



NATIONAL
STUDENT
POETS
PROGRAM

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

2012

Letter from the First Lady of the United States





As Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, I am pleased to congratulate the National Student Poets, Class of 2012.

Throughout our Nation's history, the arts have sparked imaginations young and old, inspired us to take action, and helped bring us together. Since 1982, The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities has been dedicated to the education of our children, and the creativity of our citizens, while contributing to the vibrancy of our society, and the strength of our democracy.

As a National Student Poet, you now have the unique opportunity to share your accomplishments with the rest of the country; you have the opportunity to lift up and inspire others. I believe that what you learn while reading and writing poetry will stay with you for the rest of your life, and I sincerely hope you continue to use your creativity and imagination throughout your term as literary ambassador and beyond.

Michelle Obama

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Letter from the National Student Poets Program Partners

We are honored to join First Lady Michelle Obama in congratulating the inaugural class of National Student Poets, whose talent and exceptional skill exemplify the ideals of this national award. A jury of renowned poets, literary luminaries and celebrated artists made the final selection of youth poets, a sample of whose work is collected here.

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) have partnered with the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers to create and carry out the National Student Poets Program, the country's highest honor for youth poets whose original work exhibits exceptional creativity, dedication to craft and promise.

We recognize that to sustain our nation's cultural life we must take steps now to ensure that the talents of young people are nurtured and recognized. Today's students will become the creative innovators and economic leaders of tomorrow. The new National Student Poets Program identifies our country's most promising young writers and provides them with resources to develop their own skills and to engage and inspire their peers.

During a year of service, National Student Poets will share their appreciation of poetry and the importance of creative expression through readings and workshops at libraries, museums and schools in communities throughout the five different regions represented by the awardees. We know that the process of art making—writing, drawing, playing, performing—not only hones the skills of young artists, but also shapes successful students and adults.

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



George Stevens, Jr.
Co-Chair
President's Committee on
the Arts & the Humanities



Margo Lion
Co-Chair
President's Committee on
the Arts & the Humanities



Susan Hildreth
Director
Institute of Museum and
Library Services



Virginia McEnerney
Executive Director
Alliance for Young
Artists & Writers



AGE: 17

HOMETOWN: ARLINGTON, VA

REGION: SOUTHEAST

Luisa Banchoff

is a senior at Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia, where she is an International Baccalaureate Diploma Candidate and serves as poetry editor for the school literary magazine. Luisa grew up in a bilingual and bicultural family and has spent two years in Bonn, Germany. She has been active in community service, helping to found a social justice youth group at her church and serving as a Girl Scout for 10 years. She has been an avid poet since the eighth grade, receiving a Scholastic Gold Medal in poetry in 2011 and a Gold Medal and American Voices Medal this past year. For her Girl Scout Gold Award, she led a poetry workshop at her former elementary school.

She led a project in three Arlington schools to set up interactive poetry bulletin boards, where students may take pause from their day and communicate with their peers by combining words into poems. Luisa serves as one of two girls on her Girl Scout council's Board of Directors, which serves more than 90,000 members. She attended Kenyon College's Young Writers Workshop this past summer and hopes to major in English or creative writing in college.



AMERICAN ZODIAC

The Ram

You see it in the paths two cars take before a collision,
in the bumping inflections of speeches unspoken,
as if you could take your stroboscope and clap down
that fleeting pulse of life that turns the sand between children's toes into the glass
cutting lies in the gray face of morning.

The Bull

You see it in the skeleton houses nestled in each wrinkle of the mountain,
good dreams the sandman sprinkled upon sleeping eyes
that have long since opened.
Whose beams ache to be raised from ribcage to sky in an open-armed archway
for limping children to pass under
but now only form the highwayside crosses of canceled-out maybe-somedays.

The Twins

You see it in the grasp of the blind couple on the other side of the tracks
glimpsed only through passing metro cars,
whose glazed eyes cannot see the flashing lights at the edges of life
that warn of the incoming day.
Who know true joy is not as flat as *attention: doors opening*
and loss is not as simple as *caution, doors closing*.

