2023 County Champions

**Alameda County Champion**
Lana Tariq  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

*School:* Quarry Lane School  
*Teacher:* Tricia Miller  
*Poem 1:* American Smooth - Rita Dove  
*Poem 2:* The Doubt of Future Foes - Queen Elizabeth I  
*Poem 3:* Sunshower - Natalie Shapero

“The arts and the Poetry Out Loud contest are very meaningful to me, as I write my own poetry and being able to present an author’s work in a respectful, meaningful way is an amazing experience.”

**Amador County Champion**
Lily Fawver  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

*School:* Argonaut High  
*Teacher:* Dale Lisa Flint  
*Poem 1:* Harold & the Purple Crayon - D. Gilson  
*Poem 2:* Broken Promises - David Kirby  
*Poem 3:* An Autumn Sunset - Edith Wharton

“Poetry Out Loud is an emotional freedom that challenges me yet brings me to places I never knew I wanted to explore.”

**Butte County Champion**
Phoebe Parks  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

*School:* Inspire School of Arts and Sciences  
*Teacher:* Joseph Hill  
*Poem 1:* When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be - John Keats  
*Poem 2:* Clear Night - Charles Wright  
*Poem 3:* Across the Street - Austin Segrest

“The arts are my childhood, my life, and will be my death.”

**Calaveras County Champion**
Marco Rincon  
Pronouns: he/him

*School:* Calaveras High School  
*Teacher:* Ann Mazzaferro (Ms. Mazz)  
*Poem 1:* On the Death of Anne Brontë - Charlotte Brontë  
*Poem 2:* I, Too - Langston Hughes  
*Poem 3:* When You Are Old - William Butler Yeats

“Art is the refinement of human emotion, poetry is the reflection over them.”
2023 County Champions

**Contra Costa County Champion**
Harper Iles
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Pinole Valley High School  
**Teacher:** Corinna Carlile  
**Poem 1:** I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340) - Emily Dickinson  
**Poem 2:** In Love, His Grammar Grew - Stephen Dunn  
**Poem 3:** There Are Birds Here - Jamaal May  

"Poetry Out Loud has given me the opportunity to bring poems to life with my voice. Through this experience, I've been able to connect with poets, fellow participants, and audiences, and I've been introduced to poems I probably would have never discovered on my own. Getting to perform them has been a privilege, and just so fun!"

**Del Norte County Champion**
Aidan Vincenzo Malone  
*Pronouns: he/him/his*

**School:** Sunset High School  
**Teacher:** Kelly Troyna  
**Poem 1:** Auto-Lullaby - Franz Wright  
**Poem 2:** Or - Thomas Sayers Ellis  
**Poem 3:** And If I Did, What Then? - George Gascoigne  

"The arts give me an opportunity to perform! It’s a way to challenge myself, express my creativity, be heard, and show my face to the world."

**El Dorado County Champion**
Alison Lee  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Oak Ridge High School  
**Teacher:** Mrs. Ivelich / Denise Ivelich  
**Poem 1:** Learning to love America - Shirley Geok-Lin Lim  
**Poem 2:** Threshold - Maggie Smith  
**Poem 3:** Friendship After Love - Ella Wheeler Wilcox  

"To me, Poetry Out Loud means bringing stories to life by weaving one’s own experiences into the words of the poem. What I love most about poetry is that individuals connect with poems in unique ways, and Poetry Out Loud gives students the opportunity to express themselves through their interpretation of each poem."

**Fresno County Champion**
Aaron Santibanez-Ramirez  
*Pronouns: he/him*

**School:** Clovis West High School  
**Teacher:** Mrs. Garcia  
**Poem 1:** Friendship After Love - Ella Wheeler Wilcox  
**Poem 2:** The Contract Says: We’d Like the Conversation to Be Bilingual - Ada Limon  
**Poem 3:** Onions - William Matthews  

"Poetry Out Loud has opened my eyes to the whole world of poetry; reading poems has inspired me to begin creating my own pieces to understand myself and the world around me."
Humboldt County Champion
Zoe LoCicero
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Eureka High School
Teacher: Mauro Staiano
Poem 1: Not Horses - Natalie Shapero
Poem 2: Ozymandias - Percy Bysshe Shelley
Poem 3: Threshold - Maggie Smith

“As a student pursuing a STEM education, I have found the arts to be paramount in allowing me to express myself and to maintain my sanity. Whether it be through poetry, painting, or playing the cello, the arts have always been an integral part of making my life vibrant.”

