Be There: Events that Bring Words to Life

Panel discussion with Q&A

The Tokyo scene now has a mix of storytelling, poetry, outreach and scholarly events that present great opportunities for writers reach new audiences, learn from experts and find inspiration. Organizers of science & humanities cafes and poetry events discuss the power of live shows for sharing and sustaining your writing.

In this session, organizers of Nerd Nite Tokyo, Tokyo Humanities Cafe and Tokyo Poetry Journal* discuss their experiences, featuring authors, journalists, bloggers, scholars and poets. The growing community of ‘smart’ events are a source for story ideas, inspiration and co-creation with keen audiences, enthusiasts and experts. The attendees are encouraged to share their ideas for effective and entertaining live formats that can best showcase the talent and knowledge base of the writers of Japan.

*A special video cameo

Amanda Alvarez is a science communicator at RIKEN, Japan's national science institute. Her writing has appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Physics Today, Yale Medicine, Medium and elsewhere. She also produces Nerd Nite Tokyo, a monthly evening of thinking and drinking. Twitter: @neuroamanda

Alex Watson is Associate Professor at the School of Arts and Letters, Meiji University. His research focuses mainly on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British writing. He also serves as a series co-editor for Palgrave's Asia-Pacific and Literature in English series. He is the main organiser of Tokyo Humanities Cafe and a regular contributor to Wall Street International and Kyoto Journal. Twitter: @Alexwat51720119

The Inside Story: Preparing a Successful Poetry Submission

Short Lecture with Q&A

Based on over ten years of experience both as poetry editors of RHINO magazine and as published poets, we will share our practices for preparing and submitting poetry to literary journals. Topics will include choosing your market, writing a cover letter, creating a bio, preparing and formatting poems for submission, and more. We will discuss some of the inner workings of RHINO magazine: how and why we choose poems for publication, what
common pitfalls to avoid when submitting, and how to be a good citizen of the poetry community. Special focus will be given to navigating the literary landscape as writers of color in the United States.

Angela Narciso Torres, author of Blood Orange (Willow Books Poetry Award), has recent or forthcoming work in POETRY, Missouri Review, and New Ohio Review. A graduate of Warren Wilson’s MFA Program and Harvard Graduate School of Education, Angela has received fellowships from Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference and Ragdale Foundation. She recently placed first in the 2019 Yeats Poetry Prize (Yeats Society of New York). Born in Brooklyn and raised in Manila, she’s a senior and reviews editor for RHINO and a reader for New England Review.

Naoko Fujimoto was born in Nagoya, studied at Nanzan Junior College and received a B.A. and M.A. from Indiana University. Her recent publications and forthcoming are or will be in POETRY, Kenyon Review, and Diode Poetry Journal. Her poetry collections, Where I Was Born (Willow Books), Glyph: Graphic Poetry=Trans.Sensory (Tupelo Press, 2020), Mother Said, I Want Your Pain (Backbone Press), Silver Seasons of Heartache (Glass Lyre Press), and Home, No Home (Educe Press) are available from each press. She is a RHINO associate editor.

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Baye McNeil

What Skills and Expertise are Essential to a Successful Writing Career in Japan

Short Lecture

I've written professionally in Japan for a decade now and in that time I've accrued experiences, honed skills, and developed habits and built a career from the ground up. Some of these I believe are essential to achieving success as a writer here, while others should be avoided. For this session I will share some of them with anecdotes and illustrations.

Baye McNeil was born and raised in Brooklyn New York and has lived in Japan since 2004. He's the author of two books on life in Japan as a non-Japanese, and has been a Japan Times columnist since 2014. His column Black Eye is globally-recognized as the source for info on "blackness" in Asia. He lives in Yokohama.

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C. E. J. Simons

‘Draft Z: Revising Poetry for Publication’

Writing and Publishing Workshop
This is a poetry workshop that will focus on strategies to revise poems for publication. The ethos of the session is that poems are reborn through extensive revision.

The session will begin with a short presentation that shows examples from the history of poetry of how revision has transformed poems between early and late drafts. The presentation will suggest strategies for transforming a draft into a publishable poem.

The last 20 minutes of the session will be a mini-workshop in which participants apply these strategies to an attendee’s draft poem. I will ask the participants to extract key lines and ideas from an existing draft in order to start a new draft.

The goal is to inspire attendees that the revision process is not only necessary, but enjoyable. The session will also discuss how the right kinds of revision should produce a seemingly more spontaneous poem than the first draft—a more vibrant, living poem, as opposed to an over-written or over-edited ‘zombie poem’.

NOTE: If you would like your short poem (20 lines or less) considered for the in-session mini-workshop, send it to “simons “at” (replace with @) ICU.ac.jp”. Preferably it will be one which has been submitted to one or more journals or competitions and has been rejected.

C. E. J. (Christopher) Simons is Senior Associate Professor of British Literature at ICU (International Christian University), Tokyo. He holds a D.Phil in British Romanticism from Lincoln College, Oxford, and in 2003 he held the Harper-Wood Studentship in Creative Writing at St John’s College Cambridge. He has published two collections of poetry with Isobar Press: One More Civil Gesture (2015) and Underground Facility (2018). His poems have won prizes in international competitions including the Bridport Competition, the Cardiff International Poetry Competition and the Wigtown Competition. His criticism and poetry have appeared in publications including the Independent, Isis, Magma, Oxford Poetry, PN Review, The Times Literary Supplement, and World Haiku.

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Charles Kowalski

What’s In A Name? Tips and traps in character naming

Craft workshop

Remember the journey into Mordor by the heroic Bingo Baggins? (Of course not, and aren’t you glad?) The naming of characters is a difficult matter, but we will discuss the three main considerations (sound, meaning, and associations) and their applications to genres ranging from contemporary fiction to SF and fantasy.
This workshop will discuss the three key considerations in naming characters: sound, meaning, and associations, along with pitfalls to avoid. Charles Kowalski’s debut thriller, MIND VIRUS, won the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers’ Colorado Gold Award, and was a finalist for the Killer Nashville Claymore Award and the Adventure Writers’ Grandmaster Award. His first middle-grade novel, SIMON GREY AND THE MARCH OF A HUNDRED GHOSTS, was just released by Excalibur Books.

