



How to Be A Better Writer

Conversations about Writing and Publishing at the Bay Area Book Festival

Saturday, April 28

10:00 - 11:15 **The Book Review: Top Reviewers Share How It's Done**

Lydia Kiesling, Paul Laity, John McMurtrie, Ismail Muhammad, Jane Ciabattari

What makes for a good book review? How about a good book reviewer, for that matter? How are books chosen for review, and reviewers chosen for a particular book? How can a reviewer best express what might be evangelical zeal (as John Green puts it) for a book—and when and how should a "bad" book be panned? (Or is it better to just not review it at all?) This panel of esteemed reviewers takes us inside the process: Lydia Kiesling, editor of the literary website The Millions; Paul Laity, non-fiction reviewer at The Guardian; Ismail Muhammad, reviewer for The Millions and contributor to Slate and the Paris Review; and Jane Ciabattari, reviewer for the BBC, and current vice president (and former president) of the National Book Critics Circle.

10:00 - 11:15 **California College of the Arts Presents: The Modern Writer's Practice**

Faith Adiele, Tonya Foster, Aimee Phan, Leslie Carol Roberts, Tom Barbash

Writers shoulder a responsibility to serve as voices for their time. They seek ways to narrate, philosophize, and ponder what it means to be human as the world fluctuates dramatically around them. Translating the complex world—inner and outer change—into words is no easy task. This panel of faculty from CCA's MFA in Writing program embraces writers with diverse practices across travel, memoir, fiction, and poetry to interrogate the role of creative practice in the 21st century.

10:00 - 11:15 **Pep Talk for Writers!**

Grant Faulkner, Brooke Warner

"The world needs your novel." That's the tagline of National Novel Writing Month, the nonprofit literary phenomenon run by Grant Faulkner. NaNoWriMo now boasts approximately 400,000 participants who pledge to write a full novel in a month (they each write their own book—made up of at least 50,000 words—each November). Some highly successful works have come out of the initiative, including Sara Gruen's "Water for Elephants" and Rainbow Rowell's "Fangirl." Faulkner appears in

person with Brooke Warner, publisher of She Writes Press, president of Warner Coaching Inc., and author of "Green-Light Your Book," to talk about how to turn inspiration into a tangible product. This session is a must-see for anyone who believes they have a book in them.

11:15 - 12:45 **The Power of History: Turning Groundbreaking Scholarship into Page-Turning**

Prose

Edward L. Ayers, Peter Cozzens, Joel Richard Paul, T. J. Stiles, Steve Wasserman

Is best-selling history bad history? Does good history have to be dull reading? Four award-winning historians and biographers talk about the big questions of American history and reveal how they explore them through captivating narratives that win esteem in the academy yet appeal to wide audiences. Bancroft and Lincoln prize winner Edward Ayers (whose many works focus on the Civil War and Reconstruction), Gilder Lehrman Military History Prize winner Peter Cozzens (most recently "The Earth Is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West"), Pulitzer and National Book Award laureate T.J. Stiles (most recently "Custer's Trials: A Life on a Frontier of New America" and "The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt"), and Hastings Law Professor Joel Richard Paul (most recently "Without Precedent: Chief Justice John Marshall and His Times") talk with Steve Wasserman, executive director of Heyday Books, former editor at Yale University Press, and former book review editor of the Los Angeles Times.

4:45 - 6:00 **The Future of Publishing**

Emily Bell, Niels Hooper, Elaine Katzenberger, Avalon Radys, Brooke Warner

Back by popular demand: an informed, freewheeling discussion for aspiring and published authors, as well as anyone curious about the state of book publishing in 2018. Panelists Emily Bell (senior editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux), Elaine Katzenberger (Publisher of City Lights), Niels Hooper (Executive Editor of the University of California Press), and Avalon Radys (Director, Marketing & Publishing Operations of InkShares), with moderator Brooke Warner (Publisher, She Writes Press) represent the many faces of publishing—from big house to small, university press to hybrid, traditional and non-traditional alike. They'll consider Amazon's expansion, the state of the traditional book industry, the biggest changes happening in publishing today, and ways the political climate affects what publishers are acquiring—and therefore what we're reading.

5:00 - 6:00 **Who's Your Muse?**

Victoria Chang, Tongo Eisen-Martin, Brittany Perham, David Roderick, Maw Shein Win

Poetry can be difficult for some readers to digest, with its interwoven layers of meaning, lyricism, rhythm, and context. Even more difficult to appreciate is how these poems come to be. Five poets come together to discuss the origins of their poems—energies they tap into and methods they use to get the right words into the right order. They'll talk about how they handle writers block and how they know when a poem is heading in the most fruitful direction. Perhaps they'll also share some writing prompts that will help you find your own source of inspiration.

Sunday, April 29

3:15 - 4:30 **University of San Francisco Presents Writing and Risk: A Conversation with
Laleh Khadivi and Michael David Lukas**

Laleh Khadivi, Michael David Lukas, Bich Minh Nguyen

To write is to take risks: with words, with voice, with subject matter. The process of writing something daring doesn't end with publication—authors have to live with the consequences of taking these risks, personally and socially. Laleh Khadivi, author of "A Good Country," and Michael David Lukas, author of "The Last Watchman of Old Cairo," both faculty in USF's MFA in Writing program, talk with writer and program director Beth Nguyen about risky writing and the questions writers never seem to get (or don't get enough). They invite audience members to ask their own risky questions.

3:15 - 4:30 **Books y Libros: A Talk with Spanish and Bilingual Children's Books Writers,
Illustrators and Publishers**

Maya Christina Gonzalez, Robert Liu-Trujillo, Heather Robertson-Devine, Aida Salazar, Jennifer Torres, Maceo Cabrera Estévez

As borders tighten and DREAMers await their future, there are children who need to find themselves in the books they read. Is having brown and black skinned characters in books enough? In the age of Trump and Time's Up, how can bilingual and Spanish children's books in the US make an impact in our society? Can they help create a world where borders cannot be closed off? Children's book writers, illustrators, and publishers discuss why they create books that are geared towards a Latinx audience.