

# ANNUAL REPORT

## About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation recognizes the power of words to transform lives. We work to amplify poetry and celebrate poets by fostering spaces for all to create, experience, and share poetry.



2023



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# INTRODUCTION



Visitor engaging with the Harriet Monroe & the Open Door exhibition

# Introduction



Michelle T. Boone

## 2023: Leading with Our Values

2023 marked 20 years of operation as the Poetry Foundation. It was a year of many firsts for us; we established Chicago's poet laureateship alongside partners, launched a citywide poetry reading initiative, introduced an award for service in poetry, and more. Our twentieth anniversary year was a time to reflect on our place in the poetry world and our obligations to our communities.

Poetry has the power to illuminate the joys and pains of our world, bring healing, and transform lives, and we recognize the privilege and embrace the responsibility we have as an institution built around poetry. Cultural institutions and nonprofit organizations, including the Poetry Foundation, have faced increased calls for accountability in the wake of devastating events and ongoing suffering. A year of volatile global conflicts, divisive politics, and the ongoing cultural reckoning gave us pause to reexamine and reconfirm our institutional values. Established in the strategic plan instituted in 2022, our values guide how we deliver on our mission and live up to our vision. The following are examples of how we executed these values in 2023:

- **Sharing + Collaboration:** The Poetry Foundation instituted a new grants program in 2022 as part of our pledge to support the field of poetry and the literary arts more robustly. In 2023, we were proud to distribute \$3 million in direct financial support to 100 partner organizations that are amplifying poetry across the United States and its territories. We've also distributed \$1 million in additional support to partners and as payments to poets, performers, and others.
- **Equity + Access:** Our programs and events created inclusive spaces for poets to share their work and varying perspectives. Poetry readings, musical performances, educational initiatives, and exhibitions expanded the audience for poetry in Chicago and beyond. *Poetry* magazine continued to focus on publishing voices that had been left out of its pages in the past, providing a platform for emerging poets to express their voices and increase their exposure.
- **Innovation + Growth:** We spent much of 2023 researching and testing upgrades to our website so that users will have a better experience accessing the vast digital library of poems, author biographies, and educational resources available free to all. We look forward to launching these updates in 2024.

These are just a snapshot of how we put our values into action in 2023; more examples have been captured in the pages to follow. We know that we cannot do this work without support from poets, partner organizations, and poetry lovers. We move forward in the spirit of gratitude and learning from all that has been accomplished in the past two decades, and in 2023, especially. As we enter our third decade, we pledge to continue using our resources to elevate poetry to new heights alongside you all with our values as our guide.

**Yours in poetry,**

**Michelle T. Boone**

Poetry Foundation president and CEO

# KEY UPDATES



Visitors in the Poetry Foundation library

# 2023 Key Updates

## A Year of Firsts

- Chicago named its first **poet laureate**, award-winning poet, educator, composer, performer, and producer, **avery r. young**.
- We collaborated with Chicago Public Library to support the first **citywide poetry reading initiative**, *One Poem, One Chicago*, with a collective reading of beloved local poet Gwendolyn Brooks's seminal collection, *Blacks*, and a series of events celebrating her legacy.
- We introduced the first **Pegasus Award for Service in Poetry**, which recognizes commitment and extraordinary work in poetry and the literary arts through administration, advocacy, education, publishing, or service.
- For the first time, **three poets serve on the board of trustees**, which provides the Foundation's governance, stewardship, and strategic direction.
- *Poetry* magazine continued its commitment to publishing diverse perspectives and emergent voices, including **126 first-time contributors**, representing 50% of the poets published.
- We published the *Eleven Legends* issue of *Poetry* in April, the first time that *Poetry* featured **11 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize winners in one issue**.
- For the first time since 2019, more than 100 educators from across the United States gathered in person at the University of Miami for the annual **Summer Poetry Teachers Institute**.
- A first-of-its-kind collaboration with the Poetry Foundation online archive and a team of nine co-curators, ***Harriet Monroe & the Open Door***, mapped the evolution of Monroe's editorial philosophy, locating it within the cultures and structures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



Ben Okri signs books after his September 28, 2023 Poetry Off the Shelf reading



September 14, 2023 Open Doors: Harriet Monroe Editors Panel

# 2023 Key Updates

— continued

*it is this time  
that matters*

*it is this history  
I care about*

*the one we make together*

Excerpt from "On a New Year's Eve" by June Jordan,  
featured in *Poetry*, November 2023

# GRANTS



CityLit Festival 2022 featuring Like Water and Joyful Singing. Photo courtesy of CityLit.

# Grants

In 2023, the Poetry Foundation began the second year of a **three-year commitment to supporting poetry and literary arts nonprofits in the United States through [grantmaking](#)**. To date, more than 250 grants totaling over \$6,000,000 have been awarded. The Poetry Foundation's grant recipients have included poetry and cultural nonprofits that offer in-school poetry programs, university poetry centers, poetry presses, publications, and organizations that support underserved communities of poets and writers through providing workshops, residencies, publishing opportunities, and more.

## 2023 Grants

- \$3,000,000 in grants to nonprofit organizations
- 106 grants awarded
- 100 organizations received grants
- 60–65% of grant funds go toward general operating support; the remaining funds go toward program support
- 60% of organizations that received grants were BIPOC-led

## Impact from 2022 Grants Reporting\*

- 3,863 poets paid
- 2,253,000 individuals served

\*Our grantee-partners share impact metrics the year after they receive the grants. 2023 data will be collected in 2024.

## Grantee-Partner Profiles

The Poetry Foundation began publishing [grantee-partner profiles](#) on the website and social media in 2023. This new content stream provides a snapshot of grantee-partners' work to advance poetry and the literary arts, raising awareness of the individual organizations and of the Foundation's grantmaking efforts.

- 10 fall 2022 grantee-partners featured in 2023



Kitchen Table Literary Arts workshop participants.  
Photo courtesy of Kitchen Table Literary Arts.



Student reading their poetry during a Diatribe program. Photo courtesy of the Diatribe.

