



Celebrate National Poetry Month with *Twahaiku Tag*, *Waking the Bard* and Poetry Workshop

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Celebrate National Poetry Month in April with *Twahaiku Tag*, a modern twist on the traditional haiku poem, *Waking the Bard*, an evening of Shakespearean sonnets, theatre and live music at Victoria City Hall, and an engaging *Speaking the Word Workshop*.

Victoria's Poet Laureate Yvonne Blomer and Youth Poet Laureate Ann-Bernice Thomas invite the community to participate in *Twahaiku Tag* during the month of April. To participate, inspired poets tweet their 140-character micropoem featuring the theme, "How do you love your city?" with the hashtags #poetrymonth and #iheartyyj to @CityofVictoria. A traditional Japanese haiku is a short, three-line poem about the natural world.

Participating in *Twahaiku Tag* will be previous Poet Laureates Janet Rogers, Linda Rogers and Carla Funk, and Youth Poet Laureates Aysia Law, Morgan Purvis and Zoé Duhaime. The City will retweet family-friendly twahaikus and post them online at www.victoria.ca/poetlaureate.

Hosted by Poet Laureate Yvonne Blomer, *Waking the Bard* is a free evening of poetry, theatre and live music in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's life on Saturday, April 23 from 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. at City Hall. (Doors open at 7 p.m.) April 23 is widely accepted as both the day of Shakespeare's birth and death.

University of Victoria Fine Arts students will perform an original play inspired by Shakespeare's works, and six guest poets will create and perform a response to Shakespearean sonnets. Joining Yvonne Blomer will be Youth Poet Laureate Ann-Bernice Thomas and local poets Iain Higgins, Sonnet L'Abbe, Anita Lahey and Troy Sebastian. Elizabethan music will be performed by the Banquo Folk Ensemble. The event will include complimentary cake, beverages and door prizes donated by local businesses. Registration is not required.

Victoria's Youth Poet Laureate Ann-Bernice Thomas invites theatrical, spoken word poets to participate in a free *Speaking the Word Workshop* on Tuesday, April 12 from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the Greater Victoria Public Library Central Branch. Participants will learn how to create their own poetry show that combines the art of theatre with spoken word. Activities will include ensemble building, theatre games and learning how to think like a poet. To register, visit www.gvpl.ca.

The City of Victoria will also participate in the *Annual Mayor's Poetry Challenge*, which invites municipalities across Canada to bring poetry into politics. As part of the City's Poet Laureate program, the Poet Laureate and Youth Poet Laureate each read an original poem at the first City Council meeting of the month. During National Poetry Month, this poetry reading will take place on Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

Established in Canada in April 1999 by the League of Canadian Poets, National Poetry Month celebrates poetry and its vital place in Canada's culture. Learn more at www.victoria.ca/poetlaureate.

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