

The Seventh Week

clarion west writers workshop • fall 2020

Volcano Woman

FLASH FICTION BY
KIINI IBURA SALAAM
(CW '01)

He creeps up on me, quiet-like. A funky whisky scent invades my nose. When I take a step back, he scowls.

"Why you actin scared, I jus wan talk to you. Maybe take you to a hotel."

One jittery look around shows me empty lots and boarded-up buildings. I step off the curb and scoot across the street. The slap of my tennis is loud on the concrete, but I hear the beat of his feet.

Next thing I know, my knee twists and I'm tumbling. I scramble sideways, scraping my palms as I work my way underneath a chain-link fence. Inside, I duck tire rims and rusty engines, limping through the mess of metal to find a place to hide.

"Girlie, you all right?"

I whirl around to see an old woman sitting on a throne of twisted car fenders, thick strands of hair coiled high on her head.

I nod mutely.

"Soup?" she says, motioning to a gigantic pot billowing steam.

I shake my head and look back toward the street.

"Girl, you come to my yard with a wolf chasin you and you in a rush to go back into the night?"

In a flash, she is standing. Her arm outstretched, holding a steaming cup. My hand lifts. I try not to drink, but my body is not under my control.

After the soup is inside me, I drop



Volcano Galangung by R. Hadian, U.S. Geological Survey

down to the dirt. I lie there paralyzed while the old woman trickles a ragged line of salt in a circle around me.

"What do you see?" she whispers.

With eyes closed, I see a figure dancing around the rim of a volcano.

"Go."

At her command, the dancing figure descends.

"Clean yourself."

The dancing figure undresses me and leads me to four clay pots. I dip my hands into the first. Black paste coats my fingers.

"Roach dung," she whispers as I slather it on my body.

I dig into the next, scooping up rotten fruit to work into my hair. Tree sap from the third cakes my armpits. The gin from the last splatters my skin.

The dancing figure spins before me growing brighter and brighter. My eyes roll back in my head as every cell in my body trembles in fury. Then, without warning, I erupt.

#

When I wake, the old bony fingers grab my arm and drag me to my feet.

"Go home. Don't talk to nobody, go straight inside. Go, now!"

#

"Been looking for you, baby."

The stench of liquor worms into my nostrils as I stagger down the street. The volcano woman stirs.

He grabs my wrist and I explode. Light shoots from my eyes and I sink my heat into his flesh. He falls, screeching, at my feet.

At home, I wrestle the door open, click the lock behind me.

"You're safe," the volcano woman flutters, whipping up a spiral of winds that cocoon me in softness. I release my terror to her warmth and collapse on the floor. ♦

KIINI IBURA SALAAM writes electrifying fantasy rooted in culture, identity, and freedom. Her fiction has been published in two collections: *Ancient, Ancient* and *When the World Wounds*.



photo © Régine Romdin

Welcome New Board Members and Staff

MARNEE CHUA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we approach the end of this year, I am pleased to share that several individuals have joined the Clarion West Board of Directors in 2020. Their addition to the board will help us better position the organization to grow, build capacity, and achieve our plans to make our workshops more accessible. They have already been engaging in our identity review and workshop review process and will be key to implementing our goals for the coming year.

The following individuals joined the board in 2020:

Shweta Adhyam (she/her) grew up in Madras, lives in Seattle, and writes speculative fiction. She has graduate degrees in physics and astronomy, has worked as actuary and data analyst, speaks five languages, and strongly believes escapism is vital. She is frenemies with ADHD, knows far more about Hindu mythology than is good for her, and attended Clarion West in 2017. She lives with her spouse and child. Shweta can be found on the web at www.shweta-adhyam.com and on Twitter as @shweta_adhyam.

Betsy Aoki (she/her) is an industry pioneer with 20+ years of experience leading technical teams. Her jobs have centered on v.1 products and platforms



Shweta Adhyam (CW '17)



Betsy Aoki (CW '16)



Linda Breneman

Jessica L. Drake JLD Imagery

Stephanie Skerfvington
Flashing Lights Photography Seattle



M. Huw Evans (CW '12)



Scott Sherman



Evan J. Peterson (CW '15)

for social interaction, metrics platforms, and gaming. With Eileen Brown, she is co-author of *Digital Marketer*, published by the British Computer Society.

Linda Breneman (she/her) is a writer in Seattle. She works on fiction, essays, and video game journalism and publishes Pixelkin.org. She is interested in games and learning, consciousness, virtual worlds, cockapoo dogs, literature, speculative fiction, and her family. In 1996, she co-founded Seattle's literary center, Richard Hugo House.

