

## **2026 AWP Conference & Bookfair**

March 4-7, 2026, Baltimore, MD

Baltimore Convention Center

### **Tentative List of Accepted Events for #AWP26**

This list of accepted events for the 2026 AWP Conference & Bookfair is tentative as we wait to receive confirmation from all event organizers and participants. We are also working to ensure that each participant does not participate in more than two events. Event titles and descriptions have not yet been edited for grammar or content. The final conference schedule will be posted later this year.

The list is organized by event style: in-person events (pg. 3) and virtual events (pg. 141). Within these sections, events are separated into panel discussions and readings, then alphabetized by title. Events marked as in-person will be held onsite at the Baltimore Convention Center, and some may include a mix of in-person and virtual presenters. Events marked as virtual will be prerecorded and made available to view on-demand online during the conference and for one month after #AWP26. A select number of in-person events will also be livestreamed on the virtual conference platform, and these events will be released when the full schedule is posted later this year. Please note that due to limited staff and resources, not all in-person events can be livestreamed for virtual audiences.

The AWP Conference & Bookfair reflects the broader literary community, with all of its creativity, passion, and diversity evident on the programming schedule. AWP's mission is to create space for all writers to be represented, and to that end, we are committed to supporting as diverse and inclusive a slate of panels as possible. Each year, AWP assembles an independent

subcommittee to adjudicate proposals, and we use aggregate evaluations to identify the strongest proposals for acceptance onto the conference schedule. We acknowledge that perspectives put forth by individual programs and speakers may not be shared by everyone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AWP Board, staff, literary partners, sponsors, or each conference attendee. For more information about the proposal adjudication process or for information on the subcommittee, please visit the [How Events Are Selected](#) page and the [2026 Conference Subcommittee](#) page.

AWP's conference subcommittee worked hard to shape a diverse schedule for #AWP26, creating the best possible balance among genres, presenters, and topics. Every year, there are a number of high-quality events that have to be left off the schedule due to space limitations. Although the pool of submissions was highly competitive, we did our best to ensure that the conference belongs to AWP's numerous and varied constituencies. From 1,348 proposals, we tentatively accepted 319 events involving more than 1,000 presenters.

Please feel free to contact us at [events@awpwriter.org](mailto:events@awpwriter.org) with any questions you may have about this list. For more information about the 2026 Conference & Bookfair, including information about registration, hotels, travel, or the Bookfair, please visit our [conference website](#).

## **In-Person Events**

### **Panel Discussions:**

#### **40 Years of Joseph Beam's IN THE LIFE**

Johnnie Ray Kornegay III, John Keene, Steven G. Fullwood,  
Doug Jones

In-Person Event

Event Category: Tributes

This panel discussion will commemorate the 40th 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.

#### **50 Years of Gargoyle: A Celebration of Gargoyle Magazine and Richard Peabody**

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **A Lifetime to Write: 50 Years of the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers**

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

In-Person Event

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 non-fiction writing track.

## **A New Era for Translated Literature: Three Indie Publishers Discuss**

Edwin Frank, Adam Levy, Madeleine Nephew,

In-Person Event

Event Category: Translation

From Jon Fosse’s *Septology* to Osamu Dazai’s *No Longer Human* and Vincenzo Latronico’s *Perfection*, translated literature that may have been previously categorized as “esoteric” has found increasing commercial success, due at least in part to BookTok and other literary influencer platforms. Editors from three indie publishers will discuss how this era of “viral” book trends may affect literary translators working today, and what they see as the future of translation and translation publishing.

## **A Psalm for the Wild Teacher: Building Genre Fiction Workshops that Inspire**

Jennifer Pullen, Melanie Dusseau, Dave Essinger, Joy Baglio  
In-Person Event  
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 21st century writers. Genre fiction strategies and knowledge are required in the inclusive teacher's toolkit. 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.

**A Return to our Senses: Strategies for Hands-on Writing in the Poetry Workshop**

Mia Leonin, Shara McCallum, Catherine Bowman  
In-Person Event  
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.

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

Sarah Mullens, Neema Avashia, Steven Carl Dunn, Jr., Catherine Venable Moore, Robert Wood Lynn  
In-Person Event  
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?

### **A Writer's Place Is in a Union**

Nicholas Taylor, Brittany Perham, Tina Ontiveros, Mary Rasenberger,

In-Person Event

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 Author’s 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.

### **Activating the Experimental Impulse: Prompts & Provocations**

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

In-Person Event

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 honour conceptual thinking, ambiguity, not-knowing, deep attentiveness, and surprise as vital elements of creative practice.

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

Christina Chiu, Shelly Sanders, Robin Black, Marcus Burke

In-Person Event

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 50 lb backpack. These award-winning authors share strategies that transform their ADHD "deficit" into a super strength. Come to listen, learn, and troubleshoot strategies for success.

### **Adjunct Writers Caucus**

Mike Spry, Cara Diaconoff, Elizabeth Donald, Joseph Hess

In-Person Event

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.

### **African Diaspora Caucus**

In-Person Event

Event Category: Caucus

More information coming soon.

### **After the Debut: Hope for the best, prepare for the worst**

Annabelle Tometitch, Margaret Juhae Lee, Rosa Kwon Easton, Tomas Moniz, Gloria Muñoz

In-Person Event

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 5, independent, Amazon, small press) share their experiences publishing their debuts and offer practical advice on how they navigated the process.

### **AI and the Editor: Redefining Writer-Editor Collaboration**

Christina Frey, Tenesha Curtis, Linda Ruggeri, Katherine Pickett

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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 21st Century?

### **Anti-Grammar and Other Upside-Down Experiments with Syntax and Usage**

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

In-Person Event

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.

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

Shinelle Espaillat, Rashaun Allen, Gail Upchurch, Jeremy Broyles, Keith O'Neill

In-Person Event

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. 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?

### **Art School Writing Faculty Caucus**

Lee Griffith, Janée Baugher, Jeanette Luise Eberhardy, Nada Gordon

In-Person Event

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.

### **Asian American & Diasporic Caucus**

Devyn Manibo, Neela Banerjee, Gina Chung

In-Person Event

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.

### **Assimilation Blues: Citizenship and Belonging in Indigenous Fiction**

Autumn Fourkiller, Eliana Ramage, Kelli Jo Ford, Brandon

Hobson, Vanessa Lillie

In-Person Event

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, culture, and the work of the diaspora as a whole. While their set 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.

### **At the Intersection of Writing and Healing: Writers in Narrative Medicine**

Joseph Eveld, Nicole Robinson, Bruce Campbell, Sayantani

DasGupta, Maya Sorini

In-Person Event  
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.

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

Chris Feliciano-Arnold, Oona Patrick, Bruna Dantas Lobato, Lee Santos Silva, Casey Walker

In-Person Event  
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

At a time when art and free expression are under attack in the U.S. 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.

**Bad Romance: On Writing Difficult Relationships**

Sam Risak, Liz Harmer, Ira Sukrungruang, Melissa Febos, Elissa Washuta

In-Person Event  
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?

### **Battle for Authenticity: 2-Year College Strategies to Resist AI in the Classroom**

Simone Zelitch, Jessica Lewis, Regina Peters, April Gibson, Kathryn Kysar

In-Person Event

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.

### **Beauty vs. Fidelity: The Poetry Translator's Gamble**

Barbara Hamby, Dzvinia Orlowsky, Andrea Jurjevic, Silvia Valisa, Ariel Francisco

In-Person Event

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.

### **Beyond “Love’s Austere and Lonely Offices” Exploring Robert Hayden’s Other Poems**

Peter Murphy, Joel Dias-Porter, Celeste Doaks, Donna Denize, Cherise Pollard

In-Person Event

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.

### **Beyond Good Intentions: Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning**

Lucy Bryan, Wyatt Bonikowski, Ann E. Green, Raffi Joe Wartanian, Amber West

In-Person Event

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.

### **BEYOND PLATFORM: Growing a Writing Career Without Relying on Social Media**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Think you need thousands of followers to build a writing career? This diverse panel of successful multi-genre and multi-ethnic 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.

### **Beyond the Creative-Scholarly Divide: Advocacy in an Era of Academic Scarcity**

Sara Schaff, Kristiana Kahakauwila, Kathleen "Katie" Peterson, Sara Schaff, Kiese Laymon

In-Person Event

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.

### **Beyond the Debut: Writers on the Long Game of Writing**

Jung Yun, Angie Kim, Angie Cruz, Jimin Han, Mitchell S. Jackson

In-Person Event

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.

### **Beyond The Literary Reading: Performance As Possibility and Community**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Moving off the page and through the body, five multi-genre 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 more expansive, liberatory creative practices.



## **Beyond the Picket Sign: Writer's Tools to Create Social Change**

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Book Design: From Scroll to Codex & Print Production**

Nicole Baxter, Dede Cummings, Lantz Arroyo

In-Person Event

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Book Design can sometimes be confusing and overwhelming for writers, editors, and publishers. The Book Design Panel and Tutorial will detail the history of book design with a slide show 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.

## **Book Reviews and Literary Community: Why Criticism Continues to Matter**

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

In-Person Event

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.

