

May 2018

Unhistorical

Brittany Cavallaro

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UNHISTORICAL

by

Brittany Cavallaro

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in English

at

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

May 2018

ABSTRACT
UNHISTORICAL

by
Brittany Cavallaro

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2018
Under the Supervision of Professor Rebecca Dunham

This creative dissertation, *Unhistorical*, draws from historical narrative, confessional poetry, and detective fiction to tell the story of a contemporary romantic relationship that begins in Scotland and falls apart in America, as the narrator finds herself in the role of spectator to her partner's genius. Many of these poems draw from the elegiac tradition, following a speaker who is, at turns, tourist in and historian of a landscape that is foreign to them. The middle section of this manuscript, entitled "The Resurrectionists," follows an alternate version of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Holmes and Watson as they journey to solve a mystery in Scotland while grappling with their own anguished friendship.

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The Collagist: “Salad Days”

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Great Lakes Review: “At the Wisconsin State Fair”

Iron Horse Literary Review: “Portions”

Meridian: “Relationship with Textiles and Barter”

Poetry Northwest: “After Image”

Salt Hill: “Your Twenties”

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The Southern Review: “Portraiture”

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Unhistorical

Come at once if convenient. If inconvenient come all the same.

SIR AUTHOR CONAN DOYLE

PASTICHE WITH LINES FROM CONAN DOYLE

Milwaukee, 2012

I have pinpointed the particular flaw
 in our relations: it's how you transpose
 each small riot into sadness but have
no Stradivarius to mourn on—you have my ears,

 and my feet freeze in our bed,
 and the knocking in the night is
just a dear friend looking to score, our cat
 is named for a knave. We tweak

 our epaulets, we make margaritas
in rooms populated by the ephemera
 of other lives that I cannot shore up
my own against. This fashion rag

tells me to think of the highlands
 so I eye-drop water into my Laphroaig
 and when later, for work, I stand
on the Scottish street on which I once lived,

 it is blue melodrama or it is
 not real, and if the stories tally
I'll watch it again on the plane. This may appeal
 to your lurid taste in fiction,

 darling: I am your constant companion,
and we have never both lived within these same walls.

I.

Edinburgh, 2008

YOUR TWENTIES

The framed art creeps along the wall, the cat
wants another cat, you make bowls that I eat from—
I could eat, since your ask always comes at four.

The plants outside grow. They tumble down
to the water, wanting water. I wake up
in your arms. I remember not to look back

when leading a man out of darkness. A girl outside
asks me, *do you know where* and then blanches
sudden as the morning. Years ago

I lived in a city built onto itself. Each street
ate its own tail. When I marry you
I am making a promise. A mirror bought isn't bought alone.

LEITMOTIF

The ghost wants to walk through
your bedroom wall. When do you sleep?
The ghost wants to know. It wants to turn
the faucet on for your morning shower.
It's helping. It fills your French press. The water
turns out red. The ghost isn't sure how
to fix that. Your nightgown is cotton, the kind
the ghost likes. The ghost reaches for your hem
like a cat would. If it were a cat, the ghost
could warm your ankles. It could make
the walking easier. The ghost doesn't like it
when you go back to bed. The ghost opens
your shutters all at once because it's morning.
Why are you sleeping? The dust the ghost leaves
is white like a drug or a lime deposit. The taps
are still turned on. The ghost lets them wash
your tiles clean. It would kiss your face clean
like a cat, if you'd let it. The ghost would come
into your bed and stop your wild hands. Its hands
are what matter. Your comforter has weight.
If it spreads itself above you like a quilt,
you might feel it. The ghost wants you to feel it
again. The ghost has made a lake
of itself. You can take it into your lungs.

AFTER IMAGE

In one take, the blue ruck of the night was
a cataract cloud. Through the shades, my bad eye
strained at a light the other couldn't see. The world

was often split this way, and I, unsurprised,
ate fig-and-rose cookies on a Saturday,
burned your letters the next. When I fell down the stairs,

you red-taped their ends without my asking
but then swore at your ruined fingers.
Yes, the traffic in the mornings and the traffic

at night, and you, avid in your glasses,
the men in your biographies,
their terrible crimes. Our love kept me here

against my will. When my right side clouded
like a mirror, as I'd been told by my doctors
it would, I woke in tubing and tape

to too much light. In my paper gown,
I asked, cotton-mouthed, for a chocolate,
and you said, *you can't have one, then open your mouth.*

PORTRAITURE

In this drawing, the girl hides behind herself. The sun is too much
in her hands. In this drawing, the girl's double
wears green around her hair, a decision made

to tell them apart. To be so lucky. To remember a night with him—
here's a string, he said, pulling it between his hands.
With her butter knife he frayed its ends, then peeled the red line

away from itself. At the end of a black hole's endlessness,
every present layered onto itself. Shift one, and another shifts,
his hand returns to the light switch. Here, in her studio, the artist

wears a long braid down each shoulder. She glances at the window,
at her reflection laid out against the street's bright leaves—
both here, for now, though all the paintings look away.

“TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT FROM ME”

I told him. An apartment with no doors
and crown molding where I'd teach him
how to be alone. Third and King, masked
and bare, beloved and yet left by himself
with the uncovered furniture and the fire.

A loosening finger, a snap-case
of yellowed pages and him,

when I wanted him

(Apollonian, twenty-five), his head lolled back
against the sheets we wouldn't clean. We'd ash
on the floor. I could want while I still had
what I wanted: no novelty, just flush-
ruined, him pleading like a child. In the caverns
beneath, I would enter an alcove and there
my tabernacle. Tea brewed from the ash
of letters sent by other swains, swan-necked
photos (me alone in the garden). My shadow
pinned down and stitched again to my feet.

FOLLY

A building that has no purpose except as an ornament.

My thinking was
the hedgerows, manicured,
on the manicured drive to the ruin.

I spun it so the taut line
of you in the seat beside
was a favor to me. Your sulks I had loved

for their tenacity, and you
for your disdain
of Baroque composers and dictionaries

and all but the very worst
television, the plainest girls,
of most things but me. I could do nothing

with you in this way.

On that English hill I counted
the nine pillars of a would-be Parthenon

and you kicked a rock
across the field. *A pity*, you said,
what you find beautiful. Through your lips

the gap in your teeth.

I could never help, as it wasn't
what you wanted. I couldn't make bricks

without clay, and the design's
missing pages, and the structure
spoke to itself at night. And still people came

in their mud boots and corduroys,
with their cameras, aloud
they wondered how this began—stone dragged

from the earth to appease
some small god
that refused them, and was forgotten.

