

**CLATSKANIE
RAYMOND CARVER
WRITING
FESTIVAL
MAY 3, 2025**

CLATSKANIE, OREGON

Welcome! *The Clatskanie Raymond Carver Writing Festival* takes place annually here in beautiful Clatskanie, Oregon, the birthplace of Raymond Carver. This year's theme is "Call it a Polestar." Born from Carver's connection to Clatskanie, this event is designed to encourage and support our regional rural writing communities along the Lower Columbia River. All efforts have been made to keep events free and open to the public, thanks to the contributions of organizations, businesses, and a volunteer committee of organizers. We're glad you are here!

The organizing committee
(Asher, Brian, Connie, Joseph, Mac, Mandy, Molly, Rebecca)

2025 FESTIVAL THEME: "CALL IT A POLESTAR"

Raymond Carver once described a signal moment in his development when a stranger offered him a lens to a broader world and, "as if reading my heart," an invitation to pursue his dreams. Carver wrote of this experience, "I was just a pup then but nothing can explain, or explain away, such a moment: the moment when the very thing I needed most in my life—call it a polestar—was casually, generously given to me."

CLATSKANIE RAYMOND CARVER WRITING FESTIVAL SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE SATURDAY, MAY 3rd 2025

10:00am-11:30am

OPENING RECEPTION

*Clatskanie Cultural Center
Ballroom*

10:00am-12:15pm

PUBLISHERS & WRITERS FAIR

*Clatskanie Cultural Center
Ballroom*

12:30pm-1:30pm

POETRY AND PROSE READING

Fultano's Pizza

12:00pm-5:30pm

STEAL TIME TO WRITE!

*Self-guided ramble around
Clatskanie and
writing time for you.
Find unique limited edition
writing prompt cards
at these locations:*

2:00pm-3:00pm

WRITING WORKSHOP

*Clatskanie Cultural Center
Ballroom*

**CARVER MURAL/OLD
CLATSKANIE HOSPITAL
BUILDING**

CLATSKANIE LIBRARY

CLATSKANIE FOOD HUB

FULTANO'S PIZZA

FARMHOUSE COFFEE

**RAYMOND CARVER MEMORIAL
SCULPTURE IN COPE'S PARK**

**THE CASTLE/THOMAS J. FLIPPIN
HOUSE/CLATSKANIE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

FLOWERS N FLUFF

5:30pm-6:00pm

POETRY CONTEST AWARDS

Birkenfeld Theater

6:15pm-7:15pm

CATERED DINNER

Clatskanie Food Hub

7:15pm-8:30pm

OPEN MIC POETRY JAM

Clatskanie Food Hub

SATURDAY, MAY 3rd

OPENING RECEPTION

10-11:30am

Clatskanie Cultural Center, Ballroom

75 S. Nehalem Street

Welcome to the Raymond Carver Writing Festival!

Introduction: **Asher Finch**

Guest presenter: **Laura Moulton**

Featured presenter: **Martha Gies**

PUBLISHERS & WRITERS FAIR

10am-12:15pm

Clatskanie Cultural Center, Ballroom

75 S. Nehalem Street

Vendor tables by local authors, regional writing organizations and presenters.

Allen Braden (Tacoma, WA), **C.C. Stern Type Foundry** (Clatskanie, OR), **Columbia River Writers Group** (Clatskanie, OR), **Empty Bowl Press** (Chimacum, WA), **Martha Gies** (Portland, OR), **Holly Hughes** (Chimacum, WA), **Laura Moulton** (Portland, OR), **Dayle Olson** (Cathlamet, WA), **Rain Magazine** (Astoria, OR), **Raymond Carver Podcast** (Port Angeles, WA), **Salal Review** (Longview, WA), **Armin Tolentino** (Vancouver, WA), **Evan Williams** (OR), **Write Around Portland** (Portland, OR), **The Writer's Guild** (Astoria, OR), and more!

A select assortment of Raymond Carver books will be for sale at the event. We'll also have merch available from the Raymond Carver Writing Festival including commemorative posters, stickers, postcards, book bags and badges. Maybe even a few t-shirts in random sizes!

Presented by Astoria's The Writer's Guild.

