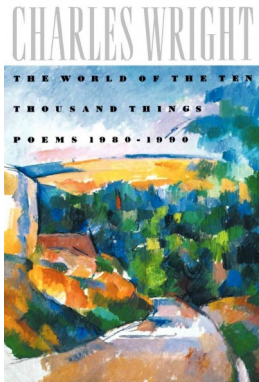


# New U.S. Poet Laureate Announced



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The Library of Congress just appointed Charles Wright from Virginia to be our new national poet laureate. Some of our best contemporary poets have brought their energy and vision to promote this ancient, ever-changing art. Recent poets laureate have included: Billy Collins, Natasha Trethewey, Robert Pinsky, Rita Dove, Ted Kooser, and Kay Ryan.

Some of their projects live on. Ted Kooser created a free weekly newspaper column called American Life in Poetry that features work each week by a different poet. Billy Collins started Poetry 180, a website that has spawned at least two books that have brought accessible poetry to high school students and the general public. Natasha Trethewey started a series on PBS's The News Hour called Where Poetry Lives. It includes segments of contemporary poets reading their own work and describing how it came to be.

And what, you might ask, will Charles Wright do? In the *New York Times* announcement of his post, Wright said that he and his wife spend two summer months each year in a remote corner of Montana. He will envision his new project there, something worthy of the tradition that earlier appointees have started.

We have three of his collections. Wright is a fine poet, somewhat mystical, who describes nature very well. He captures evocatively the landscape of Virginia. His writing is beautiful, and behind it you sense an intelligent observer praising each and every day. We reviewed his latest collection Caribou [here](#).

For a taste of his work, try this ending from Lullaby followed by a very short poem from Caribou:

**Lullaby** (excerpt)

Time to go,  
Time to meet those you've never met,  
    time to say goodnight.  
Grant us silence, grant us no reply,  
Grant us shadows and their cohorts  
    stealth across the sky.

**WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AL LEE?**

What happened is what happens to all of us: we walked  
On the earth, we threw a couple of handfuls of dirt  
Into the air, and when it came down it covered us.

