



Council President Nick Licata

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Art and Politics to Mix at Downtown Library

Next Poet Populist Election Starts this Month

SEATTLE – Jourdan Imani Keith, Seattle’s Poet Populist, will perform a reading in honor of National Poetry Month at the downtown **Central Public Library, Sunday, April 15th at 3:00 pm in the Microsoft Auditorium (1000 Fourth Avenue, 1st floor).**

Keith received the most votes in the 2006-2007 Seattle Poet Populist election and was announced the winner on the Literary Stage during the Bumbershoot Arts Festival last September. She received a cash prize of \$500 and agreed to read in the spirit of populism at venues throughout the city. Keith is also a 2006 Jack Straw Writer’s Program recipient.

For Sunday’s reading, Keith will be accompanied by poets Brian McGuigan and Felicia Gonzalez. McGuigan produces ‘A Night of Cheap Wine and Poetry’ held at Richard Hugo House. Gonzalez has a forthcoming chapbook titled ‘Recollection Graffiti.’

“To be poet populist is to be the poet laureate by vote, which makes the responsibility and the investment of the writer and the community a mutual adventure,” said Keith. “Suddenly, you become ‘super poet,’ able to leap into audiences of all kinds in a single poem, so that they fall in love with words.”

The Poet Populist program was invented in 1999 by Council President Nick Licata as an alternative to conventional poet laureate appointments. Council President Licata said, “The program has certainly grown since a handful of voters at Benaroya Hall declared Barnard Harris Jr. the first Poet Populist. This year, Cambridge, Massachusetts started their own program; I expect other cities will follow. It’s gratifying to see this uniquely Seattle idea catch on elsewhere.”

On April 23rd, groups and curators can begin nominating poets to run in the next election. Check out www.seattlepoetpopulist.org for more information.

This year’s Seattle Poet Populist is sponsored by the Seattle City Council and Bumbershoot and is supported by the Seattle Public Library. For directions and parking information, search the library’s web site at <http://www.spl.org/> or call 206-386-4636.

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