

People's
Literary



Festival

February 22nd – 24th, 2024
Corpus Christi, TX

People's Literary Festival

Mission Statement

People's Literary Festival celebrates and supports writers—both new and established—by bridging literary borders and genres. We bring writers and readers into dialogue, honor self-expression, and inspire creativity in our readings and workshops.



D.A. Lockhart Keynote Speaker

D.A. Lockhart is the author of *North of Middle Island* (Kegedonce Press, 2023), *Bearmen Descend Upon Gimli* (Frontenac House, 2021), and *Breaking Right: Stories* (Porcupine's Quill, 2021). *Bearmen Descend Upon Gimli* was shortlisted for the Raymond Souster Award. *Breaking Right* was a finalist for the ReLit Award for Short Fiction and shortlisted for the

2022 Indiana Author's Awards in Fiction. He is pùkuwànkooamimèns of the Moravian of the Thames First Nation. Lockhart currently resides at Waawiiyaatanong and Pelee Island where he is the publisher at Urban Farmhouse Press.



Robin Carstensen 2023-24 Corpus Christi Poet Laureate

Robin has served on the People's Poetry Festival Committee (now the People's Literary Festival of Corpus) since its inception nine years ago. Her poetry manuscript, *In the Temple of Shining Mercy* earned first-place award and was published in 2017 by Iron

Horse Literary Press. She has won an Academy of American Poets collegiate award and numerous annual poetry awards from diverse journals. Her poems are more recently published in *Dream of a River: Queer in the New Century*; *Odes and Elegies: Eco-Poetry from the Texas Gulf Coast*; *Good Cop/Bad Cop* and many more. She directs the creative writing program at TAMU-CC where she is co-faculty advisor for the Islander Creative Writers and the *Windward Review: Literary Journal of the South Texas Coastal Bend*, and co-founding, executive senior editor for *Switchgrass Review: Literary Journal of Healing and Transformation*.

Thursday, February 22

Del Mar College Heritage Campus

101 Baldwin Blvd., 78404

Coles Building #119 (Reading Lab)

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|--------------------|---|
| 11:00 am Session 1 | Literature Exploring Mythologies and Literary Villains
Hors d'oeuvres will be served |
| 1:00 pm Session 2 | Adapting a Short Story to an Audio Drama Script |
| 2:00 pm Session 3 | Voices of Latin-America / Voces de América Latin |
| 3:00 pm Session 4 | These Neutral Sea Currents |
| 4:00 pm Session 5 | Poetry for Therapy or Purpose |

All Saints' Episcopal Church

3026 S Staples St., 78404

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|-----------------------|--|
| 7:00 pm Session 6 | Corpus Christi Poet Laureates Panel &
Nkata Kwsi: Migration as Our Essence with Keynote Poet: D.A. Lockhart |
| Immediately Following | Special Event:
Robb and Vanessa Jackson Award Ceremony for High School Poets |



About Robb Jackson

Robb Jackson, M.F.A., Ph.D., CAPF, CJF was Regents Professor and Professor of English at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, where he was a rhetoric-composition specialist. Robb's poetry originated from his journal writing practice and was informed by close

observation of his adopted home, Corpus Christi, Texas. While still in Ohio, Robb had a chapbook called *Arthur Zen Comes to America* (1981) and a pamphlet *Junctures* (1983) published. Learn more on our website.

