

Mapping Worcester in Poetry News, March 2026

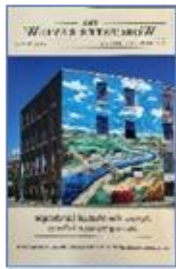
<https://worcestercountypoetry.org/mapping-worcester-in-poetry/>

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Here's the latest from **Mapping Worcester in Poetry**, an initiative funded by the Mellon Foundation (through Scholarship in Action at Holy Cross) and directed by Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, with Worcester County Poetry Association as community partner and Katherine Gregoire as WCPA liaison. **MWiP** identifies, documents, and marks sites related to some of the city's best-known poets—including Stanley Kunitz, Elizabeth Bishop, Charles Olson, Frank O'Hara, Etheridge Knight, Mary Fell, and Chris Gilbert—while nurturing new poetry about places in Worcester and Central Massachusetts.

MWiP Project Update



In 2025, Beth worked with student associate Anna Claire Pritchett, who helped to install *The Poem Next Door*, filmed the exhibit, and created a slide show of events. Our guest-edited feature in *The Worcester Review 45* came out! We launched the Worcester Poetry Archive at the Museum of Worcester and began to develop another feature for *The Worcester Review 46*. MWiP appeared in the *Telegram & Gazette*, *Worcester Magazine*, *Holy Cross Magazine*, *Judy's Journal*, and WGBH's *Culture Show*. *From left*: Beth with student associate Tessa Zafón-Whalen '26; Anna Claire Pritchett '26; and *Worcester Review 45* contributor Amanda Sopchokchai '27.



The Poem Next Door at the Museum of Worcester, May 16—Dec. 31



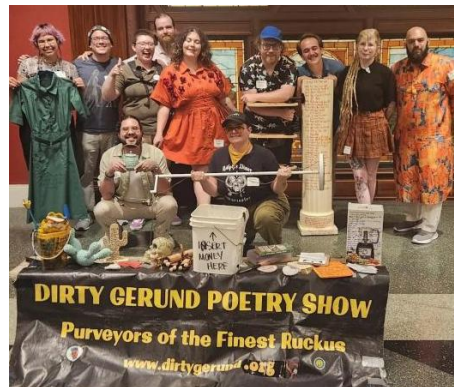
With exhibition coordinator Vanessa Bumpus, Beth guest-curated a landmark exhibit that was viewed by thousands of people during its extended run. *The Poem Next Door* brought six famous poems, set in the city, to life with images, objects, recordings, manuscripts, and bright green doors that allowed viewers to enter each poem. It depicted the poets' neighborhoods (complete with street signs) as well as places—cafés, bookstores, libraries, renovated factories—where poetry grows. *The Poem Next Door* featured rain poems, a reading nook, a desk with prompts for writing new poems about places, and a vintage typewriter on which to record them (a typewriter, indeed, that also traveled to galleries, stores, and open mics throughout the summer). The exhibit was celebrated in reviews, feature articles, a photo essay, an op-ed, a blog entry, and anonymous secondhand praise (the nicest kind!) from someone at the Institute of Contemporary Art who called it the best curated show of 2025. *The Poem Next Door* has already led to other partnerships and possibilities, and we're immensely grateful to everyone who contributed, especially the marvelous staff at the Museum of Worcester. If you missed the exhibit, check out Anna Claire's 2-minute video tour on our website!



Summer in the City: Celebrating the Poetry of Worcester Places

Hundreds of people attended MWiP's programs for the Poem Next Door (*see slide show on website*):

- May 16: Opening Reception
- June 10: In a Poet's Footsteps (members-only event for the Museum of Worcester)
- June 17: Poems in and out of Places Contest Winners' Reading
- July 15: Tales from Poetry Town and Poetry Bazaar (*pictured at left below*)
- July 24: Inside the Kunitz Family: Biographers James Dempsey & Judith Ferrara (*video on website*)
- Aug 14: Follow the Ruckus! Open mic & spoken-word poetry games (*pictured at right below*)
- Aug 23: Poems in Parks: Reading poems about the city's parks & open mic in Elm Park
- Sept. 4: Across the Mutual Landscape: Open mic & launch for *The Worcester Review & Three Decker*
- Sept.25: Closing Reception (research on Worcester poets by students and faculty)



Annual Elizabeth Bishop Graveside Readings in Hope Cemetery

On Feb. 7, at "A Tropical Getaway," 30 people celebrated Bishop's birthday with Brazilian pastries and hot chocolate while listening to her poems about the Amazon rainforest. On Oct. 4, at "Rainbow! Rainbow! Rainbow!" (*at left below*) we read her poems about rainbows and every color of the spectrum.

"Poems as Part of a Wondrous Whole"

On July 10, MWiP hosted a reading of poems about Worcester places (*at right*) for Room of Wonders: A Worcester Wunderkammer, an exhibit at Cantor Art Gallery featuring work by local artists.



"Discovery Day": The Worcester Poetry Archive at the Museum of Worcester

On November 15, 17 donors came to the museum with multiple boxes and bags to help launch a new archive of materials related to Worcester's poetic history. Our next Discovery Day is May 16, 2026.

Photo credits: Evan Plante, Allan Jung (p. 1); Evan Plante, Vanessa Bumpus, Robert Steele, Christina An (p. 2).