



Seretta Martin

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Seretta Martin, author of *Foreign Dust Familiar Rain* and *Overtaking Glass* (forthcoming,) is the managing editor and a regional editor of the San Diego Poetry Annual. She is also a co-founder of Haiku San Diego. Seretta is a Philip Levine Prize, Washington Prize and Atlanta Review finalist. Her publishing credits include *Serving House Journal*, *Web Del Sol*, *Poetry International*, *Margie*, *Modern Haiku*, *California State Poetry Society*, *A Year in Ink* and *San Diego Poetry Annual*. Since 2001 she has hosted the New Alchemy Poetry Series. Seretta holds an MFA from SDSU. She appears on ITV as a featured poet and interviewer of award-winner students at the *Doorway to Vision*, Virtual Poetry fair. Seretta holds an MFA in Creative Writing from SDSU and lives in Santee, CA with a magnificent, lanky Maine Coon. She is also a hospice volunteer.

Seretta's awards include California Center for the Arts; Outstanding Leadership, Linda Brown Memorial Idyllwild Summer Poetry Scholarship, grants from the Lannan Foundation and Poets and Writers, California State Poetry Society awards, and the OASIS Journal's "Best Poem" award.

Teaching Accomplishments

Seretta teaches K-12 in San Diego City and County Schools and has taught at the YMCA. She also leads adult workshops at libraries, conferences and at the San Diego Writer's Ink Spot at Liberty Station, Point Loma. Dozens of students have been published in the annual anthologies of Border Voices Poetry Project and the California Poets in the Schools and A Year in Ink.

Seretta Martin's Youth & Children's Poetry Classes

Teaching Approach

Through imaginative freedom in poetry, students awaken to their creative spirit and find new ways to see, feel 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 in the fertile minds of her students when they are stimulated and focused.

Using her love and appreciation of art and language, she prompts them to explore their emotions and ideas with fun activities that spark originality. They learn to overlook self-judgment and the opinions of their peers to develop an appreciation for their individual ideas and poetic voice.

Seretta integrates paintings, drawings, music, with poetry in engaging ways that challenges pupils to take risks and find new ways to express themselves. She stresses the importance of learning through reading, being an astute listener and reciting poetry. Her instruction utilizes state-of-the-arts technology including CDs, DVDs, Video, computers, microphones, and musical instruments.

Special Emphasis & Skills

Students are asked to paint a detailed picture with words—to write as if they are describing something to a blind person. They are encouraged to search for the best words and use them in the best order. She teaches them how to use vivid imagery and “show, not telling” the reader what is happening in their poems. Her lessons explore lyrical, (musical) narrative, (story) free verse, American haiku (short form) and many other poetic forms using magic, mood and mystery. Students learn figurative language including metaphor, simile, setting, sequence, character, drama, dialog, humor and the element of surprise.

Seretta 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) these steps are presented in clear, simple terms. Major poets—past and present, are read as models.

She says, In workshops we read and discuss successful student poems and sometimes I read my poetry to the class. With my beloved students, I share my awareness and insights learned from my eclectic background in writing, cinema, TV and visual arts.

Grand Finale Celebration for Everyone

On the last day students celebrate by performing their poetry using a microphone as if they were participating in a professional Barnes and Noble poetry reading. To honor their success, Seretta presents a poetry license to each of the students and invites everyone.

Submitting Student Work for Publication

After the workshop Seretta selects successful poems, types them and meets one-on-one with the student poets. She is not a final judge, but is permitted to submit a certain number per class to the Border Voices and CPITS contest judges 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 or guardian. They must be returned to Seretta by the assigned deadline. Students have the opportunity to win cash awards, TV appearances and publication in the Border Voices 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 poems.

References:

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CEO, Founding Director
Border Voices Poetry Project

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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