

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Lupe Mendez,
Texas Poet Laureate 2022
lupe@thepoetmendez.org



2022 Texas State Poet Laureate Announces the Texas Poetry Roadshow

May 2022 – May 2023

A year-long celebration of Texas, Texans and Poetry

April 5th, 2022 – In May of 2021, the Texas Legislature made appointments for the position of Texas State Poet Laureate through State and House Resolutions for 2021 and 2022. Galveston native and Houston resident, Lupe Mendez was selected as the 2022 Texas State Poet Laureate and will kick off a year-long project that celebrates the Lone Star State.

Mendez's project, the Texas Poetry Roadshow, intends to capture as much as it can; to highlight the ups and downs in all things Texan. This "roadshow" will serve as a celebration and also a respite from how changed lives have become during the pandemic. Mendez says "Many Texans have lost so much: loved ones, jobs, direction, homes, access to books and a way of life - and this project will be a way to speak on it." Thematically, this project will look to answer "*Who or what has been silenced? What needs to be uplifted?*"

The Texas Poetry Roadshow is a 3-part project: writing workshops, virtual poetry readings and an audio anthology.

The Virtual Readings

Eighteen poets have confirmed their commitment to the Texas Poetry Roadshow. Each poet will be mixed and matched up with the Texas Poet Laureate to read in a 1.5-hour virtual show. These poets hail from metropolitan areas big and small. Each poetry showcase is designed to present three different voices (along with the Texas Poet Laureate) presenting works in a once-in-a-life-time setting. These readings serve as a celebration of all things joyous – something everyone could use more of.

San Antonio – [Chibbi Orduña](#), *[Andrea "Vocab" Sanderson](#), ***[Laurie Ann Guerrero](#)

Rio Grande Valley – **[Emmy Perez](#), *[Edward Vidaurre](#), *[Rodney Gomez](#)

Dallas/Ft. Worth – [Faylita Hicks](#), [Joaquin Zihuatanejo](#)

El Paso – [Andrea Cote-Botero](#), [Aldo Amparán](#), [Gris Muñoz](#);

Houston – *[Emmanuel "Outspoken" Bean](#), [Dulcie Vuluthekarán](#), [Ebony Stewart](#), [Ayokunle Falomo](#), [Muhammad Khaerisman](#), [Jasminne Mendez](#), [Natasha Carrizosa](#),

(* = City Poet Laureate; ** = State Poet Laureate; *** = City & State Poet Laureate)

WRITING WORKSHOPS

6 cities have been selected for writing workshops: Galveston, Georgetown, Laredo, Amarillo, El Paso and San Angelo, are the smaller communities that reflect some of the best characteristics of Texas. They will serve to provide creative backdrops to uplift the voice of every kind of Texan. The public workshops will explore story telling through poetry. These workshops will allow novice or expert writers a chance to write about what they feel is best while also looking to answer the questions: "*Who or what has been silenced? What needs to be uplifted?*"

AUDIO ANTHOLOGY

This portion of project will provide the public a chance to submit their work for inclusion in an audio anthology and will live online. Having already had the chance to hear from master poets, then the opportunity to think, talk and write, this last part will allow Texans to submit their own works. Special attention will be dedicated to Educators, students, and front line workers, all of whom have been front and center in of an ever-changing environment that is both wild and unprecedented. Educational, Food Service and Medical communities have had to learn to navigate a system that has responded to the Covid-19 Pandemic in vastly different ways, while at the same time witnessing policy moves that change the very nature of access to books, learning, safe contact, and medical care.

