

# Joy M. Priest

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D. *Literature & Creative Writing*, University of Houston, projected class of 2024  
Dissertation: *The Black Outside*  
Exams Specializations: Black Modernity: Diasporic Literatures & Translation and Critical  
Ecopoetics

M.F.A. *Creative Writing*, University of South Carolina, 2019  
Poetry, Thesis: *Horsepower*  
Thesis Committee: Nikky Finney, Samuel Amadon, Michael Dowdy, Carla Pfeffer  
*Graduate Certificate*, University of South Carolina, 2019  
Women & Gender Studies

B.S. *Information & Communication Sciences*, University of Kentucky, 2012  
Print Journalism

Relevant Coursework: Colonial Modernity, Black and Native Poetics, Feminist Theory

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2020-present *Lecturer*, Dept. of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, University of Houston

2021-present *Teaching Fellow/ Instructor of Record*, Dept. of English, University of Houston

2020 *Lecturer*, Dept. of Liberal Studies, Spalding University

2016-2019 *Teaching Fellow/ Instructor of Record*, Dept. of English, University of South  
Carolina

2018-2019 *Graduate Instructional Assistant*, Dept. of Women & Gender Studies, University  
of South Carolina

2018 *Lecturer*, Dept. of African American Studies, University of South Carolina

## SELECTED HONORS

2023 Aikens Taylor Lecturer for *The Sewanee Review*, honoring the work of Patricia Smith

2022 Finalist, Alice Fay Di Castagnola Award, Poetry Society of America

2022 Winner, Inprint Paul Verlaine Prize in Poetry

2021 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Literature

2020 Stanley Kunitz Memorial Prize, *American Poetry Review*

2019-2020 Poetry Fellow, Fine Arts Work Center at Provincetown

2019	Nikki Giovanni Scholar, Appalachian Writers' Workshop
2019	Winner, Donald Hall Prize for Poetry, AWP
2019-2021	Stegner Fellowship in Poetry (Declined)
2018	Gregory Pardlo Fellow, The Frost Place

## PUBLICATIONS

### Books

(forthcoming) *Once a City Said: A Louisville Poets Anthology*. Editor. Sarabande Books, 2023.

- Conceived in the aftermath of city-wide protests in 2020, *Once a City Said* showcases the polyvocal communities of Louisville, Kentucky, a city celebrated for its bourbon, basketball, and horseracing, but long fraught with racial injustice, police corruption, and social unrest. Priest takes the city's narrative out of the mouths of politicians, news anchors, and police chiefs, and puts it into the mouths of poets. What emerges is an intimate report of a city misshapen by segregation, tourism, and ruptures in the public trust. Featuring thirty-seven acclaimed and emerging poets—including Mitchell L. H. Douglas, Erin Keane, Ryan Ridge, and Hannah L. Drake—*Once a City Said* archives the traditions and icons, the landmarks and spirits, the portraits and memories of Derby City.

*Horsepower*. Pitt Poetry Series, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. Print

- Winner of the 2019 Donald Hall Prize in Poetry from the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP). Chosen by Natasha Trethewey, Pulitzer Prize-winner and 19<sup>th</sup> U.S. Poet Laureate.
- Nominated for John Leonard Prize for first book in any genre from the National Book Critics Circle Award.
- “One of the best debuts of the year.” —*The Millions*.
- Priest's debut collection, *Horsepower*, is a cinematic escape narrative that radically envisions a daughter's waywardness as aspirational. Across the book's three sequences, we encounter the speaker as a Black child being raised in the shadow of Churchill Downs, Kentucky's world-famous horseracing track, and the landscape of a harshly segregated Louisville. Out of a space that is at once southern and urban, violent and beautiful, racially-charged and working-class, she attempts to transcend her social and economic circumstances. Unlike the traditional Bildungsroman, the speaker lacks the freedom to come of age naively in the urban South and must instead possess the wisdom of “the horses & their restless minds.”
- “Through tragedy and triumph, Joy Priest's poems thunder in the ears like a supercharged heartbeat. Her landscapes drawn technicolor, intense with paradox and heat, devotion is indistinguishable from rage. *Horsepower* seethes with so much intelligence and feeling that comparisons to Hurston are inevitable. Jean Toomer also comes quickly to mind, but Priest's voice is one of a kind. Let these poems comfort you, if you dare, soft as the pillow that hides the gun.” —Gregory Pardlo

