AWP 2027 Conference & Bookfair Schedule of Events.

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

On-Demand Virtual Events

V100. Being the Only Woman of Color at the Literary Event - VIRTUAL EVENT
Roopa Ramamoorthi, Faleeha Hassan, Jaylan Salman, Nika Beamon, Hua Ai
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Diverse BIPOC women writers discuss issues/anxieties navigating mostly white literary spaces. How do we avoid assumptions that we represent our entire culture? Be authentic but

not exoticized? Navigate microaggressions and "well-meaning" racism couched in strategy or aesthetics? How do immigrant WOC navigate language barriers in professional contexts? Participants share their experiences, their work to change the landscape for BIPOC women, and how they see the future for BIPOC women writers.

V101. Beyond Representation: What True Inclusion Looks like in Publishing - VIRTUAL EVENT

Stacy Ennis, Emma Lowe

Event Category: Writing Organizations

The publishing industry has room to grow across gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status—but it is waking up. This conversation explores why diversity matters more than ever, what genuine representation looks like, and where gaps remain. From human rights stages to sensory-

safe spaces and neurodiverse voices, it examines how authors, publishers, and industry professionals can integrate more inclusive practices and create spaces where all people belong.

V102. Blind Poetics: Disability & Craft - VIRTUAL EVENT

Olivia Thomakos, Russell Brakefield, Noor Al-Samarrai, Michele Leggott, Ellen Renton

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What do blindness and disability have to do with craft? By sharing and exploring their poetry, panelists will discuss how experiences with disability have impacted their writing through multisensory approaches and orality/aurality. They engage with questions on their relationships with form, with publishing, and with poetry. This panel has accessibility built in by providing documents with participants' written poems and other

resources in a screen reader–friendly format. From field notes to footnotes, this panel leaves no stone unturned.

V103. Collective Force: Sweet Action Poetry Collective - VIRTUAL EVENT
A Kaiser, Danielle Bero, Julie Hart, April Biggs, Cynthia Manick
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Twelve years strong, the Sweet Action Poetry Collective, founded by Mirielle Clifford and Julie Hart, organizes workshops, readings, and public actions aimed at creating a welcoming, feminist, and gender-inclusive space for poets of different identities, backgrounds, and experiences working in all styles and forms. This event is an intentional, and perhaps useful to others, stroll through herstory, a best practices and forward-looking panel about the literary creation and political engagement, community-

building and community-sustaining aspects of Sweet Action.

V104. Dreams, Fever & Imagination: Delving into the Unconscious - VIRTUAL EVENT
Douglas Cole, Hazel Denhart, Mary Mackey, Peter Fueeg, Ragini Shah
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

We share our journeys exploring the unconscious in different ways, including generative practices, dream analysis, and exploration of mythic cultural stories from the collective human imagination. We speak to how to translate these insights into practical wisdom informing our writing and our lives, and to the role of the human author and the human imagination amid the rise of artificial intelligence.

V105. From Idea to Picture Book: How Authors Help Bring Children's Stories to Life - VIRTUAL EVENT

Heather Felty, Parul Bhandari, Catherine Felts
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

Independent children's authors are not only creating books—they're guiding others to do the same. This panel explores how experienced authors coach new writers through the full process: shaping story, communicating with illustrators, navigating publishing paths, and building an audience. Panelists share practical tools, hard-earned lessons, and how they help others turn a dream into a finished children's book.

V106. Inside the Industry: The Reality of Writing & Publishing a Book Today - VIRTUAL EVENT

Stacy Ennis, Leslie Miller, Richelle Fredson, Tim Vandehey
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

The publishing industry has changed rapidly, leaving aspiring authors with more questions than answers about what it takes to get a quality book published today. This panel covers the realities of writing and publishing—from self-, hybrid, and traditional publishing pathways to AI's role, platform building, and the mindset shifts needed for success. Practical, realistic, and clear, this session answers the most-asked questions to help authors navigate what can feel like an overwhelming journey.

V107. Inspiration Every Day at 9:00 a.m. Sharp? Developing a Writing Practice That Works - VIRTUAL EVENT
Amaury Ponciano, Dennis Etzel Jr, Judith Dancoff, Nadia Alexis, Gayle Marshall

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Formerly a practicing physician, W. Somerset Maugham reportedly rose early each morning for an appointment with his muse. Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami runs daily to help him focus and get mental distance from his work. This diverse international group of writers and poets has drawn inspiration from their own experiences in a variety of fields to develop workable routines and writing practices. They share insights/mind-shifts that help them navigate writing's mental obstacle course.

V108. International Collaboration & More Equitable Publication in Online Lit Mags - VIRTUAL EVENT

Cristina Deptula, Hua Ai, Uchechukwu Onyedikam, Yongbo Ma, Jacques Fleury-Author

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

How can we make publishing more inclusive and equitable? The editor in chief and several contributors to *Synchronized Chaos Magazine* discuss how the online publication organically expanded over time to reach a global audience and publish international works. And how intentional openness to emerging authors, to a variety of genres, and to experimental, interdisciplinary pieces outside traditional Western genres created a space for worldwide literary collaborations, including in the Global South.

V109. Protect Your Author Vision: The Hidden Decisions That Shape Your Book's Success - VIRTUAL EVENT

Misty Megia, Leslie Miller, Luzy King, Jana Nelson

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

In publishing, no one succeeds alone. From first idea to public launch, success depends on trusted relationships—professionals who share your values, respect your vision, and deliver excellence with integrity. This panel explores how authentic collaboration leads to stronger outcomes, including how to identify aligned partners, navigate ethical dilemmas, and protect your vision at every stage. At its heart, this session is about values-based publishing and creating books that endure.

V110. The Art & Science of Doing Both: What Science Brings to Writing & the Writer - VIRTUAL EVENT

Katie McLendon, Christine Lee, Shauna Harrison, Jennifer McQuiston, Kelly Jordan

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Five creative writers with scientific backgrounds discuss the interplay between their work and

lives in the two fields. What about this combination of scientific and creative work affects the writer's craft as well as their course of development as a writer, a scientist, and a person? What is unique about this moment in history for academic or government scientists doing creative writing, and what is contributed to both fields?

V111. The Places You'll Go: Culture, Language & Geography in Art & Literature - VIRTUAL EVENT

Amarantha Cruz, Aida Zilelian, Daniella Toosie-Watson, Neda Zahraie, Yukiko Nakashima
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Women of color panelists from diverse backgrounds discuss the connection between identity, lived experience, and creative expression. They engage with how their work is inspired by culture, language, and geography.

Panelists connect representation, their cultural backgrounds, histories, perspectives, and positionality(ies) to their art, poetry, process, and communities. How do multiple languages influence a body of work? How does a sense of belonging, or the lack thereof, influence the artist? How does location, travel, migration, and immigration shape the artist's voice?

V112. Two Aliens Had One Kiss: Critical & Creative Perspectives on the Aubade - VIRTUAL EVENT

Jessica Holmes, Jessica Holmes, Kit Fryatt, Yuqi Li

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel explores the poetic conceit of the aubade, traditionally a song or poem heralding the arrival of dawn, often invoking the parting of lovers. Presenters will discuss the aubade from critical and creative perspectives, exploring its origins in troubadour lyric and

historical persistence to the present moment. Presenters will consider the relation of aubade to poetic temporality, setting, and form with attention to liminality and lyric threshold.

V113. When We Are Offered Better Choices: Econarratives, Cultural & Other Futurisms - VIRTUAL EVENT
Karen Walasek, Tonya Moore, BrightFlame -, Ayida Shonibar, Andrea Hairston
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Is it possible to move beyond a singular journey where the hero must accept their place in a broken and degraded world? Instead of a hyperfocus on the degradation, what happens when we focus on hopeful possibilities? How can character choice alter our view of the living world and our place within it? Join us in dialogue where characters thrive beyond the empiric status quo and the culture makers assume the responsibility to challenge our

current disastrous trajectory. What possibilities await?

V114. Writing in Dark Times: The Obligation to Engage with Reality - VIRTUAL EVENT
Caroline Topperman, Amy Bernstein
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

How do writers balance the demands of compelling storytelling with the urgency of real-world crises? From economic collapse to social upheaval, writers are often tasked with creating the “first draft of history” through a fictional or historical lens. This panel explores the craft and ethical considerations of writing fiction and nonfiction that reflect our darkest realities without sacrificing narrative drive or descending into didacticism. We’ll examine the role of catharsis in constructing these narratives and the nuances of choosing a POV that resonates with readers.

V115. Writing Science, Writing the Self: Combining Memoir & Environmental Reporting - VIRTUAL EVENT

Lorraine Boissoneault, Erica Berry, Patricia Kaishian, Wei Tchou, Maria Pinto

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

From Rachel Carson to Henry David Thoreau, some of our greatest writers have turned to science and the environment to explore humanity. In this panel, we will discuss how to write memoir and personal essays that combine our personal experiences with nature. Writers will learn where to look for research papers, how to weave disparate topics together, and the many ways that science can offer a counterpoint to the thematic arcs that appear in writing about our lives.

V116. You Are Not Your Book: Building a Writing Life Beyond Outcome - VIRTUAL EVENT
Yvonne Liu, Joyce Chen, Jessica Winkler, Margaret Whitehead, Wiley Ho
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

What happens when writers stop treating the book as their whole life? The panel brings together memoirists, essayists, and a novelist who untangled their drive to publish a book. An ordained Buddhist and mental health counselor, two late-emerging writers, and a literary nonprofit executive share how interruption, healing, and a life fully lived can deepen rather than derail the work. An honest conversation about devotion, process, and the self that exists beyond the page.

Wednesday, March 17, 2027

12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. CT

W100. AWP Bookfair Setup, Sponsored by the Poetry Foundation
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

The exhibit hall at McCormick Place Lakeside Center will be open for bookfair setup. For safety and security reasons, only those holding an exhibitor registration will be permitted inside the bookfair during setup hours. Bookfair exhibitors are welcome to pick up their registration materials in AWP's registration area in Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 3.

W101. Conference Registration

Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 3. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. CT

W102. Accessibility Tour
Accessibility Services Desk, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Join AWP conference staff for a tour of McCormick Place Lakeside Center. This tour will

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

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. CT

W103. CLMP Membership Meeting
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

This event is for all independent literary magazine and small press publishers: seasoned professionals, those just starting out, and all in between. Learn what we're planning for the year, and share your thoughts on how we can best ensure that our community thrives. If

you're not yet a member of CLMP but would like to find out more, please feel welcome to join us.

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. CT

W104. AWP Awards Celebration
Great Lakes Ballroom AB, Level 2, Marriott Marquis Chicago

Kick off #AWP27 with the AWP Awards Celebration, hosted by Kenyatta Rogers, AWP board member and Chicago local!

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

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, AWP could not exist without the generosity of our members. Admission to this event is complimentary, with a suggested $20 minimum donation to AWP to help us sustain programming and awards and to continue serving writers. One free drink ticket per guest and appetizers will be available.

Thursday, March 18, 2027

7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. CT

T100. Sober AWP
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Daily 12-step meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT

T101. First Aid
Level 1, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

First Aid is located on level 1 of McCormick Place Lakeside Center. From the central lobby (near the level 2 gift shop), proceed down the stairs or elevator and turn left. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

Attendees can also call the ADA hotline, 240-269-6635, to request EMT assistance throughout McCormick Place Lakeside Center.

T102. Mamava Lactation Pod
Near Room E250, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

A Mamava lactation pod is located across the hall from room E250 at McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 2, and is available for any nursing parent to use.

T103. Low-Light Space
Room E250, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

T104. Dickinson Quiet Space
Room E252, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

T105. Lactation Lounge
Room E254, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

The lactation lounge is located in room E254 of McCormick Place Lakeside Center and is available for any nursing parent to use.

T106. Coat Check

Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Coat check is available at the entrance of Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, Level 3. No cash, only credit cards accepted.

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CT

T107. Conference Registration
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 3. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required

to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. CT

T108. What Mother Couldn't Teach Us: Restriction, Possibility & Black Motherhood
Brittany Rogers, Tianna Bratcher, WJ Lofton, Courtney Taylor
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Societal expectations state that all mothers are nurturing, emotionally available; that they will fulfill the role of confidante, protector, nurturer, and teacher. The writers in this panel use fiction, nonfiction, poetry, collage, and theory to explore what happens when Black mothers are unwilling or unable to inhabit the role of the "perfect mother." What does it look like to

mother the collective? What do we learn about love, sexuality, and self-possession when we have to teach ourselves?

T109. Picture This: Memory & Hybridity in Graphic Literature
Stacie Evans, Quincy Scott Jones, Emily Yamauchi, Dickson Lam, Grisel Acosta
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This panel explores the complexity of storytelling in graphic literature by examining memory (fictional and nonfictional). As graphic literature moves into memoir, nostalgia, and autofiction, these stories can literally illustrate the past, moving us through trauma and building social connections. How do writers grapple with the intersection of social expectations, race, gender, history, and the

emotional spectrum of the human condition . . . and fit it all into a series of four-color panels?

T110. El bilingüismo está vivo: Leer y escribir en español en Chicago y en EE. UU.
Ofelia Montelongo, Dejanira Alvarez Cardenas, Maya Pina, Alfredo AVALOS, Adriana Pacheco
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

“Bilingualism Is Alive: Reading & Writing in Spanish in Chicago and the United States” explores how organizations across the US promote Spanish through bookfairs, podcasts, bilingual presses, interviews, anthologies, and community events. Panelists discuss the work behind Spanish-language literary initiatives and the importance of creating spaces where readers, writers, publishers, and communities can connect, collaborate, and sustain bilingual literary culture.

T111. Ekphrasis Writ Largely: Art, Revision & Formal Variation

Reuben Gelley Newman, Nina Pelaez, Daniel Barnum, José Felipe Ozuna, Ty Raso

Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poets inspired by visual art and music continue to innovate formally in practice and teaching. Drawing from the panelists' own work on video games like *Animal Crossing*, the performance art of Ana Mendieta, and more, this panel investigates the farther reaches of ekphrasis. How can writers reflect the methodology of another art form on the written page, using sonic and visual experimentation? How can we encourage others to think critically about formal choices in ekphrastic poetry and beyond?

T112. Caucus for K–12 Creative Writing Education

Allison Campbell, Annell Lopez
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

This caucus creates a space where creative writing teachers in K–12 schools and those who teach young writers outside traditional K–12 settings can share their experiences. By discussing the joys and challenges of teaching young writers, this caucus aims to deepen our understanding of how to best nurture students' creative identities. The meeting will feature presentations by caucus members and discussion of how to build and facilitate an accessible and impactful creative writing curriculum.

T113. The Past Is Personal: Weaving Jewish History into Prose & Poetry

Aviya Kushner, Elizabeth Poliner, Rachel Kadish, Richard Michelson, Yerra Sugarman
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Writers are often drawn to stories of individuals at an individual moment in time—but what if that moment was a long, long time ago? Four writers who have set books in eras ranging from antiquity to the 17th century to the Holocaust discuss how to weave history into art without being didactic or academic. We'll explore how to make characters from another era seem real, how to enter mindsets different from ours, how to connect past and present, and how to fact-check writing inspired by history.

T114. How to Use Beauty as Strategy When Writing the Extreme

Alice LaPlante, Jennifer Hasegawa, K.M. Soehnlein, Randall Mann, Matthew Clark Davison
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel examines beauty as deliberate craft strategy in writing about violence, illness, desire, and sex. Panelists may reference writers like Gaitskill, Morrison, and Greenwell, exploring how obsession, precision, and image elevate anecdote to art as much as ethical intent does. Discussion ranges across memoir, fiction, poetry, and hybrid forms, as well as creative and teaching practices. Key elements: sensory juxtaposition, “termite art,” beauty in the quotidian, and form as strategy rather than rule.

T115. Refusing Despair: Women Poets Writing Through the Anthropocene

Arielle Hebert, Kai Coggin, Chelsea Krieg, Monica Ferrell, Kira Tucker
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Five women poets read original poems that speak to the environmental moment—one marked by deregulation, protection rollbacks, and research defunding. These feminist perspectives examine intersections between threats to our lands and those endured by women and gender-expansive people. Inspired by nature's resilience and often returning to their matrilineages, primal landscapes, and lived experiences, these writers ultimately refuse despair, choosing courage and hope—even as we enter a new era of our climate-changed world.

T116. Bringing Back Print with *The Onion* & the *Chicago Reader*

Christine Wenc, Chad Nackers, Sarah Conway, Malik Jackson, Jimmy Hasse
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

In this panel, senior leadership at Chicago-based legends *The Onion* and the *Chicago Reader* discuss the recent rebirth of their print publications with Christine Wenc, author of *Funny Because It's True: How "The Onion" Created Modern American News Satire*. Topics: How do you make print work today? Is the tide really turning from digital media? How are alt media and the literary arts connected? How much does print cost anyway? And is the *Reader* hiring book reviewers? Wenc may also discuss work to recreate *ALL Review*, the lit journal of Arts + Literature Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, as a print insert in the newspaper *Isthmus*.

T117. 15 Trombones Where Other Women Got Hips: Ntozake Shange's Jazz & Choreopoems
DuEwa Frazier, Cherise Pollard, Samiya Bashir, Michele Evans
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

Black feminist poet, playwright, and novelist Ntozake Shange blended jazz, African drums, and Black dance with drama to create rhythmic poetry and choreopoems such as *for colored girls*, *i live in music*, *spell #7*, and other works. Shange's writings connected themes on Black girlhood, Black feminism, Black consciousness, love, music, and spirituality. The panelists will read from Shange's work and reflect on how her style, themes, and achievements influenced their own writings and perspectives.

T118. Borderless Stories: Writing Transnational Experiences

Jeffrey Condran, Pauline Kaldas, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Jared Lemus, Khem Aryal

Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

The short story has long remained as a favored genre among transnational writers. In this session, five writers of short story collections that transcend national boundaries discuss how their work moves across borders in an effort to capture transnational experiences. More specifically, they highlight how their work unfolds across geographies and cultures and how their transnational experiences shape not only their subject matter but also the ways their stories are imagined and told.

T119. A Press That Feels like Home: How to Publish Multiple Books with the Same Press
Dennis Sweeney, Cameron Barnett, Devi Laskar, Sonya Huber, Lucy Jane Bledsoe
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

In the competitive publishing landscape, ongoing relationships with a home press are an essential practice that can make writers feel supported as they explore new territory. This panel features four writers whose relationships with a publisher—from small presses to university presses to the Big Five—have supported more than one book. Topics include how to identify presses open to publishing multiple books, how to cultivate editorial relationships, and how to broach the subject of a new manuscript.

T120. Meno-Pause or Meno-Persist? Women Writing the Second Act

Amy Monticello, Brooke Champagne, Heather Lanier, Karen McElmurray, Sue Silverman

Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Aging is a privilege and a pain. With the maturity that comes with age, women's essays and memoirs view healthcare, friendship, parenting, partnership, and work through new lenses. On this panel, boomers, Gen Xers, and geriatric millennials will discuss writing the humility, humor, horror, and joys of aging. From sex to menopause to the "sandwich generation" of duties, we will explore how creative nonfiction illuminates the years during which we allegedly become invisible and yet essential.

T121. Finding Funny in the Fray: Infusing Humor in Memoir About Trauma
Maryann Aita, Natalie Lima, Natassja Schiel, Jocelyn Cox
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Humor can be a powerful way to connect with readers, empower narrators, and add texture to our work. But when writing a memoir about trauma, how do you find the funny? This panel explores the importance of humor in nonfiction about trauma and provides strategies to craft it. Memoirists who write about grief, mental illness, addiction, and other traumas discuss their craft techniques for finding levity and crafting comedy when the subject matter is dark, difficult, or inherently unfunny.

T122. Who Is Poetry For? In Defense of Poetry You Can Understand

Julia Kolchinsky, Jose Olivarez, Kelly Grace Thomas, Luisa Muradyan, Matthew Olzmann
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

In a literary culture where opacity is often equated with seriousness, poets discuss how writing can invite rather than exclude readers by embracing semantic clarity and empathic connection without sacrificing depth or rigor. We suggest that poetry's potential to be understood is an ethical and artistic stance rooted in clarity, musicality, and emotional precision—one that widens audiences, challenges gatekeeping, and makes difficult conversations possible.

T123. Nurturing Emerging Talent in Independent Publishing
Vayne Ong, Michael Welch, Andrea Change, Cecilia Stelzer

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Amid rising costs of living, declining book sales, and federal funding cuts, literary arts organizations must confront systemic barriers and economic realities to nurturing emerging literary talent. The talent development of the full literary ecosystem—writers, editors, critics, arts administrators—is indispensable. This panel asks literary organizations to share approaches to creating enriching, well-compensated artistic and professional experiences, while balancing organizational needs.

T124. Making Your Own Audiobook: The DIY Approach
Courtney Kocak, Kerry Kriseman, Gayle Kirschenbaum, Kelly Lundquist, Meg Weber

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

As audiobooks continue to grow in popularity, more authors are choosing to narrate and produce their own work. This panel explores the DIY audiobook process, including recording setups, editing, distribution, rights, costs, accessibility, and whether to narrate yourself or hire a professional. Panelists will discuss the creative and business reasons writers may want greater ownership and control over their audio work, as well as the challenges and rewards of producing audiobooks independently.

T125. Shattering the Portrait: South Asian Writers on the Cost of Cultural Inheritance
Dimple Dhabalia, Dimple Dhabalia, Rabia Chaudry, Sara Surani

Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Every family has a portrait—carefully composed, maintained across generations through the grammar of silence. This panel brings together South Asian women writers working across memoir, poetry, and hybrid prose to explore how cultural inheritance shapes what we write, how we write it, and at what cost. Topics include craft across genres, gender, ethics of immigrant family narrative, and spiritual and cultural inheritance.

T126. Do the Hustle: Five Debut Poets on Promoting Their Collections
K. T. Landon, Genevieve DeGuzman, John Bonanni, Mckendy Fils-Aimé, Lisa Low
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

For many debut poets, publication is only the prologue: Much of the work of finding readers falls to the author. Five poets with first collections discuss the realities of literary promotion today, from navigating social media and event planning to working with presses and publicists. How can poets advocate for their books in ways that feel authentic, sustainable, and artistically grounded?

T127. Resistance Is Not Futile: Anti-Carceral Approaches to Refusing AI

Marissa Landrigan, Emrys Donaldson, Maddox Pennington, Melanie Dusseau, Mikayla Davis

Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

As writing instructors scramble to address AI, many seem to be either teaching students how to integrate it, or banning it, using methods to surveil, detect, and punish students who do. This panel is composed of writing instructors who chart a different course: resisting the use of AI without reverting to restrictive or punitive policies. Attendees will leave with new ideas for lessons, activities, writing prompts, and assignments for every phase of the writing process to deter and avoid AI.

T128. The Poetics of Queer Friendship
Luna Rey Hall, Adrienne Novy, Ally Ang, Topaz Winters, Danez Smith
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This event will feature poets discussing how queer friendship and platonic love shapes their writing. Poets will get the opportunity to read

excerpts of current and/or recent projects, discussing the art of platonic love poems, how queer friendship/platonic love manifests in their own writing, the collaborative process, and how friendships have strengthened their literary citizenship.

T129. TikTok Tool Kit: How to Use TikTok to Build Your Writer Brand
Kim Narby, Marines Alvarez, Iman Hariri-kia, Nina Haines, Natalia Hernandez
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

On TikTok readers are able to share their favorite books in a way that feels raw and intimate. It is also a space many writers use to document their writing journey—something that can lead to connection with other writers, early readers, and potentially even book deals.

But how should you engage with BookTok as a writer? And if you want to produce content yourself, where should you start? This panel, which includes writers who have successfully built an online following as well as two BookTokers, will help you learn the basics of TikTok for writers.

T130. The Infinite Game: Writing Our Lives Through Video Games
Elissa Washuta, Ander Monson, Danielle Geller, Megan Jones
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

For essayists, video games can serve not only as objects of criticism and inquiry, but also as sites of lived experience, containers for reflection, and conduits of memory excavation. Their immersive settings, sprawling forms, rich image systems, and strange blends of agency and

received narrative offer new ways of thinking about selfhood, embodiment, place, and time. This panel explores the pleasures and pains—or the dopamine hits and craft challenges—of writing from within these virtual worlds.

T131. Starting & Growing Literary Organizations: Evolving with Your Community
Michael Khandelwal, Rob Arnold, Karen Schubert, Asari Beale, Zach Powers
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Literary organizations create and nurture vibrant and diverse literary communities across the US, bringing together both writers and readers inside and outside academia, some without traditional access to the literary arts. In this interactive panel, directors from literary organizations in urban and rural areas will explore how their organizations have evolved to

fit the needs of their communities, including how programming (workshops, events, and outreach) has changed over time.

9:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. CT

T132. AWP Program Directors' Plenary Assembly
Great Lakes Ballroom A, Level 2, Marriott Marquis Chicago

This meeting is for all directors of AWP member programs. Please join us for a light breakfast and an informal working session with your regional representatives. AWP Board Chair Travis Kurowski will give a welcome and briefing before the breakout discussions begin.

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT

T133. AWP Bookfair, Sponsored by the Poetry Foundation

Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

T134. Concessions
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in McCormick Place Lakeside Center in the AWP Bookfair, Exhibit Hall D, Level 3. No cash, only credit cards are accepted at all food and beverage locations. Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app for location details.

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT

T135. AWP Member Lounge
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

AWP members! Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the conference in this members-only lounge on the bookfair floor, featuring comfortable seating and complimentary water and coffee. Thank you for your membership and for being part of the AWP community! Please note: You must have "AWP Member" printed on your badge to access the lounge.

If you aren't already, we encourage you to become a member today!

10:35 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. CT

T136. Asian American Ghost Stories

Gerald Maa, Karen Tei Yamashita, Cathy Che, Lawrence-Minh Davis
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

New Asian American ghost stories. Come hear Cathy Che, Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis, and Karen Yamashita read from new work, all about ghosts.

T137. Disobedient Futures
Rita Banerjee, Alyssa Beckitt, David Weiden, Jason Schneiderman, Samuel Kolawole
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

“Disobedient Futures” invites the audience into a space of imagination, justice, community, and

collaboration. Panelists investigate what the future cultures of America might look like through a diverse, inclusive, and multigenre lens. Panelists will discuss the craft techniques and formal experimentation of the new *Disobedient Futures* anthology (University Press of Kentucky, spring 2027), which features fiction, poetry, and nonfiction that explores alternative realities, futuristic places, and parallel histories.

T138. Poetry & Play in the Age of AI: Why Novels in Verse are Vital for Young Readers
Brianna Jett, Christine Derr, Evan Griffith, Kaua Adams, Laura Shovan
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

This panel explores the importance of writing novels in verse for young readers in the age of

generative AI. Join expert panelists, including authors, poets, MFAs, and educators, as they discuss the power of narrative poetry to be both playful and profound, why reaching young readers matters now more than ever, and writing stories that engage readers. Whether you write narrative poetry or not, learn why playing with the words on the page is vital for both writers and readers of all ages.

T139. Children of the Thunder Dragon: The Myths & Magic of Eastern Storytellers
Zuni Chopra, Pawo Dorji
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

What unique evolutions do Southeastern artists have to contribute to the craft of writing? What transformative values and ideas can previously insulated countries like Bhutan and India offer the West? An open conversation exploring the

expansion and subsequent intersection of cultural boundaries in the stories we tell as well as the act of honoring heritage through our film and literature.

T140. How & Why to Develop a Community-Engaged Writing Practice
Kate Vieira, Kate Vieira, Dana Maya, Juana María Echeverri Escobar
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

How can writers engage meaningfully in our communities in moments of repression and violence? While many discussions center the importance of using our platforms for advocacy, this panel explores direct community engagement. Based on our respective work with immigrant communities, with survivors of armed conflict, and in climate advocacy, this panel shares strategies for facilitating

community writing workshops in times of distress. We then discuss how such work has helped us rethink our approaches to craft.

T141. Poetry and/as Faith
Alex Mouw, Kimberly Johnson, Tacey Atsitty, Faisal Mohyuddin
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

If poetry is, or is a form of, prayer, then what petitions, laments, and exultations do we need it to voice right now? In an era of invigorated Christian nationalism, what alternative spiritual possibilities can contemporary poetry offer? In this panel, four poets explore how diverse faith traditions inform their approach to the craft and purpose of poetry. Together, we discuss how poets can productively engage faith, not as dabblers or dogmatists, but as committed artists.

T142. WITS Alliance Annual Meeting: All Together Now!
Michele Kotler, Nancy Weber, Javan Howard
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Join other teaching writers and writers-in-the-schools programs to discuss the rewards and challenges of the field at this moment. In this open-forum meeting, participants are invited to weigh in on topics from the nuts and bolts of managing a writers-in-the-schools program to broader issues that impact our work, like mental health and well-being. This meeting is open to anyone interested in the work of writers-in-the-schools teaching artists, programs, and organizations.

