



2026



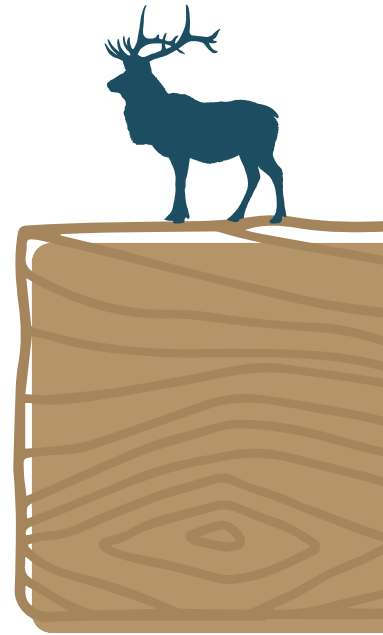
LIGHTHOUSE
WRITERS WORKSHOP

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 workshops. His work has appeared in *5280 Magazine*, *Georgetown Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *Elevation Outdoors*, *The Writer*, and *Poets Reading the News*. 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. His adventure how-to book, *Bikepacking the Colorado Trail*, was published in 2023, and *Gun Poems*, a new book of poetry, was published earlier this year.



INSTRUCTORS



Erika Krouse (she/her) is the author of four books of fiction and nonfiction, including her new collection of stories, *Save Me, Stranger*. Erika is a two-time Edgar Award awardee and a winner of the Colorado Book Award, the Housatonic Book Award, and the Paterson Fiction Prize. Erika's fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Best Mystery Stories of the Year*, *The Best American Mystery and Suspense*, and others. Erika mentors for the Book Project and the Portfolio Year at Lighthouse Writers Workshop, where she won the Beacon Award for Teaching Excellence.

Juan J. Morales (he/him) is the son of an Ecuadorian mother and Puerto Rican father and the author of four poetry collections, including *Dream of the Bird Tattoo* and *The Handyman's Guide to End Times*. Morales has received fellowships from CantoMundo, Macondo, Longleaf Writers Conference, and he has served as the editor/publisher of *Pilgrimage Press*. Recent poems have appeared in *Verse Daily*, *The Slowdown Podcast*, *High Plains Pueblo Radio*, and *Inscape*. He lives in Pueblo, Colorado, occasionally teaches for Lighthouse Writers in Denver, and is an Assistant Professor of English at Colorado College.



INSTRUCTORS



Karen Palmer (she/her) is the author of a 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* and "Birds of Paradise," received the *Virginia Quarterly's* Emily Clark Balch Prize for Fiction. Other writing has appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *The Denver Post*, *Five Points*, *The Rumpus*, *Lit Hub*, *The Writer's Chronicle*, and *Arts & Letters*. Karen lives and works in Los Angeles and has taught at Lighthouse for twenty years.



Suzi Q. Smith (she/her) is the author of poetry collections *Poems for the End of the World*, *A Gospel of Bones*, and the chapbook collection, *Thirteen Descansos*, and the co-editor of the anthologies, *Tell It Slant: An Anthology of Creative Nonfiction by Writers from Colorado's Prisons* and *All the Lives We Ever Lived, Volume I*. Suzi is also an organizer, an educator, a singer-songwriter, playwright, essayist, and interdisciplinary creative. Recipient of the 2023 Beacon Award for Excellence in Teaching, she is on faculty at Lighthouse Writers Workshop, and the Writing Director with Chateau d'Orquevaux in France. The recipient of the 2024 Social Impact Artist Award, as well as the 2018 Swanee Hunt Leadership Award, she chairs the Denver County Cultural Council.



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.

Using Photographs to Tell Our Stories

Led by Suzi Q. Smith

This generative writing session and workshop will focus on using photographs, documents, and other print materials as writing prompts to tell our stories. Participants will be invited to bring objects and/or photographs that evoke memories they want to explore and we'll allow them to spark short story writing and sharing (optional).



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Tuesday

On Revision: Finding Ways to See Again

Led by Andrea Dupree

We all know that getting a first, second, or third draft of something is often only the beginning. We tell the story so that we learn the story. We write the poem to feel the poem. And then the real work is upon us. But how do we re-enter the space of the work, how do we conceptualize a method of improvement? Our impulse might be to be conservative, to try to protect what is going right in a draft and carefully layer in additions. But that rarely seems to yield our best work. Let's talk instead about methods, mindsets, and radical ideas that can help any writer break back into their work and take it in surprising directions.

Element[ary] Poetry Writing

Led by Juan Morales

Our poetic traditions not only commemorate our daily histories and myths, but they also wish to understand our mysterious origins and the fundamental building blocks of all matter. We poetically attempt to harness the land, the sea, the sky, and the flames. In this generative workshop, we'll write and ponder the elements in nature. We'll celebrate the miniscule on the periodic table, snapshot the epic scale of the Grand Canyon, and delve into the delightful dirt in order to find and celebrate our poetic presence in the world.

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Wednesday

Eyes Like Strange Sins: Creating Irresistible Character Descriptions

Led by Erika Krouse

In this generative class, we'll create intricate character descriptions that transcend twinkling eyes and tall-dark-handsome. Using projection, sensory imagery, metaphor, and other descriptive techniques, we'll show how our characters understand themselves, view others, and reveal hidden psychologies and value systems. Come with a few characters in mind, and leave with great character descriptions you can use immediately. Open to all genres.