“

This [Poetry Programs, Partnerships, and Innovation grant] is Kitchen Literary Arts' first major grant prize. We were a bit intimidated to apply but felt encouraged and supported throughout the process. As a grassroots, primarily crowd and individual donor-funded arts organization, being able to secure the Poetry Foundation's support has been a game-changer for us in terms of staying committed to the work we love so much.

”

—Sheree L. Greer, Kitchen Table Literary Arts executive director

# Grants

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## Grant Recipients

### Equity in Verse

- [826CHI](#) - \$30,000
- [Alegria Bilingual Bookstores & Arts Collective](#) - \$15,000
- [Alternative Field](#) - \$15,000
- [Bamboo Ridge Press](#) - \$25,000
- [BreatheINK](#) - \$30,000
- [Brew & Forge](#) - \$20,000
- [Burst Into Books](#) - \$25,000
- [Cardboard House Press](#) - \$25,000
- [Cave Canem Foundation](#) - \$65,000
- [CityLit Project](#) - \$40,000
- [ConTextos](#) - \$40,000
- [DewMore Baltimore](#) - \$35,000
- [Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network](#) - \$40,000
- [Foglifter Press](#) - \$15,000
- [Guild Literary Complex](#) - \$30,000
- [In-Na-Po, Indigenous Nations Poets](#) - \$50,000
- [InsideOut Literary Arts](#) - \$50,000
- [Kearny Street Workshop](#) - \$35,000
- [Kuumba Lynx](#) - \$40,000
- [Lambda Literary](#) - \$45,000
- [Love Now Media](#) - \$35,000
- [Lugar Comun](#) - \$25,000
- [Mizna](#) - \$35,000
- [Noemi Press](#) - \$20,000
- [Northwest New Mexico Arts Council](#) - \$15,000
- [Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora at Illinois State University](#) - \$50,000
- [Radical Reversal](#) - \$50,000
- [Radius of Arab American Writers](#) - \$15,000
- [SISTORIES](#) - \$20,000
- [Split This Rock](#) - \$40,000
- [Stomping Grounds Literary Arts Initiative](#) - \$30,000
- [The Philly Pigeon](#) - \$20,000
- [The Watering Hole Poetry Organization](#) - \$25,000
- [The Word, A Storytelling Sanctuary](#) - \$45,000
- [Torch Literary Arts](#) - \$40,000
- [Urban Word NYC](#) - \$45,000
- [Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation](#) - \$30,000
- [Young Chicago Authors](#) - \$45,000

### Poetry Programs, Partnerships, and Innovation

- [Academy of American Poets](#) - \$50,000
- [Beyond Baroque](#) - \$30,000
- [Center for Book Arts](#) - \$35,000
- [Chicago Poetry Center](#) - \$40,000
- [Community of Literary Magazines and Presses](#) - \$30,000
- [Dinéta Drama Festival](#) - \$50,000
- [EcoTheo Collective](#) - \$30,000
- [Floating Museum](#) - \$40,000
- [Freedom Reads](#) - \$45,000
- [Gemini Ink \(The Gemini Series\)](#) - \$20,000
- [Good Journey Development Foundation](#) - \$18,000
- [Guernica](#) - \$20,000
- [Hub City Writers Project](#) - \$20,000
- [Kitchen Table Literary Arts](#) - \$15,000
- [Mass Poetry](#) - \$30,000
- [Milkweed Editions](#) - \$40,000
- [Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop](#) - \$40,000
- [National Poetry Series](#) - \$30,000
- [Nebraska Writers Collective](#) - \$40,000
- [PEN America](#) - \$40,000
- [Pen Parentis](#) - \$20,000
- [Philadelphia Contemporary](#) - \$40,000
- [Poet Lore](#) - \$11,000
- [Poetic Justice](#) - \$40,000
- [Poets in Need](#) - \$20,000
- [Poetry Society of America](#) - \$30,000
- [Southern Fried Poetry](#) - \$18,000
- [Street Poets](#) - \$30,000
- [The Arts Council of Princeton](#) - \$12,000
- [The Beautiful Project](#) - \$50,000
- [The Care Center](#) - \$40,000
- [The Poetry Forum \(RHINO Poetry\)](#) - \$10,000
- [The Poetry Lab](#) - \$25,000
- [The Poetry Project](#) - \$45,000
- [Ugly Duckling Presse](#) - \$25,000
- [Under the Volcano International](#) - \$30,000
- [The University of Arizona Poetry Center](#) - \$25,000
- [Wick Poetry Center](#) - Kent State University - \$25,000
- [Woodland Pattern](#) - \$45,000
- [Words Without Borders](#) - \$20,000
- [WriteGirl](#) - \$25,000
- [Writers Without Margins](#) - \$20,000
- [YourWords STL](#) - \$10,000

### Special Opportunity Grants and Sponsorships

- [826CHI](#) - \$5,000
- [Academy of American Poets](#) - \$10,000
- [Before Columbus Foundation](#) - \$7,500
- [Beyond Baroque](#) - \$2,500
- [BOA Editions](#) - \$25,000
- [Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights](#) - \$6,000
- [Chicago Literary Hall of Fame](#) - \$5,000
- [Chicago Theatre Group](#) - \$25,000
- [Contratiempo](#) - \$15,000
- [Court Theatre](#) - \$25,000
- [City of Chicago, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events](#) - \$30,000
- [Griot and Grey Festival \(Visual Arts Exchange\)](#) - \$5,000
- [Guild Literary](#) - \$6,000
- [Hubbard Street Dance](#) - \$5,000
- [Illinois Arts Alliance](#) - \$10,000
- [Illinois Humanities](#) - \$15,000
- [Kuumba Lynx](#) - \$5,000
- [National Book Awards](#) - \$15,000
- [National Youth Foundation](#) - \$10,000
- [Prison Neighborhood Arts Project](#) - \$15,000
- [Steppenwolf Theater](#) - \$15,000
- [Third World Press Foundation](#) - \$20,000
- [Thurber House](#) - \$15,000
- [United States Artists](#) - \$65,000
- [University of Nebraska, Lincoln - African Poetry Book Fund](#) - \$110,128

# AWARDS



(from left) Kimiko Hahn, Cornelius Eady, and Douglas Kearney  
at the 2023 Pegasus Awards ceremony

# Awards

Since 1986, the Poetry Foundation's awards have **honored and celebrated the accomplishments of poets** throughout different stages of their writing careers.

