

BALTIMORE'S
16TH ANNUAL



SESSION DIRECTORY

April 27, 2019

University of Baltimore

10:00 - 11:00 AM	4
History's Mysteries: Shaping the Past into a Literary Now	4
BC-135	4
Truth & Trauma: How We Write Authentic Stories of Pain	6
BC-205	6
Possible and Impossible Futures	9
BC-207	9
 10:00 - 11:30 AM	 11
30-Minute, One-on-One Editorial Session	11
Brian Price	11
BC-129	11
Lauren LaRocca	11
BC-131	11
Tafisha A, Edwards	12
BC-131	12
Bret McCabe	12
BC-139	12
Karen Houppert	13
BC-141	13
 11:00 - 12:00 PM	 14
You Can't Live Off Air. Money's in the Room	14
BC-143	14
 11:00 - 12:30 PM	 17
Your Classics Aren't My Classics! Decolonizing Literary Canon for Asian Americans	17
BC-135	17
 12:00 - 1:00 PM	 20
How We Fight White Supremacy: The Field Guide to Black Resistance	20
BC Auditorium	20
 12:00-1:00 PM	 21
Identity in Artistry: Exploring the Queer Perspective	21
BC-205	21

12:00 - 1:30 PM	23
No One Leaves Home Unless Home Is the Mouth of a Shark: The Immigrant's Journey	23
BC-143	23
12:00 - 1:30 PM	26
Master Class: Diving Into Stage Writing: Dialogue & Drama	26
BC-207	26
1:00 - 2:00 PM	27
Angie Kim discusses Miracle Creek	27
BC Auditorium	27
Breaking Down Bars: Stories That Challenge Mass Incarceration	28
BC-135	28
1:30 - 2:30 PM	30
The Art of Telling Lies Skillfully: Writing Tips from an Award-Winning Screenwriter	30
BC-207	30
1:30 - 3:00 PM	31
Novelists at Work: How to Structure a Novel and Walk Away Like a Boss	31
BC-205	31
2:00-3:30 PM	35
What We Are: Speck, Good Hair, Vanilla Bean, Cinnamon & Pearl: When Words Make You Real	35
BC-135	35
2:00 - 3:00 PM	39
Poet This!	39
BC-143	39
3:00 - 4:00 PM	43
When It All Falls Down: Real Talk About Journalism in the Age of Trump	43
BC-205	43
3:00 - 4:00 PM	44

It Takes a Village: Supporting the Local Literary Scene	44
BC-207	44
3:30 - 5:00 PM	46
We Need Diverse Books: Children's and Young Adult Literature	46
BC-143	46
4:00 - 6:00 PM	49
KEYNOTE: Dani Shapiro in Conversation with Marion Winik	49
BC Auditorium	49
MUSICIANS	51
Annie Cassidy	51
Queen Earth	52

10:00 - 11:00 AM

History's Mysteries: Shaping the Past into a Literary Now

BC-135

How do writers use history to create contemporary literature? What research is required? How do they transform the past into stories, poems, novels and essays for today? What fidelity do they show to the historical record? **Eugenia Kim**, **Shelley Puhak**, **Richard Slotkin**, and **Michael Downs** represent multiple genres as they explore these questions and more, including history's ongoing role as a compelling and necessary subject for writers.

Eugenia Kim

Eugenia Kim's debut novel, *The Calligrapher's Daughter*, won the Borders Original Voices Award, was shortlisted for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, and was a Washington Post Best Historical Novel and Critic's Pick. Her second novel, *The Kinship of Secrets*, published last November, received a starred review from Booklist, was a Library Reads pick, and an Amazon Best Book of the Month/Literature and Fiction. She teaches at Fairfield University's MFA Creative Writing Program.

Twitter: @Eugenia_Kim

Instagram: @Rhebius

Website: www.eugenia-kim.com



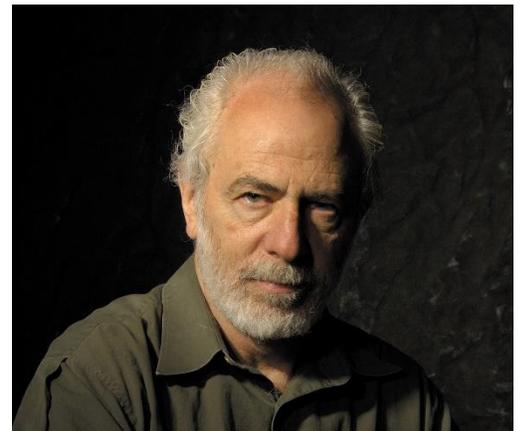
Richard Slotkin

Richard Slotkin is best known for an award-winning trilogy of scholarly books on the myth of the frontier in American cultural history. *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973) was a Finalist for the 1974 National Book Award in History, and received the 1973 Albert J. Beveridge Award of the American Historical Association. *The Fatal Environment* (1985) received the Little Big Horn Associates Literary Award. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (1992) was a Finalist for the 1993 National Book Award. Other books include *Lost Battalions: The Great War and the Crisis of American Nationality* (2005); *No Quarter: The Battle of the Petersburg Crater, 1864* (2009); and *Long Road to Antietam: How the Civil War Became a Revolution* (2012). He has also written three historical novels. *Abe* (2000), which won the Shaara Prize for Civil War Fiction; *The Return of Henry Starr* (1988); and *The Crater* (1980).

Twitter: NA

Instagram: NA

Website: NA



Shelley Puhak

Shelley Puhak is the author of two books of poetry, *Stalin in Aruba*, awarded the Towson Prize for Literature, and *Guinevere in Baltimore*, winner of the Anthony Hecht Prize. Her nonfiction has appeared in *The Atlantic*, the *Iowa Review*, and *The Best American Travel Writing* and has received notable mentions in *The Best American Essays*.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: www.shelleypuhak.com



Michael Downs

Michael Downs is the author of *The Strange and True Tale of Horace Wells, Surgeon Dentist*, a novel based on the tragic life of the American dentist widely credited with discovering anesthesia. Earlier works include *The Greatest Show: Stories*, inspired by the true story of the deadly 1944 Hartford, Conn., circus fire, and *House of Good Hope: A Promise for a Broken City*, named a finalist in memoir for the Connecticut Book Award. He also co-authored *Hollywood's Team: Grit, Glamour, and the 1950s Los Angeles Rams*. He lives in Baltimore's Hamilton neighborhood, and is a professor of English at Towson University.

Twitter: @MDownswriter

Instagram: michaeldownswriter

Website: <http://www.michael-downs.net/>



Truth & Trauma: How We Write Authentic Stories of Pain

BC-205

Four writers across genres, **Kristina Gaddy, Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson, Cija Jefferson, Wallace Lane** and **Neda Semani**, write global and local stories of war, loss, death, illness, abuse, crime, and discuss researching and writing trauma, as well as the effect working with difficult subjects can have on a writer.

Wallace Lane

Wallace Lane is a poet, writer and author from Baltimore, Maryland. He received his MFA Degree in Creative Writing and Publishing Arts from The University of Baltimore in May 2017. His poetry has appeared in Little Patuxent Review, The Avenue, Welter Literary Journal and is forthcoming in several other literary journals. *Jordan Year*, his debut collection of poetry, is a coming of age narrative, which uncovers what it means to live and survive in Baltimore City. Wallace also works as a Media Arts and Creative Writing teacher with Baltimore City Public Schools.



Twitter: @wallacelane_

Instagram: @wallykool

Website: www.wallacelaneiii.com

Cija Jefferson

Cija (pronounced Kia) Jefferson is the author of *Sonic Memories* (and other essays), and host of *Writers & Words*, a Baltimore reading series. Her work has been featured in multiple publications including *Baltimore Style*, *Yellow Arrow Journal*, *HelloGiggles*, and *The Conversation with Amanda de Cadenet*. She holds her MFA in Creative Writing & Publishing Arts from the University of Baltimore.

Twitter: @cjasquips

Instagram: @cjasquips

Website: cjasquips.com



Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson

Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson is a writer and editor based in Baltimore who has written articles, essays, and short fiction for The New Yorker.com, The New York Times, The Washington Post Magazine, The Southern Review, McSweeney's, PANK, and The Atlantic, among many others. Her writing has been recognized by Best American Essays and nominated for multiple Pushcart Prizes. In 2018, she was a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow. Dickinson's writing has been supported with fellowships and residencies from the Kenyon Review Writers Workshop, the Vermont Studio Center, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Cuttyhunk Island Writers' Residency, and Ragdale; and with grants from the Sustainable Arts Foundation, the Maryland State Arts Council, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, and the Money for Women/Barbara Deming Memorial Fund. She was a 2017 Rubys Artist Grant recipient and she won the 2017 Baker Artist Award for the Literary Arts.



