

Poetry April 2022

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Erin 00:18

Hello, everyone, and welcome to our podcast for April which is poetry month. My name is Erin and I am a teen services librarian at the Clinton-Macomb Public Library. And I'm going to be talking with Kate Brown today. Welcome, Kate, you want to get us started and tell us about our poetry while coming up?

Kate B 00:38

Sure, I'd be happy to. Like Erin said, my name is Kate Brown. And I work here at the main library. And one of the things I do at the library is buy the 800 section, which includes poetry. So, there's always something new in poetry. And if you have any suggestions, I'm happy to hear them. The Poetry Walk is a really special project. I can't say it was my idea. But I was asked to help find poems for the poor too. And we're about to have our third year. This is a partnership between the library and our friends over at the Tomlinson Arboretum, we find poems, print them on a nice template that our person does here, then we laminate them. And they get attached to holders and placed by benches in the Arboretum, which is right across the street from the Main Library. So, this year, there are 26 poems, and six of them are by winners of the library's poetry contest. And we had some wonderful poems submitted, particularly the adult category, we had 10 poems that were all nice poems. It was difficult to pick what we thought was the best one. But I think when people see it, they'll respond to it the way that the judges responded to it this year. And we do hope that everyone who entered the contest, or anyone who even enjoys poetry a little bit will come to our reception, that's going to be on May 22. It's a Sunday at three o'clock. And what we're hoping is that people who entered, not just the winners, but anybody who submitted to the contest, will read their work, you can...if you have a favorite poem, and you didn't write it, you could come and read that as well. So, we'd have a few poems read, and we'll have some refreshments, the winners will get their prizes there. And then if people want to, they can join us in walking across the street, to see some of the poems over at the arboretum. They will be up by then. That's May 22, they go up in the middle of May, and they're up all summer long and come down in the middle of September. So, in addition to the six poems that are by our community members, and those range from K to two to adult, so we had by...by grade level. But there are also classic poems, modern and recent poetry, poems that are especially for kids. And they all have something to do with nature. They either lightly touch on the topic, or that really is the theme of the poem. And a lot of them have a sort of magical, mystical quality. At the end of the podcast, I'll read one of those that I think fits that very well. But first, Erin is going to talk about something special, which is young adult novels that are written in verse.

Erin 03:48

Yeah, absolutely. I want to get started on that. But I do have a couple questions for you. So this poetry contest that we have, is this going to be an annual competition? Or...

Kate B 03:58

I, you know, I don't know if we're going to do it again, this was the first year and I haven't heard yet, you know, if we want to do it again. It is a certain amount of work and, and somewhat painful when you have been a judge, but...but I thought you were pretty well, we did get entries, no high school entries, but we had entries from all the elementary divisions, as well as the middle school division. And of course, the adults we had 10 poems from the adults. So that was, that was the hardest one that we had to choose.

Erin 04:32

What was criteria for submission like did it have to be a certain length or...?

Kate B 04:37

Yes, we try to print the poems that we have in the Arboretum in the 18-point font. There are a couple that this year I noticed aren't quite able to get that large. But you know, it's the idea is you're walking in the Arboretum, you're not sitting down with your glasses on necessarily ready to read a book. You're going for a walk maybe with your dog or your family, or a friend or whatever. And you come upon a poem and you read the poem. So, we do want to make it easy on people. So, there is a, there was a length requirement that it had to be fitting onto, we printed on legal size paper. So, eight and a half by 13.5, I think it is, I think of it as 14, and then in 18 font, so all of the poems in somewhere were much shorter than that only a couple really kind of ran to the limit. And then they had to do a tree of nature. And again, that there can be somewhat loosely defined, it could be in as a metaphor, or it could be, you know, literally about trees. And there were all of those.

Erin 05:47

That's awesome. That's clearing. I'm really looking forward to reading some of those poems.

Kate B 05:52

Okay.

Erin 05:54

So, yeah, I have actually novels and verse in young adult literature have been around for quite a while. Although recently, there's definitely been a resurgence of them. I'm going to do like short book talks on ones that we have in the collection. And then I'm gonna talk a little bit longer about ones that I personally have read that I really recommend. So, let's get started. And the first two authors of course on like, the recommended list are ones that I'm going to talk about quite a bit. So, the first one I will mention is, we have our collection is Every Body Looking by Candice Iloh. And basically, the story is about Ada who is part of a religious Nigerian immigrant father, and African American mother, and her mother is grappling with substance addiction, which affects the relationship with Ada. In this novel, it really draws heavily on life experiences. And it's a lot about body image, belonging, and identity. So I highly recommend this title. A lot of buzz in the young adult community and recommended by a lot of librarians to Alright, um, one that I have found my to read list that I have not read yet is Punching the Air by Ibi Zoboi, Ibi Zoboi became really well known in Michigan, because one of her first books that she wrote was actually set in Michigan and <unintelligible> I'm gonna go ahead and didn't have it just occurred to me about that book, and I don't have it up. So I'm gonna go ahead and bring up her...Yes, it was called American Street. And it was on like a lot of awards, was one of the community reads for some libraries in

