

IWWA Workshop Pitch — Falmouth Conference

My name is Jordan Blanchard and I am a Graduate Researcher with the University of Westminster. I am currently working on my PhD focusing on poetry as a tool to examine Louisiana ecology and Body Dysmorphic Disorder. If you would like to read my original proposal I will attach it [here](#). This is a continuation of my work in body-writing and eco-poetry. I would love the opportunity to pitch my workshop on body-writing as an almost meditative practice as well as how this facilitates agency and awareness in the feminine body for the Falmouth Conference.

Abstract

My workshops begin with a brief free-writing exercise that requires a meditative body scan. This can look like cataloging the sensations from head to toe or as they are most prominent in the writer's mind. Sometimes students might feel more comfortable and productive to isolate a single sensation and fixate on that for the allotted time. Either way, the free-write is not usually meant to be shared so it is entirely personal. As the workshop leader, I try to give some direction by only using one method after assessing the cohort. From there I will give some basics about my research and influences. I enjoy taking the time to be vulnerable about my work and experience with Body Dysmorphic Disorder, including why I am currently writing my PhD, in order to relate to the participants. Then I will be asking attendants to look at a key poem of my choice to analyze. For example, I am very fond of Rickey Laurentiis' "Boy with Thorn" and Natalie Diaz' "The First Water is the Body". If there is time I also am keen to share excerpts from Astrida Neimanis' "Hydrofeminism" essay as that is one of the key texts informing my current work. The goal is to identify what key techniques from those pieces not only become cathartic for the piece but for their author (allowing for speculation of course). From there we will try to craft a poem utilizing our new practice. Attendants are encouraged to share their work and give critique but not required. The key takeaways are to encourage mini meditation in the writing practice, engaging with our own bodies in ways that are not always obvious to us, and to encourage a wider vocabulary for how we experience life in our bodies.

Biography

Jordan Blanchard is a poet hailing from New Orleans, Louisiana. A 2018 alumnus of the Smithsonian Institution's Internship program at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, she is a voracious researcher and author. After completing two consecutive Master's degrees, she is now working on her PhD at the University of Westminster. She can be found where there is water, her work can be found in Autograph Gallery, BRUISER, Cheerio Publishing, Kelp Journal, the Kenyon College Anthology, and more. Her collection *river muck, baby* is out now.

I'm looking forward to hearing back from your organization,

Jordan Blanchard

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[Research Page](#)