



NATIONAL
STUDENT
POETS
PROGRAM
2016

THE NATION'S HIGHEST HONOR
FOR YOUTH POETS PRESENTING
ORIGINAL WORK



Scholastic
Art & Writing
Awards



academy of
american poets

Letter from the First Lady of the United States

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers partner to present the National Student Poets Program (NSPP), the country's highest honor for youth poets presenting original work. Five outstanding high school poets whose work exhibits exceptional creativity, dedication to craft, and promise are selected annually for a year of service as national poetry ambassadors.

National Student Poets are chosen from among the National Medalists in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards by a jury of literary luminaries and leaders in education and the arts. Student Poets receive college scholarships and opportunities to present their work at writing and poetry events throughout their term.

The National Student Poets Program is supported in part by funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, with private support provided by an anonymous donor, the Poetry Foundation, the Bernstein Family Foundation, and the Academy of American Poets.

artandwriting.org/NSPP

facebook.com/NationalStudentPoetsProgram



I am delighted to send my warmest congratulations to this year's five, very talented National Student Poets. These poets have demonstrated unmatched skill, a strong commitment to their craft, and a willingness to share their voices in order to stir our imaginations.

As Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, I have had the privilege of witnessing the essential role the fine arts play in our lives and the patience and dedication necessary to create such masterful works. Your passion for poetry and the written word will continue to inspire so many across the country to work together towards a brighter future, and I know that your generation's creativity and belief in the power of the arts will help create stronger communities and a more welcoming world. As you spend this year as an ambassador for the arts and humanities, I hope you take pride in all you have accomplished and continue to advocate for the importance of creative expression in our schools, libraries, and museums.

Again, congratulations to the fifth annual class of National Student Poets, and I wish you the best in the years to come.

Michelle Obama

Table of Contents

- 1 Letter from the First Lady
- 3 Letter from the Partners
- 4 Stella Binion, Midwest
- 8 Maya Eashwaran, Southeast
- 12 Gopal Raman, Southwest
- 16 Joey Reisberg, Northeast
- 20 Maya Salameh, West
- 25 2016 Jurors
- 27 Special Thanks
- 28 Eligibility

Letter from the National Student Poets Program Partners

We are delighted to join First Lady Michelle Obama in congratulating the Class of 2016 on receiving the nation's highest honor for youth poets. Over the past five years, the National Student Poet Program has created a legacy of our country's most promising young poets by providing each class with resources to develop their skills as poets and supporting them as ambassadors who engage and inspire young and old alike.

Each year, at a White House ceremony, the First Lady charges them, as she puts it, to "go out there and spread the word and to share your gift with as many people as you can." Class after class of poets has fulfilled this charge through events and service projects that have changed the trajectory of each poet's life and touched the lives of hundreds of young people. They have reached kids who had never before met a poet their age, they have been advocates for poetry in their schools and communities, and they have grown as poets and as leaders.

As partners in carrying out the National Student Poets Program, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers seek to ensure that the talents of young people are nurtured and recognized so as to sustain our nation's cultural life. We are therefore proud to share samples of their work in this small volume.

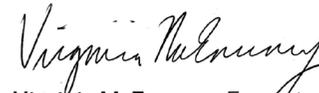
Congratulations to these five outstanding poets! We applaud the creativity and genius of America's youth.



Megan Beyer, Executive Director
President's Committee on the Arts
and the Humanities



Kathryn Matthew, Executive Director
Institute of Museum and Library Services



Virginia McEnerney, Executive Director
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers



Stella Binion

Age 17; Chicago, IL; Midwest Region

Stella Binion is a rising senior at Walter Payton College Prep who grew up on the West Side of Chicago. She is a captain of her performance poetry team, Rebirth Poetry Ensemble, a community-focused organization that brings together youth poets from across the city. This past March, Rebirth won Chicago's Louder Than a Bomb slam poetry competition, and Stella and her team represented Chicago at the 19th annual Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Festival. Stella is also a poet educator—teaching, mentoring, and leading workshops for fifth-graders at Rowe Elementary. She is a Payton Advisory Leader (PAL) and a leader with Payton's Organization of Women (POW). 