Twitter: @elizdickinson

Instagram: elizabethevittsdickinson

Website: www.eedickinson.com

Kristina Gaddy

Kristina Gaddy's forthcoming nonfiction book *Flowers in the Gutter* (Dutton 2020) tells the true story of the teenage Edelweiss Pirates who fought the Nazis. Through narratives based on memoirs, oral history interviews, and Nazi documents, her writing immerse the reader in the world of these teenagers as they resist the Third Reich. In 2018, she received a Robert W. Deutsch Foundation Ruby's Artist Award for *Well of Souls*, a literary exploration of the little known history of the banjo in the Americas, it's role as a a spiritual device in the hands of enslaved Africans, and the instrument's legacy in today's culture and society. Her writing explores and highlights forgotten and marginalized histories, and has appeared in The Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, Bitch Magazine, Narratively, Proximity, Atlas Obscura, OZY, and other smaller history and music publications.



Twitter:

Instagram: @kgadz

Website: www.kristinagaddy.com

Neda Toloui-Semnani

Neda Toloui-Semnani is a journalist and writer whose work has appeared in various online and print publications, including the Washington Post, Longreads, New York, Kinfolk, the Baffler, the Week, and Roll Call, among others. She is currently at work on her memoir, *They Said They Wanted Revolution*, to be published by Little A in August 2020.

Twitter: @neda_semnani

Instagram: @neda_semnani

Website: nedasemnani.com



Possible and Impossible Futures

BC-207

Jason Harris, Sarah Pinsker, Erin Roberts, and K.M. Szpara explore classic, recent, and upcoming near-future fictions and discuss the responsibilities and challenges of looking forward: utopias, dystopias, apocalypses, and hope.

Erin Roberts

Erin Roberts is a speculative fiction writer whose short fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in publications including *Asimov's*, *Clarkesworld*, *The Dark*, *Then Again*, and *The Best Science Fiction of the Year: Volume 4*. In addition to prose writing, she enjoys storytelling in all its formats - she is a staff writer for the audio exergame *Zombies, Run!* and has interactive fiction published or forthcoming in *Sub-Q Magazine* and from *Choice of Games*. She has an MFA from Stonecoast, is a graduate of the *Odyssey Writers Workshop*, and was the winner of the *Speculative Literature Foundation's 2017 Diverse Worlds and Diverse Writers awards*. Her musings on life and writing can be found on Twitter at [@nirele](https://twitter.com/nirele) or on her website at writingwonder.com.

Twitter: [@nirele](https://twitter.com/nirele)

Instagram:

Website: www.writingwonder.com



K.M. Szpara

K.M. Szpara is a queer and trans author who lives in Baltimore, MD, with a tiny dog. Kellan's debut alt-/near-future novel, *DOCILE* (Spring 2020, Tor.com Publishing), explores the snowballing debt crisis, consent, and privilege, and can be described as "really gay". He is the author of "Small Changes Over Long Periods of Time," a Hugo and Nebula nominated novelette about a gay trans man who's bitten by a vampire. More of his fiction can be found in venues such as *Uncanny*, *Lightspeed*, and *Shimmer*. You can find him on the Internet at kmszpara.com or on Twitter at [@KMSzpara](https://twitter.com/KMSzpara).

Twitter: [@kmszpara](https://twitter.com/KMSzpara)

Instagram: [@kmszpara](https://www.instagram.com/kmszpara)

Website: <https://www.kmszpara.com>



Sarah Pinsker

Sarah Pinsker's short fiction has won the Nebula & Sturgeon Awards, and she's been a finalist for the Hugo and numerous other awards. Small Beer Press published her first collection, *Sooner or Later Everything Falls Into the Sea*, in March 2019, and her first novel, *A Song For A New Day*, will be published by Penguin/Random House/Berkley in September 2019. She's also a singer/songwriter with three albums on various indie labels and a fourth on the way. She lives with her wife and dog in Baltimore.

Twitter: @sarahpinsker

Instagram: @sarahpinsker

Website: <http://www.sarahpinsker.com>



10:00 - 11:30 AM

30-Minute, One-on-One Editorial Session

Brian Price

BC-129

Brian Price is an award-winning screenwriter and director who has worked with major studios, independent producers, and television networks from around the world, including Universal, Warner Bros., Canal +, Blaspheme, Scanbox, Hudson River, and Mother Films. As an educator, Brian has taught screenwriting at the UCLA School of Theatre, Film and Television, Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, Hollins University, and the Brooks Institute, where he developed their MFA Screenwriting program. His students have gone



on to direct for folks like Steven Spielberg and to be nominated for Emmys and Golden Globes. His book *Classical Storytelling and Contemporary Screenwriting: Aristotle and the Modern Screenwriter* was published by Focal Press this year.

Twitter: [BPScreenwriting](#)

Instagram: [brianpricescreenwriting](#)

Website: <https://www.brianpricescreenwriting.com>

Lauren LaRocca

BC-131

Lauren LaRocca has been an arts and culture writer for 13 years and a former staff editor at *The Frederick News-Post* and *Baltimore* magazine. She earned a BA in creative writing from Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina, and her poetry, essays, and articles have appeared in *Frederick Magazine*, *The Washington Times*, *The Washington Examiner*, *Pittsburgh City Paper*, *Lines + Stars*, and *Hidden City Quarterly*, among others. She's also an herbalist and astrologer and periodically publishes zines and chapbooks.



Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/llarocca>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/karmarocca/>

Website: <https://flowersinthehouse.com>

Tafisha A, Edwards

BC-131

Tafisha A. Edwards is the Poetry Editor of Gigantic Sequins and author of THE BLOODLET, winner of Phantom Books' 2016 Breitling Chapbook Prize. Her work has appeared in Poetry Northwest, Bettering American Poetry Volume 2, Bodega Magazine, Fjords Review, Washington Square Review, Winter Tangerine and other print and online publications. Her non-fiction work has appeared in TIDAL, VICE, Cosmopolitan and other publications. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland's Jiminéz-Porter Writers' House, and a Cave Canem Graduate fellow.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: tafishaedwards.com



Bret McCabe

BC-139

Bret McCabe is the senior humanities writer for the Johns Hopkins magazine and has been a general arts critic and editor for more than 20 years. His music, film, visual arts, and literary criticism and feature stories have appeared in a number of newspapers, alternative weeklies, magazines, and web sites, some of whom are still in business. Although he's lived in Baltimore for 25 years, he remains a native Texan. Twitter:

twitter.com/BretMcBret

Instagram: [instagram.com/bretmcbret](https://www.instagram.com/bretmcbret)

Website: bretmccabe.com



Karen Houppert

BC-141

KAREN HOUPPERT is the Associate Director of the M.A. in Writing Program at Johns Hopkins. She was a contributing writer for The Washington Post magazine for several years, was Editor-in-Chief of Baltimore City Paper and now freelances for many magazines, covering social and political issues. She is also the author of three nonfiction books. Her most recent book, *Chasing Gideon: The Elusive Quest for Poor People’s Justice*, takes the pulse of the public defense system fifty years after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *Gideon v. Wainwright* and was selected as one of the Top 10 Books Investigative books of 2013 by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

To learn more about Karen’s work, visit her website.

Twitter: @karenhouppert

Instagram:

Website: <https://www.karenhouppert.net/>



11:00 - 12:00 PM

You Can't Live Off Air. Money's in the Room

BC-143

An open dialogue with funders, featuring representatives from the **National Endowment for the Arts, Maryland State Arts Council, Robert W. Deutsch Foundation, Maryland Citizens for the Arts, Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, and Creative Capital** and grantee **Ashlie Kauffman** who shares the promise of receiving a grant.

Sonja Cendak

Sonja Cendak is an arts professional with over 15 years experience in grants management and arts administration. In her role as Program Director at the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation, she values providing direct support to artists navigating the grant process. She has previously worked at the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Los Angeles Craft and Folk Art Museum, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Sonja holds a B.A. from UCLA and M.A. from the University of California, Riverside.



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DeutschFound>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/rwdfoundation/>

Website: <https://www.rwdfoundation.org/rubys-artist-grants>

Ashlie Kauffman

Ashlie Kauffman holds an MFA in Poetry from New York University and an MFA in Fiction from the University of Maryland. Her recognitions include a 2018 Rubys Artist Project Grant in Literary Arts from the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation, an Individual Artist Award in Fiction from the Maryland State Arts Council, and residencies from the Ragdale Foundation, the Vermont Studio Center, the Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild, and the Wellstone Center in the Redwoods. Her writing has appeared in *The Rumpus* and *Quail Bell*, among other publications. She is Senior Poetry Editor for the online journal *jmww*.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website:



Katy Day

Katy Day is a Literature Specialist at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and oversees the NEA's Literature Fellowships Program. She received her Bachelor's degree in English Literature with an emphasis on creative writing from the University of Maryland, and is a graduate candidate in creative writing at Sierra Nevada College.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: arts.gov

Nicholas Cohen

Over the past 12 years, Nicholas Cohen has been a strong advocate for the arts in Maryland as a musician, educator, and administrator. Currently, Mr. Cohen is the Executive Director of Maryland Citizens for the Arts (MCA). In this role, he oversees the statewide strategy, implementation and engagement for advancing public policy and investment in the Maryland Arts Sector. Before coming to MCA, he served as Director of Community Engagement & Education Program for the Baltimore Symphony



Orchestra, overseeing programming that provided access to music and arts for the Mid-Atlantic region. Nicholas has also served on Baltimore City Mayor Catherine Pugh's Youth Development Committee which was charged with developing a comprehensive plan for Baltimore City youth.

