



Chaparral updrafts

from the
California Federation
of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

serving California poets for over 60 years

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Ted Koosner named new Poet Laureate

US poet laureate for the coming year is Ted Kooser, a retired vice-president of Lincoln Benefit Life insurance company and a University of Nebraska-Lincoln visiting professor of English. His appointment was announced in mid-August by Librarian of Congress James H. Billington.

“Ted Kooser is a major poetic voice for rural and small-town America and the first poet laureate chosen from the Great Plains,” Billington said. “His verse reaches beyond his native region to touch on universal themes in accessible ways.”

The author of ten collections of poetry, most recently *Delights & Shadows* (2004), Kooser was born in Ames, Iowa, in 1939 and attended public school there before earning his bachelor's degree at Iowa State University in 1962. He taught school for one year before moving to Nebraska to pursue graduate

school. He received his master's degree at the University of Nebraska in 1968. He has lived all of his life in Nebraska and Iowa.

His career path to becoming a writer was not typical. While working on his master's, he was heavily influenced by Karl Shapiro, who had won a Pulitzer Prize for poetry and who was teaching at Nebraska at the time. However, Kooser found it necessary to drop out of graduate school and take a full-time job. He found one at the insurance company that “paid the bills and I was done at 5 o'clock every day, no student themes to stay up late laboring over. I finished my master's degree by taking night classes over the next few years.”

He stayed for 35 years, getting up at 4:30 or 5 every morning to write for a couple of hours before going off to work. Although he has been compared to Wallace Stevens, the Connecticut poet who was also an insurance executive, Kooser points out that Stevens did not have to rise so early. “He had a better job than I did. I believe he had plenty of time to write in his office.”

Kooser would occasionally show some of his work to his colleagues, and if they didn't understand the poem, he would rework it until they did. “I was completely committed to being a writer,” he says, but

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Three California sites included in National Poetry Landmarks

The Academy of American Poets announced that it has designated 31 sites as National Poetry Landmarks. “Road Trip! Poetry Landmarks across the U.S.A.” will be showcased on the Academy's website, www.poets.org, beginning August 2004, as part of the Academy's year-long National Poetry Almanac project.

The three California sites are: Berkley Poetry Walk, in Berkeley; City Lights Book Shop, in San Francisco; and Robinson Jeffers Tor House, in Carmel. Several members wrote to tell us that they had sent in nominations.

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Second Poetry Education Summit set to convene

The success and enthusiasm of the first Poetry Education Summit held July 10 in Modesto resulted in overwhelming agreement to hold a second similar meeting in southern California, providing an opportunity for greater participation as well as a chance to expand and develop some of the ideas already proposed.

This meeting was a result of member comments at our General Membership meeting at the Convention in April. Several critical remarks were made regarding CFCP's community outreach, especially to youth. It was generally felt that the efforts currently being made, while laudatory, were insufficient and inadequate, and urgent requests were made for a much broader and deeper program.

At its July meeting, the Board approved the Report of the first Summit, and agreed to the appointment of an Education Committee, following the second Summit.

Consequently, a Second Poetry Education Summit is scheduled for Saturday, September 11 at the Ontario Marriott Hotel (where we held the 2004 Convention). This Summit will be a day-long series of discussions to develop a program, some aspects of which can be implemented almost immediately. The Board would like to have at least the early stages of a program in place as part of the 2005 Convention.

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Please send news and information items to the editor one month in advance of intended publication date.

For questions involving membership, either new or renewal, please contact the treasurer.

Be sure to visit our new web site:

<http://www.ChaparralPoets.org>

Poetry Summit to meet

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If you or a friend or colleague, even a non-CFCP member, would like to attend this meeting, please make plans to join us, and let us know of your interest.

Ideas that have already been suggested include offering a continuing education program for which teachers could earn CE credit, and expanding the web site to include a section for teachers and students. We remain open to discussion of these and many other ideas, so do whatever research you wish in advance, and be prepared with facts, figures, and suggestions.