When Sister Comes to Visit

she never cracks shell on mixing bowl rim
instead picks coconut oil from thin metal loops

when with her,
don't have to jump
through them

only have to pick up pace beside her in grocery store aisles
Earth Balance
cinnamon
unsweetened chocolate chips

watching from kitchen counter
as brown hands coated
in white flour
trace patterns in
hip-hop cemented,
self-taught,
familial rhythms

but the way she licks sugar from fingertip
as if she had ever tasted this sweet before
as if one home
as if got her hair permed every month
as if Christmas tree, not Katrina-brought branch
as if didn't Mother herself

kitchen floor sags under weight of all she carries

the walls
can barely hold all of
her
as she whisks accord into mixing bowls

blk girls be boxing

I tried writing a poem
 where I stood in the middle of a boxing ring
 a metaphor of black womanhood
 where we're out-sized in our weight class, timer tap-out rigged
 our brain and bodies shook and shaken
 brown lips bruised straight punch
 all swollen
 but it's too hard to write about real as if it's only rhetoric
 as if being blk girl is like getting beat and broken only if I write it into this poem

 every morning I look in the mirror and see blk girl hook
 ever since I couldn't be the princess on the playground bc princesses don't look like me
 open-hand hit
 the first time I didn't say anything when the n-word slipped through the white boy's
 lips full crouch
 the first time I learned to love myself everyone else still didn't back-hand hit

 all the punches thrown at every blk woman each passing day can't be written into this
 one poem
 all I can do is spit out what I can, while I still can straight punch
 before I fall with split lip or purple yellow black eye overhand clinch
 before they tell me they can't hear me
 but this poem is blk girl resilience
 is me, telling you I'm hurt right cross

but breathing still
 this poem is not one in which my strength is written and weighed only at the whim of a
 black boy
 our hurt is more than just his
 this poem is all the blk girls missing and not looked for
 all whose names aren't said
 this poem is me saying them
 and saying we are magic, too straight punch

 this poem is split decision
 a twelfth-round rally
 a carrying of spirits come before me in gripped knuckles
 an Assata, Angela, Alicia clinch counterpunch
 a knowing that we've always punched back

 blk girls be boxing
 breathing the dirt and sweat-coated air of a lifelong bout, surviving corruption and
 poison
 I can't write this poem
 without it being a punch too



Maya Eashwaran

Age 17; Alpharetta, GA; Southeast Region

Maya Eashwaran has always loved reading and writing. She used to write stories about female ice-skating detectives and short Dr. Seuss-inspired poems at the age of eight. Since then, her love for words has expanded rapidly. As a first-generation Indian American, Maya writes a lot about foreigners and the foreigner mentality, often touching into personal experiences dealing with assimilation in the modern age. An avid writer and musician, Maya also combines her love for poetry and love for music, frequently experimenting with rhythm and syncopation in her poems. When she's not writing, you can find her doodling in the margins of a new poem, experimenting with watercolors or calligraphy, or reading Harry Potter or works by Walt Whitman. 🎨

Linguistics (for my mother)

Ma, I haven't spoken Tamil in three years.
Some god must have known I was a child
of loose change, of ambiguity, of everything more confused
than it should be. Of conjoined twins snipped off
the cord together. Of the love of a language. Mother, maybe I'll
lose the syllables of my name next, ancient and observing, still,
like the way rice farmers wade into their crop after the monsoon
swallowed them whole. We promised to keep culture like dollars and gum wrappers,
stashed in inside-out pockets, tumbled and dried in the wash,
bleached and chlorinated by city swimming pools, floating
pieces of ourselves blanched in cauliflower and contamination;
this is how letters forget themselves, this is how a
daughter loses the weight of her tongue in her mouth, replaces
it with a borrowed accent, a softer *l*, a rumbling *a*, a smeared
r, toothpick consonants, dissonance. Ma, we were Indian until
we weren't. Meanwhile, I pretend I am cultured, I read Dickinson,
structure culture around the linebreaks of my own ignorance. Outside,
the sun melts into itself and I am thinking of all the ways to say that
this is not poetry anymore, this is what happens when a daughter forgets where
her lungs are, what they were made of. Ma, I'm losing parts of
myself every day, leaving bits of human when I walk, buttons, sweater
strings, rosin dust, crushed bottles of water, words and words and
worlds, latex gloves and frozen-over car lots downtown,
mustard seed heat thawing immigrant dreams, silence.
I want to question whether these are the things that make up
the constellations of my genetics, the silence of my voice, but even I
know nothing is silent about life. I've lost more than I have ever lost in
sixteen years. I've started shedding ethnicity like hair:
Mother,
I fear I'll go bald.

