NORMANDALE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



FIFTEENTH ANNUAL

NORMANDALE WRITING FESTIVAL

APRIL 16, 2025

PRESENTED BY
Normandale Community College English Department

9700 France Ave S
Bloomington, MN 55431

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

This festival, our fifteenth annual, is organized by the English Department to expand the Department's mission to help students with all facets of their writing. Today, we celebrate the many ways students and the broader Normandale community use and enjoy writing. We thank everyone—presenters, helpers, support staff, administrators—who helped make this annual festival possible.

LOCATION

Normandale Community College
9700 France Ave S,
Bloomington, MN 55431

1 KEYNOTE

7 SESSIONS

12 PRESENTERS

FEATURING A KEYNOTE BY MARCIE R. RENDON

PRESENTED BY

THE NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

WELCOME TO THE FESTIVAL

We're delighted that you're here! The festival offers you a chance to learn, write, and discuss across a range of subjects and styles. It's a celebration of the written word and how it can open our minds and hearts.

Whether you're a writer or a reader, we hope you'll find something for you at the festival. On the next page, you'll see a snapshot overview of session times and locations, and on the following pages, you'll find detailed descriptions.

Don't miss the keynote speaker, Marcie R. Rendon, in conversation with Normandale's own Lynette Reini-Grandell! And should you hear something memorable or be struck by inspiration, there are note pages in the back of the program.

We hope you enjoy the day and come back next year!

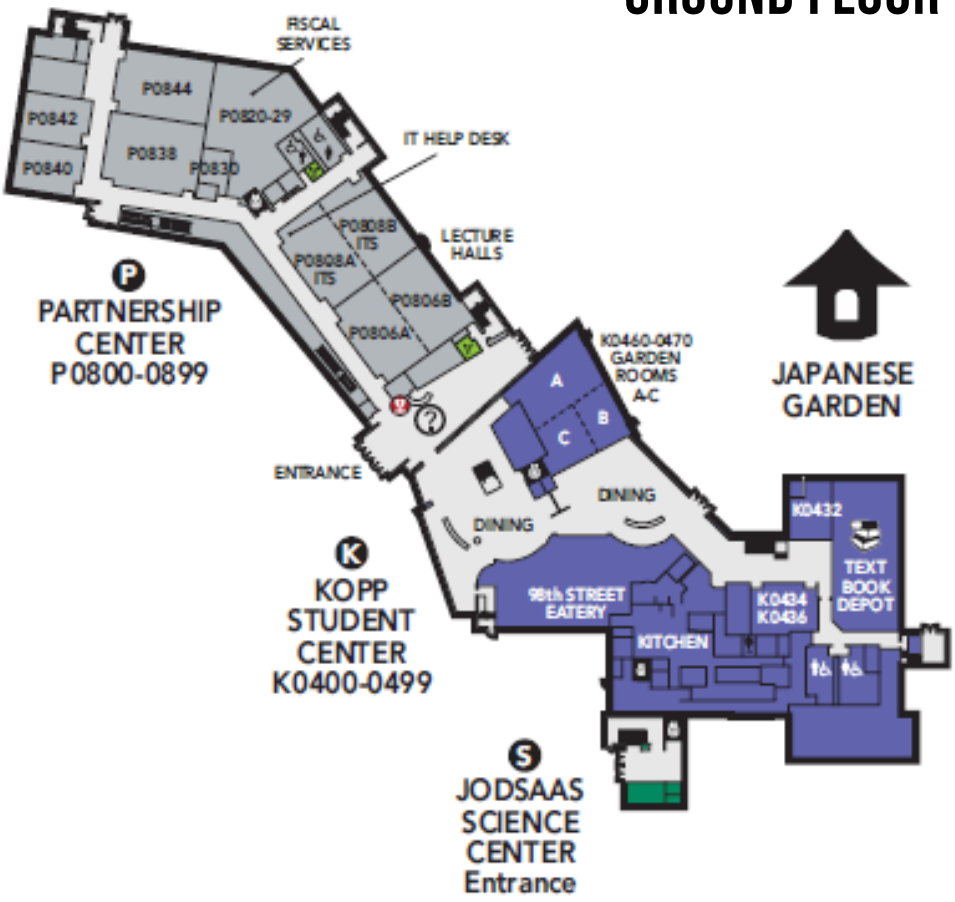
—The Normadale Community College English Department



