

THE RAINIER WRITING WORKSHOP
MFA @ PLU
Faculty Biographies

Rick Barot has published three books of poetry with Sarabande Books: *The Darker Fall* (2002), which received the Kathryn A. Morton Prize; *Want* (2008), which was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award and won the 2009 Grub Street Book Prize; and *Chord* (2015), which received the UNT Rilke Prize, the PEN Open Book Award, the Publishing Triangle's Thom Gunn Award, and was a finalist for the *LA Times* Book Prize. He has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Artist Trust of Washington, the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, and Stanford University, where he was a Wallace E. Stegner Fellow and a Jones Lecturer in Poetry. He lives in Tacoma, WA and is an associate professor of English at Pacific Lutheran University and is the director of The Rainier Writing Workshop. He is the poetry editor of *New England Review*. For many years he was on the faculty of the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. His fourth book, *The Galleons*, will be published by Milkweed Editions in 2020.

Suzanne Berne is the author of four novels: *The Dogs of Littlefield*, *The Ghost at the Table*, *A Perfect Arrangement*, and *A Crime in the Neighborhood*, which won Great Britain's Orange Prize in 1999, as well as a book of nonfiction. She has written frequently for *The New York Times*, and her short stories, reviews and essays have also appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Agni*, *Vogue*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *The London Sunday Times* among other publications. She is the fiction editor for *The Harvard Review* and teaches creative writing at Boston College.

David Biespiel is a poet, literary critic, memoirist, and contributing writer at *American Poetry Review*, *New Republic*, *New York Times*, *Poetry*, *Politico*, *The Rumpus*, and *Slate*, among other publications. He is the author of numerous books, most recently *The Education of a Young Poet*, which was selected a Best Books for Writers by *Poets & Writers*, *A Long High Whistle*, which received the 2016 Oregon Book Award for General Nonfiction, and *The Book of Men and Women*, which was chosen for Best Books of the Year by the Poetry Foundation and received the 2011 Oregon Book Award for Poetry. He was a 2018 National Book Critics Circle Awards Finalist for the Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing. Recipient of Lannan, National Endowment for the Arts, and Stegner fellowships, he has taught at Stanford University, University of Maryland, George Washington University, and Wake Forest University, in addition to other colleges and universities. He is Poet in Residence at Oregon State University and President of the Attic Institute of Arts and Letters.

Barrie Jean Borich is the author of *Apocalypse, Darling* (Ohio State University Press: Mad Creek Crooks/Machete Series in Literary Nonfiction 2018). *PopMatters* said "*Apocalypse*,

Darling soars and seems to live as a new form altogether. It's poetry, a meditation on life as "the other", creative non-fiction, and abstract art." Her memoir *Body Geographic* (University of Nebraska Press/American Lives Series 2013) won a Lambda Literary Award in Memoir, an IPPY (Independent Publisher Book Award) Gold Medal in Essay/Creative Nonfiction, and a 2013 Forward INDIE Bronze Award for Essays. In a starred review *Kirkus* called *Body Geographic* "an elegant literary map that celebrates shifting topographies as well as human bodies in motion, not only across water and land, but also through life." Borich's previous book, *My Lesbian Husband* (Graywolf 1999, 2000), won the American Library Association Stonewall Book Award, and her first book, *Restoring the Color of Roses* (1993), was published by Firebrand Books, an independent feminist press. Her work has been anthologized in *Waveform: Twenty-First Century Essays by Women* and in *After Montaigne: Contemporary Essayists Cover the Essays*, and has been cited in *Best American Essays* and *Best American Non-Required Reading*. She is the recipient of *The Florida Review* Editor's Prize in the Essay and the *Crab Orchard Review* Literary Nonfiction Prize, and her work has appeared in *Ecotone*, *The Seneca Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *TriQuarterly*, *Passages North*, *The Washington Post*, *The Rumpus* and many others. Borich is an associate professor in the English Department and MA in Writing and Publishing Program at DePaul University in Chicago. She leads writing workshops for graduate and undergraduate students at DePaul, teaches courses in LGBTQ memoir and the history and practice of the American literary magazine, and she edits *Slag Glass City*, a digital journal of the urban essay arts. A Chicago native, Borich lives with her spouse Linnea in the city's historic Bryn Mawr District of the Edgewater Beach neighborhood, one of the most culturally and internationally diverse community areas of the city and recently voted the sixth "gayest" neighborhood in the United States.

