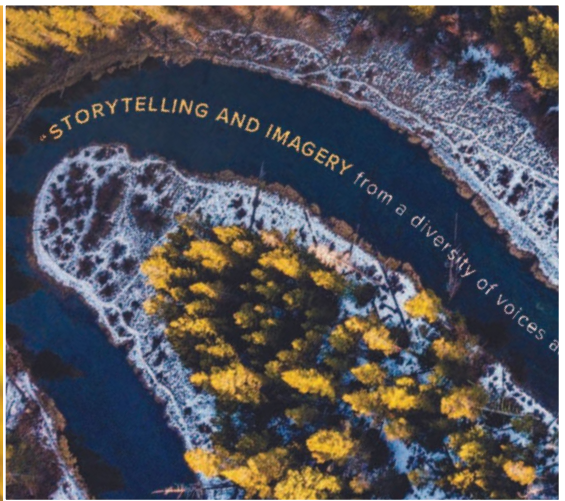
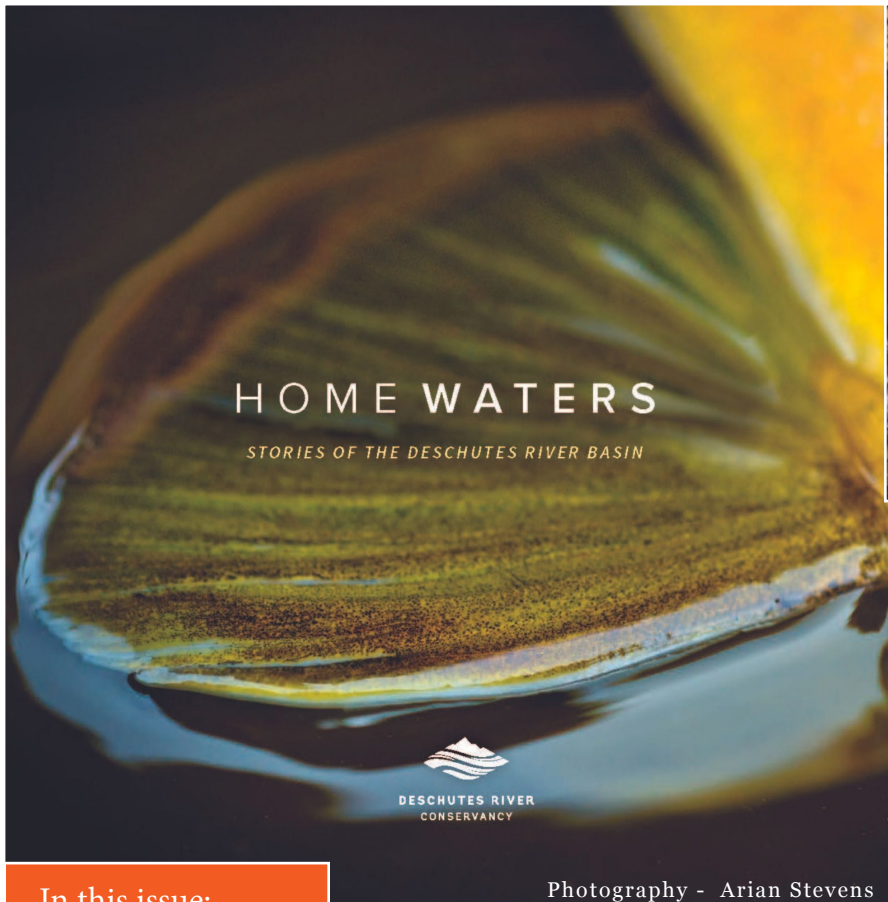




newsletter



FACULTY NEWS

We spoke with some of the faculty this month and discovered they're not just reading student work and eating bonbons.

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Photography - Arian Stevens

Ellen Waterston is a contributing writer to the anthology, *Home Waters*, gracing the cover this month. *Home Waters* is a limited edition, high-quality coffee table-style book that tells the story of the Deschutes River Basin's past, present, and future through art, poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Ellen has contributed three poems to this meaningful conservation project.

