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5 POETS WIN NATIONAL TIMES SQUARE POETRY CONTEST

**THE TIMES SQUARE ALLIANCE
AND THE POETRY SOCIETY OF AMERICA
ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF
BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG VERSE:
POEMS OF TIMES SQUARE**

**LYRICAL DESCRIPTIONS EVOKE THE MANY FACES OF TIMES SQUARE –
EUPHORIC, BITTERSWEET, ECSTATIC, TRAGIC AND ALL POINTS BETWEEN**

(New York, NY- April 23, 2008) As National Poetry Month draws to a close, The Poetry Society of America and the Times Square Alliance are proud to announce the five winners of Bright Lights Big Verse: Poems of Times Square, the first-ever national contest for poetry inspired by Times Square.

The five winners, selected from a pool of close to 700 entrants, include Steven Alvarez from New York, NY, for “& So Tio & Chaley”; Simone Muench from Chicago, IL, for “her dreaming feet”; Timothy Donnelly from Brooklyn, NY, for “My Funny Valentine”; Gretchen Fletcher from Ft. Lauderdale, FL, for “Two Giant Men in New York”; and Joshua Rivkin from San Francisco, CA, for “In Praise of What Will Not Last”. Each winner will receive \$1,000, plus a trip to New York City in June for a free outdoor public reading of their prize-winning work in the heart of Times Square.

The five prize-winning pieces represent Times Square experiences and impressions as disparate and diverse as their authors – from a father’s visit to the wartime Times Square of the 1940s to a family’s unlikely choice of Times Square as a place to scatter an uncle’s ashes to a poem about love, heartache, movie theaters and Ella Fitzgerald.

“The response to this first-ever Times Square poetry contest has been truly outstanding,” said Tim Tompkins, President of the Times Square Alliance, “We received hundreds of fascinating and diverse visions of Times Square from so many talented poets – it’s really a testament to this neighborhood’s ability to provoke strong emotional reactions of every kind, to evoke vivid memories and, above all, to inspire creativity.”

The winning poems were selected by a panel of judges comprising some of the most notable and accomplished names in the literary world today, including *Best American Poetry* Series Editor David Lehman; Tracie Morris, former champion of the Nuyorican Grand Slam and National Haiku Slam; and Alice Quinn, Executive Director of the Poetry Society of America and former Poetry Editor at *The New Yorker*.

“We judges thoroughly enjoyed our time with the exceptional poems submitted and are very happy with our choices,” said Alice Quinn, Executive Director of the Poetry Society of America, “It will be such a pleasure to hear the poets read their prize-winning poems. Hurray for Times Square!”

For full details on the winners, judges and the free public reading, please visit www.TimesSquareNYC.org.

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The Poetry Society of America (PSA) was founded on October 10, 1910 for the purpose of creating a public forum for the advancement, enjoyment, dissemination, and understanding of poetry. PSA programs foster our mission “to place poetry at the crossroads of American life” by raising public awareness of poetry, deepening the understanding of it, and encouraging more people to become readers and writers of poetry. In its 97th year, the PSA continues to bring diverse poetry programming that is accessible, engaging, vital in concept and broad in scope to myriad audiences.

Times Square Alliance, founded in 1992, works to improve and promote Times Square. In addition to providing safety and sanitation services, the Alliance coordinates many major events in Times Square including New Year's Eve, manages an Information Center and advocates on behalf of its constituents with respect to a host of public policy, planning and quality of life issues. For more information, log onto www.timessquarenyc.org.