

## Visiting Assistant Professor

### *Interview with Derek Palacio*

by Tanisha Kahn, MFA Fiction '21 • April 2020

**Derek Palacio**, Visiting Assistant Professor in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Oregon for 2019-20, received his MFA from Ohio State University. He is the author of the novel *The Mortifications* (2016) and the novella *How to Shake the Other Man* (2013), and "Sugarcane" (a short story which appeared in *The O. Henry Prize Stories 2013*). He is a recipient of fellowships from the Black Mountain Institute, Ragdale, CubaOne, and the National Park Service.

**Tanisha Khan (TK):** Your short story "Sugarcane" was published in *The O. Henry Prize Stories 2013*. Your novella, *How to Shake the Other Man*, was critically acclaimed, and your novel, *The Mortifications*, was well received, reviewed by *The New York Times*, *NPR*, and *Kirkus Reviews*. What inspired these works, and what continues to inspire you in your writing life?

**Derek Palacio (DP):** My father was born in Cuba in 1950 but left the island with his family in 1956. What he kept of his brief time there were a handful of memories, and those he shared with my siblings and me. Through them, I knew my father's family had lost something, but I didn't know exactly what. What I was given was longing without an object. A great deal of my work, then, is about the nature of longing within a Cuban American context, the ways in which a perceived void demands reckoning.

**TK:** Are there particular writers whom you find yourself returning to and reading



while you write, or authors whose writing you think back to often?

**DP:** Joy Williams, Jesmyn Ward, Roberto Bolaño and Clarice Lispector are writers whose fiction means a great deal to me. I appreciate how each attempts to encapsulate something ineffable in their writing, such as the religious mysticism of Lispector or the generational legacy of violence in Bolaño. I also find that their works remain mysterious to me in certain ways; they demand rereading, and every time I return to them, I find something new illuminated.

# Literary Reference

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## Poetry Faculty

Garrett Hongo  
Daniel Anderson  
Geri Doran

## Fiction Faculty

Mat Johnson  
Jason Brown  
Marjorie Celona  
Karen Thompson Walker

### Instructors

Brian Trapp (Career)  
Michael Copperman

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## Faculty News

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**Garrett Hongo**  
Professor of Poetry

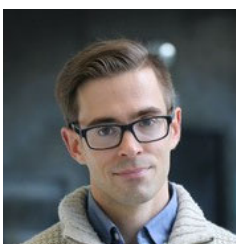
Garrett Hongo has been asked to contribute to *Nuova Poesia Americana 2020*, a new annual publication from Italy that collects poetry from four American poets with each issue. His tribute panel from last year's AWP is now live on the *Poetry Northwest* website (<https://www.poetrynw.org/garrett-hongo-a-tribute/>), curated by new editor and MFA alum Keetje Kuipers, with essay contributions from five other alums, a new poem, and an interview with Mark Jarman. Other poems are forthcoming in *terrain.org*, *Kyoto Journal*, and *Provincetown Arts*. This spring, *Georgia Review* will publish his essay "On My Therapist, Late in This Life." In August, he will be at the Lucas Artists Residency Program (LAP) at Villa Montalvo. His essay "Kubota and the Poetry of Incarceration" was published in the *American Poetry Review* last October, when he was also awarded the Allen Tate Poetry Prize by *Sewanee Review*.

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### Marjorie Celona

Assistant Professor of Fiction

Marjorie Celona's second novel, *How a Woman Becomes a Lake*, was published in March 2020. In the past year, she received an Oregon Arts Commission Fellowship from Literary Arts and a Creative Arts Fellowship from the College of Arts and Sciences, and has a residency up-coming from Lemon Tree House in Tuscany and an invitation to the American Library in Paris to read as part of her Evenings with an Author series in 2021.



**Brian Trapp**  
Career Instructor

Brian Trapp's essay "Twelve Words" was published in the *Kenyon Review* and was selected as the #1 Longreads of the Week by Longreads.com and Best Writing of the Month by UK's The Browser. "Twelve Words" is also currently being translated into German and published in the longform magazine REPORTAGEN. He was selected to attend the Tin House Summer Writing Workshop in Creative Nonfiction and recently accepted a position as a Senior Editor of the newly reestablished *Northwest Review*.