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David Gilbey

Reeling and Writhing: A Poetry Editing Workshop – preparing for publication.

A ‘closed’ workshop, requiring participants to submit poems before the conference as well as read and be ready to discuss the work submitted by others. To join, contact David directly at debidogirubi(at)gmail.com (substitute the @ sign).

The proposed workshop is based on the familiar and successful structure and strategy as offered by John Gribble at the 2008 JWC and my own over the last ten years. It will involve my sending out a ‘brief’ to intending participants requiring submission of drafts of poems, then, before the actual workshop, reading and making comments on each of the participants’ poems and finally, participating in the workshop discussion itself at the conference.

This workshop allows writers to work on a poem or two in readiness for publication, recognising that conference delegates are themselves writers, teachers and editors and that there are both personal and professional benefits from a closely-focused discussion of emerging texts. So the purpose of this workshop is to give a small group of poets the opportunity to meet, read and discuss in depth a sample of each others’ work. The workshop will be open to a limited number of participants but writers of varying degrees of experience will be welcome. The session will be closed and of two hours’ duration. There will be two parts to the workshop: preparation and participation. Preparation also has two parts: submitting and close reading – those who sign up for the session will be contacted before the conference.

David Gilbey was Adjunct Senior Lecturer in English at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia, and is the founding President of Wagga Wagga Writers Writers, as well as a poet. His three collection of poems are 'Under the Rainbow' (1996), 'Death and the Motorway' (2008) and 'Pachinko Sunset' (2016). He has taught English at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University in Sendai, Japan 1996, 2000 and 2007. These days he works as a medical receptionist …

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Diane Hawley Nagatomo


Short lecture with Q&A

In this presentation, I will compare two editions of the same textbook published nearly thirty years apart. I will discuss not only how EFL textbooks in Japan have changed with the times, but also how I, as a materials writer, have changed as well.

Dr. Diane Hawley Nagatomo, professor at Ochanomizu University, has published academic books, academic articles, and EFL textbooks, and self-study books. Her most recent academic book is Identity, Gender and Teaching English in Japan (2016) published by Multilingual Matters.

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Edward Levinson

Simple Photo Editing Techniques for Writers and Other Photography Tips

Illustrated talk with Q+A

Being knowledgeable about photography is helpful for: illustrating one’s own writing, working collaboratively with photographers, working with editors and designers, and most importantly, understanding basic post-processing editing techniques to improve photos after capture, no matter what kind of camera you use.

The basic concepts of photo editing find many parallels with the writer’s editing process: Cut what’s not necessary. Find the proper angle or “hook”. Edit, tweak, and polish. Create a story line.

Explained simply with photo examples, this presentation is for those who want to: up the level of photos accompanying their writings, improve the wow factor of social media posts, add inspiring photos to blogs, or anyone who simply wants to better preserve their precious memories in a private journal.

Learn simple post-processing editing techniques to improve photos plus tips for organizing, selecting the keepers, and backing up.

Participants can bring in a “problem” photo and Edward will try to “fix” it as you watch. (Due to time restraints, this offer limited to 2-3 people. Bring original data on a USB stick.) NOTE: Participants who want to submit a photo for an editing a demonstration should contact Edward at the venue BEFORE the presentation if possible.
A photographer and writer focused on Japan, Edward Levinson shares openly from his broad base of knowledge. He has lived in Japan since 1979. His memoir, Whisper of the Land, was published by Fine Line Press (2014). He has published two books in Japanese by Iwanami Shoten and an award winning photo book. He lives on Chiba’s Bosó Peninsula, inspired by nature and his garden.

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Elizabeth Tasker, Amanda Alvarez

The Science in Storytelling

Short lecture with Q&A

How can the power of storytelling be employed to explain scientific concepts or conversely, can science help tell a story? This session looks at how two science writers use stories in their fields of neuroscience and astrophysics and how science figured prominently in the storytelling of a YA novel.

Creating delight from the cradle to old age, storytelling is a powerful tool for engaging with an audience. There is growing understanding of how and why stories have a powerful effect on the brain, with scientists and communicators using this knowledge to transmit research more effectively to non-specialists and the public. Writers too can take advantage of the principles and power of storytelling.

Two science writers will discuss how narrative, framing and tension are used to tell effective research stories, tackle technical concepts and connect to life outside the lab. These ideas will then be flipped to look at how science helped the storytelling in the YA novel ‘The Center of the Universe’ by Ria Voros, in which Elizabeth features as a character.

Amanda Alvarez is a science communicator at RIKEN, Japan's national science institute. Her writing has appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Physics Today, Yale Medicine, Medium and elsewhere. She also produces Nerd Nite Tokyo, a monthly evening of thinking and drinking. Twitter: @neuroamanda

Elizabeth Tasker is an astrophysicist and science communicator at JAXA, Japan’s national space agency. She writes for the NASA NExSS ‘Many Worlds’ column on exoplanets and space missions, among other publications, and her popular science book ‘The Planet Factory’ came out in paperback this year. Twitter: girlandkat

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Evan Fallenberg
Sex on the Page—A New Spin on Showing Versus Telling

Short craft lecture with Q&A

Sex on the page can be anything from breathtaking to appalling, from delicate to violent, and it serves a variety of functions. So why is it so hard to do well, no matter whether the parties involved are gay or straight, lovers or enemies, and whether the scene is meant to be romantic, horrific or hilariously funny? Participants are urged to bring a favorite sex scene from a published work.

Evan Fallenberg is the author of the novels Light Fell (Soho Press 2008), When We Danced on Water (HarperCollins 2011) and The Parting Gift (Other Press 2018) and a translator of Hebrew fiction, plays, libretti and film scripts. His work has won or been shortlisted for numerous awards, including an American Library Association Award, the Edmund White Award and the PEN Translation Prize. He teaches at Bar-Ilan University and is faculty co-director of the Vermont College of Fine Arts International MFA in Creative Writing & Literary Translation.