The agenda for the day:

- 9:00 – 9:30 am Meet and get acquainted
- 9:30 – 10:20 am Review of previous meeting, Board comments
- 10:30 – 11:50 am Assessing the proposals, adding new ideas
- 12:00 – 12:50 pm Lunch, R & R
- 1:00 – 1:50 pm Deciding on a set of plans
- 2:00 – 3:15 pm Breakout sessions to develop the details of action
- 3:15 – 3:45 pm Reporting back; finalizing details and commitments

The meeting will be in Room 320 of the

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Midwesterner named Poet Laureate

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quickly adds, "I have always wanted to write poems that people would understand."

He seems to have achieved that goal. Kooser, says former poet laureate Billy Collins, is a poet whose writing is clear and openhanded. "He is perhaps more interested in presenting the reader with a scene than in leading the reader on a complicated tour."

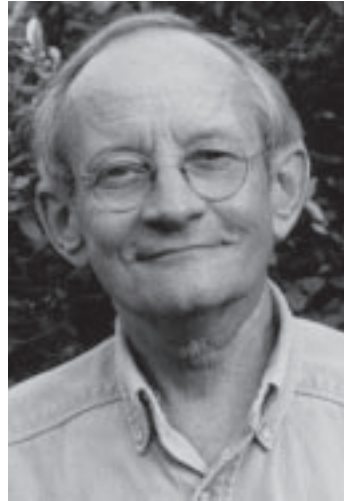
"What I think poetry can do is give people fresh ways to look at the world," Kooser says. "I attempt in my poems to take ordinary things and look at them in a new light."

Kooser's newest work is an upcoming University of Nebraska Press book, *The Poetry Home Repair Manual*, due out this fall. His other collections of poetry include *Sure Signs* (1980), which received the Society of Midland Authors Prize for the best book of poetry by a Midwestern writer published in that year; *One World at a Time* (1985); *Weather Central* (1994); and *Winter Morning Walks: One Hundred Postcards to Jim Harrison* (2000), winner of the 2001 Nebraska Book Award for Poetry.

A book of his essays, *Local Wonders: Seasons in the Bohemian Alps* (2002), won the Nebraska Book Award for Nonfiction in 2003. The book was also chosen as the Best Book Written by a Midwestern Writer for 2002 by *Friends of American Writers*, and it won the Gold Award for Autobiography in *ForeWord Magazine's* Book of the Year Awards. It was followed by *Braided Creek: A Conversation in Poetry* (2003), written with his longtime friend, Jim Harrison.

Among Kooser's other awards and honors are two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, the Pushcart Prize, the Stanley Kunitz Prize, the James Boatwright Prize and a Merit Award from the Nebraska Arts Council.

His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Antioch Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Shenandoah*, *Tailwind*, *Cream City Review* and elsewhere. His poems appear regu-



Ted Kooser

larly in textbooks and anthologies currently in use in secondary schools and college classrooms across the country.

Kooser said he was surprised and amazed to be chosen for the honor.

"I'm actually pretty overwhelmed and dazed right now... discombobulated," he said. "I feel like my phone is the switchboard for the town of Garland!" For the last 20 years, he and his wife, Kathleen Rutledge, have lived on 62 acres of hills and trees about

three miles from the village of Garland northwest of Lincoln. *Local Wonders* is much about life there.

"My poems are about the world I see about me," he said. "Poetry can offer readers fresh new ways of looking at the ordinary, everyday world."

Since retiring from the insurance company five years ago, he has had more time for writing and has published three books. He teaches poetry and nonfiction writing as a visiting professor at UNL and is on faculty for the Nebraska Summer Writers' Conference, an annual conference. He is also editor and publisher of Windflower Press, a small press specializing in contemporary poetry.

