

UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY 2026 CONTEST RULES

Funded by the Utah State Poetry Society, in association with the generous support of member sponsors who fund the majority of contest categories. The UTSPS is affiliated with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

PLEASE closely read and follow contest rules along with each category's specific SUBJECT, FORM, and LINE LIMITS. Violations of the contest rules will disqualify individual poems, and may disqualify your entire entry. NO fees or poems will be returned. Be sure to include your **Cover Sheet** (i.e., the list of all the categories you are entering with the title of the poem in each entered category) and payment for your submission.

A. SUBMISSIONS: Start Date December 15, 2025. Deadline Postmark date: February 15, 2026.

B. MEMBER has paid annual dues (\$30 regular; \$15 student) postmarked by January 5, 2026.

Membership information: Lauren Madsen at (801) 360-2507 or Laurmadsen2003@gmail.com

C. EACH POEM SUBMITTED MUST:

1. be the original work of the contestant. No part of any poem shall be generated by any artificial intelligence content generator (e.g., ChatGPT).
2. Follow the Subject specified in each category, the Form allowed, and the Line Limit. The line limit does NOT include title, epigraph, or blank lines. However, line limits DO include section headings in words, numbers, or characters such as an asterisk. There is a 40-line limit for all categories not stating line limit.
3. be unpublished in any form, including electronically, on the submission deadline date, Feb. 15, 2026, except for The Wild Card category.
4. not have won a cash prize of more than \$10.00 in any previous UTSPS contest.
5. be titled. Exceptions: haiku, tanka, and senryu.
6. be in good taste. Please, no vulgarity or sexual innuendo. Political themes discouraged.
7. be entered in **only one category** in this contest.
8. be typed or computer generated. No illustrations. No onion skin.
9. not be changed and cannot be withdrawn.
10. each category must receive a minimum of 10 entries to be a valid contest.

No poems will be returned. Poet should retain copies.

D. CONTEST FEES:

1. All entrants pay an initial \$5.00 entry fee for processing.
2. MEMBERS pay \$1 per poem up to \$15 maximum to enter one poem in every category. Exceptions: Wild Card = \$2.00 each poem, no entry limit.
3. NON-MEMBERS pay \$3 per poem in categories identified as OPEN TO ALL. Non-members are not allowed to enter categories marked *MEMBERS ONLY*. Exception: Wild Card = \$5.00 each poem, no limit on # of entries.

E. PROPER PREPARATION OF ENTRIES:

1. Prepare two clear copies, single-spaced in 12 - 14 point standard font similar to Times New Roman or Courier and black ink (no gray-scale even for Courier) on 8½ x 11-in. white paper **without illustrations**. No onion skin paper.
2. One poem per page. For long poems requiring a second page, staple pages together.
3. **ONLY ONE** poet’s submission per envelope, and payment in full. Write **ONE** check or money order payable to UTSPS. Do not make check payable to a person.
4. On **BOTH** copies, type category number and category name in upper **LEFT** corner. When applicable—but especially when required in the category description—identify the form (e.g., Shakespearean Sonnet) in the upper **LEFT** corner under category number and name.
5. For each poem, leave one copy unidentified. On the identified copy, place **ALL** elements of the poet’s information in upper **RIGHT** corner: **name, address, phone #, and email**.
6. **SEPARATE** originals from author-identified duplicates. **STACK** each group in numerical order, with the original (no ID) stack on top.
7. **COMPLETE COVER SHEET: (incomplete sheet will disqualify submission)**
 - a. Type 8½ x 11-in. **COVER SHEET** single-spaced (all on **ONE SIDE**) with name, address, phone number, email, “UTSPS Member” or “Non-member” in upper **RIGHT** corner.
 - b. List the category number on every category entered, along with title of poem entered. Also list the total number of poems entered.
 - c. **LIST ALL FEES:** entry, Wild Card (if applicable), plus single categories, and total paid.

EXAMPLES:

Non Member Example: Entry Fee	= \$ 5.00
2 Wild Card (\$5 each)	= 10.00
5 single categories (\$3 each)	<u>= 15.00</u>
Total	= \$30.00

UTSPS Member Example: Entry Fee	= \$ 5.00
2 Wild Card (\$2 each)	= 4.00
12 single categories (\$1 each)	<u>= 12.00</u>
Total	= \$21.00

8. Do **NOT** staple entry fee to entry. Please paper clip the check to the Cover Sheet. Checks are cashed after all entries are presumed received.

