

“American Poetry”  
A Symposium Sponsored by the  
American Literature Association

February 20-22, 2020

Kimpton Hotel Palomar  
2121 P Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Conference Director: Richard Flynn, Georgia Southern University

Acknowledgments

**Thursday, February 20, 2020**

**Name Badge and Program Pick-Up**

**&**

**Opening Reception 5:30-7:30 p.m. (Location TBA)**

**Friday, February 21, 2020**

**Name Badge and Program Pick UP: 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

**(Location TBA)**

**Welcome and Plenary Roundtable:**

**9:00 – 10:20 a.m. (Location TBA)**

**Introduction and Welcome by Richard Flynn, Georgia Southern University**

**Moderator: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University**

**Steve Axelrod, University of California, Riverside**

**Matthew Hofer, University of New Mexico**

**Karen Kilcup, University of North Carolina, Greensboro**

**Kerry Larson, University of Michigan**

**Brett Millier, Middlebury College**

**Aldon Nielsen, Pennsylvania State University**

**Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College**

**Session One A: 10:30– 11:50**

**Amiri Baraka’s Poetry: Radical Musicked Speech**

Organized by The Amiri Baraka Society

Session Chair: Jean-Philippe Marcoux

1. “Mobilizing the Lyrical-I and Black Radical Capaciousness: Amiri Baraka’s Poetics,” Jeremy M. Glick, Hunter College, CUNY
2. “POTUS Blues: Gil Scott-Heron and Amiri Baraka Break Down the Presidential Dozens,” Michael J. New, Saint Anselm College
3. “‘Disco Turns Revolutionary’: Amiri Baraka and The Advanced Workers,” Grégory Pierrot, University of Connecticut-Stamford

**Session One B: 10:30– 11:50**

**Longfellow and the Lyric**

Organized by the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Society

Session Chair: Andrew C. Higgins, SUNY New Paltz

1. “From ‘The Soul’ to ‘The Warning’: How Longfellow Became a Political Poet.” Timothy E. G. Bartel, The College at Saint Constantine.
2. “The Limited Listening Persona from Voices of the Night to In the Harbor: Singing a Certainty.” Jeffrey Hotz, East Stroudsburg University.
3. “An Aesthete’s Longfellow: Edmund Clarence Stedman’s Criticism of the Poet.” Andrew C. Higgins, SUNY New Paltz.

**Session One C: 10:30– 11:50**

**Queer Poetics**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “Elizabeth Bishop’s Queer Astronomy,” Maggie Greaves, Skidmore College
2. “CAConrad’s Queer Surveillance,” Chad Bennett, University of Texas at Austin
3. “The Dilemma of Trans-exclusionary Imagery in 20<sup>TH</sup>- and 21<sup>ST</sup>-Century Feminist Poetry,” Stevie Edwards, Clemson University
4. “‘Only through Self-Immolation’: Tennessee Williams Revises Hart Crane’s American Lyric,” Brandon Menke, Yale University.

**Lunch: 12 noon – 1:15 p.m. (Provided, buffet)**

**Name Badge and Program Pick Up: 1:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.  
(Location TBA)**

**Session Two A: 1:20-2:40**

**“Series of Dreams”: A Roundtable Discussion on the Poetry of Aldon Lynn Nielsen”**

Session Chair: Jean-Philippe Marcoux, Université Laval

Participants:

Richard Flynn, Georgia Southern University  
Kathy Lou Schultz, University of Memphis  
Joseph T. Thomas, Jr., San Diego State University  
Jean-Philippe Marcoux, Université Laval

**Session Two B: 1:20-2:40**

**Mourning and Memory**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “Mourning and Melancholia in Natasha Trethewey’s *Monument*.” Rebecka Rutledge Fisher, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
2. “‘Present in the continuum of time’: History, Memory and Hope in Joy Harjo’s *An American Sunrise*.” Shari M. Evans, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.
3. “The Historicized Elegy in Natasha Trethewey’s *Native Guard*.” Hongbo Chen, University of Pennsylvania.
4. “‘sensation unpeeling from his limbs like leaves’: Toward and Eco-critical reading of AIDS Elegies.” Claire Genesy, University of California, Davis.

**Session Two C: 1:20-2:40**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson and Poetry**

Organized by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society

Session Chair: Joseph Urbas, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

1. “‘If these enclosed pieces are worthy a place in the new magazine, will you stand as their godfather?’: Emerson as advocate and editor of *The Dial*.” Michael C. Weisenburg, University of South Carolina.

2. "Emerson, Impersonality and Lyric Theory." Danielle Follett, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle.
3. "Grieving for the Poet: Emerson's 'Threnody.'" Yves Gardes, Université de Rouen Normandie.

