



WCSU MFA 2023 WINTER RESIDENCY



January 3-8



WCSU Westside Campus



**WESTERN CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Winter Residency
January 3, 2023 – January 8, 2023
WCSU's [Westside Campus](#)
43 Lake Avenue Ext.
Danbury, CT 06811

*A continental breakfast is included and will be served on Wednesday the 4th – Sunday the 8th from 8:00 – 9:00 in the Westside Campus Ballroom.

*Lunch is included and will be served on Wednesday the 4th – Sunday the 8th from noon – 1:00 in the Westside Campus Ballroom.

*Coffee/tea is included and available all day.

*Dinner is not included, but there are plenty of great restaurants near campus. Feel free to ask for suggestions!

*Books by faculty and visiting writers are available for purchase through Byrd's Books:
<https://www.byrdsbooks.com/wcsu-winter-residency-2023>

***Current MFA students: In order to receive credit for attending residency, you must attend all events, including the opening reception, evening readings, and residency wrap-up session.**

Tuesday, January 3rd

---ARRIVAL---

New Student Orientation/Tour of Westside Campus

Anthony D'Aries
Westside Campus Center Ballroom
1:30-3:00

Students starting in the spring semester are required to attend this orientation session. Current students and MFA mentors are also welcome to join us on a tour of the Westside Campus.

Online Multi-Genre (OMG) Workshop Meetings

Oscar De Los Santos & Erik Ofgang
CC 212
3:30-5:00

Students enrolled in OMG in the spring will meet with their instructor and classmates to review course expectations and guidelines, including Blackboard, workshop etiquette, and how best to prepare and receive workshop feedback.

Opening Reception/Faculty Flash Readings

[Hotel Zero Degrees – Conference Room](#)

7:30-9:00

MFA Coordinator Anthony D'Aries will welcome everyone to our winter residency! MFA mentors will read short excerpts (7-10 minutes) from their works-in-progress. Desserts and coffee/tea will be served.

Wednesday, January 4th

Flash: Beyond the Genre Binary

Jubi Arriola-Headley, 2021 Housatonic Book Award Winner in Poetry
CC 212
9:00-11:30

Poetry or prose? Fiction or fact? Narrative or lyric? Flash doesn't care about your *boundaries*. Flash crosses borders at will and steals what works. Flash is fixed on the image, stuck in the moment. Flash is a magnifying glass on a sunny day, aimed at a predictably industrious and utterly unsuspecting ant. Flash speaks in multitudinous vernaculars. Flash is literary, queered. During our time together, we'll read some pieces resplendent in their brevity (thank you, Dinty Moore), talk about what makes them great flash – or not, and spend some time crafting mad flashes of our own.

Choose Your Own Adventure

Option A

Writing the Line Between Dread and Desire: Gothic Techniques to Seduce and Scare Your Reader

Briana Una McGuckin

CC 214

1:30-3:00

The gross-out and the jump scare are not the only ways to horrify. In fact, if your reader isn't good and anxious beforehand, these moments in our fiction can come off as funny instead of frightening. To be invested in horror, the reader must first consent to being horrified—which means that, on some level, horror should be seductive. During this workshop, we'll take a look at a sensual subgenre of horror—the Gothic—and mine it for tips on getting readers in the mood to be scared.

Option B

I Couldn't Put it Down: Pacing and Storytelling

Anne Westrick

Westside Campus Center Ballroom

1:30-3:00

Often we equate pacing with page-turning as if faster were always better, but sometimes it's the craft of slowing a scene down that causes the tension to ramp up. How do writers create dramatic tension? What are the elements of well-paced stories, and what mistakes do writers sometimes make? In this workshop we'll analyze the pacing in two novels: *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell and *The Sweetness of Water* by Nathan Harris. (Excerpts will be provided. There is no requirement to read these books in advance, but both are recommended.) Although we'll discuss fiction, insights gleaned will help you write well, no matter your genre. **Please bring 5 pages of a current work-in-progress and be ready to reflect on the way you've paced your work.**

Enrichment Project Presentations

CC 212

3:30-5:00

Enrichment Projects are designed to give MFA students an opportunity to explore an avenue of learning outside of their coursework. A student might, for example, choose to learn a foreign language, start a new online publication, volunteer for a nonprofit organization, or try another appropriately challenging activity. The Enrichment Project is not a writing assignment, but a project that will influence the student as a professional writer.

