

# The Seventh Week

clarion west fall workshop report 2017



photo by E.L. Bangs

In the house, Summer 2017

## CLARION WEST 2017 PRACTICAL TACTICAL BRILLIANCE

NEILE GRAHAM (CW 96)  
WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

HUW EVANS (CW 12)  
WORKSHOP ADMINISTRATOR

KATIE SPARROW (CW 05)  
ONE-DAY WORKSHOP  
COORDINATOR

2017 was another exciting and unforgettable summer workshop!

Our third year in the ‘new’ house brought no last-minute instructor changes and pleasant weather throughout. That felt almost—if you can say that about six weeks of brain-boosting writerly intensity—calm! Neile and Huw led the workshop team again, with Lauren, Katie, and additionally Tegan Moore as assistants. Joe was back for a fifth time, nourishing students and instructors alike in grand and delicious style, reminding us once again just how essential both his phenomenal cooking and his delightful presence is to the workshop's success. Esther returned as housekeeper for the first half the workshop, and her friend Genevieve joined us for the rest. And of course, as always, we're immensely grateful to all of you in the Clarion West community who gave so generously of your time and energies to support the students and staff throughout the summer.

The eighteen fantastically talented students of the 2017 class were delightful, hard-working, and dedicated—not only to their writing, but to shaping their world for the better through their writing. They hailed from Singapore, Cyprus, Mexico, and all over the U.S., and for one student we were a stopping point between an Oxford degree and a residency in Japan. We had a strong local contingent, too—what is it about Seattle? Coincidentally, in a

year when one of our instructors is known for his background as an EMT, one of our students was a practicing EMT (we're happy to say that neither of them were called upon to demonstrate their emergency response skills at the workshop).

The workshop began as immersively as ever: Daryl Gregory barely paused for introductions before leading the students in writing—and re-writing and scene-writing and even acting and directing—exercises. His inspiring positivity and motivating energy (and sense of humor!) helped them push their own writing limits. Crucial to the first week, the students got to know and trust one another, and they learned many of the coping skills and keys to success that would see them successfully through the remainder of the workshop.

In Week Two, the inimitable Kij Johnson (an alumna of Clarion West!) introduced the students to the Clarion West method of story critique—and to her own veritable trove of writerly wisdom. Every day, the students grew in their abilities to recognize the strengths and uncover the opportunities in both their colleagues' writings and their own works. Week Two is always hard work, with so many new challenges and demands hitting the students at once, but Kij is the perfect instructor to guide a class along even the most perilous of paths, and she guided this class with her signature aplomb.

The third week was led by John





THE CLASS OF 2017

**L-R Back row:** E.L. Bangs, Stephanie Malia Morris, Mark Galarrita, Izzy Wasserstein, Robert Minto, Adam Shannon, Emma Törzs, Patrick Lofgren, David Bruns **Front row:** Gordon White, Vina Jie-Min Prasad, Andrea Chapela, Iori Kusano, Shweta Adhyam, A. T. Greenblatt, Alexandra Manglis, Joanne Lim-Pousard, Andrea M. Pawley **Down in front:** Instructor Kij Johnson

► Chu, a multi-talented rising star of the speculative fiction world, and—as he ably demonstrated—an effective and inspiring instructor. He joined the workshop just as the students were coming into their own as a class and were poised to pick up every crumb of wisdom to fall their way. John delivered to them an expertly appointed toolbox of literary techniques to use during the remaining weeks and throughout their careers.

Veteran Clarion West instructor and living legend of speculative fiction, the one and only Connie Willis, assumed leadership of the workshop in Week Four. Witty, wise, and wonderful as ever, Connie unreservedly gave to the class not only expert story critiques, a wealth of technical and stylistic writing advice, and sage counsel for the writer's career, but also the warming glow of her own passion and joy in writing.