### Anthologies

- 2023 *Another Last Call: Poems on Addiction & Deliverance*, “Blue Heart Baby” and “The Collar,” edited by Kaveh Akbar and Paige Lewis. Sarabande Books.
- 2023 *What Things Cost: An Anthology for the People*, “All My Mothers,” edited by Rebecca Gayle Howell and Ashley M. Jones. University Press of Kentucky.

- 2023 *That's a Pretty Thing to Call It: Prose and Poetry by Artists Teaching in Carceral Institutions*, "Nightstick," and "A Personal History of Breathing," edited by Leigh Sugar. New Village Press
- 2021 *Home is Where You Queer Your Heart*, "American Honey," "Blue Heart Baby," "Rodeo," and "Dear Aunt Louise, Muh," Edited by Miah Jeffra, Arisa White, and Monique Mero-Williams, Foglifter Press
- 2020 *Patrice Lumumba: An Anthology of Writers on Black Liberation*, "All My Mothers," Nomadic Press
- 2020 *A Measure of Belonging: Writers of Color on the New American South*, "I Feel Most Southern in the Hip-Hop of My Adolescence: On Black Southern Intra-regionality, Mobility, and Internalized Misogyny," edited by Cinelle Barnes, Hub City Press
- 2020 *Best New Poets 2019*, "American Honey," Edited by Cate Marvin and Jeb Livingood, The University of Virginia Press
- 2019 *Bounty Everlasting: Poetry from 25 Years of Southern Cultures*, "American Honey," Edited by Gabrielle Calvocoressi and Marina Greenfield, University of North Carolina Press
- 2017 *Black Bone: 25 Years of the Affrilachian Poets*, "Nightstick," "In the City," Edited by Bianca Lynne Spriggs and Jeremy Paden, The University Press of KY
- 2017 *Best New Poets 2016*, "Ode to Hushpuppy," Edited by Mary Szybist and Jeb Livingood, The University of Virginia Press
- 2015 *The Breakbeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip Hop*, "No Country for Black Boys," Edited by Quraysh Ali Lansana, Kevin Coval, and Nate Marshall, Haymarket Books
- 2015 *Best New Poets 2014*, "Nightstick," Edited by Dorianne Laux and Jazzy Danziger, The University of Virginia Press

### Scholarly Articles

- 2019 *CrossCurrents*, "Toward a Black Femme Fugitive Poetics"

### Poetry

- Forthcoming *Los Angeles Review of Books*, "Keats Rides Shotgun"
- Forthcoming *The Nation*, "The Black Outside (Spirit: — I have heard the spirituals)"
- 2023 *Kenyon Review*, "The Black Outside (The jazz, it puts you on a swing. . .)" and "Redemption"
- 2022 *Poet Lore*, Vol. 117, No. 1/2, "It's Beyond Me"
- 2022 *Indiana Review*, "The Black Outside (We brought the blues. . .)"
- 2022 *Hayden's Ferry Review*, "Bass," "Soulful Songs Found in Strange Places," and "My Sister"
- 2022 *Shenandoah*, "My First Kiss Was in a Choir Room"
- 2021 *The Bitter Southerner*, "We Had Dreams Named After Us"
- 2021 *Poetry Daily*, "Ghost Ride"
- 2021 *Poem-a-Day*, "Looking for the Beautiful Things"
- 2021 *The Atlantic*, "Ghosts in Schools"
- 2020 *American Poetry Review*, "A Personal History of Breathing"
- 2020 *Poetry Northwest*, "Dear Aunt Louise, Muh"
- 2020 *Poem-a-Day*, "Denial is a cliff we are driven over"
- 2020 *BOAAT PRESS*, "Somebody's Bitter Elder"
- 2020 *The Atlantic*, "All My Mothers"

