UPR & Tuesday’s Access Utah spent the hour with Jennifer Sinor on February 28, 2017.

Jennifer Sinor is the author of Letters Like the Day: On Reading Georgia O’Keeffe, a collection of essays inspired by the letters of the American modernist Georgia O’Keeffe and Ordinary Trauma, a memoir of her military childhood told through linked flash nonfiction. She teaches creative writing at Utah State University where she is a professor of English. She is also the author of The Extraordinary Work of Ordinary Writing: Annie Ray’s Diary, a book about the diary of her great, great, great aunt, a woman who homesteaded the Dakotas in the late nineteenth century. All of her books work to reveal the extraordinary possibilities that arise in the most ordinary moments of our lives.

Born into a military family, Sinor has lived all over the United States. While she considers Hawaii her first home, she has come to love northern Utah, where the mountains remind her of the ocean in the way they crest all around her.

Jennifer Sinor graduated from the University of Nebraska, the University of Hawaii, and the University of Michigan. She is married to the poet Michael Sowder, and they have two boys as well as a passel of animals.

Ordinary Trauma:
As if she could not bear to leave it, Jennifer Sinor came into this spinning world twice, once dead and once alive, the first time born from her mother, the second, from a bucket, its silvery metal sides a poor substitute for the womb, yet enough. Through spare yet lyrical prose, Sinor threads together the story of how she learned to carry the bucket she was born into and reclaim all that was tossed away. In short, almost telegraphic, linked pieces, Ordinary Trauma reveals moments in life that are made to appear unremarkable but harm deeply. Set against the late Cold War and a military childhood spent amid fast-attack submarines and long-range nuclear missiles, this memoir delivers a revelatory look at how moments that typically pass unnoticed form the very basis for our perceptions of both love and loss.

Letters Like the Day:
Georgia O’Keeffe mistrusted words. She claimed color as her language. Nevertheless, in the course of her long life, the great American painter wrote thousands of letters#more than two thousand survive between her and her husband, Alfred Stieglitz, alone. Jennifer Sinor’s Letters Like the Day honors O’Keeffe, her modernist landscapes, and, crucially, the value of letter writing. In the painter’s correspondence, we find an intimacy with words that is all her own. Taking her letters as a touchstone, Sinor experiments with the limits of language using the same aesthetic that drove O’Keeffe’s art. Through magnification, cropping, and juxtaposition#hallmarks of modernism#Sinor explores the larger truths at the center of O’Keeffe’s work: how we see, capture, and create. Letters Like the Day pursues the highest function of art#to take one’s medium to the edge and then push beyond.