**TK:** *The Mortifications* engages with themes of displacement and exile, and in some ways recasts the classic exile story—the inability to return— through the eventual return of the main characters to Cuba. What was it like writing about this sort of displacement, and in some ways, through writing this novel, perhaps exploring your own familial and personal connections to Cuba and what it means to be disconnected in such a way?

**DP:** I think *The Mortifications*, in the end, explores the idea that exile makes “going home” impossible, even when a person can or does eventually return. Once that bond is severed—especially when it is done so violently or abruptly—a different relationship exists between a person and their homeland. Going back, as the characters in the novel discover, isn’t so much a process of reconciliation as acceptance. One must accept the time and space that have come between them and what they knew, and one must be willing to accept a new version of the place they left behind.

**TK:** *The Mortifications* looks intimately at memory and dislocation, and the idealization of the homeland when one has left it behind. There is a sort of restlessness to your characters in *The Mortifications*. In Isabel, this manifests through her dedication to her religion and the promise to one day return, a way of trying to keep her

homeland alive with her in Connecticut. In Ulises, it is through the ache of knowing that his memory of his home and his father is slowly fading, that he cannot recollect the way back as he was once able. Can you speak to how you went about capturing these details in your writing and what you learned in the process of this endeavor?

**DP:** What helped me in the writing process was realizing that my own distance from Cuba could become a strength of the novel. All the feelings and anxieties I had about having never been to Cuba, about not fully understanding its place in my life or psyche, were things I could give to my characters. It was especially helpful to realize that my own sense of the island was an amalgamation of my father’s memories and my research, and a kind of dream that had become a myth. Once I realized that, I was able to explore the ways the characters themselves mythologized a place and land they once intimately knew.

**TK:** What projects are you currently working on or looking forward to working on? And how is the current writing process for this project similar or different from your last project?

**DP:** My newest writing project—*The Confessions*—is a novel that explores the life of a fictional Cuban American swimmer in the 1990s, Daniel Flood. Flood is the descendant of Cuban revolution-

## CRWR Faculty Statement of Support

June 2020

The University of Oregon’s Creative Writing Program supports the on-going protests against the systemic racism and violence perpetrated against Black lives in the United States over the course of its existence—typified recently by the horrific murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery—and the longer journey towards manifesting a truly equitable society.

As poets and prose writers, we acknowledge our obligation as artists and people to reflect on the insidious effects of racism and how legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and slavery have led us to this moment. We understand the importance of using our positions to empower tomorrow’s voices. In this spirit, we endorse the [demands made by the Black Student Collective](#).

Over the course of its existence, the University of Oregon’s Creative Writing Program has had a tradition of racial diversity among its faculty, students, and visiting writers. It’s our goal to both honor and build on that legacy, and dedicate ourselves to the ongoing work necessary to make this program welcoming and empowering to all. ■

aries, and when he fails to qualify for the U.S. swim team, he will invoke his heritage in order to join the Cuban squad. *The Confessions* is told from the point of view of Miriam Young, and it relates the summer that she spends with a swimmer named Daniel Flood at her grandmother Ruth’s house on the coast of Connecticut. Miriam has been banished from her home by her parents, who are unnerved by her burgeoning rebelliousness. Unbeknownst to Miriam, Ruth participated in the Cuban revolution, which is how she came to know Flood’s grandmother, Sylvia, who cares for the boy in the absence of his mother, who has, at the novel’s start, gone missing. Daniel is sent to Ruth’s coastal estate so that he can train without distraction in order to qualify for the Olympic trials. So far, the process for this novel has required a great deal more research. I was also fortunate to visit Cuba for the first time in 2016, and that trip has helped broaden my understanding of the island’s contemporary identity.

**TK:** How has teaching at various programs across the country influenced your writing?

**DP:** My experience with various programs means I’ve gotten to work alongside a whole bunch of really talented writers and to learn from them, both in terms of craft and creative writing pedagogy. I’ve

been fortunate to see how others run their workshop, how they inspire young writers, and how they think differently about literature as an art form. That kind of breadth has really helped me develop my own approaches in the classroom along the way.

**TK:** What has been your favorite aspect of the UO Creative Writing MFA Program?

**DP:** My favorite part has been participating in (if only briefly) such a marvelous literary community! The students and faculty here are deeply engaged in the development of their art, and I’ve found everyone to be tremendously supportive of one another. I feel really lucky, then, as the communal atmosphere has benefited my own work tremendously.

