

I WANT POEMS

SAINT LOUIS



Saint Louis, Missouri

V3n2 February 2026

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Featured

Observable Readings: Keetje Kuipers & Aaron Coleman



February 16 @ 7p
High Low Reading Room

[More Info](#)



Raise a glass to Irish poetry! Read poems aloud, engage in a bit of craic, and enjoy some Irish delicacies. Bring a favorite poem, a friend, or just yourself (and maybe the next Yeats).

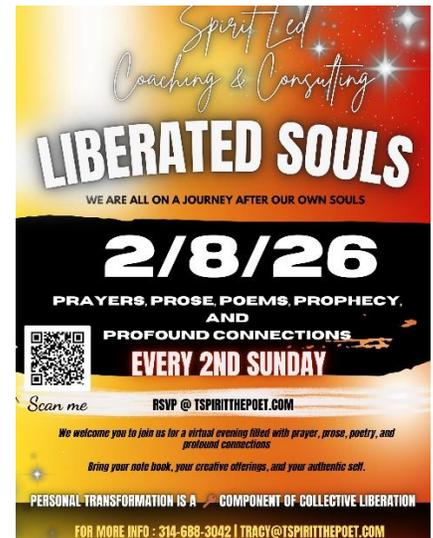
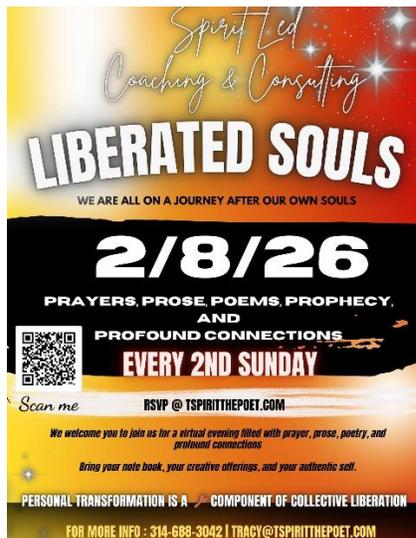
Feb 7 @ 4p – 6p
Kerry Cottage

[More Info](#)

And More

From Tracy “T-Spirit” Stanton

Tracy Stanton might be the hardest working poet in St. Louis right now. In addition to the events shown below (you can register for her events [here](#)), she is accepting poetry submissions **from artists who believe that art, culture, and narrative power are foundational aspects of connection, liberation, and revolution** for Spitting & Politicking. You can find out more about becoming a part of the movement [here](#).



From the Washington University in St. Louis English Department

Visiting Hurst Professor Liz Howard Reading

Liz Howard is a poet, editor, and teacher. Her work explores Anishinaabe ways of knowing, cosmology, ecology, and the liberatory potentials of language as art. Her first collection, *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent*, won the 2016 Griffin Poetry Prize and was shortlisted for the 2015 Governor General’s Award for Poetry. Her second collection, *Letters in a Bruised Cosmos*, was shortlisted for the 2022 Griffin Poetry Prize and the Trillium Poetry Prize. The reading will be followed by a reception.

February 19 @ 6p
Washington University’s Hurst Lounge
[More Info](#)

Visiting Hurst Professor Hanif Abdurraqib Reading

Hanif Abdurraqib is a poet, essayist, and cultural critic from Columbus, Ohio. His books include *The Crown Ain't Worth Much* (Button Poetry 2016); *Vintage Sadness* (Big Luck 2017); *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us* (Two Dollar Radio 2017); *Go Ahead In The Rain: Notes To A Tribe Called Quest* (University of Texas 2019); *A Fortune For Your Disaster* (Tin House 2019); and *A Little Devil In America* (Random House 2021). The reading will be followed by a reception.

February 26 @ 6p

Washington University's Hurst Lounge

[More Info](#)

Tanner Olson

A powerful evening of poetry, storytelling, and music celebrating the release of Tanner Olson's book, *Getting Through What You're Going Through*.

February 19 @ 7p

Lutheran South High School

[More Info](#)

Wednesday Club Centennial Original Poetry Contest

Entry Deadline: February 1

Eligibility:

- Adults over 18; living within a 50-mile radius of Saint Louis.
- Any person having won first prize in the contest twice within the last five years is ineligible for further cash awards but may be cited for honors.

Rules:

- Submit TWO TYPED COPIES of TWO that have never been published or won an award. One poem per 8 1/2x11 page.
- Sign with pseudonym ONLY.
- Type real name, address, email address, and telephone number on a separate piece of paper and enclose with poems. No manuscripts returned.