Poetry is Not a Luxury

Led by Suzi Q. Smith

This workshop will include a close reading and discussion of excerpts from Audre Lorde's poems and essays, accompanied by generative exercises designed for participants to begin drafting their own poems and/or essays

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Thursday

I Keep Hearing Voices: Writing Persona Poems

Led by Michael Henry

Whatever they may be called—dramatic monologues, persona poems, or "other" voice transcriptions, there's something very engaging, weird, and often surprising when we allow a persona to speak to us—or perhaps through us. In this workshop, we'll take a look at some of these kinds of poems, and then we'll try our hand at summoning those voices that need to speak. Hopefully we'll all produce poems that are strange and reverberant, a way of speaking—and thinking—that we didn't know we knew.

Writing While the World Burns

Led by Karen Palmer

How and why do we write when the world is falling apart? In this historical moment, it's hard to summon up the concentration needed to honor our practice. In this workshop, aided by short readings and exercises, we'll discuss why literature matters now more than ever and how to sustain belief while dealing responsibly and creatively with news, AI, and personal or professional setbacks. Because art matters. Every line pulled from you at great cost matters. Every word.

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

Future Imperfect: Ian McEwan's What We Can Know

Led by Andrea Dupree

Some of the best writers cross genres to explore the terrain of being alive, and Ian McEwan does just that in his 22nd Century take on the humanities and its discontents in a future dystopia. What can writers learn by practicing the kind of fluidity he shows in moving so comfortably between historical fiction, speculative, and contemporary realism? The first half of this talk will encourage some experimental genre hopping, and the second half will act as a book club.

Recommended Text: What We Can Know by Ian McEwan

Tuesday

"The Suicide Catcher," by Michael Paterniti

Led by Erika Krouse

In his astonishing essay, "The Suicide Catcher," Michael Paterniti profiles a man whose daily mission is to save Nanjing bridge jumpers from suicide. But during the course of Paterniti's reporting, roles suddenly shift and everything goes wrong, yet right, yet...well, you'll have to read it! In this story talk, we'll explore this literary blurring of boundaries and then write about a time when we temporarily lost ourselves –only to find something daring and new.

Recommended Text: the short story "The Suicide Catcher" by Michael Paterniti will be provided by email.

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Wednesday

The Writer Provokes

Led by Karen Palmer

Richard Flanagan's hybrid memoir, *Question 7*, is a work that refuses distance or detachment. The book is short and insistent, speaking to the reader rather than about its subjects, an ongoing conversation that moves restlessly across wide terrain—war and violence, love and grief, faith and doubt, and the moral failures and hopes of modern societies. Let's examine how provocation draws the reader in, challenging us to sit with uncertainty at a moment when easy answers can feel both seductive and dangerous.

Recommended Reading: *Question 7*, by Richard Flanagan

Thursday

We Insist and Resist: Honoring the Marginalized Body and Community in Danez Smith's *Don't Call Us Dead*

Led by Juan J. Morales

In the wealth of rave reviews for this book, Danez Smith is described as angry, erotic, politicized, innovative, classical, a formalist, an activist, and heartrending. Published in 2017, *Don't Call Us Dead* opens the queer imagination, speaks for the young black boys killed by police, and writes through their HIV positive diagnosis. The resulting poems remain timely. They're bittersweet struggles that seethe in their repairing and sustaining of communities. In this craft talk, we'll lean into discomfort, celebrate the marginalized body, learn from Smiths' ability to call out, and analyze how these poems elicit resistance and reconfigure community almost ten years later.

Recommended Text: *Don't Call Us Dead* by Danez Smith

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.





COST


SINGLE ROOMS

\$2,040 members / \$2,115 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$950 (after May 31: \$1,000)

Room and board: \$1090




DOUBLE ROOMS

\$1,590 members / \$1,670 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$950 (after May 31: \$1,000)

Room and board: \$640



MEALS AND WORKSHOPS ONLY

\$1,320 members / \$1,400 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$950 (after May 31: \$1,000)

Daily pass to Shadowcliff: \$75

Meals at Shadowcliff: \$295



WORKSHOPS ONLY

\$1,025 members / \$1,100 non-members

Breakdown:

Workshops: \$950 (after May 31: \$1,000)

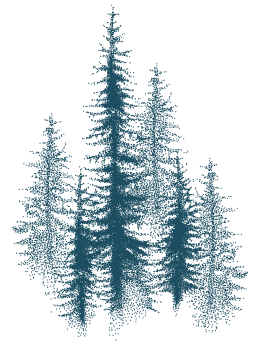
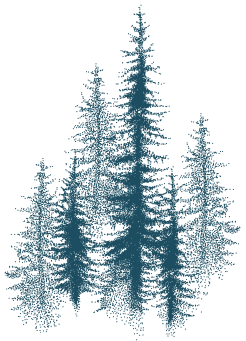
Daily pass to Shadowcliff: \$75



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
7/12

MONDAY
7/13

TUESDAY
7/14

WEDNESDAY
7/15

THURSDAY
7/16

FRIDAY
7/17

Morning Workshops | 9:30-11:30 AM

Check In
3:00
- to -
6:00 PM

Reception
and
Reading

7:30
- to -
9:00 PM

Hike and
Write
(Henry)

Using
Photographs
(Smith)

On Revision
(Dupree)

Element[ary]
Poetry
(Morales)

Eyes Like
Strange Sines
(Krouse)

Poetry is Not a
Luxury
(Smith)

Keep Hearing
Voices
(Henry)

Writing While
the World
Burns
(Palmer)

Farewell
with
Grand Lake
instructors
and
participants
CHAPEL

9:00
- to -
10:00 AM

Afternoon Craft Talks | 3:00-4:30 PM

Future
Imperfect*
(Dupree)
Chapel

“The Suice
Catcher”*
(Krouse)
Chapel

The Writer
Provokes*
(Palmer)
Chapel

We Insist and
Resist
(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.