

Amy Leah Solomon-Minarchi

OBJECTIVE

I intend to obtain the Inaugural Olympia Poet Laureate appointment in order to serve my Olympia community with my 15 years of continuous writing experience and expertise in teaching Creative Writing to broad audiences with compassion, curiosity and confidence.

EDUCATION

2008-2010. The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA. Master's in Teaching.

2000-2004. Rutgers University, Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ. BA in English Literature with Creative Writing Focus.

2005-present Member and student of the Richard Hugo House, Seattle, WA.

EMPLOYMENT

English and Creative Writing Teacher, 2011-present. North Thurston High School, Lacey, WA. Advisor of the NTHS "Write Club", advisor and publisher of the school Literary Magazine "The Art of Words", co-organizer of open mics for middle school and teens, in-school and in the community, teacher liaison to Lacey Loves to Read with librarians Raina Sedore and Holly Paxson.

Choreographer and Co-Director, 2012-present, North Thurston High School, Lacey, WA. Designed, implemented and rehearsed dances with students from various cultural backgrounds through the school musical and Spring Arts Showcase productions.

Library Page, 2008-2009. Timberland Regional Library, Olympia, WA. Shelled books, assisted patrons, set up for library events and worked closely with librarian Kelsey Smith to code and catalog the Olympia Library Zine Collection.

Yoga Instructor, 2006-2009. Spruce Street School and Samarya Center. Seattle, WA. Worked closely teaching yoga in a studio and school setting to students from various cultural and economic backgrounds ranging from 6 years old to 89 years olds.

Library Assistant, 2006-2008. Seattle Public Library, Seattle, WA. Assisted patrons at the circulation desk and assisted in set-up for author events.

Honors, Publications and Awards:

- Nominee for the 2015 Evergreen Teacher of the Year Award
- Richard Hugo House New Works Winner, 2007 for short story *Dead Fish and Lipstick*. Public reading with Jennifer D. Munro.

- Edna K. Herzberg Prize for Poetry, 2003, for poetry collection *Burnt; Fair-Haired Angels Don't Visit Dreams Here; Big Man, Little Girl; The Last Night of Chemical Ali; Walking Longer, I.*

Publications include: *Authentic Storytelling: Implications for Teachers and Students* (The Evergreen State College, 2010), *Poets Against the War* (On-line Anthology, 2008), *Objet d'Art* (Rutgers University Literary Journal, 2004), *The Anthologist* (Douglass College Literary Journal, 2003).

Chapbooks: *The Grunt Wife's Memory Book*, 2016; *Poems of Love in War*, 2004; *Indigenous People*, 2003; *Elements*, 2002

ARTS INVOLVEMENT

- 2016, Editor and Mentor for student playwright Trevor Ellis, whose play *Falling in Spring* was produced as the feature length musical comedy for the Spring Arts Showcase at North Thurston High School.
- 2015-2016, Dancer for Samba OlyWA
- 2015-2016, Organizer of NTHS Poetry Out Loud Competition
- 2013-2016, Mentor to High School Performance Poets for Spring open mics
- 2012-2016, Advisor and editor of the North Thurston High School Literary Magazine, Write Club and Open Mic series.
- 2012-2014, Mentor to P-FLAG student spokesperson, Robert Kowalski.
- 2009, Organizer of Olympia Web-zine Project, *Stable Bows* for new parents to showcase their writing and art about parenthood.
- 2008-2010, Olympia Zine Collection cataloguer
- 2007-2008, Teen Writing Mentor through the Richard Hugo House

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Steve Coker

North Thurston High School. Teacher-Librarian, Teacher-Librarian of the Year 2015-2016.

Primary phone: 360-412-4800

E-mail: scoker@nthurston.k12.wa.us

Steve Coker has been a colleague at NTHS for five years. Together, we have worked as organizers of open mics in and out of school, as liaisons to the Instructional Materials Committee reviewing proposed curriculum and have tested new and innovative technology in recording and presenting poetry.

Nani Duvall

North Thurston High School. English Department Program Leader.

Primary phone: 360-412-4800

E-mail: nduvall@nthurston.k12.wa.us

Nani Duvall has been my program leader for five years and through her dedication and championing of me, we were able to resurrect the Creative Writing program as a school offering.

