

## The Poet's Voice: Conversations with the Archive

**Event Description:** Poetry Centered, a new podcast from the University of Arizona Poetry Center, invites poets to curate selections from Voca, the Center's online audiovisual archive of 1,000+ recorded readings from 1963 to today. In each episode, new constellations of meaning emerge, coalescing as intergenerational conversations across time and space. The producers and three poets who have hosted episodes will reflect on voices they encountered in the archive and how this experience shaped their present thinking.

**Event Category:** Writers Conferences and Centers Events

### Event moderators:

**Diana Marie Delgado** is the author of the poetry collection *Tracing the Horse*, (BOA Editions). She graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Poetry from Columbia University and is the Literary Director at the University of Arizona Poetry Center.

**Julie Swarstad Johnson** is a poet and the Archivist and Outreach Librarian for the University of Arizona Poetry Center. She is the author of the poetry collection *Pennsylvania Furnace* and the chapbook *Orchard Light*. She is the co-editor of the anthology *Beyond Earth's Edge: The Poetry of Spaceflight*.

### Event participants:

**Francisco Aragón** is the author of the collections *After Rubén*, *Puerta del Sol*, and *Glow of Our Sweat*. He is also the editor of the award-winning anthology *The Wind Shifts: New Latino Poetry*. He established and directs Letras Latinas, the literary program at Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies. His work as a translator includes four books by Francisco X. Alarcón, as well as work by Spanish poets Federico García Lorca and Gerardo Diego.

**Allison Adelle Hedge Coke** is the recipient of the 2021 AWP George Garret Award. Her books include *Look at This Blue* (2022), *The Year of the Rat*, *Dog Road Woman*, *Off-Season City Pipe*, *Blood Run*, *Burn* and *Streaming*, as well as a memoir, *Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer*. She is the editor of the anthologies *Sing*:

*Poetry of the Indigenous Americas, Effigies* and *Effigies II* and is a Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Riverside. She is currently at work on a film, *Red Dust: resiliency in the dirty thirties*, a new CD, and new poems.

**Urayoán Noel** is Associate Professor of English and Spanish at NYU and also teaches at Stetson University's MFA of the Americas. He is the author of eight books of poetry, including *Buzzing Hemisphere/Rumor Hemisférico* and *Transversal*, which was longlisted for the PEN Open Book Award and named a Book of the Year by the New York Public Library. As a translator of Latin American poetry, Noel has been a finalist for the National Translation Award and the Best Translated Book Award.

### **Event Outline:**

Julie Swarstad Johnson will welcome the audience, read any housekeeping announcements, and introduce the panelists. She will then provide a brief overview of the University of Arizona Poetry Center and Voca, the Center's online, open access audiovisual archive with more than one thousand recordings of poets reading their work in Tucson between 1963 and today. (5 minutes)

Diana Marie Delgado will give a brief overview of the Poetry Centered podcast, including why and how it was created, her guiding principles for inviting hosts, and the current audience for the podcast. (5 minutes)

Each panelist will then briefly introduce their episode (5-7 minutes each):

#### **Urayoán Noel: Radical Imagination**

August 12, 2020, Season 1, Episode 4

Urayoán Noel introduces recordings of Ai engaging with war through necessary fury ("The Root Eater," 1972), Lehua M. Taitano composing a lifeline to communities living with the legacies of colonialism ("A Love Letter to the Chamoru People in the Twenty-first Century," 2017), Ofelia Zepeda on the untranslatability of song ("Ñeñe'i Ha-şa:gid / In the Midst of Songs," 2015), and a fable of radical imagination by Gloria E. Anzaldúa ("Nepantla," 1991). Noel ends the episode with his poem "Molecular Modular," built around open-ended questions considering virality and modes of community.

## **Francisco Aragón: A Speaking Voice**

March 10, 2021, Season 3, Episode 1

Francisco Aragón shares poems alive with the vibrancy of a particular voice addressed to a particular audience. He introduces Francisco X. Alarcón's bittersweet homage to a poetic ancestor ("Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón," 2008), Thom Gunn's farewell address to a beloved fellow writer ("To Isherwood Dying," 1986), and Denise Levertov's mythic, ecstatic monologue on transformation ("A Tree Telling of Orpheus," 1973). Aragón concludes the episode with a direct address of his own that challenges Arizona's SB 1070 ("Poem with a Phrase of Isherwood").

## **Allison Adelle Hedge Coke: Belonging and Being**

March 24, 2021, Season 3, Episode 2

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke curates poems by writers who have influenced her own writing through their creative leadership, mentoring, or poetics of belonging. She introduces Juan Felipe Herrera's invitation to a spirit of generosity and care ("Let Us Gather in a Flourishing Way," 2008), Quincy Troupe's musically attuned tribute to his father ("Poem for My Father," 2001), and Arthur Sze's transformative vision that unites intelligence with grace ("Adamant," 2019). To close, Hedge Coke reads her poem "Ghost," acknowledging the role voices from the past can play as educators for the living.

## **Discussion Questions for Panelists (30 minutes)**

1. Why read poetry out loud or perform it for an audience? What do you as a listener gain from the experience of hearing a poem that differs from the experience of reading it on the page? What do you potentially miss?
2. How did you approach assembling the selections for your episode? Did you focus on a theme, find recordings of favorite poets, listen to bits and pieces before finding recordings you wanted to use? How does your approach relate to your own writing or concerns as a writer?
3. Did you find any recordings that particularly surprised or excited you on Voca? Did you encounter any challenges in the archive in terms of subject matter, writers included, languages represented, etc.?

4. Did you come away from the experience of curating an episode with any particular insights into your own work, poetry more broadly, or the experience of interacting with an archive?

**Audience Question and Answer Session (10-15 minutes)**