- 2020 *Wildness*, “Little Lamp,” “Where There is History, We Haunt”  
 2020 *Virginia Quarterly Review*, “Junker,” “Pegasus,” “Ars Poetica”  
 2020 *The Southeast Review*, “My Father Teaches Me How to Disappear”  
 2019 *Scalawag*, “The night never ended when one of us died”  
 2019 *Mississippi Review*, “Horsepower”  
 2019 *Gulf Coast Journal*, “Girl 6”  
 2018 *Four Way Review*, “The Payphone”  
 2018 *The Rumpus*, “My Father Teaches Me About the Bees,” “Winning Colors, 1988,”  
 “Quilt ‘n’ Frames”  
 2018 *Connotation Press*, “Rodeo”  
 2018 *The Puritan*, “Upon Reading James Lipton’s *An Exaltation of Larks?*”  
 2018 *Southern Cultures*, “American Honey”  
 2018 *Verse Daily*, “Nightstick”  
 2017 *Blackbird*, “Spell to Reverse Loss of Memory,” “My Father Teaches Me How to  
 Handle a Pistol”  
 2017 *The Shallow Ends*, “Drift”  
 2017 *Reservoir Journal*, “Elegy for Kentucky,” “My Father Teaches Me How to  
 Disappear”  
 2017 *Winter Tangerine*, “Ode to Hushpuppy”  
 2017 *Third Coast Magazine*, “Runaway”  
 2016 *Callaloo Journal*, “doula”  
 2016 *Cosmonauts Avenue*, “Sorry,” “Timelapse in Flagrante Delicto”  
 2016 *Vinyl Poetry*, “Ghost Ride”  
 2016 *Blunderbuss Magazine*, “Blue Heart Baby”  
 2016 *Scalawag*, “God of the Motorcade”  
 2015 *Muzzle Magazine*, “Menace,” “Peripatetic,” “door,” “Bouquet Triptych”  
 2014 *Drunken Boat*, “Derby”  
 2014 *Solstice Literary Magazine*, “In Perigee,” “The Young Just Live”  
 2014 *Toe Good Poetry Journal*, “In the City”  
 2013 *Pluck! Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, “Birth”  
 2013 *Still: the Journal*, “Sorting Wheat”

## Essays

- 2020 *The Bitter Southerner*, “I Feel Most Southern in the Hip-Hop of My Adolescence:  
 On Black Southern Mobility, Intra-Regionality, and Internalized Misogyny”  
 2020 *Poets & Writers*, “The Cinema Factory,” “The Black Bildungsroman,” “Craft is  
 Not Objective,” and “The Authority of Black Childhood”  
 2020 *The Undeclared*, “Megan thee Stallion’s IG Live video is a reminder of ‘We Wear  
 the Mask’ poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar”  
 2020 *The Undeclared*, “Simone Biles shows how violence against women continues to  
 be tucked under the floor mat”  
 2019 *The Undeclared*, “‘Don’t try this at home,’ Simone Biles has everyone scrambling  
 for a revision”  
 2019 *espnW*, “In Her Shoes: Unlacing my Nike Air Swoopes”  
 2017 *espnW*, “Finding the Experience of a Woman Flaneur”  
 2016 *Anthropoid Journal*, “Kinfolk”  
 2016 *espnW*, “The Athleticism of Beyoncé”  
 2014 *The Blueshift Journal*, “In the In-Between”

2013 *Pluck! Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, “American Spirit”

### Reviews

- 2023 *American Poetry Review*, “On Ama Codjoe, *Bluest Nude*”  
2022 *EcoTheo Review*, “Brooks’ Attentive Black Ecology in *Maud Martha*”  
2020 *Pleiades: Literature in Context*, “A Review of Vanessa Angélica Villarreal’s *Beast Meridian*”

### Exhibits

- 2022 “Horsepower”: Artwork Inspired by the Poems of Joy Priest, LexArts, Lexington, KY.  
2021 “Artist in Dialogue: Joy Priest and Andrew Wilson.” Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.  
2021 “The Black Outside.” Obama Portraits. Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA).  
2021 “Ghost in Schools.” *Afro-Atlantic Histories*. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.  
2019 “We Had Dreams Named After Us.” *Disrupting Domestic*. ACRE Projects, Chicago, IL.

