

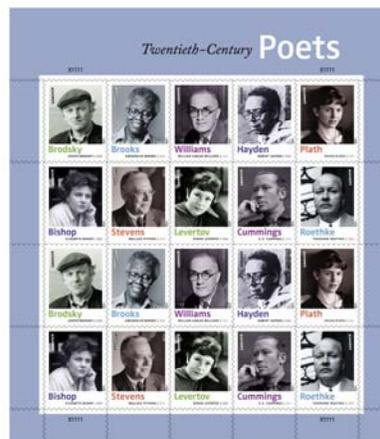
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 21, 2012

Contacts: Darlene Casey  
202-268-3440  
[darlene.casey@usps.gov](mailto:darlene.casey@usps.gov)  
[usps.com/news](http://usps.com/news)

Meiko Patton  
(O) 858-674-2676  
(C) 310-924-5266  
[meiko.s.patton@usps.gov](mailto:meiko.s.patton@usps.gov)  
Release No. 12-049



## Postal Service Immortalizes Literary Giants *Pays Tribute to Ten of Nation's Most Admired 20th-Century Poets*



To obtain high-resolution images of the Twentieth-Century Poets Forever stamps for media use only, email [darlene.casey@usps.gov](mailto:darlene.casey@usps.gov).

LOS ANGELES — Against the electric backdrop of the 17th annual *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books, at the University of Southern California (USC), the U.S. Postal Service today honored 10 of this nation's most illustrious poets of the 20th century on 45-cent First-Class Mail Forever stamps.

"Throughout the ages, poetry has been regarded as important and providing unique value, giving us all a better understanding of life," said David Williams, U.S. Postal Service vice president, Network Operations. "That is why the Postal Service is so proud to be dedicating a new commemorative Forever stamp pane that celebrates 10 of our nation's most admired poets, which include United States Poet Laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners and National Book Award winners."

Joining Williams to dedicate the stamps at the First-Day-of-Issue ceremony were Elizabeth Garrett, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs, USC; Dana Gioia, Judge Widney Professor of Poetry and Public Culture, USC and member of the Postmaster General's [Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee](#); Youssef Biaz, student, USC and U.S. national champion, Poetry Out Loud; Carol Muske-Dukes, founding director of PhD program in Creative Writing and Literature, USC; and David St. John, professor, USC.

The Twentieth-Century Poets honored by the Postal Service include Elizabeth Bishop, Joseph Brodsky, Gwendolyn Brooks, E.E. Cummings, Robert Hayden, Denise Levertov, Sylvia Plath, Theodore Roethke, Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams. Each stamp features a photograph of one of the 10 poets. Text on the back of the stamp sheet includes an excerpt from one poem by each poet. The art director was Derry Noyes.

Elizabeth Bishop was known as a "writer's writer," suggesting the admiration other poets feel for her work. The photograph of Elizabeth Bishop was taken in her home in Key West, FL, by Josef Breitenbach.

E.E. Cummings expertly manipulated the rules of grammar, punctuation, rhyme and meter to create poems that resembled modernist paintings more than traditional verse. The E.E. Cummings stamp features a photograph of Cummings taken in 1935 by Edward Weston.

An award-winning author of more than 20 collections of poetry, Denise Levertov wrote mystical, meditative poems about nature, spirituality, love, and loss as well as antiwar poems. The Denise Levertov stamp features a photograph of Levertov taken by Rollie McKenna.

Sylvia Plath probed the conflict between inner self and outward appearance. Her complex body of work includes deftly imagined poems about marriage and motherhood, gender and power, death and resurrection, and the search for self. The Sylvia Plath stamp features a photograph of Plath taken by Rollie McKenna.

The Elizabeth Bishop, E.E. Cummings, Denise Levertov and Sylvia Plath photographs are part of the collection at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

Joseph Brodsky, an exile from the Soviet Union, was the first foreign-born poet to be appointed Poet Laureate of the United States. The Joseph Brodsky stamp features a photograph of Brodsky standing on a pier on the Hudson River in New York City. The photograph was taken by Nancy Crampton.

Gwendolyn Brooks is best remembered for distinctive, lyrical portraits of everyday urban life. The Gwendolyn Brooks stamp features a photograph of Brooks in her Chicago home. The photograph was taken in 1987 by Jon Randolph.

The poems of Robert Hayden reflect his brilliant craftsmanship, his historical conscience and his gift for storytelling. The Robert Hayden stamp features a photograph of Robert Hayden taken around 1975 by Timothy Franklin. The photograph is part of the Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress.

Theodore Roethke created intimate, introspective poems distinguished by lyricism and a sensual use of imagery. The Theodore Roethke stamp features a photograph of Roethke taken in London, England.

The poems of Wallace Stevens explore language and meaning that make reading a distinctive experience. The Wallace Stevens stamp features a photograph of Stevens taken by Sylvia Salmi. The image is from Bettmann/CORBIS.

William Carlos Williams was a doctor who typed out his poems between seeing patients. His work showed readers the extraordinary in the commonplace. The Williams stamp features a photograph taken in the 1940s. The photograph is from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

The stamps on the Twentieth-Century Poets pane are being issued as Forever stamps. Forever stamps are always equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

Customers may view the Twentieth-Century Poets Forever stamps, as well as this year's other stamps, on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through [Twitter @USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at [beyondtheperf.com/stamp-releases/2012](https://beyondtheperf.com/stamp-releases/2012). *Beyond the Perf* is the Postal Service's online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

#### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [www.usps.com/shop](https://www.usps.com/shop), or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Twentieth-Century Poets Stamp  
Main Post Office  
7001 S. Central Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90052-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by June 21, 2012.

#### **How to Order First Day Covers**

The Postal Service also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with

the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic Catalog*, online at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop) or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service  
Catalog Request  
PO Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

#### **Philatelic Products**

There are five philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 468863, First Day Cover, Set of 10, \$8.90.
- 468868, Digital Color Postmark, Set of 10, \$16.00.
- 468891, Ceremony Program (random single), \$6.95.
- 468894, Note cards, \$14.95.
- 468899, Cancellation Keepsake (Random DCP w/Pane), \$10.95.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

###

**Please Note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm>.

For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, [usps.com](http://usps.com), the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service was ranked number one in overall service performance, out of the top 20 wealthiest nations in the world, Oxford Strategic Consulting. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

Follow the Postal Service on Twitter @USPS\_PR and at Facebook.com/usps