



**LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER**  
**SENIOR SERVICES**

FORWARD  
FOR  
**50**



**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**  
*City of Los Angeles*

# My Life is Poetry: Final Reading

Workshop taught by: STEVEN REIGNS

**LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER**  
**ANITA MAY ROSENSTEIN CAMPUS**  
1118 N. McCadden Pl. | Los Angeles, CA 90038

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**Saturday, December 21, 3–4:30 p.m.**  
Reception to follow.

Event supported by a grant from  
**The City of Los Angeles Department  
of Cultural Affairs**

Sponsored by  
**Los Angeles LGBT Center's  
Senior Services Program**

# Message from Steven Reigns

Creator and Founder of  
*My Life is Poetry*



I created the *My Life Is Poetry* workshop out of concern about queer seniors' visibility, representation, connection to their community, and their need for an artistic outlet. With the idolization of youth, our culture's value in the wisdom and stories that come with age has diminished. I'm thankful for a grant from The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and for sponsorship from the Los Angeles LGBT Center's Senior Services department that helped make the workshop a success. The students continually awed me in class with their disclosure, risk taking, hard work, kindness, and craft. It was an honor to witness their growth as writers, hear their stories, and now share them with you.

# Program

## **WELCOME**

Senior Services Staff

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Steven Reigns

Class Reading

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

Steven Reigns

*Reception to follow.*

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

Evans Vestal Ward for the compelling portraits that visually capture the beauty of the 2019 poets.

Seniors Services staff for their invaluable support to help coordinate the workshop and final reading.

The DCA staff, especially Joe Smoke and Christopher Riedesel, who have answered countless questions over the years.

## **MUCH GRATITUDE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

Joshua Benny, Robert Patrick, Dean Littner, Veronica Macias, Tim Miller, Tripp Mills, Kiera Pollock, Kira Preston, Michael Saul, Linda Watts, and Michael Wolfson

**The 2019**  
***My Life is Poetry***  
**students:**

# Bonnilee Kaufman

is a proud queer fem poet working on her first chapbook. Despite senior status, she remains employed as a community college educator.

## I HAD IT ALL - MORE THAN ONCE

Thanksgivings seemed easier when we were  
vegetarian & girlfriend cooked up creamy mac &  
cheese she raved  
over my version of collard greens somehow  
everything I touched turned Jewish.  
That was a long  
time  
ago. Now I scramble for roasted tradition for  
oven comfort but can't find my way back.  
I imagine monastic life  
living behind  
high arching walls no regrets not even  
memory stands  
tall, sturdy cottonwood trees understand  
the value of shedding. Cotton wisps everywhere  
penetrate  
the ground at my feet.

# Cassandra Christenson

was born to be a nurse but not a very good one. Depressed and nowhere to turn, she bumps into Mother Teresa at Miami Airport whose divine eyes sees what she is good at: "You work with AIDS." Marianne Williamson fills in the rest: "Come with me. We'll find a way for you to be there for young men dying alone without anyone to care." With her support, Cassandra created Project Nightlight with volunteers going to the bedside of those in their last hours of life.



## SEASONS OF LOVE

You brought me in from snows  
deep winter to spring jonquils  
all the way into summer, woman joy  
seared to your bed, you straddle my body  
knees on each side, wrists rooted immobile  
lean your breasts in their fullness  
taunting, brim over in their fullness  
your eyes glitter mischievous  
I know meaning of *swoon*

But sun releases her hold on summer  
dry leaves, twigs and branch-chatter  
merrily flow streams frost over  
tears cloud sky, shiver season of late fall

Winter's breath of snow cometh  
mustaches of ice, thunder in hills  
water falls down granite  
season of bluster  
and loss

Alone, only memory  
your breasts warm melons in summer  
music of your scent fills room of my mind  
butterfly kisses flutter eye lashes  
buttercup flowers in quick summer showers  
we slosh in leaky grandfather goulashes  
muddy from street, strip off our wet  
fall into plump lushness of we

Seasons of relationship  
come, then go, winter into spring  
one more summer, invited into fall  
one more winter

