



THE SITTING ROOM

A COMMUNITY LIBRARY

FALL 2017

POST OFFICE BOX 838, PENNGROVE, CALIFORNIA 94951

SPECIAL EVENTS

NOTE: All special events are free and open to everyone in the community (no memberships needed or gender excluded). The Sitting Room is located at 2025 Curtis Drive, just off Petaluma Hill Rd., south of E. Cotati Ave, near Sonoma State University – we are right next door to the Church of Christ. Map and parking advice on our website: sittingroom.org. You can also reach us via Sonoma County Transit. Line 44 drops you right at our doorstep (Curtis Drive) and we are just .7 miles from Sonoma State, which is served by lines 10, 12 and 14. Check <http://sctransit.com/> for details.

SHINING LIGHTS: WOMEN WRITING SCIENCE

Please join us this fall for a series of programs which explore the craft of writing science in ways that enlighten, engage and elucidate. The speakers are some of our local scientists, science writers and poets, who will talk about their current work, how they came to their careers, and how they seek to engage the public in what are sometimes complex and specialized areas in various science disciplines. We are planning four programs, each focusing on one of the genres of writing and disciplines noted below along with exhibits of science themed books.

NASA AND SETI, AERONAUTICS AND ASTROPHYSICS

Dawn Keiser and Mary Barsony, Saturday, Sept. 30, 2-4 p.m.

Local working scientists on their own work and experiences; discussion/critique of writers they recommend.

Dawn's interests and studies include unmanned flight technology for Mars exploration, human factors in space travel, simulation systems, orbital debris and the international Space Treaty. She is a member of the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), and has recently taught a class about NASA-developed materials at the SRJC. She currently directs Communities for Science, a local program cultivating social and community spaces for scientific discussion.

Mary Barsony is a professor of astronomy and physics who has taught at UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, San Francisco State University, and the SRJC, among other institutions. She has been a Faculty Fellow at NASA Ames. Her interests and research include star formation and planetary mass objects. She is currently a research scientist affiliated with The SETI Institute.

READING WATER; RESPECTING THE EARTH

Rebecca Lawton, Saturday, October 7, 2-4 p.m.

Science writers discuss their special interests and favorite works.

Rebecca Lawton, scientist, writer and river guide, is author of *Steelies and Other Endangered Species*, *Sacrament: Homage to a River*, and *Reading Water: Lessons from the River*, among others. In the latter, she explores rivers and their impact on human emotional landscape. She offers many of the lessons learned from interpreting rivers and currents, living in the river community and being steeped in boating subculture. She has contributed articles for general audiences to many national publications, and is very active in local outreach. 2nd speaker TBA.

ECO POETICS: THE LANGUAGE OF NATURE

Elizabeth C. Herron and Maya Khosla, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2-4 p.m.

Poetry and filmmaking incorporating science and environmental themes, how creative works can advance science and effect change.

Elizabeth C. Herron, Professor of Arts and Humanities at Sonoma State University, writes poetry and articles on art and ecology, the role of art in society, and the importance of natural systems and biodiversity in the physical and spiritual wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the planet. Much of her poetry reflects these concerns. Herron's published work includes three collections of poems – *Desire Being Full of Distances*, *Language for the Wild*, *The Stones the Dark Earth*, *Report* (a chapbook), and a book of short stories, *While the Distance Widens*.

Writer/filmmaker/biologist Maya Khosla's fieldwork has been supported by Patagonia and the Sacramento Audubon Society. She has written *Web of Water: Life in Redwood Creek*, *Tapping the Fire*, *Turning the Steam: Securing the Future with Geothermal Energy*, and *Keel Bone*. Her recent projects have focused on the resurrection of forests after fires, bird life in post-burn ecosystems and the crucial importance of wildfires in the Sierra Nevada. She will be discussing and showing clips from her recent documentaries *Searching for Gold Spot* and *Northern Goshawks and Fire*.

