



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

UNITED IN POETRY: UNESCO CITIES OF LITERATURE CELEBRATE WORLD POETRY DAY 2026

World Poetry Day is on Saturday 21 March and UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature across the world will be celebrating together. World Poetry Day was adopted by UNESCO during their 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999, and the day has since been used to champion and celebrate linguistic diversity, poetic expression, and endangered languages. Cities of Literature celebrate the power of poetry to promote justice, unity, and joy.

[Granada City of Literature](#) (Spain) will again be leading the celebrations for the Literature network in Granada's first World Poetry Day collaboration with the Granada European Capital of Culture 2031 Consortium. Granada's literary community will gather for a large-scale public poetry reading featuring 95 poets who were born in Granada and/or currently live in the city. Lim Kyung-seop, from Wonju UNESCO City of Literature, will appear as a special international guest. His reading in Granada will feature the first translations of his poetry into Spanish.

There will also be a tribute to St John of the Cross who served as prior of the Discalced Carmelite convent of Los Mártires between 1582 and 1588 and wrote most of his work in Granada. To mark the third centenary of his canonisation, pianist and composer Jesús Hernández and flamenco singer Sergio Gómez 'El Colorao' will blend poetry with jazz, flamenco and contemporary musical languages. For Granada's World Poetry Day programme and its list of 95 featured poets please visit [World Poetry Day 2026](#).

Cities of Literature the world over will also be celebrating this special day with their communities and sharing the activities of sister Cities of Literature across the globe:

Celje (Slovenia) will host a project called 'The Tree of Poetry: Spreading the Branches of Poetry'. A tree will be decorated near the public library with poems from Celje's annual [Little](#)

[Veronika](#) poetry award for young poets from Slovenia, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Several of the past winners of the award will read their poetry aloud on 21 March.

Dunedin (New Zealand) will announce the gift of a poem for display in the new South Dunedin Community Library, written by students from the University of Washington (Seattle City of Literature) when in Dunedin on a recent study programme exploring librarianship, youth services, and Indigenous children's literature. The poem came from a special workshop led by Dunedin City of Literature South D Poet Lorikeet, Jenny Powell and was written by the students together as one voice.

Edinburgh City of Literature (Scotland) is hosting a drop-in poetry and craft event. Participants are invited to craft, write their own poetry, chat, and perform beloved poems about Edinburgh.

In **Heidelberg** (Germany) the Cultural Office, in collaboration with the Literature Focus Group of the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region, will host the 'Poetry on the Phone' initiative for the fifth time. Interested residents of Heidelberg will receive a call from a poet, who will recite a poem to them over the phone. In addition, the poetic public holiday programme by and for Heidelberg offers further events, and more information is available at: www.cityofliterature.de.

As well in Heidelberg a closing event will be held to mark the exhibition on the life, work and legacy of the writer and honorary citizen of Heidelberg, Hilde Domin, organised by the City of Heidelberg's Cultural Office in collaboration with writer Marion Tauschwitz. Heidelberg-based dancer Lisa Bless will enter into a dialogue with the poet in a ten-minute performance combining dance and speech, inspired by Hilde Domin's 'Autobiographical Collections'. Shared Reading is also hosting a reading dedicated to Hilde Domin at which participants will read a poem and a short story. Initiated by the Heidelberg Community Foundation, the commemorative plaque on Hilde-Domin-Straße will be officially unveiled. Meanwhile Heidelberg City Library will offer poetry recommendations and showcase selected poetry in the exhibition area and in the children's library from 21 March to 4 April. Heidelberg-based author and poet Ralph Dutli will read poems by French Renaissance poet Louise Labé (1524–1566) in his own translations and those by Rainer Maria Rilke and Paul Zech, interspersed with musical settings by Viktor Ullmann (1898–1944) and Maurice Ravel (1875–1937).

