

American Poetry
A Symposium Sponsored by the American Literature Association
and
The Society for the Study of American Poetry

March 26-28, 2026

Hawthorne Hotel in Salem

18 Washington Square West,
Salem, MA 01970

Conference Director:

Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

Keynote Speaker:

Evie Shockley, Rutgers University

This tentative program is designed to provide participants with an opportunity to make corrections and request minor changes before we go to press. Please review the listing of your presentation to ensure that all details are presented accurately and send any requests to the conference director at ab23@princeton.edu. It is likely that we will see normal attrition between now and the conference, which may require some adjustments to the program. A few sessions still need chairs, and I encourage individuals to volunteer.

Please note that audiovisual equipment has been requested for most of the sessions labelled B and C but will not be available for other sessions. The hotel will provide a digital projector and screen and normal hook up equipment; individuals should bring their laptops and any special cables or dongles required. It is probably impossible to add any additional a/v at this point, but you are free to ask.

You will note that we have a packed program with many of the most distinguished scholars of American Poetry presenting. If you are on a panel with two speakers or three speakers and a chair, you should presume that you have twenty minutes for your presentation which normally permits a paper of ten typed double-space spaces with a 12-point font. If you are on a panel with four speakers, you should presume that you have fifteen minutes which permits a paper of 7-8 typed pages.

Our package with the Hawthorne Hotel provides **all** conference registrants with two breakfasts and two buffet lunches and two refreshment breaks each day. If you have specific food needs or will have to miss one of these lunches, please let me know this in early February. If you need to withdraw from the conference for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible.

The hotel also offers free parking. You can pick up your printed programs and conference badges during registration. The conference director wants to thank everyone who organized sessions and panels and provided specific advice. I look forward to a wonderful meeting.

Friendly Reminders: Our conference fee is \$250, which includes two breakfasts, two lunches, and the receptions. I regret that we are unable to provide a lower rate for graduate students or emeriti faculty. **All conference participants are required to pre-register and pre-pay by February 11.** You can pay your conference registration on-line by going to [Registration – The American Literature Association](#)

American Poetry Program 2026 Salem -- Updated March 1, 2026

Thursday, March 26, 2026:

Registration will be open from 4:30 -6:00 pm and then from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Current plans call for an informal welcoming reception from about 7 to 8 pm, followed by an opening plenary panel that will start at 8 pm.

1-A "Contemporary Poetry: Media, Form, and Community"

Participants have been invited to engage interrelated problems in contemporary poetics: the social and material functions of poetic form in the present; the constitution of poetic communities across modes of readership, collaborative practice, and networked exchange; and the key pressures—cultural, political, technological—transforming poetic production and reception.

Moderator: Nikki Skillman, Indiana University

Joe Wei, University of Georgia

Chris Spaide, University of Southern Mississippi

Walton Muyumba, Indiana University

Matthew Kilbane, University of Notre Dame

A/V Provided

Friday, March 27, 2026:

7:00-8:30 am:

Breakfast for all conference registrants, including those not staying in the hotel.

8:30- 9:45 am

2-A African-American Voices

Chair: Walton Muyumba, Indiana University

1. "Black Pastoralism: Audre Lorde and Eco-Poetics in the Time of Trump," James McCorkle, Hobart and William Smith Colleges
2. "Dissonance and Dissent: Meditations on a Black Speculative Poetics, Keith D. Leonard, American University
3. "Audre Lorde, Mother Warrior Poet in America," Hannah Baker Saltmarsh, Hampton University

NO AV requested

2-B "Whitman's America at 250. Rethinking the Poet of Democracy"

Organized by the Whitman Studies Association

Chair: Elizabeth A Petrino, Fairfield University

1. "Whitman, Democracy, and Nineteenth-Century Cultures of Data," Ed Whitley, Lehigh University
2. "'Never were These States so insulted, and attempted to be betrayed!': Whitman on American Dictatorship," Zachary Turpin, University of Idaho
3. "Walt Whitman, Populist," Stefan Schöberlein, Texas A&M University–Central Texas
4. "Representative Democracy: Media and Mediation in Whitman's Indian Poems," Phillip Brown, University of Notre Dame.

