

# Summer Residency 2018

MFA in Creative and Professional Writing @ Western Connecticut State University

## Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. (Westside Campus, Alumni Pavilion)

Welcome BBQ

All students and alumni are welcome. New students are required to attend and check in with Program Coordinator, Anthony D'Aries.

7:30 p.m. (Westside Campus, Room 218)

Alumni and Featured Faculty Reading

Opening remarks and welcome from Anthony D'Aries followed by a reading from alumni. Featured faculty reader: Elizabeth Cohen.

## Sunday, August 5<sup>th</sup>

9:00 - 11:45 a.m. (Campus Center, Room 212/214)

Evidence-based Writing-: Using Data and Stories to Persuade

Jane Cleland

Most business documents require the writer to integrate evidence in the form of data or stories, or both. This workshop discusses these two key approaches to persuasion. We'll examine the ways and means to harness the power of data, including interpreting charts and graphs and writing titles and captions, and we'll analyze why some stories resonate with readers and others fall flat.

12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch / Mentor Meetings

This time is set aside for student/mentor meetings. Students should have made appointments to meet with faculty in advance of the residency. If you have no appointments scheduled, you may use this period as free time. Students may use this time for self-organized peer group work or as they see fit. Please note that any free time on the schedule can be used to arrange student/mentor meetings.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

OMG Meetings: D'Aries (CC212/214) Clements (CC315)

Students will meet with their Online Multi-Genre Workshop mentor and group to discuss the course – syllabus, Blackboard, discussion boards, and assignments.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

Alumni Meeting (Main Ballroom)

The MFA Alumni Writers Cooperative will discuss their forthcoming activities, including support for the Housatonic Book Awards. Current students are invited to attend, especially current students who expect to finish their degrees soon.

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. (Molly Darcy's, 39 Mill Pond Road, Danbury)

Beth Turley Launch Party: *If This Were a Story*

Join us in celebrating alumna Beth Turley on the upcoming release of her debut middle-grade novel *If This Were a Story* (Simon and Schuster).

7:30 – 9:00 p.m. (WS218)

In Conversation with Dan Pope

**Dan Pope** is the author of the novels *In the Cherry Tree* (Picador, 2003) and *Housebreak* (Simon & Schuster, 2015). His short stories have appeared in such journals as *McSweeney's*, *Harvard Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Shenandoah*, *Greensboro Review*, *Iowa Review*, and *Best American New Voices 2007*. He is a 2002 graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop, where he was awarded the Glen Schaeffer Award from the International Institute of Modern Letters and the John Leggett Prize in Fiction.

## Monday, August 6th

9:00 - 11:45 a.m. (CC212/214)

Bringing Setting to Life in Your Writing

John Roche

There is an often-overlooked opportunity to develop setting in creative writing, breathing more life into it than a backdrop of time and place. In this workshop, John Roche will help MFA writers explore setting “as a character” in fiction (and nonfiction), going beyond describing the surroundings and looking at ways to integrate setting more fully so our characters interact with it, shape it and in turn are shaped by it. This workshop will include two writing exercises focused on making setting a dynamic element of any story rather than a stagnant one.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m. (CC212/214)

Graphic Novels and Game Scripting

Jason McNamara

In this seminar, students will be taken through the creation of a graphic novel, from ideation, to script, to the final printed book. We'll discuss how stories for comics and games are built and adapted across platforms, including concrete examples and steps to completion. We'll also cover developing compelling characters and creating tension and tone. This workshop will be a complete crash course in dynamic writing for a visual medium.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m.

Where We Find Our Poetry

Elizabeth Cohen

This seminar guides students from inspiration to first draft, paying close attention to our instincts and observations. While the focus will be on poetry, writers of all genres will find this session useful.

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. (CC212/214)

Enrichment Presentations

Students will present their enrichment projects for the MFA community. Come support your fellow writers!