The Crab

You see it in the cornerpeople who thrust papers at you, pleading for your pocket,
there's-children-in-Africa, problems-here-at-home, be-the-change-you-wish-to-see,
who will keep throwing good intentions into the stars
until fliers rain down like manna from the sky.

The Lion

You see it in the laughter-lipped veteran who floats through the Capitol,
occasionally joining sticky-handed school groups or camera-necklaced couples,
always making that same joke about Taney
fixing the courtroom clock five minutes early,
always waiting for his audience to laugh
and thinking, tomorrow, tomorrow.

The Maiden

You see it in the decades sprinkled across the face of the woman who rides the school bus,
watching each little now get on with muddied sneaker and slipping hair tie,
thinking of the glorious before,
when the world was flat and the streets were narrow
and when there was no fear of the after etched into her leatherbeaten skin.

The Scales

You see it in the statue of the woman wading in the silver lake
that you found stumbling blindfolded through acres of forest. The two open hands,
palms up, hold copper coins of open-mouthed muses
who tell you to turn around and forget the shiver of stone shoulders.
It is nothing, they say, but the sound of cloth peeled from the eyes.

The Scorpion

You see it in the *er* the billboards throw at the person sitting next to you
faster, cleaner, slimmer, primmer,
preached from magazines as if they were mountains,
the new Decalogue of *thou shalt not*s
screamed by the people who eat their own throats
and choke out broken words to
silent ceiling fan psychiatrists
in the nakedness of their own minds.

The Archer

You see it in the open hands of the girl in the abandoned amphitheater
who is more light than flesh, carving the spring-speckled air with her arms,
a one-ended embrace with no purpose
but to touch the salt of stars.

The Sea-Goat

You see it in the flatness of empty parking lots of rust-and-dust towns
whose horizon summits and trenches were carved from,
sprawling and sprawling and sprawling,
only good for endless rides of anger or ecstasy
by the middle children of society
who look for no cornucopia of meaning in the asphalt of memory.

The Water-Bearer

You see it in the cupped hands of your niece, who
whispers hot gusts of secrets into your ear
that tell of forgotten yesterdays and mindless tomorrows
and a truckload of brimming before-I-die's you promised, you promised.

The Fish

You see it in the river you make with a person in just one look
from the other side of the room
and that corner of the eye
whose endowed purpose is to signal the beginning of a smile.
Let us tie our mouths together, you say,
so we are not fossilized in the flip of the calendar or the lilt of foreign lights
but found in the peace of an impromptu sidewalk prayer circle
or that fleeting sliver of night found behind the clock's searching hand.

BROKEN RIB

In early morning they slip from sleep
 with lungs sprinting to find unchoked air to breathe,
 steadfast things that once knew sighs from shrieks.
 Hands clasped together, he and she pepper their days
 with games you will never play,
 pretending their souls were not hot enough to burn down the houses.

Past snug houses
 where newborns sleep
 they walk to the jungle-gymed park where older siblings play,
 where you can squint and see the futures breathe
 whispers of waiting days,
 of tenth birthdays and diploma handshakes and homecoming shrieks.

Can you hear our child's shrieks?
 He wants to ask the houses.
 The playground keeps no ledger of days
 they have sat on this bench where better men sleep
 by night and blissful parents breathe
 by day, their thoughts building castles of pretend-play.

She watches the realities play
 before her as her body silently shrieks
 against itself. She thinks of when her mouth was a cradle that had only to breathe
 and her spine was woven of little white houses
 whose walls were held up with a second sleep.
 When she counted down days

that would later shake against themselves. The days
 that had authored a play
 that could only ever send its audience to some half-dreaming sleep.
 The days whose nights heard blinding shrieks
 with claws that scratched at hollow air. *What are houses
 built for?* But he could not breathe

the answer that danced on the unused cradle's lip. To breathe
 is to be. God made a lie on the sixth day
 when he took the rib from Adam, she said. It is written in the houses
 where no children will play
 and no routine morning shrieks
 will wake parents from malnourished sleep.

