

Texas Institute of Letters Fall 2024 Newsletter



Compiled by Kathryn Jones
TIL Secretary

Saludos and Salutations from the President

Dear TIL Members:

I hope everyone is staying cool and productive during this very hot summer. I can hardly believe that five months have passed since our annual meeting at The Woodlands. Many thanks to all who managed to attend and participate in our programming, despite the floodwaters that sadly kept others of you away. Luckily, no one had to be airlifted out or given a ride on a speedboat! Regardless of the weather, it was a delight to see so many familiar and new faces for a weekend of fellowship, literature, music, and art.

I have begun planning our next banquet and will be sharing more details soon. For now, please save the date of April 25-26, 2025. We will be back on the border in historic Brownsville, enjoying fronterizo food, culture, and entertainment. I'm hoping to get some volunteers from membership to help out at the conference: greeters, guides for new members, TIL-hotel liaisons, photographers, readers for Wednesday and Thursday community events, and other possible roles that y'all may suggest to me. Don't be shy: shoot me an email and let's work together to make 2025 the most amazing conference yet.

I also invite you to add to your calendar the Texas Book Festival, happening November 16-17 at the state capitol. The TIL will have *two* panels this year, featuring recent award-winners KB Brookins, Diana López, Deborah Mouton, Drew Buxton, Xelena González, and Laekan Zea Kemp.

We are just a few weeks from announcing the details of our literary contests. When we do, please share the news with publishers and fellow writers to ensure a strong pool of entries. I also encourage you to enter one of our contests if you have any eligible publications.

This year we will be launching the new *Giron/Valdez Bilingual Poetry Award*, for a book of at least 45 pages written in English with a Spanish translation or written in Spanish with an English translation. Books published in 2023 or 2024 will be eligible.

We are also on-track to add *another* award for next year, the *Frederick Luis Aldama Award for Best Graphic Narrative (Fiction or Nonfiction)*. It will also be awarded biennially, so the 2026 award would cover books published in 2024 and 2025. Dr. Aldama is sponsoring this timely prize for three cycles before endowing it completely. ¡Gracias, Fede!

We will be accepting new member nominations in October. [Click here to view a complete list of TIL members](#) so you don't accidentally nominate someone who has already been inducted.

Please join me in welcoming our new council members, ire'ne lara silva and Glenn Blake. Your TIL Officers and Council Members volunteer their energy and time to make sure that our organization continues to move forward as we celebrate the best of Texas literature. We will be meeting on September 14 and welcome your comments and suggestions. I can be reached at president@texasinstituteofletters.org.

Muchas gracias and much gratitude to all who have renewed your TIL membership. If you haven't had a chance, you can still do so [by clicking here](#).

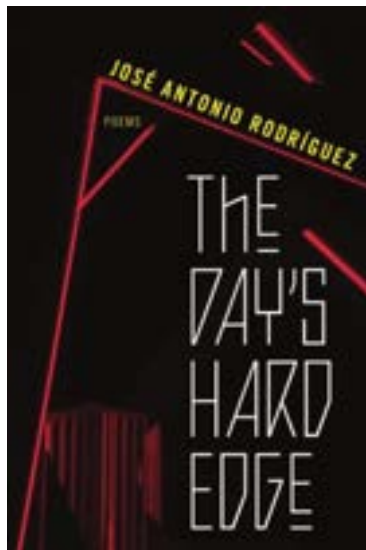
I wish y'all lots of good reading and writing! Hasta muy pronto.

David Bowles
President
Texas Institute of Letters



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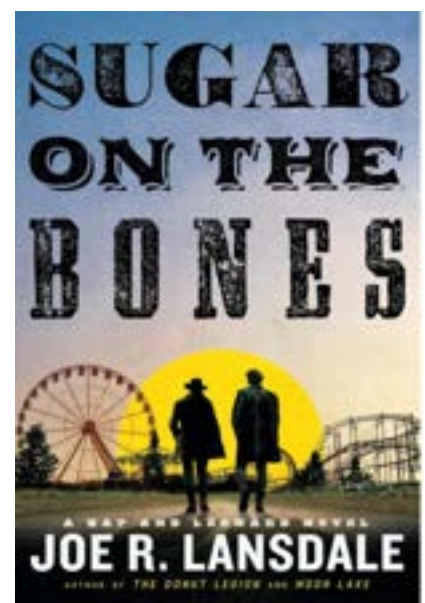
(in order received)



Jose Antonio Rodriguez's newest poetry collection, *The Day's Hard Edge*, is just out from Northwestern UP. He has new poems this year in *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *Paterson Literary Review*, and *Lips*. And his work will be featured in *Latino Poetry: The Library of America Anthology* and the fifteenth edition of *The Norton Introduction to Literature*.

From **Kevin Prufer**: My new book of poems, *The Fears* (Copper Canyon Press) has received the 2024 Rilke Prize, and my new novel, *Sleepaway*, is just out from Acre Books.

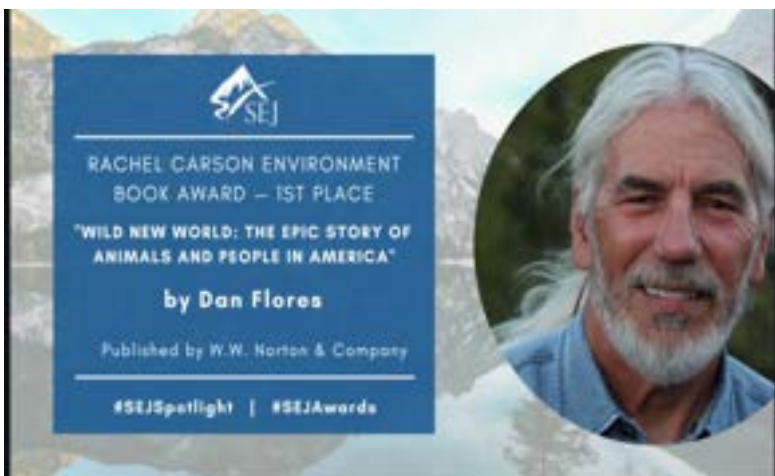
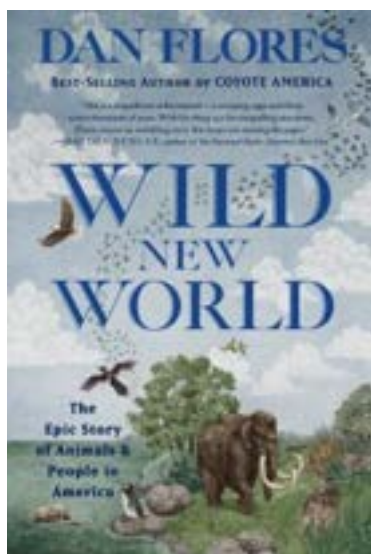
From **Joe Lansdale**: SUGAR ON THE BONES, a new Hap and Leonard Crime novel, came out in July. The film THE THICKET, based on my book of the same name, comes out September 6 in theaters and stars Peter Dinklage and Juliette Lewis.