In 2012, **M. Huw Evans** (he/him) left a career in health sciences and research to pursue his childhood dream of writing fiction. He attended Clarion West (where he wrote the first version of a story for none other than the master of time travel herself, Connie Willis), then served as Workshop Administrator for four years (2014–2017). Huw is a freelance editor, a stay-at-home dad ... and a writer.

Scott Sherman (he/him) is a software engineer and writer. He enjoys reading (anything from a new perspective),

writing (stories and programs), and 'rithmetic (including advanced mathematical topics like flexagons).

In addition, a new staff member, **Evan J. Peterson** (all pronouns accepted) joined Clarion West in June, as our Marketing & Social Media Coordinator. Since joining the team, Evan has also increasingly taken on a role with our fundraising efforts, with an eye toward moving into our Fundraising & Outreach Coordinator position by the end of the year. Evan writes strange stories, nonfiction, poetry, and interactive games such as Drag Star! He was the founding creative editor and then editor-in-chief of Minor Arcana Press and founder of the SHRIEK: A Women of Horror Film Series. Find Evan online at www.evanjpeterson.com.

Please join me in welcoming them. This year has been an especially challenging time for our workshop and community. I am so thankful our board and staff's dedication to moving forward and keeping our programs thriving. ♦

Donor Spotlight

Susan C. Petrey Fund

EVAN J. PETERSON
(CW '15)



Susan C. Petrey

photo courtesy of Debbie Cross and Paul Wrigley

We love our donors. That may sound glib, but in 2020, support for the arts and social progress cannot be taken for granted. Clarion West nurtures writers of science fiction (and fantasy, horror, and other speculative genres) — we support the artists who imagine better futures and reimagine the present and past. Our donors make this all possible; consider what Clarion West and other organizations would look like this year without the continued support of donors. Our donors quite literally help create the future.

This fall, we'd like to pay tribute to the Oregon-based Susan C. Petrey Fund, which has honored us for over three decades with their Clarion West scholarship and the more recent fellowship for instructors.

Recent Clarion West Petrey scholars include Celeste Rita Baker (CW '19), Laurie Penny (CW '15), and JY Neon Yang (CW '13). Recent Petrey fellows include instructors Anne Leckie (2019), Karen Joy Fowler (2018), and Pat Cadigan (2017). For our

fall Donor Spotlight, we interviewed Debbie Cross and Paul Wrigley from the Susan C. Petrey Fund about Susan's literary legacy and the opportunities they provide in her name:

Evan J. Peterson: You honor Susan C. Petrey's memory and legacy with your philanthropy. Can you tell us more about what kind of person she was?

Debbie Cross and Paul Wrigley: Susan was a writer, a musician, and a student of Turkish and Russian. She worked as a medical technologist. She participated in Portland fandom and was a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America. Most of all, she was a friend.

Susan, like many of us, was confused about her life. Her diaries and doodling revealed this. However, she lived her life, no matter how confused, with direction and intent. Much of her energy was funneled into the study of languages and history, writing many of her notes and story ideas in Russian and Turkish. She began writing as a means of combating depression, but it became much more. She participated in local writers groups and had been accepted to attend [the] Clarion [Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers' Workshop], but she was unable to

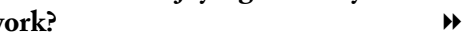
attend for financial reasons. Prior to her sudden death in 1980, she'd had four stories accepted for publication in the Fantasy & Science Fiction magazine. Steve Perry took uncompleted story ideas and rough manuscripts and turned them into three stories also

accepted by the magazine.

EJP: Clarion West is the benefactor of your generous scholarship for students as well as your fellowship for instructors. What is your greatest wish for your philanthropy toward our organization and toward the Clarion Workshop in San Diego?

DC & PW: Our greatest wish is that the scholarship winners enjoy their time at the workshop and use the experience to change their lives in the future.

EJP: "Spidersong" is perhaps Petrey's best-known story, and you've also produced a collection of her stories titled *Gifts of Blood*. Do you have a favorite story of hers or a suggested place to start enjoying her body of work?



Our greatest wish is that the scholarship winners enjoy their time at the workshop and use the experience to change their lives in the future.

— Debbie Cross and Paul Wrigley of the Susan C. Petrey Fund



Cover Art for *Gifts of Blood*
by Tim Hildebrandt

- ▶ DC & PW: Although "Spidersong" (available to read via Lightspeed magazine) was the story for which she received a Hugo nomination, we love the universe where most of her stories take place. They tell the story of a race, the Varkela, who live on the Russian steppes. Like vampires, they need blood to live, but they are also healers. The payment they receive for healing is a small amount of human blood.