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

Chibbi Orduna, Anel Flores, Gume Laurel, III, jo reyes-boitel

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Queer Latinx writers chart the shifting terrain of masculinity, femininity, and non-binary 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.

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

Nadia Ghasedi, Niki Herd, Adrian Matejka, Julie Swarstad  
Johnson, Aditi Machado  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Bringing Social Justice into the Writing Classroom**

Thaddeus Rutkowski, Samuel Kólawólé, Thomas Kneeland,  
Joanna Sit, Randi Hoffman  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Building the House: The Importance of A Community for Muslim Writers**

Safiya Khan, Sara Bawany, Amal Kassir, Salma Mohammad  
In-Person Event

## Event Category: Program Development

House of Amal is in its fifth year of community programming, teaching, mentorship, and publishing. Amidst 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 re-crafting our 12-month Writers Residency curriculum and membership programming.

### **Building Voices and Community: How to Establish a Youth Poet Laureate Program**

Rachel Morgan, Katherine Lamb-Legrand, Zedeka Poindexter  
In-Person Event

Event Category: Program Development

At the intersection of artistic excellence and civic engagement are Youth Poet Laureates, 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.

### **"Bullet in the Brain": Creative Writers on Book Criticism**

Grace Talusan, Joanne Diaz, Rebecca Morgan Frank, Marie Myung-Ok Lee, Anri Wheeler

In-Person Event

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, and fiction writers at different stages of their careers who all engage in book criticism.

### **By Hook or By Crook: Communicating Solidarity During Intellectual Suppression**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Pedagogy

Since the 2025 inauguration, the U.S. 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 & perform solidarity with students despite existential and financial threat. As writers we navigate multiple audiences simultaneously, and will discuss a variety of strategies, such as bodily visual rhetoric, coded language, and strategic assignments.

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

Aubrey Hirsch, Shay Mirk, Sanika Phawde, Yifan Luo

In-Person Event

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.

### **Caucus for K-12 Creative Writing Education**

Allison Campbell, Molly Sutton Kiefer

In-Person Event

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.

### **Centering Accessibility: How Virtual Writing Spaces Can Build Strong Communities**

K Angel, chloe feffer, Chibbi Orduña, Turi Sioson, CD Eskilson

In-Person Event

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.

## **Choice and the Lyric Body**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Panelists of diverse backgrounds will engage in a craft-based discussion about how the choice to be child-free 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 multi-genre work, along with craft tips about tone, the lyric I, and how to challenge stock narratives of caregiving to include communal and ecological stewardship.

## **Choose Your Own Adventure: Debut Authors on the Different Paths to Publication**

Bruna Dantas Lobato, Sonia Feldman, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, Lacey N. Dunham, Ankur Thakkar

In-Person Event

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.

## **Chosen Family, Narrative Possibility: The Expansive Literature of Friendship**

Rachel Richardson, Lilly Dancyger, Tomas Moniz, Kirstin Chen, Paul Lisicky

In-Person Event

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.

## **Collaborative Translation: Creativity and Praxis, Sponsored by ALTA**

Cynthia Hogue, Nancy Naomi Carlson, Mary Jo Bang, Katie Farris, Farid Matuk

In-Person Event

Event Category: Translation

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

## **Coworking Communities: Publishing the Literary Magazine with Students**



Kurt Milberger Milberger, Amanda Ellard, Karen Babine, Veronica Perez, Caroline Laganas

In-Person Event

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.

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

Kerry Graham, Annie Marhefka, Laura Weiss, Carla Du Pree, Emily Ross

In-Person Event

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 & community engagement. Learn from an array of Maryland-based arts organizations how they're defying the "crabs in a pot" metaphor to power forward together.

### **Craft Across Borders: Writers with Immigrant Roots Discuss Craft**

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Craft Lessons from Yiddish Poetry**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Modern Yiddish poetry is one of the most dynamic, daring, and complex bodies of global literature from the 20th 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.

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

CD Eskilson, Nic Anstett, Luna Rey Hall, Diamond Braxton, Zefyr Lisowski

In-Person Event

## 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.

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

Andrea Ballou, Gary Glasner, Martha Collins, Glecia Tatum

In-Person Event

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.

### **Cropping our Lives: Sustaining a private life in a public vocation**

Krissy Kludt, Annie Wenstrup, J. Drew Lanham, Michael Kleber-Diggs

In-Person Event

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.

### **Crying Laughing: Black Authors on Writing Satire, Surrealism, and the Absurd**

Charles Stephens, John Vercher, Deesha Philyaw, Joy Priest, Maurice Ruffin

In-Person Event

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.

### **Cuentistas in Comunidad: Creating Spaces for Stories, Connection and Resistance**

Adrian Gaston Garcia, Adriana M. Martínez Figueroa, Carlota Roby, Cynthia Via, Dahlia Aguilar

In-Person Event

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.

### **Cultural Realities: Blurring Barriers of Magic Realism and Genre Expectations**

Mary Leauna Christensen, Arielle Taitano Lowe, Chandanie Somwaru, Kalilinoe Detwiler, m.s. RedCherries

In-Person Event

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 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.

### **Debut Poets Speak: Five Writers on Bringing Their First Books Into the World**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

As poet Brenda Shaughnessey once said, “you only get one first book.” In this panel, five award-winning poets publishing debuts in 2025-2026 discuss the high-stakes and often anxiety-inducing 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.

### **Debuting After 50**

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

In-Person Event

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 50. 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?

### **Democratizing Writing: First-Gen Perspectives on Class, Access, and Academia**

Kimberly Grey, Allison Pitinii Davis, Rosanna Young Oh, Jose Hernandez Diaz, Joy Priest

In-Person Event

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, non-hierarchical literary communities.

### **Disabled and D/deaf Writers Caucus**

Cade Leebron, Jess Silfa

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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 masterclass in keeping academic discourse alive in a choose-your-own-adventure-novel-gone-wrong landscape that only comes from facing the dreaded policy manual.

## **Don't Box Me In! Crossing Genres and Defying Categorization**

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

In-Person Event

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.

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

Luanne Smith, Carmen Machado, Connie May Fowler, Lily

Burana, Parneshia Jones

In-Person Event

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.



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

Estelle Erasmus, Dionne Ford, Katie Henken Robinson, Dennis James Sweeney

In-Person Event

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.

## **Drawn to Dissent: Graphic Forms as Cultural Critique**

Robert James Russell, Kelcey Ervick, Tom Hart, Aubrey Hirsch, Sharon De La Cruz

In-Person Event

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.

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

Lexi Rosen, M.M. Carrigan, Rita Mookerjee, Aaron Burch, Jeremy Schraffenberger  
In-Person Event  
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.

**Editors of Color: the Political and Personal, Sponsored by CLMP**

Gerald Maa, George Abraham, Emilio Carrero, Marcelo Hernandez Castilla, Kyla Kupferstein Torres  
In-Person Event  
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.

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

Aishvarya Arora, David Haydon, Zoe Tuck, Brian Teare,  
In-Person Event

## Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Chapbooks have a countercultural history & democratizing ethic. This panel of poets, editors, & publishers discuss the challenges & 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 & contribute to an essential, living archive of work by queer, BIPOC, and feminist authors.

### **Environment, Locale, Identity: Setting in Contemporary American Literature**

Donna Hayes, Anesa Miller, Lora Chilton, Lawrence Coates, Lee Martin

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Failed! Honest Talk About Failure and the Writing Life**

Paisley Rekdal, Carol Edgarian, Rick Barot, Beth Ann Fennelly  
In-Person Event

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.

### **Finding New, True Literary Sounds**

Lissa Soep, Leila Nadir, DJ Johnson, Sharif Youssef, Shawn Wen  
In-Person Event

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.

### **Finding Wild Anywhere: Bring Your Writing Workshop Outdoors**

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

In-Person Event

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

### **Flashes of Truth: A Celebration and Examination of the Flash Essay Form**

Rae Pagliarulo, Lilly Dancyger, Zoe Bossiere, Jane Wong, Ira Sukrungruang

In-Person Event

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 over-explanation 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 1,000 words, and how to make every one of those words pull its weight.

**Fractured Borders: Mapping South Asian Lit in Translation,  
Sponsored by ALTA**

Gauri Awasthi, Aruni Kashyap, Rohan Chhetri, Sadia Khatri,  
Mahmud Rahman

In-Person Event

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?

**From Contract to Successful Launch: The Key to a  
Collaborative Book Launch**

Kevin Atticks, Jessie Glenn, Deborah Jayne, Katey Schlutz,

In-Person Event

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Baltimore publisher, Kevin Atticks, heads up a 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 marketing teams. 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 publicity are typically done by an external publicist or a marketing & events specialist versus a publisher?

## **From Hard Drive to Big Five: How to Write and Sell a Literary Novel**

Haili Blassingame, Kat Lewis, Eshani Surya, Lai Sanders,  
Alejandro Heredia

In-Person Event

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.

## **From Isolation to Coalition: Reimagining Literary Arts Centers**

Leslie Taylor-Grover, Nina Adel, Masha Shukovich, Daemond Arrindell, Nikkisha Napoleon

In-Person Event

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.