## The Pegasus Awards

The [Pegasus Awards](#) are a family of prizes that includes the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, Young People's Poet Laureate, Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism, and new in 2023, Pegasus Award for Service in Poetry.

The 2023 Pegasus Awards were held on October 26 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. 175 staff and guests enjoyed performances and remarks from Poetry Foundation president and CEO, Michelle T. Boone; poet and curator, Mahogany L. Browne; *Poetry* magazine editor, Adrian Matejka; 2023 Poetry Out Loud winner, Sreepadaarchana Munjuluri; *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist and ABC-7 Chicago political analyst, Laura Washington; and Fulcrum Point New Music Project.



Kimiko Hahn

### Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize

The Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize recognizes a living US poet for their outstanding lifetime achievement with an award of \$100,000. Presented annually, it is one of the most prestigious awards given to US poets and one of the nation's largest literary prizes.

2023 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize recipient **Kimiko Hahn** is the author of 10 books of poetry, some of which have been honored with the American Book Award, Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize, and an Association of Asian American Studies Literature Award. Hahn is a distinguished professor in the creative writing and literary translation program at Queens College of the City University of New York, where she also established the City University of New York Chapbook Festival. In January 2023, she was elected as a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.



Douglas Kearney

### Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism

The Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism is an annual \$10,000 prize that commends an outstanding book-length work of criticism published in the United States in the prior calendar year. Eligible works include biographies, essay collections, and critical editions that consider the subject of poetry or poets.

**Douglas Kearney** is a poet, performer, and librettist. Kearney won the Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism for *Optic Subwoof* (Wave Books), a collection of talks he presented for the Bagley Wright Lecture Series. He has published eight books and staged four operas, one of which, *The Sweet Land*, was named 2021 Opera of the Year by the Music Critics Association of North America.

### 2023 Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism Finalists

- Susannah Young-ah Gottlieb for *Auden and the Muse of History*
- Carl Phillips for *My Trade Is Mystery: Seven Meditations from a Life in Writing*
- Katherine Rundell for *Super-Infinite: The Transformations of John Donne*



Poetry editor, Adrian Matejka presenting at the Pegasus Awards



Pegasus presenter Mahogany L. Browne and former *Poetry* guest editor Charif Shanahan at the Pegasus Awards

# Awards

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## Pegasus Award for Service in Poetry

The Pegasus Award for Service in Poetry debuted in 2023 as an award bestowed in recognition of commitment and extraordinary work in poetry and the literary arts through administration, advocacy, education, publishing, or service.

The inaugural recipients of the Pegasus Award for Service in Poetry are **Toi Derricotte** and **Cornelius Eady**, who each received \$25,000. Poets Derricotte and Eady are the founders of Cave Canem, established in 1996 to remedy the underrepresentation and isolation of African American poets in the literary landscape. To date, Cave Canem Fellowships have supported more than 500 poets, many of whom have gone on to distinguished literary careers, including winners of the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize, recipients of the MacArthur Fellowship, and poets laureate.



Toi Derricotte



Cornelius Eady

## Fellowships

### Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship

[Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowships](#) are intended to support exceptional US poets between 21 and 31 years of age, prioritizing poets who have not had substantial institutional support in their careers thus far. Awarded annually to five poets, the award increased from \$25,800 to \$27,000 in 2023.

#### 2023 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellows

- Bhion Achimba
- Roda Avelar
- Ariana Benson
- Chrysanthemum
- Willie Lee Kinard III



2023 Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellows

# POETRY MAGAZINE



Founded in 1912 by Harriet Monroe  
Volume 217, Number 1

the poem as the champagne  
of what the body has bottled  
in its strain.

Roberson

Cathy Song  
Oli Rodriguez  
Tianru Wang

POETRY

OCTOBER 2020

POETRY  
OCTOBER 2020



POETRY

\$5.95 USA  
\$6.75 CAN  
\$6.75 UK

# Poetry Magazine

**Poetry magazine has brought poets and readers together for over a century.**

Founded by Harriet Monroe in 1912 in Chicago, the magazine publishes contemporary work primarily in English and translations from poets worldwide. In 2023, *Poetry* concluded its guest editor program with Charif Shanahan, who edited three issues.



“

I encountered so many new-to-me poets in 2023, several of whom were also first-time contributors to the magazine. What a gift to learn, to be hippped up to new poetics like I’m still in the front row of Public School 113, trying to do my best.

”

—Adrian Matejka, editor, *Poetry*

## Poetry Publishing

- 11 issues, including one double issue and three issues edited by a guest editor
- 529 poems
- 253 poets
  - 126 (50%) were first-time contributors
- 5 visual/multimedia poems
- 397 [audio poems](#)
- 34 prose pieces
- 9 folios
- 22 episodes of the *POETRY Magazine Podcast*

## Poetry Administration

- Received 20,439 submissions
- Paid \$414,000 to poets\*
- Donated 13,000 issues to community organizations, visitors, and event attendees
- Delivered *Poetry* to 23,150 print subscribers

\*This does not include the salaries paid to *Poetry* guest editors, monthly payments to the podcast producer, or the fellows, all of whom are poets.

