**CONTACT INFO:**Julie E. Bloemeke (she/her)
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[#5poets5parks](https://metroparkstoledo.com/5poets5parks)

**RELEASE DATE:** For immediate release

**Metroparks Toledo Announces Inaugural National Poetry Month Collaboration** **#5poets5parks**

Toledo, OH—Metroparks Toledo has announced its inaugural collaboration for National Poetry Month in April. Known as [#5poets5parks](https://metroparkstoledo.com/5poets5parks), five award-winning Toledo poets have been chosen to highlight five of 19 Metroparks by composing an occasional poem based on the history, aesthetic, and sensibility of each location with the aim of amplifying conservation and eco awareness. The initiative will culminate in a reading and celebration at the Glass City Metropark Pavilion on April 5, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. A reception featuring park photography and an author signing of custom letterpress prints will follow.

“For the Metroparks, part of our vision involves the idea that we move beyond what we think we know. Collaborating with this group of award-winning poets to celebrate National Poetry Month allows us a chance to expand on and share the Metroparks story, to see how the art form of words invites us into a deeper understanding of spaces that hold such community reverence, memory, and history. We wanted to take on a collaboration that brought in photography, letterpress printing, and poetry as a way of connecting eco awareness and conservation to the arts—not only in Toledo, but to park lovers and adventurers everywhere,” said Matt Killam, Chief Outreach Officer for the Toledo Metroparks.

Selected [poets](https://metroparkstoledo.com/learn-and-play/special-events-and-programs/5poets5parks/biographies/) include [Ryan Bunch](https://midcoastagency.com/ryanbunch), [Tim Geiger](https://www.utoledo.edu/al/english/faculty/geiger.html), Lucas County Poet Laureate [Jonie McIntire](https://www.joniemcintire.net/), [Dustin Pearson](https://dustinkpearson.com/), and [Kerry Trautman](https://toledopoet.com/welcome-to-the-toledo-poet-website/toledo-poets-2/kerry-trautman-2/), each representing [Glass City](https://metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/glass-city-metropark/), [Side Cut](https://metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/side-cut-metropark/), [Farnsworth](https://metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/farnsworth-metropark/), [Oak Openings](https://metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/oak-openings-preserve-metropark/) and [Wildwood](https://metroparkstoledo.com/explore-your-parks/wildwood-preserve-metropark/), respectively.

McIntire, the first female Poet Laureate of Lucas County, is especially excited about what the collaboration represents for the arts in Toledo: “#5poets5parks gives us a moment during National Poetry Month to explore the richness the Toledo area is built from, the impact of our industrial innovations, and the creative collaborations of area literary artists, photography, and letterpress printing,” she said of the inaugural initiative. “Not only am I proud to honor our incredible Metropark system, but I am humbled by the width and breadth of artistic talent across Lucas County.”

Each of the selected poets has brought innovation and accolades to the Glass City. Ryan Bunch is the founder of the OHMI Reading Series and Mid-Coast Industrial Workshop, a conceptual project building creative and travel networks across the Michigan-Ohio border. Tim Geiger teaches creative writing at the University of Toledo and is the winner of the 2019 Vern Rutsala Prize from Cloudbank Books. McIntire, in addition to being poet laureate, is the winner of Red Flag Poetry’s 2020 chapbook contest and the host of the monthly *Uncloistered Poetry* reading series. Dustin Pearson teaches creative writing at the University of Toledo; in 2019, The Root named him one of nine Black poets working in “academic, cultural and government institutions committed to elevating and preserving the poetry artform.” And Kerry Trautman is the author of seven collections of poetry; her one-act play “Mass” was a winner of The Toledo Repertoire Theater’s “Toledo Voices” competition in 2019.

