

SOUTH CAROLINA The Storytelling State

2021 Session Descriptions

Cinelle Barnes, “What’s Mine and Yours: Writing Nonfiction Family Stories” In this generative seminar, writers will learn strategies for writing nonfiction stories on family: research, writing, scope setting, attribution and privacy matters, and literary tools and techniques that help depict family members with honesty, clarity, and nuance. The seminar will comprise of mini lectures, writing prompts, read alouds, and a Q&A.

Jeffrey Blount, “The Shy Writer’s Guide to Presenting Yourself and Your Work” As a director for NBC News, Jeffrey Blount trained on-air talent, print and radio journalists, pundits, and executives to present themselves well on television. After retiring from NBC, Jeffrey delivered media training to government officials, doctors, business professionals, university officials, professional athletes and more. Jeffrey, author of the recent novel *The Emancipation of Evan Walls*, will share with us a portion of a lifetime of wisdom learned helping others share their passion with audiences. Joining Mr. Blount on the panel are life-long introverts, Marly Rusoff, literary agent and former publicist, and Rebecca Bruff, author. Both will share their experiences of managing the fear of public speaking.

Belle Boggs, “You *Do* Look Funny In Your Bathing Suit: Humor in Life’s Dreadful Moments” Taking inspiration from stories and novels by Charles Dickens, Arnold Lobel, Joy Williams, Paul Beatty, and Julie Hecht, this workshop will examine the way these writers find absurdity and humor in life’s dark moments. We will tap into our inner weirdness and explore strategies for putting it on the page. Please bring your insecurities, preoccupations, wild impulses, and secret meanness. Bathing suits optional.

Anne Brewer, *The Plot Thickens: A User's Guide to Novel Structure*

Bogged down in the middle of your novel? Not sure if you've built to a satisfying conclusion? Wondering where in your characters' story your book should start? In this workshop, Anne Brewer, former senior acquisitions editor and 10-year veteran of traditional publishers (St. Martin's Press, Thomas Dunne Books/Minotaur, and Crooked Lane Books) will show you how the Three Act Structure and The Hero's Journey can be used to craft an engaging opening, brainstorm intriguing plot twists, and ultimately develop a narrative climax that feels satisfying and exciting to your readers.

Patti Callahan Henry, “The Soul of Story” Join *New York Times* bestselling author Patti Callahan Henry as she discusses the “Soul of Story” and how to identify, capitalize and perfect the human journey/motivation of your character. Soul of the story is the emotional journey of transformation – how do we allow the external plot to affect change in the character’s internal life?

Len Lawson, “Love Thyself: A Poetic Approach” The poet's life can be filled with thrilling highs and abysmal lows. It can be difficult to remain encouraged in the craft in addition to the hardships of

life and the uncertainty of the world. Using a popular poetry trend in recent years, we will promote self-love through a transparent look into the self, using poetry by Ocean Vuong, Roger Reeves, and more. Through writing love for self, we can create poetry that matters beyond page and stage.

Ray McManus & Len Lawson, Poetry Slushfest Read aloud one of your poems, get instant feedback and learn some tips and tricks from renowned South Carolina poets.

Patti Callahan, Marly Rusoff, Amanda Bostic, “From Manuscript to Publication: Answering Your Questions” An author, an agent and an editor discuss how a book comes into the world, from it’s early stages to its final display on a bookstore shelf and all the insider secrets in between. In this panel, you’ll learn about contracts, queries, the job of the author, agent, and editor, marketing and more. Come with your questions about the process!

Peter Schmitt, “Image is Everything”

Image—in poetry especially, and even in prose fiction—is, if not “everything,” then at least an asset of great potential to the writer. In this exercise in concreteness—emphasizing specificity, immediacy, physicality and the visual—we will reassemble an example of a well-known poet’s work to highlight these qualities, while minimizing reliance on vague abstractions. It’s a clear, pragmatic, and fun demonstration of “show, not tell,” as we focus on the image and its potent capacity to communicate our meaning.

Susan Zurenda, “Family Stories: Evoking Emotion in Your Characters”

This workshop will cover both the basics of story and the importance of genuine emotion in stories. It will also examine how writers achieve success in creating human emotion in contrast to why writers sometimes fail in this essential endeavor. Ample illustrations will be provided, some from Susan's novel, *Bells for Eli*, and participants will be given writing prompts with time to write, followed by real-time feedback.

Queryfest Query letters are read aloud and agents respond to them in real time.

Prose Slushfest Your work is read aloud anonymously. Agents & editors respond to your work in real time.