FOREVER

It wasn't so hard to want it, while the ancient stove smoked
and our friends slept under their coats
on the linoleum. The door's warped wood
meant it never shut completely, so each snap of wind
masked my movement toward you on the sofa. We hadn't kissed,
wouldn't—we both had partners—I undid
my hair from its braids and shook it out
over my burning shoulders. Our friends woke. They read
tarot on the floor; someone tuned a guitar, another broke down
some boxes and threw them on the fire. My suitcase
was brought in and dismembered,
and my green party dress, and the table where I'd drafted
a letter home, of which there was then a staged reading. I was told
I could direct my own production, as there was time.
There was time for me to move myself so minutely
that I would never reach you. I could have what I wanted.
The impossibility, the creeping forward all the same.

ORPHIC HYMN

I didn't want to be touched. I wanted to be held
in the grip of something I couldn't escape. I wanted

to run straight back into the forest, wanted him
to forget the black guitar. I had always been that girl

except for the days I couldn't climb from my bed.

No matter. In the song, he sang *I am the thing*

that ate the flowers. Then he smiled with his straight teeth.

In the song the long forest path changed with every turn—

I saw meadows in the hard red earth. Behind me
he played the instrument I'd bought only for display.

A GATE

It originates at the detail,
the hinge of the door
to the museum. Not the landscape
or the figure that might be
art, might be a coin-collector,
maybe both. How you've taken us
to twenty such places
in the name of teaching me.
The titles were always better
than their canvases, all that
blank sincerity. Their voices—
if voiced—would spiral up
into sincerity, and I never
liked a sound for what it signified.
I lost you in the impressionists.
Found the gate to the pleasure-garden
behind the museum. There, I named
no flowers, no birds. Let the world
be a worse sketch, left untitled.

WE DIDN'T SEE IT AT FIRST, BUT AFTER THAT WE SAW IT ALL THE TIME

I said its syllables slowly over my cup like steam. Corrected your pronunciation.

I said of course not, I'm perfectly happy. The whole thing's covered in soot.

I said no, I didn't live there alone. I saw other people at market. My Swedish flatmate pinned a blanket to her wall, and I could stare at it when I was cold.

I said inflation, of course. And the bridges, so many, and it wasn't water running underneath.

I said I auditioned at least four before I made up my mind.

I said that we weren't ever seen without the other. I had my own room. It didn't change the story.

I said, stop. I said *here*, and *here*, and I circled your map.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

The nurse said *would you like to see*, said *he can hold your hand*
but if he did he would see what was on the screen,
what grew even in the seconds it took for him to cross

the room. We were sent back to wait where the girls *with*
were partitioned from the girls *without*, and in our corner
the girls were slim and nervous and all wore the same

suede boots. I added up my days left in Scotland, took away
my days left as a girl, watched the one beside me scrawl
her own name, *Georgia*, in interlocking letters down

the margins of her book. Her boots were brown,
had a slight heel, and her voice was Midlothian sweet
when she said *later*. I wore those boots; I wore tweed

because I was an educated girl, because I could be from
any titled house, I let my boyfriend answer the questions,
widened my eyes to look *delicate*, the word the nurse used

to describe my mother's necklace, a comfort
after I vomited in the sterile sink. I didn't speak—
my vowels were broad, my *okays* cheerful

no matter how I said them. I said them in my head.
She gave me a form to fill out in triplicate, and when
the pen wouldn't bleed through, I wrote my name again

and again and again, I would write it anywhere
if it meant I didn't have to keep it.

EVIDENCE

four plates before we had three and the tumbler
from Edinburgh I slipped your new tie pin

into held the glass above one eye
like a dirty fish anyway it was the dish rack wet

I pressed my fist to my mouth your hands
cut your lips thinned my own feet were bare

you said *you're crying* like I'd fallen and spilled
into little tinsels of gold delighted my mother handing

me ceramic foxes salt cellars scalloped plates
too small to eat on she saw the basement flat I'd taken

alone or I'd been well I wrapped myself in paper
lanterns I had it all for years I hadn't couldn't

because I knew how it was done some afternoon
wet hands and us so poor your red misery eyedropped

into every glass of water extravagant like wine I ate
I kept my head through rolling heat blood cylindered

and sold the summer nothing unfurled from its homes
until what was one plate, one cup you eyeing me satisfied

a fork pulling at the piece before you is it done is it done

PORTIONS

The wolves we met were French and they sharpened
their teeth on stones, and they had
beautiful restaurants, and each of them fed us

in turn. And you were you, in this dream,
but you were pleased when I began
to pack my things—you rolled the stone back from our cave

and I woke, and my flight was on time. I made
breakfast. The wind stripped rocks
from Arthur's Seat, and below us the market

did a brisk trade in disposables. I had a dream
where you bound my wrists in expensive rope
below a symbol for love, and that symbol too

stood for the trees that shook in pairs, or singly,
and some didn't shake at all.
And I was awake through it, and I held the stove

for balance. You turned from the game and loped
to me like a wolf, in your Ramones shirt
and ripped-up jeans, a Scottish prince bent on

halving me. I could stay, I knew, only if I could go;
then you'd have what parts you wanted
before my body was mixed with ash, and salted.

PERSONAL HISTORY

When I left, I said goodbye out the back of a black car
to the tenements and the night-dangerous meadows

and the intricate black spire of my love

for you. I still bled. Back across the ocean I caught it in a pan
and boiled it in secret. My letters were clear. I wrote down

the names I had given you. In a dream you sat with my mother
and told her that I was an immutable thing. In a dream
you tried to sneak past the marching men to find me a book

and when I found you in that field you were up to your knees
and gut-shot. I had read the book before. I left, in a way

where I called and said I was staying. I was full of ashes that I thought
were beautiful. There was another man who hung coins in my American trees

and when the wind blew, they were a folksong, and then they were
the noise a magpie makes, and then the sound of an industrial plant.

In a dream, I had a map with a burn-hole instead of the city

where you were born. I needed you then. I always had. I bought tickets
to steamers that never left port. I became so quiet that my house
and then the other houses were quiet, too, but you did not come to me.

I became so quiet that I was the book from the field. I smuggled myself
under your bed. I dreamed against the encyclopedias

A through F. I learned the cries of Scottish birds, what to call them
and how to drown them softly with my hands.

When I woke, years had passed, and you made uniforms
for films set in no country, nowhere wars. I was a swan.

I had nothing to show but my long neck. I gave it to you
as a present. You hadn't seen it before.

SELF PORTRAIT AS JOHN WATSON

If it's to me to write the story, I will be master
of my subject. So be the gleaming machine

for my sake. Take the facts of these years

and show me how, like lovers,
they betray us. If I were the logician, I'd say

I wrote you wrong so you stayed mine.

II.

THE RESURRECTIONISTS

London, 1896

For years the author has, in his own domestic circle, obtained inspired messages through the hand and voice of his wife, which have been of the most lofty and often of the most evidential nature. They are, however, too personal and intimate to be discussed in a general survey of the subject.

