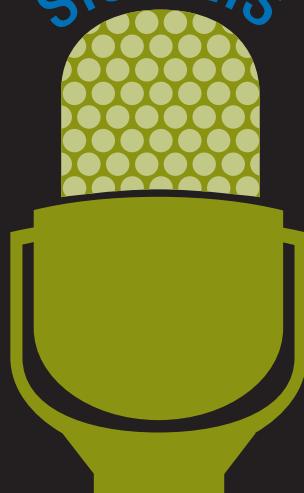


INSPIRING  
STUDENTS



**POETRY**  
**OUT LOUD**

**2016 NATIONAL FINALS**

Lisner Auditorium, The George Washington University  
Washington, DC



**National  
Endowment  
for the Arts**  
arts.gov

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA 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 NEA 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. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the agency is celebrating this milestone with events and activities through September 2016.



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 Foundation develops partnerships and programs that reinforce artists' capacity to create and present work, advance access to and participation in the arts, and promote a more sustainable arts ecology. The Foundation was created in 1979 and is a private non-profit organization that is closely allied with the region's state arts councils and the National Endowment for the Arts. It combines funding from state and federal resources with private support from corporations, foundations, and individuals to address needs in the arts from a regional, national, and international perspective.

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.



Welcome to our nation’s capital and the final competition of the 2016 Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest.

Since the program began in 2005, more than 3 million students and 45,000 teachers from 10,000 schools across the country have participated in Poetry Out Loud. Fifty-three students have advanced to the National Finals—one from every state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. We congratulate all our state champions on their successes and recognize the courage and hard work that brought them here today. Of course they are not alone, but joined by the family, friends, teachers, and state arts agency staff and partners who have supported and inspired them along the way. We offer an enthusiastic round of applause to all those who have journeyed with these students—thank you.

Every audience member, whether with us in person, watching the live webcast, or following us at #POL16, will witness how a poem is transformed when taken off the page and spoken aloud. These students have explored the intricacies of poetry and brought their own experience to the interpretation and delivery. It is their task to return the poem to world, to make it new. You will hear poems written centuries ago and others newly minted, and you will hear a few poems recited more than once—consider what each unique perspective reveals.

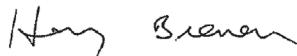
This year, we are pleased to debut an original poetry competition—Poetry Ourselves—in honor of the NEA’s 50th anniversary. We will announce the winners on Finals night!

Poetry is an ancient art that still thrives in our popular culture because of its magical simplicity, its allegiance to imagination and invention, and its ability to stir human thought and feeling in a few pure lines. As poet Rita Dove once said, “Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful.” We invite you to listen closely to these recitations and be inspired by their power to connect us to one another, to nourish our intellect, and to light new paths.

A warm welcome to all of our guests, and best of luck to our competitors.



Jane Chu  
Chairman  
National Endowment for the Arts



Henry Bienen  
President  
Poetry Foundation



Photo by Strauss Peyton Studios



Photo courtesy of the  
Poetry Foundation

# May 3

## SEMIFINALS PROGRAM

9:00 am **SEMIFINAL ONE**  
1:00 pm **SEMIFINAL TWO**  
5:00 pm **SEMIFINAL THREE**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Eleanor Billington  
Stephen Young

### **Hosts**

Stephen F. Schmidt  
Anderson Wells  
Josephine Reed

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### **First Round**

### **Second Round**

INTERMISSION

### **Awards Presentation**

### **Announcement of Regional Finalists**

*Top eight competitors in each semifinal will recite a third poem*

### **Third Round**

### **Announcement of National Finalists**

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



# SEMIFINALS Hosts and Judges

## Hosts

**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.

**Stephen F. Schmidt** has been a professional actor for more than 40 years, and has lived and worked in New York, Los Angeles, and for the past 28 years in the DC-Baltimore area. He is an associate artist of Ford's Theatre, where he is also a teaching artist and for the past seven years has worked with teachers from across the country teaching the art of oratory. He is currently in Arena Stage's production of *All The Way*, the Tony and Drama Desk Award-winning play by Robert Schenkkan about Lyndon Baines Johnson and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He is also currently performing in *One Destiny* (a two-man show about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln) at Ford's. He can be seen in the Clint Eastwood film, *J. Edgar*, and can also be seen in the third episode of the second season of Netflix's *House of Cards* as Senator Abner.

