

Young Poets of Delaware County 2023 Poetry Contest Winners



The Taste of Togetherness by Aria Jayaprakash

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**Cover art: 2023 Teen Art Contest Winner
Aria Jayaprakash**

**Young Poets of Delaware County
Contest Winners 2023**

First Grade Winners

1st Place
The Beach
Natalia Del Monte
Pennell Elementary

2nd Place
Seasons
Emily McBride
Springfield Literacy Center

3rd Place
Tiger
Olivia Hall
Coebourn Elementary

Second Grade Winners

1st Place
Fireworks
Gianna Gagliano
Concord Elementary

2nd Place
A Shamrocks Bakery
Sophia Dao
Saint Dorothy's Catholic School

3rd Place
Baseball Haiku
Jacob Linsky
Scenic Hills Elementary

Third Grade Winners

1st Place
Poetry Is Everywhere
Sonali Amaravadi
Indian Lane Elementary

2nd Place
Time
Naomi McFarlane
Indian Lane Elementary

3rd Place
The Milky Way
Marin McCampbell
Homeschool

Fourth Grade Winners

1st Place
The Toaster Cycle
Sebastian Richardson
Glenwood Elementary

2nd Place
Orchid Praying Mantis
Danica Manion
Loomis Elementary

3rd Place
Dancing In the Rain
Parker LePard
Rose Tree Elementary

Fifth Grade Winners

1st Place
Summer
Job Jones-Waite
Aronimink Elementary

2nd Place
There's an Alligator in My Pool
Peyton Fehrle
Pennell Elementary

3rd Place
It's Time
Ariya Bishop
Wallingford Elementary

Sixth Grade Winners

1st Place
Words
Elizabeth Boland
Strath Haven Middle School

2nd Place
Nothing Lasts Forever
Zora Lewis
St. Andrew School

3rd Place
What Defines Me
Amber Thompson
Beverly Hills Middle School

Seventh Grade Winners

1st Place
Double-Edged
Andrew DiPasquale
Northley Middle School

2nd Place
Bluebird
Maisey Santo
Northley Middle School

3rd Place
Springtime Stream
Leah Eastburn
Northley Middle School

Eighth Grade Winners

1st Place
Burnt Out
Anika Fernandes
Radnor Middle School

2nd Place
Clothing Thief
Kevin Tran
Springton Lake Middle School

3rd Place
Aspirations
Maeve Raffaele
Strath Haven Middle School

Ninth Grade Winners

1st Place
A Star
Favour Peters
Cardinal O'Hara High School

2nd Place
the city of my soul
Julia Menschik

3rd Place
A Script
Anrui Xu
Radnor High School

Tenth Grade Winners

1st Place
Untitled
Nahmier Abdur-Raheem
Upper Darby High School

2nd Place
Facade
Jessica Hassel
Sun Valley High School

3rd Place
Saving for a Rainy Day
Tabitha G. Shatney
Homeschool

Eleventh Grade Winners

1st Place
My PTSD Does Not Get to Win. Neither
Should Yours
Alexa von Berg
Springfield High School

2nd Place
Thoughts and Prayers
Madeline Wuest
Sacred Heart Academy

3rd Place
Nocte Felidae
Gwen Bradwell
The Baldwin School

**Grade 1
Natalia Del Monte
Pennell Elementary
First Place**

The Beach

**The beach turns everything sandy.
Covering my legs,
Dropping to the bottom of the car,
Following me inside my house,
Like a trail of sandy crumbs,
Whose leftovers we find later.
Summer sand lasts all season!**

Seasons

In summer, I like to play
and say hooray.
In summer, on the Fourth of July,
the fireworks pop in the sky.
In summer, I hear waves crashing
while I'm splashing.

In spring, I see a bunny,
isn't that funny.
In spring, I see showers
and flowers.
In spring, I hear rain tapping
and birds flapping.

In fall is Halloween,
what a scene!
In fall, I see colorful leaves
and wear sleeves.
In fall, I hear wind whooshing
and swooshing.

In winter, snow is very white
what a sight.
In winter, it is cold
I've been told.
In winter, I like to sled down hills,
it gives me chills.

**Grade 1
Olivia Hall
Coebourn Elementary School
Third Place**

Tiger

**Through the jungle
Between the rocks
Under the blue sky
A tiger sneaks by
To get its prey**

**Grade 2
Gianna Gagliano
Concord Elementary School
First Place**

Fireworks

I was walking on the sidewalk one day and I saw different colored spots on it.

