

The 8th Annual Boldface Conference for Emerging Writers May 23-27, 2016

The Honors College and Elizabeth D. Rockwell Pavilion
at the University of Houston

Monday, May 23

8:30-9:30 **Breakfast and Registration** ◇ Rockwell Foyer

9:40-9:55 **Opening Remarks from Matthew Salesses, Conference Administrator and Audrey Colombe, Faculty Advisor**
◇ Rockwell Pavilion

10:00-11:30 **Workshops***

*For locations see list at end of program

11:30-11:40 **BREAK**

11:40-12:30 **Masterclasses***

*See descriptions at end of program

- Dana Kroos: “Making a Scene: what plays and screen-plays can teach fiction writers”
◇ Rockwell Pavilion
- Alexandra Naumann: “*Which* Craft? Poetry or Prose? Poetry Craft Moves for Fiction Writers”
◇ Honors College Commons
- Christopher Murray: “‘Can You Make It Rain Harder?’ How Impediments Can Raise Your Poetic Game”
◇ Honors College 212S

12:30-1:30 **Lunch** ◇ Rockwell Foyer

1:35-2:15 **Reading by Visiting Writer Kimberly Meyer, with introduction by Boldface faculty Joshua Foster**
◇ Rockwell Pavillion

2:20-3:45 **Workshops**

3:45-4:15 **BREAK**

4:15-5:00 **Craft Talk by Visiting Writer Lauren Berry, with introduction by Boldface faculty Erika Jo Brown: “Selective Hearing: How to Cultivate Your Poetic Voice When You’re Not Writing”**
◇ Rockwell Pavillion

Tuesday, May 24

9:00-10:00 **Breakfast** ◇ Rockwell Foyer

10:00-11:30 **Workshops**

11:30-11:40 **BREAK**

11:40-12:30 **Masterclasses***

*See descriptions at end of program

- Corey Campbell: “Time After Time: Exploring Time in Fiction”
◇ Rockwell Pavilion
- Joshua Foster: “Where ‘I’ Fits in: Nonfiction Genres along the Self <—> World Axis”
◇ Honors College Commons
- Josephine Mitchell: “Whose Story Is It Anyway? Perspective and Voice”
◇ Honors College 212S

12:30-1:30 **Lunch** ◇ Rockwell Foyer

1:35-2:15 **Reading by Visiting Writer Tiphonie Yanique, with introduction by Boldface faculty Corey Campbell**
◇ Rockwell Pavilion

2:20-3:45 **Workshops**

3:45-4:15 **BREAK**

4:15-5:00 **Craft Talk by Visiting Writer Kimberly Meyer, with introduction by *Glass Mountain* Fiction Editor LeeAnne Carlson: “Get Over Yourself: Towards a New Creative Non-Fiction”**
◇ Rockwell Pavilion

After-Hours Event: Featured Faculty Readers Erika Jo Brown & Jonathan Meyer, plus Student open mic reading at Kaboom Books (3116 Houston Avenue) at 7:30 pm (sign up at the registration table)

Wednesday, May 25

9:00-10:00 **Breakfast** ◇ Rockwell Foyer

10:00-11:30 **Workshops**

11:30-11:40 **BREAK**

11:40-12:30 **Masterclasses***
*See descriptions at end of program

- JP Gritton: “How to Avoid a Flashback”
◇ Rockwell Pavilion

- Georgia Pearle: “The Ethical Plunder: How to Riff off the World and Stay (Mostly) Enemy-Free”
 ◇ Honors College Commons
- Dino Piacentini: “‘Just a Little Trick I Picked up from Billie Holiday:’ What Can Writers Learn from Other Artists?”
 ◇ Honors College 212S

12:30-3:00 Lunch and Mid-Week Break for Consultations, Conversations, and Community

- A limited number of trips will be available (sign up at the registration table) to:
 - ◇ Houston Museum of Fine Arts/Hermann Park
 - ◇ Project Row Houses
 - ◇ Menil Collection

3:00-3:40 Readings by Boldface Faculty Corey Campbell, Christopher Murray, and Dana Kroos, with introductions by *Glass Mountain* Managing Editor Mai Tram Nguyen
 ◇ Rockwell Pavilion

3:45-5:00 Workshops

After-Hours Event: Featured Faculty Readers Alexandra Naumann and Joshua Foster plus Student open mic at Brasil (2604 Dunlavy, at Westheimer) at 7:30 pm (sign up at the registration table)