Workshops



TINY POSTCARDS
counseling & creative arts

Poetry Workshop Facilitated by Holly Sinclair: Fall Session

Feb 4 @ 4p – 6p
@ Tiny Postcards
4700 Virginia Ave, 63111

[More Info](#)



Babler Poetry Society

February 7 @ 9:45a – 12p,
@ Visitor and Education Center
Forest Park
5595 Grand Dr, 63112



Sunday Workshop:

Keetje Kuipers and Aaron Coleman
February 15 @ 1:30p – 4p
@ High Low
3301 Washington Ave, 63103

Note: Submissions due Feb 12

[More Info](#)

Open Mics

<p>Heavy Anchor Last Wednesdays</p> <p>February 25: Hosted by Kyle Brandt-Lubart and Bobby Stevens. Sign up at 7p; readers begin at 8.</p> <p>More Info</p>	<p>Re: Born Reconstituted! TikTok Tavern Third Tuesdays</p> <p>February 17: Hosted by Matthew Scott Freeman and featuring Chris Parr and Carol Cox, followed by a spirited open mic. Starts at 7p.</p> <p>More Info</p>	<p>Spellbound: Open Poetry Mic 1st and 3rd Sundays</p> <p>February 1 and 15 From 7p – 10p at Lady Layre on Morgan Ford.</p> <p>More Info</p>
<p>Wordup! Every Tuesday</p> <p>Tuesdays in February: Live music, poetry, and comedy in The Grove.</p> <p>More Info</p>	<p>The Lyrics and Laughs Interlude Ground Sharp Studios</p> <p>Mondays: Join hosts Artiz of Wordz, Gigi, & The Cosplay Poet at the soft opening of their new mic space from 7p – 10p.</p> <p>More Info</p>	<p>Poetry & Rage</p> <p>February 4: Featuring Artist Love, Molly Pearson, Metaphorical RJ. @Tschuss on Cherokee. 7p.</p> <p>More Info</p>
<p>Community Poetry Open Mic Night Third Wednesdays</p> <p>February 18: Family-friendly open-mic Community Poetry Open-Mic night. Dogwood Social House, 2nd Floor. 5:30p - 8:00p.</p> <p>More Info</p>	<p>Lyrical Therapy @ Urb Arts</p> <p>February 6: Hosted every first Friday at Urb Arts, the “open mic and chill” features performances of spoken word poetry, live music, and hip hop.</p> <p>More Info</p>	<p>ARTICA Open Mic Night Greenfinch Theater Monthly</p> <p>TBA: An evening of creativity, connection, and spontaneous art-making for poets and other artists. From 6p – 10p.</p> <p>More Info</p>



<p>PAST ISSUES AND MORE GOOD STUFF ON THE WEBSITE:</p> <p>HTTPS://IWANTPOEMS.WIXSITE.COM/I-WANT-POEMS</p>	<p>FOLLOW US ON BLUE SKY</p> <p>@iwantpoemsstl.bsky.social</p>
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Read Something

***Red Wilderness*, Aaron Coleman (Four Way Books 2025)**

Red Wilderness is Coleman's love song to his ancestors. The poems begin with an unnamed great and his decision to choose life+ freedom chosen as a soldier during the Civil War. The erasure+collage poem promises the "always felt grievance" will be handed down through the generations -- but then takes a turn to predict this particular descendant, a poet who "after spring and summer suffered from life ... and desired *esprit corps*" with the ancestors. This history is taken back up in the poem "Battle Flag: 'Strike for God and [...]" which approaches the 25th United States Colored Regiment from both a scholarly stance and from the wild serendipity of running into an elder flying a replica in Philadelphia in 2022. When the reenactor explains its iconography as thus: "When enemies/ saw this here white woman and black man together on this flag/ they'd lose their minds or at least be/distracted long enough to be killed" – I mean, *Esprit corps*, indeed.

There are so many other grandparents here: Ma Shug, who "opened/all of them so also me to/her wilderness called love"; Grandmother Coleman watching her man fly to her across the Texarkana sky in "Sunday"; a shared memory with Great Grandmother Harris in "The Bright River We Keep." The most compelling of these is the poem "til I get back". An emotionally complex exchange between the father and great grandfather holds both threat and tenderness in razor-thin tension, exploring a "bud of simple violence" in which the two generations learn "the quiet of each other". Each of these poems shines with the patina of the personal legends passed around at family reunions and Thanksgiving dinners; each shines like a gift polished by many tellings.

If I had to name a favorite poem, it would be "American Football", in which the subject is the ancestor as descendent and descendant as ancestor. The progression from the speaker's "precise violence" to "calloused hands relaxed/at my sides, tenderness left open" is both startling and hopeful.

Other poems in *Red Wilderness* recall past lovers ("We Lay Our Fear in a Wicker Basket" is a killer title just begging to be a prompt), notable influences, and lush, menacing southern landscapes. But mostly it is a life-affirming treatise that reminds us that we all come from somewhere and belong here.

Aaron Coleman is an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan, and formerly at Washington University. The Saint Louis Poetry Center is welcoming him back this month for the Observable Reading on February 16.