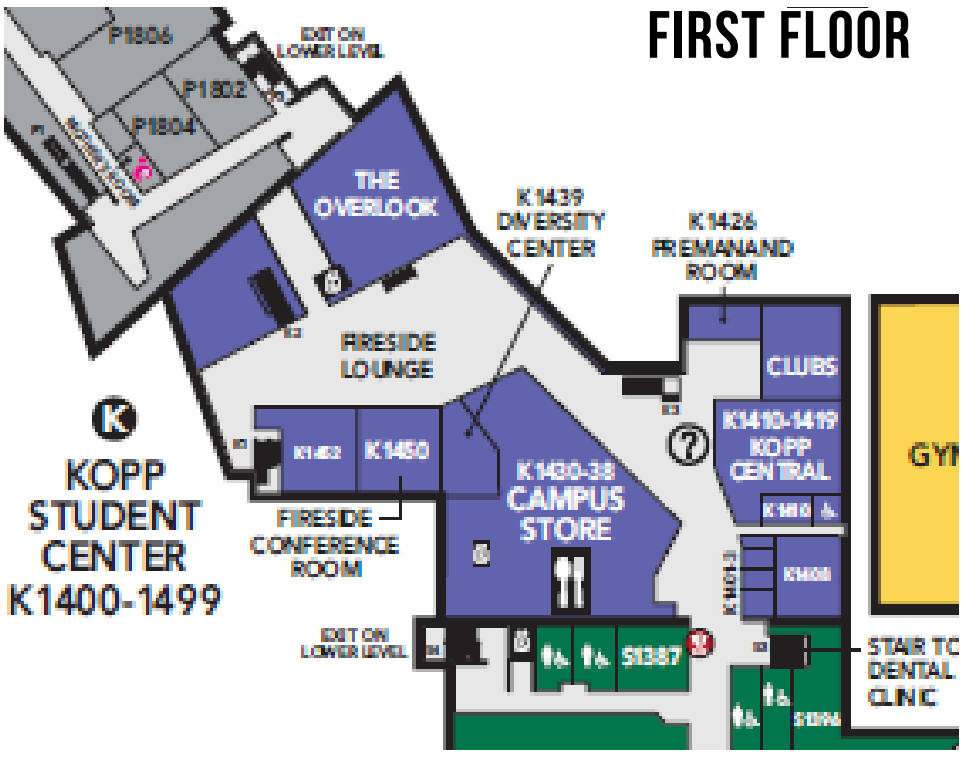
"WRITING, FOR ME, IS AN ACT OF BEAUTY. IT'S AN ACT OF POWER, IT'S AN ACT OF MOURNING, AND IT'S AN ACT OF JUSTICE.—VIET THANH NGUYEN

WRITING FESTIVAL MAPS

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

10:00-10:50	**The Mythic Imagination of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*** Patrick O'Donnell **Room K034-K036**	**Mapping the Territory: Geography of Stories and Poems** Tom Maltman **Room K1450**
11:00-11:50	**Paths to Publishing** Steve Woodward and Matt Mauch **Room K1450**	**Write Now! Interactive Prose and Poetry** Heidi Czerwiec and Anna George **Room K034-K036**
12:00-12:50	**Keynote Speaker: Marcie R. Rendon** In conversation with Lynette Reini-Grandell **Kopp Center Garden Room**	
1:00-1:50	**Murder! Victims, Victors, and Violence in Art and Myth** Eric Mein and Molly Skjei **Room S2320**	**Embodied Writing Workshop** Jennifer Miller **Room P1842**
2:00-2:50	**Creativity Crash: Igniting Your Novel in Fifty Minutes** Dan Darling **Room K1450**	

SESSION ONE: 10:00-11:00 AM

ROOM K034-K036

PATRICK O'DONNELL

THE MYTHIC IMAGINATION OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S THE GREAT GATSBY

2025 is the 100th anniversary of the publication of F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterpiece The Great Gatsby which uses mythic images and allusions to Dante and Arthurian literature to critique the limits of the American Dream and the "careless people" who possess material wealth but little emotional and psychological maturity.

ROOM K1450

TOM MALTMAN

MAPPING THE TERRITORY: GEOGRAPHY OF STORIES AND POEMS

Jumpstart your creativity with a morning session featuring interactive stations to inspire new stories and poems! Deepen your knowledge of poetic craft, map out unexplored territory with your fiction, and experience firsthand how prose and poetry speak to each other across genre divides. Each station will awaken new ideas about writing, teach techniques to strengthen your stories and poems, and embolden your imaginative explorations. Come Write Now! with us.

