Gulf Coast Writers Association - Poetry Judging Criteria

Control No.	Title of Entry

Step One - Weed out entries

At the Judges discretion does the entry meet the general rules including: line count, no gratuitous violence or erotica, submission rules followed: times new roman, font 12, pages numbered, title on each page.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Step Two

Images & Discourse

The images in the poem should be unique and provide the reader with vivid sensory detail. The discourse of the poem should avoid cliche expressions by presenting original phrasing.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Rhythm

Fixed meter should follow standard rules of prosody and should not sound mechanical. That is, metrical poems should maintain their structure of stressed/unstressed syllables without making the language seem wooden or monotonous. Free rhythm should have a distinct beat or current of sound. A poem written in free rhythm should not merely be prose chopped into shorter lines.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Line Breaks

Enjambment occurs when a line carriers over from the preceding line. Enjambed lines should create suspense and movement, so the poem moves swiftly. End-stop occurs when meaning and rhythm pause at the end of the line. Effective end-stopped lines will have strong end-words (in both meaning and music); they will also make the reader pause long enough to consider the line.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Figures of Speech

Similes and metaphors need to avoid stock or cliché comparisons, such as "my love is like a rose." The comparisons should be unique and original, helping the reader to make new connections between the compared terms.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

Word Music

Direct rhyme should not be forced; the language should flow naturally, as in regular speech. The rhyme word should not be there just because it rhymes, but because it is the best word for the poem's sense as well as its sound. ***Indirect rhyme*** creates a subtle echo of sound that is also called half-rhyme or slant rhyme. ***Within the lines*** is created by use of assonance and consonance. Strong poems will "ring" with such internal music.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Formal Structures

If a poet submits a formal poem such as a sonnet, sestina, or villanelle, the poem should adhere to that form's basic structure.

Score 1 equals very poor 10 equals excellent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Subtotals

Total Score	