T143. Where Is My Place? Navigating the Classroom as a Noncitizen

Shlagha Borah, Sandra Dolores Gómez Amador, Kanchi Sharma, Adedayo Agarau
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

In this panel, a group of noncitizens (from Nigeria, India, Mexico) will discuss their experiences in the classroom, both as graduate students and as educators. The discussion will focus on microaggressions faced by noncitizens of color, targeted behaviors, and institutional gaslighting. We will discuss possible solutions—nontraditional pedagogical approaches, alternative workshop models, orientation for new teachers, and building community, especially outside of academia.

T144. Screaming into New Worlds: The Poetry & Craft of Haki Madhubuti
Brian Gilmore, LeConte Dill, Toni Asante Lightfoot, Bayo Ojikutu

Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

The writing life of Chicago poet Haki Madhubuti includes an impressive number of timeless poems, books, and writing styles. From his period of shorter, more stark poetry to poetry in the modern era that is longer, more personal, and never in retreat from the moment, four panelists present their favorite Madhubuti poem along with their reasons for its selection. The panel will demonstrate how Madhubuti has carved out a special space in American poetry and the world, not to mention Chicago.

T145. How to Teach Translation When We're Not Teaching Translation, Sponsored by ALTA
Derick Mattern, Conor Bracken, Jack Jung, Jesse Lee Kercheval, Kathleen Maris Paltrineri
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Translation

Many translators teach; few translators teach translation classes. Instead, most teacher-translators “smuggle” translation concepts and praxis into other courses: creative writing workshops, first-year seminars, literature surveys, critical theory courses, etc. This panel assembles a group of translators to discuss pedagogy for “non-translation teaching” spaces, sharing strategies, techniques, and assignments that bring translation into every type of classroom.

T146. Words from the Ashes: Jewish Poets Writing Peace & Liberation
Philip Terman, Charlene Fix, Hila Ratzabi, Maya Pindyck, Michal Rubin
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Writing in the face of the annihilation of Gaza and ethnic cleansing in the West Bank, in the aftermath of October 7, is a struggle to describe the indescribable, to weave grief and shame with yearning for justice and peace. Five Jewish poets, three Israeli and one who translates poetry from Gaza, will read poems that bear witness to our collective traumas—both those we've experienced and those we've inflicted—to lift up the shards of destruction and ask: What can we build from the ashes?

T147. Creative Divergence: Embracing Neurodiversity in Writing, Teaching & Editing
Stephanie Lenox, Chris Martin, Christie Collins, Leigh Rourks, H.K. Hummel
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

This panel represents a convergence of editors, educators, and writers from multiple genres devoted to challenging the neurotypical assumptions embedded in creative writing. This session examines inclusive strategies in publishing and teaching and unique approaches to languaging and living the creative life, along with the innovations and challenges of neurodiversity and disability for the creative professional, including ADHD, Autism, and chronic illness.

T148. “A Different Kind of Novel”: Reading & Writing Experimental Fiction

Kasia Van Schaik, Brendan Bowles, Mandy Gutmann-Gonzalez, Jeff Noh, Sarah Burgoyne

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

“All novelists,” writes Anne Carson, “share the fantasy of a different kind of novel.” Yet most

fail to “abolish” the novel’s familiar indicators of “plot, consequence, the pleasure a reader derives from answers withheld.” What does it mean to disrupt or transform the pleasure these indicators afford? This panel will consider how experimental, plotless, situation, or language-based narratives offer up politically and aesthetically meaningful reconfigurations of the reader-writer contract.

T149. Making It Work: Publishing Successfully Without an MFA
Daniel Lassell, Daisy Fried, Rajia Hassib, Brandon Kilbourne, Amy Thatcher
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

An MFA in creative writing is a traditional, yet often costly, stepping stone into academia and literary circles. However, a lack of an advanced

degree is no barrier to publication, landing a book deal, or building a credible writing career. This panel uncovers how successful authors hone their craft, network, and navigate the publishing industry without formal academic credentials.

T150. Dark Green: On the Shadier Side of Nature Writing
Clinton Peters, A. Kendra Greene, Sandra Meek, Taylor Brorby, Toni Jensen
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Joyce Carol Oates famously wrote in “Against Nature,” that nature writing “inspires a painfully limited set of responses.” Far from a romanticized reverence, this panel dives deep into and discusses a darker nature. From gun violence to fracking, taxidermy, and the US

military shelling whales, our writers offer advice for capturing a new angle on “nature.” From poetry to prose, this panel not only explores each writer’s obsessions, but also whether they choose to write in poetry, fiction, or CNF.

T150A. *The Big Brutal Bill* Anthology Reading - Small Harbor Publishing
Helene Fisher, Jennifer Franklin
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

This is a poetry reading celebrating the publication of *The Big Brutal Bill* anthology (Small Harbor Publishing), coedited by Jose Hernandez Diaz, H.E. Fisher, and Jennifer Franklin, featuring poet-contributors.

T151. For Culture & Craft: Writing Black Chicago

Mikki Kendall, Cole Lavalais, Catherine West, M Shelly Conner
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Readings

We are Black. We are women. We are queer/straight/allied. We are more than news cycles, crime rates, and the segregated ventricles of this beating landscape. We are Chicago, and it has been a living, breathing entity in literary production since the Great Migration. Four Black writers will read from their work and discuss how their writing speaks to and from Chicago as a setting in fictional work and as a site of Black literary production.

T152. Writing a Game: Narrative Design & the Craft of Play
Brigitte Winter, Nat Mesnard, Sharang Biswas, Yeonsoo Kim, Erin Roberts

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Game writing is a dynamic creative practice that draws on and transforms the craft of fiction. In this panel, writers who have also published "story games" will connect fiction concepts like narrative structure, pacing, and POV with game design ideas like interactivity, collaboration, and nonlinearity. How can players take turns building narrative tension? How can writers offer choices while assuring key scenes play out? What is sacrificed and what is gained by staging a story as a game?

T153. Launching Literary Ventures: The Author as Industry Entrepreneur
Marina Budhos, Anjali Duva, Milda De Voe, Minal Hajratwala, Therese Walsh

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

These days, authors must be entrepreneurs to market their work. But what about thinking bigger: launching ventures to benefit the community at large and change the industry? This panel's authors have created an innovative press, online writing communities focused on social justice and people of the global majority, literary salons, and a biennial in-person conference. They will discuss what motivated them, how they got their start-ups off the ground, and what they have learned in the process.

T154. Judge-y Face: The Ethics, Logistics & Craft of Judging Writing Contests
Dionne Bremyer, Rebecca Makkai, Rachel Beanland, Taymour Soomro, Tiphanie Yanique

Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Winning a major award can transform a writer overnight, yet the process behind these decisions can feel confusing. Recent judges of the Pulitzer Prize, the PEN/Hemingway, the PEN/Faulkner, and the Giller Prizes consider this as both judges and writers. How do judges come to a consensus? What separates semifinalists? What are the ethical responsibilities of defining merit? This conversation aims to equip writers with an understanding of how books are evaluated and championed.

T155. Writing Where We Are: Building Literary Community Beyond the Major Hubs
Elizabeth Jannuzzi, Jennifer Chauhan, Matt Weinkam, Michael Khandelwal

Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Community writing organizations outside major cities face unique challenges: limited funding, fewer publishing connections, and geographic barriers to literary opportunity. This panel brings together leaders of community-based literary nonprofits from across the country to discuss programming models, funding strategies, community partnerships, and the philosophy behind creating accessible, inclusive spaces where writers feel seen, supported, and connected to a larger creative community.

T156. Age Up, Not Out! Kick-Ass Strategies: Patricia Smith's Sage Creators Collective
Rebecca Evans, Patricia Smith, Jean Howard, Melissa Rayworth, Karen Paul Holmes
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Embrace aging, don’t be canceled by it! Stay relevant and fearless at every stage of your writing life. These dynamic and diverse Sages (a “force,” per Patricia Smith) redefine age, sharing candid real-life insights on sustaining creative verve. With community and solid strategies, women can continue to heighten artistic growth and resilience. As writers in their mid-50s to 70s, this multigenre panel will share samples of their work and offer tools they’ve wielded to dispel the myth that artists age out of the literary world.

T157. Super Gay True Love Stories: Queering the Shape of Memoir
Jomar Isip, Charles Jensen, Nicole Tallman, Richard Siken, Kelly Lundquist
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Join writers Richard Siken, Kelly Foster Lundquist, Nicole Tallman, Charles Jensen, and J.D. Isip for a craft discussion about how one might shape a memoir, particularly one with a queer bent. Each panelist's work presents the memoir in a unique way with a unique shape, and attendees will have the opportunity to tap into the creative processes for each writer. Attendees can look forward to finding many perspectives on finding the right slant for telling their truth.

T158. Sustaining a Literary Magazine Under Austerity & Unrest
Maureen Langloss, Aaron Burch, Denne Michele Norris, Roxane Gay, Sarah Leonard
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

The publishing landscape has always been challenging for independent literary magazines and presses, but the second Trump administration has been especially brutal. In this panel, lit mag leaders will discuss methods for seeking funding, maintaining autonomy, and fostering resilience in an environment that reveres austerity, homogeneity, and control. Attendees will hear from veterans whose experience and wisdom are some of the literary community's most valuable resources.

T159. Why This Book, Why You, Why Now? The Five Types of Pitches Every Writer Needs
Nanda Dyssou, Valena Beety, Keri Mangis, Decoteau Irby, Lamont Jones
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

How do you open doors for your book and yourself? Journalists, editors, producers, hosts, booksellers, and event organizers all need to know why this book, why this author, why now, and why for their audience. A seasoned publicist and four authors break down five pitch types writers can use to secure reviews, interviews, events, and speaking opportunities. Using real, successful pitches as examples, this panel shows you what gets a yes and leaves you with ready-to-send drafts. This session will be especially useful for writers who know their work matters but hate selling themselves.

T160. We Melt Fascists: Voices from Minnesota's ICE Out Movement

Claire Wahmanholm, Ash Wynter, Michael Prior, Michael Torres, Sana Wazwaz
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

As fascism continues to spread, it's increasingly clear that poetry—with its anti-capitalist framing, its use of metaphor, its compression and shareability—is a site of both resilience and resistance. In this reading, Minnesota authors from Latinx, Asian, Palestinian American, and Black identities will share poetry written in direct response to Operation Metro Surge. We will speak to the terror, fury, and grief—but also to the joy and humanization—of this moment.

12:10 p.m. to 1:25 p.m. CT

T161. Poetry Across Genres, Forms & Influences
Virginia Bell, Keith Wilson, Amy Yee, avery r. young
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Poetry is most commonly associated with the written word or oral readings. But poetry can cross genres and influence other forms, including narrative nonfiction, visual art, video games, journalism, music, composition, performance, and more. Four poets will discuss how poetry shapes and influences other genres and vice versa, as well as their careers outside of poetry in journalism, game design, education, and publishing.

T162. Radiant Testimony: Multidisciplinary Poems of Resistance
Tina Chang, Suji Kwock Kim, Alison Rollins, Jonah Mixon-Webster, Nick Flynn
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

This panel explores embodied text as multidisciplinary poets move beyond the page through art, sound, video, performance, and

collage to engage difficult subjects. Panelists examine interdisciplinary practices as new points of access to histories of revolution, systemic racism, archival silences, erasure, and personal or collective voice. The discussion considers artists' responsibilities when working with trauma and how hybridity can amplify marginalized voices while resisting generalization.

T163. Beyond What the "I" Can See: Point of View in Flash Fiction

Sian Griffiths, Gwen Kirby, Sarah Freligh, Tommy Dean, Avitus B. Carle

Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Point of view is more than a writer's choice of pronouns; it shapes readers' relationship to the characters and story. In flash fiction, POV really comes out to play. Write from the perspective

of a shoe? Sure! Or from a chorus of housewives? Why not? You only have to make it work for 1,000 words . . . but you also only get 1,000 words to create a world. Our panel explores the nuances and effects of various POVs in flash, celebrating the strangeness that each can unlock in this compressed genre.

T164. Return to Memoria: A Tribute to Xavier Navarro Aquino
Gabriela Garcia, Derek Nnuro, Irvin Weathersby, Dionne Bremyer
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

Xavier Navarro Aquino, author of the acclaimed novel *Velorio*, passed away suddenly this year. A stalwart of Caribbean literature, dedicated creative writing professor and mentor at Notre Dame, and fierce advocate for an anti-colonial Puerto Rico, his legacy is in the way his work

will continue to shape conversations about the possibilities of art and collective remembrance. Friends and colleagues will gather “in memoria” of Xavier and celebrate his lasting impact.

T165. Graphic Narratives as Community Activism: Readings on Identity & Social Critique

Juliet McMullin, Maureen Burdock, Sherine Hamdy, Rocío Pichon-Rivière, Sheila McMullin

Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

YA, memoir, ethnographic, and poetry comix writers and scholars working across anthropology, abolition medicine, and cultural studies read their graphic narratives rooted in personal experience and social critique. Stories of chronic illness, Muslim identity, environmental justice, and anti-capitalist

critiques of rest and labor showcase the interplay of text and image to expand literary and community activism and create vocabularies for resistance, collective care, and social imagination.

T166. Creating Safe, Respectful, Inspiring Events with Visiting Writers
MEGAN BEISNER, Dan Lau, Evie Atkinson, Stephanie Soileau, Lillian-Yvonne Bertram
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Program Development

The ongoing escalation of the risks faced by visiting writers—particularly those who are BIPOC, 2SLGBTQ+, and/or undocumented—is a burden that hosting staff are meant to lighten. Those of us who manage readings and residencies have been especially alert to this obligation in recent years, and this panel convenes five such professionals to discuss

practical strategies to meaningfully welcome guests, center their work, and leave both audiences and visiting artists feeling inspired.

T167. Editing Literary Translations: Should Editors Be Able to Read the Original?
Sponsored by ALTA
Kolawole Olatubosun, Padma Viswanathan, Bruna Dantas Lobato, Chad Post, Geoff Brock
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

Is it useful or important for editors of English translations to be able to read the original text, or is it enough for them to be sensitive, perceptive readers familiar with the target readership? Translators often find it valuable to discuss a translation with others who can access the original, but finding such an editor for certain books or languages is a challenge. A panel of editors and translators will share their

varied experiences and opinions on these matters.

T168. Debut Poets of the Queer South
Ellie Black, Acie Clark, JC Andrews, Toni Garcia-Butler, TR Brady
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Five queer Southern poets read from their debut poetry collections—all released in 2026 or 2027—and discuss how they've navigated the debut publication process as well as their experiences living, writing, teaching, engaging in activism, and being in community in the South.

T169. "Turning Out to Greet You": 100 Years of John Ashbery
Emily Skillings, Eric Lorberer, John Yau, Maggie Millner, Oli Hazzard

Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

John Ashbery (1927–2017) is widely considered one of the most influential American poets of our time. A member of the New York School of poets, Ashbery published 26 collections of poetry during his lifetime, along with books of criticism and translations from French. To mark Ashbery's centennial year, this multigenerational tribute gathers poets, editors, teachers, and scholars who have been influenced by his wide-ranging work, illuminating why Ashbery will be read for decades to come.

T170. Community College Teaching & the Burgeoning Writing Career
Gail Upchurch, Jeremy Broyles, Racquel Goodison, Rashaun Allen, Shinelle Espaillat

Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Teaching at a community college is at once rewarding and challenging. These kinds of open enrollment institutions are rife with brilliant students who may have learning differences or are at various levels of college preparedness, leaving little time for committed community college professors to also build writing careers. Panelists will discuss ways to “juggle” the very real work of community college teaching and writing and whether there is ever enough time to do both well.

T171. Poetic Injustice: Weighing the Costs of Disclosing & Publishing Sexual Trauma
Kimberly Priest, Connie Post, Elisa Karbin, Elizabeth Mercurio, Phil Goldstein
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Stories of sexual trauma are vulnerable, harrowing, and difficult to listen to, and the process of drafting trauma stories and then putting them out into the world can be fraught with worry over how they will be received by the individuals connected to those stories as well as general audiences. Coming from unique experiences and perspectives, five poets will share what it cost them to break the silence about their assault, write the poems of assault, and publish books that tell these stories.

T172. Subtext—What Lies Beyond the Page
Kristina Gorcheva-Newberry, Raul Palma, Jemimah Wei, Maria Kuznetsova, Edward Falco
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

As writers, we always try to mean more than we say. Dialogue should reveal character, setting must convey mood and propel the action, clothing or food can indicate politics or social status, and gesture often betrays thought. Five diverse award-winning authors of realistic and speculative fiction will discuss types and placements of subtext, underscoring various principles that can effectively improve/sharpen the technique and make fictional narratives as charged and complex as possible.

T173. Not as Flat as Its Landscape: Writing a Nuanced Midwest

Robert Maakestad, Rajpreet Heir, Christina Olson, Samuel Autman, Silas Hansen

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Too often in literature the Midwest is caricatured, oversimplified, or outright dismissed, when in actuality Midwestern writing contains just as much (if not more!) diversity and nuance than literature set in, say, New York City or Los Angeles. Learn from five Midwestern poets/essayists/fiction writers who navigate complex identities as they write their lived truths while redefining expectations concerning the Midwest.

T174. Horror+: The Blurred Genre Haunting the Literary Market
Colleen Morrissey, Diana Xin, Molly Olguin, Rylan Hynes, Torsa Ghosal
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Horror is having a moment. From the Oscars to the Pulitzer Prize, an overlooked genre seems to finally be getting its due. But many of these

recently lauded works cannot be called straight-up “horror.” Instead, they interweave elements of literary realism, sci-fi, fantasy, and other genres. This panel features five diverse fiction writers working in this powerful blurred space we call “horror+”. Panelists reflect on their own negotiations with horror as genre, mode, and market category.

T175. Marketing Experimental Nonfiction: Finding Homes for Hybrid Texts
Rae Pagliarulo, Amy Goldmacher, Darien Gee, Jane Wong, Jeff Bogle
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Publishing experimental nonfiction means forging an unconventional path. Small presses, hybrid models, and self-publishing are opportunities for innovation, but how can writers connect genre-defying work with

readers unfamiliar with nontraditional forms? By sharing publisher, editor, and writer perspectives, this panel explores commercial strategies for reaching audiences and building readerships. For writers navigating memoir, literary, and creative nonfiction outside traditional models.

T176. Fuel or Friction? Pressures & Desires to Write (or Not Write) Immigrant Identity
Carolene Kurien, Elina Katrin, Key K. Bird, Mandy Tu, Elaine Wang
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Under the current administration's attempts to silence immigrant voices, writers of color are often at the intersection of pressure and desire to highlight their communities—how does this reality propel or hinder our artistic processes?

This panel brings together Malayali, Syrian, Burmese, Mvskoke, Chinese, and Russian poets and fiction writers to discuss how they conceptualize or elude their cultural identities on the page, and how they resist tidy diasporic narratives via craft techniques.

T177. Writing Back: Creative Writers Respond to Threats to Academic Freedom
Kristi Osorio, Brendan Stephens, Lucy Schiller, Nabila Lovelace, Monica Ortiz
Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Academic freedom is under attack at public universities across the US, with courses being censored, surveilled, and even canceled altogether. As creative writing and literature curricula are being targeted, this panel centers the experiences of faculty and graduate students whose teaching, research, and

creative productions are subject to such policies. Panelists discuss the state of academic freedom for writers in academia and offer practical strategies for building community and fighting back.

T178. The Anatomy of a Chapbook: A Lab, Sponsored by CLMP

Nancy Simat, Alix Klingenberg, Jeff Alessandrelli, Josh Roark, Natalie Axton
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This hands-on lab explores the chapbook as a distinct editorial form in small press publishing, covering how chapbooks are shaped through theme, sequencing, and visual identity, and how editors evaluate manuscripts for selection. Panelists will discuss editorial approaches to chapbook development, including challenges,

submission considerations, and the role chapbooks play in press catalogs. The session includes a generative exercise where attendees will map the conceptual arc of a chapbook.

T179. “We Already Have an Asian Story”: Navigating Publishing as an Asian Writer
Nina McConigley, Lenika Cruz, Sindya Bhanoo, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, Sequoia Nagamatsu
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Four writers of Asian heritage share how they found their footing in a literary landscape where gatekeepers (teachers, agents, editors) are overwhelmingly white. How did they navigate barriers and racialized expectations in classes, conferences, and MFA programs, and in querying, selling, publishing, and marketing their books? Panelists offer candid reflections

on what's changed and what hasn't, and strategies for surviving and flourishing while holding true to one's artistic and political vision.

T180. Writing with Distraction: Authoring with Kids, a Day Job, ADHD & a Smartphone
Daniel Tam-Claiborne, Jessica Johnson, Kerry Donoghue, Miranda Schmidt
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

How do you make time for writing when you have SO. MANY. DISTRACTIONS? Whether that's caretaking, parenting, ADHD, a full-time job, or all of the above, some days it can feel impossible to focus on writing. Get real-life tips to incorporate more writing time into your already-packed schedule. Discover the power of timeblocking, find out which internet blockers help, chat about the importance of self-

forgiveness, and discuss why you should always carry a few pages of your manuscript with you.

T181. The Joy & Purpose of Literary Awards
Joseph Legaspi, Kortney Morrow, Gwydion Suilebhan, Dante Micheaux, Ruth Dickey
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Literary awards are celebratory, but they also inspire both curiosity and contention. Why do we need them? What purpose do they serve in the contemporary literary ecosystem? This panel of representatives with expertise and experience from premiere prize-granting organizations will offer a look behind the scenes, a demystification of the awards process, and a deep dive into the missions that drive the work.

T182. Genre as Method: Mary H.K. Choi and Eve L. Ewing on Writing Across Forms, Sponsored by MacDowell

Mary HK Choi, Eve Ewing, Courtney Bethel
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Mary H.K. Choi and Eve L. Ewing have built bodies of work that range across YA fiction, poetry, journalism, sociology, and the Marvel universe to narrate the complicated process of coming of age and to terms with oneself in a fractured contemporary. Choi and Ewing will read from their work and discuss the craft of moving between genres, the challenge of writing young people and communities, and what it means to take genre seriously as a vehicle for complex ideas.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

T183. What Time Is It Now? Everyday Dystopias & the Displacement of the Present
Jess Row, Eugene Lim, Mattilda Sycamore, Morgan Thomas, Matt Bell
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

How often have you had the disorienting experience of writing or reading something that appears to be an unreal projected world (dystopia, fantasy, or otherwise) and then realizing it's really a description of the present? Or reading historical fiction and realizing our historical moment is a repetition of all the worst mistakes and most brutal policies of the past? On this panel five novelists confront the

challenge of writing about our disordered, disorienting, sometimes-elusive present.

T184. Your Rage Is Showing: Black Women Writers on Characters Who Choose Violence
Destiny Birdsong, Dantiel Moniz, Roxane Gay, Deesha Philyaw
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Like their real-life counterparts, Black women characters in contemporary literature must navigate racism, gender-based violence, and economic disparities, all while under the watchful eye of folks eager to dismiss them as irrational, unruly, and enraged. But what happens when those same characters lean into that rage as a last resort when justice and/or legal retribution are not available? Five

multigenre writers discuss how they use Black women's righteous rage in their work.

T185. "Getting in the Way": Tales of Writing Activists (US, Israel & Palestine)
Karen Paley, James Madigan, Aziz Sarah, Maoz Inon, Bill Ayers
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

The Palestinian poet Rasha Abdulhadi advises, "Whatever sand you can throw in the gears of genocide, do it now. . . . Get in the way however you can." Each writer takes different actions that "get in the way" of social injustice, such as work with prisoners and support of Israeli/Palestinian nonviolent co-resistance. We will read from our related writing (nonfiction and poetry) and talk about its impact on our

audiences and on ourselves, as well as how activism drives our writing.

T186. Reaching Readers, One Way or Another, Sponsored by the Authors Guild
Lupita Aquino, Teddy Wayne, Courtney Maum, Will Roth
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Authors are asked to do so many things that are both outside their wheelhouse and, unfortunately, not guaranteed to sell books: edit videos, master Canva, be charming on social, manage the logistics of a launch. This panel will discuss what writers have control over, the importance of playing to your strengths, navigating what your publisher should be doing for you, and knowing how much promo work is reasonable to do. We will

also share time-tested and inventive new ways to reach readers these days.

1:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CT

T187. Literary Umbilical Cord: Writing from the Río Bravo/Río Grande
Anel Flores, Emmy Pérez, Karen Michelle Otero, Marisol Cortez, Alejandra Sánchez Alanís
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Five Chicanx/e and Latinx writers read from work rooted in the Río Bravo/Río Grande—tracing how one river shapes identity, ecological consciousness, and queer and Brown survival. From Albuquerque's bosque to South Texas borderlands, the panel examines the river as literary umbilical cord amid climate change,

repression, and environmental racism—a living current of grief, resistance, and radical hope.

T188. Poetic Justice: How to Win a First Union Contract When the University Says No
Susanna Horng, Carley Moore, Jasmine Reid, Matthew Rohrer, Noel Sikorski
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Award-winning poets and writers discuss NYU's contract faculty union as a model for organizing precarious academic labor. Learn strategies behind organizing nearly 1,000 continuing contract faculty and executing a two-day strike, culminating in a first contract win, with gains in compensation, job security, academic freedom, and shared governance. This panel provides vital guidance for writers and faculty seeking

solidarity, institutional change, and power through collective action.

T189. *The Speculative Detective Agency* (SDA): A Multiethnic, Multigenre Anthology
Michael Zapata, Matthew Goodwin, Monique Laban, Richie Narvaez, Nadia Rabbani
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Readings

The Speculative Detective Agency (SDA) is a multiethnic, multigenre anthology of interconnected short stories (Diversion Books, 2026). The panel participants, composed of two editors and two authors, will explore the way in which the anthology plays with the border between the real and the imaginary and expresses the fantastic through various cultural lenses, including Latinx, Muslim, West African, Singaporean, and more. The discussion will be

followed by brief fiction readings from the book.

T190. Body Blows: A Multigenre Combat Sports Reading

Jenny Liou, John Vercher, Michael Copperman, Raisa Tolchinsky, Sean Prentiss
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

In the 1950s, Charles Bukowski wrote, “It takes guts to be a great artist and it takes guts to be a great fighter.” In this multigenre reading, four combat sports athletes/writers write about single-legs and jabs to create a multidimensional world of fighting as a doorway into conflict, fear, love, and grief. With different approaches and within different genres, we wonder together about the intersections of writing and fighting—the ways

combat sports can support narrative growth and risk.

T191. All Welcome on the Schoolyard: Writing #OwnVoices MG/YA Diverse Protagonists
Shilpa Kamat, Natalia Sylvester, Benjamin Gorman, Jenny Ferguson, Jonathan Rice
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

We'll share our experiences and practical insights about crafting #OwnVoices books for younger readers in today's political climate where important characters are BIPOC, LGBTQ, neurodivergent, immigrant, working class, or disabled. This will include how we researched and wrote our stories with nuance and sensitivity, how we sought out agents and publishers who understood our stories, and how we navigated censorship and criticism.

T192. Black Queer Masculinities & the Excavation of the Self

Dez Brown, Christian Ivey, Jasper Joyner, Sean Medlin, MARS Marshall

Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

What does masculinity look like when both race and gender expansiveness are considered? If we move beyond cisheteronormative representations of Black masculinity, how can this transform us? What new possibilities can emerge in our world and our writing? In this panel, authors will share from works that envision and recreate Black masculinities and speak at length about how they unearthed alternate masculinities for themselves and how this is explored in their writing.

T193. *The Missouri Review*'s 50th-Anniversary Reading

Heidi Seaborn, CHAUN BALLARD, Keya Mitra, Ann-Marie Blanchard, Tiana Clark
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Join *The Missouri Review* in celebrating its 50th year of literary publishing with readings by award-winning contributors in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Since its founding in 1978 at the University of Missouri, *The Missouri Review* has been a magazine of discovery, seeking to publish the best writers first. We are serious about supporting our authors throughout their careers and training the next generation of writers, readers, and editors through our long-running internship.

T194. Pedagogical Uses of Translation

Laura Nagle, Aruni Kashyap, Calvin Olsen, Jamie Banks, Maja Teref
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel brings together five educators in secondary schools and higher education, all practicing literary translators, who use works in translation to model the craft of creative writing, foster close reading through reading multiple translations of the same text, and nurture language acquisition in the world language classroom. Panelists will share examples of class activities and discuss their text selection process for a wide range of educational environments.

