

2022 Oklahoma Poem Contest Winners

\$800 in Prize Money

Rural Oklahoma Museum of Poetry

K-4th Grade

1. Lizabeth Bundy, Idabel, “The Sooner State”
2. Lana Smith, Tuttle, “Oklahoma Buffalo”
3. Kambryi Bowles, Tuttle, “The Oklahoma Honeybee”

5th-8th Grade

1. Tsuguaki Katoh, Tulsa, “A Place I’ve Seen Grow”
2. Payton Marlin, Inola, “Day at the Ranch”
3. Sadie Ferguson, Wagoner, “Oklahoma Masterpiece”

9th-12 Grade

1. Lucas Buzzelli, Claremore, “Frogs from an Oklahoma Clearing”
2. Reese Akins, Edmond, “My Oklahoma”
3. Eric Geng, Norman, “Mother Oklahoma”

Adult

1. Cody Swinson, Lexington, “A Feather Blows”
2. Regina Philpott McLemore, Stilwell, “Shades of Oklahoma”
3. Jeffrey Baggett, Tulsa, “Council Oak Tree”

K-4th Grade: 1st Place

The Sooner State

When you hear the coyotes howl
And you see the cattle grazing low
You know you're in the Sooner State

When you see folks riding past
And you hear the church bells ringing
You know you're in the Sooner State.

When you smell the sweet pie in the oven
And you see wild red roses blooming
You know you're in the Sooner State

When you see the scissortail flycatcher flying
And the see the white bass swimming
You know you're in the Sooner State

Now, why they call it that is no mystery, no no
It is because when you're near it you always know
I'm in the Sooner State. Yeehaw!

--Lizabeth Bundy
Idabel OK

K-4th Grade: 2nd Place

Oklahoma Buffalo

I smell the flower swaying through the breeze

I see the blue blue sky

I taste the luscious grass

I feel the weight of my 2,000-pound body

I hear the wind and the birds chirping

--Lana Smith

Tuttle OK

K-4th Grade: 3rd Place

The Oklahoma Honeybee

I bent down to pick a flower

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

To take a closer look

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

I see it collecting pollen

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

It smells the tasty flower

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

I hope it doesn't sting me

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

I can see it's not afraid

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

To another flower it goes

--Kambryi Bowles

Tuttle OK

5th-8th Grade: 1st Place

A Place I've Seen Grow

I have lived for many years
I have the knowledge worth of gold.
I've seen a place change after many years.
I've seen people come here while leaving a trail of tears.

My roots have spread far and wide.
People have cried under my shade.
Animals ate what I made.
The winds have caused my arms to sway.

People came to rush for land.
Oil gushed out of the land.
Dust bowls came and destroyed the land.
Tornadoes ripped through the land.

Even through the trials, people stayed.
Then the place started to grow.
Business started to boom.
Families started to bloom.

This wonderful state is still alive, and so am I.
It is a place many people call home.
No matter where people go, here will be home.
So don't forget OK.

--Tsuguaki Katoh
Tulsa OK

5th-8th Grade: 2nd Place

Day at the Ranch

Alarm rings at the crack of dawn.
Moo! the cattle let out a loud bawl;
Mad hens clucking,
Little birds chirping,

As the Oklahoma sun rises.
Quack! ducks swim in the pond
Oink! the pigs play in Oklahoma's red mud,
The barn door opens.

Everything gets feed,
Time to fix fence,
Watch the deer play,
In the Oklahoma rain.

As the day ends,
Whittling on an old hackberry stick,
Watching the sun fade away
In that Oklahoma sky.

--Payton Marlin
Inola

5th-8th Grade: 3rd Place

Oklahoma Masterpiece

In the wild wheat field,
the golden wheat sways
to the rhythm of the heartbeat,
Oklahoma's heartbeat.

Listen to the wind whistle,
making a beautiful tune,
a symphony
expressing emotions untold,
happiness, sadness, longing, grief.

Look out to the horizon,
just in time to see
the peak of the colors.
Red, orange, yellow, pink,
all coming together,
creating a masterpiece.

The beauty of something
so often unseen.
Yet, do we stop
to take it all in,
and truly notice,
the wonder of nature's masterpiece?

--Sadie Ferguson
Wagoner OK

9th-12th Grade: 1st Place

Frogs from an Oklahoma Clearing

Tonight is the first night I've heard
the frogs' call from the clearing
since I've started working at the pub.
There's only a few, this Sunday evening—
the first tender night of spring—
so the frogs go quietly about their business,
tentatively, I think, straining against
the receding coolness of the season.

My eyes shift into that great basin of land,
and I stare until the lampposts
forget to pound blindness into my adjusting eyes.
I stare until the frogs croak beats
into my nostrils, and I blink
until the emptiness feels like
the hug of a mother on a reminiscing night,
where a scraped knee beneath the roof of the
unheavy summer moon is as innocuous as
the Scissor-tailed flycatchers in wait.

I hope they're baptized in renewal,
resurrection, and vitality, those frogs,
just as they drench me in remembrance
of who I once was on the land
I've always known. I think
perhaps adulthood is this croaking—
maybe yelping—for return.
I face the void before me
in all its strange familiarity.
I repeat their call until my head croaks and thumps
and aches along to their cadence.

