

# Power of Language at Creative Writing Festival



The 2024 release of *The Swift*, a student-run literary journal, included readings by authors featured in the publication.

Whether you're a seasoned writer or just love the written word, Clark College invites you to find inspiration, connection, and creativity at its annual Creative Writing Festival, taking place May 27–31. Free and open to the public, this week-long festival includes engaging readings, conversations, and workshops led by acclaimed authors—all designed to spark your imagination and grow your craft.

The festival wraps up with the popular Clark Spring Creative Writing Workshop on Saturday, May 31, featuring a full day of interactive sessions for writers of all backgrounds.

All events will be in the Penguin Union Building (PUB) on Clark College's main campus, 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver. Directions and maps are available online.



The Columbia Writers Series brings acclaimed writers to Clark College three times a year.

## Creative Writing Festival Schedule:

**May 27, 10 am–Noon, PUB258:**

Reading & Conversation with New York Times bestselling young adult and adult fiction author Emiko Jean

**May 28, 10 am–Noon, PUB161:**

*"The Swift"* release party with student readings and a celebration of the publication of the third edition of Clark's student-run literary journal

**May 29, 10–11 am, PUB258:**

Columbia Writers Series Fiction Reading: Chelsea Bieker

**May 29, 3-4 pm, Cannell Library:**

Book release celebration for Clark Professor Gerry Smith's collaborative project *Coyote and Bear Discuss Modern Art*

**May 30, 11am–Noon, PUB258:**

Yoga for Creativity

**May 31, 10 am–5 pm, Penguin Union Building:**

Spring Writing Workshop: A full day of writing workshops, readings, and community building. Includes free lunch, coffee, and pastries. **Reserve your free tickets here.**

*Clark College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution. Learn more at [www.clark.edu/nds](http://www.clark.edu/nds). If you need accommodation due to a disability in order to fully participate in this event, please contact Clark College's Human Resources Office. Phone: 360-992-2105 or email: [hr@clark.edu](mailto:hr@clark.edu).*



## Writing Workshop

**Opening Remarks by Susan Dingle**, the current Clark County Poet Laureate. Dingle earned a master's degree in creative writing from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the author of two books: *In Pilgram Drag*, published by Finishing Line Press and *Parting Gifts*, published by Local Gems. Dingle

earned a Master of Social Work degree at SUNY Stony Brook University and is a licensed clinical social worker and alcohol and substance abuse counselor.

**Workshop: Letters and Poems, Poems and Letters with Jeff Alessandrelli**, a writer and editor living in Portland. *The Kenyon Review* called his most recent poetry collection *Fur Not Light* “an example of radical humility.” Jeff Alessandrelli is the author of the novel *And Yet*. In addition to his writing Jeff also directs and co-edits the non-profit record label/book press Fonograf Editions.

**Workshop: Writing with Ghosts in the Archival Machine with Katy Anastasi** (she/her), a Reference & Instruction Librarian at Clark College and a graduate student at Eastern Oregon University’s MFA in Creative Writing program. In this generative, open-genre craft workshop, participants will explore various library and archival materials with sensitivity to ghosts in the archival machine.

**Workshop: Writing the Magical, Writing the Real: On Making Magical Stories Believable with Emme Lund**, an author living and writing in Portland, OR. She has an MFA from Mills College. Her debut novel, *The Boy with a Bird in His Chest* (Atria Books, 2022) was longlisted for the First Novel Prize from the Center For Fiction, was a finalist for an Oregon Book Award, was named a best book of the year by *Buzzfeed* and *The Portland Mercury*, and was included on lists in *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *People Magazine*, *The Advocate*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Shondaland*.

**Workshop: Talk Short to Me with Elena Passarello**, whose essays on performance, pop culture, and the natural world have been translated into six languages. Her recent work appears in the *New York Times Book Review*, *Paris Review*, *Audubon* and *Best American Science and Nature Writing*. She is the author of two collections, the most recent of which, *Animals Strike Curious Poses*, was a *New York Times* Editor’s Choice. Her next book,

about the spotty legacy of Elvis Presley, is forthcoming from Penguin Press in 2027. You can hear Elena every week on the nationally syndicated public radio program *Live Wire!* This class works through a few of Carson's short talks and closes with a generative prompt to get you started on a Talk of your own.

