

The Seventh Week

clarion west writers workshop • fall 2021

The Plagiarism Of Locusts



FLASH FICTION BY
RHIANNON RASMUSSEN
& VELES SVITLYCHNY

The locust archive is not a physical place. The archive resides in the sound of their wings, an orchestra of echoes where locusts store all of the words they have eaten. Once, they came in great waves onto our fields and chewed our crops to the roots, and we starved. We had too many words, and the words solved none of our problems. The locusts only understood that they hungered. To them, one sort of grain is much the same as another. So we offered them our words, and they accepted.

At first they devoured discarded ephemera, and that was enough to engross them; but the repetition of broadsides and slogans, barely tolerable even when the deluge chanced to contain an object of interest, became a vacuous cacophony. We started to feed them narratives instead; cheap, bargain-bin, formulaic; and then, ambitiously, literature. Stories nourished locusts more than they have ever nourished us. Now they have devoured libraries. And what an accomplishment, to have our own great art consumed by another species; appreciated, ingested, and fully anatomized?

That they repeat what they have eaten is not, to them, an act of piracy, but of digestion. They call their works 'transformative' because Don Quixote as rendered by the rasping of locust wings is almost unrecognizable as the book written out on reams of paper. The locust archive has spread so far



that we can no longer tell which works are our own and which are just stochastic coincidences of wingbeats.

Many of us write only for the locusts. They fertilized us with famine, pestilence, and tragedy. Perhaps, to the locusts, we are seeds and our stories the fruit of their labor.

Nevertheless, the locusts leave certain volumes untouched. Rarely do they wipe out the entire yield of a single genre. Thrillers, romance, mystery, science-fiction, literary fiction — if the taste is too familiar, they will pass it by. Others they devour, edition after edition. Their critical opinions are only voiced in the scraps left behind. Within

the archive, these stories resound.

All the world's poor, once ruined by the locusts, now listen to that storm of wings, listening for the works they can no longer read.

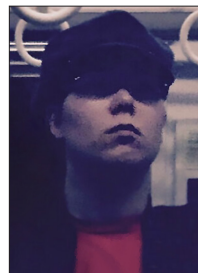
We may never know which stories the locusts hunger most for; but we listen, and we write. Many of us dread the day the winds change and the archive leaves us, our imaginations desolate; our audience — at last — sated.

Yet the winds that guide the locusts also carry the voices we have lost. Echoes and swarms carve mountains into valleys.

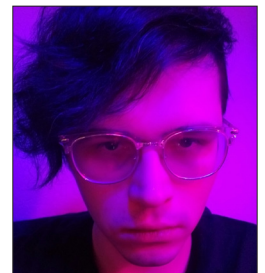
In the slow loam of ruin, new stories permeate. ♦



RHIANNON RASMUSSEN (CW '14) is a horror author and illustrator interested in monstrosity and the persistence of hope. Rhiannon's fiction has appeared in publications including *Lightspeed Magazine*, *Diabolical Plots*, and *Evil in Technicolor*. Visit rhiannonrs.com for more.



VELES SVITLYCHNY is a writer, podcaster, and game designer borne up from the chemical wastes of a local river. They are interested in alienation and bleak humor. You can find them on twitter at [@MemoriousTulpa](https://twitter.com/MemoriousTulpa).



2021 Six-Week Workshop in Review

JAE STEINBACHER (CW '14)
Residential Workshop Coordinator

Clarion West 2021 was historic in a number of ways. It was our first online workshop, bringing together students in fourteen time zones. The staff made care packages for the students, and each student was paired with an alum or former instructor who served as a mentor they could reach out to for additional support. We used online class software to share stories and feedback. And we offered modifications of the Milford method based on the Workshop Culture Committee's visioning sessions and early experiential workshops.

Each week included unwrapping new goodies from the care packages, coworking sessions offered by Nelly Geraldine García-Rosas (CW '19), and yoga by Lora Gray (CW '16). Weekly muses joined via Zoom to share their wisdom. Students socialized in a Discord channel where they could plan their own sprints together.