T195. What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About War

Rebecca Evans, Ken Rodgers, Brian Turner, Jerri Bell, Benjamin Busch

Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

If you want to research current military warfare, consider interviewing a veteran and note what is left out. Veterans are trained in honor code, military bearing, and keeping calm under fire. What is often aired in media shapes into a juxtaposition against boots-in-the-sand experiences. These five veterans, a variety of literary artists, bring an important roundtable with the less-discussed perspectives of war. They'll also share research and resource tips for writers regarding conflict.

T196. The Power of the Elegy: Loss & Renewal in Jewish Poetry
Sharon Dolin, Dan Rosenberg, Donna Spruijt-Metz, Patty Seyburn, Shamar Hill

Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Jewish poets often thread loss and grief through their poetry: from Allen Ginsberg's *Kaddish* to Gerald Stern's "animal sorrow" in "Behaving Like a Jew," to Adrienne Rich's "Tattered Kaddish," to Edward Hirsch's *Gabriel: A Poem*. Five contemporary Jewish American poets explore the use of elegy in their own poems and in others. What is salient about the Jewish elegy now and in the past? Do poetic expressions of grief provide a path toward renewal, community, and even joy?

T197. Nature as Balm for Burnout in the Creative Writing Classroom
Samantha Sorenson, Brad Aaron Modlin, Joey Franklin, Megan McManama
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

This pedagogy panel provides specific, adaptable writing activities to lead the burnt-out student away from the technoscape and into the physical landscape. Grounded in phenomenology, ecocriticism, and place-based writing, panelists discuss how reengaging with the natural world serves as a lens for processing experience, identity, politics, faith, etc. As students “return to nature,” as Rilke wrote, they will step into being and creativity.

T198. Writing With & About Disability
Sophia Babai, Rabha Ashry, Laura Waltje, Pinar Banu Yasar, Krista Hanson
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Disability is often either romanticized or erased. As writers, how do we craft radically truthful narratives and write ourselves into existence in a capitalist society? How do we legitimize our own experiences without the validation of a prejudiced medical system, living in a world that demands productivity as a marker of self-worth? How do we build sustainable writing practices? What impact does writing about the body have on the writer and reader?

T199. The Editorial Classroom: Teaching Literary Magazine Publishing

Laura Biagi, Marc McKee, Jeremy Schraffenberger, Jessie Van Rheenen, Laura Bylenok

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

In literary magazine practicums, students gain invaluable skills that give them a serious leg up

in future publishing and editing jobs, while literary magazines gain invaluable assistance. In this panel, instructors in these classrooms dissect best practices and pitfalls in teaching students to evaluate submissions, correspond with writers, tackle layout issues, navigate ethical challenges, and more. New and experienced literary magazine instructors alike will leave with a wealth of ideas.

T200. From Query to Book Tour: Self-Care from First Draft to Pub Day & Beyond
Nancy Reddy, Kelly Norman Ellis, Rachel Mennies, Rebecca Hazelton Stafford, Remica Bingham-Risher
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

From querying agents to going on submission to planning a great book launch, every step of the

publication process is marked by excitement but also significant anxiety and stress. Writers on this panel have published across a range of genres and with presses from university and independent presses to the Big Five. Panelists will offer practical strategies for writers to practice self-care and manage mental illness across the ups and downs of writing, publication, promotion, and more.

T201. Mercy, Mercy, Me: How to Write Poems of Forgiveness
Jennifer Jean, Oliver De La Paz, Brendan Constantine, Didi Jackson, Nick Flynn
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

To forgive and be forgiven is explosive, improbable, transcendent, and bittersweet. “Don’t,” as Craig Morgan Teicher writes, “you dare forgive.” But if you dare, is it even possible

to write about this profound experience? Maybe. Five poets discuss their own and their favorite poems about, against, and wrestling with forgiveness. Each offers a reading list, a writing prompt, and several writing tips for students, teachers, and writers of poetry. A generous Q&A follows this panel discussion.

T202. Lily Poetry Review Books, Part One
Gloria Monaghan, Anne Pluto, Eileen Cleary
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Lily Poetry Review Books authors Anne Elezabeth Pluto, Steven Cramer, Max Heinegg, Dustin Brookshire, Ellen June Wright, and Jonathan Aibel read from their newest collections. Special additional reading from Jennifer Martelli's posthumous collection *Dear America*.

T203. The Weirding: We Want to Believe; Sincerity & the Supernatural

Cat Ingrid Leeches, Anthony Sutton, Julia Coursey, Randall Tyrone, Jane Morton

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Poetry and storytelling often emerge from encounters that resist rational explanation. Drawing on Mark Fisher's concept of the weird as an intrusion of what does not belong, this panel explores folklore, superstition, UFOs, and visitations through poetry, experimental prose, and hybrid forms, engaging the strange not as aesthetic material but as a mode of perception that makes space for contradiction, intuition, and the possibility that reality exceeds our frameworks.

T204. Nuts & Bolts: Creating a Community-Based Writing Program, Sponsored by WITS Alliance

Mark O'Connor, Asari Beale, Kelly Krumrie, Kerry Neville, Piper Whitlatch

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Starting and running a writers-in-the-community program at a university can be a daunting task. Focusing on programs that center youth audiences, panelists will address questions like these: What are the logistical nuts and bolts of getting a program started? How do we prepare our college students to teach responsibly? Panelists will also share how they integrate programs into existing areas of study, create new courses, recruit and retain students, and develop and sustain community partnerships.

T205. Publishing While Indigenous & Female: From Newbies to Elders

Deborah Miranda, Casandra Lopez, Mimi Wheatwind, Mary Leauna Christensen, Arielle Lowe

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Indigenous women publish poetry and memoir despite challenges in an industry with mostly white editors and audiences. Challenges include age, geography, small press woes, demanding day jobs, and lack of retirement funds, in addition to family/tribal community responsibilities and healing from historical trauma. From soon-to-be published to posthumously published authors, ages early 30s to 65 and beyond, we share war stories, old-time Indian wisdom, and communal practices that benefit BIPOC writers.

T206. Grief Work: Writing Through, Alongside & Away from Pain & Mourning

K Angel, Diamond Braxton, Monica Ortiz, Bianca Perez, Ern Rivera

Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Writing can be a deeply cathartic act, but often the pressure to make something of our pain can get in the way of living through it. This panel explores the grief we increasingly face in the course of a life, from the micro (relationship ruptures, health crises, bereavements . . .) to the macro (climate change, pandemics, political upheaval . . .), as participants share from personal experience how they have navigated, or surrendered to, the changes grief enacts on creative practice and purpose.

T207. When the Draft Is Done, the Real Work Begins: Revising & Editing Strategies
Laura Spence-Ash, Kirstin Chen, S. Kirk Walsh, Will Allison, Yoojin Grace Wuertz
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

To become a better writer is often to appreciate the value of revising and editing. But it can be difficult to keep the act of revision (plot, structure, character, voice) separate from the act of editing (line). The writers and editors on this panel will present their strategies for revising and editing their manuscripts; they will also talk about guiding other writers through this process and how to incorporate feedback. A handout with suggested resources on revising/editing will be provided.

T208. Working-Class Fiction from Flyover Country

Amy Fladeboe, Nora Lange, Thomas Maltman, Denne Michele Norris, Bonnie Campbell
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This panel of Midwest-Rust Belt novelists develop a sense of place in liminal space, working class characters in the trenches of America's class war, and plot revolutions in flyover country. Our characters work, love, struggle, and rebel paycheck to paycheck, in and against the backdrop of cornfields, factories, boarded-up businesses, foreclosed homes, and the crumbling American dream. Don't fear the flatline of empire; these panelists demonstrate America's literary heartland beats on.

T209. Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Sealey Challenge, Sponsored by University of Arizona Poetry Center

Nicole Sealey, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Danez Smith, Lisa Lucas, Eduardo Corral
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

Join us to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Sealey Challenge, the annual August poetry reading initiative where participants read one book of poems each day during the month, for all 31 days. Hosted by founder Nicole Sealey, we'll learn about how the challenge has grown and how you can participate, and hear from veteran Sealey Challenge readers as they recount some of their favorite Sealey Challenge reads—from surprising new discoveries to enduring favorites.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

T210. The Role of BookTok/Bookstagram in Publishing & Literary Criticism
Simone Siew, Kristen Brida, Johnny Chinnici, Natalka Burian, Ebony Santos
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

As venues for literary criticism are dwindling and publishing houses are increasingly scrutinizing digital followings, social media has never been more important for writers. This panel provides a nuanced analysis of how BookTok and Bookstagram fits within the literary ecosystem while also imparting practical advice for writers and book reviewers on how to successfully use these platforms.

T211. DIY Marketing for Small Press & Indie Authors: No Publicist? No Problem

Linda Kleinbub, Emil DeAndreis, Thaddeus Rutkowski, William Burleson, Jane LeCroy
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

While the Big Five count on extensive teams to market books, small presses and indie authors are usually on their own. How can an author get the word out with little marketing experience and no budget? Panelists will show what works to generate visibility and sales at low cost. We'll cover readings, interviews, blogs, book clubs, social platforms, book reviews, and getting books into stores, libraries, and classrooms. Panelists are publishers and authors with successful marketing strategies.

T212. POV: A Day in the Life of a Literary Agent
Roma Panganiban, Kayla Lightner, Mina Hamedi, Jade Wong-Baxter, Amy Bishop-Wycisk

Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

The publishing industry can seem impossibly opaque—literary agents especially. We joke that the job is 20% reading, 80% emails—plus editing, networking, negotiating contracts, attending conferences, scouting writers, selling rights for translation, film/TV, audio, and more. Five agents with diverse backgrounds and workflows will share snapshots of an “average” day in a job where every day is different, helping writers understand on a practical level what it takes to be an author advocate.

T213. The Audio Edit: The Literary Craft of Podcast
Laura Rensing, Mellinda Hensley, Ramona Pilar, Rebecca Luxton

Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Podcast editing is so much more than the software you use to remove background noise. Should your podcast be scripted or not? Should you add audio effects? How do you find the narrative arc of an interview? In this discussion, podcast producers and editors will offer their insights on transforming raw audio into captivating stories by sharing practical tips about how to structure episodes and leverage editing software, and creative insights for weaving compelling audio narratives.

3:20 p.m. to 4:35 p.m. CT

T214. Truth & Testimony in Comics Storytelling: Graphic Journalism, Biography & Memoir

Sharmila Sen, Dana Walrath
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Comics can tell more than just far-fetched tales. They can also be powerful agents of truth. Join us for a discussion between Dana Mashoian Walrath, author of *The Book of Genocides*, and Sharmila Sen, editorial director of Harvard University Press.

T215. On the Night Of: Craft, Responsibility & the Lyric Alibi in Poetry of Witness
Issam Zineh, Carolina Ebeid, John Murillo, Matthew Olzmann
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

In moments of public crisis, poets often feel urgently compelled to bear witness—but what

does that really mean? This panel examines how poems of witness can respond to power and atrocity not just in subject matter but in method. We also think through lyric alibis (subconscious craft choices) that allow poems to appear responsive to the moment but avoid the full demands of witness. Through readings/discussion, we explore ethically alert ways of writing that resist spectacle and sentimentality.

T216. Stanzas on Screen? How to Write for the Video Essay & the Cine-Poem
Sarah Minor, Kathy Wu, Tracie Morris, Hannah Bonner
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Call them video essays, cine-poems, writing-forward mini documentaries, stanzas

interrupting a social feed: Video today is everywhere, and writers are taking advantage of the form on both small and large screens. On this panel, five writers will describe the ways they incorporate video in their written work. Afterward panelists will offer prompts and tools for writers interested in using video to generate new writing, get unstuck, and borrow cinematic strategies for the page.

T217. Dream Design: How to Embody Your Book's Aesthetic & Vision
Kristine Somerville, Alban Fischer, Amy Freels, Mary Austin Speaker, Sevy Perez
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Directors, editors, and designers from the University of Akron Press, Intradesign, Milkweed Editions, *The Missouri Review*,

Rescue Press, and Trnsfr Books will interrogate historical production practices and explore new strategies for balancing an author's vision with budgetary reality. Topics include current marketplace trends, licensing images, and the impact of artificial intelligence and the shift from offset to digital printing. The panel will also share triumphs and beautiful mistakes.

T218. Forbidden Fruit: Queer Jews Writing the Tradition Anew
Julie Enszer, Benjamin Grossberg, Joy Ladin, Bonnie Morris, Yermiyahu Ahron Taub
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Throughout their history, the Torah, written and oral, has been the lodestar for the People of the Book. But how do LGBTQIA+ Jewish writers grapple with centuries of text, law, and tradition

that have marginalized or condemned the queer self? How do we take into account past and ongoing prohibitions while staking new ground for reinvention? And how to do this work in a time of rising antisemitism? In this session, queer writers share how they negotiate with and redefine their Jewish heritage.

T219. Writing the Ungrounded Self: An AWP TCU Fellowship Program Reading & Conversation

Kimberly Blaeser, Tim Raymond, Sabine Brigette, Nels Christensen, Sarita Jain, Cierra Farst, Kai Nagata Rebideau

Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writing within the Indigenous space can come with the freedom of interdisciplinary expression, not having to explain oneself. But

for writers of multiple Indigenous identities, a dilemma can appear: When you feel removed from a tribal community, what is and isn't allowed? What language can you use? How can a writer find their place when they are not grounded in the Self? Join the #AWP27 Tribal Colleges & Universities Fellowship Program spotlight event to hear a student reading and an eye-opening conversation with their faculty mentors, moderated by AWP board member Kimberly Blaeser.

T220. Biting the Bullet: Poets Respond to Gun Violence
Alison Granucci, Brian Turner, Richard Blanco, Jennie Malboeuf, Michael Kleber-Diggs
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Five poets whose lives have been shaped by gun violence—a father murdered; a soldier at

war; a shooting survivor; a mother protecting her son; a committed witness to mass shootings of marginalized communities—read and discuss work that wrestles not only with trauma but with healing, often by turning to the solace and life/death cycles of nature. After bullets, hear how being struck down by beauty can make grief bearable, can allow empathy to enter, can give human resilience a place to grow.

T221. Demystifying the Summer Workshop
Vika Mujumdar, Autumn Fourkiller, Betsy Wheeler, Jeff Parker, Travis Eisenbise
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Consisting of administrators at Juniper, Disquiet, McCormack, and Sewanee, this panel will focus on how summer workshops function and how applicants/participants can best utilize

this kind of workshop in service of their artistic and professional development. Topics discussed will cover how these programs function, scholarships and funding, how to choose a program that's the best fit for you, how to find and build a writing community through workshops like this, and more.

T222. Ecowriters as Conduits of Social Change & Empowerment: It's Time to Strike Back!
Amber Thomas, S. Salazar, Dorinda Wegener-RN- CAPA, Claire Vaye Watkins, Dorsía Smith Silva
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

These multigenre writers will share excerpts that explore their relationships with nature and intersections of climate change, ecosystem degradation, population vulnerabilities, and

environmental justice. Their readings and discussion will also highlight various approaches to ecowriting and how writers can respond to activism, natural disasters, and social transformation in contemporary society. Attendees will leave with enriched connections to the environment and creative writing strategies.

T223. Sex, Slurs & Swear Words: Translating Sensitive Language
Anjali Duva, Joon-Li Kim, Nancy Naomi Carlson, Liza Tripp, Anne Willborn
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

“Sensitive language” reveals so much about place, culture, and beliefs. Translating these terms requires significant human expertise in varying cultural subtext, and translators must confront censorship from editors, publishers,

and readers, as well as self-censorship due to their own cultural circumstances. This panel of translators of Arabic, French, Korean, and Spanish will discuss creative approaches to successfully handling language that is visceral, emotional, and weighted by taboo.

T224. Afrofuturism, Afrosurrealism & Africanjujuism: The Texts That Shape the Movement

Delight Ejiaka, Shingai Kagunda, Somto Ihezue, Rutendo Chidzodzo, YVETTE NDLOVU

Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Afrofuturism is one of the fastest-growing genres in the world and is acknowledged for its capacity to push innovations. We will discuss the nuances of three pivotal terms and analyze the foundational texts that have shaped these movements, from pioneering speculative fiction

to contemporary surrealist prose, and how it shows up in our own work. Finally, we will navigate the demands of the publishing industry and resist the pressure to explain cultural or spiritual elements to a mainstream audience.

T225. Bless Our Hearts: Teaching While Queer in the South (Revisited)
Brandy Wilson, T.K. Lee, Yuly Restrepo, Douglas Ray, Julie Marie Wade
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Teaching as a queer writer in the South brings rewards and challenges, from Southern hospitality and humor to conservative values and recent legislation targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Can writers come out in the classroom? How do we discuss diversity while fostering a respectful, welcoming

environment? How can queer educators address homophobia, racism, transphobia, and sexism? Panelists share experiences and strategies for teaching while queer today in the South and beyond.

T226. Great Writers Steal: Teaching Borrowed Form & Imitation

Dustin M. Hoffman, Michael Martone, Renee Branum, Gwen Kirby

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Methods of teaching direct inspiration will guide this panel focused on teaching through imitation and borrowed form. Panelists will discuss the craft of hermit-crab fiction and prompts that challenge students to focus on structure and voice outside of their comfort zones. Influence will also guide this panel with discussions of studying literary lineages and

prompts that turn imitation into fresh inspiration.

T227. Surviving Censorship: Junior Faculty on Creative Writing in the University Today
Nathan Osorio, Claire Jimenez, Nicholas Goodly, SJ Sindu, Cindy Juyoung Ok
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

As academic freedom is corroded across the US, the university is in crisis. Yet for its underrepresented communities, it has always been a site of precarity. Ironically, the university is built upon a promise of creative freedom that continues to attract writers from diverse backgrounds. As a cohort of junior creative writing faculty, we ask, How did we get here? What historical and communal resources do we

call upon to survive this paradox? And how do we make it tenable for those who come next?

T228. Latinx/e Literary Organizations in the United States

Anita Huizar-Hernandez, Francisco Aragón, Norma Cantú, Belinda Acosta, PhD, Toni Kirkpatrick

Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

This panel brings together leaders of national Latinx/e literary organizations that advocate for the visibility, inclusion, and advancement of Latinx poets and writers in the United States. Rooted in community, cultural heritage, and resistance, these organizations dismantle barriers in publishing and literary spaces through storytelling, mentorship, advocacy, and literary programming while fostering belonging and nurturing future generations of writers.

T229. Brains on the Plains: Readings by *Plainsongs* & *Corpus Callosum* Contributors
Matt Mason, Eleanor Reeds, Eric Tucker, Ulrick Casimir, Ali Beheler
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

As *Plainsongs* poetry journal nears its 50th anniversary and the *Corpus Callosum* journal nears its fifth, contributors to these two Nebraska-based journals share their recent work and discuss the role that small literary magazines have played in their writing lives.

T230. Poetry & Public Truth: Writing Against Misinformation & Manufactured Narratives
Katerina Canyon, Jose Medina, Nate Marshall, Susan Rich, Buku Sarkar

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poets and interdisciplinary writers discuss how poetry engages public truth in an era shaped by misinformation, surveillance, war, media manipulation, and algorithmic culture. The panel explores documentary poetics, archival practice, political witness, and the ethical responsibilities of writers working across personal testimony, history, technology, and public memory. Panelists consider how poetry can test dominant narratives while making new spaces for collective understanding and resistance.

T231. Behind the Scenes at *The Chicago Manual of Style*
Jenny Ringblom, Jenni Fry, Carol Saller, Mary Laur

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Chicago is home to the premier style manual followed by authors and publishers of literary journals and books. In this session, members of the University of Chicago Press team that produces *The Chicago Manual of Style* discuss how they decide what to add, delete, and update with each edition as well as what they do when they disagree about changes and how they address issues arising between editions. Writers and editors, come learn the secrets of Chicago style from those who help shape it!

T232. Editors of Color: Structures of Care, Sponsored by CLMP
Gerald Maa, Sasheene Denny, Emilio Carrero, Kyla Kupferstein Torres

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Literary magazines are immensely capable vehicles for fostering literary community. This panel brings together 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, with a particular focus on the theme of “structures of care.” This is a panel for readers, writers, and editors; people of color and allies; and all who care to have journals be a productive place for race matters.

T233. Mom, What Were You like in the ’90s? Gen X Writers & Reality’s Bite
Elizabeth Gold, Marie Myung-Ok Lee, Alissa Quart, Asali Solomon, Michelle Tea

Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The 1990s may seem cool now. Pre-iPhones and social media, with cheap rent, and glam magazine jobs. As Gen X writers, we remember that heyday of spoken word, zines, riot grrrl, and conscious hip-hop. But we won't forget the harassment and pushback we faced as Black, Queer, first-gen, and/or third-wave feminist writers. In memoir, poetry, reporting, and fiction, we limn the era between Morning in America and the war on terror. Recalling our roots, we push against our reactionary contemporary.

T234. Intimate Geopolitics: Reverberations of Empire Across Centuries & Continents
Leila Nadir, Jen Soriano, Jung Hae Chae, Lena Tuffaha, Sahar Delijani

Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

This panel explores the ricocheting of US foreign policies across continents, generations, diasporas, and language. With readings and discussion, prose and poetry panelists discuss how their literary craft responds to the invisibilities, silences, and amnesias of US involvements in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iran, Korea, and the Philippines. Panelists trace how these amnesias haunt American literary history while the memories live on in our bodies, memories, homes, and dreams.

T235. Threading the Needle: The Craft of a Perfect Ending
Blair Hurley, Joy Baglio, RICKEY Fayne, Vu Tran, JAMIL KOCHAI

Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Finding the right ending for your story or novel can feel like a magic trick—we have to thread the needle of theme, character, and metaphor without being too heavy-handed. In this discussion with fiction writers of diverse perspectives and backgrounds at the top of their field, we'll discuss how we fit resonant images and character choices into story endings, sharing our own triumphs and missteps. An open discussion with audience questions, we'll help attendees find radical new endings.

T237. Destabilize Your Ontology: Experiments in (Non)fiction
Sarah Mullens, Carmen Machado, Hilary Leichter, Jami Lin, Laura Van Den Berg

Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Apparitions, hallucinations, collapsing timelines, and virtual worlds: What happens to a story when multiple realities fold into one another? Five writers discuss recent experiments in fiction, memoir, autofiction, and all the shades between. We'll talk craft beyond straight narrative realism, techniques for layering realities (memory vs. archive, actual vs. virtual, living vs. dead) and how, in storyworlds where nothing feels quite real or unreal, truer truths bubble up like magic.

T238. Beyond the Book Deal: How Writers Make Money
Lacey Dunham, Emily Smith, Maurice Carlos Ruffin, Sara Petersen, Kristen Berry

Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Behind the public fanfare of publishing lies the murky reality of how writers make money. Authors from a variety of upbringings, backgrounds, and career paths offer a frank discussion about advances, royalties, and taxes; supporting writing with other work; how social class shows up in publishing; and career transitions before and after their book deals in a candid conversation about sustaining a writing life while paying the bills.

T239. AAPI Caucus
Gina Chung, Noah Arhm Choi, Lawrence-Minh Davis, Ching-In Chen
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

What is literature's role in liberation? How do we as Asian American and Pacific Islander writers and readers steward spaces of care, emergence, legacy, and belonging? How can we think expansively about what it means to be of AAPI diasporic communities and what it means to be a writer?

T240. There's a Website for That: Resources to Find the Right Agent for You
Shelly Romero, Donovan Levine, Roma Panganiban, Hannah Teachout, CeCe Lyra
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

You've written your book. You've taken your time to edit and revise. And now you're ready to query. But where the heck do you even start? Not to mention, how do you determine which

literary agent will have the taste, communication style, workflow, and overall vibes that you need in a creative partner? Join a panel of agents as they discuss tried-and-true resources and best practices from using trade publications, industry websites, social media, and more.

4:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. CT

T241. Two-Year College Creative Writing Caucus
Regina Peters, Mary Lannon, Christine Guaragno, Gabrielle Myers
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

Do you teach at a two-year college? Interested in job opportunities at two-year colleges? Join us for our annual networking meeting. With almost half of all students starting at two-year

colleges, and increasing numbers of MFAs landing two-year college teaching jobs, the future of creative writing courses and programs at our campuses looks bright. We will discuss teaching creative writing at the two-year college, hold a short business meeting, and provide tangible resources.

T242. LGBTQ Writers Caucus
Erin Sharkey, Davi Gray
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

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

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

5:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. CT

T243. Sober AWP
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

Daily 12-step meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. CT

T244. #AWP27 Keynote Address by Rebecca Makkai, Sponsored by *The Rumpus*
Rebecca Makkai
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

Rebecca Makkai is the author of the *New York Times*-bestselling *I Have Some Questions For You* as well as four other works of fiction. Her novel *The Great Believers* was one of the *New York Times'* Best Books of the 21st Century, finalist for both the 2019 Pulitzer Prize and the 2018 National Book Award, and the winner of the ALA Carnegie Medal and LA Times Book Prize, among other honors. A 2022 Guggenheim Fellow, Rebecca teaches graduate fiction writing at Middlebury College, Northwestern University, and the Bennington Writing Seminars. She is Artistic Director of StoryStudio Chicago.

This event will include live captioning and ASL interpretation.

Read presenters' bios.

8:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. CT

T245. Indigenous Aboriginal American Writers Caucus

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

Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Caucus

Indigenous writers and scholars participate fluidly in AWP by teaching and directing affiliated programs and by working as independent writers/scholars, in language revitalization, and in local community programming. Annually imparting field-related craft, pedagogy, celebrations, and concerns as understood by Indigenous/Native writers from the Americas and surrounding island nations is necessary. Essential program development continues in 2027.

Friday, March 19, 2027

7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. CT

F100. Sober AWP
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Daily 12-step meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

F101. First Aid
Level 1, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

First Aid is located on level 1 of McCormick Place Lakeside Center. From the central lobby (near the level 2 gift shop), proceed down the stairs or elevator and turn left. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

Attendees can also call the ADA hotline, 240-269-6635, to request EMT assistance throughout McCormick Place Lakeside Center.

F102. Mamava Lactation Pod
Near Room E250, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

A Mamava lactation pod is located across the hall from room E250 at McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 2, and is available for any nursing parent to use.

F103. Low-Light Space
Room E250, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

F104. Dickinson Quiet Space
Room E252, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

F105. Lactation Lounge
Room E254, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

The lactation lounge is located in room E254 of McCormick Place Lakeside Center and is available for any nursing parent to use.

F106. Coat Check

Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Coat check is available at the entrance of Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, Level 3. No cash, only credit cards accepted.

F107. Conference Registration
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 3. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. CT

F108. Chicago Roots: Art & Literature Influenced by Workers & Latine Movements
Angelica Davila, Diego Baez, Rocio Franco, Ricardo Gamboa, Britney Quiroz
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

A city with strong historical ties to labor rights and grassroots organized movements, Chicago continues to be a hub for community-centered movements that aim to protect its working-class residents, as demonstrated recently by its response to heavy ICE presence. A city with such a fight has undoubtedly influenced generations of writers and multidisciplinary artists. Panelists at this event will share how

workers' rights and Latine movements have become tied to their work.

F109. The Ethical Representation of Trauma in Poetry

Hope Wabuke, Saddiq Dzukogi, Mahtem Shiferraw, Ladan Osman
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

How do we ethically represent trauma and grief in poetry? How do we do this without retraumatizing the reader or ourselves? Or should the experience gesture toward traumatizing the reader? As Black writers, how do we avoid the media's titillation of Black trauma? It is also important to engage with the enterprise of the monetization of suffering and the locus of our attention as craftspeople when we choose who to center and decide on our

primary audience—whether or not to ignore outside gazes.

F110. Migrating Pedagogies: Teaching/Learning Radical Writing in Colleges/Universities
Andrea Quaid, Alexis Almeida, Gabrielle Civil, Jess Arndt, Allison Yasukawa
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

In this panel, diverse college-level writing teachers share and reflect on radical writing about their own teaching/learning. All contributors to the *Migrating Pedagogies Anthology* (n.p., 2027), panelists reveal how writing honest, urgent accounts of teaching experiences can help teachers process and deepen their pedagogy. Facing heavy workload, xenophobia, rape culture, and more, panelists show how writing about pedagogy documents

and instigates new conversations inside and outside of classrooms.

F111. School of the Art Institute of Chicago: 30 Years Writing in the Heart of Chicago
Sisel Gelman, Sara Levine, Lindsay Hunter, Cynthia Pelayo
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Readings

The MFA program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago—in downtown Chicago near “The Bean”—celebrates its 30th anniversary with readings and insights from a professor and three alumni: Sara Levine, Cynthia Pelayo, Lindsay Hunter, and Sisel Gelman. These award-winning writers will share how their success was inspired and guided by the city of Chicago, its literary opportunities, and the SAIC community. The reading and Q&A will showcase the work they have published

across the genres of comedy, thriller, horror, literary fiction, and more.

