

LEAGUE OF CANADIAN POETS

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ANNOUNCES AL PURDY DAY, APRIL 21, 2009

“It’s a great celebration today, by poets across Canada of the life, work and the Purdy A-Frame in Ameliasburgh, Ontario that Al Purdy left behind,” League of Canadian Poets President, D.C. Reid, said today. “No other poet is as deserving as Al Purdy for us to recognize as the most Canadian voice in poetry for more than half a century.”

Before passing in April 2000, Purdy, in his great, elegiac, laconic, voice of our land and country, had influenced generations of Canadian poets who were drawn to his small shack in the woods near Ameliasburgh, Ontario, to drink wild grape wine and write and talk and argue through the night about the poetry that has made Canada famous around the world.

Purdy went on to earn most of this country’s highest honours, including, two Governor General Awards, The Order of Ontario, and the Order of Canada. Had the office of Poet Laureate of Canada been previously created, he would have been the most natural first choice to represent culture in Canada. “The League of Canadian Poets created an honour shortly thereafter to award him the status that all knew he had attained: The Voice of The Land.”

Poets, academics, cultural officials have come together to pay tribute to the man and his many books and poems that have defined this country, including: Roblin Lake, The Quinte Hotel, Caribou Horses, Lament for the Dorsets, The Country North of Bellville, Trees at the Arctic Circle, Elegy for a Grandfather.... the list is very long, and ending with his final book: To Paris Never Again that proved he carried his abilities all the way to the end of his life. “Every poet has many Purdy stories, and mine was that it was great to read with him many times - the audiences were overflowing. But after, the line up for his books, was long, indeed, but not so long for others, both of which are understandable.”

“At the end, Al was surrounded by his books, and as though to carry them with him, he was rereading passages to memorize them one last time.” Reid said. And then he was gone. A special tribute to Al Purdy, the Al Purdy A-Frame Trust, supported by his surviving wife, Eurithe Purdy, is raising money to save the ramshackle home where so much of Canadian cultural history was discussed and written. “This is a project to save our heritage and preserve the A-Frame forever, along with the introduction of a writer in residence program.” Donations are gladly accepted by Trust sponsor, Jean Baird:

jeandbaird@shaw.ca; Phone: 1-604-224-4898; Address: 4403 West 11th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6R 2M2.

The League of Canadian Poets is the national association of professional publishing and spoken word poets in Canada. Its purpose is to enhance the status of poets and nurture a professional poetic community to facilitate the teaching of Canadian poetry at all levels of education and to develop the audience for poetry by encouraging publication, performance and recognition of Canadian poetry nationally and internationally.

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