



GRAND LAKE RETREAT

July 13-18, 2025



LIGHTHOUSE
WRITERS WORKSHOP

GRAND LAKE



THE RETREAT

Join Lighthouse Writers Workshop in the scenic mountain town of Grand Lake, Colorado, to immerse yourself in writing, reading, and creative discovery with a community of like-minded writers.

Each day, we invite you to attend workshops and activities, listen to craft talks, and share your work at fireside readings, all with the goal of inspiring new ideas, new writing, and new ways of seeing.



ABOUT LIGHTHOUSE

The mission of Lighthouse Writers Workshop is to provide the highest caliber of artistic education, support, and community for writers and readers in the Rocky Mountain Region and beyond. We strive to ensure that literature maintains its proper prominence in culture and that individuals achieve their fullest potential as artists and human beings.



OUR RETREAT PHILOSOPHY

In the more than 20 years of our Grand Lake Retreat, we’ve come to admire what “getting away” has to offer: a chance to focus solely on pursuits that feed our lives as writers and readers, as creative people. We appreciate the ways in which a majestic natural landscape allows the mind freedom to wander and discover, as well as connect to sensation—an integral part of good writing, no matter what genre.



The retreat is structured to allow for extensive engagement with craft. Our dynamic courses invite a great deal of collaboration and dialogue, opportunities for sharing, and guided—or unguided—writing time. We also build in free time to allow for hikes, bike rides, yoga, journaling, and wandering through the town of Grand Lake. We value socializing, too, and hanging out with other writers of various backgrounds and interests away from the constraints and responsibilities of our everyday lives. Because sometimes what a writer needs most is other writers.

We hope you’ll join us in this most inspiring place and find a little creative breathing room of your own.

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INSTRUCTORS



Andrea Dupree (she/her) serves as Program Director for Lighthouse and teaches fiction there and at the University of Denver. Her short stories have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Colorado Review*, *The Normal School*, and elsewhere. She's been honored with two fellowships from MacDowell, several Pushcart nominations, and a distinguished mention in *Best American Short Stories*.



Michael Henry (he/him) is co-founder and Executive Director at Lighthouse, where he teaches poetry and memoir. His work has appeared in *5280 Magazine*, *Georgetown Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *Mountain Gazette*, and *Rio Grande Review*. He's also the author of two collections of poetry, *No Stranger Than My Own* and *Active Gods*, as well as a chapbook, *Intersection*. In 2017, he was awarded a Livingston Fellowship from the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation. A book of his nonfiction, *Over the Mountains There Are More Mountains: Bikepacking the Colorado Trail*, was released from Bower House press in 2023.





INSTRUCTORS



Erika Krouse (she/her) is the author of four books: *Save Me, Stranger* (short story collection); *Tell Me Everything: The Story of a Private Investigation* (memoir, winner of the Edgar Award, Colorado Book Award, and Housatonic Book Award); *Contenders* (novel); and *Come Up and See Me Sometime* (short story collection, winner of the Paterson Prize). Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Granta.com*, *Ploughshares*, and other places. A Beacon Award winner, Erika is also a faculty mentor for the Lighthouse Book Project.

Juan J. Morales (he/him) is the son of an Ecuadorian mother and a Puerto Rican father. He is the author of three poetry collections, including *The Handyman's Guide to End Times*, and his fourth collection, *Dream of the Bird Tattoo*, is forthcoming from University of New Mexico Press in 2025. Recent poems have appeared in *Crazyhorse*, *The Laurel Review*, *Breakbeats Vol. 4* *LatiNEXT*, *Acentos Review*, *terrain.org*, *South Dakota Review*, *Sugar House Review*, and *Poetry*. Morales is a CantoMundo Fellow, a Macondo Fellow, the editor/publisher of Pilgrimage Press, a Professor of English, and the Associate Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences at Colorado State University Pueblo.



