THE HEALING ART OF WRITING
A Conference and Writing Workshop
at
Dominican University of California
July 8 - July 14, 2012
THE HEALING ART OF WRITING

The Healing Art of Writing began as Writing the Medical Experience (WME), a conference that first met in 2003 as part of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers in the breathtaking Sierra Nevada. The conference continued for four years on the campus of Sarah Lawrence College, attracting participants from all over the country. Past faculty members have included notable writers and poets such as Marie Howe, Richard Selzer, Frank Huyler, Courtney Davis, John Fox, Ted Kooser, Donald Hall, and Alicia Ostriker.

Our conference offers a unique experience in bringing together caregivers and patients who share a passion for writing about the mysterious forces of illness and recovery. The conference fosters communication between the two worlds we are all born into, described by Susan Sontag as “the kingdom of the well and . . . the kingdom of the sick.” A belief shared among all the participants is that being cured of the disease is not the same as being healed, and that the writing of poetry and prose brings us to a place of healing. Our subject is the body, our medical experiences widely diverse, our goal to express through literature what happens when a physical or mental anguish disrupts our lives.

Since participants are exploring intimate subjects, the conference fosters mutual support and friendship. Dominican provides a secluded retreat, yet lies within easy distance to San Francisco for those wishing to venture forth. Wednesday afternoon events are optional to allow participants to explore the Bay Area, socialize, or take time for quiet reflection.

FACILITIES

The tranquil Dominican campus covers 80 wooded acres in a quiet residential neighborhood in San Rafael—yet it’s only twenty minutes to San Francisco and the East Bay. Edgehill Village, a residential complex built in 2002, is six cedar-shingled buildings. Each suite features a living room, two bedrooms, and a shared bathroom. Conlan Recreation Center offers workout rooms and an outdoor pool. Accommodations include meals.
THE WORKSHOPS

Poetry workshops meet from 9:30 a.m. to noon each morning. Workshop members and leaders change daily so that all may experience a variety of styles and voices. Poets will be required to write a new poem each day to bring to the workshop. In this atmosphere of challenge and support, poets will be free to break old habits and write with more strength and truth. Since time is limited, you may wish to bring a list of possible subjects for new poems.

Prose workshops meet from 9:30 a.m. to noon with a different leader each day. Two to three manuscripts will be treated at each session. Participants will have the opportunity to read manuscripts in advance so as to be prepared to give constructive feedback in the workshop. The first two days’ manuscripts will be due two weeks before the start of the conference, with the remainder due upon registration. Participants whose manuscripts are being discussed during the first two days will be notified in advance.

SPECIAL EVENTS

There will be daily activities and panel discussions on craft, editing, publishing, ethics, and other subjects that address the particular concerns of writers. Faculty readings, participant readings, and social gatherings will take place during the evenings. In addition to workshops, participants will be offered a one-on-one session with a faculty member to allow for more detailed feedback on their work.
FACULTY

JOAN BARANOW, PhD, is an Associate Professor of English at Dominican University of California. Her poetry has appeared in *The Paris Review, Western Humanities Review, The Antioch Review, The Western Journal of Medicine,* and other magazines. Her poetry has also appeared in *Women Write Their Bodies: Stories of Illness and Recovery,* issued in 2007 by Kent State University Press. Her book of poetry, *Living Apart,* was published by Plain View Press. She won Individual Artists Fellowships in Poetry from the Marin Arts Council and from the Ohio Arts Council. With her husband David Watts, she produced the PBS documentary *Healing Words: Poetry & Medicine.*

JOHN FOX, is a poet and certified poetry therapist. He is adjunct associate professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, California. John is author of *Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-making* and numerous essays. His work is featured in the PBS documentary, *Healing Words: Poetry and Medicine.* He contributed “Healing the Within” to the book, *The Healing Environment* published by the Royal College of Physicians. John presents in medical schools and hospitals including Stanford, Harvard, Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida, The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, Washington and many other places. He is President of The Institute for Poetic Medicine, which offers poetry and healing programs.

