

P O E T R Y



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Chicago Poetry Tour Debuts

Multimedia tour featuring Chicago poems and poets offers new way to discover the city

CHICAGO – The Poetry Foundation announces the launch of the Chicago Poetry Tour, a multimedia tour of poetry written in and about the city of Chicago. The tour can be taken online or downloaded at www.poetryfoundation.org, and is available for download via iTunes. The tour will also be featured in the multimedia gallery of the City of Chicago's official tourism website, www.explorechicago.org.

Featuring the work of a range of Chicago poets past and present—Gwendolyn Brooks, Carl Sandburg, Li-Young Lee, Haki Madhubuti, Harriet Monroe, Sterling Plumpp, Ana Castillo, Stuart Dybek, and many more—and addressing a variety of neighborhoods and landmarks—the Loop, Bronzeville, Bucktown, Maxwell Street, Haymarket, Pilsen, and New Chinatown among them—the tour includes archival and contemporary recordings of poets and scholars, local music, and historic photographs.

In addition to the rich range of poets and poetry showcased, the tour also features Chicago native Scott Simon, who hosts the downtown tour; local musician Bucky Halker, whose music is featured on the Haymarket stop; the late legendary Chicago personality Studs Terkel; professor of Chicago literature Bill Savage; WBEZ's Richard Steele; slam poetry founder Marc Smith; and wood-cut illustrations by local artist Kathleen Judge.

A chance for Chicagoans and tourists alike to explore the history of the city through poetry, the tour can be taken online, or downloaded as mp3 files. With their mp3 players, people can take a guided walking tour of downtown, or visit any of the other tour stops, such as the Green Mill, Newberry Library, Graceland Cemetery, Union Stock Yard Gate, Maxwell Street, or DuSable Museum, as they listen to poetry and commentary and experience Chicago's architecture, neighborhoods, and landmarks.

The downtown walking tour begins at the Cultural Center; the original Chicago public library, it is an apt place to consider Chicago's long-standing commitment to democratic access to the arts. “[That is] something that the Chicago Renaissance writers, especially people like Sandburg, were absolutely dedicated to. Poetry should be for everybody,”

comments Savage. “And you look at the Tiffany windows and the ceilings in this building and think that the shoeshine boy and the multimillionaire both came here to check out books. And that’s one of the great things about the city.”

Featuring contemporary poets such as Lisel Mueller, W.S. Di Piero, and Haki Madhubuti, and archival recordings of Gwendolyn Brooks, Vachel Lindsay, and Edgar Lee Masters, the downtown walking tour demonstrates how poetry shaped, and continues to shape, the heart of the city. From the Cultural Center to the Harold Washington Library, people can experience Chicago’s iconic architectural sights, including Millennium Park, the Art Institute, and the Fine Arts Building.

“Chicago is and always has been an exciting place for poetry,” said Anne Halsey, media director at the Poetry Foundation. “The Chicago Poetry Tour makes clear the connections between the city’s rich literary history and its significant architectural, social, and cultural contributions.”

“Whether virtual or actual,” Halsey added, “the Chicago Poetry Tour is a unique new way to discover Chicago and its great poetry.”

The Chicago Poetry Tour, an original production of the Poetry Foundation created in collaboration with Sourcelab, was written and produced by Ed Herrmann.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.

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