SENATE STATE AFFAIRS
EXHIBIT NO. 4
DATE 1.10.05
BILL NO. 69

MEMO

HONORARY POSITION OF STATE POET LAUREATE

Senate Bill No. 69

Prepared by
Senator Kitzenberg
&
Senator Cobb

Forgetfulness

The name of the author is the first to go
followed obediently by the title, the plot,
the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel
which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never
even heard of,

as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor
decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain,
to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the nine Muses goodbye
and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag,
and even now as you memorize the order of the planets,

something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps,
the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember
it is not poised on the tip of your tongue,
not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river
whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall,
well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those
who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a
bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night
to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.
No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted
out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

--Billy Collins

2005 Montana Legislature

About Bill – Links

SENATE BILL NO. 69

INTRODUCED BY J. COBB

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE HONORARY POSITION OF STATE POET LAUREATE; PROVIDING FOR THE NOMINATION, APPOINTMENT, AND TERM OF THE STATE POET LAUREATE; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AMENDING SECTION 22-2-106, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. State poet laureate.** (1) There is a state poet laureate.

(2) Within 30 days prior to the expiration of the state poet laureate's term of appointment or within 30 days after a vacancy in the position occurs, the Montana arts council established in 22-2-101 shall nominate three individuals to be the state poet laureate. The Montana arts council shall provide the list of nominees to the governor who shall:

(a) within 30 days after receiving the list of nominees, appoint the state poet laureate from among the individuals named on the list; and

(b) notify the secretary of state and the Montana arts council of the appointment.

(3) The individual named by the governor as the state poet laureate shall serve for a term of 2 years beginning on the date of appointment by the governor.

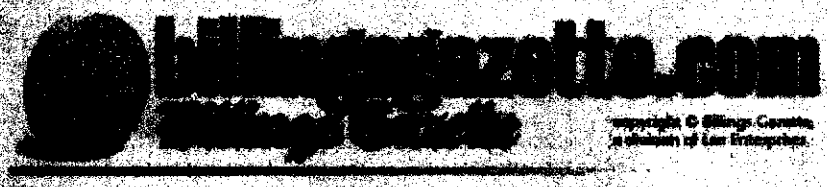
(4) The state poet laureate is an honorary position, and the person serving as the state poet laureate may not receive any compensation from the state for serving as the state poet laureate.

Section 2. Section 22-2-106, MCA, is amended to read:

"**22-2-106. Council duties.** The ~~duties of the~~ council shall ~~be to~~:

(1) encourage throughout the state the study and presentation of the arts and stimulate public interest and participation ~~therein~~ in the arts;

(2) cooperate with public and private institutions engaged within the state in artistic and cultural activities, including but not limited to music, theater, dance, painting, sculpture, architecture, and allied arts and crafts, and make recommendations concerning appropriate methods to encourage participation in and appreciation of the arts to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state;



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http://www.billingsgazette.com/index.php?display=rednews/2005/01/05/build/state/50-poet-laureate.inc

State poet laureate proposed

By ALLISON FARRELL
Gazette State Bureau

HELENA - Aside from a solution to the school funding problem and a new state budget, what Montana needs is its own poet laureate, Sen. Sam Kitzenberg, R-Glasgow, said Tuesday.

Kitzenberg, a high school English teacher, and Sen. John Cobb, R-Augusta, a rancher-lawyer, are co-sponsoring a bill in the 2005 Legislature that would create the top poetry post in Montana.

"I always felt we had an unwritten poet laureate with Richard Hugo at the University of Montana," Kitzenberg said. "This would be a way we could recognize some of our poets who have been able to capture what Montana really means."

The late and iconic Hugo gave voice to a generation of Montana poets and paved the way for the current generation of Montana writers, such as Maile Meloy and Deirdre McNamer, published in "The New Montana Story: An Anthology" in 2003.

"It's just a nice thing to do," Cobb said of the proposed post. "It doesn't solve any problems, but it's something the government does."

Under the bill, the Montana Arts Council would supply the governor with the names of three qualified Montana poets. The governor would then appoint a poet from the list to hold the honorary post for two years. The poet laureate would receive no compensation but would promote the arts throughout Montana.

"I think it's a grand idea," said Arni Fishbaugh, executive director of the Montana Arts Council. "Many other states have poet laureates, and Montana is known for the outstanding quality of its poets and writers."

Thirteen other states, including Utah and California, have state poet laureates, and four countries - Britain, Canada, France and the United States - also have the position.

