

April 2021 Podcast

Fri, 4/9 8:32AM • 26:39

Kate M 00:14

Hey, everybody, welcome to our ANF podcast today. My name is Kate M., and I'm here with all four librarians from the adult nonfiction department. You guys can go ahead and introduce yourself so we'll know your voice.

Kate B 00:29

Hello, I'm Kathy.

Kathy 00:32

I'm Kathy Champieux.

Uma 00:35

I am Uma Ravishanker.

Kate M 00:40

I'm not sure who's aware that April is poetry month. So this month, we're really excited to talk to you guys about a variety of topics in the realm of poetry. And we're actually going to start out today with a song.

Uma 00:55

Okay, good afternoon, everyone. I am going to start off a little different today with a song <singing>

Kathy 02:02

Congratulations. Oh my gosh, that was so pretty. I mean, that...okay, so obviously that was in, let me guess, Bengali.

Uma 02:15

That is Indian National Anthem in Bengali language.

Kate M 02:19

It's a nice song.

Uma 02:20

Thank you. It's a national anthem, Indian National Anthem...

Kathy 02:26

I was just going to say, why did you choose that Uma? For poetry?

Uma 02:32

Because he, the person who wrote this national anthem, was a great poet, famous poet. His name was Rabindranath Tagore, who's a poetry man. So I thought I will introduce this poet to all of us, Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, he is from West Bengal. He is a Bengali poet. But he had he was he had written this the national anthem as well. And he was born actually in 1861. On May 7 1861, and has inspired generations of people through his poetry writings and thoughts.

Kathy 02:39

Well, Oh, I hate to take over you guys. Sorry, I was just going to ask her if she would mind giving us the translation in English.

Uma 03:22

Of course, I can do that.

Kate B 03:24

I think I heard the word Hindu. In the beginning, I heard Madras in the beginning and something. So they're still talking about different states the way that we have the United States of America.

Uma 03:40

Yes, yes. Your character, Kate, you guessed it, right. Because it's a big country. And we have a lot of states and each state speak different language. And there are so many rivers and all the Himalayan mountains, you know, you know, the famous mountain Himalayas. So he put all those things together, and he wrote this song, and I can read out the meaning for this. For the song, Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, dispenser of India's destiny. The name rouses the hearts of the Punjab, it's a state, Sindh, Gujarat and Murata after Dravid and worry sir and Bengal. It calls in the hills of India's Linda is a hill. It's the name of the hill and Himalayas mingles in the music of the Jamuna, that is Yamuna River, and the Ganges and is chanted by the waves of the Indian sea. Yeah, yeah, thank you The pray for the blessings and sing by the price. The savings of all people weights in Dae Han, Thao dispenser of India's destiny, victory victory, victory to thee, because we got the independence on January 24. He released this song because January 26 was he in a Republic Day although India got independence August 15, 1947, but still Britishers were ruling the country and they left that completely. They left the country only on January 26. So that day again, they celebrated as a Republic Day.

Kate M 05:34

Cool. Oh, wow. He originally wrote it as a song or was it like a poem that was later set to music or something?

Uma 05:40

No, he wrote it as a song. And then they put all the music and everything and they made a national anthem.

Kate B 05:47

Yeah. Francis Scott Key wrote the lyrics to the Star Spangled Banner. He was also author of different type but a poet. But he did not write the music to the Star Spangled Banner that was an an old song. It's, what's it called?

Let's see, to Anacreon in heaven and Anacreon were a gentlemen's club, really. So the tune was an old tune that the Star Spangled Banner has and he wrote the lyrics, of course, for the war of 1812. So he didn't write the music as well. But in the case of the Indian National Anthem, I believe he did write the music as well. And what about the dead poet is such an important person because he was the first...

Uma 06:37

Yes.

Kate B 06:39

Non-European to win a big prize.

Uma 06:44

Yes, he got there. Very good. And Nobel Prize.

Kate B 06:47

Nobel Prize in Literature. Yeah, yeah. Well, I just ordered the book that he won the Nobel Prize for, we were kind of underrepresented in Indian poetry. So I have a few things in a cart right now. So those of you who are interested in that might enjoy seeing some more of his work, as well as a compilation of Indian love poems by a variety of authors. So I appreciate Uma for making sure that our collection has everything.

Uma 07:20

Thank you very much, Kate. And I would like to mention here what worked like he got a Nobel Prize for his famous work. That name is *gitanjali*. That name is determined solely for that he won the Nobel Prize for that literature in 1913, he received prize for that.

Kathy 07:39

I have I have one little factoid question for you, Uma. And that is when you were talking about the famous mountains and you said Himalaya, right? Is that, the ones that we pronounce in English as Himalaya?

