

Spring 2021

CREATIVE WRITING

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

FROM REBECCA LINDENBERG

When I sat down to write the annual Director's Note in May of 2020, we knew things were difficult, anxious, and uncertain. I wrote sincerely about how impressed and appreciative I was of everyone's ability to pivot nimbly to remote teaching and learning – though I'm not sure how much I was using words like "pivot" and "nimble," words that have become part of the discourse of an era (now more than a year) defined by – and utterly changed by – COVID-19. But I'm not sure any of us had the faintest idea of what was really in store for us. And not only the pandemic changed and defined the months that followed. Our daily lives and our communities and our mental and emotional ecosystems have been profoundly impacted by other social, cultural and political forces – Black Lives Matter protests and the pursuit of justice for George Floyd and too many others murdered by the police, the tumult of the days and weeks leading up to the November 2020 election, the misinformation and disinformation and chaos that followed it, culminating in a confusing and terrifying and ultimately tragic insurrection at the Capitol on January 6th. It would have been a memorable year even if a terrifyingly transmissible virus wasn't hovering around, behind, over it all. We have all experienced loss, we have all experienced anxiety and fear, we have all, at times, felt overwhelmed. And it's hard to imagine what will happen next.

But as you read through the litany of successes, the lists of publications and awards, of books contracted or published, jobs offered and accepted, you'll be able to see that even in difficult times, the energy that this community has for its art doesn't flag. Even in a year where many magazines stopped accepting submissions, many publishers paused book acquisition and production, many arts organizations struggled, our students and faculty and alums still managed to shine. Just for example: Sakinah Hofler won UC's Presidential Medal of Graduate Student Excellence. And Yalie Kamara won a prestigious P.E.O Scholarship. But please read the full

(DIRECTOR'S NOTE CONTINUED)

newsletter for more.

Notably, we welcomed two incredible new writers into our faculty – Felicia Zamora and Aditi Machado. And despite spending their first year with us mostly remotely, they have contributed enormously. Felicia won the William Boyce Award for Excellence in Teaching, and it was clear from both the nomination letters from her students and the enthusiasm her capstone students displayed in their final virtual reading that they felt empowered as artists and that they learned a great deal. Aditi's graduate workshop won rave reviews and she has leapt into service on the Steering Committee and as an instrumental part of the collaboration between English and RALL in the creation of a new graduate certificate in translation and translation studies. We could not be happier to have them both here, and our entire program benefits enormously from all of their various, substantial gifts and, between them, their wide range of coverage. They have given this program their all, even though we haven't been able to be together as a program, and that makes their contributions that much more meaningful.

We had a limited Visiting Writers Series, due to the pandemic, but we did have many virtual visitors to both graduate and undergraduate classes, as well as a hugely impactful week with our virtual Elliston poet, Pulitzer Prize-winner Tyehimba Jess. He gave a lecture, did many conferences with graduate students, gave a wonderful reading, and made himself very available in a Q&A moderated by John Drury, and everyone came away with a sense of how his innovations and interventions have contributed to the conversation of

contemporary American letters. He was gracious and generous, and inspiring. His way of re-imagining the page was illuminating – in just reading *Olio*, one cannot experience the text the way Jess presented and performed it. Our wonderful new Elliston Room curator Michael Peterson hosted and also recorded the events for anyone who might be interested.

I continue to be impressed by and grateful for this community. I want to particularly note how hard this year has been for our first-year cohort, coming into the program without knowing most of the people they've spent the year working with, and finding ways to make community when we can't have all the readings, seminars, workshops, gatherings, conferences and more that we would normally rely upon to help nurture connection and continuity. I also raise my cap to those who have worked tirelessly and succeeded triumphantly, and who have taken exams, defended dissertations, even graduated remotely, without quite the fanfare and collegial shows of goodwill they truly, truly deserve. But all of you have given and striven, and your commitments to our community here at UC as well as the larger Cincinnati and literary community do not go unnoticed. Success and service are both values we pursue here, and our students embody both.

