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Metro Art's live poetry readings at Union Station invite rush-hour commuters to cherish the moment



Photos by Peter Watkinson

^ Poet Teka-Lark Lo takes the stage at Union Station East Portal in an event produced by Metro Art in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. Behind her, rush-hour poets await their turn at the mic: from left, Brendan Constantine, Tony Barnstone, coordinator Elena Karina Byrne and Imani Tolliver.

- **Check it out** in the [Downtown News](#)
- **KNBC Video:** 6 o'clock news report with Cary Berglund. To view, [click here](#) or follow this path: nbc4.tv>video>entertainment>culture and community> select "3" from prev/next bar >"Poetry in Motion" report.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(May 9, 2007) The muse may be mysterious in her wanderings, but in April, the month designated by the Poetry Society of America as National Poetry Month, she can be counted on to keep her annual rendezvous with Metro, a decidedly alternative space for poets who converge upon the Metro system to read poetry to



Poets Imani Tolliver, above, and Liz González, below, read to a rush-hour crowd of commuters, a line of monthly transit pass buyers and media in the East Portal of Union Station on April 30.

rush-hour commuters during National Poetry Month.

Breaking through the rush-hour monotone, poets Tony Barnstone, Brendan Constantine, Liz González, Teka-Lark Lo, Rubén Martínez, Imani Tolliver and Elena Karina Byrne invoked the muse to lift the heart and soothe the spirit of Metro patrons and public transportation users rushing through the East Portal en route to waiting trains and other destinations.

The rush-hour readings personify and extend the experience of Poetry in Motion ® L.A., where the work of poets inscribed on placards placed aboard nearly 2,400 Metro buses brings poetry to more than one million bus riders a day.



"Many cities have a Poetry in Motion program in their transit system, but nobody else has these live readings," Maya Emsden, DEO of Creative Services, told the Downtown News. "We just thought that was a really wonderful, immediate way of having transit customers meet poets."

Metro Art, in partnership with Poetry in Motion L.A., has staged annual rush-hour readings during National Poetry Month since 1999. The alternative space in the context of a transit system - at bus stops, on board Metro Rail or at staged readings - has become a welcome platform for the spoken and written word, delivered to delighted audiences by local poets in live readings.



A rush-hour commuter stops to hear poet Brendan Constantine. Below, Metro Red Line commuters make a beeline to Metrolink trains and beyond.



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