

New Student Orientation!

7 August 2019

OVERCOMING WRITERS BLOCK 😐

SUMMER RESIDENCY 2019

mfa in creative and
professional writing at

western connecticut
state university

	9:00-11:45	12:00-1:15	1:30-2:45	3:00-5:00	5:00-7:30	7:30-9:00
Tue., Aug. 6	Arrivals			New Student Orientation 4:00-5:00 p.m. CC212/214	Free	Welcome Reception & Reading The Maron Hotel Washington Room
Wed., Aug. 7	Beth Ann Fennelly <i>Nonfiction Master Class: Build Me a Hummingbird of Words: Micro-Memoirs</i> CC212/214	Lunch Session w/ Sara Whitestone CC South Ballroom	Agata Boxe <i>Writing & Selling Science Writing</i> CC212/214	Jane Cleland in conversation with Wendy Corsi Staub CC South Ballroom	Free	Wendy Corsi Staub & Beth Ann Fennelly <i>HBA Nonfiction</i> Byrd's Books
Thu, Aug. 8	Baron Wormser <i>Poetry Master Class</i> CC212/214	Lunch Dublin Info Session.	Jane Cleland <i>Find Your Inner Muse: Overcoming Writer's Block</i> CC212/214	William Patrick <i>Structuring a Narrative, Part. 1</i> CC South Ballroom	Free	Baron Wormser Bad Dream Brewing
Fri., Aug. 9	Kathi Aguero <i>How to Teach and Organize Community Workshops</i> CC212/214	Lunch OMG Meetings CC212 & South Ballroom	Amy Monticello <i>Essay and Essays and Essays, Oh, My!</i> CC212/214	William Patrick <i>Structuring a Narrative, Part. 2</i> CC South Ballroom	Free	Katey Schultz & Patricia Park Cultural Alliance of Western CT
Sat., Aug. 10	Katey Schultz <i>Flash Form Writing in a Flash</i> CC212/214	Lunch in Ridgefield	Jesse P. Pollack, Anthony Zenkus, and Daniel Jones <i>An Afternoon of YA True Crime</i> <i>Screening of The Acid King at Prospector Theater – Film starts promptly at 1:00 pm</i> <i>Panel Discussion at Ridgefield Library at 3:45 pm</i>		Free	Shanthi Sekaran <i>HBA Fiction</i> CC South Ballroom Flash Fiction Contest at 9:30 pm at Maron!
Sun., Aug. 11	Shanthi Sekaran <i>Fiction Master Class: Project Frankenstein</i> CC212/214	Lunch Poor Yorick info session	Enrichment Project Presentations CC212/CC214	Matthew Quinn Martin <i>Pitch It, Pitch It REAL Good</i> CC212/214	MFA Community Dinner Molly Darcy's Pub (optional)	

Tuesday, August 6, 2019

New Student Orientation

4:00-5:00 pm

CC 212/214

Students starting the program in August will join MFA Coordinator Anthony D'Aries and Peer Mentors for a new student orientation. Faculty and alumni are welcome to attend, too. We will discuss details about coursework, mentor selection, and the residency schedule.

Welcome Reception and Reading

7:30 – 9:00

The Maron Hotel – Washington Room

Join us in kicking off the 2019 MFA summer residency! Welcome from Anthony D'Aries followed by a flash faculty reading.

Wednesday, August 7, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Beth Ann Fennelly

Build Me a Hummingbird of Words: Micro-Memoirs

CC212/214

In today's increasingly heterogeneous landscape, cross-genre works that blend inheritances from multiple literary parents have a new urgency and popularity. Combining the extreme brevity of poetry, the narrative arc of fiction, and the truth-telling of creative nonfiction, the micro-memoir is a form that offers writers exciting opportunities. In this all-levels interactive craft class, we'll look at handouts that introduce us to various short forms, including the monostich, the 6-word memoir, the aphorism, one-sentence essays, and quick crit. Beth Ann Fennelly will share ten things she has learned from writing micro-memoirs. The class will end with a prompt so students can try their own.

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch

Lunch is included with the residency and will be held in the Main Ballroom in the Westside Campus Center (unless otherwise noted).

