



2022–23 LOFT MENTOR SERIES

Poetry and Creative Prose Guidelines

The Loft Literary Center invites poets, fiction, and nonfiction writers to apply to the 2022–2023 Mentor Series in Poetry and Creative Prose. This program offers advanced criticism and professional development opportunities to 12 writers: four each in the genres of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

THE PROGRAM

Twelve early career* writers are selected through a competitive judging process to work intensively with six nationally acclaimed writers of prose and poetry. Three of the mentors spend an extended period of time working with the entire group and conducting genre-specific workshops and individual conferences with the four writers in their genres. The other three mentors come in for intensive weekends of craft seminars with the full group and individual manuscript conferences with the writers in their genre. All participants are featured in a public reading—four fellows with two mentors—throughout the course of the year.

*Please see the Jerome Foundation's definition of early career [here](#).

Eligibility

- Work must be in the genres of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. Nonfiction may include memoir, personal essay, literary journalism, and biography. It does not include reportage, blogs, or opinion pieces.
- You may apply in more than one genre, but can only win in one. If you are applying in more than one genre, you must submit different work samples for each application.
- You must be a resident of Minnesota for a minimum of 12 months on the date of your application.
- You must not have published (traditional or self-published) more than one book in any genre.
- You may submit work previously published in magazines, journals, or anthologies.
- You must not be an enrolled student in a degree-granting program (including K-12, college, graduate, or postgraduate studies) at the time of application and/or during the Mentor Series fellowship period.
- Mentor Series fellowship alumni are eligible to re-apply to the Mentor Series after ten years have passed since their fellowship year and you have taken time off from pursuing writing during that time to align with the Jerome Foundation's definition of an early career artist (<https://www.jeromefdn.org/defining-early-career-emerging-artists>).
- Board and staff members of the Loft and the Jerome Foundation are ineligible to apply.

Fellows are selected on the basis of the strength of their manuscripts and project plans and will receive an award of \$500 to defray the costs of program participation (book purchases, child care, etc.). Fellows are required to prepare for and attend all program-related meetings, seminars, readings, workshops, manuscript conferences, and social activities. These activities may be virtual or in-person depending on mentors' and fellows' comfort level and public health guidelines.

All program dates are tentative and subject to change. Orientation for fellows is currently scheduled for September 24, 2022.

If you have questions about eligibility, please call program manager Marion Gomez at 612-215-2578 or email her at mgomez@loft.org. More information is available on our website: www.loft.org.

The Loft is unable to answer questions during the week of the application deadline, so please contact us in advance of July 17th. **The deadline to apply is Sunday, July 24th, at 11:59 p.m.**

Judging Process

A panel of preliminary readers composed of recent Mentor Series fellows who are ineligible to apply for the program will review the initial manuscripts received to the competition. From these, they will select 20 - 24 finalists in each genre which will be forwarded to the respective mentors for final decisions. The two mentors in each genre will confer and select four winners and two honorable mentions.

THE MENTORS

Fiction

Helena María Viramontes

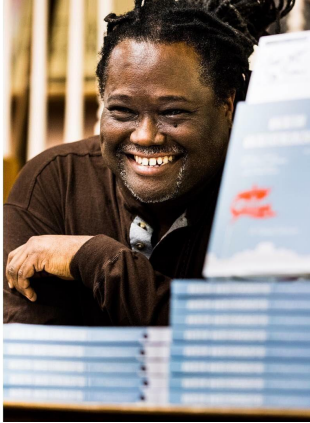


Helena María Viramontes is the author of *The Moths and Other Stories* (1985) and two novels: *Under the Feet of Jesus*, which bears witness to the struggles of a makeshift family of migrant farmworkers in California, and *Their Dogs Came with Them* (2008), a masterful depiction of the lives of the dispossessed, the working poor, the homeless, and the undocumented of East Los Angeles, where Viramontes was born and raised.

Named a Ford Fellow in Literature by United States Artists, Viramontes has also received the John Dos Passos Prize for Literature, a Sundance Institute Fellowship, an NEA Fellowship, a Spirit Award from the California Latino Legislative Caucus and a 2017 Bellagio Center Residency from the Rockefeller Foundation. In 2015, California State University-Long Beach inaugurated the Helena María Viramontes Lecture. Viramontes is Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences in English at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, where she is working on a novel.

Fiction

A. Rafael Johnson



A. Rafael Johnson is a writer, educator, evaluator, and the author of *The Through* (Jaded Ibis Press, 2017), finalist for the 2018 Minnesota Book Award in fiction. and co-author of *Creative Evaluation & Engagement: Essentials* (Amazon, 2022). A Kimbilio Fellow, his newest story *Morrison's Note* (Temenos Journal, 2022) questions the nature of our shared reality through metafiction. Johnson is working on a sequel to *The Through* entitled *Follow The Sun*. Johnson teaches at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and co-owns Inspire to Change, a consulting firm based in Minneapolis.

Creative Nonfiction

Rajiv Mohabir



Rajiv Mohabir is an Indo-Caribbean American author of three acclaimed poetry collections, *The Taxidermist's Cut*, *Cowherd's Son*, and *Cutlish*; a book of translation, *I Even Regret Night*; and his hybrid memoir, *Antiman*. He is winner of the 2015 Kundiman Prize, a 2015 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant, finalists for the 2017 and 2022 Lambda Literary Awards, finalist for the 2022 PEN Open Book Award, the 2021 National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry, and longlisted for the PEN/Voelcker Award in Poetry. Mohabir has received fellowships from Voices of

Our Nation's Artist foundation, Kundiman, The Home School, and the American Institute of Indian Studies language program. He received his MFA in Poetry and Translation from Queens College, CUNY and his PhD in English from the University of Hawai'i. Rajiv is currently a professor at Emerson College.