## Content Highlights

- Folios on Bert Meyers (January), William J. Harris (February), Ann Lauterbach (March), Assotto Saint (May), Joyce Mansour (June), Ntozake Shange (September), Kimiko Hahn (October), June Jordan (November), Frank Marshall Davis (December)
- Special issues: *Eleven Legends* (April) and *Lineages* (November)
- New series: *Hard Feelings* and *Not Too Hard to Master*

# Poetry Magazine

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## Awards Poetry Administered

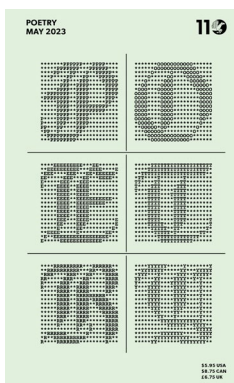
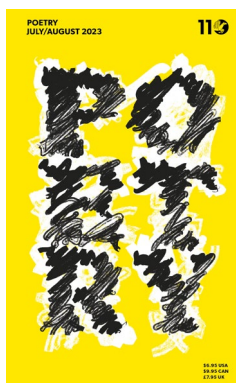
- The **Levinson Prize** of \$500 was awarded to Jennifer Chang for her poems “Dialogues (Against Literature)” and “The Age of Unreason,” *Poetry*, July/August 2023.
- The **Bess Hokin Prize** of \$1,000 was awarded to Omar Sakr for his series of three poems titled “On Finding the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Dante’s ‘Inferno,’” *Poetry*, June 2023.
- The **Frederick Bock Prize** of \$500 was awarded to Michelle Peñaloza for her poems “Utang Na Loob” and “All the Words I Can Remember Are Poems,” *Poetry*, July/August 2023.
- The **J. Howard and Barbara M.J. Wood Prize** of \$5,000 was awarded to Omotara James for her poems “Autobiography of Thud” and “First Kiss/Under Capitalism,” *Poetry*, January 2023.
- The **John Frederick Nims Memorial Prize for Translation** of \$500 was awarded to Lena Khalaf Tuffaha for her translations of Zakaria Mohammed’s poems, “January 2,” “August 15,” and “August 16,” *Poetry*, September 2023.
- The **Friends of Literature Prize** of \$500 was awarded to Yongyu Chen for their poem “Theory of Mesh,” *Poetry*, February 2023.
- The **Editors Prize for Visual Poetry** of \$1,000 was awarded to Roda Avelar for her poem “Jotxland Epic,” *Poetry*, March 2023.
- The **Editors Prize for Feature Article** of \$1,000 was awarded to two authors: Nikky Finney for her essay “Carolyn Rodgers: Loving on Black People” in the October 2022 issue and torrin a. greathouse for her essay “Writing from the Ashes: On the Burning Haibun,” *Poetry*, July/August 2023.
- The **Editors Prize for Reviewing** of \$1,000 was not awarded in 2022 or 2023 since *Poetry* magazine didn’t publish any reviews in the eligible issues. Instead, *Poetry* awarded the Editors Prize for Feature Article to two authors.

Many thanks to the judges of 2023 magazine prizes:  
Alejandro Aguirre, Sohini Basak, Emily Brandt, Nicholas Goodly, Lisa Low, and Natalie Perman.



## Poetry Magazine App Users

# 33,000



# POETRY, PROSE, AND PODCASTS



## Poetry, Prose, and Podcasts

[PoetryFoundation.org](https://PoetryFoundation.org) is **one of the world's largest free online English-language poetry resources**. The continuously updated digital archive of poems, author biographies, and editorial content serves as a vital resource for educators, students, and anyone looking to broaden their exploration of poetry.

average monthly website visits

**4.56 million**

new audio poems

**70**

poet bios added or updated

**350**

new glossary entries

**21**

new feature articles

**35**

active users

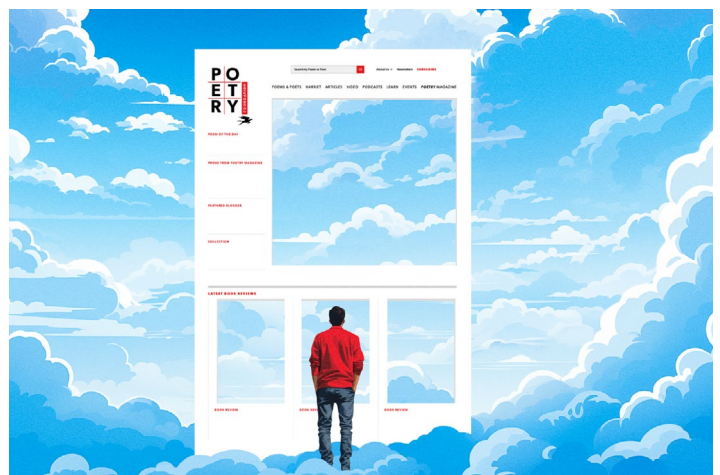
**53.5 million**

poems in the archive

**47,122**

new poems added in 2023

**659**



Art by Rob Dobi for "2023: Poetry's Year in Prose" by the editors

# Poetry, Prose, and Podcasts

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## Poetry

### New Collections

Curated online resources of poems, articles, audio, and more, each dedicated to a specific theme or movement.

- [110 Years of Poetry](#)
- [Disability Poetics](#)
- [Gwendolyn Brooks: A Chicago Legacy](#)
- [Poetry and Form](#)

### New Poem Guide

Interactive elements and in-depth essays on the themes, techniques, and context of individual poems.

- ["the mother" by Gwendolyn Brooks](#)
- ["The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot](#)
- ["The Applicant" by Sylvia Plath](#)
- ["For My People" by Margaret Walker](#)

### New Poem Samplers for 2022 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize Winners

Deep dives into the work of individual poets, including poems that exemplify aspects of their art and practice.

- [CAConrad](#)
- [Rita Dove](#)
- [Nikki Giovanni](#)
- [Juan Felipe Herrera](#)
- [Angela Jackson](#)
- [Haki R. Madhubuti](#)
- [Sharon Olds](#)
- [Sonia Sanchez](#)
- [Patti Smith](#)
- [Arthur Sze](#)

## Prose

### Online Exhibitions

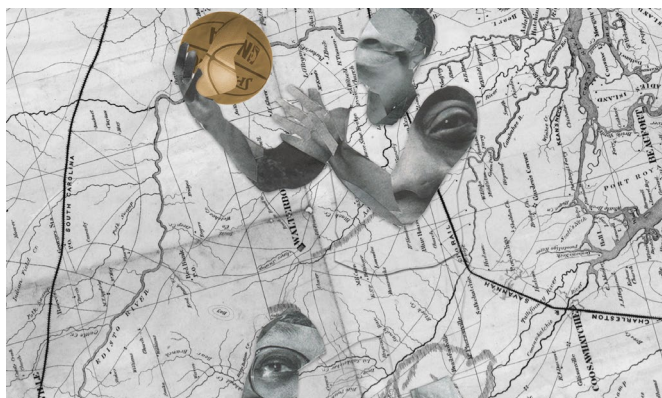
The website provides opportunities to host digital "exhibitions" of curated content that explores poetry within a deeper context. Two such exhibitions were added to the website in 2023.