POETRY AND PROSE READING

12:30-1:30pm

Fultano's Pizza

770 E. Columbia River Highway

Readers:

Allen Braden, Dayle Olson, Mandy Ellen

WRITING WORKSHOP

2-3pm

Clatskanie Cultural Center, Ballroom

75 S. Nehalem Street

Presenter: **Martha Gies**

In this workshop, we will use prompts suggested by two or—time permitting—three of Carver's poems. I have found this exercise to be fun for writers of prose and poetry alike. No public sharing required.

Prose and Poetry Reading

3:30-4:30pm

"The Castle"

Thomas J. Flippin House

National Historic Preservation Site

620 SW Tichenor Street

Readers:

Holly Hughes, Armin Tolentino, Moe Bowstern

POETRY CONTEST AWARD CEREMONY

5:30-6pm

Clatskanie Cultural Center, Birkenfeld Theater

75 S. Nehalem Street

Award presentation and readings from the winners of the 2025 Poetry Contest in both youth and adult (over 18) categories.

Award presenters:

Estella Hamilton, Mayor Robert "Bob" Brajcich

POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

ADULT

1ST - Craig Brandis
"Dark Summer"

1ST - Janet Ebert
"Gnat Creek"

YOUTH 16-18

1ST - Maria Vittoria Altafini
"Love, the First Compass"

2ND - Estella Hamilton
"Dowsing Rod"

YOUTH 12-15

1ST - Heidi Isaacson
"Guiding Light"

2ND - Hailey Neeley
"Call it a Star"

YOUTH 8-11

1ST - Holly Isaacson
(untitled) "You're my friend..."

2ND - Audrey Hepler
"Shepherd and Sheep"

Thank you to the judges who volunteered their time!

YOUTH CATEGORY JUDGES

Estrella Brown, Dayle Olson, Armin Tolentino

ADULT CATEGORY JUDGES

Marj Hogan, Scott MacGregor, Michael Calvin Mills, Cliff Taylor

FESTIVAL FINALE!

6:15-8:30pm

Clatskanie Food Hub

80 Steele Street

6:15pm Catered Dinner (reservations required)

Whimsical and seasonal Farm-to-table food featuring a menagerie of locally grown savory delights handcrafted by **Bluebell Bakeshop**. Non-alcoholic beverages supplied by **The Wild Locals**, beer and wine available for purchase.

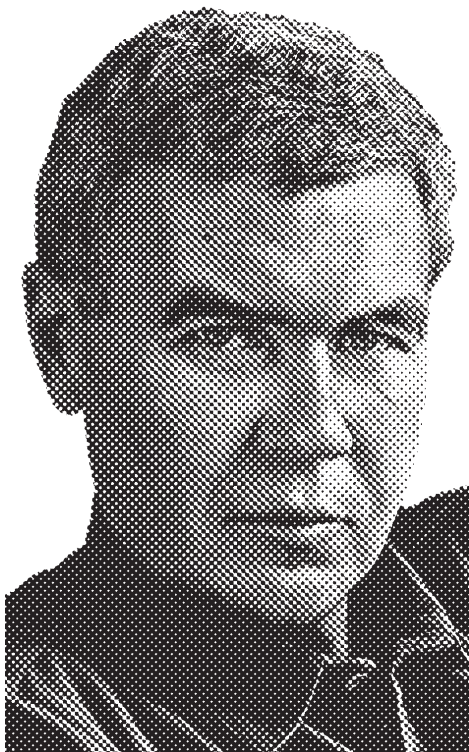
Reservations are required, cost is \$20 per person. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door on the day of.

... and a community pie potluck!

Bring a homemade pie to share after dinner – your best recipe, a sweet treat using the remainder of last year's harvest, or a regional favorite.

7:15-8:30pm Open Mic Poetry Jam (free and open to all)

An opportunity for festival participants to share their words in a supportive and fun atmosphere, sign-ups will be available all day and on site in case of last minute inspiration.



Steal Time to Write!

