

Narrative Shifts

Holding Spaces

Session 6 Resource Packet

SEVENTH WAVE

Session 6: Holding Spaces

Overview:

Writing is in and of itself a solo endeavor. But it doesn't have to be a lonely one. During this session, we'll talk about the importance of building community through our words, and share resources for how to plug into existing spaces or create our own. We'll also share tips and tricks for writing routines and practices that can help you sustain your craft beyond what happens on the page. We will also zoom out and talk about what it means to be a writer in the world during times of political division, censorship, and strife.

Before Session:

What does it mean to hold space? For ourselves, our shared pasts, and our collective futures? What does it mean to hold space for our work? How do we create rituals and routines, disciplines and creative practices? How do we rest, and when do we pause? What role does community have in the spaces we are holding? What spaces hold us? In this sixth session, we look at the art and acts of holding space for the self, for your work, and for each other.

Recommended prompt: Before the session, we ask that you hold space for yourself — at least sixty minutes — for unscripted, creative decompression. Do not generate in this time. Take the hour (or more, if you have it) to attend to something you've been neglecting, perhaps, or wanting to pay attention to. Perhaps you've been wanting to organize a bookshelf or create a bookshelf in a space; sift through a project folder or clean up the version history of a project; or sit back and read from your TBR pile. Perhaps you know what you need to attend to, or maybe you first just need to create the space to let that time tell you what needs your attention.

During Session:

Below are the activities we have planned for our sixth session:

- **The social justice change map.** In the first half of the session, we'll be looking at the roles we play, have played, or would like to play within our creative communities. We'll also be interrogating what it means to be a "literary citizen," and how our work is helping to make the literary world more dynamic, inclusive, and/or accessible. Our reference material and guiding framework for this part of the session is Deepa Iyer's [Social Change Map](#).
- **Bring a question for someone else.** In the second half, we'll be holding space for our group. What question would you like to ask someone else in the group? Now knowing them or their work a little bit better, what's something you're curious to know about how someone else does something? Be it writing or organizing, maintaining your creative writing time while parenting, or freelance writing and running your own creative business, we welcome all questions and curiosities. In this second half of the session, we'll be holding spaces to talk about our haves, our wants, and our collective needs.

After Session:

These are continuing resources created in collaboration with Emilie Menzel, a poet and librarian who builds creative libraries for individuals, nonprofits, and organizations (pictures are not in order, but just a sample of the authors listed).



1. On the Writing Workshop:

- [**Craft in the Real World, Matthew Salesses.**](#) "The traditional writing workshop was established with white male writers in mind; what we call craft is informed by their cultural values. In this bold and original examination of elements of writing — including plot, character, conflict, structure, and believability — and aspects of workshop — including the silenced writer and the imagined reader — Matthew Salesses asks questions to invigorate these familiar concepts. He upends Western notions of how a story must progress. How can we rethink craft, and the teaching of it, to better reach writers with diverse backgrounds? How can we invite diverse storytelling traditions into literary spaces?"
- [**The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom, Felicia Rose Chavez.**](#) "A call to create healthy, sustainable, and empowering classroom communities. Award-winning educator Felicia Rose Chavez exposes the invisible politics of power and privilege that have silenced writers of color for far too long."

2. On a Sustainable Creative Life:

- [**The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World, Lewis Hyde \(Book\).**](#) "Lewis Hyde demonstrates how our society — governed by the marketplace — is poorly equipped to determine the worth of artists' work. He shows us that another way is possible: the alternative economy of the gift, which allows creations and ideas to circulate freely, rather than hoarding them as commodities."
- [**Unpublished, podcast.**](#) A podcast with real, not-just-celebrities people about what it's like to build a creative practice from scratch and how to actually sustain and maintain a creative practice.

3. On Finding Community:

- [**"What's the Deal With Writing Residencies?" Elisa Gabbert.**](#) What even is a residency? And how do you apply? Which ones do you apply to, and what can you expect? What about cover letters, rec letters, and finding time off work? Gabbert responds to these questions and more with kind, measured answers.

- [Find a Residency Tool](#), **Artist Communities Alliance (website)**. A website that compiles artist residency information and details, then has an effective way for you to filter the results by location, funding, discipline, program structure, identities of focus, ADA compliance, and even whether or not you can bring your pets.

4. Resources by The Seventh Wave

- [Who is home in publishing?](#) A three-part series by Callum Angus. In 2023, we launched our Well-Crafted community blog, which houses process pieces, news, and announcements, and in 2024, we started commissioning articles. On July 2, 2024, we published Part 1 of a three-part series by Callum Angus, which examines the systems we've both inherited and invented, and the ways they sometimes exacerbate the very problems they sought to address.
- [2024 Community Anthologies](#), **Seventh Wave**. In 2023, we launched our Community Anthologies program, which selects four EICs to curate their own community anthologies, or mini-issues. In 2024, our four EICs (Xu Li's "On Endings"; Isaiah Yonah Back-Gaal's "On Queer Family"; dezirée a. brown's "On Gaming"; and Para VadhaHong's "On Prayer") all brought together six to eight voices each — writers both emerging and established — to ruminate on the power of these poignant topics.
- ["Rebellious Joy Resource Guide,"](#) **Emilie Menzel**. Emilie Menzel, our senior poetry editor and in-house librarian, helped us to curate a resource guide to accompany Issue 13: Rebellious Joy. To do so, she asked team members, contributors, and our featured artist to share some of their favorite books, films, songs, podcasts, and more that all relate to the theme of "rebellious joy."
- ["How TSW curates our calls for submissions,"](#) **Seventh Wave**. The way that we comes up with each call for submissions is very collaborative — it involves a three-month process and usually up to 10 people brainstorming together in a Google doc. There are three phases of the process: the brainstorm, the braincalm, and then "mindblown," or the call itself. In this way, we consider every call to be an ongoing conversation between folks from each issue.

- [Insights](#), **Seventh Wave**. As part of our efforts to offer multiple entry points into the Seventh Wave, we have an ongoing column we like to call “Insights,” which features members of our community sharing thought-provoking pieces about the art and craft of writing. Pieces range from ruminations on the politics of care to the importance of Black joy; the amorphous shapes of desire to the mystifying draw of our homelands.
- [“TSW staff picks: what we’re reading, watching, and listening to right now,”](#) **Seventh Wave**. From time to time, we like to ask our team what stories they’re currently consuming, both to get a better gauge of what amazing art is out there and to help offer a continuous resource for our community. As the entire team is composed of artists and writers, we know the importance of practicing what we preach, and this is one small way that we stay accountable to that.
- [“10 Black-focused retreats, workshops, and festivals,”](#) **Seventh Wave**. It is our deep belief that literary organizations should always look for ways to support one another; as such, we occasionally pull together roundups to spotlight different literary organizations and events that we think our community might be interested in looking into. When it comes to bettering the literary ecosystem, we believe the only way to do so is to rise together.
- [“10 TSW poets writing against systems,”](#) **Seventh Wave**. Some months, we try to pull together a roundup of past contributors’ pieces to spotlight, oftentimes pegged to a certain theme or topic, like this roundup of incredible pieces by poets who are using their write to interrogate broken systems and their impact on our lived experiences. It is our hope, with these roundups, to shine a light on pieces we’ve published in the past in new context, and to offer readers an entry point into some really singular short stories, essays, poems, and more.

*The first thing we built
wasn't a magazine, but a
community.*

