2020
PEN Oakland Awards

Josephine Miles Awards
Adelle Foley Award
Gary Webb Anti-Censorship Award
Reginald Lockett Lifetime Achievement Award

The late Reginald Lockett (1948-2008) who was a former board member and who PEN Oakland named its Lifetime Achievement Award after.

Photo taken by Tennessee Reed at the 2007 PEN Oakland Award Ceremony.
Introduction

Founded in 1991 by Ishmael Reed, Floyd Salas and Claire Ortalda, PEN Oakland, called by The New York Times, “The Blue Collar PEN,” has honored scores of distinguished writers. Unlike some of the corporate designed awards, we are an independent group of writers living in the Oakland, California area. Oakland has a grand tradition, having hosted at one time or another distinguished writers like Robert Louis Stevenson, Maya Angelou, Bret Harte, Chester Himes and our own internationally famed homeboy, Jack London. Where else would a complex of restaurants, theaters and Jazz venues be named after one of the most popular American writers, Jack London? In Jack London Square you will find J.M. Heinold’s First and Last Chance Saloon where in the old days one might find Robert Louis Stevenson, Edwin Markham, Ambrose Bierce, Erle Gardner, Erskine Caldwell, and Rex Beach having a spot. We named our awards after Josephine Miles, the late professor at the University of California at Berkeley. She was not only a great poet, but a staunch advocate for the younger generation of writers. We congratulate the winners of the 2020 PEN Oakland Awards. They should know that they have been honored by their peers for the excellence of their writing and for nothing else. We are grateful to Librarians Allison Hack, Christy Thomas and Emily Weak at the Oakland Public Library, Rockridge Branch for hosting this virtual event.

Nick Estes is a citizen of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and an Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of New Mexico. He hosts the Red Nation Podcast. In 2019, he received the Lannan Literary Award Fellowship in Nonfiction and is a 2020-21 Marguerite Casey Foundation’s Freedom Scholar. Estes is the author of *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock Versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* (Verso, 2019).
Sigrun Susan Lane, *Salt: Poems Based in a dream that mullosks and bi-valves can suddenly sing* (Goldfish Press)

Sigrun Susan Lane’s poems appear in regional, national and international publications including the *Amsterdam Quarterly, Crab Creek Review, Ekphrastic Review, Seattle Review, Sing Heavenly Muse, Rain City Review, Malahat Review* and others. She has received awards for poetry from Seattle and King County Arts Commissions. Lane has published two chapbooks, *Little Bones* and *Salt* both from Goldfish Press. She is a docent at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle Washington.
Jericho Brown, *The Tradition* (Copper Canyon Press)

Maya Khosla, *All the Fires of Wind and Light* (Sixteen Rivers Press)

Maya Khosla is a wildlife biologist and writer. She was born in the United Kingdom, raised there and in India, Bhutan, and Myanmar, places that continue to inform her writing. Her poetry books include *All the Fires of Wind and Light* (Sixteen Rivers Press), *Keel Bone* (Bear Star Press; Dorothy Brunsman Poetry Prize), and *Heart of the Tearing*, a chapbook from Red Dust Press. Her poems have been featured in journals including *River Teeth, California Quarterly*, and *Nomadic Coffee Press*, have been nominated for Pushcart Prizes and featured in documentary films. Maya served as the Poet Laureate of Sonoma County (2018-2020), organizing a series of filmed readings to bring Sonoma’s communities together after the 2017 fires. Field work grounds her writing: most recently, thousands of hours spent in untouched post-fire forests that grow full of life, related studies and field-based interviews with fire scientists. Maya has directed *Searching for the Gold Spot*, a short film about natural rejuvenation after wildfire in forests of the Sierra Nevada and Cascades Regions, supported by organizations including Environment Now, From the Heart Productions, Patagonia, and Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. Sonoma County Conservation Council (SCCC) has selected her as one of the three Environmentalists of the Year 2020.
Jillian Weise, *Cyborg Detective*  
(BOA Editions, Ltd.)

Jia Tolentino is a staff writer at the New Yorker and the author of the essay collection *Trick Mirror*. Formerly, she was the deputy editor at Jezebel and a contributing editor at Hairpin. She grew up in Texas, went to University of Virginia, and got her MFA in fiction from the University of Michigan. She recently received a Whiting Award. Her work has also appeared in The New York Times Magazine and Pitchfork among other places. She lives in Brooklyn.
Stephanie McCurry is the R. Gordon Hoxie Professor of American History in Honor of Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University. She teaches and writes about the nineteenth century United States, the Civil War and Emancipation, and women’s and gender history. Stephanie is the author of three books: Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country (1995), Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South, (2010), which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and Women’s War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War (2019). She is currently working on a book about the Reconstruction era in U.S. history (1865-1877) recast as a postwar story. It is about the tension between dispossession and possession unleashed by defeat, emancipation, military occupation, and the epic human drama that involved. Stephanie was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She has two children and lives in New York City. Her website is stephaniemccurry.com.
Henry Dumas was born on July 20, 1934 in Sweet Home, Arkansas, and moved to Harlem at the age of ten. He graduated from Commerce High School and studied at City College in New York before a stint in the Air Force. He was stationed on the Arabian Peninsula (which piqued his abiding interest in Arabic culture) and in San Antonio, Texas. Following discharge, Dumas attended Rutgers University, worked for a year at IBM, served on the staff of Upward Bound at Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, and then taught at Southern Illinois University’s Experiment in Higher Education in East St. Louis from 1967–68. At EHE, he was a colleague/friend of Eugene B. Redmond, who would become his literary executor. An editor, supporter of, and contributor to, numerous small magazines, Dumas was also active in the Civil Rights Movement and a seminal force in the Black Arts Movement. He and his wife Loretta Ponton Dumas had two sons, David and Michael, both of whom are deceased. On May 23, 1968, Dumas was shot and killed by a New York City Transit policeman in the subway. Circumstances of his death remain unclear.

Omarosa Manigault Newman is an American reality television show participant, writer, and former political aide to President Donald Trump. She became widely known as a contestant on the first season of NBC’s reality television series The Apprentice. Newman became assistant to the president and director of communications for the Office of the Public Liaison during the Trump administration in January 2017. However, on December 13, 2017, White House Chief of Staff, John Jelly, fired Newman citing “money and integrity issues,” as well as “inappropriate use of company vehicles.” In August 2018 Newman published Unhinged, detailing her tenure at the White House and criticizing Trump and his administration.
Thomas Sanchez is a descendant of Spanish immigrants and Portuguese cattle-men dating back to generations to the California Gold Rush. Sanchez was born in 1944 in Oakland, California days after his father was killed at the age of 21 in the Battle of Tarawa during World War II. His novels include *Rabbit Boss*, *Zoot-Suit Murders*, *Mile Zero*, *Day of the Bees* and *King Bongo*. 
Poet Laureate of Santa Cruz County, 2016-2018, Robert Sward has taught at Cornell University, the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, and UC Santa Cruz. A Fulbright scholar and Guggenheim Fellow, he was chosen by Lucille Clifton to receive a Villa Montalvo Literary Arts Award. His 30 books include: Four Incarnations (Coffee House Press), now in its second printing; Heavenly Sex; The Collected Poems (1957-2004); and, earlier this year, “All That I Have Not Made,” Hidden Brook Press, Canada. Born and raised in Chicago, Robert Sward served in the U.S. Navy in the combat zone during the Korean War (1951-1953) and later worked for CBC Radio and as book reviewer and feature writer for The Toronto Star and The Globe & Mail.
2019 PEN Oakland Winners