Kooser will take up his duties in the fall, opening the Library of Congress's annual literary series on October 7 with a reading of his work. He will also be a featured speaker at the Library of Congress National Book Festival poetry pavilion on October 9, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The poet laureate's job carries with it few specific duties so writers can work on their own projects. The post includes an office at the Library of Congress, a \$35,000 salary and an obligation to deliver and organize readings. Kooser succeeds Louise Glück in the one-year position. Previous poets laureate include Robert Frost, Gwendolyn Brooks, Billy Collins and Rita Dove.

"I really want to throw myself into this and do what I can to further people's interest in poetry," Kooser said. "I see part of my job as being a promoter of poetry of all kinds."

Monthly Contest Winners

Red Tide Pools

Here in these pools of being,
a far moon's dancing pull feeds
sea star, sponge, anemone.
Here leathery seaweeds
waltz in swaying harmony
with lunar gravity.
Here, my body can feel
rhythms that reveal
life's pulsing tidal needs.
Through my eyes, a plunging surge
is plugged into this world.
Through my ears, an urge
of ancient drumbeat swirls
in a retreating low ebb of tedium,
then is purged by a high abundant flood.
It's that brooding concealed sea,
that salty crash and thud
flowing through the wise tide pools
of my blood.

—Lee Collins, Glendora, CA
First Prize, June

Shadow

Here he comes all dressed in formal black,
Eyes aglow, struttin' his stuff with sass.
Not a care in the world, all is fine,
Doing his thing, not ready for mine.

He has a way of warming my heart,
Climbs in my lap and snuggles a lot.
Lovingly spoiled he leads me along,
And the joy that he brings purrs like a song.

Days when I leave, he pouts and he cries
And stares out the window with sad, saucer eyes,
Then, at the sound of my voice, he comes runnin',
His way of saying all is forgiven.

Gifts he brings me, no matter the time,
Dead or alive, to him it's no crime.
"This is my thanks, I want you to see
How grateful I am for you loving me."

Likes to be stroked and scratched on his head,
Eats anytime and sleeps on my bed.
He's no fool, he knows home's where it's at,
He is my friend, my shadow, my cat.

—David A. LaPierre, Cottonwood, CA
Second Prize, June

View from a Tour Bus Window

An early start into horizons bound
by snowy peaks, mountains which surround
frequent sights of lakes, turquoise display
overlaid by clouds, an interplay
of the imagined: a brace of fairy geese,
chased by lambs, fluffed in curly fleece;
but soon, all dissipate below, above
ephemeral as life and love.

Ravens ride the wind. We hope to see
reputed longhorn sheep, and bears free
from hibernation. It is spring. The world,
newborn, awaits like brown bears uncurled
to roam dandelion carpets on the green,
for them, we are assured, gourmet cuisine.

We ride into the moment, into now,
our eyes embracing all time will allow.

—Pearl Stein Selinsky, Sacramento, CA
Third Prize, June

Polish Poet and Nobelist Czeslaw Milosz dies at 93

Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish writer who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980, known for his intellectual and emotional works about some of the worst cruelties of the 20th century, died August 7 at his home in Krakow, according to the Polish news agency PAP. He was 93.

Milosz had lived in Krakow since the fall of the Iron Curtain allowed him to return home after almost 40 years in exile in France and the United States, during which time he became a prominent symbol for anti-communist dissidents.

An artist of extraordinary intellectual energy, Milosz was also an essayist, literary translator and scholar of the first rank. His best-known works include *The Captive Mind* (1953), a study of the plight of intellectuals under communist dictatorship. It brought him international fame.

Born to a noble family in what is now

Lithuania, Milosz lived through the World War II Nazi regime and the Stalinist tyranny that wiped out the culture in which he grew up.

A diplomat for communist Poland, he broke with the regime in 1951. In 1960 he accepted a professorship of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. He became an American citizen and lived in the Berkeley hills in a modest house with a stunning view of San Francisco Bay.