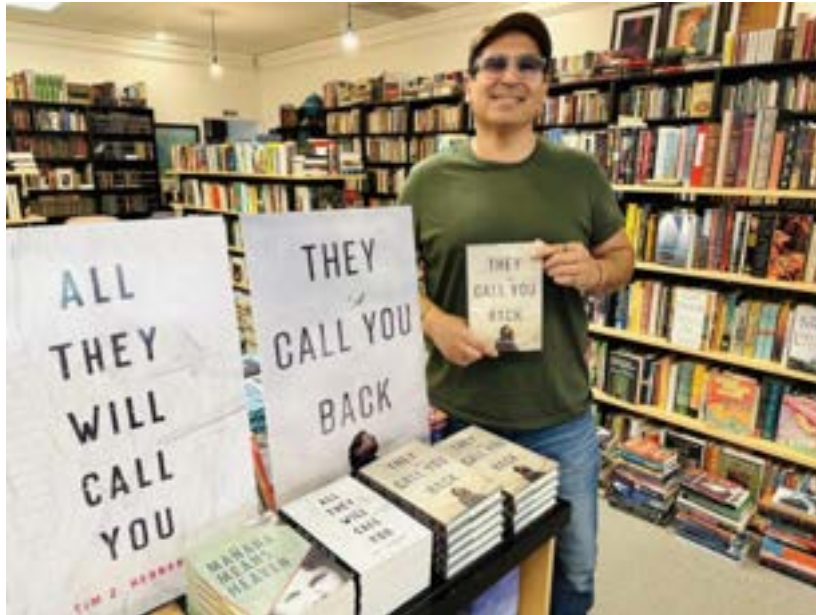


Although **Carolyn Banks** has a long and continuous record of publication by major and minor publishing houses, she decided to publish her latest novel, *The Importance of Being Erica*, herself. She describes the experience as “a voyage to the bottom of the publishing world.” The whole story is told in the foreword to that book, but finding the book is akin to finding the Lost Ark.

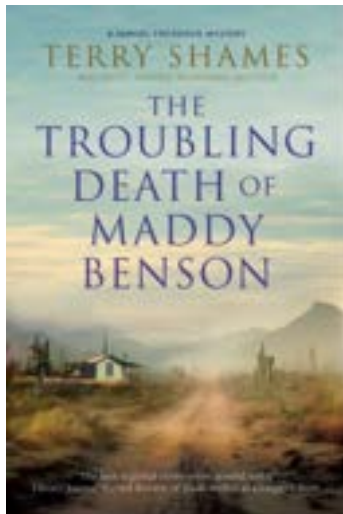
Dan Flores’ book *Wild New World* won the 2023 Rachel Carson Environment Book Prize, the 2023 National Outdoor Book Award for Natural History Literature, and was a finalist for Phi Beta Kappa’s Ralph Waldo Emerson Prize.



Tim Hernandez's memoir *They Call You Back* comes out September 17.



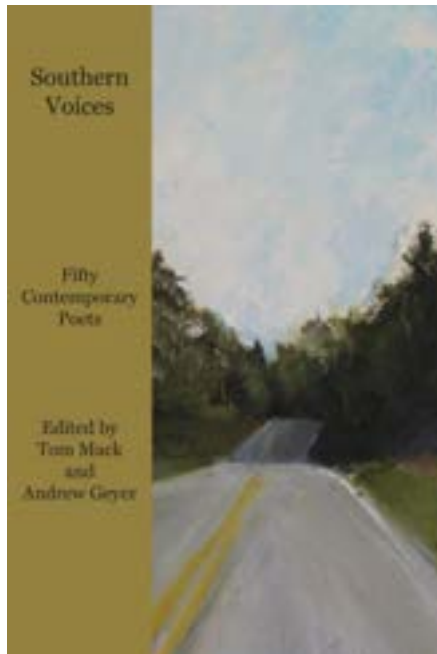
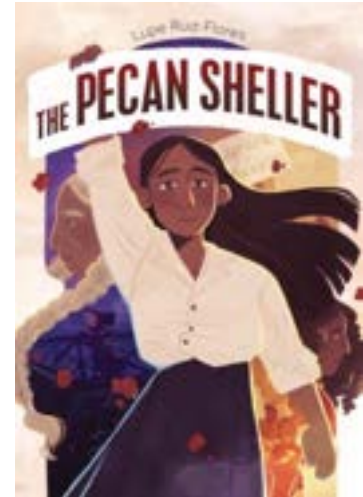
From **David Samuel Levinson**: I received the Fulbright-Mach Award (2024-2025) from the Fulbright to research a historical novel in Vienna, Austria, about writers Franz Kafka and Hermann Ungar, and a painter, Egon Schiele, one of whose famous self-portraits my grandmother smuggled out of Vienna under the cover of darkness while fleeing the Nazis.



From **Terry Shames**: My latest Samuel Craddock mystery, eleventh in the series, *The Troubling Death of Maddie Benson*, comes out October 2 from Severn House. I will be appearing at Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena, California, on October 22 at 7 p.m.

I have just signed contracts for the twelfth in the series, and another for the second in the Jessie Madison thriller series, entitled *Deep Dive*.

Lupe Ruiz-Flores has an upcoming middle-grade novel, historical fiction, *The Pecan Sheller*, due out in April 2025. It can be preordered on November 1. Thirteen-year-old Mexican-American Petra has big dreams: to graduate from high school and become a writer. Her father dies and she's forced to drop out of school and get hired as a pecan sheller to help her struggling stepmother and two younger siblings. The work is grueling. The working conditions are terrible, and the pay is so low that her family barely gets by. When the factory owners decide to pay workers even less, Petra knows it's time for change—even if she has to take a huge risk to make that change happen.