Chris Boucher published a brilliant piece titled, *The Literary Reading*, in the new journal, *Exacting Clam*, (see page 2.)

Raquel completed a stint with the University of Nevada, Reno, as the 2022 judge of the ['Desert Pavilion Chapbook Series in Poetry.'](#)

Dr. Rebecca Morgan Frank's wonderful book of poetry, that graced the cover of our first newsletter, and is our selected reading at our upcoming residency, was just featured at the New York City Library as a staff pick!

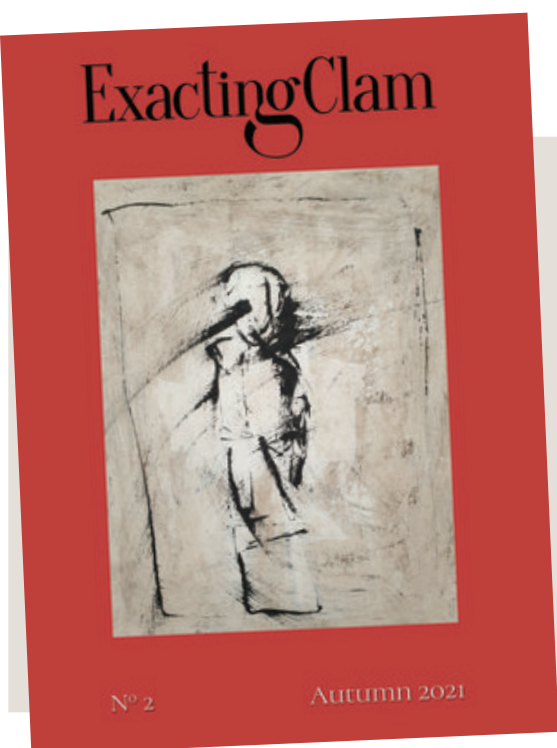
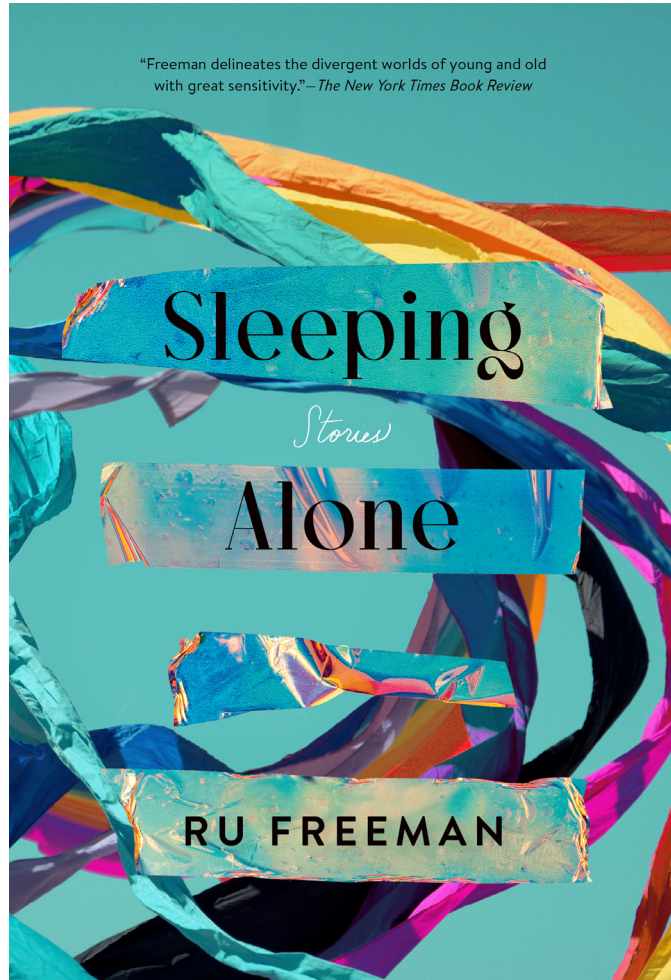
That said, Beth Alvarado has been keeping a vigorous schedule. Several weeks ago, in conversation with G.P. Gottlieb on the *New Books Network*, she spoke about her most recent publication, *Jillian in the Borderlands*. Hear the interview on [Lithub](#).

