



## **A Writing Workshop with Naomi Shihab Nye and Marion Winik**

In conjunction with the 2026 VOICES Lenten Speaker Series, we are excited to offer a writing workshop, “I Know About a Thousand Things: Letter Writing as a Spark for Creativity,” with poet Naomi Shihab Nye and essayist Marion Winik, on Sunday, February 22, 2026, from 1 – 4 p.m. in the parish hall.

This three-hour workshop centers on the book *I Know About a Thousand Things: The Writings of Ann Alejandro of Uvalde, Texas*, a collection of excerpts from Ann’s letters and other occasional writing. It is led by the book’s co-editors, Naomi Shihab Nye and Marion Winik, longtime friends of the author, and each other, and writers themselves. The collection is the result of the promise they made to Ann, who died in 2019 at the age of 64, to pull together and publish a book from the thousands of pages of her writing she left in their care.

In putting the book together, Winik and Nye came to suspect that it is possible for any writer to access rare power, intimacy and candor by addressing a specific person directly, rather than writing for the larger, undefined audience of literature in general. Even the subject matter that comes to mind is often different, framed by the relationship of the letter writer to its recipient. To explore these ideas with other writers, they designed this workshop.

The session will begin with a discussion of the book, followed by four or five epistolary exercises which can be approached either in prose or poetry. Each exercise is seeded by a passage from the book we will review together. Students will have the opportunity to share their responses to the prompts. That evening, students are invited to join Winik and Nye for a public presentation of the book and brief readings from their individual work. Students are encouraged to read the book prior to the session.

The cost of the workshop is \$60 (includes a copy of the book) and is limited to 30 participants. Please use [this link](#) to sign up.

### **About the authors:**

Naomi Shihab Nye has served as Young People’s Poet Laureate of the United States and poetry editor for the *New York Times Magazine* and the *Texas Observer*. She has written or edited more than thirty books, including *Grace Notes* and *The Tiny Journalist*. She has worked as a visiting writer all her life, currently teaching at Texas State University. She received Lifetime Achievement awards from the Texas Institute of Letters, the National Books Critics Circle, and the Arab-American National Museum, and is the recipient of the 2024 Wallace Stevens Award from the American Academy of Poets which honored her as a “voice who has made space for

the extraordinary possibility of poetry as a register of observation and reflection, compassion and togetherness, justice and grace.”

Marion Winik is the author of *The Big Book of the Dead*, *Above Us Only Sky*, and *First Comes Love*, which was reissued this year to celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a new introduction by the author and an audiobook narrated by her as well. Her essays have been published in the *New York Times*, *Agni* and *The Hopkins Review*. She reviews books for the *Washington Post*, *People*, *Oprah Daily*, and others, and hosts *The Weekly Reader* podcast on National Public Radio. She teaches in the MFA program at the University of Baltimore and was a commentator on *All Things Considered* for 15 years. More information available at [marionwinik.com](http://marionwinik.com).