SESSION TWO: 11:00-12:00 PM

ROOM K1450

STEVE WOODWARD

MATT MAUCH

PATHWAYS TO PUBLISHING

An experienced writer and editor will share their insights on publishing and provide tips on how to publish your work in literary magazines. Matt Mauch will share how his five books have been published and will discuss publishing paths and opportunities in the current landscape. Steve Woodward will share insights on editing and the publishing process gathered from twelve years as a senior editor at Graywolf Press and as founder and editor at *Menagerie Magazine*.

ROOM K034-K036

HEIDI CZERWIEC

ANNA GEORGE MEEK

WRITE NOW! INTERACTIVE PROSE AND POETRY

In this panel, we will work in groups to read examples and use prompts to generate the starts of poems and literary prose. No experience needed! Just bring yourself and something to write with.

KEYNOTE: MARCIE R. RENDON

In conversation with Lynette Reini-Grandell

12:00-1:00 PM: Kopp Center Garden Room (K0462)



MARCIE R. RENDON

Author and Activist

Marcie Rendon will share her story, discuss the art of creative writing, and read excerpts from her latest novel, *Broken Fields*.

ABOUT MARCIE R. RENDON

Marcie R. Rendon is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, author, playwright, poet, and freelance writer. She is an award-winning author of a fresh new murder mystery series, and also has an extensive body of fiction and nonfiction works.

The creative mind behind Raving Native Theater, Rendon has also curated community created performances such as Art Is... Creative Native Resilience, featuring three Anishinaabe performance artists, which premiered on TPT (Twin Cities Public Television), June 2019.

Rendon was recognized as a 50 over 50 Change-maker by MN AARP and POLLEN in 2018. Rendon and Diego Vazquez received a 2017 Loft Spoken Word Immersion Fellowship for their work with women incarcerated in county jails.

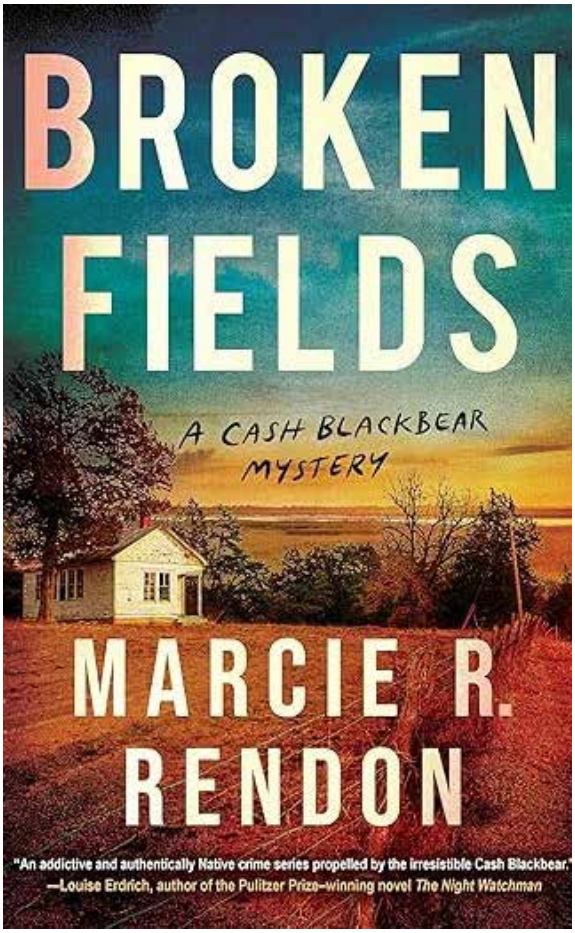
FOOD & REFRESHMENTS: The keynote presentation will be in the Kopp Center Garden Room adjoining the cafeteria. Guests may bring food into the Garden Room during the presentation.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Marcie Rendon has an extensive list of publications, including novels, poems, stoires, essays, and childrens' books. *Broken Fields* is the latest installment in her acclaimed Native crime series.

BROKEN FIELDS

Cash Blackbear, a young Ojibwe woman and occasional sleuth, is back on the case after a man is found dead on a rural Minnesota farm. *Broken Fields* is a compelling, atmospheric read woven with details of rural life, the American Indian Movement, abusive farm labor practices, and women's liberation.



