Desert Nights, Rising Stars
Writers Conference

February 22 - 24, 2018
Arizona State University

450 E Tyler Mall
PO Box 875002
Tempe, AZ 85281

tel: 480.965.6018
email: pipercenter.info@asu.edu
web: piper.asu.edu
Welcome writers. Welcome readers.

Each day, all of us make a decision on where to channel our energy, time, and interests. In tandem with all the commitments swirling in life, you have chosen to be with us here, now, in this beautiful place, to show your passion for creative writing. We do not take your gesture lightly. We are honored to host you as our guests over the next two and a half days. Welcome to our home at Arizona State University!

Here at the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing, we strive to help you in your own individual journey as a reader and a writer. This conference exists because we believe your voice, the unique person you are, adds intrinsic value to the larger conversation in creative writing.

We believe in the power of community. We are not a singular voice, but many singular voices, resonating as everyone together. We believe in your words—how these words form a larger collective and become the catalysts for innovation, inspiration, motivation, and change.

Along with who we are, where we are matters as well. Place, to me, is the actual ground people stand on. We may live our lives in whatever ways we do, but we live somewhere, we are somewhere, and we make our presence somewhere. We recognize in our welcome that we are in the great Sonoran Desert. Sonoran, as a word, means “sonorous,” or “soundful.” In that spirit, we will listen and make noise both. It is through you that our place becomes meaningful. As we gather, and say such different things, we will be in this place together. Let us embrace our differences and commonalities both, to learn, process, think, and be community. Thank you for making the Piper Center and this conference part of the place in which you live.

Alberto Ríos
Poet Laureate of Arizona
Artistic Director, The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing
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Founded in 2003 with a gift from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University is a home for writers, readers, and the literary community.

The Center aspires to:

- Build connections among readers, writers, and others, across multiple disciplines and fields of interest
- Offer a variety of educational opportunities to support writers in every stage of their development
- Foster a thriving creative and literary community, and transform the Valley’s cultural environment
- Become the driving force for a dynamic and entrepreneurial creative environment that will enrich Arizona and the entire Southwest
- Encourage cultural and artistic exchanges with international communities
- Promote the value that art is integral to all our lives, and make it accessible both within and beyond our community of writers

Constructed in 1907, the Piper Writers House originally served as the President’s Cottage. It’s one of the last standing buildings designed by territorial architect James Creighton and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Piper Center staff members and volunteers are committed to ensuring that your Desert Nights, Rising Stars experience is the best conference experience it can possibly be. If you have any questions about the conference, things you’d like to know about the Piper Center, or even if you’d just like to talk, please feel free to pull us aside.

While staff will be busy walking around the conference checking in on individual sessions and working behind the scenes, volunteers will be stationed in each classroom and at the information table (on the second floor of Old Main). Piper staff will be wearing ASU name tags; volunteers will be wearing volunteer buttons. We’re thrilled to have you join us this year, we look forward to meeting you soon!

Volunteers: Megan Atencia, Nina Benneton, Jonathan Duffy, Michael Greenwald, Elizabeth Hansen, Shanyin Hosier, Andrew Dana Hudson, Dyanna Jiron, Robin Kramme, Bryan Larson, Kelly Lydick, Kate McCusker, Amy Scoville-Weaver, Randi Shelton, Susan Pohlman, Megan Taliaferro, Melissa Tramuta, Rashaad Thomas

OUR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Angie Dell
Managing Director

Dana Tribke
Business Operations Specialist

Felicia Zamora
Education Programs Coordinator

Jake Friedman
Marketing & Outreach Specialist

Ashley Wilkins
Coordinator

Kalani Pickhart
Graduate Assistant
All conference sessions take place in the historic quarter of Arizona State University, Tempe Campus.

If you’ve parked in the Fulton Center Parking Structure or are coming from the light rail, simply walk South down College Ave and cross University Drive at the light. Take a slight left due East to find the conference venues. (Look for the fountain in the middle of the plaza.)

If you are coming from other parking lots, please consult the ASU maps posted around campus or available online at www.asu.edu/map. Detailed directions are also available under the “Getting Here” tab at http://piper.asu.edu/about.
All sessions taking place in Old Main occur on the 2nd floor. To access the 2nd floor of Old Main, enter through the main entrance, walk straight through the lobby, and go up the stairs.

**Elevators and restrooms** for Old Main are located on the south side of the building.

**Farnsworth Terrace** is located on the south side of the building near the elevators and bathrooms.

While finding your way around the conference can be a little confusing, especially if it’s the first time you’ve visited ASU, things generally get easier by the second day. Piper staff and volunteers will be on hand to assist you throughout the conference if you get lost or have any questions.
Parking, Light Rail, & Public Transportation

Parking at ASU can be relatively difficult. We recommend the Fulton Center Parking Structure off University Blvd (just east of College Ave on the North side of University), which is the closest lot to the Piper Center and less than five minutes away. Parking is $3/hr or $15/day Monday through Sunday (though sometimes it’s free on the weekends).

The conference is also accessible public transportation. Our light rail stop is College Ave and Veterans Way. The Orbit shuttle, GRID Bike Share, and the bus are available, too. There’s also Lyft, Uber, or other ride-sharing services.

For more information, visit https://cfo.asu.edu/transportation.

Registration & Check-In

Once you arrive at the Conference, check in at the registration table in front of Old Main during the following times:

- Thursday, Feb 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. or
- Friday, Feb 23 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

The registration table will have your name badge, conference program, and other conference materials like journals and pens available upon request. To check in during other times, visit the information table on the 2nd floor of Old Main.

Information Table

If you need extra conference materials, have questions about the Conference, or if there’s anything else you’d like to discuss more generally speaking, please visit the Information Table on the 2nd floor of Old Main at any time during the conference.

Name Badges

As your name badge is your official access to all conference venues and sessions, we encourage you to wear your name badge at all times. If your name badge requires corrections or becomes lost, visit the information table to obtain a replacement.
The conference schedule and session descriptions are available in a printed format in your conference program or online at our website at http://piper.asu.edu/conference/schedule/2018. Any last minute changes will be updated on the website, posted in the facebook event and outside of affected rooms, and distributed as printed hand-outs in the conference program or at the information table.

**Reception & Keynote**

Help us celebrate another year of the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference with a catered reception from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Carson Ballroom of Old Main. Then, join us for the conference keynote from ASU professor and poet Natalie Diaz from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. The reception and keynote are included in your registration.

**Readings, Socials, & Other Conference Highlights**

Besides craft talks and panels, the conference offers several other ways to engage with literary culture and participate in the larger creative writing community.

During lunch on Friday, you can hear work from fellow attendees during an open reading at the Piper Writers House from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. Sign ups for the open reading are first-come, first-serve. Participants
should prepare to read no more than 5 minutes of material.

During lunch on Saturday, you can hear the latest work from the graduate students of ASU’s Creative Writing Program at the Piper Writers House from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.

On Friday evening, you can get to know your fellow attendees at the off-site social from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Casey Moore’s Oyster House (810 S Ash Ave, Tempe, AZ 85281), just a ten or fifteen minute walk West of ASU.

Coffee & Conversation

Friday and Saturday morning, you can chat with fellow attendees, get a little writing done, or just relax before the day’s sessions with complimentary coffee, orange juice, and other refreshments from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. in the Heritage Room of University Club.

Water, Coffee, & Other Beverages

If you get thirsty, water stations will be located in each building (on the 2nd floor of University Club and Old Main). Coffee will also be available until 11:00 a.m. If you’d like something else to drink, there are vending machines near Old Main. There are also plenty of options in the ASU Memorial Union or along College Ave.
Lunch

As part of your registration, boxed lunches are provided for all attendees from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m on the Farnsworth Terrace behind Old Main. Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-friendly options will be available as well.

Prior to the conference, you should have received a brief survey via email asking you for your lunch preferences, which should be printed on the corner of your name badge. To claim your lunch, simply present your name badge. If you did not receive this email or your preferences are printed incorrectly, find a Piper Center staff member or volunteer.

Once you get your lunch, feel free to grab a seat with fellow attendees on Farnsworth Terrace, find a quiet place to eat on campus, or head to the Piper Writers House for readings.

If you’re looking for something else to eat, there are plenty of restaurants in ASU’s Memorial Union or along College Avenue, University Blvd, and Mill Ave.

Afternoon Snack

Avoid the afternoon slump with complimentary cookies and fresh fruit, available Friday and Saturday on the 2nd floor of University Club outside of the Heritage room (beginning at 2:00 p.m.).
Book Sales & Signings

Find your next read at the book fair, open on the 2nd floor of Old Main during the following hours:

- Thursday, Feb 22 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, Feb 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

While there aren’t any formal book signings, feel free to approach individual faculty before or after their sessions if you'd like them to sign your books. (As faculty may have other sessions to run off to, please be understanding if they need to find another time.)

