



The Seventh Week

clarion west writers workshop • fall 2022

Watch 'Round, Cayden Browne

N.A. Blair
Winner of CW 2022 Flash
Fiction Contest



N.A. Blair

I hated Reminiscences. Until I met Sheila at the cocktail party after my cousins' double wedding. Dennis forced us together, amused to make introductions while I was in my prepped-for-the-chaos attire — an unflattering oversized dress-suit that flopped around my slender frame.

I would have excused myself and hidden from the crowd of Big Aunties and Uncles, but she pinned me with her intense gaze and sickle-curl smile.

With shoulders hunched in apology and embarrassment, I explained my aversion. "Them big people always forcing yuh to relive yuh whole life story. Good, bad, traumatic. Like is just entertainment fuh them."

But Sheila only sucked her teeth and said, "That's the most selfish ting I ever hear in me life."

I stared at her, stunned. She flicked her wrist at my attire, bejewelled acrylics clacking.

"All this dropsy-dropsy clothes just because you never watch 'round?"

"Watch 'round?" I huffed. "When? I's be trying fuh balance me body and

keep wuwhatever lil dignity I got left when them Big Aunties deh treating me like a dolly."

"But you ever watch them?"

"Why?"

"Cause The Reminiscences ain' just 'bout *you*. Is 'bout everybody. So, when they ketch you today, watch 'round, Cayden Browne. See."

Then she flounced away, and I — lost in irritation — didn't notice a Big Auntie hustling to fill the void she left until I heard the high-pitched, "Eh eh? Cayden Browne?"

Too late. She gripped my elbow, and I could feel her intention rattling my bones as she said, "When last I see you, chile? And since when you so magga? You di' so round and fat as a baby!"

I winced and gagged as my body shrunk and reshaped, my baby-self dropping into my crumpled nest of giant clothes. The Big Auntie picked me up, cooing and bouncing me as I fought nausea and squirmed in her arms.

Watch 'round, Sheila had said. So, I swallowed my bile, inhaled, and stared at the Big Auntie.

How had I missed this? She was

N. A. Blair was born in Georgetown, Guyana. She regularly contributes book reviews to the Stabroek News, and her articles have been published in CARICOM Today, the Commonwealth Writers Blog, and The Guyana Annual. She is a VoodooNauts Fellow ('21/'22) and Commonwealth Writers Workshop alum ('19/'20). When she isn't writing, she can be found in her home garden, fussing over baby succulents.

Website: <https://blairviews.com/>

Twitter: [@BlairNecessitys](https://twitter.com/BlairNecessitys)

younger, too — wrinkles less defined, eyes shining, voice strong. I blinked, curiosity replacing malaise as I looked around the wedding hall.

A kaleidoscopic display of our family's collective memory played out before me. Uncles flickered between their awkward school-days selves and adulthoods, reliving mango pelting and hard labour. Aunties exchanged sweetmeat recipes between tales of tomboyishness, and rocky maturities filled with sacrifice and respectability performances. The groups converged at recollections of disco nights and strikes, blossoming cousins like fractals into the night.

Finally, the Big Auntie put me down. I wriggled into my clothes as my body expanded and rebalanced. I stood, hugged her goodbye, and marvelled at The Reminiscence once more.

But enough for me, I thought, shouldering my way past relatives to find Dennis. Until an acrylic nail smacked my left cheek. I glanced sideways, locking eyes with a toddler in an Auntie's arms brandishing a fistful of them, ready to toss another. I laughed, shook my head, and relented.

Okay Sheila, I thought, *One more.* ♦

Workshop Report: Back in Seattle, Building a New Culture

Jae Steinbacher
(CW '14)
Residential Workshop
Coordinator

Big, big changes were in the works this summer, including a return to the residential workshop in a new location, new staff, and new staff positions. We made major updates to our workshoping strategies, and shifted to Covid-safer activities, like parties hosted entirely outdoors.

This spring, we brought on two new staff members who have been truly indispensable! Workshop administrator Amy Hirayama helped coordinate the logistics of the workshop, not least of which included getting students settled in, boosting morale with cute stickers and

grocery runs, and organizing reading opportunities for the class in spaces around Seattle like Bulldog News and Underbelly in Pioneer Square. We also welcomed María Alejandra Barrios in the brand-new role of workshop facilitator. María led trainings with our instructors and orientations with the class to introduce them to new workshop methods, and she helped in guiding the workshop every day. Between her office hours and reading every story, she got to know the students' work and workshop dynamics very well.

