



August 22, 2019

Board of Library Trustees
Pomona Public Library
625 South Garey Avenue
Pomona, CA 91769

NOMINATION/APPLICATION COVER SHEET FOR THE HONORARY POSITION OF
CITY OF POMONA POET LAUREATE

Note: Completed applications and nominations with all supporting material are due no later than 6:00pm on Thursday, October 31, 2019.

NOMINEE /APPLICANT

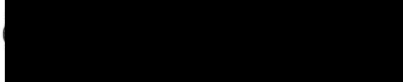
Name: • *GEORGE HAMMONS*

Address:



POMONA, CA 91767

Phone:



Email:



IF A YOU ARE NOMINATING SOMEONE, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

All material and necessary documents must be submitted with this application or nomination

George Hammons

Pomona, CA 91767

October 28, 2019

Poet Laureate ad hoc Committee

Board of Library Trustees Pomona Public Library

Pomona Public Library

625 South Garey Ave.

Pomona, CA 91769

Dear Poet Laureate Committee and Library Board of Trustees:

I am honored to submit my application for the inaugural position of the Pomona Poet Laureate. I have been an active poet for over forty years and can personally attest to poetry's positive impact on both my life and my experience as a community member. Even though I have been writing for many years, I still consider myself an emerging poet. Though my credits in terms of literary publications are limited, my commitment and active participation as a member of the poetry community in Southern California, specifically Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, is steadfast. Those who know my work, both writers and non-writers alike, will attest to my commitment to the craft writing and presenting of poetry. I consider it an endorsement that I am often called upon, within the local literary community, to showcase my work, which often addresses the subjects of social justice, family relationships, and love. If selected as the Pomona Poet Laureate, I believe that I can provide both genuine enthusiasm and organized programming that will set a path for future Pomona Poet Laureates.

I look forward to bringing my knowledge and relationships with local literary and arts communities to the position. Over the past ten years, I have consistently visited and supported artists and arts groups from Santa Monica, Orange County, Long Beach, Sylmar, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Joshua Tree. In part, my belief in this outreach is due to my experience as an employee and student at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB). I worked at CSUSB as a staff member, and I attended classes because of my love for creative writing.

In June 2016, I obtained a Certificate of Completion from the CSUSB English Department in Creative Writing with an emphasis in poetry. During my time in the Creative Writing program, I had the honor of participating in a curriculum that actively sought to bring poets and fiction writers of every status to our campus. During that time, I had the privilege of studying under wonderful poets like Juan Felipe Herrera (former Poet Laureate to the United States), Marylyn Nelson (former Poet Laureate to Connecticut) Ellen Bass, Cecilia Woloch, William (Bill) Mohr (CSU Long Beach), Douglas Kearney, and especially Chad Sweeney and Juan Delgado professors at CSUSB. Professor Sweeney, whom I consider a great friend, was consistently bringing both poets and creative writing students to CSUSB to participate in poetry readings and as such, truly impressed upon me the value of reaching out and meeting fellow artists and building community.

In December of 2016, I retired from my job as Parking Program Coordinator at CSUSB and have perused writing and poetry with a far greater focus on becoming professional. In 2017 I released my first chapbook, "Hungry To Bed, Love Poems," and in that same year, I was the runner up for the PEN America Emerging Writer's 2019 Fellowship. As runner up, I was selected to participate in a master's series poetry workshop, led by poet F. Douglas Brown. I have re-applied for the 2020 fellowship and am currently awaiting the selection committee's decision regarding my application. If selected by PEN America, that obligation will in no way conflict with Pomona's Poet Laureate position.

Since my retirement, I have had the honor of writing and presenting poems at CSUSB for the annual Pioneer Breakfast, an annual scholarship fundraiser for African American students that honors former faculty, students, and staff. During these events, I present original poems to approximately five hundred attendees and have been honored with standing ovations each year. I currently have a poem on exhibit at Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change, as part of an exhibition celebrating "The Great Migration, Arizona's Indiscernible" which acknowledges a period from the early 1900's until 1970 and the migration of African Americans from the south to the north and mid-west. The exhibition and my poem will be touring the state throughout the year.

My personal goals for the near future are to develop a series of graphic novels based on poems that I have written and to establish a reading series that focuses on literary artists in a way that allows audiences to gain more in-depth insight into the people behind the poems and stories. I am also working on my own presentation in which I hope to create an extended reading which incorporates theatrical elements and helps the poetry come alive through the use of sound, lighting, and music.

