

Poetry Contest

For High School Students in Maryland, Virginia and D.C.

High school students from across the Washington metropolitan area are invited to submit poems to the Gaithersburg Book Festival Poetry Contest. **Poems should be on the topic: The Things We Carry.** Your entry must be no longer than one page, single-spaced 12-point Times New Roman in .doc or .docx format.



Submission

Deadline: February 19, 2027, by midnight ET.

- Poems must be submitted electronically as a Word document as directed above.
- Use your poem title as the file name.
- Do not include your name in the file name.
- Author's name, address, phone number, personal email address (not a school email), school, grade, and English/writing teacher's name are required on the application form (not the Word document).

**Submit your
poem to:**



Authors will be notified in April 2027 if their poem is selected as a finalist.

**Judging will be based
on the following criteria:**

- originality
- creativity
- use of language
- overall effect

Qualifications

- Author must be a high school student (public, private or homeschooled, grades 9 -12, in the 2026-2027 school year) at time of entry.
- Author must live in Maryland, Virginia, or Washington, D.C.
- Only one submission per author.

Prizes

- Up to 12 poems will be selected as finalists. The finalists will have their poems posted on the Gaithersburg Book Festival website prior to the festival.
- The top three poems and a fan favorite will be announced at the Gaithersburg Book Festival on May 18, 2027. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and the fan favorite will receive \$250, \$100, \$50 and \$25 gift cards, respectively.



For further information, please visit www.gaithersburgbookfestival.org/gbf-programs/poetry-contest/ or e-mail writingcontest@gaitersburgbookfestival.org.

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CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

Submitted poetry must:

- Poems should be on the topic: The Things We Carry.
- Be no longer than one page, single-spaced 12 point Times New Roman in .doc or .docx file format.
- Be written in the English language.
- Be wholly the original work of the entrant, written solely by the entrant.
- Not be copied from any other source.
- Not have been previously broadcast or otherwise distributed or disseminated in any media or format.
- No use of AI.
- Not be in violation of trademark, copyright, or publicity right.
- Not include content that is inappropriate, offensive, pornographic or otherwise unfit for dissemination or broadcast, as determined by the City of Gaithersburg at its sole discretion.
- Be submitted by or before **February 19, 2027**.

Entries not satisfying these criteria in any respect will be disqualified. If the City of Gaithersburg, at its sole discretion, has reason to believe that any entry violates any law or any right, the City of Gaithersburg may immediately disqualify such entry and take any other measures the City of Gaithersburg may deem appropriate or necessary.

GRANT OF RIGHTS

By submitting a poem, the entrant grants to the City of Gaithersburg:

- A non-exclusive, assignable, perpetual, license to produce, publish, distribute, transmit, exhibit, exploit and license the poem and any portions thereof in any format (collectively "distribute" or "distribution," as applicable) by any and all means, uses and media, whether audio, print, audiovisual or otherwise, now or hereafter known, throughout the universe in all languages without financial compensation.
- Finalists will be asked to read their poems on video, and at the festival, and will be required to sign a release form.

NOT ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE

The following, and their family members, are prohibited from participating in this contest:

- Employees of the City of Gaithersburg.
- City Council Members.
- All volunteers associated with the Gaithersburg Book Festival.