

# Joy M. Priest

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## EDUCATION

- Ph.D. *Literature & Creative Writing*, University of Houston, 2024  
 Dissertation: *The Black Outside: A Poetics of Black Ecological Desire*
- M.F.A *Creative Writing*, University of South Carolina, 2019  
 Poetry, Thesis: *Horsepower*  
*Graduate Certificate*, University of South Carolina, 2019  
 Women & Gender Studies
- B.S. *Information & Communication Sciences*, University of Kentucky, 2012  
 Print Journalism

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2023-present *Assistant Professor*, Dept. of English,  
 University of Pittsburgh  
*Curator of Community Programs and Practice (CCPP)*,  
 Center for African American Poetry & Poetics (CAAPP)
- 2021-2023 *Teaching Fellow/Instructor of Record*, Dept. of English, University of Houston
- 2020-2022 *Lecturer*, Dept. of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, University of Houston
- 2020 *Lecturer*, Dept. of Liberal Studies, Spalding University
- 2016-2019 *Teaching Fellow/Instructor of Record*, Dept. of English, University of South Carolina
- 2018-2019 *Graduate Instructional Assistant*, Dept. of Women & Gender Studies, University of South Carolina
- 2018 *Lecturer*, Dept. of African American Studies, University of South Carolina

## SELECTED HONORS

- 2024-25 Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh Award, Pittsburgh Foundation
- 2024 Granum Foundation Prize, Granum Foundation
- 2024 Momentum Funds grant, University of Pittsburgh

- 2023 Aikens Taylor Lecturer, *Sewanee Review*, The University of the South  
 2021 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Literature  
 2020 Stanley Kunitz Memorial Prize, *American Poetry Review*  
 2019 Poetry Fellow, Fine Arts Work Center at Provincetown  
 2019 Winner, Donald Hall Prize for Poetry, AWP Award Series  
 2018 Gregory Pardlo Fellow, The Frost Place

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

*The Black Outside: Poems*

Duke University Press, Spring 2027.

*Once a City Said: A Louisville Poets Anthology*. Editor. Sarabande Books, 2023.

Foreward Indie Book Award Finalist. Conceived in the aftermath of city-wide protests in 2020, *Once a City Said* showcases the polyvocal communities of Louisville, Kentucky, a city celebrated for its bourbon, basketball, and horseracing, but long fraught with racial injustice, police corruption, and social unrest. Priest takes the city's narrative out of the mouths of politicians, news anchors, and police chiefs, and puts it into the mouths of poets. What emerges is an intimate report of a city misshapen by segregation, tourism, and ruptures in the public trust. Featuring thirty-seven acclaimed and emerging poets—including Mitchell L. H. Douglas, Erin Keane, Ryan Ridge, and Hannah L. Drake—*Once a City Said* archives the traditions and icons, the landmarks and spirits, the portraits and memories of Derby City.

*Horsepower*. Pitt Poetry Series, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. Print

Winner of the 2019 Donald Hall Prize in Poetry from the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP). Chosen by Natasha Trethewey, Pulitzer Prize-winner and 19<sup>th</sup> U.S. Poet Laureate. Nominated for John Leonard Prize for first book in any genre from the National Book Critics Circle Award. Poems from the collection published in *Blackbird*, *Connotation Press*, *Four Way Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Mississippi Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Scalawag*, *Southeast Review*, *Southern Cultures*, *The Puritan* (Canada), *The Rumpus*, and *Virginia Quarterly Review*. Reviewed in *The Harvard Crimson*, *The Millions*, *Pleiades*, *National Book Critics Circle Award* website, and many others.

