



THE WRITER'S CENTER MAGAZINE SUMMER 2023

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& Marisa Crane**
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ABOUT THE WRITER'S CENTER

Founded in 1976, The Writer's Center supports writers and everyone who wants to write!

Every year we offer hundreds of creative writing workshops in all genres and for all experience levels, dozens of free events for writers, and countless opportunities to connect with the Washington DC and national literary communities.

THE WRITER'S CENTER

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THE WRITER'S CENTER MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2023

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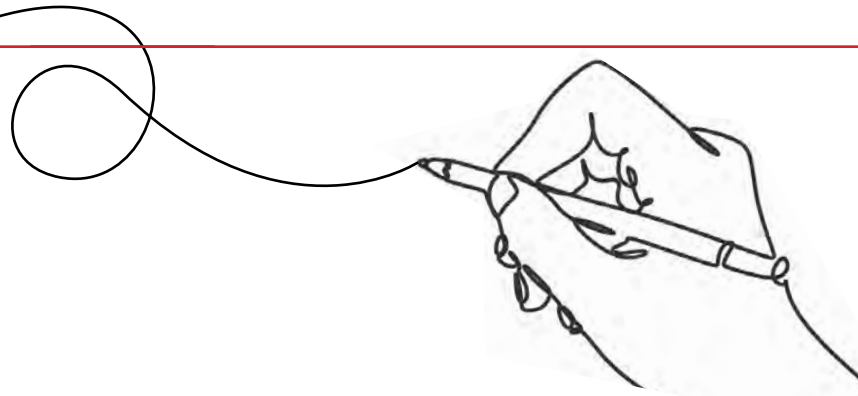
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As I type this I'm the only person in The Writer's Center. The members who were writing downstairs have packed up and gone home. The rest of the staff is done for the night. With nobody walking the halls, the motion-sensing lights have shut off. It's a warm day, so there's no whoosh of air from the heater. It's serene, still, sleepy. *Any unexpected noise now would absolutely terrify me.*

Peacefulness is great, but I prefer it when there's more bustle. Questions shouted from office to office. Writers coming and going. Drop-ins from old friends of the Center (today we had a board member from 20 years ago stop by) and inquiries from people who want to know who we are and what we do (we welcome curious visitors almost every day). And, of course, there are our workshops and free events that bring life to the building.

Sometimes I marvel that our small staff interacts with so many thousands of people. Forgive us if we forget a name now and again. But people are the point. Our goal is to build community.

So, why am I here *alone* after hours? I'm writing this note, obviously. I'm also waiting to attend The Inner Loop Reading Series, a partner literary organization (featured in a previous issue of *TWC Magazine*). Yes, it's quiet now, but in just a couple hours, I'll be surrounded by writers again. And y'all are always my favorite company to keep.

—Zach Powers, TWC Artistic Director



ABOUT THE COVER

Marissa DiDonna

Celestial Views, 2022

Mixed media

Available in 8 x 10 and 16 x 20 in.

Marissa DiDonna is a Deaf artist based out of Washington, DC. Her mixed media work strives to create a unique vision that reflects the beauty and diversity that exists in our society. Her artistic creations promote an awareness of the realities in our communities and elevate an appreciation of our surroundings. With strong elements of surrealism, her artwork features complex layering, striking contrasts, and bold colors. Her goal is to spread more colors in your lives!

Visit marissadidonna.com or follow on Instagram @marissadidonna to see more of her work.

Highlights from The Writer's Center Virtual Craft Chat Series

CHEN CHEN DISCUSSES HIS LATEST POETRY COLLECTION, *YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT HAS EXPERIENCED AN EMERGENCY*



ON WHERE HIS POEMS COME FROM

It depends on the poem, it really does. Sometimes, there's something on my mind, a subject that I really want to explore, but actually those are the harder poems to write because it's like I have a subject and I have an idea, but I don't have form, and so it can be really challenging to find the right form to hold and carry that idea. Often, I like to just start with a scrap of language or an image. Something tonally interesting to me. It could be funny, it could be sad. It can be both. And that really just rattles around in my head for days, and then I have to do something with it.

Poet Mary Ruefle, one of my favorite contemporary writers, said, I don't think I really know what I'm doing as I'm writing, like, I'm not thinking about it as I'm writing, but it feels like I just need to release this pressure that's built up in my head. She said, It's like peeing but from your mind. I love that. Often, I don't start with an idea, really. It's just like a piece of language that interests me for some reason. I'm curious about it and that will lead to other lines and other images. I just try to trust that if I keep following it, it will become something, but it doesn't have to become something either. It can be an experiment. I try to be really open and receptive to what comes in the process.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC AND OTHER ARTS

Music is so important to me. I feel like I became a poet because I'm a failed musician. It's not in the cards for me. It's funny because I am always drawn to musicians, and always end up dating musicians. I think there's something about sound and rhythm



that is really important to me. I also just love putting references in to different musicians and songs in the writing because I feel if it's important, if it's a part of how your mind works, a part of how your heart beats, then why not put it in a poem? There are many, many musical references in these poems.

I also think about it in terms of songwriting and composition. From instrumentation to lyrics, that whole creative process also really fascinates me, and I love seeing someone dive into that. It's also just a good way to get out of my writer head, which I can be stuck in sometimes. To think about other art forms, music especially, but also painting and dance have been important to me.



NYANI NKUMAH DISCUSSES HER DEBUT NOVEL, *WADE IN THE WATER*



ON WRITING FROM ADULT AND CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES

If I wrote from Ella's [young] perspective, it wasn't that difficult, simply because I have done a number of short pieces, and they're all children's novels. The innocence of children, the feelings — they do have very strong feelings at some point. This is what I used to develop Ella's character, and it came naturally. I also have kids, so I drew on that. I drew on my childhood.

It was a lot harder for me to write about Katherine, especially in the beginning, because she was an adult. After I developed the first draft of the manuscript, I sent it out to readers to take a look at. I kept getting the same feedback, that they didn't really have a sense of who Katherine was as a person.

This is what led me to go back and start to rewrite. I finally made up my mind that it's actually when you're a child that you're able to access your feelings and your emotions and your character the best. I started to write about Katherine as a child when she was five to the age of fifteen. Then I integrated those sections into the novel. That's how I merged them into the rest of the novel. It allowed me to really get a good understanding of Katherine and who she was as a person, and also allowed readers to be able to really understand her.

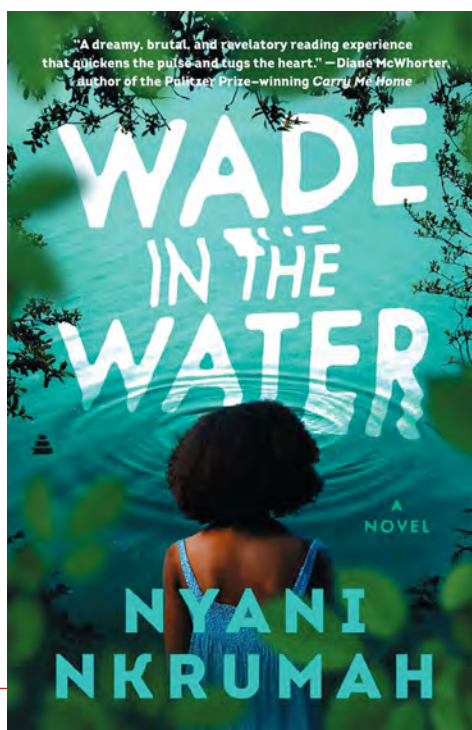
ON MANAGING ALL THE MOVING PIECES

I thought of it as a kaleidoscope. I really wanted all the pieces to come together, so I looked first at the [fictional] community itself. For me, the community is integral because we have two different generations represented. We have the children who have grown up in the 70s and 80s, and then we have the adults who have witnessed the Civil Rights movement. I wanted to look at that generational gap from the legacy of the Civil Rights era. 20 years later what is happening? The kids don't know anything about Civil Rights. Or they know about it, but they don't feel it. They know it in terms of textbooks, but they weren't there. Now, the adults in the community, they grew up in the 1960s, so they obviously have



more feelings and suspicions. To be able to articulate how they felt, I made sure to use multiple narrators in the story.

I really wanted for the reader to be able to get into [each character's] headspace. That's why I used the first-person point of view for [the two primary narrators]. I kept thinking about my audiences because I know I have white audiences and I have Black audiences. I really wanted to make sure that each audience could get into the headspaces of these two characters and really understand what they were thinking and what their motivations were, what their feelings were. That's how I worked it through to create this kaleidoscope, I would say, of voices.



MARISA CRANE DISCUSSES THEIR DEBUT NOVEL, *I KEEP MY EXOSKELETONS TO MYSELF*



ON VOICE

I'm typically a voice-driven person. Before I get something on the page, it's more like a character that's haunting me or following me around, talking to me. That's usually where the engine is for a book for me. This book I did actually have the conceit first, which is generally not how it goes for me, but I had the world in mind.

When I was creating [the narrator's] character, I just love voicey stuff. I love reading voicey stuff. I just think that for me, that's what keeps me reading is that I want to jump to the next fragment because I want to know what weird thing this person's going to say or do. Weirdness is like a part of voice for me. Finding strange ways to say things on the line level. What's a more surprising way to say something that's everyday? What's a stranger way to do it?

Then just leaning into her neurosis and anxieties without hopefully making them too annoying. I think there's always a balance there in character. You want to give someone all of these defining qualities without pushing people away by being like, "Oh my god, not this person talking about exoskeletons again." That's a good example, giving



her this grounding behavior, and we're able to learn about her through this behavior. We know that she does this when she's feeling particularly vulnerable or stressed out or upset about something.

ON WRITING IN A FRAGMENTED STYLE

Oh, my gosh. It felt like just moving a million puzzle pieces around at all times until something clicked. I started a lot of drafts over and over again throughout my revision process because I was getting so overwhelmed by going into this 300-something-page document. Being like, "Okay, I messed up, and I know that I need to move all of these parts around." A lot of times I would just open a new document, and be like, "Okay, I know what order I need these things to go in now. Now, it's a matter of grabbing it, rearranging it, and pasting it over."

I'm terrible at puzzles. More terrible than probably the average person telling you that they're terrible. That part of my brain is missing. I've never been able to sit down and do a puzzle. But here I am doing this with words. It was just like, "Why did I do this to myself?"

It feels really magical when it clicks. When you're doing it, and you get that moment of satisfaction, and you're like, "This is the perfect transition, and this is the perfect place where this piece goes." That feels like such a mini celebration. You're like, Yes. That's locked in there. Yes.

**THE WRITER'S CENTER
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presents writers from the
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the world. Visit writer.org to watch
recordings of past events and browse
the upcoming schedule.



AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT L. SHUSTER

Winner of the 2022 McLaughlin-Esstman-Stearns First Novel Prize

By Amy Freeman

In addition to the 2022 McLaughlin-Esstman-Stearns Prize, Robert L. Shuster's *To Zenzi* received a Foreword Indie Gold Award, the AWP Prize for the Novel, and a James Jones Fellowship. For a number of years, he wrote arts and culture pieces for *The Village Voice*. He lives in Westchester County, NY.

Amy Freeman: This extraordinary novel follows the travails of a 13-year-old child in 1945 Berlin. Where did you get the idea for the story?

Robert L. Shuster: I've always been both fascinated and horrified by war, and some years ago I was working on a nonfiction book about the subject. Researching it, I read Allan Bullock's 1000-page tome, *Hitler and Stalin*, at the end of which Bullock examines the insanity of the Führerbunker. I had always imagined it as a small, cramped enclosure, with Hitler cowering inside, but not so: the place was a vast labyrinth, complete with meeting rooms, a large kitchen, a surgical ward, a dental facility, and so on — and at the end, it was a buzzing hive of desperation, delusion, and considerable debauchery. A perfect setting, it suddenly seemed, for fiction. But how to get inside with a character? I did not want to write from the perspective of a Nazi. Then I read about the ceremony held outside the bunker on April 20th, 1945, for Hitler's 56th birthday, in which the Fuhrer presented 19 boys with the Iron Cross. There was my answer: a boy, who would be, in the novel, the uncounted 20th. But, instead of a young warrior, a boy who was there by accident. And, more interesting, a dreamy boy who loved to draw spaceships (just as I did at Tobias's age). So I began to work on the novel.

At the outset, I saw the story's broad arc, roughly conceiving a few of the major scenes (the bomb shelter, the Eastern Front battle, the escape from Berlin), but the points in between were invented and shaped as I went along, through many revisions.

Odd and fascinating aspects of the fall of Berlin, discovered in my research, kept finding their way into the novel's plot. The sad fate, for example, of the Berlin zoo's gorilla (Pongo), who was found dead in his cage next to the body of an SS officer. A strange scenario, and unexplained. So I invented a reason for it, which became a turning point in the story.

Tobias Koertig, the narrator, is in his 80s, describing events when he was 13, but sometimes coming back to the present. How did you differentiate his voice as a teen and an octogenarian?

Capturing a childhood experience from a mature perspective is a challenge. One thing that made this easier was to have the elderly Tobias retain some of his boyish innocence. He is not a deeply philosophic man, and he lives a simple, solitary life. He spends much of his time producing sketches, as he did as a child. Also, I decided to make Tobias's narrative voice a little awkward at times — to convey his occasional trouble with English (a reminder of his German identity) as well as his distressed state in relating traumatic events. That awkwardness also gives some flavor of a boyish viewpoint.

Mostly, though, the differentiation in age is achieved through internal thoughts and dialog. The 84-year-old narrator portrays his 13-year-old self in 1945 as being typical of that age: obstinate, gullible, overly eager, silly, confused, and nervously lustful. He yearns to see glimpses of the sexual couplings occurring in the bomb shelter, for example, yet he's embarrassed by the adoration of Zenzi, an older girl.

When Tobias brings the narrative back to the present day, commenting as an 84-year-old, the tone switches to one of regret, lament, and weariness (though still retaining a simple style and a touch of awkwardness). Here, late in the novel, he regrets a decision he and Zenzi made: "But there are too many

days like this in a lifetime, too many, and it is only a sadder and sadder thing to consider.”

As historical fiction, obviously this book took a lot of research. In terms of the historical part of that label, what kinds of sources did you use?

I took a top-down approach, starting with the big-picture accounts: Cornelius Ryan’s unmatched and novel-like *The Last Battle*, Antony Beevor’s *The Fall of Berlin*, Ian Kershaw’s *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler’s Germany, 1944-1945*, all excellent in laying out the scope and drama of the madness.

Then I concentrated on specific subjects. For the German boy-soldier experience, there was Helmut Altner’s *Berlin Dance of Death* (and other accounts). For the civilian view, there was *A Woman in Berlin* (anonymous author) and Ursula Von Kardorff’s *Diary of Nightmare: Berlin 1942-1945*. James P. O’Donnell’s incisive *The Bunker* was incredibly helpful in visualizing this bizarre and relatively comfortable underground world, central in the novel. Of course I also read numerous biographies of Hitler. And I tracked down sources for the smallest details: a booklet on the U-Bahn, Martin Bormann’s letters, descriptions of the Hotel Adlon, instructions for firing a panzerfaust, German recordings of Poulenc’s piano works, etc.

Period photographs, old footage, maps, and films made shortly after the war (such as Rossellini’s *Germany Year Zero*, filmed in Berlin’s ruins) were also essential, allowing me to easily transport myself into certain scenes. But with all the research (the full list is on my website, robertshuster.com), I tried hard not to make that historical-novel mistake — showing off all that you learned and cluttering the narrative. My arbitrary rule is to know ten times more than you’ll ever include.

