



a book of homes

a contemplative experiment

Nikki Fragala Barnes, @bynikkibarnes, she / they

– an interactive zoom presentation | Museum of Motherhood, 2022 –

I am an experimental poet, also making conceptual books and participatory installations. My practice is centered on cultural objects, materiality and restorative history.

My research is at the intersection of critical making (process-based, generative work), embodied knowledge, and digital / new media studies in society.

Both my creative practice and my research are site-sensitive, emphasizing labor and consent, and critically reframing power and hierarchies.

*text is material



Nikki Fragala Barnes, MFA
@bynikkibarnes

contents

01

i

about
isolation : community
presence : absence

**objects +
material**

fabric + maps

language/s

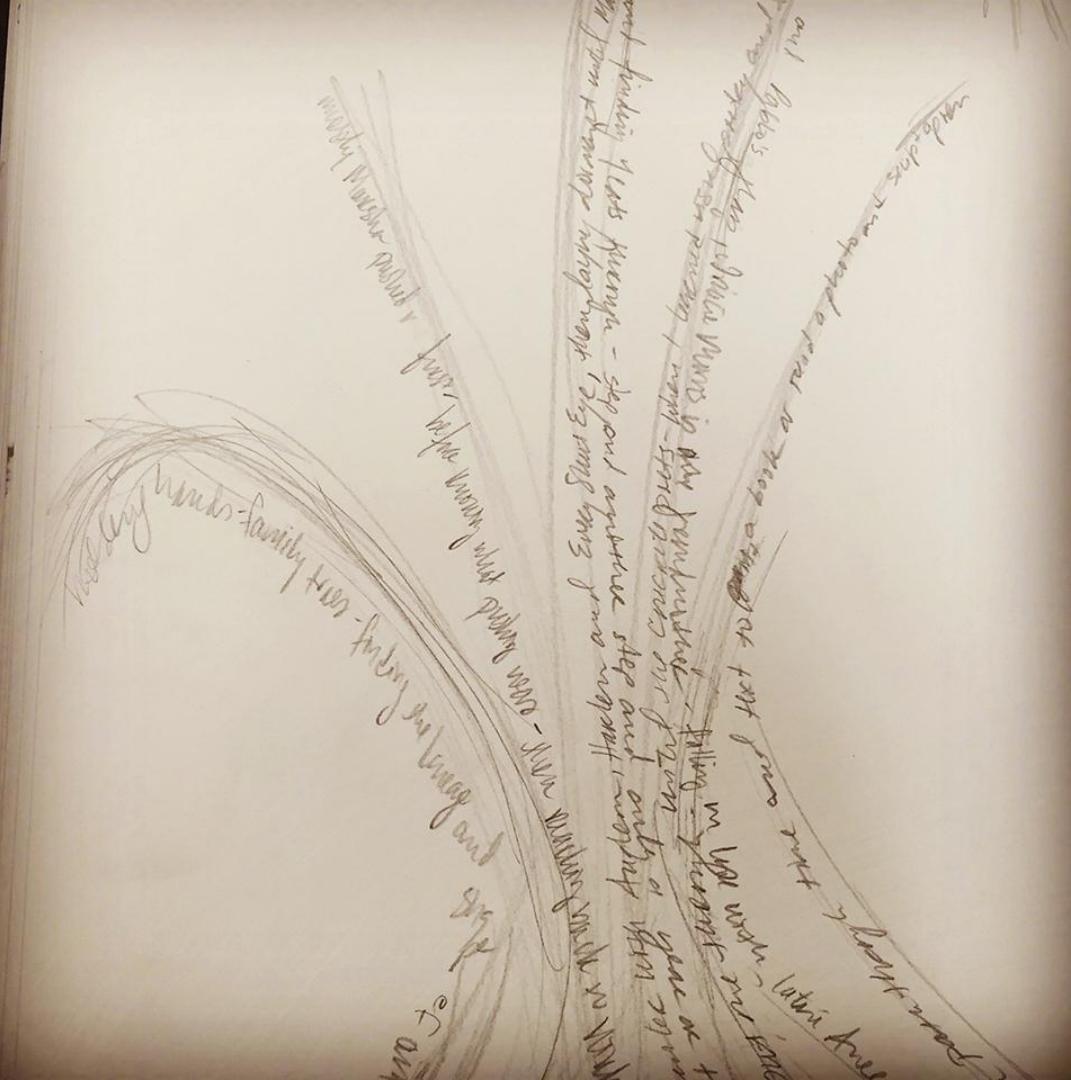
litanies
depths

02

collisions

questions

03



this collection of poems, on and off the page, engages

gentle and unsettling, with
the fish-out-of-water's violence
submerged and unearthed