Her essay, "Bloomsbury in winter—2020," from a collection in-progress called *Unreachable Cities* will be published in [Fourth Genre's](#) upcoming issue. If you go to their main page, as Beth recommended, and I'm glad she did, there's some intriguing work from the winner and finalists of the 2021 Multimedia Essay Prize.

Beth is also moderating a panel at the NonfictionNOW conference, an international conference on nonfiction that will “take place” in early December in New Zealand. The conference is online and early bird registration was extended to November 15 and is ‘student-affordable.’ Twenty-five ‘kiwi’ dollars are just eighteen US dollars. According to Beth, it is an amazing conference and at that price everyone should see the keynotes, readings and listen to the panels, some of which will be “live” and some, like Beth’s, pre-recorded for later streaming. The panel that Beth is moderating is called “Collecting Essays” and features Jennifer Tseng as well as Joanna Eleftheriou and Heidi Czerwiec, who also edit the journal *Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies*.

There will be discourse about marketing terms for essay collections, such as “memoir-in-essay,” “essay cycles,” “book-length essays,” etc. as well as about how to curate and organize essays in a collection. The panel is based on a review essay Beth wrote, called “**Essays All, However We Decide to Collect Them,**” that was published on [River Teeth’s](#) online blog on May 4, 2020. All the info for the NonfictionNOW conference 2022 is [here](#).

And this just in! Ru Freeman has new book of stories coming out next year published by Graywolf Press. *Sleeping Alone*, a collection of rich and textured stories about crossing borders, both real and imagined, asks one of the fundamental questions of our times: What is the toll of feeling foreign in one’s land, to others, or even to oneself? A cast of misfits, young and old, single and coupled, even entire family units, confront startling changes wrought by difficult circumstances or harrowing choices. The stories span the world, moving from Maine to Sri Lanka, from Dublin to Philadelphia, paying exquisite attention to the dance between the intimate details of our lives and our public selves. The cover alone is wondrous!



To conclude this first instalment of faculty news, we will end with an excerpt from Chris Boucher’s piece “The Literary Reading,” published in the autumn issue of *Exacting Clam*:

I was enjoying the reading until the moment when, about five minutes into the story, I realized that the person in the seat in front of me was also an author. And that the person to my left was, too. Wait a second, I thought. Am I the only person here who is not an author? Fuck—I was! I bolted up and stormed out of the bookstore, and I went home and took a long, hot shower. But the thought that haunted me—that haunts me still—is: Were those people always authors? Or was there something about that reading that turned them into authors? Would I become an author someday? Please God no, I thought. Have mercy.”

- Chris Boucher

Alumni News: In Conversation with Alston

We recently spoke to Alston Chiron who graduated in the spring of 2020, and has since published some poetry that we wanted to share. Naturally, we asked some questions: **Tell me something that is important for others to know regarding who you are, your writing, your accomplishments etc.** "The most important part of writing for me is to put a poem out in the world that hopefully will nudge or jolt the reader into a deeper path of thought and consideration about our place in the universe. I liken it to holding a non-lethal grenade, slipping the pin, then deciphering the after-effects."

Why did you enter the writing life? Why did you pursue your MFA? "For me it started as a child when my father would read to me. Emily Dickinson's "A Bird Came Down the Walk" drew first blood. I was mesmerized by the rhythms and images, that from a young age, I wanted to see if I was able to go to the places, she had the craft and courage to travel. Later, of course Shakespeare, Yeats, Stevens, Bishop, St.Vincent Millay, Cummings, Gluck (etc.) So I dabbled many years, until I could afford to enroll and had the time to commit to the writing life. I was on a cloud when OSU Cascades accepted me. I was even more impressed when I finally spent time with the faculty during our first retreat. Impressive group of people."

