



UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

2018 NEWSLETTER

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Dr. Antonio D. Tillis
Dean, CLASS

Dr. James Kastely
English Dept. Chair

Alex Parsons
CWP Director

Giuseppe Taurino
Associate Director

In Memory of Michelle Boisseau (PhD, 1985)

1955 – 2017



Death Gets into the Suburbs

It sweats into the tongue and groove
of redwood decks with a Tahoe view.
It slides under the truck where some knuckles
are getting banged up on a stuck nut.
It whirls in the egg whites. Among blacks
and whites spread evenly. Inside the chicken
factory, the Falcon 7x, and under the bridge.

There's death by taxi, by blood clot, by slippery rug.
Death by oops and flood, by drone and gun.

Death with honor derides death without.
Realpolitik and offshore accounts
are erased like a thumb drive lost in a fire.

And the friendly crow sets out walnuts to pop under tires.

So let's walk the ruins, let's walk along the ocean
and listen to death's undying devotion.

-From the January 2012 issue of *Poetry*

From the Director



Fellow writers,

We began the academic year with the alliterative Hurricane Harvey. The resultant, derivative motto “Houston Strong” (which I always want to say with a Russian accent while fist-thumping my chest) did not inspire, but the efforts of the entire community did. The storm was staggering—when the water subsided we surfaced from the largest tropical cyclone in recorded U.S. history. It was, in short, the kind of eminently braggable bad weather and distinction no one hopes for.

In Roy Cullen, refrigerator-sized dehumidifiers buzzed. Galeforce™ fans gave the impression we inhabited a jet engine. Mold blossomed, plaster bubbled, soggy carpet mildewed in garbage bags. So it looked like always, if louder. Historical neglect of the building had prepared us. In the deafening turbulence, people communicated with the exaggerated gestures and expressions of mimes. Here I have to say that Giuseppe’s upbringing in Queens gave him the most expressive repertoire.

In the storm and aftermath, amid the flooding and displacement, professors and students taught and studied and wrote. In many ways, disruption proved generative. Our incoming class of newly initiated Houstonians, for example, hewed together with inspiring good humor. They seemed to become more enthused with life here because of the hardship. Collectively, we came to appreciate the worth of art and literature, and the routines that are necessary to create these; such circumstance emphasizes their necessity as they contextualize and stabilize the day-to-day.

Exiting the storm and immediate recovery, we enjoyed a stellar year in almost all respects save Mat Johnson’s departure. We will miss Mat terribly. He put a decade into the program and many of us benefitted from his insight, humor, and writing. His departure was also a catalyst. We look toward next year with a new slate of diversity fellowships, community-based fellowships, visiting writers, and endowed professorships. We will also hire a new poet and a fiction writer to join our permanent faculty.

In the headwinds of the privatization of American education, writing programs often experience dispiriting change—staff cuts, budget cuts, fellowship cuts. The most unkindest cuts, as it were. But we continue to thrive. This year, like last, we fully funded 100% of our incoming class of 15 students. We did this by coordinating with other programs and institutions (special thanks to our friends at Inprint, as always; also Arte Público Press, the Center for Mexican American Studies, and Brazos Bookstore). We also continue to develop assistantships that provide professional training that does not revolve around teaching, such as in arts administration. Thanks to these our website features videos on student life in Houston and how to apply to graduate school; the number of people following us on social media has quadrupled in a year; and event coordination has increased attendance at literary happenings across-the-board. Lastly, we’ve formalized a multi-year initiative, Sustaining the Writing Life. This pilot program places graduate students with non- and for-profit institutions and companies, who share the cost of student support in return for a sharp writer not so different from yourself.

Our students have been similarly industrious. Of note, in conjunction with Inprint and the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center, one group established writing workshops in local homeless shelters; another student is teaching writing in the local jail; two are working on a Hurricane Harvey oral history project in Meyerland. Many graduates have come through on book tour; several of our PhDs have contracts or will publish books before they go up for their dissertation defenses and move on to professorships.

Finally, I sent a missive in the fall asking for alumni and student experiences at the CWP in light of the many national revelations connected to the #MeToo movement. The responses have broadly been supportive, useful, and balanced. UH implemented mandatory Title IX training for all staff and faculty, but we want to be more proactive and encompassing, which is why we've engaged with you to ensure we have a program that benefits all who attend. No one who spends three or five years here should leave with a case that the time was wasted, counter-productive, traumatic, or a boondoggle.

We'll contact those of you who responded to our March questionnaire and want to advise incoming and current students with whom you self-identify, be this on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, region, socio-economic class, or a number of other categories. This will become the basis for better recruitment, better support, and better adjustment within the program. It should also promote dialogue over meeting the needs and wants of the writers who come here. Our goal is to promote a community that mirrors the nation's broad diversity, supports a panoply of voices, and makes every writer who graduates sure that the time, education, and effort was well spent. It's to this end that we will now hire new professors, visiting writers, and recruit even more students.

If we get another bumper hurricane season let's hope that in its wake the sun shines on you as brightly and benevolently as it has this year.

With thanks,

Alex

Program News

Literature and Medicine AWP 2018



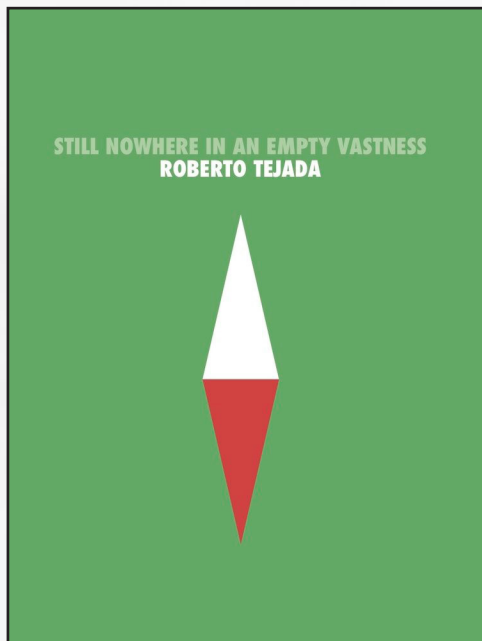
The University of Houston's Creative Writing Program, with the support of CavanKerry Press, sponsored a literature and medicine volunteer opportunity at the Tampa General Hospital during the Associated Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Tampa. Writers from Illinois, Texas, Tennessee, California, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin read in German, French, Creole, Spanish, and English to admitted patients and outpatients. The group included UH alum Conor Bracken and current students Chelsea Brennan DesAutels and Josie Mitchell. Writing workshops were also run for chaplains and for children on the pediatric unit.

Ecopoetics



The first workshop of the Fall 2017 Ecopoetics on the Gulf (also known as Shrimp Boat) was replaced by unscheduled independent research on Hurricane Harvey. Later the class teamed with UH biology faculty and the UH Coastal Center for a field introduction to local ecology. The usual trips—kayaking and birding—were augmented by a filmmaking trip to Cocodrie, Louisiana, home to the Louisiana Universities' Marine Consortium. Despite the cold and wind, the group took a boat tour of restored marsh (by pipeline sediment) and warmed up with local beer, fresh crabs and redfish, and carrot casserole. Veins in the Gulf filmmaker Elizabeth Coffman assisted students with sound design, and their cinepoems were shown as part of the Library's Poetry and Prose series. Throughout the semester, the class studied ecopoetics, read shore odes, and wrote their own threshold-inspired poems.