David Allan Cates is the author of five novels, most recently *Tom Connor's Gift*, a gold medalist in the 2015 Independent Book Publishers Book awards. His chapbook of poetry, *The Mysterious Location of Kyrgyzstan*, was released in the spring, 2016. His other novels include: *Hunger in America*, a New York Times Notable Book, *X Out of Wonderland*, and *Freeman Walker*, both Montana Book Award Honor Books, and *Ben Armstrong's Strange Trip Home*, a gold medalist in the 2013 Independent Book Publishers Book Awards. The winner of the Montana Arts Council's Artist Innovation Award in 2010, his stories and poems have appeared in numerous literary magazines, and his travel articles in *Outside Magazine* and the *New York Times Sophisticated Traveler*. For 18 years, Cates was the executive director of Missoula Medical Aid, a non-profit that provides public health and surgery services in Honduras. In Missoula he has worked with the Missoula Writing Collaborative, teaching classes on short story writing in high schools, and the 406 writing workshop. For many years he worked as a fishing guide on the Smith River and raised cattle on his family farm in Wisconsin.

Kevin Clark's book, *Self-Portrait with Expletives*, won the Pleiades Press book contest and is distributed by LSU Press. His first full-length collection of poetry, *In the Evening of No*

Warning, was published by New Issues Press, and his chapbook *The Wanting* won the 2016 Five Oaks Press contest. His poems have appeared in numerous magazines and collections, including *The Antioch Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Gulf Coast*, *Ploughshares*, *Crazyhorse*, and *The Iowa Review*. He also won the Angoff Award from *The Literary Review* for best contribution in a volume year. Kevin's textbook, *The Mind's Eye: A Guide to Writing Poetry*, is published by Pearson Longman. He has published essays about numerous contemporary American poets. A regular essayist for *The Georgia Review*, his critical articles and reviews have appeared in many journals and collections, among them *The Iowa Review*, *Papers on Language and Literature*, *The Southern Review*, *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, and *Poetry International*. He was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, CA, where he taught poetry writing and modern and contemporary American literature. Still attempting slow-pitch softball and fast-pitch baseball, he lives with his wife Amy Hewes in San Luis Obispo.

Geffrey Davis is the author of *Revising the Storm* (BOA Editions 2014), winner of the A. Poulin Jr. Poetry Prize and a Hurston/Wright Legacy Award Finalist, and of the chapbook *Begotten* (URB Books 2016), coauthored with poet F. Douglas Brown. His second full-length collection, *Night Angler* (BOA Editions), appears in Spring 2019. Davis's honors include the Anne Halley Poetry Prize, the Dogwood Prize in Poetry, the Wabash Prize for Poetry, an Academy of American Poets Prize, and fellowships from the Cave Canem Foundation and the Vermont Studio Center. He has recent work published or forthcoming in *The Massachusetts Review*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *PBS NewsHour*, and *Ploughshares*. A native of the Pacific Northwest, Davis serves as the poetry editor of *Iron Horse Literary Review* and teaches in the MFA Program in Creative Writing & Translation at the University of Arkansas.

Oliver de la Paz is the author of four collections of poetry: *Names Above Houses*, *Furious Lullaby*, *Requiem for the Orchard*, and *Post Subject: A Fable*. He co-edited *A Face to Meet the Faces: An Anthology of Contemporary Persona Poetry*, and serves as the co-chair of the Kundiman advisory board. His work has been published or is forthcoming in journals such as *American Poetry Review*, *Tin House*, *The Southern Review*, and *Poetry Northwest*. He teaches at the College of the Holy Cross and in the Low-Res MFA Program at PLU.

Greg Glazner's books of poetry are *From the Iron Chair* and *Singularity*, both published by W.W. Norton. His awards include The Walt Whitman Award, The Bess Hokin Award from *Poetry*, and an NEA Fellowship. He has published recent poetry, fiction, and non-fiction in magazines including *Poetry*, *Fifth Wednesday*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. An electric guitarist as well as a writer, he has collaborated with the composer Garrett Shatzer on a blues-influenced piece in the art song tradition, *At the Blinds*, for which Greg wrote the text. Sung by the tenor David Saul Lee and accompanied by CityWater New Music Ensemble, with Greg on guitar, the piece premiered in November of 2014 at the Center for New Music in San Francisco and was

recorded live. When he's not teaching at PLU or at UC Davis, he lives in Creede, Colorado with his partner, the writer Pam Houston.