Do you consider yourself a writer, or are you 'someone' who writes? Is it valuable to identify as a writer or author or other? Explain. "Honestly, I don't have the emotional courage to call myself a writer. Even when I was a professional actor, I didn't call myself an actor or artist. When I owned my own restaurant, I could not bring to call myself a restaurateur. My daughter says I suffer from hyper-imposter syndrome. I can't disagree. The only titles I am comfortable with are husband and father. I do love being someone who writes, though."

What have you been up to since you finished your Master's? "Right now I am in a difficult place with my writing. I submit work that I would like to see published (that hasn't found a home yet), but I'm feeling a little sheepish these days as I don't think I've been brave enough to truly express "my voice." Rather it always seems to me to be a representation of me "as a writer." I think what I need to start doing is writing as though I were experimenting in a lab, and play with words like they were elements and compounds thrown into a beaker just to see the reaction. I tend to have too much concern about the "finished product." One of my MFA instructors pointed that out to me immediately, and I've been struggling with it ever since, but he was right, of course."

What advice do you have for current grad students? "Write, write, write. Listen to yourself, listen to yourself."



Thirteen

A bike spoke in jeans.
erections
and the grass
Too slight for Dad's radar.
a monster-mommy
My mother
in her economy.
enough for her
I built what I could
was easiest at
midnight.
among the yellow
weeds
at thirty-thousand feet,
I would raise my palms.

The boss of free-range
growing on our backdoor mat.
His blips blistered by
and a trip through World War II.
's route money.
I had no place
I was large
signal
to bounce off me.
between suns.
Kitchen water
After school
out back
and jet lace ribbon

'Thirteen' was published in Carnegie Mellon's Literary Journal, *The Oakland Review*

Be open to any thoughts or suggestions your instructors impart, but listen to yourself."

Do you have a writing practice? "I don't, darn the luck. I have a full-time position with Oregon State University with the College of Pharmacy as a research administrator. My work load varies throughout the year and is unpredictable, so I have to work around that."

What makes you smile daily? "My wife and seeing pictures of my daughters on my computer desktop and screen saver. I also speak with them daily, so that always brings a smile to my face. Especially when I get to irritate them. What father doesn't love that?"

Where do you envision yourself in five years? "Same place. I love my life."

If you could send a text to everyone in the world, what would it say? "Respect everyone."

Alston also has a poem published in *Quarterly West*:104 as part of the "100 Syllables" collection. You can read it [here](#).

Interviewed by Imke Wernicke

If I Can See It

Would you believe my ache if it had color—
the rusty coat of a three-legged fox, hobbling
from a wolf trap?

Or, a cream, two-year, cotton ball me,
crawling up his lap for a nap?

Would you believe desiccant yellow high school
hangovers? Purple teen-tongues under the bleachers?
Cinnamon fingers in each other's jeans?

How about a gun metal gray park bench? His tawny,
hollow-log voice, sounding his plan to kill us all and
himself?

Would it have been okay if after I had said to
him, Daddy, I am umber today?

The poem 'If I can See it' by Alston Chiron was published in Poetry South 2020

NOVEMBER'S OFFERING

Thank you to [Samantha Verini](#) for contributing a little "uncanny/spooky horror work!"
Fulfilling October's theme, here is her contribution:

LOST

It's nice to be in the cave. You've been here so long that you've forgotten how and why you came to be here. But you know it is nice.

It's quiet and cool. There are many small, scurrying things to eat, and you can lap at the water that runs down the walls and drips from the spears overhead. It tastes like iron and orange, like something alkaline, but it doesn't concern you. You don't dare to build a fire. You don't remember why.

It's hard to remember your shape in the dark. Were your nails always so brittle? Was your skin always so loose? Did your teeth always taste like stone? You can't be sure. But things don't disappear in the dark, you've learned. They become something else, shapeless and silent.

You never wonder in the cave. It's world is small enough to memorize and large enough to live in. The only things that change are the tunnels. You have a half-formed scene in your mind, a memory that isn't quite yours, that you tried to chart them once. It couldn't be done. Like everything else in the cave, the tunnels moved, grew, breathed, and squirmed. Then they died.