Audio-Visual Equipment required: screen, projector, and cables to connect to PC, as well as a Mac dongle

2-C Poetic Form and Emotional Spaces.

Chair: Rachel Trousdale, Framingham State University

1. "Against Allegory: Wallace Stevens's Long Lines," Emily Lobb, Princeton University
2. "'Unemotional, and all emotion': Moore's Syllabics," Sarah Berry, University of Dallas
3. "'I Like Your Use of Space": C.D. Wright's Lens-Lyric in *Tremble*," Kaley Hutter, Hollins College

No AV requested

10-11:15 am

3-A William Carlos Williams

Organized by Christopher MacGowan

Chair: Stephanie Burt, Harvard University

1. "'Sing me a song to make death tolerable' (107): Death in Paterson I- IV," Christopher MacGowan, College of William and Mary
2. "'And now by the sea a new world death has come...': The Art of Williams's Memorialization of Emily Dickinson Wellcome" Stephen Hahn, William Paterson University
3. "'Thickets' and 'Pulpy Weeds': Marginal Ecologies in William Carlos Williams's Paterson," Kyra G. Morris, Endicott College

No AV Requested

3-B "This was a Poet –": A Cognitive Reading of Dickinson's Poetic Art

Organized by The Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS)

Chair: Renée Bergland, Simmons University

1. "Dickinson's Choices: Factors Associated with Her Alternate Wording," Michael Kelly, Independent Scholar
2. "The Way I read a Poem's – this –," Margaret Freeman, Myrifiel Institute for Cognition and the Arts

3. Application: An interactive exercise with attendees in cognitively experiencing a Dickinson poem

Audio-Visual Equipment Required: yes

3-C Contemporary Poets

Chair: Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

1. "Transforming Pound's Exemplary Epic Stance: Robyn Schiff's *The Information Desk*," Charles Altieri, University of California, Berkeley
2. "Karen Solie and the New Book of Nature," Bonnie Costello, Boston University
3. "Elisa Gonzalez' Grand Tour," William Flesch, Brandeis University

Needs AV

3-D Revelations

Chair: TBA

1. "Lyric 'in death's position': The Poetics of the Suicide Note in Hughes, Baraka, and Rankine," Dylan Furcall, University of California, Berkeley
2. "Elizabeth Bishop: Arkiving 'Gestational Waters' in Foster letters," Amna Umer Cheema, University of the Punjab
3. "Natalie Merchant's Leave Your Sleep as Musical Poetry Anthology: The Danger of Desire in American Children's Verse," Paul Christian Jones, Ohio University

No AV Required

11:15-11:40 refreshment break

11:40 am-12:30 pm

4-A Song Lyrics as Poetry

Chair: Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

1. On Andrew and Jim Baxter, "Bamalong Blues" and "The Moore Girl" (1927), Aaron Kunin,(Pomona College)

2. On Duke Ellington and Bob Russell, "Do Nothing 'til You Hear from Me" (1944), Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

No AV requested

4-B Blindness, Disability, and the Poetry of Possibility

Chair: Leslie Petty, Rhodes College

1. "The Erotics Of 'Yes': Resistance in Hannah Emerson's Poetry," Pauline Marie-Jeanne, Sorbonne Université in Paris. (neurodiversity/ disability)
2. "Poetry, Empathy, and Blindness: Close Reading Brown and Brakefield," Olivia Thomakos, University of Rhode Island

NEEDS AV

4-C The Personal, the Impersonal, and the Political

Chair: Stephanie Burt, Harvard University

1. "Jimmy Carter, Poets, and the Republic," Emily Seelbinder, Queens University of Charlotte.
2. "'It is the Monster in the Labyrinth': From the Poetics of the Impersonal to the Language of Objects in Charles Simic's Poetry," Nina Granger, Sorbonne Université, Paris,

NO AV requested

12:30-1:45 pm Buffet Lunch

1:45-3:00 pm

5-A RECENT POETS (1)

