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The BlackBerry Peach Poetry Awards (BBP3) for written and spoken poetry have been chosen for 2017. The awards are given for the best written and spoken word poets who presented their work in written and oral format and were judged based on the quality of their spoken as well as written poetry. This is a major, new national contest sponsored by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS). Winners will be invited to perform at the NFSPS national convention on July 1, 2017 in Fort Worth, Texas. The work of the six winners will be presented in written and spoken format in a book to be released in June of 2017.

The winners are Kari Gunter-Seymour (Ohio), Susan Chambers (Minnesota), Rosemerry Trommer (Colorado), Zachary Kluckman (New Mexico), Josh Conklin (New Hampshire), and David Bond (Illinois). The winners were chosen from entries originating in eighteen states, with Florida, Texas, New Mexico and Illinois leading the number of poets who submitted written and oral versions of 4 poems electronically through *Submittable, Inc.* Hakim Bellamy, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, a highly regarded poet in both written and spoken word poetry judged this year's contest, choosing the six winners in the spring of 2017.

This is the first year of this competition and the first book published with the winners work in audio accessible through *Soundcloud*. Videos of their performances can be viewed on *YOUTUBE* beginning in July, 2017.

The tradition of "performance" poetry goes back into pre-history. Poetry was performed "onstage" long before it was captured on the page. Competitive performance poetry was part of the ancient Greek Olympics. With the advent of printing, poetry moved increasingly to the page and classroom, but since the 1970s, there has been a resurgence in oral presentation, including *hip-hop* (or *rap*) and incorporating other genres such as *slam* (which reintroduced competition) and *spoken word*, the catchall term for any kind of poetry recited aloud. In recent decades, poetry has been blended with music and many other art forms. This "trend" is becoming a cultural mainstay and the genre most embraced by youth--case in point, the hip-hop musical "Hamilton," which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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