

Poetry Scavenger Hunt – Poets

Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson was an American poet whose innovative, introspective work reshaped the possibilities of lyric poetry. Writing largely in seclusion, she composed nearly 1,800 poems exploring themes of death, nature, love, and the inner life. Though little recognized during her lifetime, her compressed language and unconventional style have made her one of the most influential poets in American literature. [Learn more about Emily](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/emily-dickinson): <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/emily-dickinson>

Matsuo Bashō

Matsuo Bashō was a Japanese poet of the Edo period, widely regarded as the master of haiku. His work combines simplicity, depth, and a profound attention to the natural world, often reflecting Buddhist philosophy and a sense of impermanence. Through his travel journals and poems, Bashō elevated haiku into a major literary form that continues to shape poetry worldwide. [Learn more about Bashō](https://www.basho-bp.jp/en/): <https://www.basho-bp.jp/en/>

Antonio Machado

Antonio Machado was a Spanish poet known for his reflective and lyrical explorations of time, memory, and landscape. His work often draws on the rural imagery of Spain while engaging deeply with philosophical and emotional themes. Machado remains one of Spain's most beloved poets, admired for his clarity, humanity, and quiet depth. [Learn more about Antonio](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/antonio-machado): <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/antonio-machado>

Nancy Miller Gomez

Nancy Miller Gomez is the current Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate and an Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellow. She is the co-founder of the Santa Cruz Poetry Project, an organization that facilitates poetry workshops for incarcerated people, and the founder of Rising Voices, a program bringing poetry to youth across Santa Cruz County. [Learn more about Nancy](https://www.nancymillergomez.com/): <https://www.nancymillergomez.com/>

Avery Ruddick

Avery is a student at Aptos High School. She participated in the Rising Voices program that brings poetry into classrooms across Santa Cruz County. Avery's poem My Santa Cruz County, appears in the Rising Voices Anthology, Seeds of Tomorrow, a collection of poetry written entirely by Santa Cruz County youth.

Ellen Bass

Ellen Bass served as the Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate from 2014-15. She was named The Santa Cruz County Artist of the Year in 2019. A former Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, she has been awarded numerous awards and fellowships, including from the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

[Learn more about Ellen](https://www.ellenbass.com/): <https://www.ellenbass.com/>

Gary Young

Gary Young served as the first ever Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate, from 2010-11. His print work is represented in numerous collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and The Getty Center for the Arts. He has been awarded numerous awards and fellowships, including the Pushcart Prize and the National Endowment for the Arts. [Learn more about Gary](https://gary-young.net/): <https://gary-young.net/>

Cynthia White

Cynthia White is a Santa Cruz–based poet whose work explores memory, place, and the natural world. She was a finalist for Nimrod’s Pablo Neruda Prize and the winner of the Julia Darling Memorial Prize from Kallisto Gaia Press. [Learn more about Cynthia](https://cynthiawhitepoet.com/): <https://cynthiawhitepoet.com/>

Bob Gomez

Bob Gomez is a Santa Cruz poet and community organizer known for his grounded, socially aware work. A longtime participant in local readings and literary events, he has been an advocate for accessible poetry and creative expression in the region. He served as Watsonville’s poet laureate from 2022-23. [Learn more about Bob](https://www.goodtimes.sc/watsonville-poet-laureate-has-a-rich-history/):

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Vicky Bañales

Vicky Bañales is a poet, performer, and educator from Santa Cruz County whose work centers on identity, culture, and social justice. She is the current Watsonville poet laureate, serving from 2025 to 2027. Vicky is also a co-founder of Writers of Color - Santa Cruz County Collective, and a prominent voice in Chicana arts.

[Learn more about Vicky](https://www.vickybanales.com/): <https://www.vickybanales.com/>

Farnaz Fatemi

Farnaz Fatemi served as Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate from 2023–25. An Iranian American poet, her work has appeared in numerous literary journals. She is known for her teaching and mentorship within the Santa Cruz writing community. Winner of the Wick Poetry Prize for her collection, *Sister Tongue*, Farnaz launched and oversees the Santa Cruz County Youth Poet Laureate Program.

[Learn more about Farnaz](https://www.farnazfatemi.com/): <https://www.farnazfatemi.com/>

Lee Herrick

Lee Herrick is the current California Poet Laureate, appointed in 2022 and now serving his second term. Based in the Central Coast, he has dedicated much of his career to promoting poetry in schools and communities. [Learn more about Lee:](https://www.leeherick.com/) <https://www.leeherick.com/>

Lisa Allen Ortiz

Lisa Allen Ortiz is a Santa Cruz–based poet, translator, and editor whose work bridges language, culture, and activism. Lisa is the author of *Stem*, winner of the 2021 Idaho Prize and *Guide to the Exhibit*, winner of the 2016 Perugia Press Prize. [Learn more about Lisa:](https://lisaallenortiz.com/) <https://lisaallenortiz.com/>

Danusha Lameris

Danusha Laméris served as the Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate from 2018-20. She is a poet, teacher and essayist, and the recipient of the Lucille Clifton Legacy Award. She was a co-founder of the Hive Poetry Collective, and also the creator of the Litfield online writing community. [Learn more about Danusha:](https://www.danushalameris.com/) <https://www.danushalameris.com/>

David Allen Sullivan

Davis Allen Sullivan was Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate from 2020-22. He was a Fullbright Lecturer in Xi'an, China, and has taught literature and film at Cabrillo College where he edits the Porter Gulch Review with his students. David is the author several books including, *Strong-Armed Angels*, and *Every Seed of the Pomegranate*, a book of co-translation with Abbas Kadhim from the Arabic of Iraqi Adnan Al-Sayegh. [Learn more about David:](https://dasulliv1.wixsite.com/website-1) <https://dasulliv1.wixsite.com/website-1>

Adela Najarro

Adela Najarro is the author of five poetry collections, including *Variations in Blue*, selected for publication in 2025 through the Letras Latinas/Red Hen Collaborative. Her chapbook, *Volcanic Interruptions*, received an Honorable Mention in the Juan Felipe Herrera Best Poetry Book Award. The California Arts Council recognized her as an established artist for the Central California Region and appointed her as an Individual Artist Fellow. [Learn more about Adela:](https://adelanajarro.com/) <https://adelanajarro.com/>