

# A masquerade, at home

Pulitzer Prize winner to present at Writer's Guild event

BY NATALIE SKOWLUND

When Pulitzer Prize winning poet Jericho Brown read some of his work at the 2019 Portland Book Festival, he left many dazzled — including Marriane Monson, president of the Writer's Guild of Astoria.

“(It was) his vulnerability, his generosity, his humility, his kindness, the depths of his soul, the artistry of his language. What more could you ever want in a poet, you know?” she said.

Brown's 2019 collection of poems, “The Tradition,” won this year's Pulitzer Prize in poetry for its “masterful lyrics that combine delicacy with historical urgency in their loving evocation of bodies vulnerable to hostility and violence,” according to the prize's website.

Monson approached the poet after his presentation with what she felt might be a bold proposal: would Brown ever be interested in coming to Astoria?

The Guild will host Brown as the headliner for this year's virtual Literary Masquerade benefit. Brown will do a live reading during the event and share a special

## If You Go

Writer's Guild of Astoria's Literary Masquerade

6 to 7:15 p.m. Saturday

Event link: [bit.ly/3oA48XR](https://bit.ly/3oA48XR)

Donations accepted at [thewritersguild.org](https://thewritersguild.org)

announcement.

The masquerade will also include readings from the guild's two 2020 writers-in-residence, in partnership with Astoria Visual Artists: Sarah Buckmaster and Deborah Williams. Buckmaster will share a reading from a dystopian novel she is working on. Williams plans to read a segment from her memoir, which is set in the Middle East.

Attendees who are eager to test their literary and linguistic prowess will have the chance to engage in virtual wordplay games and win raffle prizes. There will also be a show presented on the guild's website featuring local photography, flash fiction and poetry in response to the theme “2020.”

“Everybody is welcome,” Monson said.



Stephanie Mitchell

Jericho Brown

“I hope everyone comes. It's something that anyone can enjoy, regardless of their comfort level with writing themselves.”

## United in wordplay

The mission of the all-volunteer Writer's Guild of Astoria, founded by Monson in 2018, is “to create a community of writers and strengthen the Astoria area and surrounding communities through the power of the written word.”

The guild hosts events including monthly open mics and workshops led by professional authors; writing workshops in local schools; and a writers-in-residence program.

The guild ran a creative writing club at Astoria High School before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and plans to continue the club once schools can safely reopen.

See Page 10

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