

Spring 2022

CREATIVE WRITING

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

FROM REBECCA LINDENBERG

It's with mixed feelings that I type this note for our annual newsletter, as it'll be my last one; spring 2022 marks the end of my five-year term as Area Director of Creative Writing. I'll be moving into the position of Graduate Program Director in the fall and our marvelous colleague Chris Bachelder will be taking over in this position for the next five years. Five years moves extremely quickly, but I'm gratified to have been part of an administration that made some significant positive changes to and for our undergraduate and graduate creative writing program, despite the many challenges of the Covid pandemic that has loomed so large for more than two years now. I have a moment now to reflect on not just this past year, but the past few years, and I'd like to share some of those reflections.

I am proud of the ways in which we've focused during this administration to ensure we're serving our undergraduate student community as well as possible. Together with the Chair, our own Leah Stewart, and the other Area and Program Directors, we restructured the core of the undergraduate English major to bring it up to date with current student needs and to ensure that our creative writing majors get not only the best artistic training possible, but also a broader exposure to different forms, genres, eras, and sources of literature and the varied theoretical approaches to those. We also incorporated more opportunities for experiential learning and service and and for professionalization, with new classes like Creative Writing and Literary Publishing and with internships. Additionally, we pioneered new Learning Communities for our freshmen English majors, giving them a stronger sense of cohort and community than they've had before – something we all need now more than ever. We hired alum Michael Peterson to serve as the new curator of the Elliston Poetry Room, a space that's been recently renovated and looks (and smells) better than ever. The room and its role has also been somewhat reimagined in no small part due to Michael's

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expertise, vision, and commitment, and with his help and guidance, the undergraduate Cincinnati Poetry Collective group has grown and begun to plan some of its own programming in the space. We've pioneered new classes for our students, including such offerings as Creative Writing and Social Change, Creative Writing and the Environment, Podcasting and Audio Storytelling, Hybrid Forms, Creative Writing and Research, and Creative Writing from Real Life, all of which have proved popular and exciting. And of course, we've been able to include our undergraduate students in our programming, giving them unique access to eminent contemporary writers through our annual Visiting Writers Series, which I'll discuss more at length in a moment. We have a large and consistent cadre of undergraduate creative writing majors, and they go on to an array of exciting opportunities, including graduate school in creative writing as well as careers in publishing, education, content creation, and more. One student travels the world as the personal assistant to an influential corporate executive, another got a job at Marvel Studios in New York City. They are committed, and so we must strive to be as committed to them.

Our graduate program has also undergone some exciting and positive changes in the past five years. Funding available from the university and the college has helped us to both grow and diversify our graduate student body, recruiting even more wildly talented graduate students. And new external funding has made it possible for us to raise baseline graduate student stipends as well, something we've known was extremely important for a long time and have finally been able to do.

And while we saw some retirements over the course of the past several years, we were finally able to hire not one but two dedicated, brilliant, prolific, and energetic new creative writing faculty members, Felicia Zamora and Aditi Machado, both of whose teaching, service, art, community engagement, and mentorship of students has already proved invaluable. Just this past year, each of them independently raised funds for wonderfully innovative programming, including conversations about art and activism organized by Felicia and featuring artists like Hoa Nguyen, Donika Kelly and Craig Santos Perez. In addition, Aditi organized a series of readings by fabulously interesting and innovative writers like Ginger Ko and Divya Victor. Felicia also took point on organizing a lecture, conversation, and reading by Heid E. Erdrich, the first Native American artist to serve as the University of Cincinnati's annual Elliston Poet this March, and while we all wished the events could have been in person, they were all thrilling nonetheless. As always, our current and former students are, of course, the stars of the program and its *raison-d'être*, and I look forward every year to reading about their (your) many accomplishments in this newsletter, as they are always staggering and far too many to enumerate here. But I do want in particular to congratulate Yalie Kamara, who this year was named the Poet Laureate of our own city of Cincinnati. And I wish the heartiest congratulations to those graduating and moving on this year. You've done a huge amount of work during an incredibly challenging time, and I hope that you're as proud of your accomplishment as we all are.

In addition to the wonderful readings and conversations mentioned above, the last five years has seen a robust and exciting Visiting

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Writers Series, with some of the best-attended readings in a while in the Elliston Room prior to the pandemic. Ross Gay drew a standing-room-only crowd, for example, and we also played host to Pulitzer Prize-winner Tyehimba Jess, as well as poets Mary Ruefle, Juan Felipe Herrera, Ada Limón, Natalie Scenters-Zapico, Victoria Chang, Ishion Hutchinson, alums Jillian Weise and Erica Dawson, among many, many more. We also got to hear from novelists Lillian Li, Uzodinma Iweala, Katie Kitamura, Joan Silber, Karan Mahajan, Sandra Cisneros, and more. Our events programming gives graduate and undergraduate students access to some of the most important literary voices writing today, and it's a central aspect of our community, as well as a site where our community and the larger university and city communities can meet and engage. While we've had now two full years of online-only literary programming, we are planning (with fingers crossed) to return to in-person events in the fall, and we're excitedly inviting people to travel here to share their work with us.