An avid musician, Nicholas is currently the contrabassoonist with the National Philharmonic Orchestra in Bethesda, Maryland, and has performed with the Annapolis Symphony, Maryland Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, and other ensembles throughout North America. Nicholas and his partner, Stephanie, a professional flutist and musical entrepreneur, reside in Baltimore City where both are deeply invested in utilizing the arts as a vehicle to help build and sustain local communities.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: mdarts.org

Steven Skerritt-Davis

Steven Skerritt-Davis is the Deputy Director of the Maryland State Arts Council where he oversees statewide initiatives, including, the Independent Artist Awards, Community Arts Development, and Arts and Entertainment Districts programs. Before joining MSAC, Steven was Director of External Relations at Lumberyard Contemporary Performing Arts where he helped elevate the organization to national prominence by securing grants and partnerships to build and expand its programs, implementing a national scholarship program to increase diversity in dance education, and building a new residency facility that is transforming a rural town in upstate New York into an arts destination. He is a graduate of Brown University, having earned a BA magna cum laude after retiring from a ten-year career as a professional ballet dancer. Steven has also worked as Program Coordinator for the National Dance Project at the New England Foundation for the Arts.



Twitter: [@mdartscouncil](#)

Instagram: [@mdartscouncil](#)

Website: msac.org

11:00 - 12:30 PM

Your Classics Aren't My Classics! Decolonizing Literary Canon for Asian Americans

BC-135

What do Asian-Americans consider classics? How is it that the lack of media representation of Asians and Asian Americans has made it so that only white writers are ever considered canon? **Fran Del Rosario, Chris Jesu Lee, Mekita Rivas, Marissa Rodriguez, Eliza Romero** and **Sharon Trande** deconstruct the concept of a must-read as it applies to Asian Americans.

Chris Jesu Lee

Chris is a founding member and contributor to Plan A Magazine and the Escape From Plan A podcast (writing/podcasting as "Oxford Kondo"), both of which seek to discuss difficult topics in the Asian American community that often touch on politics, culture, race, and gender. A native of Vancouver, he currently lives and works in New York City.

Twitter: @oxford_kondo

Instagram: @leejesu



Marissa Rodriguez

Marissa Rodriguez is a Florida native, a Filipino-American indigenous studies and ethnic identity scholar, web accessibility advocate with the Bureau of Internet Accessibility, a former campaign marketing consultant for Democratic Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard and a Digital Content Specialist at American University in Washington, D.C. Her passion includes working to make American academia inclusive of Filipino-American studies, decolonizing Filipino-American history in American mainstream society, bolstering Filipino-American representation in American politics, and making the internet more accessible for people with disabilities.

Twitter:

Instagram: enl1ghten

Website:



Eliza Romero

Eliza Romero is a Filipino American pop culture writer, podcast host and activist. She is the founder of the popular blog, Aesthetic Distance, and the public relations officer of the Katipunan of Maryland, the oldest Filipino American cultural organization in the region. She is also the founder of the Decolonize Your Bookshelves book club and cofounder of the Katipunan Filipino Cultural School.

Twitter: aesthdistance1

Instagram: aestheticdistance

Website: aestheticdistance.com



Fran del Rosario

Fran is a finance professional with a passion for reading. She immigrated to the US from the Philippines as a child, an experience which has shaped her world view and also, her reading preferences. She is drawn towards immigrant narratives set in the US that focus on themes of loss, displacement, and transformation. She documents her reading journey through Instagram at @quietnook.

Twitter:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/quietnook/>

Website: <https://www.instagram.com/quietnook/>



Mekita Rivas

Mekita Rivas is a freelance journalist and creative consultant based in Washington, D.C. She is a contributing writer for The Washington Post, Teen Vogue, Glamour, Brides, Wine Enthusiast, and others. She primarily covers culture, fashion, travel, and wellness through the lens of gender and race.

She earned her undergraduate degrees in journalism and English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her current creative projects include a feature film screenplay and a collection of personal essays.

Twitter: @mekitarivas

Instagram: @rivasraves

Website: <http://rivasraves.com/>



Sharon Tran

Sharon Tran is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Her scholarly research focuses on multiethnic American and Asian American literatures with an emphasis on gender studies. At present, she is working on a book manuscript that takes up the 'Asian girl' as a portal for exploring questions of power, neoliberal subject formation, and vulnerability.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: <https://sharon-tran.com/>



12:00 - 1:00 PM

How We Fight White Supremacy: The Field Guide to Black Resistance

BC Auditorium

AKIBA SOLOMON and **KENYRA RANKIN** read and examine **How We Fight White Supremacy: The Field Guide to Black Resistance** with contributor **Elissa Blount Moorhead** Colorlines' editorial directors and award-winning journalists present a timely collection, an urgent political text deemed a must-read for anyone new to resistance work, and for the next generation of leaders.

Akiba Solomon

Akiba Solomon is the Senior Editorial Director of Colorlines. She is an NABJ-Award winning journalist from West Philadelphia. Online, she has written about culture and the intersection between gender and race for *Ebony*, *Dissent*, *Essence* and *POZ*. As Colorlines' inaugural reporting fellow, Solomon reported on reproductive health access for women of color. Solomon has also been a health editor for *Essence*, a researcher for *Glamour* and a senior editor for the print versions of *Vibe Vixen* and *The Source*.

She is currently co-editing an anthology tentatively titled "How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance" to be published by Nation Books in 2019. Solomon was the coeditor "Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Lips, Hips and Other Parts." As a panelist, she has spoken about women's and social justice issues at a range of institutions including The Schomburg Center for the Research in Black Culture, Stanford University, Yale University and Harvard University.

Twitter: @akibasolomon

Instagram: n/a

Website: n/a



Kenrya Rankin

Kenrya Rankin is an award-winning author, journalist, editorial consultant, speaker and on-air talent whose insight has been tapped by leading outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post* and *ThinkProgress*. From books to news analysis to breastfeeding primers, she creates dynamic content that amplifies the lived experiences, advocacy and work of people of color and shifts the narrative around who deserves liberation, justice and dignity in America. Raised by a Black nationalist father in Cleveland, Ohio, Kenrya learned early how White supremacy and its attendant -isms impact the lives of those pushed to the margins, including people of color, women and femmes, folks living with disabilities and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. She currently serves as editorial director at Colorlines, where her activist self shines through via work that centers POC and reimagines what it looks like to engage them in a way that doesn't require begging for their humanity.

Twitter: @kenrya

Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/kenrya>

Website: <http://www.kenrya.com/>

12:00-1:00 PM

Identity in Artistry: Exploring the Queer Perspective

BC-205

Writers **Jamie Grace Alexander**, **Mark King**, **Mejdulene Shomali** and **Clarence Orsi** integrate their identities in a way that provides insight into their lived experiences as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. They have used their artistic medium to share their experiences and explore sexual identity, creating works that showcase an underrepresented perspective.

Jamie Grace Alexander

Jamie Grace Alexander (she/her, they/them) attends the University of Baltimore for Nonprofit Management & Community Leadership at --they apply their studies as the Community Director of the Baltimore Transgender Alliance. Jamie Grace is the curator of the Gender Museum. An accessible online archive of marginalized genders & the truths that they, like all art, illuminate. Her own artistic practice has traveled from poetry into street art as she is constantly seeking new platforms to share ideas with community.

Twitter:

Instagram: @jamiegracealexander

Website: Jamie Grace Alexander



Mark S. King

Mark S. King is an award-winning author ("A Place Like This"), activist, and recovering addict who has been speaking out on behalf of people living with HIV since testing positive in 1985. His blog, My Fabulous Disease, has been nominated for four consecutive GLAAD Media Awards. Always candid and irreverent, King was named "One of 13 Legendary Activists in the Fight Against AIDS" by HIV Equal. He attributes his longevity to standing up for his healthcare, the love of a good man, and double chocolate brownies made from scratch.

Twitter: @myfabdisease

Instagram: mark.s.king

Website: <https://marksking.com/>



Clarence Harlan Orsi

Clarence Harlan Orsi is a graduate of the PhD program in writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln whose essays and fiction have appeared in publications including *The Believer*, *Boston Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *New England Review*, and *n+1*. He is an Associate Professor of English at Cecil College in northern Maryland and lives in Baltimore.



Twitter:

Instagram:

Website:

Mejdulene Shomali

Mejdulene B. Shomali is a Palestinian American poet and Assistant Professor of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Mejdulene is a 2018 VONA fellow and Winter Tangerine Workshop alum; her chapbook, *coming of age in arabish*, was a finalist for the Honeysuckle Press 2018 Chapbook prize. Her work can be read in *Copper Nickel*, *The Shade Journal*, *Tinderbox*, *Diode Press*, *The Pinch Journal*, *Mizna*, and elsewhere.



Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: mejdulenesomali.com

12:00 - 1:30 PM

No One Leaves Home Unless Home Is the Mouth of a Shark: The Immigrant's Journey
BC-143

Warsan Shire's poem "Home" shares the truths of many immigrants, migrants, and refugees in relation to leaving home. Why'd they leave? Why can't they return? **Ana Portnoy Brimmer, Daria-Ann Martineau, Girum Seid Mulat, Senait Mulugeta, Lark Omura and Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez**, poets originating from different parts of the world, including Ethiopia, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad & Tobago, share their work and a piece of their story as someone "not from here," and how their home still speaks in their poetry.

