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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at ASU
Announces the Return of Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference.**

Tempe, AZ (July 19, 2023)—Writers and readers from Arizona and across the nation are invited to join “the must attend literary event of the year.” October 12-14, 2023, will mark the in-person return of the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference, offering over 75 workshops, classes, panels and readings by over 60 presenters, including our [distinguished visiting faculty](#), Conference Teaching Fellows, community writers, and students selected to host panels through MFA Presents. An intimate exceptional conference for writers and readers at all levels, Desert Nights, Rising Stars has long been a much-loved feature of the Phoenix writing scene. As we return to an in-person forum after a two-year hiatus, we are proud to deliver a conference that covers multiple genres, with small classes taught by truly exceptional writers, providing participants with unrivaled access to influential voices and change-makers in contemporary literature.

The conference will take place in the historic quarter of the ASU Tempe campus with off-site events at local cafes, bars, and bookstores. You can view the [conference schedule](#) on the Piper website. You can also learn about our [conference faculty](#), including our keynote speaker Joy Harjo, who served three terms as the 23rd US Poet Laureate. In her keynote, Joy Harjo will be in conversation with noted poet Natalie Diaz, Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry at ASU and director of the Center for Imagination in the Borderlands.

For those who might want to attend the conference, registration is now open. Students can gain full admittance for \$75, and seniors full entry for \$95. Discounts are also available for Arizona Educators, military, and people with disabilities. People interested can register at [conference registration](#) or at piper.asu.edu/conference/register.

Alberto Rios, Piper Center director and Arizona Poet Laureate says of the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference:

“These are times when sharing ideas in a receptive community forum is more necessary than ever. Though as artists we work as individuals most of the time, gathering under the auspices of the arts offers us a chance to participate in common acts of the imagination, helping us all to envision what lies before us in the world and, thereby, affect it. The shortest, whimsical poem and the longest, most complex novel—we as artists imagine everything and in this way we get to have our say in whatever comes next. That we do it artfully is an enduring human essential, and by far the most effective aspect of what we do. A conference, this conference, Desert Nights, Rising Stars, gives us a rousing framework for thought, creativity, and story—a place where we all fit in.”

Among the writers teaching and presenting are the first US Youth Poet Laureate, [Naomi Shihab Nye](#); Jackson Prize winner, [Patricia Spears Jones](#); Yale Younger Poets Prize winner, [Fady Joudah](#); Los Angeles Times Prize winner, [Victoria Chang](#); National Book Award finalists, [Brandon Hobson](#) and [Ramona Emerson](#); noted fiction writers [Matt Bell](#), [Robert Boswell](#), [Antonya Nelson](#), [Peter Turchi](#), and [Vauhini Vara](#); children's book author [Xelena Gonzalez](#); and screenwriter [Carroll Cartwright](#).

Literary organizations [the University of Arizona Poetry Center](#), [PEN Arizona](#), and [Kundiman](#) will also present panels at the conference, with a presentation by CantoMundo. Workshops on the business of writing will be taught by noted literary agent Regina Brooks of [Serendipity Literary Agency](#) and Patricia Murphy of [Superstition Review](#) among others.

Founded in 2003 with a historic gift from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University (ASU) is a non-academic university center dedicated to offering talks, readings, classes, workshops, and other literary events and programs for the larger community. We seek to make literary exploration a space for everyone and to “create brave spaces where individuals can discover and claim their stories.”

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