It reminded me of fireworks.

I closed my eyes and imagined colors filling the air. What a show it was!

It made me feel joyful, just like when I watch real fireworks.

Reds, green and blues...splattered the sky.

Even though it was dark and cold outside, I felt a warm glow fill my body, as if the fireworks light were warming me.

Then, the finale came...so many bright fireworks filled the air that I could barely see.

I could feel the air getting colder, as we started up the stairs to our house. My eyes were still closed imagining the fireworks finishing their show.

And then the last firework floated into the sky high above me and drifted downward.

The fireworks had ended and so had the sidewalk.

**Grade 2
Sophia Dao
Saint Dorothy's Catholic School
Second Place**

A Shamrock Bakery

There once was a shamrock named Shack

Who put some baked treats on a rack

He got a bad review

His cat walked by and mewed

So he began to prepare a new snack

**Grade 2
Jacob Linsky
Scenic Hills Elementary School
Third Place**

Baseball Haiku

**Batter hits the ball
The ball soars into the stands
Home Run! Our team wins!**

Grade 3
Sonali Amaravadi
Indian Lane Elementary School
First Place

Poetry is Everywhere

Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is hiding behind trees
In closets and under chairs
Poetry is always hiding somewhere
Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is the rain pouring down on the town
Thunder clapping and lightning flashing
Poetry is the dark clouds hovering above you
Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is the sparkling snow we see in the winter
A graceful ice dancer gliding across the rink
Poetry is warm hot chocolate during cold dark nights
Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is the sweet smell of flowers in the spring
A huge wave crashing on the shore
Poetry is the autumn breeze in your hair
Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is an emotional feeling
Someone who can help you get through rough days
Poetry is the superhero that saves the day
Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is in your shoes and walks where you walk
It won't let you get lost
Poetry is your way back home
Poetry is everywhere
Poetry is always hiding
So let's take the time...
And let us find it

**Grade 3
Naomi McFarlane
Indian Lane Elementary School
Second Place**

Time

**Many things will come and go
But time goes on forever
Ice shall melt and so will snow
But time goes on forever.**

**Plants may wither and may die
But time goes on forever
Even birds will cease to fly
But time goes on forever**

**Cloth will rip, wrinkle and stain
But time goes on forever
Weather changes, sun or rain
But time goes on forever
And ever
And ever.**

**Grade 3
Marin McCampbell
Homeschool
Third Place**

The Milky Way

**In space it is dark.
But planets leave their mark.
There are big, shining stars.
There is the red planet Mars.
One gas giant is Jupiter with the big red dot
And unlike Saturn, no rings has it got.
There are Mercury and Venus, the closest to the sun,
They move so fast, much faster than a run.
Uranus and Neptune, the coldest of all,
They move so slow it is like someone's stalled.
The lone planet Pluto, the smallest of the bunch,
Like a HUGE space slug's lunch.
And Earth, the one I love most.
With big tall trees and a pretty little coast.
Lastly, the Moon, our large night-light,
Doesn't make its own light, just reflects the sun's bright.
This is the Milky Way, one universe out of many,
And if I got to name a planet, I might call it Henry.**

**Grade 4
Sebastian Richardson
Glenwood Elementary School
First Place**

The Toaster Cycle

**Toasters are for toasting
bread is for toasters
toast is to butter
butter is for putting on toast
buttered toast is for cutting
cut buttered toast is for putting on a plate
cut toast on a plate is for eating
chewed food is for swallowing
swallowed food is for digesting
digesting helps you repeat the toaster cycle
just don't eat the toaster
or else you can't repeat the toaster cycle
and you can't make more toast
so don't eat the toaster**

**Grade 4
Danica Manion
Loomis Elementary School
Second Place**

Orchid Praying Mantis

**The Orchid Mantis, A great predator,
Watches closely, as its food goes by.**

**In the night,
It shines bright.
Attracting all its prey,
“Oh Orchid Mantis,”
“Oh Orchid Mantis”
“Please let us live another day!”
Insects hop or run
Not having any fun
The Mantis grows,
Hides when it snows,
And we all watch as it flies away.**

