



TWO-DAY INTENSIVES

the busy writer's home at Lit Fest



Ready to dive into Lit Fest but can't commit to a week-long workshop? Our Two-Day Intensives are the perfect way to dive deeper than a Craft Seminar without the intensity of a full Advanced Weeklong Workshop. Below you'll find the full catalog of Two-Day Intensives coming up at Lit Fest!

Jun
10–11
9:00am
to
12:00pm

Breaking Rules (Safely) with John Cotter

Anyone can smash rules recklessly. We'll do something harder and better—we'll break rules carefully, in subtle and insinuating ways that will make our fiction not just daring, but moving, elusive, fresh. In this generative workshop, we'll study examples from Julie Otsuka, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, and Steven Millhauser. We'll tell instead of showing, we'll base our characters on stock types, we'll not trust the reader, and we'll let all our darlings live. We'll try lots of in-class exercises, and we'll leave iconoclasts.

Jun
10–11
9:00am
to
12:00pm

Obsessions with William Haywood Henderson

All writers have a particular lens on the world, a way of seeing, a way of understanding, and certain questions that they return to time and again across their writing career. It's interesting to discover what you're obsessed with and why—you can use this knowledge to dig deeper into what matters to you, and it's only through exploring your obsessions (and fears and desires) that you'll find your most individual and compelling voice and vision. In this intensive, we'll dig into your brain and see what's hidden there, and then we'll explore how your material shapes itself on the page.

Jun
10–11
9:00am
to
12:00pm

In Memoriam: Poetry and Grief (Virtual) with Toby Altman

This course will introduce writers to one of the most important poetic genres: the elegy. We'll explore some famous, canonical examples of the genre, like John Milton's "Lycidas," to get a sense of how it has traditionally worked—and what its shortcomings are. And we'll study contemporary poets who rework the elegy: making the old form new again—and newly relevant to the griefs of the present, from the AIDS crisis to Black Lives Matter.

Jun
10–11
1:00
to
4:00pm

The Ghost, The Glimmer with Sarah Elizabeth Schantz

Using divination techniques like bibliomancy, Tarot, and other oracles, we'll borrow from Pam Houston's "glimmer" to draw down the muse. Thinking about what haunts us, we'll rummage in the etymology of words, excavate the archives, and call upon our ancestors. We'll explore the zeitgeist and the overlap of past, present, and tomorrow in narrative. We'll throw the stones, write down the bones, and wrap our fingers around our roots. Considering the power of the invisible (subtext, secrets, the arcane, the "truth," or even God), this intensive is generative while focusing on the art of revision as resurrection for some of the darlings we had to kill.



LIT
FEST

TWO-DAY INTENSIVES

Jun
10–11
1:00
to
4:00pm

Writing the Short Poem with John Brehm

"Brevity is the soul of wit," Shakespeare wrote, and to illustrate the point, here is a very brief poem by A.R. Ammons, titled "Their Sex Life": "One failure on/ Top of another." The unforgettable image, the delight in the ordinary, the quick strike that makes the mind leap: in this two-day intensive, we'll explore these and many other charms of short poems and try our hands at writing some ourselves.

Required Texts:

The Really Short Poems of A.R. Ammons

Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years, Jim Kacian, editor

Jun
12–13
4:00
to
7:00pm

Strange Story Structures with Erika Krouse

Freytag, get lost! In this two-day intensive, we'll read, explore, and try a variety of short story structures that range from the alternative to the bizarre: the montage, the list, the instructional, the backward story, metafiction, the "Rashomon," the floater, and much more! Emphasis will be on mass generation rather than perfected and read-aloud-able work. Prose writers of any genre can expect example readings, brief discussions, and lots of exercises focusing on techniques you've never tried before. Come to class with one idea or fifteen; leave with exciting new writing and your mind on fire.

Jun
13–14
4:00
to
7:00pm

Humor Writing for Those Who Are or Aren't Funny (Yet) with Elissa Bassist

We'll break down a short comedy piece in order to write/publish our own in venues like NewYorker.com's *Daily Shouts*. We'll discuss premise, structure, speaker, target, deviating from reality, and other tricks that apply to all writing, including personal essays, novels, and dating profiles. There will be readings, handouts, and brainstorming exercises to bring out what you have to offer as a writer. After day one, each participant will write a short (150–500 words) piece (parody, satire, character monologue) to share/workshop the next day. After two days, everyone will have new skills, but if not, it's not the instructor's fault.

Jun
14–15
4:00
to
7:00pm

Outsider Poets (Virtual) with Elizabeth Robinson

We'll use outsider poets as inspiration—John Clare, Jean Toomer, Besmilr Brigham, and dg nanouk okpik—to draw inspiration from poets working outside conventional educational, cultural, or stylistic norms. Using poems by these authors, we'll claim permission for creative rule-breaking of all sorts! All levels of experience welcome in this generative study and writing intensive.

Jun
15–16
4:00
to
7:00pm

Beyond the "Me" in Memoir with Anna Qu

Memoir is not just 'my' story, but a story of a community, a culture (maybe more than one), and a unique world. In this two-day intensive, we'll begin to ask questions like who do we carry in our work? Who are we holding space for, and how do we balance those stories with our own? We'll focus on writing complex memoir with multiple narratives, and balancing character, society building, and scene, to create a fully fleshed-out world.