

# CONNECTION

*Everyone Can Write!*

The SLCC Community Writing Center

Fall 2022 | Vol. 22, No. 3

## Writing to Create Life-sustaining Culture

By Nan Seymour

I grew up in this lake bed. I also grew up in a culture of apathy, and even disdain for Great Salt Lake. “Too stinky,” they would say, “too buggy, too far away...” I believed them until birds led me into a deeper relationship.

As you know, Great Salt Lake’s life is now in tremendous peril. Even as the waters recede, it is not too late to become lake-facing people, to become heart-shaken, attentive, and grateful.

We can still create a culture of reverence for water. Culture is something we make together. We shift culture by the ways in which we spend our attention, we shape culture with our words.

Earlier this year, the River Writing community kept vigil on Antelope Island for every hour of the six-week Utah State legislative session. During that time we gathered words of praise from 400+ voices and assembled a 2580-line praise poem entitled irreplaceable, a polyphonic love letter to Great Salt Lake to be published by Toad Hall Editions this fall.

Writing to witness is something all of us can do. In the practice of River Writing, we

write imperfectly, buoyed by community. Together we can shift culture, tipping the scales in favor of the life that loves life.

Are you feeling pulled towards the page? There are so many reasons to write. What is beckoning you?

If your heart is pulled towards the lake, please join our friendly writing circle at the visitor’s center on Antelope Island on Saturday, July 30th from 2-4 pm. We’ll meet again on Saturday, September 3rd. Come! Write, witness, and listen with us at the water’s edge. Registration is open and tuition is sliding scale.

As we write to witness we grow our intimacy, along with our capacity to love. May we write our way into a culture that would sustain all life.

love,

nan seymour & the river  
writing collective

Andy Kirkpatrick, “Voices from Africa,” in *World Englishes: Implications for International Communication and English Language Teaching* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 102-106.



Nan Seymour  
Youth Programs Coordinator

### What’s Inside

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Facebook - @CommunityWritingCenter  
Instagram - @SLCC\_CWC

(801) 957-2192  
slcc.edu/cwc  
210 E 400 S #8  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

## Great Salt Lake Anthology CWC Staff Submissions

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Great Salt Lake Anthology “Consecrate/Desecrate” and all those who showed up to the gala! Here are some of the submissions from the CWC staff (continued on page 6):

### Restoration Clause

*By Nalu Francis and Claire Adams*

We are in a close-up  
Shot of a dying body  
Taking good pictures  
    That will soon be all we have  
    Of our salty sandy home

Forest is desert  
At the center of the edge  
Trees die just like sand  
    No water left to give life  
    To withering branches now

Moloka'i, the  
Next to last in line, it's the  
dialogue of sharks  
    Musing into the void  
    No one taking notice now

If there's sand from the  
Dead Sea in your hourglass  
Isn't it murder?  
    If you didn't listen,  
    If you didn't heed the signs?

You can't reappear  
If you don't disappear  
Don't pray for resurrection  
    No one is listening  
    Tired of empty conversation

Unless you are sure  
That you're already dead  
And don't count on no  
    Restoration clause  
    No one is coming to save

Splints of neon grace  
and calcium, the doctor's  
sifting through your sand  
    Too late to stop time  
    And the dried-up toxic cloud

Blue light triangles  
I see red light Bermudas  
Permutations of  
    What once was there  
    Only now can be imagined

It's a ho-hum death  
Worthy of when history's  
mad babble of the living  
    Deafen us with cries of pain  
    From the barren sands of time

You can't reappear  
If you don't disappear  
Don't pray for resurrection  
    No one is listening  
    Tired of empty conversation

#### ***Need feedback on your writing?***

One-on-one writing coaching is always free. Our coaching is open to anyone who needs help or feedback on their writing. Schedule your 30-minute session today! Last coaching session is one hour before closing.

#### **SLCC Community Writing Center Hours**

210 E 400 S, Suite 8, Salt Lake City, UT 84111  
Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (Online 6 - 7:30 p.m.)  
Friday-Saturday, 12 p.m.-4 p.m.