**Anderson Wells** is an actor and singer in the DC area. He has worked with such theatre education programs as Centerstage in Maryland and Tyler Hill Camp in Pennsylvania. He has performed with many a cappella groups, including DC's Vox Pop and The Lobby. Currently, Wells is the office manager and registrar for Studio Theatre and in fall of 2016 he will become the newest member of the faculty of Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory. Wells has his BFA for acting from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and continues to train at Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory.

## Judges

### REGION ONE

**Jericho Brown** is the recipient of a Whiting Writer's Award and fellowships from the John S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, and the National Endowment for the Arts. His poems have appeared in *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Best American Poetry*. His first book, *Please*, won the American Book Award, and his second book, *The New Testament*, won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and the Thom Gunn Award, and it was named one of the best books of the year by *Library Journal*, *Coldfront*, and the Academy of American Poets. He is an associate professor in English and creative writing at Emory University in Atlanta.

**Allison Adelle Hedge Coke**'s books include *Streaming*, *Blood Run*, *Off-Season City Pipe*, *Dog Road Woman*, *Sing: Poetry from the Indigenous Americas*, *Effigies*, *Effigies II*, and *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer*. Her awards include an American Book Award, a King-Chavez-Parks Award, the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas Lifetime Achievement Award, and a 2016 Library of Congress Witter Bynner Fellowship. She teaches in the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA program in writing and publishing and the Red Earth MFA program at Oklahoma City University.

**Philippa Hughes** founded the Pink Line Project, a calendar of all things cool and creative in DC, and writes a widely read blog highlighting the best of the DC art scene. She created the Pink Line Project to inspire creative thinking in everyone, to build community, and to open portals to art and culture for the curious. Hughes hopes

# SEMIFINALS Hosts and Judges

to help both residents and visitors see beyond the institutions and politics of DC and view the city as a place filled with incredible people doing amazingly creative things using art, technology, and good old-fashioned ingenuity.

**Adrian Matejka**'s first collection of poetry, *The Devil's Garden*, won the 2002 New York/New England Award, and his second collection, *Mixology*, was selected for the 2008 National Poetry Series. His most recent book, *The Big Smoke*, received the 2014 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was a finalist for the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Matejka has received two Illinois Arts Council Literary Awards and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Lannan Foundation. He currently teaches in the MFA program at Indiana University.

## REGION TWO

**Regie Cabico** is a three-time National Poetry Slam Champion whose work has appeared on several seasons of HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*, NPR's *Snap Judgment*, and MTV's "Free Your Mind" spoken-word tour. His poetry appears in *Poetry*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, and *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. He is a founding board member and featured poet for Split This Rock and is a teaching artist for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and has coached and directed the DC Youth Slam Team. Since 2008, Cabico has led recitation workshops for Poetry Out Loud in conjunction with the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

**Katharine Coles'** fifth poetry collection, *The Earth Is Not Flat*, was written under the auspices of the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Artists and Writers Program; her sixth, *Flight*, is due out in 2016. Since 2012, she has collaborated with teams at Oxford University and the University of Utah to create visualization tools to aid poetry scholars and poets in close reading and composition. This work has resulted in co-authored publications and presentations in venues including the international EuroVis, InfoVis, Modern Language Association, and Digital Humanities Conferences. A professor at the University of Utah, in 2009–2010 she served as the inaugural director of the Poetry Foundation's Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute.

**Abel López** is the associate producing director of GALA Hispanic Theatre, chair of Americans for the Arts, chair of the Helen Hayes Awards Board of Governors, and vice chair of the National Performance Network. As a director, his productions have been presented in theaters in DC, Arizona, Texas, California, New York, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Cuba, and Venezuela. Among the honors he has received are the 2015 Arthur L. Johnson Award from the Sphinx Organization and the Selina Ottum Roberts Award from Americans for the Arts for his contributions to the arts. A graduate of Harvard Law School, López taught in the graduate arts management program at George Mason University.