Uma 07:56

Yes. Oh.

Kathy 08:00

Oh, really?

Uma 08:03

Right.

Kathy 08:03

Oh, gosh.

Kate M 08:05

So that doesn't sound smart and pronounce it the right way.

Kathy 08:08

Yeah. And then people go, just trying to be uppity or something.

Kate B 08:15

The poet who wrote the Indian National Anthem, he founded a university and it's still there. It's 99 years. Yeah. And foreign students can go there and get a certificate in different areas of study of India. Very interesting.

Uma 08:32

Yeah. Thank you very much. And I really happy that you came to know one of our Indian poets here. Now today...

Kathy 08:44

Yeah, it's great, because every time we have talks like this, I learn something new.

Kate M 08:51

So something that's kind of related to that, that I've been exploring a little bit, just in preparation for this is like, as far as song lyrics go, what counts as poetry and what doesn't? Just like you mentioned, excuse me, winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, Bob Dylan won it in 2016 for like, his whole body of work. So I guess I'm sort of thinking about where do you draw the line between what lyrics count is poetry and what's just like pop or more like fluff type stuff?

Kate B 09:23

I mean, it's really good. It's a poem. It's not so good. It's just a lot of repetition is just lyrics.

Kate M 09:32

Most pop music is just lyrics. But there's some good stuff. But yeah, I have this book and it was picked as a Michigan notable book last year. It's called Respect: The poetry of Detroit music.

Kathy 09:45

Oh.

Kate M 09:46

And I just think, you know, because I've never been huge into poetry personally. But I think something like this is like a really good introduction for someone who's maybe reluctant to get into poetry because like, some of them are poems about the music of Detroit or just about, you know, Detroit and listening to music in Detroit, all that. But then they also never compiled this also included some song lyrics. So like, there's Motown song lyrics interspersed throughout. They've got...

Kathy 10:17

The best!

Kate M 10:18

Yeah, this made me laugh that they included this. Do you guys remember the rap battle scene in the movie? Eight Mile? With Eminem?

Kate B 10:26

Oh, yeah.

Uma 10:28

Yes. So

Kate M 10:29

The song he's saying it was yourself, which there's all over the internet about it now about how he's talking about throwing up mom's spaghetti. That's included in here. an Eminem, lose yourself.

Kate B 10:42

Oh, okay. And that was, that was in the rap battle. I do remember a rap battle.

Kate M 10:47

And then the poem that they included right after that is an original that somebody wrote called Haiku for Eminem.

Kathy 10:53

Oh, oh, oh,

Kate B 10:56

It's only haiku, it's probably only three lines.

Kate M 10:59

It looks like it's actually about 20 haikus in a row.

Kate B 11:02

Oh,

Kate M 11:03

I'll just read the first couple. Okay, Slim Lim LP ruled. It came right out of the blue. You were a cipher, happy music and self loathing and all those words made for good music. And then it goes on. But oh, well, it's somebody wrote a haiku about him,

Kathy 11:21

I think a few years ago, and I think it was back, because I have a picture of myself still working at old South. So it would have been in early 2000s. And it was proposed, and it's really vague about this, but I'm pretty sure it happened. That Bob Dylan be declared the poet laureate for one year, that year, whatever year that was.

Kate M 11:46

Was it the same year that he won the Nobel Prize?

Kathy 11:49

I don't know.

Kate M 11:50

Oh, no because that was just 2016. So it was a long time ago that you would have been at South.

Kathy 11:56

And, and I remember there being a lot of controversy, and even I thought, I don't know if he deserves to be the poet laureate, considering all the other wonderful poets. I mean, ya know. And so I was not enthused about that. And he never he didn't make it. You know, I think it was just a little too controversial.

Kate M 12:16

Yeah. And that reminds me of, I totally forgot about this before, but I think Leonard Cohen was a poet before he ever even started making music.

Kathy 12:25

Right. His lyrics are awesome. Oh, yeah. And I had a friend who used to talk about Leonard Cohen. And, and I love him. Decadently dep...whatever it was, it was decadent depression or something just slightly depressed, you can just dive into Leonard Cohen.

Uma 12:49

Oh yeah.

Kate M 12:49

I remember that I watched a documentary about him, like, probably a decade ago or something. And they were interviewing him. And he said, there's this misconception that I'm a ladies' man. This misconception that I cursed in the 1000 nights I spent alone.

Kathy 13:07

I'm so sad because he died too young.

Kate M 13:09

He did. Yeah.

Kate B 13:11

Yeah. I love that love's not a victory march.

Kate M 13:14

Oh, yeah.

Kate B 13:15

Yeah, it's a great line.

