

## Poet laureate Peter Cooley pens inauguration sonnet

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Peter Cooley, poet laureate of Louisiana, professor of English and director of the Tulane creative writing program, reads “Sonnet for the Inauguration of President Fitts,” which he wrote. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

One of the highlights of the [inauguration of President Michael A. Fitts](#) on Thursday (March 17) was the reading of an original sonnet by [Peter Cooley](#), Tulane University professor of English, Senior Mellon Professor in the Humanities and director of the creative writing program. Cooley is also [Louisiana’s poet laureate](#). He has authored many poetry books and has numerous fellowships and prizes to his credit, including the Pushcart Prize and the Marble Faun First Place Prize in Poetry given by the Faulkner Society.

**Sonnet for the Inauguration of President Fitts**  
by Peter Cooley

The stars at noon shine brighter for the sun.  
Their music can be heard in Gibson Hall.  
Now for centuries these live oaks have built bowers  
above the young, their elders, all passing voices.

Oaks know the certainty of this chosen one.  
Along their branches, leaves open canopies of light,  
connections already spun, tendril on tendril.

Dawn's first birds—oh, such promising gold air!  
What sheer amazements await their chorusing?  
What rearrangements greet the stones under our feet?  
Look, the trees are speaking of what will come,  
all New Orleans soon astonished by our afternoons.  
Listen, the stars are watching, radiant.  
We, too, will have our song in this new world.

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“We, too, will have our song in this new world.”

by Peter Cooley