# POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE
# 70TH ANNUAL POETRY FESTIVAL CONTESTS

## *DEADLINE AND ENTRY FEES*

PST Board Contest entry fees are noted on the contest. Pay one fee to enter any or all Sponsored contests: **$10** for members, **$15** for non-members. Please note: some contests have eligibility restrictions. Review contests carefully.

A poet may submit one packet of entries. Contests **open for submission October 15, 2026,** and entries **must be received by email before midnight, Sunday, December 1, 2026**. Follow instructions carefully. ***No simultaneous submissions.***

Questions? Contact Festival Contest Chair Howard Carman at pstsubmissions@gmail.com

## *PRIZES AND PUBLICATION*

1. PST publishes first-place poems in *Tennessee Voices Anthology*. Second and third place winners may be published at the discretion of the Editorial Board.
2. In addition to prizes, honorable mentions are given as merited by the number of entries in each individual contest and the quality of the material submitted. Published poets, sponsors, and non-sponsor judges will receive a complimentary anthology copy.
3. By submitting an entry, you agree to give PST first publishing rights should your poem be selected for publication. Following publication, all rights revert to the author. You also grant PST non-exclusive electronic permission to post this work in archives and share it through social media and/or live presentations. We ask that you credit *Tennessee Voices Anthology, 2026-2027* if the work is published elsewhere in the future.
4. The *Tennessee Voices Anthology* Editorial Board reserves the right to alter line breaks in poems having more than 50 characters per line, including punctuation marks and spaces. We reserve the right to make minor revisions to works (e.g., spacing conventions for em-dashes, correction of typographical errors, and the like).
5. Pseudonyms of winning poets will be honored in *Tennessee Voices Anthology* and on winner's lists; however, legal names are required for issuing checks.

## *ELIGIBILITY*

1. Unless otherwise indicated, contests are open to all poets. Please review each contest carefully to ensure you are eligible to participate in a particular contest.
2. Unless otherwise specified, all poems must be the exclusive work of the contestant, unpublished in any form, including electronically and placed on exhibition, and not under consideration or accepted for publication elsewhere. Your work must be created ***without*** use of Artificial Intelligence-assisted technologies. Your entries must not have previously won a prize valued at $15 or more. NOTE: Prize requirements are exempted for contests seeking previously published poems.
3. The same poem may not be entered in more than one contest.
4. Unless otherwise specified, a poet may not enter more than one poem in a single contest.

5. *No simultaneous submissions.*
6. While PST welcomes a variety of themes and topics, we do not accept explicitly violent or sexual content for our contests.
7. Entries which do not conform to the following rules will be disqualified:
    a. Poets who violate publication and/or simultaneous submission rules will be disqualified. If awarded prize money, poet will be asked to refund any prize money that has been issued for poem(s) in violation of guidelines.
    b. Poems which do not meet membership or other criteria specified in specific contest instructions will be disqualified from that contest.
    c. Poets will not be notified if poems are disqualified.

## *FORMAT AND SUBMISSION*

1. All entries must be submitted by email to pstsubmissions@gmail.com
2. In order of preference, we accept digital entries formatted as .docx, .doc, .pdf, and .txt.
3. Entries must be single spaced in 12-point Times New Roman or similar font.
4. Include the following information either in the body of your email or in a separate Summary Sheet document (preferred, with document name "LastName_SummarySheet"):
    a. Name
    b. Email Address
    c. Mailing Address
    d. Phone number
    e. List of contests you are entering, including
        i. Contest number
        ii. Contest name (if applicable)
        iii. Title of poem(s) for that contest
    f. A short (70 words or less) biography written in third person. (In the event your poem is selected for publication, this bio will appear in the *Tennessee Voices Anthology*.)

    Submissions that do not include **all** this information will not be considered and will be disqualified.
5. **Blind Copy** of each poem being submitted. For each poem entered, in the upper left of each document list the contest number, contest title (if applicable) and form of poem being submitted (e.g., Free Verse, Blank Verse, Villanelle, etc.). **Do not** place any identifying information in the document or in the file name.
6. We recommend a file name of "Contest Number_Title" (e.g., 10_Tree to Sawdust.docx).
7. For poems 2 pages or longer, place the title on all pages.
8. Unless otherwise specified, line count does not include the title or one space below the title. Unless otherwise specified, all other lines, including blank lines, epigraphs and supplemental information are included in line count.

9. Do not include graphics unless specifically required by contest instructions or integrated into the poetry form. If submitting a poem with integrated art (e.g., tanka art, erasure poetry) please specify the form for the judge. Color copies are acceptable, but if accepted for publication, the piece will appear in grayscale in the anthology.

## *PAYMENT*

Pay your entry fee online or with check by mail:

1. Online: online payment option available at https://bit.ly/pstpaynow.
   Please review the instructions for online payments here:
   https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SfW6u1BO0dBQYK1Mo0nfXKeRPpviCfSY/view?usp=sharing
2. By mail: Make check payable to Poetry Society of Tennessee, write "PST Festival Entry" on the memo line, and mail to PST Festival Contest Coordinator, P.O. Box 3772, Johnson City, TN 37602.

## FESTIVAL CONTESTS

Unless otherwise specified, contests have a 40-line limit. Standard line count does not include the title or blank line following but all other lines, including blanks, count. Some contests may not consider blank lines in line count. Review categories carefully.

## PST BOARD-SPONSORED CONTESTS

### BEST OF THE FEST AWARD

PRIZE: $250
An outside judge will select one poem from all festival contest 1st place poems (except contest 2) for this award. The judge's decision will be final.

