

# **AWP 2026 Conference & Bookfair Schedule of Events.**

This document with general conference information and the full schedule is displayed in high contrast twenty-four-point font.

## **General Conference Information.**

### **A Welcome to All.**

AWP welcomes diversity and the participation of individuals in its activities regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, socioeconomic status, age, disability, or religious or political belief. AWP encourages the contributions of all of its members and attendees at the conference, and we are proud to create an event that supports such inclusive participation.

## **About AWP.**

Founded in nineteen sixty-seven, AWP provides support, advocacy, resources, and community to writers, college and university creative writing programs, and writers' conferences and centers. Our mission is to amplify the voices of writers and the academic programs and organizations that serve them while championing diversity and excellence in creative writing.

## **About the Conference.**

AWP held its first conference in nineteen seventy-three at the Library of Congress. It featured six events and sixteen presenters. George Garrett, one of AWP's founders, planned the first gathering with help from the National Endowment for the Arts. Presenters included Elliott Coleman, founder of the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University; Paul Engle, former director of the Iowa Writers'

Workshop and cofounder of the International Writing Program; poets Josephine Jacobsen and Miller Williams; and novelists Ralph Ellison and Wallace Stegner, among others. The conference grew steadily, and with the addition of the bookfair in the mid-eighties it became the foundation for what has become the largest literary conference in North America. This year's conference is host to over three hundred fifty events, over one thousand five hundred presenters, and more than six hundred fifty presses, journals, and literary organizations from around the world. Most conference events are organized by their participants and selected through an open, competitive submission process by AWP's conference subcommittee. Most featured events are organized and sponsored by member institutions and affiliated literary organizations.

**Proposals for Our Twenty-Twenty seven Conference.**

AWP welcomes proposals for future conference events. Please visit the [Event Proposal Guidelines page](#) for information about proposing an event, literary partnership, or sponsorship for next year's conference.

### **Conference Registration & Check-in.**

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in the Charles Street Lobby, Baltimore Convention Center, Level 100. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. Students must present a valid student ID to check in or register at our student rate. Seniors must present a valid ID to check in or register at our senior rate. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

### **Registration & Check-in Hours.**

Wednesday, March four: twelve o'clock noon to seven o'clock p.m.

Thursday, March five: eight o'clock a.m. to five o'clock p.m.

Friday, March six: eight o'clock a.m. to five o'clock p.m.

Saturday, March seven: eight o'clock a.m. to five o'clock p.m.

## **Need Help?**

If you have problems registering or require assistance, please visit AWP's Help Desk, located in the registration area in the Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center. If you have a question about accessibility services, please visit the Accessibility Desk in the registration area, email [ADA@awpwriter.org](mailto:ADA@awpwriter.org) with "On-Site Accessibility" in the subject line, or call or text the on-site accessibility hotline at 240-269-6635.

## **Get Connected.**

Stay on top of everything happening at the conference by checking out #AWP26 on all social media and following AWP on Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and Threads (@awpwriter) and on Bluesky (@awpwriter.org).

## **Virtual Access.**

All in-person registrations include full virtual access and provide over forty hours of virtual content for one month after conference.

Starting the week of #AWP26, visit the [Conference Overview page](#) of the AWP website to access virtual conference content.

## **AWP's Bookfair.**

AWP's bookfair is located in Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center. This year's bookfair showcases more than six hundred fifty presses, journals, and literary organizations from around the world. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

## **Lost & Found.**

All found items will be turned over to the Baltimore Convention Center's public safety office at the close of registration each day. Lost articles are kept for 30 days. If you have questions, please visit AWP's Help Desk, located in the registration area of the Baltimore Convention Center.

## **Concessions.**

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in the Baltimore Convention Center in the Charles Street Lobby and AWP Bookfair on Level 100 and at the Market Fresh Café on Level 300. No cash, only credit card and digital payment are accepted at all food and beverage locations. Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app for location details.

## **First Aid.**

First Aid is located in the Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center. Please

consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

### **Lactation Lounge**

The lactation lounge is located in room 306, Level 300 of the Baltimore Convention Center and is available for any nursing parent to use. Women's restroom in Charles Street Lobby, Level 100 also includes a nursing area.

### **Childcare Services.**

Your hotel concierge likely maintains a list of recommended local providers.

### **Smoking.**

Smoking is permitted in designated areas only.

### **Schedule**

Below is a list of events for the #AWP26 Conference & Bookfair in Baltimore, Maryland.

# Virtual Events

These virtual #AWP26 events will be prerecorded and made available for registered conference attendees to watch on demand online during the conference in March 2026, and for one month afterward.

## **V100. Breaking the Fifth Wall: Insights from Readers & Fans - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Nicole Peeler, Rotem Rusak, Vaishnavi Patel, Elwin Cotman

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Fantasy authors are sometimes surprised by audiences' reactions to their creations. Readers can find unintentional messages/motifs reflecting authors' unexamined assumptions and see behind the "fifth wall" separating authors from themselves. This panel of writers,

educators, and journalists will discuss how fandom's democratized analysis of works or conversations among authors/readers present the possibility for cocreation that helps us embrace nuance and expand our moral/empathic imaginations.

**V101. Creative Writing Through Crisis: English & Writing Studies Program Development - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Rebecca Davis, Katie Manthey, Edyta Oczkowicz  
Event Category: Program Development

This presentation explores the English and Writing Studies program at a small women's college that, out of institutional and cultural instability, evolved to include three disciplinary lenses: creative writing, literature, and rhetoric and composition. The speakers discuss how the program evolved after the initial crisis, and creative writing's importance in this evolution and the creation of a community of care

through combining the three disciplines and the practices of feminist pedagogy.

## **V102. Editing Is My Superpower: How Editorial Internships Shape Writers - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kelly Grey Carlisle, Jennifer Case, Devon Bellamy, Karen Babine, Brooke MacDonald  
Event Category: Pedagogy

Opportunities to intern at literary magazines or presses are often seen as “add-ons” to graduate and undergraduate creative writing education; however, our panel suggests that such editorial experiences can be fundamental to student success in writing, publishing, and career development. This panel of faculty, students, and lit-mag alumni examines experiential learning in literary editing, its effect on students’ development as writers, and best pedagogical practices to support that development.

## **V103. How Reading & Writing Fantasy Can Make Us Better Humans - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Nicole Peeler, Rotem Rusak, Vaishnavi Patel, Elwin Cotman

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Set in worlds closer to our own, urban fantasy's subtexts and ideas can feel especially relevant and insightful. Elaborate world-building and three-dimensional characters can take us beyond simplistic binaries. We embrace nuance and hear various perspectives while maintaining a vision of more equitable/sustainable worlds. This diverse panel of writers, educators, and journalists will discuss the history and cultural value of urban fantasy and how it can expand our moral and empathic imaginations.

## **V104. In the Throat of the Mountain: Helping Veterans Tell Their Story in Poetry - VIRTUAL EVENT**

James Hornsby, William Harding, Billiekai Boughton

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This virtual poetry workshop consists of three published Vietnam veterans and one Gulf War veteran as well as the published Vietnam veteran moderator. We attended the 2025 AWP Conference and found no presentations for veterans. Original narrative poems, poetry prompts, film clips, and craft dos and don'ts are addressed in this gathering. Publishing and self-publishing choices are also recommended.

**V105. Just Say No, Cyrano: How to Break Out, Break In & Yuk It Up Like It's Your Job -**

**VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kathy Berardi, Richard Walter, Julie Ann Sipos

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

If you write sharp, clever copy for clients, campaigns, or classrooms—maybe it's time your own talent took the lead. In this candid conversation on wit and authenticity, screenwriting legend Richard Walter and executive-turned-satirist Julie Ann Sipos get real on how to stop punching up the other guy's story and start forging your own. Whether you're a brand whisperer, faculty workhorse, or just ready to raise a voice to the rafters, learn to turn the funny into money worth writing home about.

## **V106. Lab Reports: Science & Nature Writing as Literature - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Cristina Deptula, Alejandra Canales, Mary Mackey, Roopa Ramamoorthi

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

Writing and science let us take “lab reports,” inspiring understanding of and connection to the web of life on and beyond Earth. Hear a

piece on a brain-computer interface allowing a paralyzed man to speak in his native Spanish; poetry and essays on falls in older adults and on dark matter/energy; poems on joy and climate change from an Eric Hoffer Award and PEN Award winner; Greek mythology–inspired tales of why we must update indicators for our scientific models to track and solve climate change; and a profile of a punk medical researcher and eco-activist.

**V107. Latinx Digital Poetics: Resistance Through Joy - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Camilo Loaiza Bonilla, Brent Amenityro, Joshua Escobar, Alex Saum

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel explores how Latinx digital poetry expands poetic forms and creates new modes of resistance by centering play and joy. With support from Letras Latinas, the literary initiative at the University of Notre Dame,

panelists share digital pieces from *The Los Angeles Review's* electronic literature folio, "Latinx Digital Poetics: Resistance Through Joy," and explore how electronic literature offers new possibilities for Latinx storytelling. Through discussion, the panel critically examines how digital poetics challenge dominant narratives and foster community.

**V108. Myths & Motherlands: Migration & Multiplicity in the Chinese Diaspora - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Angela Siew, M. Cynthia Cheung, Diana Cao, Nicole Lee, Saba Keramati

Event Category: Poetry Readings

A reading from the authors' award-winning work and recent/forthcoming books. In the face of hypernationalism and trade wars, it's essential that we as Chinese diasporic women offer our work as resistance. Poems will touch upon the Chinese diasporic experience—the

impact of migration on cultural and linguistic legacy, the idea of homeland, reinterpretations of historical characters and myths, multiplicity in identities and literary form—and work outside this scope. A Q&A will follow.

### **V109. Orcs, Morlocks, Avatars & the Urban Fantastical - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Veronica Schanoes, Joyce Chng, Tonya Liburd, Hadas Elber-Aviram, David Pike

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

We're a panel of academics and writers of urban fantasy, historical fantasy, and steampunk who study historical and current urban fantasy and the real and imagined underground spaces in modern cities. We explore different layers of various historical and modern representations of cities and their residents in fantasy literature to uncover possible imaginal potential for more just, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments in the real world.

## **V110. Practical Tips to Building a Sustainable Critique Group: Meet the CritiqueHers - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kimberly Nixon, Kimberly Nixon, Susan Coventry, Linda Paul, Nancy Fagan  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Writers benefit from reading and critiquing one another, with the right complement of personalities and experience. But how does one find a supportive critique group and maintain a practice that enriches each manuscript in the long term? Our group of writers has accomplished that, despite our various backgrounds, distinct writing styles, and even different subgenres. In this presentation, we offer insight into actionable strategies that work for our sustainable model.

## **V111. Radical Resilience: CALYX Inc.'s First Fifty Years as a Women's Literary Collective -**

### **VIRTUAL EVENT**

Gressa New, Ann Craig, Brenna Crotty, Beth Russell

Event Category: Writing Organizations

In this dynamic panel discussion, CALYX Board Chair Beth Russell, *CALYX Journal* Senior Editor Brenna Crotty, CALYX Press Publicist Debbra Palmer, and CALYX Intern Gressa New will discuss the Herstory of CALYX Inc., the nonprofit entity responsible for founding, developing, protecting, and promoting the mission, vision, and fiscal well-being of both Calyx Press and *CALYX: A Journal of Art and Literature by Women*. Organized anecdotally, this presentation aims to celebrate, illuminate, and inspire.

## **V112. Somos CALMA: Conversation Across Migratory Border Writing in the Southwest - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Ricardo Bogaert-Alvarez, Irene Blea, Ricardo Lafore, Frank Davila

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Our panel bridges writing between migration and immigration. The Colorado Alliance of Latino Mentors and Authors (CALMA) is dedicated to discovering, supporting, and promoting Latino writers and authors in Colorado. The panelists have extensive family histories in the Southwest going back to the 1700s. The panel is multidisciplinary and centers on mentorship of the next generation of writers, with Colorado as the setting of their work and advocacy as central to a writer's commitment to community.

## **V113. Talking Story: New Writing Across the Pacific - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Shawna Ryan, Pat Matsueda, Kara Briggs,  
Lawrence Ypil, Midori Fujioka  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

A panel of diverse writers and multicultural artists “talk story” about recent multigenre work with a place-based focus on the Hawaiian Islands and a greater Indo-Pacific region. Across generations and Asian-Pacific American ethnicities, they share, read, discuss, and contemplate in multiple languages new writing from their hot-off-the-press book excerpts, articles, e-zines, dissertations, film, and other mixed-media formats. Affiliated with University of Hawai‘i, writers lead “local” literary circles.

**V114. Team You & How to Win the Long Game:  
Mentorship, Mayhem, Making It in Showbiz -  
VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kathy Berardi, Richard Walter, Julie Ann Sipos  
Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

What if your screenwriting mentor called the day after 9/11 to say class was still on—because audiences needed stories, especially funny ones, more than ever? What if thirty years later, you published satirical works in the same season, still challenging each other’s craft, work style, and points of view? Mentorship offers a path to resilience at a time when the writing life feels especially uncertain. Learn to mine time-tested creative alliances to surmount trends, trauma, and the market itself.

**V115. Thinking Small, Writing Large: Moving Between Short & Long Forms - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Lauren Alwan, Louise Marburg, Lydia Renfro, Paul Jaskunas, Montéz Louria

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Writers working in short forms traditionally use techniques of compression and concision, but

what happens when they tackle the scale of a larger work? The novel demands a different approach to structure, pacing, and detail, and shifting from the constraints of brevity to the freedom of a large canvas can sometimes pose daunting challenges. A panel of poets and prose writers who work in both short and long forms discusses the strategies and rewards of tackling the expansiveness of the novel.

**V116. What Makes Metaphors Human? -  
VIRTUAL EVENT**

Abhaya NB, Pritika Nehra, Rolla Das, Rachel Genn

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In the face of AI generation and evaluation of figurative language across poetry, prose and nonfiction, might metaphor be a last bastion of artisanal writing? We ask critical/creative writers to choose a metaphor that epitomises

their love of language. We then ask them to explain why using their expertise in neuroscience, comparative literature, creative writing and semiotics. Questions will deal with embodiment, aesthetic benefits of indistinctness, doubt and uncertainty in creative writing.

## **V117. What We Mean When We Talk About Vampires - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Steven Van Patten, Marcus James, Denise Tapscott, M.D. Neu

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Something comes to everyone's mind when we hear the word "vampire." This diverse group of authors explores how vampires have been coded in horror and mythology to represent societal fears, modes of transgression, and marginalized groups. They argue for the cultural value and literary potential of the vampire

archetype and the horror genre to metabolize the issues of today's world, what psychological and social needs it meets, and how techniques from horror can enliven writing within many genres.

**V118. What We Talk About When We Write About War: Voices of Ukrainian Women in Wartime - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Irene Zabytko, Anna Danylchuk, Tamara Hundorova, OLGA POPOVYCH

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. In its fourth year, the war is still continuing despite Putin's boast of conquering Kyiv in three days. In this panel, Ukrainian women share their unique perspectives about the war, and are committed to working as writers, publishers, scholars, and vloggers by implementing the theme of this war into the

books they are writing and publishing in the areas specifically of pedagogy, fiction, memoir, and children's literature.

## **V119. Women Poets Inventing & Embracing Forms - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kathleen McClung, Dawn Angelicca Barcelona, Julie Kane, Maw Shein Win, Alexis Sears  
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Five award-winning poets across the lifespan read work in both traditional and exhilarating new verse forms: sonnets, sestinas, burning haibuns, thought logs, duplexes, pecha kuchas, and more. While the tones of our readings fluctuate from contemplative to wacky to fierce, we five patternmakers unite around wholehearted, full-throated artistry to explore urgent themes emerging from women's bodies, minds, and spirits confronting a complex world of flux and constancy, beauty and suffering.

## **V120. Writing Against the Machine: Misusing AI in the Creative Writing Classroom - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Ian Schimmel, Daniel Snelson, Katy Gero, Allen Romano, Carly Schnitzler

Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel explores how students and writers can engage with AI as a site of resistance, mischief, and creative refusal. Rather than framing AI as a neutral tool for revision or productivity, the discussion will focus on how writers might subvert its logic—using it to glitch, disrupt, parody, or reimagine authorship. Panelists will share their own experiences working with and against the algorithm, as well as classroom experiments that foreground human voice and creative agency, introducing AI into the writing process not as a collaborator but as a provocateur or adversary.

## **V121. Writing the Surreal in Speculative YA Literature - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Emily Young, Emily X.R. Pan, Nova Ren Suma,  
Amy King

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult  
Literature

Get inspired to write your surreal or speculative young adult novel. As our panelists walk you through the difference between “day logic,” “dream logic,” and “night logic,” we’ll dive into the suspension of disbelief and the power of ambiguity. We will also discuss how surrealism not only empowers creativity, but was invented to provide catharsis from trauma. Panelists will share their favorite surreal writing prompts.

## **V122. Writing with Disabilities: How to Make the Most of Your Spoons - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Emily Young, Sydney Langford, William  
Alexander, Lillie Lainoff, Anna Sortino

## Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Are you a writer with disabilities or chronic health issues? Come hang out with us! Our panel of writers has learned to make the most of our limited spoons. From drafting to book promotions, we'll share our tricks and accessibility hacks—including dictation, built-in rest periods, and more. We'll also talk about how you can find supportive agents/editors and ask for what you need throughout the publishing process.

### **V123. Youth Laureates of the DMV: A Reading & Conversation - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Karapetkova Hollynd, Tara Prakash, Lily Scheckner, Kashvi Ramani, Isaac Yebio

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

The DMV (Washington, DC; Maryland; and Virginia) has a robust youth poetry culture, strengthened by a variety of youth poet laureate positions at the city, county, and state levels. Youth laureates work to bring the power of poetry to their communities, inspiring other young people to express themselves in writing and giving us all hope for the future of poetry. In this panel, four youth laureates from the DMV share their poetry and discuss their experience as laureates and community leaders.

# Wednesday, March 4, 2026

12:00 PM – 7:00 PM EST

## **W100. Conference Registration**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in the Charles Street Lobby, Baltimore Convention Center, Level 100. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. Students must present a valid student ID to check in or register at our student rate. Seniors must present a valid ID to check in or register at our senior rate. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

## **W101. AWP Bookfair Setup**

Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

The exhibit hall at the Baltimore Convention Center will be open for bookfair setup. For safety and security reasons, only those holding a bookfair setup access (BSA) registration, or those accompanied by an individual wearing a BSA registration, will be permitted inside the bookfair during setup hours. Bookfair exhibitors are welcome to pick up their registration materials in AWP's registration area in the Charles Street Lobby, Baltimore Convention Center, Level 100.

2:00 PM – 6:00 PM EST

**W102. Author Portraits by Adrienne Mathiowetz Photography**

Room 313, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Stop being embarrassed by your author photo! A great portrait is not only flattering, but also actively invites your audience to get to know you and your work. Returning for a seventh year at AWP, author photographer Adrienne Mathiowetz will be offering twenty-minute studio sessions on-site. See your proof gallery of images immediately; any portrait you choose will be fully processed and digitally delivered in high res for \$175. (Conference discount: Studio hour-long author portrait sessions with one image included are usually priced at \$1,050.)

Put your best face forward on websites, book covers, social media, and published interviews. Advanced sign-up is required with a \$50 retainer fee (covers our session preparation communication and can be applied toward your first image).

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM EST

**W103. Accessibility Tour**

Accessibility Services Desk, Charles Street  
Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Join AWP conference staff for a tour of the Baltimore Convention Center. This tour will cover main event areas of the Baltimore Convention Center and will be an opportunity to ask questions about conference accessibility. This tour is great for someone who would like to get a sense for the distances between meeting rooms and to plan easiest routes. If you are unable to make it to this 3:00 p.m. tour, please email [ADA@awpwriter.org](mailto:ADA@awpwriter.org) to arrange for a different time.

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM EST

## **W104. CLMP Membership Meeting**

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

This event is for all independent literary magazine and small press publishers: seasoned professionals, those just starting out, and all in between. Learn what we're planning for the year and share your thoughts on how we can best ensure that our community thrives. Even if you're not yet a member of CLMP, but would like to find out more, please feel welcome to join us.

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM EST

## **W105. AWP Awards Reception & Celebration**

Watertable Ballroom, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Kick off #AWP26 with the AWP Awards Reception, hosted by Carla Du Pree, AWP board

member and executive director of the  
Baltimore literary nonprofit CityLit Project!

We are proud to celebrate the winners of  
AWP's awards, including the AWP Award Series,  
AWP George Garrett Award for Outstanding  
Community Service in Literature, AWP Small  
Press Publisher Award, and AWP Writing  
Organization Award.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, AWP  
could not exist without the generosity of our  
members. Admission to this event is  
complimentary, with a suggested \$15 minimum  
donation to AWP to help us sustain  
programming and awards and to continue  
serving writers. One free drink ticket per guest  
and appetizers will be available, as well as a  
performance by the Cornelius Eady Group.

# Thursday, March 5, 2026

7:30 AM – 8:45 AM EST

## **T100. Sober AWP**

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Daily 12-Step Meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST

## **T101. Conference Registration**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

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Lobby, Baltimore Convention Center, Level 100. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. Students must present a valid student ID to check in or register at our student rate. Seniors must present a valid ID to check in or register at our senior rate. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

### **T101A. First Aid**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

First Aid is located in the Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

### **T102. Dickinson Quiet Space**

Room 303, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

A dedicated quiet space for you to collect your thoughts, unwind, and escape the literary commotion. “There is a solitude of space, / A solitude of sea, / A solitude of death, but these / Society shall be, / Compared with that profounder site, / That polar privacy, / A Soul admitted to Itself: / Finite Infinity.” —Emily Dickinson

### **T102A. Coat Check**

Room 304, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Coat check is available in room 304 on Level 300 of the Baltimore Convention Center. Coat check will not accept purses or laptops. \$3.00 per item checked. No cash, only credit card and digital payment accepted.

### **T103. Low-Light Space**

Room 305, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

A darkened, quiet, and more private space for attendees to gather their thoughts, reset, or take a break from the lighting of the Convention Center.

### **T104. Lactation Lounge**

Room 306, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

The lactation lounge is located in room 306 of the Baltimore Convention Center and is available for any nursing parent to use.

Women's restroom in Charles Street Lobby, Level 100 also includes a nursing area.

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM EST

**T105. Author Portraits by Adrienne Mathiowetz Photography**

Room 313, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Stop being embarrassed by your author photo! A great portrait is not only flattering, but also actively invites your audience to get to know you and your work. Returning for a seventh year at AWP, author photographer Adrienne Mathiowetz will be offering twenty-minute studio sessions on-site. See your proof gallery of images immediately; any portrait you choose will be fully processed and digitally delivered in high res for \$175. (Conference discount: Studio hour-long author portrait sessions with one image included are usually priced at \$1,050.)

Put your best face forward on websites, book covers, social media, and published interviews. Advanced sign-up is required with a \$50 retainer fee (covers our session preparation communication and can be applied toward your first image).

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM EST

**T106. Yoga for Writers**

Room 311, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Join writer Manisha Sharma, an Iowa State University professor and internationally certified yoga and meditation expert for twenty-eight years. Start your day with 9:00–10:00 a.m. yoga, calm your mind, unleash creativity, and build concentration. It will include stretching and breathing and conclude with a ten-minute guided meditation relaxation to build awareness. Arrive wearing comfortable street clothes; mats and yoga apparel are not necessary. For more, visit [Manisha-Sharma.com/Yoga.html](http://Manisha-Sharma.com/Yoga.html)

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM EST

**T107. Book Reviews & Literary Community:  
Why Criticism Continues to Matter**

Elise McHugh, Eric Lorberer, Kathleen Rooney,  
Robin Becker, Alyse Bense

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing &  
Technology

Book reviews offer writers an opportunity to actively participate within the writing community, and a thriving and supportive literary community has never been more important than it is right now. Panelists experienced in reviewing and editorial work will share their views on why writing criticism is a skill that should be taught and how to do so, how to navigate the current ecosystem for publishing these pieces, and how and why reviews remain important for authors, readers, and publishers.

## **T108. Cartooning at the End of the World**

Aubrey Hirsch, Sanika Phawde, Yifan Luo, Sarah Mirk

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

From zines to graphic memoirs, comics have long served as a force for social change. This panel brings together four writer-artists and educators who use the power of graphic storytelling to confront injustice, amplify marginalized voices, and engage readers in critical conversations. We'll explore the role of comics in resistance and activism in the current cultural climate, and reflect on our own artistic practices in memoir, cultural criticism, and reportage.

## **T109. Little Magazines in Urgent Times: Editing for Community & Change**

Carlie Hoffman, Gerald Maa, Nina Lohman,  
James Hall, Dora Malech  
Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Publishing, Editing &  
Technology

As literary publishing evolves with indie presses and online magazines, editors are now more focused than ever on crafting a publication that stands out. This panel explores literary publishing as a means to community building, sustaining artistic practice, and engaging with communities across cultures and digital spaces. Editors from *The Georgia Review*, *The Hopkins Review*, *Brink Literary*, *Small Orange*, and *Cherry Tree* will discuss curation, editorial life, and how to start a journal.

### **T110. The Lyric “We”**

Taije Silverman, M.Nzadi Keita, Cynthia Dewi Oka, Eleanor Wilner, Ilya Kaminsky

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poets will read and discuss different forms of the first-person plural voice, exploring how the porousness of an individual voice can expand into, and expand, history. Placing Eleanor Wilner's idea of the transpersonal at the center of our conversation, we will consider the juncture between singular and communal selves as it surfaces in our poetry and often leads to engagement beyond the page. Examining the plural voice, we will celebrate how friendship shapes and sustains both words and worlds.

### **T111. Literary Podcasting & the Critical Conversation**

Dan Kois, Jordan Kisner, Michele Moses, Matthew Buckley Smith, Lauren Wethers

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The literary podcast offers a critical experience unlike the essay or the review. A dialectic form that rewards debate, the podcast allows writers and readers a framework for civil, even friendly, critical disagreement, something of a lost art in 2025. The creators, hosts, and producers of five literary podcasts will discuss how they launched their shows, the nuts and bolts of production and distribution, and how the podcast form has affected their literary sensibility.

**T112. “I Wish to Speak to the Dead”: The Craft of Historical Imagination**

Maya Deane, Clare Sears, Jeanne Thornton, M. M. Olivas

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Join four celebrated LGBTQ historical and science fiction and fantasy writers for a practicum on historical world-building research and narrative design. This panel focuses on methods: how to find fractures in dominant narratives and see through the expected past, how to locate lost traces and hidden archives, how to enter into the past as an alien country, and how to lure back the ghosts of our queer predecessors to haunt our readers. Vibes cannot replace rigorous methodology. To speak to the dead, you need technique.

**T113. Collaborative Translation: Creativity & Praxis, Sponsored by ALTA**

Cynthia Hogue, Katie Farris, Mary Jo Bang,  
Nancy Naomi Carlson, Khaled Mattawa  
Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Translation

This panel takes as its premise that literary translation is inherently collaborative. Four prolific and prizewinning collaborative translators, working in such languages as French, Latin, Ukrainian, and Spanish, will discuss how collaboration has affected their practice. In addition, they will explore a spectrum of specific practices and collaborative experiences in their work.

**T114. Activating the Experimental Impulse:  
Prompts & Provocations**

Sheryda Warrener, Danielle Vogel, Jess Arndt,  
Lucy Ives, Lara Montes

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

The writing prompt is a staple of any writing classroom, but are we tapping its potential to inspire new modes of thinking, seeing, and

making? What happens when we orient generative exercises within an expansive interdisciplinary framework? Guided by experimental pedagogies, these five panelists will share material, conceptual, and embodied provocations that honor conceptual thinking, ambiguity, not-knowing, deep attentiveness, and surprise as vital elements of creative practice.