Andrew Geyer's new co-edited anthology, *Southern Voices: Fifty Contemporary Poets*, will be out in September from Lamar University Literary Press. The collection, which focuses on the twin themes of place and voice, contains poems by Terrance Hayes, Silas House, Ron Rash, and poets-laureate from throughout the Greater South (including several members of TIL).

Larry D. Thomas has poems recently published or forthcoming in four major anthologies: *Southern Voices: Fifty Contemporary Poets* (Lamar University Literary Press); *Right Hand Pointing: Twentieth Anniversary Special Issue* (Ambidextrous Bloodhound Press); *The Senior Class: Poems on Aging* (Lamar University Literary Press); and *Friendswood Poets Anthology 2024* (Friendswood Public Library, Friendswood, Texas). National journals in which his poetry has recently appeared or is forthcoming include *Valley*

Voices: A Literary Review, *Saint Austin Review*, *Deep South Magazine: Southern Culture and Literature*, *Southwestern American Literature* and *San Pedro River Review*.

Jim Schutze's first novel, *Pontiac*, a harrowing tale of boys in a New England boarding school in 1960, will be released September 10 by Deep Vellum Publishing.



From **Janice Shefelman**: I decided to revise the text of a picture book that my husband Tom and I did together and send it out again. Tom's illustrations are too glorious not to be published, and the story is too moving not to be read. We call it *WHALE FERRY TALE*.

The idea for this book started with a newspaper article about a young orca who followed a Norwegian ferry from port to port, apparently lost from her pod. The crew fell in love with the orca and named her Hanna. Passengers stood in icy winds to watch her, and she seemed to delight in splashing them.

Teachers took schoolchildren to ride the ferry and see Hanna.

When the ferry docked for the night, Hanna rubbed up against the black and white hull as if it were her mother.

Unfortunately, the article did not say whatever happened to the lost orca, but we do.



Since Tom grew up in Seattle, we decided to set our story in

the Puget Sound. We made several trips on the ferry, *Nisqually*. And once when Tom and I were crossing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, an orca followed our sailboat and breached beside us. We did extensive research on orcas as well. The book that touched us most deeply was *Song of the Whale*, the story of Dr. Paul Spong's love affair with orcas, which began with playing his flute for Skana in the aquarium at Stanley Park in Vancouver. No surprise then that we have a flute playing scene in our story.



This fall **Ben Fountain** will receive the Thomas Wolfe Award from UNC-Chapel Hill, and the Joyce Carol Oates Prize from the New Literary Project and the University of California-Berkeley. His novel *Devil Makes Three* will be released in paperback in October.

From **Allison Hedge Coke**:

Two main summer notes:

Return residency with Katherine Vaz and the Writing the Luso Way members, with Disquiet in Lisbon.

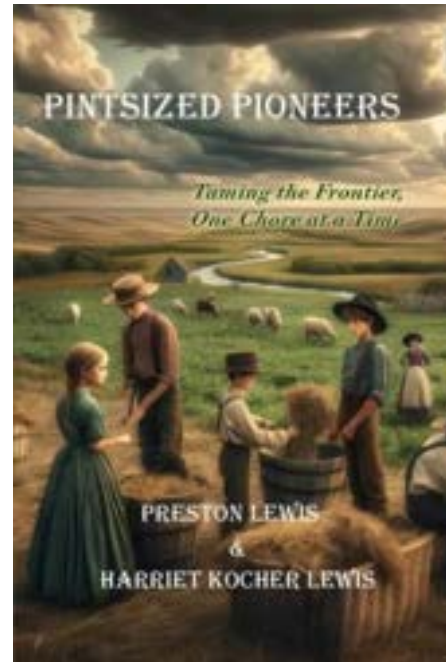
Simultaneous reading from *Look at This Blue* for the *Sea More Blue* EASCLE Conference on the Sorbonne Observatoire Océanologique de Banyula-aure-Mer (OOB) boardwalk, along with the newly named conference president and translator of the presented work, Bénédicte Meillon — as captured in this photo taken by the brilliant artist, photographer, philosopher Athane Adrahane.



Preston Lewis: September 24 is the release date for *Pint-sized Pioneers: Taming the Frontier, One Chore at a Time*, a nonfiction YA work he co-authored with his wife Harriet Kocher Lewis. The book is being published under their Bariso Press imprint and marks his 57th fiction or nonfiction book.

His *Call of the Wilde*—as in Oscar Wilde—has been named a 2024 Will Rogers Medallion Award recipient with placements to be announced in October at the annual awards dinner in Fort Worth. *Call of the Wilde* is the eighth book in his Memoirs of H.H. Lomax comic western series released by Wolfpack Publishing. The medallion is his sixth in the category since 2018 and his tenth overall.

Lewis's two nonfiction books on frontier cats also have earned awards. *Cat Tales of the Old West: Poems, Puns, and Perspectives on Frontier Felines* received Literary Global's inaugural Independent Author Award for western nonfiction. *More Cat Tales of the Old West: Triumphs, Trials & Trivia of Frontier Felines* was honored as a Spur finalist at the June meeting of Western Writers of America. Both books were published by Bariso Press.



Shelley Armitage was awarded a Spur award from the Western Writers Association for the best poem of 2024, "Counting Cattle with the Fathers." The poem was read as part of a podcast on the Texas Standard public radio broadcast.

She also has a forthcoming chapbook, *From a Sandstone Ledge*, to be published in 2025 by Finishing Line Press.

Shelley also gave a short talk to a conference in Amarillo last March: "Stewarding Our Water Future" sponsored by the Ogallala Commons. Her talk was titled "Stewarding Wonder: Our Lives Are Rivers and Aquifers Too." The conference was focused on the Ogallala Aquifer, which is found in six states. "It was an amazing conference attracting people from as far away as California," Shelley reports. "And the Ogallala Commons folks do a wonderful job on a daily basis as a non-profit which provides internships and training, etc. regarding water and land stewardship."

Rebecca Balcárcel's novel, *Shine On, Luz Véliz*, will appear on this school year's state reading lists in Indiana, Illinois, Washington, and Mississippi, plus North Carolina's Battle of the Books list and the Spirit of Texas list. She'll also present at the Jackson Hole Book Festival in October and Florida's conference for librarians, FAME, in November. Her next novel, *Sunchild*, is due out in 2025.