Hashtags & Social Media

Share your conference experience and connect with other attendees on social media using the hashtags #piperwriters, #desertnightsrisingstars, and #DNRS2018. You can also tag or follow us on the following platforms:

Facebook: /PiperCenter
Twitter: @Piper_Center
Instagram: @PiperCenter
Tobacco-Free Policy

As ASU is a tobacco-free campus, smoking on campus is prohibited. If you’d like to smoke, feel free to take a short trip to the NW corner of University Drive and College Ave. Please refrain from using e-cigarettes or similar devices as well.

Sustainability at ASU

Help us create a more sustainable conference by using a refillable water bottle, recycling as many materials as you can, and returning your name badge and lanyard to the Piper Center at the conference’s end.

Accessibility

All conference venues are accessible to individuals with challenges with mobility, hearing loss, or other forms of impairment or disability. If you encounter any challenges or require accommodations, please find a Piper Center staff member or volunteer to discuss.

Professional Development Credit

Are you an Arizona educator? The conference can count hours of Professional Development credit under the Arizona Department of Education. For more information on receiving Professional Development
Extend Your Experience

While the Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference only happens once a year, there are plenty of other ways to keep your energy going (including readings, talks, classes, workshops, and more). Just visit our information table, sign up for our mailing list, like the Piper Center on Facebook, or visit our website at http://piper.asu.edu.

Support

Thanks to the kindness and generosity of various colleges, organizations, and local community members, we’re able to offer numerous scholarships to students, teachers, and other individuals for whom the value of this experience would simply be out of reach.

This year, we’d like to thank Joni Adamson, Elton Bowen, Rebecca Boyd, Joan Burtnett, Susan Conner, Meg Dobson, Rebecca Dyer, Candance Hughes, Gregory Martin, Nicki Lies, Satya Sharma, Katrina Shawver, John Stikeman, Anissa Stringer, and Felicity Wilson for their gracious donations and support.

If you’d like to consider making a donation and help us increase access to literary culture, find a Piper Center staff member or visit http://piper.asu.edu/donate.
The NonfictionNOW Conference is a regular gathering of over 400 nonfiction writers, teachers, readers and students from around the world in an effort to explore the past, present, and future of nonfiction. NonfictionNOW is unique in being neither a conventional academic conference nor a writers’ festival, but rather a conversation among peers, from well-established writers and artists to those just starting out.

NonfictionNOW gathers leading writers from around the world to share notes with emerging peers and audiences on the intricate challenges and intriguing delights of writing and reading nonfiction NOW. The growing success of NonfictionNOW highlights the great energy and interest in the art of nonfiction storytelling in all its forms, from literary and political essays and memoir to reality TV.

Panels and readings highlight the myriad forms of nonfiction, from the video essay and graphic essays, to the memoir, lyric essay, and literary journalism. Past keynote speakers have included Karl Ove Knausgård, Maggie Smith, Aisha Sabatini Sloan, Alison Bechdel, Rebecca Solnit, Wayne Koestenbaum, Pico Iyer, Lauren Slater, Richard Rodriguez, and Tim Flannery, among others.

with keynote speakers

Francisco Cantú
Gretel Ehrlich
Melissa Lucashenko
Valeria Luiselli

Now accepting proposals for panels

More information regarding registration coming soon

To learn more, visit http://nonfictionnow.org
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<tr>
<th>TIME, LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Main</td>
<td>Check in to receive your name tag, program, and other materials you’ll need for the conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 - 2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Afternoon Session A</td>
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</table>
| Heritage, UC | **When Words Won’t Come**  
Jac Jemc, Amy K. Nichols, & Malka Older with Jonathan Danielson | Mixed Genre, Writing Life |
| Traditions, UC | **Erotic & Aesthetic Distance (On Henri Michaux & Anais Nin)**  
Kevin McIlvoy | Fiction, Mixed Genre |
| Thoren, UC | **Exploring the Unsayable through Sound**  
Jenny Johnson | Poetry |
| Basha, OM | **Tiny Package, Big Punch: Flash Memoir & the Art of Concision**  
Rosemarie Dombrowski | Flash, Memoir, Nonfiction |
| 2:45 - 3:45 p.m. | Afternoon Session B |
| Heritage, UC | **The Devil’s in the Details**  
Charlie Jane Anders, Tara Ison, & Bill Konigsberg with Kalani Pickhart | Fiction, Mixed Genre |
| Traditions, UC | **Crisis Creates Us: The Three Act Structure**  
Daniel José Older | Fiction |
| Thoren, UC | **Writer’s Voice on Graphic Nonfiction**  
Kristen Radtke | Comics, Graphic Novels, Memoir, Nonfiction |
| Basha, OM | **Haunting: Mining Memory to Add Depth & Intrigue**  
Jac Jemc | Fiction, Mixed Genre |
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<tr>
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| Tooker, OM | The Lyric Impulse  
Stephen Kuusisto | Hybrid, Memoir, Nonfiction, Poetry |
| 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. | Reception |
| Carson Ballroom, OM | Enjoy light refreshments and live music with conference faculty and fellow attendees before keynote speaker Natalie Diaz |
| 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. | Keynote |
| Carson Ballroom, OM | Conference Keynote  
Natalie Diaz |

OM = Old Main  
UC = U Club  
See pp. 26 - 43 for session descriptions
### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

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<td><strong>7:30 - 8:15 a.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Coffee &amp; Conversation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td>Enjoy coffee and conversation with fellow attendees before the start of the day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7:30 - 9:30 a.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Registration</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Main</td>
<td>Check in to receive your name tag, program, and other materials you’ll need for the conference. To check in after 9:30 a.m., visit the information table on the 2nd floor of Old Main.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8:30 - 9:30 a.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Morning Session A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td><strong>Writing in the Visual Medium</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cecil Castellucci &amp; Kristen Radtke with Malik Toms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td><strong>Frame Work</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jac Jemc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td><strong>Working with Agents</strong></td>
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<td>Rayhané Sanders</td>
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<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td><strong>Research for Writers</strong></td>
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<td>Derek Palacio</td>
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<td><strong>9:45 - 10:45 a.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Morning Session B</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td><strong>Putting the Science in Science Fiction</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Amy K. Nichols</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td><strong>Representing Foreign Territories in Fiction</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nina McConigley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td><strong>From Acquisition to Publication</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emily Bell</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 - 10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Morning Session B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carson Ballroom, OM</td>
<td>The Craft of Character: From the Charismatic to the Anti-Hero</td>
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<td>Tod Goldberg, Roy Kesey, &amp; Alix Ohlin with Maritsa Leyva Martinez</td>
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<td>Morning Session C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
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<td>Andrea Avery, Rosemarie Dombrowski, &amp; Stephen Kuusisto with Cheyenne “Anna” Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td>Temporality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kevin McIlvoy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td>Believable Characters in Unbelievable Situations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Charlie Jane Anders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td>Narrative Fundamentals</td>
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<td>Daniel José Older</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 - 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farnsworth Terrace, OM</td>
<td>Enjoy complimentary lunch with conference faculty and fellow attendees on the Farnsworth Terrace behind Old Main</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 - 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Open Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piper Writers House</td>
<td>Hear work from fellow attendees with an open reading at the Piper Writers House. The first 12 individuals to sign up will get to read for up to 5 minutes each.</td>
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### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

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<tr>
<th>TIME, LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1:30 - 2:30 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Afternoon Session A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td><strong>Writing Life: Balancing Word &amp; World</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jenny Johnson, Malka Older, &amp; Derek Palacio with Rachel Bunning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td><strong>Where Poetry Comes From</strong>&lt;br&gt;Alberto Álvaro Ríos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td><strong>Writing the New American West: Postfrontier Literature</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nina McConigley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td><strong>Reliably Unreliable: Writing Unreliable Narrators</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tod Goldberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2:45 - 3:45 p.m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Afternoon Session B</strong></td>
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<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td><strong>Contested Memories</strong>&lt;br&gt;Roy Kesey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td><strong>Making Beautiful Sentences</strong>&lt;br&gt;Alix Ohlin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td><strong>Writing the Anthropocene</strong>&lt;br&gt;Claire Vaye Watkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td><strong>Pardon My Youth: Don’t Be Afraid of the Dark</strong>&lt;br&gt;Cecil Castellucci</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carson Ballroom, OM</td>
<td><strong>The First Book: Publishing &amp; You</strong>&lt;br&gt;Kaveh Akbar, Andrea Avery, Derek Palacio, &amp; Kristen Radtke with Annie Vitalsey</td>
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<td>TIME, LOCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 - 5:00 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Afternoon Session C</strong></td>
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| Traditions, UC | **Finding Your Inner Teen**  
Bill Konigsberg | Fiction, Young Adult |
| Thoren, UC | **Future Present: Writing Speculative Fiction about the Here & Now**  
Malka Older | Fiction, Science Fiction |
| Basha, OM | **The Art of Dialogue**  
Tara Ison | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction |
| 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | **Off-Site Event** |
| Casey Moore’s Oyster House | **After Hours Social**  
850 S Ash Ave, Tempe, AZ 85281 | Get to know fellow attendees with a casual happy hour at Casey Moore’s Oyster House |

