L.J. SYSKO

ljsysko.com

EDUCATION

M.F.A. Creative Writing (poetry), New England College. June 2006.
Graduate thesis: "The Vestigial 'I': Confession & Pathos Subverted by Metaphor in Anne Sexton's 'You, Doctor Martin' and Sylvia Plath's 'Tulips.'"

B.A. English, Lafayette College. June 1997.
Summa Cum Laude; Phi Beta Kappa; H. MacKnight Black Poetry Prize. Judge: Gerald Stern. 1997; Gilbert Prize in English. 1997; Academy of American Poets' Jean Corrie Poetry Prize. 1996; Rexroth Prize in German. 1994.

The Lawrenceville School. June 1993.

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

THE DAUGHTER OF MAN. Miller Williams Poetry Series. University of Arkansas Press. 2023.
Audiobook, narrated by author. October 2023.

BATTLEDORE. New Women's Voices Chapbook Series #131. Finishing Line Press: 2017.

Literary Journal Publications: Poetry

"Night Sweats," *SWWIM Every Day*. Forthcoming February 5, 2027.
"Please make your Venmo private." and "I've been reading too much Regency Romance."
Electric Lit: The Commuter. Forthcoming January 13, 2027.
"Car Sick," Zócalo Public Square. October 16, 2026.
"Middle Age has a branding problem."*RHINO*. 50th anniversary issue. June 2026.
"The Daughter of Man: A Conversation with L.J. Sysko and a Portfolio of Poetry," *Tupelo Quarterly.* TQ29. March 31, 2023.
"Landscape with Wisteria," *Mississippi Review*. Volume 47.4. Summer 2022.
"M.I.L.F.," Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation. 2022.
"What A Warrior Whispers" triptych, *Degenerate Art*. Issue A. 2022.
"Paula" and "Everything's Elegy," *Mom Egg Review*. Volume 20.
May 2022.
"Ball Game," "Relational Identity," and "Flying Fish," *Painted Bride Quarterly*. Issue 101.
May 2022.
"Pockabook," *Missouri Review* "Poem of the Week." March 14, 2022.
"I'm addicted to meet-cutes.," *Limp Wrist*. #6. March 2022.
"Kristallnacht," *Radar Poetry*. Issue 32. February 2022.
"Venus and Minerva in Quarantine" and "Fluorescent Mammals," *Moist Poetry Journal*.
December 22 & 24, 2021.
"I'm undone," *SWWIM Every Day*. December 6, 2021.
"Trees and paint aren't different," *SWWIM Every Day*. May 7, 2021.
"I have a friend who wants to be buried," *Stirring*. April 1, 2021.

"Self-portrait with Bubble Gum," *Voicemail Poems*. Summer 2020.
"Barnegat Light," *The Pinch*. Issue 39.2. August 2019.
"Sitz Bath," *Mom Egg Review*. 2016.
"Checkout," Amazon's *Day One*. 2014.
"I was busy," *Texas Poetry Calendar*. 2014.
"Razor Cut" and "Ode to Botox," *Sweet: A Literary Confection*. 2013.
"Pearlescent Omnivore" and "Trailhead," *Terrain*. October 1, 2012.
"Burn," *New York Quarterly*. 2011, 2010.
"Spider Goat" and "Motorcycle Ride," *5AM*. 2010, 2009;
"Volcano," *Ploughshares*. 2009.

Literary Journal Publications: Non-Fiction

Be Kind Rewind: Where Poetry Meets Proust, an interview series by L.J. Sysko,Tupelo Quarterly. TQ32-TQ36. May 2024-ongoing.
"100th Birthday Tribute to Gerald Stern, edited and introduced by L.J. Sysko with contributors Toi Derricotte, Ross Gay, Edward Hirsch, Anne Marie Macari, Campbell McGrath, Mihaela Moscaliuc, Yesenia Montilla, Barbara Ras, Carey Salerno, David Stern, and Michael Waters," *Tupelo Quarterly.* TQ36. October 2025.
Inside Lane, *The Georgia Review*. Summer 2023.
"Tailoring Truth," Planned Parenthood of Delaware blog. 2018.
"Review of Lee Upton's *Undid in the Land of Undone*," *Rattle.* 2009.

Literary Anthology Publications

"Please make your Venmo private.," *FORM & FLEXIBILITY: A BOOK OF CONTEMPORARY POETIC FORMS*. Small Harbor Press. Forthcoming 2027.
"What a Warrior Whispers," *EKPHRASTIC POETRY: AN INTRODUCTION.* Princeton University Press. Forthcoming 2027.
"To the lunatic on the debate stage," *POETS FOR HARRIS: A POETRY ANTHOLOGY*. Viewless Wings Press. 2024.
"The Yassification of Dolly Parton," *LET ME SAY THIS: A DOLLY PARTON POETRY ANTHOLOGY*. Madville Publishing. 2023.
"Razor Cut" and "Ode to Botox," *ALL OF US, SWEET: THE FIRST FIVE YEARS, POETRY 2008-2013. Sweet Publications. 2014.*
"Just Try," *BEST NEW POETS*. University of Virginia Press. 2013.

Multimedia Publications:

"Fleet as Time" lyrics commissioned by Zerrin Agabigum Martin; musical composer Daniel Elder. February 2020.

TEACHING AND SELECTED PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Director of Executive Communications. 2021-Ongoing.
Strategic, crisis, and speech communications for President of Delaware State University. Dover, Delaware.

Secondary Level English Teacher and English Department Chair. 2004-2020.
Tower Hill School. Wilmington, Delaware.

Timothy B. Golding Endowed Chair in English. 2016-2018.