within the tensions of unrest and
suffering

this digital chapbook, a mini-gallery
un/contained

a global para-doxy-moronic
isolation: we enter/ed together

about the work



a
map
of
interior
space

a book of homes. nikki fragala barnes.

cube / globe

a contemplative experiment

This is a creative text, a visual cultural object, generated as a critical meditation on ***m / others***: myself, my own, those in and out of my family, and those who mother that are not gendered female.

Utilizing list forms as a tool ubiquitous to motherhood, these meditations are each compact and intense catalogs, grappling with tensions across generations of partial knowing. This experimental work centers the bodies of mothers and mothered by approaching these layered, living mysteries with reverence and compassion for their humanity. Functioning as a compilation of fragments, frustrations, memory and loss that seeks to reveal the intense supersaturation of multiples: healths, traumas, transformations. It is both lens and mirror.





gen 1:1

MIRAMAR

one. brooklyn and before.

unscripted

INT. a *heart*

DISSOLVE to

compounding questions: home undefined, unfound, solve
for ex, for why, find one

how long is *long*, given: if home + family, then family =
home, space and presence, they do not exist, approaching
infinity or zero or both

calculus of a heart function: $f(\text{heart})$

[a beat.]



numbered, left to right



1. died june 2008
2. died july 2014
- 3.

her mother never knew

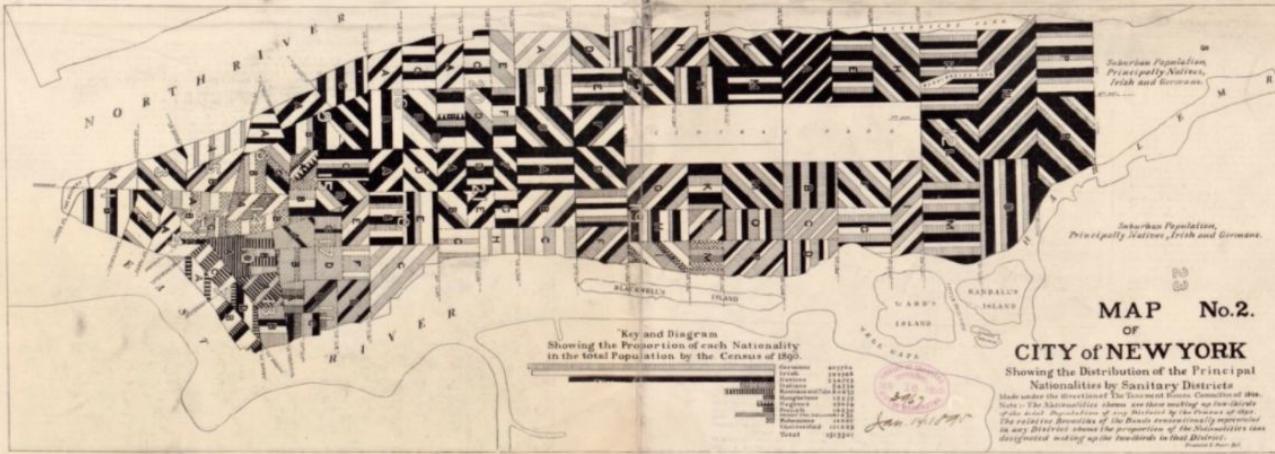
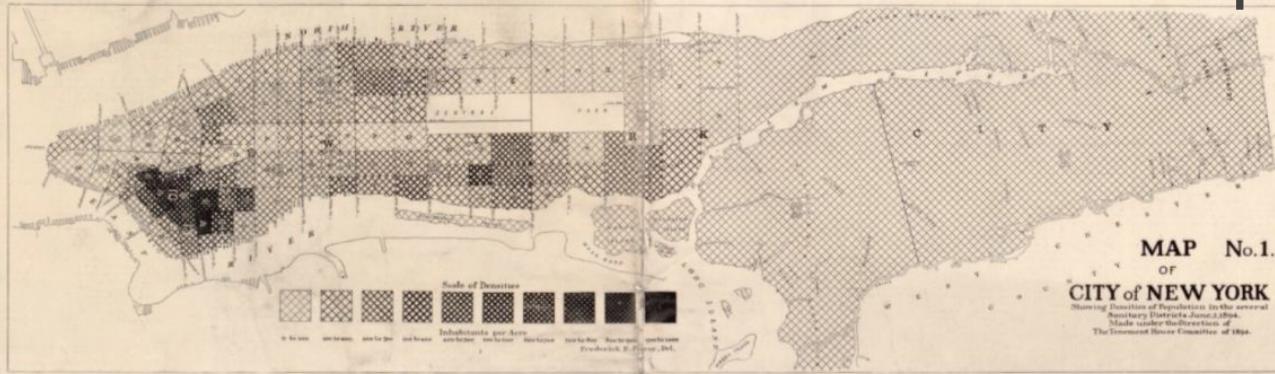
1. 1941, not 1940, the eighteenth
2. married him seven months before, clicking shoes in city hall, so the US Army would pay for her to move with him, stationed
3. forgettable feast, simple dinner
4. stephanotis means crown, represents happiness in marriage, travel
5. mo(u)rning coat, god forbid a smile