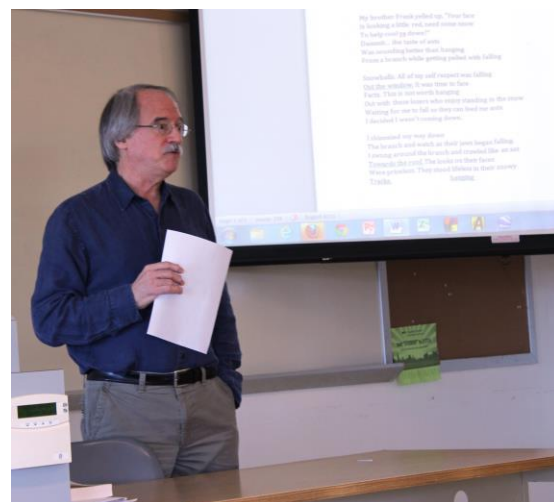
This program is a community, and one of its core members, huge-hearted, generous, a gifted teacher, a devoted mentor, a spirited colleague, a terrific artist, and a cherished friend is retiring. While I congratulate him mightily on a splendid career and some much-deserved time to spend in whatever creative or quotidian way he sees fit, I miss John Drury already. Over his long career, John has published four full-length poetry collections, two books on the craft of poetry (including *The Poetry Dictionary*), a few poetry chapbooks, numerous poems and a handful of excellent nonfiction prose pieces. He's won two Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Awards and an award from the

Ingram Merrill Foundation, as well as UC's own Dolly Cohen Award for Distinguished Teaching. He has taught, advised, mentored, and supported countless students – undergraduate and graduate – and he has mentored, befriended and supported junior faculty members including, well, me. I know we'll see John around the college quite a lot in the coming years, but it simply won't be the same not to have him as a partner in poetry in the program. We will miss you, John, but we are very, very happy for you and eager to see what you get up to next.

It's been really meaningful work, serving as the Area Director for Creative Writing during this departmental administration. And I look forward to my new role. Starting next fall, you can find me in the back corner of the head office. And the next newsletter's "Director's Note" will be from Chris! Onward, together.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

JOHN DRURY RETIRES



On May 25th we'll gather to celebrate the career of John Drury, whom the creative

writing program is going to miss dearly. John, who received his MFA from the Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, joined the English Department in 1985. Since then, he has been awarded both the "Dolly" Cohen Award for Distinguished Excellence in Teaching and the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences' Edith Alexander Award for Distinguished Teaching. The English Department twice awarded him the William C. Boyce Excellence in Teaching Award. In addition, he received the University's George Rieveschl Jr. Award for Creative or Scholarly Works. As he neared the end of his long and lauded career at UC, we asked him some questions about his time in the department and his post-retirement plans.

As you look back on your time at UC, what are some of your favorite memories, or of what do you feel most proud?

I'm especially happy that I organized and led two Literary Venice Study Tours, the first with eight participants (including myself) in 1998 and the second with 16 participants in 2005. My colleague Bev Brannan was a fellow traveler on both trips. During the second, we celebrated undergraduate poet Jordan Bernsmeier's birthday in the spacious back room of a restaurant. And I gave a poetry reading at Ca' Garzoni, a Gothic palazzo on the Grand Canal that was then the home of the English Department of the University of Venice.

I'm also glad that I took part in the week-long AAUP strike of 1993 and picketed with my colleague Jon Hughes at the main gate on the 11:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. shift.

It was a privilege, as well as a lot of work, to co-edit (with Bea Opengart) a collection of poems by the late Cathy Hale, who lived with

breast cancer for twenty years during which she took many poetry workshops here, starting with introductory classes and progressing to a Graduate Poetry Workshop and a doctoral Forms seminar on the sonnet. Her book, *Grasp and Release*, was published in 2021 by David Robert Books and is available on [Amazon](#).

I've loved teaching courses from the introductory undergraduate level to doctoral seminars. It's been a privilege and joy to work with the amazing poets who have earned their PhDs here. But that's something to explore when I answer the next question.

How has your teaching changed over the years?

Several years ago, I started drinking a big mug of Opera Cream coffee every morning, and it's worked on me (a longtime tea fancier, both iced and hot) like amphetamines. I enjoyed a two-year break from teaching from 2008 to 2010, when I was lucky enough to have a Taft Center Fellowship during the first year and a sabbatical during the second. Afterwards, I returned to the classroom reinvigorated, an effect intensified by the university's switch from quarters to semesters. Those extra four weeks each term allowed courses to develop more of a flow, and I tried many new possibilities in my teaching.

In the fall of 2012, for example, I taught a Graduate Poetry Workshop in which we tried a wide variety of workshopping methods, experimenting with alternatives:

- cold readings of poems, with the discussion led by the poet;
- traditional workshop, led by the instructor;

—primary critics reading drafts aloud, presenting critiques, and then leading discussions;

—two weeks of daily writing, interrupted by an oral (and aural) workshop in which each poet read one of their daily poems aloud, without any explanation of how it looked on the page, and fellow students and the instructor wrote down first impressions before the poet read the poem again and described its shape, as well as the principles of composition, and then class members discussed what they heard—without ever having seen the poem;

—each poet’s 15-days-worth of writing, posted on the Discussion Board, discussed *en masse* in class, with each poet commenting on the process and class members giving each poet a list of “keepers,” “maybes,” and “maybe nots”;

—WORD files of drafts projected on the classroom screen, with the poet at the computer console, typing in and testing possible revisions suggested by class members;

—anonymous workshop, with drafts sent to the instructor and posted on the discussion board, using aliases; in class, the instructor read each poem aloud and then welcomed a fearless, free-wheeling, no-holds-barred discussion.

The syllabus for that workshop began with three quotations meant to stimulate growth in different ways:

What the public criticizes in you, cultivate. It is you.

—Jean Cocteau, *Le Coq et l’Arlequin* (1918)

Without Contraries is no progression.