Evening Reading and Q&A

Jubi Arriola-Headley, 2021 Housatonic Book Award Winner in Poetry
Westside Classroom 218
7:30-9:00

Jubi Arriola-Headley (he/him) is a Blacqueer poet, storyteller, first-generation United Statesian, & author of [original kink: poems](#) (Sibling Rivalry Press), recipient of the 2021 Housatonic Book Award. He's a 2018 PEN America Emerging Voices Fellow, holds an MFA from the University of Miami, and has received support from Yaddo, Millay Arts, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Lambda Literary, & the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Jubi and his work have been featured in [Literary Hub](#), [Electric Literature](#), [The Rumpus](#), [Southern Humanities Review](#), PBS NewsHour's [Brief But Spectacular](#), & elsewhere. Jubi lives with his husband in South Florida, on ancestral Tequesta, Miccosukee, and Seminole lands.

Thursday, January 5th

Playing the Shell Game: A Multi-Genre Master Class in Hermit Crab Writing

Julie Marie Wade, 2021 Housatonic Book Award Winner in Nonfiction
CC 212
9:00-11:30

Poets and prosists have long borrowed non-literary forms like dictionary entries, encyclopedias, out-of-office replies, and personal ads as containers for their literary content. In 2003, in the first edition of their craft text *Tell It Slant*, creative nonfiction writers Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola invoked the "hermit crab" as a memorable metaphor for adopted-forms literature. A vulnerable mollusk born without a shell, the hermit crab searches its environment for viable shells to inhabit—much the way writers, particularly those exploring emotionally charged content, may seek out a seemingly neutral shell to house, and help them more fully elucidate, their content. In this class, we'll consider examples of "hermit crab" poetry and prose, with many opportunities for discussion and emulation.

Choose Your Own Adventure

Option A

Matthew Quinn Martin in Conversation with Ben Burgis

Westside Campus Center Ballroom

1:30-3:00

Ben Burgis is a philosophy instructor at Morehouse College, a Jacobin columnist, and host of the “Give Them an Argument” podcast and YouTube show. He is the author of four books: *Christopher Hitchens: What He Got Right, How He Went Wrong, and Why He Still Matters*; *Canceling Comedians While the World Burns*; *Myth and Mayhem*; and *Give Them an Argument*.

Matthew Quinn Martin is the author of the Nightlife series (Pocket Star/Simon & Schuster) as well as numerous works of short fiction. He is the co-writer of the feature films *Being* and *Slingshot*. He lives in the shadow of the Capital in Upstate New York, and when he isn't writing or pulling a "Bob Vila" on the house he just bought, he spends his time playing bagpipes competitively (...for real).

Option B

Finding a Way In: Locating the Seeds for Powerful Personal Writing

Onnesha Roychoudhuri

CC 212

1:30-3:00

In Courtney Zoffness' essay “The Only Thing We Have to Fear,” her five-year-old son's sudden and severe anxiety about getting to school on time brings back her own forgotten childhood anxieties, forcing a new reckoning with her roles as both daughter and mother. In Hilton Als' “Tristes Tropiques,” it's the resurgence of a memory of his former best friend—whom he had an unrequited crush on—that spurs his deeper reflections on love, sex, race, and gender identity. For Sheila Heti, it's the broad and freewheeling question, *How Should a Person Be?* that launches and guides her forward. And, for Amy Leach, it's following a moth's flight through the parking lot of a grocery store.

There are countless topics to explore when we're drawing from our own lives, but it's often that initial spark that comes from a vital scene, memory, or question that is key to unlocking the organizing theme(s) that can sustain and contain a personal narrative.

In this workshop, we'll use a series of guided reading and brainstorming exercises to locate some of those (often unexpected) hot spots in your own life. Whether you're an old hand at writing personal essays and memoir or have never written in these genres before, this workshop offers ample room to experiment, brainstorm, and play. You'll leave the workshop with a handful of potential essay or longer-form memoir topics to explore further as well as some tools to help you take the next steps.

The Creative Writing Workshop as a Mobile Space: Teaching Outside of Academia

Bob Cowser, Anthony D'Aries, and John Proctor
Westside Campus Ballroom
3:30-5:00

While many MFA graduates go on to teach writing and literature in colleges and universities, more and more choose to also pursue teaching opportunities outside of academic settings. Libraries, senior communities, after-school programs, as well as prisons, shelters, and rehabilitation centers can often benefit from (and are usually in desperate need of) quality, engaging education programs.

