



Midwest Writing Center

Fostering appreciation of the written word, supporting and educating its creators.

David R. Collins 2019 Writers' Conference June 27, 28, & 29

St. Ambrose University, McCarthy Hall
518 W. Locust Street, Davenport, IA



Conference Schedule

	June 27	June 28	June 29
8:45-10:15 a.m.	Shaping the Short Story (Colville)		
10:30 a.m.-Noon	Writing the Personal Essay (Lenz)		
10:00 a.m.-Noon			Book Pitches – 918studio Press/ Legacy Book Press \$15
Noon-1:30 p.m.	Lunch on your own	Lunch on your own <i>or optional</i> Practical Publishing Luncheon Discussion about independent publishing with Q & A, led by Steve Semken, owner Ice Cube Press \$17 Gottlieb Lounge, St. Ambrose	Lunch on your own <i>or</i> Mary Foster Concluding Lunch Included with conference registration fee. \$17 if you did not pay a registration fee. Gottlieb Lounge, St. Ambrose
1:45-3:15 p.m.	Ways of Seeing – Poetry Workshop (Austin)		
	Selling Nonfiction – A Freelancing Workshop (Lenz)		
2:30-4:30 p.m.			Book Pitches – MWC Press \$15
3:30-5:00 p.m.	From Novel Idea to Immersive First Draft – (Tan)		
6:00-9:00 p.m.	Conference Keynote Address Ben Miller Figge Art Museum, 225 W. 2 nd St., Davenport, IA 52801 Light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar available. • 6:00-7:00 p.m. – Public Reception Community Gallery • 7:15-8:30 p.m. – Ben Miller author talk and Q & A John Deere Auditorium	Conference Social Mixer & Faculty Reading/Book Signing/Participant Open Mic *Free & Open to the Public* Rozz-Tox, 2108 3 rd Ave., Rock Island, IL 61201 • Faculty Reading & Participant Open Mic / Social starts at 5:30 p.m. • Faculty Reading starts at 7:00 p.m., participant open mic immediately after.	

Conference Sponsors:

- Modern Woodmen of America – *Founding Sponsor of the David R. Collins Writers' Conference*
- Illinois Arts Council Agency, through federal funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.
- St. Ambrose University English Department
- Figge Art Museum
- Rozz-Tox



Workshop Descriptions

“Shaping the Short Story” with Jennifer Colville

8:45-10:15 a.m. on June 27, 28, 29

What shape does your short story demand? Does it curve like an Aristotelian arc? Does it call for something associative such as a many branched collage, or wandering and exploratory as an essay? Wonderful short stories have been written in the form of field notes, interviews, love letters, and recipes. Poe and Hawthorn lay contradictory ground rules. We'll use these rules as basic armatures, and from there work to guide your story toward its rightfully traditional or yet-to-be-invented form.

“Writing the Personal Essay” with Lyz Lenz

10:30 a.m.-Noon on June 27, 28, 29

Essays are a wild and weird form of writing. Both expansive in form, yet tethered to the truth. Through assigned readings and writing prompts, this class will guide students through the process of creating essays that use personal experience to give readers new insight into the world. Because whatever else our writing is, it ought to begin by being personal.

“Ways of Seeing – Poetry Workshop” with Derrick Austin

1:45-3:15 p.m. on June 27, 28, 29

In this workshop we'll be thinking through ekphrasis, poetry about or inspired by visual art. What can visual art teach us about vision and writing? How does looking outward reveal, perhaps, more intimately our interior lives? Discussing art, performance, and poetry, we'll discover the myriad way ekphrasis not only grounds us in the self but forces one to confront history and aesthetics.

“Selling Nonfiction – A Freelancing Workshop” with Lyz Lenz

1:45-3:15 p.m. on June 27, 28, 29

Maybe you have a brilliant idea for a non-fiction story or perhaps there is an essay, hidden like a jewel in your files, the only trouble is, you don't know how to get published. This intensive course is designed to take you from idea, to pitch, to publication. The class begins with idea generation, explores the art of the successful story pitch, and how to find the right home for your writing. At the end of the course, you will have sample pitches, tools and resources for finding and contacting editors, your own fully crafted pitch, and three publications to send it to. This class is designed specifically for people interested in publishing journalism, non-fiction, and essays.

“From Novel Idea to Immersive First Draft” with Lucy Tan

3:30-5:00 p.m. on June 27, 28, 29

In every successful novel-writing journey, there comes a moment when the line between fiction and reality begins to blur. This course is designed to bring you closer to that moment by deepening your understanding of characters, honing your skills

for writing scenes, and taking a close look at novel structure. Through generative writing assignments and in-class exercises, we will demystify the process of novel-writing by framing it as a series of decisions that are made and re-made as our stories take shape. Students should come to class with a novel idea in mind or a first draft partially written.



CONFERENCE KEYNOTE EVENT

featuring Ben Miller
Author of *River Bend Chronicle*

Thursday, June 27
6:00-9:00 p.m.

Figge Art Museum, (225 W. 2nd St. Davenport, IA 52801)
Light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar available.

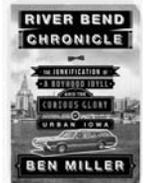
Schedule for Conference Keynote Event

6:00-7:00 p.m. - Public reception, Community Gallery

7:15-8:30 p.m. - Ben Miller author talk and Q & A,
John Deere Auditorium

Ben Miller is an essayist and fiction writer. After attending Cornell College (Mount Vernon, Iowa) he graduated from the New York University writing program, studying under E.L. Doctorow, John A. Williams and Luisa Valenzuela.