OM = Old Main  
UC = U Club  
SEE PP. 26 - 43 FOR SESSION DESCRIPTIONS
### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

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<tr>
<td>7:30 - 8:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Coffee and Conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td>Enjoy coffee and conversation with fellow attendees before the start of the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 - 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Morning Session A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td><strong>Error &amp; Accident: Using Found Materials</strong></td>
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<td>Ander Monson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td><strong>What American Regionalism Means to Me</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Claire Vaye Watkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td><strong>Writing for Sequential Art &amp; the Quest for Silence</strong></td>
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<td>Cecil Castellucci</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td><strong>Mining the Poetic Unconscious</strong></td>
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<td>Kaveh Akbar</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 - 10:45 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Morning Session B</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Heritage, UC</td>
<td><strong>The Same Thing, but Different: Writing Series Fiction, Sequels, &amp; Connected Stories</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tod Goldberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditions, UC</td>
<td><strong>How to Freeze Time</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jenny Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoren, UC</td>
<td><strong>Lyrical Resistance: The Power of Ethnographic Poetry</strong></td>
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<td>Rosemarie Dombrowski</td>
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<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td><strong>False Starts: Finding Where Your Story Really Begins</strong></td>
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<td>Amy K. Nichols</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 - 10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Morning Session B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carson Ballroom, OM</td>
<td>The Direction of Contemporary Fiction</td>
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<td>Emily Bell, Ander Monson, &amp; Rayhané Sanders</td>
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<td>Andrea Avery</td>
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<td>Basha, OM</td>
<td>Genres &amp; Their Place in Your Work</td>
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<td>Kaveh Akbar, Emily Bell, Nina McConigley, &amp; Daniel José Older with Susan Nguyen</td>
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<td>12:15 - 1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>Farnsworth Terrace, OM</td>
<td>Enjoy complimentary lunch with conference faculty and fellow attendees on the Farnsworth Terrace behind Old Main</td>
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<td>12:15 - 1:15 p.m.</td>
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<td>Piper Writers House</td>
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### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

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                      | Stephen Kuusisto | Mixed Genre, Poetry |
| Traditions, UC        | Who’s Allowed to Write LGBTQ?  
                      | Bill Konigsberg | Fiction, Mixed Genre |
| Thoren, UC            | Bodies & Text in Space: The Architecture of Image & Identity  
                      | Wanda Dalla Costa & Natalie Diaz | Mixed Genre, Poetry |
| Basha, OM             | Travel Writing: Going There  
                      | Roy Kesey | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction, Travel Writing |
| **2:45 - 3:45 p.m.**  | **Afternoon Session B**                                             |
| Heritage, UC          | Structure of Collections  
                      | Ander Monson | Editing, Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction, Poetry |
| Traditions, UC        | Poetics of Witness Workshop  
                      | Cynthia Hogue | Poetry |
| Thoren, UC            | Query Letters  
                      | Rayhané Sanders | Agents, Business of Writing, Publishing |
| Basha, OM             | Maps for Storytellers  
                      | Tara Ison | Fiction, Screenwriting |
| **4:00 - 5:00 p.m.**  | **Afternoon Session C**                                             |
| Heritage, UC          | Re-Visioning: Revising the Manuscript & Conference Wrap Up  
                      | Kevin McIlvoy, Alix Ohlin, & Claire Vaye Watkins  
                      | with Beth Charles | Fiction, Mixed Genre |
**When Words Won't Come** (Heritage, UC)
Jac Jemc, Amy K. Nichols, & Malka Older with Jonathan Danielson | Mixed Genre, Writing Life

What happens when the page stretches out in front of you and the words remain stagnant? How do you bring yourself to write when the words just won’t flow? All writers have ideas and hesitations on where to begin. Join our authors Jac Jemc, Malka Older, and Amy K. Nichols in a discussion of how to tackle the blank page—by motivation, habit, trickery, and more. Authors will explore ways to dig language up from memory and how to use resources to hunt for narrative. Learn from these authors on how to spin stories from the everyday and how the act of writing becomes as important as the writing itself.

**Erotic & Aesthetic Distance: On Henri Michaux & Anais Nin**
(Traditions, UC)
Kevin McIlvoy | Fiction, Mixed Genre

In this session, we will focus on selected examples from the works of Henri Michaux and Anais Nin, writers whose sense of erotic distance and aesthetic distance is instructive. We will focus upon selections from Henri Michaux, *Selected Writings* (New Directions, paperback) and Anais Nin, *Under a Glass Bell* (Swallow Press / Ohio University Press).

**Exploring the Unsayable through Sound** (Thoren, UC)
Jenny Johnson | Poetry

Writing sound-driven poems can allow us a way into writing about that which feels hard to say or express. In this session, we will consider how sound effects meaning in a few poems, attending to what Robert Pinsky calls a poem’s “audible web.” Then, we will do a writing exercise where you will have a chance to experiment with sound, letting it be your guide as you explore a subject matter that you’re struggling to tackle.
Tiny Package, Big Punch: Flash Memoir & the Art of Concision
(Basha, OM)
Rosemarie Dombrowski | Flash, Memoir, Nonfiction

The tools of the trade remain relatively the same, but the size of the package—when it comes to writing “flash”—forces us to distill our stories into palatable, 750-word bites. Think of them as appetizers for your longer works, parts/chapters of a longer whole, or simply an exercise in brevity and lyrical concision. In this session, we’ll discuss the features of the form as well as a few recent flashes from Brevity magazine.

Thu, Feb 22: Afternoon Session B (2:45 - 3:45 p.m.)

The Devil’s in the Details (Heritage, UC)
Charlie Jane Anders, Tara Ison, & Bill Konigsberg with Kalani Pickhart | Fiction, Mixed Genre

Writing fiction requires intense engagement from the author with specific attention on the intricacies of the world in which their characters live. How do you bring a scene to life? What can you do as a writer to weave your reader in, and make them feel right alongside the protagonist, in the stockroom, on the boat, or in the living room? How do authors who strive for some degree of scientific accuracy, keep the drama in cohesion with the realities of a gradual or methodical progression of the story? Join authors Charlie Jane Anders, Tara Ison, and Bill Konigsberg in a discussion on sensual and concrete details that evoke place and bring readers into the sensory. Learn from these authors on how to dramatize the mundane yet necessary, as well as ways to manufacture details that are evocative, accurate, and unique.

Crisis Creates Us: The Three Act Structure (Traditions, UC)
Daniel José Older | Fiction

An in-depth look at narrative structure and how to make each section stand on its own and function in the larger story.
Thu, Feb 22: Afternoon Session B (2:45 - 3:45 p.m.)

**Writer’s Voice on Graphic Nonfiction** (Thoren, UC)
Kristen Radtke | Comics, Graphic Novels, Memoir, Nonfiction

In this discussion-based session, learn about one author’s views and perspectives on graphic nonfiction, including recommendations for writers pursuing the genre, how releasing the first graphic novel has impacted the author’s life, and how the worlds of art director and author meld/don’t meld together as a career.

**Haunting: Mining Memory to Add Depth & Intrigue** (Basha, OM)
Jac Jemc | Fiction, Mixed Genre

From the absences of Sappho to the specters of Henry James, the idea of haunting presents itself in many forms throughout literature. In this session we’ll explore haunting as narrative driver and resonance builder. Whether you’re interested in building a traditional ghost story, a tale of unrequited love or lingering grief, or lacing your work with outside influences, this session will help anyone looking for ways of building theme and image-based collateral in a variety of genres.

**The Lyric Impulse** (Tooker, OM)
Stephen Kuusisto | Hybrid, Memoir, Nonfiction, Poetry

We live in a time of hybrid forms when creative writers are exploring lyric prose in striking ways. In this session, poet and memoirist Stephen Kuusisto will share examples drawn from lyric essays that not only bridge the gap between poetry and prose, but also demonstrate how the writer finds new imaginative ground. Writing prompts will also be shared.

Thu, Feb 22: Keynote (5:00 - 6:00 p.m.)

**Desert Nights, Rising Stars Conference Keynote** (Carson Ballroom, OM)
Natalie Diaz

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*see pp. 17 - 25 for the schedule*

[28] THE DESERT NIGHTS, RISING STARS WRITERS CONFERENCE
Writing in the Visual Medium (Heritage, UC)
Cecil Castellucci & Kristen Radtke with Malik Toms | Comics, Graphic Novels, Mixed Genre

What is the intersection of image and text? What does it mean to be a writer in today’s graphic medium? Join Cecil Castellucci and Kristen Radtke for an intimate conversation exploring their respective journeys as graphic novelists, how writing graphic novels differs from traditional narratives in fiction and nonfiction, their different approaches to the medium—practicing the art form versus collaborating with artists—and a survey of the field and art in contemporary society.