Gifts of Blood was published as a 500-copy limited edition hardcover in 1990, priced at \$20, with an introduction by us and essays by Ursula K. Le Guin, Vonda N. McIntyre, and Kate Wilhelm; they also signed all copies of the book. We still have copies for sale at the original \$20 price, plus \$4 for shipping and handling (see the mailing address below to order a copy!). Baen published a paperback in 1992 which lacked the introduction and essays. Used copies may be found online at the usual outlets.

EJP: What else would you like readers to know about Susan,

GIFTS OF BLOOD

Five Hundred copies have been printed, of which 474 have been numbered and offered for sale. 26 lettered copies have been kept for presentation.

This is copy 45

Ursula K. Le Guin

Vonda N. McIntyre

Kate Wilhelm

Oregon Science Fiction Conventions Inc., and the Susan C. Petrey Fund?

DC & PW: The fund started accidentally. It started with \$100 collected at a Portland Science Fiction Society meeting, to send flowers to Susan's funeral. It was then discovered that the church did not allow flowers. It was decided that giving the money to Clarion West would be a fitting tribute. Additional donations were solicited to make the grant more meaningful. Because of administrative problems, the scholarship was not awarded in 1981, and we continued to raise money for another year. Almost 40 years later, we are still raising money. Auctions and sales at OryCon and surpluses from Portland-area conventions have been a major source of funds.

This year, with only a virtual OryCon (the annual Portland SFF convention), as this goes to press we've just completed an eBay auction concurrent with the convention.

EJP: How are you handling the

extremes of 2020? What do you miss most about having an in-person convention?

DC & PW: We only attend one convention a year at present, so the virus has had no effect to date on our convention activity. Otherwise, we stay home and practice social distancing whenever we have to leave. The election is more of a concern to us at the present time.

EJP: Whom else does the Susan C. Petrey Fund support?

DC & PW: The Petrey Fund also awards an annual scholarship to the Clarion Workshop in San Diego. In the early days of the scholarship (1982), we started with awarding a scholarship to Clarion. In 1985, we awarded a scholarship to Leslie Howle to attend Clarion West and began alternating between Clarion and Clarion West until, in 1992, we started awarding scholarships to both workshops. The first Susan C. Petrey Fellow was Michael Swanwick in 2005.

More information, including a complete list of winners, may be found at <http://www.osfci.org/petrey>. To support the Susan C. Petrey Fund, scroll through the website for suggestions for donating and online fundraising. Cash donations can be made through PayPal to the email address susanpetrey@comcast.net.

If you have any items to donate for the 2021 auction, or wish to purchase a copy of *Gifts of Blood* signed by Le Guin, McIntyre, and Wilhelm, please contact us at:

Susan C. Petrey Scholarship Fund
PMB 455
2870 NE Hogan Road, Suite E
Gresham, OR 97030-3175
Phone: 503-667-0807
Email: susanpetrey@comcast.net ♦

Summer 2020 Review

CLARION WEST
WORKSHOP TEAM



Clarion West Six-Week Summer Workshop 2020/21 students joined members of Clarion San Diego's 2020 "Ghost Class" and others at the Nebulas on Zoom. (L to R, top to bottom) LP Kindred, Amit Gupta (CW), P H Lee (CW), Mary Thaler, Jenny Williams, Louis Evans (CW), Matthew Olivas, Andrew Dana Hudson, teri.zin (CW), Anna-Claire McGrath, Joule Zelman (CW), Sydney Rossman-Reich (CW), Yilin Wang (CW), S.R. Mandel, Shingai Kagunda, and Sloane Leong (CW)

2020 challenged all of us in ways we never expected. At Clarion West, this meant trying different approaches and making new connections. In April, One-Day Workshop Administrator Tegan Moore (CW '15) pivoted on a dime to pull together 43 free online classes. We followed this in May with another set of 13 classes, offered on a sliding price scale.

Meanwhile, the Clarion West Six-Week Summer Workshop team, Rashida J. Smith (CW '05) and Jae Steinbacher (CW '14), planned a memorable summer for the 18 members of the now-postponed Class of 2020/2021. With Executive Director Marnee Chua, they cooked up an expanded version of the annual Clarion West Write-a-thon fundraiser that included flash fiction critique groups, 33 free classes, weekly prompts and craft talks, and a Slack forum with 527 active participants.