Ana Portnoy Brimmer

Ana Portnoy Brimmer is a Puerto Rican poet-performer, writer and ARTivist. She holds a BA and MA in English from the University of Puerto Rico, and is an MFA candidate in Creative Writing at Rutgers University-Newark. Ana is the inaugural recipient of the Sandra Cisneros Fellowship, a Pushcart Prize nominee, and a co-organizer of the #PoetsForPuertoRico movement. She is also a Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation Fellow, an Under The Volcano Fellow, a Las Dos Brujas Writing Workshop Alumna, and an inaugural Moko Writers' Workshop Alumna. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in Sx Salon; Aftershocks of Disaster: Puerto Rico Before and After the Storm; Huizache: The Magazine of Latino Literature; Kweli Journal; Visual Verse: An Anthology of Arts and Words; Anomaly: Caribbean Folio; among others.



Twitter: @anaportbrim

Instagram: anaportnoybrimmer

Website: <http://anaportnoybrimmer.com/>

Daria-Ann Martineau

Daria-Ann Martineau was born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago. She is a Pushcart-nominated poet with an MFA in poetry from New York University. She is an alumna of several writing conferences including Bread Loaf and the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley. Her poems have appeared in Anomaly, Narrative, and The Collagist among others.



Twitter: @daria_ann_m

Instagram: @daria_ann_poet

Website:

Lark Omura

Lark Omura was born and raised on the island of Maui, and currently resides in Brooklyn, NY. A VONA/Voices and Winter Tangerine alum, her poetry can be found or is forthcoming in Crab Fat Magazine, Aster(ix) journal, The Hawaii Review, and The Offing, among other places. She is currently an MFA candidate in Poetry at Rutgers University Newark. Her writing contemplates the beauty of being human within the context of a capitalist society.

Twitter: @larkomura

Instagram: @_skylarking_

Website:



Senait Mulugeta

Senait Mulugeta. Introduced to the public with her first volume of Amharic poetry “Merkign” published in 2015. Senait, who was born and raised in Addis Ababa Ethiopia and travelled to the USA, started writing poetry since she was in elementary school, few poems from her high school are included in “Merkign”. Her book includes 75 poems from those orates love and unity to poems that echo emotions and aspirations. Senait has



performed on several stages organized by the Ethiopian Community and currently is an organizer at Ge’ez Association of Arts and Culture where poets go and perform their works with jazz music.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website:

Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez

Born in Puerto Rico and raised in the mainland United States, Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez graduated with a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and is a VONA Voices Alumna, having worked with award winning poets Willie Perdomo and Danez Smith. She also completed the Poetry Teaching Artist Training Program under Jonathan B. Tucker and an artist residency in Santo Domingo. Tatiana currently performs and teaches poetry workshops in the greater Washington DC area, having previously done so in New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic at venues including New York University, The Kennedy Center, and The Howard Theatre. You can read her work in The Acentos Review, Here Comes Everyone, and Queen Mob's Teahouse, among other publications, or visit her website www.sincerelytatiana.com.



Twitter: [msauciana](https://twitter.com/msauciana)

Instagram: [msauciana](https://www.instagram.com/msauciana)

Website: www.sincerelytatiana.com

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Master Class: Diving Into Stage Writing: Dialogue & Drama

BC-207

“Diving into Stage Writing: Dialogue and Drama” with novelist/playwright **Kia Corthron**. (90-minutes)
Many prose writers (and some playwrights) feel confident in their narrative skills but intimidated by the use of dialogue. Is it natural? Does it need to be? How does “natural” in real life differ from that in literature? What are the ethical concerns in writing dialect? In a similar vein, writers sometimes avoid the dramatic—building tension—out of fear of committing the “sin” of melodrama. In this workshop, participants will be given exercises to help facilitate their undertaking of expressive speech and action inherent to the characters they’ve created.

Corthron, as a playwright and novelist, has addressed contemporary issues, and most recently co-produced *Imagine: Yemen*, an evening of short plays addressing the crisis in Yemen and U.S. responsibility for it, including her short musical *Charade*. Her debut novel *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* was the winner of the 2016 Center for Fiction First Novel Prize. Baltimore productions of her plays include *Splash Hatch on the E Going Down* at Center Stage and *Force Continuum* at Cohesion Theatre Company. She has written for television shows *The Jury* and *The Wire*. \$10

Kia Corthron

Kia Corthron is often called a "political" playwright. Most of her plays deal with African-American issues, yet skirt the realm of all human consciences. Ms. Corthron has a large commissioned body of work including *Light Raise the Roof*, *Slide Glide the Slippery Slope*, *The Venus de Milo is Armed*, *Breath Boom*, *Force Continuum*, *Splash Hatch on the E Going Down*, *Seeking the Genesis*, *Digging Eleven*, *Life by Asphyxiation*, *Wake Up Lou Riser*, *Come Down Burning*, and *Cage Rhythm*. Ms. Corthron has won numerous awards for playwrighting including the AT&T On Stage Award, the Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award, the Mark Taper Forum’s Fadiman Award, National Endowment for the Arts/TCG, Kennedy Center Fund for New American Plays, the New Professional Theatre Playwriting Award, and the Callaway Award. Kia is a resident of New Dramatists.



Twitter: n/a

Instagram: n/a

Website: <http://www.kiacorthron-author.com/>

1:00 - 2:00 PM

Angie Kim discusses *Miracle Creek*

BC Auditorium

Kim's debut novel is about an experimental medical treatment device that patients enter for therapeutic "dives" with the hopes of curing issues like autism or infertility. A thriller on how far we'll go to protect our families and our deepest secrets.

Angie Kim

Angie Kim moved as a preteen from Seoul, South Korea, to the suburbs of Baltimore. She attended Stanford University and Harvard Law School, where she was an editor of the Harvard Law Review, then practiced as a trial lawyer at Williams & Connolly. Her stories have won the Glamour Essay Contest and the Wabash Prize in Fiction, and appeared in numerous publications including The New York Times, Salon, Slate, The Southern Review, Sycamore Review, The Asian American Literary Review, and PANK. She lives in northern Virginia with her husband and three sons.



Photo: Tim Coburn

Twitter: @AngieKimWriter

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/angiekimask/>

Website: <https://angiekimbooks.com/>

Vicky Pinpin-Feinstein

Vicky Pinpin-Feinstein left the Philippines for the United States to work on an international research project on women and the media. She holds graduate degrees in Telecommunications Policy and Political Science. She has worked for the Smithsonian, public television, the World Bank, AusAid, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and consulted for private and nonprofit organizations on communications technology and development.



Taking a step back from consulting, she has been taking creative writing courses and joined selected participants in Creative Nonfiction under the Jenny McKean Moore Fellowship at the George Washington University. She has since published a memoir, and is currently at work on a book about Ethiopian Americans in the DC area.

Married with two children, she is an avid traveler, a lover of books, dogs, and music.

Twitter: @VickyPF1

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/pinpinfeinstein/>

Website: <http://vickypfwrites.org>

Breaking Down Bars: Stories That Challenge Mass Incarceration

BC-135

Dr. Tara Betts, Tony Lewis, Jr. and Chris Wilson join voices, share excerpts from their books and discuss the flaws and biases in mass incarceration. These writers discuss how prisons cripple communities of color and poor people, extend the power of policing, and create economic dependence on the corporatized prisons. Their books, and other writings expose the inefficacies of the prison system, challenge the perspectives people have about mass incarceration, and offer a bit of hope.

Tony Lewis Jr

Tony Lewis Jr. is an author, re-entry expert, and champion for children with incarcerated parents. Mr. Lewis has fought relentlessly over the past 19 years to uplift and empower men, women, and children impacted by mass incarceration. His work and advocacy has been featured on CNN, BET, Elite Daily, The Washington Post, A&E, Black Enterprise, Hot 97, and The Breakfast Club.



Twitter: @mrtonylewisjr

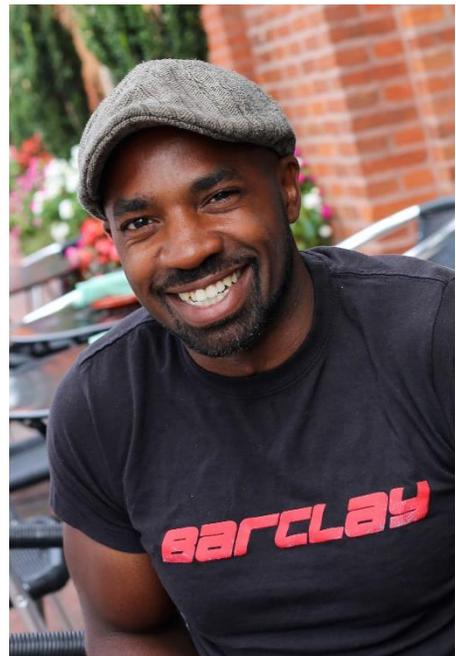
Instagram: @mrtonylewisjr

Website: www.tonylewisjunior.com

Chris Wilson

Born and raised in Washington D.C, Chris grew up under extremely difficult circumstances. Poverty, drug addiction, and gun violence was the everyday norm in his community. At the age of 17, he was charged with a crime, convicted, and sentenced to natural life in prison. It was during times of isolation that he decided to not only to turn his life around, but to make a difference in the lives of people who currently live in poverty-stricken communities similar to his childhood surroundings. “Many years ago, I committed my life to self-improvement and helping others. I sat in a dark cell and wrote up what I now call my Master Plan. A plan to build a business empire and help others.”?

