

**THE RAINIER WRITING WORKSHOP**  
**MFA @ PLU**  
**Faculty Biographies**

**Kelli Russell Agodon's** newest book is *Dialogues with Rising Tides* from Copper Canyon Press. She is the cofounder of Two Sylvias Press as well as the Co-Director of Poets on the Coast: A Weekend Retreat for Women. Her last book, *Hourglass Museum*, was a finalist for the Washington State Book Awards and shortlisted for the Julie Suk Poetry Prize. Her second book, *Letters from the Emily Dickinson Room*, was the winner of the Foreword Indies Book of the Year for poetry and also a finalist for the Washington State Book Awards. She's received awards from the Poetry Society of America, the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Foundation, James Hearst Poetry Prize, Artist Trust, and the Puffin Foundation for editorial excellence. Agodon lives in a sleepy seaside town in Washington State on traditional lands of the Chimacum, Coast Salish, S'Klallam, and Suquamish people, where she is an avid hiker and paddleboarder.

**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. In 2020 he received the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America. He lives in Tacoma, WA and is a professor of English at Pacific Lutheran University and is the director of The Rainier Writing Workshop. His fourth book, *The Galleons*, was published by Milkweed Editions in 2020. *The Galleons* was listed on the top ten poetry books for 2020 by the New York Public Library and was on the longlist for the National Book Award. Also in 2020, his chapbook *During the Pandemic* was published by Albion Books.

**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 teaches creative writing at Boston College.

**Barrie Jean Borich** is the author of *Apocalypse, Darling* (2018), which was short-listed for a Lambda Literary Award. *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 nonfiction, and abstract art.” Her memoir *Body Geographic* (2013) won a Lambda Literary Award in Memoir, and in a starred review *Kirkus* called the book “...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* (2000), won the American Library Association Stonewall Book Award. Borich’s essays have been anthologized in: *Isherwood in Transit*; *Critical Creative Writing*; *Waveform: Twenty-First Century Essays by Women*; and in *After Montaigne: Contemporary Essayists Cover the Essays*, and have been cited in *Best American Essays* and *Best American Non-Required Reading*. She is a professor in the Department of English-MFA/MA in Creative Writing and Publishing Program at DePaul University in Chicago, where she directs the LGBTQ Studies minor and edits *Slag Glass City*, a journal of the urban essay arts.

**Wendy Call** is co-editor of the craft anthology *Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers’ Guide* (Penguin, 2007); author of *No Word for Welcome: The Mexican Village Faces the Global Economy* (Nebraska, 2011), winner of the Grub Street Book Prize and an International Latino Book Award; and translator of *In the Belly of Night and Other Poems* by Mexican-Zapotec poet Irma Pineda (Pluralia, 2020). Wendy has received grants and fellowships for her creative nonfiction from 4Culture, Artist Trust, Ragdale Foundation, and the Seattle CityArtist Program, and for her translations of poetry, from the Fulbright Commission, Jack Straw Foundation, and National Endowment for the Arts. She has served as Artist in Residence at two dozen institutions, including the American Antiquarian Society, Harborview Medical Center, New College of Florida, Seattle University, and five national parks. She is Associate Professor of English at Pacific Lutheran University, also affiliated with the university’s Environmental Studies, Latino Studies, and Native & Indigenous Studies programs.

**Kevin Clark’s** book *The Consecrations* will have appeared by June of 2021 from Stephen F. Austin University Press. His volume *Self-Portrait with Expletives* won the 2009 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. His poems have appeared in numerous magazines and collections, including *The Southern Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Georgia Review*, *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. 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*, *The Georgia Review*, 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 fastpitch baseball, he lives in San Luis Obispo with his wife Amy Hewes.

**Geffrey Davis** is the author of *Night Angler* (BOA Editions), winner of the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets, and *Revising the Storm* (BOA Editions), winner of the A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize. He also coauthored the chapbook *Begotten* (URB Books) with poet F. Douglas Brown. Named a finalist for the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, Davis has received the Anne Halley Poetry Prize, the Dogwood Prize in Poetry, the Porter Fund Literary Prize, and the Wabash Prize for Poetry, as well as fellowships from Bread Loaf, Cave Canem, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Vermont Studio Center, and the Whiting Foundation for his involvement with The Prison Story Project. His poems have appeared in *New England Review*, *New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *PBS NewsHour*, *Ploughshares*, and elsewhere. Raised by the Pacific Northwest, Davis teaches full-time with the University of Arkansas. He also serves as Poetry Editor for *Iron Horse Literary Review*.

