




UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

2020 Newsletter



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CWP Director

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From the Director...



Fellow Writers,

I hope this note finds you well. Of course, at this point and in the context of our times, it is woefully pro forma. But I like to think that the intent—however tread-bare and low-air the phrase—is a generous one in light of the many difficulties all of us are encountering in various less-than-delightful combinations. In the midst of much turmoil, the words indicate that we look to each other with empathy, sharing the acknowledgement of what our society and world is experiencing. And so: I hope this note finds you well. Truly.

For a variety of reasons I've had occasion to look back at the past decade + at UH. As with the headlines, there

are dramatic events that draw attention, be these the impact of Hurricane Harvey, the deaths and departures of loved colleagues, fire and flood leading to our exile into the Old Science Building or, most recently, the disruption of the pandemic and need for online teaching in a subfield that celebrates Luddites. But while disruption vies for attention, the trajectory of the CWP has been exceptional. Our progress fills me with faith that we will continue to thrive and evolve, as any healthy organization ought to. The increments by which this happens are at times smaller than one might like, but they accrete. We are far better off—as a student body and as faculty—than we were. We have a larger and more diverse faculty (and, yes, we are tightly focused on how to further our representation and balance); we have a highly diverse gathering of graduates that more closely mirrors our undergraduates; we have more funding so students can excel at their chosen work; and we have programmatic initiatives afoot to help the Program evolve.

Two initiatives are already underway. One features the new CWP professorships, which are five-year, \$50,000 initiatives to expand underrepresented aspects or groups within the CWP. The first is led by Prof. Francine Harris, who writes that she is “working on a Critical and Creative Legacy Project aimed at fostering dialogue between critics and creative writers of color, particularly within the context of black poetics. Ideally it will encourage critical writing by creative writers toward building archive and legacy and extend that effort beyond the university campus into the broader community.” The second initiative is pedagogical. We are opening the recommended readings for undergraduate Creative Writing Classes to our graduate assistants so that everyone teaching the courses will have a broadly representative sampling of fiction and poetry from which to choose. Appended to this will be a mechanism that allows for a catalogue of teaching notes and observations on each reading. This ongoing archive will help everyone gauge undergraduate engagement, what worked and didn't, list the happy and unhappy encounters, and create a dialogue over the challenges and history of our teaching. My hope is that we can analyze this regularly to take our bearings in all of the courses we teach.

The core of such initiatives comes down to a simple, shared desire: We want everyone who studies here to be bettered by the experience. This comes about by continually reevaluating how we treat each other, by engaging in productive conversation, by collaborating to create an institution that enhances mutual appreciation, understanding, and collaboration.

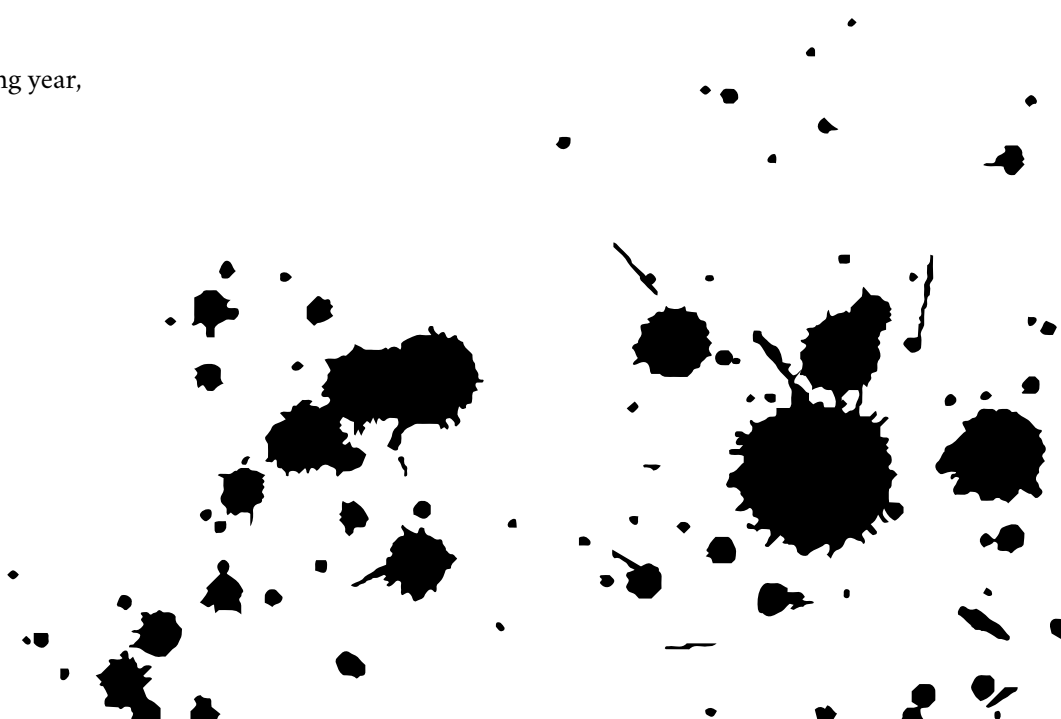
On a more prosaic and somewhat, yes, bragworthy note, I'd like to highlight the best news of the year.

- Alum Jericho Brown won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his poetry collection, *The Tradition*.
- Bryan Washington, a past CWP undergraduate, won the Dylan Thomas Prize and the Lambda Literary Award for his short story collection, *Lot*. Like Jericho, he does us proud, as do so many of you; we send our congratulations, abiding respect, and affection to both writers.
- A major donation will ensure the construction of Creative Writing suite in the renovation of Roy Cullen. This will include a graduate lounge, *Gulf Coast* and *Glass Mountain* studio space, and a library. The library will serve as a literary hub, allowing us to host a range of readers and panels whether in-person or virtually, and connect us more immediately to writers of all walks throughout the city, region, and country.
- We established a month-long artist's residency for UH faculty and doctoral students at the Ucross Ranch in Wyoming. This is generously funded by the Raymond Plank Foundation and the Ucross Foundation. The ranch will host one CWP writer each summer.
- The Rowan Foundation will now subsidize seven undergraduate summer literary internships, provide for major undergraduate writing awards, tuition for many writers to attend the Boldface Literary Conference, and underwrite the costs for guest writers and editors to the Conference over the next three years.
- David Parsons and other esteemed alums gave a heartfelt tribute to Stanley Plumly at our AWP gathering; it was excellent to see so many years of the CWP together even as in retrospect it was, ah, unwise to clump together like that.

All of this rests on a foundation of years of collective work. We have roughly doubled student funding in the past decade thanks to private donations, our stalwart ally Inprint, and the famous student strike of 2013 (grads forever in our pantheon!). We have a permanent associate director, Giuseppe Taurino, who plays the budget like a chess master. We feature our largest faculty roster, a variety of assistantships, a record number of community partners, and new writing awards, summer residencies, and research funds that all have the new car smell and shine.

No matter the disruption of the move or the pandemic, then, we continue to build. It is my conviction, shared by our faculty, that the CWP's success, particularly our long-term success, is tied to a diverse and inclusive program where we can listen, share, and learn from one another. We exist to help talented writers fashion the consequential narratives that will help us navigate a shared and interconnected future. In short, our success rest on you. Which is why I am so optimistic.

Wish great wishes for the coming year,
Alex



Program News

Sustaining the Writing Life

A few years ago we were confronted with a decrease in available University TAships even as we wanted to continue to recruit top-notch MFA and PhD candidates and provide our current students opportunities to grow and prosper. And so we devised a community partnership initiative. Recognizing Houston's long tradition of creativity and innovation, and the CWP's unique position within that space, we figured what better way to evolve as a program than to leverage the inherent talents of our students and the various opportunities our broader community could provide.

We arrived on a simple idea: partner with community organizations to help fund student fellowships and place students into roles within those organizations as a means of professional development.

Our first community partner was Inprint, Houston's premier literary arts nonprofit. Given their longstanding support and friendship, this was a no-brainer. We are fundamentally aligned in myriad ways and reasoned our longstanding partnership would help us untangle any initial kinks. Kinks arose. But we came away from our inaugural community partnership with positive and useful experience, which led us to fine-tune our procedures, and gifted us a more definitive notion of how to maximize the experience for both student-fellows and potential partners. Our partnership with Inprint inspired us to establish a second local partnership with 9th Wonder (a strategic marketing, media and ideas agency) which, in turn, led to the crafting of a five-year plan to grow the initiative into a sustainable branch of the CWP – a plan that was fast-tracked thanks to the support of an anonymous gift to the program in the spring of 2019. We called it Sustaining the Writing Life (SWL). The express goals were to provide meaningful professionalization for our writers that would help to support their literary careers, provide real benefits for our community partners, and build out our program with useful, non-teaching-related fellowships.

During the 2019-20 academic year we partnered with three organizations: 9th Wonder, Inprint, and Brazos Bookstore. In addition to the invaluable professional development our SWL fellows received working with each organization, these partnerships freed up additional teaching assistantships (SWL fellows exchange their University TAships for equivalent, fellowship-based funds) used to recruit terrific students we would've otherwise lost to competitive programs.

This year we welcome our newest partner, the stellar Writers in the Schools (WITS). We are also in conversations with additional partners for next year and beyond. We are excited for the opportunities these partnerships have already delivered, and look forward to the brilliant possibilities on the rise.

Please take a few moments to read about last year's fellows' experiences. If you're interested in learning more about, or contributing to, the Sustaining the Writing Life program, please reach out to us at cwp@uh.edu.

Looking forward.
Giuseppe

It's possible that this experience is solely my own, but I'd venture a guess that many members of the Creative Writing Program have people in their lives—friends, family, romantic interests, etc.—that don't understand what they do or why they're doing it. Here's an example: When I chose to join the MFA program at UH, my mother said that she never understood why I hadn't studied accounting or engineering. When I asked her why those specific disciplines, she said that I was just so bright.

