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2026 LOUISIANA BOOK FESTIVAL TO FEATURE DAY OF POETRY READINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

BATON ROUGE, La. – Poetry will have a prominent place on the schedule when the 2026 [Louisiana Book Festival](https://LouisianaBookFestival.org) returns Saturday, October 31, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in downtown Baton Rouge, at the State Library of Louisiana and the surrounding Capitol Park area. The day includes readings by Louisiana’s poet laureate, former state laureates, and poets from across the state. Admission is free.

“Louisiana has produced poets whose work is read well beyond our borders, and the Book Festival is one of the few places where readers across the state can hear them in person,” said Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. “Bringing our poet laureate together with so many accomplished writers, in programs free and open to everyone, reflects the value Louisiana places on its literary culture.”

With more than 20 subject areas on this year’s schedule, poetry takes center stage all day under the West Tent outside the Capitol Park Museum. The programming kicks off at 9 a.m. with “Diving Into Nature: An Eco-Poetry Anthology of Louisiana.” Hosted by [John P. Travis](#), the ensemble reading brings together more than a dozen poets, among them [Jack B. Bedell](#), [Julie Kane](#), [Biljana D. Obradović](#), and [Andy Young](#), to read work rooted in the state’s landscape and waters. hosts.

Louisiana Poet Laureate [Gina Ferrara](#) anchors a two-part showcase of poets working across the state. The morning segment, “The Louisiana Poet Laureate Presents Louisiana Poets, Vol. I,” begins at 10:45 a.m. and features [Taylor Clement](#), [Rodney Jones](#), [Justin Lacour](#), [Jonathan Penton](#), and [Jennifer Polson Peterson](#), each reading from a recent collection. The series resumes just after midday at 12:45 p.m. with Vol. II, highlighting [Emily Cospers](#), [Bill Lavender](#), [Biljana D. Obradović](#), [Ann Plicque](#), and [Ed Ruzicka](#).

At noon, [Catharine Savage Brosman](#) discusses her new and selected work in *Fire in the Mind: Poems New and Selected*, with [Julie Kane](#) moderating. At 2 p.m., “Second Sight: Poets Laureate Write Through Vision Loss” pairs former Louisiana poets laureate [Darrell Bourque](#) and [Peter Cooley](#) for a discussion of how writing changes in the face of macular degeneration, ranging across the senses, reading and writing habits, and sources of inspiration. [Benjamin Morris](#), whose *64 Parishes* magazine article inspired the session, moderates the session.

“Poetry is one of the most alive things you can experience at the festival — ideally it’s meant to be heard out loud, in the poet’s own voice,” said Robert Wilson, executive director of the Louisiana Book Festival. “This year’s poetry offerings will give readers several ways to experience that magic, from a stage full of

poets presenting a variety of verses, to a quiet panel on writing through vision loss, to a poem written just for them while they wait.”

A returning popular activity is the festival’s *Poetry-to-Order* feature. Poets [Cassandra de Alba](#) and [GennaRose Nethercott](#) of The Traveling Poetry Emporium will create free personalized poems, which can be taken home as keepsakes, composed on the spot in the lobby of the State Library using antique typewriters.

Times and locations for all poetry sessions and other programs are available on the [Louisiana Book Festival’s website](#), and every author appearance can be found on the site’s [individual author pages](#).

For complete details on the 2026 Louisiana Book Festival, a schedule of events, and featured authors and titles, visit [LouisianaBookFestival.org](#) and follow the event on the [Louisiana Book Festival Facebook page](#).

The [Louisiana Center for the Book](#) was established in the State Library of Louisiana in 1994. Its mission is to stimulate public interest in reading, books, literacy, and libraries and to celebrate Louisiana’s rich literary heritage. It is the official state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book.



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