In this panel, three writers discuss their experiences teaching in a wide range of community settings and institutions. While the conversation will focus on the panelists shared background in teaching in prisons, the discussion will apply to anyone interested in teaching in and/or starting their own community workshops.

Evening Reading & Q&A

Julie Marie Wade, 2021 Housatonic Book Award Winner in Nonfiction
Westside Classroom 218
7:30-9:00

Julie Marie Wade is the author of 13 collections of poetry, prose, and hybrid forms, including *Wishbone: A Memoir in Fractures*, *Small Fires*, *Postage Due: Poems & Prose Poems*, *When I Was Straight, SIX*, *Just an Ordinary Woman Breathing*, and *Skirted*. With Denise Duhamel, she wrote *The Unrhymables: Collaborations in Prose*, and with Brenda Miller, *Telephone: Essays in Two Voices*. A winner of the Marie Alexander Poetry Series and the Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Memoir, Julie teaches in the creative writing program at Florida International University and reviews regularly for *Lambda Literary Review* and *The Rumpus*.

Friday, January 6th

Panel Discussion: Starting a Community Arts Nonprofit Organization

CC 212
10:00 – 11:30

[The Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut](#) connects with and provides support for artists, creative entrepreneurs, arts, and cultural organizations. They engage the public, businesses, and government leaders to advance the arts and integrate creativity in communities. They are

connectors, facilitators, and providers of essential resources. Overall, the mission of the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut is to enrich people's lives and grow the economy through creativity.

Join us for a panel discussion with key team members to learn more about their exciting programs and important mission as well as discover ways writing can help you establish and fund a community arts organization.

Lisa Scails, Executive Director

Lisa joined the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut in 2007 with a background in civil rights, social service, and as a small business entrepreneur. Scails currently serves as a member of the Private Sector Council for Americans for the Arts; a member of the Western Connecticut Economic Develop District Advisory group; and an active partner with the CT Office of the Arts through the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Alice Schuette, Programs and Community Engagement Coordinator

Alice brings a strong background in journalism, public relations, and social media marketing. She's also a writer and has had the privilege of performing one of her pieces at Thrown Stone Theatre in Ridgefield, CT for Expressing Motherhood. Alice's greatest joy, in addition to her family, is connecting the community to the art around them in hopes of igniting the artist within.

Tiffany Johnson, Program Coordinator, Walk in Their Shoes

Artist and social justice advocate, Tiffany Johnson is passionate about the BIPOC community, and all the intersections related to equity and justice. She is the guru behind the Alliance's Walk in Their Shoes programs and resources. Tiffany is an artist and equity-minded spirit helping the Alliance to lead on issues of equality and justice.

Panel Discussion: From Page to Screen: The Film Adaptation Process

Alysia Abbott, Harlan Bosmajian, & Jay Dixit

Westside Campus Center Ballroom

1:30-3:00

Many writers dream of seeing their work adapted to film, but how does that process work? What is the role of the writer once other artists – actors, screenwriters, directors, producers – are involved? In this panel, filmmakers and writers discuss their experience shepherding a story from the page to the screen. Filmmaker and Emerson professor Harlan Bosmajian will discuss his collaboration with writer Jay Dixit on *In Transit*. Memoirist and journalist Alysia Abbott will share her experiences writing her memoir *Fairyland* and her contributions to the screenplay of the forthcoming film co-written and produced by Sofia Coppola and starring Emilia Jones, Scoot McNairy, and Geena Davis.

MFA Thesis Readings

Westside Classroom 218

3:30-5:00

Join us in celebrating our recent and soon-to-be MFA graduates as they read from their final manuscripts!

Tackling Difficult Topics: Sarah Darer Littman in Conversation with Nora Raleigh Baskin

Westside Classroom 218

7:30-9:00

Writers Nora Raleigh Baskin and Sarah Darer Littman aren't afraid to tackle difficult—and sometimes controversial—topics. What are the author's responsibilities to their audience when writing about these subjects? And what responsibility do authors have to themselves when researching and writing about topics that have painful personal resonance?

Saturday, January 7th

MFA Alumni Panel: Where Are They Now?

Benjamin Chase, Christina Coe, Charlotte Dabrowski, Jessica McCadden, and Ian Peterkin

Westside Campus Ballroom

10:00-11:30

It is no secret that WCSU MFA graduates go on to do amazing work, both creatively and professionally. Come hear four of our recent graduates discuss their post-MFA lives: opportunities, challenges, promotions, and of course, publications ☺. Bring all your questions about how to keep your creative and professional life thriving after graduation.