Setting aside my mother's presumed assumption that the accounting and engineering fields are the zenith of academic pursuit, I think her attitude towards creative writing—one that reduces creating and studying literature to a hobby—are reasonably pervasive. This perspective is, however, patently untrue. I would argue that studying creative writing and literature ultimately develops two skills. The first is critical thinking; the second, effective communication. Both are invaluable skills in, well, life but also in the professional world. Regardless of this reality, many still see writers as flighty daydreamers incapable of real work—sure, some are, but I'm sure there are plenty of fickle, distractible engineers out there.

For the past year, I've worked for 9thWonder, an international marketing firm, as a copywriting and creative intern. Since joining the creative team, I've edited and proofread advertising material for global brands, concepted names for new products and services, drafted the script for a state-wide radio commercial, and written many, many emails for corporate accounts. It's been a truly wonderful experience, and I'm immensely grateful for it. I'm grateful—unsurprisingly—for the opportunity to beef up my resume. I'm grateful to have a job that allows me to use the skills I've developed by studying creative writing—and, really, to have a job at all given the present plague. I'm grateful that the work I'm doing provides me with the work/life separation that allows me to pursue my other interests—like writing fiction, tutoring, and teaching community workshops. Most of all though, I'm grateful for the opportunity to dispel a myth I'd long since internalized.



Hunter Gilson

Around the time I started writing, I invited myself to the office hours of a poetry professor I'd never met. He was nice about it. He had me sit down and I pulled out my crumpled sheets of printer paper. He took his time reading my terrible poems. Then he asked several questions I had no answer for: what I'd read (nothing), who my favorite poets were (William Blake and Rupi Kaur), why I wrote poems (I had a lot of feelings).

"Have you been to any readings?" he eventually asked.

I had not.

"Well you should start with Brazos."

And so I went to one reading. And then another. And then another. Over the years I've learned as much in that store as I have in any classroom. Which, for myself and many others, encapsulates the special position Brazos holds in Houston's writing community. It's a place of business, but it's also a space completely dedicated to knitting together the city's many literary worlds. A twenty-year-old whose knowledge of poetry begins and ends on Instagram can share space with writers who have spent twice the length of her lifetime studying their craft.

Working at Brazos only deepened that sense of appreciation. As a CWP fellow, I spent my time learning about every aspect of the store's operations, from stocking to buying to community outreach and event planning. I worked in the stockroom, manned the front of the store, and helped run offsite events. I became familiar with how publishers market, represent, and sell books, how Brazos creates and leverages community contacts, how a piece of writing is displayed, talked about, and sold. In essence, I learned about what happens to the books we spend so much time writing once, if we are lucky, they're out in the world. Plus, I had the privilege of working along some of the best human beings I have ever met. My coworkers and managers at Brazos were all warm, hilarious, wonderful people. Together, they contributed to the most welcoming work environment I have ever experienced. The opportunity to join that close-knit community rivaled the knowledge I gained working in the store.

Ultimately, interning at Brazos allowed me to see a literary world completely different from the one I have encountered as an MFA candidate. It broadened my understanding of the life literature can have outside of the academy and deepened my connection to Houston's literary community. Overall, I would recommend it as a valuable opportunity for anyone trying to envision or explore a writing life outside of the university.



Sonia Hamer



The year I spent interning for Inprint, a literary arts nonprofit located in the historic Montrose neighborhood of Houston, Texas, was immensely valuable to my growth as both an individual, and a professional. Over the course of my internship I gained experience in nonprofit organizational management, and arts administration. I worked closely with the development team, was immersed in grant writing, copy-editing, and managing relationships with various partners and funders, both local and national.

In helping with Inprint's esteemed Inprint Maragarett Root Brown Reading Series and the Cool Brains! Reading Series for Young People, I had ample opportunity to assist with planning and managing events whose audiences ranged in number from ~300 to ~1800 attendees (not to mention meeting a few Pulitzer Prize winning authors!). Importantly, I also gained extensive experience managing the organization's comprehensive donor database, the bedrock that helps Inprint function on a daily basis. I learned that simple tasks such as updating addresses and phone numbers translate directly into the nonprofit pipeline of building relationships and offering customized programming to specific subsets of donors and community members.

In similar fashion, I was able to help with the preparation and planning of many of Inprint's community focused creative writing programs, including the Creative Writing Workshops, the Inprint Poetry Buskers, and Inprint workshops hosted at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston, the Finnigan Park Community Center, the Harris County Jail, and Houston Methodist Hospital, assuring that relevant postings, e-blasts, fliers, notifications, timesheets, calendar listings, etc. were all proofread and up-to-date, as well as helping to put together physical and digital anthologies of participants' writing.

Paired with extensive experience in the day-to-day operations of an arts nonprofit and the administrative tasks therein, I also acquired an understanding of the upper level managing of the organization by planning for and attending key assemblies, including Board, Development, and Executive Committee meetings.

Prior to this internship I had a limited grasp of what factors into a nonprofit's success, but have come away with a deeper appreciation for the moving pieces, large and small, that help Inprint (and many arts organizations like it) run smoothly. I have no doubt that what I've learned at Inprint will help position me favorably should I decide to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector, arts administration, or within any creative, fast-moving space that demands attention to detail, a focus on grants, and a close partnership with the local community that resonates on a national scale.



David Nikityn

Ecopoetics

Fall 2019

The fourth running of Ecopoetics on the Gulf (or Shrimp Boat) began with a trip to UH's Coastal Center and an orientation by Moores Professor Steve Pennings. Students also painted and kayaked with Artist Boat and visited Bolivar Flats Shorebird Sanctuary. A weekend stay at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) allowed the class to see a pipeline sediment project (an effort to restore crucial marsh loss) by boat—as well as sample local oysters, shrimp, and fish. The group filmed the imperiled Gulf shore and created cinemoems that were shown at November's final Poetry and Prose.

Between field work we read shore poems, poetry from Gulf Coast writers, and essays on ecopoetics.

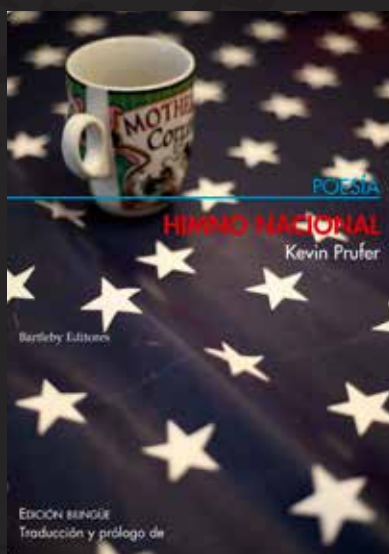
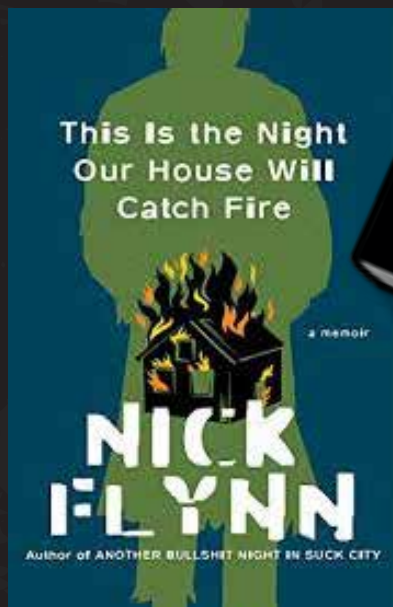




Faculty News

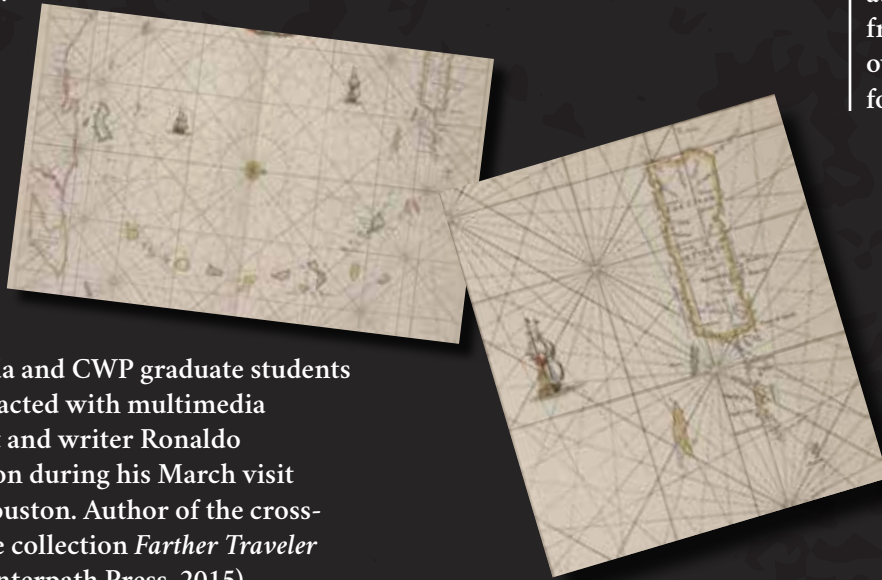
In 2020, Nick Flynn published two new books—*Stay: threads, conversations, collaborations* (Ze Books); and *This is the Night Our House Will Catch Fire* (Norton). *Stay* is, in part, a manifestation of Flynn's yearly interdisciplinary art workshop at UH. *This is the Night Our House Will Catch Fire* is a memoir of his early childhood and fire. Tours for both these books (like everything else) were cancelled, postponed, or went virtual. He also contributed commentary for the Francis Bacon exhibit at the MFAH, which you could have listened to had the museum not been forced to close. He was also scheduled to be part of *Countercurrent 2020*, UH's international festival of collaborative performance. He was in preproduction for *The Nine Dreams* (Blake & the Apocalypse) when the pandemic hit. *Countercurrent 2020* was, yes, cancelled.

Kevin Prufer recently co-edited the volume *World's Too Much: The Selected Poems of Russell Atkins*, and will be co-editing a special feature on him for *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts & Letters*. He also published poems this year in *AGNI*, *Paris Review*, *The Adroit Journal*, *Manoa*, and *Best American Poetry 2020*. The Spanish language translation of Kevin's *Selected Poems* will be published in Madrid by Bartleby Editores in October.