7:30 – 9:00 p.m. (WS218)

Housatonic Book Award Reading (nonfiction)

Peter Selgin

**Peter Selgin** is the author of *Drowning Lessons*, winner of the 2007 Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction. He has written a novel, three books on the craft of writing, an essay collection, and several children’s books. His novel, *The Water Master*, won the Faulkner-Wisdom Prize for the Novel, and his memoir-in-essays, *Confessions of a Left-Handed Man*, was a finalist for the William Saroyan International Prize. Of his recent memoir *The Inventors*, *Library Journal* wrote, “It is a book destined to become a modern American classic.” His stories and essays have been featured in *Missouri Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Colorado Review*, *Crazy Horse*, *Ploughshares*, *Best American Essays*, and *Best American Travel Writing*. His plays have been published and produced nationally. A visual artist as well as a writer, his work has been featured in *The New Yorker* and other publications. He is an affiliate faculty member of Antioch University’s low-residency MFA program in Los Angeles, and Associate Professor of English at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Georgia.

## Tuesday, August 7th

9:00 - 11:45 a.m. (CC212/214)

In the Beginning: A First Page Seminar/Workshop

Peter Selgin

Readers are rude. While they have no obligation to read our stories, we're obliged to claim and keep their interest. As soon as we set down the first words to a novel, memoir, or story, we begin creating a world, one with its own laws and limits. Line-by-line, we establish the covenants of that world for the reader and for ourselves, the rules to which we'll be bound for the duration of the work. We lay down the laws of the worlds they will inhabit for as long as they keep reading. Or they'll reject our worlds and go on about some other business.

In this seminar we'll discuss the first pages of published works, anonymous unpublished works, and your own works-in-progress. We'll examine great openings of works classic and contemporary, from DeFoe to Dickens to James M. Cain and Marilyn Robinson. We'll look at fiction as well as nonfiction/memoirs, and discuss the thorny choices authors face in deciding how, when, and where to enter their stories. We'll discover, too, how many if not most of the concerns raised by a work of narrative prose are embodied in its first 300 words, how a first page is a harbinger, the canary in the coal mine. Does it sing, or die?

Suggested Reading: *Your First Page: First Pages and What They Tell Us about the Pages that Follow Them* by Peter Selgin

1:30 - 2:45 p.m. (WS241)

Character is King

Brian Thiem

There's so much attention on plot that writers sometimes relegate character to second place in their stories. Whether you write fiction, memoir, or creative nonfiction, stories without interesting and sympathetic characters (even unlikable characters can be sympathetic) will fall flat. In this presentation, Brian will discuss how to envision and develop your book's characters, create character arcs and subplots involving characters that synch with the main plot of your story, and how to add internal character conflict that enhances the main conflict of the story. We'll end with discussion about creating series protagonists and questions about writing, publishing, or anything else.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m. (CC212/214)

From File to Print: What Happens to Make a Book

Nick Mamatas

The editorial and production processes that go into making a book can be confusing and intimidating for a first-time author. In this talk, we will discuss what editors, copy editors, proof readers, production and cover designers, and publicists do, what authors can expect from each of these departments, and what authors themselves will be asked to do and what influence they can wield over the process. We will focus on line and copy editing, developing cover copy and sales points, tip sheets, and managing expectations when your book hits stores...or doesn't.

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. (Ballroom North)

Agent Panel: Rita Rosenkranz, Connor Goldsmith, Saba Sulaiman

Three seasoned agents will share their experiences working with authors and editors and offer tips on current publishing trends. Students who submitted materials by the June deadline will meet individually with an agent after the presentations.

7:30 - 9:00 p.m. (WS218)

Housatonic Book Award Reading (fiction)

Jo Knowles

**Jo Knowles** is the author of *Still a Work In Progress*, *Read Between The Lines*, *Living With Jackie Chan*, *See You At Harry's*, *Pearl*, *Jumping Off Swings*, and *Lessons from a Dead Girl*. Jo's awards include two SCBWI Crystal Kite Awards, a *New York Times* Editor's Choice and Notable Book, the PEN New England Children's Book Discovery Award, American Library Association Notables, Bank Street College's Best Books for Children (Outstanding Merit), and YALSA's Best Fiction for Young Adults. Jo's books have also appeared on numerous state award lists. Jo has a master's degree in children's literature and teaches writing at the Mountainview MFA program through Southern New Hampshire University.



