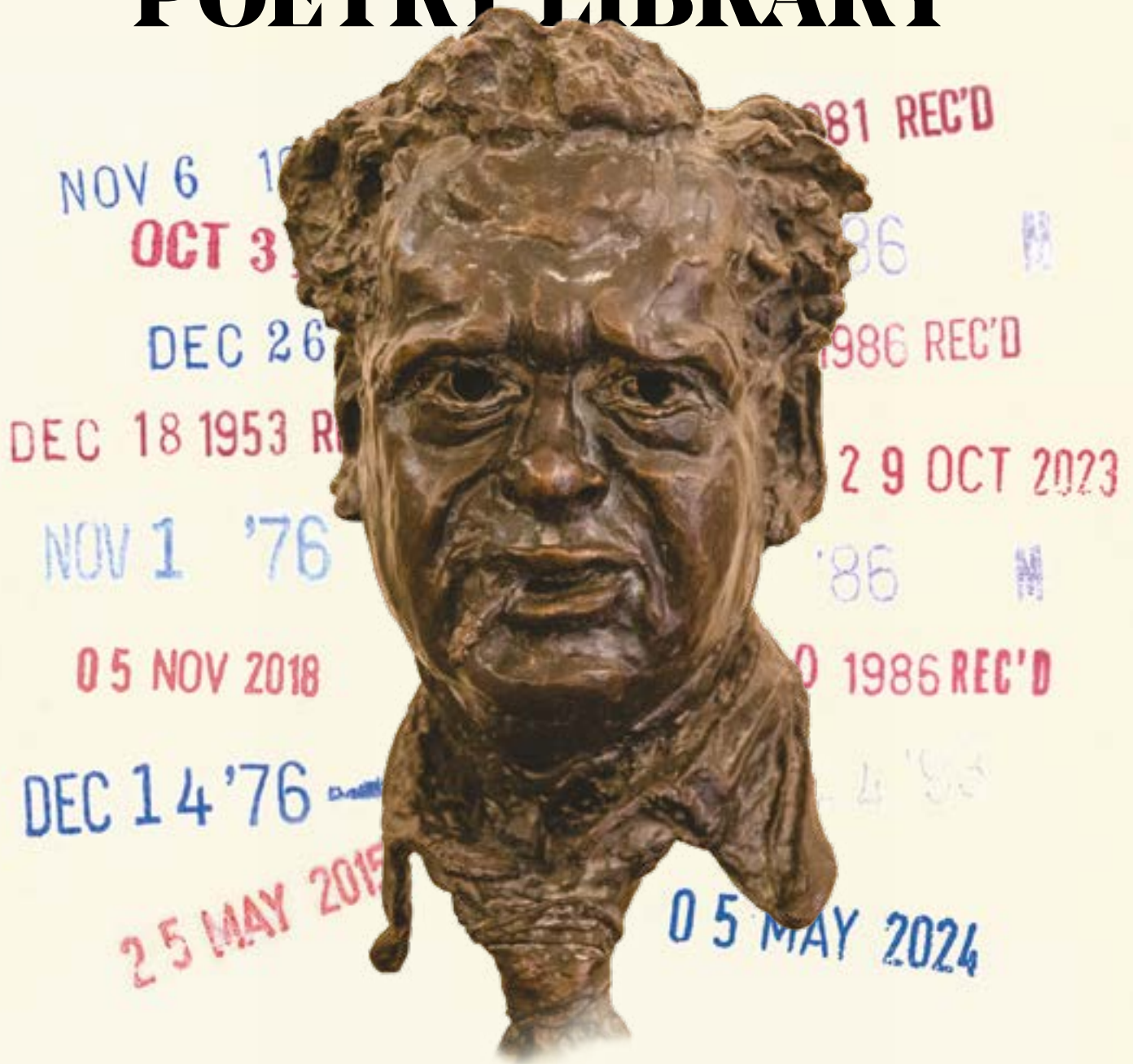


NATIONAL POETRY LIBRARY



The 70-Poet Challenge



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**

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Reader

To celebrate the National Poetry Library's 70th birthday, we are aiming to shift the nation's poetry-reading habits by inviting people to discover 70 'new' poets who have been writing and performing in the past seven decades.

For 70 years the National Poetry Library has been bringing poetry to life and connecting readers with their new favourite poems. Now it's your turn to help shape the poetic tastes of the nation.

Discover poets publishing since 1953 – from any country and writing in any language – that are 'new' to you. Include them on your list, with each name acting as a vote. When you submit your poets to the library, we'll also ask for your Top 10, so think about the poets whose work you've liked the most. The poets receiving the most votes will be invited to perform at the Southbank Centre in October 2024.

