

# BOLDFACE

A CONFERENCE FOR EMERGING WRITERS



**BE BOLD | FACE THE WRITER IN YOU**

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON | MAY 22-26, 2017

[BOLDFACECONFERENCE.COM](http://BOLDFACECONFERENCE.COM)



**9<sup>th</sup> Annual Boldface Conference for Emerging Writers**  
**May 22-26, 2017**

The Honors College and Elizabeth D. Rockwell Pavilion  
at the University of Houston

**Monday, May 22**

**8:30-9:30**

**Breakfast and Registration**

Rockwell Foyer

**9:40-9:55**

**Opening Remarks**

**Conference Administrator, Erika Jo Brown**

**Faculty Advisor, Audrey Colombe**

Rockwell Pavilion

**10:00-11:30**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**11:30-11:40 BREAK**

**11:45-12:30**

**Masterclasses** - See descriptions at end of program

**Josie Mitchell: "Creating Your Post-Apocalyptic World,"**

Rockwell Pavilion

**Matthew Salesses: "The Novel, Plot, and the Inciting Incident,"** Honors College Commons

**Christopher Brean Murray: "Triggering Towns & Geographical Mirrors: Hugo, Bishop & the Landscape Poem,"** 10G (M.D.

Anderson)

**12:30-1:30**

**Lunch**

Rockwell Foyer

**1:30-2:15**

**Reading by Visiting Writer Leah Lax, with introduction by  
Boldface faculty Cait Weiss**

Rockwell Pavilion

**2:20-3:45**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**3:45-4:15 BREAK**

**4:15-5:00**

**Craft Talk by Visiting Writer Bill Broun, with introduction by  
Boldface faculty Charlotte Wyatt, "Spiracles, Horn Plates, and  
Heaps of Brugo: Weird Nouns as Fictive Portals"**

Rockwell Pavilion

## **Tuesday, May 23**

**9:00-10:00**

**Breakfast**

Rockwell Foyer

**10:00-11:30**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**11:30-11:40 BREAK**

**11:45-12:30**

**Masterclasses** - See descriptions at end of program

**Rachel Ballenger: "Writing From Life,"** Rockwell Pavilion

**Cait Weiss: "Do You Even Know Who I Am?: Creating Voice(s)  
via Persona in Poetry,"** Honors College Commons

**Corey Campbell: "The Haunted Narrator: Fragmentation and  
Uncertainty as Part of Your Narrative Strategy,"** 10G (M.D.

Anderson)

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**Lunch**

Rockwell Foyer

**1:30-2:15**

**Reading by Visiting Writer Bill Broun, with introduction by  
Boldface Faculty Jonathan Meyer**

Rockwell Pavilion

**2:20-3:45**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**3:45-4:15 BREAK**

**4:15-5:00**

**Craft Talk by Visiting Writer Hayan Charara, with introduction  
by Boldface Faculty Niki Herd, “Against Witticism: A Case for  
Voices of Authority and Authenticity in the Age of Twitter”**

Rockwell Pavilion

**Tuesday after-hours event: Featured Faculty Readers Dan Chu  
& Josie Mitchell, plus Student open mic reading at Brasil Cafe  
(2604 Dunlavy St.), emceed by *Glass Mountain* PR Manager  
Kim Coy at 7:30 p.m. (sign up at the registration table)**

## **Wednesday, May 24**

**9:00-10:00**

**Breakfast**

Rockwell Foyer

**10:00-11:30**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**11:30-11:40 BREAK**

**11:45-12:30**

**Masterclasses** - See descriptions at end of program

**Dan Chu: “POC in MFA,”** Rockwell Pavilion

Charlotte Wyatt: “Back to the Future: Time Travel as Narrative Strategy,” Honors College Commons

**12:30-3:00**

**Lunch and Mid-Week Break for Consultations, Conversations, and Community**

\*A limited number of trips to the **Project Row Houses** and the **Menil Collection** will be available; sign up at the registration table.