With our commitment to hosting public events in accessible spaces, Clarion West chose Highline College in Des Moines, WA, as our home base for the summer. The small campus offered housing, classroom space, and common areas with the amenities we needed for participants with mobility needs and other disabilities. Students began the summer in apartment "pods" of two or four bedrooms instead of individual rooms in a shared house. Due to the need for additional isolation and measures like masking to prevent the spread of Covid, these pods offered the students an opportunity to get to know a few of their classmates more deeply. There was also space for the class to gather together and take meals on the rooftop in the open air with their instructors. Many of the instructors took advantage of the rooftop to lead additional discussions on craft after class.

Following what we've learned in experiential workshop sessions since ►►



CW 2022 students around the Six-Week Workshop table

Clarion West Writers Workshop

2022

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(left to right) Steph Kwiatkowski (CW '22), Louis Evans (CW '22), and Jonathan Kincade (CW '22)

► 2020, we introduced the class to Andy Duncan's (CW '94) Help Build! guidelines and encouraged them to build their own community agreements based on how they hoped to approach each other and their work. (To learn more about workshop culture updates, visit: <https://www.clarionwest.org/2022/04/01/evolving-workshop-culture-2/>. A full report on the spring sessions is forthcoming.) María supported instructors in class daily and offered time to meet with students to check in about questions or concerns they had regarding their workshop sessions.

This year, we developed a handful of different workshop models from which instructors and students could choose. All these models were updated or designed to intentionally center the author and not silence them at any point. Students also had the opportunity to include author statements with every submission, in which they could express how they wanted the piece to be workshopped, ask the class questions, and explain their intentions for their stories.

After a week with Susan Palwick setting the tone by leading the class in exercises centered on their writing

goals, practices, and routines, as well as elements of craft, P. Djéli Clark opened Week 2 with the Modified Milford method to introduce everyone to workshopping. In Week 3, Fonda Lee introduced a version of the Lerman Critical Response Process that fit the class's needs well. The students came together in supporting a volunteer model in which those with the most to contribute to a piece started the discussion. Tobias Buckell, Bill Campbell, and Charlie Jane Anders and Annalee Newitz also took up this model, with modifications as needed.

Outside of class, students had visits from a few local mystery muses, including Curtis C. Chen (CW '14), Ted Chiang, and Rachel Swirsky (CW '05), and Zoom calls with farther-flung writers and editors like John Joseph Adams, Sam J. Miller, and Scott H. Andrews. They also enjoyed belly rubs with a trio of dogs belonging to Tegan Moore (CW '05), visits to Pike Place Market and Capitol Hill, karaoke, ice cream, and countless bubble tea hangs.

In a slight change from previous years, all our parties were held in local parks. We fired up the grill and invited local alumni to join us at Alki Beach and Lincoln Park, with beautiful sun-

set views of the Puget Sound and the Olympics. Our final party included a ceremony to recognize Octavia E. Butler Scholars Naomi Day (CW '22) and Wen-yi Lee (CW '22), with speeches from Nisi Shawl (CW '92) and Erik Owomoyela (CW '10).

Wrapping up the workshop, each student was introduced to a mentor with whom they could decompress and plot a plan for life after Clarion West. These mentor matches included Clarion West alumni and instructors with experience relevant to each student's career path.

We moved out in a heatwave, which only served to further forge the affectionate bonds between the students. Their class of eighteen — with some members accepted as long ago as 2020 — spans a great deal of experiences, identities, and miles, and collectively they wrote hundreds of thousands of words. Many of these students had exceptional milestones between 2020 and this summer. Others are sending out their first stories or seeing their first publications this year. We wish them all the best and know they've got each other's backs, as well as the support of the broader Clarion West community. ♦



Kerstin Hall (CW '22) with the Verisimilitoad. Credit: Sam Davis (CW '22)

Donor Spotlight: Isabel Cañas (CW '18)

Stefani Cox
Communications
Specialist



Isabel Cañas

What was your inspiration for starting The Flores Scholarship, which covers full tuition for one student who identifies as Latinx/e to attend the Six-Week Summer Workshop?

The opportunity to attend Clarion West changed my life and my career enormously. I do not believe I would have been capable of writing the book that would become my debut, *The Hacienda*, without the intense critique and workshoping experience of Clarion West, nor without the community that it provided. I would not have been able to attend Clarion West had it not been for the Worldbuilder Scholarship. Many talented marginalized writers discount even applying to workshops like Clarion West because of the tuition burden. I wanted to remove that barrier for Latinx/e writers specifically, because there are still so few of us in the SFFH world.

What's your dream for the impact of The Flores Scholarship?