Chair: Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

1. "The This or Here of It: Poetry and Non-Conceptual Content," John Beer, Portland State University
2. "Voice in the Poetry of John Beer," Leland de la Durantaye, Claremont McKenna College
3. "The Poetics Thing," C. D. Blanton, University of California, Berkeley

No AV Required

5-B Dickinson: Rhetorical, Philosophical, and Epistolary Readings

Organized by The Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS)

Chair: Margaret Freeman, Myrifiel Institute for Cognition and the Arts

1. “Emily Dickinson: Master of the Rhetoric of Temporality,” Saudamini Siegrist, Independent Scholar
2. “Temporal Wounds: Dickinson and the Philosophy of Repetition,” Nava Eghdami, Kansas State University
3. “‘I trust you are “at Home”’: A Close Examination of Poems Resulting from Dickinson’s Correspondence with Abiah Root and Otis Phillips Lord,” Cole Phillips, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Audio-Visual Equipment Required: yes

5-C African American Poetry Beyond the Archive

Chair: James McCorkle, Hobart and William Smith Colleges

1. ‘UNTAKEN DOWN ON TAPE’: Langston Hughes’ ASK YOUR MAMA (1960) and the archive” Tymek Woodham, Queen Mary University of London.
2. “‘Ask Your Mama’: Polyvocality as Disruption in the Poetry of Langston Hughes, Patricia Smith and Kendrick Lamar,” Flore Emmerich, Sorbonne Université, Paris
3. “The Dark Room Collective’s Reading Series at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston,” Fallon Murphy, Boston University

AV Required

5-D Expanding Poetics

Chair: Karen Kilcup, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

1. “Poetry’s Original Sounds,” Bill Fogarty, University of Central Florida
2. “Wonder as Critical Method in Contemporary Poetics,” Nate Mickelson, New York University
3. A Science of Vital Life: Knowledge Localization and Poetic Observation in Bernadette Mayer's *Midwinter Day*,” Scout Turkel, University of Chicago

4. “Sylvia Wynter’s Ethnopoetics: From the Caribbean Out,” Leo Dunsker, University of California, Berkeley

NO AV Required

3:15-4:30 pm

6-A American Poetry in the Age of Transnational Poetics: A Roundtable

Chair: Nikki Skillman, Indiana University

Presenters:

Jahan Ramazani, University of Virginia

Lucy Alford, Wake Forest University

Ama Bemba Adwetewa-Badu, Washington University

Hoon Lee, Indiana University

Dorothy Wang, Tufts University

NO A/V Requested

6-B Insights on Frost and His Works

Organized by the Robert Frost Society

Chair, Virginia Smith, U.S. Naval Academy

1. “Class Themes in Robert Frost’s Life and Work,” Neal Dolan, University of Toronto

2. “Elinor’s House: The Other Poet on the Derry Farm,” Robert Crawford, Frost Farm, Derry, New Hampshire

3. “Robert Frost’s Astronomical Imagination” Leila Belkora, Independent Scholar,

4. “Eliotic Frost: Vocal Theatricality in Frost’s Performance” Chris Mustazza, University of Pennsylvania,

AV Required

6-C How I wish I’d been a painter”: A Roundtable on Elizabeth Bishop’s Other Art:

(Part 1) Organized by the Elizabeth Bishop Society

Moderator: Lara Lee Meintjes, University of California, Berkeley

1. “Brazilian Landscape”: Bethany Hicok, Williams College
2. “County Courthouse” and “Merida from the Roof,” Charles Altieri, University of California, Berkeley
3. “Chandelier,” Stacy Hubbard, SUNY Buffalo
4. “Sleeping Figure” and “Cabin with Porthole,” Heather Treseler, Worcester State University

AV Required

4:30 – 5:00 pm Break with refreshments

5:00-6:15 pm

7-A Poetic Resistance

Chair: Leslie Petty, Rhodes College

1. “Persuading with Poets: Representation, Self-Expression, and American Law,” Talia Shalev, Boston University
2. “Confinement, Violence, and Expression in Etheridge Knight,” Thomas Alan Dichter, Harvard University
3. “From Border Crossing to Racialization: Ada Limón and Latinx Tradition,” Anne Dewey, Saint Louis University, Madrid Campus

