

Wilmington Writers Conference

Session Descriptions

MORNING SESSIONS

Stepping Over the Frame: Ekphrasis as Journey into the Loper Paintings

Devon Miller-Dugan

Location: Galleries 11 & 12

This proposal would take advantage of the lush colors and lighting of both Lopers' works, which defamiliarize scenes that are essentially familiar for Delawareans, and invite participants to engage in ekphrasis specifically geared toward imagining themselves as characters in those cityscapes and landscapes, thinking of how those lights and colors and scenes might change them (If the Loper galleries are already claimed, I could easily shift the workshop to the 20th c. gallery with the gorgeous Motherwell). It would make a tactic of writing (ekphrasis) that is often daunting by virtue of its Greek name more accessible and, hopefully give participants a new way to explore both themselves and works of art.

The Local Connection: Using Sense of Place to Attract Readers, Agents, and Publishers

Nancy Sakaduski

Location: Thronson Board Room

Nancy Sakaduski, whose company, Cat & Mouse Press, publishes books set in the Delmarva region, will explain how writers can use sense of place to bring a setting to life. This session will cover why people enjoy stories and books with a vivid sense of place, how to incorporate local information without info dumps, how to fact-check setting details, and how to make characters "live" in the setting. She will also explain how to research a place and how to safely incorporate real people and places in works of fiction. Participants will practice what they've learned in several short exercises. Sakaduski will also share tips for using sense of place when marketing manuscripts to agents and publishers.

Unsafe Journeys: Internalizing the Exquisite Corpse

Gemelle John

Location: Jefferson Conference Room

The 'exquisite corpse' is defined as a group pass and add poetic process. It is recognized for its ability to spur an organic non-linear rhythm. The twists and turns can be hard to recreate in our individual process. In this session we will practice the group exquisite corpse process and work on individual poetic exercises to hone in on that often-sought ingenuity. Our thematic focus will be travel and home; where we've dwelled, where we stay, and the places yet chartered or forgotten.

More than Meets the Eye: Developing Imagery through Brain Studies

Tara Elliot

Location: Painting Studio

Having suffered a brain aneurysm at the age of 42, Tara became fascinated with the inner-workings of the human brain. In this session, Wicomico County Light of Literacy Educator, and MD Humanities Teacher of the Year (2018), Tara A. Elliott will take participants on a journey through the human mind, exploring how the mind processes and stores information, as well as how that information is retrieved for readers through sensory imagery and reward-based triggers. Participants will analyze rich model texts in a hands-on approach and apply this knowledge to their own writing, ultimately creating passages ground in concrete details that truly resonate with us all.

Where Have You Been All Your Life: A Travel Writing Workshop

Maureen McVeigh

Location: Children's Studio

From a once-in-a-lifetime safari adventure to a weekly trip to the grocery store, the places we visit can inspire our writing. All great travel writing shares several features, include a strong exploration of place and its impact on the writer. In this writing workshop, we'll examine how those features function in a few brief excerpts of classic and contemporary travel writing. Then we'll discuss how they can inspire our own examinations of the places we've been. Next we'll respond to writing prompts that encourage us to consider both the places and our experiences, on a level deeper than mere description. Finally, we'll share our writing with the other workshop participants. This workshop is for anyone looking to develop their use of place and its influence in fiction and nonfiction writing.

Keynote Session— Theater, Place, and Imagination

Erlina Ortiz

Location: DuPont Auditorium

Utilizing techniques from Maria Irene Fornes' Learn How to Daydream style, and a mix of writing activities and games from her Land and Body: Tierra y Cuerpo playwriting course, theatre maker Erlina Ortiz will lead participants through an imaginative workshop exploring the senses, connection, and place. Be prepared to move your body a little bit, and be prepared to write!

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Building Your Writing Platform

The Happy Self Publisher, Lois Hoffman

Location: Thronson Board Room

This workshop explains the details of a writing platform, why a writer needs one even before publishing, and how to make oneself more visible to potential readers online and in the community to sell books and build a business around writing.

Artifact as Muse: Using the Things We Share to Bring Nonfiction and Poetry to Life

Ann Quinn

Location: Children's Studio

How can we as writers interact with the past, to a particular time and place, in a tangible way? In this session we will examine how ten accomplished writers in both poetry and non-fiction asked questions of artifact to bring the past into relevant relationship with the present. Come prepared to write: we will practice posing questions to an artifact (bring one, or a picture of one if you like) to see how it can inspire our own writing.

