Dusty Artifact or Window Into the Past?

Writing Poems About Sonoma County History

January 15, 2025.

Museum of Sonoma County, Santa Rosa, CA.

5:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Introductions

5:45 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Curated Tour of Sonoma County Stories (a permanent Sonoma County exhibition) with Eric Stanley, Deputy Director and History Curator.

Remarks and example poems about history by special guest, Sonoma County poet and historian, Arthur Dawson.

6:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Participants disperse throughout the museum to select one or more stories or artifacts that interest them.

Participants—what grabs your interest? A story you haven’t heard before? A story that’s different from the one you’ve been told? Does an object on display offer a window through which you can enter into the past?

Participants will then take notes and/or photos on the stories or objects they select to write about before the group moves to the writing table for the remainder of the event.

6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Writing time for us to begin crafting our poems

Here are some prompts, if you need them, to jumpstart your poem(s):

* Can you imagine yourself living in the past? How would your life be different from the one you lead today?
* Are we repeating our mistakes of the past? Are we repeating the successes of the past?
* How do the people represented in the stories of the past resemble us? How are they different from us?
* Do you have questions that the historical account doesn’t answer? Write about those questions. Write about what you think is missing from the story.

7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sharing time. Each participant will have a few minutes to share with the others what they wrote about.

Thank you for attending. Please share any feedback you may have to Dave Seter at the email address listed below.

Many thanks to The Museum of Sonoma County for hosting this event. Learn more

about their programming, and becoming a member is you are interested, at:

https://museumsc.org/

Dave Seter

Sonoma County Poet Laureate 2024-26

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