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## **Our Side: A Creative Nonfiction Writing Workshop on Cultural Identity**

Led by **Nancy Agabian** at **TOPAZ ARTS Center**

**Dates:** 10 Sessions, **Saturdays, June 6 -- August 15, 10 am – 12:30 pm**  
Participants' reading: **Sunday, August 16, 3 – 6 pm**

**Fee:** Sliding scale donation: \$10 -- \$200. Free for the unemployed.  
Each participant will decide her/his own fee and pay it at the 2nd meeting

**Description:** *Our Side* is a new workshop for writers of all levels to write in English about the worlds they live in, past and present. For the first five weeks, we will read work by Amy Tan, Jhumpa Lahiri, Junot Diaz, Edwidge Danticat, and others; then we'll discuss the issues these writers address on emigration, dislocation from homeland, assimilation to a new land, maintenance of cultural identity, and trans-nationalism. These discussions will prompt writing exercises to explore our own experiences with migration and views of cultural identity. For the following four weeks, we'll read to the group our writing to receive feedback and help polish it into memoirs or personal essays. During the last meeting, we'll prepare for a reading of our work.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must be immigrants or have a parent who is an immigrant. You should have (familial, national, intellectual, or spiritual, etc.) connections to a place outside of the U.S. that you would like to write about.

**To apply:** Write one page on your experience with writing, why you would like to take a writing workshop on cultural identity, and your commitment to attend each session (except July 4, a holiday). Include your name, email address, and phone number. Participants will be chosen on their ability to commit to the workshop and their level of writing. Every level will be included from first-time beginners to advanced.

**Email your application** (or any questions) to [nancyagabian@yahoo.com](mailto:nancyagabian@yahoo.com).

**Application deadline: May 9, 2009.** Participants will be notified by May 23, 2009.

**TOPAZ ARTS** is located at **55-03 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Woodside, Queens.**

Subway directions: #7-train to 61 St. or the R, V, G trains to Northern Blvd.

Details and directions are available at [www.topazarts.org](http://www.topazarts.org).

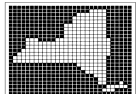
**Facilitator: Nancy Agabian** is the author of *Me as her again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter*, a memoir on her Armenian American family history. Currently, she is working on a book about her experiences living in a community of artists in Yerevan, Armenia, and an article on the history of the Turkish and Armenian communities in Sunnyside, Queens. Since 1994, she has been teaching community-based writing workshops in Los Angeles, New York and Yerevan, Armenia. She teaches writing at CUNY, Queens College and the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University. She lives in Astoria, Queens.

[www.nancyagabian.com](http://www.nancyagabian.com)

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State of the Arts



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**TOPAZ ARTS, Inc.** is a nonprofit organization founded in 2000 by artists **Todd Richmond** and **Paz Tanjuaquio**. TOPAZ ARTS fosters the creative process, enabling artists to realize their projects. **TOPAZ ARTS, Inc.** is made possible, in part, by public funds from the NYC Dept. of Cultural Affairs; New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; National Endowment for the Arts; Carnegie Corporation of New York; Dance Theater Workshop's Outer/Space Program; Foundation for Contemporary Art; The F.B. Heron Foundation; QCA Queens Community Art Fund; Material for the Arts, a program of NYC's Dept. of Cultural Affairs, Dept. of Sanitation and Board of Education; and the generosity of private individuals.