**EVENT TITLE**: **Dual Citizens: Scientist-Poets on Intersections, Inquiry, and Creative Paths**

**Event Description:** How do scientific backgrounds intersect with creativity in the arts, and what emerges from dual immersion in fields with widely varied ways of seeing? As poets from chemistry, physics, engineering, and medicine, we’ll explore questions of process, models, sources, and relationships to language. We’ll reflect on paths to poetic education and practice, and the influence of the ways in which science includes and excludes people and ideas, even as it fosters international collaboration.

**EVENT CATEGORY:** Poetry Craft & Criticism

**Bios of panel members:**

**Participant:** Zubair Ahmed

Zubair Ahmed’s debut collection, *City of Rivers*, was published while he was a student at Stanford University, where he studied creative writing and earned a BS and MS in mechanical engineering. He is a senior software engineer and manager at a San Francisco Bay Area start up, and previously worked in aeronautics.

*Zubair is curious about our varied generative processes, and will discuss overlap, synergism, and distinctiveness between properties of the poetic space and the scientific space. He’ll also explore cultural and conceptual exclusion in science.*

**Event Organizer and Participant:** Adrienne Drobnies

Adrienne Drobnies is the author of *Salt and Ashes* and editor of a French poetry collection, *Poèmes sur Mesure*. She has a PhD in chemistry from UC Berkeley, and worked as a research scientist at Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC, Canada) and as a project manager at the BC Genome Sciences Centre. A graduate of the Simon Fraser University Writer’s Studio, she received the 2017 Gwendolyn MacEwen Award.

*Adrienne will share perspectives on problem-solving in both poetry and scientific work, aspects of dual domains as competing currents in life, and the creation of work at the interplay of permeable boundaries.*

**Participant:** Liz Howard

Liz Howard is the author of *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Ten*t, winner of the 2016 Griffin Poetry Prize. Her poems explore Euro-Anishinaabe inheritances through an array of texts and landscapes. She holds an MFA, and a BS in cognitive neuroscience. She works in research on the aging brain. In 2019, she was writer-in-residence at the University of Calgary Distinguished Writers Program.

*Liz will share how her work and studies in experimental psychology and cognitive neuroscience influence her poetics. She will also touch briefly on indigenous ways of knowing.*

**Participant:** Jim Johnstone

Jim Johnstone is a Toronto-based poet, editor, critic, and reproductive physiologist. He is the author of five poetry books, most recently *The Chemical Life*, which explores mental illness and addiction. His work has received numerous awards, including *Poetry’s* Editors Prize for Book Reviewing.

*Jim’s work has incorporated his interest in mathematical equations, examination of the human stories behind scientific principles-as-examples, and poetry as both hypothesis and testing ground for exploring unfamiliar concepts and relationships.*

**Event Moderator and Participant:** Lisa Rosenberg

Lisa Rosenberg is the author of *A Different Physics*. She holds degrees in physics and creative writing, and worked as an engineer in the space program. A former Wallace Stegner Fellow and private pilot, she served as 2017/18 Poet Laureate of San Mateo County, CA, and will be a 2020 Djerassi Resident Scientist-Artist.

*Lisa will focus on shared territory in science and art, specifically in the areas of systems thinking and conceptual tools (such as taxonomy and modeling) as they relate to navigating craft-based strategies and personal aesthetics in composition.*

**Opening Remarks by moderator Lisa Rosenberg:**

We are excited this year to see multiple offerings that bring together science and literary arts, and are grateful to have you explore this territory with us. This exploration can broaden possibilities and expectations for engagement. Of equal importance, it allows us to reframe and build upon the resources available to practitioners in arts and sciences alike. As poets immersed and trained in the worlds of science and technology, we offer our perspectives today to expand the range of voices in this timely conversation.

At its core, our discussion examines ways of knowing: ways in which we explore the universe; ways by which we come into, expand, apply, and test our knowledge.

We chose the term “Dual Citizens” for connotations of at-homeness, rather than transit: poets at home in dual domains that fuel their work. The work can feel and appear separate at many points in its journey, but it issues from the same mind, and the same body of resources: tools of thought and craft; diverse source materials, models, and modalities; and the mix of personal sensibilities, opportunities, preferences, and receptivity that gives rise to our aesthetics and proclivities. The poems and reflections we’ll share today depict some of the ways that science, as a foundational component of these resources, enters and impacts the work of poetry.

Each panel member will speak to a mix of the following questions, and read a short selection of poetry.

1. What questions or curiosities compel you to explore a vein of thought in one discipline or the other? Where, or when, and how do they intersect?
2. How might art created from within the worlds of science and technology shift expectations and create new possibilities for poetic engagement?
3. Are there aspects of process (craft), tools, and models that fuel or influence your work in both domains?
4. Did these disciplines enter your life at different times, and how did you become educated in poetic traditions and practice?
5. How do the processes and symbolic languages of science resemble and/or influence poetry and expand the possibilities of figurative language, poetic devices, and/or the process of composition?
6. What is the role for those steeped in science and its traditions in pushing the boundaries of language and giving us a powerful means to think in new and different ways?
7. In what ways do different kinds of imaginative and creative activity enhance each other for scientist-poets and readers of their work?
8. Science and technology have global reach and foster international collaboration. Do you find similar or analogous collaborative efforts in poetry?
9. How does the way science includes and excludes people and ideas influence our writing?
10. As we consider systemic questions of social justice, climate justice, and other concerns of the larger culture, can poet-scientists shape discourse in a way that science alone cannot?

**Questions from the audience and open discussion**