**Workshop: 'As You Know, Captain...' Avoiding Infodump in Speculative Fiction with Joe Pitkin.** Pitkin has lived, taught, and studied in England, Hungary, Mexico, and at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington. His short stories have appeared in *The Boston Review*, *Analog*, *Black Static*, *Cosmos*, and other magazines and podcasts, as well as on his blog, *The Subway Test*. *Stranger Bird*, his first novel, was published in 2017; his most recent novel, *Exit Black*, was published by Blackstone last year.

**Workshop: Character Development: A Generative Tarot Writing Journey with Selah Saterstrom**, the author of the innovative novels *Slab*, *The Meat and Spirit Plan*, and *The Pink Institution*, as well as two nonfiction collections, *Rancher* and the award-winning *Ideal Suggestions: Essays in Divinatory Poetics*. Selah Saterstrom is the co-founder of Four Queens Divination, an online platform dedicated to the intersection of creative writing and divinatory arts, where she offers classes and mentorship.

**Workshop: Zenyatta Mondatta with Ed Skoogm**, the author of four collections of poetry, *Mister Skylight*, *Rough Day*, *Run the Red Lights*, and *Travelers Leaving for the City*. His poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The New Republic*, *American Poetry Review*, and the *Best American Poetry* series. This generative poetry workshop will focus on how poems can sound amazing and memorable, with language that resonates before it even means.

**Workshop: Poetry and Art: Ekphrastic Poetry with Gerald Donnelly Smith**, who has published poems in various literary

journals including *The Adirondack Review*, *hummingbird*, *River Wind*, *Icon*, and *Talking Leaves* as well as the anthologies *War* (Green Haven, 2007), *The X-Y Experience* (2001), and *Playing with a Full Deck*. He served as the director of the Columbia Writers Series at Clark College for seven years. In this workshop, we will review the different methods for writing poetry about artwork, focusing on painting. We will briefly discuss example poems about Van Gogh's "Starry Night."

**Workshop: Multidisciplinary Workshop: Reading & Writing with Images by Dao Strom**, a poet, musician, writer, and interdisciplinary artist who works with three "voices"—written, sung, visual—to explore hybridity and the intersection of personal and collective histories. She is the author/composer of several hybrid-literary works, including the poetry-art collection, *INSTRUMENT*, and its musical companion of song-poems, *TRAVELER'S ODE*, and the forthcoming *TENDER REVOLUTIONS/YELLOW SONGS* (2025). Recently, she co-edited/co-curated the hybrid-literary anthology + exhibit *A MOUTH HOLDS MANY THINGS* (2024). Strom's work encompasses both solo and collaborative art and writing projects, and has received support from the Creative Capital Foundation, NEA, Oregon Community Foundation, and others.

**Workshop: Five Kinds of Trouble by Dr. Tara Williams** (she/her), who earned her MFA in Fiction at Fresno State University. She also holds a master's and doctorate in education. Currently she teaches composition and literature courses at Clark. Her literary work has appeared in *Southwest Review*, *Tales of the Fantastic*, *Fatal Flaw*, and other publications, and her short stories have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. An excerpt from her novel-in-progress won an honorable mention for the Plentitudes Prize, and an audio adaptation of one of her short stories took second place in *Sycamore Review's* Deanna Tulley Multimedia Contest. Her work is also included in the climate fiction anthology *Fire & Water: Stories of the*

*Anthropocene* (Black Lawrence Press, 2021).

**Workshop: The Poetry of Memoir by Jane Wong**, the author of the memoir *Meet Me Tonight in Atlantic City* (Tin House, 2023), winner of the Washington State Book Award. She also wrote two poetry collections: *How to Not Be Afraid of Everything* (Alice James, 2021) and *Overpour* (Action Books, 2016). She is the recipient of a Pushcart Prize and fellowships and residencies from the U.S. Fulbright Program, Harvard's Woodberry Poetry Room, Artist Trust, Hedgebrook, Ucross, Loghaven, the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, and others. An interdisciplinary artist as well, she has exhibited her poetry installations and performances at the Frye Art Museum, Richmond Art Gallery, and the Asian Art Museum. She grew up in a take-out restaurant on the Jersey shore and is an Associate Professor at Western Washington University.

### **Learn More**

- **Creative Writing Festival** – May 27-31:  
<https://www.clark.edu/about/arts-events/cwf/>
- **Writing Workshop** – Saturday, May 31:  
<https://www.clark.edu/academics/programs/dept/english/writingworkshop.php>Registration for the Writing Workshop only:<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/clark-college-spring-writing-workshop-tickets-1075675828359>