## Future/After

By Kati Lewis

its offerings, we thought, had no end... yet, here we  
are in the drought season—

in this predicted season  
of desert expansion.

diverted water will manifest solastalgia. heated rock,  
fading channels retain scars of briny waves. we  
document its dying for posterity—and our futures—  
with cell phone cameras and unearthly filters,  
marking the excesses of disappearance—  
this lake's evanescent.

while on watch, we will say we saw it coming. we  
will tragedize this lake that will have once been here.  
we will

tour its exposed aftermath. we will erect

signs memorializing lost stopovers for migrations. we  
will develop the dead lake's expansive new real  
estate. we will

conduct a postmortem. We will surface  
something positive from its desiccation and extract  
what's left—we

will embody a malleable poetics  
of refusing, in its presence, to act.

its now muted smell signals a decay. a great carrion  
lake we

will develop, manufacture, construct, farm—we will  
choose the words best suited for marketing and  
histories. we will wash

out the unfavorable parts of our lake stories. later,  
we

will remember the currency of

water. we will have nothing to trade.

## Community Writing Series

The Community Writing Series is a collection of writing groups hosted by the Community Writing Center to give writers of all backgrounds a voice and a community.

### Queer, Trans and Non-Binary Writing Group

Community Writing Center  
210 East 400 South, Suite 8  
1st and 3rd Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

### Escritores De Utah Writing Group

Community Writing Center  
210 East 400 South, Suite 8  
3rd Saturday from 2:00-4:00 PM

### Silver Pen Writing Group

Community Writing Center  
210 East 400 South, Suite 8  
1st and 3rd Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 PM

### Kearns Writing Group

Kearns County Library,  
4275 W 5345 S, Kearns, UT  
2nd and 4th Thursdays from 7:00-8:30 PM

### Writing for the Self: Poetry, Fiction, and Whatever Else is Needed.

Chapman Branch Library,  
577 S 900 W, Salt Lake City, UT 84104  
1st and 2nd Wednesday from 6:00-7:30 pm.

### Playhouse Writing Cohort (PWC)

Online: Register for Zoom Link at  
<http://www.slcc.edu/cwc/dws.aspx>  
1st Tuesday from 6:00-7:30 PM

For any additional questions, concerns, accommodations, or if you are  
interested in mentoring your own group as part of our series, please contact  
[elisar.soueidi@gmail.com](mailto:elisar.soueidi@gmail.com).

## Scholarship and Application Essays

### 1-Part Workshop

November 29 (Tuesday), 6-7:30 p.m.

A great personal essay can be the final step that gets you a meaningful scholarship or gets you into your best choice of colleges. Join us while we workshop personal essays! You will learn how to write compelling narratives that grab the attention of college recruiters while holding fast to their prompts, as well as receive writing tips and personalized feedback on your own essays.

Cost: \$10. Registration is required.

## Holiday Traditions: Giving Writing as a Gift

### 2-Part Workshop

December 3 & 10 (Saturday), 2-3:30 p.m.

Holidays are a time to gather with loved ones to make and share memories, and an opportunity to show our appreciation for the people in our lives. Some of the most treasured gifts don't come from the store, but from your heart. There are many ways to gift your writing to loved ones, such as poetry, memoir, short story, comic, or a letter of gratitude. Join us in this 2-part workshop where we will explore ways to share your writing with loved ones and create personal and meaningful gifts to give this holiday season.

Cost: \$30. Registration is required.

## Historical Fiction

### 1-Part Workshop

December 13 (Tuesday), 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Historical fiction intertwines the bizarre and sometimes unbelievable facts of history using creative writing elements to create amazing stories about the past. History is an expansive field with plenty of stories to explore. Come join our Historical Fiction

Workshop, and learn how to combine both fact and fiction, to tell a unique story about real events, places, and maybe even people. No history degree needed!

Cost: \$15. Registration is required.

## Math X Poetry

### 1-Part Workshop

December 17 (Saturday), 2-3:30 p.m.

Take poetic inspiration from math theorems as you learn the awe-inducing ways that mathematics & poetry are intertwined. In this interdisciplinary workshop, you'll discover how geometric shapes and math formulas can become the muses and structures for compelling, wild, and wonderful poetry. Join poet and Professor of Mathematics, Joe Gallegos, in learning about the connectedness of math and poetry. Then, you'll play with mathematical ideas and poetic forms to create your own poetry.

Cost: Free. Registration is required.

## Writing for Change: Letter Writing

### 1-Part Workshop

January 14 (Saturday), 2-3:30 p.m.