**T115. Here Goes the Neighborhood:  
Hyperlocal Literature for Art & Action**

Elizabeth Gold, Asali Solomon, Ava Chin, Philippe AbiYouness, Anne Elizabeth Moore

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The word “neighborhood” is a fertile ground for writing, evoking pavement, stoops, lawns, schools. Family, friends, first loves, the meanie

across the street. Skating, bikes, bus stops. Also: segregation, gentrification, Nextdoor, “values.” We may long to escape our first environs, but we return in poetry, fiction, memoir, and reporting. In exploring hyperlocal writing, we’ll share our generative energy with attendees to inspire writing, teaching, and mutual aid on their own fertile home turfs.

**T116. “Genre” by Any Other Name: What Literary Writers Can Learn from Genre Fiction**

Latifa Ayad, Charli Spier, Misha Rai, Laura Roque, Sophia Khan

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

In writing programs, “genre” has come to be defined as opposite to literary fiction. Genre fiction is called formulaic and cheap. In workshops, genre elements may be tolerated, but writers should always strive for literary. Yet

genre books consistently outsell literary books. Five authors and teachers of cross-genre fiction (sci-fi, steampunk, romantasy, mystery, and horror) discuss how literary writers can take a page from genre's book to captivate audiences and compel them to keep turning pages.

### **T117. Auntie, Outsider**

Nina Sharma, Christina Cha, Hyeseung Song,  
Prachi Gupta

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

What happens when we dare to look beyond the mother-daughter relationship? In this panel we will explore what it means to write an aunt. In particular, we will explore the presence of aunts in Asian American narratives. In "No Name Woman," Maxine Hong Kingston describes how the word "aunt" alone "would

do my father harm.” What transgressive truths does the character of the aunt convey? And how do these truths speak to Asian America as a whole? This event is sponsored by the Asian American Writers’ Workshop (AAWW).

**T118. Start-Up Literary Centers on Campus:  
Years 1 & 5**

Kara Oakleaf, Alice Magelssen-Green, Alexander Chee, Laura Jean Gilloux

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Join representatives from the Literary Arts Bridge at Dartmouth College and Watershed Lit: Center for Literary Engagement and Publishing Practice at George Mason University for a discussion on the challenges and opportunities in starting a campus literary center. The Bridge is in its first year of operation, while Watershed Lit will be entering its fifth year. Join both

organizations as they talk about securing funding, finding space, and building partnerships, as well as the impact on their communities.

### **T119. Debuting After Fifty**

Sara Lippmann, Chin-Sun Lee, Zeeva Bukai, Nita Noveno, Melanie Faranello

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Writing is a lifelong journey and the path to publication can take years. The phrase “emerging writer” doesn’t always correlate with age. Four writers who published debut novels, a story collection, and a memoir will discuss their paths toward publication and the experience of doing so after fifty. What do we gain with age, and how do life experiences benefit our perspective? What are the challenges of ageism

in a mediagenic/platform-oriented culture? And how do we stay committed through the years?

### **T120. Somos Xicanas: échale Tu Canto**

Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo, Dahlia Aguilar, Brenda Vaca, Luz Schweig, Angela C Trudell Vasquez  
Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The X in Xicana is the vital confluence of past with future marked by our present voices. Eighty contemporary Xicana writers make up *Somos Xicanas*, an anthology that connects those represented with future generations in a call to liberate all. “échale tu canto al viento, pa’ que llega más lejos,” writes editor Luz Schweig in the introduction. Join this panel with the anthology’s editor, publisher, and contributors to discuss from where those songs derive and just how far they can go.

## **T121. Queer Nostalgia in Fiction**

Christopher Tradowsky, Greg Hewett, Raki  
Kopernik, David Crouse

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Nostalgia can be a powerful inspiration for fiction writers, yet for LGBTQ+ authors, looking to the past can prove paradoxical. On the one hand, nostalgia can be a source of queer joy, a celebration of unique communities and their cultural contributions. On the other, traumatic aspects of our history can make it difficult to look back. The four novelists on this panel tangle with the paradox of queer nostalgia, redeeming the joyful aspects of LGBTQ+ history without ignoring its hard truths.

**T122. Celebrating *Sinister Wisdom*, a  
Multicultural Lesbian Literary Journal, at Fifty**

Julie Enszer, Cavar Sarah, Jenny Factor, JP  
Howard, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan  
Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Founded in 1976, *Sinister Wisdom*, a multicultural lesbian literary and art journal, has been publishing consistently since then. Four distinguished writers, editors, and curators reflect on the work of *Sinister Wisdom*, including its recent Sapphic Classics, reprints of iconic books by lesbian-feminists. By reading from past and forthcoming issues and discussing their significance, *Sinister Wisdom's* enduring contributions to lesbian and queer women's voices and its future aspirations emerge.

**T123. The Anthony Hecht Prize: A Twentieth-  
Anniversary Reading**

Anna Lena Phillips Bell, Austin Allen, Erica Dawson, Geoffrey Brock, Julia Thacker  
Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Waywiser fills a vibrant niche in the poetry publishing ecosystem. After launching the Waywiser Press in 2001, publisher Philip Hoy partnered with editor Joseph Harrison in 2005 to found the Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize, hailed as the poetry world's "new plum." Since then, Waywiser Press has run twenty Hecht Prize contests, with winners receiving numerous accolades. In celebration, five poets, spanning the two decades of the prize, will read from their books, to be followed by a Q&A.

### **T124. Craft Lessons from Yiddish Poetry**

Daniel Kraft, Pearl Abraham, Yerra Sugarman, Zackary Sholem Berger, Kathryn Hellerstein

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Modern Yiddish poetry is one of the most dynamic, daring, and complex bodies of global literature from the twentieth century. Its diasporic perspectives, formal experiments, and ambivalent relationships to its own history offer timely models for poets writing in all languages. Our panelists, all translators and poets, will discuss some of the lessons in poetic craft they have learned from their apprenticeships to great Yiddish poets, in ways accessible to writers without knowledge of Yiddish.

**T125. It's Political, But It's Not Political Art**

Terry Nguyen, Kevin Nguyen, Jon Hickey, Karissa Chen, Alejandro Varela

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

The act of writing is often political. But whereas “political art” aims to be prescriptive and morally assured, the strength of fiction remains in its ability to explore and complicate our long-held beliefs, to muddy truths that once felt clear. The authors of this panel have wrestled with overtly political topics in their work—from immigration policy to state-enacted violence to the lasting damage of colonial history—but with approaches that focus on narrative and character.

**T126. Writing Gender-Based Sexual Violence Is Difficult Enough, So How Do We Teach It?**

Sue William Silverman, Karen Michelle Otero,  
Nicole Walker, Brooke Champagne, Jill  
Christman

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Excavating the gritty literary landscape of sexual violence is scary. By sharing how we write our dark emotional terrains, this diverse panel of women will discuss how we create safe spaces to teach students ways to approach trauma such as rape, sexual harassment, and incest. What role do content warnings play? While acknowledging potential triggers and navigating Title IX requirements, how do we equip our students with the tools they need to overcome resistance, shame, and silence?

9:00 AM – 11:50 AM EST

**T127. AWP Program Directors' Plenary  
Assembly**

Baltimore Ballroom A, Fifth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

This meeting is for all directors of AWP member programs. Please join us for a light breakfast and an informal working session with your

regional representatives. The AWP board chair will give a welcome and briefing before the breakout discussions begin.

Please note: Program directors who are unable to attend may send a department representative in their place.

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST

### **T128. AWP Bookfair**

Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

With more than 650 literary exhibitors, the AWP Bookfair is the largest of its kind. A great way to meet authors, critics, and peers, the bookfair also provides excellent opportunities to find information about many literary magazines, presses, and organizations. Please consult the bookfair map in the AWP mobile app for location details.

## **T128A. Concessions**

Baltimore Convention Center

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in the Baltimore Convention Center in the Charles Street Lobby and AWP Bookfair on Level 100 and at the Market Fresh Café on Level 300. No cash, only credit card and digital payment are accepted at all food and beverage locations. Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app for location details.

10:35 AM – 11:50 AM EST

## **T129. Lily Poetry Review Stage Reading**

Chloe Miller, Eileen Cleary, Subhaga Crystal  
Bacon

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Reading of new books published by Lily Poetry Review Books, featuring Rikki Santer, Subhaga Crystal Bacon, Barbara Carlson, Wendy Drexler, Melody Wilson, Chloe Yelena Miller, and others.

**T130. The Doctor Is In: Creative Writers on Healing & Medical Humanities**

Hadara Bar-Nadav, Donovan McAbee, Owen Lewis, Yael Shinar, Jude Okonkwo

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

We are doctors and medical editors who write poetry and prose, and believe in the power of creative writing to promote healing. We teach medical and health humanities classes across the country in English and ethics departments and in medical schools, hospitals, and treatment centers to people of all ages.

Panelists will discuss best practices for teaching creative writing with a medical focus to

promote empathy and healing for students, patients, doctors, and writers of all levels and genres.

**T131. Craft Across Borders: Writers with Immigrant Roots Discuss Craft**

Khem Aryal, Rajiv Mohabir, Jennifer Maritza McCauley, Hasanthika Sirisena, Joanna Eleftheriou

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

In this session, five writers with immigrant roots—working across fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry, and representing diverse cultural backgrounds—highlight the aesthetic principles and craft theories that shape their writing. More specifically, they explore the craft traditions inherited from their cultures, the strategies they use to navigate and

reconcile with mainstream craft expectations, and the importance of readers understanding those craft choices to fully engage with their work.

### **T132. Poets Duel with AI: LLMs vs. Poets**

Vincent Cellucci, Annelise Gelman, Ronaldo Wilson, Ian Hatcher, Angeliki Sioli  
Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

When LLMs (large language models) threaten the pen as sword, light, and saber, poets must unmodel, dueling with computers. This poet panel contends with AI in recent work either as a subject or practice, engaging in its ethics as well as the vexed histories and states of computationally generated (poetic) output. We view this liminal moment (full of limits/bias) as the very site of poetic engagement, where

poetry might reveal and transgress the now ever-haunting boundaries of the AI generation.

**T133. By Hook or by Crook: Communicating Solidarity During Intellectual Suppression**

Sarah A. Chavez, Rochelle Hurt, Siew Hii, Ever Jones, Christopher Carmona

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Since the 2025 inauguration, the US has experienced pervasive attacks on intellectual freedom and First Amendment rights, with universities firmly in the crosshairs. This diverse panel explores how faculty can support the fight against oppression and perform solidarity with students despite existential and financial threat. As writers, we navigate multiple audiences simultaneously, and we will discuss a variety of strategies, such as bodily visual

rhetoric, coded language, and strategic assignments.

## **T134. Resourcing Resilience: Strategies for Navigating Organizational Change**

Arleta Little, Lisa Willis, Joanne Gabbin,  
Kimberly A.C. Wilson

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Octavia Butler wrote that “the only lasting truth is change.” Hear from three leaders who are navigating this truth within the lives of their organizations by using cultural, creative, and spiritual practices that help them to cultivate stability, root in wisdom, activate joy, metabolize stress and pain, and find strength and courage in connection amid pervasive uncertainties and the realities of accelerating and ongoing organizational change.

## **T135. “Inspired by a True Story”: Fusing Fact & Fiction from Headlines to History**

Julia Dahl, Sarah Seltzer, Steph Cha, Asha Lemmie, Elizabeth L. Silver

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Long before *Law & Order* popularized the term “ripped from the headlines,” novelists have been folding real events into their work. This panel will explore how five contemporary novelists, whose works are influenced by real people and historical events, balance facts and fiction. What challenges and opportunities do narratives like this present? And what questions arise as authors sell and promote these books?

## **T136. More than Memory: The Art of Jewish Storytelling in Creative Nonfiction**

Kenning JP Garcia, Jonathan Penton, Hannah Cohen, Jessie Askinazi, Michael Black

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Jewish storytelling, despite its extensive history, is often misunderstood, even by those who practice it. We will explore past and current dynamics of this art form and how to develop it as contemporary creative nonfiction. Panelists will exhibit examples of Jewish creative nonfiction and consider how these works have fortified our writing. We will explore the multifaceted nature of Jewish identity and discuss bringing the layers of our Jewishness to a broad audience, Jewish and otherwise.

**T137. Born-Digital Poetry: Planning for the Future of Literary Archives**

Nadia Ghasedi, Aditi Machado, Adrian Matejka, Niki Herd, Julie Swarstad Johnson

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

This panel brings together poets, translators, editors, scholars, and archivists to explore what it means to create, collect, and preserve born-digital poetry. Drawing on the Mellon-funded Born-Digital Poetry project, it addresses the challenges of creation in the digital environment and the urgency of preventing future loss, offering insights on creative process in the digital era, personal curation, ethical considerations, and strategies to protect literary archives for future generations.

### **T138. Kithship: A Dialogue with Asian Diasporic Poet-Scholars**

Jasmine An, Jennifer S. Cheng, Sumita Chakraborty, Jeddie Sophronius, Carlina Duan  
Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel of Asian diasporic scholar-artists invites cross-genre possibilities of intimacy and kithship between Asia and the Asian diaspora. Panelists explore how poets theorize through poetry, and how Asian diasporic poets challenge the distinction between “poet” and “scholar” by crossing genre and geographic borders. We ask, How do Asian diasporic poet-scholars explore relationships to genre? How do such poet-scholars reconfigure dialogues around Asia America through their hybrid work?

**T139. A Psalm for the Wild Teacher: Building Genre Fiction Workshops That Inspire**

Jennifer Pullen, Melanie Dusseau, Dave Essinger, Brooke Wonders, Snowden Wright  
Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Gone are the days of hiding genre writing like kids reading comics under the covers. If creative writing programs are to survive both dwindling enrollment and a robot apocalypse, we must develop workshops of interest to twenty-first century writers. Genre fiction strategies and knowledge are required in the inclusive teacher's tool kit. With hopepunk for the future, escape with us to our well-stocked bunker for genre-specific teaching tactics that are resonant, joyful, subversive, swoon-worthy, and fun. Panelists will present workshop tips for fantasy, sci-fi, romance, horror, and crime.

**T140. Mizna Presents: HUNA—Writing Resistance in the Now**

George Abraham, Issam Zineh, Jameelah Lang,  
Sarah Aziza, Abdelrahman ElGendy

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

To write resistively from the US is to reckon with many colonial presents: how imperialism abroad is connected to domestic oppression, how resisting fascism requires both urgency and slow thinking. As SWANA writers, how might disrupting normative Western expectations around craft and form, in turn, confront imperialism's un/conscious? We explore how literature can invite interrogation of one's positionality and confront present horrors, guiding us to a collective future beyond imperial domination.

**T141. Pigeon Goes to College: Picture Books as a Framework for Lifelong Learning**

Sylvie Shaffer, Sylvie Shaffer, Emily Rosenthal,  
Venise Duchesne, Sylvia Whitman

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult  
Literature

From circle time to college (and beyond), this panel of educators, writers, and kidlit professionals discusses how picture books serve as tools for teaching and learning craft and content throughout life. Young learners discover their own world and the world of others while developing reading skills and social-emotional awareness. But picture books also enable readers and writers of all ages to grapple with complex subjects and craft compelling stories.

**T142. Beyond the Debut: Writers on the Long Game of Writing**

Jung Yun, Jimin Han, Mitchell Jackson, Angie Kim, Cleyvis Natera

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Authors of multiple books will discuss how the writing and publishing journey evolves over time with successive publications. From debut book anxieties to developing a greater sense of confidence and clarity about their goals, the panelists will discuss what they wish they would have known, done, and asked with each major book project. Additional topics will include craft development, audience building, industry navigation, maintaining creative momentum, and adapting to a changing industry.

**T143. Shaping the Narrative: African Literature for a Global Audience**

Adedayo Agarau, Romeo Oriogun, Mubanga Kalimamukwento, Tramaine Suubi

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

African literature is surging onto global prize lists and bestseller charts, yet fresh visibility brings hard choices. This conversation examines how contemporary African writers honor local textures while engaging readers worldwide, how stories shift in translation—of language and of life—and how author-led magazines and prizes guard against commodified “Africa.” Through this event, attendees join the conversations about sustaining authenticity amid borderless readerships.

**T144. Writers in the Schools Alliance Annual Meeting**

Asari Beale, Daemond Arrindell, Michele Kotler, Javan Howard, Ellen Hagan

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category:

Join other teaching writers and writer-in-the-school programs to discuss the rewards and

challenges of the field at this moment. Goals for this meeting are to forge stronger connections within the network of WITSA organizations and practitioners and to set the coalition's agenda for the year ahead. This meeting is open to anyone interested in the work of writer-in-the-school teaching artists, programs, and organizations.

**T145. A Strange Land & a Peculiar People:  
Appalachians Writing Against the Stereotypes**

Sarah Mullens, Neema Avashia, Catherine Moore, Robert Lynn, Steven Dunn

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Appalachian tropes have persisted since “A Strange Land and a Peculiar People” framed the region with a “poor, helpless old man sitting on a stool,” his lawn “choked with weeds.” In the

150 years since, these images—and their kin—remain, sometimes in real life but always in the expectations of the outside audience.

Appalachians across genres ask: How do we write regional complexity when stereotypes loom large? What should we do with Papaw spitting chew out front of the single-wide in our story?

### **T146. Trans Publishers, Then & Now**

Casey Plett, Noah Rosenzweig, Luke Sutherland,  
Emily Zhou, Oliver Fugler

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing &  
Technology

Recent years have seen a trans literary renaissance. What's it like to be an indie trans publisher working behind the scenes to make that renaissance? This panel will speak to the literary and logistical trials and joys of trans

publishing, with representatives from trans publishers new and old from the US, UK, and Canada. We will share wisdom, horror stories, triumph stories, and strategies for successfully publishing trans books in 2026 and beyond.

### **T147. Don't Box Me In! Crossing Genres & Defying Categorization**

Art Taylor, John Copenhaver, Richie Narvaez, SJ Sindu, Shannon Scott

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Buried mere blocks from this year's convention, Edgar Allan Poe left an indelible mark on mystery, horror, and science fiction. His crossing of genre lines feels prescient today, with an increasing amount of modern fiction breaking the boundaries between forms, blending traditions, disrupting conventions, and thriving in ambiguity. Professors and fiction writers

both, the panelists explore the landscape of cross-genre fiction and the possibilities for emerging writers.

**T148. Fifty Years of *Gargoyle*: A Celebration of *Gargoyle Magazine* & Richard Peabody**

Gerry LaFemina, Melissa Scholes Young, Rose Solari, Rita Dove, Tim Wendel

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Tributes

Since 1976, *Gargoyle Magazine* and its editor, Richard Peabody, has been publishing one of the most eclectic and cutting-edge journals and supporting writers of all stages of their careers. *Gargoyle* readers can often expect to find speculative fiction beside beat poetry beside a traditional memoir—each piece of high literary quality. As Peabody retires in 2026, this panel brings together writers and readers whom he

has supported over those years to celebrate his years of literary stewardship.

## **T149. Is My Book Too Much? Publishing & Marketing Queasy Literature**

Samuel Ashworth, Daria Lavelle, Monica Prince, Catherine Dang

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

The publishing world has a low risk tolerance. It likes books it knows will sell, because other books like it have sold. But what if there are no books out there like yours? And worse, what if your book is about things that just plain freak some people out? In this panel, four authors and publishers whose books involve tough subjects like autopsies, cannibalism, the afterlife, and depraved sexual fantasy will share

their experiences writing, selling, and marketing difficult, original books.

12:10 PM – 1:10 PM EST

**T150. Meditation for Writers: Quieting the Inner Critic**

Room 311, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Join award-winning novelist and certified mindfulness teacher April Dávila for a grounding, one-hour dharma talk and meditation. The session will begin and end with fifteen minutes of guided meditation. The middle thirty minutes will explore how mindfulness can help us write more and suffer less. On Thursday, March 5, participants will focus on quieting the inner critic.

12:10 PM - 1:25 PM EST

**T151. “They’ll Never Write a Poem”:  
Neurodivergent Poets on Their Writing Lives,  
Sponsored by Sarabande Books**

Kristen Renee Miller, Stine An, Lauren  
Haldeman, Alina Stefanescu, Karisma Price  
Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

In April 2025, the US health secretary made the claim that there will never be an autistic poet. Five award-winning poets set the record straight in a reading and discussion of their work and lived experiences as neurodivergent writers. Topics include, but are by no means limited to, intersectionality and neurodivergence, reframing creative practices, novelty-fueled nervous systems, pitching divergent projects, our most off-brand skills, and accessibility in the literary field.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' full bios.](#)

**T152. Present Tense: Writing Jewish Stories for Today, Sponsored by Jewish Book Council**

Josh Rolnick, Maya Arad, Esther Chehebar, Sam Sussman

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Why do Jewish stories matter? What are the unique challenges and responsibilities—and inspiring possibilities—of writing Jewish fiction today? What does it mean to build a Jewish bookshelf that speaks to today's readers, as Jewish Book Council's newest program, Nu Reads, is physically doing, one month at a time? This panel brings together three acclaimed authors to discuss weaving personal

experiences into one's work, how fiction can engage and educate a broad readership about the diversity of Jewish cultural heritage, how Jewish authors can navigate the publishing world, and how to envision the role of Jewish stories in the future.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**T153. Flat Waters Run Deep: Readings by  
*Plainsongs* Writers**

Eleanor Reeds, Ali Beheler, Ulrick Casimir, Kiara Letcher, Matt Mason

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Nearing its fiftieth anniversary, Nebraska-based literary journal *Plainsongs* invites several of its recent contributors to read their latest work and discuss the vital role that small lit mags have played in their writing life.

**T154. When “Normal” Is Overrated: Writing About Disability & Chronic Illness**

Mathew Rodriguez, Kristen Harmon, Brian Trapp, Rosie Sultan, Carter Sickels

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Disability studies might be a newish genre, but it has an unfortunate currency today, given proposed cuts to Medicaid and systemic ableism. But what are the ethics and politics of such writing? How do we manage the public appetite for narratives about “overcoming”? How do we allow our narrators and characters

the same complexity, ambiguity, and humor that literature about nondisabled people enjoys? This panel features writers who have created work from both inside and outside the disabled body.

**T155. Making an Old Thing New: Research, Relics & Resurrection in Poetry & Fiction**

Remica Bingham-Risher, Tim Seibles, Princess Perry, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Afaa M. Weaver  
Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The five Black writers here craft works that engage in radical reimagining and revisioning. Helping to restore the humanity of the missing and barely known, these poets and novelists are tending history as they know it to be, not as it has been handed to them. Through docupoetics, lyrical research, and creative

counternarratives, they will illuminate craft and research processes, help expand the canon, and sharpen our understanding of the value of the personal linked to the historical.

### **T156. Adjunct Writers Caucus**

Mike Spry, Cara Diaconoff, Elizabeth Donald, Joe Hess

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

Are you an adjunct or part-time instructor at a college or university? Do you support adjuncts, maybe as a former adjunct yourself? Join us! The Adjunct Writers Caucus (est. 2025) provides a space for writers who are also instructors to connect with others to learn and grow in their personal and professional lives. The caucus strives to provide visibility for this large subset of instructors, as well as space for discussion, support, and resources for its members.

## **T157. Writing to Rehumanize: Collaborative Classroom Creativity in the AI Age**

Julie Gard, Darci Schummer, Emily August, Sara Sowers-Wills, Anna Davis

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

As AI infiltrates every facet of higher education, instructors report record levels of student disengagement and difficulty with advanced literacy. In this panel, writing professors from various disciplines discuss how collaborative writing can foster the curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, community building, and conflict navigation skills necessary for a functioning democracy and a joyful quality of life. Attendees will leave with example exercises and ideas for their own classrooms.

## **T158. Shape-Shifting: Visions of Resurgence in Indigenous Art-Poetry**

Kalilinoe Detwiler, Kenzie Allen, Abigail Chabitnoy, Kimberly Blaeser, Heid Erdrich  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Five Indigenous writers highlight the dynamic shapes that empower Native poetry. From clay to camera; pictograph to performance; installations to experimental forms—Indigenous poets construct poetic models inspired by tribal epistemologies, models that sustain their community, knowledge, and sovereignty. Working in collaboration with or beyond the page, words are embodied, staged, touched, and reimagined to open possibilities for resurgence and remembrance. Forms and roles of poetry shape-shift.

**T159. How to Resist AI in Writing & Teaching,  
Sponsored by the Authors Guild**

Vauhini Vara, Carmen Machado, Alex Hanna,  
Umair Kazi

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests &  
Marketing

Among practitioners and teachers of writing, a resistance to AI is taking all kinds of creative forms: organizing among colleagues to change language in publishing and teaching contracts; crafting legal strategies to counter those of AI companies; refusing requests to incorporate AI into writing and teaching practice; and much more. This panel, drawing on the tradition of workers' inquiry, is meant for those interested in hearing from colleagues deeply involved in crafting these strategies.

**T160. Finding New, True Literary Sounds**

Lissa Soep, Sharif Youssef, DJ Johnson, Leila Nadir, Shawn Wen  
Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

A timely conversation about breaking ground in nonfiction by working at the intersection of print and audio. Authors and sound artists are joining forces to elbow their ways out of format constraints, creating novel narrative modalities and reaching new audiences in the process. With audiobooks on the rise and documentary podcasts vanishing for lack of funds, a dynamic panel of writers and other nonfiction creators and distributors share how they're crafting words to ring in our ears.

**T161. Spoiler Alert: I Know How This Story Ends**

Danielle Harms, Sakinah Hofler, Lydi Conklin, Gene Kwak, Brenda Peynado

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

What makes the ending of a story resonate long after the final page? These published novelists and short story writers will dissect the mechanics of endings in fiction. From tying up loose ends to letting questions linger, we'll explore the choices writers face when reaching their narrative destinations. Join for an intimate look at the elusive craft of transforming good endings into unforgettable ones.

**T162. Sacred Science & Rational Spirit: Black Knowledge Systems in Contemporary Drama**

David Johnson, Masha Dowell, Jordan Mims, Veronique MacRae

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

This panel explores how Black American playwrights and screenwriters engage science and spirituality as distinct yet powerful frameworks for storytelling. Panelists will share craft strategies for authentic representation, examine audience reception across communities, and reflect on how dramatic writing can illuminate these ways of knowing. Rooted in Black cultural traditions, the session honors both empirical and intuitive approaches to truth with integrity and depth.

**T163. Alternative Nation, or Whatever: Gen X Perspectives on the Writing Life**

Michael Mercurio, Rebecca Faulkner, Tara Betts, B. K. Fischer, Paisley Rekdal

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Generally understood as those born between 1965 and 1980, Generation X tends to be ignored or forgotten. When it's not, it has often been derided and misunderstood by the much larger generations that flank it: baby boomers and millennials. In a media landscape where the dominant voices aren't Generation X, what are the alternative perspectives that are missing? What does the Generation X experience tell us about the larger shifts in literary culture since the turn of the twenty-first century?

## **T164. Celebrating Twenty Years of Torch Literary Arts**

Amanda Johnston, Teri Cross Davis, Saida Agostini, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Torch Literary Arts celebrates twenty years of literary excellence by Black women writers. This reading will feature poets and novelists from the DMV area who have contributed works to Torch's digital publication, *Torch Magazine*, across two decades. Panelists will be in conversation with Torch's founder to discuss the importance of preserving the works of Black women writers and sustaining intersectional, Black-led, and serving organizations like Torch Literary Arts.

**T165. Unsung Voices: Developing Reading Series & Inclusive Events in Libraries**

Jonathan Wittmaier, Nari Kirk, Sophia Tarin,  
Gabriella Reznowski

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Program Development

As vibrant hubs of academic and creative communities, libraries are often the perfect

place to host readings and other literary events. With book bans and censorship on the rise, such programs can be both haven and inspiration for marginalized groups. Writers and library professionals will discuss how they built literary programs from the ground up, prioritizing various underserved populations in academic and public libraries.

