

Author Bios 2016 OCB

Rick Bass was born in Fort Worth, Texas, the son of a geologist, and he studied petroleum geology at Utah State University. He grew up in Houston and started writing short stories on his lunch breaks while working as a petroleum geologist in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1987 he moved with his wife, the artist Elizabeth Hughes Bass, to the remote Yaak Valley, where he works to protect his adopted home from roads and logging. Rick serves on the board of both the Yaak Valley Forest Council and Round River Conservation Studies. In 2011 Rick moved from the Yaak area of Montana to Missoula, Montana. He is the author of sixteen books of nonfiction, four novels, and five collections of short stories. His stories, articles, and essays have appeared in the *Paris Review*, the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Narrative*, *Men's Journal*, *Esquire*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly*, *Harper's*, *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, *Tin House*, *Zoetrope*, and numerous other periodicals.

Vereen Bell received his BA from Davidson College and his PhD from Duke University in 1959. He has taught at Vanderbilt for more than forty years, where he has received several teaching awards, including the Madison Sarratt Prize for excellence in undergraduate teaching and the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award. He teaches a range of graduate and undergraduate courses on the modern British novel, the modern American novel, modern poetry, contemporary British and American poetry, Yeats and Irish history, poetry and interpretation, and literary theory. His books include *Robert Lowell: Nihilist as Hero*, *The Achievement of Cormac McCarthy*, *On Modern Poetry: Essays Presented to Donald Davie*, and *Yeats and the Logic of Formalism*.

Jericho Brown is the recipient of the Whiting Writers Award and fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and the National Endowment for the Arts. His first book, *Please*, won the American Book Award, and his second book, *The New Testament*, was named one of the best poetry books of the year by *Library Journal*. His poems have appeared in the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New Yorker*, and *The Best American Poetry*. Brown earned a PhD from the University of Houston, an MFA from the University of New Orleans, and a BA from Dillard University. He is an assistant professor in the creative writing program at Emory University in Atlanta.

Taylor Brown grew up on the Georgia coast. He has lived in Buenos Aires, San Francisco, and the mountains of western North Carolina. His fiction has appeared in more than twenty publications, including the *Baltimore Review*, the *North Carolina Literary Review*, and *storySouth*. He is the recipient of the Montana Prize in Fiction and was a finalist in both the Machigonne Fiction Contest and the Doris Betts Fiction Prize. An Eagle Scout, he lives in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Joseph Crespino is Jimmy Carter Professor of twentieth-century American political history and southern history since Reconstruction at Emory University. He is author of *Strom Thurmond's America* and *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*. He is also coeditor, with Matthew Lassiter, of *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*. His published work has examined the intersections of region, race, and religion in American politics in the second half of the twentieth century. The argument that animates both of his books, as well as his coedited collection, is the notion that the struggles in the American South over race and modernization in the twentieth century should not be viewed in isolation, but rather as part of a broader series of transformations in national political life. In 2009 Crespino was awarded the Emory Center for Teaching and Curriculum's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

Chiyuma Elliott is an assistant professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. A former Stegner Fellow, Elliott's poems have appeared in the *African American Review*, *Callaloo*, the *Notre Dame Review*, the *PN Review*, and other journals. She has received fellowships from the American Philosophical Society, Cave Canem, the James Irvine Foundation, and the Vermont Studio Center. Her first book of poems, *California Winter League*, was published by Unicorn Press in November of 2015.

Mark Essig, a historian and writer, is the author of *Lesser Beasts: A Snout-to-Tail History of the Humble Pig*. He also wrote *Edison and the Electric Chair*, which was named one of the twenty best science books of 2003 by *Discover magazine*. He has written op-eds and book reviews for the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and has worked at the *Los Angeles Times* community news division, the Long Beach (Calif.) *Press-Telegram*, and the Asheville (N.C.) *Citizen-Times*. He holds a PhD in US history from Cornell University and a bachelor's degree in English and religious studies from the University of Virginia. He has taught history and American studies at Cornell and journalism at Warren Wilson College. A native of St. Louis, he lives in Asheville, N.C.