I look forward to a new academic year, hopefully one that begins to bring us back together again, so we can gather in both joy and grief, because it is my experience that being together amplifies the first and mitigates the latter. Please read on to hear from our faculty and students and alums about their accomplishments, and know that this represents only some of the really important achievements realized during (and

(DIRECTOR'S NOTE CONTINUED)

I promised myself I wouldn't say it but I must) these unprecedented times.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

ACRE BOOKS

Recent publications from Acre Books earned many accolades this year. Some highlights: Elizabeth Lindsey Rogers's poetry collection, *The Tilt Torn Away from the Seasons*—about a human mission to Mars—was named by *The Boston Globe* one of the Best Books of 2020. Thomas Legendre's novel, *Keeping Time*, was featured in *Foreword Magazine's* Best Science Fiction and Fantasy Roundup. Corinna Vallianatos's novel, *The Beforeland*, garnered a glowing review in *The New York Times* and has been named a Foreword Indies finalist (literary fiction category). *Publishers Weekly* deemed Brock Clarke's *I, Grape* an "impassioned" and "whimsical" chronicle of the author's "obsession with fiction as an art form." Jenny Bitner's novel, *Here Is a Game We Could Play*, received a starred review in *Foreword*, and *Booklist* concluded: "The fast pace, visceral imagery, and endlessly endearing protagonist make this book a must-read."

THE CINCINNATI REVIEW

The Cincinnati Review has been seeing record numbers of submissions since the pandemic—be patient with literary magazines considering your submissions; they're likely inundated! If any alumni are interested in serving as readers for us on

volunteer basis, get in touch with Lisa Ampleman or Matt O'Keefe.

Work from our pages and the miCRo online series was picked up in the past year for *Best American Poetry*, *Best American Short Stories*, *Best Microfiction*, *Best of the Net*, *Best Small Fictions* (in which we were a featured journal), and *The Orison Anthology*.

We've also started a monthly email newsletter highlighting the zesty work our editors have been doing on the blog (with recent posts about building writing community in the digital age, when to know if poems are ready to submit, and common mistakes when writing dialogue, for example). You can sign up for it [here](#) (scroll down).

ELLISTON POETRY ROOM

In the absence of in-person events, archival management has been the primary focus this year. Stay tuned, though, for a new podcast created by the Elliston Poetry Room: THE BRIEF, conversations with poets hosted by Jenn Habel. Early episodes will feature Tyehimba Jess, Erin Belieu, and Tiana Clark. Coming soon to our [SoundCloud page](#).

VISITING WRITERS SERIES

As Rebecca mentioned in her Director's Note, we were delighted to host Tyehimba Jess (virtually) as the 2021 Elliston Poet-in-Residence. Jess lectured on "Documentary Poetics: Remixing and Remastering History" and read poems from his Pulitzer-Prize-winning book *Olio*. He also met with students and recorded a podcast. Combined, his

events drew an audience of over a hundred people.



FACULTY NEWS

Don Bogen: I gave two poetry readings, at the Spanish Association of American Studies and at my alma mater, the University of California, Berkeley, and a reading of translations from the Spanish poet Julio Martínez Mesanza's new book *The Glory*—all from the privacy of my own room. Some of my translations from *The Glory* appeared in *Presence* and *Pensive*, and three translations from another Spanish poet, Juan Lamillar, came out in *The Arkansas International*. My poem "Bread Song" was published in *Chicago Quarterly Review*, and *Hotel Amerika* ran a short essay, "Home Businesses," in its Winter, 2020 issue.