**Session Two D: 1:20-2:40**

**Poetry and Song**

Session Chair: Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

1. "The Conceit in Sound: American Settings of Donne." Nigel Smith, Princeton University.
2. "Song Travels: Whitman - Swinburne – Delius." Elizabeth Helsinger, University of Chicago.
3. "On Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah.'" Robert Faggen, Claremont McKenna College.

**Session Three A: 2:50-4:10**

**"Precise the Object's loss': Emily Dickinson and the Poetics of Non-Human Nature."**

Organized by The Emily Dickinson Society

Session Chair: Marianne Noble, American University

1. "Arctic Creatures, Tropic Hints: Geopoetics and Romantic Thought," Renée Bergland, Simmons University
2. "Nature as the Medium of Mind: Dickinson and Humboldt," Daniel Manheim, Centre College
3. "Perceiving Perception in Dickinson's Bird Poems," Elizabeth Sagaser, Colby College

**Session Three B: 2:50-4:10**

**(Typo)Graphic Poetries**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. "Race and Typeface: Performative Letterforms in Recent American Poetry." Nikki Skillman, Indiana University.
2. "Works on Paper: Poetry and the Graphic Line (or Ammons contra Grenier)." Thomas Gould, University of East Anglia.
3. "What Type-o[f]-graphical Space? Unbarring Ronald Johnson's Corpus." Joseph Shafer, University College Cork.
4. "The Color of Concrete: giovanni singleton's *American Letters*." Jessica Luck, California State University, San Bernardino.

**Session Three C: 2:50-4:10**

**Stevens, Moore, Bishop, Berryman**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “‘Yet the Sea is Not Full’: Spending ‘Sunday Morning’ with Ecclesiastes.” Dustin Faulstick, University of Kentucky
2. “Marianne Moore's Public Solitude: World War II and After.” Alex Mouw, Washington University in St. Louis.
3. “A Deleuze-Guattarian Reading of Elizabeth Bishop’s ‘The Map’: Expanding *Rhizome* and Contracting *Fold*.” Amna Umer Cheema, University of the Punjab, Pakistan.
4. “Anxiety, Endurance, and Formalism: Smiling with John Berryman.” Erin Piemont, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Session Three D: 2:50-4:10**

**Exhausted yet Inexhaustible: Children’s Poetry, the Fairy Tale, and Experimental Literature**

Organized by the Children’s Literature Society

Session Chair: Joseph T. Thomas, Jr, San Diego State University

1. “American Fairy Tale Poetry and the Exhaustion of Childhood and Children's Literature,” Michael Joseph, Rutgers University
2. “‘A rose is a rose is a rose’: Gertrude Stein, The World is Round, and the Poetics of Exhaustion,” Katie Strode, Independent Scholar
3. “‘a cinder in the shoe or the mind’s eye’: Three Limericks by Theodore Roethke,” Joseph T. Thomas, Jr, San Diego State University

**Session Four A: 4:20-5:40**

**Lateness, Affect, Trauma, Memoir**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “Lateness in Contemporary American Poetry,” Miriam Clark, Auburn University.
2. “W.S. Merwin and the Affective Unknown.” Zachary Kinsella, Clemson University.
3. “Adaptive and Maladaptive Poetry: Resolution in Plath, Roethke, Kunitz, and Moraga.” Jeff P. Turpin and Robert W. Fuhrman, University of Texas at San Antonio
4. ”Revisiting the Poet John Engman.” A.M. Brandt, Savannah College of Art and Design.

**Session Four B: 4:20-5:40**

**Civil War Poetry**

Session Chair:

1. "Making the Poetic Personal: How Poetry Mobilized the Public During the Civil War," Monica Pelaez, St. Cloud State University
2. "Whitman in 1860: The Division of America and the Division of the Self," David Lowrey, Florida State University
3. "Walt Whitman's Wartime Rhythms," Jamie Fenton, University of Cambridge

**Session Four C: 4:20-5:40**

**Jazz, Sounds, and Spectres**

Session Chair:

1. "Form is Never More than an Extension of Bird," Joseph Pizza, Belmont Abbey College
2. "Lorine Niedecker and Bad Reception," Mathew Kilbane, Cornell University
3. "Crossing: Whitman, Creeley, Lerner," Anton Vander Zee, College of Charleston

**Session Four D: 4:20-5:40**

**Poetry for and About Children**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. "The Long and Winding Road Through Nursery Verse and Ballad to Sylvia Plath's first Published Poem for Children, "The Bull of Bendylaw." Lissa Paul, Brock University.
2. "Children Writing and Cosmopolitanism in Robert Hayden's Poetry." Yan Jiang, Wuhan University of Technology.
3. "'To educate is to 'educare'': Frances Harper's Educational Poetics and Reception as a Children's Author." Tabitha Lowery, Middle Tennessee State University.