**T166. More than Ourselves: Reorganizing Publishers After NEA Cuts, Sponsored by CLMP**

Neelanjana Banerjee, Jennifer Acker, Moheb Soliman, Stephen Motika

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

The recent cancellation of NEA grants amounts to a potential loss of over \$1 million for more than fifty literary publishers in the coming years. What do such shortfalls mean for

independent publishing? How can literary organizations recover and galvanize community support? This group of publishers will share concrete strategies—from grant research and fundraising initiatives to collaborative projects and joint programming—for organizing anew as the publishing industry grows more precarious.

**T167. On Our Own Terms: First-Generation Immigrants Writing About Asia**

Shubha Sunder, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, Preeti Vangani, M Lin, Grace Liew

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Writers from China, India, Malaysia, and Singapore share how their perspectives as first-generation Asian immigrants inform their novels, short stories, and poetry. How do they write about home and diaspora, especially when some cultures and political worlds are

very different from the US? Which stories “travel well,” and which meet resistance? How much do they translate, linguistically and culturally? Panelists will discuss how to challenge prevailing Western ideas about Asia and navigate the publishing industry while hewing to their voices and vision.

### **T169. Books That Refuse to Behave: Readings in Autotheory**

Lauren Samblanet, Leora Fridman, Sarah Rosenthal, Valerie Witte, A.W. Strouse  
Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Authors published by punctum books read from books that defy traditional literary and scholarly genres, mining the intersections of memoir, critical theory, and fictive-poetic experimentation, leading to literary-scholarly

mash-ups. Each author will also reflect briefly on the construction of their work—why this shape, this voice, this refusal of convention(s)? Join us for a reading of genre-bending, where fragments, chapters, and openings challenge the rules of both literary and scholarly form.

## **T170. Launch Your Dream: Get That Lit Org Off the Ground**

Karen Schubert, Joel Lesses, Michael Khandelwal, Phil Memmer, Trish Hopkinson  
Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Every literary arts organization begins with an idea. We know what we know. But how to learn the rest? Large and small, new and longtime organization founders will talk about how they conceptualized their initiative, what they didn't know they didn't know, and how collaboration

and community shaped their literary center along the way.

**T171. Enduring Ephemeral Forms: On Poetry Chapbooks & Building Community**

Aishvarya Arora, David Haydon, Zoe Tuck, Dujie Tahat, Brian Teare

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Chapbooks have a countercultural history and democratizing ethic. This panel of poets, editors, and publishers discuss the challenges and opportunities of this short form. They'll offer insights into contests that support debut authors, chaplets that commemorate reading series, alternative modes of production, such as letterpress and risograph printing. We'll consider how chapbooks create enduring connections and contribute to an essential,

living archive of work by queer, BIPOC, and feminist authors.

## **T172. Building the House: The Importance of a Community for Muslim Writers**

Safiya Khan, Amal Kassir, Salma Mohammad, Sara Bawany

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Program Development

House of Amal is in its sixth year of community programming, teaching, mentorship, and publishing. Amid an uptick in global Islamophobia, it is vital to create spaces centered on both craft and community for aspiring Muslim writers who require a unique kind of mentorship. Bridging the overlap between the spiritual, literary, and artistic identities, House of Amal will share the lessons learned while crafting and recrafting our

twelve-month Writing Residency curriculum and membership programming.

### **T173. Borderlands of the Self: Queer Latinidad Beyond the Binary**

Chibbi Orduna, Anel Flores, Jo Reyes-Boitel, Saúl Hernández, Diamond Braxton

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Queer Latinx writers chart the shifting terrain of masculinity, femininity, and nonbinary presence across multiple genres: poetry, memoir, YA, novels, and performance. We unpack how craft choices (voice, code-switching, form, and myth) both affirm and unsettle Latinidad. Panelists share strategies for writing bodies and borders, confront stereotypes, and imagine liberated futures, offering tools attendees can bring to

crafting their own work that holds radical multiplicity and resists erasure.

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM EST

**T174. The Right to Read vs. Book Bans: Stories & Advice from the Front Lines, Sponsored by Blue Flower Arts**

Andrew Karre, Malinda Lo, Mahogany L.

Browne, Ibi Zoboi

Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

Book bans designed to keep diverse stories—particularly BIPOC and LGBTQ+ voices—out of classrooms and libraries are growing at an alarming rate. We believe in the freedom to read. We believe in the power of literature to foster empathy and help isolated young people know they are not alone. We invite you to join

our fight! Come hear from our panel of celebrated YA authors as they share lessons they've learned taking a stand against censorship—and how to empower us all to do the same.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' full bios.](#)

**T175. Black Poets & Their Fictions: A Reading & Conversation, Sponsored by Furious Flower Poetry Center**

Lauren Alleyne, Rachel Eliza Griffiths, Canisia Lubrin, Phillip Williams

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

In September 2024, Furious Flower celebrated its fourth decennial conference, “Furious Flower IV: The Worlds of Black Poetry,” which explored the expansiveness of expression within traditional and contemporary Black poetic practice. This panel extends that theme, bringing together three award-winning poets who have recently—and successfully—ventured into the world of fiction to share their experiences with the craft, complications, and rewards of engaging self, history, and language across genre.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters’ full bios.](#)

**T176. University of Arkansas MFA Sixtieth-Anniversary Reading & Celebration**

CD Eskilson, Toni Jensen, Adam Clay, Chelsea Rathburn, Alysandra Dutton

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

For over fifty years, the University of Arkansas Program in Creative Writing and Translation has served as a preeminent training ground for some of the nation's best writers. Established in 1966, ours is one of the oldest MFA programs in the nation and one of the most innovative, offering degree tracks in poetry, fiction, and literary translation. This event will celebrate the program's sixtieth anniversary with readings and remarks from notable alumni.

**T177. Writers of Bilad Al-Sham: A Reading for  
Palestine & Syria**

Sara Bawany, Amal Kassir, Salma Mohammad  
Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Writing has remained an essential practice for Levantine peoples, even during times of war. Spoken word poets from Syria and Palestine will perform powerful political poems inspired by their personal and familial experiences with loss through war, genocide, and settler colonialism. They discuss the intersection of their Muslim and Levant identities and the impact of the diaspora on their poetry, and further, how this influences their teaching of both craft and writing identity at House of Amal.

**T178. Cuentistas in Comunidad: Creating Spaces for Stories, Connection & Resistance**

Adrian Gaston Garcia, Dahlia Aguilar, Cynthia Via, Adriana Martinez Figueroa, Isabel Roby  
Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In a time of escalating attacks on immigrants and people of color, writing in community is both an act of resistance and a way of building solidarity. This workshop, facilitated by Tintas DC, a collective of Latine storytellers in the Washington, DC, metro area, explores how writing can move beyond the solitary and become a communal practice rooted in care, cultural connection, and collective healing. Participants will reflect on the ways shared creative space can help amplify voices.

**T179. Dodge, Duck & Dazzle: Creative Writing Faculty's DEI Dodgeball Arena in Florida**

Laura McDermott, David Kirby, Romeo Oriogun, Richard Toumey, Yael Aldana

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Florida's CRW faculty have been handed a thriller-worthy plot twist—new state mandates

under the anti-DEI wave rewriting the rules of academia. Join a diverse cast of faculty from across Florida with real-life adventures telling academic tales of pedagogical practices and the occasional “Wait, what?” moment. It’s not just a panel—it’s a master class in keeping academic discourse alive in a choose-your-own-adventure-novel-gone-wrong landscape that only comes from facing the dreaded policy manual.

## **T180. Imagining Literary Futures in Challenging Times**

KT Herr, Lisa Willis, Ryo Yamaguchi, Stephen Motika, Amy Stolls

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

We will discuss how literary organizations and small presses navigate the social and fiscal realities of a destabilizing landscape. What

constitutes thriving under antimission constraints? What does community building look like under conditions of scarcity? What can we learn from the past, and how can we imagine a future in which support for the arts flourishes? Professionals from a range of literary and publishing nonprofits discuss strategy, solidarity, hope, and perseverance.

**T181. It Takes Two to Make a Poem Go Right:  
Collaboration in Poetry**

Dustin Brookshire, Ben Kline, Caridad Moro-Gronlier, Denise Duhamel, Nicole Tallman  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Collaborative poetry grew out of word games played by French surrealists in the 1920s. It was taken up a decade later by Japan's Vou Club and then by Charles Henri Ford. After WWII, the Beat writers' collaborative experiments resulted

in the famous *Pull My Daisy*. In honor of this one-hundred-year-plus tradition, panelists will discuss collaborative techniques and craft used to cowrite a single poem to writing an entire book, and they'll share how collaboration has affected their own writing.

**T182. “So What’s Your Book About?”: A Branding Mini-Clinic**

Nanda Dyssou, Wylín Wilson, Marion Orr, Avgi Saketopoulou, Marlene Daut  
Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Your book might be brilliant, but can you explain the gist of it to a stranger in one sentence? This mini-clinic will help writers clarify their message to better position their work for media and public attention. Publicist Nanda Dyssou and four authors who have

effectively branded and pitched their books, generating lots of media, event, and public interest, will guide attendees in inventing a tagline and an elevator pitch for their books to strengthen their author brand.

### **T183. Art School Writing Faculty Caucus**

Lee Griffith, Nada Gordon, Janée Baugher  
Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Caucus

The Art School Writing Faculty Caucus provides a forum for writers to consider issues unique to art and design environments, their students, and curricula. This year we welcome new members and guests to an open-forum discussion of topics including pedagogy, technology, and craft. We also seek input concerning the coming year's caucus programming, executive board elections, and

the needs of our caucus members and their respective institutions.

## **T184. Material Encounters: On Teaching the Multimodal**

Carlina Duan, Kathy Wu, Sarah Minor, Anna Lena Phillips Bell

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel explores the relationship between multimodal writing and pedagogy. We gather writers who explore book arts; materiality; and digital, sonic, and visual textures in their teaching, in addition to their creative practices. Panelists explore questions such as: What are the pedagogical possibilities of teaching multimodal genres in the creative writing workshop? What offerings and/or productive tensions might emerge from teaching lyric

genres in dialogue with image, collage, and sound?

## **T185. Thinking with & at Scale: A Poetics for Planetary Crisis**

Julie Choffel, Julie Choffel, Henk Rossouw, Judy Halebsky, Sueyeun Juliette Lee

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

While close looking will always matter to craft, we are living in an era of massive and multiple crises that necessitate a wider lens to include other geographies, other timelines, and other experiences of living. How do we write toward that immensity? How can our poems address what we cannot see? Four poets working in different modes will discuss how their work attempts to contend with large-scale environmental change and explore how

language can attend to the wild, entangled, and expansive.

**T186. After the Debut: Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst**

Annabelle Tometich, Gloria Muñoz, Rosa Kwon Easton, Margaret Lee, Aaron Aceves

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Publishing your first book is an exciting and sometimes daunting process filled with questions: What should you expect? What does the publisher handle? What is your role in promotion? What happens when your expectations aren't met? Five diverse authors from a variety of genres (memoir, fiction, YA, poetry) and publishers (Big Five, independent, Amazon, small press) share their experiences

publishing their debuts and offer practical advice on how they navigated the process.

**T187. Keeping Stories Safe: Holding Space for Appalachian Voices in the Efficiency Era**

Natalie Sypolt, Neema Avashia, Kari Gunter-Seymour, Amy Le Ann Richardson, Laura Leigh Morris

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

What happens in marginalized communities when austerity and the war on ideas threaten our literary traditions? Creatives and educators step up. In this panel, five Appalachian writers share how they cultivate opportunities for regional storytelling through higher education, literary series, community writing spaces, prison writing programs, and grassroots anthologies. The panel explores the urgency

and impact of making space for Appalachian voices and offers tangible ways others can do the same.

**T188. The New Bioregional “Feel Guides”:  
Integrating Art, Ecology & Poetry**

Elizabeth Bradfield, CMarie Fuhrman, Kamella Cruz, IAN-ROB RAMSEY, Kate Rogers

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Cascadia, Alaska, the Rocky Mountains, the Gulf of Maine: Editors are bringing a new generation of anthologies into the world that foster connections of mind and heart, people and place, Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western science, urban spaces and designated Wilderness Areas. Editors from these four anthologies (some published, some under contract) will share readings, ethos, and process

in shaping these “feel guides” that strengthen relationships between humans and the worlds we walk.

## **T189. Beyond the Picket Sign: Writer’s Tools to Create Social Change**

Chloe Miller, Hila Ratzabi, Olga Livshin, Sara R Burnett, Sunu Chandy

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writers can act for social change while deepening and expanding their art on and off the page. The panelists will outline their actions (workshops, newsletters, speeches, poems, documentation and protests) that intersect with and grow their writing practices and genres while considering risk. They will share their experiences and offer tools for writers to use their craft to promote the values of

democracy, gender justice, LGBTQIA+ rights, peace, climate justice, and human rights.

**T190. The Art of Editing Translations:  
Exploration & Guidance, Sponsored by CLMP**

Jennifer Kronovet, Aditi Machado, Johannes Goransson, JD Pluecker, Michelle Gil-Montero  
Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This panel explores the work of editing translations, highlighting the editor's role in bringing global literature to new audiences. Panelists will discuss the creative and ethical negotiations at the heart of editing translations. How can editors select work from different cultures with care? How can translations be framed with awareness and enthusiasm? How much play is there in shaping a translation? The panel will share diverse approaches that

support cross-cultural exchange and connection.

**T191. Johns Hopkins University: Join the Literary Legacy**

Dora Malech, Rahne Alexander, Susan Choi, Eric Puchner, Karen Houppert

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Information Session

Learn about our fully funded MFA programs in poetry and fiction writing; long-standing BA in creative writing; flexible online MA programs in fiction, nonfiction, and science writing; expansive university press; award-winning journal of literature and culture; and other opportunities for continuing education, publication, and enrichment for writers of all ages and stages. Meet representatives from the Writing Seminars (MFA, BA), the online MA

programs, Hopkins Press, and *The Hopkins Review*.

## **T192. God-Wrestlers: Jewish Poets on Poetry as Prayer**

Sharon Dolin, Yerra Sugarman, Ava Winter,  
Donna Spruijt-Metz, Elliott BatTzedek  
Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

The lyric voice, through the psalms, is the backbone of all Jewish liturgy, and Jewish poets, like Jacob wrestling with the angel for a blessing, have sought ways to wrestle with their ability to pray to an unseen creator. Five Jewish-identified poets discuss their paths to poetry as prayer through belief and skepticism, as well as through their desire to repair the world (tikkun olam). Is there something unique and/or universal about the prayer poems that Jewish poets write?

## **T193. Getting Real in MG & YA Fiction: Writing with Honesty, Nuance & Heart**

Kimberly Kenna, Rebecca Morrison, Kalela Williams, Laura Shovan, Ona Gritz

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

How do writers of kidlit offer stories that are hopeful, but also probing and true? Five writers whose books reflect the challenges of growing up in a fractured, sometimes dangerous world share craft advice for exploring sensitive themes with authenticity and care. Panelists will discuss how their identities and experiences shape their work, how they approach research and sensitivity reading, and how they connect with today's teen and tween readers.

## **T194. On the Up & UP: Debut Authors**

### **Publishing with University Presses**

Ashley Anderson, Sebastián Páramo, Laura Chow Reeve, Bailey Moore, Samantha Edmonds  
Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Publishing with a university press isn't just for scholarly books. For many creative writers, university presses offer opportunities to break into an increasingly competitive literary landscape, especially when publishing a debut book. Bringing together voices from across genres, this panel explores their motivations for taking this path, the unique opportunities and challenges working with university presses present, and how their experiences illuminate the changes in the publishing landscape.

## **T195. Choice & the Lyric Body**

Amanda Shaw, Majda Gama, Joanna Fuhrman,  
Kyoko Mori, Sandra Beasley

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

Panelists of diverse backgrounds will engage in a craft-based discussion about how the choice to be childfree informs our art, including what it took to be “successful” at our craft. If choice is a spectrum, how do we write past stereotypes about people without children without stigmatizing other reproductive choices? We will share multigenre work, along with craft tips about tone, the lyric “I,” and how to challenge stock narratives of caregiving to include communal and ecological stewardship.

**T196. From Panel to Print: Three Book Projects That Originated at AWP**

David B. Olsen, Eric Freeze, Lisa Hadley, Lizette Wanzer, Chloe Martinez

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Bands often test out new material on the road and then head into the studio when the tour ends to record it. What if we approached conference panels with something similar in mind? What if a productive conversation didn't stop at the sound of polite clapping but instead found new form as a book? Writers and editors from past AWP panels discuss the unique paths that led them from working out ideas in public to collaborative publishing projects, including edited collections and coauthored books.

3:20 PM – 4:35 PM EST

**T197. Cave Canem Presents: POETS LAUREATE!**

Dante Micheaux, Regie Gibson, Curtis L. Crisler,  
Jacqueline Trimble, Natalie Graham  
Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Poetry Readings

A poet laureate is an individual honored with that title and who often has published collections of poems, critically acclaimed performances, a résumé decorated with literary awards. A less-discussed attribute is that they are usually selected by their peers and/or geosocial groups for the contributions they make to their respective communities. Hear Curtis Crisler, Regie Gibson, Natalie Graham, and Jacqueline Trimble read their poems and discuss their projects and tenures as poets laureate.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **T198. Writing the Things We Don't Talk About: A Lecture By Ramona Emerson**

Ramona Emerson

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category:

As a writer, we always tackle things that are difficult to confront. But in Native communities, the things we are told not to share are even more consequential and can have ramifications far beyond our page. In this lecture we will talk about writing about those things that we are told not to talk about. Taboos, ceremonies, teachings - how do we navigate these topics without revealing too much? How does tackling these issues translate to the page?

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**T199. A New Series Heroine & the Comedy of Chaos: Jaycee Grayson Live & Unfiltered**

Thelma Vickroy, Julie Ann Sipos

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Readings

From a billion-dollar corporate takedown to a girls' guide to offing the old man, Jaycee Grayson isn't just satire—she's a live event that bites back. Join an IPPY gold medalist and former Mattel exec gone rogue for a roundtable so fearless it feels like underground comedy. BookLife (Editor's Pick) hails this indie debut as "a cross between *Firefly Lane* and *Quite a Year for Plums*." Expect quips, candy, merch, and a showstopping preorder reveal from a woman-owned micropress that isn't here to play.

## **T200. Improbable Pedagogies: Workshop-Based Approaches to Teaching Speculative Fiction**

Benjamin Warner, Ron Tanner, Emrys Donaldson, Elizabeth DeMeo, Hannah Eko  
Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel explores teaching speculative fiction through workshops and exercises. The panel examines how in-class writing and peer feedback foster critical engagement with genre conventions like world-building and characterization. Drawing on their experience as writers and educators, presenters offer new pedagogical frameworks blending genre analysis with creative practice to help students develop their voice and engage with real-world issues through imaginative storytelling.

## **T201. Whose Story Is It Anyway? A Framework for Writing (or Not Writing) the “Other”**

Carol Mitchell, Miranda Schmidt, Rebecca Burke, Rone Shavers, Carole Bell

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Increasingly, literature written about marginalized groups to which the author does not belong is called out as inauthentic and exploitative. This backlash is often justified. But what do we lose if authors (both of minority and majority groups) write only from the lens of their public positionality? On this panel, authors, editors, and critics explore these issues and discuss a framework for writing (or not writing) experiences stemming from an identity that is not the author’s own.

## **T202. Jewish Writers Caucus**

Jessica Jacobs, Josh Rolnick, Lauren Grodstein,  
Margot Singer

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Caucus

The Jewish Writers Caucus will invite writers to meet each other, discuss challenges and opportunities, share resources, and compile suggestions for how AWP can better include and support Jewish writers, all in a space of community welcoming to Jews of all denominations, degrees of religious engagement, races, ethnicities, sexualities, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and political affiliations. Organized by Yetzirah: A Hearth for Jewish Poetry, in affiliation with the Jewish Book Council.

**T203. Failed! Honest Talk About Failure & the Writing Life**

Paisley Rekdal, Carol Edgarian, Beth Ann Fennelly, Rick Barot  
Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Failure shapes the writer's life, with powerful, surprising results. Whether it's a rejected book, an unfinished draft, a grant or job that won't materialize, or the failures of genre, disappointment shapes our creative trajectory. In a culture that fetishizes success, how do we metabolize failure? What are the pitfalls and opportunities of creative defeat? Carol Edgarian, Beth Ann Fennelly, Rick Barot, and Paisley Rekdal engage in an open conversation about failure within a long career.

**T204. Narrative Constellations: Exploring the Boundaries of the Novel-in-Stories**

Cynthia Reeves, Michael Martone, Rachel Cantor, Laura Bonazzoli, Sidik Fofana  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Novels-in-stories create layered, novelistic worlds through linkages ranging from traditional to experimental. This panel explores the novel-in-stories as constellation, from building classic connections among stories through character, theme, object, and setting to yield a unified whole, to pushing the boundaries of bridging “pieces” that may or may not stand alone. Panelists discuss how the novel-in-stories differs from a story collection or novel, and unravel the form’s many possibilities.

**T205. A Collaborative Book Launch: From Contract to Successful Release**

Kevin Atticks, Deborah Jayne, Katey Schultz, Jessie Glenn

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Baltimore publisher Kevin Atticks heads up the student-run Apprentice House Press at Loyola University. In this panel, writers get a bird's-eye view of the collaboration between the author, publisher, and publicity team. How are jobs divided up? How much control does the author have over various aspects of the collaboration, and what is the publisher's responsibility? What types of marketing are typically done by an external publicist versus a marketing and events specialist versus a publisher?

**T206. Anti-Racist Pedagogy: Creative Writing Workshops at Community Colleges (Pt. III)**

Shinelle L. Espaillat, Gail Upchurch-Mills, Jeremy Broyles, Keith O'Neill, Rashaun Allen

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

How do panelists center voices of students from underrepresented groups and teach published work from underrepresented groups? Panelists will share best practices and discuss the mechanics of leading anti-racist discussions within the academy. They will also discuss the tensions between art for art's sake and art that's socially conscious. What are the challenges? What are the rewards? What do panelists consider when creating the course?

**T207. Say My Name, Say My Name: Reclaiming Identity in the Face of Violence**

Jenny Molberg, Jameelah Lang, Courtney Faye Taylor, Felicia Zamora, Meg Day

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Five writers across genres explore the power and problem of naming as an act of craft—how names inform identity, claim space, and carry histories. Panelists will explore nuances of choosing whether and how to name. They confront and complicate the power structures of familial naming, indigenous naming, multilingual naming, queer naming, trans naming, and the empowerment of naming perpetrators of violence. They navigate how naming, as artistic tool and cultural terrain, can resist erasure.

### **T208. How International Writers Can Build Successful Literary Careers Post-MFA**

Li Zhuang, Li Zhuang, Farooz Rather, Weijia Pan, Hera Naguib

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

International students in creative writing programs face unique challenges: Beyond navigating cultural and language barriers, they are faced with issues related to legal status and job uncertainties after the MFA. In this panel, writers from China, Pakistan, and Kashmir share post-MFA career advice focusing on four key areas: applying to creative writing PhD programs, residencies, and fellowships; securing teaching positions; and building publishing careers.

### **T209. “Pop Quiz, Hotshot”: Why Pop Culture Matters in Our Writing**

Melissa Fite Johnson, Gary Jackson, Leah Umansky, W. Todd Kaneko, Maria Zoccola  
Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Writers are often dissuaded from including pop culture in their work; many internalize the notion that incorporating it excludes readers and keeps their work from being timeless. But often the opposite is true—pop culture connects us, gives us shared experiences. The movies, shows, music, sports, and books we grow up with are how we learn to understand ourselves and the world. As for the timeless argument, isn't it better to root our stories in a time and place? For our work to be time capsules?

## **T210. Swirl & Vortex: A Celebration of Larry Levis**

David St. John, Mai Der Vang, Carolyn Forché,  
John Murillo, Kevin Young

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Tributes

The poetry of Larry Levis increasingly occupies a legendary place among poets, teachers, and readers. Over his career, his poetic lines broadened to accommodate the cinematic aperture of his observations on American empire, poverty, landscape, migrant workers, political violence, addiction, and art. Five contemporary poets will celebrate and read from Levis's poetry to mark Levis's eightieth year, thirty years since his death, and the long-awaited publication of his collected poems.

**T211. Use Your Outside Voice! Why We Write for Children in the Era of Book Challenges**

Ali Terese, Ashley Granillo, Nashae Jones, MEG KUYATT, Erin Becker

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

PEN has tracked more than 16K book bans since 2021. The American Library Association saw 821 censorship attempts in 2024. With the fraught side of children's lit in the news, this panel of middle grade authors will tell a different story: the joyful, intriguing, and artistically energizing side of writing for kids. They'll share ways to apply literary craft to the children's market—and vice versa—and make the case that writing for young people is worth it despite (or because of?) the challenges.

## **T212. AI & the Editor: Redefining Writer-Editor Collaboration**

Christina M. Frey, Linda Ruggeri, Tenesha Curtis,  
Katherine Pickett

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional  
Development

In the AI era, many writers are asking how tools like Grammarly or ChatGPT fit into their creative workflow. What's the right balance between digital assistance and editorial partnership? This panel brings together four editor-authors to explore the evolving intersection of human editing and artificial intelligence in the writing process. Panelists outline how AI tools can support the writing journey without replacing the human elements of voice, judgment, and emotional nuance.

**T213. Not an MFA 2.0: Navigating Scholar-Writer Identity in the Creative Writing PhD**

Jane Kalu, Ariel Katz, Clancy Tripp, Arah Ko, Daniel Barnum

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

The creative writing PhD is often misunderstood as MFA 2.0. More than a space to grow creatively, the PhD demands fluency in academic language and critical theory. These pressures can intensify impostor syndrome, particularly for students navigating institutional definitions of “rigor” and “critical studies,” which are shaped by race, class, and cultural assumptions. This panel invites a candid conversation about the realities of the CW PhD and how we might redefine the scholar-writer identity.

**T213A. Global Words in a Time of Crisis:**

***Guernica, Adi & Aster(ix) in Dialogue***

Nimmi Gowrinathan, Adriana Ramírez, Michael Archer, Genevieve Hartman

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

In uncertain times, how can more inclusive, unconventional, and international stories combat fear of the “other” and build community? Four literary organizations share their experiences publishing “global majority” writers over the years, touching on what writing from the Global South can teach readers in the West; the challenges and rewards of soliciting work from the grassroots; strategies for combining good politics with good prose; and literature’s role as a form of political resistance.

**T214. Authoritarians in the Lusophone World:  
Models of Opposition for American Writing**

Chris Arnold, Casey Walker, Oona Patrick,  
Ananda Lima, Lee Santos Silva

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

At a time when art and free expression are under attack in the US and around the world,

writers need to find new ways to make their voices heard. Artists from the Lusophone world offer inspiring models for resistance, and this panel will look at work from Brazil, Portugal, and Cabo Verde in search of strategies of defiance, opposition, and obstinacy in the face of authoritarianism.

**T215. It's More than the Pencils: How Baltimore Writer-Educators Protect Literacy**

Ashley Elizabeth, Kerry Graham, Wallace Lane, Katia Ulysse

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Literacy is a life skill and human right long denied to Black, Brown, and low-income communities. In Baltimore, where literacy rates fall below the national average, youth are criticized and criminalized for systemic failures beyond their control. Hear lessons learned by

four Baltimore-based secondary educators and writers working to strengthen literacy in their classrooms and beyond.

## **T216. Dorothy Allison: Breaking Down Barriers for Women Writers**

Luanne Smith, Carmen Machado, Lily Burana,  
Connie May Fowler

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Tributes

Writer Dorothy Allison, recently passed, broke through barriers for all writers, but women writers in particular. She deserves both celebration and remembrance. Through her work, she led the way for us to openly portray living in poverty, owning our sexuality, speaking freely about our desires and sex, and discussing, without flinching, abuse. Allison taught us to speak truths in our work about the lives of so many women, the women on this

panel included. We owe her thanks and hope to honor her.