He was “a witness to crucial and terrible events of the 20th century, and an original and contrary thinker — and feeler — about them,” said Robert Hass, a UC Berkeley professor who translated Milosz’s poetry.

Throughout his life Milosz chose to compose his poetry in the complex but rich Polish language, even after he mastered French and English. Poetry can be true, he said, only if created in one’s mother tongue.

His poetry was praised for its enormous range of subject matter and technique, and its mix of sensuousness and references to culture, religion and philosophy.

“The birth of Solidarity and martial law made Milosz a myth, which he couldn’t entirely shake off — a myth of anti-communist militant, fighter for freedom,” said Milosz biographer Lukasz Stadnicki. “Even if he didn’t want it, he had to face the role of national prophet.”

Exile and the feelings of being a foreigner intensified the theme of memory in his work. He often explored the problem of roots in his writing.

At 90, Milosz said he was still up at night writing poems.

“It’s not possible to be sated with the world. I’m still insatiable,” he said. “At my age, I’m still looking for a form, for a language to express the world.”

Out of 31 National Poetry Landmarks for entire US, three are in California

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“We received hundreds of poetry landmark nominations, and we heard from people in all fifty states,” says the Academy’s executive director Tree Swenson. “We are excited to recognize points on our country’s physical landscape—from Maine to Georgia to Montana—that are important to the cultural landscape.”

Sites chosen as landmarks include poets’ birthplaces (*e.g.*, Carl Sandburg, Galesburg, IL), poetry museums and libraries (*e.g.*, the Marianne Moore Collection at the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia, PA), places of poetic inspiration (*e.g.*, Brooklyn Bridge, Brooklyn, NY), and sites that commemorate poetry (*e.g.*, Berkeley Poetry Walk, Berkeley, CA). “We tried to identify places where people can literally walk in a poet’s footsteps,” says Swenson. The nomination process was open to the public. A list of the sites selected as National Poetry Landmarks is attached.

The Academy began rolling out the National Poetry Almanac on April 1, 2004, to coincide with the first day of National Poetry Month, a program started by the Academy in 1996. The Almanac will ultimately provide 365 days’ worth of poetry highlights, activities, ideas, and history for individual exploration and classroom use. The Almanac complements the National Poetry Map,

another online project created by the Academy in 2003. Both the Almanac and Map are available exclusively at the Academy’s award-winning website, www.poets.org.

The Academy of American Poets is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1934 to foster appreciation for contemporary poetry and to support American poets at all stages of their careers. For more information on the Academy and its programs, visit www.poets.org.

National Poetry Landmarks from the National Poetry Almanac, a project of the Academy of American Poets:

1. Berkley Poetry Walk, Berkeley, CA
2. City Lights Book Shop, San Francisco, CA
3. Robinson Jeffers Tor House, Carmel, CA
4. Wallace Stevens’s home-office route, Hartford, CT
5. Key West, FL: homes of Elizabeth Bishop, James Merrill, Wallace Stevens, Tennessee Williams, & Shel Silverstein
6. Sidney Lanier’s home, Macon, GA
7. Carl Sandberg’s birthplace, Galesburg, IL
8. Green Mill Cocktail Lounge, Chicago, IL
9. Langston Hughes’s hometown, Lawrence, KS
10. Robert Penn Warren’s birthplace, Guthrie, KY
11. Emily Dickinson’s home, Amherst, MA