Faculty News

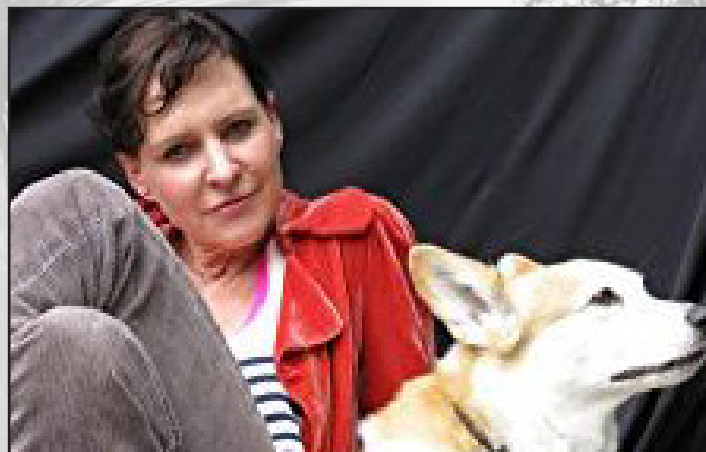


Roberto Tejada's recent publications include a four-part essay "Diagonal and Self-Possessed: Group-Portrait with Liminal Figures," featured on the Poetry Foundation's *Harriet* website (June 2018). His art writings include an essay on Latin American and Latinx pop art in the catalog to *Pop América: Contesting Freedom, 1965-1975*. The exhibition opens in October 2018 at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, and will be on view in 2019-2020 at Duke University's Nasher Museum and Northwestern University's Block Museum. His book *Still Nowhere in an Empty Vastness*, is forthcoming from Noemi Press's *Infidel Poetics* series in the fall of 2018. The essays and manifestos engage hemispheric desires and borderland eventualities in the geopolitical imagination of the Americas, from Cabeza de Vaca and Mary Rowlandson to contemporary poets Reina María Rodríguez, from Cuba, and Chicano multimedia wordsmith Harry Gamboa, Jr., from Los Angeles.

Antonya Nelson taught at Tin and Bear River this past summer. She also insulated a house, built a bed frame and installed a pressed tin ceiling....though she doesn't suppose anybody wants to hear about that.

In November, Graywolf Press published Martha Collins' and **Kevin Prufer's** *Into English: Poems, Translations, Commentaries, an anthology of essays on the art of translation*. His newest book, *How He Loved Them*, was published by Four Way Books April 2018.

Kevin was also awarded the Poetry Society of America's Lyric Prize for 2018.



Peter Turchi was a guest speaker at Texas Christian University, published "Canyon View," an essay about personal and historic enchantment with the Grand Canyon, and received a Houston Arts Alliance fellowship for "That is Not to Say We Have No Regrets," a section of a novel-in-progress that he presented as part of a multimedia presentation with music and songs by his son, Reed Turchi.



This fall **Martha Serpas's** *Ecopoetics of the Gulf* workshop made it to Cocodrie, Louisiana, for instruction at the State's marine consortium. A marsh boat tour and some very fresh redfish were highlights. Martha also organized a narrative medicine outreach to patients and staff at Tampa General Hospital during the AWP Conference. She delivered a key note address, "Ecological Metaphors and Paradox," at the Sustainable Cities and Communities Conference to inaugurate LSU's new Center for Collaborative Knowledge. That talk led to a *New York Times*

op-ed "Don't Drain the Swamp," which points out the irony of using a vital, fecund, and diverse ecosystem as a metaphor for political dysfunction (regardless of how innocuous rural/Southern bashing is believed to be). She also read poems connecting Northeast and Southern coastal erosion, oil dredging and fracking at the University of Scranton. Her poem "City of Small Streams" was commissioned by Minor Design and accepted by the City for the Bayou Greenways 2020 Project. A collaboration with Cheryl Beckett, UH Graphic Design coordinator, the installation will line a section of White Oak Bayou.



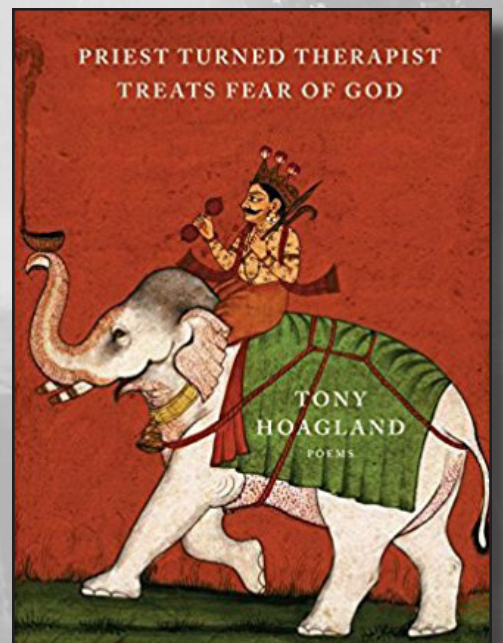
For **Audrey Colombe**, the past year had the usual activities (Glass Mountain, Write-a-thon, Boldface, AWP with students, the Provost's Prize in Undergraduate Creative Writing, the CW Pedagogy course and Supervising the Creative Writing Program Teaching Assistants), but also included the death of her mother, Pat Colombe, which made life a little slower—and has changed the lenses for a while.



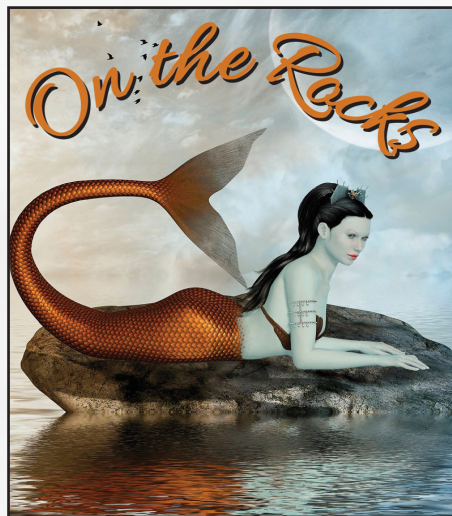
Robert Boswell gave a lecture and held workshop at the Warren Wilson residency and the Tin House conference. His story "The Use of Landscape"

will appear in *Houston Noir*, and he has a story forthcoming in an anthology about an iconic Houston institution: Poison Girl.

Tony Hoagland's most recent book, *Priest Turned Therapist Treats Fear of God*, was published by Graywolf Press in June 2018. His poetry-teaching textbook, *The Art of Voice: Principles and Practice* will be published by Norton in the summer of 2019.



Student News



Theodora Bishop's (PhD, Poetry) novella, *On the Rocks*, was the runner-up for the 2016 Clay Reynolds Novella Prize at Texas Review Press (TRP) and published by TRP in February 2018. *On the Rocks* was also the winning novella for the 2018 New Generation Indie Awards. In the spring of 2018, Bishop was named one of the University of Alabama's College of Arts & Sciences "30 Under 30 Outstanding Alumni," and featured in its newsletter *The Collegian* for her work as a poet and fiction writer. She has fiction forthcoming in *The Texas Review* and poetry in *Barrow Street* and *The Plume Anthology of Long-ish Poems*.



Chelsea B. DesAutels (MFA, Poetry) had poems accepted at *TriQuarterly*, *Pleiades*, and *Notre Dame Review*. She received support from the Vermont Studio Center and Community of Writers at Squaw Valley. Chelsea won the

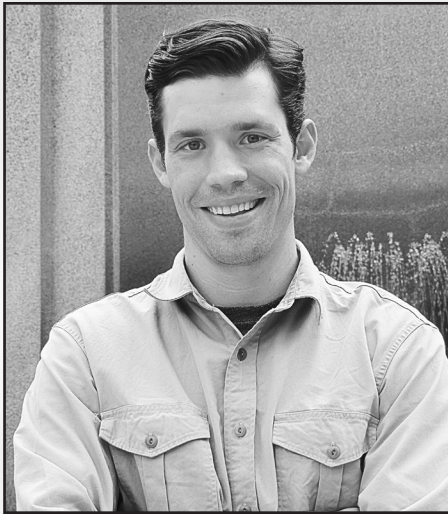


Joshua Dewain Foster (PhD, Fiction) is ABD, in his fourth and final year of PhD work at the University of Houston, where he is the Online Fiction Editor for *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature & Fine Arts*. Recently, the opening

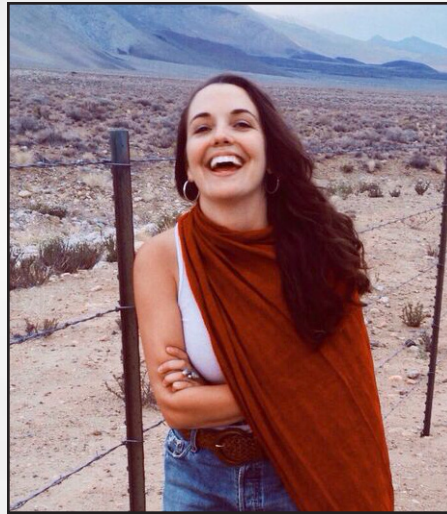
chapters of his novel. *Jokers Wild* was awarded the Inprint Donald Barthelme Memorial Prize in Fiction. His short story "The Dogman Cometh" is forthcoming in *DIA-*



Niki Herd (PhD, Poetry) was invited to read her work at Carlow University in Pittsburgh earlier in the year; she also participated in the WITS Alumni Reading: The Unfiltered Imagination at AWP in Tampa. For a second year, she served as a semi-final judge for the Poetry Out Loud National Championship in Washington, DC. Her work has been published in or is forthcoming from *The Texas Review*, *Obsidian*, *The Rumpus*, and the anthology *The BreakBeat Poets, Vol. 2*. She was recently awarded a fellowship to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.