For Week Five Daniel José Older arrived to infuse the workshop with his own irresistible exuberance for the adventure and art of writing great fiction. Daniel schooled the students in fine elements of

literary expression, packed their heads to bursting with practical tactical brilliance for living the writer life, and helped them hone their already keen sociopolitical savvy. And at this perilous point in the workshop when exhaustion might otherwise have threatened to overwhelm, he re-energized the students, inciting them to lunge with fresh zeal into their final week.

And teaching that final week was none other than the unstoppable, irresistible, sometimes irascible, often irreverent, and always empathetic and encouraging Pat Cadigan. With her usual take-no-prisoners approach, she terrified the students into mindless obedi—well, she brought her trademark generosity, humor, seriousness, and candor to both the student's stories and to discussions about the nitty gritty details of craft and the writer's life. Her time with the class was the perfect conclusion to six weeks of hard work and wonderful times, and the perfect opening chapter of the rest of the students' lives and careers.

Overall the workshop was—once again, and as is always hoped—a brilliant success,

and though the class experienced its own particular ups and downs throughout its time together, the six weeks were a fantastically joyous and productive period for all involved. We look forward, with eager anticipation, to doing it all again next year. The class will be new, of course, and for summer of 2018, in addition to superstar veteran instructors Karen Joy Fowler and Ellen Datlow, we'll be welcoming four phenomenally exciting Clarion West newcomers: Daniel Abraham (CW '98 grad and half the of James S. A. Corey writing team), Ken MacLeod, Yoon Ha Lee, and Karen Lord.

There will also be changes to the workshop staff: 2017 marks the end of Huw's term as workshop administrator. As you may have seen in the Alumni News, Huw is retiring from the position in order to free up more summer time for family and writing. We're not letting him step away entirely though. He'll be around to assist Clarion West however and whenever he may, including helping to train his successor, who we look forward to introducing very soon. ►►

▶ The Clarion West One-Day Workshops, coordinated by Katie Sparrow, continue to be a successful endeavor, with sessions designed to hone craft for new and more experienced writers alike. Our final spring workshop was by alumna Helen Marshall, who delved deep into evoking emotions within readers. The Fall One-Day sessions got off to fantastic start with a workshop by Arinn Dembo that delivered on its ambitious title: *World-Building in a Day*. Upcoming workshop instructors include J.M. Sidorova, and Kij Johnson. The workshops are unique and delightful, and we invite all of you to follow our line-up for the coming year at the One-Day Workshops page of Clarion West's website.

And finally [teaser alert!] expect to hear from us very soon about our latest endeavor: the soon-to-be-launched Clarion West Online Workshops! ♦

## Clarion West Writers Workshop

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# 2017 Summer Reading Series

The Summer Reading Series is one of the year's most anticipated events for Clarion West, and this year was no exception. Part of the lifeblood of the organization is our mission to connect readers with writers, and these evenings with the instructors of the Summer Workshop are part of that mission to connect with our community.

Daryl Gregory started the series off strong with a reading from *Spoonbenders*



photo by Kris Millering

Daryl Gregory

which had the audience alternately laughing and sitting spellbound, listening to the story of a gifted family who are human in some profound and flawed ways. Kij Johnson kept the audience enraptured the next week with her reading from *The River Bank*, a sequel to the classic story *The Wind in the Willows*.

In the third week, John Chu read from a near-future story about a secret agent with an engineered body, trying to make things work with an old friend.



photo by Kris Millering

Kij Johnson



photo by Kris Millering

Daniel José Older



photo by Marnee Chua

Connie Willis at Seattle Public Library

Our fourth week reading, held at the Seattle Public Library's downtown branch, featured Connie Willis and her signature blend of wit, humor, and just the right amount of gravity, with a story about an eclipse titled "And Come From Miles Around."