F. “MEMBERS ONLY” eligible if a paid member of UTSPS by (postmark) January 5th of 2026. Membership dues (refer to UTSPS website utahpoets.com for amount) must be postmarked by January 5, current contest year. Print a membership form from the website: utahpoets.com, then mail to the address on the form with a check for membership made to UTSPS.

G. WHEN TO SUBMIT POEMS:

1. Contest starting date: entries must not be postmarked before December 15th 2026.
2. Contest deadline: **entries must be postmarked on or before February 15th 2026.**

H. HOW TO SUBMIT POEMS:

1. Mail all entries at one time, unfolded, in a large envelope, including the cover sheet and Mail Entries to:

UTSPS CONTEST CLERK:
c/o Barbara Funke, Clerk
474 W. Rolling Hills Dr.
St. George, UT 84770-6111

2. Use First Class or any method that DOES NOT REQUIRE A SIGNATURE!
All categories are judged double-blind by poets who are not contesting members of UTSPS. Decisions of judges are final; winners are announced at April UTSPS awards Festival. Additions sent separately will not be considered.
UTSPS will not assume mailing costs nor be responsible for any entries lost or delayed by mail.
3. For notice of your entry's arrival, please state your request for a text message (include cell #), or for email (which is included in your cover sheet).
4. To receive winners list by mail, include business-sized (4 x 9-in) SASE with 2X postage. The list will be made available on the UTSPS website www.utahpoets.com.

VIOLATION OF ANY OF THESE RULES MAY LEAD TO DISQUALIFICATION.

UTSPS 2026 Contest Categories

1. Wild Card Award

Requires each poet to pay an entry fee of \$2 per poem (\$5 if not a UTSPS member). Any number of unpublished or published (if author retains rights) poems may be entered, except poems having previously won cash prizes in this Wild Card category. All fees become “the pot.” First place winner receives 30%, second place 25%, third place 20%. Remaining 25% goes to the UTSPS.

Subject: Any, Form: Any

Open To All

Prizes: See above

2. Mathew J. Limburg Christ-Centered Poetry Award

Sponsor: Michael Shoemaker

Subject: A poem that shares veneration, praise or honor to Jesus Christ or Christian lives that follow His example. Please, no violence, profanity or bigotry.

Form: ANY, Line Limit: 80

Open To All

Prizes: \$125, \$75, \$50

3. Dale H. Kohler Memorial Award

Sponsor: Joyce Kohler

Subject: Something That Is Difficult

Form: ANY, Line Limit: ANY

Open To All

Prizes: \$100, \$50, \$25

4. Orville Webb Award

Sponsor: Anonymous

Subject: Refuge, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 42

Open To All

Prizes: \$100, \$50, \$25

5. Betty Fowler Memorial—You Better Believe It

Sponsor: Bill Fowler and Candy Lish Fowler

Subject: About the U.S.A. Could be a hometown: a community event, noteworthy character, town tradition, but nothing to do with politics.

Form: ANY (except no rhyming poetry), Line Limit: 42

Members Only

Prizes: \$100, \$30, \$20

6. Ann C. Larson Memorial

Sponsor: Bill Fowler and Candy Lish Fowler

Subject: ANY (nothing to do with politics, no explicit erotica, no vulgarities).

Form: ANY (except no prose, no rhyming poetry) Line Limit: 50

Members Only

Prizes: \$100, \$30, \$20

7. Verna Hartsoe Chiong Memorial Award

Sponsor: Raven Chiong Memorial Fund

Subject: Unsung Heroine, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 49

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

8. Steven Leitch Memorial Award

Sponsor: Steven Leitch Memorial Fund

Subject: Inspiration, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

9. Pat Bader's Celebration of Living

Sponsor: Bob Bader

Subject: Children's Poem, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

10. Nad Richard Brown Memorial

Sponsor: Markay Brown

Subject : ANY, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 30

Open To All

Prizes: \$40, \$30, \$30

11. Rachel Olsen Memorial

Sponsor: Grace Diane Jessen

Subject: ANY, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

12. Norma Asplund Memorial

Sponsor: The Asplund Family

Subject: My Best Friend (Any Friend)

Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

13. Women Trailblazers Award

Sponsor: Marilyn Marshall

Subject: Hope, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

14. Odd Square Poem Category

Sponsor: Kim Barney

Subject: ANY

Form: Square Poem = must have the same # of syllables per line as # of lines in the poem.