Audio Anthology will begin in October of 2022. A Submittable account will be created in order to process submission (both audio and text) for inclusion in the anthology. Submissions will remain open until the beginning of May 2023. Submissions will close in May and the Anthology will open by September of 2023 in a newly created Squarespace website as a virtual anthology. All submissions (rejected and selected) will be housed in perpetuity at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

LOGISTICS

Below are the dates, times and places thus far confirmed for all workshops and readings. All virtual readings are from 7-8:30p, CST. Workshops will occur from 2-4:30p, local time. All elements will be free and open to the public and held in local community spaces or local libraries.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| May 7 st , 2022 | – Writing Workshop in Galveston, TX, at Rosenburg Library |
| June 22 nd , 2022 | – Reading with Chibbi Orduña, Emmy Perez, Ayokunle Falomo |
| July 9 th , 2022 | – Writing Workshop in Georgetown, TX at TBA |
| August 24 th , 2022 | – Reading with Andrea Sanderson, Edward Vidaurre, Dulcie Vuluthekarán |
| September 10 th , 2022 | – Writing Workshop in Laredo, TX at TBA |
| October 1 st , 2022 | – Open Submissions on Submittable for “Audio Anthology” |
| October 26 th , 2022 | – Reading with Natasha Carrizosa, Aldo Amparán, Muhammad Khaerisman |
| November 12 th , 2022 | – Writing Workshop in El Paso, TX at TBA |
| December 7 th , 2022 | – Reading with Laurie Ann Guerrero, Rodney Gomez, Ebony Stewart |
| January 14 th , 2023 | – Writing Workshop in San Angelo, TX at TBA |
| February 22 nd , 2023 | – Reading with Faylita Hicks, Jasminne Mendez, Andrea Cote-Botero |
| March 25 th , 2023 | – Writing Workshop in Amarillo, TX at TBA |
| April 26 th , 2023 | – Reading with Emmanuel Bean, Joaquin Zihuatanejo, Gris Muñoz |
| May 1 st , 2023 | – Submissions close for Audio Anthology |
| May 5 th , 2023 | – Culminating Event at TBA |

About Lupe Mendez:

Originally from Galveston, TX, Lupe Mendez (Writer//Educator//Activist) is the author WHY I AM LIKE TEQUILA (Willow Books, 2019), winner of the 2019 John A. Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry from the Texas Institute of Letters. He is the founder of Tintero Projects which works with emerging Latinx writers and other writers of color within the Texas Gulf Coast Region, with Houston as its hub. Lupe earned his Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Texas @ El Paso. Mendez’s work can be seen in print and online formats including the Kenyon Review, Gulf Coast Journal, the Texas Review, the L.A. Review of Books, Split This Rock, Poetry Magazine and Poem-A-Day from the Academy of American Poets. Mendez is the 2022 Texas Poet Laureate. Follow Lupe on Twitter, at @thepoetmendez and on Instagram, at @ellupis.

Bios of the poets:

JUNE READING:

Emmy Pérez is the author of *With the River on Our Face*, *Solstice*, and a forthcoming collection of new and selected poems. Her work also appears in the anthologies *The Long Devotion: Poets Writing Motherhood*, *What Saves Us: Poems of Empathy and Outrage*, *Ghost Fishing: An Eco-justice Poetry Anthology*, *Other Musics: New Latina Poetry*, and other publications. Pérez served as Texas Poet Laureate 2020 and is a USA Poetry Fellow 2022. She is also the recipient of fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, the National Endowment for the Arts, CantoMundo, and others. In 2017, she co-founded Poets Against Walls collective and in 2019 was the inaugural recipient of the Modesta Avila Award in her hometown of Santa Ana. Pérez has lived in the Texas borderlands for over 20 years and is a professor of creative writing at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

M.R. "Chibbi" Orduña (he/they) is a Mexican-born, Texas-raised queer poet, publisher, editor, and actor, Director and co-host of the Words and Sh*t virtual talk show and podcast, and 2-time San Antonio Slam Champion. He is the Director of Virtual Programming for Write About Now and the Editor-in-Chief of The Mixtape Literary Magazine, has self-published 2 books and was the co-editor of the anthology *Contra: Texas Poets Speak Out* (Flowersong Press, 2020). His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The Texas Review*, *Waxwing*, *The Acentos Review*, *The B'K*, *Defunkt*, *Voices de la Luna*, *Wax Nine*, *Homology*, *Honey Lit*, *The Latino Book Review Magazine*, *Buzzfeed*, *We Are Mitu*, *George Takei*, *Button Poetry*, *Write About Now*, and elsewhere. You can follow him on IG @gemineyes and Twitter @gemineyespoetry.

