Event Title: “To Confirm a Thing and Give Thanks”: Rereading May Swenson

Event Description: Though more widely acknowledged in her lifetime, May Swenson is now something of a “poet’s poet’s poet,” loved and admired by a select readership but generally overlooked by the wider public. This panel aims to elevate Swenson’s work, articulating the dynamics behind her richly varied oeuvre—lush, exploratory, imaginative, poised—and arguing for a 21st century return to this unduly neglected master and pioneering queer poet.

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Event Organizer & Moderator:
Malachi Black is the author of Indirect Light, forthcoming from Four Way Books, and Storm Toward Morning (Copper Canyon, 2014), a finalist for the Poetry Society of America's Norma Farber First Book Award and a PSA New American Poets series selection. Black teaches at the University of San Diego.

Event Participants:


Sara Eliza Johnson is the recipient of an NEA Fellowship in poetry, a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award, and Winter Fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center, among other honors. Her first book, Bone Map, won the 2013 National Poetry Series. Her second book, Vapor, was published in 2022.


Nancy K. Pearson is an English Professor at West Chester University PA. She is the author of the poetry collections The Whole by Contemplation Of a Single Bone and Two Minutes of Light, for which she received the PEN New England Award and a Lambda Literary finalist award.