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Hans Brinckmann

How Giving Talks on Any Subject Can Help Promote Your Books.

Lecture illustrated with Power Point and readings, followed by Q&A

Selling their books is what writers need to continue writing. But in addition to book launches and internet promotion, giving lectures at every opportunity – even on unrelated subjects – can provide an excellent additional platform for selling your books.

How best to promote your writings? When you publish a new book, there usually are opportunities to introduce it at a book launch organized by your publisher or other institutions prepared to help you, as well as at online platforms such as Amazon and Facebook. But there is an additional effective way to promote your publications: by giving lectures on any subject, even if not directly related to your books. I will offer you some examples of how the talks I’ve been giving at many locations in Japan and abroad on a wide variety of topics often unexpectedly stimulated my audience’s interest in my writings, with some good book sales and signings as a result.

Hans Brinckmann, born in The Hague, after a 36-year career as a “reluctant banker” in Japan, New York, Singapore, Amsterdam and Curaçao, turned to writing fiction, non-fiction and poetry. URL: www.habri.jp and www.habri.co.uk

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Holly Thompson and Mariko Nagai
Re-envisioning Revisions: A YA/MG Novel Revision Workshop

“Closed” Workshop (2 sessions on Saturday morning, by pre-registration only)

YA/MG novel revision workshop for participants who have pre-submitted complete novel drafts for group feedback prior to JWC. At JWC, participants will discuss whole novel revision strategies and techniques and workshop writers’ selected revised excerpts.

The aim is to give YA/MG writers/translators a fixed deadline for completing a novel draft, to ensure that writers are placed in small groups for offering/receiving feedback on drafts in advance of JWC. Then, during the two JWC Re-envisioning Revision workshops, writers will reflect on feedback, discuss tools and techniques identified for advancing their novel, and plan key strategies for revision. Writers/translators will have a chance to share a brief excerpt of a revised scene, and will set personal goals for completing whole novel revisions within the support of a larger writing group.

Please Note: These sessions are open only to participants who submitted a completed draft of a young adult or middle grade novel before July 30.

Holly Thompson is author of the verse novels Falling into the Dragon’s Mouth, Orchards, The Language Inside; picture books Twilight Chant; One Wave at a Time, The Wakame Gatherers and the novel Ash. She writes poetry, fiction and nonfiction, is SCBWI Japan Co-Regional Advisor, and teaches at Yokohama City University.

Mariko Nagai is the author of Histories of Bodies: Poems (2007), Georgic Stories (2010), Instructions For The Living (2012), Dust of Eden (2014), Under the Broken Sky (2019) and Cold Spring (forthcoming 2021). She is an Associate Professor at Temple University Japan and is SCBWI Japan Co-Regional Advisor.

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Iain Maloney

The Only Gaijin in the Village

Reading with Q&A

In 2016 my wife and I bought a house and moved to a small village in rural Gifu Prefecture. I began writing a series of columns for Gaijinpot about my experiences as the only gaijin in the village. Collected, they will be published as a memoir in spring 2020.

This presentation will focus on both the content of the forthcoming book and the techniques used to turn everyday experiences into narratives. My previous book,
The Waves Burn Bright, was a fictionalisation of a real-life tragedy, while this book is a non-fictional dramatic retelling of real life. I will talk about the process of moving from writing fiction to narrative non-fiction, the similarities between the two forms and the challenges inherent in leaving the imaginary for the actual, and about the tensions between factual accuracy and the requirements of storytelling. I will read extracts while examining and explaining the techniques used to dramatise actual events, how to portray real people within a shaped world, and the universal in the specific.

Iain Maloney teaches English and creative writing at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. He is the author of three novels and a collection of poetry. His memoir about life in rural Japan, The Only Gaijin in the Village, will be published in spring 2020. www.iainmaloney.com @ianmaloney

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Isobar Press

Philip Rowland, Gregory Dunne

The Year’s Work at Isobar Press

Poetry reading with short Q&A

Readings from the three latest Isobar books: NOON: An Anthology of Short Poems, edited by Philip Rowland; Other/Wise by Gregory Dunne; and On Arrival by Paul Rossiter.

Isobar Press, which is based in Tokyo, specialises in English-language poetry from Japan. In this session, Isobar authors will introduce the latest Isobar books: Philip Rowland will introduce NOON: An Anthology of Short Poems, which is a careful renga-like arrangement of a strikingly diverse selection of poems from the issues of NOON: journal of the short poem; and Gregory Dunne will introduce and read his elegies and poems of friendship, marriage, family and vocation from his collection Other/Wise. Philip and Gregory will also introduce and read from Paul Rossiter’s On Arrival, book of poems arising from travels in Japan and South East Asia.

Gregory Dunne is the author of Fistful of Lotus (Elizabeth Forrest, 2000), Home Test (Adastra Press, 2009) and Quiet Accomplishment: Remembering Cid Corman (Ekstasis Editions, 2014). He is an associate poetry editor at Kyoto Journal and teaches in the Faculty of Comparative Culture at Miyazaki International College.

Philip Rowland lives in Tokyo, where he works as a professor of English. He is the author of Something Other Than Other (Isobar, 2016), the founding editor of NOON: journal of the short poem, and co-editor of the anthology Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years (Norton, 2013).
Paul Rossiter founded Isobar Press in 2013 after he retired from the University of Tokyo, where he taught Applied Linguistics. He has published eight books of poetry, most recently From the Japanese (Isobar, 2013), World Without (Isobar, 2015), Seeing Sights (Isobar, 2016), Temporary Measures (Isobar, 2017), and On Arrival (2019).

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Jane Joritz-Nakagawa

Hybridity and Writing

How writers can learn from hybrid forms such as prose poetry, flash fiction, haibun, and literary non-fiction and cross-genre fiction/poetry/essay/research will be the subject of this session.

What is it, a poem? A work of fiction? A short story? A chart? Research? A personal essay? None of these? A combination? Many hybrid works make us wonder how to categorize them. I will argue that these difficult to categorize hybrid forms can be examined with the goal of energizing one's writing regardless of the style or genre one adopts by imitating their boldness brashness freshness and ambiguity.