Watershed: Personal Landmarks in Public Conversation for Poetry & Prose

JoAnn Balingit

Location: DuPont Auditorium

Geologists disagree on the definition of watershed. Is it the central ridge of land, the point that separates one flow of water from the flow of streams and rivers in the opposite direction? Or is a watershed the culminating basin through which the divided water persistently flows? It's huge and vital, and so are the watershed moments we writers grapple to translate into language. Writers use the figurative sense of watershed moment to mean a turning point in life, and writers return again and again to landmark events with compulsion. This workshop suggests ways to approach the watershed event

you can't stop thinking by expanding the personal and looking outward at the wider world. We'll look at poems and essays that incorporate research, investigation and found language as springboards to a wider view of the personal.

Out of My Mind, Just in Time

Brevity Bookspace, Saliym Cooper

Location: Copeland Sculpture Garden

What if I told you there were three simple techniques to birth prose directly from your heart, in your own language, without trying to sound like a "writer?" With this class, Brevity Bookspace has created an intimate, experiential writing workshop where writers of all levels will learn to open the pathways to their deep creative potential through sound, meditation, and movement. The only necessary materials are an open heart, paper and a pen. The best part: all attendees will leave with a completed poem and proven techniques to cultivate an ongoing, transformative writing practice.

When Place Becomes a Character How Do You Give it A Voice?

Carrie Knowles

Location: Painting Studio

How does place dictate the situation? The development of the characters? Or, the arc of the story? Is place just as important as the main character? Can place be a character? Is the city of Savannah a character in John Berendt's novel, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*? How about the psychiatric hospital in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*?

As authors, how much do we need to know about a place in order to use it to its full potential in shaping our stories? Our characters?

Claiming History: Writing Cliophrastic Poems

Kim Roberts & Dan Vera

Location: Jefferson Conference Room

Clio, the Muse of History, inspires us to revisit, reinterpret, and reclaim lost times and places. This work is particularly important for people who have been historically oppressed or underrepresented in cultural narratives: women, LGBTQ people, people of color, and those who come from ethnic or religious minority groups. In this roundtable, two writers who have specialized in historical poems as a means to uncover and reclaim will read examples of their work and the poems of other authors they admire, and discuss the pleasures and pitfalls of writing about American history. We will explore the sometimes conflicting needs of art and fact, and distribute a "recommended reading" list.

PANEL

Writing While Working

Location: DuPont Auditorium

Three writers, who have all balanced various aspects of adult-life (working full time, being a parent, cobbling together part-time gigs, etc.), will engage in frank discussion about the pitfalls and peaks of achieving your writing goals while navigating life. Panelists include David P. Kozinski, Chet'la Sebree, and Mara Gorman. Moderator: Molly Giordano.

Presenter Bios

JoAnn Balingit is a writer, educator, editor and arts-in-education advocate. Her full-length poetry collection, *Words for House Story*, was a 2015 Best Books selection at Beltway Poetry. She has taught poetry writing at the University of Delaware, Newark Arts Alliance, for New Castle County Libraries and for the Freeman Foundation's K12 arts initiatives. As state coordinator of Poetry Out Loud, a national recitation contest, JoAnn teaches poetry workshops for high school teachers and students. From 2008 to 2015, she served as Delaware's poet laureate. She is an assistant editor for YesYes Books. JoAnn Balingit's poetry and prose has been honored with fellowships from VONA/Voices of Our Nation Arts; Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation; Hedgebrook; and the Bread Loaf Writers Conference as a Bakeless/Camargo Foundation Fellow. Recent work appears at *The Rumpus*, *poets.org*, *Vallum Magazine* and in *Asian American Literary Review*. She is working on a collection of memoir essays. <http://joannbalingit.org>
@jabalingit

Saliym Cooper is the founder of an itty-bitty, mobile bookshop called Brevity. To put it simply, it's a book trolley connected to his bike. The mission is to bring diverse works of fiction to book deserts within inner-city Wilmington. This itinerant word and wisdom agency was the basis of his dissertation at Kingston University in London, where he received his Masters in Publishing. In partnership with the New Castle County Library System, he has held several successful teen and adult writing workshops. Outside of his penchant for getting Wilmington residents to love words, he enjoys doing yoga in incredibly hot rooms.

