Guidelines for Evaluating WILLA Entries in the Adult Poetry Category

The purpose of Women Writing the West® is to become the internationally recognized organization of writers and other professionals engaged in writing and promoting writing about the North American West with emphasis on the experiences and sensibilities of women in that region. The WILLA Literary Awards are presented annually for outstanding literature featuring women's or girls' stories set in the North American West and includes Alaska and Hawaii.

Entries in the Adult Poetry category differ from poetry geared toward children and young adults. The following rubrics were developed to help readers evaluate such diverse entries. They are intended to be guidelines only. Readers should use their own judgement in assessing how well each entry suits its target audience.

Points should be awarded as follows:

10 – exceptional in all regards

9 – excellent

8 – well done

7 – majority well done; room for polish

6 – good overall with strong points

5 – good overall

4 – good overall with some weak points

3 – good start but needs work

2 – good idea but poor presentation

1 – needs work throughout

0 – ineligible

Note that entries that do not warrant at least 4 points in the first benchmark, "Women of the West Theme," should be disqualified.

WILLA CATEGORY RUBRIC
ADULT POETRY©

Note: If a poetry anthology is chosen as a WILLA Winner or Finalist, the compiler will be honored

Poetry	Ineligible	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
1. Women of the West Theme	• Male main character(s), no relevant theme in most poems • Western landscape (natural or human-made) nonexistent or irrelevant* • Poems do not portray authentic western experiences • Theme & content of most poems do not reflect WWW's mission & goals	• Female character(s), relevant theme in most poems • Western landscape (natural or human-made) somewhat important* • Most poems portray authentic western experiences • Theme & content of most poems reflect WWW's mission & goals	• Female main character(s), relevant theme consistent • Western landscape (natural or human-made) primary & essential* • Poems consistently portray authentic western experiences • Theme & content of all poems excellent reflections of WWW's mission & goals
	0 – 3 points	**4 – 7 points**	**8 – 10 points**
2. Characterization	• People/characters not well developed • Stereotypes evident in many or all poems**	• People/characters generally well developed • Most poems convey no gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes**	• All people/characters believable • No gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes presented**
3. Setting	• Setting not important • Setting not portrayed accurately • Illustrations (if used) & text inconsistent	• Setting of moderate importance • Setting generally portrayed accurately • Illustrations (if used) & text generally matched	• Setting supports book's theme • Setting consistently portrayed accurately • Illustrations (if used) & text well matched

Poetry	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
4. Content, Ideas, Organization	• Subject matter not likely to emotionally engage readers • Poems not organized by theme or topic • Most poems inadequately depict an idea, experience, or emotion • Little evidence of logical or effective order or sequence	• Subject matter somewhat emotionally engaging for readers • Adequate focus on overall theme or topic • Most poems depict an idea, experience, or emotion; some poems stronger than others • Poems moderately well arranged in logical & effective order, with workable flow from one to the next	• Subject matter emotionally engaging for readers • Excellent, cohesive focus on overall theme or topic • Each poem depicts an idea, experience, or emotion • Poems consistently arranged in logical & effective order, with excellent flow from one to the next
5. Voice	• Little or no sense of poet's/poets' individual style(s) • Word choice rarely reflects or evokes poems' themes, sounds, or emotions • Difficult to read aloud • Poems unlikely to be read more than once	• Poet's/poets' individual style(s) sometimes apparent • Word choice sometimes reflects or evokes poems' themes, sounds, or emotions • Rhythm creates adequate "read-aloud" quality; some lapses • Some poems likely to resonate during multiple readings	• Poet's/poets' individual style(s) clearly apparent • Word choice often reflects or evokes poems' themes, sounds, or emotions • Inherent rhythm creates excellent "read-aloud" quality • Poems likely to resonate during multiple readings
6. Literary Qualities	• Poor or inappropriate command of language • Imagery abstract or clichéd • Rhyme (if used) forced or incomplete • Little or no demonstrated grasp of poetic conventions & devices	• Generally good command of language • Some use of concrete, fresh imagery • Rhyme (if used) generally good • Adequate grasp of poetic conventions & devices	• Consistently strong command of language • Consistently concrete, fresh imagery • Rhyme (if used) consistently excellent • Clear grasp of poetic conventions & devices

Poetry	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
7. Technical Conventions	• Frequent problems with grammar, punctuation, spelling • Line breaks & poems' shapes confusing	• Grammar, punctuation, spelling generally good • Line breaks & poems' shapes adequate	• Grammar, punctuation, spelling consistently good; unique constructions clearly intentional & effective • Line breaks & poems' shapes carefully considered
8. Presentation	• Illustrations (if used) inadequate, unpleasing • Unattractive cover art & design • Interior design features lacking • Font & typesetting difficult to read; not used to support collection	• Illustrations (if used) adequate, pleasing • Adequate cover art & design • Design features moderately support collection • Font & typesetting used adequately	• Illustrations (if used) appropriate, well executed, engaging • Attractive, appropriate, compelling cover art & design • Excellent design features support collection • Font & typesetting used effectively • Properly bound, i.e., audio and eBook

* WWW defines "the West" as all of North America west of the Mississippi River, and includes Alaska and Hawaii.

** Depiction of peoples' biases or stereotypical views, presented in context, may be appropriate.