Event Outline

Event Title: Writing Poetry in English as a Second, Third, Etc Language

Event Description: What poetry can emerge from writers working in languages that are not their mother tongues? How is language and meaning metamorphosed through translingual verses, creative translation, disruption, resistance, distances, experimentation, and/or play? The poets in this panel will discuss their experiences cohabiting with the languages in their lives, their relationships with English, and how these have informed their approach to craft throughout their careers.

Event Organizer & Moderator

Ae Hee Lee: Born in South Korea and raised in Peru, Ae Hee Lee’s debut poetry collection *ASTERISM* was selected for the 2022 Dorset Prize. She's author of poetry chapbooks *Bedtime || Riverbed*, *Dear bear*, and *Connotary* (Frost Place Chapbook Competition Winner).

Event Participants:

Andrea Jurjević: Andrea Jurjević is the author of two poetry collections and a chapbook, most recently, *In Another Country* (Saturnalia Press, 2024). Her book-length translations from Croatian include *Mamasafari* (Diálogos Press, 2018) by Olja Savičević and *Dead Letter Office* (The Word Works, 2020) by Marko Pogačar. She was born and raised in Rijeka, Croatia, in the former Yugoslavia, before emigrating in the late ‘90s.
Alonso Llerena: Alonso Llerena is a Peruvian writer, visual artist, translator, and educator. He has earned an MFA from Bard: Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts. His work has appeared in *Prairie Schooner, The Offing, FENCE, Cream City Review*, and elsewhere.

Siwar Masannat: Siwar Masannat is a Jordanian writer and the author of *cue: poems* (Georgia Review Books/University of Georgia Press 2024) and *50 Water Dreams* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center 2015). Masannat is the managing editor of the African Poetry Book Fund and Prairie Schooner in Lincoln, NE.


Opening Comments

Composed of an international group of immigrant poets (Belarus, Croatia, Jordan, Peru, S. Korea) currently living in the US, the panel presents nuanced, multitudinal poetic Englishes arising from each writer’s bonds with and between their languages.

We’ll start with brief introductions, move to a discussion, share a couple of writing prompts we’ve prepared, open it up to a Q&A, and end with a poetry reading by our panelists.
Moderator Questions

• What are the languages in your lives and your relationships with them? Do you picture these relationships in terms of positionality, distances, intimacies, or something else? How do they (the languages and your relationships with them) inform your work as a poet?

• What has been your experience with the concepts of accessibility, legibility, and audience in your writing?

• What role do you think translation and/or translingual writing play in your poetic craft? How about in the U.S. literary landscape?

• Could you share some advice/strategies you employ or found helpful when writing across languages?
Prompts

Andrea Jurjević:
- Think of the lines we draw in our lives, both personal and collective, literal and figurative. Consider how scars and love-making act as demarcation and intertwinement. Consider the horizon. Consider borders. Consider our homes, particularly windows and doors. The orderliness of poems and poetry collections. What patterns are there? Now explore the intersections between the documented and undocumented lines and reflect on whether the personal trails we leave behind are ones that divide or connect.

Alonso Llerena:
- Make a list of five characteristics you want in a writer.
- Write a poem as that writer you described above:
  - 20 lines max. No more than ten syllables per line.
  - The first word of the poem is If. The last is not.
  - Includes one question repeated twice
  - Include the name of a place as it is called in the local language
  - Includes one sentence that is long and one that is very short.

Siwar Masannat:
- ‘Map’ a word by translating each of its meanings/synonyms/connotations into images and/or narratives. Draw on your own memory, family history, photographs, songs, or visions.
Lena Zycinsky:

• This is a photograph of a British man on a train in London taken by a friend. The tattoo on the man’s face says ВЫЖИТЬ, which means *to survive*. When asked if he speaks Russian, the man says that he does not but he knows what the word on his face means. Imagine a situation in which you are required to tattoo a foreign word on your face to stay alive. Write what word you would choose and why. Research the etymology of that word and compare it to the etymology of its English equivalent.