Body Terrorism: Poems of Resistance, Defiance, and Survival

Description:
In the US today many of us are under constant attack by both the state and individuals. Anti-black, -indigenous, -woman, -trans, and -Queer violence; bans on gender-affirming care for adults and youth, bans on abortion; systemic racism, sexism, and fear-based decision-making at all levels of our communities cause degrees of harm physically and psychically. This group of poets will read and speak to these and other forms of body terrorism. We use poetry to speak out, speak up, and speak truth.

Statement of Value:
Poetry is a powerful tool of resistance and protest. As we gather in Missouri with its history of systemic racism, a state which has unilaterally banned both abortion and gender-affirming care for trans people, this reading and discussion will give voice to the costs of attacks on our collective body. It will provide a safe space for us to speak our truths and be heard by those who need our words for their own defense against the various forms of terrorism against our bodies.

Event Agenda:
The moderator will welcome attendees and give a brief overview of the session. Afterward, the panel will be conducted as a round-robin event with each speaker introducing themselves, offering a statement of their own experience with body terrorism, and then reading some poems to elucidate their experience. After each of us has spoken and read, we will take comments and questions from the attendees.

Presenter Bios:
Subhaga Crystal Bacon is a Queer poet living in rural northcentral Washington on unceded Methow land. She is the author of four collections of poetry, Transitory, from BOA Editions, 2023; Surrender of Water in Hidden Places, 2022; Blue Hunger, 2020; Elegy with a Glass of Whiskey, BOA Editions, 2004.

Jennifer Martelli is the author of The Queen of Queens and My Tarantella, both selected as Must Reads by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. Her work has appeared in Poetry and The Academy of American Poets Poem a Day. Martelli has twice received grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Chavonn Williams Shen was a 2022 McKnight Writing fellow and a first runner-up for The Los Angeles Review Flash Fiction Contest. She was also a winner of the Loft Literary Center’s Mentor Series and fellow with the Givens Foundation for African American Literature.