**Event Title:** First Generation Writers on Voice, Place, and Belonging

**Event Description:** Four writers and poets read their original works and discuss the challenges of being first generation college students, all of whom went on to earn advanced degrees and become published authors and professors. Specifically, the panel will present work relating to feelings or notions of being behind and struggling with a sense of belonging, while also finding joy in cultivating their own writerly voices despite these challenges.

**Event Category:** Reading

**Event Organizer/Moderator/Presenter:** Rachel M. Hanson is the author of *The End of Tennessee: A Memoir* (forthcoming 2024). A former Olive B. O’Connor Fellow in Nonfiction at Colgate University, she is now an assistant professor of English at the University of North Carolina Asheville, and she is the executive director of the literary nonprofit Punch Bucket Lit.

**Event Participants:**

**Danielle Cadena Deulen** teaches for the graduate program at Georgia State University and hosts the podcast *Lit from the Basement*. She has published a memoir and three poetry collections, most recently *Desire Museum*. She has won a Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing Fellowship and a Pushcart Prize.

**Diamond Forde** is a Tin House and Callaloo fellow whose work has appeared in *Ninth Letter, Tupelo Quarterly, The Offing*, and more. She is a recipient of the Margaret Walker prize, a finalist for the Georgia Poetry Prize, and her debut book *Mother Body* was published with Saturnalia Books in Spring 2021.

**Eric Tran** is a queer Vietnamese poet and the author of *Mouth, Sugar, and Smoke*, winner of the Oregon Book Award and finalist for the Thom Gunn Award, and *The Gutter Spread Guide to Prayer*. His poetry has been featured in *All Things Considered, Poetry Daily*, and *Verse Daily*.

**Event Outline:**

- The moderator will begin the event by introducing herself, and the three panelists, including their short biographies, and how the panel came about. (5 minutes)
• The panelists will present alphabetically, giving a brief introduction of the work they are going to read and how it aligns with the subject of the panel. (15 minutes each)
• The moderator will then open up discussion with a list of questions prepared in advance, but also allowing for panelists to ask questions of each other (for about 10 minutes)
• The panel will end with a fifteen-minute audience Q&A.

Opening Remarks (abbreviated) – Being a first generation student comes with many challenges, some of which aren’t even apparent at the time. Particularly as writers, it’s often in retrospect that we begin to realize the ways in which being first generation students defines, at least in part, our identity and thus our craft. While first generation students share similarities, each first generation story is unique. For some, being first generation comes with a sense of isolation and feeling behind. For others, it is a point of pride. For many, it is both. The writers on this panel share in the fact that higher education was uncharted territory. They will read works that are informed by their experience of the struggle and joy of finding their writerly voices in that new territory.

Brief Overview of Panelists Presentation

Danielle Cadena Deulen - Reading original creative nonfiction.

Diamond Forde – Reading original poetry

Rachel Hanson – Reading original fiction

Eric Tran - Reading original poetry