

POETRY



FOUNDATION

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**POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENTS
FIRST-EVER JOINT READING BY U.S. AND BRITISH POETS LAUREATE**

***Donald Hall and Andrew Motion to give series of poetry readings
in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and London***

CHICAGO – The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is pleased to announce that it will host U.S. Poet Laureate Donald Hall and British Poet Laureate Andrew Motion in a series of poetry readings in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and London. The transatlantic presentations mark the first time two sitting laureates have shared a stage and will take place on May 7, May 10, and June 6, respectively. The readings are co-sponsored by the Library of Congress and the London-based Poetry Society.

What: First-Ever Joint Readings by U.S. and British Poets Laureate Donald Hall and Andrew Motion

When/Where: Monday, May 7, at 6 p.m., Fullerton Hall, Art Institute of Chicago

Thursday, May 10, at 7 p.m., Coolidge Auditorium, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, June 6, at 6 p.m., St. Giles-in-the-Fields Church, London

All events are free and open to the public, but reservations are strongly encouraged; call (312) 787-7070.

The U.S. and British Poets Laureate reading series is part of the *Poetry Across the Atlantic* program, an initiative to

reacquaint the poetries of America and the United Kingdom. Both poets will read their own work as well as important works by their contemporaries. The talks will focus largely on each laureate's understanding of his country's most significant poetic voices—both established and emerging—that may be unfamiliar to readers overseas.

"These historic readings will promote critical awareness of, and a shared readership for, the contemporary poetry written on both sides of the Atlantic," said John Barr, president of the Poetry Foundation, in making the announcement. "The Poetry Foundation is pleased to be in partnership with the offices of the U.S. and the British Poets Laureate in renewing an old and integral friendship."

King James I established the office of "poet" in Great Britain for Ben Jonson in 1617, although the title "poet laureate" was not used until it was conferred on John Dryden in 1670. Historically, it has been the job of the British poet laureate to write poems commemorating state occasions or events related to the monarchy.

In the United States, the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress serves as the nation's official lightning rod for the poetic impulse of Americans. During his or her term, the poet laureate seeks to raise the national consciousness to a greater appreciation of the reading and writing of poetry. The position has existed under two separate titles: from 1937 to 1986 as "Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress" and from 1986 forward as "Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry." The poet laureate is appointed annually by the Librarian of Congress and serves from October to May.

Poetry Across the Atlantic

In addition to the U.S. and British Poets Laureate reading series, the Poetry Foundation is working to raise awareness of and interest in poetry on both sides of the Atlantic through a variety of activities and partnerships with other leading poetry organizations around the world.

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 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.

For more information, and to sign up to receive email notices of Poetry Foundation events, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.

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. For more information on these and other programs, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.

About the Library of Congress

The office of the U.S. Poet Laureate is in the Library of Congress Poetry and Literature Center. The Center stimulates and enhances the public's appreciation of poetry and the literary arts as a creative activity and as part of the Library's living and historic treasures. Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry at the Library is the highest public office for a poet in this country. Past laureate consultants include: Robert Frost, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell, James Dickey, and more recently, Stanley Kunitz, Maxine Kumin, Rita Dove, and Robert Pinsky. Founded in 1800, the Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and the largest library in the world, with more than 134 million items in various languages, disciplines, and formats. As the world's largest repository of knowledge and creativity, the Library is a symbol of democracy and the principles on which this nation was founded. Today the Library serves the U.S. Congress and the nation both on site, in its 21 reading rooms on Capitol Hill, and through its award-winning website at www.loc.gov.

Donald Hall was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1928. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1951 and his bachelor's in literature from Oxford University in 1953. He has published 15 books of poetry, beginning with *Exiles and Marriages* in 1955; his most recent is *White Apples and the Taste of Stone: Selected Poems 1946-2006*, a volume of his essential life's work. One of his books for children, *Ox-Cart Man*, won the Caldecott Medal. His 20 books of prose include *Willow Temple: New and Selected Stories* (2003), *The Best Day the Worst Day: Life with Jane Kenyon* (2005), and a collection of his essays about poetry, *Breakfast Served Any Time All Day* (2003). Donald Hall received the Marshall/Nation Award in 1987 for *The Happy Man*; both the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Award in 1988 for *The One Day*; the Lilly Prize for Poetry in 1994; and two Guggenheim Fellowships. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and lives in New Hampshire. In September 2006, Donald Hall was appointed U.S. Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry. To read more about the poet laureate, visit www.loc.gov/poetry.

Andrew Motion was born in 1952. He read English at University College, Oxford, and subsequently spent two years writing about the poetry of Edward Thomas for an M. Litt. From 1976 to 1980 he taught English at the University of Hull; from 1980 to 1982 he

edited the *Poetry Review*; and from 1982 to 1989 he was editorial director and poetry editor at Chatto & Windus. He has recently been appointed professor of creative writing at Royal Holloway, University of London. Motion has published more than a dozen collections of poetry, as well as biographies of Philip Larkin and John Keats. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and lives in London. Andrew Motion was appointed Poet Laureate of Great Britain in May 1999.