Round and round past spring  
grand charade of time  
marionettes tangle in string  
winter bluster claims memory  
we survive, not necessarily  
into spring for one moment  
or without time  
we know not if birth of new  
or naught, no promise held  
we falter on cusp of our lives

Perhaps another summer-to-winter-go-round

# Darryl Denning

Classical Guitarist, performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Russia, and Mexico for Columbia Artists. He recorded for Varese-Sarabande, Citadel, and Legend Records. At the age of 12, he was a prizewinner in the *Los Angeles Examiner* "Bill of Rights Essay Contest." Inspired by Steven Reigns, his poetry has been published in *OffBeat Magazine*, *The Curious Element*, Flashpoint Publications, Chelsea Station Editions, and the Saved Objects Project. He facilitates the Los Angeles LGBT Center's Senior Writing Group.



## THE WHITE SPOT CAFÉ

Aunt Rosie's restaurant  
*The White Spot Café*  
A small-town icon  
Pretty good cheeseburgers  
But Pop always said an  
Extra 10 cents for cheese  
Was just way too much

Whenever Auntie drove  
Through our driveway  
About 5 PM in her 1949  
Purple and beige Buick  
I knew I was in for trouble  
Her dishwasher didn't show  
up

"Please! Please!  
I hate it! I hate it!  
Don't make me do it!"  
But Pop always said,  
"Now Darryl, help Rosie  
out."

Fifty cents for a night  
Of pure drudgery  
And what I saw there

The cook wiping his  
Chubby hands across  
His freckled forehead  
Drops of sweat dripping  
onto  
The next customer's plate.  
Hash brown dropped on the  
floor  
Put back on the ham and  
eggs.

The waitress wiping tables  
After her dingy rag fell onto  
The grimy linoleum floor.

Rosie's famous meatloaf  
Never the same and  
God only knows what  
She threw in it each time  
But people drove from  
Miles around to savor it  
If only they had known.

I'm lucky I have the  
stomach  
To even eat in a restaurant.  
I mean any restaurant.  
I do, but sometimes the  
*White Spot* crosses my  
mind  
And I'm forced to repress  
The lurking memories of  
My childhood dishpan  
hands.

# David Parke Epstein

cohabitated with the hipsters of Silver Lake for the past 16 years. This July, David moved to live among the YouTube celebrities of Hollywood. In the tenth grade, 15-year-old David won a prize in *The Atlantic* magazine writing contest. He took this as an omen. He hasn't stopped writing since.



## STRAIGHT PEOPLE CAN KISS MY GAY ASS

I don't know why  
I still remember him  
but I do

Nobody knew  
a Plague was coming  
Nobody knew  
we'd all be dead

New York City  
Summer of '77  
I'm 27  
it's 3 A.M.  
downtown at the docks  
I meet him  
inside  
a bar for forbidden men only  
smells like poppers and beer  
tribal dance floor  
with a secret  
all-gay orgy room  
downstairs in the dark

Yes, I remember  
the first dance with him  
I still remember the song  
Grace Jones  
"I Need a Man"  
she screams  
so do we  
a hundred blood brothers  
on the dance floor  
hungry for love and dick

I still remember him  
not his name  
I remember  
he's a lapsed Catholic  
an Irishman  
he pulls me close  
hip to hip  
straight in the eye  
says to me,  
"If my father up in heaven  
ever finds out I'm here,  
he'll climb down  
and stone me to death  
personally."  
Then he laughs and kisses me



# Erin O'Keefe

is 66 years old and has been involved with *My Life is Poetry* for the past two years. Erin credits the class for helping her to connect with other LGBTQ seniors and giving a sense of purpose and permission to create and share her work in a supportive environment.



## HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Kindergartners take to the stage,  
bouncing, lumbering, serious, silly.  
My teaching partner and I  
guide our brood into place.  
Families scramble for seats,  
extricate children from puffy jackets.  
Body heat rises into still, cool air.  
Adam, our nervous announcer,  
reaches out for his teacher.  
Artwork of menorahs, evergreen trees,  
Santas and snowflakes  
line the auditorium.  
Impatient five-year olds rattle jingle-bell  
bracelets,  
wave to parents, poke each other.  
Principal gracefully snags a falling garland of  
tinsel and mistletoe  
as she greets parents.  
Lights dim, audience quiets, music swells.  
Flavia, excited eyes sparkling, whispers to me  
“I love this!”  
Her joy amid the chaos lights my heart.