Kathy 13:17

Oh, I loved the Tower of love was one that's great. And then there's another one. It's real, irreverent. Oh, yeah. couldn't say the things out loud that he said in it. It would be offensive. But yeah, he's wonderful. If anybody ever wants some awesome lyrics slash poems, Leonard Cohen's your man too? Yeah.

Freegal Commercial 13:41

Are you a music lover? Try freegal. You can download five free mp3 songs every week. No need to return. You can also stream music for five hours every day and make playlists. Check it at cmpl.org.

Kathy 13:59

I too, was not a huge fan of poetry until Kate Brown. And you can catch her readings, did some readings on our Facebook. And if you go back through time, when we first started from last year, there are I don't know how many did Kate but there were four or five that were such fan favorites. I'm not kidding. She had a fan club. So at any rate, I guess what I'll talk about is an experience that my daughter and I had when she was in high school. Katie went to a really nice high school and she had an English class and it was in comprehensible for her the poetry readings that she had to do. And so what I did to help her out was we would sit at in the in our back room here our living room and we would go over Each poem, okay, this isn't too long a story, and I would read it out loud. And then we would try together to figure out what it was about. And just by reading it out loud, and then we used, you know, she used a couple of helps from the internet, then it was so much easier for her to figure it out. So by the very act of reading it out, and working together on it, she managed to really do well in that class. But the sad part was the teacher thought she cheated. And so in class, she made the teacher was didn't like her very much at any rate, and said something like, well, if anybody doesn't understand it, just as Katie she's the expert. Oh, my God, obvious dig. That's, that's what we get, because I was very conscious of not cheating and helping her, you know, to understand but in a very reciprocal way. So that sounds like that teacher lacks maturity. Yes, I know. Well, that was a long time ago, you know, but, um, at any rate, but the poet that I do, like, and I was introduced to several years ago is Billy Collins, we have most of his books. He was a poet laureate, for two years in a row. And one of the reasons I like him is he's so understandable, he's accessible. There's some gentle humor that runs throughout his poetry. And he really likes the fact that he said, when there was an interview that he likes to talk in his poems, like he's talking to a person, and, you know, not using a lot of metaphor and things that the average person wouldn't get. So he's very straightforward in his poetry. So I'm going to read one of his poems, and you'll see what I mean. And the poem is called The Dead. Okay, it says the dead are always looking down on us. As they say, while we are putting on our shoes or making a sandwich, they are looking down through the glass bottom boats of heaven. As they row themselves slowly through eternity, they watch the tops of our heads moving below the earth. And when we lie down in a field or on a couch,

drugged by perhaps by the hum of a warm afternoon, they think we are looking back at them, which makes them lift their oars and fall silent and wait, like parents, for us to close our eyes. So...

Uma 17:35

Oh, great. Nice. Job, Kathy.

Kathy 17:40

Thanks. Well, I'm not the best reader. But so in a nutshell, that's totally understandable. And that's why I like him. And all of his poems are kind of like that most of them are longer. So I didn't want to, you know, read a really long one, but I think that you would really enjoy his poetry. We have plenty by him in the library. And as I said, he's very popular, very well known, and was Poet Laureate. So...

Kate M 18:08

Yeah, I noticed at least one or two in the display.

Kate B 18:11

Yeah, yeah. made a whole Billy Collins little shelf. I think there's three of his books up there. And there's one book that we have Aimless Love on CD. So I have seen him himself. I don't I don't remember the reader, but I hope it's him because he reads his work very nicely in that same kind of understated normal, you know, modern sound, you know, and right, really a great a great place to get into poetry because he is so accessible, and yet really excellent.

Kate M 18:45

Right? I like that. You don't have to guess what he's getting at.

Kate B 18:47

Right? Right. No, it's straightforward. For sure.

Kathy 18:51

Well, okay, one more thing. I was going to say sorry, because I just thought of something. Another thing. I fell in love with a poem in college by William Blake. And I can recite the first stanza Tiger Tiger burning bright in the forest of the night. What immortal hander I could frame they fearful symmetry. That I don't know, it just gives me goosebumps, you know, and then the rest of the poem is, you know, fairly straightforward, simplistic, I thought. I was doing the research for this podcast, I looked up that poem, it was too long to read, but it talked about all the metaphor and all the meaning and the religion and the God and and this and that, and I thought, Wait a minute, I didn't know it was so complicated. So you just it's so funny that it's ironic that I love that poem thinking it was straightforward, when in reality, it had a lot more depth to it than I you know, possibly understood.

Uma 19:56

That's what they get this audio about you guys, guys, and I have to leave I have a program at three o'clock, and I have to get ready for that. And bye to everyone. We really enjoyed poems here. Okay.