Literary Agent Panel – Moderated by Jane Cleland

Adam Chromy, Rebecca Podos, and Eric Smith

Westside Campus Ballroom

1:30-3:00

MFA mentor Jane Cleland will lead a discussion with some of the top literary agents working today. Find out what makes for a strong query letter, a memorable synopsis, and how a manuscript makes the journey from Word document to published book. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.

Individual Agent Meetings and/or Mentor Meetings

Westside Campus Ballroom/CC212/CC315

3:30-5:00

Students who have scheduled one-on-one meetings with an agent and/or their spring semester mentors will meet during this time block.

Evening Reading & Q&A

Leslie Campbell and Sonja Mongar

Westside Classroom 218

7:30-9:00

Leslie Kirk Campbell has published poetry, personal essays, nonfiction, and fiction. No spring chicken, she is a great example of “it’s never too late.” A poet, community activist and single mother in her 20s & 30s, she returned to school to get her MFA in fiction in her 50s. Her debut short story collection, *The Man with Eight Pairs of Legs* (Sarabande Books) won the 2020 Mary McCarthy Prize for Short Fiction and is a 2022 WNBA Great Group Reads Selection. Her award-winning stories have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Arts & Letters*, *Briar Cliff Review*, *Southern Indiana Review* and *The Thomas Wolfe Review*. Her personal essays have appeared in *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine* and *Literary Mama*. The mother of two grown sons, she is the author of *Journey into Motherhood: Writing Your Way to Self-Discovery* (Riverhead) and has received writing fellowships at Playa and Ucross. She taught at San Francisco State University, before founding Ripe Fruit Writing, a creative writing program in San Francisco, where she teaches Art of Languageing, Soulfood Memoir Writing, Art of (Deep) Revision, and Growing the Short Story. <https://lesliekirkcampbell.com>.

Sonja Mongar is a 10-year MFA mentor and recently retired University of Puerto Rico Associate Professor. She is a journalist and managing editor of the bilingual – *Esta Vida Boricua: A Digital Life Narrative Installation*, Spoken Story Archive & Public Art Space. Her interests include digital and performance story work, film production, ancestral narratives, indie publishing, and social justice and advocacy. She is the author of the novel *Two Spoons of Bitter* (2018) and the work-in-progress, *Love in a Field of Wheat: Dreaming Cora Paul*, based on her great-grandmother’s 1907 diary. Sonja is a car auction driver, closet street poet, and songwriter-blues harmonica player. She specializes in creative nonfiction, journalism, writing for nonprofits, and documentary film.

Bad Poetry Contest

[The Maron Hotel – Washington Room](#)

9:00 PM - ?

The cringiest literary event of the year (and that’s saying something)! Share the worst poem you can come up with and maybe you’ll win one of our three fabulous prizes. You’ve worked hard all year writing *good* work – now’s your chance to be bad. Join us for this light-hearted event and celebrate the last night of residency ☺.

Sunday, January 8th

Keep ‘er Lit: The Dynamic Power of Language and Narrative

Leslie Campbell

CC 212

10:00-12:00

We often get carried away with form and content as writers, but may take language, our actual medium, for granted. Are you in love with language, the way a dancer is intimate with her body, a potter with his clay, a sculptor with their marble? This workshop focuses on the natural resources of language itself: its music and texture; its rhythms and unexpected sound juxtapositions; and the original, memorable image. Words, sentences, and paragraphs (line and stanzas in poems) are the building blocks of our writing projects. We will look at the poetry of the sentence, the musical scoring of paragraphs/stanzas, and, finally, the orchestration of an entire piece. What does it take to give our work the kind of narrative dynamism (galvanizing elements and energy transmissions) that will magnetize the reader and light up on an editor’s desk? Whether you are working on fiction, memoir, poetry, journalism, or essays, captivating language and a dynamic structure will win the day.

Myths, Monsters, Faeries, & Speculative Memoir

Sonja Mongar

CC 212

1:30-3:00

Memoir, creative nonfiction, and personal essay hold truth as a genre cornerstone. Yet isn’t truth a speculative endeavor? Memory is unreliable and all dialogue is a lie, so memoirists must often tread dangerously close to fiction with invention and imagination to flesh out a narrative. And what of those personal stories which stray into the strange, the eerie, the uncomfortable, the disrupted, the broken, the unnamable, the unclassifiable, the unexplainable and not to mention the jigsaws of the fantastical? Where do those real-life fringe experiences fit?

