

Writefest

POETRY



ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:

Anis Shivani is the author of several critically acclaimed books of poetry, fiction, and criticism, including *Anatolia and Other Stories* (2009), *Against the Workshop: Provocations, Polemics, Controversies* (2011), *The Fifth Lash and Other Stories* (2012), *My Tranquil War and Other Poems* (2012), and *Karachi Raj: A Novel* (2015). Both *Anatolia and Other Stories* and *The Fifth Lash and Other Stories* were longlisted for the Frank O'Connor international short story award. Forthcoming books include *Soraya: Sonnets* and *Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Anis won a 2012 Pushcart Prize, graduated from Harvard College, and lives in Houston, Texas.

STEPPING OUTSIDE THE VOID: LEARNING POETRY BY IMMERSION IN UNFAMILIAR STYLES

This intense four-day workshop seeks to draw out the habits of rote all of us tend to fall into after a period of writing and to offer solutions to get the participants out of the quagmire of repeating the same kind of poetry over and over. The workshop will be structured so that poets at all levels of accomplishment will feel included and have their individual concerns addressed.

The habits of rote we will identify together include such things as resort to metaphorical sleights and unattached/orphaned similes, shallow thematic and philosophical development, line breaks and other structural elements that don't flow from the logic of the poem, generalities and abstractions that stick out because of predictable diction, and insufficient response to the tradition to which the particular genre of the poem belongs. We will discuss antidotes to these mechanical habits, which ought to lead to poems of greater precision, subtlety, grace, originality, and respect (for the tradition and for the presumed reader).

Poets at different levels will also benefit from the major instructional component of the workshop, which will be to trace the evolution of particular forms (blank verse, the sonnet, the poem of address) poets in different periods have used as points of departure. The workshop will provide honest critique of the level of technique each of you brings to your poems and involve the group in spirited discussion of specific ideas to make your poetry better. I believe that poetry which is faithful to one's unique voice comes only after long immersion in the practice of highly original stylists; yet one's poetic ability at a given moment is always provisional and susceptible to radical or even sudden improvement. This is the ethos of discipline, skepticism toward one's own work, and striving to identify self-perceived limitations that we as a group will try to absorb.

If, after this workshop, you can provide yourself more self-aware answers about why your poems work or don't work, then this workshop will have done its job. Participants are asked to bring three of their most polished poems for group critique, and are also requested to study the packet of poems provided upon registration.

FEBRUARY 22ND-25TH
MON-THURS 9AM-12PM
SILVER STREET STUDIOS
STUDIO # _____
ARTIST: _____

BY WRITESPACE