



The Loft's Memoir/Creative Nonfiction Writing Project 2020

Your nonfiction manuscript, from first word to market.

Teaching Artist: **Nicole Helget**

Sessions

Winter/Spring Term:	Tuesdays: January 28–April 14, 2020; 6–9 p.m.
Summer meetings:	Saturdays: June 13, July 11, August 8; 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Fall/Winter Term:	Tuesdays: September 15–December 8; 6–9 p.m (no class Nov 24)

Final public reading on Tuesday January 12, 2021, 7 p.m.

Final manuscripts due to Nicole on December 8, 2020; final one to one with Nicole must take place no later than February 28, 2021

Some memoirs span the length of a single day. Others cast a line into a year or two-long experience. Still others, such as one of my favorite's, *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, begin with the storyteller's earliest memories in toddlerhood and then pick and choose moments all the way until the storyteller's 60th year. Creative Nonfiction can take the form of an essay collection, a deeply researched story, a blend of poetry and prose, or a cookbook in stories, for instance. No matter how much time or what shape your manuscript covers, I'm making a bet that with the support and encouragement from this class, you can get your book finished in one year.

That's the first lesson of this year-long course. The hundred other lessons that follow will take into account everything from how to begin to how to end, what to include and what to cut, if and how to include documents, modes of delivery, characterization, dialogue, setting, language, voice, purpose, idea, metaphor, conflict, arc, and tone, and when honesty is good and when honesty is going to get you in trouble, and what is honesty in memoir anyway? Is it emotional truth? Is a recreated memory from age five honest? Should you tell the reader when you're recreating memories? Or is the only honesty the strict, verifiable factual kind? The Memoir/CNF Writing Project will help you navigate these concerns and hopefully help you stave off writerly existential crises as you write your way toward your completed manuscript. Along the way, we'll also help you design a plan of action for its life after the book is done.



Maybe you've known for a while that you want to write about your unique life experiences or area of expertise, but you don't know how to start—or you keep hitting blocks when you sit down to write. Maybe you've got a draft, but parts of it just aren't working and you don't know how to fix them. Perhaps you're unsure about how to polish your manuscript and feel truly confident that it's ready to pursue publication.

You want to know that your book is the best you can make it. The Memoir/CNF Writing Project can help you.

We've heard from a number of students who've taken Loft classes that they're craving more intensive, personalized guidance and coaching on their writing projects. This program is designed to meet that demand.

It'll be a year of rigorous reading, focused writing, meticulous revising, and deep study of craft. You'll meet best selling authors, luminaries in publishing, distinguished booksellers and literary agents. But most importantly, you'll develop the resources and relationships to move ahead with a writing life once the course is finished. After 12 months, your manuscript will be close to submission-ready, and you'll be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to either pitch to agents, editors, and pursue traditional publication or look toward independent publishing sources.

Memoir Writing Project books:

Neither Wolf Nor Dog by Kent Nerburn

Tailings by Kaethe Schwehn

The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen by Sean Sherman

The Bride Price by Mai Neng Moua

Visiting writers will include Kent Nerburn, Kaethe Schwehn, Sean Sherman, and Mai Neng Moua, as well as publishing professionals including agents and editors. More guests will be announced throughout the year.

An information session will be held Tuesday, October 8, 2019, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Loft for those interested in talking with Loft education staff, Peter Geye (of the Novel Writing Project), Nicole Helget (of the Memoir/CNF Writing Project, Gretchen Marquette (Poetry Project), and Molly Beth Griffin (The Picture Book Project) in more detail. These sessions are free and open to the public.



Your Registration in The Memoir Writing Project Includes:

- 4 one-on-one meetings/manuscript consultations with Nicole Helget focused on your individual memoir/CNF project
 - first (Winter 2020) meeting is to glean the overall idea and goal of your manuscript and to discuss the Project's design and how Nicole Helget facilitates the Project and individual manuscript attention.
 - second (late Spring/early Summer 2020) meeting occurs after Nicole Helget has read all of your manuscript-in-progress (up to 180 pgs) and is focused on your structure/plot/arc and strategies for how to proceed for the publishing goal and audience the author has in mind.
 - third meeting occurs sometime in the fall, to ensure you're on the right track to finishing
 - fourth meeting occurs after the Project ends (Winter 2020/01, but no later than February 28, 2021) and you've turned in your completed manuscript (up to 350 pgs). After reading and editing your completed manuscript, Nicole will discuss with you the next steps toward your publishing desire.
- Weekly office hours for drop-in meetings, questions, edits, or conversations
- A communal writing and discussion space at Open Book, for the duration of the Memoir/CNF Writing Project.
 - The Loft cohort meets for class and workshopping at 6-9pm every Tuesday at Open Book for the Spring and Fall sessions.
 - The room is available to the cohorts throughout the summer, even while class is not in session, for editing and writing space.
 - Nicole Helget holds office hours from 2-5 through the Spring and Fall sessions.
- 27 cohort meetings throughout the year. These meetings will include:
 - Beginning level into advanced craft lessons
 - Focused prompts designed for Memoir/Creative Nonfiction
 - Workshopping with oral and written feedback
 - Visiting authors including Kent Nerburn, Kaethe Schwehn, Sean Sherman, and Mai Neng Moua and publishing professionals including agents and editors.
 - Instructor consultations
 - Final manuscript consultation
 - Optional additional Saturday meetings include a Grant Writing tutorial, an organization/structure tutorial, and a line editing tutorial