John Drury: I've been lucky this year with magazine publications and acceptances. "[Reception Center](#)" (eight sections from the basic training chapter in *The Bad Soldier: A Picaresque Memoir of Enlisting in the Army to Avoid Being Drafted during the Vietnam War*) appeared in *Consequence* on October 29, 2020, with a photo of me in uniform. Three poems appeared in two different issues of *The American Journal of Poetry*: "[The Teller's Cage](#)," a sonnet in the voice of my mother; "Curriculum Vitae," a response to a poem by Lisel Mueller, and "[Gossip](#)," a rondeau written during an in-class word-list exercise. *Nine Mile* published "Chain Saw Blues," "Cincinnati Haiku," and "The Projectionist" (an elegy for Liam Rector) in its print issue of Fall 2020. Other poems include "[Chameleons](#)" in *Ascent* and "[Horseback Riding](#)" and "[Crèche Scene with My Son](#)" in *Maryland Literary Review*. Several poems are forthcoming: "Beginning with a Line from Turgenev's *On the Eve*" and "Cherry Blossoms around the Tidal Basin" in *Relief: A Journal of Art and Faith*, "Flammable" in *Literary Matters*, and "Social Networking" in *Main Street Rag*.

Michael Griffith's most recent book, *The Speaking Stone*, was published in April. He continues to devise puzzles—crosswords, acrostics, and hink pinks—for each issue of *The Southern Review*.

Kristen Iversen: The past year is almost beyond description in the changes and challenges it brought to our UC writing community and beyond. I have been heartened by the energy and spirit of my students and colleagues, and I look forward, as I know we all do, to campus life getting back to normal. My plans to go to Norway this year as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Bergen were scuttled by Covid-

19—at first just for one semester, then for the entire year—and I continued my responsibilities at UC. In addition to my teaching and work with interns and graduate students, I published two anthologies: *Doom with a View: Historical and Cultural Contexts of the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant* (Chicago Review Press), and *Don't Look Now: Things We Wish We Hadn't Seen* (Mad Creek Books), co-edited with David Lazar.

Of *Doom with a View*, Helen Caldicott noted "A cautionary tale of the moral choices we face, this book should and indeed must be imperative reading for every US citizen." My essay in the collection, entitled "The Accidental Activist," explores my (unexpected) journey from memoirist and journalist to activist.

Regarding *Don't Look Now*, Lia Purpura wrote: "These gorgeous essays perform acts of homage, bravery, and forgiveness; show what can be made of the searing left by life-altering experiences; and point us toward a deeper understanding of both vulnerability and the capacity to rebuild at the blast site." I'm grateful to all the amazing contributors to this book. My own essay, "Love and Death in Mexico," is about a bullfight, a romance, and a poke at Ernest Hemingway.

This year I continued a round of readings and speaking engagements (all virtual, of course), and made steady progress on my forthcoming literary biography, "Friend and Faithful Stranger: The Untold Story of Nikola Tesla" (bolstered by a fresh batch of unseen letters and materials from the Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade), as well as a work of literary journalism, "Wink's Lodge: The West's Hidden African American Jazz Club and Literary Salon," which has expanded into a broader examination of the role of the KKK in Colorado and the West. The forthcoming documentary based on my

book *Full Body Burden* was delayed by Covid-19 but will be released in the coming months, and a tv series is in production.

I'm thrilled to welcome the two new members of our creative writing faculty, and I share in the celebration of all the successes and publications of our graduate students.

I'll end by echoing the words of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General: Be safe, be smart, be kind, and may the coming year bring us a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable society.

Aditi Machado: 2020 saw the publication of my second book of poems *Emporium* (Nightboat) and an essay pamphlet titled *The End* (Ugly Duckling Presse). Other writing appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Chicago Review*, *poets.org*, *Volt*, and *The Volta*. I zoomed a lot. But most importantly, I joined this happy community of writers and taught two of my all-time favorite classes. :)

Jim Schiff, with the assistance of Toni Judnitch, Jason Namey, Sarah Rose Nordgren, Thomas Cherry, and Antonio "Joey" Ferrarro, has completed work on the John Updike Letters Project. A volume of selected Updike letters will likely appear in Fall 2022.

