Event Title: Nobody’s Mother: Writing Through the Decision to Parent

Event Description: This reading will focus on ways of writing about (non)motherhood. The participants will share work (including nonfiction, fiction, and poetry) that thinks through the various and difficult questions, concerns, griefs, and hopes of choosing—or not having the freedom to choose—whether or not to become a mother. Through sharing their writing, these authors will present possibilities for considering (non)motherhood in diverse genres and forms.

Event category: Multi-genre Reading

Event organizers: Stacy Gnall and Casey Bell

Event moderator: Casey Bell

Event participants and short biographies:

Katya Apekina is the author of The Deeper the Water the Uglier the Fish (2018) and Mother Doll (2024). She translated poetry and prose from Russian for Night Wraps the Sky: Writings by and about Mayakovsky (2008), short-listed for the Best Translated Book Award. Born in Moscow, she lives in Los Angeles.

Casey Bell is the author of the slipstream short story collection Little Fury, out now with Metatron Press. She is a graduate of the MFA program at University of Nevada, Reno, where she currently teaches English. Her work most recently appeared in Sequestrum, Cream City Review, and Reed Magazine.

Stacy Gnall is the author of the poetry collections Dogged and Heart First into the Forest. A finalist for the Georgia Prize, she holds a PhD from the University of Southern California and is the founder of the youth writing program Wordstruck. She is poet-in-residence at the University of Detroit Mercy.

Keturah Kendrick is the author of the award-winning No Thanks: Black, Female, and Living in the Martyr-Free Zone; she writes personal narrative and memoir that explores the interior lives of Black women. She has written for NBC News, Newsweek, EdPost, Insider, USA Today, HuffPost and numerous publications.
Erin Swan is the author of *Walk the Vanished Earth*, a work of speculative fiction focusing on intergenerational trauma and environmental upheaval. A graduate of Teachers College at Columbia University and the MFA program at the New School, she teaches English at a public high school in Manhattan.

Opening remarks + share bios:
- Brief description of theme and the value of exploring this theme through multiple forms/genres

Readings:
- Each member reads for 5-7 mins

Moderator Questions for each member:
1. How do you see your work grappling with contemporary conceptions of motherhood and the choices surrounding parenthood?
2. How do you think about form (poetry / short story / novel / nonfiction) and exploring motherhood? What are some of the constraints and affordances of your chosen form when it comes to battling conventions?
3. Considerations surrounding motherhood have shifted in our contemporary era as anxieties around climate change and sociopolitical instability continue to mount. How do those anxieties play out in your work?
4. Motherhood and writing are often presented in opposition–you can either be a writer or a creative person (a binary that’s not imposed on fathers). As a writer, how does the discourse around motherhood (including the infantilization of mothers, the external pressures to care about baby products, the conflation of mother and baby as one identity, etc.) sit with you? How would you like to see the discourse shift?
5. How do you have time to write as a normal person / as a mom? What does your creative practice look like? How do you see your decisions around and/or (non)motherhood shaping your writing life?

Audience Q+A Session