



2019–20 LOFT MENTOR SERIES

Poetry and Creative Prose Guidelines

The Loft Literary Center invites poets, fiction, and nonfiction writers to apply to the 2019–2020 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 emerging 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.

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 both fiction and nonfiction, you must submit different work samples.
- 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.
- Students who are at the time of application, and/or will during the Mentor Series fellowship period, be enrolled in degree-granting programs (including K-12, college, graduate, or post-graduate studies) are ineligible to apply.
- Mentor Series fellowship alumni are eligible to re-apply to the Mentor Series after ten years have passed since their fellowship year.
- 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 a modest 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.

All program dates are tentative and subject to change. Orientation for fellows is currently scheduled for September 7, 2019.

If you have questions about eligibility, please call program associate Marion Gomez at 612-215-2578 or email her at mgomez@loft.org. More information, including answers to frequently asked questions, 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 1st. The deadline to apply is Monday, July 8th, at 11:59 p.m.

Judging Process

A panel of preliminary readers comprised 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 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

Jennine Capó Crucet



Jennine Capó Crucet is the author of *Make Your Home Among Strangers*, winner of the International Latino Book Award and cited as a best book of the year by NBC Latino, the *Guardian*, and the *Miami Herald*; and of *How to Leave Hialeah*, which won the Iowa Short Fiction Award and the John Gardner Book Prize. A Contributing Opinion Writer for *The New York Times* and a recipient of an O. Henry Prize, she is currently an associate professor at the University of Nebraska. Her essay collection, *My Time Among the Whites*, is forthcoming in September 2019 from Picador/FSG. Photo by Monica McGivern.

Fiction

Junauda Petrus

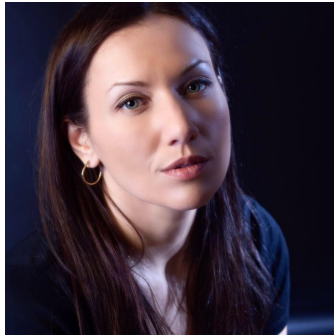


Junauda Petrus is a writer, pleasure activist, filmmaker and performance artist of Black-Caribbean descent, born on Dakota land. Her work centers around wildness, queerness, Black-diasporic-futurism, ancestral healing, sweetness, shimmer and liberation. She lives in Minneapolis with her wife and family. She is the co-founder with Erin Sharkey of Free Black Dirt, an experimental arts production company. She is currently writing and directing, "Sweetness of Wild" a

poetic-episodic film series themed around Blackness, queerness, biking, resistance, love and coming of age in Minneapolis. Her work centers around wildness, Black-diasporic-futurism, ancestral healing, sweetness, spectacle and shimmer. Her first YA novel, *The Stars and The Blackness Between Them*, debuts September 2019 on Dutton Children's.

Creative Nonfiction

Melissa Febos



Melissa Febos is the author of the acclaimed memoir, *Whip Smart* (St. Martin's Press 2010), and the essay collection, *Abandon Me* (Bloomsbury 2017), which was a LAMBDA Literary Award finalist, a Publishing Triangle Award finalist, an Indie Next Pick, and was widely named a Best Book of 2017. Febos is the inaugural winner of the Jeanne Córdova Nonfiction Award from LAMBDA Literary and the recipient of the 2018 Sarah Verdone Writing Award from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. She has been awarded fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, Bread Loaf

Writer's Conference, Virginia Center for Creative Arts, Vermont Studio Center, The Barbara Deming Memorial Foundation, The BAU Institute, and Ragdale. The recipient of an MFA from Sarah Lawrence College and an associate professor and Graduate Director at Monmouth University, her work has recently appeared in *Tin House*, *Granta*, *The Believer*, *The Sewanee Review*, and *The New York Times*. She lives in Brooklyn.

Creative Nonfiction



Douglas Kearney

Douglas Kearney has published six books, most recently, *Buck Studies* (Fence Books, 2016), winner of the Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Award, the CLMP Firecracker Award for Poetry and silver medalist for the California Book Award (Poetry).

BOMB says: "[*Buck Studies*] remaps the 20th century in a project that is both lyrical and epic, personal and historical." M. NourbeSe Philip calls Kearney's collection of libretti, *Someone Took They Tongues* (Subito,

2016), "a seismic, polyphonic mash-up that disturbs the tongue." Kearney's collection of hybrid essays on poetics and performativity, *Mess and Mess and* (Noemi Press, 2015), was a Small Press Distribution Handpicked Selection that *Publisher's Weekly* called "an extraordinary book." His work is widely anthologized, including *Best American Poetry* (2014, 2015), *Best American Experimental Writing* (2014), *The Creative Critic: Writing As/About Practice*, *What I Say: Innovative Poetry by Black Writers in America*, and *The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*. His poetry and criticism is also widely published in magazines and journals, including *Poetry*, *Callaloo*, *Boston Review*, *Hyperallergic*, *Jacket2*, and *Lana Turner*. His work has

been exhibited at the American Jazz Museum, Temple Contemporary, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, and The Visitor's Welcome Center (Los Angeles). A librettist, Kearney has had three operas staged. He has received a Whiting Writer's Award, a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Cy Twombly Award for Poetry, residencies/fellowships from Cave Canem, The Rauschenberg Foundation, and others. A Howard University and CalArts alum, Kearney teaches Creative Nonfiction and Poetry at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. Born in Brooklyn, raised in Altadena, CA, he lives with his family just west of Minneapolis. Photo by Bao Phi.

Poetry

Gretchen Marquette



Gretchen Marquette is the author of *May Day* (Graywolf Press, 2016). Her poetry has appeared in *Poetry*, *Harper's*, the *Paris Review*, *Tin House*, PBS Newshour, and elsewhere. She was a 2014 recipient of The Loft Literary Center's Emerging Writer Grant and a 2017 artist-in-residence at The Anderson Center in Red Wing, Minnesota. Her first book was nominated for a 2017 Minnesota Book Award in poetry. She lives in Minneapolis. Photo by Sasha Ivanovsky.

Poetry

Ross Gay



Ross Gay is the author of three books of poetry, including *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, winner of the 2015 National Book Critics Circle Award and the 2016 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. *Catalog* was also a finalist for the 2015 National Book Award in Poetry, the Ohioana Book Award, the Balcones Poetry Prize, the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and was nominated for an NAACP Image Award. He is a founding editor, with Karissa Chen and Patrick Rosal, of the online

sports magazine *Some Call It Ballin'* and founding board member of the Bloomington Community Orchard, a nonprofit, free-fruit-for-all food justice and joy project. Gay has received fellowships from the Cave Canem Foundation, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He teaches at Indiana University. Algonquin will be publishing his next book, *This Black Earth*, in 2019. Photo by Natasha Komoda.

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 blind.
- If your work sample contains multiple pieces, title your entire work sample with the title of 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 8, 2019.

- ⇒ Applicants will learn their status by late August 2019. Fellows will be notified by phone, all others will receive an email. Please be certain to include your contact information for summer if it is different from your current address.
- ⇒ The Loft will not alert finalists of their status. We will only contact admitted fellows.

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.