Michigan. It was a national court finalist, five-star reviews, and it won all kinds of awards. So, on the corner of American street and Joy Road, Fabiola Toussaint thought she would finally find "une bonne vie," a good life. But after they leave Porter Prince, Haiti, Fabiola mother's attained by US immigration leaving Fabiola to navigate her loud American cousins Chantal, Donna, and Princess, the grittiness of Detroit's west side, a new school, and a surprising romance on her own. Just as she finds her footing in this strange new world, and dangerous proposition presents itself and Fabiola soon realizes that freedom comes at a cost. Trapped at the crossroads of an impossible dream, will she pay the price for the American dream? So, she's well known for that book. After that, not all of her novels are in verse. She wrote *Pride*, which is a *Pride and Prejudice* remix. Starring Black main characters, which is super exciting and awesome. And then. So, book in this book, *Punching the Air* is she partnered with Yusef Salaam, and it follows a wrongfully incarcerated black teen and his fight to change the trajectory of his life. With gorgeous, lyrical writing and a powerful message, this one will leave you changed. So, this keeps moving up on my to-read list. And hopefully I'll get to in the next month or so, but I can't wait.

Kate B 09:41

Those all sound really good. So, when a novel is written in verse like that, does it actually rhyme? Or is each part like a poem?

Erin 09:50

Some does. Yeah, actually. So, each section is like a poem. Which is like it and when you actually look at it on the page, it does look like...each page looks like poem. Which is funny because when it's actually read, it reads kind of as a novel like you, like you can tell how lyrical and beautiful it is. And you can see the poetry in it, but at the same time, it reads as like a full novel.

Kate B 10:21

Those sound wonderful.

Erin 10:22

Yeah, there's a couple more. One that I again is on my to read list I haven't gotten to by Joy McCullough is a historical verse novel called *Blood Water Paint*. And it's based off of the life of renowned Italian painter Artemesia Gelent...I'm gonna totally butcher this last name, gentle...Gentileschi, I think, whose life was changed after sexual assault. And it's really an exploration of art, misogyny, and women reclaiming power. And I've heard so many good things about that, that's been on my list for a while too. One more short one and then...which this I have to recommend is on our nonfiction, it's actually this is a verse memoir. It won a Printz Honor and several other awards. And for those of you that don't know, Printz is the equivalent of the Newberry for teen books. So, it's the best teen book that was written that year. And in this verse memoir, Nikki Grimes, she recounts her traumatic childhood first with a schizophrenic mother and then bouncing through foster homes. At age six, she discovers the power of words and writing, and an art form preserves her spirits and gifts us with the writer that we have today. She just she writes beautiful novels, that one is definitely not miss. And then my absolute two favorite authors of novels, and verse is Mahogany Browne, who I was able to briefly meet and fat with. She wrote *Chlorine Sky*, which came out last year, and it's about, it's a young girl coming of age and stepping out of the shadow of her former best friend. And one thing I really like about this, as you can tell, that it's really from written from the community that she grew up and kind of, um, it has a little bit of an AVE, if you're not familiar,

it's African American Vernacular English. So, it has a so you kind of feel like you're in that world you're in, you're getting an inside look at, okay, there's this black teen girl, this is her life. And this is what she has to go through and deal with. And, but it really does hit home with all of us when it talks about those teenage years of maybe you're, you don't see eye to eye with a best friend and you're growing at different rates, and you go through that whole...maybe I'm losing my best friend, and are we going to see an eye or maybe this is a juncture where we're no longer going to be friends because we're becoming two different people. So, I really like how relatable it is. But for those of you that haven't read a lot of even just...just Black literature in general like it just have some of that American African American Vernacular English, which is great to just get you...you know, more familiar with Black culture. So of course, last but not least, is Elizabeth Acevedo, which a lot of people are familiar with, she wrote *The Poet X*, *Clap When You Land*, *With the Fire on High*, she's going to have the most well known poem published, and it's called *Inheritance*. And I'm looking forward to reading that I don't think I've actually heard her perform it or read it before. I recommend all of them she reads all of her own audio books, *Clap When You Land* is her most recent novel, which is actually about two sisters that don't know about each other. Because their dad lives one life in the Dominican Republic and another life in America. Or, oh, man, I can't remember if it's America or Canada. No, it is New York, okay. And the other in New York, and they learn about each other. It's actually won Audio Book Award. So, I definitely recommend if you if you like listening to audio to listen to the audiobook, and because there's two different characters, Elizabeth Acevedo got one of her really good friends to marry the other main character, and she's just as amazing. So those are all my recommendations. I know there were so many of them. So, in the transcript of the podcast, Jamie will have listed all of the titles and the authors that I have recommended. So, Kate, do you want to kind of conclude us with a poem?