Jude in November

She tried on every dress in the store
for it to tell her she was pretty. Grabbed their
price tags like melon bones, scraped the
honeydew flesh across the rinds of her stomach
like something revealing.

Now she is burnt hair and waffle faced
and distance and aging and youth and she cannot decide on
what she wants. A rest, she proclaims, a tenuto, fermata,
a drowning ocean.

Jude smells like bananas and leather, sucks antibiotics like
spaghetti from a thin dorsal tube, cracks a gold-tipped hello from her mouth
like a smashed egg. I want to tell her she is not a pause, she is big and
huge, expansive, that she is a stringendo in the middle of a caesura.
I want to tell her she is a mountain lifting itself out of the ground,
pine burr brambles snapping like a dead bird's wings, I want to
tell her she is alive, she is alive, she is sixteenth notes and
no air and tree branch melodies, and bluebell jazz and
springtime condensation on the windows and a sonata swung wide.
The waiting room feels like a eulogy already fleshed out and I feel
like screaming for her. Jude, Jude, J u d e—

I tell her what I want, even though it's selfish and I am not proud
of all these things: I tell her I want to play lavish concerts, how notes
can breathe, how atoms are like people in love, how a fermata is like a diagnosis.
How empty pill bottles and antiseptic are grace notes, embellishments,
allargando, stretching, taut like the skin of her face. How this music only
gets faster, more intense, bow snapping, breathless until the end. I tell her too
much about the future, about rosin under my nails each night, rock star
except without the guitar-smashing, liquor eyeballs, hoarse throats.
I can see us trailing like smoke and it scares me to smile. She grins, sunken,
her hair a crossword begging to be solved. Her scalp, an atlas, a peninsula,
a map to find a home and I feel guilty talking about tomorrow, about being

alive and waiting and not waiting for a death that takes 200 hours
and 4 people, about being a remnant of sickness she leaves behind.

I don't tell Jude I burnt my cheek with a hair straightener,
or that I saw her mother praying near a jar full of quarters
and her father wailing like a hurricane. I don't tell her about the
resonance of the moment before something happens, a bow to string,
a lightning bolt of clarinet and timpani, stage lights, that she is
still breathing, god, she is still breathing, I don't tell her I know
nothing about life, let alone death.

Now, it is morning and I am lost.

Now, it is morning and I only know
that on the stage, there is
no way to leave unnoticed.



Gopal Raman

Age 17; Dallas, TX; Southwest Region

Gopal Raman is a rising senior at St. Mark's School of Texas. After being inspired by both his English and photography teachers in seventh grade, he fell in love with the perfect mixture of the two genres: poetry. For him, poetry distills images and emotions into a form that brings people together. In his poetry, Gopal seeks to delicately weave the flowing beauty of the natural world with the thread of human connection. Although most of his inspiration comes from nature, poets like Billy Collins, Wallace Stevens, and Walt Whitman push him to experiment with different styles and subjects. During the summer after freshman year, Gopal studied under Nickole Brown and learned how to craft his own unique style and how to develop a concrete voice. In addition to writing poetry, he edits for his high school newspaper and chairs the St. Mark's Literary Festival. 📖

This Apple

is alive.

its skin is a watercolor war
between burning reds and lazy yellows,
and tension pulls it

apart. it smells like orchards of monrovia,
nitrogen south of nigeria, like
carbon from your

lungs. there are worlds inside
this apple, sugar universes
shivering around naïve

nuclei. seafoam from the caymans
swirl around in this globe, the hudson
leaks its ashy blood into this big

apple. its fibers stand tall like flying buttresses
in cathedrals and arches much grander
yet not much greater than the bubble in my

hand. the pulsing heart yearning
for the present and future lies at its
starry core, a white midnight

constellation. its seeds, satin brown like silk
stretched and pulled over cellulose skeletons,
shout so shockingly

silently.

august 23, 2005

“Scores killed as Katrina pounds states along Gulf Coast”—
Sun Sentinel, August 30, 2005

the lichen dips
its furry fingers
just inches in,

but it’s enough.

how nice,
to know when
to stop.

i woke up late today
and cracked open
the faucet

and dipped my
frail fingers in until
they pruned and
wrinkled.

i can’t write with
tight skin.

i leave the paper
soaking, graphite
shading the dripping
shadows.

the paper just sits,
pruned and not
wanting to dry off.

and that must be enough,
to feel the earth crackle
but to not fear the water
creeping through the cracks.

to hear ‘prune’
and think of the fruit.

to hear ‘cane’
and not hurry

to run but
to taste the sugar
melt into your mouth.

my fingers are tightening
up, so i dip them in the stream
again,

but they take longer to
wrinkle.



