Gathering of California's POETS LAUREATE

Saturday, October 6, 2018

McGroarty Arts Center

7570 McGroarty Terrace
Tujunga, CA 91042

Sponsors

This event is co-sponsored by Engaging the Senses Foundation, the California Arts Council and the McGroarty Arts Center.

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A Greeting from the State Poet Laureate Dana Gioia

Welcome to this historic gathering of California's laureates—state and local, past and present. I venture to use the word "historic" because these poets meet at a turning point in the history of American poetry.

For years, literary pundits declared that poetry was a dying art. No one, they claimed, read poems outside the English Department. But today poetry has become the nation's fastest growing art. Poetry readership in the U.S. has doubled in the past five years. The new audience is young, diverse, and non-academic. The growth has come mostly from teenagers and young adults. That isn't my opinion. The trend has been carefully documented in America's largest and most accurate arts survey by the National Endowment for the Arts.

One reason that American poetry is experiencing a renaissance comes from the people in this room—poets laureate who serve local communities. The modern notion of the poet laureate was invented in California. In 1915, Ina Coolbrith was acclaimed the state's first laureate. Her appointment revived an ancient aristocratic office and reset it for a new democratic purpose. It also announced that creativity was an integral part of the Golden State's identity. California's example was so compelling that gradually the rest of the nation followed, though it took until 1986 for the office of U.S. Poet Laureate to appear.

In recent years California has seen the emergence of city, county, and regional laureates. These local laureates bring the art to classrooms, civic events, parks, community centers, and prisons. They have broadened and diversified the audience of poetry by bringing the power of words and literature to everyone across the state. They are a vanguard of cultural change.

Today, at the home of California's third laureate, John J. McGroarty, we celebrate the contributions of the public poets who work, so often with minimal support, across the state. The McGroarty mansion, now a vibrant local arts center, is a symbol of how the arts can transform lives and communities.

If you want to know why poetry is growing, meet our poets and the McGroarty staff. Introduce yourself to the dedicated employees of the California Arts Council. Discover the programs of our co-sponsor, Engaging the Senses Foundation. Together we are growing literature and literacy—one reader, one classroom, one community at a time.

Let's rejoice in our state's poetic tradition embodied in these laureates.

Schedule of Events

9:30 a.m. **Coffee and Pastries**

10:00 a.m. **Welcome & Introductions**

- **Dana Gioia**, California Poet Laureate
- **Joe DeCenzo**, Former Poet Laureate, Sunland, Tujunga; McGroarty Arts Center
- **Connie Post**, Former Poet Laureate, Livermore
- **Mona Abadir**, CEO, Engaging the Senses Foundation

10:20 a.m. **Workshop I: Small Group Discussions - Favorite Ideas**

	Location	Moderator
Group 1	Main Hall	Connie Post, Livermore
Group 2	Back Patio	Juan Delgado, Inlandia
Group 3	Upstairs Studio	Maw Shein Win, El Cerrito
Group 4	Main Tent	Andy Jones, Davis
Group 5	Front Patio	Stella Beratlis, Modesto

11:15 a.m. **Workshop 2: Small Group Discussions - Planning Public Events**
(Participants should change rooms for a different moderator)

12 noon **Lunch**

Schedule of Events cont.

1:00 p.m. **Plenary Panel**

- **Dana Gioia,** Moderator, California Poet Laureate
- **Connie Post,** Former Poet Laureate, Livermore
- **Al Young,** Former California Poet Laureate
- **Sabrina Coryell,** Creative Director and Founder, Engaging the Senses Foundation
- **Alexandra Thurman,** Director of Communications, Engaging the Senses Foundation

1:50 p.m. **Break**

Event Opens to the General Public

2:00-3:15 p.m. **Group Reading: Part I**

3:15 p.m. **Break**

3:30-4:45 p.m. **Group Reading: Part II**

4:45 p.m. **Break**

5:00-6:00 p.m. **Featured Reading**

- **Welcome** from the California Arts Council, Engaging the Senses Foundation, and the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
- **Joe DeCenzo**, Emcee
- **Dana Gioia**, California Poet Laureate
- **Robin Coste Lewis**, Los Angeles Poet Laureate
- **Carol Muske-Dukes**, Former California Poet Laureate
- **Al Young**, Former California Poet Laureate

6:00 p.m. **Reception**

DANA GIOIA
CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE

Dana Gioia is California's state Poet Laureate. Appointed by Governor Jerry Brown in December, 2015, Gioia serves as the state advocate for poetry and literature in libraries, classrooms and boardrooms across California. An award-winning poet, Gioia is the author of *Can Poetry Matter?*, which is credited for helping revive poetry's role in American public life. He is also the former Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, where he championed arts education.