In one tunnel, a short long time ago, you heard a footstep that didn't belong to the cave. The step was a body. The body had a voice. You crawled down a tunnel newly born, away from the voice and the body and the word it whispered. You said it was a word. You knew it was a name. You knew the name was yours, but you couldn't remember. You just kept running, deeper, until the body and the voice faded, until it was quiet in the cave again. You wouldn't remember how to leave, anyway. And it was nice.

-Samantha Verini

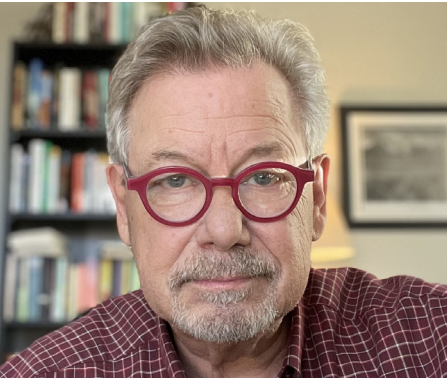
Community: Remember the non-newbies!!

Elizabeth Higgins
Curious, Confused, tired.
Creswell, OR **Genre: Poetry**



What are you grateful for? All of the usual things. I started listing them, but it seemed like too much. **Who in the literary world has left an impression and why?** Raymond Carver's poetry because it expanded my conception of what's allowed. **Do you have a writing practice? If yes, what is it?** It is whenever I can fit it in, not infrequently on a google doc on my phone because if my toddler sees a laptop she'll pounce on it and mash the keys wildly. **What is your favorite smell? Sound?** Bergamot and rain.

Richard Choate
Iconoclastic, curmudgeonly, roguish
Redmond, OR **Genre: Fiction**



Who in the literary world has left an impression and why? William Styron. Because he wrote Sophie's Choice. **Who is your favorite artist?** Pablo Picasso who transcended time even during his own life. The first time I read *The Shining* by Stephen King, was during grad school at the University of Iowa and I thought everyone who sniffed their nose around me had the plague. My favorite work of art is a tie between Rembrandt's *Night Watch* and Francisco Goya's *The Third of May 1808*. I also like *The Encounter* by

Gustav Corbet because my art teacher, who hated Corbet, would show a slide of this painting and say, "Bonjour, Monsieur Corbet," snap off the projector and say, "Adieu." **What is your favorite smell? Sound?** Siri telling me she's turned off the light.

Keisha Theirry-Mildor
Grateful, inquisitive, honest.
Fort Wayne, IN **Genre: Undecided**



What are you grateful for? God, Time, Opportunities. **Who in the literary world has left an impression and why?** I started reading V.C Andrews in high school. In college, I was introduced to James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Audre Lorde, Paul Laurence Dunbar. The writers from the Harlem Renaissance have changed my life! I could go on forever; Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Richard Wright, and so many others continue to inspire. And Maya Angelou I am without words. **Who is your favorite artist?** I can't narrow it down to one. I admire an artist that goes beyond the boundaries and is unapologetic for doing so. I am really digging Jean-Michel Basquiat's art work right now.

Kathryn Mhatre
Writer, mycophile, introvert.
Redmond, WA **Genre: Fiction**

What are you grateful for? My dog, my volunteer work (also with dogs), books, colored pens, coffee, and mushrooms. **Who in the literary world has left an impression and why?** Sylvia Plath, Lauren Slater, Susanna Kaysen, Esmé Weijun Wang, Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, and anyone else who has written honestly about mental illness.

Who is your favorite artist? I don't know that I have a favorite, but I like Chris Ofili, Gerhard Richter, James



Rosenquist, Sigmar Polke, and Yayoi Kusama (especially her mushrooms). **Three things you do every day.** Use my daily planner, go for a short hike or long walk with my dog, and read.

