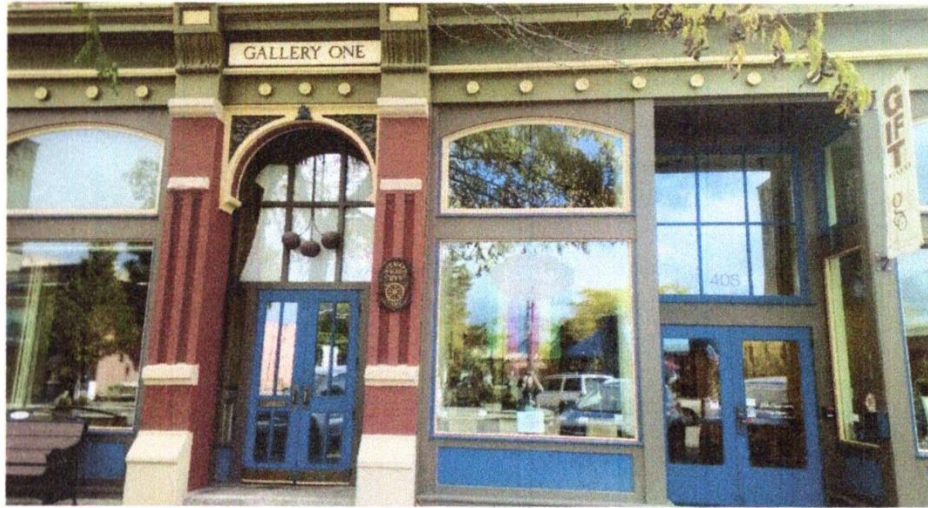




SHE
LIVES
ON





SHE LIVES ON

A Crown of Sonnets

Celebrating Women of Kittitas County

Read at Gallery One

A collection of documents

Curated by Jampa Dorje

D Press 2023 Ellensburg

Front cover photos by Rodney Harwood
Back cover poster design by Marie Marchand
Title page photo by Jampa Dorje

Katharine Whitcomb's "Winter Saturday" was previously published
in *Washington 129* and it will be in her new book
from Poetry Northwest Editions.

Maya Jewell Zeller's "The Waiting" is from
Alchemy for Cells & Other Beasts (Entre Rios Books, 2017).

Jampa Dorje's "Risking the Boundaries" is from
Poems Theregonia (D Press, Ellensburg, 2023).

Here are links to three videos produced by Ellensburg Community Radio
and a review with photos by Northwest Public Broadcasting

Washington Poet Laureate: <https://youtu.be/-WDAur4UIYE>
Crown of Sonnets: <https://youtu.be/PObzPW6O-v8>
Local Poets: https://youtu.be/_WqxS0NYCO8

Northwest Public Broadcasting Review with photos
By Lauren Gallup March 1, 2023
Honoring women's history through poetry - (nwpb.org)



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She Lives On

Crown of Sonnets

How fortunate the snow-turning-rain. Do you miss it, and what you planted?
To Pshwanapum from Wenatchee, five nights, singing fire
Descended of doctor Tek'nupt, who cared for the empty-handed
Picking huckleberries, grandma and mother's child

Logs falling after dishes with Lucy by moonlight
Royal riders racing 'round bright arena nights
The keepers of the thrones, daughters her own
A home in Hal Holmes, Hall of Fame Rodeo

Xapan weaved from cedar root, burning wood by stove
Her name before the children's school, etched into the land
1888 lives on in hearts of those she knows
No sound needed to hear stories, no sound to understand

Throughout her life, she said everything change (everything change)
Yet her legacy burns on and remains the same

For Ida Nason Aronica

by Katherine Camarata

Her legacy burns on, beyond measure
This city named Donna an Arts Treasure
Ardent and evolved in her views
Her interests were diverse, of myriad hues
Heritage, learning, the arts, our environment
Are causes for which her voice she raised and lent
Children she perceived as hidden gems

That sparkled when the spotlight shone on them
A vibrant force in the community
Her footprints still remain around this city
The theater, schoolhouse, council, pool, and park
Still echo with her voice and bear her mark
A radiant being like Donna never dies
She lives on in her deeds and in her ties

*For Donna Nylander
by Sarita Dasgupta*

I live on, cloaked in storied deeds that tie
Long time after the Curse of 400 arrived
Loaded in cattle cars led by a lie
Ash cakes just a bit out of slavery
My roots wide in explosive charred love
Curtained in pear leaves on limbs high above
Carrying secrets back home to Momma
Whipped by a black snake in a Roslyn school
Raised twelve children with futures to retool
Teacher, boxer, valedictorian
One who marched with Dr. King
One who was the first Black mayor in our state
Me? A pioneer Queen who stopped at 8th grade
Truth be forever told, we are - Somebody.