Creative Nonfiction

Ryan Berg



Ryan Berg is the author of *No House to Call My Home: Love, Family and Other Transgressions*, winner the Minnesota Book Award for General Nonfiction, the NCCD Media for a Just Society Award, and *No House to Call My Home* was listed as a Top 10 LGBTQ Book of 2016 by the American Library Association. His essays have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *The Sun*, *The Rumpus*, *Salon*, *Slate*, *The*

Advocate and the *Queer Voices Anthology*. He has received writing residencies from Yaddo, MacDowell, and the Everwood Farmstead Foundation. He is the recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Nonfiction Literature as well as a Lambda Literary Emerging LGBTQ Voices Fellowship and he was awarded the Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant. He lives in Minneapolis with his two dogs, River and Jack.

Poetry

Kimberly Blaeser



Kimberly Blaeser, past Wisconsin Poet Laureate and founding director of Indigenous Nations Poets, is a writer, photographer, and scholar. She is the author of five poetry collections including *Copper Yearning*, *Apprenticed to Justice*, and the bi-lingual *Résister en dansant/Ikwe-niimi: Dancing Resistance*. Blaeser edited *Traces in Blood, Bone, and Stone: Contemporary Ojibwe Poetry* and authored the monograph *Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition*. An enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, she is an Anishinaabe activist and environmentalist. Blaeser is a Professor at UW–Milwaukee, and MFA faculty for Institute of American

Indian Arts. Her photographs, picto-poems, and ekphrastic pieces have appeared in exhibits such as “Ancient Light,” “Visualizing Sovereignty,” and “No More Stolen Sisters.” In 2021, Blaeser received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers’ Circle of the Americas. She lives in rural Wisconsin; and, for portions of each year, in a water-access cabin near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. Additional information available here: <http://kblaeser.org>

Poetry

Su Hwang



Su Hwang is a poet, activist, stargazer, and the author of *Bodega* (Milkweed Editions), which received the 2020 Minnesota Book Award in poetry and was named a finalist for the 2021 Kate Tufts Discovery Award. Born in Seoul, Korea, she was raised in New York then called the Bay Area home before transplanting to the Midwest, where she received her MFA from the University of Minnesota. A recipient of the Jerome Hill Fellowship in Literature and the

Academy of American Poets James Wright Prize, she has been awarded grants from the Loft Literary Center, Minnesota State Arts Board, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, and residencies to Dickinson House, Springboard for the Arts’ *Hinge*, and Hedgebrook. Her poems have appeared in *The Baffler*, *Ninth Letter*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Waxwing*, and elsewhere. She is a teaching artist with the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop, and is the co-founder of Poetry Asylum. She lives in Minneapolis, and is currently working on her next poetry collection, *Roost*.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- All entries must be submitted through Submittable. Incomplete entries or entries that do not comply with the guidelines will not be considered.
- A complete application will include:
 - A completed form in Submittable, including the biographical statement (written in third person).
 - An upload of a one-page goal statement detailing what you hope to achieve in the program as part of your application.

- An upload of a 200-word statement about your “Contribution to the Literary Landscape.” The Loft Literary Center believes equity benefits everyone and the Loft Mentor Series is committed to inclusion. Our most recent strategic framework states “We encompass a broad spectrum of voices, literary expression, and artistic endeavor. We respect all constituents, readers, and writers at every stage of their development. We believe language connects us; that through our shared love of reading, writing, and spoken word, we embrace and transcend our differences.” In 200 words, describe how your point of view and background (social, racial/ethnic, religious, gender identity, sexual identity, ability/disability) will contribute to the literary landscape of Minnesota and beyond our state.
- An upload of a 100-word statement answering the following question: *Is your work innovating, changing or challenging genre, form or the literary landscape at large? If so, how?*
- A work sample (see below)

WORK SAMPLE GUIDELINES

- You may submit one manuscript in each genre but may win in only one category. Each submission will require a separate Submittable entry; (e.g. you may not submit a poetry and a nonfiction manuscript with one entry).
- Your name may appear on the manuscript. Your submission will not be judged anonymously.
- If your work sample contains multiple pieces, title your entire work sample with the title of your first piece in the work sample. If your first work sample is untitled, please use the first line of the first piece as the title.
- **PAGE LIMITS:**
 - ⇒ Poets must submit 15–18 pages of poetry, with no more than one poem per page (poems longer than one page should be continued on subsequent pages). Pages must be consecutively numbered, one through 15 to 18.
 - ⇒ Prose writers must submit 12–20 double-spaced pages, with margins of no less than one inch on all sides. If you are submitting sections of a book-length project, you may include a one-page synopsis as part of your page limit. If you are submitting several short pieces, all pages must be numbered consecutively, one through 12 to 20.
 - ⇒ Exceeding the page limit will render your application ineligible.

DEADLINE:

- ⇒ All entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on July 24, 2022.
- ⇒ Winners will be notified by mid September 2022 by phone. All other applicants will receive an email.

The Loft Mentor Series in Poetry and Creative Prose is made possible through the support of the Jerome Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Loft Members.