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa has published over a dozen books and chapbooks of poetry. Her most recent books are <<terrain grammar>> (theenk Books, 2018) and Poems: New and Selected (Isobar, 2018). She lives in Shizuoka prefecture and can be reached at janejoritznakagawa at gmail dot com.

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Jennifer Hammer

NaNoWriMo - What Are These Syllables and Why Do Writers Care?

Lecture

This lecture will focus on what exactly NaNoWriMo is, the pros and cons of writing 50,000 words in thirty days, and how writers can benefit from this online (and real life) community during the official November event, in April and July for "Camp NaNo," and with writers of varying levels from around the world.

Why should a writer care about these four syllables? Because NaNo is a great resource for writers, can be adapted to schools (and/or clubs), and is a way to make friends for life (as well as connect with the 5AM writing club, whichever time zone you’re in.)

Jennifer Hammer is the Tokyo Municipal Leader (ML) for NaNoWriMo and a four year NaNo winner. She writes whatever pretty idea catches her attention, all the way from super hero romance (White Knight) to creepy-crawly horror (JA
Hammer) to fantasy video games (CoffeeQuills). Join her this November for NaNo!

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John Spiri

Breaking down Barriers: Freewriting for Greater Creativity and Authenticity workshop

Freewriting, and just understanding the liberating power of writing without regard for the product, leads to greater creativity and productivity. In this workshop we’ll discuss the aims and methods of freewriting, make distinctions between freewriting and focused freewriting, look at freewriting samples, and get a taste of freewriting ourselves.

Ever since Peter Elbow wrote his seminal book Writing Without Teachers in 1975, freewriting has been a valued activity. One freewriting objective is to help writers overcome writer’s block. Freewriting is also used to brainstorm ideas and cultivate creativity. Perhaps most importantly, freewriting places an absolute emphasis on the process of writing. In doing so, writers can find their voice, and restrain the pressures we might feel to adhere to conventions, both regarding the written word and the unsanctioned or difficult ideas we might want to express. The presenter will argue that while trying freewriting is desirable, just understanding the rationale for its importance can be a source of guidance if not inspiration as well. We will also discuss the distinction between freewriting and focused freewriting. During this workshop participants will get a brief taste of both freewriting and focused freewriting and discuss the relative benefits of each.

John Spiri has taught composition at Champlain College (Vermont), Kyoto University, and other universities. He’s a freelance writer with many publications including 17 in The Japan Times. John raises ducks and bees in rural Shiga.

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Leza Lowitz

Mindful Writing Workshop

Mindfulness helps us cultivate presence in a non-judgmental, curious way. This awareness is a wonderful tool to use in the writing process.

From conception to creation, writing and mindfulness have much in common. Commitment and discipline. Exploration and playfulness. Finding the perfect balance of will and surrender.
In this workshop, we’ll explore simple meditation and writing exercises to help unlock creativity, release blocks, and cultivate a more compassionate approach to the creative process.

Whether you seek inspiration, need tips on how to transform your ideas into powerful words on the page, want support to grapple with the inner critic, or desire courage and tenacity to shape what you’ve already written into something that matches your vision, this offering is for you.

Leza Lowitz, M.A., is an award-winning author of over 20 books, including five Amazon best-sellers in multiple genres. A long-term practitioner and teacher of meditation and yoga, she is also the owner of Tokyo's beloved Sun and Moon Yoga studio. Visit her at www.lezalowitz.com or www.sunandmoon.jp

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Maria A. Ioannou

Object Animation in Contemporary Short Fiction – How to Create Engaging Lifeless Protagonists

Short presentation and creative writing practice with Q&A

This creative writing presentation/workshop focuses on ways to animate objects in contemporary short fiction and investigates how an object-centred approach can affect form, language and creative writing methodology. The presentation/workshop proposes an object-centred approach to creative writing, without excluding human characters but becoming the means to talk about human reality through objects. It focuses on both conventional and unconventional creative writing techniques in relation to object animation, while using examples from 20th and 21st-century adult short fiction. The presentation/workshop will also slightly refer to the theoretical background used in the above study, eg. related aspects of the Phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and could become a useful point of reference for writers, artists, academics and publishers interested in the animation of objects in literature.

Maria A. Ioannou (Limassol, 1982) is an awarded writer, creative writing tutor and festival organizer (Sardam festival). She studied Literature and Creative Writing in the UK (Vice Chancellor's Excellence in Research Award 2019 for her PhD in progress) and published two short fiction collections, one experimental novella and two fairytales (Emerging Writer State Prize 2012 for her short fiction collection The gigantic fall of an eyelash).

More info and full bio: www.mariajoannoushortstories.wordpress.com

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Mark Yakich and Loren Goodman
The Serious Play of Surrealism: How to Generate Poems while Having Fun with Yourself and Others

A great power of poetry is to help us re-envision what has become too familiar, thereby waking us from states of complacence. The Surrealists pushed poetry’s re-envisioning to an extreme—most often by engaging in serious play. In this workshop, we will draw on and modify their games and techniques to generate new drafts of poems and to probe the space of collaborative writing. As the Surrealists did, we will pay particular attention to how various strategies allow us to upend convention, connotation, and perspective. To such ends, we will experiment with a variety of strategies ourselves, including exquisite corpse, question/answer machines, automatic writing, erasures, cut-ups, and aleatory methods that we devise on-the-spot. Practicing such strategies together will remind us of the importance of making the “work” of writing both playful and rigorous, entertaining and serious, while leading to further discoveries.

A former Fulbright Fellow and communications consultant, Dr. Mark Yakich is the Gregory F. Curtin, S.J., Distinguished Professor of English at Loyola University New Orleans. He has 25 years of experience teaching writing, editing, literature, politics, history, and design, and has published books of poetry, fiction, memoir, and pedagogy. His unconventional guide to reading and writing poems, Poetry: A Survivor’s Guide (Bloomsbury, 2016), is taught worldwide. His next poetry collection, Spiritual Exercises, is forthcoming from Penguin in July.