Felicia Zamora's new book, *I Always Carry My Bones*, winner of the 2020 Iowa Poetry Prize, released from the University of Iowa Press on April 15, 2021. Her book, *Body of Render*, was listed last September as one of the "19 Books by Hispanic Authors to Add to Your Shelf ASAP" by *Women's Day Magazine*. Her poem "Meditations on Lines" was included in the Spring 2021 Ancestor Edition of *Boston Review* and other poems were published or are forthcoming in *Guernica*, *POETRY*, *Orion*, *Hunger Mountain*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *AGNI*, and *Boston Review* online. Her essay "In the Cellular: Poetry in the Body" is forthcoming in 2021 in *The*

Encounter: A Handbook of Poetic Practice. Selected as one of the winners of the 2020-2021 William C. Boyce Award for Teaching Excellence in English, Zamora also received an Ohio Pre-trial and Racial Justice Grant, a Latino Faculty Association Small Grant Award, and a Taft Research Center Competitive Lecture Grant for her project: *Art as Activism: Poetry as a Catalyst for Radicalization and Liberation for BIPOC and Marginalized Voices*. Her other involvement included: guest editor for the Fall 2021 edition of the *Colorado Review*, moderator for a scholar discussion for Dr. Anima Adjepong's new book titled *Afropolitan Projects: Redefining Blackness, Sexualities, and Culture from Houston to Accra* in UC's Sociology Department, masterclass faculty for the Tucson Festival of Books, poet collaborator invited by Dr. Quinn Patrick Ankrum with CCM on the multidisciplinary project *Our House Is On Fire: Collaborative Song Cycle project on Environmental Justice and Climate Change*, and a panelist for *Sunset Salons: Women in Writing* with the Clifton Cultural Arts Center.

ALUMNI NEWS

Lisa Ampleman has poems appearing or forthcoming in *32 Poems*, *Image*, *Matter*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Shore*, and *Southern Review*. She was one of the 2021 awardees of the departmental William C. Boyce Award for Teaching Excellence in English for her work overseeing graduate-student editors at *The Cincinnati Review*, where she serves as managing editor.

Ashley Anderson: I was admitted to candidacy in the PhD in creative writing program at the University of Missouri back in October, and I am also the recipient of the

2020-2021 William Peden Prize for Outstanding Teaching of Creative Writing from the University of Missouri English Department.

Cynthia Arrieu-King recently published a genre bending memoir, *The Betweens* from Noemi Press and a book of poems, *Continuity* from Octopus Books. Her poem "Morning, As Is" was featured on Poetry Daily the publication day of *Continuity*. She was glad to visit Professor Drury's memoir class virtually and hear what they've been reading and working on this term. Mostly, she's been caregiving for family during the pandemic.

Rebekah Bloyd teaches writing and ecological practices at California College of the Arts. In April, she gave a virtual writing craft talk "Conveying Worlds Through Creative Nonfiction" at Palacký University in the Czech Republic. Her recent creative nonfiction, flash fiction, and poems appear or are forthcoming in *Pinyon Review*, *Meat for Tea*, *The Racket* and *Catamaran Literary Reader*. And, broadcast as part of KQED Public Radio's *Perspectives*, "A Tree Army" highlights a way to create jobs and protect public lands.

Darrin Doyle published his fifth book of fiction, the story collection *The Big Baby Crime Spree and Other Delusions* (Wolfson Press) in March 2021. His sixth book, the literary comedy-horror werewolf novel *The Beast in Aisle 34* (Tortoise Books), will be released in September 2021. He is a Professor and Graduate Coordinator in the Department of English Language and Literature at Central Michigan University.

Charlie Green: My first collection of poems, *Feral Ornamentals*, was published by Finishing Line Press in March.