Thursday, May 26

9:00-10:00 Breakfast
 ◇ Rockwell Foyer

10:00-11:30 Workshops

11:30-11:40 **BREAK**

11:40-12:30 **Masterclasses***

*See descriptions at end of program

- Jonathan Meyer: “Why So Serious?: Using Humor to Your Story’s Advantage”
 - ◊ Honors College Commons
- Erika Jo Brown: “Why So Serious?: Poetry and Humor”
 - ◊ Honors College 212S

12:30-1:30 **Lunch** ◊ Rockwell Foyer

1:35-2:15 **Reading by Visiting Writer Lauren Berry, with introduction by Boldface faculty Christopher Murray**
◊ Rockwell Pavilion

2:15-2:45 **BREAK**

2:45-4:00 **Workshops**

4:10-5:00 **Readings by Boldface faculty Josie Mitchell, J.P. Gritton, Dino Piacentini, and Georgia Pearle, with introductions by *Glass Mountain* Editor Aries Jones**
◊ Rockwell Pavilion

Friday, May 27

****Tables for Literary Magazines and Organizations**
in Rockwell Pavilion & Foyer**

9:30-10:30 **Breakfast** ◊ Rockwell Foyer

10:30-11:30 **Panel: “Practical Advice for Getting Started with Publishing”** with Visiting Writers Tiphonie Yanique, Kimberly Meyer, and Lauren Berry; moderated by UH faculty Audrey Colombe
◇ Rockwell Pavilion

10:30-11:30 **Writing Room: Creative writing exercises led by Boldface faculty**
◇ Honors College 212S

11:30-11:45 **BREAK**

11:45-12:45 **Your Choice:**

- **Panel: “Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Applying to MFA Programs”** with Peter Turchi, UH Faculty and former Director of the MFA programs at Warren Wilson and Arizona State; Audrey Colombe, UH Faculty, formerly University of Tampa; Roberto Tejada, UH Faculty, formerly Southern Methodist University
◇ Honors College Commons

- **Panel: “How to Be Build Community and Practice Literary Citizenship”** with Elizabeth White-Olsen, Director of Writespace; Fernanda Brady of the Houston Writers Guild; Rich Levy, Executive Director of Inprint; and Jack McBride, Associate Director of Writers in the Schools; moderated by *Glass Mountain* Managing Editor Mai Tram Nguyen
◇ Rockwell Pavilion

- **Writing Room: Creative Writing Exercises** led by Boldface faculty
◇ Honors College 212S

12:45-1:45 **Lunch** ◇ Rockwell Foyer

1:45-2:30 **Your Choice:**

- **Panel: “You Wrote It, Now What’s the Secret to Submitting Your Work?”** with *Gulf Coast* Digital Editor Carlos Hernandez, *Glass Mountain* Managing Editor Mai Tram Nguyen, *NANO Fiction* Associate Editor Sophie Rosenblum, and *The First Line* Editor, David LaBounty; moderated by *Glass Mountain* Editor Aries Jones
◊ Rockwell Pavillion
- **Panel: “You Workshopped It, Now What’s the Secret to Revision?”** with Fernanda Brady of *Inklings*; Chris Cander, author of *Whisper Hollow*; Kevin Prufer, UH faculty and author of *Churches*; Benjamin Rybeck, marketing director at Brazos Bookstore and author of *The Sadness*; moderated by Matthew Salesses, author of *The Hundred-Year Flood*
◊ Honors College Commons
- **Writing Room: Creative Writing Exercises** led by Boldface faculty
◊ Honors College 212S

2:30-3:00 **BREAK**

- 3:00-3:45 **Craft Talk by Visiting Writer Tiphanie Yanique, with introduction by Boldface faculty Alexandra Naumann: “Girls: Crafting the Female Child in Contemporary Narratives”**
◊ Rockwell Pavilion
- 3:50-4:00 **Closing Remarks by Conference Administrator Matthew Salesses**
◊ Rockwell Pavillion

After-Hours Event: Farewell Party at Calhoun’s Rooftop Bar & Grill
(4701 Calhoun Road, University of Houston) 7-9 pm

Evening Events:

Tuesday May 24, 7:30 pm
Open Mic Reading at Kaboom Books
3116 Houston Avenue
(Sign up at the Registration Table)

Wednesday, May 25, 7:30 pm
Open Mic Reading at Brasil Cafe
2604 Dunlavy St.
(Sign up at the Registration Table)