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Agata Boxe

Writing and Selling Science Writing

CC212/214

This workshop will focus on the ins and outs of running a successful freelance science writing business. Students will learn how to cover technical material for a variety of audiences. We will also discuss crafting effective pitches and selling science writing to publications.

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Jane Cleland in Conversation with Wendy Corsi Staub

WS218

New York Times and *USA Today* bestselling author Wendy Corsi Staub has published more than 90 novels over a 27-year career, under her own name and the pseudonym Wendy Markham (among others). This year, HarperCollins will publish *Dead Silence*, the second book in Wendy's psychological suspense trilogy about foundlings. The first was 2018's *Little Lost Girl*, and the third, *The Butcher's Daughter*, is slated for summer, 2020. Wendy's recent *Dead of Winter* (Crooked Lane) is the third novel in her "Lily Dale"

traditional mystery series. Set in the upstate NY town populated by psychic mediums, the books revisit characters from her earlier young adult mystery series, currently optioned by Tish Cyrus at Hopetown Entertainment. Wendy is a three-time finalist for the Simon and Schuster Mary Higgins Clark Award, has been honored five times with the Westchester Library Association's Washington Irving Prize for Fiction, and has won an RWA Rita Award, an RT Award for Career Achievement in Suspense, and the 2007 RWA-NYC Golden Apple Award for Lifetime Achievement. She lives in the New York City suburbs with her family and rescue cats.

Wendy has also been a book editor and a ghost writer. In this conversation, writers will learn how Wendy broke in, what she thinks it takes to succeed, and hear her recommendations for the current publishing marketplace.

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Free

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Beth Ann Fennelly & Wendy Corsi Staub Reading

[Byrd's Books](#), Bethel

178 Greenwood Avenue

Bethel, CT 06801

Thursday, August 8, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Baron Wormser

Poetry Master Class

CC212/CC214

Participants will write to a series of poem-prompts that will provide a degree of structure while encouraging individual imaginative flights. The premise of such a workshop is—by writing on the spot—to break through the conceptual mind and find what's in there that, otherwise, might not surface. Since these are, by definition, first drafts, we will not be critiquing anything. The incitement is to see where you go and see where others go. The poem-prompts will come from various recent and contemporary poets. No preparation necessary, just a willingness to write.

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch – **Dublin Residency Info. Session** (open to students attending the Dublin trip in October as well as anyone interested in attending in the future)

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Jane Cleland

Find Your Inner Muse: Overcoming Writer's Block

CC212/CC214

Your internal critic feeds on your own self-doubt, anxieties, and fears. To quiet her, you must starve her out. Our internal editor is a different voice from the one that misdirects our energy by demeaning our efforts. The internal editor is smart and savvy and helps us improve our work. The internal critic shuts down creativity and mocks our editorial eye. This presentation provides practical strategies to address the three reasons writers feel blocked: fear of failure, fear of success, and perfectionism.

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

William Patrick

Structuring a Narrative, Part 1

WS218

You've got an idea for something, right? You're not sure what it is yet – a short story, a memoir, a novella, immersion journalism, a long narrative poem, maybe even a novel or a screenplay – but you're not sure how to develop it. Or maybe one opening scene has presented itself to you – a great scene, with characters and action and dialogue all right there, a scene that almost seemed to write itself – but that's as far as you've got, and now you're stuck. You're not

sure how to expand that one great scene into something that feels cohesive. Where's your story going?

This story development session will offer you some strategies for shaping those good ideas and scenes into a viable outline. William Patrick, a writer published and produced in a number of different genres, will lay out time-tested principles of dramatic narrative development, show you various ways to develop strategies with them, and help you brainstorm an intentional plan for whatever it is you're working on. One handout will be e-mailed before the residency, and another will be supplied at the session.

Recommended reading: *Storycraft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction* – Jack Hart

Story Genius: How to Use Brain Science to Go Beyond Outlining and Write a Riveting Novel – Lisa Cron

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Free

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Baron Wormser Reading

[Bad Dream Brewing](#), New Milford

116 Danbury Road

New Milford, CT 06776

Friday, August 9, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Kathi Aguero

How to Teach and Organize Community Workshops
CC212/CC214

After a brief general presentation and discussion of the many purposes of community writing workshops, we will focus on creative writing workshops for healing, including writing for caregivers as well as those struggling with illness or trauma. After going over some research in the field of writing and healing, we will do some of the writing exercises one might present in such a group and then open the seminar up to those who would like to share the drafts they have just written and for general discussion. This seminar will provide practical help to students pursuing community teaching internships and/or Enrichment Projects.

