Sonnet or Not

Cannon Poets Poetry Competition 2026

Cannon Poets are pleased to announce this year's popular ***Sonnet or Not*** Poetry competition. You are invited to write a poem or poems of just fourteen lines in length. You may choose any one of the traditional sonnet forms, or experiment with alternative 14 line forms perhaps using half rhyme, metarhyme or blank verse.

Prizes:

First Prize: **£500**; **Second Prize: £250; Third Prize: £150 and up to 5 Commended Prizes: £10.** All prize winners also receive a free one year subscription to *The Cannon's Mouth* in which the prizewinning poems will be published.

Special Offer:

Submit at least one poem with the correct fee to become eligible for one year subscription to our magazine, *The Cannon's Mouth,* discounted from the usual £20.00 to £18.00 [UK] or from £30 to £28 [outside UK].

Entries:

An entry will consist of one 14 line poem. Please ensure that each entry has its own title. There is no limit to the number of entries providing the fees are paid. The entry fee is £6.50 for the first poem and £3.50 for each additional poem submitted, but **the third poem submitted will be free**. You can enter **by post** using this entry form or **on line:** go to: www.cannonpoets.org.uk then go to the **competitions** page and follow the instructions. **Please carefully read the Rules of Entry overleaf.**

This year's sole **Judge** is **Olga Dermott-Bond.**

Olga will judge all eligible poems submitted anonymously.



Olga Dermott-Bond has published two pamphlets and her first full collection Frieze, is published by Nine Arches Press. Her poetry has won a variety of national and international prizes, including the BBC Proms poetry, Welshpool and Strokestown competitions, and she was highly commended in Forward Poetry prizes 2024. She is currently a managing editor for Irish poetry journal Dodging the Rain and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

The closing date for entries is 31st October 2026

Sonnet or Not 2026 Poetry Competition

GENERAL

1. The closing date of the competition is midnight (UK time), **31st October 2026**.
2. The competition is open to anyone aged 18 or over at the time of entering.
3. International entries are welcome but all entries must be in English.
4. Under no circumstances can alterations be submitted once poems have been entered, but an amended/ improved version could be submitted on payment of the appropriate fee.
5. The judge's decision is final and neither the judge nor Cannon Poets will enter into any correspondence.
6. No person involved in the judging process is eligible to enter the Competition.
7. No entrant may win more than one prize.

POEMS

8. There is no limit on the number of entries a single entrant can make.
9. Entries will not be returned, so please keep a copy.
10. All entries are judged anonymously and the poet's name must not appear on the poem itself.
11. All poems must be in English, have a title and must have 14 lines (excluding title).
12. Entries can be on any subject.
13. Poems must be the original work of the entrant.
14. Entries must not have been published, self-published, published on a website or broadcast.

FEES

15. The first poem entered costs **£6.50**. Subsequent entries in the same submission cost **£3.50** per poem except he **third poem** submitted will be **free** (applies to your first submission of three or more poems only).
16. Payments must be made in £ sterling. Entries accompanied by payment in a currency other than £ sterling will not be accepted.

ENTERING ON LINE

17. To enter on line go to **www.cannonpoets.org.uk/competitions** and follow the instructions.
18. Payment and submissions may be made directly from the site by Paypal or credit/debit card.
19. There is no facility for submitting by separate email.

ENTERING BY POST

20. Each poem should be on a separate sheet of A4 paper, typed or word processed in no smaller than 12 point typeface, and must include ONLY the poem and its title. Do not include your name.
21. A completed entry form and cheque/postal order [£ Stirling] for the correct fee must accompany all postal submissions. Photocopied entrance forms are acceptable.
22. Cheque/postal orders should be made payable to **Cannon Poets**. Please write your name and phone number on the back of cheques.
23. If you would like confirmation that your postal entry has been received and/or notification of results, please include a stamped addressed envelope/postcard with your entry. See bottom of entry form. Telephone or email confirmation of receipt is not available. If you supply your email address, you will be notified of the results.
24. The postal address is: **Cannon Poets, 22 Margaret Grove, Harborne, Birmingham. B17 9JH**

WINNERS

25. Prize winners will be notified by 31st December 2026
26. Authors of the winning poems, by entering the competition, grant Cannon Poets the right to publish and/or broadcast their poem for one year from date of presentation. Winning poems will be published in *The Cannon's Mouth* and later on the Cannon Poets website. Use of the poems elsewhere during this time is subject to acknowledgement of the poem's success in the Cannon Poets *Sonnet or Not* Competition. Copyright of each poem stays with the author.

Cannon Poets website: **www.cannonpoets.org.uk**

ENTRY FORM Cannon Poets 2026 Poetry Competition

First name	**OFFICE USE ONLY**
Surname or Family Name	Author Number
Contact Address	No. of poems submitted
Postcode	Amount paid £
Telephone (daytime)	Eligible
Email [for automatic notification of results]	Not Eligible [Reason]
Title of Poem	**First entry £6.50, additional poems £3.50 except third entry - free**
	£ 6.50
	£
	Third entry free
	£
The Cannon's Mouth special offer subscription* @ £18.00 [UK] -usually £20 or £28.00 [outside the UK] -usually £30	£
TOTAL	£

Method of payment: Cheque [£ Sterling only] [ ] / Postal Order [payable to Cannon Poets] [ ] / Cash [ ] / Other [ ] [***tick one***]. **Do not send cash by post.**

I give consent for information supplied by me to be used for the purposes of Cannon Poets. I also understand that Cannon Poets will only use my information for the purpose for which it is supplied unless prior consent is obtained. I have read and understood Cannon Poets Privacy Statement. I confirm I am aged 18 years or over.

Signed: ……Date: ……..

[ ] Please **acknowledge my entry** by post [Endorsed SAE / postcard enclosed.]

[ ] Please **supply a list of winning entries** by post [SAE enclosed.]

*Changes to *The Cannon's Mouth:*

We are reducing the number of issues per year. If you are an existing subscriber, or become a subscriber before the end of September 2026, you will still be entitled to four issues. From then, *The Cannon's Mouth* will be 'four-monthly' rather than 'quarterly'.

Where did you hear about this competition?	Please tick
• Direct contact from Cannon Poets	
• *The Cannon's Mouth* Magazine	
• Cannon Poets Website	
• Orbis Competition Bulletin	
• Entry form from Public Library	
• Other [please specify]	

Cannon Poets

Established in 1983, Cannon Poets meet by-monthly in person at the Moseley Exchange, Birmingham and on Zoom on alternate months. If you would like to join in with the meetings, please contact Cannon Poets Honorary Secretary Martin Underwood:

martin@cannonpoets.org.uk

Cannon Poets also arrange workshops, readings and produce a quarterly magazine, *The Cannon's Mouth*. To view some of the previous competition winners and see more information about the activities of Cannon Poets, please see our website:

www.cannonpoets.org.uk

Enter and pay on line - or post the completed entry form with poems and correct fee to:

Cannon Poets,
22 Margaret Grove,
Harborne,
Birmingham
B17 9JH