F112. The Blackprint: Creating the first MFA Program Centered on Black Literature
Cole Lavalais, Haki Madhubuti, Kelly Norman Ellis, Sandra Jackson-Opoku
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Program Development

This panel will discuss the institutional challenges and practical strategies involved in developing and sustaining Chicago State University's MFA program at a public, predominantly Black university for 25 years. Topics will include curriculum design, institutional roadblocks, community engagement, funding and resource navigation, and creating pathways for students beyond the degree.

F113. Writing with Ancestors & Archives
A.W. Strouse, Katelin Kelly, Amanda Scott, Dez Brown
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Authors will share from works that summon ancestors and that attend to archives—that listen carefully for voices that historically have been hard to hear, either because those voices were silenced, or just kind of quiet, or because they spoke in languages that have died, or that haven't been invented yet. Each author will also reflect briefly on the construction of their work and their processes. Join us for a reading of poetry and prose that challenges us to hear the past.

F114. Stethoscope to Pen: Writing From the Front Lines of Reproductive Healthcare

Kaitlyn Joshua, Willie Parker, Jamilla Webb, DeShawn Taylor
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

In a post-Roe era, clinicians are vital frontline voices. This panel brings together two physicians and a registered nurse who move from “Stethoscope to Pen,” sharing a literary tool kit for translating reproductive care into narrative. Through moderated discussion and readings, these storytellers explore the craft of writing through stigma toward dismantling systems of harm. Attendees learn how to use memoirs and workbooks to shift discourse and advance reproductive justice with purpose.

F115. Critical Poetics of Suicide for Queer & Trans People of Color
Maya Williams, Emily ("Emdash") Gao, Kailah Figueroa, Diannely Antigua

Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

As QTBIPOC, not only are our narratives of suicidality ostracized in some circles, they have a tendency to be fetishized in others. As an underserved hyphenated community, our poetry is critical in reminding ourselves to stay alive for ourselves. Join us in a panel and reading discussion about the critical poetics of suicide for queer and trans people of color, featuring Diannely Antigua, EMDASH, Kailah Figueroa, and Maya Williams.

F116. Nancy Zafris: Indelible Voice
EJ Levy, David Lynn, Geeta Kothari, Nick White, Amina Gautier
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

Nancy Zafris (1954–2021) may be best known as *Kenyon Review*'s longtime fiction editor and series editor for the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction. But she was also a great writer and teacher who cofounded *Kenyon Review*'s generative workshops and mentored many with a pedagogy all her own. This panel—of acclaimed authors, editors, and teachers who worked with Zafris—will share insights from her distinctive approach, and pay tribute to her indelible voice with brief readings from her books.

F117. "On Being Ill": The Challenges, & Opportunities, of Writing Illness
Ann Wallace, Sarah Sala, Tzynya Pinchback, Therese Gleason
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

In the throes of illness, language can be elusive. And yet, as Emily Dickinson noted, “After great pain, a formal feeling comes –.” Four writers who live with chronic pain and/or have experienced life-limiting illness explore the transgressive act of writing the ailing body—not only as a form of witness to the stigmatized experience of (often invisible) pain and disability prone to erasure, but also as a catalyst for formal innovation, embodied aesthetics, play, and even pleasure.

F118. Literature Between Empire & Liberation
Lily Rosengard, Radhika Singh, Seraj Assi, Eman Abdelhadi, Jeff Holmes
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Four anticolonial novelists discuss the craft of writing against empire. Through conversation, they explore how fiction can illuminate systems

of power, preserve memory, and imagine liberatory futures. What narrative strategies make empire visible? What responsibilities do writers have when depicting histories of colonization, displacement, and resistance? How can fiction render liberation possible? Attendees will leave with new insights on writing history, power, and liberation on the page.

F119. From Readings to Relationships: Building Citywide Community
Ananda Lima, Rachel León, James Stewart, Mandy Medley, Brian Hieggelke
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Writing is a solitary act, but you don't need to do it alone. The panel explores larger trends of writing and living in urban spaces, community building in the Midwest, and interdisciplinary

collaborations. Five Chicago-based organizations—StoryStudio Chicago, *Chicago Review of Books*, Pilsen Community Books, Exhibit B Performance Series, and *Newcity*—discuss how they've contributed to successfully building community for writers in the city, and why it's vital to do so.

F120. Another Country: Fiction, Travel & the Writer's Craft
Leeya Mehta, Aminatta Forna, Helon Habila, Anqi Tang
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This panel brings together four award-winning writers whose fiction has been shaped by travels across Europe, Africa, and Asia. With roots in America, Nigeria, China, Scotland, Sierra Leone, and India, these authors move beyond their own cultural and personal

narratives to write about places and communities within and outside their immediate experience through immersion, and sustained engagement. They will discuss the challenges and creative possibilities of experiencing travel to expand their fiction.

F121. Occupied: Queer Voices from the People's Minnesota

Kathryn Kysar, Alice Paige, Chavonn Shen, Luna Rey Hall, Tarik Dobbs

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

During Operation Metro Surge, Minnesota's emerging writers were at the forefront supporting, protecting, and giving voice to their communities. This diverse group of panelists will consider how living under federal occupation changed their careers as they bore

witness to the grief of brutality while celebrating collective creative resistance. As Trans, Queer, Disabled, Arab American, and Black writers, they will offer insights on belonging, survival, resilience, and resistance during crisis.

F122. Writing Wayward Mothers: When Mothers Do the Unexpected
Uche Okonkwo, Camille Adams, Maria Zoccola, Esther Okonkwo
Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

How do we make sense of mothers who choose differently, who upend expectations of what a mother looks and feels and performs like? In this mixed-genre panel, authors discuss how they write mothers and mothering outside of the norms. From an emotional and technical

perspective, authors will discuss the challenges of crafting these mothers, and how their process is shaped by the constraints and opportunities of their genres—the novel, poetry, and memoir.

F123. Beyond Control: Perspectives on Censorship in the Literary Arts
B Sampson, C. Russell Price, Elisabet Velasquez, Steven Baron, Cathy Che
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

In today's climate, writing and publishing are mired in issues of literary censorship. From "illegal DEI" to book bans and canceled events, writers are losing potential earnings and their right to free speech in support of social justice issues. This panel will give attendees a chance to learn from three writers with firsthand

experience of political and identity-based censorship, and to hear a legal perspective from an attorney who specializes in publishing law.

F124. Is the Bird Living or Dead? Truth & Subjectivity in the 21st Century
Noah Zanella, Christie Valentin-Bati, Evan Fusco, Lisa Fishman, Darya Foroohar
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In this panel, writers of poetry, fiction, plays, essays, and comics explore how they write against dead language and toward genuine speech, in order to, as Toni Morrison said, "expand articulation, rather than to close it." Questions for the panelists address modern conceptions of subjectivity, the commodification of marginalized narratives, the poetics of attention, digital mass media, AI, the

ineffable, and the historically vexed relationship between the imagination, necessity, and freedom.

F125. Failing Up: How Your Unpublished Manuscript Can Help Your Career
Amy Brill, Cleyvis Natera, Courtney Maum, Diane Brown, Dionne Ford
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Nearly every writer of long-form fiction has a book in the drawer—literally or metaphorically—but we rarely contemplate their value. Diverse novelists at various career stages will discuss the implications of these projects. What happens if we reframe “failure” as a normal part of practice? What type of change in process or output can an unpublished manuscript engender? Will self-publishing help

or hinder future opportunites with traditional publishers? Who decides whether a book “doesn’t work”?

F126. Red Ink & Revision: How to Edit a Poetry Collection

Daniel Slager, Camille Dungy, Campbell McGrath, Keetje Kuipers, Dan Chiasson
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poetry can be a Pandora’s box of challenges: Changing a word increases musicality but throws off the line, new lineation fixes a stanza yet disrupts the overall poem. Editing a collection magnifies this issue: How do you find a bird’s-eye view while tackling individual poems? This panel offers insights on balancing cohesion and dissonance in a collection, the push and pull of editing, and how to prepare manuscripts for publication. Presented by

Milkweed Editions and the National Poetry Series.

F127. The Fictional Self in Exile: Hannah Lillith Assadi & Naeem Murr, Sponsored by the Center for Fiction
Sarah Cypher, Hannah Assadi, Naeem Murr
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

In their novels *Paradiso 17* and *Every Exit Brings You Home*, Hannah Lillith Assadi and Naeem Murr's characters' families are exiled from their homes in Palestine during the 1948 Nakba. This displacement affects their futures in ways that are impossible to predict and utterly captivating to read, bringing the borders of nations and the interior lines of gender, sexuality, loyalty, and familial love into question in surprising ways. They will discuss crafting complex stories and characters.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F128. Publishing the Short Story Collection: From Submission to Promoting Your Work
Abby Manzella, Andrew Bertaina, Jessie Marshall, Patricia Grace King, Megan Giddings
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

These authors, who have also published or produced other long forms—novels, novellas, plays, essay collections, academic books—will discuss the learning curve of publishing a story collection. From submitting to university presses or to competitions, or to indies or the Big Five, we'll explore strategies of

putting together and pitching your collection, as well as promoting a form often undervalued. We'll compare notes on our journeys and ask, What did we learn? What do wish we'd known?

F129. Comps Confidential: What You Need to Know About How Comps Work at Each Stage of the Publishing Process, Sponsored by Publishers Marketplace
Mary Ann Naples, Amy Bishop-Wycisk, Maggie Cooper, Jackie De Leo
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

From querying to editorial to sales to retail, comparative/competitive titles are a crucial, infuriating part of every publishing journey. Learn from publishing executives, literary agents, and other industry experts how they work, which bestsellers to avoid, and what free

tools as well as bespoke industry searches from Publishers Marketplace can help hone your research, so you have confidence in your saleable strategy.

F130. Jewish Writers Caucus
Jessica Jacobs, Josh Rolnick, Lauren Grodstein, Sara Lippmann
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

The Jewish Writers Caucus invites 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.

F131. Publisher Math: Where Money Goes in the Sale of a Book & Why You Don't Have It, Sponsored by CLMP
Christina Ward, Casey Plett, Christine Neulieb, Diane Goettel, Janaka Stucky
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

A $24 book sold through a distributor returns roughly $4.50 to the publisher, who must then pay the author, the printer, the editor, the designer, the publicist, and the warehouse. Where does the rest go, and why? Five independent publishers break down the real cost structure of a book from acquisition to remainder, walking attendees through P&Ls, royalty statements, and return rates. A clear-

eyed, numbers-on-the-table conversation for writers tired of guessing.

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT

F132. AWP Bookfair, Sponsored by the Poetry Foundation
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

F133. Concessions
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in McCormick Place Lakeside Center in the AWP Bookfair, Exhibit Hall D, Level 3. No cash, only credit cards are accepted at all food and beverage locations. Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app for location details.

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT

F134. AWP Member Lounge
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

AWP members! Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the conference in this members-only lounge on the bookfair floor, featuring comfortable seating and complimentary water and coffee. Thank you for your membership and for being part of the AWP community! Please note: You must have “AWP Member” printed on your badge to access the lounge.

If you aren't already, we encourage you to become a member today!

10:35 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. CT

F135. The Other Side of the Coin: Hidden Costs & Joys of Writing a Memoir
Claudia Castro Luna, Kristen Millares Young, Maya Jewell Zeller, Tina Ontiveros
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writers from varied personal backgrounds and aesthetic inclinations speak about their memoir-writing journeys and the personal cost of tackling emotionally and psychically difficult material that includes war, intergenerational trauma, rural poverty, addiction, and reclaiming heritages and identities. The discussion

includes: retriggering of past traumas, family dynamics
(mothering/divorce/separation/abuse), bodily impacts, AND how to establish boundaries and safe writing spaces in order to strike a healthier writing/life balance.

F136. Literature in a Time of Carceral Peril: Writing & Publishing Latinx Lives
Joy Castro, Marco Fernando Navarro, Sara Rivera, John González, Lorraine Lopez
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

In a time when official political rhetoric distorts, erases, and dehumanizes Latinx people, characterizing us as criminals and economic parasites in order to lay the groundwork for our incarceration and expulsion, it feels imperative to document the complex truths and textures of our lives. Four authors whose new personal

essays appear in a portfolio of 32 Latinx flash memoirs in *Prairie Schooner* will discuss with the journal's new nonfiction editor the political import of their literary work.

F137. Poetry for Young People: Pedagogy, Politics & Transformation
Aishvarya Arora, Carlina Duan, Marlin M Jenkins, Noah Arhm Choi
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

In this panel, experienced poet-educators of color from across the US will discuss the philosophies that inform their youth-centered poetry pedagogy in middle schools, high schools, community-engaged arts spaces, and writing-intensive summer camps. As a call to action, they'll offer insights into the political urgency of youth-work, especially with queer youth and youth of color. We'll close by

discussing how being a teacher has transformed their own writing practices as poets.

F138. Silence(d) in Translation, Sponsored by ALTA

Sharon Dolin, Nancy Naomi Carlson, Charlotte Friedman, Chloe Martinez, Piotr Florczyk
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

Translators from Catalan, Ch'ol, French, Polish, and Braj Bhasha consider the role that silence as understatement and white space, and as the political dimension of being silenced, plays in their work. What are the choices a translator has to make when a poem is minimalist on the page? How does white space function in the original and in the translation? Is there a connection between the silence on the page and the poet grappling with and resisting being silenced within the culture at large?

F139. Disabled & D/eaf Writers Caucus
Jess Silfa, Cade Leebron, Rose Zinnia
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

The Disabled and D/deaf Writers Caucus brings together writers who are disabled, Deaf, or living with chronic illness, and their allies, to network and discuss shared challenges of identity, craft, teaching, and access while leading a literary life. Meeting annually at AWP, the caucus archives our interests and concerns to increase the visibility of disabled and D/deaf writers and affirm our importance to this organization and to the communities where we live, teach, and work.

F140. Black Romance: A Radical Act
Amber Phillips, Frances Williams, Rasheda Malcolm, Mariana Sheppard

Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In a literary world that often centers Black trauma, contemporary romance writers are rejecting the limitations placed on Black storytelling. This panel examines the ways Black writers are challenging the status quo, depicting love in its many forms, including friends to lovers, queer love, chosen family, and journeys toward self-love. Panelists will discuss how romance writing reimagines Black love beyond the stereotype, by focusing on joy, intimacy, pleasure, and tenderness.

F141. Why Can't We All Get Along? Writing Personal Conflict in Middle Grade
Nicole M. Hewitt, Alby C. Williams, Sarah J. Mendonca, Stan Yan, Shifa Saltagi Safadi

Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

In our increasingly divided world, it's more important than ever for kids to see characters working past differences toward common ground. But how do we write realistic character conflict that acknowledges that differences can sometimes feel insurmountable? Conversely, how do we demonstrate that, in certain circumstances, distancing yourself from an unhealthy relationship is an equally valid choice? A panel of middle grade authors discusses navigating this delicate balance in their writing.

F142. Letter to a Stranger: The Magic of the Epistolary Essay
Aube Rey Lescure, Ber Anena, Jai Chakrabarti, Margo Steines, Ucheoma Onwutuebe

Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Who is a stranger that haunts you still? “Letter to a Stranger” is an essay prompt that invites writers to explore stories they might otherwise have overlooked. In this panel, four essayists—writing about strangers ranging from an Indian astrologer to a Midwestern bus passenger, from an expat at a Nigerian airport to a baby with a brain freeze—will discuss letters as vessels for storytelling. Attendees will begin their own essays exploring interactions that linger with unresolved mystery.

F143. Opening Access: Building Literary Community at Two-Year Colleges
Jamie De Monte, Joee Goheen, Trina Sotira, Joshua Thusat
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Program Development

This panel explores approaches to building literary community at two-year colleges. Panelists discuss their efforts in advising publications, organizing events, teaching workshops, and running reading series. Topics also include the diversity of the overall student population and their unique needs, and how an engaging literary community can lead to students' overall self-efficacy and persistence. Panelists reflect on obstacles—some common, some unique—as well as solutions and opportunities.

F144. Ronald Johnson's *Radi os*: 50 Years of Influence

Derek Mong, Devin Johnston, Kirsten "Kai" Ihns, Jonathan Moore, Peter O'Leary

Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Tributes

This panel will explore Ronald Johnson (1935–1998) and the lasting influence of *Radi os* (1977), his best-known poem. A book-length erasure of Milton's Paradise Lost, *Radi os* is among the first erasures in English, a technique that, although once avant-garde, now appears in debut collections and undergrad classrooms. This panel's five members, which include Johnson's literary executor and publisher, will reintroduce *Radi os* and track its influence in poetry. A Q&A will follow the discussion.

F145. Poetic Fatherhood Across Diasporas
David Maduli, Faisal Mohyuddin, Hari Alluri, Kevin Dublin, Michal Jones
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Poets of color explore how fatherhood reshapes writing across diaspora, migration, and family life. Through prepared remarks, readings, and conversation, panelists examine parenting as a poetic practice of witnessing, care, protection, and cultural transmission. The panel considers gender, masculinity, lineage, vulnerability, and domestic and artistic labor while imagining more expansive futures for families and communities through poetry.

F146. Conversing with the Dead: Wrestling with Grief Across Genres
Isobel O'Hare, Jonah Mixon-Webster, Karie Fugett, Kenning García, Steven Dunn
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

While grief is a universal human experience, the ways grief is expressed are as varied as the

individuals impacted by it. Perhaps the question of how to write one's grief begins with choosing its genre. Is your grief a memoir, essay, novel, diary, poetry collection, or hybrid creature? How do you decide? Writers united in their disparate creative approaches to the losses of their closest loved ones read excerpts from their work and answer questions from the moderator, followed by an audience Q&A.

F147. Other Legacies: The Great Unsung Poets
Kevin Prufer, Dana Levin, Kazim Ali, Robin Coste Lewis, Paul Tran
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Why do brilliant poets disappear from literary memory? Why do some writers become central to our understanding of American poetry while others, equally innovative and influential, fade from anthologies, classrooms, and public

conversation? Four contemporary poets each introduce an overlooked American precursor, explore the cultural and institutional forces that shaped that poet's disappearance, and read selections from their work, asking how literary histories are made, preserved, and revised.

F148. Fact Meets Fiction: The Art & Craft of the Biographical Novel
Kathleen Collins, Lauren Willig, Victoria Murray, Andrea Schenkel
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

How do novelists balance artistic freedom with respect for the lives of characters based on real people? How do they maintain factual integrity while producing an entertaining narrative? Panelists discuss the challenges and strategies used in achieving balance between accuracy and imaginative storytelling. They will address

issues such as creating plausible dialogue, managing complex legacies, and building psychological depth into well-documented figures.

F149. On the Mic: Reading Your Writing Aloud
Alexis Wright, Theresa Okokon, Crystal Valentine, Ines Bellina, Nora Meiners
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Reading our work aloud is part of being a writer, yet most of us are never taught how. Neither, this panel argues, are we taught to listen. Public reading is a symbiotic craft: choices about pacing, breath, and editing on the writer's side, met by attention, generosity, and patience on the audience's. Four writers across prose, poetry, and storytelling discuss reading aloud, what it asks of the room, and

how that mutual practice is what literary community is made of.

F150. Lily Poetry Review Books, Part Two
Gloria Monaghan, Anne Pluto, Eileen Cleary
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Lily Poetry Review Books presents Kareem Tayyar, Dom Blanco, Michael McInnis, Melody Wilson, and others with a special reading from Jennifer Martelli's posthumous collection *In the Mother House* and Ren Wilding's debut collection.

F151. Accidental Ambassadors: Immigrant Writers on Representing Home Countries
Khem Aryal, Rahad Abir, Kanza Javed, Oindrila Mukherjee, V.V. Ganeshananthan
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writers with immigrant roots writing about home countries often hear complaints that they do not portray their people and cultures in favorable terms and that they fail to serve as ambassadors of their countries of origin. In this session, five writers representing five South Asian countries discuss how they write about and represent their home countries and cultures. More specifically, they explore underlying tensions in representation and discuss strategies they employ as they write from diaspora.

F152. Serious Fun in the Creative Writing Workshop

Barney Haney, Christopher Coake, Phong Nguyen, Shonda Buchanan, Kayleb Candrilli

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Writers having fun in workshop are cocreators in learning. They're engaged, their attention is focused, and they work harder. They don't use AI or overvalue grades. They're more comfortable and less anxious. Panelists will present arguments and practices for fun in different workshop modes and levels, from graduate to introductory to community. We'll share perspectives from liberal arts colleges, large universities, and public events to present the value of fun in academics, art, and life.

F153. Don't Burn the Place Down: How University Lit Mags Manage a Rotating Masthead, Sponsored by CLMP

Sarah Belli, Diana Towner, Ellen Litman, Heather Truett, Brooke Burns

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Literary magazines run by MFA cohorts and undergraduates allow students to collaborate with their peers and experience the publishing world. When a new masthead comes in each fall, how do we make sure the magazine and everything it stands for doesn't instantly burn to the ground? In this panel, student editors and faculty advisors representing established literary magazines discuss how they ensure their work speaks to the magazine's mission while also showcasing a personal flare.

F154. Queer Place-Making: Resiliency, Imagination & Resistance
Matty Glasgow, Chekwube Danladi, Jessica Tanck, Kieron Walquist, Luna Andujar
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Queerness can never be untangled from place. Where we are determines not just our comfort, but our safety and ability to live full lives. Yet place is also capacious, multifaceted: text, mind, body, gathering, group chat. Place can be created and reforged on the page. This multigenre reading gathers queer writers from red, blue, and purple states to ask: Where and how does queer place-making happen on the page? And what might it have to teach us about resiliency, imagination, and resistance?

F155. Eyes on the Prizes: How & Why to Submit to University Press Book Contests
Katie Cortese, Allison Means, Courtney Ochsner, Parneshia Jones, Sarah Shermyen
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Since most commercial presses don't accept unagented submissions, many university presses run contests as pathways to publication for writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, translation, and more. Editors from five university presses will describe their book contests, highlight traits of successful works, offer advice, and demystify their selection processes. Too, panelists will discuss the benefits—and any challenges—of working with a university press during and after book publication.

F156. Reclaiming Native/Indigenous Aesthetics
Beth Piatote, Beth Piatote, Esther Belin, Matthew Skeets, Abigail Chabitnoy
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

As Indigenous writers we discuss challenges and strategies of foregrounding distinct Indigenous aesthetics rooted in our languages, homelands, and cultures in a market shaped by stereotypes and artificial expectations. We address (1) the weight of anthropological discourses on poetics and effects of “pretendianism” and stereotypes, (2) historical narratives that efface Alaska Native geographies, practices, and aesthetics, and (3) effects of “nature writing” on Native expressions of relationality.

F157. Reinventing Tradition: Jewish Fiction for a New Generation, Sponsored by the Jewish Book Council

Rachel Kadish, Zeeva Bukai, Helene Wecker, Portia Elan

Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Every generation inherits stories and the chance to transform them. From family sagas to futuristic worlds to folkloric fantasies, contemporary Jewish writers reimagine tradition, memory, and identity to create work that speaks to today's readers. In this session, acclaimed Jewish novelists will discuss how they draw on inherited narratives while pushing beyond established boundaries. Together, they'll explore how literature evolves and what the future of Jewish storytelling might look like.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F158. Cave Canem Presents *"deep like the rivers..."*: A Report on Black Poets

Amanda Johnston, Barbara Shae-Jackson, Jasmine Mans, Michael Kleber-Diggs, Lisa Willis
Room E354b, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Following the release of *Magnitude and Bond* (2025), Cave Canem returns with its next research project, "*deep like the rivers…": A Report on Black Poets*. The project seeks to illuminate and generate new knowledge exploring "What are the formal and informal networks that connect Black poets and enable artistic and professional growth?" The panel will lead the audience through highlights of the survey findings through the lens of survey, experience, practice, and inquiry.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F159. Research for Making Stuff Up: Strategies & Surprises in Research for Fiction

Marguerite Sheffer, Clare Beams, Rufi Thorpe, Senaa Ahmad, Kangkang Kovacs

Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Research can inspire a plot, ground a character, or enrich a setting. But what does “research for fiction” mean in practice? Panelists will share stories, surprises, and learnings from their journeys deep into historical archives and interviewing OnlyFans models. We’ll discuss beginning research, finding vivid sources, balancing research with generation, tracking and weaving in learnings, pitfalls to avoid, and when to stop researching and get down to making stuff up.

F160. Trash Can Energy: Writers on Class, Access & Getting Through the Door
D/ANNIE LIONTAS, Chet'la Sebree, Dantiel Moniz, Marie-Helene Bertino, Sara Novic
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Do you ever feel like you were “born trash . . . in a land of aristocrats?” This intersectional roundtable offers a praxis for how to navigate the publishing industry and literary world as an outsider. Participants leave with practical advice on agents, contacts, contracts, editorial relationships, and how to seek out others who are similarly marginalized as we build community. Show up late to the party, make them all know you belong there.

F161. The Surreal Memoir: Writing the Self Beyond Realism

Ruben Quesada, Shakeema Smalls, Zito Madu, May-lee Chai
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

What if your life story doesn't fit neatly within the boundaries of American realism? Four BIPOC authors describe their strategies for writing autobiographical works that make use of surreal, magical, mythical, and speculative elements. Whether unpacking Diasporic family histories and migration, resisting imperialist or racist narratives, unearthing queer ancestors, exploring mental health and disability, or healing from grief, these writers will discuss mining the surreal in prose and poetry.

F162. A Certain Bitchiness: Women Writing Women in Fiction

Katie Jean Shinkle, Erika Wurth, Jeanne Thornton, Megan Giddings, Ursula Villarreal-Moura
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Too often women characters in fiction are created using stereotypes and tropes that can, at best, detract from the writing and, at worst, perpetuate harm. Five women fiction writers will discuss how to approach writing women characters, how they negotiate “likability,” flaws, and the relatability of characters who might not have all the right answers. Each writer will share strategies about and experiences in writing women characters in novels, novellas, short stories, and hybrid works.

10:35 a.m. to 1:25 p.m. CT

F163. AWP Writing Organization Council Meeting
Level 33, Marriott Marquis Chicago

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

12:10 p.m. to 1:25 p.m. CT

F164. Culture Takes: Criticism as a Parallel Practice
Meher Manda, Summer Farah, Torsa Ghosal, Lucas Mann, Colleen Morrissey
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

“Those who can’t do, critique.” In popular imagination, there exists a separation between the critic and the writer. The critic strains their spear at the heart of creative work, while the writer is all instinct and muscle. The writer makes, while the critic intellectualizes. In this panel, five writers who also moonlight as critics of cinema, pop culture, gender, food histories, postcolonial literatures, and AI discuss how criticism informs, supplements, and parallels their creative writing.

F165. Transforming Vision at the Art Institute of Chicago: A Revisitation
Dean Rader, Edward Hirsch, Elise Paschen, Robyn Schiff, Rita Dove
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

In the early 1990s, Edward Hirsch invited a range of authors to write about a specific work

of art from the Art Institute of Chicago. The result, *Transforming Vision: Writers on Art*, was a groundbreaking and influential work of ekphrasis that expanded how writers encountered, engaged, interpreted, and translated visual art. This panel celebrates *Transforming Vision* three decades later by revisiting pieces from the book and offering new takes on works from the Art Institute's collection.

F166. Text as Performance / Performative Writing / Scripts & Scores Beyond the Stage
Katie Schaag, Anne Lesley Selcer, Monica Mody, Meghan Lamb, Téa Jones-Yelvington
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

As Suzan-Lori Parks reminds us, "Words are spells in our mouths." Resisting the binary

between script and performance, panelists discuss experimental approaches to hybrid forms that activate the physicality of language. With intersectional feminist perspectives on multimedia projects including performance poem-cycles, fieldwork compositions, literary performance personae, conceptual scores, and embodied participatory rituals, panelists explore possibilities for writing as a transformative act.

F167. Me dijo que that's it . . . A Reading by Transcreative Poets

Carlos Aguasaco, Jennifer Rathbun, Kristin Dykstra, Nidia Baquero, Tina Escaja
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Five critically acclaimed bilingual (English/Spanish) authors share their recent transcreative work, including cyber and

performance poetry, translingual poems, translations, or transversal poetic forms. The reading explores a variety of manifestations of bilingualism and its intersection with identity while challenging the boundaries of current dominant linguistic determinisms. The dialogism in their presentations allow the poets to reveal their sense of self and place in the United States.

F168. Adjunct Writers Caucus
Mike Spry, Elizabeth Donald, Joe Hess, Cara Diaconoff
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

The Adjunct Writers Caucus provides a space for writers who teach from precarious positions within academia—including adjunct faculty, contingent faculty, graduate students, and others without stable institutional support—to

connect, share resources, and grow. The caucus works to increase visibility for this large and under-recognized community of writers and instructors, while creating space for discussion, support, solidarity, and advocacy.