So today they reteach one another how to breathe like showing a child how to play
 and together walk back the days as the tree-tangled bird shrieks
 and the houses silently sleep.



AGE: 18

HOMETOWN: VANCOUVER, WA

REGION: WEST

Miles Hewitt

has been writing since the third grade, when his love of Brian Jacques' *Redwall* inspired him to write the imaginatively named *Greenwall*, which featured anthropomorphic animals embarking on conquests in a medieval setting. In the eighth grade, as his ear for voice continued to develop, Miles discovered musical artists such as Bob Dylan and Paul Simon and moved on to songwriting. Since then, he's penned more than 100 songs and self-recorded two albums that are reminiscent of these earlier artists while reflecting the sounds and feelings of his generation.

Miles fell in love with poetry more recently. A senior at the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics in Vancouver, Washington, he was admitted this past year to the Focus (highest level) Literary Arts class. There, he's a member of a small group of burgeoning writers who come together to workshop one another's pieces and offer support.

Outside school, Miles enjoys integrating his writing talent into everything he does. He is the president of the Young Democrats of Clark County, and founded and served as the editor-in-chief of his school newspaper. He's considering a career in political communications or speechwriting if the "rock-and-roll-poet" line of business doesn't pan out.



PRELUDE

The wind-whipped marshes in September
(the month of grace, of ends—velvet and plum
leaves burning in New England—the strongest horses
white, ferocious with dignity—the sun setting
younger each day, the night brewing with the
afterglow of August's bold charisma—the beasts, sensing
the presence of Hades, hiding—
the mountains over the vineyards, succulent
rosy clouds in the dripping of the golden rays
battleworn, weary—the rain close behind)
are where Helios once leaned against the tall back of his silver chariot
surveying as the vines grew and the trees, ancient,
simply continued to exist,
his expression inscrutable
but now he shrinks
before the moon and stars
for he knows his reign is over & looking over his shoulder
he saw something that he never thought to expect –
the coming of a storm.
No passing rolling frenzy as before—
not a quickly evaporated blue and black mess—
a cloak the cold stars draw near. No, this is
the real one—the end. This is the black knight, once
vanquished by the Hero, rising again—improbably—
impossibly—to strike, as with back turned behind shining
robe, the Hero—not yet knowing the feeling of death—
not even imagining it—eyes wide, perhaps, with the
last mirth fading in his face—begins to die. the curtain
falls, and the lights, in dull irony, come back up—
the audience rises to their feet—not sure what
to make of what they've witnessed—
this, then, is the marshes in September.

ORPHEUS

& in between passionless crimes—
 (so for the lack of humanity,
the careless abandon
 and the forgoing of burden)
I looked into your eyes & thought

I AM ORPHEUS

& you smiled
 & asked me
 what I was thinking about

 I brushed you away
off the bed
pushed you over the nightstand as
 the lamp with wavy grasping shade reached
 & the globe on the shelf & the maps
 on the walls slipped & sighed
 & you collapsed on the ground—

 'I don't know'—
but I wasn't lying.

VOYAGE

Here's to the voyage:
 the iron ringing of ships against the sea
 the cresting of her back
 the sweet rain
 the sails
 in her robe sliding
 whistling
 dancing

 her lips parched and dripping
 and the word that emerges:
 swim
 the photographed wave in the dark pool
 sketched, sought and bottled
 the thrill
 then the eyes
 of those haunted of those
 left behind
 she's had a lot on her mind
 as cauldrons fill
 the sun is deeply black
 and the silken sea
 and the broken sea
 and the charred maps
 that show only
 the
 sea

 the cresting of her
 back and the white linen
 the white linen that conceals
 something I could never hide:
 the sea

