What is a poetry slam?

A poetry slam is a competitive event in which poets perform their work and are judged by members of the audience. Typically, the host or another organizer selects the judges, who are instructed to give numerical scores (on a zero to 10 or one to 10 scale) based on the poets' content and performance.

How do I win a poetry slam?

Winning a poetry slam requires some measure of skill and a huge dose of luck. The judges' tastes, the audience's reactions, and the poets' performances all shape a slam event, and what wins one week might not get a poet into the second round the next week. There's no formula for winning a slam, although you become a stronger poet and performer the same way you get to Carnegie Hall — practice, practice, practice.

What are the rules for the performers?

- ☺ Each poem must be of the poet's own construction;

- ☺ Each poet gets three minutes (plus a ten-second grace period) to read one poem. Should the poet go over his time limit, 0.5 points will be deducted from the total score per each 10 second increment of time violation.
  3:10 and under **(no penalty),** 3:10.01 - 3:20 **(- 0.5 points), etc**

- ☺ The clock begins ticking when the performance begins. The performance is considered to have begun at the first utterance, even if it is not part of the poem (an introduction, for example). Prior to the performance, the poet is allowed some seconds to adjust the microphone and become settled and ready. But as soon as the performer makes some connection with the audience (even a non-verbal connection through a gesture or facial expression) the clock starts.

- ☺ Time penalties and point deductions are not announced until all judges have reported their scores.

- ☺ The poet may not use props, costumes, or musical instruments; animals or other people. The performer **is allowed to** mime the use of a prop however. Poets may use their given environment (microphone and mic stand)

- ☺ The will receive a score from each of the 5 judges at which point the high and low scores will be dropped, and the middle three will be added together, giving the poet a total score of 0-30.