Frame Work (Traditions, UC)
Jac Jemc | Fiction

In his essay, “The Perception of Reality,” William James posed the question, “Under what circumstances do we think things are real?” We’ll use this question as a jumping off point to examine how it is we generate feelings of authenticity in our fiction using different frameworks. How can voice be used to indicate truth? How can stories within stories aid the attempt at making meaning? How can a structure that supports multiple levels of fact or fiction strengthen the overall effect of the narrative and serve as a platform for the objective of the piece?

Working with Agents (Thoren, UC)
Rayhané Sanders | Agents, Business of Writing, Publishing

Learn an overview of an agent's job and role in working with authors throughout the process—from signing to the publishing deal and beyond. This session opens for Q&A from the audience and is intended to be conversational, so bring your questions.
Fri, Feb 23: Morning Session A (8:30 - 9:30 a.m.)

**Research for Writers** (Basha, OM)
Derek Palacio | Fiction, Mixed Genre

This session will explore broad approaches and philosophies to incorporating research into fiction writing. What are the goals of research? How can research be employed in fiction writing beyond ambiguous ideas of “authenticity”? How does one mine facts and histories for rich narrative discovery? A mixture of lecture and exercises, this session will ask participants to think differently on how we research fiction, and how to better employ acquired knowledge and expertise.

Fri, Feb 23: Morning Session B (9:45 - 10:45 a.m.)

**Putting the Science in Science Fiction** (Heritage, UC)
Amy K. Nichols | Fiction, Science Fiction

It’s one thing to imagine a space battle; it’s quite another to write one in such a way it slips easily through the reader’s believability filter. This session will explore research and writing techniques for incorporating scientific fact in your fiction. Participants will gain practical knowledge of scientific resources for writers, as well as tips for crafting science fiction that is both compelling and believable.

**Representing Foreign Territories in Fiction** (Traditions, UC)
Nina McConigley | Fiction

This session discusses the issues that arise when authors represent foreign spaces in fiction—such as other countries, cities, states, and landscapes—they themselves have not traveled to or are not originally from. We will look to what extent a writer can “know” a place they did not grow up in; we will discuss/write how to deal with the social and factual issues innate to representing unfamiliar territories, sharing observations from our own work and experience. This session will illuminate the sometimes ethically sensitive process of writing about places/people we do not intimately know.
From Acquisition to Publication (Thoren, UC)
Emily Bell | Business of Writing, Editing, Publishing

Here’s the “what you need to know” about publication. We will discuss the publication process—every step that goes into getting your manuscript published by a major publishing house and all of the people who would be working with you throughout the process.

The Craft of Character: From the Charismatic to the Anti-Hero
(Carson Ballroom, OM)
Tod Goldberg, Roy Kesey, & Alix Ohlin with Maritsa Leyva Martinez | Fiction, Mixed Genre

What makes a character memorable? How do you design a character that drives story? Great characters are not perfect. Some great characters are not even likable. At times, it’s a character’s meanness, cynicism, and wretchedness that draws a reader to them and makes the plot matter. Great characters are complex, flawed, unique human beings—just like their writers and readers. Join authors Alix Ohlin, Roy Kesey, and Tod Goldberg as they discuss techniques and strategies for crafting memorable characters, how character development intersects other narrative components such as voice and setting, creating dubious characters who don’t turn off your readers, and how to bring characters—from the charismatic to the anti-heroes—to life.

Memoir & the Body (Heritage, UC)
Andrea Avery, Rosemarie Dombrowski, & Stephen Kuusisto with Cheyenne “Anna” Black | Memoir, Nonfiction

How do we conceptualize the body in narrative? How does society enable or disable certain modes of being? What kinds of physical assumptions do we bring to a text? Join authors Andrea Avery, Rosemarie Dombrowski, and Stephen Kuusisto as they explore the role of ability in text: where personal narratives intersect with social constructions of health and illness, how these stories can be given power through the vehicle of memoir, and how the body can serve as a site of lyrical resistance.
Fri, Feb 23: Morning Session C (11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

**Temporality** (Traditions, UC)
Kevin McIlvoy | Mixed Genre, Writing Life

We will focus upon the complex matters of temporal experience writers reckon with as they compose and as they revise. Participants should come prepared for an active discussion ranging over broad concepts and specific approaches.

**Believable Characters in Unbelievable Situations** (Thoren, UC)
Charlie Jane Anders | Fantasy, Fiction, Mixed Genre, Science Fiction

Nowadays a lot of the most interesting Science Fiction and literary fiction features ludicrous and unreal situations—everyone from George Saunders to George R.R. Martin has some wild storylines where ordinary reality goes out the window. So how do you keep your characters feeling like people the reader could meet on the subway, while putting them in surreal worlds? We will discuss some ideas about how to write characters with believable inner lives and worlds, even when everything around them is crazy.

**Narrative Fundamentals** (Basha, OM)
Daniel José Older | Fiction

In this session, we will examine four fundamental elements of narrative to craft a story that readers won’t want to put down.

Fri, Feb 23: Afternoon Session A (1:30 - 2:30 p.m.)

**Writing Life: Balancing Word & World** (Heritage, UC)
Jenny Johnson, Malka Older, & Derek Palacio with Rachel Bunning | Writing Life

How do we, as writers, make creative space and find a balance in our hectic lives? How do we manage competing attentions, desires, deadlines and responsibilities? How do we remain wholly writer and wholly human? In this panel discussion, authors Jenny Johnson, Malka Older, and Derek Palacio discuss the challenges of balancing an active writing practice with the rest of life’s demands and share insights on how writing doesn’t have to be a disconnected side project, but an integrated part of an individual’s life.
Where Poetry Comes From (Traditions, UC)
Alberto Álvaro Ríos | Poetry, Writing Life

Where does poetry come from? This is an impossible question to answer, of course, and it’s different for everybody—still, it comes from somewhere. This is one person’s exploration of the journey, moving from border kid to poet laureate of the state. The markers that lead beyond poetry toward a greater poetics of understanding are complex but unmistakable, and this session will explore the makings of what matters to us as poets.

Writing the New American West: Postfrontier Literature (Thoren, UC)
Nina McConigley | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction

Writing about the American West has moved well beyond literature of American Old West/Frontier narratives that were typically set from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century. A new understanding of contemporary western writing is emerging. Sometimes referred to as Postfrontier literature, the more recent literary output of the region tends to engage in a reinterpretation of the region, calling into question the ways in which it has been defined in the past. We’ll look at some contemporary postfrontier writers who are writing less traditional narratives about the frontier—Percival Everett, Claire Vaye Watkins, Michael Ondaatje, Sherman Alexie, Paisley Redkdal, Layli Long Soldier, Kirstin Valdez Quade, and Annie Proulx among others—and talk about how the West is portrayed in these texts.

Reliably Unreliable: Writing Unreliable Narrators (Basha, OM)
Tod Goldberg | Fiction, Mixed Genre

Some of the most iconic narrators in the history of literature have been nothing short of abject liars. Huckleberry Finn? Totally unreliable. Nick Carraway? Delusional. Briony Tallis? Humbert Humbert? Both Nick AND Amy Dunne? Con artists, one and all. In this session, we’ll examine the art of deception, how writers can make their narrators—in any point of view—unreliable without alienating their readers in the process.
Contested Memories (Heritage, UC)
Roy Kesey | Fiction, Memoir, Nonfiction

In this generative session, we will be exploring the notion of contested memories, and the ways in which they can be used to build scenes in memoir, creative nonfiction, and fiction.

Making Beautiful Sentences (Traditions, UC)
Alix Ohlin | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction

What makes a sentence so powerful and enduring that it will stick in your mind forever? In this session, we’ll take a look at some beautiful sentences and try to figure out exactly what makes them work, what distinguishes a writer’s style at the syntax level, and where the music of prose resides. We’ll talk about the sentence as the unit of composition in fiction, and take a look at some examples of revised sentences from published writers to see how they made their words sing. You’ll be asked to respond to these examples critically and creatively.

Writing the Anthropocene (Thoren, UC)
Claire Vaye Watkins | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction, Poetry

A survey of philosophy, poetry, nature writing, climate fiction and eco-fabulism engaging the concept of the Anthropocene.

