

Robert Pinsky

 Tags: [literature](#), [poetry](#)

A guide to the work of Robert Pinsky

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Robert Pinsky



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Marking Time: On Time and Place in Poetry and Film

 From the [Vision and Voices](#) website:

Robert Pinsky is a world-renowned poet, literary critic and translator. His translation of Dante's *Inferno* is among the most praised poetical reimaginings of our time, and his own poetry, including such prize-winning volumes as *An Explanation of America*, *The Figured Wheel* and *Sadness and Happiness*, continues to inspire a wide range of readers. In the book-length essay *Thousands of Broadways: Dreams and Nightmares of the American Small Town*, he travels seamlessly from personal history to literary analysis to film. The works of Preston Sturges and Alfred Hitchcock meet up with dazzling insouciance with such writers as William Faulkner, Willa Cather and Thornton Wilder. In his work as the poet laureate of the United States and as the creator of the "Favorite Poem" project, Pinsky makes us take literature more seriously and see the way the artistic imagination creates, recreates and transforms the world around us.

Note: This guide was originally developed for a Vision and Voices event in April, 2010. The guide has been re-purposed as a general guide for learning more about Robert Pinsky.

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Honors and Awards

- Fulbright Fellowship, 1965
- Stegner Fellowship in Creative Writing, 1965
- NEH Fellowship, 1974
- Massachusetts Council for the Arts Award, 1976
- Oscar Blumenthal Prize, 1979
- American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award, 1980
- Saxifrage Prize, 1980
- Guggenheim Fellowship, 1980
- Eunice B. Tietjens Prize, 1983
- NEA Fellowship, 1984
- William Carlos Williams Prize, 1985
- Landon Prize in Translation, 1995
- Shelley Memorial award, 1996
- LA Times Book Award, 1997
- Ambassador Book Award in Poetry, 1997
- Lenore Marshall Prize, 1997
- Harold Washington Literacy Award, 1999
- Phi Beta Kappa Award, 2003
- PEN-Voelcker Award, 2004
- Manhae Foundation Prize, 2006
- Jewish Cultural Foundation Achievement Award, 2006

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About Robert Pinsky

Robert Neal Pinsky, born October 20, 1940 in Long Branch, NJ, graduated from Rutgers University (B.A.) in 1962 and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. from Stanford in 1966. He was an assistant professor of English at the University of Chicago from 1967-68, professor of English at Wellesley College from 1968-80, professor of English at the University of California Berkley from 1980-88, and is currently a professor of English and Creative Writing at Boston University.

In 1997, Pinsky was named Poet Laureate of the United States and Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, a post he held until 2000. He has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize (1996) and was a 2005 National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist. (See sidebar for additional honors and awards)

In 1997, Pinsky founded the [Favorite Poem Project](#), an invitation for ordinary Americans to read their favorites poems and have those readings recorded and archived in the Library of Congress. Over 18,000 Americans volunteered to read their favorite poems. The original letters, emails, and both raw and edited versions of audio and video recordings are housed by Boston University's Mugar Library, at the Howard Gottlieb Archival Research Center

From 1978-86, Pinsky was poetry editor for *New Republic* and he is currently the poetry editor for *Slate.com*. Pinsky has also contributed to *American Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *American Scholar*, *Antaeus*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Literary Review*, *Poetry*, *Shenandoah*, *Threepenny Review*, *New Yorker*, *Washington Post Magazine*, and *Yale Review*. Additionally, he has been a guest on the *Colbert Report*, the *Simpsons*, and *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*.

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Additional Biographical Sources

"Robert Pinsky." (2010). *Contemporary Authors Online*. Reproduced in Biography Resource Center. Farmington Hills, MI. Retrieved February 4, 2010, from <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC>

Callison, K. B. (2006). Image of Desire: An Interview with Robert Pinsky. In J. W. Hunter (Ed.) *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, 216. Detroit: Gale New Letters, 83-94. Retrieved February 4, 2010, from Literature Resource Center via Gale: <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=LitRC&u=usc13562>

Passey, J. (2005). An appetite for art: a conversation with Robert Pinsky. *Weber Studies*, 22(2), 2-13.

