

Jennifer M. Cross  
El Cerrito, CA  
415-608-3398  
Jennifer@writingourselveswhole.org

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Jen Cross is a professional writer, speaker, and writing workshop facilitator who has devoted her career and creative life to exploring the power of writing and creative community to catalyze healing from trauma. She is the founder of Writing Ourselves Whole, a nonprofit organization that creates a powerful, safe community in which writers bear witness to one another as they give voice to their stories.

Jen believes that when we open our hearts to ourselves and each other – when every individual is welcomed in their most complete selfhood – we forge expressive and loving communities willing to meet the truth of intimate violence, listen to and honor the survivors, and undo the damage that intimate violence has caused.

### **Education**

**San Francisco State University, MFA in Creative Writing** **2018**

Concentration in Creative Nonfiction

Certificate, Teaching Composition

**Goddard College, MA in Transformative Language Arts** **2003**

Master's Thesis: *Declaring Our Erotic: Using Erotic Writing for Reclamation and Resistance*: Seven wide-ranging essays explore identity and desire in the post-trauma body, and the power of erotic writing as a means through which sexual abuse survivors can reconnect with the empowered erotic self.

**Dartmouth College, BA, Cognitive Science** **1996**

**Amherst Writers and Artists, Amherst, MA Workshop Facilitator Certifications I & II** **2001 & 2002**

**Workshops (selected list)** **2001 – present**

#### **Private:**

- Declaring Our Erotic – quarterly writing group, 2002-present (San Francisco and Oakland, CA)
- Write Whole: Survivors Write – quarterly writing group, 2006-present (San Francisco and Oakland, CA)
- Dive Deep – advanced, manuscript-driven workshop, 2012-present (San Francisco and Oakland, CA)
- Writing the Flood – general topic monthly writing group, 2010-present (San Francisco and Oakland, CA)
- Erotic Reading Circle (co-facilitated with Carol Queen), monthly 2006-present (San Francisco, CA)
- Amherst Writers & Artists Facilitator Training Leader, 2011-present
- Liberatory Uses of Erotic Writing, offered annually, 2011-present (AWA Sacramento, Sacramento, CA)

#### **With Schools/Partner Organizations:**

- 2015, 2014, 2013 Fearless Words: Sexual trauma survivors writing group with SF Women Against Rape
- 2013 Declaring Our Erotic, Ashland, OR
- 2013 Evergreen College: Erotic writing for survivors of sexual trauma
- 2012 Charis Bookstore, Atlanta, GA: Embodied Writing workshop

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- 2011-2012 Office of Medical Education, UCSF (San Francisco, CA): Writing as a way of knowing (fiction writing group for Medical Education staff)
- 2008-2010 Art for Recovery: Writing workshop for people living with cancer (sponsored by the UCSF Mt. Zion Art for Recovery program in San Francisco, CA)
- 2010 Queers Surviving: Telling our whole stories (co-facilitated with Sassafras Lowrey)
- 2009-2010 Survivorship: Write Whole, offered biannually (transformative writing for survivors of extreme and ritual violence)
- November 2009 Body Empathy (co-facilitated with Alex Cafarelli) – a daylong workshop combining writing and body mindfulness/gentle movement for queer survivors of sexual trauma
- 2009 Write Whole: presentation and writing group for crisis counselors at Bay Area Women Against Rape
- 2008 Fearless Words: Sexual trauma survivors writing workshop with SF Women Against Rape
- 2008 Minneapolis: Erotic Reading Circle at Amazon Bookstore, and writing workshop
- 2008 Brown University: Erotic Writing Workshop (with Body Heat)
- 2007 University of Oregon at Eugene: Erotic and survivors' writing workshops with queer students
- 2000-2001 Portland, ME: Writing workshop session with queer youth, OutRight Portland

