

- 1) **Event Title:** *Mentors Discuss the AWP Writer-to-Writer Mentorship Program*
- 2) **Event Description:** The AWP Writer-to-Writer Mentorship program matches writers in one-on-one working relationships and provides opportunities for mentors to share writing, editing, and publishing experience. Mentors will discuss their program experiences, explore why this diverse program may be a viable alternative to an MFA program, and offer advice for prospective applicants. They will also explore similarities and differences between traditional workshop teaching and one-on-one mentorship.
- 3) **Event Category:** Artistic and Professional Stewardship
- 4) **Event Organizer:** Paul Pedroza
- 5) **Event Moderator:** Paul Pedroza
- 6) **Event Participants & short bios:**

Moderator: Paul Pedroza

Bio: Paul Pedroza is the author of the story collection, *The Dead Will Rise and Save Us*. His poetry and fiction have appeared in *Rattle* and *MAKE: A Chicago Magazine*. Currently, he is completing his first novel.

Initial Remarks: I served as a mentor for the first time during the second season of the W2W Mentorship Program after learning about the program when it was initially launched. At the time, I was working for New Mexico State University as an adjunct instructor and was interested in the one-on-one, potentially long-term writing relationship with someone who, for whatever reason, wasn't interested in applying for or couldn't pursue an MFA degree. The potential for an experience

much different from the traditional workshop pedagogical formula appealed to me, and I appreciated that a mentorship program would welcome “non-traditional” writers who’ve set off on less common paths towards publication. I am currently serving my third term as a W2W mentor.

Participant: Lex Williford

Bio: Lex Williford won the Iowa Short Fiction Award and the Rose Metal Chapbook Contest. Coeditor of the Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction and Touchstone Anthology of Contemporary Nonfiction, he teaches at UTEP. His novella, *Balsa and Tissue Paper*, is a Ploughshares Solo Oct. 2019.

Participant: Eileen Cronin

Bio: Eileen Cronin’s *Mermaid*, translated in 3 languages, was one of *O Magazine*’s Best Memoirs of the Year. She’s held fellowships with Vermont Studio Center and American Psychological Association. She won the Washington Writing Prize in fiction. She’s a writing instructor and a psychologist at UCLA.

Participant: James Tate Hill

Bio: James Tate Hill is the author of *Academy Gothic*, winner of the Nilse Prize for a First Novel. His work has appeared in *Literary Hub*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Waxwing*, and *Hobart*, among others. He is the fiction editor for *Monkeybicycle*

and a contributing editor for Lit Hub, where he writes a monthly audiobooks column.

Initial Remarks:

7) Moderator Questions

1. Although our writing and publishing goals, as AWP attendees, may be similar, our origin stories as writers are unique. How did you come to writing, or how did it come to you? What do you now wish you had done, early on, to accomplish your goals?
2. No writer succeeds in a vacuum. Why is seeking mentoring relationships important for a writer, and what direct and indirect benefits do mentees gain from them?
3. Why did you decide to serve as a mentor in AWP's Writer-to-Writer Program?
4. The one-on-one mentoring dynamic of the program has facilitated a good deal of growth for many mentors who have participated over the previous eleven seasons. Can you share some of your W2W experiences and anything you've learned about mentoring, writing, etc. from your mentees?
5. For those with traditional workshop teaching experience, whether at a university or in your community, can you compare this experience with a one-on-one, possibly long-term mentoring relationship? Did it require you to adapt as an instructor, and if so, how?
6. How does being an AWP mentor differ, say, from being an MFA thesis advisor? What kind of work must you do to help prepare a student to write a thesis, then prepare it for publication, and how might a mentee's experience be different?

7. How much of a long-term commitment do you make to advising mentees, helping them find reading lists, recommended books about discussions of craft, advice about artist residencies and writing conferences, etc. as well as marketing advice for publication in literary magazines, with agents and publishers?
8. The W2W Program is growing every season. The previous season, our eleventh, featured 44 mentor-mentee pairings, our largest ever. Do you have any advice for prospective mentees who'd like to produce strong applications and writing samples that might stand out in a large, competitive pool? How can one know when it's the right time to apply in terms of their development as a writer? How can W2W's commitment to diversity benefit underrepresented writers?