Pardon my Youth: Don’t Be Afraid of the Dark (Basha, OM)
Cecil Castellucci | Fiction, Young Adult

This session will examine whether there is a difference between writing for young people and writing about young people and the unique challenges of writing stories for both adolescent readers and adults. Many stories star young protagonists who live in and encounter the same mature world that adults do. Whether realistic or fantastical, it’s a world filled with darkness and light. But just because a young character is front and center doesn’t necessarily mean that the book is geared towards kids. What makes a book a book specifically for young people? How dark is too dark for a young audience?
The First Book: Publishing & You (Carson Ballroom, OM)
Kaveh Akbar, Andrea Avery, Derek Palacio, & Kristen Radtke with Annie Vitalsey | Business of Writing, Publishing

Publication is an exciting and daunting aspect of being a writer. You’ve put in an enormous amount of work in a manuscript and you’re ready for publishers to take a look. Now what? What do you need to know in the process to be prepared for a first book publication? Join Kaveh Akbar, Andrea Avery, Derek Palacio, and Kristen Radtke in this mixed-genre session designed to help you navigate the journey of what to expect during the first book publication process. Authors will talk about their personal experiences in the publishing world, working with contracts, understanding the author’s role in promotion, and the unpredictable emotional experiences around the fulfillment of a life-long goal. Bring your questions!

Fri, Feb 23: Afternoon Session C (4:00 - 5:00 p.m.)

Finding Your Inner Teen (Traditions, UC)
Bill Konigsberg | Fiction, Young Adult

Perhaps the hardest—and most crucial—aspect of young adult writing is nailing the voice of a teen protagonist. Young readers are nearly impossible to fool; if your protagonist is a 45-year-old woman masquerading as a teen, they’ll let you know! In this session, we will discuss several tools for getting in touch with our own inner teen voice. By the end of this session, students will have several exercises in hand that they can use to bring out that voice and sharpen it into authenticity.

Future Present: Writing Speculative Fiction about the Here & Now (Thoren, UC)
Malka Older | Fiction, Science Fiction

Ursula K. Le Guin wrote that “Science fiction is not predictive; it is descriptive.” This session will explore how science fiction can connect to the present, reflecting current concerns through a futuristic lens. Recommended Reading: The Dispossessed, Ursula K. Le Guin; The Yiddish Policeman’s Union, Michael Chabon; An Excess Male, Maggie Shen King.
You reach a crucial moment in your short story, novel, or essay; do you employ dialogue or narrative prose? When do we want the reader to eavesdrop on a scene in real time…and when do we want to simply “fill in the blanks” on what happened? We’ll explore the nature of dialogue, its use and misuse, and its relationship to story and character.
Error & Accident: Using Found Materials (Heritage, UC)
Ander Monson | Fiction, Hybrid, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction, Poetry

This session explores the usefulness of error in research. Often in researching, the thing that’s really important isn’t the thing we’re looking for, but the thing right next to it. We’ll discuss the use of found forms and materials in essays, poems, and stories.

What American Regionalism Means to Me (Traditions, UC)
Claire Vaye Watkins | Fiction, Mixed Genre

A talk about American regionalism, the Western, and reading and writing the American West today.

Writing for Sequential Art and the Quest for Silence (Thoren, UC)
Cecil Castellucci | Comics, Fiction, Graphic Novels

We will explore writing for comics, the golden age of which is currently unfolding around us. What are the advantages and disadvantages of telling your story sequentially? And how does one make full use of the medium? How do we write stories for a visual medium? What are some options for using the visual in our stories? And how do we find the quiet spaces in our narratives?

Mining the Poetic Unconscious (Basha, OM)
Kaveh Akbar | Poetry

Transcendent American poet Max Ritvo wrote that if the world outside a poet’s head is more interesting than the world inside their head, they might as well become a journalist. His point: it’s what’s inside the poet’s mind, what (or who) is hooting or singing or moaning or gagging inside the poet’s own totally unique psychic ecosystem that allows the poet access to a singular voice. In this session, we’ll try various methods of popping under our own hoods and exploring our cognitive machinery (using things like meditation and bibliomancy and Rorschach tests), mining our discoveries for poetic language and imagery and more. Leaving the session, we’ll have generated drafts, jumping off points for new poems, and hopefully, if all goes well, better relationships with the little voices in our heads.
The Same Thing, but Different: Writing Series Fiction, Sequels, & Connected Stories (Heritage, UC)
Tod Goldberg | Fiction, Mixed Genre

Creating a character, a world, and a central conflict that can be sustained over several years is the key to writing series fiction and sequels and connected short stories. In this session, we’ll examine prize-winning works of literature, genre fiction, and short fiction to learn how everyone from Richard Ford to James Lee Burke to Alice Munro, among many others, have crafted works that they can return to, time and again.

How to Freeze Time (Traditions, UC)
Jenny Johnson | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Poetry

Ever wished your sentences could warp a reader’s sense of time like a high-speed camera slowing motion? We will be looking at sentences in poems and prose that impact our perception of time. This session will include a rich discussion of a few examples and a writing exercise.

Lyrical Resistance: The Power of Ethnographic Poetry (Thoren, UC)
Rosemarie Dombrowski | Poetry

Arts-Based Research has been gaining traction in the social sciences, specifically regarding the use of personal poetry as a means of recording the stories of the marginalized, as well as the use of ethnographic poetry as a means of inscribing the cultural record. This session will explore the ways in which poetry can simultaneously act as cultural document and vehicle for social transformation. Examples from Poetry of Resistance: Voices for Social Justice (University of Arizona Press, 2016) will be read and discussed as a possible benchmark for all poetic endeavors in this age.
False Starts: Finding Where Your Story Really Begins  (Basha, OM)
Amy K. Nichols | Fiction, Mixed Genre

Of all the revising that happens when crafting a novel, perhaps the most effort goes into writing (and rewriting, and rewriting...) the beginning. Finding the right opening can be difficult, and it’s easy to become blind to your own work. In this interactive session, we’ll discuss how to find where your story really starts, and help willing participants identify the real beginnings of their stories. Bring the first page of your novel if you want to participate in this impromptu session.

The Direction of Contemporary Fiction  (Carson Ballroom, OM)
Emily Bell, Ander Monson, & Rayhané Sanders with David Joseph | Business of Writing, Editing, Fiction, Mixed Genre, Publishing

What is the current pulse of contemporary creative writing in the United States? Where is fiction right now? What predictions can we make for the literary future from the present moment? What trends, blends of genres, and literary techniques do we witness emerging from new authors and veterans of the craft? In this panel, editors Emily Bell, Ander Monson, and literary agent Rayhané Sanders share their perspectives on the landscape and trajectory of contemporary literature: what they’re excited about, what major issues are arising, current challenges for fiction writers, and more.

Sat, Feb 24: Morning Session C (11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

Car Crashes, Escape Hatches, & Hobbit Helmets: Where Did Your Suspense Go?  (Heritage, UC)
Matt Bell | Fiction, Mixed Genre

In this session, we’ll explore ways to generate and maintain suspense, tension, and excitement in fiction and other modes of storytelling. We’ll look at some of the most common mistakes that cost scenes their chance to be truly exciting or terrifying or thrilling, as well as study successful examples of how master storytellers keep us glued to the page, extracting practical tips and techniques we can put to use in our own stories.
**Memoir as Two-Way Mirror** (Thoren, UC)  
Andrea Avery | Memoir, Nonfiction

We have all seen two-way mirrors on hardboiled cop shows—the suspect sees only him or herself, but the unseen observers on the other side see everything. A good memoir is a little bit like a two-way mirror, except that the memoirist is both suspect-subject (staring back at herself) and cop-author (detached, analyzing, questioning everything). In this session, we will discuss that delightfully complicated task before the memoirist: to candidly examine the stuff of one’s life while filtering that self-examination through a more removed, strategic artistic lens. This presentation will include excerpts from model texts and discussion from the author’s own experiences.

**Genres & Their Place in Your Work** (Basha, OM)  
Charlie Jane Anders | Fantasy, Fiction, Mixed Genre, Science Fiction

What are genres? Why do we have them? How do genres reflect real-life events? And most importantly, when you decide to write about zombies or spaceships, what are you committing yourself to? What do these things usually mean, and what do they mean to you personally? In this session, we will discuss how to use genres mindfully, and create stories that make good use of them.

**Writer in the World: Publishing & Author Platforms** (Carson Ballroom, OM)  
Kaveh Akbar, Emily Bell, Nina McConigley, & Daniel José Older with Susan Nguyen | Business of Writing, Editing, Publishing

In today’s publishing industry, author promotion lies in the hands of the individual author as much as the publisher. With the increasing number of small and varied presses, a writer’s understanding of their role during and after the publication process is crucial. How do you build networks, find reviews, obtain interviews, and help get the word out about your work? Join Kaveh Akbar, Emily Bell, Nina McConigley and Daniel José Older as they discuss what it means to involve yourself in publishing and the ways contemporary writers work with their publishers to shape and market their books. Panelists will address building a platform and using social media, guerrilla campaigns, independent bookstores, interpersonal connections, and library systems in marketing and sharing your writing.
Animals & the Imagination (Heritage, UC)
Stephen Kuusisto | Mixed Genre, Poetry

We will explore how animals can infuse the literary imagination with dramatic and comic irony. Poets as diverse as D.H. Lawrence, Mary Oliver, W.S. Merwin, and Mark Doty (just to name some noted examples) express both the ambitions and limits of human “knowing” by acknowledging the ways that animals (both domestic and wild) often lead us away from custom.