## **T217. ADHD & the Writer: Strategies to Harness Your Superpower**

Christina Chiu, Shelly Sanders, Robin Black, Marcus Burke

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writing happens to be one of the most challenging tasks for many people with ADHD, and yet, you choose it for a reason—you're amazing at it! Even still, it's frustrating to miss deadlines, and it's tough to find motivation when you feel like you're lugging a fifty-pound backpack. These award-winning authors share strategies that transform their ADHD "deficit" into a superstrength. Come to listen, learn, and troubleshoot strategies for success.

## **T218. Crafting Trans Horror: Authors on Crossing Gender & Genre**

Cavar Sarah, M. M. Olivas, Luna Rey Hall, Nic Anstett, Zefyr Lisowski

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This event will feature trans authors of horror fiction discussing common themes, craft advice, and political stakes of writing trans horror in an increasingly anti-trans social milieu. Authors will get the opportunity to read excerpts of current and recent projects, discussing their relationships to conventional horror tropes (many of which rely on the specter of transness without regard for trans personhood) and how our work challenges, destabilizes, and reinvents them.

5:00 PM – 6:15 PM EST

## **T219. Sober AWP**

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Daily 12-Step Meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

## **T220. LGBTQ Writers Caucus**

Erin Sharkey, Davi Gray

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

The LGBTQ Writers Caucus provides a space for writers who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer to network and discuss common issues and challenges, such as representation and visibility on and off the literary page, and how to incorporate one's personal identity into their professional and academic lives. The caucus also strives to

discuss, develop, and increase queer representation for future AWP conferences and serve as a supportive community and resource for its members.

## **T221. Two-Year College Creative Writing Caucus**

Stephanie M. Lindberg, Regina Peters, Magin  
LaSov Gregg, Mary Lannon

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Caucus

Do you teach at a two-year college? Interested in job opportunities at two-year colleges? Join us for our annual networking meeting. With almost half of all students starting at two-year colleges, and increasing numbers of MFAs landing two-year college teaching jobs, the future of creative writing courses and programs at our campuses looks bright. We will discuss teaching creative writing at the two-year

college, hold a short business meeting, and provide tangible resources.

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM EST

**T222. Writer to Writer Mentorship Program  
Reception**

Baltimore Ballroom A, Fifth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

Celebrate twenty-two wonderful seasons of the Writer to Writer Mentorship Program! Former mentors and mentees are invited for a reunion and celebration. Bring a plus one, mingle with fellow participants and AWP staff, and enjoy a drink and some light fare.

**T223. AWP HBCU Fellowship Program  
Reception**

Baltimore Ballroom B, Fifth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

Celebrate the AWP HBCU Fellowship Program's fourth year at the reception, where you can enjoy refreshments, meet the #AWP26 faculty and student fellows, and hear from this year's creative advisor, MK Asante.

### **T224. University of Cincinnati Creative Writing Program Reception**

Federal Hill Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Please join faculty, alumni, students, and friends of the University of Cincinnati's Creative Writing Program for complimentary food and drinks. Prospective students are welcome.

### **T224A. Meet the 2026 Trio House Press Authors!**

Homeland Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Join Trio House Press authors and editors for hors d'oeuvres and beverages at the Renaissance Marriott. The first twenty attendees will receive a free 2026 title, and books will be available for sale and signing by the authors.

**T225. *Callaloo*: Celebrating Fifty Years of Black Excellence**

Fells Point Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Come celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of *Callaloo*, the premier literary journal for African diaspora arts and letters. Meet editors and contributors, raise a glass to *Callaloo's* storied past, and learn about opportunities to be involved in its future.

**T225A. Gaudy Boy & Kaya Press Reception**

Guilford Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Publishers of the Asian Pacific diaspora, Gaudy Boy and Kaya Press come together from both coasts of the United States to honor their award-winning authors (California Book Awards, Lambda Literary Awards, etc.) and celebrate their most recent titles. Relax with our publishers, editors, authors, and supporters over hors d'oeuvres and drinks at the end of a long conference day. All are welcome!

**T226. Hollins University MFA Reception**

St. George Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Reception for Hollins University alums, current students, faculty, and prospective students.

**T227. An Evening with Saturnalia Books**

Gibson Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Join Saturnalia Books editorial staff, authors, and friends for a celebration of our writers.

**T227A. VCCA Fellows & Friends Gathering**

Kent Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA) has hosted more than seven thousand writers, visual artists, and composers for artist residencies since its founding in 1971. VCCA fellows and anyone interested in the VCCA community are invited to join us for a casual reunion and reception.

6:30 PM – 7:45 PM EST

**T228. Indigenous Aboriginal American Writers  
Caucus**

Abigail Chabitnoy, M.S. RedCherries, Mary  
Leauna Christensen

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

Indigenous writers and scholars participate fluidly in AWP by teaching and directing affiliated programs, working as independent writers/scholars, working in language revitalization, and working in local community programming. Annually imparting field-related craft, pedagogy, celebrations, and concerns as understood by Indigenous-Native writers from the Americas and surrounding island nations is necessary. Essential program development continues in 2026.

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM EST

**T229. #AWP26 Keynote Address by John Waters, Sponsored by Johns Hopkins University**

Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

John Waters has written and directed sixteen movies including *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble*, *Polyester*, *Hairspray*, *Cry Baby*, *Serial Mom*, and *A Dirty Shame*. Both *Pink Flamingos* and *Hairspray* have been added to the U.S. Library of Congress' National Film Registry.

He is the author of ten books: *Shock Value*, *Crackpot*, *Pink Flamingos and Other Trash*, *Hairspray*, *Female Trouble and Multiple Maniacs*, *Art: A Sex Book* (co-written with Bruce Hainley), *Role Models*, *Carsick*, *Make Trouble*, *Mr. Know-It-All*, and in 2022 his first novel, *Liarmouth: A Feel Bad Romance*. *Liarmouth* was optioned by Village Roadshow Pictures for John to write the screenplay adaptation and direct the movie.

Picador will publish six of Waters' screenplays as individual editions in 2025: *Pink Flamingos*, *Flamingos Forever*, and *Desperate Living in May*, and *Multiple Maniacs*, *Female Trouble*, and *Hairspray* in mid-October.

[Read John Waters' full bio.](#)

*Please note that photography and recording are strictly prohibited at this event. The event will be live streamed to registered attendees for 30 days post-conference and will not be made available later.*

Doors open 7:30 p.m. We anticipate this will be a popular event and encourage you to arrive when doors open! We will be cutting off access when Ballroom I reaches capacity. An overflow room will be available in Ballroom II.

This event will include live captioning and ASL interpretation.

John Waters will be signing books after the Keynote Address outside of the ballroom. To enter signing line, at least one item must be purchased that evening from Atomic Books.

# Friday, March 6, 2026

7:30 AM – 8:45 AM EST

## **F100. Sober AWP**

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Daily 12-Step Meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST

## **F101. Conference Registration**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in the Charles Street

Lobby, Baltimore Convention Center, Level 100. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. Students must present a valid student ID to check in or register at our student rate. Seniors must present a valid ID to check in or register at our senior rate. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

### **F101A. First Aid**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

First Aid is located in the Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

### **F102. Dickinson Quiet Space**

Room 303, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

A dedicated quiet space for you to collect your thoughts, unwind, and escape the literary commotion. “There is a solitude of space, / A solitude of sea, / A solitude of death, but these / Society shall be, / Compared with that profounder site, / That polar privacy, / A Soul admitted to Itself: / Finite Infinity.” —Emily Dickinson

### **F102A. Coat Check**

Room 304, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Coat check is available in room 304 on Level 300 of the Baltimore Convention Center. Coat check will not accept purses or laptops. \$3.00 per item checked. No cash, only credit card and digital payment accepted.

### **F103. Low-Light Space**

Room 305, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

A darkened, quiet, and more private space for attendees to gather their thoughts, reset, or take a break from the lighting of the Convention Center.

### **F104. Lactation Lounge**

Room 306, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

The lactation lounge is located in room 306 of the Baltimore Convention Center and is available for any nursing parent to use.

Women's restroom in Charles Street Lobby, Level 100 also includes a nursing area.

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM EST

**F105. Author Portraits by Adrienne Mathiowetz Photography**

Room 313, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Stop being embarrassed by your author photo! A great portrait is not only flattering, but also actively invites your audience to get to know you and your work. Returning for a seventh year at AWP, author photographer Adrienne Mathiowetz will be offering twenty-minute studio sessions on-site. See your proof gallery of images immediately; any portrait you choose will be fully processed and digitally delivered in high res for \$175. (Conference discount: Studio hour-long author portrait sessions with one image included are usually priced at \$1,050.)

Put your best face forward on websites, book covers, social media, and published interviews. Advanced sign-up is required with a \$50 retainer fee (covers our session preparation communication and can be applied toward your first image).

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM EST

**F106. Yoga for Writers**

Room 311, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Join writer Manisha Sharma, an Iowa State University professor and internationally certified yoga and meditation expert for twenty-eight years. Start your day with 9:00–10:00 a.m. yoga, calm your mind, unleash creativity, and build concentration. It will include stretching and breathing and conclude with a ten-minute guided meditation relaxation to build awareness. Arrive wearing comfortable street clothes; mats and yoga apparel are not necessary. For more, visit [Manisha-Sharma.com/Yoga.html](http://Manisha-Sharma.com/Yoga.html)

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM EST

## **F107. Ask An Agent Anything, Sponsored by AWP**

Regina Brooks, Maeve MacLysaght, Nicole Cunningham, Kayla Lightner, Heather Carr  
Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Ever wonder what literary agents *really* look for in a query? Or how they decide which projects to take on? Join us for this candid conversation among a panel of literary agents answering your questions about everything from submissions and publishing trends to representation and more. Whether you're seeking representation or are just curious about how the industry works, this is a rare opportunity to hear directly from the experts.

All questions must be submitted in advance via the #AWP26 Ask an Agent Anything form. The

deadline to submit a question is Wednesday, February 18, 2026.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**F108. Pages On-Beat: Rhythm & Prose: A  
Lecture by MK Asante**

MK Asante

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

MK Asante, bestselling author, award-winning filmmaker, recording artist, and distinguished professor, takes us on a personal journey into polyrhythmic storytelling.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**F109. Flashes of Truth: A Celebration & Examination of the Flash Essay Form**

Rae Pagliarulo, Ira Sukrungruang, Jane Wong,  
Lilly Dancyger

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

So much more than “short essays,” flash nonfiction has its own conventions, challenges, and advantages—experience compressed into a single white-hot image or moment, with no space to hide in overexplanation or exposition. In this panel, five writers and editors of flash will dig into the particularities of this unique form: how to decide which experiences are best suited to flash, how to get in and out of a story in under one thousand words, and how to make every one of those words pull its weight.

## **F110. On the Ethics of Writing Violence: A Roundtable Discussion**

Julija Sukys, David Griffith, Krystal Sital, Wes Jamison

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Four writers of nonfiction speak from experience to reflect on: how to write ethically about abjection, humiliation, self-harm, and suicide; accepting the risks of exposure to disturbing images and documents; ways of contending with the difficulties and ethics of writing about violence against children; weathering familial and community fallout from truth-telling, such as disclosing domestic violence; and remaining vigilant regarding the dangers of appropriating or exploiting tragedy and the dead.

**F111. Rooted & Rising: Comunidad Latina  
Literary Kinship in the DC/Maryland Scene**

Ofelia Montelongo, Lupita Aquino, Patricia  
Coral, Lorena Ortiz, Anna Lopera

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional  
Development

Rooted in the DC/Maryland literary scene, this panel brings together Latina writers who've built a creative kinship through mutual aid, mentorship, and craft. We explore how the local community sustains us in a field that often isolates us, and how editing each other's work, amplifying platforms, and sharing cultural language have helped us survive and thrive. This is a conversation about radical literary care, place-based solidarity, and writing beyond competition.

## **F112. No Pants? No Problem: “Planners” Share Their Outlining Processes**

Brian Gresko, Sakinah Hofler, Elizabeth Austin, Courtney Maum, Miranda Beverly-Whittemore  
Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Legend says there are two types of writers: “pantsers” (who write by the seat of their pants), and us, the “planners.” Our outline-loving presenters, with a collective fifteen published books, work in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, playwriting, anthology, and translation. We’ll share the details of our diverse, self-honed processes, including: drawing, diagramming, plot “highways” that allow for “off-roading,” and open first drafts leading to beat sheets. Plus our love of art supplies!

## **F113. Growth spurts: How Parenting Changes Poetics**

Conor Bracken, Camille Dungy, Erika Meitner,  
Katie Condon, Blas Falconer

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Parenting, like revision, has a way of clarifying what matters. Lucille Clifton, talking about her roles of parent and poet, once said “[h]aving the most spic-and-span house wasn’t that high on the list.” To write and to parent means making choices, often about what to privilege and what to let slide, whether that’s with discipline or chores, but also lineation and imagery. In this panel, five poets will discuss how parenting influences the choices they make in composing their poems and why.

## **F114. Marketing Your Book on a Shoestring**

Thaddeus Rutkowski, William Burleson, Gloria Mindock, Diane Goettel, Linda Kleinbub  
Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

How can you get the word out on a new book when you have a limited budget? Small press publishers explain how to generate visibility at low cost. This discussion covers setting up readings and interviews; finding book reviewers; and getting books into stores, libraries, and classrooms. Also on the agenda are new-media options such as blogs and social platforms, as well as digital retailers and book clubs. Panelists are independent publishers who have developed successful marketing strategies.

**F115. The Art & Craft of the Craft Book**

Heidi Czerwiec, Jehanne Dubrow, Matt Bell, Jason Schneiderman, Gayle Brandeis

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

While we often think of craft books as dry, didactic documents, they can be provocative, engaging, and even fun. Five writers from across genres will discuss their experiences writing such texts and address questions like: How might craft essays and lectures evolve into book-length projects? How do you develop an imaginative thesis and a creative structure? How do you overcome self-doubt and trust in the authority of your voice? And how do you make craft appealing to the reader?

**F116. Words from the Deep, Dark Woods:  
Using Fairy Tales as Foil & Fuse**

Elline Lipkin, Emily Perez, Kate Bernheimer,  
Oliver de la Paz, Jessica Stark

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

As cultural touchstones, fairy tales and myths provide fertile creative ground. Leveraging their known settings, characters, and story arcs, writers can slip into ekphrasis, persona, narrative, and more. This panel will offer examples and prompts from poets and prose writers of diverse cultural backgrounds who have used tales and myths to process grief; explore emigration and culture; and question gender, power, and neurodivergence, while using the familiar as a palimpsest to write something new.

**F117. Finding Wild Anywhere: Bring Your Writing Workshop Outdoors**

Travis Mossotti, Sheila McMullin, Genevieve Wall, Becca Rose Hall, Erin Robertson

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Leave the classroom behind and write with the living world. Educators teaching outdoors across the country share inclusive, adaptive approaches that support students of all ages and abilities in connecting with land, community, and self. Through practical strategies and interactive discussion, explore how writing with wind, water, and weeds fosters belonging, builds climate literacy, and anchors creativity in sensory experiences, offering a grounded, AI-proof path to more authentic expression.

**F118. Why Do We Write? A Multidisciplinary Exploration of Our Initial Drive to Write**

Elisa Gabbert, Robert Pinsky, Lloyd Schwartz, Ellen Pinsky, Sigrid Nunez

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

From literary, psychological, and interdisciplinary perspectives, this panel explores the impulses that drive writers to the page. Contributors reflect on how their desire to write took shape across different life stages—childhood, education, and professional experiences—and how these origins continue to shape their craft and purpose today. Drawing on memoir, fiction, poetry, and psychoanalytic and critical work, this conversation interrogates the complex forces behind our creative beginnings.

**F119. Architectures of FuturoPasados & Untouchable Voices: *Manoa* Reading & Discussion**

Siobhan Ting, Subramanian Shankar, Anthony  
Cody, Anushiya Ramaswamy, Heidi Rhodes  
Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

*Manoa Journal's* two most recent issues explore speaking truth to power through writing from the Latinx diaspora spread across the Americas and Dalit (formerly “untouchable”) literature from India in translation. Though widely separated in historical contexts, both issues highlight experimentation in form and language in writing from the social margins. Through readings and conversation, the event will explore the expression of marginalized identities in creative works.

**F120. The Watering Hole Poetry Reading**

Candace Wiley, Ajanae Dawkins, Brittany  
Rogers, Edward Mabrey, Gabriel Ramirez

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

This reading celebrates the Southern written and oral traditions of poets of color. Featuring fellows of the Watering Hole, this reading showcases the depth and range of TWH's vibrant community, which has over three hundred fellows and more than one thousand program participants. Founded in 2013, TWH is transforming the literary landscape of the US South.

**F121. Lessons Learned: What the Short Story Can Do for the Novel**

Annell Lopez, Deesha Philyaw, Lydi Conklin, Marguerite Sheffer, Camille Acker

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

We often find ourselves drawn to the novel, which, in its expansiveness, can offer endless possibilities for character development and plot. However, the short story's conciseness, velocity, and depth can be invaluable. This panel explores what the short story form can do for the novel from the perspectives of short story writers navigating long-form fiction.

## **F122. Beauty vs. Fidelity: The Poetry**

### **Translator's Gamble**

Barbara Hamby, Ariel Francisco, Dzvinia

Orlowsky, Silvia Valisa, Andrea Jurjevic

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention

Center

Event Category: Translation

What makes a great translation of poetry? Is it an accurate transcription of language, or transfer of tone, image, and poetic sensibility? In spring 2025, Silvia Valisa and Barbara Hamby organized a graduate seminar at Florida State

University to explore this question. They invited nine experienced translators to share their work. Some of those poet/translators join this panel to examine the tension between accuracy and poetic transcendence and what informed their decisions.

**F123. A Laboratory for Innovative Storytelling:  
The Goucher MFA in Nonfiction**

Randon Noble, Neda Semnani, Amrita  
Sengupta, Sheri Booker

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

The Goucher MFA in Nonfiction—one of the only programs nationally to solely focus on nonfiction—teaches students to write with the power and elegance of literature and the depth and clarity of fact. Since the program’s founding in 1997, its alumni have published over three hundred books, some of which have won

awards and been named on national best books lists. One faculty member joins two graduates and a current student to read from past and current work, exploring the depth and importance of the nonfiction genre.

**F124. Twenty Years of PoemoftheWeek.com**

Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum, Monica Prince,  
Brian Turner, Lee Herrick, Lauren Camp  
Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Founded in 2006 by Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum, PoemoftheWeek.com was one of the first online anthologies dedicated to sharing and promoting the best in contemporary poetry. Now, after twenty years, POW is coming to print. *Twenty Years of PoemoftheWeek.com* will be the first major collection to showcase the evolving voice of twenty-first-century American poetry. Join us for a special

celebration of POW's twenty-year legacy with a reading by a diverse and dynamic lineup of award-winning and emerging poets.

**F125. Even Strange Ghosts Can Be Shared: A Roundtable on the Legacy of Jack Spicer**

Daniel Benjamin, Hoa Nguyen, Chris Nealon, Ariana Reines, Maria Damon

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Tributes

A key figure of the San Francisco Renaissance, poet Jack Spicer (1925–1965) forged a poetics of queer resistance, mysticism, and linguistic subversion. This roundtable celebrates the 2025 centenary of Spicer's birth and the recent publication of *Even Strange Ghosts Can Be Shared: The Collected Letters of Jack Spicer* (Wesleyan, 2025). In a roundtable including critical reflection and dialogue, poets and scholars discuss Spicer's influence on

experimental poetics and queer literary practice.

## **F126. From Page to Podcast: Amplify Your Writing Career on the Mic**

Amanda Montell, Kate Kennedy, Nora McInerney, Melissa Lozada-Oliva

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

In a publishing landscape that requires writers to wear countless hats, podcasting has become one of the most powerful tools that authors, journalists, novelists, memoirists, and poets can use to expand their reach and take creative control of their careers. This panel on “podcasting for writers” demystifies how to launch a podcast that empowers writers to promote their work, build an audience, develop

valuable professional skills, and even bring in a new income stream.

## **F127. Poetry & the Sacred**

James Davis May, Jared Har el, Megan Pinto,  
Hayan Charara, Philip Metres

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Daily news reports and think pieces describe how institutions are under attack and how things that were once considered sacred are no longer revered. The profane seems to be threatening both secular and religious ideals ranging from habeas corpus to empathy. For as long as we've had notions of the sacred, we've turned to poetry to help us find and define it. In this panel, poets from multiple religious and secular perspectives will discuss how their work connects to the sacred.

## **F128. No Más Promesas: Protest & Power**

Dorsía Smith Silva, Jennifer Maritza McCauley,

Vincent Toro, Kimberly Reyes

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention

Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

This multigenre reading by acclaimed writers with Puerto Rican connections focuses on writing in these precarious times and protests against oppression and US colonialism. What does the path of protest writing look like as a transformative experience and collective action? How can writers develop literary strategies to reframe resistance? How do we teach protest writing and craft? Our reading will explore how our words galvanize communities and address the relationship between protest and power.

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST

## **F129. AWP Bookfair**

Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

With more than 650 literary exhibitors, the AWP Bookfair is the largest of its kind. A great way to meet authors, critics, and peers, the bookfair also provides excellent opportunities to find information about many literary magazines, presses, and organizations. Please consult the bookfair map in the AWP mobile app for location details.

### **F129A. Concessions**

Baltimore Convention Center

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in the Baltimore Convention Center in the Charles Street Lobby and AWP Bookfair on Level 100 and at the Market Fresh Café on Level 300. No cash, only credit card and digital payment are

accepted at all food and beverage locations.  
Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app  
for location details.

10:35 AM – 11:50 AM EST

**F130. Toward a Liberatory Literature:  
Palestinian Writers in Conversation, Sponsored  
by Kundiman**

Leena Aboutaleb, Sarah Aziza, Fargo Nissim  
Tbakhi

Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

The struggle for liberation in Palestine and the  
genocide in Gaza have galvanized the world and  
reignited long-standing conversations around  
the global struggle for liberation. Join  
Kundiman for this special reading and  
conversation featuring Palestinian writers Sarah

Aziza and Fargo Nissim Tbakhi. This panel will discuss the role of writers in displaced diaspora communities, how literature can disrupt narratives of empire and colonialism, and the histories of cross-community solidarities.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**F131. Poet Community Leaders: A Letras Latinas Reading & Discussion**

Cloud Delfina Cardona, Brenda Cardenas, Karla Cordero, Raina Leon

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

When you are active in your local literary community, how do you carve out time to

maintain a writing practice? After reading from their work, the poet laureate of Wisconsin, the cofounder of a vibrant reading series in Philadelphia, and the executive director of a community-based literary organization in California will share insights on the challenges of balancing their artistic practice while also serving their local communities.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

### **F132. Contemporary Disability Poetry**

Stephen Kuusisto, Anne Kaier, Nathan Spoon,  
Lisa M. Dougherty

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

For the past four years, Nine Mile Press has been publishing books by disabled poets supported through a grant from the Propel Foundation. We believe American readers need to hear disability voices. This bookfair reading will showcase three disabled poets whose books have just been published through the Propel Disability Poetry Series.

**F133. Conjuring Home: Women of Color on Exile, Borders & Belonging**

Sabina Khan-Ibarra, Eirinie Carson, Grace Prasad, TARA DORABJI

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

What does it mean to make a home in a world shaped by displacement? These writers tell stories about immigration, exile, colonization, and family rupture, while still reaching for hope,

joy, and wholeness. Our writing travels across borders—literal and imagined—asking, How do we build home when land, memory, and language have been taken or lost? We'll address the complexities of writing through contradictions—grief, beauty, rage, and tenderness—while celebrating diasporic voices in American literature.

**F134. Said & Unsaid: Crafting Silence in Poetry**

Allison Adair, Gabrielle Bates, Sandra Lim,  
Randall Mann

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Of the poet's tools, Li-Young Lee praises the "different colors and shades" of silence, while Jane Hirshfield calls intersections of language and silence "thresholds" for the "marriage of said and unsaid." This panel explores the craft of silences: pauses, line breaks, blank space,

hesitation, disruption, and implication. Using models from their own and others' work, panelists reveal how silences shape poems, heighten consciousness, manage risks of miscommunication, and counteract daily chatter.

### **F135. Pan-African Diaspora Caucus**

Olivia Springer, Travis Trusty, Shakira Smith  
Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Caucus

The Pan-African Diaspora Caucus is a safe gathering space for writers who are creating and advocating for excellence, literary craft, and the overall future of Black authorship.

### **F136. Teaching Writing Despite “AI”: The Noncoercive Rearranging of Desire**

Shana Youngdahl, Arisa White, Kate Schapira,  
Eireann Lorsung

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Here, experienced teachers respond to ethical, artistic, and human questions that the normalization of LLMs brings to writing education. How can we prioritize process over product, and center human creativity and engagement with the world? How can we design work away from the screen, or help our students move away from it? We will detail strategies for reminding our students that process is the aim of education, and writing invites the full presence of ourselves in the world.

**F137. Editors as Brand Builders: How Lit Mags Use Branding to Express Their Missions, Sponsored by CLMP**

Lexi Rosen, Aaron Burch, Jeremy  
Schraffenberger, Rita Mookerjee, Michelle  
Carrigan  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Publishing, Editing &  
Technology

Join the editors of five literary magazines for a discussion about scaling and sustaining publications through successful branding. This panel will also explore the reciprocal relationship between how the distinct look and feel of a literary magazine shapes and is shaped by its contributors and readers. Whether you're a magazine founder, submitter, or reader, you'll walk away with an understanding of how literary magazines' branding informs their curation process.

**F138. Double Exposure: Writing, Submitting & Publishing in Literary/Mainstream Outlets**

Estelle Erasmus, Dionne Ford, Dennis Sweeney,  
Katie Robinson

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests &  
Marketing

What separates an essay destined for *The Sun*, *Electric Literature*, or *Fourth Genre* from one accepted at *The New York Times* or *The Cut*? In this candid, strategy-driven conversation, a panel of literary and mainstream editors, submissions experts, and hybrid writers break down the gap between these two worlds—and how writers can bridge it. We'll share real submission examples, pitching tips, and behind-the-scenes intel on what editors rarely say out loud.

**F139. Battle for Authenticity: Two-Year College Strategies to Resist AI in the Classroom**

Simone Zelitch, Kathryn Kysar, Jessi Lewis, April Gibson, Regina Peters  
Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Pedagogy

AI poses unique challenges for two-year colleges. Many of our students believe Chat GPT sounds “smarter” than they could ever be, and institutions focused on workforce development see AI as inevitable. In this panel, creative writing instructors from colleges across the country present strategies that move beyond AI policing, building trust and pushing our first-generation, BIPOC, and immigrant students to subvert cultural expectations, and to value their own messy, magnificent voices.

**F140. Picture Writing Inside Out: Four Women on Making Comics**

Jesse Lee Kercheval, Kelcey Ervick, Ebony Flowers, AMY KURZWEIL

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

How do words and pictures interact to make something new? Call it sequential arts, graphic novels, cartoons, or comics, four accomplished women authors of books that explore family and friends, women's sports, immigration, and AI discuss how experimentation with words and pictures transforms storytelling practices, with a focus on the possibilities for writers with little to no training in the visual arts. Panelists will share their work, career path, and possible futures for graphic narrative.

**F141. Anti-Grammar & Other Upside-Down Experiments with Syntax & Usage**

Kathryn Nuernberger, Chaun Webster, Mai Der Vang, Douglas Kearney

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In praise of prepositions over verbs, commas over periods, this run-on sentence panel will revel in multiplicities and elisions of meaning. *Grammar* shares etymological roots with *grimoire* and indeed words arranged in a particular way can make magic happen. Against order, polish, and control, we choose grammars with distressed finishes that disarrange common sense. We wonder what it means if, instead of verbs, prepositions (which reveal relationships) are the most potent part of speech.