—William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793)

Carefully examined, a good—an interesting—style will be found to consist in a constant succession of tiny, unobservable surprises.

—Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance* (1924)

I’ve loved inventing, designing, and teaching two 3000-level creative-writing courses: Music and Poetry (which both Yalie Kamara and Emily Rose Cole have also taught) and Reading and Writing Memoir. I’m also grateful I had the chance to teach several wonderful courses one time each: Introduction to Poetry and Prose (in which I assigned poems, fiction, and nonfiction by all of my colleagues in creating writing and by the current students I had worked with in our program); The Poet as Actor (now retitled “Persona Poems,” which I taught during the semester of the Ntozake Shange Festival, a course made possible by Sharrell Luckett’s help in getting enough students to enroll), and The Literary Essay (with PhD students from the poetry, fiction, and nonfiction programs).

What are you most looking forward to in retirement?

As much as I’ve loved teaching, which I find thrilling and energizing, I’m already feeling a sense of relief from the daily anxiety, seven days a week: fretting, mulling, and pondering; marking texts I’ve assigned and assignments students have turned in, and then making dozens and dozens of PDFs. Teaching, however, has been the ideal vocation for me (although in a previous life I could have been a vicar in a small town in Yorkshire). I’ve cherished the freedom from nine-to-five jobs, at which I was always a malcontent, a slacker, and now I look forward to *dolce far niente*, the sweet idleness in which to write new poems and nonfiction—

and to read “at whim,” as Randall Jarrell puts it.

What's next for your writing?

My inner critic likes to quote what Sergei Diaghilev said to Jean Cocteau: “*Étonne-moi!*” So I hope to astonish myself, and I’m lucky to be married to a poet, LaWanda Walters, who will let me know if a draft works or needs work.

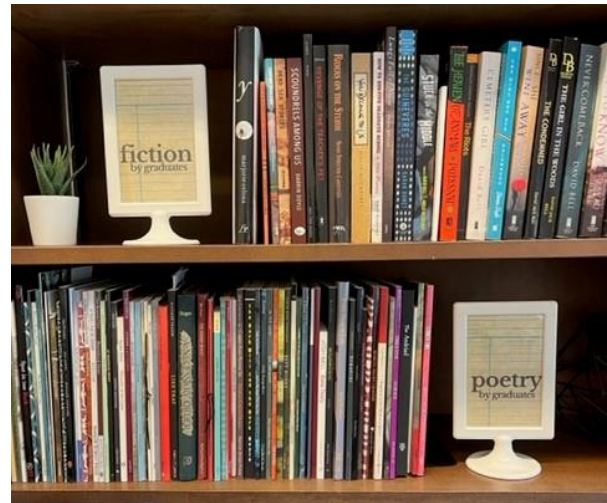
UC GRADUATE STUDENTS ATTEND LOUISVILLE CONFERENCE



In February 2022 poets Paige Webb, Cara Dees, Nicholas Molbert, and Andy Sia (from left to right) presented papers at the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900. Their co-organized panel “Entanglements in the Poetic Landscape: Ecofeminism and Environmentalism” featured a happily diverse set of inquiries into contemporary eco-poetics that were united by a focus on race, gender, disability, and affect. Organizer (and alum) Kristi Maxwell declared this “fantastic” event a highlight of the conference. Poet (now Dr.) Cara Dees and fiction writer David Lerner

Schwartz were elsewhere feted for reading from their brilliant works. One can only hope a contingent of Cincinnati writers shall journey to nearby Louisville again next year to bestow on us all their gifts of art and erudition.

ROOM 222 LIBRARY OF STUDENT, ALUMNI, AND FACULTY BOOKS



In 2017 Michael Griffith began a project to collect books by students, alumni, and faculty of the English Department for display in our seminar room (McMicken 222). To date he has collected 160 books. Following is a list of books by alumni that are part of the collection. If we don’t have a copy of yours, we would be delighted if you would donate one! Books may be sent to Michael Griffith c/o the UC Dept of English, PO Box 210069, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0069. Thank you for considering this, and thanks to all who have already donated books.

Allen, Austin. *Pleasures of the Game*
Ampleman, Lisa. *I’ve Been Collecting This to Tell You* and *Full Cry*
Araguz, José Angel. *The Wall, Corpus Christi*