**TK:** You’re leaving us soon to go to UNC Greensboro (I’m really sad about this). What are you looking forward to most about this new post?

**DP:** I’m really looking forward to joining another superb English Department and continuing to work with aspiring writers. Much like here at Oregon, they also use the tutorial structure, which means a lot of enriching one-on-one time with students. Through my work here and in low-residency programs, it’s a teaching model I’ve really grown to appreciate. ■



Walter Evans Kidd (1901-1990)

## 2020

### Kidd Prize Winners

The Creative Writing Program is pleased to announce the winners of this year’s Walter and Nancy Kidd Writing Competition in Fiction and Poetry:

#### Fiction

Judge: writer, Jamel Brinkley

- 1st Place Hayley Schlueter
- 2nd Place Billy von Raven
- 3rd Place Lida Ford

#### Honorary Mentions

Lorel Kelsey and Twila Neiwert

#### Poetry

Judge: Professor Garrett Hongo

- 1st Place Bethan Tyler
- 2nd Place Stephany Fetheriee
- 3rd Place Katie Quines

#### Honorable Mentions

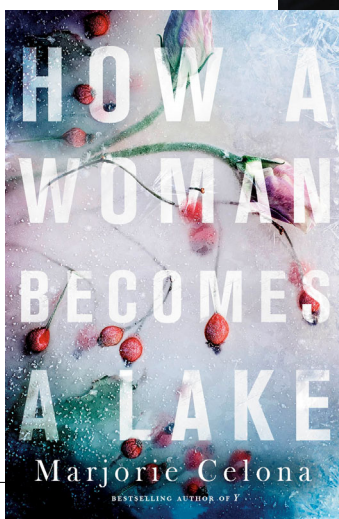
Martha DeCosta, Sierra Squires, and Billy von Raven ■

# New Faculty Book

## Interview with Marjorie Celona

by Mariah Rigg (MFA Fiction '21)

Marjorie has been a member of the University of Oregon fiction faculty since Fall 2015. Her first novel, *Y*, was published in eight countries and won France's *Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Héroïne*, along with being longlisted for Canada's *Giller Prize*, shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing, and a finalist for the Center for Fiction's Flaherty-Dunnan First Novel Prize and the *Dioraphte Jongerenliteratuur Prijs* in the Netherlands. Celona's work has also appeared in *The O. Henry Prize Stories*, *The Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *The Southern Review*, *The Harvard Review*, *The Sunday Times*, and elsewhere. She is a graduate of the University of Victoria and the Iowa Writers' Workshop.



**Marjorie Celona**  
Assistant Professor of Fiction

**Maria Rigg (MR):** In many ways, *How a Woman Becomes a Lake* is an examination of the way life unfolds after a mysterious and traumatic event: the disappearance of a woman on New Year's Day. This seems to be a theme in your writing, as you yourself have said that you like to 'start at a situation and examine the ripple effects.' How do you think fiction can be used to examine how we work through, and perhaps are even transformed by, trauma?

**Marjorie Celona (MC):** I'm going to paraphrase Susan Sontag, because she says this better than I do, but, essentially, we need stories to honor the complexity of reality—in particular, the complexity of our inner realities. No other medium—not film, not television, not visual art—breaks open human consciousness as carefully and complexly as literature. Literature is the realm of the interior. In the case of my book, I'm asking, what is the long arc of trauma? What is the shadow that childhood trauma casts onto adulthood? All of this is an invisible, interior investi-

gation. By showing a character as a child, then, over the course of 300 pages, returning to them as an adult—maybe I can cast a little light on transformation, on a particular shadow.

**MR:** One of the distinguishing aspects of your new book, *How a Woman Becomes a Lake*, is the way it's told through multiple perspectives. You've been very open about your appreciation for Edward P. Jones' fiction with your students here at the University of Oregon. Was his work influential to the way you chose to tell *How a Woman Becomes a Lake*?

**MC:** Initially I was more drawn to Edward St. Aubyn's Patrick Melrose novels, particularly how *everything* in Patrick's life, over the course of five books, stems from his father's abuse. I also just wanted to do something different this time around—the polyphonic novel, in third person. I was less concerned with voice (perhaps for the first time in my writing life) than with the pleasure of weaving several storylines over a period of thirty-five years. The multiple



## Keetje Kuipers

MFA Poetry '06

Article published on January 28, 2020:

### New Editor Keetje Kuipers takes the reins

*Poetry Northwest* (the region's oldest literary magazine, established in 1959) has just published volume 14.2 in its New Series, marking fifteen vibrant years in its expanded format and ten at host institution Everett Community College.