**F142. Crabs in a Pot, Collaborating: Maryland Arts Organizations Sustaining Together**

Kerry Graham, Emily Ross, Annie Marhefka, Steven Leyva, Tracy Dimond

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

The scalding loss of arts funding is forcing organizations to take measures to maintain their region's cultural infrastructure, resulting in increased requests for support from local and state organizations. Rather than pull each other down in their scramble for survival, some organizations are gaining new strength through collaboration and community engagement. Learn from an array of Maryland-based arts organizations about how they're defying the "crabs in a pot" metaphor to power forward together.

**F143. Beyond the Literary Reading:**

**Performance as Possibility & Community**

Crystal Odelle, Ching-In Chen, Gabrielle Civil, Joss Barton, Ali Gali

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore

Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

Moving off the page and through the body, five multigenre writers activate possibilities for witness, solidarity, and transformation through performance. The panel celebrates performance as a vital leap from the public literary reading, a meeting of form and content that builds community through practices of ritual, generative discomfort, and care.

Panelists within and outside the academy will share and discuss their work to provoke writers toward expansive, liberatory creative practices.

**F144. Coworking Communities: Publishing the  
Literary Magazine with Students**

Kurt Milberger, Amanda Ellard, Karen Babine,  
Caroline Laganas, Austin Tucker

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Staples of education promising to offer professional writing and editorial opportunities, many university literary magazines have been shuttered, downsized, or transformed in recent years. This panel gathers editors, advisors, and students to consider the state of literary magazine publishing in the academy. Together we ask how these programs can evolve to meet the needs of students and readers, how publishing might help buttress humanities programs, and how journals might reach our communities.

**F145. Beyond Platform: Growing a Writing Career Without Relying on Social Media**

Allison Williams, Tonya Todd, Darien Gee, Rebecca Morrison, Jane Friedman

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center  
Event Category: Publishing, Editing &  
Technology

Think you need thousands of followers to build a writing career? This diverse panel of successful multigenre and multiethnic writers, editors, and teachers proves otherwise. We'll discuss strategies for building authentic literary connections, developing our careers through meaningful opportunities, and sharing our work without social media pressure. Learn how literary careers can be built on craft and community, not clicks and shares.

**F146. Game Changer: Literary Queer Sports Writing**

Kasey Peters, Jade Song, John Fram, Holly M. Wendt

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Join four fiction writers in a discussion and celebration of writing queer desire on the field—or in the rink, or in the pool, as it were. Panelists will discuss their treatment of team sports as a theater for gender and sexuality, chosen family, and discipline; the unique implications of unsettling the sports writing landscape; and how to craft the intoxicating, erotic physicality of a good game.

### **F147. Poetry in Translation: Sound & Musicality Around the World, Sponsored by ALTA**

Sergio Waisman, Kristin Dykstra, Anna Deeny Morales, Karen Bishop, Vivek Narayanan  
Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Translation

Can sound and musicality be translated? Taking cues from their translations of poetry from India, Chile, Cuba, Argentina, and Spain, the participants will consider: What happens to sound and musicality as it travels in and through translation? What is the relationship between sound, musicality, voice and memory, identity, race, and gender and sexuality in the translation of poetry?

**F148. Poetry from Nosotros: Bilingual Poetry Craft & Criticism**

Manuel Iris, Jennifer Rathbun, Cristian Gomez, Mauricio Espinoza

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poetry, bilingualism, and identity converge as they resist hegemonic notions and reveal cultural cartographies and collective memories. The bilingual writers on this panel explore how

they write, translate, and share their translingual work. The dialogue will shed light on how language constructs identity and a sense of belonging. They will share opportunities and challenges of bilingualism and reflect upon their experiences in the current cultural environment of the United States.

### **F149. The Third Book of Poetry**

Monica Ferrell, Jennifer Chang, Natalie Eilbert,  
Phillip Williams, Megan Fernandes

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What is the third book's role in the arc of a poet's development? While first books can be uneven explorations heralding a new voice's arrival and second books may distill that voice or radically break from it, in a third collection the trajectory of a poet's work becomes clearer.

Third books can be more polished and confident, or may offer space where a poet truly finds their subject, engaging in experiment and play. Five poets read from their work and discuss their experience of writing a third book.

### **F150. Genre Nonconformity: How to Break All the Rules but Still Publish**

Caroline Hagood, Jiwon Choi, Tariq Shah, Adam Al-Sirgany, Anastacia Renee

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Despite new developments and excitement about genre-nonconforming writing, many publishers, agents, and publicists stay away from this kind of book, leaving writers unsure how to get published and find their readers. Established members of the publishing industry will discuss how to break genre rules while still

creating a book that will resonate with readers and find a home. We will discuss current trends in genre play, as well as the steps to getting such adventurous work published.

### **F151. Un/Holy Acts: Religious Violence, Sacred Texts & Religious Poetry**

Donovan McAbee, Jessica Jacobs, Kazim Ali,  
James Davis May, Tess Taylor

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

How do religious poets navigate the violence in their sacred texts? From mythical tales, historical battles, and imagined apocalypses, the rhetoric and even divine command to commit violence is a problematic feature of sacred texts. In this panel Jewish, Christian, and Muslim poets gather to discuss and demonstrate the ways that poetry helps them to wrestle with, contradict, and transfigure the

violence of their religious traditions in ways that serve a nonviolent understanding of the sacred.

**F152. Memory as Borderland in Immigrant Narratives: The Refuge & Burden of Remembering**

Lana Spendl, Marianne Villanueva, Olga Zilberbourg, Yang Huang, Samrat Upadhyay  
Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

This panel explores memory as a borderland in immigrant narratives, across both fiction and creative nonfiction, focusing on how personal, familial, and collective memory shapes identity across geographies. Writers from Bosnia, China, Nepal, the Philippines, and Russia examine memory as both refuge and burden, with some also reimagining ways of being through the interplay of memory, migration, and queerness.

10:35 AM – 1:25 PM EST

**F153. AWP Writing Organization Council Meeting**

Kent Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Previously called the WC&C Meeting, this meeting is the official convening of all AWP writing organization members. Please join us for a lunch and an informal working session with Writing Organization Council Chair Carla Du Pree and Director of Membership Services & Publications Miranda González.

12:10 PM – 1:10 PM EST

**F154. Meditation for Writers: Banish Writer's Block**

Room 311, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Join award-winning novelist and certified mindfulness teacher April Dávila for a grounding, one-hour dharma talk and meditation. The session will begin and end with fifteen minutes of guided meditation. The middle thirty minutes will explore how mindfulness can help us write more and suffer less. On Friday, March 6, participants will focus on understanding the underlying causes of writer's block.

12:10 PM – 1:25 PM EST

**F155. From Isolation to Ecosystem: How to Be Seen, Supported & Sustained, Sponsored by MacDowell & the Black List**

D Watkins, Chiwoniso Kaitano, Denne Michele Norris, Jason Reynolds, Randy Winston  
Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Artists often work alone, but no one builds a career all by themselves. This panel explores the platforms, tools, and communities that artists can use to develop a sustainable and connected artistic ecosystem for themselves before and after being published, such as the Black List and MacDowell. Hear from prominent writers and users of these tools as well as leaders at these organizations on how to navigate essential support for your career at every stage of your writing life.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

### **F156. NBF Presents: Genre-Bending**

Ruth Dickey, Helen Phillips, 'Pemi Aguda

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Who gets to choose a book's genre—the writer, the publisher, or the reader? Join National Book Award–honored authors on storytelling that traverses horror, sci-fi, mythology, and back. The writers will read from their work and join in conversation about the prescience and persistence of genre in contemporary literature, awards recognition, and the stories connecting with today's readers. This event is moderated by Ruth Dickey, executive director of the National Book Foundation.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **F157. Breaking the Silence: Writing Mental Health into Memoir**

Christine Wolf, Meg Kissinger, Charlie Stewart,  
Deborah Francis, Steven Eichenblatt

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

How do you write about mental health in memoir when silence is expected and truth feels dangerous? In this urgent and intimate panel, four authors share how they confronted stigma, betrayal, and fear to tell their stories of bipolar disorder, trauma, and survival.

Moderated by a trauma-informed memoir coach, the conversation offers craft guidance, moral support, and powerful tools for anyone writing into the heart of mental illness, shame, and healing.

## **F158. Poetry & Poetics of War**

Alen Hamza, Armen Davoudian, Valzhyna Mort,  
Julia Kolchinsky, Suji Kwock Kim  
Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What does it mean to write a war poem, and how does poetry of war relate to poetry of witness? How are traumatic experiences represented on the page, including both personal and generational trauma? Our panel explores these questions from a number of different perspectives in an attempt to illuminate different approaches to war poetry. We also discuss the poetics and ethics of writing about war, including the role that a poet's relationship to language plays in how they conceive of their work.

**F159. Prose, Poetry & Play: Game Design as a Literary Practice**

Nat Mesnard, Brigitte Winter, Erin Roberts,  
Sharang Biswas, David Ring  
Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

The world of narrative games is a site of rich literary possibility, expanding notions of genre and inspiring the invention of new storytelling forms. In this panel, writers who have also published tabletop “story games,” narrative video games, and interactive fiction will explore the practice of writing games. Is there a narrative games canon? How might a writer of “traditional” prose find pathways into games? What stories are best told through interactive, collaborative experiences of play?

**F160. Come as You Are: Writers with ADHD**

Chloe Martinez, Robin Black, Kwoya Fagin  
Maples, Rebecca Makkai, Lawrence-Minh Bui  
Davis

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

At #AWP23, a panel on ADHD and writing drew a huge crowd of curious, excited, brilliant ADHD writers. That conversation sparked *Chaos, Creativity, Completion: New Approaches to Writing and ADHD* (University of Chicago Press, 2026). At this reading, contributors will read from their essays, which ask how we can write in ways that embrace rather than mask our neurodifference; tell of diagnoses that can come as midlife revelations; and go beyond traditional writing advice to find practices that work for us.

**F161. Literary Podcasting: A New Sonic Space**

Jessica Nelson, Bethanne Patrick, Dawnie Walton, Trey Burnart Hall, Carvell Wallace  
Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

As audiobooks and streaming grow, podcasts about writing and reading are vital to literary communities. Blending literature, music, criticism, and sound design, many go beyond author interviews to explore hybrid audio forms. Seasoned as well as novice producers explore the following: What are the creative and logistical possibilities of the literary podcast, especially in collaboration with media, publishers, and journals? What do audiences want? Why podcasting, and what does its future hold?

**F162. Crying Laughing: Black Authors on Writing Satire, Surrealism & the Absurd**

Charles Stephens, Deesha Philyaw, Joy Priest,  
Maurice Carlos Ruffin, John Vercher  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

“Racial satirization . . . articulates an autonomous selfhood for Black bodies . . . bodies that are systematically disempowered in other spheres” (Danielle Fuentes Morgan, *Laughing to Keep from Dying*). Four Black writers will explore the ways they incorporate and leverage satire, surrealism, and absurdity to address prevailing social justice issues while interrogating the moral imperatives and responsibilities of examining these topics through a humorous or fantastical lens.

**F163. Know Your Rights: What to Look for in Book Contracts, Sponsored by Authors Guild & Association of American Literary Agents**

Mary Rasenberger, Michael Gross, Jaime Wolf,  
Kyle Maxey, Amy Bishop-Wycisk

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests &  
Marketing

Getting a book deal is always an exciting step in your career, but it's important to protect your creative work from the pitfalls of publishing.

Writers and agents focus on the advance amounts, of course. But more than ever, the other details can be of greater impact in the long run. Representatives from the Authors Guild and the Association of American Literary Agents will give advice and encouragement for negotiating the best deal for your book and your career.

### **F164. Creative Aging: Writing with Elders**

Andrea Ballou, Martha Collins, Glecia Tatum,  
Gary Glazner

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

How do we help elders use writing to unearth their own complexities—their pasts, presents, and futures; their thoughts and feelings; their struggles and joys? How to engage them to ask not only “Who was I then?” but “Who am I now?” Working with elders, from those living with Alzheimer’s to those who are cognitively well, panelists will share their diverse approaches to nurture a sense of agency, creativity, and delight.

**F165. Staging Resistance: Black Social Justice Novels from Page to Stage**

Tommy Mouton, Deborah Mouton, Keenan Norris, Toni Ann Johnson, Timmia DeRoy

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

It is imperative that our social justice novels live anew on stage. This panel explores the stage adaptation of Keenan Norris's award-winning novel *The Confession of Copeland Cane*, examining social realism as an enduring genre and the systemic inequities limiting such works by Black authors. Featuring authors, playwrights, and educators and casting audience members as "spect-actors," this panel will model the transformative power of collective performance in bringing social justice narratives from page to stage.

**F166. A Lifetime to Write: Fifty Years of the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers**

Yanyi -, Alix Ohlin, Nina McConigley, Christopher Castellani, Rita Banerjee

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Program Development

How does one create “a lifetime to write”? This panel highlights the MFA program’s roots in creating the low-residency model, a radical, inclusive means to a creative writing education for caretakers, workers, and people of nontraditional backgrounds. Panelists will speak to program changes decade by decade through writing practices, low-residency teaching, and program policies over the years, as well as new directions, such as the recent launch of the creative nonfiction writing track.

**F167. Assimilation Blues: Citizenship & Belonging in Indigenous Fiction**

Autumn Fourkiller, Eliana Ramage, Kelli Jo Ford, Vanessa Lillie, Brandon Hobson

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Questions of sovereignty, citizenship, and identity permeate Indigenous fiction. Together,

five writers of the same tribe (Cherokee) will discuss these themes, among others, in their own work, their culture, and the work of the diaspora as a whole. While their sets of experiences differ, and they do not seek to answer the questions of one's own identity, this panel will be helpful for any writer seeking to probe these same questions in their own work.

**F168. The Sacred & the True: An Interreligious Panel on Spirituality & Nonfiction**

Heather Lanier, Joanna Eleftheriou, Marco Wilkinson, Sofia Ali-Khan, Courtney Zoffness  
Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Religion is often seen as a source of destruction rather than creation. And yet, in this age of apocalyptic politics and algorithms, many of us find ourselves reaching toward what we might call “ultimate reality”—the truths that

transcend the secular materialism of our times. Panelists with their feet in several religious traditions—Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—explore how their spiritual traditions and practices inform their essays, memoirs, and hybrid nonfiction writing.

**F169. Translating the Dead, Sponsored by ALTA**

Diana Arterian, Aaron Coleman, Chloe Garcia Roberts, C. Francis Fisher, Umair Kazi

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Translation

Translators are anxious—about authorial intention, accuracy, misrepresenting the work. And that’s even when the author is alive! In this panel, we will discuss translating the writing of the dead, and the hard-earned lessons we have learned, including how to avoid exploiting common tropes (e.g., “the brilliant dead author”). We will also give practical advice on

acquiring translation rights and engaging with estates—often essential elements of translating a nonliving writer’s work.

**F170. Speculating the Machine: How Fiction Writers Are Rendering a New AI Reality**

Joy Baglio, Allegra Hyde, Erika Swyler, Jane Pek, Sequoia Nagamatsu

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

As AI and emerging technologies become widespread, fiction writers are tasked with imagining—and questioning—the future possibilities and implications through narrative. From monitoring systems to algorithmic consciousness, robotic companions to AI-run cities, this panel brings together fiction writers who have thought and written deeply about these topics. We’ll discuss the reasons we portray AI and other technologies in fiction and

the challenges of doing so in a quickly changing world.

### **F171. Foothills, Bays & Freeways: Mid-Atlantic Poets**

Alyse Bensel, Jona Colson, Joseph J. Capista,  
Leona Sevick, Arden Levine

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

The Mid-Atlantic region is uniquely situated at the crossroads of culture, politics, and place. Poets offer perspectives on how the Mid-Atlantic, from the Susquehanna Valley to the Chesapeake Bay, has shaped their creative practices and read from work that showcases this influence.

### **F172. Literary Afterlives: Estates, Archives & Stewardship**

Suzanna Tamminen, Lauri Scheyer, Sarah Sawyer, Sarah Yake, Peter Gizzi  
Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

This panel explores the afterlives of literary work through the distinct lenses of executors, scholars, agents, and editors. How do we curate, care for, publish, and contextualize an author's legacy? Panelists will share strategies for stewarding literature beyond the writer's life, including how to establish estates and archives, how to manage rights, and how to address the ethical and cultural questions that may arise when stewarding an author's work after death.

**F173. Writing Beyond the Mother Tongue**

Samuel Kolawole, Karol Lagodzki, Ali Araghi, Roohi Choudhry

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

International writers in the US work in a liminal space between at least two cultures and languages even if they write in English. They face a question: How to represent, or “translate,” the culture that’s familiar to them but not to most of their readers? What does it mean to be a writer from an “alien” culture in an insular society? The panelists, with backgrounds rife with experiences of colonialism, war, and migration, will discuss how existing in the interstices has shaped their fiction.

**F174. Ink Under Siege: Writing for Queer & Trans Teens in the Era of Book Bans**

JD Scott, Gloria Muñoz, Naomi Kanakia, Jen St. Jude, Tia Clark

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

Over half of the ALA's most-challenged books are LGBTQ authored. Book bans soar, yet prohibition does not stop queer and trans teens from craving pages that name their presents and futures. How do we negotiate between honest storytelling and the reality of politicized classrooms, libraries, and locker rooms? Five queer and trans authors reveal how they smuggle first kisses, write the body, name gender euphoria, author messy truths, and navigate publishing in the era of outlawed YA literature.

**F175. Debut Poets Speak: Five Writers on Bringing Their First Books into the World**

Avia Tadmor, Arielle Hebert, Carlene Kucharczyk, Chelsea Krieg, Isabella DeSendi

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

As poet Brenda Shaughnessy once said, “you only get one first book.” In this panel, five award-winning poets publishing debuts in 2025–2026 discuss the high-stakes process of bringing a first book into the world. Drawing on their individual experiences with five different presses, topics include working with an in-house editorial team, hiring a publicist, pitching reviews, planning readings and events, initiating collaborations with other debut poets, and more.

**F176. Poets Containing Multitudes: The Benefits of Cross-Genre Influence**

Abi Pollokoff, Cody Stetzel, Rob Arnold, Sasha LaPointe, Erin McCoy

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Poets “and” writers? How about just “writers”! In this panel, five poets will discuss how writing in more than one genre—from fiction to criticism to essays—has affected craft and literary trajectory. They’ll share why they choose to approach certain types of work in a particular genre, what each genre gives to the other, and whether they feel certain genres encompass built-in constraints—or lack thereof—to break down genre bias and inspire more possibilities in a writing life.

**F177. Sea Creatures, Space & Words:  
Discovering New Subject Matter While  
Parenting**

Catherine Pierce, Beth Kander-Dauphin,  
Catherine Simone Gray, Derrick Harriell

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Writing takes both time and brain space. So does caring for children—and while, as any parent-writer will tell you, finding balance can feel impossible, spending time with kids can also yield surprising discoveries and writerly obsessions, even for those who aren't writing about children. Panelists will share their experiences finding fruitful new subject matter through interactions with children and offer strategies for staying attuned to potential material (and making time to write it down).

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM EST

**F178. Rewriting the Archive: Poetic Voices on Who Defines History, Sponsored by Alice James Books**

Andrea Jurjevic, Tyehimba Jess, Iain Haley  
Pollock, Leigh Sugar  
Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Alice James Books presents a powerful panel of acclaimed poets whose work examines the historical record and challenges those who shape it. Iain Haley Pollock and Leigh Sugar read from *All the Possible Bodies* and *FREELAND* alongside Tyehimba Jess (*Olio*). Moderated by Andrea Jurjevic, the conversation explores the intersection of personal history and public record to deconstruct dominant narratives and redefine who is allowed space in the archive.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **F179. Traversing Genre: A Nightboat Books Reading**

Monica De La Torre, Miranda Mellis, Imogen Xtian Smith, Aurora Mattia

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

This reading will feature four of Nightboat's most prominent authors working across poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, presenting a dynamic constellation of writers who work across literary genre. This diverse group explores issues of ecology and ecopoetics; class and economic factors; gender, sexuality, and trans identity; and multilingualism and translation in essay, memoir, short stories, novels, and a wide range of poetic forms and prosody.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **F180. War & the Living World: The Intersection of History, Biology & Poetry**

Lucille Lang Day, Sean McClain Brown, Ann Fisher-Wirth, J. C. Todd

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Panelists will read and discuss poetry on environmental impacts of war, a subgenre of both ecopoetry and war poetry. The victims of war are not only humans, but also flora and fauna found in areas of armed conflict.

Although war has been damaging ecosystems worldwide throughout history, people are now becoming more aware of how war affects plants, animals, soil, air, and water. This panel

will address how poetry can deepen our understanding of war's relentless reshaping of landscapes worldwide.

### **F181. Making Tactile Literary Devices**

Ebony Flowers, KC Councilor, Dawn Wing  
Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

How do tactile activities enliven a creative writing classroom? Zine-inspired book formats that serve as tactile literary devices invite undergraduate students and community workshop participants to engage in multimodal thinking about their stories and poems beyond the written word, particularly during the revision process. Three zinesters share their mini bookmaking practices in this hands-on and participatory panel. Attendees will receive a take-home tool kit for classroom application.

## **F182. Sustaining & Building Robust Literary Partnerships**

Michael Welch, Rebecca Makkai, Libby Flores,  
Gina Chung, Maya Marshall

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

In celebration of their ten-year anniversary, *Chicago Review of Books* will sponsor a panel on building literary partnerships. Their robust partnership with StoryStudio Chicago has allowed for their growth and sustainability as a publication, and in an era of disruption in the literary arts, they invite representatives from Haymarket Books, Periplus, and Kundiman to join in a discussion about how organizations can partner together to build networks, foster community, and build resilience.

## **F183. Sifting Through Book Promotion Channels: What Do Emerging Authors Actually Need?**

Cristina Deptula, Jacqueline Karma Bennett,  
Terena Elizabeth Bell, NATALIE OBANDO, Joe  
Biel

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests &  
Marketing

Plenty of PR discussions teach particular skills and tools, but this panel takes a step back by helping authors figure out what techniques will be the best use of their resources. For example, do you need blog reviewers? Influencers? Are book tours still worth it? Podcasts and libraries? Paid online advertising? Our panel contains book publicists, a digital marketer, a publisher, and public relations experts who offer suggestions on what might work well for different sorts of authors and books.

## **F184. Rewriting Stories That History Forgot**

Sandra Simonds, Maurice Carlos Ruffin,  
Rebecca Lehmann, Matt Bell

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This panel considers how historical fiction can reimagine familiar narratives, giving agency to voices often silenced or overlooked. How can this genre intervene to retell history from new and exciting angles? What responsibilities do writers face when fictionalizing real people and events? Panelists will discuss the creative and ethical dimensions of rewriting the past, share their experience working with archival materials, and offer insights into the power—and limits—of narrative reinvention.

## **F185. Living Truth: The Life & Legacy of Nikki Giovanni, a Tribute Reading**

Nikki Fragala Barnes, Amy Alvarez, Britny Cordera, KENDRA AYA, Dominique Wilson  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Tributes

A tribute reading to honor and celebrate the living legacy of literary luminary Nikki Giovanni, the peerless poet, who died in December 2024. Giovanni transformed our creative culture for decades. In 2019, Furious Flower Poetry Center (JMU) convened a seminar to study and celebrate the work of Nikki Giovanni—with Giovanni attending. Poets who attended the seminar where Giovanni spoke will read her poems and excerpts from commencement speeches and lectures, testifying to her living legacy.

**F186. A Writer's Place Is in a Union**

Daniel Felsenthal, Tina Ontiveros, Mary Rasenberger, Kristen Martin

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

At a moment when arts and education are threatened by censorship and government funding cuts, it has never been more important for writers to organize. In this panel, representatives from faculty unions and the Authors Guild demonstrate how their organizations provide muscle to advocacy efforts on issues like working conditions, pay and benefits, copyright protection, and curriculum. Panelists will describe concrete actions all writers can take now.

**F187. Our Brave Stories: Writing Diverse Mental Health Narratives**

Rocky Callen, Alechia Dow, Nora Shalaway Carpenter, Sonia Patel, James Bird

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Five diverse traditionally published authors—Latina, Black, Indian American, Native American, and Appalachian—share how they write mental health with truth and care, challenging harmful tropes and honoring their own lived experience. This panel offers tools for writers, teachers, and publishers to craft nuanced, culturally rooted narratives that break stigma and reflect the full complexity of mental health, particularly in young adult and children’s fiction.

**F188. Nourishing Our Cities with Poetry: PNW City Laureates on Programs & Engagement**

Marie Marchand, Marie Marchand, Mery Smith, Jennifer Passaro

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Program Development

City poet laureates are charged with creating inclusive programming that engages a wide swath of people. Mery, Jenni, and Marie will share their outreach and implementation processes for their most successful events in the role of city poet laureate. Participants will learn about this unique civic role, along with creative strategies for successful outreach and implementation that they can take back to their local communities. Participants will learn how to champion this important civic role.

**F189. Hard to Get: How Queer & BIPOC Poets Use Allusions to (Re)write the Culture**

Jennifer Chang, Brandon Som, Francine J. Harris, Jenny Johnson

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Reginald Shepherd argued that “poetry isn’t hard enough,” listing among other difficulties the use of allusions as integral to the pleasures of being truly engaged by a poem. While we commonly associate allusions as barriers to comprehension (think *The Waste Land* and *The Cantos*), this panel considers allusion not as an alienating force, or at its worst another tool of cultural white supremacy, but as a literary device used by queer and BIPOC writers to experiment with exclusion and access.

### **F190. The New Literary Salon: Substacks & Podcasts for Writers**

Christine Sneed, B. Sharise Moore, John Paul Scotto, Katie Gee Salisbury, Kelly Daniels  
Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Five authors discuss their diverse experiences with literary Substacks and podcasts. Topics include using these tools as author platforms, teaching resources, literary salons, or as potential careers in themselves. Panelists will offer technical tips, problems to be avoided, and best practices for getting started. With audiences growing each year, opportunities abound in these booming media—for individual authors, literary journals, publishing companies, writing programs, and more.

**F191. Book Design: From Scroll to Codex & Print Production**

Nicole Baxter, Lantz Arroyo, Dede Cummings  
Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center  
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Book design can sometimes be confusing and overwhelming for writers, editors, and

publishers. This book design panel and tutorial will detail the history of book design with a slideshow, and panelists will discuss how they create cover designs, interior design pages, and print production. An overview of manuscript preparation, typesetting for different genres, and proofing will be covered. The panel will cover the process from manuscripts to printed books and answer questions from the audience.

### **F192. Cultural Realities: Blurring Barriers of Magic Realism & Genre Expectations**

Mary Leana Christensen, M.S. RedCherries,  
Kalilinoe Detwiler, Annie Wenstrup, Asa Drake  
Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

Five writers of Indigenous and Asian American and Pacific Islander backgrounds will share their creative work and discuss the erasure that

labels like “magic realism” spur. Panelists will consider why texts incorporating cultural stories and knowledge are often qualified with adjectives to signify differences in realities. The panel will question the need to create a homogenous reality that aligns with colonial perspectives unless the “fabricated” reality is seen as fresh and profitable.

**F193. Editors of Color: The Political & Personal,  
Sponsored by CLMP**

Gerald Maa, Kyla Kupferstein Torres, Emilio Carrero, George Abraham, Marcelo Castillo  
Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing &  
Technology

Literary magazines are immensely capable vehicles for fostering literary community. This panel brings together five editors of color to host a conversation about race, journals, and

community—for the present moment and ever. We will discuss mission, craft, and literary citizenship. This is a panel for readers, writers, and editors; people of color and allies; all who care to have journals be a productive place for race matters.