INSTRUCTORS



Karen Palmer (she/her) is the author of a forthcoming memoir, *She's Under Here*, and the novels *All Saints* and *Border Dogs*. Her essay, "The Reader Is the Protagonist," was selected by Leslie Jamison for inclusion in *Best American Essays 2017*. More recently, "Birds of Paradise" received the *Virginia Quarterly Review's* Emily Clark Balch Prize for Fiction. Other writing has appeared in *The Rumpus*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Denver Post*, *Five Points*, *Arts & Letters*, and *Kalliope*. Karen lives and works in Los Angeles and has taught at Lighthouse for twenty years.



Suzi Q. Smith is an award-winning poet, author, interdisciplinary artist, music maker, and dreamer of dreams who lives in Denver, Colorado. She has created, curated, coached, organized, and taught for over 25 years, touring throughout the United States. The author of poetry collections *Poems for the End of the World*, *A Gospel of Bones* (winner of the 2019 Electric Press Award), and the chapbook collection *Thirteen Descansos*, Smith is also the co-editor of two anthologies, *Tell It Slant: An Anthology of Creative Nonfiction by Writers from Colorado's Prisons* and *All the Lives We Ever Lived, Volume I*, both finalists for the Colorado Book Award. Smith is also a Pushcart-nominated essayist with an MFA in Creative Writing from Randolph College.



WORKSHOPS

Each morning, we invite you to start the day with a choice of two engaging workshops. These classes focus on generating fresh work and rethinking integral elements of craft. They offer a combination of writing exercises and discussions on specific topics. Because of this focus, there are no formal writing critiques.

Monday

Hike and Write

Led by Michael Henry

A yearly tradition! Take a gentle hike up the North Inlet Trail, enter Rocky Mountain National Park, and write something beautiful. Michael will guide you, protect you from marmots, and provide some inspirational writing prompts to help you bring the wildness of life and a sharp focus on detail onto the page.

Reading for an Audience

Led by Suzi Q. Smith

In this workshop, we'll discuss techniques to help prepare for a reading, including selecting work, practicing enunciation and projection, and managing nerves. We'll also share methods to connect with an audience and learn the ins and outs of what to expect during and after a reading—including what on earth we do with our hands, using microphones, and dealing with interruptions, distractions, and weird questions and interactions with our audiences. Please bring a short (one page) excerpt to practice with.



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Tuesday

Three Starts: A Generative To-Do List

Led by Andrea Dupree

For those who are coming to Grand Lake for some inspiration, this workshop will ask you to generate at least three fresh starts. These can be for as-yet unwritten works, or they can be re-imaginings for work you've already started. As part of the workshop, we'll consider different types of openings and how we might land on them. We'll also try out different catalysts and prompts to get us going. Finally, we'll assess the heat, potential, and zestiness of each idea. Come with an openness to try something new—and leave with some projects to work on this week and beyond.

Writing to Unplug, Regroup, and Resist

Led by Juan Morales

As we already know, the world is on fire, full of fear, and there are countless injustices unfolding. So how are we supposed to write? How can our writing make a difference? In this workshop, we'll take a balanced look at playful, humorous, intense, and politically charged poetry for guidance. Some writers include Paisley Rekdal, Martín Espada, Jericho Brown, Layli Long Soldier, Charles Simic, and Ilya Kaminsky. We'll investigate word choice, tension, and subtle strategies to implement in our writing. Most importantly, we'll embrace the place around us, lean on the community we've built, and read activist writers to help us feel inspired and free to write.

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Wednesday

Narrative Echo (Echo, Echo...)

Led by Erika Krouse

In this generative class, we'll focus on narrative echo: the use of strategic repetition to create resonance, new connections, and emotional impact in your work. We'll read and discuss different kinds of echo—plot/situational, character, dialogue, symbolic, and more. We'll then hone your echo skills with exercises designed to drill deeper into your work's meaning. Open to all genres.