**Glenis Redmond** is the poet-in-residence at both the Peace Center in Greenville, South Carolina, and the State Theatre in New Brunswick, New Jersey. She served as the mentor poet for the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities' National Student Poets Program in 2014 and 2015. She prepared the national student poets to read at the Library of Congress, the Department of Education, and for First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. Redmond is a Cave Canem Fellow, a North Carolina Literary Fellowship recipient, and a Kennedy Center Teaching Artist. Her latest book, *What My Hand Say*, will be published by Press 53 this fall.

## REGION THREE

**Dr. Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis** is a founding director of the Washington, DC-based arts nonprofit, *The Asian American Literary Review*, and serves as co-editor-in-chief of its critically acclaimed literary journal. A consulting curator with the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, he currently coordinates the Smithsonian Asian-Latino Project. Since 2006, he has taught literature, film, and mixed race studies for the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Maryland. His fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction have appeared or will appear in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *Ploughshares*, *Gastronomica*, *Kenyon Review*, *Amerasia Journal*, AGNI online, and *Fiction International*, among other publications.

**Teri Ellen Cross Davis** is the poetry coordinator at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. She is the recipient of fellowships from the Ford Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Cave Canem, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. Cross Davis' poems have been published in many journals and anthologies, including *Poet Lore*, *Natural Bridge*, *The North American Review*, *Delaware Poetry Review*, *Bum Rush the Page: A Def Poetry Jam*, and *Gathering Ground: A Reader Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade*. Her first collection, *HAI NT*, will be published in June 2016 by Gival Press.

**Thomas Dooley** is a poet and the author of *Trespass*, a winner of the National Poetry Series. As founding artistic director of Emotive Fruition, a New York-based collective of poets and actors, he has created live performances of poetry for audiences all over New York and recently was featured on NPR's hit show *Radiolab*. A member of the creative writing faculty at New York University, Dooley lives and writes in Brooklyn, New York.

**Gowri K.** is a Tamil-American poet, performing artist, teaching artist, and lawyer. She serves as co-editor of *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, a poetry events host at Busboys and Poets, poetry coordinator at BloomBars, and senior poetry editor at *Jaggery*. Gowri has performed her poetry and original theater productions at Lincoln Center Out of Doors, the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Atlas Performing Arts Center, Capital Fringe Festival, and universities in the U.S. and Canada.

# May 4

## NATIONAL FINALS PROGRAM

### Welcome

Elizabeth Acevedo

### Roll Call of State Champions

### Opening Remarks and Announcement of Poetry Ourselves Winners

Jane Chu, Chairman

National Endowment for the Arts

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### First Round

#### Remarks

Henry Bienen, President

Poetry Foundation

### Second Round

### Awarding of Medals

### Announcement of Three Finalists

### Final Round

#### Remarks

Pam Breaux, CEO

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

### Performance

Christylez Bacon

### Announcement of Poetry Out Loud Champion



# NATIONAL FINALS Host and Judges

## Host

**Elizabeth Acevedo** was born and raised in New York City and her poetry is infused with her Dominican parents' bolero and her beloved city's tough grit. She holds a BA in performing arts from The George Washington University and a MFA in creative writing from the University of Maryland. She is a National Poetry Slam Champion and has performed nationally and internationally, most recently returning from a European tour. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in the *Notre Dame Review*, *Callaloo*, *Puerto Del Sol*, *Poet Lore*, and *Beltway Quarterly*. Her manuscript, *Blessed Fruit & Other Origin Myths*, was a finalist for Yes Yes Books' chapbook poetry prize and will be published in September 2016. She is a CantoMundo, Cave Canem, and Callaloo Fellow.

## Judges

**Alice Quinn** is the executive director of the Poetry Society of America, the nation's oldest organization devoted to the art, founded in 1910. She was poetry editor at *The New Yorker* from 1987–2007 and at Alfred A. Knopf from 1976–1986. She teaches at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts and is at work on an edition of Elizabeth Bishop's journals.