F169. Teaching Teen Writers
Chukwuma Ndulue, Jamie Lyn Smith, Maria Pinto, Rebecca Wallace-Segall, Kerri Bowen-Balejko
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Teaching teen writers requires a distinct kind of trust. Unlike adults who self-select into workshops, teens often arrive through schools, caregivers, scholarships, or community programs. This panel brings together experienced educators and program leaders to discuss teaching craft in an AI- and social media–saturated landscape, gaining support for

your program, fostering creative risk-taking and literary community, and building programs that are accessible, safe, and exciting for young writers.

F170. The Problem/Child: Writing the Family Body Through a Narrative Medicine Lens
Kyler Koons, Julia Schneider, Kate Brubeck, Alya Ahmad, Karie Fugett
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Across genres, the “problem child” writer is tasked with parsing complex family dynamics: generational trauma, toxic cycles, physical and mental illness, and the ways stories of sickness and survival are passed from one generation to the next. How do we write the family body? Explore disease as both lived experience and legacy? Write as cycle-breakers in stubborn

systems? Panelists draw on diverse professional experiences to discuss the ethical and artistic challenges of writing the family body.

F171. Out of the Wasteland: Reading Eliot's Work from an Ecofeminist Perspective
Tresha Haefner-Rubinstein, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Brenda Hillman, Heidi Seaborn
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

In *The Wasteland* Eliot describes a world ravaged by the effects of industrialization, war, and increasing isolation and selfishness. A hundred years later we are still grappling with these issues. However, more people seem to be ready for a shift. In this panel we will discuss the factors that influenced Eliot's work and how his work has influenced modern writers, especially ecofeminists, to reconsider and

reenvision the world we want to create out of the “waste” of the past.

F172. Switching Back, Going Forward: 20 Years of Switchback Books
Marina Blitshteyn, Alyse Knorr, Mackenzie Carignan, Brandi Homan, Becca Klaver
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

For over 20 years, Switchback Books has been publishing women, trans, and gender nonconforming poets using a unique rotating leadership model. This panel of former and current editors will discuss how a volunteer-run independent press stays relevant, agile, and sustainable. What pitfalls can come with switching editors and passing the baton? How can mission-driven presses persist in this era of censorship? And how can like-minded

communities come together to publish poetry for the future?

F173. The Life, Literature & Legacy of Luis J. Rodriguez—In the Long Run
Sheilah Garland-Olaniran, Michael Warr,
Michael Warr, Luis Rodriguez
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

The panelists will focus on the unique relevance and impact of *The Life, Literature, and Legacy of Luis J. Rodriguez—In the Long Run* in the literary world and the multitude of communities that the renowned poet, essayist, journalist, editor, publisher, and activist has traversed and influenced for more than 50 years. How does living a life in which he has literally and continuously crossed local and global borders influence Rodriguez's interpretation of a world

overwhelmed by crisis while erupting with revolutionary potential?

F174. Cracking the Monolith: Publishing Global Voices Beyond the American Lyric
Claretta Holsey, Gabriella Bedetti, Joyelle McSweeney, Katherine Hedeen, Michael Shea
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

How do translators convince US publishers to take risks on poets unknown here, especially when the work resists familiar Anglophone aesthetics? Five practitioners—translators, editors, press founders—discuss what worked, what failed, and what they learned while bringing Uruguayan experimentalists, Korean radicals, and other formally challenging poets into English for the first time. Attendees gain useful guidelines for pitching work that refuses to conform to standard market expectations.

F175. Against the Marriage Plot: Queerness & Narrative Structure

Joseph Osmundson, Aisha Sabatini Sloan, Alex Marzano-Lesnevich, Zena Sharman, Jaquira Díaz

Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Queerness is a site of resistance against inherited narratives of who we are and who we should become. What possibilities, and possible futures, emerge when we write into this resistance? Which narratives do we seek to defy, divest from, or transform? What are our responsibilities as queer nonfiction writers working in an era of rising fascism, when assimilation is still seen by some as a path to safety? In this panel, five writers explore the craft of queering narrative structure in memoir.

F176. Off the Page: When & Why We Leave the Drama Unwritten
Nicole Haroutunian, Shasta Grant, Helen Georgas, Lisa Ko, Reena Shah
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

As writers, we are told to skip the boring stuff: bathroom breaks, naps, uneventful commutes. But why might we skip the good, eventful, life-changing stuff, too? Sometimes what remains unwritten can propel narrative and carry momentum just as much as, or even more than, what is written in scene. In this panel, five fiction writers will share how and why some of the major events of their books—from births to deaths to the end of the world as we know it—happened off the page.

F177. Kicking & Screaming: Writing, Publishing & Promoting Books as a Parent

Kim Liao, Jimin Han, Brian Gresko, Matthew Salesses, Rita Woods
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Someone said, “You lose a book for every child you have,” but what if that’s bullshit? In this panel, established authors with children of all ages debunk the idea that children sabotage the writing life—while acknowledging they may still reschedule it. Panelists will offer tips and wisdom for finishing, publishing, and promoting books as parents, while addressing issues like time management, dealing with grief or guilt, meeting deadlines, and other important aspects of the parent-writer life.

F178. Outside the Classroom: Nature, Attention & the Pedagogy of Place

katie annarino, Matthew Rossi, Brock Jones, Hannah Kroonblawd, Marissa Landrigan
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Gathering writers and educators across genres and institutions, this panel examines what becomes possible in our classrooms and on the page when we invite students into sustained, mindful attention with the natural world. What makes nature writing work? What craft elements resonate with readers? We discuss practical/institutional barriers: urban campuses, limited course time, and screens. We discuss how sitting with a landscape unlocks mindfulness and voice, which translates to the page.

F179. Writing the Kinetic: From Field to Page
Amy Brill, Rita Bullwinkel, Mitchell Jackson, Emily Nemens, Tom Vellner

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

“By the time you find the word for it,” Joyce Carol Oates wrote, “the sweat has flown, and the moment is gone.” Diverse novelists at various career stages will explore the draw—and the challenges—of writing the body in motion. How are language, syntax, and cadence deployed to capture fluidity and grace? Are there “rules” for writing about sport? Can a spectator’s gaze recount an athlete’s embodied experience? What are the practical and artistic considerations for writing the kinetic?

F180. Where Our Souls Live: An Anniversary Reading
Opal Moore, Maryemma Graham, Parneshia Jones, Mahogany L. Browne, Patricia Smith
Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Wintergreen Women Writers Collective will hold its second in-person multigenre reading at #AWP27 commemorating its 40-year anniversary. The event will feature Chicago poet and editor Parneshia Jones; scholar and founder of the History of Black Writing, Maryemma Graham; also members of Wintergreen, Mahogany L. Browne and National Book Award winner Patricia Smith.

F181. Did You Marry Rich? How to Sustain an Equitable Independent Literary Journal
Patricia Caspers, Alexandra Watson, Allison Blevins, Miah Jeffra Milla, Steve Chang
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

It’s been said that a literary magazine that can’t afford to pay its contributors shouldn’t exist. Is this true? And what does it mean to publish an equitable independent literary magazine in 2027? Perhaps it’s publishing diverse voices, offering free submissions, or paying staff. In light of the dwindling arts funding in the US, can this be done—and how? During this panel discussion, editors and publishers discuss the ways they’re able to create equitable journals as well as how to fund them.

F182. Switching It Up: Code-Meshing as Resistance in Classrooms & Community Spaces
Angela Jackson-Brown, Curtis Crisler, L. Renée, Zainab Karim, Steven Dunn
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

This panel will focus on code-meshing, a term coined by Vershawn Ashanti Young. Not switching back and forth but bringing it all together in one breath. Letting language move the way jazz moves, letting it riff, letting country talk sit next to academic talk. We will talk about the labor we carry when we are made to feel like we have to translate ourselves before we can begin to speak our truths. We will discuss strategies to eliminate the need to check our languages at the door.

F183. The Blurb Industrial Complex: Waste of Time or Valuable PR?

Magda Bartkowska, Leslie Pietrzyk, Olga Zilberbourg, Gayle Brandeis, Kate Gale
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

How do we manage the discomfort involved in soliciting endorsements for our forthcoming books? Whom do we ask and how, especially if we're faced with cultural taboos against requesting such favors? How do authors and small presses leverage blurbs for publicity? Five writers—including an indie press publisher and a bookseller—will discuss blurb etiquette and successful blurb queries with real examples, followed by a lively debate about the pros and cons of the "blurb industrial complex."

F184. Crisis Teaching: An Open Dialogue About Operation Metro Surge & Future Crises
Paula Molina Acosta, Clara Alfaro, Sandra Del Rio Madrigal
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Under crisis, we enter survival mode; what do we do when every semester is a crisis? Join a

group of non-tenure-track Latinx writers and instructors in reflecting on what it was like to teach undergraduates at the University of Minnesota during Operation Metro Surge. What does crisis teach us about what “education” should be? How do we rise to the occasion?

F186. The Subversive Opportunities of Experimental Poetics, Sponsored by Blue Flower Arts & The Loft
Arleta Little, Douglas Kearney, Sun Yung Shin, Layli Long Soldier, Latasha Diggs
Room E354b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Experimental writers are exploding traditional arrangements, merging and inventing forms, working within and across different media, and drawing from a wide variety of cultural archives to activate rich layers of meaning in their work. In this main stage reading and panel discussion,

we will hear from poets who are exploring the subversive opportunities of experimental poetics to challenge social policies and perspectives and forge strategic and transformative paths for freedom.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F187. A Time & a Place: Residencies, Retreats & Finding Space to Create
Jennifer Moore, Erin Elizabeth Smith, Jerod Santek, Sara Cutaia, Gabriel Chalfin-Piney-González
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

What opportunities can residencies and retreats offer for both solitary creative time and community building? This panel features directors of a variety of residency programs who will offer practical guidance and resources for prospective attendees. By exploring a range of opportunities—urban and rural, short- and long-term, collaborative and service-based—panelists will demystify the residency experience, exploring the value of creating space for individual and communal artistic endeavors.

F188. Jobs in Publishing: How to Find Them, Get Them & Build Your Career in Publishing, Sponsored by Publishers Marketplace
Steph Opitz, Sarah Perillo, Jackie De Leo, Carmen Giménez
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

So you grew up a reader, a writer, and now you want to work with books all the time. Hear from publishing executives at indie and trade presses as well as distributors about the publishing career landscape, roles, how to find out about open jobs, and how to ensure your application stands out. From internships to publishing programs, and the varied publishers and other kinds of publishing jobs, including in publishing services and technology, there's more to publishing than editorial—we promise.

F189. Your Name in Lights: Adapting Literary Work for TV & Film

Rachel Yoder, Dean Bakopoulos, Kerry Howley, Emily Yoshida, Mamadou Yattassaye
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

How exactly do you take a short story and shape it into a movie? And how might a writer go about structuring a novel into, say, a three-season TV show? As the entertainment industry's appetite for IP continues to grow, this panel provides writers of all genres with insight into the creative and business considerations of adapting stories, journalism, novels, and poems for TV and film, with input from professionals with industry experience.

F190. The Murky Middle: Sustaining a Story's Narrative Momentum
Danielle Harms, Brenda Peynado, Gene Kwak, Sakinah Hofler, Ananda Lima
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

The middle is where a story can take off, but it's also where the energy of a promising plot can grind to a halt. Published novelists and short

story writers dissect the forces that keep the middle of a narrative alive, escalating, and humming with possibility. From raising stakes to creating forward propulsion, we explore strategies for resisting narrative slack: approaches that deepen conflict, generate surprise, keep you excited as a writer, and sustain the fictional dream through the murky middle stretch of a story.

1:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CT

F191. Novel Approaches to the Novel Workshop
Claire Stanford, Alexandra Kleeman, Brandi Wells, Luis Jaramillo, Matt Bell
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Fiction classes and workshops have traditionally focused on the short story, but how can we

tackle writing and workshopping a novel? Five panelists teaching in a wide variety of academic and nonacademic settings will discuss strategies for teaching novel writing. They will also share overall course structures, sample assignments, and workshop techniques for building a supportive and inclusive novel workshop.

F192. Poetry as Rehearsal for the Revolution: Improvisation on the Page & the Body
Alison Rollins, Franny Choi, Joy Priest, Diana Khoi Nguyen
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Augusto Boal posits that “theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution.” In this panel, four poets offer embodied performances based on improvisational methods in their written work to push the boundaries of what is possible.

Using multimedia, vocal experiments, improvisation, looping tech, and more, these poets pursue collective freedom in the face of the silence. How can lyric operate as a ritual? What emerges in repetitions when looping toward freedom?

F193. Conjuring & Conjugating: Siguanabes in Future Tense

Leticia Hernández-Linares, Claudia Castro Luna, Janel Pineda, Tatiana Luboviski-Acosta, MK Chavez

Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

To conjure is to call something into the world; to conjugate is to shift its time. Writers of the Central American diaspora invoke La Siguanaba, the shape-shifting leyenda used to punish audacious women, as provocation and portal.

Through readings and discussion, panelists explore how this inherited monster informs their lives, imaginaries, and craft: the mask, the turn, the withheld face, the refused punishment, the future-tense body becoming rimbombante, capable, and free.

F194. Sister Is a Verb: Building Trust & Longevity in Black Literary Organizations
Opal Moore, Joanne Gabbin, Amanda Johnston, Kyla Kupferstein Torres
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Representatives from Torch Literary Arts, Callaloo, and Wintergreen Women Writers Collective discuss how trust, conflict navigation, leadership succession, and collaborative infrastructure shape the longevity of Black arts institutions. Drawing on experiences from founder-led and intergenerational

organizations, panelists explore building community trust, sharing resources, and sustaining Black women-led literary spaces amid structural inequities in publishing and arts funding.

F195. Low-Residency MFA Caucus
Sarah Shotland, Deborah Taffa, Jessica Goudeau, Nicole Ravas, Tess Barry
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

The Low-Residency MFA Caucus provides time to share resources, compare trends, and collaborate on initiatives to support the writers who study and work in low-residency programs. In reinstating this caucus, organizers hope to facilitate productive working time for programs to find noncompetitive, collaborative projects that might be mutually beneficial in supporting students, alums, and faculty members, and

promote recognition of our significant contributions to American literature.

F196. The New Ekphrasis: Writing Across Image, Sound & Performance
Julie Marie Wade, Ander Monson, Caridad Moro-Gronlier, Paul Lisicky, Jericho Parms
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Ekphrastic techniques engage with other art forms—film, music, visual art, television, and pop culture—to make new writing. In this expanded practice, contemporary writers such as Hanif Abdurraqib, Hilton Als, and Olivia Laing move attention, structure, and voice across media, creating unexpected transformations. Drawing on their own recent books, five panelists offer practical approaches to writing

through these methods, so that writing becomes both encounter and invention.

F197. Poetry Can Be Music in Verse Novels for Young Readers

Betsy Bird, Arriel Vinson, Nicole M. Hewitt, Shifa Saltagi Safadi, Colby Cedar Smith
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

With the literacy crisis affecting children more than ever, reading has been a hard sell. But are children still into music? The answer is a resounding yes! Something about repetition and rhythm is especially soothing to young people who are living in a fast and loud world. Verse novel authors for young people will discuss the way poetry can mirror music for young readers—through format, playfulness,

rhythm, and structure—and help them fall back in love with reading.

F198. Translation as Creation, Critique, Community: The Case of Korean Poetry
Emily Jungmin Yoon, Hedgie Choi, Marci Calabretta Cancio-Bello, David Krolikoski, Jack Jung
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

Korean poetry is a fruitful case study for exploring the relationship between poetry and translation. How has translation served as a (trans)formative site for creation, critique, and community for poets, from colonial Korea to the contemporary United States? Five award-winning poet-translators and scholars examine this question through their varied experiences and knowledge on collaborative translation,

self-translation, and the history and current practice of translation as a creative process.

F199. Elizabeth Bishop's *Geography III* at 50
Derek Mong, Armen Davoudian, Christina Pugh, Katie Peterson, Miguel Murphy
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

This panel celebrates the golden jubilee of Elizabeth Bishop's final collection, *Geography III*, an exquisite volume of ten poems, each offering different entry points for the reader: queer self-identity ("Crusoe in England"), form ("One Art"), ekphrastic memoir ("Poem"), narrative ("The Moose"), and many others. The five poets and scholars will discuss the book's structure, its lasting impact on American poetry, and one poem that affected their own work. A Q&A will follow their discussion.

F200. Mic Check: How Writers Working in the Community Support Our Writing Life, Sponsored by WITS Alliance

Michele Kotler, Javan Howard, Jenny Gropp, Brenda Cardenas, Jeffrey Kass

Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

How can you thrive as a writer while helping young people/community members develop their voices? How do you build and sustain a creative community that helps deepen your own writing life? Panelists will share examples of how their community writing programs inspire their own creativity/writing. Panelists will engage us in a collaborative generative writing activity followed by a dialogue of how we can keep growing as writers who give back to their communities.

F201. From WAC to CWAC: Creative Writing Across the Curriculum

Huan Hsu, Wade Geary, Claire Stocks, Alexander Smith, Rich Davison
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Writers and professors from the US and Europe share how they have embedded creative writing in university curricula beyond traditional English departments, including anthropology, medicine, archeology, computer science, sociology, and various interdisciplinary degrees. This panel will discuss the myriad benefits of such courses to students, instructors, programs, and institutions; how courses can be developed; and how to get buy-in from key stakeholders.

F202. Beyond the Workshop: Experiential Learning in the Creative Writing Classroom

Julialicia Case, David Wanczyk, Eric Freeze, Trent Hergenrader, Jennifer Pullen
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

This panel focuses on alternatives to traditional creative writing instruction, exploring experiential learning approaches such as community partnerships, travel courses, collaborative world-building, applied editing and publishing, ethics and representation, multimodal creation, game writing, and more. Panelists will discuss a variety of approaches to applied learning, providing practical strategies for attendees interested in incorporating experiential approaches into their own classrooms.

F203. From Pages to Book: Structural Revision in Memoir & Personal Nonfiction

Aimee Christian, Athena Dixon, Michelle Bowdler, Theresa Okokon
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Memoirists and creative nonfiction writers often have strong pages before they have a book. This panel focuses on what comes next: structural revision. How do writers begin to see patterns, test sequence, follow thematic threads, and decide what belongs? How do books emerge from fragments, essays, chapters, and partial drafts? And how can teachers help writers find structure without forcing the material into formula?

F204. Saving Our Ships: Keeping Creative Writing Programs Afloat in Rough Times
Sean Bernard, Anna Leahy, Kevin Clouther, Lillian-Yvonne Bertram, Marcus Jackson

Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Program Development

Faced with rip currents of the demographic enrollment cliff, budget cuts, politically fueled distrust of high ed, and federal/state policies that restrict content and reduce access to grant funding, student visas, and student loans, directors of creative writing programs—public and private, residential and low-res, and Midwest, West Coast, and East Coast—will describe strategies to navigate the storm, reflect on what's working and what's not, and suggest inventive ways to update our programs.

F205. Magazine Schools: Literary Publishers with Writing Classes
Lena Valencia, Stephanie Macias, Susannah Felts, Kathleen Yale, Logan Davis
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

Event Category: Writing Organizations

Writing classes offered by literary publishers are a relatively new enterprise in the publishing world. From building community to bringing in much-needed funds, classes can be a boon to independent magazines and literary organizations. But running educational programming outside of an academic institution comes with its own set of challenges. Five literary publishers discuss their approach to running educational programming and how they tailor their classes to the audiences they serve.

F206. Grandmother as Muse: Transforming Historical Silence into Artistic Reclamation
Martha Young, Geri Gutwein, Kelly DuMar, Greta Sesheta, Jenny Grassl
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Matrilineal ancestors serve as vital yet often invisible anchors of personal and cultural identity. Poeticizing the “grandmother” requires navigating sentimentality, erasure, and stereotypes. Our panelists span ethnicity, race, culture, and geography to explore effects of migration, war, work, mental illness, and racial and sexual trauma on grandmother ancestry. Attendees will learn literary strategies to reveal ancestral narratives that transform historical silence into artistic reclamation.

F207. Beyond the Page: Magazine & Lit Mag Editor-Writer Relationships

Steph Liberatore, Emma Komlos-Hrobsky, Leona Chen, Kim Liao, Jimin Han

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

So you want to write for a magazine or lit mag? Editor-writer relationships are crucial for both emerging and established writers. But they can be hard to cultivate, and without them, writers may feel like they're submitting to the void. This panel illuminates the process from both editors' and writers' perspectives, offering insights about what makes these relationships work. Panelists will provide tips for pitching and submitting work and for forming writer-editor relationships that last.

F208. Making the List: Black Women, Bestseller Culture & What Gets Left Out
Cecilia Rabess, Diane Brown, Carolyn Edgar, Olga Jobe, Vanesa Walters
Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Bestseller lists are not neutral. They reflect marketing spend, retailer relationships, and assumptions about who reads what, forces that often work against Black women writers in specific ways. This panel examines how books by Black women get onto lists and how they fall off them, what mainstream success costs, and what it leaves out. With panelists who have appeared on major bestseller lists alongside writers who have not yet published, the conversation spans arrival and aspiration.

F209. East Coast, West Coast, Best Coast: Publishing the Midwest
Megan Stielstra, Martha Bayne, Maya Marshall, Phoebe Mogharei, Brittany Torres Rivera
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

What does it mean to write a place? As artists, we attempt to craft it; as regional publishers, we aim to define it. The Midwest is home to many small presses who labor every day to honor the diversity and complexity of a region often flattened into a monoculture known as flyover country. In this panel, editors will unpack the ways in which publishing local stories by and for the people of the Midwest asserts the value of the region and its people as worthy of literary and critical exploration.

F210. Her Eyes Shone like the Moon: Guiding Undergraduates Past Cliché
Rachel Marston, Natanya Pulley, Shena McAuliffe, Robert Glick
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Given the ease by which undergraduate writing falls into tropes, how can we teach students to develop more interesting and nuanced work? How can we teach students to identify where writing needs to push beyond its set of clichés? How do stereotypes and bias work hand in hand with tropes? Drawing from poetry and prose as well as from individual/collaborative processes in different media, panelists will offer practical, innovative approaches to concept generation, development, and refinement.

F211. Who Reviews Books Anymore? The New Landscape of Literary Coverage

Laura Hawbaker, Donna Seaman, J. Howard Rosier, Sheryl Johnston, Grace Talusan
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

For indie, small press, and debut authors and publishers, the path to review coverage is opaque and shrinking. Major venues—like *The Washington Post*'s "Book World"—have disappeared, so where can serious attention come from? How can authors and presses pursue reviews realistically, particularly amid the rise of sponsored, pay-to-play coverage, comment sections, and social media? Panel experts from *Booklist*, the National Book Critics Circle, independent publishing, and publicity will discuss the current review landscape and what new outlets exist that move the needle.

F212. Writing What You Don't Know: Research in Fiction Writing

Emily Mirengoff, Brittany Cavallaro, Alysandra Dutton, Vanessa Chan, Eshani Surya

Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

The adage “Write what you know” serves at times, but it can limit fiction writers interested in exploring their unknown. To expand their writing, fiction writers must use a skill rarely taught in the classroom: ethical research. How do we intertwine research with imagination? How can we use interviews, primary sources, academic papers, and on-the-ground experiences to enhance our writing? And how can we find the time and funds for all this labor? This panel answers these questions and more.

F213. NBF Presents: Fiction of the Midwest
Ruth Dickey, Tess Gunty, Jakob Guanzon
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

From fictional Vacca Vale, Indiana, to Twin Cities-esque suburbs, the Midwest is a place of both inspiration and devastation for Jakob

Guanzon and Tess Gunty's National Book Award–honored debut novels. Join Guanzon (*Abundance*) and Gunty (*The Rabbit Hutch*) for readings and a conversation about how place, people, and class intersect in great fiction, and the resonances of heartland storytelling with readers everywhere. Moderated by Ruth Dickey, executive director of the National Book Foundation.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F214. The Ethics of Power & Witness in Poetry, Sponsored by Kundiman
Cathy Che, Carolina Ebeid, Leora Kava, Divya Victor
Room E354b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

How can poetry show us how to attend to the lives and wounds of others, beyond the boundaries of our bodies, borders, and histories? How can we create and organize alongside one another, and how can we find kin in the ones we write with and for? This event will bring together poets whose work confronts exile, displacement, state violence and surveillance, climate crisis, and environmental grief, showing us how poetry can expand our ways of seeing and speaking about the world.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F215. Age & the Page
Jill Bialosky, Erin Belieu, Kathy Fagan, Paisley Rekdal, Rita Dove

Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Mid- to late-career women poets consider how maturity affects content, craft, and commitment, reflecting on the challenges often specific to women—caregiving, sexism, mentoring workloads. They will reflect upon the challenges they faced as younger poets, the creative choices they made, and how the idea of the poem continued to change along with their own personal journey and constraints. They will reflect upon the opportunities they envision as they consider their own poetic legacy.

F216. Terms of Submission: What Editors & Writers Expect, Tolerate & Owe
Emily Rosko, Lesley Wheeler, Manuel Gonzales, Marc McKee, Joanna Luloff

Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Literary publishing runs on an unwritten contract—part etiquette, part ethics, learned by trial, error, and the occasional bruised ego. How should writers think about sim-subs, reading fees, solicitations, submission windows, and the AI question now hovering over the slush? Editors from *Bennington Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Missouri Review*, *Shenandoah*, and *swamp pink* pull back the curtain on best practices, pet peeves, and the harder questions of fairness, transparency, and access. Bring your questions and gripes.

F217. Women's Caucus: Building Literary Community for Women & Nonbinary Writers
Karin Fazio Littlefield, Elise Collins, Kristen E Nelson, Sheree Renée Thomas, Linda Kleinbub

Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

Join the Women's Caucus for a bring-your-own lunch conversation on publishing, access, advocacy, and community. Literary professionals will discuss opportunities and challenges facing women and nonbinary writers, followed by audience conversation and participant-led breakout groups that encourage networking, mentorship, and the exchange of ideas and resources. These conversations will also generate ideas that will help shape future Women's Caucus programming and advocacy efforts.

F218. Docupoetics: Videos Responding to the Moment

Sehba Sarwar, Carolina Monsivais, Sorayya Khan, Emmy Pérez

Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Inspired by Gayatri Spivak, Emma Pérez, and others who sought to excavate histories hidden, silenced, erased, or relegated to the margins, four poets/writers/educators share videos and texts that tackle contemporary and historical events from the borderlands of US-Mexico-Canada and South Asia. They will discuss the craft of creating work in response to urgent issues and how they and collaborators blend elements of filmmaking/poetry/prose/research/docupoetics as they target new audiences/youth.

3:20 p.m. to 4:35 p.m. CT

F219. Crafting the Scene: The Backbone of Great Storytelling in Audio & Beyond

Laura Davis, Elaine Grant, Jia Rizvi, Micaela Blei
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Scenes are the backbone of audio documentaries. They allow us to care about characters in a way that explanatory journalism cannot. But how do you produce gripping podcast scenes? In this interactive workshop, we'll learn how to build characters, worlds, stakes, and action through close listening of immersive scenes from podcasts like *This American Life*, *Snap Judgment*, *Last Day*, *The 13th Step*, and more, and demonstrate techniques that work equally well for the screen, the page, and the stage.

F220. "Charity, Sainthood, Glory, Shame" in Gwendolyn Brooks's *In the Mecca*

Sandra Jackson-Opoku, Nora Blakely, avery r. young, Adrienne Brown, Joanne Gabbin
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

“In the Mecca were murders, loves, loneliness, hates, jealousies. Hope occurred, and charity, sainthood, glory, shame, despair, fear, altruism.”
—Gwendolyn Brooks, *Report from Part One*
In preview of the 60th anniversary of the publication of Gwendolyn Brooks’s *In the Mecca*, this hybrid panel presentation examines the literary, historical, and sociological significance of Brooks’s fifth volume of poetry.

F221. Inside Voices: Sharing the Words of Incarcerated Writers
Alison Pelegrin, Adam Clay, Alex Tretbar, Melissa Ferrer Civil, Michael Kleber-Diggs
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

This event is a reading of work by incarcerated writers created either independently, as part of a writing class, or as part of poetic correspondence. Wherever possible, the panel will present audio/video recordings and/or live streams of these writers, but their forced exclusion reflects the continued isolation of this marginalized group. Panelists, all of whom collaborate with incarcerated writers, will introduce each piece and discuss their experiences teaching in carceral facilitates.

