

Opening the Doors of Poetry: A Weeklong Generative Workshop

When: June 26 – 30, 2017 and August 7 – 11, 2017

Where: Montpelier, Vermont at Baron Wormser's house

Cost: \$1,000

Over the course of decades I have taught many dozens of workshops and have developed a sense, both practical and intuitive, about the value of using prompts as a springboard into writing. The notion is Buddhist and reminiscent of koans: be in the moment and respond to what occurs in the moment. There is nothing to plan and very definitely nothing to worry about. Each participant starts afresh with each piece of writing in search of new ways through the thicket of the self and welter of the world.

Each day, I will present two prompts, which means ten new poems during the week. After a discussion that speaks to what is occurring in the piece, participants use that prompt as a jumping-off point. Then, after a timed writing period, the group reconvenes to read aloud what they've written and discuss how their piece related to the prompt and where they went with it.

The workshop revolves around trust: trusting me as a teacher and trusting yourself to respond. Responsiveness is a great gift, a hallmark of our being alive. For my part, I started teaching at the Frost Place in 1992 and before that was teaching undergrads and high school students. I came to realize that prompts offer a chance to appreciate and engage with some nugget of art along with a chance to make something more of it, something personal. The prompts are a spur to writing but also a chance to further the conversation every writer needs to have about other writers.

There will be, over the course of the days, time to revise pieces. If a participant gets caught up with a piece of his or her writing and wants to stay with it, that's fine. The intention is to respect the opening of those inner doors. Although what comes up may be intense, there is no emotional agenda. The path each person takes in each piece is utterly up to the person.

Again, for my part, I have offered similar generative workshops over the years at various locales but can now do it in my own home, where my own library is present. My wife and I live in a cozy cottage of a house and the group will meet, as weather and inclination dictate, in our living room, our dining room, our patio, and our front porch. Our house is near downtown Montpelier so it's a very short walk from places to stay like the Montpelier Inn, Betsy's B & B, and the Capitol Plaza Hotel. Montpelier has many restaurants, an art cinema, a bar with over twenty craft beers on tap, independent bookstores, and a number of bakeries and cafes. There is plenty of hiking, kayaking, and swimming nearby. It's a lovely place to spend a week.

The cost for a week is \$1,000. The day runs from 8:30 (breakfast will be provided) to 3. Participants can sit and write in our house and on the grounds or porch or sit in a nearby café and write there. I am around all day to talk individually with each participant. Participation is limited to six people.

This workshop is geared for any level of writer. The point is to offer a chance to grow as a writer and bear witness to others' growth. Each day will unfold in a slightly different way because the prompts and the writing that the prompts generate inevitably take us down intriguing paths.

Contact Baron Wormser at 802.223.2622 or baronwormser@gmail.com

What participants have said about the "Open the Doors" workshops:

"I left the front porch of Baron's lovely and historic home with a full notebook and dozens of ways to go with new pieces. This is a fertile and exciting week for a poet in any stage of the creative life."

"A meta-awareness of stylistic and formal possibility effervesces from your method, clearly challenging us to reach and feel and write beyond our habitual reading for content and voice. BRAVO! You have revolutionized the workshop model."

"I found the variety of poems and prompts to be wonderful. I wasn't sure exactly what to expect in coming, but I know I didn't expect to feel so quickly and completely part of a generative writer's community that I'm hoping will carry forward over the coming months. Even if it doesn't, having that for a week is well worth the entry fee."

For more information: www.baronwormser.com