The poet laureate concept was born in England in the early 1600s, when King James I commissioned a poem. The idea didn't jump the Atlantic for 300 years, until the United States created a poetry consultant post in 1937. The current post was created by Congress in 1985.

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What is a Poet Laureate?

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Poets Laureate, appointed by the Librarian of Congress, are entrusted with raising the status of poetry in the everyday conscience of the American public.

In 1616 King James I of England granted playwright and poet Ben Jonson a pension, thereby establishing the informal position of Poet Laureate. Jonson died in 1637 and a like pension was bestowed to William Davenant.

In 1668 the post of Poet Laureate was officially established as a royal office. As first decreed by Thomas Shadwell, the Poet Laureate of England's sole responsibility was to compose birthday poems and a special New Year's ode for the Royal Family. For more than 150 years this tradition was strictly adhered to until the dignity of the post began to erode to the point where both poet and royal were just going through the motions. Queen Victoria ended the sham and changed the honorific to a recognition of achievement in poetry. If the Poet Laureate feels the urge to compose a verse or two for the royal family, it is still looked upon favorably.

In the United States some local Poets Laureate were recognized in their communities in the 19th century but it was not until 1937 that a similar position to that in England was established in America. The American equivalent was the Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress, a job that carried an impressive title but no pay. In 1985 the United States Congress created an official post with the creation of the Poet Laureate Consultant to the Library of Congress.

The Poet Laureate, in addition to legitimacy, now received an annual monetary stipend, currently $35,000. The money was funded by a gift from Archer M. Huntingdon, son of

THE

Poetry

Poets Laureate of the U.S.A.

A Net-annotated list

A Net-annotated list of all the poets who have served the Library of Congress as Consultant (the old title) or Poet Laureate Consultant (the new title). Biographies & general reference sites are linked to the poets' names -- many of them pages from the Academy of American Poets' Find a Poet archive, a growing & invaluable resource. If there is no general information site about the poet, we have searched the Net for sample poems or other writings or recordings & listed those below the poet's name.

- Joseph Auslander 1937-41
  His sonnet, "To My Despoiler"
- Allen Tate 1943-44
  His essay on writing poetry, "Narcissus As Narcissus"
- Robert Penn Warren 1944-45
- Louise Bogan 1945-46
- Karl Shapiro 1946-47
- Robert Lowell 1947-48
- Leonie Adams 1948-49
- Elizabeth Bishop 1949-50
- Conrad Aiken 1950-52 (First to serve two terms)
- William Carlos Williams
  Appointed to serve two terms in 1952 but did not serve -- for more on this & other Laureate controversies see the history in *Jacket* magazine
- Randall Jarrell 1957-58
- Robert Frost 1958-59

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Our 2000 feature article on him, "Stranded: Poet Mark Strand Preaches Political Indifference at UCI"

- Joseph Brodsky 1991-92
  Our 1997 feature article on him, "The Poet Is Gone, The Poems Live On"

- Mona Van Duyn 1992-93

- Rita Dove 1993-95
  A special Web edition of her poem "Lady Freedom Among Us"

- Robert Hass 1995-97
  Brighde Mullins' introduction to his reading at DIA Center for the Arts

- Robert Pinsky 1997-2000
  His Favorite Poem Project
  Our review of his book, *The Sounds of Poetry*

- Stanley Kunitz 2000-2001
  Our collection of Kunitz quotes & links when he was appointed Laureate

- Billy Collins 2001-2003
  His Poetry 180 project to bring poetry into American high schools
  Our choice of two of his readings as Poetry MP3 Picks in honor of his laureateship

- Louise Glück 2003-2004
  Our links & comments when she was named Laureate

See the most recent Library of Congress press release (on Louise Glück's appointment) & the 1999 press release (when Robert Pinsky was reappointed to an unprecedented third term as Poet Laureate) for fact sheets & brief history of the U.S. Poet Laureate position.

Previous Feature Articles
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Poets Laureate of Great Britain.

Related pages:
★ Books of Poetry Form, ★ Alphabetic list of poetry forms and related topics, ★ Poetry Home-Sweet-Home, ★ How to Write Poetry.

Essays on how to write specific forms:
★ Ghazal, ★ Pantoum, ★ Sestina, ★ Sonnet, ★ Villanelle.