Praise for Broken Fields:

"An addictive and authentically Native crime series propelled by the irresistible Cash Blackbear."
—Louise Erdrich

"A tragic, unforgiving crime novel that emphasizes the perils of the foster care system for Indigenous children."
—Library Journal, Starred Review

Read more at marcierendon.com

SESSION THREE: 1:00-2:00 PM

ROOM S2320

ERIC MEIN

MOLLY SKJEI

MURDER! VICTIMS, VICTORS, AND VIOLENCE IN ART AND MYTH

Are you a true crime fan? What about mythological crime? Stories about "murder most foul" are famous throughout history-- begun as oral stories, told and retold, eventually written down, often depicted in art, and frequently re-interpreted across time and place. Join Eric Mein and Molly Skjei as they examine stories and images of famous mythological murders. Note: Murder is adult subject matter, and Art often features nudity. Don't say we didn't warn you!

ROOM P1842

JENNIFER MILLER

EMBODIED WRITING WORKSHOP

How we feel in our bodies affects what is going on in our minds, and one way to grow as a writer is to learn to draw on the knowledge and strength of your body as you write. Come learn some body-based practices for becoming a more holistic writer. Bring a writing project you are working on so that you can put what you learn to use right away!

SESSION FOUR: 2:00-3:00 PM

ROOM K1450

DAN DARLING

CREATIVITY CRASH: IGNITING YOUR NOVEL IN FIFTY MINUTES

Want to write a novel but having trouble getting started? Let's launch your project into the stratosphere using the rocket fuel of imagination and the boosters of your own life experience. Get step-by-step guidance into coming up with an idea, forming a protagonist, and writing the first scenes.

PRESENTERS



HEIDI CZERWIEC

Essayist and poet Heidi Czerwiec is the author of *Crafting the Lyric Essay: Strike a Chord*, the lyric essay collection *Fluid States*, and the poetry collection *Conjoining*, and co-editor of *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing the Lyric Essay*. She teaches and writes in Minneapolis. Visit her at heidiczerwiec.com.



DAN DARLING

Dan Darling's first novel *Archaeopteryx* was a finalist for the New Mexico-Arizona book award. He speaks four languages, has traveled to twenty countries, and has worked as a circus performer, bartender, IRS agent, and magician. Having earned his MFA in creative writing at the University of New Mexico, Dan is now a multi award-winning educator in Minnesota.



THOMAS MALTMAN

Thomas Maltman's first novel, The Night Birds, won an Alex Award, a Spur Award, and the Friends of American Writers Literary Award. In 2009 the American Library Association chose The Night Birds as an "Outstanding Book for the College Bound." Little Wolves, his second novel, was a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award and won the All Iowa Reads selection in 2014. He teaches at Normandale Community College and lives in the Twin Cities area with his wife, a Lutheran pastor, and his three daughters. His third novel, The Land, was published by Soho Press in October, 2020. In July of 2025, Soho Press will publish his fourth novel, Ashes to Ashes.

PRESENTERS



MATT MAUCH

Matt Mauch is the author of five books of lyrical prose and poetry, including A Northern Spring. Mauch's work has appeared in numerous journals and has been recognized by the Minnesota State Arts Board and as a finalist for National Poetry Series and other national and international contests. Mauch lives in Minneapolis and teaches in the AFA in Creative Writing program at Normandale Community College. He and his books can be found online at mauchmauch.com.



ANNA GEORGE MEEK

Anna George Meek (she/her) has published in Poetry, The Kenyon Review, The Yale Review, and dozens of other national literary journals. She is the recipient of a $25,000 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and two Minnesota State Arts Board grants. She has three nationally prizewinning books of poetry, *Acts of Contortion, Engraved,* and *The Genome Rhapsodies,* and her novel is currently being considered for representation by the literary agent of freakin' F. Scott Fitzgerald, which kinda blows her mind. Having taught creative writing for 30 years at homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, juvenile detention centers, schools, and non-profits, Meek is currently faculty at Normandale and Hamline University. She also: sings professionally for the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers; has played violin for more than 200 weddings; can operate a backhoe; leads wilderness canoe trips; and lives in South Minneapolis with her family and an exuberantly affectionate pitbull named Camille.

PRESENTERS



ERIC MEIN

Eric Mein is an instructor in the English department at Normandale Community College. He earned his B.A. in English Language and Literature from the University of Maryland, College Park, and his M.F.A. in Writing from Hamline University. He has been a servant of the Unseelie Court since 2019, when he stumbled into Faerie during an ill-fated camping trip and had to swear allegiance to the Queen of Air and Darkness in exchange for being allowed to leave. He also enjoys putting ridiculous lies in his bios for the entertainment of those who read them.



JENNIFER MILLER

Jennifer Miller is a faculty member in English at Normandale and a registered yoga teacher. She thinks writing is not just an activity of the mind, but something that should be approached holistically—mind, body, and spirit. When she's not in the classroom or with her family, Dr. Miller can be found outside, probably looking for birds.