map number two

1. italian island burrows
2. inside neighborhoods
3. city block worlds
4. Domenico, counted, extrapolated
5. keys, grids, names, histories, projections
6. square miles dense with vowels
7. onion, garlic, olive oil

HARPER'S WEEKLY



Copyright, 1894, by HARPER & BROTHERS

THE TENEMENT-HOUSE COMMITTEE MAPS.—DRAWN BY FREDERIC E. PIERCE.—[SEE PAGE 62.]

2006-689773

Map No. 2
Dec 20 1899
Dec 20 1899
P.S.

specto, spectare



what did they call you before I called you mom



10. JUN 70
9. drinking something without alcohol
8. because your father
7. long shadows, late
6. seven months before
5. laughing, carefree li(f)e
4. certain of the cage, you stopped asking to be released
3. ptsd hadn't been named
2. wish you'd escaped
1. did you even want to be there, at that house, in this photo

not what I was expecting

1. when I first saw it, I thought
this was you
2. red sauce cooking down



high holy days



opposite of memory

from the label
the appearance of this garment is
unique unto itself

irregularities may be present and
are design characteristics created
from wash techniques,
embellishments, and other
treatments, to achieve a unique
look that grows more apparent

caution: this garment is not
colorfast colors may fade or bleed



forty-three years

Powell-Fragala



IDA LOUISE POWELL

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Powell of Fairfax proudly announce the engagement of their daughter, Ida Louise, to Augustine M. Fragala Jr., son of Col. and Mrs. Augustine M. Fragala Sr., of North Springfield.

Miss Powell, a 1967 graduate of Fairfax High School, is presently completing her senior year at Clemson University in South Carolina. Mr. Fragala is a 1963 graduate of the Northern Virginia Community College. He is presently employed by the City of Fairfax Planning Commission. A January 30 wedding is planned.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK.
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

STATE OF NEW YORK.

CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF BIRTH

No. of Certificate.

5552

Name of Child Augustino Fragaia

Sex	male.	Father's Occupation	Barber
Color	white	Mother's Name	Rosaria Fragaia
Date of Birth	May 6th 1913	Mother's Name before Marriage	Rosaria La Barber
Place of Birth Street and No.	#244 Stagg st	Mother's Residence	#244 Stagg st
Father's Name	Domenico Fragaia	Mother's Birthplace	Cataly
Father's Residence	#244 Stagg st	Mother's Age	24 years
Father's Birthplace	Cataly	Number of previous Children	
Father's Age	33 years	How many now living (in all)	1

I, the undersigned, being duly certified that I attended professionally at the above birth and I am personally cognizant thereof; and that all the facts above in this certificate and report of birth are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Signature.

ma. iannella (signature)

Residence.

