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N E W S R E L E A S E

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U.S. Poet Laureate Kooser wins 2006 Sower Award

LINCOLN—Ted Kooser, a 2005 Pulitzer Prize winner who has served two years as U.S. Poet Laureate, is the winner of this year's Sower Award in the Humanities.

The Nebraska Humanities Council honors Kooser Sept. 20 during a 7:30 p.m. ceremony at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, in conjunction with the 11th annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities. Best-selling author Azar Nafisi will deliver the lecture, entitled "Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books."

Kooser assumed his duties as 12th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in October 2004, the first poet from the Great Plains to be chosen. The following year he won the Pulitzer Prize for his collection of poems entitled "Delights and Shadows."

A professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, he is the author of 13 full-length collections of poetry and prose. Over the years his works have appeared in many periodicals including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Nation*, *The American Poetry Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner* and *Antioch Review*.

Kooser's poems are included in textbooks and anthologies used in both secondary schools and college classrooms across the country. He has received two NEA fellowships in poetry, the Pushcart Prize, the Stanley Kunitz Prize, The James Boatwright Prize, and a Merit Award from the Nebraska Arts Council.

Kooser has read his poetry for The Academy of American Poets in New York City as well as for many university audiences, including those of the University of California at Berkeley, Cornell at Ithaca, Case Western Reserve at Cleveland, The School of the Art Institute in Chicago, and Wesleyan University in Connecticut. He has conducted writing workshops in connection with many of these readings.

Born in Ames, Iowa, in 1939, Kooser earned a B.S. at Iowa State University in 1962 and an M.A. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1968. He is a former vice-president of Lincoln Benefit Life, where he worked as an insurance representative for many years. He lives on an acreage near Garland with his wife, Kathleen Rutledge.

The Nebraska Humanities Council annually honors individuals, institutions, businesses and communities with Sower Awards for contributions to public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska, based on nominations and letters of support from the citizens of Nebraska. The Sower Award is an original bronze sculpture by Nebraska-born artist Sandra Dunn Mahoney.

The Sept. 20 evening lecture is free and open to the public. It is presented in collaboration by the Nebraska Humanities Council, the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues and the University of Nebraska.