Peter Turchi published two craft essays in *Fiction Writer's Review*: "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Information Dump" and (in two parts) "Don't Stand So Close," on narrative distance in third person narratives. "Canyon View," an essay in response to images by the photographer Mark Klett, was published in the artist's book *Prompt Press 7*, and "To the Grandfather I Hardly Knew" is forthcoming in the anthology *Letter to a Stranger: Essays to the Ones Who Haunt Us*, due out from Algonquin Press. Pete also Skyped in as a visitor to BYU creative writing students after being felled at the airport by two ruptured disks; fate returned the favor when Covid-19 forced UH to Zoom, and Lauren Groff and Tom Drury visited his graduate workshop.

Roberto Tejada's essay "Wonderstruck on the Edge of Decline" features in *Allora & Calzadilla Specters of Noon* (Yale University Press, 2021). The book accompanies the fall 2020 exhibition at The Menil Collection, seven newly-created large-scale works by the Puerto Rico-based, collaborative artistic duo Allora & Calzadilla; an occasion to reflect on Surrealist art and poetry of the Caribbean (Aimé and Suzanne Césaire), colonial histories, and environmental crisis.



Tejada and CWP graduate students interacted with multimedia artist and writer Ronaldo Wilson during his March visit to Houston. Author of the cross-genre collection *Farther Traveler* (Counterpath Press, 2015) and *Poems of the Black Object* (Futurepoem Books, 2009), and cofounder of the performance-based Black Took Collective, Wilson engaged questions about his multidirectional projects in poetry, critical prose, visual art and performance, discussing his work-in-progress *NOMANSLAND: OFFENSE/DEFENSE*.

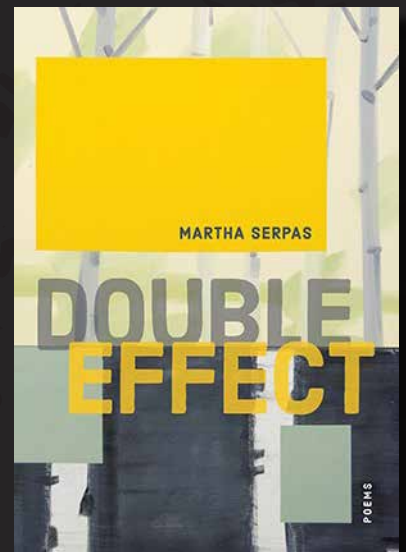


francine j. harris' *Here is the Sweet Hand* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) was published this past summer. She also recently published a poem in the *New York Times Book Review*.

Audrey Colombe spent the later part of the year with *Glass Mountain* and the CWP TAs making pretty fast adjustments due to the COVID situation-- Boldface was turned into the virtual Strikethrough Workshop and online teaching happened very quickly for all involved. Her book on undergraduate literary magazines (a handbook for students) is coming out next year. *Glass Mountain* attended the AWP conference in San Antonio along with about half of the expected attendees, and Hayan Charara, from the Honors College, is taking over as Glass Mountain Advisor for 2020-2021.



Martha Serpas' *Double Effect*, will be published by LSU Press in August. The book was awarded the L. E. Phillabaum Poetry Award, which is given infrequently for the best collection of poetry to be published by the LSU Press in a given calendar year. Individual poems appeared in *Poetry*, *Southern Review*, and other journals. Martha read at World Environmental Day at the Rothko Chapel and at the Louisiana Book Festival, this past year, and the Unamuno Festival in Madrid invited her to read this coming spring.



Student News

Laura Biagi (MFA, Fiction) won the UH Teaching Excellence Graduate Teaching Assistant Award.



Christopher Miguel Flakus's (MFA, Fiction) short story, "Disassembly" was published in *Anti-Heroic Chic*, a journal that focuses on fiction, poetry, and art dealing with issues of mental health and recovery from addiction. He also published a short non-fiction piece for the website, *The Poetry Question* (thepoetryquestion.com) as part of their "Power of Poetry" series.



Despy Boutris (MFA, Poetry) has poems forthcoming in *Copper Nickel*, *American Literary Review*, *Southern Indiana Review*, and *Colorado Review*.



Joshua Gottlieb-Miller (PhD, Poetry) most recently published poetry in *Brooklyn Rail* and *Miracle Monocle*, and hybrid work in *Talking Writing*. Along with other Fellows at the Post-Harvey Think Tank—a collaboration between humanities scholars at UH and Rice—Joshua contributed to a special issue of *Green Praxis* on the humanities and disaster-response; Joshua's essay advocated folkloric survivor to survivor storytelling. Joshua's dissertation continues work he began as a Fellow at the Yiddish Book Center's Tent Summer Writing Workshop.

LeeAnne Carlson (MFA, Fiction) got a new cow! Originally "Cow 1255" from a large dairy, Virginia is settling in to being a spoiled only cow. Thanks to her, LeeAnne and her family have been making some killer fresh mozzarella. LeeAnne is quickly learning to adjust to having a massive creature after years of just having goats. Her black eye has almost entirely faded.



Gabriella Adriana Iacono (MFA, Poetry), was invited to read her work for Public Poetry at the Houston Public Library. She was a recipient of a 2020 Poetry at Round Top Fellowship, and has work forthcoming in *Defunkt Magazine*. Her poems will appear in the Round Top 2020 anthology, as well as the 2020 *Defunkt Anthology*.



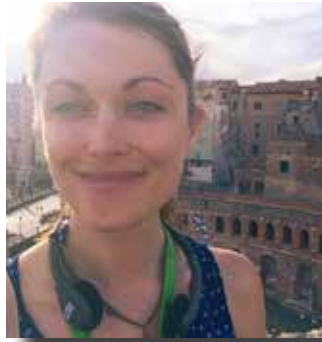
Daniel Kennedy (PhD, fiction) published a story in the *The Madison Review* and has a story forthcoming in *Arts & Letters*.



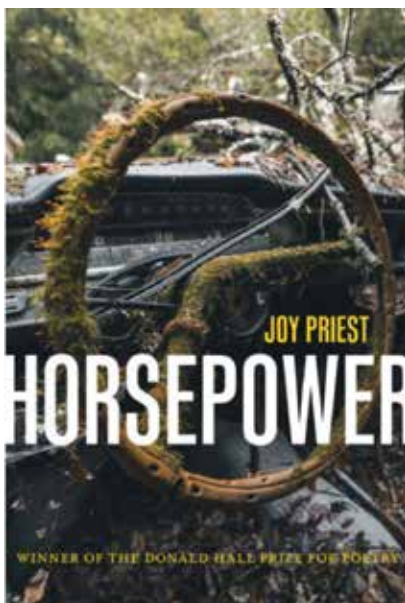
Rosario Margate (MFA, Fiction) won the Inprint Alexander Prize in Fiction with two short-short stories, and taught a creative writing workshop, exploring flash fiction, at Grackle & Grackle.



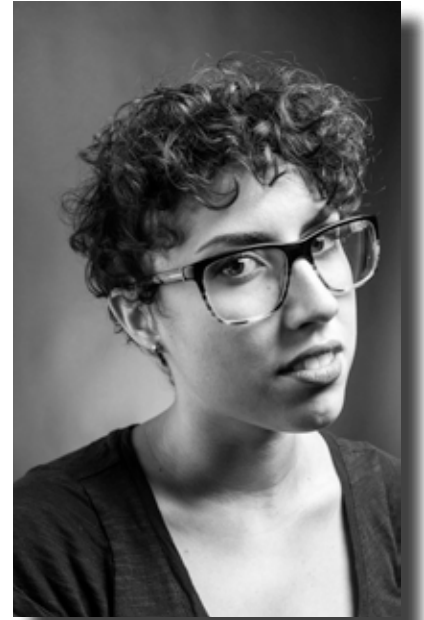
Erin L. McCoy (PhD, Poetry) recently won second place in the 2019-20 Rougarou Poetry Contest, judged by CAConrad.



Joy Priest (PhD, Poetry) has so far this year had work published in *Best New Poets 2019*, *The Southeast Review*, *The Undefeated*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and *Wildness*. She has poems forthcoming in *Poetry Northwest* and *The Louisville Anthology* (Belt Publishing, Sept. 21), as well as an essay in *A Measure of Belonging: Writers of Color on the New American South* (Hub City Press, Oct. 6), and a micro-essay series on craft in *Poets & Writers*. She was the winner of the 2019 Donald Hall Prize for Poetry from AWP for her debut collection *HORSEPOWER*, forthcoming Sept. 22 from University of Pittsburgh Press.



Paige Quiñones's (PhD, Poetry) first collection of poems, *The Best Prey*, was selected by Tiana Clark as the winner of the 2020 Lena-Miles Wever Todd Prize for Poetry and will be published by Pleiades Press in 2021. She has had poems recently appear or are forthcoming in *The Adroit Journal*, *Colorado Review*, and *Prelude*.



Stalina Villarreal's (PhD, Poetry) poems "Flooded Memoria" and "Hispano' Soap" were published in an online source called *The Loop* published by Common Field.



Grace Wagner (MFA, Poetry) published poems in *The Atlanta Review*, *The Offing*, *Palette Poetry*, *Blue Stem*. They have poems forthcoming in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Penumbra Speculative Fiction Magazine*, *The West Review*, and *The Screen Door Review*. Grace

also won the Academy of American Poets Prize, and was a semifinalist in *Boulevard's* Contest for Emerging Poets.



Theodora Ziolkowski (PhD, Poetry) won the 2020 Marion Barthelme Prize in Creative Writing. Her story "The Hedgehog" appeared in *The Pinch*; her poem "Shield" appeared in *North American Poetry Review*; and her essay "I Wore My Anger Like a Shroud: On Poetry, Art, and Shielding the Self" appeared in *North American Review* (online). She has a poem forthcoming in *Prairie Schooner* and a creative writing exercise forthcoming in *Once Upon a Time in the Twenty-First Century: Unexpected Exercises in Creative Writing* (University of Alabama Press). A second edition of her novella *On the Rocks* is forthcoming from Texas Review Press in Spring 2021.



