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Former SLO Poet Laureate to Join L.A.-area Author in Kicking Off Cal Poly Summer Reading Series on June 23

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Former SLO County Poet Laureate Dian Sousa will join Los Angeles-based non-fiction author Dinah Lenney on June 23 to kick off the second annual Cal Poly Summer Reading Series.

The free reading will take place at 7 p.m. in Science North (Building 53), Room 215 at Cal Poly.

Sousa, a San Luis Obispo native, attended Cal Poly and has been charging up West Coast poetry audiences for two decades. Her second book of poems, “Lullabies for the Spooked and Cool,” is published by Mille Grazie Press.

Series director Kevin Clark describes Sousa’s writing as both narrative and cutting edge. “Dian’s poetry is hoodwink fast, gut-punch visceral, and always surprising,” he said. “Her poem stories are sometimes pretty funny, and they always turn our conventional expectations around. You get the best kind of literary whiplash listening to her.”

Clark said Cal Poly is fortunate to be able to bring Lenney, who is also a working actress, from Los Angeles, describing her as “one of the best storytellers in California.”

Lenney’s book “Bigger Than Life” is about her relationship with her politically and financially powerful New Jersey father, who was murdered. Clark calls it “a gritty, absorbing, multi-layered true story that grabs you by the lapels and makes you read.”

Best known as Nurse Shirley on the long running “ER,” Lenney has been in more than 30 series and feature movies.

Sponsored by the English Department, WriterSpeak and the Writers-at-Work series, Cal Poly’s Summer Reading Series gives both the campus and local communities a chance to hear and meet literary authors during the summer months.

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