*For Ethel Craven
by Nan Doolittle*

Truth be forever told we're somebody.
Let's talk of Rachel Page and Mrs. Splawn.
Were they colossuses of history
Or quiet like the doe that leaves the fawn
Hidden in dappled shade of trees or grass?
Here's a good story, if you haven't heard,
That faded from the record of our past.
In the west end it was midwives who served.
When summoned to come as lying-in neared
Rachel took the saddle horse, gone a week
A stretch, to be there when baby appeared.
Same with Mrs. Splawn. They were not unique.

Both well respected, for Rachel, the twist--
Most people don't even know who she is.

*For Rachel Page
by Cory Eberhart*

People didn't even know who she was
entering college, 1932
a woman, experiment, spectacle
yet invisible, too, in a man's world.

Now, Irene, every sweet gum lauds you.
The gale through larch and linden commends you.
How you merged human and wild spaces
to bravely protect people and the earth.
The world knew what you stood for and against.
Your anti-nuclear voice saved our souls.

One mile of forested riverbank
grew into our leafy backyard, our home.
Your gift still blossoms. This green canopy,
this blue haven of earth quenches us all.

*For Irene Rinehart
by Marie Marchand*

This blue haven of earth quenches us all,
even in winter's heart the land surrounds
the town like a friend. Sarah Spurgeon calls
a painting *Lumber Yard in Snow*, ground

white in Iowa, snow rake abandoned
on barn roof, like those here out west.
She modeled for Grant Wood in an apron,
sole woman, men in jeans, the best

among assistants, absorbing techniques
while at work on WPA murals. Come 1939
she moved to CWU, to teach mechanics
& processes of painting. So loved in time

by generations of students, artists, & by
Amanda (leave the two there, '55, in Italy).

*For Sarah Spurgeon
by Katharine Whitcomb*

A man, duh, no, two women, long hair, '68, Kittitas,
Leta May with peonies behind you and your paisley dress

and Clareta with a collar and the same fir and lilies
at your feet. From our cars, the earth sages from scabs to yellow

willow, signs say Land for Sale, Trout for Sale, Free Guided
Tours. Colonial, sunrise, carcass, a bed of old bones sleep jagged

and sideways in snow. We see how you desired things to stay the same —
don't we all want things to stay the same?; we confuse your name

with other people with your name. You said leave it, be frugal, be winter,
buy nothing new. Our eyes flip back to 1875, you walk the perimeter,

thinking of your book, *The End of the Trail*, your hems dark with mud,
The Trail Leads West, did you feel it too?, the cabin made of cottonwood?,

and we feel it: that desire to dig, dig in, not take anything for granted.
How unsteady the snow-turning-rain. Do you miss it, and what you planted?

*For Clareta "Birdie" and
Leta May Olmstead Smith
by Maya Jewell Zeller*

▣ A MEDLEY OF POEMS ▣

Excerpt from **To Be a Man**

Why wouldn't I want to be a man
If it always feels like two steps forward
Three steps back
Since the dawn of time
Our kind has strived
To birth and feed
Yet we were starving
With unfed minds underneath
The burdened teat
Wondering why we couldn't
Work or scream or vote or read
Simply a vessel
A hollow body
With no more purpose
But to fulfill a need
For control, for greed
We possess the magic
Of nurturing, of truth-bearing
Of wearing trauma like a
White flag cloaking us
Yet we are denied this strength
By those who call it weakness

—Katherine Caramata

An Ode to the Seasoned Woman

You look in the mirror
And who do you see?
A middle-aged woman
"Gosh! That can't be me!"

But those wrinkles and lines
Marking your face
Are signs of a life
Lived fully, with grace

Each line tells a story
Each wrinkle a tale
Of times you succeeded
And times when you failed

But picked yourself up
And pushed yourself on
Holding fast to your courage,
When it was all but gone

You battle the currents
You deal with the waves
And the men in your life
Whether gallants or knaves

You fulfil all your roles:
Those of daughter and wife,
Sister, mother, colleague,
Friend – all through your life

Your lines, shape, and grey hair
Are badges you've earned
Of the life that you've lived
And the lessons you learned

So, on this Women's Day
What I urge you to do,
Is to hold your head high
And be proud to be YOU!

