AWP Event: Catastrophe and Survival: Women Ecopoets Navigate Pathways Past Denials

Moderator: Sandra Meek
Panelists: Elizabeth Bradfield, Camille Dungy, Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, and Brenda Hillman

Each of the five panel members will speak to the following questions and read a recent poem of theirs which resonates with these concerns.

a) With the #MeToo movement, women are more and more speaking out about sexual violence. Do you feel this gives power to women to speak and write about ecological violence—or does it somehow “second-tier” the environmental? Do you see any intersection in your work with this movement?

b) How does your recent work (last published book + brand-new work) grapple with environmental and/or gender-based violence?

c) How do you see gender and ecological violence as interconnected?

d) How do you balance activist goals/passions with aesthetic ones in your work? Are there aesthetic/formal connections or ramifications resulting from your sense of the eco-poetic and/or what’s happening in this political/environmental moment?

e) Denial itself can be a survival strategy, a way of continuing despite horrific circumstances. Yet climate crisis illustrates how denial can amplify harm—how does denial manifest itself in your work, if it does?

f) How do you make room in your poetry for wonder in this age of ecological damage/disappearance and social injustice—and why should we do so?

g) How would you respond to the accusation some would make that activism, a political focus, a passionate idea, can lead to “lesser” didactic poetry?