Program Proposal

Focus: *I Hear Olympia Singing*

As a teacher and creative writing mentor through the public school system, I am well-versed in the need for the literary arts as part of community strength building. I use poetry and writing everyday to unite classrooms of students from a multitude of social, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds, creating one, fresh, democratic space for young people to voice the parts of their identity that they are puzzling over, while also learning about the dynamic lives of their peers, sometimes sharing and connecting in collective fears or questions that are unsaid, sometimes rejoicing in bravery of uncovered stories. No matter what the outcome, camaraderie and rapport are immediate indicators that students in my classes engage in an enriching respect for each other with creative writing and literature as a catalyst.

Olympia's diverse populations are at a serious crossroads in which no one dare cross the road. Let poetry be the place where we enter the crosswalk. Through my term as Poet Laureate of Olympia, I will bring my practiced expertise of building community through poetry offering accessible and equitable workshops, contests and readings to Olympians by elevating perception and engagement in the growing Downtown Arts Core by focusing writing on engaging with the city.

Audience:

I believe it is essential to engage kids and young adults in creative literary arts to keep them growing in creative directions, learning from each other and providing a creative learning environment for students to ground into as a functional and collaborative part of the community. I include offerings for all ages, which I believe to be essential to a successful Poet Laureate's term, however my primary outreach will be directed first toward Olympia school students in need of art enrichment, young adults who do not have privilege or access to educational opportunity and finally the community at large in an effort to record Olympia's voice through the poetry of it's current residents, born and bred or newly transplanted.

Community Engagement: Camaraderie and Solidarity through *I Hear Olympia Singing*

I envision:

1. Outreach to all levels of school students within each yearly term, with literary arts workshops coordinated first with schools that have the least resources and highest need for Art programs and enrichment within the curriculum. For Elementary, students write poems as song lyrics, individuals and pairs writing on connected themes, that can be woven together into a wider student written play, or a stand alone writing session. Middle School students will engage in the poetry of identity, writing their own and reading mentor texts to consider multicultural voices. High School students will engage in the Book in a Day Model of collaborative writing, editing and publication.
2. Outreach to Community Youth Services, engaging in a monthly writing series with youth to chronicle their experiences through the study of Confessionalist poets.

3. Open calls for short poems through Writing the City workshops for a semi-annual public art display, "Writing in the Rain." Using Rainwork, rain activated, temporary paint, local poems can adorn honored sidewalks in the Downtown Arts Core to promote year-round walking. Poem selections would unveil at Fall and Spring Arts Walk.
4. Ultimately, at the end of the term, I would work toward editing a current anthology of poems that capture Olympia in all its burgeoning flux--that will celebrate the local and rich working history of Olympia and the new, five-story culture of artist lofts, Convention Centers and Seattle transplants buying property in cash, who look with wide wonder at the eclectic promise of growing roots here. I intend to option the publishing to a local printing house.

Workshop Samples:

1. *Writing the City*- A monthly walking tour and writing series will take students to rotating safe spaces around the city accessible to all ages--Olympia Library, City Hall, the Capitol Campus, Midnight Sun, Burfoot Park and the Farmer's Market (perhaps a place to collaborate with the Downtown Ambassadors). Instruction in the practice of sensory imagery and capturing the sound of a place in words will allow patrons to generate several starts and full length pieces, with the intention of submitting finished pieces toward the *I Hear Olympia Singing Anthology*.
2. *Poetry as Creative Therapy*- A monthly poetry workshop, collaborating with CYS that will teach the fundamental process of generating poetry. Using the Confessionalist poets as mentor texts, students will journal and share their experiences in a safe space for all voices, also with the intention to submit to the *I Hear America Singing Anthology*.

I Can't Stop Losing

(for the 2016 Seattle Mariners)

Jerry told me we'd be visionaries,
and like a seven year old girl, I brought
my glove along, hoping for a home run,
naive and reckless, I believed in you.

You promised life with April's early buds,
and batted false eyelashes in July.
And like a hound, I fetched the radio,
relishing countenance, the 3-2 pitch,

the K cards flapping to crown Felix, king
the metered balance of lean legs kicking,
reaching to shrink distances, angles that
fluidly outwit the stagnant diamond.

August's dusty stretch plugged up our noses,
with dehydrated tongues dangling behind
hard hit fly balls, gaping mouths watching from
the warning track, as our hopes left the yard.

Even flipped up hat brims, soul selling and
prayer could not tourniquet the bleeding,
no boomstick peppered by Zeus' lightning,
no porchetta sandwich with liquid smoke

could turn each waiver into flash paper,
could stitch me tight with glossy scarlet thread,
could make a winner appear from glassy
emerald ether rising from the sound.

Suburban Danger

Cars speed past pedestrians in crosswalks
while babies stain Snugglies, dogs strain leashes
drivers yell, 900 points, and mean it.