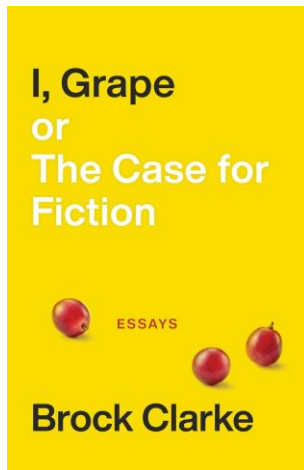
Octaves, Reasons (Not) to Dance, Everything We Think We Hear, and The Divorce Suite
 Bell, David, and Molly McCaffrey, eds. *Stuck in the Middle: Writing That Holds You in Suspense and Commutability: Stories about the Journey from Here to There*
 Bell, David. *Rides a Stranger, Cemetery Girl, The Condemned, The Girl in the Woods, Since She Went Away, Somebody I Used to Know, The Forgotten Girl, Never Come Back, and The Hiding Place*
 Bell, Josh. *No Planets Strike and Alamo Theory*
 Boyle, Kirk, and Daniel Mrozowski. *The Great Recession in Fiction, Film, and Television*
 Boyle, Kirk, ed. *The Rhetoric of Humor*
 Brodeur, Brian. *Local Fauna, Natural Causes, and Other Latitudes*
 Burke, Michelle Y. *Animal Purpose*
 Carpenter, Susan Streeter. *Riders on the Storm*
 Doyle, Darrin. *The Girl Who Ate Kalamazoo, Revenge of the Teacher's Pet, and The Dark Will End the Dark*
 Frank, Rebecca Morgan. *The Spokes of Venus*
 Frech, Stephen. *Toward Evening and the Day Far Spent*
 Grant, Bernard. *Puzzle Pieces and Fly Back at Me*
 Gray, Juliana. *Anne Boleyn's Sleeve and Roleplay*
 Griffith, Vivé. *Weeks in This Country*
 Gylys, Beth. *Balloon Heart, Bodies That Hum, Spot in the Dark, and Blue Enough to Drink*
 Hurt, Rochelle. *The Rusted City and In Which I Play the Runaway*
 Karapetkova, Holly. *Towline and Words We Might One Day Say*
 Kay, Les. *At Whatever Front*
 Koets, Julia. *Hold Like Owls*
 McCaffrey, Molly. *How to Survive Graduate School (& Other Disasters): Stories and You Belong to Us: A Memoir*
 Mellas, Tessa. *Lungs Full of Noise*

Murphy, Jim. *The Memphis Sun*
 Nordgren, Sarah Rose. *Best Bones and Darwin's Mother*
 Oberlin, Kevin. *Spotlit Girl*
 Pennock, Matthew. *Sudden Dog*
 Poissant, David James. *The Heaven of Animals*
 Rerick, Michael. *In Ways Impossible to Fold*
 Rumney, Linwood. *Abandoned Earth*
 Valente, Anne. *Our Hearts Will Burn Us Down*
 Van Landingham, Corey. *Antidote*
 Weise, Jillian. *The Amputee's Guide to Sex, The Book of Goodbyes, and The Colony*
 Weise, Jillian, contributor. *Beauty Is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability*
 Wilkinson, Caki. *Circles Where the Head Should Be and The Wynona Stone Poems*
 Zlabek, Katherine. *Let the Rivers Clap Their Hands*

ACRE BOOKS

Acre Books brought out four new titles this year. *Our Cancers* is a poetry collection that chronicles author Dan O'Brien and his wife's successive battles with illness and struggles to heal. The *Times Literary Supplement* lauded the volume for the "exquisite and terrible beauty" in its pages. *This Fierce Blood* by Malia Marquez, which received the IPPY silver medal in the multicultural fiction category, revolves around three generations of women facing different forms of adversity. Spanning both time (late 1800s to the present) and place (New England to the Southwest), the novel "dramatizes," as Peter Selgin writes, the "urgent-as-ever themes" of "passion, faith, identity trauma, love, and loyalty." *Dear Queer Self*, in which author Jonathan Alexander addresses wry and affective missives to a younger self growing up in the Deep South, garnered a starred review in *Foreword* magazine, which called it

a “radiant memoir” whose narration is “a triumph.” A second poetry title, *Headless John the Baptist Hitchhiking*, received a starred review in *Library Journal* and notice in *Ms.* magazine as one of the most “exciting and necessary” collections of 2021/2022. A queer person of color who came of age in Mississippi, author C. T. Salazar has crafted a volume that *The Southern Review of Books* characterizes as “a masterclass in power, both in its language and its intimacy.” We are also happy to announce that one of Acre’s titles from last year, *I, Grape; or The Case for Fiction* by Brock Clarke, recently won the 2022 IPPY gold medal in the essay category.



pieces for the print magazine. Because of that new process—and to shorten our response times—we’ve moved to a different set of submission periods, starting on May 1, September 1, and December 1, and we’ve instituted a flexible cap on submissions for those time frames, based on our needs and staffing.

We’ve also started the process of strategic planning for the first time, with the help of an advisory board: Leigh Anne Couch, Ira Sukrungruang, and UC CW alumni José Araguz, Lisa Summe, and Sarah Anne Strickley. As part of that effort, we will probably email out a survey this summer related to forward planning for the magazine. It’d really help us out if you answered the survey!

Next academic year, we will have a guest literary nonfiction editor while Kristen Iversen is on sabbatical: [Jerald Walker](#). We’re looking forward to the collaboration.

THE CINCINNATI REVIEW



We’ve made some small changes to *The Cincinnati Review* in the past year: student editors have joined the genre editors in “genre teams” that work together to accept

Finally, we’ve started emphasizing professionalization projects and microcredentialing opportunities for both our staff and the graduate students at large. We’re putting together a workshop on graphic design and layout with Adobe software, funded by the Public Careers initiative in A&S, and we’ve had a grantwriting working group this year, using the CR as a sort of infrastructure to get hands-on experience applying for grants.