12. Anne Bradstreet, Salem, MA
13. Grolier Bookshop, Cambridge, MA
14. Woodberry Poetry Room, Lamont Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
15. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow House, Cambridge, MA
16. McLean Hospital, Belmont, MA
17. Edna St. Vincent Millay’s home, Camden, ME
18. Theodore Roethke’s home, Saginaw, MI
19. Robert Hayden’s bus route, Ann Arbor, MI
20. Dixon Bar, Dixon, MT
21. Robert Frost Place, Franconia, NH
22. Walt Whitman House, Camden, NJ
23. William Carlos Williams’s home and office, Rutherford, NJ
24. George Moses Horton’s home, Chatham County, NC
25. Poets’ Corner, Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, New York, NY
26. Brooklyn Bridge, New York, NY
27. White Horse Tavern, New York, NY
28. Paul Laurence Dunbar House, Dayton, OH
29. James Wright’s hometown, Martins Ferry, OH
30. Marianne Moore Collection, Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia PA
31. William Stafford’s signs along the North Cascades National Scenic Highway, WA

Don't neglect the important things!

Keep this page handy for when people ask how to join CFCP, or for your own double-checking of the monthly contest categories and rules. Both items are contained in a convenient reference source that can be copied and given to prospective new members or pinned on the bulletin board above your desk.

August being an "off" month for the newsletter, some folks may have neglected to enter the monthly contest. That's sad. With a new category every month, there are 30 chances a year to win recognition. But, of course, it *is* necessary to actually send your poems in to the Contest Chair! So keep them coming, but do notice that there's a change of address — *be sure to use this new one!*

Also, the membership year has moved into its final phase, meaning that new memberships are valid through December, 2005! Please think in terms of making a copy and giving this handy form to an interested friend or acquaintance. It can be completed and returned (along with a check) to your chapter treasurer, who will then send it in to the state.

Carry copies of this page with you and hand them to your friends and acquaintances. Leave a few at your library or on the bulletin board at the local college or university. Let's all recruit a few new members. Get the word out!

CFCP, Inc. Monthly Contests

Except where otherwise indicated, poems are limited to 28 lines

RULES

- JANUARY** — Free Verse
- FEBRUARY** — Poet's Choice
- MARCH** — Any Subject, Any Style
- APRIL** — Light or Humorous Verse
- MAY** — Poet's Choice
- JUNE** — Children, Pets or Places
- JULY** — *no contest*
- AUGUST** — Poet's Choice
- SEPTEMBER** — Any Subject, Any Style
- OCTOBER** — Any Poem 24 Lines or Fewer
- NOVEMBER** — Nature (any style)
- DECEMBER** — *no contest*

Contests are open to all poets in the United States and Canada. Each poem submitted must be typewritten on standard size paper with the contest month in the upper right-hand corner. Send ONE COPY of each poem with author's name and address in the upper left-hand corner of the reverse side. Address labels are acceptable. Multiple entries are especially welcome.

Only UNPUBLISHED POEMS and poems not previously awarded a money prize are eligible. A fee of one dollar (\$1.00) must accompany entry for each poem submitted. Send cash or make checks to CFCP, Inc. DEADLINE is the last day of the contest month. Envelope must be postmarked no later than 12 midnight of that day. *Print contest month on outside of mailing envelope.*

NOTE: *In any month wherein insufficient entries are received, those poems which were submitted will be held over and judged with the entries for the following month.*

1st prize: \$25.00 2nd prize: \$15.00 3rd prize: \$10.00

Poems will be returned only if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Allow one month after closing date of contest before sending poems elsewhere. Winning poems will be printed in the Chaparral Newsletter.

**CALIFORNIA
FEDERATION
OF CHAPARRAL
POETS, INC.**

➔ Cleo Griffith
mail contest Monthly Contest Chair, CFCP, Inc.
entries to 4409 Diamond Court
Salida, CA 95368-9632
<cleor36@yahoo.com>



YES!

I definitely want to be a member of the
California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. for the year 2004.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____

E-MAIL _____

Your membership includes all issues of the newsletter; Updrafts, free entry in the Annual Contest, Monthly Contest information, and Membership Roster every 2 years during the membership period. All memberships renew between 8/1 and 12/31 yearly. Persons joining between February 1 and July 31 will use the pro-rated formula. New memberships received between August 1 and December 31 will be extended for the following full year.

