About "Write the Open Spaces" Writing Retreat

DeLaCour Ranch, Lone Pine, CA
June 21-26, 2011

The Magic of DeLaCour Ranch

A former mule-packing base camp and 10 miles from the town of Lone Pine, DeLaCour Ranch sits in a liminal space—a canyoned entrance to the Eastern Sierra. At 5500 feet, this is considered high desert, but hundreds of springs feed its acreage and it has become an oasis for travelers and its permanent residents—musician Coale Johnson and master gardener Julie Fought, along with their horses, mules, sheep, chickens, and dogs.

With vegetable gardens, lavender fields, and horse pastures, it is now a year-round vacation rental space and comfortable ranch home. Coale spent 10 years designing and building the main cabin and tent cabins (where we will rest and gather) with the idea of providing an accessible and comfortable wilderness retreat for people of all ages and backgrounds. The ranch proper is green—power is generated from a small hydro system on the creek that flows through the ranch.

For those who are not familiar with this area, there is a mountain range in view from every vantage point—the Inyos, the Cosos, the Panamints, the Sierra—and your eye is drawn to the Owens Valley with its shimmering (dry) lakebed. The trailhead to Mt. Whitney is a few miles away and the entrance to Death Valley is a 40-minute drive. The nearby Alabama Hills were regular film shooting locations in the heyday of western films and more recently *GI Jane, Ironman,* and *Star Trek*.

Writing Retreat 2010

After our first retreat in June 2010, writers returned to their daily lives with a deepened commitment to their practice. One person completed her book and has now found several publishers; another found a way back into a 10-year project and is on a fourth draft of a manuscript; other writers began to step up and out with their writing, publishing online, creating their own websites, or simply showing up more often to write. A trio of writers from last year's retreat are now having monthly "harvesting" meetings, where they share work and figure out where their body of work wants to live. Our community of writers last year created a generous and comfortable space and enabled risk-taking; we allowed the

vastness of the mountains, desert, and sky to enter us and bring us to new places with our writing and our lives.

Writing Retreat 2011

Similar to last year, I envision this June's retreat as a writing community/ artists' residence. Everything we do is based on our writing needs for the five days we are together, but since the location is so special, I prefer writers to come with an open mind and allow the surroundings to deepen your relationship with writing or creativity.

I am happy to provide structure and support—organization, prompts, facilitation—but as a group we will decide how to best structure our retreat for rest, writing, performance, and play. You will have time to explore, go on hikes, visit local spots of interest, take Sabine's hatha yoga class in town, or simply relax and be still. You may devote your entire time to "woodshedding" with a manuscript and emerging to share what's on your mind during the evening meal (and be totally supported in this!). Or you may choose to do all your writerly activities "en groupe" and be supported in a more interactive way.

The accommodations vary from a fully winterized cabin to tent camping—and we are truly living WITH each other in our canyon nook. For those who may end up sleeping in a tent (if we have more than six writers), let me emphasize that this is LUXURY camping: two kitchens (one indoor), refrigerator, multiple gas grills, clean bathrooms, linens, hot showers. I will provide basics for cooking and whatever is too cumbersome to bring, but morning and afternoon meals are up to you. Please bring what you need or give me your shopping list beforehand. We will sign up for evening meal responsibilities and rotate. This aspect of cooking and sharing meals is an important aspect of our time together.

I am also happy if writers bring prompts or want to share facilitation. We will use AWA guidelines for our sharing.

You do not need to submit a manuscript to apply nor is there a requirement for writing in a particular genre. I welcome creativity from all media and disciplines, and ask only for your willingness to write and be open to the writing of others. This year I would love for writers who are also musicians, singers, dancers and artists of all backgrounds to bring their talents to the mix. We have the opportunity to 'play' and/or perform in a special space, an empty silo at the nearby former Pittsburgh Plate Glass factory.

About Stephanie Baker:

I completed an MFA in Poetics and Writing (1998) from New College of California and have led writing workshops with a wide variety of groups including the Bay Area Writing Project, teachers, homeless adults, schoolchildren, and adolescents. I have performed my work in a variety of venues, including cafes, art galleries, and libraries. I have published in various literary journals, both print and online (*Rudolf's Diner, Certain Stones, Mirage, Prosodia, Digital Paper*). I have been fortunate to work with some amazing poets and writers who have also been my teachers, including David Meltzer, Will Alexander, Gloria Frym, Lyn Hejinian, Gail Sher, and most recently Diane DiPrima (San Francisco's current poet laureate).

I have been awarded a grant by the San Francisco Art Commission, been a writer in residence at the Morris Graves Foundation, and in 2007 was chosen as one of Jack Hirschman's Poets 11 in San Francisco. I taught high school students for 12 years, but left the classroom in 2009 to focus on my own writing. I write mostly poetry and creative non-fiction, but I have also published art reviews, dramaturgical essays, and short fiction. I currently freelance in the Bay Area as a writer, editor, tutor, and teacher. I own two horses on the coast, who often serve as teachers for both my writing students and me. I live in the Mission district in San Francisco with my husband, sculptor David Fought.

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

CELLPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT (NAME AND PHONE NUMBER):
_____

DO YOU HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CONDITIONS OR ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS? PLEASE DESCRIBE.
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

DO YOU HAVE DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS? ARE YOU A VEGETARIAN? PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR NEEDS.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Are you interested or willing to bring a writing prompt for our group and/or share facilitation?

Yes? No? Comments or Questions:
_____

Are you willing to prepare one meal (dinner) for group or team up with another person to do so? _____yes _____no

Comments: _____

Do you have creative practices in addition to writing (for example, music, sculpture, photography, dance, healing arts, yoga, gardening, performance) or others that you would be willing to share with the group in some form?
_____yes _____now

Comments: _____

Where will you be traveling from?_____

Please note: Our retreat formally begins with dinner the first evening (Tuesday June 21) at 6 pm, but I encourage you to come earlier in the day, get settled in, relax, and explore. Please make sure you make travel arrangements so you arrive in time for dinner that evening. We end before noon on Sunday June 26.

Are you interested in any of the following activities? Please indicate.
-lavender harvesting
-hiking (High Sierra? lower altitude?)
-horsebackriding or horsemanship lesson with Stephanie
-doing yoga with Sabine at our site or in town
-visiting museums or nearby sites (Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, Manzanar (former Japanese-American Internment camp), mining town of Darwin, Death Valley

This space is for additional comments. Please write additional questions or concerns here:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

RETREAT COST: $375 FOR 5 NIGHTS: cost includes lodging and amenities, basic foodstuff and supplies, retreat organization

TO SAVE YOUR PLACE, FILL OUT THIS FORM AND SEND IT ALONG WITH A CHECK (NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT) FOR $200 BY APRIL 30 TO:

STEPHANIE BAKER
3004 16TH STREET #107
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103