It is my hope that The Flores Scholarship not only opens the door for more Latinx/e voices to enter

SFFH spaces, but also for them to make a tremendous splash and leave their mark on the genre. Those who are Latinx/e are not a monolith — we have different historical experiences with colonialism and migration; we're different races; we have roots in different countries; we speak different languages. All of these things can only enrich SFFH, genres in which we are still woefully underrepresented. Whether we like it or not, attending a workshop like Clarion West is a mark of prestige. I want more Latinx/e writers to be afforded the opportunity of attending and being taken seriously as professionals in the genre.

Most importantly, I want other Latinx/e writers to never have to put their dreams of improving their craft on hold. I want diverse Latinx/e voices to be heard and celebrated. In 2020, the New York Times reported that in 2018, just 11% of traditionally published books were by writers of color. We face an uphill battle to be published, and I want to give emerging Latinx/e writers every leg up I can. (Also, for the love of all that is good, please don't assume that Latinx/e writers all write magical realism! Some of us do, but many of us don't!)

Isabel Cañas is a Mexican-American speculative fiction writer. After having lived in Mexico, Scotland, Egypt, and Turkey, among other places, she has settled (for now) in New York City. She holds a doctorate in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and writes fiction inspired by her research and her heritage.

Congratulations on your novel, *The Hacienda*, released in May 2022! Is there anything you'd like to share about your writing evolution and where you're at now?

Thank you so much! After years of rejection in the submission trenches of traditional publishing with two different manuscripts — including one where I tried to "write to market" and perform my marginalizations in a way that I thought would be palatable to publishing — writing *The Hacienda* taught me that joy in publishing (and, hopefully, success) only comes when you write what you want to write. For years, and even now, I hear the phantom voices of past and future rejections in my head, wondering why my manuscripts aren't "more Mexican" or why I don't write magical realism or write about immigration. It is vital to shut those voices out and write what keeps you up at night.

What's your favorite memory from your time as a Clarion West 2018 student?

I am someone who could always use a good afternoon nap, especially when I have to stay up until 2am writing my next story or get up at 6am to finish critiques. There were several times where I fell asleep in the couch cushions of one of the living room's gloriously comfy couches and accidentally surprised people who had no idea I was there. So much laughter ensued! ♦

Introducing Summer 2023 Faculty!



**Week 1:
Mary Anne
Mohanraj
& Benjamin
Rosenbaum**
Public Reading:
Tuesday, June
27, 2023

Mary Anne Mohanraj (CW '97) is the author of *A Feast of Serendib*, *Bodies in Motion*, *The Stars Change*, and twelve other titles. Mohanraj founded Hugo-nominated and World Fantasy Award-winning speculative literature magazine *Strange Horizons*, and serves as Executive Director of both *DesiLit* (desilit.org) and the *Speculative Literature Foundation* (speclit.org). Website: www.maryannemohanraj.com.

Benjamin Rosenbaum (CW '01) is the author of *The Unraveling*, and the Ennie-nominated Jewish historical



fantasy tabletop roleplaying game *Dream Apart*. His short stories have been nominated for the Hugo, Nebula, Sturgeon, BSFA, Locus, and World Fantasy awards, and have appeared in *Tor.com*, *Strange Horizons*, *Lightspeed*, *Asimov's*, *F&SF*, and beyond. More at <http://benjaminrosenbaum.com>.

Week 2: Cat Rambo

Public Reading: Week of July 3, 2023 (TBD)

Cat Rambo's (CW '05) 250+ fiction publications include stories in *Asimov's*, *Clarkesworld Magazine*,

and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. In 2020 they won the Nebula Award for fantasy novelette *Carpe Glitter*.

Their most recent works are the space opera *You Sexy Thing* (Tor Macmillan) and an anthology, *The Reinvented Heart* (Arc Manor, March, 2022), co-edited with Jennifer Brozek.



Week 3: Samit Basu

Public Reading:
Tuesday, July 11, 2023

Samit Basu is the author of several novels, most recently *The City Inside* (Tordotcom, 2022). He's been publishing fantasy and SF novels in India since 2003 (*The Simoqin Prophecies*, Penguin India). His US debut was in 2013 (*Turbulence*, Titan Books). Samit has also co-written/directed a film for Netflix, written comics and children's books across a range of genres, and published non-fiction as a journalist and columnist. Social media: @samitbasu.



Week 4: Karen Lord

Public Reading:
Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Karen Lord is a Barbadian author and editor. Her debut novel, *Redemption in Indigo* was nominated for the 2011 World Fantasy Award for Best Novel.