New Students

2020 - 2021

Fiction

Pritha Bhattacharyya, PhD
BA, Cornell University
MFA, Boston University

Tayyba Kanwal, MFA
BS, University of Rochester
MS, University of Oregon

Hannah Kelly, MFA
BA, Emerson College

Nicholas Almeida Miller, PhD
BA, Penn State University
MA, Penn State University
MFA, University of Texas—Austin

Stephanie Pushaw, PhD
BA, University of Southern California
MFA, University of Montana

Katherine Smith, MFA
BA, University of South Alabama
MED, University of Texas—Arlington

Lisa Wartenberg, MFA
BA, New York University
MFA, University of Houston

Poetry

Ryan Bollenbach, PhD
BA, University of South Florida
MFA, University of Alabama

Addie Eliades, MFA
BA, University of Virginia

Erin McCoy, PhD
BA, University of Louisville
MA, University of Washington
MFA, University of Washington

Joy Priest, PhD
BS, University of Kentucky
MFA, University of South Carolina

Olufeyikewa Popoola, MFA
AB, Princeton University

Ashley Warner, MFA
BA, University of West Georgia
MA, University of West Georgia

Adele Williams, PhD
BA, Appalachian State University
MFA, Virginia Tech University

Graduates

Spring 2020

Rachel Ballenger, MFA Fiction
Laura Biagi, MFA Fiction
Michelle Dominique Burk, PhD Poetry
Jenny Staff Johnson, MFA Fiction
Alex McElroy, PhD Fiction
David Nikityn, MFA Fiction

Summer 2020

Novuyo Tshuma, PhD Fiction

*Inprint and the University of Houston's
Creative Writing Program
are pleased to announce the writing prize winners
for 2019 – 2020*

INPRINT ALEXANDER PRIZE IN FICTION
Rosario Margate

INPRINT VERLAINE PRIZE IN POETRY
Justin Jannise

**INPRINT MARION BARTHELME PRIZE IN
CREATIVE WRITING**
Theodora Ziolkowski

**INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME PRIZE IN
NONFICTION**
Sonia Hamer

**INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME PRIZE IN
FICTION**
Brendan Stephens and Sarah Robinson

**INPRINT DONALD BARTHELME PRIZE IN
POETRY**
Rohan Chhetri and Brittney Ray-Crowell

**INPRINT MARION BARTHELME GULF COAST
EDITOR'S PRIZE**
Paige Quiñones

ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS PRIZE
Grace Wagner

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

JUDGES
MARION BARTHELME AWARD
ALLEN GEE (UH Alum)

POETRY
TOMÁS MORÍN

FICTION
Mary Miller

NONFICTION
Lacy M. Johnson (UH Alum)

*Readings,
Publications,
and Community*



Brazos Bookstore

Upcoming Virtual Events:

July 29 -
John Freeman (THE PARK)
in conversation with Lacy Johnson

August 4 -
Jessica Goudeau
(AFTER THE LAST BORDER)

August 5 -
francine j. harris
(HERE IS THE SWEET HAND)
in conversation with Joy Priest

August 7-
Morgan Jerkins
(WANDERING IN STRANGE LANDS)
in conversation with Mat Johnson

About Brazos:

Brazos Bookstore, Houston's premier literary bookseller since 1974, features an eclectic mix of literary fiction, general interest nonfiction, art/architecture monographs, kids books, and sideline items. Through carefully crafted curation, Brazos proudly emphasizes independent publishers and literature in translation. It is our mission to ensure that every title on hand is something that either staff or customers feel strongly about.

As the arts become increasingly crucial to Houston's identity, Brazos continues to adapt and grow as a central cultural hub. The store is honored to partner with Houston's leading literary, arts, and community organizations and are constantly expanding the reach of these partnerships. Notable among these are the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, Inprint, Gulf Coast, Houston Public Library, Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Project Row Houses, The Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston, Interfaith Ministries and more!

Brazos Bookstore's event programming ranges from local authors to internationally renowned figures. Recent notable authors include Ocean Vuong, Bryan Washington, Gloria Steinem, David Sedaris, Annie Leibovitz, Malcolm Gladwell, Patton Oswalt, Barbara Epler, Madeleine Albright, Valerie Jarrett, Marlon James, Anne Lamott, Alan Lightman, Lacy Johnson, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton and Hanif Abdurraqib.

It is an honor to serve the reading and writing community of Houston. As we continue to adapt to the realities of this year and the growing uncertainties of the future, please know we remain committed to our readers and the writers they love. Brazos has a wide offering of virtual event programming and we continue to fulfill book orders for curbside pick-up or shipping.



BRAZOS
BOOKSTORE

Boldface Conference



We started planning for Boldface 2020 in the summer, almost immediately after Boldface 2019 ended. By the start of the spring 2020 semester, we were ready and excited to host new authors and hear fresh voices at the annual conference. By the time AWP rolled around in March, though, Covid-19 was spreading around the country, and by spring break, the world had rocked to a standstill. For a few weeks, we waited and debated. We knew we couldn't continue on with *Boldface* as it stood, but we also weren't sure exactly what to do. Should we cancel completely, or just postpone, or do some hybrid online version? The more we went back and forth, the more we saw how desperately writers wanted and needed community, support, and solidarity, and so we went full steam ahead and created the *Strikethrough* Workshop. We were striking through Boldface, striking through the way things used to be, and making room for something new.



Under the leadership of Graduate Advisor and conference coordinator Grace Wagner and with immeasurable help and support from Audrey Colombe, we put together *Strikethrough* in a little over a month. The workshop lasted four days during the first week of June and was held entirely online. For the first time in Boldface history, the workshops led by graduate students were hyper-specific. We led 11 workshops ranging from "Writing in the Time of Covid-19" to our first ever "Power of Performance" workshop. We also continued where we left off with Boldface last year and had a bilingual workshop about Trauma Writing. *Glass Mountain* staff moderated the workshop sessions, working on the fly to learn new technology and solve Zoom problems. Each day also included a live Q&A by one of our featured writers, who each answered questions about their prerecorded craft talks and writing in general. We were honored to hear from genre fiction writer Stephen Graham Jones, poet Nicky Beer, nonfiction author Samantha Allen, and fiction writer Steven Dunn. At the end of the week, we hosted a virtual open mic and were able to hear some of the inspiring work our attendees created through the mentorship of their workshop leaders.



We don't know what next year will look like, whether it will be safe for Boldface to return in full force or whether we will do *Strikethrough* again. We may have to "strikethrough" *Strikethrough* again and come up with something entirely new. What we do know, though, is that writers will always need support and community, and Boldface, whether under that name or another, provides that.

Glass Mountain

Resilience was the name of the game for *Glass Mountain* in 2019-2020. Audrey Colombe returned as faculty advisor, Rosalind Williamson as Graphic Design Manager, and Stewart Wilson as Web Editor, but the rest of the upper editing team was entirely new, and they were excited to bring their ideas, visions, and hopes to Glass Mountain. Grace Wagner joined the team as Graduate Advisor, William Faour and Hales Harrison as Co-Managing Editors, Elsa Pair as Poetry Editor, Emma Allbright and Ashley Guidry as Co-Prose editors, Keagan Wheat as Reviews, Interviews, & Essays Editor, Amanda Keill as Art Editor, Gabriela Torres as Public Relations Manager, Sarah Swinford as Social Media Manager, Corina Escalante as *Shards* Editor, Isabella Neblett as *Shards* Managing Editor, and Melinda Mayden as Editor. The team faced some unique challenges right off the bat as they, along with the rest of the English Department, moved into new offices in a renovated but not-quite-ready building. Those challenges, however, were secondary to the opportunity to create a new space and vision while maintaining our mission to promote emerging voices.

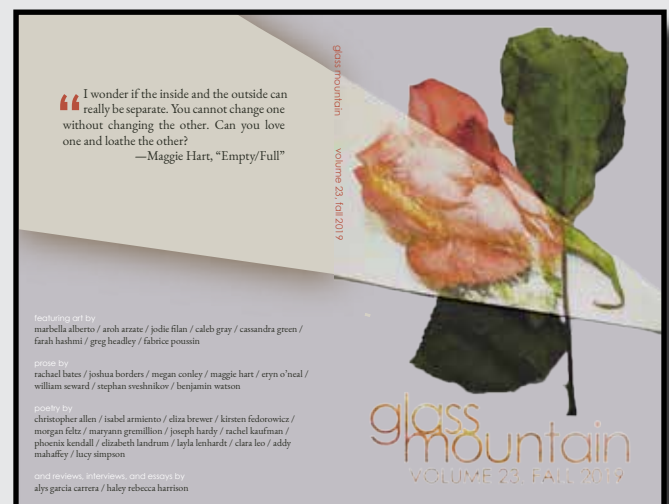
Our fall reading series saw some wonderful and stimulating readings from CWP graduate voices like Despy Boutris and Brittny Rae Crowell, undergraduates Justin Bui and Emma Allbright, and community leaders Ranjana Varghese and Miah Arnold. Our open mic readers, as always, continued to inspire and amaze with their beautiful readings and moving work. Despite the fact that the first reading was held as Tropical Storm Imelda raged across Houston and the second reading conflicted with Game 6 of the Astros' go at the World Series, all who attended were privy to an intimate and truly special time. The Volume 23 launch party rolled around in December at the Brasil Café and featured readings from undergraduate and former Prose Editor Aubrey Cowley, Coogslam member Kendryk Youngblood, and Sam Houston Criminal Justice professor Eryn O'Neal. Their readings, and the open mic that followed (including some singing!), showcased the beautiful energy and wide-ranging pieces represented in Volume 23.

Volume 23 was an absolute joy to put together and is and will remain one of the things I am most proud of doing. We featured experimental fiction set in a dystopian society, poetry ranging from Iambic Pentameter to a moving piece about unsolved missing persons cases in British Columbia, and raw, honest nonfiction reflecting on distorted body image. We were also able to produce two new issues of *Shards*.