**Chris Sarandon** began his career as a teen drummer/singer in a popular high school rock band. He has appeared on Broadway in *The Rothschilds*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Nick & Nora*, *The Light in the Piazza*, and *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Off-Broadway, he has appeared in *The Woods*, *The Devil's Disciple*, *Through a Glass Darkly*, and recently in the highly acclaimed *Preludes*. His movies include *Dog Day Afternoon*, for which he won an Oscar nomination, *The Princess Bride*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Fright Night*, and *I Smile Back*. He has had roles on *Felicity*, *Chicago Hope*, *Law & Order: SVU*, and *ER*. His lead roles in Hallmark Hall of Fame Specials include *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Day Christ Died* and he appeared as Abraham Lincoln in PBS's *God in America*. He is married to award-winning actress/director Joanna Gleason.

**Virgil Suárez** is the author of more than 20 books, including the poetry collections *Guide to the Blue Tongue*; *Banyan*, for which he won the Book Expo America/Latino Literature Hall of Fame Poetry Prize; *In the Republic of Longing*, and *You Come Singing*. In addition to poetry, he has published novels, short stories, essays, book reviews, a memoir, and translations and has edited several anthologies. Suárez has achieved such distinctions as the Florida State Individual

Artist Grant, a G. MacArthur Poetry Prize, and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He is a professor of creative writing at Florida State University.

**José Vadi** is a writer living in Oakland, California. He received the San Francisco Foundation's Shenson Performing Arts Award for his debut play, *A Eulogy for Three*, before becoming the inaugural director of the Off/Page Project, a collaboration between Youth Speaks and the Center for Investigative Reporting. A two-time poetry slam champion, his work has been featured by *PBS NewsHour*, *Mashable*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Daily Beast*, while his writing has appeared in *Colorlines*, *The Huffington Post*, *Gigantic*, *Jupiter 88*, *3:AM Magazine*, and *Catapult*.

**Jacqueline Woodson** is the new Young People's Poet Laureate and the 2014 National Book Award Winner for her memoir, *Brown Girl Dreaming*. The book also received a Newbery Honor, an NAACP Image Award, a Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Honor, and was short-listed for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. She is the author of 30 books for young adults, middle-graders, and children. Among many other awards, she is also a four-time Newbery Honor winner, a three-time National Book Award finalist, and two-time Coretta Scott King Award winner. Her books include *The Other Side*, *Each Kindness*, *Beneath the Meth Moon*, *Coming on Home Soon*, *Feathers*, and *Miracle's Boys*, which received the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and was adapted into a miniseries directed by Spike Lee.



# 2016 State Champions

These are the 2016 Poetry Out Loud State Champions from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Congratulations to all!

## ALABAMA

**Raina Verser**

*New Century Technology High School*

## ALASKA

**Shannon Croft**

*West Anchorage High School*

## ARIZONA

**Hunter Hazelton**

*Betty H. Fairfax High School*

## ARKANSAS

**Madeleine I. Windel**

*Deer High School*

## CALIFORNIA

**Chigozie Maduchukwu**

*Pleasant Grove High School*

## COLORADO

**David Cendón García**

*Fountain Valley School of Colorado*

## CONNECTICUT

**Emily L. Saunders**

*RHAM High School*

## DELAWARE

**Hannah R. Sturgis**

*Polytech High School*

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Erica P. Jones**

*McKinley Technology High School*

## FLORIDA

**Jarod R. Atchley**

*West Port High School*

## GEORGIA

**Marta Palombo**

*Cambridge High School*

## HAWAII

**Nicholas Amador**

*Punahou School*

## IDAHO

**Romee Johnson**

*Teton High School*

## ILLINOIS

**Mariah L. Brooks**

*Springfield Southeast High School*

## INDIANA

**Grace C. Milligan**

*Twin Lakes High School*

## IOWA

**Grace Beumler**

*Bishop Heelan High School*

## KANSAS

**Sarah Katsiyiannis**

*Tipton Catholic High School*

## KENTUCKY

**Naomi Cliett**

*Elizabethtown High School*

## LOUISIANA

**Kyla Rose Bates**

*Zachary High School*

## MAINE

**Rose Horowitz**

*Mt. Ararat High School*

## MARYLAND

**Sharese Acheampong**

*New Town High School*

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Courtney Bryan Devon Stewart**

