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Writing & Right Livelihood: A Writer's Colony at Dairy Hollow Workshop

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Writing & Right Livelihood

*A Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow Workshop
with Kathryn Lorenzen & Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg*

Ground Rules

1. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, and most of all, making sense.
2. Write what you know as well as what you don't know.
3. Follow your writing, not the suggested exercise, the facilitator or what you think you should write. Write what wakes you up the most.
4. Feel free to experiment with poems, stories, dialogues, essays, letters, and whatever other form the writing wants to be.
5. Practice trust. Trust yourself to write what you need to write, how you need to write it.
6. Remember that all revealed in this workshop is confidential.
7. Treat all newborn writing with great respect and tenderness so that it can grow.
8. Reading your writing aloud is always optional.
9. No self-deprecating remarks allowed (especially when preparing to read your work).
10. Strive, as much as possible, not to compare your writing with the writing of others, and not to critique, interpret or analyze away what your writing is trying to show you.
11. Witness others. Listen carefully with your full attention. It will enhance your ability to listen to your own words.
12. Please share your responses to one another's work—what moves you, what stands out for you – but please refrain from critiquing or analyzing the work. You can put responses in the chat box.
13. Treat all you do as a delicious and invigorating experiment. Play. Take chances. See what way leads to way, and what words lead to words.

Writing Prompts

1. Write about one of the hundreds of ways for you "...to kneel and kiss the ground" in potential work you might do in the work.

Today, like every other day

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down the dulcimer.

Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground
~ Rumi

2. Make a list and keep adding to it over time of all the moments you most loved in various jobs you held, from things you might have done as a teen (enjoying the quiet of reading a book in someone else's home when you were babysitting) to what you might be doing right now. Then look at the qualities you discover and consider what these qualities say to you about what you most seek.

3. What do you need to live your fullest life, do your best work, act in balance with your calling? Make a list, and then write about how you might cultivate, invite in, research, cajole, attract or plan for one item of your list coming true
4. In concert with Kathryn Lorenzen's blog post, "What Are You No Longer Willing to Tolerate", make a list of what you're finished with tolerating in jobs, gigs, workplaces, or with colleagues or supervisors. Then write a list of what qualities you invite in – what you're not just willing to tolerate but ready to embrace. Consider what you discover in this prompt as you look at other possibilities for your livelihood or other work.
5. Write your own initiation song for starting your new work or deepening your new calling.

Initiation Song from the Finder's Lodge

Please bring strange things.
Please come bringing new things.
Let very old things come into your hands.
Let what you do not know come into your eyes.
Let desert sand harden your feet.
Let the arch of your feet be the mountains.
Let the paths of your fingertips be your maps
and the ways you go be the lines on your palms.
Let there be deep snow in your inbreathing
and your outbreath be the shining of ice.
May your mouth contain the shapes of strange words.
May you smell food cooking you have not eaten.
May the spring of a foreign river be your navel.
May your soul be at home where there are no houses.
Walk carefully, well loved one,
walk mindfully, well loved one,
walk fearlessly, well loved one.
Return with us, return to us,
be always coming home.
~ Ursula LeGuin

6. Write about meeting your muse for a conversation in your backyard, at a bar, on a ranch, or anywhere else, and what you learn from your muse about how to sustain him/her/them/it as well as specific work you might consider.

When I met My Muse

I glanced at her and took my glasses
off – they were still singing. They buzzed
like a locust at the coffee table and then
ceased. Her voice belled forth, and the
sunlight bent. I felt the ceiling arch, and
knew that nails up there took a new grip
on whatever they touched. "I am your own

way of looking at things,” she said. “When you allow me to live with you, every glance at the world around you will be a sort of salvation.” And I took her hand.
~ William Stafford

7. Make a list of the jobs, gigs, or assignments you most loved, and from this list, extract the qualities of each that worked best for you.

8. Write about a typical day or week in your life as if you had enough time to write and fulfill other obligations (including making a living, caregiving, being a partner and/or friend, etc.). What kind of schedule might work best for you? How much writing time would you set up (and it might be a big block once a week or every few days)? How much unscheduled time would best serve you for your own self-care and resilience?

9. We all have our callings, especially as writers: the work that wants to be created and the timing that is best. Make a list of writing or work-work (what you might do for a living or service outside of writing) that called you in the past and that are calling you now. Consider what brings you satisfaction, a sense of being aligned with your soul, and joy.

Resources

Your Right Livelihood: An annual class and retreat offered by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg and Kathryn Lorenzen on finding and putting into action the work, art, or service you love. The class especially offers a comprehensive approach to dreaming up and putting into action your emerging work. Join our mailing list and receive a free guide, “12 Ways to Repair Your Work-Life Balance,” and consider connecting with us for a discovery call to find out more. Please also [see our blog for more resources.](#)

Facilitation: Learning to be a strong community writing facilitator (whether you work with groups or even facilitate people in one-on-one coaching) is a life-long art, and there are numerous classes, programs, articles, and books on this topic. Like everything, you need to find the best path forward for you, but here are some close to Caryn’s heart:

- **The Art of Facilitation:** Five classes offered annually by Joy Roulier Sawyer and Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg on workshop, meeting, coaching, and collaborative facilitation. We have over 50 years’ combined experience, and all the classes include ample resources.
- **Transformative Language Arts Network Certification in TLA Foundations:** A certification in social and personal transformation through the written, spoken, and sung word.
- **The Power of Words: A Transformative Language Arts Reader,** edited by Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg and Janet Tallman, and **Transformative Language Arts in Action,** edited by Ruth Farmer and Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg: Two anthologies of articles on, among other things, making a living through community workshops and other facilitation.

Developmental Editing & Writing Coaching: Other training to become a writing coach: There are many programs out there, so do your homework if you feel you need training. Make sure the training gives you what you need most (for example, you might be great at marketing but need guidance on setting your rates, or you might only need to know how to build your business, or you might be ready to roll!). Do you need a long-term program, a series of classes, just a short class or two, one-on-one

coaching, or another approach? There are many programs, so instead of listing any, we encourage you to do your own research. Kathryn and Caryn also do career development coaching.

That said, one resource Caryn recommends from knowing Jennifer Lawler and her work training people to do developmental editing is [Club Ed: Become a Freelance Story Editor](#) (which provides a wide range of support).

Establishing Your Freelance or Solopreneur Writing Business:

There's no one authoritative "right way" to establish your writing livelihood, just the way that's right for you. It has been helpful for many to identify a specialty, which makes it easier to build a portfolio, create clear messaging, and network in an efficient way.

Here is a partial list of specialties: Journalism articles and features, blog posts, speeches, ghostwriting for executives, website copy, newsletters, social media campaigns, customer stories and profiles, corporate histories, bios and resumes, advertising copy, PR releases and press kits, sales materials, training manuals and educational materials, technical documentation, employee communications and manuals, grant writing, annual reports.

Here are several articles on starting your business:

- ["How to Start a Freelance Business" by Randy Duermyer](#)
- ["9 Steps to Start Your Own Freelance Writing Business" by Marc Andre](#)

Here is a partial list of websites for researching and finding writing jobs and assignments: MediaBistro.com; LinkedIn.com; JournalismJobs.com; AllFreelanceWriting.com; Freelancer.com; Upwork.com; Fiverr.com; FreelanceWritingGigs.com; Guru.com; ProBlogger.com