The History of Spiritualism, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

WATSON'S DIARY (I)

Singular experience at the track. H. sent me there as witness to the end. Our man now in chains. Pocketed a crop, two sovereigns. The first because I am a sentimental man. Gave five shillings to the girl for her part, her ashy hair like my poor Mary's.

At the top of the stairs I had to gather myself. Counted the vials in the drawer. Seven. Dreamt of teeth, the long mouth stretched over the gate. H. by the fire when I retired, again when I woke.

No letters today.

HOLMES GIVES A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS METHODS

If the dun horse is old and still water-glossy,
then arsenic was given, enough to cover

a knife's blade. If you look in its mouth
then it will die three days hence. If the lady places

a man's bet, then her skirts will show the result
as a skirt shows mud from a dog-cart.

She will loiter across our street. Her cape
of course is white. Then my good friend

will observe her from our window
as he observes his breakfast or my morocco case

and its needle. If the letter asking for my assistance
does not arrive, I will open the case.

There is medicine within. This is a fault
but I keep what information I find

necessary. My friend knows medicine
as he knows his soul. His service revolver

is in the locked drawer. Some mornings
I hear each of his widower's gasps

clear as the clap of the gate
behind the jockeys. I can hear this

even before he wakes. If he strikes
a match off his chin then he has not shaved

this week. If no letter arrives
then there is a solution.

FROM THE ADVENTURE OF THE HOODED WOMAN

My previous experience accompanying my constant companion had not adequately prepared me for the depraved situation upon which Sherlock Holmes had stumbled. It was the summer of '95, and we had few cases at that moment; some rather embarrassing business with the French ambassador had just been straightened out, but the situation had so overtaken Holmes' time that he had turned away a surfeit of clients just before his culprit more or less placed himself in my dear friend's exacting hands. We celebrated. We slept. The sun set. Then the girl in white at the window, then at the door, then pleading, bent-kneed, at my friend's unworthy feet. I stood with my notebook: *small white shoes, buttoned at the ankle*. She could not, or would not, open her pink mouth. This is what I am prepared to tell you: a fortnight found us bedded down in a Berkshire stable. A duke's fists full of needles. The cellar below our feet filled with the dying girls sunk down in their skirts. I could not know. I thought neither of us could. Each horse a renowned runner. Her mouth had bled for weeks.

221B BAKER STREET, IN REPOSE

Alphabetized detritus. A ship half-built

in a brief, clean circle and beside it
a reliquary of criminal teeth. Two books

of eschatology that the detective will not
study, that his friend secrets beneath

his sheets. He sleeps upstairs. His bad leg

slams each third step. The desk downstairs
and a tangled clutch of horsehair that refuses

its bow. The Stradivarius upstairs, then down,
then laid at a right angle to the initials shot

into the wall. Twelve bullets above the side-

board. A waxwork bust of the detective,
wounded, and the curtains that cannot conceal

the scorch marks. A tea service and sandwiches.
A pince-nez and six pairs of sideburns, one

flame-red, two blonde. They wait in the drawer

with the morocco case. It waits, like his dinner,
for his friend to appear. Without his wife

he has no excuse. The detective scratches
on his chalkboard and arrives at

a known quantity. The stairs are beyond that, and the laughter

in the tin box, the seizure-scrabble

of what's underneath it.

SELF PORTRAIT AS BLACK MOOD/BROWN STUDY

Still by accident and not design.

The bare desk a problem. The library
a problem of arrangement. A container
spilled if too still, and the page
a problem too, the days spent
in pencil, tracing someone else's words
for pay, and the empty afternoon,
bare in its branches but still outside
the glass. And I am in. I am making
something from the cords of it,
the knots and bows, the leather that seizes
when wet, will tie it tightly enough
to resist my weight and make it
turn, the thought facing thought,
the domestic yawn, the lean and problem
the source of the problem. The self
the problem, presented as solution.

FROM THE ADVENTURE OF THE HOODED WOMAN

My previous experience accompanying my constant companion had not adequately prepared me for the depraved situation upon which Sherlock Holmes had stumbled. Much later, when the two of us were in our cups, he would blame the entirety of the mess on my propensity to watch the pretty parasoled girls out the window. *You see, Doctor, but you do not observe*, he said, bowing wretchedly away at his violin. It was the summer of '95, and we had few cases at that moment; some rather embarrassing business with the French ambassador and his rosebush of a daughter had just been straightened out, but the situation had so overtaken Holmes' time that he had turned away a surfeit of clients just before his culprit more or less placed himself in my dear friend's exacting hands. Then? A fortnight of death; another of silence. Indeed, a single day of Holmes taking that most abhorrent cure—the black moods in which he cursed every petty aristocrat by exact indiscretion before he lapsed into a twitching silence punctuated only by his gnawing at his raw lower lip—that is to say, I passed long hours at my club. I became a rather dab hand at euchre. I saw her still: the beautiful girl in the street, her dusty skirts, the shock of leather in her mouth.

WATSON'S DIARY (II)

Not left the flat. The Hooded Woman, Or: Her Last Run. (Meaning the horse.) Four cross-outs. When completed the account will be short. H. betrays no interest, not an eyelid's worth. While I write, he stabs the pen-knife into the mantle and the letters beneath are further destroyed. Six vials now.

A full week since our last. The morocco case open atop the drawer, the solution mixed beside. Argument. Citrus ices ordered for our dinner. Not by my request. The table is too small for this misery. Hotpot then billiards at the club. Pocketed ten shillings. Cannot find a proper place for the crop. Bedside table suggests it is unimportant. Sitting room suggests it is a fair topic for conversation.

H. handles his bow as if it were a bell-pull. The violin sounds ill. If I were to diagnose, would suggest oil of violet and perhaps a bath. H.? Cocaine and sorting through the ash trap again. All this burning.

Singular. Today at tea H. praised my memoirs while studying my fingernails. I could hide nothing from him even if I wanted to do so. How I hid my Mary from him. How I should have taken her away.

FROM THE ADVENTURE OF THE HOODED WOMAN

I'll say that I developed a fair amount of skill propping bruised men against myself, but my God, your wasted mouth. Later, when the two of us were in our cups, you would blame the entirety of the mess on my propensity to stare at you across the room. *You see, Doctor, but you do not observe*, you said, sliding the needle behind a shaking hand. It was the summer of '95, and we had few cases after that rather embarrassing business between the French ambassador and his filly of a daughter—you naturally had straightened the situation out before I came home from the track. The girls there like spit and grease. Send me on an errand to the horses again and I could conceivably mouth the pistol myself. Your exacting hands. Then? A fortnight of silence. Indeed, a single day of your black moods, the women sussed out down to boot size, to brain, your evident hatred, the twitching silence, the hawker's punctuation, you gnawing and gnawing at your raw lower lip—that is to say, I passed long hours at my club. I became a rather dab hand at the cold. And then that beautiful girl in the street, like some blessedly silent memory—all I had now three years past—her dusty fingers, the shock of love in her mouth. I am a kind man. You cannot be the last thing in this world for me.

