

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. His new book of poems, *Moving the Bones*, is forthcoming in 2024 from Milkweed Editions.

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) and the new annual *Best Literary Translations* (Deep Vellum, 2024). She wrote *No Word for Welcome: The Mexican Village Faces the Global Economy* (Nebraska, 2011), winner of the Grub Street Book Prize for Nonfiction, and the chapbook *Tilled Paths Through Wilds of Thought* (MBR/K2, 2012). In 2022 she published her first book of poetry in translation, *In the Belly of Night and Other Poems (Pluralia/Eulalia)*, by Mexican-Zapotec poet Irma Pineda. Two additional books of poetry in translation are forthcoming in 2023: *Nostalgia Doesn't Flow Away Like Riverwater* (Deep Vellum) by Irma Pineda and *How to be a Good Savage and Other Poems* (Milkweed) by Zoque poet Mikeas Sánchez. Wendy has received grants and fellowships for her creative nonfiction from 4Culture, Artist Trust, the Seattle CityArtist Program, and the Wurlitzer Foundation. Fellowships for her poetry translations have come from Cornell University's Institute for Comparative Modernities, Fulbright Commission, and National Endowment for the Arts. She has served as Artist or Writer in Residence at 25 institutions, including five national parks, four universities, two visual arts centers, the American Antiquarian Society, and Harborview Medical Center. She is the 2023 Distinguished Visiting Writer at Cornell College and Translator in Residence at the University of Iowa. Wendy lives in Seattle, on Duwamish land, and in Oaxaca, on Mixtec and Zapotec land.

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.

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 and editor of seven books including *Requiem for the Orchard*, a finalist for the Washington State Book Award, *The Boy in the Labyrinth*, a finalist for the Massachusetts Book Award, and his latest book, *The Diaspora Sonnets*. With Stacy Lynn Brown he edited *A Face to Meet the Faces: Contemporary Persona Poetry*, and he serves as a contributing editor for the *Kenyon Review*. A founding member of Kundiman, he serves on the organization's advisory board. A recipient of grants from The Artist's Trust, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, he serves as the Poet Laureate of Worcester MA. He teaches at the College of the Holy Cross.

Jennifer Elise Foerster is the author of three books of poetry, *The Maybe Bird* (2002), *Bright Raft in the Afterweather* (2018), and *Leaving Tulsa* (2013), 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, was a Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford, and holds a PhD in Literary Arts from the University of Denver. Foerster grew up living internationally, is of European 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 Ragdale Foundation. 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 and essays appear in *American Poetry Review*, *BOMB Magazine*, *The Georgia Review*, and *The New York Times*. Her honors include a Whiting Award, a Hodder Fellowship at

Princeton University, and a NEA Fellowship. Her work has been supported by the Blue Mountain Center, Bread Loaf Writer's Conference, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo. Before teaching at the university level, she taught middle and high school English in San Francisco. Currently, 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.

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's most recent book is *A Braided Heart: Essays on Writing on Form*. She is the author of five more essay collections, including *An Earlier Life*, which received the Washington State Book Award for Memoir, and she is the recipient of six Pushcart Prizes. Her book of collaborative essays with Julie Marie Wade, *Telephone: Essays in Two Voices*, received the Cleveland Poetry Center Award for Creative Nonfiction and was published by Cleveland State University Press in 2021. She co-authored, with Suzanne Paola, the textbook *Tell it Slant: Creating, Refining, and Publishing Creative Nonfiction*, now in its third edition from McGraw-Hill Higher Education. She also received the Floating Bridge Press Chapbook Award for her poetry collection, *The Daughters of Elderly Women*.

Scott Nadelson is the author of a novel, a memoir, and six collections of short fiction, most recently *While It Lasts*, recipient of the Donald L. Jordan Prize for Literary Excellence. His work has won an Oregon Book Award, the Great Lakes Colleges

Association New Writers Award, and the Reform Judaism Fiction Prize and has been published in *Ploughshares*, *New England Review*, *Harvard Review*, *The Writer's Chronicle* and *The Best American Short Stories*. He teaches at Willamette University, where he holds the Hallie Brown Ford Chair in Writing.

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 the 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 is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship, a John Gardner Fiction Fellowship at Bread Loaf, and fellowships from Ragdale and Vermont Studio Center. In addition to teaching in the Rainier Writing

Workshop, she's an associate professor of African American Studies at University of Puget Sound and 2023 Summer Faculty with Kimbilio Fiction. Her debut story collection *Meet Behind Mars* was a Foreword Indies finalist for Short Stories, was featured on NPR, the National Book Critics Circle blog, and was listed by The Root as one of 28 brilliant books by Black authors in 2018. Renee is currently at work on a creative nonfiction book about an historic Detroit neighborhood.

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, a 2020 Guggenheim Fellow, is the author of eight chapbooks and six critically acclaimed books, including *Companion Grasses*, a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Award, and *Doomstead Days*, winner of the Four Quartets Prize and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle, Kingsley Tufts, and Lambda Literary Awards. His most recent publication is the 2022 Nightboat reissue of *The Empty Form Goes All the Way to Heaven*; his seventh book, *Poem Bitten by a Man*, is forthcoming in the fall of 2023. 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 of Poetry at the University of Virginia. An editorial board member of Poetry Daily, he lives in Charlottesville, where he makes books by hand for his micropress, Albion Books.

Matt Young is the author of the memoir, *Eat the Apple*. His stories and essays have appeared in *TIME*, *Granta*, *Tin House*, *Catapult*, and *The Cincinnati Review* among other publications. He is the recipient of fellowships from Words After War and The Carey Institute for Global Good, and teaches composition, literature, and creative writing at Centralia College in Washington. His novel, *End of Active Service*, will be published by Bloomsbury in 2024.

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