### Anthologies

- 2024 *This is the Honey: An Anthology of Contemporary Black Poets*, “When I See the Stars in the Night Sky,” edited by Kwame Alexander. Little Brown & Co.  
 2023 *Another Last Call: Poems on Addiction & Deliverance*, “Blue Heart Baby” and “The Collar,” edited by Kaveh Akbar and Paige Lewis. Sarabande Books.  
 2023 *What Things Cost: An Anthology for the People*, “All My Mothers,” edited by Rebecca Gayle Howell and Ashley M. Jones. University Press of Kentucky.  
 2023 *That's a Pretty Thing to Call It: Prose and Poetry by Artists Teaching in Carceral*

- Institutions*, “Nightstick,” and “A Personal History of Breathing,” edited by Leigh Sugar. New Village Press
- 2021 *Home is Where You Queer Your Heart*, “American Honey,” “Blue Heart Baby,” “Rodeo,” and “Dear Aunt Louise, Muh,” Edited by Miah Jeffra, Arisa White, and Monique Mero-Williams, Foglifter Press
- 2020 *Patrice Lumumba: An Anthology of Writers on Black Liberation*, “All My Mothers,” Nomadic Press
- 2020 *A Measure of Belonging: Writers of Color on the New American South*, “I Feel Most Southern in the Hip-Hop of My Adolescence: On Black Southern Intra-regionality, Mobility, and Internalized Misogyny,” edited by Cinelle Barnes, Hub City Press
- 2020 *Best New Poets 2019*, “American Honey,” Edited by Cate Marvin and Jeb Livingood, The University of Virginia Press
- 2019 *Bounty Everlasting: Poetry from 25 Years of Southern Cultures*, “American Honey,” Edited by Gabrielle Calvocoressi and Marina Greenfield, University of North Carolina Press
- 2017 *Black Bone: 25 Years of the Affrilachian Poets*, “Nightstick,” “In the City,” Edited by Bianca Lynne Spriggs and Jeremy Paden, The University Press of KY
- 2017 *Best New Poets 2016*, “Ode to Hushpuppy,” Edited by Mary Szybist and Jeb Livingood, The University of Virginia Press
- 2015 *The Breakbeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip Hop*, “No Country for Black Boys,” Edited by Quraysh Ali Lansana, Kevin Coval, and Nate Marshall, Haymarket Books
- 2015 *Best New Poets 2014*, “Nightstick,” Edited by Dorianne Laux and Jazzy Danziger, The University of Virginia Press

## Poems

- 2026 (forthcoming) *Transition: The Magazine of Africa & the Diaspora*, “Cimetière du Père” and “Belleville”
- 2026 (forthcoming) *The McNeese Review*, “Sans Souci (“I can’t remember. . .”) and “Desire”
- 2025 *Southern Indiana Review*, “Somewhere on an Interstate in Cleveland (2003)” and “Reading Frederick Douglass”
- 2025 *The New Republic*, “The Black Outside (“Spirit: — I have heard the spirituals”)
- 2025 *Shade Journal*, “The Minnie Riperton Suite”
- 2025 *Santa Clara Review*, “Metaphor as Carpenter Bee,” “Nostalgia,” and “Gigantic Feelings”
- 2025 *Salvation South*, “Houston,” “Willie’s Bop,” and “Grease”
- 2024 *World Within and Without*, Furious Flower Poetry Center, “Bass II”
- 2024 *Untelling: The Literary & Arts Magazine of Hindman Settlement School*, “Secrets of the Soil”
- 2024 *Poem-a-Day*, “The Black Outside (“Dear Beloved, come on out into the Outside: —”)
- 2024 *Indiana Review*, “Quarrel”
- 2023 *Boston Review*, “The Black Outside (“Relying a little less on the odd language. . .),” “Outside Memphis,” and “Sans Souci”
- 2023 *Los Angeles Review of Books*, “Keats Rides Shotgun”
- 2023 *Kenyon Review*, “The Black Outside (The jazz, it puts you on a swing. . .)” and “Redemption”
- 2022 *Poet Lore*, Vol. 117, No. ½, “It’s Beyond Me”
- 2022 *Indiana Review*, “The Black Outside (We brought the blues. . .)”
- 2022 *Hayden’s Ferry Review*, “Bass,” “Soulful Songs Found in Strange Places,” and “My Sister”

