

L.J. SYSKO

LONG BIO (466 WORDS) – for event introductions or general knowledge

L.J. Sysko is the author of two books of poems, including her debut full-length collection *THE DAUGHTER OF MAN*, released in April 2023 by The University of Arkansas Press.

THE DAUGHTER OF MAN was Miller Williams Poetry Series 2023 First Finalist selected by poet Patricia Smith. In the book's foreword, Smith exclaims, "Well, hello there, Ms. L.J. Sysko! You are a wildness and a weirdness, and I would like to play a role in unleashing you upon the world. Your book, *THE DAUGHTER OF MAN*, is gleeful and quicksilver, not willing to sit still for categorization. I'm here for it." Smith goes on to say, "L.J. is the risk-taker, the unveiler, the irreverent namer of things. *THE DAUGHTER OF MAN* is gleefully unapologetic, upending the familiar and blasting it with motion, heat, and consequence. It's a wide-eyed stroll through the real world, reintroducing me to moments I just might remember living—moments made new with liberal dashes of L.J.'s humor and singular insight." In one of the book's blurbs, poet Ross Gay calls *THE DAUGHTER OF MAN* "goddam funny" and "a clinic in irony."

Sysko's first collection, *BATTLEDORE*, published in 2017 as part of Finishing Line Press' New Women's Voices Series, is a humorous yet poignant chapbook about postpartum depression, early motherhood, and pregnancy.

Sysko's poems have been anthologized in *BEST NEW POETS* and *LET ME SAY THIS: A Dolly Parton Poetry Anthology*. Sysko's poems have appeared in publications such as *Ploughshares*, *The Missouri Review's "Poem of the Week,"* *Tupelo Quarterly*, and *Mississippi Review*, among many others. Sysko earned an MFA in poetry from New England College, is a proud Virginia Center for Creative Arts Fellow, a 2024 Delaware Division of the Arts Established Artist Fellow, and a 2022 Palm Beach Poetry Festival Thomas Lux Scholar. Sysko has received several Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg awards, was a 2010 Delaware Division of the Arts Emerging Artist Fellow, and was chosen by former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins as runner-up for the 2023 Scotti Merrill Poetry Award. Collins says of Sysko's poetry, "This poet uses the language of everyday to expose the nervous realities at work behind human behavior... using bright language to make poems that are fun to read!"

Also a prose writer, Sysko's nonfiction was *The Georgia Review's* inaugural Prose Prize finalist, judged by Jennine Capó Crucet, published in the journal's 2023 Summer edition. Sysko's essays have been honorably mentioned by Zoetrope's *All Story*, judged by novelist Anthony Marra, and have received finalist recognition from both *The Bellingham Review* Annie Dillard Award for Creative Nonfiction and *The Pinch* Literary Awards.

A former high school English teacher, Sysko is now Director of Executive Communications at Delaware State University where she writes for University President Tony Allen. Originally from Yardley, Pennsylvania, Sysko lives in Wilmington, Delaware with her family.

SHORTER BIO (92 WORDS) – for shorter event introductions or publications

L.J. Sysko is the author of *THE DAUGHTER OF MAN* (2023, University of Arkansas Press), a Miller Williams Poetry Series book selected by Patricia Smith, and *BATTLEDORE* (2017, Finishing Line Press), a chapbook about early motherhood. Sysko's work has been anthologized in *BEST NEW POETS*, appearing also in publications such as *Ploughshares*, *The Georgia Review*, *The Missouri Review's "Poem of the Week," Tupelo Quarterly*, and *Mississippi Review*. A former high school English teacher, Sysko is now Director of Executive Communications at Delaware State University. She lives in Wilmington, Delaware with her family.