

*“I am matter returned from the core of the earth to tell you interior things.”* —Anne Carson

Fire plays peekaboo in California, cutting swaths through forested and domesticated terrain: flickers of wildness, destruction, and regeneration. For many years, I’ve borne witness to this surging and incendiary landscape of harrowing loss. At the crucible and precipice, it is time, finally, to reckon fully with our habitat’s volatility and the register of our insatiable impact. To do so, we must look inward, to catalyze altered comprehension and invention, and outward, to actualize new visions of belonging and sustainability.

Fire and water. Two co-creative forces, equal in might and influence. And potential for destruction. Fire surfaces earth from below; water carves valleys from stone. How do these two elements work in opposition, in concert, retrospectively and contemporarily? How can they be rendered in artistic form? Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park provides an unparalleled lens through which to document this propulsive dynamic.

Volcanoes compose a landscape spawned and sustained by paradox—the combustion and communion of discordant matter, elements situated in uneasy and ever-changing relation to one another—and hybridity—liquefaction, lava tubes, craters, smoky mists. My project probes these elemental exhalations as fluid entities, possessed of internal polarities and tensions, *and* as part of a complex field of physical and emotional states and relationships. Rising from fiery seas, active or dormant, volcanoes inhale, release, and consume life, surfacing knowledge of deep time and expansive space beyond humanity’s ephemeral grasp. Placid or pulsing, oceans shift and abide—imprints and harbingers of duration and mutation. Scientists study this juxtaposition of aqueous and flammable flux to convey geology’s mercurial forms of expression. I want to join a topographical perspective to these efforts, to excavate other stories, whispered, hummed, and exclaimed by the park’s unique narrative persona.

My work maps the influence of space on selves and the etching of selves in space. These central themes orient my creative and pedagogical path, charting a course to recover the connective tissue that links people to the land and community members to one another. I trace social and physical geography in varied form, engaging equally with poetry’s demand for compression and the essay’s pull toward synthesis. As I navigate and portray the intersection of human-made and natural environments, I am inspired by exploration of spaces of beauty, ruin, metamorphosis, and mystery, and by places that vivify mobility and embody change. The residency at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park would immerse me in such a generative setting.

Rimmed by the fires of translucence and transformation, my writing hybridizes genres, dissolving into one as it dances into another, blending memoir, philosophy, history, poetry, and narrative, often in the span of a single piece. My latest project, titled *Fierce Illumination*, configures the five elements from a personal, poetic, political, and planetary perspective. Earth, air, water, spirit, and fire. Disparate fields of study anchor this project, ranging from investigations of geological phenomena to literatures of conversion,

confession, sainthood, and reconciliation. Poems from this collection are included with my application, representative of earth, fire, and air. I will be working on many different sections concurrently during my residency. Although I do not *require* assistance nor use of any special facilities, I do hope to speak with the park's staff and local residents for a wider-angle view of a land shaped and recast continually by massive elemental forces. My creative process gathers momentum from diverse sensory and social inputs, and I am always eager to amplify and redirect, to spark new conversations and connections.

I do not wish to write a book on fire. I wish to write a book *on fire*. As my project traces the elements' personalities, patterns, and resonances, their convergences and dissonances, the central challenge—the demand for *craft*—will be to capture, conjure, and fulfill this multiplicity and animation in static form, on the page. I have been building momentum in fits and starts for 3 years, but the project's ethical and creative urgency has reached fever pitch, and I would relish the opportunity to deepen my practice and move the manuscript forward. Nascent impressions and lengthier meditations await expansion and distillation. For me to enact this process, I require time and space for inner work, environmental stimulation, physical exertion, *and* public engagement. The beauty of this residency is that it meets *all* of these needs.

As a teacher and artist of language, I search for ways to exhume and acknowledge diverse stories—to render the impact of historical forces and the gravity of our irreducible individuality. Bodies and nature fuse and shapeshift, all within the singular incarnation of light and energy that precipitates material emergence. Sparks from a ceaseless inferno, we burn and burst forth from primal radiance. From the kindling essence of earth's interior, we revolve around the ball of fire that illuminates its exterior. Elemental forces churn and embody, registering the volatility, immensity, and intensity of our exuberant selves. At the park, I am digging for a new language, a terrestrial medium of expression and means of connection: one that vocalizes and materializes the passion and struggle of unity and becoming—unwieldy and unpredictable—fed by a visceral relationship to the land.

My writing oscillates between a micro and a macro perspective, in both content and form. This dynamic motivates the public outreach efforts I propose during my residency. I envision multiple streams of community involvement that alight on this project's core: transformative personal expression, physical immersiveness, fluid exchange between inner and outer worlds, and revitalizing social dialogue. These include:

1. A guided “hike and write” at the park: we will make DIY viewfinders to navigate the micro- and macro-worlds, hike, discuss elemental immersion and creative expression, write, and share work.
2. A collection of my “pocket poems” & writing prompts made available at the visitor center to inspire sensate awareness (see my literary work samples for an example of each)

*I am poised to listen to our planet's deep interior, to tune my ear to its exquisite offerings. Please give me the opportunity to do so.*