Rob Howell's (PhD, Fiction) short story, *The Spillway*, won the Jack Dyer Fiction Prize from *Crab Orchard Review*. He also received a Tennessee Williams Scholarship and a Cullen travel grant to attend the 2018 Sewanee Writers' Conference.



Carolann Caviglia Madden (PhD, Poetry) was awarded a Fulbright to Galway, Ireland for the Fall 2018 semester. While on her Fulbright, she will undertake archival research in the James Hardiman Library at NUI Galway on folklore and folklore collectors in the West of Ireland. She is particularly interested in the role of women and 'outsiders' in early folklore collecting in Ireland, as well as how and why creative writers, from Lady Gregory to Tim Robinson, utilize Irish folklore in their work, and to what effect.



Brendan Stephens (PhD, Fiction) published short stories in *Epoch* and *The Notre Dame Review*, and an essay in *Phoebe*.



Alex McElroy's (PhD, Fiction) essay, "Hazardous Cravings," appeared in the *Tin House Candy* Issue this spring. He was also awarded a Work Study Fellowship from the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference.



Charlotte Wyatt (MFA, Fiction) won the Inprint Donald Barthelme Prize in Fiction, and has taken the job of Fiction Director for the Napa Valley Writers' Conference.

Writing Prizes

*Inprint and the University of Houston's
Creative Writing Program
are pleased to announce the writing prize winners
for 2017 – 2018*

INPRINT JOAN AND STANFORD ALEXANDER PRIZE IN
FICTION
Michele Nereim

INPRINT VERLAINE PRIZE IN POETRY
Chelsea Brennan DesAustels

INPRINT MARION BARTHELME PRIZE IN
CREATIVE WRITING
Georgia Pearle

INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME PRIZE IN NONFICTION
Alex McElroy

INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME PRIZES IN FICTION
Joshua Foster and Charlotte Wyatt

INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME PRIZES IN POETRY
Joshua Gottlieb-Miller and Samantha Thilen

INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME GULF COAST EDITOR'S PRIZE
Luisa Muradyan-Tannahill

BRAZOS BOOKSTORE / ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS PRIZE
Paige Quiñones

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

JUDGES

MARION BARTHELME PRIZE
Miah Arnold (UH Alum)

FICTION
Manuel Gonzales

POETRY
Nicole Cooley

NONFICTION
Reginald Dwayne Betts

Graduates

New Students

2018-2019

Fall 2017

Sam Dinger, MFA, Fiction
Martha Stallman, PhD, Fiction

Spring 2018

Rhianna Brandt, PhD, Poetry
Thomas Cardamone, MFA Fiction
Daniel Chu, MFA Poetry
Catherine Cleary, MFA, Poetry
JP Gritton, PhD, Fiction
Jennifer Lowe, PhD, Poetry
Josie Mitchell, MFA, Fiction
Christopher Murray, PhD, Poetry
Alexandra Naumann, MFA, Fiction
Wanjiku Ngugi, MFA, Fiction
Aza Pace, MFA, Poetry
Adrienne Perry, PhD, Fiction
Martin Rock, PhD, Poetry
Samantha Thilen, MFA, Poetry
Lani Yu, MFA, Poetry
Andrea Syzdek, MFA Poetry

Fiction

Roseanne Aarii, MFA
BA, University of Houston

Blaine Ely, PhD
BA, Western Kentucky
University
MA, Auburn University
MFA, University of Oregon

James Gilson, MFA
BA, Kansas State University
MA, Kansas State University

Sonia Hamer, PhD
BA, Rice University

Cameron Lehman, MFA
BA, Stanford University

Madeleine Maillet, PhD
BA, University of Toronto
MA, Concordia University

Colby Ornell, PhD
BA, Wheaton College
MFA, Butler University

Sarah Robinson, MFA
BA, University of New Mexico

Obiamoch Umeozor, PhD
BA, University of Port Harcourt
MFA, Florida State University

Poetry

Despy Boutris, MFA
BA, California Poly Technical
University

Rohan Chhetri, PhD
BA, KC College
MA, Mumbai University
MFA, Syracuse University

Brittney Crowell, PhD
BA, Spellman College
MFA, Texas A&M Texarkana

Emelie Griffin, PhD
BA, Kalamzaoo College
MFA, Syracuse University

Nicholas Rattner, PhD
BA, Carelton College
MFA, University of
Massachusetts-Amherst

Grace Wagner, MFA
BA, University of Colorado-
Denver

Poison Pen Reading Series



Always on the last Thursday of the month, the Poison Pen Reading Series features nationally renowned writers and local talent, as well as members of the University of Houston community. Now in its 12th year, Poison Pen continues with its sometimes raunchy, rarely classy, but always exceptional ensemble of readers and audience. This past year, the series featured visiting writers Yuki Tanaka, Roger Reeves, Shelia Maldonado, Arna B. Hemenway, and Micah Bateman. Also featured were: local writers Daniel Pena, BJ Love, Zachary Caballero, Christopher Diaz, and Amir Safi; UH alums Casey Fleming, Kery Beth Neville, Beth Lyons and Ed Porter; UH faculty members Robert Boswell and Antonya Nelson; and current UH students Niki Herd, Onyinye Ihezukwu. Alex McElroy, Cait Weiss, and Ji yoon Lee. For the November reading, the Gulf Coast editors read rapid fire amidst smoke, whiskey, and applause. Poison Pen is organized by Giuseppe Taurino (UH MFA, 2006), Analia Sotelo (UH MFA, 2012) UH PhD student Erika Jo Brown, Scott Repass (co-owner of Poison Pen), Casey Fleming (UH MFA, 2007), UH faculty member Mat Johnson, and David Maclean (UH PhD, 2009). This year we say goodbye to PP friend and advisor, UH faculty member Mat Johnson, who is leaving for a new position at the University of Oregon.



Thanks for everything, Mat.
Houston will miss you.



Inprint News

A nonprofit organization directly serving more than 15,000 people annually, Inprint's mission is to inspire readers and writers in Houston. Through well-attended readings, fully-subscribed writing workshops, innovative literary collaborations, continued support for emerging writers, and a new podcast, Inprint has helped to transform Houston into a diverse and thriving literary metropolis, where creativity is celebrated and Houstonians come together to engage with the written word.

Since Inprint's inception in 1983, supporting, championing, and working with the wonderful talent of the University of Houston Creative Writing Program (UH CWP) has been one of the organization's core priorities. Looking forward to another great year ahead, Inprint will proudly provide fellowships, prizes, and



other support to graduate students at the UH CWP. Last year alone these Inprint fellows and juried prize winners received \$198,500, and over the years Inprint has given more than \$4 million to over 500 graduate students. Inprint will also once again provide an annual grant to Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature & Fine Arts, helping to ensure that the journal continues to thrive. The Inprint Fund, managed by the UH CWP, provided more than \$18,000 last year to fund three dissertation fellowships and four author visits.

As in the past, Inprint will also employ UH CWP students and alums in a variety of ways. Many Inprint Writers Workshops, Intensive Workshops, Teachers-As-Writers Workshops, Senior Memoir Workshops, and Life Writing Workshops at Methodist Hospital—which help individuals of all backgrounds to become better writers—are taught by grad students and alumni. Inprint umbrellaed two new pilot workshops last year (thanks to the initiative and leadership of UH CWP students), Inprint Incarcerated Workshops at Harris County Jail and Inprint Homeless Workshops at centers serving homeless populations.