Speculative memoir concerns itself with the figurative over the literal, ambiguity over knowing, and meditation over reportage. It engages with dreams, symbols, fantasy, and mythic story structures rather than with things or facts. It can also draw upon a pastiche of unconventional narratives such as found in visual art, documents, letters, diaries, books, and other artifacts. Not only does speculative writing elevate personal storytelling to the literary, but it gives writers the tools and permission to write their complex and difficult stories. Via speculation, writers can gain new vision.

Through reading several short models of the genre, class discussion and writing activities, students will explore the possibilities of speculative memoir.

Preparation: Read digital materials provided in advance.

Residency Wrap-Up/Semester Planning

Anthony D'Aries

Westside Campus Ballroom

3:30-5:00

All spring semester students are required to attend this session. MFA mentors are welcome, too. We'll share feedback about the residency as well as review course/program expectations before we begin the new semester.

---DEPARTURE---

Additional Faculty Bios

Alysia Abbott is the author of [Fairyland, A Memoir of My Father](#), which was a *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice and an ALA Stonewall Award winner, a winner of the Madame Figaro Prix Heroine, and was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Awards. In 2022, she was awarded an artist grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. She grew up in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, the only child of gay poet and writer, Steve Abbott. As a journalist, essayist, and critic, she's written for *The Boston Globe*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Vogue*, *Marie Claire*, *TheAtlantic.com*, *TriQuarterly* and *Psychology Today*, among other publications. She holds an MFA in Creative Nonfiction from New School University and was a contributing producer at WNYC Radio.

Nora Raleigh Baskin is a creative writing teacher and the author of [fifteen novels for young](#) readers, as well as several personal narrative essays, and a work-in-progress novel of literary fiction for adult readers (*The Story of You*). Her YA novel, *Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story*, is a “tense...and thought-provoking” (*Kirkus Review*, starred review) look at the days leading up to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and how that day impacted the lives of four middle schoolers.

Harlan Bosmajian has been the director of photography on 30 feature films and several TV series. His career began after shooting the black and white film [La Ciudad](#) for which he received a nomination for Best Cinematography at the Independent Spirit Awards and won Best Cinematography at the Santa Barbara Film Festival. He shot one of the first high-def TV series, *Strangers with Candy*, as well as one of the first high-def films to get a theatrical release, titled *Lovely and Amazing*. He recently shot the romantic comedy *The Other End of the Line* in Mumbai, India. He also did additional photography on the second season of the TV series *Mad Men*. Bosmajian has shot movies in all film/video formats from 16mm black and white to the Red One camera. He has taught camera and lighting classes in New York, Los Angeles, and The Sundance Labs. He is also an avid still photographer.

Benjamin J. Chase is a Connecticut native with an MFA in Poetry from Western Connecticut State University. His poems have appeared in more than a dozen literary journals, and his first book of poetry, *Here to See It*, was published by Kelsay Books in May of 2022. He is a member of the literary reading group Chapter & Verse in New Haven, Connecticut, and he currently chairs the English department at Christian Heritage School in Trumbull, Connecticut. Besides reading and writing poetry, his hobbies include weightlifting, woodworking, photography, and motorcycling.

After receiving a degree in finance and management from NYU's Stern School of Business and spending a decade as a sales and marketing specialist for technology startups, **Adam Chromy** decided to blend his love of narrative with his modern entrepreneurial spirit. The result was Artists and Artisans Inc., where for ten years he represented authors with a professional rigor seldom seen in the book business. After hundreds of published books and dozens of bestsellers, Adam relaunched his company as [Movable Type Management](#) to better serve clients by offering them the higher visibility afforded by film and television adaptations of their work.

Jane K. Cleland writes the multiple award-winning and IMBA bestselling and long-running Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery series, all published by St. Martin's Minotaur and *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. Jane's bestseller about the craft of writing, *Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot*, from Writer's Digest Books, won the Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction 2016. Her second craft book, *Mastering Plot Twists*, is also from Writer's Digest Books. She has written numerous articles for *Writer's Digest Magazine* and many other publications. She is a member of the full-time faculty at Lehman College, where she is also the director of the Program for Professional Communications. More information is available at <http://janecleland.com>.

Christina Coe is the senior editor for *Custom*. She manages and produces client projects, ranging from long-form reports and explainer guides to podcast interstitial stories and webinars, providing topical insights to shape projects and garner strong testimonials along the way. Prior to joining Digiday, she managed the marketing content for a biotech company and was the production editor for several peer-reviewed scientific and medical journals. She holds an MFA in Creative and Professional Writing from WCSU and outside of work enjoys supporting her fellow writers and author friends' work, crocheting, reading mysteries and horror novels, as well as consuming as many podcasts as she can.