SELF PORTRAIT AS MOROCCO CASE

Locked in the drawer with your pocketbook,
a pen. A knife inside fashioned from glass, steel
to a point—I've hidden myself like a ration

or the obvious path to the armistice. Under
the mattress where you sleep, I breathe.

If I am your timepiece and the needle
that stitches your nights together. There is no
distraction like this, the one that undoes you
in the way the wrong words can't, you won't

undo the resolute—that insistence
in the blood, the drop as logical as love.

WATSON TAKES A CLIENT IN HOLMES'S ABSENCE

The detective has panted and paced for days,
refused food, wrapped his red-tracked arms

around the doctor's legs, begged with his mouth.
Sedated, he sleeps, and so the doctor is alone,

a small white glove to his nose. The things
he can touch still dwindle in their numbers.

Under the influence of such monomania,
a man could be capable of any fantastic outrage.

The lost heat of his wife like gas-light. He could,
after grinding his teeth into paste, allow himself

to follow a fancy. Could allow in the visitor
for the detective, could call *himself* the detective,

Dr. Holmes, throw out his arms, hawk-like, and sneer
at the lady in the door. He is surprised to find

this so easy, the curt greeting, his own knowing
hands waving her in. In the next room

Holmes whispers in his sleep. The lost wife then becomes
a tightened belt. Becomes a client. It could be

this girl. Could be the next. This girl naturally carries
a set of smart gloves and a letter from the medium

Lady Jean. There could be a brother or a fiancé,
an assurance that his form will be projected onstage.

She could beg this wavering Holmes,
show him her beloved's hair in a locket

she proffers from her pale fist. She could say
I loved. Compliment his moustache and brush

a curl from her eyes. The curl could be
blonde. Could list away down her face. His wife.

This Mary. Asks for an escort to a séance
at a prominent address. Edinburgh. The city

of his birth. She could say something
about coffins or the lost. The wife then

a losing horse. A hand seizing after an idea.

HOLMES, ON RELIEF

I make it my business to know
where things are kept. The brother
in the goose-yard, bald and praying,
agitating each fowl, wanting
the precious stone no longer
in its crop. Why would he keep it
in a safe? Would a man, having framed
his wife, lean against the piano-forte
as she sang for him? The birds dashing
against the lighted window. These wives,
on the endless train to their ailing mothers
or in the dark cavern of their comfortable rooms.
In the dark of their underground boxes, Watson,
not thrust into the tea-lights of an ossified hag
and her wet, lying mouth. The dead
cannot come back to us. What medium
do you require for your relief? Come here.
Are you a medical man? Do you believe
in this science? There are faster ways
to exhaustion. I have trained, swift-fisted,
with the lofted leather bag,
with the needle. The flexed arm
and jab. What has already passed
through you—Afghan bullets,
your diaphanous days, spirits
like sherry or wine? I make a practice
of keeping. What do I keep in myself?
Where do you keep your arms?

PERFORMANCE

Once she is exposed

Edinburgh's streets are like the hands in a pocket-watch.

we will leave. I am not yours

To promise an image of her brother in the silver bowl.

to command in this or any thing,

Nothing appears. The audience requires more faith to keep

Holmes. Of course I will stand

those milliner's mistakes on their heads. If nothing else

if my wife's name is spoken, I am not

you wear my own flapped cap convincingly, though

a fool. Yes, I carry her glove

on that stage you are as bare as her moon-face.

in my own. I cannot brook further refusals—

To stroke your hands? To hold a tallow candle

I give over every last one

to your eyes? You must begin seeing your clients in this theater.

to your performative kindness

The alphabetic women extra-sensed in this room.

and all you want is to tally up

How many will you 'yes'? I rather doubt

my loyalty, which is to say my silence,

you yearn to hear of where they watch you.

which is to say you know

They died for want of you.

your simpering Boswell

For your second bedroom. Your second seat

saws away at this farce

by our fire. Their white-ash eyes—their hair pale as burning, you are quite fond

so I may ignore how

of the dainty ones. So our medium cannot give us

I am responsible—

a body. My dear Watson, will you step down?

she sees through me like the Water of Leith

SELF-PORTRAIT AS "THE FINAL PROBLEM"

Gave a stranger your coat, gave another your legs,
walked away when the man you loved
loved someone who could wake up

before him. You were lazy, at best.

At best, the lights jangled like a set of silent keys,
and the cover on the mirror hid the person

you had no choice but to be. You burnt down
your house, lived there another year.

Burnt down your city and refused to seed

the ashes for a garden. Your face blushed quick-
lime when spring came, but by definition
the beautiful is useless; the waterfall, frozen;

you'll lead us to our true hearts
and none of us will come back.

HOLMES, ON SPIRITUALISM

A sitting room is not the proper setting
for a spiritual awakening. As a horse forgets
his shoes (he is not, after all, the one to nail them
to his feet), so can a man forget his deceased wife
despite previous adoration. Adoration: the sudden
attention to such details (unbrushed coat, needle-
mark in the crook of an arm) in a lady's appearance
when these have not been marked before
in one's closest companion. When you assumed
my death, you quit me after a quarter hour.
I have trained you well in observation
and distance. There are certain
well-carved tables, excellent china,
there are vessels for the quiet governesses
of tragic good breeding who are pleased to rise
from the dead and come back to their husbands
for a justifiable fee.

 Come back. See, I am fond
of charlatans. There is a certain amount of pleasure
in disguise and the caught-breath escape
from water and chains. The drowning
or how it is imagined. If you had been watching closely?
Then I could have returned sooner. Here I will differentiate
between legerdemain and what meager love
I have witnessed. What desire, to call back
the dead to watch you take your tea.

WATSON'S DIARY (III)

If singularity added to a thing's value. Many Marys, so mine is nothing. Perhaps I thought that, with so many seeming likenesses, surely I could have her again. In the window-seat, laughing over a red-backed book, too absorbed to see me standing there. In a city this size I thought, surely there is another window, another wife. H. would not be surprised. There was, after all, another of him.

He could be my shadow-self, if that shadow were also a dug hole.

Naturally the girl did not glimpse her brother on that stage though I confess I left before its conclusion. Still remittance will come by post, I am sure of it. What H. commands, even when he is not himself.

