

# SONJA BOON

<https://sonjaboon.com>

## PUBLISHED WORK

### Memoir

*What the Oceans Remember: Searching for Belonging and Home*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2019.

*Finalist, Foreword INDIES Award in 2 categories; Longlist, 2020 BMO Winterset Award; Longlist, 2021 Newfoundland and Labrador Book Awards (Non Fiction); Honourable Mention, 2021 Very Best Book Awards, The Miramichi Reader)*

### Creative Non-Fiction Essays

“Stopping the Hearse,” *Riddle Fence*, #40 (Spring 2021).

“Bitter / Love: A Mixed-Race Body Archive.” *Life Writing*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2021): 417-428.

“Body Lessons,” in *Body Stories: In and Out and With and Through Fat*, edited by Jill Andrew and May Friedman, pp. 133-36. Bradford: Demeter Press, 2020.

“Plucked Chicken,” *ROOM Magazine*. vol. 43, no. 1 (March, 2020): 45-51.

“Fifty Shades of Black Fat: An Inventory,” in *Big: Stories of Plus-Sized Life*, edited by Christina Myers, pp. 81-88. Vancouver: Caitlin Press, February 2020.

“Telling Stories with Gold.” *Imagining the Guyanas*, eds. Lawrence Aje, Thomas Lacroix, and Judith Misrahi-Barak, pp. 73-90. PoCoPages: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2019.

“God’s Will.” *Cultural Studies ⇔ Critical Methodologies*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2018): 228-235.

“Thirteen Litres,” *Geist: Ideas + Culture*, 101 (Summer 2016): 13-15.

“French Kiss,” *Don’t Talk to Me About Love: An Online Magazine*, 2016.

“But Where Are You Really From?,” *The Ethnic Aisle*, Fall 2015.

“Autobiography by numbers; or, Embodying Maternal Grief.” *Life Writing*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2012): 91-102.

### Poetry

“forgettings.” *Janus Unbound* (accepted; forthcoming, 2024).

“salt the page.” *Unlost: Journal of Found Poetry and Art*. Issue 32. February 2024.

two poems: “possible ground” and “hold my wake” *Pinhole Poetry*. Issue 2.4 January 2024.

three poems (from PatchWork Poems series): “work and mendings,” “this strange embroidering,” “threads of knowing” *Dark Winter Lit*, January 2024.

## Short Fiction

“Deep River,” *Syncopation* (Summer 2022).

## Magazine Articles, Essays, Blog Posts & Other Publications

“On Oceans as Archives as Oceans.” Contextual essay for the exhibition catalogue *Daze Jefferies: Stay Here Stay How Stay*, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, 2024.

“Speculation, Magic Realism, and Minding the Gaps.” Guest blog post for *History Workshop Journal Online*, September 2020.

“What the Oceans Remember: Thinking and Writing with Music.” Guest blog post for *The Authors Book Club*, February 2020.

“A Cocoon of Books, Music and Friendship,” in the larger article “Advice to Keep You Feeling Well Throughout the Year” in *University Affairs*, January 2020.

“Begin Anywhere,” Guest blog post, WLU Press, October 2019.

“What Stories Can Yarn Tell? Thinking About Creative Scholarship.” Op-ed, *The Gazette*, Memorial University, October 2019.

“Thinking with Oceans.” Guest post, *SSHORE: Social Sciences and Humanities Ocean Research and Education Blog*, May 2019.

“Creative Histories: Vulnerability, Emotions, and the Undoing of the Self,” guest post for *storyingthepast.wordpress.com*, a blog for creative histories, October 2017.

“International Women’s Day: Politics, Passion, and Pussyhats.” Op-ed, *The Gazette*, Memorial University, March 2017.

## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

### Invited Literary Appearances

Winterset in Summer Literary Festival, Eastport, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022. [in person]

OchreFest, Ochre Pit Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2022. [in person]

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Netherlandic Studies - Vancouver, 2021. [online]

Coast Lines: Memorial University Book Club Pick, 2021. [online]

Festival of Literary Diversity (FOLD), May 2021. [online]

SFU Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies Reads Book Club, January 2021. [online]

SPARKS Literary Festival (online), St. John’s, 2020. [online]

New Westminster Public Library Literary Festival, October 2020. [online]

Draft Reading Series (draftreadings.com), Toronto, August 2020. [online]

Thin Air: Winnipeg International Writers’ Festival, September 2019. [in person]

### Invited Keynotes, Guest Lectures, Panels

“Confederation Correspondents: Letters to Joey Smallwood, 1948-1951,” Newfoundland and Labrador Historical Society, March 2024. [online]

“Archives and Life Writing.” Interactive pedagogy session for *Autobiography in Canada Workshop*, Banff Centre, May 2023. [in person].