Join the CWC during this legislative session to learn techniques of writing for change through letters to editors and public officials. Come with an issue in mind and explore persuasive strategies and format recommendations with CWC writing coaches.

Cost: Free. Registration is required.

**REGISTER FOR OUR WORKSHOPS AT [SLCC.EDU/CWC/WORKSHOPS.ASPX](http://SLCC.EDU/CWC/WORKSHOPS.ASPX) OR BY PHONE AT 801-957-2192.  
ALL WORKSHOPS ARE LOCATED AT 210 EAST, 400 SOUTH, SUITE 8 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.**



## Playwriting

### 2-Part Workshop

January 24 & 31 (Tuesday), 6-7:30 p.m.

Plays are writing that has come to life. For this 2-part workshop series, the CWC has invited playwright, theater educator, and accomplished director, Josh Patterson, to lead us in the discovery of how to overcome writer's block and generate unique ideas. Join us to unearth how plays function in the realm of creative writing, the intricacies of writing for multiple voices, how to approach editing and rewriting, and what steps to take to get your play from script to stage.

**Cost: \$30. Registration is required.**

## Romance

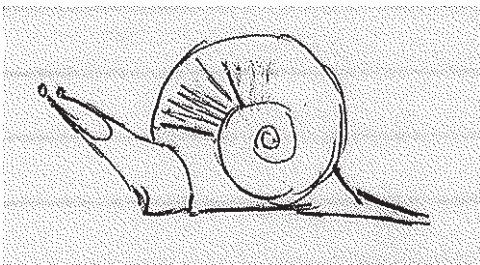
### 1-Part Workshop

February 4 (Saturday), 2-3:30 p.m..

Love! From romance, heartbreak, and even triangles, love is a big genre and theme in writing. Join us in our workshop to learn how you can explore this complicated feeling in your own writing.

**Cost: \$15. Registration is required.**

**Workshop Fees Can Be  
Waived Upon Request**



Writing Doodle Snail by the CWC

## Everybody Writes Open Mics 2022

Join us at the Community Writing Center to share your words in any medium. Bring any writing you want to share and listen to local writers and performers share their work. Each open mic will be held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 7 - 8 p.m.

## Quip (CWP - Community Writing Podcast)

The Salt Lake Community College's Community Writing Center (CWC) has recently launched a podcast! Quip (CWP - Community Writing Podcast) is a podcast which works to foster a safe and diverse space for all writers to learn, collaborate, and celebrate one another's voices and ideas. By channeling the CWC's core principles that every person can and should be empowered to write, Quip serves as both an incubator for writing ideas and questions, as well as a megaphone for Utah writers.

Episode 1: For our first episode, the CWP team discussed how to discern poetry from prose and scrutinized some of the CWP team members' poetry-writing process, which was followed by an expert perspective given by Utah's Poet Laureate, Paisley Rekdal.

Episode 2: In honor of National Novel Writing Month, a November pastime, the CWP team examined the novel-writing and -consuming process, and shared insights from several of the Salt Lake City area's most talented novel writers.



## Interested in Volunteering?

Come to one of our volunteer orientations and learn how you can get involved.

**Call (801) 957-2192 or visit [slcc.edu/cwc](http://slcc.edu/cwc)  
Volunteer orientation by appointment  
only**



## Great Salt Lake Cloudscape

*By Lisa Donaldson*

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**Discard Pile**

*By Allison Hutto*



**Salty**

*By Elisar Soueidi*

## When it (D)rains

*By Tara Hogan*

We've been hollow interlopers  
Every drip and dropping morsel  
Draining from your shores

Strange casts fall over your valleys  
Black lungs melt every slope  
Like a flood of toxic grease  
We've been hollow interlopers

Alien blades of grassy meadow  
Demand with ignorance your tides  
Soaking up your antecedents  
Draining from your shores

Fly onward, Great Heron  
Marooned on Antelope's  
Blank beaches, dry salt  
We've been hollow interlopers

Your life forsaken, Great Mother  
For greed, futile machines  
We've been hollow interlopers  
Draining from your shores

## Our Lot

*By Wesley Walls*

Do we turn around to watch the city burn? Do we run  
and forget?

Do we try to help the unforgiven?

Do we hide, do we wait, do we pray?

Do we care?