 swim



AGE: 16

HOMETOWN: NEW YORK, NY

REGION: NORTHEAST

Claire Lee

born in 1996, Claire Lee is a Korean-American who currently attends the Chapin School. Her passions in life include creating lists, eating food, photography, reading, playing squash and, of course, writing. As an only child who didn't like to play with dolls while growing up, Claire found comfort in writing stories in which she had many siblings and poems about cool words. In school, Claire is the photo editor and a columnist for her school newspaper, *Limelight*; a member of Model UN, the literary magazine (*Wheel*), the dance club and the forensics club; and the editor-in-chief of an out-of-school newspaper, *NY Girls' Squash*. Claire has also won awards for her creative fiction, nonfiction and poetry. In ninth grade, she won 2nd place in Ayn Rand's *Anthem* Essay Contest and was awarded the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Regional Gold and Silver Keys for her photography.

In addition to winning National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, Claire won 2nd place in the Margaret Emerson Bailey Essay Contest (in-school essay contest) for her essay on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and she had one of her poems published in a poetry anthology. This past summer, Claire attended the New England Young Writers' Conference at Middlebury College (Bread Loaf).



LIVING IN NUMBERS

Sunday, August 22, 2010:

Number of times I've woken up after
oversleeping and sprung out of bed like a ninja: 959

Number of broken bones: 3

Number of scars, physical: 4; emotional: 947

Number of funerals attended: 7

Number of friends, Facebook: 744, real: 9

Number of cavities filled: 0

Percentage of people I can stand in the world: 3.5

Number of times I've laughed so hard my sides would bruise: 2,972

Number of times I've wanted to bawl my eyes out: 320

Number of things I regret: 11

Number of things I know: 918,394

Monday, August 23, 2010:

Number of times I've woken up after oversleeping and sprung out of bed like a ninja: 960

Number of broken bones: 3

Number of scars, physical: 4; emotional: 1,293

Number of funerals attended: 7

Number of friends, Facebook: 800, real: 7

Number of cavities filled: 0

Percentage of people I can stand in the world: 3.4

Number of times I've laughed so hard my sides would bruise: 2,973

Number of times I've wanted to bawl my eyes out: 321

Number of things I regret: 13

Number of things I know: 918,390

SOLUBILITY RULES

We impatiently watch
As she pours granular NaCl
Into the beaker of H₂O.

The particles trickle out,
And she coaxes the stragglers from the bag
With small taps.

My mother teaches me
The alphabet, drilling me
With flashcards.

A is for apple pie
B is for baseball
C is for chocolate chip cookies.

Breaking the surface,
The grains explode into an
Inverted mushroom cloud.

Detonated, they scatter throughout the H₂O.
The edges soften to form
An iridescent curtain.
My father taught me
That before anything else, I belonged
To this land called America.

I shed when I held scissors in hand,
Kissed the strands and cut.
My black hair fell to the cold floor.

We watch as she stirs,
The NaCl and H₂O turning a
Brackish, flimsy, speckled white,
The briny waters crashing against
My ancestral home.

$\text{NaCl} + \text{H}_2\text{O} > \text{NaOH} + \text{HCl}$

A neutralized solution results,
Clear like water, but with a bitter aftertaste.
The reaction, she says, is complete.

EXPONENTIAL INCREASE

We lift them up to the Lord.

I can see the mathematician rising up to the Lord
the way an exponential function curves
upwards.

Crawling around on hands and knees in
the darkness of her mind and wandering like
the functions of sine and cosine, she searches
for the trail, the sign that He has left for us
to follow—the path to Greater Understanding.

After a while, she's come to learn
that the positive x -values of a cube root
function is a nudge leading to the Right Way,
the point $(0,0)$, the origin of all journeys,
and that the integer values of the integer
function are the small steps into the 1st Quadrant,
a place where both x and y -values are positive.