Ayokunle Falomo is Nigerian, American, and the author of *AFRICANAMERICAN'T* (FlowerSong Press, 2022), two self-published collections and *African, American* (New Delta Review, 2019; selected by Selah Saterstrom as the winner of New Delta Review's 8th annual chapbook contest). A recipient of fellowships from Vermont Studio Center, MacDowell, and the University of Michigan's Helen Zell Writers' Program, where he obtained his MFA in Creative Writing—Poetry, his work has been anthologized and widely published in print and online: *The New York Times*, *Houston Public Media*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Texas Review*, *New England Review*, *Write About Now* among others.

AUGUST READING:

Dulcie Veluthukaran is a poet and curriculum writer from Iowa Colony, TX - a town so small that it has zero traffic lights. A former member of Houston VIP and Slam Ballabajoomba, Dulcie writes about her childhood as a third culture kid and the immigrant experience. When she's not writing English curriculum or tinkering with poetry, Dulcie is running her district-wide pet projects, *Write Beside Us* and *Let's Book Up*, initiatives developed to grow teachers as readers and writers.

Edward Vidaurre is an award-winning poet with eight collections of poetry, publisher and editor-in-chief of FlowerSong Press and Juventud Press. Editor of several anthologies and a 2022 inductee as a distinguished member of the Texas Institute of Letters. Follow him on Twitter @VidaurreEdward and on Instagram @edward_vidaurre

Andrea "Vocab" Sanderson is the first Black Poet Laureate of San Antonio, 2020-2023. She is a San Antonio native. Her dynamic performance style is an originally crafted fusion of spoken word poetry, hip hop and soulful rhythm and blues. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including Dream Voice, People's Choice Award, Best Live Entertainment/Band Musician of the Year by the 17th Annual SEA Awards, Best Literary Advocate 2021 San Antonio Magazine, and The Arts and Letters Award by Friends of San Antonio Public Library in 2020. Best Local Poet 2021 by The San Antonio Current. She serves as a Teaching Artist for Gemini Ink. In 2021, she received an Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship.

Vocab's debut book is entitled *She Lives In Music* and was released by Flower Song Press in February of 2020. Her music is available on all music streaming platforms. For more information visit her website andreavocabsanderson.com IG: Vocabulous For her book visit: www.flowersongpress.com/sanderson

OCTOBER READING:

Natasha Carrizosa is a poet and writer. Her work is deeply-rooted in her childhood and life experiences. Raised as the daughter of a fierce African-American mother and Mexican father, her writing reflects the dichotomy of these two rich cultures. She is author of *mexiafricana*, *heavy light*, and *crown*. Her work has been published in *¡Manteca!* - an anthology of Afro-Latino poets, *CONTRA: Texas Poets Speak Out*, *defunct* magazine, *cutthroat* magazine, *raising mothers*, and *R2: The Rice Review* (Rice University.) She has performed her work and conducted workshops for audiences in Madrid, Paris, Saint Lucia, New York, Houston, New Mexico, and countless other cities. She has collaborated with Aspen Challenge, Aspen Youth Leadership Forum, Aspen Words, Bezos Scholars,, Write About Now, Public Poetry, Tintero Projects, WITS (Writers in the Schools) and Poets & Writers. She is a Coolspeaker (youth engagement company.)

social media:

IG, TikTok, Twitter: @natty poet

Facebook: natasha Carrizosa

Muhammad Khaerisman is a Muslim, Indonesian-American 24 year old multi disciplinary artist and storyteller. His craft lives at the intersection of acting, poetry, music, movement, photography, filmmaking, and love. A graduate of the University of Houston's Bachelor in Fine Arts in Acting program, Khaerisman pushes to reimagine education to nurture and not traumatize those that pursue it. Founder of CoogSlam, UH's first poetry team and community, Khaerisman is ever grateful to all the people he met through CoogSlam and Write About Now poetry that nurtured his love for writing. In its first year, CoogSlam received top honors and ranked 4th in the nation at the Collegiate Union Poetry Slam Invitational. Khaerisman received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting from UH, and has worked as actor, playwright and director in various projects throughout the southern region of the US. In collaboration with the Houston Symphony, Khaerisman's favorite project is "Resilient Sounds." 6 musical compositions paired with dialogue, vocals, dance, and film to tell the story of Houston's refugee community. Khaerisman's poetry has been featured by Write About Now Poetry, and Awful Good Writer's Heavy Hitters Festival hosted by Buddy Wakefield. Khaerisman hopes his art challenges the status quo to create multi-dimensionality within BIPOC narratives, a former core organizer with Mutual Aid Houston, Khaerisman builds communities in any space he inhabits. Recently opening his one man show with Stages Houston and OG Pajama Sam, titled "Alhamdulillah (2021)" Khaerisman is currently creating, "We Are (2022)" a multimedia poetic movement experience, to be presented in Cincinnati, OH for two nights only in May of 2022, and then released as a short film by FACES. Khaerisman, with his primary artistic collaborator Tyren Duncan are the co-founders of FACES, a global network of artists dedicated to pushing the boundaries of storytelling in the visual and performing arts. When not, staring at a blank page exploring magic and truth, Khaerisman is founder and CEO of Secondhandscoops, a global sustainable vintage clothing platform that houses virtual auctions every Sunday through instagram live called, Southern Style Sundayz. A space that began to survive the pandemic's shutdown of physical pop up and markets, it has now grown to a community of vintage and nostalgia curators from all over the world.

Aldo Amparán is the author of *Brother Sleep* (Alice James Books, September 2022) & winner of the 2020 Alice James Award. They are the recipients of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts & CantoMundo. Their work has been widely published in magazines & anthologies, including the Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day, Best New Poets, Kenyon Review Online, New England Review, Ploughshares, Poetry, & elsewhere. They hold an MFA in Creative Writing from The University of Texas at El Paso, where they teach.

Twitter: @skygoneout
Instagram: @skygoneout

DECEMBER READING:

Ebony Stewart is an international touring interdisciplinary poet, writer, and performance artist. Her work speaks to the Black experience, with emphasis on gender, sexuality, womanhood, queer-positivity, and race, with the hopes to be relatable, remove shame, heal minds, encourage dialogue, and inspire folks in marginalized communities. As one of the most decorated poets in Texas, Ebony is a respected coach & mentor, one of the top touring poets in the country, and a Woman of the World Poetry Slam Champion. The mental health advocate and former sexual health educator also has a Master's in Social Work and is soon to be the hood's favorite therapist. As a playwright, Ebony's one woman shows, *Hunger* and *Ocean*, have received B. Iden Payne Awards & the David Mark Cohen New Play Award.

She is the author of *BloodFresh*, *Home.Girl.Hood.*, and *Love Letters to Balled Fists*. Her work has been featured in *Button Poetry*, *AfroPunk*, *For Harriet*, *Teen Vogue*, *The Texas Observer*, *Houston Public Media*, *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 2: Black Girl Magic*, *2021 Colorism Healing Writing Contest*, *Write About Now Poetry*, and more. She is the only poet to perform at the 2018 Seattle Pride Festival before 200,000 people.

Laurie Ann Guerrero was born and raised in the Southside of San Antonio. She is the author of four collections, including *A Tongue in the Mouth of the Dying* (Notre Dame 2013), *A Crown for Gumecindo* (Aztlan Libre 2015), and *I Have Eaten the Rattlesnake: New & Selected Poems* (TCU 2021). She served as Poet Laureate of San Antonio from 2014-2016 and the Poet Laureate of Texas from 2016-2017. She is an Associate Professor and the Writer-in-Residence at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