—Sarita Dasgupta

Serviceberries

(with J on the Sky)

What came out
Of this time
Staring at shamans
Rattlesnake art
Merging with whistling trains
And mice at dusk?
Dreaming
Fierce trench-coated evil men
Even their breath harms us
Cabin ghosts
Voices from the river
Grandfather sings
Night of grizzlies
And black magic;
Two eagles flew over
When all was possibility
Honoring finger dances and
Kissings of women.
Winter moved water's path
Probation over
We love in full wet;
Bleeding hearts bloom early
On the beaver house trail.

—Nancy Doolittle

Risking the Boundary

There's somewhere I want to go,
and so, I cruise the limits of the visible.
I feel the barrier, weird yet familiar
to my touch—is this a warning?

A car burns beside the road
where I meet the guardians of the way,
an old woman throwing bones in the dust,
a young man rolling stones on a board.

“Who are you?” he asks, “Elven queen,
white witch, she who has trouble
making up her mind?” If I pass, I know
I cannot return, but what more can I lose?

The wind carries me—I change.
I have no eyes. I have no sex.
I dance to the rhythm of the stars,
a dance that is older than love.

—Jampa Dorje

Altapes Is My Name

Cedar--Seel There!

Birdseye view from ancient trees of Olmstead Place--
Its branching canopies, a drowsy surround,
Air fractured with rise and fall of murmur and buzz.

Its riparian border space a-hum like a treadle machine that
Stitches a great green ruffle on the heritage farm field edge.

Desire will move you--a visitor--to explore me.
Rock underfoot, you meander along spring water
Sourced deep within basalt. Listen to the song
Of atmospheric rivers, snow melt, storm flow.

Progress along my bank trail in quiet company
Of hidden friends--finned-furred-feathered--
Until slowed to stop you must turn
Back from my Wilderness unhacked.

See! There!

The Interstate cuts east-west through valley bottom land.
Endemic wanderers in waves churn by this Nineteenth
Century settler's preserve of but three-generations.

I was called Coleman Creek, you know, for a time,
But I have long been Altapes. Even as I wandered through
This end-of-the-line place, mid-Twentieth Century
As two sisters--cotton-frocked, elderly--guided
Students around ephemera of antiquarian life.

From log cabin to rusty iron, their outdoor classroom
Was where they kept alive the old pioneer ways.
Listen. Children's cricket voices still tug
A visceral thought, always someone sick on the bus.

See! There!

Before you go, pause beside the shadowed base
Of an old cedar and stare up through its deepest shade.
The lesson is branches die from the bottom up
And ravens vie with hawks for nesting rights at the top.

—Cory J. Eberhart

Love Sonnet

i
trace
the
black
edge
silhouette
 wendy
face
head
between
finger
 &
a
lip

—Xavier Cavazos

[year]

a woman could take a year to build a cedar
canoe in a room of her own but first she'd need
to gather a random orbital sander and a router
and a circular saw with a jig and a really thin kerf
blade instead she might choose to take the god's
eye point of view and write the initial draft to a novel
she would later title peace and war or maybe compose
a sonata—notes graceful as moonlight shining on
lake lucerne—or by some chance sprout her first pair
of antlers like a buck fawn and rub her velvet tines
against a laurel tree in a mythic forest where she might

foresee—given an hour of unfettered thought—the
invention of rope and learn to avoid being led from
open pasture like a yearling filly newly broke-to-halter

—Joanna Thomas

Winter Saturday

Last night I lay down
in front of the gas fireplace like an old dog
and fell asleep on the rug.

How long had it been,
what miles flown over full-speed, since sleep
seeped in, warm as a drug?

The day for once bore
no schisms, no battering-rammed doors leaned
askew on their hooks.

A forest carries quiet
like cloth in its arms. When I was a girl I dreamed
this inside my books.

—Katharine Whitcomb

The Waiting

It was not the hour of red-flecked birds.
It was not the hour of wood smoke.
It was not the hour of the exquisite chirping of trees.
It was not the hour of ice cream, guitar, or warm bricks,
ice skating, of neon celebration. This was no hour
for a child. I put on my mask
and walked into the mountain. I pushed right through the stone.
I wore a necklace of furred insects, emerged in a forest,
stepped into a boat, rocked inside with seismic proportions.
I drew a knife from my belly, plundered the lake. I put on my wolf head,
my girl arms, my quiver of bodies. I put on my blood
and it put me on. I was a scrub grub. A cold bug. A sharp blade.
A self, reaching into a self, a hole. It was my hour of fluttering hands,
hands like wings, hands like a red streak. The red streak
was me. There were no birds. The trees sang a dirge.
I dipped my head into the bile, pulled it up with my name,
like a tongue, clenched between my teeth.