The Winter & Spring 2020 issue brings to a close the joint editorship of Aaron Barrell and Erin Malone. Malone has resigned her position to devote more time ... [\[Read more\]](#).



## Celona (continued from page 5)

perspectives allowed me to play with suspense—where is the woman and why has she gone missing?—while also threading other plotlines, other pleasures to fall into.

My Edward P. Jones obsession began in earnest after I started teaching his work, although I'd been a fan since grad school. What he does with time and third person was undoubtedly influential on *HWBL*, and I admit I tried some wild, Jonesian stuff. . . like going back in time five million years (really), then flash-forwarding to a distant future. Some of that whimsy remains in the Vera chapters, but ultimately I could not pull off such antics. Jones is a master. His work is inimitable—I've learned that and accepted it.

**MR:** There's a sense of circularity in both this work and your previous novel, *Y*. Additionally, setting is a huge part of both your published novels. How do you think growing up on Vancouver Island, surrounded by water, has impacted the way in which you approach storytelling and the stories you choose to tell?

**MC:** I'm drawn to the ugliness of beautiful places and the beauty of ugly places . . . Victoria (on Vancouver Island) is this bizarre triumvirate of (1) staggeringly natural beauty—ocean, forest, mountains, (2) old school British Colonialism, people speaking with affected accents and high tea, and (3) hardcore West Coast slackerism—

skateboarding, dope, and hacky sack; Red Hot Chili Peppers playing in every store. With *Y*, I was trying to capture this precisely, right down to the street names of my old haunts. With *How a Woman Becomes a Lake*, I wanted more freedom, particularly because it has non-realist elements. So I made up two cities—Whale Bay, which is a hybrid of two existing coastal towns, one in America and one in Canada—and San Garcia, which is a hybrid of LA and San Francisco. Setting tends to rear its head when I'm writing from the perspective of a child—because they notice things. Their surroundings affect them. That said, I'm not sure setting is crucial to me as a writer, but the ocean is. I can't imagine writing a novel in which the ocean isn't there in the background, doing its ocean thing. There's a stretch of highway just north of Florence, Oregon, where you round a bend and the entire Pacific Ocean is suddenly upon you. And it looks like you're going to go careening into it. It never gets any less sensational. My whole heart opens.

**MR:** Titling a piece of work is often the hardest part of the endeavor (at least for me). The title of your novel, *How a Woman Becomes a Lake*, comes from Jia Tolentino's 2018 essay in the *New Yorker*. Why'd you choose this?

**MC:** To find my book's title, I did precisely the wrong thing: I looked inside the book. I filled a Word doc-

## Celona (continued)

ument with shitty titles, lines cribbed from the book. At one point I felt like I'd never find a title. It just wasn't happening.

Then one of my undergraduate students told me something that one of his poetry instructors—one of our former Poetry MFAs—had told him: to think of a title as an “extra line.” This felt right to me. It was redundant to look inside my book—to title it with something that was *already* there. What I needed was an addition, not a repetition. Something that opened up meaning, not reduced it.

In Jia Tolentino's essay, she rereads Ovid's *Metamorphoses* after attending an exhibition called “The Un-Heroic Act: Representations of Rape in Women's Art in the U.S.” She focuses on the story of Arethusa turning into a spring to get away from Alpheus, then moves to the story of Daphne becoming a laurel tree, crying out to the gods, *change the body that has destroyed my life*, in order to get away from Apollo. (More recently, she reread Coetzee's *Disgrace* against the backdrop of the Weinstein trials—I love how she is rereading these texts and measuring them against our current times.) But in the case of her essay about Ovid, I was more than pleased; I was moved. I heard the voice of my student in my head, *a title is an extra line*. I wrote Jia and to my surprise she wrote back quickly, saying the title was mine.

But it would never be mine, and

that was partly the idea. By giving my novel this title, I would be adding the voice of Jia Tolentino, of Ovid, of Daphne, and of Arethusa. I would be asking the reader to think about transformation before they had even begun to read the book. Because, ultimately, this is a book about transformation—the way grief transforms us, and love transforms us; how certain events disfigure us and damage us, and if that damage occurs in childhood, where it might bloom in adulthood, and what damage can bloom into. “I tried to stop thinking about changing myself to better meet our era,” Tolentino writes. “I tried to remember that I've already been changed.... Other people walked around the room, radiating grief and exhaustion. For a moment, I imagined us all turning into trees, and then turning back.”

