

THE MARSH BERKELEY PRESENTS LYNNE KAUFMAN'S  
**POETIC JUSTICE**

Written by Lynne Kaufman

Directed by Sheila Balter

Performed by Lorri Holt and Charles Shaw Robinson

October 14 – November 5, 2023

BERKELEY, CA (14 September 2023) — **The Marsh Berkeley** audiences will take a deep dive into the true lives of three distinguished writers with **Lynne Kaufman's** *Poetic Justice* this fall. Starring Bay Area favorites **Charles Shaw Robinson** and **Lorri Holt**, this double bill features *You Must Change Your Life* and *Divine Madness* – one-act plays written by Kaufman and directed by **Sheila Balter**. *Poetic Justice* will play **October 14 – November 5, 2023**, with performances at 8:00pm Saturdays and 5:00pm Sundays at **The Marsh Berkeley**, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. For information or to order tickets (\$25-\$35 sliding scale, \$50 and \$100 reserved), the public may visit [themarsh.org](http://themarsh.org).

The evening begins with *You Must Change Your Life*, revealing the creation of Rainer Maria Rilke's timeless masterpiece, *Letters to a Young Poet*. Torn between becoming a writer or an officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army, 19-year-old Franz Kappus writes a poem for Rilke in 1902, asking for feedback. A single letter turns into a series of correspondences. After Rilke's death, Kappus compiles and publishes Rilke's letters to him. But what about his letters to Rilke? A recent discovery provides a surprising answer. *Divine Madness* recounts the love story of poet Robert Lowell and writer Elizabeth Hardwick, who were famously divorced when Lowell, who suffered frequent debilitating bouts of manic depression, left Hardwick to marry an English heiress. He then documented the end of his marriage in a volume of poetry, *The Dolphin*, that scandalized the literary world and won him the Pulitzer Prize. *Divine Madness* follows the couple as they consider reuniting and invites audiences to explore the questions: Is art worth that much? Can love survive madness and betrayal?

### **ABOUT LYNNE KAUFMAN**

**Lynne Kaufman** is the author of 20 full-length plays that have been produced in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and Louisville at such theatres as Magic Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, and many more – with *Poetic Justice* being her most recent work. Three of Kaufman’s plays, *Acid Test*, *Two Minds*, and *Who Killed Sylvia Plath* have premiered on stage at The Marsh, while two others, *Exposing Margaret Mead* and *The Smartest Woman in America* have appeared on The Marsh’s digital platform, MarshStream. *Who Killed Sylvia Plath* went on to win Best Play in The Marsh’s 2020 MarshStream International Solo Festival. Kaufman’s plays have won many awards including the Glickman Award for Best New Play (*The Couch*), the Kennedy Center’s Fund for New American Plays Award (*Speaking in Tongues*), and the Neil Simon Festival New Play Award (*William Blake in Hollywood*). Kaufman has published four novels and her short stories have appeared in *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, and *McCall’s*. She was also the recipient of the Otis Guernsey Outstanding New Voice in American Theatre Award from the William Inge Theatre Festival.

### **ABOUT CHARLES SHAW ROBINSON**

A familiar face on Bay Area stages who received his theatre training at Julliard, **Charles Shaw Robinson** has been seen locally in leading roles at San Francisco Playhouse, Marin Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theatre, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre, as well as at theatres across the country. His regional theatre credits include the title roles in *Hamlet* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *Pericles* (Center Stage, Baltimore); *Scaramouche* (Empty Space Theatre, Seattle); and *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (Word for Word, San Francisco). He was recently seen in New York in the American premiere of Frank McGuiness’ *Gates of Gold* at 59E59 Theaters as well as *Public Enemy: Flint* (Unicorn Theatre), for and with the residents of Flint, Michigan.

### **ABOUT LORRI HOLT**

**Lorri Holt** is a longtime leading actress in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she was a company member for 10 years with the Eureka Theatre, where she was featured in more than two dozen productions and originated the role of Harper Pitt in Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*. Holt’s regional and international credits include work at La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, The Wilma Theater in Philadelphia, Birmingham Rep in England, and London’s Barbican Theatre. She originated the title role in *Who Killed Sylvia Plath?*, also by Kaufman, at The Marsh, which received an award for Best Full-Length Performance at the Marsh International Solo Festival in 2020. The solo show *Colette Uncensored*, about the life and work of the famous French writer which she co-wrote with poet and translator Zack Rogow, was nominated for Best Solo Production and Best Solo Performance by Theatre Bay Area and the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle. *Colette Uncensored* has been performed at The Marsh, London’s Canal Café Theatre, Cerimon House in Portland, San Francisco’s Presidio Theatre, and at The LIFEs Festival in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Holt holds a BA in Theatre from UC Berkeley and an MFA in Writing & Literature from Bennington College in Vermont.