Beth Ann Fennelly directs the MFA program at the University of Mississippi, where she was named the 2011 Outstanding Liberal Arts Teacher of the Year. She's won grants from the NEA, United States Artists, and a Fulbright to Brazil. She has published three books of poetry and one of nonfiction, all with W.W. Norton. In 2014 she coauthored *A Titled World* with her husband, Tom Franklin. They live in Oxford with their three children.

Sheri Fink is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling book, *Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital* (Crown, 2013) about choices made in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She is a correspondent at the *New York Times*, where her and her colleagues' stories on the West Africa Ebola crisis were recognized with the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting, the George Polk Award for health reporting, and the Overseas Press Club Hal Boyle Award. Her story "The Deadly Choices at Memorial," co-published by ProPublica and the *New York Times Magazine*, received a 2010 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting and a National Magazine Award for reporting. A former relief worker in disaster and conflict zones, Fink received her M.D. and Ph.D. from Stanford University. Her first book, *War Hospital: A True Story of Surgery and Survival* (PublicAffairs), is about medical professionals under siege during the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Five Days at Memorial* was the winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction, the PEN/John Kenneth Galbraith Award for nonfiction, the Ridenhour Book Prize, the J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance Book Award, the American Medical Writers Association Medical Book Award, and the NASW Science in Society Journalism Book Award.

Rebecca Morgan Frank is the author of *Little Murders Everywhere*, a finalist for the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and *The Spokes of Venus*, forthcoming from Carnegie Mellon University Press. She is the recipient of the Poetry Society of America's Alice Fay di Castagnola Award, as well as fellowships from the Sewanee Writers' Conference and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Her poems have appeared such places as *Ploughshares*, *Harvard Review*, *New England Review*, *Georgia Review*, *Guernica*, and *Best New Poets*. She is an assistant professor at the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Writers and co-founder and editor of the online literary magazine *Memorious*.

Robert Gipe lives in Harlan, Kentucky, and is the director of the Appalachian Program at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College in Cumberland, Kentucky. His fiction has appeared in *Appalachian Heritage*, *Still*, *Motif*, and *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*. He is a producer of *Higher Ground*, a series of community musical dramas based on oral histories and grounded in discussion of local issues. *Trampoline* is his first book.

Matthew Griffin is a graduate of Wake Forest University and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of English at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Previously, he was an assistant to the director of Highlander Research and Education Center, a renowned hub of grassroots organizing for social justice throughout the South and Appalachia. He was born and raised in North Carolina and now lives in Louisiana with his husband and too many pets. *Hide* is his first novel.

Derrick Harriell was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He has worked as assistant poetry editor for *Third World Press* and *The Cream City Review* and has taught community writing workshops for individuals of all ages, including senior citizens. A two-time Pushcart Nominee, Harriell's poems have appeared in various literary journals and anthologies. He published his first collection of poems, *Cotton*, in

2010. His second collection of poems, *Ropes*, won the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Poetry Award in 2014.

Julia Claiborne Johnson worked at *Mademoiselle* and *Glamour* magazines before marrying and moving to Los Angeles, where she lives with her comedy-writer husband and their two children. *Be Frank with Me* is her first novel.

Richard Katrovas spent his early years in cars and motels living on the highways of America while his father, a petty thief and conman, eluded state and federal authorities. His father was eventually caught, but upon being released on probation from federal prison reverted to his criminal ways and was caught and re-incarcerated. During his father's prison terms, Katrovas and his mother and siblings lived on welfare in public housing projects. Katrovas was adopted by relatives in his early teens and lived with them for three years in Sasebo, Japan. He graduated from high school in Coronado, California, and attended San Diego State University (BA, English, 1977). He was then a Hoyns Fellow at the University of Virginia, attended the MFA program at the University of Arkansas, and finished his graduate work in the Iowa Writers' Workshop (MFA, 1983). Katrovas is the author of seven books of poetry, *Green Dragons*, *Snug Harbor*, *The Public Mirror*, *The Book of Complaints*, *Dithyrambs*, *Scorpio Rising: Selected Poems*, and *Prague Winter*; a book of short stories, *Prague USA*; two memoirs, *The Years of Smashing Bricks* and *The Republic of Burma Shave*; and a novel, *The Mystic Pig*. His poems, stories, reviews, and essays have appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, including *Antioch Review*, *Contemporary Fiction*, *Crazyhorse*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Iowa Review*, *Missouri Review*, *New England Review*, *Poetry*, *Southern Review*, and *Virginia Quarterly Review*. Katrovas's current projects are *Raising Girls in Bohemia: Meditations of an American Father*, a collection of essays, and *Confessions of a Waiter*, a novel. Katrovas and his family live in Kalamazoo, Michigan, New Orleans, and Prague. He is a professor of English at Western Michigan University.