Inyo County Champion
Kevin J. Glenn
Pronouns: he/him/his

School: Owens Valley High School
Teacher: Erin Renee
Poem 1: The Arrow and the Song - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Poem 2: Fire and Ice - Robert Frost
Poem 3: Late Summer - Jennifer Grotz

“Poetry Out Loud is an opportunity for me to express myself using the words of poets, allowing to overcome my fear of public speaking, as well as being able to travel to new places, all while following my passion.”

Lake County Champion
Madelin Muniz-Espinoza
Pronouns: she/her

School: Clearlake High School
Teacher: Tim Barnes
Poem 1: Idea 61: Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part - Michael Drayton
Poem 2: I Am Offering this Poem - Jimmy Santiago Baca
Poem 3: Harold & the Purple Crayon - D. Gilson

“A new experience, and something I can learn from”

Lassen County Champion
Morgan Merrill
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Lassen High School
Teacher: Rachel Vincent
Poem 1: A Song: Lying is an occupation - Laetitia Pilkington
Poem 2: Flirtation - Rita Dove
Poem 3: Fire and Ice - Robert Frost

“Poetry Out Loud has helped me connect to words that have been written to express someone else’s emotions. I feel poetry has a way to speak without saying it as it is, leaving thoughts and feelings within it all.”
2023 County Champions

**Los Angeles County Champion**

Anaiya Asomugha  
_Pronouns: she/her/hers_

School: The Archer School for Girls  
Teacher: Kathleen Keelty  
Poem 1: a song in the front yard - Gwendolyn Brooks  
Poem 2: Self-Help - Michael Ryan  
Poem 3: Envy - Mary Lamb

“One of the best feelings in the world is reading a poem and realizing that with every stanza, you grow more and more confident that this poem was written for you.”

**Madera County Champion**

David Ivey Jr.  
_Pronouns: he/him/his_

School: Yosemite Highschool  
Teacher: Alicia Myer  
Poem 1: Fire and Ice - Robert Frost  
Poem 2: Harlem - Langston Hughes  
Poem 3: Song of the Powers - David Manson

“I like how in “Poetry Out Loud” us the participants are there to be a conduit of the true Emotionality of the poem for further understanding of the poem.”

**Marin County Champion**

Henry Greber  
_Pronouns: he/him/his_

School: Novato High School  
Teacher: Rebecca Pollack  
Poem 1: Wide Receiver - Mark Halliday  
Poem 2: Perhaps the World Ends Here - Joy Harjo  
Poem 3: The American Soldier - Philip Freneau

“To me, Poetry Out Loud is the opportunity to express feelings and messages through the words of those who can't express them themselves.”

**Mariposa County Champion**

Annie Bryant  
_Pronouns: she/her/hers_

School: Mariposa County High School  
Teacher: Brooke Dobson  
Poem 1: Cartoon Physics, part 1 - Nick Flynn  
Poem 2: I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340) - Emily Dickinson  
Poem 3: A Wing and a Prayer - Beth Ann Fennelly

“Poetry Out Loud is about celebrating the art of poetry and allowing students to explore their connection to these pieces of art.”
## Mendocino County Champion

**Amy Liu**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Developing Virtue Secondary School  
**Teacher:** Jin Jr Shr  
**Poem 1:** Burning in the Rain - Richard Blanco  
**Poem 2:** Breakfast - Mary Lamb  
**Poem 3:** History Textbook, America - JoAnn Balingit

"Poems are a pair of wings that cannot only bring me close to what awes me, but also lift me to a new perspective so I find myself in awe of what is close to me. Poetry Out Loud, then, is something I cherish -- a chance for me to take flight and share with others what I discover."