- 2022 *Shenandoah*, “My First Kiss Was in a Choir Room”
- 2021 *The Bitter Southerner*, “We Had Dreams Named After Us”
- 2021 *Poetry Daily*, “Ghost Ride”
- 2021 *Poem-a-Day*, “Looking for the Beautiful Things”
- 2021 *The Atlantic*, “Ghosts in Schools”
- 2020 *American Poetry Review*, “A Personal History of Breathing”
- 2020 *Poetry Northwest*, “Dear Aunt Louise, Muh”
- 2020 *Poem-a-Day*, “Denial is a cliff we are driven over”
- 2020 BOAAT PRESS, “Somebody’s Bitter Elder”
- 2020 *The Atlantic*, “All My Mothers”
- 2020 *Wildness*, “Little Lamp,” “Where There is History, We Haunt”
- 2020 *Virginia Quarterly Review*, “Junker,” “Pegasus,” “Ars Poetica”
- 2020 *The Southeast Review*, “My Father Teaches Me How to Disappear”
- 2019 *Scalawag*, “The night never ended when one of us died”
- 2019 *Mississippi Review*, “Horsepower”
- 2019 *Gulf Coast Journal*, “Girl 6”
- 2018 *Four Way Review*, “The Payphone”
- 2018 *The Rumpus*, “My Father Teaches Me About the Bees,” “Winning Colors, 1988,” “Quilt ‘n’ Frames”
- 2018 *Connotation Press*, “Rodeo”
- 2018 *The Puritan*, “Upon Reading James Lipton’s *An Exaltation of Larks*”
- 2018 *Southern Cultures*, “American Honey”
- 2018 *Verse Daily*, “Nightstick”
- 2017 *Blackbird*, “Spell to Reverse Loss of Memory,” “My Father Teaches Me How to Handle a Pistol”
- 2017 *The Shallow Ends*, “Drift”
- 2017 *Reservoir Journal*, “Elegy for Kentucky,” “My Father Teaches Me How to Disappear”
- 2017 *Winter Tangerine*, “Ode to Hushpuppy”
- 2017 *Third Coast Magazine*, “Runaway”
- 2016 *Callaloo Journal*, “doula”
- 2016 *Cosmonauts Avenue*, “Sorry,” “Timelapse in Flagrante Delicto”
- 2016 *Vinyl Poetry*, “Ghost Ride”
- 2016 *Blunderbus Magazine*, “Blue Heart Baby”
- 2016 *Scalawag*, “God of the Motorcade”
- 2015 *Muzzle Magazine*, “Menace,” “Peripatetic,” “door,” “Bouquet Triptych”
- 2014 *Drunken Boat*, “Derby”
- 2014 *Solstice Literary Magazine*, “In Perigee,” “The Young Just Live”
- 2014 *Toe Good Poetry Journal*, “In the City”
- 2013 *Pluck! Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, “Birth”
- 2013 *Still: the Journal*, “Sorting Wheat”

### **Creative Nonfiction & Essays**

- 2025 *Aster(ix) Journal*. “Inside the Loop: On Solange, Houston, and Chanting”
- 2020 *The Bitter Southerner*, “I Feel Most Southern in the Hip-Hop of My Adolescence: On Black Southern Mobility, Intra-Regionality, and Internalized Misogyny”
- 2020 *Poets & Writers*, “The Cinema Factory,” “The Black Bildungsroman,” “Craft is Not Objective,” and “The Authority of Black Childhood”

- 2020 *The Undefeated*, “Megan thee Stallion’s IG Live video is a reminder of ‘We Wear the Mask’ poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar”
- 2020 *The Undefeated*, “Simone Biles shows how violence against women continues to be tucked under the floor mat”
- 2019 *The Undefeated*, “‘Don’t try this at home,’ Simone Biles has everyone scrambling for a revision”
- 2019 *espnW*, “In Her Shoes: Unlacing my Nike Air Swoopes”
- 2017 *espnW*, “Finding the Experience of a Woman Flaneur”
- 2016 *Anthropoid Journal*, “Kinfolk”
- 2016 *espnW*, “The Athleticism of Beyoncé”
- 2014 *The Blueshift Journal*, “In the In-Between”
- 2013 *Pluck! Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, “American Spirit”

