

# THE FIRST NEW YORK STATE POETRY UNITES CONTEST



New York City — After a successful six-year run in Europe, the **Poetry Unites** contest, inspired by Robert Pinsky's Favorite Poem project, is coming to New York State.

Marie Howe, the New York State Poet Laureate, and Corinne Evens, a philanthropist, in co-ordination with the Academy of American Poets, the New York State Writers Institute and the New York State Office of Cultural Education, are pleased to announce a contest for the best short essay about a favorite poem. The contest is open to all New York State residents.

## Marie Howe issues the following call to New York State residents:

- Do you have a poem you carry in your wallet? Or, in your heart? Perhaps you have a poem you taped on your refrigerator? How has this poem changed your life?

- Briefly, deeply in no more than 600 words, tell us how. Say a few words about yourself and the story of the poem.

- Are you seven, or twenty-two, eighty-two or ninety four? Are you a construction worker, a priest, waitress, doctor, student, homemaker? Are you self-employed, employed or unemployed? Whoever you are we want to hear about how one poem has affected your life.

- We believe that everyone has a favorite poem, but not everyone knows about it.

- If you do, tell us about it. If you don't, try to find the poem now. We want to hear from you.

Four individuals' essays will be selected to be featured in a series of six-minute-long film profiles, which will be posted on Poets.org and PBS's website and may be broadcast by PBS and other media. These winners will receive invitations to a celebratory film screening in New York City in October 2014.

## Poetry Unites Contest Guidelines

Participants are asked to write a two-page (or 600 word) piece about their favorite poem and its importance in their life. The selected poem should be by a published poet. The contest participant's essay can be in any style or form, but the piece should touch upon the following three questions:

1. What's your favorite poem, who wrote it, and when did you read it for the first time?
2. Why is this poem important to you?
3. Please provide some information about yourself: what does your day look like, what are your dreams, what do you expect from life?

The jury, headed by New York State Poet Marie Howe, will select four winners and each of their essays will be awarded a Certificate of Merit. The winners will each be featured in short film profiles, which will be posted on Poets.org, the State Library website, and may be broadcast by public television across the United States.

All winners will be invited to a celebratory film screening in October 2014. Travel within New York State and hotel accommodation in NYC will be covered.

Submissions should be made electronically, and should be emailed to [poetryunites@poets.org](mailto:poetryunites@poets.org). The deadline for submissions is **April 15, 2014**.

Contest winners will be announced at the beginning of May on Poets.org, and production of films of the four winners will commence. The production process will conclude in September, and the films will premiere at the celebratory film screening in New York.

## The Jury Members:

Marie Howe, New York State Poet, 2012-2014

Jeffrey Cannel, Deputy Commissioner, New York State Office of Cultural Education

Nina Darnton, Author

Donald Faulkner, Director, New York State Writers Institute

Edward Hirsch, Poet and Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets

Robert Pinsky, Poet, former US Poet Laureate and the Founder of Favorite Poem project

Ewa Zadrzynska, Writer and Filmmaker