

Nancy Agabian

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Education

Columbia University, School of the Arts, Writing Division. M.F.A. in Nonfiction, 2003.
Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA. B.A. in Studio Art, cum laude, 1990.

Specializations

Creative Nonfiction
Creative Writing (Poetry, Fiction, Drama)
First-Year Writing/Composition
Writing about Cultural Identity
World Literature
Writing for the Web

Publications

Books

Me as her again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 2008.

(An)daratsutian Mej (In the [Un]Space). Co-written with Lara Aharonian and Shushan Avagyan. Yerevan: Women's Resource Center, 2007.

Princess Freak: Poetry and Performance Texts. Venice, CA: Beyond Baroque Books, 2000.

Articles

"Amina Arraf: A 'Queered' Antidote," *The Brooklyn Rail*. March 2012.

"Tiny Retreats," *GetawayStyle*. <<http://getawaystyle.com>>. 6 January 2012.

"What is a Tiny House?" <<http://getawaystyle.com>>. 18 November 2011.

"Wonder Cabinet: The Artist in Academia," *Hyperallergic*. <<http://hyperallergic.com>>. 24 June 2010.

"Ungeziefer: Kafka at the Whitney Biennial," *Hyperallergic*. <<http://hyperallergic.com>>. 16 March 2010

"Waiting for Tables," *The Brooklyn Rail*. March 2010. pp. 3-6.

"Essay on Arlene Voski Avakian," *Forgotten Bread: First Generation Armenian American Writers*. Ed. David Kherdian. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2007.

One Armenian World. <<http://www.onearmenianworld.blogspot.com>>, 3 Sept. 2006 – 13 Aug. 2007.

“We Need Each Other: A Report on ‘Water and Wine’, a Performance in Armenia,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, Spring/Summer 2006. Ed. Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner. New York: The Feminist Press of the CUNY Graduate Center, 2006.

“An Interview with *Beast on the Moon’s* Larry Moss and David Grillo.” *Groong*. <<http://www.groong.com/tcc/tcc-20050411.html>> , 11 Apr. 2005.

Anthologies

“Fighting Family”. *Queered: What’s to be done with Xcentric Art*. Yerevan: Queering Yerevan. December 2011.

A selection of thirteen poems. *Deviation: Anthology of Contemporary Armenian Literature*. Yerevan, Armenia: Inkagir, 2008.

“Memento” and introduction. *Matnashoonch: Armenian Women Write*. Geneva: Metis Press, 2007.

“Seeing Istanos,” *Homelands: Women’s Journeys Across Race, Place and Time*, ed. Patricia Tumang and Jenessa De Rivera. San Francisco: Seal Press, 2007.

“More Intimacy.” *Gynomite: Fearless Feminist Porn*. Ed. Liz Belile. New Orleans, LA: New Mouth from the Dirty South, 2000. 44-49.

Birthmark: A bilingual anthology of Armenian-American poetry. Ed. Gourgen Arzoumanian. Glendale, CA: Open Letter Press, 1999. 132-152.

“Blanket,” “Corrine Got Her Period.” *Scream When You Burn: An Anthology from Caffeine Magazine*. Ed. Robert Cohen. Incommunicado Press: New York, 1998. 15-18.

“Ghosts and Bags.” *Hers 2: Brilliant New Fiction by Lesbian Writers*. Ed. Terry Wolverton with Robert Drake, Winchester, MA: Faber & Faber, 1997.

“Sick Television.” *Blood Whispers II: L.A. Writers on AIDS*. Ed. Terry Wolverton. Los Angeles: Silverton Books, 1994. 98-99.

Literary Journals

"America/Armenia/Angelina," *Perigee: Publication for the Arts*, Fall 2009, <<http://www.perigee-art.com/index-4.php>>, 15 Oct 2009.

"100% Armenian Blood: A Theoretical Performance," *Sunday Salon Magazine*, Spring 2009, <<http://www.sundaysalon.com/category/magazine/non-fiction>>, 3 Feb. 2009.

Excerpt from “The Fear of Large and Small Nations,” *KGBBarLit*, Summer 2006, <<http://www.kgbbar.com/lit/nonfiction>>, 24 Apr. 2006.