Vivé Griffith: I work as Director of Outreach and Engagement for the national Clemente Course in the Humanities, a program I first learned about from a *Harper's* article Russel Durst included in a freshman comp course reader in 1997. I've been involved in the Austin affiliate, Free Minds, since 2007. My essays have most recently appeared in *The Sun* and *River Teeth*, and every Sunday I pop a new poem into my curbside poetry box. Follow along [here](#).

Kevin Honold: A book of essays, *The Rock Cycle*, was published by University of New Mexico Press last month. A novel, *Molly*, will be published by Autumn House Press later this fall.

Rochelle Hurt is an Assistant Professor at the University of Central Florida, where she teaches in their graduate and undergraduate creative writing programs. Her third book, *The J Girls: A Reality Show*, won the Blue Light Books Prize from *Indiana Review* and will be published by Indiana University Press in 2022. Her poetry and creative nonfiction are recently published or forthcoming in the *Iowa Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The Pinch*, *Bennington Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, and *Memorious*.

Holly Karapetkova is currently serving as the Poet Laureate of Arlington, Virginia.

Gwen E. Kirby's debut collection *Shit Cassandra Saw* is forthcoming on January 4th, 2022, from Penguin Books.

Julia Koets: I accepted a tenure-track assistant professor position in creative nonfiction at the University of South Florida and my third book *PINE* (Southern Indiana Review Press) was published April 5, 2021.

Matthew McBride: Despite the pandemic, I have had a good year. Greying Ghost Press accepted my new chapbook, *The Mourners Forget Which Funeral They're At*, which is set to come out in a couple months. Further, I published poems in *The Cortland Review*, *Guernica*, *Impossible Task*, *The Rupture*, *Rust + Moth*, and *Zone 3*. I also placed a review of my friend Noah Falck's book, *Exclusions*, at the *Kenyon Review*. And perhaps the most important thing I have forthcoming is my daughter, who will be released at the end of May.

Brenda Peynado has accepted a position at the University of Houston as an Assistant Professor, and her debut book, *The Rock Eaters*, a short story collection featuring ghosts, aliens, angels, superheroes, and Latina girlhood, is out from Penguin Books May 11! She also just welcomed a new baby, Soledad Anais, into the world.

Adam Sol: My fifth collection of poetry, *Broken Dawn Blessings*, will be published by ECW Press this Fall. I am now the Coordinator of the Creative Expression & Society Program at the University of Toronto's Victoria College.

Liv Stratman completed her MFA at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2015. Her first novel, *Cheat Day*, will be published by Scribner on May 25, 2021.

Sarah Anne Strickley published *Sister*, a novella from Summer Camp Publishing, in January. She also recently published a piece of flash fiction in *Shrew Literary Zine* and an essay in *Watershed Review*. A story from *Rock & Sling: A Journal of Witness* is forthcoming. She continues her work as faculty editor of *Miracle Monocle* at the University of Louisville, where she is an

assistant professor of English. The journal is soon to release its second micro-anthology, *MONSTER*, in addition to its biannual digital issues. She will appear as a panelist and featured reader in this year's Boldface conference at the University of Houston.

Lisa Summe's first book, *Say It Hurts*, was published by YesYes Books in January.

Jillian Weise: My memoir, *Common Cyborg*, went to auction and was sold to Jenny Xu at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt by agent Julia Kenny of Dunow, Carlson and Lerner.

Blythe Winslow: I'm committed and engrossed in creating happier, smarter, healthier school communities through digital wellness and research-driven classroom tech use through my new nonprofit, *EVERYSCHOOL.ORG* (established in fall of 2019). *EVERYSCHOOL.ORG* is also the vehicle to deliver the research-based classroom tech use model I co-created, *The EdTech Triangle*, to classrooms and schools nationwide.

STUDENT NEWS

Michael Alessi: I'm happy to announce that Mason Jar Press selected my chapbook of short fiction, *Call a Body Home*, as the winner of their 5th anniversary chapbook competition and released it this past February. The title story was just published in the most recent issue of *Appalachian Review*.

