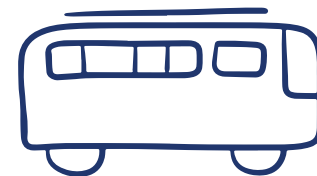




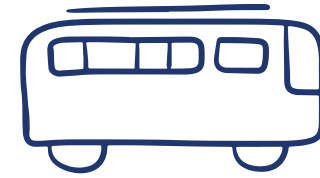
Lawrence Transit Poet Laureate Program

2026



Note: Idiosyncrasies in format and grammar are intentional.

The Closer We Get



The closer we get, the closer our hearts
intertwine, soaring out of our chests, swirling
together like melodies not quite written,
maroon and auburn and gold.

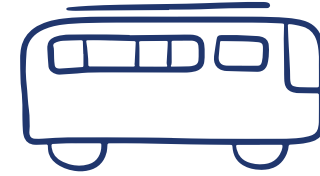
A little boy in a soft, worn hoodie tugs
on his mother's sleeve: Are we there yet?
But where is there, or anywhere,
on a route born of frozen time?

All that exists is the drive, and I am alive.

—Alice Pulsinelli, Poet Laureate of Route 2



A dónde ir

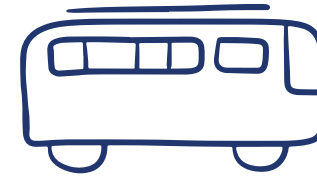


Hay una paz conocida y valorada por pocos
Donde las ansiedades de la vida
No han tenido tiempo para dar luz
La sientes cuando llega el autobús en la madrugada
Y el conductor te abre sus puertas sin juicio
Te sientas y miras al autobús, llena de gente de varios caminos
Madres y padres acariciando a sus hijos
Estudiantes después de no dormir toda la noche
Un espacio donde la incertidumbre no ha llegado
Un espacio a dónde ir.

—Jen Fernandez, Poet Laureate of Route 12



Routes to Belonging



On the Number 1, the doors sigh open,
and I step into a world stitched together
by bus seats and window glass.
A student with earbuds nods to the rhythm,
a grandmother clutches her grocery list,
two friends laugh in the shared language
of being late together.

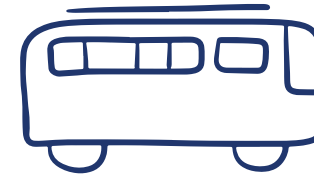
The streets roll beneath us,
Mass Street brick, the curve past the river,
the stop where someone always waves.
Every route is a thread,
tying one neighborhood to the next,
a map not of distance,
but of connection.

Here, belonging is not a single place,
but the spaces we pass through,
the glances we exchange,
the stories we carry home in our pockets.
Each ride is a reminder:
we are travelers,
we are neighbors,
we are here together.

—Megan Gragg, Poet Laureate of Route 1



my soul has two homes



rear row, new routes
sole destination
but my soul has two homes

miles away though the journey dawned
now I ride home
built by dreams and love

shifting seasons in window panes
I watch mesmerized
in transit for the daily grind

four glorious phases
captured in frames
shared with loved ones living in foreign terrains

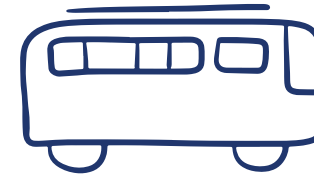
swaying neighborhood sycamores, oaks,
and cottonwoods
summon up childhood
swinging banyans and climbing mango wood

shades, sights, smells, alien once
a home not quite like *home*
but a home where I belong

—Sneha Nair, Poet Laureate of Route 11



Morning Journey



The quiet route unspools the day—
sunrise kindles blacktop,
wheels whisper across awakening light.
Kansas exhales hay, walnut, grass;
cottonwoods bead their resin prayers.

Doors open like offerings—
smiles drift in,
warm as poured sunlight.

We gather in motion,
peace beside us,
rain-washed streets stitched with
goldenrod.

—Whit Bell, Poet Laureate of Route 8

Each breath a homecoming,
each mile a soft remembering—
we are the morning,
arriving together.