### **Publications (partial list)**

**2000 - present**

- "Coming Home," *Matador Review*, Fall 2017
- "Safe," *The Elephants*, August 16, 2017
- *Writing Ourselves Whole: Using the Power of Your Own Creativity to Recover and Heal from Sexual Trauma*. (Mango Media, 2017).
- "Night Hands (excerpt)," *Fourteen Hills* 22.2, Summer 2016. (*Story nominated for a Pushcart Prize*)
- "Hot Pants," *Me and My Boi*, San Francisco: Cleis Press, 2016. (*Book nominated for Lambda Award*)
- "curious" and "emergence" (poems), *Sinister Wisdom* 99, 2016.
- *Sex Still Spoken Here: An Anthology*, Carol Queen, Jen Cross, and Amy Butcher, eds. CSC Press, 2014.
- "Coagulation," *Wilde Magazine*, Erotica Issue 1, Summer 2014.
- "Writing Our Survival: Transformative writing for survivors and those who love them," *Survivorship Journal*, Volume 19, Issue 2, Summer 2014.
- "unhinged," *nin: a literary journal of erotic poetics*, vol. 1, issue 2, February 2014.
- "Ordinary and Resilient," *New Yorker* (Letters section), November 11, 2013.
- *Fierce Hunger: Writing from the intersection of trauma and desire*, Jen Cross, ed. (150-page anthology published to commemorate Writing Ourselves Whole's tenth anniversary).
- "Sisters: A Deology," *The Healing Art of Writing 2010*, University of California Press, 2011.
- Editor of *Survivorship Journal*, Volume 16, Issue 2, Summer 2010.
- "Femme the sex of me," *Visible: A Femmethology*, Homofactus Press, 2009.

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- "Communities of scars" (review of *Live Through This, Essence and Artifice* and *Scars Tell Stories*), *make/shift: feminisms in motion*, issue 4, Fall/Winter 2008.
  - "Business," *Ignavia*, vol. 2.2 (www.ignaviapress.com).
  - "Review of Female to Femme," *make/shift: feminisms in motion*, issue 3, Spring/Summer 2008.
  - "Surface Tensions," *Best Sex Writing 2008*, Cleis Press.
  - "This flesh has changed meaning," *Best Women's Erotica 2007*, Cleis Press, 2006.
  - "Surface Tensions," *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the rules of gender and conformity*, Seal Press, 2006.
  - "This is not safe sex," *Clean Sheets*, Dec 2006 (cleansheets.com).
  - "The G-String," *Glamour Girls: femme-on-femme erotica*, Haworth Press, 2006.

(The following were published under the name Jen Collins:)

- "Metaphors, the Erotic & Survival or How I Learned to Use a Tool of Repressive Normalization as an Instrument of Eroto-sexual Revolution." *The Erotic: Approaches to a cultural contextualization*. The Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2005. ISBN:1-904710 04-2.
- "An Old-School Femme," *Back to Basics: a butch-femme anthology*, Bella After Dark, 2004.
- "Bedrock," *Tough Girls, down & dirty dyke erotica*, Black Books, 2002.
- "Something to believe in," *Young Wives' Tales: New Adventures In Love*, Seal Press, 2001.
- "Home is where the heart's safe," *Maine Times*, vol. 33 no. 34 (Jan 4 - Jan 10, 2001).
- "Bedrock," *Set In Stone: butch-on-butch erotica*, Alyson Press, 2000.

## **Lectures and Conference Workshops**

**2001 - present**

- 2017 San Francisco State University Women's Conference, "Writing Ourselves Whole"
- 2015 Amherst Writers & Artists Conference: "Declaring Our Erotic: Erotic Writing in AWA Workshops"
- 2015 AWP Conference: "Helping Special Populations Heal Through Writing"
- 2015, 2014, 2013: Festival of Words at Pacific School of Religion (Festival organizer in 2015)
- 2014 Power of Words Conference: "Write Whole, Healers: Self Care for Transformative Language Artists"
- 2015, 2014, 2012 Survivorship Conference: "Writing Ourselves Whole—Writing as a transformative healing practice for trauma survivors and those who love them."
- 2013 Dreamspinner Author's Weekend: "Getting Through the Blue" (sexuality writing session)
- 2013 Writing Ourselves Whole: Using Writing to Transform Trauma, University of California at Davis
- 2012 Femme Conference: "Body Mindfulness: a meditative writing workshop for femme survivors of sexual violence" (co-facilitated with Alex Cafarelli)
- 2011 Conversations with Writers, University of California at Davis: "Erotic Writing as Liberatory Practice"
- 2011 SafetyFest Conference: "Notes from Our Underground" (co-facilitated writing group)
- September 2010 Power of Words Conference (sponsored by the Transformative Language Arts Network): "Reclaiming the Erotic Story: the Liberatory Potential of Writing Desire"