--Lucas Buzzelli
Claremore OK

9th-12th Grade: 2nd Place

My Oklahoma

Close to a decade in the prairie land
Arrived young and afraid - tied to hopeful caution
Twisting storms and earth-quaking warnings
Adolescent fears; though real and shared
What to make of this promised land
That was promised to me

My first laughter
On a bike ride in gleaming sunshine
Lying in warm summer rains
Boots and jackets warming bodies
White crystals and cold flurries
Stuck out tongues and fallen angels
At dusk, the world dreams before its slumber
On the sky's canvas;
Shades of blue, swirling purples, blushing pinks, fierce orange
Golden sun lights the world

Time has gone on and the stars aren't as bright
Our smiles make up for that
Each season; contradicting
Past history, hard trails
Though not always proud
Sacred lands to those we owe
The wind never fails to blow – taking stories of those before; passing them on

Seas of orange and yellow once green
Crisp air, hues of pink cheeks
This beauty land
You're not perfect
But Oh Oklahoma
My Oklahoma
I'm glad I gave you a chance

--Reese Akins
Edmond OK

9th-12th Grade, 3rd Place

Mother Oklahoma

I see Oklahoma,
Under the summer night stars.
A smiling land pulled between mountain cheeks,
paired with wide rivers, tall grasses, effervescent coyote eyes.
She runs and the wind runs with her
Dragging her sweet country air aroma
Her pride hanging on her neck,
while she runs wild.

Never alone she was living
All Oklahomans fill her with life
All the memories she had made
Instils joys in her cities
to jolly times in which she seemed never happier
And when the tornadoes come roaring in
She'll cover us up
Like Okie mothers
Supporting her people's cries

Outside her stately pride, I'll find
The love, the warmth
I see in her native spirit
she is gentle
I'm thinking this is the Oklahoma I know
I'm numb
But even though her hot sun beats my skin
I can't seem to forget her smiling lands
On every warm Oklahoma night
Under glorious moon's light

--Eric Geng
Norman

Adult, 1st Place

A Feather Blows

When did the wind sweep down the plains and make the feather blow?
The night the whippoorwill sang in the creek bottom.
The day the roadrunner dashed through the nettles for the grasshopper.

When did the wind sway the corn as high as an elephant's eye?
The night the lightning bugs flew on the breeze with the June bugs.
The day the bison wandered through tall fescue on the hill.

When did the wind tell stories as it whispered on the dogwood blossoms?
The night the farmer sang praises for the thunderstorm.
The day the largemouth found shade and solace under a bobber in the sun.

When does the wind blow life into a heart and a feather blows in the soul?

--Cody Swinson
Lexington OK

Adult, 2nd Place

Shades of Oklahoma

Sometimes I secretly see them,
Bright-eyed brown boys hunting with blowguns,
Their big brothers beside them with bows and arrows,
Unaware of the stranger stalking them from another time.

Afterwards, wandering the woods,
I chance upon a primitive path,
Leading to a simple frontier farmhouse,
And I watch the husband patiently plowing fertile furrows.

As his busy bee wife washes all the family's dirty laundry,
Lining linens up like circus tents, flapping in the wind,
Conveying commands to their obedient offspring,
Who ably assist their parents with habitual household chores.

Way across a faraway field,
I spy some cunning cowboys,
Seamlessly and skillfully,
Channeling cows to their appointed places.

Traveling toward a sizable town,
I cross train tracks to a drafty depot,
Where I encounter the elegance of fine gentlemen gracefully,
Assisting delicate damsels down from their crowded compartments.

Sometimes I secretly see it,
A glimpse of old Oklahoma from long ago,
Realizing the people and places that have made you,
Lie close in the shadowed shallows of the past.

--Regina Philpott McLemore
Stilwell OK

Adult, 3rd Place

Council Oak Tree

"March on!", the soldiers yell, "March on!"
Your small frost-bitten feet slipping, in snow dotted red with blood drops.
Trudging along on a forced trail, beloved homeland so far behind.
Teardrops streaming down your young cheeks, death feasting at ev'ry hour.

"March on!", the soldiers yell, "March on!"
Shivering nights spent 'neath blankets, issued by the overseers.
Blankets infected on purpose, weariness and disease prevails.
Infants cough and cry all night long, how can humans be so cruel?

"March on!" the soldiers yell, "March on!"
Stiff-necked soldiers whose rifle butts, have no respect for the elders.
Passing by so many people, lying dead alongside the trail.
People of well-deserved honor, denied a decent burial.

"March on!", the soldiers yell, "March on!"
There lies Auntie Sallie's body, the sweetest soul who ever lived.
Big sister pulling on your arm, for she knows that if you tarry.
A soldier's rifle will make sure, your body lies next to Sallie's.

"March on!", the soldiers yell, "March on!"
And yes, please do march on young one.
For inside you carry a flame.
A burning flame of heritage, the shining light of your people.
From a grandmother's loving lips, into her grandchildren's soft ears.
This sacred flame of tribal pride, is passed down through the generations.
Therefore, young one, please do march on.
On through the troubles of today, and boldly into tomorrow.
With your head held high and steps sure, carry your flame for all to see.
March on young one, march on!

--Jeffry Baggett
Tulsa OK