**12-5:30pm at various
locations in Clatskanie**

Self guided. Pop in to sponsoring sites, pick up a keepsake print and spend a few minutes writing to short prompts from festival writers. Prompts from: **Moe Bowstern, Allen Braden, Tess Gallagher, Martha Gies, Mandy Ellen, Holly J. Hughes, Laura Moulton, and Armin Tolentino.**

Writing Prompt cards are printed in a limited edition of 80, letterpress printed from types cast at the **C.C. Stern Type Foundry**. There are 8 different cards available. A different printed prompt will be offered at each location, so plan on stealing time for all eight of them!

Find the cards here:

Carver Mural/old Clatskanie hospital building

Clatskanie Library

Clatskanie Food Hub

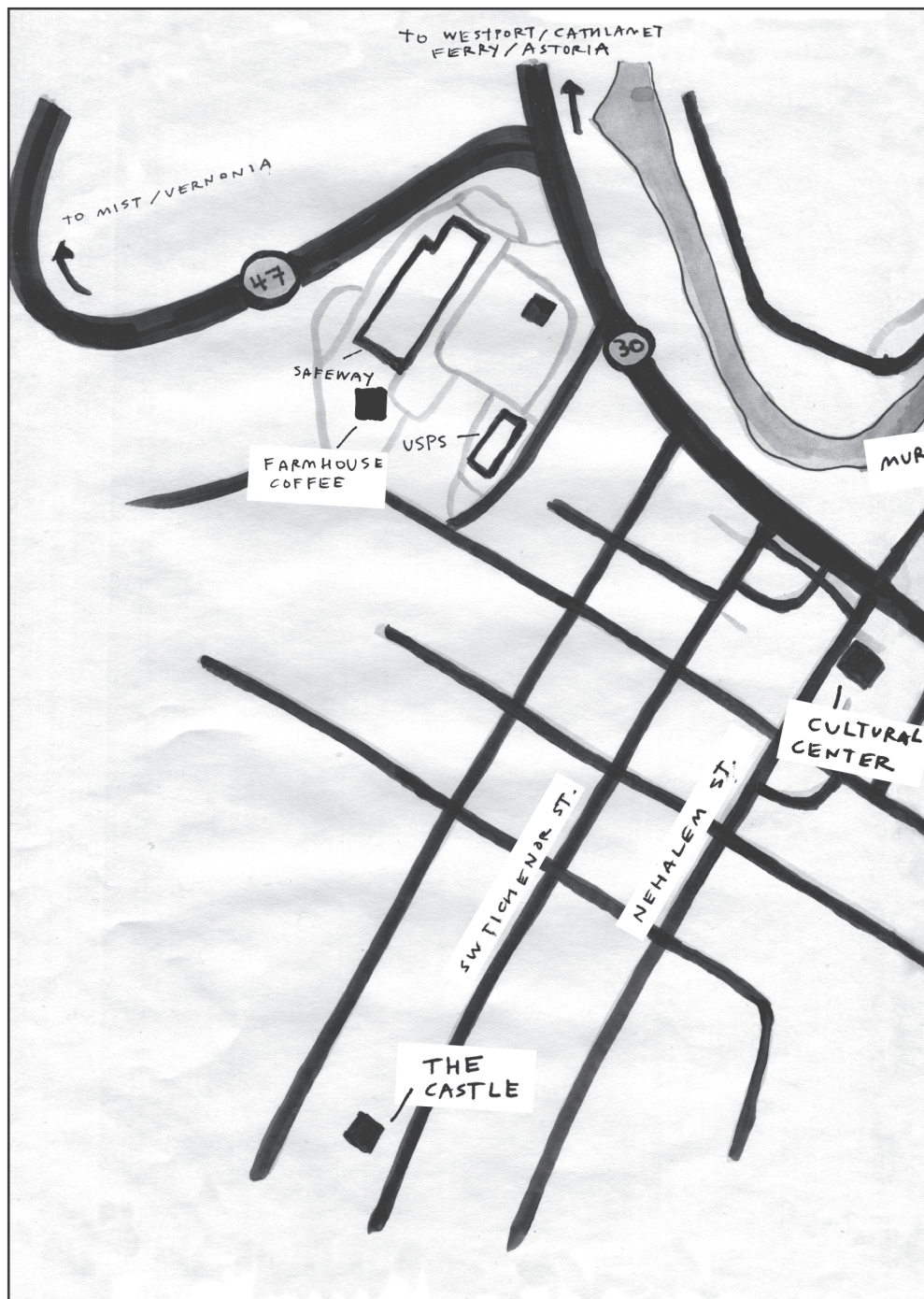
Fultano's Pizza

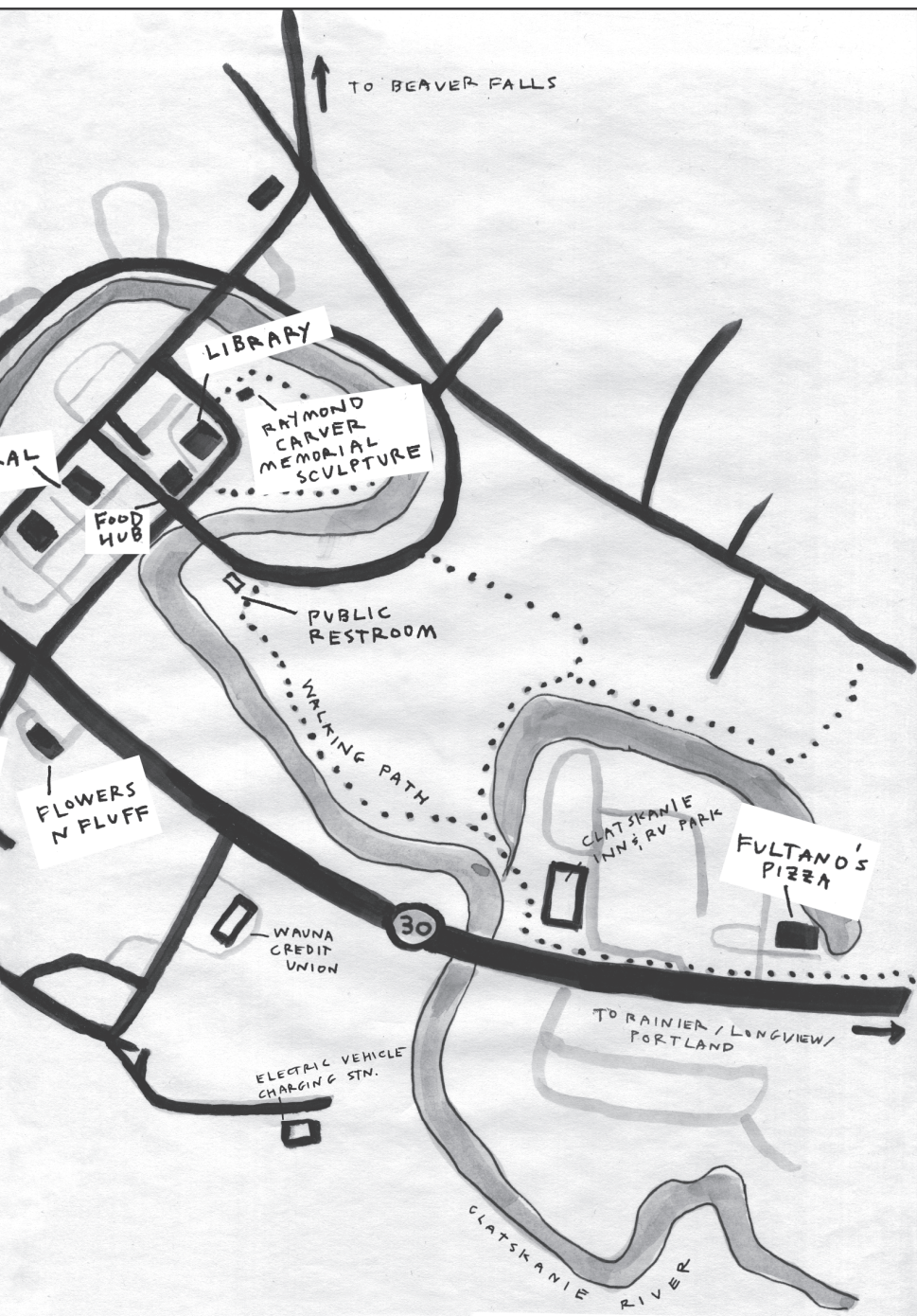
Farmhouse Coffee

Raymond Carver Memorial Sculpture in Cope's Park

**The Castle/Thomas J. Flippin House/Clatskanie Historical
Society**

Flowers n Fluff





Venues and Reading Locations:

“The Castle”

Thomas J. Flippin House
National Historic Preservation Site
620 SW Tichenor Street

Clatskanie Cultural Center

75 S. Nehalem Street
(503) 338-9770

Clatskanie Food Hub

80 Steele Street
(503) 308-1121

Clatskanie Public Library

11 Lillich Street
(503) 728-3732

Farmhouse Coffee

305 E Columbia River Hwy
(503) 728-1117

Flowers ‘N Fluff

45 E. Columbia River Highway
(503) 728-4222

Fultano’s Pizza

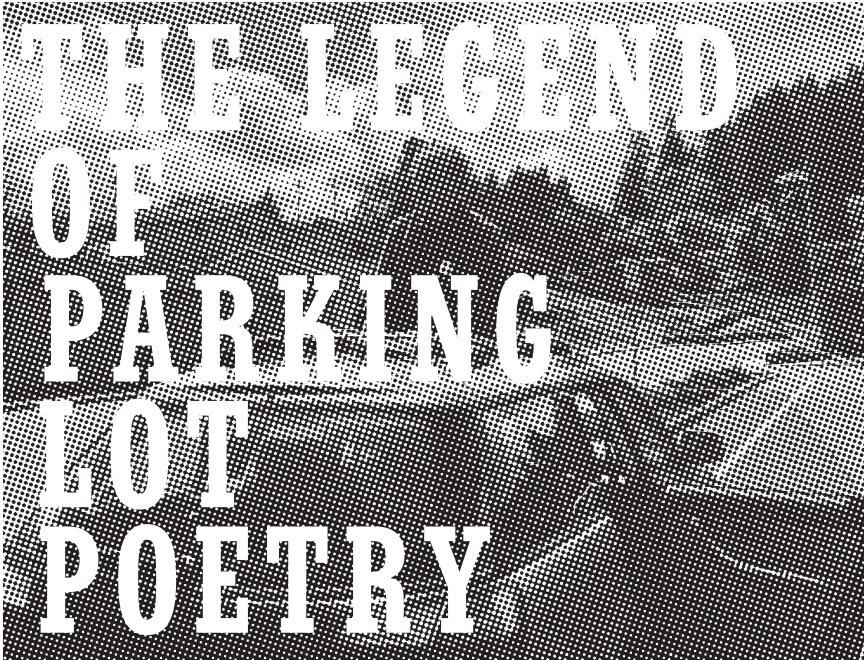
770 E. Columbia River Highway
(503) 728-2922

Old Hospital Building Mural

183 - 175 N Nehalem Street

Raymond Carver Sculpture

across from the Library in Cope’s Park
11 Lillich Street



THE LEGEND OF PARKING LOT POETRY

41 years ago Tess Gallagher and Raymond Carver held an impromptu poetry reading at the Evergreen Shopping Center in beautiful Clatskanie, Oregon. So the legend goes... While en route to their home in Port Angeles, Washington, these two writers stopped by Clatskanie to visit Raymond's birthplace. They toured the town, met some locals, had some lunch, sat down for an interview with the editor of the Clatskanie Chief, Deborah Steele Hazen. Tess and Raymond then stopped at Safeway for provisions. It was there in that parking lot with the view of the town and surrounding mountains that they were inspired to have an impromptu reading. From their car's moonroof, they read to whomever passed by. They read to the sky, they read to the hills. Tess described it as a gleeful burst of inspiration, and she recalls that she and Raymond were both giggling as they recited their words. It's a joyful image, and one that the organizers of this festival thought we should commemorate and continue as a tradition. When Tess Gallagher was asked recently which poems should be recited, she stated that it's not the particular writing that's important, but only that the participants find joy in what they choose to read. You can't argue with that. In the spirit of the improvised 1984 Clatskanie parking lot poetry recital, this year we've decided to not schedule the event. When will it happen? Which parking lot will be used? Keep your eyes and ears open. And of course if you feel so compelled, you can instigate a spontaneous parking lot poetry recital yourself!

