Five questions for Nicky Beer[1]
[2]

Writing poetry came naturally to 5-year-old Nicky Beer, but it took a bit longer for her to realize that teaching was what she was meant to do. Of course, she may have been influenced a bit by the fact that her parents, aunts and grandfather chose a career in academics.

“It’s kind of the family business,” said the award-winning writer and an associate professor at CU Denver’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “I have always written poetry, but I didn’t know until my 20s that I could do that as part of teaching for a living.”

Beer, who has been at the university since 2009, has written two books of poetry and has had works featured in numerous publications. She loves teaching, in part, because she can talk to a “group of really interesting people about literature and language and writing – the things that excite me and excite them.”
Nicky Beer’s “Don’t Miss” Reads **“Idaho”** by Emily Ruskovich – The author, who until recently taught at CU Denver and is now at Boise State University, has written a beautiful, emotionally intense first novel.

“The Tornado Is the World” by Catherine Pierce – This book of poetry uses the tornado as a recurring character.

“Landfalls” by Naomi J. Williams – I’m a sucker for 18th century seafaring novels. What I love about this book is that each chapter is told from a different point of view during a long and world-spanning journey.

“Little Fires Everywhere” by Celeste Ng – I loved her first book, “Everything I Never Told You,” and can’t wait to get my hands on this one.

She was particularly thrilled about joining the university so that she would work with her late colleague, Jake Adam York, who founded the creative writing program at the university as well as the national literary journal Copper Nickel, of which Beer is now an editor. For more information about Beer’s work, visit her website: http://www.nickybeer.com/[3]

When she is not teaching or writing, Beer gets creative in the kitchen. She calls Denver a “great town for cooks” thanks to retailers such as Western Daughters Butcher Shoppe and the Savory Spice Shop, and the Union Station farmer’s market.

1. How did poetry become your passion?

I grew up in a house where literature was valued. My parents were big readers; there were always books in the house and they always read to me. When I was a kid, there was a promo for a special on PBS about tigers. The voice-over used an excerpt from a William Blake poem, “The Tyger.” Hearing that use of language, I knew it was something different. This was a way of using language that was important and powerful and dramatic. It sounded very exciting to me.

I asked my parents about poetry and my dad showed me a book of poetry we had that included “The Tyger” in it. Very quickly, I wanted to write my own poetry and received encouragement from my teachers to keep writing it. It was a natural thing for me. The first full-fledged poem I wrote was in the fourth grade called “What’s at the End of the Rainbow.”

2. You’ve earned several awards and accolades for your poetry volumes. Is there one that has special meaning for you? Are you working on another volume or other projects?
Audio
Hear Nicky read her poem, "Juveniles[4]" on The New Yorker website.

Getting the Colorado Book Award for poetry (in 2010 for “The Diminishing House” and 2016 for “The Octopus Game”)

has been special because I love this state and I love living in the state. The writing community here is so robust and aesthetically diverse and ridiculously talented. To get an award that essentially is given to you by a jury of your peers in Colorado is a huge honor.

The fact that Colorado has a body that gives awards to Colorado writers and Colorado subjects is precious. Not all states do that. Colorado Humanities, which presents the awards, is a terrific organization and I'm hoping to see it grow and strengthen over the years because our cultural institutions are hugely important and need to be nurtured and protected.

I'm working on my third book of poems titled "Real Phonies and Genuine Fakes." The majority of poems are about fraud, forgery, fakery, duplicity, lying and things like that. I started working on it a couple of years ago, but it is surprisingly relevant now.

I'm also proud to say that I have a poem in an anthology of poems called "The Book of Donuts," which is all about donuts. I'm delighted to have my work in there because who doesn't love a collection about donuts?

3. How has the teaching of or popularity of creative writing changed over the past few years? Are there emerging writing trends?

There is an interesting trend in creative writing. A lot of creative writers and writers who teach creative writing and literature are friends on Facebook. If someone wants to teach a class they haven't taught before and don't know how to start, they pose the question on Facebook and people answer. You immediately get all this expertise from all these writers and professors instead of stumbling blind. You get these wonderful recommendations from people you trust, and that is shaping the teaching of creative writing and literature in a fantastic way. As much as we try and read and keep up, we can't possibly know everything. It's a fantastic way of exploring new venues in our pedagogy. And it is wonderful using those minds as a resource to become a better professor.