Friday, May 27, 7:00-9:00 pm
Farewell Party at Calhoun's Rooftop Bar & Grill
4701 Calhoun Road, University of Houston

Masterclass Descriptions:

*See daily schedule for times and locations

Dana Kroos: “Making a Scene: what plays and screenplays can teach fiction writers”

Stories told on the big screen or in the small theater take advantage of the immediate experience for the viewer, but are also confined by their media: the size of the stage, the amount of time an audience can sit without a break, etc. In plays and screenplays most information is conveyed through action and dialogue; the writer must give the viewer enough clues about what is happening so that the viewer will catch-on, join-in and be swept away without the exposition and direct explanation from a narrator. Well-written plays and screenplays use those things that confine them (space, time, absence of narration) to their advantage to create intense and well-paced narratives that reveal characters through actions and develop plot through shaped and crafted scenes. This master-class will explore strategies used by screen and playwriting that can be applied to writing fiction.

Dino Piacentini: “Just a Little Trick I Picked Up from Billie Holiday’: What Can Writers Learn from Other Artists?”

What can singers teach us about repetition and syntax? What can painters teach us about sensual detail and juxtaposition? What can dancers teach us about dialogue? For centuries, artists have been turning to the written word for inspiration. Here’s your chance to look right back at them. In this workshop, we’ll investigate ways in which writers can find ideas, techniques, inspiration, solutions, and even form and structure possibilities from other artistic disciplines. Come prepared to write.

Corey Campbell: “Time After Time: Exploring Time in Fiction”

Eudora Welty tells us, “Fiction’s concern is with the ephemeral—that is the human—effects of time, these alone.” How do we as writers make sense of time in our work? How can we play with it to create interesting

effects in our stories? This class will explore time both as a structuring mechanism (often an engine creating urgency in a story) and as a deeply personal philosophy held by characters. Looking at story structure, we'll think about compression, flash-forwards, and the way some stories travel characters' entire lives while others put hyper-focus on specific moments. Finally, time permitting (ha), we'll consider how characters may perceive time differently and how those different obsessions and understandings can affect a story's structure. Students will leave with a greater awareness of possibilities in their own fiction.

Christopher Murray: “Can You Make it Rain Harder?” How Impediments Can Raise Your Poetic Game”

“Can You Make it Rain Harder?” is how Prince responded when informed that it would be raining during his outdoor Super Bowl Halftime performance. We often think that life is better when difficulties are removed, or at least reduced. However, when writing a poem, added difficulties can draw from us imaginative and emotional resources that would otherwise lie dormant. Poets have known for ages that the mind's creative energies respond to difficulties; thus, they have created challenging forms like the sestina and the villanelle. These traditional forms are just some of the ways poets impel themselves to raise their poetic game and test their imaginative mettle. In this masterclass, we will discuss various strategies for challenging oneself and accessing more of one's poetic resources.

Josephine Mitchell: “Whose Story Is It Anyway?: Perspective and Voice”

You meet a chatty second-grader in the laundromat, you're entranced by the grapefruit-sized moth with no digestive track at the butterfly sanctuary, your grandmother tells you her version of the Pinochet regime disappearances. However it happens, you have the start of a story. But who is going to tell it? You masquerading as a narrator, the second grader that smells of laundry soap, the moth with no mouth, your abuela? Perspective, the lens through which to view the story, is foundational.

And an integral part of this perspective as it hits the page is the voice, the sound and diction of the character. What vocabulary does the narrator use? How does a second grader's diction differ from a moth's? From your grandmother's? In this masterclass, we'll examine published pieces written in a variety of perspectives and voices. To further understand the intricacies of voice, we'll take on a series of writing exercises to explore the writer's own and unearth the the most compelling way to tell the story.

Georgia Pearle: “The Ethical Plunder: How to Riff Off the World and Stay (Mostly) Enemy-Free”

Thievery. You know we all do it—being a good writer often amounts to being a fantastic mimic. Sometimes we take something small as an overheard phrase or an overworn expression. Sometimes we're telling stories that have happened to us, or happened to people we know, but the stories are so commonplace that, well, why tell them at all? Sometimes we're trying to include subjectivities in our work that we don't ourselves inhabit. So then, given our obsession with the original, and given our attachments to materials that are both personally and culturally 'owned,' how do we make what we take useful? How do we make it relevant? Most importantly, how do we give stories to our readers that offer penance for what we've taken from the world? In this masterclass, we'll talk both theory and strategy.

