

**NATIONAL
POETRY 
DAY 2020**

See It Like a Poet

NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed to 00:01 am 1 October 2020

NATION CALLED TO VERSE ON NATIONAL POETRY DAY

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HRH Prince of Wales shares favourite Wordsworth lines

New Margaret Atwood poem launches nationwide competition

Benjamin Zephaniah says: 'Poetry saved my life'

English Heritage turns to poetry to tell the Untold Stories of its 400 sites

BBC Local Radio stations invite nation to upload poems, inspired by Kate Clanchy

Cerys Matthews launches forthcoming album, with new poem by Belinda Zhawi

The Poet Laureate Simon Armitage awards the first ever Laurel Prize

24-Hour Poetry Lock-In hosted on Instagram Live by leading BookTuber Leena Norms

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Millions will unleash their inner poet today (Oct 1) as [National Poetry Day](#) invites the nation to share a poem, using their own words, or taking inspiration from new poetry by Margaret Atwood and lines of Wordsworth read by HRH The Prince of Wales.

Through its 40 local radio stations, the BBC is inviting millions of listeners to write and upload their own poems, inspired by a 'poem in ten minutes' masterclass by super-teacher Kate Clanchy, accompanied by five-year-old Nadim, the youngest of the young authors she has encouraged to find their own voices through poetry.

At 11am, artist Chris Riddell hosts a free [Poetry Day Live Draw](#), with special guests Brian Bilston - Twitter's favourite poet - and Foyle Young Poet Khushi Daryani.

The first ever [24-Hour Poetry Lock-In](#), a non-stop day-and-night online celebration of poetry, starting at noon, will be hosted on Instagram Live by leading BookTuber Leena Norms, with inspiring write-alongs, interviews and even a midnight feast. The Lock-In will feature Cerys Matthews previewing her new album - a poetry and music collaboration - plus poets Don Paterson, Nikita Gill and Inua Ellams, whose new titles feature on the 40-strong list of [National Poetry Day books](#).

At 5pm, the Lock-In goes international for National Poetry Day's Young Poets Showcase, when Rathbone Folio Prize-winner Raymond Antrobus will highlight the incredible poetry talent nurtured by teachers worldwide.

Susannah Herbert, Executive Director of the Forward Arts Foundation, the charity that has organised [National Poetry Day](#) each year since 1994, says: 'This year has seen an unprecedented number of people discovering their inner poet during lockdown. Poetry offers an alternative to soundbites and statistics, a way of addressing what really matters, as individuals and as communities. A shared poem creates a space for true communication, with ourselves, our friends and family, and all those separated from us by distance or confinement.'

'The interactive National Poetry Day map features hundreds of poetry celebrations across the UK, led by local libraries, schools and bookshops: care homes are connecting with school children via Gyles Brandreth's #PoetryTogether2020 initiative and English Heritage has seized on poetry to celebrate untold stories in an unprecedented link between National Poetry Day and Black History Month. Our theme this year is Vision and our invitation to all is to See It Like A Poet by finding the words to get us through a turbulent, uncertain time.'

More poetry books are due to be published around [National Poetry Day](#) than ever before, including new work by Michael Rosen, Jackie Morris and Robert McFarlane, Nikita Gill, and Inua Ellams, all on the 40-strong list of recommended poetry reads promoted via Waterstones and the Booksellers Association.

As National Poetry Day's founder William Sieghart reflects: 'Why is poetry so in demand? Because it provides us with an expression of how we feel, often more elegantly worded than we could manage ourselves, and gives us a sense of complicity, a sense of no longer being alone in our thoughts or our lives. At a time when most cultural venues have had to close their doors, poetry is thriving because it allows people to connect and communicate.'

Poet Benjamin Zephaniah agrees, saying: 'National Poetry Day helps people discover poetry: it doesn't just get them thinking about poetry, it gets them thinking about the world.'

'If I want to know what a woman's life is like, say, where can I go? I could listen to the government and I'd get a bland version of it, or I could look at some statistics, but if I want to know what they feel like when they get up in the morning, and what they feel like when they have children, or what they feel that when they go to the bathroom, poetry will tell me a lot more. I could say, without sounding too dramatic, that poetry saved my life.'

Author Margaret Atwood, who has released a poem from her forthcoming collection *Dearly* especially for [National Poetry Day](#), agrees, defining poetry as the core of her craft:

'Poetry has always been central to my other forays into language. It opens doors for me into spaces that may later be found to contain stories.'

The National Poetry Day team, in partnership with Waterstones and Penguin Random House, now invites everyone to put forward their own creative response to Atwood's poem for a chance to win a signed copy of *Dearly*. They can post a video performance of the poem, a picture or a short poem of their own, using #AtwoodNPD.

Atwood's involvement, alongside that of other artists working in a wide range of artforms - music, performance, drama, art - demonstrates the flexibility and centrality of poetry to culture.

As Sieghart adds: '2020 may go down as the year of bubbles and screens as the pandemic continues to confine many to our homes, but it has also allowed us to increase the ways in which we can reach out to others, and for many more people to understand the healing power of poetry in the most difficult of times.'

Other initiatives taking place this year, as featured on National Poetry Day's [interactive map](#), include an exclusive reading from Wordsworth's Dove Cottage by Poet Laureate Simon Armitage and the shortlist announcement for the 2020 CLiPPA (Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award), the UK's only award for published poetry for children.

Find more ways to #ShareAPoem at nationalpoetryday.co.uk.

