

NATASHA SAJE

About



Natasha Saje was born in Munich, Germany in 1955 to parents who were displaced by the events of WWII. Her mother was from Silesia, and her father was from Yugoslavia where he was an officer in King Peter's army. In 1957, the family emigrated to New York City where Natasha learned the English language from American television and kindergarten class. Except for a three-year stint in South Bend, Indiana, where her father got a job at Studebaker (a distributor of Mercedes Benz cars in the U.S. at that time), Natasha grew up mostly in the suburbs of New York City.

She chose to attend college at the University of Virginia because it was six hours from home and tuition was a bargain. After graduating in three years with a B.A. in English in 1976, she moved to Europe: first to Paris and then to Stuttgart where she worked secretarial jobs, and finally to Grindelwald in Switzerland, where she worked as a waitress. She returned to the U.S. two years later to attend law school but dropped out after a semester and got a job waitressing at the Washington Hilton. There she

fell in love with Tyrone Robertson, a chef from Jamaica (by way of London and the British Merchant Navy). A year later she attended the Johns Hopkins Writing Seminars (then a one year M.A. program) and afterward returned to waitressing, this time at a Capitol Hill restaurant called 209 ½.

In 1982, Natasha and Tyrone bought a tiny house in Baltimore. She started a catering business, taught composition courses at Goucher College, and worked for the Sterling Silversmith Guild of America (a trade association). In 1987, she began a Ph.D. program at the University of Delaware and worked in their writing center. After a year and half, she entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland. In the interim, she had finally learned that faster is not better when it comes to education, and at Maryland, she wrote a dissertation tracing the rhetorical figure of the coquette through conduct books and novels.

During those studies, she also wrote and began publishing poems that culminated in her book, *Red Under the Skin*, which was chosen for the Agnes Lynch Starrett Prize from the University of Pittsburgh Press in 1993. Natasha began teaching in the Vermont College of Fine Arts low-residency MFA in writing program in 1996 and accepted a fulltime job from Westminster College in Salt Lake City in 1998. She and Tyrone moved to Salt Lake City where he ran a catering business after an unfulfilling stint as the executive chef at the University of Utah food service. Natasha's second book, *Bend (Tupelo)*, was published in 2004, and a year later she received a Fulbright award to teach in Ljubljana, Slovenia. During this time, she got to know her Slovenian cousins and came to love this alpine country of two million people tucked between Austria, Italy, Croatia, and Hungary. After three years of treatment for T-cell lymphoma, Tyrone Robertson died in 2008.



In 2009, Natasha fell in love with her wife Laura Ann Manning, a native Boston sports fan who works in IT for the Veteran’s Administration. They live in the foothills of Salt Lake City with their two cats. Natasha’s favorite pastime is cooking (particularly baking), and she often supplies friends with customized celebration cakes. Her third book of poems, *Vivarium*, (Tupelo) and a postmodern poetry handbook, *Windows and Doors: A Poet Reads Literary Theory* (University of Michigan), were published in 2014. In 2020, her book of personal essays-memoir, *Terroir: Love, Out of Place*, is out from Trinity University Press.

Natasha’s poems, reviews, and essays have appeared in many periodicals, including *The Henry James Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Kenyon Review*, *New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Paris Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Rhino*, *Shenandoah*, *The Writer’s Chronicle*, and *The New York Times*.

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