

Biography

Mateo Acuña (he/him) is a gay, transgender Peruvian-American poet, activist, and visual artist. Born and raised in Auburn, he went to Auburn public schools from K-12 and is currently an undergraduate majoring in Visual Arts and English with a Creative Writing concentration. He writes about intersectional identity, and his love for nature, and advocates for social and environmental justice in his works. In addition to poetry, he also writes fiction and creative nonfiction and hopes to write a memoir in the future.

At nineteen, he made his literary debut as the Seattle Youth Poet Laureate. Throughout his term, he's been a featured reader at Seattle Town Hall, The Triple Door, Centilia Cultural Center, the Seattle Art Museum, and more. His debut poetry collection highlighting the intersectionality of gender, race, and environmental and social justice issues will be released through *Poetry Northwest* at Elliot Bay Books in June 2024.

Mateo is the youngest Auburn Poet Laureate to date, having started his three-year term at age twenty. He is also the first transgender, gay, Latino, and POC (person of color) Auburn poet laureate. As an Auburn resident, he felt firsthand the impact of having a poet laureate for the city. He credits his first writing mentor, former Auburn Poet Laureate Susan Landgraf, for teaching him the power of the edit and piquing his interest in poetry. He has plans to relaunch the Teen Writers' Group she led, this time as facilitator, at the Postmark Cultural Center. His focus as Auburn Poet Laureate will be on youth and giving them opportunities to hone their skills as creative writers.