

Rachel Trousdale, Framingham State University

Comic Epistemologies in Contemporary American Poetry

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022

12.15-1.45 pm

On Zoom

Abstract: Humor in the work of contemporary poets like Cathy Park Hong, Jamaal May, and Lucille Clifton prompts us to examine the values of competing epistemologies. These poets suggest that affective responses can determine what we think we know: laughter can re-shape our sense of canons, make unfamiliar material accessible, and limit or expand our sympathies. At the same time, these poets test the limits of laughter's power to heal trauma or mediate other minds, warning against trusting humorous insight too far.

Bio: Rachel Trousdale is a professor of English at Framingham State University in Framingham, Massachusetts, USA. She is the author of *Humor, Empathy, and Community in Twentieth-Century American Poetry*; *Humor in Modern American Poetry*; *Nabokov, Rushdie, and the Transnational Imagination*; and a poetry chapbook, *Antiphonal Fugue for Marx Brothers, Elephant, and Slide Trombone*.

