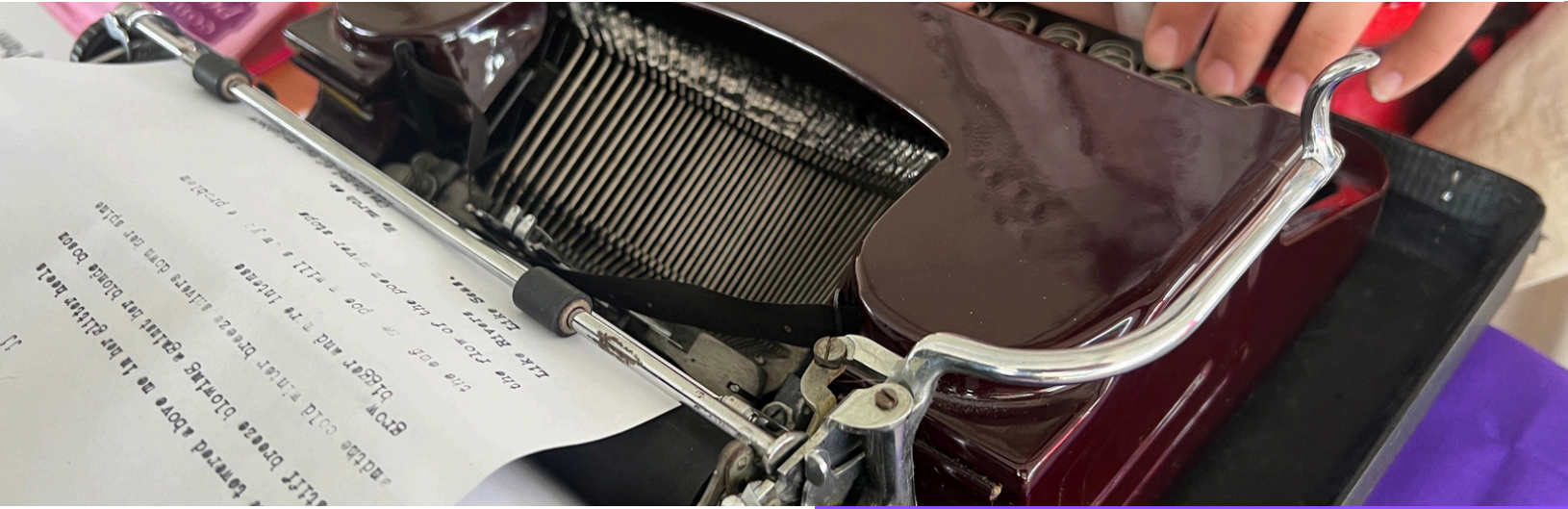




<https://kalamazoopoetryfestival.com/>

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Newsletter



SAVE THE DATE!

KPF has officially picked the date for our upcoming festival. Please mark your calendar for April 25 and 26, 2025. Next year's festival will include free workshops, Celebration of Community Poets, Open Mic, a reading from two featured readers, and a Craft Talk from these two readers. We are excited to see you!

KZ PRIDE FEST

For the first time ever, KPF tabled at the Kalamazoo Pride Festival in early June! We invited the festival goers to contribute to our community poem, through the use of a game called Exquisite Corpse- where you read the line above written by another person, and add your word or words in your own line. We used a vintage typewriter that was over 50 years old, and ended up with almost 5 full pages of poetry! You can find the lightly edited poem [here](#).



Kalamazoo Poetry Festival
June 2024

KPF WELCOMES NEW ED

CASEY GROOTEN

The 2024 festival feedback was extremely positive, and it makes me proud as a member of KPF that so many of our Kalamazoo community members felt seen, heard, and LISTENED to. I am thankful for Allison (Sonny) Kennedy for the immense job they took on part of the way into our planning year.

Allison, with the help of many community partners, really showed us how KPF can truly create an environment where every voice can be heard. I want to also thank Allison and the community partners for helping create a transitional era where I feel completely supported and confident in the future of KPF.

I am so happy to join the Kalamazoo Poetry Festival as new Executive Director. Since 2018, I have worked with KPF, and have watched the festival grow. It is my aim for KPF that we keep in line with the vision the current board and outgoing E.D. have established. I have had the opportunity to meet and speak with many of you, but just in case we need more of an introduction, here it is!

My name is Casey Grooten, I grew up in the Gobles, MI area, and have lived in Kalamazoo the majority of the last 16 years. I graduated from Western Michigan University with a Bachelors Degree in Creative Writing, and have a passion for poetry and fiction. I call myself an interdisciplinary artist, because the majority of my time is dedicated to some area of the arts, whether it be written work, visual art, or music. Poetry came to me in the forest, when I was very young, through the form of song. My parents informed everyone on our street that the singing they heard in the woods that stretched behind many of our houses at night, or early in the morning was me. I still carry this love of nature within me, and much of my work revolves around recycled, found, and gifted materials. Two other things about myself that I believe help people understand me more completely is that I am a nonbinary person who is unapologetically queer, and that I am thirteen years sober from narcotics as of April 2024. I am proud of who I am, and plan to translate that pride into very hard, intentional work with KPF during my time as Executive Director.

Please do not be shy! I encourage every one of you to submit feedback, or ideas to KPF during my tenure as E.D. I will not be able to meet one on one with you all, but the information will always be responded to, and taken into account.

