

OPA Conference, Sept 14-15, 2019, Salem Convention Center

All sessions are in the Croisan Creek Rooms (A, B, C)

Sessions and Bios

Keynote:

The Personal “I” in the Community of “We”

Skim through any contemporary poetry journal and you will find lots of poems written in first person singular. Some are persona poems but most are the poet’s own voice describing that poet’s own experience. How does the “I” poem relate to our shared world?

Penelope Scambly Schott is a past recipient of the Oregon Book Award for Poetry. Recent books include *Serpent Love: A Mother-Daughter Epic* about a struggle with her adult daughter with an essay in which the daughter gives her viewpoint, as well as *House of the Cardamom Seed*, and *November Quilt*. Penelope lives a double life—in Portland, where she and her husband host the White Dog Poetry Salon, and in Dufur, where she spends half of every week and also teaches an annual poetry workshop.

Session #1 Room A

The Subject is Silence, Rethinking “Spiritual” Poetry

Joshua Boettiger

We will try to redefine spiritual poetry by pulling the rug out from under our assumptions and reframing the conversation, and we’ll look at some poets who manage this through a diversity of strategies: Ilya Kaminsky, Jean Valentine, Chris Abani, Lucie Brock-Broido, and C.D. Wright, among others. Based on identifying what works, in the second half of the session we will engage in some generative writing exercises with the intent of producing original work and going home with sketches and raw material to work with.

Joshua Boettiger’s work has appeared in *B O D Y*, *Parabola*, *Dream Pop*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *Verseweavers*, and he is a contributing author to the anthology *Neither Here Nor There: The Many Voices of Liminality*. He teaches poetry at Southern Oregon University’s Young Artists Institute and is a recent recipient of a residency at Vermont Studio Center. He is also a rabbi.

Session #1 Room B

Science in Poetry, and the Poetry of Science

Amelia Díaz Ettinger

In this workshop, we will review old and new science poems, and dissect how the language of poetry and science are so easily intertwined. Samples of poetry from William Carlos Williams to

current poets will be examined and discussed. Time will be allotted for writing a scientifically based poem from selected prompts.

Amelia Díaz Ettinger was born in Mexico and raised in Puerto Rico. She has written poems that reflect the struggle with identity often found in immigrants. She began writing poetry at age three, dictating poems out loud to the adults in her life who wrote them down for her. Amelia continued writing poems and short stories throughout her life, also while working as a high school science teacher. In 2015, her first book of poetry, *Speaking at a Time*, was published by Redbat books. This bilingual book of poetry, according to Oregon poet laureate Peter Sears, “echo the poetry of Lorca and Neruda.” A second book of poetry will be published by Airlie Press in 2020.

Session #1 Room C

Four Poets Read: A Cool Mix

Each poet will read for ten minutes, with a few minutes for questions or discussion.

Diane Corson, Dan Liberthson, Leah Stenson, and C. Steven Blue

Diane Corson has a BA in Art from Montana State University, where she lived for 30 years. Inspired by the Pacific Northwest as a transplant, Diane Corson’s poetry slants towards surrealism and the spirit of nature. She is a board member for the Oregon Poetry Association and a co-curator for Free Range Poetry and runs “Salon Argyle,” an active salon for poetry events and readings with her husband, Bruce Parker, in their home. Diane has three chapbooks and her poetry has been in several publications. Diane says, “I’m working on a collection of Ecopoetics with a full blaze of the senses, often in a surrealist twist.”

Dan Liberthson was born in Rochester, NY, and attended Reed College, Northwestern University (BA, history) and SUNY at Buffalo (PhD, English). His poetry and writing are driven by a few core beliefs: the importance of telling a story, the need to tell it in a disciplined way, and a belief that the sound of the language, too often neglected, is a forceful agent of expression. He believes poetry is made stronger when presented in combination with visual images. His work has been published in small magazines, professional reviews, and newsletters. His newest book is *A Poetry of Birds: Poems about Birds and the Photographs that Inspired Them*.