From **Cynthia Levinson**: Happily, my latest picture book, *Free to Learn: How Alfredo Lopez Fought for the Right to Go to School* (Atheneum/Simon & Schuster), and I will be at the Texas Book Festival in November. This is a fictionalized true story based on one of the plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe*, which ruled that schools have to educate undocumented kids.

My next publication, coming out in January 2025, is *Who Owns the Moon? And Other Conundrums of Exploring and Using Space* (Margaret Quinlin Books/Peachtree Publishers), a nonfiction book for ages 12 and up about the science and engineering that are taking humans back to the moon and the laws and policy that we hope will encourage people from different countries to get along there.

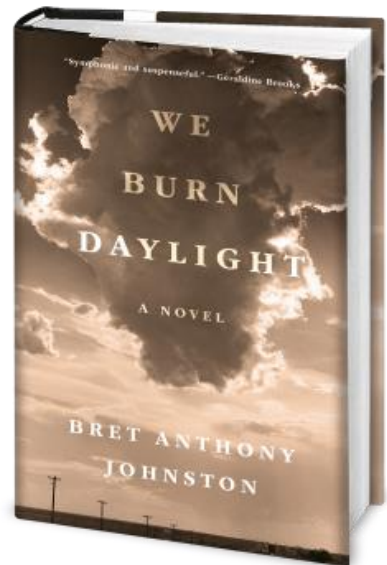
Bret Anthony Johnston's novel *WE BURN DAYLIGHT* was published by Random House in late summer. The book is loosely based on the events in Waco, Texas, in 1993. *The New York Times* named it an Editor's Choice and called it "a cause for celebration" and "literature of the highest order."

There are two upcoming Texas events:

September 5 at the Harry Ransom Center with Naomi Shihab Nye

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/book-reading-and-signing-with-bret-anthony-johnston-tickets-954374789687?aff=oddtcreator>

September 28 in Corpus Christi as part of the Corpus Christi Literary Reading Series



From **Joanne Leedom-Ackerman**:
Looking forward to seeing fellow TIL
members and others at Bouchercon
Conference in August in Nashville where
I'm joining other writers on the "Mr.
Smith Goes to Washington" panel.



The poster for Bouchercon 2024 features a red border and a light blue background. At the top, it says "BOUCHERCON 2024" in large red letters. Below this, there's a graphic of a guitar with a knife stuck in the neck, and the text "Murder and Mystery in Music City". A central photograph shows Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, a woman with blonde hair wearing a black and white striped jacket, standing on a balcony. To the right of the photo is a book cover for "THE FAR SIDE OF THE DESERT" by Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, which has a red background and a desert scene. Below the photo and book cover, the panel title "Panel: 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington'" is written in bold. Underneath, it says "Politics can be scary in the best of times. What makes a great political mystery or thriller?". The panelists listed are Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, J.M. Adams, Joseph Finder, Peter Malone Elliott, and Robert Swarwood. The panel moderator is Vicki Montet. The event details are "Thursday, August 29, 2024, 1:00pm - 1:50pm" at the "Gaylord Opryland Resort, 2800 Opryland Drive, Nashville, TN 37214".

W.K. (Kip) Stratton reports: *Texas Monthly* published my article about Daniel Webster "80 John" Wallace in the May issue. The magazine reported back to me that it was a hit as soon as the online version was posted on the website. Apple News picked it up, which significantly increased the number of people who read it. But much more gratifying was that 80 John's family thought he had received his due from "the national magazine of Texas." Here's a



link: <https://www.texasmonthly.com/being-texan/the-former-slave-who-became-a-cowboy-a-rancher-and-a-texas-legend/>

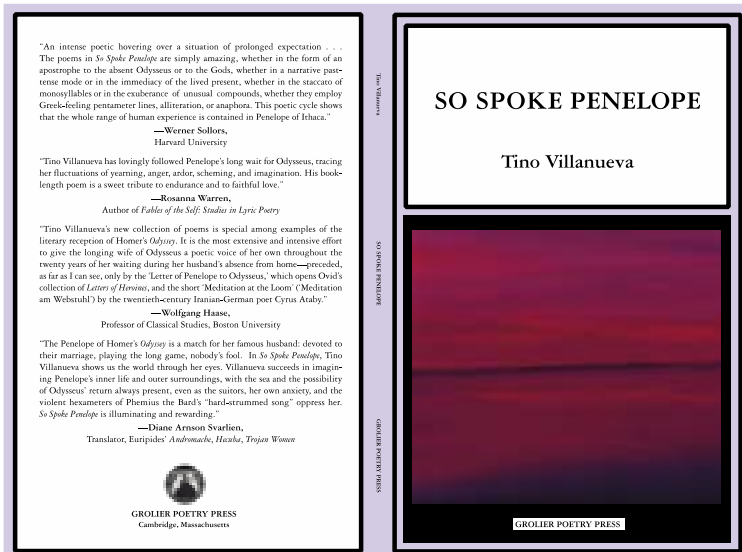
I'm in the finishing phases of an essay about the "Peyote Gardens" of South Texas. It's scheduled to run in the October issue of *Texas Highways*.

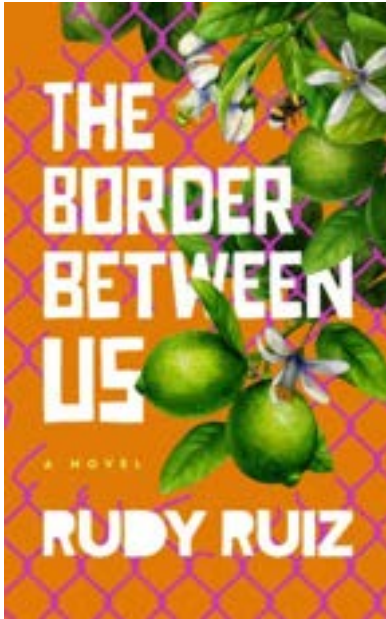
And, speaking of essays, I'm working on a proposal for a book of original personal/autobiographical essays, which a university press has expressed interest in. Hopefully I'll have good news to report about that soon. The title piece concerns the restoration of TIL Lifetime Achievement Award winner Bud Shrake's leather office chair, which is, as they say these days, a "Mid Century Modern piece."

