

2020-2021 Readings and Lectures

All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.

FALL 2020

Zoom connectivity information will be available closer to the time of each event.
All times are given in Eastern Standard Time.

To those outside of Hollins University who wish to receive an event Zoom link:
send an email to creative.writing@hollins.edu and provide the event(s) you are interested in attending,
as well as your name, phone number, and, if different, the name on your Zoom account.

Thursday, September 10, 2020 – 7:30 pm **Virtual reading by Lia Purpura**

Purpura is an essayist, poet, and translator whose books include *All the Fierce Tethers*, *It Shouldn't Have Been Beautiful*, *Rough Likeness*, *King Baby*, and *On Looking*. A finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for *On Looking*, Purpura has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fulbright Foundation, and the Maryland State Arts Council, among others. She is also the recipient of four Pushcart Prizes. Purpura is Writer in Residence at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and teaches at the Rainier Writing Workshop in Tacoma, Washington.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speakers Fund.

Thursday, September 24, 2020 – 7:30 pm **Virtual reading by Kaveh Akbar**

Akbar is the author of *Calling a Wolf a Wolf* and a forthcoming volume of poems, *Pilgrim Bell*. He is also the author of the chapbook, *Portrait of the Alcoholic*. His poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The New York Times*, *Paris Review*, *The Nation*, *Best American Poetry*, *The New Republic*, and elsewhere. Akbar founded *Divedapper*, a home for dialogues with the most vital voices in American poetry. Previously, he ran *The Quirk*, a for-charity print literary journal. With Sarah Kay and Claire Schwartz, he writes a weekly column for the *Paris Review* called "Poetry RX." Akbar was born in Tehran, Iran, and teaches at Purdue University and in the low residency M.F.A. programs at Randolph College and Warren Wilson College.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speakers Fund.

Thursday, October 8, 2020 – 7:30 pm
Virtual reading and discussion: Terry Tempest Williams

Known for her impassioned and lyrical prose, Williams is a writer, naturalist, and freedom of speech advocate who is the author of the environmental literature classic, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. Her book, *The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks*, honored the centennial of the National Park Service and was a *New York Times* bestseller. In her latest work, *Erosion: Essays of Undoing*, Williams picks up a theme pursued in her 2009 work, *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*: the fragmentation of our times. Williams' many honors include The Wilderness Society's Robert Marshall Award, their highest honor given to an American citizen; the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western Literature Association; the Wallace Stegner Award given by The Center for the American West; and the Audubon New York Award for Environmental Writing. She is currently writer-in-residence at Harvard Divinity School.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speakers Fund.

Thursday, October 29, 2020 – 7:30 pm
Virtual Writers' Harvest Reading

Hollins faculty writers read from their work to raise money for the hungry.
100% of the proceeds will be donated directly to Feeding America Southwest Virginia.

Donations of money and non-perishable food accepted. Drop off money and food to Lisa Radcliff, administrative coordinator, at Swannanoa 110. Phone: 540-362-6317; email: creative.writing@hollins.edu.

Hear exciting new work by our Hollins writers and help a very good cause at the same time.

Thursday, November 12, 2020 – 7:30 pm
Virtual reading by Heid E. Erdrich

Erdrich is author of seven books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Little Big Bully*. Her writing has won fellowships and awards from the National Poetry Series, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Bush Foundation, Loft Literary Center, and First People's Fund, among others. She has twice won a Minnesota Book Award for poetry. She edited the 2018 anthology *New Poets of Native Nations* from Graywolf Press. She has created poemeos (poem films and videos), curated dozens of art exhibits focused on Native American artists, and written plays produced by Pangea World theater. She performs her poetry across the country, sometimes collaborating with musicians, visual artists, and dancers. She grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota and is Ojibwe enrolled at Turtle Mountain.

Funding provided by the Beanstalk Fund.

SHORT TERM 2021

Wednesday, January 13, 2021 – 7:30 pm

Hollins Creative Writing Alum Virtual Reading featuring Jen Fawkes and Karen Salyer McElmurray

Jen Fawkes

Fawkes' debut story collection, *Mannequin and Wife*, is just out (in September 2020) from LSU Press. A second story collection, *Tales the Devil Told Me*, won the 2020 Press 53 Award for Short Fiction and is forthcoming in May 2021. She has published fiction in *One Story*, *Crazyhorse*, *The Iowa Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Best Small Fictions 2020*, and elsewhere. A four-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize, Fawkes' stories have garnered awards from *The Pinch*, *Washington Square Review*, *Harpur Palate*, *Salamander*, and others. Fawkes holds an M.F.A. in creative writing from Hollins and a Ph.D. in English literature and creative writing from the University of Cincinnati. She is currently an assistant professor of English and creative writing at West Liberty University in West Virginia.