Mount Rainier so majestic, could we climb it if
the tsunami hits? Better yet seek the water tower
pack the power bars, guzzle Powerade

and wait to be saved. Or if it erupts
could we outrun the lava flow in our
Prius? Would we run out of gas mid-flee?

If only my mother were here. We could
be generations until the white waves
wash us out to sea, or the red hand claims us.

Machiavelli and the Soothsayer

You want to know

the classified secrets

mortared in the cellar

of this great nation.

You run your mouth

to excavate the deep

seeded aggression cold-

pressed by honorable

mentions, pronouns and

cellulite creams. You

humbly hug tragedy

junkies, hoard harems

of journalists penciling

propitiatory propaganda

a proprietary blend of

animosity, brotherhood

and serpentine virility.

You warm the hands

of ex-wives, high

school dropouts and

Neo-Nazis to behold

that fabled womb.

Lose.

Lose to win.

You lose to win access

to the nudes descending

the staircase, ethereal

sheen of synovial fluid

gliding over you,

shamelessly, loosening

the belt cinching bloated

and egregious aspirations.

Wild, fated flailing from

the last cellar step,

name the tombs

something pretty--bury

logic down deep and

bear the pall, calloused

after such a long walk.

Tend the shrine with

golden touch, small

business loans, forked

vermillion talons. Scrape

knuckles against basement gravel:

leave unwashed to blister.

The Loft in Philadelphia

The sink-stove-refrigerator-
all-in-one unit. The microwave
you stole from the empty apartment
across the hall that you mark as
starting the string of bad luck. After
weeks of Sleater-Kinney in the cd player,
you began to write your lyrics
on the walls. The distance
was killing you.

A furniture salesman then, you couldn't
buy the viciousness of
commission. No furniture to
your name, we proffered pillows and
my sleeping bag to the concrete floor. We
walked all the streets between
Bainbridge and Locust and drank
wine out of coffee mugs to make
the nights longer.

You'd take me to the line where
the buildings were eaten out
by fire, but it was still safe to walk
up to. "This is the hot spot," you'd say. "We
should buy some property before it gets
cleaned up. When we get some money.
Let the city grow around us."
And we'd steal a kiss. To letting the
city grow around us. This music
was indestructible.

Charles, the homeless, self-taught
violinist on 2nd Street remembered you
from a previous life. He'd play all night
for you for half price. You described him
to me once, brown overcoat in summer,
the left side of his face permanently
swollen from repeating the same sad notes
over the body of his dead lover in the alley.
You played with him from the fire escape,
inspired by the suffering.

Pushing sleep away with pins, that night we
sat leaning our backs against the green velvet loveseat
a tenant from 7E abandoned. You laid
the cushions under the sleeping bag, your
calves and feet still hung off the end,
but it was better.

You asked delicately, "What would you say if
I went to war?" "You'd
have my blessing. And I'd want to
be pregnant with
your child.

Connie During Savasana

Reading poetry during savasana,
I am grateful as my tears
may easily be mistaken for sweat.

I feel the ghostly distance
of my son's hand through
space and over time.

Far away from myself,
convinced the planets favored me,
again, the lesson is pooling.

Gut in knots, the future
is not so unpredictable.
I hold my nose and breath,

but not my tongue--
age won't allow that.
Together we waggle on.

Work Sample Description Sheet

"I Can't Stop Losing (for the 2016 Seattle Mariners)" was written to record the run.

*"Suburban Danger" is from the chapbook *The Grunt Wife's Memory Book*. It was inspired by a brief brush with a speeding car while walking a baby and a big dog through the crosswalk at 7th Ave SE and Boundary.

"Machiavelli and the Soothsayer" was written while ruminating on Donald Trump's motivations for the presidency and Animal Fire's production of *Julius Caesar* on the steps of the Capitol Campus.

"The Loft in Philadelphia" was written in 2004 and is from the chapbook *Poems of Love in War*. It is an eerie reminder of life's motifs. The band *Sleater-Kinney* was part of a rich soundtrack of my youth on the East Coast, and today, the door to my classroom is on Sleater-Kinney Road.

"For Connie After Savasana" was written after a 90 minute Hot Yoga Class at Olympia Hot Yoga, as I cried and the tears mixed with sweat.

*Recorded Poetry Work Sample- "Suburban Danger"

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B36tL4G6A0V6TWNNUkxaTIU20TQ/view?usp=sharing>

To Note:

1. References are located in the Resume.
2. Live link of Recorded Poetry Sample has been uploaded using FTP to Stephanie Johnson.