*Springfield Central High School*

## MICHIGAN

**Lyndon DeFoe**

*University High School Academy*

## MINNESOTA

**Abigail Joy Etterson**

*Harbor City International School*

## MISSISSIPPI

**Lawson Marchetti**

*Jackson Preparatory School*

## MISSOURI

**Sarah Koo**

*Parkway North High School*

## MONTANA

**Savannah Smith**

*Helena High School*

## NEBRASKA

**Margaret Harris**

*Thayer Central Community Schools*

## NEVADA

**Mikayla C. Bates**

*Elko High School*

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Danielle Corbett**

*Jesse Remington High School*

## NEW JERSEY

**Celeste Sena**

*Dr. Ronald E. McNair Academic High School*

## NEW MEXICO

**Michelle Zhou**

*La Cueva High School*

## NEW YORK

**Chiara M. Raimondo**

*Jamestown High School*

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Jasmine Jackson**

*Kinston High School*

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Caroline Huber**

*Minot High School Magic City Campus*

## OHIO

**Thomas Ellison**

*Chaminade Julienne Catholic High School*

## OKLAHOMA

**Juan A. Oseguera**

*Ada High School*

## OREGON

**Mitchell Lenneville**

*Homeschooled*

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Greer LeRoy**

*Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School*

## PUERTO RICO

**Wenmimareba Klobah Collins**

*University High School*

## RHODE ISLAND

**Austin Paulhus**

*Central Falls High School*

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**Nicole Sadek**

*Charleston County School of the Arts*

## SOUTH DAKOTA

**Maddie Lukomski**

*Lincoln High School*

## TENNESSEE

**Alexia Buckner**

*Bolton High School*

## TEXAS

**Madison Heggins**

*Lewisville High School*

## UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

**Irvin Mason, Jr.**

*All Saints Cathedral School*

## UTAH

**Tessa Mae Thornley**

*Bear River High School*

## VERMONT

**Maggie Fitzgerald**

*Rice Memorial High School*

## VIRGINIA

**Ahkei Togun**

*Tallwood High School*

## WASHINGTON

**Jake Andrews**

*Ellensburg High School*

## WEST VIRGINIA

**Neely Seams**

*Greenbrier East High School*

## WISCONSIN

**Kirsten Meier**

*Brookfield Central High School*

## WYOMING

**Lucy Martinez**

*Summit High School*



# SEMIFINAL ONE

May 3, 9:00 am

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## MAINE

### **Rose Horowitz**

“In the Basement of the Goodwill Store” by Ted Kooser

“Mrs. Caldera’s House of Things” by Gregory Djanikian

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## VERMONT

### **Maggie Fitzgerald**

“Love Song” by Dorothy Parker

“The Nail” by C.K. Williams

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## NEW JERSEY

### **Celeste Sena**

“I’m A Fool To Love You” by Cornelius Eady

“La Figlia che Piange” by T.S. Eliot

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## MARYLAND

### **Sharese Acheampong**

“It was not death, for I stood up” by Emily Dickinson

“Make a Law so that the Spine Remembers Wings” by Larry Lewis

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## MASSACHUSETTS

### **Courtney Bryan Devon Stewart**

“Life Cycle of Common Man” by Howard Nemerov

“Memory As a Hearing Aid” by Tony Hoagland

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### **Danielle Corbett**

“Monet Refuses the Operation” by Lisel Mueller

“Very Large Moth” by Craig Arnold

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## SOUTH CAROLINA

### **Nicole Sadek**

“The Hospital Window” by James L. Dickey

“Planetarium” by Adrienne Rich

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## NEW YORK

### **Chiara M. Raimondo**

“Bleeding Heart” by Carmen Giménez Smith

“The Pulley” by George Herbert

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## OHIO

### **Thomas Ellison**

“The Delta” by Bruce Bond

“Translations from the English” by George Starbuck

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**RHODE ISLAND****Austin Paulhus**

“The Obligation to Be Happy” by Linda Pastan

“The Conqueror Worm” by Edgar Allan Poe

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**WEST VIRGINIA****Neely Seams**

“Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg” by Richard Hugo

“Insomnia” by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

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**NORTH CAROLINA****Jasmine Jackson**

“Obedience, or the Lying Tale” by Jennifer Chang

“The Spider and the Fly” by Mary Howitt

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**UNITED STATES  
VIRGIN ISLANDS****Irvin Mason, Jr.**

“The Bones of My Father” by Etheridge Knight

“Flounder” by Natasha Trethewey

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**VIRGINIA****Ahkei Togun**

“The Way It Sometimes Is” by Henry Taylor

“I’m a Fool to Love You” by Cornelius Eady

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**CONNECTICUT****Emily L. Saunders**

“a song in the front yard” by Gwendolyn Brooks

“The Children’s Hour” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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**PENNSYLVANIA****Greer LeRoy**

“The Second Coming” by William Butler Yeats

“The World Is Too Much With Us” by William Wordsworth

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**DELAWARE****Hannah R. Sturgis**

“Infelix” by Adah Isaacs Menken

“Blackberrying” by Sylvia Plath

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**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Erica P. Jones**

“The Other Side of This World” by Calvin Forbes

“From Space to Time” by Carolyn M. Rodgers

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# SEMIFINAL TWO

May 3, 1:00 pm

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## TENNESSEE

### **Alexia Buckner**

“Echo” by Christina Rossetti

“The Obligation to Be Happy” by Linda Pastan

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## IOWA

### **Grace Beumler**

“Confessions” by Robert Browning

“Idea 61: Since there’s no help, come let us kiss and part”  
by Michael Drayton

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## NEBRASKA

### **Margaret Harris**

“There Are Birds Here” by Jamaal May

“Quite Frankly” by Mark Halliday

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## INDIANA

### **Grace C. Milligan**

“Hymn to God, my God, in My Sickness” by John Donne

“La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad” by John Keats

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## PUERTO RICO

### **Wenmimareba Klobah Collins**

“Channel Firing” by Thomas Hardy

“Written by Himself” by Gregory Pardlo

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## LOUISIANA

### **Kyla Rose Bates**

“Echo” by Christina Rossetti

“The Way It Sometimes Is” by Henry Taylor

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## WISCONSIN

### **Kirsten Meier**

“Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

“Lazy” by David Yezzi

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## ALABAMA

### **Raina Verser**

“Brian Age Seven” by Mark Doty

“As Children Know” by Jimmy Santiago Baca

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## MISSOURI

### **Sarah Koo**

“Sanctuary” by Jean Valentine

“Lines Written in Early Spring” by William Wordsworth

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**FLORIDA****Jarod R. Atchley**

“The Way It Sometimes Is” by Henry Taylor

“Poem” by Muriel Rukeyser

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**ILLINOIS****Mariah L. Brooks**

“Negative” by Kevin Young

“The Children of the Poor” by Gwendolyn Brooks

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**OKLAHOMA****Juan A. Oseguera**

“The Enigma” by Anne Stevenson

“Bent to the Earth” by Blas Manuel De Luna

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**KANSAS****Sarah Katsiyannis**

“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus

“Personal” by Tony Hoagland

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**MICHIGAN****Lyndon DeFoe**

“Hush” by David St. John

“In School Days” by John Greenleaf Whittier

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**MISSISSIPPI****Lawson Marchetti**

“Fishing on the Susquehanna in July” by Billy Collins

“Novel” by Arthur Rimbaud

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**GEORGIA****Marta Palombo**

“Echo” by Christina Rossetti

“For the young who want to” by Marge Piercy

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**ARKANSAS****Madeleine I. Windel**

“Hysteria” by Dionisio D. Martínez

“Ghazal” by Agha Shahid Ali

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**KENTUCKY****Naomi Cliett**

