

POETRY OUT LOUD STATE CHAMPION 2010



First Place in the Poetry Out Loud State Finals went to Youssef Biaz, a junior at Auburn High School

Friday, February 26, 2010, students converged in Montgomery from high schools all over the state to compete in the state final of the [Poetry Out Loud](#) competition. Twenty one students, their teachers and parents arrived at the Leila Barlow Theatre, Tullibody Fine Arts Center on the campus of [Alabama State University](#) to recite their poems. These students, already winners in their own regions, gave moving renditions of poetry from well-know poets such as Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, and Edgar Allen Poe. The students also performed their own original poems about truth and friendship, personal identity and tragic life experiences. It was an evening filled with laughter, thoughtfulness, and tears, proving to all that Alabama students have the power to speak with voices very much worth hearing.

First place in the Poetry Out Loud National Competition went to Youssef Biaz, a junior at [Auburn High School](#). Youssef is a student of Mr. Davis Thompson. This was Youssef's first year participating in the Poetry Out Loud competition. He will be traveling to Washington D.C. in April, all expenses paid, to represent Alabama in the National Finals. Yusuf's family and friends were there to celebrate his victory. **Caitlin Varquez, an 9th grade student at St. Bernard Preparatory School in Cullman came in second place.** Caitlin is a student of Ms. Stella Couch.

In the Original Poetry Competition, Caitlin (Varquez) placed first, with her poem entitled "November 2, 2009". Second place went to Nicole Blackman, a Junior at [Spanish Fort High School](#) , reading her poem "The Aha! Moment of Satisfaction".

Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program presented by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation in partnership with state arts councils nationwide.

It encourages the mastery of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic competition of high schools across the country. Poetry Out Loud uses a pyramid structure. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to a school-wide competition, regional competitions, the state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, D.C.

The winners of the state finals of Poetry Out Loud are awarded \$200, and their schools receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The second place winners receive \$100, and their schools each receive \$200 for their school libraries. Winners in the Original Poetry competition receive \$200 for first place, \$100, for second place, as well as books that encourage their independent writing. The monetary awards for the Original Poetry Competition are provided by the Alabama Writers' Forum (www.writersforum.org). The Poetry Out Loud National Finals will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion.

For additional information about this event, please contact Diana Green, Arts in Education Program Manager, Alabama State Council on the Arts: 334/242-4076 Ext. 241 or Diana.green@arts.alabama.gov. or Donna Russell, Executive Director, Alabama Alliance for Arts Education, 334/269-1435 or aaae@bellsouth.net



Caitlin Varquez, Original Poetry Winner