

Bremerton's First Poet Laureate Continues Giving Toward the Creative Writing Community

On March 15 at the Kitsap Regional Library's Bremerton, Sylvan Way location, former poet laureate, Tia Hudson, held a poetry workshop working on sestina poetry.

by Amy Ngo, Copy Editor

Although poetry may not be in everyone's life, the type of writing is well known to gracefully depict emotion and creativity. Hudson has been asked for, and has provided her share of her artistry around Bremerton for a variety of communities. When she was appointed as poet laureate, she gained the responsibility of spreading poetry all around Bremerton.

"[Being a poet laureate,] it's promoting poetry as a part of everyday society," Hudson said. "[When] I started, I was the first poet laureate of Bremerton, so I got to do my own thing. I did a lot of readings at public events. If someone requested something of me, then I would do it. I did a poem [for] the commander of the Naval hospital. His wife asked me if, at his retirement ceremony, I could read a poem about him. I did a poetry reading at Pride one year, and then I also do these 'Ten Minute Typewriter' poems on the first Friday [of the month] at the First Friday Art Walk. I have a manual typewriter; people come give me a topic, and I type it up in about 10 minutes for them."

A poet laureate not only works with the community, but also for the community. Hudson has worked with the city and other poet laureates to provide opportunities for poets to share their work with their own schedule in mind.

"One of the things I love about Bremerton is the artwork that they promote by wrapping the utility boxes," Hudson said. "I was really honored that they wrapped one for me [with] one of my short poems on it. I did [also] have them set up the poetry exchange box downtown, across from the downtown library, where you take a poem and leave a poem. It's a place where if you have something written and you want to leave it for people to look at, you could take some of theirs and read it. That was an idea that I got from Raul Sanchez, the poet laureate of Redmond. So I asked the mayor and the arts commission, and they said, 'That sounds like a great idea,' so they put one up. I introduce the poets to each other because they are kind of all, in Central Kitsap, spread out, working poets. Very few poets make a living off of poetry, but they're not even necessarily people who are publishing or trying to publish; they just write poems, so trying to create some sort of community out of that has been really interesting to me."



Amy Ngo

Bremerton's former poet laureate, Tia Hudson, reads a poem as an example of a sestina poem for the workshop's prompt.



Mia Rodriguez (center) reads her poem to the group of participants. (Amy Ngo)

Hudson has continuously provided poetry workshops every third Saturday of the month at the Kitsap Regional Library's Bremerton, Sylvan Way location. She has made it clear that she fosters an inclusive environment for experienced and new writers of all ages. The workshops not only analyze different forms of poetry but also allow poets

to loosely create from a given prompt. Types of poetry can range from flexible to rigid, so it's important to find good prompts in order to stimulate creativity while also working on specific skills.

"I literally have books of 'a prompt a day' that I sometimes use," Hudson said. "I get a newsletter every week from Two Sylvias Press up in Kingston, and they always have two or three prompts there. So, I'm overwhelmed with prompts. Part of what I like with this workshop [is] the people that come to learn the craft of poetry and the elements that go into it. There's something to be said for just putting down what you're feeling and how you see things, but then there are elements that you can use in terms of imagery, scan lines, and all these different things that will help your poem be better, stronger. I also enjoy introducing people to the form poems, like the sestina. We also did a villanelle, haiku; we did a more in-depth look at haikus than you might get in grade school."

As a poet and public speaker, Hudson ensures that she knows her audience. Bremerton has creative writers of all ages and professions. Accordingly, the prompts are chosen in a way that ensures all participants will get the most insight out of the workshop.

"We have people all across the spectrum," Hudson said. "One girl who comes occasionally is nine years old. We have poets who have books published and awards, and we have poets who are just writing for themselves. So I always try to pick something that everyone can do."

In a subject that includes emotion and experiences in the writing, varying ages can provide much insight into the art of poetry itself. Getting to hear and know poets of different or similar backgrounds within Bremerton greatly adds to the shrewdness in the community. Hudson is always welcoming people to her events.

"Come to the poetry readings and the open mics on the second Tuesdays [of each month at Bubz Cafe] and the workshops on the third Saturdays," Hudson said. "Come even if you don't think you have anything to offer. If you don't have any of your own poetry, bring a poem you like from someone else. Just get introduced to some people that are already doing it. It can be scary to share some things, and I think that, with this, people are very open, supportive; they want people to write poetry, just like I do. So hopefully people will just come."