Friday, February 23

Texas A&M Corpus Christi

6300 Ocean Dr., 78412

University Center Bayview Room

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|--------------------|--|
| 9:00 am Session 7 | Place-Based Poetry of the (Sometimes) Heartsick |
| 10:00 am Session 8 | The Intersectionality of Native American and Mexican American Storytelling |
| 11:00 am Session 9 | American Borderland Poets |
| 12:00 to 1:30 pm | Catered Lunch in the Bayview Room |
| 1:30 pm Session 10 | Rising Islander Writers Talk Writing Process and Concept Development |
| 2:30 pm Session 11 | Stories of Home, Transgression and Connecting with Others |
| 3:30 pm Session 12 | "It's not your fault:" Reframing and Overcoming Writer's Block |
| 4:30 pm Session 13 | Strong Women in the Corpus Christi Writers Anthology |

Lazy Beach – Southside Brewery & Taproom

7522 Bichon Dr #100, 78414

7:00 pm Special Event:

Open Mic Hosted by Dylan Lopez and Joshua Bridgewater Hamilton



Saturday, February 24

Ropes Park

3502 Ocean Dr., 78411

6:30 am Session 14 Haiku Walk

All Saints' Episcopal Church

3026 S Staples St., 78404

A Sessions: St Teresa Room

B Sessions: St Hildegard Room

Free popcorn and beverages throughout the day

Breakfast and Lunch Concessions Provided by

Paloma Street Market

Gourmet Faye

Meshel's Treats

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|---------------------------|--|
| 9:00 am to 5:00 pm | Book Fair on the Labyrinth
Type-In with David Torres of Austin
Typewriter, Ink |
| 9:00 am Session 15 | (A) Children's Literary Authors Talk
(B) Remembering the Earth: Three Poets |
| 10:00 am Session 16 | (A) Postcard Poetry
(B) Young Adult: Multi-Genre |
| 11:00 am Session 17 | (A) The Bad Place: How to Write a
Dystopian Story |
| 12:00 pm Special
Event | Haiku Deathmatch |

Saturday, February 24 (continued)

All Saints' Episcopal Church

3026 S Staples St., 78404

A Sessions: St Teresa Room

B Sessions: St Hildegard Room

1:00 pm Session 18

(A) Memoir: Genre of Self-Remembrance and Self-Reflection

(B) Ethereal Poetry of Sadness, Longing, Beauty, and the Damned

2:00 pm Session 19

(A) Multigenre Creative Workshop: Documenting (Narrating) Our Families of Choice and Intentional Communities

(B) Something Fantastic: Speculative Writers in the Coastal Bend

3:00 pm Session 20

(A) The Short Poem

(B) Embodying Women's Bodies in Writing

4:00 pm Session 21

(A) Second Person: You and Your Reader

(B) Central Texas Bilingual Poetry: Versos del corazón de Tejas



Thank You for Attending!

We hope you enjoyed the festivities. A lot of work went into this festival, and we do this because we want to share our love for Literary Arts. Scan the code to send us a donation to help make next year's festival even better.

Panel and Event Descriptions

Session 1: Literature Exploring Mythologies and Literary Villains

Wes Jamison, Paul McCann, Annie Huckabee
Moderated by Kent Lenz

This creative showcase features fiction, lyrical essay, and poetry that blurs the line between reality and myth. At times, we all need to explore what cannot be easily explained to help us understand and make sense of our world.

Session 2: Adapting a Short Story to an Audio Drama Script

Pete Lutz

In learning how to adapt short stories to scripts, this workshop will discuss how to decide what to cut and what to keep, how to convert visuals to audio, how to convert third-person narration to dialogue, and tricks to keeping the audio story flowing.

Session 3: Voices of Latin-America / Voces de América Latina

Rossy Lima de Padilla, Lizbette Ocasio-Russe,
Marco Cerqueira, Alfredo Avalos
Moderated by Gerald Padilla

Writers from across the Americas (including Brazil, Mexico, and Puerto Rico) will read their work in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. These works will showcase the rich, vibrant voices of writing across the Americas.

Session 4: These Neutral Sea Currents

Poet D.A. Lockhart Conversation w/ Scott Obernesser
From *North of Middle Island* (Kegedonce Press, 2023), Lockhart will explore contemporary rooted Indigenous mythologies with special attention to the epic poem, "Piper," which is about famed WWE wrestler Rowdy Roddy Piper and an epic battle with evil medicines and Deerwoman on a Canada's southern-most inhabited island, traditional Lenape language and stories along with the importance of form poetics (specifically Anglo-Saxon verse) in telling stories and reconnecting to our pre-colonial literary roots.

