



Fall 2022 KCVWT Veterans Writing Workshop  
Theme: War and Truth  
October 7-8 and 15, 2022

Kansas City Public Library: Plaza Location  
4801 Main St.  
Kansas City, MO 64113

**Friday, October 7**

**AM Schedule**

9:00 - 9:15 Welcome, Announcements, Evaluations: Nick Lopez  
Introductions: HC Palmer

9:15–10:00 Moral Injury: What is it, and How do we Recognize it? **Dr. Rita Brock**

10:00– 10:15 Q and A: **Dr. Rita Brock** (moderator - **Dr. H.C. Palmer**)

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30 -11:15 Recovery from Moral Injury: Why Writing Matters for Soul Repair  
**Dr. Rita Brock**

11:15-11:45 Moral Injury Roundtable  
**Dr. Rita Brock, Dr. Thomas McGuire, Dr. Katherine McGuire, Dr. H. C. Palmer**

11:45 –12:15PM – Lunch **A free sandwich lunch with water is provided. If you have dietary restrictions, please bring your own brown bag.**

**Friday, October 7**

**PM Schedule**

12:15 - 1:00 Moral Injury Summary **Dr. Rita Brock**

1:00 - 1:45 The Process of Writing I: **Virginia Brackett**

Writing is a process – few pieces appear perfectly the first time we sit down to write. This session presents several of those steps along with demonstrations of each



1:45 - 2:00 - Break

2:00 – 2:45 How to Tell a True War Story: A Writer's & Reader's Guide to the True War Story Tradition **Dr. Thomas McGuire**

Chaim Potok once said, "Good writers read, and good readers write." Eyeing this truism, we'll discuss how you can bolster your efforts to write true war stories through a creative discipline that combines frequent writing with a habit of regularly reading exemplary war stories. Along the way, we'll explore some essential qualities and continuities that define the true war story tradition, taking Tim O'Brien's "How to Tell A True War Story" and the work of WLA contributors as exemplars of that tradition.

2:45 - 3:30 How to Tell A True War Story: Negotiating War's Brokenness and the Quest for Healing **Dr. Katherine McGuire**

A psychological introduction to understanding and negotiating the psychological fragmentation resulting from war, with focus on how telling a true war story may facilitate healing and reintegration

3:30 – Evaluations & Announcements **Dr. H.C. Palmer**

## Saturday, October 8

### AM Schedule

9:00 - 9:15 Announcements **Nick Lopez**

Introduction of workshop leaders **Dr. H. C. Palmer**

9:15 – 10:00

How to Tell A True War Story: Why Poetry Makes The Stomach Believe **Dr. Thomas McGuire**

Tim O'Brien writes, "A true war story, if told truly, makes the stomach believe." This session considers how common poetic elements and techniques (e.g., constructing images, making sensory appeals, balancing sounds and silence) can make "the stomach believe." Examining well-made poems from the WLA archive, we'll discuss how tapping into the power of poetic expression will equip you to make art that moves not only readers' intellects, but also their bodies and emotions.

10:00 – 10:45 How to Tell a True War Story: How Psychological and Somatic Responses Impact the Narration and Reception of War Stories **Dr. Katherine McGuire**

Noting the military/civilian gap, Tim O'Brien writes, "Nobody listens. Nobody hears nothin'." This session explores the common psychological and physical responses to the war experience/narrative, and how such responses impact both the hearing and telling of a true war story. Specifically, we will examine how these psychological responses affect veterans, family members and other civilians.

10:45-11:00 Break



11:00 –11:45 The Process of Writing II **Virginia Brackett**

Discussion of the steps to achieve a polished draft continue, with focus on Prewriting and Drafting

11:45 -12:30 Lunch **A free sandwich lunch with water is provided. If you have dietary restrictions, please bring your own brown bag.**

## **Saturday, October 8**

### **PM Schedule**

1:00 -1:45 How to Tell A True War Story in Private: A Psychologist and Writer in Conversation **Dr. Thomas McGuire and Dr. Katherine McGuire**

A dialogue about vulnerability and the essential need to both talk and write about war and military life, even if only for yourselves. The moderators will begin by discussing the benefits and challenges of reflecting on war and military experience either in private or with another person. This dialogue will be followed by a question-and-answer session with workshop participants

1:45 - 2:00 Reader's Theater Discussion **George Pettigrew, Jon Michael Jonson**

2:00 - 2:15 Break

2:15 - 3:30 Focus on Writing **Dr. H.C. Palmer**

3:30 - 4:00 Evaluations and Questions. Discussion prompts for "Speaking of Courage" from Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* **Dr. H.C. Palmer**

## **Saturday, October 15**

### **AM Schedule**

9:00 - 9:15 Announcements, Reminders **Nick Lopez**

Introduction of Shana Youngdahl and Kaite Stover **Dr. H. C. Palmer**

9:15 - 10:00 Tim O'Brien's "Speaking of Courage": a Civilian Point of View **Katie Stover**

10:00 -10:15 Break

10:15 -10:45 The Process of Writing III: Focus Points for Revision **Virginia Brackett**



10:45 -11:45 AM: Fact, Fiction, or Poem: Writing Your Emotional Truth Part 1:

**Shana Youngdahl**

In this workshop we will consider the differences between emotional truth, literal truth, and memory. Participants can expect to engage in writing exercises to probe these questions more deeply.