On the train back to London, the man in my compartment not a vicar. Naturally. Yet I let him believe I did not know until, with a flourish, H. peeled off gloves, moustache. *Consuetudinis magna vis est.* I averted my eyes for decency's sake.

HOLMES, ON WITHDRAWAL

I watch as if I've taken the aft seat
in our carriage—what is past
retreats from me, while the next town
sharpens only for you. Customarily
our nation progresses toward more
and better punishment; we did once agree
to take digs together. To ensure my mistake,
I lift the floorboard beneath your bed
to retrieve the vial I once allowed you
to find, I inject that as well. Make nothing of her miniature
that you hid away with my medicine. Make nothing
of this Mendelssohn while I watch you decide whether
to leave me. My dear, I play the Mendelssohn
as an apology you'd no doubt refuse
if you saw it as such. I play the Tchaikovsky
I abhor for the lost girls in Reading,
keeping time with the earth, and the Verdi you love
for the men they will never have, men
with well-trimmed moustaches, medical bags,
men with whom I have no sympathy. Then a gypsy air
to prolong the evening, to stave off want,
and hunger, to stop your lips from mourning
what I left you at that cliff to mourn. Let them
be lips again. After, the Bach. And then the Brahms
because you loved it once, and with the pleasure
in repetition, you could perhaps love it again.

WATSON'S DIARY (IV)

All these stories, as if for children. In the logbook, their given names before their pseudonyms. Black Pearl, Danceless, Red-briar, Hooded Girl. What I do not sell to the *Strand*: all those women piled like useless data. *Where were their husbands then?* Those were his words. He toed one with a black boot. I retched in the corner, and then followed him home.

I confess that day in Switzerland I felt some measure of relief. How could I have known? It took me years to pare out the last of him with this dull knife. She could not know. She thought it grief. What I felt was far too wild to be that.

My own disappearance worth less, then. No cliffs, no consumption. The men will move my things to my practice, and I will be of some good. If, for want of me, he

No matter. I do not believe in such things.

III.

Milwaukee, 20—

LOVE POEM

In your childhood bed
and in your cups—

when you think of me

am I abstracted? Is the pear white
when in slivers?

Is the drawing quartered?
Am I refusing again

to take off the last slip

I'd bought for tonight—
I loved you most

in the next room,
in the hallway.

A shower. The almost
of you, without the eyes.

What if I wished it very much?

When I couldn't eat,
paper nests, your smallest finger.

A girl edged up to
every open window.

In the other story

we kept the flat, the child.

I kept the rope in the shed.

In the other story where I didn't leave

I left you.

Here. The beginning you wanted.

UNHISTORICAL

In this crepuscular era of nowheres
 of clocks miswound Of no bows

when knots would do Of a veil
 below a veil I would never

lift There is a night where I find
 two photographs of a night

we never spent My flush the stutter
 even in the still As you mouth

some secret behind a hand Strung light
 The lit tower looming like a trick

candle This never happened
All the nights I knew were under

old blankets Walking backward
 through security A book

neither of us liked in a bony chair
 The whole in some rainy

curtained Thursday I hold loose
 as I would some muscular version of you

the man I loved fey Against the ending
 Against the factual one This fiction of

 a place that wanted us

EXCEPTIONS

At first just birthdays,
Christmas. Then the two writers
we loved spoke together

in a museum. The old bird
hung above them, a guesswork. Then
the sweet shop closed. That one,

you said, made you dig out the photo.
Pretty enough for fairies. Fool even
the experts. But the costume store

shuttered. Then you took a course
on Wordsworth. The supporting actor
had your improbable freckles

so I sat up searching even
his commercials. Whenever you called
it said *Florida*. We laughed

but then the pictures of you smiling
on an American beach. Then
I had the date wrong. Then I ran out

of credit. What if it had never been open,
not once? Would we still claim
otherwise? My city never changed

owners. You'd left the old one
entirely. I had my doubts but you arrived,

part and parcel. We watched each other.

The flat walls wavered. They didn't know
what they could contain. At their edges
something receded. Something I couldn't see.

GAMES

Better at following rules than filling the blank seconds
between them. Say, the tire swing at midnight

in the Meadows you shouldn't cross, not alone. So
we'll never be. Say, should we, but if it's a question—

it's not. So fill a tin with medicine for your bedside
drawer. Say, no one's loved you like this. Doubtless.

You take it and make it art. With you, I can't insist
I'm worthless so there's a price. Your whispered laugh I love

but still the gestures make me nervous. I love
what—put it down, the declarations you've drawn

to exhibit for the camera. Cover my eyes, I think,
in pleasure. Count only to two, never higher.

AT THE WISCONSIN STATE FAIR

On the cable, our car shudder-swings

as you sing to calm me—*we aren't here,*

we aren't here in this rain, my orange shirt

wet like failed lightning. The car beside

painted with faces of film stars, ducked

and swollen as if drawn in a mirror.

Watch, you say, as the ingénue tips away

in the honest wind but, again, comes back.

You promise me your handful of tokens.

You will live in this state less than a year.

West Allis, sugarland, we have never been

so in love as when we were elsewhere, Calton Hill,

the mountain undone and still shadowing

the city below. We went there always on foot

then coasted out, but our ride here halts midway.

Beneath us, everything sells for the same price.

SALAD DAYS

We no longer created. We were still too young
to climb out into the darkened real houses.
I wanted it gone but you followed me
into the shower. There was some talk about sharing
our meals again, so long as we didn't feed
each other. I was full, so I pulled out the old contract
for our future. There would be two doors
and I could use neither. You would use these
for your work. We signed our names to the bottom;
this settled, we slept. Or you did. Or you didn't,
or we took turns, as we did then
because of the bombings, and I heard you
kneel as I lay awake. In the morning, our room
was white. I reminded you of iodine, the way I was
always ill. The light worked you clean like a blotter
but I was stained, and though I was stained
you tended my bed as one did in that house, in that time.

RELATIONSHIP WITH TEXTILES AND BARTER

You love me, and I watch the power lines outside
hang like the awning over a bazaar,

where the wind is a salesman shaking each line

in front of our faces, our hands, the velvet ribbons
that tie my dress together. *Come buy*

the wind calls, but we have no fruit for trade

though we offer both our winter-weight and
our sheets' cleanliness. We'll trade our bed

for a library, and our library for girls tied up smart

with money, and those girls for two cocktails in a hotel bar
and a contract saying we'll split our fieldstone evenly

and no longer bring the other to the sharing table.

We share ourselves with ourselves, or, no, that's not right—
my with *mine*, I am the one who ties my ribbons tight.