Her other works include *The Best of All Possible Worlds*, *The Galaxy Game*, and *Unraveling*. She edited the anthology *New Worlds, Old Ways: Speculative Tales from the Caribbean* and was a judge for the 2019 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, as well as the 2018 CODE Burt Award for Caribbean YA Literature.

Week 5: Arley Sorg

Public Reading:
Tuesday, July 25, 2023

Arley Sorg is co-Editor-in-Chief at *Fantasy Magazine* and a 2022 recipient of SFWA's Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award. He is also a 2021 World Fantasy Award finalist, a 2022 Locus Award finalist, and a finalist for two 2022 Ignite Awards. Arley is senior editor at *Locus Magazine*, associate editor at *Lightspeed* and *Nightmare*, and a columnist for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Find him on Twitter @arleysorg or his website: arleysorg.com.



Week 6: N. K. Jemisin

Public Reading:
Tuesday, August 1, 2023

N. K. Jemisin is a New York Times-bestselling author of speculative fiction short stories and novels. In 2018, she became the first author to win three Best Novel Hugos in a row. She has also won a Nebula Award, two Locus Awards, and is a recipient of the MacArthur Fellowship. She lives and writes in Brooklyn. ♦



News and Updates

Clarion West After Dark Gala

On October 21, Clarion West hosted Daniel Abraham (CW '98), co-author of The Expanse series and television show, as guest of honor for our annual gala and fundraiser auction!



Daniel Abraham (CW '98)

This year, the gala was hosted entirely online, and the charismatic and excellently-costumed Sasha Summer Cousineau led participants through auction bidding and a fun outfit contest for best-dressed and best-captioned photo.



Sasha Summer Cousineau

We are so grateful to all our donors, large and small, who help keep our ship afloat and allow us to generate accessible programming for emerging writers everywhere! And a special thank-you to gala sponsors Zook & Oleson Gardening; Becky Bruhn, videographer; Mighty House Construction; Paper Boat Booksellers; Brenda Cooper; Town Hall Se-

attle; Team Arsenic (Clarion West class of 2016); Libro.fm; and Revel Rouser Events!

Upcoming Classes

We still have spots in our final class of the fall season, Breaking Out of Revision Hell with LaShawn M. Wanak starting November 28: <https://www.clarionwest.org/find/breaking-out-of-revision-hell-with-lashawn-m-wanak-2/>. This class is perfect for writers of all levels looking for ways to organize and improve their revision process and includes specific guidance on revising and editing, types of revision tools and methods, incorporating feedback into your revisions, resting a story, self-care during revisions, and knowing when a story is ready for final edits! (Free seats are also available.)



Breaking Out of Revision Hell with LaShawn M. Wanak
November 28, 2022 at 6pm
November 30, 2022 at 6pm
December 7, 2022 at 6pm

We've also got a final writing session from J.D. Harlock's November series:

Writing Session with J.D. Harlock
November 26, 2022 at 9am

To sign up for any of our online classes or writing sessions, and for full course descriptions, see "Programs" at our website: clarionwest.org.

Stay tuned for announcements about our upcoming 2023 online offerings! A little sneak peek:

Cross-Examining Your Character with Henry Lien

January 21, 2023 at 10am

January 28, 2023 at 10am

Finding Creative Truth Through Desire And Fear with Sloane Leong

February 13, 2023 at 5pm

Discord Community

Not just for Write-a-thon! If you're looking for online writing community, our Discord server is open year-round for group writing and social opportunities. In November, we'll be finishing up National Novel Writing Month strong with weekly writing and brainstorming sessions. Invite link: <https://discord.gg/NpwxzTB-suC>.



2023 Six-Week Summer Workshop

Stay tuned to our blog and social media for information about applications for next year's Six-Week Summer Workshop! We will open for applications on January 4, 2023. ♦

In Memoriam

Marnee Chua
Executive Director

The Clarion West community remembers the alumni, instructors, and mentors who have been students, teachers, supporters, and so much more. We mourn our losses and remember their stories. As a tribute to the lasting contributions of the writers, editors, and outstanding community members we lost in 2021 and 2022, we leave space for recommending their works and sharing their indelible mark on our lives:

Bruce Taylor (CW '71)

“Bruce Taylor, who liked to be known as Mr. Magic Realism,



passed away on August 31, 2022, at the age of 75. One of Clarion West's first students, he studied under such writers as Avram Davidson, Robert Silverberg, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Frank Herbert. Bruce went on to found the Magic Realism Writers International Network and collaborated with Tamara Sellman on MARGIN magazine. Author or editor of twenty books of magical realism, surrealism, science fiction, new age healing, hiking, meditation, and bizarro fiction, his work includes the novel *Stormworld*, a short novel about global warming co-written with Brian Herbert, and the anthology *Like Water for Quarks*.”