“Playing with Mud; or What Happens Where Water Meets Land. Thinking About Archives, Absences, and the Spaces Between.” *Keith Jefferey Annual Lecture*, Queen’s University, Belfast, 2022. [in person].

“Researching in the Vaults: Unlocking Memorial’s Archives.” Panelist, Memorial University Research Week, October 2020. [online].

“What Carries Us: Black History in Newfoundland and Labrador. Bushra Junaid and Sonja Boon in Conversation.” Facebook Live Event co-hosted by The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery and CBC Newfoundland and Labrador, July 2020. [online]

“Art Topics: Migrations, Memory, Identity, and Art,” Invited guest lecture for The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, March 2020. [in person].

“What the Oceans Remember: Speculating on Archival Silences,” Keynote for *The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, Indigeneity, and Gender*, Memorial University, February 2020.

“Speculative Lives: Haunted Yearnings for Impossible Pasts,” Opening Keynote for *Unhinging the National Framework: Transnational Life Writing*, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, December 2019.

“What the Oceans Remember: Reflections on Archival Silences,” Invited guest speaker, Gender and Diversity Studies, Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, December 2019.

“Serendipity, Tactility, and Community: Library Research as a Practice of Wonder.” Guest Webinar, American Library Association ACRL-Choice. August 2019. 1 hour webinar.

“Minuet as Method: Embodied Performance in the Research Process.” Music, Media, and Culture Lecture Series, Centre for Music, Media & Place, Memorial University, September 2018.

“Thinking about Dismembering and Remembering in the Archives.” Panelist for *Silenced Voices Speak*, School of Music and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Memorial University, 2018.

“Emotions and the Embodied Researcher: Reflections on Autoethnography.” Panelist in a session titled “Matters of the (Research) Body: Theory and Practice in Conducting Feminist Research.” Nexus Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences Research, October 2017.

“Not Just a Bystander”, Women Lawyers Forum, Canadian Bar Association, Newfoundland and Labrador Branch, March 2017.

“Engaging Evenings: Between Darkness and Memory” (Invited roundtable participant), The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, January 2013.

“Dear Mr. Premier: Women’s Letters to J. R. Smallwood,” Invited guest lecture, Canadian Federation of University Women, St John’s Chapter, October 2011.

## AWARDS, GRANTS & HONOURS

### Awards

Newfoundland & Labrador Arts & Letters Awards (Senior Poetry), 2021.

Longlist, Newfoundland and Labrador Book Awards (Non-Fiction), 2021.

Honourable Mention, Very Best Book Awards (Non-Fiction), *The Miramichi Reader*, 2021.

Ursula Franklin Award in Gender Studies, Royal Society of Canada, 2020.

Finalist, Foreword INDIE Awards (2 Categories: Autobiography & Memoir and Multicultural), 2020.

Longlist, BMO Winterset Award for Excellence in Writing, 2020.

Winner, Marina Nemat Award (Outstanding Final Project), Creative Writing Program, University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies, 2018.

Finalist, ROOM Magazine Creative Non-Fiction Contest, 2015.

Longlist, CBC Canada Writes Creative Non-Fiction Contest, 2014.

### Grants

Professional Development for Artists Grant, Explore and Create program, Canada Council for the Arts, 2024.

Publication Subvention Grant, J.R. Smallwood Foundation for NL Studies, 2024.

Project Grant, ArtsNL, 2022 (classical music).

Aid to Scholarly Publications Award, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), 2019.

Insight Development Grant, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2015.

Aid to Scholarly Publications Award, CFHSS, 2015.

Standard Research Grant, SSHRC, 2011. *Shortlisted for SSHRC's Aurora Prize, 2011.*

Standard Research Grant, SSHRC, 2010.

### Honours

Member, College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists, Royal Society of Canada, 2022.