Creative writing classes are more popular than they used to be, but I do think that they are often a university's best-kept secret. In truth, these classes strengthen student skills in creativity and oral and written communication and constructive criticism. I'm surprised there is not more awareness of how creative writing is excellent for preparing students for any number of areas in the professional job market. There's a lot going on in these classes besides just writing poems and short stories.

I think there is a longstanding innate skepticism about how relevant whatever you learn in English or creative writing class is going to be in a professional context. But it is tremendously relevant and is useful wherever you go. I think English classes need better marketing.

4. A recent essay in The New York Times focused on spelling – in part because of the president's often misspelled tweets. The upshot was that correct spelling isn't a necessity in today's world. As someone who is engulfed by words, what are your thoughts on the state of the English language?

The English language is an always-evolving, shifting animal. The standards and correct usage are always changing and they always have. That being said, I would say it is about investing the energy in proofreading. Spelling correctly is a form of respect, both for oneself and one's audience.

Everyone makes typos, that's normal, especially because of the speed of our contemporary communication. There is nothing wrong with trying to hold oneself, or our elected officials, to a higher standard. As long as there is only a one-letter difference between the word "public" and the word "pubic," it would seem that proofreading one's writing will continue to be necessary. You can save yourself a lot of embarrassment and costly legal problems if you just read your work carefully a few times before sending it off.

5. Do you have a favorite item or artifact in your office that has special meaning to you? If so, what is it and what is the story behind it?

I collect a lot of skulls and bones. My first book of poems contains a lot of stuff about anatomy and I developed an

interest in bones. I have an interest in the sciences in general and I find bones fascinating. They are a great way to study the body up close.

I have a part of a pig's jaw on display in my office. My husband and my brother and sister-in-law and I went to a Denver restaurant where one menu item was a pig's head. We shared half a pig's head and I asked if I could keep the jaw. It reminds me of a lovely evening of adventurous eating with my loved ones, which is one of my favorite ways to spend my time.

Published Books of Poetry
[5]

The Octopus Game
Carnegie Mellon Poetry Series
February 3, 2015
Learn more[6]
[7]

The Diminishing House
Carnegie Mellon Poetry Series
January 12, 2010
Learn more[8]

O'Herron named Chief Human Resources Officer for CU system[9]
[10]

Felicity O'Herron on Tuesday joined the University of Colorado as Chief Human Resources Officer and Associate Vice President of Employee Services.

A seasoned Human Resources executive with more than 25 years of experience in HR and related law, O'Herron has spent her career as an executive at Colorado companies.

"I am thrilled that Felicity will be joining our already thriving team. She will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to this position," said Kathy Nesbitt, Vice President of Administration for the University of Colorado.

Most recently, O'Herron served as Senior Vice President of HR with Electric Lightwave (formerly Integra). She previously worked as Senior Vice President of HR for ProBuild Holdings, a building materials distributor, and as Vice President of HR for Qwest Communications.

O'Herron has extensive experience in talent acquisition and management, compensation, benefit plan design and administration, payroll, companywide training and internal HR communications, all of which she will oversee in her new role leading Employee Services. She has a track record of building strong HR teams and initiatives that drive company strategies and operational goals.

"I am excited for the opportunity to use my extensive experience in Human Resources and employee services in the field of higher education, an area of great interest to me," O'Herron said. "I look forward to working with the wonderful people I have met across the University of Colorado's system administration, and I am eager to build partnerships across CU campuses."

O'Herron serves on the board of Mile High United Way and has previously held board seats at MiCasa, Denver Career Services Authority, Bishop Machebeuf High School and the American Benefits Council.

O'Herron earned a law degree from the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America. She also holds an undergraduate degree in psychology from Bryn Mawr College.

New international employees must meet with tax specialist[11]

All new CU international employees – including faculty members, researchers, staff and students – must meet with one of Employee Services' international tax specialists to determine and document their U.S. tax status.
Prepare for your appointment with this Q&A:
Why am I required have an International Tax Appointment? What is the purpose of the appointment?

To comply with federal tax regulations, the university requires that international employees meet with an International Tax Specialist to determine and document their U.S. tax status.

