



LIGHTHOUSE
WRITERS WORKSHOP

THE BOOK PROJECT

WHERE BOOKS ARE BORN





A TWO-YEAR MANUSCRIPT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Book Project isn't just another writing program—it's a carefully designed pathway to a finished book created by working writers who understand the real challenges every writer faces. Whether you're crafting a novel, memoir, short story collection, or narrative nonfiction book, we offer a comprehensive, supportive track with the tools, mentorship, and community you need to bring that manuscript to life, from concept to completed book.

A DEDICATED PATH TO PUBLISHABLE WORK

Our program provides a holistic approach to book development, with expert mentors working closely alongside you to navigate your project's challenges. Through weekend intensives, 8- and 4-week workshops, Lit Fest, and intimate cohort gatherings, you'll receive **personalized guidance that transforms your manuscript** from a rough draft to a polished work ready for publication.

We understand that writers lead complex lives. Our **fully hybrid model** accommodates writers from diverse backgrounds and locations. With extensive online and Zoom offerings, in addition to cutting-edge hybrid meeting technology, the Book Project adapts to your life rather than requiring you to reshape your entire existence around a rigid program.



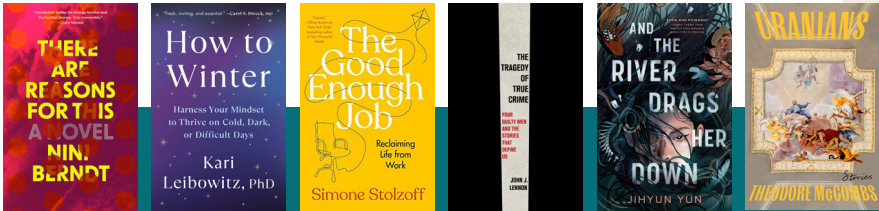
EXPERT INSTRUCTION AND MENTORSHIP

Your writing will be nurtured by a **comprehensive approach to literary development**. You'll engage in six cohort meetings annually, participate in intensive weekends featuring mentors and guest authors, and receive priority access to Lighthouse's acclaimed workshops. One-on-one mentorship provides personalized guidance, ensuring your unique voice and vision remain at the center of your writing journey.

The Book Project goes beyond craft instruction, offering publishing expertise that **provides a pragmatic path to publication**. Mentors and guest experts provide you with direct advice, and participants receive a Lit Fest Full-Access Business Pass that gives you entry to crucial publishing panels, and opportunities for agent matching to help bridge the gap between manuscript and marketplace.

PROVEN PUBLISHING SUCCESS

Since 2019, Book Project writers have signed over 25 book deals with prestigious presses and imprints like Simon & Schuster, Knopf, Tin House, Celadon, Riverhead, Penguin Random House, and Hachette. The Book Project has helped launch books across multiple genres, demonstrating our commitment to all of our writers' careers.



RECENT TITLES

There Are Reasons for This | Nini Berndt (Tin House Books, 2025)

How to Winter | Kari Leibowitz (Penguin Life, 2024)

The Good Enough Job | Simone Stolzoff (Penguin Random House, 2023)

The Tragedy of True Crime | John J. Lennon (Celadon, 2025)

And The River Drags Her Down | Jihyun Jun (Knopf, 2025)

Uranians | Theodore McCombs (Astra House, 2023)

And 13 more forthcoming in 2025–2026.

BENEFITS



WRITING IN COMMUNITY

Our community embraces writers at every stage: first-time novelists, experienced authors seeking new directions, and writers with completed drafts, across genres and backgrounds. Whether you're a published or emerging writer, the Book Project offers a supportive environment for your literary ambitions.

The Book Project is committed to writers throughout their careers. Unlike other programs that conclude after a set period, we offer lifetime access to the Lighthouse writing community. Our intentionally small cohorts of six writers create a collaborative environment where you'll forge lasting connections. Writers receive exclusive invitations to author events, ongoing educational opportunities, and a network that continues to support your literary journey long after the program ends. Some even join the Lighthouse faculty, or continue their Book Project experience with an optional (and repeatable) one-year Post-Grad program.



COHORT-BASED COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

- **Intimate Collaboration:** Your cohort of six writers creates a supportive environment where everyone knows your manuscript intimately. We prioritize collaboration over competition.
- **Weekend Intensives:** Twice per year, convene in Denver (or on Zoom) for a long weekend of craft talks, keynotes, cohort meetings, social activities, writing time, and more.
- **Inspiring Retreats and Festivals:** Optional mountain retreats in Colorado offer dedicated writing time and inspiration. Or join the wider community to escape to the Grand Lake Retreat, Lit Fest in Denver, Genre mini-fests, and our Writing in Color or Queer Creatives retreats.
- **Flexible Learning:** The program is fully hybrid, with nearly half our cohort participating remotely, thanks to comprehensive online, Zoom, and hybrid offerings.

