

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Take A Detour From Route 66: Taos to L.A

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Route 66: The name conjures up small towns, mom and pop diners, motels and drive-ins sporting neon signs, curious attractions like the Cadillac Ranch and Totem Pole Park. One of the original highways in the U.S. Highway System, Route 66 became a symbol of Americana, ranging through eight states, beginning in Chicago, Illinois and ending in Santa Monica, California.

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Irvine poet Karen Córdova and Taos, New Mexico poet and publisher Andrea Watson have connected their states—writers, artists, historians, musicians, and culinary experts—in a special outreach project of The Homestead Museum and Taos Arts Council.*

This exciting two-day event will feature fifteen award-winning poets from across the United States performing poems dedicated to Route 66.

Each poet responded with a completely different aspect of Route 66. Here are Colorado poet Madelyn Garner memories of her sister Judy's days riding a now-vintage car along the route:

Route 66: A Love Story

The myth my sister spins
about the summer she roamed Route 66
with the man who would eat her heart:
Weeks on the road in a '62 Bonneville,
AC broken since Amarillo, her elbow propped
out the window, thighs sticking to vinyl
as they traveled through Main Street USA,
passed landscapes drenched
in sienna, the ebb and flow of dust.

Year she learned to love the whine
of tires on pavement, the alien glow
of service areas along the highway at night,
but especially watching him check the oil,
dipstick and rag, closing the hood
with its quick metal kiss;
saying there was something about
sun falling thick on his waist-long black hair,
the length of him, almost infinite in jeans.
All the rooms they woke in, sun half-risen,
their lips ash and acid
from unfiltered Camels, red wine.
The drunken night in Albuquerque
when the alpha rose tattoo bloomed
on the white field of her breasts.
Next comes the part about the space
beneath her flowery skirt, the round
of her stomach, two cells splitting and splitting
All those years after he was long gone
she spent alone unwrapping her only child
from an unwed blanket.
How taken she is with this story,
nudging it with a stick, kicking it over
in the gravel. The way she uses it
as a mile marker for her life.

Other poets participating in the event include Tobi Alfier, Jeffrey Alfier, Tina Carlson, Karen Cordova, Peggy Dobreer, Max Early, Alexis Rhone Fancher, Karen Kevorkian, Ellaraine Lockie, David Meischen, Katherine Seluja, Andrea Watson, Scott Wiggerman, and Dom Zuccone.

Featuring local historians Michael Sedano, Douglas Daniels, Lenny Trujillo, and Anthony Ray, and local musicians Kriss Light & Tom Gramlich and John Martinez & Combo. Featured photograph from Torrance poet and publisher Jeffrey Alfier. Art from photographers Geraint Smith and Harold Hall. Laguna Pueblo poet and potter Max Early and Navajo potter and silversmith Norvin Johnson will demonstrate their work. Enjoy a Route 66-themed dinner courtesy of culinary historian Ernest Miller.

To open the events, Peggy Dobreer will offer a children's workshop for students in grades 2 thru 6.

Day 2 of the show will showcase poets in single-stage performance in the parlor of the John A. Rowland House, the oldest surviving structure in Southern California, rarely opened to the public.



Photo By Harold Hall

TAKE A DETOUR FROM ROUTE 66: TAOS TO L.A. CALENDAR:

Saturday, March 25 at the *Homestead Museum*

15415 East Don Julian Road, City of Industry, CA 91745

10:00-11:00 a.m. Children's Poetry Workshop

Children will learn how to use movement, color, environment, and storytelling to write poetry. This program is ideal for students in grades 2-6. Taught by Peggy Dobreer.

2:00-5:00 p.m., Day 1 Main Event

Poetry, art, music, history, and a Route 66 diner tasting will transport visitors to various points in time along Route 66 and the Old Spanish Trail. Visit five venues around the beautiful grounds of the Homestead Museum, once part of an immense Mexican rancho. Today, the six-acre site features the Workman House, a Victorian-era country home constructed around an 1840's adobe; La Casa Nueva, a 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival mansion; and El Campo Santo, one of the oldest private cemeteries in the region.

Sunday, March 26 at the *John A. Rowland House*

16021 East Gale Avenue, City of Industry, CA 91745

2:00-4:00 p.m., Day 2 Main Event

Join poets from Saturday's event for an intimate, single-stage performance in the parlor of the Rowland House. Built in 1855, it is the oldest surviving structure in Southern California and rarely opened to the public for events like this!

Admission is free. Space for each program is limited. Reservations are required.

Phone: 626-968-8492

Or visit homesteadmuseum.org or facebook.com/Route66TakeTheDetour

***Co-sponsored by the Taos Arts Council and the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum—with 3: A Taos Press, Cordova & Associates, the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America (Southern California Chapter), La Puente Valley Historical Society, and the Old Spanish Trail Association as contributors.**

To photo by Jeff Alfier

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