

Spring Writes Literary Festival
May 3-6, 2018
2018 Writer Bios

Doreen Alsen is the author with seven romantic comedy books published by The Wild Rose Press. She is a member of the Romance Writers of America, Central New York Romance Writers, and Southern Tier Authors of Romance. www.DoreenAlsen.com

Jacob M. Appel is the author of three literary novels, six short story collections, an essay collection, a cozy mystery, a thriller and a forthcoming poetry collection. His latest novel, *Millard Salter's Last Day*, was published by Simon & Schuster in November 2017. www.jacobmappel.com

Peter Bakjia's name is often mispronounced. A high school drama teacher and man-about-town extraordinaire, Peter has an unparalleled knowledge of eighties punk rock and indie music and can be counted on to show up at a dance party or story slam.

Heather Bartlett holds an MFA in poetry from Hunter College. Her recent work can be found in *Carolina Quarterly*, *Lambda Literary*, *the Los Angeles Review*, *Ninth Letter*, and other journals. She is a lecturer in English at SUNY Cortland. (hbartlett92@gmail.com)

E.C. Barrett writes speculative fiction, teaches creative writing, and is an award-winning freelance journalist. She built a house in the woods with her partner, where she writes, gardens, and spends too much time watching the crows outside her window. www.ecbarrett.com

Bruce Bennett is author of ten books of poetry and more than thirty poetry chapbooks. His most recent book is *Just another Day in Just Our Town Poems: New and Selected, 2000-2016*. He is Emeritus Professor of English at Wells College.

Michelle Courtney Berry is an author, playwright, actor and wellness consultant living in Ithaca. Her one woman shows, *The Month of Not Speaking - Labor -* and *Mother Land* were world premieres all staged at The Kitchen Theatre. *Breathe* was staged by Theatre Incognita. www.michellecourtneyberry.com

Nydia Blas serves as the E.D. of Southside Community Center; holds a Visual & Performing Arts MFA from Syracuse U. Her photography delicately weaves stories concerning circumstance, value, and power and uses her work to create a physical and allegorical space presented through a Black feminine lens. www.nydiablas.com

Barrett Bowlin teaches writing and literature classes at Binghamton University. His stories and essays appear in literary journals like *Ninth Letter*, *Hobart*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *The Rumpus*, *The Los Angeles Review*, and *Bayou*, which awarded him the 2015 James Knudsen Prize in Fiction.

Patricia Brown creates drawing, painting and mixed media in her Wild Spirit Art Studio in Ithaca NY. She shows her artwork through State of the Art Gallery. www.soagithaca.org

Robert Danberg is a poet and the author of *Teaching Writing While Standing on One Foot* (Sense Publishers), creative nonfiction that explores the experience of teaching writing. His poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *The Sun*, and other online & print journals. www.robertdanberg.com

Leslie Daniels' novel, *Cleaning Nabokov's House* is under film option, and was published in translation in four languages. Daniels' careers included literary agent and fiction editor. www.lesliedaniels.com

Elliott DeLine's novel *Refuse* is one of the first works of fiction from a young transgender man's perspective. His writing has been featured in publications like *The New York Times*, *The Advocate*, *Original Plumbing Magazine*, *QED*, and *The Collection* from Topside Press. www.elliottdeline.net

Rachel Dickinson is the author of two narrative nonfiction books. In *Falconer on the Edge* (2009), Dickinson follows a hardcore falconer through a hunting season. *The Notorious Reno Gang* (2017) tells the story of the world's first train robbers. www.racheldickinson.com

Yvonne Fisher is writer, performer, visual artist, and psychotherapist. She performed her stories *My Jewish Mother*, a at Spring Writes and at other venues throughout NY State.