Laurie Keller grew up in Muskegon, Michigan. After graduating high school, she took education classes at a local community college and studied dance until a friend brought her to see a show at the Kendall College of Art and Design, which re-sparked her interest, causing her to enroll and receive a degree from the college in illustration. Following graduation, Keller worked for seven years for Hallmark Cards as a greeting card artist. While there, she was allowed to design entire cards, which caused her to consider writing and illustrating books. Starting in 1997, she made illustrations for Nickelodeon and later in 1998, she directed 6 network ID's for the channel with Pitch Productions, using pipe-cleaners and cel animation. Keller has written and illustrated six books for Henry Holt: *The Scrambled States of America*, a geography book; *Open Wide: Tooth School Inside*, a dental book about tooth care; *Arnie the Doughnut*, about an anthropomorphic doughnut; *Grandpa Gazillion's Number Yard*, a number book, *Do Unto Otters*, a book about manners; and *The Scrambled States of America Talent Show*, the follow-up to her 1998 debut.

Edward J. Larson holds the Hugh and Hazel Darling Chair in Law and is University Professor of History at Pepperdine University. Originally from Ohio with a PhD in the history of science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and law degree from Harvard, Larson has lectured on all seven continents and taught at Stanford Law School, University of Melbourne, Leiden University, and the University of Georgia, where he chaired the History Department. Prior to become a professor, Larson practiced law in Seattle and served as counsel for the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. Recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in History and numerous other awards for writing and teaching, Larson is the author of nine books and over one hundred published articles. His books, which have been translated into more than twenty languages, include *An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton, and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science*; *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign*; *Evolution's Workshop: God and Science in the Galapagos Islands*; and the Pulitzer Prize winning *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*. Larson's latest book, *The Return of George Washington*, was on the *New York Times* bestseller list in 2015. His articles have appeared in such varied publications as *Nature*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Science*, *Scientific American*, *Time*, *Wall Street Journal*, *American History*, the *Guardian*, and dozens of academic journals.

Ariel Lawhon is cofounder of the popular online book club She Reads, a novelist, a blogger, and a life-long reader. She is the author of *The Wife, the Maid, and the Mistress* and, most recently, *Flight of Dreams*. She lives in the rolling hills outside Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband and four young sons (aka The Wild Rumpus) and a black lab who is, thankfully, a girl.

Kiese Laymon who was born and raised in Mississippi, is the 2015–16 Grisham writer-in-residence at the University of Mississippi and a professor of English and Africana studies at Vassar College. Author of *Long Division* and *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America*, Laymon's work deals with American racism, feminism, family, hip-hop and southern black life. *Long Division* was named one of the Best of 2013 by a number of publications, including *Buzzfeed*, *The Believer*, *Salon*, the *Chicago Tribune*, among others. It was also short-listed for the Saroyan International Writing Award. Three essays in *How to Slowly Kill Yourself and Others in America* have been included in the Best American series, the Best of Net award, and the *Atlantic's* Best Essays of 2013. Laymon has written essays and stories for numerous online publications, including his work as a contributing editor at *Gawker* and frequent posts to ESPN.com.

Bobbie Ann Mason is an American novelist and short-story writer, who in her earlier works drew on her Kentucky upbringing. Mason is the recipient of several awards, grants and fellowships, most notably the PEN Hemingway Award for her collection *Shiloh and Other Stories* in 1982, followed shortly by the Arts and Letters Award for Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1984. Her most recent novel, *The Girl in the Blue Beret*, won the Kentucky Book Award. Her other works include a biography of Elvis Presley and the novel *In Country*.

