

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Word Woman

Playshops with Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

All is Write with the World: Where Nature Meets Human Nature

When we enter the natural world with a pen in our hand, we automatically heighten our senses. It helps us to hunger for detail and thereby better pay attention. Instead of passing the wild rose bush growing abruptly out of a rock, we note it and perhaps find a metaphorical echo in our own lives. A pen can be like a magic meaning making wand: Instead of merely observing the landscape, we interact with it and begin to find resonance. In this workshop, we'll read many poems, write a lot, share our work, and discuss the mysteries that make it so wonderful and terrible to be alive.

Ecstatic: 43 Centuries of Women's Poetry in Praise of the Sacred

In the original sense of the word, ecstasy refers to a rapturous delight—a mental transport from the contemplation of divine things. In this conversational class (not a writing class), we'll look at 43 centuries of ecstatic poetry written by women, from the 22nd century B.C.E. poet Enheduanna to contemporary women mystics and poets. How can we weave their insights into our lives? One thing we'll notice is that although these writers are separated by eons, by cultures and by spiritual traditions, almost all of them embrace the sacred and the worldly at the same time. Some of the women included in the series: Sappho, Rabia, Yeshe Tsogyel, Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch of Antwerp, Lal Ded, Mirabai, Bibi Hayati, Tsvetaeva. The course is based on a collection edited by Jane Hirshfield, "Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women."

Holy in the Moment: Exploring What Matters All Around Us

Albert Einstein noted, "The field is the only reality." Poets, too, have been exploring this concept for centuries—how do we connect the world around us? Our survival depends on the answer— all the more reason to be paying attention! In this workshop we'll read contemporary American poets including Mary Oliver, Li-Young Lee, Jane Hirschfield, Naomi Shihab-Nye and Louise Glück, and explore how they link the external "field" with what happens inside of us—creating connections between outer landscapes and inner emotional landscapes. We'll go outside and make our own connections, do our own writing, and share our ideas and words. What kind of impact can this awareness have on our lives? How might we carry this awareness with us as we engage in the world?

Is It a Path or a Test: Metaphor and Transformation

Everyone writes—grocery lists, to do lists, perhaps a thank you letter. But if you're willing to risk a little, writing can open doors where before you didn't even realize a door existed—doors of renewal and healing. This workshop for people interested in personal transformation weaves spiritual awakening and the creative poetic impulse. Rosemerry draws on George Lakoff's neuro-linguistic theories on frames and uses metaphor as a tool for re-seeing ourselves, our past, our relationship to the world. As poet Mark Doty writes, "What is healing, but a shift in perspective?"

Lost in Motherland: Writing to Discover Who We Are(n't)

Motherhood changes things. Amidst the blessings and the challenges, we transform. As one mother put it, "With my first child, I lost my interests. With my second child, I lost my identity." How do we lean into motherhood's paradoxical blend of miracle and loss? Writing can help. As James Pennebroke writes in *Opening Up*, writing "clears the mind" and helps us "understand and reorient our complicated lives" and "helps keep our psychological compass oriented." In this workshop, Rosemerry leads other mothers in a writing practice that also includes moving meditation, mapping, reading and other pathways that help us reorient ourselves and meet the moment as it is. What happens when we ask, "Who am I?" As Ramana Maharshi says, "The purpose of that question is not to find an answer but to dissolve the questioner." What's that supposed to mean? Come play.

Walking in Two Worlds at Once: A playshop that leaps between details and dreams

Chink. Chink. That's the sound of the poem breaking open to show a bit of its heart. How do we do that? In this workshop, we'll explore how poems can sometimes walk in two worlds at once: a world of sense memory—the world of pagers, cell phones, to do lists, robinsong, blizzard and mud; and also a world of emotional memory, a world dedicated to meaning making—the world we inhabit when we dream, imagine and feel. What exactly will we do? Generate a kind of magical language, sometimes sounding like double-speak, language that harbors contradictions, paradoxes, contraries, Zen-like koans that challenge the brain, working along the lines of Keats' notion of "negative capability" in which the mind may hold disparate views without any "irritable reaching after fact and reason." With play and practice, reading, writing and sharing, we'll do a little balancing act of our own, leaping from dreamworld to glittering details and back again. And again.

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Wordcrafting: A skill & thrill playshop for poets and other writers, too

Great writing. It's more than what you say, it's how you say it. In this six-hour playshop (more fun than a workshop), we'll explore the building blocks of poetry: metaphor, imagery, line breaks, titles, rhyme, rhythm, ways to close a poem, syntax and more. We'll read, write, debate and rewrite. This is not a critique class, but a chance to jump into the hows and whys of our language. What is it that thrills us about great work? We'll tease some of the secrets out. You'll come away with many new lenses for reading and with new tools for your own writing endeavors.

Writing the Path: Our goal is discovery

What path are you on? For thousands of years, the path has been a popular metaphor for understanding our journey through life. Cavafy advises us to "pray that the road is long." Frost suggests we "take the road less traveled by." A.R. Ammons advocates that we "hoist our burdens, get on down the road." How we choose to walk on our path affects all we are connected to. And are we not connected to everything? Through the practices of writing, reading and paying attention—or as Rumi would say, opening the sail—we divine who we are in the world. This reading and writing workshop will focus on exploring the use of images and how these are used to engage with the landscape, the imagination and the reader. Through our choice of images, we frame the path we're on.

Poet and presenter Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer is the author of If You Listen, a three-time award winning book of poetry, editor of Charity: True Stories of Giving and Receiving, and leads TAG: You're It seminars on creativity, positive attitude and finding purpose. Visit her at www.wordwoman.com.