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch - **OMG Meetings**

(D'Aries CC212/214; Ofgang CC Main Ballroom)

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Amy Monticello

Essays and Essays and Essays, Oh, My!

Essays are playful little literary machines. The essay is also a shape-shifter—it can inhabit many forms. This session will introduce writers to some of the most fun and malleable essay forms creative nonfiction writers use: the personal essay, the lyric essay, journalistic essays, and flash essays.

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

William Patrick

Structuring a Narrative, Part 2
WS218

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Free

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Katey Schultz & Patricia Park

Reading

[Cultural Alliance of Western CT](#), Danbury

287 Main Street

Danbury, CT 06810

Saturday, August 10, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Katey Schultz

Flash Form Writing in a Flash

What are the defining characteristics of flash fiction and flash nonfiction? How can writers in all genres benefit from studying this form? In this course we will read and discuss examples, study the defining characteristics of the form, and write from at least one flash prompt. Whether you are working on a novel or memoir that needs stronger scenes, short stories that need stronger metaphor, essays missing that "so what" factor, or poetry that needs more efficient imagery – studying this form and trying it yourself can impact your writing profoundly. From efficiency, to escalation, to those coveted frozen-in-time "ah-hah's," this form represents a microcosm of some of the most important craft skills a writer can master.

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch in Ridgefield

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Jesse P. Pollack, Anthony Zenkus, and Daniel Jones

An Afternoon of YA True Crime

Screening of *The Acid King* at [Prospector Theater](#)

Panel Discussion at [Ridgefield Library](#)

Join us for an afternoon of YA True Crime with author and filmmaker Jesse P. Pollack, who will discuss writing the macabre for a younger audience, along with a screening of the feature-length documentary adaptation of his book, *THE ACID KING*. **The film starts promptly at 1:00 p.m., followed by a panel discussion with the filmmakers at 3:45 at the Ridgefield Library.** Free soda and popcorn!

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Free

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Shanthi Sekaran

HBA Fiction Reading

WS218

Sunday, August 11, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Shanthi Sekaran

Fiction Master Class: Project Frankenstein

CC212/CC214

What makes a character come to life and jump off the page? The process reaches into almost every aspect of story-building. In this three-hour seminar, Shanthi Sekaran, winner of the Housatonic Book Award in fiction, will walk you through everything she knows about breathing life into character through dialogue, narrative focus, setting, attitude and counterpoint. This seminar will be interactive, generative, and applicable to both fiction and nonfiction writers. Come ready to write!

12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Enrichment Project Presentations

CC212/CC214

Come support your fellow writers and learn more about some of the exciting Enrichment Projects they recently completed.

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Pitch It, Pitch It REAL Good

Matthew Quinn Martin

CC212/CC214

This session will provide an overview of the various ways authors can pitch their work and themselves to outlets, editors, publishers, and agents. This will include:

- Researching markets and agents to find the right fit for your work and work style.
- Learning to understand where one stands in one's career and how to a) maximize opportunities at that level and b) know when it is time to risk moving higher.
- Finding the right outlets for short fiction (and how to avoid the wrong ones).
- Constructing a successful cold query letter.
- Handling speed-pitch meetings that one might encounter at various conferences (using Matthew's own success in landing an agent this way as an example, among others).
- Examining and exploring emerging methods of drawing attention (ex. #PitMad, etc).

-Handling rejection. And how to recognize when an agent/editor has left the door open.

-Spotting scams. And how to know when it might be time to move on.