EXPERT CRAFT INSTRUCTION

- **Consistent Connections:** Six cohort meetings annually keep you motivated and on track. Most cohorts set a regular schedule of additional, mentee-led meetings throughout the two years.
- **Priority Workshop Access:** Use your generous workshop credits to gain entry to Lighthouse’s world-class workshops before they’re available to the wider public.
- **Structured Support:** Take advantage of our eight-week accountability classes **Getting it Done**, **Works in Progress**, and **Productivity Club**, each designed to support a disciplined practice and propel your manuscript forward.

PERSONALIZED MENTORSHIP

- **Expert Guidance:** Work closely with the same mentor over two years. Our dedicated mentors provide more than just feedback—they become true literary partners.
- **One-on-One Attention:** You’ll have regular mentor meetings to review progress, set goals, and keep you accountable throughout your writing journey.
- **Comprehensive Manuscript Review:** Your mentor will read your entire manuscript (up to 100,000 words), providing deep, nuanced feedback.



PUBLISHING PATHWAYS

- **Industry Insider Access:** Receive several hours of personal access to and advice from our publishing expert.
- **Direct Connection:** Get an annual Full-Access Business Pass at Lit Fest, which includes eight publishing panels, industry insights, and one-on-one agent meetings—a unique Book Project benefit.



FACULTY

Book Project writers work with established, award-winning authors, who are fully invested in each writer's drafting and revision process. Participants also have access to our in-house publishing professional, who provides guidance on finding an agent and getting published.



William Haywood Henderson, Book Project Director, is the author of three novels: *Native*, *The Rest of the Earth*, and *Augusta Locke*. He has taught creative writing at Brown, Harvard, the Ashland University MFA program, and the University of Denver. He was a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University. He's taught at Lighthouse for 25 years, and the Beacon Award for Teaching Excellence was initiated in his honor by his students.



Shana Kelly was a literary agent at the William Morris Agency in New York and London for ten years. She currently works as a book editor, writer, publishing consultant, and teacher. In 2024, she won an Emmy for writing *A Towering Task: The Story of the Peace Corps*, a historical documentary which aired on PBS in September 2023. She is currently writing a historical documentary about the League of Women Voters.



Erika Krouse is the author of *Save Me, Stranger*, *Tell Me Everything: The Story of a Private Investigation*; *Contenders*; and *Come Up and See Me Sometime*. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Ploughshares*, *One Story*, and *Granta*. Erika is a winner of the Edgar Award, the Colorado Book Award, and the Lighthouse Beacon Award for Teaching Excellence.



Anna Qu is a Chinese American author. Her critically acclaimed debut memoir, *Made In China: A Memoir of Love and Labor*, was named a *New York Times* Editors' Choice pick. Her essays have appeared in *Threepenny Review*, *Lumina*, *Kartika*, and *Kweli Journal*, among others. She was a 2023 Black Mountain Institute Shearing Fellow and has received support from Yaddo and Ragdale.





Vauhini Vara is the author of *Searches*, *This is Salvaged*, and *The Immortal King Rao*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist. She is also a journalist, writing for *Businessweek* and others, and an editor, most recently at *The New York Times Magazine*.



Rachel Weaver is the author of the novel *Point of Direction*, which *Oprah Magazine* named a Top Ten Book to Pick Up Now. *Point of Direction* was chosen by the American Booksellers Association as a Top Ten Debut for Spring 2014, and won the 2015 Willa Cather Award for Fiction.



Benjamin Whitmer is the author of the novels *Escape*, *The Dynamiters*, *Cry Father*, and *Pike*, which was nominated for the prestigious Grand Prix de Littérature Policière. He is also co-author, with Charlie Louvin, of the memoir, *Satan is Real: The Ballad of the Louvin Brothers*, a *New York Times*' Critics' Choice book.



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The book that I wrote at Lighthouse went on to sell in a twelve-editor auction to Knopf, and is slated for publication in fall of 2025. In a lot of ways, I feel like my whirlwind experience from draft to selling, because it all happened within two to three years, was largely thanks to my time in the Book Project. I say this because I tend to be an avid drafter, but I get discouraged during revisions... but the structure of the Book Project, and the accountability I felt to my mentor and wonderful cohort, kept me focused enough to see the book through to completion.”