The event will be hosted by [Julie E. Bloemeke](https://www.jebloemeke.com/), an award-winning poet in Atlanta. While her debut collection earned her the title of Georgia Author of the Year Poetry Finalist in 2021 and was also selected as a 2021 Book All Georgians Should Read, her most recent work—an anthology of poetry honoring Dolly Parton called *Let Me Say This: A Dolly Parton Poetry Anthology,* co-edited along with poet Dustin Brookshire—was also named a 2024 Book All Georgians Should Read in January. A Toledo native, Bloemeke is especially passionate about innovative collaborations:

“The Metroparks are a force of community and connection; each offers a diverse ecosystem—metaphors into our understanding of the complexity of the Glass City. Highlighting the arts in conjunction with the Metroparks speaks to a collaborative verve and vision that has been so nurtured in Toledo, and yet reaches far beyond the 419. As a student of Toledo Public Schools and a graduate of St. Ursula Academy, Toledo is deep in my blood; I am thrilled to help shine light on the work of Toledo creatives through this initiative of poetry, photography, and letterpress printing,” said Bloemeke, whose poem, “Glass City” is on permanent display in the lobby of Hiltons Toledo Downtown in commemoration of [#HTPOETRY23](https://www.jebloemeke.com/htpoetry23), a 2023 National Poetry Month collaboration between the arts, industry, and local business.

The celebration will also feature park photography curated by Toledo photographer [Doug Hinebaugh](https://dougiefreshphotography.com/about/). [Sven Olaf Nelson,](https://pineapplepress.net/) founder of Pineapple Press and Design, will create custom-designed postcards of the poems to commemorate the venture. The postcards will be letterpress printed on handmade paper and include native seeds sourced from the Toledo Metroparks.

“Being able to combine the art of letterpress printing with poetry, and Metroparks Toledo in a tangible way brings an added element to the spirit of this event,” said Nelson. “I love that guests can choose to display the poems, or when they are finished enjoying them, can plant the postcards to be enjoyed beyond and remember Metroparks Toledo in their own backyard.”

After the reading, a signing and reception will follow. Registration is limited and will open to the public on Feb. 7. Link to register is [here](https://ohmetroparkstoledoweb.myvscloud.com/webtrac/web/search.html?Action=Start&SubAction=&_csrf_token=si02006V176X3Q2X23343C5K6Z4F5C5009524M5F5U6Y714J5B506M5J5Y596G175S575A586R6S4R59506Y4Z4F6M531G6W5Z5U4Z016J5T5D67025D5B6E50715T4L5D&module=Global&subtype=&keyword=poet&beginmonth=4&display=Detail&multiselectlist_value=&globalwebsearch_buttonsearch=yes). Please visit [#5poets5parks](https://metroparkstoledo.com/5poets5parks) for more information.

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**DETAILED BIOS FOR #5poets5parks**

**Glass City Metropark, Glass City Pavilion, 4-5-24, 6:30 pm**

**POETS:**

**RYAN BUNCH** (he/him) is a poet, writer, performance artist, and nonprofit administrator living in Toledo, Ohio. He’s helped to form the Lucas County Poet Laureate program, Poetry Sidewalks public art project, Ode to the Zip Code poetry contest, established Toledo’s creative placemaking program and Culture Trail framework, as well as planning and hosting numerous literary, arts, and cultural events. Ryan’s work has appeared in the *Istanbul Literary Review*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, *Toledo City Paper*, and others. He’s released three collaborative spoken word albums with musician Lance Hulsey under the moniker Kyrux Macist and hosted his first visual art exhibition, a collaboration poetry-photography show titled ALLUVIUM in mid-2022. Ryan is the founder of the OHMI Mid-Coast Industrial Workshop, a conceptual project building creative and travel networks across the Michigan-Ohio border.

**TIMOTHY GEIGER** (he/him) has published three poetry collections and ten chapbooks, most recently *Weatherbox*, winner of the 2019 Vern Rutsala Prize from Cloudbank Books. His work has received a Pushcart Prize XVII and a Holt, Rinehart and Winston Award in Literature, as well as many state and local grants from Ohio, Minnesota, and Alabama. He runs a small farm in Northwest Ohio raising goats, chickens, ducks, and pigs; is the proprietor of Aureole Press, a letterpress imprint publishing contemporary poetry since 1989; and teaches Creative Writing and Book Arts at The University of Toledo.