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## Merced County Champion

**Olivia Bruner**  
*Pronouns: she/her*

**School:** Merced High School  
**Teacher:** Karen Silva  
**Poem 1:** The Debt - Paul Laurence Dunbar  
**Poem 2:** Experience - Ralph Waldo Emerson  
**Poem 3:** Not Waving but Drowning - Stevie Smith

"Preparing for my senior year, I had one mission: try everything. I wanted to take advantage of any and every opportunity I could before moving onto the next chapter of my life. When my teacher, Mrs. Silva, brought up the Poetry Out Loud challenge, I knew I wanted to partake in the challenge. I always love the chance to dive into new areas and while poetry is by no means new to me, it gave me the chance to read through new poetry and find some new poets to look into."

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## Modoc County Champion

**Alexis Jean Hill**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Surprise Valley High School  
**Teacher:** Heather Bordwell  
**Poem 1:** Since There Is No Escape - Sara Teasdale  
**Poem 2:** The Debt - Paul Laurence Dunbar  
**Poem 3:** I Find no Peace – Sir Thomas Wyatt

"Poetry Out Loud facing my fears of public speaking and expressing my love of poetry."

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## Mono County Champion

**Kira Wanner**  
*Pronouns: she/her*

**School:** Lee Vining High School  
**Teacher:** Sarah Taylor  
**Poem 1:** Shall earth no more inspire thee - Emily Brontë  
**Poem 2:** Enemies - Wendell Berry  
**Poem 3:** Do Not! - Stevie Smith

"To me, Poetry Out Loud represents an opportunity for teenagers to explore a new and beautiful, though often overlooked, way of expressing our emotions, about the world, nature, people, hard times and good times - in short, poetry speaks from the heart, and POL allows us to tune in to that."
## Monterey County Champion

**Karina Torres**  
***Pronouns: she/her***

**School:** North Monterey County High School  
**Teacher:** Ms. Velasquez  
**Poem 1:** And I wonder where you are - Tanaya Winder  
**Poem 2:** After the Winter - Claude McKay  
**Poem 3:** We Wear the Mask - Paul Laurence Dunbar

"The arts mean everything to me; they are a part of my life. Poetry Out Loud has been a great opportunity to open up about my passions."

## Napa County Champion

**Colette St. Aubin**  
***Pronouns: she/her/hers***

**School:** Vintage High School  
**Teacher:** Mrs. LaMonte  
**Poem 1:** Siren Song - Margaret Atwood  
**Poem 2:** If We Must Die - Claude McKay  
**Poem 3:** "Hope" is the thing with feathers - Emily Dickinson

"Poetry is a hand to be held; it guides us to see that we are never alone."

## Nevada County Champion

**Sam Uelmen**  
***Pronouns: he/him***

**School:** Sierra Academy Of Expeditionary Learning (SAEL)  
**Teacher:** Marika Beck  
**Poem 1:** The Coming of the Plague - Weldon Kees  
**Poem 2:** Very Large Moth - Craig Arnold  
**Poem 3:** The Charge of the Light Brigade – Alfred, Lord Tennyson

"I am an actor, a musician, and a poet. I view art and poetry as a great way to express yourself without being constrained by all these grammatical rules and writing styles. Poetry has helped me through a lot in my life. From my foster father’s passing to a recent breakup, I find myself turning back to poetry."

## Orange County Champion

**Olivia Le**  
***Pronouns: she/her/hers***

**School:** OCSA  
**Teacher:** Josh Wood  
**Poem 1:** A Noiseless Patient Spider - Walt Whitman  
**Poem 2:** Fairy Tale with Laryngitis and Resignation Letter - Jehanne Dubrow  
**Poem 3:** Respiration - Jamaal May

"Words have been used in infinitely different ways with infinitely different intentions but poetry is the place where we can be fully honest and human."
2023 County Champions

**Placer County Champion**
Sarah Yee
Pronouns: she/her/hers

*School:* Granite Bay High School  
*Teacher:* Julie Francesconi  
*Poem 1:* Suppose - Phoebe Cary  
*Poem 2:* anthem for my belly after eating too much - Kara Jackson  
*Poem 3:* The Legend - Garrett Hongo

“Poetry Out Loud is a space for me to celebrate language and connect to the its context--whether that's the poet's lived experiences or my own. Poetry and Poetry Out Loud is about empathy and building connections that both transcend and recognize the times.”

