

The New Mothers' Writing Circle

A Village Gathering

PRESENTATION BY DR. LAURA BISSELL

Glasgow Women's Library
Saturday 27th January 2024

Five offerings to support sustaining your writing practice

Time

Not enough of it, what to prioritise in any free time, time as being constantly fragmented or interrupted. Invitation one is to work in the gaps, the slivers, the snatches.



Interruption

Invitation two: accept interruption. You don't have to embrace it but accept it. Short bursts and fragments of writing could become something bigger or be pieced together into a whole.

'Nothing could have prepared me for the realization that I was a mother, one of those givens, when I knew I was still in a state of uncreation myself.'

(Adrienne Rich, 1976: 36)

Space

Virginia Woolf famously said a woman needs 'a room of one's own' to write. Where do you write? Is it a shared space? A domestic space? Where else could you try? While out on a walk? On a park-bench on your lunch break? At a friends? Invitation three: try different locations, see what they inspire.

Inner critic

Invitation four: keep your inner critic on the sidelines. Try to remember why you are writing, it is for you, the process, the creative energy. Don't beat yourself up if you don't meet your writing goals, writing is a practice, there to be returned to at any point.



Community

Invitation five: stay connected to your community. What do you all need? How can we support those needs being met?

Melissa Febos writes in *Body Works: The Radical Power of Personal Narrative*: "Memoirs begin as conversations with the self" (2021: 139) and argues that "we write to understand things" (2021: 87).

Philips says: 'She is transformed over and over by it. Throughout her life. Her acts of self-creation and self-revision are her story' (2022: 17).

Taking your writing to the next level:
redrafting and revising

Revision Exploration 1: *What is it saying?*

Try to explore the same idea in a different way. What is at the heart of this piece you have just written. Is it the idea? The image? The form? Find out what your piece really is.

Revision Exploration 2: *How does it sound?*

Read your work aloud to hear its rhythms, pace and voice. What doesn't sound right? What doesn't feel like it belongs? What is missing? What does it need?

Revision Exploration 3: *How does it look?*

Think about the arrangement of the words on the page, the cadences of the lines. What punctuation are you using? Try to think of this as breath, of helping your reader with the rhythms, pace and feel of your work.

Revision Exploration 4: *Pay attention to the detail.*

Refine: look at each word, roll it over in your mind, is it a precious gem or a rock? Is it even needed?

Revision Exploration 5: *Where could it go next?*

Try to end your writing session with a list of potential directions it could go in. Some writers even leave sentences unfinished so they have a tangible starting point for their next session – a thought in process.

Getting your work out into the world

Do you want to publish? What do you like to read? Who publishes those books/poetry collections/zines? What genre are you writing in? Who publishes in those areas?

Before you send your work out to complete strangers you could send it to friends, family, other writers (i.e. this group!) to get some feedback before you make the leap into submitting for publication.

Know that you will get rejections, not a reason for giving up!

Upcoming Deadlines & Where to Submit Your Work

MsLexia

A magazine where readers also have the opportunity to contribute their writing. They are looking for submissions across genres, monitor the submission page for deadlines or sign up for the newsletter to get information on competitions, events and writing opportunities.

Motherlore Magazine (previously, Mutter Magazine)

Magazine on care, mothering, matrescence & mother nature now taking submissions for issue two on the theme of roots.

Closing Date: 29 February, 2024

Scottish Art Trust Short Story Award

Short story competition welcoming stories of all genres with opportunity for cash prizes and shortlisted stories to be published in an anthology.

Closing Date: 29 February, 2024

Hope Prize

Fiction and nonfiction short stories that center around the theme of hope, courage and resilience from all over the world. They especially encourage emerging and unpublished writers to submit their work.

Closing Date: 22 March, 2024

Arboreal Literary Magazine

Magazine seeking creative writing and art on the theme of Eternity for Issue No. 06. We are based in Oregon, U.S.A. but accept work from writers worldwide

Closing Date: 30 March, 2024

Brick Lane Short Story Prize

The competition is funded by Brick Lane Bookshop for original short fiction by writers without previous publication.

Closing Date: 7 April, 2024

Creative Futures Writer Award

Free to enter national writing competition for all underrepresented writers – those who face barriers due to health, mental health, identity or social circumstance. The competition is open to writers across genres. For eligibility see here.

Closing Date: 19 May, 2024

Motherhood Uncensored

Challenging the misconceptions and myths of motherhood through sharing real life stories of mothers.

Creative Scotland's Opportunities

A full listing of opportunities for creatives and writers across genres based in Scotland. Sign up for the weekly newsletter sent out every Friday.

Scottish BPOC writers

Advocacy and professional development group for Scottish or Scotland-based writers and literary professionals who identify as BPOC. Sign up for the newsletter to get updates on submissions, job opportunities and community events.

Scottish Book Trust

Curated list of opportunities for writers across genres. You can also find more resources to support your writing and opportunities for retreats and workshops on the website.

Arts Council England

Open funding applications to support creative opportunities.

National Association of Writers in Education

Registered charity supporting writers and advocating for creative writing to enhance knowledge. Curated list of opportunities for writers across genres posted to their site.

National Centre for Writing

Links to other writer resources with prizes



New Writing North Resources

Links to other writer resources with prizes



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

The New Mothers' Writing Circle is funded by Creative Scotland

  [@newmumswriting](https://www.instagram.com/newmumswriting)

www.newmumswriting.co.uk