Between April and August, we reached 449 unique writers with our free and sliding scale online classes. We also held nine classes and workshops for teens. This made summer 2020 a hectic time, but an exciting one for our community. Here's what some

of the folks who joined us for the ride had to say:

"When the pandemic began, writing felt like trying to unmoor a ship. I'm so grateful for the weekly flash fiction goals and co-working sessions of the Write-a-thon, as well as the weekly craft talks with true luminaries. Sprint by sprint and week by week, spending the summer with CW put me back into a regular habit of writing and inspired me to release more of my weird and my fun back into my words."
—Serena W. Lin (CW '20/21)

"Over this summer I've had some of the most illuminating conversations with some of the best people, and learned a ton! I felt unbelievably lucky to share (virtual) space with thoughtful, approachable instructors and a creative, inspiring cohort, with organizers who went above and beyond to make this experience as close to the real thing as possible. In these extraordinary times, these classes, sprints, the Write-a-thon critique groups, and other events served as welcome balms that reminded me about the power of speculative fiction — and

just also [were] a whole lot of fun. As an international student, I'm also very grateful for the accommodations in the time slot, and for the opportunities to attend events like the Nebula Awards that I could never have attended otherwise. It's been a fantastic induction into the community — I cannot wait for more."

—Varsha Dinesh (CW '20/21)

"Thank you so much for all of these wonderful opportunities! The Write-a-thon was so much fun this year, thanks to the critique groups and especially those sprints with Jae and Rashida!"

"I really appreciate that you have been offering these learning opportunities during the pandemic — it's really helpful and makes me feel very supported. Thank you!"

"I'd love to attend the summer workshop one day, but as the mother of a young child, it's hard for me to be away for that long. So online workshops, including multiweek workshops, are a great option for me." ♦

MISSION STATEMENT

We support emerging and underrepresented voices by providing writers with world-class instruction to empower their creation of wild and amazing worlds.

Through conversation and public engagement, we bring those voices to an ever-expanding community.

Upcoming Events this Spring

Join us for a series of panels highlighting three avenues of publication in which Black editors are making an impact on the genre.

Power in Publishing: Publishers Roundtable

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 1PM PACIFIC

Featuring: Bill Campbell (Rosarium), Zelda Knight (AURELIA LEO), and Milton Davis (MVmedia)

With major publishers stuck in a cycle of selling the same mainstream stories or tightening their belts when it comes to the work of marginalized communities, how are Black publishers shaping opportunities for BIPOC writers to have their voices heard?

Zines and Magazines: Expanding Worlds in Speculative Fiction

MONDAY, MAY 17, 7PM PACIFIC

Featuring: Craig Laurance Gidney (Baffling Magazine), Chinelo Onwualu (Omenana/Anathema), Eboni Dunbar (FIYAH), LaShawn Wanak (Giganotosaurus/Uncanny), and Brent Lambert (FIYAH)

Join prominent Black editors of online zines and magazines as they discuss their journeys into editing and the role editors play in creating space for the voices of BIPOC communities in the speculative fiction field. Moderated by Arley Sorg of Locus and Fantasy Magazine.

Ancestors and Anthologies: New Worlds in Chorus

DATE: TBD

Featuring: Maurice Broaddus (*POC Destroy Horror* and *Dark Faith*), Linda D. Addison (*Sycorax's Daughters*), Sheree Renée Thomas (*Dark Matter*), and C.L. Clark (*We're Here: The Best Queer Speculative Fiction 2020*)

From the groundbreaking *Dark Matter* to *Sycorax's Daughters* to *POC Destroy!*, anthologies are one way marginalized voices gather in chorus on a particular subject, subgenre, or genre. Our anthologies panel will delve into the world of bespoke collections with luminaries in the field, moderated by award-winning author and editor Nisi Shawl (*New Suns*, *Everfair*, *Stories for Chip: A Tribute to Samuel R. Delany*). ♦

Clarion West Writers Workshop

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Jae Steinbacher | Workshop Coordinator
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7th Week

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Tod McCoy | Volunteer Reader
Misha Stone | Volunteer Reader
Miriah Hetherington | Volunteer Reader
Yang-Yang Wang | Volunteer Reader
Shweta Adhyam | Volunteer Reader
M. Huw Evans | Volunteer Reader

Writing Prompts from 2021 Six-Week Workshop Instructors

CLARION WEST
WORKSHOP TEAM

We are delighted to report that our 2020 lineup of instructors will return to teach the Clarion West Six-Week Workshop in 2021. A few of them sent prompts this summer for the Write-a-thon participants, and we've included some snippets below.