Session 5: Poetry for Therapy or Purpose

J.D. Leza

We will explore some reasons people write poetry and benefits from writing and reading poems. We then will share topics we are thinking of writing poems about, reflecting and brainstorming together what thoughts, feelings and experiences we might want to express in our poem topics, and then we practice writing, presenting and receiving feedback on our first drafts.

Session 6:

Corpus Christi Poet Laureates

Robin Carstensen, Alan Berecka, Tom Murphy

Moderated by Sarah K. Lenz

Global threats to democracy. Ongoing war, genocide, and violence near and far—Ukraine, Iran, Gaza, Texas, etc. Texas legislation passed by the Senate and implemented in the New Year—anti-immigration; anti-women; anti-LGBTQ+; anti-diversity, equity, and inclusion; anti-history, and anti-books, etc. What counternarratives might we offer to fight the good fight for justice and a better life for all?

Nkata Kwsi: Migration as Our Essence

Keynote Speaker D.A. Lockhart

Speaking to the experiences of the Lenape diaspora and those residing in Waawiyaaataong (Detroit,MI-Windsor,ON), this talk focuses on naturally existing in lives of motion. Rootness and relationships with the land are central to notions of decolonization and healing. Yet these hold a critical position with our need to move. Looking at the literary traditions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous America we discover a literal path forward one that winds us through the works of writers such as Philip Levine, Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo, Eugene McNamara, and Natalie Diaz.

Session 7: Place-Based Poetry of the (Sometimes) Heartsick

Nathanael O'Reilly, Joel Ortiz, Srijani Mitra
Moderated by Robin Carstensen

The poems in here cast a wide net while exploring place, landscape, migration, travel, colonization and personal impact and resistance. Meanwhile, a psychological interiority will invite us into themes of ancestry, family history and culture, and universal human experiences, such as fatherhood, death/grief, empathy, and love.

Session 8: The Intersectionality of Native American and Mexican American Storytelling

Wes Jamison, Paul McCann, Annie Huckabee
Moderated by Kent Lenz

Author and playwright, F. Anthony Falcon (Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas), discusses the commonalities in Indigenous storytelling through the lenses of someone who is Native American and Mexican American. Learn about his journey from an at-risk youth in Corpus Christi, to traditionally publisher author, and how this road has impacted the stories he creates.

Session 9: American Borderland Poets

Alex Z. Salinas, Tezozomoc, Ron George
Moderated by Joshua Bridgwater Hamilton

This panel features poetry that explores the cross-generational and cultural melding of languages, memories, literary influences, and heritages that occur at the junctures of political, physical, and personal borders. The poems work with intertextuality from English and Spanish language worlds.

Session 10: Rising Islander Writers Talk Writing Process and Concept Development

Indigo Rodríguez, Roy Gomez, Raye Bailey,
Derek Willis Jr.

Moderated by Lizbette Ocasio-Russe

Four undergraduate advanced creative writers from TAMU-CC who will read their work and discuss – Q&A encouraged - writing process and concept development. The panel features published and unpublished writers (all marginalized voices - POC, women, LGBTQIA+) to showcase diverse experiences and writing journeys.

Session 11: Stories of Home, Transgression and Connecting with Others

Andrew Geyer, Thomas Ray Garcia, Thảo Đình
Moderated by Tom Murphy

Understanding the human condition that makes us common and also different transpires inside these three stories of a human book, of a living spirit of the grace of place. These heartrending stories beckon connection with others through self-reflection and speak frankly about tough subjects that invite our understanding.

Session 12: "It's not your fault:" Reframing and Overcoming Writer's Block

Andrea Perez, Lisa Annette Ramos, Kindel Casey,
Stephen Gambill
Moderated by Zoe Elise Ramos

This is a panel that includes both readings and stories related to writer's block. Part of this event will be a discussion and a compassion-oriented approach to addressing audience-member's experiences with writer's block.