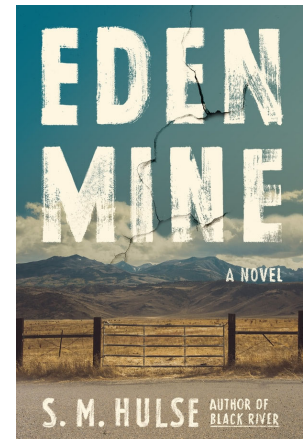
**MR:** You've said yourself that your novels tend to grow out of short stories you've written, taking imagery and emotion and marrying them to plot. Your current work in progress, for which you received a 2020 Oregon Literary Fellowship, is just that: an expansion of your O. Henry award winning story, “Counterblast”. What's different about writing a short story versus a novel? What are some of the joys of expanding shorter work into longer fiction?

**MC:** One difference (that I enjoy) is that a novel is an imperfect, shitty art form—originally seen as “low” art, especially when written



### Sarah Hulse MFA Fiction '12

Sarah's newest novel, *Eden Mine*, was released in February 2020 (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Her first novel, *Black River*, was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction, and ABA Indies Introduce title, and Indie Next pick and the winner of the Reading the West Book Award. She was a fiction fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An avid horse-woman, she has lived throughout the American West.



Credits: Rick Singer Photography



## Claire Luchette

MFA Fiction '17

Claire received a [National Endowment for the Arts](#) 2020 Literature Fellowship in Prose. A 2020 Push-cart Prize 4.9 winner, she is currently the 2019-2020 Hopkins Post-Graduate Fellow in Fiction at John Carroll University and has a novel forth-coming from FSG in 2021.

*Credit: Rob Wetzler*

## Celona (continued)

by a woman. So when I write a novel, I can relax a bit, knowing that save for *Remains of the Day*, there is no perfect novel out there. But there are perfect stories, and I demand perfection from my own, down to the syllables. When I wrote the short story "Counterblast," I was trying to harness a certain anger I felt towards the world after my daughter, Ena, was born. But a novel has to do a lot more than that. It's got to pull a reader through its three-hundred-or-so pages, and the journey has to be worth it, both for me and the reader. Anyway, it's an awful, impossible process, and "the joys" come for me at the very beginning, as in a love affair, say, and at the end—the relief of finally letting go.

**MR:** You've been with the program for over half a decade now, but before that you moved around a bunch. How has settling into Eugene changed or shaped you as a teacher and writer?

**MC:** I've done my best writing since coming to Eugene. I wrote "Counterblast" a month after moving here, and the majority of *HWBL*, and I just finished a short story that feels stronger to me than my previous work (of course it's getting rejected all over the place as I type this). As for teaching, I've been able to settle into my obsessions. I foist Jones on all of you and will never stop. I've been able to really think through the formal elements of fiction, in a way that when I was hopping all over North America, I couldn't do. I don't have any proof of this, but I think I'm a stronger professor and writer than I was when I arrived in the fall of 2015, baby Ena in arms. Certainly I have better hair. ■



## Monica (Brown) Fields

MFA Poetry '11

Monica's poem "Trigger" was selected as a finalist for the *North American Review's* 2020 James Hearst Poetry Prize, judged by Ilya Kaminsky. Her work has appeared in *Poems & Plays* and *Meridian*; and is forthcoming in *North American Review*. Monica has taught Creative Writing workshops at Chattanooga State Community College and as a visiting writer for the Meacham Writers' Workshop at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga. She currently lives and teaches writing in Etowah, Tennessee.



# Welcoming the New Resource Library During a Pandemic, or Notes on a Practice with Distance

by Anna Ball (MFA Poetry '19) • May 2020

*What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as I approach?*

*What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that looks in my face?*

*Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?*

— Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”

There’s a distance I need to travel just to revisit the beginning of March, when I shelved the last books for the new Creative Writing Resource Library. That week, the university announced the shift to online classrooms and we all took our first steps into more remote territory.