- [Better Craftsmen, Not Gods](#)  
This examination of the development of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" was written as dialogue that tracks the poem's development through digitized manuscript versions and editorial correspondence. The online exhibition also points to additional online resources to aid in discussing and teaching the poem and its history.
- [Harriet Monroe & the Open Door](#)  
The complement to the physical exhibition of the same name includes digitized archival photographs, letters, and other documents from Monroe's life along with additional educational resources and poems.

### Harriet Books

[Harriet Books](#) publishes weekly micro-reviews of new and forthcoming poetry titles. A rotating team of poets reviews books published by small and independent presses, authored by poets from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds, poetry in translation, and chapbooks. For the blog component of *Harriet Books*, poets are invited to contribute several posts on a theme related to contemporary poetry and poetics. The quarterly themes for 2023 were "Poetry & Form," "Poetry & Disaster," "Poetry & Humor," and "Poetic Lineages."

- 155 *Harriet Books* reviews
- 12 featured bloggers published 34 posts
- 53 news roundups
- 1 Open Door post



Art by Trevor Davis for "Not a Game" by Keith D. Leonard



Art by Adeshola Makinde for "Spoken Like a True Poet" by Stephen Kearse

# Poetry, Prose, and Podcasts

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## Podcasts

- [Audio Poem of the Day](#)
- [Poetry Magazine Podcast](#)
- [Poetry Off the Shelf](#)
- [Poem Talk](#)
- [VS the Podcast](#)

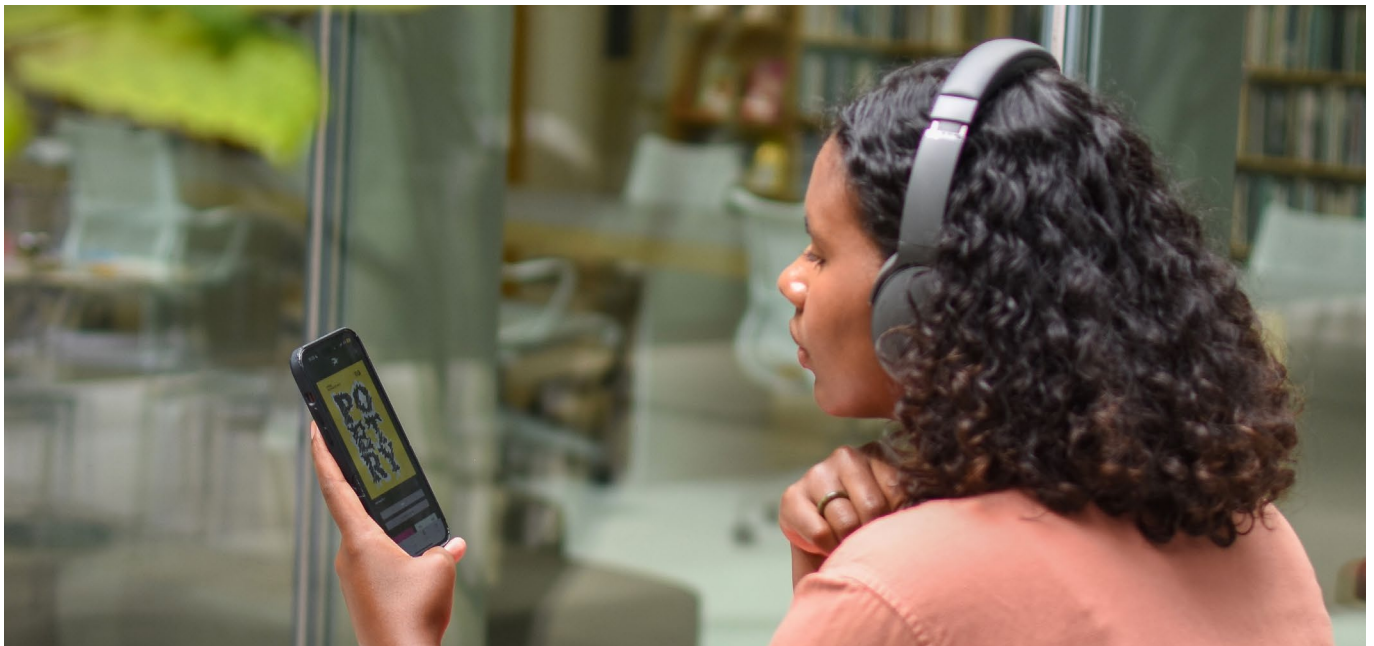
### Poem Talk

In 2023, the Poetry Foundation discontinued its funding of *Poem Talk*, a bimonthly podcast in which host Al Filreis convenes a roundtable discussion of a poem with a series of rotating guests. The *Poem Talk* podcast continues production through the Kelly Writers House at the University of Pennsylvania.

### VS the Podcast

In 2023, *VS* finished its sixth season and kicked off the seventh, the second one hosted by Brittany Rogers and Ajanaé Dawkins and produced by Cin Pim. Brittany and Ajanaé continued to ask poets like Jericho Brown, Courtney Faye Taylor, and Toi Derricotte to confront the ideas that move them while bringing poetic and personal lineages into the discussion. In addition, *VS* partnered with the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit for a live episode featuring Aricka Foreman and Tommye Blount.

- 19 episodes
- 20 guests
- 52,522 unique listens
- 109,935 episode downloads



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# 1,967,109

podcast episode listens across five podcasts

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# 65,767

subscribers to the *Poem of the Day* newsletter, which launched a guest editors program in 2023

# ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH



Summer Poetry Teachers Institute attendee

# Engagement and Outreach - Library

The Poetry Foundation leads and supports several initiatives that **foster a love for poetry** from the classroom to the community.

