

Emily Lawson

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

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AOS: Indian Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Aesthetics

AOC: Buddhist Philosophy, Value Theory

Education

Ph.D. ABD Philosophy, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Dissertation Title: “Life’s Painful Beauty: *Rasa*, Empathy, and Deathbed Aesthetics”

Committee: Evan Thompson (primary supervisor) Catherine Prueitt (co-supervisor) and Dominic McIver Lopes (committee member)

MFA 2020 Creative Writing: Poetry, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

BA 2015 Cross-Cultural Philosophy, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA

Publications

Books

(Under Contract) *Death: A Guide for Imaginers*, Columbia University Press

Peer-Reviewed Articles

2025 “A Dynamic Approach to Compulsive Fantasy: Creativity and Constraint in ‘Maladaptive Daydreaming.’” With Jennifer Burrell and Kalina Christoff Hadjilieva. *Behavioral Sciences* 15(10):1333

2024 “Courageous Love: K. C. Bhattacharyya on the Puzzle of Painful Beauty.” With Dominic McIver Lopes. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 10 (4): 728-743.

- 2024 “Daydreaming as Spontaneous Immersive Imagination: A Phenomenological Analysis.”
With Evan Thompson. *Philosophy and the Mind Sciences* 5 (1): 1-34.

Invited Book Chapters

- In Preparation “Rasa and Negative Emotion.” *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art*,
2nd Edition, Wiley, ed. Brandon Polite, Elizabeth Scarbrough, and Aaron Meskin,
2028.
- In Press “Daydreaming.” *The Cambridge Handbook of Thought*, Cambridge University Press,
ed. Andre Zamani and Kalina Christoff Hadjiilieva, 2027.

Invited Book Reviews

- In preparation “Review: *The Making of Contemporary Indian Philosophy: Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya*,
ed. Daniel Raveh, Elise Coquereau-Saouma, 2023”: *Journal of Hindu Studies*.

Articles Under Submission

- R&R An article on the experience of dying and K. C. Bhattacharyya’s aesthetics
Under Review An article about aesthetic disgust in Abhinavagupta’s writings

Selected Literary Journal Publications

- 2026 *ONLY POEMS* Poet of the Week Feature
2024 *Three Hearts: An Anthology of Cephalopod Poetry*, “Aubade with Deep Sea Footage”
2023 *The Adroit Journal* Djanikian Award Portfolio, Volume 45
2022 *Palette Poetry*, “Sand Flats, UT” 2022 (*Love and Eros Prize* Winner)
2022 *The Adroit Journal*, “Exorcism,” “Past Tense,” Volume 43, October 2022
2022 *Witness Magazine*, “Deinotherium Elegy,” March 2022 (*Witness Literary Prize* Winner)
2021 *BOOTH Journal*: “Hosting,” (Fiction)
2020 *Indiana Review*, “Coal Hollow Fire, UT” (*1/2 K Prize* Winner)
2020 *Sixth Finch*, “Primate Elegy,” 2020
2020 *Waxwing*, “Playroom,” “Panic Room,” and “Map Room.”
2019 *DIAGRAM*, “Between Stations.”
2019 *THRUSH Poetry Journal*, “Darkroom.”

Selected Awards and Grants

- 2024 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, SSHRC, \$150,000 CAD
2024 Annual Brian Laetz Graduate Essay Prize, University of British Columbia

- 2020 Connaught International Scholarship for Doctoral Students, The University of Toronto
\$50,000 CAD (Declined)
- 2017 Four-Year Fellowship Award – The University of British Columbia
- 2017 Henry Hoyns Fellowship, The University of Virginia

Selected Poetry Awards

- 2023 Djanikian Scholarship, *Adroit Journal*
- 2022 Love and Eros Prize, *Palette Poetry*, \$3,000 USD
- 2022 *Witness Magazine* Literary Award, \$500 USD
- 2018 Indiana Review ½ K Prize for Nonfiction, *Indiana Review*, \$1,000 USD

Presentations

Refereed Talks

- 2026 “Corpse Visualization and Emotional Cultivation”
Buddhist Studies Unit, Topic: Buddhism and Meditation
AAR Annual Meeting in Denver, CO
- 2026 “Neo-Rasa Aesthetic Emotions: Empathetic, Not Disinterested”
Canadian Philosophical Association (CPA), Halifax, NS
- 2025 “Neo-Rasa in Indian Renaissance Aesthetics”
Joint Session of the Aristotelian Society, Glasgow, Scotland, UK
- 2025 “Abhinavagupta and Two Puzzles About the Disgust *Rasa*”
American Society for Aesthetics (ASA) Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL
- 2024 “Towards a Cross-Disciplinary Approach to Poetic Meaning: *Rasadhvani* and the Heresy of Paraphrase Thesis,” Hindu Philosophy Roundtable,
American Academy of Religions (AAR) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX
- 2023 “Doing Deathbed Aesthetics with K. C. Bhattacharyya”
ASA Pacific Division Meeting, Berkeley, CA
- 2023 “Daydreaming as Spontaneous Immersive Imagination”
Uehiro Graduate Philosophy Conference, University of Hawaii, Manoa, HI
- 2023 “Everyday Aesthetics and Deathbed Experiences,”
International Association of Japanese Philosophy (IAJP), Topic: Yuriko Saito
American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division, Denver, CO