Adam Cook
Outdoors, Willing, Seeking.
Tigard, OR **Genre: CNF**

Who in the literary world has left an impression and why? Stieg Larsson. He might be the only man to write the perfect woman protagonist. His supporting characters are flawed and they just want to make it through the day. **Who is your favorite artist?** Leonard Cohen. He is a poet that made music to support his writing. I was given a copy of *I'm Your Man* and from the first listen I was struck by his symbolism. This lead down a path of finding every album and book in the time before the internet. The woman who gave me the tape of his music was badly injured in a car crash. When I hear "I'm Your Man" I think of her and her sister and that late night. Perhaps that is a story for another time. **Three things you do every day:** Drink too much coffee. Listen to Music. Read. **Do you have a writing practice?** I go for a run and or a walk and build the story in my mind. When I return, I stand and write the story until I run out of words.

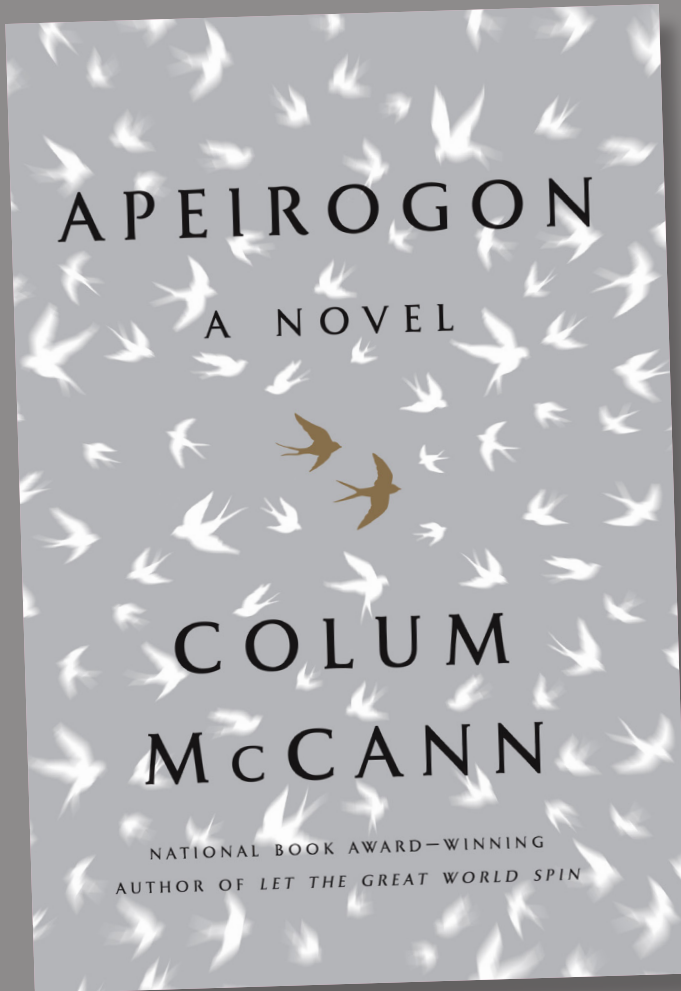


NOVEMBER'S BOOK REVIEW

BY IMKE WERNICKE

Apeiogon

- Colum McCann



*"You don't read Apeiogon so much as feel it."*²

the roads they are allowed to drive on, to the schools their daughters, Abir and Smadar, each attend, to the checkpoints, both physical and emotional, they must negotiate.

Their worlds shift irreparably after ten-year-old Abir is killed by a rubber bullet and thirteen-year-old Smadar becomes the victim of suicide bombers. When Bassam and Rami learn of each other's stories, they recognize the loss that connects them and they attempt to use their grief as a weapon for peace."¹

"For all its grief, Apeiogon is a novel that buoys the heart. The friendship of Bassam and Rami is a thing of great and sustaining beauty. There's a picture of the two of them, asleep on a train. They lean against one another, Rami – the older man – supporting the smaller Bassam as he sleeps. This, the novel suggests, is the solution to the conflict: something as simple and easy as friendship, as the acknowledgment of a shared experience, as love. I kept thinking as I read it about all the ways that Apeiogon could have failed, about the ammunition it might have provided to all of those who claim that no one should write a novel that reaches beyond their own particular experience. It could have been maudlin, tawdry, exploitative, trite. Instead, it's a masterpiece, a novel that will change the world, and you don't hear that very often."²

It's only my opinion, but this is one of those books that leaves you with a heightened sense of awareness of your place in the world, that no matter how small, compassion and positive actions can arouse shifts in humanity.