Tara A. Elliott's poems have appeared in *TAOS Journal of International Poetry & Art*, *Wildness* and *The American Journal of Poetry*, among others. She is the founder and director of Salisbury's Poetry Week, a facilitator of Salisbury University's Lighthouse Literary Guild, co-chair of the Bay to Ocean Writers Conference, and a board member of Eastern Shore Writers Association. She recently served as Poet-in-Residence for the Freeman Stage. As recipient of both Wicomico County's Light of Literacy Educator Award and the MD Humanities Christine D. Sarbanes Award, she has been recognized for her outstanding contributions to education. For more information, visit www.taraelliott.com

Lois Hoffman is the owner of The Happy Self-Publisher and award-winning author of *Write a Book, Grow Your Business* and *The Self-Publishing Roadmap*. Her online course, *Adventures in Writing Nonfiction*, challenges aspiring authors to imagine what is possible and helps them realize their vision. She is a book coach, author coach, speaker, workshop facilitator, and brings the joy of authorship to determined writers through personalized writing, publishing, and author services. She also elicits countless smiles as a professional juggler (really) along with her husband, Michael, who perform as The Juggling Hoffmans. Lois lives with her family in Newark, DE where she juggles her creative pursuits with enthusiasm and joy. You can find her playing with words online at www.happyselfpublisher.com.

Gemelle John is a poet and educator. While at the University of Delaware she served as vice-president of the University's Resident Student Organization, S.P.I.T (Stimulating, Prose, Ideas, and Theories). Through S.P.I.T. she has had the privilege to work with poets including Andrea Gibson, Clint Smith, and Alixa and Naima of "Climbing Poetree". Her work has since been featured or is upcoming in *Clever Magazine*, *Public Pool*, *The News Journal*, and *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*. She is a 2018 Emerging Artist Fellow with the Delaware Division of the Arts and has received fellowships from VONA, Juniper, and the Delaware Writers Retreat. John presented at the 2018 Wilmington Writers Conference. She currently works as a Spanish teacher in Wilmington and continues to write, and publish poetry.

Carrie Knowles has published dozens of short stories, hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, and five books: *Lillian's Garden* (Roundfire Books, 2013), *Ashoan's Rug* (Roundfire Books, 2013), and *A Garden Wall in Provence* (Owl Canyon Press, 2017) and a collection of short stories, *Black Tie Optional* (Owl Canyon Press, 2019). Her non-fiction memoir about her family's struggles with their mother's Alzheimer's, *The Last Childhood: A Family Story of Alzheimer's*, initially published by Three Rivers Press, was recently revised, updated and reissued through Amazon. Carrie was named the Piedmont Laureate for Short Fiction in 2014. Her short stories have won more than 25 awards, including the Village Advocate Fiction Contest, the Blumenthal Writers & Readers Series, the North Carolina Writer's Network Fiction Syndication and Glimmer Train's Very Short Fiction Competition. Carrie writes a regular column for *Psychology Today: Shifting Forward: A Wanderer's Musings*.

Maureen McVeigh's essays and short stories recently appeared in *Cold Noon*, *Mothers Always Write*, *Flash Fiction Magazine* and *Calyx*. She won second place in the *Devil's Party Press Spring 2019 Anthology*. She was a runner-up in the *Philadelphia City Paper* fiction writing contest. She teaches Creative Writing at West Chester University and has taught for the University of New Orleans MFA program in Cork, Ireland. She has an MFA from Rosemont College.

Devon Miller-Duggan has published poems in *Rattle*, *Margie*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Gargoyle*, *Massachusetts Review*, and *Spillway*. She teaches Poetry Writing at the University of Delaware and anywhere else she can. Her books include *Pinning the Bird to the Wall* (Tres Chicas Books, 2008), *Alphabet Year*, (Wipf & Stock, 2017), *The Slow Salute*, Lithic Press Chabook Competition, 2018). She is a Delaware native, as long as you don't count her having been born in a military hospital in Texas.

Erlina Ortiz is a Dominican-American playwright, performer, and theatre maker from Reading, PA based in Philadelphia. Her plays on gentrification, domestic violence, and rape culture have been produced with Power Street Theatre Company where she is proud to be the Co - Artistic Director as well as Resident Playwright for seven years. This spring her play *Morir Sonyando* opened at Passage Theatre Company of Trenton, Nj, and her play *MinorityLand* will be premiering as a co-production with Power Street Theatre Company and Theatre Horizon of Norristown in September. Erlina is a member of The Foundry @ PlayPenn and New Pages with Azuka Theatre Company. She has received the Amtrak Writer's residency and the Signal Fire Outpost Residency on Mount St. Helens. Erlina believes being an artist is a superpower, she believes in using her powers for good. #theatrewillsaveus

Ann Quinn is the author of the poetry chapbook *Final Deployment*, published by Finishing Line Press (2018). Her poetry has appeared in a wide variety of publications including *Potomac Review*, *Little Patuxent Review*, *Broadkill Review*, *Haibun Today*, and *Snapdragon*, and is included in the anthology *Red Sky: Poetry on the Global Epidemic of Violence Against Women*. She is a Pushcart Prize nominee and her poem "Three Years after my father's Final Deployment to the Gulf of Tonkin" won the 2015 Bethesda Literary Arts Festival poetry contest, judged by Stanley Plumly. Ann is a graduate of the Pacific Lutheran University MFA program. She teaches reflective and creative writing and music and lives with her family in Catonsville, Maryland. Please visit online at www.annquinn.net.