“American School.” *Ararat* Vol. XLIV, No. 182, Spring 2006.

Teaching Experience

New York University, Gallatin School of Individualized Study

Writing Your Ancestry. Spring 2012, Spring 2011, Spring 2010, Spring 2009

Developed an advanced creative nonfiction course on writing about cultural identity and family history. Taught students various nonfiction genres -- memoir, personal essay, process essay, and historical narrative -- as a means to explore in writing the dynamics of their family, past and present. Chose a variety of writers from multicultural backgrounds to encourage students to write on race, class, gender, mental health issues, and addiction. Covered research techniques such as interviewing, genealogical searches and using the NYU library and other NYC resources to aid students in uncovering information about their families.

CUNY Queens College, Flushing, New York:

Essay Writing. Spring 2012, Spring 2011, Fall 2010, Spring 2009, Fall 2008.

Community-based essay writing course, in which students write about themselves as members of communities, defining various identities and arguing current issues of their families, cultures and neighborhoods. Designed course to include readings on New York City, from the New York Times City Section, various blogs (“QC Voices”, “The Hell Gate Review”, “Mr. Beller's Neighborhood”) and for students to write about the readings on a class blog. The last assignment is also a blog post: a substantially line-edited revision of a previous essay.

Creative Nonfiction. Spring 2010, Fall 2009, Spring 2008, Spring 2006, Spring 2005, Fall 2004.

A creative writing class on memoir, personal essay and literary journalism. Assigned readings by various contemporary authors to help define each of these categories, to investigate the ways in which they overlap in terms of rhetorical approaches, and to identify the multitude of literary tactics (detail, dialogue, exposition, setting, metaphor, poetics, etc.) that nonfiction writers use to successfully join style and content. Helped students to develop their own versions of creative nonfiction through regular writing exercises inside and outside of class and peer feedback workshops.

College Writing. Spring 2012, Fall 2011, Spring 2011, Fall 2010, Spring 2010, Fall 2009, Fall 2008, Fall 2007, Fall 2005, Fall 2004, Fall 2003.

Required composition course. Led students through pre-writing, drafting, revision and editing processes to compose college-level essays. Covered topics of definition, reflection, narration, description, classification, persuasion and argumentation. Systematically taught steps of research papers – collecting, organizing, summarizing and citing. Assigned readings and facilitated class discussions to inform in-class and at-home journal writing. In Fall 2007, 2009, and 2010 taught an honors level course on New York City in the Macaulay Honors College. Developed a special course on Cultural Identity for Fall 2011, linked to an Anthropology class on Evolution, including a field trip to the solo show, “The Rap Guide to Evolution”.

Writing, Literature and Culture. Spring 2009, Fall 2005, Spring 2005, Spring 2004.

Designed an intermediate level composition class on autobiographical texts. Students analyzed the themes of three authors dealing with diverse forms of trauma – Primo Levi, Audre Lorde, and Dave Eggers. (For Spring 2009, students read The Color of Water by James McBride, Black Dog of Fate by Peter Balakian, Fun Home by Alison Bechdel and The Woman Warrior by

Maxine Hong Kingston.) Essay assignments on the books included definition, compare/contrast, and argument using theories of feminism, psychoanalytic and other forms of criticism.

Dance Writing, College Now. Spring 2008, Fall 2007, Summer 2006, Spring 2006, Fall 2005, Summer 2005, Spring 2005, Summer 2004.

A writing class linked with an intro dance class in a special program for college-bound high school students. Guided students through readings of dance journals, criticism, and physically-oriented literature in order to introduce them to dance history as well as to provide them with a verbal vocabulary to think and communicate about dance. Developed assignments with Te Perez, Dance Faculty, that allowed students to write about dance from the perspective of a dancer, as a critic and as a creative writer. Accompanied students to dance performances in Manhattan.

Creative Writing. Summer 2006, Summer 2005, Spring 2004.