Who’s Allowed to Write LGBTQ? (Traditions, UC)
Bill Konigsberg | Fiction, Mixed Genre

This session will focus on the #ownvoices movement, which stresses the importance of getting diverse stories from those from who are members of marginalized groups. We will discuss the somewhat difficult topics of writing across ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. While encouraging participants to write the stories they know, we will also discuss tools that authors can use if they choose to write across various identities, as well as some of the possible difficulties they may face.

Bodies & Text in Space: The Architecture of Image & Identity (Thoren, UC)
Wanda Dalla Costa & Natalie Diaz | Mixed Genre, Poetry

Travel Writing: Going There (Basha, OM)
Roy Kesey | Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction, Travel Writing

For millennia, both fiction and nonfiction have used travel experiences as raw material. This session will focus on ways to get the most out of your time away, and on the most dangerous pitfalls to avoid along the way.
**Structure of Collections** (Heritage, UC)
Ander Monson | Editing, Fiction, Mixed Genre, Nonfiction, Poetry

A good collection must become more than the sum of its disparate parts, which requires some thought as to architectures and resonances. Yet structures in literary collections are rarely discussed or theorized or talked about. So we’ll discuss fruitful ways to use architectures in collections—of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry.

**Poetics of Witness Workshop** (Traditions, UC)
Cynthia Hogue | Poetry

This hour-long poetry session will introduce you to four kinds of poetry of witness through examples. After brief discussion, participants will undertake two exercises designed to explore the act of witnessing as a creative approach (one among many) to the practice of poetry (poesis).

**Query Letters** (Thoren, UC)
Rayhané Sanders | Agents, Business of Writing, Publishing

Manuscript in hand, but don’t know how to start the submission process? A strong query letter showcases your work to any agent. This session explores the DOs and DON’Ts of the query letter. Sample query letters will be explored along with a Q&A.

**Maps for Storytellers** (Basha, OM)
Tara Ison | Fiction, Screenwriting

So, you have that great idea for your novel, a fascinating character, an intriguing environment, a compelling theme, and, yes, a stunningly original literary style—but what is this thing called “structure”? How do you move your character from A to Z through your story? In this session, we’ll examine two classic cinematic structural maps—The Heroic Journey and the 3-Act Feature Film Paradigm—from a novelist’s POV. We’ll explore how to use these templates to develop a solid structural framework and sustain momentum in a novel-length work of fiction without sacrificing character, theme, or voice.

Suggested advance viewing: Witness (1985) and The Wizard of Oz prior to this session.
Re-Visioning: Revising the Manuscript and Conference Wrap-Up
(Carson Ballroom, OM)
Kevin McIlvoy, Alix Ohlin, & Claire Vaye Watkins with Beth Charles | Fiction, Mixed Genre

Revision is an ongoing part of any writer’s processes. While each draft is a huge accomplishment, how do you move your draft into the revision process? How do you elevate your writing to the next level? Authors Alix Ohlin, Kevin McIlvoy, and Claire Vaye Watkins share hands-on approaches to the techniques of revision, personal strategies that work for them, how to see revision as a creative act, the habits of revision, and more.

After this panel, the conference will conclude with a few words from the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing.
Kaveh Akbar is the founding editor of Divedapper. His poems appear recently in The New Yorker, Poetry, Ploughshares, APR, Tin House, and elsewhere. His debut full-length collection, Calling a Wolf a Wolf, is just out with Alice James Books; he is also the author of the chapbook Portrait of the Alcoholic. The recipient of a Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation, a Pushcart Prize, and a Lucille Medwick Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, Kaveh was born in Tehran, Iran, and teaches at Purdue University and in the low-residency MFA program at Randolph College.

Charlie Jane Anders is the author of All the Birds in the Sky, which was one of Time Magazine’s 10 best novels of 2016 and recently won a Nebula Award, along with a Locus Award and the William L. Crawford Award. She organizes the Writers With Drinks reading series in San Francisco, and was a founding editor of the science fiction site io9. Her story “Six Months, Three Days” won a Hugo Award, and her debut novel Choir Boy won a Lambda Literary Award.

Andrea Avery is the author of Sonata: A Memoir of Pain and the Piano, which describes her experiences growing up as an aspiring pianist even after a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis at age 12. Her writing has been published in Ploughshares, Real Simple, The Oxford American, and The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior. She was the winner of Real Simple’s 2010 essay contest and a finalist in Glamour magazine’s essay contest. She holds a BA in music, an MFA in Creative Writing, and a doctorate in education from Arizona State University. She teaches English at Phoenix Country Day School and is an active volunteer with the Arthritis Foundation.
Emily Bell is a Senior Editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux and the Director of FSG Originals. She publishes Lucia Berlin, Amelia Gray, Catherine Lacey, and Laura van den Berg, among others. Prior to FSG she worked at Riverhead Books.

Matt Bell is the author of the novels *Scrapper* (a 2016 Michigan Notable Book) and *In the House upon the Dirt between the Lake and the Woods* (a finalist for the Young Lions Fiction Award), as well as the short story collection *A Tree or a Person or a Wall*. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times, Tin House, Conjunctions*, and many other publications. A native of Michigan, he is an Assistant Professor in the Creative Writing Program at Arizona State University.

Cecil Castellucci is the award-winning author of books and graphic novels for young adults including *Boy Proof, The Plain Janes, The Year of the Beasts, Tin Star*, and the Eisner nominated *Odd Duck*. In 2015 she co-authored *Moving Target: A Princess Leia Adventure*. Her latest graphic novel is *Soupy Leaves Home*. She is currently writing *Shade, The Changing Girl*, an ongoing comic on Gerard Way’s Young Animal imprint at DC Comics. Upcoming in 2018 is *Don’t Cosplay With My Heart*. Her short stories and short comics have been published in *Strange Horizons, Tor.com, Apex Mag, Black Clock, The Rattling Wall, Womanthology: Space, Star Trek: Waypoint* and *Vertigo SFX: Slam!* She is the Children’s Correspondence Coordinator for *The Rumpus*, a two-time Macdowell Fellow, and the founding YA Editor at the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. She lives in Los Angeles.
Wanda Dalla Costa, AIA, LEED A.P. is a Visiting Eminent Scholar at the Del E. Webb School of Construction at ASU. She is part of the Indigenous team of architects, Unceded, representing Team Canada at the Venice Biennale 2018. She is an architect and has spent nearly 20 years working with Indigenous communities in North America. Her current work focuses on culturally responsive design, sustainable-affordable housing, climatic resiliency in architecture, and built environments as a teaching tool for traditional knowledge. She holds a Master of Design Research (City Design, Planning and Policy) from the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc), a Master of Architecture from the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Native Studies. She is the Owner of Redquill Architecture. Dalla Costa is a member of the Saddle Lake First Nation, Alberta and currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona.

Natalie Diaz was born and raised in the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California, on the banks of the Colorado River. She is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Tribe. Diaz teaches at Arizona State University, and her first poetry collection is *When My Brother Was an Aztec*.

Rosemarie Dombrowski is the founder of rinky dink press, the co-founder and host of the Phoenix Poetry Series, and an editor for Four Chambers Press. She is the recipient of four Pushcart nominations, the Carrie McCray Memorial Literary Award, an Arts Hero Award, and a fellowship from the Lincoln Center for Applied Ethics. Her collections include *The Book of Emergencies*, *The Philosophy of Unclean Things*, and the forthcoming *The Cleavage Planes of Southwest Minerals [A Love Story]*, winner of the 2017 *Split Rock Review* chapbook competition. She teaches courses on the poetics of street art, women’s literature, and creative ethnography at Arizona State University’s Downtown Phoenix.
campus. Additionally, she is the inaugural Poet Laureate of Phoenix, AZ.

**Tod Goldberg** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of over a dozen books, including *Gangsterland*, a finalist for the Hammett Prize, *The House of Secrets*, which he co-authored with Brad Meltzer, *Living Dead Girl*, a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, two collections of short stories, and the popular *Burn Notice* series. His short stories, essays, and criticism, have appeared in numerous publications, including the *Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Review of Books, Black Clock, The Normal School, Las Vegas Weekly*, and, recently, *Best American Essays*. In addition, he is also the co-host of the immensely popular podcast Literary Disco along with Julia Pistell and Rider Strong. He holds an MFA fiction and literature from Bennington College and founded and directs the Low Residency MFA in Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts at the University of California, Riverside.