With the help of workshop assistants Izzy Wasserstein (CW '17) and Miyuki Jane Pinckard (Clarion 2017), staff did more to facilitate each workshop and support instructors as we introduced new methods and philosophies, including "Help Build," written by Andy Duncan and finalized by workshop staff.

The 2021 cohort did something extraordinary this summer — they wrote thousands of words, read and critiqued dozens of each other's stories, and developed bonds stretching across countless miles. They are a truly excellent group of writers and humans, and we can't wait to see what's in store



The Class of 2021 show off their diplomas on the final day of Clarion West. L to R, top row: Fawaz Al-Matrouk, Jana Bianchi, Daniela L. Guzmán, Joel Donato Ching Jacob; second row: Alex Payne, Shakirah Peterson, Stefan A. Slater, Yilin Wang; third row: Sagan Yee, Joule Zelman, Clara Madrigano, Amanda Song; fourth row: December Cuccaro, Lue Palmer, Serena W. Lin, Week Six instructor Ted Chiang; fifth row: Workshop Assistants Miyuki Jane Pinckard and Izzy Wasserstein, Online Program Coordinator Rashida J. Smith, Residential Workshop Coordinator Jae Steinbacher.

for their writerly futures.

Here's what some of the folks who joined us for the ride had to say:

"Clarion West felt like a turning point in my creative journey. I went into the workshop hoping to reconnect with my personal voice, and there was a definite moment when I felt this happen. I wrote a story based on workshop prompts that just flowed out of me, and everyone in the feedback session engaged with it on the level of philosophical introspection I hoped for. I credit this entirely to the inspiring and caring environment created by the mentors, peers, and team at Clarion West."

—Fawaz Al-Matrouk (CW '21)

"I am so thankful to the whole Clarion West team, board, staff, and our cohort for creating an amazing experience for the summer. It's strange how none of us have been in the same room, but we

all feel the bond that people talk about when they describe Clarion West — and continue to celebrate each other's work and achievements. The summer itself was one of the most challenging and creatively stimulating workshops I have been a part of. It was daunting to write one new story per week, and as faculty Sheree Renée Thomas said, to 'present our inky newborn babies' for critique! I was blessed to be part of a cohort of the most caring, creative, and incisive writers. The staff created a culture of building up each other's work and helping it to grow within the author's vision. By far my favourite [part] was our weekly one-on-ones with our instructors, and every week we were so sad to see them go, but to get to work with so many authors was incredible. I hope that all of us can connect in person one day, but I know we're in a life-long community who support each other's careers and imaginations."

—Lue Palmer (CW '21)

Update: Incubating a New Workshop Culture

MARNEE CHUA
Executive Director

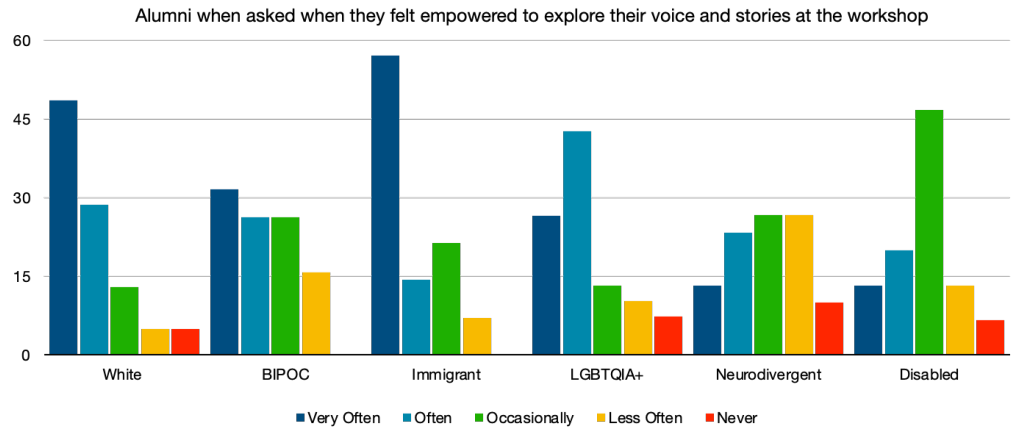
In 2021, Clarion West took a deep dive into reviewing workshop methods and learning about updates being made across the field of creative writing and arts programs for workshoping in groups. We found a consultant, Rachele Cruz, and brought together a committee to review our practices and bring them up to date, paying special attention to the workshop environment and who felt safest in it.