UH CWP students and graduates are also hired to serve as Inprint Poetry Buskers, a team of writers who demystify the writing process and spread the joy of poetry by writing free poems on demand with typewriters at festivals and special events throughout the city. Inprint is excited to be launching a Bilingual Inprint Poetry Buskers team this year as well.



*Top left: 2017-18 Inprint CWP Prize Winners.
Top right: Inprint Poetry Buskers
Bottom right: Inprint Incarcerated Workshop*

Inprint Reading Series



The Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, now entering its 37th season and presented in association with the UH CWP, makes it possible for thousands of Houstonians to meet and hear from the world's most accomplished writers and thinkers. Over the years, the series has featured more than 350 great writers of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. The 2018/2019 season features a dynamic lineup of authors, including Man Booker finalist Esi Edugyan, *New York Times* bestselling author and Hurston/Wright Legacy Award recipient Tayari Jones, Orange Prize winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist Barbara Kingsolver, MacArthur Fellow and National Book Critics Circle Award winner

Jonathan Lethem, MacArthur Fellow and National Book Critics Circle Award winner Claudia Rankine, *New York Times* Notable Book author and National Book Critics Circle Award finalist Gary Shteyngart, *New York Times* bestseller Meg Wolitzer, and others. Readings take place at Cullen Performance Hall on the UH campus and at Stude Concert Hall at Rice University. UH CWP students are given complimentary tickets, and one or two writers each year give free craft talks on the UH campus for the benefit of the UH CWP. UH Creative Writing Program faculty and alumni also often serve as on-stage interviewers for the readings.

For more information on all of Inprint's programs, including the **Inprint Writers Workshops**, **Inprint Writing Cafe**, **Cool Brains! Inprint Readings for Young People**, the **Inprint Book Club**, community programs, collaborative readings, and more, visit www.inprinthouston.org, call 713.521.2026, join the email list, follow Inprint on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



BRAZOS

BOOKSTORE

Brazos Bookstore has been Houston's premier literary bookseller since 1974,

a curated retail/community space featuring new fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, with a special emphasis on independent publishers and literature-in-translation. The store is honored to continue partnerships with some of Houston's foremost literary arts organizations, including the University of Houston Creative Writing Program (you!), Gulf Coast, Inprint, and many others.



Brazos Bookstore's events program is varied, ranging from local authors to internationally renowned figures, in a variety of venues across Houston. We host over 300 events a year! In the past two years, Brazos has hosted several Pulitzer Prize-winners and Nobel laureates, and authors from countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Denmark, France, Iceland, Indonesia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Congo, South Korea, Spain, and Turkey, a diverse event schedule which reflects the internationality of Houston.

Recent notable authors include Zadie Smith, Colson Whitehead, Eileen Myles, Brene Brown, Michael Chabon, John Freeman, Jeffrey Eugenides, Dan Rather, Reza Aslan, Jesmyn Ward, Cecile Richards, Mohsin Hamid, Kevin Powers, Terrance Hayes, and David Sedaris. Those in attendance are able to see these authors in an intimate environment and are often able to engage in conversation with them about their work.

So come by and see us! We've got books and authors. What more is there to say?

Upcoming Notable Events:

In-store

Ticketed

September 4 | Luisa Muradyan
September 12 | Sarah Bird
September 28 | Henk Rossuow
October 1 | Cristina Rivera Garza
October 4 | Ben Fountain

October 5 | Alan Lightman
October 9 | Lacy Johnson
October 30 | B.A. Shapiro
November 17 | Jessica Wilbanks

September 14 | DeRay Mckesson
October 6 | Jodi Picoult
September 24 | Jose Antonio Vargas
October 16 | Ron Chernow
October 19 | Anne Lamott

Come visit us! 2421 Bissonnet Street | 713-523-0701 | brazosbookstore.com | [@brazosbookstore](https://twitter.com/brazosbookstore)

Writers in the Schools

Since 1983, Writers in the Schools (WITS) has brought professional writers into classrooms, fostering the creativity, critical thinking, and adaptive learning skills that students need to succeed in the 21st century. WITS offers creative writing, digital storytelling, and performance poetry workshops in schools, museums, hospitals, community centers, parks, libraries, camps, and juvenile detention centers, meeting students where



they are with innovative learning strategies. WITS also provides professional development opportunities for educators, giving them the tools to engage their students in the power of reading and writing.

This year, WITS was delighted to welcome new writers from the University of Houston Creative Writing Program to our teaching roster: Michelle Orsi, Justin Jannise, David Nikityn, LeeAnne Carlson, and Annie Shepherd. Many congratulations to WITS writer Chelsea Brennan Desautels on winning the Inprint Paul Verlaine Prize in Poetry and to Cait Weiss Orcutt on the publication of her first book, *Valleyspeak*. We are grateful

for our WITS writers who infuse the classroom with fun and engaging activities and create a rigorous and celebratory learning experience for our students. WITS has been hard at work this year helping to cultivate and advocate for Houston's literary landscape:

WITS has been hard at work this year helping to cultivate and advocate for Houston's literary landscape: In partnership with Houston Public Library and the City of Houston, WITS established the Houston Youth Poet Laureate program to identify young writers committed to civic and community engagement, poetry and performance, and education across Houston. Rukmini Kalamangalam, a recent graduate of Carnegie Vanguard High School in Houston ISD, was named Houston's third Youth Poet Laureate. She was also named the regional Southwest Youth Poet Laureate and was one of five finalists for the National Youth Poet Laureate title. She will be attending Emory University this fall.

In celebration of National Poetry Month, WITS collaborated with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership and artist Nicola Parente to create the interactive public art project, Poet-Trees. In response to Hurricane Harvey, this year's Poet-Trees offered a theme of healing: "Dear Houston: Poems of Love from a City of Resilience." Wrapped in colorful material symbolizing water, visitors from as far as Poland and Germany placed their messages of love and hope on the trees, transform the installation into beacons of color and life at Eleanor Tinsley Park.

In addition to enhancing our local literary community, WITS leads an international network of sister programs through the WITS Alliance. Each year, the WITS Alliance has a strong national presence at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference, fostering discussions on key issues in the literary community. Many of our writers have gone on to establish their own WITS programs as well, and we are happy to support them as members of the WITS Alliance.

For the last 35 years, WITS has helped fuel Houston's creative economy by giving creative individuals the opportunity not only to earn a living, but also to make a difference in the lives of Houston students. Through the strength and talent of our writers, we have been able to expand and grow our program and now reach over 52,000 students each year. We recognize the success of our organization depends on the quality of our writers. WITS employs and trains approximately 200 writers and teachers each year, giving them the opportunity for professional growth, to build new networks, and to connect with Greater Houston community.

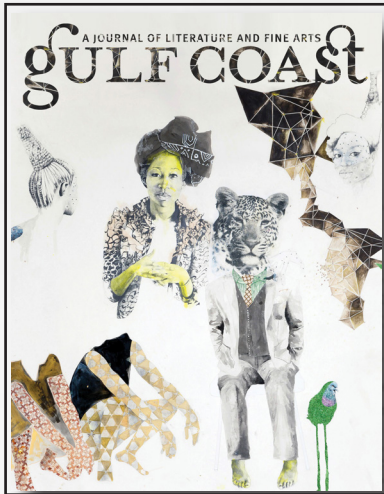
For more information about WITS, including how to apply for a teaching position, please visit us at witshouston.org or call 713-523-3877.



Gulf Coast

A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts

2017-2018 was another memorable year for *Gulf Coast* as we welcomed our new brilliant group of Senior Editors Justin Jannise, Paige Quiñones, and Robbie Howell to the *Gulf Coast* team. Looking back at this year we were thrilled to be able to continue our mission to support art and literature of consequence.