Karen Salyer McElmurray

McElmurray's memoir, *Surrendered Child*, won the AWP Award Series for Creative Nonfiction and was listed as a "notable book" by the National Book Critics Circle. She is also the author of *Motel of the Stars*, an Editor's Pick from *Oxford American* and a Lit Life Book of the Year; *Strange Birds in the Tree of Heaven*, a novel that won the Lillie Chaffin Award for Appalachian Writing; *Walk Till the Dogs Get Mean*, co-edited with Adrian Blevins; and, most recently, the novel *Wanting Radiance*. Her essays have won the Annie Dillard Prize, the New Southerner Prize, and the Orison Magazine Anthology Award, and have several times been Notable in Best American Essays. McElmurray has an M.F.A. in fiction writing from the University of Virginia, an M.A. in creative writing from Hollins, and a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speakers Fund.

SPRING 2021

These events may become virtual events if necessary.

Thursday-Friday, February 11-12, 2021: T.J. Anderson III

Reading: Thursday, February 11, 2021 ☞ 7:30 pm ☞ Talmadge Recital Hall, Bradley Hall

Q & A: Friday, February 12, 2021 ☞ 11:00 am ☞ Location TBD

A poet, author, and literary critic, Anderson is an associate professor of English at Hollins whose research interests include jazz poetry, African American literature, and the work of Aimé Césaire. A former Fulbright Scholar, he lived in Cairo, Egypt, where he taught at Cairo University and conducted research on the influence of jazz on contemporary Egyptian music. He is the author of *Devonte Travels the Sorry Route*, *At Last Round Up*, *River to Cross*, and *Notes to Make the Sound Come Right: Four Innovators of Jazz Poetry*. In addition, Anderson has produced two poetry and music collaborations: *The Mask* (with William Bolcom) and *Songs of Illumination* (with T.J. Anderson Jr.), and the highly acclaimed spoken word CD, *Blood Octave*.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Series.

Thursday, February 25, 2021: Farah Jasmine Griffin

Lecture title: TBD

7:30 pm ☞ Location TBD

Griffin, who has published widely on issues of race and gender, feminism, jazz, and cultural politics, is the author of *Harlem Nocturne: Women Artists and Progressive Politics During World War II*. Her other works include *Who Set You Flowin?: The African American Migration Narrative*; *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters from Rebecca Primus of Royal Oak, Maryland, and Addie Brown of Hartford, Connecticut, 1854-1868*; *If You Can't Be Free, Be a Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday*; and *Clawing at the Limits of Cool: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and the Greatest Jazz Collaboration Ever*, co-authored with Salim Washington. She is chair of African American and African Diaspora Studies; director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies; and the William B. Ransford Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African American Studies at Columbia University.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Series.

Saturday, March 13, 2021: 60th Annual Literary Festival

All readings and the poetry panel will be held in the Wetherill Visual Arts Center Auditorium (Room 200).

- 9:30 – check-in and refreshments, 2nd floor lobby
- 10:30 – reading by Marilyn Chin
- 11:30 – poetry panel discussing student-submitted work
- 12:45 – luncheon, Moody Dining Hall (pay at the door)
- 2:00 – reading by Inara Verzemnieks
- 3:15 – reading by ZZ Packer
- 4:00 – reception, 2nd floor lobby

Marilyn Chin, an award-winning author whose books have become Asian American classics and are taught in classrooms internationally, is Hollins University's Louis D. Rubin Jr. Writer-in-Residence for 2021. Chin's books include *A Portrait of the Self as Nation: New and Selected Poems*; *Hard Love Province*; *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow*; *Dwarf Bamboo*; and *The Phoenix Gone, the Terrace Empty*. She has also written a book of wild girl fiction, *Revenge of the Mooncake Vixen*. Her honors include the Anisfield-Wolf Award, the United States Artist Foundation Award, the Radcliffe Institute Fellowship at Harvard, the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Arts awards, the Stegner Fellowship, the PEN/Josephine Miles Award, and five Pushcart Prizes. In 2017, she was recognized by the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus and the California Assembly for her activism and excellence in education.