No AV required

7-B “Nature is a stranger yet”: Dickinson, Science, Nature, and Ecology

Organized by The Emily Dickinson International Society (EDIS)

Chair: Emily Seelbinder, Queens University of Charlotte

1. “Dickinson and the Darklings: Romantic Poetry and the Extinction of Species,” Renée Bergland, Simmons University
2. “Lips and Birds: The Nature of Speaking Out in Whittier and Dickinson,” Wendy Tronrud, Queens College, CUNY

3. “To make a prairie”: Dickinson’s Liminal (Human) Animal Daydream,” Raul Martin IV, University of Miami

Audio-Visual Equipment Required: yes

7-C: “How I wish I’d been a painter”: A Roundtable on Elizabeth Bishop’s Other Art: (Part 2) Organized by the Elizabeth Bishop Society

Moderator: Bethany Hicok, Williams College

5. “Graveyard with Fenced Graves” and “Tombstones for Sale”: Tom Travisano, Hartwick College

6. Untitled (frontispiece of a card), Arlo Haskell, Key West Literary Seminar

7. “Tea Service”: Lara Lee Meintjes, University of California, Berkeley

8. “Pansies”: Langdon Hammer, Yale University

9. “Interior with Extension Cord”: Melissa Zeiger, Dartmouth College

AV Required

6:15 -7:00 Welcoming Reception

7:00 pm Keynote by Evie Shockley

"An Alt-Natural Order:

Towards a Wynterian Reading of Recent Black Ecopoetics."

The talk takes up three very recent poetry collections—Ariana Benson's *Black Pastoral*, Saretta Morgan's *Alt-Nature*, and Donika Kelly's *The Natural Order of Things*—with an eye toward what emerges when we use Sylvia Wynter's analysis of the plantation economy and its logics to think with and about their engagements with the idea of the "natural."

Evie Shockley, Zora Neale Hurston Distinguished Professor of English at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, is the author of *Renegade Poetics: Black Aesthetics and Formal Innovation in African American Poetry* and six collections of poetry, including *suddenly we*, *semiautomatic*, and *the new black*. For her poetry, she has received an NAACP Image Award and two Hurston/Wright Legacy Awards, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. She is editor of the recently released Norton Library edition of

Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Her critical essays appear or are forthcoming in *The Black Scholar*, *New Literary History*, *Callaloo*, *The Cambridge History of African American Poetry*, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Poetry*, *The New Emily Dickinson Studies*, and elsewhere. Additional honors include the Academy of American Poetry Fellowship, the Shelley Memorial Award, the Lannan Literary Award for Poetry, and the Stephen Henderson Award, and support from the Harvard Radcliffe Institute, ACLS, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Shockley served as Editor for Poetry at *Contemporary Literature* from 2020-2025.

Saturday, March 28, 2026

7:00-9:00 am:

Breakfast for all conference registrants, including those not staying in the hotel

9:00-10:15 am

8-A The Emergence of American Poetic Methods

Chair: Michael Keller, Columbus State Community College

1. "In the Mood for Method: Michael Wigglesworth and the Method of Poetry," Ethan A. Plaue, Columbia University
2. "Entwining Individualism with Self-Erasure: Jones Very's Impossible Project," Becky McLaughlin, University of South Alabama
3. "Bad Environmentalism in Nineteenth-Century American Poetry," Caroline Gelmi, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

No A/V Requested

8-B A.R. Ammons at 100 AV

Chair: Kevin McGuirk, University of Waterloo, Ontario

1. "The Eco-poetics of A. R. Ammons," Steven Schneider, University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley
2. "'In View of the Fact': Ammons and Aging," Roger Gilbert, Cornell University
3. "Formal Excess and A.R. Ammons's *Garbage*." Christian Wessels, University of Rochester