I’d felt a similar remove sifting through the boxes of the late Ehud Havazelet, former fiction professor in the program, whose office archives serve as the foundation for the new program library. As Jonathan Hill (Poetry ’20) and Dewey Fox (Poetry ’20) recall, the work of sorting his books felt much like making his acquaintance, though it was an introduction mediated by absence. Those of us organizing his collection also noticed the breadth of the professor’s intellectual interests. Chris Connelly (Fiction ’20) remarks, “What I remember the most about Ehud’s collection is the Ted Bundy biographies—there were three—alongside the likes of Proust. We should all aim at being so widely read.”

Even judging by this modest collection, small in comparison to the library he had curated at home, Havazelet was well versed within his field and outside its borders. Besides his four bookcases of fiction, featuring favorite authors like Malamud, Chekhov, and O’Connor, as well as a few shelves of poetry classics, plays, creative nonfiction, and the biographies of famous writers, there were stacks of baseball encyclopedias and film criticism, tomes of world

histories and American regional writing, Judaic Studies literature, religious thought of various traditions, case studies in atypical psychology, and texts by astronomers, naturalists, and anthropologists.

Leafing through his books, I approached the expanse of his writing life. I caught glimpses of his bonds with fellow writers in their effusive notes above autographs. I deciphered keys at the start of many novels, scrawled in his own cramped script, on some exemplified matter of craft. Yet, though I’d contemplated the intimate intersections of his interests, overheard his community and his cadence in marginalia, I had to accept I was merely looking at fragments, not a face.

All the process seemed to amount to was punching titles into a database and smoothing bookplates into hundreds of covers. I hadn’t even done the bulk of the task; Susan Lofton, who assisted Julia Schewanick with administrative work for several months, herself catalogued almost 1,000 books. Still, I felt drawn to navigate Havazelet’s own slow and painstaking trek through literature, years after his death; to trail his encounters with the words of other writers, cover to cover, day by day.

In the epigraph to his first collection of short stories, *What Is It Then Between Us?*, I arrived at this meditation on distance. The poem from which its title came—Walt Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”—travels the span of the East River from

Manhattan to Brooklyn by boat, collapsing linear time into the present moment, traversing the veil between death and life.

After days of scanning his annotations, I had come to sense how Havazelet traveled. He surrendered his ear like a son to his mother's last wishes, becoming interpreter of the family secrets. I recalled my own inheritance of this trusted presence between the lines, the desire to carry that presence forward. *Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?* Although I perused his library rather than his own literature, I felt near to the living hand that had collected and turned the pages.

Writing programs, Havazelet taught his students, are not for learning how to write but for learning how to read. How to read against your pillow in the sun in the morning, on a porch where the breeze lifts the page, at a cluttered desk upstairs where you can sit alone at midnight by the open window. In a small library, beside the dusty shelves.

Reading is a practice with distances. How far can I venture from my own beloved backyard? How close am I willing to get to another's ailing body, to the virus? Writing, too, is a practice with distances. How deep can I drop down the well of my experience and return with language? How close to the door of my own sickness do I dare bring someone else?

*What is it then between us?*

*What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?*

From our quarantines, we can contemplate the meaning of this distance, contemplate the meaning of what a writer has left behind for us: a nexus of his lineages, a gathering of his voices outside of time, a place to approach, confront, and apprehend these generations of expression. Where a few books lean against each other, we can listen for the call to come near another's experience, and, where we put our words down, to follow the buried heartbeat of our own. Practicing with this distance is to contend with where we have come from, to hear the voices that hail us, to ask where we go from here.

The program hopes to host a small reception when the library is ready to open—extending a special invitation to Ehud Havazelet's wife, Molly Brown, to cut the ribbon—to welcome and encourage program faculty and students to gather and enjoy the books. Julia Schewanick, who has been the force behind this project, hopes this event might coincide with campus operations resuming and serve as an occasion to celebrate everyone's return.

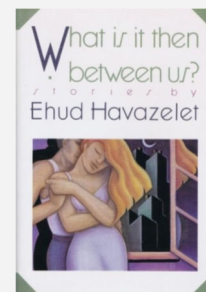
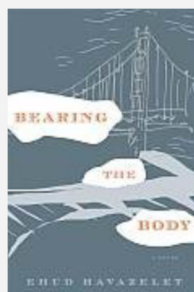
The return is, perhaps, still a remote prospect during this uncertain time of quarantine. And in the grand scheme of things, this new library may become old news. But in it, we can continue to see distant figures of isolation and intimacy moving closer. In any time, it's a writer's work to travel to meet them. ■