In June, **Cynthia Leitich Smith** led a weekend writing-publishing intensive for authors of her Heartdrum imprint at HarperChildren's in Gruene, Texas, and served as faculty at Kwame Alexander's Writers' Lab and Conference at the Chautauqua Institution. In July, completing the *Blue Stars* series (Candlewick Press) tour, she spoke at LITpalooza and YAMidwest, hosted by Anderson's Bookshops in Naperville, Illinois. In August, Cynthia spoke at the Adirondack Family Book Festival in Westport, New York, and she looks forward to the release of her middle-grade novel, *On a Wing and a Tear* (Heartdrum), in September.



From **Tino Villanueva**: My book of 32 poems *So Spoke Penelope* (Cambridge: Grolier Poetry Press, 2013) has, thus far, been translated into six languages, including French. The French translation of it – a bilingual edition – has yielded a play that has been performed several times since 2022 (in Paris, and in Spain once, at the Universidad Miguel Hernández in Elche). A small theater company has selected 21 of the 32 poems and taken them to the stage. See the two flyers, one from last year, and one from this past June 2024:





Rudy Ruiz's new novel, *The Border Between Us*, was released on August 27 by Blackstone Publishing in both English and Spanish, across print, e-book, and audio formats. The border Bildungsroman captures the beauty and danger of border life as the novel's hero, Ramón López, struggles to understand his home and his place in the world. Learn more at: <https://rudyrui.com/border/>

From **Michael Mooney**: I just had an Audible Original podcast come out two media moguls (the owners of Village Voice Media) charged with dozens of crimes related to the website Backpage.com. The show is called “Hold Fast” and it’s a pretty wild story.

<https://www.audible.com/pd/Hold-Fast-Audiobook/B0CYNFZVXY>



about

Turtle on a Post: Memoir of Texas State Senator Carl Parker as told to **Jim Sanderson** came out this summer.



This is a humorous anecdotal memoir of former Texas State Representative (1962-1977) and Texas State Senator Carl Parker (1978-1995). After losing the Speaker of the House through political manipulations, Parker ran for the Senate and served on numerous committees, sponsored a record number of bills, specifically helping with education, and reformed various policies. He grew up in a unique time and place (Port Arthur in the '40s and '50s), served in the U.S. Navy, and had a long career as lawyer.

The story of his upbringing, his time in the house and the senate, a particularly scandalous and corrupt indictment, and his legal cases presents a mosaic of society and politics in Texas during the last half of the twentieth century. Sanderson helped Parker organize the oral-history-based memoir, encouraged other “stories,” more recordings, and suggested other additions. He also edited and revised to preserve Parker’s unique voice.

The Museum of the Gulf Coast in Port Arthur will hold a book signing on September 7, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Mary Margaret McAllen contributed to the article “The Belgian Princess Became Empress of Mexico” in *National Geographic History Magazine*, October 2023.

Currently, she is contributing chapters to a book on the legacy of historic preservation on Texas. Editor: Ken Hafertepe. To be published in 2025.

She also is working on a history of one of the largest ranches in Texas to be published in 2026.

Laura Wilson has been working on her upcoming book and exhibition on Mexico, which will open at the Meadows Museum at Southern Methodist University in September 2025. In addition to this studio preparation, she has taken three trips this past spring to add to over 30 years of photographs of Mexico’s passionate and vibrant culture.

From **José Limón**: On April 4, my alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin and its Center for Mexican American Studies, invited me back to the campus to receive the Américo Paredes Arts and Letters Award for my "many contributions to creating and expanding the field of Mexican American Studies." Here are two links to the award event.

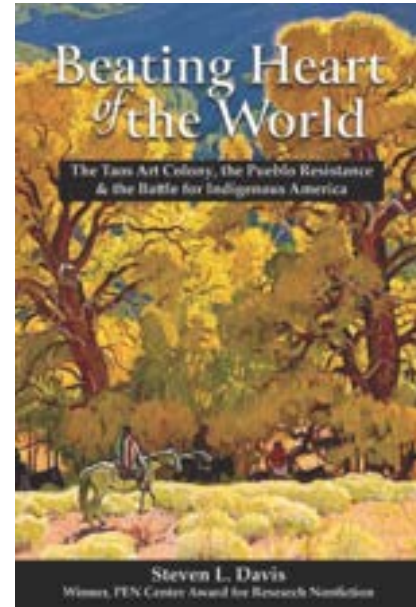
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1UZ4mY0iQQ>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nZbt_11bHU

From **Steve Davis**: I'm pleased to announce that the University of New Mexico Press is publishing my new book, *Beating Heart of the World*. [cover mockup attached]

In the early 20th century, the New Mexico village of Taos became a counterculture mecca, drawing world-famous artists and writers just as the US Government targeted the nearby Pueblo Indians for extinction. An extraordinary new movement erupted as the bohemians and Pueblos came together to resist. Their revolution would turn back the tide of conquest and reshape the nation.

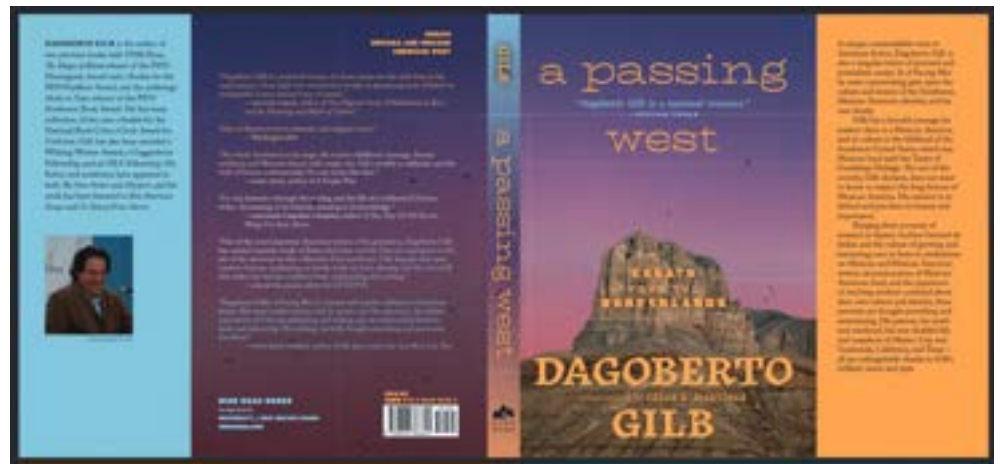
In other news: After 30 years at the Wittliff Collections, I'm retiring as Literary Curator in December 2024. I think the university will post the job opening sometime this fall. Good candidates are encouraged to apply, including any TIL members!