During your appointment, we will explain the U.S. payroll tax rules that apply to you and help you complete related tax forms. You should leave the appointment with a good understanding of your U.S. tax residency status and personal responsibilities as a U.S. taxpayer.

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What should I bring to my appointment?

Please bring your passport, I-94 and immigration document (I-20, DS-2019, H1B approval, etc.) to your scheduled appointment. Be ready to discuss your entire history of presence in the United States, including previous visits in different immigration statuses.

A Social Security number is helpful but not required for your new employee appointment.

How do I make an appointment?

Schedule an appointment through the online scheduling system.

When should I schedule my appointment?

It's best to schedule an appointment as soon as you are hired at CU and ideally before you receive your first paycheck. However, these appointments fill fast, so there may be a wait during busy times of the semester. Employee Services can retroactively adjust your pay to correct withholding errors that may result from a delayed appointment.

If you begin working in the fall, please ensure you've completed your appointment before the end of the calendar year to avoid complicating your personal tax filing process.

How can I contact an International Tax Specialist?

Reach us by email IntlTax@cu.edu[12].

For more information on tax appointments, click here[13].

Schedule an appointment[14]

50 Years of Ralphie[15]

Better than Babel[16]

Kraemer Family Library begins review to keep collection up to date[17]

CU Student Agency builds pipeline for jobs[18]

Community comes together for Something Queer[19]
[20]

About 100 members of the CU Denver|Anschutz Medical Campus community convened for Something Queer, the annual back-to-school gathering of LGBTQ faculty, staff and allies.

Sponsored by the CU Denver Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the CU Denver Association of Lecturers and Instructors (UCDALI), the Aug. 17 event at the Lawrence Street Center's Terrace Room offered a networking opportunity and social support for new and veteran faculty and staff members to connect, engage and learn about cross-campus and cross-city happenings. Participants were welcomed by local LGBTQ organizations who shared information on important happenings in and around Denver.

Event organizer Edward Cannon, clinical associate professor at CU Denver's School of Education and Human Development, spoke about the importance of local communities of support for LGBTQ people and their allies.

"We are so fortunate to be here at CU Denver, where LGBTQ faculty and staff are acknowledged and affirmed for their positive contributions to the university community and beyond," Cannon said.
[21]

The event also is a time to reflect on the past year's successes while looking to the challenges yet to come.

Brenda Allen, vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion, spoke about the important role that LGBTQ faculty, staff and allies play in the university, and how this event is an embodiment of the university's strategic plan.

There was also time for food, drink and conversation, as CU Denver community members shared stories, milestones and goals for the new academic year.

Next year's Something Queer event is scheduled for Aug. 16, 2018, at CU Anschutz.

Records broken at fifth annual Block Party[22]

Jimeno earns R01 grants to make new models testing cancer immunotherapies[23]

CU Boulder researchers honored with Governor's Awards for high impact[24]

Bean named new alumni director[25]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/five-questions-nicky-beer[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/beer_01.jpg[3] http://www.nickybeer.com/[4] https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/04/juveniles-by-nicky-beer[5] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/beer_tog.jpg[6] https://www.amazon.com/Octopus-Game-Carnegie-Mellon-Poetry/dp/0887485936[7] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/beer_tdh.jpg[8] https://www.amazon.com/Diminishing-House-Carnegie-Mellon-Poetry/dp/0887485162/[9] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/o-herron-named-chief-human-resources-officer-cu-system[10] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/new-hr.jpg[11] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-international-employees-must-meet-tax-specialist-0[12] mailto:IntlTax@cu.edu[13] https://www.cu.edu/employee-services/payroll/international-employee-payroll[14] http://booknow.appointment-plus.com/43rspqeq/[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/50-years-ralphie[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/better-babel[17] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/kraemer-family-library-begins-review-keep-collection-date[18] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-student-agency-builds-pipeline-jobs[19] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/community-comes-together-something-queer[20] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/something-queer_01.jpg[21] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/something-queer_02.jpg[22] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/records-broken-fifth-annual-block-party[23] https://connections.cu.edu/people/jimeno-earns-r01-grants-make-new-models-testing-cancer-immunotherapies[24] https://connections.cu.edu/people/cu-boulder-researchers-honored-governor-s-awards-high-impact[25] https://connections.cu.edu/people/bean-named-new-alumni-director