Leah Stenson believes that truth is often stranger and more interesting than fiction and that stories help us feel connection. Her poems have been described as “witty, playful, and deadly serious . . . one woman’s unflinchingly honest take on life’s beautiful, painful vicissitudes.” She is the author of two chapbooks, *Heavenly Body* and *The Turquoise Bee and Other Love Poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2011 and 2014 respectively); a regional editor of *Alive at the Center: Contemporary Poems from the Pacific Northwest* (Ooligan Press, 2013); and co-editor of *Reverberations from Fukushima* (Inkwater Press, 2014). Her full-length book of poetry, *Everywhere I Find Myself*, was published by Turning Point in December 2017, and her hybrid

memoir, *Life, Revised*, will be published by Cirque Press in 2020. She serves on the board of Tavern Books.

C. Steven Blue is a lyrical/performance poet, reading and performing his poetry from a unique rhythmic perspective, at the crossroads of poetry and music. His poetry has a relevancy and honest bearing that is grounded in the current world predicament. He produces and hosts many local poetry events, including Burning Down the Barnes, a monthly literary series at Eugene Barnes & Noble, as well as The Poets' Corner, which gives Eugene poets an opportunity to sell their books to a local audience. He publishes other peoples' work, has seven published books of his own and a blog on his website, www.wordsongs.com. Steven is retired from a 27-year career in Stage Production in Hollywood, California. He usually performs his poetry with a range of extras, including a prop, a drum, or music.

Session #2 Room A

Creating and Executing Successful Poetry Events

Marc Janssen

This session will present how to create a single poetry reading, a reading series, and other kinds of poetry events. Drawing on his background in marketing and sales, Janssen will walk participants through a step-by-step process for how to create a range of poetry events, how to promote them, and what to do after the event is done to get ready for the next one.

Marc Janssen, the coordinator of the Salem Poetry Project, has produced over 200 weekly poetry events as well as the Salem Poetry Festival. Aside from his work as poet, Janssen was also the marketing and advertising manager at Holiday Retirement Corporation, Frontier Management, and Western Tool Supply.

Session #2 Room B

Moving Your Reader to Move Your Reader: The Power of Proximity and Distance in Poetry

Lynn Otto

This session will focus on craft. With the help of some sample poems and very brief exercises, we'll discuss how a poet's choices affect where readers find themselves as they read (in what physical and temporal place, and in what relationship to the poem's speaker), and we'll discover how that placement affects readers' ability to be moved by the poem. You'll leave with a number of strategies for creating proximity and distance, and an understanding of how you can use these strategies to strengthen your work.

Lynn Otto is a freelance copy editor and writing mentor. Her work has appeared in *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Raleigh Review*, *Sequestrum*, and other journals; her book *Real Daughter* won Unicorn Press's First Book Award and was published earlier this year. She holds an MFA from Portland State University.

Session #2 Room C

Finders, Keepers: Working with Fragments

Autumn Stephens

This workshop is a sequenced, five-step prompt series. Provided is a framework for poets to create, combine, and expand on small units—fragments—of writing to create new material. The exercise guides participants to explore the universal yet also deeply personal theme of fragmentation and its corollaries, loss and reconstruction. Participants (1) react in writing to an on-the-spot tactile encounter with a physical fragment of pottery, textile, etc., (2) create a brief erasure poem, (3) create “Sapphic fragments” of text, (4) select engaging fragments from steps 1-3, and finally (5) use these fragments to create a new poem or text.

Autumn Stephens is an Oregon-bred writer, poet, editor, and teacher who has published numerous books, poems, articles, and essays. With an MFA in creative nonfiction, Stephens teaches private writing classes and workshops, and for ten years developed curriculum and led an expressive writing group for people living with cancer.

Session #3 Room A

Poem-a-Day: How to Write a Connected Series

Penelope Scambly Schott

In this workshop we will discuss how to create an extended body of work that goes together, whether by topic or tone or sequence. Schott will briefly describe her process and results. Then, as a group, we will brainstorm topics and approaches. Participants will experiment with an organizing idea and make notes toward a first poem in their own possible new series.

Penelope Scambly Schott is a past recipient of the Oregon Book Award for Poetry. Recent books include *Serpent Love: A Mother-Daughter Epic* about a struggle with her adult daughter including an essay in which the daughter gives her viewpoint, *House of the Cardamom Seed*, and *November Quilt*. Penelope lives a double life—in Portland, where she and her husband host the White Dog Poetry Salon, and in Dufur, where she spends half of every week and also teaches an annual poetry workshop.

