



# THE HEALING ART OF WRITING

## A Conference and Writing Workshop

Dominican University of California  
June 27-July 2, 2010



**DOMINICAN  
UNIVERSITY**  
of CALIFORNIA  
1890

# THE HEALING ART OF WRITING

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The Healing Art of Writing began as Writing the Medical Experience (WME), a conference that first met in 2003 as part of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers in the breathtaking Sierra Nevada. The conference continued for four years on the campus of Sarah Lawrence College, attracting participants from all over the country. Past faculty members have included notable writers and poets such as Richard Selzer, Frank Huyler, Courtney Davis, John Fox, Ted Kooser, Donald Hall, and Alicia Ostriker. Now we are pleased to bring WME to Dominican University of California, with a new title intended to reflect more closely its aspirations.

Our conference offers a unique experience in bringing together caregivers and patients who share a passion for writing about the mysterious forces of illness and recovery. The conference fosters communication between the two worlds we are all born into, described by Susan Sontag as “the kingdom of the well and . . . the kingdom of the sick.” A belief shared among all the participants is that *being cured* of the disease is not the same as *being healed*, and that the writing of poetry and prose brings us to a place of healing. Our subject is the body, our medical experiences widely diverse, our goal to express through literature what happens when a physical or mental anguish disrupts our lives.

Since participants are exploring intimate subjects, the conference fosters mutual support and friendship. Dominican provides a secluded retreat, yet lies within easy distance to San Francisco for those wishing to venture forth. Wednesday afternoon of the conference is non-scheduled to allow participants to explore the Bay Area, socialize, or take time for quiet reflection.

## FACILITIES

The tranquil Dominican campus covers 80 wooded acres in a quiet residential neighborhood in San Rafael—yet it’s only twenty minutes to San Francisco and the East Bay. Edgehill Village, a residential complex built in 2002, is six cedar-shingled buildings. Each suite features a living room, two bedrooms, and a shared bathroom. Conlan Recreation Center offers workout rooms and an outdoor pool. Accommodations include meals.

## THE WORKSHOPS

*Poetry workshops* will meet from 9:30 a.m. to noon each morning. Workshop members and leaders change daily so that all may experience a variety of styles and voices. Poets will be required to write a new poem each day to bring to the workshop. In this atmosphere of challenge and support, poets will be free to break old habits and write with more strength and truth. Since time is limited, you may wish to bring a list of possible subjects for new poems.

*Prose workshops* meet from 9:30 a.m. to noon each morning. Participants will meet with a different leader each day. Two to three manuscripts will be treated at each session. Participants will have the opportunity to read manuscripts in advance so as to be prepared to give constructive feedback in the workshop. The first two days’ manuscripts will be due two weeks before the start of the conference, the remainder upon registration. Participants whose manuscripts are being discussed the first two days will be notified in advance.

## AFTERNOON AND EVENING EVENTS

There will be daily talks and panel discussions on craft, editing, publishing, ethics, and other subjects that address the particular concerns of writers. Faculty readings, participant readings, and social gatherings will take place during the evenings. In addition to workshops, participants will be offered a one-on-one session with a faculty member to allow for more detailed feedback on their work.



# FACULTY



**Joan Baranow, PhD**, is an Assistant Professor of English at Dominican University of California. Her poetry has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Western Journal of Medicine*, and other magazines. Her poetry has also appeared in *Women Write Their Bodies: Stories of Illness and Recovery*, issued in 2007 by Kent State University Press. Her book of poetry, *Living Apart*, was published by Plain View Press. With her husband David Watts, she produced the PBS documentary *Healing Words: Poetry & Medicine*, airing nationally in 2008-2011.



**John Fox, CPT**, is adjunct associate professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, California. John is author of *Finding What You Didn't Lose: Expressing Your Truth and Creativity through Poem-Making* and *Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-making*. His work is featured in the PBS documentary, *Healing Words: Poetry and Medicine*. John presents in medical schools and hospitals including Stanford, Harvard, Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida, The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in Seattle, and many others places. He is president of The Institute for Poetic Medicine, which offers poetry and healing programs.



**Jane Hirshfield's** sixth book of poetry, *After*, was named a "Best Book of 2006" by *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and England's *Financial Times*. She is also the author of a now-classic book of essays, *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry*, and three books collecting the work of women poets from the past. Featured in two Bill Moyers PBS specials, her work also appears in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, and five editions of *The Best American Poems*.



**Louis B. Jones** is the author of the novels *Ordinary Money*, *Particles and Luck*, and *California's Over*, all three New York Times Notable Books. His writing recently appeared in *The Santa Monica Review*, *The Threepenny Review*, and in the 2009 *Pushcart Prize* collection. With Lisa Alvarez, he directs the Writers Workshops of the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley.



**Veneta Masson, RN, NP**, was a founder, director, and family nurse practitioner in a small, mom-and-pop clinic providing office and home care to an inner-city neighborhood in Washington, DC. Two books came out of that experience: *Ninth Street Notebook—Voice of a Nurse in the City*, short pieces about big issues in health care from her vantage point on the front lines, and *Rehab at the Florida Avenue Grill*, a poetry collection about events and people whose lives changed hers. Though no longer in practice, Veneta continues to explore healing art. Her poetry collection, *Clinician's Guide to the Soul*, was published in 2008. In 2009, she began working with medical students in clinical bioethics at Georgetown University.