ABOUT THE MCLAUGHLIN-ESSTMAN-STEARNES PRIZE

Each year, The Writer’s Center awards \$3,000 to the author of an exceptional first novel published in the previous calendar year. Conceived and funded by former board member Neal P. Gillen, the McLaughlin-Esstman-Stearns First Novel Prize honors three dedicated writers and members of The Writer’s Center faculty — the late Ann McLaughlin, Barbara Esstman, and Lynn Stearns — who have nourished and inspired students and fellow writers.

And now to the fiction aspect! How did you decide what liberties you could take?

Because Tobias wants to establish the truth of his account (to convince the police to investigate a theft related to the war), and because the historian in the Afterword attempts to confirm its authenticity, I needed everything — even the most fantastical or absurd scenes — to be plausible. The previously mentioned gorilla, the battlefield camel, the Russian biplane dropping Nivea “leaflets,” the tricks of Hitler’s dog, the gold antiquities, Russian soldiers wearing opera costumes — all of this is based on the historical record. Even Hitler’s insane monologues are largely taken from his officially recorded late-night ramblings, collected as *Table Talk*.

For Tobias’s summons to the Führerbunker, where he meets several notorious figures of the German High Command, I looked to Thomas Berger’s comic novel of the Old West, *Little Big Man*, as a kind of guide. Berger maneuvered his character, Jack Crabb, into encounters with Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill, and General Custer, closely adhering to known history but slipping Crabb into the unwitnessed gaps. Tobias’s presence at three big events — the marriage of Hitler and Eva Braun, the last moments of their lives, and the death of Martin Bormann — does not alter the well-known final outcomes, but does create a different set of circumstances in moments that weren’t observed or recorded — imagined scenes that I made sure (by studying timelines, witness reports, etc.) lay within the realm of possibility. Of course, real historians (unlike the Afterword’s Christopher Voss) may disagree!





My History Lesson in Learning to Write Historical Fiction

By Aaron Hamburger

Before embarking upon my novel *Hotel Cuba* I had never written historical fiction. Though my three previous books were rooted in place (Prague for *The View from Stalin's Head*, Jerusalem for *Faith for Beginners*, and Detroit for *Nirvana Is Here*), their time periods were the recent rather than distant past.

Hotel Cuba, set in the early 1920s, travels to Havana, Russia, Key West, New York City, and eventually Detroit. It's based on the story of my grandmother, a Russian-Jewish refugee who fled the chaos of her homeland after the Russian Revolution. She hoped to join her sister in New York, but US immigration laws were being changed to block Jewish immigrants like her. Instead she diverted her journey to Havana, Cuba, where she lived for a year. This was during Prohibition, when American tourists were flooding the island to get drunk and get wild. My grandmother paid an American couple every cent she had to pretend she was their daughter and smuggle her to Key West. However, as soon as she stepped off the boat in Key West, she was arrested and eventually deported back to Cuba.

As I began writing her story in novel form, I feared I might commit the fallacy described famously by Henry James in his letter to Sarah Orne Jewett about the challenges of historical fiction:

"You may multiply the little facts that can be got from pictures & documents, relics & prints, as much as you like — the real thing is almost impossible to do...You have to think with your modern apparatus a man, a woman, — or rather fifty — whose own thinking was intensely otherwise conditioned, you have to simplify back by an amazing tour de force — & even then it's all humbug."

There were so many "little facts" I'd need to know. Where would I start?

Around this time, I was fortunate to attend a reading by DC-area novelist Dolen Perkins-Valdez, author of gripping, award-winning historical novels about

African-American women like *Wench* and *Take My Hand*. Perkins-Valdez shared two insights about her process.

First, she said that she began her books by writing a draft before doing extensive research, in order to figure out what she needed to figure out.

This way of working gave me the liberty I needed to launch into my story, headlong, ignorant, and free. Creating my story this way provided necessary and helpful boundaries for my research, letting me know both what I'd need to find out and what might be extraneous.

“

This way of working gave me the liberty I needed to launch into my story, headlong, ignorant, and free.

”

—Aaron Hamburger

The second thing she said that stayed with me was her vivid recounting of a visit to an archive in Chicago where she read a diary of a woman from the time period of her story. At first, Perkins-Valdez found the diary entries disappointingly mundane, variations on "It was cold." The same thing repeated over and over.

Then Perkins-Valdez realized: It was cold! Back in Chicago in the 1870s, there was no central heating. To stay warm, people lit wood fires, which burned fast and were expensive to maintain. A family would probably only have a single fire going in one room of the house. Imagine it, winter in Chicago, one chilly room crowded with freezing family members jockeying for the space nearest the fireplace that was feebly trying to ward off the chill. Think of their frame of mind!

Perkins-Valdez’s resourcefulness and empathetic imagination gave me a model to follow as I dug into the past to recreate my grandmother’s life. I looked not just for details of the time period, but how those details would shape the feelings and actions of the people of the time period. An ad for car blankets reminded me that cars didn’t come equipped with heaters, for example. (Contemporaneous advertisements were one of my best sources of information.) As I researched women’s fashion, I noted the emphasis on flowing rather than fitted lines, muted colors, and androgyny, all of which reflected a zeitgeist of new possibilities for feminine identity.

When I traveled to Havana, I tried to imagine how the tropical weather must have felt to my grandmother after the cold, bitter winters of Eastern Europe. I wondered how unfamiliar the food, the music, the language, and the people all must have been for her.

In Key West, I took pictures of landmarks, but also the plants I saw, the sky and the water, as well as timetables for ferries that ran back and forth between Cuba and Florida. I read books, books, and more books, hunting through the bibliography of each one to find other sources. I interviewed historians, scholars, and family members, pestering them with questions. I visited the National Archive and read hundred-year-old letters and reports. I studied original photographs and old menus. With each piece of the puzzle, I kept asking myself, what’s underneath this detail?

I was also fortunate that my family had tape recorded interviews with my grandmother while she was still alive. I listened to these recordings over and over. My grandmother, a woman of few but choice words, told her story in broad strokes, leaving several sizable gaps that are now lost to history.

In recreating her story as fiction, I played detective to fill in those gaps. While listening to those precious recordings, I tried to think about what she hadn’t said but implied. Which parts of her story did she gloss over? Which ones evoked strong emotions?

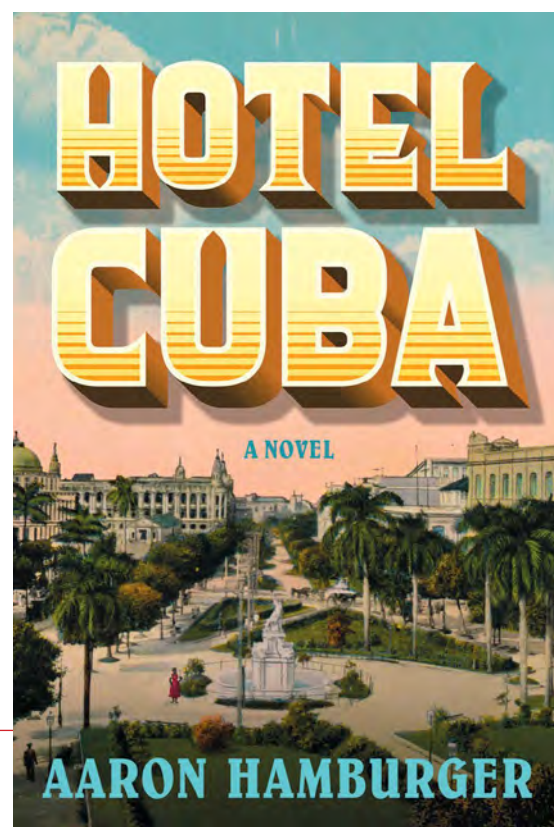
I noted the desperation in her voice when she recounted the moment of her arrest. I was also particularly taken by a point at which my grandmother called out one of her relatives in Yiddish as a “machashefa.”

“You know what it is, machashefa?” she asked my brothers, who were interviewing her. “A witch!” She was insistent on their knowing this word’s meaning, and she kept repeating it in a way that expressed how much it mattered to her. Interestingly, at the story’s end, my grandmother confessed that the relative in question confronted her, asking, “Aren’t you ashamed to call me a machashefa?”

That depth of feeling in my grandmother’s shaky voice inspired me to spin a vivid subplot in my novel about the fight between these two women and their differing values, as well as what a grudging reconciliation between them might look like.

My grandmother died when I was in my teens. I knew her only vaguely, as a sweet, frail old woman in tweed skirts who’d rock me in her lap singing lullabies in her thick Yiddish accent. So I’ve been gratified to hear my family say after reading my new book, “It’s amazing how you’ve caught her voice. It sounds exactly like her!”

Ultimately, this is the joy of reading and writing historical fiction. History can give us the facts, names, dates, and figures of what happened. Historical fiction, at its best, can give us the feelings of those who lived through it, recreating the experience of another time and place, and perhaps, once the story is over and we’ve had time to reflect upon it, leading us to consider what future generations might wonder about us and our time.





Workshop Guidelines

Write with us! The Writer's Center offers more than 300 workshops every year in all genres and for all experience levels.

You'll work with published, professional writers as you explore the craft of writing in genre-specific as well as special topics workshops. Take a look below at the basic levels of instruction, and then find our workshop schedule, workshop descriptions, and instructor bios in the following pages. You can find more info at writer.org.

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BEGINNER

If you're new to creative writing, start here! Beginner-level workshops introduce you to the basic elements of the craft of writing. You'll take your first steps to creating stories, poems, essays, novels, and more!

INTERMEDIATE

Now that you've developed a writing practice, it's time to take it to the next level. Intermediate workshops help you learn new skills and improve your own original work.

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Calling all confident writers! In our advanced workshops, you'll master elements of craft, finish polished pieces, and learn how to get your work published.

WORKSHOP POLICIES

REFUND POLICY

In the case of a workshop cancellation, participants can receive either a full refund or a credit toward a future workshop(s). Workshop participants can withdraw (at least 48 hours before the first workshop session) for a full credit valid for one year. No refunds are offered for withdrawals. For our full refund policy, visit writer.org/refund-policy.

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No jerks! The Writer's Center is committed to providing a welcoming environment for all program participants, instructors, staff members, and volunteers regardless of race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, appearance, or class. To view our complete code of conduct, please visit writer.org/conduct.

SUMMER 2023 WORKSHOPS ARE ON SITE & VIRTUAL

LIVE VIDEO CONFERENCE workshops will be held via **Zoom**. You can view brief tutorials on using the platform at support.zoom.us.

ASYNCHRONOUS workshops will take place over **Wet Ink**, an online learning forum and discussion board.

Register now at writer.org!

SUMMER 2023 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

B = BEGINNER I = INTERMEDIATE A = ADVANCED M = MASTER ALL = ALL LEVELS

ADULTS WRITE FOR CHILDREN 16	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Writing for Children: Character and Plot	Carol Mitchell	6/3/23 - 6/10/23	SAT	1 - 2:30 PM	B/I
Creating Your Book for Children	Peter Mandel	6/15/23	THURS	7 - 9 PM	ALL
Writing Picture Books	Jacqueline Jules	7/11/23	TUES	7 - 9 PM	B
FICTION 16-19	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Intro to the Novel	T. Greenwood	4/28/23 - 6/16/23	N/A	Asynchronous	B
Creating Novel Characters	T. Greenwood	4/28/23 - 5/19/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Crafting Short Stories	Christopher Linforth	5/15/23 - 7/3/23	N/A	Asynchronous	I/A
The Extreme Novelist	Kathryn Johnson	5/17/23 - 6/28/23	WED	7 - 9:30 PM	I/A
Introduction to Fiction	Kathryn Johnson	5/20/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	B
Short Fiction	Jennifer Buxton	5/23/23 - 6/27/23	TUES	7 - 9:30 PM	I
Plotting Your Novel	T. Greenwood	5/26/23 - 6/16/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
How to Plot Like a Pro	Kathryn Johnson	6/3/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL
Novel in Progress	Dana Cann	6/14/23 - 8/2/23	WED	7 - 9:30 PM	ALL
Your First (or Next) Novel	Kathryn Johnson	6/17/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	B/I
Fiction II: Revise and Shine	Nick Gardner	6/19/23 - 8/14/23	MON	6:30 - 9 PM	I/A
Flash Fiction	Christopher Linforth	6/19/23 - 7/10/23	N/A	Asynchronous	B
Compelling Scenes	Kathryn Johnson	6/24/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	B/I
The Art of Description	Afabwaje Kurian	6/26/23 - 7/31/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Fiction I: The Engines That Power a Story	Nick Gardner	6/29/23 - 8/17/23	THURS	7 - 9 PM	B
Creating Novel Characters	T. Greenwood	6/30/23 - 7/21/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Intermediate Novel Writing (The 8 Cs)	T. Greenwood	6/30/23 - 8/18/23	N/A	Asynchronous	I
Writing Fiction	Jennifer Buxton	7/11/23 - 8/15/23	TUES	7 - 9:30 PM	I
Plotting Your Novel	T. Greenwood	7/28/23 - 8/18/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Breathing Life into Your Characters	Kathryn Johnson	8/5/23 - 8/5/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL
Using Backstory Effectively	Kathryn Johnson	8/9/23	WED	7 - 8 PM	I/A
Troubleshooting Your Fiction	Kathryn Johnson	8/19/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL

MIXED GENRE 19-21	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Getting Started with Creative Writing	Mathangi Subramanian	5/15/23 - 6/19/23	N/A	Asynchronous	B
Writing Compelling Historical Fiction	Dave Tevelin	5/20/23 - 6/24/23	SAT	10 AM - 12 PM	ALL
Show and Tell Intensive	Laura J. Oliver	5/20/23	SAT	10 AM - 12 PM	ALL
Writing Great Dialogue	Caela Carter	5/30/23 - 6/27/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Embracing a Writing Habit	Lynn Auld Schwartz	6/6/23	TUES	6:30 - 8:30 PM	ALL
Reading Your Work Out Loud	Jennifer Hamady	6/7/23	WED	6 - 9 PM	ALL
Funny Ways To Tell Your Story	Nikki Frias	6/8/23 - 7/13/23	THURS	7 - 9 PM	ALL
Creative Journaling: Words + Art	Mary Quattlebaum and Joan Waites	6/15/23	THURS	6:30 - 9:30 PM	ALL
Getting Started with Creative Writing	Meg Eden	6/19/23 - 7/24/23	N/A	Asynchronous	B
Demystifying Dialogue	Lynn Auld Schwartz	6/27/23	TUES	6:30 - 8:30 PM	B/I
Becoming a Master Writer	John DeDakis	7/5/23 - 8/9/23	WED	7 - 9 PM	I
How to Write a Lot	Kathryn Johnson	7/8/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL
Pop-up! How to Tell Your Story	Nikki Frias	7/13/23	THURS	7 - 8 PM	ALL
Turning Memories into Transformational Stories	GG Renee Hill	7/16/23	SUN	10 AM - 1 PM	B/I
Creating Conflict & Tension	Kathryn Johnson	7/22/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL
10 Prompts To Deepen Your Writing	Lynn Auld Schwartz	7/22/23	SAT	9:30 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL
The Art of Writing Rough Drafts	GG Renee Hill	8/9/23 - 8/16/23	WED	6 - 8 PM	B/I
UnClogging Your Brain	Lisa Jan Sherman	8/29/23	TUES	7 - 8:30 PM	ALL