Session 13: Strong Women in the Corpus Christi Writers Anthology

Julieta Corpus, Susan Daubenspeck, Carol Mays,
Patricia Alaniz
Moderated by William Mays

This yearly anthology includes the strong voices of women in South Texas. A tentative list of poems/stories: Woman beaten by her husband, woman kills home invader, teenager avoids sexual abuse, woman says there is no shame in being sexually abused, witch's cat kills an abusive husband.

Session 14: Haiku Walk

Stefan Sencerz

We will meet on the beach at Ropes Park half an hour before sunrise. We will start with a brief guided meditation. Then, after being introduced to a "haiku training exercise," participants will write haiku. It will be followed by sharing our efforts and the discussion of haiku and the process of writing them.

Session 15A: Children's Literary Authors Talk

David Norec, Claudia Villarreal, Patty York Raymond,
Roy Cervantes
Moderated by Rosa Esthela Mora

Four children's book authors will introduce their books, speak about what goes into an author presentation for school, local libraries or local bookstores. We will also discuss our book topics and presentation topics and the lessons they provide.

Session 15B: Remembering the Earth: Three Poets

Paul Bowers, Ken Hada, Cullen Whisenhunt
Moderated by Alan Berecka

This panel features poets from the prairies of Northwestern Oklahoma, the Cross-Timbers section of central Oklahoma, and the Ouachita Forests of Southeastern Oklahoma. These poets "dwell" in these places. Their poetry "wonders" upon these landscapes that shape them and the life filling them. Their poetry looks at this life from "many angles."

Session 16A: Postcard Poetry

Laura Peña

With 10 years of experience participating in postcard poetry festivals, Laura Peña will lead this workshop focused on the craft of writing short form poetry directly on postcards. Participants will take inspiration from postcard images and will be provided with postcards to create their own Postcard Poetry.

Session 16B: Young Adult: Multi-genre

Thomas Ray Garcia, Rosa Esthela Mora,
Randal Lee Gritzner
Moderated by Ron Ramirez

Literacy Crisis: 81% of Texas students can't read at grade level, and the future of individuals and our nation are at stake. We will chat about our reasons for writing in multiple genres. Short readings will be included. In an attempt to motivate young adults to read more, our target is readers and writers of YA literature.

Session 17A: Bad Place: How to Write a Dystopian Story

Heather Twardowski

This workshop aims to teach writers components of constructing a dystopian story. Topics covered will include defining “dystopia” and how it usually comes about through examples of dystopian literature with focus on setting, plot, and character creation. Writers will get the opportunity to develop their own dystopian story by the end of the workshop.

Session 18A: Memoir: Genre of Self-Remembrance and Self-Reflection

Sarah K. Lenz, Ron George

Moderated by Jon Dyen

“If you want to write memoir, you need to set caterwauling narcissism to the side,” writes Beth Kephart in *Handling the Truth*. “Real memoirists open themselves to self-discovery and, in the process, make themselves vulnerable.” In this craft lecture, we’ll discuss the inherent difficulties of this process and how to overcome them.

Session 18B: Ethereal Poetry of Sadness, Longing, Beauty, and the Damned

Dustin Hackfeld, Stephen Gambill, Joe Wilson, Joshua Bridgwater Hamilton

Moderated by Chuck Etheridge

John Keats’s poetry described poetry as moments of feeling “uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” Each of the four poets in this panel write of these mysterious moments that find us open to love, hope, beauty, and terror.

Session 19A: Multigenre Creative Workshop: Documenting (Narrating) Our Families of Choice and Intentional Communities

Robin Carstensen (Poet Laureate of Corpus Christi)

Through prompts, this workshop explores the alternative families, safe harbors, and intentional communities that many create for support and belonging. What experiences shape our ability to create nurturing, affirming families and communities in the face of trauma, isolation, marginalization by long held cultural beliefs? How can our stories be a beacon? All welcome!