CAROL MUSKE-DUKES
FORMER CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE

Carol Muske-Dukes is a professor at the University of Southern California and a former Poet Laureate of California. She is an author of eight books of poems and four novels. She is also an essayist and anthology editor. Her most recent book of poetry is *Blue Rose* (2018).

ROBIN COSTE LEWIS
LOS ANGELES POET LAUREATE
PHOTO CREDIT DUNYA ALWAN

Robin Coste Lewis is the Poet Laureate of Los Angeles and writer-in-residence at the University of Southern California. In 2015 she published her poetry debut, *Voyage of the Sable Venus*, which was honored with the 2015 National Book Award for Poetry—the first poetry debut to do so since 1975.

AL YOUNG
FORMER CALIFORNIA POET LAUREATE

Al Young is author of 22 widely translated books, including poetry, fiction, essays, anthologies and musical memoirs. Appointed in 2005 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Young served as California's Poet Laureate through 2008.

MONA ABADIR

Mona Abadir is the Chief Executive Officer of Engaging the Senses Foundation and the former Chairperson of the Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, as well as a past board member for the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Over the last 40 years Mona has held leadership roles in business, marketing, and development for brand name companies and as a trustee for numerous arts and culture nonprofits. She is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley.

JOE DECENZO

Joe DeCenzo grew up in Los Angeles and studied theater at Los Angeles City College Theater Academy. He served as Sunland-Tujunga Poet Laureate from 2004 to 2006 and worked to establish guidelines for the selection of future laureates. Joe and fellow S-T poets laureate comprise the Village Poets, who coordinate monthly readings at Bolton Hall Museum and other L.A. area venues. Apart from volunteering his voice and energies to functions at Bolton Hall and McGroarty Arts Center, he chairs the Sunland-Tujunga Arts, Recreation and Culture Committee (STARC) that nurtures and promotes artistic endeavors throughout the region.

CONNIE POST

Connie Post served as the first Poet Laureate of Livermore, California (2005 to 2009). She has been the "Keeper of the California Poet Laureate List" since 2005. Her work has appeared in dozens of journals, including *Calyx, Comstock Review, Slipstream, River Styx, Spoon River Poetry Review, Valparaiso Poetry Review* and *Verse Daily*. Her first full length book, *Floodwater* (Glass Lyre Press 2014), won the Lyrebird Award. Her other awards include the 2017 Prick of the Spindle Poetry Competition, the Caesura Award, and the 2016 Crab Creek Poetry Award. She is dedicated to promoting community and poetry in her local area and beyond.

SABRINA CORYELL

Sabrina Coryell is the Creative Director and Founder of Engaging the Senses Foundation. She is a yoga teacher, a poet, and a mindfulness practice educator who has focused on social justice issues throughout her career. She established the first not-for-profit Arts Foundation in Australia and created The Judith Wright Prize for Poetry.

RON SINGER

Ron Singer, Director of Production and Finance for Engaging the Senses Foundation, is a producer and director who has worked on multiple educational and high-profile entertainment films such as *In Dubious Battle* and *I Am Michael* through his production company, That's Hollywood.

ALEXANDRA THURMAN

Alexandra Thurman is the Director of Communications for Engaging the Senses Foundation and holds an MFA in writing and literature. She is a poet, an essayist, a fiction writer, and an educational curriculum specialist whose work has been published in the United States and Canada.

