

Dear **Creative Writing** Students,

Congratulations—You're coming to GSA this summer!

We couldn't be more excited for you about this point in your life. GSA is an important time. It's a chance to grow as a writer, to learn more about your craft, to explore other artforms, and to meet fellow creatives who share your interests. In short, GSA is an experience. These will be three transformative weeks for you.

### **What to Expect**

We will work on all aspects of writing, from idea creation and drafting, to revising and polishing, and publishing and performance. Together, we'll refine our strengths and tackle our obstacles, while pushing each other to experiment with new subjects and forms (like adding music and rhythm to your piece). We'll achieve this in the form of lectures, small group workshops, individual conferences, daily writing exercises, manuscript critique sessions, and in visits from real working writers.

You will also have the opportunity participate in interdisciplinary activities (engaging in artforms other than your own). In addition, you will produce a body of work and assemble a chapbook. You'll even be learning about writing for the stage and how to present your work to audiences in public readings.

### **What We Expect from You**

The two most important things we expect from you are **curiosity** and **optimism**. We expect you to be interested in working on your writing and in learning as much as you can. We expect you to be willing to revise, to try new things, and to consider comments from other writers. We expect you to listen attentively to the many voices of your classmates, faculty, staff, and our guest artists. Above all, we expect that you believe in yourself, for you can solve all your creative obstacles. Even if you struggle to do that on your own, *we promise to help you*.

**Of course, we also expect you to be on time and to be ready to start work immediately.** Our classes are fast-paced and intense, and there's a lot we want you to learn! We expect you to take care of yourself before and during the program, so you'll be able to keep up with the workload and get as much out of the GSA experience as possible. *This means eating well and making sure you get enough rest. (We know it can be tempting, but please don't have too much ice cream!)*

We also expect you to give each other the utmost respect. In other words, treat each other with the care and sensitivity you'd want for yourself.

### **What to Explore In Your Reading Before You Arrive**

You're a Kentucky writer, so we want you to become familiar with the work of Kentuckian Writers! Review your local library's online offerings, visit authors' websites, find anthologies and journals, and check out works by several of these state writers:

**Nikky Finney, Crystal Wilkinson, Kelly Norman Ellis, Wendell Berry, Sallie Bingham, Rebecca Gayle Howell, James Baker Hall, bell hooks, Mary Ann Taylor-Hall, Ellen Hagan, Erin Keane, Tania James,**

**Bianca Spriggs, Shayla Lawson, Danni Quintos, Frank X Walker, Katerina Stoykova-Klemer, Barbara Kingsolver, George Ella Lyon, Bobbie Ann Mason, Frederick Smock, Sena Jeter Naslund, Chris Offutt, Gayl Jones, Gurney Norman, Jeremy Paden, and ZZ Packer.**

**NOTE** – This list is by no means exhaustive.

### **What to Bring to the Writing Program**

Please bring a **laptop computer, iPad, or tablet (and a device charger)**. We'll be collaborating on your devices and sharing digital files to limit our use of paper.

**NOTE** – If you need assistance in obtaining a laptop for GSA (or any of the other supplies listed below), please email your request **immediately** to [gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org](mailto:gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org). We're happy to help!

Even though we'll rely heavily on technology, we'll also be writing by hand. For this, we ask that you bring **pens, pencils, notebooks, and journals** that you can carry around with ease. You're also welcome to bring additional tools that you think you might need, such as a **pocket dictionary or lucky pencil**. 😊

Though housing, meals, room, and board are covered by GSA, you might want a little **extra spending money** for GSA merch on-campus or souvenirs during field trips.

Last, we ask that you bring enough **face masks** with you for 3 weeks at GSA.

As you prepare yourself for GSA, may your words flow, and your excitement grow.

With all best wishes,

**Dan Bernitt** (*First & Second Session*)

**Berry** (*First Session Only*)

**Olivia Cole** (*First & Second Session*)

**Mitchell L. H. Douglas** (*Second Session Only*)

**-The GSA Creative Writing Faculty**