



**LIGHTHOUSE**  
WRITERS WORKSHOP



**GET SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR WRITING**





# TAKE THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR LITERARY LIFE

What if a single year of focus could move your writing from something you squeeze into the margins of your life to a serious practice with real, lasting consequences? Maybe you're nearly ready to approach an agent or editor. Maybe you're eyeing an MFA program, a residency, a grant. Maybe you just want a clearer path forward. Whatever the case, it helps to have a map—and a mentor, and a cohort of people who actually get it.

## WELCOME TO THE PORTFOLIO YEAR.

Portfolio Year is a one-year immersion in writing: six writers, one mentor, and a shared commitment to getting somewhere. The program is highly customizable—you define the destination. Build a collection of stories, essays, chapters, screenplays, poems, or any combination that serves your work. Some writers assemble a package aimed at grants, contests, or fellowships. Others build toward an MFA application or Lighthouse's own Book Project. The only limits are your imagination and your follow-through.

Beginning writers, experienced writers, blocked writers, writers already publishing—this program was built just for you.



# PROGRAM BENEFITS

## ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Four one-on-one meetings with your mentor** spread throughout the year help you gauge progress and troubleshoot blocks.
- **Orientation activities**, including a goal-setting session, will get you started on this journey and set you up to celebrate accomplishments along the way.
- **Your small cohort has six official meetings with your mentor.** Cohorts often meet more frequently on their own to build camaraderie, share writing goals, and troubleshoot problems.

## COMMUNITY

- **Annual membership at Lighthouse** each year, giving you free access to events like Friday 500, our monthly writing challenge, and affinity group meetups (like Body of Words, Queer Creatives, and Writing in Color).
- **Attend one of many social or writing events** held for Portfolio Year throughout the year.
- **Meet with an agent or editor** at our annual writing conference, Lit Fest, which opens the door to workshops with published authors, panels on publishing, and more with your Business Pass.
- **Productivity collectives:** Get discounts (or use credits) to partake in one of our many accountability tracks—the in-person Productivity Club, online Get It Done workshop, and occasional other options.
- **Weekend Fests:** Join our wider community with a Gold Pass to one of five weekend festivals, unlocking two days of seminars, panels, and events. Past Fests have included Love Fest, Poetry Fest, and Short Forms Fest.



## EDUCATION

- **Use credits to take Lighthouse’s rigorous and generative multi-week workshops throughout the year:** as part of the program, work with your mentor to select critique-based or generative craft-focused courses that help you achieve breakthroughs.
- **Attend three special craft classes in our Visiting Author Series. Recent and upcoming authors include:** Steve Almond, Andre Dubus III, Jennifer Haigh, Henry Hoke, Leslie Jamison, Adam Johnson, Rebecca Makkai, and Ross Gay.
- **Meet members of another mentor-based program, the Book Project, through keynotes and other special events.** Past keynote speakers include: Kali Fajardo-Anstine, Melissa Febos, Karan Mahajan, R.O. Kwon, George Saunders, and Cheryl Strayed.



# HOW TO APPLY

Mentors accept six applicants per cohort, aligning groups based on genre, writing preferences, or other considerations. Visit [lighthousewriters.org/PortfolioYear](https://lighthousewriters.org/PortfolioYear) to learn more and submit an application.

**TUITION:**

\$7,250/year or \$604/month

**APPLICATIONS OPEN:**

April 1, 2026

**DEADLINE TO APPLY:**

July 1, 2026 (we recommend much sooner)

**WHAT TO INCLUDE:**

Submit a writing sample, which should reflect some of your best work and the general type of writing you'll be doing throughout the year. The application will ask you if you have mentor preferences, group focus preferences, or predetermined goals for the year.



Being a Portfolio Year member is more than just craft classes, workshops, or having your work reviewed by a mentor. It's about becoming part of a community of writers.”

—Deanna Byck, 2026 Portfolio Year Grad



# MENTORS

Lighthouse is proud to have an ever-expanding roster of motivated mentors who love seeing their mentees succeed.

Current mentors include: Erika Krouse, William Henderson, Dino Enrique Piacentini, Jenny Shank, Natalie Hodges, Suzi Q. Smith, and Amanda Rea.

## WHAT MENTORS HAVE TO SAY



### William Haywood Henderson

“My mentees have different goals in the world of writing, but they all share a love of writing and a full engagement with craft. It’s been beautiful to see how much they support each other. I love helping them each see their potential.”



### Natalie Hodges

“It is from my mentees—who assert the necessity of storytelling in uncertain times, who build deep and enduring commitments to their writing within the confines of 9-5s and caregiving and the other obligations of ordinary life, and who support one another compassionately and relentlessly in community—that I’ve learned the most about what it means to really be a writer.”



### Erika Krouse

“I love to help writers find their voices, turn their dreams into realities, and write stories they’ve stored deep inside for years—sometimes even decades!”





## Dino Enrique Piacentini

“I love seeing my mentees grow as writers over a full year. I get to see them develop a real, honest relationship with their projects. I get to watch the bloom of first love, and then that deeper understanding that only comes when a writer really begins to see the true nature of their project: the characters, with all their flaws and hopes and disappointments. The project’s world, a living, breathing character in itself. And maybe even its larger purpose—who the project is for, why it’s there, and where it belongs in the larger world.”



## Amanda Rea

“It’s an honor to spend a year working alongside writers as they develop their voices and their craft. My mentees have amazed me again and again with their growth and dedication, and it’s been rewarding to see how they’ve transformed ideas into striking and original pieces of work.”



## Jenny Shank

“I love the process of working with writers through the long-term growth of their projects. During the Portfolio Year, writers receive so much input and motivation from classes and peer support that it often leads to a breakthrough in their work, and that transformation is as rewarding for the mentor as it is for the writer.”



## Suzi Q. Smith

“To work alongside writers to bring their ideas and outlines into manuscripts is an honor. I love being able to offer support and structure to help writers create what they intend to, and tools to continue their work well beyond the Portfolio Year.”



# LEVEL UP YOUR WRITING WITH US

LEARN MORE AT [LIGHTHOUSEWRITERS.ORG/PORTFOLIOYEAR](https://lighthousewriters.org/portfolioyear)



**LIGHTHOUSE**  
WRITERS WORKSHOP

3844 York Street | Denver, CO 80205  
303.297.1185 | [info@lighthousewriters.org](mailto:info@lighthousewriters.org) | [lighthousewriters.org](https://lighthousewriters.org)

 @lighthousewriters |  @lighthousewrite  
 @lighthousewriters |  @Lighthouse Writers Workshop

**PORTFOLIO YEAR**