AIM HIGH—PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY; OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Lynn Cominsky, Saturday, Nov. 4, 2-4 p.m.

Lynn Cominsky is the Chair of the Physics and Astronomy department at Sonoma State University. She also directs SSU's Education and Public Outreach group, which develops innovative educational materials to inspire students in grades 5-14 to pursue STEM careers, to train teachers nationwide to use these materials in the classroom, and to enhance science literacy for the general public. She is also a scientific co-investigator on the Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope mission.

HARVEST SUPPER Friday, November 3, 6 p.m. on

This annual event is always a benefit for The Living Room, the wonderful women's daytime shelter in Santa Rosa. You will need to email us at sittingroom.org for reservations by Oct. 23 (or before, as it does usually sell out) or telephone J.J. Wilson at 707 795-9028, if you have questions. We will have a bucket for your checks made out to The Living Room (tax deductible) and also take sample unopened shampoos etc. and other desirables (have a look at The Living Room website to see what they can use).



The menu is simple – this year will probably feature a choice of harvest soups along with assemble-it-yourself bacon (optional), lettuce, and fried green tomato sandwiches. And then there are the desserts! From Karen's famous poached pears and J.J.'s cheesecake to Eloise's lemon bars, etc. Wine is served (unlike our usual temperance policy) and there is homemade entertainment: this year dramatic readings from some of J.J.'s cross country travel narratives with different co-drivers who will add their own commentary....



THE SITTING ROOM 2017 BIRTHDAY AND ANTHOLOGY

The Need To Read: My Best Literary Friend

This year we celebrated that fascinatingly diverse assembly of literary characters who had influenced, inspired, amused and beguiled us through years of reading. What an odd lot they were, too, from Offred to Antigone, Elena to Molly, Heathcliff to Holden. We chose just one to share with you all here, Elizabeth Herron's warm recollection of Cassandra, the young heroine of Dodi Smith's *I Capture the Castle*. You will have a chance to meet Elizabeth on October 14 when she shares her poetry as part of our Shining Lights series.

How I CAPTURE THE CASTLE Captured My Imagination

Elizabeth C. Herron

"I write this sitting in the kitchen sink. That is, my feet are in it; the rest of me is on the draining-board, which I have padded with our dog's blanket and the tea-cosy." So opens *I Capture the Castle*, Dodi Smith's gently witty novel narrated by seventeen year-old Cassandra. I was ten or eleven when this book came into my hands, years when I shared a room with my sister, whose name like the name of the narrator's sister, was Rose. My sister and I read the book in turn, as we were in the habit of doing in those years, she first, I following, until *I Capture the Castle* sewed in me the seeds of my separateness, without which I would not have become a writer. Cassandra was becoming a writer. More than anything else I think it was her choice that allowed me to imagine my own. Not that I aimed directly or ever said as much or even knew and so could not have told Rose, to whom I told everything eventually – but Cassandra was someone who had thoughts of her own, shared only with herself and an imagined future reader. As I became that imagined reader of a writer somehow like myself, I became aware of the separateness of my thoughts. All this is a tangled weaving I cannot completely sort out. We too had a tea-cosy in our house; we too had a dog. We too had a mother who was alternately present and utterly absent.

There was a window above the kitchen sink and I had a pencil and a notebook with me when I sat there. I scribbled and looked out the window at the sea, and thought my own thoughts and felt a kinship with Cassandra. The habit of writing from peculiar locations persisted, because when I look at the world from an unexpected vantage point I have unexpected thoughts. The usual way of doing things confines my thinking. And so it is that I cannot keep good habits, be they getting to bed at the same sensible hour every night or sitting regular work hours at the desk in my office. Oh no – I must sit with my back to a door jam all day, or kneel with my computer on the ottoman, or crawl into the hollow under the weeping birch where I can peer out through moving leaves that shadow the pages of my little notebook as I write.