F222. Beyond the Lesson: Adapting Diverse Children's Literature for the Stage
Guadalupe Mendez, Susan Pak, Alvaro Rios
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

Children's theater is often expected to teach lessons, but memorable stories begin with compelling characters. How do playwrights adapt children's books for the stage while preserving the heart of the original story? How do they secure rights, expand brief narratives into dramatic action, and bring culturally specific protagonists to broad audiences? This panel explores the artistic and practical challenges of adapting children's literature featuring BIPOC protagonists.

F223. From Both Sides of the Mirror: The Writer as Editor, the Editor as Writer
Philip Graham, Kate McCahill, Thomas Mira Y Lopez, Ross Barkan, Thammika Songkaeo
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writers who also serve as editors can, from their own daily struggles and explorations on the page, gain insight on how to give advice that might help encourage a newly submitted work of art to its possible best place. Understanding each side of the literary mirror, whether as the edited or the editor, offers insight on how a writer can eventually reveal their own voice on the blank page and find the steady place that could serve one well amid the current shifting changes in publishing.

F224. It's a Different World: An AWP HBCU Fellowship Program Reading & Conversation
Regina Brooks, Charlotte Teague, Yaisa Mann, Candice Jackson, Kiah Smith, Brianna Hatfield, Amory Campbell, LaShawnna Holder, Briana Nunn, Nova Johnson
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

HBCUs serve as unique incubators of creativity, producing creative writing talents such as Jericho Brown and Tayari Jones. Each institution has its own perspective, its own style, its own world. What kind of dreams are born from HBCUs, and how are they realized on the page? Join the #AWP27 HBCU Fellowship Program spotlight event to hear a student reading and enjoy an engaging conversation with their faculty mentors, moderated by AWP board member Regina Brooks.

F225. The Creative Writing PhD: Applying, Surviving & Thriving

A. Rafael Johnson, Julia Brown, Julie Iromuanya, Ravi Howard, Vince Omni

Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

The creative writing PhD asks writers to apply critical theory and academic research to their own work, as well as the work of others. Far from a continuation of the MFA, CW PhD programs encourage a deep consideration of craft, theory, and critique. This panel will discuss how to thrive in CW PhD programs, as well as the application process, preparation for the degree, and what to expect once you're admitted.

F226. Walking Away from the Empire of Other People's Expertise

Ben Gucciardi, Camille Rankine, Margaret Ray, Michael Bazzett, Preeti Vangani

Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poets inherit expectations from teachers, traditions, peers, identities, and now algorithms. While these influences can nurture

artistic growth, they can also limit a poet's sense of what is possible. This panel examines how poets distinguish guidance from restriction and seek to make work that feels distinctly their own. Through readings and discussion, panelists will explore influence, permission, experimentation, failure, and the risks of trusting their own artistic instincts.

F227. Say Cheese: Celebrating 40 Years of the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing
Erika Meitner, Claire Luchette, Tiana Clark, Sasha Debevec-McKenney, Jaquira Díaz
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing, this multigenre reading features former fellows in poetry and fiction across decades. Since 1986,

the WICW has provided emerging writers with time, space, teaching experience, and an intellectual community while they develop first and second books. The event highlights the Institute's literary legacy and showcases new work by writers whose careers have been shaped by this nationally recognized fellowship program.

F228. Edging Closer to the Fire: The Brass-Knuckled Poetics of Stuart Dybek
Kelly Daniels, Christine Sneed, Richard Katrovas, Naeem Murr, Mark Turcotte
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

A diverse group of students and colleagues honor beloved Chicago poet, professor, and fiction writer Stuart Dybek. MacArthur fellow, multiple award winner, and native Southsider, Dybek developed an urban lyricism unique to

him, a hybrid realism shot through with everyday magic. Panelists will read selections of their favorite Dybek works and offer personal stories highlighting his teaching, mentorship, and generosity, and the writing whose influence has spread far beyond his native Chicago.

F229. Mothers, Mother Tongues, Motherlands
Reem Tasyakan, Farshad Sonboldel, Nilufar Karimi, Vyxz Vasquez
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Maternal influences shape us long before we realize it. Our mothers, languages, and homelands offer understanding from our earliest days, but demand translation and renewed expression, especially across borders. Bringing together Palestinian, Iranian, and Filipino diasporic authors, this panel explores

how multiple genres interpret the ways mothers, mother tongues, and motherlands dwell in us, shape perceptions, and inspire us to preserve origins while inhabiting new languages and landscapes.

F230. Cripping the Line: Embodiment & Form in Disability Poetry
Ellen Smith, Travis Lau, Susanne Antonetta, Nathan Spoon, Leslie McIntosh
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Embodiment—the lived experience of existing within a particular bodymind—is central to disability poetics. Often, disabled poets use lineation, white space, fragmentation, duration, silence, visual arrangement, and other formal strategies to make their embodiment visible. Inhabiting a unique bodymind shapes how a poem moves, breathes, and communicates.

Formal experiments challenge ableist assumptions about what writing, bodies, perceptions, and modes of expression are considered legitimate.

F231. Teaching Presses: The Pedagogy of Book Publishing

Caitlin Horrocks, Carol Mitchell, Rachael Price, Ross Tangedal, Karlie Harpold

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Students crave book publishing experience, whether to pursue jobs, to amplify new voices, or to gain insight into publishing their own work. Representatives from four college and university teaching presses, where students learn to play key roles in the book publication process, will discuss topics such as creating curricular and extracurricular experiential learning opportunities, the logistics of

sustaining a press, and how to meet pedagogical aims while doing right by authors' work.

F232. The Ghosts of History
Hannah Bae, Michael Lukas, Caro De Robertis, Hannah Assadi, Vanessa Chan
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

"Now I know what a ghost is," wrote Salman Rushdie. "Unfinished business." In this panel, four historical novelists will explore the ghosts that haunt their work. Drawing inspiration from classic "ghost stories" like *Beloved*, *Dictee*, and *Pedro Páramo*, we'll dig into questions of craft and technique, asking what's at stake in writing about painful and often overlooked histories like the Japanese occupation of Malaysia, the Palestinian Nakba, and queer survival under dictatorship in Uruguay.

F233. No Coast Queers: Crafting Character in the Midwest

Kasey Peters, Caroliena Cabada, Jennifer Morales, Melissa Faliveno, Ryan Van Meter
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

We're here and we're queer and we have no fear! Or, actually, maybe we do—but not the way our coastal readers imagine. How to depict the nuances and diversity of queer life in Milwaukee or Chicago? In the Wisconsin North Woods? In rural Missouri? Five fiction writers whose lives were shaped by the Midwest discuss the work of rendering queer characters (sometimes ourselves) in these social and ecological landscapes, which often seem illegible to coastal and global readers.

F234. Publishing Your New & Selected Poems with an Independent Press

Kate Gale, Richard Blanco, Nancy White, Daniel Tobin, Lucille Lang Day

Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Two publishers and three poets will discuss the process of organizing, publishing, and promoting a New and Selected poetry collection. The publishers will describe what they are looking for in a New and Selected collection, the process for submitting such a collection to their press, and how marketing such a collection differs from marketing other poetry collections. The poets will share their own journeys of organizing their New and Selected poems, finding a publisher, and promoting the book.

F235. Writing the Dead: Historical Fiction as Tribute . . . or Trespass?
Jennifer Epstein, Denny S. Bryce, Nikesha Williams, Rilla Askew
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Historical fiction asks writers to take real risks: to speak for the dead, write across cultural and racial lines, and fill spaces the "formal" record leaves blank. This panel will push past the form's surface pleasures into deeper ethical questions: What do we owe those we rewrite into being? Who has the right to claim another community's history? And what happens when record and narrative diverge? Four novelists writing across time, race, and culture will wrestle with these questions and more.

F236. "It Cannot Always Be Night": Chicago Creative Writing Faculty Against Occupation

Colin Pope, Barrie Jean Borich, Daniel Borzutzky, Rachel Galvin, Daisy Hernandez
Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Despite a campaign of oppression—from attacks on our universities to mask-wearing officers kidnapping our citizens—Chicago has emerged stronger and more unified. “Come show me another city,” Carl Sandburg writes, “with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong.” This panel celebrates Chicago’s resilience, bringing together renowned faculty from our great academic institutions for a reading in support of the city, its people, and its future.

F237. Now You See Her, Now You Don’t: The Need to Amplify Women’s Voices

Arden Levine, Sharon Spaulding, Stephanie Gorton, Mayda Del Valle, Samira Mehta
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Book bans. Censorship. Disappearing reproductive and voting rights. For writers who feel a responsibility to adopt an activist stance on issues, this panel features a poet, a historian, a journalist, and a biographer whose work includes the stories of women change agents, past and present. In a lively and informative discussion, they reveal the literary choices they make and their methods of reclaiming power and voice when writing across multiple genres.

F238. The Life of the Literary Party: Programs, Partnerships & Literary Community

Jean Yoon, Leslie Shipman, Randy Winston, Chelsea Kern, Gina Chung
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Program Development

Writers work in solitude, yet here we are at the largest literary covening in North America. Literary programs like this generate connections, conversations, and opportunities—elements as essential to sustaining a life in writing as writing itself. This panel brings together four writers and programming professionals to consider what it takes to bring people together, build partnerships and programs that matter, and throw really good parties—and how all this, too, is part of a creative life.

F239. Adjunct Faculty Writers & the Rise of Generative AI: Plagues & Opportunities

Courtney Bambrick, Elizabeth Switaj, Estelle Erasmus, Sarah Layden, Staci Halt
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

It's a truism that since ChatGPT burst on the scene at the end of 2022, generative AI has changed our jobs as writing teachers. For adjunct faculty, the rise of AI threatens to add even more precarity and unpaid labor to our working conditions. Our panel will discuss the most productive ways that instructors and administrators can respond to the pedagogical challenges raised by the widespread availability of AI tools while protecting nontenurable faculty's livelihoods and academic freedom.

F240. I FEEL NOTHING LIKE GOOD: Poets Against Genocide
Haleh Gafori, Tova Greene, Danez Smith, Hala Alyan, Mahogany L. Browne

Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

I FEEL NOTHING LIKE GOOD: Poets Against Genocide began as an anthology opposing the silence surrounding ongoing genocides and grew into a fundraising project supporting relief efforts. Launched at Poets House in May 2026, it has raised over $5,000 for the Sameer Project and SAPA's emergency response in Sudan. This reading gathers poets from the anthology to present work that resists erasure through elegy, refusal, indictment, and intimacy.

F241. Public Practice: A Reading & Conversation with the US Poet Laureate, Sponsored by Copper Canyon Press
Michael Wiegers, Arthur Sze
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

US Poet Laureate Arthur Sze delivers an expansive reading of his poetry, which spans decades of restless poetic evolution. Following that, Sze joins his longtime editor, Michael Wiegers, to reflect on his innovative laureateship—the first to center global poetry in translation—and poetry's enduring role in civic and cultural life. This event highlights literature as a connective force, bringing us closer to our domestic and global neighbors—and back to ourselves in a distractible world.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

F243. Before the Beginning: The Case For & Against Novel Prologues
Jac Jemc, Gina Balibrera, Nana Adjei-Brenyah, Nina McConigley, Rebecca Makkai

Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Novel prologues can get a bad rap as being pretentious or throat-clearing. Some readers even ignore them entirely. But they can also serve as a sly tool to create anticipation, build voice, and tease the range of the story to come—among many other possibilities. This panel will explore the mechanics of well-crafted prologues, the challenges that present themselves in this technique, and innovative ways to make the most of the opening of your novel.

F244. Book Tours & Publicity: What Works?
Wes Blake, Agata Szczeszak-Brewer, Karol Lagodzki, Jared Lemus
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

You've published your book! Now how do you put together an effective book tour and develop publicity for your book? A panel of mid-career writers and a marketing professional will discuss how to plan and navigate a book tour and generate publicity for your book. They'll discuss cost-efficient strategies that generated the best results for them. These panelists will share their advice and experience, and impart the lessons they learned as they navigated their own book tours and publicity efforts.

F245. Latinx Writers Caucus
Breena Nuñez, Alan Pelaez Lopez, Amairani Perez Chamu, Sonia Guinansaca
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
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.

F246. Essays Performed: This Is Chicago Live Lit!

Amy Eaton, Corrbette Pasko, Ian Belknap, Jasmine Davila, Lawrence Tolefree
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

Chicago Live Lit is a dynamic art form where an author does not only read an essay well, they

bring it to life. With an actor's skill, a comedian's timing, a preacher's passion, a politician's slyness, a slam poet's heartbeat, and an activist's call to mobilize, essays can reference pop culture, science, history, politics, philosophy, and the personal, and be braided or take experimental forms. It is mostly performed in bars because, like her people, Chicago's art is loud, gritty, messy, and glorious.

5:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. CT

F247. SWANA Writers Caucus
Sophia Babai, Pinar Banu Yasar, Tariq Luthun, Rabha Ashry
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
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.

F248. Sober AWP
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Daily 12-step meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. CT

F250. Sewanee Writers' Conference Reception
Great Lakes Ballroom B, Level 2, Marriott Marquis Chicago

The Sewanee Writers' Conference reception is open to all SWC alumni and interested writers. Come join us for a drink or soda while catching up with or meeting new friends. Looking forward to seeing you all!

F252. Longleaf Press 30th Anniversary Poets' Ball

Water Tower A, Level 2, Marriott Marquis Chicago

Come for the poetry, stay for the dancing! Celebrate 30 years of Longleaf Press at our Poets' Ball. We'll toast our founders, authors, readers, and friends, and celebrate the launch of Maria Surricchio's *Edge States*, winner of the Longleaf Press Poetry Prize. Enjoy heartfelt toasts and dancing—all in joyful company. No dance experience needed. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

F253. Stony Brook Creative Writing Reception

Water Tower B, Level 2, Marriott Marquis Chicago

Celebrate with Stony Brook creative writing faculty, students, BookEnds fellows, and alumni.

F254. University of Nebraska Omaha MFA Reception
Shedd A, Level 2, Marriott Marquis Chicago

Current students, prospective students, mentors, alumni, and friends are invited to UNO's MFA in Writing reception. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres will be served. If you're curious about our low-residency program at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City, stop by to chat with students, faculty, and graduates. During the home-based semester, each student works one-on-one with a mentor in their chosen genre: fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, playwriting, screenwriting, or YA. We hope to see you there!

Saturday, March 20, 2027

7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. CT

S100. Sober AWP
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Daily 12-step meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT

S101. First Aid
Level 1, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

First Aid is located on level 1 of McCormick Place Lakeside Center. From the central lobby (near the level 2 gift shop), proceed down the stairs or elevator and turn left. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details.

Attendees can also call the ADA hotline, 240-269-6635, to request EMT assistance throughout McCormick Place Lakeside Center.

S102. Mamava Lactation Pod
Near Room E250, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

A Mamava lactation pod is located across the hall from room E250 at McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 2, and is available for any nursing parent to use.

S103. Low-Light Space
Room E250, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

S104. Dickinson Quiet Space
Room E252, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

S105. Lactation Lounge
Room E254, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

The lactation lounge is located in room E254 of McCormick Place Lakeside Center and is available for any nursing parent to use.

S106. Coat Check

Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Coat check is available at the entrance of Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, Level 3. No cash, only credit cards accepted.

S107. Conference Registration
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Attendees who have registered in advance, and attendees who have not yet registered, may pick up their registration materials in the registration area, located in Exhibit Hall D, McCormick Place Lakeside Center, level 3. Please consult the maps in the mobile app for location details. If an attendee loses, misplaces, or forgets their registration, they are required to replace their badge at their current eligible rate.

9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. CT

S108. Beyond & With the Pastoral: An Indigenous Restoration

Chris Hoshnic, Arielle Lowe, Summer J. Hart, Robert Bordeaux, Halee Kirkwood
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Colonial pastoral poetry idealizes retreats to stolen land, where Indigenous people are backdrops for non-Native musings upon simpler ways of life, industrializing both land and imagination. But what are the possibilities of Indigenous poetics writing within and beyond this form? We will discuss how Indigenous poetics can restore the pastoral, utilizing sound, refrain, and visual form, and how this relates to the restoration of our home lands and waters, writing with these sacred spaces as kin.

S109. The Process of Teaching Process: Creative Writing Pedagogies for Student Success

Rebecca Entel, Rebecca Entel, Cathy Day, Ryan Collins, SUJASH PURNA

Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

A foundational tenet of Writing Center pedagogy is a focus on creating better writers, not better writing: teaching students to develop a process that will serve them far beyond one project. This panel discusses the advantages of orienting creative writing pedagogy toward process in undergraduate classrooms as well as in community writing spaces. Panelists share how they have reshaped their assignments, classroom activities, and grading practices to help students develop individual processes.

S110. Black Aesthetics in Docupoetry

MARS Marshall, Courtney Taylor, Mick Powell, Ajanae Dawkins
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

The Black aesthetic in docupoetry (re)renders the experience of Black American life in the absence of documented stories by centering personal, private, and family archives as the primary architects of our stories amid the larger historical frame. These poets employ critical fabulation as the means to imagine and reimagine the stories they seek to exhume and employ poetic forms such as persona, ekphrastic, and visual poetry to enter and expand upon larger historical conversations.

S111. African Poetry in Translation, Sponsored by ALTA

John Keene, Gabeba Baderoon, Meg Arenberg, Sandra Tamele, Patron Henekou
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

This event focuses on aesthetic and cultural questions related to translating African poets writing in African colonial and indigenous languages. Recent books published by the African Poetry Book Fund include poetry from Angola (Portuguese), Ghana (Ewe), South Africa (Afrikaans), and Zanzibar (Swahili). The translators involved will discuss approaches to the craft of literary translation, their aesthetic collaboration with the poets, and the process of publishing African poetry in translation.

S112. Poets & the Public: Four Poets Laureate Read & Discuss Their Work
Jay Rogoff, Kimiko Hahn, Mayda Del Valle, Mark Turcotte

Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Many communities now appoint a poet laureate, acknowledging the important role poetry can play in public life. Four recently selected official poets—from Chicago, the states of Illinois and New York, and the small city of Saratoga Springs, New York—read from their work and discuss the laureate's practical and poetic responsibilities, including how, in addition to celebrating a city or state, poets can serve as ambassadors for poetry while offering valuable social criticism and aesthetic truths.

S113. Sacred Science, Rational Spirit: Scripted Medicine-Writing as Healing Technology
David Johnson, Masha Dowell, Jordan Mims, Veronique MacRae
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Across African, African American, Indigenous, and Afro-Latino traditions, writing has always been medicinal; the word carries Asé, the page holds ceremony, the story is the cure. Building upon our 2026 panel, this interactive session invites writers across all genres to experience writing as ancient healing technology through focused presentations, embodied prompts, and facilitated reflection. These traditions never separated art from healing. Come as a writer. Leave with medicine.

S114. Hidden Corner of the Bookstore: Sportswriting as Universal Story
Maggie Mertens, Maitreyi Anantharaman, Jessica Luther, Amira Rose Davis, Julie Kliegman
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Too often, sportswriting is relegated to back corners of the bookstore, dismissed as unserious projects that won't sell. But these panelists believe that sports are a vehicle for telling global stories that matter, that cut to the heart of social issues including gender, sexuality, race, and class. They will offer craft tips from their decades of experience writing and selling compelling, humanizing narratives about athletes who take part in running, tennis, basketball, soccer, and more.

S115. What the Archive Cannot Hold
Roksana Badruddoja, Roksana Badruddoja, Gauri Awasthi, Suzi Tucker
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

How do writers narrate histories marked by silence, displacement, and archival absence?

This panel examines literary nonfiction, fiction, and hybrid forms that emerge when official records fail lived experience. Through conversations on fragmentation, inherited memory, family secrecy, migration, and historical rupture, panelists explore how writers create narrative structures for what the archive cannot hold, and how silence itself reshapes narrative, memory, and literary form.

S116. House of Amal: Writers of the Muslim Diaspora

Sara Bawany, Amal Kassir, Sara Filali, Oliver Khan

Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Through centuries of peace and harmony, war and migration, as well as praise and lament, poetry and its oral recitation have remained essential practices for the Muslim world. In this

panel, spoken word poets and storytelling artists from Syria, Morocco, and Pakistan will continue this tradition, sharing formidable pieces inspired by personal, familial, and ancestral experiences of genocide, colonization, and forced migration. Panelists will then discuss how the ongoing politicization of their identities impacts their writing, and how it influences their pedagogy at House of Amal.

S117. We Care: Understanding, Managing & Making the Most of Writing & Caregiving
Eugenia Leigh, Marjorie Tesser, Amy Dryansky, Alafia Sessions, Jennifer Franklin
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Many writers are also caregivers for family members and others with physical, developmental, or other challenges. This

impacts the focus, energy, and emotional tenor of our work, and shapes the work itself—how much do we say? How do we say it? How do we set boundaries that respect our needs as writers and those for whom we care? These writers will talk about practical, aesthetic, and ethical questions, explore strategies for writing while/about caregiving, and share their own writing on the topic.

S118. Beyond the Coasts: Teaching in Rural & Remote Landscapes
Courtney LaFaive, Gene Kwak, Molly McCully Brown, Sean Enfield, Thomas Dai
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Students from remote or rural locations face unique challenges in the creative writing classroom. They often inherit shameful stereotypes about rural populations and the

bias that coastal literary hubs are superior to their communities. In turn, these students can be disempowered to write. This panel brings together a group of writers and educators who discuss how to overcome these barriers and share specific tools for engaging this unique student population in the creative writing classroom.

S119. Start a Literary Thing! How to Build a Lit Organization That Lasts
Steph Liberatore, NaBeela Washington, Will Evans, Melissa Hung, Diamond Braxton
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

If you've been dreaming of building something literary but don't know where to start, this panel is for you! Five founders from lit mags, presses, retreats, and festivals come together to provide tips and share insights from launching

their own. From incorporation to fundraising to building a team, we'll cover the basics of putting an organization together—and share things we wish we knew along the way.

S120. Cognitive Estrangement in Science Fiction: A Tool for Writing Brighter Futures
Mary Anne Mohanraj, Andrea Hairston, Isaiah Hunt, Alex Kingsley, Tara Betts
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Cognitive estrangement is a term coined by critic Darko Suvin to define the unique power of science fiction, describing how SF uses an imagined setting to distance readers from their familiar reality, allowing them to view unexamined societal norms, biases, and everyday assumptions from a fresh perspective. When it becomes difficult (or even dangerous) to write and publish realist political fiction,

science fiction offers a powerful alternative for presenting visions of a better future.

S121. There Is No Planet B (or Is There?): Why We Read & Write Cli-Fi
Katie Cortese, Muriel Leung, Allegra Hyde, Eiren Caffall, Sequoia Nagamatsu
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Journalist and activist Dan Bloom may have coined the phrase “cli-fi” in 2007, but novelists like Octavia Butler, J. G. Ballard, and even Jules Verne were writing (and warning) about our changing climate long before that. Climate fiction often shares the speculative vision and/or futuristic settings of sci-fi, but its themes trend darker, and its outcomes tend to whittle any hope that survives the plot into a thin, brittle shard. What do readers want from cli-fi? What do writers seek to deliver?

S122. Teaching the Novel: Guiding Writers Through a Book-Length Project

Michelle Hoover, Rowan Beaird, Michael Zapata
Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Novel writing is a daunting process that often takes years, but traditional writing programs aren't structured to support a full book-length manuscript. So what teaching methods help writers get drafts across the finish line? This panel of expert novel instructors and authors will discuss the nuances of intensive, long-term novel workshops. We'll cover drafting and revision; teaching craft across subgenres and styles; how to keep momentum going; and the value of community in long-form projects.

S123. Screenwriting Unlocked: The Smarter (Not Harder) Method for Writing Your Script

Adrienne Carter, Taylor Vaughn Lasley
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Playwriting & Screenwriting

Why start from scratch when you can build on success? This dynamic workshop teaches the "scaffolding method"—using existing, successful projects as structural templates for original screenplays. We'll demonstrate the technique, then lead participants through breaking a TV pilot in real time as a group! Last year's workshop was a hit, so we'd like to do it again!

S124. The Violence of Form: Black Lives Writing Against Violence
Matthieu Chapman, Said Shaiye, Troy Wilderson, nicholas brady, Chaun Webster
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

This panel brings together a diverse group of Black authors who work across various genres (poetry, memoir, CNF, academic, and ficton) to discuss how the grammars of form, evidence, archive, narrative, and argumentation inflict violence on Black thought, memory, and being. From there we will discuss how the anti-Black violence of these grammars impacts anyone who either in their work or in their body deviates from the normative subject and its enforced standards of the written word.

S125. Diss Tracks: Voices in a Marginalized Key
Camille Acker, Deesha Philyaw, Lydi Conklin, Nura Maznavi
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

What do we talk about when we talk about our own people? When white supremacy/patriarchy/heteronormativity/transphobia/Islamophobia are arrayed against us, it's only natural to want to protect our communities. But what happens when we have meaningful critiques? Difficult conversations? Can you craft a diss track with love? These four writers will tell how they employ techniques such as humor and pathos to craft critical essays and fiction that gather their people through the power of the pen.

S126. Do I Have to Wait Until They Die? Rewards & Regrets of Writing Real People
Elise McHugh, Carvell Wallace, Grant Faulkner, Joni Cole, Danielle Bainbridge
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

The author Anne Lamott wrote, “If people wanted you to write warmly about them, they should have behaved better.” If only it were that simple. Panelists will discuss questions to help you find your comfort level on this fraught issue. Are you avoiding writing for fear of upsetting others? What about other people’s privacy? How much are you willing to risk in service to telling your truth? Panelists will also share their own rewards, regrets, and surprises when writing about real-life characters.

S127. Understanding Agents: Researching, Querying, Choosing & Working with an Agent, Sponsored by Publishers Marketplace
Mollie Weisenfeld, Eric Smith, Heather Carr, Mariah Stovall
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

What exactly is a literary agent, and what the heck do they do? Get the real talk from literary agents and industry experts about how to find the best representative for your work, how to read between the lines of a Publishers Marketplace Deal announcement, and how to navigate rights/permissions, red flags, and developing a productive partnership. We'll share resources from agency websites, interviews, QueryTracker, book acknowledgments, and more.

S128. Nothing Is Inevitable: Teaching Writing in the Age of AI
Sunny Rosen, Ariel Francisco, Bleah Patterson, Megan Arlett, Becky Tuch
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

We've all heard that AI will inevitably create a world in which students no longer need to learn

to write. But what if the opposite is true? What if writing instruction is more vital than ever? A diverse panel of instructors from universities across the country will share their practical, innovative strategies for managing students' AI usage, maintaining sanity in grading, and—most importantly—creating classrooms in which students genuinely want to develop their own irreplaceable writing voices.

S129. How to Win at the Moth & Use Storytelling to Pitch, Promote, Build Your Platform

Micaela Blei, Dawn Fraser, Harriett Jernigan, Laura Davis, Nichole Hill
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Live storytelling offers a special brand of magic; people get to know you—maybe even love

you—and you get to share your writing and find your voice. Five award-winning storytellers share their secrets for telling (and coaching) winning stories at the Moth, TED, Audible, and First Person Storytelling. We'll discuss how winning storytellers put together and practice their stories, how to tell your "writer origin story" (even if you're an introvert), and the story arc you can use for any anecdote.

9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. CT

S130. Writer to Writer Coffee Hour
AWP Member Lounge, Hall D, Level 3,
McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Celebrate 24 wonderful sessions of the AWP Writer to Writer Mentorship Program! Mentors and mentees from all seasons are invited to start off their final day of #AWP27 by having coffee and a pastry with fellow participants and AWP staff. If you're thinking of applying to

W2W—as a mentor or a mentee—feel free to drop by with your questions!

This is an informal gathering. Please stop by anytime during the 90-minute session, for all or part of the time. Coffee and pastries will be served until we run out.

9:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. CT

S131. LitNet Meeting
Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

LitNet is a coalition of literary organizations from across the United States that works to promote the importance of the literary arts in American culture, build the capacity of the literary field, and broaden funding for the literary arts. Join us for a meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. to learn more about what we

do, followed by a breakfast mingle with literary leaders and other advocates from the field.

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT

S132. AWP Bookfair, Sponsored by the Poetry Foundation
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

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

S133. Concessions
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Breakfast and lunch concessions are available in McCormick Place Lakeside Center in the AWP Bookfair, Exhibit Hall D, Level 3. No cash, only credit cards are accepted at all food and beverage locations. Please consult the maps in the AWP mobile app for location details.

10:35 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. CT

S134. This Is It, Audre, You're on Your Own: Writers & Breast Cancer
Allison Blevins, Felicia Zamora, Meg Day, Nicole Callihan
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

In *The Cancer Journals*, first published in 1980, poet and activist Audre Lorde describes the isolation of her diagnosis: "This is it Audre," she

writes, “you’re on your own.” Nearly 50 years later, four award-winning poets and essayists find community as they read from their work and discuss how their cancer experiences changed not only their lives but also their writing.