### **F194. “Bullet in the Brain”: Creative Writers on Book Criticism**

Grace Talusan, Anri Wheeler, Joanne Diaz,  
Rebecca Morgan Frank, Marie Myung-Ok Lee  
Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional  
Development

Tobias Wolff’s story “Bullet in the Brain,” about a critic’s final moments, is taught as an object lesson in responding to negative reviews by making more art. But what if you see the world as both writer and reviewer? While the relationship between creating and criticizing is

both complicated and necessary, who better to review than deeply engaged practitioners? Hear from poets, nonfiction writers, and fiction writers at different stages of their careers who all engage in book criticism.

### **F195. Succession: The Drama of Lit Nonprofit Leadership Change**

Janine Harrison, Matt Weinkam, Jan Beatty,  
Holly Brians Ragusa, Erin Elizabeth Smith  
Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

The work of running a literary arts nonprofit is complex in the all-consuming now. Strategic planning may focus more on funding streams and program development than leadership. However, preparing for succession will help a new director, and the organization, smoothly transition. Even so, not every organization

survives, and there is much to learn from those experiences, as well.

**F196. Writing from the Big Brain: Somatic, Spiritual & Visionary Writing Pedagogies**

Amy Bonnaffons, Sofia Thanhauser, Daniella Toosie-Watson, Helen Betya Rubinstein, Bureen Ruffin

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Writing involves not just the “little brain” in the skull, but the “big brain” of the body: somatic knowledge, memory, and spiritual experience. Yet conventional teaching approaches emphasize intellectual analysis, rarely engaging with these expansive ways of knowing. In this panel, writers who employ psychological, somatic, spiritual, and visionary techniques will share practices including dreamwork, weaving,

and song, and discuss how to cultivate holistic writing pedagogies.

## **F197. Home, Belonging & Agency in Diasporic Fiction**

Serkan Görkemli, Elysha Chang, Nawaaz Ahmed, Roohi Choudhry, Cleyvis Natera  
Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Readings

Migration and social upheavals complicate what are already differential perceptions and experiences of home and belonging. This session will feature five writers who will read from their debut fiction. Set in diverse locales from Asia to Africa, Middle East, and North America, their global, diasporic storytelling about identity, including ethnicity, gender, race, and sexuality, showcases their characters' agency in navigating home/lands and their relationship to un/belonging.

## **F198. Liberated Spaces: Black-Owned Publishers & Booksellers Speak!**

Haki Madhubuti, W Paul Coates, Kassahun Checole, Char Adams, Mikael Awake  
Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This panel brings together founders of legendary Black presses to discuss the archival impulse and struggle for self-determination connecting the work of Black publishing and bookselling of the past half century. Reflecting on institutional resilience and collaboration in the face of surveillance, censorship, and state repression, panelists offer the next generation of writers, publishers, and booksellers a blueprint for independence in turbulent times.

## **F199. Slow Down: Patience, Poetry & Poets**

David Baker, Kimiko Hahn, Linda Gregerson,  
Philip Metres

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poems reward patience. Reading one deepens with time. Writing one may take weeks, months; publishing even longer. Yet poets feel intense pressure to rush—deadlines, professional reviews, a hyperactive scrutiny on social media. Our panel considers the paradox of colliding tempos, relating poetry the art to poetry the career. (Is it a career?) We offer professional guidance, publishing strategies, and our own testimony in examining how we read, how we write, how we work alone and in community.

**F200. Penning Resistance from Empire's  
Margins: DMV Writers on Radical Art's Power**

Rion Scott, Arielle Heiman, Kivel Carson, Taína .,  
Christiana McClain

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Emerging writers living at the margins of empire, both physically and positionally, in conversation with acclaimed fiction author and Maryland native Rion Scott on radical art's possibilities in these times. Panelists will discuss the current social and political context near the heart of an increasingly authoritarian political system, their work concerned with racial, gender, economic, and labor justice; the legacy of radical writers before them; and the power and possibility in radical fiction.

3:20 PM – 4:35 PM EST

**F201. Laura Lippman & Sujata Massey in  
Conversation with Angie Kim, Sponsored by  
the Authors Guild**

Angie Kim, Laura Lippman, Sujata Massey  
Ballroom I, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Join us to celebrate some of Baltimore's greatest living authors as Laura Lippman and Sujata Massey appear in conversation with Angie Kim. After brief readings, we will enjoy a discussion of the craft of creating great crime and mystery fiction, the unique ability of genre fiction to address social justice issues, and how Lippman and Massey have built elaborate fictional worlds based in reality.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**F202. Half of the Birdsong: Poetry Working  
Toward Personal Truth, Sponsored by Copper  
Canyon Press**

Michael Wieggers, Richard Siken, Gabrielle  
Calvocoressi

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

In this extraordinary pairing, two poets showcase poetry's ability to reveal profound truths. In Gabrielle Calvocoressi's poems, the body becomes a cistern in which lyric springs forth both brave vulnerability and a commitment to hope. In Richard Siken's poems, precise storytelling excavates the past by way of a confrontation with the experience of having a stroke. Both write from within the middle of a

life—queer, scarred, seeking renewal—from within an architecture resonant with sound.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

### **F203. Translating the Self: Memory, Migration & Myth in East European Diasporas**

Domnica Radulescu, Adela Sinclair, Annie Lulu, Alina Stefanescu

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Readings

This multigenre panel explores the creative processes and voices that emerge from our diverse identities at the crossroads of migration, memory, and myth as we succeed or fail to translate our hyphenated selves into languages of exile. Our prose and poetry

readings give voice to our hybrid cultural, geographic, and linguistic identities; intergenerational traumas; shared histories of authoritarianism; genocidal wars; or painful uprootings and reflect our strategies of reinvention and healing.

**F204. Writing Humor for an Online Audience with *McSweeney's* Internet Tendency**

Lucy Huber, Kristen Mulrooney, Jiji Lee, Carlos Greaves

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

A panel of *McSweeney's* contributors and a *McSweeney's* editor discuss the writing and submission process of humor and satire for an online audience. The panel of writers will discuss their writing process, how they

approach writing satire and humor, and how they got their first *McSweeney's* acceptance.

## **F205. Twist! New Directions for Teaching Poetic Turns**

Michael Theune, Alexis Sears, Kim Addonizio, Kim Noriega, Matthew Olzmann

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Turns, significant shifts in rhetorical and/or dramatic trajectory, are vital elements in poetry. As poetry writing pedagogy has only recently begun to systematically focus on volta-like turning, new techniques and materials for teaching turns are still emerging. “Twist!” offers workshop-tested lessons, prompts, and activities that will help developing writers engage the turn as invention exercise, drafting tool, revision strategy, and performance feature. Advanced undergraduate and above.

## **F206. Asian American & Diasporic Caucus**

Gina Chung

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

What is literature's role in liberation? How do we as Asian American and Pacific Islander writers and readers steward spaces of care, emergence, legacy, and belonging? How can we think expansively about what it means to be Asian American and what it means to be a writer?

## **F207. Drawn to Dissent: Graphic Forms as Cultural Critique**

Robert Russell, Sharon De La Cruz, Tom Hart, Kelcey Ervick, Aubrey Hirsch

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Comics juxtapose text and image to clarify complex realities and add emotional depth, making cultural critique accessible and immersive. As dissent grows more vital, our panelists are using graphic forms to challenge dominant narratives, spark conversation, and reach wider audiences. Panelists will share how they research, structure, and craft visual work that documents, disrupts, and reimagines social and political issues.

### **F208. Now More than Ever: The Vital Need for Literary Centers in These Uncertain Times**

Michael Khandelwal, Karen Schubert, Shawn Girvan, Marceline White, Arleta Little

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Literary centers play an increasingly vital role in the literary community, in the age of massive cuts in universities and arts funding and writers everywhere struggling to find a stable community. Directors from four prominent centers discuss the innovative programming accessible to both established writers and those without traditional access to literary programs and education, including at-risk populations, all while providing teaching and mentorship opportunities for MFA program graduates.

**F209. Bad Romance: On Writing Difficult Relationships**

Sam Risak, Elissa Washuta, Ira Sukrungruang, Liz Harmer, Kristen Millares Young

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

There's always more than one side to a story, and particularly when you're in a destructive

relationship, it can be hard to know if your side is the “true” one. In this panel, we discuss how to write about difficult relationships in CNF. How can you trust your story enough to tell it? How do you admit to your own shortcomings without causing the reader to lose faith in you? How do you write these stories knowing there are people out there who would object to them?

**F210. “This Is a Time for Mistral”: Eighty Years Since Gabriela Mistral’s Nobel Prize**

Emilia Phillips, Anna Deeny Morales, Claudia Cabello Hutt, M. Soledad Caballero  
Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Tributes

Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral (1889–1957) won the Nobel Prize in Literature eighty years ago in 1945, but she remains mostly unread in English. This panel will engage with her rise from a rural

educator to a poet, diplomat, and public intellectual; dictatorship propaganda about her and the reclamation of her image; archival evidence of her sexuality; the difficulties and rewards of translating her; and why more English readers—especially those interested in women’s and queer history—should know her.

## **F211. Queer+ Ekphrasis: Investigations & Celebrations**

Nicky Beer, Ava Winter, Blas Falconer, Brenda Shaughnessy, Jason B. Crawford

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Is ekphrasis a uniquely queer-friendly genre? With intimacy, rage, eros, sublimity, transgression, and disruption, such poems are often at their best when they defy boundaries and categories. We will explore and celebrate together the ways that ekphrasis and queerness

interact in our writing, as well as how such work is necessary for our futures. Note: “Queer+” indicates that our discussion will make space for other intersectionalities at play in our writerly encounters with art.

## **F212. Script Curious: How Book Writers Can “Beat Their Own Path” into Screenwriting**

Elizabeth Searle, David Shields

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

Shields and Searle—cowriters on the feature film *I’ll Show You Mine* (Duplass Bros.)—discuss segueing into scripts and analyze popular scriptwriting templates. Searle cracks open the “nutshell technique” and McKee’s *Story* (a book that Shields finds “useless”). Shields deconstructs Freytag’s pyramid (seven beats), Aristotle’s three-acts (fourteen beats), and Syd Field’s seven beats (five in Shields’s version).

Learn how two book writers “beat the odds” into feature film writing and how they find ways to “beat the beats.”

### **F213. Cropping Our Lives: Sustaining a Private Life in a Public Vocation**

Krissy Kludt, Michael Kleber-Diggs, Joseph Lanham, Annie Wenstrup

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

In this digital age, writers are often expected to leverage our lives as marketing tools. Must we commodify our lives? To what extent? What are the risks and costs of such transactions? As we cultivate our public writing identities in the name of success and influence, we need boundaries for our own well-being. So, how do we choose what to expose and what to “crop”? Join us in exploring these questions and more

as we talk honestly about the pressures and challenges of public life as a writer.

**F214. Beyond Good Intentions: Community-Engaged Teaching & Learning**

Lucy Bryan, Amber West, Wyatt Bonikowski, Ann Green, Raffi Wartanian

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Community-engaged and service-learning writing courses promise meaningful impact—but do they deliver? This panel of five writer-educators explores the tensions, responsibilities, limitations, and transformative possibilities of community engagement–based writing classes and workshops. They discuss issues of mutuality, hierarchy, and diversity and share insights from collaborations with community partners ranging from literacy nonprofits to correctional facilities.

**F215. *Divergent Writers: A New Bloomsbury Anthology on Disability & Ableism***

Christie Collins, Celeste Schueler, Said Shaiye,  
Saul Lemerond, Leigh Rourks

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

The newly published Bloomsbury anthology, titled *Divergent Writers*, comprises essays by nineteen impacted writers from across six countries. This panel, which includes the two editors and three contributors, will focus on the anthology and the ways in which writers who are neurodivergent, disabled, and/or suffer from chronic illnesses are marginalized by a field that prizes the neurotypical and the able-bodied. Our panelists will share their lived experiences and provide teaching and writing insights.

## **F216. Haints, Haunts & Other Shape-Shifters**

Sarah Stone, Marianne Villanueva, Judy Juanita,

Lillian Howan, Mary Slechta

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore

Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

What calls us to tell tales of spirits made restless by loneliness, passion, and personal or historical grievances and injustices? How, in today's endangered world, do we find new ways to write speculative fiction about ghosts, the uncanny, haints and haunts, shape-shifters, and the dead who refuse to stay dead? Five fiction writers from varied backgrounds and storytelling traditions share work, literary models, and craft strategies for the fierce and sometimes playful art of writing the uncanny.

## **F217. The Classroom as a Site of Freedom: Emergent Strategy, Transgressive Possibility**

Helen Betya Rubinstein, Alejandro Heredia,  
Catina Bacote, Sonya Bilocerkowycz, Bureen  
Ruffin

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

In a time of authoritarianism and repression, even and especially within the university, how can we hold the writing classroom apart as a site of freedom, a respite, and a source of practical reimaging, where students might rehearse alternative ways of being? In this interactive panel, writers teaching nonfiction, fiction, and poetry share strategies for cultivating students' interpersonal and creative freedom, including collaborative play, decentering power, and resisting censorship and capture.

**F218. Writing Impermanence**

Erica Watson, Anna Cabe, Bathsheba Demuth,  
Monica Macansantos, Sean Enfield  
Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Writing about place at a time of rapid ecological and sociopolitical change can serve as archive, as elegy, and as resistance. Panelists will explore how forces and conditions including climate change, gentrification, and political upheaval reshape the places we write, informing the choices we make in writing them. We will examine impermanence as both subject and structural guide, and consider how our work allows a vanished past to gain permanence on the page.

**F219. Widening the Bridge of Ekphrasis:  
Writing the Saturation Poem**

Jennifer Jean, Melissa Studdard, Cornelius Eady,  
Kelli Russell Agodon, Michelle Whittaker  
Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Do you love music? Ekphrasis? Immersive experiences? Do you want to dive into the vast potential of sound to free memory and language? Or help your students do so? Learn about the saturation—a poem written after or about an obsessive audio encounter. Five poets discuss this vital bridge between artistic mediums and their poetry adventures with classical, folk, rap, rock, pop, blues, funk, and jazz. Attendees will gain a grasp of the form, reading lists, and prompts for amazing music-filled work.

**F220. LGBTQ Publishing Professionals on Queer Books**

Maggie Cooper, Ezra Kupor, Jules Wernersbach,  
Amelia Possanza, Alicia Kroell

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests &  
Marketing

In this panel, two editors, an agent, a publicist, and a bookstore owner will examine the state of queer and trans books in 2026. In the wake of the recent proliferation of LGBTQ books released by mainstream publishers—and the attendant rise of book bans targeting many of those same titles—panelists will discuss the market for queer books, explore the ecosystem of trade and independent presses publishing the work of LGBTQ writers, and offer takeaways for writers telling queer stories.

**F221. Smiling at the End of the World: Why  
Dystopian Fiction Gives Us Hope**

Ciera McElroy, Joy Baglio, Brenda Peynado,  
Sequoia Nagamatsu, Michelle Sterling  
Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

For many, “dystopian” fiction conjures inherently grim images of nuclear holocaust and white Handmaid’s bonnets. But what if dystopian fiction is actually a path toward hope? In this panel, five writers who have explored dystopian narratives discuss what the genre means to them, including the ways it allows us to put voice to resistance, articulate our fears, highlight human resilience, affirm shared values, and see literature as a force to catalyze change.

**F222. Strange Estrangement: SWANA Writers on Family, Home & Belonging**

B. Al-Ism, Leila Nadir, Noam Keim, Sarah Aziza,  
Hayan Charara

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

This panel of SWANA writers explores family estrangement: from going “no contact” with relatives to forced separation from ancestral homelands. As US discourse normalizes cutting ties, we examine how war, occupation, and colonialism uniquely impact our region.

Spanning Palestine, the Persian Gulf, Lebanon, and Afghanistan, panelists ground their personal stories in broader cultural and political contexts to illuminate the complex forces of colonialism and empire driving familial rupture.

5:00 PM – 6:15 PM EST

### **F223. Sober AWP**

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Daily 12-Step Meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

## **F224. Disabled & D/deaf Writers Caucus**

Cade Leebron, Jess Silfa

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

The Disabled & D/deaf Writers Caucus allows for those who are disabled or living with chronic illness, and their allies, to network and discuss common challenges related to identity, writing, and teaching while professionally leading a literary life. By meeting annually at the AWP Conference, we aim to archive our interests, challenges, and concerns in order to increase our visibility and emphasize our importance both to this organization and to the communities where we live, teach, and work.

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM EST

## **F225. Unbound Edition Press: Reception & Announcements**

Maryland Ballroom E, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Unbound Edition Press welcomes authors, readers, and others interested in our work to this reception. Whether an emerging writer or an established voice, please join us for an important series of announcements regarding future opportunities with the press. From debuts to reviews to new open calls, the press and its journal, *Revel*, are looking to meet literary writers and critics to discuss what might be possible together. Special offers are available to attendees.

## **F225A. NYU Creative Writing Program Reception**

Maryland Ballroom F, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Please join the NYU Creative Writing Program's faculty, students, and alumni for drinks and lively conversation. Hosted by Program Director Deborah Landau. Open to all.

**F226. Sewanee Writers' Conference Alumni Reception**

Baltimore Ballroom A, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

The Sewanee Writers' Conference invites you to grab a drink with us. Come be with friends and meet new ones. All are welcome. Drink tickets will be handed out at the door until they are gone.

**F227. *Pinch* Friends & Contributor Reception**

Watertable Ballroom B, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Please join Pinch editors, contributors, friends, and supporters of the literary magazine housed at the University of Memphis for complimentary drinks.

**F228. AWP TCU Fellowship Program Reception**  
Federal Hill Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

Join us in celebrating the second year of the AWP Tribal Colleges & Universities Fellowship Program! Enjoy refreshments, meet the #AWP26 faculty and student fellows, and hear from this year's creative advisor, Ramona Emerson.

**F229. *Indiana Review* & Indiana University  
MFA Reception**  
Homeland Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

*Indiana Review* and the MFA program at Indiana University Bloomington are pleased to welcome current and past editors, contributors, and alumni for a reception in honor of the new Indiana University Creative Writing Alumni Syndicate.

**F230. Texas State MFA Reception: Celebrating Our Writers' Community**

Fells Point Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Join us for an evening of connection, celebration, and literary camaraderie at the Texas State MFA reception! This gathering welcomes all Texas State MFA alumni, current and prospective students, faculty, and program friends to mingle, reminisce, and build new creative bridges. Enjoy complimentary food, drinks, and good conversation as we celebrate the vibrant community that continues to make

the Texas State MFA in Creative Writing one of the most dynamic programs in the country.

**F231. Fairfield University MFA Collaborates:  
Image & Woodhall Press**

James Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

Join the faculty and students of Fairfield University's MFA program as well as Woodhall Press, an independent literary press founded by alumni, in celebration of the community of writers we are. All are welcome.

**F232. The Muse Writers Center Twentieth-  
Anniversary Celebration**

Kent Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance  
Harborplace Hotel

Join The Muse for a celebration of our twentieth-anniversary year! Enjoy great snacks, a cash bar (credit card payments only), and fun

conversation. All are welcome! We serve adults and youth with hundreds of workshops in every genre and level, with financial help to forty-plus percent of students. Many teachers are hired from MFA programs. Events include readings, open mics, book launches, and a multi-day conference, and we use creative writing as a healing tool for youth, seniors, the military, the unhoused, and those experiencing illness and loss.

6:30 PM – 7:45 PM EST

### **F234. Women's Caucus**

DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

The Women's Caucus offers an inclusive space for networking, event planning, and discussing issues like resources, access to literary power

structures, childcare, and publication obstacles. Welcoming diverse perspectives, we support women and women-identifying writers, enhance understanding of gender and creative writing, and expand literary dialogue across genres. We encourage feminist literary perspectives, advocate for equity, and provide support for women writers. If you are interested in joining the leadership for the Women's Caucus, please email [events@awpwriter.org](mailto:events@awpwriter.org).

## **F235. Caucus for K–12 Creative Writing Education**

Allison Campbell, Molly Sutton Kiefer  
Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

In this caucus, teachers of creative writing in K–12 schools meet to discuss best practices, share resources, and address areas of concern specific

to K–12 teaching. Participants in this caucus are usually a mix of creative writing teachers and teachers of English language arts who incorporate creative writing in their lessons. Writers who are curious about teaching in K–12 schools are welcome to attend and collaborate with practicing educators.

# Saturday, March 7, 2026

7:30 AM – 8:45 AM EST

## **S100. Sober AWP**

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Daily 12-Step Meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

8:00 AM – 1:00 PM EST

## **S101. Author Portraits by Adrienne Mathiowetz Photography**

Room 313, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Stop being embarrassed by your author photo! A great portrait is not only flattering, but also actively invites your audience to get to know

you and your work. Returning for a seventh year at AWP, author photographer Adrienne Mathiowetz will be offering twenty-minute studio sessions on-site. See your proof gallery of images immediately; any portrait you choose will be fully processed and digitally delivered in high res for \$175. (Conference discount: Studio hour-long author portrait sessions with one image included are usually priced at \$1,050.)

Put your best face forward on websites, book covers, social media, and published interviews. Advanced sign-up is required with a \$50 retainer fee (covers our session preparation communication and can be applied toward your first image).

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST

## **S102. Conference Registration**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in the Charles Street Lobby, Baltimore Convention Center, Level 100. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. Students must present a valid student ID to check in or register at our student rate. Seniors must present a valid ID to check in or register at our senior rate. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

### **S102A. First Aid**

Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

First Aid is located in the Charles Street Lobby, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center. Please

consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

### **S103. Dickinson Quiet Space**

Room 303, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

A dedicated quiet space for you to collect your thoughts, unwind, and escape the literary commotion. “There is a solitude of space, / A solitude of sea, / A solitude of death, but these / Society shall be, / Compared with that profounder site, / That polar privacy, / A Soul admitted to Itself: / Finite Infinity.” —Emily Dickinson

### **S103A. Coat Check**

Room 304, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Coat check is available in room 304 on Level 300 of the Baltimore Convention Center. Coat

check will not accept purses or laptops. \$3.00 per item checked. No cash, only credit card and digital payment accepted.

### **S104. Low-Light Space**

Room 305, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

A darkened, quiet, and more private space for attendees to gather their thoughts, reset, or take a break from the lighting of the Convention Center.

### **S105. Lactation Lounge**

Room 306, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

The lactation lounge is located in room 306 of the Baltimore Convention Center and is available for any nursing parent to use.

Women's restroom in Charles Street Lobby, Level 100 also includes a nursing area.

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM EST

**S106. Yoga for Writers**

Room 311, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Join writer Manisha Sharma, an Iowa State University professor and internationally certified yoga and meditation expert for twenty-eight years. Start your day with 9:00–10:00 a.m. yoga, calm your mind, unleash creativity, and build concentration. It will include stretching and breathing and conclude with a ten-minute guided meditation relaxation to build awareness. Arrive wearing comfortable street clothes; mats and yoga apparel are not necessary. For more, visit [Manisha-Sharma.com/Yoga.html](http://Manisha-Sharma.com/Yoga.html)

9:00 AM – 10:15 PM EST

**S107. Worlds Within Worlds: Fiction, Language & Intertextuality, Sponsored by Center for Fiction**

Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, Rabih Alameddine,  
Katie Kitamura

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Join two giants of literary fiction for an exploration of multifaceted, compressed prose that is both accessible and rich with nuance, insight, and meaning. Katie Kitamura and Rabih Alameddine's novels, like those of Sebald, offer complex and unreconciled worlds. In both authors' work, too, translation—and the untranslatable—works on multiple levels. Come for a craft talk that will open up new avenues of exploration in your work. Moderated by author and scholar Mecca Jamilah Sullivan.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **S108. Our Unique Brains: Neurodivergent Writers Share Strategies**

Samantha Paige Rosen, Eshani Surya, KRISTINE ESSER SLENTZ, Emily Farris, Alex Alberto

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Approximately 20% of the population identifies as neurodivergent. If you're among this group, you've likely seen your writing benefit from your unique brain through hyperfocus, attention to detail, memory retention, thinking outside the box, and more. You've also probably experienced challenges to process and craft around these same skills and qualities. In this

panel, genre-diverse writers with ADHD, ASD, OCD, and dyslexia share their strategies and routines, their wisdom and reflections.

### **S109. Writing Into Our Ancestors' Voices for a Twenty-First-Century America**

Jill Bialosky, Elise Paschen, Major Jackson,  
Sophie Cabot Black, Maya Popa

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel brings together poets who craft verse from the perspective of their ancestors and their homeplaces—whether historical, spiritual, or imagined—to explore how ancestral history can speak urgently into today's American landscape. In an era shaped by cultural reckoning, inherited trauma, and the reimagining of identity, many contemporary poets are turning to and exploring ancestral

history as sources of resistance, recovery, and revelation.

**S110. Democratizing Writing: First-Gen Perspectives on Class, Access & Academia**

Kimberly Grey, Allison Pitinii Davis, Jose Hernandez Diaz, Rosanna Oh, Joy Priest  
Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

This panel gathers first-generation college students, first-generation Americans, writers of color, and cross-genre artists to explore what it means to be “first” in creative writing spaces. Together they will discuss access and class-based barriers in academia and publishing—unspoken rules, inequitable access, and impostor syndrome—and offer tools, strategies, and resource-sharing aimed at supporting first-

gen writers and building more inclusive, nonhierarchical literary communities.

## **S111. The New Embodied Lyrics of Wild, Wild Tech**

Jennifer Steinorth, Kathy Wu, Erika Meitner, Katherine Yang, Urayoan Noel

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Digital networks, IT, and computational technologies riddle twenty-first-century experience, yet these paradigms are largely absent from contemporary poetry. What do we miss ignoring the clicks that make hearts race, when algorithmic hegemonies go unchecked? How can we leverage evolving technologies for more embodied poetics? Through discussion, brief readings, and speculative prompts, our motley crew will explore IT's mercurial

presence in contemporary lyric genres—the better to grasp IRL entanglements.

## **S112. Going It Alone: Paths to a Book Contract Without an Agent**

Kristi Osorio, Bonnie Chau, Lindsey Webb,  
Patrycja Humienik, Nathan Osorio  
Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests &  
Marketing

In the literary world, there is so much emphasis on getting an agent: how to write a query letter, when to pitch, how long to wait to follow up. In the changing publishing landscape, authors are finding alternative ways to secure book contracts on their own, from competing in first-book contests to cold emailing indie editors to submitting manuscripts through the “slush pile.” Panelists discuss navigating publishing

unagented, detailing the process, challenges, and benefits of going it alone.

### **S113. Character Crisis: When the Surreal Becomes Our Reality**

Diana Marie Delgado, Mónica-Ramón Ríos,  
Claudia Morales, Shayla Lawz

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Readings

In a present defined by war, material precarity, and dehumanization, conflict—traditionally used to structure narrative—no longer serves as a reliable structure for meaningful storytelling. In this reading, four queer women of color come together to ask, What stories emerge when crisis is not a passing storm, but our new normal? What aesthetic forms arise when confronting public/private devastation, when we must embrace the surreal to write not only our characters, but ourselves into existence?

## **S114. Environment, Locale, Identity: Setting in Contemporary American Literature**

Donna Marie Hayes, Lawrence Coates, Lee Martin, Lora Chilton, Anesa Miller

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Literature with a sense of place stands against the homogenization of American culture and allows writers to address concrete issues of environment and identity. This panel brings together writers from various regions and backgrounds to reflect on the importance of setting and how historical, geographic, cultural, ethnic, and other factors create a vital context for contemporary writing.

## **S115. Poetry & Revolution: How Black & Brown Oral Tradition Creates Active Literacy**

Vania Gutierrez, Aleah Bradshaw, Julissa Moolenaar, Sainey Ceesay  
Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel will explore Youth Speaks's approach to active literacy. We will outline how to create learning environments where young people can rely on and develop their voice, identity, power, and imagination through poetry and spoken word. Panelists will share pedagogical antidotes, ground in Black and Brown poetic histories, and dream around the future of the oral tradition as working artists and educators.