From **Cliff Hudder**: My novel SALLOWSFIELD has a release date of November 1 from Texas Review Press as part of their Sabine Series in Literature. The Sabine series “highlights work by authors born in or working in Eastern Texas and/or Louisiana. . . . the best writing from this unique region of the American South.” I spent the summer wading through floodwaters, dodging trees blown down by Hurricane Beryl, considering moving away from this unique region of the American South, and finishing, after two years, a first draft of my next novel. Look for it in a decade or so . . .



Dagoberto Gilb has two books coming out in October, fiction from City Lights Books and essays from University of New Mexico Press.



In late spring, **Don Tate** ventured into new territory by writing an informational text for McGraw Hill, an educational publishing company. The subject of the book is still top secret. It is written for first graders and combines the biography of a well-known figure with science and technology. The book is set to be published sometime in 2027—quite a wait!

June and July were busy months for Don as he promoted a new book, spoke at conferences, and taught about writing biographies for children. In late June, he appeared at the 18th Annual Austin African American Book Festival alongside collaborator Wade Hudson to promote their new picture book, *The Day Madear Voted* (Penguin/Paulsen).

In July, the duo launched their voting-themed book at the East Orange Public Library in East Orange, New Jersey, where the local NAACP chapter conducted voter registration. After that, Don zipped over to Honesdale, Pennsylvania, where he served as faculty at the Highlights Foundation's Nonfiction Summer Camp, teaching and mentoring a group of new and seasoned writers.



Don received the 2024 Mathical Honor Book award for his book *Jerry Changed The Game: How Engineer Jerry Lawson Revolutionized Video Games Forever* (Simon & Schuster). It's an award that recognizes exceptional fiction and nonfiction for young people. In July, Don gave a speech at the joint conference of the National Association of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to accept the award.

In early August, Don was a keynote speaker at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Summer Reading Extravaganza. Whew!—it was definitely a busy and exciting summer for him!

From **Christian Wallace**: *Landman*, the show I co-created with Taylor Sheridan, premieres November 17 on Paramount+. The series is based on my podcast, *Boomtown*, which chronicled the latest oil boom in West Texas. *Landman* stars Billy Bob Thornton, Jon Hamm, Demi Moore, Ali Larter, Jacob Lofland, Michelle Randolph, Michael Peña, and Andy Garcia. We shot from February to June around Fort Worth and Midland/Odessa. It's an oil story unlike any other I've seen on TV. Hope y'all will tune in.

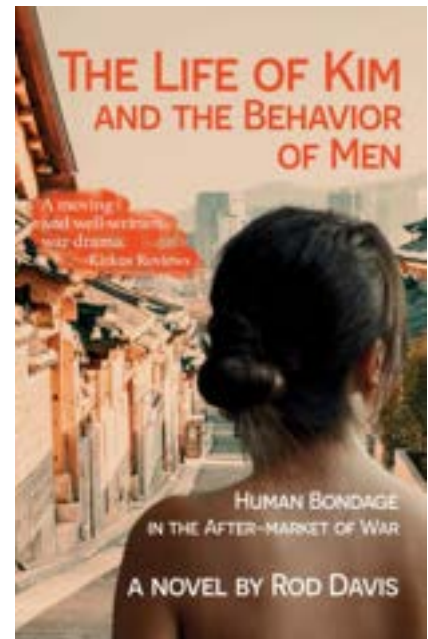


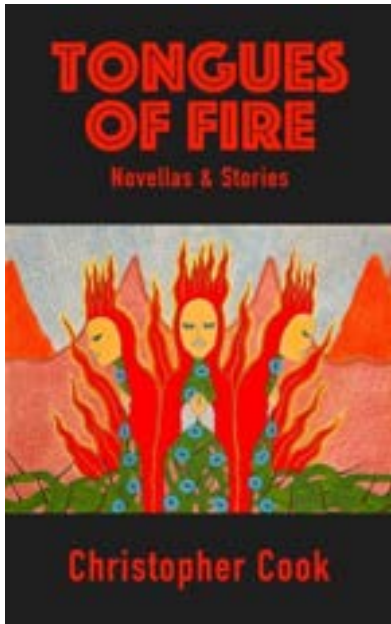
Wes Ferguson's independent media company, Free Range, launched a documentary podcast called [The Unforgotten](#) in July. The first 10-episode season, “The Labor Day Ghost,” was created in tandem with fellow TIL member **Carol Dawson**. It tells a haunting but true story of murder, money, and corruption in Corsicana, Texas. In Season 2 of The Unforgotten, which is coming this fall, SMU professor Charlie Scudder explores the most prolific serial killings in Dallas history. It's a surprisingly recent story that Charlie covered as a reporter for *The Dallas Morning News* and *The Guardian*. Back in May, Wes also wrote a [personal essay](#) for Texas Highways about his misadventures in Gulf Coast cooking.



From **Dave Parsons**: I am jazzed that TCU Press will publish my latest book in the spring of 2025: *Austin Relativity: Coming of Age in the 60s. A Memoir in Prose and Poetry*.

Rod Davis's new novel, *The Life of Kim and the Behavior of Men: Human Bondage in the After-market of War*, was released in July. The story is based in South Korea during the Vietnam Era. It earned two pre-pub awards: winner, International Impact Book Awards, Contemporary Fiction, June 2024; and finalist, military fiction, Annual American Fiction Awards, American Book Fest, 2024. Kirkus Featured Reviews said it was “a moving and well-written war drama.” Available from the usual sellers and stores.





Christopher Cook completed an introduction to a special edition of Jim Thompson's acclaimed noir novel *The Grifters*, which will be published by his French publisher, Éditions Payot & Rivages, early next year. Christopher says the French translation by his longtime translator Pierre Bondil is superb. Unfortunately, the collaboration did not necessitate a trip to Nice, where Pierre lives. But he'll probably go there anyhow. Christopher is still working on the movie script for his novel *Robbers* (and admits his summer writing schedule has gone awry, a victim of lassitude and/or laziness).

