

The Loft's Poetry Apprenticeship 2025 - Summer Start

led by Danez Smith
Via Zoom | all times listed in US Central Time
Wednesdays & Saturdays | 6-9 PM CST
Starting June 11, 2025

Participants will meet weekly as a cohort during the summer (8 weeks; June-July), biweekly with additional Saturday meetings during the late summer months (August); and weekly again during the fall 2025 term (12 weeks; September - December 2025) and the winter/spring 2026 term (12 weeks; January-April).

The online cohort will meet via live weekly video meetings over Zoom; there will be no in-person meetings.

Poetry Apprenticeship 2025-2026 Cohort Schedule

Online cohort meeting dates
(Calendar is subject to adjustment)

Year-Long Writing Project Information Session

Wednesday, April 1, 2025
5:30-6:30 pm CST
Online/Zoom

Year-Long Writing Project Orientation Meeting

Required of all participants
Wednesday, June 4, 2025 | 6-7:30 p.m.
Online/Zoom

Final Public Loft Reading

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 | 7 p.m.
Online/Zoom

Summer 2025 Term Meetings

6 Wednesdays | 6-9 p.m.

June 11 – July 23, 2025, no meeting July 2

3 Saturdays | 10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

August 2, 9, and 16, 2025

Summer Independent Study Time

One month of independent study time between the final summer meeting and the start of the fall cohort meetings (August 20-September 17); this time is to be used for independent writing time, focusing on aspects of craft your teaching mentor feels will help your development as a writer; deep reading, of your own work as well as books outside of the cohort reading list that will benefit your writing; one to one meetings with your teaching mentor; writing group meetings with your cohort members.

Fall Meetings

12 Wednesdays | 6–9 p.m.

September 17 – December 10, 2025

No class November 26

Winter/Spring Meetings

12 Wednesdays | 6–9 p.m.

January 14 – April 1, 2026

Final workshops this term and final guest author.

Final manuscripts are turned in April 1, with a final one to one meeting scheduled with teaching mentor no later than June 25, 2026

Manuscript Consultations and Final

Each student will also meet one-on-one with the project leader four times over the course of the year-long program. These meetings include one introductory meeting before the program kicks off on June 11, 2025, and one manuscript consultation session after April 1, 2026 when the program concludes (and by which date you need to have submitted your final manuscript, double-spaced, 1" margin, 12 point font pages—no pdfs, please—either Word or Google docs so I can give feedback electronically), to be completed no later than June 23, 2026.

Course description

The 2025 Poetry Apprenticeship Summer Program is a mixture of one-on-one time with Danez Smith, and time spent with your full poetry cohort in peer activities.

Your one-on-one sessions will be tailored specifically to you and your goals. The primary reading for these sessions will be your poetry. One-on-one time will revolve around your goals for your poetry as well as considering suggested edits to your work. During these sessions, Danez will provide intensive craft instruction and feedback, but you will also be able to ask questions and discuss concerns.

Your cohort time will be either formal presentation (by Danez) or group activity and discussion, depending on the week. During the winter and fall terms, Danez will lead cohort time two weeks of the month, providing focused talks or guiding the group through response to poetry collections, podcasts, articles on craft or on the writing life, organizing manuscripts, and more. Brief guided exercises and generative writing will be incorporated into these sessions.

Danez's presentation topics will include craft concerns (such as titles, line breaks, crafting poem series, and use of poetic forms), the discussion of essays by poets from the book *Personal Best: Makers on Their Poems that Matter Most* edited by Erin Belieu and Carl Phillips, as well as topics such as the personal and the political in poetry, the use of language other than English in poems, and an examination of what makes a poem or collection of poems ready to submit for publication. Presentations will be tailored to the group needs, once Danez meets everyone in January, and as the year progresses.

During the other two weeks of the month in winter and fall terms, you will meet with Danez one-on-one on a day to be determined according to your schedules. We will decide as a group how we would like to spend our time together during one-on-one weeks. Cohorts can devote time to sharing work with one another in a workshop format and also in discussions of our brief reading assignments. In the past, cohorts have taken turns bringing prompts and writing together. During one-on-one weeks, we might adjust our schedule to attend online poetry presentations or have a shorter session in order to do so. What we do with our time in one-on-one weeks will evolve with our work and is likely to become a time for peer workshop and peer learning, an important aspect of the writer's life that creates community support and audience.

Please see below for a week by week proposed schedule. This document is subject to change, however Wednesdays in the p.m. will be our core meeting time.

All specific lectures and assigned readings will be tailored to individuals and to the cohort, once Danez has gotten a feel for what you want and need in 2025. **Detailed syllabi will be provided each term**—what you'll find below is a proposed schedule to be discussed in our first weeks.

Note: All weeks run Saturday to Friday, though most activities and meetings will take place during the week. Occasionally, a visiting writer or publishing professional might need to meet on a weekend, so for consistency's sake, you'll see the weeks organized with weekends involved.