—Maya Jewell Zeller

Prayer in the Desert

Be still says the wind
hazy and dry
tasting of sage.
Seek serenity prods
the light on the river.

In this spare landscape
certain things find
themselves closing,
others in bloom.

—Marie Marchand

Honoring women

Crown of Sonnets poetry reading held at arts center

By Rodney Harwood, published in Ellensburg Daily Record, March 8, 2023

Ethel Craven-Sweet bowed her head in silent reverence, sitting in the front row, as local poet Nan Doolittle recited her sonnet in tribute to her mother Ethel Craven. It was part of Friday evening's Crown of Sonnets program titled *She Lives On* at Gallery One Visual Arts Center.

When Doolittle finished, Craven-Sweet raised her hand, index finger extended, as if to acknowledge something her mother told each of her 13 children when they were growing up: "We are somebody."

The night, coming as an extension of the First Friday Art Walk at the downtown gallery, was an evening of poetry and a community gathering, paying tribute to eight women from the Kittitas Valley as part of Women's History Month.

"It was absolutely wonderful," said Craven-Sweet, who grew up in Roslyn and went on to become the second African-American woman worker hired at Boeing. "It just makes my heart feel so good that they would honor my mother this way.

“All 13 children were born and raised in Roslyn. (My mother) made sure that we all went to high school and some of us to college, which was very important. So, tonight’s poetry reading about her is perfect and a great show of respect.”

Seven local and regional poets delivered their thoughts and reflections on the historical women of the Kittitas Valley: Ida Nason Aronica, Donna Nylander, Ethel Craven, Rachel Page, Irene Rinehart, Sarah Spurgeon, and Claretta and Leta May Olmstead-Smith.

“I thought it was a fantastic community celebration of poetry and women and women’s contributions. I also thought it was a beautiful coming together of community,” Ellensburg Poet Laureate Marie Marchand said. “There was a lot of hope and positivity, and that’s the beauty of what poetry can bring.”

“*She Lives On* was a celebration of Kittitas Valley women’s history. It’s about connecting the present to the past. The Crown of Sonnets itself is a form that connects one to another.”

In keeping with the March theme of Women’s History Month, the poets themselves were women. Seven poets stood in descending order from the top of the stairs to the bottom rung, passing the microphone upward as each sonnet tied to the next.

Katherine Camarata (Ida Nason Aronica), Sarita Dasgupta (Donna Nylander), Nan Doolittle (Ethel Craven), Cory Eberhart (Rachel Page), Marie Marchand (Irene Rinehart), Katharine Whitcomb (Sarah Spurgeon) and Maya Jewell Zeller (Leta May and Claretta Olmstead-Smith) shared their spoken word to a capacity audience that filled the main gallery and mezzanine.

“Mom would be pretty embarrassed because she was kind of a quiet person,” Ida Nason Aronica’s son Allen said with a smile. “But she’d be honored, and later on she’d appreciate it. It’s a good thing she’s included and I’m sure she would have liked it.”

The Ellensburg Arts Commission and the Ellensburg Poet Laureate Program played host in special recognition to eight women from the Kittitas Valley. The Crown of Sonnets included special readings by Washington State Poet Laureate Rena Priest.

“I think it was a tremendous way to honor these women,” said local artist Jane Orleman, who was there to represent her friend Sarah Spurgeon. “These women all added to our community. My art is with a paintbrush, but I thought the (spoken word) was a nice artistic tribute. It captured the spirit of the evening.”

The night also included original work by poets Katherine Camarata, Xavier Cavazos, Sarita Dasgupta, Jampa Dorje, Nan Doolittle, Cory Eberhart, Marie Marchand, Joanna Thomas, Maya Jewell Zeller and Katharine Whitcomb.

▣ Historical background ▣

Ida Joseph Nason Aronica was born on June 4, 1888 near Cashmere. She was the great-granddaughter of Yakama Chief Owhi and a member of the Yakama Nation. She raced horses, created beadwork, weaved baskets, gathered food and gave demonstrations of native traditions at schools. The Ida Nason Aronica Elementary School was named after her in 2021 to honor her resounding legacy.

