

**AWP Panel: The Thing With Feathers: Poetry of Witness to Illness, Disability, and Trauma** with Brian Komei Dempster, Fred Marchant, Jennifer Franklin, Michelle Whittaker, Oliver de la Paz

1. Introduction

2. Brian Komei Dempster makes introductory remarks and reads a poem from Kamilah Aisha Moon & two of his own poems from *Seize* (Four Way Books, 2020)

- Introductory Remarks:
  - Keats' negative capability
  - Interior/exterior worlds
  - The value of perspective
  - Vulnerability
  
- Reading: Kamila Aisha Moon, "Weekend Trip Home," from *She Has a Name* (Four Way Books, 2013)
  
- Reading: "Brendan Lexicon" and "Broken" from *Seize* (Four Way Books, 2020)

3. Fred Marchant reads a poem by Emily Dickinson and two of his own poems.

- Fred Marchant offers remarks on Emily Dickinson's poem. He relates that poem to Vaclav Havel's remarks on hope, and how hope differs from optimism. Marchant goes on to discuss the fallout of chronic illness in his family life. He notes how hope and despair are so often in dialogue with one another, and how that has been and continues to be reflected in his poetry.
  
- Fred Marchant reads "viscera" and "saw whet," two new poems (included in supplemental materials)

4. Jennifer Franklin discusses her daughter's profound autism and epilepsy,

- Jennifer Franklin talks about the impact of her daughter's disability on her life.
  - Discusses her thoughts on Gregory Orr's *Poetry as Survival*, quotes Marie Howe and Edward Hirsch.

- lists her influences in writing about illness and trauma: Mary Jo Bang (particularly her book *Elegy*), Marie Howe (especially *What the Living Do*), Nick Flynn (especially *Some Ether*) as well as the poetry of Rita Dove, Jane Kenyon, Lucille Clifton, John Murillo, Carolyn Forché, Tiana Clark, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Diane Seuss, Donika Kelly, Edward Hirsch, and Louise Glück.
- She reads three of her poems, “I Would Like My Love To Die,” “My Daughter’s Body,” and “Antigone’s Decision” (included in supplemental materials)

5. Michelle Whittaker reads “Making a Fist” by Naomi Shihab Nye and two of her poems” including “[Turned Away] After 30 Hospitals in 2 Hours” (included in supplemental materials)

6. Oliver de la Paz

- Introduction and read a poem by Adam Wolfond from his chapbook *In Way of Music Water Answers Toward Questions Other Than What is Autism*
- Read three of his own poems “Ablation as the Creation of Adam” and “The Surgical Theater as Spirit Cabinet” from *Requiem for the Orchard* (University of Akron Press, 2010) and “Autism Spectrum Questionnaire” from *The Boy in the Labyrinth* (University of Akron Press,