



MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Rachel Pass
805-772-3834 ext. 13
rpass@mbnep.org

Morro Bay Estuary Poetry Contest Opens on Earth Day, 2015!

We're excited to announce the opening of the **Morro Bay Estuary Poetry Contest—A National Treasure in Words** on Earth Day, April 22, 2015! To celebrate the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's 20th anniversary, the **Morro Bay Estuary Poetry Contest—A National Treasure in Words** asks kids and adults to write haikus and free verse poems using the Morro Bay Estuary as a theme.

Haikus—three-line poems consisting of 17 syllables in a 5/7/5 pattern—will be accepted in the Estuarine Seventeen category, while free verse poems of no more than 45 lines will be accepted in the Free Flowing category. Writers may submit up to three poems in total. **Entries will be accepted by email until May 15, 2015.** One adult (age 18 & up) and one youth (age 12 to 17) winner will be chosen in each category. Winners will receive a prize basket and certificate, and their selected poems will be published in Estuary Program materials, on the website, and in social media messages. One adult and one youth runner up from each category will receive a certificate of participation, and their selected poem will be included on the Estuary Program's website and in social media messages. **A celebratory reading featuring the winners and runners-up will be held at Coalesce Bookstore (845 Main St, Morro Bay, CA 93442) at 7 p.m. on Friday, June 19.** Before entering the contest, poets should read our complete guidelines at www.mbnep.org.

The judging panel includes Youssef Alaoui, Rob Seitz, Kevin Patrick Sullivan, and Rachel Pass. Life by the ocean inspired Youssef to publish a collection of dark romantic poems called *Death At Sea* and a nineteenth century adventure novel called *The Blue Demon*. Rob began writing poetry while working aboard his grandfather's commercial salmon fishing boat on The Cook Inlet in Alaska; he has published one book of poetry, *2.5 gpf*. Kevin is a past Poet Laureate for the City of San Luis Obispo and the Co-Founder and Curator for the Annual San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival and Corners of the Mouth.

Rachel is the Communications & Outreach Coordinator for the Estuary Program and has edited several collections of poetry.

Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a non-regulatory, non-profit organization that brings together citizens, local government, non-profits, agencies, and landowners to protect and restore the Morro Bay Estuary for people and wildlife. The Estuary Program has been conducting monitoring and research, restoring natural habitats, and educating residents and visitors on how to keep Morro Bay clean and healthy since 1995.

The Estuary Program will host other 20th anniversary celebrations throughout 2015 to focus attention on the bay and to teach people how to keep it clean and healthy for future generations. You can find out more about the Morro Bay National Estuary Program and our 20th anniversary events at www.mbnep.org. If you have questions, please contact Rachel Pass, Communications & Outreach Coordinator, at rpass@mbnep.org or 805-772-3834.