**Interactive Program: Literary Scavenger Hunt on UH Campus, created by *Glass Mountain* Online Editors Mai Tram Nguyen and Aries Jones**

**3:00-3:40**

**Readings by Boldface Faculty Niki Herd, Rachel Ballenger, and Matthew Salesses, with introductions by *Glass Mountain* Poetry Editor Maryam Ahmed**

Rockwell Pavilion

**3:45-5:00**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**Wednesday after-hours event: Featured Faculty Readers Cait Weiss and Jonathan Meyer plus Student open mic at Kaboom (3116 Houston Avenue) emceed by *Glass Mountain* Assistant Poetry Editor Amanda Ortiz at 7:30 p.m. (sign up at the registration table)**

**Thursday, May 25**

**9:00-10:00**

**Breakfast**

Rockwell Foyer

**10:00-11:30**

**Workshops** - For locations see list at end of program

**11:30-11:40 BREAK**

**11:45-12:30**

**Masterclasses**

\*See descriptions at end of program

**Jonathan Meyer: “Making the Stone Stony”: On Strangeness and Defamiliarization, Honors College Commons**

**Niki Herd: “From Wall Street to Baghdad: The Project Poetry Collection,” Rockwell Pavilion**

**12:30-1:30**

**Lunch**

Rockwell Foyer

**1:30-2:15**

**Reading by Visiting Writer Hayan Charara, with introduction by Boldface faculty Christopher Brean Murray**

Rockwell Pavilion

**2:15-2:45 BREAK**

**2:45-4:00**

**Workshops - For locations see list at end of program**

**4:10-5:00**

**Craft Talk by Visiting Writer Leah Lax, with introduction by Boldface Faculty Rachel Ballenger, “Memory: How It Drives Us, How To Use It, and Why We Must Create It in Our Characters and Our Readers”**

Rockwell Pavilion

**Friday, May 26**

**Writing Onward: Literary Magazines and Organizations**

Rockwell Foyer

Ayokunle Falomo

Christina Escamilla / Revolving Door Press

Emily Shearer / Minerva Rising

*Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts*

Houston Poetry Fest + First Fridays

Houston Writers Guild + Inklings

Lee Steiner / Domestic Papers

Sharon Halprin / SBV Studios

*Silk Road Review*

WTTS (Writers in the Schools)

Writespace

**9:30-10:30**

**Breakfast**

Rockwell Foyer

**10:30-11:30**

**Panel: “Advice for Getting Started with Publishing” with Visiting Writers Bill Broun, Hayan Charara, and Leah Lax, moderated by *Glass Mountain* Editor LeeAnne Carlson**

Rockwell Pavilion

**Panel: “Literary Translation in Theory and Practice” with Robin Davidson (Former Houston Poet Laureate; UHD Professor), Gabriela Baeza Ventura (Executive Editor of Arte Público Press; Director of Graduate Studies, Hispanic Studies), Hosam Aboul-Ela (UH Professor; Co-founder of Translation and Empire Studies Graduate Certificate Programs), and Ed Nawotka (Bookselling and International News Editor, *Publishers Weekly*), moderated by *Glass Mountain* Poetry Editor Maryam Ahmed**

Honors College Commons

**11:30-11:45 BREAK**

**11:45-12:45**

**Panel: “Self Publishing: How Tos, Merits, and Challenges” with Christina Escamilla (Publisher, Revolving Door Press), Nishta Mehra (Author, *The Pomegranate King: Essays*), Rebecca Nolen (Executive Director, Houston Writers House),**



and Ayokunle Falomo (Author, *thread, this wordweaver must!*),  
moderated by *Glass Mountain* Editor LeeAnne Carlson  
Rockwell Pavilion

Interactive Program: “Perform Your Work Like A Champion!:  
Reading in Public Venues” with Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton  
(Houston Poet Laureate) and Houston VIP Slam, moderated  
by *Glass Mountain* PR Manager Kim Coy  
Honors College Commons

