

By [Doug Banks](#) – Executive Editor, Boston Business Journal
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The poetry of baseball

The Red Sox have a winning home record and are .500 overall — yet they're still in last place in the AL East. With the Yankees just above them, it almost looks like someone took the standings from years past and flipped them on their head. For those of you who may not care about baseball — even with its new pitch clock and faster games — you might still enjoy knowing that the [National Baseball Poetry Festival](#) is taking place in our fair state this weekend.

Never heard of it? Neither had I.

This is its inaugural festival, at Polar Park in Worcester, and it offers a weekend's worth of poetry and poets from across the U.S., all coming to the Heart of the Commonwealth to celebrate Worcester's heritage as the hometown of Ernest Thayer, author of "Casey at the Bat." (OK, sure, he was born in Lawrence, but he was raised in Worcester.) If you don't know the story of the "Mudville Nine," it's among the most famous American poems of the 19th century. The full title is "Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888," and it was first published in The San Francisco Examiner on June 3, 1888.

This weekend's festival is sponsored by the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Worcester Red Sox, BaseballBard.com and Biondolillo Associates Inc. of Wellesley. It includes a reception this evening, followed by a game between the Triple-A WooSox and the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders, and, tomorrow, another WooSox-RailRiders game and poetry readings in Worcester's nearby Canal District. The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day, but there may be joy in Worcester, no matter how mighty Casey performed at the plate.