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Media contact:

Jule Wilson, Chart.PR, on behalf of National Poetry Day

Notes to Editors

About National Poetry Day:

National Poetry Day is the annual mass celebration on the first Thursday of October that encourages all to enjoy, discover and share poetry. It is organised by the charity Forward Arts Foundation and supported by Arts Council England.

This year, National Poetry Day takes place on 1st October 2020, and the theme is Vision. We encourage you to get involved with activities nationwide on the day, to See It Like a Poet and to #ShareAPoem.

National Poetry Day generates an explosion of activity nationwide, thousands of amazing events across the UK – on doorsteps and at kitchen tables, in gardens and streets, in schools, libraries and public spaces both online and offline – all celebrating poetry's power to bring people together.

The day starts conversations, encourages love of language – and best of all, is open to absolutely everyone to join in, quietly or noisily in rewarding and enjoyable ways. As the artform's most visible moment, it showcases the ways in which poetry adds value to society.

Find out more about National Poetry Day's reach, impact and effect on poetry book sales with our leaflet, downloadable at [nationalpoetryday.co.uk/ NPD-2020-Vision-Leaflet](http://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/NPD-2020-Vision-Leaflet).



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The full lists of National Poetry Day recommended titles for 2020 are as follows:

Great new poetry books recommended for you

Antiemetic for	Ante, Romalyn	9781784743000	Chatto and Windus	Out now
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Homesickness			(PRH)	
The Air Year	Bird, Caroline	9781784109028	Carcanet Press	Out now
Postcolonial Love Poem	Diaz, Natalie	9780571359868	Faber & Faber	Out now
The Estate Agent's Daughter	Edwards, Rhian	9781781725832	Seren Books	Out now
The Actual	Ellams, Inua	9781908058782	Penned in the Margins	05/10/20
How to Wash a Heart	Kapil, Bhanu	9781789621686	Liverpool University Press	Out now
My Darling from the Lions	Long, Rachel	9781529045161	Picador	Out now
Zonal	Paterson, Don	9780571338245	Faber & Faber	Out now
Grimoire	Robertson, Robin	9781529051117	Picador	01/10/20
Cannibal	Sinclair, Safiya	9781529030235	Picador	01/10/20
Road Trip	Thompson, Marvin	9781845234607	Peepal Tree Press	Out now

Great new poetry books recommended for you and your book group

Staying Human: New Poems for Staying Alive	Astley, Neil (ed)	9781780373904	Bloodaxe Books	01/10/20
Dancing by the Light of the Moon	Brandreth, Gyles (ed)	9780241397923	Michael Joseph (PRH)	Out now
A Little History of Poetry	Carey, John	9780300232226	Yale University Press	Out now
How to Grow your own Poem	Clanchy, Kate	9781529024692	Picador	Out now
Life Support: 100 poems to Reach for on Dark Nights	Copus, Julia (ed)	9781788542845	Head of Zeus	Out now
The Fire of Joy	James, Clive	9781529042085	Picador	01/10/20
Tell Me the Truth About Life	Matthews, Cerys (ed)	9781789290998	Michael O Mara	Out now
A Portable Paradise	Robinson, Roger	9781845234331	Peepal Tree Press	Out now
Smart Devices	Rumens, Carol (ed)	9781784107796	Carcanet	Out now
Forward Book of Poetry 2021	Chosen by the judges of the Forward Prizes 2020	9780571362486	Faber & Faber	Out now

Great new poetry books recommended for young adults

Blood Moon	Cuthew, Lucy	9781406393446	Walker Books	Out now
Slam! You're Gonna Wanna Hear This	Gill, Nikita (ed)	9781529028300	Macmillan Children's	Out now
The Girl and the Goddess	Gill, Nikita	9781529104653	Ebury (PRH)	01/10/20
Run, Rebel	Mann, Manjeet	9780241411421	Penguin	Out now
Gloves Off	Reid, Louisa	9781913101022	Guppy Books	Out now
Poems to Save the World With	Riddell, Chris (ed)	9781529040111	Macmillan Children's	17/09/20
She Will Soar	Sampson, Ana (ed)	9781529040043	Macmillan Children's	Out now

Great new poetry books recommended for children

Poems Aloud	Coelho, Joseph (ed)	9780711247680	Wide Eye Editions	Out now
Zombierella: Fairytales Gone Bad	Coelho, Joseph	9781406389661	Walker Books	Out now
Fire Burn, Cauldron Bubble: Magical Poems	Cookson, Paul	9781472958150	Bloomsbury Education	Out now

Bright Bursts of Colour	Goodfellow, Matt	9781472963543	Bloomsbury Education	Out now
The Book of Not Entirely Useful Advice	Harrold, A.F.	9781526618016	Bloomsbury Children's	Out now
The B on your Thumb: 60 Poems to Boost Reading and Spelling	Hillier, Collette	9780711254589	Quarto	Out now
The Lost Spells	Macfarlane, Robert (ed) & Morris, Jackie	9780241444641	(PRH)	01/10/20
Poems from a Green and Blue Planet	Mahfouz, Sabrina (ed)	9781444951240	Hachette Children's	Out now
On the Move: Poems about Migration	Rosen, Michael & Quentin Blake	9781406393705	Walker Books	01/10/20
Welcome to My Crazy Life	Seigal, Joshua	9781472972729	Bloomsbury Education	Out now
Super Guppy: Poems for Children	Vendel, Edward van de	9781910139653	The Emma Press	Out now
Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright!: An Animal Poem for Every Day of the Year	Waters, Fiona (ed) & Teckentrup, Britta	9781788005678	Nosy Crow	Out now