¹ McCann, Colum, Apeiogon, colummccann.com, 2020

² Preston, Alex, Apeiogon by Colum McCann review- a beautifully observed masterpiece, The Guardian, Feb 2020



NOW ACCEPTING SCI-FI STORIES THE ROSWELL AWARD & FEMINIST FUTURES AWARD

The Omega Sci-Fi Awards are proud to accept submissions to The Roswell Award and the Feminist Futures Award from September 7, 2021 through December 21, 2021. These are international short science fiction storywriting competitions, and we accept entries from emerging writers age 16 and older located anywhere in the world. Our goal is to provide a unique opportunity for writers to aspire to excel-

lence in storytelling and imagine the future of humanity – from how we address scientific, social, philosophical, and environmental issues to the development of new technologies and outer space exploration. The “Feminist Futures Award” co-presented by Artemis Journal is our special prize category recognizing a science fiction story that embraces feminist themes. Top entries will exemplify excellence in feminist storytelling.

Submissions are due December 21, 2021, at 11:59 pm PST. Chosen finalists will have their stories read in their honor by celebrity guests at our Culminating Event on Saturday, May 21, 2022. Writers may submit up to one story between 500 minimum and 1500 words maximum to either our general sci-fi category: The Roswell Award or our special prize: Feminist Futures Award. This competition is open to writers worldwide. [More info!](#)

ABOUT THE “FEMINIST FUTURES AWARD” CO-PRESENTED BY ARTEMIS JOURNAL

This award recognizes a science fiction story that embraces feminist themes. Top entries will exemplify excellence in feminist storytelling. We encourage stories that capture the complexities and other aspects of identity, as well as intersectionality, through the imaginative power of science fiction. This competition is open to people of any gender and/or no gender.

The winner will receive print publication in Artemis Journal. Artemis Journal is an award-winning non-profit feminist art and creative writing journal. Its purpose is to foster art and literary excellence in the Blue Ridge mountain region of Southwest Virginia and beyond. Learn more at <http://www.artemisjournal.org>. Additional prizes for the winning story will be announced.

While this deadline is rather soon, I thought I would include this because it has other year-round offerings that seemed rather interesting. Also, they co-sponsor The Breakout! Writers Prize which you can submit to in 2022. They also have a fellowship worth checking out.



epiphany
a literary journal

Submissions are currently OPEN for fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and art for the Fall/Winter 2021 issue of Epiphany. **Submissions will close on December 1st.** Details: <https://epiphanymagazine.submittable.com/submit>

During this submissions period, we are offering everyone who sends us work a free digital subscription to Epiphany. If you submit work to us, the code for a free digital subscription will be included in our initial response letter.

We hope that when you read Epiphany, you'll get a sense of the great variety of stories, poems, essays, and genre-bending work that we like, and the recurring themes to which we keep returning. We hope that you'll enjoy and connect with the work of your fellow writers, and that you'll feel you're a valued part of our community, rather than just another lonely writer sending your beloved work out into some unsympathetic void. We hope you'll see what makes us different. We hope you'll feel you have a stake in our endeavor. For more [info](#).

LOW RES MFA CASCADIANS!

Share, contribute, send us your offering.

It's usually at this time of the year where I become rather reflective and consider the things ending, and look forward to the new year with its beginnings. These thoughts brought me back to a Children's book, *The Hello, Goodbye Window*, by Norton Juster, that I used to read to my children.

The story is told from the viewpoint of a little girl who explains how wonderful it is to visit her grandparents. Throughout the story, she refers to a 'hello, good-bye window' and how magical things happen near, through and beyond it, almost like the window represents a world where anything you imagine is possible. She discovers simultaneous opposites in the world, like feeling sadness and joy together as she leaves her grandparents and sees her parents, or how the window is a mirror and a looking glass to view herself and the stars concurrently.