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

MFA Community Dinner (optional) – RSVP to Anthony no later than Thursday, 8/8

[Molly Darcy's Pub](#)

39 Mill Plain Road

Danbury, CT 06811

Still want more? Good! Join us at Molly Darcy's for dinner and to unwind/debrief, share ideas for future sessions, and, oh yeah, have fun. 😊

Summer 2019 MFA Residency Visiting Writer Bios

Kathleen Agüero's latest book is *After That* (Tiger Bark Books). Her other poetry collections include *Investigations: The Mystery of the Girl Sleuth* (Cervena Barva Press), *Daughter Of* (Cedar Hill Books), *The Real Weather* (Hanging Loose), and *Thirsty Day* (Alice James Books). She has also co-edited three volumes of multi-cultural literature for the University of Georgia Press (*A Gift of Tongues*, *An Ear to the Ground*, and *Daily Fare*) and is a consulting poetry editor of *Solstice Literary Magazine*. She is a co-winner of the 2012 Firman Houghton Award from the New England Poetry Club and a recipient of grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Elgin-Cox Foundation. She teaches in the low-residency MFA program at Pine Manor College and in Changing Lives through Literature, an alternative sentencing program. Kathleen also runs Creative Writing for Caregivers workshops in both private and institutional settings.

Agata Boxe is a New York-based freelance writer and editor specializing in health, science, and tech. She has written for *National Geographic News*, *Scientific American Mind*, *New Scientist*, *Psychology Today*, *CBS News*, and other publications. Her work has covered a range of topics, including neurology, neuroscience, psychology, animal cognition, climate change, and healthcare tech. Check out her latest stories [here](#). When she is not working on a story, she teaches writing at the City University of New York. Her scholarly interests focus on critical expressivism, learning through writing, and assessment strategies that facilitate learning.

Beth Ann Fennelly (Housatonic Book Award Winner in Nonfiction), Poet Laureate of Mississippi, teaches in the MFA Program at the University of Mississippi, where she was named Outstanding Teacher of the Year. She's won grants from the N.E.A., the United States Artists, and a Fulbright to Brazil. Fennelly has published three poetry books: *Open House*, *Tender Hooks*, and *Unmentionables*, and a book of nonfiction, *Great with Child*, all published with W. W. Norton. A novel she co-authored with her husband, Tom Franklin, called *The Tilted World* was published by HarperCollins. Her sixth book, *Heating & Cooling: 52 Micro-memoirs*, recently published by W. W. Norton, was named an *Atlanta Journal Constitution* Best Book of 2017 and a Goodreaders Favorite for 2017. Fennelly and Franklin live in Oxford with their three children. <http://www.bethannfennelly.com>

Dan Jones, a chef trained by the Culinary Institute of America, is a podcaster and filmmaker from the foothills of Appalachian in northeastern Kentucky. As the host of Podcast 1289, Jones has chronicled stories of the macabre and paranormal since 2016. His documentary adaption of *The Acid King*, co-directed with the book's author, Jesse P. Pollack, is his first film.

Amy Monticello is the author of *Close Quarters*, a chapbook memoir about unconventional divorce (Sweet Publications), and the essay collection *How to Euthanize a Horse*, which won the 2016 Arcadia Press Chapbook Prize in Nonfiction. Her work has been published in *Creative Nonfiction*, *Brevity*, *The Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Salon*, *The Rumpus*, *Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies*, and other journals, anthologized in *Going Om: Real-Life Stories On and Off the Yoga Mat*, and listed as notable in *Best American Essays*. Amy is currently

working on a memoir about grief, pregnancy, and the search for rootedness tentatively titled *A New and Magical Life*, and regularly contributes at [Role/Reboot](#), writing about her life as a working mom. She is an assistant professor of English and creative writing at Suffolk University in Boston, where she lives with her husband and five-year-old daughter.

Patricia Park is the author of the novel, *Re Jane* (Penguin), a Korean-American reimagining of Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, which was named Editors' Choice by the *New York Times Book Review* and was included on the Best Books of 2015 by the American Library Association. She has received fellowships from Fulbright, The Center for Fiction, Jerome Foundation, and others. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Guardian*, *Salon*, *Slice*, and others. She is Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at American University. She is at work on her second novel, *El Chino*, about the Koreans in Argentina during the Dirty War. www.patriciapark.com
@patriciapark718

William B. Patrick is the author of *Roxa: Voices of the Culver Family*, a novel that won the 1990 Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writers Award for fiction; *Saving Troy: A Year with Firefighters and Paramedics in a Battered City*; *We Didn't Come Here for This*, a memoir in poetry; and many other books. His radio play, *Rescue*, was commissioned by the BBC, and his teleplay, *Rachel's Dinner*, starring Olympia Dukakis and Peter Gerety, aired on ABC-TV. Mr. Patrick is the recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as state arts grants from New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia. He also founded and still directs the New York State Summer Young Writers Institute, which just celebrated its 20th anniversary.

