



# PEACH PRESERVES

APRIL 2026  
ISSUE 202604

*Georgia Poetry Society Newsletter*



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fellow Poets,

April has arrived — with all its showers, pollen, and possibilities, and with it National Poetry Month, a time that reminds us how powerful words and connections can be.

As President, one of my greatest joys is learning how you are serving your communities through poetry — especially this month. Our Open Mic nights continue to show how meaningful those connections can be, built on genuine sharing and a love of language.

### *A Personal Reflection*

I did not grow up surrounded by poetry. In fact, I found it by chance at age 14, tucked away in a quiet room with “The Best Loved Poems of the American People” (1936). Those early poems, by Rudyard Kipling, Worth While - by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, If You're Ever Going To Love Me - by an unknown poet, sparked something in me —an ember that, though dimmed for many years, never fully went out.

It wasn't until I was 35, after the birth of my only child, Paul, that poetry

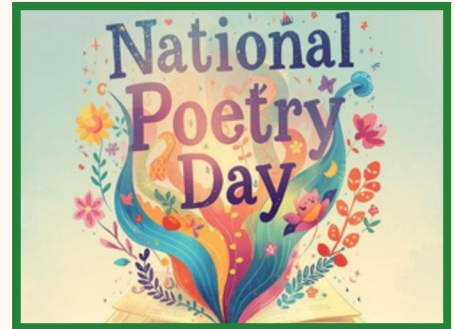
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## April Is National Poetry Month

**National Poetry Month** began in April 1996, created by the Academy of American Poets to celebrate poetry's role in American culture and to encourage wider public engagement. Inspired by the success of Black History Month and Women's History Month, it quickly grew into the world's largest literary celebration, involving schools, libraries, publishers, bookstores, and community organizations nationwide.



The Academy of American Poets convened publishers, book-sellers, librarians, teachers, and poets in 1995 to explore the idea of a month-long celebration. The first official National Poetry Month launched in April 1996, accompanied by public events, free poetry book distributions, and national media attention. Over the years, it has expanded to include:

- *The annual National Poetry Month poster* - distributed to schools and libraries
- *Poem-a-Day*, which began as an April project and is now year-round
- *Dear Poet*, a multimedia project inviting students to respond to poets
- *Poem in Your Pocket Day*, celebrated nationwide each April 30

Today, tens of millions of people participate each year.

### Why April Belongs to Poetry

Poetry Month isn't about expertise or accomplishment; it's about giving yourself permission to pay attention. For beginners, April is a gentle doorway. A single poem, even a single line, is enough. You don't need a plan or a theme. Just curiosity. Just the willingness to try.

For those still searching for their voice, April offers a chance to experiment. To write badly on purpose. To surprise yourself. To read poets you've never heard of and discover that something in their work unlocks something in yours.

For the experienced poet, April becomes a way to reconnect with the original impulse that brought you to poetry in the first place. Not the deadlines, not the submissions, not the workshops. Just the quiet pleasure of language doing what only language can do.

Whether you write daily, read occasionally, or simply let a poem cross your path when it wants to, April is an invitation: to notice, to listen, to imagine, to remember. Poetry belongs to everyone this month — and everyone belongs to poetry.

## NATIONAL POETRY MONTH IN GEORGIA

April brings readings, festivals, open mics, and creative gatherings across the state. Here's a curated list to help you celebrate poetry all month long.

### Jane Hirshfield Lecture

**April 16, 7 PM – Atlanta Botanical Garden** A literary evening with acclaimed poet Jane Hirshfield, exploring classical Japanese poetics and contemporary meaning.

### Atlanta Haiku Festival

**April 18, 10 AM-2 PM – Atlanta Botanical Garden** A spring celebration of haiku, nature, and creativity, including an online haiku competition.

### Poetry in the Park - Decatur

A relaxed outdoor gathering featuring local poets, picnics, and community connection.

### Writer's Circle of Atlanta

Weekly creative meetups for poets and writers. Supportive, informal, and open to all levels.

