



FICTION WRITING CRITIQUE GROUP

Lifelong Learning Collaborative: Spring 2019

Welcome to our writing critique group. It's small, just the way a critique group should be to make the most of working together to write and learn. As soon as you put pen or pencil to paper, you are a writer, whether you believe it or not. And the task is, of course, to believe it no matter how hard the struggle.

We will be a group of writers who conjure tales of far away and nearby, who love telling stories and have many to tell. In an intimate and supportive group, learn how to hone your writing, explode it into something brand new, or extract it sentence by sentence from a tremulous brain with cheers and encouragement from others. No judgments allowed--only constructive assessment to urge you on to finding or asserting your writer's voice.

Maybe you've pulled some fiction writing out of your journal or files from the past, to look at again. Maybe you are plotting a story already in your head but have not yet put words on paper or in your computer. Now is the time to assess old thoughts and imagine a scenario you want to make anew and whole. What do you want to teach a reader about life, human relationships, social realities, or whatever guides your writing utensil?

The Meeting Format: Taking turns, we will submit a story or chapter online to class members by the Monday before the Thursday class meeting date. Class members will print (or email if not able to attend that class) the material with comments, suggestions, and editing corrections by that Thursday. The writer will be expected to ask for specific

feedback when submitting the story or chapter to others so that the class will have some direction while reading and commenting.

We will probably engage in at least one creative writing exercise each time we meet. These exercises will loosen us up as fiction writers along the way.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS ABOUT WRITING:

Ann Lamott, *Bird by Bird*

Stephen King, *On Writing*

Damon Night, *Creating Short Fiction: The Classic Guide to Writing Short Fiction*

Angela Ackeman and Becca Puglisi, *The Emotion Thesaurus* (so necessary to avoid telling rather than showing: there is also a Body Thesaurus that is useful, and by Delia Evans)

John Gardner and Raymond Carver, *On Becoming a Novelist*

Jodi Henley, *Backstory Motivation and Conflict*

Donald Mass, *The Emotional Craft of Fiction, Writing the Break-out Novel*

Carolyn Wheat, *How to Write Killer Fiction* (on writing mysteries)

G. B. Pool, *The Anatomy of a Short Story Workbook*

ESSENTIAL BOOKS ON BEING A WRITER (and believing it)

Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*

Steven Pressfield, *The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle* (a great battle cry for writer-identification)

Natalie Goldberg and Julia Cameron, *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*