**Grade 4
Parker LePard
Rose Tree Elementary
Third Place**

Dancing in the Rain

**A cat dancing in the rain
The streets like streams
She dances in the puddle
Leaps like a frog
The sidewalks glazed with water
The wind whistled in the night
The cold stars
The beeps of horns on the road was music
The cat danced softly
Paw to paw, jumping in the puddles
She can feel the cold night move through her fur**

Summer

**Summer brings warmth and bliss,
A time of joy and endless days,
The sunshine blankets all with peace,
As nature blooms in many ways.
The sweet aroma of blooming flowers,
Fills the air with sweet delight,
The blue sky stands as a tower,**

Welcoming with all open sight

**A curtain of greenery spreads,
As trees sway in a gentle breeze,
Birds chirp merrily in their nests,**

As the butterflies dance with ease.

**The river flows with a gentle hum,
As the sun dips into the horizon,
The stars twinkle like diamonds,**

As the crickets start their symphonies

**Summer is a never-ending dream,
Full of life, vibrancy, and light,
A rush of color and emotion,**

A time of pure unadulterated delight.

**So, let us enjoy this season of fun,
And bask in its warmth and grace,
For summer is a treat for all,
And its beauty we should embrace.**

Grade 5
Peyton Fehrle
Pennell Elementary School
Second Place

There's An Alligator in My Pool...

There's an alligator in my pool
What should I do?
I don't want to bother it if it's trying to cool
He is turning the water green
It looks like a swamp
Maybe I should back up before it chomps
Should I call the police?
Firemen too?
Nevermind, I should turn it into a zoo!
That would be cool,
If I had a zoo
Then fish can come and cool off too!
Fish in my pool!
That would be amazing
That would be fan-bam-tastic-amazing!
People would pay money to see
Sharks that jump, flip and swim, yippee!
I would love that a lot, a lot
Would my parents approve?
Probably not
They would say this can't groove,
not on my watch!
But would they watch?
Would they support,
My rising business that's in the spot?
I don't know and I don't care

Because I would have cash everywhere!
I hope the alligator leaves soon
I wanna watch my favorite cartoon
And if I take my eyes off the alligator
The pool might crumble, fold and crater
So I can't watch my favorite cartoon
If the alligator is cooling in my pool
Maybe he isn't cooling at all
Maybe he's thirsty
I should buy a drinking fountain to install
Then all the animals in the zoo
Will have some nice and cold water to brew
Then they will have some tea after brewing
After we get tea, I'll be spewing
Spewing doesn't sound very fun
I think I'll stick to laying in the sun
Wait, but then I could get burned
Getting burned sounds no fun
I don't like no fun
No fun is having an alligator in your pool
I don't recommend
Alligators in pools are no fun to the end
So this is your warning
Take it in
An alligator in your pool
Is not cool, to begin

It's Time

It's that time.
Me and my family have been
Waiting in a cloud
For years.

It's time to separate.
There are some tears.

We slowly fall
So far from the
World.

The closer I get the better I see,
Kids and families
So happy!

The sound of the snow-
Crunch, Crunch

Knowing that I will fall into
that crunch,
I try to keep myself up,
But a whoosh of wind
Just pulls me down.

Seeing those kids just makes
Me smile!

I close my eyes while
I fall to the ground.
A little boy catches me
With a frown.

While I melt to the ground,
He thinks I'm gone, but I'm
Still alive

I'll just float right back,
Up to the sky.

**Grade 6
Elizabeth Boland
Strath Haven Middle School
First Place**

Words

**Words blend,
Together as one,
Swirling around the page,
Forming sentences,
And lines,
And verses,
And red wheel barrows,
Upon which so much depends,
And ravens,
That call out,
“Nevermore”.**

**Words,
That form stories.
And lessons.
And magic.**

**Words
That change people,
That help people,
That once helped a man,
To find his voice,
And say,
“I have a dream...”**

**Words,
That fight without violence,
But can hurt much worse.**

**So choose your words wisely,
You never know where they could lead you.**

**Words,
That can change the world if you let them.**

Grade 6
Zora Lewis
Saint Andrew School
Second Place

Nothing Lasts Forever

I used to wake up with the same gleeful smile spread across my face.
Stumbling around putting on the same blue uniform.
Racing down the familiar tickly carpet stairs.
Greeting my mom packing my lunch.
This will last forever I thought.

