The Writing Life

2026–2027 • Monthly learning opportunities for Wordsmith & PRISM members

The Writing Life is a benefit of Wordsmith & PRISM memberships designed to provide monthly learning opportunities on the 4th Monday of each month (Oct.-May) from 6-8 pm. Topics will be presented in person at the Writing Center or virtually depending on volunteer presenter and format. The topics and presenters have been selected based on member feedback. No pre-registration is required and there is no additional fee to attend but please ensure your membership level is at (or has been upgraded to) the Wordsmith or PRISM level before arriving. To verify membership, email (preferred) admin@lrjf.org or call (772) 569-6718.

October 26, 2026 | Virtual 6-8pm (link will be posted on the LRJF Events Calendar)

Choosing Your Publishing Path

With Suzanne Fox

How do you decide whether self-publication, a small or hybrid press, or a traditional publisher is right for you and your book project? This session compares the pros, cons, and requirements of each option; explores the four questions that help you identify the best publishing path for your particular needs, goals, manuscript, and audience; and includes time for your questions. Writers of all genres and experience levels who are aiming at—or even just intrigued by —the possibility of book publication will come away clearer and more confident about their next steps.



About the presenter Author, artist, consultant and teacher Suzanne Fox earned her MFA in Writing from the Columbia University School of the Arts. Her memoir, Home Life: A Journey of Rooms and Recollections, was published by Simon & Schuster. Written under two pen names, her women's fiction has been published by Berkley Penguin Putnam and Harlequin (now a division of HarperCollins). Suzanne reviews literary, mainstream and historical fiction for Publishers Weekly; edits the online journal Society Nineteen; and speaks and consults on topics including book development, story structure, publication planning, and creative practice. Find out more about Suzanne at www.suzannefox.me.

November 23, 2026 | LRJF Writing Center, 1914 14th Ave., Vero Beach

Three Types of Editing

With Linda Gordon Hengerer

How do you know when your story is ready for editing? The simple answer is after the story question has been answered and you've typed THE END. There are three types of editing, and you may need them at the beginning or the end of writing the polished draft. Developmental editing is a big picture view. Line editing is revising or rewriting each sentence. Copy editing is more akin to proofreading. We'll do some in-session editing so participants can see the differences in action.



About the presenter Linda Gordon Hengerer writes heartwarming cozy mysteries that serve up justice with a side of recipes and crafts. Joanna Campbell Slan and Linda co-edited six themed editions of the Happy Homicides cozy mystery anthology series, each contributing at least one story per edition. Linda has also written non-fiction about food and wine pairings, American Football, and has contributed to several non-fiction anthologies. Her books cover a wide range of topics. During the pandemic Linda created the Tart Words Podcast, interviewing authors, discussing favorite books with Suzanne Fox, and sharing family recipes. For more about Linda, visit LindaGordonHengerer.com.

December 28, 2026 | Virtual (link will be posted on the LRJF Events Calendar)

Submitting Your Work to Literary Magazines and Contests

With Christine Light

Publishing a full-length book isn't the only way to get your work out into the world! Together we'll review resources (free and paid) and systems that will get you set up to find and submit to outlets for publication. You'll leave our time together knowing how to write submission cover letters and short bios (standard for magazine and contest entry), conventions for naming and saving your files, as well as how to keep track of submissions over time. We'll transform an at-times unwieldy process into one that can actually be quite fun! All genres welcome.



About the presenter Christine Light lives in Vero Beach, where she co-leads a twice-monthly poetry workshop and chairs the Publications Committee at the Laura (Riding) Jackson Foundation. She also works as a mental health coach. She has a craft essay published in Assay and poetry published in Little Patuxent Review, The Shore, and Cetera. Her short fiction won Globe Soup's 2021 Flash Fiction Competition and their eighth 7-Day Story Writing Challenge. Her work currently lives at the intersection of parataxis, literature of (in)subordination, and archival engagement. Christine formerly served as the Lead Poetry Editor and Lead Copy Editor at Revolute and holds an MFA from Randolph College.

January 25, 2027 | LRJF Writing Center, 1914 14th Ave., Vero Beach

Writing and Researching History

With Gregory Enns

Enns' 2025 non-fiction book **Cow Creek Chronicles: The Rise and Fall of an Early Florida Cattle Ranch** will be used to discuss the process of accurate research and writing a history of time and place. Based on the storied ranch southwest of Vero Beach, the book explores a century-long generational saga of the Raulerson pioneer family and their cattle empire.