Kate B 20:09

Bye Uma.

Uma 20:14

Thank you guys.

Kate B 20:16

So I'm just going to mention a couple of things we have coming up. Um, as far as poetry goes, of course, Kathy mentioned that I read some poems on the internet. And that was because I couldn't do my favorite display the poetry month display. And we just talked about the Billy Collins books that are out there, there's books from a bunch of different poets are kind of across the spectrum, and little quotes, lines here and there, sometimes the whole poem, but usually just a line or a stanza, from a poem or on a little clip, so you can read them, they just if you, and I will put some homes out there. So if you pass by, you can take a phone and have a phone for yourself. It's a great Oh, yeah, it's a lot of fun to do that one. All my data will be up in adult nonfiction area, if you're interested in taking a look. And and April 14, so that's a Wednesday at 6:30am doing a program with our coworker, Nicole from PopMat, Popular Materials, and it's called Found Poetry. So you can pick up a kit, and...from the library, and it all it has in it is about 10 lines of actual poems, different poems that we both chose, and a few pages from books that were withdrawn, and a couple of magazine pages and some construction paper, and the idea is, you can cut out lines, or phrases, a single word, maybe even letters, whatever you want to do, and create a poem. And of course, you don't really need our kit, but it's kind of kinda nice to have everything all together, and those lines of poetry. Sometimes people will write a poem in response to another poem. So you might want to put that line at the front and then write something that answers the poet or that line of the poem. Or you could not do it that way. I think it's better to just look at the lines, and don't look at the back of the instructions. Because in the back of the instructions, it tells you the full name of the poem and the author. And you may make judgments about that, knowing something different about it. But you can do anything you want with it really, it's kind of really like doing refrigerator, magnet poetry, you know, that's always fun. So you can kind of make a poem like that and join us and we'll be doing it. And over Zoom too.

Kate M 22:55

That sounds really fun.

Kate B 22:56

If you're into that just call the library, yeah, should actually be pretty fun. And then our next ANF chat, which is April 28, still at 10 o'clock, is going to be dedicated to poetry we'll talk more about poetry. And then, if anyone remembers last year, there was a poetry walk in the Arboretum with this next to the Main Library, and it had 16 poems, then well, it's back this year with 25 poems, and that should run from May 10, they think all the poems will be up and in place, right to September 24th, I think after usually after Festival the Senses. So, I hope we'll keep on doing this. I'm already getting poems for next year and thinking about what would be our next year. But just for fun, I thought I would read a quick poem that will be out there in the poetry walk, and you can look for it. I don't know what number it is, but it's going to be one of the poems that's out there. And it's called April is a Dog's Dream by Marilyn Singer. April is a dog's dream. The soft grass is growing. This sweet breeze is blowing,

the air all full of singing feels just right. So no excuses now. We're going to the park to chase and charge and chew. And I will make you see what spring is all about.

Kate M 24:27

That's really nice.

Kathy 24:28

So nice.

Kate B 24:30

And Marilyn Singer, I have to say graciously gave us permission to post her poem in the poetry work. I asked a few people this year if they were easy to find and they're still alive in the area. I asked them and everyone said yes and was very happy to be included.

Kathy 24:47

Well, Kate, what is the you have it on display? And it's called Dog Songs, who wrote...

Kate B 24:55

Dog Songs. Yeah, Mary Oliver his book. Yeah.

Kathy 24:58

Oh my gosh. Let me tell you that you just that's just what I decided I'll talk about at the ANF chat. That book had so many beautiful poems in it. And Katie, my daughter, lost her beloved pet of 15 years, Rudy. And there was a poem in there that immediately I started choking up. But it was so beautiful and so aptly described her beloved dog that I sent it to her and even though I'm sure it made her sad, it was just just so heartwarming and wonderful. So I'm excited because now I have something I can talk about it the chat.

Kate B 25:42

Yes, that's a wonderful book. Right? Yeah, I have it. There was one. One that's also about poems about pets. But yeah, Mary Oliver's Dog Songs. If you like dogs, that's, that's a great book.

Kathy 25:56

Yeah.

Kate B 25:57

Yeah.

Kathy 25:57

So don't when you go into work, Kate Mazzara, pull that for me. So nobody else gets it.

Kate M 26:01

All right I will. All right. Well, I guess we're at 2:30. So Uma's got to use this account.

Kathy 26:09

Right.

Kate M 26:11

That's about it from us. We had a pretty good time talking about poetry today.

Kathy 26:15

Yeah, I had fun. Yeah.

Kate M 26:16

So thanks to anybody that was listening, and we'll see you next time.

Kathy 26:19

Okay.

Kate B 26:21

Bye.