NONFICTION 21-22	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Writing Creative Nonfiction	Christopher Linforth	5/15/23 - 7/3/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
My Life, One Story at a Time	Pat McNees	5/16/23 - 6/20/23	TUES	7:15 - 10 PM	I/A
Writing About Mental Illness	GG Renee Hill	5/17/23 - 5/24/23	WED	6 - 8 PM	ALL
Writing the Truth: Lessons in Nonfiction Writing	Eric Lichtblau	6/6/23 - 7/18/23	TUES	6:30 - 8 PM	B
Vulnerability in Personal Storytelling	GG Renee Hill	6/11/23	SUN	12 - 3 PM	B/I
How to Pitch Personal Essays	Christine Koubek	6/20/23	TUES	7 - 9:30 PM	ALL
Personal Reported Essay Workshop	Liz Tracy	7/11/23 - 8/15/23	TUES	7 - 9 PM	B/I

SUMMER 2023 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

NONFICTION 21-22	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Life Stories Intensive	Lynn Auld Schwartz	8/5/23	SAT	9:30 AM - 12:30 PM	B/I

How to Write A Grant Proposal	Cara Seitchek	8/5/23 - 9/16/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL
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POETRY 22-23	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Crafting Short Poems	Dan Brady	5/15/23 - 6/19/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Poetry Writing and Revision	Emily Holland	5/16/23 - 6/27/23	TUES	7 - 9 PM	ALL
Natural Meter Crash Course	Claudia Gary	6/3/23	SAT	10 AM - 1 PM	I/A
Broken Poems	Woody Woodger	6/7/23 - 6/28/23	WED	2 - 3 PM	I/A
Poetry for Music Lovers	Claudia Gary	6/10/23	SAT	10 AM - 1 PM	I/A
Building a Poetry Chapbook	Melanie Figg	6/12/23 - 6/26/23	MON	7 - 9 PM	I/A
Poetry Vs. Trauma	Claudia Gary	6/17/23 - 7/1/23	SAT	10 AM - 1 PM	I/A
Poetic Forms	Meg Eden	6/19/23 - 7/24/23	N/A	Asynchronous	ALL
Sonnet Crash Course	Claudia Gary	6/25/23	SUN	1 - 4 PM	I/A
Reimagining the Love Poem	Annie Przepyszny	7/6/23 - 8/24/23	THURS	7 - 9 PM	I
Whole-Brain Poetry	Claudia Gary	7/8/23 - 8/5/23	SAT	10 AM - 1 PM	I/A
Revision as Practice	Naomi Ayala	7/15/23 - 8/26/23	SAT	1:30 - 4:30 PM	I
Villanelle Crash Course	Claudia Gary	8/12/23	SAT	10 AM - 1 PM	I/A
Freedom With Forms	Claudia Gary	8/13/23	SUN	1 - 4 PM	I/A
Writing Persona Poems	Claudia Gary	8/27/23	SUN	1 - 4 PM	I/A

PROFESSIONAL WRITING 24	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
How to Become a Rock Star Freelancer	Nevin Martell and Elizabeth Chang	6/5/23 - 6/19/23	MON	7 - 9 PM	B/I
Fundamentals of Persuasive Writing	James Alexander	6/10/23 - 7/15/23	SAT	10 AM - 12:30 PM	B/I
Write Like the News	Hank Wallace	8/30/23	WED	7 - 9 PM	ALL

PUBLISHING 24	LEADER	DATES	DAY	TIME	LEVEL
Writing the Query Letter	Eva Langston	6/3/23 - 6/17/23	SAT	10 AM - 12 PM	I/A
Book Marketing on a Budget	Rob Jolles	6/22/23 - 6/29/23	THURS	9:30 - 11 AM	ALL
Publishing in Literary Journals	Melanie Figg	7/15/23	SAT	10 AM - 12 PM	B/I
How to Write a Killer Query Letter	Kathryn Johnson	8/30/23	WED	7 - 9 PM	ALL



WORKSHOPS

ADULTS WRITE FOR CHILDREN

WRITING FOR CHILDREN: CHARACTER AND PLOT

Carol Mitchell

6/3/23 - 6/10/23 | 2 Saturdays | 1 - 2:30 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$100

In this two session workshop, participants will learn and practice techniques for creating characters and plot that work together to produce a book that children will love, remember, and share with others. This workshop is designed for beginner children's book writers with a book idea looking to learn the basics, and intermediate writers looking to solidify their writing craft. The workshop will include a mixture of mini-lectures, reading, writing, and workshopping. Participants can expect to spend 2-3 hours writing and reading in between the workshop sessions.

CREATING YOUR BOOK FOR CHILDREN

Peter Mandel

6/15/23 | Thursday | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Having a children's book published in today's tough market may seem like an impossible dream. But, in reality, getting your book idea into shape and into print can hinge on just the right advice from a pro. Do you need an agent? Should you connect with an artist? What about self-publishing? In this one-session workshop, nationally-known author Peter Mandel will pass on the insider's tips writers need to know in order to create a

marketable first book and get it into the hands of exactly the right gatekeepers in the publishing world.

WRITING PICTURE BOOKS

Jacqueline Jules

7/11/23 | Tuesday | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | Beginner \$50

What makes a story engaging for young readers? How do you tell a captivating story in less than 800 words? Jacqueline Jules, author of fifty books for children, will discuss the elements important to a successful children's picture book. In this two hour workshop, participants will learn the basics of story and receive tips on how to break into children's publishing.

FICTION

INTRO TO THE NOVEL

T. Greenwood

4/28/23 - 6/16/23 | 8 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | Beginner | \$360

This workshop is designed for those who have never written a novel before — or for those who are looking for a strong foundation in the basic components of novel-writing. This workshop will help you understand the process of writing a novel so you can get started putting pen to paper. The workshop will focus on everything from generating ideas to developing characters to establishing point of view. Participants will discuss many elements of fiction (dialogue, scene, etc.) but the emphasis will be on discovering the writing process that works best for each writer. Participants should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week on work. Required Text:

Hooked by Les Edgerton and *Plot & Structure* by James Scott Bell.

CREATING NOVEL CHARACTERS

T. Greenwood

4/28/23 - 5/19/23 | 4 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$195

When writing a novel, we must know our primary characters inside and out. We need to understand their desires, motivations, and frustrations, their histories, and their futures. This workshop will focus on the development of authentic characters. Participants will explore the main character(s) in their novels-in-progress as both autonomous and residing within the context of the other novelistic elements, while also examining the challenge of creating and integrating these various elements into a cohesive and credible whole. Participants should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week on work.

CRAFTING SHORT STORIES

Christopher Linforth

5/15/23 - 7/3/23 | 8 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | Intermediate/Advanced | \$360

This workshop is a craft-based dive into making your stories stronger by examining the qualities of good writing and good storytelling. After a recap on the constituent elements of short fiction, we will take a fresh look at contemporary and classic stories alike. Each week, writers will craft a new piece and offer feedback to fellow participants. By the course's end, writers will have workshopped several stories each and revised them with an eye toward publication. Participants should expect to spend about 2-4 hours a week on work.

THE EXTREME NOVELIST

Kathryn Johnson

5/17/23 - 6/28/23 | 7 Wednesdays | 7 - 9:30 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$315

This popular course will help you complete a rough draft in just 8 weeks. Each author will commit to an aggressive writing schedule and learn the tricks pros use to create a productive working environment and meet their deadlines, despite life's distractions. Classes will include accountability and progress reports from each participant, troubleshooting discussions, a brief lecture on some aspect of the fiction craft, and the opportunity to submit portions of the work-in-progress to the instructor for individual feedback and guidance. (Note: This is not a work-shopping course. Participants should expect to spend about 60-90 minutes a day for writing time).

INTRODUCTION TO FICTION

Kathryn Johnson

5/20/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | Beginner | \$50

Have you dreamed of writing fiction but didn't know how to start? If you've always wanted to write short stories or even a novel but been unsure where to begin, join us and discover how easy getting started can be. We'll discuss the basics of writing good fiction that others will want to read. Even if you've written every day in your working life, this new and joyful world is waiting for you to discover it.

SHORT FICTION

Jennifer Buxton

5/23/23 - 6/27/23 | 6 Tuesdays | 7 - 9:30 PM | Zoom | Intermediate | \$270

Through careful reading and guided discussion we will explore each participant piece for its secret aims, visible strengths, and needed areas of development. We will talk about the role of feedback in a writer's process, and how reading for each other sharpens our skills. This six week class will further your understanding of key craft elements, and help you see how your own work is coming across to a group of readers so that you can go forth armed with new ideas, skills, and hope. Instructor will discuss point of view, character presentation, story development, tension, and form, but the bulk of the content will arise from the particulars of each participant's work. This workshop will best suit people with previous workshop experience. Participants should expect to spend 2-3 hours each week reading and

responding to workshop stories and for the written exercises.

PLOTTING YOUR NOVEL

T. Greenwood

5/26/23 - 6/16/23 | 4 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$195

Whether you are an organized planner or a writer who flies by the seat of their pants, a novel still needs structure. In this workshop, participants will study the architecture of a novel and devise plans for plotting their novels. Using the three-act structure as a map, we will explore the basic components of a novel's plot. Participants should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week on work. Required Text: *Hooked* by Les Edgerton and *Plot & Structure* by James Scott Bell.

HOW TO PLOT LIKE A PRO

Kathryn Johnson

6/3/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

You have a great idea for a story. Do you dive in and just begin writing, or start by drafting an outline? Are you a born planner or a writer who loves to discover stories organically (i.e., a pantsler)? Understanding how to structure a well-conceived story around a main character and central conflict, while paying attention to pacing, can make the difference between a finished, publishable manuscript and an abandoned work-in-progress. Plotting provides a safety net that never robs the author of the joy of writing, and always reduces revision time.

NOVEL IN PROGRESS

Dana Cann

6/14/23 - 8/2/23 | 8 Wednesdays | 7 - 9:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$360

Does your novel have legs? For writers with a novel in progress, getting through the first 50-100 pages is a critical first step to get to the end. This workshop is for writers who are there (or just about there). We'll cover the basics—character, dialogue, plot, point of view, voice, and structure. Each writer will distribute a brief synopsis and up to 25 pages of their novel in progress for constructive critique. You'll leave the workshop with a better understanding of your novel, armed with the tools to keep going. Participants should expect to spend around 2-3 hours a week on work outside of class, plus time writing your own novel.

YOUR FIRST (OR NEXT) NOVEL

Kathryn Johnson

6/17/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

Get started writing the novel of your imagination — now! Writing a novel takes commitment, but it doesn't need to be daunting. Learn how to generate a handful of plots to choose from, methods for effectively planning your story, and simple hacks for fine tuning your basic fiction skills. Participants will initiate a flexible writing plan that will keep their writing flowing.

FICTION II: REVISE AND SHINE

Nick Gardner

6/19/23 - 8/14/23 | 8 Mondays | 6:30 - 9 PM | The Writer's Center | Intermediate/Advanced | \$360

Each week, we will read interviews and essays from established writers in order to learn better editing practices to make our own stories stand out. As a group, we will workshop participants' short stories or novel excerpts (15 pages or fewer). Each writer will leave the workshop with written feedback from the instructor and the group, as well as a more established revision plan for this and future works. We will also discuss strategies for submitting your writing to journals, publishers, and agents. Participants should have a piece of fiction 15 pages or fewer ready to submit by the first workshop. Each week, participants will read 1 published short story, 1-2 craft essays/interviews, and 1-2 short stories (which they will comment on). Note: No meeting July 3.

FLASH FICTION

Christopher Linforth

6/19/23 - 7/10/23 | 4 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | Beginner | \$195

This workshop will introduce writers to this explosive short form. Each week, writers will read several contemporary flashes, read craft essays on flash, and write one piece to a specific prompt. The instructor and class will offer feedback on all the flash fictions, with an eye toward revising work for publication. Participants should expect to spend about 2-4 hours a week on work.

COMPELLING SCENES

Kathryn Johnson

6/24/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

Master the skills of scene building and learn how to avoid weak story segments that

result in bland and uninspiring stories. The building blocks of any short story, novel, memoir, or work of creative nonfiction are scenes. Each one has its own beginning, middle, and end and moves readers another step toward the plot's resolution. Elements discussed in this fast-paced, half-day class will include perspective, setting, emotion, action, dialogue, and exposition—as well as the most effective types of scene openings and endings. This workshop is intended for new and intermediate authors who will benefit from a clearer understanding of the elements of an effective scene.

THE ART OF DESCRIPTION

Afabwaje Kurian

6/26/23 - 7/31/23 | 6 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$270

Learn the secret to engaging readers with your writing! This six-week interactive class, open to fiction and nonfiction writers, is designed to give you the skills to write rich descriptive sentences and paragraphs that infuse life into your characters and the worlds you create. During this course, you will strengthen your powers of observation through a variety of assigned weekly readings and writing exercises. You'll also share some of your own writing and enjoy reading the work of other participants. A new lesson will open on Mondays and assignments will be due by the end of each week. After the completion of this course, you'll have new material that may springboard future stories. Participants should expect to spend 2-4 hours a week on this course.

FICTION I: THE ENGINES THAT POWER A STORY

Nick Gardner

6/29/23 - 8/17/23 | 8 Thursdays | 7 - 9 PM | The Writer's Center | Beginner | \$360

In this workshop, we will discuss one element of fiction each week while reading works by contemporary writers such as Ottessa Moshfegh, Amber Sparks, and Rion Amilcar Scott, and discussing the different ways these professionals use their writing tools. Each week will include craft readings, a short lecture, and generative writing exercises that will be good for beginning writers as well as those who are returning to the page and hoping to think more deeply about their craft. You will leave the workshop with a deeper understanding of your own writing voice and the tools necessary to make your fiction sing.

There will be two short stories (5-12 pages each) and two craft readings (1-5 pages each) to prepare for class each week as well as a short 15 minute-1/2 hour writing exercise. Participants should expect to spend around 2 hours a week on work outside of class.

CREATING NOVEL CHARACTERS

T. Greenwood

6/30/23 - 7/21/23 | 4 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$195

When writing a novel, we must know our primary characters inside and out. We need to understand their desires, motivations, and frustrations, their histories, and their futures. This workshop will focus on the development of authentic characters. Participants will explore the main character(s) in their novels-in-progress as both autonomous and residing within the context of the other novelistic elements, while also examining the challenge of creating and integrating these various elements into a cohesive and credible whole. Participants should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week on work.

INTERMEDIATE NOVEL WRITING (THE 8 CS)

T. Greenwood

6/30/23 - 8/18/23 | 8 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | Intermediate | \$360

This intermediate course will examine the eight fundamental elements of the novel to help you find the strengths and weaknesses of your work-in-progress. From Concept to Conclusion, we will study the key components of a novel, with generative and evaluative exercises along the way. Written lessons, curated online resources, and targeted exercises (along with instructor and peer feedback) will help guide you as you continue to draft your novel. Participants should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week on work.

WRITING FICTION

Jennifer Buxton

7/11/23 - 8/15/23 | 6 Tuesdays | 7 - 9:30 PM | Zoom | Intermediate | \$270

Through careful reading and guided discussion we will explore each participant piece for its secret aims, visible strengths, and needed areas of development. This six week class will further your understanding of key craft elements, and help you see how your own work is coming across to a group of readers so that you can go forward armed with new

ideas, skills, and hope. Instructor will discuss point of view, character presentation, story development, tension, and form, but the bulk of the content will arise from the particulars of each participant's work. This workshop best suits people with prior experience workshopping, especially those working on stories rather than novels. Participants should expect to spend 2-3 hours each week reading and responding to workshop stories and for the written exercises.