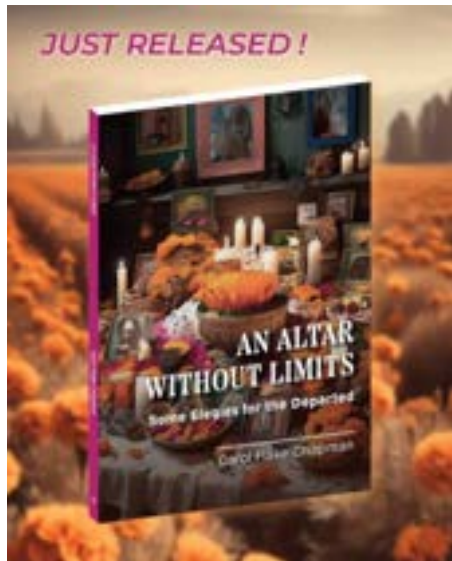
On the upside, he has plenty to do this autumn. He and his wife, Czech artist-poet Kateřina Piňosová, are still living in Prague, Czech Republic. He's now involved with the third generation of magpies that he feeds on his terrace. Clever birds with excellent memories, they like to remind folks that all Christopher's books are available in print and e-book at Amazon, including his most recent, *Tongues of Fire – Novellas & Stories*, for which Kateřina illustrated the cover.

From **Michael Zagst**: I am writing a homage to Fletcher, not best of breed, or best in show, but The Best Dog in The World.

"Fletcher, as he ran by, smiling, three legs off the ground. He would greet me with the same unrestrained enthusiasm and joy every time I returned to our place after even a brief errand when he was left alone. That is the essence of a dog's gift to its owner."

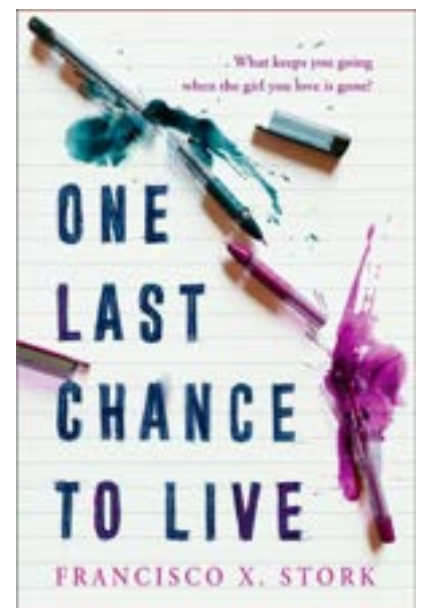
Spoiler alert: Every dog is the best dog in the world.





We're celebrating the release of **Carol Flake Chapman's** new book of poems, *An Altar Without Limits: Some Elegies for the Departed*, on September 12, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Tranquility Room at the Casa de Luz, 1701 Toomey Road, Austin. There will be a signing, a reading, some storytelling, an altar made of books, refreshments, and lots of camaraderie. Please stop by. For anyone who has lost a loved one, including animals, Carol will be talking about the alchemy of time and creativity that can turn grief and loss into celebration and joy. Her inspirations include the New Orleans Jazz Funeral and the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico.

Francisco Stork's eleventh novel, *One Last Chance to Live* will be published by Scholastic on September 3. *One Last Chance to Live* is the journal of Nico Kardos, a young writer from the Bronx searching for a way to write and live with honesty.



Jesús (Frank) de la Teja's article tentatively titled "Abolitionism's Influence in the Hispanic World and Texas, 1789-1827" is scheduled to appear in the October issue of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. In it, Frank tracks the complex history of late-colony slavery and antislavery in the Spanish Empire and how it has been misunderstood by Texas historians. Frank also continues to work on a biography of Erasmo Seguín, one of the most influential Tejanos of the first half of the 19th century.

After exchanging the bears and blizzards of the high Rockies for the beaches and pelicans of Galveston, **James L. Haley** is once again at home and at play. He is looking to wrap both *HIGH TEA IN THE ROCKIES* about early British settlers on the Front Range for Filter Press Books, and *FRONTIER CRUCIBLE: SOCIAL LIFE IN ANTEBELLUM TEXAS* for OU Press. He continues his recovery from high-altitude hypoxemia by giving walking tours past the historic downtown mansions and churches for the Galveston Historical Foundation, and in his spare time, he is mesmerized with research on a couple of new Texas subjects. Hint: *In Texas ist das Leben schön*. The historic churches tour begins in St. Joseph's from 1860—the first German Catholic church in Texas (pictured right).



Gene Fowler is pleased to have begun contributing content to an art website called *Southwest Contemporary*. His first two pieces are here:

<https://southwestcontemporary.com/past-deposits-from-a-future-yet-to-come-a-sweeping-saga-of-everyday-objects-in-austins-waterloo-park/> and

here: <https://southwestcontemporary.com/new-book-on-aby-warburg/>. He also just finished a 4,000-word article on the Old Leather Man, an 1850s -1890s (and beyond) folk figure of Connecticut and New York, for a magazine called *Illume*, published in Utah. In June, Hispanic Theological Initiative excerpted some content from his 1987 book, *Border Radio*. It includes audio: <https://www.htiopenplaza.org/content/border-radio>.

Katie Hoerth was the featured poet for Imprint's First Friday in Houston on August 2nd. Her new poems have been published in Texas Poetry Assignment, The Pierian, and I70. She has a book of poetry forthcoming titled *Pandora's Prairie* with Cornerstone Press (University of Wisconsin Steven's Point) in 2025. She is an associate professor of English at Lamar University.

From **Eugene Lee**: An anthology of nine of my plays has been published and is available on Amazon. TRUTH BE TOLD: Black Texas Plays By Eugene Lee

My play “East Texas Hot Links” opens at Chicago’s Court Theatre September 6.

Texas State University Department of Theatre and Dance will be honoring my career as a playwright with a tribute at the Performing Arts Center on Friday, September 6, at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free.



From **Jan Seale**: I've had readings recently in McAllen's Common Space, Quinta Mazatlan Nature Center, and at UT-RGV. I did a writing workshop in the spring at the Rockport Center for the Arts and will be doing a two-day one there in January with my son Avrel on researching, writing, and publishing family memoirs. A new book of poems and essays titled **ELDER SKELTER** was published by Lamar University Literary Press on July 31.

I'm to be inducted into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame in October at Texas Christian University.

