

I WANT POEMS



Saint Louis, Missouri

V2n1 January 2025

Want to subscribe? Have an event you would like to list? A new book out? Send an email to iwantpoems@gmail.com.

Featured Poetry Readings



SAINT
LOUIS
POETRY
CENTER

Steffan Triplett @ Left Bank Books

January 23, 2025 – 6:00 PM

[RSVP Here](#)

Poetry at the Point

January 28th @ The Focal Point

[Readers: TBA](#)

Open Mics

Spine Indie Bookstore Every Sunday

All Sundays in January: Featured Poets to be announced. Their poetry nights are inclusive and supportive. It is a perfect place to read for the first time, try new material, experiment, or share your published work. Door: 6pm. Poetry: 7:00-10:00

[More Info](#)

Re: Born Reconstituted! Third Tuesday

January 21st: Featuring John Dorsey with a dynamic open mic to follow. Hosted by Matthew Scott Freeman. Heads up! Born will be moving to Joe's Cafe in January

[More Info](#)

New! Poetry on the Rocks Luvwoo Bar

Fresh Launch January 13th: Featuring Danielle Coffyn. Arrive by 7pm to sign up for the open mic. Readings begin at 7:30. Hosted Caiti Quatmann.

[More Info](#)

Wordup! Every Tuesday

Tuesdays in January: Live music, poetry, and comedy in The Grove.

[More Info](#)

New! First Friday Poetry

January 3rd: Featured Poet: Rick Christensen. First Friday of every month at Pages in Pacific (sending some poetry love to those of you across the river).

[More Info](#)

[Read Something]

St. Louis Poet Writes Book

Challenge Accepted

Black Bell, Alison C. Rollins. Copper Canyon (2023).

I've been harboring a secret hope that Jess's *Olio* would set off a small rage for a new, far-ranging concrete poetry that demanded physical interaction from the reader. Rollins has more than answered the call. *Black Bell* doesn't feel so much as inspired by *Olio* as haven been given permission to soar.

My most favorite poems are those that play with diagrams and labels. "We Gave the Clock a Face" begins with a figure of the parts of watch. The lyrical labels then begin with the face, where the crystal is "3 A Magic trick:" with the hands picking that trick up with, "4. The minute hand favors men./5 the hour hand hides the ball./6 the second hand is empty." The poem concludes on a sly note with "31 Do you want more thyme chicken?/ No. Go ahead. You can kill it." Rollins's poems are often funny and devastating – what she gives us is everything but ironic remove.

The centerpiece of the book, the image of bells as a form of confinement, appears as a motif along with its complement, a series of poems and diagrams about Henry "Box" Brown, an enslaved man who shipped himself to freedom from Richmond to Philadelphia in a small box. In these poems, Rollins – and we – explore tangible moments of freedom and release.

As if that were not enough, tucked toward the back of the book, usually a bit of a dead spot,

is a startling riffle of poems that personifies Dante's levels of hell, yet another kind of confinement and release.

Several of the poems are preceded by "Performance Directions" – elaborate instructions that demand direct audience engagement with lists of emotional responses and the idea of confinement (in boxes, envelopes, etc.) of those responses. **In February, Rollins will be returning to St. Louis to read as part of the St. Louis Poetry Center's Observable Series.** I'm dying to see what she does with that.

I Checked It Out

With my personal poetry library spiraling out of space and budget, I've started hitting the collection at the St. Louis Central Public Library. I read these this month and liked them:

To Anacreon in Heaven and Other Poems, Graham Foust (811.6 Foust). It's a collection of beautiful sentences reflecting the speaker's inner world – which seems quite lovely, to be honest. There's no main idea here, and what ends one poem and begins another isn't clear, giving the whole book an ethereal quality.

Human Hours, Catherine Barnett (811.6 Barnett, Catherine). Barnett has a sparkling voice – clear, earthy, and witty. Her humor is not self-deprecating or ironic – she enjoys the absurdity of carrying a torch for John Locke and looking for Beckett on a Jumbotron.

PAST ISSUES AND MORE GOOD
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