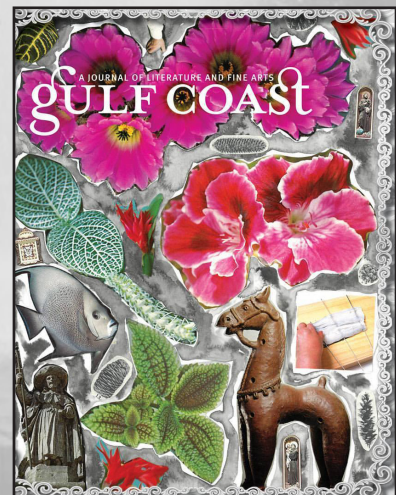


We were proud to bring a star-studded group of authors to Houston for this year's *Gulf Coast* Reading Series. With our Reading Series hosts Alex McElroy and Samantha Thilén on the mic, the reading series continued to live up to its reputation as one of the best in Houston. We were thankful for the support of the CWP that helped make lunch talks possible with several of our featured readers. Readers included Adrian Matejka, Allegra Hyde, Carmen Maria Machado, Kelly Sundberg, Beth Ann Fennelly, Molly McCully Brown, John Andrews, and Elizabeth Lyons. In addition to our Reading Series, *Gulf Coast* was also honored to partner with the Houston Museum of African American Culture to host Marcus Wicker in conversation with artist David McGee. *Gulf Coast* also went full Florida at AWP Tampa with a flamingo and palm tree themed booth. We also joined forces with *Subtropics*, *Bat City Review*, and *Pleiades* for a reading with Hadara Bar-Nadav, Sam Sax, Ange Mlinko, Erin Adair-Hodges, and Mary Miller.

2017 was also a banner year for *Gulf Coast* contests. We were thrilled to launch the Toni Beauchamp Prize in Critical Art Writing, which is focused on encouraging and fostering this important type of scholarship. Esteemed art writer Darby English judged our prize and we were thrilled to publish our winner in our summer issue. In addition to our Art Prize we were also thrilled to have Roxane Gay judge our Barthelme Prize and John Keene judge our Translation Prize.

Gulf Coast continued to enjoy building strong relationships with local Houston organizations like the Houston Endowment, Houston Arts Alliance, the Brown Foundation, Inprint, the Lawndale Art Center, HMAAC, and the University of Houston to name a few. *Gulf Coast* also partnered with Pleiades Press to distribute another important issue of the *Unsung Masters Series*.

Gulf Coast Online also had a strong year by publishing the work of a wide range of award winning authors as Online Exclusives. Some highlights included Dinah Cox, Marcela Sulak, and Maureen Langloss. Our newest print issue features the brilliant art work of Ruby Onyinyechi Amanze and new work by Porochista Khakpour, Debbie Urbanski, Yuki Tanaka, Jenny Molberg, Adeeba Talukder, Seely, Paige Lewis, Renee Gladman and many more!



Glass Mountain

The Undergraduate Literary Journal at the University of Houston



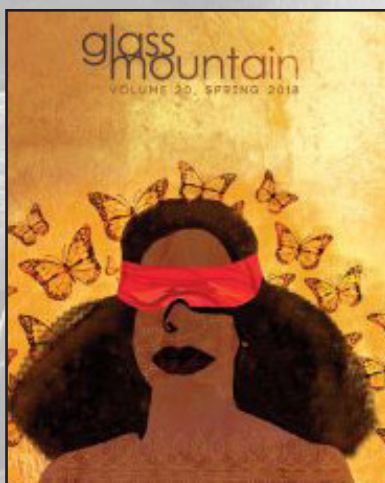
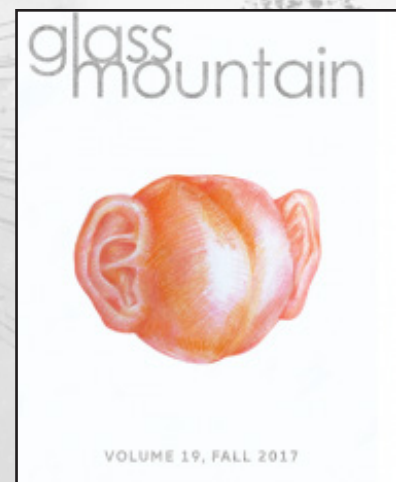
Glass Mountain's staff doubled in size for the 2017–2018 academic year. Led by Faculty Advisor Audrey Colombe, Graduate Advisor Josie Mitchell, Editor Kim Coy and Co-managing Editors Amanda Ortiz and Anthony Álvares, the fall staff consisted of Web Editor Carol Harkness, Co-prose Editors Kathy Hill and Aubrey Cowley, Art Editor Stephanie Matthiesen, Reviews and Interviews Editor Vinh Hoang, Public Relations Manager Austin Svedjan and Poetry Editor Aubrey Ward. Our plates were full right away as we hit the ground running: planning our fall reading series, organizing the Write-A-Thon fundraiser and preparing the long-term plans for the Boldface Conference. While the staff of associate editors doubled in size, we managed

to stay busy reading hundreds of submissions from all over the world.

We held readings at Bohemeo's and Brasil and featured a variety of readers, including CWP students Ji Yoon Lee, Will Burns, Erika Jo Brown, our former graduate advisor, and LeeAnne Carlson, former *Glass Mountain* Editor. Aspiring comedian Vinh Hoang tried his hand at emceeing to good-natured jeers, and Amanda Ortiz kept the Halloween reading spooky yet cute, prowling onstage as a cat. Our courageous open mic participants never failed to wow the crowd with vivacious spoken word and subdued sonnets—even if they sometimes had to be reminded of the time limit!

After returning from winter break, the masthead changed as Austin Svedjan stepped into the role of Co-managing Editor after Anthony Álvares bowed out. Six editors attended AWP in Tampa, where we met with other literary magazines and organizations and picked up amazing swag and books. At the UH mixer, we rubbed elbows with CWP alum and faculty,

further deepening our relationship with the graduate program and getting to know the work and faces of the program. We were awed by the work of Bat Cat Press, an indie press run by high school students, and determined to redouble our efforts to reach out to high schoolers, especially those in the Houston area, by attending FuenteCo's Youth Studio in August.



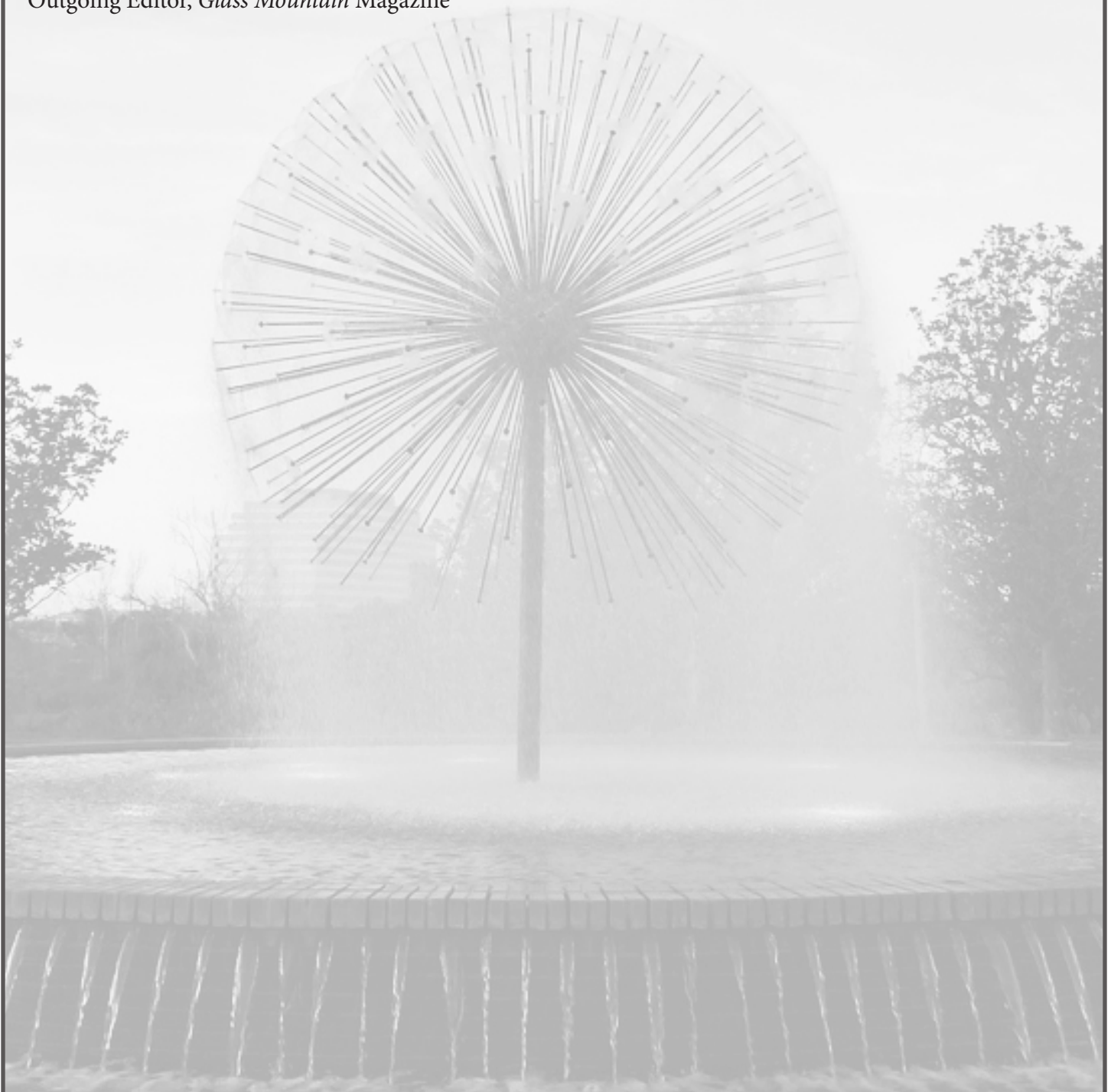
Volume 19, affectionately nicknamed Peach Butt, sold out within the first few weeks of its publication, leading us to order a second batch of copies. Peach Butt's minimalistic cover perfectly matched the new, smaller format; *Glass Mountain's* new size means it can easily fit in a bookbag to be read on the go. Where Peach Butt is quiet, Volume 20's lively cover leaps off the page. The two covers, intended to show the range of possibility between muted and vibrant, sparked an important conversation about how to maintain a magazine's aesthetic while showcasing such varied art. The outgoing editors hope