PLOTTING YOUR NOVEL

T. Greenwood

7/28/23 - 8/18/23 | 4 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$195

Whether you are an organized planner or a writer who flies by the seat of their pants, a novel still needs structure. In this workshop, participants will study the architecture of a novel and devise plans for plotting their novels. Using the three-act structure as a map, we will explore the basic components of a novel's plot. Participants should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week on work. Required Text: *Hooked* by Les Edgerton and *Plot & Structure* by James Scott Bell.

BREATHING LIFE INTO YOUR CHARACTERS

Kathryn Johnson

8/5/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Create strong, believable characters. The cleverest plot in the world won't hold a reader's attention if your characters are flat, unrealistic, and behave like stick figures on the page. Learn how to choose, develop, and employ interesting characters that readers will want to follow through your stories. Participants will discover how to create a strong character-reader bond and focus their stories through the vivid, emotional experiences of their central character(s).

USING BACKSTORY EFFECTIVELY

Kathryn Johnson

8/9/23 | Wednesday | 7 - 8 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$25

Characters have a history just as real people do. A character's past provides motivation, making them believable and emotionally sympathetic. By using backstory, we give readers valuable insight into their lives. But how do we write effective backstory and where in our stories do we put it? Participants will leave this fast-paced session with options for

including elegant and practical backstory in their work-in-progress and future stories.

TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR FICTION

Kathryn Johnson

8/19/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom
All Levels | \$50

Revision is a dirty word to some writers. But you needn't fear the challenges of polishing a manuscript before submission for publication. This fast-paced, half-day class focuses on the ten most common mistakes and concerns, often overlooked by authors. Everything you do to your manuscript after the first draft is what makes the difference between a ho-hum story and a powerful tale that lingers in readers' minds. Join us for a painless look at these ten major (but fixable) issues for fiction.

MIXED GENRE

GETTING STARTED WITH CREATIVE WRITING

Mathangi Subramanian

5/15/23 - 6/19/23 | 6 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | Beginner | \$270

Do you have a memoir, novel, or chapbook trapped inside of you? Set it free with this course about the basics of creative writing! Every week, participants will apply what they learn from close readings across genres to craft elements such as plot, character, setting, tense, and point of view. Participants will leave the workshop with a familiarity with multiple genres; initial drafts of fiction, poetry and/or nonfiction pieces; and a set of writing exercises they can use to maintain their creative momentum. Plus, they'll read authors from diverse backgrounds that can serve as models for their future work. Please expect to spend about 2-4 hours a week on reading and discussion and 2-4 hours on creative writing.

WRITING COMPELLING HISTORICAL FICTION

Dave Tevelin

5/20/23 - 6/24/23 | 5 Saturdays | 10 AM - 12 PM | The Writer's Center | All Levels | \$225

Make your historical fiction — or your nonfiction — vivid and credible! This five-week course will be a collaborative workshop that will teach participants a variety of techniques to find what they're looking for

and work it into a gripping and informative novel. You'll learn how to find archived resources; cultivate relationships with both the people charged with maintaining those resources and those with a connection to the historical event involved; use a broad array of information to capture the feel of life at the time of the events; and employ other useful investigative and literary techniques. At the final two sessions, participants will share their ideas and suggestions about how to research and write each other's work.

SHOW AND TELL INTENSIVE

Laura J. Oliver

5/20/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Learn how to make your readers experience your stories as if they were there. Skilled writers make readers feel and intuit exactly what they want them to by using the technique of showing writing. No other element of craft promises this immediacy and power to bring a work to life. This is how to make a flat passage sing, how to gain your readers' trust and emotional participation. Through exercises, lively discussion, and inspiring instruction, you will learn to elevate your stories to submission-quality prose. This workshop is for any writer seeking to make stories more potent, compelling, easily felt, and memorably visualized.

WRITING GREAT DIALOGUE

Caela Carter

5/30/23 - 6/27/23 | 5 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$225

Dialogue can make or break a novel. It either bounces off the page and sings through the climax, or it drags the pace and destroys your characterization. In this class you'll learn some of the most basic tenants about writing fantastic dialogue, and you'll discover how focusing on dialogue can help you to develop your plot, round out your characters, smooth your pace, and develop a strong narrative voice. Participants should be prepared to write consistently in this class, and to spend about 30-45 minutes a week reading classmates' submissions.

EMBRACING A WRITING HABIT

Lynn Auld Schwartz

6/6/23 | Tuesday | 6:30 - 8:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

We'll identify the creative self in each of us and explore how to establish the most

effective process for our ongoing artistic work. Learn to design a healthy and powerful writing practice, an inspirational workspace, and techniques to combat barriers to creativity such as writer's block, procrastination, perfectionism, and the inner critic. Participants will leave with new tools for discovering and developing a lasting creative habit.

READING YOUR WORK OUT LOUD

Jennifer Hamady

6/7/23 | Wednesday | 6 - 9 PM | The Writer's Center | All Levels | \$50

Practice sharing your work in front of a supportive group of fellow writers. Spend an evening sharing your stories, poems, and memoirs. This small-group coaching session will give you the opportunity to bring your voice — and self — to the words you've written. You'll learn how to become a more genuine and effective communicator of your work, which will in turn fuel a more authentic writing process and outcome. You'll leave the workshop with a sense of camaraderie, community, and a more deeply rooted sense of your creative and expressive self. Please have on hand a number of pieces you'd be comfortable sharing during the meeting. Great practice for TWC's Open Mic Nights!

FUNNY WAYS TO TELL YOUR STORY

Nikki Frias

6/8/23 - 7/13/23 | 6 Thursdays | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$270

Let's make your story funnier! This workshop will discuss and teach different effective methods towards building and developing your story with humor. For the writer of any genre, this interactive workshop will include prompts to get the creative juices flowing, and some peer feedback during lessons. Participants should expect to spend about 1 hour a week on work outside of class.

CREATIVE JOURNALING: WORDS + ART

Mary Quattlebaum & Joan Waites

6/15/23 | Thursday | 6:30 - 9:30 PM | The Writer's Center | All Levels | \$50

Discover how to interlace your writing with your own simple sketches and collages, to create a unique fusion of words and art. Have you ever wanted to create art along with your writing — but felt you lacked skills or direction? Participants begin with personal-

writing prompts, which then become the basis for mixed-media art pieces. The co-leaders are an author and an artist who love the process of creative discovery and, through specific strategies, can help you to explore and shape your material. The work created may become part of an ongoing unique memoir, a creative journal, or individual pieces.

GETTING STARTED WITH CREATIVE WRITING

Meg Eden

6/19/23 - 7/24/23 | 6 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | Beginner | \$270

Dive into writing poetry and fiction in this welcoming class! Test the waters in both poetry and fiction, and learn the essential tools for writing creative work. Each unit will focus on an element of craft, including writing exercises, workshops and reading discussions. This is a great way to dip into creative writing and gain confidence on the page! Participants will learn how to write with poetic imagery, what flash fiction is, how to write compelling characters, and more.

DEMISTIFYING DIALOGUE

Lynn Auld Schwartz

6/27/23 | Tuesday | 6:30 - 8:30 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

Good dialogue is a great tool for both fiction and nonfiction writers. Yet, many writers avoid it. Let's demystify dialogue — exploring “real talk” versus written conversation; analyzing what characters should say and how they should say it; and identifying how speech creates action and propels the story forward. We'll examine the appropriate use of tags, dialects, and how to balance summary, direct, and indirect dialogue. Participants will come away with an understanding of how to give voice to their characters on the page.

BECOMING A MASTER WRITER

John DeDakis

7/5/23 - 8/9/23 | 6 Wednesdays | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | Intermediate | \$270

Take your writing to the next level in this series of topic-specific classes designed to drill deeper into the finer points of storytelling. We'll tackle memoir, journaling, characterization, dialogue, and research. Participants will learn how to tap into their creative subconscious, gain practical skills for igniting their curiosity, along with for rewriting, proofreading, and copy editing skills. By the end of the sessions, you'll have the skills, confidence, and strategies to take

your writing to a professional level. Each day will include short writing assignments, plus the opportunity to have your work critiqued.

HOW TO WRITE A LOT

Kathryn Johnson

7/8/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Do you believe you don't have the time, energy, or inspiration to write because of your hectic lifestyle? Learn what Kathryn Johnson's Extreme Novelists know about organizing their time, establishing a productive writing routine, and getting their stories written. We'll share methods EN Grads (and many professional writers) use to complete their books in months instead of years, their short stories in mere weeks. Become the dedicated author you've always dreamed of being. (Ideal for writers who don't have 8 weeks to dedicate to the Extreme Novelist course.)

POP-UP! HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY

Nikki Frias

7/13/23 | Thursday | 7 - 8 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$25

Have an idea, but don't know where to start? Join us for an hour as we discuss and learn different effective methods towards building and developing your story. This workshop is intended to help with all creative projects and how to navigate through ideas. This workshop will include a couple prompts to get the creative juices flowing, and some light lesson methodologies on ways to ease into projects, followed with a Q & A session.

TURNING MEMORIES INTO TRANSFORMATIONAL STORIES

GG Renee Hill

7/16/23 | Sunday | 10 AM - 1 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

How have your ups and downs, wins and losses shaped your life? Whether you want to write privately or wish to publish, identifying the turning points and themes in your life is an important first step in memoir writing. In this workshop, participants will reflect on the transformational seasons in their lives and associate stories and themes to each one. We will explore the dynamics of character development and narrative arc, and learn techniques to capture universal meaning through personal experiences. You will come away with a timeline technique to uncover life themes and storylines, a bank of memories to serve as writing prompts, and tips for

starting a memoir journaling practice.

CREATING CONFLICT & TENSION

Kathryn Johnson

7/22/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

It's often said that without conflict there is no story. Strengthening the conflict in any type of fiction will bump up the tension and turn limp, ordinary fiction into an extraordinary tale that will keep readers turning pages. Whether you choose to write literary fiction, mysteries, family sagas, thrillers, historical fiction, sci-fi or fantasy—you can learn techniques for drawing readers into your tales through action, dialogue, setting details, and plot twists that make your work stand out from the crowd. This workshop is intended for writers of fiction, memoir, and creative nonfiction who want to draw readers into their stories.

10 PROMPTS TO DEEPEN YOUR WRITING

Lynn Auld Schwartz

7/22/23 | Saturday | 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

This workshop is designed to inspire you to deepen your stories with emotional weight. By examining your response to a variety of visual and musical prompts including painting, sculpture, photography, short film, dance, and music video, we'll learn to notice underlying emotion. Since everything we create is a representation of something else, we'll practice translating your feelings to the page so that they can live in your characters and resonate with readers. Participants will leave with fresh ideas for their stories and characters, and the confidence to move beyond surface-level writing. This workshop is open to all writers, especially fiction and memoir writers, who are interested in deepening their ideas and creating emotional resonance on the page.

THE ART OF WRITING ROUGH DRAFTS

GG Renee Hill

8/9/23 - 8/16/23 | 2 Wednesdays | 6 - 8 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$100

Do you ever think to yourself: “I have many creative ideas and stories to tell, but why is it so hard to get my ideas out of my head and onto the page?” This workshop helps you understand your creative process on a deeper level so you can work with it and not against

it. You will learn the difference between the mindset needed for idea and draft generation and the mindset needed for organizing and editing your work. We will experiment with variations of expressive and intuitive writing, and other techniques that break down creative barriers. Writers will come away with a rough draft and a new appreciation for the early stages of story development.

UNCLOGGING YOUR BRAIN

Lisa Jan Sherman

8/29/23 | Tuesday | 7 - 8:30 PM | The Writer's Center | All Levels | \$50

Improvisation forces you directly into the action and heart of the piece. Allow your creative genius to 'script' in the moment, in a judgement-free zone. Surprise yourself! We will all learn basic improv techniques as it pertains to all genres of writing. We will experience taking physical and verbal prompts to spark memories, characters, and places, turning them into poems, scenes, and stories. During 'UnClogging' you will likely come up with an 'idea' that you feel compelled to expand on, or perhaps be re-inspired to continue work 'in progress.' Either way, you will have gained new perspective and confidence! Participants should dress comfortably for movement.

NONFICTION

WRITING CREATIVE NONFICTION

Christopher Linforth

5/15/23 - 7/3/23 | 8 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$360

Explore the personal and literary world of creative nonfiction. Participants will read and write in several sub-genres of creative nonfiction, including memoir, essay, literary journalism, and the epistolary form. This asynchronous class will focus on generating new material, offering feedback to peers, revising pieces, and researching markets for the placement of work. Participants should expect to spend about 2-4 hours a week on work.

MY LIFE, ONE STORY AT A TIME

Pat McNees

5/16/23 - 6/20/23 | 6 Tuesdays | 7:15 - 10 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$270

The goal in this 'Guided Autobiography' workshop is to capture your life experiences

in six short pieces of autobiographical writing (true stories) for those who will survive you—or for yourself later in life. Knowing that you are writing not for publication but to set the record straight may liberate you, allowing you to frankly explore your life choices and experiences. Write a two-page (500-word max) story to bring to the first session, to read aloud, to introduce yourself to others in the group—about a turning point in your life, or a time when you made a choice that changed your life. The emphasis here is on storytelling—making yourself and important friends and family characters in your stories. There is no “literary critiquing”—so you can relax enough to tell your story frankly, and find your natural voice. Participants should expect to write one story a week outside of class, to share with fellow participants at each session.

WRITING ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

GG Renee Hill

5/17/23 - 5/24/23 | 2 Wednesdays | 6 - 8 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$100

Whether you have experienced mental illness personally or have a loved one with mental illness, writing about it can help you process the challenges and inner conflicts while creating powerful narratives that reduce stigma and stereotypes. This workshop will teach you creative ways to practice self-discovery through writing and turn personal experience into art; and you will come away with two rough drafts in whatever genre you choose. For inspiration, we will read pieces by Elyn Saks, Bassey Ikpi, Mariah Hornbacher, and more. Please note: This is not a replacement for therapy. It's an opportunity to explore a difficult topic through a creative lens with a compassionate guide and community.

WRITING THE TRUTH: LESSONS IN NONFICTION WRITING

Eric Lichtblau

6/6/23 - 7/18/23 | 6 Tuesdays | 6:30 - 8 PM | The Writer's Center | Beginner | \$270

The workshop will allow beginners to learn the essentials of nonfiction writing in different formats and lengths. We'll work on magazine-style writing, book-length narratives, and first-person essays among others. We'll read from noted works to glean insights, and examine the research and reporting skills needed to write nonfiction. Note: No meeting July 4.

VULNERABILITY IN PERSONAL STORYTELLING

GG Renee Hill

6/11/23 | Sunday | 12 - 3 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

Find the courage to write about sensitive subjects. Each of us has the power to look at our lived experiences to find meaning and wisdom that we can transform however we want: into art, into lifestyle, into legacy. In this workshop, you will learn how to view creative vulnerability as generosity, and how to offer up your humanity through story as a gift to yourself and others. You will come away from this workshop with a rough draft of a personal story and perspective on your unique storyteller type, as well as best practices for taking care of yourself as you do this introspective work.

HOW TO PITCH PERSONAL ESSAYS

Christine Koubek

6/20/23 | Tuesday | 7 - 9:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Personal essays are perhaps the genre that has the largest array of publication possibilities—literary journals, newspapers, magazines, alumni publications, and more all publish this form. That's the good news! The challenge: finding the right publications for your story, along with submission guidelines, pay rates, and style preferences. In this workshop, you'll learn where to find writer's guidelines for popular newspaper and magazine essay columns (many with tips from the editor), how to create a submission plan to increase your success, and the pros and cons of submitting essays to newspapers and magazines vs. literary journals.