Loren Goodman is the author of Famous Americans, selected by W.S. Merwin for the 2002 Yale Series of Younger Poets, and Non-Existential Facts (otata’s bookshelf, 2018). An Associate Professor of Creative Writing and English Literature at Yonsei University/Underwood International College in Seoul, Korea, he serves as UIC Creative Writing Director.

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Melinda Taliancich Falgoust

The Mad, Mad Science of Dissecting the Plot Monster: a universal formula for success

Short lecture with Q&A and craft workshop

Participants will learn the scientific formula distilled from the teachings of master storytelling gurus worldwide which can be applied universally across all types of writing. With a slight margin for error, the formula holds true for most successful works, many which will be examined in this presentation.

Every good doctor (evil genius scientist) knows the inner mechanics of his patient (or monster). Writers are no different. We have no Gray’s Anatomy, but we do have some scions of story science to provide guidance to the systems and organs that make a truly good story sing – the 16 elements that form the
anatomy of plot.

Attendees will participate in guided dissection of some successful, well-known titles in children’s and adult literature to see how the Plot Formula applies and, when adhered to, nearly guarantees a concise, tightly woven plot that keeps the monster under control.

Melinda Falgoust is an award-winning author whose writing has appeared in Reader’s Digest, AHMM, and others. Most recently, she was recognized as a finalist in the Clive Cussler Adventure Writer’s Competition. The veteran actor often reaches into her actor’s bag-of-tricks to introduce quirky characters that bring her presentations alive!

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Melissa McIvor

Objective Self-Editing: What Cats Can Teach Us about Killing Our Darlings

This presentation will cover the basics of how to edit your own work, as well as 5 traps authors often fall into during the self-editing process. At the end, we'll examine some flawed pieces of writing and try to determine which trap the author fell into.

There's more to writing than putting words on paper. Self-editing is an important step in getting your writing to its best. This presentation will kick off with some absolute basics: the difference between editing and proofreading, what editors expect out of a submission, and some simple pre-submission polishing techniques. We will then cover trickier areas where writers get subconsciously stuck as they fine-tune their work. In the last 20 minutes, we'll examine a few pieces of writing and discuss what the author could have done to improve the work.

Melissa McIvor is Editor-in-Chief and contributor to GLOBIS Insights, a business school online publication. She has worked as an editor for various large corporations in Tokyo, including Coca-Cola, Shiseido, Warner Bros. Japan, and Toshiba.

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Micah Tasaka, Yoshika Wason, and Michael Frazier

Beyond Borders: Creating Connective Writing Communities

Reading, Panel, and Q&A

In this presentation, we will discuss how to build international writing communities, utilize internet resources, and create publishing opportunities for one another. Ultimately, we want to explore the connective power of writing communities in our home countries and abroad while focusing on creating
mutual support and legitimacy for other writers.

While publishing is often thought of as written work being "accepted" by a publisher, we would like to question what publishing means and focus on how to build international communities that support and create opportunities for one another. Through this discussion, we seek to dismantle the scarcity complex that often surrounds publishing and find new ways to get our work in front of audiences by means of collaboration and community support while utilizing internet resources to extend our reach to a global scale. With backgrounds in both written and performance art, we would like to redefine publishing to be more inclusive and community based. By establishing communities that are willing to hear and experience one another's work, can we create space for more writers to be legitimized? In doing so, how can we ensure that those who exist in the margins are also heard from and not just established writers?

Micah Tasaka is a queer mixed Japanese poet and spoken word artist from the Inland Empire, California, residing in Fukui prefecture, Japan. They received their undergraduate degree in creative writing from the University of California, Riverside. Micah is a community organizer and has taught workshops on publishing manuscripts, poetry performance skills, and using poetry as healing for trauma survivors. Their first full length manuscript, Expansions, was released on Jamii Publishing in 2017, and their work has appeared in In the Words of Women, Name and None, and Nikkei Uncovered among others. www.micahtasaka.com

Yoshika Wason is a teacher and writer. She earned her BA from Boston College, where she was Editor in Chief of ASIAM, an Asian Pacific Islander American literary magazine. She is continuing her work in the API community through her current role as Co President of the Asian Pacific Islander Association for Japan Exchange and Teaching (API AJET.) Yoshika is working on her first full length poetry manuscript currently titled Second Chances for Fallen Blessed Children and also has a self published micro chapbook called Extra Bold. She currently writes a monthly education column called Today’s Lesson and has been published in Ghost City Review, Rice Paper Magazine, The Paper Napkin, and elsewhere. Learn more at www.yoshikawason.com

Michael Frazier graduated from NYU, where he was the 2017 Poet Commencement Speaker & College Union Poetry Slam Invitational Co-Champion. He has performed at venues such as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, & Gallatin Arts Festival. His poems appear in The Visual Poetry Project, Day One, The Speakeasy Project, & others. Catch him reading poems for The Adroit Journal & teaching SHS in Kanazawa.

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Michael Frazier

Haibun, Tanka, Pecha Kucha—Contemporary English-Language Poets &
Japanese Forms

Craft Workshop

This workshop focuses on the influences of unsung Japanese poetic forms on contemporary English language poetry and spoken word. We’ll watch and read haibun, pecha kucha, and tanka. We’ll discuss the forms and write our own poems using one of the forms. This generative workshop is open to writers of all genres.

In particular, we will look at less common forms (haibun & tanka) and newly-invented forms (Origami & Pecha Kucha). The Pecha Kucha, based on a Japanese business presentation style, was pioneered as a poetic form by American poet Terrance Hayes. It is this type of ingenuity this workshop is to focused on. In this workshop we will look at poems by writers of color who practice “re-approaching” by using Japanese forms like Aziza Barnes, Sonia Sanchez, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Amiri Baraka, and Terrance Hayes. We will discuss the content of their poems, why they used the form, and how they reinvented. Participants will be asked to choose a form and write something new in the workshop.

Michael Frazier graduated from NYU, where he was the 2017 Poet Commencement Speaker & College Union Poetry Slam Invitational Co-Champion. He has performed at venues such as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, & Gallatin Arts Festival. His poems appear in The Visual Poetry Project, Day One, The Speakeasy Project, & others. Catch him reading poems for The Adroit Journal & teaching SHS in Kanazawa.

