

Canadian Poetry Fact Sheet
www.poets.ca / www.youngpoets.ca

Did you Know?

- ✚ That the Parliament of Canada appoints a Poet Laureate and the current Poet Laureate is John Steffler who was appointed on December 4, 2006 for a period of two years. Born in Toronto and educated at the University of Toronto and the University of Guelph, Steffler's role is to encourage and promote the importance of literature, culture and language in Canadian society. Federal legislators created the position in 2001 to draw Canadians' attention to poetry, both spoken and written, and its role in our lives. As explained in the Parliament of Canada Act, the Parliamentary Poet Laureate may:
 - i) write poetry, especially for use in Parliament on important occasions;
 - ii) sponsor poetry readings;
 - iii) advise the Parliamentary Librarian regarding the Library's collection and acquisitions to enrich its cultural materials; and,
 - iv) perform other related duties at the request of the Speaker of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Commons, or the Parliamentary Librarian.

- ✚ The Canadian Poetry Archive, part of the National Library of Canada, features some 1,000 poems, dating from 1826 to 1925, by more than 100 early English- and French-language Canadian poets. The database also includes biographies of some of this period's more prominent poets, including Pauline Johnson, Archibald Lampman, Susanna Moodie, Émile Nelligan, Charles G. D. Roberts and Duncan Campbell Scott. The Canadian Poetry Archive can be found on the Internet at <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/canvers/>.

- ✚ Over the decade 1985-1995, sales of poetry in Canada increased overall by 18% and by 37% in English alone. The trend since then has been going up. (Source: Canada Council for the Arts)



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- ✚ The number of books of poetry published in Canada supported by the Canada Council has increased from 1985 to 1997 by 57%, from 147 to 231.
- ✚ Some of Canada's best-known novelists have also made their names as poets, including Margaret Atwood, Anne Michaels, Michael Ondaatje, Carol Shields and Anne Hébert.
- ✚ Canada is host to one of the most important poetry festivals in the world, Le Festival International de la poésie de Trois-Rivières. This Festival has grown steadily over the years, and welcomes over 150 poets from 35 countries who present more than 400 readings to a combined local and visiting audience of more than 25,000 each year in a town of 52,000. (Source: Festival international de poésie). Major literary festivals featuring poets are also held in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Victoria, Sechelt, Ottawa and Montréal.
- ✚ The largest poetry publishing project in Canadian history started a few years ago when public transit authorities in Vancouver agreed to display poetry on city buses. With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, poetry-in-transit projects have since been initiated in Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary and Ottawa-Carleton. More than three million Canadians now read poetry daily on buses across the country.

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