

The Skinned Bird

A Workshop on Writing about Science

REQUIRED WORKSHOP PREP

Instructor: Author Chelsea Biondolillo, MFA

Berry Center 217

October 15 | 1:00-3:00 PM

Participation limited to 15*

Free; pre-registration required

[Register here.](#)

READ AHEAD:

Chelsea Biondolillo, How to Skin a Bird:

<https://shenandoahliterary.org/632/2014/02/10/how-to-skin-a-bird/>

Aimee Nezhukumatathil, The Soils I Have Eaten:

<https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/the-soils-i-have-eaten/>

Carmella Guiol, Hair: <https://www.thenormalschool.com/blog/2017/11/15/hair-by-carmella-guiol>

Christine Byl, Bear Fragments: <https://brevitymag.com/nonfiction/bear-fragments/>

COME PREPARED:

Write two lists, A and B.

In the **A list** include between 5 and 10 things you know a lot about or that you know very well. These can be "small" things, like how to make the best chicken noodle soup or apple cake or all the wildflowers native to your childhood backyard, or they can be "bigger" things, like the symptoms and treatment for Epstein-Barr, the geology of the West, or avian anatomy and evolution. They don't have to all be science or nature related, but it will help if at least a couple are.

In the **B list** include between 5 and 10 *really* strong and vivid memories from your life. They don't all have to be good and you don't have to share either of your lists with the class if you don't want to. These can be particularly memorable birthdays or holidays, a recollection from grade or high school, a specific place you know well and an occasion when you were there, or a less singular, but still memorable way you used to spend time. For example, in the fifth grade, I took a city bus home after

school and let myself into an empty house each day. I had to call my mom at work as soon as I got home and then I was supposed to do math homework for the first 30 minutes, but I remember I would watch Rocky & Bullwinkle and Felix the Cat cartoons instead. I don't remember any one of those days particularly well, but I remember what those late afternoons were like before my parents got home from work. Think about firsts (first sushi, first night away from home, first time sky diving), or the stories you tell people about yourself (I like to tell the story of how I became a Camel cigarette girl five years after I quit smoking for good.) You don't need to write down the whole memory, just a few words or a sentence so you'll know what you mean.

NOTE: we will be using these lists in class in a writing exercise, but you won't have to share them or read them out loud. You will have the *option* of sharing some of what's in your lists and then later the writing that comes out of the exercise out loud.

WORKSHOP SPONSORS

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