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- April 2010 SafetyFest (sponsored by Communities United Against Violence): “Declaring Our Erotic” (erotic writing for survivors of violence)
  - 2010 Femme Conference: “Wild Geese—a writing group for femme survivors of sexual violence”
  - September 2009 Power of Words Conference (sponsored by the Transformative Language Arts Network): “Survivors Write: A non-clinical transformative writing practice for survivors of sexual trauma”
  - September 2008 Power of Words Conference (sponsored by the Transformative Language Arts Network): “Declaring our erotic – transformative writing about sexuality”
  - 2006 Femme Conference: “Writing with sexual trauma survivors”
  - 2004 The Erotic: First Global Interdisciplinary Conference: “Metaphors, the Erotic & Survival”
  - 2004 Transformative Language Arts Conference. “Erotic Writing as Transformative Practice”
  - 2001, 2002 Goddard College, Individualized Masters Residency- Erotic writing workshop session

### **Performances/Readings (partial list)**

**2004 - present**

- VelRo (San Francisco State University Reading Series), 2016, 2017
- LitQuake LitCrawl “Erotic Writing with Carol Queen”: October 2006, 2008-2013, 2015-2017
- LitQuake LitCrawl “Fierce Hunger,” featuring writers from Writing Ourselves Whole, October 2014
- “Fierce Hunger” – produced and emceed a reading and book launch produced in honor of Writing Ourselves Whole's Tenth Anniversary, March, 2013
- “Body Heat: Queer Femme Porn Tour” (National): April 2008, March 2009, March 2010, February 2012
- “Perverts Put Out” (since 2008, invited at least annually to participate in this long-running series)
- “Holiday Dirt” Fundraiser benefitting Writing Ourselves Whole, produced and emceed, December 2009
- “Artists Against Rape 2008” (grant-funded position to co-coordinate artists for the twelfth annual Artists Against Rape with San Francisco Women Against Rape)
- “Pride Kickoff Party” Reading by Declaring Our Erotic writers, June 2008
- “Best of SFinExile,” June 2008
- “Best Sex Writing 2008,” March 2008
- “Fresh Dirt” Performance by Declaring Our Erotic writers, March 2008
- National Queer Arts Festival: 2006 (with Dirty Ink: “Fist.Muscle.Bone”), 2005 (with Dirty Ink), 2004 (with Dirty Ink: “Borderland Erotica”)
- “Hotter than Hell,” SF in Exile (with Dirty Ink)

### **Current Creative Projects**

- *JocelynCeciliaWendyWade* – a novel about three sisters trying to learn how to live in the world—not to mention in relationship with each other—in the aftermath of extreme sexual and psychological abuse
- *how to resuture: a memoir in fragments*—a collection of poems and other experimental works

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**Residencies, Workshops, and Community Engagement**

**2010 - present**

- Hedgebrook residency, March 2012
- Tomales Bay writing workshop (with Dorothy Allison), October 2011
- Healing Art of Writing workshop, June 2010
- Transformative Language Arts Network Board, 2010 - 2011

**Other Professional Engagement**

**1997-present**

- 2017 Adjunct lecturer, John F. Kennedy University, Pleasant Hill, CA
- 2007-present Editor (with private clients), Oakland, CA
- 2014-2017 Copy Editor, WritersCorps, San Francisco, CA
- 2007-2012 Educational Data Analyst, UCSF Office of Educational Technology, San Francisco, CA
- 2005-2007 Business Communications Instructor, Jewish Vocational Services, San Francisco, CA
- 2004 Community Education Outreach Coordinator/ Psychoeducational Group Facilitator, Building Futures with Women and Children, San Leandro, CA
- 1997-2000 Outreach Advocate/Same-Sex Domestic Violence Education Coordinator, Family Crisis Services, Portland, ME

**Interviews/ Articles**

**2005 - present**

- "Jen Cross, Writer and Erotic Writer, Facilitator of Workshops for Survivors of Sexual Violence and for Erotic Writing." *Transformative Language Arts in Action*, Caryn Mirriam Goldberg and Ruth Farmer, eds. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014.
- Katz, Dorian. "A Dirty Learning Curve," *Clamor Magazine*, issue 34, Jan 2005. (<https://archive.org/details/clamormagazine34mult>)
- Interview with Britt Bravo for the Arts & Healing Network: [http://artheals.org/projects/arts\\_healing\\_podcast.html?fb\\_17380826\\_anch=17380852](http://artheals.org/projects/arts_healing_podcast.html?fb_17380826_anch=17380852)
- "Interview with Jen Cross on gender roles, butch/femme, sexual abuse and writing" on Rachel Kramer Bussel's *Best Sex Writing 2008 Blog*: <https://bestsexwriting2008.wordpress.com/2008/01/09/interview-with->