The Lyric Essay

Led by Suzi Q. Smith

In this workshop, we'll read examples and begin drafting our own lyric essays. The lyric essay is a form that brings together elements of poetry, memoir, and creative nonfiction to invite a reader to an experience. Sometimes fragmented, the lyric essay allows us to draw from our own memories, impressions, ideations, questions, and research to weave a narrative about our individual and collective experiences. We'll write fragments in response to prompts and find strategies to weave them together into lyric essays.



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Thursday

Forms and Functions: Poetic and Otherwise

Led by Michael Henry

In this generative workshop, we'll try our hand at writing poems (and maybe even some prose) using forms—some traditional (hello, sonnet, my old friend/nemesis) and perhaps some weird, wild, and invented forms as well. Bring your rhymes and schemes and creative impulses, and be read to write, sing, cry, laugh, and count.

Consider the Hybrid

Led by Karen Palmer

Hybrid plants are often considered hardier than their parents because they are intentionally bred to inherit the best traits from each. Through discussion and in-class generative exercises, we'll explore how writers can strengthen their work by integrating alternative structures and unconventional elements, research and facts, and by deliberately shifting voice to uncover hidden narrative possibilities.



BOOK TALKS

After lunch, we'll gather each afternoon to hear from our Grand Lake instructors on a variety of topics. These book talks are meant to engage and inspire, and will consist of a 45-minute lecture followed by a Q&A session. Each talk centers on a book or text, although many will incorporate other readings as well. While we do encourage it, you need not read the recommended book in order to participate.

Monday

The Art of Compression: *Audition* by Katie Kitamura

Led by Andrea Dupree

Brevity may be the soul of wit, but it also feeds a contemporary appetite for shorter reads; the short novel (and memoir) is having a day. This book talk will be in two parts. First, we'll examine the elements of short works: what techniques and narrative choices help make 200 pages feel substantial enough to be a book? If you're an overwriter, what can you learn from Kitamura's concision? If you're someone who frequently hears "I want more" in workshop, look to Kitamura's book to guide your revisions and fortify your impulse to leave some things unsaid. The second part of the session will be a book club, with spoilers and opinions galore.

Recommended Text: *Audition* by Katie Kitamura

Tuesday

"All the Names They Used for God," by Anjali Sachdeva

Led by Erika Krouse

Magic and the harshest of realisms blur in this remarkable short story, in which two Boko Haram kidnappees learn how to mind-control their captors. We'll discuss Sachdeva's use of magical realism, historical events, and radical empathy to write a story that exceeds personal experience. What are we "allowed" to write about and why? How can stories help us deal with the unthinkable? After our discussion, we'll do a Sachdeva-inspired writing exercise.

Recommended Text: the short story "All the Names They Used for God" by Anjali Sachdeva will be provided by email, but participants are welcome to read Anjali's collection of the same name.

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Wednesday

Grand Theft Author

Led by Karen Palmer

In Tracy O'Neill's 2024 memoir *Woman of Interest*, the author hooks up with a grizzled PI in hopes of finding the mother in Korea who gave her up for adoption. When the PI disappears before completing the job, O'Neill becomes her own hell-bent detective, investigating her self-conception while chasing a woman she imagines as a kindred outlaw. Why—and how—does the author steal elements from the mystery novel? What is gained, what is lost? How can we incorporate genre theft in our own work, whether memoir, fiction, narrative nonfiction, or poetry?

Recommended Reading: *Woman of Interest* by Tracy O'Neill

Thursday

Diane Seuss' *Modern Poetry* and Finding Our Poetic Education

Led by Juan J. Morales

In Diane Seuss' *Modern Poetry*, she questions contemporary poetics in what has been described as "a post-Romantic lyric autobiography." In it, she reflects on her discovery of iconic writers and how they informed her own work, writes and converses with inherited forms, and invites us to challenge how we experience and write poetry. In this craft talk, we'll discuss how *Modern Poetry* encourages us to delve into our ongoing literary education, welcome the gaps in our knowledge, embrace and challenge the literary "canon," and continue to find power in contemporary poetry.