Joey Reisberg

Age 17; Towson, MD; Northeast Region

Joey Reisberg is a rising junior at the George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology in Towson, Maryland, where he studies Literary Arts and is on the staff of the literary magazine “Synergy.” His poetic influences include Emily Dickinson, Mark Doty, and Sylvia Plath. When he’s not doing homework or writing poems, Joey enjoys poking around used bookstores, wasting precious reading time on the Internet, or taking care of his plants. 🌿

The Muses in a Rented Room in New Orleans

The Muses, sick of being stuck on vases for millennia, take a holiday and are seen here in their play:

Euterpe taps the distant beat of a streetcar on her knee while Terpsichore gyroscopes through the muggy air.

Thalia barks bawdy jokes to the men slinking past the back door, as Melpomene boo-hoo-hoos watching panhandlers parade beneath the scraggly Spanish moss. Urania scrawls sketches of stars plummeting into the Mississippi,

ignoring Polyhymnia parting her hair and dropping her faith like Mardi Gras beads twining through tree branches.

Clio clammers between gravestones and pries open lichen-splattered mausoleums, scribbling epistles to Marie Laveau

in lipstick. Erato wastes reams of paper on her stunted sonnets to the man sitting outside, straining soupy notes out of a trombone.

Calliope’s voice can barely be heard over the racket, but she is there too, whispering this poem into my ear.

13 Ways of Looking at a Mushroom
After Wallace Stevens

1
 Loamy dome
 of soft fungus
 fermented in the soil's spongy cauldron.

2
 New York's hottest restaurant buzzes with Bohemian
 babbling and the pastoral punch of Portobello.

3
 Blue rings of hookah smoke writhed
 into strained vowels
 and mushrooms rocketed
 into Wonderland sky.

4
 Pious, varnished beetles
 trundle to salvation
 under the cathedral vault of the mushrooms' bowed heads.

5
 A tiny elf umbrella
 pokes out of the verdant shag carpet of moss.

6
 In the forest's toxic hangout,
 Death Cap and Destroying Angel
 and Sulphur Tuft chuckle over drinks,
 swapping stories of blue-faced humans
 and gastrointestinal irritants.

7
 colors unveil themselves
 this is the secret heart of the world

beating & bloody
 and it is hurtling toward me
 out of the ragged edge of my dilated pupil:
 This Is a Bad Trip

8
 I'm a pretty fungi
 once you get to know me a little
 come to my place
 just ignore the dirt

9
 Ancient tree roots
 crawl under graves and gated communities,
 occasionally lifting fungoid
 periscopes into the strange light.

10
 mushrooms in a fairy ring
 is there a sweeter thing
 in the spring?

11
 The victim sat in the basement for ten years.
 Mushrooms sprouted in her blue veins.

12
 To ants, this must be a city
 of crumbling splendor, an ever-expanding
 metropolis of fungus.

13
 Plant mushrooms in my grave—
 let me seep into soil
 let me be a galaxy of recycled stars



Maya Salameh

Age 16; San Diego, CA; West Region

Maya Salameh, a rising junior at the San Diego High School of International Studies, is passionate about writing, psychology, and history. She is the founder and president of her school's Psychology Club. She is fluent in English, French, and Arabic and is learning Spanish. The oldest daughter of Lebanese-Americans, Maya hopes to become a psychologist and possibly a diplomat. She believes psychology is an immutable facet of international relations and seeks to bring about effective change for the lost generation of children who have served as weapons of war throughout the world. She lives in San Diego, California, where she enjoys ethereal sunsets and infinite sunshine. 🌅

The Arab Winter

AA, not triple A
 funny, ethnicity's a car crash that needs emergency assistance, assistance it will never receive
 Arab-American
 Cute term for those who live at the perilous intersection of east and west
 Arrogant presumptions
 to smile at our national anthem
 are received with at best
 indulgent smiles
 and at worst
 disbelieving frowns
 Laughing at the terrorism jokes my "peers" make
 Peers,
 implying understanding,
 implying equality
 I am hesitant to reveal I am half Syrian
 and Catholic
 And what the hell should it matter if I was Muslim anyways?
 Such is religion,
 that all extremists must typify believers
 and all believers must typify faiths.

