



# Pyramid Women Writers Retreat

**Sun. July 14 - Fri. July 19, 2024**

**Single price for classes, room and meals**

**(PLEASE SEE MORE ON PRICING UNDER CHANGES P.4.)**

*This schedule is subject to change if the need arises.*

**(CLASS SIGN-UP will be Sunday Evening)**

<p><b>Daily</b> <b>9:15 -10:30</b></p>	<p><b>POETRY: Life Is Change — Exploring Loss and Grief, Wonder and Awe</b></p> <p>Sue Oringel</p>	<p><b>FICTION: Changing the World One Reader at a Time</b></p> <p>Dio Kaufman</p>	<p><b>JOURNALING: Forest Bathing and Journaling</b></p> <p>Anne Samson And Nan Payne</p>
<p><b>Daily</b> <b>10:45 - Noon</b></p>	<p><b>MEMOIR: Capturing the Difficult Times</b></p> <p>Ellie O’Leary</p>	<p><b>POETRY: Discovery Through Poetry — Let Nature Be Your Guide</b></p> <p>Sarah Sullivan</p>	<p><b>TRANSFORMATIONAL WRITING: Becoming Luminous — Writing Our Elder Tales</b></p> <p>Ellen Secci</p>

**9:15 a.m. POETRY: Life Is Change — Exploring Loss and Grief, Wonder and Awe Through Writing and Poetry**

**Instructor: Sue Oringel**

We will start by looking at a list of poems I provide that give us a sense of the possibilities in writing poems in/around/about these states of consciousness. There will be exercises to loosen up our resistances to change, that may inform the new poems we write. No experience needed, but a willingness to experiment.

**Susan Oringel** is a poet and writer, a teacher of creative writing, and a psychologist in private practice in New York’s Capital District. Publications include her full-length poetry book *Carnevale* published in November 2023 from David Robert Press, poetry chapbook *My Coney Island* (Finishing Line Press, (2019) and a short story “The Relative Truth,” published in *Tiferet Journal*, Spring/summer 2021. A graduate of the Warren Wilson M.F.A. program, she is also published in various journals, such as *Blueline*, *The Maryland Poetry Review*, *The Paterson Review*, and *The National Council of Teachers of English*, *English Journal*. She also served as co-translator for a collection of Latin American poetry, *Messengers of Rain*, (Groundwoods Press, (2002 and 2011). Fellowships and awards include Individual Artist award from the Albany Schenectady League of Arts, a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center, and an SOS award sponsored by NYSCA. She taught creative writing at Hudson Valley Community College from 2004-2017.

**9:15 a.m. FICTION:** Changing the World One Reader at a Time

**Instructor: Dio Kaufman**

A generative class focusing on influencing hearts and minds primarily through fiction.

Students are encouraged to come with an idea of 1-2 social issues they want to explore through fiction. Each day, we will examine a different example of socially conscious fiction and methods of how fiction can be a catalyst for awareness and social change.

We will examine the role of plot, characters, and setting to convey social messages. Time permitting, the final class will include a discussion on the publishing and self-publishing processes and pros and cons of each.



**Dio Kaufman** (they, she) is the author of *Queen Up! Reclaim Your Crown When Life Knocks You Down*, *Quiet Man*, *Golden Apple*, *Murder in the Gilded City*, and *Frank from Jersey*. Their main focus is fiction focused on social criticism. Dio is also a member of the Social Justice Artists Collective.

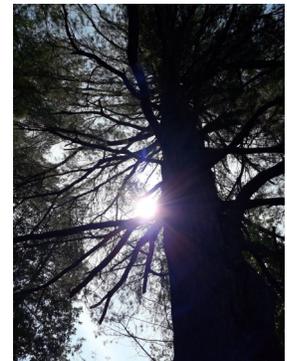
**9:15 a.m. JOURNALING:** Forest Bathing and Journaling

**Instructors: Anne Samson and Nan Payne**

Nature has much to teach us.

Forest bathing is an immersion of ourselves into the natural world. It has been proven that time in nature helps us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It is an inspiration to all creativity.

Each class will begin with a brief excursion to a particular area of the PLC property, where we will be prompted to experience with our senses the beauty and the mood. Using imagination, memory, and our skills as writers, we will let our senses guide us as we turn experience into words. We will bring our notes and observations back into our writing space where we will briefly share our words with each other. We will then individually write on a single prompt, and see what happens!



**Nancy Marie Payne, Nan**, has been an Environmental Educator for forty years. She shares her knowledge and love of the natural world with people of all ages, and knows firsthand how immersion into nature brings healing and calm and enhances creativity. As a storyteller and writer, she has woven her nature experiences into her prose and poetry. Recently she has been offering her knowledge of the concepts of Forest Bathing (the practice of immersing yourself in nature in a mindful way and using your senses to derive a range of benefits) into her programs.

**Anne Samson** has been a part of the Pyramid women's writing community since 2007. She has taught journaling classes and retreats for numerous years, as well as a variety of 12-Step and Energy Healing classes. Anne has written three books: *Journaling as a Spiritual Practice* (2020), *Abba House and Me: Prayer Changes Everything* (2013 -a history of Abba House of Prayer and her own spiritual memoir of the time she was involved with Abba House), and *My Memories: Island Roots, Sailor Dreams* (2017--a memoir told to her by her late husband José). Anne is also a freelance magazine writer who has been published in a variety of recovery, Reiki and spiritual magazines. Anne has been in 12-Step Recovery programs for over three decades, is a Reiki master teacher and a former special education teacher.