the conversation continues as *Glass Mountain* strides toward its twelfth birthday in 2019.

During Fall 2017, we revived our online companion magazine, *Shards*. Headed by Tamara Coleman, *Shards* publishes poetry, prose, art and interviews bi-monthly. The first two editions of *Shards* featured powerful art and writing surrounding Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey. Though it's been back for less than a year, the online magazine has already gained momentum with a high number of quality submissions. Web Editor Carol Harkness and Tamara Coleman noticed that a new issue of *Shards* leads to a spike in traffic for the website as a whole, making it clear that *Shards* has put itself on the map as a great venue for artists to share their work with the world. Tamara Coleman will reprise her role as Editor of *Shards* next year.

Kathy Hill will take the helm as editor for *Glass Mountain*. The magazine continues to climb to new heights, and next year's staff will further embrace the magazine's mission to publish fresh, exciting voices.

Kim Coy
Outgoing Editor, *Glass Mountain Magazine*



Boldface

A Conference for Emerging Writers

The 2018 Boldface Conference for Emerging Writers was a whirlwind of mentorship, scholarship and community. We celebrated ten years of Boldface by moving from our usual formula of selecting the conference's featured visiting writers from the pool of CWP alumni, and invited Daniel Peña, Assistant Professor at University of Houston-Downtown and faculty advisor to UHD's undergraduate magazine, *Bayou Review*, to be our fiction expert. Also joining us were CWP alumni, nonfiction writer Dickson Lam and poet Analicia Sotelo.



Daniel, Dickson and Analicia were crucial to making this conference memorable. Each visiting writer spoke openly and genuinely on topics such as knowing when a manuscript is ready for submission, the challenges of navigating literary community, and how to approach writing about family. Through consultations and mingling during breaks, the visiting writers and conference attendees immersed themselves in the Boldface experience.

This year's conference was a delightful mix of people, as participants came to us from universities such as UH, UHD, Pacific University and University of Montevallo. In addition, many writers from the Houston community at-large added their voices to the conversation.



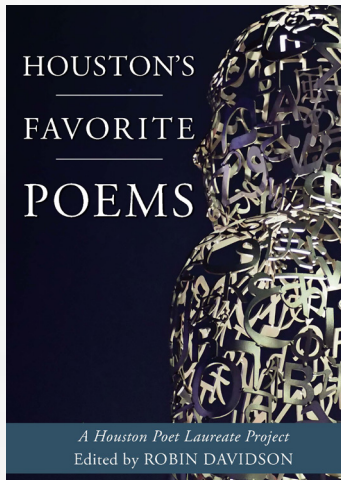
Boldface coordinator Josie Mitchell brought the event together through her detailed communications between attendees, workers, faculty and vendors. She worked tirelessly to create an atmosphere of collected coolness, ensuring the structured days offered wisdom, productivity and fun. Audrey Colombe worked behind the scenes to ensure Boldface participants were well-fed throughout the long days—giving out-of-towners their first taste of Tex-Mex and kolaches.

CWP students, as always, led workshops and added their own flair to the conference. The intensity of condensed workshops created quick bonds between teachers and students; it wasn't uncommon to see incoming *Gulf Coast* Editor Justin Jannise talking animatedly with attendees. At Boldface, the lines between teacher and student are firm in masterclasses, workshops and craft talks, but blurry everywhere else to ensure the experience is fruitful for everybody.

Not only did CWP students organize and work the conference, but LeeAnne Carlson donated a day of breakfast by bringing goat cheese from her family farm. On our day of panels, CWP student Laura Biagi offered valuable insight into the daunting world of publishing, and alumnus JP Gritton spoke about submitting to contests and literary magazines. We're so grateful for their generosity!

Special thanks to j. Kastely, Alex Parsons, Lillie Robertson, Dr. Antonio Tillis, Giuseppe Taurino, and the UH English Department for their support.

Houston's Favorite Poems



Houston's Favorite Poems is a city-wide anthology I developed and edited as part of my term as city poet laureate from 2015-2017. The anthology was launched at the Julia Ideson Library downtown on January 18 of this year and involved a reading by a number of contributors to the anthology, including Mayor Sylvester Turner, Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Cohen, and former Mayor Annise Parker.

Houston's Favorite Poems is an initiative of the City of Houston Poet Laureate Program and the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs and is modeled on former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky's Favorite Poem Project (<http://www.favoritepoem.org/>) and his national anthology, *Americans' Favorite Poems*. In spring 2016, the Houston project—with the support of Mayor Sylvester Turner's office—made a call for favorite poems to those living in Greater Houston, and received approximately 400 poems in response. One hundred eighty-five poems, submitted by more than 200 Houstonians, are included in the volume published

by Calypso Editions and released in January 2018 at the Julia Ideson Library in downtown Houston.

Of the Houstonians who shared favorite poems, you will see occupations as varied as a biostatistician, a cattle rancher, and a woodworker—as well as accountants, attorneys, bankers, clergy, engineers, electricians, health care professionals, museum attendants, musicians, visual artists, and many writers and teachers. Contributors range in age from 18 to 85 and live throughout Greater Houston within more than 100 zip codes. The volume's contents is as diverse as Houston itself—including 119 poets from across the globe from such national and cultural origins as Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Greece, El Salvador, England, Germany, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Palestine, ancient Persia, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Scotland, Somalia, and Wales. And many American poets are represented—ranging in ethnic background from such African American poets as Maya Angelou, Lucille Clifton, Nikki Finney, Langston Hughes, and A. Van Jordan to Asian American poets Amanda Huynh and Claire Kageyama-Ramakrishnan, Mexican American poet Juan Felipe Herrera, Native American poet Joy Harjo, and Sudanese American poet Safia Elhillo.

The volume features two special sections—one dedicated to student poets studying with Writers in the Schools-Houston and a concluding memorial section dedicated to Houston poet Claire Kageyama-Ramakrishnan.

More info can be found here: <http://calypsoeditions.org/title/houstons-favorite-poems/>

Robin Davidson (PhD, 2001)



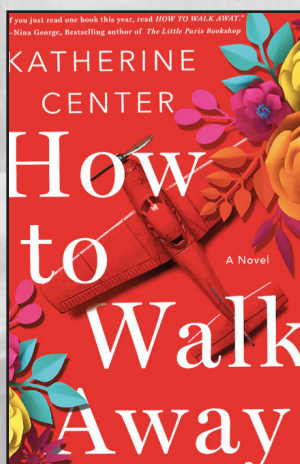
Alumni News

Glenna Bell (PhD, 1998) is preparing to travel to Palm Springs, California to record a new album of original songs with producer Ronnie King, whose credits include multi-platinum hits for 2Pac, Snoop Dogg, The Offspring, Mariah Carey, Coolio, Warren G and many more. The release is scheduled for 2019. For updates on the new record and more, please subscribe to the monthly online newsletter at glennabell.com and check out videos on Youtube.



