

Oklahoma Poem Contest winners 2023

K-4th

1st, Lejeh Kim, Broken Arrow
2nd, Vivian Williams, Alva
3rd, Oliver Griffith, Shawnee

5th-8th

1st. Allison Radcliffe, Chandler
2nd, Daniella Priester, Skiatook
3rd, Tailyn Lee, Skiatook

9th-12th

1st, Gavin Dennis, Wagoner
2nd, Blake Means, Claremore
3rd, Emma Oliver, Grove

Adult

1st, Zhenya Yevtushenko, Tulsa
2nd, Sarah Bell, Newalla
3rd, Gary Reddin, Duncan

K-4th Grade
1st Place

Oklahoma Air

The eagle's feathers are a color of brown that will drown in joy
She tips her wing ready to fly

As she soars into the air
I swear she whispers "Oh, Oklahoma Air"

As she flies over the wheat
I swear the wheat says "Oh, Oklahoma Air!"

As she lands the woods where does and deer romp
I swear they all say "Oh, Oklahoma air!"

"Hello, Oklahoma!"
The grace, the hope, and the fresh love! Oh, Oklahoma air!

--Lejeh Kim, Broken Arrow

K-4th Grade
2nd Place

Where the Air Smells Like Honeysuckle

My favorite place in Oklahoma is Grand Lake.
Where the air smells like honeysuckles
and fish from the dock.
You see the American flag hanging on the pole
And jet skis riding the waves.
It tastes like slushies from Sharon at Four Seasons.
Sometimes the tree frogs are so loud I can't hear
the waves on the shore.

–Vivian Williams, Alva

K-4th Grade

3rd Place

The Best Oklahoma

Oklahoma has a good community.
Kids speak many languages.
Love spreads everywhere.
Animals are nice to everyone.
Hope is in everyone's hearts.
Outside there is no pollution.
Many people are nice
And there are more nice things that I can say.

--Oliver Griffith, Shawnee

5th-8th Grade

1st Place

Symphony of a State

My homeland, my symphony of a state.
Mother Nature the composer,
Her weather the conductor,
All working together, for there is music to create!

We start with the breeze,
Creating a soothing sound against the trees.
I listen as a beat is being formed.
Watch as the land is transformed.

Then cue the birds, singing to the sun.
The woodpecker tapping out the rhythm,
All encouraging more to join with them.
Such a joyous sound, but we have just begun.

Now the clouds roll over, no more sun can I see,
But I hear a slow, weak beat, almost leisurely.
With every tiny tap, the beat grows more urgent,
Until the slow, weak beat becomes a non-stop current.

Enter the thunder, no more than tranquil rumbles,
As they crescendo into ground shaking growls.
Night descends, the unseen stars forced to be humble.
Out in the distance, I hear the hoot of an owl

The gray wall floats away as I watch the sun rise.
The sweet, controlled outcome of the chaos last night.
I again hear the birds singing joyously mid flight,
The breeze gently rustling the trees before my eyes.

A symphony isn't just about the sound, but the sight,
Seeing all of the parts work together, as one.
The moon and stars both shining so bright,
The trees swaying in unison beneath the brightening sun.

My symphony of a state, beauty, chaos, wondrous resolve,
Mother Nature and her weather creating music for all.

--Allison Radcliffe, Chandler

5th-8th Grade
2nd Place

Oklahoma Wildflower

Should you be a wildflower?
Would you grow where you were placed in Oklahoma?
Would you let the sun shine down on you
And rain water on your wilted face?

Let's be wildflowers,
Let our souls be scattered by the wind
Let us grow wild and free,
Tall and brave

Hold your head up high
And look up to that rose red mood.
With the stars and moon in the sky,
Oklahoma was a part of my life.

In the places we dream
In the places where our longings are filled,
Let us grow between the cracks of brokenness,
And we will make everything beautiful here in Oklahoma.

--Daniella Priester, Skiatook

5th-8th Grade
3rd Place

Oklahoma Beauty

The sun across the hills begins to set
And endless green fields turn to soft orange flow
The sun's orange glow rises from the hilltops
Revealing Oklahoma's beauty

The cicadas begin to sing their nightly Oklahoma lullaby
The frog and crickets answer in turn in an ancient Osage orchestra
The coyotes howl a rhythmic signal
The barred owls are hooting a call

Darkness falls across the greenest country you'll know
As the full moon takes its home in the Tulsa skyline
The nocturnals become alive
While the diurnals go fast asleep

A billion shining stars are a mirror
Reflecting the firefly covered fields back from above
The planets look like white specks of paint
Millions of miles away from my home
All these magnificent views
Show how beautiful Oklahoma can be.