Needs AV

8-C Black Magic Poetry: Amiri Baraka

Chair: Evie Shockley, Rutgers University

1. "A Black Arts Laboratory for 'Blues People': Baraka and 27 Cooper Square," Kehinde Alonge, Rutgers University
2. "A Poem Welcoming Jonas Mekas to America': The Last Days of LeRoi Jones II," Aldon Lynn Nielsen, Penn State Emeritus
3. "Breakfast with Baraka," Brian Gilmore, University of Maryland – College Park

AV Requested

10:15-10:30 Coffee Break

10:30-11:45 am

9-A Form and Meaning in 20th-Century American Poetry

Chair: Stephanie Burt, Harvard University

1. "Mortal Stakes: Frost and Play," Rachel Trousdale, Framingham State University
2. "Gender (and) Performance in and through the Sonnet: Sara Teasdale's Sonnets to Duse," Eleanor Wakefield, University of Oregon
3. "Deixis in the Time of Pain: Forming Southern Addiction from Rukeyser's *The Book of the Dead* to Lynn's *Mothman Apologia*," Tanner Crunelle, Cornell University
4. "Belatedness and Influence: The Objectivists in the Twenty-First Century," Mark Scroggins, Florida Atlantic University

No AV requested.

9-B Forms and Methods

Chair: TBA

1. "'white rings of tumult': The Logic of Spiral in Hart Crane's *The Bridge*," Niloofar Ghaemi, Cornell University
2. "Forms of Attachment: Ekphrasis as Hybrid Form in the Collaborations of Barbara Guest w/ Mary Abbott and Fay Lansner," Hannah Piette, Yale University

3. “Cid Corman and the New American Poetry: The Kyoto Notebooks, 1960 to 1975,” Gregory Dunne, Miyazaki International University (Japan)

AV Required

9-C Moore, Bishop, and Notley

Chair: Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University

1. “‘Playing with fire,’: Moore’s ‘Compositional Method’ as Illuminated by her Notebooks,” Cristanne Miller, University at Buffalo.
2. “Elizabeth Bishop and /The Alcoholic Woman/,” Langdon Hammer, Yale University
3. “Alice Notley and Dante,” Laura Quinney, Brandeis University

NEEDS AV

9-D New Directions in Early American Poetry Studies

Organized by the Society of Early Americanists

Chair: Joshua Bartlett, High Point University

1. “‘Setting My Muse to Work’: Thomas Paine, Poetry, and the American Revolution,” Scott Cleary, Iona University.
2. “Coming to Terms with Early American Poetry,” Meredith Marie Neuman, Clark University
3. “Phillis and Chloe: Seeing Early American Black Women’s Poetic Coteries,” Wendy Raphael Roberts, University at Albany, SUNY

Audiovisual equipment required: laptop connection & projection screen

11:45 am - 1:30 pm

Buffet Lunch

1:45-3:00 pm

10A Repurposing Form in Late Twentieth Century Poetry and Poetics

Chair: Matthew Hofer, University of New Mexico

1. "Human Wording': Robert Grenier and the Form of Criticism," Dale Enggass, University of Utah
2. "Re-Editing Langston Hughes's *Montage*," Jim Cocola, Worcester Polytechnic Institute
3. "all the / lost creatures" "began to" "emerge": Poetry as a Venue for Public Stories, Scarlett Higgins, University of New Mexico

No AV required

10-B Wallace Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (Part 1) – A Roundtable on the Poem

Organized by the Wallace Stevens Society to celebrate The Wallace Stevens Journal's 50th Anniversary: A roundtable discussion of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" and its offspring (in other poems, narrative fiction and essays, visual artwork, musical compositions, and so on), the transcript of which may be edited for inclusion in the *Journal's* anniversary issue (*WSJ* 50.2, Fall 2026).

