



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## NEWS RELEASE



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### **NANCY MILLER GOMEZ APPOINTED COUNTY POET LAUREATE**

*Gomez' nomination confirmed by Board, will serve two-year term*

Santa Cruz Public Libraries and the County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Spaces, and Cultural Services, Arts Council Santa Cruz County, and Poetry Santa Cruz are pleased to announce that Nancy Miller Gomez has been named the 2025-2026 Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate.

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, at the recommendation of the Santa Cruz County Arts Commission, voted to establish an official County Poet Laureate honorary position at the October 18, 2022 Board meeting. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors officially appointed Gomez as the new Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate at their Board meeting on January 28th.

Selection of the Poet Laureate was made through a competitive application process in which the panel considered artistic achievement in poetry; community engagement experience and ability to communicate well across a diverse range of communities; demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and alignment of the proposed project with the Poet Laureate mission and role.

Gomez is a distinguished poet and writer whose work explores themes of social justice, human connection, and the transformative power of poetry. She is the author of "Inconsolable Objects and "Punishment" and her poetry and essays have been published in numerous literary journals and anthologies including *Best American Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *TriQuarterly*, *The Adroit Journal*, *The Hopkins Review* and a special mention in the 2023 *Pushcart Prize Anthology*. She has also been actively engaged in community outreach, using poetry as a tool for education and empowerment. Gomez has worked extensively in correctional facilities and co-founded the Poetry in the Jails program to bring poetry workshops to incarcerated women and men in Santa Cruz County.

“Poetry can bring connection to the community even for those who have little experience with poetry,” Gomez said. “If you take it out of the ivory towers and off the academic pedestals, it has the power to unify people and deliver hope, especially for those who have been marginalized. We need poetry now more than ever, and I will use this role to spread poetry throughout the county and into all the places where it is needed most.”

Gomez will be appearing at Bookshop Santa Cruz on April 14th to share poems and conversation with Farnaz Fatemi, her Poet Laureate predecessor.

Gomez encourages community members to share their ideas and sign up for her newsletter for updates and future poetry events. You can find her at [nancymillergomez.com](http://nancymillergomez.com).

The Poet Laureate program aligns with the Strategic Plans of both the County and the Library System. The County's Strategic Plan element pertaining to a Dynamic Economy: Community Vitality, asserts that the arts are essential to a community's vitality and economic development. This project aligns with the Library's Inclusionary goals to create opportunities for diverse groups to connect, have fun, and gain understanding through art, history, and humanities programs that celebrate diverse cultures and identities.