### 1. TENNESSEE VOICES

Eligibility: Tennessee resident or PST members only.
Entry Fee: $2 for a single poem (in addition to the $10 member/$15 non-member entry fee).
One entry only.
Form: Any / Subject: Any
Prizes: 1st $150/ 2nd $100 / 3rd $50

### 2. PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

Eligibility: PST members only.
Entry Fee: $2 per entry (in addition to the $10 member/$15 non-member entry fee).
Up to 5 entries.
Form: Any / Subject: Any
Special Instructions: Any previously published poem. Note where poem was published on your entry. Do not combine multiple entries into a single file.
PRIZES: to be determined by number of entries

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SPONSORED CONTESTS
(selected and funded by individuals or organizations)

### 3. NATIONAL PARKS CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: National Parks
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Sarah Cummins Small
Prizes: 1st $25/ 2nd $15/ 3rd $10
The subject is open to any way the poet wishes to explore US National Parks, whether one park or more or the concept of public lands.

### 4. GOLDEN SHOVEL CONTEST
Form: Golden Shovel
Subject: any
Lines: 40 max (including epigraph or poetic credit)
Sponsor: Jennifer Smith
Prizes: 1st $35 / 2nd $25 / 3rd $15

### 5. AUTUMN WINDS CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: Autumn Winds
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: KB Ballentine
Prizes: $25/$15/$10

### 6. ODE TO AN INANIMATE OBJECT
Form: Ode
Subject: Any inanimate object
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Connie Jordan Green
Prizes: $30/$20/$10

### 7. WHAT WOULD DEBORAH ADAMS DO?
Form: Prose Poem
Subject: Any
Lines: 18 max
Sponsor: Julie Herman
Prizes: $50/$25/$10

### 8. CAREGIVING CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: Caregiving
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Natalie Kimbell
Prizes: $50/$35/$15

### 9. "A FAIRER HOUSE THAN PROSE"
Form: Any
Subject: Any
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Sherry Poff
Prizes: $30/$20/$10
Write a poem inspired by Emily Dickinson's verse. Please include an epigraph from Dickinson, of no more than four lines, that will inform the reader of your work.

### 10. FOREIGN LANGUAGE CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: An experience with a foreign language
Lines: 40 Max
Sponsor: Barb Jeffress
Prizes: $25/$15/$10
Foreign language word(s) encouraged, but keep it accessible to English readers

### 11. PATIENCE CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: Patience
Lines: 10 - 30
Sponsor: Greer Litton Fox
Prizes: $25/$15/$10

### 12. DISCOVERY CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: Discovery
Lines: 40 Max
Sponsor: Howard Carman
Prizes: $25/$15/$10

### 13. WATER CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: An eco poem focused on water
Lines: 40 max (not including blank lines between stanzas)
Sponsor: Lisa Kamolnick
Prizes: $35/$20/$15
For information and inspiration for an eco poem on water, see https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/159667/ecopoetry-and-water

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SPONSORED CONTESTS (CONT'D)
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### 14. THE BOBBIE DROBECK MEMOMRIAL AWARD
Form: Any
Subject: A spooky narrative poem – must tell a story
Lines: 10 – 40
Sponsor: Russell H. Strauss
Prizes: $25/$15/$10
Lyric poems that do not tell a story are unacceptable

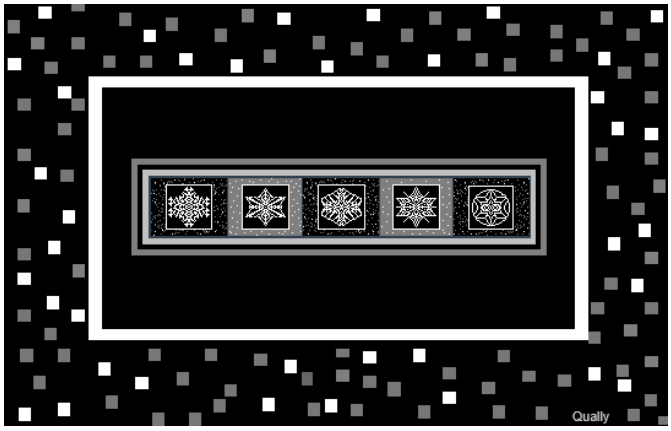
### 15. THE JOAN T AND SHERON B STRAUSS AWARD
Form: A historic Burma Shave Poem, rhymed, humorous
Subject: Any
Lines: 5 - 6
Sponsor: Russell H. Strauss
Prizes: $25/$15/$10
Last line need not rhyme with the rest of the poem but must read "Burma Shave"

### 16. GRANDPARENT MEMORIES
Form: Any
Subject: Grandparent Memories
Lines: 30 max
Sponsor: JoAn Howerton
Prizes: $20/$10/$5

### 17. DR. DIANE M. CLARK AWARDS
Form: any
Subject: a secret or secrets
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Dr. Diane M. Clark
Prizes: $25/$20/$15

### 18. SONG PARODY CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: A song parody
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: William Hill Art and Poetry
Prizes: $25/$15/$10
Must include the name of the song being parodied

### 19. EKPHRASTIC CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: Ekphrastic poem in response to the digital artwork below:




Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Janet Qually
Prizes: $30/$20/$10

### 20. ANAM CARA CONTEST
Form: Any
Subject: The Celtic concept of Anam Cara
Lines: 40 max
Sponsor: Anonymous Donor
Prizes: $50/$30/$20

### 21. THE COAT OF MANY COLORS POETRY PRIZE
Form: Any
Subject: Write a poem about the experiences, people, places, or memories that make up your own "coat of many colors"
Lines: N/A
Sponsor: Nikki Noushin
Prizes: $50/$35/$15