Session #3 Room B

The Desert and Beyond: Poetry of Ada Hastings Hedges

Ulrich Hardt / Alan Contreras

The presentation will consist of an introduction to Oregon poet Ada Hastings Hedges (1884-1980), author of “Desert Poems” (1930) and teacher of poetry in the Portland area from the 1940s to the 1970s. This will include biographical information, comments on her poetic style,

her connections within the northwest poetic community, opinions of her work, and her place in the universe of Oregon poets.

Ulrich Hardt is professor emeritus in the College of Education at Portland State University. He won the Walt Morey Young Readers Literary Legacy Award in 2012 in recognition of his contributions to the Oregon literary community. As a member and past president of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, Hardt edited the peer-reviewed *Oregon English Journal* for 28 years. He was managing editor of the six-volume *Oregon Literature Series* published by OSU Press, and he has been directing the Oregon Writing Festival for 30 years. The festival recognizes and encourages the efforts of Oregon students and teachers to improve writing.

Alan Contreras is retired from a career in higher education bureaucracy. He was co-editor of *Birds of Oregon*, author of *Afield*, and editor of *Edge of Awe* (all OSU Press). His writing has appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Fireweed*, *Gay and Lesbian Review International*, and other publications. He has issued three poetry collections, most recently *In the Time of the Queen* (2018).

Session #3 Room C

Magic vs. Mundane: How to Infuse your Poetry with Meaning and Emotion

A. Molotkov

The workshop will review several successful poems and discuss how the poets avoid unnecessary logistical elaborations while creating a palpable sense of mystery. Participants are welcome to bring one or two poems of their own; the group will discuss several poems and offer suggestions. Bringing your own poems is not a requirement. If you choose to do so, please bring 15-20 copies.

A. Molotkov was born in Russia, but moved to the U.S. in 1990 and switched to writing in English in 1993. His poetry collections are *The Catalog of Broken Things*, *Application of Shadows*, and *Synonyms for Silence*. Published by *Kenyon, Iowa, Antioch, Massachusetts, Atlanta, Bennington, and Tampa Reviews, Pif, Volt, 2 River View*, and many more, Molotkov has received various fiction and poetry awards and an Oregon Literary Fellowship. His translation of a Chekhov story was included by Knopf in their Everyman Series; his prose is represented by Laura Strachan at Strachan Lit. He co-edits the *Inflectionist Review*. Please visit him at AMolotkov.com.

Session #4 Room A

Please Plant This Book Coast to Coast

Anderson / Brautigan Aste

This session is a reading and discussion. Virginia Brautigan Aste and Susan Kay Anderson will be reading aloud from Aste's illuminating memoir, "Please Plant This Book Coast To

Coast” (unpublished, but sections have appeared in *Arthur* and *Beat Scene*). Her memoir is of interest because it tells the story of being the first helpmate, wife, and muse to poet Richard Brautigan.

Virginia Brautigan Aste works as a substitute teacher and activist in Hawaii, which has been her home for the past forty-plus years. Susan Kay Anderson began interviewing Aste in Hawaii in 2008, when she taught at a local high school and met Aste, who was a substitute teacher at the school. When she was finished asking Aste about Richard Brautigan, Anderson began to become more curious about Aste’s growing up years and life after Brautigan as well. Aste seemed instrumental in altering the course of American Literature because of her love and support.

Susan Kay Anderson is a recent recipient of an MFA degree from Eastern Oregon University. She has a MA from Colorado University-Boulder, and a BS from the University of Oregon. Her first book of poems, *Mezzanine*, was published by Finishing Line Press in April 2019.

Session #4 Room B

Sound’s Effects: Ear Training for Poets

Rosemary Lombard

In this craft workshop we’ll explore and build sensitivity to the production and relationships of English phonemes, the basic units that build the sound worlds of our words. We’ll get acquainted with our vocal tracts, experiment with mouth sounds in reference to the ear and phoneme charts, and analyze others’ poems and our own poetic experiments for techniques to control the effects, mood, and degrees and placements of same or similar sound relationships. In particular, we’ll examine work from Christian Bök’s *Enoia* and poems by Paulann Petersen.

Rosemary Lombard, poet/nonfiction writer, draws on interdisciplinary training and experience in musicology; languages and writing; teaching—all levels; and biology, (including animal behavior, acoustics, communication, vocalization); and voice: singing, choral directing, and readers’ theater. Her undergraduate work was in liberal arts and music at Lewis & Clark, where her favorite teacher was William Stafford. Her doctoral program was in musicology at Indiana University. Lombard’s work appears in *Cirque*, *Verseweavers*, *Writing for Animals*, the chapbook *Turtles All the Way: Poems*, and elsewhere.

