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POETS AGAINST THE WAR DAY READINGS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

Washington D.C. area poets will participate in anti-war poetry readings as part of the national and worldwide Poets Against the War Day on February 12th in which more than 135 separate events are scheduled around the country and around the world. An online collection of more than 6,000 poems will be available to press at that time.

At noon on February 12th in Lafayette Park across from the White House **Jane Shore** will read a statement from **Stanley Kunitz**, a previous U.S. Poet Laureate, followed by readings from **Jane Shore**, **Stanley Plumly**, **Michael Collier**, poet laureate of the state of Maryland, **Elizabeth Arnold**, **Joshua Weiner**, **Sandy Solomon**, **David McAleavey**, and **David Gewanter**. This reading will be hosted by CODEPINK Women's Peace Vigil. Immediately following it, poets will present a sampling of over 1,000 poems from the Poets Against the War anthology to members of Congress. A second poetry reading by Washington D.C. area poets will be held 7:00 PM. at All Souls Church Unitarian, 16th & Harvard Streets, NW.

The day of anti-war poetry began as a response to First Lady Laura Bush's invitation to leading American poets to participate in a February 12, White House symposium to celebrate the poetry of Langston Hughes, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson. One poet's protest to that invitation triggered a national and worldwide outpouring of poetic dissent. Sam Hamill, a poet and founder of the Copper Canyon Press in Port Townsend, Wash., asked 150 other poets to join him in voicing opposition to the administration's drive to war with Iraq. He called for the date to be a National Day of Poetry Against the War and invited poets to send him poems of resistance to compile and present it to the White House on that day.

"We believe that the world is poised on the knife-edge of a decision between war and peace, and it is conceivably the passionate, miraculous efforts of a growing throng of peace-loving poets who may be able to make part of the difference."

Since January 30, poets in many countries have joined an upsurge of conscience and compassion, submitting over 6,000 poems to the Poets Against The War site (www.poetsagainsthewar.org/), organizing hundreds of anti-war poetry readings around the world, joining with millions of others in vigils, processions, prayers and intercessions, lobbying and rallying for peace. At no time in history have so many poets spoken in such a large chorus.