12:45-1:45 LUNCH

Lunch Time Talk

“Literary Citizenship: Make Your Voice an Agent of Change”  
with Lauren Berry (Author, *The Lifting Dress*; Founder,  
Boldface Berry Scholarship), Robin Davidson (UHD Professor;  
Former Houston Poet Laureate), Lacy M. Johnson (Author,  
*The Other Side*; Rice Professor), Rich Levy (Executive  
Director, Inprint), Nicole Zaza (HCC Professor), moderated by  
Miah Arnold (*Glass Mountain* Advisory Board President;  
Grackle and Grackle Writing Studios Founder and Director)  
Rockwell Pavilion

1:45-2:30

Panel: “Applying to Grad School: Student and Faculty  
Perspectives” with Alexander Parsons (Director, UH Creative  
Writing Program), LeeAnne Carlson (*Glass Mountain* Editor),  
Dan Chu (Boldface Faculty), and Elizabeth White-Olsen  
(Writespace Founder and Director), moderated by *Glass  
Mountain* Poetry Editor Maryam Ahmed  
Rockwell Pavilion

Interactive Program: “Submit Now! Getting Your Work in the  
World” with Fern Brady (Inklings Publishing VP; Houston  
Writers Guild CEO), Michele Nereim (*Gulf Coast* Managing  
Editor), and Katherine Hill (*Glass Mountain* Assistant Fiction  
Editor), moderated by *Glass Mountain* PR Manager Kim Coy  
Honors College Commons

**2:30-3:00 BREAK**

**3:00-3:45**

**Readings by Boldface Faculty Charlotte Wyatt, Christopher Brean Murray, and Corey Campbell, with introductions by *Glass Mountain* Managing Editor Marissa Gonzalez**  
Rockwell Pavilion

**3:50-4:00**

**Closing Remarks**  
**Conference Administrator, Erika Jo Brown**  
Rockwell Pavilion

**After-hours event: Farewell Party at Calhoun's Rooftop Bar & Grill (4701 Calhoun Road, University of Houston) 7-9 p.m.**

**Evening Events:**

Tuesday May 23, 7:30 p.m.

Open Mic Reading at Brasil Cafe  
2604 Dunlavy St.  
Sign up at the Registration Table

Wednesday, May 24, 7:30 p.m.

Open Mic Reading at Kaboom Books  
3116 Houston Avenue  
Sign up at the Registration Table

Friday, May 26, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Farewell Party at Calhoun's Rooftop Bar & Grill  
4701 Calhoun Road, University of Houston

## **Workshop Leaders and Locations**

- ✧ Rachel Ballenger: 304C (M.D. Anderson)
- ✧ Corey Campbell: 10G (M.D. Anderson)
- ✧ Dan Chu: Honors College Commons
- ✧ Niki Herd: Evans Room (Special Collections)
- ✧ Jonathan Meyer: Estess Library
- ✧ Josie Mitchell: Rockwell Pavilion
- ✧ Christopher Murray: 304D (M.D. Anderson)
- ✧ Matthew Salesses: 304B (M.D. Anderson)
- ✧ Cait Weiss: Rockwell Pavilion
- ✧ Charlotte Wyatt: 304A (M.D. Anderson)

## **Masterclass Descriptions:**

\*See daily schedule for times and places

### **Rachel Ballenger: “Writing From Life”**

Novice writers often look outside themselves for inspiration, trying to “come up” with interesting ideas. But, our own lives are rich with material. This class is about translating your experiences into powerful fiction worth reading. We will discuss journaling techniques to generate content, creating composite characters from people you know, and how to reimagine and reshape events from your life in service of a fictional story. This class includes guided exercises, discussion, and a reading list to take home.