2025 PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES, CLATSKANIE RAYMOND CARVER WRITING FESTIVAL

Moe Bowstern contributes to underground literary culture as a reader, writer, and editor, notably of XtraTuf zine. She performs annually at the Fisher Poets Gathering in Astoria, Oregon. From 1997 to 2007 Moe gave her time to DIY agitprop, co-creating space for citizens to protest within the queer, fun-centered, anarchist Amalgamated Everlasting Union Chorus, and making ceremony outside of mainstream capitalism with an annual mega-collaboration, the Winter Solstice Puppet Show, among other projects. She co-wrote narration for the award-winning independent podcast “It Did Happen Here” and was the principal author for the subsequent book (PM Press, 2023).

Allen Braden grew up in the Yakima Valley not far from where Carver grew up. He is the author of *A Wreath of Down and Drops of Blood*, a finalist for the Walt Whitman Award judged by Mary Oliver, and *Elegy in the Passive Voice*, winner of the University of Alaska’s Midnight Sun Chapbook Contest. He has published recently in *The Laurel Review*, *Interim* and *Attached to the Living World: A New Ecopoetry Anthology*.

Portland writer **Martha Gies** has published widely over the last four decades in newspapers, magazines and literary quarterlies, including *Gettysburg Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Orion*, *The Sun*, and *Zyzzyva*. Her memoir, *Broken Open*, was published last fall by *Wandering Aengus Press*. A previous book, *Up All Night* (OSU Press, 2004) portrayed Portland through interviews with people who work graveyard shift, and was listed by the two major Oregon newspapers as one of “Ten Best Books of the Year.” In addition to her writing and teaching, she has been an activist for human rights and for maintaining housing affordable for the poor and elderly amidst a gentrifying city.

Holly J. Hughes is the author of four poetry collections, most recently *Hold Fast*, coauthor of *The Pen and The Bell: Mindful Writing in a Busy World*, and editor of several anthologies. Her fine-art chapbook *Passings* received an American Book Award in 2017. She is copublisher of *Empty Bowl Press*, directs *Flying Squirrel Studio*, which offers residencies for women, and consults as a writing coach. She divides her time between a log cabin in Indianola and her home in the Chimacum valley.

Mandy Ellen grew up on the beaches of southern California, went to high school in Albany, Oregon (where she skipped class to hide out in the poetry section of the local used bookstore), and studied comparative literature at Berkeley (where she skipped class to hear the Lunch Poem readings in the Morrison Library). After a brief stint as a bookseller, Mandy found meaningful work in her favorite community spaces: public libraries. A lifetime pursuer of poetry, lover of languages, player of pianos, mother of twins, and slave to curiosity, Mandy can most often be found barefoot with a pocketful of lichens.

Laura Moulton is the founder of Street Books, a street library that serves people who live outside in Portland. She is the author of *Loaners: The Making of a Street Library*, co-written with Ben Hodgson. Moulton taught writing in Portland high schools for 20 years for Literary Arts, and for the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College. She is currently on the faculty of the Attic Institute. She is the founder of Truth & Dare, contemporary art/writing workshops created during the pandemic that is now a monthly community writing and art project published on substack. In 2025 Moulton received the Stewart H. Holbrook Literary Legacy Award from Literary Arts in honor of her contributions to the literary life of Oregon.

Dayle Olson is a recent Northwest Voices featured writer at Lower Columbia College and won first prize for prose poetry in the 2024 Oregon Poetry Association contest. Her work appears in *The Salal Review*, *Cathexis Northwest*, *Rockvale Review*, and *North Coast Squid*, among others. She is a frequent contributor to the *Columbia River Reader*. Dayle has her sights on publishing her first poetry collection in the coming year. She lives in the small river town of Cathlamet with her husband, David.

Derek Sheffield was not able to attend the 2025 Clatskanie Raymond Carver Writing Festival due to a schedule conflict with activities related to his new role as the incoming Washington State Poet Laureate.

