

## ARTS &amp; SHOW

# Poetry lovers can enjoy plenty of options in April

BY CELESTE BUSK  
STAFF REPORTER

Poets and poetry lovers have a literary rainbow of entertainment options during National Poetry Month.

One of the biggest events—the Chicago Performance Poetry Community Celebration—takes place Friday and Saturday at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington.

The celebration includes lots of entertainment hosted by city poets. There's a Head-to-Head Bag Slam competition and a Grab Bag Slam (why people can put a poem in the grab bag and someone else will read it aloud).

The Chicago Poetry Ensemble will perform at 2:45 p.m. on Friday.

Also featured will be a Poetic Confessional Booth where people can confess past poetry transgressions—like hating poetry in high school.

The punishment? "Sinners" must read poem aloud.

Programs for kids feature readings by young poets from Chicago area schools and prestigious slam champs from the Chicago Children's Museum.

The Chicago Performance Poetry Community Celebration is free. Hours are noon to 6 p.m. both days. For a schedule of events or more information, call (312) 744-6630, TTD (312) 744-2947.

Here's a local roundup of other National Poetry Month events:

- **Wednesday:** Poet and educator Debra Bruce will read from her new book *What the Wind Tells Me* (University Press, \$11.95) and poet Harvey Overton will read from his work *Notes of a Sieringer* (Hukew Press, \$3) at 2 p.m. at Northwestern Illinois University, Heritage House, Evanston. Admission is free. Call (773) 583-4050.

- **April 9:** A group of readings—"Here Me Out: Poems From Frison"—begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Guild Complex at the Chopin Theater, 1543 W. Division. The poems focus on themes of love, hate, addiction and renewal. There also will be an open microphone segment. Admission is \$5; \$3 for open microphone participants. Call (773) 278-2210.

- **April 14:** Borders Books & Music in Wilmette, at 3232 Lake Ave., will host an Open Mike Poetry Night at 7:30. Participants may read original work as well as those penned by their favorite poets. Admission is free. Call (847) 256-3220.

- **April 15:** A program of Unitarian poetry begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Guild Complex at the Chopin Theater. "Brown Eyes & Sunshine Poetics" will feature poetry readings and a performance by the John Doe Quartet



The Chicago Poetry Ensemble will perform at 2:45 p.m. on Friday at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington.

seniors, students and the handicapped. Call (312) 368-0905.

- **April 17:** The University of Chicago Press hosts readings by poets James McMichael and Alan Shapiro at 7:30 p.m. at the university's Humanities Institute. Admission is free.

- **April 17:** "A Tribute to Native American Poetry" will spotlight poet Joy Harjo (of the Muskogee Creek tribe) who will read from her anthology *Reinventing the Enemy's Language* at 6 p.m. at the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton. Linda Hogan (Chickasaw) will discuss her novel *Mean Spirit* and poetry. The free event is sponsored by the Modern Poetry Association, the Poetry Society of America and the library. Call (312) 266-3703.

- **April 18:** Performance poet Denise La Grassa entertains at 7:30 at the Guild Complex at the Chopin Theater. Admission is \$5.

- **April 23:** The sixth annual National Poetry Video Festival kicks off at 7:30 p.m. at the Guild Complex at the Chopin Theater. The rollicking and boisterous opening program is "Yo, Yo, Yo Youth Produced Video." There also will be live performances from young poets. Performance poet and writer



Jean Howard, director of the festival, will present her video, "Nazi Youth in Brugges." The festival runs through April 25. Admission: \$7; \$5 students. Call (773) 278-2210. On April 24, the National Poetry Video Slam—considered the wildest night of the Poetry Video Festival—features celebrity judges who will rate competing poetry videos in typical "slam" fashion. The audience can get in on the judging during the People's Choice Award competition. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. at the Guild Complex at the Chopin Theater. Admission: \$5; \$5 for students. Call (773) 278-2210.

- **April 25:** The National Poetry Video Festival continues at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago. Poet Andrei Codrescu will read from his works and present a sampling of his film "The Road Scholar." Later that evening there will be a screening of this year's best poetry videos from around the nation. Admission is \$12; \$5 for museum members and \$5 for students. Call (773) 278-2210.

- **April 25:** Poets Debra Bruce and Paulette Roeseke will read from their works at 8 p.m. at Borders Books and Music, 1625 Orange in Evanston. Admission is free. Roeseke is the author of *Divine Attention* (Louis State University Press, \$9.95). Admission is free. Call (847) 733-8852.

- **April 25:** The video festival's grand finale begins at 11 a.m. with a free workshop for young Chicago authors (ages 14 to 21) conducted by Codrescu. At 3 p.m. there will be a full screening of "The Road Scholar" and a review of festival highlights. Admission is \$8; \$5 for museum and Guild Complex members \$5 for students and seniors. All events are at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Call (773) 278-2210.