### Films

- 2017 “Poeta: Ep. 002.” *8-Ball TV*

### Podcasts

- 2023 *VS, the podcast*, Poetry Foundation  
2022 *Inkwell*, “Joy Priest”  
2021 *The Drunken Odyssey with John King*, “A Panel of Debut Poets, with Tommye Blount, Ricardo Alberto Maldonado, and Joy Priest”  
2021 *Brown Girl Book Lover*, “Poetry Break with Joy Priest”

### Refereed Conference Presentations

- 2023 University of Louisville Conference on Literature & Culture, Louisville, KY  
2022 National Women’s Studies Association Conference, Minneapolis, MN  
2022 Youngstown Literary Festival, Youngstown, OH  
2022 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference, Philadelphia, PA  
2021 Working Class Studies Association Conference, Youngstown, OH  
2021 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference, Kansas City, KS  
2021 Kentucky State Poetry Society Annual Conference, Frankfort, KY  
2019 Furious Flower: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, The Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, D.C.  
2019 Fugitive Futures: Graduate Students of Color Un-Settling the University, 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Sequels Symposium, University of Texas-Austin, Austin, TX  
2017 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference, Tampa, FL  
2015 Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference, Los Angeles, CA

### Academic Consultations

- 2022 *Dictionary of Literary Biography 392: Twenty-First Century African American Poets*, “Vievee Francis,” edited by Kwame Dawes, Gale Cengage  
2022 *Dictionary of Literary Biography 392: Twenty-First Century African American Poets*, “Reginald Dwayne Betts,” edited by Kwame Dawes, Gale Cengage  
2019 *Contemporary Literature Criticism*, “Justin Phillip Reed,” Gale Cengage  
2019 *Poetry Criticism*, “Wanda Coleman,” Gale Cengage  
2017 *The Carolina Reader*, “Nikky Finney,” Macmillan

## **Editorial Service**

- 2022 *Gulf Coast*, Asst. Nonfiction Editor  
2021 *West Branch*, Guest Editor  
2021 *Verse Press*, Guest Editor  
2017-2018 *Yemassee Journal*, Editor-in-Chief  
2016-2017 *Yemassee Journal*, Associate Editor  
2016 *Anthropoid Journal*, Guest Editor  
2015-2016 *Narrative Magazine*, Associate Poetry Editor  
2011-2012 *Pluck! Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*, Copy Editor

## **Judging Service**

- 2023 *Poetry Society of America*, Student Poetry Award  
2022 *Pleiades*, Pruffer Poetry Prize  
2022 Kentucky State Poetry Society, Grand Prix Poetry Contest  
2022 *Birmingham Poetry Review*, Collins Prize  
2021 *Sycamore Review*, Wabash Prize for Poetry  
2021 *Switchback Books*, Gatewood Prize  
2020-2022 Scholastic Awards, Writing Juror  
2020 *Grist Journal*, ProForma Writing Contest  
2015 Kentucky Governor's Office, MLK Poetry Contest

## **Community Projects**

- 2023 Member, Youngstown Lit Festival Advisory Board  
2022 Mentor, Teen Fellowship Program, Muse Writers Center  
2021 Grantee/Co-host, "Poet &." *Poets & Writers* Virtual Project Grant  
2019 Program Co-coordinator, Women's Well-Being Initiative, U of South Carolina  
2017 Organizer, J. Marion Sims Monument Removal Poetry Marathon Protest  
2011-2013 Facilitator, The SwallowTale Project, Lexington, KY

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Academic**

- Lecturer, University of Houston, WGSS, 2020-present  
WGSS 2350—Intro to Women's Studies (5 courses)  
Teaching Fellow, University of Houston, English, 2020-present  
ENGL 1302—First Year Writing II  
ENGL 2306—Introduction to Poetry  
ENGL 3331—Beginning Creative Writing: Poetry (2 courses)  
Teaching Assistant, University of Houston, English, Spring 2022  
ENGL 2318—Creation and Performance of Literature  
Lecturer, Spalding University, Liberal Studies, Summer 2020  
ENGL 110—College Writing Workshop II  
ENGL 205—Introduction to Poetry  
Teaching Fellow, University of South Carolina, English, 2016-2019  
ENGL 101—Critical Reading and Composition (4 courses)  
ENGL 102—Rhetoric and Composition (4 courses)

