

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 two books of poetry by Mexican-Zapotec poet Irma Pineda, *In the Belly of Night and Other Poems* (Pluralia/Song Bridge, 2022) and *Nostalgia Doesn’t Flow Away Like Riverwater* (Deep Vellum, 2023). 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. Wendy lives in the country’s most linguistically diverse zip code (Southeast Seattle), in an old house that is walking distance to all of life’s essentials: a farmer’s market, independent bookstore, public library, brewpub, community art gallery, old-growth forest, and view of Mount Tacoma.

Kevin Clark’s third volume of poems *The Consecrations* was published by Stephen F. Austin University Press. His second book *Self-Portrait with Expletives* won the Pleiades Press prize. His first collection *In the Evening of No Warning* earned a grant from the Academy of American Poets. Kevin’s poems appear in the *Southern*, *Georgia*, *Iowa*, and *Antioch* reviews, as well as *Crazyhorse*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Gulf Coast*, etc. His poetry is anthologized in many places, including *Keener Sounds: Selected Poems from The Georgia Review*. He is *The Literary Review’s* Angoff Award winner and the inaugural selectee for the ArtSmith Award. Formerly a regular critic for *The Georgia Review* for fifteen years, Kevin has also published essays in *The Iowa*

Review, *The Southern Review*, and *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. He's the author of *The Mind's Eye*, a poetry-writing textbook from Pearson Longman. His website is: <http://kevinclarkpoetry.com>.

Geffrey Davis is the author of *Night Angler* (BOA Editions, 2019), winner of the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets, and *Revising the Storm* (BOA Editions, 2014), winner of the A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize. He also coauthored the chapbook *Begotten* 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 *The Atlantic*, *New England Review*, *New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Oxford American*, *PBS NewsHour*, *Ploughshares*, and elsewhere. Raised by the Pacific Northwest, Davis lives in the Ozarks and teaches with the University of Arkansas's Program in Creative Writing and Translation. He also serves as Poetry Editor for *Iron Horse Literary Review*.

Oliver de la Paz is the author of six collections of poetry: *Names Above Houses*, *Furious Lullaby*, *Requiem for the Orchard*, *Post Subject: A Fable*, and *The Boy in the Labyrinth* which was a finalist for the Massachusetts Book Award in Poetry. His sixth book, *The Diaspora Sonnets*, is forthcoming from Liveright Press, an imprint of W.W. Norton, in 2023. 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. He has received grants from the NEA, NYFA, the Artist's Trust, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and has been awarded two Pushcart Prizes. His work has been published in journals such as *Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *Tin House*, *The Southern Review*, and *Poetry Northwest*. 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 three books of poetry, *Leaving Tulsa* (2013), *Bright Raft in the Afterweather* (2018), and *The Maybe-Bird* (2022), and served as the Associate Editor of *When the Light of the World Was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry*. She is the recipient of a NEA Creative Writing Fellowship, a Lannan Foundation Writing Residency Fellowship, a Hermitage Artist Retreat Fellowship, and was a Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford. Her poetry has recently appeared in *POETRY London*, *The Georgia Review*, *Kenyon Review* and other journals. Jennifer currently teaches at the Rainier Writing Workshop, the Institute of American Indian Arts Continuing Education Program, and is the Literary Assistant to the U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo. She 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.

torrin a. greathouse is a transgender cripple-punk poet and essayist. She received her MFA in creative writing from the University of Minnesota. Her work has been featured in *Poetry Magazine*, *The Rumpus*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *Ploughshares*, and *The Kenyon Review*. She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Effing Foundation for Sex Positivity, Zoeglossia, and the University of Arizona Poetry Center. Her debut poetry collection, *Wound from the Mouth of a Wound* (Milkweed Editions, 2020), was a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award, CLMP Firecracker Award, and winner of the 2022 Kate Tufts Discovery Award. She teaches at the Rainier Writing Workshop, the low-residency MFA program at Pacific Lutheran University.

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.

Brenda Miller is the author of six essay collections, most recently *A Braided Heart: Essays on Writing and Form*. Her collaborative collection with Julie Marie Wade, *Telephone: Essays in Two Voices*, won the Cleveland State University Press Nonfiction Book Award and was published in 2021. She received the 2020 Floating Bridge Press Chapbook Award for her poetry book *The Daughters of Elderly Women* and the 2017 Washington State Book Award for her memoir *An Earlier Life*. She also co-authored *Tell It Slant: Creating, Refining, and Publishing Creative Nonfiction* with Suzanne Paola and *The Pen and the Bell: Mindful Writing in a Busy World* with Holly J. Hughes. Her work has received six Pushcart Prizes. She is a Professor of English at Western Washington University and associate faculty at the Rainier Writing Workshop.

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 national bestselling novel, *How High We Go in the Dark* (William Morrow, 2022), a New York Times Editors' Choice, and the story collection, *Where We Go When All We Were Is Gone* (Black Lawrence Press, 2016), silver medal winner of the 2016 Foreword Reviews Indies Book of the Year Award. His work has appeared 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. He is at work on forthcoming novel, *Girl Zero*. More at <http://SequoiaNagamatsu.com>.

Marjorie Sandor is the author of five books of fiction and creative nonfiction, most recently a debut novel, *The Secret Music at Tordesillas*, which won the 2020 Foreword Indies Gold Medal for Historical Fiction. Earlier books include 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 books of personal essays, including *The Night Gardener: A Search for Home*, which won a 2000 Oregon Book Award in Literary Nonfiction. Her stories and essays have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Agni*, *The Georgia Review*, and other literary journals, and have been anthologized in *Best American Short Stories* and the *Pushcart Prize*. She is also the editor of *The Uncanny Reader: Stories from the Shadows*, an international anthology of short fiction from St. Martins Press (2015). She has been a member of the RWW 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, and the memoir *Son of a Gun* (Random House, 2013), which won the Barnes & Noble Discover Award, was a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, and was named a best book of the year by Amazon, *Publishers Weekly*, *Salon*, *Library Journal*, and others. His nonfiction and fiction have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Tin House*, *New England Review*, *DIAGRAM*, *ZYZZYVA*, and many other publications, as well as anthologies including *Best of the West* and *The Pushcart Prize*. He was a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University and has a BA and MFA from the University of Arizona. He lives in Oregon, teaches at Oregon State University and the Rainier Writing Workshop, and co-hosts *I'll Find Myself When I'm Dead*, a podcast about the literary essay.

Brian Teare is the author of six critically acclaimed books, most recently *Companion Grasses*, *The Empty Form Goes All the Way to Heaven*, and *Doomstead Days*, winner of the Four Quartets Prize. His honors include the Brittingham Prize and Lambda Literary and Publishing Triangle Awards, as well as Guggenheim, NEA, Pew Foundation, and

MacDowell Colony fellowships. After over a decade of teaching and writing in the San Francisco Bay Area, and eight years in Philadelphia, he's now an Associate Professor at the University of Virginia, and lives in Charlottesville, where he makes books by hand for his micropress, Albion Books.

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