Iași City of Literature (Romania) will mark the day with an [event](#) organised by the National Museum of Romanian Literature Iași and the Vasile Alecsandri National College Iași, in partnership with the Iași City Hall. The poet Nichita Danilov, who has been honoured with numerous literary awards and in January was awarded the Mihai Eminescu National Poetry Prize, will meet with students from the Vasile Alecsandri National College Iași, coordinated by Professor Alla Apopei. The event, moderated by the museum curator Liviu Apetroaie, will take place at the St. Hierarch Dosoftei – The Metropolitan Museum. Also well-known Romanian publisher Junimea Publishing House Iași is taking part in the Timișoara Book Fair, where it will launch the poetry volumes of the writers Viorica Balteanu, George Vigdor, and Gheorghe Florescu.

Leeuwarden City of Literature (Netherlands) releases, for each new season, a matching poetic bookmark which is available for collection at bookstores. Because 21 March marks not only the start of spring but also World Poetry Day, an animated version of the poem and illustration is also being shared. The poem was written by Tryntsje van der Steege, a student in Creative Writing in Leeuwarden, in response to an invitation to the poetry students. The Dutch and English versions can be read by scanning the QR code on the bookmark. Throughout this year, illustrations are being created by Redmer Hoekstra:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kahA9I4luBY>

Ljubljana (Slovenia) is hosting the second edition of the Ljubljana Poetry Festival (21–28 March), an eight-day programme unfolding across eleven venues with eleven events, anchored by a city-wide marathon poetry reading. Emerging from the long-standing tradition of marathon readings that take place on 21 March, the festival invites reflection on the relationships between text and performance, listening and reading, and between individual expression and collective experience, as the city comes together to breathe with poetry.

Milan (Italy) is celebrating with a range of events across the city, starting with the FARE VERSI (Making Poems) festival, organised in collaboration between Casa della Poesia and Fondazione Mondadori, which features seven events, including readings and social gatherings, taking place from 19 to 21 March. Meanwhile, the Casa delle Donne is organising a meeting with the American poet Susan M. Schultz as part of her tour of Italy to promote her book *Io ed Eucalipto*, which will take place on 21 March.

Nottingham City of Literature (UK) will be spotlighting World Poetry Day with a special series of TikToks from its placement student Cassidy about what a week of poetry looks like in the city, and how to get involved. Cassidy has also crafted a blog piece discussing her views on why we should celebrate World Poetry Day.

Seattle (USA) is celebrating at Open Books: A Poem Emporium. The poetry-focused bookstore will host a reading with poets Monica Ferrell (*The Future*) and Rick Barot (*Moving the Bones*).

In **Tartu** (Estonia), celebrations commence on 20 March with the World Poetry Café organised by the literature students and the Department of Comparative Literature of the University of Tartu. On 21 March the programme will take place at Tartu Literature House and will include a concert 'Poetry and Song' by Hedvig Hanson as well as poetry night featuring Aliis Aalman, fs, Brigitta Davidjants, and Merca.

In **Tukums** (Latvia) the initiative 'Poetry Against Loneliness' will continue for the third year, inviting people across Latvia to visit elderly people living alone throughout the week and to share poetry and heartfelt conversations. Cards with poems and kind messages will be collected at Tukums Library and will later be delivered to a local seniors' organisation.

Wonju (South Korea) will host a three-week exhibition of poetry artworks created by local writers and citizen poets. On 20 March, a string orchestra performance inspired by poetry and literature will also be presented.

In **Wrocław** (Poland) the Wrocław Literature House will host a performative reading of poems by the Polish poet Julian Tuwim, in cooperation with the Polish Theatre in Wrocław, performed by professional actors. The title of the event is 'Jazda Poetycka' – 'Poetic Ride'.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

World Poetry Day: For more information on World Poetry Day, please visit: <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldpoetryday>

About the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN): Established in 2004, the UCCN aims to foster collaboration among cities that recognize creativity as a crucial element in achieving sustainable urban development. Worldwide, 408 cities are part of this network, united in their pursuit of a shared goal: integrating creativity and cultural industries into their local development strategies while actively cooperating on the global stage. The Network encompasses eight diverse creative fields: Architecture, Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts, and Music. Sixty-three UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature from 46 countries are currently members of the Network, diligently working together to harness the transformative power of literature in fostering sustainable and inclusive societies.

For more information on the UCCN, please visit:

<https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>

To learn more about the UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature Network and our values:

<https://www.citiesoflit.com/>

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