



KEY WEST

ART & HISTORICAL SOCIETY™

Annual Tennessee Williams Poetry & Short Story Contests Prospectus

OVERVIEW

In celebration of Tennessee Williams's 115th Birthday, the Tennessee Williams Museum in Key West is pleased to present its annual poetry and short story contests.

Although Williams traveled extensively throughout the United States and Europe, he found his greatest professional success, and personal happiness, while living and writing in Key West. During nearly four decades on the island, he created many of his most enduring works, including *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

In keeping with the 2026 Festival theme, all contest submissions must reference Tennessee Williams's seminal work *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in some manner. Poets and prose writers are encouraged to interpret this requirement loosely. References may include, but are not limited to, Williams during the writing of the play, one or more of its characters, or actors and actresses associated with the stage or film adaptations.

The entry fee is \$20 per submission. Each entrant may submit one poem and/or one short story. First-place winners in each category will receive a \$500 cash award; second-place winners will receive \$250.

Winners will be announced on March 26, 2026, during a special birthday celebration at the Tennessee Williams Museum and will be published online on the Tennessee Williams Key West Festival website.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

All poetry and short story entries must be received by **11:59 p.m. (ET) on March 1, 2026**.

- The contest is open to United States residents only.
- A \$20.00 non-refundable submission fee is required per entry.
- Each entrant may submit one poem or one short story.
- All submissions must be written in English.
- Entries must be **original, unpublished work** and may not have appeared in print, digital, or online publications.
- Writers may choose to reference Williams, his family, one of his characters, or an actor/actress who starred in his plays or films.

- **Poetry submissions: Maximum of 30 lines.**
- **Short Story submissions: Between 1,500 to 4,000 words.**
- Submissions must be uploaded as .PDF or .DOC files only.
- All entries must be submitted online via the official entry form at: www.twfest.org/contests or www.kwahs.org/tennessee-williams-festival
- All submissions are final. Refunds are not provided for disqualified, withdrawn or non-winning entries.

AWARDS

First and second place are awarded in each contest. First place winners receive a \$500 prize while second place receives \$250.

Winning entries will be published on the Tennessee Williams Key West Festival website beginning on April 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

RECEPTION & AWARDS CEREMONY

Join us at the Tennessee Williams Museum, **March 26, 2026, 5-7 PM** for a reception to honor Tennessee Williams on his 115th birthday.

Winners will be honored and a short excerpt from their story will be read along with the poems.

All participating writers, friends, family, and community members are invited to attend.

MEET THE JUDGES

SHORT STORY

- Anne Shaver: Retired Tennessee Williams Museum Founding Board Member.
- Dr. Suzanne Wood: Retired Professor and University Dean with degrees in English and Comparative Literature.
- Joanna Brady Schmida: Local Author and former Journalist with *Key West Citizen*.

POETRY

- Dr. Emily Schulten-Weekley: English Professor at the College of the Florida Keys, Key West Poet Laureate, and Author.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Writers retain ownership of submitted short story or poem.
- By submitting it to the Key West Art & Historical Society for publication or for inclusion in the contest, should it rank among winners or receive an honorable mention, you give the Society permission to publish it online on its website and the Tennessee Williams Key West Festival website.
- The KWAHS will not sell your individual short story or poem or have any further rights over it beyond the purposes listed on the prospectus.
- Once the contest is complete, writers can publish the work as they deem fit.