S135. “Doubly Invisible”: Asian American Literature of the Midwest
Maggie Su, Lisa Low, Rakesh Satyal, Su Cho, Marianne Chan
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Asian writers in and from the American Midwest often navigate contradictions: belonging and alienation, nostalgia and estrangement, visibility and erasure. Though Asians make up a small share of the region’s population, Asian writers have built a rich

Midwestern literary tradition, reimagining home, affinity, and regional identity. In this conversation, poets and prose writers explore life in the so-called “nowhere” of the Midwest, challenging dominant narratives of Asian America.

S136. Reclaiming Creative Critical Writing Ancestors

Thaïs Miller, Mecca Jamilah Sullivan, micah perks, Jonathan Goldberg, Nathan Osorio

Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

In this reading, Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Harryette Mullen, bell hooks, Charles Ludlam, and Francisco X. Alarcón, among others, are reimagined as critical and creative literary ancestors that teach us how to combat systemic oppression through innovative

writing, research, editing, and teaching methodologies. A diverse panel of creative critical writers will read original work and reflect on how these writers inspired their practices through genre-troubling methods.

S137. Diagonal Passages: Latiné/Latinx Ekphrastic Memoir & Arts Criticism Today
RAQUEL GUTIERREZ, Carribean Fragoza, Roberto Tejada, Deanna Ledezma, Rose Salseda
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Readings

Our point of departure is author Roberto Tejada's latest essay collection, *Along the Diagonal: Art/Essays/América*, as a site of critical exploration of biography and memoir, modern and contemporary arts practices and productions, and cultural histories of the Americas. Four writers converge at the intersection of memoir, cultural criticism,

autobiography, and ekphrasis to explore recent Latiné/Latinx arts nonfiction writing as a relational and/or kaleidoscopic act.

S138. SWANA Poets Against Genocide & Imperialism: A Solidarity Reading
Alexa Luborsky, Arthur Kayzakian, Perla Kantarjian, Saba Keramati, Lena Tuffaha
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

This reading is an act of solidarity between poets with ties to Armenia, Lebanon, Iran, and Palestine. As W. H. Auden is famously misquoted, “poetry makes nothing happen.” The full quotation, which each of these writers embodies in their work, says: “For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives / . . . a way of happening, a mouth.” This reading will honor the entangled histories of these conflicts, and

offer ways into survival via a continued envisioning of a future, under threat.

S139. Where Is the Weird? Black Authors on Transgressive & Experimental Fiction
Charles Stephens, Giada Scodellaro, Joseph Thomas, Destiny Birdsong, John Vercher
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Experimental, transgressive, and “taboo” fiction is often lauded as groundbreaking and brilliant . . . except when written by Black authors, who frequently see that work overlooked, ignored, or even assailed. Four Black authors and educators will address this current disparity while examining this notion through the lens of past works by pioneering writers including Nettie Jones, George Schuyler, Fran Ross, Hal Bennett, and Toni Morrison.

S140. What Is YA Today?
Shana Youngdahl, Aimee Phan, Gloria Muñoz, Michelle Falkoff, Nova Ren Suma
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

In this panel, YA novelists will discuss trends in YA literature. We will address not only the genres and content that define YA, but the impact of press closures, editorial layoffs, book bans, and our peers switching to writing for adults. We will explore the impact of this on our own creative processes and writing decision-making. Attendees can expect to learn about the changing face of YA today and how knowing industry trends can coexist with creative nourishment.

S141. Finding a Way in: Teaching the Lyric Essay

Lizette Wanzer, Bronwen Tate, Erica Trabold, Harrison Candelaria Fletcher, Heidi Czerwiec
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Authors from Didion to Purpura have written lyric essays. But what, exactly, is this form? Poetic essay or essayistic poem? Their crafting privileges images/ideas over chronicle to sculpt a narrative, contravening long-standing stylistic rules in which students find purchase. Students experience a tough time letting themselves color outside the lines, an inherent skill for writing lyric essays. This panel presents instructors' varying approaches and perspectives on teaching lyric essay writing.

S142. The Sonnet Is Trans!
Alexis Garcia, E.R. Pulgar, k tiao, Aishvarya Arora, plum.e champlin

Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What is the sonnet capable of, and who is it for? Although no written form can hold the embodied experience of transness, sonnets are built to house change. From Millay to Coleman, this 14-line container has been used to deconstruct gender, race, and desire. The volta, or the turn, is a defiant movement that sets the stage for trans writers to shape-shift with and against tradition. Join trans and nonbinary poets as they read sonnets, share how they engage with this form, and constellate literary kinship across time.

S143. 50 Years of Resilient Low-Res MFAs: Where They Are Now, What the Future Holds
Jessica Goudeau, Deborah Taffa, Leta Seletzky, Rene Steinke, Robert Johnson

Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Program Development

Fifty years after the first low-res MFA program began, a *Poets & Writers* feature took an in-depth look at this innovative model. Often seen as lesser alternatives to residential programs, research and interviews show instead that these programs are equally strong. Moderated by the journalist who wrote the article and low-res directors from across the country, this conversation explores the opportunities and obstacles facing low-res MFAs and how they're well situated to thrive in a tumultuous world.

S144. Writing Across Mental States: Mental Health, Medication & Neurodivergence
Tierney Oberhammer, Elena Dudum, Josh Nicolaisen, Rachel Robinson
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Have you experienced a change in your mental state during your writing career? Whether you started a medication, adjusted, or tapered off, this panel is for you. We explore what it means for your art when your mental state changes. We interrogate harmful stereotypes like the "tortured genius" and talk about getting un-tortured. From artistic drive to self-belief to the work itself: How do chemicals that change our brains change our creative process, and what to do about it?

S145. Mentors & Mentees: Growing as an Editor

Natasha Kane, David Groff, Latifa Ayad, Misha Rai, Samantha Hernandez

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This panel focuses on how we uniquely grow as editors in communities that include literary magazines, small presses, and writing programs. Mentors will discuss how they developed their skills in editorial roles, while mentees will share advice on how they found mentors who can help them grow as editors in the literary and publishing community. Mentorship offers a guiding space for many publishing professionals. What creative works can mentors and mentees achieve through collaboration? What does growth look like in a healthy mentorship?

S146. The (Administrative) Grim Reaper May Be Coming for Your MFA Program: What Now?
Mark Brazaitis, Angela Pelster-Wiebe, Brian Leung, Mary Ann Samyn, Brian Ballentine

Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Program Development

MFA programs across the country are facing an existential threat from upper administrators who've devalued the humanities and believe cutting creativity is a simple way to save money. Hamline University endured a dean's misguided efforts to end its beloved, community-based program. Purdue University saw its esteemed, thirty-six-year-old program discontinued. West Virginia University's program was put on the chopping block, but its advocates had the chance to save it via an appeals process.

S147. Same Page, Different Rooms: Teaching Writing Online
Erin Weiss, Andrea Dupree, Jami Attenberg, Kayla Degala-Paraiso
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

When writing workshops moved online in 2020, something unexpected happened: Participation surged. Writers once excluded by geography, disability, caregiving, or work schedules suddenly found community and craft instruction within reach. This panel brings together teaching artists and literary program leaders to discuss what online workshops have revealed about teaching craft across distance: how to foster trust, build community, increase access, and preserve the best of the workshop model.

S148. *MER - Mom Egg Review* 25th-Anniversary Reading
Marjorie Tesser, Cindy Veach, Carla Panciera, Melissa Higley
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

MER - Mom Egg Review is a literary journal about motherhood, publishing poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction about all aspects of mothers, mothering, and motherhood. Stellar poets and prose writers who have contributed to the journal over the years will give brief readings of their work.

S149. Black to the Future: How a Diaspora Can Bring Heritage into Their Writing
Grace Amui, Kadija George, Kianna Greene, Tope Folarin
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Ghana, one of Africa's first independent nations, shares its 70th anniversary with AWP's 60th in March. Yet, 95% of US fiction (1950–2018) was by white authors and only 6% of UK

shortlists (1998–2023) were Black (PEN, Creamer). What will make this decade different? How can a diaspora bring heritage to writing and connect with their “Western” experience? This panel of African diaspora scholars and writers discuss how authors can incorporate heritage through oral tradition, fables, rhythm, and realism.

S150. 100 Years of *Prairie Schooner*: A Celebration Reading

Timothy Schaffert, Molly Gaudry, Denise Duhamel, Rigoberto Gonzalez, Toi Derricotte

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Publishing since 1927, *Prairie Schooner* holds the distinction of being among the five oldest literary quarterlies in the nation. In commemoration of its centennial issue, this

panel will bring together four contributors from the archives of *Prairie Schooner*, authors of poetry, short fiction, and essays, in a celebration of 100 years of publishing original poetry, short fiction, and essays from around the world.

S151. What's Allowed Here? Teaching at the Boundaries of Content
Sarah Snider, Katherine Payne, Marcos L. Martínez, Spencer Hunt, Marion Wrenn
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Across educational contexts, both formal policies and unspoken norms influence which texts and ideas can be introduced into a writing classroom without institutional, governmental, or even student resistance. Drawing on their experiences as faculty at international and religious universities and college-in-prison

programs, panelists will discuss approaches to navigating these boundaries while fostering open inquiry and encouraging freedom of expression in their classrooms and creative work.

S152. In Conversation: Writing About Art to Write About Self

Katie Ellison, Lilly Dancyger, Tisa Bryant, Larissa Pham, Aisha Sabatini Sloan
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Ekphrasis—vivid written description of visual art—is most closely associated with poetry, but it's also a valuable move in memoir and creative nonfiction. On this panel, five writers who use visual art, music, literature, and film as a way into personal narrative will describe their writing process, the role art plays in their understanding of themselves and the world,

and how they tap into the ineffable, intangible power of other artists and their work in a text-based medium.

S153. Beyond Representation: Radical Narrative Forms of Witnessing
Sayantika Mandal, Alexia Nader-Rondinini, Annell Lopez, JAMIL KOCHAI, Luis Urrea
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This panel asks how fiction can bear witness to atrocity, repression, displacement, and violence without reducing suffering to spectacle. Moving beyond representation, it considers how form can enact dissent and resist dominant narratives. What structures can hold histories of occupation, migration, racialization, caste, gendered violence, incarceration, and empire? Panelists discuss fiction as counter-archive,

witness, refusal, satire, collective voice, image, and world-making.

S154. Long & Winding Roads: Embracing a Slow Writing Process
Caitlin Horrocks, V.V. Ganeshananthan, Melissa Matthewson, Sarah Cypher, W. Todd Kaneko
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writers face pressure from all sides to produce and publish quickly: from the marketplace, from academia, from social media, from our own self-expectations. Five writers in different genres who have spent at least some time on the slow path talk about how longer or more circuitous writing processes can deepen and shape individual projects, as well as our writing and research processes generally. What is

gained when we embrace slowness? How can we reexamine ideas of artistic “productivity”?

S155. Beyond the Page: The Poet’s Role in Shaping Contemporary Culture, Sponsored by Alice James Books
Brittany Rogers, Jose Olivarez, Shane McCrae, Shara McCallum, DeeSoul Carson
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

Alice James Books presents a conversation on poetry’s evolving role within contemporary arts and culture, exploring the poetic form as both artistic practice and cultural engagement. AJB poets DeeSoul Carson and Shara McCallum will read from *The Laughing Barrel* and *Behold*, alongside José Olivarez (*Promises of Gold*) and Shane McCrae (*New and Collected Hell*). Moderated by Brittany Rogers, the conversation

explores poetry's intersections with music, visual art, performance, politics, and public life.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

S157. "Not a Teacher but an Awakener": Poets on the Meaning of Mentorship
Helene Achanzar, Brian Teare, Makshya Tolbert, Natasha Trethewey, Kira Tucker
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writing, among nearly all art forms, is a discipline of lineage. How does Frost's assertion of being "not a teacher but an awakener" inform our collective understanding of mentorship? Two poets—prominent authors,

educators, and literary citizens—join their recently debuted apprentices to discuss everything from mastering poetic craft to professional tact. Offering formative experiences, trusted approaches, and original poems, this panel explores how shared wisdom endures across generations.

S158. Beyond the Big Five: Practical Visibility for the Independent Author
Hannah Grieco, Avitus B. Carle, Monica Prince, Zach Powers, Michelle Malonzo
Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Most university and independent presses don't have the marketing budgets to land major reviews or retail placement, but that doesn't mean you can't sell your book! This panel brings together a National Book Award judge,

an artistic director, an activist writer, and two indie bestsellers to discuss building a readership through library circuits, bookstore partnerships, grassroots touring, and more. Attendees will leave with specific, effective strategies for self-promotion.

S159. Get Paid to Write Books: How to Break Into the World of Ghostwriting
Becka Oliver, Heidi Scott, Kelsey Adams, Madison Fitzpatrick, Leslie Hinson
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Getting paid to write? That's the dream, and ghostwriting can make it a reality! Learn how to break into the industry and build a sustainable career, even if you've never written a book before. We'll share how to land clients, set your rates, structure your services, and stay relevant

in the age of AI. With the right approach, you can build a strong, steady income from anywhere in the world, on your own terms, all while practicing your craft.

11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. CT

S160. AWP Member Lounge
Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

AWP members! Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the conference in this members-only lounge on the bookfair floor, featuring comfortable seating and complimentary water and coffee. Thank you for your membership and for being part of the AWP community! Please note: You must have “AWP Member” printed on your badge to access the lounge.

If you aren’t already, we encourage you to become a member today!

12:10 p.m. to 1:25 p.m. CT

S161. Podcasting as a Generative Medium for Nonfiction Writers
Ines Bellina, Matthew King, Miriam Perez, Willy Nast
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This panel explores how different nonfiction writers use podcasting as a medium for the genre itself, creating narrative or essay-driven podcasts born out of writing projects or that resulted in writing projects. Discussions include the reasons why they chose podcasting for their topics, how it expanded their creative possibilities, the difference between writing for the page and writing for the ear, and the kind of

opportunities podcasting opened up for them in the wider literary world.

S162. Hilarity, Profanity & Sacrilege: Crooked Approaches to Sacred Spaces
Jennifer Steinorth, Donovan McAbee, Jessica Jacobs, Sam Sax, Hayan Charara
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Amid ongoing travesties of justice and airbrushed spiritual practice, writers of varying faith traditions make the case for profanity to advance decency, sacrilege that aspires to the sacred, hilarity to loosen rammed earth for the grave. But what hot calculus ought writers to consider when flipping tables as artistic-devotional practice? Through discussion and brief readings, panelists explore strategies,

incitements, and consequences of art that risks offense in pursuit of something holy.

S163. Call-and-Response: Poets Respond to Art, Music & Film
Jenny Molberg, Caitlin Cowan, Kathleen Winter, Michelle Alexander, Derrick Austin
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Poets working across disciplines explore the urgency of ekphrastic engagement with visual art, music, film, and pop culture. Through craft discussion, the panel celebrates historical connections between painters and poets, musicians and lyricists, filmmakers and graphic forms. Considering call-and-response as a sociopolitical act rooted in listening, research, and engagement, panelists examine the erasure of marginalized voices while reimagining ekphrastic practice in contemporary poetry.

S164. Within Us an Orchard: A Tribute to Li-Young Lee

Chris Santiago, Bao Phi, Eugenia Leigh, Tina Chang, Helene Achanzar

Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Tributes

This panel will pay tribute to Li-Young Lee, beloved poet and longtime Chicago resident who has inspired generations of writers with his lyrical innovations, spiritual inquiry, and intimate meditations on family, migration, memory, and the body. Poets Eugenia Leigh, Bao Phi, Tina Chang, Helene Achanzar, and Chris Santiago will read from Lee's work and discuss his profound impact on the Asian American writing community and on their own writing and teaching. Lee will join briefly at the panel's end.

S165. Art School Writing Faculty Caucus

Amy Lemmon, Kathryn Savage, Melissa Tombro, Sung Ju Ahn, Raki Kopernik
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

The Art School Writing Faculty Caucus provides a forum for writers to consider issues unique to art and design environments, their students, and their curricula. This year we welcome new members and guests to a panel discussion of topics including AI, neurodiversity in the classroom, and writing across genres and artistic disciplines. We also seek input concerning the coming year's caucus programming and the needs of our caucus members and their respective institutions.

S166. The Writer's Task in a Climate-Changed World: (Re)defining Nature Poetry

Elizabeth Bradfield, Nickole Brown, CMarie Fuhrman, David Baker, Camille Dungy
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

With the growing crisis of the biosphere, many feel compelled to protect and repair our climate-changed world, but writing such can be daunting, especially if “nature”—and the writing about it—is unfamiliar territory. We’ll discuss how all of us—no matter our range of knowledge—might find during this critical time a point of access and enter ecological writing through curiosity, attention, uncertainty, and learning—expanding what nature poetry can hold and who feels invited to write it.

S167. The Underage Body: Sexualization of Girls in Gabriel García Márquez’s Novels

Ana Maria Spagna, Adriana PARAMO, Andrea Cote Botero, Victoria Buitron, Ana Maria Spagna
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Gabriel García Márquez is celebrated as a master of world literature, yet his work repeatedly eroticizes girls and young women, transforming their bodies into symbols of purity, temptation, or sacrifice. Rather than fully dismissing García Márquez, panelists interrogate how magical realism and the male gaze intersect to normalize the sexualization of underage bodies. This conversation invites a necessary reevaluation of a beloved author through a feminist lens.

S168. You Don’t Know What Work Is: Poems of Bodily Labor

Rebecca Gayle Howell, Debora Kuan, Geffrey Davis, Kevin Goodan, Dan Alter
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What poems do we make out of the jobs we do when we come home dirty and sore, or steal a few minutes from diapering and spooning puree? What pressures do these jobs create on our minds and time, and to what forms of poetry do they give rise? Former subsistence farmers, an electrician, a wildfire fighter, fathers and mothers will explore how we give shape and voice to the work of our bodies, and what kinds of silence we struggle against to do so.

S169. “No Such Thing as an Empty Space”: Silence & Caesura in the Lyric Essay
Lee Roripaugh, Chaun Webster, Ching-In Chen, Oliver De La Paz, Sun Yung Shin

Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

John Cage wrote that “try as we may to make a silence, we cannot.” Lyric essayists often use silence and white space in the service of musicality, ellipsis, and associational meaning making. Five writers discuss these techniques in lyric prose, discussing such questions as: What can be created within gaps that are neither empty nor silent? How do these areas function as craft elements in lyric prose? What are the technical challenges of incorporating these approaches?

S170. Pass the Mic: How Literary Orgs Help Young Writers Find Their People & Shine, Sponsored by WITS Alliance
Nancy Weber, Emanuelee Bean, Shawntai Brown, Jessica Grace Kelley, Elly Leman

Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

How do we open the door for young writers, make room for their talent to grow and voices to be heard? In this panel, program directors discuss ways to create programs that are youth-centered, where young writers not only publish their work, but have true agency in the process. Learn how to build and sustain communities through public readings, writing and publishing opportunities, fellowships, mentorships, and other activities that help young writers find a seat at the table.

S171. Sak Pase? A Tribute to Haitian Poet Laureate Danielle Legros Georges
Artress White, Porsha Olayiwola, Rosamond King, Patrick Sylvain, Tisa Bryant
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Tributes

This #AWP27 panel is timely in its cultural alignment with Haitian founder of Chicago, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. Legros Georges served as Boston poet laureate from 2014 to 2019, and her papers are newly archived at Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. These poets, who knew her as fellow poet laureate, member of the Dark Room Collective, and collaborator, will discuss her work and opportunities for future scholars.

S172. Writing Toward Home: Capturing the Truth, Beauty & Urgency of Place
Tanvi Misra, Elena Dudum, Jenisha Watts, Stephanie Krzywonos, Lenika Cruz
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Some places we call home we have never fully lived in; they reach us inherited, remembered, or carried across distance, and yet are no less real. Four memoirists write home across Palestine, Antarctica, Guam, and Kentucky—places that exist for most readers as myth or blank space, and for the writer as something far more intimate. They explore how to render such a place for a reader who has never been, and how to write without romanticizing, flattening, or letting grief overtake the page.

S173. Conversation & Communion: How Should We Discuss Someone's Writing?
Ginger Ko, Kelly Krumrie, Sam Corfman, JOSHUA BURTON, Guadalupe Mendez
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Pedagogy books such as *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* and *Craft in the Real World* indicate a

growing awareness among educators and writing groups that the activity of sharing and critique contains an interpersonal element that can require careful leadership and intervention. How can we create productive, comfortable spaces by guiding discussion and conversation? How can we create challenging, dynamic spaces? How can we best serve the work that is being discussed, and the writer who wrote it?

S174. Horrifying Women: Using Horror to Reflect the Female Gaze

Brigitte Winter, Erin Roberts, Zefyr Lisowski, Elsie Raymond, Inez Ray
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

From Shirley Jackson to Carmen Maria Machado, women have consistently used the horrifying to translate their experiences into fiction. Horror's flexibility allows the exploration

of topics like pregnancy, queerness, race, female rage, messy motherhood, and bodily autonomy freed from the male gaze. This panel will explore why women are drawn to horror, how horror tropes are subverted by women writers, and how the transgressive nature of horror can expand the possibilities of feminist expression.

S175. Give Me a Break: The Craft of Lineation in the Age of Screens
Rosalie Moffett, Bernardo Wade, Edgar Kunz, Lisa Spaar, Megan Fernandes
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

What becomes possible at the end of the line? Five award-winning poets discuss how the line break shapes tension, attention, and meaning, and why—as our phone screens chop everyday language into accidental verse—our moment

demands a renewed appreciation of one of poetry's most powerful elements of craft. Drawing on their diverse bodies of work as well as exemplars of the form, this panel will showcase the possibilities for the line and offer perspectives on the craft that makes the breaks matter.

S176. How the Future Remembers: Poetry, Memory & the Earth

Karen Michelle Otero, Kate ONeill, Cynthia Gallaher, Beatrice Szymkowiak, Angela C Trudell Vasquez

Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Readings

Five writers discuss histories of entanglement between humans and the natural world, pointing to the damaging effects of practices rooted in capitalism, colonialism, and other forms of hegemonism. Unearthing stories and

memories hidden in lands and bodies, their poetry brings past into present, and asks a future haunted by histories and exploitative systems to remember and reimagine our relationship with our environment and the ecosystem.

S177. The Novel/istic Story Collection: How It Links Up

Anne Horowitz, Monona Wali, Dylan Landis, Toni Ann Johnson

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Peering at linked collections and novels through their critical story links—character, plot, time, theme, and place. Each writer will address how they conceived the structure of freestanding chapters or stories that build on each other to offer the scope, resonance, complexity, and resolution of a novel, or a novelistic collection.

S178. Immigrant Regret: Writing & Researching from the Diaspora

Grace Talusan, Marie Myung-Ok Lee, Rebecca Morgan Frank, Rishi Reddi

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Writers of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction who draw on family experiences of migration share working questions, challenges, and critical approaches to research and craft issues about writing immigrant experiences and providing alternative narratives of regret, complaint, overburdening, ambivalence, and resentment. Through their lenses as writers, lawyers, teachers, and scholars, they will address approaches to avoiding familiar tropes of assimilation, success, and the American dream.

S179. Writing Work: Activating Your Day Job for Art

Dustin M. Hoffman, RS Deeren, Katie Burpo, Stephanie Dugger, Toni Jensen
Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

The idea that creative writing should be escapism, separated from the mundanities of labor, is a lie this panel seeks to counter. The dramas and details behind the “Employees Only” door can be even more fascinating than speculative worlds. This panel of writing teachers will share their approaches to activate the artistic potential of students’ work experiences, from the tension-driven plots of hourly shifts to the unique poetry of occupational jargon to found families.

S180. Our Stories Will Remain: Afrofuturism & the Legacy of Black Storytelling

DuEwa Frazier, Remica Bingham-Risher, Sarah RudeWalker, Curtis Crisler
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

Poets and writers from the Black Arts Movement (BAM) poets to Octavia Butler reimagined Black futures and the power of storytelling through their words. BAM poets issued a call for Black power and a reaffirmation of self. Butler's prose set the foundation for Afrofuturism through her prophetic words. Drawing from an Afrofuturist lens, the panelists—poets, scholars, and prose writers—come together to read their works and reflect on the future of Black storytelling. Q&A will follow the panel.

S181. Queer Writing Pedagogy

JP Solheim, Melissa Febos, Serena Chopra, Lydi Conklin, Brendan Bowles
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

As we celebrate queer voices in writing, workshops beg a different question: how—and can—queer writing be taught? In this panel, university-level author-teachers consider how—and if—to define queer writing; a capacious understanding of queer literary vision and sensibilities; and why and how dedicated space for queer writing in creative writing programs might lead to greater visibility and legibility. What are our duties and goals as college instructors and workshop leaders of queer writing?

S182. Post-Debut: Five Poets on Maximizing Opportunities After Publication

Avia Tadmor, Carlene Kucharczyk, Chelsea Krieg, Isabella DeSendi, Arielle Hebert
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Marie Howe said, “I’m a ten-year kind of girl.” Indeed, poets spend years, even decades, working on a poetry book—let alone their debut. In this panel, five award-winning poets with debuts published in 2025–2026 discuss maximizing opportunities in the first year post-publication. Drawing on their experiences and successes, topics include: pursuing publicity opportunities and events, submitting to post-publication prizes, seeking teaching jobs, taking up new writing, and being in community.

S183. Chicago: Wrestling with a Demon-Angel Called Home, Sponsored by Macondo Writers Workshop

Ellen Placey Wadey, Jasmon Drain, Sandra Cisneros
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Writing is the most difficult task we know. It is wrestling with a being that can't be defeated without suffering injury.

When one comes from a demonized urban neighborhood, it's an especially remarkable journey that grants both wounds and wings. Chicago's Humboldt Park and Englewood neighborhoods are unlikely places to cultivate writers, and yet their stories have led us on an incredible spirit walk. How did we find the route to write coming from such a harsh environment? How did we imagine we even could? How have we managed to be resilient and ultimately defiant? How has home shaped us into the storytellers we are in 2027?

We will discuss the advantage of disadvantage, and how it has served us on our path to becoming artists, how we discovered and accepted being a voice for our community, and why we believe art can and does make change.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

S184. Forged in Verse: Chicago, the Midwest & the American Poetic Tradition, Sponsored by Red Hen Press
Mayda Del Valle, Michael Warr, Luis Rodriguez, Douglas Manuel
Room E354b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Chicago and the Midwest have long stood at the center of American poetry. Join literary greats Luis J. Rodriguez, Michael Warr, Douglas Manuel, and Chicago Poet Laureate Mayda del Valle as they trace the rich literary lineage of Chicago and the Midwest, the unique role industrialization and deindustrialization played in the emergence of slam poetry and other forms of creative expression in the last 50 years, and the future of the region's place as a major poetry hub in America.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

S185. Pulling Back the Curtain: What Every New Writer Should Know About Publishing
Laura McGrath, Yahdon Israel, A.L. Major, Adam Vitcavage, Randy Winston

Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

This panel covers the most important intel that every new writer should know (but isn't told). Whether workshopping a manuscript, querying agents, going on submission, working with editors, or promoting a first book, these seasoned industry professionals will help you think strategically about your career from the earliest stages: equipping you with relevant data, explaining how you fit into a complex industry, and empowering you to ask the right questions so you can be your own best advocate.

S186. Opening the Gate: Building a Successful Author-Agent Relationship
Tommy Dean, Aaron Hamburger, Paula Munier, Jennifer Gordon, Lauren Grodstein

Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Information abounds about landing an agent, crafting the perfect query, and polishing those opening pages. But what happens once an author actually signs with an agent? Our panel will explore the agent-author working relationship from the POV of both agents and authors. What do agents actually do? And how can authors best manage their relationships with their agents? We'll cover everything from preparing a project to submission to supporting an author's next project and beyond.

S187. Beyond the Ivory Tower: Creative Writing & the Community
Emma Hudelson, Danni Quintos, Rajpreet Heir, Sarah Seltzer, Yalie Kamara

Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

Creative writing isn't bound to academic spaces. Some of the best pedagogy unfolds in public-facing community spaces or in courses that include a real-world writing component. These five panelists, with backgrounds in both academia and community writing, will share what they've learned by taking the literary arts to the streets (or to the woods), both literally and figuratively. This interactive panel will include exercises that help creative writing thrive beyond the traditional classroom.