**Rachel Naomi Remen, MD**, is Co-Founder and Medical Director of the Commonweal Cancer Help Program featured in the Bill Moyers PBS series *Healing and the Mind* and has cared for people with cancer and their families for almost 30 years. Her groundbreaking holistic curricula enable physicians at all levels of training to remember their calling and strengthen their commitment to serve life. She is a Clinical Professor of Family and Community Medicine at UCSF and Director of the innovative course *The Healer's Art*. Her newest book, *My Grandfather's Blessings: Stories of Strength, Refuge and Belonging*, issued by Riverhead Books, 2000, is a national bestseller.

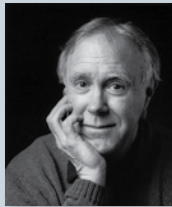


**Terese Svoboda** has produced a body of work that includes five books of poetry, six novels, a memoir, a book of translations, and poetry documentaries. Called "disturbing, edgy and provocative" by *Book Magazine*, her work has been chosen for the Writer's Choice column in the *New York Times Book Review* and garnered numerous awards. She has taught at Sarah Lawrence, Bennington, William and Mary, San Francisco State, and elsewhere. *Cannibal*, her first novel, won the Bobst Prize and was chosen as one of the ten best books of the year by *Spin*. Two new novels, *Pirate Talk or Mermelade* and *Bohemian Girl*, are forthcoming (2010 and 2011).

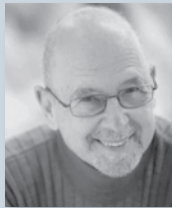


**David Watts, MD**, has published a second book of stories, *The Orange Wire Problem*, which along with *Bedside Manners*, forms a body of work which explores the intricacies of the art of medicine. He has published four books of poetry and a CD of "word-jazz." He is an NPR commentator on *All Things Considered*, a producer of the PBS program *Healing Words: Poetry and Medicine*, and a gastroenterologist at UCSF. A volume of avant-guard poetry, *sleep not sleep*, was published under his pseudonym, Harvey Ellis, by Wolf Ridge Press.

# GUEST FACULTY



**Robert Hass** has published many books of poetry including *Field Guide*, *Praise*, *Human Wishes*, and *Sun Under Wood*, as well as a book of essays on poetry, *Twentieth Century Pleasures*. As US Poet Laureate (1995-1997), his deep commitment to environmental issues led him to found River of Words (ROW), an organization that promotes environmental and arts education in affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book. His most recent collection of poems, *Time and Materials*, won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In spring 2010, Ecco will publish *The Apple Trees at Olema: Selected Poems & Essays, 1985-2009*.



**Mardi Horowitz, MD**, is President Elect of the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis. He has initiated and directed clinical research programs, supported by the National Institute of Mental Health and the MacArthur Foundation. The work in these projects, especially his work contributing to the diagnosis and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, led to receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. His most current books are *Understanding Psychotherapy Change: A Practical Guide to Configurational Analysis* and *A Course in Happiness*.



**Jeremy Nobel, MD, PhD**, is on the Faculty of the Harvard School of Public Health, where he works on the tough problem of fixing our badly broken health care system. In addition to this work, he is the founder and president of the Foundation for Art and Healing, whose mission is to explore ways in which creative engagement can be part of the healing process, easing the burden of suffering for patients and their loved ones through “hands on” creative experiences. He has also received several awards for his poetry including the Bain-Swiggett Prize from Princeton University and the American Academy of Poets Prize from the University of Pennsylvania.

## COSTS

**Tuition: \$700**

**Housing and Meals: double room \$250; single room \$375**

Meal plan begins with dinner on Sunday, June 27 and ends with breakfast on Friday, July 2

**Conlan Recreation Center:** \$8/day. You pay at the Center per use.

**Application fee:** \$25

**Partial Scholarships:** A limited number of partial scholarships are available.

To be considered, attach a letter describing need.

## TO APPLY

Applications will be considered in two categories: poetry and prose. Acceptance into the program is based on the quality of the application sample. Previous participants need not submit their work. If you are a new applicant, in addition to the application form, please send a 5-page sample of your work. Include your name in the upper right-hand corner of each page, and staple the upper left-hand corner of the manuscript. Please indicate if memoir, fiction, or poetry. Returning participants need not send work.

A \$25.00 nonrefundable application fee is required. Make application checks payable to **The Foundation for Humanities in Medicine**. All applications must be postmarked by **April 30, 2010**. Acceptance letters and registration materials will be mailed by **May 9**. All fees must be received by **May 28**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you attended *Writing the Medical Experience* before?**

Yes  No

Past participants do not need to submit work and will be admitted directly.

**Program (choose one):**

Poetry  Prose  Enclosed are my writing samples.

**I would also like:**

Housing and Meal Plan  Scholarship Consideration (my letter is attached)

**Please detach and mail in an envelope with your \$25.00 application fee made payable to The Foundation for Humanities in Medicine to:**

David Watts | 350 Parnassus Ave., Suite 900 | San Francisco, California 94117

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**[www.dominican.edu](http://www.dominican.edu)**



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