
PRESS RELEASE



Congratulations to Statewide 2024 Vermont Poetry Out Loud Winner Greer Kennedy

BURLINGTON, VT — Greer Kennedy, a student at St. Johnsbury Academy, took top honors at the **2024 Poetry Out Loud State Finals** held in Flynn Space at **the Flynn on March 14**. Samantha Urbina, a student at BFA Fairfax, was the runner up, and the third-place finalist was Mary Bosco, a student at Thetford Academy. Kennedy heads to Washington, DC, at the end of April to represent Vermont in the Poetry Out Loud National Competition.

Ten students recited their chosen poems in three rounds during the state final competition, which was emceed by Myra Flynn. The top three finalists with the highest cumulative scores after the first two rounds continued to round three, reciting their last poem. Kennedy recited *Life Cycle of Common Man* by Howard Nemerov, *Dirge Without Music* by Edna St. Vincent Millay, and *Mezzo Cammin* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Urbina recited *We Are of a Tribe* by Alberto Ríos, *Revenge* by Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and *“Un Tintero,” Inkwell* by Desirée Alvarez. Bosco recited *Tonight I can Almost Hear the Singing* by Silvia Curbelo, *It Isn't Me* by James Lasdun, and *On An Unsociable Family* by Elizabeth Hands.

The other finalists were Eli Wimette, Mount Mansfield Union High School; Jordan Larose, South Burlington High School; Ren Launderville, Williamstown High School; Lily Hutcheson, Burr and Burton Academy; Timothy Tester, Lyndon Institute; Rowan Thayer, Burlington High School; Grace Bruley, BFA St. Albans.

22 schools across Vermont registered to bring the national Poetry Out Loud program to their classrooms in 2023, reaching nearly 3,000 students with about 90 teachers participating. 21 students were selected by their teachers as school champions and advanced to participate in the statewide semi-finals competition, which was held on March 7 at the Barre Opera House and emceed by Geof Hewitt.

Poetry recitations were evaluated by the judges using these criteria: physical presence, voice and articulation, evidence of understanding, interpretation, accuracy, and overall performance. The 2024 Poetry Out Loud Finals judges were hip-hop artist and poet Omega Jade; author, storyteller, and musician Joseph Bruchac; spoken-word poet LN Bethea; author AR Capetta; and Vermont College of Fine Arts Director of Alumnx & Community Engagement Sarah Madru.

State champion Greer Kennedy receives \$200 and advances to the national finals where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends are distributed. The state champion's school receives \$500 for the purchase of poetry materials. First runner-up Urbina receives \$100, with \$200 for her school.

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Vermont Poetry Out Loud is supported by the Poetry Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Vermont Arts Council. Since the program began in 2005, more than four million students across the country have participated in the national program. The Poetry Foundation provides and administers the monetary prizes.

For more information about Vermont Poetry Out Loud, visit <https://www.flynnvt.org/Education/poetry-out-loud>.

About the Vermont Arts Council

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. Learn more at vermontartscouncil.org.

About the Flynn

Burlington's "Wonder Theatre" was established in 1930 as a state-of-the-art vaudeville and motion pictures venue. The Flynn has endured a zigzagging history to become the renowned, world-class performing arts center it is today—a place for anyone seeking the transformative power of the arts and live performance. Year round, the Flynn welcomes international, national, and regional artists to perform on the original Main Stage as well as in the intimate black box theater Flynn Space; offers a diverse array of classes and camps held in Flynn studios; presents the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival; and supports local and visiting artists through residencies and commissions. For more information, visit flynnvt.org.

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