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Mike (Michael) Guest

Merging Multiple Identities and the Marginalized Character in Fiction

Short lecture with Q&A

Characters with multiple identities are an increasing reality in both our increasing mobile and hybrid society and in fiction. In this presentation, based on his recently published novel ‘The Aggrieved Parties’, the presenter will suggest how fiction writers might tackle depicting such complex characters while avoiding stereotypes and sociopolitical polemics.

The notion of multiple, often competing, identities is not merely a feature of current socio-political discourse, it has always been an essential quality of being fully human. However, with increasing mobility, the world is gradually becoming populated with hyphenized-hybrid cultural and linguistic identities, a wider recognition of non-traditional sexual/gender identities, ‘third-culture children’, and people thrust into unfamiliar cultural milieus. As a result, such characters are now increasingly emerging in fiction, as in the presenter’s recently published

This, however, creates a writer’s dilemma: How do we depict or address such complexity without falling into the trap of pandering to stereotypes or using the characters as vehicles for our own socio-political pronouncements? Using examples from ‘The Aggrieved Parties’, plus thirty years’ experience living and traveling ‘abroad’, the presenter hopes to ignite a discussion as to how balance, sensitivity, and accuracy in pan-cultural fiction writing can best be achieved.

Biography: Mike Guest is Associate Professor of English in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Miyazaki. Besides twenty years’ worth of academic publications, Guest has also written two novels, the latest being ‘The Aggrieved Parties’. He also maintains an EFL blog, ‘Musings and Methods’, and a literary blog, ‘Honeyed Badger Feet’.

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Michael Pronko

Make Characters Sing--Sharpening Point of View

Short lecture with Q&A

This lecture and Q&A will go into specific techniques for sharpening the point of view and taking it more deeply into the character’s worldview, mindset and limitations in-scene by looking at examples and working with rewriting techniques.

This short talk with Q&A will dig into methods for expanding character by sharpening the point of view. By looking at examples from great writers and by examining how those examples help connect character to readers, attendees will be able to see how word choice, word excision, and phrasing can greatly influence the connection between reader and character. The talk will also examine how character POV supports the larger arc of the character. The talk will focus on specific scenes, but also consider point of view from the perspective of character change in successive scenes. The talk will also look at how multiple characters can provide an expansive ensemble set of viewpoints. Suggestions on how to rewrite and how to think when rewriting for POV will conclude the talk.

The first two Detective Hiroshi mystery novels, *The Last Train* and *The Moving Blade*, have won numerous awards, as have his three collections of creative non-fiction about Tokyo life. He has written for numerous publications and runs *Jazz in Japan* (www.jazzinjapan.com). He teaches American Literature at Meiji Gakuin University.

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Peter MacMillian
One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each: Translating the Poems, Reinventing the Game

The waka (tanka) anthology One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each (Hyakunin Isshu), was compiled by Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241). The collection remains an important part of Japanese literature. It is also the basis of a “karuda,” a party card game still popular in Japan.

Peter MacMillan’s translation was published in 2008, winning prizes in both Japan and the United States. This year he created Whack a Waka, the world’s first English karuta based on the One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each.

This talk will focus on the translation of the poems and the creation of the game.

There will also be an opportunity to play a round of the karuta under the guidance of its creator.

Peter MacMillan is a prize-winning translator, scholar, poet, and artist. In addition to creating prints, Dr. MacMillan is also a poet and translator. His translation, One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each (Hyakunin Isshu), was published in 2008, winning prizes in both Japan and the United States. His translation of The Tales of Ise (Ise Monogatari), which was published by Penguin in 2016. He has also published a collection of poetry entitled Admiring Fields. In 2018 a new translation of One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each (Hyakunin Isshu) was published by Penguin Books. In 2019 he created Whack a Waka, the world’s first English karuta based on One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each.

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Peter Jonathan Mallett

The Past is a Foreign Country: Writing Historical Fiction

Short lecture, workshop and discussion

Why write historical fiction and how do you do it? We will examine examples of novels set in the past by contemporary writers and the authors’ different reasons for writing about or creating history.

‘The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there,’ L.P. Hartley famously wrote in the opening lines of The Go Between. How do they ‘do things differently’ and how does a novelist show this in a work of historical fiction? Why would a novelist want to?

We will examine the methods used by contemporary writers such as Sarah Waters, J.G. Ballard, Richard Flanagan, Hilary Mantel, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan and Alan Hollinghurst to achieve a credible sense of period in their novels.
Winner of the 1st Writers in Kyoto Writing Contest and runner-up in the 2017 Scottish Arts Club Short Story Competition, Peter Mallett’s short stories have been published in the anthologies The Desperation Game and Other Stories and Eternal: Award Winning Short Stories, and online in The Font and East Lit. He has written for Kyoto Journal, The Asahi Evening News, Gramophone Japan, Opera News, The New Internationalist and others. He has an MA in Creative Writing (Bath Spa University) and is now writing a historical novel.

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Philip Rowland

Being Creatively Selective: Editorial Approach in Assembling a Poetry Collection

Short Lecture with discussion/Q&A

The presenter will draw on his experience of editing poetry collections to describe and discuss questions of editorial approach and decision-making. Several examples, chosen to highlight issues of poem-selection and arrangement, will be considered, in hopes of helping those wishing to edit their own poetry book projects more effectively.

Assembling and editing a book of poems — whether a collection of one’s own or an anthology — can be as creatively challenging and satisfying as the writing of the poems themselves. The presenter will draw on his experience of book, journal and anthology editing to describe and discuss questions of editorial approach and decision-making. When, for example, may less be more, in selecting poems for inclusion? What kinds of juxtaposition and layout can enhance a reading of the book as a whole? Attendees will be invited to consider several examples, chosen to highlight issues of poem-selection and arrangement. It is hoped that this presentation and discussion will inspire and help those wishing to edit their own poetry book projects more effectively.

Philip Rowland is the founding editor of NOON: journal of the short poem, editor of NOON: An Anthology of Short Poems (Isobar, 2019), and co-editor of the anthology Haiku in English: The First Hundred Years (Norton, 2013). His most recent poetry collection is Something Other Than Other (Isobar, 2016).