## Wednesday, August 8th

9:00 - 11:45 a.m. (CC212/214)

Worldbuilding and Dialogue: A 2-Part Workshop

Jo Knowles

### Part One: Worldbuilding 101

This presentation will cover the basics of worldbuilding—with a twist! We'll start with how to create strong worlds in fantasy and science fiction, reviewing some important rules for worldbuilding and tools for making your world feel real and fully-formed. Then, we'll shift to the importance of worldbuilding in ALL narratives, including nonfiction, memoir, historical fiction, and contemporary realistic fiction, using similar tools to help you deepen your story and make your character's world unique.

### Part Two: Using Dialogue to Build Character

Dialogue serves many purposes, but often isn't used to its greatest effect! Dialogue can build character, create tension, infuse emotion, reveal important details about relationships, and so much more! This workshop will explore how to use dialogue to your best advantage.

1:30 – 2:45 p.m. (CC212/214)

How to Find, Query, and Publish with Small/University Presses

Lisa Romeo

If your manuscript is highly polished and ready to go, and you're interested in traditional publishing with a small or university press, there's a lot you need to know and prepare. Most boutique, small, and university presses work directly with writers (no agent needed). Landing a book contract relies on targeting the right publishers and approaching them properly. Learn what's expected (and what not to do) when submitting to these presses that value high quality literary work above platform, prior book sales, and potential bestsellers. We'll review query letters, synopses, book proposal elements, researching publishers, and book publication contests.

3:00 – 5:00 p.m. (CC212/214)

The Healing Power of Deep Revision

Julia Lisella

In this multi-genre workshop we consider revision as truly re-seeing a work rather than "rewriting." We focus not on final "edits" but on revisiting the work's intention, purpose, and power in order to reinvigorate the work with the energy we had when we first began to create it. We will explore a variety of techniques, including writing prompts, cut up editing, creating arbitrary "rules" to retrain the writing thread, and rebuilding from single lines or images. Writers are asked to bring with them 2-3 pages of prose or 1 or 2 poems that have felt "stuck" for a longish time.

7:30 - 9:00 p.m. (WS218)

Readings: Julia Lisella and Lisa Romeo

**Julia Lisella's** poetry collections include *Always* (2014), *Terrain* (2007), and *Love Song Hiroshima* (2004). Her poems have been widely anthologized, most recently in *Sharing the Earth: An International Environmental Justice Anthology*. Poems appear in print and online at *Nimrod*, *Ovunque Siamo*, *Gravel*, *Snapdragon: A Journal of Art and Healing*, *Talking Writing*, *Ocean State Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *VIA: Voices in*

*Italian Americana*, *Antiphon*, and many others. Her book reviews and essays appear most recently in *Obsidian* and *Mom Egg Review*. She has led writing and healing workshops around Massachusetts. She is Associate Professor of English at Regis College.

**Lisa Romeo** is the author of *Starting with Goodbye: A Daughter's Memoir of Love after Loss* (University of Nevada Press, 2018). Her short work is cited in *Best American Essays 2016* and has appeared in the *New York Times*, *O The Oprah Magazine*, *Brevity*, *Tishman Review*, *Word Riot*, *Sport Literate*, *Inside Jersey*, and many other places. She holds an MFA from the Stonecoast Program (University of Southern Maine), and currently teaches in the Bay Path University MFA program. Lisa is the creative nonfiction editor for *Compose Journal*, a craft essays editor for *Cleaver Magazine*. She lives in New Jersey.

## Thursday, August 9th

9:00 - 11:45 a.m. (CC212/214)

Process Over Product

Matthew Quin Martin

Ray Bradbury once said, "An athlete may run ten thousand miles in order to prepare for one hundred yards." And while crossing the finish line is the goal, only through focused dedication and long-term preparation does one stand a chance of victory. However, even from the podium, the winner is always eyeing another race.