Do we taste the salt as it becomes us? Do we find  
solace in annihilation?

Are we scared?

Are we forgotten?

Are we worthy?

Are we alone?

Are we something else?

Take less,  
hold me close.  
Save me then,  
use me now.  
Please, stay  
and watch me go.

- Your lot



## A Letter from Gen Z

*By Kobe Rathsavong*

I don't think anything has caused me as much stress or worry as climate change. Maybe not the biggest immediate problem in a 20 year old's life, but it's a haunting spectre nonetheless. An existential yet real fear; there is nothing within me but anguish, to see the destruction of the environment, and the loud inaction following silent promises.

I don't speak for everyone in my generation, but I wouldn't be surprised if they have also felt that eerie anxiety that everything's falling apart, including the Earth itself. One thing that I do know that many Gen Z (at least in Utah) might all agree on is Utah is boring, but its saving grace exists everywhere and seldom far from our homes, its nature. Bear Lake, Mount Timpanogos, Lake Powell, Arches, Zion, Big Cottonwood Canyon, The Great Salt Lake, and many more spots that we ruthlessly stole and swindled from indigenous peoples.

The Great Salt Lake might not be a piece of nature that we think about often, or perhaps go see often, but it carries its importance in the background like an omnipresent machine. My first visit there took place in 2020, paddleboarding with some friends fresh out of high school. It's easy to overlook details when you're right in the heart of it all. Sitting in the middle of the lake, I didn't know that it was in danger of drying up, I saw the seagulls but not the brine shrimp, nor could I see the industry or dangerous dust. This is a part of my home, climate change will make life harder than it already is, perhaps uninhabitable. It's an apathetic hopelessness that surrounds me when thinking about nature, the dangers of arsenic winds and no more snow threaten my already dim future.

I didn't even know that our snow was linked with the Great Salt Lake, and if that disappears, so does our snow. Perhaps my ignorance of this fact can be excused, as I can seldom recall snow falling in recent years. Just the dry and cold wind, little to no snow, implanting my memories on recent winters.

I often question what my personal role is in the struggle towards bettering the environment. It often seems absurd that I alone can make any changes to fix this issue. What do my paper straws hold against the fuel leakage in Hawaii? Will my train ride offset the thousands of millionaire's private jets soaring each day? Why must I conserve water while golf courses guzzle water to maintain their greenness? Which deity do I pray to to make it rain in Utah?

Ominous foretellings of what might happen in Utah already occur elsewhere in the world. One only needs to look at Mississippi, where the rich can afford clean tankers of water, or the poisoning of Hawaii's waters by the United States military. Will the rest of us shrivel up and drink the blackened waters of humanity's hubris and greed? We have already witnessed how the marginalized are the first and always the worst to be affected by climate change. What will this look like in Utah? With the lake gone, all of us will be gone.

What is the source of these issues, my fears, my anger, if not capitalism? Capitalism not only exploits the people, but also the land, and the Great Salt Lake may be another victim of exploitation. Many will point the finger at the individual as being the cause, asking the wider population to change their ways or adapt if we are to survive the upcoming climate change, but why must the responsibility land on the individual? I've come to terms with my ability as one single human, but I alone cannot go toe to toe against a multibillion dollar company.

However, however bleak my words may be, I am not advocating for despair or inaction in the face of this colossal struggle. Neither do I believe that humans are a virus that must be removed if we are to save the earth. No, we must come to terms that the individual alone cannot save the environment, yet our collective ability is what gives us power.

We cannot wait for prayers to manifest into our salvation, nor can we expect this problem to disappear like a bad dream. We have the ability to fix the earth and its environment; together as a collective, do we have the ability to overpower corporations. There is no separating environmentalism from class, race, or even gender issues. We will all be affected, and we must all collectivize our efforts if we are to win the struggle.

A better world is possible, a better environment is possible. Climate despair will not fix anything, everyday people try to salvage the world from the destruction, new technologies and renewed efforts push back against total destruction of our climate. It is not a futile effort, for people have been trying for ages and always making strides in the field of justice and environmentalism.

The indomitable human spirit is no parasite, nor will it give up in the struggle. The power we have not just individually, but together, can and will overcome those who exploit the earth.

So here I leave my thoughts, not at the feet of despair, but in the brine of The Great Salt Lake.