# Gordon Prescott Blitz

has published work in Issue #22 of *Really Systems* (2019), Fall 2019 *Vitamin ZZZ*, *Free Verse Revolutions* June 2019, *Emeritus Chronicles* (2019), *Senior Stories WEHO* (2019), and *My Life is Poetry* (2008). He's a standup comic who has performed at The Ruby, TAO, and The Davidson/Valentini Theatre at the Los Angeles LGBT Center's Village at Ed Gould Plaza in Hollywood. He's performed his short stories at AKBAR, and they've been recorded on *The Queer Slam* podcast for iTunes. Visit his blog website at [culturecritique.blog](http://culturecritique.blog)



## KAREN CARPENTER'S MERRY CHRISTMAS DARLING

Tears each follicle  
Exposes goosebumps  
She lifts the Jewish holiday  
Depression

Chanukah on Long Island  
Stepchild holiday  
With an electric menorah  
Eight days a week of gifts  
Still jealous of the gentile  
Bombardment of presents  
The reframe of  
Jews killed Jesus  
Filled my grade school taunts  
The only Jew on the Long Island block  
In 1958 no Dreidel songs

Karen's vocal warmth  
Wipes away  
The bristling anxiety  
Starvation death  
Carves a pitted stomachache  
Conversational phrasing  
Parsing each syllable  
The Christmas cliché's  
Fly

Ms. Carpenter expunges  
Bones knitting without pain  
Corneas reflect  
Lungs gulp  
Fingertips sizzle  
A thoughtless state  
Level the playing field

For three minutes  
Space empties  
Urging a still  
Pausing a grief  
Belching a spirit  
Echoing a closure  
Jesus wasn't a carpenter

# Harry Gipson

was born in Shreveport, Louisiana. He is a retired public school teacher. During his long teaching career, he taught English and art education classes for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). He also trained student-teachers for LAUSD and UCLA. Harry enjoys reading and writing poetry, gardening, traveling, drawing, painting, making collages, and studying and appreciating elegant high fashion. In high school, Harry twice won first place in LAUSD's all-city essay contest. He loves to dance in which he vogues like Madonna.



## A JOB I HAD

As a boy I sold the Los Angeles Sentinel newspaper from door to door. It only cost 25 cents. I felt safe and appreciated. I didn't worry about going to strangers' homes. I didn't think that anyone would ever harm me. Now I think back and wonder if I was a little boy selling newspapers from door to door now,

how dangerous that could be. Perhaps I would be offered

candy

or Kool-Aid

to come inside

and then be sexually assaulted

or drugged

or murdered.

I'm so tired of living in a society that has become so profoundly dangerous for little boys

to sell newspapers from door to door

or for a little boy or anyone to feel safe sitting

in a theater, in a church, in a temple,

in a mosque, in a school, in a restaurant,

in a bar, in an airplane, on a train,

on a bus, on a ship,

in a shopping mall, on the street ..... almost

anywhere because of mass murdering shooters.

If our society itself is responsible for mass producing such deeply disturbed people, what should we be

doing

to reverse this pathological process? It's like

that creepy saying is malignantly pervasive

in our lives; "Be afraid, be very afraid."

How sad. That's no way to live.

It's a sign of the times.

Where do we go from here?

# Jen O'Connor

started writing poetry and fiction in high school and continued through college. Then she didn't write for many years because things happened—a lot of them stupid but some of them good, especially when she finally came out which helped her start writing again. What also helped her was finding really good writing workshops like this one. If she keeps taking them, she thinks she'll get better at writing.



## PALM TREE WITH ITS THROAT CUT

### A Noir poem

What kind of case was this?  
A murdered palm tree.  
It must be a delusion.  
But the dame was paying big bucks  
and had bronzed legs longer than a run-on sentence.  
So, I took a drive.  
She lived in Malibu.  
It figured.  
All the bad things happen  
in Malibu or Chinatown.