The first phase of the Workshop Culture project ended in February after Cruz and the workshop staff reviewed the alumni survey and focus group results and reported these to the board and workshop culture committee.*

“The result is exactly the opposite of finding their voice — the real-world silencing simply reinforces the idea that the marginalized writer should be writing toward the workshop and power.”

— Matthew Salesses

The results indicate that participant experience and satisfaction in the Six-Week Workshop varied widely by race, as well as across other marginalized demographics. What is even more disheartening is knowing that these writers left what they considered a disempowering workshop only to move on to today’s publishing market and what Matthew Salesses, author of *Craft in the Real World*, describes as “facing the same disempowerment on a larger scale... The result is exactly the opposite of finding their voice — the real-world silencing simply reinforces the idea that the marginalized writer should be writing toward the workshop and power.”



In order to address these concerns, Clarion West’s newly formed workshop culture committee — a group of alumni and former instructors, all with writing, publishing, and teaching experience — assisted in reviewing workshop options and recommendations from Cruz, Salesses, and others

Our team will continue to revise and update our methods over the next year and will review workshoping methods and accessibility for marginalized writers on an ongoing basis. Our number one takeaway is that we need to be better prepared, as an organization, to assist our instructors and the class in creating the workshop culture they want and to facilitate workshoping that is open to exploring non-Western stories and new voices.

These methods are perhaps even more rigorous and demanding of the staff, instructors, and workshop participants than before. The final approach to submitting drafts and offering feedback within the workshop will be defined and outlined by each class. It means that each cohort spends more time thinking about how to workshop, how to provide critiques, and how to ask for help during a critique. Clarion West will be hiring a Workshop Facilitator to help train and advise students, staff, and instructors on their workshoping options and how to improve their critiques, and to facilitate discussions when necessary.

Some of these workshop methods and techniques were introduced to the Six-Week Workshop this summer. While the students largely worked

WORKSHOPPING, continued on page 7 ►►

* For more details about the outset of this project, as well as a list of committee members, visit <https://www.clarionwest.org/resources/workshop-methods/>.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: Linda Deneroff

EVAN J. PETERSON (CW '15)

Marketing & Social Media Coordinator

We love our donors. That may sound glib, but in 2021, 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 quite literally help create the future.

After Vonda N. McIntyre's passing in early 2019, longtime convention leader and volunteer Linda Deneroff donated to Clarion West to start a scholarship in Vonda's memory. This year's donor spotlight celebrates Linda, the new World Science Fiction Society Division head for this year's WorldCon (DisCon III), and shares a bit of her history with our community.

Evan J. Peterson: What inspired you to kick off the Vonda N. McIntyre scholarship?

Linda Deneroff: I first met Vonda in London. We weren't close friends, but she was a mover and a shaker in the community — and talk about generous! When Vonda passed away, she left money to me! I was in shock, and I thought the best way to repay her was to create something in her name.

EJP: What would you like to see grow from the scholarship you've created?

LD: I want to see new writers. I don't read as much as I should of the newer stuff; I have about four thousand books in my house. I try to read the Hugo nominees and vote on those, and that's turned me on to new writers. I love Mary Robinette Kowal's Lady Astronaut series.



Linda Deneroff

EJP: You've done so much for the community in leadership and support roles. What does it mean to you to be a leader within our fandom?

LD: It's payback. Fandom has given me so much. When I was much younger, my father said to me, "When are you gonna grow up and get married," and I said, "Hey, I've published a fanzine, I've traveled, I've done photography," and fandom has given this to me. I don't need to get married and have kids to prove that I contributed.

I walked into [my first] convention and said, "I'm home. These are my people."