Jesse P. Pollack was born and raised in the Garden State of New Jersey. His first book, *Death on the Devil's Teeth: The Strange Murder That Shocked Suburban New Jersey*, co-authored with *Weird NJ's* Mark Moran, was published in 2015 to critical acclaim and nominated for a New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance Author Award. Also an accomplished musician, Pollack's soundtrack work has been heard on *Driving Jersey*, an Emmy-nominated PBS documentary series. His latest book, *The Acid King* (Simon & Schuster, 2019), was recently made into a feature documentary. He is married with two children.

Katey Schultz is the author of *Flashes of War* (stories) and the forthcoming *Still Come Home* (novel), both published by Loyola University Maryland. She has received writing fellowships from eight different states, placed in over a dozen story and book contests, and been nominated for a Puschcart Prize four times. Ten years ago, she founded Maximum Impact, a mentoring and critique company providing transformative online curricula that helps writers articulate precise language and authentic meaning in their work. She is a graduate of the Pacific University MFA in Writing Program, winner of the Linda Flowers Literary Prize, and currently at work on her third book – a collection of stories set in Appalachia. Please visit www.kateyschultz.com for more information.

Shanthi Sekaran is a writer and educator in Berkeley, California. Her recent novel, *Lucky Boy*, was named an IndieNext Great Read and an NPR Best Book of 2017. It was a finalist for Stanford University's William Saroyan Prize and winner of the Housatonic Book Award. Her essays and stories have also appeared in *The New York Times*, *Salon.com*, and the *LA Review of Books*. She's a member of the San Francisco Writers' Grotto, an AWP mentor, and teaches

writing at Mills College in Oakland. She's currently working on a middle-grade novel and has a book on dialogue due for release in Fall '19.

Wendy Corsi Staub has published more than 90 novels over a 27-year career, under her own name and the pseudonym Wendy Markham (among others). This year, HarperCollins will publish *Dead Silence*, the second book in Wendy's psychological suspense trilogy about foundlings. The first was 2018's *Little Lost Girl*, and the third, *The Butcher's Daughter*, is slated for summer, 2020. Wendy's recent *Dead of Winter* (Crooked Lane) is the third novel in her "Lily Dale" traditional mystery series. Set in the upstate NY town populated by psychic mediums, the books revisit characters from her earlier young adult mystery series, currently optioned by Tish Cyrus at Hopetown Entertainment. Wendy is a three-time finalist for the Simon and Schuster Mary Higgins Clark Award, has been honored five times with the Westchester Library Association's Washington Irving Prize for Fiction, and has won an RWA Rita Award, an RT Award for Career Achievement in Suspense, and the 2007 RWA-NYC Golden Apple Award for Lifetime Achievement. She lives in the New York City suburbs with her family and rescue cats.

Baron Wormser is the author/co-author of sixteen books and a poetry chapbook. His recent books include *Tom o' Vietnam*, a novel set in 1982 about a Vietnam War veteran who is obsessed with King Lear, and *Legends of the Slow Explosion: Eleven Modern Lives*, biographical pieces about eleven crucial figures from the second half of the twentieth century. Wormser has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Bread Loaf, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. From 2000 to 2005, he served as poet laureate of the state of Maine.

Anthony Zenkus has over 30 years of experience in the child and family welfare sector. As a resident of Northport, NY, Anthony was involved in the community response to the murder and suicide of two of its young people in 1984 profiled in Jesse P. Pollack's book, "The Acid King", and his first job was as a Street Outreach Worker for Youth Directions and Alternatives, a position that was created in response to the incidents of the Summer of 1984. Anthony is currently a nationally recognized trainer, speaking to professionals and community members throughout NY and beyond on issues related to family and community violence and trauma. In 2016, he did a TED talk on the effects of poverty and inequality on the development of children. As a lifelong activist, Anthony has been an organizer with Occupy Wall Street and a campaigner for Climate Justice as well as an ally in the Black Lives Matter movement. Anthony also serves as adjunct faculty at the schools of Social Work at Columbia University and Adelphi University.

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