**Cynthia Hogue** has published fourteen books, including nine collections of poetry, most recently *Revenance*, listed as one of the 2014 “Standout” books by the Academy of American Poets, and *In June the Labyrinth* (Red Hen Press, 2017). With Sylvain Gallais, Hogue co-translated *Fortino Sámano* (The overflowing of the poem), from the French of poet Virginie Lalucq and philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (Omnidawn 2012), which won the Harold Morton Landon Translation Award from the Academy of American Poets in 2013. Among Hogue’s other honors are an NEA Fellowship in poetry, a MacDowell Colony residency, and the Witter Bynner Translation Fellowship at the Santa Fe Art Institute. Hogue served as the Distinguished Visiting Writer at Cornell University in the Spring of 2014. She was a 2015 NEA Fellow in Translation, and is the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry Emerita at Arizona State University.
Tara Ison is the author of the novels *A Child out of Alcatraz*, *The List*, and *Rockaway*, the essay collection *Reeling Through Life: How I Learned to Live, Love, and Die at the Movies*, and the short story collection *Ball*. She is a professor of creative writing at Arizona State University. For more info, please see www.TaraIson.com

Jac Jemc lives in Chicago. Her novel *The Grip of It* was recently released from FSG Originals (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) in August 2017. Jemc is also the author of *My Only Wife* (Dzanc Books), named a finalist for the 2013 PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize for Debut Fiction and winner of the Paula Anderson Book Award; *A Different Bed Every Time* (Dzanc Books), named one of Amazon’s Best Story Collections of 2014; and a chapbook of stories, *These Strangers She’d Invited In* (Greying Ghost Press). Jac’s nonfiction has been featured on the longlist for *Best American Essays* and her story “Women in Wells” was featured in the 2010 Best of the Web anthology. Jac received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has completed residencies at the Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus, Hald: The Danish Center for Writers and Translators, Ragdale, the Vermont Studio Center, Thicket, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She has been the recipient of two Illinois Arts Council Professional Development Grants, and was named as one of 25 Writers to Watch by the Guild Literary Complex and one of New City’s Lit 50 in Chicago. She’s taught English and Creative Writing at the University of Notre Dame, Northeastern Illinois University, Loyola University Chicago, Lake Forest College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Story Studio Chicago, and The Loft Literary Center. She currently serves as web nonfiction editor for Hobart.
Jenny Johnson is the author of *In Full Velvet* (Sarabande Books, 2017). She is the recipient of a 2015 Whiting Award and a 2016-17 Hodder Fellowship in Poetry at Princeton University. Her poems have appeared in *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly, New England Review, Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, and elsewhere. She teaches at the University of Pittsburgh and at the Rainier Writing Workshop, Pacific Lutheran University’s low-residency MFA program.

Roy Kesey was born and raised in northern California, and currently lives in Maryland. His latest book is a short story collection called *Any Deadly Thing*. He’s also the author of a novel called *Pacazo* (the January 2011 selection for *The Rumpus* Book Club), a collection of short stories called *All Over* (a finalist for the Foreword Magazine Book of the Year Award, and one of *The L* Magazine’s Best Books of the Decade), a novella called *Nothing in the World* (winner of the Bullfight Media Little Book Award), and a historical guide to the city of Nanjing, China. His work has appeared in several anthologies including *Best American Short Stories, New Sudden Fiction, The Robert Olen Butler Prize Anthology, The Future Dictionary of America*, and in more than eighty magazines including *McSweeney’s, Subtropics, The Georgia Review, American Short Fiction, The Iowa Review* and *Ninth Letter*. His translation of Pola Oloixarac’s magnificent debut novel *Las teorías salvages* was published by Soho Press as *Savage Theories* in 2017. Other translations of his from Spanish and French into English include work on behalf of Turner Books, the Ministry of Education of Spain, PromPerú, Ferrovial Agromán, and the City of Santander.
Bill Konigsberg is the award-winning author of four young adult novels. *The Porcupine of Truth* won the PEN Center USA Literary Award and the Stonewall Book Award in 2016. *Openly Straight* won the Sid Fleischman Award for Humor, and was a finalist for the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award and Lambda Literary Award in 2014. His debut novel, *Out of the Pocket* won the Lambda Literary Award in 2009. His most recent novel, *Honestly Ben*, received three starred reviews, from *Publisher’s Weekly*, *Booklist*, and *School Library Journal*. He lives in Chandler, Arizona, with his husband, Chuck, and their Australian Labradoodles, Mabel and Buford.

Stephen Kuusisto is the author of the memoirs *Planet of the Blind* (a *New York Times* “Notable Book of the Year”), *Eavesdropping: A Memoir of Blindness and Listening* and the poetry collections *Only Bread, Only Light*, and *Letters to Borges*. His newest memoir, *Have Dog, Will Travel: A Poet’s Journey with an Exceptional Labrador* will be published in March, 2018 by Simon & Schuster. A graduate of the Iowa Writer’s Workshop and a Fulbright Scholar, he has taught at the University of Iowa, Hobart & William Smith Colleges, and The Ohio State University. He currently teaches at Syracuse University where he holds a professorship in the Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies. He is a frequent speaker in the US and abroad. His website is: www.stephenkuusisto.com

Nina McConigley is the author of the story collection *Cowboys and East Indians*, which was the winner of the 2014 PEN Open Book Award and winner of a High Plains Book Award. It also was on the longlist for the 2014 Frank O’Connor International Short Story Award. She was born in Singapore and grew up in Wyoming. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Houston, where she was an Inprint Brown Foundation Fellow. She also holds an MA in English from the University of Wyoming and a BA in Literature from Saint Olaf College. She is the winner
of a Barthelme Memorial Fellowship in Non-Fiction and served as the Non-Fiction Editor of *Gulf Coast: a Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*. Her play, *Owen Wister Considered* was one of five plays produced in 2005 for the Edward Albee New Playwrights Festival, in which Pulitzer-prize winning playwright Lanford Wilson was the producer. She has been awarded a work-study scholarship to the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference in 2005-2009, and received a full fellowship to the Vermont Studio Center. She was granted a Tennessee Williams Scholarship in Fiction at the 2010 Sewanee Writers’ Conference. In 2011, she was a Scholar at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference and in 2014 was a Fiction fellow.

**Kevin McIlvoy**, retired New Mexico State University Regents Professor, has published six books, most recently *57 Octaves Below Middle C* (Four Way Books, 2017) and *The Complete History of New Mexico and Other Stories* (Graywolf Press, 2008). His novel, *At the Gate of All Wonder* (Tupelo Press) will be published in September 2018. He teaches in the MFA Creative Writing Program at Warren Wilson College. He has served on the boards of the Council for Literary Magazines and Small Presses and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs.

**Ander Monson** is the author of six books: three of nonfiction (*Neck Deep and Other Predicaments*, *Vanishing Point*, and *Letter to a Future Lover*), two poetry collections (*Vacationland* and *The Available World*), and a novel, *Other Electricities*. A finalist for the New York Public Library Young Lions Award (for *Other Electricities*) and a NBCC in criticism (for *Vanishing Point*), he is also a recipient of a number of other prizes: a Howard Foundation Fellowship, the Graywolf Nonfiction Prize, the Annie Dillard Award for Nonfiction, the Great Lakes Colleges New Writers Award in Nonfiction, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He edits the magazine *DIAGRAM* <thediagram.com>, the New Michigan Press, *Essay Daily*

**KONIGSBERG - MONSON**

February 22 - 24, 2018 at Arizona State University
<essaydaily.org>, and a series of yearly literary/music tournaments: March Sadness (2016), March Fadness (2017), and March Shredness (2018). He directs the MFA program at the University of Arizona.

**Amy K. Nichols** has been a musician, a web designer, a political assistant, a teacher, and a technical writer. She’s traveled overseas, studied medieval paleography, earned a brown belt in karate, been complimented by Benedict Cumberbatch, and survived being crushed by drunken Scots. She lives in Peoria with her husband, two children and too many books. She is the author of the YA science fiction novels *Now That You’re Here* and *While You Were Gone* published by Knopf. She taught with the Your Novel Year program at the Piper Center for Creative Writing at ASU, served as the Writer in Residence for the Glendale Public Library, and is currently plotting her next adventure. Visit her online at www.amyknichols.com.

**Alix Ohlin** is the author of four books of fiction, most recently *Inside* and *Signs and Wonders*. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker, Tin House, The New York Times, Best American Short Stories*, and many other places. She lives in Easton, PA and teaches at Lafayette College.

**Daniel José Older** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Salsa Nocturna*, the *Bone Street Rumba* urban fantasy series from Penguin’s Roc Books and the Young Adult novel *Shadowshaper* (Scholastic, 2015), a New York Times Notable Book of 2015, which won the International Latino Book Award and was shortlisted for the Kirkus Prize in Young Readers’ Literature, the Andre Norton Award, the Locus, the Mythopoeic Award, and named one of *Esquire’s* 80 Books Every Person Should Read. You can find his thoughts on writing, read dispatches from his decade-long career as an NYC
paramedic and hear his music at http://danieljoseolder.net/, on youtube and @djolder on twitter.