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Rebecca Otowa

Pictures to Words: Using the Photographs of John Einarsen as inspiration for Microfiction and Micropoetry

Writing Workshop
This will be a writing workshop in which participants will look at photographs by John Einarsen and use these as inspiration to experiment with writing microfiction and micropoetry.

Photographs by noted photographer and Kyoto Journal editor-in-chief John Einarsen will be shown on a projector by way of introduction. Smaller hard copies of the photographs will also be available for participants' use. Then various types of ultra-short fiction and micropoetry will be introduced. In the body of the workshop, participants will choose one or more photographs and experiment with writing short pieces using these as inspiration. At the end of the workshop participants may share their work if they wish.

Born in USA, grew up in Australia, moved to Japan in 1978, never left. Member by marriage of an old Japanese family and community in countryside southeast of Lake Biwa. Have worked as primary and University level teacher, writer and translator. Publications: At Home in Japan (Tuttle, 2010), My Awesome Japan Adventure (Tuttle, 2013), The Mad Kyoto Shoe Swapper and other Tales of Life in Japan (now in the works; Tuttle wants to publish it in 2020) Also bimonthly columns in Mainichi Weekly English newspaper (present), articles in Kyoto Journal, Chanoyu Quarterly, Eastern Buddhist etc. (past)

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Rosey Chang

Recasting your Inner Critic as a Fool

Experiential workshop

In this hands-on workshop, participants will consider the inner critic in terms of the super-ego, and be led through a short writing activity to recast their inner critic as a clown, fool or similar figure.

Writers can experience their inner critic as challenging and even debilitating. This workshop explores our inner critic by drawing on the concept of the super-ego from the tradition of psychoanalysis. The presenter will introduce Adam Phillips’ discussion of the super-ego as a means to potentially reframe our experiences with our inner critic. We will explore the super-ego—judge, internal critic, domineering parent—and its function “to protect and prohibit the individual from desires that endangered him (sic), or were presumed to”. We will consider Phillips’ metaphorical use of Don Quixote characters to recast the super-ego from judge to the role of Sancho Panza—“nitwit”, “clown”, or “fool”. Participants will be invited to engage in a writing activity to recast or otherwise occupy their own inner critic, which builds on the writing activity recommended by friend of JWC, David Gilbey, in 2018.

There will be time for discussion. Bring writing materials.


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She has also published in “TEXT”, “Peril”, and “Research Whisperer”. Rosey’s PhD research at Monash University, Melbourne, explores creative writers’ experiences of everyday anxieties in writing practice through the lens of mindfulness. She is developing a middle-grade novel.

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Sara Kate Ellis

From the Panel to the Page: Using Comic Books to Write Better Prose

It’s all fun and games dreaming up a duel on a space yacht, but putting one into words? Touché.

Where do you start? How do you start? Is swordplay harder in zero gravity? And how do you know what to add or leave out without either confusing readers or drowning them in details? Certainly writing and reading more helps, but an easier approach may lie in that hybrid stepchild of cinema and prose—the comic book. Comics, writes Scott McCloud, rely far more than cinema on reader agency, and closure is “anything but involuntary” dependent on the ability to draw inferences from what is and isn’t visible on the page. Using McCloud’s Understanding Comics (1993) as a guide, this presentation will look at how the composition and layout of comics provide helpful cues for prose writers to approach a scene, manage POVs, and express a mood or the passage of time. After comparing examples from both mediums, we’ll take part in a ‘panel to prose’ writing exercise before sharing our work.

Sara Kate Ellis is a 2011 Lambda Emerging Writers Fellow and Milford Science Fiction Workshop alum. Her fiction has appeared in Visions, Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine, Crossed Genres, and AE: Science Fiction and the Chaffey Review. She lives in Tokyo with an insatiable one-eyed flerken.

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SCBWI Japan

Brown Bag Lunch and Meeting

SCBWI Japan, the Japan regional chapter of The Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, offers illustrators, writers and translators of children’s and young adult literature throughout Japan support, information, and community. Although primarily an English-language organization, SCBWI Japan welcomes members of all nationalities based in Japan and holds events throughout the year in English and Japanese.

Bring your snack, meet members of this lively group, and learn what all they do.

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Stephen Mansfield

Visualizing Okinawa

Lecture with slides. Short Q&A.

What makes Okinawa such a good subject for writers and photographers? A garrison island that is also a tourist resort, Okinawa is the most politicized region of Japan. This presentation will examine issues of identity against a backdrop of military occupation as they relate to writers. Okinawa’s unique culture, its landscape, climate and flora all provide material for people profiles, and pieces on travel, food, music, textiles, political commentary, and many other topics and issues. I will be sharing my own experiences of publishing work on Okinawa and the successes and failures encountered in this process. I will also talk about the specific writing techniques and styles applied to different themes. This will include photo caption writing, a skill in itself.

Stephen Mansfield is a British photojournalist and author based in Japan. Early photographic projects included photo-essays on London street life and a six-week stint covering the civil war in Lebanon. His work has appeared in numerous magazines, newspapers and journals worldwide. He has had twenty books published to date. Themes have varied from travel, ethnology, food, architecture, cultural geography, book reviewing and music, to Japanese garden design.

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Steve McClure

The Art of the Interview

Short lecture with Q&A

This session offers practical tips about how to prepare for an interview, how to conduct one and how to use the material collected.

Background research, preparing a list of questions, using a recorder, avoiding interview faux pas, staying in control of an interview, etiquette, using an interpreter, are some of the topics to be covered.

Steve McClure is a Canadian writer, editor and narrator who has lived in Japan since 1985. He has written for many publications and worked as an editor at various news organizations during his career, most notably as Billboard magazine’s Japan/Asia bureau chief from 1991 until 2008.

