

**FOR RELEASE:** Immediately

**DATE:** March 18, 2019

**CONTACT:** Deborah Moore: (206) 592-3518, [dmoore@highline.edu](mailto:dmoore@highline.edu)  
Kari Coglon Cantey: (206) 291-8622, [kcantey@highline.edu](mailto:kcantey@highline.edu)

**106 Poems Yield 10 Finalists in Annual Poetry Contest**  
Free Events, Celebration of Winners Coming in April at Highline College

DES MOINES, Wash. — “Expect Sadness like Rain” earned Alyssa Konopaski first place in Highline College’s 2019 Student Poetry Contest. Konopaski was one of 53 writers who submitted 106 poems during the contest, a prelude to Highline’s seventh annual celebration of National Poetry Month in April.

“The poem was written shortly after my best friend moved back to Japan in order to show that any way people deal with sadness is valid,” said Konopaski, who earned \$200 for winning the contest. She added that she wrote the poem “to remind myself that sadness is normal and natural, like rain.”

A resident of Des Moines, she has been writing poetry for about five years and earned honorable mention in last year’s contest for “forgive me if I do not care to be a gardener.”

Konopaski is in her second year at Highline and studying biology. After she graduates in the spring, she will transfer to Seattle University, where she has been admitted as a chemistry major.

“The Poetry Contest committee really liked the title of this poem, the imagery, and the repeated final line in both stanzas,” said Deborah Moore, one of the contest judges.

Second place, with a prize of \$150, went to Anlorey Alvarado of Covington for “Flee.” This is Alvarado’s second year at Highline.

Third place and \$100 went to Gabrielle Geiger of Tacoma for “Father.” Geiger is a second-year nursing student at Highline and will graduate March 20 and become an RN.

For the second year in a row, Tamar S. Manuel of Normandy Park earned honorable mention in the contest, along with a cash prize of \$75. His entry this year was “The Color Yellow.” As a Running Start student last year, Manuel submitted “A Gambler’s Mouth.”

Six others received honorable mention and \$75 each (listed in alphabetical order):

- Anonymous: “calls from grandma”
- Tevlin Britten, Tacoma: “This Black Baggage”
- Joshua Hamilton, Burien: “The Food Runner”
- Dio Jean-Baptiste, Seattle: “Retrospect”
- McKenzie Loiselle, Des Moines: “Roslyn”
- Irene Tran, Auburn: “Break Away”

The contest required students to submit poems that were no more than 20 lines and could fit onto an 8 1/2-by-11-inch piece of paper. The winning poems will be displayed as broadsides during the months of April and May in the Highline Library Exhibits and Art Gallery.

Broadsides are loosely defined as single sheets of paper printed on one side. They were the most diverse form of brief, single-occasion publishing before the Civil War.

Although broadsides were first introduced in England, they became a prime means of communication in the United States. They were often posted in town squares.

Later, Harlem Renaissance, Concrete, and Beat writers claimed the broadside as a below-the-radar way to get their words out onto the streets.

Highline will honor contest winners and finalists with a reception and poetry reading April 9, 1:30 p.m., in the Library Exhibits and Art Gallery. The students’ poems will be on display alongside those of published poets Erika Brumett, Mark Doty and Ilya Kaminsky, all of whom will give readings during the month-long celebration.

All events are free and open to the public:

**April 1–May 30**

Poetry Exhibit

Highline Library, Building 25, 4th floor

**April 6**

12–12:45 p.m.

Susan Landgraf: Writing Workshop, “A Place Out of Time and Space”

MaST Center

**April 9**

1:30–3 p.m.

Student Contest Winners: Poetry Reading and Reception

Highline Library Exhibits and Art Gallery, Building 25, 4th floor

**April 11**

12–1 p.m.

Erika Brumett: Poetry Reading and Q&A

Building 2

**April 17**

11 a.m.–3 p.m.

Opening Reception: “Poetic Visions: Artwork Inspired by Poetry”  
Highline Student Art Gallery, Building 16, Room 115

**April 17–May 15: Monday–Friday**

9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Art Display: “Poetic Visions: Artwork Inspired by Poetry”  
Highline Student Art Gallery, Building 16, Room 115  
(Enter through Building 16 office)

**April 17**

11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Mark Doty and Ilya Kaminsky: Poetry Reading and Writing Workshop, “The House of Memory: A Poetry Workshop”  
Building 2

[Highline’s main campus](#) is located midway between Seattle and Tacoma at South 240th Street and Pacific Highway South (Highway 99). The Highline Library Exhibits and Art Gallery (Building 25, 4th floor) is open Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; and Sunday, 2–9 p.m.

Highline’s [MaST Center](#) is located on the Redondo Dock next to Salty’s in Des Moines at (28203 Redondo Beach Drive South).

The college’s annual celebration of National Poetry Month is sponsored by the Highline Arts and Humanities division, Highline College Foundation, Highline Marketing department, Highline Library, Highline Print Services, Student Services division and the Visual Communications program.

For more information, visit [Highline’s National Poetry Month blog](#).

###

**Attachment:** Photo of Alyssa Konopaski

**Winning Poem:****Expect Sadness like Rain**

By Alyssa Konopaski

If you need to prepare, pack the umbrella  
your friend left to you when she went  
home to Japan. Wear a yellow raincoat to  
contrast the grey skies and the clouds that

bury you. Remind yourself to stash an extra pair of socks just in case you underestimate a puddle and find your toes soaked and your heart aching. You will make it out alive and wet.

If you prefer it finds you unexpectedly, let it search. It missed you. Enjoy the way it drips down your forehead and tickles your brow. Embrace the way your hair frizzes and curls. Your damp jeans will stick awkwardly to your skin as you walk; no one is watching even if you feel their eyes upon you. Waterproof makeup was never your thing, so check the mirror afterward if you must. You will make it out alive and wet.

**Links within this release:**

- Highline’s main campus: <https://www.highline.edu/campus-guide/locations-and-directions/>
- MaST Center: <https://mast.highline.edu/>
- Highline’s National Poetry Month blog: <https://npm.blogs.highline.edu/>

*Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves more than 17,000 students. With over 70 percent students of color, Highline is the most diverse higher education institution in the state. The college offers a wide range of academic transfer, professional-technical education, basic skills and applied bachelor’s degree programs. Alumni include former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida and former Washington state poet laureate Sam Green.*