Brenna Fitzgerald holds an M.F.A. in creative nonfiction writing. She has published work in a variety of literary journals including *Stone Canoe*, *Creative Nonfiction*, and *Ars Medica*. She teaches yoga and edits a Cornell University publication on Southeast Asia. brenna.ef@gmail.com

Lisa Ford teaches academic writing and screenwriting at TC3; writer and director of short films - screened in many festivals including Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, tDC Independent Film Festival, ReelHeart International Film Festival, and the Katra Film Series. www.thewishhorse.com

Santee Frazier: A member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Santee Frazier earned an MFA from Syracuse University. His collection of poems, *Dark Thirty* (2009), was published in the Sun Tracks series of the University of Arizona Press. www.Poetryfoundation.org/poets/santee-frazier

Alison Fromme, freelancer since '04, wrote for National Geographic, Backpacker, etc. In 2013, she joined with 34 colleagues to write *The Science Writers Handbook* (DaCapo). www.AlisonFromme.com

David Guaspari was trained as a pure mathematician and considers himself to be, of all post19th century mathematical logicians, the funniest. He has published fiction, essays, and reviews, and has had short plays produced throughout the country. dguaspari.wordpress.com

Charles P. Hamilton is the CEO of Conamix, Inc and typically plays the villain. Born in Alaska, Charles still finds Ithaca cold in the winter; when the apocalypse comes, he will be the one operating the still.

Clio M. W. Hamilton is a senior at L. A.C.S. where she has performed in all the Shakespeare. She is currently working on a podcast entitled *Charlie's Ethnically Ambiguous Angels*. In the apocalypse, she'll compose the poetry and knit the scarves.

Colette R. C. G. Hamilton is a 4th grader at Fall Creek School. She is currently working on more than one novel, and generally plays the comic role, even when it's not a play. In the apocalypse, she will collect the kindling, and tame the animals. She fervently believes that zombies cannot go in water.

Melanie C. G. Hamilton is a novelist and professor at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She typically plays the unreliable narrator. In the apocalypse, she'll run strategy from the safety of the fortress. She is the author of *The Likely World*, a novel from Red Hen Press in 2020. www.MelanieConroy-Goldman.com

Lisa Harris writes poetry, short fiction, and novels. Her novels, *Geechee Girls*, *Alleghany Dream*, and *The Raven's Tale* comprise The Quest Trilogy from Ravenna Press. lisaharris.harris52@gmail.com

Ellen Hartman has published eight novels with Harlequin and is working on her first young adult book. She's a dedicated critique partner, a passionate reader, and a creative and supportive editor. www.EllenHartman.com

Kathryn Henion's fiction has appeared in over 20 literary magazines and received several awards. She received a PhD in English with a concentration in creative writing from Binghamton U, and is fiction editor for *Anomaly* journal of literature and art. www.KathrynHenion.com

Christopher Holmes is a writer, director, performance artist, comedian, and artist. He is the writer and director of the short film *Yahweh's Sea Glass*. www.littlewhaleproductions.com

Nancy Holzner is the author of the *Deadtown* urban fantasy series. She has worked as a medievalist, English teacher, corporate trainer, writer, and editors. www.nancyholzner.wordpress.com

Jack Hopper's fourth poetry collection *Rafting the Medusa* is out. He was Tompkins's laureate for 2 terms. johnHopperAuthor.com

Katharyn Machan Howd has taught creative writing at Ithaca College for three and a half decades with an emphasis on speculative fiction. Her own work in poetry has appeared in 37 published collections. machan@ithaca.edu

Sarah Jefferis is an author, actress and writing coach. Her most recent poetry collection is called *What Enters the Mouth*, (Standing Stone Press). www.SarahJefferis.net

Jennifer Savran Kelly writes fiction and binds books. Her short stories have recently appeared in *Green Mountains Review*, *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Grist: The Journal of Literary Arts*, and elsewhere. www.jennifersavrankelly.com

Sorayya Khan's novels include *Noor*, *Five Queen's Road*, and most recently, *City of Spies*. Her work has appeared in several publications which include *Guernica*, *Longreads*, *The Kenyon Review*, *North American Review*, and *Journal of Narrative Politics*. www.SorayyaKhan.com

Christine Kitano is an assistant professor at Ithaca College and the author of the poetry collections *Sky Country* (2017) and *Birds of Paradise* (2011). She received her MFA from Syracuse University, and her PhD in English and Creative Writing from Texas Tech University. www.christinekitano.com

Tierra Labrada is local poet, organizer and founder of The Empowerment Project, a grassroots program aimed at the empowerment of young black and brown people, and chair of the new Ithaca City Community Life Commission and Continuum of Care Coordinator for the Human Services Coalition.