In this workshop, we will explore the motivations that, all too often, cause us to shift our focus from the work at hand, to potential outcomes. And share strategies and techniques that will help writers center on what is truly important, the writing process.

Participants should bring a short (no longer than two page) piece of extremely raw work, completely unedited or polished.

**Required reading:** *Zen and the Art of Writing*, Ray Bradbury ("Zen and the Art of Writing" essay excerpt). *On Writing*, Stephen King ("Toolbox" section).

9:00 - 11:45 a.m. (WS241)

Desire: How to Craft a Compelling Plot

Anne Westrick

In the spring 1977 issue of *The Paris Review*, Kurt Vonnegut was quoted as saying, “When I used to teach creative writing, I would tell the students to make their characters want something right away—even if it’s only a glass of water. Characters paralyzed by the meaninglessness of modern life still have to drink water from time to time.”

The sense of wanting, of yearning, of desire is the essence of plot. Long after reading a book, the characters (and nonfiction personalities) we tend to remember are those with big hearts and big dreams. They want something. And they strive to get that something. Readers turn pages to find out whether or not they succeed. While issues and ideas are interesting and even provocative at times, they’re heady and thought-filled. Readers don’t tend to stick with a book because issues interest them. They stick because the character cares about the issue and that caring leads the character to desire something and act upon that desire. When writers fail to establish a desire line, their stories are at risk of plodding along like a bad history textbook: “just one damn thing after another.”<sup>1</sup>

We’ll review the classic graph of the structure of a novel (rising action, climax, denouement), and discuss where desire fits on the graph. We’ll look at the way desire shapes the dramatic arc of two bestselling books (one fiction, one nonfiction). We’ll reflect on the difference between internal desires (love, dignity, power) and external ones (issues, material objects, solutions), and look at examples of both.

In the second half of this 3-hour workshop, participants will (1) outline their current work-in-progress, noting when and how their characters’ (or subjects’) desires drive the story they’re telling, and/or (2) interview their protagonists and write a scene in which desire impacts the protagonist’s actions. Time and technology permitting, we’ll end with a Disney/Pixar animated clip showing the way desire drives the plot of three blockbuster movies.

Books to be discussed:

*The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry: A Novel* by Rachel Joyce (NY: Random House 2012).

*Seabiscuit: An American Legend* by Laura Hillenbrand (NY: Random House 2003).

1 - Historian Arnold J. Toynbee, among others.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m. (CC212/214)

Writing Women and Violence in the Horror Genre

Stephanie Wytovich

Students will explore feminist theory and criticism in regard to topics of gender in the horror genre with a specific focus on the description of the final girl. Together, we will explore both fictional women who have effectively turned the victim trope on its head and others who have propagated the stereotype all too well. We will then look at the cultural stigmas regarding violence and women, focusing on areas such as body image, motherhood, and the repression of female sexuality, and then engage in an in-class writing assignment that answers questions of what should be shown vs left to the imagination, and how violence can be used to emotionally engage readers and further the plot.

1:30 - 2:45 p.m. (WS241)

Pitching Magazine and Newspapers

Erik Ofgang

Participants will learn how to develop a professional quality pitch. They will fine-tune and tweak their pitches, research appropriate publications and start a query letter that has a chance of catching a publisher's eye. We will also discuss generating story ideas, building relationships with editors as a freelancer and negotiating pay. Please come with a story idea ready to workshop.

3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Thesis Q&A

Anthony D'Aries will share information about thesis submission and approval process. Students are welcome to ask any questions regarding their thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to invite their thesis advisors to attend this session as well.

4:00 p.m.

### Wrap-up Meeting

Residency wrap-up meeting with Anthony D'Aries. All students who attended residency are expected to attend this meeting to complete evaluation forms, to discuss what worked and didn't work well at the residency, and to discuss future residencies and the direction of the program.