The Poetry Foundation [library](#) is the only library in the Midwest dedicated to poetry, with a collection of more than 40,000 volumes, audio and video recordings, and exhibitions of poetry-related materials. **Library staff believe that poetry is something to be shared, and the collection is curated to encourage engagement.** Visitors are invited to participate in writing activities, reading challenges, and art-making stations amid the reading room's expansive collection of poetry books. The library also hosts book clubs and writing workshops open to the public.

## Book Clubs

Library staff moderate an online book club featuring works by a wide range of classic and contemporary poets. Continuing with the virtual format established in 2020 allows guests to join from anywhere. Participants in the United States received copies of the discussion book free of charge.

- 12 book clubs (one each month)
- 178 participants
- 11 of the books discussed were by BIPOC poets
- 9 of the books discussed were by living poets

## Writing Workshops

Forms & Features, the library's long-standing writing workshop, has been offered online since 2020. Participants come together to learn about different poetic forms and aspects of poetry from a range of poets, teaching artists, and each other. Many of the sessions center work appearing in *Poetry* or other Foundation programming.

The "Celebrating the Poets of Forms & Features" reading series allows past participants the opportunity to share work they have developed in the workshops. In 2023, two events featured readings by the 12 Visiting Teaching Artists.

- 104 sessions
- 1,540 participants



“

The conversation among so many people whom I do not currently know—so many wonderful insights were expressed. The moderator is a terrific listener and makes the group immediately feel included and comfortable.

”

—Forms & Features workshop participant

# Engagement and Outreach - Library

— continued



## Top 10 Books Consulted (in descending order)

1. *Collected Poems*, C.P. Cavafy, translated by Daniel Mendelsohn
2. *If They Come for Us: Poems*, Fatimah Asghar
3. *Crush*, Richard Siken
4. *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, Ocean Vuong
5. *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*
6. *Rumi: The Big Red Book: The Great Masterpiece Celebrating Mystical Love and Friendship*, Coleman Barks
7. *Sharks in the Rivers*, Ada Limón
8. *The Colossus and Other Poems*, Sylvia Plath
9. *Time Is a Mother*, Ocean Vuong
10. *War of the Foxes*, Richard Siken, and *Winter Recipes from the Collective*, Louise Glück (tied)



(from left) Poetry Foundation library staff Maggie Queeney, Katherine Litwin, and Evalena Lakin

# Engagement and Outreach - Education Programs

## Poetry Out Loud

[Poetry Out Loud®](#), a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering free educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition for high school students. The program helps students master public speaking skills, build confidence, and learn about literary history and contemporary life through poetry.

With a catalog of 1,200 classic and contemporary poems at their disposal, students can explore language and themes that resonate with their own experiences. Since 2005, Poetry Out Loud has grown to reach more than **4.3 million students and 76,000 teachers from 19,000 schools and organizations** in every state, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.



2023 Poetry Out Loud national finalists

### 2022–2023 School Year

- 159,830 students
- 1,447 schools and organizations
- \$44,500 awarded to competitors and their schools
- \$60,500 awarded to the top 12 finalists

### 2023 Champions

- First place: Sreepadaarchana Munjuluri, a junior at Columbus North High School in Columbus, Indiana, received a \$20,000 prize.
- Second place: Edward Wilson Jr., a senior at Jackson Preparatory School in Jackson, Mississippi, received a \$10,000 prize.
- Third place: Madison Harris, a freshman at Indian Creek School in Crownsville, Maryland, received a \$5,000 prize.



Sreepadaarchana Munjuluri

“

I love the fact that students are not just reading a poem or reading words, but they are actually sharing a part of their identity, sharing what's important to them. The poems that I chose share a different facet of what I believe in, who I am.

”

—Sreepadaarchana Munjuluri, 2023 Poetry Out Loud National Champion

# Engagement and Outreach - Education Programs

— continued

## Summer Poetry Teachers Institute

For the first time since 2019, educators from across the United States gathered in person at the University of Miami for the annual Summer Poetry Teachers Institute. Participants attended seminars and workshops presented by poets, breakout sessions led by expert teachers, and a curriculum fair. They connected with peers over meals and in grade-specific sessions built to enhance skills in teaching poetry. The Poetry Foundation collaborated with longtime partner O, Miami to plan the Institute.

- 4.5 days
- 44 breakout sessions, seminars, workshops, and readings
- 20 poets presented
- 104 educators in attendance



Poets Juan Felipe Herrera, Jaswinder Bolina, and Christell Victoria Roach at the 2023 Summer Poetry Teachers Institute. Photo by Chantal Lawrie.



2023 Summer Poetry Teacher's Institute participant. Photo by Chantal Lawrie.



2023 Summer Poetry Teachers Institute participants. Photo by Chantal Lawrie.

“

The speakers, presenters, and poets were incredible. Meeting people from other states and sharing our trials and tribulations within the school system was valuable and made me feel like I wasn't alone. Thank you so much.

”

—2023 Summer Poetry Teachers Institute participant

# Engagement and Outreach - Education Programs

— continued

## One Poem, One Chicago

This year marked the first installment of One Poem, One Chicago, a partnership between Chicago Public Library, Third World Press, Brooks Permissions, and Northwestern University Press. A sibling of Chicago Public Library's One Book, One Chicago, the new initiative is an opportunity to engage Chicagoans in poetry and foster a sense of community by inviting them to read a selected poetry collection and participate in related programming.



