



TIME OUT

## A ROOM OF THEIR OWN

Once in a new moon, women find a way to relax.

Life may be crazier than ever, but a group of local women are taking a cue from history to set aside an afternoon each month to relax and reflect in a Red Tent Temple. The tradition dates back to biblical times, when women rested together in a separate dwelling during their monthly cycles, a practice that served as the context for Anita Diamant's bestselling 1997 novel, *The Red Tent*.

The ancient ritual is almost scandalous today. "We live in a culture that's very, very busy," says Kate Siner Francis, who co-founded the Providence Red Tent Temple a year ago, when a group of women, aged twenties to fifties, boldly called a time-out to create their modern-day retreat.

Set in a cozy alcove in an office suite on Waterman Street, the Red Tent Temple is a lush cocoon offering womb-like comfort: Red, gauzy fabric drapes over the wall, a thick red chenille blanket and plump cushions cover the floor, nourishing soup steams in a slow cooker. The women meet on the Sunday afternoon closest to the new moon to gather in the Red Tent's circle, where they spend a half-hour listening and being listened to about what's going on in their lives. The rest of the afternoon is devoted to whatever they want—reading, drawing, chatting or taking a nap. "It's relaxing and also illuminating," says a Red Tent regular named Kathleen. "I always gain some new insight."

Similar Red Tent Temples have sprung up in major cities throughout North America and Europe. "I see it as a form of activism," says Siner Francis. "It's hard to take time off to intentionally do nothing." For more information, contact Siner Francis at [azurekairos@gmail.com](mailto:azurekairos@gmail.com). —SUSAN SPENCER

ARTS AND CULTURE

## Poetry in Motion

The country's state poet laureates gather in Rhode Island to spread the word.

Not everyone likes poetry. Lisa Starr understands. It's the heavy book that seems meant for a chosen few, filled with a language and hidden meanings. But the Rhode Island state poet laureate wants you to give it another chance—as do her state poet laureates, eighteen of whom will head to Rhode Island on April 19 through 24 for "Poetry for Hope," a celebration in honor of National Poetry Month. Along with scenic sights from Block Island to Blackstone Valley, the poets will visit local schools, elderly communities and public spaces to host poetry readings, writing workshops and cultural events. They will mark the fourth time the country's state poet laureates have joined forces. "It's a great way to keep our work forward-moving and find new ways to get poetry actively into all kinds of communities," says Starr. "We want to create places where people are listening to each other." Along the way, the poets hope you will discover that the world is full of funny, moving, accessible poetry. "We're taught that the things that happen to us are as important as the job we have and the car we drive," Starr says. "Poetry is the language that can most accurately describe the joys and fears we experience on a daily basis." For information, visit [arts.ri.gov/statepoet](http://arts.ri.gov/statepoet). —N.M.

Starr quality: State poet laureate Lisa Starr and Brother at the Hygeia House, Block Island.