The way Cassandra writes about her life, what details she includes, and her wry bemused observations shifted my perspective. I began to see even myself with a pleasing double vision, both personal and distant as I developed the capacity (a writer's capacity) to hear my own thoughts. Once I began writing, I discovered a way to survive life's nastier surprises and discomforts. My writing took on a precedence of necessity I was only aware of if I left it very long. The other key to my survival, was my sister Rose, who came second or first, depending on what kind of crisis was at hand.

Around the time of *I Capture the Castle*, I began keeping a diary, something Rose did not do. That was when I began to have a truly separate life. Writing gives you that – a separate life.

To the small extent that I do, I understand life through writing and reading. I know that the old horse down the lane lives in a "blue patience made of loneliness" because an inner voice told me so. And I know my mother was right when she told me, "the best are wild-caught, straight from the sea." That is why she had to leave; and that is why I too must remain free. I know the tunnels of light we make with our flashlights blind us. Cassandra saw into the dark, as writers sometimes do, and she was so charming that when she spoke she was loved, even when she was disbelieved.

SITTING ROOM 2018 PUBLICATION

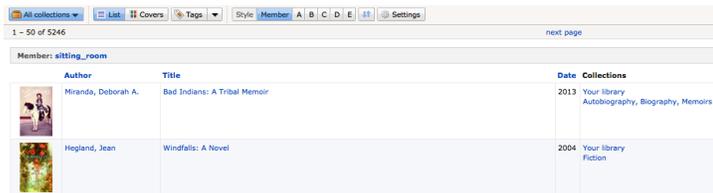
Before print, people from around the globe gathered in groves and circles to tell stories. And while each generation kept their culture alive through repeating these myths and legends, there were adaptations. Individual flourishes. Exaggerations and morphings. Perhaps with digital media our voices have become softer and smaller and less compelling. Still, there is great power in recalling, reciting and rewriting a favorite legend in your own words. Even if retellings of folk tales, myths or fairy-tales are not eligible for National Book Foundation awards (Intro, *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me: Forty New Fairy Tales*, edited by Kate Bernheimer, 2010) they will be welcomed here. In fact this is our theme for the 2018 Sitting Room Publication!

Pick a somewhat well known fairytale, myth, legend or fable from Grimm, the Bible, Shakespeare, Hans Christian Andersen, the Koran, or any other source, and make the story yours. Tell it from another vantage point and/or add or change a character and/or situate the story in another time or place. Examples: Sleeping Beauty...what was the mirror really thinking? Snow White from the POV of Bashful. Cain and Abel as Star Wars characters. Looking forward, Sharon Bard and Karen Petersen will lead a workshop in March '18 where we can explore topics, try our hands/pens at transformations, and just generally have some fun with this delightful subject matter.

The usual guidelines apply: You may remember from past years that the pieces are to be no longer than a page, 400 words, with 1" margins on both right and left sides, single or double space, with an original title please, and your name at the bottom; on a separate cover page, your name, mailing address, phone, emails, and the title of your contribution. Please send your piece electronically as a word attachment to sittingroom2017@gmail.com. If you prefer hard copy, mail material unfolded to Editor, 2016 publication, c/o The Sitting Room, P.O. Box 838, Penngrove, CA, 94951. All contributions will be accepted, if they address the theme and follow the format and arrive by April 1, 2017. *You do not have to be a "member" of the Sitting Room to contribute or indeed any one gender or age.*

SAPPHO UPDATE

Want to know what new and tantalizing books have been added to the Sitting Room collection? Here's a tip.... When you first login, if set to browse all collections, you will see the newest titles in the Sitting Room library. You can also browse particular collections in this way—i.e., see what's new in specific topics, or just peruse the growing list of collections, by changing the search filter at the top.