Riding the bus laughing and relishing the bumpy ride.
Skipping into school overjoyed to see friends I've known from Kindergarten
Itching to flee the school building to enjoy recess.
This will last forever I thought.

Endlessly talking about how excited I was to grow up
Because I thought no one
Would be able to tell me what to do.
This will last forever I thought.

Now, I wake up to an irritating, ear piercing alarm clock that I turn off with a frown.
Languidly drag on a new, unfamiliar uniform.
Sluggishly ambling down the new slippery wood stairs to pack my lunch.
I hope this won't last forever.

Riding the bus to school with my AirPods blasting music to tune out the singing little kids.
Glumly walking into school praying a few people I talk to are there.
Pushing my way through the overly crowded, suffocating hallway.
I hope this won't last forever.

Procrastinating on my homework by wasting time on my phone.
Wishing I were younger
Because I've realized
I get told what to do now more than ever.
I hope this won't last forever.

I know it won't last forever.
Nothing lasts forever.
Good, bad, happy, sad...
It will never last forever
Unfortunately...well, fortunately.

**Grade 6
Amber Thompson
Beverly Hills Middle School
Third Place**

What Defines Me

**I am not the color of my skin
I am not the way my voice sounds
I am not the clothes I wear
I am not the color of my hair
I am the books I have read
I am the tears I have shed
I am my actions
I am my ambitions
I am my smile and my laugh
I am what I believe
I will not waste my time focusing on the things that do not define me**

**Grade 7
Andrew DiPasquale
Northley Middle School
First Place**

Double-Edged

**I am the sunset gleaming over the city
I am the shine of a fish in the early morning light
I am the feather from a majestic eagle flying overhead
I am a cluster of happy, sad, angry and nervous memories
I am a rabbit, weary of itself and its surroundings
I am a fox that lives on what it can find
I am the blood of a freshly scraped knee
I am a famine that ravages a community
I am the grass, frail and easily trampled
I am a paper scribbled with ideas and thoughts**

**Grade 7
Maisey Santo
Northley Middle School
Second Place**

Bluebird

**Lawns get cut
Fresh as can be
Glistening
To the sound of the bluebird
In a tree.**

**The bluebird chirps
Gliding in the morning dew
Searching everywhere
But for who?**

**Searching and searching
But who could it be
That this bird is searching for
So frantically**

**Searching and searching until he could not see
Until there is no more morning dew
Until the flowers do not bloom
Until the leaves aren't on the trees
Until there is no more you and me**

**Grade 7
Leah Eastburn
Northley Middle School
Third Place**

Springtime Stream

A calm, moving stream

Not a single disruption

I throw a rock-Plop!

**Grade 8
Anika Fernandes
Radnor Middle School
First Place**

Burnt Out

**A bright flame, burning tirelessly from the moment it was started
Seeming eternal, so strong it refused to give in no matter how hard the
wind blew and the rain crashed
Blazing on, fueled by praises and compliments.
Pushed forward, the fire grows
Yet, the matchstick that started such an inferno is
*burnt out.***

**Losing its fiery glow, starting to weaken
Even a drop of water could smother the flames
Appearing strong and graceful, beautiful but destructive,
Delicate and dancing, dangerous as before, purposed and poised
Yet enclosed in the blaze, there is a secret, something no one can know,
A hint of vulnerability,
A chance that the fire did not have to be doused,
That it could destroy itself,
That it could be
*burnt out.***

Grade 8
Kevin Tran
Springton Lake Middle School
Second Place

Clothing Thief

With so many stolen clothes I wear
It's getting hot and sweaty in here
When I'm alone, I decide
I don't need to wear these clothes, I have no need to hide
First I take off my stolen smile
Hello frown! It's been a while
Then I take off my stolen jewel
That jewel, the jewel that makes me look cool
I take off my stolen decisions
The choices that don't match my vision
Now time to take off my stolen façade of being okay
A daily item I wear, basically everyday
Stolen coat after coat and stolen shirt after shirt
I almost hate these clothes, despite them preventing me from getting hurt
I can't wait to see
I can't wait to see the true me!
.....
.....
.....
.....where is it?
Where is the true me
I'm naked now but I don't see myself
After taking off the actor's costume
After taking off the makeup
When I look in the mirror
I'm a vampire
Because
there's
nothing.
Such a fool I am
To think I was wearing clothes
I am stolen coats
I am stolen accessories
I am stolen masks