Brooks Day, featuring Brooks's daughter, Nora Brooks Blakely (left)

## One Poem, One Chicago Highlights

- Collective reading of legendary Chicago poet Gwendolyn Brooks's landmark poetry collection *Blacks*
- Reissue of 2,000 copies of *Blacks* made available at all 81 Chicago Public Library branches
- Book club discussions in Chicago Public Library branches
- Remount of Manual Cinema's *No Blue Memories* with performances at the Harold Washington Library, including a special run of student matinees
- Panel discussion about the life and impact of Gwendolyn Brooks hosted in the Pegasus Room at the Poetry Foundation
- Brooks Day, a public celebration of Gwendolyn Brooks's birthday, that included a marathon reading of *Blacks*, hosted at the South Shore Cultural Center in partnership with the Guild Literary Complex

## Words of Wonder Literary Festival

The Words of Wonder Literary Festival is held annually in the Pullman neighborhood on Chicago's Southside. The 2023 festival hosted more than 800 attendees in a celebration of "books-to-be-written and books-to-be-read." The Poetry Foundation has sponsored the festival since its inception in 2022, with the 2023 sponsorship helping to secure the festival's headlining poet and author, Jason Reynolds.

## Words of Wonder Highlights

- Opportunities to engage with interactive literacy and art programming
- Animated storytelling by Black authors and illustrators
- Connections to community resources
- Interactions with a diverse group of book vendors and installations
- Swag bags of school supplies and more resources

“

I heard so many great things about the workshop. Just proves that there is a real thirst for knowledge about Gwendolyn Brooks and this new poetic form from the South Side community. Brooks Day is truly one of my favorites of the Guild [Literary Complex] programming. I always walk away inspired and filled with a great love for our community and [Brooks's] work.

”

— Brooks Day participant



Words of Wonder Literary Festival participant

# EVENTS



(from left) Angel Dominguez and Raquel Salas Rivera  
at the March 30, 2023 Poetry & Grief event

# Events

[Events](#) are just one of the ways that the Poetry Foundation **amplifies poetry as an expansive art form**. During the 2023 spring and fall event seasons, the Poetry Foundation hosted 28 live events in Chicago. The option to connect remotely continued, and all events included live captioners (CART) and/or American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

## Events Highlights

- Celebration of the inaugural Chicago Poet Laureate, avery r. young, who read with five other poets laureate from across the United States at Chicago Public Library's Harold Washington Library Center
- Reading at the Center for Native Futures's new space in the Chicago Loop
- Two-day celebration of Copper Canyon Press's 50th anniversary, including a reading and a panel
- One-night transformation of the Foundation's Pegasus Room into a jazz club for Herman's Lounge
- First public installment of the Crip Talk series, featuring JJJJJerome Ellis
- Tribute reading for Assotto Saint in the Pegasus Room
- Performances by Ari Baniyas, Gregg Bordowitz, CM Burroughs, David Antonio Cruz, Renee Gladman, Eileen Myles, Ben Okri, Roque Salas Rivera, Patricia Smith, Simone White, and others



Chicago Poet Laureate avery r. young. Photo by Patrick Pyszka.



September 21, 2023 Herman's Lounge attendees



April 15, 2023 Poetics in Practice: Art Writers Panel

## Events

— continued

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# 4,668

building visitors  
\*not including event attendees

---

# \$462,058

paid to poets who performed in public programs and participated in other projects, such as VS podcast hosts and guests, Summer Poetry Teachers Institute leads and presenters, and workshop teaching artists

---

# 2,061

in-person attendees

---

# 1,064

virtual attendees

---

# 28

in-person events with virtual option

---

# 6

virtual events

# EVENTS

— continued



March 30, 2023 Poetry & Grief: Raquel Salas Rivera and Angel Dominguez

“

I loved the fact that this was live-streamed. My work schedule would have prevented me from seeing it otherwise, so I was so grateful to be able to attend virtually. It allowed me to share the opportunity with a friend outside of Chicago whom I knew would also be interested. Thank you for making this event free of charge!

”

—Virtual event attendee

# EVENTS

—continued



March 2, 2023 Open Door: Ari Banias (pictured), Joss Barton, Alex Jane Cope, and KOKUMO

“

The readers were tremendous and I felt very lucky to be in the room with such talented and passionate artists.

”

— In-person event attendee

# EXHIBITIONS



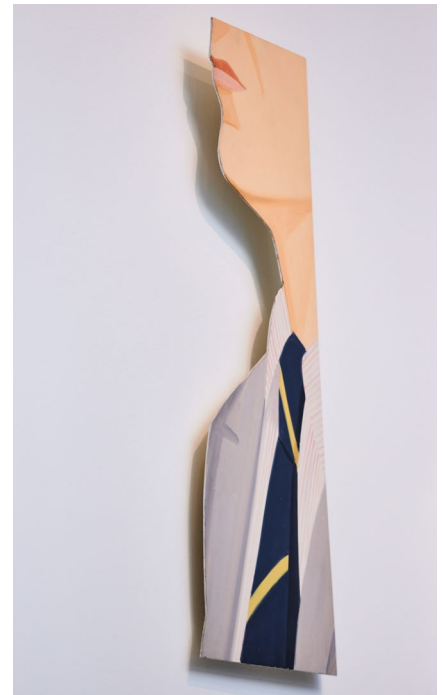
Poetry Magazine Cover Flats exhibition

## Exhibitions

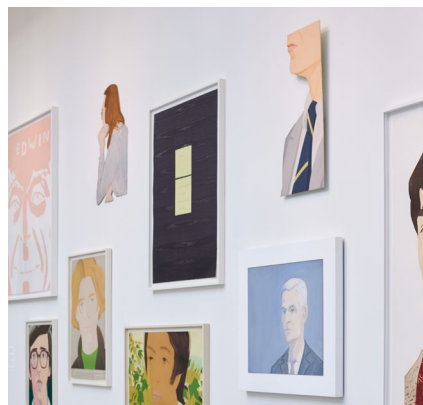
Poetry Foundation [exhibitions](#) offer in-person connections to poetry, interrogating **what poetry can look like**. They explore the physical life of poetry in all its forms, including visual arts, artifacts, and ephemera such as pictures, posters, and letters.

### **Alex Katz: Collaborations with Poets** **February 18 – May 20, 2023**

Spanning works created over the past 60 years, [Alex Katz: Collaborations with Poets](#) is the first exhibition to bring together the full range of materials that showcase renowned painter Alex Katz's extensive collaborations with poets. The exhibition included print portfolios, editioned books, portraits of poets such as Alice Notley and Frank O'Hara, and unique cutouts, all centering on poets and poetry. It offered a unique opportunity to experience Katz's deep interest in an art whose forms and tactics he considered "more stimulating than painting." The exhibition opened with an event featuring Katz in conversation with his son, poet Vincent Katz.