**S116. From Short Story to Novel**

Aaron Aceves, Bobuq Sayed, Lucas Schaefer, Sam Sax, Santiago Sanchez  
Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Oftentimes, larger narratives begin with smaller ones. The main character in a short story refuses to leave their author alone, and so they become the protagonist of a novel. This panel will focus on drafting these eventual stand-alone excerpts and giving them satisfactory character and plot arcs while leaving the reader wanting more, as well as assembling a novel from these shorter pieces. All of the panelists have successfully published excerpts in literary journals before publishing novels.

**S117. One Hundred Faces of the Beloved: Form & Features of the Ghazal**

Samyak Shertok, Eman Hassan, Jacqueline

Osherow, Raena Shirali

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore

Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Agha Shahid Ali likens the ghazal to a necklace strung with “Ravishing DisUnities,” of which each stone is an autonomous couplet that shines in “vivid isolation.” This panel explores the distinct features of the ghazal: the rhyme-refrain scheme, poet’s signature, independent couplets, and playful yet profound “ghazal spirit,” while tracking the evolution of the form from ancient to contemporary. It also pays a tribute, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, to Shahid, who brought the ghazal to the US.

**S118. Here to Stay: Black YA Novelists Telling the American Story Their Way**

Michelle Coles, Kim Johnson, Kayla Rayford  
Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Children’s & Young Adult Literature

This panel features award-winning Black YA novelists, who through a mix of fantasy, contemporary fiction, and historical fiction create authentic spaces for Black youth to shine as multidimensional characters in the American story. By giving voice to young people whose experiences and perspectives have often been undervalued and overlooked, their novels create space for honest conversations and healing. Every child deserves to see themselves in literature, and these authors embody that right.

**S119. Beyond the Creative-Scholarly Divide:  
Advocacy in an Era of Academic Scarcity**

Kristiana Kahakauwila, Kiese Laymon, Katie Peterson, Sara Schaff

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Program Development

Student demand for creative writing (CW) courses continues to grow, even as overall enrollment in the humanities declines. Yet many English departments are reluctant to support CW faculty and programming. How can we, as creative writing teachers, advocate for ourselves, our programs, and our students? How do we articulate the rigor of CW pedagogy? And where do we turn for resources? Panelists will offer tools and tips gleaned from within their institutions and beyond, including from AWP.

**S120. The Flash Nonfiction Editors Roundtable:  
Advice from the EICs**

Steph Liberatore, NaBeela Washington, Hattie Fletcher, Jill Christman, Vonetta Young  
Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Thanks to the accessibility of the form, flash nonfiction has grown in popularity in recent years. This panel brings together editors from *Beautiful Things*, *Short Reads*, *Lucky Jefferson*, *The Offing*, and *In Short* to discuss trends and provide tips for those who want to craft and publish such work. What makes a flash piece shine? How can writers navigate publication? In this roundtable, editors will provide frank advice about the editorial process and a look at where the form might be headed.

**S121. Childfree & Childless Women Writers:  
Writing Against Gender Norms**

Stevie Edwards, Brenna Womer, Christina Stoddard, Jane Huffman, Kai Coggin

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Most literature and media marketed toward women over thirty revolve around motherhood, but this doesn't tell the full story of womanhood. This panel is composed of five writers exploring alternative paths toward self-fulfillment and modes of nurturing beyond motherhood. Through poetry and creative nonfiction, this panel will explore the writers' identities as women without children. There will also be a Q&A with a discussion of obstacles to decentering motherhood in discussions of womanhood.

**S122. Beyond “Love’s Austere and Lonely Offices”: Exploring Robert Hayden’s Other Poems**

Peter Murphy, Celeste Doaks, Cherise Pollard,  
Donna Denize, Joel Dias-Porter

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Tributes

While many readers know and love “Those Winter Sundays,” few turn the page to where Robert Hayden’s other remarkable poems not only shed light on the African American experience, but also reveal what it means to be a human concerned about the state of humanity. Five poets will read lesser-known favorites from Hayden’s *Collected Poems* and discuss the impact his work has had on their lives and writing, followed by a Q&A with the audience.

### **S123. The Essay for Writers Who Work in Multiple Genres**

Kyle Minor, Bailey Moore, Joe Oestreich, Phong Nguyen, Dini Parayitam

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

As with the genres of poetry and fiction, the history of the essay is rich with writers who

specialize in the essay. But the contemporary landscape is also full with writers working in multiple genres, whose practice might achieve a kind of cross-fertilization capable of enriching the essay. The essayists on our panel have also been working in the story, the novel, journalism, poetry, screenwriting, film editing, and playwriting. They have much to say about what one genre brings to the other.

### **S124. How Form Informs the Form: Received & Original Forms in Manuscript Organization**

Donna Vorreyer, Chris Santiago, Lesley Wheeler, Rebecca Lehmann, Taylor Byas

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Experimental and traditional forms shape individual poems, but they can also provide key organizing principles in manuscripts. In this panel, writers will discuss how form (sonnet,

underpoem, villanelle, contrapuntal, erasure, and more) played a major role in the creation and organization of recent collections. They will also present ways of generating structural elements that can make a book stand out in a crowded field. After moderated conversation, there will be time for audience questions.

### **S125. POV Sluts**

Nic Anstett, Jeffrey Xiong, Mariah Rigg, Ploi Pirapokin, Megan Milks

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Has creative usage of the first-person plural ever gotten you hot and bothered? Find yourself sweating in the presence of a second-person narrator? Are you having naughty dreams about that unexpected third-person omniscient you stumbled upon? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then

you might be a Point-of-View Slut! Join five fiction writers for a discussion on POV and how bucking traditional perspectives can elevate your fiction and drive yourself (and your readers) wild.

**S126. Writer Seeks Mentor: Finding & Fostering Mentorships Beyond Academia**

Lauren Fath, Shara McCallum, EJ Levy, Tyler Mills, Crystal Ortiz

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

In this panel, three “generations” of mentors and mentees will examine the formation of mentorships and discuss their roles within them. The conversation will illuminate ways to establish and sustain mentorships within and beyond academic programs. Panelists will answer questions such as: How does a writer

find a mentor? How can mentors set boundaries? How can we view our peers as mentors? The panelists will offer advice for making the most of generational wisdom as both a mentor and mentee.

9:00 AM – 11:50 AM EST

### **S127. LitNet Meeting**

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

LitNet is a coalition of literary organizations from across the United States that works to promote the importance of the literary arts in American culture, build the capacity of the literary field, and broaden funding for the literary arts. Join us for a meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. to learn more about what we do, followed by a breakfast mingle with literary leaders and other advocates from the field.

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM EST

## **S128. AWP Bookfair**

Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore Convention Center

With more than 650 literary exhibitors, the AWP Bookfair is the largest of its kind. A great way to meet authors, critics, and peers, the bookfair also provides excellent opportunities to find information about many literary magazines, presses, and organizations. Please consult the bookfair map in the AWP mobile app for location details.

## **S128A. Concessions**

Baltimore Convention Center

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in the Baltimore Convention Center in the Charles Street Lobby and AWP Bookfair on Level 100 and at the Market Fresh Café on Level 300. No

cash, only credit card and digital payment are accepted at all food and beverage locations. Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app for location details.

10:35 AM – 11:50 AM EST

**S129. Translating Gaza, Problematizing Translation: On Urgency, Critique & Publishing, Sponsored by Mizna**

Moheb Soliman, Yahya Ashour, Huda Fakhreddine, Mona Kareem

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Translation

Three percent of US books are translations, amplifying the powers and pitfalls of the discipline. The fraction of Arabic to English work, especially in light of Gazan genocide, holds clear urgency and impact despite risks of fetishism, voyeurism, and complacency—

endemic to this literary field and ripe for critique, if not paralysis. Here, the theory and praxis of translating within empire are discussed through two contrasting, complementary publications by their editors.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**S130. River of Song: Joseph Harrison's  
Collected Poems**

Morri Creech, Joe Osterhaus, Moira Egan, Sunil  
Iyengar, Robert Schreur

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Poets from John Ashbery to Richard Wilbur  
praised Baltimorean Joseph Harrison's work,  
and he was senior American editor of Waywiser

Press until his sudden death in 2024. Technically accomplished, his poetry is informed by a deep understanding of verse in English. On the publication of Harrison's last book, Alan Shapiro referred to him as "one of American poetry's best kept secrets." In this event, poets and critics will break that secrecy by reading from and commenting upon his *Collected Poems*.

### **S131. Poetry at the Intersection of Science, Ethics & Care**

Nina Pelaez, Issam Zineh, Randall Mann, M. Cynthia Cheung

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel brings together poets who work in the sciences to explore how their practice shapes the ethical commitments and imaginative possibilities of their craft—particularly around embodiment, ethics, and

care. Panelists reflect on writing within and against the systems they inhabit, how interdisciplinary thinking informs poetic precision and complexity, and what poetry reveals about the possibilities and limits of scientific understanding.

**S132. Writing Long in the Age of the Quick  
Take: The Art of the Expansive Essay**

Amy Monticello, Melissa Faliveno, Sejal Shah,  
Nicole Graev Lipson, Heather Lanier  
Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

In a time of fragmented attention, how do essayists claim room to roam? Once an essay surpasses most literary journals' max lengths (4–5K words), how do we resist the urge to cut—and potentially cut off—more expansive thinking? How do long essays resist the trend of hot takes? Or the pressure to be prolific? We'll

explore the risks, rewards, strategies, and secrets of writing long essays: how writers embrace length, place such essays in long-form-friendly journals, and hold readers' attention.

**S133. Toward Text: Film, Painting & Performance as Routes into Writing**

Elisabeth Houston, Gabrielle Civil, Cathy Linh Che, Serena Chopra, Jackie Wang

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Writer's block is a perpetual problem.

Confronted with an ominous blank page, what is a writer to do? This craft panel explores the ways in which creative practices outside of writing—film, painting, dance, and performance—can bring us deeper into writing. Books are not born from vacuum. The panel seeks to uncover how engagement with media

outside of text can, in fact, be a powerful gateway into writing books and beyond. A presentation of each writer's work concludes the craft panel.

### **S134. From Isolation to Coalition: Reimagining Literary Arts Centers**

Leslie Grover, Daemond Arrindell, Masha Shukovich, Nikkisha Napoleon, Nina Adel  
Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Local literary and multidisciplinary arts centers often work in silos, navigating limited resources and funding competition alone. This panel proposes a shift: the beginnings of a national coalition grounded in shared values, collaboration, and mutual support. Panelists from across the country will explore how connection can be not just sustaining—but transformational.

## **S135. Gritty & Dirty: Writing Plot**

Annie Lontas, Emma Copley Eisenberg, Asali Solomon, Camille Acker, Liz Moore

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Is plot the bone you throw the dog while you rob the house, or is it the king dying of grief? Is it “entire depravity” or, as Vonnegut tells us, “discovering something wonderful”? In this panel, five Philly writers working across genre talk narrative propulsion, a craft element too often glossed over by MFAs. How can literary fiction import elements of the mystery or heist even as they emphasize character? How can plot tropes be political, even subversive? And what engines exist in nonfiction?

**S136. In Their Own Voice: The Student-Centered K–12 Creative Writing Classroom**

Christopher Shipman, Brad Richard, Rosalynd Spencer, Andrea Young, Annell Lopez

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

We spend years working with youth, developing arts programs and facilitating writing workshops, but the core experience remains unchanged: a continual search to connect. The emotions involved—fear, joy, the craving for validation—are universal markers when teaching writing to young people. Amid concerns about the decline of literacy, comprehension, and creativity, many of our youth encounter barriers before they even pick up a pen. This panel explores how all students can own their voice.

## **S137. Mining the Past: Creative Nonfiction in the Archives**

Heather Radke, Sasha Bonét, Jordan Kisner,  
Harrison Hill, Kristen Martin

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Deep inside libraries, museums, and historical societies, boxes of delicately preserved letters, manuscripts, and objects hold intimate stories that can breathe life into investigations of the past. But accessing archives can be intimidating for writers who aren't academics or historians. Five authors who have conducted archival research for diverse creative nonfiction works will discuss how they entered these esoteric spaces and explored the archives in their writing.

## **S138. Unearthed Verse: Lineage-Based Literary Projects as Critical Black Archive**

Tamara Madison, JP Howard, Remica Bingham-Risher, L. Renée, .CHISARAOKWU. .

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel, composed of multigenerational Black women poets/scholars, explores the use of personal family history and genealogical research as inspiration, motivation, and foundation for published writing. Panelists will discuss the critical importance of this work at this time as part of a growing body of literature across the Diaspora that “unearths” archives and venerates ancestry. Panelists will also discuss their process and read excerpts of such work, sharing the research and family history that support it.

**S139. Keeping the Love Alive: Tips & Tricks for Editing the *n*th Draft of Your Novel**

Sally Wiener Grotta, Lisa Rosenberg, Ruth Setton, Elysha Chang  
Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

You've finished your novel, but it needs at least one more edit to make sure your characters, plot, and dialogue are dynamic and your prose sings. However, catching your writing tics, plot holes, trite descriptions, or other problems requires forcing yourself to see your work anew—or sometimes hiring an editor to help you do so. Five novelists discuss what they do when tackling a manuscript for the *n*th time, so they can edit it with fresh eyes and make it the best it can be.

**S140. How to Reach & Enable Incarcerated Artists to Speak Their Truths**

Joyce Hinnefeld, Beth Gylys, Lane Michael Stanley, Dormen Lisby, Matthew Hippen

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center  
Event Category: Pedagogy

To reflect the real, lived experience of incarceration, we must hear directly from those entrenched in that reality. Magnifying incarcerated voices through art is a powerful way to educate and illuminate. Panelists (a filmmaker, an editor, and two formerly incarcerated arts facilitators) will discuss various forms of inside/outside collaborations in which students of writing and the arts can gain knowledge and insight that will help them bring the stories of incarcerated people to light.

**S141. I Could Not Stop for Death: Poets on  
Addiction & Substance Abuse**

Stevie Edwards, Edgar Kunz, Nick Flynn, K. Iver,  
Joan Kwon Glass  
Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

## Event Category: Poetry Readings

The literary world often romanticizes the relationship between writing and substance abuse, but this panel is composed of poets exploring an authentic view of writing about substance abuse and addiction, considering their weighty social and personal tolls. The panel will include poets from a variety of backgrounds exploring their relationships with the topics of addiction and recovery. There will also be a Q&A with a discussion of challenges in writing about substance abuse.

### **S142. Bringing Social Justice into the Writing Classroom**

Thaddeus Rutkowski, Joanna Sit, Randi Hoffman, Thomas Kneeland, Samuel Kolawole  
Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center  
Event Category: Pedagogy

Now more than ever, it is important to bring ideals of social justice and human rights into college classrooms. How will scholarship and community come together to shape the academic landscape for our students? This panel gathers a diverse group of lecturers and professors who focus on the moral component of their writing assignments. Panelists will explain how they integrate ethics and equity into their classroom discussions and will share practical knowledge gained from their experiences.

**S143. Story Game Presses: Pitching, Submissions & Publishing**

Brigitte Winter, Dominique Dickey, Justin Sirois, C. J. Linton, Nat Mesnard

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

In the world of tabletop “story games,” a growing set of small press publishers champion innovative, literary game writing work—and some are even open for submissions. In this panel, independent game publishers will discuss the tabletop game publishing landscape, sharing tips and opportunities for aspiring story game writers. What are the submission conventions? Where can writers meet and build relationships with publishers? Do you need an agent to publish a game? Do you even need a publisher?

**S144. *The Overturning Anthology: A Reading of Fiction, Creative Nonfiction & Poetry***

Christine Rice, Mary Jo Bang, Anne-Marie Oomen, Faisal Mohyuddin, Maya Marshall  
Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Erratics Books, a new imprint of *Hypertext Magazine*, announces the publication of *The Overturning* with a reading of fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry in response to the repeal of *Roe v. Wade*. The thirty-six writers in this anthology address the question of agency with nuance, personal testimony, and imagination through an intersectional lens. They remind us that much more is being overturned, from ecological care to civil and human rights—and more—giving us courage at the crossroads.

### **S145. Tickled Pink: Humor in Queer Poetry**

Mickie Kennedy, James Hall, Kemi Alabi, Topaz Winters, Dorothy Chan

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

For decades, queer poets have used humor as a cutting rhetorical tool. Humor as survival, seduction, subversion. Throwing jokes like

bricks in the face of oppression. This panel will explore humor as a serious element of craft—often overlooked but central to queer poetics. Wit, camp, sarcasm, raunch, gallows humor: What do they do on the page? Pulling from their own work, this panel will explore humor as shield, scalpel, and sucker punch.

### **S146. The Lost Art of Book Reviewing: How to Revive Literary Criticism**

Rajpreet Heir, David Varno, Brooke Champagne, Laurie Muchnick, Susan Shapiro

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

An engaging, intelligent book review has the power to support a writer in today's overcrowded, structurally unequal marketplace. It's also a genre of its own that offers a writer the chance to establish their credibility and try

out analytical skills they otherwise don't use in their creative work. Five widely published writers/critics/editors/professors discuss the art, craft, and practice of book reviewing for literary venues.

**S147. Joy Hell-Bent & Necessary: Poets Rising Up with Humor, Jubilation & Delight**

Nickole Brown, Joseph Lanham, CMarie Fuhrman, Douglas Kearney

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

At such a joy-stealing—even joy-killing—time, what better resistance than, well, joy? We'll discuss joy that doesn't deny pain but engages with it—a moment of delight relished despite the news, an effervescent justice bubbling up in this heavy darkness, or else satire that turns toward the worst to poke fun at it. So, yes, come celebrate. Because joy—like poetry—can

be a transgressive act of justice, of solidarity and survival, a downright refusal to surrender what makes life most worth living.

### **S148. Publishing Reimagined: Fresh Models for a Changing Industry**

Henriette Lazaridis, Jane Friedman, Anjali Duva, Anne Trubek, Kathleen Schmidt

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

It's often said lately that the publishing industry is "broken." But that oversimplification deserves a closer look—not only at what's currently not working, but also and especially at organizations and companies that are finding success through real innovation. Our panel brings together thought leaders from various areas of the industry—publishers, editors, a publicist, and a reporter—to shine a light on

who is bringing fresh new ideas and methods to publishing, and how well they are working.

## **S149. What Would Really Happen? Crafting Scenes Your Readers Believe**

Sophie Stern, Dan Hoyt, Shannon Sanders  
Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Have you ever read a story you just didn't believe? Readers will accept almost anything if you're able to craft a scene that comes to life, but they'll quit a book that feels like a lie. In this panel, we'll explore how we can connect with readers, create vibrant scenes, and bring a story from "fine" to "unforgettable" by asking what a character would actually do if they had a falling-out with their uncle, fell in love with their boss, or stole a backpack full of dynamite.

12:10 PM – 1:10 PM EST

**S150. Meditation for Writers: Fostering Perseverance**

Room 311, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Join award-winning novelist and certified mindfulness teacher April Dávila for a grounding, one-hour dharma talk and meditation. The session will begin and end with fifteen minutes of guided meditation. The middle thirty minutes will explore how mindfulness can help us write more and suffer less. On Saturday, March 7, participants will focus on how compassion practice can help them persevere with their writing.

12:10 PM – 1:25 PM EST

**S151. Writing the Dark of America with Red Hen Press**

Kate Gale, Lily Hoang, Amy Pence, Abrea  
Armstrong, Lara Ehrlich  
Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

When we write dystopian fiction, do we do it to predict, or to avoid, our future? Our panelists have all written about the fracturing of communities that we cannot put back together. How responsible do we feel, as women, as people, to repair what is broken? Do we write these kinds of stories to find solutions, to shine a mirror on the flaws in society, or some mixture of both? Join us as we discuss eating, consuming, and writing the dark of America, and our efforts to turn back toward the light.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **S152. It's Not Okay!**

Erica Lopez, Peter Lechuga, Cherice Cameron,  
Jeffrey Martin

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

“It’s Not Okay” is a poetry event featuring powerful voices speaking out against injustice. These poets will share work about the impact of immigration policies on families, the violence in Gaza, and the pain and frustration so many are feeling. Poets will read about the injustices of our current administration in order to bring light and connect with the audience regarding these issues. Published poets: Cherice Cameron, Peter Lechuga, Clara Roque-Wagner, Erica Castro, and Jeffery Martin.

## **S153. The Tenderness of Truth: Writing About Loved Ones in Memoir**

Nicole Graev Lipson, Nina Sharma, Hyeseung Song, Jill Bialosky, Joel Leon

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Is writing about loved ones always a venture into ethically compromised territory? In this panel, five memoirists question this common assumption as we explore how conjuring a loved one on the page can be, in contrast, an act of profound devotion. Drawing from our own writing about parents, partners, friends, and children, we'll illuminate how working to see a loved one fully, and to render them faithfully in words, is a form of love—and how this love, in turn, can guide one's craft decisions.

**S154. Memory and the Creative Process: Poets & Writers Engaging the Archive**

Jessica C. Neal, Tyehimba Jess, S. Erin Batiste,  
Dorothy Berry, keondra bills freemyn  
Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Archives are not just repositories of the past — they are living sites of memory, resistance, and creative possibility. For many writers, the archive is a space to encounter history directly, to engage with voices and experiences often excluded from dominant historical narratives, and to imagine new futures. This panel will bring together poets from across the Cave Canem ecosystem and archivists to discuss how archival materials shape artistic practice, inform, and are integrated into creative works. Panelists will share experiences of working with personal, community, and institutional archives—from historical manuscripts and photographs to oral histories and ephemera—and explore how these encounters have

influenced their writing. Finally, the panel will illuminate the ways archives can serve as both source and subject, particularly within the context of Black literary traditions.

### **S155. SWANA Writers Caucus – VIRTUAL MEETING**

Pinar Banu Yasar, Aliah Lavonne Tigh, Sophia Babai, Tariq Luthun, Rabha Ashry

Virtual

Event Category: Caucus

This will be a town hall–style meeting, creating a much-needed space for SWANA writers to build and connect within AWP. We invite established and emerging writers, editors, students, scholars, and organizers, and aim for the caucus to facilitate networking and exchange on literary endeavors, craft, publishing, poetics, and praxis. Our caucus seeks to empower and center the voices of

underrepresented Americans with roots in SWANA cultures and communities.

This caucus meeting will take place virtually only. Please email [swanawriterscaucus@gmail.com](mailto:swanawriterscaucus@gmail.com) for details.

## **S156. Reading & Writing in Times of Political Upheaval**

Sheri Booker, Neda Semnani, Mila Sanina, Purvi Shah, Maggie Messitt

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Political upheaval creates challenges for writers: How do we teach controversial topics, share work when traditional channels feel restrictive, and maintain our voices during tense times? This panel examines how writers throughout

history have adapted—journalists creating theater, poets launching zines, educators developing new approaches. Our panelists explore how these strategies can guide today’s writers seeking innovative ways to reach audiences and navigate challenging environments.

**S157. The Blue Pen or the Red Pen? Using Feedback (or Not) to Awaken Your Best Work**

June Gervais, Albert Abonado, Chad Luibl,  
Michelle Whittaker, Tara Propper

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

You’ve just received feedback on your work in progress. Now the discernment begins. Which suggestions should you take? Do you weigh all feedback equally: workshop peers, beta readers, a mentor, an agent, an editor? When is

changing your vision “compromising,” and when is it evolution? Four writers who have published books (and an agent who has sold many)—all with different approaches to revision—discuss practical tips for using feedback to move your draft toward its strongest and truest version.

### **S158. Playing the Comps Game: How Agents & Editors Use Them & How to Choose Them**

Amy Bishop-Wycisk, Dana Murphy, Katya Buresh Wiegmann, Elizabeth DeMeo, Mina Hamedi

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Comparative titles (a.k.a comp titles) are often a point of frustration and confusion for querying authors. So why do they matter? In this panel, two editors and two literary agents will break

down how they use comps, discuss what they look for, and share real-life examples of what has and hasn't worked in the past. They'll also address some common comps questions: Can I use other media as a comp? How old should they be? What if I feel my book has no comps? We'll finish with a Q&A session.

**S159. Fractured Borders: Mapping South Asian Lit in Translation, Sponsored by ALTA**

Gauri Awasthi, Aruni Kashyap, Mahmud Rahman, Rohan Chhetri, Sadia Khatri

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Translation

South Asia, home to hundreds of languages, has only recently gained global literary attention. Contemporary political tensions shape which languages and voices are translated and heard. Five translators working in Assamese, Nepali, Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali share their

experiences navigating the global publishing world and explore the question “What happens to language when it travels?”

**S160. A Return to Our Senses: Strategies for Hands-on Writing in the Poetry Workshop**

Mia Leonin, Shara McCallum, Catherine Bowman, Julia Koets

Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Call it an AI antidote, alternative, or even anarchy—this pedagogical panel is shamelessly and fervently “back to the book.” We will offer strategies and writing exercises that incorporate visual arts techniques such as photography, collage, artist’s books ritual, and intervention to galvanize the poetry writing workshop and reconnect students to the sensorial experience of reading and writing poems.

## **S161. Where Ya at? “Home” in BIPOC Graphic Novels**

Quincy Scott Jones, Shamika Mitchell, Evan Narcisse, Barbara Perez Marquez, Stephen Majors

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

On a distant planet, on a mythical island, in the shadows of the great city. When it comes to the graphic novel, world-building is paramount, but what happens when your main character lives on the margins of this world? How do we fold multiple identities into this world? Through words and images, how can BIPOC artists paint pictures of displacement, dystopia, and gentrification? And what does it take to get these narratives published and read by those that need these stories the most?

## **S162. More than the Sum of Its Parts: Crafting & Revising Your Poetry Manuscript**

Emily Polson, Rosanna Oh, C.T. Salazar, David Groff, Maria Zoccola

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What makes a poetry manuscript more than a collection of recent work? Four poets and a poetry editor discuss the craft of the full-length book, from structure and organization to thematic and narrative throughlines. How do you decide which poems belong, which to cut, and what's missing? How do projects evolve over time? Panelists share insights from writing and publishing collections with presses big and small, also describing the role of peers, mentors, and editors in the revision process.

## **S163. Not Even Past: Teaching the Personal Essay Using Old Texts**

Anastasia Nikolis, Maud McInerney, Ben Pladek,  
Julia Mueller, Lisa Cunningham  
Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center  
Event Category: Pedagogy

Although writers like Sappho and Shakespeare lived centuries ago, their works remain vibrant. Yet, in an age of digital media and declining literature enrollments, proving the relevance of “old books” is challenging, especially to undergraduates. This panel proposes a personal approach—inviting scholars and writers to reflect on intimate encounters with pre-Industrial texts. Topics may include Shakespeare and divorce, Dante and gender, Hippocrates and healthcare, and St. Agatha and embodiment.

**S164. Screenwriting Unlocked: The Smarter (Not Harder) Method for Writing Your Script**  
Taylor Vaughn Lasley, Adrienne Carter

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

Why start from scratch when you can build on success? This dynamic workshop teaches the “scaffolding method” —using existing, successful projects as structural templates for original screenplays. We’ll demonstrate the technique, then lead participants through breaking a TV pilot in real time as a group!

### **S165. Visible & Invisible Baltimores**

Jess Row, Rachel Webster, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Susan Steinberg, Kate Crane

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Crabs, John Waters, and *The Wire*, right?

There’s much more to Baltimore: its central

place in African American and Jewish American history; its role as a port city, a place of transit and passage; its wildly diverse working-class communities; its radical disparities of wealth, influence, and power. On this panel, five writers with Baltimore roots will discuss how their work speaks to the city's complicated and often-misunderstood nature.

**S166. Smart, Scintillating & Unapologetic:  
Badass B\*tches over Sixty**

Kathryn Kysar, Denise Low, Mary Moore Easter,  
Lynette D'Amico, Susan Kiyo Ito

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional  
Development

Five women in their sixties to eighties explore their writing careers as acts of resistance, resilience, and reflection. We will consider the liberations and barriers of aging and how they

are exacerbated or enhanced by the intersectionality of identities from Asian, Black, Queer, and Indigenous perspectives, how our (in)visibility affects publishing, and how the current political climate affects our work in this culture that celebrates the new and the now. Audience involvement included in conversation.

