



For Immediate Release
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Metroparks Toledo Announces Second Annual Collaboration for National Poetry Month, #5poets5parks

Ohio Poet Laureate to be Featured

Toledo, OH—Metroparks Toledo has announced its second annual #5poets5parks collaboration in honor of National Poetry Month. The free event will be April 4 at the Glass City Metropark Pavilion and feature a poetry reading and park photography. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with the presentations beginning at 6 p.m. An author signing of custom letterpress print postcards will follow. Light refreshments will be served.

Five award-winning Ohio poets have been chosen to highlight five of the 19 Toledo Metroparks by composing a poem based on the history and biodiversity of each park – each with the aim of amplifying conservation and eco awareness efforts, and community relationships to greenspaces.

While last year's event spotlighted five Toledo-area poets – including Lucas County Poet Laureate Jonie McIntire – this year the initiative has extended its reach to poets throughout various regions of Ohio, including Albany-based Ohio Poet Laureate Kari Gunter-Seymour.

Selected poets for 2025 include Lydia Babcock (Cleveland), [Darren Demaree](#) (Columbus), [Gunter-Seymour](#) (Albany), and local poets [Adrian Lime](#) and [Sandra Rivers-Gill](#), each representing [Pearson Metropark](#), [Blue Creek Metropark](#), [Providence Metropark](#), [Manhattan Marsh Metropark](#), and [Swan Creek Metropark](#), respectively.

2024 selected poets included [Ryan Bunch](#), [Tim Geiger](#), [Jonie McIntire](#), [Dustin Pearson](#), and [Kerry Trautman](#), each representing [Glass City](#), [Side Cut](#), [Farnsworth](#), [Oak Openings](#) and [Wildwood](#), respectively.

Gunter-Seymour, author of four collections of poetry, whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, said of the project, “Ohio is unique in that one can travel from the bottom to the top of the state, even side to side and never be far from spaces of pure serenity – by that I mean our vast system of Metroparks. Toledo is abundantly blessed with a number of parks, and it was my absolute joy to spend time “up north” immersed in discovery. What better way to bring attention to these wondrous hidey-holes of nature than through poetry?”

Each of the poets visited their park to compose original poems starting in early fall of 2024 and began letterpress print collaboration in January.



- Babcock, a graduate of The University of Toledo, combines creative writing and theater and will co-direct a production of *Macbeth* at Grand Rapids Town Hall Theater in March.
- Demaree is the author of 23 poetry collections, editor-in-chief of the *Best of the Net Anthology*, and a recipient of the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award.
- Gunter-Seymour, along with her appointment as poet laureate of Ohio, is an American Poets Laureate Fellowship recipient and the host of the *Spoken & Heard* virtual reading series; her latest book earned her the 2024 StoryTrade Award and POTY Award.
- Lime is a founding member of the Almeda Street Poets and the Toledo Poetry Museum.
- Rivers-Gill, who holds a Master's in Liberal Studies from the University of Toledo, is an Ohio Arts Council teaching artist; her debut chapbook was a 2024 Eric Hoffer Book Award Category Finalist.

Matt Killam, chief of external relations for Metroparks Toledo, and [Julie E. Bloemeke](#), a Toledo native and award-winning poet currently in Atlanta, will host the event.

Bloemeke, the 2021 Georgia Author of the Year Poetry Finalist, is also a two-time recipient of Books All Georgians Should Read in 2021 and in 2024 – a statewide honor only granted to two poetry collections per year. Passionate about community-focused efforts in arts collaboration and biodiversity amplification, Killam and Bloemeke collaborated to launch the #5poets5parks series in 2024, which Bloemeke directs. To date, a total of 10 parks and 10 poets have been a part of the initiative, along with Toledo-based letterpress printer, Sven Olaf Nelson – serving for two years – and two photographers, Doug Hinebaugh (2024) and Art Weber (2025).

This year's event will also honor Weber, Metroparks Toledo nature photographer, who has dedicated more than 50 years to capturing park images. During the poetry reading portion of the event, Weber's photographs – focused on each respective park – will be showcased alongside each poet.

"My passion for nature photography has always been rooted in promoting the extraordinary natural beauty of both the habitats and species Metroparks Toledo protects," Weber said. "It's truly an honor to share my visual work with such exceptional poetic talents."

Nelson, founder of [Pineapple Press and Design](#) – which is in the process of locating to Uptown Toledo from Sylvania – has created custom-designed postcards for each of the #5poets5parks poems. Each postcard is letterpress printed on handmade paper that



includes native seeds sourced from the Metroparks native plant nursery. At the close of the event, there will be an author signing of each of the postcards, which are then shared with event attendees to be saved as a keepsake, sent through the mail, or planted. Nelson spends about four months on the planning and printing for the project each year, and is especially dedicated to working with creative writers. This year he's chosen to work with Benedictine Book, an undigitized font, in Linotype.

Said Nelson: "As a letterpress printer, it's great to collaborate with poets – to bring their words about Metroparks Toledo to life for the #5poets5parks project. It's a tangible way for our community to honor National Poetry Month and the fantastic parks in Toledo."

Last year's event sold out two weeks in advance. Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz attended.

"We serve Lucas County by preserving 13,000 acres of shared greenspace – a park within five miles of every home," said Killam. "Another part of our work is telling the stories of our local natural areas. It is our honor to provide a microphone and paper to these talented poets, whose words inspire others to visit and appreciate these special places."

Free registration for 2025 is limited and open to the public. Link to register is [here](#). Please visit [#5poets5parks](#) for more information.

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