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Dear Members of the English Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for your position of one-year visiting faculty member with a focus on contemporary literature in the Department of English at Albion College. I received my Ph.D. from the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY), in May 2019. I am currently working on my book manuscript, *Hybrid Texts, Chosen Communities: Domesticity and Urbanism in the New York School*, which examines gendered connections between small-scale spaces and community networks in the New York School poetry of the late twentieth century. *Contemporary Literature* has invited me to revise and resubmit an article from this project entitled “‘living together in our separate apartments’ and Other Remixed Social Spheres in David Antin’s *talking at the boundaries*.” I will soon submit a second article, “Poetic Networks and Social Scenes: The Collective Autoliterature of Hettie Jones, LeRoi Jones, and Frank O’Hara.”

At CUNY, I honed my student-center pedagogy through my work as a writing consultant at the Graduate Center. As a writing consultant, I met individually with graduate students at both the master’s and doctoral levels to help them think through how to improve their drafts of master’s thesis projects, dissertations, assignments, job application materials, and manuscript submissions. I asked pointed questions in response to their drafts to offer constructive feedback and make sure they know what next steps should take greatest priority when they resume work on their drafts. Additionally, I collaborated with colleagues to organize and lead programming, including a weekly peer-review workshop in which we coached students through providing one another with both feedback and accountability for their long-term writing projects.

My eagerness to address students’ needs and to empower students to guide our work in the classroom characterizes my student-centered pedagogy. For several years I taught “Introduction to Writing about Literature” and “Expository Writing,” required composition courses at Hunter College, a senior college in the CUNY system where students come from a wide diversity of backgrounds in terms of both demographics and educational preparedness. We served excellent students who go on to graduate work as well as basic writers. Using syllabi I designed, “Introduction to Writing about Literature” taught freshmen to rigorously close-read prose fiction, Shakespearean drama, and poetry, and to write a research paper interpreting a literary work in conversation with critical sources. In my teaching, I adjust readings to reflect and relate to current political events, highlighting poetry about police brutality and race relations following the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, and op-eds about income inequality during the Occupy Wall Street movement, for example. I believe that the more seriously I take students’ input regarding their own education, and the more relevant I make their education to their lives, the more effectively I can teach them to interpret difficult texts. My pedagogy nurtures diversity in the classroom. Specifically, in my seven years’ teaching at CUNY, I sought to teach students how language can make our world more just. We interrogated and used certain terms—from gendered pronouns to racialized monikers—when referring to various identities because we think it is important to refer to people using the words

they choose for themselves. I have designed my syllabi to emphasize texts by writers of color. I strive to help my students practice their interpretive skills on texts by authors and about characters whose voices are underrepresented in our literary discourse. My job is to lead students to texts that will help them consider issues of stigma through the voices of people who have experienced unjust treatment and to refer students to sources that can contextualize these primary texts.

My simultaneous investment in creative writing also guides my teaching, in part because of my own writing in multiple genres. Creative assignments help engage students with different learning styles; for instance, when students write poems called “Boy” in response to Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl,” I can see what they consider to be important about Kincaid’s style. I bring sound into our poetry conversations by having students read a poem aloud and discuss the way their readings suggest it should be read, asking them what formal qualities of the poem led them to their particular oral performance, and then playing them audio recordings of the original writer’s reading of his or her work, to compare to their own. At Albion, I am eager to teach courses on the Harlem Renaissance and to examine with students the historical trajectory of the Black Arts Movement and its poetry.

My book manuscript investigates the intimate and politically charged interpersonal relationships in offshoots of the New York School poetry, a late twentieth-century avant-garde movement. I use modernist and contemporary spatial theory to argue that the bohemianism and decadence characterizing this poetic movement was explicitly political in the community formations it promoted. I examine *household scenes*—the intimate interactions among members of a social group in the apartments and streets of Manhattan and the distant towns to which many of these poets retreated from urban life. Just as the composition of these poets’ families, or the close friends they treated as kin, ignored reigning ideals of the nuclear family, so too their writing countered lofty academic poetry. These nonbiological families inhabit spaces unrestricted by the walls of private residences; similarly, the poetry that records their experience of such spaces undermines contemporaneous lyrical conventions. This poetry experiments with new ways of being in writing as it uses pastiche, garrulousness, and unconventional punctuation, among other tactics, to enact its writers’ radical or queer domesticity on the page. In imagining new modes of inhabiting space and of relating to others through text, its writers chart an expanding polis that countered prevalent race, sex, and class injustices.

My next project explores the blurring of fact and fiction in women’s life-writing of the later New York School. Writers of hybrid texts such as Eileen Myles, Maggie Nelson, and Chris Kraus are interested in artistic genealogies and frequently refer to their influences in the works of their literary forebears, the poets my current work investigates. How do these authors bend genre forms to trouble the boundaries between literary history, memoir, poetry, and criticism?

At the Graduate Center, I have performed many forms of service. In my role on the English Student Association’s Alumni Committee, I spearheaded a fundraising effort that raised money for student travel for research and conferences. As Co-Chair of the Poetics Group, I emceed and curated department poetry readings and helped compile and self-publish a poetry zine with writing and illustrations by student contributors. I also organized a panel with fellow students, “Periodizing the Twentieth Century,” in which faculty members discussed the value and drawbacks of conventional periodizations and other disciplinary frameworks, as well as ideas for new ones. I look forward to contributing similarly at Albion.

I look forward to hearing from you, as I am enthusiastic about continuing my commitment to teaching and mentoring young people at a student-oriented liberal arts college. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Bidwell Goetz