



The Joan & Bill
HANK CENTER
FOR THE CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE

Poets of Presence
faith, form, & forging community

Loyola University Chicago

October 27–28, 2023

WELCOME

Kind greetings, and a warm welcome to Loyola University Chicago and **Poets of Presence: Faith, Form, and Forging Community**.

The inspiration and objective for this gathering are one and the same thing: *celebration*. We celebrate the mystery of faith, the beauty of poetry, and the gift of community.

We also celebrate *Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry* and are most grateful that it exists. The journal found its origin and roots at the first Biennial Catholic Imagination Conference, *The Future of the Catholic Literary Imagination*, sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, in February 2015. In the intervening years, the Biennial CIC has grown expansively; and *Presence* (that is the poetry, interviews and reviews that constitute it) has enriched us all with vitality, insight, creativity, and complication. *Presence*, now preparing its eighth issue, is serving the Church, the academy, and the borderless world of arts and cultures in a needed and fresh way. We are all indebted to Editor-in Chief, Dr. Mary Ann Miller, her editorial staff, and the Advisory Board at *Presence* for their tireless work—and we cannot wait to see what they have on offer for Spring, 2024. Huzzah!

To put a conference of any size together is no small task. To that end, I want to thank our lead organization team: Mary Ann Miller, and Angela Alaimo O'Donnell. Mary Ann and Angela were most helpful in structuring a vision of our gathering and I am grateful for their collegiality and goodwill—and grateful for the support of *Presence* and the Curran Center at Fordham. A heartfelt thanks to our panelists/workshop facilitators as well. Gratitude for accepting our invitation, one and all—and thanks for your mindful preparations, too. Lastly, a special note of thanks is reserved for our excellent CCIH staff—Katie, Julian, Grace B., Connor, Mary, and Grace S.—whose dedication and steady hands have made preparation a true delight. Well done, team!

Before I close—and speaking on behalf of the Hank Center—I'd like to thank all of the conference participants for your contribution which, collectively (along with Christian, Angela, Mary Ann, Susan, Paul, Jeannine, and Mark) becomes another cornerstone of this gathering. I'd also like to thank each of you for bringing your expertise and insight to our proceedings. The enthusiasm of your shared commitment reflects the vitality of the poetry and poetics of faith. What a blessing!

Warmest regards,

Michael P. Murphy



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, Oct. 27: Francesca's on Chestnut

5:30 PM **Cocktails and Dinner**
Welcome: Michael P. Murphy (Hank Center)

8:00 PM **Poetry Reading**
Welcome and Facilitation: Mary Ann Miller
A mix of poets from all issues of Presence will read one of their own poems from the journal (or their own book) and a poem by another poet from any issue of the journal.

Saturday, Oct. 28: Water Tower Campus

8:30 AM **Check-In**
Light breakfast with readings of poetry by some of the panelists and workshop leaders:
Susan L. Miller, Angela Alaimo O'Donnell,
Paul J. Pastor and Jeannine M. Pitas

9:00–11:00 AM **Concurrent Workshops**

- 1) The Sonnet and Other Forms:
 Angela Alaimo O'Donnell (Fordham) Beane Hall
- 2) World into Word: Forging Faith into Poetry:
 Susan L. Miller (Rutgers) Regents Hall

11:30–1:00 PM **Lunch Plenary (Beane Hall)**

The Forge & the Fire: God in the Blacksmith Shop:
Angela Alaimo O'Donnell (Fordham)

1:15–2:15 PM

Presentations

- 1) Success: Writing a Winning Book Proposal
with Mark Burrows (Wildhouse Publications) Beane Hall
- 2) Finding Your Personal Publishing Strategy:
How to Focus Your Time and Energy:
Paul J. Pastor (Harper/Zondervan) Regents Hall
- 3) Words Across Cultures: On Translating Poetry
and Publishing Poetry in Translation:
Jeannine M. Pitas (Presence Journal) TBA

2:15–2:30 PM

Break

2:30–3:30 PM

Concurrent Workshops

- 1) Success: Writing a Winning Book Proposal
with Mark Burrows (Wildhouse Publications) Beane Hall
- 2) An Editor's Secrets for Successful Submissions:
Paul J. Pastor (Harper/Zondervan) Regents Hall
- 3) Translation Pitch Session: An Opportunity to
Receive Feedback on Draft Poems in Translation:
Jeannine M. Pitas (Presence Journal) TBA

3:30–5:15 PM

Break

5:15 PM

Vigil Mass (Holy Name Cathedral)

6:30 PM

Heavy hors d'oeuvres / drinks

7:30 PM

Keynote Lecture and Reading (Beane Hall):
The Art of Faith and the Faith of Art.
Christian Wiman (Yale University)

Presenters

Angela Alaimo O'Donnell, PhD is a professor, poet, literary critic, and writer at Fordham University in New York City. She is also the Associate Director of Fordham's Curran Center for American Catholic Studies. Her publications include two chapbooks and eight full-length collections of poems, among them *Andalusian Hours* (2020), a collection of 101 poems that channel the voice of Flannery O'Connor, and *Love in the Time of Coronavirus: A Pandemic Pilgrimage* (2021). O'Donnell has published a memoir, *Mortal Blessings*; a book of hours based on the practical theology of Flannery O'Connor, *The Province of Joy*; and a prize-winning biography *Flannery O'Connor: Fiction Fired by Faith*. Her critical book on Flannery O'Connor *Radical Ambivalence: Race in Flannery O'Connor* was published by Fordham University Press in 2020. O'Donnell's most recent poetry collection, *Holy Land* (2022), won the Paraclete Poetry Prize. O'Donnell's eleventh collection, *Dear Dante*, poems written in conversation with Dante's *Commedia*, will be published in spring of 2024.
<http://angelaalaimoodonnell.com/>