Poets Laureate of Great Britain
by Joan Zimmerman

★ History, ★ FAQs, ★ Notes on the laureated Poets, ★ Non-Laureated Poets,
★ Alphabetic List, ★ Chronological List, ★ Links, ★ Books.

[redacted]	Buy *Verses of the Poets Laureate: from John Dryden to Andrew Motion*, by Phillis Levin (Editor) and Andrew Motion (Introduction). It describes and shows the work of the 19 poets appointed as Poet Laureate since Charles II created the first in 1668.
Books newly read.	[redacted] Support us - buy at Amazon!

The greatest British Poets Laureate are Tennyson, William Wordsworth, and the first Laureate, John Dryden.

Several of the other Laureates were famous poets, particularly Ted Hughes, Robert Southey, John Masefield, Sir John Betjeman, Cecil Day-Lewis, and the current Laureate, Andrew Motion.

History and responsibilities.

In Great Britain, the Poet Laureate is:

- The realm's official poet.
- A member of the royal household.
- Charged with writing verses for court and national occasions (such as for a Royal Wedding or the New Year).
- Awarded the position for life.
- Chosen by the British reigning monarch, from a list of nominees that the Prime Minister compiles after a poet laureate dies.

Rowe, Nicholas (1674-1718)
Shadwell, Thomas (1642-1692)
Southey, Robert (1774-1843)
Tate, Nahum (1652-1715)
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord (1809-1892)
Wharton, Thomas (1728-1790)
Whitehead, William (1715-1785)
Wordsworth, William (1770-1850)

Chronological List of the Poets Laureate of Great Britain.

John Dryden (1631-1700)
Thomas Shadwell (1642-1692)
Nahum Tate (1652-1715)
Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718)
Laurence Eusden (1688-1730)
Colley Cibber (1671-1757)
William Whitehead (1715-1785)
Thomas Wharton (1728-1790)
Henry James Pye (1745-1813)
Robert Southey (1774-1843)
William Wordsworth (1770-1850)
Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)
Alfred Austin (1835-1913)
Robert Bridges (1844-1930)
John Masefield (1878-1967)
Cecil Day-Lewis (1904-1972)
Sir John Betjeman (1906-1984)
Ted Hughes (1930-1998)
Andrew Motion (1952-)

Sketches on the Poets Laureate of Great Britain, in chronological order.
Or, see our lists of Poets Laureate in ★ Alphabetic Sequence, ★ Chronological Sequence.

- **John Dryden** (1631-1700),
  Laureate 1668-88.

  Appointed in 1668 by King Charles II, who gave John Dryden a formal royal warrant that awarded him the official titles of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal. This role continued under King James II.

Nicholas Rowe was celebrated as a dramatist rather than as a poet. The Poet Laureate's role was now general praise of the sovereign, rather than political and historical. In addition to the annual New Year ode, the Laureate acquired the duty of writing a birthday ode to the monarch, a practice which was to last over 100 years.

- **Laurence Eusden (1688-1730).**
  Laureate 1718-30.

  Eusden never published a book of poetry. His work is mediocre.

- **Colley Cibber (1671-1757).**
  Laureate 1730-57.

  The poetry of dramatist Colley Cibber was conscientious but not inspired.

- **William Whitehead (1715-85).**
  Laureate 1757-85. [The appointment was first offered to and declined by Thomas Gray.]

  William Whitehead (a respectable though perhaps dull dramatist) was good humored and amiable. For example, he defended the poetry of Laureates in a comic poem "A Pathetic Apology For All Laureates, Past, Present, And To Come".

  Whitehead was conscientious, and saw himself as a non-partisan spokesman for the whole country. Astonishingly for a political appointee, he appeared to see no requirement "to defend the King or support the government". Sadly, this reflects the idea that the Laureate's influence had weakened so much that the official poems were unlikely to influence opinions, even though the times were important politically, with rebellion in the American colonies and war in Europe.

- **Thomas Wharton (1728-90).**
  Laureate 1785-90. Professor of Poetry at Oxford, Wharton was the only eighteenth-century laureate who was not primarily a dramatist. William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge admired his work.

- **Henry James Pye (1745-1813).**
  Laureate 1790-1813.

  Before Pye's appointment, the Sovereign or the Lord Chamberlain (a member

A pompous man, least successful of the Poets Laureate.

- **Robert Bridges** (1844-1930).
  Laureate 1913-30.

  Uninterested in fame and praise, Bridges wrote little and destroyed his papers before his death.