In conclusion, I am thrilled to submit my application in the hope of being considered for the position of Pomona Poet Laureate. I am energetic and industrious by nature and a true believer in the idea that poetry can change lives because I know that it has changed mine. One of my greatest joys is inviting newcomers to a poetry reading and having them say, "I didn't know that poetry could be like that." If selected, I pledge to work diligently to make poetry in Pomona fun, entertaining, interactive, and accessible.

Thank you for your consideration,

George Hammons

GEORGE HAMMONS

POMONA, CA



Publications:

Chap book: Hungry to Bed published by Arroyo Seco Press 2017

Pacific Review (Anthology) California State University San Bernardino, Issue 33, 2015 (2 poems)

Pacific Review: Cal State University's annual literary journal. 2014

Cadence Collective: Year Two Anthology, Sadie Girl Press, 2015

American Mustard Anthology, 2015

Education History & Workshops:

Verbum Dei High, Los Angeles, CA – Graduated

Cal State Fullerton University – General Education Units

Rancho Santiago College, Santa Ana, CA – Television Production Units

CSUSB Summer Arts Program – 7/2015 (2 week poetry writing)

Cal State University San Bernardino, Certificate, English, Creative Writing 2016

Mt. San Antonio College Writer's Weekend(s) 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Red House Writer's Weekend, April, 2019,

Pen America Master's Class May – June 2019

Featured Readings:

2nd Mondays Poetry Party, Aug 14th, 2017, Fox's Coffeehouse Long Beach, CA. (Host Sarah Thursday)

Featured by San Gabriel Writers, at the dA in Pomona (Host John Brantingham)

Featured by Friends of the Claremont Library Feb 25th, 2018 (Host Genevieve Kaplan)

Featured Nuestra' America ceramics works LA, CA. May 5th, 2018 (Host Juan Delgado)

Featured at Rapp Saloon May 4th, 2018 (Host Cynthia Alessandro-Briano)

The Poetry Circus, Los Angeles, CA. July 21st, 2018 (Host Michelle Davis / Nicelle-Nicelle)

Word of Mouth, (Fundraiser) Echo Park, CA, July 2019, (Host Dare Williams)

Featured Emancipation Arts, Phoenix, AZ. October 2019, (Host Clottee Hammons)

Featured at the dA, in Pomona, October 26th, 2019 (Host John Brantingham)

Professors Using Works as Classroom Text

Professor Chad Sweeney, CSUSB, San Bernardino, CA. used my chap book (Hungry to Bed) as assigned reading for Eng. 417, winter quarter, 2018. I visited the class and read poems and had Q&A with students.

Professor Jill Scott-Co, Riverside City College, Riverside, CA will be using "Hungry to Bed" during fall of 2018 for an English class and I will also be visiting the class and reading from that as well as newer works.

Social Media

Featured on Portraits of Poetry Blog, March 2018, <http://www.portraitsofpoetry.org/?m=1>
Photographer and writer Elder Zamora has been producing this photo blog featuring southern California poets for a couple of years. The blog has several photos, a short bio and a poem.

Community Outreach Activities:

Judge for Poetry Out Loud (2017, 2018 & 2019) <http://artsconnectionnetwork.org> Poetry Out Loud is an national poetry competition for middle and high school students, where they recite published poems and are then judged on pre-established criteria including how well they memorize and present their chosen poems. I have served as a judge for the past two years for the finals of the Inland Empire segment of this national competition. I especially enjoy interacting with the students and talking about their selections and presentations.

Featured poet "Pioneer Breakfast" fundraiser at CSUSB 2017 & 2018 (Anthony Roberson) The Pioneer Breakfast is an annual fundraiser for African American students at CSUSB. I have written two original poems for the event. I have been asked to return for 2019 and to again write an original poem. I worked as a staff member at CSUSB for 13 years (retiring in Dec, 2016) and it is my privilege to participate in this event as a poet.

My poem "Downtown Phoenix 1959" is currently on display at Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change. My poem is placed as part of the exhibit "The Great Migration, Indiscernibles in Arizona. The exhibition specifically looks at the migration of African Americans to Arizona while acknowledging that "The Great Migration" took place from the early 1900's through 1970 and included travelers who also went to the North and Midwest.

Current Projects:

I'm working to present poetry in Graphic Novel form

I'm working on a live presentation that introduces production elements (light, movement and music) into a poetry driven experience. I'm also working on a manuscript for a book of assorted poems.

Work History:

December 2019 – Present, City of Pomona Recreation Department Community Service Specialist 1.