How can I get involved?

Everyone can pick up a free booklet, or download one from the library's website, and start their search for their 70 new poets.

Every month the library will provide prompts which suggest more ways that you can discover your poets, from live and streamed events to ebooks, Instagram, and readings happening in your area.

If you like an extra challenge, there is also space to write your own poem of 70 words and send it to the library. One of the new poems will be selected to be read by the author at an event in October 2024.

Send your discoveries and 70-word poems (optional) to the library before Sunday 5 May 2024.

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DO NOT TURN DOWN THE LEAVES
Borrowers finding this book pencil-marked,
written upon, mutilated or unwarrantably defaced,
report it to the librarian.

How does it work?

1. Pick up the free booklet or download from the National Poetry Library website.
2. Discover new poets and add their names to your booklet.
3. There is an extra challenge of writing a 70-word poem.
4. Send your findings and poem (optional) to the National Poetry Library using the QR code in this booklet or by returning your completed form to the email address below before Sunday 5 May 2024.

Share your findings and join the conversation using #70poetchallenge at X (formerly Twitter) @natpoetrylib and Instagram @nationalpoetrylibrary

Contact the National Poetry Library info@poetrylibrary.org.uk





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Poetry Library
on the South Bank - London



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JAN 06 1995 REC'D
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Wole Soyinka

Apoko (Akomo?)
Frost of night,
Your gradual freeze has opened the gift
Stanzas of
How many paths remain, I pray
This language paid across four thousand miles
Included as never, not marching
In the act. Justice grows in the
Landscape
I remember being like him that will never
Forget the skin coat of that creature and
Hunted in anger will, I remember
Three prison bars, Otago, New Zealand
Was in 1961, this imprisonment
Our art again. Our art again
Where is it now?
We were the three that were
The world has lost - I know
I struggle to remember the
Their words in face of
Batter me being - as
The voices long to be

Why I'm Doing the 70-Poet Challenge

Lemn Sissay


Join me and join in. *The 70-Poet Challenge* needs you. Can you find a new poet (new to you) and send us their name and the title of a poem? It doesn't matter if the poet is published or unpublished. The only question is: do you like their work? It can be a poet who writes nonsense poems or one who writes ballads suffused with anger and love, religion or anarchy. The poet could have written of nature and wrapped their poem in a folk song or harnessed it in the rhythms of a rap. Is the poet new to you and did you love their work? Then put them forward for *The 70-Poet Challenge*!

It is strange that many people seem to think most poetry is written by writers long deceased. Subsequently, poetry is the only literary genre plagued by the dead, making it a kind of zombie literary genre. Meanwhile, all poetry and most poets are alive and well. Throughout the world poetry has never been more popular. It is a living, breathing form. Zombie-less. So can you take up *The 70-Poet Challenge* and present us with new ones be they dead or alive. Join the 70 poets to celebrate our 70th anniversary. New writers and new readers are the lifeblood of poetry. Without them, poetry will die.

We love an anniversary in literature. It is the 48th anniversary of Commonword, a community publishing house in Manchester. It is the 40th anniversary of Apples and Snakes. It is the 55th anniversary of Arvon. It is the 30th anniversary of Spread the Word. It is the 27th anniversary of The Literary Consultancy (TLC). It is the 31st anniversary of the Verbal Arts Centre in Derry. But the oldest of them is the National Poetry Library. It is our 70th anniversary in 2023 and we are celebrating the oxygen of all libraries: new writers and new readers. Be part of the revolution and join *The 70-Poet Challenge* with me.



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WITH PHILOSOPHY
 HE CONTEMPLATED
 THE MOUNTAIN
 DID PROFESSOR FRANK
 ISSA

Write your own poem of 70 words and send it to the National Poetry Library using the QR code or the contact information in this booklet.

A series of horizontal lines for writing a poem.

Discover more poets

The National Poetry Library's extensive collection covers the period 1912 to the present day. You can find all of the major poets of the 20th and 21st centuries, along with a whole range of emerging and overlooked poets writing in the last 70 years.

Other places where you can find new poets:

YouTube

Instagram

Your local library

Your local bookshop

In music

In visual art

Live events

Recommendations from friends



You can also share your findings and poem [here](#)

Share your findings and join the conversation using #70poetchallenge at X (formerly Twitter) @natpoetrylib and Instagram @nationalpoetrylibrary

Contact the National Poetry Library info@poetrylibrary.org.uk

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