7:30 – 9:00 p.m. (WS218)

Readings: Stephanie Wytovich and Jane Cleland

**Stephanie M. Wytovich** is an American poet, novelist, and essayist. Her Bram Stoker Award-winning poetry collection, *Brothel*, earned a home with Raw Dog Screaming Press alongside *Hysteria: A Collection of Madness*, *Mourning Jewelry*, *An Exorcism of Angels*, and *Sheet Music to My Acoustic Nightmare*. Her debut novel, *The Eighth*, is published with Dark Regions Press.

**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 and Plot*, from Writer's Digest Books, won the Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction 2016. Next up is *Mastering Plot Twists*, also from Writer's Digest Books. She also writes articles for *Writer's Digest Magazine*. She is a member of the fulltime faculty at Lehman College, where she is also the director of the Program for Professional Communications.

## BIOS

### **Anthony D'Aries, MFA Program Coordinator**

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 *Foreword's* Memoir-of-the-Year Award. His essays have appeared in *Boston Magazine*, *Solstice*, *Memoir Magazine*, *The Good Men Project*, *Shelf Awareness*, *The Literary Review*, and have been finalists for Fourth Genre's Michael Steinberg Essay Prize and the Diana Wood's Memorial Creative Nonfiction Award. In 2011, Anthony was selected as Randolph College's Emerging Writer-in-Residence. He has served on the board of PEN/New England as a member of the 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. Anthony received the 2014-15 Writers' Room of Boston's fellowship in nonfiction. In 2016, he was selected as the Lighthouse Writers Workshop's Fort Lyon writer in residence, where he taught writing workshops for homeless veterans.

### **Brian Clements**

Brian Clements is the founding Coordinator of the MFA program and Professor of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Writing. He is author or editor of over a dozen books of poetry, including *A Book of Common Rituals* (Quale Press), *Disappointed Psalms* (Meritage Press), and the anthologies *An Introduction to the Prose Poem* (Firewheel Editions) and *Bullets into Bells: Poets and Citizens Respond to Gun Violence* (Beacon). Prof. Clements also has worked professionally in technical communications, corporate communications, grant-writing, and non-profit administration.

### **Elizabeth Cohen**

Elizabeth Cohen is an associate professor of English at SUNY Plattsburgh and the author of eight books, including *The Family on Beartown Road*, a NYT notable book and *The Hypothetical Girl*, short stories, selected by *O Magazine* as a "best summer read".

### **Connor Goldsmith**

Connor Goldsmith began his career in publishing in 2012 at Lowenstein Associates, where he was promoted to Associate Agent in March 2013. He joined Fuse in early 2014 and was promoted to Agent in November 2015. Prior to transitioning into the world of books, he spent a year as a full-time intern and relief assistant in the commercial film and television department at Abrams Artists Agency.

Born and raised in New York, Connor lived for a brief stint in the Midwest studying English and the Classics at Oberlin College in Ohio. He is passionate about narrative fiction across all media as a vehicle for social progress, and received a Master's Degree in Media Studies from The New School for Public Engagement.

### **Nick Mamatas**

Nick Mamatas is the author of several novels, including *I Am Providence* and the forthcoming *Hexen Sabbath*. His short fiction has appeared in *Best American Mystery Stories*, *Year's Best Science Fiction & Fantasy*, and many other venues. Nick is also tradebooks editor for VIZ Media, editing the Haikasoru imprint of Japanese science fiction, and titles by Studio Ghibli.

### **Matthew Quinn Martin**

Matthew Quinn Martin was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania and raised in New Haven, Connecticut. It wasn't until he moved to Manhattan that he realized he was a writer. He is the author of the Nightlife series (Pocket Star/Simon & Schuster) as well as the writer of the original script for *Slingshot* (Bold/Weinstein Co.) and some other stuff. He lives on a small island off the North Atlantic coast of the United States where it gets quiet in the winter...perhaps too quiet.