Marianne Chan: In January, my book *All Heathens* won the 2021 GLCA New Writers Award for Poetry, and my poem "Hold Music" was recently published in *New England Review*.

Alida Dean: My story "The Off Season" won Ninth Letter's 2020 fiction contest and was printed in the winter 2021 issue.

Cara Dees won the award for the 2021 University Research Council (URC) Graduate Stipend and Research Cost Program for her project, "'The Common Dark in All the Earth': Modernist Romanticism and the Environmental Sublime in Lorine Niedecker's Poetics," which she is writing under the supervision of her faculty mentor for the project, Professor John Drury. She also hosted her first AWP Conference panel, "Loss, Memory, Transformation: Women Poets and the Elegy," this spring, and is looking forward to serving as the Vice President of the English Graduate Organization during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Kimberly Grey's second book, *Systems for the Future of Feeling*, was published in December by Persea Books and reviewed in the January issue of *American Poetry Review*. Her third book (and dissertation), an essay collection entitled *A Mother is an Intellectual Thing*, will be published in 2023. Excerpts from the book recently appeared in *The New England Review* and are forthcoming in *The Rumpus*. Next academic year she will join the English Department at Webster University in St. Louis as Assistant Professor of Poetry. She will miss everyone at UC immensely!

Emily Heiden recently published essays in the anthologies *Don't Look Now: Things We Wish We Hadn't Seen*, from Mad Creek Books, and *Fast Funny Women: 75 Essays of Flash Nonfiction* from Wood Hall Press. She also served as Visiting Writing Professor for a second year at Northern Kentucky University, where she taught creative nonfiction courses. She is currently completing her book, *According to Plan*, a memoir about

unplanned pregnancy, abortion, and searching for love.

Emma Faesi Hudelson's debut nonfiction book, *Sky Watch: The Untold Story of America's Greatest Show Horse*, is slated to be published by the University Press of Kentucky in Spring 2023. Her lyric essay chapbook *Horse/* was a finalist in the 2020 Split Lip Press Hybrid Chapbook contest. This year, Emma also began writing regularly for *Saddle & Bridle* magazine. After watching the academic job pool shrink in the wake of COVID, she started building her portfolio as a fundraising consultant and brought in more than \$1 million for midwestern nonprofits. Emma and her husband are thrilled to be expecting their first child in May. Her name is Ada Fern, and she's probably doomed to be a horse girl.

Sakinah Hofler: Despite another wild, somewhat isolating year, some positive things happened. I won the Hurston/Wright Award for College Writers in Fiction and the Yemassee Journal Poetry contest. I was a finalist for Best of the Net anthology and Aesthetica Creative Writing Award. My poem "What Contagion Got Wrong About A Pandemic in America" was selected by former UK Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy to be featured in the WRITE Where We Are NOW project. My TEDx Talk, "How Creative Writing Can Help You Through Life's Toughest Moments" was selected by TED Conferences to be featured on the front page of TED.com. One of my short stories, "Erasure" (originally published in *Kenyon Review Online*), will be published in high school textbooks. My play "Jellybean" was a part of Cincy Playhouse in the Park "Hope" series, and my radio play "The Missing" was recorded and performed by CCM. I am a 2021 recipient of UC's Presidential Medal of

Graduate Student Excellence. My absolute FAVE thing of the year is the birth of my son this past October: Ellison Martin Clovis!!! I am so grateful for my time at UC. The three of us are moving to warm winters in New Orleans, Louisiana where I've accepted a Visiting Assistant Professor position at Loyola University! I will miss you all so much.

Lily Meyer: I have stories forthcoming in *Soft Punk* and *The Drift*, and my translation of Claudia Ulloa Donoso's *Little Bird: Stories* is coming out from Deep Vellum this July.

David Lerner Schwartz's work was or will be published in *New Ohio Review*, *Los Angeles Review*, *The Rumpus*, *Literary Hub*, and *The John Updike Review*. He presented at University of Wisconsin-Madison and West Chester University and was a semifinalist in *Boston Review's* Aura Estrada Short Story Contest and *American Short Fiction's* Halifax Ranch Fiction Prize. His short play is being published in a print anthology by Stage Rights.

