

**EVENT TITLE:** Doing the Work: Publishing with a University Press

**Event description:** While it's heartening to see publishers commit to publishing more work by writers from historically marginalized groups, how do writers navigate the world of trade, indie, and university presses to find a partner who will honor their voice, experience, and vision? Writers from different backgrounds who have published with Mad Creek Books (an imprint of The Ohio State University Press) will read a section of their nonfiction work and discuss how a university press can be a supportive partner, reflecting on the entire publishing process.

**EVENT CATEGORY:**

**Event Organizer & Moderator**

**Kristen Elias Rowley:** Kristen Elias Rowley (she/her) is Editor in Chief at The Ohio State University Press, and editor for their literary trade imprint, Mad Creek Books, which she created in 2017. Books she's edited include a 2020 National Book Award finalist, International Latino Book Award winners, Lambda Literary award winners, and a Grub Street Prize winner, among others. An editor since 2006, she previously acquired books for the University of Nebraska Press.

**Event Participants**

**Harrison Candelaria Fletcher:** Harrison Candelaria Fletcher is the author of *Finding Querencia: Essays from In-Between* (Mad Creek Books), *Presentimiento: A Life in Dreams* and *Descanso for My Father: Fragments of a Life*. He teaches in the MFA programs at Vermont College of Fine Arts and Colorado State University and is a recipient of a 2022 NEA Creative Writing Fellowship in Prose.

**Negesti Kaudo:** Negesti Kaudo is the author of *Ripe: Essays* (Mad Creek Books), a *Lit Hub* most anticipated book of 2022. Kaudo is a Midwestern essayist who holds an MFA in creative nonfiction from Columbia College Chicago and has worked as a copywriter, a sex toy columnist, and an adjunct writing instructor. *Ripe* is her first book.

**Hasanthika Sirisena:** Hasanthika Sirisena (she/they) is a writer and cartoonist and a faculty member at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She is the author of *Dark*

*Tourist: Essays* (from Mad Creek Books), which won the 2020 Gournay Prize for first books of essays, and the short story collection *The Other One*.

### **Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements**

Good afternoon, and welcome to “Doing the Work: Publishing with a University Press.”

A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let the moderator of the panel, (myself, Kristen Elias Rowley), 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.

Thank you all for being here. This panel will offer audience members an opportunity to learn about university presses, who can be a unique publishing partner because of their work advocating for emerging writers and those from historically marginalized and under-published groups. Featuring Mad Creek Books/OSU Press authors, the panel will pair short readings with conversations centered on how writers can find editors and publishing partners that value and center their experiences, needs, and choices throughout the publishing process. I’ll begin by giving a brief overview of Mad Creek Books and will introduce each panelist with a bio and a short description of their work. After being introduced, the panelists will take turns reading a 3-5-minute section from their book. Then I’ll open up a conversation between the panelists with a list of questions and end with a 15-minute audience Q&A.

## **Participant Opening Remarks and Reading:**

### **Harrison Candelaria Fletcher:**

Read a 3-5 minute excerpt from “Origin Story.” Then talk for 3-5 minutes about how you found Mad Creek Books, how you knew about university presses, or anything particular about this book’s journey to publication.

### **Negesti Kaudo:**

Read a 3-5 minute excerpt from “Unbothered: A Microaggression.” Then talk for 3-5 minutes about how you found Mad Creek Books, how you knew about university presses, or anything particular about this book’s journey to publication.

### **Hasanthika Sirisena**

Read a 3-5 minute excerpt from “Pretty Girl Murdered.” Then talk for 3-5 minutes about how you found Mad Creek Books, how you knew about university presses, or anything particular about this book’s journey to publication.

## **Moderator Questions:**

- 1) What were you looking for in terms of a publisher and why did you choose to go with a university press?
- 2) What challenges do authors face in terms of finding an editor/publisher?
- 3) What are your expectations of a publisher? Why/how have those expectations been met/unmet (with this book or with past publications, book or journal)? And how has working with a university press effected that? In terms of:
  - a. Contract
  - b. Developmental editing
  - c. Editorial/Production (copyediting, cover design, etc)
  - d. Marketing/publicity (title, blurbs, time & attention, awards)
- 4) What are university presses getting right with authors?
- 5) Are there points in the publishing process where you wish you’d had (or have) more of a voice? Or where you’ve faced resistance in the past?
- 6) How does/should your press support you?

7) What are the benefits/drawbacks of publishing with a university press?

**Audience Q&A:**