Session 19B: Something Fantastic: Speculative Writers in the Coastal Bend

Chuck Etheridge, Devorah Fox, David Carpenter, John Forbus

Moderated by Tom Murphy

Published and aspiring science fiction and fantasy authors take you to strange new worlds--or will make you take a second look at the world you already live in. Might the stories you write come true? Is West Texas really as empty as people say, or is it a refuge for magical beings? How would a shapeshifting outcast nobleman's son, never groomed for office, do when thrust onto the throne? These and other questions might be answered.

Session 20A: The Short Poem

J.L. Wright

Join J.L. Wright for an exploration of some of the short poem forms through examples and writing. Short poems are often tougher than writing long poems because poets spend more time on word choice and clarity. You will read examples, analyze them, and move what you learn into your own writing. You leave with at least three first draft short poems.

Session 20B: Embodying Women's Bodies in Writing

Heather Stark, Sarah K. Lenz, Jayne-Marie Linguist

Moderated by Zoe Elise Ramos

In this creative showcase of poetry, nonfiction, and memoir, three women writers share their work about writing from a female body about the female body, using both queer and cis-gendered perspectives. Their work explores puberty, toxic beauty and diet culture, motherhood, and mother-daughter relationships.

Session 21A: Second Person: You and Your Reader

Wes Jamison

We can't expect a captive audience: our readers may want more than lists of actions and adjectives, descriptions of what we see, think, and imagine. Readers may wish to have a role, to be more involved. In this generative workshop, we will experiment with the word "you," with person, voice, and reference to see what new possibilities appear for reader engagement. All levels and abilities welcome.

Session 21B: Central Texas Bilingual Poetry: Versos del corazón de Tejas

Abra Gist, Joe Lozano, Bianca Alyssa Pérez,
Eduardo Villarreal de los Reyes
Moderated by Joshua Bridgwater Hamilton

This panel will feature poets who identify with or relate to the central Texas region and its culture. These poets actively engage bilingual poetics and directly address living in multiple cultural and linguistic contexts that create tension between Spanish and English languages and heritages.

Award Ceremony: Robb and Vanessa Jackson for High School Poets

This contest, honoring the life of Robb Jackson, who was a Regents Professor of English at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, awards exceptional high school poets, who will read their winning poems.

Special Evening Event: Open Mic Night

Hosted by Dylan Lopez and Joshua Bridgwater
Hamilton

Spontaneously share your creative work or share a beer with fellow writers, poets, and songwriters at this open mic night at Lazy Beach Brewery.

Special Event: Haiku Deathmatch

Stefan Sencerz

In the early 1670s, Bashō and his students devised an event, “the seashell game”, where poets competed head-to-head with original haiku. Over 3 centuries later, Daniel Ferri, from the Illinois poetry slam scene, created the Haiku Death Match, which blends Japanese practice of haiku with Western conventions like the roast or rap battle. Poets will battle one-on-one until only one “haikuin” is left standing.

All-Day Session: Austin Typewriter, Ink: Type-In

David Torres

Drop in and type in. Join typewriter enthusiast and master collector, David Torres, who will have a selection of vintage and antique typewriters for you to try. Enjoy writing with the tactile clack of these beautiful machines and see how changing your mode of writing can transform your ideas.

Panelist Bios



Festival Committee Members:

Sarah K. Lenz, Chair	J.D. Leza
Alan Berecka	Dylan Lopez
Robin Carstensen	Tom Murphy
Karen Cline-Tardiff	Scott Obernesser
Jonathan Dyen	Lizbette Ocasio-Russe
Chuck Etheridge	Zoe Elise Ramos (ZER)
Joshua Bridgwater Hamilton	Stefan Sencerz
Kent Lenz	

Special Thanks

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