JP Gritton: “How to Avoid the Flashback”

Maybe this has happened to you. You plow through the first five pages of a story, unable to put it down: you love the quirky cast of characters; you love the vibrant and original language; you love the tension that simmers underneath it all. And then suddenly this story, the same one that's been rolling like a freight train for the last five pages, comes to a shrieking halt. The author puts a big ol' “*” in the middle of the page and takes you back five days (or five years, or five decades), sucking you and the tension right out of the story. Flashbacks are handy tools in the writer's tool chest—they help us convey critical information to the

reader, they complicate stories in interesting ways—but they can also be disorienting, and by definition they slow a narrative’s forward motion. How can we avoid the flashback? Should we avoid the flashback? Can we? This presentation will seek to explore, if not exactly to answer, such questions.

Joshua Foster: “Where ‘I’ Fits In: Nonfiction Genres along the Self <—> World Axis”

“Nonfiction” covers a huge selection of books. Consider some typical categories: Biography, Business, Current Affairs & Politics, Diet Health Fitness, History, Religion, Self Help & Relationships. Now think about the nonfiction that you read and write. Where would you find it in the bookstore? Where would you shelve yourself? This masterclass covers further genre groupings under the nonfiction umbrella, as well as the important proximity of the author (self) to the world (audience).

Alexandra Naumann: “Which Craft? Poetry or Prose?: Poetry Craft Moves for Fiction Writers”

In a letter seeking advice on her writing, Emily Dickinson wrote: “Could you tell me how to grow? Or is it unconveyed, like melody or witchcraft?” In this Masterclass we’ll look closely at scenes from fiction writers who engage the witch-craft of poetry - IMAGE, FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE & SOUND - to create emotionally moving & linguistically stunning passages in prose. How can we, likewise, steal from the toolbox of poetry to make sentences sing and scenes sparkle? Can poetry’s craft moves bewitch fiction readers? Poet Mary Ruefle claims “the origins of poetry are clearly rooted in obscurity, in secretiveness, in incantation, in spells that must at once invoke and protect, tell the secret and keep it.” What poetic spells will enable us to capture the dark magic of “obscurity, secretiveness, & incantation” in prose? Topics of discussion will include: harnessing the power of image; tapping into figurative language as means of enchantment; and provoking an emotional response in our reader by way of sound. By engaging in activities that will allow us to experiment with these tools in our own work, we’ll

explore & discuss different ways to amp up fiction by texturing prose with poetic devices. We shall seek, above all, to captivate, entrance, and spellbind by bringing the magic of poetry into prose!

Jonathan Meyer: “Why So Serious?: Using Humor to Your Story’s Advantage”

A good joke isn’t too different from a good story: Both are constructed around an intriguing setup and complication, sustained tension and then release. We laugh when something strikes us as surprising. We also laugh to defend ourselves from the absurdity of the world. As writers, though, we can achieve a lot by embracing absurdity. Elements of humor craft—irony, understatement, suddenness, and reversal—contribute to powerful fiction-writing lessons. In this session, we’ll look at examples of humor in print and examine how hitting the funny bone can add nuance and texture to your narrative.

Erika Jo Brown: “Why So Serious?: Poetry and Humor”

Freud wrote an entire book on humor and the id, which we will calmly ignore in favor of the real experts: poets. This talk will discuss humor as a creative strategy, including wit, surrealism, and gurlisque, and will explore craft methods used to achieve it, like tone, diction, and pacing. We’ll discuss if there are limits to humor mined from autobiographical details. Funny poetry is often packaged as light verse, and its finer points underrecognized—whether subversive, satirical or plain slippery, through page, persona or performance, this fresh aesthetic deserves a “serious” look in the contemporary canon.

Workshop Leaders and Locations

- Erika Jo Brown: 106T (M.D. Anderson)
- Corey Campbell: Rockwell Pavilion
- Joshua Foster: Honors College Commons
- JP Gritton: 304A (M.D. Anderson)
- Dana Kroos: Honors College 212S
- Jonathan Meyer: Evans Room (Special Collections)
- Josephine Mitchell: 304B (M.D. Anderson)
- Christopher Murray: 106P (M.D. Anderson)
- Alexandra Naumann: 106R (M.D. Anderson)
- Georgia Pearle: Estess Library
- Dino Piacentini: Rockwell Pavilion