While imprisoned, he earned his high school diploma, graduated from all of the vocational shops, earned an Associate of Arts Degree in Sociology, from Anne Arundel Community College and taught himself to speak and write in several foreign languages. He became a mentor, started a career center, book club and after serving 16 years in prison, he has returned to society a changed man.



He now resides in Baltimore City and is the owner and founder of the Barclay Investment Corporation, a multi-service social enterprise, specializing in residential and commercial contracting work. Barclay works closely with local workforce and social service providers to connect unemployed Baltimore City residents with clients who are in need of a number of services.?

His other business ventures include The House of DaVinci, a high-end furniture restoration and design company and Master Plan Productions, a social impact content development company.

Twitter: @chriswilsonbalt

Instagram: @chriswilsonbaltimore

Website: chriswilson.biz

Tara Betts

Tara Betts is the author of *Break the Habit* and *Arc & Hue*. She's a co-editor of *The Being of America: Personal Narratives about Being Mixed Race in the 21st Century* and editor of Philippa Duke Schuyler's long out-of-print memoir *Adventures in Black and White*. Her work has appeared in *Poetry* magazine, *Essence*, *Nylon*, *Lit Hub*, and numerous anthologies. Tara teaches a weekly poetry workshop through Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project at Stateville Prison and is part of the MFA faculty at Chicago State University and Stonecoast at University of Southern Maine.

Twitter: @tarabetts

Instagram: @chitownbetts

Website: N/A



1:30 - 2:30 PM

The Art of Telling Lies Skillfully: Writing Tips from an Award-Winning Screenwriter

BC-207

Brian Price demonstrates, through memorable clips and helpful diagrams, the essential elements that all successful movies share. He's written for major studios like Universal, Warner Bros., and Canal +, and for independent producers around the world, while his students have gone on to write for Amblin, Dreamworks, 20th Century Fox, and Netflix, and have even been nominated for Emmys and Golden Globes. His book *Classical Storytelling and Contemporary Screenwriting* is required reading in top screenwriting programs.

Brian Price

Brian Price is an award-winning screenwriter and director who has worked with major studios, independent producers, and television networks from around the world, including Universal, Warner Bros., Canal +, BlaspHEME, Scanbox, Hudson River, and Mother Films. As an educator, Brian has taught screenwriting at the UCLA School of Theatre, Film and Television, Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, Hollins University, and the Brooks Institute, where he developed their MFA Screenwriting program. His students have gone on to direct for folks like Steven Spielberg and to be nominated for Emmys and Golden Globes. His book *Classical Storytelling and Contemporary Screenwriting: Aristotle and the Modern Screenwriter* was published by Focal Press this year.



Twitter: BPScreenwriting

Instagram: brianpricescreenwriting

Website: <https://www.brianpricescreenwriting.com>

1:30 - 3:00 PM

Novelists at Work: How to Structure a Novel and Walk Away Like a Boss

BC-205

Featuring **Jung Yun, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Katia Ulysse, Lauren Francis Sharma** and moderator **Danuta Hinc**. These writers share notes, observations, tips and reveal real-life challenges of creating flow on the page, making sense of the characters' lives they create and the whole messy ordeal of narrative logic, all told through the eyes and experiences of authors committed to the craft of fiction.

Danuta Hinc

Danuta Hinc's essays and short fiction have appeared in Washingtonian Magazine, Literary Hub, Popula, Consequence Magazine, The Word Riot, Litteraria, among others. She holds an M.A. in Philology from Gdansk University in Poland, and an M.F.A. in Writing and Literature from Bennington College. Hinc is the recipient of the Barry Hannah Fiction Award, and the author of the novel, *To Kill the Other*. Currently, she is working on two novels. First, "Angels in the Forest" is based on the life of her grandfather and WWII. Second, "For the Wife Who Comes After Me" explores the current political climate in America in the mirror of a relationship based on unprecedented difficulties. Hinc is also translating into Polish "The Collected Stories of Amy Hempel" by Amy Hempel. She is a Senior Lecturer at University of Maryland where she teaches writing.



Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DanutaHinc>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/danuta.hinc/?hl=en>

Website: <https://danutahinc.contently.com>

Jung Yun

Jung Yun is the author of *SHELTER* (Picador, 2016), which was long-listed for the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and a finalist for the Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers Award. Her work has appeared in Tin House, The Massachusetts Review, The Indiana Review, and The Atlantic, among others. She has received an honorable mention for the Pushcart Prize and residencies from the MacDowell Colony, Ucross Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the National Humanities Center. Currently, she is an assistant professor of English at the George Washington University.



Twitter: @JungYun71

Instagram: @JungYun71

Website: www.jungyun.info

Katia D. Ulysse

Katia D. Ulysse was born in Haiti. Her stories, essays, and poetry are published internationally in literary journals, anthologies, including *The Caribbean Writer*, *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*; *Calabash*, *Peregrine*, *Haiti Noir*, and others. Her critically-acclaimed debut story collection, *DRIFTING*, continues to draw praise for its bold, always timely, and unapologetic portrait of Haiti's class structure and seemingly interminable state of chaos. Her latest novel, *Mouths Don't Speak*, has been compared to Toni Morrison's "Paradise." She writes books for children in Creole and English. She has taught in Baltimore City Public Schools for fifteen years. Her new novel, "Across the Concrete Sky" is forthcoming.

Twitter:

Instagram: @katiadulyse

Website: www.katiadulyse.com



Lauren Francis-Sharma

Lauren Francis-Sharma, is the author of *'Til the Well Runs Dry*, her first novel, short-listed for the William Saroyan International Prize and awarded the Honor Fiction Prize by the Black Caucus of the ALA. Lauren holds a B.A. in English Literature with a minor in African-American Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. She is the Assistant Director of Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, the owner of DC Writers Room, a MacDowell Fellow, the mother of two brilliant girls, and she is currently working on her sophomore novel to be published by Grove Atlantic in late 2019.

Twitter: @laurenfsharma

Instagram: laurenfsharma

Website: www.laurenfrancissharma.com



Susan Muaddi Darraj

Susan Muaddi Darraj is Associate Professor of English at Harford Community College in Bel Air, Maryland. A 2018 USA Ford Fellow, Susan is also a Lecturer in the Johns Hopkins University's MA in Writing program and a faculty member in Fairfield University's MFA program.

In 2014, her short story collection, *A Curious Land: Stories from Home*, was named the winner of the AWP Grace Paley Prize for Short Fiction, judged by Jaime Manrique. The book was published in December 2015 by the University of Massachusetts Press. It also won the 2016 Arab American Book Award, a 2016 American Book Award, and was shortlisted for a Palestine Book Award.

In January 2020, Capstone Books will launch her debut children's chapter book series, *Farah Rocks*, about a smart, brave Palestinian American girl named Farah Hajjar.

Twitter: @SusanDarraj

Instagram: @SusanDarraj

Website: www.SusanMuaddiDarraj.com



Elissa Blount Moorhead

Elissa Blount Moorhead is an artist and producer exploring the poetics of quotidian Black life, to emphasize gestural dialectics of quiet domesticity and community building. She dwells in both immutable Black culture and the impermanence of its physical manifestations.

Moorhead has created public art, exhibitions, and cultural programs for the last 25 years. She is currently a principal partner at TNEG film studios, with Arthur Jafa and Malik Sayeed. TNEG asserts that a cinema calibrated to the cultural, socioeconomic, and existential particulars of Black being is not only possible but inescapably the way forward toward a viable Black cinema. Moorhead co-founded Red Clay Arts in NYC. She has co-produced and curated over 20 exhibitions and multimedia projects including *Random Occurrences*; *Cat Calls* (Street Harassment project); *Practicum*; *FunkGodJazzMedicine*; and *Art in Odd Places*. She was awarded the USA Artist Fellowship in (2018), Saul Zaentz Innovation Fellowship (2017), Ford Foundation /Just Films/Rockwood Fellowship (2017) and Ruby Award (2016) Creative Capital (2019) and is a current Baker



Award Finalist. She is currently producing a documentary film on Gil Scott Heron and a VR/projection installation called As of A Now. She is the author of P is for Pussy, an illustrated “children’s” book and is featured in the new anthology How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance.