ANDY DUNCAN
JUNE 20–26, 2021

Reading June 22

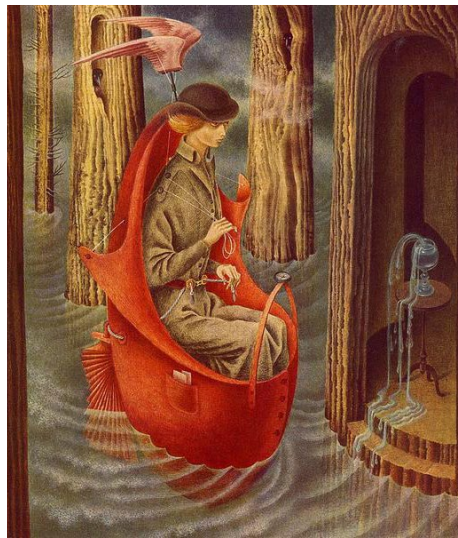
Andy's Summer 2020 prompt, condensed:

- Write about the weirdest thing that ever happened to you. Try to write down the story of precisely what happened, in as much detail as you can recall. Be honest about what you remember, and what you don't; about what you know, and what you don't. This might be a few sentences, or a few pages.
- When you think you're done, put these writings aside for a day.
- After a day has elapsed with no new additions, reread what you've

written. Ask yourself: Is this the kernel of a short story, or a personal essay? Is a character, a setting, a conflict, a plot already inherent in what I've written? Might this be incorporated into something I'm working on? How might I learn more details of this specific experience, or this specific type of experience?

EILEEN GUNN
JUNE 27–JULY 3, 2021

Reading June 29



Remedios Varo, *Exploring River of the Source Orinonoco*

Eileen's Summer 2020 prompt:

- Relax. Shake yourself all over, loosely, like a water spaniel. Breathe deeply.
- Get ready to write.
- Look at the following paintings by the surrealist painter Remedios Varo: *Exploring, Boy, Born, Gravity, Creation*.
- Take a full minute to explore each of the images you've chosen. Time yourself: one minute for each image you especially like.
- Then just set your timer for 15 minutes, and write freely for that time. Write anything that comes into your head. Don't correct your typing or edit yourself. Just write. Don't look back, and don't look

at the images again. If you get stuck, you can just write the same word over and over, but don't stop writing.

- When your timer goes off, stop.
- Put the work aside. Don't reread it.
- The next day, take it out, read it, edit it, and see what you've got.

TINA CONNOLLY
& CAROLINE YOACHIM
JULY 4–10, 2021

Reading July 6

Tina & Caroline's Summer 2020 prompts:

- What does a superhero fear most?
- What are the last words ever spoken?

NALO HOPKINSON
JULY 11–17, 2021

Reading July 13

Nalo's Summer 2020 prompt:

- Write the recipe for an impossible, nonexistent dish. Write it in the form of a short origin myth (250–1,000 words).



Honoré Damier, *Stew*, 1840

NEIL CLARKE
JULY 18–24, 2021
Editor Event July 20

TED CHIANG
JULY 25–31, 2021
Reading July 27 ♦

APPLY NOW

Online Novella Bootcamp

with Laurie Penny
(CW '15)

LAURIE PENNY is an award-winning author, journalist, and screenwriter from London, now living in Los Angeles. As a screenwriter, Laurie has worked on *The Haunting of Bly Manor* (Netflix), *The Nevers* (HBO), and *Carnival Row* (Amazon).



JANUARY 3 THROUGH FEBRUARY 21
SUNDAYS FROM 5:30 – 7:30 PM PST

\$375; some scholarships available, with preference to BIPOC and marginalized students.

Want to make your New Year's resolutions come to life? We're presenting an eight-week novella workshop with Laurie Penny in early 2021.

Together, class members will structure, outline, trouble-shoot, and most importantly, complete a 17,000-40,000 word novella. Using storytelling techniques from screenwriting, the aim is for each student to come away with a finished first draft. This class is for intermediate and advanced writers. Come prepared to work hard and support each other!

If you'd like more information or to apply to Laurie's class, reach out to workshop@clarionwest.org.

Applicants should submit the

following by December 10:

A brief outline (200-500 words) that explains your idea, describes the main characters, and where you see the story going. (This can change, but Laurie would like a sense of what your story is about!)

A short personal statement (500 words or fewer) about your workshop or publishing experience. Workshop experience and publications are not required, but we do want to know more about you!

Scholarship applicants should state in the body of their email that they are applying for a scholarship and include information in their personal statement about their interest and financial need (please maintain a limit of 800 words or fewer).

We prioritize seats for BIPOC and other marginalized students, and for first-time scholarship recipients. ♦

Clarion West

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