#168 Monroe ave

DATE OF REPORT

May 17th 1913

May 16th 1913

CITY OF NEW YORK

BUREAU OF VITAL RECORD

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

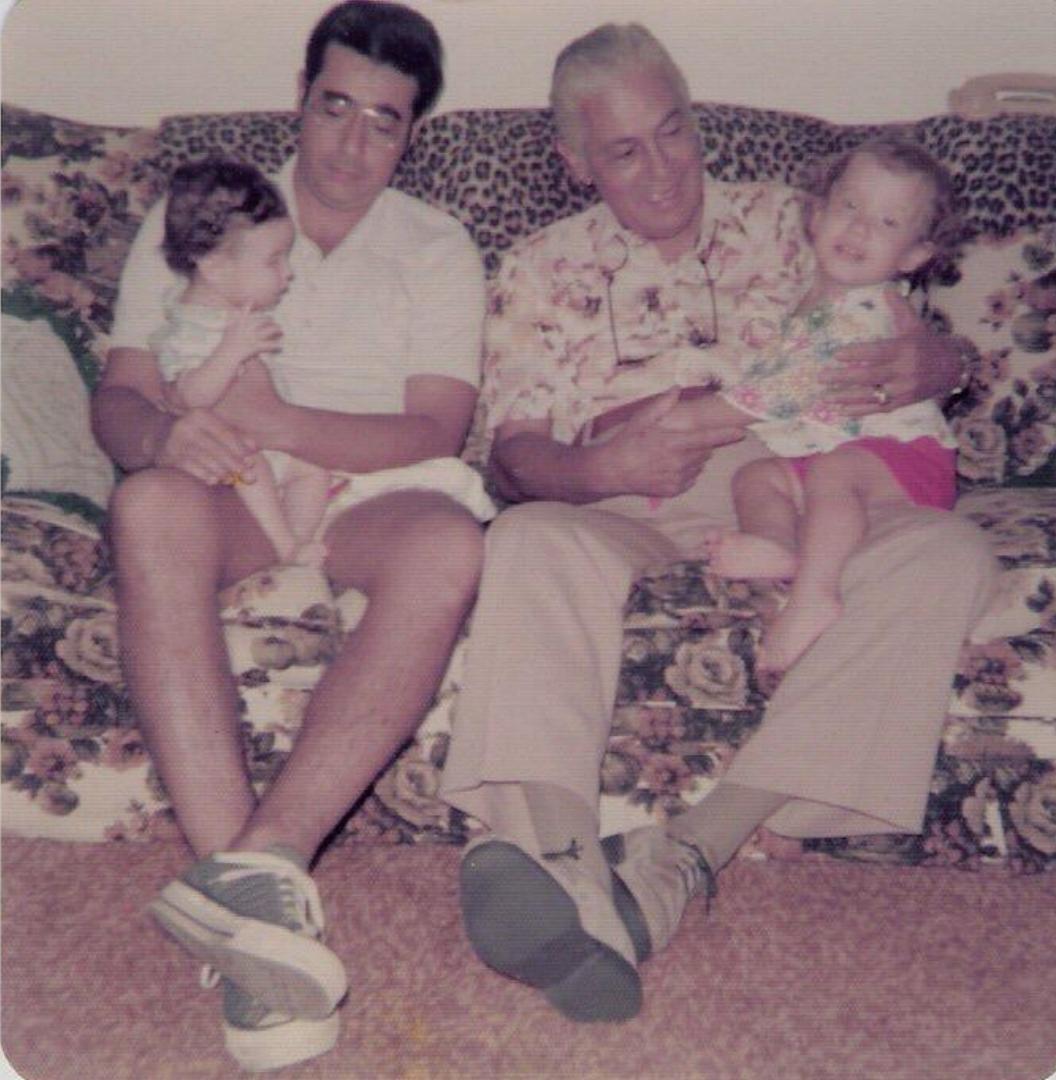
This is to certify that the following is a transcript of a record on file in the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health. The Department of Health does not certify to the truth of the statements made in this certificate of birth or death, except as provided by law.
DO NOT ACCEPT THIS TRANSCRIPT UNLESS THE RATED SEAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IS ATTACHED.
THE REPRODUCTION OR ALTERATION OF THIS CERTIFICATE IS PROHIBITED BY LAW.

