UNESCO Cities of Literature bring World Poetry Day into the home

These past weeks has seen a global outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19), including in many UNESCO Cities of Literature across the world. Our thoughts and admiration go out to all those who are working every day to protect the safety and wellbeing of their fellow citizens around the world.

During this evolving situation we have seen UNESCO Cities of Literature make the unprecedented, but essential move to re-design World Poetry Day on March 21 2020 so that the network can continue to celebrate as far as possible in a digital space.

**Thirteen cities of literature**, Edinburgh, Heidelberg, Kraków, Kuhmo, Ljubljana, Manchester, Melbourne, Montevideo, Nottingham, Óbidos, Reykjavík, Tartu and Ulyanovsk, have taken their World Poetry Day events online with poetry readings, flash-mobs, videos and publishing on digital platforms. The activities will honour poets and celebrate one of humanity’s most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression. Other Cities of Literature are poised ready to share and celebrate these initiatives widely across their own social media platforms.

World Poetry Day will thus be highlighted across the world, even on this troubled March 21, 2020. The Cities of Literature hope to bring moments of joy and solace to the world and to leverage the power of creativity in offering unity and strength to cities and communities during these difficult times.

**About World Poetry Day:** World Poetry Day is on March 21, and was first declared by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999, with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard.

Follow on Twitter and Facebook: #WorldPoetryDay

**Edinburgh**

Edinburgh’s Scottish Poetry Library will be sharing a poetry podcast from their collection on the house, every hour, throughout the day. Be sure to stay turned in and celebrate all things poetry. [https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk](https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk)

**Krakow**

In Krakow, they have asked a couple of poets to record themselves reading their favourite poem by Czesław Miłosz. Every day, starting from 18th March, they will publish one reading poet. They will also share the video of their ICORN writer reading in Arabic. Every post is translated into English and the translations of Miłosz's poems should be available online.

Link to the first video: [https://www.facebook.com/FestiwalMilosza/posts/2892055547496114?notif_id=1584605724703025&notif_t=page_post_reaction](https://www.facebook.com/FestiwalMilosza/posts/2892055547496114?notif_id=1584605724703025&notif_t=page_post_reaction)

The Facebook page where the videos will appear: [https://www.facebook.com/FestiwalMilosza/](https://www.facebook.com/FestiwalMilosza/)
Manchester
Manchester poets will be reading about their connection to trees and nature. Poems will be shared throughout the day. www.twitter.com/mcrcityoflit

Heidelberg
A group of Heidelberg authors decided to do a livestreamed reading with a title "Des dunklen Lichtes voll" (a Hölderlin quote: more or less saying ‘full of dark light’). It will take place on Friday 20th March (since it is the date of Hölderlin’s birthday) and they will spread the video also on Saturday to promote World Poetry Day.

The reading – organized by the authors themselves – will be hosted on YouTube on Friday from 8-9.30 PM on https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6eXx3-ZR6_fsEeR8lSkvzg

They will also try to directly share it on Facebook page of ‘LiteraturstadtHeidelberg’, here is the link to the Facebook event: https://www.facebook.com/events/238636480600022/

Furthermore and together with Mannheim and the city of Lorsch nearby, they started this year to celebrate the WPD regionally publishing their events on that day on a common website: www.metropolpoesie.de

Melbourne
A gathering of a multidisciplinary bunch of people to unpack a poem and reinterpret it as a multisensory experience. Together they will tackle the question of what can be done to deliver the most inclusively conceptualised experience of a poem. Join the launch online at https://us04web.zoom.us/s/359937613

Reykjavik
The Reykjavik City of Literature will celebrate World Poetry Day 2020 with six new poetry videos. Members of the Reykjavik based poetry collective Svikaskáld (Imposter Poets) will read a poem of choice by other poets, Icelandic or from abroad, and talk about their poem of choice. The readings will be in Icelandic as the foreign poems have been translated. The videos will have English subtitles. https://www.facebook.com/BokmenntaborginReykjavik/

Nottingham
An online celebration of World Poetry Day and World Forest Day in collaboration with Sherwood Forest. Hear narratives budding online: https://nottinghamcityofliterature.com

Ljubljana
Poet and organiser of literary events Ignor, Dejan Koban, will be reading his poetry and a selection of poems from other poets throughout the whole day - live on Facebook. Anyone who wants to do the same can join him. You can follow him on Facebook or on https://www.facebook.com/mestoliterature/

Tartu
An online event calling all people to record and poetry videos and share them. All participants and all languages welcome: https://www.facebook.com/events/707199873148254/
Ulyanovsk
A poetry flash mob will take place on social media with an appeal to readers to share poems online. Videos will be posted by local, Russian and foreign poets on social networks. Follow the social media hashtag #WPDULSK20

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