



Media Contact: Letitia Cain
Marketing Coordinator
lcain@lectures.org
206.621.2230 ext. 12

**SEATTLE ARTS & LECTURES ANNOUNCES 2020/21 YOUTH
POET LAUREATE BITANIYA GIDAY TO PUBLISH HER FIRST
BOOK IN JUNE 2021**

***An exclusive online-only interview and reading featuring
Bitaniya will stream on Friday, May 28 at 3 p.m. (PT) at
Northwest Folklife Festival***

Seattle, WA—May 28, 2021: [Seattle Arts & Lectures](#) (SAL) is thrilled to announce the June 2021 release of *Motherland*, the first collection of poetry by the 2020/21 Seattle Youth Poet Laureate, Bitaniya Giday, published by [Poetry NW Editions](#). This week, in a pre-recorded online event as part of the [2021 Folk Life Festival](#), Bitaniya will answer questions regarding her inspirations, her approach towards poetry, and how her writing has evolved throughout the publication process. This event will also reveal the 2021/22 Seattle Youth Poet Laureate and debut the full 2021/22 Youth Poet Laureate cohort on [lectures.org](#).

Bitaniya Giday became the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate in spring of 2020—a time of incredible national trauma and unrest. Her poetry collection, *Motherland*, invites us to interrogate the identities and stories we quietly carry, and explores the complex processes of identification, reconciliation, grief, and healing.

Bitaniya Giday is a first-generation Ethiopian American residing in Seattle. Her writing explores the nuances of womanhood and Blackness, as she reflects upon her family's path of immigration across the world. She hopes to restore and safeguard the past, present, and future histories of her people through traditional storytelling and poetry.

Motherland is currently being printed and will be available to order in June.

To remain updated on availability, please visit <https://lectures.org/youth-programs/youth-poet-laureate/> to sign up for updates, and to meet the 2021/22 Youth Poet Laureate, Zinnia Hansen, and the rest of the incoming cohort!

Photos and interviews with the author are 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 (YPL) program aims to identify youth writers and leaders who are committed to the intersection of civic and community engagement, poetry and performance, justice, 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. At the end of each Youth Poet Laureate's tenure, they publish a book of their poetry in collaboration with Poetry NW Editions.

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, 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.

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