—Jihyun Jun, Book Project 2023

KEY ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES

YEAR ONE

With guidance from your mentor and a full plate of literature and craft classes, you'll get the support you need to generate the first draft of your book. **Activities include:**

- Two weekend intensives
- Three optional writing getaways (meals and accommodations not included)
- Three eight-week writing workshops
- Two eight-week generative class credits (with the ability to upgrade to a workshop)
- Four craft-based or reading-as-a-writer courses
- Three one-on-one meetings with your mentor
- Six cohort meetings led by mentor
- Two individual hours with industry expert, who can answer questions, review pages, and read queries, in addition to courses at the weekend intensives
- One Lit Fest Full-Access Business Pass (including an agent meeting).
Note: workshops can be spread out over the project's two years.

YEAR TWO

You'll work closely with your mentor, your Book Project group, and our publishing expert to polish your manuscript and prepare to submit to agents and editors. **Activities include:**

- A thorough first reading of your manuscript (up to 100,000 words) by your mentor
- Two weekend intensives
- Three optional writing getaways (meals and accommodations not included)
- Six cohort meetings led by mentor
- Three one-on-one mentor meetings
- One Lit Fest Full-Access Business Pass
- Two individual hours with industry expert, who can answer questions, review pages, and read queries, in addition to courses at the weekend intensives



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My most trusted critique partners came through the Book Project with me and continue to sustain my writing life. The Book Project gives a writer a crucial depth of understanding in craft, an intimacy among writers without jealousy or competition, a fine-tuned excellency in instructors and mentors, as well as that all-important manuscript read.”

—Jenny Dandy, author of *The Brownstone On E. 83rd* and *The Penthouse On Park Avenue*

GUEST SPEAKERS

Throughout the year, visiting authors stop by the Book Project to give lectures and lead craft classes. Past visiting authors include:



Melissa
Febos



Cheryl
Strayed



Mona
Awad



Gabino
Iglesias



Pam
Houston



R.O.
Kwon



Peter
Ho Davies



Kali
Fajardo-Anstine



Stephen
Graham Jones



APPLICATIONS

APPLICATIONS OPEN APRIL 1
DEADLINE TO APPLY IS JUNE 21



WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Writing Sample (up to 30 pages), ideally from the book you plan to complete during the Book Project
- Project Synopsis—a brief outline of your proposed project
- Two to three references, ideally from current or former writing instructors familiar with your work
- Short Biographical Statement

Each mentor accepts six applicants, for a total of 36 incoming writers per year. Every effort is made to match writers with their preferred mentor, but there are always more applicants than spaces available, so flexibility is encouraged.

TUITION AND FELLOWSHIPS ASSISTANCE

Tuition is \$8,850 a year, payable in monthly installments of approximately \$738.



Partial tuition assistance is available to any adult writers from around the world working in English through the following funding sources:

- **Book Project Emerging Writer Fellowships**, designed for emerging writers who don't yet have a book out in English. Finalists selected based on financial need and at least one mentor identifying them as one of their potential six mentees for the year; winners selected by our publishing expert Shana Kelly, and
- **The Nighthawk Nature Writing Fellowship**, which supports writers creating book-length fiction or nonfiction that explores the natural world. Finalists selected based on the criteria and at least one mentor identifying them as one of their potential six mentees; winners selected by a panel that includes the funders.

Eligible applicants apply through the general Book Project application on Submittable. Fellowship offers are made for the current incoming class only, no deferrals or transfers.

See the **Book Project** application for details. For more information or to apply, visit lighthousewriters.org

THE BOOK PROJECT: YOUR PATH TO A FINISHED DRAFT

Transform your manuscript into a published book through our comprehensive two-year mentorship program.

A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS

Since 2019, the Book Project has launched numerous writing careers, with 20+ mentees securing publishing deals. Our Book Project members and alumni books span genres and publishers, from traditional to indie to independent presses.

- Over a dozen literary novels, short story collections, and YA/MG books from Simon & Schuster, Knopf, Astra House, Penguin Random House, Tin House, and elsewhere.
- Ten or more nonfiction/narrative nonfiction books, memoirs, and essay collections from Celadon/Macmillan, Penguin Life, Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, and elsewhere.
- A good number of independent and hybrid books.

And the momentum continues—13 books are forthcoming in 2025 and beyond.



INDUSTRY EXPERTISE THAT OPENS DOORS

“

Understanding the publishing industry can seem like a dark art—especially for first time authors. Working with Shana felt like having a cheat code. Not only is she an industry insider who knows how to sell books, but she'll work with you hand-in-hand until the moment you're ready to submit.”

—Simone Stoltzoff, BP 2022, author of *The Good Enough Job* (Penguin, 2023) and the forthcoming *Unknowing* (WW Norton)

ARE YOU NEXT?

Join our community of dedicated writers and take the next step toward publication.



SCAN THE CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY



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