"Robert (Neal) Pinsky." (2001). *Contemporary Poets, 7th ed.*, St. James Press, 2001. Reproduced in Biography Resource Center. Farmington Hills, MI. Retrieved February 4, 2010 from <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC>

Pinsky, R. & Thomas, H. (2000). A Conversation with Robert Pinsky. In J. W. Hunter & P. Vedder (Eds.) *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, 121. Detroit, MI: Gale Group TriQuarterly, 21-37. Retrieved February 4, 2010, from Literature Resource Center via Gale: <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=LitRC&u=usc13562>

Kelly, S. (1999). An Interview with ... Robert Pinsky. *The Writer*, 112(11), 18. Retrieved February 4, 2010, from Literature Resource Center via Gale: <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/start.do?p=LitRC&u=usc13562>

Mazur, M., & Pinsky, R. (1995). A Conversation about The Inferno of Dante.

Harvard Review, 8, 60-71.

Sorkin, A. J. (1984). An Interview with Robert Pinsky. *Contemporary Literature*, 25(1), 1-14.

Halliday, M. (1980). An Interview with Robert Pinsky. *Ploughshares*, 6(2), 141-69.

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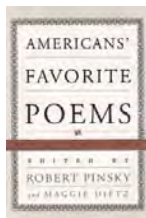
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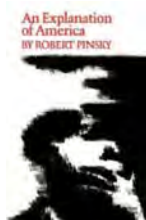
Books at USC



Americans' favorite poems : the Favorite Poem Project anthology - Pinsky, Robert and Maggie Dietz

Call Number: PN6101.A46 2000

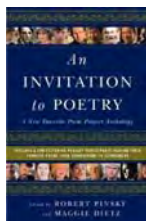
ISBN: 0393048209



An explanation of America - Pinsky, Robert

Call Number: PS3566.I54E9

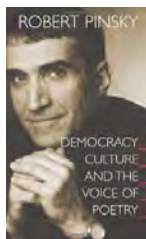
ISBN: 0691064075



An invitation to poetry : a new Favorite Poem Project anthology - Pinsky, Robert and Maggie Dietz

Call Number: PN6101.I56 2004

ISBN: 039305876X



Democracy, culture, and the voice of poetry - Pinsky, Robert

Call Number: PS323.5.P57 2002

ISBN: 0691096171



Essential pleasures : a new anthology of poems to read aloud - Pinsky, Robert

Call Number: PN6101.E87 2009

ISBN: 9780393066081



First things to hand - Pinsky, Robert

Call Number: PS3566.I54F57 2006

ISBN: 1932511342

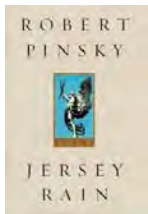
Gulf music - Pinsky, Robert



Call Number: PS3566.I54G86 2007
ISBN: 0374167494



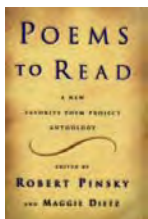
History of my heart - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS3566.I54H5 1984
ISBN: 0880010371



Jersey rain - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS3566.I54J47 2000
ISBN: 0374178879



Landor's poetry - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PR4874.P5



Poems to read : a new favorite poem project anthology - Pinsky, Robert and Maggie Dietz
Call Number: PN6101.P497 2002
ISBN: 0393010740



Poetry and the world - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS3566.I54P6 1988
ISBN: 0880012161

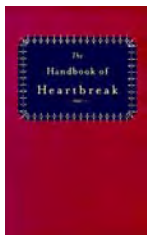


Sadness and happiness : poems - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS3566.I54S2
ISBN: 0691062951

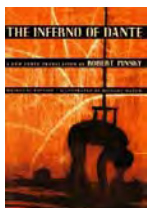


The figured wheel : new and collected poems, 1966-1996 - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS3566.I54F54 1996
ISBN: 0374154937

The handbook of heartbreak : 101 poems of lost love and sorrow - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS595.L57H36 1998
ISBN: 068816286X



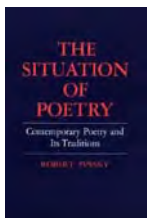
The Inferno of Dante : a new verse translation - Alighieri, Dante (transl. by Robert Pinsky)
Call Number: PQ4315.2.P47 1994
ISBN: 0374176744



The life of David - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: BS580.D3P56 2005
ISBN: 0805242031



The separate notebooks - Miłosz, Czesław (transl. by Robert Pinsky)
Call Number: PG7158.M553A24 1984
ISBN: 0880010312



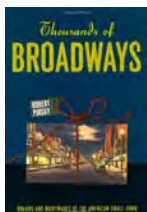
The situation of poetry : contemporary poetry and its traditions - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PN1271.P5
ISBN: 0691063141



The sounds of poetry : a brief guide - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PN4151.P55 1998
ISBN: 0374266956

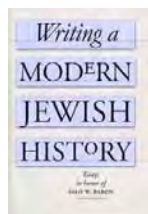


The want bone - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS3566.I54W36 1990
ISBN: 0880012501



Thousands of Broadways : dreams and nightmares of the American small town - Pinsky, Robert
Call Number: PS169.C57P5 2009
ISBN: 0226669440

Writing a modern Jewish history : essays in honor of Salo W. Baron - Baron, Salo Wittmayer
Call Number: E184.35.W75 2006
ISBN: 0300106777



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On the Web



- [Pinsky at Slate.com](#)
Pinsky is the the Poetry Editor for Slate.

