

Madison Poet Laureate Report 2021 to 2022 highlights, and a peak into 2023
Submitted by Angie Trudell Vasquez, Madison Poet Laureate 2020-2024

My last official report was November 2021. I have been doing the work as a poet laureate and literary citizen. This will work backward since the most recent events and readings may be of more interest.

March 2023

-AWP in Seattle March 8 to 10, I organized a panel called, "Connecting Community through Poetry," and together with former state poet laureate Margaret Rozga, and three other poets including poets from my Seattle days and a new poet friend from the east coast we held a 75-minute panel discussion and presentation on how to strengthen your communities through poetry. The idea being a community with a robust poetry scene is healthier and more connected. I talked about my role as the Madison Poet Laureate including the Bus Lines Poetry project that went online during the pandemic but still persisted even when we could not be in the buses. I also mentioned how the Youth Poet Laureate position came to be. Other topics included my work as the poet in residence with the libraries, Ekphrastic poetry projects with Edgewood College design students and their professor over my term, how one can go about partnering with art museums, their local schools, non-profits (Art Lit Lab, Woodland Pattern, The Chazen, MMOCA, Bonk Poetry Series, the number of arts organizations in WI, etc.) and other institutions to build community through hosting events around poetry and art, and how that can lead to publishing projects. I spoke about how I had to veer how I showed up in the community when the pandemic started, going online with virtual programming, and what it looks like to poet laureate now. I also talked about how poetry starts four Common Council meetings a year, my partnership with the city and the Madison Arts Commission, and my role as Chair for the Wisconsin Poet Laureate Commission. Our event was well attended. There are thousands of literary events, and close to fifty people chose to attend our event organized by me.

2023 select readings, I did way more than this visiting schools in Dane County, and across WI.

- Seattle University, March 10, 2023 with acclaimed Latino/a poets, Seattle, WA
- Sequoia Library, February 25, 2023 with Madeline Bohn, Youth Poet Laureate, our one and only event reading together, and her third required reading per her contract. An ASL interpreter was also present which made for a really amazing event. Madison, WI
- Capitol Lakes Retirement Home reading, February 7, 2023 at 7PM, Madison, WI
- Galena Poetry Festival January 26-27, 2023, I was invited to read in the festival, and took vacation time off work to attend. Galena, IL
- Winter Poetry Festival at Art Lit Lab, Youth Poet Laureate, Madeline Bohn, opened the eight-week festival, and I went second. We wrote a poem together for the festival. This was the first of the eight readings held for 8 consecutive Sundays. Well attended, and this was the second event Madeleine was paid for as the YPL. She was well received and people remarked upon her poems, and she will be published soon in the local newspaper in her neighborhood as a result of this reading.

- Since we established the Youth Poet Laureate position I have been meeting monthly on Zoom with those who applied. I invited all the poets to be mentored by me and we meet monthly on the last Wednesday of the month. There are three who have been consistent including the YPL, the other two poets are also quite strong. Together we build a call for a youth anthology, and during the month of February we accepted poems. I will lead them through the edit process and Edgewood College design students will assist with the anthology. We will have poems and the art work face each other, and each poem will also have an Ekphrastic piece with the poem and the art woven together. This is in place of the traditional Bus Line Poetry project usually occurring at this time. (Metro has unilaterally decided not to continue the project after sharing with me that this year it would be on the buses again.) We will go forward with the youth anthology of poetry and it will also contain black and white art work, and a color cover to be designed by the Edgewood College design students. Once the collection is published we will have a celebratory reading date and time to be determined.

2022 Highlights

- Named the first Youth Poet Laureate Madeleine Bohn to serve a one-year term
- Held an in-person Bus Lines Poetry Project celebration at Pinney Library, establishing cupcakes and poetry. Event well attended and the art work is still up at Pinney Library now. Every poet received a copy of their poem and the accompanying artwork in a frame they could take home and hang in their abode.
- Poet in residence at the library and the "Tree Friends" Ekphrastic community art project. the library printed 3000 activity kits with my poem in English and translated into Spanish with art supplies. They were invited to send back their response to my poem. This giant mural project is currently on the second floor of the downtown Madison Public Library. I also paired with a scientist from the Audubon society, a dance teacher and an artist to do Ekphrastic poetry workshops for free across the city. The last one had an ASL interpreter and was such a great experience. (throughout 2022)
- Poet in residence for the Priory Writers Retreat for the Chippewa Valley Writers Guild, worked with poets one on one on their manuscripts, and gave a craft talk called, "Mapping Out Your Manuscript." (June 2022)
- Collaborated with Writing The Land project and the Patrick Marsh Wildlife Center, to write three Ekphrastic poems for the Groundswell Conservancy, published in an anthology and virtual performance in December of 2022. (Project throughout 2022 including site visits with staff to highlight conservation efforts here. Project is US and Canada based.)
- Write On, Door County, Sturgeon Bay, WI for the Young Writers Conference, taught Indigenous Poetics to high school students in Door County.
- Poetry craft talk for Black Lawrence Press virtual March 8, 2022, over a 100 people attended online.
- My fourth collection of poetry, My People Redux, was published in January 2022 by Finishing Line Press and was named one of the top 30 poetry collections to come out in 2022 by a Latinx writer, and was named by Ms. Magazine as well as a notable collection.