**Plumas County Champion**
Aidan Powers  
Pronouns: he/him

*School:* Quincy High School  
*Teacher:* Erica Perdue  
*Poem 1:* I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud - William Wordsworth  
*Poem 2:* Adlestrop - Edward Thomas  
*Poem 3:* How Dark the Beginning - Maggie Smith

“Poetry Out Loud gives me the opportunity to submerge myself in my imagination and perform for others without judgment. The arts are important to me because they allow me to express myself to others.”

**Riverside County Champion**
Harliana Otto  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

*School:* Palm Valley School  
*Teacher:* Susie Zachik  
*Poem 1:* I Am Offering this Poem - Jimmy Santiago Baca  
*Poem 2:* Envy - Mary Lamb  
*Poem 3:* Alive - Natasha Sajé

“Poetry lets you step outside the world you are locked into and express yourself.”

**Sacramento County Champion**
Alex Yue  
Pronouns: he/him/his

*School:* John F. Kennedy High School  
*Teacher:* Jennifer Reynaga  
*Poem 1:* Filling Station - Elizabeth Bishop  
*Poem 2:* The Conqueror Worm - Edgar Allan Poe  
*Poem 3:* When I Heard the Learn’ed Astronomer - Walt Whitman

“The arts and Poetry Out Loud have been a way for me to express my individuality. Through the poems of my choice, my understanding, my approach, and my few or many victories, I can feel myself interacting with artistically adorned ideas that are depthful and great.”
2023 County Champions

San Benito County Champion
Angelo Hillstock
Pronouns: he/him/his

School: Hollister High School
Teacher: Amanda Chiado
Poem 1: Here's an Ocean Tale - Kwoya Fagin Maples
Poem 2: Caged Bird - Maya Angelou
Poem 3: The Children's Hour - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“Poetry Out Loud is a great way to share our stories and relate to others through a creative outlet; there’s a poem out there for everyone, no matter who you are or where you are from.”

San Bernardino County Champion
Faith Bakhos
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Big Bear Highschool
Teacher: Colin Schour
Poem 1: The World Is Too Much With Us - William Wordsworth
Poem 2: Floating Island - Dorothy Wordsworth
Poem 3: Shall earth no more inspire thee - Emily Brontë

“To me, Poetry Out Loud means living. It means experiencing another person’s deepest thoughts and feelings and being able to bring them to life. When I am performing I lose myself and find the soul of the author come through. The connection you feel with language when you recite a poem is incomparable, and I believe it is something every person should do at least once.”

San Diego County Champion
Mia Grace Davis
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Academy of Our Lady of Peace
Teacher: Siobhan MacManus
Poem 1: To Myself - Franz Wright
Poem 2: Hanging Fire - Audre Lorde
Poem 3: Breakfast - Mary Lamb

“Art is a conversation between an artist and the audience. As both a physical and metaphorical manifestation of that connection, Poetry Out Loud cultivates those conversations—and for that I am grateful.”

San Francisco County Champion
Duyen Huynh
Pronouns: Her

School: George Washington High School
Teacher: Laudra Cunradi
Poem 1: Today - Billy Collins
Poem 2: The Last Performance - Thomas Hardy
Poem 3: Invitation to Love - Paul Laurence Dunbar

“I got a lot of benefits from this competition and I think everyone should have a chance to join.”
2023 County Champions

San Luis Obispo County Champion
Blair Victoria Bishop
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Paso Robles High School
Teacher: Jeffrey Mount
Poem 1: I Once Was a Child - Victoria Chang
Poem 2: Early Affection - George Moses Horton
Poem 3: You, If No One Else - Tino Villanueva

“Poetry Out Loud and the arts mean finding a way to connect with someone else’s work to understand the deeper meaning, or find what it means to you.”

