



## *San Francisco Public Library*

### **San Francisco Poet Laureate Chronology**

October 1998 – February 2000

**Lawrence Ferlinghetti** – Appointed by Mayor Willie Brown, Lawrence served as San Francisco's first Poet Laureate. In this role, he wrote an ongoing poetry column, Poetry as News, in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Through City Lights Foundation, he initiated a series of commemorative books of poems by each successive Poet Laureate.

March 2000 – March 2002

**Janice Mirikitani** – Also appointed by Mayor Willie Brown, Janice worked extensively with youth and teen programming and produced workshops at the Library to bring an appreciation of poetry to young people. Janice is best known for her passion in working with poor people and attention to issues of social justice.

April 2002 – April 2004

**devorah major** – devorah initiated an 18-month program, "City Reflections: War & Peace on our Streets," in which she engaged the public in writing poems meaningful to them on topics of social justice. Selected poems were published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and in the Library's publication, *At the Library*.

January 2006 – January 2008

**Jack Hirschman** – Jack was the first Poet Laureate appointment of Mayor Gavin Newsom. Partnering with the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, the Mayor's Office of Protocol and the Library, Jack Hirschman initiated Poets 11, soliciting poems and readings from participants in each of the eleven San Francisco Supervisorial Districts, and implemented the International Poetry Festival in July 2007.

May 2009 – December 2011

**Diane di Prima** – Appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom as the City's 5<sup>th</sup> Poet Laureate, Diane planned a series of poetry workshops for children and senior citizens at branch libraries and neighborhood centers aimed at empowering people to write and speak their stories. Her autobiography, *Recollections of My Life as a Woman: The New York Years*, was selected as the Library's On the Same Page book during her tenure.

July 2012 – December 2015

**Alejandro Murguía** – The first Latino poet to hold the position, Alejandro was named the city's 6<sup>th</sup> Poet Laureate by Mayor Ed Lee. He presented the 2013 Flor Y Canto Youth Poetry Festival and the 2015 Flor Y Canto literary festival which brought poets from around the world to San

Francisco's Mission District for three days of poetry readings and events. His latest book of poetry, *Stray Poems*, was published by City Lights Books in 2014. During his tenure, he organized a major exhibition titled, *A Little Piece of Mexico*, featuring the postcards of Guillermo Kahlo, at the Jewett Gallery at the San Francisco Main Library. He continues to sponsor a monthly poetry series, *Voz Sin Tinta* at Alley Cat Books. A fragment of one of his poems was included in the resolution for the 24<sup>th</sup> Street Cultural Corridor, approved by the San Francisco Mayor and Board of Supervisors.

June 2017 – January 2021

**Kim Shuck** –Appointed by Mayor Ed Lee as San Francisco's 7<sup>th</sup> Poet Laureate. Kim's poetry draws on her multiethnic background which includes Polish and Cherokee heritage, and her experiences as a lifelong resident of San Francisco. Her most recent book of poetry, *Deer Trails*, was published in October 2019 by City Lights Press. In her term as Poet Laureate, she hosted scores of free poetry and art workshops for all ages at neighborhood libraries and schools and worked closely with San Francisco Public Library and the San Francisco Arts Commission to launch major citywide initiatives to honor Native American Indigenous People's heritage.

January 2021- present

**Tongo Eisen-Martin** - Appointed on January 15, 2021, by Mayor London N. Breed to be San Francisco's 8th Poet Laureate. Born and raised in San Francisco, Tongo earned his MA at Columbia University. He is the author of *someone's dead already*, nominated for a California Book Award and *Heaven Is All Goodbyes* (City Lights) which received a 2018 American Book Award, a 2018 California Book Award, was named a 2018 National California Booksellers Association Poetry Book of the Year, and was shortlisted for the 2018 Griffin International Poetry Prize. He is also an educator and organizer whose work centers on issues of mass incarceration, extrajudicial killings of Black people, and human rights.