and find something that inspires you! Or, better yet, visit the gallery in person!

**Category 26: Lynda Carol Memorial Award** – Sponsored and judged by Peggy and George Shumaker.

Form: Rhyming Couplet. Subject: A life worth living. Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> \$25, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$20, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$15.

Honorable mentions: as merited.

**Category 27: Last Line Award** -- Sponsored and judged by Jason Ervin.

Subject: Open, but the last line must be “and you just can’t get a rabbit to go along with that.” Inspired by comedian Dave Chappelle’s habit of keeping punch lines in a fish bowl, retrieving one every now and then, and writing the joke to the punch line. Your poem need not be humorous, however. Line limit: 40

Form: open. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions as merited.

**Category 28: Video Award** – Sponsored and judged by Jason Ervin. Form: open. Subject. open.

Line limit: 40. Prizes: 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable mentions as merited.

Our second annual video award. Video yourself reading your poem (a smartphone is a great way to do this). All videos will be posted on MPS's 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.