“Movement Song” by Audre Lorde

“Good People” by W.S. Merwin

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# SEMIFINAL THREE

May 3, 5:00 pm

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## CALIFORNIA

### **Chigozie Maduchukwu**

“Filling Station” by Elizabeth Bishop

“Let the Light Enter” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

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## OREGON

### **Mitchell Lenneville**

“My Brother, the Artist, at Seven” by Philip Levine

“They are hostile nations” by Margaret Atwood

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## ALASKA

### **Shannon Croft**

“War Ballad” by Stanley Moss

“Dear Reader” by Rita Mae Reese

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## NEW MEXICO

### **Michelle Zhou**

“Testimonial” by Rita Dove

“August 12 in the Nebraska Sand Hills Watching the Perseids

Meteor Shower” by Twyla Hansen

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## HAWAII

### **Nicholas Amador**

“Thoughtless Cruelty” by Charles Lamb

“Fishing on the Susquehanna in July” by Billy Collins

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## ARIZONA

### **Hunter Hazelton**

“Blackberrying” by Sylvia Plath

“Ecology” by Jack Collom

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## MINNESOTA

### **Abigail Joy Etterson**

“Kubla Khan” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

“The Greatest Grandeur” by Pattiann Rogers

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## WYOMING

### **Lucy Martinez**

“Refusing Silence” by Tess Gallagher

“Life in a Love” by Robert Browning

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**IDAHO****Romee Johnson**

“Dear Reader” by Rita Mae Reese

“Ode” by Arthur O’Shaughnessy

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**COLORADO****David Cendón Garcia**

“El Olvido” by Judith Ortiz Cofer

“Ode” by Arthur O’Shaughnessy

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**MONTANA****Savannah Smith**

“For the young who want to” by Marge Piercy

“Novel” by Arthur Rimbaud

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**NEVADA****Mikayla C. Bates**

“A Country Boy in Winter” by Sarah Orne Jewett

“Domestic Situation” by Ernest Hilbert

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**NORTH DAKOTA****Caroline Huber**

“Personal” by Tony Hoagland

“Mezzo Cammin” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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**SOUTH DAKOTA****Maddie Lukomski**

“Movement Song” by Audre Lorde

“Memory As a Hearing Aid” by Tony Hoagland

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**UTAH****Tessa Mae Thornley**

“Life in a Love” by Robert Browning

“Aria” by David Barber

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**TEXAS****Madison Heggins**

“Richard Cory” by Edwin Arlington Robinson

“Self-Help” by Michael Ryan

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**WASHINGTON****Jake Andrews**

“On an Unsociable Family” by Elizabeth Hands

“Zoom!” by Simon Armitage

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# PRIZES

## NATIONAL FINALS

<b>1st place</b>	\$20,000 award
<b>2nd place</b>	\$10,000 award
<b>3rd place</b>	\$5,000 award
<b>4th–9th places</b>	\$1,000 award

The schools 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 library for the purchase of poetry materials.

## STATE FINALS

More than \$50,000 in cash and school stipends were awarded at state final competitions.

*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 OURSELVES

As part of the NEA's 50th anniversary activities, Poetry Out Loud offered an additional competition for original student work for the 2016 National Finals. Each state champion had the opportunity to submit an original work of poetry in one of two categories—written or spoken. Poet and spoken-word artist Patricia Smith judged submissions. The winning student and runner-up in each category may have his/her poem featured on the NEA website, arts.gov, and the Poetry Out Loud website, poetryoutloud.org. Winners and runners-up will be announced at the National Finals.

**Patricia Smith** is a poet, writer, teacher, and performance artist. She is the author of six books of poetry, including *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah*, which won the Lenore Marshall Prize from the Academy of American Poets; *Blood Dazzler*, a chronicle of the human and environmental cost of Hurricane Katrina which was nominated for a National Book Award; and *Teahouse of the Almighty*, a 2005 National Poetry Series selection published by Coffee House Press. Her work has appeared in *Poetry*, the *Paris Review*, *The New York Times*, *TriQuarterly*, *Tin House*, *The Washington Post*, and in both *Best American Poetry* and *Best American Essays*. Smith is a four-time individual champion of the National Poetry Slam.

## Production

**Michael Baron** (director) is the producing artistic director of Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma and has directed over 85 productions at theaters across the country. Most recently at Lyric, he directed *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*, *Big Fish*, *Oklahoma!*, *Les Misérables*, *A Little Night Music*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Triangle*, Disney's *Tarzan*, *Big River*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Ragtime*, and *Oliver!* Baron's other directing highlights include the recent production of *Peter and the Starcatcher* at Zach Theatre, the current production of *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre, and *James and the Giant Peach* at Adventure Theatre. He earned his MFA in directing from Trinity Repertory and a BA in theatre from Wake Forest University.