**10:45 a.m. MEMOIR:** Capturing the Difficult Times

**Instructor: Ellie O’Leary**

Whether you want to publish or put your work away in a drawer, writing can help you understand the challenges you’ve faced. We’ll look at personal stories from varying angles and use different ways to capture those times in our writing using letters, poetry, fiction, or personal essays. Your story might be anything from a bad hair day, a difficult relationship, a tragic loss, or a combination of difficult times. The focus in the workshop will be the writing itself. We’ll take hold of the stories rather than them having a hold on us.

**Ellie O’Leary** is a poet, a memoirist, and the Poet Laureate Emerita of Amesbury, MA, where she lives. She is the Education Director of the Gloucester Writers Center and has published *Breathe Here* (poetry, 2020) and *Up Home Again* (memoir, 2023)—both with North Country Press. She has an MFA in poetry from the Stonecoast program of the University of Southern Maine.

**10:45 a.m. POETRY:** Discovery Through Poetry — Let Nature Be Your Guide

**Instructor: Sarah Sullivan**

During our week together, we have the opportunity to experience ourselves and our world in the presence of almost unbearable beauty—the pristine Pyramid Lake surrounded by woods, mountains in the background, an open sky above. Each day will include discussion of archetypal poems—investigating their content and craft; generative writing in class; time for optional sharing; and prompts to work with between classes. Our time together will be supportive, relaxed, and confidential. Discover how to engage with and learn from nature in order to develop energy, emotion, tone, and movement in our poetry. This is an opportunity to bring forth and express, within the container of a poem, some of what we tuck away deep inside. Of course, you can write whatever you choose if you have “discovered enough” on any given day. Let yourself write, however you are.



**Sarah B Sullivan**, of Northampton, MA, is a person, poet, teacher, physician, lesbian, parent, ocean-lover, searcher. She is published in journals including *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Calyx Journal*, *Willawaw Journal*, *Little Patuxent Review*, and *Cider Press Review*. Most recently *Calyx* chose her poem as the first prize winner for their Lois Cranston Memorial Prize. *Willawaw Journal* nominated one of her poems for a Pushcart Prize. For the past six years, she has chaired annual fundraiser, 30 Poems in November, for the Center for New Americans. Sarah leads craft courses and writing workshops on Zoom and in person. She completed a Master of Fine Arts degree at Pacific University. Her website is [sarahbsullivan.com](http://sarahbsullivan.com).

**10:45 a.m. TRANSFORMATIONAL WRITING:** Becoming Luminous — Writing Our Elder Tales

**Instructor: Ellen Secci**

This workshop will encourage participants to write their elder tales. Instead of longing for youth or bemoaning our limitations we write, lighting a path for those who come after us. We embrace the freedom of impermanence as we experience the shifts that evolve as we age. We celebrate our Crone time both as our bodies change and the gift of wisdom emerges from the experiences of our lives.

Questions that arise from these awarenesses, together with writing prompts, will encourage writers to leave their legacy of “Ageing to Sage-ing”.

**Ellen Secci** is a writer, storyteller, certified yoga teacher, Spiritual Counselor and co-foundress of the Women Writers Retreat at Pyramid Life Center. She has published over the years in many small press magazines and blogs. Currently living in Stillwater township in upstate NY, she is working on a memoir about growing up in a small town.

***SPACE IS LIMITED! RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY!***

**YOU CAN ONLY RESERVE THROUGH THE PYRAMID LIFE CENTER WEBSITE:  
[WWW.PYRAMIDLIFE.ORG](http://WWW.PYRAMIDLIFE.ORG)**

***INFO FOR YOUR FULL ENJOYMENT OF THE RETREAT:***

***WHAT HAS CHANGED***

- This year, you can **CHOOSE YOUR OWN ROOM** from the website during registration!
- This year, **ROOM PRICES WILL VARY SLIGHTLY BASED ON LOCATION AND WHETHER YOU SHARE A ROOM.** As always, your price will include classes, housing and meals.

***WHAT HAS NOT CHANGED***

- CHECK-IN TIME is 4 p.m. Sunday, July 14, in the dining hall.
- CHECK OUT TIME is 10 A.M. Friday, July 19. Friday morning classes will be held and breakfast/lunch will be served, but rooms must be cleared by 10 a.m.
- If you have special dietary restrictions, expect that you may need to augment the food PLC can offer. Please work with the PLC staff and bring any additional foods you may need.
- There are **NO HOOKUPS** for RVs of any kind. All on-site housing will be in cabins.
- The terrain and cabins are what you would expect in an old Adirondack lodge. Rustic!
- Classes will be in the morning with free time in the afternoon.
- Each evening will feature five-minute readings by 10-15 writers. Reading is optional. All are welcome and encouraged to be part of the audience.
- We will build a community like none other that supports our writing and expands our minds!
- We have a small fund for **SCHOLARSHIPS**. If you would like to apply, send an email to [pyramidwwretreat@gmail.com](mailto:pyramidwwretreat@gmail.com).



***FOR WRITERS WITH SEVERE MOBILITY PROBLEMS:***

A golf cart will be making SCHEDULED mealtime trips between the lodge and the dining hall for those with restricted mobility.