As I drove  
I glared at the sea.  
Wanted to be there  
on my own private yacht  
idling along the coast  
looking at it all from the distance  
not seeing the filth and insanity  
that starts on this shore  
and then slides inland  
all the way to the Atlantic.

The sea just glared back.  
A look that made me  
reach for my sunglasses  
before I remembered  
I'd left them in that massage parlor  
or maybe the bar on 6th and Belmont.  
Same night, different lousy lighting  
assaulting my eyes til I grew accustomed.  
And I always do.  
Just enough to get into mischief.

## SHARP

I shielded my eyes from the hot August sun and slowly reached under the seat of your new grey Ford pickup, now left to the wife whom you'd recently taken, and I felt the long, thin wooden handle of your pocketknife. Pulling it out, my first thought was I am keeping this, regardless of what wicked Wanda would say. Nicks and dings in the mahogany handle came from years of hunting, whittling, or tossing it into a nearby pecan tree. I remember you cutting kite strings, fish line, and slicing off bits of baloney we ate with crackers from Grandpa's tiny store on our boys-only getaways to the lake or countryside. From that knife I learned blades cut as deep accidentally as they do deliberately. You always kept it close by, and it was very sharp, like Wanda's tongue, when she told me she needed the pickup back immediately because she already had a buyer for it. I held the knife, unfolded in my hand when I told her on the phone I knew what my Dad would say about me keeping the truck as long as I needed it – After all, he'd only been buried for three days. I squeezed the knife til my knuckles turned white when I told my brother I couldn't believe how Wanda had become so vicious. He said his only surprise was that I was surprised. Now that knife rests safely in my jewelry box, in stark contrast to shiny rings and chains, but with much more love and memories in that well-worn handle and sharp, sad blade.

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## Jerry D. McCall

learned early on that life throws curves after stints as a bricklayer, barrel upholsterer, and rep for a photo company—where an angry customer once pulled a gun on him rather than pay. Obtaining degrees in Theater and Psychology, Jerry became a hypnotherapist and an entertainment publicist. This was followed by good gigs at CBS and ABC and many years as an advertising director for a media group. In between those careers, he traveled to 41 countries and fell in love at least once. A two-time cancer survivor, he's lived in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, and his proudest possession is the Golden Horseshoe which he won at the age of six on the *Foreman Scotty* television show for making his hippopotamus face. Jerry enjoys painting, reading, acting, writing, and telling stories.

# Jim Pentecost

has lived in Los Angeles for the last 28 years, having previously lived in New York City; Framingham, Massachusetts; and Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was a Boy Scout and led his troop to win the All City Knot Tying Competition which served him well later in life. He has worked as a stage manager on Broadway, a producer for Disney Animation (*Pocahontas*), and, for the last 15 years, as an LAUSD drama teacher.



## WORRY

Anxious!  
Anxiety!  
He's looking for a job.  
He's really looking for a job.  
I keep looking that he's looking for a job.

The news tells us  
"FULL EMPLOYMENT"  
"UNEMPLOYMENT ALMOST ZERO PER CENT"  
Yet, he keeps looking.  
What happens if he doesn't  
get a job?

Anxious!  
Anxiety!  
No money.  
Well, there is money.  
Well, there is more than enough money.

But I worry.  
I worry about it.  
About everything.  
No money.  
Becoming homeless  
Living in a tent  
Getting sick  
Dying!  
None of this is real.  
There is money.  
There are jobs  
He is looking for a job.  
Really looking for a job.

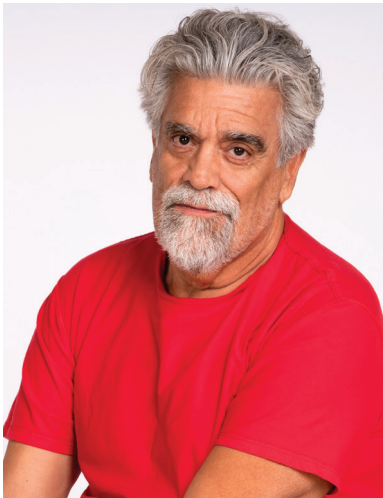
Why am I so anxious?  
Why do I worry?  
Why?  
Because I am always anxious.  
I always worry.  
I am scared.  
But he is looking.  
Will it happen?  
Will he get a job?  
When?