San Mateo County Champion
Kate Chernykh
Pronouns: she/her

School: Woodside High School
Teacher: Mark Reibstein
Poem 1: Echo - Daryl Hine
Poem 2: I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340) - Emily Dickinson
Poem 3: the world is about to end and my grandparents are in love - Kara Jackson

“Poems are these beautiful secrets that allow us to capture a moment and make it history, with only the use of words. A reader brings life to such a moment, thus making history present. The art of poetry is magical and captivating, and POL has given me a chance to share this.”

Santa Barbara County Champion
Lucas Hsiung
Pronouns: he/him

School: Ernest Righetti High School
Teacher: Mrs. Kristen Kurth
Poem 1: Invictus - William Ernest Henley
Poem 2: In a Dark Time - Theodore Roethke
Poem 3: She Walks in Beauty - Lord Byron (George Gordon)

“The arts are the expression of one's deepest emotions and feelings.”

Santa Clara County Champion
Selina Xu
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Harker Upper School
Teacher: Jennifer Siraganian
Poem 1: The Coming Woman - Mary Weston Fordham
Poem 2: Slant - Suji Kwock Kim
Poem 3: Siren Song - Margaret Atwood

“I think Poetry Out Loud is about bringing words to life and highlighting the impact of poetry, fusing the artist's words with our own choices and emotions. Art makes us human, and preserving that is vital.”
# 2023 County Champions

## Santa Cruz County Champion

**Tashi Liem**  
*Pronouns: they/them/their*

- **School:** Santa Cruz High School  
- **Teacher:** Audrey Sirota  
- **Poem 1:** “I think I should have loved you presently” - Edna St. Vincent Millay  
- **Poem 2:** The Day Lady Died - Frank O'Hara  
- **Poem 3:** Luke Havergal - Edwin Arlington Robinson

> “Poetry is where I go when I need to make sense of how I feel. Feelings that seem too big to fit anywhere always turn out to be the perfect size for a poem.”

## Shasta County Champion

**Amana Sinantha**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

- **School:** Shasta High School  
- **Teacher:** Kristina Miralles  
- **Poem 1:** On Quitting - Edgar Albert Guest  
- **Poem 2:** Breakfast - Mary Lamb  
- **Poem 3:** Propositions - Stephen Dunn

> “Drama has always been my comfort class at school. Poetry Out Loud for me is a competition that ties the skills I learned from Drama, like public speaking, with being able to take the time to appreciate poems I may never have come across before.”

## Siskiyou County Champion

**Teagan Wirth**  
*Pronouns: he/him/his*

- **School:** Golden Eagle Charter School  
- **Teacher:** Mrs. Renee Callaghan  
- **Poem 1:** Song of the Shattering Vessels - Peter Cole  
- **Poem 2:** The Maldive Shark - Herman Melville  
- **Poem 3:** The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

> “An opportunity to express myself in a healthy, creative, and exciting way.”

## Solano County Champion

**Natalie Villalobos**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

- **School:** Early College High School  
- **Teacher:** Pam Williamson  
- **Poem 1:** I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, (340) - Emily Dickinson  
- **Poem 2:** The Last Word - Nikki Grimes  
- **Poem 3:** April Midnight - Arthur Symons

> “To me, poetry both spoken and written is a form of self expression. Whether we connect with the piece through our own experiences or simply enjoy it.”
## 2023 County Champions

### Sonoma County Champion

**Chelle Servais**  
*Pronouns: they/them/theirs*

**School:** Santa Rosa High School  
**Teacher:** Mr. Lyon  
**Poem 1:** Summer - Chen Chen  
**Poem 2:** The Children’s Hour - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  
**Poem 3:** He Mele Aloha no ka Niu - Brandy Nālani McDougall  

> “Poetry Out Loud gives me a creative outlet to embody language and meaning.”