Rodney Gomez is a poet and urbanist whose work explores the intersection of place, culture, and history in the borderlands. He has a particular interest in Latinx poetry, ekphrasis, and visual poetry. His collections include *Arsenal with Praise Song*; *Geographic Tongue*, winner of the Pleiades Press Visual Poetry Series; *Ceremony of Sand*, winner of the Discovery Prize from the Writers' League of Texas; and *Citizens of the Mausoleum*, finalist for the John A. Robertson Award from the Texas Institute of Letters. His work appears in *Poetry*, *New England Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Rattle*, *North American Review*, *Verse Daily*, *Poetry Daily*, and other journals. His chapbook *Mouth Filled Night* was awarded the Drinking Gourd Prize from Northwestern University's Poetry and Poetics Colloquium. He was an Academy of American Poets Fellow and a Mellon Arts & Practitioner Fellow at Yale. He is the recipient of the Editors' Prize from *RHINO* magazine, the Gloria Anzaldúa Poetry Prize, the Rane Arroyo Prize, and the Orison Anthology Award. A member of the Macondo Writers Workshop, Gomez was the 2020-2021 Poet Laureate of McAllen, Texas. He serves as advisory editor for *FlowerSong Press* and a board member of *Newfound*, a nonprofit publisher that explores how place shapes identity, imagination, and understanding.

Website: rodneygomezpoetry.com
Twitter: @rodneyxgomez@gmail.com

FEBURARY READING:

FAYLITA HICKS (she/they) is a queer Afro-Latinx activist, writer, and interdisciplinary artist. Born in South Central California and raised in Central Texas, they use their intersectional experiences to advocate for the rights of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people. They are the author of *HoodWitch* (Acre Books, 2019), a finalist for the 2020 Lambda Literary Award

for Bisexual Poetry. They are the Editor-in-Chief of Black Femme Collective and a new voting member of the Recording Academy/GRAMMYS. Hicks is the recipient of fellowships and residencies from Black Mountain Institute, the Tony-Award winning Broadway Advocacy Coalition, Civil Rights Corps, The Dots Between, Jack Jones Literary Arts, Lambda Literary, Texas After Violence Project, Tin House, and the Right of Return USA.

Their poetry, essays, and digital art have been published in or are forthcoming in *American Poetry Review*, *Ecotone*, *Kenyon Review*, *Longreads*, *Poetry*, *Slate*, *Texas Observer*, *Yale Review*, amongst others. Their personal account of their time in pretrial incarceration in Hays County is featured in the ITVS Independent Lens 2019 documentary *45 Days in a Texas Jail*, and the Brave New Films 2021 documentary narrated by Mahershala Ali *Racially Charged: America's Misdemeanor Problem*. Hicks received a BA in English from Texas State University-San Marcos and an MFA in Creative Writing from Sierra Nevada University.

Jasminne Mendez is a Dominican-American poet, playwright, translator and award winning author of several books for children and adults. She is the author of two hybrid memoirs, *Island of Dreams* (Floricanto Press) and *Night-Blooming Jasmin(n)e: Personal Essays and Poetry* (Arte Público Press). Her second YA memoir, *Islands Apart: Becoming Dominican American* (Arte Público Press) is forthcoming in May 2022 and her debut poetry collection, *City Without Altar*, was a finalist for the Noemi Press Book Award for Poetry and will be released in August 2022. Her debut middle grade book *Anina del Mar Jumps In* (Dial) is a novel in verse about a young girl diagnosed with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis and is set to release in 2023. Her debut picture book *Josefina's Habichuelas* (Arte Público Press), was released last year.

Mendez has had poetry and essays published by or forthcoming in numerous journals and anthologies including *The Kenyon Review*, *New England Review*, the YA Latinx Anthology *Wild Tongues Can't be Tamed* edited by Saraciea Fennell (Flatiron/Macmillan), and in *The BreakBeat Poets Vol. 4: LatiNext* (Haymarket Books). She has translated and written poetry and a libretto for the Houston Grand Opera and the dramatized version of her play in verse *City Without Altar* will receive its world premiere at Milagro theatre in Portland, Oregon this spring. She is an MFA graduate of the creative writing program at the Rainier Writing Workshop at Pacific Lutheran University, a University of Houston alumni, and a Canto Mundo Fellow.

