

2023 Contest Judges' Bios



Appalachian Writing – Jayne Moore Waldrop is the author of *Retracing My Steps* and *Pandemic Lent: A Season in Poems*, both published by Finishing Line Press. Her linked story collection, *Drowned Town*, was published in 2021 by University Press of Kentucky through a partnership with Hindman Settlement School. Her debut children's picture book, *A Journey in Color: The Art of Ellis Wilson*, is forthcoming from Shadelandhouse Modern Press. Her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net Anthology.



Short Poetry – Mary Barbara Moore's five poetry books include *Dear If*, *The Book Of Snow*, the prize-winning chapbooks *Amanda* and *the Man Soul*, and *Eating the Light*. Poems appeared lately in *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *NELLE*, *Terrain*, *Asheville Review*, and more. She was the winner of *NELLE's* first Three Sisters' Award and has placed in contests at *Terrain*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, and *Nimrod*.



Long Poetry – Marianne Worthington edits *Still: The Journal*, an online literary magazine she co-founded in 2009. Her work appears in *Oxford American*, *Sweet: A Literary Confection*, *CALYX*, and *Chapter 16* among other places. She co-edited *Piano in a Sycamore: Writing Lessons from the Appalachian Writers' Workshop* and is author of a poetry chapbook. Her poetry collection is *The Girl Singer* (University Press of Kentucky, 2021), winner of the Weatherford Award for Poetry. She grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee, and lives in southeast Kentucky.



Short Story – Jim Minick is the author or editor of seven books, including the award-winning *Fire Is Your Water* and *The Blueberry Years: A Memoir of Farm and Family*. His work has appeared in many publications, including the *New York Times*, *Poets & Writers*, *Tampa Review*, *Shenandoah*, *Orion*, *Oxford American*, and *The Sun*. His newest book is *Without Warning: The Tornado of Udall, Kansas*, a nonfiction work forthcoming from University of Nebraska Press in 2023.



Non-fiction – Charles Ryan was born a small-town West Virginia boy in Keyser, WV. His first job as a disc jockey for a local radio station led to his initial career in journalism after attending West Virginia University. He moved to Charleston and enjoyed an exceptional career in television news before deciding to make the leap to public relations and advertising by starting Charles Ryan Associates in 1974. He is the author of *Death on Staunton Road: The Violent Murder of Charleston Daily Mail Owner Juliet Staunton Clark*.



Emerging Prose – Tony Viola is a Professor of English at Marshall University where he teaches literature and creative writing. His debut novel is *All Lies Begin with Truth*. His short fiction publications have appeared in *Pleiades: A Journal of New Writing*, *Gulf Coast*, *The Connecticut Review*, *Aethlon: Journal of Sports Literature*, and *Five 2 One Magazine*. One story was listed in “100 Other Distinguished Stories,” *Best American Short Stories* and another received a Pushcart Prize nomination.



Emerging Poetry – Dr. Chris Green directs Berea College’s Loyal Jones Appalachian Center and lived in West Virginia for nine years, during which time he edited *Coal: A Poetry Anthology* and authored *Rushlight: Poems*. Chris is dedicated to fostering words that live in and come from hearts/minds/spirits of each person. He has taught poetry (the reading and writing thereof) to community groups, K-12 students, inmates, college students and others. He received his MFA in 1996 from Indiana University.



Social Change - Neema Avashia is the daughter of Indian immigrants, and was born and raised in southern West Virginia. She has been a teacher in the Boston Public Schools since 2003. Her first book, *Another Appalachia: Coming Up Queer and Indian in a Mountain Place*, was published by West Virginia University Press in March. It has been called “A timely collection that begins to fill the gap in literature focused mainly on the white male experience” by *Ms. Magazine*.



Children’s Book – Anna Egan Smucker is the author of nine award-winning books including *No Star Nights*, *Golden Delicious: A Cinderella Apple Story*, *Brother Giovanni's Little Reward: How the Pretzel Was Born*, and *Fallingwater: The Building of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Masterpiece*, a picture book about Frank Lloyd Wright’s iconic house, co-authored with Marc Harshman.



Stage Play – Michael Murdock is a professional actor, writer, director, and member of the professional actors union, Actor’s Equity Association (AEA). He is also the current Artistic Director of Alchemy Theatre in Huntington, West Virginia. He attended Ohio University in Athens, OH, where he double-majored in Theatre and Journalism, with a minor in English. He finished his degree at Marshall University. Mike was one of the Resident Directors at Arts Resources for the Tri-State (ARTS) for five years. He also created The West Virginia Shakespeare Festival (WVSHAKES) in 2018. He is a published author, writing the novel *The Dragon Ruby* with Herschel Jeffrey, which will be re-released soon, and he has won several playwriting contests and screenplay awards.



Special Topic – Life in the Pandemic – Mary Ladd is the author of the *Wig Diaries: An Irreverent Cancer Book*, with illustrator Don Asmussen. She started writing at the *San Francisco Chronicle* and later collaborated with Anthony Bourdain. In 2020, she published a pandemic writing prompts book. Mary regularly presents her work at Litquake, the Community of Writers, Berkeley Poetry Festival and *Wildfire* magazine events. Her writing is in several anthologies, as well as *Playboy*, *Health*, KQED, and elsewhere.



Book Length Prose – Wiley Cash is the New York Times bestselling author of *A Land More Kind Than Home*. He's been a fellow at Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony, and he teaches fiction writing and literature at the University of North Carolina-Asheville, where he serves as Alumni Author-in-Residence. His latest novel is *When Ghosts Come Home*. He lives in North Carolina with his wife, photographer Mallory Cash, and their daughters.



NMV1 (K-5) - Diane Tarantini hails from Huntington, West Virginia, but now calls Morgantown home. She earned a Bachelor's in Journalism from West Virginia University, and later an MFA in creative nonfiction from Converse College. Her recently published children's book, *The Brave Knight*, was chosen to be distributed to each of the 7,000 foster children in West Virginia. Her story *Black Lungs* was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.



NMV 2 (6-8) - Audrey Stanton Smith is a freelance journalist, substitute teacher, and recipient of a first-place 2022 United Methodist Association of Communicators award for non-fiction writing. She holds a 1997 bachelor's degree in journalism from West Virginia University and has had three original short plays performed by local theaters. She currently serves as interim editor of *Response*, the official international magazine of United Women in Faith, and is almost finished writing her first novel.



NMV3 (9-12) – Karin Fuller is a long-time newspaper columnist for the *Sunday Gazette-Mail* (Charleston, WV). Her columns have been selected as Best in the U.S. by the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. She has been published in *Ladies Home Journal*, *Family Circle*, and *Woman's World*, among others. Although she currently resides in Atlanta, Karin and her fiancé are renovating a 110-year-old warehouse in Hinton, WV, with plans to move there in 2023.