

# Writing Seminars Welcomes New Faculty

NOVEMBER 1, 2017

Four new faculty members will join the Bennington Writing Seminars for the January residency: Claire Vaye Watkins in Fiction, Jenny Bouilly and Doug Bauer in Nonfiction, and Safiya Sinclair in Poetry. In addition, we'll welcome visiting faculty members Monica Youn in Poetry and Wayne Koestenbaum in Nonfiction/Poetry.

**Claire Vaye Watkins** is the author of *Gold Fame Citrus* and *Battleborn*, which won the Story Prize, the Dylan Thomas Prize, New York Public Library's Young Lions Fiction Award, the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame. Watkins is graduate of the University of Nevada Reno, she earned her MFA from the Ohio State University, where she was a Presidential Fellow. Her stories and essays have appeared in *Granta*, *Tin House*, *Freeman's*, *The Paris Review*, *Story Quarterly*, *New American Stories*, *Best of the West*, *The New Republic*, *The New York Times*, and many others. A recipient of fellowships from the Sewanee and Bread Loaf Writers' Conferences, Claire was also one of the National Book Foundation's "5 Under 35." A Guggenheim Fellow, Claire is on the faculty of the low residency MFA at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is also the co-director, with Derek Palacio, of the **Mojave School**, a free creative writing workshop for teenagers in rural Nevada. She was raised in the Mojave Desert, in Tecopa, California and across the state line in Pahrump, Nevada.

**Jenny Bouilly** is the author of five previous books, *not merely because of the unknown that was stalking toward them* (Tarpaulin Sky Press), *The Books of Beginnings and Endings: Essays* (Sarabande

Books), *[one love affair]\** (Tarpaulin Sky Press), *of the mismatched teacups, of the single-serving spoon: a book of failures* (Coconut Books), and *The Body: An Essay* (Essay Press, first published by Slope Editions). Her chapbook of prose, *Moveable Types*, was released by Noemi Press. Her work has been anthologized in *The Best American Poetry*, *The Next American Essay*, *Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to the Present*, and other places. Born in Thailand, she was reared in Texas. She attended Hollins University, where she double majored in English and philosophy and then went on to earn her MA in English Criticism and Writing. At the University of Notre Dame, she earned an MFA in Creative Writing with a poetry concentration. She earned a Ph.D. in English from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She teaches creative writing at Columbia College Chicago. Her new book, *Betwixt-and-Between: Essays on the Writing Life*, is forthcoming from Coffee House Press in Spring 2018.

**Doug Bauer's** novels are *The Book of Famous Iowans*; *The Very Air*; and *Dexterity*. He has also published three works of nonfiction: *Prairie City, Iowa*; *The Stuff of Fiction*; and *What Happens Next?: Matters of Life and Death*, which won the 2014 PEN/New England Book Award in Nonfiction. He's edited the anthologies *Prime Times: Writers on Television* and *Death by Pad Thai and Other Unforgettable Meals*. He has received fellowships in both fiction and creative nonfiction from the National Endowment for the Arts. He holds a Doctor of Arts from the State University of New York at Albany and a BA in journalism from Drake University. He has taught, among other places, at Harvard, Rice University, and Smith College. Bauer has taught at Bennington since 2005.

**Safiya Sinclair** was born and raised in Montego Bay, Jamaica. She is the author of ***Cannibal***, winner of a Whiting Writers' Award, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Addison M. Metcalf Award, the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Poetry, the Phillis Wheatley Book Award, the Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Poetry, and selected as one of the American Library Association's "Notable Books of the Year." *Cannibal* was a finalist for the PEN Center USA Literary Award, and longlisted for the PEN Open Book Award and the Dylan Thomas Prize. Sinclair's other honours include a Pushcart Prize, a Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation, fellowships from Yaddo, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Kenyon Review*, *Granta*, *The Nation*, *New England Review*, *Boston Review*, *Oxford American*, the *2018 Forward Book of Poetry*, and elsewhere. She received her MFA in poetry at the University of Virginia, and is currently a PhD candidate in literature and creative writing at the University of Southern California.

**Monica Youn** is the author of the poetry collections *Barter* (Graywolf, 2003) and *Ignatz* (Four Way Books, 2010), a finalist for the National Book Award. Her latest is *Blackacre* (Graywolf, 2016). Her poems have appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, the *Paris Review*, and the *New York Times Magazine*. A former lawyer and 2008 Obama delegate to the Democratic National Convention, she teaches poetry at Princeton University and in the Warren Wilson College MFA Program.

**Wayne Koestenbaum** attended Harvard University and received an MA in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD from Princeton University. After being named co-winner of the 1989 Discovery/The Nation poetry contest, he published his first collection of

poetry, *Ode to Anna Moffo and Other Poems* (Persea Books, 1990), which was chosen as one of The Village Voice Literary Supplement's "Favorite Books of 1990." His other books of poetry include *The Pink Trance Notebooks* (Nightboat, 2015), *Blue Stranger With Mosaic Background* (Turtle Point Press, 2012); and *Rhapsodies of A Repeat Offender* (Persea Books, 1994). Koestenbaum received a Whiting Writer's Award in 1994 and taught in Yale's English department from 1988 to 1996. He is currently a Distinguished Professor of English at the CUNY Graduate Center.