US Poets Laureate II

Instructor: William J. Joel

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1986–1987: Robert Penn Warren

Love Recognized

There are many things in the world, and you
Are one of them. Many things keep happening and
You are one of them, and the happening that
Is you keeps falling like snow
On the landscape of not-you, hiding hideousness, until
The streets and the world of wrath are choked with snow.

How many things have become silent? Traffic
Is throttled. The mayor
Has been, clearly, remiss, and the city
Was totally unprepared for such a crisis. Nor
Was I- yes, why should this happen to me?
I have always been a law-abiding citizen.

But you, like snow, like love, keep falling.

And it is not certain that the world will not be
Covered in a glitter of crystalline whiteness.

Silence.

Evening Hawk

From plane of light to plane, wings dipping through
Geometries and orchids that the sunset builds,
Out of the peak's black angularity of shadow, riding
The last tumultuous avalanche of
Light above pines and the guttural gorge,
The hawk comes.
        His wing
Scythes down another day, his motion
Is that of the honed steel-edge, we hear
The crashless fall of stalks of Time.

The head of each stalk is heavy with the gold of our error.

Look! Look! he is climbing the last light
Who knows neither Time nor error, and under
Whose eye, unforgiving, the world, unforgiven, swings
Into shadow.

        Long now,
The last thrush is still, the last bat
Now cruises in his sharp hieroglyphics. His wisdom
Is ancient, too, and immense. The star
Is steady, like Plato, over the mountain.

If there were no wind we might, we think, hear
The earth grind on its axis, or history
Drip in darkness like a leaking pipe in the cellar.

Tell Me A Story

[A]

Long ago, in Kentucky, I, a boy, stood
By a dirt road, in first dark, and heard
The great geese hoot northward.

I could not see them, there being no moon
And the stars sparse. I heard them.

I did not know what was happening in my heart.

It was the season before the elderberry blooms,
Therefore they were going north.

The sound was passing northward.

[B]

Tell me a story.

In this century, and moment, of mania,
Tell me a story.

Make it a story of great distances, and starlight.

The name of the story will be Time,
But you must not pronounce its name.

Tell me a story of deep delight.

1990–1991: Mark Strand

Keeping Things Whole

In a field
I am the absence
of field.
This is
always the case.
Wherever I am
I am what is missing.

When I walk
I part the air
and always
the air moves in
to fill the spaces
where my body's been.

We all have reasons
for moving.
I move
to keep things whole.

Answers

Why did you travel?
Because the house was cold.
Why did you travel?
Because it is what I have always done between sunset and sunrise.
What did you wear?
I wore a blue suit, a white shirt, yellow tie, and yellow socks.
What did you wear?
I wore nothing. A scarf of pain kept me warm.
Who did you sleep with?
I slept with a different woman each night.
Who did you sleep with?
I slept alone. I have always slept alone.
Why did you lie to me?
I always thought I told the truth.
Why did you lie to me?
Because the truth lies like nothing else and I love the truth.
Why are you going?
Because nothing means much to me anymore.
Why are you going?
I don't know. I have never known.
How long shall I wait for you?
Do not wait for me. I am tired and I want to lie down.
Are you tired and do you want to lie down?
Yes, I am tired and I want to lie down.

Eating Poetry

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

1995–1997: Robert Hass

Meditation at Lagunitas

All the new thinking is about loss.
In this it resembles all the old thinking.
The idea, for example, that each particular erases
the luminous clarity of a general idea. That the clown-
faced woodpecker probing the dead sculpted trunk
of that black birch is, by his presence,
some tragic falling off from a first world
of undivided light. Or the other notion that,
because there is in this world no one thing
to which the bramble of *blackberry* corresponds,
a word is elegy to what it signifies.
We talked about it late last night and in the voice
of my friend, there was a thin wire of grief, a tone
almost querulous. After a while I understood that,
talking this way, everything dissolves: *justice,*
pine, hair, woman, you and *I*. There was a woman
I made love to and I remembered how, holding
her small shoulders in my hands sometimes,
I felt a violent wonder at her presence
like a thirst for salt, for my childhood river
with its island willows, silly music from the pleasure boat,
muddy places where we caught the little orange-silver fish
called *pumpkinseed*. It hardly had to do with her.
Longing, we say, because desire is full
of endless distances. I must have been the same to her.
But I remember so much, the way her hands dismantled bread,
the thing her father said that hurt her, what
she dreamed. There are moments when the body is as numinous
as words, days that are the good flesh continuing.
Such tenderness, those afternoons and evenings,
saying *blackberry, blackberry, blackberry*.