Eric Van Hoose: I have a short story in the current issue of *Tahoma Literary Review*.

Natalie Villacorta published a "Rejected Modern Love Essay" in *Hobart*. This summer she will be working on a multi-part audio narrative tentatively entitled *Sister Kathleen* thanks to a Taft Graduate Enrichment Award.

Paige Webb: I have two poems forthcoming in *The Colorado Review*, Summer 21 issue. I'll be presenting a conference paper this June at the Popular Culture Association (LGBTQ+ Studies area): "Consent, Heteronormativity, and Queer Resistance in *Orange is the New Black*." I also was super lucky to win The William C. Boyce Award for Teaching

Excellence in English, along with Nick Molbert, in the graduate student category.

Connor Yeck: This past year I had poems appear in *Willow Springs*, *Ninth Letter*, and was lucky enough to interview a few poets for *Under A Warm Green Linden*. In the fall, my poem "Maximum Overdrive" was selected as the winner of *Indiana Review's* 1/2 K Prize.

INCOMING STUDENTS

We are delighted to welcome seven new students next year:

Sean Cho A. is the author of *American Home* (Autumn House 2021), winner of the Autumn House Press chapbook contest. His work can be future found or ignored in *Copper Nickel*, *Pleiades*, *The Penn Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Nashville Review*, among others. He is currently an MFA candidate at the University of California Irvine. Sean is the Associate Editor of *THRUSH Poetry Journal*. Find him [@phlat soda](#)

Lily Davenport has an irascible cat, a large number of cake pans, and an MFA in fiction from the University of Alabama. She served as fiction editor for volume 46 of the *Black Warrior Review*, and is currently a comics co-editor for *Action, Spectacle!*; her stories have appeared in *NELLE*, *Quarterly West*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, and elsewhere. More info about her and her ongoing projects is available at [lmdavenport.com](#).

Hassaan Mirza is a writer from Lahore, Pakistan. For his writing, he has received fellowships from University of Cincinnati, Vanderbilt University, New York State Summer Writers Institute, Norton Island

Residency, and Springboard of the Arts, among others.

Rome Hernández Morgan is a Mexican-American poet and translator from Dallas, Texas. After teaching high school ESL in Houston ISD, she completed her MFA at the University of Arkansas. She has served as nonfiction editor for *Up North Lit* and *The Arkansas International*. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming from *Copper-Nickel*, *Blackbird*, *New Ohio Review*, *The Journal*, and *Prairie Schooner*.

Justin Reed was born and raised in Northern New York. He has also lived in England, where he went to graduate school, and Spain, where he taught English to elementary school students. He has been an assistant fiction editor for *Consequence Magazine* and a senior reader for *Harvard Review*. His work has been published in *The Iowa Review*, *Epoch*, *Consequence*, *Post Road*, *Flash*, and elsewhere. His fiction received a special mention in the 2019 *Pushcart Prize*, and he is a recipient of a Literature Artist Fellowship grant through the Somerville Arts Council. He has taught literature, creative writing, and expository writing at Florida State University, where he earned his MFA, and Tufts University, where he was a lecturer.

Andy Sia is a Chinese Bruneian poet. His poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Poetry Northwest*, *The Missouri Review*, *West Branch*, and elsewhere. He holds an MFA from the University of Mississippi, where he was a John and Renée Grisham fellow and a senior editor of *Yalobusha Review*.

Dior J. Stephens is a proud Midwestern pisces and poet. He is the author of the chapbooks *SCREAMS & lavender, 001*, and

CANNON!, all with Ghost City Press. Dior holds an MFA in Creative Writing from California College of the Arts. His poems have appeared in *Ligeia Magazine*, *Peach Mag*, *Variety Pack*, and elsewhere.