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

Amanda Montell, Kate Kennedy, Melissa Lozada-Oliva, Nora  
McInerney, Andrea Dunlop  
In-Person Event  
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 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.

### **From Panel to Print: Three Book Projects that Originated at AWP**

David Olsen, Chloe Martinez, Lisa Van Orman Hadley, Lyzette Wanzer, Eric Freeze  
In-Person Event  
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 panels with something similar in mind? What if the 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.

### **From Short Story to Novel**

Aaron H. Aceves, Lucas Schaefer, Santiago Jose Sanchez, Sam Sax, Bobuq Sayed



In-Person Event

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 standalone 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.

### **FUSE National Caucus**

Jess Jelsma Masterton, Elizabeth Batholomay, Matelyn Lugar

In-Person Event

Event Category: Caucus

How do we create, build, and sustain undergraduate literary magazines? How do we garner greater technical, administrative, and financial support? What editorial skillsets are most important, and how do we engage with the larger publishing scene? Come meet other undergraduate writers, editors, and designers, and discuss the many opportunities and resources available to support you and your team.

### **Game Changer: Literary Queer Sports Writing**

Kasey Peters, Holly Wendt, Jade Song, John Fram

In-Person Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Join three fiction writers in a discussion and celebration of writing queer desire on the field—or in the rink and 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.

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

Caroline Hagood, Jiwon Choi, NaBeela Washington, JP Howard, Tariq Shah

In-Person Event

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.

### **"Genre" By Any Other Name: What Literary Writers Can Learn From Genre Fiction**

Latifa Ayad, Misha Rai, Sophia Khan, Sakinah Hofler, Charli Spier

In-Person Event

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 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.

### **Getting Real in MG and YA Fiction: Writing with Honesty, Nuance, and Heart**

Kimberly Behre Kenna, Ona Gritz, Kalela Williams, Gume Laurel III, Laura Shovan

In-Person Event

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.

### **Global Words in a Time of Crisis: Guernica, Adi and AAWW in dialogue**

Shze-Hui Tjoa, Nimmi Gowrinathan, Kiana Karimi, Jafreen Uddin, Angie Cruz

In-Person Event

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.

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

Sharon Dolin, Yerra Sugarman, Elliott BatTzedek, Ava Winter,  
Donna Spruijt-Metz

In-Person Event

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?

### **Going Forward: The Future of Small Presses in America**

David Rigsbee, Carey Salerno, Peter Connors, Jeffrey Levine,  
Philip Memmer

In-Person Event

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.

## **Going It Alone: Paths to a Book Contract Without an Agent**

Kristi Osorio, Bonnie Chau, Lisa Factora-Borchers, Lindsey Webb, Patrycja Humienik

In-Person Event

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.

## **Gritty and Dirty: Writing Plot**

Annie Liontas, Emma Copley Eisenberg, Liz Moore, Camille Acker, Sara Novic

In-Person Event

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.

## **Growth Spurts: How Parenting Changes Poetics**

Conor Bracken, Blas Falconer, Erika Meitner, Camille Dungy,  
Katie Condon  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Haints, Haunts, & Other Shape Shifters**

Sarah Stone, Beth Alvarado, Lillian Howan, Judy Juanita, Mary McLaughlin Slechta  
In-Person Event  
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, shapeshifters, 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.

### **Hard to Get: How Queer and BIPOC Poets Use Allusions to (Re)write the Culture**

Jennifer Chang, Jenny Johnson, Brandon Som, francine harris,  
In-Person Event

## 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.

## **Here Goes the Neighborhood: Hyperlocal Literature for Art and Action**

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Here To Stay: Black YA Novelists Telling the American Story Their Way**

Michelle Coles, Bethany C. Morrow, Kim Johnson

In-Person Event

Event Category: Children’s & Young Adult Literature

This panel features three award-winning African American novelists, who through a mix of fantasy, contemporary and historical fiction, create authentic spaces for Black youth to shine as multidimensional characters in the American story. Exposing readers to characters from different cultural backgrounds can lead to a shift in perspective which creates space for honest conversations and healing. Every child deserves to see themselves in literature, and these authors' embody that right.

### **How Form Informs the Form: Received & Original Forms in Manuscript Organization**

Donna Vorreyer, Lesley Wheeler, Taylor Byas, Chris Santiago, Rebecca Lehmann

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **How to Reach and Enable Incarcerated Artists to Speak Their Truths**

Joyce Hinnefeld, Michael Anguille, Beth Gylys, Dormen Lisby, Lane Stanley

In-Person Event

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.

### **"I Wish to Speak to the Dead": The Craft of Historical Imagination**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Join four celebrated LGBTQ historical & SFF writers for a practicum on historical worldbuilding 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.

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

KT Herr, Mary Gannon, Stephen Motika, Lisa Willis, Ryo Yamaguchi

In-Person Event

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 anti-mission 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.

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

Benjamin Warner, Benjamin Warner, Ronald Tanner, Rion Amilcar Scott, Fran Wilde

In-Person Event

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 worldbuilding 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.

### **In Their Own Voice: The Student-Centered K-12 Creative Writing Classroom**

Christopher Shipman, Rosalyn Spencer, Brad Richard, Andy Young, Annell Lopez

In-Person Event

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.

### **Indigenous Aboriginal American Writers Caucus**

Abigail Chabitnoy, Mary Christensen, Michaela RedCherries

In-Person Event

Event Category: Caucus

Indigenous writers & scholars participate fluidly in AWP by teaching & directing affiliated programs, working as independent writers/scholars, in language revitalization, & 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.

**Infect & Inflamm: Intimacies Between Translator & Text,  
Sponsored by ALTA**

Hannah V Warren, Miriam Calleja, John Wall Barger, Robert Eric Shoemaker, Magdalena Zurawski

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

**"Inspired by a True Story": Fusing Fact and Fiction From Headlines to History**

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

In-Person Event

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?

### **Is My Book Too Much? Publishing and Marketing Queasy Literature**

Samuel Ashworth, Catherine Dang, Monica Prince, Daria Lavelle

In-Person Event

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.

### **It Takes 2 to Make a Poem Go Right: Collaboration in Poetry**

Dustin Brookshire, Denise Duhamel, Ben Kline, Nicole Tallman, Caridad Moro-Gronlier

In-Person Event

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 100+ year tradition, panelists will discuss collaborative techniques and craft used to co-write a single poem to writing an entire book, and they'll share how collaboration has impacted their own writing.

### **It's More Than the Pencils: How Baltimore Writer-Educators Protect Literacy**

Kerry Graham, Ashley Elizabeth Evans, Katia D. Ulysse, Wallace Lane

In-Person Event

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.

### **It's Political, But It's Not Political Art**

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Jewish Writers Caucus**

Jessica Jacobs, Margot Singer, Lauren Grodstein, Josh Rolnick,  
In-Person Event

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.

### **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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Keeping the Love Alive: Tips & Tricks for Editing the nth Draft of your Novel**

Sally Wiener Grotta, Elysha Chang, Ruth Knafo Setton, R.L. Maizes, Lisa Williamson Rosenberg

In-Person Event

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 dialog 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 nth time, so they can edit it with fresh eyes and make it the best it can be.

### **Kithship: A dialogue with Asian diasporic poet-scholars**

Jasmine An, Carlina Duan, Sumita Chakraborty, Jeddie Sophranus, Jennifer S. Cheng

In-Person Event

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?

### **Latinx Caucus**

Claudia Castro Luna, Breena Nuñez, Sonia Guiñansaca, Alan Pelaez Lopez, Ruben Quesada

In-Person Event

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.

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

Karen Schubert, Philip Memmer, Joel David Lesses, Michael Khandelwal

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **LGBTQ Publishing Professionals on Queer Books**

Maggie Cooper, Jules Wernersbach, Ezra Kupor, Amelia Possanza, Larissa Pienkowski

In-Person Event

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

In this panel, an editor, two agents, 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.

### **LGBTQ Writers Caucus**

Erin Sharkey, Davi Gray

In-Person Event

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.

### **Liberated Spaces: Black-Owned Publishers and Booksellers Speak!**

Mikael Awake, Haki Madhubuti, Kassahun Checole, Paul Coates, Char Adams

In-Person Event

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.

### **Lightning Strikes Twice: Writing and Editing Flash Fiction**

Michael Czyzniejewski, Kim Chinquee, Christopher Allen, Michelle Ross, Kim Magowan

In-Person Event

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.

### **Literary Afterlives: Estates, Archives, and Stewardship**

Suzanna Tamminen, Sarah Yake, Peter Gizzi, Lauri Scheyer,  
Sarah Sawyer

In-Person Event

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.

### **Literary Influence: Is it Homage or Theft?**

Laura Spence-Ash, Ayse Papatya Bucak, Jai Chakrabarti, Kristina Gorcheva-Newberry, Caroline Kim

In-Person Event

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 grey 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.

### **Literary Magazine Editing in Uncertain Times**

Emily Mitchell, Gerald Maa, Elizabeth Kadetsky, Kyla Kupferstein Torres, Chinaecherem Obor

In-Person Event

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 which regularly place work in the Best-of anthologies discuss how our current moment is impacting what they do. How do we serve readers, writers and the larger literary community in these uncertain times?