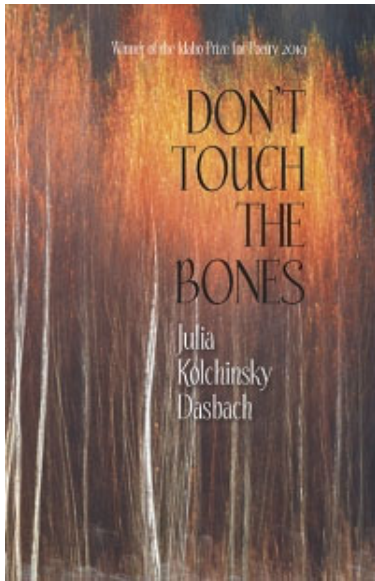
#### Creative Writing Program • Professor of Fiction



Ehud Havazelet

1955 – 2015





## Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach

MFA Poetry '13

Julia's second collection, *Don't Touch the Bones*, Lost Horse Press (2020), won the 2019 Idaho Poetry Prize. A finalist for the Pamet River Prize, her newest collection, *40 Weeks*, is forthcoming from YesYes Books in 2021. Her work has appeared in *POETRY*, *American Poetry Review*, and *The Nation*, among others.



## Alycia Pirmohamed

MFA Poetry '14

Alycia was the winner of the 2019 CBC Poetry Prize. Alycia, who is pursuing her PhD at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland), has received several awards over the past year.

Read more: 11/21/2019 • [Love Poem with Elk and Punctuation, Prairie Storm and Tasbih](#) and 11/07/2019 • [2019 CBC Poetry Prize](#)

## Susan Rich

MFA Poetry '96

Susan had two new poetry collections accepted in the same week! *Gallery of Postcards and Maps* will be published by Salmon Press in 2022 and *Blue Atlas* will be published in 2023 by Red Hen Press. Her poem-film debuted as part of the Visible Poetry Project this April and will play in New York this summer.

Susan is the author of four poetry collections, *Cloud Pharmacy*, shortlisted for the Julie Suk Prize and *The Alchemist's Kitchen*, finalist for the Washington State Book Award, *Cures Include Travel* and *The Cartographer's Tongue*, winner of the PEN USA Poetry Award. Along with Ilya Kaminsky, she coedited *The Strangest of Theatres: Poets Crossing Borders*. Rich has received awards from 4Culture, PEN USA, The Times Literary Supplement (London), Peace Corps Writers, and the Fulbright Foundation.

## Miles Wilson

MFA Fiction '68

Miles' *Woodwork: New and Selected Stories of the American West*, published in 2018 by the University of New Mexico Press, was named one of three finalists for the Jesse Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction by the Texas Institute of Letters.

His work has appeared in *The Georgia Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Southwest Review*, *Indiana Review*,

*The Gettysburg Review*, *New England Review*, and *Shenandoah*. His collection of short stories, *Line of Fall* (University of Iowa Press, 1989), was the winner of the John Simmons Short Fiction Award. One of the stories, "On Tour with Max," was optioned for a film by an Academy Award-winning director.

He has held fellowships from the Writers' League of Texas, the Christopher Isherwood Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



## Brenden Willey

MFA Fiction '10

Brenden was named the winner of the 2019 Narrative Prize by the editors of [Narrative](#).

## Current Student News

### Nic Anstett

MFA Fiction '21

Nic's story "WildMan" will be published in the upcoming seventh issue of *Outlook Springs* due for release Fall 2020.

### Mariah Rigg

MFA Fiction '21

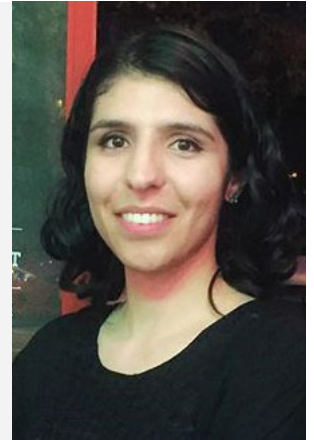
Mariah's flash fiction story, "Flying North" was longlisted for the Writer's HQ Quarterly Prize and fiction story "Every Weekend" was nominated for the PEN/Robert J Dau Emerging Writers Award.

### Seelai Karzai

MFA Poetry '21

Seelai Karzai was awarded a \$2000 seed grant from the Poetry Foundation to help in her work with the [Afghan American Artists and Writers Association](#) (AAAWA).