Author	Title	Date	Collections
Miranda, Deborah A.	Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir	2013	Your library Autobiography, Biography, Memoirs
Hogland, Jean	Windfalls: A Novel	2004	Your library Fiction

Sappho, the Sitting Room's online catalog, continues to grow weekly, now with over 5,400 titles. Sappho is searchable by author, title or keyword; or you can browse particular collections as noted above. Check it out at home: http://www.librarything.com/catalog/sitting_room or use the Mac located in the non-fiction area of the Sitting Room. You are also welcome to request a one-on-one tutorial. For more information/questions contact Karen, kpetaluma@gmail.com. Of course nothing compares to an "in-person" browse, but Sappho can keep you company until you make a trip to the Sitting Room, and/or can direct you to specific books once you're here. And stay tuned—a new version with enhanced easy searching is coming soon!

NEW FACES@THE SITTING ROOM

Lucky Sitting Room! Three talented souls have turned up and are making light work of some of the daunting backlog we face.



Lindamay Vaughn, Lucas McEuen, Meelina Galope

Lindamay is a fiber and textile artist who at one time wanted to grow up to be a paleontologist (after seeing Godzilla for the first time). Her love of books led her to dream of a job surrounded by books and guess what? She found one! Lindamay will also be joining Marie McNaughton at the Obituary workshop.

Lucas is a current student at Sonoma State University. An English major and writer, he hopes to pursue a career in libraries. Lucas has taken on the task of organizing our special collection of over 300 poetry chapbooks—the Spineless Wonders—bringing order out of chaos and *entering every single one* into Sappho.

Meelina is a recent graduate from the creative writing department at Sonoma State University, where she took a turn at editing the literary journal, *Zaum*. She is currently taking a gap year before pursuing a master's degree in Art History, and is using this time to work on her art, learn German, and volunteer at The Sitting Room. Her first job here was to visit Simone Fattal in Sausalito and receive a complete collection of the Post Apollo Press books.

ARCHIVE DIVE

An invitation: Want to come ARCHIVE DIVING at The Sitting Room? Any time, day or night, during the month of October 2017, date and time (allow about two hours for the adventure) to be arranged by phone (707 795-9028) or email boxcar@sonic.net with J.J. Wilson. No qualifications needed, except for curiosity, for which as Dorothy Parker said, there is no cure.

THE SITTING ROOM BOOK GROUP

meets the third Wednesday of every month from 2 to 4 pm. Booklist updates are posted on the website, www.SittingRoom.org. Email Joanne Page, jpage@sonic.net if you wish to receive reminders of the meetings and readings. All are welcome to drop by, no fee of course.

WORKSHOPS WITH TERRY EHRET and DAN COSHNEAR AT THE SITTING ROOM

Terry Ehret will be offering two poetry workshops at the Sitting Room in the spring of 2018. The Monday Workshop is "Reading Contemporary American Women Poets." Poets we'll study include Naomi Shihab Nye, Jorie Graham, Dorianne Laux, Mary Oliver, and Sharon Olds. The Friday Workshop will focus on Dante's *Paradiso*, the last in a three-year series on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Both workshops combine reading, discussion, and writing exercises, and are held from 9-noon, starting in February. The cost is \$250 for 10 weeks. These are very popular and fill up well in advance. Terry reserves space for Sitting Room members; so if you are interested, please write to her, tehret99@comcast.net.

Dan Coshnear regularly offers workshops here as well. All levels and all genres welcome. For latest, contact him, coshn@sonic.net

TEA-TIME WITH JANE AUSTEN Sunday, Sept. 24, 2-4 p.m.

A few neighbors had the idea of getting together at the Sitting Room to have a conversation about Jane Austen in her bicentennial year and we are opening it up to any others who want to drop by. Some of us are long time fans of the movies as well as the books and others are new to her, so we'll have a good spread. The Sitting Room has a pop-up exhibit with some handsome annotated editions, along with some rather well loved copies to loan out, so come by if you want to get back in the Austen mood. "Pride and Prejudice" will be our focus. No need to RSVP.

3 BOOKS – 3 AUTHORS – 3 GENRES: AN INTERACTIVE READING AND WRITING WORKSHOP: Fiction by Dan Coshnear, Poetry by Patricia Nelson, and Memoir by Jean Wong Saturday, October 21, 2-4 P.M.