### **Jason McNamara**

Jason McNamara was born and raised on Long Island. The son of a clam digger, Jason learned early the value of hard work and vowed to never do it again. Using comic books and horror movies as guiding life principles, Jason built an imaginary world for himself, packed his bags and promptly moved in. Occasionally he receives dispatches from your supposed "real world" but dismisses them as being too ridiculous to believe.

Jason has written dozens of comic book titles, a halfway decent screenplay, a marketing campaign for Sun Microsystems, a few video games, and is a creative consultant for the Golden State Warriors basketball team. He can be found in his basement office in Portland OR, with a fat, snoring dog under his desk.

### **Erik Ofgang**

The senior writer at *Connecticut Magazine*, Erik is the author of *Buzzed: Where to Enjoy the Best Craft Beverages in New England* and *Gillette Castle: A History*. His next book is with Penguin Random House. He has also written for the *Associated Press*, *Tablet Magazine*, *Thrillist* and many other publications. He teaches writing at WCSU & Quinnipiac University.

### **John Roche**

John Roche is the author of the novel *Bronx Bound* (Black Opal, 2015). He has been an award-winning newspaper journalist for twenty years. In addition to stints as an actor and stand-up comedian, he has

taught journalism, media studies, English composition and writing at several colleges in the tri-state region, and was recognized as Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year in 2008 by Marist College. He is currently Assistant Professor of Writing at Western Connecticut State University.

### **Rita Rosenkranz**

A well-established agent, who began her career as an editor at major publishing houses, Rita Rosenkranz represents almost exclusively adult non-fiction titles. Her wide-ranging list includes health, history, parenting, music, how-to, popular science, business, biography, sports, popular reference, cooking, writing, humor, spirituality, illustrated books and general interest titles. She represents first-time as well as seasoned authors, and looks for projects that present familiar subjects freshly or lesser-known subjects presented commercially. Rita works with major publishing houses, as well as regional publishers that handle niche markets.

Representative titles include *Forbidden Fruit: Love Stories from the Underground Railroad* by Betty DeRamus (Atria Books; essence.com best-seller, optioned by NBC for an 8-part series), *Olive Trees and Honey: A Treasury of Vegetarian Recipes from Jewish Communities Around the World* (Wiley; James Beard Award winner) by Gil Marks; *29 Gifts: How a Month of Giving Can Change Your Life* by Cami Walker (Da Capo Press; New York Times bestseller, MS Awareness Award Winner, Books for a Better Life), and *A Mind for Numbers: How to Excel at Math and Science (Even if You Flunked Algebra)* by Barbara Oakley, Ph.D. (Tarcher).

She is a member of the Association of Authors' Representatives (AAR), The Authors Guild, and Women's Media Group.

### **Saba Sulaiman**

Saba is a literary agent at Talcott Notch, specializing in:

Adult: up-market literary and commercial fiction, romance (all subgenres except paranormal), character-driven psychological thrillers, cozy mysteries, and memoir.

Young Adult: all subgenres except paranormal, fantasy, and sci-fi. I'm particularly interested in contemporary realistic YA -- anything with heart, humor, and personality. But if you've got a fast-paced, chilling mystery, she's all ears.

Middle Grade: anything that's smart, accessible and written with flair. Whether it's quirky and funny, or just plain sweet and heartwarming -- it's no big secret that this is my favorite category. Also, she loves anything Roald Dahl-esque.

Non-fiction: humor.

**Brian Thiem**

Brian Thiem is the author of *Red Line*, *Thrill Kill*, and *Shallow Grave* (Crooked Lane Books). He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from WCSU, where he is also a writing mentor. In his previous life, he spent 25 years with the Oakland Police Department, working Homicide as a detective sergeant and later as the commander of the Homicide Section as well as patrol, SWAT, and vice-narcotics. He's also a veteran of the Iraq War, and retired from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel after 28 years of active and reserve duty. He lives in South Carolina, where he's at work on a new crime novel.

**A.B. Westrick**

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.