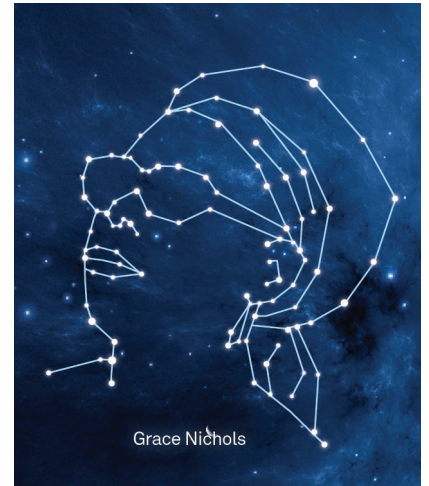


Bright Stars in the Cosmic Disco

The Poetry Society is launching two new teaching resources for National Poetry Day – and beyond...



Grace Nichols, author of one of the new Poetryclass resources

Taking this year's National Poetry Day theme of 'stars', the Poetry Society has commissioned two new, free resources for use by anyone working with poetry in education. The first, by Professor Nicholas Roe, focuses on Keats's love poem 'Bright Star', and the second orbits a new poem by Grace Nichols.

Nicholas Roe is Professor of English at St Andrews University, and has just published an exciting new biography of Keats, *John Keats: A New Life* (Yale University Press, 2012). His resource, designed for use with Key Stage 4 students (GCSE level), includes contextual information about 'Bright Star', a full illustrated text of the poem and suggestions for how to approach the poem in the classroom. The lesson plan explores the sonnet form and love poetry and ties in wonderfully with this year's NPD theme of 'stars'.

The companion resource is based on the glittering title poem from Grace Nichols's forthcoming collection, *Cosmic Disco*, which is due from Frances Lincoln in 2013. Nichols, the much-loved poet from Guyana, has been a staple of the GCSE curriculum for many years and this new resource contains ideas for engaging 7-11-year-olds. Written by Grace Nichols in collaboration with the Society's Education Coordinator Ally Davies, it contains ideas for how to use the poem in English, dance, drama, science and art lessons, and introduces scientific concepts such as magnetism, gravity and sound waves.

Education Coordinator Ally Davies said:

We hear from teachers just how busy they are so we knew what was needed: fresh, accessible and beautifully-designed lesson plans that teachers can simply pick up and run with, not only on National Poetry Day but in teaching poetry year-round.

The Poetry Society's numerous Poetryclass resources have proved popular with teachers across all disciplines. Poetryclass covers all key stages, from early years to A-level, and uses poetry to look at themes including memory, nature, history, geography and celebrating difference. All of the lesson plans and resources are available to download, completely free of charge, from the Poetry Society's website.

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Notes to Editors:

- **The Poetry Society** was founded in 1909 to promote a “more general recognition and appreciation of poetry”. Since then, it has grown into one of Britain’s most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. Today it has nearly 4,000 members worldwide and publishes the leading poetry magazine, *Poetry Review*. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages.
- **Poetryclass** from the Poetry Society aims to enthuse and empower teachers, equipping them with fresh ideas and methods for making the most of poetry in the classroom. With a wealth of free online resources, such as downloadable poetry lessons and website recommendations, Poetryclass provides teachers with a 'nuts and bolts' insight into how poetry works.
- **Grace Nichols** was born and educated in Georgetown, Guyana, in the Caribbean. She emigrated to the UK in 1977 and has written many poetry collections and novels, including *I is a Long-Memored Woman* (Karnak House) and *The Fat Black Woman's Poems* (Virago), for adults, and *The Poet Cat* (Bloomsbury) and *Everybody Got A Gift* (A&C Black) for children. Her works have been selected for inclusion on the GCSE syllabus for many years and she is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.
- **Nicholas Roe** is a professor at St Andrews University. He is a specialist in Romantic literature and culture, including the poetry of Keats, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and is the author of several critically acclaimed biographies including the 2012 *John Keats: A New Life* (Yale University Press). He is a Chair of the Keats Foundation, Keats House.