**Reception and Keynote Address: 5:45 – 7:30 p.m.**

**(Location TBA)**

**“Lynch Fragments”**

**Aldon Lynn Nielsen**

**George and Barbara Kelly Professor of American Literature**

**Pennsylvania State University**

**Friday, February 21, 2020**

**Saturday, February 22, 2020**

**Name Badge and Program Pick Up: 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.**

**(Location TBA)**

**Session Five A: 9:00 – 10:20**

**“What Kind of Times Are (Were) These”: Activist Poetics from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Session Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. “Philip Freneau’s Arboreal Poetics,” Joshua Bartlett, Bilkent University
2. “Little Lambs and Sagacious Sheep’: Environmental Activism in American Children’s Poetry,” Karen L. Kilcup, University of North Carolina, Greensboro
3. “‘What Kind of Times are These’: Adrienne Rich in the Age of Trump,” Brett Millier, Middlebury College.

**Session Five B: 9:00 – 10:20**

**Bridging Identities**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “Here and Looking Back: Migration, Split Identities, and Violence in the Poetry of Monica Sok and Javier Zamora,” Mauricio Espinoza, University of Cincinnati
2. “‘Intifada, Vidershtand.’—A View from the Archives,” Yeshua G.B. Tolle, University of Michigan
3. “The Inbreaking Word: Poetizing and Being,” Bill R. Scalia, St Mary’s Seminar and University

**Session Five C: 9:00 – 10:20**

**Past, Present and Future in Contemporary African-American Poetry**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “Touching Dark Matter: The Afrofuturist Sublime,” Keith D. Leonard, American University
2. “Forging an Ancestry: Kevin Young and Phillis Wheatley,” Melissa Tuckman, Rowan University
3. “Cosmopolitan Literary Transnationalism in Contemporary African-American Poetry,” Monique-Adelle Callahan, Emmanuel College

**Session Six A: 10:30 – 11:50**

**Diviners and Domsdayers: The Poet as Prophet**

Organized by the American Religion and Literature Society

Session Chair: Sara Judy, University of Notre Dame

1. “Visions of The Bridge: Toward a Post-Secular Poetics of Prophecy.” McKay Sheftall, Boston College.
2. “Forever on the Side of the Prophets:” The Prophetic Imagination of Muriel Rukeyser." Josh Nisley, Duquesne University.
3. “Oracular Vernacular: Lucille Clifton’s Spirit Writing.” Bill Fogarty, University of Central Florida.
4. “The Invention of a Prophet: Robinson Jeffers, Reasonable Detachment, and the ‘Gross Sense’.” Sara Judy, University of Notre Dame.

**Session Six B: 10:30 – 11:50**

**Elizabeth Bishop: Ways of Knowing and Being**

Session Chair: Hilene Flanzbaum, Butler University

1. “Elizabeth Bishop: In Pursuit of Something Transcendent.” George Lensing, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
2. “Elizabeth Bishop: Travel and Parataxis.” Jeffrey Gray, Seton Hall University.
3. “Bishop and the Cold War Episteme.” Steven Gould Axelrod, University of California, Riverside.

**Session Six C: 10:40 – 12:00 (Scarborough 2)**

**Traditions and Innovations in African-American Poetries**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “Inventing Convention: New Forms and Racial Formation in Contemporary African-American Poetry,” Lizzy LeRud, Georgia Institute of Technology
2. “The Other Griggs Brother: Poet and Playwright Allen R. Griggs, Jr.,” John Gruesser, Sam Houston State University
3. “From Damage to Desire: Contemporary Black American Persona Poetry as Counternarratives,” Ryan Sharp, Baylor University
4. “What Was Negro American Poetry?” Nicholas Rinehart, Dartmouth College

**Lunch: 12:00- 1:20 (on your own)**

**Session Seven A: 1:30 – 2:50**

**American Elegy, Now 1: Memory Matters: Documentary & Intermedial Elegy**

Session Chair: Julie Phillips Brown, Virginia Military Institute

1. “The Poetics of Elegy: Mourning & (Re)Imagining a Diminishing Environment,” Mary Pinard, Babson College
2. “Unraveling Elegy in Anne Carson’s *Nox*,” Olivia Milroy Evans, Cornell University
3. “Redistributing Grief: Reading Muriel Rukeyser’s *The Book of the Dead* with Anna Schuleit Haber’s *Habeas Corpus* and *Bloom*,” Giffen Mare Maupin, Hendrix College