From **Chris Barton**: Aside from joining fellow TIL members **Elizabeth Crook** and **Stephen Harrigan** on the dais for the "Playing the Long Game: Building a Sustaining Writing Career" panel at the Writers' League of Texas (WLT)'s Agents & Editors Conference in late June, this summer has been largely about revision: a long-in-the-works middle grade novel and a pair of research-intensive nonfiction picture books.

That fresh-on-my-mind research experience will come in handy in late September when I teach an online class, "A Writer's Guide to Research," for the WLT (<https://writersleague.org/calendar/writers-guide-to-research-barton-2024/>).

This fall, I'll also be speaking on the topic of book banning at a church in Bryan and a library in Austin; participating in a children's literature festival at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; presenting to students at public schools around Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Fort Worth; and -- as vice president of TIL -- relentlessly encouraging you to submit nominations for new members.

From **Mike Cox**: As a longtime nonfiction writer, and before that as a reporter, I stuck to the definition of the word "nonfiction." (This is not to say I didn't sometimes make mistakes.) But after 40-plus books, I decided this spring that it was time to have a little fun. For years, my wife Beverly, and I have been fans of NBC's "Dateline" true crime show. So's my cousin, who lives in Abilene. A few years back, we began texting each other during "Dateline," usually with sarcastic comments about how dumb the killer was.

That was what led to my latest book, *Getting Away with Murder; Learning from Dateline and Other True Crime Shows*. In addition to tongue-in-cheek murderous pro-tips, the book includes an Ambrose Bierce-style devil's dictionary of true crime cliches ("She lit up the room," etc.); killer binge-watching snack recipes, Keith Morrison's greatest lines, a look at the true crime boom and more.

My daughter and her husband got into the spirit and produced a book trailer that's a parody 911 call. The caller is panicking because she just found a dog-eared copy of *Getting Away with Murder* on the table next to her husband's recliner. The short video is available on YouTube or my website, mikecoauthor.com. The book's available there or on Amazon.



Light Cummins and Victoria Cummins are the editors of *Making the Unknown Known: Women in Early Texas Art, 1860s-1960s*, published in this past March by the Texas A&M University Press and CASETA. In June CASETA hosted a book launch at which they signed almost two hundred copies.

Pura Belpre Honor author **Marcia Argueta Mickelson's** *THE WRITING ROOM*, in which an 18-year-old struggles to break free from her wealthy and controlling father while finding her own voice amid the polarizing run-up to a state election, is set for publication in fall 2025.



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Sergio Troncoso will be inducted into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame on October 29 at 7 p.m. at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. The ticketed event will include the presentation of awards and remarks by author honorees. Authors also will have the opportunity to sign books. The board of judges also chose **Tracy Daugherty, Molly Ivins, Stephen Graham Jones, Cormac McCarthy, Jan Seale, and Cynthia Leitich Smith** in their biennial selection process. Sergio Troncoso: "I'm shocked and humbled to be selected with such a great group of writers into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame. I think it matters to understand and appreciate that excellent, well-crafted writing arises from many different communities in this state."

2024 Inductees:

Tracy Daugherty
Molly Ivins
Stephen Graham Jones
Cormac McCarthy
Jan Seale
Cynthia Leitich Smith
Sergio Troncoso



Chris Ellery's sixth collection of poetry, *One Like Silence*, was published this summer (2024) by Resource Publications, the academic and literary imprint of Wipf & Stock Press. In addition, his new poems have appeared recently in *Rockvale Review*, *Christian Century*, *Speckled Trout*, *Sailor's Review*, the Poets for Human Rights newsletter, and Texas Poetry Assignment.

From **Jesse Sublett**: We had a fantastic summer with many memorable experiences and reasons to celebrate, with many important dates falling on years that end in 4. Against the odds, I turned 70 this year. We saw the Rolling Stones in LA! We met with producers about my book *Last Gangsters in Austin*. We visited the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, a longtime dream of mine.

More dates: I moved to Austin in 1974, diving head-first into the music scene, gradually drifting toward my second artistic obsession, writing. I'll celebrate that with other crime writers at Noir at the Bar, September 10, 7 to 9 p.m., at Vintage Books & Wine in Austin. I'll be reading my first detective story, "Martin Fender and the Hardboiled Highway," published in 1984 in the *Austin Chronicle*. Two days later, it will be Jesse Sublett Day in Austin, as per a proclamation signed by Mayor Kirk Watson, which uses "whereas" a lot to punctuate various accomplishments and



concludes by saying, "Whereas, Jesse Sublett is an Austin music legend, one of Austin's best living writers, a painter of iconic Austin birds, and, for 50 years, he has epitomized the Austin ideals of professionalism, passion, and love of nature, etc.," and I'm sorry to go on and on, but I also published my crime/music/cancer memoir, "Never the Same Again," in 2004, and, in August 2024, a whole bunch of people came to see my new Austin bird paintings at Cloud Tree Studio, and we were very pleased that five of those paintings found happy new owners. Finally, I must add that Lois and I had an incredible time at the beach in Port Aransas in August with our exceptionally wonderful grandchildren, Serafina and Mio, and their parents, Dashiell and Mia.

(left to right) Judy Smith, Jesse Sublett, and Lois Richwine, at the opening party at Cloud Tree August 10th.

Kathryn Jones' poetry chapbook *An Orchid's Guide to Life* comes out this fall in paperback, hard cover, and e-book formats from Finishing Line Press after placing in its national "New Women's Voices" competition. Lamar University Literary Press will publish her full-length poetry collection, *The Solace of Wild Places*, in 2025.

Kathryn's poetry also appeared or will appear in several anthologies this year: *Walt Whitman Two Hundred and Five* celebrating the poet's 205th birthday; Ambidextrous Bloodhound Press's *Unbroken* edition of ekphrastic prose poetry; and LULP's forthcoming collection *The Senior Class: 100 Poets on Aging*.

The University Press of Mississippi will publish her definitive biography of Ben Johnson, *Tall in the Saddle: The Life of Ben Johnson, Hollywood's Real Cowboy* (no pub date yet). He is the only person ever to win an Academy Award (best supporting actor in *The Last Picture Show*) AND a world rodeo title. The book will be featured in the press's "Hollywood Legends" series of biographies.

As a journalist, Kathryn continues to write for *Texas Highways* and other magazines. She also works as a freelance editor for the Austin-based nonprofit investigative news site Public Health Watch (publichealthwatch.org), and as an editor for several indie presses.