**JONIE MCINTIRE** (she/her) is the first female Poet Laureate of Lucas County, Ohio. Her most recent chapbook, *Semidomesticated* (re-released by Sheila-Na-Gig Editions, 2022) won Red Flag Poetry’s 2020 chapbook contest. Her prior chapbooks are *Beyond the Sidewalk*(Nightballet Press, 2017) and *Not All Who Are Lost Wander* (Finishing Line Press, 2016). She is the poetry editor at *Of Rust and Glass*, Membership Chair at Ohio Poetry Association, and hosts a monthly reading series called *Uncloistered Poetry* from Toledo, Ohio. Visit her online at <https://www.joniemcintire.net>.

**DUSTIN PEARSON** (he/him) is the author of *A Season in Hell with Rimbaud* (BOA Editions, 2022), *Millennial Roost* (C&R Press, 2018), and *A Family Is a House* (C&R Press, 2019). In 2019, The Root named Dustin one of nine Black poets working in “academic, cultural and government institutions committed to elevating and preserving the poetry artform.” He is an assistant professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Toledo where he teaches creative writing.

**KERRY TRAUTMAN** (she/her) is a lifelong Northwest-Ohioan, UT graduate, and author of eight books. She co-founded ToledoPoet.com and the "Toledo Poetry Museum" page on Facebook to promote local poetry events. In 2019 her one-act play “Mass” was a winner of The Toledo Repertoire Theater’s “Toledo Voices” competition. She has served as judge/workshop leader for the Northwest region of Ohio’s “Poetry Out Loud” competition since 2016. Kerry has participated in local events such as Artomatic 4-1-9, Momentum Festival, Ode to the Zip Code, the Toledo Museum of Art’s ekphrastic writing contest, and Back to Jack.

**HOST:**

**JULIE E. BLOEMEKE** (she/her) is the 2021 Georgia Author of the Year Finalist for Poetry.  Her debut full-length collection *Slide to Unlock* (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2020) was also chosen as a 2021 Book All Georgians Should Read. Co-editor of *Let Me Say This: A Dolly Parton Poetry Anthology* (Madville Publishing, 2023)—chosen as a 2024 Books All Georgians Should Read in January—she is also the winner of the 2022 *Third Coast* Poetry Prize. An associate editor for *South Carolina Review*, newsletter producer for *Rough Draft Atlanta*, and a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts fellow, her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and publications including *Writer’s Chronicle*, *Prairie Schooner, Nimrod, Cortland Review, Gulf Coast, EcoTheo Review,* and others. In 2023, a broadside of her poem, “Glass City,” was commissioned by the Hiltons at Toledo Downtown to be on permanent view as part of the hotel’s art collection. She is a proud native of Toledo. Visit her online at [www.jebloemeke.com](http://www.jebloemeke.com)

**PHOTOGRAPHER:**

**DOUG HINEBAUGH** (he/him) is lovingly known in the Glass City as Dougiefresh. He is a Toledo photographer and personality who's been on a mission to tell the world why returning to the home he once left is the best thing he ever did. 2023 has been a banner year for Doug as his Board of Directors positions for both Jake & Cooper's Bark Park and FilmToledo helped launch a new dog park in Oregon, OH and elevated FilmToledo to the City of Toledo's official film commission. With his lovely partner Kristen by his side and his trusty goldendoodle Elsa along for the ride, Doug looks to celebrate his hometown with the world for many years to come.

 **LETTERPRESS PRINTING:**

**SVEN OLAF NELSON** (he/him) is the founder of Pineapple Press and Design in Toledo. His passion for graphic design and letterpress began as a student at Ball State University and has since bloomed into a collection of over 400 metal and wood typefaces spanning two centuries. Sven specializes in individual custom small batch orders and is committed to letterpress education and perpetuating beauty, working with clients on paper selection, design, font, and layout. While his range includes cards, invitations, posters, and custom orders, he is particularly interested in poetry broadsides. All of Sven’s projects are printed on antique letterpress equipment including a 1940s Chandler & Price press, a 1905 Vandercook No.01 proof press, along with other small foil presses, and book presses. He also hand mixes all of his inks and incorporates handmade papers into his work. Committed to teaching about letterpress and design, Sven also hosts community workshops through the Toledo Museum of Art.