



# Rena Priest



## Conference Opening A Reading and Conversation with Rena Priest

Rena Priest is an enrolled member of the Lhaq'temish (Lummi) Nation who served as the 6th Washington State Poet Laureate (2021-2023) and was named the 2022 Maxine Cushing Gray Distinguished Writing Fellow. Priest is also the recipient of an Allied Arts Foundation Professional Poets Award and fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, Indigenous Nations Poets, Nia Tero, and the Vadon Foundation.

She is the author of three books and editor of two anthologies, including *I Sing the Salmon Home: Poems from Washington State*, and *The Larger Voice: Celebrating the Work of Native Arts and Cultures Foundation Literature Fellows*. Her work can be found in *Poetry Magazine*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Verse Daily*, [poets.org](https://poets.org), *High Country News*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College.

To open the conference, she will share a poetry reading and reflections on food and medicine in the traditions of her tribal culture. She will also discuss how poetry and storytelling, as vital expressions of our humanity, can be used as tools for connection in ways that go beyond the mundane, reaching into the deeply personal while revealing the threads of interrelation that tie us together.