### **Corey Campbell: “The Haunted Narrator: Fragmentation and Uncertainty as Part of Your Narrative Strategy”**

A short story is more than simply *what* happens—I like to think about *how* those events affect the person telling the story. In this talk, we’ll explore what I call “the haunted narrator,” a person who has experienced an event that he/she cannot *un*-experience or who has made a choice that he/she cannot *un*-make. Writer Charles Baxter describes this as the one-way gate: “A one-way gate consists of an irrevocable action that a character simply cannot go back on; or it may be a wound that cannot be healed or mended.” Many characters who pass through this one-way gate are haunted. What happens when these haunted characters step in as narrator? How do they manage to tell a story? How do they fumble through it? In this talk, we’ll think about how a “haunted narrator” may use fragmentation and uncertainty to give stories other dimensions or interesting new structures—and how you might do the same. We’ll think about Alice Munro’s story “Gravel” and some other great examples.

### **Dan Chu: “POC in MFA”**

As part of the continuing conversation sparked by Junot Diaz’s article “MFA vs. POC,” this craft talk will focus on race in MFA programs. We will start with strategies for applying and attending an MFA program as a writer of color. Next, we’ll look at race as an

aspect of craft. After all, craft is majority preference which is shaped by norms in society. What happens when a writer's work falls outside of that norm? How do we read and respond to that work? Even more importantly, how does a writer evaluate his work in defiance of these norms? Finally, we'll look at poems that successfully defy cultural craft norms.

### **Niki Herd: “From Wall Street to Baghdad: The Project Poetry Collection”**

The past several years have seen a rise in *project* poetry books — collections written about a specific subject matter or about an historical event, with each poem focused directly or loosely indirectly on that particular subject. Though these collections can contain poems about personal experience, usually they provide both poet and reader the opportunity to examine the external world for which they are a part. If you have an idea for a project poetry collection, how then do you create poems when book research proves not enough to allow your feet to stand firm in the work? How do you find texture or a voice for the work in order to move forward? In this masterclass we will investigate how non-literary art forms can be used to jumpstart or advance your own project poetry collection. Mixed media examples will be presented and participants will be encouraged to consider their own work in the context of these examples. This masterclass should be useful for those working on poetry collections of all kinds.

### **Jonathan Meyer: “Making the Stone Stony”: On Strangeness and Defamiliarization**

“Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony.” (Victor Schklovsky).

Is your writing bogged down by pesky cliché, derivative description, or a lumbering feeling of *sameness*? Learn to face the strange with this master class in defamiliarization. We'll examine the reasons why familiar expressions find their way into our writing, and discuss what we can do to stop it. With a focus on language, diction, and imagery, this class should have utility for both poets and prose writers.

## **Josie Mitchell: “Creating Your Post-Apocalyptic World”**

What happens after the world ends? Surely, it’s still the complicated beautiful place we live in now, but with its own set of problems and beauties all of which, you, the writer, create. How do you embed the imagined world into the text? How do you build a world that is full, complicated and vivid, without relying on heavy-handed exposition? This master class will explore methods to build an apocalyptic world, before, or just after, it all comes crashing down. We’ll look to character, figurative language and concentrated locality to make sure the world is accessible, vivid and wholly imagined. While this is certainly applicable to speculative fiction, the methodology is based in literary fiction and can be useful to fictioners and poets alike. This master class will ask you to write, so bring your necessary equipment.

## **Christopher Brean Murray: “Triggering Towns & Geographical Mirrors: Hugo, Bishop & the Landscape Poem”**

In his book, *The Triggering Town*, Richard Hugo argues that a poem has two subjects: “the...triggering subject, which starts the poem or ‘causes’ [it] to be written, and the...generated subject, which...is...discovered...during the writing.” While the generated subject is, for Hugo, the ultimate goal, it can generally only be reached by first engaging with the appropriate triggering subject. Hugo informs us that for him the triggering subject that often helps him find his way to the generated subject is “a small town that has seen its better days.” He explains that “When you are honest to your feelings, that triggering town chooses you.” The phenomenon Hugo describes dates back at least as far as Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” and probably much further. While many modern poets have used a specific landscape as—in Hugo’s words—“a base of operations for the poem,” a notable example is Elizabeth Bishop’s “At the Fishhouses.” While Bishop’s poem initially appears merely to describe a seaside landscape in Nova Scotia, it ultimately becomes a forum for meditations on beauty, time, mutability, death, and the human capacity for knowledge. Bishop viewed the poem as an enactment of her idea of the “geographical mirror,” which refers to the way a poet can find herself reflected in the landscape she conjures. In this master class, we will discuss Hugo’s arguments from

*The Triggering Town*, Bishop's idea of the geographical mirror and consider how these concepts can be applied to our own writing.

