

# ***The Dalhousie Review* Questionnaire** (the questionnaire about community and craft)

## **STEPHANIE DOMET**

**1. What was the last piece of writing you told a friend they simply must read?**

SD: *The Vaster Wilds*, by Lauren Groff

**2. What book would you give to your high-school nemesis as a gesture of repair?**

SD: Since I was definitely my own nemesis in high school, I would offer her *The Sentence*, by Louise Erdrich, about, among other things: forgiveness, second chances, trauma, how books can save our lives, being haunted — and being comfortable with being haunted, the deep importance of looking after each other, the trickiness and reward of love.

**3. What is another artform (other than writing) that is close to your heart?**

SD: I am obsessed with the fibre arts. Sewing, specifically.

**4. What five living writers would you like to share a meal with and what would you serve?**

SD: Brandon Taylor, Francesca Ekwuyasi, Joshua Whitehead, Rebecca Solnit, Omar El Akkad, Elizabeth Strout, Sigrid Nunez, Maggie O'Farrell, Lisa Moore, and Max Porter. I know that's double the number you said I could have, but I am making a full Lebanese spread, all the foods my Sitto taught me to make — kibbe and tabouli and also fatouche because I love salad, and mujudura and pita and hummus and koosa — and there's always way too much an abundance, and I am, in all things but especially in conversation and meal-sharing, a maximalist.

**5. What is a meaningful act of writing mentorship you've received?**

SD: Truly too many to land on just one. Sue Goyette has been a mentor of mine for many years, decades, even, formally as a teacher and

informally as a friend. Every conversation with her steadies me in some way, lifts me in others, returns me to myself, to the page.

**6. What characteristics make up your ideal writing community?**

SD: Generosity.

**7. What does a generous readership look like for you?**

SD: I am honestly just thrilled to have any readership. Even an ungenerous readership would feel like a present. But truly, a generous readership is one that comes to the page with an open mind and a willingness to let a writer evolve. An excitement, even, about that evolution.

**8. What is one of your favorite or ideal scenarios for a literary event?**

SD: I really, really, really love conversation-based events. I just love hearing writers talk about process, and about their ideas, and how their thinking changes as they write, and how their writing changes as they live. Cozy, interesting conversation that leaves me wanting more.

**9. Is there an aspect of writing that has been consistently at the forefront of your practice (e.g. character, form, metaphor, plot, etc.)?**

SD: For me, it's always about language. Funny little recursive moments, callbacks, slight subversion of well-worn phrases, inner monologue — I love to get in a little groove of language and see where it takes me, how it turns and twists, departs and arrives. If I can stay loose in language, everything else arises — character, plot, metaphor.

**10. [Question from the new editor, Bart Vautour] If “falling” is no longer the best metaphorically appropriate verb for meeting love, can you think of different one that more appropriately describes your own experiences?**

SD: Okay, I didn't know we were moving away from “falling,” but I will take your word for it. And so, in that case, may I suggest “realizing” as a potential appropriate verb? I like the activity of it — the slow-dawning-ness, and then also the ongoing, further arrivals-ness of it, which corresponds with my experience. Like there are trees and then clearings, and then the clearing keeps widening.

**11. If you could ask a writer a question, what would it be (read the next issue to find the answer)?**

SD: When do you feel most like yourself?