And just when she thinks she's come across
the Limit itself, the piecewise function
that contains elements of all the different parent
functions, in all its profundity, the pipe organ vibrates,
and the soft glow of the stained glass windows suddenly
becomes too bright to marvel at.

So she rises, brushing the stray eraser crumbs
off her clothes and picking them out of her lap.
But as she marches single file through the double
doors, she happens to glimpse back, only to
see Him reclining, contented.

Observing her, He smiles faintly, and proceeds to
replenish the crumbs lost to searching minds
like hers.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.



AGE: 17

HOMETOWN: OAK PARK, IL

REGION: MIDWEST

Natalie Richardson

attends Oak Park and River Forest High School. She has participated in her school's Spoken Word Club and Slam Team for two years, and she absolutely loves the friends she has made in the process! This past year she competed in the Louder Than a Bomb poetry festival with her school's team and recorded a piece for radio station WBEZ. In her spare time (when she is not writing or studying), Natalie enjoys painting, drawing, eating, debating philosophy with her opposite-minded twin sister, traveling and scuba diving. She hopes to one day sell her art in a festival, travel to Chile and dive the Great Barrier Reef.



WHY SHE LEAVES

My mother shingles
lamb on the counter-
top. Whittles the wet
bone. It is the reddened
neck of my father,
pulsing still. She separates
fat from meat. Heats
curdle until it waxes hard.
Yellow as spoiled liver
congealed on father's
eyes. His veins slither sweet.

She cooks when he is
like this—knuckles white
lunging heads, temple-
veins coarse and ribboned.
He may or may not be
home for dinner. Ribs
of fat fold heavy in a bowl.

I still cannot cook
rice. Always ends
too soft or too sticky—
grain-hands grope
the throat of pot
until callous. My mother
reminds me not to open
the top before it's finished
breathing. I am not this
kind of patient. Rice boils
over every night she is
gone, my father babysits

the couch. Lips wet
and whispering. I pretend
he is a kernel in the pot:
skin shriveled, tongue
scalded. I do not tell
him when dinner is ready.
It waits until morning
on the stove, cold
and clammy as my hands
when Mama told me
she's sick of cooking
for a man who drowns
heavy; she leaves
because she needs air
that doesn't stink
like ours. It slops low
in lungs that drip. She
leaves us in search
of land.

WHAT I KNOW

(italicized words/phrases are taken directly from my mother's journal)

the day after
she leaves, I find her old journal in the crook
of her bedside table. Cursive
wings flapping, writhing.
The tight-dated passages, her *stretch-*
marked schedules.

Another night alone.

Swollen breasts aching, bowing. Her black
body always writhing. *Fever-writhing*,
Muscle-writhing.

The pages where she dips, curls
a little inward. *Forgot to date the top*.

She writes that she does *not love* my father.
The words ripple, maul each other. I do not
learn this *for the first time*. I know that

Marriage is a job, as breastfeeding is
a job. We sometimes enjoy it, pink
at the tug of warmth
inside.

And we sometimes just *endure*;
give ourselves because we are needed.

Wait impatiently for the suck
to die.

HANGING

Nour calls me over cereal.
 It is 8 p.m. in Egypt,
 he is on break from patrolling
 street curbs. Rioters
 are wrecking balls
 to the streets. A shot
 gun breathes soft on his hip.
 He complains about how
 none of the computers work
 and how he can't lurk
 past his block anymore.
 I imagine him a tree limb
 against the swinging domes:
 armed, buckling. He is 16

and hard as sand, I haven't
 seen him since he pretended
 to shave on my back porch
 with a plastic knife. When
 the floorboards hump,
 his family crouches
 in the bathroom, puts
 the babies in the tub
 until the ground stills.
 I can hear shouting
 through the phone,
 it's not my language.
 Sanded breath
 heaves close.