Oh my God!  
He got a job!

What will I worry about now?

# Mark Edward Morante

was born in San Francisco and raised one block from the San Diego Zoo. He scooped ice cream for Swenson's Ice Cream Parlour in Hollywood ; washed dishes in the first Vietnamese restaurant on Hollywood Boulevard; worked at Orange Julius located at Hollywood and Vermont, in the mailroom for Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher in downtown L.A, and at the toll booths for the George Washington Bridge in New York City—all before turning 21. He has also lived in Montana, Idaho, Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Mark is glad to have finally landed in a writing workshop devoted exclusively to poetry and nothing but poetry.

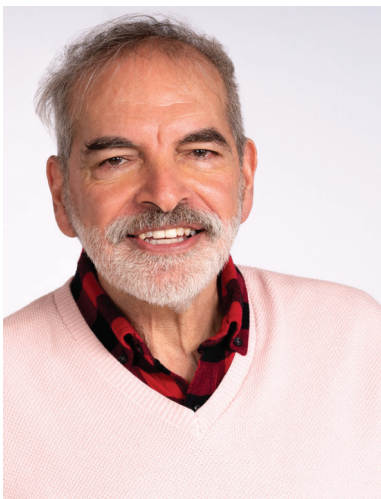


## starstruck

what I didn't know about you was  
you sold maps to the stars  
this is meaningful to me  
because of the attraction and allure  
of hollywood stardom  
that hooked me  
seated cross-legged  
at a very early age  
discovering headshots  
of my now deceased aunt beverly  
taken by george hurell  
in the late forties  
while rummaging through  
boxes with hundreds of photos  
stashed beneath the dresses  
coats and trousers  
of my aunt helen & uncle george cramer's  
cool wooden bedroom closet floor  
to come upon the gorgeous  
glamorous 8x10 glossies  
she in all black, all white  
& all black, white and grey  
shoulderless evening gowns  
or cocktail dresses  
hair flowing over her  
gleaming smooth shoulders  
such beauty captivated me  
& left me  
starstruck

# Michael Baroto

was born in Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, New Jersey, and grew up playing hopscotch and roller skating on the streets of Newark. After receiving numerous awards in art, he attended one of the first schools specializing in art and music. He has lived in Los Angeles for 26 years, the last six years as a West Hollywood resident with his little dog Tugboat, a Pug/Pomeranian rescue, where Puppet and Character Costume Design became his vocation. Being part of the *My Life is Poetry* workshops for the past five years has enriched his life and given him the opportunity to explore this area of his creativity which he was unable to pursue while working in the entertainment industry.



## A DYING WISH

I want to make love  
Until it hurts  
And hug  
Until my body  
Screams for release.  
I want to enjoy pleasure  
For pleasure's sake  
And loving forgiveness  
For all the times  
I said no, it can wait,  
It's not right,  
I'm too busy,  
Too preoccupied,  
With nothing left, to fill my  
time.  
And time,  
Enough to enjoy  
The moment.  
And when I take my last  
breath,  
Remember ecstasy  
Once more  
One more time  
A lingering look  
A knowing soul  
That says, it's okay  
You were the best  
You made the right choice  
There, in the heat of the  
moment  
Once more  
For myself  
My true self  
With you  
With someone  
Who cares as much,  
That I will no longer be  
here  
No longer be tangible  
No longer of this Earth  
And knowing this  
My lasting gift to you,  
To thy departed  
To all who may come after  
And all who came before  
Know that I lived  
And died...

For happiness  
Is just a fleeting moment  
away  
From saying  
Goodbye, one last time.  
There in the splendor  
And afterglow  
I feel you separate from me  
And all that I knew.  
I can rest in peace.  
I can rest, in love.