I don't own anything

**Grade 8
Maevè Raffaele
Strath Haven Middle School
Third Place**

Aspirations

**They rise
They thrive
They break
They die
And yet,**

We hope

**Grade 9
Favour Peters
Cardinal O'Hara High School
First Place**

A Star

**Most stars are forgettable,
Whisking about in the deep, cold blues of the night sky.
When the sun sleeps,
giving light to those that fly.
Trillions of fiery orbs freckle the sky like floating embers.
Most stars are forgettable,
But you,
I remembered.**

**Grade 9
Julia Menschik
The Grayson School
Second Place**

the city of my soul

**I built a wall around my city,
the city of my soul
A wall built of achievements,
always on patrol**

**I kept my city secret,
hidden behind the wall
Trying to build a heart of steel,
should it ever fall**

**I fortified my city walls,
with stones made of perfection
And hoped, if built strong enough,
they would provide protection**

**My city walls built far and wide,
did their rightful calling
For when my city began to crack,
not a perfect stone went falling**

**My city walls stood strong and stoic,
as my heart cried out in vain
Yet no tremor went through the wall,
Not a single glimpse of pain**

**At last my city was left in ruins,
a shell of its once glory
But the city walls stood firm and tall,
telling a different story.**

**Grade 9
Anrui Xu
Radnor High School
Third Place**

**a script.
Its words form her cage.**

**It once was ripped.
But nothing could save the puppet from the stage.
It assembled the fragments and reforged the bars.
All are at its mercy.**

**Was this inscribed on ancient stars?
It could sure be.**

**I once believed we could call destinies ours.
For this hubris, it cursed me.
By coincidence, her wandering leads her back to the same room.
The story is unfolding just as the writers planned.**

**Fate's fabric is already woven on a familiar loom.
Her life is programmed by its hand.**

**It's about time that she embraced her inevitable doom.
She clings to a delicate strand.
The fraying thread shall soon be snipped.
It must be comforting knowing that all is determined by the page**

of

**a script.
Its words form her cage.**

**Grade 10
Nahmier Abdur-Raheem
Upper Darby High School
First Place**

**To whom this may concern,
The task at hand that plagues the black man, is to stand and bring peace to the world
and make change through unity,
Why shall I be seen as not who I am, but what I am, with my attempt to make a
difference
as I am heavily under scrutiny,
Must I stay inside the lines, my rhymes considered bars,
Be an athlete or a doctor to claim that I made it far?
Need I the endorsement of the world for the chance to pursue a dream,
for my words to become my weapon of mass destruction with means?
Luckily to say, others have paved the way, for my opportunities given
to live in a better day,
And the sun shines on my black skin, I laugh
and bask among my colored kin,
I wish to be celebrated forevermore as an influence, the disbelief in my excellence
swiftly transformed from impudence
With words from yours truly, my mother's second son,
I bring to you a reason for a change that must be done.**

**Grade 10
Jessica Hassel
Sun Valley High School
Second Place**

Facade

**Your eyesight is swell,
For how could you tell,
Through my lies and tales of deception.**

**That each simple smile,
Was not versatile,
And it was all a great misconception.**

**That I put on a face,
And stay in my place,
To refrain from speaking my mind.**

**That I yearn for the day,
I no longer display,
A life where I feel predefined.**

**I'm told life is young,
And to solemn become,
The woman that I so desire.**

**But how terrifying,
And undignifying,
To leave the ones I loved prior.**

**So I'll sit and comply,
As time passes by,
And pretend that nothing is flawed.**

**For I know that my lies,
Are a safer disguise,
As I hide behind my facade.**

**Grade 10
Tabitha G. Shatney
Homeschool
Third Place**

Saving for a Rainy Day

**I'm saving for a rainy day
When mud and wet and sky of gray
Take all my hopes and dreams away
Of going out today**

**I'm planting for a sunny day
The sun will scare the clouds away
Dear seeds, come up without delay
Your blooms I shall display**

**But rain or shine — it matters not
In both of them I'll find my spot
In puddles I might splash and play
With sun I'll just enjoy the day**

**I'm saving for a rainy day
Or for the sunny — either way**

Grade 11
Alexa von Berg
Springfield High School
First Place

My PTSD Does Not Get to Win. Neither Should Yours.

