

SPRING WRITERS' RETREAT



A FIVE-DAY WRITING RETREAT AT PENNARD HOUSE WITH NOVELIST SUSAN ELDERKIN 7TH - 11TH MARCH 2022

ABOUT THE RETREAT

The theme of this spring's residential retreat is life-writing, or how to mine your own life for fuel and fodder – whether you then channel the material into fiction or non-fiction. Led by experienced tutor and novelist Susan Elderkin, the retreat is aimed at anyone wanting to immerse themselves in an ongoing writing project or kick-start a new one. You'll spend your mornings exploring an aspect of the writer's craft in a group workshop, with the afternoons left free to spend as you wish – charge off into the surrounding apple orchards, brainstorm your plot over a cup of tea, or curl up with a good book by the fire. The retreat includes five 3½ hour workshops, a one-to-one tutorial with Susan, and an inspiring guest speaker at the mid-point of the week. You'll be fed three delicious, home-cooked meals a day and have a room of your own in a beautiful family-run stately home. For those wanting to make this a retreat for the body as well as the mind, yoga sessions with an experienced lyengar teacher are on offer each morning. Expect to come away with a new group of dedicated writer friends, a full notebook, a renewed sense of where your project is going, and a plan for how to get there.

"What an inspiring week! I'm trying to hold on to the magic." (Julia)

"Suse is a wonderful teacher. I can't imagine doing a writing workshop with anyone else." (Michael)

MID-WEEK GUEST SPEAKER

No-one has spoken more passionately about the “profound satisfaction” of wrestling one’s life onto the page than Cathy Rentzenbrink (right), and I’m thrilled to announce that she will be joining us as guest speaker for this retreat. The author of two memoirs, a novel and a love letter to the books in her life, *Dear Reader* (highly recommended by this bibliotherapist), she has just brought out *Write It All Down*, a frank and generous guide to the art of life writing. Cathy is passionate that everyone has a story worth telling, whatever our background and however unexciting our lives might seem to our own self-critical gaze. “The only qualification you need is desire,” she says. This is a rare opportunity to discuss the why / how / when and what to plunder from one’s life with someone who has spent a good deal of time thinking about it. A limited number of tickets will be offered to past Pennardistas and attendees of Susan’s other workshops. Email Susan asap if you’re interested in coming, either for just the talk (Wednesday 9th March at 5pm), or the talk + dinner afterwards.



“I just spent perhaps the best weekend of my life doing one of Suse’s writing workshops. Her kindness, humour and totally rigorous, focused approach took each of us to a new place. I can’t recommend her too highly if you have a project that needs a prod or are looking to start a new one.” (Annabel)

WHERE YOU’LL BE STAYING

Pennard House (below) in the Somerset village of East Pennard is a family-run estate offering the perfect mix of elegance and comfort. Bedrooms are beautifully decorated in English country style. All are single occupancy, and most have ensuite bathrooms.



ROOMS AND PRICES

The price of the retreat is all-inclusive, but varies depending on which room you have – see the table below. Let Susan know your room preferences when you book, and she will allocate one that best fits your needs.

ROOM	TYPE	BATHROOM FACILITIES	PRICE
Orchard	Double	Ensuite	£975
West	Double	Ensuite	£975
Blue	Double	Ensuite	£955
Garden	Double	Ensuite	£955
East	Twin	Ensuite	£955
Berkeley	Double	Ensuite	£955
Venetian	Double	Ensuite	£955
Gifford	Double	Ensuite	£935
Oak	Twin	Shared	£915
Yellow	Double	Shared	£915

What's included:

- Accommodation at Pennard House from Monday night to Thursday night inclusive
- Five 3½ hour workshops with Susan
- One 30-minute 1:1 tutorial with Susan
- All meals, starting with lunch on Monday and finishing with lunch on Friday
- Guest speaker on Wednesday night

What's not included:

- Yoga classes with Sarah Constantinides, £60 for four sessions (Tuesday - Friday mornings).
- Wine / spirits which are pay-as-you-go from the bar (you can run a tab and settle at the end of the week).

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR

Susan Elderkin (right) is the author of two award-winning novels, *Sunset over Chocolate Mountains* and *The Voices*, and two books about books, *The Novel Cure* and *The Story Cure*. She has taught on the MAs in Creative Writing at Birkbeck, Goldsmith's and City University, and has been running retreats and workshops like this since 2006. She lives in Somerset with her husband and son.



EARLY MORNING YOGA

The wonderful Sarah Constantinides (right) – an experienced Iyengar teacher – will be leading early morning yoga sessions for those wanting a restorative and energising start to the day. These sessions are entirely optional and paid for separately. Sarah is used to catering to students with different levels of experience – complete beginners need not feel shy! Please let Susan know at the time of booking if you'd like to take part.



HOW TO BOOK

To secure your place, please email Susan on hello@susanelderkin.com.

A 30% deposit will be taken at the time of booking, with the remainder due three weeks before the start of the course. Places are limited and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis. If for some reason you need to cancel, Susan will do her best to find a replacement, but payments are non-refundable if your place is not filled.

COVID SAFETY MEASURES

Participants are strongly recommended to limit their contact with other people in the week leading up to the course. Everyone coming will be asked to send a photo of their negative lateral flow test the day before they arrive, and are encouraged to take advantage of hand-washing and sanitising facilities around the house while at Pennard. Should new Covid restrictions prevent us from running the course, a full refund will be made.

For more pictures, testimonials and to read more about the retreat, visit www.pennardhouse.com and www.susanelderkin.com.

We look forward to welcoming you to Pennard!