### Scholarly Articles & Criticism

- 2024 *Monique Meloche Gallery Magazine*, “Collision Course: Six Vignettes on Jake’s Troyli’s New Works”
- 2024 *Gulf Coast*, “The Surreal Sonic Collages of Earl Sweatshirt”
- 2024 *Sewanee Review*, “From the Other Side of a Migratory Silence: On the Work of Patricia Smith”
- 2019 *CrossCurrents*, “Toward a Black Femme Fugitive Poetics”

### Reviews

- 2023 *American Poetry Review*, “On Ama Codjoe, *Bluest Nude*”
- 2022 *EcoTheo Review*, “Brooks’ Attentive Black Ecology in *Maud Martha*”
- 2020 *Pleiades: Literature in Context*, “A Review of Vanessa Angélica Villarreal’s *Beast Meridian*”

### Curations

- 2025 *Black Study: Ecological Desire*, Center for African American Poetry & Poetics (CAAPP)
- 2026 *Black Study: Surrealism as Tactic*, CAAPP

### Exhibits

- 2025 “Collision Course: Six Vignettes,” Independent 2025, New York City, NY
- 2022 “Horsepower: Artwork Inspired by the Poems of Joy Priest,” LexArts, Lexington, KY.
- 2021 “Artist in Dialogue: Joy Priest and Andrew Wilson.” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
- 2021 “The Black Outside.” Obama Portraits. Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA).
- 2021 “Ghost in Schools.” *Afro-Atlantic Histories*. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
- 2019 “We Had Dreams Named After Us.” *Disrupting Domestic*. ACRE Projects, Chicago, IL.

### Films

- 2017 “Poeta: Ep. 002.” *8-Ball TV*

### Interviews

- 2025 *Salvation South*, “And I Sing: An Interview”
- 2023 *Sewanee Review Podcast*, “Joy Priest”

- 2023 *VS, the Podcast*, Poetry Foundation  
 2022 *Inkwell*, “Joy Priest”  
 2021 *The Drunken Odyssey with John King*, “A Panel of Debut Poets, with Tommye Blount, Ricardo Alberto Maldonado, and Joy Priest”  
 2021 *Brown Girl Book Lover*, “Poetry Break with Joy Priest”

## PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

### Invited Faculty, Lectures, Conference Presentations & (abbreviated)

- 2026 University of Denver, Denver, CO; Visiting Writer reading series  
 2026 Free Association Reading Series; City of Asylum; Pittsburgh, PA  
 2026 Western Carolina Spring Literary Festival; featured presenter; Cullowhee, NC  
 2026 Appalachian Studies Association Conference; panelist; Huntington, WV  
 2026 Association of Writers & Writing Programs; panelist, Baltimore, MD  
 2026 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Affrilachian Poets reading, Transylvania University,  
 2025 Chautauqua Writers Center, Chautauqua, NY; Workshop Faculty  
 2025 Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia; International Society for the Study of  
 Surrealism  
 2025 West Virginia Writers Workshop, WVU, Morgantown, WV; Workshop Faculty  
 2025 West Virginia Governor’s School for the Arts; Guest Workshop Faculty  
 2025 West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV; Poetry Lecture  
 2025 Ironwood Writers Workshop, Hindman, KY; Workshop Faculty  
 2025 Cave Canem Summer Retreat, Pittsburgh, PA; Guest Poet Lecture  
 2025 University of Georgia, Athens; Visiting Writer reading series  
 2025 University of North Carolina-Greensboro; Visiting Writer reading and craft talk  
 2025 Pitt Writers Café; “Literary Mapping: Writing a Specific Place”; University of Pittsburgh,  
 Pittsburgh, PA  
 2025 Santa Clara University; The Writing Forward Reading Series & Center for the Arts &  
 Humanities; “Holler Music: The Poetics of Appalachia”  
 2025 Shiftworks Community & Public Arts; “The People are the Poetry: Socially Engaged  
 Writing, On and Off the Page”; Pittsburgh, PA  
 2025 Modern Language Association Annual Conference; panelist “The New Animal Studies,”  
 with Sharon P. Holland and Chi-Ming Yang; New Orleans, LA  
 2024 International Society for the Study of Surrealism Annual Conference; individual presentation  
 “Black Surrealism: A Radical Poetics of Ecological Relation and Speculative  
 Knowledges”; Paris, France  
 2024 Georgetown University Mellon Sawyer Seminar; featured presentation “Creative  
 Placemaking, Black Restorative Ecologies, and Black Spatial Futures”; Washington,  
 D.C.  
 2024 Furious Flower Poetry Conference IV; panelist “A Pursuit of Fugitive Choreographies:  
 Poetics that Trouble the Line” with Douglas Kearney, Aurielle Marie, and Danez  
 Smith; Harrisonburg, VA  
 2024 University of Pittsburgh Momentum Funds Showcase; featured presentation “Black  
 Surrealism: A Poetics of Black Alternative Worldbuilding”; Pittsburgh, PA  
 2024 Appalachian Writers Workshop (AWW); Poetry Faculty; Hindman, KY  
 2024 Slippery Rock University; keynote lecture for the Women & Allies of Distinction Dinner