you are at the heart
of everything that matters
you may not realize it
but this world would stop turning
if you disappeared
scientifically, no
mentally
emotionally
and physically
for me,
and others,
yes.

you keep this world turning.
you are important, my love.
and still you rise
like the waves on the ocean
like the wind picking the leaves up
like the fan whipping up dust
like balloons into space
206 bones in you
each built with their own story
7 trillion nerves in you
each built with their own story
35 trillion blood cells
each built with their own story
but you stand here,
trying to tell me
you don't matter?

the birds outside your window will miss singing to your music
the trees will miss waving at you
the lady bugs will miss looking up to you
the ants to the crickets to the owls
more people love you than you know
even if it is silent love.
remember,
every tunnel
ends up outside in the light again
every night
ends with the sun rising
every switch
can turn the light back on
so even if it is raining,
you can still see,
even if it's hard.
keep pushing through your own storm,
even if it's hard.
the light always appears again.

**Grade 11
Madeline Wuest
Sacred Heart Academy
Second Place**

Thoughts and Prayers

**I want to say, Mother,
Can you hear me? This will be
My last call, for a while now.
Was I good? Was I good?
I hear them running now. I guess
My time is up. Did you decide that,
Mother? Will I make it? Will I be
Remembered?
I close my eyes, Mother, and I see
Two hills, and a black cat, and a hand
That was made for love. Where did their
Hand go wrong? What can I do?
There is a thump. I am alone. Why
Am I alone? They said, Mother, they said
That I had thoughts and prayers. Will they be
Enough to set me free? Or let me be forgotten?
I remember learning my colors, learning my
Right from left. Is this right? Am I seeing
Red? I do not think, Mother, that this was
Part of the lesson. I did not know.
Goodbye, Mother. My time is up. But
I am sure you will see me, for a day,
And then for the rest of your days, in all the faces
Of the children who will be next.**

Grade 11
Gwen Bradwell
The Baldwin School
Third Place

Nocte Felidae

Under dusk's descending shroud, where shadows drape dim-lit skies,
A timeless terror, veiled and vague, from my mortal mind doth lie
In the periphery; indeed it creeps: unsettling, dark, and sly,
As my cat's unyielding stare perceives the horrors which daylight hides.

Whither goes my feline's stoic gaze, upon this realm unseen,
As it pierces midnight voids where timeless horrors dare to gleam.
Silent omens, ancient cries; oh, such forgotten whispers teem!
Does she stalk a spectral wraith or watch the phantoms of a dream?

Nocte Felidae, what horrible ghouls dost thou spy,
Hidden away in corners cold, wherein shades dare belie?
What nameless dread dost thou now observe, with calculated eye,
Past the veil of human sanity, where only madness thrives?

As I drift into sleep's catacombs, I fall into sweet release
Unaware of the fiends of darkling night that hunt and never cease.
For my feline sentinel's piercing gaze falls on unnamed beasts
That lurk in shadows blackest, where naught but terrors reign complete.

1st Grade Judge
Connie Swartzman

Connie Swartzman has been published in the Schuylkill Valley Journal and won first prize in poetry at the 2019 Philadelphia Writers' Conference. She taught kindergarten classes for over thirty years. She writes memoirs and poems and participates in writing classes and critique groups.

2nd Grade Judge
Emiliano Martin

Local poet and author of a dozen poetry books. He has judged for the Delco YP Poetry Contest for over twenty-five years, as well as serving as a Judge for the Bucks County Poet Laureate 2020 Contest. He is a past president of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society and is very active in the poetry community.

His latest poetry publications: "Caught Between Layers" (2022) and "Over Clouds of Cotton" (2023) are available on Amazon, and many other Internet outlets. His writings go on.

3rd Grade Judge
Richard Lord

Richard Lord has written or co-written over 20 published books, including two chapbooks of poetry. He has had individual poems published in several print and online publications, most recently Southern Cross Review. A number of Lord's non-fiction books were written for elementary, middle and high schools in Canada and the United States. Many of his short stories are published in anthologies or on Amazon Shorts as well as a novel, published in 2013. As a playwright, he has had two of his plays broadcast on BBC World Service, the second of which (The Boys At City Hall ...) was a BBC Highlight of the Month. His ten-minute play Exchanges was chosen as Best Play at the first Singapore Short & Sweet Festival.