**Chris Burns** is a DC-based music producer, promoter, and DJ with over 15 years experience. Burns is regularly called upon to play at some of DC's most acclaimed venues, including U Street Music Hall, Flash, Eighteenth Street Lounge, and the 9:30 Club. He has released original music, remixes, and engineered projects for labels such as Italians Do It Better, Nervous, Quantize/Unquantize, New Jersey Records, Plant, and his own recording label, Mysteries of the Mind. Burns is also a real estate agent with TTR Sotheby's international realty and is licensed in DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

## Musical Guest

**Christylez Bacon** (pronounced: chris-styles) is a GRAMMY-nominated Progressive Hip-Hop artist and multi-instrumentalist from Southeast Washington, DC. As a performer, Bacon multi-tasks between various instruments, such as the West African djembe drum, acoustic guitar, and the human beat-box (oral percussion), all while continuing the oral tradition of storytelling through his lyrics.

Bacon has been a featured performer at the Music Center at Strathmore, The Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, and was the first Hip-Hop artist to be featured at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. He is the recipient of multiple Wammy Awards (Washington Area Music Association), the Montgomery County Executive Award for Excellence in the Arts, and has been honored as a "Library Superhero" in Montgomery County.



## ASL Interpreters

**Mia Engle** and **Cheryl Ringel**

## **POETRY OUT LOUD IS MANAGED AT THE STATE LEVEL BY**

Alabama State Council on the Arts

Alaska State Council on the Arts

Arizona Commission on the Arts

Arkansas Arts Council

California Arts Council

Colorado Creative Industries

Connecticut Office of the Arts

Delaware Division of the Arts

DC Commission on the Arts  
and Humanities

Florida Division of Cultural Affairs

Georgia Council for the Arts

Hawaii State Foundation on  
Culture and the Arts

Idaho Commission on the Arts

Illinois Arts Council Agency

Indiana Arts Commission

Iowa Arts Council

Kansas Creative Arts Industries  
Commission

Kentucky Arts Council

Louisiana Division of the Arts

Maine Arts Commission

Maryland State Arts Council

Massachusetts Cultural Council

Michigan Council for Arts  
and Cultural Affairs

Minnesota State Arts Board

Mississippi Arts Commission

Missouri Arts Council

Montana Arts Council

Nebraska Arts Council

Nevada Arts Council

New Hampshire State Council  
on the Arts

New Jersey State Council  
on the Arts

New Mexico Arts

New York State Council on the Arts

North Carolina Arts Council

North Dakota Council on the Arts

Ohio Arts Council

Oklahoma Arts Council

Oregon Arts Commission

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

Rhode Island State Council on the Arts

South Carolina Arts Commission

South Dakota Arts Council

Tennessee Arts Commission

Texas Commission on the Arts

Utah Division of Arts & Museums

Vermont Arts Council

Virgin Islands Council on the Arts

Virginia Commission for the Arts

Washington State Arts Commission:  
Arts WA

West Virginia Division of  
Culture and History

Wisconsin Arts Board

Wyoming Arts Council

and many incredible partners

## **THE NATIONAL FINALS ARE THE RESULT OF THE REMARKABLE EFFORTS OF**

Karen Newell and Mid Atlantic Arts  
Foundation, Peggy Dahlquist, Michael Baron,  
DJ Chris Burns, guest hosts and judges, and  
staff at the National Endowment for the Arts  
and the Poetry Foundation.

I followed these signs  
...and found so many parts of myself,  
who taught me water is not everything,  
and gave me new eyes to see through walls,  
and when they spoke, sunlight came out of their mouths,  
and I was laughing at me with them,  
we laughed like children and made pacts to always be loyal,  
who understands me when I say this is beautiful?

Excerpted from “Who Understands Me but Me” by Jimmy Santiago Baca

*In loving memory of Emily Orellana, state champion of Nevada from 2009, 2010, and 2011*

[www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org)



National  
Endowment  
for the Arts  
arts.gov

