



June 24, 2019

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## Hugo House Announces the 2019–20 Hugo Fellowship Recipients

**Seattle, WA**—Hugo House is pleased to announce the writers selected for the 2019–20 Hugo Fellowship: **Joyce Chen, Shelby Handler, Piper Lane, Sasha LaPointe, Abi Pollokoff, and Jen Soriano.**

Over the next year, the fellows will focus on their projects, honing their craft in complementary Hugo House classes, workshopping each other’s drafts, writing, revising, and meeting with writers-in-residence Laura Da’ and Kristen Millares Young. Throughout the year, the writers will be given advice on finding an agent, applying for grants and residencies, and other topics relevant to the writing life.

“The Hugo Fellowship allows us to support the artistic lives of talented emerging writers with space, resources, and educational opportunities,” Hugo House Executive Director Tree Swenson said. “It is a crucial element of our mission, and it’s a joy each year to watch the fellows work together, inspire each other, and grow as writers.”

The six fellows will give two public readings: one at the half-year point and another at the end of the fellowship.

The Hugo Fellowship provides funding, space, and resources to four-to-six emerging writers based in King County. Applicants are selected based on their writing skill, ability to complete their proposed project within the fellowship year, and alignment with Hugo House’s vision and core values. Projects include (but are not limited to) completing a draft of a novel, developing a memoir, or writing a collection of poetry.

For more information on the Hugo Fellowship, visit [hugohouse.org](http://hugohouse.org)

### About the Fellows and Their Projects

**Joyce Chen** is a writer/editor/creator from LA who spent a decade in NYC before relocating back to the West Coast in fall 2017. She has covered entertainment and human interest stories for *Rolling Stone*, the *New York Daily News*, and *People*, among others, and her creative writing credits include *LitHub*, *Narratively*, and *Barrelhouse*, among others. She is interested in topics like time, silence, and liminal spaces as they relate to agency, power, and intercultural understanding. She is one of the cofounders of *The Seventh Wave*, a bicoastal arts and literary nonprofit, and holds an MFA from The New School and a BA in journalism and psychology from USC.

Joyce will be working on a collection of essays that examine the friction that arises from living with two sets of values that are often at odds with one another—the American ideals of independence and self-fulfillment and the Taiwanese values of family, community, and sacrifice—as experienced through different modes of time perception.

**Shelby Handler** is a queer Jewish writer and organizer living on Duwamish territory/Seattle. They are rooted to a diasporic lineage of home-making through language. Shelby is a founding member of the Jewish Voice for Peace Artist Council and a master teaching artist for Arts Corps and Youth Speaks Seattle, the city's premier youth spoken word program. Their work has appeared in *Gigantic Sequins*, *glitterMOB*, and the Write Bloody anthology *We Will Be Shelter: Poems for Survival*, among others.

Shelby is working on their first poetry manuscript. So far, it is a collection of holes: gaps, breakages and splits foraged from family, memory and history. The poems, in form and content, examine empty spaces and holes to ask what it means to belong to a parent, a family, a people, a land. The work hopes to transmute holes into openings, widening them into apertures for emergent kinships to shine through.

**Piper Lane** was born and raised in Homer, Alaska, and holds an MFA from the University of Washington and an MA from Ohio University. She coordinated the reading series Castalia, cofounded the Black Jaw Lit Series, and served as prose editor for the *Seattle Review*. She teaches creative writing at UW. She has an affinity for collecting bones from tide lines and country rail road tracks, and her work explores hard characters, hard light, and the way landscape shapes and shatters small, isolated communities. She won UW's Eugene Van Buren award for fiction and Ohio University's LitFest Nonfiction essay contest. In her work, she interrogates the mythologies haunting the landscapes of home, especially disrupting Alaska as the 'last frontier.'

Piper will be working on her first novel, *What The Sea Will Take*, about a family of fishermen, exploring how the reverberations of generational trauma and sexual assault ripple out within tight-knit and isolated communities. In the book, a violent and tragic fishing accident reveals the conflicted, slippery questions of loyalty, responsibility, and guilt. Ultimately a tale of survival, it also illuminates the complex ways history and land embed and weave through relationships.

**Sasha LaPointe** is from the Upper Skagit and Nooksack Indian Tribe. Native to the Pacific Northwest, she draws inspiration from her coastal heritage as well as from her life in the city of Seattle. She writes about topics ranging from PTSD, sexual violence, and the work her great-grandmother did for the Coast Salish language revitalization, to loud basement punk shows and what it means to grow up mixed heritage. Her work has appeared in the *Rumpus*, *Indian Country Today*, and the *Portland Review*, among others. She has recently graduated with an MFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts with a focus on creative nonfiction and poetry.

Sasha will complete a draft of her memoir, *Red Paint*. It is a memoir about resilience through lineage. The story explores the ways Sasha has survived sexual assault, PTSD, and other traumas, some lived and some passed down generationally. It is the story of how she moves through the world as a contemporary, indigenous woman, drawing parallels to the lives and experiences of her Salish ancestors.

**Abi Pollokoff** is a Seattle-based poet and book artist with work previously in *CutBank*, *Poetry Northwest*, the *Spectacle*, and *Black Warrior Review*, among others. She has been the poet-in-residence for the *Seattle Review of Books* and *The Alice*, a reader for the *Seattle Review*, and editor-in-chief of the *Tulane Review*. Abi is the events manager for Open Books: A Poem Emporium, the managing editor for Poetry Northwest Editions, and a content director in visual communications. Her MFA is from the University of Washington (Seattle).

With the Hugo Fellowship, Abi will be working on a thorough revision of her manuscript-in-progress. A feminist ecopoetics, this project explores the semantic and sonic relationships of body, landscape, and language as they exist in the world today.

**Jen Soriano** (she/they) is a Filipinx-American writer whose work blurs the lines between nonfiction, surrealism, and poetry. Jen's writing has appeared in *TAYO*, *Pleiades*, *Waxwing*, and other journals. Jen earned an MFA from the Rainier Writing Workshop and is a 2019 Jack Jones Fellow. They are the recipient of the 2019 Penelope Niven Prize and the 2019 Fugue Prize for creative nonfiction. She is a contributing editor for *Slag Glass City*. Jen lives in Seattle on unceded Duwamish territory, and is a proud nanay to her 5-year old son Teo and their 1-year old betta fish Arrow. When not writing or mothering, you can find them developing strategies to make social justice irresistible and inevitable, digging in the dirt, or cooking up something in the kitchen.

Jen plans to finish her lyric memoir on colonization, historical trauma, and the neuroscience of healing. She will also start work on an essay collection on cyborg mothering, which will explore how science and technology disrupt conventions of “natural” womanhood, “natural” mothering, and a “natural” gender binary with fixed gender roles.

### **About Hugo House**

Hugo House opens the literary world to everyone who loves books or has a drive to write—giving people a place to read words, hear words, and make their own words better through writing classes, readings and events, residencies, resources, and youth programs.

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Open hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and during classes and events