

I WANT POEMS

SAINT LOUIS



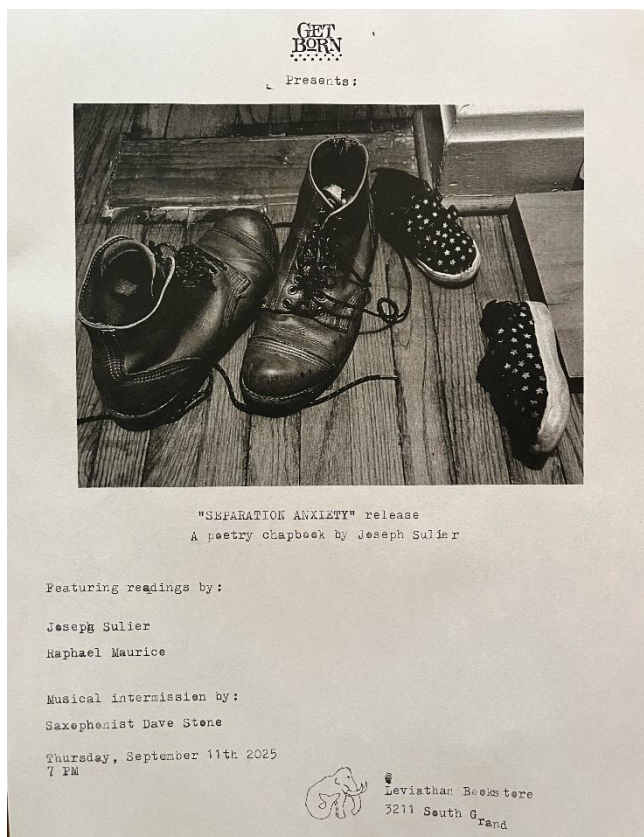
Saint Louis, Missouri

V2n9 September 2025

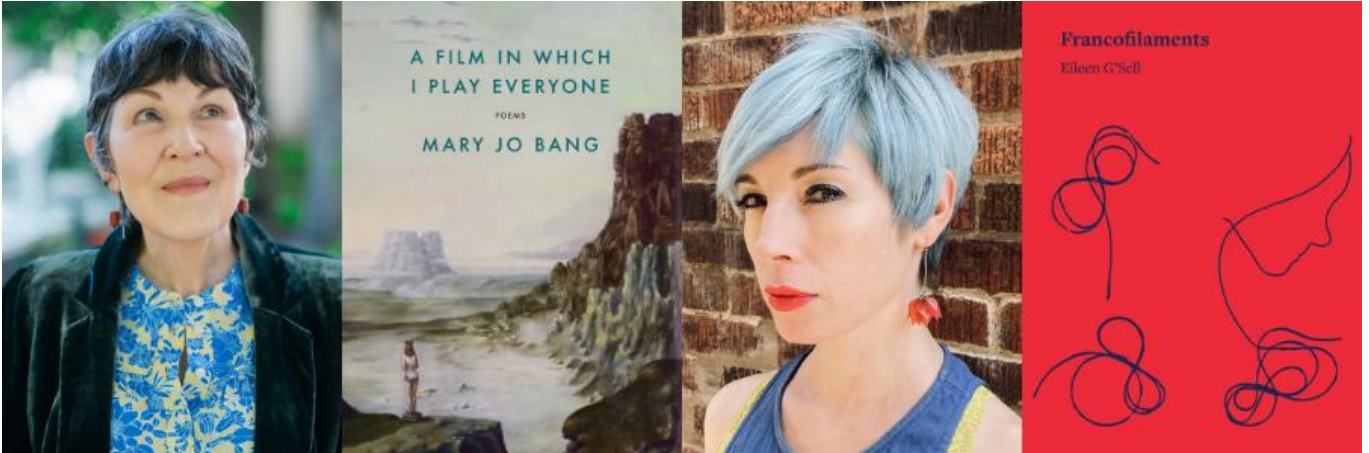
Oh, what a month to be alive and in love with poetry. Observable is kicking off the new season with the power-duo of Mary Jo Bang and Eileen G'Sell – along with cool collabs with MATI and MoBot. If you haven't applied for Poetry in the Woods – what can I say -- now is the time (and pick up faculty member Eduardo C. Corral's latest book, reviewed in this newsletter).

If you're not familiar with the [Sealey Challenge](#), it is a community quest to read a book of poetry every day for the month of August. My ideas don't always come on time, but it occurred to me last week that it wouldn't be hard to put together a month of books by poets associated with St. Louis. I loved the idea so much I thought better a month late than to put it off a year. See page 6 for what I came up with. And if you think I left off a book – I did. There were just too many. Let me know who you would add for 2026: iwantpoems@gmail.com. And happy poeming.