Donna Nylander was a woman of vision and kindness who saw potential in everyone. She encouraged children to participate in the plays she wrote for the Ellensburg Children’s Musical Theater, which she founded in 1976, and for which she was recognized as an Ellensburg Arts Treasure.

Ethel Craven was born in Roslyn in 1906. Ethel and her husband Sam made appearances in town businesses and schools when their children reported discrimination and prejudice (a daughter earned the role of valedictorian but lost the appointment because of racism). According to one of Ethel’s daughters, Ethel often said, “We are somebody.”

Rachel Page (née Hodgson) was born in 1836. She married Heman Page and they moved to Bloody Kansas Territory as slave state or free vote actions sparked violence on the brink of Civil War. Four children were born before Heman was conscripted to fight for the Union, four more children followed his eventual return. Mid-life and starting over, it took five months by wagon to reach the Kittitas Valley, September 1875. The family settled west of Ellensburg on ceded land in the Taneum. Rachel served as midwife since doctors were scarce.

Irene Rose Mann Rinehart was born on May 27, 1916, in Charlottesville, Va. In 1932, she was part of a small group of women admitted to the University of Virginia. She completed her Ph.D. in English in 1942 and taught at Louisiana State University and the University of Montana where she met Keith Rinehart. They moved to Ellensburg in 1953. Irene worked at the Ellensburg Public Library. Starting in 1967, she served on the City Council for 16 years, leading many efforts including the building of sidewalks, enhanced library services, and parks - including the riverfront park land purchase that was later named after her.

Edna May “Sarah” Spurgeon was born in Harlan, Iowa in 1903. She attended the University of Iowa, where she received her B.A. in Art in 1927, and M.A. in Art in 1931. At the university, all four of her primary instructors were women. In 1939, she moved to Ellensburg to accept a position in the Art Department of Central Washington College of Education (now CWU). Spurgeon retired in 1971 and in 1978 CWU dedicated the Sarah Spurgeon Gallery with an exhibit featuring 55 of her former students, including artists Jane Orleman and Richard C. Elliott.

Clareta and Leta May Olmstead Smith’s ancestor Samuel Olmstead moved to the Kittitas Valley in 1875 and built their family cabin out of cottonwood logs from around the Yakima River Canyon. The women inherited the original Olmstead homestead from their uncles. In 1968, the Olmstead Smith sisters donated the homestead and its 217 acres to the Washington State Park system, including the original log cabin and family farmhouse built in 1906.

Women’s History Month Poetry Extravaganza features WA state poet laureate: Local poets create crown of sonnets to celebrate women of the valley

By Jordyn Rossmeisl, published in The Observer, CWU, March 8, 2023

The chilly evening air spilled into the packed gallery, mixing with the palpable excitement of people chatting over the lively piano while weaving through the crowd to grab a glass of wine or admire some art for the First Friday Art Walk. The energetic crowd gathered around the staircase to admire a different kind of art, one woven of words.

The Ellensburg Arts Commission and the Ellensburg Poet Laureate Marie Marchand hosted the Poetry Extravaganza event in the Gallery One Visual Arts Center to celebrate Women’s History Month on March 3.

The event began with a land acknowledgment statement by Marchand and an opening reading by Washington State Poet Laureate Rena Priest from her book *Patriarchy Blues*, including a poem about what nail polish shade matches best with patriarchal oppression.

Priest encouraged young artists, and said: “Any kind of art is the expression of our humanity, and being human is messy and hard and not always pretty, and so what makes it to the canvas or what makes it to the page and then finds its way out into the public is a blessing for whoever you share that with, no matter what. So don’t be hard on yourself, and just keep doing it and find joy in it.”

Following Priest’s opening, seven local and regional poets presented a crown of sonnets titled “She Lives On” in honor of eight historical women of the Kittitas Valley. A crown of sonnets typically features seven different poets, and each sonnet’s last line is the same or similar to the next sonnet’s first line, and the last sonnet’s last line is the first sonnet’s first

line, so they all link together. Following the performance of the crown, local poets read some of their original work.

The focus of the event started as a small idea to celebrate women at a brainstorming session four months ago between three local writers: Jampa Dorje, The Observer Lead Editor Katherine Camarata and the first Poet Laureate of Ellensburg, Marchand.

“As we started talking more and brainstorming more, these amazing ideas came up to write poems honoring the women of the past, from the Kittitas Valley,” Marchand said.