And fandom has changed over the years. It used to be [adopts a solemn tone] a proud and lonely thing to be a fan. That was kind of a fannish badge of honor. It really changed in the late 1980s. [In New York City], I did not tell a single soul what I would do when I took a vacation day here and there to go to a convention. Once science fiction spread out into the general community and became popular culture, it got more respect. Then it

was easier to tell people, "I don't just attend science fiction conventions, I help run them!" It's been personal growth for me.

EJP: Congratulations on your new position as the WSFS Division head at Worldcon!

LD: Thanks, I think! (laughs) We're dealing with about half the space we would've had ordinarily, and that has had a cascading effect on things. Space is really, really limited this year. There's just nothing anybody can do about it.

EJP: What can people do to help and support?

LD: Buy a supporting or a virtual membership in the convention, and cast your ballots for the Hugo awards and site selection.

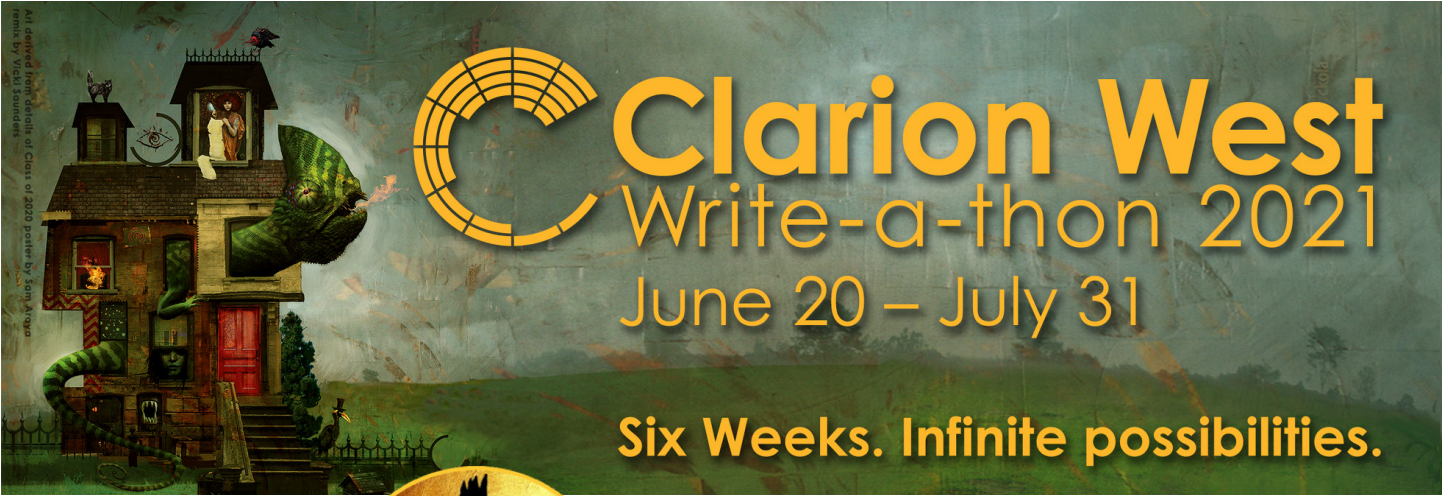
EJP: You were on a panel at Geek Girl Con called "Geek Elders Speak." How did you feel about being referred to as a "geek elder"?

DL: It doesn't bother me. Look, I'm seventy-one years old, I've earned every gray hair. I think it's important to pass on the culture, and on the other hand you have to realize that it's not going to be the same as it was. I miss the conventions as they were back in the 70s and 80s. But with the advent of popular culture, most of the [convention-goers] aren't that interested in the fannish history. If we can bring them into the literature, that's all for the better. It's always good to know what your roots are, but it's not going to happen with the masses.

EJP: Having been so active in fandom, what do you think comes in the next ten, twenty, thirty years?