- **John Masefield** (1878-1967).
  Laureate 1930-67.

  Born in Ledbury, Herefordshire, England, Masefield apprenticed to be a merchant marine officer. While training, he became ill in Chile, returned to England, then worked in factories and bars in the United States. In 1897 he returned to England, working on newspapers and his own writing (poems, stories, and plays). Masefield published his first volume of poems in 1902. He served during World War I in the Red Cross in France and on a hospital ship at Gallipoli. His simple and moving poems include the famous *Sea Fever*.

- **Cecil Day-Lewis** (1904-72).
  Laureate 1968-72.

  Anglo-Irish Cecil Day-Lewis was a poet, critic, and educator who enjoyed the honor of being the Poet Laureate. A student at Oxford with Auden. A committed Communist though naive politically. Hi poetry are often romantic and melancholy. Also he wrote detective stories (using the pseudonym Nicholas Blake).

- **Sir John Betjeman** (1906-84).
  Laureate 1972-84.

  Born in Highgate (North London). Sir John Betjeman wrote humorous and accessible poetry. Betjeman commemorated royal events such as The Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

- **Ted Hughes** (1930-98).
  Laureate 1984-1998.

  Born in Yorkshire. A fierce, sometimes ferocious, poet of the natural and the mythological worlds, of "the struggle in the soil as well as in the soul" [Levin in *Verses of the Poets Laureate*]. Also authored poetry and plays for children.

court poet to King James I.

One of Jonson's most famous poems, "To Celia", begins "Drink to me, only, with thine eyes...". Buried upright in Westminster Abbey, standing on his feet in the northern aisle of the Nave (and not in Poets' Corner) beneath the inscription "O Rare Ben Johnson"

- **William Davenant, or Sir William D'Avenant.** After Jonson's death, dramatist Davenant [D'Avenant] inherited Jonson's office and pension, again as an unofficial appointment.

Links.

- Best Poems by the Best Poets - Some Lists of Winners.
- Poets Laureate of the United States of America.

Books about the Poets Laureate of Great Britain.

Verses of the Poets Laureate: from John Dryden to Andrew Motion, by Phillis Levin (Editor) and Andrew Motion (Introduction). Background on each Poet Laureate and samples of their work. Laureate Andrew Motion introduces the collection with his thoughts on what his predecessors achieved and what he plans to accomplish.

Related Books.

- *The Best American Poetry: 2004*, Editor Lyn Hejinian.
- *The Best American Poetry: 2003*, Editor Yusef Komunyakaa.
- *The Best American Poetry: 2002*, Editor Robert Creeley.
- *The Best American Poetry: 2000*, Editor Rita Dove.
- *The Best American Poetry: 2001*, Editor Robert Hass.
- *The Best American Poetry: 1999*, Editor Robert Bly.

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(3) foster public interest in the cultural heritage of our state and expand the state's cultural resources;

(4) encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression essential for the well-being of the arts;

(5) as required under [section 1], nominate three individuals to serve as the state poet laureate and provide the list of nominees to the governor."

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Implementation.** The Montana arts council shall provide to the governor before July 1, 2005, a list of three nominees for the position of state poet laureate provided for in [section 1]. The governor shall appoint a state poet laureate within 30 days following receipt of the list of appointees. Subsequent nominations and appointments as state poet laureate must be made as provided in [section 1].

NEW SECTION. **Section 4. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 2, chapter 15, and the provisions of Title 2, chapter 15, apply to [section 1].

NEW SECTION. **Section 5. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

- END -

Latest Version of SB 69 *(SB0069.01)*

Processed for the Web on December 14, 2004 (9:24am)

New language in a bill appears underlined, deleted material appears stricken.

Sponsor names are handwritten on introduced bills, hence do not appear on the bill until it is reprinted.

See the status of this bill for the bill's primary sponsor.

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  "Reveille" & 4 other poems at Daypoems
- Howard Nemerov 1963-64
- Reed Whittemore 1964-65
- Stephen Spender 1965-66
- James Dickey 1966-68
- William Jay Smith 1968-70
  His "Epigrams"
- William Stafford 1970-71
- Josephine Jacobsen 1971-73
  Her letter to William Meredith
- Daniel Hoffman 1973-74
- Stanley Kunitz 1974-76
- Robert Hayden 1976-78
- William Meredith 1978-80
- Maxine Kumin 1981-82
- Anthony Hecht 1982-84
- Robert Fitzgerald 1984-85 (Appointed and served in a health-limited capacity, but did not come to the Library of Congress)
- Reed Whittemore 1984-85 (Interim Consultant in Poetry)
- Gwendolyn Brooks 1985-86
- Robert Penn Warren 1986-87 (First to be designated Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry)
- Richard Wilbur 1987-88
- Howard Nemerov 1988-90
- Mark Strand 1990-91

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one of the quartet of founders of the Central Pacific Railroad that worked on the Transcontinental Railroad. Huntingdon was not similarly inclined to business and spent his life in philanthropic pursuits. "Wherever I put my foot down, a museum springs up," he once said.