Armin Tolentino is the author of the poetry collection *We Meant to Bring It Home Alive* (Alternating Current Press) and the children's book, *Mythwakers: The Manananggal* (forthcoming from Hope Well Books). He served as poet laureate for Clark County, WA from 2021-2023. He earned an MFA at Rutgers University-Newark and is a former Oregon Literary Arts Fellow, Carolyn Moore House Writer in Residency, and Atticus Hotel Artist in Residency. He is a phenomenal clapper, a passable ukulele player, and a bumbling, but enthusiastic, fisherman.

Clatskanie Raymond Carver Writing Festival Organizers

Connie Blauwkamp is a volunteer and the current board chair of the C.C. Stern Type Foundry, where she supports the Pacific Northwest Poets Laureate Broadside Project and other programs to preserve the art and industry of the cast letterform. A long-time partner and printer's devil at Buzzworm Studios, Connie is now caretaker of Jeff Shay's type foundry and print shop in Portland, Oregon. She has 30 years experience in marketing for non-profits, technology start-ups and Fortune 500 companies, with expertise in strategy, market research, program management and communications. She tries to write one bad haiku every day.

Brian Bagdonas keeps a copy of the *Library of America's Raymond Carver Complete Collected Stories* at his bedside table. Brian has worked as a commercial printer since 1992. He is currently an owner/operator of Craft Printing House located in Clatskanie, Oregon along with his partner Rebecca Gilbert. Brian is a board member and volunteer at the C.C. Stern Type Foundry also located in Clatskanie.

Mandy Ellen (see Mandy's bio under "participants")

Asher Finch is a student at Oregon State University, pursuing a BA in Creative Writing. They also work for The Writers Guild, Astoria, as the organization's first student intern. Asher's writing can be found in Rain Magazine, and their poem "The First Year Without" received an honorable mention for the 2025 Neahkanie Mountain Poetry Prize. When not in class or writing, Asher can be echo-located via their laugh to the nearest bookstore or lost at the beach with their chihuahua.

Rebecca Gilbert has been involved in founding and growing three community arts non-profit organizations oriented around the printed word: The Independent Publishing Resource Center (Portland, OR), C.C. Stern Type Foundry (Clatskanie, OR), and Partners in Print (Seattle, WA). She is an owner/operator of Craft Printing House located in Clatskanie, Oregon along with her partner Brian Bagdonas, and is a publisher of both print and audio zines.

Joseph Green lives in Longview, Washington, where he retired in 2010 after teaching for twenty-five years at Lower Columbia College. He serves on the board of directors for the C.C. Stern Type Foundry and Museum of Metal Typography in Clatskanie. His most recent poetry collection is *What Water Does at a Time Like This* (MoonPath Press, 2015).

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Molly Poole is very happily retired in her hometown of Clatskanie from 30+ years as a paralegal in Seattle and Vancouver, Washington. She is a Carver fan and avid reader and recently binge-read the works of Amor Towles and Richard Ford, a close friend of Raymond Carver. She enjoys traveling and the freedom to explore a variety of interests. She is a UO alumni (Go Ducks!).

Mac Stripling was born and raised in Clatskanie, Oregon. As a small child, his favorite president was Herbert Hoover. Since graduating, he has worked a myriad of minimum wage jobs (gas stations, restaurants, etc.) He spends his free time listening to Dinosaur Jr, and hanging out with his girlfriend. He hopes to one day open a tourist trap on the coast, where he will sell seashells for \$5 a pop, and tell the children what it was like in, “The roarin’ twenties.” Also, it should be noted, he has never understood all the hype around Henry Miller.

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**THE RAYMOND CARVER WRITING FESTIVAL
IS SPONSORED BY:**

Astoria's The Writers Guild
C.C. Stern Type Foundry
Clatskanie Arts Commission
Clatskanie Farmer Collective
Clatskanie Foundation
Clatskanie Library
Clatskanie Safeway
Clatskanie Senior Citizens - The Castle
Craft Printing House
PGE Beaver and Port Westward
Wauna Credit Union

AND BY SUPPORT FROM VENUES:

Clatskanie Cultural Center
Clatskanie Food Hub
Clatskanie Historical Society
Farmhouse Coffee
Flowers N Fluff
Fultano's Pizza

Clatskanie Arts Commission
<https://www.clatskaniearts.org/>