### **S167. Twenty-Fifth-Anniversary Etruscan Press Poetry Reading**

Amanda Rabaduex, Nin Andrews, Tim Seibles, Phil Brady

Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

A reading to celebrate Etruscan Press's twenty-five years of literary publishing, featuring Nin Andrews, Philip Brady, and Tim Seibles, moderated by Etruscan Press Executive Director Amanda Rabaduex. Etruscan is an independent nonprofit press housed at Wilkes University in

Pennsylvania, publishing six titles a year in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, translation, and criticism.

**S168. Carrying on the Tradition: University of Maryland MFA Faculty Reading**

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram, Gabrielle Lucille Fuentes, Joshua Weiner, Rion Scott, Emily Mitchell

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Founded in the late '80s by Stanley Plumly, the University of Maryland MFA has a rich literary history that is carried on by today's faculty. This reading will feature the program's current poets and fiction writers, reading from recent and new material in celebration of the program, and the Plumly memorial digital archive. Faculty will read and discuss their work, experiences, and

history with the program, especially in these challenging times.

**S169. What Stuns, Unsettles, Compels:  
Experiments from *The Lab***

Alice LaPlante, Stewart Shaw, Cindy Tran, W.S. Gong, Matthew Davison  
Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Pedagogy

This generative panel explores how obsession, not genre, should shape a writer's formal choices. Drawing from *The Lab: Experiments in Writing Across Genre*, panelists share strategies for working within the traditional containers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry—or inventing new ones—depending on what the material demands. The focus is on aesthetic force, emotional urgency, and letting form arise from the pressure of the content itself.

## **S170. Literary Influence: Is it Homage or Theft?**

Laura Spence-Ash, Caroline Kim, Jai Chakrabarti,  
Kristina Gorcheva-Newberry, A Bucak  
Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

In this panel, acclaimed writers whose fiction responds to other works will discuss their process, and the benefits, joys, and complexity of the practice of being in conversation with another writer. Both short and long fiction will be discussed. We'll examine the gray area between homage and plagiarism and also discuss the relationship between two works and their interwoven connections, as one writer talks to another, sometimes across great spans of time, cultures, and distances.

**S171. Small Presses Getting Big Attention,  
Sponsored by CLMP**

Xander Gershberg, Caleb Tankersley, Natasha Kane, Rebecca Olander, Sara Arnold  
Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Small presses publish stellar work, but their titles don't often receive the recognition that books from bigger presses do. But what happens when a small press title does cut through the noise? How do publishers build on the attention of well-reviewed and award-winning titles? What benefits does this recognition provide authors and publishers? Editors of small presses will address these questions and share stories of their titles' successes in a challenging literary ecosystem.

**S172. Writer, Interrupted: Writing Through & About Illness**

Jane Delury, Yoojin Grace Wuertz, Chet'la  
Sebree, Hannah Bae, Jessie Chaffee  
Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

While writing involves the life of the mind, we live in bodies that influence and challenge our art—the most able-bodied among us may find ourselves in Susan Sontag’s “Kingdom of the Sick.” Fiction and memoir authors discuss writing through and about long COVID, chronic pain, and autoimmune issues; craft techniques for capturing illnesses that defy conventional narrative structures; and recommended reading and strategies for keeping up a practice, staying connected, and thriving professionally.

1:45 PM – 3:00 PM EST

## **S173. Art Under Threat? The Use of AI in Creative Writing, Sponsored by PEN America**

Vauhini Vara, Ken Liu, Karen Hao

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

The subject of numerous lawsuits, conversational AI bots have been trained on millions of books, without authors' consent. Despite this theft, some authors are utilizing the new technology in their work, from testing plotlines to incorporating the generated text in ways that question its impact on literature and humanity. In this timely discussion, moderated by PEN America Co-CEO, Summer Lopez, bestselling authors Ken Liu (*All That We See or Seem*), Karen Hao (*Empire of AI*), and Vauhini Vara (*Searches: Selfhood in the Digital Age*), examine the ethical considerations, threats, and possibilities in using generative AI.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

**S174. Twice Around a Marriage, a New Novel  
by Pulitzer Laureate Robert Olen Butler**

Robert Olen Butler, Dan Williams

Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Fiction Readings

Married twice and divorced in between, a septuagenarian couple returns to Paris, where they first met half a century earlier, to see if they should divorce yet again or somehow figure out how to once more find and express their love for each other. Since they are both literary types, they decide to emulate the *Decameron* and tell each other stories on alternating nights—stories of their lives

together and apart—as they try to figure out their future even as a twenty-first-century plague passes by.

**S175. Writing Abortion: What Stories Can Accomplish When Rights Are Taken Away**

Tina Vasquez, Gretchen Sisson, Amy Littlefield, Renee Bracey Sherman, Shelley Sella

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

What can writers accomplish in this perilous moment, as rights are taken away? Panelists will share their experiences of writing about abortion and reproductive justice in our post-*Dobbs* world, from the perspectives of an advocate, a reporter, an academic, and a physician. We will explore what we hope our writing will do in the world, whether that be changing hearts and minds, galvanizing a

movement, or chronicling the dangers of this moment.

## **S176. Writing Unashamed: On Resisting Shame & Silencing**

Alison Kinney, Annabelle Tometich, Edgar Gomez, Marcos Gonzalez, Nicole Walker  
Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Many of us write nonfiction to fight the internal and external shame that's suppressed our stories, telling us not to write—or sometimes not to be. Now our stories must be braver than ever against forces seeking to silence us for good. This panel will share our personal stories, and practical tips and strategies, for crafting, sharing, organizing, and refusing to be shamed. Telling the truth helps us become stronger,

braver, and kinder as we resist waves of misinformation, violence, and hate.

**S177. Selling Your Essay Without Selling Yourself: Leveraging Identity in Publishing**

Jacqueline LeKachman, Damon Colquhoun, Alyson Pomerantz, Mark Jason Williams, Emillio Mesa

Room 307, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Five writers spanning multiple sexualities, ethnicities, disability statuses, and generations explore the difference between authentically reflecting on personal experiences and oversharing for publication. We ask questions at the heart of writing personal essays: What does it mean to write your truth? How will future you feel about what you shared with the world? How can you write about your identities

without exploiting the parts of yourself that editors find timely—or shrinking to fit a mold?

**S178. US-México Borderlands Reimagined:  
New Literary Perspectives**

Elise McHugh, Seth Horton, Jose Skinner, Ito Romo, Stephanie Elizondo Griest

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Four writers read from their recently published and republished books in various genres that engage with the US-México borderlands. The panel offers a range of literary representations of this region. This event highlights work that challenges dominant portrayals and brings attention to the complexities of the border in contemporary literature.

## **S179. Permission to Play: Toward a Creatively Limber Writing Practice**

Catherine Pierce, A Bucak, Derrick Harriell,  
Michael Kardos, Nicky Beer

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

Play isn't frivolous, nor is it antithetical to serious and complex work. Rather, it can be an essential part of the creative process. This panel explores how play—through form, subject, voice, the line, and more—can help us stay nimble in our writing, address complicated subject matter, and challenge ourselves and our readers. Panelists will offer concrete strategies to help attendees approach their own work with a fresh and open perspective.

## **S180. From Hard Drive to Big Five: How to Write & Sell a Literary Novel**

Haili Blassingame, Kat Lewis, Alejandro Heredia,  
Eshani Surya, Lai Sanders

Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

In a fiction market dominated by romantasy and big-name authors, it's difficult to get attention as a literary debut. This is especially true for those writing on the margins. This panel brings together 2025–2026 debut writers of color for a candid discussion of writing, revising, and selling a literary novel in today's risk-averse market. Informed by diverse perspectives, these debut writers share actionable insights for the craft of fiction and the business of writing.

**S181. Student Editors & Advisors Caucus  
(formerly FUSE National Caucus)**

Jess Jelsma Masterton, Rachel Hall, Mattie  
Lugar, Elizabeth Bartholomay

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Caucus

This caucus is open to undergraduate and graduate student editors, as well as their faculty advisors and publication supervisors. Our event provides space to discuss the current challenges faced by university-affiliated literary magazines, presses, and publications. It also serves as a networking event, helping build a coalition to advocate for our needs both on and off campus.

**S182. Poetics, Politics & Ethics of Memory, Imagination & Mourning in the Elegy**

Samyak Shertok, Prageeta Sharma, Saddiq Dzukogi, Victoria Chang, Diana Khoi Nguyen  
Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

The conventional (pastoral) elegy opens with lament, rises to praise, and concludes in consolation. But what happens when we're unable to grieve or there's no closure? When the traditional form fails to reflect our grieving experiences, how can we reinvent it? This panel considers the limitations and possibilities of the elegy by exploring the politics of memory and mourning, radical empathy for the problematic loved ones, anticipatory grief, and memory and imagination as the door to the dead.

**S183. Writing Through the Lens: Documentary Filmmaking & Nonfiction Storytelling**

Jodie Childers, Daniel Messina

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

Whether crafting a logline, structuring a narrative, arranging footage through the edit, or composing narration, writing plays a

profound role in all aspects of documentary filmmaking. Because so much of the writing for nonfiction film involves multimodal forms of communication, documentary filmmakers must also be cognizant of the interplay between words, images, and sound. In this panel, two documentary filmmakers explore what it means to write for, with, and through the lens.

## **S184. The Role of Art in Shifting Political Landscapes**

Rachel Louise Snyder, Lawrence-Minh Bui Davis,  
David Taylor, Amy Stolls, Tope Folarin  
Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional  
Development

What role does writing play in a shifting political landscape? How has writing captured such moments historically in the US? What role do arts organizations and arts funders play in this

hyperpressurized moment? What is the importance of a federal agency devoted to supporting art, and what do we lose without it? Join us for a wide-ranging discussion on the state of the arts today. We'll also talk about the urgency of storytelling, the importance of bearing witness, and where we can find hope.

### **S185. Where the Story Happened: Embodied Reading & Literary Pilgrimage**

J.M. Schmidt, Solomon Brager, Zein El-Amine, Aiyah Sibay, Janine Hernandez-Diaz

Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore

Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel explores a decade of immersive literary travel programs in Egypt, Morocco, and Ireland, where participants read books in the places they're set. We'll discuss how place-based pedagogy fosters deep engagement with literature, supports diverse student voices, and

complicates narratives of culture, identity, and belonging. Former students, now writers and educators, reflect on how these journeys shaped their creative and critical lives.

## **S186. Magics, Myths & Realities in the Mississippi Delta**

Katherine Moore, Danian Jerry, Michael Copperman, Sheree Renée Thomas, W. Ralph Eubanks

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Ryan Coogler's cinematic masterpiece *Sinners* brought the history and mythology of the Mississippi Delta to life on the big screen through a celebration of Black culture as well as a critique of whiteness. In this multigenre panel, five writers will read from their respective works to highlight the myths,

magic, and struggles, as well as celebrations of Black culture and critiques of the continuation of whiteness and its violence, within the landscape of the Mississippi Delta.

**S187. Publishing as Community Care & Creative Practice: Beyond the Corporate Gates**

Ariel Gore, Muffy Bolding, Ayun Halliday, Adrian Shirk, China Martens

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Writers face a publishing landscape dominated by five major publishers, but thriving community-centered alternatives offer meaningful pathways that prioritize relationships over corporate metrics. This panel brings together outlaw writers and grassroots-oriented industry professionals who've navigated diverse publishing—from zines to

university presses—showing how community approaches can be more fulfilling and financially sustainable than traditional corporate publishing.

## **S188. Lightning Strikes Twice: Writing & Editing Flash Fiction**

Michael Czyzniejewski, Kim Chinquee, Michelle Ross, Christopher Allen, Kim Magowan  
Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Flash fiction has become a more preeminent form in recent history. As with all genres, it is primarily edited and published by the same people who write it. As flash is still a relatively new form, its current participants are defining what the form is and what it will be. This panel's participants, all successful flash fiction editors and writers, will discuss the challenges

of paving the way for flash, while at the same time succeeding with their own work, and how they balance both endeavors.

**S189. Infect & Inflammation: Intimacies Between Translator & Text, Sponsored by ALTA**

Hannah V Warren, Magdalena Zurawski, John Barger, Miriam Calleja Shaw, Robert Shoemaker  
Room 324, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Translation

Literal translation practices can't hold our source texts' texture. The self infects and inflames translation: We must irritate English to create an effective equivalent. Considering our bodies as translation filters, we discard purity and embrace contamination. Five writer-translators will discuss and read translations from Maltese, German, Italian, Polish, and Spanish that approach intimacy and identity, investigating the blur between self and source.

**S190. The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University: An Eightieth-Anniversary Reading**

Dora Malech, Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, Gina Apostol, Jalen Eutsey, Michael Dumanis

Room 325, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University is the second-oldest degree-granting creative writing program; established in 1947, John Barth was among its first graduates; its founder, Elliott Coleman, presented at the first AWP Conference in 1973. Generations of literary luminaries have shaped and been shaped by the Sems, as its alumni call it. This reading celebrates both the undergraduate and graduate alumni of the program, as well as their influential writing professors and classmates.

**S191. We Inherit Each Other: Inspiration & Disruption in Asian American Poetry**

Ashleigh Kennedy, Joshua Nguyen, Megan Pinto, Anni Liu, Noreen Ocampo

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

The term “Asian American” has been a site of coalition as well as scrutiny since its origin in the sixties. But how does today’s Asian American poetry landscape reflect the ambivalences of this created community? This panel accompanies *Poetry Northwest’s* print folio on this topic in order to create in-person conversation about the creative possibilities and difficulties of writing in response to our histories, our artistic lineages, and other Asian/Asian American artists.

**S192. Forty Years of Joseph Beam’s *In the Life***

Johnnie Kornegay, John Keene, Steven  
Fullwood, Doug Jones  
Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center  
Event Category: Tributes

This panel discussion will commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the publication of the Joseph Beam anthology *In the Life* (Alyson Books, 1986). The panel will bring writers together who have been inspired by and are in conversation with the historic work. The panelists will grapple with the impact of *In the Life*, how the text has inspired their work, and the meaning of *In the Life* in our current moment.

**S193. Going Forward: The Future of Small  
Presses in America**

David Rigsbee, Carey Salerno, Jeffrey Levine,  
Peter Conners, Phil Memmer

Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This panel gathers editors from five prominent small presses—BOA Editions, Tupelo Press, Alice James Books, and Tiger Bark Press—for a frank and forward-looking discussion about how to navigate the changing cultural environment for small presses. Moderated by a member of the Black Lawrence Press advisory board, the panel will offer inquiry and practical insight at a time when independent small presses are needing to regroup. We very much welcome audience participation.

**S194. Building Voices & Community: How to Establish a Youth Poet Laureate Program**

Rachel Morgan, Katherine Lamb-Legrand, Zedeka Poindexter, Saniya Pearson

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Program Development

At the intersection of artistic excellence and civic engagement are youth poet laureates and the founders and coordinators of these regional programs. Program founders and former youth poets laureate discuss their experiences creating, maintaining, and expanding civic and artistic programs. This panel offers insights into networks of support, provides strategies to build sustainable communities, and offers the opportunity to learn about the impact of laureateship on the lives of young poets.

3:20 PM – 4:35 PM EST

**S195. Pulitzer on the Road: Natasha Trethewey & Lucy Sante in Conversation**

Natasha Trethewey, Lucy Sante

Ballroom II, Level 400, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

A conversation on memoir and autobiographical writing between two authors known for their work across multiple literary genres: two-time US Poet Laureate, and Pulitzer Prize–winning poet and nonfiction writer, Natasha Trethewey, and renowned cultural critic, chronicler of subcultural life, and Pulitzer Prize finalist for Memoir in 2025, Lucy Sante. The authors explore how works rooted in personal experience can connect to larger narratives of race, historical erasure, gender, queerness, and class.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

[Read presenters' bios.](#)

## **S196. Narrative Therapy: Unsolicited Press Authors Read from Recent Books**

Summer Stewart, Terrence Tierney, Timothy DeMarco, Anthony DiPietro, Lara Lillibridge  
Bookfair Stage, Hall A-D, Level 100, Baltimore  
Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres  
Readings

Words can be both weapons against tyranny and therapy for the distressed and battle weary, providing solace as well as hope and healing humor. This event features authors with recent releases from Unsolicited Press, a small literary press in the Pacific Northwest. Home to many talented and award-winning writers, Unsolicited Press proudly publishes poetry, fiction, and nonfiction based on merit. The press is woman owned and committed to publishing only women in 2025.

## **S197. The Beautiful Room Is Empty Now: A Tribute to Edmund White**

ALYSIA ABBOTT, Alden Jones, Brian Alessandro, Rakesh Satyal, Alexander Chee

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Tributes

This panel celebrates the groundbreaking career of the late Edmund White. His provocative works of fiction, biography, memoir, and criticism have sparked dialogues on the nature of desire and the self. They also illuminate the history of queer life over the last fifty years, from early gay liberation to the AIDS crisis and its aftermath. As mentor and model, White inspired generations. Five authors—peers, colleagues, and those he mentored—join to discuss his work, life, and enduring influence.

## **S198. Writing Solutions When the World Is on Fire**

K. R. Gaddy, Saumya Roy, Jaisal Noor, Maggie Messitt

Room 302, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Our world is full of problems: economic uncertainty, governments rescinding rights, rising authoritarianism, and accelerating climate disasters. How can we, as writers, tell these stories without succumbing to despair? Four writers discuss how the concepts of solutions journalism can be applied across genres to tell stories that are relevant, grounded, and empowering. They explore how to use this emotional and narrative shift to center pressing issues we face while offering pathways forward.

**S199. Latinx Caucus - VIRTUAL MEETING**

Claudia Castro Luna, Ruben Quesada, Alan Pelaez Lopez, Breena Nuñez, Sonia Guinansaca,  
Virtual

Event Category: Caucus

Latinx writers are becoming increasingly visible in literary spaces. However, there is still work to be done to address inequalities in access, leadership, and visibility. The Latinx Writers Caucus creates space for new, emerging, and established writers of varied Latinx identities to network, reduce isolation, build community, and discuss urgent topics in Latinx literature such as war, undocumented migration, and racial/economic/disability/gender/sexual justice.

This caucus meeting will take place virtually only. Please email [latinxcaucus@gmail.com](mailto:latinxcaucus@gmail.com) for details.

## **S200. Writing in Community: Lessons from a Literary Hub**

Greg Harris, Carolyn Navikonis, Eson Kim,  
Virginia Pye, Porsha Olayiwola

Room 308, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Writing gets depicted as a lonely pursuit—but writers thrive in scenes, building organizations where we connect, launch new writers, and cultivate readers. Panelists representing one of the country’s foremost community-based teaching organizations (GrubStreet), a community-minded literary magazine (*Pangyrus*), a bookstore and creative gathering space in the inner city (Just Bookish), and a respected youth writing and publishing program (826Boston) discuss what it takes to sustain a literary hub.

## **S201. Playful Critique: Classroom Games for Teaching How to Give Feedback**

Brooke Wonders, Bronwen Tate, Ellen Kombiyil,  
Jenni Moody, Annah Browning

Room 309, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Research has confirmed the critical role of play in the teaching of writing—but what about playful feedback? Five professors of creative writing will share play-based strategies for teaching students how to offer compassionate yet constructive feedback to their peers. You'll leave with practical new ways to integrate feedback games into your classroom, including revision labs, generation stations, small-group contracts, and ungrading.

## **S202. So Many Writing Contests, So Little Time: Demystifying the Contest Experience**

Kelly Sather, Nate Marshall, Bobby Elliott, Bill Gaythwaite, Mubanga Kalimamukwento  
Room 310, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

This session will explore all aspects of the contest submission process: how to find them, guidance for deciding which to apply to, submission prep, monitoring and communication, and how to build a good relationship with your publisher. Although there will be a special focus on maximizing a successful submission, attendees need not have won a contest to find the session useful. The panel consists of five contest winners and a judge, and will appeal to both new and mid-career prose writers and poets.

**S203. Walking as Motif, Method & Resistance: Reimagining a New Genre**

Jung Hae Chae, Aube Rey Lescure, Hua Xi, Keya Mitra

Room 314, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Walking—as both act and subject—has inspired writers across genres for generations. From Thoreau and Basho to Sebald, Cole, and Strayed, walking as motif marked the intersection of memory, identity, history, and place. This panel explores the language of walking: why we do it, what it brings to our art, and how it connects to our story and form. In our polarizing world, how might art, language, and movement converge—as a possible new genre—where minds traverse forks our feet alone cannot?

**S204. Writing in Circles: Nurturing the Art in Teaching Artists, Sponsored by WITS Alliance**

Michele Kotler, Daemond Arrindell, Javan Howard, Ellen Hagan  
Room 315, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center  
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writing is considered to be a lonely art form most often practiced in isolation. Writers who teach are no different, adding curriculum development and facilitation to the load of drafting, research, and revision. This panel proposes a more holistic and beneficial alternative: where literary teaching artists maintain their writing practice in community with and among other writers.

**S205. At the Intersection of Writing & Healing:  
Writers in Narrative Medicine**

Joseph Eveld, Maya Sorini, Nicole Robinson, Sayantani DasGupta, Bruce Campbell

Room 316, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Narrative medicine is a discipline practiced in healthcare, education, and beyond gaining national attention. It engages practitioners with literature and writing, as well as other facets of the arts and humanities. This multi-institutional panel of writers, physicians, poets, and scholars will explore the multifaceted role of the writer in narrative medicine practice, focusing on pedagogy and pathways for writers to utilize their skills in narrative medicine and healthcare.

### **S206. Literary Magazine Editing in Uncertain Times**

Emily Mitchell, Kyla Kupferstein Torres, Chinaecherem Obor, Elizabeth Kadetsky, Amy Bonnaffons

Room 317, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

## Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Recent years have brought unsettling changes to the world of literary magazines, including turmoil in public arts funding. Given the complex landscape of rising costs, shifting values, and new forms of reader/contributor engagement, how can literary magazines respond? Editors from publications that regularly place work in the “Best of” anthologies discuss how our current moment is affecting what they do. How do we serve readers, writers, and the larger literary community in these uncertain times?

### **S207. Centering Accessibility: How Virtual Writing Spaces Can Build Strong Communities**

Chibbi Orduna, CD Eskilson, Chloe Feffer,  
Diamond Braxton, K Angel  
Room 318-319, Level 300, Baltimore  
Convention Center

## Event Category: Writing Organizations

Marginalized writers have long been excluded—intentionally and accidentally—from traditional literary organizations, left to make their own accessible spaces to hone a craft and build community. In this panel, leaders from Abode Press, Lambda Literary, Write About Now, and Sundress Publications will discuss how virtual writing spaces can open doors and nurture critical connections within and between marginalized communities, and the importance of designing with accessibility at the center.

### **S208. Unsilenced: Poetic Testimonies of Domestic Violence**

Erin Hoover, Jenny Molberg, Iliana Rocha, Lisa Fay Coutley

Room 320, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Domestic violence, an international crisis, is often overlooked in literary discourse—compounded by the historical and political marginalization of women, queer writers, and writers of color. How can poetic form act as a critical site for resistance and healing? The poets on this panel engage in the nuanced, dangerous, and often isolating craft of unsilencing, offering work that confronts and illuminates the frequently misunderstood and stigmatized epidemic of domestic violence.

**S209. Choose Your Own Adventure: Debut Authors on the Different Paths to Publication**

Ananda Lima, Sonia Feldman, Ankur Thakkar, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, Lacey Dunham

Room 321-322, Level 300, Baltimore

Convention Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Behind the fanfare of a debut, most writers experience their path to publication as tentative and unlikely. This panel of '25 and '26 debut novelists will chart the course from feeling like literary outsiders to finishing, querying, selling, and publishing their first books. With and without an MFA, with and without an agent, with a big press or a small one, with a novel in a drawer—this panel aims to provide helpful, transparent accounts of the winding ways a manuscript becomes a book.

**S210. Mic Drop: Tips on Performance from Page to Stage**

Rosa Castellano, Diamond Forde, Ysabel Gonzalez, Joshua Nguyen, J Ward

Room 323, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

So focused on the craft of writing, many of us forget that the reading of one's own work is also a skill that can be practiced and strengthened. The experienced poets on this panel will discuss how they utilize the stage as a space to create and deepen community as well as offer practical suggestions for incorporating simple performance techniques that poets and writers can use to increase engagement and the reach of their work.

## **S212. The Inheritance We Carry: Memory, Lyric & Making in Diasporic Poetics**

Darius Phelps, Chiwan Choi, Dorothy Chan, R. A. Villanueva, Aiden Heung

Room 326, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

“The Inheritance We Carry” gathers poets whose work traverses diaspora, queerness, and ancestral memory—writers who blend lyricism,

performance, and cultural critique to confront what we inherit and what we choose to break. Through genre-defying poetics and community-rooted pedagogy, this panel explores how lineage, language, and liberation shape both craft and teaching, offering a powerful meditation on writing beyond survival and into joy, resistance, and transformation.

**S213. Chosen Family, Narrative Possibility: The Expansive Literature of Friendship**

Rachel Richardson, Lilly Dancyger, Paul Lisicky,  
Emma Copley Eisenberg, Reena Shah

Room 327, Level 300, Baltimore Convention  
Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft  
& Criticism

Friendships rarely appear as central subjects in stories about adult life, though they are often our sturdiest and longest-lasting bonds. To center friendship is an act of resistance to a

dominant heteronormative narrative. This panel seeks to investigate these under-written relationships. In novels, poetry, and essays, the panel will discuss friendship as a topic worth centering in our creative lives and work, and will explore the generative possibilities in the territory.

### **S214. The Hidden Life of Chapbooks**

Allison Blevins, Benjamin Grossberg, Emily Hockaday, Sarah Cedeno, Jennifer Rouse  
Room 328, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

A chapbook is not just a small book. The chapbook form is a unique tool for exploring marginal experience, allowing a greater range of voices into print and enabling an intensity of focus that might overwhelm in a full-length collection. Though rarely given their due,

chapbooks are a vehicle for experimentation, thematic dives, long-poem publication, and more. Join this panel of authors and editors as they read from their chapbooks and discuss the art of creating and publishing at this length.

**S215. Now More than Ever: Cultivating & Sustaining Writing Communities**

Rebecca Aronson, Emmy Pérez, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Guadalupe Mendez, Lisa Hase-Jackson

Room 329, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Creating and sustaining creative communities is crucial for the success and well-being of writers, but forming and maintaining such communities can be challenging. Writing communities provide opportunities for writers to connect, forge new friendships, and provide resources

for support, positive activism, and inspiration. This panel of experienced organizers will discuss and offer practical tips for building successful live and virtual writing-focused events, reading series, and writing groups.

5:00 PM – 6:15 PM EST

**S216. Sober AWP**

Room 301, Level 300, Baltimore Convention Center

Daily 12-Step Meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

6:00 PM – 7:30 PM EST

**S217. JHU MA in Writing Program Reception**

Federal Hill Room, Fifth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

Students, prospective students, faculty, alumni, and friends, join us for an evening of reconnection and light refreshments.

## **S218. Scarlet Tanager Books Celebrates the Living World**

Gibson Room, Sixth Floor, Renaissance Harborplace Hotel

You are warmly invited to join Scarlet Tanager Books for food, drink, and conversation to celebrate two anthologies: *Attached to the Living World: A New Ecopoetry Anthology* (Trinity University Press, 2025) and *Convergence: Poetry on Environmental Impacts of War* (Scarlet Tanager Books, 2026). Special guests will include Ann Fisher-Wirth and Laura-Gray Street, editors of *Attached to the Living World*; J. C. Todd, co-editor of *Convergence*; and Sean McClain Brown, contributor to *Convergence*.