Bob Cowser has taught courses in nonfiction writing, film, and American literature since 1998. He is the author of three nonfiction books, most recently *Green Fields: Crime, Punishment, and a Boyhood Between*, which won "Best Memoir 2010" from the Adirondack Center for Writers and was cited in the *Best American Essays 2012*. Cowser was named the Owen D. Young Outstanding Faculty Member at St. Lawrence University in 2012. He has taught abroad in France, England, and Denmark and is the recipient of fellowships from the Vermont Studio Center, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Cowser grew up in rural west Tennessee. He holds a B.A. from Loyola-New Orleans, a Master's in English at Marquette University and a PhD in creative writing from the University of Nebraska.

Charlotte Dabrowski is the Executive Assistant and Creative Content Writer at LesserEvil Snacks in Danbury, CT. Utilizing the skills and experiences she obtained during her time at Western Connecticut State University, where she earned both a BA and an MFA in Professional Writing, she elevates the company's presence and platform through its packaging, PR, blog posts, and social media. She also supports her amazing CEO, Charles, with an array of tasks, including taste testing the snacks twice a day for product quality control! Aside from her full-time job, Charlotte stumbled into a side gig of writing, editing, and designing cookbooks for clients. She just finished up her second one, titled *Gather 'Round the Table*. If she isn't straining her eyes on a computer screen, she's probably zenning out in a yoga class, traveling to a unique part of the world, attending an exotic car show, or playing cribbage! You can reach Charlotte anytime via email at charlotte@lesserevil.com or via [LinkedIn](#).

Anthony D'Aries is the author of [The Language of Men: A Memoir](#) (Hudson Whitman Press, 2012), which received the PEN/New England Discovery Prize and an [INDIES Gold Medal](#). His work has appeared in *McSweeney's*, *Boston Magazine*, *The Literary Review*, and elsewhere. He has served on the board of PEN's Freedom-to-Write Committee, leading writing workshops in

prisons, shelters, hospitals, and residential care facilities, and co-chairing the inaugural PEN Writing and Trauma Conference. In 2016, he was selected as the Lighthouse Writers Workshop's Fort Lyon Writer-in-Residence, where he worked with homeless veterans. His essay, "No Man's Land," was listed as a Notable Essay in *Best American Essays 2021*. Most recently, his collection of short stories was selected as a finalist for Black Lawrence Press's 2022 Hudson Book Prize. He currently directs the low-residency [MFA in Creative and Professional Writing at Western Connecticut State University](#).

Jay Dixit is an award-winning science writer, journalist, and storytelling teacher whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Rolling Stone*, *Slate*, *Wired*, and *Psychology Today*. As an interviewer, Jay has spoken to Spike Lee, Tim Roth, Willem Dafoe, Tony Robbins, Eugene Mirman, Kristen Schaal, Valerie Plame, Bob Mankoff, Will Shortz, Greg Giraldo, Paula Scher, and Todd Hanson, as well as researchers such as Dan Ariely, Jonathan Haidt, Mihály Csikszentmihályi, and Helen Fisher. Jay also conducted George Carlin's last interview—which the legendary comedian called the “most complete interview” of his life. Jay has taught storytelling as a creative writing professor at Yale University, and he's lectured at Columbia University and NYU. Jay is the Founder of [Storytelling.NYC](#), through which he teaches storytelling classes, writing workshops, and corporate training to companies in New York City and across the country, including LG, Redfin, and Citigroup. He's also the winner of The Moth, a live stage storytelling competition based in New York, and his story “My Father's Love” appears on The Moth Radio Hour and NPR and is the basis for the upcoming motion picture *In Transit*.

Sarah Darer Littman is the critically acclaimed author of [19 middle grade and young adult novels](#), including *Backlash* (Winner of the Iowa Teen Book Award and the Grand Canyon Reader Award) and *Confessions of a Closet Catholic*, winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award. Her most recent book, *Some Kind of Hate*, was released in November 2022. As well as writing novels, Sarah teaches in the MFA program at WCSU and at the Yale Writers' Workshop. She is also an award-winning columnist.