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Steven Wolfson
The Art of Superstructure: Finding the Essential Turning Points in Your Story

Lecture

One of the greatest challenges facing all writers is the process of developing an engaging premise into a compelling, well-structured story. This workshop explores the art of superstructure, those essential narrative turning points that have held together great stories since Shakespeare and The Greeks. From your opening scene to midpoint to your story’s emotionally engaging climax, you will learn how each of these critical scenes work in synthesis with one another and in the process avoid the pitfalls of the poorly structured story. The final goal of the workshop is a greater understanding of what holds any great story together and a set of tools that participants can immediately apply to their current work.

Steven Wolfson has taught screenwriting, playwriting and creative writing at The Writers Program at UCLA for the past 20 years. He has been awarded The Outstanding Instructor of the Year award twice, in both screenwriting and creative writing.

As a screenwriter, Wolfson has sold projects to Fox, Lions Gate, TNT, MTV, Langley Entertainment, Beacon Films and producer Arnold Rifkin. Wolfson wrote the independent romantic comedy, Dinner and Driving, which premiered at The Austin Film Festival, won audience awards at several film festivals, and was sold to HBO. He wrote and co-produced the critically acclaimed Lionsgate feature, Gang Tapes, a drama set in South Central Los Angeles. Gang Tapes played to sold out audiences at film festivals in both The United States and Europe.

Wolfson is a founding member of the Mark Taper Forum's Mentor Playwrights Project. His original plays have been produced and workshopped at The Mark Taper Forum, Taper Too, The Getty Museum, Cornerstone Theater Company, The Virginia Avenue Project and The Geffen Contemporary. His most recent play, The Absence of Wanting, premiered in Berlin.

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Suzanne Kamata

Wheelchair User or Wheelchair-bound?: Representations of Persons with Disabilities in Children’s Books

Short lecture with Q & A

In this session, I will discuss positive and problematic representations of persons with using examples from recently published Japanese textbooks and literature featuring children in Japan and other countries, including my own work, with a view to developing better awareness.
With the approach of the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, people with disabilities in Japan have been given more attention than perhaps ever before. English textbooks for Japanese children now frequently include stories about or representations of people with disabilities. Worldwide, initiatives such as #weneeddiversebooks and the call for #ownvoices have led to an increase of children’s and young adult books featuring characters with disabilities. That said, some of these representations, and the way that they are discussed remain problematic. When do stories about disability become “inspiration porn”? What kind of language should we use when discussing disability? Who has the right to tell these stories? In this session, I will address these questions, using examples from recently published Japanese textbooks and literature featuring children in Japan and other countries, including my own work.

Suzanne Kamata is the award-winning author or editor of twelve published books including Love You to Pieces: Creative Writers on Raising a Child with Special Needs (Beacon Press, 2008), Gadget Girl: The Art of Being Invisible (GemmaMedia, 2013), A Girls’ Guide to the Islands (Gemma Open Door, 2017), Squeaky Wheels: Travels with My Daughter by Train, Plane, Metro, Tuk-tuk and Wheelchair (Wyatt-Mackenzie Publishing, 2019), and Indigo Girl (GemmaMedia, 2019). She is an Associate Professor at Naruto University of Education.

Todd Jay Leonard

Publishing in the EFL Market in Japan: Four Perspectives on How to Make your Proposal Count

Short lecture with Q & A

This presentation will outline the current publishing market in Japan for EFL/ESL textbooks by reviewing the various points of views of the publishing industry. The presenter has published extensively within the ESL/EFL field in Japan and will offer helpful advice to budding authors who wish to pursue projects geared to Japan's domestic market.

What are publishers looking for in the current market? What appeals to editors who ultimately decide? What are the salespeople on the front lines hearing from their market? What must an author do in order to get his/her book published?

This presentation focuses on these very questions. associated with EFL publishing.

Todd Jay Leonard has been actively involved in book publishing for thirty years and has published twenty books. He lives, writes, and teaches on the southern island of Kyushu, where he is a university professor at University of Teacher Education Fukuoka. He has published extensively in academic journals, magazines, and newspapers on cross-cultural, historical, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) themes.
Warren Decker

Publishing Haiku in English

Craft workshop with practical publishing information

In the first half of this session I will present information about how to submit haiku to leading English-language haiku journals. In the second half, participants will share their own haiku and offer feedback to others.

This presentation is intended for anyone interested in publishing haiku in English. I will introduce some of the leading journals for English-language haiku including Frogpond, Modern Haiku, and Acorn, providing information about when and how to submit your haiku. We will also have a chance to share our haiku and offer each other feedback to get our haiku prepared for submission to a journal. All participants are asked to bring five to ten haiku that they are hoping to publish.

Warren Decker is an associate professor at Momoyama Gakuin University of Education. His haiku have appeared or are forthcoming in Frogpond, Modern Haiku, and Fifth Wednesday Journal. His triolet appears in The Best American Poetry 2018. He also published fiction and nonfiction.

Wendy Jones Nakanishi (aka Lea O’Harra)

‘How Writers Write

I will present a short overview of how writers write: their methodology of getting pen to paper — or fingers to keyboard — to produce short stories and novels. I will look at a few representative authors — mainly from Britain and America, concentrating mostly on writers in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Wendy Jones Nakanishi, an American by birth, has been resident in Japan for the past 35 years, employed full-time at a private Japanese university. She has published widely in her academic field of English literature and also writes creative non-fiction and short stories. In recent years, under the pen name of Lea O’Harra, she has published three crime fiction novels in her so-called ‘Inspector Inoue Mystery Series’.

Yoko Danno, Jane Joritz-Nakagawa, Goro Takano

Poetry reading with Q & A
Poets Yoko Danno, Jane Joritz-Nakagawa and Goro Takano will each read a short selection of their poetry. Each poet will read for approximately 12 minutes. Subsequently there will be a question and answer session with the audience.

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa has published over a dozen books and chapbooks of poetry including <<terrain grammar>> (theenk Books, 2018) and Poems: New and Selected (Isobar, 2018).

Goro Takano published three poetry collections through BlazeVOX (NY): Responsibilities of the Obsessed, Silent Whistle-Blowers, and Non Sequitur Syndrome. On Lost Sheep, Takano’s translation of the works of the Japanese modernism poet Shiro Murano, was published through Tinfish (HI). Takano’s first Japanese-only poetry collection was published this year.