Join THREE of our best know LOCAL WRITERS as they share recent work and lead us on a reading and writing journey of our own. Teacher and writer Daniel Coshnear is the author of several fiction collections. Patricia Nelson is a retired attorney who uses metaphoric imagery to explore environmental themes in her recent book of poetry, *Spokes of Dream or Bird*. Jean Wong is an award winning poet and fiction writer. Her recent memoir, *Hurling Jade and Other Tales of Personal Folly*, explores her personal journey in a series of unusual and surprising vignettes.

CELEBRATING LOCAL WOMEN LEADERS: GAINING INSIGHTS, GROWING INSPIRATION, BUILDING COMMUNITY Saturday, Oct. 28, 2 - 4 P.M.

Women are weaving the social fabric of Sonoma County. This event features five of them. Come hear their stories and tap their experience to take a leadership leap of your own. In the first hour, they will share highlights from their leadership journeys and answer questions about their paths. In the second hour, they will take questions about current leadership challenges we are facing individually, and we will engage the collective wisdom in the room. For additional details, please check the Sitting Room website. There is no charge for this event, but space is limited and available only in advance. Send a 1/2-p. bio along with a question or situation that you would like to ask the panel about to ellensoconnor@gmail.com. Be sure to include your contact info and contribute by Sun., Oct. 15. You will receive a confirmation by Sat., Oct. 21.

LEARNING HOW TO WRITE OBITUARIES

Sunday, October 29, 2:00 To 4:30.

Yes, Marie McNaughton is back in the Obituary Workshop "business" and will be glad to guide us through creating life stories, fictional or factual. Everybody needs one — come, ready or not... RSVP by October 15 please, so that Marie can have the right number of handouts. Her email is: mrmac@sonic.net her cell phone #: 707.529.0734. There is a \$15 fee, to cover materials and a donation to the Sitting Room and to insure your commitment. By the way, if you have an obituary you particularly admire for its form, bring it along.



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COMMUNITY EVENTS

THE PETALUMA POETRY WALK. Sunday, September 17th

This unique celebration is now in its 21st year. For schedule and location, visit www.PetalumaPoetryWalk.org or pick up a flyer at the Sitting Room. Current Sonoma County Poet Laureate, Iris Dunkle, will be reading along with new and familiar voices from our local poetry world.

WOMEN IN CONVERSATION, Wednesday, September 27

Sonoma State University, Green Music Center.

3:30 to 6:30, "The Experience"

6:30, "Three Amazing Women. Three Amazing Stories!"

Geena Davis; Judy K. Sakaki; Shira Shahid. For more information and tickets, visit socowomenevents.com

TIDAL RESPONSE: COASTAL MARINE ENVIRONMENTS

FROM ABOVE AND BELOW Petaluma Arts Center, through October 21.

Tidal Response explores the intersection of art and science through a series of visual responses to coastal environments. Info: petalumaartscenter.org

THE SECOND ANNUAL LOCAL AUTHORS BOOK FAIRE,

Wednesday, November 29th, 2017

The Grange in Sebastopol. We are accepting applications for tables to present and sell your book(s). Contact: Robert Kourik, rkourik@sonic.net for more information.



*Iris Jamahl Dunkle, JJ Wilson, Christy Davids—
as dressed up as you'll ever see us, for the
GALA POETRY EVENING
at the Sitting Room at the end of summer.*

Photo by Paige Green, Official Photographer for the Event

CHANGES & STAYING IN TOUCH

We are now open Monday-Saturday, 9am to 5pm, and by appointment. Be sure to check our website for up-to-date info on book groups, events and publications, www.SittingRoom.org. You can also "follow" us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/thesittingroomlibrary. If you would like to receive email reminders of events at the Sitting Room and regionally, or if you would like to schedule a tour, please contact sittingroomlibrary@gmail.com