Jessica McCadden received her B.S. from Boston University where she studied film and television. She went on to work as a writer and producer at NBC, TV Land, and Nickelodeon, where she was nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award. She is also one of the authors of *The Great CT Caper*, a serialized mystery story for young people and has worked as an adjunct professor of English Literature and Writing. In addition, Jessica earned a Marketing Certificate from NYU and an MFA in Creative & Professional Writing from Western Connecticut State University. Jessica currently resides in Virginia and is the Director of Digital Marketing, Creative Content, and Brand Strategy at [the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University](#). She loves brunch, skiing in warm weather, and spoiling the end of mysteries.

Briana Una McGuckin lives in a charmingly strange old house in Connecticut. She has spastic diplegic cerebral palsy, and she writes Gothic and Suspense fiction—sometimes romantic, sometimes scary, sometimes a little bit fantastical. Her debut novel, *On Good Authority*, is a kinky, below-stairs Victorian, Romantic Suspense/Gothic Romance. Her short fiction appears in the Stoker-nominated horror anthology *Not All Monsters* (Rooster Republic Press), modern

Gothic horror anthology *In Somnio* (Tenebrous Press), and *The Lost Librarian's Grave* anthology (Redwood Press). A part-time academic librarian, she has an MFA in Creative and Professional Writing from Western Connecticut State University and an MLS from Long Island University. Briana has perhaps a concerningly large collection of perfume oils, and a fascination with all things Victorian.

Erik Ofgang is an award-winning journalist who has written for numerous publications, including *Connecticut Magazine* and *The Wall Street Journal*. He is the author of several books, including *Buzzed: Where to Enjoy the Best Craft Beverages in New England*, *Gillette Castle: A History*, and [The Good Vices: From Beer to Sex, the Surprising Truth About What's Actually Good for You](#). In addition, he has written for the Associated Press, *Thrillist*, and *Tablet Magazine*.

Ian Peterkin is a writer and educator. He has taught at universities in America, China, and Dubai. He has an MFA in Creative and Professional Writing from Western Connecticut State University. His work has been featured in *Rio Grande Review*, *Helix*, *Wagner Lit*, *Flare: The Flagler Review*, *The Pointed Circle*, *Tenth Street Miscellany*, *Soliloquies*, *Noctua Review*, *The Fourth River*, and elsewhere.

Rebecca Podos' debut novel, *The Mystery of Hollow Places* (Balzer + Bray), was a Junior Library Guild Selection and a B&N Best YA Book of 2016. Her second book, *Like Water* (Balzer + Bray), won the 2018 Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ Children's and Young Adult. Her latest releases are *Fools in Love* (Running Press Kids), a co-edited YA anthology with Ashley Herring Blake, and *From Dust, A Flame* (Balzer + Bray). Rebecca is an agent at the [Rees Literary Agency](#) in Boston by day. Information on her client list and submissions guidelines can be found at [Reesagency.com](http://www.reeccapodos.com/about), or on her personal website <http://www.reeccapodos.com/about>.

John Proctor is a writer, educator, and activist. His earliest years were impacted by the incarceration of his father and justice involvement of many family members, and he now facilitates narrative-building workshops at Rikers Island, Westchester, and Queensboro correctional facilities as well as a support group for people returning from incarceration as founder of [the Re/Creation Collective](#). He also currently serves as Communications & Digital Organizing Manager at [Freedom Agenda](#), a project of the Urban Justice Center focusing on decarceration and closing Rikers Island. Until 2021 he taught communications, media studies, and writing for 20 years at the City University of New York and Manhattanville College. His nonfiction has been published widely, and you can find links to much of it [here](#).

Onnesha Roychoudhuri is a writer, storyteller, and educator. A former fellow at the Center for Fiction, her work has appeared in outlets such as *Rolling Stone*, *This American Life*, *Kenyon Review*, *n+1*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Boston Review*, *McSweeney's*, *The Rumpus*, *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, *Salon*, and *Mother Jones*. Onnesha has read and performed on stages for The Moth, Tedx, Lincoln Center, and more. She is the author of [The Marginalized Majority: Claiming Our Power in a Post-Truth America](#), a *Kirkus* Best Book of the Year.

Oscar De Los Santos is former Chair of the Writing Department and former Chair of the English Department at Western Connecticut State University. His latest books are *A Modern*

Bestiary: When the Ape-Hawk Strikes (a novel, co-written with Professor Kelly L. Goodridge), *The Living Pulps* (an edited short story collection) and *25 Questions All Writers Should Ask Themselves* (with Professor Goodridge). His other books include *Hardboiled Egg* (short stories), *Spirits of Texas and New England* (folklore stories), and *Infinite Wonderlands* (science fiction, with David G. Mead). He edited *Madame Luna and other Moon Stories*, *Reel Rebels* (film essays), and co-edited *When Genres Collide* (essays, with Thomas J. Morrissey). Oscar's stories and essays have appeared in *Channeling the Future: Essays on Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, *New York Review of Science Fiction*, *Extrapolation*, *Connecticut Review*, *Saranac Review*, and other books and journals.