PERSONAL REPORTED ESSAY WORKSHOP

Liz Tracy

7/11/23 - 8/15/23 | 6 Tuesdays | 7 - 9 PM | The Writer's Center | Beginner/Intermediate | \$270

Interested in journalism but with a personal touch? A personal reported essay allows you to use storytelling to help readers connect emotionally with a topic that is important to you. Your essay will include your own story, a thesis addressing a complicated issue, interviews, and research to support your thesis. In this class, you'll learn how to write a thesis, structure your essay, find people to interview and reliable facts. You'll walk away with a strong pitch to send to editors.

LIFE STORIES INTENSIVE

Lynn Auld Schwartz

8/5/23 | Saturday | 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM |
Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

Whether you want to write a memoir, blog, letter to your granddaughter, or use your own life as the basis for fiction, life story writing requires that we tell where we come from and who we are. Consider other people's feelings without allowing this to censor your experience or keep you from writing. Learn to identify your story's essence, the truth it reveals, and to engage the reader through fictional techniques. Participants will leave inspired to begin or improve a work-in-progress.

HOW TO WRITE A GRANT PROPOSAL

Cara Seitchek

8/5/23 - 9/16/23 | 4 Saturdays | 10 AM -
12:30 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$195

Learn how to write proposals to request grants from funders. This workshop will cover how to research prospective funders, the elements of a good proposal, and how to approach funders. Proposal writing is a practical skill that, applied to those who work or volunteer for non-profit organizations, can be a good source of freelance writing income. Please come to class with a non-profit or project in mind to use as the focus of your research and proposal. This class will meet for three Saturdays (August 5-19), and then reconvene on September 16 to review completed proposals. Participants should expect to spend 1 to 2 hours a week on work outside of class.

POETRY

CRAFTING SHORT POEMS

Dan Brady

5/15/23 - 6/19/23 | 6 Weeks | Asynchronous |
Wet Ink | All Levels | \$270

How do you know if a poem is enough? In this workshop, we will look at and create short poems—poems of ten lines or less. Workshop participants will explore familiar short forms, like the haiku, and new approaches, such as compression, leaping, opposition, self-revision, and more, to build their knowledge of the strategies that make for a successful short poem. We'll be generating lots of new work (they're short poems!) and also discuss revision, how to develop a sequence, and publication of very short poems. Participants will be expected to complete readings, write

one poem per week, and critique the work of their peers.

POETRY WRITING AND REVISION

Emily Holland

5/16/23 - 6/27/23 | 7 Tuesdays | 7 - 9 PM |
Zoom | All Levels | \$315

For some poets, the most difficult part of writing is getting to the page. For others, it is the act of revisiting that first draft. This workshop will help participants not only write new work with ease, but also return to those poems with a keen eye towards revision. Participants will respond to weekly prompts based on contemporary readings from poets including Ada Limón, Chen Chen, Jericho Brown, and Natalie Diaz. Mid-way through the course, we will shift our focus to revision, reapproaching the poems from earlier weeks. By the end of the course, participants can expect to have written 6 new poems, with at least 3 substantial revisions. There will be opportunities to receive feedback from other participants and the instructor. Participants should have one poem in its early draft stages to begin the course, and expect to spend 1-2 hours a week on work outside of class.

NATURAL METER CRASH COURSE

Claudia Gary

6/3/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 1 PM | Zoom |
Intermediate/Advanced | \$50

Do you know why listening for the natural rhythms of speech can strengthen your writing? Have you ever wondered how scanning the lines of your first draft can make for a better poem? Here's an opportunity to improve your ear for meter—a major element of poetic prosody—and to fine-tune your understanding of how it works. Guided by an internationally published author of sonnets, villanelles, and other metrical poems, this one-day workshop includes scansion of well-known poems, writing exercises, and, if you like, close examination of a poem you've drafted prior to class. You'll leave with new insights about improving the auditory qualities of all your poems and prose.

BROKEN POEMS

Woody Woodger

6/7/23 - 6/28/23 | 4 Wednesdays | 2 - 3 PM |
The Writer's Center | Intermediate/Advanced
\$195

Poetry is made to be broken. In this 4-week course, you will write poems with the intention

of shattering, mangling, and breaking them wide open. First, you will be asked to employ formal poetic elements, such as enjambment, formal verse, meter, and rhyme, and consider the strengths of structured writing; then you will be guided through attempts to challenge and break those structures with intentional exploration. Doing so will reveal the limitless resiliency of poetry and how radical, imaginative drafting can transform a work. Participants should expect to spend about 1 hour a week on work outside of class.

POETRY FOR MUSIC LOVERS

Claudia Gary

6/10/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 1 PM | Zoom |
Intermediate/Advanced | \$50

Do you know which symphonies started as poems, and what a musician or music lover can bring to poetry? Inspired by her studies and practice of chamber music and art song composition, this workshop is based partly on poetry/music panels Claudia Gary has presented at the Frost Farm (NH) and West Chester (Pa.) poetry conferences. She will lead participants on a brief tour of poetry's parallels and links to music, followed by writing exercises and a workshop of participant poems.

BUILDING A POETRY CHAPBOOK

Melanie Figg

6/12/23 - 6/26/23 | 3 Mondays | 7 - 9 PM |
Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$135

Join a group of committed poets to learn how to build a chapbook that is cohesive yet expansive. This workshop is for committed poets who have at least 10 finished poems and are working toward a chapbook (20-40 pages total). Where are the gaps—the poems still needed? What is your collection's larger inquiry? How do you order poems for a chapbook? We'll also discuss publishing options. The class is designed for serious poets willing to think about their work as a larger whole, and spend significant time with their collection of poems. The class will be most beneficial for those poets who have a regular habit of revising and workshopping their poems. After each session, participants will be asked to do an exercise estimated to take 1 hour.

POETRY VS. TRAUMA

Claudia Gary

6/17/23 - 7/1/23 | 3 Saturdays | 10 AM - 1 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$135

Trauma can shut us down; writing poems can help free us to open up again. Learn, and try out, some of the many ways poetry has helped writers both heal trauma and prevent post-traumatic stress syndrome. Guided by an internationally published poet, you will explore the science behind this and learn a range of techniques, putting several of them to use in drafting new work. The workshop includes reading and discussion of time-honored poems, close attention to emotional and sensory aspects of poetry, several class writing exercises, and feedback on poems for those who wish to share them. (Note: All sharing is optional. This workshop is not a substitute for therapy.)

POETIC FORMS

Meg Eden

6/19/23 - 7/24/23 | 6 Weeks | Asynchronous | Wet Ink | All Levels | \$270

In this workshop, we'll explore why form is relevant for contemporary poets, and how we can take advantage of form to strengthen both traditional and free-verse poems. Poetic form isn't just meter and rhyme — it encompasses a diverse range of vessels that poems can inhabit. Form can help focus our poems, and reinforce a tone beyond our written words. When we have writer's block, form can give us direction on how to keep writing. Over the six weeks of this workshop, we'll write in several forms (including the haiku, sestina, pantoum, and sonnet), and explore what content works well with different types of forms. This workshop is for any level of poet, but best for poets who have at least some experience writing poems and want to learn more.

SONNET CRASH COURSE

Claudia Gary

6/25/23 | Sunday | 1 - 4 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$50

What is special about the sonnet? Guided by a prize-winning and internationally published author of sonnets, villanelles, and other metrical poems, you'll first read time-honored sonnets to see how and why they work. Next the class will write a group sonnet, and then — with or without shortcuts — you'll start one of your own. You'll leave with at least one new (draft) or improved sonnet, as well as insights about how writing

poems in form can unlock deeper meaning and enhance everything you write.

REIMAGINING THE LOVE POEM

Annie Przepyszny

7/6/23 - 8/24/23 | 8 Thursdays | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | Intermediate | \$360

What is a love poem capable of conveying? Who or what are we allowed to write love poems about? This course will tackle questions such as these as you experiment with the love poem genre and its conventions. Along with reading and analyzing a selection of love poems from Shakespeare to Chet'la Sebree, you will craft four love poems of your own, approaching the concept of love from multiple angles. In the end, you will have widened and enriched your skills in one of the most timeless genres of poetry. Participants should expect to spend 1 to 2 hours a week on work outside of class. Required Text: *Field Study* by Chet'la Sebree

WHOLE-BRAIN POETRY

Claudia Gary

7/8/23 - 8/5/23 | 5 Saturdays | 10 AM - 1 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$225

Do you know how our brains are wired for poetry? "Whole-Brain Poetry" is an opportunity to explore some of the ways poetry interacts with the brain, and to enrich your poems with that knowledge. This includes but goes beyond the use of metaphor. Through writing exercises, close examination of time-honored and recent poems, workshopping of participant poems, and brief reading assignments, we will examine the neurology and psychology of poetry, the relationship between time and memory, how science has influenced well-known poets, how poetry can heal trauma and prevent PTSD, and more. Readings include essays by Frederick Turner, Ruth Padel, Frederick Feirstein, and others.

REVISION AS PRACTICE

Naomi Ayala

7/15/23 - 8/26/23 | 7 Saturdays | 1:30 - 4:30 PM | Zoom | Intermediate | \$315

Designed for those who are eager to grow and polish poems to begin to submit to journals, this workshop focuses on manageably building revision, like writing, into your life as a practice. We'll start every session with a warm-up, workshop poems, and discuss tips and strategies for revising and submitting work. By the end of the workshop you'll have a stronger sense of how you can engage

with your work as your own editor, track submissions, and have a polished packet of 3-5 poems ready to send to journals. Participants should expect to spend about 90 minutes a week on work outside of class. Please bring two poems to the first session.

VILLANELLE CRASH COURSE

Claudia Gary

8/12/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 1 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$50

Are you ready to fall in love with the villanelle? Some of your favorite poems may be villanelles, whether you know it or not. Guided by an internationally published author of sonnets, villanelles, and other metrical poems, you'll first read time-honored villanelles to see how and why they work. Next the class will write a group villanelle, and then, with or without shortcuts, you'll start one of your own. You'll leave with at least one new (draft) or improved villanelle, as well as insights about how writing poetry in form can unlock deeper meaning and enhance everything you write.

FREEDOM WITH FORMS

Claudia Gary

8/13/23 | Sunday | 1 - 4 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$50

Have you discovered the freedom of writing in forms? Here's an opportunity to shed any misconception that received forms are constricting. Using excerpts from Richard Moore's "The Rule That Liberates," we will do several brief writing exercises that use the enchantment of meter and rhyme to liberate your deeper imagination. After exploring several traditional forms, we will experiment with creating improvised (nonce) forms. Participants may leave with at least one new draft poem and ideas for creating more.

WRITING PERSONA POEMS

Claudia Gary

8/27/23 | Sunday | 1 - 4 PM | Zoom | Intermediate/Advanced | \$50

"I" does not always mean "me" In the Persona Poem, or Dramatic Monologue, the poet writes in the voice of another real or imagined person—or even an inanimate object. Guided by a widely published author of persona and other poems, you will read and discuss several time-honored examples, then start new ones of your own. You may find unexpected insights, expanding your poetic range in the process.

PROFESSIONAL WRITING

HOW TO BECOME A ROCK STAR FREELANCER

Nevin Martell & Elizabeth Chang

6/5/23 - 6/19/23 | 3 Mondays | 7 - 9 PM |

Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$135

Want to become a full-time freelance writer or start a rewarding side hustle? Elizabeth Chang, a *Washington Post* staffer, and Nevin Martell, a veteran freelancer, will teach you techniques and tips from both sides of the craft. You'll learn how to write winning pitches, shape memorable stories, cultivate long-term editorial relationships, manage the business, and oversee a complicated schedule while maintaining your mental wellbeing. Participants should expect to complete a short homework assignment before each class.

FUNDAMENTALS OF PERSUASIVE WRITING

James Alexander

6/10/23 - 7/15/23 | 6 Saturdays | 10 AM - 12:30 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$270

This six-week workshop teaches you the processes involved in crafting mainly op-eds and prepared speeches: Think. Plan. Write. Participants will learn the techniques of audience analysis, message development, targeted research, and effective use of social media. The workshop also covers the application of persuasive writing principles in creating lower-profile writing formats, such as memos, letters, and emails. There will be hands-on writing exercises, engaging discussions, a reading list, and a blog. This workshop is designed for people who are tasked with writing speeches, op-eds, essays, and other opinion pieces at work, either full time or occasionally. Participants should expect to spend about 2 hours weekly on outside work.

WRITE LIKE THE NEWS

Hank Wallace

8/30/23 | Wednesday | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Lead with the future — not background. That's the most important of eight journalism skills that will transform your writing. The others: write your readers' language, be positive (to be both clear and upbeat), lay out logically, be consistent, be precise, be concise and choose strong verbs. Emulate the vivid

news examples you'll see in this workshop, and you'll strengthen your writing voice with lively, engaging news style. At 7 sharp, we'll critique *TheWallStreetJournal.com*, seeing how to communicate your main point in just a few words. To cover as much ground as possible, we'll have just a few writing exercises and most of them will take less than a minute each.

PUBLISHING

WRITING THE QUERY LETTER

Eva Langston

6/3/23 - 6/17/23 | 3 Saturdays | 10 AM - 12 PM | The Writer's Center | Intermediate/Advanced | \$135

Write a great query letter, and polish your first pages! To get a book published by a traditional publisher, you first need an agent. In this class you will learn how to research agents to find the right one for you. After studying sample query letters, you'll write your own query to be critiqued by your classmates. We will also workshop everyone's opening pages and discuss topics such as pitch contests, conferences, and agent red-flags. By the end of the workshop, you will be ready to send query submissions to the agents of your choice. Although you do not need to bring it to class, you should have a completed manuscript you are hoping to publish through traditional publishing. Participants should expect to spend 1 hour a week on work outside of class.

BOOK MARKETING ON A BUDGET

Rob Jolles

6/22/23 - 6/29/23 | 2 Thursdays | 9:30 - 11 AM | Zoom | All Levels | \$100

You've written — or are writing your book — now fight for it! This workshop will focus on over two dozen book marketing tips, with a close eye on budgets. From book launches,

social media, blogging and podcasting, to writing press releases, creating Amazon Author's pages, and connecting with publicists, we'll fill your head, and notebook with ideas! You will learn tips on negotiating large book sales, the value of working with book distributors, and what it takes to work with speaker's bureaus. There is no finish line to book promotion. This program will provide support for both new and established authors.

PUBLISHING IN LITERARY JOURNALS

Melanie Figg

7/15/23 | Saturday | 10 AM - 12 PM | Zoom | Beginner/Intermediate | \$50

Ready to submit your stuff (short fiction, poetry, personal essays) to literary magazines? In this workshop with writer and editor Melanie Figg, you'll learn how to professionally present yourself and your work to online and print literary magazines. You'll also learn what makes effective cover letters and biographies, how to find magazines that are a good fit for your work, how to combat rejection, and other helpful tips. There will be lots of time for questions. This workshop will be helpful to those just beginning this process and those who have submitted some work and want to improve their acceptance rate.