MOLLY GILES is the author of a novel, *Iron Shoes,* and two award winning collections of short stories, *Rough Translations* and *Creek Walk.* Among her honors are a NEA, several Marin County Arts Council grants, an Arkansas Arts Council grant, residencies at Yaddo, MacDowell, Villa Montalvo, and The House of Literature in Greece. She taught Creative Writing at San Francisco State for many years and presently teaches at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Her best-known “student” is Amy Tan, whose novels she edits.

NINA SCHUYLER’s novel, *The Painting,* was nominated for the Northern California Book Award and was named a Best Book by the San Francisco Chronicle and a “fearless debut” by MSNBC. Her second novel, *Accidental Birds,* which takes place in 1924 Berlin, will be published in 2012. Her short stories have been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best New American Voices. She is a fiction editor at Able Muse and teaches creative writing at the University of San Francisco.
MARILYN KRYSL has published four short story and seven poetry collections. Her work has appeared in *The Atlantic, The Nation, The New Republic, Pushcart Prize Anthology, Best American Short Stories, O. Henry Prize Stories*, and elsewhere. *Dinner with Osama* won the Richard Sullivan Prize in 2008 and *Foreword Magazine’s Bronze Prize* for best story collection of 2008. *Swear the Burning Vow: Selected and New Poems* appeared in 2009. She has served as Artist in Residence at the Center for Human Caring, volunteered with Mother Teresa’s Sisters of Charity in Calcutta, and worked as an unarmed bodyguard for Peace Brigade International in Sri Lanka. In Boulder she volunteers with the Lost Boys of Sudan, and is a co-founder of C-SAW, the Community of Sudanese and American Women.

ALICIA OSTRIKER has published thirteen poetry collections, including *The Book of Seventy*, which received the 2009 National Jewish Book Award for Poetry. *The Crack in Everything* and *The Little Space: Poems Selected and New*, 1969-1989, were both National Book Award finalists. As a critic, Ostriker is the author of *Stealing the Language: the Emergence of Women’s Poetry in America*, as well as several books on poetry and on the Bible. Ostriker is Professor Emerita of Rutgers university, and teaches in the Low-Residency Poetry MFA Program of Drew University.

DAVID WATTS’ second book of stories, *The Orange Wire Problem*, along with *Bedside Manners*, forms a body of work which explores the intricacies of the art of medicine. He has published four books of poetry and two CDs of “word-jazz.” He is a NPR commentator on *All Things Considered*, a producer of the PBS program *Healing Words: Poetry & Medicine*, a gastroenterologist at UCSF, and a classically trained musician. He has been an on-camera television host and a medical columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle. His second volume of avant-guard poetry, *The Color of Desire*, was published under the pseudonym, Harvey Ellis, by Petaluma River Press. He lives in Mill Valley, California with his wife, Joan Baranow, and his two sons.
GUEST FACULTY

SUSAN CORNELIS, MSW is a popular mixed media painter, workshop teacher, and former clinical social worker, who inspires students to access imagery for personal transformation and healing. Her book, Conversations With the Muse: The Art Journal as Inner Guide, is a celebration of the creative spirit through the practice of art journaling. In addition to art journaling and painting, she teaches Wellness Through Art Expression workshops for healing professionals, which incorporate meditation, painting, collage and expressive writing. Her website is http://imaginewithart.com.

DAWN McGuire, MD is a neurologist and award-winning author of three poetry collections, including Hands On (2002, ZYZZYVA) and The Aphasia Café (2012, IF SF Publishing). She grew up in Eastern Kentucky and was educated at Princeton University, Union Theological Seminary, and the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. She is the 2011 winner of the Sarah Lawrence/Campbell Corner Language Exchange Poetry Prize, awarded for “poems that treat larger themes with lyric intensity.” McGuire is Professor of Neurology at Morehouse School of Medicine, and divides her time between Atlanta and the San Francisco Bay area.

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