



Western Literature Association

Home on the Rez: Sovereignty and Sustainability October 11-14, 2023

Deadline for abstracts: June 1, 2023 | <https://www.westernlit.org/wla-conference-2023/>



Beaded wallet made by Tribal elder Madelyn Punkin (Shoshone-Bannock).
© 1990. Courtesy of owner, Randy'L Teton and the family of Madelyn Punkin.

The Western Literature Association is excited to announce that our 2023 conference will be held at the Shoshone-Bannock Hotel & Casino, situated near Pocatello, Idaho, on the Fort Hall Reservation, home of the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes live on the largest land base reservation in the state of Idaho and are one of the five Tribes of Idaho. They are well known for their museum-quality beading and brain-tanned hides, for being the Home of Indian Relays (traditional horse races), and for being designated as the first Purple Heart Reservation in the nation. The 2023 Distinguished Achievement Award Winner, Mark Trahant, the influential editor at Indian Country Today, is also an enrolled member of the Tribes. Historical icon Sacajawea of the Lewis & Clark Expedition was Lemhi Shoshone, and the model for the Sacajawea U.S. Golden Dollar coin is Randy'L Teton, also an enrolled member of the Tribes. Both Teton and Trahant will join us, along with keynote speakers Grace Dillon (Anishinaabe) and Michael Sheyahshe (Caddo), at the WLA's 57th Conference.

"Home on the Rez" is, of course, a play on "Home on the Range," a phrase that both signals and subverts the master narrative of the West. As the climate changes and precarity becomes the new normal, everyday life often feels uncanny or "unhomely." Our conference explores domesticity and the emotional dimensions of all our "homes"—feelings of place attachment, nostalgia, solastalgia, anxiety, and many others—as well as the historical, political, and colonial aspects of homemaking and homesteading in the West. We invite contributions on any aspect of the literatures and cultures of the North American West, and this year the WLA especially encourages panels, papers, and posters that explore the following topics:

- the concepts of "sovereignty" and "sustainability" that yoke together Indigenous, cultural, political, and ecological questions and invite collaborations toward livable and more just futures
- trans-Indigenous, transgeneric, multimedia and multimodal storytelling
- public lands, queer connections, and la frontera
- Western literatures by Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Chicanx, and other POC writers
- Asian American Western literatures, including literatures of internment/incarceration
- Idaho writers and texts (Mary Hallock Foote, Mary Clearman Blew, Marilynne Robinson, Kim Barnes, Emily Ruskovich, Anthony Doerr, Tara Westover, and others)
- the work of DAA recipient Mark Trahant
- the work of keynote speakers Grace Dillon and Michael Sheyahshe

We invite proposals for individual papers, lightning-talk panels, roundtable discussions, posters, photo or video essays, or other presentation formats. Pre-formed panels are encouraged. The WLA welcomes submissions from all writers and thinkers, including: college/university scholars, independent scholars, undergraduate and graduate students, K-12 educators, artists and writers, and community members.

Submissions will open via ConfTool in April 2023. See the conference website for more details and hotel room rates (coming soon). For more information, contact co-presidents Amanda Zink and Jennifer Ladino at wlaconference2023@westernlit.org.