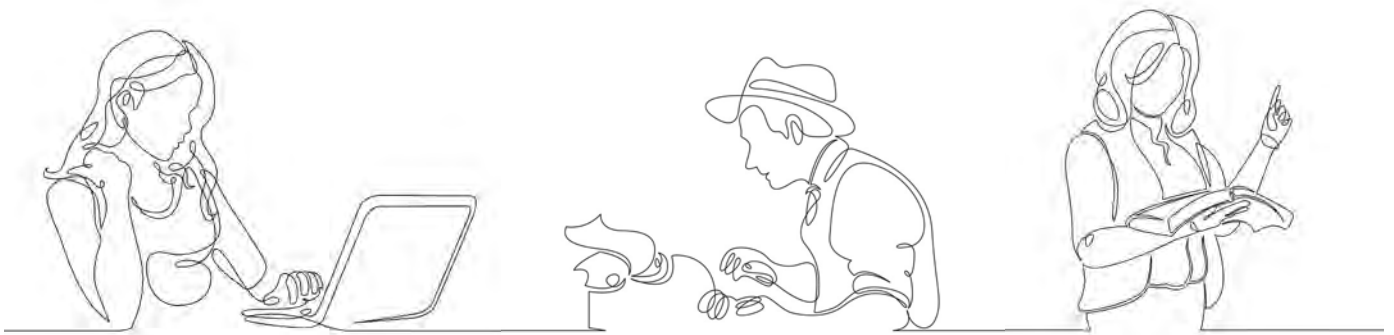
HOW TO WRITE A KILLER QUERY LETTER

Kathryn Johnson

8/30/23 | Wednesday | 7 - 9 PM | Zoom | All Levels | \$50

Learn how to reach out to literary agents and avoid career damaging scams. If you want your novel to be traditionally published, sooner or later you will need to write a query letter to send literary agents. Learn how to develop an effective pitch and the most effective ways to encapsulate your plot to create an appealing showcase for your story. We'll also discuss where to find legitimate agents to represent you and your book.

For the most up-to-date information on workshops, and to register, visit us online at writer.org.



JAMES ALEXANDER has more than 40 years experience writing professionally, including stints as a political speechwriter at the Cabinet level. After earning a BA in Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he worked as a bylined newspaper reporter at *The Charlotte Observer* and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and also interned at *The Washington Post*. He later served on Capitol Hill as a U.S. Congressional Fellow and then worked as a Hill press secretary which involved writing lots of speeches and op-eds. As a ghostwriter, James penned dozens of op-eds for political figures with publications in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Washington Post*, among others. He now works full-time in media relations and still writes.

NAOMI AYALA is the author of three books of poetry: *Wild Animals on the Moon*, *This Side of Early* (both published by Curbstone Press), and *Calling Home: Praise Songs & Incantations* (Editorial Bilingüe/Bilingual Press).

DAN BRADY is the author of the poetry collections *Strange Children* (2018), *Subtexts* (2022), and *Songs in E—* (2023), winner of the Barclay Prize for Poetry, along with two poetry chapbooks. He is the poetry editor of *Barrelhouse*, a magazine and small press based in Washington, DC. Previously, Brady served as the editor of *American Poets*, the journal of the Academy of American Poets, and worked in the Literature Division at the National Endowment for the Arts, where he received a Distinguished Service Award for his work on the

Big Read, the largest community reading initiative in US history. Learn more at danbrady.org.

JENNIFER BUXTON has an MFA from the University of Virginia. Her stories have appeared in *Epoch*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Blue Penny Quarterly*, and *Dr. T.J. Eckleberg Review*. She has taught at the University of Virginia and the Young Writers Workshop, and coaches high school seniors on the college application essay.

DANA CANN is the author of the novel *Ghosts of Bergen County* (Tin House). His short fiction has been published in *The Sun*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and, most recently, *Five South*. He's received grants and fellowships from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the Sewanee Writers Conference.

CAELA CARTER is the author of nine books for children and young adults, including *Forever or a Long, Long Time* and *Fifty-Four Things Wrong* with Gwendolyn Rogers. Her books have been selected to the Junior Library Guild and the ALA long list.

ELIZABETH CHANG is a longtime editor at *The Washington Post*, where she has edited narratives, trend stories and service stories for the magazine, *Travel and Wellness*.

Novelist, writing coach, and manuscript editor **JOHN DEDAKIS** is a former editor on CNN's "The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer." DeDakis is the author of five mystery-suspense novels. He regularly

teaches at literary centers, writers' conferences, and bookstores. Website: www.johndedakis.com.

MEG EDEN is a 2020 Pitch Wars mentee, and teaches creative writing at colleges and writing centers. She is the author of the 2021 Towson Prize for Literature winning poetry collection "Drowning in the Floating World" (Press 53, 2020) and children's novels, most recently "Good Different," a JLG Gold Standard selection (Scholastic, 2023). Find her online at <https://linktr.ee/medenauthor>.

MELANIE FIGG is a poet and essayist who's taught creative writing for over 30 years. Her poetry collection, *Trace*, was called a "roaring memorial for the voiceless" by Kirkus Reviews. As a certified professional coach, she works 1-1 with writers to finish their projects. More about her at: www.melaniefigg.net.

NIKKI FRIAS is the author of the comedy self help *Does this Divorce Make Me Look Fat?* and a contributor to *Pop Sugar*, *Forbes*, *the Daily Beast* and *Boardroom*. She additionally has attended UCB and DC Improv for sketch comedy and short form improv.

NICK GARDNER holds an MFA from BGSU and has received support from The Elizabeth George Foundation, VSC, and The DeGroot Foundation. His writing has been widely published, including one book of poetry, *So Marvelously Far*, and a forthcoming novella, *Hurricane Trinity*. An Ohio native, he resides in Washington, DC.

CLAUDIA GARY is author of *Humor Me* (2006) and chapbooks including

Genetic Revisionism (2019). Her sonnets, villanelles, and other poems appear in journals and anthologies internationally. She is also a health/science journalist, composer, editor, and three-time finalist for the Nemerov Sonnet Award. See pw.org/content/claudia_gary, @claudiagary.

T. GREENWOOD is the author of fourteen award-winning novels including *Such a Pretty Girl*, *Keeping Lucy*, *Rust & Stardust*, and *Bodies of Water*.

JENNIFER HAMADY is a voice coach and therapist specializing in technical and emotional issues that interfere with self-expression, and the author of three books on musical and personal performance. Jennifer writes regularly for *Psychology Today* on matters of creative expression and frequently presents workshops and master classes on the same. More about her at: www.FindingYourVoice.com.

GG RENEE HILL is an author and workshop facilitator who helps others discover and express their truths through writing. She brings her experience as a memoirist and creative coach to the books, courses, and workshops she offers on her website, allthemanylayers.com. GG provides her clients and participants with tools to understand their creative work on a deeper level, so they can overcome blocks and make progress on their goals. She has facilitated transformative workshops for a diverse list of organizations including The Writer's Center, The Recording Academy, University of Maryland, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and BAE Systems, Inc. to name a few. GG is also a self-help author whose books and guided journals center writing as a tool for self-care, personal growth, and creative expression. Her personal essays have been featured by *Shondaland* and *Thrive Global*.

EMILY HOLLAND (she/they) is a genderqueer lesbian writer. Their poems appear in *HAD*, *Shenandoah*, *DIALOGIST*, and *Black Warrior Review*. They are the author of the chapbook *Lineage* (dancing girl

press). She is also the editor of *Poet Lore*, an adjunct professor, and the chair of OutWrite.

KATHRYN JOHNSON's 40+ published novels (finalist for the Agatha Award, winner of Heart of Excellence and Bookseller's Best Awards), include historical fiction (e.g., *The Gentleman Poet*, wherein Shakespeare escapes to the New World aboard a ship bound for disaster) and contemporary suspense. Her book, *The Extreme Novelist* (nonfiction) is based on her courses at TWC.

A five-time Bestselling author, and 35-year professional speaker, **ROB JOLLES** has traveled over 2.5 million miles promoting his books, and delivering workshops all over the world. He trains authors to promote their books and speaks for some of the largest publishers in the country. To learn more about Rob go to www.jolles.com.

JACQUELINE JULES is the award-winning author of fifty books including the Zapato Power series, the Sofia Martinez series, *The Porridge-Pot Goblin*, *My Name is Hamburger*, *Feathers for Peacock*, *Never Say a Mean Word Again*, *Duck for Turkey Day*, and *Tag Your Dreams: Poems of Play and Persistence*. Visit www.jacquelinejules.com.

AFABWAJE KURIAN is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Her short fiction has been published in *McSweeney's*, *Callaloo*, *The Bare Life Review*, *Joyland*, *Nat. Brut*, and *Crazyhorse*. She has taught fiction at the University of Iowa and its International Writing Summer Program and served as a fiction screener for *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters*. She is currently at work on her debut novel, a 1970s story about post-colonial tensions that arise in a mission-led town in Central Nigeria.

EVA LANGSTON received her MFA from the University of New Orleans and is represented by Ali Lake of Janklow & Nesbit. Her short stories have won prizes (such as *The Playboy Fiction Contest*) and have been

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ERIC LICHTBLAU is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and best-selling author of *The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler's Men*; as well as *Bush's Law: The Remaking of American Justice*; and *Return to the Reich: A Holocaust Refugee's Secret Mission to Defeat the Nazis*. He is currently working on a book on the alarming surge in hate crimes and white supremacy in America. He was a Washington reporter for the *New York Times* for 15 years and has also written for *The New Yorker* and other publications.

CHRISTOPHER LINFORTH is the author of three story collections, *The Distortions* (Orison Books, 2022), winner of the 2020 Orison Books Fiction Prize, *Directory* (Otis Books/Seismicity Editions, 2020), and *When You Find Us We Will Be Gone* (Lamar University Press, 2014).

PETER MANDEL is the author of eleven books for children including *Jackhammer Sam* (Macmillan), *Zoo Ah-Chooooo* (Holiday House), *Bun, Onion, Burger* (Simon & Schuster), *Planes at the Airport* (Scholastic), and *Say Hey! A Song of Willie Mays* (Hyperion). He's a regular contributor to the travel sections of *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Huffington Post*. Learn more about him at www.petermandel.net.

NEVIN MARTELL is the author of eight books and a veteran freelancer with over two decades experience whose work has been published by *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *National Geographic*, *Fortune*, and *Washingtonian*.

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MARY QUATTLEBAUM is the author of 30 award-winning children's books (*Pirate vs. Pirate, Jo MacDonald Hiked in the Woods, Hero Dogs*) and of stories and poems in anthologies, literary journals, and children's magazines. She teaches in the MFA program in writing for children at the Vermont College of Fine Arts and is a popular school and conference speaker.

LYNN AULD SCHWARTZ, a story development editor and ghostwriter, guides clients to discover their stories and tell them well. She founded the Temple Bar Literary Reading Series

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CARA SEITCHEK has written grant proposals for local, state, and national nonprofit organizations. She has also evaluated proposals for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, U.S. Department of Education Teaching American History program, American Association of Museums, and the Maryland State Arts Council. She has an MA in writing from The Johns Hopkins University.

LISA JAN SHERMAN is an improvisational acting and cognitive skills coach. A longtime member of AFTRA/SAG, performing on stage, television, film, and radio. Lisa holds a BA in Theatre & Speech from UMD. She was a founding member of 'NOW THIS!' the totally improvised, musical comedy troupe. She co/developed the 'ACT AS IF' Social Skills Program, and co/wrote 'ACT AS IF' Improvisational Activities for Social Communication.

MATHANGI SUBRAMANIAN, EdD, is an Indian American writer and educator. Her novel *A People's History of Heaven* was longlisted for the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, and is a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award. Her middle grades book *Dear Mrs. Naidu* won the South Asia Book Award. Her personal essays and nonfiction have appeared in *The Washington Post, Ms. Magazine, Zora Magazine, and Al Jazeera America*, among others. She holds a doctorate in education from Columbia Teachers College and lives on the west coast with her husband and daughter.

DAVE TEVELIN has written four historical novels focused on crime in DC, *Death At The Howard, Siege Of The Capital, Murder On Morton*, and *Three Dead In Starbucks*. For more info on each, please visit <https://davetevelinbooks.com/>. A George Washington University Law School graduate, Mr. Tevelin was an attorney

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LIZ TRACY is a culture and health journalist. She started her career as a nightlife and arts blogger. She's since contributed to *The New York Times, The Atlantic, Glamour, No Depression*, and many other publications. Liz was a music editor at an alt weekly and managing editor at *Tom Tom*, a magazine about female and nonbinary drummers. Liz taught essay writing at Boston's Grub Street, ghost wrote two books, and writes for major arts and social justice organizations. She loves karaoke and recently learned to bake.

JOAN WAITES has illustrated more than 40 children's books and most recently has written and illustrated *A Colorful Tail: Finding Monet at Giverny, A Purr-fect Painting: Matisse's Other Great Cat, and A Bone for Bo: Painting with Georgia O'Keeffe*. She teaches arts classes for children at her private studio and speaks frequently at schools and conferences.

HANK WALLACE, a Columbia Law School graduate, was a government reporter for New Jersey's *Middletown Courier* and *Red Bank Daily Register*, and the assistant director of law-school publishing for Matthew Bender. He wrote the FCC's plain-language newsletter and newswriting tips for the Radio Television Digital News Association. More about him at: hankwallace.com.

WOODY WOODGER is a trans femme, pan, anarcho-commie in VA. Her poetry has appeared in *DIAGRAM, Drunk Monkeys, RFD*, and *peculiar*, has received Best of the Net and Pushcart nominations, and her first chapbook, *postcards from glasshouse drive* (Finishing Line Press) was nominated for the 2018 Massachusetts Book Award.



HELPING WRITERS WRITE

The Washington Writers Conference Continues Its Mission

By Garinè Isassi

On May 12 and 13, 2023, the Washington Writers Conference is celebrating its 10th conference — in its current form, that is! That final caveat leads us to a bit of local literary history. It turns out that this mainstay event of the DMV literary scene is actually an inspiring comeback story.

There was an annual writers' conference throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s organized by The Washington Independent Writers (WIW), an association mainly made up of freelance journalists and nonfiction writers. Over the years, due to the unfortunate decline of the newspaper industry, WIW membership shrank, and eventually, they stopped putting on the conference.

David O. Stewart was a member of the WIW Board in its final years. He secured his agent via the WIW Conference agent sessions and knew how valuable a local writers' conference experience could be. He and several other board members wanted to continue the mission of WIW, which was to help writers at every stage of their careers. So, they decided to launch The Washington Independent Review of Books, often shortened in conversation to the Independent.

"It was an era of disappearing newspapers and disappearing book review sections," Stewart said. "So, we hoped the Independent would give reviewers an outlet for their work, would help readers find books, and give writers a valuable resource." Stewart

is currently on the board of both the Independent and The Writer's Center.

To continue their mission and to help support the website financially, they revived the annual conference, including the hallmark attraction, agent sessions. Attendees were thrilled with the new version of the conference, and more attendees have found their agents through the event, including Paula Tarnapol Whitacre. She attended in 2014 and 2015 to pitch her non-fiction manuscript.

"The first year, I wasn't quite ready," Whitacre commented, regarding her agent sessions, "but it was a great experience to have the meetings and figure out how to interact."

After her first conference, she combined what she learned from there with classes at The Writer's Center. "The nonfiction course taught by Ken Ackerman was hugely helpful. In fact, he had us create a several-page summary of our idea, and I used a version for my second, ultimately successful pitch."

The Washington Writers Conference and The Writer's Center share the important vision of creating a supportive and inclusive community for writers at every stage of their careers. While The Writer's Center mainly focuses on helping writers develop their craft, the Conference shares

information about how to get writers and their work out into the world.

“The conference fills a niche by focusing on the business side of writing, because there is so little good information about how publishing really works — and most writers really want their work published,” noted Jenny Yacovissi, the President of the Independent.

Regarding how the conference helped her, Whitacre added, “The agency pitches were, of course, the most memorable. But the whole atmosphere was great, and I felt like I was really part of the Washington writing community. That is still important to me today, but it was especially validating before I had published.”