British Poets Laureate serve for life and since 1668 there have been only 19 poets so honored (no women). In the United States, the Poet Laureate is appointed by the Librarian of Congress to a single term, serving from October to May (there have been many women Poets Laureate). In making the selection, the Librarian of Congress seeks the consul of past and present Poets Laureate and other distinguished poetry critics.

The official duties of a Poet Laureate are few. There is one annual lecture and a poetry reading but little beyond that. The general mandate is to raise the status of poetry in the everyday conscience of the American public. Each Poet Laureate is free to pursue an individual agenda which are predictably diverse. During his service, Poet Laureate Joseph Brodsky spearheaded a movement to place poetry in airports, supermarkets and hotel rooms. Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks spent her tenure meeting with elementary school students encouraging them to write poetry. Poet Laureate Robert Haas sought to integrate poetry into the fabric of the community with his "Watershed" conference that united novelists, storytellers and poets to talk about their work.

Clearly, the position of Poet Laureate has come a long way since the days when a poet was expected to string together a few rhymes for a royal birthday party.

Written by *Doug Gelbert*

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You are here: Pagewise Home >> Arts & Entertainment >> Literature:General >> **What is a Poet Laureate?**

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Shortly after the 1668, the position became the Poet Laureate of *Great Britain* in 1707, when The Act of Union created "Great Britain" as the political name of England, Scotland, and Wales.

The name *Laureate* derives from the Latin *laureatus* ("crowned with laurel"). It comes from an ancient Roman tradition of honoring a person (especially a poet) who has shown excellence of achievement. The honor is signified by presenting the person with a wreath of laurel leaves.

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) on the Poets Laureate of Great Britain.

1. What does "Laureate" mean? Answer.
2. Who was the best? Most frequently this is said to be Tennyson.
3. Who was the worst? Several contenders. The winner is one of: Colley Cibber, Laurence Eusden, Henry James Pye, and William Whitehead.
4. Wasn't Ben Johnson the first Poet Laureate? Not officially. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, many monarch and other leaders patronized writers, who repaid the favor by praising their sponsors. One example is Jonson received a pension from James I, unofficially for writing masques.
5. Which Poet Laureate was dismissed from his job? John Dryden. And why? See notes on John Dryden.
6. How many Poets Laureate (including the one present in 2002) have there been? 19 people have held the position of Poet Laureate.
7. Who was the longest serving Poet Laureate? Alfred, Lord Tennyson held the post for 42 years.
8. What is the job description? There isn't one! A major challenge of the unique post is the freedom for the poet who accepts the role. Each poet has shaped it in their unique way.

Alphabetic List of the Poets Laureate of Great Britain.

Austin, Alfred (1835-1913)
Betjeman, Sir John (1906-1984)
Bridges, Robert (1844-1930)
Cibber, Colley (1671-1757)
Day-Lewis, Cecil (1904-1972)
Dryden, John (1631-1700)
Eusden, Laurence (1688-1730)
Hughes, Ted (1930-1998)
Masefield, John (1878-1967)
Motion, Andrew (1952-)
Pye, Henry (1745-1813)

Despite the "no obligations" clause, Hughes did write in commemoration of royal events, such as the christening of Prince Henry of Wales in 1985.

- **Andrew Motion** (1952-present).
  Laureate 1998-present.

  Andrew Motion, an acclaimed poet and biographer, teaches creative writing at the University of East Anglia. He promotes poetry among young people. His poems addressing many public events as well and royal occasions, including the 100th birthday of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. A critic, and a free-form poet who interweaves the personal, the historical, the legendary, and the political.

Not-quite Poets Laureate of Great Britain.

These poets were not Poets Laureate, for the reasons given.

- **Ben Jonson** (1573-1637), a playwright and poet, a volatile satirist of explosive temperament and "a great lover and praiser of himself", was not formally appointed as Poet Laureate. John Dryden was the first appointed Poet Laureate, as shown by the official royal record (starts in a new window).