Heather Bigley (MFA, 2003) has received a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching for a 4-month pedagogical research grant in India, beginning January 2019.

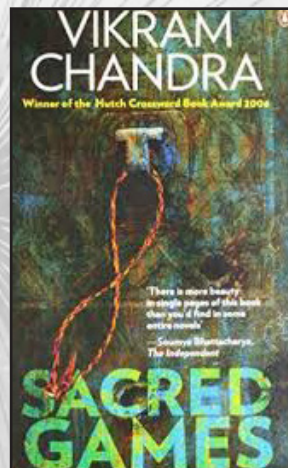
Conor Bracken (MFA, 2015) translation of Mohammed Khair-Eddine's *Scorpionic Sun* was selected during the Cleveland State University Poetry Center translation open reading period, and will be published in Fall 2019. In fall 2018, he will start as assistant professor of English at the University of Findlay.



Katherine (Pannill) Center's (MA, 1999) sixth novel just came out on May 15 and hit the

New York Times Katherine Center_Cover Bestseller List the first week at #14! Her seventh novel is in the works and comes out next year. She also just got another deal with St. Martin's for two more novels in 2020 and 2021.

A Netflix series based on on **Vikram Chandra's** (MFA, 1992) novel *Sacred Games* began streaming worldwide on July 6. Vikram is also working on new fiction, and running a software startup that is creating a next-generation editor for people who build narratives: <http://granthika.co>.



Katharine Coles (MA, 1983) was appointed Distinguished Professor at the University of Utah last July. Her memoir, *Look Both Ways*, will be out from Turtle Point Press in November. And her seventh collection of poems, *Wayward*, is forthcoming from Red Hen Press.

Liz Countryman (PhD, 2012) started as Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of South Carolina

in October 2017.

Barbara Duffey (MFA, 2005) was recently promoted to Associate Professor, with tenure, at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, SD, where she also serves as chairperson of the Department of English and Languages.

Allen Gee (PhD, 1999) accepted the Donald L. Jordan Endowed Professorship in Creative Writing at Columbus State University, beginning July 2018.

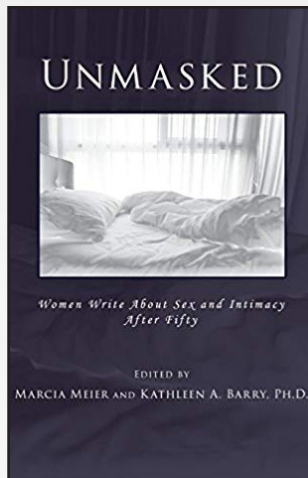
Cliff Hudder (MFA, 1995), professor of English at Lone Star College-Montgomery, completed his PhD in Literature at Texas A&M University in the Spring of 2018. His dissertation on Houston fiction, *The Capital of Elsewhere*, included among others the work of the CWP's influential faculty patriarch, Donald Barthelme, as well as

graduates Tony Diaz and Farnoosh Moshiri. With his colleague, Dave Parsons, he continues as program director of the Writers in Performance Reading Series in Conroe, Texas. Their celebration of Walt Whitman's birthday on the Conroe Square included visits this year from CWP alums Alan Ainsworth, Sharon Klander and Randy Watson, and a scholarly presentation by the University of Nebraska's Kenneth Price. In June 2017 he traveled to the omphalos of his family name, Huddersfield Town in West Yorkshire, England, where he discovered no one who would

claim any relation to him.

Renata Golden (MFA, 2000) had an essay published in the anthology *Unmasked: Women Write About Sex and Intimacy After Fifty* from Weeping Willow Press (press release with cover image attached) in addition to an essay coming in July from Outrider Press in an anthology titled *The Stars*.

Renata has also published three books this year on cloud computing and data center management from HPE Press.

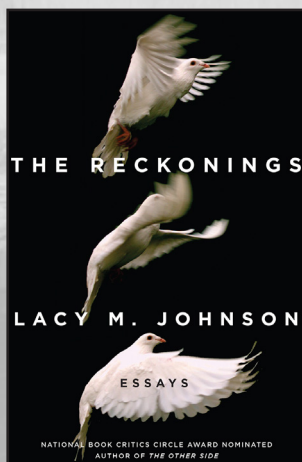


Jessica Greenbaum's (MA, 1981) third book of poems, *Spilled and Gone*, will come out from U. Pittsburgh Press in spring 2019.

JP Gritton's (PhD, 2018) novel *Wyoming* is forthcoming from Tin House Books in September, 2019. An excerpt from the novel, *Sideways* will appear this summer in *New Ohio Review* online.

J. Bradford Hippy's (MFA, 2007) first novel, *The Adventurist* (*L'Aventuriste*), was published in French in January 2018.

Lacy M. Johnson (PhD, 2008) third book, *The Reckonings*, coming out with Scribner on October 9.



Janine Joseph's (PhD, 2013) *Driving Without*

a License was awarded the 2018 da Vinci Eye Award. She published poems in *World Literature Today*, an essay in the anthology *The Poem's Country: Place & Poetic Practice* (Pleiades Press), and had a poem included in *Poetry: A Writers' Guide and Anthology* (Bloomsbury Academic). Her

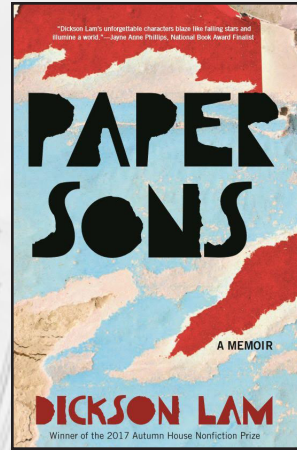
poem, "More milk, more milk makes it better," was set to music by acclaimed composer Melissa Dunphy for "American DREAMers: Stories of Immigration" concert, performed by the Philadelphia PhilHarmonia.

Sophie Klahr's (MFA, 2013) poetry appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Blackbird*, *AGNI*, and *Ploughshares* in 2017, and her recent/ forthcoming publications include

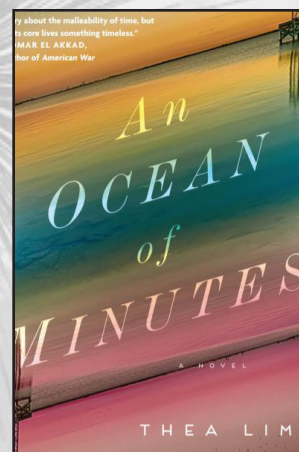
Alaska Quarterly Review, *Third Coast*, *Colorado Review*, *Bennington Review*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Neck*, *Poetry Northwest* and *Zyzyva*. 2018 marks her fourth year of editing *Teen Sequins*, a annual feature she co-created to honor teenage poets,

under the umbrella of Gigantic Sequins. She is at a residency for 6 months in rural Nebraska, and in spring 2019, will be the Philip Roth Resident in Creative Writing at The Stadler Center for Poetry at Bucknell University.

Dickson Lam (MFA, 2014) published *Paper Sons: A Memoir* with Autumn House Press in March 2018.



Thea Lim's (MFA, 2012) debut novel *An Ocean of Minutes* is forthcoming from Touchstone/Simon & Schuster. She has a 2 year-old daughter, Yung.



James Davis May's (MFA, 2007) first poetry collection, *Unquiet Things*, was named a finalist for the Poets' Prize and runner-up for the Georgia Author of the Year Award in Poetry. He also published poems in *Guerinica* and *Pleiades*, book reviews in *The Rumpus*, and nonfiction in *The*

Account.

Kimberly Meyer's (PhD, 2008) longform piece on Congolese refugee farmers with Plant It Forward in Houston came out in *Orion Magazine*. She was awarded a \$15,000 Houston Arts Alliance grant to continue trying to tell the stories of refugees here in Houston.

