

IDENTIFYING AND COMBATING RACISM: Tools to Fortify Your Mind, Body & Spirit

HEART SONGS AND POETRY WORKSHOP

FOR: Lesbians and transgender women of color

GROUP ONE: Saturday, July 11 & July 18, 2020 from 10:30 am to noon

GROUP TWO: Saturday, July 25 & August 1, 2020 from 10:30 am to noon

Both groups come together on Saturday, August 8, and August 15, 2020 from 10:30 am to noon

You need to be able to commit to sessions above.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We carry in our bodies the most intense emotions from deep love to anger, fear and helplessness. While the positive emotions can lift us up the other feelings are a weight making our hearts heavy and leaving little room for happiness. The Heart Songs we'll write are short pieces that will help expel those feelings through words and out of our bodies so our spirits can return to the natural levels of joy.

The participants will be divided into two groups of six each.

The first two sessions for each group – We'll read some work by other poets. Do short writing exercises based on suggestions we make to each other in the first session. In the second session we'll read work out loud and discuss ways we can make the poems more expressive.

For the final two sessions, Groups One & Two will come together to listen to each other's poems and get feedback.



Jewelle Gomez (Cape Verdean/loway/Wampanoag) is a writer and activist and author of the double Lambda Award-winning novel, *The Gilda Stories* from Firebrand Books. Her adaptation of the book for the stage *Bones & Ash: A Gilda Story*, was performed by the Urban Bush Women company in 13 U.S. cities. The script was published as a Triangle Classic by the Paperback Book Club.

She is the recipient of a literature fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts; two California Arts Council fellowships and an Individual Artist Commission from the San Francisco Arts Commission. Her fiction, essays, criticism and poetry have appeared in numerous periodicals. Among them: *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Ms Magazine*, *Essence Magazine*, *The Advocate*, *Callaloo* and *Black Scholar*. Her work has appeared in such anthologies as *Home Girls*, *Reading Black Reading Feminist*, *Dark Matter* and the *Oxford World Treasury Of Love Stories*. She has served on literature panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council and the California Arts Council.

She was on the original staffs of *Say Brother*, one of the first weekly, Black television shows in the US (WGBH-TV, Boston) and *The Electric Company* (Children's Television Workshop, NYC) as well as and on the founding board of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). She was an original member of the boards of the Astraea Foundation and the Open Meadows Foundation.

Her first novel, *The Gilda Stories*, celebrated its 20th year in print in 2011 with readings at the Museum of the African Diaspora and at the Queer Arts Festival. Her other publications include three collections of poetry: *The Lipstick Papers* (1980) and *Flamingoes And Bears* (1986), both self-published and *Oral Tradition* from Firebrand Books (1995). She edited (with Eric Garber) a fantasy fiction anthology entitled *Swords Of The Rainbow* (Alyson Publications (1996) and selected the fiction for *The Best Lesbian Erotica of 1997* (Cleis). She is also the author a book of personal and political essays entitled *Forty-Three Septembers* (Firebrand Books, 1993) and a collection of short fiction, *Don't Explain* (Firebrand Books, 1997).

Formerly the Executive Director of the Poetry Center and the American Poetry Archives at San Francisco State University she has also worked in philanthropy for many years. She is the former director of the Literature program at the New York State Council on the Arts and the director of Cultural Equity Grants for the San Francisco Arts Commission. She is also the former Director of Grants and Community Initiatives for Horizons Foundation as well as the former President of the San Francisco Public Library Commission. She is currently Playwright in Residence at New Conservatory Theatre Center.