Recommended Text: *Modern Poetry* by Diane Seuss

LODGING

Shadowcliff Lodge, our retreat site, borders Rocky Mountain National Park and the roaring North Inlet Stream. It's perched on a cliff overlooking Grand Lake Village and the Colorado Great Lakes area. The food at the lodge is homemade and delicious, and the rooms all have spectacular views. Most participants share a room with one other writer (the rooms can sleep six comfortably). The number at Shadowcliff is 970.627.9220; their website is shadowcliff.org, and the rooms all have spectacular views.

PLEASE NOTE: Shadowcliff is a rustic mountain lodge, which is why the room prices are so reasonable. Think shared bathrooms and periodic shared meal setup/cleanup responsibilities. It's all part of the camaraderie and charm that Shadowcliff has to offer. We keep coming back every summer for one reason: we love the place.

Of course, you might prefer other nearby lodging options: We recommend the **Rapids Lodge**, just down the hill from Shadowcliff.

Phone: 970.627.3707. **Web:** rapidslodge.com.

For more options, check out the Chamber of Commerce website: grandlakechamber.com.





COSTS

Single Rooms

\$1,990 members / \$2,065 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$900 (after May 31: \$950)

Room and board: \$1090



Double Rooms

\$1,540 members / \$1,620 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$900 (after May 31: \$950)

Room and board: \$640



Meals and Workshops Only

\$1,270 members / \$1,350 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$900 (after May 31: \$950)

Daily pass to Shadowcliff: \$75

Meals at Shadowcliff: \$295



Workshops Only

\$975 member / \$1,035 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$900 (after May 31: \$950)

Daily pass to Shadowcliff: \$75



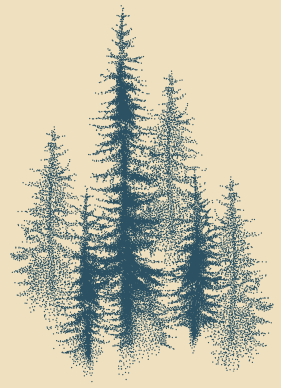
CANCELLATION POLICY

If you need to cancel your reservation for any reason, the following applies:

\$100 cancellation fee for cancellations on or before May 9. After May 9, we are unable to refund the cost of room and board, and a \$200 cancellation fee applies. After June 9, we are unable to provide any refund or credit. At this point, you are able to donate your space to a writer who wouldn't have otherwise been able to afford it, or seek a replacement.



SCHEDULE



SUNDAY
7/13

MONDAY
7/14

TUESDAY
7/15

WEDNESDAY
7/16

THURSDAY
7/17

FRIDAY
7/18

Check In

3:00
– to –
6:00 PM

Reception and Reading

7:30
– to –
9:00 PM

Morning Workshops | 9:30–11:30AM

**Hike and
Write**
(Henry)

**Reading for
an Audience**
(Smith)

Three Starts
(Dupree)

**Writing to
Unplug**
(Morales)

Narrative Echo
(Krouse)

**The Lyric
Essay**
(Smith)

**Form and
Function**
(Henry)

**Consider the
Hybrid**
(Palmer)

Farewell
with
Grand Lake
instructors
and
participants
CHAPEL

9:00
– to –
10:00 AM

Afternoon Craft Talks | 3:00–4:30PM

**The Art of
Compression***
(Dupree)
Chapel

**"All the
Names
They Used
for God"***
(Krouse)
Chapel

**Grand Theft
Author***
(Palmer)
Chapel

**Diane Seuss'
Modern
Poetry***
(Morales)
Chapel

*Recommended texts for the book talks can be found on pages 10 and 11.

Classes listed first each day (Three Starts, Narrative Echo, and Form and Function) are held in Chapel. Hike and Write will meet at Rempel and leave together.

Classes listed second each day (Reading for an Audience, Writing to Unplug, The Lyric Essay, and Consider the Hybrid) are held in Cliffside.

UNLESS NOTED ABOVE, READINGS WILL BE HELD NIGHTLY IN THE CHAPEL, 7:30 TO 8:30 PM.
COURSE SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



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