

Print

2024 City of Redmond Poet Laureate Call - Submission #16276

Date Submitted: 9/7/2023

2024-2025 CITY OF REDMOND POET LAUREATE CALL

DEADLINE: Friday, September 8, 2023 at 10pm PST

FUNDING: \$5,000 Annual Stipend

SCHEDULE:

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| • Monday, June 12, 2023 | Call opens |
| • Friday, September 8, 2023 | Applications due, 10pm PST |
| • Friday, September 22, 2023 | Finalist selection announced |
| • Thursday, October 5, 2023 | Finalist Interviews |
| • Monday, October 16, 2023 | Poet Laureate Selection Announced |
| • Jan 1, 2024-Dec 2025 | Term (contract renews annually) |

OPPORTUNITY

The City of Redmond seeks applications for the position of Redmond Poet Laureate. The purpose of the Redmond Poet Laureate program is to make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the city and reveal new ways of understanding throughout our diverse community.

The Poet Laureate will generate a work plan within the allocated budget each year that includes community engagement opportunities or projects; i.e. public poetry readings, workshops, classes, lectures, text based visual art, composing and pushing original works, public art projects or other literary based performance or activity.

BUDGET & RECOGNITION

- Finalists receive a \$250 stipend for preparation for the interview on October 5, 2023
- The Poet Laureate receives an annual stipend of \$5,000
- The City of Redmond will provide staff support and an annual budget of \$5,000 to complete events and projects proposed by the Poet Laureate
- Poet Laureate can increase the scale of projects through outside funding sources pursued by the Poet Laureate

SELECTION CRITERIA

Finalists will be selected through a panel process that will evaluate the applicants based on the below criteria:

1. Quality and strength of past work
2. Prior experience in program and/or project planning and development
3. Prior experience with community engagement or outreach
4. Demonstrated understanding of Redmond's community

REPRODUCTION

The City of Redmond reserves the right to reproduce work created for the Laureateship through print, film or electronic media for documentary, educational and promotional purposes.

DISCLOSURE

The City of Redmond reserves the right to alter the selection process or recommend not renewing the second term of the Poet Laureateship

APPLICATION

To apply, each poet must prepare the following materials and submit their application online at bit.ly/RedmondPoetLaureate2024

Statement of Interest (not to exceed 500 words)*

As a lifelong educator, community organizer and poet, I am applying for the City of Redmond's Poet Laureate position. I am currently an Assistant Professor teaching creative writing and performance classes at the University of Washington Bothell. Many of my students have been residents of Redmond and the surrounding communities. In addition to my academic background, I am also the current Poet-in-Residence at Hugo House and have a background in community organizing, specifically in Asian American communities in coalition with other communities of color and LGBTQIA* communities. I am interested in this position because of my commitment to literacy and the transformative power of poetry and storytelling, which I have experienced in my own life, to build networks of support across communities. I have been inspired by the way that former Redmond Poet Laureates such as Laura Da and Shin Yu Pai have collaborated with Redmond community organizations and artists to create opportunities for community members to participate in contributing to the cultural and civic life of the city. For the last nineteen years, I've created work in dialogue with writers involved in organizations such as Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation (VONA), Kundiman, Lambda and Macondo writing communities through organizing and participating in workshops, manuscripts exchanges, generative writing sessions and public readings and projects (postcard writing months, interview projects and live collaborative writing). As an emerging writer, these community-based writing organizations taught me about the stakes and context of making art as well as how to place myself in conversation to an earlier generation of writers and artists. In addition, I learned that our elders had founded these organizations because this kind of support did not exist for them. I learned how important it was for all of us to contribute to sustain and grow these communities. These are some of the lessons I brought forward into my own community & editorial practices. My work is also informed by study with theatrical jazz practitioners such as Sharon Bridgforth and Baraka de Soleil to value improvisation (using what's in the room) within a social space to create meaningful work for participants and gathered community. This creative work grounds itself in Sharon Bridgforth's theatrical jazz methodology for creating community-informed performance work attentive to the knowledge our bodies already hold for knowledge production and for honoring simultaneous truths and lived experiences within the same space by foregrounding improvisation and virtuosity. Currently, I am part of the organizing core for Massage Parlor Outreach Project, a grassroots formation organized to support migrant massage and sex workers in the Seattle area; and have worked to facilitate community-based healing and accountability processes through API Chaya's Community Solutions program. I am a Kelsey Street Press collective member and a board member of Seattle City of Literature. I am also part of Alphabet Alliance of Color, a QTBIPOC organizing alliance. In these communities, my goal is to hold the container for our mutual storytelling and dreaming practices; my creative work arises from these community investments.