Invited Talks

- 2026 “Aesthetic Shock and Transformative Insight: A. K. Coomaraswamy on *Saṁvega*”
Yale University, Department of Philosophy and Department of Religious Studies
- 2026 Book Panel: *Out of Sight, Into Mind* by Jed Forman
APA Central Division, Chicago, IL
- 2025 “Deathbed Aesthetics: Disgust and Courageous Love”
Simon Fraser University, Asian Philosophy Workshop, Burnaby, BC
- 2025 “Neo-Rasa: Expansive Empathy, Not Disinterest”
Symposium: South Asian *Rasa* Theory Meets Contemporary Aesthetics
APA Pacific Division, San Francisco, CA
- 2024 “*Rasa* and Negative Emotion”
Rasa 101, Rasa Fest, The University of British Columbia
- 2024 “Three Varieties of Immersive Imagination: Daydreaming, Fantasy, and Visualization”
Graduate Student Research Conference, The University of British Columbia
- 2023 “Introduction to K. C. Bhattacharyya’s Aesthetics”
Graduate Aesthetics Seminar, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA
- 2022 “Courageous Love: K. C. Bhattacharyya and the Paradox of Painful Beauty,”
Workshop on K. C. Bhattacharyya, Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2022 “Towards a Yogacāra-Informed Enactive Approach to Dreams,”
Author Meets Critics Session: Sonam Kachru, *Other Lives: Mind and World in Indian Buddhism*, AAR Annual Meeting, Denver, CO
- 2022 “Savoring Rasa in Horror Fictions: An Abhinavaguptan Solution to the Paradox of Horror,” Author Meets Critics Session: James Reich, *To Savor the Meaning: The Theology of Literary Emotions in Medieval Kashmir*
ASA National Meeting, Portland, OR

Media

- 2026 [“Wasn’t it Wisdom I Wanted? In Conversation with Emily Lawson,”](#) by Karan Kapoor, “Poet of the Week” Feature, *ONLY POEMS*
- 2024 ["Meet Our Award Holders: Emily Lawson"](#) The University of British Columbia
- 2023 ["Interview with Emily Lawson"](#) by A. T. Hincapie, *Palette Poetry*
- 2022 ["Emily Lawson on Indian Philosophy, Death, and Imagination"](#) *The Philosopher's Nest* Podcast, S1E9.

Teaching

Instructor

Sole instructor, responsible for class design, syllabus, teaching, and evaluation

University of British Columbia (Philosophy)

2026 Minds and Machines

2024 Philosophical Wisdom of Early India (Philosophy/Asian Studies)

University of Virginia (English):

2020 Writing and Critical Inquiry: Harry Potter and the Ethical Imagination

2020 Writing and Critical Inquiry: Writing About the Environment

2019 Writing and Critical Inquiry: Harry Potter and the Ethical Imagination

2019 Poetry Workshop: Dream, Death, and Myth

2019 Poetry Workshop: Dream, Death, and Myth

2018 Introduction to Poetry: Dream, Death, and Myth

The University of Virginia (Summer Transitions Program)

2019 Academic Skills Seminar (summer term intensive for incoming undergraduates)

Teaching Assistant

Responsible for evaluation, student consultation, and guest lectures.

University of British Columbia:

2025 Philosophy of Mind

2025 Comparative Conceptions of the Self

2024 Philosophical Wisdom of Early India

2023 Existentialism

2023 Comparative Conceptions of the Self

2022 Philosophy of Religion

2023 Philosophy in the 17th Century

2022 Introduction to Moral Philosophy

Advising

University of British Columbia:

2025 Honours Student Thesis Advisor, Cognitive Systems Program

2024 Honours Student Thesis Advisor, Cognitive Systems Program

University of Virginia:

2019 Honours Student Thesis Advisor: Area Program in Poetry Writing

2018 Honours Student Thesis Advisor: Area Program in Poetry Writing

Service

Editing

- 2020 Editor-in-Chief, *Meridian: A Journal of Poetry and Prose from the University of Virginia*
2019 Nonfiction Editor, *Meridian: A Journal of Poetry and Prose from the University of Virginia*
2018 Poetry Reader, *Meridian: A Journal of Poetry and Prose from the University of Virginia*

Reviewing

Reviewer for: *Inquiry, Philosophy, Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, Philosophy and the Mind Sciences, TOPOI*

Conference Organizing

- 2024 Steering Committee Member for “Rasa 101 and Rasa Fest: South Asian Rasa Aesthetics in Contemporary Philosophy.” The University of British Columbia.

Departmental Service

University of British Columbia:

- 2024 Graduate Student Representative: Department of Philosophy

University of Virginia:

- 2018 MFA Representative in the Graduate English Student Association

Memberships

- The American Academy of Religion
The South Asian Comparative Philosophy Association
The American Philosophical Association
The Canadian Philosophical Association
The American Society for Aesthetics
The Association of Writers and Writing Programs

Languages

- Classical Sanskrit – Advanced Reading and Translation, 10 years of study
Spanish – Intermediate
English – Native

Notable Language Training: Summer Intensive Sanskrit training in Pune, Maharashtra through the American Institute for Indian Studies (AIIS)

References

Evan Thompson, Professor of Philosophy and Distinguished University Scholar, University of British Columbia; Associate Member, Department of Asian Studies; Associate Member, Department of Psychology.

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Catherine Prueitt, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of British Columbia.

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Dominic McIver Lopes, University Killam Professor of Philosophy, University of British Columbia

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Sonam Kachru, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Yale University

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Jay L. Garfield, Emeritus Doris Silbert Professor of Philosophy, Logic, and Buddhist Studies, Smith College; Emeritus Visiting Professor of Buddhist Philosophy, Harvard Divinity School; Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Melbourne.

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