Andrea Cote-Botero (Barrancabermeja, Colombia) is the author of the poetry books: *En las Praderas del fin del mundo/ In the Prairies of the end of the world*. (Valparaíso, 2019), *La Ruina que nombro/ The ruin that I name* (Visor, 2015) and *Puerto Calcinado/Port in Ashes* (Universidad Externado, 2003. Valparaiso, 2010). She is also the author of selected poetry collections: *Chinatown a toda hora/ Chinatown 24/7* (Valparaiso, 2015). *Desierto Rumor/ Desert murmur* (El angel editor, 2016). She has also published books of prose: *A Nude Photographer: A Biography of Tina Modotti* (Panamericana, 2005) and *Blanca Varela or Writing from Solitude* (Universidad de Los Andes, 2004). In 2019, she curated and wrote a critical study for the Colombian women poets Anthology *Pájaros de Sombra* (Vaso Roto, 2019). This book obtained the International Latino Book Award for Best Poetry Anthology (2020). Andrea Cote has obtained recognitions including The National Prize of Poetry from the Universidad Externado of Colombia (2003), the Puentes de Struga International Poetry Prize (2005), Honorable mention for *A las Cosas que odié* in the Ruben Darío International Poetry Contest, Penn Club International the Cittá de Castrovillari Prize (2010) to the Italian edition of *Port in Ashes* and the International Latino Book Award (2020). Her poems have been translated into English, French, German, Catalan, Italian, Portuguese, Macedonian, Arabic, Polish, Greek, Chinese, and Russian. In addition, she has translated into Spanish the poets Kahlil Gibran, the Pulitzer winners Tracy K. Smith, and Jericho Brown.

APRIL READING:

Joaquín Zihuatanejo received his MFA in creative writing from the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he studied under Joan Naviyuk Kane, Sherwin Bitsui, and Natalie Diaz among others. His work has been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Yellow Medicine Review*, *Sonora Review*, and *Huizache*. His poetry has been featured on HBO, NBC, and on NPR in *Historias* and *The National Teacher's Initiative*. Joaquín has two passions in his life, his wife Aída and poetry, always in that order.

FB: Joaquin Zihuatanejo

Gram: joaquinzihuatanejo

Twitter: @thepoetjz

Emanuel "Outspoken" Bean is The New Jersey born, San Antonio raised, H-Town based military brat was introduced to the arts and world cultures at a very young age and has not let go of it. "An energetic pioneer for poetry, in all its different sizes and shapes, Bean is dedicated to making sure that poets get heard," Emily Hinds of *Arts and Culture Magazine* wrote of Bean. Bean uses poetry to engage different mediums and institutions to create new and engaging art, such as being the first poet to perform on Houston Ballet's main stage with their production "Play." He has also been commissioned to write and perform a national campaign on diversity for Pabst Blue Ribbon and VICE while creating/producing his own festival Plus Fest: the EVERYTHING plus POETRY Festival. In 2008, Bean helped develop Texas' largest youth poetry slam organization and slam team, Meta-Four Houston, with Shannon Buggs and DiverseWorks. In which he stills coaches and uses it as a vehicle today to mentor Houston's youth. He started performing spoken-word in 2005. Outspoken Bean is a true renaissance man and culture bearer through poetry, Bean willingly seeks, finds, collaborates, and creates new ways for people to experience poetry through multiple mediums.

Gris Muñoz is a frontera poet and storyteller. She is the author of the bilingual poetry and short-story collection, *Coatlícue Girl*, most recently named a finalist for the John A. Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry by the Texas Institute of Letters. Her work has been highlighted by *The Rumpus*, *Bitch Media* and *The Smithsonian Latino Center* among others and she has most recently been featured by *The Texas Book Festival*, *The Tamarindo Podcast*, and the *Latino Collection & Resource Center* at San Antonio Public Library in collaboration with Texas Public Radio. She is also the co-founder of the digital map and storytelling project, *GeoTestimonios Transfronterizxs*, which aims to record the experiences of women living on the El Paso/Juarez border. Gris is currently commissioned to write the biography of acclaimed LA artist Fabian Debora.