

# Poetry:

**creating, performing, talking and  
writing about poetry**

A conference to explore the place of poetry in our lives and in the English classroom. Is it possible to bring together creative and analytical approaches when we work with students? Do we jump to the analysis stage before personal engagement has had a chance to take root? We hope the day will offer opportunities to discuss these issues and also, in the words of Seamus Heaney, make it possible for us 'to walk on air.'

**Keynote speakers:**

**Inua Ellams & Nicholas Roe**

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 9.30 – 2.30**

**UCL Institute of Education**

20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL

A poem should be equal to/not true.

**Archibald MacLeish 1926**

Poets among us must be literalists of the imagination  
and present for our inspection imaginary gardens with  
real toads in them.

**Marianne Moore 1935**

The key to getting started is the sound. I don't mean  
sound as decoration or elaboration;  
I mean something to do with what might be called the  
musculature of your speech, your actual cadencing of  
the thing as it moves along. When, for example, I wrote  
the opening of the first poem in my book – 'Between my  
finger and my thumb / The squat pen rests; snug as a  
gun' – I just knew I had got stuck in in earnest.

**Seamus Heaney 2008**

## Conference Programme

**9.30 am:** coffee and registration

**10.00 am:** **Keynote Lecture:** Inua Ellams

**11.00 am:** coffee break

**11.30 am:** **Workshops**

(Conference participants to choose one workshop – see following pages.)

**1.00 pm:** **Keynote Lecture:** Nicholas Roe

**1.50 pm:** lunch

## INUA ELLAMS

Born in Nigeria, Inua Ellams is a cross art form practitioner, a poet, playwright and performer, graphic artist and designer and founder of the Midnight Run — an international, arts-filled, night-time, playful, urban, walking experience. He is a Complete Works poet alumni and a designer at White Space Creative Agency. Across his work, Identity, Displacement & Destiny are recurring themes in which he also tries to mix the old with the new: traditional African storytelling with contemporary poetry, pencil with pixel, texture with vector images. He has published three books of poetry with Flipped Eye and Akashic Books: *Thirteen Fairy Negro Tales*, *Candy Coated Unicorns* and *Converse All Stars*, *The Wire-Headed Heathen*. He has also published several plays with Oberon Books.

## NICHOLAS ROE

Nicholas Roe is Professor of English Literature at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and Chair of the Keats Foundation. He has published numerous books and essays on Romantic literature, and has a particular interest in John Keats. His biography *John Keats. A New Life* was published in 2012, and he is also the author of the most recent biography of Keats's mentor Leigh Hunt. Nick has lectured widely in the UK, Europe, the US, India, Japan and New Zealand, and appears frequently at literary festivals. His lecture is entitled 'The Languages of "To Autumn"'.

## WORKSHOPS

### 1. Aisling Fahey, Poet and Workshop Facilitator

Aisling Fahey is a poet who has performed in various locations across England, Ireland, America and India, including the Barbican, the Houses of Parliament and Glastonbury. She previously won the London Teenage Senior Slam and SLAMBassadors UK, run in association with The Poetry Society. She was a member of Barbican Young Poets and is part of the Burn After Reading collective, established by Jacob Sam-La Rose and Jasmine Cooray. She co-facilitated the Barbican Junior Poets programme, for 11-14 year olds, earlier this year.

This workshop will examine what constitutes a 'poem'. Looking at poetry as a means of communication, we will explore poetry across mediums, bringing poetry off the page and making it come alive. Aisling Fahey was Young Poet Laureate of London 2014-15. She will talk about her experience of various poetry programmes, both as a young participant, and then as a lead facilitator, showing ways in which poetry can become a means of seeing the world, and exploring your place within it. She will also perform a selection of her own work.

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### 2. Poetry Teaching 2016: 'Miss how do I get a 9?'

**Louise Hooper** Head of English & **Anita Ark** Second in English

*Eastbury Community School*

In this workshop we will discuss the challenges presented by the reformed GCSEs, looking at the poetry demands of English Literature Paper 2, and some of the ways we have tried to address them through our curriculum and pedagogical approaches at Eastbury.

Although we will primarily focus on the poetry from the AQA specification, we will be addressing challenges that are applicable to all of the reformed GCSE specifications. In a time of new ventures in curriculum and assessment, we hope that this will offer a space for sharing good practice and an opportunity to learn from our collective experiences. Participants are invited to bring any resource materials they wish to share with others, as well as questions and concerns about the new specifications.

Topics for discussion may include:

- New grading assessment descriptors - helping staff and students understand them Preparing for unseen assessment
  - Studying poetry collections – what methods work
  - Time period and Romantic poetry
  - Covering the full range of abilities for a non-tiered paper
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### 3. Starting a Spoken Word Club

#### **Lisa-Marie Utley and Malakai Sargeant**

*Alexandra Park School*

Lisa is an English teacher and Malakai is a Year 12 student who writes and performs his own poetry. Lisa writes:

*A colleague and I had been running a Spoken Word club for a couple of years which we had found difficult to make popular. It didn't quite have the impact intended. Last year Malakai, who had just joined the sixth form from another school, approached us and asked if he could get involved. We were lucky enough to have a talented, young performer take the reins of our little Spoken Word club and bring it to another level!*

In this workshop, Lisa will explain something of how the club has developed, and Malakai will model some writing and performance activities that you can use with your students to encourage creativity and confidence.

If you'd like to read more about Malakai's work with young people and the arts, you can visit his website here:

<http://www.sandkproject.com/>

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#### 4. Multilingual Digital Poetry and EAL Learners

**Vicky Macleroy** (Head of MA Writer/Teacher) & **Michael Vidon** (Poet/Educator)

*Goldsmiths, University of London*

This workshop offers an integrated and inclusive approach to developing children's critical digital literacy. Vicky Macleroy is co-director of 'Critical Connections: Multilingual digital storytelling project' (Goldsmiths, University of London, 2012-2014 and 2015-2017) which promotes literacy practices that are both multimodal and participatory across a range of languages. Michael Vidon is a bilingual performance poet and educator researching in schools and looking at ways to use poetry and translation in the classroom to develop students' writing and critical thinking. The EAL learners are engaged in reading and writing their own multilingual poetry. This workshop will share the work of these projects and include creative writing activities and ideas to support intercultural and multilingual approaches to literacy. We will also discuss ways of developing students' criticality by using an online platform called Kannu where students can share both their films and poetry in a safe online space.

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## 5. Multi-media approaches to teaching canonical poetry at KS3

**Theo Bryer & Jane Coles**

*UCL Institute of Education*

In this workshop we will share some of the approaches to teaching the Old English poem *Beowulf* that we developed as part of the ESRC funded *Playing Beowulf* research project. These include story-telling, role-play, film-making, making computer games and creative writing as a way of exploring verse form, language and narrative structure. As well as doing some practical activities that draw on the poem we will share some of our findings from the research we carried out with teachers, school students and student teachers.

Please see the DARE website here for more details:

<http://darecollaborative.net/2015/03/11/playing-beowulf-gaming-the-library/>