The Apple Trees at Olema

They are walking in the woods along the coast
and in a grassy meadow, wasting, they come upon
two old neglected apple trees. Moss thickened
every bough and the wood of the limbs looked rotten
but the trees were wild with blossom and a green fire
of small new leaves flickered even on the deadest branches.
Blue-eyes, poppies, a scattering of lupine
flecked the meadow, and an intricate, leopard-spotted
leaf-green flower whose name they didn't know.
Trout lily, he said; she said, adder's-tongue.
She is shaken by the raw, white, backlit flaring
of the apple blossoms. He is exultant,
as if some thing he felt were verified,
and looks to her to mirror his response.
If it is afternoon, a thin moon of my own dismay
fades like a scar in the sky to the east of them.
He could be knocking wildly at a closed door
in a dream. She thinks, meanwhile, that moss
resembles seaweed drying lightly on a dock.
Torn flesh, it was the repetitive torn flesh
of appetite in the cold white blossoms
that had startled her. Now they seem tender
and where she was repelled she takes the measure
of the trees and lets them in. But he no longer
has the apple trees. This is as sad or happy
as the tide, going out or coming in, at sunset.
The light catching in the spray that spumes up
on the reef is the color of the lesser finch
they notice now flashing dull gold in the light
above the field. They admire the bird together,
it draws them closer, and they start to walk again.
A small boy wanders corridors of a hotel that way.
Behind one door, a maid. Behind another one, a man
in striped pajamas shaving. He holds the number
of his room close to the center of his mind
gravely and delicately, as if it were the key,
and then he wanders among strangers all he wants.

The Problem of Describing Trees

The aspen glitters in the wind
And that delights us.

The leaf flutters, turning,
Because that motion in the heat of August
Protects its cells from drying out. Likewise the leaf
Of the cottonwood.

The gene pool threw up a wobbly stem
And the tree danced. No.
The tree capitalized.
No. There are limits to saying,
In language, what the tree did.

It is good sometimes for poetry to disenchant us

Dance with me, dancer. Oh, I will.

Mountains, sky,
The aspen doing something in the wind.

2003–2004: Louise Glück

Mock Orange

It is not the moon, I tell you.
It is these flowers
lighting the yard.

I hate them.
I hate them as I hate sex,
the man's mouth
sealing my mouth, the man's
paralyzing body—

and the cry that always escapes,
the low, humiliating
premise of union—

In my mind tonight
I hear the question and pursuing answer
fused in one sound
that mounts and mounts and then
is split into the old selves,
the tired antagonisms. Do you see?
We were made fools of.
And the scent of mock orange
drifts through the window.

How can I rest?
How can I be content
when there is still
that odor in the world?

The Wild Iris

At the end of my suffering
there was a door.

Hear me out: that which you call death
I remember.

Overhead, noises, branches of the pine shifting.
Then nothing. The weak sun
flickered over the dry surface.

It is terrible to survive
as consciousness
buried in the dark earth.

Then it was over: that which you fear, being
a soul and unable
to speak, ending abruptly, the stiff earth
bending a little. And what I took to be
birds darting in low shrubs.

You who do not remember
passage from the other world
I tell you I could speak again: whatever
returns from oblivion returns
to find a voice:

from the center of my life came
a great fountain, deep blue
shadows on azure seawater.

Early Darkness

How can you say
earth should give me joy? Each thing
born is my burden; I cannot succeed
with all of you.

And you would like to dictate to me,
you would like to tell me
who among you is most valuable,
who most resembles me.
And you hold up as an example
the pure life, the detachment
you struggle to acheive--

How can you understand me
when you cannot understand yourselves?
Your memory is not
powerful enough, it will not
reach back far enough--

Never forget you are my children.
You are not suffering because you touched each other
but because you were born,
because you required life
separate from me.