Featured



More Cool Stuff



Observable Readings: Mary Jo Bang & Eileen G'Sell

September 22, 7pm

High Low

MARY JO BANG has published nine collections of poetry, including *Elegy*, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, and translations of Dante's *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. She teaches at Washington University in Saint Louis.

EILEEN G'SELL is a poet and critic with recent contributions to *Poetry*, *Oversound*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Baffler*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. In 2023, she received the Rabkin Prize for arts journalism. Her second volume of poetry, *Francofilaments*, was published by Broken Sleep Books in 2024; in 2026, her first nonfiction book, *Lipstick*, will be published as part of Bloomsbury's Object Lessons series. She teaches at Washington University in St. Louis.

[More Info](#)



MoBot Nature Speaks: Staying Rooted with Plant Poetry with Kristin Emanuel

Thursday, September 24, 5:30 – 8pm

Missouri Botanical Garden

Reading and writing plant poetry helps us stay rooted within the landscape we inhabit, in the present moment, and in our relationships. The talk will be led by Kristin Emanuel, followed by a generative poetry workshop throughout the garden.

[More Info](#)

Workshops



Poetry Workshop Facilitated by Holly Sinclair: Fall Session

Wednesday 9/3 from 6-8PM
At Tiny Postcards (4700 Virginia Ave, STL 63111)

[More Info](#)



Poetry in the Woods

Applications are now open for Workshop 2025 to take place on October 4th and 5th at Washington University's Tyson Research Center. This year's faculty will be Eduardo Corral and Traci Brimhall. *Deadline is September 14th.*

Poetry in the Woods provides poetry workshops and author events to the St. Louis Region that bridge the space between wildness, place, and poetry.

[More Info](#)



Babler Poetry Society Saturdays, from 10am to 12 Noon

September 6th, Tower Grove Park
Cyprus Grove, East End
(Look for signs and bring a chair)



Sunday Workshop:

Allison Cundiff
Sunday, September 21st, 1:30pm – 4pm
This will be a traditional/revision workshop.
Submissions are due September 14th.

[More Info](#)

Open Mics

Heavy Anchor Last Wednesdays <p>September 24th: Hosted by Bobby Stevens & Kyle Brandt-Lubart. Sign up at 7:00; readers begin at 8.</p> <p>More Info</p>	Re: Born Reconstituted! TikTok Tavern Third Tuesdays <p>September 16th: Featuring Aiden Heung with a dynamic open mic to follow. Starts at 7pm. Hosted by Matthew Scott Freeman. New Venue!</p> <p>More Info</p>	Spellbound: Open Poetry Mic 1st and 3rd Sundays <p>September 7th and 21st: From 7pm – 10pm at Lady Layre on Morgan Ford.</p> <p>More Info</p>
Wordup! Every Tuesday <p>Tuesdays in September: Live music, poetry, and comedy in The Grove.</p> <p>More Info</p>	Pages in Pacific First Fridays <p>September – Check their Facebook: First Friday of every month at Pages in Pacific (sending some poetry love to those of you across the river).</p> <p>More Info</p>	Rage & Poetry First Tuesdays <p>September 9th: Featured readers and an open mic every month. Doors open at 7pm.</p> <p>More Info</p>
	The Lyrics and Laughs Interlude Ground Sharp Studios <p>Mondays: Join hosts Artiz of Wordz, Gigi, & The Cosplay Poet at the soft opening of their new mic space from 7pm – 10pm.</p> <p>More Info</p>	



<p>PAST ISSUES AND MORE GOOD STUFF ON THE WEBSITE:</p> <p>HTTPS://IWANTPOEMS.WIXSITE.COM/I-WANT-POEMS</p>	<p>FOLLOW US ON BLUE SKY</p> <p>@iwantpoemsstl.bsky.social</p>
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Read Something

Guillotine, Eduardo C. Corral (Gray Wolf Press 2020)

There's a new poet in town, and his name is Eduardo C. Corral. His first collection, *Slow Lightning* (2012), won the Yale Younger Poets Prize under the judgeship of Carl Phillips. Now he is stepping into Phillips's role at Washington University.

Guillotine returns to his interest in exploring his identity as both the son of Mexican immigrants and gay man. Once again blending English and Spanish in many of these poems, the effect is of a man thinking fluidly in two languages. Some poems begin in Spanish while others wander into it at will. Ideas are not repeated in the second language, and no translations are offered; you are on your own with the Spanish, much as an immigrant might be with English. That said, the poems possess a clarity that never exceeded my (limited) Spanish. Many collections feel as if they force the languages together; that's not the case here.