*** Those who desire to continue membership with a chapter, please remit dues to your local chapter treasurer.**

How to Become a Member

check the appropriate item:

- _____ Membership Annual/Renewal \$15⁰⁰
- _____ New Member (February 1 to April 30) \$12⁰⁰
- _____ New Member (May 1 to July 31) \$7⁵⁰
- _____ Spouse (1/2 regular member) \$7⁵⁰, \$6⁰⁰, or \$3⁷⁵
- _____ Junior (under 21; show proof of age) \$3⁰⁰
- _____ Donation (specify amount)

_____ I am interested in joining a Chapter in my area (name of Chapter) _____

_____ I wish to join as a Member-at-Large.

_____ We wish to form a Chapter of our own (5 or more Regular Members are required to form a new Chapter) to be called _____

Members-at-Large: Clip this form and mail along with a check or money order **made payable to CFCP, Inc.** to:
Frances Yordan, Members-at-Large Chairman, 2575 W. San Jose Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711-2733.

All Others: Send this form along with a check or money order **made payable to CFCP, Inc.** to:
CFCP Treasurer, P.O. Box 806, Tujunga, CA 91043-0806.

Poets&Writers provides active California Branch Office

P&W pays fees to writers giving readings or conducting workshops in New York, California, Chicago, and Detroit. Each year, the Readings/Workshops Program distributes more than \$170,000 to organizations that use these funds to pay fees to writers participating in literary events.

The California office supports organizations that sponsor writers giving readings and workshops throughout the state. While the events supported by the California Branch Office must occur in California, writers from all states are eligible for *P&W* funding. The national office of *P&W* supports events taking place in New York, Chicago, and Detroit.

The California office also produces a directory of organizations that present literary events in California and a newsletter with information useful to organizations that host literary events and to writers.

Funding for Readings/Workshops

P&W pays fees to writers giving readings or conducting workshops in California. While the funding is for writers' fees, organizations must apply.

Libraries, community centers, colleges, museums, bookstores and similar agencies are encouraged to apply for funding. Applications and guidelines are available online at www.pw.org/rw/ca/.

P&W provides support to a wide variety of writers from diverse backgrounds. Writers from all states are eligible for funding.

For more information,:

Poets & Writers, Inc., CA Office
2035 Westwood Blvd., Suite 211
Los Angeles, CA 90025
phone (310) 481-7195
fax (310) 481-7193
Ryan Tranquilla, *Director*
Cheryl Klein, *Program Associate*

Unpublished Larkin poems discovered

The discovery of hundreds of unpublished works by celebrated British poet Philip Larkin has shed new light on the celebrated writer's early career, experts said today.

"And Yet," one of a number of his works set to be published for the first time later this year, was found in a manuscript book in the vaults of Hull University.

The Coventry-born poet wrote it in 1948 as a "companion piece" to the famous 12-line elegy about his father's death: "An April Sunday Brings the Snow."

The poems were found in library archives by Trevor Tolley, a member of the Philip Larkin So-

cietly, as he researched the poet's early work.

"This is going to amaze people," society committee member Donald Lee told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

A total of 250 pages of poems have been discovered, which were written by Larkin when he worked as a librarian in Leicester.

Larkin was devastated by the death of his father, and "And Yet" was thought to have been the last poem he wrote for a long period.

"After this point he was virtually silent for about a year," said Mr Lee.

Summit meeting set

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Ontario Marriott, at 2200 E. Holt Boulevard, Ontario, CA 91761 (909-975-5000). Lunch will be served at \$14.95 each. If you plan to attend, please call president James Shuman at 209-523-6954 or hostess Marjorie Voigt at 626-799-3303 so that we will have workshop materials and lunch reserved for you.

We really need good representation from throughout the state! Anyone who has an interest in helping to develop possible areas of outreach is urged to contact president James Shuman to make certain you are included at future meetings.

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