And our presence in the anthologies continues: work from our pages was chosen for the PEN/Robert J. Dau Short Story Prize for Emerging Writers, *The Best Mystery Stories of the Year: 2022*, and the Pushcart Prize anthology.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



In its first year the Community Engagement team worked to successfully establish lasting, meaningful partnerships and programs with a variety of local organizations. Our great fortune is writer and Engagement GA Maia Morgan, who has brought decades of expertise as a teaching artist and engagement coordinator to these diverse collaborations. Trauma-informed youth workshops at the Hirsch Recreation Center featured UC writers Katie Frankel and Hassaan Mirza and culminated in a year-end community salon. Craft Workshops at the Cincinnati School for Creative and Performing Arts continued, with sessions hosted by Taylor Byas, Marianne Chan, Afsheen Farhadi, Hassaan Mirza, and Natalie Villacorta. "CE" also hosted the pilot event of "Hike + Write," a yearlong, monthly program that will pair the English Department and UC Community with Cincinnati Parks Naturalists for outdoor writing activities open to the public. This first event featured Taft Fellow Chandra Frank and Cincy Parks Naturalist Lara Wardlow, who encouraged us to think of aqueous park spaces as habitats for history, memory, and social justice. As we move into the '22-'23 academic year, stay tuned for the

return of popular service opportunities and public events, along with new ones with the Ohio Justice Policy Center, Tikkun Farms of Mt. Healthy, and Spring In Our Steps.



ELLISTON POETRY ROOM



Despite early January re-distancing, the EPR has been humming once again with student activity, readings, partnerships, and acquisitions. The Elliston recently partnered with the Taft Museum and The Cincinnati Poetry Collective (CPC) to bring Duncanson Poet-in-Residence Ajanae Dawkins to campus for an undergraduate craft-talk and workshop. The Elliston was also founding

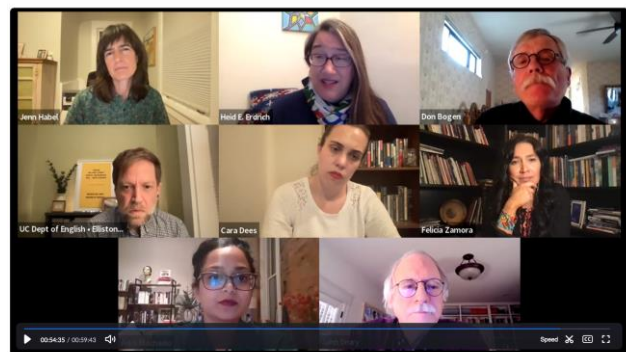
partner of the inaugural Cincinnati Youth Poet Laureate Program, with poets Felicia Zamora and Michael Peterson serving on the selection committee for the city's new YPL Rimel Kamran, a junior at Summit Country Day whose work investigates and celebrates Pakistani-American identity. We were thrilled to partner with poet Jenn Habel's excellent podcast *The Brief* for four new installments (Tiana Clark, Phillip B. Williams, Dan O'Brien, and Heid E. Erdrich) which also showcases



Cincinnati musicians. The Collection itself has been reintegrated into the UCL Content process and is full-steam ahead on new acquisitions after Covid-related delays. Close relationships with antiquarians in London, Madrid, San Francisco, NYC, and Los Angeles mean some important new rare materials on the way. In conservation news, over 350 rare vinyl and acetate recordings are currently

being stabilized in preparation for Fall 2022. At that time we also look forward to our first yearlong community workshop series (hosted by queer/non-binary poet Kay Bancroft). In the meantime, a crack summer curatorial team of Marianne Chan, Nick Molbert, and Andy Sia will lend their vision to what will be our newly designed audio archive.

VISITING WRITERS SERIES



We enjoyed a robust slate of virtual Visiting Writers Series events this year, including readings by Ginger Ko, Poupeh Missaghi, Raquel Salas Rivera, and Divya Victor. In addition, we hosted a dozen class visits by writers such as Karen Bender, Katie Kitamura, Muriel Leung, and Paisley Rekdal. The 2022 Elliston Poet-in-Residence was Heid E. Erdrich, who wowed us with her craft talk on poetry as institutional intervention, as well her poetry reading. Erdrich was also in conversation with Felicia Zamora as part of the Poetry as Radicalization & Liberation for BIPOC & Marginalized People Conversation Series. Other guests interviewed by Zamora for this series during AY 21-22 were Donika Kelly, Hoa Nguyen, and Craig Santos Perez. We look forward to another interview in the series next year, as well as to resuming in-person events. We're delighted to announce that the 2023 Elliston Poet-in-Residence will be Brian Teare. Stay tuned for our AY 22-23

calendar of events.

FACULTY NEWS

Chris Bachelder: Jenn Habel and I received an Ohio Arts Council award for *Dayswork*, our collaborative novel in progress. A portion of the novel will be published this summer in *The Sewanee Review*.

Kristen Iversen has been busy this year with a number of readings and presentations including an educational seminar for Physicians for Social Responsibility, a lecture on Margaret Tobin Brown and women on the Titanic for the Titanic Historical Society, and a discussion with *At the Brink*, a podcast on nuclear weapons policy. In January she traveled to New York to accept an award from the Tesla Science Foundation for her research on Nikola Tesla. She continues work on two books of narrative nonfiction: *Friend and Faithful Stranger: Nikola Tesla in the Gilded Age* and *Wink's Lodge: The West's Hidden African American Jazz Club and Literary Salon*. She is also finishing up a collection of new and published essays, *Wide and Generous World*.

Aditi Machado: Several many nice things happened this past year, but my favorite has to be that Argentine poet & publisher Tomás Fadel is translating my *Emporium* into Spanish (*Emporio!*). I'm to Zoom with him in a couple of weeks to see his printing press and explain my in-jokes and antic puns.

