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### Kansas Arts Commission Poetry Month Blogpost

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

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National Poetry Month is a great way to explore how the poetic power of words can fire up your life, and help you articulate in your own poetry and find articulated in others' poetry what you always knew without always knowing it. Inspired by the success of Black History Month each February, and then Women's History Month each March, a group of publishers, booksellers, librarians, literary organizations, poets, and teachers met at an event convened by the Academy of American Poets, and launched this celebration of poetry, starting in April of 1996.

Although T.S. Eliot once wrote "April is the cruelest month/ mixing memory and desire," Poetry Month activities might just prove him wrong. Through finding the words to speak your truth -- including how it interlaces with memory and desire -- you can cultivate a little more light and lightness, space and spaciousness and knowledge of yourself and the world, and you can -- just like the lilac exploding in millions of purple stars -- come alive in full blossom.

To celebrate Poetry Month in Kansas, I'm offering these activities through the Kansas Arts Commission:

- ♣ **To the Stars Poetry Contest:** [Weekly poetry contests](#) (two categories; professional and amateur writers) will begin April 1.
- ♣ **Kansas Daily Poem in Your Pocket:** Receive a poem written by a Kansas poet along with a daily writing prompt each day of April by sending an email to [KSpoetlaureate@gmail.com](mailto:KSpoetlaureate@gmail.com) or [download poems from the KAC website](#).
- ♣ **Writing Workshops with Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg:** The Poet Laureate of Kansas will be offering several writing workshops to celebrate National Poetry Month, including an April 10 workshop at Turning Point in Mission; a writing and singing retreat in early May, and an upcoming on-line workshop. Please visit [carynmirriamgoldberg.wordpress.com](http://carynmirriamgoldberg.wordpress.com) for details.

These activities are in addition to the 150 Kansas Poems project, a website featuring the poetry of dozens of fine emerging and established poets, each poem exploring what Kansas means. Check it out at <http://150KansasPoems.wordpress.com>. You can also -- whether you attended or didn't attend Poet Laureati: A National Convergence of Poets Laureate ([http://arts.ks.gov/poet\\_laureati.shtml](http://arts.ks.gov/poet_laureati.shtml)) held in Lawrence in mid-March -- hear some upcoming radio shows featuring the poets laureate of 19 states and former U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser. Visit <http://kansaspublishradio.org/KPRpresents> at KPR and New Letters on the Air (<http://www.newletters.org/onTheAir.asp>) at KCUR to tune in to or listen later to podcasts of poets from Alabama to Alaska, speaking their poetic truths in the heartland. And if you like what you wear, you can buy the first-ever anthology of state poets laureate, which I co-edited with fellow poets laureate Marilyn L. Taylor (WI), Denise Low (KS) and Walter Barga (MO).

At our National Poetry Month page ([http://arts.ks.gov/poetry\\_month/index.shtml](http://arts.ks.gov/poetry_month/index.shtml)), you can also see links to other ways to celebrate poetry month. Please also visit my blog, <http://carynmirriamgoldberg.wordpress.com>, where you can catch occasional writing prompts and meanderings about the writing life.