An introductory creative writing workshop on poetry, playwriting and the short story. Collaboratively formed a supportive environment to encourage written and verbal expression. Developed and implemented creative writing exercises based on readings. Encouraged students to experiment with writing imaginatively and autobiographically. Guided members in learning how to give constructive feedback on their peers' creative writing assignments.

Our Side: Topaz Arts Center and LaGuardia Community College Performing Arts Center

Creative Nonfiction Writing Workshop on Cultural Identity, Fall 2009, Summer 2009.

Founded a writing course for immigrants and the children of immigrants to write personal essays and memoirs on emigration, homeland, assimilation, cultural identity and transnationalism. Used a cross-disciplinary approach with theater, visual art and languages of origin to develop and create texts, resulting in a group reading, blog, and publication. Wrote grants to be sponsored by the Queens Council on the Arts with public funding from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Poets & Writers' Inc.

Yerevan, Armenia:

Physical Translating, Women's Resource Center, Yerevan, Armenia. July 2010.

A body-based creative writing workshop for women. Members wrote about physical experiences -- in illness, disconnection, pain, joy, experimentation, athleticism, sexuality, reproduction, and otherwise. Short texts by a range of contemporary multicultural women writers, including Armenian writers, were read to stimulate discussion and prompt writing exercises. Creative movement/performance exercises were also incorporated to inspire writing. The series culminated in a reading of new work.

Women's Creative Writing Project, co-sponsored by CEC Artslink, Utopiana, and The Women's Resource Center, Yerevan, Armenia. Summer 2007.

A workshop for Armenian women to explore fiction and creative nonfiction writing. Topics explored: childhood memories and identity, family dynamics, issues of the body and sexuality, women and work, the personal as political. Collaboratively shaped an environment allowing women to be creative in voicing their various life experiences. The readings, from contemporary female authors of various backgrounds and nationalities, helped facilitate such consideration. Culminated in a reading at the performance venue The Club and a book, *Matnashoonch*.

Creative Nonfiction, Yerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia. Spring 2007, Fall 2006. A Fulbright Fellowship sponsored course. Introduced English department students raised in a post-Soviet educational system to forms of individual expression such as freewriting exercises, class discussion, response papers, and the workshop. Students read examples of contemporary creative nonfiction and wrote their own personal essays on topics of family, relationships, the generation gap and the Karabakh war, particularly relating to Armenian identity.

Los Angeles, California:

Life Stories, Writers at Work, Silverlake, CA. January – June, 1999.

A six-month weekly workshop in autobiographical writing. Selected contemporary memoirs, personal essays and autobiography for students to read and discuss. Led in-class writing exercises on detail, the components of character and setting, and structure.

Writing to Perform the Truth, Beyond Baroque, Venice, CA. 1994-99.

As artist-in-residence, created a series of 12-week workshops in which members wrote and performed material from their lives. Created a supportive space for exercises and group critique. Taught techniques of speech and movement to help students publicly present their texts.

Performance History

Solo Performances

Family Returning Blows. *F Classmate Series.* Jerome Zodo Contemporary, Milan, Italy. 10 Jan 2011.

Victim. Part of the “Women in Action” art exhibition. Armenian Center for Contemporary and Experimental Art. 9 March 2007.

Water and Wine.

with Anne-Shlomit Deonna, Theatre St. Gervais, Geneva, Switzerland. 13 Jan. 2009.

with Yeva Adalyan. GALAS, Gay and Lesbian Armenian Society. Europe Café, Los Angeles, CA. 14 Jan. 2006.

with Violet Gregorian. Presented as part of the Utopiana Project “One Step Forwards, Two Steps Back.” The Club, Yerevan, Armenia. 14 Sept. 2005.

Homebody, Homefire. Finding Space, Los Angeles, CA. 6-9 May 1999.

WANT.

Glaxa Studios. Silverlake, CA. 5,6,11-13,18-20 July 1997.

Open Letter Journal. Glendale Public Library, Glendale, CA. 29 March 1997.

LACE. Hollywood, CA. 10,11 February 1997.

Highways Performance Space. Santa Monica, CA. 17 Sept. 1996.

My Gay Family.

Cleveland Performance Art Festival. Cleveland, OH. 17, 18 Aug. 1996.