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Selected Articles by Pinsky

Pinsky, R. (2008). Memory and modernism. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 56(4), 1081-1087.
(Available through [Sage Premier](#))

Pinsky, R. (2006). Peace, poetry, and negation. *Raritan* 26(1), 171-181.
(Available through [Proquest](#))

Pinsky, R. (2006). On translation. *The Literary Review*, 50(1), 7.
(Available through [Proquest](#))

Pinsky, R. (2005). Myths of the workroom. *The American Poetry Review*, 34(3), 23-24.
(Available through [Proquest](#))

Pinsky, R. (2004). Comedy, cruelty, and tourism: Thoreau's Cape Cod. *American Scholar*, 73(3), 79-89.
(Available through [Proquest](#))

Pinsky, R. (1996). American poetry in American life. *The American Poetry review*, 25, 19-23.
(Available through [Wilson OmniFile](#))

Pinsky, R. (1989). The language net. *The New Republic*, 201(5), 36-39.
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Audio

- **An Explanation of America on NPR**
Pinsky reads from and discusses his poem "An Explanation of America".
- **Big Think**
A series of videos of Pinsky "thinking aloud".
- **Internet Poetry Archive**
Pinsky reading poems at UNC-CH in 1997.
- **Poet and the Poem**
From Library of Congress series, recorded November 10, 1999. (Direct link)
- **Poetry and American Memory**
From October 8, 1998 at the Library of Congress.
- **Poetry in the Public Sphere**
From May 13, 2002 at the Library of Congress.
- **Reading and Q&A at John Carroll University**
Pinsky reads some of his poems and answers questions from students.
- **The Atlantic's Poetry Pages**
Pinsky reading selections from his translation of Dante's Inferno.
- **WNYC's Leonard Lopate Show**
Pinsky discusses his latest poetry anthology: An Invitation to Poetry

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MIT World

From February 3, 2006 at MIT. Pinsky discusses an opera work, the Favorite Poem project, his book *The Life of David*, and contemporary poetry.

Comments (0)

Samurai Song

Pinsky walks into an elevator and reads his poem, "Samurai Song."

Comments (0)

Also check out...

The Library of Congress has a [web guide](#) for online resources on Robert Pinsky. Some of the links are no longer active but the resource is still useful.

Comments (0)

Meta-Free-Phor-All

Pinsky judges between the metaphors of Stephen Colbert and Sean Penn.

The Colbert Report Mon - Thurs 11:30pm / 10:30c
Meta-Free-Phor-All: Shall I Nail Thee to a Summer's Day?
www.colbertnation.com

Colbert Report Full
Episodes Political Humor Economy

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About These Resources

On April 19, 2010, Robert Pinsky spoke to USC students, faculty and staff at Doheny Library. These are a list of works he mentioned during the talk.

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Additional Resources

Here is a list of books, films, poems, etc. mentioned during Robert Pinsky's discussion (in order of appearance). A link to any holdings at USC Libraries is provided where available.

[The Invention of Love - Stoppard, Tom](#)

Call Number: Doheny PR6069.T6I66 1998

Hilary Schor mentioned this work in her opening remarks.

[Ode to a Nightingale - John Keats](#)

Pinsky spoke about the line "Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!"

[Landor's Poetry - Pinsky, Robert](#)

Call Number: Doheny PR4874.P5

Pinsky spoke about Landor's poem "Lethe".

[Duck Soup \[videorecording\] - McCarey, Leo](#)

Call Number: Leavey DVD 279

Pinsky spoke about the mirror scene in this film and its relation to art and life.

[The Collected Poems of Sterling A. Brown - Brown, Sterling Allen](#)

Call Number: Doheny PS3503.R833A17 1996

Pinsky spoke about Brown's poem "Harlem Happiness."

[The Essential Haiku - Haas, Robert](#)

No copies available at USC, but you can request a copy through ILL.

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