Margaret McMullan is the author of seven award-winning novels. In 2015, she and Phillip Lopate curated *Every Father's Daughter*, an anthology of essays about fathers by great women writers such as Alice Munro, Ann Hood, and Jane Smiley. Her novels include *Aftermath Lounge*, *In My Mother's House*, *Cashay*, and *When I Crossed No-Bob*. Both *When I Crossed No-Bob* and *How I Found the Strong* won the Mississippi Arts and Letters Award for Best Fiction (2004 and 2008), the Indiana Best Young Adult Book (in 2005 and 2008), and they are both New York Public Library A-List Books for Teens. Her work has appeared in the *Huffington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Ploughshares*, *TriQuarterly*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, the *Greensboro Review*, *Other Voices*, and many other newspapers and journals. McMullan has taught on the summer faculty at the Stony Brook Southampton Writers Conference in Southampton, New York, at the Eastern Kentucky University Low-Residency MFA Program, and at the University of Southern Indiana's Summer and Winter Ropewalk Writers Retreat. She was the Melvin Peterson Endowed Chair in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Evansville, where she taught for twenty-five years. She writes full time now and serves as a faculty mentor at the Stony Brook Southampton Low-res MFA Program.

Sara Camp Milam is the Southern Foodways Alliance's managing editor. She has a BA in Spanish from Princeton University and an MA in folklore from UNC-Chapel Hill. She began volunteering for the SFA in 2009 and joined the staff full time in 2012. Before finding her way to SFA World Headquarters, Sara Camp was a middle school Spanish teacher and an associate editor at the *Oxford American* magazine.

Dennis J. Mitchell, from Lauderdale, Mississippi, is head of the division of arts and sciences and professor of history at Mississippi State University at Meridian. He is the author of *A New History of Mississippi; A Rich Past, a Vibrant Future: The History and Renovation of the Marks Rothenberg and Grand Opera House Buildings; Mississippi Liberal: A Biography of Frank E. Smith; and Mississippi: Portrait of an American State*, among others.

Minion "K. C." Morrison is currently professor and head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Mississippi State University. He is also senior associate professor of African American studies at MSU. Morrison's research and publications have appeared in the fields of comparative and American politics. His publications include several books, including *Aaron Henry of Mississippi: Inside Agitator; African Americans and Political Participation; Black Political Mobilization, Leadership and Power; Housing and Urban Poor in Africa*, edited with Peter Gutkind; and *Ethnicity and Political*

Integration. His work has also appeared in such journals as *Polity*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *Publius*, *Comparative Politics*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *International Political Science Review*, *National Political Science Review*, *Politics and Religion*, *American Political Science Review*, *International Studies Perspectives*, and *Journal of Modern African Studies*.

Ted Ownby is the director of the University of Mississippi's Center for the Study of Southern Culture. He has a joint appointment in history and Southern Studies and is the author of *American Dreams in Mississippi: Consumers, Poverty, and Culture, 1830–1998* and *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865–1920*, editor of *Black and White: Cultural Interaction in the Antebellum South*, and coeditor with Elizabeth Engelhardt and John T. Edge of *The Larder: Food Studies Methods from the American South*. Most recently, Ownby contributed the foreword to Joel Williamson's *Elvis Presley: A Southern Life*.

Catarina Passidomo is assistant professor of anthropology and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, and works closely with the Southern Foodways Alliance. Her research interests include southern foodways, critical race studies, social justice, food systems, social movements, and the connections between food and culture, identity, space, and power. Passidomo holds a PhD in human geography from the University of Georgia, an MA in ecological anthropology from the University of Georgia, and a BA in sociology and anthropology from Washington and Lee University.

