

# A Poetic Garden

**S**itting on lawn chairs, listening to poets and musicians turn ordinary moments into art, summer wouldn't be summer without the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. Within view of the grand home that architect Theodate Pope designed for her family, the Wednesday performances are a feast of synesthesia, sonants, and vociferation—a great way to unwind after a hectic hump day.

On June 24, the central Connecticut band Pan Caribé will play Caribbean music followed by up-and-coming African-American poet Natasha Trethewey. Born in Gulfport, Miss., in 1966, her poems speak of her fascination with labor and the objects of work and labor. A sizable sampling of her work has appeared in *Spirit and Flame: An Anthology of African American Poetry* (Syracuse University Press, 1996).

July 8 brings jazz talent The Kent Hewitt/Tim Moran Duo, followed by Margaret Gibson, of Preston, who published two poetry books, *Signs* (1979) and *Long Walks in the Afternoon* (1982).

July 22, folk singer Sally Rogers, appointed Connecticut's State Troubadour for 1997, joins Connecticut's Poet Laureate, Leo Connellan. Connellan's poems speak of "the bottom-dog world of motel maids and clerks, Yankee fisherman, the poached gray, fog-bound Maine coast," as critic Robert Bové phrased it.

August 5 offers a chance to hear from Connecticut's youngest poets. Accompanied by the Hall High Jazz Band, the eight winners of the Young Poets Competition, a poetry contest for aspiring high school poets read from their work.

The Hugh Blumenfeld Trio will perform music ranging from the "personal to the political" on August 19, followed by poet Hayden Carruth. Carruth, born in Waterbury, explores subjects such as rural poverty in northern Vermont and upstate New York.

Finally, on September 12, to culminate the season, the Hill-Stead invites Gwyneth Walker and the choral group CONCORA to sing, followed by prominent African-American poet, Lucille Clifton. Clifton has written many books,

including, *Good Woman: Poems and a Memoir 1969-1980*, *Quilting: Poems 1987-1990*, and *The Book of Light* (1993). E.K. Laing has said her work "takes up arms in the struggle to salvage what grace in life remains."

The outdoor performances are free. Music begins at 6:30 p.m.; poetry at 7:30 p.m. Light edibles will be sold on the grounds. Parking on museum grounds costs \$3. In case of rain, call (860) 677-9064. For a free map, call (860) 677-4787.

—Alexis Maislen

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Sunken Garden Poetry Festival: fine language under the stars.