

Oklahoma Poem Contest Winners 2021

K-5th Grade

1. Easton King, Lawton
2. Panashe Mushonga, Oklahoma City
3. Evan Foresman, Yukon

6th-8th Grade

1. Hayden Barrowman, Norman
2. Mykayla Shearer, Chickasha
3. TIE: Kyler Nida, Harrah, and Hannah Joo, Norman

9th-12th Grade

1. Emma Cinocca, Tulsa
2. Lucas Buzzelli, Claremore
3. TIE: Kayley Ray, Lenapah and Kaitlyn Pierce, Nowata

Adult

1. Jen Handsel, Tulsa
 2. Kathy Snyman, Locust Grove
 3. Emily Geest, Stillwater
- Honorable Mention: Kathryn Lawler, Norman

K-4th Grade, 1st Place

Easton King
Lawton

Oklahoma Calling

The sun rises brightly
Above the waving wheat,
A new day
Has just begun.

The scissortail flycatcher
Sweetly chirps its morning song,
As the calming sun beams
Greet the awaking buffalo.

When the sun is at its highest,
The lakes begin to call.
Sparkling water reflects as
The white bass jump gracefully.

The wind whispers
Through the redbuds,
As the tall prairie grasses
Sway upon the Wichita Mountains.

As evening comes and the sun begins to set,
Dusk covers the Oklahoma land.
The fireflies dance before my eyes,
And ever star takes its place.

It does not matter
Where I travel,
I know Oklahoma
Will be calling me home.

K-4th Grade, 2nd Place

Panashe Mushonga
Oklahoma City

Bison

Resilient and Stern, Royal and Majestic

The noble bison grazes on rolling hills

The animal's beautiful fleece is shedding, for it is spring

He grazes on the lush green grass that grows all around him

He moves into a pool of cool shade formed by a tree

Birds flutter out of his path

From a pond, he drinks cold fresh water

Soon the bison lays down knowing twilight is coming

The darkness sweeps over the land

The bison listens as the crickets begin chirping.

K-4th Grade, 3rd Place

Evan Forsman
Yukon

Come With Me

Come with me where I call home
There is much to see so come with me.
Come with me to the place where
Scissortails fly up in the blue sky
Come with me to the place where
Bison run and lie down in the fields.

With me you will see
Indiangrass that sways
With me you will see
White bass at Fort Gibson Lake
With me you will see
A hard working honey bee.

We can enjoy the taste
Of watermelon and strawberry jam
We can enjoy the black swallowtail
On the way to Robbers Cave
We can enjoy the fields where we
Will see Indian blankets grow free.

Come with me
So we can see
The colors, green and white
I hope you enjoy
My beautiful home
That I love with all my might.

5th-8th Grade, 1st Place

Hayden Barrowman
Norman

The Prairie Grass Dance.

May the breeze sway you ever so gently.
So gently that you can twist and turn between the gusts.
Let the wind allow you to dance in the wind.
Listen to the music around you.
Sway to the beat of a finch's song, or a toads croak.
Allow for the sweet aroma to comfort you, to calm you.
The sun is setting, creating a golden glow that casts shadows below.
The breeze is now steady, so keep dancing.
Your elegant poses allow for your golden beauty to shine.
Sway in your golden bliss, let the last of the sun soak in.
Keep dancing until the last breeze gently twirls you to a stop.
Listen to the beat of the bison's hooves.
The low sound rumbling in the distance.
As the breeze quickens in pace, your dance becomes more frantic.
Allow the wind to sway you, allow for the song to mute.
Let the sunlight absorb as it slowly fades.
Bask in the golden spotlight.
Let the breeze carry you to the beat of the song.
Let your beauty be told through your dance.
Let the people observe the allurements of the prairie.

5th-8th Grade, 2nd Place

Mykayla Shearer
Chickasha

Oklahoma Rose

Oh that Oklahoma rose that grows in the land of our people
Where the winds blow and the storms rage
But the rose stands still, unafraid of what the future holds for it
Nothing can break the rose's surface to see what it really holds close to its heart
Its petals mirror the shirt from a store that you can't seem to get your fingers to let go of
Delicate petals capture you, laughing, because you can't get away from their satiny
touch
Be careful where you stroke, for down deep in the depths that aren't shone
Are threatening, treacherous brambles, hidden and overtaken by undeniable beauty
Those thorns strike you when you least expect, they pierce flesh
They cause a sound to come from your lips proclaiming the agony that has taken place
The rose has struck fiercely, it shows no mercy
But when you glance upon it, you see compassion in its petals, just not the deepest
parts of it
It gives you feelings of love, passion, strength, joy, and happiness
The rose is strong, flooding your mind with feelings, the rose is delicate and easily
crushed
The rose is gentle, the rose is cruel, the rose is elegant, the rose is my friend.

5th-8th Grade, 3rd Place (Tie)

Kyler Nida
Harrah

At the Farm

At sunrise I watch them on the wheat field
What a name
Meleagris gallopavo

No wonder people just say turkey
not from that country that bridges two continents
but rather from North America

Wild game bird of Oklahoma
struts up the path filled with Indian Grass
Wind whistles through redbud trees

Tom lets out a gobble
fans his bronzed tail like a warrior's shield
He's followed by his troops—hens purring, contented

leaving me so grateful
that if I had wings
I would spread them

5th-8th Grade, 3rd Place (Tie)

Hannah Joo

Norman

What Keeps Us All Graced

Moccasins stamp through the tear drenched soil.
To their tribes, families, and brothers they are loyal.
The trail of tears, pain, and sorrow lasted long.
But the feathered people were united and strong.