Where has the joy gone?
 All talk is of the daesh, the poor, the dissatisfied;
 Ruin is all one can see in the streets.

And yet
 People survive, people half-thrive
 The children of the cedars have not been quashed,
 not yet
 The cabbies talk of the Syrians,
 of the jobs they have devoured
 One Leb laid off,

three Syrians hired on his salary,
him overpowered, he glowered

I see no justification to take pride in my lineage,
and yet
that is the one thing left to do.
All those -isms my parents ran away from no longer seem worth repeating.
Defiant pride and fearful disappointment
alternate like the dusk and dawn
ever-sparring, alternately powerful, relentless, endless

endless mountains and a relentless sea
alternately powerful scents
(jasmine littering the streets, fresh tannour pulled out of every oven worth its gas,
overly generous spritzes of rose water on my znoud el sit)
and ever-sparring opinions
So why did they leave, again?
endless corruption and relentless dissent
alternately powerful pollutants and ever-sparring parties
But why didn't they leave sooner?

Sighing, crying,
laughing, bashing,
loving,
grieving.
that place your parents came from,
that domain of your ancestors,
your homeland.
But what is a homeland you can no longer call a home?
What is a culture without its pride?
I ask you,
the audience,
the impassive spectator slouching in the back left row,
what is a lion without its mane?

So here we stand
And here we may fall
At the hands
and more importantly, the words
of persecutors, pundits-for-hire, and other such parrots
All repeating one thing to the children of the East:
Be ashamed.
Be ashamed because
an infinitesimal portion of you have wronged, have tortured, have killed.
Be ashamed because
the respect you deserve is infinitesimal, your children's futures are infinitesimal, you
are infinitesimal.
Be ashamed because
you were born in the same place.
Because you share the same heritage.
Be ashamed because
you're all the same.

The solemn, piercing gaze of Persecution
as it stares you in the eyes
Waiting for you to say uncle,
or better yet, 3amo
Was that a gleam of intelligence you caught in those eyes?
By then it had long gone,
overpowered by the cataracts of bigotry or ignorance or too much beer,
Slowly but steadily obscuring their true vision
Soon. Soon there would be a day when his parents—
Mr. Mobmen Tality and Mis. Understanding—
would have to decide to remove those cataracts once and for all
or allow them to completely overtake his vision.

I wonder, how important is true vision to people when it comes at such high a cost?

sacrilege incorporated

i speak to you
terrorists, skyjackers, lifejackers
and otherwise-flavored peddlers
of sacred hearsay
i speak to you
just fyi
just for your illumination
god is not
a mcdonald's franchise
you don't hold any right to sell, market, or
otherwise operate in his name
i speak to you
for now is the time
to open your eyes
to close your pocketbooks
no prophets have ever had
swiss bank accounts
i speak to you
for if you love god
you would not lie
in his name
you would not kill
in his name
you would not explode
in his name
i speak to you
for the only god you seem to know
is the god of destruction
always thirsty
for more blood, more tears,
more futures gone wrong
i speak to you

for children
belong to no creed
and if holiness exists,
it is the selflessness that runs in their
veins
i speak to you
for the magnetic attraction of violence
keeps no home
in the nonpolar
hearts of the young
i speak to you
for senseless violence
has no part
in my definition of humanity
i speak to you
because blind faith
is no faith

2016 Jurors

Kwame Alexander is an American writer of poetry and children's fiction. His book *The Crossover* won the 2015 Newbery Medal recognizing the year's "most distinguished contribution to American literature for children." His book *Acoustic Rooster and His Barnyard Band* was selected for the 2014 "Michigan Reads! One State, One Children's Book" program.

Jennifer Benka is the executive director of the Academy of American Poets and the author of *Pinko* (Hanging Loose Press, 2011) and *A Box of Longing with Fifty Drawers* (Soft Skull Press, 2005).

Michael Earl Craig is an American poet from Livingston, Montana. Craig is the author of *Can You Relax in My House*, *Thin Kimono*, and *Yes, Master*. He was appointed the Montana Poet Laureate in October 2015.

Toi Derricotte, a poet and a professor of writing at the University of Pittsburgh, co-founded Cave Canem Foundation, a summer workshop for African-American poets, with Cornelius Eady. She won a 2012 PEN / Voelcker Award for Poetry. She has received the Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, the Distinguished Pioneering of the Arts Award from the United Black Artists, two Pushcart Prizes, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the Guggenheim, and the Maryland State Arts Council.