4th Grade Judge

Steve Delia

Steve Delia has been writing poetry for 45 years. He is a Philadelphia poet who has read in many libraries, coffee houses, bookstores, and various venues. He has read on WXPB and at The Hedgerow Theater. He was a first prize winner at the Philadelphia Writers Conference in 2015. His last two books are *The Alphabet Concerto* (2018) and *Poetry Time* (2020), which can be purchased on Amazon. His new book will be out soon. He currently hosts the Elkins Park Library series, Poets and Poetry.

5th Grade Judge

Abbey J. Porter

Abbey J. Porter writes poetry and memoirs about people and relationships, life and loss—sometimes even with a bit of humor. A Pennsylvania native, Abbey has been writing since she was a child. She holds an MFA in creative writing from Queens University of Charlotte, an MA in liberal studies from Villanova University, and a BA in English from Gettysburg College. Abbey works in communications and lives in Cheltenham, Pa., with her two beloved dogs—who help her remember to smile, particularly during these challenging times.

6th Grade Judge

Prabha Nayak Prabhu

Prabha Nayak Prabhu is a retired language teacher. Her articles have appeared in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Delaware County Daily Times*. She has been published in several journals including *The Mad Poets Review*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Philadelphia Poets*, *The Fox Chase Review* and the *Anthology, Selfhood: Varieties of Experience*. Her chapbook *Layers* was published by Finishing Line Press in 2019.

7th Grade Judge

Brooke Palma

Brooke Palma grew up in Philadelphia and currently lives in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Many of her poems focus on the connections between culture and identity and finding beauty in the everyday. Her work has been published in *The Mad Poets' Review*, *Moonstone Arts*, *Toho Journal*, and *E-Verse Radio* (online), and work is forthcoming in *Unbearables: A Global Anthology*. Her chapbook, *Conversations Unfinished*, was published by The Moonstone Press in August 2019. She hosts the Livin' on Luck Poetry Series at Barnaby's West Chester.

8th Grade Judge

Mike Cohen

Mike Cohen is a local performance poet. His articles on sculpture appear in the Schuylkill Valley Journal.

9th Grade Judge

Amy Barone

Amy Barone's poetry collection, *Defying Extinction*, was published by Broadstone Books in 2022. New York Quarterly Books released her collection, *We Became Summer*, in 2018. She wrote chapbooks, *Kamikaze Dance* (Finishing Line Press) and *Views from the Driveway* (Foothills Publishing.) Her poetry has appeared in *Local Knowledge*, *Martello Journal* (Ireland), *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *New Verse News*, and *Paterson Literary Review*, among other publications. Barone spent five years as Italian correspondent for *Women's Wear Daily* and *Advertising Age*. She belongs to the Poetry Society of America and the brevitas poetry community. From Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, she lives in New York City.

10th Grade Judge

Stu O'Connor

Stu O'Connor is an educator, musician, and writer who has spent his life dedicated to the power of the word, the necessity of precision in language, and the human need for story as a method of transmitting culture, ideas, and understanding. He has been published in numerous literary and online sources including the *Mad Poets Review*, *Moonstone Poetry Writers Ink* anthologies, and *Silver Sage Magazine*, as well as performing music at many Philadelphia area venues and local radio broadcasts.

11th Grade Judge

Peter Baroth

Peter Baroth, writer, artist, and musician, is a graduate of Washington University and Temple Law School. His novel is *Long Green* (iUniverse) and his book of poetry, *Lost Autographs* (Moonstone Press). He has been published in *Philadelphia Poets*, *Red Fez*, *Schuylkill Valley Journal*, *Apiary*, *Legal Studies Forum*, *Poetry Ink*, and elsewhere. He won the 2009 Amy Tritesch Needle Award, a 2016 Petracca Family Award, was a finalist for the Joie de Vivre book prize, has been nominated for Best of the Net, and is on *Philadelphia Stories'* editorial board. He lives in Media, PA.

12th Grade Judge

Ray Greenblatt

Winning a Fourth Grade Short Story Writing Contest, Ray Greenblatt was spurred to continue writing more stories, poems, essays, plays, and even a novel. He earned a B.A. in English Literature at Eastern University and an M.A. in American Literature at the University of New Hampshire. He taught English to 7th-12th grade for over 40 years. He won the Mad Poets Annual Poetry Contest and was nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize. He has at present written 10,000 poems and recently wrote a book review for the Dylan Thomas Society.