In the spring, our editors returned ready for Boldface 2020 and to continue to grow the magazine. Right as nine of our upper editors readied themselves to attend AWP in San Antonio, though, Covid-19 went from distant worry to immediate threat in the matter of days. Our worlds were turned upside down, with *Glass Mountain* and school, but also personally. By the time spring break was over, we realized that nearly all of us had been to our last Thursday morning *Glass Mountain* meeting/office hangout, read at our last *Glass Mountain* open mic, and attended our last undergraduate class.

We took some time to reflect. We took some time to mourn. We took some time to plan. And then we got together (virtually) and decided we weren't done. We produced Volume 24, an incredible testament to the resilience of people and writers, with works from authors and artists all over the world. We published two new issues of *Shards*, one of which was dedicated to work produced in response to the pandemic. Finally, we created the online ~~Strike~~through workshop, a virtual substitute for Boldface, in order to do what we are known for doing—making a nurturing, inviting space for emerging voices.

Mindy Mayden
Outgoing Editor, *Glass Mountain*



Gulf Coast: *A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*

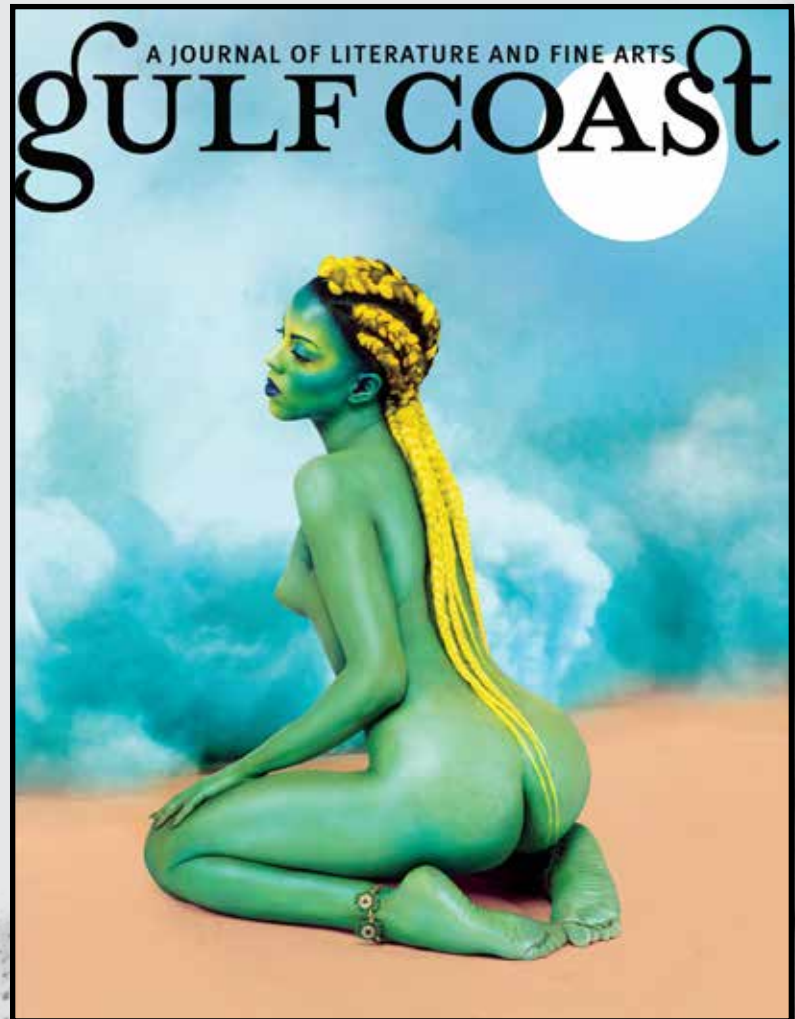
The 2019-2020 year has been a strong one for *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*. In October, we proudly launched the “Houston Issue,” highlighting the work of locally-affiliated writers and artists; increased our subscriptions and Barthelme Prize contest submissions; welcomed poets Ilya Kaminsky and Kazim Ali to Houston, facilitating meetings among them and current UH graduate students; and set ourselves up to weather new challenges to Houston’s literary arts scene.

As soon as we took over as senior editors two years ago, we began planning Issue 31.2, affectionately calling it the “Houston Issue.” It included stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa and Lydia Davis, poetry by Ana Portnoy Brimmer and Teo Mungaray, art by Juliana Huxtable, nonfiction by Elissa Washuta and Thirii Myo Kyaw Myint, and translations by Ryan C.K. Choi and Sharon Dolin.

Despite losing our chance to host an in-person Spring Launch event in April, we were thrilled to release Issue 32.2. It includes fiction by Joy Baglio and Brian Evenson, poetry by Noah Baldino and D.A. Powell, nonfiction by JoAnna Novak and Joseph Earl Thomas, art writing by Dan Fox, and the winners of the 2019 Barthelme Prize for Short Prose, Beauchamp Prize for Critical Art Writing, and *Gulf Coast* Prize in Translation.

Speaking of the Barthelme Prize, we were proud to see its portal close in the fall with a record number of submissions. More than 1100 contestants submitted to the contest (beating a previous record of 994)! This not only meant hundreds of new subscribers receiving *Gulf Coast* in their mailboxes; it also meant increasing our revenue totals by more than \$6,000 over last year!

Despite having to make adjustments to our events schedule following social distancing recommendations, we began the *Gulf Coast* Reading Series with a spectacular kickoff in September. National Book Award-nominated poet Ilya Kaminsky read to a packed and attentive audience at Lawndale Art Center, along with students from the UH Creative Writing program. Poets Corey van Landingham



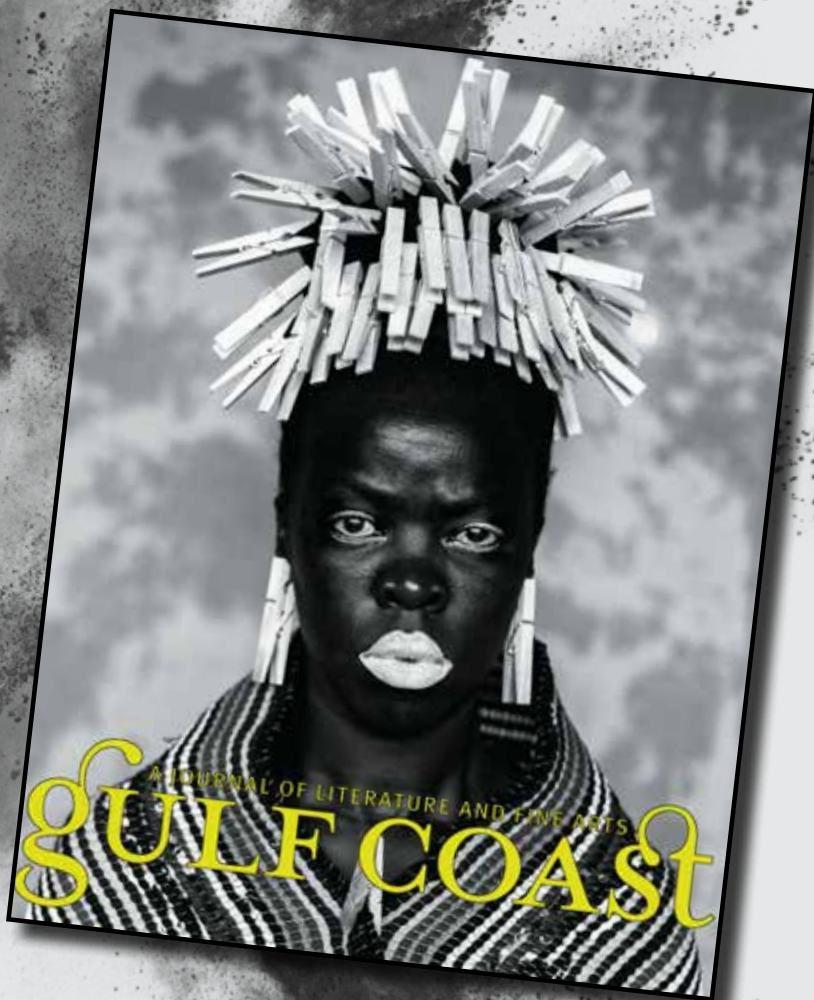
and Christopher Kempf held the honor in October, followed by Houston native Benjamin Garcia in November. We were happy to showcase the work of another local writer, Daniel Peña, in January, and to invite recent contributor (and 2020 Gulf Coast Poetry Prize judge) Kazim Ali in February.

As you may know, we now run a total of six contests a year, including the Barthelme Prize for Short Prose, the Beauchamp Prize for Critical Art Writing, and the *Gulf Coast* Prizes in Poetry, Fiction, Nonfiction, and Translation. We are proud to have secured some of the hottest names in literature to judge our prizes, including Ben Marcus, Kazim Ali, and Emma Eisenberg.

Our presence online has also seen growth, and our website GulfCoastMag.org is currently undergoing weekly improvements due to redesign. This past year, *GC Online* has featured new work by David E. Yee, Nicole Houelle, Alyssa Proujansky, and Kelsey Englert. Our *Gulf Coast* Instagram page, which now includes livestreamed video from our Reading Series, has more than 1,600 followers. Add this to our more than 24,000 followers on Twitter and 4,400 Facebook followers! As we continue to adjust to social distancing measures in the near future, we are comforted to know that we have these options to reach such a large swath of our audience remotely.

Gulf Coast is unique for a journal of its caliber in that it is totally student-run. Aside from us senior editors, more than 40 additional staff, including undergraduate interns, help at all levels of curation and production. Thanks to the support of so many institutions and donors, we were able to pay stipends to the journal's senior editors, Art Lies Editors, and our genre editors. Our genre editors continue to do incredible work by publishing established, award-winning authors and rising stars. We are also lucky to have such a distinguished board with a great variety of expertise that they are willing to lend to the students.