2007–2008: Charles Simic

The Clocks Of The Dead

One night I went to keep the clock company.
It had a loud tick after midnight
As if it were uncommonly afraid.
It's like whistling past a graveyard,
I explained.
In any case, I told him I understood.

Once there were clocks like that
In every kitchen in America.
Now the factory's windows are all broken.
The old men on night shift are in Charon's boat.
The day you stop, I said to the clock,
The little wheels they keep in reserve
Will have rolled away
Into many hard-to-find places.

Just thinking about it, I forgot to wind the clock.
We woke up in the dark.
How quiet the city is, I said.
Like the clocks of the dead, my wife replied.
Grandmother on the wall,
I heard the snows of your childhood
Begin to fall.

Read Your Fate

A world's disappearing.
Little street,
You were too narrow,
Too much in the shade already.

You had only one dog,
One lone child.
You hid your biggest mirror,
Your undressed lovers.

Someone carted them off
In an open truck.
They were still naked, travelling
On their sofa

Over a darkening plain,
Some unknown Kansas or Nebraska
With a storm brewing.
The woman opening a red umbrella

In the truck. The boy
And the dog running after them,
As if after a rooster
With its head chopped off.

This Morning

Enter without knocking, hard-working ant.
I'm just sitting here mulling over
What to do this dark, overcast day?
It was a night of the radio turned down low,
Fitful sleep, vague, troubling dreams.
I woke up lovesick and confused.
I thought I heard Estella in the garden singing
And some bird answering her,
But it was the rain. Dark tree tops swaying
And whispering. "Come to me my desire,"
I said. And she came to me by and by,
Her breath smelling of mint, her tongue
Wetting my cheek, and then she vanished.
Slowly day came, a gray streak of daylight
To bathe my hands and face in.
Hours passed, and then you crawled
Under the door, and stopped before me.
You visit the same tailors the mourners do,
Mr. Ant. I like the silence between us,
The quiet--that holy state even the rain
Knows about. Listen to her begin to fall,
As if with eyes closed,
Muting each drop in her wild-beating heart.

2012–2014: Natasha Trethewey

Elegy ["I think by now the river must be thick"]

For my father

I think by now the river must be thick
with salmon. Late August, I imagine it

as it was that morning: drizzle needling
the surface, mist at the banks like a net

settling around us — everything damp
and shining. That morning, awkward

and heavy in our hip waders, we stalked
into the current and found our places —

you upstream a few yards and out
far deeper. You must remember how

the river seeped in over your boots
and you grew heavier with that defeat.

All day I kept turning to watch you, how
first you mimed our guide's casting

then cast your invisible line, slicing the sky
between us; and later, rod in hand, how

you tried — again and again — to find
that perfect arc, flight of an insect

skimming the river's surface. Perhaps
you recall I cast my line and reeled in

two small trout we could not keep.
Because I had to release them, I confess,

I thought about the past — working
the hooks loose, the fish writhing

in my hands, each one slipping away
before I could let go. I can tell you now

that I tried to take it all in, record it
for an elegy I'd write — one day —

when the time came. Your daughter,
I was that ruthless. What does it matter

if I tell you I *learned* to be? You kept casting
your line, and when it did not come back

empty, it was tangled with mine. Some nights,
dreaming, I step again into the small boat

that carried us out and watch the bank receding
–
my back to where I know we are headed.

History Lesson

I am four in this photograph, standing
on a wide strip of Mississippi beach,
my hands on the flowered hips

of a bright bikini. My toes dig in,
curl around wet sand. The sun cuts
the rippling Gulf in flashes with each

tidal rush. Minnows dart at my feet
glinting like switchblades. I am alone
except for my grandmother, other side

of the camera, telling me how to pose.
It is 1970, two years after they opened
the rest of this beach to us,

forty years since the photograph
where she stood on a narrow plot
of sand marked colored, smiling,

her hands on the flowered hips
of a cotton meal-sack dress.