Becky Lane is a director and filmmaker, known for *Hens and Chicks* (2010), *Haunted Traxxs* (2009) and *The Chanticleer* (2015).

Jay Leeming is the author of the poetry books *Dynamite on a China Plate* and *Miracle Atlas*. He has taught poetry throughout the United States and abroad, and received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2009. www.JayLeeming.com

Melanie Lefkowitz, news reporter for 17+ years, wrote for The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, etc. She won an Emmy ('12) and 1st in a Glimmer Train short story contest ('14) @melanielefk

Mary Brett Lorson is an English teacher, musician, and writer who's lived in Ithaca since the 1990s. www.marylorsen.com

Margaret McKinnis is a sophomore Ithaca College student pursuing a Bachelors in Writing with minors in English and the Honors Program. She is also the intern for the Community Arts Partnership.

Kenneth McLaurin founded The Finger Lakes Comedy Festival, Comedy on The Commons, performs throughout Upstate NY, and works to promote comedy locally. www.kennethmclaurin.com and follow him on Instagram & Facebook at Kenneth McLaurin Comedian

Jodie Mangor is a professional writer and editor with publishing credits that include a middle grade novel, 12 nonfiction children's books, and audio tour scripts for high-profile museums and tourist destinations around the world, including Statue of Liberty, 9/11 Memorial Museum, and Ford's theater.

Devon Moore teaches writing at Syracuse University and SUNY Oswego. Poetry book, *Apology of a Girl Who Is Told She Is Going to Hell*, published in 2015. A new collection, *All Throats Sound Animal*, will be published this year by Cider Press Review. www.devonjmoore.com

Deirdre Neilen is an associate professor of bioethics and humanities at SUNY Upstate Medical University. She is also the editor of the university's literary arts journal, The Healing Muse.

Mukoma Wa Ngugi is an Assistant Professor of English and co-director of the Global South Project - Cornell. Author of poetry, fiction, and literary criticism, *The Rise of the African Novel: Politics of Language, Politics and Ownership* is his latest work. www.mukomawangugi.com

Elisabeth Nonas: Novelist and screenwriter, Nonas is the author most recently of *Story Workout: Exercises to Help You Connect to the Stories You Want to Tell*. An associate professor in Media Arts, Sciences, and Studies at Ithaca College, she teaches screenwriting and writing for emerging media.

Dr. Nia Michelle Nunn: President & Board Chair of Southside Community Center; Assistant Professor of Education and Women's & Gender Studies at Ithaca College where her research focuses on anti-racist feminist pedagogy, Black girl empowerment, and performing arts/human rights curriculum development. <https://faculty.ithaca.edu/nnunn/>

Tish Pearlman, poet and journalist, is host of the public radio show *Out of Bounds*. She has published a chapbook, *The Fix Is In*, and a full length collection of poems, *Afterlife*. She served as Poet Laureate of Tompkins County.

Angie Pelekidis worked in public relations before receiving her Ph.D in Creative Writing from Binghamton University. Her dissertation won the Distinguished Dissertation Award and her work has appeared in *The Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Confrontation*, *The Masters Review*, and other journals.

