

## **AWP 2022 outline**

### **Admit It, You're Writing a Poem: Ars Poetica and the Awkward Confession**

#### **Description:**

An *ars poetica* is a poem about poetry, one that makes an argument about what poetry should be, or that explores why we write. In writing an *ars poetica*, though, poets must also confess to craft, artifice, and intention--to this strange thing we're doing, making art out of life. What else comes out when we pull back the curtain on our own making? What does this form give us permission to say? Panelists will read and discuss both their own work and key examples by others; audience Q&A will follow.

**Category:** Poetry Craft & Criticism

#### **Event Organizer and Moderator:**

**Chloe Martinez** is the author of *Ten Thousand Selves* (The Words Works, 2021) and *Corner Shrine*, winner of the 2019 Backbone Press Chapbook Prize. Her work appears in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *The Common*, *Ploughshares*, and elsewhere. She works at Claremont McKenna College, where she is Program Coordinator at the Center for Writing & Public Discourse and Lecturer in Religious Studies.

#### **Event Participants:**

**Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach** is a poet and author of *THE MANY NAMES FOR MOTHER* (Wick Poetry Prize, KSU Press, 2019); *DON'T TOUCH THE BONES* (Lost Horse Press, 2020); and *40 WEEKS* (Yes Yes Book, 2023). She is the Murphy Visiting Fellow in Poetry at Hendrix College in Arkansas.

**Diamond Forde** is a Tin House and Callaloo fellow whose work has appeared in *Ninth Letter*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *The Offing* and more. She is a recipient of the Margaret Walker prize, a finalist for the GA Poetry Prize, and her debut book, *Mother Body*, is forthcoming with Saturnalia Books in Spring 2021.

**Matthew Olzmann** is the author of three collections of poems including *Constellation Route*, *Mezzanines*, and *Contradictions in the Design*. He teaches at Dartmouth College and in the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

**Rachel Zucker** is the author of ten books, including *SoundMachine*, *MOTHERs* and *Museum of Accidents*, which was a finalist for the NBCC Award. Zucker is an adjunct at NYU and is the host of the podcast *Commonplace*.

**Event agenda:**

*(5 mins) Chloe Martinez will begin the event by introducing the panel and welcoming the audience, and will then read the panelists' bios.*

**Chloe Martinez:** *Ars Poetica*: a poem about poetry. Aren't all poems a little bit about poetry? And yet something happens when we name what we're doing in the poem. It's a kind of poetic power move to draw attention to the artifice of making—and it's also a move towards openness and vulnerability.

The seed for this panel was first planted last spring. I had propped my laptop in a corner of my kitchen and was attempting to make dinner for my family while watching a virtual reading, one the many I've tuned into (and sometimes joined) in Julia Dasbach's great Words Together, Worlds Apart series. That day the reading was on poems about poetry. It struck me, in the poems read and the conversation afterwards, that these poems create openings for poets to make confessions of different kinds. Once we admit we are writing a poem, we might also admit to all kinds of things, maybe things we didn't know about ourselves until the poem told us.

I did not get dinner made on time that night, which is pretty standard for me, to be honest. I did keep thinking about what it meant to confess to making poems, and what it might let us discover. I wanted to hear and think and talk about that some more, so I asked Julia to brainstorm with me, and then I asked Rachel and Diamond, who had been in that original reading, and Matthew, who had not, if they might want to talk about these questions again. And here we are. Let me introduce our fantastic panelists...

*(50 mins) The four panelists will read and discuss poems around the panel theme for about 12 minutes each.*

**Julia Kolchinsky Dasbach:** How does calling out “poem” in a poem call attention to the craftedness of the space we are entering as writers as readers? I will share poems from a project called Parallax or the Many Moon Poems which grapples with what motherhood can look like, the way it rises, sets, waxes, and wanes, when raising a neurodivergent child with a disabled partner. By writing a group of poems all titled “Why write another poem about the moon,” I unify and un-unifiable experience and call attention to the fact that I am a kind of artful intruder, both with respect to the celestial body and my child, crafting, making art, turning lyric something that is perhaps not mine to turn. Calling attention to the “poem” itself, just like calling attention to the moon, is one way of doing this.

**Diamond Forde:**

**Matthew Olzmann:**

**Rachel Zucker:**

*(15-20 mins) The panel will finish with a Q&A, with questions from both the moderator and the audience.*