LD: I have absolutely no idea! I would not want to see the fan-run conventions disappear, because that's the heart and soul of conventions. The clubs like the Lunarians are disappearing. With things like Comic Con and

DENEROFF, continued on page 7 ►►



EVAN J. PETERSON
(CW '15)
& STEPHANIE MALIA
MORRIS (CW '17)



2021 banner (above) and badges, created by Vicki Saunders (CW '09) using original poster art by Samuel Araya. In descending order: Overachiever, Running Robot, Swamp Monster of Distraction, Social Cephalopod, and Happy Tardigrade.



When's the best time to fret over your writing? Eileen Gunn has the answer: "The best time to agonize over words is after they're written — but before they're published." ("Going Through an Impasse: Evading Writer's Block," from *Pocket Workshop: Essays on Living as a Writer*, edited by Tod McCoy and M. Huw Evans).

We're taking the agony out of the first draft over here at Clarion West.

It's 2021, and we continue leveling up. In addition to running our first-ever virtual Six-Week Summer Workshop, we ran an expanded version of Write-a-thon, in keeping with a tradition started in 2020. Hundreds of writers joined us from 25 countries. Our community wrote everything from flash fiction to novels. They wrote from prompts; they wrote at 5 in the morning. They made friends, partied in Slack, and reached their writing goals. Never once did they let agonizing stop them in their tracks.

Write-a-thon 2021 was an utter delight.



We worked with an amazing roster of instructors to provide a record number of classes and sprints covering subjects from elegant info-dumping to building a better con. We partnered with some fantastic organizations: The Rambo Academy for Wayward Writers, Writing the Other, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, FIYAHCON, Two Hour Transport, and We the Indigenous. We held a number of free public events, organized by board member Yang-Yang Wang (CW '14): three live panels, covering everything from journeys to debut publication to eye-catching cover design to the art of establishing healthy writing habits.



Our open mic night and a reading of Indigenous speculative fiction drew eager attendees. The 2021 Write-a-thon was an amazing ride,

but it wouldn't have been half as successful without our fantastic community. We cannot thank the community enough for raising 117% of our \$20,000 goal. Here are some delightful comments and testimonials from people who joined us along the way:



"I am absolutely delighted at all the support being given to everyone and all the effort made to accommodate people."

"Henry Lien's (CW '12) passion was contagious, and the technical aspects of the class were both clear and insightful."

"Mr. Evans was wonderful and encouraging as a facilitator, and I found myself looking forward to getting up early each week just to write with such a compassionate and motivated group."

Thank you to everyone who joined us, wrote, and donated. We look forward to seeing you next summer! ♦

Comings, Stayings & Goings

MARNEE CHUA
Executive Director

We are so lucky to have the best staff and volunteers. Every year, when we elect and appoint new members to our Board of Directors, I am inspired by their excitement and willingness to serve. Read on to meet our newest board member, learn about staff changes, and wish farewell to Vicki Saunders.

Earlier this year, our workshop team finalized new roles to better manage the growing changes in our programs. Congratulations are due to **Rashida J. Smith** (CW '05) for her promotion to Online Program Coordinator and **Jae Steinbacher** (CW '14) for taking on a broader role as the Residential Workshop Coordinator.

We elected new board member **AJ Cari** in January. AJ is a Small Business Advocate with the Office of Economic Development for the City of Seattle. He holds a Master's Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Washington and a Bachelor of Science in Geography. Please join me in welcoming AJ to our team!

Finally, our Art Director, **Vicki Saunders** (CW '09), retired this August after 12 years of working with Clarion West as a volunteer and board member, and more recently as Art Director on staff. Vicki began volunteering as copywriter and taking minutes for the board in 2010, just a year after participating in the Six-Week Workshop, and joined the board officially in 2011. She took up the role of Art Director in 2011, earning an annual honorarium. Vicki served as Vice Chair in 2013 and served as Board Chair from 2015-2018 and Past Chair until joining the staff in August 2019. In her role as Board Chair, Vicki guided the 2016-2017 Strategic Planning effort and the processes of hiring an executive director and updating the organization's bylaws and finance policy. As Art Director, Vicki helped manage the Seventh Week Newsletter, summer posters and other summer publications, and a multitude of graphics for various projects.