This summer, it will be our pleasure to hand *Gulf Coast* over to a new crop of talented senior editors: Nick Rattner (Editor), Emelie Griffin (Managing Editor), and Erik Brown (Digital Editor). We expect great work to emerge from their leadership!



Inprint

With an inclusive array of dynamic and accessible programming that brings creative writing and reading to the forefront of Houston's diverse cultural life, Inprint is the city's major literary arts nonprofit organization and directly serves more than 15,000 people annually. Through popular and often sold out readings for adults and children, fully subscribed writing workshops open to the public, vital community writing activities, innovative collaborations, longstanding support for graduate students in creative writing, a podcast, and more, Inprint works hard to bring Houstonians from all walks of life together around the power of sharing stories.

At the heart of all that Inprint does is its direct support of graduate students at the University of Houston Creative Writing Program (UH CWP) – a unique relationship between a donor community literary nonprofit and a recipient university graduate creative writing program. Since Inprint was founded in 1983, the support of UH CWP graduate students has been one of the organization's core priorities. To this end, Inprint has created and maintains an endowment solely for the purpose of funding UH CWP student support.

Inprint is excited about the year ahead, despite the challenges and uncertainties, and will proudly provide fellowships, prizes, and other support to incoming and continuing UH CWP students. Last year, UH CWP students–Inprint Fellows–were awarded a total of \$205,000 from Inprint, including \$10,000 fellowships to 14 incoming students, \$42,500 in juried prizes to continuing students, and \$9,000 in fellowships to six international students. Since 1983, Inprint has provided \$4 million in support to 500+ emerging authors, including such UH CWP alumni as Jericho Brown, Vikram Chandra, Tracy Daugherty, Amber Dermont, Aja Gabel, Peter Kimani, Farnoosh Moshiri, Paul Otremba, Novuyo Rosa Tshuma, and Tiphonie Yanique.

Inprint has also provided an annual grant to support the UH CWP student-run journal *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature & Fine Arts* since the journal was founded; to date, Inprint's support of *Gulf Coast* totals more than \$250,000. The Inprint Fund, a

gift to UH managed by the UH CWP, supplements Inprint's direct support by providing, at the Program's discretion, dissertation fellowships, funding for author events, conference travel support, etc.

Another significant way Inprint supports UH CWP graduate students and alumni is by providing employment and creative writing teaching opportunities in the Houston community, including Inprint Writers Workshops, currently running online, open to the public, on different topics and in a variety of genres. These workshops give individuals an opportunity to explore creative writing for the first time, strengthen their skills as writers, revise pieces for publication, and more. Tuition-free community workshops conducted throughout the year for K-12 schoolteachers, senior citizens, hospital employees, veterans, incarcerated men and women at the Harris County Jail, and others help individuals from a diversity of backgrounds to tell their stories. Combined, there are 50+ workshop teaching opportunities for local writers throughout the year.

Inprint also employs UH CWP students and graduates to serve as Inprint Poetry Buskers, a team of local writers who demystify and spread the joy of poetry by writing poems free on demand on typewriters at festivals and special events throughout the city. Inprint also has an active team of Spanish Inprint Poetry Buskers, many of whom are UH Spanish PhD creative writing graduate students. The Inprint Poetry Buskers are on temporary hiatus and will resume their good works after the Covid-19 pandemic is over.

All of these opportunities connect the UH CWP students to different communities in the city in fresh and exciting ways. Additionally, Inprint is thrilled to have Katie Milligan as the 2020/2021 Inprint/UH CWP Intern. Katie officially joins the Inprint team in August and will be working on a variety of the organization's initiatives with the staff and learning about nonprofit administration. UH CWP alum Dave Nikityn completed his position as the Inprint/UH CWP Intern this summer and has now become an important member of the Inprint team.

The Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, now celebrating its 40th season and presented in

association with the UH CWP and Brazos Bookstore, 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 approximately 400 great writers of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. While readings are typically held at top theatrical venues, the 2020/2021 season will predominantly take place virtually. UH CWP students always receive free complimentary access to the readings, and several writers each year give craft talks for students at UH CWP, Texas Southern University, UH-Downtown, Houston Community College, and High School Performing Visual Arts.

In addition to the Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, the UH CWP community is always invited to enjoy the organization's other offerings, including the Inprint *Cool Brains!* Series, a reading series featuring the nation's top middle-grade authors; *Escritores en la casa*, a Spanish language reading series featuring visiting and local authors; community readings held at Inprint House; the Inprint Writing Cafe; Inprint Book Club meetings; *Ink Well*, a podcast conducted in collaboration with Tintero Projects, featuring established and emerging Latinx and other authors; and more.

For more information, visit www.inprintheouston.org, where you can also join the email list and follow Inprint on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and if you have a good idea or just want to visit, please reach out to us at info@inprintheouston.org and come see us at Inprint House (behind the Menil Collection, 1520 West Main) when we are open to the public.



inprint
INSPIRING READERS & WRITERS

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 14th year, Poison Pen continues with its sometimes raunchy, rarely classy, but always exceptional ensemble of readers and audience.

This past March, due to COVID-19, we cancelled our first reading ever. While we were and remain disappointed (we've now gone six months and counting without a reading), Poison Pen organizers are still at work behind the scenes, and we're looking forward to bringing the series back as soon as possible. The fact that it took a global pandemic to cancel our first reading is a testament to our community's love and support. Whether it's organizers' inability to stay motivated, or audience attrition over time, or a limited pool of writers to draw from (and who knows what else?) local reading series with no funding rarely last longer than a few years—much less those that take place in bars! So what's our secret? Simple.

It's in the recipe:

Local writer + UH Creative Writing Program writer + Visiting Writer
(+ Organizers who care).

Thanks to these simple ingredients, Poison Pen has evolved from an idea a few friends came up with over beers to a local literary institution that amplifies the voices of the diverse writers who call Houston home (for the short or long term), while introducing our community to emerging and established writers who connect us to the larger literary landscape.

Though this past year's series ended abruptly, we still managed to sip plenty of bourbon, eat plenty of candy and too many late night tamales, while welcoming visiting writers Laura Eve Engel, Jennifer Sperry Steinorth, and Sadie Hoagland. Also featured were: local writers Mark Haber, Anthony Sutton, Angela So, Lauren Berry, Bruno Rios, and Phuc Luu; UH faculty members francine j. harris and Erin Belieu; and UH students Justin Jannise, Madeleine Maillet, Aris Brown, and Annie Shepherd. For the November reading, we hosted our second Friendsgiving reading featuring writers from Houston literary orgs Writers in the Schools, Tintero Project, *Gulf Coast*, *Glass Mountain*, and *Defunkt Magazine*.

Poison Pen is organized by Giuseppe Taurino (UH MFA, 2006), Erika Jo Brown (UH PhD, 2019), and our newest co-curator, francine j. harris. The series was founded by Scott Repass (co-owner of Poison Girl), Casey Fleming (UH MFA, 2007), David Maclean (UH PhD, 2009), and Greg Oaks (UH PhD, 2001).



Writers in the Schools

Founded in 1983, Writers in the Schools (WITS) supports Houston's literary community by hiring professional writers to engage children and youth in creative writing. Through programs in school classrooms, community centers, hospitals, parks, libraries, and summer camps, WITS employs MFA and PhD students from the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, as well as established and emerging novelists, essayists, poets, and spoken word artists. WITS also provides year-long professional development opportunities, giving writers the tools to engage students in the power of reading and writing.

This year, WITS was delighted to work with writers from the UH Creative Writing Program, including Laura Biagi, Despy Boutris, Hunter Gilson Onyinye Ihezukwu, Matt Krajniak, Colby Ornell, and Obi Umeozor. WITS also welcomed CWP student Aris Kian Brown as part of the inaugural Emerging Writers Fellowship, a paid leadership program to develop culturally responsive teaching models and pedagogical approaches to writing instruction. Many congratulations to WITS writers Justin Jannise, Sarah Robinson, Brendan Stephens, and Paige Quiñones on winning 2020 Inprint Prizes. 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 Houston's children and youth.

As part of an ongoing initiative to strengthen our work in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion, WITS launched a series of "Cultural Collaborative" workshops for writers and teachers. These public workshops focus on integrating social consciousness into creative writing instruction for children and youth through topics such as erasure poetry and Afrofuturism. In addition, amid the outbreak of COVID-19, WITS recalibrated and customized our service delivery models to ensure the safety of our students and teachers through a series of YouTube lessons ("QuickWITS") and virtual workshops ("WITS U"). The "digital version" of WITS aligns with our mission and maintains our approach to meeting students where they are in order to provide creative learning experiences that support both academic and artistic growth.

In addition to enhancing our local literary community, WITS leads an international network of 38 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 nearly 40 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 65,000 students and teachers 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.



The Unsung Masters Series

**The Unsung Masters Series Celebrates the Tenth Volume in its Series:
Wendy Battin: On the Life & Work of an American Master
Edited by Charles Hartman, Martha Collins, Pamela Alexander, & Matthew Krajniak**

The Unsung Masters Series is funded through donations made to the Department of English by Nancy Luton. Each volume spotlights an unjustly neglected, formerly out-of-print author, and contains a range of scholarship surrounding his or her work. Interviews, letters, rough drafts, photographs, and other ephemera accompany the selection of author work. The purpose of the Series is not only to bring renewed attention to a little known but important writer, but also to suggest something of that writer's life and character.

The Series is curated by Kevin Prufer, poet and Professor of English at the University of Houston, and Wayne Miller, University of Houston MFA alum and Professor of English at the University of Colorado Denver. The curators and editors of the Series work in conjunction with esteemed literary journals *Gulf Coast*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Pleiades*. Recent issues have been co-edited by graduate students paired with poets and critics.

Below, Professor Prufer addresses the history of the series.

A Q&A with Poet and Professor Kevin Prufer, Unsung Masters Series Co-Curator

Forum: What was the process for selecting this poet?

