A Magic of Pauses: Poetry Editors on Collaborative Writing and Editing Practices (Artistic & Professional Development)

Poet and editor Marianne Moore declared poetry a magic of pauses. Five poetry editors share how their varied editorial roles relate to their practices of poetry and cultural work, where their writing experience contributes to editing poems, and what conceptions of community have been born from working on journals and at presses, from established series to emerging spaces. The various pauses and magics that editing brings to writing is considered in terms of labor, time, and collectivism.

Panelists:

Sarah Ghazal Ali is a Pakistani poet and editor. A Stadler Fellow and winner of the Sewanee Review Poetry Prize, her forthcoming debut collection, Theophanies, was the Editors' Choice for the 2022 Alice James Award. She is the poetry editor for West Branch and lives in the Bay Area, California.

Anthony Cody is the author of Borderland Apocrypha (Omnidawn, 2020) and The Rendering (Omnidawn, 2023). He has won a Whiting Award and American Book Award, as well as was a finalist for the National Book Award. He is co-publisher of Noemi Press and teaches at Randolph College's Low Residency MFA.

Cindy Juyoung Ok’s debut collection Ward Toward won the 2023 Yale Younger Poets Prize. A Kenyon Review Fellow, poetry editor at Guernica, and MacDowell Fellow, she currently teaches creative writing at Kenyon College.

Srikanth Reddy’s most recent book of poetry is Underworld Lit. A recipient of fellowships from the NEA, Creative Capital, and the Guggenheim Foundation, he is currently a Professor of English at the University of Chicago.
Bernardo Wade is a Black writer from New Orleans, Louisiana. He is the editor of the Indiana Review and is a Watering Hole Fellow. He won the 2021 Puerto del Sol Poetry Prize and has works appearing or forthcoming in Ecotone, Guernica, and The Cincinnati Review.

Introductions (20 minutes): After a brief welcome, each panelist individually introduces their relationships to editing, describing their past and current editorial positions, including a bit on how they began editing poetry originally and what their positions require on a practical basis. What was surprising, delighting, or confusing about the first poetry editing role? How do reading, selecting, and production processes run at various journals and presses?

Conversation (40 minutes): The panelists respond to each other’s intros, discuss patterns in their roles, and turn to large philosophies and understandings of editorial work as poets. How might the editing experience be unique to poetry editing? What recommendations do they have for submitters, writers interested in editing and publishing jobs, or editors in other genres?

In dialogue, they particularly address the collaborations required in poetry editing, both with other editors and the writers, and the related advantages and challenges. How does such effort serve the poetry community, and connect them to their own writing? What intimacies and novelties have resulted from working as an editor, especially over many years? How is the role changed by working with books versus magazines or print forms versus online ones?

Finally, as poets who edit poetry, panelists discuss how their writing and editing lives are organized and/or balanced in time and space. As Marianne Moore wrote: “Poetry is a magic of pauses, as a dog-valentine contrasting *pauses* and *pauses*— sent to me from Harvard where I had been discussing pauses—reminded me…Might I say of the light rhyme, that T. S. Eliot’s phrase in his Introduction to my *Selected Poems*, “the greatest living master of the light rhyme”—suggesting conscious proficiency or at most a regulatory art on my part—hardly deserves the term. Conscious writing can be the death of poetry…To sum up: poetry is not a thing of tunes, but of heightened consciousness.” How might such an understanding of consciousness or pausing transform as an editor, who perhaps regards the poem with a different “height”? What does it feel like to edit, versus write, with such curious attention to language?
Q&A (15 minutes): Audience questions collected throughout the panel are gathered and synthesized for panelists’ responses, who seek to acknowledge any gaps in editing experience and knowledge for cross-sections of writers and editors, and share transparency and care around poetry publishing as a process and world. Finally, we thank the audience for joining and share the panelists’ upcoming conference panels and readings!

Event Title: A Magic of Pauses: Poetry Editors on the Collaborative Practices of Writing and Editing

Type of Event: ONE OF THESE TWO (more here):

Artistic & Professional Development

These events provide advice on how one should manage one’s talents, life, and career for greater artistic or professional success. Topics may include managing the writer’s life; employment or promotion, either within or outside academia; post-MFA/PhD opportunities; community outreach; managing writing groups; writing residency opportunities; time management; familial or parental concerns; literacy; job interview skills; development of resumes or CVs; internships; and jobs in professional writing, criticism, editing, publishing, arts administration, and academia. Ex. A Job of One’s Own: How to Create a Professional Life that Works for You; Surviving Your Debut Year: Staying Sane and Savvy Before and After Publication

Publishing, Editing, & Technology

These events are addressed to editors, publishers, distributors, and the technological facilitators of literary books, anthologies, journals, book reviews, web sites, and electronic media. Topics may include marketing, graphic design, editing, rights acquisition, copyright, website development, organizational development, business realignments in publishing, small press administration, designing publications for digital tablets, and technological innovations influencing reading, writing, and publishing. Ex. Elements of Small Press Success; Editing Patriarchy: Women Editors Respond to Historic & Restorative Publishing

Event Description (public listing, 500 characters): Poet and editor Marianne Moore declared poetry a magic of pauses. Five poetry editors share how their editorial roles relate to their practices of poetry and cultural work, where their writing experience contributes to editing poems, and what conceptions of community have been born from working on journals and at presses, from established series to emerging spaces. The various pauses and magics that editing brings to writing is considered in terms of labor, time, and collectivism.

Statement of Value (DEI) (private statement, 500 characters): For poets who submit, publishing can feel unknown, just as for editors uninvolved in poetry, it can be difficult to access poetry circulation. Editors of color with records of centering work diverse in authorship (including in the Midwest), original language, and aesthetic clarify and enliven those gaps in experience and knowledge for cross-sections of writers and editors. The focus is on building community through transparency and care whether publishing books or poems, online or in print.

Event Agenda (private statement, 500 characters): The panelists, including moderators, will each introduce their editorial positions, including a bit on how they began editing poetry originally
and what their positions require on a practical basis, spending five to seven minutes each. In an ensuing conversation of about thirty minutes, the panelists will respond to each other’s intros, discuss patterns in their roles, and turn to large philosophies and understandings of editorial work. The panel will end with a fifteen-minute audience Q&A.

A/V Needs: Anyone need/want Internet, LCD Project, or Zoom?

A/V Statement of Need:

Participants: Anthony Cody, Srikanth “Chicu” Reddy, Nathan McClain, Sarah Ghazal Ali, Cindy Juyoung Ok