

Poetry Scavenger Hunt in County Parks

How to Participate

- 1. Read the poem.** Take note of the images and descriptions in the poem. How does the poem make you feel? What overall impressions does it give you?
- 2. Snap a picture of the poem – or write it down in a notepad.**
- 3. Now take a walk through the park.** Slow down, pay attention. Notice what is there. Are there ants crawling on a fallen seed pod? Is there a burst of purple in the victory garden? Is there a sweet little creek or the moody suck and pull of an ocean? What about trees? Are they gnarly and old, or slender and lithe? Are the leaves dancing? What about the wind, is it toying with the clouds, pushing them around like paper boats? Are there boats? Or birds? Is there a path? Where will it take you? Notice rocks and stones and pebbles. And bugs! Is there a bench or a table, or somewhere you might want to spread a blanket and read a book? There are so many things to see and hear and touch (and smell). What draws your attention? With so much to notice, isn't it cool that you just happened to find this one small whorl of knothole (that looks like an eye) in the tree bark of a dying oak? Why do you think that leapt out to you from the cacophony of everything else? What you notice is unique to you. (That's what makes us who we are).
- 4. Reread the poem.** Let the poem sit with you. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to interpret a poem. How you feel about the poem is special to you.
- 5. Look around.** Take your imagination on a walk. What is in the park that relates to the poem? Let your creative mind wander. You don't need to look for anything specific. If there's a flower in the poem, perhaps you will take a picture of a loved one's beautiful smile because that reminds you of a flower. Don't see any mountains? What do you see that is mountain-like? What captures the majesty of a mountain, or the challenge of climbing a mountain (maybe a play structure, or a swing)? Remember – this is an interpretative scavenger hunt. You are not looking for anything specific. In this scavenger hunt, you decide what is relevant TO YOU based on the poem and your interpretation. Be artistic, inventive, whimsical. Have fun!
- 6. Take pictures of what you have found that relates to the poem.** You can also draw in a sketch book (remember this is interpretive).

7. **Upload your photos (or your sketches) as a post to your Instagram account and add @poetryintheparks as a collaborator.**

<https://www.instagram.com/poetryintheparks/?hl=en>

(Important Note: The very last photo should be a photo of the poem sign, so we know which park you're at). Also, while Instagram allows up to 20 photos, we suggest keeping your entries for a particular poem/park to no more than 10.

No Instagram account? No worries. Upload your entry to this Google form and we'll post it for you: <https://forms.gle/yb66iXCE8pjTmQf87>

8. **That's it! We'll pick the winner.** A judging panel will decide who wins the scavenger hunt for each poem/park based on creativity, imagination, and whatever else strikes our fancy. The winner for that poem gets a prize from the associated sponsor - a gift certificate, an experience, or product. The winners also get cool swag from County Parks. And of course, bragging rights! The winning entries will be posted on the Parks Department website (here) with a note from the judges about why they made that choice.

Q&A

How many times may I enter? 16 – once for each Park/Poem. Maybe make a day of it! Bring a picnic!

What if I'm not on social media? No worries – see note above on step 7. You can enter through this Google form: <https://forms.gle/yb66iXCE8pjTmQf87>

What if I can't find the poem in the park? Keep looking. We didn't hide them. Take a little stroll and you'll find it! Maybe it's up by the baseball field, or the pickleball courts. Maybe it's further down the path by the creek or by the garden?

What if there is a spider in the poem and I can't find a spider? Ask yourself, what does the spider represent in the poem? Fragility? Strength? What else is fragile and strong? Nothing needs to be literal or exact. Creative leaps are welcome.

Do all County Parks have poems? No, only the ones listed on the Poetry Scavenger Hunt webpage. Which poems are at which park? Surprise - you'll have to go to the park to find out!

How many winners will there be ? There will be one winner for each Poem/ Park. So, sixteen.

How will you contact the winners? We'll send you a message through your Instagram account (or provided contact information) along with posting a list of the winners. Check back in June!

When does the scavenger hunt run through?
You have until May 31st to upload your entries.

Who are the Sponsors? They are the coolest, most wonderful businesses in Santa Cruz County because they support poetry *and* the arts *and* the parks! We love them. Please go tell them thanks for making this wonderful event happen.

What are the prizes?
You will receive a \$50 gift certificate or other item from a sponsoring business, and some swag from County Parks.

Where can I see the other entries? On the @poetryintheparks Instagram site: <https://www.instagram.com/poetryintheparks/>
Go check 'em out. Like the ones you think should win!

Who are the poets? Mostly poets with a connection to Santa Cruz County (with a few exceptions). You can read all their bios when you click on the poem!

Who is behind all these poems in the parks? This is joint creative venture between the Santa Cruz County Parks Department and the Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate, Nancy Miller Gomez. Special thanks to Naomi Garrett, UCSC intern extraordinaire, and the amazing student design team of Simon Ellefson and Nami Brown of the Rising Voices Youth Poetry Collective.