- Presided over 13-teacher department, four budgets, and 28 independent English literature and writing curricula grades 5-12.
- Taught Advanced English Seminars: "Shakespeare," "Modern American Poetry," "Creative Writing," "NY, NY!," "Fire and the Frying Pan," "Tough Love," and "The Laurel Society: Honors Thesis in English" as well as English 9 and 10.
- Committee service: Strategic Planning, Middle States and PAIS Accreditation, Upper School Programming, Student Life, Admissions, Faculty Fund to Aid Students, Student Government, New Faculty Orientation, January Term, Disciplinary.
- Commencement speaker, 2012; Baccalaureate speaker, 2014.

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

Fellowships:

Delaware Division of the Arts, Established Artist Fellow in Poetry. 2024.
Virginia Center for Creative Arts, Fellow. 2022. (Also 2021.)
Palm Beach Poetry Festival. Thomas Lux Scholar."Positively Negative: Developing Mystery in Poems Via Negative Capability." Leader: Diane Seuss. 2022.
Delaware Division of the Arts, Emerging Artist Fellow in Poetry. 2010.

Awards and Honors:

The Pinch Literary Awards, poetry finalist. 2026. (Also 2019.)
The Georgia Review Prose Prize, finalist. Judge: Jennine Capó Crucet. 2023.
Scotti Merrill Award for poetry, runner-up. Key West Literary Seminar. Judge: Billy Collins. 2023.
Miller Williams Poetry Series, first finalist. University of Arkansas Press. Judge: Patricia Smith. 2023.
Pushcart Prize, nominee. 2024. (Also 2023.)
Frontier Poetry New Voices Poetry Contest, longlist. 2022.
The Robinson Jeffers Tor House Prize for Poetry, finalist. Judge: Forrest Gander. 2022.
Mississippi Review Prize, poetry finalist. 2022.
The Missouri Review Jeffrey E. Smith Editors' Prize, poetry finalist. 2022.
Sandy Crimmins National Prize in Poetry, finalist. 2022.
Thomas Lux Scholar, Palm Beach Poetry Festival, scholarship recipient. 2022.
Copper Nickel Press, Jake Adam York Prize, finalist. 2021.
Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, finalist. 2021.
New Millennium Writing Awards 51, poetry honorable mention. 2021.
Marsh Hawk Press Poetry Prize, finalist. 2021.
Fish Publishing Poetry Prize, short list. Judge: Billy Collins. 2021. (Also 2020.)
The Bellingham Review Annie Dillard Award for Creative Nonfiction, finalist. 2019.
The Fourth River Folio Contest, poetry finalist. 2019.
The Pinch Literary Awards, prose finalist. 2019.
Soundings East Claire Keyes Poetry Prize, finalist. 2018.
Zoetrope All-Story Short Fiction Contest, honorable mention. Judge: Anthony Marra. 2016.
Finishing Line Press New Women's Voices Chapbook Competition, finalist. 2016.
San Diego State University Writers' Conference Choice Award in middle grade fiction. 2016.
West Chester Poetry Conference, scholarship recipient. 2016.
Delaware Division of the Arts, opportunity grant award. 2013.

Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Memorial Foundation Award. Honorable Mention. 2011 (Also 2009, 2004).

READINGS, CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

Writers.com. "Surprise! in Poetry: Building Oomph into Your Practice." Craft workshop. September 2026.
Writers.com. "Finding Your Poetic Temperament." Craft workshop. February and July 2026.
Lit Youngstown, Fall Literary Festival in Youngstown, OH. Panelist: "Pop Culture Milestones: A Reading" with Nin Andrews, Dustin Brookshire, and Ben Kline. October 2025.
Punch Bucket Lit Festival in Asheville, NC. Reader: The Grey Eagle. Featured Author Panelist: Reading with Michael Dowdy and Mackenzie Kozak. September 2025.
Wild and Precious Life Series. Reading. April 2, 2025. Also March 22, 2023 and March 16, 2022.
Calling All Poets. Reading. January 16, 2025.
Somerville Manning Gallery in Wilmington, DE. Reading. November 1, 2024.
Cab Calloway School for the Arts in Wilmington, DE. Reading. October 4, 2024.
Poets for Harris. Reading. September 15, 2024.
17th Annual Lewes Creative Writers' Conference in Lewes, DE. Reading. August 24, 2024.
The Book Cellar in Chicago, IL. Reading. July 17, 2024.
Night Light. Reading. May 9, 2024.
Association of Writers & Writing Programs, annual conference in Kansas City, MO. Moderator: "Generative Workshops: Take 'Em or Teach 'Em" with panelists Kim Addonizio, Sandra Beasley, Flower Conroy, and Maya C. Popa. February 2024.
A Hundred Pitchers of Honey Series. Reading. November 16, 2023.
Lit Balm. Reading. August 12, 2023.
W–E Poets of the Pandemic and Beyond. Reading. May 21, 2023.
The Queen Theatre in Wilmington, DE. Reading. April 29, 2023.
South Florida Poetry Journal. Reading. April 25, 2023.
University of Wolverhampton. Reading. April 5, 2023.
Poetry Is Bread Series. Reading. February 2023.

SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Poetry Out Loud. Delaware Finals. Judge. February 2025.
White House Advisory Council on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Communications Consultant. 2022-2025.
National Endowment for the Arts. Literary Arts Panelist. 2024.
Delaware State Arts Council. Board Member. 2021-2023.
Biden Campaign for President. Volunteer Speechwriter. 2020.

LITERARY JOURNALS EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE

Publishers Weekly. Poetry Book Reviewer. 2026-Ongoing.
Tupelo Quarterly. Contributing Editor. 2024-Ongoing.
The Common. Poetry and Prose Reader. 2021-2022.