Twitter:

Instagram: ebmoorhead

Website: www.elissablountmoorhead.com

2:00-3:30 PM

What We Are: Speck, Good Hair, Vanilla Bean, Cinnamon & Pearl: When Words Make You Real

BC-135

The anthology *The Beiging of America, Being Mixed Race in the 21st Century* takes on “race matters” and considers them through the firsthand accounts of mixed-race people in the United States including **Chelsea Lemon Fetzer, Jackson Bliss, Francis Frost, Naomi Raquel Enright, and Herbert Harris**, who unite with contributing editor **Tara Betts** in a reading and frank discussion “with unparalleled candor and unmatched honesty”. **This session takes on mixed race / multi-culture identity.**

Tara Betts

Tara Betts is the author of *Break the Habit* and *Arc & Hue*. She's a co-editor of *The Beiging of America: Personal Narratives about Being Mixed Race in the 21st Century* and editor of Philippa Duke Schuyler's long out-of-print memoir *Adventures in Black and White*. Her work has appeared in *Poetry* magazine, *Essence*, *Nylon*, *Lit Hub*, and numerous anthologies. Tara teaches a weekly poetry workshop through *Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project* at Stateville Prison and is part of the MFA faculty at Chicago State University and *Stonecoast* at University of Southern Maine.

Twitter: @tarabetts

Instagram: @chitownbetts

Website: N/A



Chelsea Lemon Fetzer

Chelsea Lemon Fetzer holds an MFA in Fiction from Syracuse University. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in journals such as Callaloo, Tin House, Mississippi Review, Minnesota Review, and Little Patuxent Review. Her essay “Speck” appears in *The Beiging of America: Personal Narratives about being Mixed Race in the 21st Century*. Fetzer currently lives in Baltimore where she is mothering, teaching, working on a novel, and serving on the board of CityLit project.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website:



Frances Frost

Ever since making treks to the public library as a child, Frances Frost has been amazed by the new worlds, people, and experiences one encounters in the pages of a book. She is an independent author and publisher and loves books that will make you laugh, cry, think, and dream.

Mourning Calm, her second novel, is a journey back to her native South Korea. After meeting by chance, Hannah and JiYuen are given an old yellowed photograph and discover a shared family history which has been hidden, untold, and kept secret. Her debut *Life in Spades* (2013) is the girlfriend novel she always wanted. Four women negotiate love, strengthen their friendships, and embrace their lives as they play the hands fate has dealt them.

Frances contributed *There’s Levels to This* to the *Beiging of America* anthology, exploring the nuances of being biracial, as well as bi-cultural.

Twitter: @FrancesFrost



Instagram: francesfrost

Website: www.FrancesFrost.com

Herb Harris

Herbert Harris MD, PhD is a native of Washington, D.C., where he attended Georgetown University. He obtained his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and did his residency training in psychiatry at Yale. While at Yale, he organized a conference on race and identity and edited a book based on the conference entitled *Racial Identity: Psychological Development and Creative Expression* (Routledge, 1995). He has over twenty years of experience in research and clinical practice in government and industry. He currently lives and works in Chapel Hill, NC.

Twitter: @HerbertWHarris

Instagram: herb.hw

Website: www.herbertwharris.com



Jackson Bliss

Jackson Bliss is the author of the literary/speculative hypertext, *DUKKHA, MY LOVE* (2017). He has a BA in complit from Oberlin College, a MFA from the University of Notre Dame where he was the Fiction Fellow and the 2007 Sparks Prize winner, a MA in English, and a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing from USC where he worked with Aimee Bender, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and TC Boyle. Jackson was the 1st Runner-up for the 2013 Poets & Writer's California Writer's Exchange Award in fiction and a hapa panelist at the Mixed Remixed Festival. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Ploughshares*, *Guernica*, *Longreads*, *Boston Review*, *The Daily Dot*, *Pleiades*, the 2012-2013 *Anthology of APIA Literature*, *Tin House*, *Antioch Review*, *Witness*, *Fiction*, *Kenyon Review*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Joyland*, *Santa Monica Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Arts & Letters*, *Fiction International*, *Hobart*, *Huffington Post UK*, and *3:AM Magazine*, among many others.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/jacksonbliss>

Instagram: @jacksonbliss

Website: <http://www.jacksonbliss.com>



Naomi Raquel Enright

NAOMI RAQUEL ENRIGHT was born to a Jewish American father and an Ecuadorian mother in La Paz, Bolivia. She is a native English and Spanish speaker, and was raised in New York City. She taught Spanish for eight years, and worked as a diversity practitioner for three years, where she became a National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Facilitator. Her book, *Strength of Soul*, was published in April 2019 by 2Leaf Press. Her essay, "From One Exile to Another," appeared in *The Being of America: Personal Narratives About Being Mixed Race in the 21st Century* (2017). She has also published essays in *Hold The Line Magazine*, *Family Story Project* and *Role Reboot*. She has a blog where she writes about the ideology of racial difference, challenging systemic racism, grief/loss and parenting. Enright holds a BA in Anthropology from Kenyon College and studied at the Universidad de Sevilla in Spain her junior year. She resides with her family in Brooklyn, NY.



Twitter:

Instagram:

Website:

Shiane Wilcoxon

A native of Chicago currently residing in St. Louis, is a private chef and event planner. A 2006 graduate of Robert Morris-School of Culinary Arts. In 2010, Wilcoxon founded Team 101 Chicago, an LGBTQ youth based organization.

Twitter: qteapie

Instagram: qtea.pie

Website: www.qteapie.org



2:00 - 3:00 PM

Poet This!

BC-143

Based on Lucille Clifton's endearing phrase, "Why don't you *poet* that?" **Ailish Hopper** directs a panel of poets including **Thea Brown, Sarah Browning, Tafisha Edwards, Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez, David Yezi, Winniebell Xinyu Zong** and Enoch Pratt Free Library / Little Patuxent Review's poetry contest winner **Jalynn Harris**, all at varying stages in their careers as poets.

Ailish Hopper

Ailish Hopper is the author of *Bird in the Head*, selected by Jean Valentine for the Center for Book Arts chapbook prize, and *Dark~Sky Society*, selected by David St. John as runner up for the New Issues Poetry prize. Individual poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, and many other places, and she's received support from the MacDowell Colony, Maryland State Arts Council, and Yaddo, as well as elsewhere. In addition to page-poetry she performed with the poetry band *Heroes are Gang Leaders*; she's also the author of a number of essays about poetry and racism, most recently in *Boston Review*. She teaches at Goucher College.

Twitter: @ailishhopper

Instagram: @ailishhopper

Website: www.ailishhopper.net



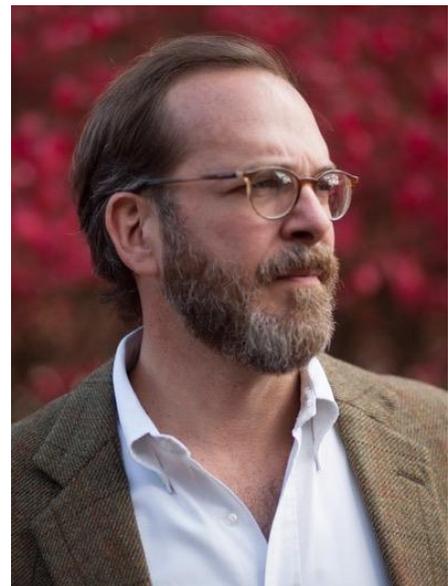
David Yezi

David Yezi's latest books of poetry are *Birds of the Air* and *Black Sea*. His verse play *Schnauzer* was recently published by Exot Books. A former director of the Unterberg Poetry Center of the 92nd Street Y in New York, he is chair of the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins and editor of the *The Hopkins Review*.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website:



Jalynn Harris

Jalynn Harris is a Baltimore native currently pursuing an MFA at the University of Baltimore where she is the inaugural recipient of the Michael F. Klein Fellowship for Social Justice. She is also the founder of SoftSavagePress-- a press dedicated to promoting works by Black people. She received her B.A in Linguistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her work has appeared in Transition, Gordon Square Review, Super Stoked Words, and Scalawag Magazine.

Twitter: bbjay524

Instagram: alienblaxcollective

Website: www.softsavagepress.com



Sarah Browning

Sarah Browning is the author of Killing Summer (Sibling Rivalry Press, 2017) and Whiskey in the Garden of Eden (The Word Works, 2007). She is co-founder and for 10 years was Executive Director of Split This Rock: Poems of Provocation & Witness. She is an Associate Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies and recipient of the Lillian E. Smith Writer-in-Service Award as well as of fellowships from the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, Mesa Refuge, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She has been guest editor or co-edited special issues of Beltway Poetry Quarterly, The Delaware Poetry Review, and three issues of POETRY magazine. From 2006 to 2019 Browning co-hosted the Sunday Kind of Love poetry series at Busboys and Poets in Washington, DC. She has been nominated numerous times for the Pushcart Prize.

Twitter:

Instagram: sarahbrowningpoet

Website:



Tafisha A, Edwards

Tafisha A. Edwards is the Poetry Editor of Gigantic Sequins and author of *THE BLOODLET*, winner of Phantom Books' 2016 Breitling Chapbook Prize. Her work has appeared in Poetry Northwest, *Bettering American Poetry Volume 2*, *Bodega Magazine*, *Fjords Review*, *Washington Square Review*, *Winter Tangerine* and other print and online publications. Her non-fiction work has appeared in *TIDAL*, *VICE*, *Cosmopolitan* and other publications. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland's Jiminéz-Porter Writers' House, and a Cave Canem Graduate fellow.