Session #4 Room C

Words in the Air: Poetry as a Spoken Art, Poetry Out Loud

Clemens Starck

This session will include a reading (20 minutes) and a discussion and Q&A (40 mins). Topics covered: Written language versus spoken language—what’s the difference? Poems on the page or poems in the ear? Writing a poem or composing a poem? Which is more alive? Which is more authentic? Poetry as a higher form of conversation. Poetry as communication.

Clemens Starck was born in 1937. A Princeton dropout and former merchant seaman, he has supported his literary and intellectual interests for more than fifty years by working with his hands, mainly as a carpenter and construction foreman. He is the author of seven books of poetry, including the recently published *Cathedrals & Parking Lots: Collected Poems* (2019). A widower, he has three grown children and lives on forty-some acres in the foothills of the Coast Range in western Oregon. www.clemensstarck.com

Saturday Evening Session: Poetry Readings:
Spring 2019 (placed) Poetry Winners and Open Mic

Sunday Early Risers 7:30 a.m. Session:

Walkabout and Write

Sign up and details will be available at the registration table.

Marilyn Johnston

This early Sunday morning session is offered to help free your inner writer and offer up new inspiration for your muse. You'll be guided outside our Conference doors to places that both typify Salem's beauty as well as the darker periods of its history. You'll have a chance to do quick-writes in multiple locations, with time to share our poetry starts. All you need is your writing journal, a pen, and a pair of comfortable walking shoes. No rules, no preparation on your part is needed—just your willingness to walk among the sights and sounds to stir your senses, imagination, and memories that have been tucked away. (Note: Room C will be available for participants when they return.)

Marilyn Johnston, a Salem poet, received a fellowship from Oregon Literary Arts and the Fishtrap Foundation. She is the author of *Red Dust Rising*, poems about a family's recovery from war, and teaches creative writing in the Artists-in-the-Schools program.

Session #5 Room A

The Prose Poem as Memoir

Carol Barrett

This writing workshop will open with an introduction to the prose poem format and a brief history of the genre, with its current acceptance by many literary magazines. Examples will be shared from published literature. Attendees will discuss several published poems in small groups, considering the elements of story-telling, vivid details and images, and the use of humor and variations in voice. The second part of the workshop will consist of participants writing drafts of two prose poems, one derived from a childhood event, and one stemming from an encounter as an adult. Handouts provided.

Carol Barrett holds doctorates in both clinical psychology and creative writing. She coordinates the Creative Writing Certificate Program at Union Institute & University. Her books include *Calling in the Bones* (Snyder Prize from Ashland Poetry Press), *Drawing Lessons* (Finishing Line Press), and *Pansies* (creative nonfiction, Sonder Press.)

Session #5 Room B

Love Gone Right, Love Gone Wrong: Writing Relationship Poems Based on Margaret Atwood's Poetry

Colette Tennant

Relationships are one thing we all have in common in life. This generative workshop will begin by introducing the participants to Margaret Atwood's relationship poems—some quirky, some surprisingly fun, some dark. We will go on to write poems about relationships—those between lovers and those between parents and children. We will begin with the Love Gone Right focus, and end with Love Gone Wrong. Participants will come away with two new poems plus ideas for a few more.

Colette Tennant just completed a book titled *Religion in The Handmaid's Tale: a Brief Guide*, forthcoming in September 2019. Billy Collins recently awarded her poem 3rd place in the 2019 Fish Publishing Contest in Ireland. She has two books of poetry: *Commotion of Wings* (2010) and *Eden and After* (2015). Her poems have been published in many journals, including *Prairie Schooner*, *Rattle*, *Southern Poetry Review*, and others. She has been an English professor for 25+ years, including teaching creative writing. She enjoys inspiring people to write poems.

Session #6 Room A

The Bridge between Art and Poetry: Broadsides, Postcard Poems and Erasure Poems as Art

Dale Champlin

Dale will work with participants with a variety of prompts, collage materials, and specifics on how to write a concise short poem that will work well on a smaller format. Suggestions will include line length, shaping the line (similar to a concrete poem), and using found printed pieces to develop an erasure poem. Dale has compiled a variety of examples from low to high art! She will bring her collection of broadsides as examples of how she formed her poems to fit with the illustrations. Note: Participants are encouraged to bring their own short poems that they would like to make into a broadside or other visual expression.

