

Legacy Online 2025 Poetry Competition

Editorial guidelines

1. The poet's name must not appear on the poem itself. You must give your real name when you register your profile (as found within your South African identity document), and this is the name that will be publicised in relation to your poem should it be selected for any prizes (pseudonyms and alternate names are not facilitated).
2. Poems should not exceed 30 lines in length (excluding title).
3. Any style of poetry is open for consideration – free verse, haiku, sonnet rhymed, unrhymed, etc.
4. Entrants should see the theme "Sleepless Nights" as a guideline, not a rule. The poems need not be about a sleepless night of a specific person but can be any poem with a literal or metaphorical sense. Poems can express the theme in any way that he/she feels, however, we explicitly forbid poems which:
 - a) are sexual or erotic in nature.
 - b) are politically inflammatory.
 - c) contain hate speech or disparage or defame any individual, group, or organisation.
 - d) contain swearing or blasphemy.
5. Poems must be the original work of the entrant. Entrants submitting plagiarised work may be blocked from participating in the competition. LEGACY ONLINE will not be liable for any damages arising from litigation around plagiarised poems that have not been identified by the competition's editors (these should be reported to the editors via the website's Contact us form and will be removed as soon as reasonably possible).
6. The poem is assessed as originally submitted only. No subsequent editorial amendment or resubmission is permitted. No correspondence or discussion about amendments will be entered into.
7. Entries must not have been published in print, on websites, public areas of social networking sites, broadcast, featured among the winners of another competition or submitted elsewhere for consideration. This includes print and online magazines, anthologies, websites and even programmes for a church service or wedding, for example. A breach of this rule will result in immediate disqualification.
8. You may submit poems in any one of the 11 official South African written languages, including Afrikaans. If your poem is not in English/Afrikaans, an English translation of your poem would be appreciated, but is not compulsory.
9. Entrants may submit poems translated into English, providing the source text is their own original work and has not been published in print, on websites, public areas of social networking sites, broadcast, featured among the winners of another competition or submitted elsewhere for consideration.

Evaluation criteria

10. Poems will be judged on the following qualities:
 - a) **Technical excellence:** The attention that is given to detail in all linguistic aspects, including grammar and spelling.
 - b) **Structure:** The organisation and structure with which thoughts are presented.

- c) **Rhyme and meter:** When used, rhyme and meter must work together with the sense of the poem to create a pleasing effect.
- d) **Assonance and alliteration:** Good use of sound to create mood and effect.
- e) **Choice of words and readability:** The effective use of words, with attention to sound and nuance to convey meaning, is important, as well as the use of descriptive language and imagery.
- f) **Form and flow:** The shape that the poem takes on paper and whether there is a natural, effortless progression in thought, tempo and pace.
- g) **Emotive power:** How poignant, expressive and compelling the poem is, and its ability to move, touch and inspire. Avoid sentimentality.
- h) **Overall impact:** The poet W.H. Auden's definition of poetry as "memorable speech" still stands. Does your poem have the potential to become engrained in someone's memory?
- i) **Entertainment or educational value:** How engaging, stimulating, engrossing and provocative the poem is, and whether it is informative, useful, enlightening or educational.
- j) **Originality:** The effort that the poet has made to conceptualise unusual phrases and novel ideas.
- k) **Refinement:** The expert touch, finesse, sophistication, savoir faire, grace and flair with which the poet endows the poem.