Twitter:

Instagram:

Website: tafishaedwards.com



Thea Brown

Originally from the Hudson Valley in New York, Thea Brown is the author of the chapbook *We Are Fantastic* (Petri Press 2013) and the full-length collections *Think of the Danger* (H_NGM_N 2016) and *Famous Times* (Slope Editions 2019). Recent or forthcoming work can be found in the *Iowa Review*, *LitHub*, *Vinyl*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and elsewhere. She lives in Baltimore, where she was the 2016–2017 Tickner Fellow at the Gilman School, a 2016 Rubys Artist Project Grant awardee, and the recipient of a 2017 UCross Foundation fellowship.

Twitter: n/a

Instagram: @theaabigailb

Website: n/a



Winniebell Xinyu Zong

Winniebell Xinyu Zong is a poet and djembe player. She was born and raised in an industrial city in China. Zong holds a B.A. in Creative Writing from Franklin and Marshall College. Her work has appeared recently or is forthcoming in *The Penn Review*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, and *Whiskey Island*, among others. She now mentors students on college access at College Advising Corps and reads for *Frontier Poetry*.

Twitter:

Instagram: [winniebell_zong](#)

Website:



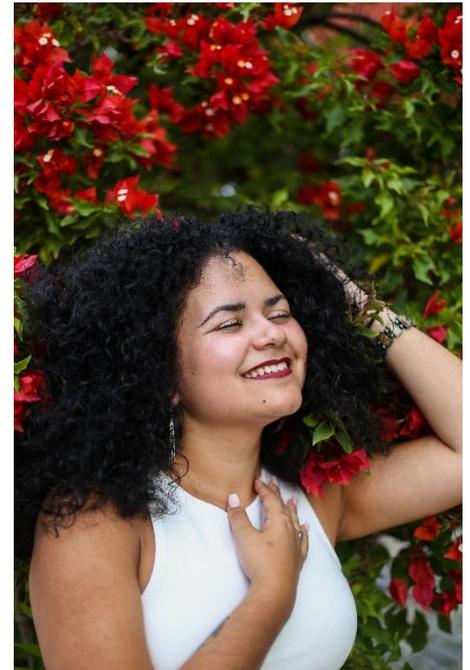
Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez

Born in Puerto Rico and raised in the mainland United States, Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez graduated with a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and is a VONA Voices Alumna, having worked with award winning poets Willie Perdomo and Danez Smith. She also completed the Poetry Teaching Artist Training Program under Jonathan B. Tucker and an artist residency in Santo Domingo. Tatiana currently performs and teaches poetry workshops in the greater Washington DC area, having previously done so in New York, Philadelphia, Miami, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic at venues including New York University, The Kennedy Center, and The Howard Theatre. You can read her work in *The Acentos Review*, *Here Comes Everyone*, and *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, among other publications, or visit her website www.sincerelytatiana.com.

Twitter: [msauciana](#)

Instagram: [msauciana](#)

Website: www.sincerelytatiana.com



3:00 - 4:00 PM

When It All Falls Down: Real Talk About Journalism in the Age of Trump

BC-205

What it takes to be a journalist right now. *Baltimore Beat* founders **Lisa Snowden-McCray** and **Brandon Soderberg** talk nuts and bolts, what it means to be a journalist in 2019. Learn about journalism basics, pitching, storytelling with compassion, using social media, and more.

Lisa Snowden-McCray, Brandon Soderberg

Lisa Snowden-McCray is the editor-in-chief of *Baltimore Beat*. Previously she was the Community Coordinator at the *Baltimore Sun* and Associate Editor of *Baltimore City Paper*. Her work has also appeared in *Essence*, *The Crisis*, *The Columbia Journalism Review*, *Baltimore Magazine*, *Bmore Art*, the *Baltimore Brew*, and the *Baltimore Fishbowl*, among others.

Brandon Soderberg is the managing editor of *Baltimore Beat*. Previously, he was the editor-in-chief of *Baltimore City Paper* and a contributing writer to *SPIN*. His work has appeared in *The Appeal*, *Vice*, *FACT Magazine*, the *Village Voice*, *The Real News Network*, and the *Baltimore Fishbowl*. Later this year, his book *I've Got A Monster*, about Baltimore's Gun Trace Task Force will be released on St. Martin's Press.



Twitter: @baltbeat

Instagram: @BaltimoreBeat

Website: <http://baltimorebeat.com/>



3:00 - 4:00 PM

It Takes a Village: Supporting the Local Literary Scene

BC-207

Gwen Van Velsor of Yellow Arrow Publishing, **Maria Goodson** of Writers & Words and **Victoria Kennedy** of Zora's Den emphasize how Baltimore's thriving writing community depends on its inclusivity. Small presses, reading series, and writing community builders work together to weave a web of support for local writers with collaboration serving the greater literary good. This panel takes an in-depth look at the Baltimore independent literary scene and how to boost these efforts.

Zora's Den, Victoria Kennedy



Victoria Kennedy is a Baltimore-based writer who writes about the complexity, resilience, and beauty of Black love. In *Where Love Goes* (2016) she explores the dynamics of love across the Diaspora. Included in this is "The Uninvited Guest" a short story which has been adapted into an eponymous stage play. Her debut novel, *Sometimes Love*, was published in 2017 by Brown Girls Books.

She is the founder of Zora's Den, a sisterhood of Black women writers who gather virtually and in real life to provide support, encouragement, and fellowship within the local and global community of black women writers. The group holds writing workshops and a writers' circle. Their reading series,

In Our Own Words, hosts monthly readings.

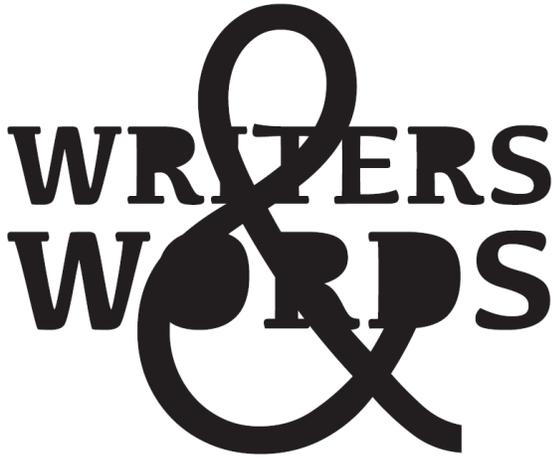
Victoria holds an MFA in Creative Writing & Publishing Arts and her second novel *Don't Walk Away*, was released in March 2019.

Twitter: @vickiewambui

Instagram: @wambuigirl

Website: victoriakennedywritenow.com

Writers & Words, Maria C. Goodson



Maria is a writer who spends her time telling people where they should volunteer in Baltimore City, running a reading series called Writers & Words, and creating art out of pipe cleaners anytime she is given the opportunity. Maria has been published in a few local journals, and has a deep love for the writing community in Baltimore. She enjoys writing anxiety haikus, holiday card stories, and villanelles about love and connection.

Twitter: @MariaCGoodson

Instagram: mariacgoodson

Website: <https://writersandwords.net/>

Yellow Arrow Publishing, Gwen Van Velsor



Gwen Van Velsor founded Yellow Arrow Publishing in 2016. Yellow Arrow supports, nurtures and inspires writers of all levels through access to the literary arts and publishes creative nonfiction and poetry by writers identifying as women.

Twitter: @yellowarrowpub

Instagram: @yellowarrowpublishing

Website: <https://yellowarrowpublishing.com/>

3:30 - 5:00 PM

We Need Diverse Books: Children's and Young Adult Literature

BC-143

Seasoned and debut authors discuss the importance of new voices and share information about the publishing industry as they know it. **Sharon G. Flake**, who celebrates the 20th anniversary of *The Skin I'm In*, debut author of *Wilder*, **Andrew Simonet** (founder of Artists U), **Tiffany D. Jackson**, whose *Monday's Not Coming* won the 2019 NAACP Image Award, among others, and **Susan Muaddi Darraj**, author of the forthcoming middle-school series *Farah Rocks*, with the first Arab- American characters ever, join Enoch Pratt librarian **Paula Willey** in an invigorating conversation about writing for children and young adults for today's diverse readership.

Andrew Simonet

Andrew Simonet is writer and choreographer in Philadelphia. His debut young adult novel, *Wilder*, was published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux in 2018. From 1993 to 2013, he co-directed Headlong Dance Theater, creating dances like CELL (a journey for one audience member guided by your cell phone), and *This Town is a Mystery* (dances by four Philadelphia families in their homes).



Andrew founded Artists U in 2006, an incubator for helping artists make sustainable lives with programs in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and South Carolina. He wrote *Making Your Life as an Artist*, an open source guide to living as an artist, and is an artist leader in Creative Capital's Professional Development Program.

He has received a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, an Independence Fellowship in the Arts, a Bessie for Choreography, and residencies at Yaddo, Ucross, The Studios of Key West, and Hambidge.