### **Literary Podcasting and the Critical Conversation**

Dan Kois, Deesha Philyaw, Lauren Wethers, Michele Moses, Matthew Buckley Smith

In-Person Event

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.

## **Literary Podcasting: A New Sonic Space**

Jessica Hendry Nelson, Bethanne Patrick, Dawnie Walton, Elena Passarello, Trey Burnart Hall

In-Person Event

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?

## **Little Magazines in Urgent Times: Editing for Community and Change**

Carlie Hoffman, Gerald Maa, Hannah Bonner, Dora Malech, Keetje Kuipers

In-Person Event

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 Poetry Northwest will discuss curation, editorial life, and how to start a journal.

## **Living Truth: The Life and Legacy of Nikki Giovanni, a Tribute Reading**

Nikki Fragala Barnes, Britny Cordera, Dominique Wilson, Amy Alvarez, Kendra N. Bryant Aya

In-Person Event

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.

## **Making An Old Thing New: Research, Relics and Resurrection in Poetry and Fiction**

Remica Bingham-Risher, Dolen Perkins-Valdez, Princess Joy L. Perry, Tim Seibles, Afaa Michael Weaver

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The five Black writers here craft works that engage in radical re-imagining and re-visioning. 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 counter-narratives, 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.

## **Making Tactile Literary Devices**

Ebony Flowers, Dawn Wing, KC Councilor

In-Person Event

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 book-making practices in this hands-on and participatory panel. Attendees will receive a take-home toolkit for classroom application.

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

Thaddeus Rutkowski, Gloria Mindock, Diane Goettel, William Burleson, Linda Kleinbub

In-Person Event

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.

## **Material Encounters: On teaching the multimodal**

Carlina Duan, Kelly Hoffer, Anna Lena Phillips Bell, kathy wu, Sarah Minor

In-Person Event



## 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?

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

Lana Spendl, Samrat Upadhyay, Marianne Villanueva, Yang Huang, Olga Zilberbourg

In-Person Event

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.

### **Mic Drop: Tips on Performance from Page to Stage**

Rosa Castellano, Diamond Forde, Joshua Nguyen, Ysabel González, Junious "Jay" Ward

In-Person Event

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

### **Mining the Past: Creative Nonfiction in the Archives**

Heather Radke, Kristen Martin, Harrison Hill, Jordan Kisner, Sasha Bonét

In-Person Event

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.

### **Mizna Presents: "HUNA-Writing Resistance in the Now"**

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

In-Person Event

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 & slow thinking. As SWANA writers, how might disrupting normative

western expectations around craft & 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.

### **More Than Memory: the Art of Jewish Storytelling in Creative Nonfiction**

Kenning JP García, Jonathan Penton, Hannah Cohen, Michael Ian Black, Jessie Askinazi

In-Person Event

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 non-fiction. Panelists will exhibit examples of Jewish creative non-fiction 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.

### **More than Ourselves: Re-Organizing Publishers after NEA Cuts, Sponsored by CLMP**

Neela Banerjee, Moheb Soliman, Stephen Motika, Jen Acker

In-Person Event

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

The recent cancellation of NEA grants amounts to a potential loss of over \$1 million for more than 50 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.

### **More Than the Sum of Its Parts: Crafting and Revising Your Poetry Manuscript**

Emily Polson, Maria Zoccola, Rosanna Young Oh, David Groff, C.T. Salazar

In-Person Event

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 what 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.

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

Cynthia Reeves, Michael Martone, Rachel Cantor, Laura Bonazzoli, Sidik Fofana

In-Person Event

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.

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

Dorsía Smith Silva, Jennifer Maritza McCauley, Kimberly Reyes, Vincent Toro

In-Person Event

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.

### **No Pants? No Problem: "Planners" Share Their Outlining Processes**

Brian Gresko, Miranda Beverly-Whittemore, Melissa Febos, Sakinah Hofler, Lina Maria Ferreira Cabeza-Vanegas

In-Person Event

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 "offroading," and open first drafts leading to beat sheets. Plus our love of art supplies!

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Not Even Past: teaching the personal essay using old texts**

Anastasia Nikolis, Ben Pladek, Maud Burnett McInerney

In-Person Event

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 health care, and St. Agatha and embodiment.

## **Nourishing Our Cities with Poetry: PNW city laureates on programs and engagement**

Marie Marchand, Marie Marchand, Mery Smith, Jennifer Passaro  
In-Person Event  
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.

**Now More Than Ever: cultivating and sustaining writing communities**

Rebecca Aronson, Lisa Hase-Jackson, Emmy Pérez, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Lupe Mendez  
In-Person Event  
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.

**Now More Than Ever: The Vital Need for Literary Centers in These Uncertain Times**

Michael Khandelwal, Arleta Little, Shawn Girvan, Karen Schubert, Marceline White

In-Person Event

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Literary centers play an increasingly vital role in the literary community, in the age of massive cuts in universities & 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 & those without traditional access to literary programs & education, including at-risk populations, all while providing teaching & mentorship opportunities for MFA program graduates.

**On Our Own Terms: First-Generation Immigrants Writing about Asia**

Shubha Sunder, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, M Lin, Grace Shuyi Liew, Dur e Aziz Amna

In-Person Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Four writers discuss how their perspectives as first-generation Asian immigrants inform their work. How do they write about home and diaspora, especially when some cultures and political worlds are very different from the US? What stories “travel well” and which meet resistance? How much do they translate, linguistically and culturally? Writers from China, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Singapore share how they navigate the shifting sands of cultural politics while hewing to their voices and vision.

**On the Ethics of Writing Violence: A Roundtable Discussion**

Julija Sukys, Wes Jamison, David Griffith, Krystal Sital

In-Person Event

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  
\*remaining vigilant regarding the dangers of appropriating or exploiting tragedy and the dead.

### **On the Up and UP: Debut Authors Publishing with University Presses**

Ashley Anderson, Samantha Edmonds, Bailey Gaylin Moore, Sebastian Paramo, Laura Chow Reeve

In-Person Event

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.

### **One Hundred Faces of the Beloved: Forms and Features of the Ghazal**

Samyak Shertok, Eman Hassan, Raena Shirali, Jacqueline Osherow

In-Person Event

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, playful yet profound “ghazal spirit”, while tracking the evolution of the form from ancient to contemporary. It also pays a tribute, on the 25th anniversary of his death, to Shahid who brought the ghazal to the US.

### **Our Brave Stories: Writing Diverse Mental Health Narratives**

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Our Unique Brains: Neurodivergent Writers Share Strategies**

Samantha Paige Rosen, Emily Farris, Eshani Surya, Alex Alberto, Kristine Esser Slentz

In-Person Event

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.

### **Penning Resistance from Empire's Margins: DMV writers on radical art's power**

Rion Amilcar Scott, Kivel Carson, Arielle Cole Heiman, Christiana McClain, Taina Patmore

In-Person Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Emerging writers living at the margins of empire, both physically and positionally, in conversation with acclaimed fiction author and MD native Rion Scott on possibilities in radical art in times like these. 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.

### **Permission to Play: Toward a Creatively Limber Writing Practice**

Catherine Pierce, Nicky Beer, Ayşe Papatya Bucak, Michael Kardos, Derrick Harriell

In-Person Event

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.

### **Picture Writing Inside Out: Four Women on Making Comics**

Jesse Lee Kercheval, Kelcey Ervick, Amy Kurzweil, Ebony Flowers

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Playful Critique: Classroom Games for Teaching How to Give Feedback**

Brooke Wonders, Jennifer Lauren Moody, Ellen Kombiyil,  
Bronwen Tate, Kathryn Kysar

In-Person Event

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.

## **Playing the Comps Game: How Agents & Editors Use Them & How to Choose Them**

Amy Bishop-Wycisk, Mina Hamed, Elizabeth DeMeo, Caroline Bleeke, Annie Hwang

In-Person Event

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Comparative titles (aka comp titles) are often a point of frustration and often confusion, for querying authors. So why do they matter? In this panel, two editors & two literary agents will break down how they use comps, what they look for, & 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.

## **Poetics, Politics, and Ethics of Memory, Imagination, and Mourning in the Elegy**

Samyak Shertok, Victoria Chang, Diana Khoi Nguyen, Saddiq Dzukogi, Prageeta Sharma

In-Person Event

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.

## **Poetry & Revolution: How Black and Brown Oral Tradition Creates Active Literacy**

Vania Gutierrez, Aleah Bradshaw, Sainey Ceesay, Julissa Emile,

In-Person Event

Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel will explore Youth Speaks' 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.

## **Poetry and Poetics of War**

Alen Hamza, Suji Kim, Julia Kolchinsky, Valzhyna Mort, Armen Davoudian

In-Person Event

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.

### **Poetry and the Sacred**

James Davis May, Megan Pinto, Hayan Chara, Jared Harél

In-Person Event

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Daily, we hear about 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.

### **Poetry at the Intersection of Science, Ethics, and Care**

Nina Peláez, Issam Zineh, M. Cynthia Cheung, M.D., Randall Mann

In-Person Event

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.