11:45 - Noon Reader's Theater: **George Pettigrew, Jon Michael Jonson**

Noon -12:30PM Lunch **A free sandwich lunch with water is provided. If you have dietary restrictions, please bring your own brown bag.**

**Saturday, October 15**

**PM Schedule**

12:30 -1:30PM: Fact, Fiction, or Poem: Writing Your Emotional Truth Part 2:

**Shana Youngdahl**

In this hour participants will continue to write their emotional truth through writing exercises that build from our first hour. Participants can expect to leave with the groundwork to keep building their own "emotionally true," story, poem or essay.

1:30 -1:45 Break

1:45 - 2:15 PM Fact, Fiction, or Poem: Writing Your Emotional Truth: Next Steps

**Shana Youngdahl**

2:15 - 3:00 Participants Read **Dr. H. C. Palmer**

3:00 – 3:15 Evaluations, Closing Remarks **Nick Lopez**

**Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock** is a leading American theologian and an expert on moral injury in combat veterans, frontline caregivers, first responders, and international humanitarian aid workers. She has offered training in recovery strategies for veterans, their families, mental health workers, professional chaplains, spiritual caregivers, social workers and the general public.

**Dr. Katherine McGuire** is a clinical psychologist. She specializes in trauma resolution work, including war trauma, family trauma from war, and PTSD.



**Dr. Thomas McGuire** is a poet. He is editor of the acclaimed literary journal, *War, Literature and the Arts*. He is a professor at The United States Air Force Academy and a Fulbright Scholar.

**Shana Youngdahl** loves helping people embrace the stories they need to tell. Educated at Mills College, The University of Minnesota, and The University of Maine, Shana currently teaches writing in the MFA program at Lindenwood University. She is the author of the poetry collection *History, Advice and Other Half-Truths* (SFSUPress), and several poetry chapbooks. Shana's debut novel *As Many Nows As I Can Get*, was a Kirkus Best Book of 2019, and a New York Public Library top-ten book of 2019 (Dial/Penguin Teen). Her second novel *A Catalog of Burnt Objects* is forthcoming. Connect with her online at [www.shanayoungdahl.com](http://www.shanayoungdahl.com), twitter [@shanayoungdahl](https://twitter.com/shanayoungdahl) or Instagram [@shanayoungdahl](https://www.instagram.com/shanayoungdahl)

**Virginia Brackett, PhD** writes mainly prose. She has published dozens of articles, blog entries and stories for all ages, including an article in *War, Literature and the Arts* and was invited to write the Foreword for the upcoming edition of *Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors* (SEMS UP). Brackett's 15 books have been cited by the New York Public Library, the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association, the American Library Association, and Booklist (Editor's Choice, Reference Sources, 2008). Tom Strelch wrote in the *New York Journal of Books* about her memoir, *In the Company of Patriots* (Sunbury Press, 2019): "The book is an absorbing hybrid: a classical drama crossed with an archeological dig, only instead of pottery shards, burial mounds, and stone tools, it uses scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, letters, emails, and family lore to reveal a multi-generational personal history linking the past to the present." [www.virginiabackett.com](http://www.virginiabackett.com).

**Dr. H.C. Palmer** writes poetry and prose. He is a retired Internist and served as a Battalion Surgeon with the First Infantry Division in Vietnam in 1965-66. His work has appeared in *New Letters*, *Poetry Daily*, *Verse Daily*, *War Literature and the Arts*, *Narrative Magazine*, *The New Mexico Poetry Review*, *I-70 Review*, *Flint Hills Review*, *Gray's Sporting Journal* and other journals and anthologies. His first book of poems, *Feet of the Messenger*, from BkMkPress, released in October 2017, was a finalist for the 2017 Balcones Poetry Prize and a 2017 Kansas Notable Book.



## Books available for purchase

By Virginia Brackett, Ph.D.:

[\*In the Company of Patriots\*](#)

\$20    please pay with cash

By Shana Youngdahl:

*History, Advice, and Other Half-Truths*

*As Many Nows As I Can Get*

*Donner: A Passing*

\$12    cash preferred

\$15

\$8

By Dr. H.C. Palmer:

[\*Feet of the Messenger\*](#)

\$14    please pay with cash