

# EDITOR'S NOTE

We begin the new year with a new look for *English Teaching Forum*. No doubt you noticed the new nameplate and format of the cover right away. When you page through the magazine, you'll see other changes as well. We've redesigned the title pages for articles to achieve a more streamlined look, and we've created standard headings for elements such as *Classroom Techniques* and *Lesson Plans*. These are just a couple of examples of our ongoing efforts to enhance the appearance and utility of *Forum*. We hope you like the changes, and, as always, we welcome your comments.

We're excited not only about *Forum's* new look but also about the theme of this issue—poetry. We chose the cover photo of sunlight shining through the trees to stand as a metaphor for poetic inspiration illuminating everyday objects and surroundings, inviting poets to record their observations. The feature article tells our readers about the U.S. Poet Laureate, giving the history of this honored position and highlighting the ways some Poet Laureates have brought poetry to a wider audience.

The current Poet Laureate, Ted Kooser, created a weekly poetry column on the Internet that also appears in print publications across the country. We include two selections from Kooser's column and provide questions we hope will inspire you to discuss the poems with your students. In addition, you will find a lesson plan that offers a wide selection of poetry activities to use in your classrooms.

In classrooms throughout the United States, teachers are preparing to observe National Poetry Month during April. Established by the Academy of American Poets in 1996, National Poetry Month is a month-long national celebration of poetry that has grown into the largest literary festival in the world. This year, special events—including a ten-city series of poetry readings and the launch of a national Poetry Read-a-Thon (to encourage students to read and write about poetry)—will mark the tenth anniversary of National Poetry Month. Many other poetry events will take place all across the United States.

And perhaps some of you will choose to celebrate a "Poetry Month" in your own classrooms, either in April or some other month. You can use the activities in this issue of *Forum* to encourage your students to read and talk about poetry, and even write their own poems. Think about posting copies of your students' poems on bulletin boards, holding a poetry slam in your English class (we tell you how to do this), or even presenting a public poetry reading at your school.

Studying poetry in a foreign language can sometimes be a challenge, but it is always rewarding.

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