Felicia Zamora's sixth book of poems, *Quotient*, released from Tinderbox Editions in March 2022. Her poem "Prayer of the Palo Verde Beetle" was selected by Ada Limón for *The Slowdown* and another poem

"Beautiful Fault" was featured on *In Their Own Words* with the Poetry Society of America. She was the author representing AZ in [*The Beautiful: Poets Reimagine a Nation*](#), and Won an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award. She had the pleasure of working with Ph.D. artist Maia Morgan and Elliston Room Curator, Michael Peterson, on the event *Writing in the Woods: An Eco-Lit Celebration* in November. Zamora was a part of *Our House Is On Fire: Collaborative Song Cycle Project on Environmental Justice and Climate Change*, with Dr. Quinn Patrick Ankrum at UC's College Conservatory of Music, Dr. Craig Santos Perez (poet), Dr. Lisa Neher (composer), and Dr. Elizabeth Avery (pianist). She offered four, virtual conversations as part of the [*Poetry as Radicalization & Liberation for BIPOC & Marginalized People Series*](#) in Spring 2022; the series was originally created in Summer 2021 with initial guest being Joshua Bennett, Jennifer S. Cheng, and Vanessa Angélica Villarreal. Guests this spring included: Hoa Nguyen, Craig Santos Perez, Donika Kelly, and Heid E. Erdrich.

ALUMNI NEWS

Lisa Ampleman has poems and lyric essays appearing or forthcoming in *Colorado Review*, *Ecotone*, *Meridian*, *New South*, *The Rumpus*, *Shenandoah*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and *Sweet*. Work from her manuscript-in-progress, *Mom in Space*, was awarded a 2022 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award.

Ashley Anderson defended her dissertation *Sifting the Feminine Bones: Essays* on April 28th and will be graduating with her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri in May. Ashley was also the

recipient of a Mizzou 18 Award and was inducted into the Rollins Society, two of the highest honors for graduate and professional students at Mizzou. Her essay "To Gaze" is forthcoming from *Cosmonauts Avenue* later this year, and her short story "Zipper Pulls" will appear in the October 2022 issue of *SLAB*. "To Gaze" also won a Creative Writing Program Award in Creative Nonfiction as part of this year's creative writing awards at the University of Missouri.

Steve Criniti was named Faculty Merit Foundation of WV Professor of the Year. The award is for the top higher ed faculty member in the state (regardless of university type, discipline, etc.).

Darrin Doyle (PhD, 2006) will publish his seventh book of fiction, the novella *Let Gravity Seize the Dead*, with Regal House Publishing in Summer 2024.

Ben Dudley: My graphic novel *The Day the Cat Got Shot* was released in April of 2022. More information about it can be found [here](#). In 2020, my animated play *The Opinions of Men: A Stupid History of the Protestant Reformation* was accepted to four national fringe festivals, winning "Staff Pick of the Fringe" at the Kansas City Fringe Festival.

Kelcey Parker Ervick's graphic memoir *The Keeper* is forthcoming from Avery Books/Penguin in September 2022. It's about growing up as a goalkeeper in the early years of Title IX. It's also about figuring out how to become—like fellow goalkeeper Vladimir Nabokov—a writer.

Tricia Evanson: I have been teaching English and Composition at Oak Hills High School, and I just accepted a position to teach next

year at Taylor High School. I resigned from the Southwest Board of Education after six years—this last couple of years have been totally bananas, and I served as long as I could bear to. My oldest son will be a freshman at UC next year, leaving me with a senior and an eighth grader (and 29 chickens) still at home.

Bernard Grant's novel-in-stories manuscript, which served as their UC dissertation, was finalized for the 2022 Iron Horse Literary Review Press First Book Prize with Texas Tech University Press and the 2022 Nilsen Prize for a First Novel by Southeast Missouri State University Press. For April's Autism Acceptance Month, Benard will speak on a virtual panel titled "The Disparate and Intersectional Impacts of COVID-19: Where do We Go From Here?" presented by the SRU Gender Studies Program & Counseling Center at Slippery Rock University. Other advocacy efforts include speaking at Bridges and Rainbows, a virtual panel discussion at the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland; a commission from the nonprofit Specialisterne to write a book on neurodiversity; and co-founding the [Diversity with Dignity Global Roundtable](#), which meets quarterly. Bernard writes about neurodiversity and related topics for various organizations, articles that have been translated into French and Dutch and nominated for an HR prize. They also serve as Associate Fiction Editor at *Tahoma Literary Review*.

Kevin Heath ('99). Finishing 32nd year of teaching writing at Cedarville University. Writing 2500 words a week as an accidental pastor at a (very) small church--Zion Baptist--in Cedarville. The sermons are essays and the style is somewhere between the Rev. Al Green and Rev. John Donne. Also at work on

a writing project with an graphic artist. We're calling it *Birds of Malaiseville*. They does the stunning artwork. I create speculative nonfiction pieces to go w/the art, along with a daily, brief observation about local birds.

Sakinah Hofler has accepted a lecturer position at Princeton University in Princeton's Writing Program. She received a fellowship from The Mae Fellowship to help her complete her first novel.

Julia Koets' new poetry book, *PINE*, won a 2021 Florida Book Award.

Amy Lemmon: I was selected as a juried fellow for a residency at the Saltonstall Foundation. Here is a link to the web page with information on all the fellows for 2022: <https://www.saltonstall.org/residencies/2022-juried-fellows/>.

After graduating from the PhD program in the summer of 2020, **Jess Jelsma Masterton** worked as a VAP of English at Albion College in Michigan, where she taught creative writing, literature, and composition. For the last year, she has lived in Reno, NV and served as the editor-in-chief of *Ruminate Magazine*, a nonprofit literary journal that publishes fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art. This fall, she will join Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania as the Director of SU Press and an assistant professor in publishing and media entrepreneurship.