J. Dunnigan

City Registrar

the colonel

1. ancestor,
antecedent,
descendent
2. I thought his
name was
Augustine
3. speaking
with him in
cemeteries
4. what else
don't I know



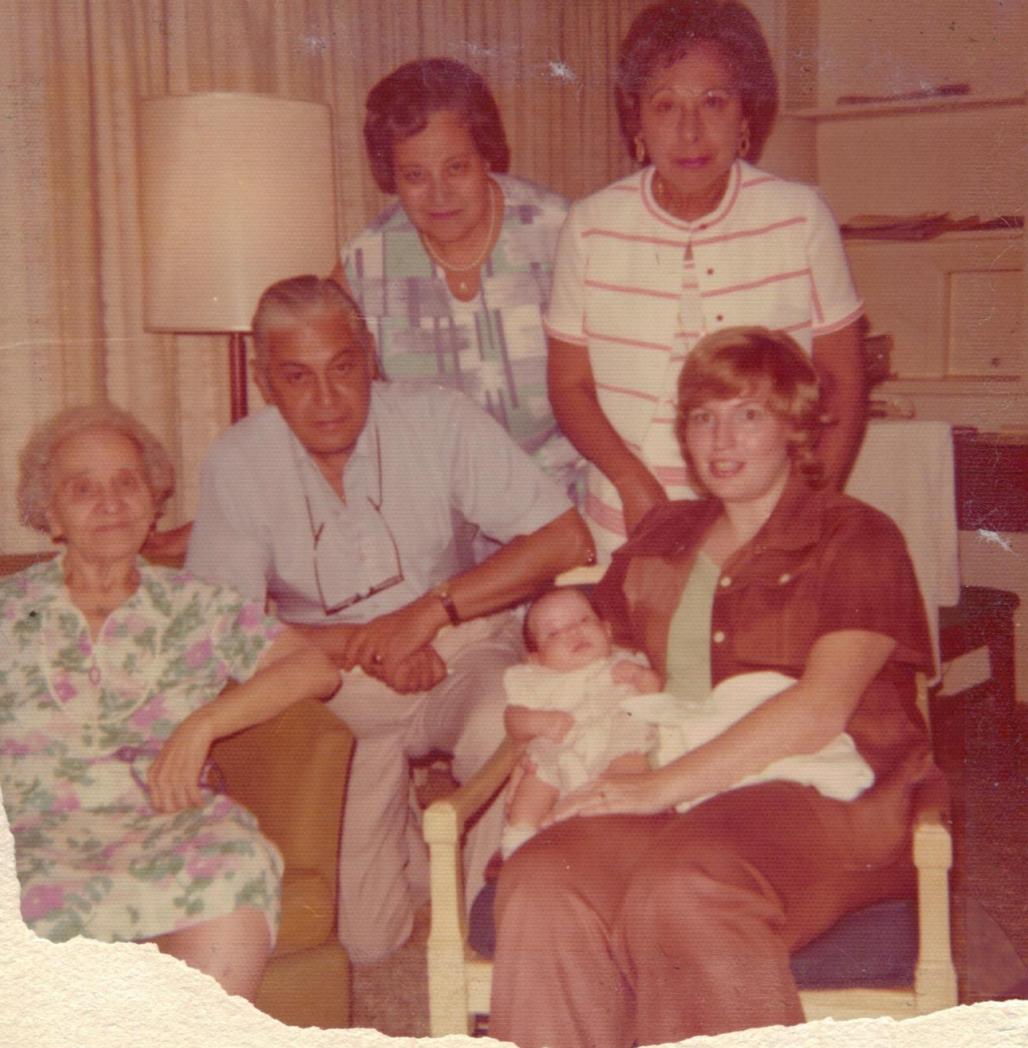
two. miami.
miramar.
lakeland.

I
was
five



campisi women

1. from the singular, campise
2. meaning bowman
3. likely jewish root
4. (n.) underground part of a plant
5. (v.) to dig out, plow up



point nine repeating

eleven most beautiful equations,
greek letters filling subscripts,
parallel lines balance equal signs

fibrous space-time, yielding

my favorite though is one equals
point nine repeating
an infinite dance, the beauty of
one and symmetry

yet not one
expresses what derivation
simplified until your breath and
body brought me to myself





my mother's smile,
my father's chin

1. a house that came with a pool table
2. and one bedroom we don't need
3. and awareness, unshakeable
4. not my home
5. sixteen deep