Twitter: @andrewsimonet

Instagram:

Website: <https://www.andrewsimonet.com>

Sharon Flake

With millions of books in print, Sharon G. Flake has earned an international reputation as one of the top children's and young adult authors around. Her breakout novel *The Skin I'm In*—celebrating twenty years in print-- established her reputation as a must read author among middle and high school students, as well as educators and parents. Flake has penned ten books, including *Pinned*, a book about a struggling gifted wrestler and *Unstoppable Octobia May*, a historical mystery novel. Her work has been translated into French, Italian, Korean and Portuguese. She has earned numerous awards and recognitions including several Coretta Scott King Honor awards; the Kirkus Review Top Ten Book of the Year; YWCA Racial Justice Award; Detroit Public Library Outstanding Book of the Year; Best Books for Young Adult Readers by the ALA; Top Ten Books for the Teen Age by the New York Public Library; and more.

Twitter: twitter.com/sharonflake

Instagram: [instagram.com/flakesharon](https://www.instagram.com/flakesharon)

Website: www.sharongflake.com



Tiffany D. Jackson

Tiffany D. Young born August 10, in Detroit, Michigan. She grew up with both parents and 5 other siblings. She lived in Las Vegas, Nevada for a few years. Began writing and singing at a young age. Became ill with viral meningitis and encephalitis at 17, and basically had to learn all over again because of how the virus attacked her brain. Doctor's gave up on her and told her parents that she wouldn't go to school, read or do anything she used to do. By the grace of God, she finished high school and graduated college with an Associate of Arts degree and have written 8 books. She never gave up and this is what she wants to instill in others, never give up, even when people don't believe in you.

Twitter: [@authorbeginning](https://twitter.com/authorbeginning)

Instagram: [@iamtiffanydyoung](https://www.instagram.com/iamtiffanydyoung)

Website: https://www.amazon.com/Tiffany-D-Young/e/B07ND53TVN?ref=dbs_p_ebk_r00_abau_000000



Paula Willey

Paula is a librarian at Enoch Pratt Free Library's Southeast Anchor Branch. A member of the 2019 Michael S. Printz Award Committee, she reads everything from board books to teen lit, and has written about children's literature for The Baltimore Sun, Booklist, School Library Journal and others.

Twitter: pwbalto

Instagram: pwbalto

Website:



Susan Muaddi Darraj

Susan Muaddi Darraj is Associate Professor of English at Harford Community College in Bel Air, Maryland. A 2018 USA Ford Fellow, Susan is also a Lecturer in the Johns Hopkins University's MA in Writing program and a faculty member in Fairfield University's MFA program.

In 2014, her short story collection, *A Curious Land: Stories from Home*, was named the winner of the AWP Grace Paley Prize for Short Fiction, judged by Jaime Manrique. The book was published in December 2015 by the University of Massachusetts Press. It also won the 2016 Arab American Book Award, a 2016 American Book Award, and was shortlisted for a Palestine Book Award.

In January 2020, Capstone Books will launch her debut children's chapter book series, *Farah Rocks*, about a smart, brave Palestinian American girl named Farah Hajar.

Twitter: @SusanDarraj

Instagram: @SusanDarraj



4:00 - 6:00 PM

KEYNOTE: Dani Shapiro in Conversation with Marion Winik

BC Auditorium

The keynote speaker at this year's festival is **Dani Shapiro**, bestselling author of *Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love* about life-changing family secrets kept out of shame or self-protectiveness. Shapiro will be in conversation with **Marion Winik**, author of *Baltimore Book of the Dead*, a collection of portraits of the dead, that approaches mourning and memory with intimacy, humor, and an eye for the idiosyncratic.

Marion Winik

Longtime All Things Considered commentator MARION WINIK is the author of *The Baltimore Book of the Dead*, *First Comes Love*, *Highs in the Low Fifties*, and seven other books. Her Bohemian Rhapsody column at BaltimoreFishbowl.com has received the Best Column and Best Humorist awards from Baltimore Magazine, and her essays have been published in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Sun*, and many other publications. She is the host of *The Weekly Reader* radio show and podcast, based at the Baltimore NPR affiliate, WYPR. She reviews books for *Newsday*, *People*, and *Kirkus Reviews* and is a board member of the National Book Critics Circle. She is a professor in the MFA program at the University of Baltimore. More info at marionwinik.com.



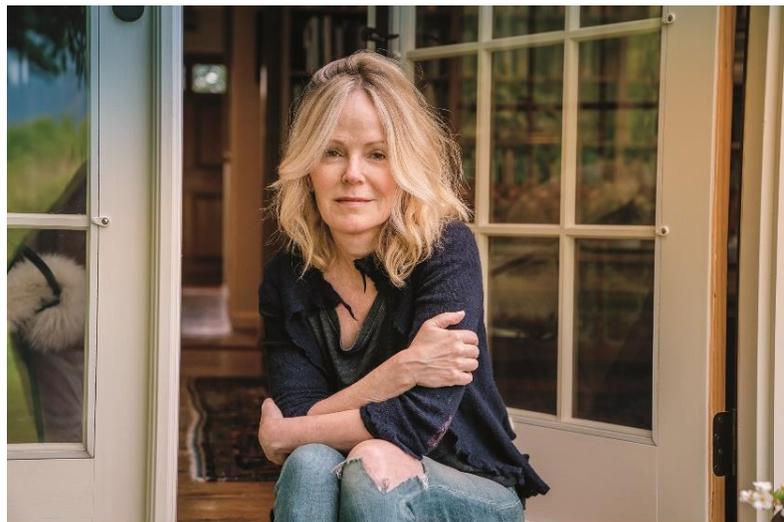
Twitter: @marionwinik

Instagram: marionwinik

Website: Marion Winik

Dani Shapiro

Dani Shapiro's books include the memoirs, *Hourglass*, *Still Writing*, *Devotion*, and *Slow Motion*, and five novels including *Black & White* and *Family History*. Her work spans diverse subjects from her tumultuous upbringing in an Orthodox Jewish community and the tragic death of her father to her explorations of spirituality and the nature of our deepest relationships. Dani's New York Times best selling memoir, *Inheritance*, was recently published by Knopf.



Dani Shapiro
PHOTO CREDIT: Michael Maren

Dani's essays and journalistic pieces have appeared in numerous publications including *The New Yorker*, *Salon*, *n+1*, *Tin House*, and *Vogue*, and have been widely anthologized. She contributes regularly to *The New York Times Book Review* and has been broadcast on *This American Life*.

Along with teaching writing workshops around the world, Dani has taught at Columbia and New York University, and is the cofounder of the Sirenland Writers Conference in Positano, Italy.

In February of 2019, Dani launched an original podcast "Family Secrets" in collaboration with iHeart Media. The podcast features stories from guests who—like Dani— have uncovered life-altering and long-hidden secrets from their families' past.

She lives with her family in Litchfield County, Connecticut.

Twitter: @daniishapiro

Instagram: @daniwriter

Website: <https://danishapiro.com/>

Musicians

Annie Cassidy

ANNIE CASSIDY is a singer/songwriter based in Baltimore, MD. She was born into a musical family in Wheeling, WV and was raised with bedtime songs, instead of bedtime stories. Singing and writing were her first loves—whether it be church choir or made up Grease/Sound of Music mashups with her sisters—then came classical piano for 13 years. After a long pause to rack up some good stories and wisdom, she returned to writing and music, adding the guitar to her skill set.

She's played in Thailand dive bars, Scottish house parties, Baltimore open mics, and is also known to pop up at a karaoke nights and weddings nationwide, channeling Aerosmith. Whether it is pop, soul, folk, or rock—Annie always has the blues running through her songs. If Fiona Apple and Big Mama Thornton partied with Bonnie Rait and Bessie Smith, Annie would surely be there. A sucker for sad songs and bathroom mirror melodies—Annie's music will remind you of lost loves, heartache, but most of all—how to get it all out and back on track. False Royalties is her debut EP. She is currently working on a full-length album for release in 2020.

<https://annie-cassidy.com/> Instagram or

Twitter: @a_a_cassidy Annie Cassidy is a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist in Baltimore city. Her style has been described as folksy with the blues bleedin' through. She's played throughout Baltimore and DC. Her debut EP, false royalties, was released in September 2018 and it's available on all streaming platforms.



Queen Earth

QueenEarth is a singer/songwriter and creative professional. She has over ten year of experience as a host/emcee, performer, event planner, speaker, and educator. She has released 5 albums of original music, solo projects and collaborations. QueenEarth travels with her educational concert, QueerCore: Behind the Music, to share her songwriting stories for LGBT audiences and its allies. This evolving showcase has been offered as a workshop, retreat, open mic, and community event for cultural celebrations. Her

commitment to social justice has taken her to many institutions including SUNY Oswego, University of Maryland at College Park, University of Baltimore, Mission High School in San Francisco, and We'Moon land in Portland, OR. She has connected with colleagues for projects as far as the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom and performed on stages in



Baltimore, London, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Her music has been featured in Queer Music Heritage, Lezbelib, and Baltimore OUTLoud. You can also find her songs on the soundtrack to the Dyke Central web series. She continues to write and record. In addition to sharing her music, she offers private and online instruction in creative coaching and guitar/songwriting. QueenEarth finds the greatest joy when she can bring her experience together for education, music, and creativity. When she is not making music, she is hanging out at Writer's Planet. <http://www.queenearth.com/>



CITYLIT
PROJECT

120 W. North Avenue, Suite 201
Baltimore, MD 21201-5832

www.citylitproject.org