As an agent with P.S. Literary, **Eric Smith** worked on *New York Times* bestselling and award-winning books. He's also a writer himself, and his recent novels include the YALSA Best Books for Young Readers selection *Don't Read the Comments* (Inkyard Press, 2020), *You Can Go Your Own Way* (Inkyard Press, 2021), and the anthology *Battle of the Bands* (Candlewick, 2021), co-edited with award-winning author Lauren Gibaldi. His latest book, *Jagged Little Pill: The Novel*, was written with Alanis Morissette, Academy award-winner Diablo Cody, and Glen Ballard, and is an adaptation of the Grammy and Tony award winning musical. A lifelong lover of writing and books, he holds a Bachelor of Arts from Kean University in English, and a Master's in English from Arcadia University, where he currently mentors MFA students. He lives in Philadelphia with his wife and son, and enjoys video games, pop punk, and crying over every movie.

A. B. (Anne Bryan) Westrick is the author of *Brotherhood* (Viking/Penguin Random House 2013), a YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults pick, and winner of the Jefferson Cup, Housatonic, Jane Addams Honor, and NCSS Notable Trade Book Awards. Westrick has been a teacher, paralegal, literacy volunteer, administrator, and coach for teams from Odyssey of the Mind to the Reading Olympics. A graduate of Stanford University and Yale Divinity School, she holds an MFA in writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts and blogs monthly about the craft of writing. She and her family live near Richmond, VA. <http://abwestrick.com/>.

	8:00 – 9:00	9:00-11:30	12:00	1:30-3:00	3:30-5:00	5:00	7:30-9:00
Tues., Jan 3	Arrivals			New Student Orientation Tour of Westside Campus Ballroom	OMG Meetings CC212	Dinner	Reception & Faculty Flash Reading Hotel Zero Degrees
Wed., Jan. 4	Breakfast Ballroom	Master Class: Jubi Arriola-Headley 2021 HBA Winner in Poetry CC212	Lunch Ballroom	Briana Una McGuckin CC212 Anne Westrick Ballroom	Enrichment Projects CC212	Dinner	Reading & Q&A Jubi Arriola- Headley WS218
Thurs., Jan. 5	Breakfast Ballroom	Master Class: Julie Marie Wade 2021 HBA Winner in Nonfiction CC212	Lunch Ballroom	Ben Burgis & Matthew Quinn Martin Ballroom Onnesha Roychoudhuri CC212	Panel: Teaching Writing Outside of Academia Ballroom	Dinner	Reading & Q&A Julie Marie Wade WS218

<p>Fri., Jan. 6</p>	<p>Breakfast Ballroom</p>	<p>10:00 AM Panel: Western CT Cultural Alliance CC212</p>	<p>Lunch Ballroom</p>	<p>Panel: Film Adaptation Ballroom</p>	<p>Thesis Readings WS218</p>	<p>Dinner</p>	<p>Sarah Darer Littman & Nora Raleigh Baskin WS218</p>
<p>Sat., Jan. 7</p>	<p>Breakfast Ballroom</p>	<p>10:00 AM Alumni Panel Ballroom</p>	<p>Lunch Ballroom Dublin 2023 Info Session!</p>	<p>Agent Panel Ballroom</p>	<p>Agent/Mentor Meetings Ballroom CC212 CC315</p>	<p>Dinner</p>	<p>Reading & Q&A Leslie Campbell & Sonja Mongar WS218 Bad Poetry Contest at 9:00 PM at Maron Hotel</p>
<p>Sun., Jan. 8</p>	<p>Breakfast Ballroom</p>	<p>10:00 AM Leslie Campbell CC212</p>	<p>Lunch Ballroom</p>	<p>Sonja Mongar CC212</p>	<p>Residency Wrap-Up Semester Planning Ballroom</p>	<p>Departures</p>	

***All sessions on WCSU's Westside Campus (Ballroom, CC212, CC315, and WS 218)**

***Opening Reception at Hotel Zero Degrees**

***Bad Poetry Contest at The Maron Hotel**

***Note: morning sessions on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday start at 10:00 AM**