  At best, Jonson was a "common law" poet laureate (as in "common law" husband).

  Some believe Jonson to be the greatest English poet and dramatist of the seventeenth century. Many praise his charm and good humor. His vigor and productivity is clear.

  Jonson learned the trade of bricklayer, fought with English troops in Flanders, then returned to London to become an actor and playwright, a writer of masques (short pageant-like plays), and a tutor to Sir Walter Raleigh's son.

  In 1597 Jonson was imprisoned for involvement in the satire *The Isle of Dogs*, which authorities found seditious. He was tried for killing a fellow actor in a duel in 1598. Imprisioned for this, he converted to Catholicism to be spared death for murder. He was released provided that he forfeit all his possessions, and that he receive a felon's brand on his thumb.

  Charged with treason for his tragedy *Sejanus, His Fall* (1603) and then briefly imprisoned for views in *Eastward Ho* (1604), Jonson (a Catholic) was under deep suspicion after Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot (1605). This situation may have motivated him, shortly thereafter, to reconvert to Anglicanism. He did become

of the Royal Household) awarded the Poet Laureateship directly. William Pitt (the first Prime Minister involved in appointing a Laureate) offered the position to Henry James Pye, a politician more than a poet. Thereafter, the Prime Minister submits names for royal approval. Then the monarch commands the Lord Chamberlain to issue a warrant of appointment.

- **Robert Southey** (1774-1843).
  Laureate 1813-43. [In a bizarre double-offer the appointment was offered to two writers concurrently. Fortunately, Sir Walter Scott turned down the approach by Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool.]

  Robert Southey accepted the suggestion of the post from the Prince Regent. When Scott declined the offer, he suggested Southey also, so the situation ended well.

  During Southey's tenure, George IV became monarch in 1820, and abandoned the requirement for regular odes to the monarch.

- **William Wordsworth** (1770-1850).
  Laureate 1843-50.

  William Wordsworth, at 73, was the oldest Poet Laureate to be appointed. He accepted the position on the agreement that he would not have obligations to write poetry on demand.

  Since Wordsworth, the job of Poet Laureate has been purely honorary, and appointees have been able to interpret the role as they wish.

- **Alfred, Lord Tennyson** (1809-92).
  Laureate 1850-92. [The appointment was first offered to and (to our benefit) declined by Samuel Rogers.]

  Alfred Tennyson raised the stature of the Poet Laureate hugely. His laureate poems include *The Charge Of The Light Brigade* (the suicidal charge by the Light Brigade down a valley at Balaclava during the Crimean war).

  Tennyson's death was mourned publicly by millions. In respect, no appointment was made to the post of Poet Laureate for four years.

- **Alfred Austin** (1835-1913).
  Laureate 1896-1913.

As a powerful satirist, Dryden was a strong advocate and spokesman for his monarch, and "the best poet, dramatist, translator and critic of the age" [Levin in *Verses of the Poets Laureate*]

In 1689, sacked [or fired] by William III for failing to take an oath of allegiance.

- **Thomas Shadwell** (1643?-1692).
  Laureate 1689-92.

  The successful dramatist Thomas Shadwell was chosen in large part because he was a Protestant Whig, essential to replace the Catholic Dryden. met an inglorious end in 1693,

  A weak poet, a heavy drinker, and an opium user, Shadwell died from an overdose of opium, which he took in part to relieve his gout. He was said to have found the laureateship unimportant. Disrespected by John Dryden, among others, for his poetry as well as for his politics.

  Shadwell wrote a yearly ode on the monarch's birthday, and introduced the tradition of writing a New Year ode; his odes are crashingly uninspired and mechanistic, as if written by an unusually dimwitted computer program.

- **Nahum Tate** (1652-1715).
  Laureate 1692-1715.

  Born in Dublin, Tate was awarded the Poet Laureate position (and its £100 per year) but the post of Historiographer Royal (and its annual £200) became a separate assignment.

  Tate is most known today for his authorship of the widely loved Christmas carol "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night". He is notorious for his (creative?) revision of Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, giving it a happy ending.

  In response to public events, Tate wrote poems for victories against the French (1704), the Act of Union between the Parliaments of England and Scotland (1707), and the signing of the Peace of Utrecht with France (1713).

- **Nicholas Rowe** (1674-1718).
  Laureate 1715-18.