Miscegenation

In 1965 my parents broke two laws of Mississippi;
they went to Ohio to marry, returned to Mississippi.

They crossed the river into Cincinnati, a city whose name
begins with a sound like sin, the sound of wrong—mis in Mississippi.

A year later they moved to Canada, followed a route the same
as slaves, the train slicing the white glaze of winter, leaving Mississippi.

Faulkner's Joe Christmas was born in winter, like Jesus, given his name
for the day he was left at the orphanage, his race unknown in Mississippi.

My father was reading War and Peace when he gave me my name.
I was born near Easter, 1966, in Mississippi.

When I turned 33 my father said, It's your Jesus year—you're the same
age he was when he died. It was spring, the hills green in Mississippi.

I know more than Joe Christmas did. Natasha is a Russian name—
though I'm not; it means Christmas child, even in Mississippi.

2019-2022: Joy Harjo

An American Sunrise

We were running out of breath, as we ran out to meet ourselves. We
were surfacing the edge of our ancestors' fights, and ready to strike.
It was difficult to lose days in the Indian bar if you were straight.
Easy if you played pool and drank to remember to forget. We
made plans to be professional — and did. And some of us could sing
so we drummed a fire-lit pathway up to those starry stars. Sin
was invented by the Christians, as was the Devil, we sang. We
were the heathens, but needed to be saved from them — thin
chance. We knew we were all related in this story, a little gin
will clarify the dark and make us all feel like dancing. We
had something to do with the origins of blues and jazz
I argued with a Pueblo as I filled the jukebox with dimes in June,
forty years later and we still want justice. We are still America. We
know the rumors of our demise. We spit them out. They die
soon.

Perhaps the World Ends Here

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live.

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.

It is here that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite.

Once The World Was Perfect

Once the world was perfect, and we were happy in that world.
Then we took it for granted.
Discontent began a small rumble in the earthly mind.
Then Doubt pushed through with its spiked head.
And once Doubt ruptured the web,
All manner of demon thoughts
Jumped through—
We destroyed the world we had been given
For inspiration, for life—
Each stone of jealousy, each stone
Of fear, greed, envy, and hatred, put out the light.
No one was without a stone in his or her hand.
There we were,
Right back where we had started.
We were bumping into each other
In the dark.
And now we had no place to live, since we didn't know
How to live with each other.
Then one of the stumbling ones took pity on another
And shared a blanket.
A spark of kindness made a light.
The light made an opening in the darkness.
Everyone worked together to make a ladder.
A Wind Clan person climbed out first into the next world,
And then the other clans, the children of those clans, their children,
And their children, all the way through time—
To now, into this morning light to you.

Appendix I: Origin

The Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry is appointed annually by the Librarian of the United States Congress and serves from October to May. In making the appointment, the Librarian consults with current and former laureates and other distinguished personalities in the field.

Currently, the laureate receives a $35,000 annual stipend, endowed by a gift from Archer M. Huntington. On October 3, 1985, the U.S. Congress passed legislation authored by Senator Spark M. Matsunaga of Hawaii changing the title of the position to Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry. The Library minimizes assigned duties, to allow incumbents to pursue their own projects while at the Library. The laureate presents an annual lecture and reading of his or her poetry and usually introduces poets at the Library's poetry series, the oldest in the Washington area and among the oldest in the United States. This annual series of public poetry and fiction readings, lectures, symposia, and occasional dramatic performances began in the 1940s. Collectively the laureates have brought more than 2,000 poets and authors to the Library to read for the Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature.

Each consultant has brought a different emphasis to the position. Maxine Kumin started a popular series of poetry workshops for women at the Library of Congress. Gwendolyn Brooks met with elementary school students to encourage them to write poetry. Joseph Brodsky initiated the idea of providing poetry in airports, supermarkets, and hotel rooms. Rita Dove, considered the first activist poet laureate, brought together writers to explore the African diaspora through the eyes of its artists, championed children's poetry and jazz with poetry events and read at the White House during Bill Clinton's first state dinner. Robert Hass organized a watershed conference that brought together popular novelists, poets, and storytellers to talk about writing, nature, and community, and co-founded the River of Words K–12 international children's poetry and art contest. Robert Pinsky initiated the Favorite Poem Project. Billy Collins's "Poetry 180" project distributed a poem to all high schools for every day of the school year. These poems were also collected and published in two anthologies.

