

Figure Eight Writers' Workshop: Memoirs & Essay Collections

Class Description:

What does it mean to write creative nonfiction? Essentially, it means writing true stories that resonate emotionally, intellectually and aesthetically using many of the same kind of literary techniques that fiction, play and poetry writers use: scene, dialogue, imagery, metaphor, point of view, etc. The most common forms of creative nonfiction are memoirs (think Cheryl Strayed's "Wild," Jeanette Walls' "The Glass Castle," Frank McCourt's "Angela's Ashes"), personal essays (think David Sedaris and Joan Didion), and lyric essays (these are less well-known, but some great examples include "Citizen" by Claudia Rankine and "Bluets" by Maggie Nelson). The "Modern Love" section of the *NYTimes*, the online magazine *Brevity* and the parenting magazine *Brain, Child* all fall under the umbrella of creative nonfiction. Basically, creative nonfiction is any kind of narrative that is both literary and true.

In this Figure Eight class, we'll meet **every other week for a block of 6-classes**. In that time, we'll read one full-length memoir or essay collection and use it to study the art of creative nonfiction. For each class, I'll assign a manageable portion of a book for everyone to read. During the first hour of each class, we'll discuss the book's impact on us as readers and then look at how the author uses craft elements to create effects. Then, to loosen the writing gears and generate ideas, I'll provide a prompt.

The 2nd hour of the class will be devoted to students' original work. Every class I'll ask 2-3 participants (depending on how many members we have) to bring in 2-4 double-spaced pages (approx. 500-1000 words) of new or revised work. The topic and form of this work is entirely up to each student, but creative nonfiction (or something close to it) is encouraged. During the workshop portion, each writer will have roughly 20 minutes to read his/her work aloud and receive constructive feedback from the group.

So, the outside-of-class expectations are:

- a. Write 2-4 double-spaced pages (approx. 500-1000 words) of new or revised work for every other class.
- b. Complete the readings from the book that I assign.

When:

Contact for openings

Where:

We will meet on Zoom.

Class Size:

6 max.

Price:

\$450 for the block (block includes six 2-hour classes)

Payment is due one week before the start of class and can be made via Zelle (emilyw7@gmail.com), Venmo (@emilyw7) or PayPal (emilyw7@gmail.com). If you prefer to mail a check, contact me for the address.

To Sign Up:

Email me at emilyw7@gmail.com