43RD ANNUAL ODU LITERARY FESTIVAL

October 4 – 8, 2020

All events are free and open to the public via virtual webinar. For instructions on joining the events, visit odu.edu/litfest.
## Schedule of Events

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>5 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>ODU MFA Thesis Reading</strong></td>
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<td>James Beardsley, Lyzzie Golliher, David Jacobson, Raoul Lobo, Bhavika Sicka, Hannah Trammell, Nina White</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Hanif Abdurraqib</td>
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<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>Maggie Smith</td>
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<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Grace Talusan</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Jake Skeets</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Suzanne Strempek Shea</td>
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In these times of heightened strife and violence, vulnerability and threat, the news is constantly filled with quarrelsome noise; with stories of seas rising and cities in quarantine, with the heavy climate of doom and gloom.

But even as we know and are burdened by this knowing, we also marvel at those individuals among us who immediately turn to the best resources they have to rally and inspire, to encourage others, and to help stave off the anxiety and paralysis that can set in when the world feels too overwhelming.

Many are leaders of social change: philanthropists, economists, technological innovators, scientists and environmental activists; philosophers, teachers, educators, community organizers.

Among them are artists and writers whose work is so important. They are the ones who stand with us in the grit of everyday life, and help us find grace again, even as we continue facing our most challenging realities.

As our current U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo reminds us: “Bless the poets, the workers for justice, the dancers of ceremony, the singers of heartache, the visionaries, all makers and carriers of fresh meaning—We will all make it through, despite politics and wars, despite failures and misunderstandings. There is only love.”
(from Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings: Poems)

Luisa A. Igloria & Katherine Jackson
2020 ODU Literary Festival Co-directors

Illustration by Gabriela Igloria
Hanif Abdurraqib is a poet, essayist, and cultural critic from Columbus, Ohio. He is the author of a New York Times best-selling biography on A Tribe Called Quest called Go Ahead in the Rain (University of Texas Press, 2019); A Fortune For Your Disaster (Tin House, 2019); The Crown Ain’t Worth Much (Button Poetry/Exploding Pinecone Press, 2016), which was nominated for a Hurston-Wright Legacy Award; and They Can’t Kill Us Until They Kill Us (Two Dollar Radio, 2017), named a best book of 2017 by NPR, Pitchfork, Oprah Magazine, The Chicago Tribune, Slate, Esquire, GQ, and Publisher’s Weekly, among others. He is a Callaloo Creative Writing Fellow, a poetry editor at Muzzle Magazine, and a member of the poetry collective Echo Hotel with poet/essayist Eve L. Ewing. Abdurraqib has a forthcoming book that is a history of Black performance in the United States titled They Don't Dance No Mo’ (Random House, 2020).

Nishat Ahmed is a Bangladeshi American residing in the Midwest. He’s an Illinois native with a deep love for Fall Out Boy, The Notebook, and Chipotle. He received his MFA in poetry from Old Dominion University in 2019. His work has been published by Sobotka, Words Dance, The Mochila Review, Into the Void, the Academy of American Poets, and the Tampa Review, and has been performed at TEDxUIUC and AWP. His first chapbook, Field Guide for End Days, debuted in 2020 from Finishing Line Press, and his second, Brown Boy, is forthcoming in late 2020 from Porkbelly Press.


Joanna Eleftheriou is the author of the essay collection This Way Back (2020), and her work has appeared in journals such as Apalachee Review, Chautauqua, CutBank, Arts and Letters, and The Common. She is assistant professor of English at Christopher Newport University, a contributing editor of Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies, and a faculty member at the Writing Workshops in Greece. She is a 2008 graduate of ODU’s MFA Program in Creative Writing.

Luisa A. Igloria was recently appointed Virginia Poet Laureate (2020-2022). She is the 2019 co-winner of the Crab Orchard Open Poetry competition for *Maps for Migrants and Ghosts* (Fall 2020) and winner of the 2015 Resurgence Prize (U.K.), the world’s first major award for ecopoetry. She is the author of four chapbooks plus 14 full-length works, including *The Buddha Wonders if She is Having a Mid-Life Crisis* (2018), *Ode to the Heart Smaller than a Pencil Eraser* (2014 May Swenson Prize), and *Juan Luna’s Revolver* (2009 Ernest Sandeen Prize). She teaches in ODU’s MFA Program in Creative Writing.


Daniel Mueller has written two collections of short fiction, *How Animals Mate* (1999), winner of the Sewanee Fiction Prize, and *Nights I Dreamed of Hubert Humphrey* (2013). He is currently at work on a memoir tentatively titled, *This Book Belongs to Me*. He teaches on the permanent faculties of University of New Mexico’s Creative Writing Program and the Low-Residency MFA Program at Queens University of Charlotte.

