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## POETIC MASTERY

### THE SPRINGFIELD AREA ARTS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES ILLINOIS STATE WINNERS

"I've always loved that a poem can be carried in the body. That unlike a novel, or a song that might require musical accompaniment, reciting a poem needs nothing but a willing voice. Not even a microphone or clapping, or a melody. It can travel with you, it resides in you."

These lines from Elizabeth Acevedo were written in the program for the Illinois State Contest of the Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest. The competition was held on Friday, March 9, 2018, at the Hoogland Center for the Arts in Springfield. **Wynton Gage** from **Southeast High School** (Springfield) was declared the winner. He will advance to the national competition in Washington, D.C., in April.

To win the competition, Gage recited "Four Glimpses of Night" by Frank Marshall Davis and "The Universe as Primal Scream" by Tracy K. Smith and "Often rebuked, yet always back returning" by Emily Brontë.

**Maeve Heumann, Edwardsville High School** (Edwardsville), was named runner-up. Rounding out the top five were Haifa Ali (Jefferson High School, Rockford), Lauran Miller (Central High School, Champaign), and Samantha Churovich (University of Illinois Laboratory High School, Champaign).

The Illinois State Contest featured recitations by two students from each of eight *Poetry Out Loud* regional contests in the state: Belleville, Carbondale, Champaign, Chicago-City, Chicago-Metro, Rockford, Rock Island, and Springfield.

Other students participating from around the state:

Varya Bazalev, Wheaton-Warrenville South High School (Wheaton)

Kenzie Clerk, Carbondale Community High School (Carbondale)

Dalen Eap, Mather High School (Chicago)

Brandon Fienhold, Agape Christian School (Marion)

Brett Harris, Freeburg Community High School (Freeburg)

Charles Hsu, Deerfield High School (Deerfield)

Zach Kline, Orion High School (Orion)

Asher Malitsky, Metropolitan Schoolhouse (Chicago)

Ana Plankenhorn, Jefferson High School (Rockford)  
Grace Sturtewagen, Annawan High School (Annawan)  
Cole White, Pawnee High School (Pawnee)

Contest staff for the 2018 Illinois State Contest included  
Recitation Judges:

Rodrigo Carramiñana, Media, Pennsylvania – college dean and researcher

Brian “Fox” Ellis, Bishop Hill – storyteller and author musician and poet

Quraysh Ali Lansana, Chicago – teacher and poet

Maurine Magliocco, Springfield – English professor emerita

Accuracy judge: Jennifer Hudson, Decatur – poet and librarian

Prompter: Doug Johnson, Bloomington – artist and executive director

Scorekeeper: Bob Jessup

M. C.: Jim Leach

Special guest at the contest was Willard Bunn, III, of Lake Forest, a Poetry Foundation trustee.

*Poetry Out Loud* in Illinois is a collaborative project of the Illinois Arts Council Agency and seven arts agencies, each of which hosts a regional contest. The *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* is a national program that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through analysis, memorization, performance, and competition. The National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation, in conjunction with state arts agencies, support this nation-wide program with participants from all fifty states plus Washington, D.C., the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

In Illinois this year, 43 high schools were part of *Poetry Out Loud*. 166 teachers. More than 8,870 students.

“Among the benefits of the *Poetry Out Loud* program is that it helps young women and men find something they’re good at. These students are so talented and insightful,” said Sheila Walk, contest organizer, during the post-contest reception.

More information is available at [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org) or from the Springfield Area Arts Council ([programs@springfieldartsco.org](mailto:programs@springfieldartsco.org)).

Attachments: Photograph of Wynton Gage - taken by William Richards;  
art by Jensine Williams

Logos - Poetry Foundation and National Endowment for the Arts





2018 Poetry Out Loud Illinois State Champion, **Wynton Gage**, Springfield Southeast High School, Springfield, Illinois

Photo Credit: William Richards, Springfield, IL

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