We are going to miss Vicki as she retires, but wish her all the best in her travel, writing, and retirement plans. Please join me and the entire Clarion West board as we thank Vicki for all she's done for Clarion West! ♦



Jae Steinbacher (CW '14)



Rashida J. Smith (CW '05)



AJ Cari



Vicki Saunders (CW '09)

Clarion West Writers Workshop

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Miriah Hetherington | Treasurer
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Jae Steinbacher | Residential Workshop Coordinator
Rashida J. Smith | Online Program Coordinator
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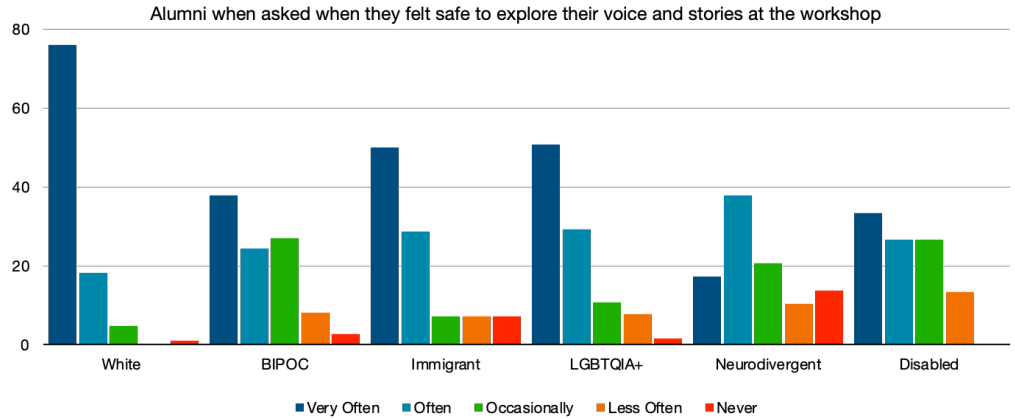
Elly Bangs | Marnee Chua |
Evan J. Peterson | Vicki Saunders |
Jeremy Sim | Rashida Smith |
Jae Steinbacher | Tod McCoy |
Misha Stone | Miriah Hetherington |
Yang-Yang Wang | Shweta Adhyam |
M. Huw Evans

photo: Nate Gowdy

within a modified version of the Milford format, they leaned in to focus on the authors' questions. Authors submitted letters with their stories asking specific questions to guide feedback and were given more of an opportunity to ask questions and follow up on feedback at the end of their critiques.

As pointed out to the class by editor Sheree Renée Thomas, if writers plan to submit to major markets, they still must be prepared to meet or exceed editors' expectations. We think this discussion is worth having within the workshop.

As we move forward, we will be working closely with each class to develop the style that meets their unique needs. A class may choose from an array of existing alternative methods established by writing experts or mix



them to meet the challenges within a given group's differences and experiences. We found that small iterations of the existing workshop methods, including author statements to get a more effective critique, have already proven highly valuable.

Overall the updated process seemed to contribute a great deal to a welcoming and collaborative online classroom during the workshop this summer. We

look forward to continuing this progress and creating a meaningful, enriching, and inclusive atmosphere to challenge future Clarion West workshops. Follow along with the process online on our Workshop Methods page!

Stay tuned for announcements about more experiential workshops we'll hold in 2022, open to alumni and writers with workshoping experience.

SIX-WEEK WORKSHOP UPDATE: Accessible location for 2022

JAE STEINBACHER & MARNEE CHUA

We are excited to announce that the 2022 Six-Week Workshop is planned to be in person in ADA accessible facilities from June 19 to July 30, 2022. More information regarding the location and what to expect will be listed on our website by the time that applications open on December 1, 2021.*

While Clarion West is committed to reducing barriers to attending the Six-Week Workshop, we are also at the mercy of rising expenses and changes in operations. Accessible housing is one kind of barrier, and the cost of attending is another. Unfortunately, after

five years with no tuition increase, Clarion West is forced to announce an increase of \$600 per student to help cover housing, classroom space, instructor payments, travel, and dining expenses. With the help of our donors, however, we hope to continue to provide scholarships to anyone who wants to attend the workshop. If you find yourself in a position to give, please consider donating toward student scholarships! Each year we provide full and partial tuition scholarships to a large percentage of our class. Any amount helps.

