

P O E T R Y



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**Albert Goldbarth and Mary Ann Hoberman
Win Major Prizes for American Poets**

Poetry Foundation Names Hoberman Nation's Second Children's Poet Laureate

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation has announced that Albert Goldbarth and Mary Ann Hoberman are the winners of its fifth annual Pegasus Awards. The announcement was made at a dinner ceremony last night at the Jay Pritzker Pavilion Stage at Millennium Park in Chicago. Established in 2004, the Pegasus Awards are a series of annual prizes with an emphasis on new awards to under-recognized poets and types of poetry.

Albert Goldbarth was named the recipient of the third **Mark Twain Poetry Award** of \$25,000, recognizing a poet's contribution to humor in American poetry. The award is given in the belief that humorous poetry can also be seriously good poetry.

Goldbarth, 60, is the author of 25 collections of poetry, including *The Kitchen Sink: New and Selected Poems 1972-2007*; five essay collections; and a novel. In presenting the award, Stephen Young, program director of the Foundation, noted, "It may have been William Blake who urged us 'to see a world in a grain of sand' and 'hold infinity in the palm of [our] hand,' but it is Albert Goldbarth who has stepped in as our lively tour guide on these imaginative adventures. In his marvelously expansive work, the comic and the profound become the kind of friends who glow in one another's company."

Goldbarth has twice won the National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. Critic Herbert Leibowitz has said, "Goldbarth could outtalk and outwit Leno and Letterman, Stewart and Colbert; he's much funnier than all of them." Goldbarth's work has appeared regularly in *Poetry* since 1971, and in 2005 he received the Frederick Bock prize from the magazine. A Chicago native, Goldbarth now lives in Wichita, Kansas and is the Adele B. Davis Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Wichita State University. His book, *To Be Read in 500 Years*, is forthcoming from Graywolf Press in May 2009.

Mary Ann Hoberman will serve as the nation's second **Children's Poet Laureate: Consultant in Children's Poetry to the Poetry Foundation** for a two-year tenure. The award, which includes a \$25,000 cash prize, aims to raise awareness that children have a natural receptivity to poetry and are its most appreciative audience, especially when poems are written specifically for them. "Generations of readers who first discovered poetry in the books of Mary Ann Hoberman

remember it not as a dry textbook encounter but as a moment of joyous play. Her poems tease young minds even as they please young ears with rhythm and rhyme. We honor her for a lifetime of writing poetry of lasting value for young readers,” said John Barr, president of the Poetry Foundation, in making the appointment.

Author of 45 books, all but one of which are in verse, Hoberman, 78, collaborated with her husband, artist Norman Hoberman, on her first four books, including her first book of poems, *All My Shoes Come in Twos* (1957). Some of Hoberman’s best-known titles are *A House is a House for Me*, illustrated by Betty Fraser; *The Seven Silly Eaters*, illustrated by Marla Frazee; and *The Llama Who Had No Pajama*, a collection of 100 of her favorite poems. Her verses have been widely anthologized and her books have been translated into several languages. She is the recipient of a National Book Award and the 2003 Poetry for Children Award of the National Council of Teachers of English. As a former volunteer with Literacy Volunteers of America, Hoberman has made literacy one of her primary concerns, writing the best-selling *You Read to Me, I’ll Read to You* series, illustrated by Michael Emberley, to further that aim. She has taught literature and writing from the elementary through the college level and visits schools and libraries throughout the country, sharing her poems and talking about poetry and the joys of reading. Her next book of poetry for children, *All Kinds of Families!*, is forthcoming from Little, Brown Books for Young Readers in August 2009.

Findings from the Poetry Foundation’s seminal research study—*Poetry in America*—demonstrate that a lifelong love for poetry is most likely to result if cultivated early in childhood and reinforced thereafter. During her laureateship, Hoberman will give two major public readings for children and their families, teachers, and librarians. She will also serve as an advisor to the Poetry Foundation on children’s literature, and may engage in a variety of projects and events to help instill a love of poetry among the nation’s youngest readers. The Poetry Foundation made the appointment with input from a panel of experts in the field of children’s literature.

About the Pegasus Awards

The Poetry Foundation has established a family of prizes with an emphasis on new awards to under-recognized poets and types of poetry. Inaugurated in 2004, the Pegasus Awards are announced annually in the fall. The Poetry Foundation believes that targeted prizes can help redress underappreciated accomplishments, diversify the kinds of poetry being written, and widen the audience for the art form. With this in mind, it intends to create additional prizes in the years ahead.

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.