

Here Are 4 New Phoenix Poetry Collections You Should Read

BY OFELIA MONTELONGO

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2016 AT 7 A.M.



Patricia C. Murphy reading from her book *Hemming Flames* at Changing Hands.

Ofelia Montelongo

Hemming Flames

By Patricia Colleen Murphy

Mental illness, a dysfunctional family, suicide attempts, and a mother on fire are some of the topics Murphy addressed in her first poetry collection. *Hemming Flames* was released in July 2016 by the Utah State University Press and won the 2016 May Swenson Poetry Award judged by Stephen Dunn. Murphy, a principal lecturer at Arizona State University's College of Integrative Sciences of Arts, worked on her book for more than 20 years. It serves as an autobiographical collection of poems. She describes her book as "a blend of surrealism and reality." She beautifully explores pain, dark humor, unstable adolescence, and depression in a genuine and relatable way. "This is not an easy book to read. This is not an easy book to read from. This was

not an easy book to write. This was not an easy life to live,” she says, referring to her childhood and to her mother, a woman with mental illness who was interned at more than 30 mental institutions.

“*Hemming Flames* represents something dangerous and impossible, and that has been my situation for a long part of my life,” she says. The name of her thought-provoking book comes from the last two sentences of her book: “Yesterday I invented fire. Today I’m hemming flames.” Her favorite poem from the collection is “Throwing the Proper Tantrums,” which captures the innocence of childhood.

Murphy is also founder of *Superstition Review* at Arizona State University, where she teaches magazine production. She has been teaching for the last 24 years, and her poems have been published by literary journals including *The Iowa Review*, *Quarterly West* and *American Poetry Review*. You can purchase Murphy’s book online [here](#). Murphy is currently working on a memoir about her family.

Her advice to aspiring writers is to “put in your 10,000 hours. Writing is a very difficult and very serious work.”



Josh Rathkamp is the author of *A Storm to Close the Door*.

Natasha Murdock

A Storm to Close the Door

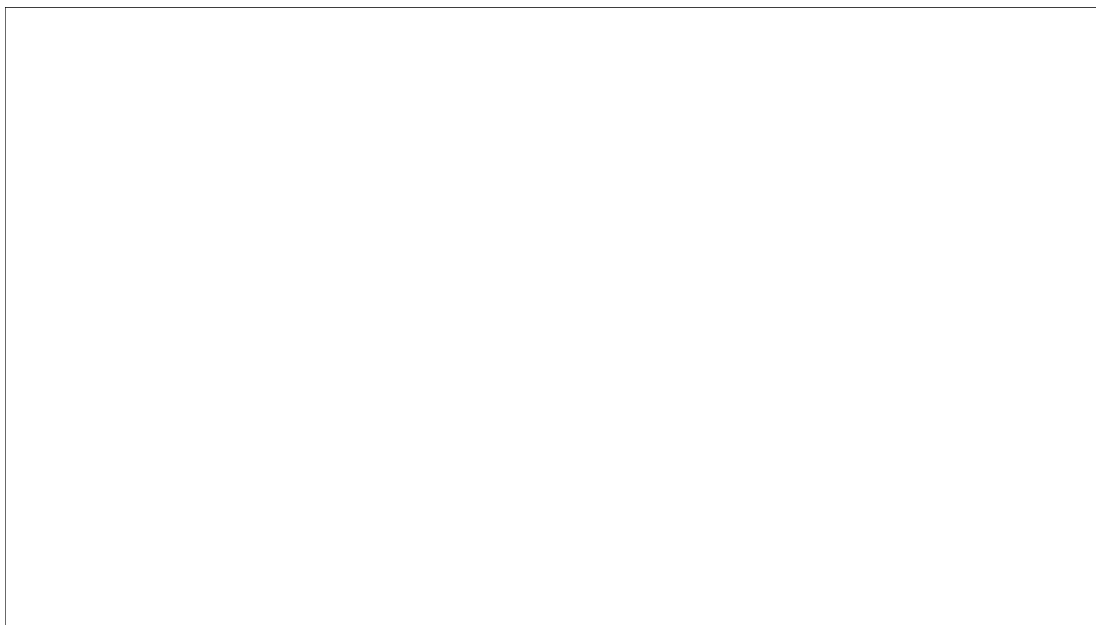
*A STORM TO CLOSE THE DOOR***By Josh Rathkamp**