Appendix II: List of US Poets Laureate

- 1986–1987: Robert Penn Warren
- 1987–1988: Richard Wilbur
- 1988–1990: Howard Nemerov
- 1990–1991: Mark Strand
- 1991–1992: Joseph Brodsky
- 1992–1993: Mona Van Duyn
- 1993–1995: Rita Dove
- 1995–1997: Robert Hass
- 1997–2000: Robert Pinsky
- 2000–2001: Stanley Kunitz
- 2001–2003: Billy Collins
- 2003–2004: Louise Glück
- 2004–2006: Ted Kooser
- 2006–2007: Donald Hall
- 2007–2008: Charles Simic
- 2008–2010: Kay Ryan
- 2010–2011: W. S. Merwin
- 2011–2012: Philip Levine
- 2012–2014: Natasha Trethewey
- 2014–2015: Charles Wright
- 2015–2017: Juan Felipe Herrera
- 2017–2019: Tracy K. Smith
- 2019-2022: Joy Harjo
- 2022 – present Ada Limón

Appendix II: Brief Biographies

Robert Penn Warren

A distinguished poet, novelist, critic, and teacher, Robert Penn Warren won virtually every major award given to writers in the United States and was the only person to receive a Pulitzer Prize in both fiction (once) and poetry (twice). Described by *Newsweek* reviewer Annalyn Swan as "America's dean of letters," Warren was among the last surviving members of a major literary movement that emerged in the South shortly after World War I. He also achieved a measure of commercial success that eludes many other serious artists. In short, as Hilton Kramer once observed in the *New York Times Book Review,* Warren "has enjoyed the best of both worlds. ... Few other writers in our history have labored with such consistent distinction and such unflagging energy in so many separate branches of the literary profession. He is a man of letters on the old-fashioned, outsize scale, and everything he writes is stamped with the passion and the embattled intelligence of a man for whom the art of literature is inseparable from the most fundamental imperatives of life." Warren was named first US poet laureate on February 26, 1986, and he served as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 1972 until 1988. He was selected as a MacArthur Fellow in 1981.

Mark Strand

Mark Strand was recognized as one of the premier American poets of his generation as well as an accomplished editor, translator, and prose writer. The hallmarks of his style are precise language, surreal imagery, and the recurring theme of absence and negation; later collections investigate ideas of the self with pointed, often urbane wit. Named the US poet laureate in 1990, Strand's career spanned five decades, and he won numerous accolades from critics and a loyal following among readers. In 1999 he was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his collection *Blizzard of One.*

Robert Hass

Robert Hass is one of the most celebrated and widely-read contemporary American poets. In addition to his success as a poet, Hass is also recognized as a leading critic and translator, notably of the Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz and Japanese haiku masters Basho, Buson, and Issa. Critics celebrate Hass's own poetry for its clarity of expression, its concision, and its imagery, often drawn from everyday life. "Hass has noted his own affinity for Japanese haiku," the poet Forrest Gander remarked, "and his work similarly attends to the details of quotidian life with remarkable clarity." Gander described Hass's gift for "musical, descriptive, meditative poetry." Carolyn Kizer wrote in the *New York Times Book Review* that Hass" is so intelligent that to read his poetry or prose, or to hear him speak, gives one an almost visceral pleasure." Hass told interviewer David Remnick in the *Chicago Review*, "Poetry is a way of living. … a human activity like baking bread or playing basketball."

Louis Gluck

Louise Glück is an American poet. She won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1993 for her collection The Wild Iris. Glück is the author of twelve books of poetry and was appointed Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 2003. The Objectivist poet, as defined by Zukofsky, strives to treat poems as an object, and to emphasize sincerity, intelligence and the poet's ability to look clearly at the world by exploiting the resonances of small everyday words. Critic Daniel Morris in Dedication to Hunger: The Poetry of Louis Glück develops the relation between economy of language and the economy of flesh through themes of starvation of the body in Glück's poetics. Poets like Emily Dickinson and Christina Rossetti have also demonstrated this poetics of anorexia minimalism in language. Read below some of her most beautiful and inspirational poems.