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

**Jennifer Elise Foerster** is the author of two books of poetry, *Leaving Tulsa* (2013) and *Bright Raft in the Afterweather* (2018), and served as the Associate Editor of the recently released *When the Light of the World Was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry*. She received her PhD in English and Literary Arts at the University of Denver and her MFA from the Vermont College of the Fine Arts; she is an alumna of the Institute of American Indian Arts. She is the recipient of a NEA Creative Writing Fellowship, a Lannan Foundation Writing Residency Fellowship, and was a Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford. Jennifer currently teaches at the Rainier Writing Workshop and is the Literary Assistant to the U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo. Foerster grew up living internationally, is of European (German/Dutch) and Mvskoke descent, and is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma. She lives in San Francisco.

**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 *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Fifth Wednesday*, and *Los Angeles Review of Books*. His poetry collection *Cellar Testament* won the 2018 Rachel Wetzsteon Chapbook Award from William Paterson University. An electric guitarist as well as a writer, he has collaborated with the classical composer Garrett Shatzer on an extensive blues-influenced piece in the art song tradition, *At the Blinds*. A past Director of Creative Writing at The College of Santa Fe and a former Richard Hugo Visiting Writer at The University of Montana, he teaches at UC Davis and in the low-residency MFA Program at Pacific Lutheran University.

**Adrienne Harun** is the author of the story collections *The King of Limbo* (Houghton Mifflin/Mariner) and *Catch, Release* (Johns Hopkins University Press) and a novel, *A Man Came Out of a Door in a Mountain* (Viking/Penguin). Her work has won awards and been anthologized, and she's been honored with several fellowships, most recently from the Civitella Ranieri Foundation. She lives in Port Townsend, Washington.

**Jenny Johnson** is the author of *In Full Velvet* (Sarabande Books, 2017). Her poems have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, *Waxwing*, and elsewhere. Her honors include a Whiting Award, a Hodder Fellowship, and an NEA Fellowship. She has also received awards and scholarships from the Blue Mountain Center, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo. She is an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at West Virginia University, and she is on the faculty of the Rainier Writing Workshop, Pacific Lutheran University's low-residency MFA program. She lives in Pittsburgh, PA.

**April Ayers Lawson** is the author of *Virgin and Other Stories*, which was named a Best Book Of The Year by *The Irish Times* and *Vice*, and a Best Foreign Book of the Year by Spain's *Qué Leer Magazine*. *Virgin and Other Stories* has been (or will be) translated into German, Spanish, Norwegian, and Italian. She has received The Plimpton Prize for Fiction, as well as a writing fellowship from The Corporation of Yaddo. Her fiction has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Granta*, *Die Welt*, *ZYZZYVA*, and *Oxford American*, among others, has been cited as notable in *Best American Short Stories*, featured by *Huffington Post*, and anthologized in *The Unprofessionals: New American Writing from The Paris Review*. Her nonfiction has appeared in *Der Spiegel*, *Granta*, *Vice*, and *Neue Zürcher Zeitung Magazine*, and been named a Most Popular Read of the Year by *Granta*. She has taught in the creative writing programs at Emory University and the University Of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and now teaches at Clemson University.

**Rebecca McClanahan's** eleventh book, *In the Key of New York City: A Memoir in Essays*, was published in 2020. Her work has appeared in *Best American Essays*, *Best American Poetry*, *Georgia Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Boulevard*, *The Sun*, and in anthologies published by Simon & Schuster, Beacon, Norton, and Bedford/St. Martin, among others. Recipient of two Pushcart prizes, the Glasgow Award in

Nonfiction, the Wood Prize from *Poetry Magazine*, the Carter Prize for the Essay, and the N.C. Governor's Award for Excellence in Education, McClanahan teaches in the MFA programs of Rainier Writing Workshop and Queens University. She can be reached at [RebeccaMcClanahanWriter.com](http://RebeccaMcClanahanWriter.com).

