

## **AWP 2022 Panel Outline**

**Event Title:** *Whenever the Wounds of Injustice are Salted We Will Gather: Poetry of Protest & Activism*

**Event Category:** Poetry craft and criticism

**Event Description:** How can poems make vivid the work of activism and protest and attract more people to social movements? Can poems make us more compassionate, effective activists? Called by Vincent Toro's poem, "Vox Populi for the Marooned," poet-activists will read poems about the nuts and bolts of social change: demonstrating, making flyers, zines, and new media, fundraising, direct action, group messaging, door knocking. Participants will discuss craft elements that make visible the hard work of building another world.

**Event Organizer/Moderator:** **Sarah Browning** is Co-Founder and for 10 years was Executive Director of Split This Rock. Author of *Killing Summer* and *Whiskey in the Garden of Eden*, she received an MFA in poetry and creative nonfiction from Rutgers Camden in 2021 and is a recipient of the Lillian E. Smith Writer-in-Service Award.

### **Event Participants**

**Tamiko Beyer** is the author of two poetry collections, *Last Days, We Come Elemental*, and two chapbooks. She is a Kundiman and VONA fellow and a Hedgebrook alum. A social justice communications writer and strategist, she spends her days writing truth to power.

**Ching-In Chen** is author of *The Heart's Traffic*, *recombinant*, *to make black paper sing*, *Kundiman for Kin* and co-editor of *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities*. They are part of Kundiman, Lambda, Watering Hole, Macondo and VONA communities.

**Sonia Sanchez** was the Laura Carnell Professor of English and Women's Studies at Temple University in Philadelphia. She is the recipient of the Robert Frost Medal and the Langston Hughes Award. One of the most important writers of the Black Arts Movement, Sanchez is the author of sixteen books.

**Vincent Toro** is the author of two poetry collections, *Tertulia* and *Stereo.Island.Mosaic.*, which won the Poetry Society of America's First Book Award. He is Assistant Professor of English at Rider University, a Dodge Poetry Foundation poet, and contributing editor at *Kweli Literary Journal*.

## **Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements**

Good morning and welcome to ***Whenever the Wounds of Injustice are Salted We Will Gather: Poetry of Protest & Activism***

A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let me know, and a printed copy 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 scented products.
- 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.

Poetry has a long history of engagement with movements for social justice. In the last 15 years, especially, this poetry has moved to the center of literary life in the US. Powerful poems now abound about the myriad injustices we face as a people and increasing numbers of poems are imagining a better future. But, despite the mass protests of the past few years, fewer poets are writing about how we get from here to there – social justice organizing and activism, the work of making change.

I've asked the poets to consider a few questions and to read a few poems. Then we'll have time for conversation. The questions are:

1. What role do you see poetry playing in activism?
2. What approach do you take in writing these poems?
3. Is there an imagined or hoped for audience/community?
4. Do you integrate poetry into your community work/organizing? If so, how?