

KELLY GRACE THOMAS



POET. CREATOR. EDUCATOR.



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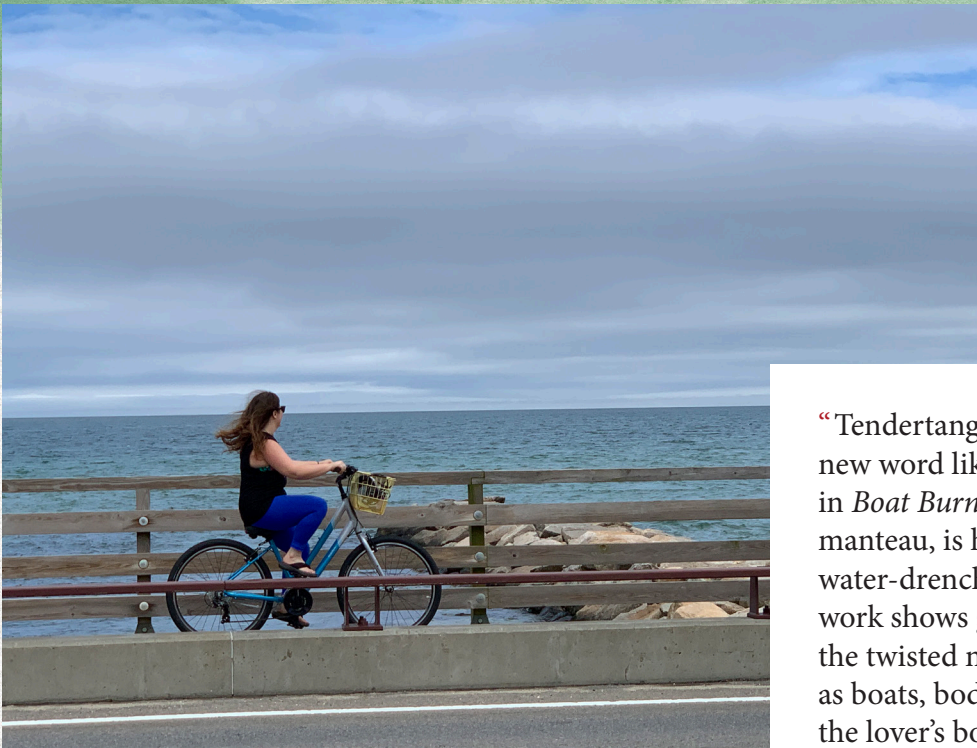
Kelly Grace Thomas is the winner of the 2017 Neil Postman Award for Metaphor from *Rattle*, a 2018 finalist for the Rita Dove Poetry Award, a multiple Pushcart and Best of the Next nominee. *Boat Burned*, her first full-length collection, is forthcoming from YesYes Books in 2020. Kelly's poems have appeared or are forthcoming in: *Best New Poets 2019*, *the Los Angeles Review*, *Redivider*, *Nashville Review*, *Muzzle*, *DIAGRAM*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry* and more. Kelly currently works to bring poetry to underserved youth as the Director of Education and Pedagogy for Get Lit- Words Ignite. She is the co-author of *Words Ignite: Explore, Write and Perform, Classic and Spoken Word Poetry* (Literary Riot). This textbook and curriculum is currently taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District using poetry to target English intervention skills. Kelly is a three-time poetry slam championship coach. She is passionate about helping others develop their voice. Through her work with Get Lit and beyond, Kelly has coached poets who have performed at Dodger Stadium, Library of Congress, The Gates Educational Conference ECET2 and the United Nations. She has helped edit and refine writing and performances prepared for icons such as Gloria Steinem, Maria Shriver, Tom's Shoes and more.

Kelly is also screenwriting partners with her sister Kat Thomas. Their screenplay, *Magic Little Pills*, a romantic comedy about a pyramid scheme, won Best Feature Length Screenplay at the Portland Comedy Film Festival. Together they also run Kat's food and travel blog, *Edible Skinny* as well as co-own the *Zelda Fitzgeralds*, a side-hustle, that features typewritten on-demand poetry business. Kelly lives in the Bay Area with her husband, Omid and is currently working on her debut novel, a YA thriller, titled *Only 10.001*.

www.kellygracethomas.com

HONORS

- Best New poets 2019
- 2017 Neil Postman Award for Metaphor
- Multiple Best of the Net and Pushcart Prize Nominee
- Best Feature Length Screenplay at the Portland Comedy Film Festival



PUBLICATIONS

- **Boat Burned**, (YesYes Books, 2020)
- **Words Ignite: Explore, Write and Perform, Classic and Spoken Word Poetry** (Literary Riot, 2017)

“In this remarkable inaugural collection of poems, Kelly Grace Thomas reminds us water is where we are from, water is what we are made of, and water is where we’ll return. These formally dexterous poems invite the reader to consider how the craft of a poem is a physical object that helps keep us afloat. *Boat Burned* interrogates the moment where the embodied spirit butts up against the strictures and violence of an impossible world. This is an urgent new collection from an urgent new voice.”

- **sam sax on *Boat Burned***

“Tendertangle—I love when a book makes a new word like Kelly Grace Thomas does here in *Boat Burned*. A tendertangle, a lush portmanteau, is how I drank and devoured these water-drenched poems. This mercy-hearted work shows great concern and empathy for the twisted mess and mass of bodies—bodies as boats, bodies burning, body as a window, the lover’s body, and the parental body as a woven elegy and ode. This gorgeous debut is a sustained symphonic metaphor on what we carry in our vessels, all the damage and joy (inherited and otherwise) sailing and sinking and singing through magnificent verse. Thomas is a master of intense precision of feeling. The diction is hungry and barking “for anything to love us back.” I am beyond excited for this brilliant and beautiful collection.”

- **Tiana Clark on *Boat Burned***

“Beautiful, what a gem! Lovely. Incredible book — needs to be in every room, hope, village, street, café, field, roof, living room, corner, cafeteria and art studio! Still floored and unroofed by this book.”

- **Juan Felipe Herrera, Poet-Laureate of the United States, 2015-2017, on *Words Ignite***



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LIFE/BOAT

Don't worry.

Your mother will always live
inside the house you built
for her. A sailboat can only wait
so long for wind. When you run
aground the buoys nod a quiet

I know. Omid loves you.

Anchor the children close.

At sunrise you write
about the morning after
your sister almost died.

Then your mother.

The many ways the sea tries
to take. They say tell me
a story and you never know
the right way to spill.

This is the one where you
and your father tied
yourselves to dark. Sailed
all night to make it
to Florida. Holding only a memory
of sleep. This was the biggest
goodbye. Your legs still
rock. Now in the mornings
you look at clouds you named
together. How each of you
chose your shape.