

BAART, NICOLE is the author of eleven novels, including *Everything We Didn't Say* (an October 2021 Book of the Month selection and Amazon Editor's pick) and *The Long Way Back*. Best known for her “race-to-the-finish family dramas” (*People*), Baart is also the co-founder of a nonprofit and mother of five. A former English teacher, Nicole is passionate about helping writers refine their craft and realize their dreams. She lives in Iowa with her family. Contact: nicolebaart@gmail.com

BASU, REKHA Rekha's syndicated commentaries and articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *USA Today*, and newspapers in only two U.S. states. She draws deeply on her multicultural background to speak truth to power on critical social issues, and her columns have had tangible results in creating change. She is the author of “Finding Her Voice”, a compilation of her *Des Moines Register* columns on women. She has made numerous appearances on network television with Tom Brokaw, Brooke Baldwin, Carol Costello, Erin Burnett, and Gwen Ifill. She has master's degrees from Columbia (journalism) and Goddard-Cambridge (political economy), a BA from Brandeis (sociology), and an honorary doctorate of humane letters from Grinnell College. As she recently ended a 30-year career as an opinion columnist for *The Register*, she wrote: “Every opinion column you write is a statement of values. And sometimes figuring out where you stand requires digging deeper into the story and yourself.” Contact: Rekhasu2@gmail.com

***BELIN, LAURA.** Editor, *Bleeding Heartland* and Laura Belin's Substack column are go-to must reads for anyone interested in Iowa politics. She is a superb political reporter and analyst for these highly regarded blogs. She found her love of writing about politics as an analyst for the Prague-based Open Media Research Institute and later for Radio Free Europe. She covered Russian campaigns and elections, parliamentary politics, and media issues full-time from 1995 to 2005, spanning most of Boris Yeltsin's presidency and the early Vladimir Putin years. She is a member of the Iowa Writers Collaborative. Laurabelin@substack.com

BIGELOW, KELSEY. Des Moines-based poet. She released her chapbook, *Sprig of Lilac*, in 2018 and her spoken word album, *Depression Holders and Secret Keepers*, in 2021. Her work is published in or forthcoming with *Central Avenue Publishing*, *Pile Press*, *Lyrical Iowa*, *Backchannels Journal*, *Spirit Lake Review*, and elsewhere, and she is a 2024 Pushcart Prize nominee. She founded the Des Moines Poetry Workshop, the Iowa Poetry Association Poetry Slam chair, and more.

BOYES, SETH joined the *Dickinson County News* as a staff writer in March 2017 and was promoted to news editor in January 2021. The Iowa native has won 23 awards for writing, photography, and multimedia content. Seth is a 2009 graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in Integrated Studio Arts. His original cartoons run regularly in the *Spencer Daily Reporter* and the *DCN*, and have been published in national newspapers. Both he and his wife, Janet, hail from Clear Lake. Follow Seth on Twitter nka X (@sethboyes).

***BURNS, DOUG** is a fourth-generation Iowa journalist whose family operated the *Carroll Times Herald* for 93 years. He is the founder and director of development for the non-profit Western Iowa Journalism Foundation. Additionally, Burns founded a marketing and advertising