As a CSS1 I am assigned to the John F. Kennedy Park, where the city of Pomona has one of it 13 after school program locations. Kennedy is one of two city wide "Teen Centers," where we provide supervised activities for youths ranging in age from 10 years old to 17. We are a voluntary program, however participants must apply to join. Most of our participants are students at Marshall middle school or Ganesha high school. We offer homework assistance and provide games and crafts for students. We also take students on field trips where they can perform community service (such as beach cleanup) as well as educational outings where they can tour local college campuses. My personal goal is to have students focus on promotion from their current grade and to also plan for life after graduation. I try to show individual participants that by practicing or participating in activities they learn and eventually master them. Quite a few of the students in our program are currently suffering academically, I hope to help each participant develops strategies which allow them to achieve better results as students. Although this is a function of the city's recreation department CSS's are constantly teaching through both word and deed.

July 2003- December 2016 California State University San Bernardino, San Bernardino, CA.
Parking Program Coordinator, Parking Officer II.

In my capacity as parking program coordinator I supervised and trained a staff consisting of full-time parking officers and student assistants whose job it was to patrol parking facilities and to enforce parking regulations. Our staff also provided services such as vehicle battery jumps and vehicle unlocks. My responsibilities also included serving as liaison with event organizers whom ranged from students, faculty, and outside parties who used campus facilities for events. My job as liaison was to meet, plan and supervise our staff's response for traffic and parking concerns for events ranging from concerts, art exhibits, WWE wrestling, Kevin Heart comedy shows, Native American Pow-wows, to our University's commencement ceremonies. I was also responsible for working with our Facilities department to coordinate parking lot repairs and maintenance. Part of my assignment also included supervising and training about 30 student Community Service Officers who were responsible for patrolling and locking down the campus on a daily basis.

1994-2003 Community Service Officer – City of San Bernardino Police Department:

I worked as a non-sworn staff member my primary job was a support position taking police reports, stocking essential forms, issuing equipment to officers including patrol vehicles and radios. I also worked for three years as a Forensics Specialist which required that I respond to crime scenes and investigate and collect evidence and take photos. I was also responsible for chain of custody reports documenting how evidence was managed. I was required to testify in court as an “expert” witness regarding my investigations.

Poem for a tattooed girl

from the chap book Hungry To Bed

I want to climb into that space

In-between your skin and your tattoos

I want to understand

your reds, your blacks, your greens,

your blues.

I want to look out from amidst wings and petals

and lie with my bare skin

amidst your dreams and wishes,

knowing full well that each needle prick is a beloved pain

which requires the unconscionable act

of you, taking your mind to another place to sustain

until your flesh succeeds,

and bleeds a painted history

so personal, so intimate

it's a history that only you can read.

Oh, I want to climb into that space

In-between your skin and your tattoos

I want to understand

Your reds,

Your blacks,

Your greens,

Your blues.

Medusa Pissed Off

She dreams and she is once again in the temple of Athena.

Her cool smile, her blushing skin,

her silky hair, restored.

Her footfalls, so slight, as to hint, that she
might be floating.

Her chores as a temple priestess; a blessing.

And she is so desired,

as suitor after suitor visit the temple

where she is always watching, while

suitors after suitors defile Athena's fane

all of them praying that they might lock eyes, capture

a selfish glance, from the beautiful Medusa.

Suddenly there is a movement in the garden, where all of those who know Medusa's true gaze,
are planted.

Their mouths agape, in silent report, their arms akimbo, or thrashing,

even birds and animals have been turned, not to mere stone,

but to marble,

every creature's metamorphic story of horror

pantomimed in perpetuity.

A menagerie, including the warriors, who all came peddling death,

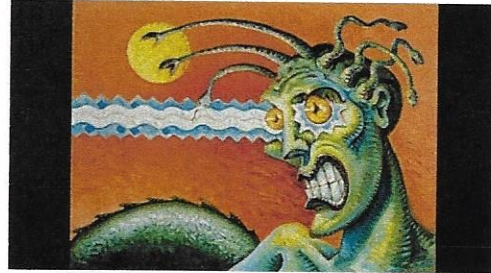
yet they now pose, frozen, each one carried and meticulously, placed,

by her.

Each one nameless, to her, as she assesses them;

a spear, a crossbow, a dagger none of them real weapons in her eyes

She uncoils herself, as slowly she forsakes the dream of her previous life, until reality builds,



behind her eyes, like cloudbursts, but these are not tears, and she is not crying, this is
Medusa *pissed off*

at Poseidon, at Athena, at the birds and the animals, at the warriors (who just keep coming)
at every man who has ever wanted to look her in the eye, and yes even at herself; the girl who
once believed herself beautiful.

*And so, she spies a feckless figure, foolishly crouching at the entrance to her layer, and it makes
her smile, her lips are haggard back and her teeth, gnashed as she remarks to herself "a sword,
a shining shield, and what are those on his feet?*

Wings?"

