**EVENT TITLE: “BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS: TEACHING ONLINE CREATIVE WRITING.”**

**EVENT DESCRIPTION:** Four accomplished, diverse writers who teach creative writing online confront the challenges of remote courses and programs, offering experiences, assignments, and best practices that meet the specific needs of online writing students and help these learners to succeed and soar. Panelists provide valuable takeaways for writers considering remote education, for curriculum designers, and for the growing number of faculty who will choose or need (for the same reasons as students) to teach online.

**PARTICIPANTS**:

**Silas Hansen** is an assistant professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, where he teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in creative writing and literary publishing, and is the nonfiction editor for *Waxwing*. His essays have appeared in Slate, *Colorado Review*, the *Normal School*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Redivider*, *Puerto del Sol*, and elsewhere.

After years of teaching students of all ages in public and private schools, **Elane Johnson** began teaching college English and creative writing the day National University conferred her M.F.A. in creative nonfiction with distinction. Elane has designed online-course curricula and departmental policy as a team lead. Her award-winning nonfiction and fiction have appeared in literary journals, magazines, anthologies, newspapers, and college curricula across the U.S. and internationally. She currently teaches creative writing for Gotham Writers’ Workshop and hosts the Witty Biddy Vlog on DeafChick.com.

**Jason McCall** holds an MFA from the University of Miami. He is an Alabama native, and he teaches at the University of North Alabama. His collections include *Two-Face God*; *Dear Hero,*; *Silver*; *A Man Ain’t Nothin’*; *Mother, Less Child*; and *I Can Explain*. He and P.J. Williams are co-editors of *It Was Written: Poetry Inspired by Hip-Hop*.

**Oindrila Mukherjee** is Associate Professor of Writing at Grand Valley State University, where she piloted an online version of the multi-genre Introduction to Creative Writing course for the 6-week spring/summer session a few years ago. This semester, she is teaching a completely online 15-week version of the class for the first time. She also teaches fiction workshops and magazine writing. She is currently doing edits on a novel. Her work has been published in *Kenyon Review*, *The Colorado Review*, *Salon*, *The Oxford Anthology of Bengali Literature*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and elsewhere. She has written several pieces on books and tennis for the Indian magazine *Scroll* and is a contributing editor for the journal *Aster(ix)*.

**OPENING REMARKS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Welcome to “Beyond the Classroom Walls: Teaching Online Creative Writing.” A few reminders before we begin:**

* We have a few accessibility copies of our panel outline available, so if you need to follow along with written text, please let me know and I can bring a copy to you.
* Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
* Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.
* Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing perfume.
* Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone’s use of an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.
* We realize the lines for the bathrooms may be long, but please refrain from using an accessible stall unless you require such accommodation. Please also be aware family restrooms located on level 2 are reserved for those with disabilities or those wishing to use a single-stall restroom.
* If you have any questions or concerns regarding conference accessibility, please call or text the **Accessibility Hotline (503) 455-4127** or email [**events@awpwriter.org**](mailto:events@awpwriter.org).

**Silas Hansen**: I will be talking about turning an intermediate nonfiction class that I regularly teach in person during a standard 16-week semester into an online, 5-week summer course. I’ve taught it online three times now and had to make significant changes to how I handled students’ preparation for discussion, workshop, and “participation” grades. I will also be talking about how these experiences have changed the way I teach creative writing in-person, too.

**Elane Johnson**: I will discuss the opportunity that online education affords to students/faculty who may not otherwise be able to enroll or teach without such an option. F2F education is not an optimum choice for a large portion of the current student body and for many faculty members—non-traditional students and faculty include working parents/guardians; caregivers; individuals with disabilities, injuries, social anxiety, mental health or other health issues; and individuals without geographical access to colleges/universities. My own progressive hearing loss ultimately made teaching F2F classes impossible. The advent of quality online educational programs gave me back my teaching career and the confidence to earn an M.F.A. I’ll also discuss other ways that online education benefits millions of students and teachers such as by facilitating inclusivity; strengthening students’ and faculty members’ written communication skills and comprehension/following directions/critical thinking skills; and allowing lasting connections/bonds that could not exist in F2F classes.

**Jason McCall**: I will discuss how the online creative writing classroom eliminates some of the worst elements (abuses related to issues such as social and economic class, race, gender, educational experiences) of the face-to-face creative writing classroom. I believe the online creative writing classroom has the potential to lessen these abuses and to create a more democratic space for all students.

**Oindrila Mukherjee**: I will talk about the supposed lack of personal interaction that a lot of instructors resist about teaching online, especially something like creative writing. Questions I want to address: Is it important for a creative writing class to retain a personal connection (between students, between student and instructor)? And if so, how do we make an online course feel more personal? Are there any advantages to being less personal?