### **Poetry from Nosotros: Bilingual Poetry Craft & Criticism**

Manuel Iris, Jennifer Rathbun, Christian Gomez Olivares,  
Mauricio Espinoza

In-Person Event

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 and 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.

### **Poetry in Translation: Sound and Musicality Around the World, Sponsored by ALTA**

Sergio Waisman, Kristin Dykstra, Karen Elizabeth Bishop, Anna Deeny Morales

In-Person Event

Event Category: Translation

Can sound and musicality be translated? Taking cues from their translations of poetry from India, Chile, Cuba, and Argentina, 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 & sexuality in the translation of poetry?

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

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

In-Person Event

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 to podcasting—has impacted 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.

### **"Pop Quiz, Hot Shot: Why Pop Culture Matters in Our Writing"**

Melissa Johnson, Gary Jackson, W. Todd Kaneko, Leah Umansky, Maria Zoccola

In-Person Event

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?

### **POV Sluts**

Nic Anstett, Megan Milks, Ploi Pirapokin, Mariah Rigg, Jeffrey Xiong

In-Person Event

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.

### **Prose, Poetry, and Play: Game Design as a Literary Practice**

Nat Mesnard, Sharang Biswas, Dave Ring, Erin Roberts, Brigitte Winter

In-Person Event

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?

## **Publishing as Community Care and Creative Practice: Beyond the Corporate Gates**

Ariel Gore, Muffy Bolding, Tomas Moniz, Ayun Halliday, Adrian Shirk

In-Person Event

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.

## **Publishing Reimagined: Fresh Models for a Changing Industry**

Henriette Lazaridis, Anjali Duva, Jane Friedman, Anne Trubek, Kathleen Schmidt

In-Person Event

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.

## **Queer Nostalgia in Fiction**

Christopher Tradowsky, Greg Hewett, David Nikki Crouse, Raki Kopernik

In-Person Event

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.

## **Queer+ Ekphrasis: Investigations and Celebrations**

Nicky Beer, jason b crawford, Blas Falconer, Brenda Shaughnessy, Ava Winter

In-Person Event

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.

## **Reading and Writing in Times of Political Upheaval**

Sheri Booker, Neda Toloui-Semnan, Mila Sanina, Purvi Shah,  
Maggie Messitt  
In-Person Event  
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.

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

Arleta Little, Carla Du Pree, Lisa Willis  
In-Person Event  
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 to find strength and courage in connection amidst pervasive uncertainties and the realities of accelerating and ongoing organizational change.

### **Rewriting Stories that History Forgot**

Sandra Simonds, Matt Bell, Maurice Carlos Ruffin, Rebecca Lehmann  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Rooted and Rising: Comunidad Latina Literary Kinship in the DC/Maryland Scene**

Ofelia Montelongo, Lupita Aquino, Patricia Coral, Lorena Ortiz  
In-Person Event

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.

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

David Johnson, Veronique MacRae, Masha Dowell, Jordan Mims  
In-Person Event

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.

### **Said and Unsaid: Crafting Silence in Poetry**

Allison Adair, Sandra Lim, Randall Mann, Gabrielle Bates,  
In-Person Event

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.

### **Screenwriting Unlocked: The Smarter (Not Harder) Method for Writing Your Script**

Taylor Vaughn Lasley, Adrienne Carter

In-Person Event

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!

## **SCRIPT CURIOUS: How Book Writers Can ‘Beat Their Own Path’ into Screenwriting**

Elizabeth Searle, David Shields

In-Person Event

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

Shields & Searle—co-writers on the feature film *I’ll Show You Mine* (Duplass Bros.)—discuss segueing into scripts & analyze popular scriptwriting templates. Searle cracks open the “Nutshell Technique” & McGee’s *STORY* (a book that Shields finds ‘useless’). Shields deconstructs Freytag’s pyramid (7 beats), Aristotle’s 3-acts (14 beats) & Syd Fields’ 7 beats (5 in Shields’ version). Learn how two book writers ‘beat the odds’ into feature film writing & how they find ways to “beat the beats.”

## **Sea Creatures, Space, and Words: Discovering New Subject Matter While Parenting**

Catherine Pierce, Catherine Simone Gray, Beth Kander, Derrick Harriell, charity e. yoro

In-Person Event

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).



## **Selling Your Essay Without Selling Yourself: Leveraging Identity in Publishing**

Jacqueline LeKachman, Alyson Pomerantz, Mark Jason Williams, Damon Colquhoun

In-Person Event

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?

## **Shapeshifting: Visions of Resurgence in Indigenous Art-Poetry**

Kalilinee Detwiler, Kenzie Allen, Abigail Chabitnoy, Heid E. Erdrich, Kimberly Blaeser

In-Person Event

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 shapeshift.

## **Shaping the Narrative—African Literature for a Global Audience**

Adedayo Agarau, Romeo Oriogun, Mubanga Kalimamukwento, Tramaine Suubi

In-Person Event

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 honour 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.

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

Cristina Deptula, Karma Bennett, Joe Biel, Terena Bell, Natalie Obando

In-Person Event

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.

## **Slow Down: Patience, Poetry, & Poets**

David Baker, Kimiko Hahn, Jill Bialosky, Linda Gregerson,  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Small Presses Getting Big Attention, Sponsored by CLMP**

Xander Gershberg, Sara Arnold, Natasha Kane, Rebecca Olander, Caleb Tankersley  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Smart, Scintillating, and Unapologetic: Badass B\*tches over 60**

Kathryn Kysar, Lynette D'Amico, Mary Moore Easter, Susan Kuyo Ito, Denise Low  
In-Person Event

## Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Five women in their 60s-80s 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 impacts our work in this culture that celebrates the new and the now. Audience involvement included in conversation.

### **Smiling at The End of the World: Why Dystopian Fiction Gives Us Hope**

Ciera McElroy, Sequoia Nagamatsu, Joy Baglio, Michelle Min Sterling, Brenda Peynado

In-Person Event

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.

### **So Many Writing Contests, So Little Time: Demystifying the Contest Experience**

Kelly Sather, Nate Marshall, Bobby Elliott, Mubanga Kalimamukwento, Bill Gaythwaite

In-Person Event

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, & 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 & mid-career prose writers and poets.

### **"So What's Your Book About?": A Branding Mini-Clinic**

Nanda Dyssou, Wylín Wilson, Marion Orr, Avgi Saketopoulou, Marlene Daut

In-Person Event

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.

### **Somos Xicanas - Échale Tu Canto**

Xochitl-Julisa Bermejo, Brenda Vaca, Angela Trudell Vasquez, Luz Schweig, Dahlia Aguilar

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The X in Xicana is the vital confluence of past with future marked by our present voices. 80 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” editor, Luz Schweig writes 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.

### **Speculating the Machine: How Fiction Writers are Rendering a New AI Reality**

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Spoiler Alert: I Know How This Story Ends**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

How do you craft story endings that resonate long after the final page? Published novelists and short story writers dissect the mechanics of a story’s final moments. From circling back to the start to turning everything upside down, we’ll explore the choices

a writer faces in ending a story—when to tie up loose ends, where to leave questions lingering, and how to honor a narrative's promise. Join for an intimate look at the elusive craft of transforming good endings into unforgettable ones.

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

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

It is imperative that social justice novels live anew on stage. This panel explores the stage adaptation of Keenan Norris' 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, it models the transformative power of collective performance in bringing social justice narratives from page to stage.

### **Startup Literary Centers on Campus: Years 1 and 5**

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

In-Person Event

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 the early stages of their journeys and the impacts on their communities.

### **Story Game Presses: Pitching, Submissions, and Publishing**

Brigitte Winter, Dominique Dickey, C. J. Linton, Justin Sirois, Nat Mesnard

In-Person Event

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?

### **Strange Estrangement: SWANA Writers on Family, Home and Belonging**

Barrak Alzaid, Jameelah Lang, George Abraham, Sarah Aziza, Leila Christine Nadir

In-Person Event

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

This panel of SWANA nonfiction writers explores family estrangement: from going “no contact” with relatives to forced separation from ancestral homelands. As U.S. discourse normalizes cutting ties, we examine how war, occupation, and colonialism uniquely impact our region. Spanning Palestine, the Persian Gulf, 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.

### **Succession: the Drama of Lit Nonprofit Leadership Change**

Janine Harrison, Erin Elizabeth Smith, Jan Beatty, Holly Brians Ragusa, Karen Schubert

In-Person Event

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.

### **Sustaining and building robust literary partnerships**

Michael Welch, Maya Marshall, Rebecca Makkai, Gina Chung, Taylor Lena McTootle

In-Person Event

Event Category: Writing Organizations

In celebration of their tenth 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.

### **SWANA Writers Caucus**

Pınar Banu Yaşar, Aliah Lavonne Tigh, Tariq Luthun, Sophia Babai, Rabha Ashry

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Teaching Writing Despite "AI": The non-coercive rearranging of desire**

Shana Youngdahl, Arisa White, Kate Schapira, Éireann Lorsung  
In-Person Event

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.