FIVE YEARS LATER

I told myself, I want this, until I wanted it. And sometimes
my back lined up to the wall, and the wall loved me. In his chair

I toweled my hair, speaking quietly until I shouted
to see his eyes turn on. My fault lay between the lethargy

of habit, between the key in the lock and my hands in the bag.
Those storyless days with their smooth hours. In the way a person

becomes paper, I folded myself into an ear. No more last
names. No more nights out. And if I did this for myself, had I

wanted a nest built, like all nests, with my mouth and my teeth,
can I blame myself for it? Why would I then destroy what a man

was already so eager to take? I want this, I said to the mirror.

I ignored the ringing phone. My intact heart. I said it louder.

NOT A QUESTION

Tell the fire to bank. It does.

Ask the line to hold, keep it all
aloft just a breath

longer. Let the storm

kill the sheep. No one called
while you were out in the yard

shooting birds with one cocked

finger. Tell me
what coins belong in

the ash trap, which children

we should keep. How a love folds down
with some small coaxing.

APOLOGIA

I was always late. We kept reassurance
in your bedside drawer. I bought you
bespoke suits. I gave you an accordion,
leather goggles. Then we took it all off.
We built a fort and took it down
tenderly, snugly. I was late but you ran it
all the way to the mailbox. I was late
but they made me coffee in my border control
cell before they waved me through;
you, panting, held my visa. We had advocates,
not friends. Our friends had religion
about us together. I could stay three months.
I could stay but the police were involved,
the judges' chambers. We had a favorite
cartoon still. We had a secret password.
When I was thrown out, I took my own flat
and there, I used my sheets as sheets.
You could stay but it took three buses
and a ten hour flight. You could stay but it cost
your next five years. When I left you
I laughed, then thought, *this is*
unforgivable. Then thought, *thank God*.

HIS LAST BOW, 1919

As we near the end of the story, we are told that there are hills in this country, and while they allow a certain amount of rise and fall to the horses pulling the detective's trap, these hills are not allowed to be beautiful, not with their dirt-clods and blue flowers; not practical, either, though they conceal his residence from the road with their grassy overlap and swell. They are just hills, as the detective's pocket-watch is a device that keeps what is left, despite its engraving from his friend. If you have sorted through what is necessary and all that remains is this, the dirt, the flowers, the bees you keep in your country house, alone— that's what you must take to bed with you, your beaten body and your revolver, there more from love than habit. We receive what we've wanted all these small years, and still, at night, the bees spin thick in their hives, and the man turns, and this is the word, this was the only one still to write.

REDUX

Outside the surgical museum
a twenty foot bone-saw has oxidized,
is the color of the sea. I've given up

on an umbrella. Across South Bridge
a man who looks like you
is you, but since it's been years

I duck my head. In the city I've dreamt
myself into, it is never noon like it is now.
Your wrists catch the midday light

like scalpels or fieldstone—those stones
you tracked in running to the chemist, the oath
in your hand and then in my coat,

tattered, the midnight dress I wore
to our friends' weddings. The body beneath it
asleep. The clouds won't shift to show

what's beneath, but you are as constant
as the rain. I left, and so I'm in the crowd.
The light's not changed. I doubt it will.

SELF PORTRAIT AS SHERLOCK HOLMES

I am aware that in this performance

I star as myself. You place your scalpel in my hands
then take the appropriate number of steps

toward the door, through which enough light
shines in to illuminate my accumulated

soot. Yet they will remember me cat-clean.
When we return and rewind the mantle-clock,

I begin again in my customary chair. Again
you will forget that you have married, that

the room is no longer yours. I can see
you fear it never was, and so with my mouth

I confirm it. Write again of my limits, the end,
the slow approach. In these rooms I carve out

other rooms; there, I litter as I'd like. Know that
I only direct what you set down. From these lines

I make my music.

Brittany Cavallaro

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Ph.D., English Literature with Creative Dissertation, 2011-present. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

M.F.A., Creative Writing, 2011. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI

B.A., American Literature, magna cum laude, 2009. Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Instructor of Creative Writing, Interlochen Arts Academy, 2017-present

PUBLICATIONS

Poetry Collections

Unhistorical, University of Akron Press, forthcoming 2019

Girl-King, Editor's Choice for the 2013 University of Akron Poetry Prize, University of Akron Press, 2015

Novels

Muse #2, Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, forthcoming 2021

Muse, Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, forthcoming 2020

Hello Girls (with Emily Henry), Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, forthcoming 2019

The Question of Holmes, Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, forthcoming 2019

The Case for Jamie, Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, March 2018

The Last of August, *New York Times* Bestseller, Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, February 2017

A Study in Charlotte, Katherine Tegen Books/HarperCollins, March 2016

Poetry Chapbook

No Girls, No Telephones (collaboration with Rebecca Hazelton), Black Lawrence Press, September 2014

Anthologized Work

Best New Poets 2011, "At the Illinois State Fair," 2012

Individual Poems

"Rebellion," *Another Chicago Magazine*, forthcoming

"Evidence," *Subtropics*, Issue 20/21 (2016), 84

"From The Adventure of the Hooded Woman (i)," "From The Adventure of the Hooded Woman (ii)" and "From The Adventure of the Hooded Woman (iii)," *The Adroit Journal*, Issue 10 (2015), <http://www.theadroitjournal.org/issue-ten-brittany-cavallaro>

"Five Years Later," *Colorado Review*, Fall 2015 (2015), 33

"Portraiture," *The Southern Review*, 2015 Autumn (2015), 42

"Autotheism," "Self-Portrait As Sherlock Holmes" and "Self-Portrait As John Watson," *FourTwoNine 2* (2014), 11, 18, 48

"Folly" and "Forever," *AGNI 78* (2013), 72-74

"Apologia" and "Pastiche With Lines From Conan Doyle," *Barrow Street* Fall 2013 (2013), 22-24

"Portions," *Iron Horse Literary Review 15.2* (2013), 42

"A Taxonomy of Sex" and "After Image," *Poetry Northwest* Spring/Summer 2013 (2013), 38

"Your Twenties," *Salt Hill 31* (2013), 140

"Censored History" and "Liebestod," *Tin House 54* (2013), 37-38

"Common Knowledge," "Lethologica" and "Prevarication," *Drunken Boat 15* (2012), <http://www.drunkenboat.com/db15/brittany-cavallaro>

"Girl-King (iv)," *Fairy Tale Review* Grey Issue (2012), 14

"At the Wisconsin State Fair" and "Why We Don't Have Children," *Great Lakes Review 1* (2012), 95-96

"Any Ordinary Hell," *Linebreak* (2012), <http://linebreak.org/poems/any-ordinary-hell>
"None of Them Will Love You" and "Relationship With Textiles and Barter," *Meridian 29* (2012), 73-74

"Leitmotif" and "Tautology," *TriQuarterly 12* (2012), <http://triquarterly.org/poetry/tautology>