Professor Kevin Prufer: We have a board of directors—eight of us including UH professors Sally Connolly and Sarah Ehlers and UHCWP alums Martin Rock, Adrienne Perry, and Wayne Miller (and others, of course). People propose candidates for the Series and the Board meets and discusses them. Then we vote. Every year, there are many very promising proposals.

Forum: Where do you see the Unsung Masters Series going in the future?

Professor Kevin Prufer: Well, we began as a sort of ragtag series—directed by Wayne Miller and me. We had fun with it, brought out a volume a year and sent them free to *Pleiades* subscribers. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) liked the idea and supported us. (It's hard to sell poetry books by poets no one has ever heard of—so giving them away seemed like an interesting distribution model. And Small Press Distribution took us on, too.)

I hope that the Series keeps thriving. We have always said we have no rules about whom we can feature—any writer living or dead, English-language or other language, medieval or contemporary is fair game. We want to keep it unpredictable and interesting.

We're now linked with *Gulf Coast* and *Pleiades*, with UH really being the center of operations. *Copper Nickel* is interested in taking on future volumes, perhaps. That magazine already manages our web presence. And the next volume, on Shreela Ray, edited by Kazim Ali and a UH PhD student Rohan Chhetri will also be distributed by the *Asian American Literary Review*. I think growth, through litmags that want to sign on, is a good thing. I hope it continues.

This year, PhD CWP Candidate Matthew Krajniak served as the graduate student editor. He shares his thoughts about the process behind co-editing this volume in the Series alongside Charles Hartman, Martha Collins, and Pamela Alexander.

There's something startling and fey about a writer being recognized for her/his work only after they've passed, as if evidence of a reach from a world aside ours. Wendy Battin, the featured poet in the upcoming volume of *The Unsung Master Series*, would've liked this idea since her work so often invests in the interplay between the mystic and the scientific. Her poems related to a synchrotron lab or *Drosophila* (a genus of flies) are as ethereal as her poems concerning astral projection or anamnesis are palpable. And maybe that's why I continue to re-inhabit her words and worlds after spending nearly a year of reading and organizing and discussing it with the editorial all-star team of poets Charles Hartman, Martha Collins, and Pamela Alexander. As a fiction writer, I sometimes forget how far poetry can reach, how it can locate the cloistered and invisible and show them to those of us clomping about on the ground. Wendy Battin's poetry does that, and the four of us are incredibly proud to have produced this volume. We found the experience rewarding if not magical, and we hope that you'll get your hands on a copy so that you can have the same experience too.

To lay hands on a copy, you can go to barnesandnoble.com or smile.amazon.com. To learn more about this singular series, which brings the work of great, out-of-print, little-known writers to new readers, please visit unsungmasters.org, or @UnsungMastersSeries on Facebook, or email us at UMSeries@gmail.com.

—Matthew Krajniak



WENDY BATTIN

ON THE LIFE & WORK OF AN AMERICAN MASTER
EDITED BY CHARLES HARTMAN, MARTHA COLLINS,
PAMELA ALEXANDER, & MATTHEW KRAJNIAK

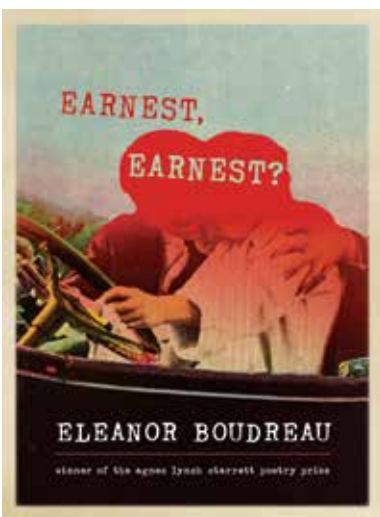
THE UNSUNG MASTERS SERIES

Alumni News

Christopher Bakken (PhD 1999) was awarded the 2020 Collins Award from *Birmingham Poetry Review* for his poem “Theology at Black Earth Creek.” He has published other new work recently in *Orion*, *The Southern Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Blackbird*, and two anthologies: *Plume Poetry 8* and *The Eloquent Poem* (Persea Books). He holds the Frederick F. Seely Chair at Allegheny College and is Director of Writing Workshops in Greece: Thessaloniki & Thasos.

Lauren Berry’s (MFA, 2009) second collection of poetry, *The Rented Altar*, won the C&R Press Poetry Award and will be released by C&R Press in September 2020.

Eleanor Mary Boudreau (MFA, Poetry, 2016) won the 2019 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize. Her first book, *Earnest, Earnest?* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), was selected from 639 manuscripts and will be published on September 8.



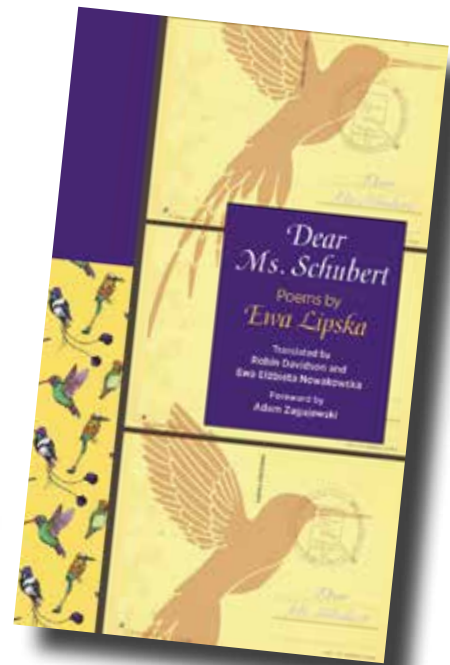
Patricia Clark’s (PhD, 1986) sixth book, *Self-Portrait with a Million Dollars*, will be published this coming fall by Terrapin Press.



JI Daniels’s (MFA, 2012) second book, *If You Can*, will be published by Spuyten Duyvil Press in fall 2020. The stories in it first appeared in the *Notre Dame Review*, *Juked*, and *Southwest Review*, among other places.

This past year saw the paperback release of **Tracy Daugherty’s** (PhD, 1986) *Leaving the Gay Place: Billy Lee Brammer and the Great Society* (University of Texas Press) and the publication of **Dante and the Early Astronomer** (Yale University Press), his biography of pioneering Victorian-era astronomer Mary Evershed. In October, Red Hen Press will publish Tracy’s novella, *High Skies*, about harsh weather and race relations in West Texas in the 1950s.

Robin Davidson’s (PhD, 2001) new book of translations, *Dear Ms. Schubert: Poems by Ewa Lipska*, with a foreword by Adam Zagajewski, is forthcoming from Princeton University Press later this year.



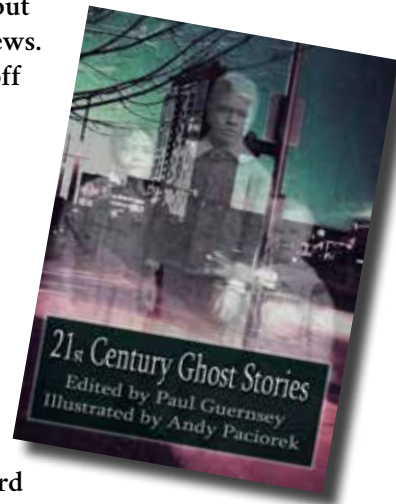
Chelsea B. DesAutels (MFA 2019) had poems in *Ploughshares*, *Copper Nickel*, *The Missouri Review*, *New Ohio Review* (online), and *Sixth Finch*.

Renata Golden’s (MFA, 2000) essay “Portal” received an Honorable Mention from the Center for Women Writers for the Penelope Niven International Literary Award in Creative Nonfiction. Two other essays, “Bought and Sold: A History of Lies and Broken Promises” (*Creative Nonfiction/True Stories*), and “Time Passes Like Water” (*Chautauqua Literary Journal*), were nominated for Pushcart Prizes.

In early 2020 the web series **Hannah Gamble** (MFA, 2010) wrote, directed, and produced, *Choose Me: An Abortion Story* was selected to be released later this year by OTV - OPEN TELEVISION, an intersectional internet tv network that centers people with marginalized identities, including people of color and queer people. *Choose Me* has also won an award of excellence for web series by INDIE FEST Film Festival in California and was selected to show at the Miami Web Fest (affiliated with the Miami International Film Festival) in 2021.

JP Gritton's (PhD, 2019) novel *Wyoming* was named a Best Debut Fiction of 2019 by Kirkus Reviews. He also won ALSCW's Meringoff Prize in Fiction.

Garret Johnson's (MFA, 2009) short story "Snake in the Attic" was a finalist for the 2019 Kurt Vonnegut Fiction Prize at the *North American Review* and an honorable mention for the 2020 Supernatural Fiction Award at *The Ghost Story* magazine, where it is forthcoming online, this summer, with accompanying artwork by Andy Paciorek. The same story is forthcoming in 2021 as part of the print anthology *21st Century Ghost Stories*, published by Wyrd Harvest Press in Durham, U.K. Garret is Associate Professor of English at Lone Star College-CyFair and lives here in town with his wife and two boys.



Sophie Klahr's (MFA, 2013) recent work appears in publications such as *Poetry London*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, and is forthcoming in *The Cortland Review*. Her collaborations with Corey Zeller appear in *The Shallow Ends*, *Passages North*, and *The Southeast Review*, and are forthcoming in *Denver Quarterly* and *Alaska Quarterly Review*.

Laura Lark (MA, 1989) was the recipient of the Winter 2020 Wendy Wagner Foundation Award for Women Artists.

Lance Larsen (PhD, 1993) recently published poems in *Gettysburg Review*, *American Scholar*, and *New Ohio Review*, with new work forthcoming in *Poetry Magazine*, *Poetry London*, *Five Points*, *Antioch Review*, *Witness* and a story in *Michigan Quarterly Review*. His poetry collection, *What the Body Knows* (Tampa 2018) won the Association of Mormon Letters Prize and was a finalist for the 15 Bytes Award. At AWP in San Antonio he was thrilled to bump into old-time U of H friends Jane Creighton, Robin Reagler, and Mark O'Connor. He continues to fool around with aphorisms: "Gesundheit! As close as I've come to Nietzsche and Heidegger in months."

