

4-2020

Featured Bookshelf: 2020 National Poetry Month

Megan M. Haught

Univeristy of Central Florida, megan.haught@ucf.edu

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/featured-bookshelf>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Featured Bookshelf by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation

Haught, Megan M., "Featured Bookshelf: 2020 National Poetry Month" (2020). *Featured Bookshelf*. 38.
<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/featured-bookshelf/38>



National Poetry Month Featured Bookshelf



Welcome to National Poetry Month!

The Academy of American Poets, inspired by the success of Black History Month and Women's History Month, created National Poetry Month in 1996. It is the largest literary celebration in the world and UCF Libraries are proud to do their part.

UCF Libraries have gathered suggestions to feature 12 books of poetry that are currently in the UCF collection. These works represent the wide range of favorite poetry books of our faculty and staff.

Since we are in strange times and realize that access to the physical books chosen by the Libraries is extremely limited at the moment, we have also crafted a list of digital poetry works that can be read from the comfort of your home: [Poetry reading digital edition](#).

Keep reading below to see the full descriptions and catalog links.

~

[Anarcha Speaks: a history in poems](#) by Dominique Christina; selected and with a foreword by Tyehimba Jess

In this provocative collection by award-winning poet and artist Dominique Christina, the historical life of Anarcha is personally reenvisioned. Anarcha was an enslaved Black woman who endured experimentation and torture at the hands of Dr. Marion Sims, more commonly known as the father of modern gynecology. Christina enables Anarcha to tell her story without being relegated to the margins of history, as a footnote to Dr. Sims's life. These poems are a reckoning, a resurrection, and a proper way to remember Anarcha . . . and grieve her.

Suggested by Jacqui Johnson, Cataloging

[Edgar Allan Poe: selected poetry and tales](#) edited by James M. Hutchisson

Edgar Allan Poe's stories and poems are among the most haunting and indelible in American literature, but critics for decades persisted in seeing Poe as an anomaly, or even an anachronism. Critics realize now that Poe was even more a part of the contemporary American literary scene than many of his more "nationalistic" peers, and that in much of his work Poe was making commentaries on slavery and Southern social attitudes, technology, the urban landscape, political economy, and other subjects.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

[Fear of Description](#) by Daniel Poppick

These poems tell the story of a generation in crisis: at odds with its own ideals, precariously (or just un-) employed, and absolutely terrified of seeing itself in the planet's future. Is our contemporary moment pure tragedy, or a dark joke? Can it be both? Cutting back and forth in time and ranging between elegiac lyrics and autobiographical accounts of a group of poets moving from Iowa to Brooklyn in the years just before and after the 2016 election, Poppick reinvigorates the prose poem, exploring the slippery terrain between grief and friendship, artifice and technology, writing and ritual, hauntings and obsessions--searching for joy in art but instead finding

it in pitch darkness.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

Homie by Danez Smith

Rooted in the loss of one of Smith's close friends, this book comes out of the search for joy and intimacy within a nation where both can seem scarce and getting scarcer. In poems of rare power and generosity, Smith acknowledges that in a country overrun by violence, xenophobia, and disparity, and in a body defined by race, queerness, and diagnosis, it can be hard to survive, even harder to remember reasons for living. But then the phone lights up, or a shout comes up to the window, and family—blood and chosen—arrives with just the right food and some redemption.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisition and Collection Services

Life in a Country Album by Nathalie Handal

From migrations to pop culture, loss to la dérive, this is a soundtrack of the global cultural landscape—borders and citizenship, hybrid identities and home, freedom and pleasure. It's a vast and moving look at the world, at what home means, and the ways we coexist in an increasingly divided world. These poems are about the dialects of the heart—those we are incapable of parting from, and those that are largely forgotten.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

Life on Mars by Tracy K. Smith

With allusions to David Bowie and interplanetary travel, Smith imagines a soundtrack for the universe to accompany the discoveries, failures, and oddities of human existence. These brilliant new poems envision a sci-fi future sucked clean of any real dangers, contemplates the dark matter that keeps people both close and distant, and revisits the kitschy concepts like "love" and "illness" now relegated to the Museum of Obsolescence. These poems reveal the realities of life lived here, on the ground, where a daughter is imprisoned in the basement by her own father, where celebrities and pop stars walk among us, and where the poet herself loses her father, one of the engineers who worked on the Hubble Space Telescope.

Suggested by Claudia Davidson, Downtown Library

Lilith, But Dark by Nichole Perkins

Perkins reveals a series of confessions and penances, exploring a southern black woman's tour through lover's lament. It explores intimacies from home to the schoolyard to the bedroom. It is a journey through tornado alley, a search for power and peace in the eye of a southern storm.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisition and Collection Services

Opened Ground: selected poems, 1966-1996 by Seamus Heaney

Born and raised in Northern Ireland, where any hint of Gaelic tradition in one's speech was considered a political act, Heaney is all too aware of the dire consequences of speaking one's mind. Indeed, during times of crisis, he has been expected to appear on television and dispense political wisdom. Most often, however, he stays out of the fray and opts for a supreme sense of empathy to guide his words. As excavator--of earth, of his beloved Gaelic, of his own life--Heaney is unmatched.

Suggested by Larry Cooperman, Research & Information Services

Running to Stand Still by Kimberly Reyes

Histories, stories, lyrics, aspirations, dreams, pressures, and images are spun into a musical tale through a site of convergence: the Black female body. Swarmed by external gazes and narratives, the inhabitant of this body uses her power to turn down this cacophony of noise and compose a symphonic space for herself. By breaching boundaries of racism, sexism, sizeism, colorism, and colonialism, these poems investigate the memories and realities of existing as Black in America. Building from poetic, journalistic, and musical histories, poet and essayist Kimberly Reyes constructs a complex and fantastic narrative in which she negotiates a path to claim her own power.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

The 100 Best Poems of All Time edited by Leslie Pockell

This poetry companion puts favorite poetry and poets from around the world at your fingertips, enabling you to revisit the classics, encounter unfamiliar masterworks and rediscover old favorites.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

The Octopus Museum by Brenda Shaughnessy

This collection of bold and scathingly beautiful feminist poems imagines what comes after our current age of environmental destruction, racism, sexism, and divisive politics.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisition and Collection Services

The Undeclared by Kwame Alexander

This poem is a love letter to black life in the United States. It highlights the unspeakable trauma of slavery, the faith and fire of the civil rights movement, and the grit, passion, and perseverance of some of the world's greatest heroes. The text is also peppered with references to the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, and others, offering deeper insights into the accomplishments of the past, while bringing attention to the endurance and spirit of those surviving and thriving in the present.

Suggested by Emma Gisclair, Curriculum Materials Center

Tumblr post: <https://ucflibrary.tumblr.com/post/614196754405015552/welcome-to-national-poetry-month-the-academy-of>

Blog post: <https://library.ucf.edu/news/featured-bookshelf-national-poetry-month-2020/>