There are other formal moves here as well. "Testaments Scratched into a Water Station Barrel" is a long sequence of voices rather than individual poems. Some of these voices are sonnets, others a plain accounting of the voice's journey across the border, others typographical pastiches of prayer and graffiti.

The titular section pivots to a more personal speaker and poems full of the cuts suffered for the need for love. There is an antagonist here that begins as "coppery & difficult" in the first, scorpion-filled section of the poem, and who finally progresses to

An avalanche of honey,
 an avalanche
 of thorns ...

in "The Autobiography of my Hungers," a devastating poem with an opening throat kick from the honey-bearded man's declaration "I don't love you" to the far reaches of the speaker's first tender swallows of cruel rejections:

In tenth grade, weeks after
 My first kiss, my mother
 Said, "You're looking thinner."
 That evening, I smuggled a cake
 Into my room.
 I ate it with my hands,
 Licked buttercream off
 My thumbs until I puked.

In the final section, Corral takes on the narrative of Las Angeles drop houses with stories combed from newspaper accounts. Here he fully realizes his motif of hunger as the flip side of pain and our insatiable need to feed on pain in the final poem “To John Doe”:

When I read his flesh fell
Off the bones, my stomach rumbled
 My mouth
Watered...

In addition to his role at Washington University, Corral will be a member of the faculty for Poetry in the Woods 2025.

Sealey Challenge 2025 Saint Louis Edition

1 <i>Now Do You Know Where You Are</i> , Dana Levin (Copper Canyon 2022)	2 <i>The Surface of the Lit World</i> , Shane Seely (Ohio UP-Swallow 2015)	3 <i>Brassbones and Rainbows</i> , Shirley LeFlore (2-Leaf Press)	4 <i>Gold Cure</i> , Ted Mathys (Coffee House Press 2020)	5 <i>Wikipedia Apocalyptica</i> , Steven D. Schroeder (swallow::tal e press 2022)	6 <i>We Need to Talk: Selected and New Poems</i> , Michael Castro (Singing Bone Press 2017)	7 <i>Soft Launch</i> , Aaron Belz (Persea 2019)
8 <i>Domestic Fugues</i> , Richard Newman (Steel Toe Books 2009)	9 <i>Vital Signs</i> , Vincent Casaregola (Finishing Line Press 2025)	10 <i>Promise</i> , Sally Van Doren (Louisiana State University Press 2017)	11 <i>Elegy</i> , Mary Jo Bang (Graywolf Press 2007)	12 <i>The Eye in the Ceiling: Selected Poems</i> , Eugene B. Redmond (Harlem River Press 1991)	13 <i>Then the War: And Selected Poems 2007-2020</i> , Carl Phillips (FSG 2022)	14 <i>Yoke</i> , Caiti Quatmann (2024)
15 <i>Mosses and Lichens</i> , Devin Johnston (FSG 2019)	16 <i>The Selected Poems of Howard Nemerov</i> , Howard Nemerov (Swallow Press 2003)	17 <i>The Tiny Journalist</i> , Naomi Shihab Nye (BOA Editions 2019)	18 <i>The Little Mrs./Misses</i> , Jane Ellen Ibur (Penultimate Press 2017)	19 <i>Everything I Love Restored</i> , Matthew Freeman (Coffeetown Press 2015)	20 <i>Four Quartets</i> , T. S. Eliot (1943)	21 <i>Remains to be Used</i> , Jessica Baran (Apostrophe Books 2010)
22 <i>Indecency</i> , Justin Phillip Reed (Coffee House Press 2018)	23 <i>Guillotine</i> , Eduardo C Corral (Gray Wolf Press 2020)	24 <i>Rob's Word Shop</i> , Robert Fitterman (Ugly Duckling Press 2019)	25 <i>Selected Poems</i> , Mona Van Duyn (Knopf 2003)	26 <i>Shrimp</i> , Jason Vasser-Elong (2Leaf Press 2018)	27 <i>Rue</i> , Nuernberger, Kathryn (BOA Editions 2020)	28 <i>Black Bell</i> , Alison C. Rollins (Copper Canyon 2024)
29 <i>All the Flowers Kneeling</i> , Paul Tran (Penguin 2022)	30 <i>Boy with Thorn</i> , Rickey Laurentiis (University of Pittsburgh Press 2015)	31 <i>Francofilaments</i> , Eileen G'Sell (Broken Sleep Books 2024)				