Aimee Nezhukumatathil is a 2020 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow and the author of four books of poetry: *Oceanic; Lucky Fish* (winner of the Hoffer Grand Prize for Prose and Independent Books); *At the Drive-In Volcano*; and *Miracle Fruit*. She is co-author of *Lace & Pyrite*, a chapbook of nature poems (2014). She is the poetry editor of *Orion* magazine and her poems have appeared in the *Best American Poetry* series, *American Poetry Review, New England Review, Poetry, Ploughshares*, and *Tin House*. Awards for her writing include an NEA Fellowship in poetry and the Pushcart Prize. She is professor of English and creative writing in the MFA program of the University of Mississippi.
Jake Skeets is Diné from the Navajo Nation. He received an MFA in poetry from the Institute of American Indian Arts. His first collection, *Eyes Bottle Dark with a Mouthful of Flowers*, won the 2018 National Poetry Series and was published by Milkweed Editions. He is also a winner of a 2018 92Y Discovery Poetry Prize and 2020 Whiting Award. He currently lives in Tsaile, Arizona, and teaches at Diné College.

Maggie Smith is the author of four award-winning books of poems: *Lamp of the Body; The Well Speaks of Its Own Poison; Good Bones*, named by *The Washington Post* as one of the Five Best Poetry Books of 2017; and her most recent, *Keep Moving*. “Good Bones” was called the Official Poem of 2016 by Public Radio International and has been translated into nearly a dozen languages. Smith’s poems have appeared in *The New York Times, Tin House, The Believer, The Paris Review, Kenyon Review, Best American Poetry*, and on the CBS drama “Madam Secretary.” A Pushcart Prize winner, Smith has received fellowships and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Academy of American Poets, the Ohio Arts Council, and the Sustainable Arts Foundation.

Grace Talusan’s first book, *The Body Papers*, is a *New York Times* Editors’ Choice selection, a Must-Read for the Massachusetts Book Awards, and winner of the Restless Books Prize for New Immigrant Writing. Born in the Philippines and raised in New England, she graduated from Tufts University and the MFA Program in Writing at UC Irvine. She received a U.S. Fulbright Fellowship to the Philippines and an Artist Fellowship Award from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. She taught writing for many years at Tufts and Grub Street. Currently, Talusan is the Fannie Hurst writer in residence at Brandeis University.

Suzanne Strempek Shea has written six novels, including *Selling the Lite of Heaven* and *Make a Wish But Not for Money*; and three memoirs, including *Songs From a Lead-lined Room: Notes - High and Low - From My Journey Through Breast Cancer and Radiation*. She also wrote *This is Paradise: An Irish Mother’s Grief, an African Village’s Plight and the Medical Clinic That Brought Fresh Hope to Both*. Her journalism and fiction have appeared in many magazines and newspapers, and her body of work won the 2000 New England Book Award. She is writer in residence at Bay Path University and teaches at the University of Southern Maine’s Stonecoast MFA program.

**ODU MFA Thesis Reading**—The ODU MFA Creative Writing Program presents its May 2020 graduates reading excerpts from their thesis manuscripts: James Beardsley, Lyzzie Golliher, David Jacobson, Raoul Lobo, Bhavika Sicka, Hannah Trammell, and Nina White.
OMOIYARI: A MUSICAL CONVERSATION WITH KISHI BASHI

Join songwriter, musician, and filmmaker Kishi Bashi for music, conversation, and selections from his forthcoming documentary, Omoiyari.

Kishi Bashi is the pseudonym of singer, multi-instrumentalist, and songwriter Kaoru Ishibashi, who grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, where his parents were professors at ODU. A 1994 graduate of Maury High, he studied film scoring at Berklee College of Music before becoming a renowned violinist. Ishibashi has recorded and toured internationally with artists such as Regina Spektor, Sondre Lerche, and most recently, the indie rock band, of Montreal before branching out on his own in 2012 to much acclaim. NPR Music’s Bob Boilen hailed Kishi Bashi as his “favorite new artist of 2012.” His latest album, Omoiyari (a Japanese word for the idea of creating compassion toward other people by thinking about them), was released in 2019. He is currently co-directing a feature length documentary of the same name about minority identity and the incarceration of Japanese Americans in WWII.

ODU Master of Fine Arts
Program in Creative Writing

Where great writers of the future connect with the great writers of our time

The Old Dominion University Annual Literary Festival, now entering its fifth decade, is the premier event of our MFA Program in Creative Writing and one of the many reasons to study the writer’s craft with us at ODU.

odu.edu/englishdept/mfa-creative-writing

Old Dominion University
College of Arts and Letters
Visit odu.edu/litfest for updates and virtual event links, and follow the Literary Festival on Facebook: @ODULitFest

Books can be ordered online at shorturl.at/cpsHI as well as purchased in the University Village Bookstore.

For more information, contact the Old Dominion University English Department at 757-683-3991 or email mfagpdassistant@odu.edu

SPECIAL THANKS

John R. Broderick and the Office of the President
Dean Kent Sandstrom and the Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Letters
Cullen Strawn and Arts@ODU
Renee Olander and ODU-Virginia Beach
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Edith White and the Forrest P. White Endowment
Michael Khandelwal and The Muse Writers Center
Shara Weber and the Office of University Design and Publications
Gabriela Igloria
Karen Vaughan and the Perry Library
BEOTIS and Blue Flower Arts
Jennifer Fish and the Department of Women’s Studies

Production assistance compliments of the Office of Community Engagement

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