The Stages of Writing & Publishing Memoir Panel

1) event title: The Stages of Writing & Publishing Memoir

2) event description:
There is no correct or unique way to write or publish memoirs as fragments of our lives. The memoirists in this panel will discuss their diverse processes in the publishing industry. From cooking-themed to realistic-paintings and borderlands memoirs — this group of writers brings a collage of stages of writing by discussing how one can start crafting a memoir or a nonfiction piece. How to know when it should be fiction or CNF? Why are our stories relevant? And how can they be published?

3) event category: Nonfiction Craft & Criticism

4) & 5) event organizer & moderator:
Ofelia Montelongo is a bilingual writer from Mexico. She has a MBA in Strategic Leadership & a MA in Latin American Literature. Her work has been published in The Rumpus, Latino Book Review, Los Acentos Review, and elsewhere. She was a 2019 Writer’s Center Fellow. She currently teaches at the University of Maryland and is a PEN/Faulkner writer in residence, a Macondista & a PEN America Emerging Voices Fellow. Tin House, VONA, Key West Seminar alumna.

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6) event participants and short biographies

Annabelle Tometich spent 18 years as a journalist, food writer and restaurant critic in South Florida. Her debut memoir The Mango Tree comes out April 2 from Little, Brown. She wrote restaurant reviews under a Frenchman’s pen name for 15 years before revealing herself as a Filipina woman in 2021.

Margaret Juhae Lee is an Oakland-based writer and a former editor at *The Nation* magazine. Her book, *Starry Field: A Memoir of Lost History* (Melville House), chronicles her search for information about her grandfather who was student revolutionary in colonial Korea and will be published in March 2024.

Sarah Chaves is a Portuguese-American writer, editor, and educator based in Boston, MA. She has received fellowships from PEN America, Bread Loaf, Fulbright, Disquiet, and more. Her work has been featured in *The Atlantic, The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and *Teen Vogue* among others.

**Introduction remarks:**

Welcome to “The Stages of Writing & Publishing Memoir” panel. A few reminders before we begin:

• For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let us know and a printed copy will be delivered 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 scented products.
• 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.

**Other remarks:**

Our panelists today are all women from minority groups. Our objective is to help each other to debunk and decentralize information unavailable to us. We want to answer questions like: Are book proposals still a thing? If so, how famous do I need to be published? Who has the right to tell a story? What voices should be listened to? Is our story good enough for a story? Should my story be a memoir or a collection of essays? We want to fill the gap regarding the lack of info about publication.
Annabelle Tometich’s remarks:

Hyeseung Song’s remarks:

Margaret Juhae Lee’s remarks:

Sarah Chaves’s remarks:

Moderator questions:

- What challenges did you encounter when publishing your memoir?
- As a nonfiction writer, what role does imagination play in your writing? How often do you call your work autofiction vs. nonfiction?
- Questions about memory