

P O E T R Y



F O U N D A T I O N

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**Poetry Foundation to Name First Children's Poet Laureate**

***\$25,000 lifetime achievement award honors poetry written for children***

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation will inaugurate the nation's first Children's Poet Laureate: Consultant in Children's Poetry to the Poetry Foundation, as part of the third annual Pegasus Awards ceremony in Chicago on September 27, 2006.

The Children's Poet Laureate award will be given to a living American writer in recognition of a career devoted to writing exceptional poetry for the young child. The award aims to raise the general public's awareness that children have a natural receptivity to poetry written specifically for them which, when nurtured, can grow into a lifelong love for poetry.

"Children's poetry is an underrecognized branch of the poetry world that is largely unknown to writers and readers of poetry for adults," said John Barr, president of the Poetry Foundation. "With the Children's Poet Laureate award, the Poetry Foundation acknowledges the importance of children's poetry in the larger world of poetry."

The Children's Poet Laureate will advise the Poetry Foundation on matters relating to children's literature and may engage in projects to help instill a love of poetry among the youngest readers. The winner will receive the Children's Poet Laureate Medallion, which includes the inscription "Permit a child to join," taken from an Emily Dickinson poem. The length of the laureate's tenure is two years and includes a prize of \$25,000. The Children's Poet Laureate will also give two major readings for children and their families, teachers, librarians, and friends over the course of the two-year tenure.

Once considered a venue from which to look nostalgically on childhood, children's poetry today

has become an art form for illuminating the immediate world of the young. Today's poets are capturing children's sensibilities and experience. Generously illustrated and written with craft and wit, poetry composed for children is reaching the best-seller lists of youth literature.

The appointment of the nation's first Children's Poet Laureate will be made by the Poetry Foundation with the help of an anonymous panel of judges. The recipient of the award will be announced during the Pegasus Awards ceremony in Chicago on September 27, 2006. No applications are accepted.

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### **About the Pegasus Awards**

The Poetry Foundation believes that targeted prizes can help recognize underappreciated accomplishments and diversify the kinds of poetry being written as well as widen the audience for the art form. With this in mind, the Poetry Foundation has established a family of prizes with an emphasis on underrecognized poets and types of poetry. Inaugurated in 2004, the Pegasus Awards honor achievements not already acknowledged by other poetry prizes.

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### **About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, 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. For more information, please visit [www.PoetryFoundation.org](http://www.PoetryFoundation.org).