L.A. Women's Theatre Festival at LACE. Hollywood, CA. 21 March 1996.

Glaxa Studios, Silverlake, CA. 13, 20 Jan. 1996; 9, 16 Dec. 1995.

Highways Performance Space. Santa Monica, CA. 3, 4 Aug. 1995.

Recent Readings and Presentations:

“Prologue from 'The Fear of Large and Small Nations'”, a reading for “Cultural Conscience: a reading of cross cultural literature between Queens and the World”, organized and selected Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhran, Joseph O. Legaspi, Margarita Soto and Sweta Vikram as co-readers. Sponsored by Poets & Writers Inc. and Queens Council on the Arts with public funding from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. The Greater Astoria Historical Society. Astoria, NY. 30 June 2012.

“What I Can Take With Me on the Plane” a reading for QUILL (Queens in Love with Literature) at Queens Art Express. With Panagiota Lilikaki and Camila Santos. Sponsored by Queens Council on the Arts. Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, Jamaica, Queens NY. 16 June 2012.

“Armenia: Land of Bisexuality”, a reading for “Ancestors: Queer Writers of Color”, sponsored by Lambda Literary Foundation as an off-site event of the AWP Conference. The Center on Halsted. Chicago, IL. 1 Mar 2012.

“Performing 'Victim' in Armenia”, a presentation for “Second Thoughts on the Memory Industry”, a symposium. New York Institute for the Humanities, New York University, 7 May 2011.

“The Intersections of Performance, Collage and Identity”, a talk presented at the “Kin: Mixed Genre of Color” panel. Associated Writing Programs Conference, Washington, DC., 5 Feb. 2011.

Reading from *Me as her again*. “An Evening of Armenian Discovery” with Cathy Salibian and Anais Salibian. Writers and Books, Rochester, NY. 9 Sept. 2010.

Poetry Reading with the Zephyr Poets. Gartal and the Armenian Poetry Project. Bowery Poetry Club, New York, 2 Apr 2010.

Presentation of “Waiting for Tables”. Arts in the One World. Brown University, Providence, RI. 19 Mar 2010.

Reading and discussion from *Me as her again* on the influence of the family on Armenian Writers. Conference on Armenian Writers. UCLA, Los Angeles, CA. 6 Nov. 2009.

Lambda Literary Awards Finalists' reading. LGBT Community Center, New York, NY. 5 May 2009.

"Waiting for Tables". Work-in-progress reading. Topaz Arts, Woodside, NY. 2 May 2009.

"Author's Series," with poet Gregory Djanikian, Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ. Sponsored by the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Education Center and the Creative Writing Department. 22 April 2009.

Reading from Me as her again. Bluestockings Bookstore. New York, NY. 2 Nov 2008

Reading from Me as her again. KGB. New York, NY. 7 Oct 2008.

Reading Series

Gartal

Coordinator. Armenian-American and multicultural writers, Cornelia Street Café, Bowery Poetry Club, and other venues in NYC. December 2002-present.

Awards

Lambda Literary Foundation Emerging Writers Retreat. Selected as a participant in this competitive program for queer writers in Los Angeles, CA. Summer 2012.

Buid Your Own Business professional development program for writers, Queens Council on the Arts. Spring 2012.

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, re-grant program, administered by the Queens Council on the Arts. Individual Artist's Grant, 2012.

Macondo Writer's Workshop. Selected as a participant in Sandra Cisneros's workshop for writers of social justice in San Antonio, TX. Summer 2011.

William Saroyan International Prize for Writing. Shortlisted for a nonfiction prize for *Me as her again*, May 2010.

Lambda Literary Award Finalist in LGBT Nonfiction, for *Me as her again*, 2008.

New York State Council on the Arts, re-grant program, administered by the Queens Council on the Arts. Individual Artist's Grant, 2009.

Queens Council on the Arts Individual Artist Initiative, 2008.

CEC Artslink Grant Funding for a women's creative writing workshop in Armenia; Summer 2007.

Fulbright Award A teaching/research fellowship to Armenia, 2006-07.

Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship Full scholarship and stipend to attend Columbia University MFA Writing program, 2000-2003.