- 2024 Michigan State University; visiting writer and discussion, craft talk  
 2024 University of Louisville; keynote lecture for the Kentucky Women’s Book Festival  
 2024 Association of Writers & Writing Programs annual Conference; featured event with Kaveh Akbar, Paige Lewish, and Sherwin Bitsui; panelist “Giving Place a Voice: Persona as a Tool for Redefining a City” with Jake Skeets, Brittany Rogers, Karisma Price, and Jacqui Germain; Kansas City, MO  
 2023 CSU Monterey Bay; Visitor Writing Series and Craft Workshop  
 2023 University of Louisville Annual Conference on Literature & Culture; moderator “Once a City Said: A Louisville Poets Anthology”; Louisville, KY  
 2022 National Women’s Studies Association Annual Conference; featured event “bell hooks and Kentucky Women Writers” with Crystal Wilkinson, DaMaris B. Hill, Stephanie Troutman Robbins, and Asha French; Minneapolis, MN  
 2022 Pleiades Visiting Writers Series, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO  
 2022 Youngstown Annual Literary Festival; Workshop Presenter “Literary Mapping: The Place in Our Metaphors”; Youngstown, OH  
 2022 Frederick Douglass Society; keynote speaker for Frederick Douglass Day  
 2022 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference; panelist; Philadelphia, PA  
 2021 Working Class Studies Association Conference; featured event; Youngstown, OH  
 2021 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference; panelist; Kansas City, KS  
 2019 Furious Flower: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration; featured event with Gregory Pardlo, Aaron Coleman, Douglas Kearney, Erica Hunt; The Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, D.C.  
 2019 Fugitive Futures: Graduate Students of Color Un-Settling the University, 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Sequels Symposium; workshop leader; University of Texas-Austin, Austin, TX  
 2017 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference; panelist; Tampa, FL  
 2015 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference; panelist; Los Angeles, CA

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### University of Pittsburgh, Assistant Professor

Term	Course#	Title	Enrollment
Fall 2023	ENGWRT 2210	Graduate Poetry Workshop	7
Spring 2024	ENGWRT 2290	Graduate Readings in Contemporary Poetry: Black Surrealism	13
Fall 2024	ENGWRT 530	Introduction to Poetry Writing	19
Fall 2024	ENGWRT 1210	Poetry Workshop	21
Spring 2025	ENGWRT 520	Introduction to Fiction Writing	19

