

RIVER STANZAS  
**E M E R G E**



Wick Poetry Center  
College of Arts and Sciences



*Cuyahoga—An American Heritage River*  
by Cuyahoga River Restoration

The Cuyahoga is one of only fourteen rivers designated as American Heritage Rivers due to their cultural, environmental and economic importance in their regions.

The Cuyahoga flows for 100 miles, through the cities of Akron and Cleveland before emptying into Lake Erie. The river supports one of the most densely populated and industrialized urban areas in America. In 1969, the Cuyahoga became a stark symbol of water pollution when oil slicks on the river's surface caught fire. The burning river captured the attention of the nation and became a rallying point for passage of the Clean Water Act. Through new laws and new partnerships, water quality on the river has improved dramatically, and today the Cuyahoga River and the communities it supports are experiencing a rebirth.

The Cuyahoga River's accessibility by ship, train, and truck helped make Cleveland a major manufacturing and shipping center. The Port of Cleveland is the third largest port on the Great Lakes and one of the nation's largest overseas ports, moving cargo to and from 100 ports worldwide. The cleanup of the Cuyahoga has provided significant opportunities for economic development, most notably along Cleveland's waterfront, now home to the Great Lakes Science Center and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Land along the Cuyahoga ranges from lush marshes at the headwaters, to rolling hills of beech, maple, oak and hemlock, to the urban neighborhoods of Cleveland. The Cuyahoga River valley is a unique biological crossroads in the transition zone between the Central Lowlands to the west and the Appalachian Plateau to the east. The many city, county, and national parks located along the river and its tributaries include the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and the 19,000-acre Cleveland Metroparks system.

from *CuyahogaRiver.org*