# Noé Garcia

was born in 1962 in Hollywood where the stars are born. He was raised, however, in Echo Park. In the fourth grade, he won a national essay contest entitled *Why I Love My Country*. He sold *Maps to Stars Homes* on Sunset Boulevard at the age of thirteen. During junior high school, Noé played the clarinet and won a scholarship with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. Noé has lived in San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, Los Osos, Oceano, and Playas de Tijuana, Mexico.



## SO THAT I MAY THINK ABOUT YOU

I'm turning off the light  
So thoughts can take a flight  
With my imagination  
To deep, deep contemplation.  
So I may think about you.  
There's nothing there I can't do.

Tired of being hated,  
There I'm intoxicated.  
In quiet seclusion,  
It's a sweet allusion  
Which starts and ends in sorted ways  
And which makes for happier days.

It's just like prostitution  
Though without persecution --  
Kissing you countlessly  
And oh, so carelessly.  
It's the finest substitution  
When living in destitution.

To this lone pretender,  
In complete surrender,  
Hugs that are oh so tender,  
With all your warmth and splendor,  
You give your heart and soul to me  
In my romantic fantasy.

Lustful oral fervor,  
You're the manly server.  
With erotic effervescence  
And fiery luminescence --  
Thoughts to make lecherous men blush --  
You serve a slow, orgasmic rush.

To love someone tonight,  
Gently with all my might,  
Like chivalry to a knight,  
So that I don't feel blue,  
I'm blowing out the candlelight  
So that I may think about you.

# Ronna Magy

born in Detroit, has claimed the warm clime of Los Angeles as home for the last 40 years. In her poetry, Ronna combines roots in the Rust Belt, training as a community organizer at UC Berkeley, and a deeply held belief in the need for social justice.



## WAR IS A LIE.....

War is a long lie. New lies  
make the old lies true.  
We live in a time of lying.  
No one can tell truth  
from fact. Or fact from reality.  
Or truth from a lie.

New lies circle around  
the truth. Circles move  
backward around  
what seemingly lies.  
Circles, like mobiles, hang  
above the earth.

From earth billow  
the fires of war.  
What is war but mushroom clouds  
shot out of a gun, a rifle, a grenade,  
a bomb dropped from the skies  
onto the earth.

War is a lie until it becomes true.  
We live in a time of lying.  
Guns, grenades, bombs  
lying on the ground  
waiting for war.  
The truth of war hangs above.  
New lies  
live circling the earth.

# Nick Paul

was born in the dead of winter in Mount Clemens, Michigan. Nick won first prize dressed as Wilma Flintstone in the Romeo Peach Parade 1961. His fat friend Nancy dressed as Fred. Nick has no pets but is known to baby talk annoyingly to strangers' dogs. Nick enjoys eating tacos, drawing, writing, and sketching nude models. Nick begrudgingly admits to living in Los Angeles for over 44 years—the last seven years in downtown L.A.



## A FLAMING CHRISTMAS

I was baptized Presbyterian  
I have no idea what that means  
something Irish I suppose.  
My neighbors across the street were Catholics  
Presbyterian churches were small and lackluster  
usually painted Navaho white  
with skinny anorexic looking crosses out front.  
Catholic churches were huge and gothic.  
Catholics had scary looking nuns  
who walked around like winged gargoyles  
slapping children with rulers.  
It was sadomasochistic, dangerous, and exciting.  
I wanted to be Catholic! I wanted a nun to wail off on me!  
Every year at Christmas the Catholics  
would do something called “Midnight Mass”  
it sounded so inviting. I used to fanaticize how beautiful it  
must be.  
I would see cute choir boys in white robes singing their hearts  
out  
while Jesus on the cross looked solemnly below at the nuns  
running helter skelter slapping disrespectful children in the  
pews.  
It sounded so phantasmagoric, but I never attended.