The bison were hunted to be scarcely found.
But in the time of the natives, they roamed around.
They thanked the bison for its hide and meat.
And let not an ounce of its body lay incomplete.

Bison are our symbols of honor and valor.
Of native culture and dress brimming with color.
We remember Oklahoma by each mother clan.
Their arrival is when our true history began.

The Choctaw, Cherokee, and Creek prairie land.
And Chickasaw and Seminole hand in hand.
To our thriving red dirt their value is tied.
And the sixty-two more who called it their pride.

The Natives are a piece in every Okie's heart.
Oklahoma means "brave nation" in their language art.
We cherish the integrity that had us embraced.
It leads us today and keeps us all graced.

9th-12th Grade, 1st Place

Emma Cinocca

Tulsa

“Roots”

There is a burial ground under the tree
One that watches soundlessly through the frost and the swarm of midsummer heat
Then she is sitting on the bones of a memory, roots, against the slim trunk in the cool
Moment just before daybreak
Then she is swaying with the delicate leaves and the wind, solemn,

And it grows, slowly, building on itself like a monument of brick and stone to the vitality
The mortality, climbing her arms as the sun blooms over a prairie's rose
Sweltering, the dregs of nightfall melt away and the shade of that steadfast redbud is
futile
Still, she stays
She had remained through the burnt pink blossoms of spring and the unfurling of green
Just like the roots, burying themselves in clay sediment, still harboring life even as
autumn draws nearer

Codependent in their exchanges, a thousand moments in solitude for a thousand words
unsaid
Silence broken with the light on the horizon and the call of birds scattering over thick
grasses
With the morning
She may one day leave the graveyard yet.

9th-12th Grade, 2nd Place

Lucas Buzzelli
Claremore

"What Do You Gather, Dreamcatcher?"

What do you gather,
dreamcatcher, you,
besides blooming redbuds and
spring skies of blue?

Is it thoughts
of reigning bison
in lieu of
conniving liaison?

Perhaps visions of
destiny in manifest?
"Labor conquers all"
sewn to your beaded chest?

This land is my land,
this land is your land;
you cradle our hopes
in your feathered hand.

I know what you gather,
dreamcatcher, friend:
the promise that tomorrow
is oppression's end.

9th-12th Grade, 3rd Place (TIE)

Kayley Ray
Lenapah

Oklahoma Lands

Walking barefoot on these Native lands
The red dirt I hold stains my hands
The blue skies above bring a gentle breeze
That puts the surrounding lands at ease
Never ending plains all laid out in front of me
Makes me think of what it could one day be
A land once enriched with culture
Stolen by foreigners like vultures
All the plants like the redbud trees
Bring forth the summer bees
Oklahoma home to so many
Gives us what we need to provide ourselves plenty

9th-12th Grade, 3rd Place (TIE)

Kaitlyn Pierce
Nowata

Oklahoma Trails

The air cools as I walk
I can hear the bullfrogs talk
Silence of the air returns
Soon I am concerned
As I walk, time is changing
The seasons rearranging
Soon the weather is warm
I see Oklahoma Roses form
Roses in full bloom
Black Swallowtail Butterflies zoom
Back to the silence of night
The Bison are sleeping to my right
Oh Oklahoma you are so bright

Adult, 1st Place

Jen Handsel

Tulsa

Flower of our Land

Inaugurating May with
Bursting bloom
Freckles of fire
On seas of cool, crisp grass
A blanket of color
Illuminating dusty dirt roads
During hot summer drives
Bees encircle, like the planets round the sun
They spread your progeny wildly across the land
The canvas earth now painted
With mahogany center core
and
Lissom scarlet flames
Crowned in royal gold
Blanket and sun
Paint and brush
Wild and regal
The flower of our land

Adult, 2nd Place

Kathy Snyman
Locust Grove

Dear Oklahoma,

Quarry our hearts of green-amber grass, crude, and the redbud, O,
Scissortail, white tail, laced dogwood, cow, sunset, and oak.
Draw out our best, so neglect neither fallen nor old soul:
From flint-fruited meadow, make a locust and peach-starred tiara,
Tear-jeweled crown—for from long trails to highways we rush.
Take whippoorwill's wilderness, white bass, and one brown potato;
Bring eagle, sky-blue flag, paint filly, and soft garden loam.
Garnish our cradles with treasures like these, and then . . . carry, Ah!

Carry to music mapped through by red merciful mile.
Walk and not faint! . . . thus, with mother-love carry us Home.

Adult, 3rd Place

Emily Geest
Stillwater

Moving here

I felt ready...

Having listened to all the warnings

On how the red dirt would stain my shoes

Or that summer would feel as if I was being baked on flat terrain

filled with emptiness for miles

and that the wildlife consisted solely of cows.

But no one had said

that the red of the soil could be seen in painted sunsets at dusk

That clear summer skies will make the land feel infinite

and mesas will bring you to the eyes of soaring vultures

Or that scissortails will fill cerulean skies while bison sway slightly with each breathe on earth

I fell in love with my red stained shoes and all I was given in return.

Adult, Honorable Mention

Kathryn Lawler
Norman

Rose Rock

Teardrops from ancient natives,
Formed of red clay,
Uncovered in crackled creek beds,
Chiseled by driving winds,
Delicate petals sift to sandy surface.

Unique earthen treasures
Tossed casually aside--
God's workmanship revised
into curio collectibles--
Capital of the World!