

Fall 2017

Dear Rananim Writers,

Fiction and creative non-fiction are typically regarded as a dramatic art form, sharing with plays and films the capacity to engage an audience's imagination through action that seems, when successful, urgent, immediate, necessary, and real. When, as writers, we invest ourselves in portraying movement and rendering external conflict such that our readers may infer the internal conflicts and motivations of our characters, we are operating at our most dramatic and have most in common with playwrights and filmmakers. But most fiction/creative non-fiction isn't written in the third person objective voice, and unless we're Hemingway writing "Hills Like White Elephants" (which makes use of an extraordinarily telling image) or Carver writing "Fat," or any number of other fiction writers whose stories resemble scripts and/or screenplays, we can limit ourselves unnecessarily.

In a few short months, we will embark on a study of the power of visual image in fiction and creative non-fiction. In this workshop, not only will we examine how fiction writers (and a few narrative poets and essayists) have employed images as structural elements in their work, we'll transfer what we have learned from them to our own work. For the eight weeks that we will be actively engaged in reading, writing, and interacting with one another through the Rananim online learning platform and portal, our goal will be to empower ourselves and one another through a deeper understanding of fiction's reliance on strategies more closely associated with lyric poetry and the visual arts, but critical to the success of much fiction.

This workshop asks you to train your eyes as sharply on the corporeal world in which we live as on the imagined one seen by the mind's eye and to make use of the things that can be seen in the fiction and creative non-fiction you write. The author of *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Sharer*, Joseph Conrad, proclaimed, "Above all, I want to make you see." For eight weeks, let's make this our dictum, too, and delight in what we can show one another and, in time, our ever-growing readership.

I look forward to working with each and all of you.

Daniel Mueller

Author, *How Animals Mate* and *Nights I Dreamed of Hubert Humphrey*