Daniel José Older, also at the Seattle Public Library, gave an enthralling and kinetic reading from his upcoming *Bone Street Rumba* book, weaving the words through the minds of the audience mem-



photo by Kris Millering

Gabriel Teodros

bers. Before Daniel's reading, local musician and CW '16 alumnus Gabriel Teodros spun some tunes and performed his own songs, including an amazing multimedia performance. Pat Cadigan ended the series on the perfect note, reading a story about an exclusive club and the terrible choices one woman faces within.

Thank you to everyone who makes the Summer Reading Series possible—our sponsors, our instructors, the University Book Store and the Seattle Public Library, and the audience who come out to listen, question, and leave a little different than they were when they arrived.

If you missed the readings this summer, we will be featuring them on our YouTube channel starting in late 2017. And, as always, we look forward to seeing you next year! ♦



photo by Kris Millering

Pat Cadigan

# In Students' Words

"CLARION WEST WAS TRULY A WATERSHED MOMENT in my life as a writer and honestly one of the most important things I've ever done. Grueling, joyous, transformative. I'm grateful beyond words to have had the chance to live to write for those six weeks—and even more than that, for the community we forged in the process, spanning the whole Earth and tight knit as a wolf pack." —**E.L. Bangs**

"Clarion West changed my life. I was told that it would, but even so I WAS UNPREPARED FOR THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CHANGE. I attended hoping to become a better writer and to make a few friends. I saw my writing massively improve while I was at Clarion West, and the skills I learned there continue to help me improve as a writer. And I made friends, but not just a few—a class's worth of people who are near and dear to me (we're already planning con meetups, there's chatting every day in the team Slack meetup, and we're constantly encouraging one another and helping each other adjust to the "real," post-CW world). I also had the chance to build rich relationships with members of the speculative fiction community.

"All of which is to say: I hoped I'd have a rewarding experience at Clarion West, and instead I had the greatest six weeks of my life. I'll be forever grateful for CW both for helping me become a better writer and, especially, for providing me a supportive, caring, dedicated community when I most needed it. I'm grateful every day for the experience I had at Clarion West.

"There is no better way for early-career speculative fiction writers to improve than to go to Clarion West, and funds given to support CW provide immediate and direct support to a life-changing program. I'm forever grateful for the contributions of time, effort, and funding that made my experience possible." —**Izzy Wasserstein**

# Summer Reading Series 2018



**June 19**  
Daniel Abraham



**June 26**  
Ken MacLeod



**July 3** Yoon Ha Lee

photo by J. K. Mann

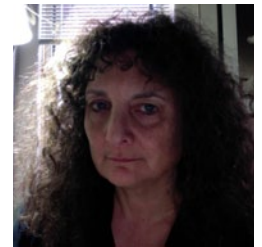


**July 10** Karen Lord



**July 17** Karen Joy Fowler

photo by Brett Hall Jones



**July 24**  
Ellen Datlow

The 2018 Clarion West Summer Reading Series will happen on Tuesday evenings during the workshop. Mark your calendars now, and watch our website, Twitter, or Facebook page for announcements about locations.

For more details on next summer's instructors, visit [clarionwest.org/workshops/summer](http://clarionwest.org/workshops/summer) ♦

## Write-a-thon Results

We had a fantastic Write-a-thon this summer, with 204 living writers and the ghost of Mary Shelley participating. Together, these writers raised a grand total of \$20,689 to support the workshop. If you were a writer or donor or both this summer, thank you so much! We could not do this without you. ♦



## Alumni News

The online Clarion West Alumni News is still going strong. The Alumni News is published monthly at the Clarion West website: [clarionwest.org/community/alumni-news](http://clarionwest.org/community/alumni-news). You can also subscribe to our email list to receive the Alumni News via email most months. (Not subscribed, but want to be? Go to the Contact section of [clarionwest.org](http://clarionwest.org) and fill out the form. We'll get you added to the list.)

Have some news of your own to share? Email [alumni@clarionwest.org](mailto:alumni@clarionwest.org) with the details of your publications, awards, appearances, and new ventures. We love hearing from our alumni, and we love pictures! ♦