Boyd’s Favorite Poets

(an incomplete, ever-in-flux list)

1. Marin Sorescu: Romanian poet with a terrific sense of humor and an acute political awareness. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/marin-sorescu>
2. Billy Collins: My gateway to the world of poetry. It’s wonderful to hear him read. Check out his TED talks and other resources. <https://www.ted.com/talks/billy_collins_everyday_moments_caught_in_time?language=en>
3. Kay Ryan: Very short, brilliant poems that often play on idioms and turns of phrase. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/kay-ryan>. “Why Isn’t It All More Marked” is a favorite.
4. Ted Kooser. Great Midwestern voice and gift of metaphor. “A Rainy Morning” and “Mother” are two of my favorites. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/ted-kooser>
5. Walt Whitman: A classic American voice and exuberance. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/walt-whitman>
6. Mark Strand: Some of his best poems are like a beautifully sketched *Twilight Zone* episode to me. Read “The Tunnel.” <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/mark-strand>
7. Sherman Alexie: Classic interpreter of some of the ironies of navigating between the Native American and “American” worlds. I love his prose, as well. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/sherman-alexie>.

You must read “Requiem for a Pay Phone”

1. Robert Pinsky: His poem “Gulf Music” is the best poem I’ve ever read aloud. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-pinsky>
2. Natalie Diaz: *When My Brother Was an Aztec* is a poetry book of brilliance. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/natalie-diaz>
3. Ross Gay: *The Unabashed Catalog of Gratitude.* How’s that for a title! I wish I had written it! And he is joyful. It’s good to be reminded of how sorrow often turns to joy when one least expects it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcLEwL4WQnc>

I try to always be reading some contemporary poetry. Jose Olivarez, Ada Limon, and Terrance Hayes come to mind. I discover many current poets by trying to read as many finalists for the National Book Award in poetry as I can: <https://www.nationalbook.org/awards-prizes/national-book-awards-2018/?cat=poetry>.

I also enjoy reading Kansas poets and have discovered gems like H.C. Palmer on the Kansas Notable Book lists: <https://kslib.info/849/Kansas-Notable-Books>. Kevin Young is a Kansas poet who is notable and known worldwide. I really enjoyed his 2018 book, *Brown,* where he explores some of the racial divides in his hometown of Topeka.