Participating Poets Laureate

Poet	City/Region
Toby Bielawski	Albany
Teresa Mei Chuc	Altadena Library District
Linda Dove	Altadena Library District
Thelma T. Reyna	Altadena Library District
Elline Lipkin	Altadena Library District
Grant Hier	Anaheim
Tanu Wakefield	Belmont
Jacki Rigoni	Belmont
Thomas Stanton	Benicia
Rafael Jesus Gonzalez	Berkeley
Amanda Williamsen	Cupertino
Ann Muto	Cupertino
Andy Jones	Davis
Ronnie Holland	Dublin
Maw Shein Win	El Cerrito
Danielle Gabriel	El Cerrito
Kalamu Chache	East Palo Alto
Sarah Kobrinsky	Emeryville
Juan Delgado	Inlandia Institute
Nikia Chaney	Inlandia Institute
Charan Wollard	Livermore
Kevin Gunn	Livermore
Connie Post	Livermore
Cynthia Patton	Livermore
Luis Rodriguez	Los Angeles
Stella Beratlis	Modesto
Radomir Luza	N. Hollywood
Amy Glynn	Orinda Lafayette
Barbara Mossberg	Pacific Grove
Brenda Quintanilla	Richmond
Lincoln Bergman	Richmond
James B. Golden	Salinas
Kevin Patrick Sullivan	San Luis Obispo

Participating Poets Laureate

Poet	City/Region
Glenna Luschei	San Luis Obispo
Michael McLaughlin	San Luis Obispo
David Starkey	Santa Barbara
Sojourner Kincaid Rolle	Santa Barbara
John Brantingham	Sequoia/ Kings Canyon National Park
Ronald Koertge	South Pasadena
Pamela Shea	Sunland Tujunga
Marlene Hitt	Sunland Tujunga
Joe DeCenzo	Sunland Tujunga
Maja Trochimczyk	Sunland Tujunga
Elsa Frausto	Sunland Tujunga
Dorothy Skiles	Sunland Tujunga
D.L. Lang	Vallejo
Steven Reigns	West Hollywood
Kim Dower	West Hollywood

Poet	County
Rebecca Foust	Marin County
Jeremy Benson	Napa County
Molly Fisk	Nevada County
Lisa Rosenberg	San Mateo County
Robert Sward	Santa Cruz County
Jonathan Kinsman	Sutter Yuba County
Phil Taggart	Ventura County

Robin Coste Lewis	Los Angeles
Al Young	California
Carol Muske Dukes	California
Dana Gioia	California

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

On behalf of all of California's residents, Engaging the Senses Foundation, the California Arts Council and the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs offer their heartfelt gratitude to Dana Gioia for his service to our state as California's poet laureate through deft leadership, enterprising vision, and inviting dedication to the art of poetry.

Thank you to our sponsors

ENGAGING THE SENSES FOUNDATION

Engaging the Senses Foundation celebrates and promotes the power of the arts and conscious engagement with our senses to move human beings from habitual, everyday reality into a state of mindfulness. We believe that poetry, one of art's highest forms, seeds in individuals and groups an awareness that can help ensure the healing of our vital, fragile, beautiful world. We understand that by teaching people to engage consciously with their taste, sight, touch, smell, hearing, and intuition, we are assisting humanity to thrive. Through the creation of programs and events that illuminate the intersection of art and mindfulness, we honor the indivisibility of the human spirit and the natural world and attend to the nurturing of both. As a working foundation, we create programs that fulfill this mandate. As a giving foundation, we are by invitation only. Our projects encompass outreach to selected communities, film, education, partnerships with other organizations working towards complementary goals, communication via print and social media, and events that bring individuals and groups together in a shared purpose.

engagingthesensesfoundation.com

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL

The mission of the California Arts Council, a state agency, is to advance California through the arts and creativity. The Council is committed to building public will and resources for the arts; fostering accessible arts initiatives that reflect contributions from all of California's diverse populations; serving as a thought leader and champion or the arts; and providing effective and relevant programs and services.

www.arts.ca.gov

LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles' vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists.

www.culturela.org

Special thanks to Kimberly Brown, Joe DeCenzo, Caitlin Fitzwater, Connie Post, and Wendy Moran

FROM "THE BEAUTY OF THINGS", 1954
ROBINSON JEFFERS

To feel and speak the astonishing beauty of things—earth, stone, and water,
Beast, man and woman, sun, moon, and stars—
The blood-shot beauty of human nature, its thoughts, frenzies, and passions,
And unhuman nature its towering reality—
For man's half dream; man, you might say, is nature dreaming...

Notes

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