Although it started off small, Marchand said the idea quickly picked up speed, and another local poet, Joanna Thomas, proposed the idea for a crown of sonnets. “It is a great metaphor for connection and things being intertwined,” Marchand said.

According to Marchand, the whole event was about creating connections; connecting our past and present by having the women of today honor the women of our past, and connecting the downtown community with the university.

Nan Doolittle, director of the local nonprofit Northwest Expressive Arts Response, suggested the readers make physical crowns to present to the descendants of the historical women to whom the sonnets were dedicated.

The seven poets each researched the significant woman they chose to honor with their sonnets, read in this order: The Observer Lead Editor Katherine Camarata for Ida Nason Aronica, Sarita Dasgupta for Donna Nylander, Nan Doolittle for Ethel Craven, Cory Eberhart for Rachel Page, Marie Marchand for Irene Rinehart, Katherine Whitcomb for Sarah Spurgeon and Maya Jewell Zeller for the Olmstead sisters, Leta May and Clareta Olmstead Smith. The poets collaborated on writing and tracking down the descendants of their chosen women.

“The seven poets chose the one woman they were wanting to write about because that woman spoke to them and inspired them,” Marchand said. “For me, Irene Rinehart really inspires me and the more I learned about her, the more I was inspired. I am an anti-nuclear activist and that was part of what she did on the city council during her sixteen-year run. And then Sarita, another poet, wrote about Donna Nylander, and they both wrote plays for children. So they were connected in that way.”

Local women read a crown of sonnets featuring historical women of the valley. Marchand highlighted the similarities between the modern women who read poetry at the event and the women of the past who were honored.

“We are trailblazers too, and maybe we won’t realize it for 80 years or 100 years from now, the trail that we are blazing, because we still live in a society that is misogynistic,” Marchand said. “Women make approximately 86 cents for every dollar that a man makes. So we have a lot of change to still make.”

One of the descendants who attended the event, Ethel Craven-Sweet, the daughter of Ethel Craven (to whom Nan Dolittle dedicated her sonnet), came all the way from Auburn on a bus to attend the event.

“It’s wonderful and refreshing that they are honoring poetry now, and I love poetry,” Craven-Sweet said. “My mother had 13 children. She had nine straight girls, and I am the ninth and last girl, so she named me after her.” According to Craven-Sweet, her mother would have loved the event.

“Oh mama is smiling from heaven, mama is smiling,” Craven-Sweet said. “She didn’t get to finish high school or anything, but she made sure we got some school and she said how important it was, and I encouraged all my sons to do the same thing. My mother was a very tough woman. Very tough. She taught us to work hard because she didn’t want to see us going astray.”

CWU senior and English major Anna Baldwin was moved to tears by some of the poetry. “I cried a lot,” Baldwin said. “I really loved it. It made me feel really good about being a woman. I wish we had more. I feel like in my life, as a woman, I have not felt appreciated enough for just being a female and I have a large inferiority complex really related to that. And so, being uplifted as a woman is really, really important.”

A Reflection on *She Lives On*

Seven different women of today
Sought the lives of eight to portray
Katharine, Katherine, Marie, Nan and Cory
Maya and Sarita – told the story
Of Irene, Donna, Clareta, and Leta May
Of what they did and what they had to say
Of Rachel, Sarah, of Ida and Ethel
Who triumphed over trials that befell
To strive on, beating ordeals yet unseen
Pathfinders, activists, pioneer queens
Inspirational women from the recent past
On the here and now their mantles still do cast
They led their lives here in our Kittitas dales
An honor for us seven to tell their tales!

—Sarita Dasgupta

The Ellensburg Poet Laureate Program Presents

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Poetry Extravaganza

Featuring WA State
Poet Laureate
Rena Priest



A Crown of Sonnets will celebrate eight historical women from the Kittitas Valley:

Ida Nason Aronica by Katherine Camarata
Donna Nylander by Sarita Dasgupta
Ethel Craven by Nan Doolittle
Rachel Page by Cory Eberhart
Irene Rinehart by Marie Marchand
Sarah Spurgeon by Katharine Whitcomb
Clareta and Leta May Olmstead Smith
by Maya Jewell Zeller

Additional readers include Xavier Cavazos
Jampa Dorje and Joanna Thomas

Friday, March 3, 2023

7 p.m. ■ Gallery One ■ Ellensburg, WA



INLAND POETRY