PATRICK O'DONNELL

Originally from Ireland, Patrick has been teaching at NCC since 1999 and enjoys exploring the intersections of literary history, myth, spirituality, and biography in his teaching and research, particularly in Modern World Literature. Outside NCC, he edits and writes both fiction and nonfiction for the online quarterly arts journal, Celtic Junction Arts Review and is Chairperson of the Dublin-based international AE Russell Society (www.asgeorgerussell.ie).

PRESENTERS



LYNETTE REINI-GRANDELL

Lynette Reini-Grandell is the author of the memoir *Wild Things: A Trans Glam Punk Rock Love Story*. It's the story of how her spouse came out as trans in 1988, went public through fronting the rock band All the Pretty Horses beginning in the 1990s, and how they navigated an often-hostile, anti-trans environment. Above all, it's a love story of two people navigating the changes in their lives to remain committed to each other. She is also the author of the poetry collections *Wild Verge*; *Approaching the Gate*, winner of the 2015 Northeastern Minnesota book award for poetry. She teaches English and creative writing at Normandale Community College and the Loft. She has received support from her work from the Finlandia Foundation and was awarded a 2025 grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. A multidisciplinary collaborator, she performs at spoken word venues with the Bosso Poetry Company and the jazz collective, Sonoglyph, and her poetry is part of a permanent installation at the Carlton Arms Art Hotel in Manhattan. She lives in Minneapolis on the ancestral homeland of the Dakota people.



MOLLY SKJEI

Molly Skjei has taught Art History at Normandale since 2006. She is a medieval history nerd, enjoys conceptual art and will not entertain theories about aliens building ancient monuments.



STEVE WOODWARD

Steve Woodward has sixteen years of experience in the publishing industry. As a senior editor at Graywolf Press, he edited winners of the Booker Prize and the NBCC Award, and finalists for the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award.

AFA IN CREATIVE WRITING

Are you a dreamer, world-builder, or wordscaper? Do you like writing poems and stories? Memoir? Screenplays? The Associates of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is waiting for you. In the AFA in Creative Writing, you'll have the opportunity to:

- **Study with a wide range of published, award-winning faculty members**
- **Take advanced workshops in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting**
- **Complete all the regular general courses while focusing on the craft of creative writing**
- **Get hands-on editing and designing experience at *The Paper Lantern*, Normandale's literary journal**
- **Complete an independent writing project or internship under the guidance of a faculty mentor**

For additonal info on the AFA in Creative Writing, visit our webpage:
http://normandaleafacw.wordpress.com

Contact Kris Bigalk, Director of Creative Writing:
kris.bigalk@normandale.edu

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH AN AFA?

Anything you want! The Normandale AFA has transfer agreements with local and national colleges and universities, plus most of our graduates receive significant financial aid at their transfer schools.

Our graduates go on to work as writers, professors, teachers, publicists, managers, lawyers, psychologists, and more.

They have published books and magazine articles, and have worked on films in L.A.

ANNA GERGEN
2018 AFA Graduate

Transfered to Columbia University in New York City.

LUNA REY HALL
2014 AFA Graduate

Author of four books, including *Loudest When Startled.*

PAUL PATANE
2014 AFA Graduate

Transferred to Hamline University. Copy Manager at Rocket 55.

HALEY SARGENT
2018 AFA Graduate

Digital Engagement Specialist at Live Action.

NOTES

NOTES

OUR NEXT EVENT

Join us for the Patsy Lea Core Writing Award Ceremony!

Event Details

Date: April 22, 2025
Time: 7:00
Place: Garden Room
Judges: Chaun Webster, Poetry; Ari Tison, Fiction





THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

Would you like to ensure future Writing Festivals? The Writing Festival, offered to students, faculty, staff and the greater community without charge, requires a certain amount of money to put on. If you'd like to help with the cost of future festivals, please donate using the info below.

DONATE

You can make tax-deductible donations directly to the Normandale Foundation through our website:

https://www.normandale.edu/why-normandale/foundation/give/index.html

- Click on the "Give Now" button.
- On the first screen of the donation form, type "Writing Center/Writing Festival" in the box for "other."

The English Department gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following for their help in putting on this year's festival: The Normandale AFA in Creative Writing Program, Creative Writing Club, Normandale Foundation, Normandale Reading Series, President's Diversity Council, The Normandale Marketing Staff, our wonderful donors, and everyone else who helped make this year's festival a success.

Scan the QR Code to donate now!

THANKS!