

## PAST POETS

**MARIA LISELLA (2015—2019):** Maria Lisella is the sixth Poet Laureate of Queens and the first Italian American to be so named. Her Pushcart Prize-nominated work appears in *Thieves in the Family* (NYQ Books), *Amore on Hope Street* (Finishing Line Press) and *Two Naked Feet* (Poets Wear Prada). Her work has appeared in *New Verse News*, *The New York Quarterly*, *Ovunque Siamo*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *Skidrow Penthouse*, and *Shrew*. Work has also been published in recent anthologies such as *The Traveler's Vade Mecum* (Red Hen Press, 2017) while her essay, *Shades, Colors and Internal Dialogues* appears in *What Does It Mean to Be White in America?* (2LeafPress) and her travel piece, *Lemmings* appears in the five-volume collection *She Can Find Her Way* (Upper Hand Press, 2017). She co-curates the 28-year old Italian American Writers Association literary series. By day, she is a NY Expert for USA TODAY, Europe Editor for Travel Market Report and contributes to the bilingual, *La Voce di New York*.

**PAOLO JAVIER (2010 – 2014):** Paolo Javier is the fifth Poet Laureate of Queens. A native of the Philippines, he is an award-winning author of seven chapbooks and four full-length books of poetry, including *Court of the Dragon* (Nightboat Books, May 2015).

During his tenure as Queens Poet Laureate, Javier performed his own poetry across the five boroughs; curated the work of local and international poets, artists, musicians, and publishers through Queens Poet Lore, his own roving series set across the borough; and mounted several acclaimed public programs at distinguished institutions such as Queens Library, the Museum of the Moving Image, and Queens Museum. Javier earned his MFA and MAT from Bard College, and lives with family in Sunnyside, where he is a longtime resident.

**JULIO MARZAN (2007 – 2010):** Born in Puerto Rico in 1946, Julio Marzan is the Fourth Poet Laureate of Queens. He has published two books of poetry and his poems have appeared in numerous journals. His work also appears in several anthologies and college texts, as well as translations. Mr. Marzan is also the author of two non-fiction books. A professor of English at Nassau Community College, in spring 2006 he was Visiting Professor of Romance Languages at Harvard University. A resident of Queens for most of his adult life, he graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School and later studied at Fordham University (B.A.), Columbia University (M.F.A.), and New York University (Ph.D.).

**ISHLE YI PARK (2004 – 2007):** Ishle Yi Park is the third Poet Laureate of Queens. Her first book, entitled *The Temperature of This Water*, is the winner of the 2005 PEN America Beyond Margins Award and the 2005 Members' Choice Award of the Asian American Literary Awards. Ishle has performed at more than 300 venues here and overseas. She was a touring cast member of the Tony Award-winning "Russell Simmons Presents: Def Poetry Jam," performing in 51 cities in the United States and at the Auckland Festival in New Zealand. The *New York Times* wrote, "Ms. Park has an angelic face and the soul of a rock star."

**HAL SIROWITZ (2001 – 2004):** Hal Sirowitz is the second Poet Laureate of Queens. He is the author of six books of poetry, although probably best known for the volumes; *Mother Said, My Therapist Said, and Father Said*. He has performed on MTV, at Lollapalooza, and can be heard on several recordings. He is currently the best-selling translated poet in Norway, where his work has also inspired a much-loved animated series. Hal is a cult figure of sorts in literary circles throughout the world, as a poet, a performance artist, a comedian, a teacher, and an all-around good guy. Born in New York City in 1949, he received a B.A. in English Literature from New York University, an M.A. in Special Education from

Hofstra, and has taught Special Education in the New York public school system for 25 years. His father was a salesman in New York's garment district, and his mother, Estelle -- well, she worried. He is married to writer Mary Minter Krotzer.

**STEPHEN STEPANCHEV (1997– 2001):** In 1997, Dr. Stephen Stepanchev was named the first Poet Laureate of the borough of Queens. His poems, like his life, reflect the rich immigrant experience so familiar to our neighborhoods. He was born in Mokrin, Yugoslavia, in 1915. On a scholarship, he went to the University of Chicago. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army, and he received a Bronze Star Medal. From 1949 to 1985, he taught Creative Writing at Queens College. He has published a major critique of American poetry, eleven collections of poems, and appears regularly in such venues as *The New Yorker* and Poetry magazines. Dr. Stephen Stepanchev has inspired several generations of writers.