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Native Angeleno Lynne Thompson is L.A.'s 2021 poet laureate



Lynne Thompson speaks at a gala in 2019 for ArtworxLA, an organization combating L.A.'s high school dropout rate. (John Wolfsohn / Getty Images)

By DORANY PINEDA | STAFF WRITER

FEB. 25, 2021 1:38 PM PT



*Every driver stops for the cops and 18 wheelers
Until they loop the river Los Angeles,
Covered in concrete and buried under a stubborn scent of smog,
Last bloom of jacarandas and can't squeeze a drop of rain until tomorrow.*

So goes a verse from “Red Jasper” by Lynne Thompson, the new poet laureate of Los Angeles.

On Wednesday, Los Angeles Major [Eric Garcetti](#) honored Thompson, “a native Angeleno whose words tell stories, unite communities and open perspectives,” as the city’s head

poet for the year 2021.

“Lynne is an acclaimed writer and outspoken force who uses words to tell stories, bring communities together, and open up new avenues of art and thinking,” Garcetti said in a [news release](#). “Los Angeles is an international capital of creativity, a place for dynamic dreamers who shape global culture, ignite trends, and inspire — and I know Lynne will use her drive to show Angelenos and beyond the immense power of poetry.”

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[Thompson](#) wrote the 2007 book “Beg No Pardon,” winner of the Perugia Press Prize and the Great Lakes Colleges Assn.’s New Writers Award, and the 2013 poetry selection [“Start With a Small Guitar,”](#) which poet David St. John called “a dazzling collection of love poems, wickedly wise and stitched with the darkest nuances of desire.” Her collection “Fretwork” was published in 2019. A recipient of the city’s 2015 Artist Fellowship, Thompson was also awarded the 2016 Stephen Dunn Poetry Prize and the 2017 Tucson Literary Award for poetry.



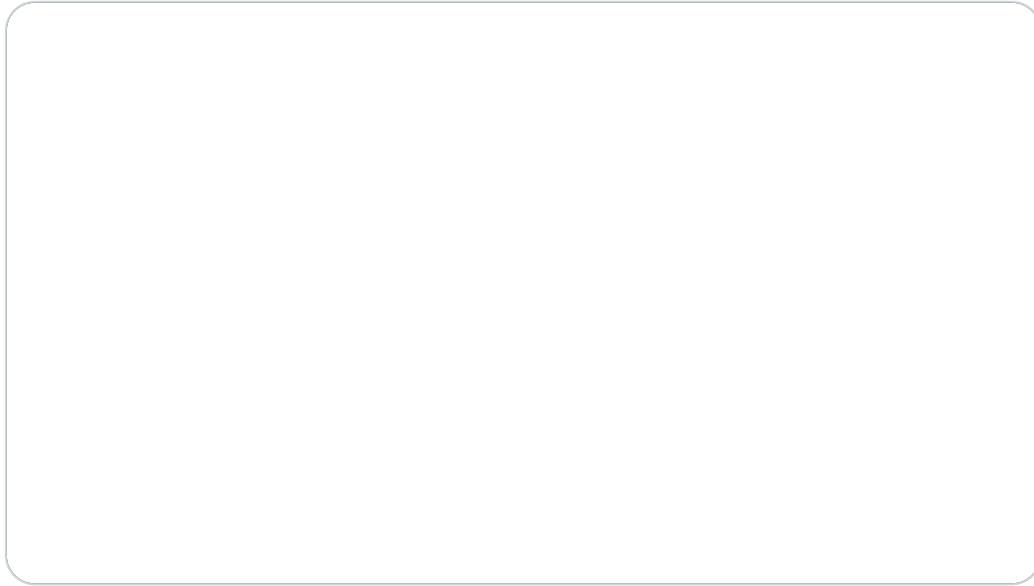
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@MayorOfLA



L.A. always celebrates our creative community and draws inspiration from the arts.

Tonight, our city honored Lynne Thompson as our 2021 poet laureate — a native Angeleno whose words tell stories, unite communities & open perspectives.

Check out one of her poems: "Red Jasper".



8:02 PM, Feb 24, 2021



In the news release, Thompson said she is “humbled and honored” to be named L.A.'s new poet laureate. “The City has a true recognition of the value of poetry in our cultural landscape, and I am excited about the opportunities ahead.”

Her poetry has appeared in the anthologies “New Poets of the American West,” “Mischievous, Caprice & Other Poetic Strategies” and “So Luminous the Wildflowers,” as well as journals such as Poetry, the Colorado Review and the New England Review.

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Thompson currently sits on the board of the [Los Angeles Review of Books](#) and Cave Canem, a literary nonprofit, and is chair of the Scripps College Board of Trustees.

The L.A. Poet Laureate Program aims to enhance the city's appreciation of the literary arts and reach residents who have limited exposure to creative writing. The program is a partnership between the Department of Cultural Affairs and the L.A. Public Library.

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Dorany Pineda writes about books, publishing and the local literary scene for the Los Angeles Times.

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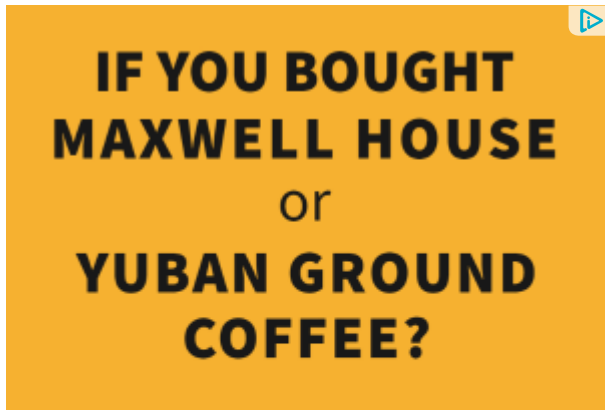
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