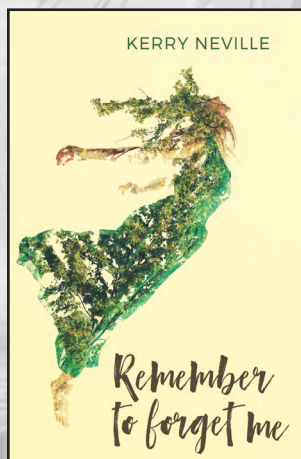
Whitney Mower's (MFA, 2014) short story was published in UC Irvine's journal *Faultline* alongside our own Nick Flynn. She's also released two music EPs under the moniker Iva Dawn since 2014 and this



summer is on a tour of the American Southwest with the classic country duets band called Dawn and Dupree, featuring the poet Alex Dupree. She recorded a cover of the Lucinda Williams song "Are You Down," featured on 'Hummingbirds & Helicopters, Vol 1: A Benefit for South Texas,' a charity compilation for Harvey survivors, produced by the musician Jolie Holland. All proceeds will be donated to The Schoolbox Project, to aid in their trauma-informed care for children on the ground in the aftermath of the deluge.

Oindrila Mukherjee (PhD, 2009) got tenure and promotion to Associate Professor at Grand Valley State University. She also completed an item on her bucket list when she got a press pass to cover the 2018 Australian Open live from Melbourne for the Indian website Scroll.

Kerry Neville's (PhD, 2000) second collection of short stories, *Remember to Forget Me*, was published by Braddock Avenue Books in October.



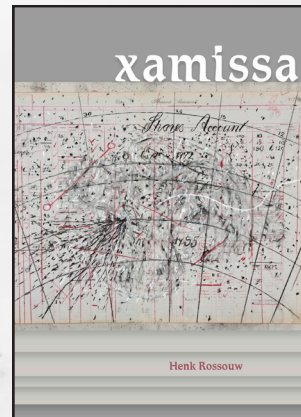
She received the John Guyon Prize in Creative Nonfiction from Crab Orchard Review. She was faculty at the Frank McCourt/University of Limerick Writers Festival. She

has also been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for Fall 2018 and will be Visiting Faculty in the MaPhil Creative Writing Program at University of Limerick.

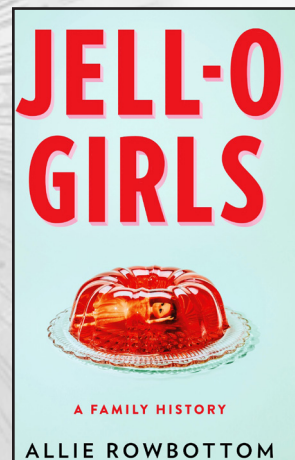
Dave Parsons (MA, 1991) had three poems included in the *Southern Poetry Anthology - Texas and single poems in Carrying the Branch: Poets in Search of Peace, anthology, Writers Resist, and Out of the Blue* (The Texas Standard/NPR: 50 Years after the UT Tower shooting) Tower Archives. His poem, "Texian," which was composed for the opening of the Texas Flag Park in 2011 is being placed at the entrance to the park this year. He continues to Co-direct the Writers in Performance Series with CWP Alum, Cliff Hudder and is in his 26th year as Adjunct Professor at Lone Star College-Montgomery. He was the Final Judge for the 2017 X.J. Kennedy Book Prize.

Michael Powers' (MFA, 2008) story "More or Less Like a Man," originally published in the *Threepenny Review*, will be reprinted in the O. Henry Prize Stories 2018.

Henk Rossouw (PhD, 2017) shifted from UH's Honors College to a tenure-track position in creative writing (poetry and poetics) at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Fordham University Press published his poetry debut *Xamissa*. The release date is September 4.



Allie Rowbottom's (PhD, 2016) debut book, *Jell-O Girls*, is an American Booksellers Association Indies Introduce title for the summer/fall of 2018 and will be out on July 24th from Little Brown!

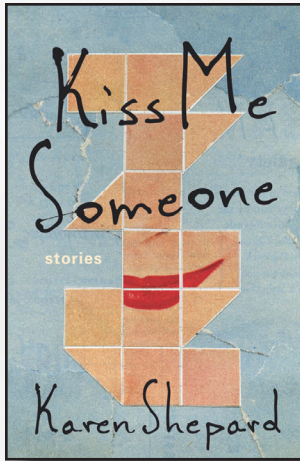


Charlie Scott (PhD, 1995) continues to work regularly with The Catastrophic Theatre in Houston. He most recently directed the dual-production of Mickle Maher's twin

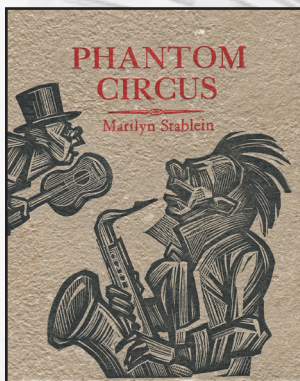
plays *The Strangerer and Jim Lehrer and The Theatre and Its Double and Jim Lehrer's Double*. Both performed at the MATCH in downtown Houston.

Kent Shaw (PhD, 2011) was awarded the 2018 Juniper Prize for his manuscript, *Too Numerous*. It will be published by University of Massachusetts Press in April 2019.

Karen Shepard's (MFA, 1992) fifth book and first collection of stories, *Kiss Me Someone*, was published in September of 2017 by Tin House Books.



Marilyn Stablein's (MA, 1984) new book, *Phantom Circus*, is an extended prose poem set in a circus museum built by an outsider artist on the road to Sandia Crest, a 10,000 foot ridge in central New Mexico, considered sacred by the Sandia Pueblo. The numbered, limited edition artist book features cover art by Dmitry Sayenko.



In addition, she completed an adaptation of Sayenko's book, *Legends*. An essay, "Sacred Waters," is forthcoming in *Raven Chronicles Anthology*.

Collage illustrations appeared in *Gargoyle* and *Otoliths* and three new books are forthcoming: an epistolary memoir *Houseboat on the Ganges & A Room in Kathmandu* about a six year residency in the Himalayas; a collection of short stories *Vermin: A Traveler's Bestiary* and a collection of poems, *Ferment*.

Gail (Donohue) Storey's (MA, 1982 and Administrative Director of the CWP, 1982-86) piece "The Great Divide Mountain



"Bike Route" is being published this fall in Rizzoli International's book about the Continental

Divide Trail. She also mentors emerging writers, including finding imaginative ways to help them reach wider audiences. She has serious fun being interviewed on podcasts for her most recent book, *I Promise Not to Suffer: A Fool for Love Hikes the Pacific Crest Trail* (Winner of the National Outdoor Book Award),

links to which can be found on her new website at gailstorey.com.

Michael Theune (PhD, 2002)

co-authored *We Need To Talk: A New Method for Evaluating Poetry* with Bob Broad published in Bristol, UK by Multilingual Matters, 2017.

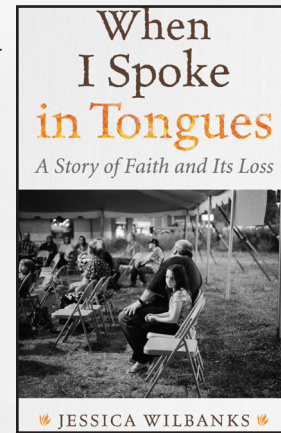
Sam Thilen (MFA, 2018) published "Rainsong," "Wrecking," and "Let's Play Twister Let's Play Risk" in

Western Humanities Review.

Rebecca Wadlinger's (PhD, 2013) poetry collection *Terror/Terrible/Terrific* is forthcoming from Octopus Books in 2019.

Jessica Wilbanks's (MFA, 2011) memoir, *When I Spoke in Tongues: A Story of Faith and Its Loss* is coming out from Beacon Press in November 2018 (and is currently available for pre-order). The

book is about the profound destabilization that comes from losing one's faith and moving across class



divides. Leslie Jamison selected the first chapter for the Sycamore Review's annual prize in creative nonfiction, calling it "a searching, visceral examination of faith and its negative margins."

Will Wilkinson (MFA, 2015) is a Contributing Opinion Writer for the *New York Times* and Vice President for Research at the Niskanen Center in Washington, D.C.