**25 poets featured**



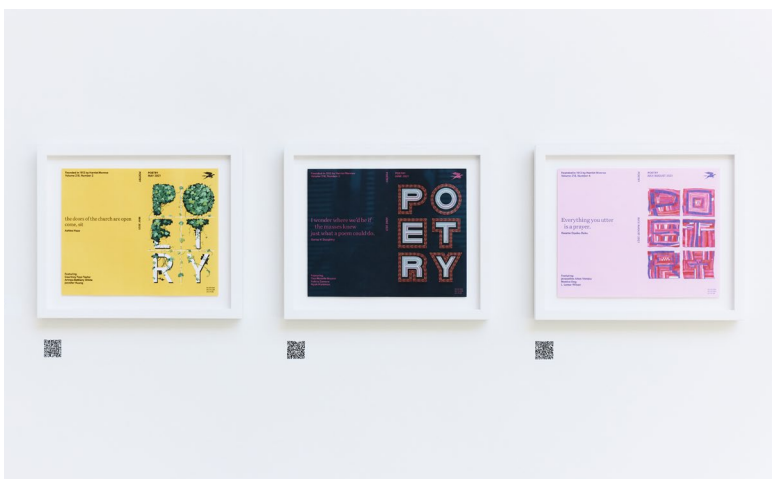
# Exhibitions

— continued

## **Poetry Magazine Cover Flats** **June 22 – August 19, 2023**

During two years of immense growth at the Poetry Foundation, *Poetry* instituted a guest editor program to bring new perspectives to the magazine. From May 2021 to September 2022, five guest editors curated issues from communities that were historically underrepresented in the magazine's pages; this approach coincided with a shift in editorial philosophy, making space for new people and poems. [The Poetry Magazine Cover Flats](#) exhibition showcased the resulting collaborations between the guest editors and cover artists. The 15 issues featured were displayed in their unbound or "flat" form. Longtime collaborator the University of Arizona Poetry Center also featured the exhibition from September 12 to December 16, 2023.

- 15 *Poetry* covers featured
- Editors featured
  - Esther Belin
  - Su Cho
  - Suzi F. Garcia
  - Ashley M. Jones
  - Srikanth "Chicu" Reddy
- Cover artists featured
  - Weshoyot Alvitre
  - Haein Kim
  - Jianan Liu
  - Jade Pilgrom
  - Sonnenzimmer's Nick Butcher and Nadine Nakanishi



## Exhibitions

— continued

### ***Harriet Monroe & the Open Door*** September 14, 2023 – January 13, 2024

Harriet Monroe (1860–1936) was a poet, critic, and the founding editor of *Poetry*, whose steadfast commitment to the art form and its creators altered the course of American literary history. [Harriet Monroe & the Open Door](#) mapped the evolution of Monroe's editorial philosophy, locating it within the cultures and structures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The exhibition, a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the Poetry Foundation online archive and a team of nine co-curators, included original artwork by Lilli Carré and a comic titled "[The Amazing Harriet Monroe](#)," alongside archival photographs, letters, and other documents from Monroe's life.

- More than 60 artifacts
- Span of artifacts: 1890s–2023



“

Monroe established *Poetry* under the Open Door policy that informs the magazine still. She intended that openness to allow poets to stretch artistically in whatever direction the work called them to explore, regardless of school or style. Her message still hits home. Poetry and other arts unite people across borders and boundaries. Poetry has the power to bring people together and to show the humanity in every person.

”

—Robert Eric Shoemaker, digital archive editor  
and *Harriet Monroe & the Open Door* co-curator

# MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA



# Media Partnerships and Social Media

Through a variety of collaborations, the Poetry Foundation invests in **poetry programming to reach audiences across the full media spectrum**. Partners help extend the Foundation's efforts to foster spaces for all to create, experience, and share poetry through podcasts, video, print, digital publications, and beyond.

## The Slowdown

A weekday poetry podcast produced in partnership with American Public Media, *The Slowdown* entered its fourth season and marked its thousandth episode in 2023. New host Major Jackson has continued the legacy of past hosts and US poets laureate, Tracy K. Smith and Ada Limón.

- 23,000 subscribers
- 454,000 average monthly podcast downloads
- *The Slowdown* won Best Daily Podcast at the 2023 Signal Awards

“

Poetry couldn't be more alive. Think otherwise? You clearly haven't listened to [*The Slowdown*.]

”

—Listener on Twitter/X



Major Jackson, host of *The Slowdown*

## Poetry Corner

Since 2020, the Poetry Foundation has sponsored Poetry Corner in the *Chicago Reader*, a free local print and digital alt-weekly publication. Poetry Corner uplifts established and emerging Chicago poets and independent publishing, paying the local poets who are published and the curators who select the poems.

- 60,000 print editions distributed across Chicagoland
- 26 poems published
- Four local curators



Instagram post from the *Chicago Reader* promoting a Poetry Corner poem from Raych Jackson

## Social Media

- 1,180,267 followers across [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter/X](#)
- 3.6% audience growth over 2022
- 543,037 clicks from social media posts to PoetryFoundation.org
- 1,817,409 video views
  - 105.4% increase in video views over 2022 due to 27 dynamic videos created in-house
  - Video views were highest on Instagram

“All the Words I Can Remember Are Poems” by Michelle Peñaloza from the July/August 2023 issue of *Poetry* had the highest number of engagements of any poem shared in 2023, with the following metrics on Instagram:

- 10,854 total engagements
  - 6,729 likes
  - 47 comments
  - 1,346 shares
  - 2,732 saves

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND STAFF



Lynne Thompson and  
Rebecca Sword

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Trustees Lynn Thompson and Caren Yanis (on right) with Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism awardee Douglas Kearney and his wife Nicole McJamerson



(from left) staff Allison Claybon, Chris Guzaitis, and Marilyn Rubio

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Staff and trustees with 2023 Pegasus awardees and guests



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