
PRESS RELEASE



Statewide 2023 Vermont Poetry Out Loud Winner Announced

BURLINGTON, VT — Greer Kennedy, a student at St. Johnsbury Academy, took top honors at the **2023 Poetry Out Loud State Finals** held in Flynn Space at **the Flynn on March 16**. Anne Hauze, a student at Woodstock Union High School, was the runner up, and the third-place finalist was Grace Bruley, a student at Bellows Free Academy, St. Albans. Kennedy heads to Washington, DC, in May 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 Jolivette Anderson-Douning. The top three finalists with the highest cumulative scores after the first two rounds continued to round three, reciting their last poem. Kennedy recited *Mr. Darcy* by Victoria Chang, *On the Death of Anne Bronte* by Charlotte Bronte, and *I Am Offering this Poem* by Jimmy Santiago Baca. Hauze recited *Sonnet 55: Not marble nor the gilded monuments* by William Shakespeare, *The Properly Scholarly Attitude* by Adelaide Crapsey, and *Clear Night* by Charles Wright. Bruley recited *The world is about to end and my grandparents are in love* by Kara Jackson, *I Am Offering this Poem* by Jimmy Santiago Baca, and *Dawn* by Ella Higginson.

The other finalists were Mary Bosco, Thetford Academy; Melissa Hall, Bellows Free Academy Fairfax; Lily Hutcheson, Burr and Burton Academy; Moorea Lambert, Rice Memorial High School; Brenna Lee, Williamstown High School; Mira Novak, Champlain Valley Union High School; and Andi Marie Tisdell, Peoples Academy,

21 schools across Vermont registered to bring the national Poetry Out Loud program to their classrooms in 2023, reaching more than 2,500 students with about 90 teachers participating. 19 students were selected by their teachers as school champions and advanced to participate in the statewide semi-finals competition, which was held on March 9 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, dramatic appropriateness, accuracy, and overall performance. The 2023 judges were author Sarah Audsley, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum Executive Director Susan Evans McClure, actor Morgan Irons, Outright Vermont Executive Director Dana Kaplan, and artist Shanta Lee.

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 Hauze 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 state of Vermont. 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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