**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, including *An Earlier Life*, which received the Washington State Book Award for Memoir. Her poetry chapbook, *The Daughters of Elderly Women*, received the 2020 Floating Bridge Press Chapbook Award. She co-authored, with Suzanne Paola, *Tell it Slant: Creating, Refining, and Publishing Creative Nonfiction* and, with Holly J. Hughes, *The Pen and the Bell: Mindful Writing in a Busy World*. Brenda's work has received six Pushcart Prizes. She is a professor of English at Western Washington University and Associate Faculty with the Rainier Writing Workshop. Her website is [www.brendamillerwriter.com](http://www.brendamillerwriter.com).

**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.

**Sequoia Nagamatsu** is the author of the forthcoming novels, *How High We Go in the Dark* (2022) and *Girl Zero* (William Morrow/Harper Collins and Bloomsbury UK) and the story collection, *Where We Go When All We Were Is Gone* (Black Lawrence Press), silver medal winner of the 2016 Foreword Reviews Indies Book of the Year Award, an Entropy Magazine Best Book of 2016, and a notable book at Buzzfeed. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in publications such as *Conjunctions*, *The Southern Review*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Tin House*, *Iowa Review*, *Lightspeed Magazine*, and *One World: A Global Anthology of Short Stories*, and has been listed as notable in *Best American Non-Required Reading* and the *Best Horror of the Year*. He has previously taught at The College of Idaho, Southern Illinois University, and the Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing. He currently teaches at St. Olaf College and resides in Minneapolis.

**Marjorie Sandor** is the author of five books, including the recently published novel *The Secret Music at Tordesillas*, winner of the inaugural Tuscarora Award for Historical Fiction. Her previous books included the linked-story collection *Portrait of my Mother, Who Posed Nude in Wartime*, winner of the 2004 National Jewish Book Award in Fiction, and two essay collections, *The Night Gardener: A Search for Home*, and *The Late Interiors: A Life Under Construction*. She is also the editor of *The Uncanny Reader: Stories from the Shadows*, an international anthology of short fiction. She lives in Corvallis, Oregon with her husband, the writer Tracy Daugherty, and has been a part of RWW's faculty since its founding.

**Peggy Shumaker's** most recent book is *Cairn*, new and selected poems and prose, published by Red Hen Press. The Rasmuson Foundation honored her work with its Distinguished Artist Award, and the National Endowment for 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*. Shumaker is professor emerita at University of Alaska Fairbanks. 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 the University of Alaska Press, and contributing editor for *Alaska Quarterly Review*.

**Renee Simms** received her MFA from Arizona State University, a JD from Wayne State University Law School, and a BA from University of Michigan. She is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, was a John Gardner Fiction Fellow at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference, and received fellowships from Ragdale and Vermont Studio Center. In addition to teaching in the Rainier Writing Workshop, Renee teaches at University of Puget Sound, where she is an associate professor of African American Studies and contributing faculty to English. Renee's debut story collection *Meet Behind Mars* was a Foreword Indies Finalist for Short Stories and listed by *The Root* as one of 28 brilliant books by black authors in 2018.

**Jason Skipper's** debut novel *Hustle* was a finalist for the PEN Center USA Award for Fiction. His work has appeared in *Hotel Amerika*, *Mid-American Review*, and *South Writ Large*, and he has received awards and recognition from *Zoetrope: All-Story*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Crab Orchard Review*. He teaches at Pacific Lutheran University.

**Justin St. Germain** is the author of the book-length essay *Truman Capote's In Cold Blood*, part of IG Publishing's Bookmarked series, as well as the memoir *Son of a Gun*, which won the Barnes & Noble Discover Award. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Tin House*, *The Guardian*, *New England Review*, *DIAGRAM*, and other publications, as well as the *Best of the West* and *Pushcart Prize* anthologies, among others. He holds a BA and MFA from the University of Arizona and was a Wallace Stegner Fellow and

Jones Lecturer at Stanford University. He lives in Oregon and teaches at Oregon State University and the Rainier Writing Workshop.

[Updated May 2021]