Award-winning poet Josh Rathkamp is the director of the creative writing program at Mesa Community College. *Georgetown Review Press* released his second collection of poetry, *A Storm to Close the Door*, on October 30, and it was selected by Terrance Hayes for the 2016 Georgetown Review Poetry Prize. Rathkamp's second book was inspired by circumstances surrounding his life. "I became a single father, and was dropped into a contentious legal battle for my right to be a father," he says. "This book is a reflection on that time in my life." Among his favorite poems from the book is "Single Father," which was the inspiration for the whole collection. He finished it more than five years ago, and it sat as a file on his computer for another three years. "Because of its personal and tough nature, I didn't want to pick it up. I didn't want to have to read it, or read from it," he says. The author says he is somehow a little different from who he was while writing it, and he is proud of the book's outcome.

Rathkamp has an MFA in poetry from Arizona State University and an MFA in poetry translation from Drew University. His work has been published by several literary journals, including *American Poetry Review*. He has been awarded with the Arizona Artist Grant and has been named a Virginia G. Piper Writing Fellow. Currently, he is working on his third book, which he describes as "irreverent and humorous, but still focused on social commentary."

His work is available for purchase [online](#) at Barnes and Noble, [Amazon](#), and Changing Hands.

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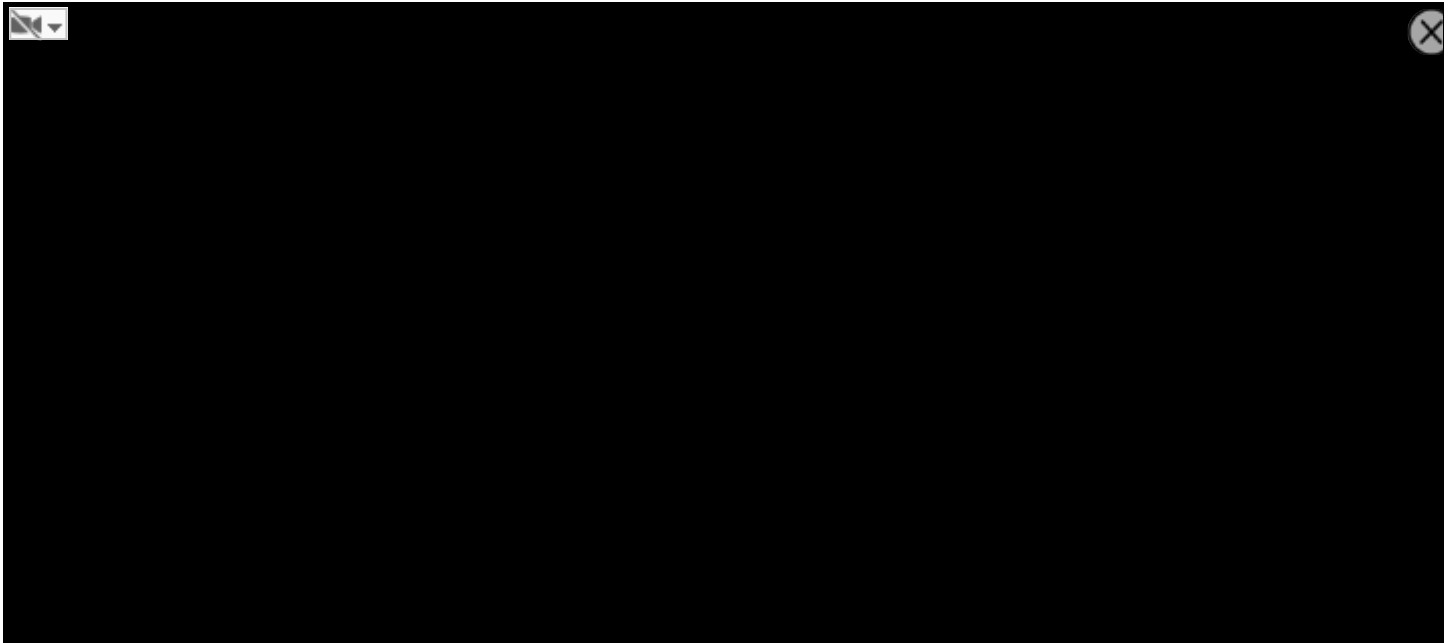
inRead invented by Teads

His advice to aspiring writers is to “keep your butt in the seat and write – the Cheez-Its will still be in the cupboard in an hour or two.”

Editor's note: This post has been updated to reflect that Dombrowski will no longer hold a book event at Lost Leaf on December 14.

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