

EVENT TITLE: Writing the Monster

EVENT Description: Five authors discuss writing monsters across multiple genres, considering ways monsters can be used to explore queerness and transness, disability, domestic abuse, cultural traditions, patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy and other concerns. Looking at monstrous figures like La Llorona, the minotaur, witches, ghouls, internet demons and sea hags, panelists will discuss ways monsters can subvert narrative expectations, reveal socio-historical concerns and moral panics, and ensorcell readers.

EVENT TYPE: Multiple Literary Genres Craft Talk

Event Organizer & Moderator

Rebecca Lehmann: Rebecca Lehmann's poetry collections include *Ringer* (Pitt Poetry Series) and *Between the Crackups* (Salt). Her poetry and nonfiction have appeared in *Tin House*, *Copper Nickel*, *Ploughshares* and other venues. She is Assistant Professor at Saint Mary's College, and editor of the journal *Couplet Poetry*.

Event Participants

Oliver de la Paz: Oliver de la Paz is the author of six books of poetry. His most recent book, *THE DIASPORA SONNETS* is forthcoming in 2023 with Liveright Press. He is a founding member of Kundiman and teaches at the College of the Holy Cross and in the Low Res MFA Program at PLU.

A. Rafael Johnson: A. Rafael Johnson is a writer from New York and Austin who now calls Minneapolis home. He has an MFA from The University of Alabama. Author of *The Through*, his fiction can be read in *Kweli*, *Temenos*, *spacecraft stories*, and other places. He mentors at the Loft Literary Center.

K.C. Mead-Brewer: K.C. Mead-Brewer lives in Baltimore, MD. Fun fact: her rowhome used to be part of an orphanage in the early 1900s; no child-

ghosts have been encountered yet, but one can hope. She is a graduate of Tin House's 2018 Winter Workshop for Short Fiction and of the 2018 Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers' Workshop. For more information, visit kcmeadbrewer.com.

aureleo sans: aureleo sans is a Colombian-American, queer writer who lives in San Antonio. In 2022, she was a Sewanee Writers Conference Scholar, a Lambda Literary fellow, a Tin House Scholar and a Periplus fellow. Her work has appeared in *Shenandoah*, *Salamander*, *Electric Literature*, *Fractured Lit*, and elsewhere.

Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements:

Welcome to Writing the Monster, a panel on writing monsters, both literal and figurative, across genres. I'm Rebecca Lehmann, the event moderator. Seated next to me are Oliver de la Paz, A. Rafael Johnson, Kathryn Nuernberger, and aureleo sans. 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, (identify moderator), 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.

I'm really excited to be here to talk about Writing the Monster today. I had the idea for this topic as I was working on organizing poems for my third manuscript of poetry, *The Sweating Sickness*, which features both literal and figurative monsters, and I wanted to think a little more deeply about the ways that monsters work as symbols in writing, what they represent, what they can subvert, why they are so interesting to work with and read, and why writers over millennia have been drawn to them. Every person on this panel has done really interesting work with monster figures, and I'm really looking forward to hearing each of them talk.

We'll each speak for 10 minutes about ways that we've used monsters in our writing, sharing a short example. Then, we'll open for questions from the audience.

Participant Remarks:

Oliver de la Paz: Oliver de la Paz speaks about writing the minotaur in his poetry collection *The Boy in the Labyrinth*.

A. Rafael Johnson: A. Rafael Johnson will discuss writing several monsters, including a haint, a zombie and an ice twin, into his novel *The Through*.

K.C. Mead-Brewer: Weird fiction author K.C. Mead-Brewer talks about vampires, zombies and fairytale monsters from her short stories and how these fantastically frightening creatures can help us think about some of life's truly frightening situations.

aureleo sans: aureleo sans, a magical realist writer, talks about incorporating monsters and creatures in her fiction and nonfiction, including La Lechuza, a duende, El Sombreron, a flower god and La Tunda.

Rebecca Lehmann: Rebecca Lehmann discusses writing ghosts into her third collection of poetry, *The Sweating Sickness*, in which fable, fairytale and ghost stories take a prominent role as she works through the complex grief following the death of her abusive ex to suicide mid-pandemic. She will

consider ways to ethically write a “figurative” monster, that is, someone who has behaved monstrously, as well ways that writing spirits and ghosts into poems about grief can help conceptualize loss. She will share her poem “Nike, Medusa, Jocasta, Split.”

Audience Q & A

Event moderator Rebecca Lehmann will call on audience members who may pose questions to any member of the panel.