Nour killed a man
 today. Brought him
 to the basement
 of the house with
 the others. Tied him
 to the water pipe
 with a Barbie-pink jump-
 rope they found
 in a laundry basket.
 The rest was easy—
 just skin bucking skin

and bone thrusting muscle
 'til he bled out onto
 sheets and socks.
 Torso turned
 mush. "You can tell
 when a man stops breathing,"
 Nour says. They are dead
 when the flesh doesn't push
 back. A dead man is hanged
 meat—red and stripped,
 stinking up the laundry.
 The phone is turned plastic-
 cold, Nour's voice hard
 and short as grit.

What do you say
 when your old best
 friend thinks he's a man
 'cuz he's watched bone
 drain, what do you say
 when all you can think
 of is the time before
 the move, when he brushed
 your hair out wet, his hands
 boy-soft and pink, gently
 dipping the comb in
 a bucket of water
 that was almost red.



AGE: 17

HOMETOWN: ALEXANDRIA, LA

REGION: SOUTHWEST

Lylla Younes

was born in Williamson, West Virginia, a coal miner's town with a population of about 2,000 people. A few blocks from her house there was an old floodwall. Her mother used to make up stories about the "great flood of 1969," and she would stare down at the scraps of furniture in the water and imagine the lives of the people they belonged to. That's where her dreaming began, where her imagination developed—at the Williamson floodwall.

She moved to Alexandria, Louisiana, in the first grade and lived there until 2011, when she transferred to the Louisiana School, a public magnet boarding school in Natchitoches, Louisiana. She enjoys science and philosophy a great deal, and is often inspired to write by works that are not literary. She loves traveling and meeting new people, which is why the National Poets Program strikes her as such an incredible opportunity.



COWBOY

You have that leaving look,
the way you squint at
the soggy horizon
hanging in the distance,
coaxing you out of
this tired town.

The clouds are sagging,
bloated,
ready to explode.

You turn a marbled eye up,
watching.

There are wolves in the canyons,
beer cans in the alley,
maps unraveling all over your face,

You sing the vagabond song.

BILLY

When you tell me stories,
I watch

as thin strips
of film
wrap around
your eyes,

playing memories
like your
radio played
Bobby Darin
in '55.

And your soul is
a snapshot,

an old polaroid
stashed
in a box with

yellowing baseball cards
and broken plastic toys.

When I'm gone,
you say,

You can find me there.

In that dusty box
of forgotten dreams–

Of remnants
worn around the seams–

a skinny Boy
in ripped blue jeans–

And wrinkles crease.
And your mouth
hangs
slightly
ajar.

I have never seen an old man weep.

GOSPELS

It didn't take long

To tune my ears to the music seeping
out of your hidden mahogany box.

I fell
into the mesh of sound.

For a few minutes,
the walls breathed it in.
Took it into their thin,
insulated lungs, and held it there.

We exhaled together.

Only our breath could fill the cavity
that materialized when you left.

Jurors



Robert Casper

is the head of the Poetry and Literary Center at the Library of Congress. He previously worked as programs director at the Poetry Society of America. He is one of the founders of the literary magazine *jubilat*, and he served as its publisher for more than a decade. He also served as the poetry chair for the Brooklyn Borough President's Literary Council and on the board for the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, where he had worked as membership director.

Mayda del Valle

a Latin-American artist from Chicago, was chosen to represent the poetry community at the first White House poetry event, in May 2009. She was part of the original Broadway cast of the Tony Award-winning *Def Poetry Jam* and was chosen as one of the first 20 women on Oprah's "O Power List." DeValle has been featured in many publications, including *The New York Times*, and was chosen by *Smithsonian* magazine as one of "America's Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences."

Andrea Gibson

is a poet who is active in the LGBT community. Her work has been featured on media outlets such as the BBC and CNN, among others. She is known for the fearless truths in her poetry. She has released five spoken word albums and was the first winner of the Women's World Poetry Slam. Her work often addresses such topics as war, class, gender, bullying and others.