Dale Champlin, after many years as a graphic designer and visual artist, devotes most of her time to writing poetry. Her MFA in painting and photography developed her critical eye. She is the editor the *Verseweavers* poetry collections, and current director of Conversations with Writers, a monthly presentation by accomplished writers leading spirited discussions about the craft of writing. Dale has published in *VoiceCatcher*, *North Coast Squid*, *Willawaw Journal*,

Mojave River Press, The Voices Project, and other publications. During the month of January 2019, Dale wrote a poem a day as part of the Tupelo Press 30/30 Project.

Session #6 Room B

Widening the Legacy of an Oregon Poet: The Vision and Craft of Virginia Corrie-Cozart
Eleanor Berry / Ada Molinoff / Lois Rosen

Through readings of exemplary poems (provided as handouts) and commentary on them, this panel will show Virginia Corrie-Cozart as a poet of place with an artist's eye for natural detail, as a poet of family relationships with a deep sensitivity to their nuances, as a poet of whimsy with a lively sense of humor, and as a poet of mutability with a keen sense of its power. Through analytical appreciations of poems representing each of these four territories of her poetic work, we will show Virginia Corrie-Cozart's achievements as a poet of both celebration and lament, with a gaze that is both tender and unflinching.

Eleanor Berry, a past president of OPA and of NFSPS, has taught writing and literature at Willamette University, Marquette University, and other colleges. She has three collections of poetry, *Green November* (Traprock Books, 2007), *No Constant Hues* (Turnstone Books of Oregon, 2015), and *Only So Far* (Main Street Rag, 2019).

Ada Molinoff's poetry and prose have appeared in literary journals, newspapers, and anthologies, including *Memories Flow in Our Veins: Forty Years of Women's Writing from CALYX*. Pacific University awarded her an MFA in Nonfiction in 2010. As was Virginia Corrie-Cozart, Ada is a founding member of the Peregrine Writers.

Lois Rosen's poetry books are *Pigeons* (Traprock Books, 2003) and *Nice and Loud* (Tebot Bach, 2015). She has taught E.S.L. in Oregon, Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Japan. Lois co-founded Salem's Peregrine Poets, leads the Trillium Writers and Willamette University's ICL Writers, and won Willamette Writers' 2016 Kay Snow Fiction Award.

Session #7 Room A

Sensory and Memory Recall for Writing the Personal Narrative (including practice in Free Association)

James Merrill

This session will begin with a brief ice-breaker prompt into free association. Following that, it will progress with a narrative mode to consider 13 categories of recalling memories. Finally, participants will dive into one key memory to record multiple sensory details, much more than the usual "telling a story from my past." This is the work of all good poetry, but it is in service to personal story-telling that Merrill calls it the "Memory Chain."

James Merrill attended the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, where he received an MFA in Poetics with instruction from Anne Waldman, Gary Snyder, and Allen Ginsberg, among other Beat Writing luminaries. He has taught university-level composition and creative writing, as well as high school English and writing, in three states. His books include *Blues Fall Down Like Rain* and *The Lust of Experience*. He recently collected his favorite writing prompts, exercises, and story starters from his 30 years of teaching into a volume he calls *You're a Genius All the Time: A Guide to Conscious Creative Writing*. He lives in Keizer and completed his teaching career after 15 years at the Chemawa Indian School in Salem.

Session #7 Room B

Cut-ups, Automatism and Exquisite Corpses: Surrealist Techniques for Poets

Erica Goss

In this writing workshop, the presentation will investigate several techniques the surrealist poets of the early 20th century created and used in their poetry (i.e., Rimbaud, Breton, Lorca, Paz)—cutting up newspapers, automatic writing, and exquisite corpse—in order to stimulate and challenge the imagination. The presentation will begin with a brief history of surrealism in art and poetry. We will then explore each of the three techniques, ending with a game of exquisite corpse. Supplies will be provided.

Erica Goss won the 2019 Zocalo Poetry Prize. Her collection, *Night Court*, won the 2017 Lyrebird Award from Glass Lyre Press. Recent publications include *Spillway*, *A-Minor*, *Collateral*, *Slant*, and *Rise Up Review*. Erica lives in Eugene, Oregon, where she teaches, writes, and edits the newsletter *Sticks & Stones*. She has studied and used surrealist poets' techniques in her own writing for many years.