



GWENDOLYN BROOKS POETRY AWARD

EMERGING WRITERS COMPETITION

SECRETARY OF STATE & STATE LIBRARIAN ALEXI GIANNOULIAS
ILLINOIS STATE LIBRARY • ILLINOIS CENTER FOR THE BOOK

Secretary of State and State Librarian Alexi Giannoulis is pleased to announce the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition, Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award. Named for the late award-winning poet and Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks, the contest promotes creative writing, encourages local writers, and provides a unique opportunity to recognize new literary talent in the state.

The award for first place is \$500, second place is \$300, and third place is \$100. Winning poems will also be submitted for possible publication in partner Illinois journals.

ELIGIBILITY

Entrants

- All entrants must be Illinois residents, age 18 and over.
- Those who have published a full-length poetry collection via a commercial or not-for-profit press are NOT eligible. For contest purposes, a full-length poetry collection is defined as a volume of 48 pages or more published in paper or digital format by a commercial or not-for-profit press.
- Those who have published poems in paper or digital literary journals, magazines, anthologies, and/or chapbooks ARE eligible.
- Secretary of State employees, officials, and members of their immediate families are NOT eligible. Proof of eligibility is required.

Entries

- All entries must be original, be unpublished, and not be currently scheduled or under contract for publication in a paper or digital format literary journal or magazine. All works that have appeared in print or on the web, including self-published works and works that have been broadcast, are considered previously published and are, therefore, NOT eligible for the competition.
- If work is simultaneously submitted to literary journals and/or contests in addition to the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition, the entrant agrees to contact the Illinois Center for the Book immediately upon notification of their submission being published elsewhere during the course of entry and judging of the competition; understanding that their entry in the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition will then be ineligible.
- All entries must be typed or word-processed, double-spaced, one-sided, and include the poem title at the top of the first page. Multiple page submissions must include the poem title and page number at the bottom of each page and must not be stapled or bound. Handwritten, fax and email submissions are not accepted. There is no minimum or maximum number of words.

ENTERING

Entries must be postmarked by June 30 and include the following items:

- Two copies of the poem.
- Completed entry form.
- Check or money order for \$20 per submission, payable to Illinois Secretary of State. Cash is not accepted. Entry fee is non-refundable.
- Signed copy of release form.
- Photocopy of valid Illinois driver's license or state ID card.

Please submit entries to:

Illinois Center for the Book

Illinois State Library

300 S. Second St.

Springfield, IL 62701

- Judging is blind. No personal identification or contact information is allowed anywhere in the poem. All personal information must be typed, word-processed, or written legibly on the entry form ONLY.
- Entries must be postmarked on or by June 30. The Illinois Secretary of State, employees, and officials are not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, illegible, damaged, misdirected, mutilated, or postage-due entries. Entries will not be returned.
- Entries not adhering to these eligibility guidelines will be disqualified. All decisions are final.

SUBMISSION AGREEMENT AND RELEASE

Entrant understands and agrees that the execution of this release is a prerequisite to acceptance of their submission to the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition, Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award, and in consideration thereof, the entrant warrants and acknowledges the following:

1. They are an Illinois resident and at least age 18 years of age.
2. They have NOT published a full-length poetry collection via a commercial or not-for-profit press. For contest purposes, a full-length collection is defined as a volume of 48 pages or more published in paper or digital format by a commercial or not-for-profit press.
3. They are not an official or employee of the Illinois Secretary of State or immediate family thereof.
4. The submission is their own original, unpublished, and not currently scheduled or under contract for publication in a paper or digital format literary journal or magazine and has not been self-published or broadcast through any media outlet — including social media.
5. In the instance of work simultaneously submitted to literary journals and/or contests in addition to the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition, the entrant agrees to contact the Illinois Center for the Book immediately upon notification of their submission being published elsewhere during the course of entry and judging of the competition; understanding that their entry in the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition will then be ineligible.
6. All submissions are accepted as is and cannot be altered after submission.
7. Copies of their entry will not be returned. Entrant warrants and represents that they have retained at least one copy of the material and hereby releases the Illinois Secretary of State, officials, and employees from any and all liability for loss of or damage to copies of the submitted material.
8. Indemnifies and holds harmless the Illinois Secretary of State, the officials, and employees thereof, from any claims brought by third parties alleging that the entrant’s submission is not an original or unpublished work.
9. An independent panel of judges will determine the winners, and the Illinois Secretary of State is under no obligation to entrant whatsoever if their submission is not selected a winner. All decisions are final.
10. Winners must sign and return affidavits of eligibility within 14 days of the prize letter notification mailing date, or the prize will be forfeited. All taxes on prizes are the sole responsibility of winners. All prizes claimed will be awarded.
11. Grants the Illinois Secretary of State and officials permission to quote from and release to the press and appropriate publications their name, hometown and any or all parts of any poem submitted in the competition.
12. Copyright remains with the author, but the Illinois Secretary of State and officials retain the non-exclusive rights to publish the winning entries in their respective newsletters, publications and websites.
13. Participating publishers are not obligated to publish the award-winning poems. Each publisher will make an independent determination as to whether an award-winning poem meets the publisher’s criteria.
14. Any entrant found to be making false statements will be automatically disqualified from the competition. All decisions are final.

AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

Name of Entrant (print)

Signature of Entrant

Date

Phone Number

Street Address

City, State, ZIP



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ENTRY FORM — Each original poem must have its own entry form and fee. (PLEASE PRINT or TYPE)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Evening Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Occupation: _____

Title of Submission: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

- Completed entry form
- Entry fee (check/money order)
- Signed submission agreement and release
- Photocopy of driver's license or state ID card
- Two copies of poem



ATTENTION ALL WRITERS

21ST ANNUAL ILLINOIS EMERGING WRITERS COMPETITION

OPEN TO ILLINOIS RESIDENTS AGE 18 AND OVER

CASH PRIZES FOR WINNING POETRY

ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY JUNE 30, 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

ilsos.gov/departments/library/center_for_the_book
or BMATHEIS@ILSOS.GOV

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