Richard Lyons's (PhD, 1991) chapbook *Heart House* was selected as winner of the 2020 Emrys Press Chapbook Competition by Joseph Millar.

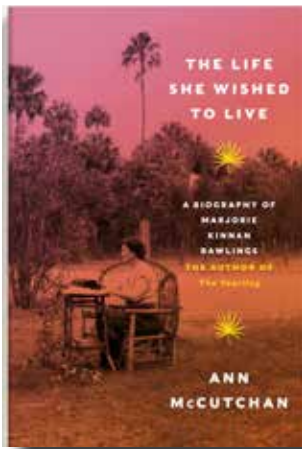


David MacLean (PhD, 2009) has a novel coming out in January 2021 with Overlook Press entitled *How I Learned to Hate in Ohio*. Gillian Flynn calls it “A moving and heartbreaking novel . . . wickedly funny and sad and sobering all at once.”

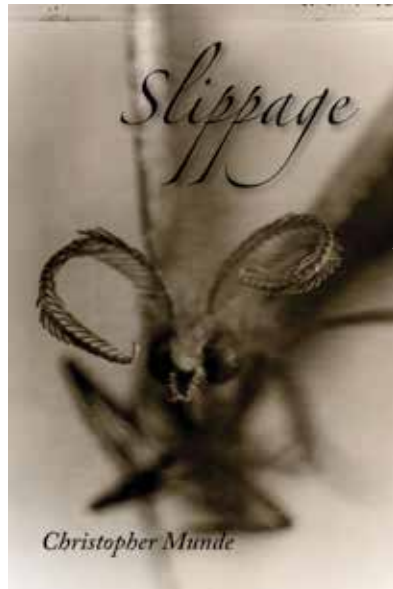


James Davis May (MFA, 2007) was appointed director of the creative writing program at Mercer University. In February, his poem “Red in Tooth and Claw” won the Rattle Poetry Prize Readers’ Choice Award.

Ann McCutchan’s (MFA, 1998) sixth book, *The Life She Wished to Live: A Biography of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, The Author of “The Yearling,”* will be published by W.W. Norton in February, 2021.



Christopher Munde’s (MFA, 2008) poetry collection, *Slippage*, was released late last year by Tebot Bach. He has also recently placed poems at *basalt*, *CutBank* and *Gargoyle*.

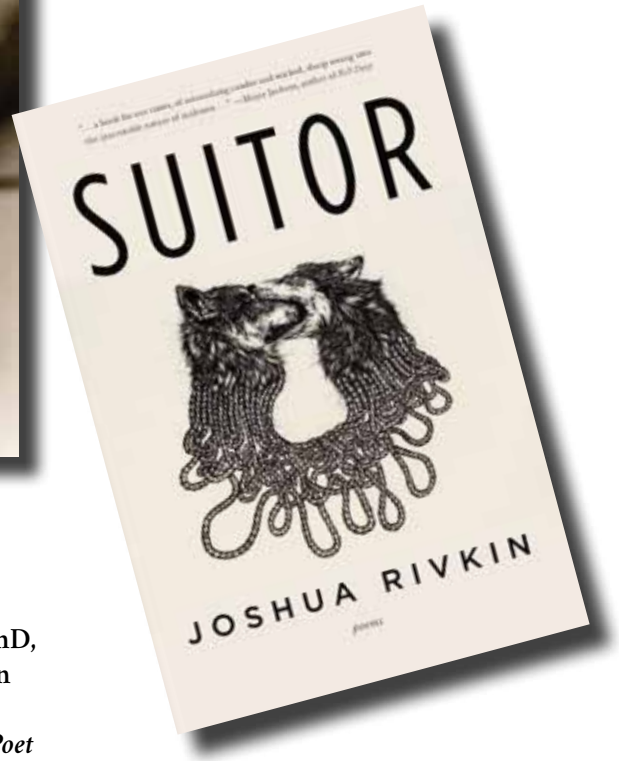


Christopher Brean Murray (PhD, 2018) has poems forthcoming in *Cimarron Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Epoch*, *Grist*, *New Ohio Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *Quarterly West*.

In 2021, Copper Canyon Press will publish Christian Nagle’s (PhD, 2000) translations of Japanese early modernist Chuya Nakahara’s first collection, *Goat Songs*, and Salmon Poetry (Ireland) will publish his original collection, *Flightbook*. Practicing two internal martial arts and the Wim Hof Method, he is an avid follower of the Sapien Diet. Already earned his retirement working as Communications Wizard for Zensho Agency (zenshoagency.com) for the past four years: poetry pays after all.

Robin Reagler (PhD, 1995) has poems appearing in *Cutbank*, *Gulf Coast*, *The Inspired Poet*, and *Poet Lore*.

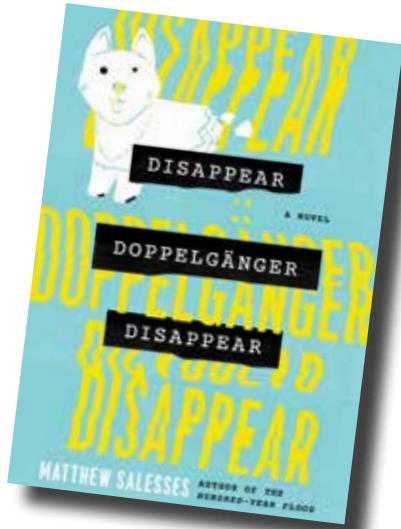
Joshua Rivkin’s (MFA, 2006) first book of poems, *Suitor*, will be published in September 2020 by Red Hen Press.



Martin Rock (PhD, 2015) has had poems published in *LIT*, *Waxwing*, and *Washington Square Review*, and he served as Senior Creative Writer for Tom Steyer’s 2020 presidential campaign. And despite misgivings about the transformation of language into capitalist units known as “copy,” he has a new website: martinrockcopy.com. Because, hey, even poets gotta make a living.

Lindsey Royce’s (PhD, 2006) poetry collection, *Play Me a Revolution* won a silver medal in the 2020 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

Matthew Salesses's (PhD, 2017) novel *Disappear Doppelgänger Disappear* was published by Little A this past August, and his book *Craft in the Real World* will be published by Catapult in early 2021.



Glenn Shaheen (MFA, 2008) will start teaching at Prairie View A&M University in the fall of 2020 as an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing.

Karen (Glazier) Shepard (MFA, 1992) continues to teach at Williams College. Her most exciting recent news is that her story, "Consent," will appear alongside her daughter's debut publication, "Wild Weasels," in the Fall 2020 issue of *Ploughshares*.

J.D. Smith (MA, Poetry) is pleased to announce that his first fiction collection, *Transit*, will be published by Unsolicited Press in 2022. He is currently working on projects in several genres and seeking a publisher for his fifth collection of poetry. Smith lives with his wife Paula Van Lare and their rescue animals in Washington, D.C.

Marilyn Stablein (MA, 1984) was a panelist, speaker and archival artist at the Kathy Acker Seattle Symposium. Her book *Milepost 27: Poems* (Black Heron Press, released May 2019) received a Southwest Book of the Year 2019 award. *Houseboat on the Ganges & A Room in Kathmandu: Letters from India & Nepal 1966-1972*, (Chin Music Press, released April 2019) an epistolary counterculture memoir illustrated with photographs and artwork, won 2nd Place in the nonfiction memoir category in the National Federation of Press Women's 2019 Awards Contest. Her artist books were featured in shows at the Pacific University, Forest Grove, (OR), University of Puget Sound (WA) and Museum Contempo, Olympia (WA). Stories, graphic essays and art were published in *Golden Handcuffs*, *Fiction International*, *ViceVersa*, *Printed Matter*, and the anthologies *What Could Possibly Go Wrong* and *Ms. Aligned 3*.

Gail (Donohue) Storey (MA, 1982 and Administrative Director of the CWP, 1982-86) is turning her writing, royalties, and notoriety toward the pressing needs for accelerating social change. She's the author of a book of poetry, two novels, and most recently, her memoir *I Promise Not to Suffer: A Fool for Love Hikes the Pacific Crest Trail*, winner of the National Outdoor Book Award. Her literary papers are archived in the University of Houston Libraries/ Special Collections.



Yerra Sugarman (PhD, 2016) has poems in recent issues of *Ploughshares*, *Colorado Review*, *Bat City Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Cherry Tree*, and *American Literary Review*. Her third poetry collection, *Aunt Bird*, is forthcoming from Four Way Books in March 2022.

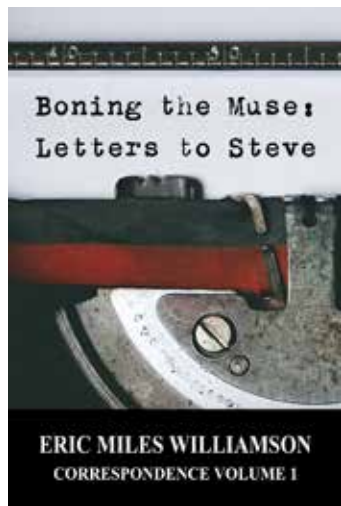
Robert Tinajero (MFA, 2004) launched a new podcast, *Words, Words, Words*, which can be heard here: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/words-words-words-a-podcast-by-robert-tinajero/id1450675329>



Sidney Wade's (PhD, 1984) eighth book, *Deep Gossip: New & Selected Poems*, was published by Johns Hopkins University Press in April 2020.



Eric Miles Williamson's (MFA, 1991) correspondence and journals, over 20 volumes, are being published by Down and Out Books. The first volume, *Boning the Muse: Letters to Steve*, appeared last Fall (2019). He lives in the Rio Grande Valley, where he is raising his two sons, Guthrie and Turner.



Ashley Wurzbacher's (PhD, 2016) debut short story collection, *Happy Like This*, was named one of the National Book Foundation's 2019 "5 Under 35" honorees. Her next book, a novel, is forthcoming from Atria Books in fall 2021.

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