



James River Watershed Poetry Contest representing the greater Lynchburg Area



The James River Association, in partnership with the Black Earth Institute and Randolph College, invites anyone between the ages of 14 and 23 who currently lives or attends school in the Greater Lynchburg Area, and is either pursuing or holds a high school degree or equivalent, to submit poems on the James River or the James River Watershed.

The James River and its tributaries are deep sources of connection and memory, holding different meanings for different individuals and communities. This contest seeks to illustrate and honor the varied relationships we have with the river in the Greater Lynchburg Area. Poems could be about the James River specifically or could engage with the many local rivers, creeks, and streams that flow into the James. A few examples include:

- Blackwater Creek, Ivy Creek, and Fishing Creek in Lynchburg
- Judith Creek and North Otter Creek in Bedford County
- Pedlar River, Harris Creek, and Falling Rock Creek in Amherst County
- Beaver Creek and Joshua Creek in Campbell County
- Bent Creek and Blackfoot Creek in Appomattox County
- Tye River and Piney River in Nelson County

Qualified participants: All participants must live in the Greater Lynchburg Area (Lynchburg City; Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, and Nelson Counties). Poems will be judged in two categories.

- Category 1: Anyone between the ages of 14 and 18 who is currently enrolled in high school or pursuing a GED in the Greater Lynchburg Area. Students may submit entries themselves or teachers may submit for them.
- Category 2: Anyone between the ages of 18 and 23 who holds a high school degree (or equivalent) and who currently lives (as a resident or a student) in the Greater Lynchburg Area.

Requirements: Poems may be in any form (traditional, free verse, etc.) and should be typed using a standard font 11 or 12 point. Poems may be illustrated, but only the text will be judged. All poems must be the original work of the poet (AI-generated poems are not accepted). Up to three poems per submitter. Poems may not be the same as those submitted to the STEM Contest, although eligible individuals are welcome to submit to both contests using different work. Poems may be submitted by mail or electronically, and as an individual or as a class. Instructions below.

Submissions may be made any time between now and midnight, February 28, 2025. The preferred submission method is using the link: <http://bit.ly/scifestjam>. However, submissions via other methods as described for the SciFest 2025 Poetry Jam contest submission process will also be accepted.

Judging: A panel of three judges will select a winner and an honorable mention in each of the two categories. The winner in each category will receive a cash prize of \$500. The honorable mentions in each category will receive a cash prize of \$100.

Awards Ceremony: The winners and honorable mentions of the James River Watershed Poetry Contest in both categories will be invited to read their poems at an awards ceremony on Friday, March 28, 6:00–7:30 pm. This event is free and open to the public. In addition, the selected poems will be featured on the James River Association website and published along with STEM Contest finalists in a book available for free to all finalists. Winners and honorable mentions will be announced March 21, 2025.

For location and more information about the poetry contests and additional Science Festival Events, visit <http://www.randolphscience.org> or scifest@randolphcollege.edu

For questions specifically about the James River Watershed Poetry Contest GLA, contact Laura-Gray Street, Professor of English at Randolph College, at lstreet@randolphcollege.edu