Moderator: Juliette Utard, Sorbonne Université, Paris

Stephanie Burt, Harvard University

Florian Gargaillo, Austin Paey State University

Wanyü Lin, National Chengchi University

Andrew Osborn, University of Dallas

Stephen Sicari, St. John's University

Ian Tan, Nanyang Technological University

AV Required

10- C The Affordances of Immateriality in Nineteenth-Century US Poetry

Organized by Eliza Richards

Chair: Shirley Samuels, Cornell University

1. "And All We Are Brethren': Frederick Douglass's Eco-poetics," Denise Xu, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

2. "Feeling Heavenly: Toward an Aesthetics of Virtue," Kylan Rice, Utah State University
3. "'Pleasure Lingered from the Word': Poetic Liberty in George Moses Horton's Poetry," Eliza Richards, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

No A/V Requested

10-D Contemporary Poetry

Chair: TBA

1. "Embodied Paradox and the Contemporary American Sonnet," Emma K. Atwood, University of Montevallo
2. "'Door's open. Soup's On': Queer Foodways & Contemporary American Poetry," Anna James, Franklin College
3. "Rukeyser's Urgency: On 'Poem [I lived in the first century of world wars],'" Piotr Gwiazda, University of Pittsburgh.

AV required

3:15-4:30 pm

11-A Engagement

Chair: Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

1. "On Occasional Poetry," Oren Izenberg, University of California, Irvine
2. "Baraka's Self-Fashioning," Joshua Kotin, Princeton University
3. "Ontology: Tone and Style," Brett Bourbon, University of Dallas
4. "Poetry and the Idea of Rules," V. Joshua Adams, University of Louisville

No AV requested

11-B Wallace Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (Part 2) – A Roundtable on the Poem's Artistic Offspring and Afterlives

Moderator: Andrew Osborn, University of Dallas

Charles Altieri, University of California, Berkeley
Roger Gilbert, Cornell University
Lisa Goldfarb, Gallatin School of NYU
Jonathan Ivry, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater
Emily Lobb, Princeton University
Christopher Spaide, University of Southern Mississippi
Juliette Utard, Sorbonne Université, Paris

AV Required

11-C The Natural and the Wild.

Chair: Karen Kilcup, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

1. “American Identity and Place in Poetic Forests of the 20th Century,” Virginia Grant, University of New Mexico-Los Alamos
2. “The Tidal Metaphor in Maine Regional Poets,” James E. Dobson, Dartmouth College
3. “Wild in Three Keys: The Inevitability of the Wild and How to Attend to It in the Poetry of Gary Snyder, Nelson Ball, and Elena Johnson.” Lance La Rocque, Acadia University, and Lisa Narbeshuber, Acadia University

AV required

4:30-5:00 Break with Refreshment

5:00-6:15pm

12-A Frank Bidart

Chair: Langdon Hammer, Yale University

1. “Frank Bidart and Tragedy,” Dustin Simpson, Reed College
2. “Frank Bidart: Friendship through Poetry and Music,” Lloyd Schwartz, University of Massachusetts, Boston
3. “Frank Bidart on California and Predation,” Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

[Frank Bidart (Wellesley), Response]

12-B Wild Eco-poetics in the 19th Century

Chair/Respondent: Shirley Samuels, Cornell University

1. "Building 'Freedom's Temple': Lydia Sigourney and Frances Harper's Coral Poems," Elizabeth Petrino, Fairfield University
2. "Fragments of a Song: Seaweed Poetry and the Album," Charline Jao, Tufts University
3. "Anti-Pastoral Poetics and the Settler-Colonial Imaginary," Susannah Sharpless, Cornell University

NEEDS AV

12-C Roundtable: "Correspondence and/as Recovery in Late Twentieth Century Poetry"

V. Joshua Adams, University of Louisville
Matthew Hofer, University of New Mexico (Moderator)
Joshua Kotin, Princeton University
Jane Malcolm, Université de Montréal
Claudia Moreno Parsons, Oxnard College
Andrew Rippeon, Davidson College
Kristen Tapson, Independent Scholar

Closing Reception: 6:15-7:30 pm

Possible Open poetry reading --- 9 to 10:30 pm: If you are interested in reading a couple of your poems (eight minutes max), please let me know as soon as possible.