Flash forward 30 years--I gathered a bunch of my bohemian  
friends  
and pleaded “Let’s go to the Midnight Christmas Mass!”  
They agreed, anticipated an Oscar winning presentation that  
evening.  
Myself, Shawn, and Rod the photographer entered the church.  
We were given lit candles with instructions  
“be careful with the candles-don’t start a fire...”  
The ceremony started, we sat high in the balcony  
It was boring as hell, no gorgeous choir boys, no wicked nuns,  
just a priest with a tall cone on his head swinging smoky  
incense  
“Love your hat girl but your purse is on fire.”  
My photographer friend Rod has shoulder length long hair  
that he kept tossing over his shoulder  
every time he took a photo of Sean and I.  
flash flash woosh woosh with his hair  
He wasn’t respecting the flame in the candle  
he was holding in his other hand  
flash flash woosh woosh  
all of a sudden  
W O O S H  
his hair caught on fire!  
I started slapping him in the head with my program!  
The whole balcony started laughing hysterically.  
The look of horror on our faces  
in the later developed photo  
was priceless.

# Terry Lynn Anglin

July 17, 1958, saw Terry Lynn Anglin arrive on this planet. By 1961 she had experienced the death of her 18-month-old sister and the disappearance of her father. This is when her mother moved back into her immigrant parents' ranch/farm where Terry worked and lived until she graduated high school in 1976 with a full scholarship in performing arts. Terry arrived in California on December 21, 1981, after she and her first domestic partner Yolanda were expelled from Ottawa University in Kansas. She attended her first Gay Pride parade in Kansas City in 1977. At that time, a significant number of marchers wore paper bags over their heads which was better than not coming at all. From 1985 to 1992, Terry fronted the women rock band Pope Joan, performing at Pride festivals from San Diego to San Francisco including Haight Street. Terry's life was forever changed when she survived a major stroke due to lack of insurance in 2007. She is grateful to share with you tonight.



## TWENTY TWENTY, THE 21ST CENTURY DECADE 2

But time is not time  
We are All in fact Divine  
Air, Water, Fire, Terra  
Tree, Grass, Flower, Seed  
Cow, Horse, Dog, Cat  
Zebra, Lion, Octopus, Cockroach  
Human, Ape, Lizard, Eagle  
Sunlight, Moonlight, All Light, No Light  
All the same stuff.  
The Universe is made of  
12 Particles of Matter  
6 Quarks, 3 Electrons, 3 Neutrons  
4 forces of nature  
Gravitational, Weak Nuclear, Electromagnetic  
Strong Nuclear  
All expressed in 5 geometric forms  
Tetrahedron, Hexahedron, Octahedron,  
Dodecahedron, Icosahedron  
It's what we're made of  
Each and every living form in this dimension  
and the one before,  
The one before that and the next one too  
Stretching both directions from infinity  
To infinity.  
(insert purest bell tone here)

# Steven Reigns

is a Los Angeles-based poet and educator and was appointed the first Poet Laureate of West Hollywood. Alongside over a dozen chapbooks, he has published the collections *Inheritance* and *Your Dead Body is My Welcome Mat*. Reigns holds a BA in Creative Writing from the University of South Florida, a Master of Clinical Psychology from Antioch University, and is a 14-time recipient of The Los Angeles County's Department of Cultural Affairs' Artist in Residency Grant. He edited *My Life is Poetry*, showcasing his students' work from the first-ever autobiographical poetry workshop for LGBT seniors. Reigns has lectured and taught writing workshops around the country to LGBT youth and people living with HIV. Currently he is touring *The Gay Rub*, an exhibition of rubbings from LGBT landmarks, facilitates the monthly Lambda Lit Book Club, sees clients in his practice in West LA ([TherapyForAdults.com](http://TherapyForAdults.com)), and is at work on a new collection of poetry. Visit him at [www.stevenreigns.com](http://www.stevenreigns.com).

## **ABOUT SENIOR SERVICES DEPARTMENT:**

The Los Angeles LGBT Center's Senior Services department is intended to support and enrich the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people 50 years and older, with an overarching goal of successful aging in place. In this effort, the department provides a broad array of social, educational and support services to LGBT older adults, all of which are free or low-cost.

In addition to helping LGBT seniors build community and support networks, the department also provides one-on-one case management to those in need of support and resources. Most often, LGBT seniors seek case management services and referrals related to affordable housing, benefits, home health assistance, bereavement, isolation, as well as mental health and legal issues, by offering over 100 activities, events, classes, and groups each month at four different locations.