--Taily Lee, Skiatook

9th-12th Grade
1st Place

O, Clay Home

This red land has deep roots,
Deep red roots of clay.

Burnished bronze sundown,
Setting on the day.

Rain shimmers in the breeze,
Lakes fair and still.

Shadows looming over,
Deep clouds lay calm until,

God plays His instrument lightning,
His thunder like a song.

Roaring rivers mighty,
Flowing ever long.

The price that's paid for nature,
Bruises and scarred hands.

The wild forever restless,
This is the red man's land.

--Gavin Dennis, Wagoner

9th-12th Grade
2nd Place

Barbecue on the Plains

A gentle breeze, and rustling leaves.
Grassy plains stretching along the horizon,
Horses gleefully galloping about the grass.
Prancing children, and dancing tribes,
And an uproarious fire extending its tender warmth.

The sun bows her head with the horizon.
Cicadas and drums and flutes,
Rattles and syllables and clapping.
Men and women alike gathered 'round,
And danced and let their spirit sound.

A meat's fragrance permeated the air.
Seared bison passed around,
'Till everyone had some to spare.
The white men accepted their offer,
And joined their meal without care.

Two cultures converged on that day.
Native and foreign, white and red,
It mattered not as they blended.
Jokes and banter they exchanged,
As their prolonged rivalry ended.

--Blake Means, Claremore

9th-12th Grade
3rd Place

Journey of a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

I take flight
from the barbed-wire fence
that contains the grazing cattle.

I take flight
above the multitude of lakes
that glisten beneath me.

I take flight
from the delicate branches
of a blossoming redbud tree.

I take flight
above the waving field of wheat
that whispers in the wind.

I take flight
from the powerlines
that stretch along a country road.

I take flight
over a land of impeccable beauty
becoming one with the Oklahoma sky.

--Emma Oliver, Grove

Adult
1st Place

Oklahoma Eyes

Sleep passes through me like a Dust Bowl and ochre
particles of topsoil, both past and present, collect kaleidoscopes
in the corners of my eyes, their Northern blue now a low
red dirt floor and I stir a devil in the wind somewhere aghast
between the gusts he nests nowhere within my brown and gray hairs
whispering tales of the how the land feeds the hands, calloused, made outspoken,
by famines past, and how we all return in one way, particle by particle to mend
the ghosts of ancient oceans, landlocked in future's waking sleep, harvests await

before the end when this unlikely home grows like a sunrise
where devils can be angels, if we only rub our eyes.

--Zhenya Yevtushenko, Tulsa

Adult
2nd Place

Twilight in Oklahoma

Oak leaves in the woods of my native land
Fluttering in the breeze of twilight
Bathed in the colors of day's end
Pink and coral sunset hues
Slowly change to lavender and silver
Reflecting the brave last rays of the setting sun
And finally darken to match the evening sky
The shades of Oklahoma deepen
The air cools and dampens
Fading the late afternoon warmth
A solitary deer grazes near the edge of a field
Her soft brown blending into the shadows of the woods
The red-tailed hawk ceases his sharp eyed vigil
For tiny creatures scurrying below
While birds flying amongst the trees alight
And hush their daytime chatter
Slowly giving way to the nocturnal droning of frogs and crickets
That never seems to end
But even amongst all this
There is a settling
A stillness, a hush
That comes over the land
With the setting of the sun
As if mother earth is resting up
For the new day to come

--Sarah Bell, Newalla

Adult
3rd Place

Oklahoma State

State: a complete description of the observable characteristics of a physical system

let me show you the deep red earth
guide hands into this clay soil
that still echoes with tribal drums

find a twisted willow slowly dying
its guts spun 'round by a forgotten 'nado
climb its still-firm limbs

offer all these dying towns
a last kiss before their roots
pull apart and turn to ghosts

run wild through the wheat
sending grasshoppers alight
to fill a startled sky

sit quiet on the lake shore
under a brass sun
to taste fresh blackberry lips

keep calm as the wall clouds roll
watch the sky bruise under a summer storm
and feel the thunder in our ribcages

--Gary Reddin, Duncan