



## Disability History and Awareness Month 2023

### Sheila Black

Sheila Black, born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is an American poet who has written over 40 books for children and young adults in addition to four poetry collections. She was a 2000: U.S. co-winner of the Frost-Pellicer Frontera Prize and a 2012 Witter Bynner Fellowship. She has three children and lives with her husband in San Antonio, Texas.



Black graduated from Barnard College, earning a BA in French literature, and later received her master's degree from the University of Montana.

She then began teaching part-time at New Mexico State University and worked as Development Director for the Colonias Development Council. Still, Sheila Black continues to write poetry, recently becoming co-editor of *Beauty Is A Verb: The New Poetry of Disability* with Jennifer Bartlett and Mike Northen. In addition, Black co-founded Zoeglossia, a nonprofit organization that strives to build a community for poets with disabilities and promotes their work. She is also the current director of development for the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP).

Sheila Black was diagnosed with XLH, commonly referred to as Vitamin-D Resistant Rickets, at a young age. Black often writes confessional poetry, which focuses on the extremes of personal experience to explore and articulate what disability means for herself. In addition to her poetry, Black advocates for equal rights for people with disabilities.

what he could not imagine is how even on my wedding day  
I would arch back and wonder  
about that body I had before I was changed,  
how I would have nested in it,  
made it my home  
– Sheila Black; What you Mourn

Profiles by Andrew Caruana, Policy and Research Intern, Office of Senator Sara Gelser Blouin

Andrew is a Junior at Willamette University studying philosophy. He is a lifelong Oregonian and has cerebral palsy.

[Sen.SaraGelser@OregonLegislature.Gov](mailto:Sen.SaraGelser@OregonLegislature.Gov)

503-986-1708