Florida ranching traditions and cowboy culture are only part of the story. Choices the author made in including the displacement of Seminole communities, the history of the Cow Creek band and heroine Emateloye Estenletkvte (Polly Parker) will be highlighted in how writers may best preserve history for the reader

About the presenter Gregory Enns is the founder and publisher of Indian River Magazine and Indian River Media Group, a company that publishes magazines for Florida's Treasure Coast and Space Coast. A fifth-generation Floridian and Vero Beach resident, Enns has worked as a reporter and editor at newspapers in Florida and Alabama for more than 25 years.



February 22, 2027 | Virtual (link will be posted on the LRJF Events Calendar)

Against Chronology

With Christa Lei

Memories do not arrive in linear order. They show up uninvited and out of sequence--often triggered by a smell or sentence. Writing that runs on clock time is a common device writers use to keep narrative straight-forward, but it's not descriptive of an actual experience. This class treats non-linear narratives, including the use of flashbacks and memories, as an exploration into how we can use our lived experiences in order to write against chronology. We will take apart four working models (classic examples): 1) Maggie Nelson's Bluets, 2) Christopher Nolan's Memento; 3) Ray Bradbury's All Summer in a Day and 4) Ellen Samuels' Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time; and see if we can borrow from these writers in order to remix and write towards the truth of our experiences. (All genres welcome)

About the presenter Christa Lei (they/them) is a writer and social worker living in New York City. They are a non-fiction editor at Blood Tree Literature and the Community Curator at Anodyne literary magazine, with extensive experiences building literary community and championing undiscovered, emerging writers. Christa's work has appeared in Autostraddle, the Seventh Wave and 45th Parallel, amongst others; and their fiction was a finalist in the 2025 Tennessee Williams Festival fiction contest. They are also a Nancy Blackburn fellow in Randolph College's MFA program.



March 22, 2027 | Virtual (link will be posted on the LRJF Events Calendar)

Using Natural, Organic, and Found Forms

With E.J. Cousins

Have you ever been awe-struck sitting on the beach watching the waves roll in against the sand? Have you wondered how to capture the mesmerizing spiral at the center of a sunflower? If so, come and explore how to use the natural forms and shapes all around us to deepen your writing and create wonder in your work! Together we will read poetry, nonfiction, and cross-genre writing that engages with natural and organic forms, and discuss the craft elements at work. After that, we will engage with generative prompts using natural forms and have an opportunity to share what we've written.



About the presenter E.J. Cousins lives, teaches, and writes in Denver, CO. Their poems have appeared in Denver Quarterly, The Laurel Review, Copper Nickel, Poetry Northwest, and elsewhere. They are a Nancy Craig Blackburn Fellow at Randolph College MFA as well as a nonfiction and poetry editor for Revolute.

April 26, 2027 | LRJF Writing Center, 1914 14th Ave., Vero Beach

Writing and Reading Trauma

With Christine Light

Our most difficult experiences are often ineffable, though we're also typically left with an urge to understand our suffering through language. You're not alone in navigating this impulse, and this challenge; people across the ages have experimented with literary forms that allow—often through distance and through making-it-strange—a greater closeness to that which is indescribable. Together we'll learn from some of these forms and practice our own inquiry into the unsayable. Please note that there is no pressure to bring what you would call "a traumatic experience" to this session; this is the session for you if you've ever tried to write anything you felt you didn't have the words to say.



About the presenter Christine Light lives in Vero Beach, where she co-leads a twice-monthly poetry workshop and chairs the Publications Committee at the Laura (Riding) Jackson Foundation. She also works as a mental health coach. She has a craft essay published in Assay and poetry published in Little Patuxent Review, The Shore, and Cetera. Her short fiction won Globe Soup's 2021 Flash Fiction Competition and their eighth 7-Day Story Writing Challenge. Her work currently lives at the intersection of parataxis, literature of (in)subordination, and archival engagement. Christine formerly served as the Lead Poetry Editor and Lead Copy Editor at Revolute and holds an MFA from Randolph College.

May 24, 2027 | LRJF Writing Center, 1914 14th Ave., Vero Beach

Q&A on How to Get Your Published Books Sold

With Kenny Gould

Your book was published (or is about to be). Now it's time to make sure it finds as many readers as possible. This session is open to everyone but is also meant as a follow up to our December 12 all day retreat,"From Manuscript to Marketing." Kenny will present on and answer your questions about all available avenues of marketing & promoting your book. Whether you're just starting or need help surmounting roadblocks you've faced, you'll get the tried-and-true tips from a successful marketer & self-published author.



About the presenter Kenny Gould is a full-time author, journalist, and entrepreneur. He holds a BA in English from Duke University, an MFA from Chatham University, and an MBA from NYU's Stern School of Business. He has self-published ten books. Prior to writing fiction, Kenny was a journalist for Forbes and Bon Appetit, and he also taught creative writing in the Allegheny County Jail. Kenny can be found on his website at kennygould.com or on Instagram / TikTok at @thekennygould.