

## AWP 2023 Outline for “Right on Time: Four Fiction Writers Discuss Debuts Over 50”

### Event Description:

Supporting younger authors' success is important, but it's equally critical to support those who publish their first books after 50, 60 and beyond. This women-identified panel dispels notions of late bloomers and ageism in favor of publishing "right on time." Having stayed the course, these panelists celebrate lived experience in crafting their debuts, despite challenges of finding space, time, income and community. They also discuss succeeding in a world that often values youth over age.

**Event Category:** Artistic and Professional Development

**Event Organizer:** Ramona Reeves

**Event Moderator:** Darlene Taylor

Darlene Taylor advances the humanities and arts and brings literature to students in under-served communities. She is a fellow of Kweli, Kimbilio, Callaloo, and a scholar-artist at Howard University. A life of social justice advocacy and preservation of Black history shape her storytelling.

**Marcia Bradley** earned a BA from Antioch LA, MFA from Sarah Lawrence College, and teaches novel and memoir for continuing education students at the Sarah Lawrence Writing Institute. Her novel, *The Home for Wayward Girls*, will debut from HarperCollins this year. Marcia lives in the Bronx, NY.

**Caroline Kim** is the author of a collection of short stories, *The Prince of Mournful Thoughts and Other Stories*, which won the 2020 Drue Heinz Prize in Literature. Her work can be found in *New England Review*, *Story*, *TriQuarterly*, *Best of Korea*, *Lithub*, and elsewhere.

**Naomi Williams** is the author of the novel *Landfalls*, long-listed for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize. Her short fiction has garnered a Pushcart Prize and a Best American honorable mention. She teaches with the MFA programs at Saint Mary's College in California and at Ashland University in Ohio.

**Ramona Reeves** won the 2022 Drue Heinz Literature Prize for her linked story collection, *It Falls Gently All Around and Other Stories*. Her work has appeared in *The Southampton Review*, *Bayou Magazine*, *New South*, *Texas Highways* and others. She lives with her wife in Texas.

### SESSION OUTLINE

1. Moderator Darlene Taylor will welcome everyone to the session and introduce herself. She will announce any housekeeping items, and then read the description of the panel. She will then introduce panelists, who will each say hello. Taylor will explain that we will intermingle questions from her with questions from the audience to encourage a

conversation between us and the audience and will provide the reason we brought this panel together and thought it was important. (5-7 minutes)

2. Taylor will ask the panelists to read no more than one page of their work to get a flavor of each panelist's writing and audience, which could play into questions about their specific writing journeys. Before doing this, as an icebreaker and to encourage conversation between attendees. (10 minutes)
3. Taylor will ask the first question, which will be related to panelists' journeys toward publishing their first books of fiction. Panelists will respond with two-to-three-minute answers. (10-12 minutes)
4. Taylor will ask a second question related to this idea: Are there characters or scenes that benefitted from lived experience? Panelists will respond with one-to-two-minute answers. (5-7 minutes)
5. Taylor will invite two questions from the audience and panelists will respond. (8-10 minutes)
6. Taylor will ask a third prepared question related to specifically to each panelist's experience and book. Panelists will respond with two-to-three-minute answers. (8-10 minutes)
7. Taylor will take more questions from the audience. Panelists will respond to those questions. (20-22 minutes)

AND/OR

If there are no questions, or if there is still time remaining after audience questions, Taylor will have three questions on hand to ask panelists about resources available to writers over 50, articles and books for further discussion, and how panelists found the resources and support they needed. Panelists will respond to each question giving concise answers and allowing for each panelist equal time to speak. (13-25 minutes)

8. Taylor will close by letting attendees know that many of the resources mentioned for 50+ writers are available by googling and going to any of our author websites.