Ching-In Chen

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing, May 2015

University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; Milwaukee, WI

M.F.A. in Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts, June 2010

University of California, Riverside; Riverside, CA

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

2022-present Poet-in-Residence, Hugo House, Seattle, WA

2019-present Assistant Professor, School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, University of Washington Bothell.

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

recombinant. Kelsey Street Press, 2017 [Lambda Literary Award, 2018]

The Heart's Traffic: a novel in poems. Arktoi Books/Red Hen Press, 2009.

Chapbooks (Selected):

Kundiman for Kin :: Information Retrieval for Monsters. Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs, 2020.

to make black paper sing. speCt! Books, 2019.

Anthologies and Chapbooks, Edited (Selected):

The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities. Co-edited with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha and Dulani. First edition, South End Press, 2011; Second edition, AK Press, 2016.

Literary Journals and Presses, Edited (Selected):

2023-present Creative Nonfiction Editor, *Best of the Net Anthology*.

2022-present Editorial Collective Member, Kelsey Street Press.

Creative Work, Anthologies (Selected):

2023 “For Peddidle,” *Creature Conserve: Writing at the Intersection of Arts & Science*, University of Minnesota Press.

2022 “Lantern Letter: a Zuihitsu,” “Original,” “Predator,” and “Guest/Stalker,” *Re-Examining Conservation: Questions at the Intersection of the Arts & Sciences*. Creature Conserve.
“Dear O,” *Queer Nature: An Ecoqueer Poetry Anthology*. Autumn House Press.

2021 “inspector of journals makes introductions: Fan & Basket plot escape from Peabody Essex Museum.” *Q&A – Voices from Queer Asian North America*. Temple University Press.

“Flood Fathers” and “Guest/Stalker,” *NOMBONO: An Anthology of Speculative Poetry by BIPOC Creators*. Sundress Publications.

- 2020 “Behind the Ballroom,” “Household Mutations,” “Returning to a Posted Notice Taped to the Door,” “Trying to Feel Human/Tomorrow,” and “Self-Portrait, house with no one Present.” *We Want It All: An Anthology of Radical Trans Poetics*. Nightboat Books.

Creative Work, Academic/Literary Journals/Magazines (Selected):

- 2023 “Breath for Metal,” Poem-A-Day, *Academy of American Poets*.
 “Letters to Landfall,” *Prairie Schooner*.
 “Leaving the Desert (*story in reverse*)” and “Tree Skin,” *Lit-Sea*.
 “Jostle. Fracture. Access.” *Bellingham Review*.

GRANTS, AWARDS & HONORS (Selected)

Creative Work:

- 2023 Residency, Sequina Space, Inscape Arts and Cultural Center, Seattle, WA
 Grantee, Educational Retreat, Fernland Studios, Eugene, OR
 Fellow, Poets and Scholars Summer Writing Retreat, Rutgers Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice, NJ
 Awardee, Creature Conserve Continuing Mentorship Scholarship, Creature Conserve
 Fellow, Rad(ical) Poetry Consortium, DreamYard, Bronx, NY
 Writing the Land Commissioned Poet, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Mt. Ulka, Oregon
 Writing the Land Commissioned Poet, The Nature Conservancy, Moses Coulee, WA
 Residency, PLAYA, Summer Lake, OR
 Residency, Marble House Project, Dorset, VT
 Residency, Vashon Artist Residency, Vashon Island, WA
 Residency, Whiteley Center, Friday Harbor Labs, WA
 2022 Fellow, Intercultural Leadership Institute (online)
 Grantee, Art Projects: Individuals, 4Culture, Seattle, WA
 Fellow, Artist in Residence, Fernland Studios, Eugene, OR
 Dr. Kristi Larkin Havens Memorial Residency Fellowship for Service to the Community, The Sundress Academy for the Arts (SAFTA), Knoxville, TN
 Commissioned Writer, Reimagine Seattle Storytelling Project, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle, WA
 2021 New Media Gallery Residency, Jack Straw Cultural Center, Seattle, WA
 2020 Writing Fellow, Jack Straw Cultural Center, Seattle, WA

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- 2023 Curator, Trans and Nonbinary Reading Room, Asian American Literary Festival
 Juror, Cadence Video Poetry Festival
 Arts Panelist, Gay City Arts & Culture Neighborhood Recovery Program
 2022-present Governing Council, Cultural Space Agency
 2022 Mentor, Alphabet Institute, Alphabet Alliance of Color
 2021 Cohort Member and Selection Committee, Build Art Space Equitably
 2020-present Core Member, Massage Parlor Outreach Project

Work Sample 1:

Breathing in a Time of Disaster

<https://uwb.ds.lib.uw.edu/breathinginatimeofdisaster/>

Work Sample 2:

for the fir tree hanging by thin desire

written for the Misery Point Preserve, Seabeck, Washington

I admire your vertical ambition

you shift and settle with wind

despite falling over bluff's edge

you determined to grow up decades

straining towards cloud

I dream of you reaching in all directions

making home in this "place that is like an arm"

listening for North storms

tracking unusual impulses through crumbled dirt

watching for fallen objects making their way to shore

did you wait for your own shape to adjust

ask ocean to introduce you to cousin eelgrass

sing blessings to the forage fish

I've come to say hello today again

despite daily struggles to keep balance

I learn again from you how to re-orient back to breath, how to dream into our own roots.