## **The Art and Craft of the Craft Book**

Jehanne Dubrow, Matt Bell, Jason Schneiderman, Gayle Brandeis, Heidi Czerwiec  
In-Person Event

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?

## **The Art of Editing Translations: Exploration and Guidance, Sponsored by CLMP**

Jennifer Kronovet, Michelle Gil-Montero, JD Pluecker, Johannes Göransson, Aditi Machado

In-Person Event

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.

### **The Beautiful Room is Empty Now: A Tribute to Edmund White**

Alysia Abbott, Alexander Chee, Brian Alessandro, Rakesh Kumar Satyal, Alden Jones

In-Person Event

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.

### **The Blue Pen or the Red Pen?: Using Feedback (or Not) to Awaken Your Best Work**

June Gervais, Chad Luibl, Albert Abonado, Michelle Whittaker,  
Tara Propper

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

You 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.

### **The Classroom as a Site of Freedom: Emergent Strategy, Transgressive Possibility**

Helen Betya Rubinstein, Sonya Bilocerkowycz, Catina Bacote,  
Bureen Ruffin, Alejandro Heredia

In-Person Event

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 re-imagining, 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, & resisting censorship & capture.

### **The Doctor Is In: Creative Writers on Healing and Medical Humanities**

Hadara Bar-Nadav, Jude Tochukwu Okonkwo, Kate Daniels,  
Owen Lewis, Yael Shinar  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **The Essay for Writers Who Work in Multiple Genres**

Kyle Minor, Joe Oestreich, Bailey Gaylin Moore, Phong Nguyen, Dini Parayitam  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **The Flash Nonfiction Editors Roundtable: Advice from the EICs**

Steph Liberatore, Jill Christman, Hattie Fletcher, Vonetta Young, NaBeela Washington

In-Person Event

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, In Short, and The Offing 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.

### **The Hidden Life of Chapbooks**

Allison Blevins, Jen Rouse, Emily Hockaday, Sarah Cedeño, Benjamin Grossberg

In-Person Event

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 which 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.

### **The Inheritance We Carry: Memory, Lyric, and Making in Diasporic Poetics**

Darius Phelps, Dorothy Chan, Chiwan Choi, Aiden Heung, R.A. Villanueva

In-Person Event

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.

### **The Lost Art of Book Reviewing: How to Revive Literary Criticism**

Rajpreet Heir, Susan Shapiro, Brooke Champagne, Ellie Eberlee, Laurie Muchnick

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

An engaging, intelligent book review has the power to support a writer in today's overcrowded, structural 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.

### **The Lyric We**

Taije Silverman, Ilya Kaminsky, Constance Merritt, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Eleanor Wilner

In-Person Event

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 our lives, through community. Examining the plural voice, we will celebrate friendship, as it has shaped and sustained both words and worlds.

### **The New Embodied Lyrics of Wild Wild Tech**

Jennifer Steinorth, Erika Meitner, Katherine Yang, Urayoan Noel, kathy wu

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Digital networks, IT and computational technologies riddle 21st 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 reconsider IT's place in contemporary lyric genres—to illuminate & reimagine IRL entanglements.

### **The New Literary Salon: Substacks and Podcasts for Writers**

Christine Sneed, Kelly Daniels, Katie Gee Salisbury, B. Sharise Moore, John Paul Scotto

In-Person Event

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.

### **The Role of Art in Shifting Political Landscapes**

Rachel Louise Snyder, Amy Stolls, David Taylor, Lawrence-Minh Bui Davis,

In-Person Event

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 hyper-pressurized 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.

### **The Sacred and the True: An Interreligious Panel on Spirituality and Nonfiction**

Heather Lanier, Sofia Ali-Khan, Joanna Eleftheriou, Marco Wilkinson, Courtney Zoffness

In-Person Event

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.

### **The Tenderness of Truth: Writing About Loved Ones in Memoir**

Nicole Graev Lipson, Hyeseung Song, José Leon, Nina Sharma, Jill Bialosky

In-Person Event

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.

### **The Third Book of Poetry**

Monica Ferrell, Donika Kelly, Natalie Eilbert, Megan Fernandes, Phillip B. Williams

In-Person Event

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 or confident, or may offer space where a poet truly finds their subject, engaging in experiment and play. Five poets discuss how third books work and their experience of writing one.

## **Thinking With and At Scale: A Poetics for Planetary Crisis**

Julie Choffel, Henk Rossouw, Sueyeun Juliette Lee, Judy

Halebsky, Julie Choffel

In-Person Event

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 towards 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.

## **"This Is a Time for Mistral": 80 Years Since Gabriela Mistral's Nobel Prize**

Emilia Phillips, M. Soledad Caballero, Anna Deeny Morales,

Claudia Cabello Hutt

In-Person Event

Event Category: Tributes

Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral (1889–1957) won the Nobel Prize in Literature 80 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.

### **Tickled Pink: Humor in Queer Poetry**

Mickie Kennedy, James Allen Hall, Kemi Alabi, Topaz Winters,  
Dorothy Randall Gray

In-Person Event

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.

### **Towards Text: Film, Painting and Performance As Routes into Writing**

Elisabeth Houston, Cathy Linh Che, Gabrielle Civil, Jackie Wang,  
Serena Chopra

In-Person Event

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.

### **Trans Publishers, Then and Now**

Casey Plett, Luke Sutherland, Oliver Fugler, Emily Zhou, Jack Thompson

In-Person Event

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.

### **Translating the Dead, Sponsored by ALTA**

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

In-Person Event

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 (eg. "the brilliant dead author"). We will also give practical advice on acquiring translation rights and engaging with estates—often essential elements of translating a non-living writer's work.

### **Twist!: New Directions for Teaching Poetic Turns**

Michael Theune, Kim Addonizio, Kim Noriega, Alexis Sears, Matthew Olzmann

In-Person Event

## 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.

### **Two Year College Creative Writing Caucus**

Stephanie Lindberg, Mary Lannon, Magin LaSov Gregg, Regina McMorris Peters

In-Person Event

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.

### **Un/Holy Acts: Religious Violence, Sacred Texts, and Religious Poetry**

Donovan McAbee, Jessica Jacobs, James Davis May, Tess Taylor, Faisal Mohyuddin

In-Person Event

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.

### **Unearthed Verse: Lineage Based Literary Projects as Critical Black Archive**

Tamara Madison, Remica Bingham-Risher, JP Howard,  
Chisaraokwu Asomugha, L. Renée

In-Person Event

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel, comprised of multi-generational Black women poets/scholars, explores the use of personal family history and genealogical research as inspiration and foundation for writing and published projects. Panelists will discuss the critical importance of this work as part of a growing body of literature across the Diaspora that “unearths” archives and venerates ancestry. Panelists will share their process and read excerpts of such work sharing the research and family history that support it.

### **Unsung Voices: Developing Reading Series and Inclusive Events in Libraries**

Jonathan Wittmaier, Nari Kirk, Sophia Tarin, Gabriella Reznowski,  
Allison MacFarlane

In-Person Event

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.

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

Ali Terese, Erin Becker, Nashae Jones, Meg Eden Kuyatt, Ashley Granillo

In-Person Event

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.

### **Visible and Invisible Baltimores**

Jess Row, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Susan Steinberg, Rachel Jamison Webster, Kate Crane

In-Person Event

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.

### **Walking as Motif, Method, and Resistance: Reimagining a New Genre**

Jung Hae Chae, Aube Rey Lescure, Hua Xi, Keya Mitra,  
In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Walking—as both act and subject—has inspired writers across genres for generations. From Thoreau and Bashō 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?

### **We Inherit Each Other: Inspiration and Disruption in Asian American Poetry**

Ashleigh Kennedy, Anni Liu, Megan Pinto, Joshua Nguyen,  
Noreen Ocampo

In-Person Event

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

The term “Asian American” has been a site of coalition as well as scrutiny since its origin in the 60s. 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.

### **What Stuns, Unsettles, Compels: Experiments from The Lab**

Alice LaPlante, Matthew Clark Davison, Stewart Shaw, Cindy Tran, WS Gong

In-Person Event

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.

### **What Would Really Happen? Crafting Scenes Your Readers Believe**

Sophie Stern, Shannon Sanders, Gene Kwak, Daniel A. Hoyt, In-Person Event

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.

## **When "Normal" is Overrated: Writing About Disability and Chronic Illness**

Lisa Levy, Emily Rapp Black, Carter Sickels, Sara Nović, Greg Marshall

In-Person Event

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 non-disabled people enjoys? This panel features writers who have created work from both inside and outside the disabled body.

## **Where the Story Happened: Embodied Reading and Literary Pilgrimage**

Johnna Schmidt, Zein El-Amine, Aiyah Sibay, Janine Hernandez-Diaz, Solomon Brager

In-Person Event

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.

## **Where Ya At?: "Home" in BIPOC Graphic Novels**

Quincy Scott Jones, Barbara Perez Marquez, Steve Majors, Evan Narcisse, Kiara Valdez

In-Person Event

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 artist 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?

