**Introducing Poetry from Daily Life, a new weekly feature from Missouri's poet laureate**

*By David L. Harrison*

As Missouri’s 7th Poet Laureate, I asked Springfield News-Leader Editor-in-Chief Amos Bridges what he thought about establishing a regular weekly column about poetry. He liked the idea, suggested the title, and here we are, launching the new column. I hope you will start looking for us each week in your Sunday News-Leader. [Feel free to insert your publication]

The purpose for this unique new adventure is to remind us all, no matter our age, work, religion, politics, interests, ethnicities, or gender, that poetry is part of our lives. We read it, hear it, sing it, paint it, dance it, act it, and write it. When Ted Kooser was United States Poet Laureate, from 2004-2006, his regular column featuring poems and commentary reached 4.3 million readers. We may not reach that number, but one of our guest columnists is Ted Kooser.

I’ll write the first column but will be followed by at least three dozen other poets across the country who have agreed to write guest columns. They may share their own poems or ones they like by other poets, or give you a tip about writing your own poem, or suggest some good books to read. How they write their guest columns is up to them. One thing they share in common is that they are all top-notch, well-known, favorite poets.

In addition to a former U.S. Poet Laureate, you’ll meet Margarita Engle (former Young People’s Poet Laureate), Karen Craigo and Maryfrances Wagner (former Missouri Poet Laureates), Jane Yolen (recipient of a Caldecott Medal, two Nebula Awards, two Christopher Awards, and six honorary doctorate of letters), and Georgia Heard, Marilyn Singer, and Janet Wong (recipients of the Excellence in Poetry for Children’s Award from National Council for Teachers of English). These are only a few of the poets you’ll meet who, together, have earned a long list of honors. These poets and nearly thirty others are featured in a proposed anthology of poems that will soon be read by school librarians to students throughout our country.

Guest columns coming up in the six weeks following my opening column include Charles Ghigna (aka Father Goose) with “The Eye of the Poet”; Sandy Asher with “Try a Guided Poem”; Matt Forrest Esenwine with “What If?”; Marilyn Singer with “How to Read a Poem Aloud”; as well as Jane Yolen and Karen Craigo writing on their own chosen subjects.

The tremendous range and variety of poets in “Poetry from Daily Life” make it an exciting offering. Collectively, these gifted writers have had more than 1,000 books published and their work is in every library of size in the United States. I hope you will join us, share with friends and family, and tell others who will also enjoy an experience that not many newspapers offer these days: the pleasure of enjoying poetry.

*David L. Harrison is the Missouri Poet Laureate and Drury University Poet Laureate. He has published more than 100 books for young people and educators. You can find more on his website, davidlharrison.com, and reach him by email at davidlharrison1@att.net.*