

P O E T R Y



F O U N D A T I O N

For Immediate Release

April 19, 2007

Media Contact: Anne Halsey, (312) 799.8016; ahalsey@poetryfoundation.org

**POETRY FOUNDATION FORMS PARTNERSHIP
WITH UK-BASED POETRY ARCHIVE TO CREATE HISTORIC
AUDIO COLLECTION OF AMERICAN POETRY**

*Recordings of more than 100 American poets to be made available over the next 3 years;
Poets selected by U.S. Poet Laureate Donald Hall*

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and poetryfoundation.org, announces a transatlantic partnership with the United Kingdom-based Poetry Archive to create a compendium of more than 100 essential American poetry recordings. The collaboration is part of the Poetry Foundation's new *Poetry Across the Atlantic* program, an initiative to reacquaint the poetries of America and the United Kingdom.

“Reading poetry on the page, we take in metaphors and image. If we are accustomed to listening to poetry, we use the line breaks and punctuation as a guide to hearing the lines inside our minds. But there is nothing like hearing the poet’s voice,” said Donald Hall in discussing the project. “The entryway to poetry is the beauty of its sound. Sound persuades us of its authenticity and prepares us to receive the subtlety and power of its emotion. This online archive of poetry recordings opens the wholeness of poetry to the world’s ear.”

During the last few decades, poets and readers on both either side of the Atlantic have become disconnected from each other. The Poetry Foundation, through partnerships with other leading poetry organizations around the world, is working to build international awareness of American poetry and, conversely, support important influences on contemporary poetry from abroad.

“Contemporary poetry and its audience have never been limited by national borders,” said John Barr, president of the Poetry Foundation. “The Poetry Foundation views this project as an important step in creating a lasting partnership with the office of the British Poet Laureate to broaden the enjoyment of English-language poetry around the world.”

The Poetry Foundation and the Poetry Archive share many goals, including a dedication to using the Internet to make poetry widely available and to furthering the serious enjoyment of listening

to poets reading their own work. Over the next three years, the collected audio recordings of American poets will become freely available on both organizations' websites—www.poetryfoundation.org and www.poetryarchive.org—accompanied by photographs and a specially written introduction to each poet's work and to the recording.

As Andrew Motion notes, "The availability of poetry recordings online has allowed a very ancient truth—that sound is integral to meaning—to be rediscovered. The *Beowulf* poet knew that and everybody in the mead hall knew that, but somehow in the last thousand years or so, we've underplayed it. Now the Internet is returning poetry to its ancient roots."

The list of poets to be included in the project was drawn up by Donald Hall, poet laureate of the United States, in consultation with Andrew Motion, poet laureate of Great Britain. It includes historic archival recordings by poets of the past as well as new recordings by today's leading poets. On the list are such names as Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Frost, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Ezra Pound, and Ogden Nash as well as a wide range of contemporary American poets.

In addition to the expanded audio archive, the Poetry Foundation is working to raise awareness of and interest in poetry on both sides of the Atlantic by hosting the first-ever joint reading by the poets laureate of the United States and Great Britain. On Monday, May 7, Donald Hall and Andrew Motion will share a stage in Chicago; the Chicago reading will be followed by events at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., on May 10, and at the Poetry Society in London on June 6.

For the second year in a row, the April issue of *Poetry* magazine is devoted to the art of translation. The issue showcases an incredible variety of talent, featuring new translations of classic authors such as Rimbaud, Horace, Dante, and Neruda, as well as poets relatively unknown in America, like Mexico's Coral Bracho and Korea's Jin Eun-Young, by renowned authors such as Robert Pinsky, Charles Simic, J.M. Coetzee, Rosanna Warren, and Paul Muldoon. In the coming months, subsequent issues of *Poetry* will publish a series of in-depth portfolios on the contemporary poetry of countries including India and Italy.

This also marks the first year that poetry in translation will be included in the comprehensive archive of classic and contemporary English-language poetry available at the Foundation's website, www.poetryfoundation.org. Over the coming year, the Poetry Foundation will be adding poetry in translation from Indian and Italian poets as well as from other major international poets who have influenced American poetry, such as Pablo Neruda, Czeslaw Milosz, Gabriela Mistral, Odysseus Elytis, and George Seferis.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is one of the largest literary foundations in the world. An independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture, it 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. The Poetry Foundation website, www.poetryfoundation.org, provides a variety of information about poetry as well as articles, podcasts, and reading guides.

The Foundation recently completed *Poetry in America*, an unprecedented study aimed at understanding poetry's place in American culture. The study found that a lifelong love for poetry is most likely to result if cultivated early in childhood and reinforced thereafter. In 2006, the Poetry Foundation appointed Jack Prelutsky as the nation's first Children's Poet Laureate. The laureate serves as an advisor to the Poetry Foundation on children's poetry and engages in a variety of projects designed to instill a love of poetry among the nation's youngest readers.

Now in its second year, *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest*, created by the NEA and the Poetry Foundation, encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country.

The Poetry Foundation is currently working on a new series of programs titled *Poetry Across the Atlantic*, designed to renew the venerable and important friendship between the poetries of the United States and those of the United Kingdom. For more information on these and other programs, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.

The Poetry Archive

The Poetry Archive is the world's premier collection of recordings of English-language poets reading their work. Its website, www.poetryarchive.org, contains readings by 120 poets from many parts of the world—both newly made contemporary recordings and extracts from historic recordings of the past—as well as biographical and bibliographical information, portrait photographs, and additional features such as filmed interviews with poets, and a wealth of practical help for teachers and students.

The Archive also publishes CDs of its full-length recordings of contemporary poets. The directors of the Poetry Archive are Andrew Motion, poet laureate of Great Britain, and Richard Carrington, a producer with extensive experience in recording poets reading their work. Since its launch in November 2005, more than 860,000 people have made nearly a million and a half visits to the Archive. All told, the pages of the sites have been viewed more than 6 million times. These extraordinary numbers illustrate the enormous impact the Archive is having on the enjoyment of poetry in the United Kingdom and beyond.

The Archive plans to add more recordings to its collection during the coming months and years and to support those recordings with wide-ranging downloadable material to help teachers and students enjoy its recordings. As a not-for-profit charity, the Poetry Archive depends for its existence on donations from public bodies, trusts and foundations, and generous individuals. Visitors to the Archive's website can support its work by making donations online. The Poetry Archive is a registered charity; extracts from its collection of recordings, and all of its interpretive and background information, including wide-ranging educational resources, are

available online free of charge to all. More information on the Archive can be found online at www.poetryarchive.org.