Mary Ann Buddenberg Miller is professor of English at Caldwell University in Caldwell, New Jersey, and founding editor-in-chief of *Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry*, an annual professional print poetry journal that publishes new poems and translations, interviews, book reviews and essays on poetry informed by the Catholic faith. She is editor of *St. Peter's B-list: Contemporary Poems Inspired by the Saints* (Ave Maria Press, 2014), the Fall 2019 selection by *America Magazine's* The Catholic Book Club. She frequently teaches a Catholic Writers of literature course and a Journal Editing class that engages interested students in the process of reading submissions to *Presence*.

Susan L. Miller is the author of *Communion of Saints: Poems* (Paraclete Press, 2017.) She has had poetry and prose published in *Commonweal*, *The Iowa Review*, *Literature and Medicine*, *Meridian*, *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *Sewanee Theological Review*, and in many other journals. She also has poems in *Collective Brightness: LGBTIQ Poets on Faith, Religion, and Spirituality* (Sibling Rivalry Press), *St. Peter's B-List: Contemporary Poems Inspired by the Saints* (Ave Maria Press), and the forthcoming anthology *Reflection on the Pandemic: COVID and Social Crises in the Year Everything Changed* (Bucknell University Press). She teaches creative writing as an Associate Teaching Professor at Rutgers University and is currently researching death in twentieth century Mexican art and culture. She lives with her family in Brooklyn, NY.

Paul J. Pastor is an award-winning writer, editor, and author of several books, most recently, *Bower Lodge: Poems*. Drawing on his wide-ranging experience as a journalist, magazine editor, premium freelancer, working poet, and editor, Paul has worked to empower writers at all phases of their careers, ranging from debut poets to multiple *New York Times* bestselling nonfiction authors. Presently serving HarperCollins as Senior Acquisitions Editor for Zondervan Books, Paul is also a candidate for Master of Fine Arts in Poetry at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. He lives in Oregon with his wife Emily, a classically-trained fine artist, and their three children.

Jeannine M. Pitas is the translation co-editor of *Presence: A Journal of Catholic Poetry*. She is the Spanish-English translator or co-translator of twelve books by authors from Latin America with a particular focus on Argentine and Uruguayan women writers. Her most recent translation is *A Sea at Dawn* by Uruguayan poet Silvia Guerra, co-translated with Jesse Lee Kercheval and published in 2023 by Eulalia Books. She is also the author of two books of poetry: *Or/And* (Paraclete Press 2023) and *Things Seen and Unseen* (Mosaic Press 2019). She lives in Pittsburgh, teaches at Saint Vincent College, and is about to join the editorial staff of Eulalia Books, a small press dedicated to publishing poetry books by writers from around the world whose work has not yet been published in English.

Mark S. Burrows has been editing poetry for the past several decades. He served as Poetry Editor for Paraclete Press in the 2010s and recently became Poetry Editor for Wildhouse Publications, a new press in Boston devoted to publishing for “the spiritually adventurous.” In that capacity, he oversaw the press’s recent “con/verge/nces” Chapbook Contest, judged by Jane Hirshfield. Since 2007 he has also edited poetry for the journal *Spiritus*. An award-winning poet and translator of German poetry, he is the recent author (with Jon Sweeney) of *Meister Eckhart’s Book of Darkness and Light: Meditations for the Journey on the Wayless Way* (Hampton Roads, 2023) and *The Wandering Radiance: Selected Poems of Hilde Domin*, the first bilingual edition of one of Germany’s most celebrated post-war poets. He is on the “core faculty” of the MFA in Creative Writing at Seattle Pacific University. After spending most of the last decade as a university professor for Religion and Literature in Bochum, Germany, he now lives and writes in Camden, Maine. www.soul-in-sight.org

ABOUT THE HANK CENTER

Founded in 2006, the Joan (Los, '54) and Bill Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage (CCIH) is one of five Loyola University Chicago Centers of Excellence. The Center is a venue for faculty, students, staff to learn about and investigate Roman Catholic thought and its links to all academic disciplines. The Hank Center stewards the Jesuit principle of finding God in all things, which is at the core of the University's mission. Within CCIH, the rich and variant lines of the Catholic intellectual tradition are explored, communicated, and renewed. With its strong emphasis on scholarly research and discussion, the Center is a productive space where the fruits of that research can be engaged, debated, and shared. CCIH also has a larger footprint – locally, nationally, and internationally – and conducts numerous programs, conferences, and symposia that cultivate reflective experiences of:

Connecting to Catholic Thought

Researching Catholic Thought

Communicating Catholic Thought



The Catholic Studies minor program is likewise oriented and cultivates the rich interdisciplinary heritage of Catholic thought and practice for our undergraduates. The minor was established in 2008 in the College of Arts and Sciences and was formally integrated into Hank Center operations in 2011. The CS Minor introduces and engenders the academic study of the Catholic intellectual tradition for the University's most important audience: our students.

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