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SOME INFORMATION BLOG

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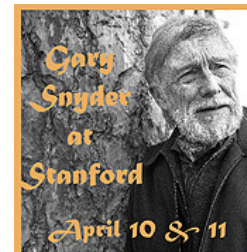
The Poetry Center Digital Archives: A Necessary Interactive Library

When I first began as a MFA in Poetry student at San Francisco State University, I found the [Poetry Center](#) to be a great place to thumb through print editions of works I was looking for, ones that the library didn't have (or that were missing), or poetry that I wanted to get to know. I could sit in there and read for hours, or set up sessions to listen from the center's audio archives. It became a place for conversation with other students, as well as reading, but for me, it had its limitations: with a part-time job, classes to attend, and school work, I was running out of time for its open hours. Now, however, the Poetry Center has evolved—from a small poetry center first established in 1954 with its library of donated books and audio recordings of American poetry—to a more developed, interactive digital library. Curated by Poetry Center Director Steve Dickison, the Poetry Center has acquired DIVA (Digital Information Virtual Archive), a project that allows virtual access to the center and is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. The Poetry Center itself is housed by the San Francisco State University's Department of Humanities, and is run by Dickison and a limited staff, supplemented every semester with student interns, assistants, and volunteers. But since the launch of its archive website in April 2011, it's managing to gain attention from publications like *The Huffington Post*. Aside from its collection of poetry in print, it's making itself well known for its unique and irreplaceable collection of more than 4,000 audio recordings from the mid-1950s on, which are also paired with texts and images.

I'm getting to know the Poetry Center in a new way: as a virtual, interactive museum, combing through reels of notable recordings from Allen Ginsberg to Marianne Moore. I want to know how a poet meant for a line to be read, to take in their reading tone. As I write this, I'm getting to know William Carlos Williams a bit better, while sitting at my desk in my pajamas. I'm also anxiously awaiting the Poetry Center's Spring 2012 launch of original video tapes of essential poets from 1973 to present. Watch for these video releases and other recordings from the [Poetry Center Digital Archives](#):
<https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/poetrycenter>

—Lauren Peck

Lauren Peck is a graduate student in the MFA program at San Francisco State University.

—POSTED BY [AMY WONG](#)
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