

Worry About It Later: Strategies to Finish What You Start

Event Outline

[Kendra Fortmeyer](#), [Amy Gentry](#), [Sarah Kokernot](#), [Juan Martinez](#), and [Christine Sneed](#)

Panelist intros

1. Christine Sneed is the faculty director of Northwestern University's graduate writing program in the School of Professional Studies. Her most recent book is *The Virginity of Famous Men*, and her stories have appeared in *The Best American Short Stories*, *O. Henry Prize Stories*, and various literary journals including *Ploughshares* and *Glimmer Train*.
2. Sarah Kokernot's fiction has appeared in *The Best American Short Stories*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Front Porch*, *West Branch*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *decomp*, and *PANK*. She lives in Chicago and is the Program Curator at StoryStudio.
3. Kendra Fortmeyer is the prose editor for *Broad! Magazine* with an MFA in fiction from the New Writers Project at UT Austin. Her stories have appeared in *One Story*, *Black Warrior Review*, *The Literary Review*, *The Toast*, and elsewhere, and her debut novel was published from Little, Brown in 2017.
4. Amy Gentry is the author of thrillers *Good as Gone* and *Last Woman Standing*, as well as *Boys for Pele*, a book on the gendered experience of taste. She has a PhD in English from the University of Chicago, and her criticism has appeared in the *Paris Review*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *LA Review of Books*.
5. Juan Martinez is an assistant professor at Northwestern University. *Best Worst American*, his story collection, was released in 2017, and his work has appeared in *Huizache*, *Glimmer Train*, *McSweeney's*, *Ecotone*, *Selected Shorts*, and elsewhere.

Questions (1/3 of the time)

- What have you just started that you're planning on finishing? What are you finishing right now? What was the last thing you finished?
- What's the hardest thing about finishing?
- What's the hardest thing you've finished?
- What did you give up on that you're glad you did?
- What did you all give up on that you regret?
- How do you know when something is worth it?
- Is it really difficult all the time? What about moments when everything is working?
- What you've done when nothing feels like it's going right?
- How do we balance critical distance and creative enthusiasm?

Strategies second? Tips? ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the time)

- Handwriting
- Allowing for sloppiness
- Outlining
- Passes
- Pomodoro
- Morning v. evening / “windows,” e.g. how to write in the interstices

Allow for questions and audience strategies ($\frac{1}{3}$ of the time)