

Women Trespassing: Stories of Women Breaking the Rules in Fiction and their Writing Lives

From Virginia Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own": *"I must have opened [the library door], for instantly there issued, like a guardian angel barring the way with a flutter of black gown instead of white wings, a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman, who regretted in a low voice as he waved me back that ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction."*

Event Description: A Catholic-turned-Buddhist has sex with her Zen master. A biomechanist builds a deer suit to live in the woods. A woman stalks the celebrity living on her street. A girl basketball player navigates a male-dominated world. In this panel, women writers discuss how they write women trespassing and break rules in their writing lives. Women writers have been too long excluded from spaces of authority. We're taking the power back. This panel is for writers ready to make risky choices and daring work.

Event Organizers:

Blair Hurley is the author of the novel *THE DEVOTED*. She received a 2018 Pushcart Prize and scholarships from Bread Loaf, Hawthornden Castle, and the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts. She teaches creative writing at the University of Toronto and McMaster University.

Lara Ehrlich is the author of the short story collection *ANIMAL WIFE* and her short stories appear in *StoryQuarterly*, *Hunger Mountain*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Normal School*, and *River Styx*, among others.

Event Participants:

Dana Czapnik's critically acclaimed debut novel *THE FALCONER* was published 2019 in the US, UK, Italy, and Germany. She has earned fellowships in Fiction from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Center for Fiction, and the Hertog Foundation.

Laura Sims is the author of *LOOKER*, a debut novel. She has published four books of poetry, most recently *Staying Alive*, and is the editor of *Fare Forward: Letters from David Markson*. She lives outside of New York City with her family.

Kristen Millares Young is the author of *SUBDUCTION* (Red Hen Press). A prizewinning journalist, essayist & book critic, she is Prose Writer-in-Residence of Hugo House. Her

work appears in the Washington Post, Guardian, NYT, Hobart, Moss & Poetry Northwest. She is cofounder & chair of InvestigateWest.

The panel will begin with short opening statements from each of our presenters. The presenters will discuss their personal journey to publication and career success, the obstacles they encountered along the way, and an example of the ways they “trespassed” in their writing or in their careers.

Moderator Questions:

- 1) What are some of biggest obstacles you’ve encountered in having your work reach its intended audience? What were some strategies you used to overcome those obstacles?
- 2) How do you push your creative work into forbidden spaces? How do you enter forbidden spaces in your writing career?
- 3) Have you encountered a “confidence gap” between male and female writers, or the problem of imposter syndrome? What do you do to overcome your own hesitations in your creative process?
- 4) How do you advocate for yourself, your book and your career in the professional and publishing sphere?
- 5) How do you tackle the problem of “likability”, both of your female characters and of your own conduct in the professional sphere?
- 6) What is the most important thing women writers can do to gain greater authority and power in their writing careers?