ZZ Packer's collection of stories, *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*, won the Commonwealth First Fiction Award and was a National Book Award 5 under 35 winner. It became a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner award, was a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2004, and was selected for the *Today Show* Book Club by John Updike. Her stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Story*, *Ploughshares*, *Granta*, *Zoetrope All-Story*, *Best American Short Stories 2000*, *Best American Short Stories 2003*, and *100 Years of The Best American Short Stories*. Her nonfiction has been published in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *The Believer*, *The American Prospect*, *The Oxford American*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Newsweek Digital Online*, and *The New Yorker Online*.

Inara Verzemnieks' memoir, *Among the Living and the Dead: A Tale of Exile and Homecoming on the War Roads of Europe*, retraces the steps of her grandmother, a war refugee, and her great-aunt, a Siberian exile, in the wake of World War II. It was named one of *The Times'* (of London) best history books of 2018 and a *New York Times* Book Review Editors' Choice. A Pushcart Prize winner and the recipient of a Rona Jaffe Writer's Award, as well as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in feature writing, she previously worked as a newspaper journalist for 13 years. Her essays and journalism have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Tin House*, *The Atlantic*, *The Iowa Review*, and *Creative Nonfiction*. She is a graduate of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program.

Funding provided by the John Alexander and Mary Josephine Haynes Allen Literary Endowment, the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Series, the Benedict Fiction Fund, and the Louis D. Rubin Jr. Writer-in-Residence Fund.

Thursday-Friday, April 8-9, 2021: Richard Blanco

Reading: Thursday, April 8, 2021 🌀 7:30 pm 🌀 Talmadge Recital Hall, Bradley Hall

Q & A: Friday, April 9, 2021 🌀 11:00 am 🌀 Hollins Room, Wyndham Robertson Library

Blanco's first book of poetry, *City of a Hundred Fires*, was published in 1998 to critical acclaim, winning the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize. *Directions to The Beach of the Dead* (2005) received the Beyond Margins Award from the PEN American Center. *Looking for The Gulf Motel* (2012) received the Paterson Poetry Prize, the 2012 Maine Literary Award for Poetry, and the Thom Gunn Award. His first prose publication, *For All of Us, One Today: An Inaugural Poet's Journey* (2013), explores the emotional details of his experiences as presidential inaugural poet. He has been featured on *CBS Sunday Morning*, NPR's *All Things Considered* and *Fresh Air with Terry Gross*, as well as major media from around the world, including CNN, Telemundo, BBC, Univision, and PBS. In 2015, the Academy of American Poets chose Blanco to serve as its first education ambassador.

Funding provided by the Jackson Poetry Endowment.

Thursday-Friday, April 22-23, 2021: Nora Krug

Reading: Thursday, April 22, 2021 🌀 7:30 pm 🌀 Talmadge Recital Hall, Bradley Hall

Q & A: Friday, April 23, 2021 🌀 11:00 am 🌀 Hollins Room, Wyndham Robertson Library

Creative Hands-on Event for Hollins students: Friday, April 23, 2021 🌀 2:00-4:00 pm 🌀
Lewis Reading Room, Wyndham Robertson Library

Krug is a German-American author and illustrator. Her visual memoir, *Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home* (foreign edition title *Heimat*), was chosen as a best book of the year by *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, NPR, *Kirkus Review*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Boston Globe*. She is a recipient of fellowships from Fulbright, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Maurice Sendak Foundation, and others. She was named Moira Gemmill Illustrator of the Year and 2019 Book Illustration Prize Winner by the Victoria and Albert Museum. Her visual biography, *Kamikaze*, about a surviving Japanese World War II pilot, was included in Houghton Mifflin's *Best American Comics* and *Best Non-Required Reading*. Krug is associate professor of illustration at the Parsons School of Design in New York City.

Funding provided by the Beanstalk Fund.

Thursday, May 6, 2021: Farewell reading by seniors and graduating M.F.A. students

“The Last Butterfly Dance” 🌀 7:30 pm 🌀 Location TBD

An open reading by Hollins seniors and graduating Creative Writing M.F.A. students. One last chance to hear our favorite student writers read before they depart.

Note to readers: readings should be brief (i.e., 1-2 pages of poetry or 1-2 pages of prose). A sign-up sheet for participants will be at the door.

Funding provided by the Dee Hull Everist Visiting Speaker Series.