

Women of New Fabulism and Speculative Literature: A Reading

Description: Fabulism and speculative literature have long employed the bizarre, unexpected, and impossible to better reflect human experience. Recent political and societal changes, such as anti-trans laws, the overturning of Roe vs. Wade, and the attack on no-fault divorce make the seemingly impossible much more expected, and these genres feel increasingly relevant and prescient. Join us for a reading by writers who use the weird to reflect on what it means to be female in an increasingly fraught world.

Category: Multiple Literary Genres Reading

Organizer, Moderator & Participant:

Sarah Kain Gutowski (brief bio below)

Participants:

Nic Anstett (brief bio below)

Carolyn Oliver (brief bio below)

Aimee Parkison (brief bio below)

Chloe Chun Seim (brief bio below)

Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements

Welcome to **Women of New Fabulism and Speculative Literature: A Reading**. My name is Sarah Kain Gutowski and I'm the organizer and moderator of this panel. A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let me know, and a printed copy will be delivered to you.
- Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
- Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.

- Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing scented products.
- Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone's use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

Thank you to everyone for attending today's reading, with special thanks to our authors for sharing their work in fabulist and speculative literature this morning.

I'd like to direct everyone to our event outline which has biographies for each of the participants, the order of the readers, and some initial questions for the Q&A that I'll pose to the readers before we move to taking audience questions. We have 10 physical copies of the outline available, but it's also available using the QR code posted at the end of the aisles.

We've also included two supplemental handouts with some additional information that may be of help. We have 10 physical copies of the supplemental handouts available, but they are *also* available using the QR codes posted at the end of the aisles.

The first supplemental handout includes author photos beside full bios, which may better assist you with keeping track of who is who during our time here today. It also contains contact, social media, and publication information for each of the panelists, as well as two lists: one with some of our favorite fabulist/speculative journals, magazines, and book publishers, and another with a brief but hopefully helpful list of additional favorite fabulist/speculative writers, particularly women-identifying.

The second supplemental handout is a visual aid for some or all of the material that will be read here today.

And now I'll give brief bios for our panelists in the order they'll read here:

Nic Anstett, a Tin House scholar and graduate from the University of Oregon's MFA program, has published work in magazines such as *One Story*, *Lightspeed Magazine*, *North American Review*, and elsewhere. She currently lives in Frederick, Maryland. **She'll be reading** "The Exorsister," a short story exploring the complicated relationship between a trans woman and her cisgender sister during a worldwide plague of demonic possession.

Carolyn Oliver is the author of *The Alcestis Machine*, which Acre Books will publish later this year, and *Inside the Storm I Want to Touch the Tremble* (University of Utah Press, 2022), which Matthew Olzmann selected for the Agha Shahid Ali Prize in Poetry. **She'll be reading** poems and very short prose pieces from her forthcoming speculative collection, *The Alcestis Machine*.

Aimee Parkison is the author of eight books of fiction, including *Refrigerated Music for a Gleaming Woman*, winner of the FC2 Catherine Doctorow Innovative Fiction Prize. She teaches fiction writing in the Creative Writing Program at Oklahoma State University and is the new Fiction Editor of *The Cimarron Review*. **She'll be reading** "The Blood Tree," a sensual, surreal eco-fable. "The Blood Tree," the Earth's defense against climate change and ecocide, is an act of seduction – and transformation.

Chloe Chun Seim is the author of the George Garrett Fiction Prize-winning novel, *Churn*. She earned her MFA from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and currently lives in Lawrence, KS. **She'll be reading** "Communion at a Taco Bell in Gypsum, KS," which is a chapter from *Churn*. In this chapter, two teenage girls roam the streets of a hundred-acre town in rural Kansas and will a Taco Bell into existence.

And I'll read last. Again, my name is Sarah Kain Gutowski, and I'm the author of *The Familiar*, a fabulist, absurdist narrative-in-poems about female midlife and existential crisis. **I'll be reading** a selection from this book, which is about 6 days old, and is being launched here at AWP.

Following our reading, we'll have an audience Q&A.