<b>Term</b>	<b>Course#</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
Spring 2025	ENGWRT 3009	Directed Study	1
Fall 2025	ENGWRT 2210	Graduate Poetry Workshop: Lyric Poetry & the Lyric Essay	7
Fall 2025	ENGWRT 400	Introduction to Creative Writing	19
Spring 2026	ENGWRT400	Introduction to Creative Writing	22

### **Graduate Student Supervision**

First Reader, MFA Thesis, David Lo, 2025-2026  
 First Reader, MFA Thesis, Lila Bonow, 2025-2026  
 Second Reader, MFA Thesis, Tyler Henderson, 2025-2026  
 Chair, MFA Thesis, Avery Robinson, 2024-2025  
 First Reader, MFA Thesis, Laura Kenny, 2024-2025  
 First Reader, MFA Thesis, Kandala Singh, 2024-2025  
 First Reader, MFA Thesis, Abdelrahman Gendy, 2024-2025  
 Outside Reader, PhD Dissertation, Kelsey Smoot, 2024-2025  
 Chair, MFA Thesis, Edythe Rodriguez, 2025  
 Chair, MFA Thesis, Alisha Lockley, 2024  
 First Reader, MFA Thesis, Olivia Huntley, 2024

Adviser, MFA, Jason Hawkins, 2024-2027  
 Adviser, MFA, Ari Wagoner, 2023-2027  
 Adviser, MFA, Avery Robinson, 2023-2025

### **Randolph University**

Poetry Workshop I  
 Creative Writing Workshop III & Applied Criticism

### **University of Houston**

Intro to Women's Studies (5 semesters)  
 First Year Writing II  
 Introduction to Poetry  
 Beginning Creative Writing: Poetry (2 semesters)  
 Creation and Performance of Literature

### **Spalding University**

College Writing Workshop II  
 Introduction to Poetry

### **University of South Carolina**

Critical Reading & Composition (4 semesters)  
 Rhetoric & Composition (4 semesters)  
 The Rhetoric of Comedy  
 American Identity  
 Introduction to African American Arts & Culture

## UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2023-present Admissions Committee, Graduate Writing Program, University of Pittsburgh  
 2023-present Graduate Faculty Adviser, Graduate Writing Program, University of Pittsburgh  
 2023-present Curator of Community Programs & Practice, Center for African American Poetry & Poetics (CAAPP), University of Pittsburgh  
 2023-2024 Faculty Search Committee, English Department, University of Pittsburgh  
 2024-2025 Graduate Thesis Adviser, Graduate Writing Program, University of Pittsburgh  
 2024-2025 Post-doc Fellow Search Committee, CAAPP, University of Pittsburgh

## Service to the Profession

2026 Judge of the The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University poetry contest  
 2024 Judge of the Tillie Olsen Award from the Working-Class Studies Association  
 2023 Juror for the Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowships from the Poetry Foundation  
 2022 Judge of *Pleiades Magazine* Pruffer Poetry Prize  
 2022 Judge of *Birmingham Poetry Review* Collins Prize  
 2021 Judge of *Sycamore Review* Wabash Prize for Poetry  
 2021 Judge of *Switchback Books* Gatewood Prize  
 2021 Guest Editor, *West Branch*  
 2020 Judge of *Grist Journal* ProForma Writing Contest  
 2017-2018 *Yemassee Journal*, Editor-in-Chief  
 2016 *Anthropoid Journal*, Guest Editor  
 2015-2016 *Narrative Magazine*, Associate Poetry Editor  
 2011-2012 *Pluck! Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, Copy Editor

## Academic Consultations

2022 *Dictionary of Literary Biography 392: Twenty-First Century African American Poets*, "Vievee Francis," edited by Kwame Dawes, Gale Cengage  
 2022 *Dictionary of Literary Biography 392: Twenty-First Century African American Poets*, "Reginald Dwayne Betts," edited by Kwame Dawes, Gale Cengage  
 2019 *Contemporary Literature Criticism*, "Justin Phillip Reed," Gale Cengage  
 2019 *Poetry Criticism*, "Wanda Coleman," Gale Cengage  
 2017 *The Carolina Reader*, "Nikky Finney," Macmillan