For 2023, the organizing committee is hard at work, putting together another great event. They make a point to make the atmosphere easy for attendees and fun.

“The conference always gets high marks from the attendees for being well-organized and well-run,” Yacovissi said, “And I believe we have exceptionally good panels and speakers. This year we are particularly excited about our keynote speaker, Dolen Perkins-Valdez. She is the author of three *New York Times* bestselling novels and chair of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation here in DC.”

Additional highlights of this year’s conference include over a dozen literary agents scheduled to attend and the following panels and writers:

- ***Historical Fiction: In Living Memory*** with Anthony Marra, Cheryl Head, and Louis Bayard, moderated by Mary Kay Zuraleff
- ***Thrillers & Horror & Crime: Oh, My!*** with S.A. Cosby, Alma Katsu, and E.A. Aymar, moderated by Anjili Babbar
- ***Small Press Publishers*** with Monica Price of SFWP, Jennifer Harris of JackLeg Press, Michael Tager of Mason Jar Press, and Annie Marhefka of Yellow Arrow Publishing, moderated by Caroline Bock with the Washington Writers’ Publishing House

- ***Voices Across Genres*** with Bethanne Patrick, Mary Kay Zuravleff, Leeya Mehta, and Diana Parsell, moderated by Tara Campbell
- ***An Agent, an Editor, and a Publisher: Publishing’s Holy Trinity*** featuring Monica Price of SFWP, moderated by Chloe Yelena Miller
- ***Muzzled Expression: The Alarming Rise in Book Banning*** featuring Nadine Farid Johnson of PEN/America, and David Payne of Enoch Pratt Public Library, moderated by Sarah Trembath

The Washington Writers Conference is an event where writers learn from other writers, connect with publishing professionals, and become part of a vibrant literary community.

Garinè Isassi is active in the DMV literary community and a member of The Writer’s Center. She is the author of novel, *Start with the Backbeat* and on the organizing committees of both the Washington Writers Conference and the Gaithersburg Book Festival. www.GarineTheWrite.com

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Haolun Xu

Oceania

Perhaps in my last life, I played evil music and led the field astray.
As punishment, I was born into a world without music.
Every period of rest is a stage of exile.
It is winter in the ocean again.

Perhaps, it is not the season itself,
nor the temperature, but the way
time dilutes even through the cold.

Lip of youth. In the small parking lot, I cried again.
How fleeting, the strength of a word. Meanwhile,
dawn reveals most to the all-nighter.
Sometimes, weakness is simply weakness.

In the floating hour, it is possible
that a person's sadness is their own.

So for this, I shall repel any action,
I will consider only the sadness
that melts even the rain above, holding me.

The rhythm is shifting into *largo*. When the waves reverse,
all fish know it is time to go home. The sea, rampant with change.
The water births gravity. Eventually, even time kneels to movement.

A whale swims with two of his children
covered by his belly. The smaller one starts to drift,
sleepy and with its eyes closing.

The father sings — *open them wide and keep them,
do not let the current rock you away from me,
redoing what you see.*

Please rest in the low ocean,
where the water tastes like taro,
or a memory of some long place,
sleeping yet unforgotten.

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Co-Authored a Family Story

**CONSTANCE HAYS MATSUMOTO
DISCUSSES HER JOURNEY
PUBLISHING A HISTORICAL
NOVEL INSPIRED BY A
FAMILY STORY**

By Constance Hays Matsumoto

Sometimes destiny steps in and takes us on an unexpected journey. I know, because it happened to me. My husband, Kent, and I didn't set out to co-author *Of White Ashes*; it happened quite organically. A white woman, born and raised in Baltimore, and a business major in college, I didn't suddenly transform into a fiction writer of the Japanese American experience. The path opened to me on my first date with Kent Matsumoto.

When Kent, a Japanese American lawyer I had met in 1996 through my corporate job, invited me to the Dale Chihuly blown glassworks exhibit at the Baltimore Museum of Art, I was excited — excited to see the exhibit and for the opportunity to know Kent better. We hadn't anticipated the Dorothea Lange precursor exhibit, and I was instantly stirred by her sensitive and provocative photographs of destitution and hardship. While quietly absorbing a photograph of Japanese American children wearing their best clothes and waiting for a bus to transport them into confinement following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Kent whispered, "My mother's name is Reiko. This photograph captures her story." Paradoxically, the enormity of scale and vibrancy of the Chihuly exhibit paled in contrast to Lange's small, black and white photograph.

Later that day, Kent shared his father's story. Born in California, his father, Hisao, moved to Hiroshima, Japan when he was a baby. He was sixteen years old when the United States dropped the atomic bomb on his city. Miraculously, he survived. And something else stirred inside me. The snapshot Kent offered of his parents' experiences was humbling and brought

up feelings of inadequacy. Like most high school students, I had read and was horrified by John Hersey's *Hiroshima*. For the longest time after reading *Hiroshima*, I tried to imagine carbonized bodies and human shadows etched in stone, but it was unimaginable. I stopped imagining; easier, safer not to think about the suffering. My understanding of Japan's history and culture and life before and after the atomic bombing was hazy at best. And my public high school education didn't cover in any detail what is most commonly referred to as the WWII Japanese American Internment. The humiliation. The terror. The injustice. Here I was, a highly-educated and successful business woman, fairly ignorant about this shameful chapter in my country's history.

Since marrying Kent two years after that first date and then growing to know and love Hisao and Reiko, I've believed a book was waiting to be written. Sometimes it takes an outsider to see the uniqueness of a family history. It seems my sister-in-law, Lisa (also white), and I were those outsiders. Interestingly, following the war, most Japanese Americans didn't discuss their wartime experiences with their children. Perhaps not to burden them. Perhaps to leave the pain of war and incarceration behind. But I was curious. I asked Kent questions he couldn't answer or answered in the short soundbites offered to him by his parents. But Lisa and I continued to ask Hisao and Reiko to share their stories with us. Gratefully, they opened up a little at a time. And I was able to know and understand Hisao's quiet nature and the determination underlying Reiko's elegant demeanor. Learning their stories and knowing them changed my life.

Soon after our marriage, Kent and I tried several paths to capture Hisao and Reiko's stories. Along the way, we experienced a few misfires. The first was hiring an accomplished non-fiction author who was excited about the project and met with Hisao and Reiko. They offered the author nothing but a cold shoulder. In the second, we arranged to introduce Hisao and Reiko to a documentary filmmaker who assembled a small crew that was scheduled to travel across country to meet and record Hisao and Reiko's stories. They soundly rejected the plan. The third went on for many years as Kent assured me he would write his parents' stories, but there was *never enough time*. Reiko passed away.

During the summer of 2017, while Hisao struggled with dementia, Kent abandoned our vision to memorialize his parents' stories. I was crushed, and the oppressive summer heat and humidity somehow fueled the simmer of my disappointment and frustration. But as the weather began to change, a shift occurred. A new way of thinking. And then resolution. In the crisp early autumn, the flame fueling the simmer extinguished. I followed my heart, closed my business, and plunged into the literary world, learning the craft of writing, researching history, and writing. Perhaps this was Hisao and Reiko's divine plan.

It has taken a full five years to publish our novel, which is thoroughly researched and grounded in historical accuracy. Together, Kent and I visited Hisao's hometown in Hiroshima and Reiko's in Waimea, Hawaii. We walked where they walked. We did our best to imagine the events they lived through and how it felt for them. We talked to people and researched material preserved in those cities, as well as at the Tule Lake Segregation Center, the WWII Japanese American Museum in McGehee, AR, the Pearl Harbor Museum, the Los Angeles Japanese American Museum, the Asian American Collection at the Smithsonian, and the National Archives.

As co-authors, we found ways to combine our individual strengths. My role included reading and viewing over 120 books, films, articles, and documents on WWII, the political environment in the US and Japan from the early 1900's to 1949, atomic bomb science and history, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Daily life in wartime Japan, Japanese thought and culture, Asian immigration to Hawaii, the Hawaiian sugarcane industry, and the Japanese

American incarceration all play a part in the development of this novel.

An engaged literary citizen, I joined The Writer's Center and other organizations that bring writers together and support their development and journeys. I educated myself on the craft of fiction and conducted detailed and thorough research. My business strategy and organization skills came to life as I structured the book, determined the dual points of view, and fleshed out a comprehensive outline and timeline. Then, on a warm summer day on my patio, I drafted the first page of the manuscript.

Together, Kent and I enjoyed quiet conversations with Reiko's sister, Wakako, for whom her recollections were painful, and we studied family documents, personal stories, and diaries. We recorded a random conversation with Hisao before his passing, when he shared one final and unexpected vivid memory. Using our imaginations, we brainstormed and debated scenes that told the history of what happened to Hisao and Reiko in ways that conveyed how it felt to live through those traumatic moments. Kent offered the Japanese cultural perspective, critiqued and refined my drafts, and maddened me with his wordsmithing.

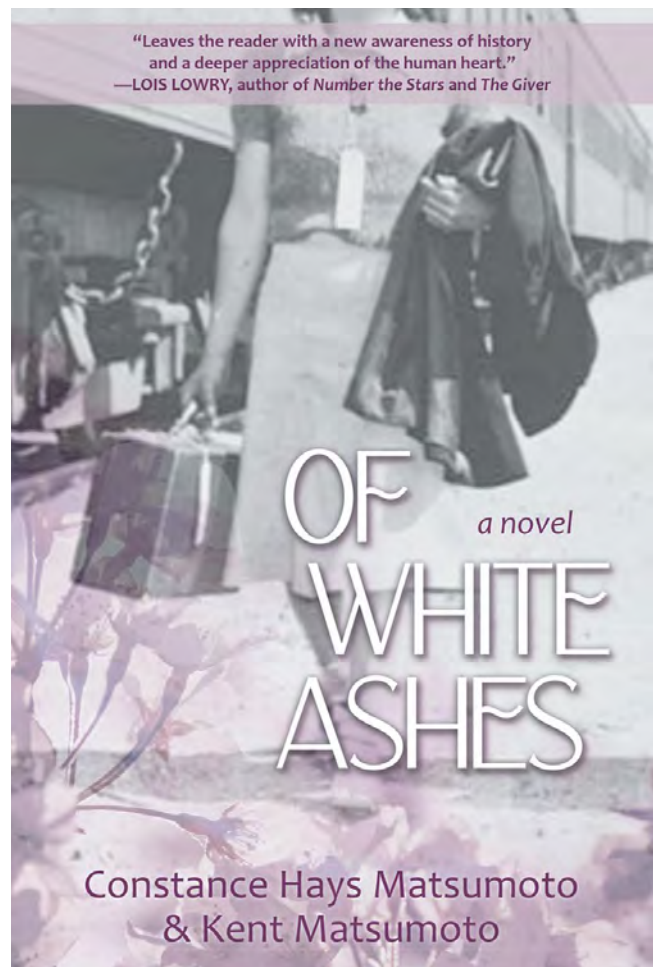
Kent and I wrote *Of White Ashes* to honor Hisao and Reiko, their remarkable stories, and the many Japanese Americans whose lives were decidedly shaped by the events of WWII. Hisao and Reiko were two ordinary people forced into extraordinary circumstances who personified the spirit of *gaman* — Japanese for enduring the seemingly unbearable with dignity and patience. We invite readers on a journey that crosses continents and cultures where they can imagine themselves being herded into confinement behind barbed wire fences and walk among the devastation of a nuclear explosion. We hope our readers will feel the power of nuclear destruction, injustice, love, resilience, and forgiveness.

Since that day 27 years ago, I've learned a lot, including that most Americans were taught little about the Japanese American experience. Others who were educated about this dark time in history may have chosen not to remember. One of the more important lessons I learned is the colloquial term, *Japanese Internment*, is both incorrect and inadequate. Enemy aliens are *interned* during wartime, not American citizens. Of the 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry unjustly confined

behind barbed wire during WWII, fewer than 8,000 were enemy aliens. The overwhelming majority were American citizens. They were incarcerated. Not interned. And I learned that co-authoring a family story for publication is not for the faint of heart. But when you write *The End*, even the non-crier will well up with tears of joy, satisfaction, and exhaustion. I know, because it happened to me.

A native Marylander, Connie empty-nests in Greenville, Delaware with her husband, Kent, and their adorable Westie. She is a former corporate and interior design devotee who later embraced the art and rigor of creative writing. Inspired by Shakespeare's "What's past is prologue," Connie writes stories and poetry intended to influence positive change in our world.

Connie earned her B.A. from Notre Dame of Maryland University and M.S. in Business from Johns Hopkins University. She is a member of The Writer's Center, Authors Guild, Eastern Shore Writers' Association, Historical Novel Society, and Women's National Book Association, and served on the Maryland Writers' Association Board as Communications Chair and as President of the Baltimore Chapter.



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A Rich Paper Trail

WRITING THE BIOGRAPHY OF MY FATHER, AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST STEWART COCKBURN

By Jennifer Cockburn

What inspires a daughter to write a biography of her father? Well, in my case, it was partly what he said about one of his own biography subjects, Sir Mark Oliphant (an Australian nuclear physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project) — that he was someone “brimming over with character.” I thought that description applied to my father as well, and in particular the inter-weaving of his intense and complicated personality with the focus and impact of his journalism. He was a man of contrasts; he could be combative yet compassionate, hyper-critical yet generous, self-righteous and impulsive. And some of the things that could make him difficult were what drove his journalism and produced some impressive results: he was tenacious and single-minded in his pursuit of a story, of truth, of justice. He was energetic, passionate and could be obsessed. He had always been interested in writing about other people — including authoring two best-selling biographies — but I thought other people would also be interested in reading about him!

Next was his peripatetic career that began in 1938 with his joining the *Advertiser* newspaper in Adelaide, South Australia as a copy boy at the age of 16. His journalism cadetship completed, he then took off to the Melbourne *Herald* at the end of the war. The paper sent him up to the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Canberra, where he got his first

taste of Federal politics. Sir Keith Murdoch of the *Herald* (father of Rupert) was an important mentor who arranged for Stewart to spend a year at the *Reuters* newsagency in London (1947), followed by two years with the *Herald* office there. In 1951, Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies, whom he had gotten to know in London when Menzies visited there, asked him to be his press secretary. Stewart was not yet thirty then, and he spent three marvellous years with Menzies — a brilliant and towering figure in Australian politics — before returning to the Adelaide *Advertiser* as a feature writer in 1954.

By 1961 Stewart Cockburn was a well-known South Australian journalist respected for his feature-writing and radio commentaries. But my restless father got itchy feet again, and that year he was appointed Press Attaché to the Australian Embassy in Washington, a job he had coveted ever since his first visit there with Menzies in 1952. Taking the family with him — by that time he and my mother Beatrice had produced four children — he spent two years in the job, returning to Adelaide in 1963. (I attended Somerset Elementary School, up the road from The Writer’s Center, only returning, serendipitously, to live in the Washington area in 1979.) He spent the rest of his career with the *Advertiser*, and did some of his best journalism

in the 1970s and early 1980s, including an award-winning series of investigative articles that led to a Royal Commission and the release of a man wrongly convicted of a grisly murder.

But the clincher for me in deciding to write my father's biography was the mass of his letters and journals filed away in manila folders in his metal filing cabinets (with such tantalizing titles as 'Intimate and Indiscreet'). Without all this material, I would not have been truly inspired to write the book. He was a prolific correspondent from a young age and kept thousands of letters. He had a visceral need to record everything on paper — his thoughts, feelings and observations, and then share them, even the contents of his journals. His reason for living was to write.

In his files were smudged boyhood letters to his father and a diary of his first trip to Sydney in 1935

“

Could a daughter write an effective biography of her father?