Honors ENGL 102—The Rhetoric of Comedy  
Honors ENGL 102—American Identity  
Student won *University Library Research Award*  
Lecturer, University of South Carolina, African American Studies, Spring 2018  
AFAM 202—Introduction to AFAM Arts & Culture

### **Public Literary Organizations**

- 2022 “The Autobiography of Metaphor.” Muse Writers Center
- 2022 “Poetry of Place, Poetry of Witness.” The Porch
- 2022 “Foundations of Poetry.” Inprint Writers Workshop
- 2022 “The Poet’s Starter Kit.” Catapult
- 2022 “Poetry Knockout with Kevin Prufer and Joy Priest.” Grackle & Grackle Writing Enterprises
- 2021 “The Failure of Inspiration (A Poetics of Attention).” Catapult
- 2021 “The Architecture of a Poem.” The Porch
- 2021 “House of Craft.” InPrint Writers Workshops
- 2021 “Advanced Poetry Workshop – Undergrad.” Ellipsis Writing Workshops
- 2021 “One Poem Only!” Catapult
- 2021 “The Image-Repertoire: Solving the Enigma of Desire.” The Muse Writers Center
- 2021 “The Black Poet & The Deer: On the Transpositional Phenomena of the Line.” Vermont Studio Center
- 2021 “Writing Place: The Autobiographical Landscape.” Poetry Society of South Carolina
- 2020 “The Poet’s Report.” Kentucky State Poetry Society Annual Conference
- 2020 “Against Silence: Writing our Current National Moment.” Sarabande Writing Labs
- 2019 “Reinventing the Myth, the Narrative, the Pop Culture Icon.” Provincetown Art Association & Museum (PAAM) START program
- 2018 “The Apocryphilia Poem: Re-inventing the Myth, The Narrative, The Pop Culture Icon.” Wider Than a Sky Poetry Festival, Harvard Westlake School, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 “The Failure of Inspiration: Getting Past the First Line of the Poem.” Hub City Press Workshops
- 2014 “Cultural Organizing for Social Change.” Kentucky Foundation for Women
- 2014 D.C. Youth Poetry Slam Workshop
- 2013 “Slam 101.” Queerslang Festival, WRFL FM, Lexington, KY
- 2013 “Pop Culture Poetry.” Carnegie Center for Literacy & Learning, Lexington, KY