*Due to the ongoing uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, Clarion West will consider returning to a fully virtual workshop in 2022 if there is any question of risk to the health and safety of our staff, instructors, and students.

DragonCon, they're bringing more people in but they're bringing people in who [act like they] are going to a baseball game or going to a movie. To me, fandom has always been participatory. That's why we refer to the people who come to our conventions as "members," not as "attendees," because you are participating.

My biggest beef with most conventions today is they go for quantity over quality. I'd rather see a smaller convention that offers quality than a bigger convention that brings in 3,000 people and is run badly.

EJP: Not to put too fine a point on it, but is there one thing that you're most proud of from your career in fandom?

LD: Oh, god...I'm proud of all of it. I can't think of a single thing I would've done differently.

EJP: I love that answer. ♦

INTRODUCING: 2022 Six-Week Summer Workshop Instructors

Week 1: Susan Palwick



Susan Palwick's fiction has been honored with a Crawford Award from the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts, an Alex Award from the American Library

Association, and a Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame, and has been shortlisted for the World Fantasy Award, the Mythopoeic Award, and the Philip K. Dick Award. She lives in Reno with her husband, three cats, and a large collection of books, looms, and spinning wheels.

Week 2: P. Djèlí Clark



Phenderson Djèlí Clark is the award-winning and Hugo, Nebula, Sturgeon, and World Fantasy-nominated author of the novel *A Master of Djinn* and the novellas *Ring Shout*, *The*

Black God's Drums, and *The Haunting of Tram Car 015*. He works as an academic historian and is a founding member of FIYAH Literary Magazine. Phenderson resides in a small Edwardian castle in New England with his wife, daughters, and Boston Terrier.

Week 3: Fonda Lee



Fonda Lee is the World Fantasy Award-winning author of the epic urban fantasy *Green Bone Saga* as well as three acclaimed young adult science fiction novels. She is a three-

time winner of the Aurora Award and a multiple finalist for the Nebula and Locus Awards. Fonda is a martial artist, foodie, and action movie aficionado residing in Portland, Oregon.

Week 4: Tobias S. Buckell



Tobias S. Buckell is a *New York Times* Bestselling author and World Fantasy Award winner born in the Caribbean. His novels and almost one hundred stories have been trans-

lated into twenty different languages. His work has been nominated for the Hugo, Nebula, World Fantasy, and Astounding Award for Best New Science Fiction Author. He currently lives in Bluffton, Ohio, with his wife and two daughters, where he teaches Creative Writing at Bluffton University.

Week 5: Bill Campbell



Bill Campbell is the author of four novels and a memoir, as well as the graphic novel *The Day the Klan Came to Town*. He coedited three anthologies, including the groundbreaking

Mothership: Tales from Afrofuturism and Beyond, and edited *Sunspot Jungle: The Ever Expanding Universe of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Campbell lives in Washington, DC, where he spends his time with his family and helms Rosarium Publishing.

Week 6: Annalee Newitz & Charlie Jane Anders



Annalee Newitz is the author of the nonfiction book *Four Lost Cities: A Secret History of the Urban Age* and the novels *The Future of Another Timeline* and *Autonomous*, which

won the Lambda Literary Award. As a science journalist, they are a writer for the *New York Times* and elsewhere, and have a monthly column in *New Scientist*. They are also the co-host of the Hugo Award-winning podcast *Our Opinions Are Correct*.



Charlie Jane Anders is the Nebula-award-winning author of *All the Birds in the Sky*. Most recent books include *Victories Greater Than Death*; *Never Say You Can't Survive*, a

book about how to use creative writing to get through hard times; and the short story collection *Even Greater Mistakes*. Her TED Talk, "Go Ahead, Dream About the Future," got 700,000 views in its first week. She co-hosts the podcast *Our Opinions Are Correct*.

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.

Image: "Dark Matter in a Simulated Universe,"
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