### Music & Poetry at HowdyATL

**Biscuit Café.** The last Wednesday of each month, [poetryispretentious.com](http://poetryispretentious.com), hosts music & poetry at [HowdyATL](http://HowdyATL), across from the Atlanta Zoo.

### Poetry in the City: Live Open

**Mic Downtown Atlanta** A vibrant spoken-word night featuring emerging and established performers.

**Grant Park – Last Wednesday of each month.** A lively mix of poetry, music, and community voices. Free and welcoming.

### Poetic Justice: Poetry & Live Music Show Downtown Atlanta

A dynamic blend of poetry, soul, and live instrumentation.

### Sunset Poetry in the Forest Cascade Springs Nature Preserve

An interpretive poetry hike combining nature, reflection, and spoken word.

## National Poetry Challenges

**America 250 Poetry Competition.** Open call to define what "America is".

**Na/GloPoWriMo 2026**  
30 Poems in 30 Days

**Writer's Digest April PAD Challenge.** 30 Poems in 30 Days

**80 Free Poetry Contests to Enter in 2026**

**Poetry & the Creative Mind 2026** Register for a benefit reading - 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Poetry Month.

**The Stafford Challenge.** A poem a day for a year.

Spotlight

**Alice H. Johnson**

**Secretary, Georgia Poetry Society**



Alice H. Johnson joined the Georgia Poetry Society in 2024 and currently serves as Secretary. With academic roots at St. Augustine's University and the University of South Carolina, her professional life has centered on service, community support, and mental-health advocacy. Her poetry reflects those same commitments.

Alice is the author of *A Dove in the Golden Light*, a collection that blends personal reflection with themes of faith, resilience, and encouragement. She has also contributed to the Eber & Wein anthology *Figments of Love*.

Alice remains active in the Augusta arts community, participating in local readings and literary events. Her work continues to highlight the power of poetry to uplift, connect, and inspire.

GPS's own **Elizabeth Michaud** will be one of five poets reading and signing books at Eagle Eye Book Shop in Decatur this April. We're delighted to see her sharing her work in one of Georgia's most beloved independent bookstores. We love seeing our members shine, and we're thrilled to celebrate her continued creative presence in Georgia's poetry community. Read more about the event [here](#).

**Saturday, April 4 at 1:00 p.m.**

**Eagle Eye Book Shop**

**2076 N Decatur Road**

**Decatur GA 30033**



*A poet is a keeper of quiet miracles—  
the breath between thoughts, the shimmer  
beneath ordinary things.  
Their purpose is not to explain the world,  
but to reveal the beauty hiding inside it.*

## REACH OF SONG DEADLINE EXTENDED

Several members have experienced difficulties renewing their memberships or submitting their work to *The Reach of Song*. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate, we are extending the submission deadline to April 30. If you continue to experience any issues, please contact Michelle Alderman at [VP@georgiapoetrysociety.org](mailto:VP@georgiapoetrysociety.org) for assistance. We appreciate your patience and look forward to reading your poems. Members may submit your poetry [here](#).

## QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING – APRIL 25

The Georgia Poetry Society will hold its next Quarterly Membership Meeting on Saturday, April 25 at 11 a.m. This gathering offers members a chance to connect, hear updates, and share ideas as we move through a full season of poetry activity. We look forward to spending the morning together and continuing the work that keeps our community vibrant and growing. A Zoom invitation will be sent to members nearer the date.



GEORGIA POETRY  
SOCIETY

## OPEN MIC

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026

Hosted on Zoom • 7:00 PM

Join us for an evening of poetry, community, and connection. All are welcome—whether you'd like to read, listen, or simply enjoy the company of fellow writers.



Hosted by:  
**Barbara Barry  
Nishanian**  
President,  
Georgia Poetry Society

Bring a poem to share, or come to enjoy the voices of our GPS community,

Zoom Link: [April Open Mic](#)  
[www.georgiapoetrysociety.org](http://www.georgiapoetrysociety.org)

**Haiku** is the most widely written poetic form in the world, distilling a single moment into just seventeen syllables and inviting the reader to pause, notice, and breathe. Rooted in attention and simplicity, the form captures the quiet truths that often go unnoticed.

Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), the great haiku master and Japan's most celebrated haiku poet, transformed the haiku into an art of deep attention, revealing the world as it is – simple, fleeting, and full of wonder.

The temple bell stops—  
but the sound keeps coming out  
of the flowers.

- Matsuo Bashō

## The Georgia Poetry Project: A Statewide Collaboration in the Making

The **Georgia Poetry Project** is a creative partnership between the Monroe-Walton Center for the Arts (MWCA) and the Georgia Poetry Society, designed to bring poetry into public spaces and everyday life across the state.

What began as small, accessible “poetry moments” created by local communities has grown into a shared vision for a statewide, annual public arts initiative.

MWCA is leading the inaugural year, shaping a model that other Georgia communities can follow. Their creativity is already expanding the project in exciting ways.

Barbara Barth, MWCA’s Literary Director, introduced a dynamic component: a series of short videos featuring people reading or performing poems, shared across social media throughout April to highlight local voices and celebrate diverse styles. GPS will support the project with statewide publicity and coordination, ensuring that

each participating community can contribute in a way that fits its character. Together, MWCA and GPS are building something flexible, inclusive, and deeply rooted in Georgia’s creative spirit.

Though still in its early stages, the Georgia Poetry Project is gaining strong momentum and marks the beginning of a movement that will continue to grow each April.

[MWCA Website:](#)  
[MWCA on Facebook](#)



**OPEN MIC NIGHT**  
7 p.m. April 22

Grizzle Beer  
208 S. Broad Street  
Monroe GA 30655

*"When poetry finds its voice, it doesn't just speak — it dances in the air, turning breath into music and silence into meaning."*

## POETS FOR PEACE - SUNFLOWERS RISING 2

**"Sunflowers Rising 2"** is the second international peace-themed anthology created by Poets for Peace to support recovery programs for orphans of war in Ukraine. Following the success of the first anthology, this new volume continues the mission of raising awareness and offering tangible assistance through poetry.

**Submissions** are open to all poets, including international contributors, and must center on themes of peace, the human cost of war, and the emotional landscape surrounding conflict.

Poets may submit up to three original poems, with one selected for publication, and Ukrainian poets may submit in their native language with an English translation.

Poems must follow specific guidelines, including a 30-line limit, 50-character line width, and Times New Roman 12-point font.

Submissions should be sent as a single email with attached files in .pdf, .doc, .docx, or .rtf format, and must include the poet's contact information.

**The submission window** remains open until 200 poets have entered or until May 31, 2026.

There is no fee for Ukrainian poets; all others pay a \$10 submission fee.

Poets will receive confirmation and final selection notices by July 1, 2026. Poets for Peace encourages writers everywhere to lend their voices to this meaningful project.



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER, *continued*

found its way back into my life. And now, as I have been lovingly teased, if my book “Poetic Awakenings: Thoughts of an Inspirational Georgia Poet” is released this year, I may just become the “Grandma Moses of poetry” at 88 ... this they say with a smile.

### *Why Poetry Matters*

During this special month, I encourage each of you to keep that poetic flame alive - and to pass it on. A few benefits worth mentioning are:

- \* *Emotional Healing* - Poetry helps us process, connect, and foster empathy.
- \* *Creativity & Expression* - it opens the mind to new and meaningful connections
- \* *Reflections* - it invites us to slow down ... and yes, even smell the roses.

### *Stay Connected*

I hope to see many of you at our upcoming quarterly meeting as we continue to grow and strengthen our impact together. Please also remember: submissions for the Reach of Song Anthology have been extended - details are in this newsletter. We would truly love to read your work.

And while I missed hosting in March, I look forward to seeing you at our next Open Night on April 16 — always the third Thursday of the month.

### *Until then ...*

May your words find light,  
your thoughts find rhythm,  
and your heart always find its way back to poetry.

Warmly,  
Barbara Barry Nishanian  
President, Georgia Poetry Society

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