



The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the Divine

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RELEASE

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**POET AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST
MURIEL RUKEYSER
TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE AMERICAN POETS CORNER
THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**



In-person induction ceremony welcomes lovers of poetry to the Cathedral on November 14

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is honored to announce Muriel Rukeyser as the 2021 inductee to the American Poets Corner, celebrating both her groundbreaking poetic voice and a return to in-person literary gatherings. Rukeyser, known for her poetry and for her social activism, will be commemorated at an induction ceremony on **Sunday, November 14, 2021 at 4 pm at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street).**

Muriel Rukeyser, born in New York City in 1913, is known for her bold poems of social realism drawing upon the voices and experiences of oppressed people. Her poetry of womanhood and Jewishness celebrate difference and decry injustice. As a lifelong New Yorker, she formed a relationship with the Cathedral towards the end of her life, becoming the namesake of the Muriel Rukeyser Poetry Wall. Today, the Poetry Wall continues to receive submissions of poetry from incarcerated people around the United States.



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Audre Lorde, the 2020 Poets Corner inductee, was honored in a virtual gathering in place of the traditional Cathedral ceremony. While restrictions on in-person gatherings are gradually lessening in New York City, the celebration of Muriel Rukeyser's life and writings on November 14 at 4 pm will remain an intimate event, hosted by Cathedral Poet in Residence Marie Howe. Lovers of great literature are invited to RSVP on the Cathedral's website.

A larger event, jointly honoring both Rukeyser and Lorde, will be planned for 2022. Continuing the Cathedral's beloved tradition, a stone with a quote from Rukeyser's writing will be installed in the American Poets Corner, inviting visitors to the Cathedral to reflect on her feminist, far-reaching words:

*What would happen if one woman told the truth
about her life? / The world would split open.*

Candidates for the 2021 induction were nominated by the Electors to the Poets Corner under the guidance of Poet in Residence Marie Howe. The American Poets Corner, established in 1984 to memorialize and celebrate American writers, is modeled after a similar alcove at Westminster Abbey in London. Previous inductees include Emily Dickinson, e. e. cummings, Tennessee Williams, James Baldwin, Flannery O'Connor, Zora Neale Hurston, and last year's dual honorees, Harriet Jacobs and Ralph Ellison. The American Poets Corner and Cathedral poetry events have become an integral part of the literary landscape of New York.

For more information on this year's induction, visit stjohndivine.org.

About The Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cathedral has responded to changing needs in the local community and across the city and state. People from many faiths and communities worship together in daily services held online and in person; the soup kitchen serves roughly 50,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs to safely provide resources and aid to the hardest-hit New Yorkers; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; Advancing the Community of Tomorrow, the renowned preschool, afterschool and summer program, offers diverse educational and nurturing experiences; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.

About the American Poets Corner

Poets, fiction writers, essayists, and dramatists: the American Poets Corner memorializes the literature of our nation in all its surprise, wit and beauty. The Poets Corner, beloved by visitors, has earned respect for its choices of inductees, and for the high quality of its Electors and Poets in Residence, which



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include 17 U.S. Poets Laureate and winners of every literary prize an American writer can aspire to, including the Nobel. Marie Howe, the current Poet in Residence, joined the Cathedral in 2019.

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