her bath

1. blue glass
2. faucet flush to the wall
3. a pro at sixty-one
4. two weeks water returning
5. coffee, sugar, tupperware
6. this year I installed a sink
built for a baby's bath

nineteen ninety five

1. fifty years
down
2. twenty
four to
go





fear

1. your eyes, your eyes, your eyes
2. first christmas with a baby
3. pregnant again
4. not your father
5. xx years away from knowing
6. myth of safety
- 7.
8. Your eyes

minus one

1. you were two years away from Caleb
2. that christmas I said yes
3. plus seven people
4. minus one



christina

1. fire of sons
2. uneven
3. lists of empty shoes
4. greying charcoal
bricks
5. so much smoke and
cigarettes and
expectations and
disappointment
6. I couldn't breathe





three.
crossed florida roads.



counted

1. eyes and cheeks claiming birthright
2. cold winds – refuge
3. three of us – not three of them, plus us
4. sand stinging into May
5. in sickness and health can mean other people's
6. even then

which ocoee

1. november second, nineteen twenty
2. women voting
3. Black blood and backlash
4. burned sundown town
5. four hundred ninety five souls become / down to one
6. equals fifty years with only whites

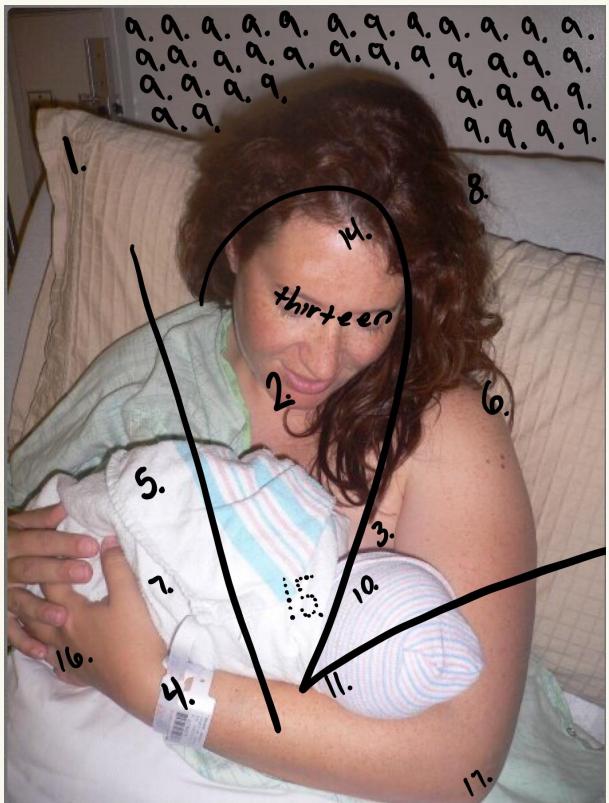


july 9th. 15 days left.



1. playing memory
2. this orphan, no angel
3. only I remember

home body



first born



lake house



letters

you wrote me so many letters and I am afraid I can't find one. betrayed by paper and ink, which survives. I know what you would say, some practical advice about checking the tires and don't sweat the small stuff, but, dad, it's not small. I am overcome.

I am in this house where you were how did you live when your father did not. I do not know what to tell my children. how we waste time. I am and am not what you said.

What are some of your earliest memories about your birthplace and growing up?

I was born in Brooklyn, NY. We lived at 18 ARIAN PLACE. I had lots of friends. We didn't have a television for a long time. I used to walk up to the Avenue and watch television in the window of a TV store. (long before they had Best Buy) I would watch "Hawdy Deady". My mother (your great grandmother) would call the store MANAGER & ask "Is my son up there watching TV from outside?" He'd say "

JAMES 6



James, age 6

1. he drew himself, co-created
2. scratching wax
3. all face and feet
4. sharing my green eyes
5. bent low, bangs brushing elbows

living arrows



gravity

fourth force, changing
with mass / space /
time / words / weight

heavy witness, waking,
perpetual, atomic

at the center of the
universe is a dim black
hole sleeping



thank
you

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Creative Writing / Poetry Instructor
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New work forthcoming this summer:
* Society of Textual Scholarship
* Electronic Literature Organization
* 8th World Conference on Women's Studies



Nikki Fragala Barnes

fragata barnes

slide deck template

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), including icons by [Flaticon](#), infographics & images by [Freepik](#).