S188. Cuts & Closures in the Literary Arts
Becca Klaver, Hilary Plum, Nick Sturm, Joanna Davis-McElligatt, Jessica Alexander
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Support for the literary arts in the US is growing more precarious by the day. Framed by a discussion of contemporary austerity culture and the history of federal arts policy, teachers and administrators share their direct experiences with shuttered or gutted programs. What do the literary arts lose—and gain—when they lose institutional funding? How might we imagine and sustain new models of literary community? Together, we'll swap strategies for confronting assaults on the literary arts.

1:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CT

S189. Formal Antagonisms: Experiments in Trans Poetics
Temperance Aghamohammadi, Eleanor Sturm, Ty Raso, Ching-In Chen
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Queering poetic form as trans poets is an act of obfuscating directness. There is power in inventing forms that cannot be easily understood, which offer expansive and encrypted interactions. This panel gathers four trans poets engaging in formal antagonism who challenge writers of all experiences to do the same. We will discuss practices around stranging syntax, writing multidirectionally, text-image hybridity, spatial excess, and other experiments. Join us in disarming the trap of palatability.

S190. Women Writing the Body: Multigenerational Voices on Age & Embodiment

Margaret Grundstein, JoAnn Balingit, Iris Kim, Isabella Suarez, Sheila McMullin

Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

How does time shape stories women tell about their bodies, and how do our bodies reshape our understanding of time? Multigenerational women writers, spanning seven decades of life, confront the body as archive, battleground, and inheritance. In poetry, prose, and multimedia forms, panelists read work on rites of passage, systemic silencing, infertility, the ancestral body, intimacy, and aging to explore how literary form helps make meaning from our achingly limited and ever-expansive bodies.

S191. Celebrating the Legacy of Lexi Rudnitsky
Gabriel Fried, Donna Masini, Gabrielle Calvocoressi, Monica Ferrell, Molly McCully Brown
Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

This panel explores and celebrates the legacy of Lexi Rudnitsky, who died suddenly at the age of 32 in 2005, shortly before the publication of her sole poetry book, *A Doorless Knocking into Night*—just reissued for a new generation of readers. A person and poet of sly wit and deep conviction, Lexi's fierce spirit continues through her writing and through two annual book prizes (past winners include Cameron Awkward-Rich, Molly McCully Brown, Shane McCrae, and dozens more) and other ventures in her name, all aimed at bringing poetry to corners of the world it might not otherwise reach.

S192. How to Raise the Dead: Translating Old Classics Newly, Sponsored by ALTA
Tess Taylor, Catherine Ciepiela, Haleh Gafori, Anthony Opal, Dean Rader
Room E256, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

What does it take to make a text translated many times feel alive again? Five translators explore outside voyages that make inner fidelity possible—into landscape, labor, devotional practice, and the body. Dean Rader hiked the Andes; Haleh Liza Gafori breathes and sings Rumi alive. What calls us across time, and what must a translator bring to hear it?

S193. Pan-African Diaspora Caucus Meeting
Olivia Springer, Shakira Smith
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Caucus

The African Diaspora Caucus is a safe gathering space for Black writers who are creating and advocating for excellence, craft, and the overall future of Black writing. We strive to unite and uplift any Black writer who is feeling creatively isolated or unsupported by grounding them in a

feeling of collective imagination and artistic exchange.

S194. Rise & Fall of a Midwest Princess: Place-Based Writing from the Ozarks
Mariya Kurbatova, Laurie Marshall, Lillian Durr, James McWilliams, Bria Winfree
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

The Ozarks of Missouri and Arkansas have inspired authors like Charles Portis and Frank Stanford to write tales of rugged people living rough lives. Despite paradoxical features—incredible wealth, extreme poverty, natural beauty, and ugly history—the region still struggles to be represented as anything but violent and broken. How can we tell stories about a place area at once nascent and

entrenched? What does it mean to root one's writing in a political and cultural crossroads?

S195. Horror Authors Are Coming for Your Kids: Come Play with Us . . . Forever . . .
Wendy Parris, Mel Hammond, Kathleen Palm, Christine Virnig, Stan Yan
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Children's & Young Adult Literature

Why write horror for kids? While reading spooky helps kids cope with horrors of the real world, the truth is that kids are clamoring for scary stories, so let's not deprive them of the very thing we most love writing? "Scary" is highly subjective, though, so it shouldn't surprise anyone that authors of spooky kidlit have varied approaches to writing and illustrating these books. In this panel of PB, MG, and YA authors and illustrators, we'll discuss

how we each approach writing horror for children.

S196. Back to the Future: Empowering Community College Students with In-Class Writing

Regina Peters, April Gibson, Jessica Lewis, Stacy Egan, Michelle Myers

Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

In response to students' inclination to use generative-AI tools for writing, many composition and creative writing instructors at two-year colleges are moving to having students write papers in class. This panel will draw from the expertise of experienced faculty in navigating the challenges and benefits of in-class writing. Panelists will discuss their unique approaches, provide sample in-class assignments, and describe how they have

overcome the unique challenges of in-class writing.

S197. Notes, Fragments, Feeds: Strategies for Nonlinear & Serial Writing
Kenning García, Katie Jean Shinkle, Rone Shavers, K. Graham, Stella Corso
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Many writers work in fragments: notes, diary entries, lists, images, and short passages that resist traditional forms. This panel explores practical approaches to generating, organizing, revising, and sequencing fragment-based work across genres. Panelists will discuss diaries, notebooks, digital feeds, nonlinear structures, and strategies for shaping accumulative writing into cohesive manuscripts without relying on traditional plot or argument.

S198. Going Toward the Ghost: A Poetry Reading

Ansley Moon, Malvika Jolly, Sally Wen Mao, Soham Patel, Serena Chopra
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

This reading brings together Asian American poets whose work engages with ghosts, haunting, and the spectral as literary and cultural modes. The poems explore how haunting functions as a way of reckoning with history, diaspora, ancestral memory, and loss. Together, the readers consider how ghosts (as figure, as form, as feeling) illuminate what it means to carry the past in the body and on the page.

S199. Developmental Editors: Why You May Need One & What They Do

Marina Budhos, Jaimee Garbacik, Michelle Wildgen, Mike Levine, Pamela Erens
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

More and more, writers are using developmental editors to shepherd their manuscripts into the submission process. With literary agents and editors swamped, developmental editors play a crucial role in helping a work stand out in a crowded field. But what do developmental editors actually do? How to choose the right one? What to expect? What are the pitfalls? A panel of developmental editors, each with different approaches, shares insights from working with emerging and experienced writers.

S200. A Brain for Every Character: Write Authentic Neurodivergent Characters

Jenna Grinstead, Guadalupe Garcia McCall, Mary Morris, Susan Mesler-Evans, Francesca Block
Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Neurodivergent and cognitively diverse character representation is expanding in fiction. Learn how to write these characters authentically and avoid stereotypes. Panelists will discuss characters within their work, research techniques, positive and negative depictions, coded and explicit representation, and the impact of narrative choices to write multilayered characters with a wide range of brains. The panel will include specific resources and exercises to strengthen character creation.

S201. From the Inside: Instructors on Working for Justice

Kenny Mitchell, A. Rafael Johnson, Brando Skyhorse, Theodora Ziolkowski, Michael Pontacoloni
Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

In this panel, five writing instructors break down the ways their writing and teaching practices overlap within the broader goals of social justice pedagogy. They discuss how they approach teaching with goals beyond content instruction and how they implement sustainable teaching practices. They discuss the ways teaching with more specific goals toward inclusion, abolition, access, liberation, and community development allow them to refine their socially just teaching practices.

S202. Beyond Formulas & Tropes: Centering Genre Fiction in Craft Discussions

Jessica Goudeau, Gabino Iglesias, Tod Goldberg, Ada Palmer, Alexandra Vasti
Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Poets writing sonnets are praised for creating something new out of an expected form. But genre fiction writers are criticized for the same work, often dismissed as too reliant on formulas and tropes. This panel brings together scholars and professors who write romance, science fiction, thrillers, horror, and mysteries to discuss why the craft of genre fiction should be centered precisely because it involves creativity with formal elements, and how these genres are transforming literature today.

S203. Pull a Card: Three Poets on Tarot, Divination & Wonder in Creative Practice
Travis Helms, Leila Chatti, Maya Popa, Roger Reeves

Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

James Merrill's experiments with Ouija, CAConrad's Somatic Rituals, Lucie Brock-Broido's atmospheric arrangements . . . Poets have long practiced forms of divination as a way of communing with the muse and channeling inspiration. This panel explores the use of divination—and in particular, tarot—in the work of three contemporary poets as a way of tapping the numinous. Presenters will discuss the role of divination in their creative process and demonstrate their method through readings of poems.

S204. Readings by Carlow University's MFA Program & Madwomen in the Attic
Lee Roripaugh, Geeta Kothari, A Kaiser, Nicole Ravas, Sarah Shotland

Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres
Readings

Five writers affiliated with Carlow University's low-residency MFA in Creative Writing Program (which takes place in the US and Ireland) and Madwomen in the Attic Writing Workshops (community-based workshops for women of all ages) at different stages of recognition and publication will read excerpts from their work in three different genres (fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry) that reflect the content and concerns of contemporary writers.

S205. The Soul Selects Her Own: Preparing & Publishing a Selected Poems
Grace Bauer, Julie Kane, Patricia Jabbeh Wesley, Kimiko Hahn, Erin Belieu
Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

In recent years, Selected Poems collections have won or been finalists for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. But even books that garner less attention can be major milestones in a poet's career. This panel attempts to demystify the Selected Poems process. Topics discussed will include: deciding when you're ready, criteria for choosing poems from previous collections, to revise or not, including new poems or not, securing permissions, and more.

S206. Native Presence, Migrant Memory: Writing the Americas

Diego Baez, Féi Hernandez, Violeta Orozco, Sonia Guinansaca

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Indigenous and migrant writers of the Americas write across borders, languages, nations, and inheritances. Centering Indigenous and migrant writers of the Americas, this panel offers craft-based approaches to history, displacement, language, sovereignty, and belonging while modeling cross-cultural literary exchange. This is a critical time to focus on how Indigenous and migrant writers of the Americas challenge national borders, colonial histories, and literary erasure.

S207. Writing & Publishing the First Book of Poems

DeeSoul Carson, Jim Whiteside, Noel Quiñones, Colby Cotton, Ellie Black

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Much weight is put on a poet's first book, but how do we take our poems from early drafts or MFA theses to the bookshelf? Five poets with recently released debut collections discuss the process of editing, developing, and arranging their poems into a completed book project. Panelists will discuss their journeys toward the first book, working in the contest model versus sending to presses directly, as well as the production process after acceptance. All five will read from their books as well.

S208. The Stories We Swore We'd Never Tell: Writing the Unguarded Truth of Parenting
Melissa Fraterrigo, Jody Keisner, Tomás Q. Morín, Tyrese Coleman, Meg Weber
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

Most parents have a story they have sworn not to tell. Yet there is power in disclosing the darker sides of parenting. A diverse panel of writer-parents will share the low-stakes strategies they've used to approach their own difficult stories with honesty and compassion. Through candid conversation and guided writing prompts, attendees will leave with new tools for turning private experience into meaningful narratives—extending the conversation about what it means to parent in the 21st century.

S209. Get Your Book Noticed: Understanding & Working with University Press Publicity
Sarena Ulibarri, Sarena Ulibarri, Anna Zumbahlen, Kelsey Giffin, Cameron Quan
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

We know firsthand that promoting books can seem daunting. In this panel we will lay out the strategies, successes, challenges, and limitations that university press marketing and publicity teams face within the trade world and will also provide guidance to authors about what they can and should be doing to promote their own work. The audience will leave the session with a list of strategies they can employ to help market their own books.

S210. Memoir Dysphoria
Candace Walsh, RAQUEL GUTIERREZ, Ariel Gore, Lauren Westerfield, Shigeko Ito
Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

The person who completes and publishes a memoir is not the same person who begins it. The act of writing a memoir alters the persona's

relationship to the subject matter and their identity, leading to a disconnection between the author promoting and relating to the book and the persona in the book. Five memoirists draw from personal experience to share how to prepare for and powerfully navigate this dynamic in ways that support generating new work and strengthening your authorial identity.

S211. We Are Each Other: The Enduring Legacy of Gwendolyn Brooks, Sponsored by Furious Flower Poetry Center
Nate Marshall, Patricia Smith, Evie Shockley, A Van Jordan
Room E354a, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Tributes

Furious Flower celebrates the legacy of iconic Chicago poet Gwendolyn Brooks, the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. This panel reflects on Brooks's massive

impact on the field—from her youth in the 1930s Black Chicago Renaissance through her mentorship of Black Arts Movement poets and her continuing afterlives as a writer, teacher, and inspiration. The panelists will reflect on Brooks's life, poetry, and legacy, and present poems marked by her towering influence.

This event will be live streamed and include live captioning.

Read presenters' bios.

S212. What Writers Can Learn from BookTok: Understanding the Online Reader
Simone Siew, Sabrina Siew, Dania Amora, Jennifer Grace, Kaylen Ralph
Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Online communities are an essential part of the modern reader's experience, and BookTok and Bookstagram are more important than ever. Hear from a panel of successful literary influencers with an amassed viewership of over 100 million views on TikTok/Instagram. They'll discuss what BookTok actually is, the future of literary criticism online, and how authors can foster meaningful relationships with content creators to connect with readers and promote their work. Q&A to follow with @balloonbreath, @daniasbooktique2, @ladies_who_lit, @sabrinaendsley, and @sincerelyjennifergrace.

S213. How Book Promotion Actually Works in 2027: What Is Working & What Isn't, Sponsored by Publishers Marketplace

Mary Ann Naples, Angela Corpus, Morgan LaRocca, Patrick Davis

Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

How do you capture lightning in a bottle? Real talk from marketers and publicists at trade and indie presses about book promo campaigns that took off, what works now, what authors are expected to do, what publishers really do, and the difference between reality and dreams.

S215. A House We Built Together: Sustaining Literary Communities for Writers of Color
Maw Shein Win, Lee Herrick, Leticia Hernández-Linares, MK Chavez, Kevin Dublin
Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Five panelists will discuss strategies for cultivating long-term creative ecosystems through mentorship, accessible programming, intergenerational collaboration, grassroots

organizing, and collective care. Moving beyond conversations of representation alone, this session asks how literary communities are maintained, protected, and reimagined over time, and what becomes possible when writers are supported not just as artists, but as whole people.

3:20 p.m. to 4:35 p.m. CT

S216. Being In-Between: Dilemmas of Affiliation & Creativity
Jeanne Heuving, Jeanne Heuving, Cindy Juyoung Ok, Elizabeth Robinson, Rae Armantrout
Room E253ab, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Artistic & Professional Development

Writers find direction and opportunities through diverse affiliations, whether literary

movements, political identifications, religious communities, or informal collaborations. Yet these very affiliations can put writers at odds with their emerging creative work. How do writers negotiate loyalties to these communities and their need for creative freedom? How do they contribute to community formations within and apart from universities while sustaining their commitments to personal discovery?

S217. Queering Family Matters: Kinship, Intimacy & Belonging in Creative Nonfiction
Kira Cordova, KB Brookins, Zoë Bossiere, Ana Maria Spagna, Cara Stoddard
Room E253cd, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

On this panel, we offer a behind-the-scenes look into how to queer our personal essays and memoirs about family and subvert

heternormative models for kinship and intimacy. Through showcasing literary techniques—like strange juxtapositions, gender-play, joyous embodiment, and creating narrative distance—we encapsulate both the tenderness and grief with which we render alive on the page our parents, siblings, romantic partners, and our own children, niblings, and others in our chosen families.

S218. Iambs & Arias: Connecting Poetry & Opera

Gabriel Fried, Elaine Sexton, Janine Joseph, Ricky Gordon

Room E255, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Although thought of on very different scales, opera and poetry have a long history of cocreation and engagement, with many notable

poets (e.g., Auden, Stein, Hughes) contributing libretti to the canon of 20th-century opera. Both art forms are textual yet vocal, visceral yet conspicuously *made*—and reports of both of their demise are frequent and misinformed. This panel brings together aficionados and creators to discuss opera and poetry's connected pleasures and overlaps, both large and small.

S219. Necessary Strangeness: Translating Beyond Binaries

Marcela Sulak, Chloe Garcia Roberts, Hyejung Kook, Julia Guez, Sawako Nakayasu
Room E258, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Translation

Five translators of Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Czech, Hebrew, Galician, French, and Portuguese move away from the hierarchical paradigm of binaries between original and

target languages by addressing the other languages in the room/on the page/in the translating bodies. We will each read a excerpt exemplifying techniques of necessary strangeness, then converse about how to avoid sanitizing, glossing, colonizing moments of weirdness in the originals.

S220. For Our Steps Are Hallowed: Black Women Storytellers Archiving Black Chicago
Joi' Weathers, Essence McDowell, Leslé Honoré, Nicole J. Johnson, Tonika Johnson
Room E259, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

This panel explores how Black Chicago women writers, poets, journalists, archivists, and cultural historians carry forward the literary tradition of documenting and preserving Black Chicago culture. Following Ida B. Wells,

Margaret Burroughs, Gwendolyn Brooks, Vivian G. Harsh, etc., storytelling becomes acts of remembrance, liberation, and communal care. Amid systemic displacement, segregation, and cultural erasure, how does one protect the heritage of Chicago's Black communities?

S221. The Obsessive Writer: Craft & Stereotype
Sisel Gelman, M. L. Rio, Cynthia Marie Hoffman, Elissa Bassist, Eshani Surya
Room E260, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Obsession is romanticized as the engine of genius, but OCD is often stigmatized. Join novelists, memoirists, and poets in discussing how obsession and compulsion intersect with writing. Learn how to use OCD strategies to get unstuck from common writing and editing issues. Discover ways to write obsessive

characters with nuance, build narratives driven by fixation and repetition, and navigate the blurred line between artistic discipline, perfectionism, and compulsion in your creative practice.

S222. From Chicago to the Southwest: Latinx/e Memoirs in Essays
Gionni Ponce, Erika Sanchez, Reyna Grande, Ofelia Montelongo
Room E261, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

This panel explores how Latina essayists use memoir in essays and hybrid forms to tell stories shaped by migration, identity, family, and place. Drawing on experiences from across Chicago, Portland, LA, Phoenix, and beyond, participants discuss fragmented narratives that break from traditional memoir structures. They examine the essay as a powerful form of

healing, resistance, and personal evolution—portraying the many voices within our lives while engaging in social and political dialogue.

S223. Beyond Lady Lazarus: Womxn Poets Talk Suicidality
Sara Henning, Alexis Sears, Diannely Antigua, Rachel Mckibbens, Stevie Edwards
Room E262, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Readings

In this session, we will reframe the spectacle of the suicidal womxn poet in the 21st century. How have we learned from foremothers like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton to defy fetishization and scrutiny in favor of advocacy and community care? How do we balance emotional honesty with the pressures of professional demands? How do we create spaces for young writers to speak about mental health? Five award-winning womxn poets will

explore such questions by sharing their experiences and creative work.

S224. Limits of the Lyric in the Anthropocene
Matthew Cooperman, Aby Kaupang, Joseph Harrington, Tony Trigilio, Siobhan Scarry
Room E263, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Is it barbaric to write lyric poetry in the Anthropocene? Plenty still gets written. But some poets are responding to the global climate emergency by abandoning or revising the private individual self of the lyric tradition via exciting new documentary, satirical, speculative, conversational, polyvocal, epistolary, and hybrid forms. This panel explores these issues via the work of five US poets who are adapting their poetics to our radically altered present and increasingly precarious future/s.

S225. The Race to Write: Dreaming Up Creative, Equitable & Inclusive Spaces
Victoria Banales, Adela Najarro, Brenda Vaca, Scott Duncan, Shizue Seigel
Room E264, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Toni Morrison once wrote, “If there’s a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.” Although Morrison was referring to the act of writing, her idea can be applied to writing organizations we wish to see in the world. In this panel, writers of color will discuss how they developed and funded equitable opportunities for writers—from national writing organizations and publishing houses to poet laureate positions, magazines, writing collectives, and more.

S226. “Strike Sparks: I Will Tell About It”: Writing the Difficult Family Poem

Jennifer Franklin, Iain Pollock, Jessica Cuello, Justin Wymer, Simone Muench

Room E265, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Poetry Craft & Criticism

Five panelists will discuss craft as well as the complexities of writing challenging poems about family (family of origin/chosen family/ancestors) that are difficult in a myriad of ways, including the political. Each award-winning poet will discuss the ethical issues surrounding writing about family and way they employ craft to address these thorny but relevant topics in their own work as well as examples from writers who have informed their practice. Our panel takes its title from Sharon Olds.

S227. Variations on a Theme: How Subject-Focused Magazines Build Literary Movements

Topaz Winters, Andy Brown, Ariel McCleese, Kelly Dugan

Room E270, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

What does it take to build a literary magazine around a single, animating subject—not just as an issue theme, but as an enduring editorial identity? This panel brings together editors of niche literary magazines built entirely around music, feminist horror, place, and sex and the body, respectively. Panelists discuss submission guidelines, design, financial sustainability, and community building within a specific editorial focus, examining the ongoing negotiation between depth and discoverability to ask how a magazine stays legible without losing its individuality.

S228. Teaching Creative Writing at Liberal Arts Institutions Today

Jeremy Reed, Jeremy Reed, Avni Vyas, John Linstrom, Tacey Atsitty

Room E271a, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Pedagogy

Not often included in national coverage, liberal arts institutions serve as bellwethers for higher education and spaces for creating innovative pedagogy. This panel creates a place for open, frank dialogue between creative writing faculty members at liberal arts institutions of different types in a variety of states about how our experiences have shaped what opportunities and challenges we see in higher ed, what strategies have worked and failed in our classes, and where we see our work going from here.

S229. Writers Need Writers: Growing Community in the Heartland

Lisa Henner, Bonnie Campbell, Dawn Burns, Melissa Fraterrigo, Angela Jackson-Brown
Room E271b, Level 2, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Writing Organizations

Writers in underserved areas often lack established venues to showcase their work and interact with other writers. In rural areas and small towns, the task of making connections often falls to the creators themselves. In this session, writers from the Midwest share their toolboxes for creating and growing grassroots groups, both virtual and in-person, and their successes, challenges, and models for developing community-based organizations that support and amplify the voices of rural writers.

S230. Garifuna Drum, Jaguar, Hummingbird: Caribbean & Maya Stories Come Alive
Mesha McGregor, Wendie Elovich, Cheryl Noralez, KM Cookie
Bookfair Stage, Hall D, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Readings

A Garifuna drum calls the bookfair to gather. What does it take to write a culture as an outsider looking in? Novelists behind *Song of Hummingbird Highway* and *Jaguar on the Mountain* share how cultural consultants shaped their work, joined by the Garifuna author of *Garifuna Language Workbook*. Readings, language lessons, and candid talk tell the story of Indigenous cultures and the diaspora that carries them forward, culminating in an original Caribbean song inspired by a novel.

S231. Two Places at Once: Contemporary Fiction & the Shifting Nature of Home

Theodore Wheeler, Amina Gautier, Juan Martinez, Julie Iromuanya, Raul Palma

Room E350, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

An acclaimed group of authors with ties to the Midwest discuss writing fiction about characters who are pulled between sometimes vastly different places—on the map, between generations, and between supernatural forces. The conversation will cover what goes into writing characters of depth in contemporary fiction, including research, drawing from personal experience, and what the expatriate experience means in the present day when definitions of what we call home are ever evolving.

S232. Bad Muslims: Resistance & Narrative Complexity

Hayan Charara, Jameelah Lang, Tarfia Faizullah, Ladan Osman, Khaled Mattawa

Room E351, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Five writers explore the political and cultural construction of “good” and “bad” Muslims across contemporary Western discourse. Dominant narratives render Muslims legible through reductive binaries of assimilation, extremism, or ideological alignment. Drawing from diverse Muslim identities, panelists discuss how their work uses fragmentation, contradiction, irreverence, ambiguity, and lived experience to resist imposed representations—expanding what it means to write and be read as Muslim today.

S233. Building & Maintaining an Undergraduate Creative Writing Program

Maria Brandt, Anastasia Nikolis, Gabrielle Myers, James Ducat, Lisa Whalen

Room E352, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center

Event Category: Program Development

Given high workload demands and resistant administrations, what's the trick to building an undergraduate creative writing program? Once built, how can faculty maintain that program with vibrancy and equity? Or appeal to students facing the pressures of degree-to-career pipelines and writing in the age of AI? Panelists who have helped build and maintain a robust presence at community colleges and at small, regional four-year colleges respond with creative solutions and future strategies.

S234. Haunted: Grief, Terror & the Art of Speculative Storytelling

Aimee Parkison, Kristine Ervin, Lauren Osborn, Robert Warf, JungHe Wood
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Exploring “haunting” as a metaphor in narratives of violence, loss, and trauma, writers of fiction and nonfiction investigate grief, terror, and the art of speculative storytelling by weaving the real and the speculative as witnesses, storytellers, and survivors haunted by the past. Motivated by the desire to know the unknown as it relates to traumatic experience, we discuss how memories can live in our bodies and how writing about the past gives us agency to shape our present and our future.

S235. Research in Memoir & Creative Nonfiction

Michael Copperman, Jessica Johnson, Jessica Nelson, Taylor Brorby, Carvell Wallace
Room E353b, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

In narrative nonfiction, including memoir, research can take many forms: archival investigation, interviews, transpacific travel, hours down a Reddit rabbit hole, sifting through boxes of pictures and keepsakes, transcribing old letters, searching county records, sifting images on Google Earth, even watching vacation videos on YouTube. Five nonfiction writers talk about the particulars of their varied research processes and how they were able to make that work come alive on the page.

S236. Write Weirder Fiction: On Leaning into Your Own Strangeness
Brandon Haffner, Kirsten Kaschock, Molly Gaudry, Rone Shavers, Caitlin Cass

Room E353c, Level 3, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Fiction Craft & Criticism

Publishers often ask for new, original work they've "never seen before." But how is that done, exactly? Given marketplace pressure to write sellable fiction with comps and the homogenizing traditions of many MFA workshops, it is difficult to find the courage and tools to make work confident in its uniqueness. By excavating strategies of writers whose style is unquestionably their own, this panel will demonstrate ways to evoke surprise and to invite our own strangeness onto the page.

S238. DIY Book Publicity: Five Small Press Debuts Talk What Worked (& What Didn't)
Kerry Donoghue, Daniel Tam-Claiborne, Shasta Grant, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, Miranda Schmidt

Room E450a, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Agents, Contracts, Contests & Marketing

Four fiction debuts from Poets & Writers' Get the Word Out publicity incubator tell all about what it's really like to publish books with a small press: pitching letters that land, hiring a freelance publicist, DIY publicity secrets, working with BookTokkers, getting the cover you want, establishing personal boundaries, what to expect financially, pitching bookstore events without being cringey—and what they wish they'd done differently. Bring your questions, leave empowered with practical tips.

S239. Books & Magazines: Demystifying the Mechanics of Publishing, Sponsored by CLMP
Sabrina Pyun Wiemert, Brittany Torres Rivera, Stephanie Schubet, Beth Duncan

Room E450b, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

This panel explores the nitty-gritty, mechanical and practical aspects of going from manuscript to printed work, whether in a magazine or a book. Panelists will discuss the specifics of the publication process, including editing, copyediting, design, proofreading, and printing. Writers and aspiring publishing professionals will gain insight into what can sometimes seem like a black box after the writing is done and understand the similarities and differences between magazine and book publication.

S240. Write like a Mother: Writing With & Through Motherhood
Emma Hudelson, Adrienne Celt, Janet McNally, Sakinah Hofler, Maggie Su

Room E451a, Level 4, McCormick Place Lakeside Center
Event Category: Publishing, Editing & Technology

Motherhood changes everything, including the way writers approach both craft and publishing. The muse doesn't always strike during naptime, and book tours aren't baby friendly. Five moms will share how they've written and published through pregnancy, postpartum, and beyond. The time compression of parenting can feel like the end of a creative life, but it can also sharpen priorities and open new possibilities, allowing motherhood to reframe the writing process in surprising ways.

S241. The Museum Is a Verb: Ekphrasis at the Art Institute of Chicago & Beyond
Robyn Schiff, Nathan Hoks, Jim Whiteside, Victoria Chang, David Raskin

Room E451b, Level 4, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center
Event Category: Pedagogy

How can a single painting ignite a semester of writing? Five panelists—including four poets and an art historian—share field-tested strategies for teaching ekphrasis in museums and beyond. Drawing on their experience at the Art Institute of Chicago and elsewhere, they demonstrate how to use gallery spaces to overcome student resistance and build creative partnerships. Attendees will leave with assignments, prompts, and poems to transform any museum visit into a catalyst for original writing.

5:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. CT

S242. Sober AWP
Room E353a, Level 3, McCormick Place
Lakeside Center

Daily 12-step meeting. All in recovery from anything are welcome.