## **Whose story is it anyway? A framework for writing (or not writing) the "other"**

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Why Do We Write?: A Multi-Disciplinary Exploration of Our Initial Drive to Write**

Elisa Gabbert, Robert Pinsky, Lloyd Schwartz, Kerry Malawista  
In-Person Event

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, psychoanalytic and critical work, this conversation interrogates the complex forces behind our creative beginnings.

### **Widening the Bridge of Ekphrasis: Writing the Saturation Poem**

Jennifer Jean, Michelle Whittaker, Melissa Studdard, Cornelius Eady, Kelli Agodon

In-Person Event

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.

### **Women's Caucus**

In-Person Event

Event Category: Caucus

More information coming soon.

## **Words from the Deep, Dark, Woods: Using Fairy Tales as Foil and Fuse**

Elline Lipkin, Jessica Q. Stark, Emily Perez, Kate Bernheimer, Oliver De La Paz

In-Person Event

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 myth to process grief, explore emigration and culture, question gender, power, and neurodivergence, while using the familiar as a palimpsest to write something new.

## **Writer Seeks Mentor: Finding and Fostering Mentorships Beyond Academia**

Lauren Fath, EJ Levy, Shara McCallum, Crystal Rivera, Tyler Mills

In-Person Event

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.

## **Writer, Interrupted: Writing Through and About Illness**

Jung Yun, Hannah Bae, Jessie Chaffee, Krys Lee, Yoojin Grace Wuertz

In-Person Event

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; recommended reading; and strategies for keeping up a practice, staying connected, and thriving professionally.

## **Writing Beyond the Mother Tongue**

Samuel Kórlawólé, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, Ali Araghi, Karol Lagodzki

In-Person Event

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.

## **Writing from the Big Brain: Somatic, Spiritual & Visionary Writing Pedagogies**



Amy Bonnaffons, Helen Betya Rubinstein, Sofi Thanhauser,  
Daniella Toosie-Watson  
In-Person Event  
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.

### **Writing Gender-based Sexual Violence Is Difficult Enough, So How Do We Teach It?**

Sue William Silverman, Nicole Walker, Karen Michelle Otero, Jill Christman, Brooke Champagne  
In-Person Event  
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?

### **Writing Humor for an Online Audience with McSweeney's Internet Tendency**

Lucy Huber, Kristen Mulrooney, Carlos Greaves, JiJi Lee

In-Person Event

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.

**Writing In Circles: Nurturing the Art in Teaching Artists,  
Sponsored by WITS Alliance**

Michele Kotler, Ellen Hagan, Daemond Arrindell, Javan Howard

In-Person Event

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 amongst other writers.

**Writing in Community: Lessons from a Literary Hub**

Virginia Pye, Eson Kim, Carolyn Navikonis, Greg Harris

In-Person Event

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.

### **Writing Into Our Ancestors' Voices for a 21st-Century America**

Jill Bialosky, Sophie Cabot Black, Elise Paschen, Major Jackson

In-Person Event

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.

### **Writing Long in the Age of the Quick Take: The Art of the Expansive Essay**

Amy Monticello, Nicole Graev Lipson, Heather Lanier, Melissa Faliveno, Sejal Shah

In-Person Event

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 longform-friendly journals, and hold readers' attention.

## **Writing Solutions When the World is On Fire**

Kristina Gaddy, Jaisal Noor, Saumya Roy, Maggie Messitt, Jean Guerrero

In-Person Event

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.

## **Writing Through the Lens: Documentary Filmmaking and Non-fiction Storytelling**

Jodie Childers, Dan Messina, Jodie Childers

In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **Writing Unashamed: On Resisting Shame & Silencing**

Alison Kinney, Nicole Walker, Marcos Gonzalez, Annabelle Tometich, Edgar Gomez

In-Person Event

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.

## **Readings:**

### **25th Anniversary Etruscan Press Poetry Reading**

Amanda Rabaduex, Tim Seibles, Nin Andrews, Shanta Lee, Philip Brady

In-Person Event

Event Category: Poetry Readings

A reading to celebrate Etruscan Press's 25 years of literary publishing, featuring four Etruscan Readers: Nin Andrews, Philip Brady, Shanta Lee, and Tim Seibles, moderated by Etruscan Press Executive Director Amanda Rabaduex. Etruscan is an independent non-profit press housed at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania, publishing six titles a year in poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, translation, and criticism.

### **A Laboratory for Innovative Storytelling: the Goucher MFA in Nonfiction**

Randon Billings Noble, Neda Toloui-Semnani, Sheri Booker, Amrita Sengupta

In-Person Event

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

The Goucher M.F.A. 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 its founding in 1997, alumni have published over 300 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.

## **Architectures of FuturoPasados & Untouchable Voices: Mānoa Reading & Discussion**

Subramanian Shankar, Anthony Cody, Anushiya Ramaswamy,  
heidi andrea restrepo rhodes

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Mānoa 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.

## **Auntie, Outsider**

Nina Sharma, Christina Cha, Prachi Gupta, Hyeseung Song

In-Person Event

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?

## **Books that Refuse to Behave: Readings in Autotheory**

lauren samblanet, Sarah Rosenthal, Val Witte, Leora Fridman,  
A.W. Strouse

In-Person Event

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 mashups. 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.

### **Carrying on the Tradition: University of Maryland MFA Faculty Reading**

Lillian-Yvonne Bertram, Emily Mitchell, Rion Amilcar Scott, Gabrielle Fuentes, Joshua Weiner

In-Person Event

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.

### **Celebrating 20 Years of Torch Literary Arts**

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

In-Person Event

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.

### **Celebrating Sinister Wisdom, a Multicultural Lesbian Literary Journal, at 50**

Julie R Enszer, JP Howard, [sarah] Cavar, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, Jenny Factor

In-Person Event

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.

### **Character Crisis: When the Surreal Becomes Our Reality**

Diana Marie Delgado, Mónica-Ramón Ríos, Shayla Lawz, Claudia Morales

In-Person Event

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?

### **Childfree and Childless Women Writers: Writing Against Gender Norms**

Stevie Edwards, Christina Stoddard, Kai Coggin, Brenna Womer, Jane Huffman

In-Person Event

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 de-centering motherhood in discussions of womanhood.

### **Come as You Are: Writers with ADHD**

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

In-Person Event

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: Essays on 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 mid-life revelations; and go beyond traditional writing advice to find practices that work for us.

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

Sabina Khan-Ibarra, Eirinie Carson, Tara Dorabji, Grace Loh Prasad, Betty Shamieh

In-Person Event

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

### **Divergent Writers: A New Bloomsbury Anthology on Disability and Ableism**

Christie Collins, Saul Lemerond, Leigh Camacho Rourks, Said Shaiye, Celeste Schueler

In-Person Event

Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

The newly published Bloomsbury anthology, titled *Divergent Writers*, comprises essays by 19 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.

### **Foothills, Bays, and Freeways: Mid-Atlantic Poets**

Alyse Bense, Jona Colson, Leona Sevic, Joseph J. Capista  
In-Person Event

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.

### **Home, Belonging, and Agency in Diasporic Fiction**

Serkan Gorkemli, Nawaaz Ahmed, Elysha Chang, Roohi Choudhry, Daniel Tam-Claiborne  
In-Person Event

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.

### **I Could Not Stop For Death: Poets on Addiction and Substance Abuse**

Stevie Edwards, Joan Kwon Glass, Nick Flynn, K. Iver, Edgar Kunz

In-Person Event

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 and A with a discussion of challenges in writing about substance abuse.

### **Joy Hellbent and Necessary: Poets Rising Up with Humor, Jubilation, and Delight**

Nickole Brown, Joseph Drew (J. Drew) Lanham, CMarie Fuhrman, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Tim Seibles

In-Person Event

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.

### **Magics, Myths, and Realities in the Mississippi Delta**

Kat Moore, W Ralph Eubanks, Sheree Renée Thomas, Danian Jerry, Michael Copperman

In-Person Event

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 multi-genre panel, five writers will read from their respective works to highlight the myths, magic, 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.

### **Poets Duel with AI: LLMS VS. POETS**

Vincent Cellucci, Ronaldo Wilson, Annelyse Gelman, Ian Hatcher, In-Person Event

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.

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

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

In-Person Event

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.

## **The Anthony Hecht Prize: A Twentieth Anniversary Reading**

Anna Lena Phillips Bell, Austin Allen, Geoff Brock, Erica Dawson, Julia Thacker

In-Person Event

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.

## **The New Bioregional “Feel Guides”: Integrating Art, Ecology, and Poetry**

Elizabeth Bradfield, Kamella Cruz, Ian Ramsey, Marybeth Holleman, CMarie Fuhrman

In-Person Event

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.

## **The Overturning Anthology: A Reading of Fiction, Creative Nonfiction and Poetry**

Christine Maul Rice, Mary Jo Bang, Faisal Mohyuddin, Anne-Marie Oomen, Maya Marshall

In-Person Event

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.



## **The Watering Hole Poetry Reading**

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

In-Person Event

Event Category: Poetry Readings

This reading celebrates both the written and oral traditions, featuring fellows of The Watering Hole Poetry Org. Founded in 2013 by fellows of Cave Canem South workshops, TWH has grown into a vibrant community with over 300 fellows and more than 1,000 program participants, reshaping the literary landscape of the U.S. South. This reading showcases the depth and power of that transformation, as The Watering Hole continues to foster kinship among poets of color across generations, styles, and form.