### Stanislaus County Champion

**Haven Cating**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Oakdale High  
**Teacher:** Leigh Ann Gobel  
**Poem 1:** a song in the front yard - Gwendolyn Brooks  
**Poem 2:** The Children’s Hour - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow  
**Poem 3:** Candles - Carl Dennis  

> “Arts are an expression my humanity. It connects people emotionally and intellectually throughout the world with words, pictures, and music.”

### Sutter County Champion

**Ainsley May Nelson**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Sutter Union High School  
**Teacher:** Rick Tuttle  
**Poem 1:** How Dark the Beginning - Maggie Smith  
**Poem 2:** Love Calls Us to the Things of This World - Richard Wilbur  
**Poem 3:** The Albatross - Kate Bass  

> “Art is not a luxury, but a necessity for our souls.”

### Tehama County Champion

**Crystal Jasmin Marquez**  
*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

**School:** Corning Union High School  
**Teacher:** Louis Buran  
**Poem 1:** A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky - Lewis Carroll  
**Poem 2:** Early Affection - George Moses Horton  
**Poem 3:** To Cupid - Joanna Baillie  

> “Art, no matter what form it comes in, cleanses the soul and makes life seem a little sweeter.”
2023 County Champions

**Trinity County Champion**  
Charles Vang  
Pronouns: he/him/his

School: Hayfork High School  
Teacher: Joe Hall  
Poem 1: Don't Bother the Earth Spirit - Joy Harjo  
Poem 2: I Find no Peace - Sir Thomas Wyatt  
Poem 3: For the Nefarious - Mai Der Vang

“Poetry brings out the feelings you have stored up inside and a history of what the authors went through for them to write the poems we’re currently reading and reciting now.”

**Tulare County Champion**  
Sabrina Castillo  
Pronouns: she/her

School: Tulare Union  
Teacher: Jill Coyle  
Poem 1: Invisible Children - Mariana Llanos  
Poem 2: When You Are Old - William Butler Yeats  
Poem 3: Sweet Tooth – Russell Edson

“The arts convey meaningful emotional expression in many different forms. Poetry helps an experience be shared with others through the power of words and Poetry Out Loud has given me a platform to branch out into this amazing form of performance.”

**Tuolumne County Champion**  
Natalie Harris  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Summerville Union High School  
Teacher: Leah Gissler  
Poem 1: In the Desert - Stephen Crane  
Poem 2: Happy Hour - Lee Ann Roripaugh  
Poem 3: After working sixty hours again for what reason - Bob Hicok

“This competition has introduced me to a wonderful array of new people and beautiful poetry, and I’m glad to be involved in it.”

**Ventura County Champion**  
Sofia Noriega  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Oxnard Middle College High School  
Teacher: Dr. Stephenson  
Poem 1: I Find no Peace - Sir Thomas Wyatt  
Poem 2: Truth is I would like to escape myself - Nour Al Ghraowi  
Poem 3: Broken Promises - David Kirby

“Art is something you pour your heart and soul into, it can be any shape or form, it can have curves, lines, bumps, glitter anything you can imagine, because everything is art if you set your heart and soul to it.”
Yolo County Champion
Gabriela Garcia
Pronouns: she/her/hers

School: Winters High School
Teacher: Olivia Rodriguez
Poem 1: Acquainted with the Night - Robert Frost
Poem 2: To Solitude - Alice Cary
Poem 3: The Affliction of Richard - Robert Bridges

“To me, poetry is a way to express myself and communicate my feelings to those around me. The arts, specifically poetry, have positively shaped the way I view life and have helped me better appreciate the world around me.”

Yuba County Champion
Salma Antonia Alfaqeeh
Pronouns: she/her/hers, they/them/theirs

School: Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts
Teacher: Mathew Fridrich
Poem 1: Horns - Kwame Dawes
Poem 2: We Wear the Mask - Paul Laurence Dunbar
Poem 3: Sunshower - Natalie Shapero

“Poetry Out Loud has given me a new appreciation for the musicality of poetry. Dissecting and analyzing the poems has made the meter, punctuation, line breaks, and other components of each poem stand out. So much more can be found in a poem by reading it aloud.”