”

—Jennifer Cockburn

with his mother, where he was awed by the newly-built Sydney Harbour Bridge; earnest letters to and from friends during his late teens and early twenties; early references and correspondence from his newspaper bosses at the *Advertiser* and the Melbourne *Herald*; courtship letters to my mother and correspondence with his future in-laws; a journal of his sea voyage to London in 1947 that recorded shipboard life and his reactions to then-exotic ports like Bombay. He continued his diary during his time based in London, recording the details of his continuing education as a journalist, but also vividly capturing the post-war world, whether the trials of rationing or historic occasions such as the announcement of India's independence or the Berlin Airlift. Later diaries recorded his six-week trip accompanying Prime Minister Menzies to Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation. And there were round-robin letters from Washington recording his

observations of America during the Kennedy years.

As I started reading his writings, many of them deeply personal, the essence of my father leapt off the page with the same furious energy as his fingers batting his typewriter keys. The man, his life, his career — it was all there. Rich pickings.

THE CHALLENGE

So how to tackle this project I had assigned myself? I was a lawyer by profession: not a writer or journalist, not a historian or biographer. On the other hand, my legal background had instilled discipline in analysis, in careful and exact writing and an appreciation of nuance.

The biggest issue, perhaps, was objectivity. Could a daughter write an effective biography of her father? I knew it would be a challenge, but being aware of the issue was a first step. I wasn't writing a memoir — I didn't have a personal axe to grind, nor did I wish to write a hagiography. I had a good sense of both his strengths and his flaws, as a person and as a journalist. I drew inspiration from my father's own words on writing biography:

You can show he or she was gifted or flawed; how success and failure were handled; how the crises in life were resolved; and how, moreover, life changed and modified each personality. ... part of the art of biography is to detect and describe how the subject has been blessed, refined, coarsened or corrupted by his experience. It is not to celebrate a life — it is not a testimonial or a funeral oration.

He also referred to Australian historian Geoffrey Serle's description of the challenges faced by a biographer:

A biographer must be candid; he is an artist on oath; he must aim at explanation but not apology, understanding but not partisanship, insight and yet detachment. ... It is perhaps the biographer's duty to see that both the best and the worst cases are made for and against his subject, in general and in particular, without adopting either, but perhaps leaning a tiny bit in favour of the subject, at least from time to time giving him or her the benefit of the doubt.

That is the challenge I took up.

IMPLEMENTATION

How could I make it possible to work from home in Washington, with occasional research trips to Australia to conduct interviews and visit archives (such as the Menzies Collection held at the National Library of Australia)? I had brought much of the personal intra-family correspondence with me back to the United States, but most of his general correspondence remained in Adelaide. My father had already donated his scrapbooks and memorabilia to the University of Adelaide Library. After he died in 2009, my family planned to donate most of his remaining correspondence and journals, which were boxed up, ready to be moved. My stepmother had a solution. We hired someone to scan the latter material and transfer onto a disc. Over time I printed out thousands of pages, organised them in binders and began reading. Another advantage was that the University Library had scanned the donated scrapbooks onto a CD-ROM and made copies for the family.

IMPORTANCE OF LETTERS AND DIARIES

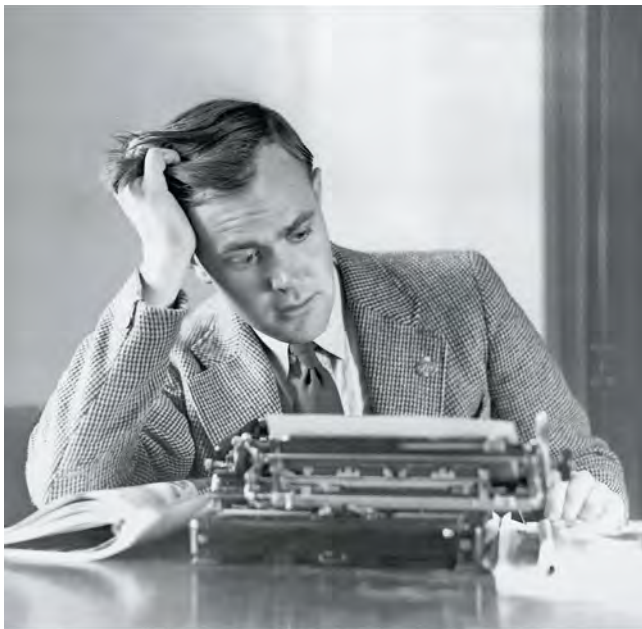
Now, something on the importance of letters and diaries in writing biography. Much has been said about the demise of the letter and how difficult it

will be for historians of the future to re-create our times. We have new media now, of course — emails, blogs, videos and so on — but I don't think anything can substitute for the immediacy of, the channelling of innermost thoughts in, the descriptive power of, letters when they were an intrinsic element of our daily lives and culture. Letters to friends, to parents, to boyfriends and girlfriends, this was the norm. Whether one travelled or not, one still wrote letters. It was a habit, an imperative. As the internet developed and email became so easy, many of us still continued the tradition, attaching our letters to email messages, or writing them in the body of emails. I kept up that habit for several years. Now, it is an effort, something I have to put my mind to, and is rare. What once came naturally — to record in detail our daily lives, to share our private thoughts and feelings through the written word — has become unnatural, the exception rather than the rule. Instead, we FaceTime or Skype, or send quick WhatsApp messages.

I feel fortunate to have had the record my father left behind. I believe that his own writings bring him to life — and provide a powerful lens through which he captured the world around him — in a way that only such a contemporaneous record can do. In putting together my manuscript, I also based the themes of particular chapters on sets of correspondence. My focus on this important primary source material strongly influenced not only the content, but also the narrative structure of my book.

FINAL NOTE

In the early stages of my project, I took several courses at The Writer's Center that were enormously helpful, especially Ken Ackerman's narrative non-fiction workshop and James McGrath Morris's course on writing biography. These improved my writing, gave me confidence, and helped my organizational skills. And with some fellow students, I formed a writing group that provided a focus for my writing, the motivation to keep going, and priceless feedback.



WRITING FOR HIS LIFE

Stewart Cockburn, Crusading Journalist

JENNIFER COCKBURN

Jennifer Cockburn's biography of her father, *Writing for His Life: Stewart Cockburn, Crusading Journalist*, was published in 2022 by Australian Scholarly Publishing. She will appear at The Writer's Center on Saturday, April 29 at 2pm in conversation with journalist Margaret Engel: writer.org/jennifer-cockburn



I'm Supposed to Be Doing This

CREATING CHARACTERS IN A MEMOIR

By Suzanne Roske

Everybody has a story to tell.

My story started with a crazy idea — moving my family of five from Washington DC to Oaxaca, Mexico for an adult gap year. A way to turn the monotony of Covid into an adventure. A way to address the state of burnout I'd been suffering for years. A way to reconnect with myself, my values, and my family. A way to figure out what I am supposed to be doing.

I want to be clear; I never intended to write a book. It wasn't something that was on my bucket list. I consider myself to be an accidental author (if there can be such a thing). But when I returned from my adult gap year, I discovered people connected with my story, were inspired by the lessons I had to unlearn and relearn, and saw themselves in the struggle that I had been through. Even though it wasn't the plan, I soon found myself working on my memoir.

Writing a memoir is no easy task. Memoirs represent a unique hybrid writing style that lives somewhere between fiction and nonfiction. Memoirs are based on real-life events, experiences, and people, but authors have license to employ creative techniques to craft engaging characters and to tell a compelling story. And because the primary goal of a memoir is to share your personal experience and insight with your readers, developing characters is essential to creating a compelling narrative that will resonate. This can be tricky, however, as the primary characters are you and people whom you generally know well, or at least have impacted you in some way. By starting with yourself, observing others, presenting your supporting characters without bias or judgment, using archetypes, and showing growth, you can create well-rounded, complex characters that a reader will care about and remember.

YOU AS A CHARACTER

The central character in your memoir is none other than you. This is where it can get difficult because we tend to see ourselves, and want others to see us, in a positive light. We know ourselves so well that

we either provide a backstory that is overkill, or we gloss over the details that make us interesting and relatable. As the author of your memoir, you need to let your reader into your world, explore your motivators, be vulnerable and honest, and share your deepest, and sometimes darkest, thoughts.

When I asked myself what my motivation was for moving my family to Mexico for an adult gap year, there were several half-truth answers that I could have offered and would have been fine. Unfortunately, these half-truths didn't paint the whole picture and would never let the reader into my world.

I could have said that my adult gap year was an obvious reaction to all the ways the pandemic had negatively impacted me and my family: Frustration, from participating all day, every day on conference calls, and rarely interacting with my children; Exhaustion and Rage, after working sixteen-hour days and still being questioned when I declined a 7 pm conference call so that I could have dinner with my family; or Guilt and Sadness because my kids were struggling. I could have left this as the surface-level motivation for my adult gap year, but it wasn't the real story.

I could have stopped when I admitted that I was unhappy and knew something in my professional life had to change. You see, for as long as I could remember, I was the one who knew what I wanted. I learned the rules of the game early. It was a donut-eating contest, and I was out to win. Over the years, I'd honed my craft. I won the contests, only to discover that the prize for winning was more donuts. After years of eating donuts, I realized I was tired of them. But I had no idea what else I could eat or what I even liked. And again, this was part of the story, but not the complete picture.

And so, I kept digging. Until I had to admit that to fully understand why I uprooted my family in the middle of a global pandemic, I needed to tell the story that I had shared with no one up until this

point except for my therapist. The fact was I had been suffering from burnout for years. At times the burnout had manifested into me wondering what it would feel like to have a gun in my mouth. Writing this part of my story was terrifying, but I knew that this was the level of honesty that I needed to create the flawed and interesting character that I am. This was the level of detail that I needed to share to allow my readers to see my world and connect with my point of view.

YOUR SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

As you write your memoir, you will need to include other characters that played significant roles in your life and your experiences. My supporting characters were my husband and children, the friends we made, and even the city of Oaxaca itself. When developing your supporting characters, it is important to present them in a manner that is objective and truthful, without judgment or bias. This can prove challenging, especially if you have strong feelings for the person.

Developing my family as complex characters was a difficult balance between presenting them in a way that supported my story and wanting to protect them. When it came to my character, I held the creative license, I knew the story I wanted to tell, and how much I wanted to reveal; I was in control. With my family, especially my children, I had to exercise a decent amount of judgment and in some cases restraint about how much I was willing to share.

My husband's character, on the other hand, played the foil to me. Where my archetype was anxious and restless, his archetype was calm, cool, and collected. He was (and is) the rational to my crazy. Like when I practically called off our move to Mexico because I

thought the mail and the US Postal Service were too much to handle, he countered with, "We'll figure it out, but I am not talking about the mail." Using my spouse as my foil allowed me to convey his rational perspective as a direct comparison to my character's view of the situation.

YOUR GROWTH AND CHANGE

A key element of character development in a memoir is showing growth and change over time. The changes may be subtle or dramatic but should be revealed to the reader so that they understand how your experiences have shaped you as a character, how you have evolved, and how your attitudes and values have shifted. When contemplating how to engage your readers in the arc of your growth, there are many established plotlines you can follow, including the hero or heroine's journey, overcoming the monster, a rags-to-riches tale, and the tragedy, among others.

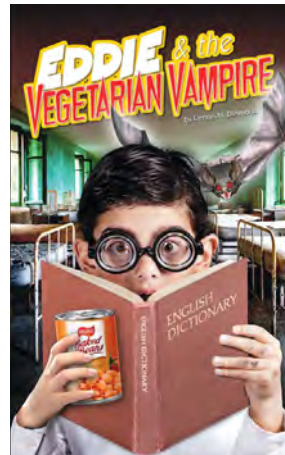
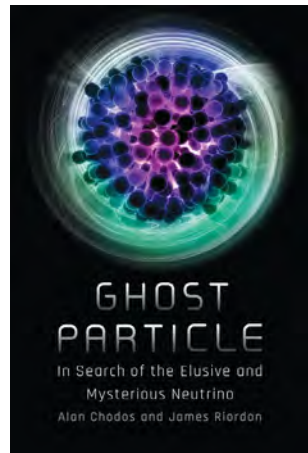
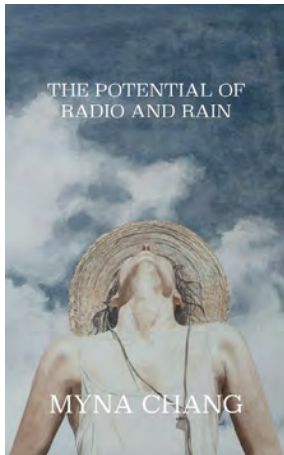
My growth arc followed the heroine's journey, an internal quest. I set out to figure out what I am supposed to be doing, and along the way found acceptance of myself, connection with my values, reconnection with my family, and the courage to lean into a life that I was intentionally choosing versus the life that I had been told that I wanted. By carefully developing my character as someone vulnerable, exposed, humble, not afraid to laugh at herself, receptive to change, introspective, and loving, I allowed my reader to connect with me.

My story started with a crazy idea to move to Oaxaca, Mexico. My memoir evolved through character development — starting with myself, observing and presenting my supporting characters without bias or judgment, using archetypes, and demonstrating my growth. Over the course of my adult gap year, I unlearned and relearned, I slowed down, I let go, I listened to my intuition, and I figured out what I am supposed to be doing.

As I said, everybody has a story to tell. Everybody's story is important, including mine and including yours.

Suzanne Roske is the author of *I'm Supposed to Be Doing This: An Adult Gap Year*. She is a recovering consultant, a certified executive coach, and the founder of Vamonos Executive Coaching where she helps individuals and teams unlock their full potential. Suzanne lives in Arlington with her husband and three children, but a piece of her heart will forever be in Oaxaca.





NEW BOOKS FROM THE WRITER'S CENTER FAMILY!

The Potential of Radio and Rain

Myna Chang

cutbankonline.org

Set in the unforgiving landscape of the shortgrass prairie, this award-winning flash collection by author Myna Chang explores quirky characters struggling to make their way through generations of drought. In these interwoven stories, deliverance may come in the form of rain or revenge, music or the open road. *The Potential of Radio and Rain* is available from CutBank.

Ghost Particle: In Search of the Elusive and Mysterious Neutrino

Alan Chodos and James Riordon

The fascinating story of science in pursuit of the ghostly, ubiquitous subatomic particle—the neutrino. In *Ghost Particle*, Alan Chodos and James Riordon recount the dramatic history of the neutrino — from the initial suggestion that the particle was merely a desperate solution to a puzzle that threatened to undermine the burgeoning field of particle physics to its modern role in illuminating the universe.

Eddie and the Vegetarian Vampire

Dennis M. Desmond

Twelve-year-old Eddie has no idea how he wound up in an orphanage or why he can't be adopted. He gets the shock of his life when the bat in the orphanage basement transforms into a vampire and introduces himself as Count Bloodless. The starving Count is also an orphan, rejected by his vampire family because he is vegetarian. Eddie and the Count discover that family and belonging are sometimes found in the most unexpected of places.

The Death of Weinberg: Poems and Stories

Walter Weinschenk

walterweinschenk.com

“In *The Death of Weinberg*, Walter Weinschenk gives us an elemental display; his prose is airy but burns fiery; his poetic lines move with the dancing grace of gushing water but are thick with the richness of earth. These stories and verses plumb want, loss, and selfhood with a flair for the surreal and the strange, using the bizarre as a backdrop to explore what it means to know one's deepest self and to feel the root things of being human.” —Joe Baumann, author of *Sing With Me at the Edge of Paradise*

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