Kimiko Hahn

is the author of eight books of poems, including *The Unbearable Heart* (Kaya, 1996), which received an American Book Award; *The Narrow Road to the Interior* (W.W. Norton, 2006), a collection that takes its title from Basho's famous poetic journal; and *Toxic Flora* (W.W. Norton, 2010), poems inspired by science. Her most recent honor is a Guggenheim Fellowship. Hahn is a distinguished professor in the MFA program in Creative Writing & Literary Translation at Queens College, City University of New York.

Terrance Hayes

is the author of *Lighthouse*, winner of the 2010 National Book Award in poetry. His other collections are *Wind in a Box*, *Hip Logic* and *Muscular Music*. Other honors include a Whiting Writers Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a United States Artists Zell Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He is a professor of creative writing at Carnegie Mellon University and lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

James Kass

is a poet and writer and the founder and executive director of Youth Speaks. Since 1996, Youth Speaks has set a national standard for creative writing, poetry and spoken word programs for youth. Kass created the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Festival in 1998 and helped launch more than 44 spoken word programs across the country, including co-founding Youth Speaks NY in 1999 (now called Urban Word NYC), Youth Speaks Seattle, Youth Speaks Hawai'i, Youth Speaks Wisconsin, Nashville Youth Speaks, Youth Speaks Twin Cities, Youth Speaks Sacramento and more.

David Lynn

is the editor of *The Kenyon Review* and also a fiction writer and essayist. He has written the novel *Wrestling with Gabriel* and the critical study *The Hero's Tale: Narrators in the Early Modern Novel*, as well as other books. He received his B.A. from Kenyon College and then attended the University of Virginia, where he received his M.A. and Ph.D. He was a longtime member of the Board of Directors of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses. At Kenyon he teaches workshops in fiction writing as well as literature courses.

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, such as *Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box: Uncollected Poems, Drafts, and Fragments*.

Jeff Tweedy

is an American songwriter, musician and leader of the band Wilco. Tweedy's early interest in blending country and punk music found expression with the alt-country band Uncle Tupelo. After the group's breakup in 1994, Tweedy formed the band Wilco, which has produced 10 studio albums and won multiple Grammy Awards. Wilco's 2002 album, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* has been widely heralded as one of the greatest pop albums of the last decade. The band's latest album is the Grammy-nominated *The Whole Love*. In addition to his work with Wilco, Tweedy won a Grammy Award in 2011 for his work with legendary soul and gospel singer Mavis Staples. Tweedy wrote the title song and produced her album *You Are Not Alone*.

Kerry Washington

is an award-winning actress. She is on the Artists Committee for Americans for the Arts, an organization that works to promote the arts in America. She is also on the board of V-Day, an organization dedicated to ending violence against women and girls. In 2005, Americans for the Arts presented her with the Young Artist Award for artistic accomplishments and exemplary leadership. In 2008, she was awarded the Phoenix Award for commitment to social advocacy from the Congressional Black Caucus. And in 2009, Washington received the Artist-Citizen Award for public leadership in the arts from the U.S. Conference. In 2009, she was appointed by President Barack Obama to the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Thanks

The National Student Poets Program partners gratefully acknowledge the Regional Affiliates of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for their dedication to supporting and coordinating the Awards on the regional level and we honor the thousands of teachers who annually encourage students to submit their work.

Eligibility

In order for students to be considered for the National Student Poets Program, they must be in grades 9, 10 or 11 and enrolled in a public, private, parochial, home-school or out-of-school program. Students must also win a National Gold or Silver Medal in poetry in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

Deadlines to participate in the 2013 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards vary by region and may be found at www.artandwriting.org. All students who earn National Gold and Silver Medals in the Scholastic Awards will be notified on March 15, 2013.

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services have partnered with the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers 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 academic awards and opportunities to present their work at writing and poetry events, and are featured at the National Book Festival in Washington, DC, in cooperation with the Library of Congress.

www.artandwriting.org/NSPP



**Scholastic
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