Sue Perlmut has worked in theatre in NYC and Ithaca for more than 40 years. She is currently the director of the Senior Theatre Troupe of Lifelong, Ithaca, NY. www.ClosetoHomeProductions.com

Bob Proehl is a local author and long-time trivia host. He has been spending the months leading up to the literary festival cultivating a Trebekkian mustache. www.bobproehl.com

Mickie Quinn is the host and organizer of Trampoline, Ithaca's premiere monthly competitive storytelling event. Additionally, she organizes and hosts Dance Party for Democracy, and the Cosmic Joke Collective. By day, she illustrates, animates, and sits in front of a computer. www.mightyproductions.com

Raad Rahman, a Bangladeshi novelist, journalist, and essayist, is a writer-in-residence with Ithaca City of Asylum. The author of the novel *Framed Butterflies* and many articles, Raad has worked in human rights in many parts of the world. <https://wondersonder.wordpress.com/>

Amy Reading worked in book publishing before receiving her Ph.D. in American studies from Yale in 2007. She is the author of *The Mark Inside* (Knopf 2012). www.AmyReading.com

Leo Ríos is a fiction writer from Delano, California. He studied English, Spanish and Latinx Studies at UCLA. A Cornell MFA graduate, he has worked as a maintenance mechanic, case worker and ESL teacher. His fiction appears as winner of the Emerging Writers' Prize in *The Arkansas International*.

Cynthia Robinson's short fiction appears in *The Arkansas Review*, *Epoch*, *The Missouri Review*, *Slice*, *Stone Canoe*, and others. Day Job: Professor of Medieval and Islamic Art at Cornell University. Her debut novel, *Birds of Wonder*, was published in February 2018. www.CynthiaRobinsonBooks.com

Ellie A. Rogers is a poetry editor at *The Hopper*. You can read her recent work in *Cincinnati Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, and *Ecotone*. www.elliearogers.com

Aaron Sachs teaches history and writing at Cornell University. In 2017, he organized a Conference on Creative Academic Writing, and throughout his career he has tried to produce scholarship that could qualify as creative nonfiction. www.history.cornell.edu/aaron-sachs

Ellen Schmidt's *Writing Through The Rough Spots* helps participants to create clarity about challenging situations through writing. Her students: athlete, author, chaplain, ex-felon, hairdresser, musician, physician, prison guard, restaurant server...18 - 85 years, from many states and 15 countries.

www.WritingRoomWorkshops.com

Godfrey L. Simmons, Jr. is an Artistic Director of Ithaca's Civic Ensemble; Senior Lecturer at Cornell's Department of Performance & Media Arts; an accomplished actor & teaching artists; soon appearing appearing Off Broadway in "The Winning Side" with Epic Theatre Ensemble. www.civicensemble.org

Saviana Stanescu is a Romanian-born NYU-educated playwright, poet, and ARTivist, who writes about and advocates for underrepresented voices. She teaches Playwriting & Contemporary Theatre at Ithaca College, Theatre Arts. Her plays have been produced worldwide. Winner of NY Innovative Theatre Award.

www.Saviana.com

Elbonee "SingTrece" Stevenson's motto "**Changing Hearts One Positive Note at a Time**" is evident through her soul and gospel music. She is the lead singer of Stone Cold Miracle, performs nationally and internationally, has sung with the NY Gospel Choir, Dionne Warwick & Al Jarreau, & for Pope Francis.

www.SingTrece.com and (@Singtrece)

Melissa Tuckey's first book of poems *Tenuous Chapel* was selected by Charles Simic for the ABZ First Book Award in 2013. She is editor of *Ghost Fishing: An Eco-Justice Poetry Anthology* with Univ. of Georgia Press, a Black Earth Institute Fellow, and a founder of Split This Rock.

Jackie Swift writes SF/Fantasy and is a graduate of Viable Paradise Science Fiction Writing Workshop. She's also edited historical action-adventure novels. Currently she's a freelance writer/editor. She's writing a series of SF-noir novels set in 22nd century NYC.

Gigi Vernon is an author of historical thriller and mystery fiction. Her short fiction has been published in *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine* and elsewhere. She has a Ph.D. in history and is a 2016 Odyssey Workshop graduate. www.gigivernon.com

Zee Zahava has been leading writing workshops in Ithaca since 1994. She is the Tompkins County Poet Laureate for 2017 - 2018. Her haiku collection, *Here I Am*, was published last year. zee@twcnny.rr.com

