

World Poetry Day: Commissions for Poems and Filmed Readings

Manchester City of Literature and Manchester Poetry Library are delighted to announce two poetry commissions to celebrate UNESCO World Poetry Day 2021.

The Themes of the Commission

Poets are invited to respond to the theme of the door as a portal. During the ongoing pandemic, many doors are closed to people but poetry can help open them in different ways and can inspire people experiencing lockdown. We are seeking poems that speak about the power of the imagination, giving hope in dark times and about the door as a gateway or as the start of a new journey.

“Go and open the door.
Maybe outside there’s
a tree, or a wood,
a garden,
or a magic city.”

- Miroslav Holub, ‘The Door’

As part of the commission, each poet will be filmed reading their poem outside a Manchester doorway. We want to include doors that are recognisable and iconic to acknowledge and celebrate the city itself – for instance Central Library, Salford Lads’ Club, or Chinatown’s paifang (archway). The filmed readings will be broadcast on Sunday 21 March as part of UNESCO World Poetry Day celebrations via YouTube and social media.

There is a fee of £500 per commission to include a new or unpublished poem that responds to the theme and the reading itself. The poem should ideally be 30-40 lines in length.

Who Can Apply?

We are seeking expressions of interest from poets who live or work in Manchester or Greater Manchester. We want to celebrate the rich diversity of our city and our writers so we want to hear from poets of all social and cultural backgrounds and identities. We are looking for poets who can respond to this brief in the time available and can produce work that will inspire and speak to a broad audience, both locally and internationally, including those who may not read or listen to poetry regularly. We are looking for poets who are comfortable reading their work to camera.

How To Apply

Please send us a letter of application (maximum of one page of A4, in word document or PDF format) or a video recording telling us:

- Your name and contact details
- A short description of your work and interests
- Your interest in the themes of this commission and how you will approach these
- Your experience of writing to a brief

Manchester City of Literature

- Your experience of reading to camera

Manchester
Poetry
Library

Please also include one or two poems as an example of your previous work. Each poem or extract should be no more than 20 lines long and relevant to this brief. It could either be read as part of your video or submitted as an extra document or by providing a link to the work online.

Please email your application to ivan.wadeson@manchester.gov.uk by 5pm by Wednesday 24 February. If we cannot make a decision based solely on applications, shortlisted poets may be invited to an online interview on Monday 1 March.

Successful poets will be informed by end of Tuesday 2 March. Finished poems are to be submitted no later than Tuesday 16 March with filming to take place later that week.

Unfortunately we do not have the capacity to offer individual feedback on submissions.

www.manchestercityofliterature.com
<https://www.mmu.ac.uk/poetrylibrary/>



A UNESCO City
of Literature