

Please join us to celebrate the publication of the
First full-length volume of creative literature composed in
Armenian by a US-born author

TO SAY WITH PASSION: WHY AM I HERE?

Կիրքով ըսելով՝ ինչո՞ւ հոս եմ

(Yerevan: ARI Literature, 2021)

By UCLA alumna **TENNY ARLEN**

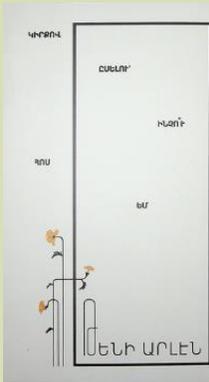
After over a century of Armenian-American community development, this is a landmark achievement by a former UCLA student. It is also one of the first public outcomes of the emphasis that UCLA Narekatsi Chair's Armenian program has placed on the concept of Armenian as a living and creative language in diaspora.

Friday, May 20th at 6:00pm

UCLA Bunche Hall, Room 10383

(a wine and cheese reception will follow)

To attend the event virtually, via the Zoom Webinar platform RSVP [here](#).



Tenny Arlen grew up in San Luis Obispo, CA far removed from any Armenian community. She began her undergraduate studies at UCLA in 2011 with no prior knowledge of Armenian. She took courses in Western Armenian language and literature for two years with Dr. Hagop Kouloujian, and, already a talented writer, soon began to write poetry in Armenian. In 2013, she graduated from UCLA with highest honors, earning a B.A. in Comparative Literature. In 2015, she was admitted into the University of Michigan's

doctoral program in Comparative Literature with a plan to study French and Armenian symbolist poetry, but she passed away in a car accident in the summer of 2015 before beginning the program. She wrote the first drafts of most of the poems collected in this book about 15–20 months after beginning Armenian language studies. Her posthumous book of poetry, published by the ARI Literature Foundation (Yerevan, 2021) with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, is entitled *To Say with Passion: Why Am I Here?* (Կիրքով ըսելով՝ ինչո՞ւ հոս եմ), a line taken from one of her poems, in which the Armenian language speaks about its own existence in the twenty-first century Diaspora. The book was edited by Dr. Kouloujian, who also wrote its afterword, in which he tells of Tenny's creative journey in Armenian and highlights the book's significance as the first full-length volume of creative literature written and published in Armenian by a US-born author.

This event is co-sponsored by the [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation](#), [UCLA Narekatsi Chair of Armenian Studies](#), [UCLA Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures](#), [The Promise Armenian Institute at UCLA](#), and the [UCLA Armenian Students' Association](#).