Work Sample 3:

Leaving the Desert (*story in reverse*)

He had always let me have my way before. I thought my brother eventually
would leave me a message back.

My father had shut off the radio each night and asked us to repeat our memorized sentences to him.

(the one who had come to sweeten the honey)

My brother always received praise,
but I knew he had spent half the time I had to write them.

a boiled egg for ten sentences.

Eventually, we worked out a fair exchange –

There was nothing left in our dusty town once we laid our father into the ground and his sisters claimed their shares.

I watched him until the sky went dark and I could see no more.

He had walked to the horizon and then kept going.

That's when I realized he had really left me behind.

This time, I left 12 messages up and down the street and
heard no answer.

Some day, you'll see my black hair – very fine, very short – and think you'll have caught me, but
I never answer.

What he left – a smooth stone. A clean and well-worn search.

Work Sample 4:

For Pediddle

1. They catalogued you #1012 [only 350
remaining]

a “right” whale easy target [hunted near extinction by 1800s whalers]

first seen year of my own blizzard birth [one human year may equal one whale year?]

you expected to live to 70 if not for –

“Not a single adult is known to have died of natural causes in the
last ten years”

your nine calves,
two names - Contrail and Sickle –
and three uncatalogued calves in 1991, 1996, 2001 – who grew your relations to four grand-
calves and four great-calves

only one documented human-cause injury but a bright
circular leftside

Headscar

Headlight searching for

daughter (Catalog #1308) killed by vessel

strike while caring for young

calf / Bay of Fundy > Roseway Basin > Great South Channel >

Roseway Basin > Bay of Fundy > Florida > Georgia > Bay of Fundy >

Gulf of St. Lawrence > Bay of Fundy > Great South Channel > Florida > Georgia >
Florida [yes with calf] [yes with calf] [yes with calf] [yes with calf] [yes with calf] Gulf of

Maine [yes with calf] South Carolina Jeffrey’s Ledge North Carolina

>> North Carolina [no calf] memorable mark on upper jaw only
(propeller wound?) / memorable scar on mandible or lip / scar in chin between left and
right chin callosities / scar in front of rostrum below bonnet / scar in, over, or

touching callosity / scar in or around blowholes / significant dorsal or
ventral peduncle scar (entanglement or other)

granddaughter Snow Cone entangled

5 times, first known

to have given birth while entangled, “almost certainly died” /
2020 calf catalog #5060 vessel hit
twice over at five or six months / deep rudder wound / cut across
tail [“When I read

the news

that Snow Cone’s calf had died, I mean, I actually cried. It was like

losing a friend, and now it’s sort of hard to look at the video from last year
and the pictures of last year. It felt like losing a friend.” – biologist Sara Ellis] /

12 year-old great-
grandson Cottontail (Catalog #3920)
entanglement-dead– a line over head exiting

both sides of mouth extending beyond tail for 3-4

body lengths, 15

miles off Myrtle Beach, South Carolina coast who

grew ecosystem feast attracting seven

Great White sharks [“400 pounds of

dinner”], birds, fish, what’s

left moving 1-2 miles

per hour

south

2. From mouths of Snow

Cone's entanglement
responders: "rope coming
out of mouth" "two trailing
lines from mouth" "tighten
over time" "through blubber,
through muscle, and even
into bone" "moving
24 hours 7 days a week"
seven teams recording
36 entanglements "keeping people
on bow as close as
possible so could throw
grappling hook
into her
entanglement" ["I cut it!
I cut it! I cut it!"]

"to cut rope ... shorter" "if
she can

then shed it
on her own."

"What
I'm hoping
to see
the next time
someone sees her
is that there's no rope
left
at all."

3.

As if some-

where in ocean, you

plankton-full frolick

migration

slick bump and splash

and rest

for long

and rest

and rest

and rest

as if gunshot calls

as if up-

through the miles

calls as if scream and warble

as if progression we listen for

as if searching

for family again

survivors

Additional Bibliography

“2022–2023 North Atlantic Right Whale Mother and Calf Pairs.” *New England Aquarium*, New England Aquarium, 1 June 2023, www.neaq.org/2022-2023-north-atlantic-right-whale-mother-and-calf-pairs/.