Charles Simic

Charles Simic is widely recognized as one of the most visceral and unique poets writing today. His work has won numerous awards, among them the 1990 Pulitzer Prize, a MacArthur Foundation "genius grant," the Griffin International Poetry Prize, the Wallace Stevens Award, and the appointment as US poet laureate. He taught English and creative writing for over 30 years at the University of New Hampshire. Although he emigrated to the US from Yugoslavia as a teenager, Simic writes in English, drawing upon his own experiences of war-torn Belgrade to compose poems about the physical and spiritual poverty of modern life. Liam Rector, writing for the *Hudson Review,* has noted that the author's work "has about it a purity, an originality unmatched by many of his contemporaries." Though Simic's popularity and profile may have increased dramatically over the two decades, his work has always enjoyed critical praise. In the *Chicago Review,* Victor Contoski characterized Simic's work as "some of the most strikingly original poetry of our time, a poetry shockingly stark in its concepts, imagery, and language." *Georgia Review* correspondent Peter Stitt wrote: "The fact that [Simic] spent his first eleven years surviving World War II as a resident of Eastern Europe makes him a going-away-from-home writer in an especially profound way. … He is one of the wisest poets of his generation, and one of the best."

Natasha Tretheway

Poet Natasha Trethewey served two terms as the 19th Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-2014). She is the author of five collections of poetry, including *Native Guard* (2006*),* for which she was awarded the 2007 Pulitzer Prize; *Monument: Poems New and Selected* (2018); *Beyond Katrina: A Meditation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast* (2010); and a memoir, *Memorial Drive* (2020). She is the recipient of fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Beinecke Library at Yale, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard. Tretheway is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the American Philosophical Society. In 2017, she received the Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities. A Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets since 2019, Trethewey was awarded the 2020 Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt Prize in Poetry for Lifetime Achievement from the Library of Congress. In 2022, she was the William B. Hart Poet in Residence at the American Academy in Rome. Currently, Tretheway is Board of Trustees Professor of English at Northwestern University.

Joy Harjo

Joy Harjo was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She earned her BA from the University of New Mexico and MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Harjo draws on First Nation storytelling and histories, as well as feminist and social justice poetic traditions, and frequently incorporates indigenous myths, symbols, and values into her writing. Her poetry inhabits landscapes—the Southwest, Southeast, but also Alaska and Hawaii—and centers around the need for remembrance and transcendence. She once commented, "I feel strongly that I have a responsibility to all the sources that I am: to all past and future ancestors, to my home country, to all places that I touch down on and that are myself, to all voices, all women, all of my tribe, all people, all earth, and beyond that to all beginnings and endings. In a strange kind of sense [writing] frees me to believe in myself, to be able to speak, to have voice, because I have to; it is my survival." Her work is often autobiographical, informed by the natural world, and above all preoccupied with survival and the limitations of language. She was named U.S. poet laureate in June 2019.

Appendix III: Poetry Terms

alliteration	the repetition of sounds in a sequence of words. (See also **consonance** and **assonance**.)
assonance	the repetition of vowel-sounds.
beat	a stressed (or accented) syllable.
blank verse	unrhymed iambic pentameter.
caesura	an audible pause internal to a line, usually in the middle. (An audible pause at the end of a line is called an end-stop.) The French alexandrine, Anglo-Saxon alliterative meter, and Latin dactylic hexameter are all verse forms that call for a caesura.
consonance	the repetition of consonant-sounds.
end-stopped line	a line that ends with a punctuation mark and whose meaning is complete.
enjambed line	a "run-on" line that carries over into the next to complete its meaning.
free verse	poetry in which the rhythm does not repeat regularly.
meter	a regularly repeating rhythm, divided for convenience into feet.
ode	a genre of lyric, an ode tends to be a long, serious meditation on an elevated subject.
simile	a figure of speech that compares two distinct things by using a connective word such as "like" or "as."
stanza	a “paragraph” of a poem: a group of lines separated by extra white space from other groups of lines.