



FICTION WRITING CRITIQUE GROUP

Lifelong Learning Collaborative: Spring 2021

A ZOOM Class

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, two class members 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.

Unlike other LLC courses you have been in, this is not really a course. It's a critique group where there are certain rules and procedures we will follow, ones that are rather set and standard among fiction writers' critique groups nationally. We will discuss your work (emailed ahead of the meeting in which your writing will up for consideration) and *not* listen to you discuss your writing. You will have to listen without responding to each class member's supportive and constructive critical and comments before having your turn at the end. **We are there, all of us, as equals.** There is not a teacher, per se, although I may have more experience than the rest and can help when needed, as can others.

We may engage in at least one creative writing exercise from time to time. 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 Knight, *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*

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