Rigoberto González is the author of four books of poetry, most recently *Unpeopled Eden*, which won the Lambda Literary Award and the Lenore Marshall Prize from the Academy of American Poets, and eleven books of prose, including *Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa*, which received the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. The recipient of Guggenheim, NEA and USA Rolón fellowships, a NYFA grant in poetry, the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, The Poetry Center Book Award, and the Barnes & Noble Writer for Writers Award, he is contributing editor for *Poets & Writers Magazine* and writes a monthly column for NBC-Latino online. Currently, he is professor of English at Rutgers-Newark, the State University of New Jersey, and the inaugural Stan Rubin Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at the Rainier Writing Workshop. In 2015, he received The Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Publishing Triangle. As of 2016, he serves as critic-at-large with the *L.A. Times* and sits on the Board of Trustees of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP).

Jenny Johnson is the author of *In Full Velvet*, published by Sarabande Books in 2017. Her many honors include a 2015 Whiting Award and a 2016-17 Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University. She has also received awards and scholarships from the Blue Mountain Center, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She received her MFA from the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. Her poems have appeared in *The Best American Poetry 2012*, *New England Review*, *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, and elsewhere. She teaches at the University of Pittsburgh and at the Rainier Writing Workshop, Pacific Lutheran University's low-residency MFA program.

Ayers Ayers Lawson is the author of *Virgin and Other Stories*, which in addition to being named a Best Debut Of The Year by *The Irish Times* and a Best Book Of The Year by *Vice* is also being translated for publication in Germany, Italy, Norway, and Spain. She has received the George Plimpton Award for Fiction, as well as a writing fellowship from The Corporation of Yaddo. Her fiction has appeared in *Paris Review*, *Granta*, *ZYZZYVA* and *Oxford American*, among others, has been cited as notable in *Best American Short Stories*, and was anthologized in *The Unprofessionals: New American Writing from The Paris Review*. Her non-fiction has appeared in *Der Spiegel* and *Granta*. She has lectured in the creative writing department at Emory University, and teaches at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. [Guest Faculty and Mentor, 2018-19.]

Rebecca McClanahan's most recent books are *The Tribal Knot: A Memoir of Family, Community, and a Century of Change* and a new edition of *Word Painting: The Fine Art of Writing Descriptively*. She has also published five books of poetry, two additional books of writing instruction, and *The Riddle Song and Other Rememberings*, winner of the

Glasgow Award in nonfiction. McClanahan's work has appeared in *Best American Essays*, *Best American Poetry*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Sun*, and numerous anthologies. McClanahan, who received the Wood Prize from *Poetry*, a Pushcart Prize in Fiction, the Carter Prize for the Essay, and literary fellowships from New York Foundation for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council, was the 2015 Writer-in-Residence at Hollins University.

Kent Meyers is the author of a memoir, a book of short fiction, and three novels, most recently *Twisted Tree*, which won a Society of Midland Authors award and a High Plains Book award, and was translated into French. *The River Warren* and *Light In the Crossing* were *New York Times* Notable Books, and *The Work Of Wolves* won the Mountain and Plains Booksellers Association Award and an American Library Association Award. Meyers has published fiction and essays in numerous literary journals. He recently retired from many years of teaching at Black Hills State University in South Dakota.

Brenda Miller is the author of five essay collections: *An Earlier Life*; *Who You Will Become*; *Listening Against the Stone*; *Blessing of the Animals*; and *Season of the Body*. She also co-authored *Tell It Slant: Creating, Refining and Publishing Creative Nonfiction* and *The Pen and The Bell: Mindful Writing in a Busy World*. Her work has received six Pushcart Prizes. *An Earlier Life* recently received the Washington State Book Award. She is a Professor of English at Western Washington University, and on the faculty of the Rainier Writing Workshop. She lives in Bellingham, WA, with her dog Abbe and a rotating crew of foster dogs who take up temporary residence.

Marie Mutsuki Mockett was born to an American father and Japanese mother, and graduated from Columbia University with a degree in East Asian Languages and Civilizations. Her memoir, *Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye*, examines grief against the backdrop of the 2011 Great East Earthquake, and Mockett's family temple located 25 miles from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power reactor. Mockett's awards include a Fellowship from the US/Japan Creative Artist Fellowship, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. *Where the Dead Pause and the Japanese Say Goodbye*, was a finalist for the 2016 PEN Open Book Award, the Indies Choice for Nonfiction and the Northern California Book Award for Creative Nonfiction. Her novel, *Picking Bones from Ash*, published by Graywolf, was a finalist for the Saroyan Prize and the Paterson Prize. Her new book, tentatively titled *A Kernel in God's Eye*, explores her family's one-hundred-year-old wheat farm in Nebraska, and the changing role of food, God, science, race and agriculture in society, and was a finalist for the Lukas Prize, awarded by Columbia and Harvard University's Schools of Journalism. She lives in San Francisco.