According to an excerpt from our blog, posted by graduate and instructor Kathleen Alcalá (CW '87): <https://www.clarionwest.org/2022/09/19/remembering-bruce-taylor-cw-71/>. Bruce was a fixture in the Clarion West community since the first workshop, held in Seattle in 1971.



Patricia A. McKillip

Patricia McKillip passed away on May 6, 2022. Patricia taught for Clarion West in 1986. Her work won numerous awards, including the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2008.

Patricia penned a 2013 guest blog post on Fantasy Cafe for Women in SFF Month (<https://www.fantasybookcafe.com/2013/04/women-in-sff-month-patricia-a-mckillip/>) about writing strong female leads during a time when they were hard to find. “I studied English Literature in the late '60s and early '70s, because I thought the best way to learn to write was to read the best writers I could find. At least 95% of what I read to get my master's degree was written from a male point of view. (This was before Women's Studies and World Literature came into their own.) I read a great deal and learned a lot about writing from writers as diverse as William Faulkner, P.G. Wodehouse and J. R. R. Tolkien. But when I sat down to write my first major fantasy, *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld*, I didn't question the point of view

that came out of my pen. It seemed very natural to me to wonder why in the world a woman couldn't be a witch or a wizard, or why, if she did, she had to be virginal as well. Or why, if she was powerful and not a virgin, she was probably the evil force the male hero had to overcome. Such was my experience reading about women in fantasy back then. So I wrote from the point of view of a powerful female wizard, who, even after she married, was the hero of her own story, and whose decisions, for better and for worse, were her own. That was published in 1974.”

Patricia was an excellent example of the women writers in speculative fiction who helped shape the stories that we read today, and her extensive collection of novels and short stories are a treasure trove of quality fantasy in both YA and adult novels.



Jane Hawkins (CW '88)

Jane Hawkins passed away on January 7, 2022. Jane attended Clarion West in 1988 and was known as a convention and community organizer, as well as one of the founders of Norwescon. In an obituary posted on Facebook, Clarion West graduate Ian K. Hagemann wrote, “She moved to Seattle specifically in search of a place where she could find community. A life-long science fiction fan, some of Jane's proudest and happiest moments were of welcoming people to the ▶▶

► community and of working on the things that brought people together.” This is the way that many in the community remember Jane, who is dearly missed. The full obituary and introduction by Clarion West instructor Greg Bear can be found on our blog: <https://www.clarionwest.org/2022/01/11/remembering-jane-hawkins/>.



Bob Brown

Beloved bookstore owner, storyteller, and convention presence Bob Brown passed away in June 2021. In a post on the Clarion West blog (<https://www.clarionwest.org/2021/06/17/remembering-bob-brown/>), Nisi Shawl wrote of him, “Through his store, in addition to making his own deep well of knowledge accessible to his customers and the SF community at large, Bob provided a place for us to exchange recommendations and mutually infect one another with our enthusiasm for the field.”



Kathleen Ann Goonan (CW '88)

Kathleen Ann Goonan died on January 28, 2021, at the age of 68. She was the award-winning author of more than forty short stories and seven novels. Her first novel, *Queen City Jazz* (1994), a New York Times Notable Book, was short-listed for the British Science Fiction Association Award. Her novel *In War Times* (2007) won the Campbell Memorial Award and was the American Library Association’s Best SF Novel of 2007. Three of her works earned Nebula Award nominations. She returned to Clarion West as an instructor in 2003 and taught at Georgia Tech for the better part of a decade, starting in 2010.

Her classmate, Beverly Suarez-Beard, remembered attending the workshop with her in a post on our blog: <https://www.clarionwest.org/2021/02/25/a-classmate-remembers-kathleen-ann-goonan/>. “Kathy was thirty-six, on the cusp of breaking in as a published author when she attended Clarion West '88. You could see the kind of writer she would become – the

passion for looking behind things instead of just at the surface, the curiosity, the elegance of the prose [...] She was generous and funny, wise and kind. So much about Kathy is revealed in her work. Her books are atmospheric and layered. Sometimes they’re historical (*The Bones of Time*, *In War Times*, *This Shared Dream*). Sometimes they’re renditions of a future of hopeful and terrible beauty (*The Nanotech Quartet*). Her more recent short fiction shows her optimism, her love of music, and her belief in the abilities of unusual children. There’s quantum physics in her work, and her beloved Hawaii, and almost always the opportunity to change.”

We know the Clarion West community has experienced many losses over the past few years. Please let us know about anyone we may have missed by emailing communications@clarionwest.org. ♦

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.