### **READINGS**

Pleiades Visiting Writers Series, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO  
Lit Youngstown Fall Festival, Youngstown, OH  
Frederick Douglass Day, Frederick Douglass Honor Society, Talbott Co., DE  
Climate Justice Museum Block Party, Houston, TX  
Poison Pen Reading Series, Houston, TX  
Word is Bond #7 w/ Ross Gay, Ruth Awad & Khadijah Queen, Asian American Writers Workshop, Virtual  
Keynote, Boldface Writers Conference, Glass Mountain Journal, Houston, TX  
Inprint Prize Winners Reading, The Menil, Houston, TX  
National Poetry Month Reading w/ Aurielle Marie, Bookshop West Portal, San Francisco, Virtual.  
Obama Portraits Opening, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Kentucky Women's Book Festival, Virtual  
Kentucky Tornado Benefit Reading, Virtual  
Visiting Writers Series, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY  
Poetry in Color, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Virtual  
Living Writers Series, SUNY Canton, Virtual  
Gulf Coast Journal Gala, Houston, TX  
Kentucky State Poetry Society Conference, Virtual  
Visiting Writers Series, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL  
Radical Poetry Reading w/ Joy Priest, The Brooklyn Rail, Virtual  
Specters of Noon, The Menil, Houston, TX  
Radical Poetry Reading w/ Arisa White, The Brooklyn Rail, Virtual  
The New Social Environment w/ Carrie Mae Weems, The Brooklyn Rail, Virtual  
Rural Assembly Everywhere Festival, Virtual  
Little Grassy Lit Festival, Souther Illinois U – Carbondale, Virtual  
Dallas Literary Festival, Virtual  
In Print, Ball State Festival of First Books, Virtual  
Working Writers Series, College of the Holy Cross, Virtual  
AWP Award Series, Kansas City, Virtual  
Vermont Studio Center, Virtual  
Poets in Print, Kalamazoo Book Arts Center, Virtual  
Poetry Society of South Carolina, Virtual  
LHUCA Reading Series, Texas Tech University, Virtual  
BLACK CENTER, Cal State-Fullerton, Virtual  
Tree Reading Series, Toronto, Virtual  
Root Work Journal Reading, Virtual  
Debut Revue, Virtual  
Correspondence, a literary & music salon, Louisville, Virtual  
Purdue University CWP Reading Series, Virtual  
University of Kentucky CWP Reading Series, Virtual  
AWP Book Club, YouTube LIVE  
Mary Ellen and Jim Wayne Miller Keynote, Western Kentucky U, Virtual  
The Muse, Virtual  
Six Bridges Literary Festival, Virtual  
Writers & Books Reading Series, Virtual  
Twin Cities Book Festival, Virtual  
Charleston's Free Verse Poetry Festival, Virtual  
White Whale Bookstore, Virtual  
Louisville's TAUNT Release Reading, Virtual  
Riffraff Bookstore & Bar, Virtual  
Weber State University Visiting Writer Series, Virtual  
*Horsepower*: Book Release, Brazos Bookstore, Virtual  
LOGOS Gatherings, Austin, TX, Virtual  
RiffRaff Books Reading, Virtual  
Wild & Precious Life Reading Series, Virtual  
Brooklyn Rail Radical Poetry Reading, Virtual  
Georgetown University Creative Writing Academy, Virtual  
In conversation w/ francine j. harris, Brazos Bookstore, Virtual  
Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts, Virtual



Bourbon & Poetry Festival, Affrilachian Poets, Virtual  
Payomet Early Stages Reading Series, Truro, MA, Virtual  
Carolina Poets Reading Series, Virtual  
No Desk Poetry Concert, Bowery Poetry Room, Virtual  
Further Notice Reading Series, Virtual  
The Quarantine Reading Series, Virtual  
Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA  
The Wild Fig Bookstore, Lexington, KY  
*The Milk Hours* release party, Louisville, KY  
Write Around Series, Columbia, S.C.  
The Unspoken Word, Columbia, S.C.  
Southbound Photography Exhibit, Charleston, S.C.  
Small House Reading Series, Greenville, S.C.  
Bull City Press Reading, Durham, N.C.  
Hub City Press Reading, Spartanburg, S.C.  
Run Tell Dat, Richmond, VA  
Urban Word NYC, Manhattan, NYC  
LIT Brooklyn Reading Series, NYC  
InKY Reading Series, Louisville, KY  
SpeakSocial: Official Louisville Writers Block Festival, Louisville, KY  
Louisville Remembers Maya, Louisville, KY  
Busboys & Poets, Washington, D.C.  
Beltway Slam, Washington, D.C.  
Busboys & Poets, Shirlington, VA  
UK SAB Presents the Affrilachian Poets, Lexington, KY  
HOLLER Poet Series #68, Lexington, KY  
Wild Women of Poetry Slam, Lexington, KY  
Roots & Heritage Festival, Lexington, KY  
New Affrilachian Poet Inductees, 88.1 FM WRFL  
Kentucky Center for Women and Families, Louisville, KY  
Evening with the Affrilachian Poets, GSA Lexington, KY  
Frank X Walker Poet Laureate Induction Reception, Lexington, KY  
CLA National Conference, Lexington, KY  
LexArts Youth Poetry Slam, Lexington, KY  
Gypsy Poetry Slam, Lexington, KY  
Wild Women of Poetry, Lexington, KY

\*References available upon request

Mary Karr, Terrance Hayes, Roberto Tejada, Audrey Colombe