

Special Problems in Vocabulary: A Tribute to Tony Hoagland
AWP 2020 Conference & Bookfair in San Antonio
Organized by Erika Jo Brown

Tony Hoagland was a poet, critic, teacher, and 'champion of poetry.' His ten books include the poetry collections *What Narcissism Means to Me* and *Sweet Ruin*, and craft book *The Art of the Voice*. He taught at the University of Houston and Warren Wilson MFA program, and led free workshops across the country. His poetry and criticism, which scrutinize contemporary culture with humor and empathy, appealed to a wide readership. This panel invites writers and former students to celebrate his legacy.

This tribute celebrates Tony Hoagland's (1953-2018) notable contribution to American letters. His seven poetry collections are unique for mixing the vulnerable, profound, and hilarious, engaging both new and experienced readers. His considerable body of critical work includes three essay collections about poetics and poets, craft and culture. Tony was an enthusiastic correspondent with writers of diverse backgrounds and career stages, who will illuminate his creative and critical impact.

Kevin Prufer

Kevin Prufer is the author most recently of *How He Loved Them*, *Churches*, *In a Beautiful Country*, and *National Anthem*. He is Co-Director of the Unsung Masters Series, and Professor at the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program and the Lesley University Low-Residency MFA Program.

Adrian Blevins

Adrian Blevins's third full-length collection of poems, *Appalachians Run Amok*, is the recipient of the Wilder Prize from Two Sylvias Press and was published in 2018. Blevins is also the author of *Live from the Homesick Jamboree*, *The Brass Girl Brouhaha*, and other books.

Hayan Charara is the author of three poetry books, most recently *Something Sinister*, and a children's book. He edited *Inclined to Speak*, an anthology of contemporary Arab American poetry, and with Fady Joudah is series editor of the Etel Adnan Poetry Prize. He teaches at the University of Houston.

Reginald Dwayne Betts

Reginald Dwayne Betts is a writer and poet. Norton will publish his next collection of poems, *Felon*.

Alicia Ostriker

Alicia Ostriker 's most recent collections of poetry are *The Old Woman, the Tulip and the Dog* (2014), and *Waiting for the Light* (2017), which won a National Jewish Book Award. She teaches in the low-res MFA program at Drew University, and is an Academy of American Poets Chancellor, and NY State Poet.

Good morning and welcome to Special Problems in Vocabulary: A Tribute to Tony Hoagland. A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let Erika Jo know and a printed copy of the presentation will be delivered to you.
- Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
- Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.
- Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing perfume.
- Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone's use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.
- We realize the lines for the bathrooms may be long, but please refrain from using an accessible stall unless you require such accommodation. Please also be aware family restrooms located on level 2 are reserved for those with disabilities or those wishing to use a single-stall restroom.
- If you have any questions or concerns regarding conference accessibility, please call or text the Accessibility Hotline (503) 455-4127 or email events@awpwriter.org.

Opening moderator remarks and housekeeping announcements.

Kevin Prufer will speak on Tony Hoagland's legacy from the perspective of a colleague at the University of Houston. Of *The Art of Voice*, Prufer writes, "Tony Hoagland was one of our greatest masters of the nuances, complexities, and vagaries of poetic voice. His seductive, deeply moving poems are, as he liked to say, 'connective,' beginning in conversation and aspiring to intimacy between a poem's speaker and its reader. In *The Art of Voice*, Hoagland meditates on the possibilities available to those who would also aspire to poetic voice... This is a brilliant book by one of this country's foremost poets."

Adrian Blevins will speak on Tony Hoagland's legacy from the perspective of a student. Of her book *The Brass Girl Brouhaha*, Hoagland once wrote: "This is the American voice that I've been waiting for: robust, complex, passionate, sassy, crucified, and amused. Adrian Blevins tells some stories about women's lives that we haven't heard before, and tells them with a big, rich unrestrained stylistic vocabulary. Poetry lovers, this is the dirty, trash-talking, highly edified real thang."

Hayan Charara will speak on Tony Hoagland's legacy from the perspective of a PhD alum at the University of Houston.

Reginald Dwayne Betts will speak on Tony Hoagland's legacy from the perspective of a correspondent and previous AWP co-panelist.

Alicia Ostriker will speak on Tony Hoagland's poetic legacy. In an interview, she observes: "Another clue to writing good political poetry is to get inside of whatever you think the evil might be, to deal with your own complicity, not to just finger-point. It's a reason I admire Tony Hoagland."

At the end of the event, there will be time for a 5-10 minute Q&A session.