## **ABOUT SHELIA BALTER**

**Sheila Balter** (Director) is a core company member of Word for Word who last directed *HOME* by George Saunders which ran at ZSpace and then toured France. Other directing credits with the company include *In the Garden of the North American Martyrs* by Tobias Wolff, *4 Adverbs* by Daniel Handler (chapters from his book *Adverbs*), *The Islanders* by Andrew Sean Greer (LitQuake; France tour), *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (chapters for school tour), *Holiday High Jinx*, short works by Damon Runyon, Joseph Mitchell, and E.B. White, and *The Kugelmass Episode* by Woody Allen (City Arts & Lectures). She has directed for Encore Theatre Company, Brava for Women in the Arts, and California Shakespeare Theater (Cal Shakes). Sheila also works as a Bay Area actress, teacher, and coach.

## **ABOUT THE MARSH**

**The Marsh** is known as “a breeding ground for new performance.” It was launched in 1989 by Founder and Artistic Director Stephanie Weisman, and pre-COVID hosted more than 600 performances of 175 shows across the company’s two venues in San Francisco and Berkeley. A leading outlet for solo performers, The Marsh’s specialty has been hailed by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “solo performances that celebrate the power of storytelling at its simplest and purest.” The *East Bay Times* named The Marsh one of Bay Area’s best intimate theaters, calling it “one of the most thriving solo theaters in the nation. The live theatrical energy is simply irresistible.” Since its launch in April 2020, the theatre’s digital platform MarshStream has garnered more than 100,000 viewers. Notable MarshStream moments include the debut of MarshStream International Solo Fest 1 and 2, The Marsh’s first-ever digital festivals, and the U.S. premiere of *The Invisible Line*, a new documentary about one of the world’s most famous social experiments gone wrong. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic MarshStream has hosted over 700 live streams, providing some 300 performers a platform to continue developing and producing art. The Marsh will continue to offer digital content on MarshStream, as well as in-person performances.

## **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** **The Marsh Berkeley** audiences will take a deep dive into the true lives of three distinguished writers with **Lynne Kaufman**’s *Poetic Justice* this fall. Starring Bay Area favorites **Charles Shaw Robinson** and **Lorri Holt**, this double bill features *You Must Change Your Life* and *Divine Madness* – one-act plays written by Kaufman and directed by **Sheila Balter**. *You Must Change Your Life* explores the creation of Rainer Maria Rilke’s timeless masterpiece, *Letters to a Young Poet*. Torn between becoming a writer or an officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army, 19-year-old Franz Kappus corresponds with the great poet Rilke. He later publishes Rilke’s responses but tantalizingly leaves out his own correspondence. Why? *Divine Madness* recounts the love story of poet Robert Lowell and writer

Elizabeth Hardwick, who were famously divorced when Lowell, left Hardwick to marry an English heiress and then documented the end of his marriage in a volume of poetry, *The Dolphin*, that scandalized the literary world and won him the Pulitzer Prize.

**WHEN:** **October 14 – November 5, 2023**

**SHOWS:** 8:00pm Saturdays  
5:00pm Sundays

**WHERE:** **The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley**  
*Parking: Allston Way Garage, 2061 Allston Way between Milvia & Shattuck.*  
*BART station (closest): Downtown Berkeley BART*

**TICKETS:** \$25-\$35 sliding scale; \$50 and \$100 reserved

**INFO:** For information or to order tickets visit [themarsh.org](http://themarsh.org) or call (415) 282-3055 (Monday through Friday, 1:00pm-4:00pm).

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**PRESS:** Contact Courtney Heimbeck, Carla Befera & Co.  
[courtney@cb-pr.com](mailto:courtney@cb-pr.com)

**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available here:  
<http://cbpr.co/press/poeticjustice>