**Session Seven B: 1:30 – 2:50**

## **Split at the Root: Intersectionality in Mid-Century American Poetry**

Session Chair: Steven Gould Axelrod, University of California, Riverside

1. "From Shingled Hippo to Gay Unicorn: Aesthetic, Identity Desires in Bob Kaufman," Craig Svonkin. Metropolitan State University of Denver
2. "The Poet's Two Bodies: Jack Spicer and the Corporate University," Bryce Thornburgh, Cornell University
3. "Ginsberg and Rich, Queer and Jewish Poetics," Hilene Flanzbaum, Butler University

### **Session Seven C: 1:30 – 2:50**

#### **Jeffers, Frost, Pound**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. "'Impossible Wind': The Formative Years of Robinson Jeffers." Ted Olson, East Tennessee State University.
2. "Robert Frost's Farmer Philosopher: The Ironic, Self-Contradicting 'I' in North of Boston's Major Lyrics." Nicholas Otranto, University of Dallas.
3. "Meditations on the Fallen: Three of the Grace Note Poems in Robert Frost's *New Hampshire*." Nancy Van Arsdale, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania.
4. "'The beauty of machines (A.D. 1930)': Ezra Pound Reads Machine, Nature, and Text." Kelly MacPhail, University of Minnesota, Duluth.

### **Session Eight A: 3:00-4:20**

#### **American Elegy, Now II: Bodies Matter: Race, Social Justice, and Contemporary American Elegy**

Chair: Giffen Mare Maupin, Hendrix College

1. "Elegiac Aesthetics in the Black Lives Matter Era," Almas Khan, Georgetown University
2. "'Happiness is for Amateurs': C.D. Wright's *Rising, Falling, Hovering* as Global Elegy," Annie Bolotin, University of Michigan
3. "'Dark blue feeling': The Temporal Erotics of Black Elegy," Julie Phillips Brown, Virginia Military Institute

### **Session Eight B: 3:00-4:20**

#### **Humor and Community in Recent American Poetry**

Session Chair: Rachel Trousdale

1. “Lucie Brock-Broido and the Self-Parodying Lyric,” Calista McRae, New Jersey Institute of Technology
2. “Be the Cowboy: The Ventriloquistic ‘We’ in Contemporary Asian American Poetry,” Christopher Spaide, Harvard University
3. “Humor and the Limits of Empathy: Kim Rosenfield, Jamaal May, and Lucille Clifton,” Rachel Trousdale, Framingham State University

**Session Eight C 3:00-4:20**

**Hybrids, Replicants, Poetic Entanglement, New Materialism**

Session Chair: NEEDED

1. “The Ethics of Intertextual Hybridities: Martha Ronk’s *Vertigo*,” Lisa Sewell, Villanova University
2. “‘I Didn’t Know I Wasn’t Human’: Replicant Poetry in Sun Yung Shin’s *Unbearable Splendor*.” Susan Vanderborg, University of South Carolina
2. “Reading Leslie Scalapino: Poetic Entanglement and Surplus Meaning.” Nate Mickelson, New York University.
4. “‘I Do Not Know Who I Am When I Read This’: New Materialism and Armand Schwerner’s *The Tablets*.” Joe Moffet, Kentucky State University.

**Session Nine A: 4:30–5:50**

**Rhyme and Poetic Voice in Robert Frost**

Organized by The Robert Frost Society

Session Chair: Calista McRae, New Jersey Institute of Technology

1. “Saying Poems for Ear Readers: Robert Frost’s Measured Performance,” Setsuko Yokoyama, University of Maryland
2. “‘Thank you for noticing’: Robert Frost and Rhyme,” Mark Richardson, Doshisha University
3. “Between Lyric and Narrative: The Strange Poetic Voice in Robert Frost’s *North of Boston*,” Jonathan N. Barron, The University of Southern Mississippi

**Session Nine B: 4:30-5:50**

**New York School**

Session chair: NEEDED

1. “Alice Notley’s *Noir* Poetry,” Scarlett Higgins, University of New Mexico
2. “‘A Step Away from Them’: Memory, Class and Queer Citationality in the Poetry of Frank O’Hara and Wayne Koestenbaum,” Daniel Swain, Yale University
3. “Radical Intermission: Break and/or Breath in Frank O’Hara’s *Lunch Poems*,” Hyunjung Kim, Texas A&M University

**Session Nine C: 4:30 – 5:50 (Scarborough 2)**  
**Some Directions in Poetic Theory and Practice**

Session Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. “Translational Poetics?” Piotr Gwiazda, University of Pittsburgh
2. “Editing the Genome as Lyric Theory,” Erin Singer, Louisiana Tech University
3. “ASSEMBLING EVIDENCE OF THE ALTERNATIVE: *Roots And Routes* POETICS AT NEW COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA,” Patrick James Dunagan, independent Scholar

**Closing Reception**  
**6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**  
**(Location TBA)**