Kim Roberts is the author of *A Literary Guide to Washington, DC: Walking in the Footsteps of American Writers from Francis Scott Key to Zora Neale Hurston* (University of Virginia Press, 2018), and five books of poems, most recently *The Scientific Method* (WordTech Editions, 2017). She is the founding editor of the literary journal *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*.

Nancy (Day) Sakaduski is an award-winning writer, editor, and owner of Cat & Mouse Press in Lewes, Delaware, which has 22 books in print and several more in production. The company publishes books set in the Delmarva region, runs the Rehoboth Beach Reads Short Story Contest, and produces Writing is a Shore Thing (www.writingisashorething.com), a curated online newspaper for writers. Nancy has a BA in Communications from the University of Maryland and an MBA from Loyola University (Baltimore). Nancy has authored 24 published books, including *How to Write Winning Short Stories*. Three books she edited, *The Beach House*, *Beach Nights*, and *Sandy Shorts*, and one book she authored, *The Mermaid in Rehoboth Bay*, won national first-place awards from the National Federation of Press Women. She has also won numerous state-level awards. Nancy enjoys encouraging beginning and emerging writers through talks, workshops, and written materials.

Dan Vera is the co-editor of *Imaniman: Poets Writing In The Anzaldúan Borderlands* and author of two books of poetry, *Speaking Wiri Wiri* and *The Space Between Our Danger and Delight* (Beothuk Books, 2008). A CantoMundo and Macondo writing fellow, he's the winner of the Oscar Wilde Award for Poetry and the Letras Latinas/Red Hen Poetry Prize. He is the former board chair of Split This Rock.

Panelist Bios

Mara Gorman is a travel writer, personal essayist and blogger. She spent eight years chronicling her travels with her children on the award-winning website *The Mother of all Trips* (<http://www.motherofalltrips.com/>). She is also the author of *The Family Traveler's Handbook*, a combination of narrative and how-to that is designed to help parents travel successfully with children of all ages. Her travel writing and personal essays have appeared in *Creative Nonfiction*, on the BBC Travel website, and in the anthology *The Best Travel Writing, Volume 11*, published by *Traveler's Tales*, as well as on numerous other travel websites and blogs. Mara recently turned her experience as a nonfiction writer in a different direction: researching and writing a historical novel. Her current project, tentatively titled *Susanna's Cradle*, tells the story of a Mayflower pilgrim named Susanna White Winslow.

David P. Kozinski received the 2018 Established Professional Poetry Fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts. His first full-length book of poems, *Tripping Over Memorial Day*, was published by Kelsay Books in 2017. He received the Dogfish Head Poetry Prize, which included publication of his chapbook, *Loopholes* (Broadkill Press). Kozinski conducts poetry workshops for teens and adults, and was named 2018 Mentor of the Year by Expressive Path, a non-profit that facilitates youth participation in the arts. Last year he offered presentations about poetry and visual art at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and at Wilmington Friends and Tower Hill Schools. He received the Dr. Eugene J. Szatkowski Achievement Award for his poetry and artwork. Kozinski serves on the Boards of the Manayunk-Roxborough Art Center and the Philadelphia Writers' Conference and is Art Editor of the Schuylkill Valley Journal. He lives in Wilmington.

Chet'la (pronounced: Shayla) **Sebree** is the author of *Mistress*, selected by Cathy Park Hong as the winner of the 2018 New Issues Poetry Prize. A Delaware native, she holds an MFA in Creative Writing, with a focus in poetry, from American University. She was the 2014-2016 Stadler Fellow at Bucknell University's Stadler Center for Poetry and has received fellowships from The MacDowell Colony, Hedgebrook, Yaddo, the Vermont Studio Center, and the Richard H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies. Her poetry and prose have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Kenyon Review*,

Pleiades, wildness, Guernica, Poetry International, and The Account, as well as other journals and anthologies.

Over the last several years, Chet'la has taught workshops, composition courses, and craft classes through programs at Bucknell University, American University, Duke University, George Washington University, Wilmington University, WriterHouse, and Yoga Dear. She has served as Editor-at-Large for West Branch and a manuscript reader for 491 Magazine.

She is currently an editor for Cavendish Square Publishing.