Edward Hirsch, a MacArthur Fellow, has published *The Living Fire: New and Selected Poems*, which brings together 35 years of poetry from seven previous collections. He has also written five prose books, including *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry*, a national bestseller. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for Literature, amongst other awards. Hirsch now serves as president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Alice Quinn was the poetry editor at Alfred A. Knopf from 1976 to 1986 and then became the poetry editor of *The New Yorker*. She teaches at Columbia University's Graduate School of the Arts and is the executive director of the Poetry Society of America. She has written and edited several books, including *Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box: Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments*.

Glenis Redmond, an esteemed Cave Canem Fellow and a Literary Fellowship recipient from the North Carolina Arts Council, currently serves as the Poet-in-Residence at the Peace Center for the Performing Arts. Her latest book of poetry is titled *Under the Sun*. She is a Kennedy Center Teaching Artist and a full-time road poet, performing and teaching poetry across the country. In 1996, she founded the Asheville Poetry Slam and the Greenville Poetry Slam. Glenis is a two-time Individual Regional Slam Champion and a top-ten finalist twice at the National Poetry Slam. Her poems have been featured in *Tidal Basin Review*, *NCLR*, *EMRYS*, *Meridians*, *The Asheville Poetry Review*, *Tongues of the Ocean*, and *Obsidian II*.

Naomi Shihab Nye, a poet, songwriter, and novelist born to a Palestinian father and American mother, currently refers to San Antonio as her home. She has won many awards and fellowships, among them four Pushcart Prizes, the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, the Paterson Poetry Prize, and many notable book and best book citations from the American Library Association, and a 2000 Witter Bynner Fellowship. In June 2009, Nye was named as one of PeaceByPeace.com's first peace heroes. Her books include poetry collections *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*, *A Maze Me*, *Red Suitcase*, *Field Trip*, and *Fuel*.

Alfre Woodard is an Oscar-nominated and multiple Emmy-winning African-American actress. Her prolific film and TV career spans over three decades and includes *Passion Fish* (1992), *Crooklyn* (1994), *How to Make an American Quilt* (1995), *Down in the Delta* (1998), *Beauty Shop* (2005), James Baldwin's *Go Tell Us on the Mountain* (PBS, 1985), and *Desperate Housewives* (ABC, 2004-2012). In 1989, Woodard was a founder, and since that time has been a board member, of Artists for a New South Africa, a nonprofit organization dedicated to combating the African AIDS pandemic and advancing democracy and equality in South Africa. Her charity has since raised more than \$9 million and has provided health care to more than 3,500 South African AIDS orphans. Woodard is also a supporter of LGBT rights.

Jacqueline Woodson is an American writer of books for children and adolescents. She is best known for *Miracle's Boys*, which won the Coretta Scott King Award in 2001, and her Newbery Honor-winning titles *Brown Girl Dreaming*, *After Tupac and D Foster*, *Feathers*, and *Show Way*.

Special Thanks

The National Student Poets Program partners sincerely thank the Poetry Society of America, the Academy of American Poets, the Poetry Foundation, the National Writing Project, the National Student Poets Program jurors, and 826 National for their support, expertise, and enthusiasm. The National Student Poets Program partners also gratefully acknowledge the Regional Affiliates of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for their dedication to supporting and coordinating the Awards on the regional level. We honor the thousands of educators who annually encourage students to submit their work.

Eligibility

For students to be considered for the National Student Poets Program, they must be United States citizens in grades 10 or 11 and enrolled in a public, private, or parochial school, or a home school in the United States. Students must also receive a National Gold or Silver Medal in poetry in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards continues to be the longest-running, most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in the U.S., and the largest source of scholarships for young artists and writers. Deadlines to participate in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards vary by region and may be found at **artandwriting.org**.

From the pool of National Scholastic Award medalists in poetry, thirty-five semifinalists for the National Student Poets Program are selected in the spring. The semifinalists are notified and asked to submit additional poetry (two to five works total), a short video about themselves, and a short bio for consideration by the national jury panel.

A national jury of literary luminaries and leaders in education and the arts selects the five National Student Poets. Submissions are evaluated based on the National Student Poets Program's three criteria: creativity, dedication and promise, and personal voice.