Kate B 15:29

Yes. I just wanted to ask one thing though, about the audio. Do you have those as a downloadable audio any audio or do you have them on CD? Or some of these? Oh, yeah.

Erin 15:41

So, yes, Elizabeth Acevedo I believe we have all in CD and e-audio. The other ones we mostly have and e-audio on OverDrive. Some might be found in hoopla though, too.

Kate B 15:58

Yeah, the e-audio is is really great for people who want to, you know, just download, especially these kind of short books and, and verse is, you know, wonderful to hear out loud. So I think you know, that that is going to be a great experience. And you can download those right to your phone or, you know, device, whatever. And, you know, be walking around and listening or doing something boring at home.

Erin 16:22

Yeah, I think like a lot of people think like you need to like travel or commute and I do so I do get more read that way. Cuz listening audiobook is reading. But you like I'll do it while I'm doing chores at home while I'm folding laundry while I'm doing the dishes. You can you know, listen to it on a headphone, you can have a speaker if nobody's around to, to disturb. And you can just do it all the time. If you're going on a walk. Some people like to listen to music. I always listened to audiobooks.

Kate B 16:56

My husband usually had to...Oh, yeah, my husband listens to audiobooks when he's walking the dog. And, and I have a friend here at work who says oh, yeah, when you're, you know, doing your household stuff. That's great. So I guess I'm one of those who, well, I don't really have much of a commute anymore. But certain things I think are really worth listening to. And those sound great. I mean, you could read it too. But I do like that idea of hearing diverse it's...it's really wonderful like that.

Erin 17:25

Yeah. When it's like the author that reads their own work. You really get the intention.

Kate B 17:32

Right, right, the emphasis is going to be where they want it to be. So, I was talking about the poetry walk. And, I'm not a great reader, but you can enjoy hearing this poem, I think it's a it's interesting poem is called Silver. And it shows...it's one that I used to the poetry work that I actually pulled out of a book of poems for children, here at the Main Library, maybe the branches as well. But definitely the Main Library has a great collection of poetry for children, old fashioned stuff, and modern stuff. And this is an older poem. The author is an English poet, Walter de la Mare. He lived from 1873 to 1956. And he is best known for his poems for children, although he's also noted for short, short stories, which are sad, they called psychological horror. So that should be interesting. I haven't read any of those. But I was really taken with this particular poem, and did get to include it in this year's poetry walk. There is one word that in the poem, you know, it's an older poem that we don't use anymore. And it's shoon s-h-o-o-n. And I had to look it up, shoon, if you can kind of tell what it might be from the context. But all that means is shoes. It's an older version of saying shoes. So here's the poem Silver by Walter de la Mare.

Slowly, silently now the moon
boxes the night in her silver shoon
This way, and that she appears and sees
silver fruit upon silver trees,
one by one the casements catch
her beams beneath the silvery thatch.
Crouched in his kennel like a log
with paws of silver sleeps the dog.
From their shadow we cooped the white
breast peep of doves in a silver
feathered sleep,
a harvest mouse goes scampering
by with silver claws and a silver eye
and moveless fish in the water
gleam by silver reeds in a silver stream.

So that's the poem silver Walter de la Mare. And I think I picked a few poems this year that have sort of that mystical, magical quality. And you can see where it's about nature, but not very specifically so but it's about the way that the moon looks at night. And that one was intended for children. But I think now these days, we all we all would like, oh, there is one more thing about the few one another kind of poetry walk preview stop by the Main Library, on the second floor in April. It's National Poetry Month in April, and I always get to do the display. And I include little verses a few verses. And this year, I'm really trying to include more from the poetry walk poems. So, some and I, they're just such great verses unto themselves that I'll still put those up. But there will be some little snippets of poems that are in the poetry box. So, you might see something that intrigues you and decide to go out and read the whole poem and in nature in May, but that's all I have.

Erin 21:09

I'm so excited. I definitely want to do this poetry walk. I actually have never been to the arboretum, so I need to take advantage of that and walk around.

Kate B 21:16

Yeah, yeah, it's lovely. It's sort of in two parts, but you can just have to across the street to get to the second part. And, you know, some people will go and maybe see the first few poems and then some people see all 26 on the same day, but it should keep you busy over the summer looking at those poems.

Erin 21:36

Alright, so if you happen to stop into the Main Library and happen to see Kate or I, definitely ask us for recommendations and we'll all be healthy, happy to give you some YA novels in verse and key can be used in adult poetry to listen to particularly.

Kate B 21:58

Thank you. Bye bye.