“Girl-King (iii),” *Barn Owl Review* 4 (2011), 7

“The Girl in Question,” *Beloit Poetry Journal* 62.2 (2011/2012), 23

“Magician’s Girl” and “White-Armed Persephone Walks Into His Van,” *Blackbird* 10.1 (2011), http://www.blackbird.vcu.edu/v10n1/poetry/cavallaro_b/index.shtml

“Dream Park” and “Salad Days,” *The Collagist* 27 (2011), <http://www.dzancbooks.org/the-collagist/2011/10/14/dream-park.html>

“Melrose Park, 1982,” *Court Green* 8 (2011), 54

“Children’s Story” and “Hunting,” *CutBank* 74 (2011), 110-111

“Aubade: In Fall” and “Girl-King (ii),” *Gettysburg Review* 24.3 (2011), 412-413

“Mythomania” and “Transmigration,” *Handsome Journal* 4.1 (2011), 74-75

“Points of Issue,” *Indiana Review* 33.1 (2011), 1

“Eliza-Crossing-the-Ice,” “Lies I Told” and “Loup de Guerre,” *The Journal* 35.1 (2011), 50-52

“Electricity, 1876,” *Meridian* 26 (2011), 37

“Bildungsroman,” *Nashville Review* Spring 2011 (2011), <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/english/nashvillereview/archives/3948>

“Pax, Fortuna, Salus,” *Vinyl* 4 (2011), <http://vinylpoetry.com/volume-4/page-16>

“Cause / Effect” and “Hungary, Imbroglia,” *H-NGM-N* 12 (2010), http://www.h-ngm-n.com/h_ngm_n10/brittany-cavallaro.html

“Tuesday Night at the Illinois State Fair,” *Linebreak* (2010), <http://linebreak.org/poems/tuesday-night-at-the-illinois-state-fair>

“Mesocyclone,” *Redivider* 8.1 (2010), 52

“Other Fields,” *Washington Square Review* 26 (2010), 54

“Superstition Ghazal,” *Cream City Review* 33.2 (2009), 33

“Green Lake,” *Tar River Poetry* (2009), 82

“The Virgin Disambiguates,” *Bat City Review* 5 (2008), 54

Creative Nonfiction and Craft Essays

“Book of Obsessions,” *Imagine Magazine* 7 (2015), 86

“On ‘The Girl in Question,’” *Beloit Poetry Journal* (2012),
<http://blog.bpj.org/2012/02/brittany-cavallaro-on-girl-in-question.html>

“Thirteen Ways of Looking at Genealogy, Ancestry, and the (Re)making of Selves (A Collaborative Essay),” *Michigan Quarterly Review* (2012),
<http://www.michiganquarterlyreview.com/2012/08/thirteen-ways-of-looking-at-genealogy-ancestry-and-the-remaking-of-selves>

“Not-Autobiography,” *Blackbird* (2011),
http://www.blackbird.vcu.edu/v10n1/features/tracking_the_muse/cavallaro_page.shtml

Interviews Given

“Interview with Brittany Cavallaro,” *Subtropics* (2016),
<http://subtropics.english.ufl.edu/index.php/2016/12/27/brittany-cavallaro/>

“A Place of Could-Have Been: An Interview With Brittany Cavallaro By Emilia Phillips,” *32 Poems* (2015), <http://www.32poems.com/blog/8877/prose-feature-place-interview-brittany-cavallaro-emilia-phillips>

“Staging a Bloody Coup in Your Fairytale: A Conversation with Brittany Cavallaro on the Exploration of History Through Poetry and Feminine Power,” *The Interlochen Review* (2015), <http://www.interlochenreview.org/new-page-59>

“Conversations with Contributors: Brittany Cavallaro,” *The Adroit Journal* (2015),
<http://www.theadroitjournal.org/blog/2015/2/5/conversations-with-contributors-brittany-cavallaro-poetry-issue-10>

“Poet Embraces the Mythology of the Midwest,” *WUWM 89.7FM* (2015),
<http://wuw.com/post/poet-embraces-mythology-midwest>

Articles, Book Reviews, and Interviews Conducted

Review of *Best Bones* by Sarah Rose Nordgren, *Devil's Lake*, November 10th 2014,
http://english.wisc.edu/devilslake/reviews/nordgren_best-bones.html

Interview with Chloe Benjamin, *Devil's Lake*, September 15th 2014,
http://english.wisc.edu/devilslake/features/interview_benjamin.html

Review of *My Love is a Dead Arctic Explorer* by Paige Ackerson-Kiely, *Devil's Lake*, March 15th 2013, http://english.wisc.edu/devilslake/reviews/ackerson_kiely_my_love.html

Interview with Rebecca Hazelton, *Cream City Review* 36.2 (2013), 128-130

Review of *Madame X* by Darcie Dennigan, *Devil's Lake*, April 20th 2012,
http://english.wisc.edu/devilslake/reviews/dennigan_madamex.html

Review of *Mistaking the Sea for Green Fields* by Ashley Capps, *Devil's Lake*, March 5th 2011,
http://english.wisc.edu/devilslake/reviews/capps_mistakingthesea.html

Review of *Letters to Guns* by Brandon Constantine, *Devil's Lake*, August 20th 2010,
http://english.wisc.edu/devilslake/reviews/constantine_letterstoguns.html

AWARDS AND HONORS

2017 Outstanding Book, Wisconsin Library Association's Children's Book Award
Committee (for *A Study in Charlotte*), 2017

New York Times Bestseller (for *The Last of August*), 2017

Junior Library Guild Selection (for *The Last of August*), 2017

Indie Next List Selection (for *The Last of August*), 2017

Junior Library Guild Selection (for *A Study in Charlotte*), 2016

Indie Next List Selection (for *A Study in Charlotte*), 2016

National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship (in Poetry), 2015

Distinguished Dissertator Fellowship, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2015

Wladyslaw Cieszynski Literary Prize, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014

William Harrold Memorial Award, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014

Semifinalist, "Discovery"/*Boston Review* Prize, 2014

Editor's Choice, University of Akron Press Poetry Prize (for *Girl-King*), 2013

Rona Jaffe Foundation Fellowship, Vermont Studio Center, 2013

Finalist, Crab Orchard Series in Poetry Open Competition (for *Girl-King*), 2013

Work-Study (Administrative) Scholarship, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, 2013

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Poetry Manuscript Award, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012

William Harrold Memorial Award, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012

Finalist, Cleveland State Poetry Center First Book Award (for *Girl-King*), 2012

Finalist, Crab Orchard Series in Poetry First Book Competition (for *Girl-King*), 2012

Finalist, Yale Series of Younger Poets (for *Girl-King*), 2012

Work-Study (Administrative) Scholarship, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, 2012

Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012

Finalist, Ruth Lilly Fellowship, 2011

Chancellor's Fellowship, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2011