Many of the poetry craft readings I've encountered this month have explored this idea, constraints like two bookends, holding any spirited idea in place, making it more resolute. We need constraints. It does not mean we're unfree. True story!

This brings me to our monthly writing prompt: **Endings and beginnings**, hello and goodbye, two opposing bookends. What can they hold? This month's book, *Apeirogon*, illustrates this concept brilliantly, how two opposing forces brought together can create something unimaginable.

You may be thinking you won't have to time ponder any of this because we'll be super busy with our residency, mais au contraire mon ami! The next newsletter won't be out until January, so there's extra time.

And if you feel overwhelmed by this prompt or any of what you're doing, consider the little girl's words: "When I get tired, I come in, and take my nap and nothing happens until I get up."

Think about that little gem!

GUIDELINES:

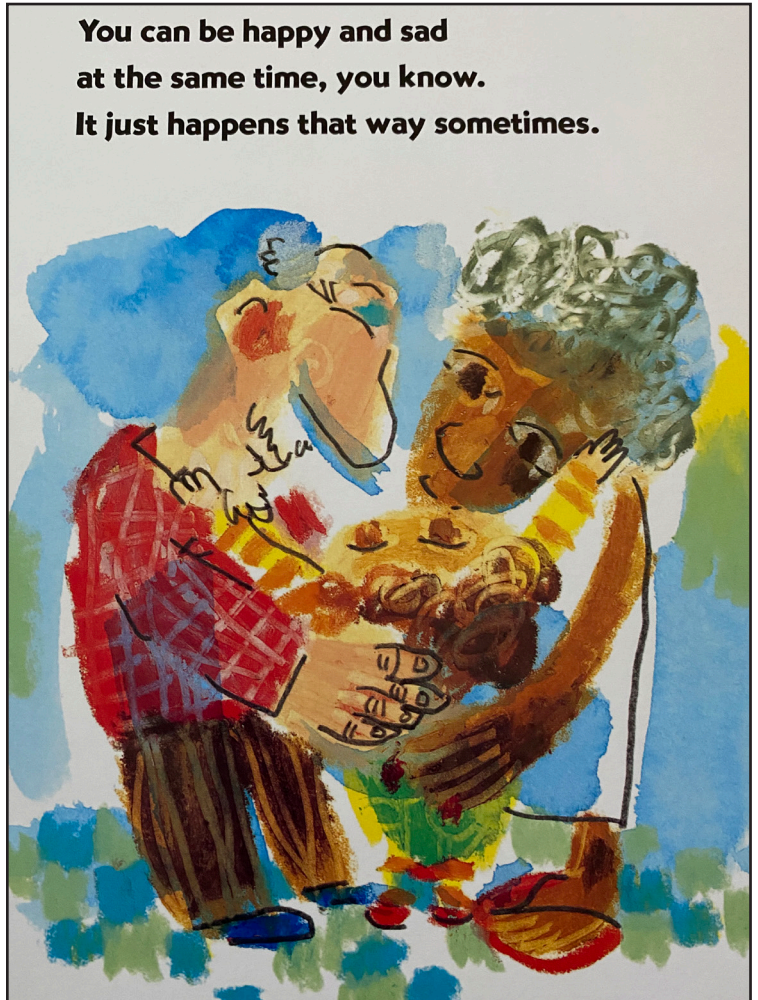
Student, faculty, and alumni original works are welcome. Please share your thoughts, work, unfinished or not.

Prose: 300 wordsmax (excerpts from larger works welcome)

Poetry: No more than one page double spaced.

Email your offering by **January 3rd, 2022** to: wernicki@oregonstate.edu

**You can be happy and sad
at the same time, you know.
It just happens that way sometimes.**



- from the book, *The Hello, Goodbye Window*,
Illustration by Chris Rauschka, 2005

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in collaboration with Lauren Seiffert



Oregon State University
Cascades