



For Immediate Release May 12, 2020

Contact: Dana Stewart, ARTSFAIRFAX

(C)703-328-4365

dstewart@artsfairfax.org

2667 Prosperity Ave., Ste. A, Fairfax, VA 22031

www.artsfairfax.org

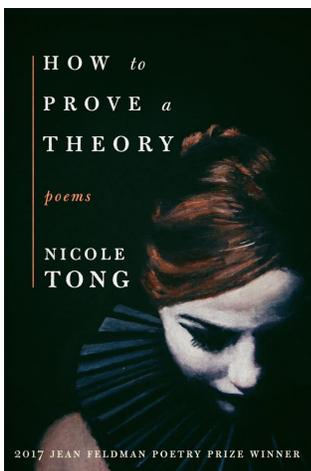
ARTSFAIRFAX Announces First Fairfax Poet Laureate

Fairfax County, VA— ARTSFAIRFAX invites the community to celebrate the announcement of the first Fairfax Poet Laureate, Nicole Tong. The Fairfax Poet Laureate is the county’s highest honor awarded to a local poet. In Tong’s two-year term she will engage with the community through education and community service activities. Tong’s service project will amplify living poets and poetry communicated via her Twitter name [@PoetryLivesHere](https://twitter.com/PoetryLivesHere).

Tong, a professor of English at Northern Virginia Community College has been honored with fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and George Mason University where she received a Master of Fine Arts. In 2016, Tong served as an inaugural Writer-in-Residence at Pope-Leighey House, a Frank Lloyd Wright Property. Her writing has appeared in *American Book Review*, *CALY, A Journal of Art and Literature by Women*, *Cortland Review*, *Yalobusha Review*, and others. The Washington Writers’ Publishing House selected Tong’s first collection of poems *How to Prove a Theory* for its 2017 Jean Feldman Poetry Prize winner.



Nicole Tong, Fairfax Poet Laureate



How to Prove a Theory is Tong’s first published collection of her poems.

“Being named the inaugural Fairfax Poet Laureate offers me an extraordinary opportunity to share poetry, which I love, write and teach, with my community,” says Tong. “At the end of my tenure, I will have done my work if county residents understand that poetry and poets are alive in the here and now; they are not just documented in canonical books. I look forward to sharing my work and the voices of other living poets, which reflect the diverse lived experiences of all of us.”

“A Fairfax County Poet Laureate program has been the dream of many for some years” says Linda Sullivan, ARTSFAIRFAX President & CEO. “Former Board of Supervisors Chair Sharon Bulova asked ARTSFAIRFAX to develop the program and the County officially endorsed the program this past fall. ARTSFAIRFAX is investing in this program to identify and celebrate talented poets in our community, and to create opportunities for county residents to encounter poetry in their daily lives.”

The Fairfax Poet Laureate was selected through a competitive process by a distinguished panel, which included Grace Cavalieri (Maryland Poet Laureate), Anya Creightney (Poet and Program Manager

Poetry and Literature Center, Library of Congress), Kim Roberts (poet and Editor Beltway Poetry), Gregg Wilhelm (Director, GMU Creative Writing Program).

“Poetry, as an art form, gives us the means to see things in a new light and an opportunity to engage in conversations as a community. **ARTSFAIRFAX** is committed to making all art forms accessible to a wider community.” says Shelly Hazel, Chair, **ARTSFAIRFAX** Board of Directors.

To read more of Tong’s work, visit www.nicoletong.com.

Additional information on the Fairfax Poet Laureate community engagement will be posted on the **ARTSFAIRFAX** [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts and on the website at artsfairfax.org.

About ARTSFAIRFAX

ARTSFAIRFAX is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, incorporated in 1964, as Fairfax County’s designated local arts agency. **ARTSFAIRFAX** is funded in part by Fairfax County, corporations, foundations, individuals, Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

#####