



Seretta Martin

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*What do you get when you combine
a flash of fire-red hair with a calm, gentle poet?
An Oxymoron!*

This describes Seretta Martin, author, illustrator of ***Foreign Dust Familiar Rain***, and ***Love, Rain, Dog***. (Blue Vortex Publishers) She is the poet-teacher coordinator for Border Voices Poetry Project and hosts the Barnes & Noble Poetry Series, Grossmont Center, La Mesa (3rd Wednesday 7:30 – 9 p.m.) Seretta earned her degree in Film, Television and Educational Technology from SDSU. She also studied at Cal Arts, Los Angeles. (Formerly, Walt Disney's Chouinard Art Institute) After growing up in San Diego she lived in New England for seven years then, returned to San Diego where she resides on the family homestead with her feral tiger cat, Velcro.(Velly) web.mac.com/serettamartin

Teaching Accomplishments

Seretta teaches K-12 in San Diego City and County Schools and at the YMCA. She also leads adult classes at libraries and conferences. Resulting from her poetry workshops, dozens of students have been published in the Border Voices Poetry annual anthology, California Poets in the Schools annual anthology, Magee Park, A Year in Ink, San Diego Poetry Annual and on-line journals. Seretta has interviewed her award-winning Border Voices students on Educational ITV's ***Doorway to Vision*** with renowned poets such as Ken Waldman, "the fiddler poet from Alaska." She is a regional editor for the San Diego Poetry Annual and has served as a poetry judge for several statewide contests. See the Poetry Workshop page on her for a full list of more than 17 schools and places where she has taught. web.mac.com/serettamartin

Teaching Approach

Through imaginative freedom, students awaken to their creative spirit and find new ways to see and articulate what is meaningful in their lives. Seretta is a detective of life's details: colors, sounds, fragrances and mysteries of the heart. She encourages her students to share these adventures and believes that poems develop in magical ways from fertile minds when they are stimulated and focused. Using her love and appreciation of art and language, she prompts students to explore their emotions and ideas doing fun activities that spark originality. They learn to overlook self-judgment and peer opinions and develop an appreciation for their individuality. Seretta integrates paintings, drawings, posters, music, and poetry in a playful manner that challenges pupils to take risks and find new ways to express themselves. She stresses the importance of learning through reading and being an astute listener. Her instruction utilizes state-of-the-arts technology including CDs, DVDs, Video, microphones, and musical instruments.

Special Emphasis & Skills

Seretta stresses the use of strong imagery. Students are asked to paint a picture with words and write as if they are describing details to a blind person. She teaches lyrical, (musical) narrative, (story) free verse, haiku and other poetic forms. Magic, mood, mystery, metaphor, simile, setting, sequence, character, drama, dialog, humor and the element of surprise, are all important considerations that Seretta emphasizes. She uses the "Writing Process" model to guide students through the necessary steps of creating a good poem: brainstorming/pre-write, draft, revision, editing and publishing. For models, the class reads major poets. (Contemporary and past) She also shows and discusses successful poems by other students and sometimes reads from her own books of poetry. Her eclectic background in writing, cinema, TV and visual arts has given her an awareness of the complimentary relationship between all the arts that she shares with her beloved students.

A Classroom Poetry Celebration

On the last day the class celebrates by reading their poetry using a microphone as if they were participating in a professional Barnes and Noble poetry reading. Seretta presents a poetry license to each of the students and invites everyone and their family and friends to the annual Border Voices Poetry Fair that takes place in the Spring. It is free and open the public. See: bordervoices.com

Submitting Student Work for Publication

After the workshop Seretta types and submits selected student poems to the Border Voices and CPITS contests for possible awards and publication in the anthologies. These typed poems and permission slips are sent home by the classroom teacher to be approved and signed by the student and a parent/guardian. They must be returned to Seretta by the assigned deadline in early December. She will submit them to the contest/anthology judges for consideration. Students have the opportunity to win cash awards, TV appearances and publication in the annual anthology, on the web site and in the San Diego Union Tribune newspaper. Seretta says her greatest joy is the thrill of seeing and hearing her student-poets read their successful poems on the stage at the poetry fair.

Recent Professional Accomplishments

The *Atlanta Review* declared Seretta a recent finalist, and on the *Web Del Sol*, website you can read her recent book review of Anna Swir's, "Talking To My Body." Seretta's awards include California Center for the Arts, Outstanding Leadership, Linda Brown Memorial Idyllwild Summer Poetry Scholarship, California State Poetry Society, and the OASIS Journal's "Best Poem" award. Her poems have been published in *Margie: The American Journal of Poetry*, *OASIS Journal*, *Oberon Foundation*, *The Best of Border Voices*, *San Diego Poetry Annual*, *A Year of Ink*, *San Diego Writer's Ink*, *Magee Park*, *Tide Pools*, *Poppysseed Kolache* and the *35th San Gabriel Valley Poetry Quarterly*. As an international poet her poems were translated into Russian for a UK newspaper. On-line she has been published in several journals including *Mooday Poets*, *Muse Apprentice*, *Poetic Voices* and, as mentioned earlier, *Web Del Sol*.

Seretta's References:

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Testimonial letters

from Millennial Tech Middle School

Thank you Seretta:

Our poetry read was awesome on last Friday! My favorite poem was entitled "I'm an Algebraic Equation" by Zonke Frasier.

We look forward to pod-casting and publishing through multiple venues the outstanding work of our scholars.

We appreciate what you deposited here at MTM in the lives of our students and in our learning community.

Best,

Helen V. Griffith
Principal
Millennial Tech Middle School
Home of the Future Scientific Innovators

from Ramona High School

To Whom It May Concern;

I have had the privilege of working with Seretta Martin through the Border Voices Project for two years in a row. Impressed by her "bio" in the Border Voices handbook, I asked her to teach my ninth grade Honors English class last year. She drove a considerable distance to bring a week's worth of excellent poetry lessons to my students and followed up with individual contracts for those who were chosen for the Border Voices contest. She incorporated a variety of modalities in her teaching including dramatic readings, artistic postcards, music, detailed handouts and examples. My students responded warmly to her enthusiasm and expertise.

Naturally, I called upon Seretta again for this year's group of Honor students. She rose to the challenge of teaching a very vocal and lively group. I know we were both extremely pleased and proud when Kenia Reyes was chosen to read her poem "Silence" at the Poetry Fair this year.

Seretta Martin combines the best of teaching with her structured lessons, real-world experiences, warm and caring personality, and lastly, her dedication both to the aesthetics of poetry and the individual creativity of each student. She inspires me as well as my students, and I look forward to working with her and Border Voices next year.

Sincerely,

Connie Mendoza
English Teacher, Ramona, CA

from Tierra Santa Elementary

"I was impressed by the quality and depth my class was able to produce with the guidance provided by Ms. Seretta Martin. Ms. Martin was always prepared with her poetry lesson and provided positive encouragement for all my students. The Border Voices Program will definitely be used again, hopefully with Ms. Martin as the instructor."

Bill Sprong
Tierra Santa Elementary School