

**(Lectures can be adjusted for allotted time, size of audience, and academic or non-academic settings)**

GREAT NEWS!

“It is difficult/ to get the news from poems,” wrote poet William Carlos Williams, “Yet men die miserably every day/ for lack/ of what is found there.” In this workshop we’re going to make it easy for folks to get the news from poems—we’re going to write our own “poem-responses” to items featured in the global news! Not only will you learn about free-verse-poetry-writing-basics in this workshop (about how to write poems containing: potent language, vivid imagery and powerful lines), we’ll also discuss example poem-responses, various approaches to the poem-response, as well as the biggest news items of the day.

What’s Your Literary Lineage?

If you don’t know where you come from, how do you know where you’re going? For poets, knowing where you come from includes knowing your “literary lineage” (aka influences). Knowing this lineage can reveal, and help you address, problems in your writing—this knowledge can help get you out of a writerly rut! Panelists will discuss how they “mapped out” or “came to understand” their lit lineage, and how this has helped (or hindered) their writing. This could include talking about being a mentee or a mentor (to “descendants”). Panel presentations are meant to be a guide for audience members to trace their own literary lineages so they may assess and advance their own writing.

How to Be a Great Literary Citizen

A “literary citizen” is a writer who gives back to their various communities through building or hosting a reading series, building or volunteering with literary programs for dis-advantaged populations, volunteering at writing festivals and conferences, writing reviews, mentoring emerging writers, and a ton of similar, worthy work. Most writers not only want to be good literary citizens, they want to be great ones who have lasting impact on the communities and people that they serve. But, how is this done? And, how is this done without burning out, and without siphoning (often limited) creative energy from the writer’s own projects?

Is There Anybody Out There?

How does a writer know when to stop anticipating audience-response? Doesn’t she risk writing obscure, obtuse, or insular lines/poems/collections that leave audiences confused (and in some cases, indignant)? Doesn’t she risk writing groundbreaking and transcendent work? Then again, how does a writer know when it’s best to anticipate and even cultivate audience-response? Doesn’t she risk composing constrained, mediocre, or self-consciously “trendy” lines/poems/collections? Doesn’t she risk writing timeless and inspiring work? Brief presentation, followed by a generous Q&A.

The Poetry of Lost Voices

What role can poetry play in recovering and preserving voices that have been swallowed by the past or made invisible in the present? Voices from history, voices from vulnerable populations—the forgotten, the abused, the enslaved, the neglected. How can we render them alive in our poetry and what are the ethical considerations in doing so? Who has the right to speak for those who can’t speak for themselves? What part should factual, secondary source material play? Where is the line between empathy and appropriation?