Fisheries, NOAA. “First Recording of North Pacific Right Whale Song.” *NOAA*, www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/first-recording-north-pacific-right-whale-song#:~:text=Right%20whales%20don't%20sing,and%20North%20Atlantic%20right%20whales. Accessed 1 Sept. 2023.

Helline, Meredith. “Body of Endangered Whale off S.C. Coast Attracts Host of Sharks, Other Wildlife.” *Https://Www.Wmbfnews.Com*, WMBF News, 5 Mar. 2021,

www.wmbfnews.com/2021/03/05/body-endangered-whale-off-sc-coast-attracts-host-sharks-other-wildlife/.

Pequenezza Nadine et al. directors. *Saving the Right Whale*. WGBH Educational PBS 2023.

Household Mutations,
after Carmen Agote

born a string of golden light I invited my growing mother
 to new baroque bedroom she said who wants radioactive
suitcase who invites one lined with silver teeth
 who mirror white wants whale carpet scraped from mattress of
maps

 all routes poured with last tea *all routes spilled from me*, all her
 nights attached to appliance dainty shoes unwrap
 ears

those stains belong to me, all her shoulder-leaning crease my joints
 all snaps in cups shave head to a cut all bikes and doorways remember
I came to alter to table without
 a fight

[Notes: "Household Mutations" by Ching-In Chen uses the text to experiment with generating and growing multiple voices sharing the same text: <https://atsalonisu.org/ching-in-chen-household-mutations/> Published in We Want It All! an Anthology of Radical Trans Poetics.]

Work Sample List

- 1) **Breathing in a Time of Disaster** is a hybrid project incorporating performance, installation and speculative writing to explore the unit of breath through the intersection of meditation, health and environmental justice. I organized community story circles with Cassie Mira in Houston, Texas in 2019 and asked participants to create performance, writing, visual art and/or video for a community pop-up and performance. In 2022, we organized story circles at Jack Straw Cultural Center in Seattle. In addition, I trained BIPOC students at UW Bothell in story circle methodology; they organized story circles for their peers in 2022 and 2023. Those who participated in story circles and additional community artists and leaders from the Houston and Seattle areas were invited to contribute a breath recording, zip code and/or public ritual to the project. We collaborated with climate data sound artist Judy Twedt to create Breath-By-Zipcode soundtracks, where community participant breath recordings were blended with environmental sounds dependent on air quality and life expectancy data from the zip code. The Breath-By-Zipcode soundtracks, breath recordings, rituals and story circle excerpts were displayed in Jack Straw New Media Gallery October 28th, 2022 to January 13, 2023. This past summer, I collaborated with Cassie Mira to create a digital exhibit of the show.
- 2) **for the fir tree hanging by thin desire** is a poem I was commissioned to write for Misery Point Preserve and Great Peninsula Conservancy through Writing the Land. The project pairs poets with conserved lands for a year to create work inspired by place, which are included in anthologies sold to support the land protection organizations. I read this poem for the Misery Point Preserve ribbon cutting ceremony on April 30, 2023.
- 3) **Leaving the Desert (*story in reverse*)** is a multimedia piece originally created for the Can Serrat Open Studios in 2016. The story circles around the same phrases, but changes meaning with each iteration. Rather than try to attempt the impossible task of capturing this text on a static page, I opted to approach the story from another angle on the page. In this mp4, the text is by Ching-In Chen and audio by Cassie Mira:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qRDB_6853y2-xgmxbVry-v1U6YiVtJws/view
In 2023, the text version was included in the Lit-Sea Short Story Dispensers at Seattle Public Library and the Station Café in Beacon Hill.
- 4) **For Peddiddle** is a poem commissioned by Creature Conserve in 2023 for *Creature Conserve: Writing at the Intersection of Art & Science*, to be published by University of Minnesota Press. Creature Conserve brings artists, writers and scientists together to foster informed sustained support for animal conservation. The anthology features creative writing written in response to the latest scientific research about the uncertain fate of the animal world. Each literary work will be paired with an excerpt from the scientific article.
- 5) **Household Mutations**, was a poem initially inspired by an invitation to respond to artwork in *Home—So Different, So Appealing*, an exhibit which featured U.S. Latino and Latinx American artists at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. I originally read this piece on December 14, 2017. In response to an invitation to participate in @Salon Queer Sound Showcase at Illinois State University, I used the text to experiment with generating

and growing multiple voices sharing the same text, which was published in 2020:
https://soundcloud.com/obsidianlit/05-chen_household-mutations?in=obsidianlit/sets/salon-queer-sound-2020-curated-by-samuel-ace
The poem was published in *We Want It All! an Anthology of Radical Trans Poetics* in 2020.