He is the author of the nonfiction work *River Bend Chronicle: The Junkification of a Boyhood Idyll amid the Curious Glory of Urban Iowa* (Lookout Books, University of North Carolina Wilmington).



His prose has been published in many journals, including *Kenyon Review*, *New England Review*, *Yale Review*, *AGNI*, *Ecotone*, *Raritan*, *Antioch Review*, *Southern Review*, *Harvard Review*, and *One Story*. Six of his essays have been cited as “Notable” by *Best American Essays* and another, “Bix and Flannery,” was chosen to appear in the anthology by Louis Menand.

Miller's awards include creative writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

CONFERENCE SOCIAL MIXER, FACULTY READING & PARTICIPANT OPEN MIC

June 28, 5:30-9:00 p.m. at Rozz-Tox (2108 3rd Ave. Rock Island, IL 61201)

Social Mixer, 5:30-7:00 p.m. – Join other conference attendees, local writers, and some conference faculty to enjoy a drink and talk about the conference or writing in general.

Faculty Reading & Participant Open Mic, 7:00-9:00 p.m. – Listen to conference faculty reading their work and then, the mic will be opened up for reading by conference participants.

Event is free and open to the public; food and drinks are available for purchase.

Conference Faculty

Derrick Austin:

Derrick Austin is the author of *Trouble the Water* (BOA Editions). A Cave Canem fellow, his work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Best American Poetry*, *Image: A Journal of Arts and Religion*, *New England Review*, *The Nation*, and *Tin House*. He was a finalist for the 2017 Kate Tufts Discovery Award. This fall he will be a Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford University.



Jennifer Colville:

Jennifer Colville is the founding editor of *Prompt Press*, a project connecting visual artists, book artists and writers. She holds an MFA from Syracuse University and a Ph.D. from the University of Utah. Her collection of short stories *Elegies for Uncanny Girls* was published in 2017 by Indiana University Press. She has taught at the University of Iowa, the University of San Francisco, and Coe College. She is a co-organizer of the *Free Generative Writing Workshops* in Iowa City.



Lyz Lenz:

Lyz Lenz is a contributing writer for the *Columbia Journalism Review*. Her essays and journalism have been published in the *New York Times*, *Buzzfeed*, *Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *ESPN*, *Marie Claire*, *Mashable*, *Salon*, and more. Her book *God Land* will be published by Indiana University Press on August 1, 2019 and *Bela-bored: Tales of Myth, Medicine, and Motherhood* is forthcoming from Bold Type books in spring of 2020. She also has an essay in the anthology *Not That Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture* edited by Roxane Gay. Lenz holds an MFA in creative writing from Lesley University.



Lucy Tan:

Lucy Tan is the author of *What We Were Promised*, which was long listed for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize and named a Best Book of 2018 by *The Washington Post*, *Refinery 29*, and *Amazon*. Lucy received her M.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she was awarded the 2016 August Derleth Prize and currently serves as the James C. McCreight Fiction Fellow. Her work is published or forthcoming in journals such as *McSweeney's*, *Asia Literary Review* and *Ploughshares*.



Photo by Sarah Rose Smiley

Learn more at www.lucyrtan.com.

CONFERENCE LUNCHEONS

Practical Publishing Luncheon with Steve Semken –

June 28, Noon-1:30 p.m. at Gottlieb Lounge, St. Ambrose: This is an optional opportunity to connect with writers attending the Conference. Featuring a discussion about independent publishing, with Q & A, led by Steve Semken, author and owner/publisher of Ice Cube Press, over a catered lunch. Cost is \$17

Mary Foster Concluding Luncheon

Saturday, June 29, Noon-1:30 p.m. at Gottlieb Lounge, St. Ambrose: Conference sponsors will be recognized, and the faculty will reflect on their workshops over a catered lunch. Cost is included with your Conference registration fee, or \$17 per individual.

BOOK PITCHES

Ten minutes to pitch your book to Jodie Toohey from 918studio Press and/or to representatives from MWC Press. Cost is \$15 – pre-register required.



918studio Press/Legacy Book

Press Saturday, June 29: Representatives from 918studio Press/Legacy

Book Press will hear pitches for fiction, nonfiction, and poetry manuscripts from 10:00 a.m.-Noon

918studio Press – Pitch Info

918studio Press, a selective subsidized publishing company, will be accepting pitches for book-length in a variety of genres for its regular catalog, as well as for its new imprint, Legacy Book Press, which seeks to publish book-length personal stories in whatever form they take (fiction, non-fiction, or poetry). Please be prepared to tell us about your project during your pitch, and bring two copies each of the entire manuscript, a one page or shorter synopsis, and a statement of how you plan to market your book. If we choose your book for publication and you publish with us (you incur no obligation by pitching to us or having us choose your work for publication), we will credit the cost of the pitch session to your publishing package. For more information about pitching to 918studio Press, please contact owner Jodie Toohey or visit the 918studio Press and Legacy Book Press website:

<https://918studiopress.com/> <https://legacybookpress.com/>



MWC Press

Saturday, June 29: A panel of representatives from MWC Press will hear pitches for fiction, nonfiction, and poetry manuscripts from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

MWC Press – Pitch info

The MWC Press panel requests each author bring a one page summary of their pitch—brief synopsis of the manuscript, brief author bio/other publications, brief outline of marketing ideas/strategy, etc. The panel will take these summaries and their input from the pitch sessions back to the MWC Board of Directors and related committees to make a final decision. Authors whose work advances through this process may be asked provide more detailed information.