*This ekphrastic poem was inspired by "Medusa Pissed Off," part of the Mt. Olympus below the
Tree Line series by artist Mike Street. The poem is part of a project to have 100 artists
collaborate with 100 poets and to eventually produce an art book consisting of the
collaborations.*

North

Written for the 2018 Pioneer Breakfast at Cal State San Bernardino

And this is how we dreamed,
one bare foot in front of the other, in the darkness,
one desperate soul in front of the other,
my hand on your back,
and us bent at the waist,
as if somehow our very bodies could be bowed
into a whisper.

And this is how we dreamed,
near naked, our best rags, stowed
in a tattered rucksack;
packed away, so that we could be presentable
on that day when we made it
North.

They said, "*there's milk and honey up there,*"
they pay you, for your work, up there,
Babies suckle at their mother's breasts,
never to be torn away," up there.
And this is how we dreamed;

secrets, hidden in our work songs,
we'd sing "*Steal away, steal away,*
steal away to Jesus.
Steal away, steal away home.
I ain't got long to say here.
And under our breath, a code,
that told of the day and time

for our departure.

And this is how we dreamed,
of going North.

We learned to follow the signs;
the way the trees bent,
or where the moss grew
even our little children understood that to get north,
you follow the drinking gourd, some call it
the lil' dipper, the North Star;
which is *always* pointing North.

Oh, this is how we dreamed,

they said, "*A slave up North,
is freer than a free Negro, in the South.*"
and we believed it.

They said, we could learn our ABCs
and readin', writin' and rithmatic,
*without fear of being whipped or starved
as punishment,*
and we believed that too.

And so bruised and bright eyed,
we climbed and stumbled
through wood and thistle,
barn yard and swamp; goin'
North, North always North.

We watched for the *secret signs*, of
the Underground Railroad:
Here and there we met a kind conductor,
who provided a cool drink of water and a meal,
a place to spend the night
some even showed us, safe passages, through
woods and swamps.

Some even put us on boats and trains;
with a hug and prayer of *fare-thee- well*,
and a hopeful hand pointing,
North.

And *this* is how we dreamed;

not about a flag or a country,
not about vengeance or hate,
we dreamed about walking out into a world,
where our lives matter,
we dreamed about
speaking up for ourselves, having our own voices,
expressing our own opinions, without fear.

Yes, this is how we dreamed about goin' North;

But the reality that we found,
is that no matter how far North you run;
you are still, always South of some-place.

Perhaps it's just south of your own expectations,
perhaps it's south of opportunity,

perhaps you feel as if you have fallen into that
“Sunken Place”

where you realize that the farthest north that
you ever made it is Charlottesville;
with its tiki-torch-toting “good people,”
who came from every corner of this country,
talking about “heritage,”
lamenting the removal their monuments to rape,
murder and exploitation.

Perhaps you’ve fallen, into that *sunken place* of
gerrymandering,
suppressed voting

Perhaps you’re just complacent.

Perhaps you have found yourself south of the fact,
that for every Barack Obama, there is a *Ben Carson*,
and for every Michelle there is an *Omarosa*,
for every Colin Kaepernick there is
a Sheriff, *David Clarke*;

And so:

Perhaps now, in 2018, that long journey North was
always, really about, our ancestors; sacrificing
everything. So that we might have the humanity
to look south, across the border,
at starry eyed neighbors, braving coyotes and deserts,
armed with little more than hope, and a hand full of,

worn out rosary beads,
trudging one foot in front of the other.
praying that someone here will say to them;
“I *understand* your dream”.

Maybe in 2018 we need to understand that our
ancestor’s journey North, was always really about, us
having the humanity to looking across the ocean, at
fellow human beings running from bombed out cities,
where they have had to dig their loved ones, broken,
bodies, from under the concrete rubble, of places they
once called home

Maybe our ancestor’s horrible journey was always
meant to teach us how to tell refugees
“I understand your dream.”

Maybe in now 2018, our ancestor’s, desperate, journey
was really, meant to warn us

to call our kin folks’ in Georgia, Texas, South Carolina,
Florida, Ohio and Michigan and ask them
“Are you registered to vote?
Do you have a way to get to the poll?
Do you know where your polling place is?
Are you sure that it hasn’t been secretly moved?”

Because we need for *everybody* to know,
that “North” in 2018;
is about the flag
and it is about this country.

Oh we are in a political “Me Too” moment,
and we are saying “*Time’s Up*,
Our votes matter!”

And so, yes; this is how we dreamed;

one bare foot in front of the other, near naked,
our best rags, stowed in a tattered rucksack, packed
away, safe so that we could be “presentable”
on that day
when we made it

North.