Work-Study (Waiter) Scholarship, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, 2011

David and Jean Milofsky Prize in Creative Writing, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011

Dorothy D. Bailey Summer Prize Scholarship, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2010

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of record for all:

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Literary Forms and Genres: Mystery and Detective Fiction

Introduction to English Studies

Introduction to Creative Writing (multiple semesters)

Introduction to College Writing and Research

Introduction to College Writing (multiple semesters)

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Creative Writing Workshop in Fiction and Poetry

Introduction to College Writing

Beginning Creative Writing Workshop in Fiction and Poetry (multiple semesters)

Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University

Advanced Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Mystery Writing Honors

Advanced Creative Writing Honors (multiple years)

Creative Writing Honors

Summer Writing Institute (multiple years)

Interlochen Arts Academy

Writing the Novel

Experiments in Poetry: Laws and Wildness

Poetry Workshop

Elements of Poetry

EDITORIAL POSITIONS

Founding Editor-in-Chief, *Devil's Lake*, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009-2011; 2014-2016

Associate Editor, Bull City Press, 2012-present

Curator and Editor, Eat Local::Read Local, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012

Book Review Editor and Associate Poetry Editor, *Cream City Review*, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2011-2012

Author Panelist, Scholastic Inc., New York, NY, 2004-2007

SELECTED READINGS

North Central College, 2018

Point Park University, 2017

Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI, May 2016

Boswell Books, Madison, WI, March 2016

Room of One's Own Bookstore, Madison, WI, March 2016

BONK! Reading Series (with BJ Best), Racine, WI, November 2015

SPECTRE Reading Series (with Kara Candito), Rock Island, IL, October 2015

Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT, October 2015

Woodland Pattern (with Cynthia Marie Hoffman), Milwaukee, WI, September 2015

The Bridge Reading Series (with Jay Varner), Charlottesville, VA, May 2015

Four Way Books/Persea Books/Bull City Press/Unicorn Press Presents (with Gregory Pardlo and Emilia Phillips), AWP, Minneapolis, MN, April 2015

Poetry and Pints (with Nancy Reddy), Madison, WI, April 2015

Monsters of Poetry (with Cynthia Marie Hoffman), Madison, WI, March 2015

Wit Rabbit (with Chloe Benjamin and Quan Barry), Chicago, IL, March 2015

Boswell Books, Milwaukee, WI, February 2015

Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI, January 2015

Vermont Studio Center (with Samiah Haque), Johnson, VT, May 2014

Middle Coast Poets (with Robert Vaughn), Milwaukee, WI, April 2014

Poetry Northwest / Seattle Arts & Lectures (with Heather McHugh and Matthew Olzmann), AWP, Seattle, WA, February 2014

6 Under 36 (with Corey Van Landingham and Tyler Mills), AWP, Seattle, WA, February 2014

The Marble Room Reading Series (with BJ Best), Chicago, IL, July 2013

Eat Local::Read Local 2013 (with Kimberly Blaeser), Milwaukee, WI, April 2013

United We Read (with Brenda Cárdenas), Milwaukee, WI, March 2013

Ink Node (with Zachary Schomburg, Emily Kendal Frey, and Hannah Gamble), AWP, Boston, MA, March 2013

Wit Rabbit Reading Series (with Adam McOmber and Christine Sneed), Chicago, IL, February 2013

The Empty Room Reading Series (with Kathleen Rooney), Milwaukee, WI, November 2012

Observable Reading Series (with James Arthur and Teresa Scollon), St. Louis Poetry Center, St. Louis, MO, November 2012

TriQuarterly (with Cecilia Pinto and Monica Berlin), Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, September 2012

Bread Loaf Work-Study Reading (with Matthew Olzmann and Jamaal May), Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Ripton, VT, August 2012

Bread Loaf Waiter Reading (with Philip B. Williams and Rickey Laurentiis), AWP, Chicago, IL, March 2012

Best New Poets 2011 (with Virginia Konchan and David Welch), Book Cellar, Chicago, IL, January 2012

Best New Poets 2011 (with Rebecca Hazelton and Nancy Reddy), Avol's Bookstore, Madison, WI, November 2011

United We Read (with Maurice Kilwein-Guevara), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, WI, September 2011

Bread Loaf Work-Study Reading (with Philip B. Williams and Rickey Laurentiis), Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, Ripton, VT, August 2011

Blue Ox Reading Series (with Nancy Reddy and Josh Kalscheur), University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI, November 2010

Fall Collage (with Louisa Diodato), University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI, October 2010

Gates of Heaven (with Jacques J. Rancourt and Louisa Diodato), Madison, WI, May 2010

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Papers Presented

"Demystifying the Market: Multiple Paths to the First Book." Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Los Angeles, CA, 2016

"I Got You Babe: The (Dis)Harmonies of Collaboration." Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Los Angeles, CA, 2016

"The Relationship of a Lifetime: Agent/Author Collaboration Through Each Stage of the Publishing Process." Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Minneapolis, MN, 2015

"Beg, Borrow, Steal: Practicing Imitation in the Creative Writing Classroom." Session: "Accessing Little Narratives of Creative Writing." Conference on College Composition and Communication, Indianapolis, IN, 2014

"Women Poets on Mentoring." Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Boston, MA, 2013

"Chick Lit by Design: Intersections of Marketing and Gender in the Current Publishing Climate." Session: "Transforming Pleasure: Repetition, Emulation, and Appropriation." International Association for the Study of Popular Romance Conference, York, England, 2012

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Fellowship Juror, Vermont Studio Center, 2015-present

Final Judge, *Imagine Magazine* Creative Writing Contest, 2015

Judging Panel, Black River Chapbook Competition, Black Lawrence Press, 2014-present

Advisory Board, *Devil's Lake*, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009-2013

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Member, First Year Composition Reader Committee, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013

Judge, George B. Hill Award, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011

Judge, Charles M. Hart Jr. Writer of Promise Award, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2010

Preliminary Judge, Brittingham and Felix Pollak Prizes in Poetry, University of Wisconsin Press, 2009-2011

Creative Writing Library Liaison, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009-2011

Writers' Committee, Department of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009-2011

INVITED TALKS

"Leaders in the Wisconsin Literary Scene." Northwestern University MFA Program, 2012

CAMPUS TALKS

"Developing In-Class Activities Using Student Texts." English 101/102 Program, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014

"Considering the Common Place of Prewriting in Creative Writing and Composition."
Session: "A Community of Pedagogies in the Composition Classroom."
Composition Forum, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012

"Student Business Leaders: *Devil's Lake*." Arts Enterprise, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011

"Incorporating and Interviewing Experts in Introductory Composition." English 100 Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2010

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Modern Language Association

Association of Writers and Writing Programs