Malka Older is a writer, aid worker, and PhD candidate. Her science fiction political thriller Infomocracy is the first full-length novel from Tor.com, and the sequel Null States was published in 2017. She was nominated for the 2016 John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer. Named Senior Fellow for Technology and Risk at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs for 2015, she has more than a decade of experience in humanitarian aid and development. Her doctoral work on the sociology of organizations at the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) explores the dynamics of multi-level governance and disaster response using the cases of Hurricane Katrina and the Japan tsunami of 2011.

Derek Palacio is a Delbanco Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Michigan, as well as a faculty member of the Institute of American Indian Arts MFA program. He is the author of the novella How to Shake the Other Man and the novel The Mortifications. With Claire Vaye Watkins, he co-directs the Mojave School, a free creative writing workshop for rural Nevada teens.

Kristen Radtke is the author of the graphic nonfiction book Imagine Wanting Only This (Pantheon, 2017). She is the managing editor of Sarabande Books and the film & video editor of TriQuarterly magazine. She lives in New York.
Alberto Álvaro Ríos, Arizona’s inaugural poet laureate and a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, is the author of eleven books and chapbooks of poetry, including *The Theater of Night*—winner of the 2007 PEN/Beyond Margins Award—three collections of short stories, and a memoir about growing up on the border, *Capirotada*. His book *The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body* was a finalist for the National Book Award. Ríos is the recipient of numerous accolades and his work is included in over 300 national and international literary anthologies. He is also the host of the PBS program Books & Co. His work is regularly taught and translated, and has been adapted to dance and both classical and popular music. Ríos is a University Professor of Letters, Regents’ Professor, and the Katharine C. Turner Chair in English at Arizona State University. His most recent book is *A Small Story About the Sky*.

Rayhané Sanders is an agent at Massie & McQuilkin (www.mmqlit.com) and an independent book editor available for hire (rss.editorial@gmail.com). She attended NYU and began her publishing career at *Newsweek* Magazine. She then moved to book publishing, working first for Penguin’s Dutton and Gotham Books and then for William Morris Endeavor, where she worked with *New York Times* bestselling authors and recipients of such honors as the PEN/Hemingway Award, PEN/New England Award, Guggenheim and Wallace Stegner Fellowships, and National Endowment for the Arts grants, among others. Rayhané began to represent authors at Wayne Kabak’s WSK Management, where she worked with a slew of internationally bestselling authors and broadcast journalists, and added a *New York Times* bestseller and winners of, among others, the Hopwood Award, Oregon Book Award, and Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award to her list. She represents and is on the lookout for literary and historical fiction, upmarket book-club fiction and comic novels, select YA (no speculative elements, please), propulsive narrative nonfiction, linked essay collections, and select memoir. She likes projects that are voice-centered and site-specific, whether that be a place, profession, or...
subculture. Though quality of writing is the most important factor, she is particularly interested in fresh voices telling fresh stories we haven’t heard before (including for YA audiences), and is fond of immigrant stories and stories concerned with race, sexuality, specific cultural settings, cross-cultural themes, and notions of identity.

Claire Vaye Watkins was born and raised in the Mojave Desert. She is the author of Gold Fame Citrus and Battleborn, which won the Story Prize, the Dylan Thomas Prize, New York Public Library’s Young Lions Fiction Award, the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame. She is an assistant professor in the Helen Zell Writers’ Program at the University of Michigan and the co-director, with Derek Palacio, of the Mojave School, a free creative writing workshop for teenagers in rural Nevada.
Cheyenne "Anna" Black serves as the Editor-in-Chief for Hayden’s Ferry Review at Arizona State University where she is an MFA candidate and Virginia G. Piper global and research fellow. Black has taught creative writing and publishing through ASU, the National University of Singapore, Western Washington University, and Perryville women’s prison. She lectures on topics as diverse as experimental poetry and the future of the book. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in the anthologies We Will Be Shelter and In Sight: An Ekphrastic Collaboration, as well as the journals 45th Parallel, Bacopa Review, Wordgathering, the American Journal of Poetry, and New Mobility among others.

Rachel Bunning is an Arizona native who received her BA in English with a concentration in creative writing (fiction) from Arizona State University in December 2017. She works at South Mountain Community College as a writing tutor and TA and does freelance writing. Her hobbies include running, trying new places to eat, and looking at pictures of foxes. She hopes to pursue an MFA in creative writing within the next few years.

Elizabeth Charles writes fiction and teaches undergraduate composition and creative writing at Arizona State University, where she is currently pursuing an MFA. She is a recipient of the 2017 Virginia G. Piper Global Residency Fellowship and 2018 Virginia G. Piper Global Teaching Fellowship in Singapore.

Jonathan Danielson is an instructor with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. He was named Writer-at-Large for Feathertale Review in 2017, and his fiction has appeared in Juked, Superstition Review, The Saturday Evening Post, Gravel, and other journals. He was the recipient of the 2016 Editor’s Prize from Switchback for his story “Borders.” Along with his full-time teaching duties, Jonathan is also a Ph.D. student studying English Literature and Creative Writing.

David Joseph is an MFA candidate in fiction writing at Arizona State University. His creative work has appeared in Hobart, Cheap Pop, W.W. Norton’s Hint Fiction anthology, and elsewhere. David has served in several editorial positions, including Editor-in-Chief of Susquehanna Review from 2011-2013.

Maritsa Leyva Martinez is an MFA candidate in fiction at Arizona State University and expects to complete her degree in 2018. An avid traveller and amateur chef, she has enjoyed delicious cuisine in Hong Kong, Rome, Oaxaca, Naples, Lyon, Thailand, and other smaller and bigger nooks in the world. Previously she has worked as a TEFL certified instructor, middle school teacher, Education and Community Engagement intern, social media manager (Sweet Dreams Rwanda - A Documentary Film), and tutor. Most recently she was the
recipient of the 2017 Piper Global Teaching Fellowship in Singapore (The National University of Singapore).

**Susan Nguyen** is an MFA candidate in poetry at Arizona State University where she serves as poetry editor for Hayden’s Ferry Review. She is the recipient of several fellowships from the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing, one of which enabled her to start an oral history project centered on the Vietnamese diaspora. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *PANK, diode, The Rumpus,* and elsewhere. She was recently featured on PBS NewsHour as one of “three women poets to watch in 2018.” Find her at www.girlpoet.co

Kalani Pickhart is an MFA fiction candidate at Arizona State University and is a graduate assistant at the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing. She is the recipient of the 2018 Virginia G. Piper Research Fellowship, which will fund travel to Ukraine to finish her work on a novel. Her work was chosen as a finalist for the *Yemassee Journal’s* 2017 Fiction Writing Prizes, judged by Alexandra Kleeman. Her short fiction has appeared in *Superstition Review.*

**Malik Toms** was born and raised in Harlem, New York, and is a 20+ year veteran of the pen and keyboard. He did his undergraduate work in Sociology at Iowa State University, working as a drug rehabilitation counselor before returning to college to pursue a graduate degree in Creative Writing. He published his first short story at the age 18 after two years of “No thanks.” Since then he has worked as a freelance author, which is a bit like being a freelance mercenary minus all the bullets and moral ambiguity. His work has appeared in over thirty publications including multiple anthologies and a stand-alone novella. A graduate of Iowa State’s Creative Writing MFA program, Malik Toms polished his writing skills crafting cyberpunk and steampunk fantasies on the way to multiple Origin and Ennie award nominations (including six Ennie wins). Malik also was part of the Shadowrun Returns video game team, which won Diehard gameFan’s PC Game of the year in 2013. He is presently hard at work writing his first fantasy thriller. Malik currently lives in Arizona where he is regularly super-smashed by at least one of his three video-game-obsessed boys. When he isn’t writing, he’s teaching writing and sociology at community colleges throughout the Arizona desert, and maybe watching a lot of TV.

**Annie Vitalsey** is an MFA candidate in fiction at Arizona State University. Her stories have appeared in *Pacifica Literary Review, Bennington Review, Spilled Milk Magazine, Menacing Hedge, Bird’s Thumb, Watershed Review,* and elsewhere. Originally from North Carolina, Annie now resides in Mesa, Arizona.
The Piper Center would like to acknowledge the following attendees, each of whom’s attendance was made possible through the support of various institutions, organizations, and individuals:

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In our own lives here in the world, we all have an opportunity to do good things on a daily basis for others, and to do them in an unselfish manner; to provide our world and its people, through giving, an improved, beautiful culture and place to live, work, and grow healthy families.

—Virginia G. Piper

15 years ago, the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust established the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing to serve as the artistic and intellectual heart of a vibrant, thriving literary community. Ever since, we’ve strived to fulfill that vision with humility, honor, and heart.

We hope you’ve enjoyed this year’s Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference: that you’ve learned something new or been able to gain a different perspective on your creative practice. And more than this, that you’ve realized you’re not alone, that you feel like a part of a larger community.

While sometimes it feels like the conference always ends too soon, it’s just a beginning—new relationships, new projects, new goals. We’re so grateful for your participation and support. We look forward to seeing you again soon.