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**SEATTLE ARTS & LECTURES ANNOUNCES 2019/20 YOUTH
POET LAUREATE WEI-WEI LEE TO PUBLISH HER FIRST BOOK
ON JUNE 9, 2020**

***An online book launch will include a reading from Lee's newly
released book, along with readings from the incoming Youth
Poet Laureate and YPL Cohort***

Seattle, WA—MAY 27, 2020: Seattle Arts & Lectures announces that the 2019/20 Youth Poet Laureate, Wei-Wei Lee, will publish her first collection, *In the Footsteps of a Thousand Grievs*, on June 9, 2020. [Poetry NW Editions](#) is the publisher. Wei-Wei will read from the book, along with members of the incoming 2020/21 Youth Poet Laureate (YPL) Cohort, in a pre-recorded online event on June 9, at 6 PM (PDT) at lectures.org. The event will also feature the unveiling of the 2020/21 Youth Poet Laureate. The event will feature a conversation between co-founders of the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate Program, mentors Aaron Counts and Matt Gano, along with Wei-Wei, as well as readings from the incoming 2020/21 YPL Cohort. Wei-Wei Lee's poetry collection will be available for pre-sale at [Open Books: A Poem Emporium](#) and [Elliott Bay Book Company](#) beginning June 1, 2020.

In a time of uncertainty, Wei-Wei Lee's debut poetry collection invites us to join her in her vulnerability, and partake in the forming of bonds between ourselves and the ever-evolving stories amidst our time and place. *In the Footsteps of a Thousand Grievs* asks us what it means to call a place home, and then cherishes the small things that silently root in us all until we are all surrounded by an abundance of beauty.

Wei-Wei Lee was born in San Gabriel, California, but grew up one ocean away in Zhongli District, Taoyuan, Taiwan. She is a senior at Nathan Hale High School. Lee has been stateside for four years, and Seattle is the first U.S. city, she says, that she has ever known and loved. For her, poetry holds its beauty in language

that comes from pure feeling and imagery. She set out to pay tribute to Taiwan and America in her work and, as she has said, “hopes [she] duly honored both.”

Claudia Castro Luna, Washington State Poet Laureate, writes: “Wei-Wei's poems from *In the Footsteps of a Thousand Grievs* work like concentric circles. The first poems in the collection fill our senses with the cacophony of life in the big city: the screech of cars, the waft of foods prepared by street vendors, the indifference of a passersby. As the book advances the poems move us inward and we walk alongside the poet, her feet on the streets of Seattle, her heart longing for a country, for dear relatives, for a language and ways of being lost to exile. ‘Maybe desperation has its own tone’ the poet writes and goes on to render for us the intimate sounds of her experience.”

The 2020/21 Youth Poet Laureate mentors will be Laura Da’ and Arianne True. [Laura Da’](#) is a poet and teacher. A lifetime resident of the Pacific Northwest, Da’ studied creative writing at the University of Washington and The Institute of American Indian Arts. Da’ is Eastern Shawnee. Her first book, *Tributaries*, won the American Book Award. Da’ lives near Seattle with her husband and son. Her newest book is *Instruments of the True Measure*. [Arianne True](#) (Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations) is a poet, teacher, and excitable human from right here in Seattle. Arianne has more than a decade of experience working with youth of all ages, and has taught and performed everywhere from the temperate rainforest canopy to under Seattle’s streets, from the intertidal zone to the deck of a tall ship. Arianne is a proud alum of Hedgebrook and of the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts.

Photos and interviews available upon request.

About the YPL Program: A joint program between Seattle Arts & Lectures’ [Writers in the Schools](#) program and [Urban Word NYC](#)—with support from Northwest Folklife, Poetry NW, and the Academy of American Poets—the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate Program aims to identify youth writers and leaders who are committed to civic and community engagement, poetry and performance, human relations, diversity, and education in the greater Seattle region. SAL, WITS, and our other partners recognize that youth voices and community engagement are vital for empowering young people to effect positive changes in their communities and beyond. Each year-long laureateship culminates in a published book of poetry.

About Seattle Arts & Lectures: Founded in 1987, Seattle Arts & Lectures champions the literary arts by engaging and inspiring readers and writers of all generations in the Puget Sound region. SAL's programs include the Literary Arts Series, Poetry Series, Women You Need to Know (WYNK), Journalism Series, SAL Presents, Hinge, Local

Voices, Summer Book Bingo, the Youth Poet Laureate (YPL) program, and Writers in the Schools (WITS). For more information about SAL, visit lectures.org.

About Poetry NW Editions: [Poetry NW Editions](#) grows out of a deep and vital literary tradition. For sixty years, they've published one of the country's finest poetry magazines, presenting northwest writers to a national audience and an expanding roster of poets from around the globe to audiences in the Northwest and beyond. As the publishing industry has changed, so have we. In fall 2018, they added book publishing to the platforms—print and digital—that showcase the imaginative values of the Poetry Northwest community for readers everywhere.