## RESIDENCIES

Writer-in-Residence, University of Manitoba, Winter 2025 (3 months).

Jampolis Cottage Self-Directed Residence, Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, December 2024.

## WRITING WORKSHOPS: DESIGN & FACILITATION

“When Archives Break Your Heart,” Writers’ Federation of Nova Scotia, March 2024. [online]

“(Re)Imagining a Sack: A Creative Writing Workshop,” for the symposium, *Discursive Constructions of Gender, Race, Indigeneity and Disability*, Memorial University, September 2023. [in person]

“HSS Grad Student Writing Retreat,” Nexus Centre for Humanities and Social Science Research, Memorial University. [in person, 2022; online, 2022; in person, 2018]

“Found Objects: Writing Identity With, Through, and Against Documents and Things,” for *Writing True, Creative Non-Fiction Collective Annual National Conference*, May 2021. [online]

(with Dr. Amanda Bittner), “Butt Glue, Biorhythms and Besties: 10 weeks to building an #acwri habit.” Departments of Gender Studies and Political Science, Memorial University [in person, 2021 and 2017]

“Four Principles for using (Academic) Social Media Respectfully.” *Graduate Student Public Scholar Program*, Memorial University, March 2018.

“Beating Procrastination,” *Launch Forth Student Leadership Conference*, Memorial University, October 2017.

## UNIVERSITY TEACHING

Since 1994, I have taught, supervised, and mentored graduate and undergraduate students at Memorial University, the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and Bangor University (previously University of North Wales). I centre arts-based practices in the classroom, and my students have regularly prepared creative assignments, from feminist detective fiction to zines to sculptures to knitivism to arts-based theses that include poetry, creative non-fiction, and visual art. For more on my creative approaches to university teaching, please see these articles:

- “What stories can yarn tell?” (2019)  
<https://gazette.mun.ca/campus-and-community/op-ed-dr-sonja-boon-2/>
- “Detective stories” (2017)  
<https://gazette.mun.ca/teaching-and-learning/detective-stories/>
- “Gender students get *Red Trench* beach ready.” (2014)  
<http://today.mun.ca/news.php?id=8867>

## PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Freelance writer, researcher, flutist, and teacher, Halifax, NS, 2023-present

Assistant, Associate & Full professor, Gender Studies, Memorial University, 2008-2023.

Sessional Lecturer, Women’s Studies, Simon Fraser University, 2006.

Sessional Lecturer, School of Music, University of British Columbia, 1998-2008.

Flute Instructor, Bangor University, Wales, 1993-1995.

## EDUCATION

Certificate in Creative Writing, University of Toronto Continuing Studies, 2017.  
PhD (Women's Studies), Simon Fraser University, 2008.  
MA (Liberal Studies), Simon Fraser University, 2004.  
Advanced Certificate (Early Music), Royal Conservatory, The Hague, 1997.  
Postgraduate Diploma (Flute), Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, 1994.  
Master of Music (Flute), Indiana University, 1993.  
Bachelor of Music in Performance (Honours), University of Toronto, 1991.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Literary & Music Juries

Jury member, Eileen McTavish Sykes Award for First Book, Manitoba Book Awards, 2023.  
Adjudicator, Newfoundland and Labrador Arts & Letters Awards, Senior Poetry, 2022.  
Jury member, Quebec Writers' Federation, Mavis Gallant Prize, 2020.  
Jury member, Canada Council for the Arts, Grants to Small Ensembles, 2008.

### Volunteer Activities

Participating writer, Writing Rumble Fundraiser, Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, 2024.  
Member, Literary Awards Committee, WritersNL, 2023-.  
Member, Board of Directors, *Riddle Fence*, St. John's, 2023-.  
Vice President, *WritersNL*, 2021-2023.  
Member, Eastern Edge Anti-Racism Mural Project Committee, *BIPOC Creators' Collective*, 2021  
Women's Vote 100, Ladies Reading Room Project, *PerSISTence Theatre*, St. John's, 2021.  
Performer, Harvest Moon Fundraiser, *Oxfam*, St. John's, 2012.  
Co-Founder, The Blue Castle: Conversations on Women, Culture and the Spaces of the Imagination, St. John's, 2008-2018.

### Professional Affiliations

Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, 2022-present.  
WritersNL, 2017-present.  
Writers' Union of Canada, 2019-present.