Katie Peterson earned a BA at Stanford University and a PhD at Harvard University, where her dissertation, "Supposed Person: Emily Dickinson and the Selflessness of Poetry," won the Howard Mumford Jones Prize. She is the author of the poetry collections *This One Tree*, which was awarded the New Issues Poetry Prize by judge William Olson, *Permission*, and *The Accounts*, which won the Rilke Prize. Peterson's lyric poems explore interior and exterior landscapes, exposure, and shelter. "A poem is a place," Peterson stated in an interview with the *Harvard Gazette*. "It does not describe a place." In her artist's statement, Peterson explains, "I like a poem that feels logical but is not—a poem in which thinking takes the shape of a hallucination. I like a poem in which all of my intelligence fails. I am forced to use other tools: desire, anger, recklessness. I pursue beauty and memory not to preserve them but to try, against odds, to preserve that perishable pursuit." Peterson has been a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and the Summer Literary Seminars, and received a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. She has taught at Bennington College and Deep Springs College, where she was the Robert B. Aird Chair of Humanities. Peterson is on the English faculty at the University of California-Davis.

LaKisha Michelle Simmons is assistant professor of global gender studies at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. Simmons earned her BA in history and women's studies from the University of Virginia and her PhD in history and women's studies from the University of Michigan. Her work has appeared in *Gender & History* and *American Quarterly*.

Holly Goldberg Sloan was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and spent her childhood living in Holland, Istanbul, Turkey, Washington, D.C., Berkeley, California, and Eugene, Oregon. After graduating from Wellesley College and spending some time as an advertising copywriter, she began writing and directing family feature films, including "Angels in the Outfield" and "Made in America." *Counting by 7s*, her first novel with Penguin, was a *New York Times* bestseller. The mother of two sons, Holly lives with her husband in Santa Monica, California.

Young Suh received his BFA in photography from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, in 1998, and went on to receive his MFA in Studio Art from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where he taught large-format photography and digital printing. His photographic work often deals with the complicated nature of human involvement in managing natural resources and the shifting concepts of nature in contemporary society. Over the last ten years he has completed two major projects, *Instant Traveler* and *Wildfires*. He is

currently working on his new project, *Let Burn*, a photo and video series on controlled fires. Suh's work is included in several public and corporate collections, and he has had solo exhibitions in the US and in Korea. His work has also appeared in numerous group exhibitions throughout the country, notable among them *The Collector's Guide to New Art Photography* at Chelsea Art Museum (New York) and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Center for Contemporary Art in Sacramento.

David Wharton is the Center for the Study of Southern Culture's Director for Documentary Studies and an assistant professor of Southern Studies. His first book, *The Soul of a Small Texas Town: Photographs, Memories, and History from McDade*, was published in 2000, and he published his second book of photographs, *Small Town South*, in 2013. The photographs record rural townscapes from across the South—portraits of small southern towns in the first decades of the twenty-first century and evidence of how residents of those towns express their distinct culture. Wharton's current book project is *The Power of Belief: Spiritual Landscapes from the Rural South*.

Jessica Wilkerson is assistant professor of history and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. Her research interests include southern history, US women's history, Appalachian history, twentieth-century social movements, and oral history. She earned her MA from Sarah Lawrence College and her PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is currently working on her book manuscript, "Where Movements Meet: From the War on Poverty to Grassroots Feminism in the Appalachian South," which traces the alliances forged and the grassroots movements led by women in the Appalachian South in the 1960s and 1970s.

Curtis Wilkie was a reporter for the *Clarksdale Press Register* in his home state of Mississippi during the 1960s and then served as a national and foreign correspondent for the *Boston Globe* for 26 years. He is coauthor, with Jim McDougal, of *Arkansas Mischief: The Birth of a National Scandal* and author of *Dixie: A Personal Odyssey through Events that Shaped the Modern South*, *The Fall of the House of Zeus: The Rise and Ruin of America's Most Powerful Trial Lawyer*, and, most recently, *Assassins, Eccentrics, Politicians, and Other Persons of Interest: Fifty Pieces from the Road*. Wilkie holds the Kelly Gene Cook Chair of Journalism at the University of Mississippi. In 2005 he received a special award for excellence in nonfiction from the Fellowship of Southern Writers.

Caki Wilkinson is the author of the poetry collections *Circles Where the Head Should Be*, which won the Vassar Miller Prize, and *The Wynona Stone Poems*, which won the Lexi Rudnitsky/Editor's Choice Award. She lives in Memphis, Tennessee, where she is an assistant professor in the English Department at Rhodes College.