

# Laura Grothaus

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## EDUCATION

**Oberlin College**, Oberlin, Ohio, USA

Bachelor of Arts, Major in Creative Writing, Major in Visual Arts, 2013

Phi Beta Kappa Member

**Advanced Studies in England**, Bath, England, 2012

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

My projects explore queerness and childhood, folklore and religion, and family and loss. They pull from places: blue-walled Baltimore rooms, forested summers in Virginia, a few grey days in Budapest, and a childhood in the Catholic neighborhoods of Cincinnati's west side. They burrow into memories and speculative alternatives: bats flocking in the chimney, dead gulls on the Oregon shore, river horses, and red cloaked girls.

Growing up steeped in Catholicism, holy ghosts and sly demons were sewn into the everyday. These textures of lush and lingering threats find their way into my stories, hoping to trouble our understanding of bodies while also celebrating embodiment.

Collaboration and in-person connections are essential to my process and to sustaining my energy for this work. As a teacher, I've partnered with kindergarteners, college students, and everyone in between. Currently, I lead a writing workshop in Baltimore for adults, which has fostered the creation of several full-length manuscripts. I've collaborated with musicians, activists, and visual artists on workshops and performance projects in Chicago, Cincinnati, and Baltimore. In one of those projects, I co-wrote and co-directed an interactive play about a child-stealing witch. In another project, my collaborator and I led workshops about writing to heal the body, which provided the groundwork for an international tour focused on survivors of domestic violence. An extension of this project, a volume of letters from survivors of domestic violence to their body parts, contains my illustrations. In my recent exhibition, "Green Archives," I worked with Shelley Picot and Art Enables' artists Debora Green, Imani Turner, Egbert "Clem" Evans, Mara Clawson, Gary Murrell, and Vanessa Monroe to create an exhibition that considers ecosystems and the stories humans have told about them throughout time.

I believe in the power of writing to build empathy, to spread crucial ideas, to clarify, to trouble, and to provide transcendence when we need it most. I'm at work on a book of poetry and a novel.

## PROJECTS

### 2021 Green Archives

Collaborated with Shelley Picot and Art Enables artists including Debora Green, Imani Turner, Egbert “Clem” Evans, Mara Clawson, Gary Murrell, and Vanessa Monroe. Together, we created an exhibition that considers ecosystems and the stories humans have told about them throughout time. Art Enables is a gallery and vocational arts program dedicated to creating opportunities for artists with disabilities to make, market, and earn income from their original and compelling artwork.

Online at: <https://art-enables.org/show/art-enables-green-archives>

### 2021 Magic Books

Sculpted a series of interactive books to be distributed through free libraries. I wanted to make something intricate and intimate for a stranger, something that would spark the imagination and offer connection across time and space. One book invited the readers to play with gloves tipped with pen nibs. Another offered a small, embroidered quilt and clay animals. A third contained seeds.

### 2020 Red Ballad.

Painted a thesis on red for an interactive production exploring the color. Directed by Rae Red and in collaboration with Rain, Kim Le, Theresa Columbus, and Maura Dwyer, *Red Ballad* is a cabaret combining visual art, music, storytelling, burlesque, and more. The paintings and accompanying writings were to be displayed at Towson University in Baltimore in the Spring of 2020. The show was postponed due to the pandemic.

### 2016 Physics.

Embroidered poems on silk and wool to create a fragmented narrative exploring science, myth, and family. Using the story of Daphne, the nymph turned into a laurel tree to escape assault, I explored what it means to change your body for the sake of survival.

### 2015 Witch.

Co-wrote, co-directed, and co-designed this interactive play about a child-stealing witch. At the beginning of the show, the audience wrote secrets on slips of paper that were baked into bread and eaten after the last bow. Throughout the course of the play, the cast explored family and transgression, incorporating their own stories into the narrative. The production took place in a home in Chicago.

### 2014 Portable Homes.

Illustrated *Portable Homes*, a book of letters from survivors of domestic violence. These illustrations were displayed at the *18th International Conference and Summit on Violence, Abuse, and Trauma Art Showcase* in San Diego. Lexie Bean, Director of Attention People with Body Parts, and I led workshops about writing to heal the body, which provided the groundwork for an international tour focused on survivors of domestic violence.

### 2013 Moth Suite.

Painted a set of cards—Ace through King—that could be shuffled and read in any order. This poem played with the iterations and reiterations of grief, with the shuffling of memories and the circular thoughts of loss. The instructions intoned: *Draw again*. It was displayed and performed in galleries at Oberlin College.

## WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES

### 2022 Sewanee Writers' Conference

*Twelve-day-long workshop funded in part by the estate of Tennessee Williams, offering workshops, meetings with agents, masterclasses, and more.*

*<http://www.sewaneewriters.org/conference/>*

### 2021 Kenyon Writers Workshop

*Week-long workshop hosted by Kenyon College and Kenyon Review, an Ohio literary magazine publishing "groundbreaking work by both Nobel Prize-winning authors and daring new voices."*

*[kenyonreview.org/writers](http://kenyonreview.org/writers)*

### 2021 Annmarie Sculpture Garden Residency

*Artist in Action at this Smithsonian-affiliated art and nature center in Calvert County, Maryland.*

*<https://www.annmariegarden.org>*

### 2020 Tin House Winter Workshop

*Four-day workshop with manuscript review hosted by Tin House, a Portland literary magazine and press.*

*[tinhouse.com](http://tinhouse.com)*

### 2018 Winter Tangerine Writing Workshop

*Four-day workshop hosted by Winter Tangerine, a literary magazine and press dedicated to amplifying unheard voices.*

*[wintertangerine.com](http://wintertangerine.com)*

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

**Pleiades.** Summer 2021. "Delight" and "When I Framed" *biannual print publication featuring writing by authors from around the world, including winners of the Nobel Prize, National Book Award, and more.*

**Hotel Amerika.** Spring 2021. "Sleepwalker's Atlas" *print journal featuring fiction and nonfiction by well-known and emerging writers.*

**In All Transparency.** Fall 2020. "Thank you, Lucille Clifton" *created a piece of mail in transparent materials as part of this collaborative exhibition focused on getting out the vote during a time of physical isolation and social solidarity.*

**Cimarron Review.** Fall 2020. "Mentor" and "Goddamnit, Laura!" *One of the oldest quarterlies in the nation, publishing work by winners of the Nobel Prize, Pulitzer prize, and more. Published by Oklahoma State University.*

**BUST.** Fall 2020. "Table Games" *quarterly feminist lifestyle magazine reaching over 100,000 readers.*

**Thalia.** Fall 2019. "Red Shoes," "Mother Tongue," and "Dinner Sketches" *online and print publication dedicated to fostering collaboration and celebrating creatives who identify with womanhood.*

**Iris N. Spencer: The Early Years.** Fall 2019. "Icumen In" *print book of work by recipients of the Iris N. Spencer Award and associated awards.*

**Beyond Baroque.** Summer 2019. “The Tending” *online publication by a leading independent Literary | Arts Center in Venice, California in connection with their annual poetry competition.*

**Cincinnati Review miCRo.** Spring 2019. “Also Milk” *online extension of acclaimed print journal published by the University of Cincinnati.*

**Crosswinds.** Spring 2019. “Mary Magdalene Washes His Feet with Perfume” *print journal.*

**Nâzim Hikmet Poetry Festival Book.** Spring 2018. “What you remember of the rock,” “The Selkie,” and “Proof” *print journal published in association with the Nâzim Hikmet Poetry Festival.*

**Fairy Tale Review.** Spring 2016. “Pinocchio Revisited” *print journal published by Wayne State University Press in association with the University of Arizona.*

**Hermeneutic Chaos.** Fall 2015. “A Mouth is a Ghost you can Shut” *online journal.*

**International Painting Annual.** Fall 2014. “Coda” *print book published by Manifest Gallery, connected with the eponymous exhibition.*

**Plentitude Magazine.** Fall 2014. “The Goose Girl” *print journal of work by queer writers.*

**So to Speak.** Spring 2013. “Baba Yaga in Conversation with her Home” *print journal published by George Mason University.*

## SELECTED AWARDS

**2019 and 2017 Pushcart Nominee.**

**2019 Beyond Baroque Poetry Prize.** Selected by Diane Seuss for this national poetry competition hosted by Beyond Baroque, an art and literary center in Venice, California.

**2018 Nâzim Hikmet Poetry Prize.** National poetry competition and festival hosted by the American Turkish Association of North Carolina.

**2016 Fairy Tale Review Poetry Prize.** Selected by Joyelle McSweeney for this national poetry competition hosted by Fairy Tale Review via Wayne State University Press.

**2015 Hermeneutic Chaos Poetry Prize.**

**2013 Stuart Friebert Academy of American Poets Prize.** Award offered by the Academy of American Poets through Oberlin College.

**2013 Phyllis Jones Memorial Award.** Award offered by Oberlin College's Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies Department for a body of work.

**2012 Winner of Bath Literary Festival's Poetry in Pubs.** A spoken word competition hosted by pubs in Bath, England, as part of Bath's Literary Festival.

## COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN WORK

### **Freelance Designer and Writer**

**Baltimore, Maryland | 2013 – present**

- Illustrate, write, and design for a variety of organizations ranging from SOHO20 Gallery in New York City to the Ohio Council for Exceptional Children to BUST magazine.

### **Partnerships Director, Next Day Animations**

**Baltimore, Maryland | September 2017 – present**

- Collaborate with a team on writing, design, sales, and marketing projects at this animation and communications company.

## TEACHING

### **Director, Polaris Writing Workshop**

**Baltimore, Maryland | January 2018 – present**

- Organize and facilitate a monthly workshop for Baltimore creatives.

### **Teacher, Baltimore Yearly Meeting**

**Baltimore, Maryland | October 2018**

- Designed and taught artistic map-making workshop to a Quaker youth group, ages fourteen to seventeen.

### **Teacher, Youth Skills Partnership**

**Baltimore, Maryland | March 2017 – June 2017**

- Designed and taught interdisciplinary writing lessons to high school students at this after-school program.
- Created a book of student work for distribution.

### **Teacher, Access Art**

**Baltimore, Maryland | October 2015 – June 2017**

- Designed and taught art lessons to elementary and middle school students at this after-school program.
- Created a book of student work for distribution.

### **Workshop Instructor, 826chi**

**Chicago, Illinois | October 2015**

- Taught a workshop on ghost stories to middle school students at this national creative writing agency.