Kristi Maxwell is a 2022 recipient of the University of Louisville Distinguished Faculty Award in Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity and has been selected as an American-Scandinavian Foundation Fellow for 2022-23, which will support her research in Denmark during her sabbatical. Her

seventh book of poetry, *My My*, came out with Saturnalia Books in 2020.

Matthew McBride: In July of 2021, my latest chapbook, *The Mourners Forget Which Funeral They're At*, was published by Greying Ghost Press. If anyone is interested, they can purchase a copy [here](#).

Sarah Rose Nordgren: My hybrid-genre chapbook, *The Creation Museum*, (much of which I wrote while at UC) is forthcoming from Harbor Editions in summer 2022, and I am writing poems for my third full-length collection. Since moving my family back to my hometown of Durham, NC at the start of the pandemic, I've been working as an independent (self-employed) creative writing teacher, mentor, and consultant, which I love. My parents moved into the house next door to us last summer, and so we're developing a small, suburban, family compound with a shared garden and chicken coop in the works.

Kevin Oberlin's chapbook *Steamboat Alley* was published this winter as the winner of the 2021 Heartland Review Press Chapbook Contest. Fellow UC alumnus Joshua Butts writes that this brief collection about child-rearing and yearning "refracts fridge contents with domestic strangeness," enacting "a survival mode necessary to make any kind of a life." Kevin is an associate professor in the Department of English and Communication at UC Blue Ash College. His chapbook is available through [The Heartland Review Press](#) and [Amazon](#).

Dirk Stratton: A couple of years ago, I used this newsletter to announce that my nano-publishing enterprise, I-BeaM Books, had published two books by UC English Department alums, Karl Zuelke's *Petting the*

Bumblebees (a collection of poems), and Louis Friedman's *Dead Sea Stories* (a collection of linked short stories). This year I-BeaM will be publishing Professor Emeritus Tom LeClair's *Passing Again*, the fifth entry in his series of "Passing" novels about (and ostensibly written by) Michael Keever, a former pro basketball player. Unique to this novel is the use of 50 color photographs (to help establish and further the plot) by Polish photographer Kinga Owczennikow (who also becomes a character in the novel). The official publication date is 7/7/22, but copies are already available on [the website I-BeaM uses to sell its books](#). Working with Tom on this novel proved to be so rewarding we've already started work on another book which also will feature Owczennikow photos. And when we finish it, I'll be sure to give notice here.

Lisa Williams has poems recently published in *New England Review* and *Ecotone: The Climate Issue* as well as in *Your Impossible Voice* and *Mer Vox*. Since 2014 she has served as Series Editor for the University Press of Kentucky New Poetry and Prose Series. Her latest selection for publication in the series, Manini Nayar's *Being Here*, received accolades from [the New York Times](#).

STUDENT NEWS

Michael Alessi: I've largely been laid up finishing coursework this year, but I did have a short story, "Ordinary Ghost," picked up by *Quarter After Eight*, Ohio University's journal of innovative writing, for their Spring '22 issue (vol. 28).

Holli Carrell: This past year, I had poems appear in *32 Poems*, *The Journal*, *The Cortland Review*, *Pangyrus*, and *Small Orange*

Journal. My poetry was also a finalist for *River Styx's* 2021 International Poetry Contest and *Phoebe's* 2021 Greg Grummer Poetry Contest, judged by Emily Wilson.

Lily Davenport published a story, "Ballad III," in *Denver Quarterly* in February. She'll be presenting a paper at this year's SFFA/CoFutures conference in July, "'We find a wrinkle in time and you tell the manager?': Anticapitalism, Intertextuality, and Queer Worldbuilding in Nino Cipri's *FINNA*."

Sarah Haak's essays have recently been published in *Fourth Genre*, *Essay Daily*, *The Pinch*, *Atticus Review*, *The Wrath-Bearing Tree*, *Sonora Review*, and are forthcoming in *DIAGRAM* and other journals. Her work is presently nominated for a Pushcart Prize and a Sundress Best of the Net Award. She serves as an Assistant Editor for *Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction*, and is also a certified workshop facilitator for Warrior Writers, a veteran-focused arts organization dedicated to creativity and wellness. As an educator, her current focus is on trauma-informed curriculum development, and her scholarship and dissertation project were recently granted a UC University Research Council award which will fund her research for summer of 2022. She is working on a book titled *When Grief Stands Still: Stories of Ambiguous Loss*, which examines firsthand experiences of uncanny loss and unites critical research on trauma and complicated grief with story. She is working with Dr. Kristen Iversen on a textbook, "*Cutting Edge in Creative Nonfiction: Readings and Pedagogical Approaches*."

Yalie Kamara: I was a recipient of the 2021-2022 Taft Competitive Dissertation Fellowship and was one of 100 female doctoral candidates in North America to

receive a 2021-2022 P.E.O Scholarship, and was one of fourteen scholars to be further distinguished with an endowed or named scholarship. *What You Need to Know About Me: Young Writers on Their Experiences of Immigration* (The Hawkins Project, 2022), the anthology for which I was an executive editor, will be released this May. This collection chronicles the immigration narratives of young people who are exploring the possibilities and challenges of seeking and finding “home” in a new place. Lastly, I was selected as the 2022-2023 Cincinnati and Mercantile Library Poet Laureate (2-year term). I will remain in Cincinnati and begin my position as the Director of Creative Youth Leadership at WordPlay Cincy--I am very much looking forward to both endeavors. I am proud to have been a part of the University of Cincinnati's English Department, a community from which I have gained so much and to which I hope to contribute as an alumna.