Scott Nadelson is the author of four story collections, most recently *The Fourth Corner of the World*; a memoir, *The Next Scott Nadelson: A Life in Progress*; and a novel, *Between You and Me*. His stories and essays have appeared in *Harvard Review*, *AGNI*, *Ploughshares*, *Glimmer Train*, *The Southern Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *New England Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and have been cited as notable in both *Best American Short*

Stories and Best American Essays. Winner of the Oregon Book Award, the Great Lakes Colleges New Writers Award, and the Reform Judaism Fiction Prize, he teaches at Willamette University and lives in Salem, Oregon.

Ann Pancake is the author of two short story collections, *Given Ground* and *Me and My Daddy Listen to Bob Marley*, and a novel, *Strange As This Weather Has Been*, which was one of *Kirkus Review's* Top Ten Fiction Books of the year, won the 2007 Weatherford Prize, and was a finalist for the 2008 Orion Book Award and the 2008 Washington State Book Award. She has also received a Whiting Award, an NEA grant, the Bakeless Prize, and a Pushcart Prize. Fiction and essays have appeared in journals and anthologies like *Orion*, *The Georgia Review*, *Poets and Writers*, and *New Stories from the South, the Year's Best*. In 2016, she was the first recipient of the Barry Lopez Visiting Writer in Ethics and the Community Fellowship. She has a PhD in English literature from the University of Washington and was recently the Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. [On Leave 2018-19.]

Lia Purpura is the author of eight collections of essays, poems, and translations, most recently, *Rough Likeness* (essays) and *It Shouldn't Have Been Beautiful* (poems). Her honors include a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist, National Endowment for the Arts and Fulbright Fellowships, four Pushcart prizes, the Associated Writing Programs Award in Nonfiction, and the Beatrice Hawley, and Ohio State University Press awards in poetry. Recent work appears in *Agni*, *Field*, *The Georgia Review*, *Orion*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *Best American Essays*. She is Writer in Residence at The University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and teaches in prisons in Baltimore and at writing programs around the country. In early 2019, her new collection of essays, *All the Fierce Tethers*, will be published with Sarabande Books.

Marjorie Sandor is the author of four books of short fiction and creative nonfiction, and the editor of a short-story anthology, *The Uncanny Reader* (St. Martins Press, 2015). Her linked story collection, *Portrait of my Mother, Who Posed Nude in Wartime* (Sarabande Books) won the 2004 National Jewish Book Award. Stories and essays have appeared in such journals as *AGNI*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Harvard Review*, and *Opera News*, as well as in several anthologies, including *The Best American Short Stories* and *The Pushcart Prize*. She lives in Corvallis, Oregon, and teaches in the MFA Program at Oregon State University.

Peggy Shumaker's new and selected volume *Cairn* was recently published by Red Hen Press. She was honored by the Rasmuson Foundation with its Distinguished Artist Award, and by the National Endowment on the Arts with a fellowship in poetry. She served as Alaska State Writer Laureate. Shumaker is the author of eight books of poetry. Her lyrical memoir is *Just Breathe Normally*. Professor emerita from University of Alaska Fairbanks, Shumaker teaches in the Rainier Writing Workshop MFA at PLU. She serves on the Advisory Board for Storyknife and on the board of the Alaska Arts

and Culture Foundation. Shumaker is editor of the Boreal Books series (an imprint of Red Hen Press), editor of the Alaska Literary Series at University of Alaska Press, contributing editor for *Alaska Quarterly Review*, and poetry editor for *Persimmon Tree*.

Sherry Simpson has published two collections of essays, *The Way Winter Comes* and *The Accidental Explorer*. Her most recent book, *Dominion of Bears*, won the John Burroughs Medal for Excellence in Natural History Writing in 2015. Her work has appeared in numerous journals, anthologies, and magazines, including *Orion*, *Harvard Review*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Brevity*, *On Nature: Great Writers on the Great Outdoors*, and *In Fact*. She is a professor of creative writing at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

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