

Lecture & Reading – 12 July 2023, 19:30, In English

Rather than take up the literary world's on and off obsession with classifications and genre demarcations, this talk will center on the relationship between ideas, things, forms, and shapes — how writing can be a practice of, as poet A. R. Ammons once put it, looking for 'the forms|things want to come as'. What does it mean for a thing to want to come as a form? What is the relationship between the content of an idea and its shape on the page? To examine such questions, Nelson will read from a variety of her works and think about how they relate (or don't) to poet Robert Creeley's famous contention, 'form is never more than an extension of content'. Possible tributary lines of thought include: the literary nature of (some) philosophy; the question of 'vernacular scholarship' (a term coined by Eileen Myles), various strategies of performing the self in writing; and the value of never settling, of staying on the move.

Maggie Nelson is the author of several acclaimed books of poetry and prose, including the forthcoming collection *Like Love: Essays and Conversations* (2024), the national bestseller *On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint* (2021), the National Book Critics Circle Award winner *The Argonauts* (2015), *The Art of Cruelty: A Reckoning* (2011), *Bluets* (2009; named by Bookforum as one of the top 10 best books of the past 20 years), *The Red Parts* (2007), *Women, the New York School, and Other True Abstractions* (2007), and *Jane: A Murder* (2005). In 2016 she received a MacArthur 'genius' Fellowship. She currently teaches at the University of Southern California and lives in Los Angeles.

Followed by a Q&A with Marta Aleksandrowicz, Mark Anthony Cayanan, and Ruth Ramsden-Karelse

Maggie Nelson

The Forms Things Want to Come As

