



WHITE DANCING ELEPHANTS

STORIES BY

CHAYA BHUVANESWAR

Want to publish your creative writing (fiction, nonfiction, poetry?) Come to this workshop with Chaya Bhuvaneshwar, acclaimed doctor-writer!

The biggest surprise in White Dancing Elephants is its core of hope and compassion –National Public Radio (NPR)

*Chaya Bhuvaneshwar is a *force* in her provocative debut short story collection White Dancing Elephants. – BuzzFeed*

An exuberant collection – Kirkus Reviews

- In a highly interactive format (please bring your writing!) we will go over what it means to go public with your creative writing, while being a compassionate and dedicated caregiver for patients.
- Learn how to generate, revise, submit, publish and promote your writing – while embracing your life as a doctor!

The task of a writer is not to solve the problem but to state the problem correctly.

— Chekhov

Journey of a writer and
a book

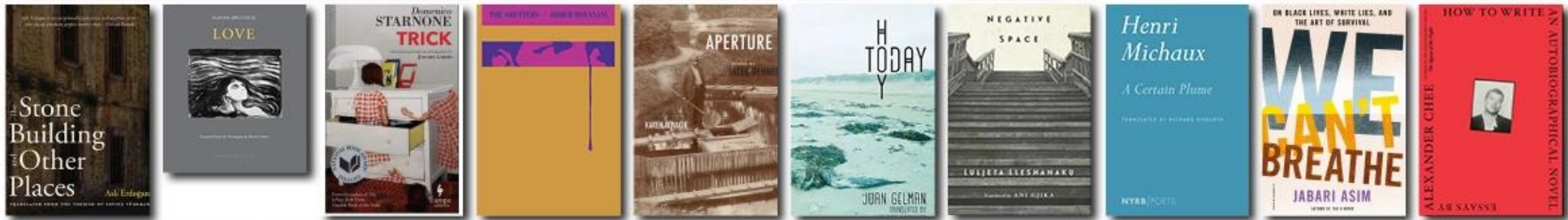
Reading of a short
excerpt

Paths for doctors in the
literary world



A top-down view of various items of travel and photography gear. In the upper left, a pair of white over-ear headphones with a white cable lies on a grey, textured knit sweater. Below the sweater, a pair of round sunglasses with dark frames and lenses is placed on a blue denim jacket. To the right, a black DSLR camera with a lens attached is positioned on a light-colored wooden surface. A black tripod with a red stripe is partially visible, extending from the bottom center towards the camera. In the upper right, a pair of white sneakers is partially visible. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey filter, and the text 'Journey to publication' is centered in a white, outlined font.

Journey to publication



PEN/AMERICA FINALISTS AND WINNERS 2019



FINALISTS
2019 Literary Awards



Multiple possible writer journeys for doctors

- Write a novel, collection of stories (or even 2-3 stories), collection of essay (or one widely viral or well-published essay) or memoir during training, after graduation but before going into practice (“time off”), while practicing full or part time, or upon retirement (at any point)
- Write literary fiction or nonfiction, or “genre” (sci-fi, fantasy, mystery, thriller, young adult or children’s books, romance)
- Pursue multiple paths to getting published (Big Five publishing, digital magazines, indie publishing)
- Pursue screen adaptations, audio book adaptations, other forms of the book
- Teach writing, give lectures and readings

Why it's inherently worthwhile

- James Pennebaker PhD (Austin TX): Narrative therapy alleviates caregiver stress, depression among HIV patients, depression more generally
- Writing as a hobby, as a form of physician resilience
 - Art, music, sports, lifestyle, social media, clubs, communities, cultural exchange
- Evidence base on writing/ journaling as way to address physician burnout
- Trainee burnout and stress management can also be addressed by creative writing:
 - Acad Psych Jan 2009 Using the technique of journal-writing to learn emergency psychiatry

Examples of doctor writers

- Abraham Verghese, *The Covenant of Water* (2023)
- Anna DeForest, *A History of The Present Illness* (2022)
- Louise Aronson, *Elderhood* (2019)
- Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal* (2014)
- Richard Selzer, *Confessions of a Knife* (1979)
- Pauline Chen, *Final Exam* (2012)
- Ricardo Nuila, *The People's Hospital* (2023)
- Josh Bazell, *Beat the Reaper* (2009)
- Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park* (1990)
- Rivka Galchen, *Atmospheric Disturbances* (2009)
- Ethan Canin, *Emperor of Air* (1985)
- Chris Adrian, *Gob's Grief* (2002)
- Daniel Mason, *The Winter Soldier* (2018)
- Samuel Shem, *House of God* (1980)
- Kwei Quartey, *Wife of the Gods* (2009)
- C. Dale Young, *The Halo* (2016)
- Grace Li, *Portrait of a Thief* (2022)
- Fady Joudah, *Alight* (2013)



Anton Chekhov



- Never stopped practicing medicine
- Not only practiced but also spent 3 months in Sakhalin conducting census interviews so convicts would be counted in the census
- Did public health medicine and gave many patients in poverty free care
- Never wrote about “quitting medicine to write” (“wife” vs. “mistress” quote)
- Passed away from TB at age 44
- Thousands of mourners





Where to begin? If you enjoy writing and/or want to publish your work...