## **The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University: An 80th Anniversary Reading**

Dora Malech, Michael Dumanis, Gina Apostol, Joanne Leedom-Ackerman, Jalen Eutsey

In-Person Event

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.

**Twenty Years of PoemoftheWeek.com**

Andrew McFadyen-Ketchum, Brian Turner, Ruth Ellen Kocher,  
Lee Herrick, Monica Prince  
In-Person Event  
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 20 years, POW is coming to print. Twenty Years of PoemoftheWeek.com will be the first major collection to showcase the evolving voice of 21st-Century American poetry. Join us for a special celebration of POW's 20-year legacy with a reading by a diverse and dynamic lineup of award-winning and emerging poets.

### **U.S.-México Borderlands Reimagined: New Literary Perspectives**

Elise McHugh, Stephanie Elizondo Griest, D. Seth Horton, Ito Romo, José Skinner  
In-Person Event  
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Four writers read from their recently published and republished books in various genres that engage with the U.S.-Mexico 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.

### **Unsilenced: Poetic Testimonies of Domestic Violence**

Erin Hoover, Lisa Fay Coutley, Michelle Menting, Iliana Rocha,  
Jenny Molberg  
In-Person Event

## 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.

### **Writers of Bilad Al-Sham: A Reading for Palestine and Syria**

Sara Bawany, Salma Mohammad, Amal Kassir

In-Person Event

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.

### **Writing Abortion: What Stories Can Accomplish When Rights Are Taken Away**

Tina Vasquez, Gretchen Sisson, Amy Littlefield, Renee Bracey Sherman, Shelley Sella, MD

In-Person Event

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.

### **Writing Impermanence**

Erica Watson, Monica Macansantos, Bathsheba Demuth, Anna Cabe, Chris La Tray

In-Person Event

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.

### **Writing Local: Complicating Place and Perceptions of Hawai'i**

Misty Sanico, Wing Tek Lum, Scott Kikkawa, Christy Passion, Donald Carreira Ching

In-Person Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Although much has changed since the publication of James Michener's *Hawaii*, Hawai'i is still treated by mainstream media as a one-dimensional paradise while the communities here are

depicted as caricatures or ignored entirely. In this event, panelists from a variety of backgrounds will discuss the ways in which they engage with Hawai'i as more than setting and complicate perceptions of the islands through their work, challenging stereotypes and stigmas.

## **Virtual Events**

### **Panel Discussions:**

#### **Breaking the Fifth Wall: Insights from Readers and Fans - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Cristina Deptula, Dr. Nicole Peeler, Elwin Cotman, Vaishnavi Patel, Rotem Rusak

Virtual Event

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 co-creation that helps us embrace nuance and expand our moral/empathic imaginations.

#### **Creative Writing Through Crisis: English and Writing Studies Program Development - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Rebecca Davis, Katie Manthey, Edyta Oczkowicz

Virtual Event

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.

### **Editing is my Superpower: how editorial internships Shape Writers - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kelly Grey Carlisle, Karen Babine, Jennifer Case, Devon Bellamy  
Virtual Event

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 litmag alumni examines experiential learning in literary editing, its effect on students' development as writers, and best pedagogical practices to support that development.

### **How Reading and Writing Fantasy Can Make Us Better Humans - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Dr. Nicole Peeler, Elwin Cotman, Vaishnavi Patel, Rotem Rusak  
Virtual Event

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 worldbuilding 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 imagination.

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

Jim Moreno, Billiekai Boughton, William Harding, Joseph D. Milosch

Virtual Event

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This virtual poetry workshop consists of three published Vietnam Veterans & 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 do's and don'ts are addressed in this gathering. Publishing and self-publishing choices are also recommended.

### **Just Say No, Cyrano: How to Break Out, Break In and Yuk It Up Like It's Your Job - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kathy Berardi, Richard Walter, Julie Ann Sipos

Virtual Event

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.

### **Latinx Digital Poetics: Resistance Through Joy - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Camilo Loaiza Bonilla, Alex Saum-Pascual, Brent Ameneiro, Joshua Escobar

Virtual Event

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. Panelists share digital pieces from The Los Angeles Review's forthcoming 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.

### **Orcs, Morlocks, Avatars, and the Urban Fantastical - VIRTUAL EVENT**

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

Virtual Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

We're a panel of academics and writers of urban fantasy, historical fantasy, and steampunk writers 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.

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

Kimberly Nixon, Nancy J. Fagan, Susan Coventry, Kimberly Nixon, Linda Paul

Virtual Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

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

### **Publishing Price Tags: Publishing Models (And What Each Will Cost You) - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Madison Johnson, Justin Branch, Rose Friel Conway, Stacy Ennis

Virtual Event

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Navigating the publishing world with so many options and business models is overwhelming. Whether you're seeking an agent for a traditional deal, self-publishing, or exploring with hybrid publishers, it's an open secret — there's always a cost to publishing. During this panel, publishing professionals with diverse backgrounds will explain the difference between different publishing options and answer the question nobody wants to talk about: How much does it really cost to publish a book?

## **Radical Resilience: CALYX Inc.'s First 50 Years as a Women's Literary Collective - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Gressa New, Beth Russell, Brenna Crotty, Debbra Palmer

Virtual Event

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.

## **Somos CALMA: A conversation across migratory border writing in the Southwest - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Ricardo Bogaert, Frank Davila, Ricardo LaFore, Irene Blea

Virtual Event

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, 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.

## **Story Skeleton: The Method Behind the Magic - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Carmen Craig, Michelle Barker, David Brown

Virtual Event

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Story structure relates to the psychological appeal of narrative, that which engages readers and builds in them a desire to know what will happen next. A strong structure creates emotional draw in the reader. It makes them care—and that's our number one job as authors. In this session, we'll deconstruct some well-known novels to demonstrate how malleable story structure can be. We'll also discuss the elements of a strong novel to make sure we have included them in our own manuscripts.

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

Kathy Berardi, Richard Walter, Julie Ann Sipos

Virtual Event

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.

## **Thinking Small, Writing Large: Moving Between Short and Long Forms - VIRTUAL EVENT**

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

Virtual Event

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 discuss the strategies and rewards of tackling the expansiveness of the novel.

### **What makes metaphors human? - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Abhaya Gurumurthy, Rachel Genn, Pritika Nehra, Eesha Kumar,  
Rolla Das

Virtual Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In the face of AI generation and evaluation of figurative language across poetry, prose and non-fiction, 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.

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

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

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.

### **Women Poets Inventing and Embracing Forms - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Kathleen McClung, Alexis Sears, Dawn Angelicca Barcelona, Julie Kane, Maw Shein Win

Virtual Event

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 whole-hearted, 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.

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

Ian Schimmel, Amaranth Borsuk, Allen Romano, Katy Gero, Danny Snelson

Virtual Event

Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel explores how students might engage AI not as a neutral tool but as a site of resistance and creative mischief. Rather than aid, AI becomes something to glitch, parody, or push into contradiction. Panelists will share classroom experiments that position AI as provocateur or adversary, asking how such confrontations can deepen student agency and reimagine the act of writing.

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

Emily Young, Nova Ren Suma, A.S. King, Emily X.R. Pan  
Virtual Event

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.

### **Writing with disabilities: how to make the most of your spoons - VIRTUAL EVENT**

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

Virtual Event

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Are you a writer with disabilities or chronic health issues? Come hang out with us! Our panel of writers have 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.

### **Youth Laureates of the DMV: A Reading and Conversation - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Holly Karapetkova, Tara Prakash, Lily Scheckner, Kashvi Ramani, Yishak Yohannes Yebio

Virtual Event

Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

The DMV (Washington, D.C., 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.

### **Readings:**

### **Lab Reports: Science and Nature Writing As Literature - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Cristina Deptula, Alejandra Canales, Roopa Ramamoorthi, Paul Kleyman, Mary Mackey

Virtual Event

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 Yeats-inspired take on the science and psychology of aging, 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 and PEN-award winner, and a profile of a punk medical researcher and eco-activist.

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

Angela Siew, Diana Cao, M. Cynthia Cheung, Nicole W. Lee  
Virtual Event

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.

### **Talking Story: New Writing About Hawai'i - VIRTUAL EVENT**

Midori Fujioka, Pat Matsueda, Jake Vermaas, Shawna Ryan,  
Kara Briggs

Virtual Event

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

A panel of diverse writers & multicultural artists "talk story" about recent multi-genre work with a place-based focus on the Hawaiian Islands & a greater Indo-Pacific region. Across generations & Asian-Pacific American ethnicities, they share, read, discuss & contemplate in multiple languages new writing from their hot-off-



the press book excerpts, articles, e-zines, dissertations, film & other mixed media formats. Affiliated with University of Hawai'i, writers lead "local" literary circles.

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

Irene Zabytko, Tamara Hundorova, Anna Danylchuk, Olya Popovych,  
Virtual Event

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.