As part of the 2019 Poetry Incubator for community-engaged poets, Seelai was given the opportunity to submit a proposal for a project that would benefit her community. This proposal, The Afghan Futures Project, was selected by her peers in the program to receive the grant. The Afghan Futures Project will offer a series of free workshops to emerging Afghan writers and supports AAWA's long-term goal of cultivating a creative community in the Afghan diaspora.



## In Memoriam



**Beatrice Altoe Vargas Bugané**  
(1996—2019)

"Bia" graduated with a BA from Brown University in English Literature and was an MFA student in fiction in 2018-2019 in the UO's Creative Writing Program. ■

## Annual Giving Reminder

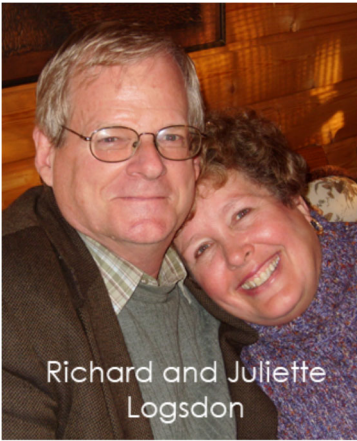


Consider giving to the **Creative Writing Program**. Your generous support helps us educate students, strengthen our program, and prepare tomorrow's writers—our future literary voices. There are a variety of ways to support the program and gifts of all sizes are a powerful investment in our mission and community.

Whether you are making a one-time gift, making a pledge of recurring contributions, considering a planned gift, or establishing an endowed fund, donations to the program and program-related funds allow us to provide a competitive education for our growing body of undergraduates and graduate students.

- Writing Program Fund
- The Walter and Nancy Kidd Endowment
- Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Prize
- Richard and Juliette Logsdon Prize in Fiction
- Beatrice Altoe Vargas Bugané Memorial Prize in Fiction

The faculty and staff in the Creative Writing Program are committed to advancing the educational and scholarly mission of the university and we thank you for your generosity. For more information, visit our webpage: <http://crwr.uoregon.edu/give-now/>. ■



Richard and Juliette  
Logsdon



Norman Rickles  
1950—2019  
UO English • Class of '74

## Logsdon/Rickles Prize in Fiction

**Richard Logsdon** was Senior Editor for *Red Rock Review*, a literary journal published by the College of Southern Nevada featuring works by poets and short story writers. While in that position, he met with Creative Writing Program faculty. Richard had himself won a writing award in 1971, the Sarah Harkness Kirby Award from the UO English Department for the best graduate student essay and was so inspired, he and his wife wanted to do something similar for other students and the Richard and Juliette Logsdon Scholarship for fiction writing was established. **Norman Rickles** was a 1974 UO graduate of English who passed away in August 2019. In October 2019, the program received a gift in his

memory. In recognition of the donor's intentions, this year's fiction award honors both — **Logsdon/Rickles Prize in Fiction**.

2020 Winner:

**Angela Bogart-Monteith** (MFA Fiction '20)

## Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Prize

*In honor of Miriam McFall Starlin (1917—2015)*

The Miriam McFall Starlin Poetry Prize was established in 1997 by the late Glenn Starlin. It was created as a gift to his wife, Miriam, who read and wrote poetry her entire life, beginning as a girl after her bedtime, using a flashlight under the covers. Her first volume of poems, *Wait a Minute*, was published in 2006.

This prize offers a promising poet the freedom to pursue writing in the summer between their first and second years in the MFA program.



2020 Winner:

**Loic-Amie Mulatris** (MFA Poetry '21)

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## *Congratulations to the Class of 2020*

- Angela Bogart-Monteith • Chris Connolly • Dewey Fox •  
• Mark Hennion • Jonathan Hill • Steve Kiernan •  
• Charles Neaves • Nathaniel Nelson • Natalie Staples •

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## Call for Alumni News

The Creative Writing Program is extremely proud of its program graduates and strives to keep up with their wide-ranging successes. Alumni have a long history of success with publishing, translation, fellowships, and prizes. Graduates have received Wallace Stegner Fellowships, the Dylan Thomas Award (University of Wales), the Amy Lowell Scholarship, the Philip Levine Prize in Poetry, the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award, and other honors. We invite alum to submit news using our online form • <https://crwr.uoregon.edu/alumni/>.