### **Matthew Salesses: “The Novel, Plot, and the Inciting Incident”**

Have a great idea for a novel but don't know how to start it? Stuck in the middle of novel-drafting and stalling out? Much of writing a novel through to its end is about what is set up by its premise. A novel, a great writer once said, is a structural machine. That structure begins at the beginning. Agents and editors want to see the first 50 pages of the novel for a reason--a lot has to happen in those 50 pages to sustain a book-length work of fiction. What exactly makes an inciting incident, though? Exploring that question will help the writer set the groundwork for a novel.

### **Cait Weiss: “Do You Even Know Who I Am?: Creating Voice(s) via Persona in Poetry”**

Every poet needs a persona, the voice we craft to speak our poems on the page. This is the voice our reader hears, a bit like our real-life voice but also often quite different. Our personas sprout from barely-fictionalized autobiographical characters, full-blown fantasy creations, well-known celebrities, mythic figures, parents, our younger selves or anyone anywhere in between. Either way, the voices that speak our poems both are and are not us. How can we make the most of persona? In this talk, we'll look at how poems use persona and how those choices heighten the impact of the work. We'll experiment with voices we have access to and how they influence our poetic personas. Come prepared to discover whole new parts of yourself and your writing. What revelations do we unlock when we embrace personas? Show up and begin to find out.

### **Charlotte Wyatt: “Back to the Future: Time Travel as Narrative Strategy”**

In her book *The Art of Time in Fiction*, Joan Silber describes the ways in which time can shape stories. She says, “Where the teller begins and ends a tale decides what its point is, how it gathers meaning.” Finding the shape of a story can get tricky when it doesn't operate by the normal rules of space and time--whether your characters join a

dinosaur safari, or learn clairvoyance from aliens, or narrate what happens after their own deaths, etc. ... Using work by Ted Chiang, Adam Johnson, and others, we'll look at how time travel, literal and otherwise, can serve as a narrative strategy to shape and drive your projects in fiction.





***Attention all Boldfacers!  
Enter the Lillie Robertson Prize!***

After you've finished revising and editing your work, you are invited to enter the Boldface Conference Lillie Robertson Contest (for free!). This is a contest **only** available for Boldface attendees, and is meant to reflect the writing you created or workshopped while here. All submissions will be judged blindly by Boldface faculty and staff. Winners in each category—poetry, fiction, non-fiction—will receive **\$100 and publication in *Glass Mountain's* Fall 2017 issue!**

Questions? Contact us at [boldfaceconference@gmail.com](mailto:boldfaceconference@gmail.com).

**Deadline for the Lillie Robertson Prize:  
August 1, 2017.**

# glass mountain

*The only way to get your work published...is to submit it!*

*Glass Mountain* is currently accepting work for our Fall issue. After ten years of publishing, submitting is still easy and free! Start writing, and we hope to see your best and most polished poem, review, artwork, fiction, or creative nonfiction soon!

We also hold an annual Poetry and Prose Contest every winter. Send in a piece of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry that you feel is worth not only publication in the journal, but also a **\$100 prize and free admission to next year's Boldface Conference for Emerging Writers**. Keep an eye on [glassmountainmag.com](http://glassmountainmag.com) for the announcement of the start of the contest in November!

Looking to see what we publish? Buy any of our issues during Boldface and get a taste for our magazine.

Questions? Contact us at [glassmountaineditors@gmail.com](mailto:glassmountaineditors@gmail.com)

**To submit, please visit  
[glassmountain.submittable.com/submit](http://glassmountain.submittable.com/submit).**



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