Example: a seven-line poem would have seven syllables per line. Rhyme is optional.

Line Limit: Min 5, Max 13 (Must have an odd number of lines; i.e. 5, 7, 9, 11 or 13)

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

15. Rosalyn Ostler Memorial Award

Sponsor: Protégé of Rosalyn Ostler

Subject: Tug o' War (Mere mortals in challenging situations - no controversial issues)

Form: ANY, Line Limit: standard 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

16. Vera Isadore Pearce Spears Memorial Award

Sponsor: Anna Louise Spears Family

Subject: Traditional Cowboy Poetry

Form: Rhymed, Line Limit: 80

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

17. Kolette Montague Memorial Award

Sponsor: Rhyme & Reason Chapter

Subject: ANY, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$50, \$25, \$25

18. Ben Lomond Chapter Award

Sponsor: Ben Lomond Chapter

Subject: Where Have I Been, Why Am I Here, or What Have I Done

Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

19. Valley Winds Chapter Award

Sponsor: Valley Winds Chapter

Subject: Gratitude, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Members Only

Prizes: \$50,\$30, \$20

20. Dorothy L. & Paul Roberts Memorial

Sponsor: Roberts Memorial Fund

Subject: An upbeat expression showing awareness of the beauty in the world around us.

Form: Any, Line Limit: 40

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

21. Leroy Meagher Sonnet

Sponsor: Meagher Memorial Fund

Subject: ANY

Form: Use correct Shakespearean, Petrarchan, or Beymorlin forms only.

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

22. Meagher Memorial

Sponsor: Meagher Memorial Fund

Subject: Any humorous — make us giggle, chuckle, or laugh.

Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

23. Zara Sabin Memorial

Sponsor: Zara Sabin Memorial Fund

Subject: The Personal Poem. Expression of spontaneous, intense, personal emotion. Imagery & metaphor should develop and enrich expression and impact of the basic emotion.

Form: ANY, Line limit: 24

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

24. Lloyd Murray Light Verse

Sponsor: Lloyd Murray Memorial Fund

Subject: Any, Form: light verse, rhymed, metered, humorous, Line Limit: 8 max

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

25. Short Poem—Vesta Crawford Memorial

Sponsor: Crawford Memorial Fund

Subject: Any serious subject, Form: Any, Line limit: 6 min - 12 max

Members Only

Prizes: \$50, \$30, \$20

26. Red Rock Writers Founders Award

Sponsor: Red Rocks Chapter

Subject: ANY, Form: Free verse or blank verse (iambic Pentameter, no rhyme)

Line Limit: 40

Open to All

Prizes: \$35, \$25, \$15

27. David F. And Robert H. Balph Memorial

Sponsor: Martha Balph

Subject: Wild Animals: whales to hummingbirds to insects. The poem should focus on the wild creature in that animal.

Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$30, \$20, \$10

28. American Indian Heritage Award

Sponsor: Martha Balph

Subject: Relating to Native Americans: history, spirituality, contemporary issues or arts.

Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$30, \$20, \$10

29. Honoring U.F. and Agnes Wood

Sponsor: Marilyn Richardson

Subject: Off We Go, Form: ANY, Line Limit: 40

Open To All

Prizes: \$30, \$20, \$10

30. HAIKU Category

Sponsor: UTSPS

Subject: Any, Form: Haiku (style or form of three-lines is allowed)

Members Only

Prizes: \$25, \$15, \$10

ALICE MORREY SWEEPSTAKES

Sponsor: UTSPS

A certificate and check for \$35.00 will be awarded to the UTSPS member who accumulates The most points for winning entries (1st place 5 points, 2nd place 4 points, 3rd place 3 points) for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of each of the 29 categories in the UTSPS 2026 Poetry Contest.