Claire Kortyna's work has been published in *Blood Orange Review*, *The Maine Review*, *The Baltimore Review*, *Jellyfish Review*, and others. She recently received the William C. Boyce Award for Excellence in Teaching. Claire has accepted a tenure track position in Creative Nonfiction at Arkansas Tech University. Her presentation “Ecology and Engagement: Inclusivity and Environment in the Classroom” was included on the panel Ecological Pedagogies and Editorial Methods at the 2022 UC Graduate Conference. She is a member of the Center for Public Engagement with Science’s Graduate Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research and Discussion Group, an on-going mentor for Creative Writers through Job IQ, and a volunteer reader for *The Cincinnati Review*.

Hassaan Mirza: I had a short story, "I'm Sick But Missing You," get published in *Joyland* at the very end of December 2021. I now have a story "Permanent Garden" come out in *Ploughshares* this month. Another story of mine was shortlisted for the fiction prize by the *Disquiet* Literary Contest this year (but didn't win!).

Ben Sandman: I have a story forthcoming in *Joyland* this summer, and two reviews set to appear shortly--one in *The New Republic* on rural gentrification, and one in *Los Angeles Review of Books* on a pair of newly translated novels by the German writer Peter Weiss.

David Lerner Schwartz was awarded support this year from UC’s University Research Council (URC), The Niehoff Center for Film & Media Studies, and The Bread Loaf Writer’s Workshop. He read at the Louisville Conference on Literature & Culture, presented at the Symposium for Disinformation Studies at Swarthmore College, and taught two writing workshops for the South Carolina Writers Association. His short story is forthcoming in *Ecotone*.

Maggie Su accepted a position as Associate Prose Editor at *Georgia Review*, and will be moving to Athens, Georgia in May with her partner and cat. She will miss everyone at UC immensely!

Natalie Villacorta has a story forthcoming in *Joyland*. She and fellow student Ben Sandman are getting married this summer on June 25th in Delhi, New York.

Madeleine Wattenberg: I published my debut poetry collection, *I/O*, with University of Arkansas Press last April. In actually recent news, I also will be joining Lakeland

University in Plymouth, Wisconsin as an Assistant Professor of Writing this fall and have poems forthcoming in the June issue of *Poetry Magazine*.

INCOMING STUDENTS

We are delighted to welcome seven new students next year:

Hussain Ahmed is Nigerian, poet, and environmentalist. He completed an MFA in poetry at the University of Mississippi. His poems are featured in *AGNI, Poetry Magazine, The Kenyon Review, Transition Magazine*, and elsewhere. He is a 2021 Semi-finalist for the Cave Canem Poetry Prize, 2022 Finalist for the University of Wisconsin Press's Brittingham Prize and Felix Pollak Prize poetry competition, and several others. He is the author of chapbook *Harp in a Fireplace* (Newfound, 2021) and debut collection *Soliloquy with the Ghosts in Nile* (Black Ocean Press, 2022). He is currently an Editorial Assistant for *Seneca Review*.

Charlie Beckerman's fiction has appeared in *Glassworks* and *The Quail Bell Review*, his non-fiction has appeared in *Greatist, Thrillist*, and *Bustle*, where he covered the 2016 Presidential campaign. His memoir podcast, *Serial Dater*, has two seasons and is available on iTunes, and he is the co-author of the internet's pre-eminent *Star Trek: The Next Generation* fashion blog, *Fashion It So*. He has an MFA from Florida State University, received a Fulbright Award to research in the United Kingdom, and has been an artist-in-residence at Yaddo. Since the pandemic, he's been wandering the earth, between San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Montana, and the UK.

Blessing J. Christopher holds an MFA in fiction from Virginia Tech. Her work has appeared in *The Sun, Gulf Coast, Guernica, the minnesota review, Salt Hill*, and elsewhere.

Joely Fitch is a writer from Dayton, Ohio. She holds an MFA from the University of Idaho, where she served as the editor-in-chief of *Fugue*; she has also studied at Bennington College, worked at a restaurant in Philadelphia, and haunted the stacks of various libraries. Some of Jo's poems and essays live at *The Shore, Voicemail Poems, Dilettante Army*, and *Blue Earth Review*.

Daniel Hunt is a writer from South Jersey. His stories and scholarly articles have appeared in *Portland Review, New Hibernia Review, The Journal of Romanian Literary Studies*, and elsewhere. He's finishing up his MFA at the University of Houston, where he served as assistant fiction editor for *Gulf Coast*.

Kate Jayroe is a writer from Little Mountain, South Carolina. Kate's chapbook, *Parts* (Dorsa Brevia, 2019), was a top ten seller in Powell's Books Small Press in 2019. Work by Kate appears in *X-R-A-Y, Hayden's Ferry Review, The Fanzine, Joyland, Hobart, VIDA's Report from the Field, Vol. 1 Brooklyn, Juked*, and more. katejayroe.com.

Asher Marron holds an MFA in poetry from San Francisco State University. They have lived in the Bay Area for the past thirteen years, and eight of those were spent working an amazing job as a high school teacher. Their MFA thesis, *Eleison*, explores the intersections of genderfluid bodies and the beatification of those bodies within spiritual narratives that have historically omitted gender expansive people. Asher's chapbook,

"We were alone together. I forget the rest,"
was released by Ramblr press in December
2020 which immerses the reader in the
testimony of frontline workers. They are
thrilled to be joining the creative writing
program at UC, and—having never lived
anywhere it snows—hopes to survive the
winter.