

# Institute for Cultural Change

*Inner evolution, outer change*

## The Writer's Retreat

Christine Downing, Jacqueline Feather, Maureen Murdock

October 24-25, 2009

### Christine Downing, *May The Gods Draw Near: Writing From Soul*



Freud spoke often of the "old and grubby gods," part of his collection of ancient figurines, that sat on his writing desk and took part in his work. On my own desk and now by my computer have sat at various times a carved wooden lion who symbolized the support of my Leo father figures, including Jung; a bronze Cretan serpent goddess, who embodied female divine power; a marble Aphrodite who represents the love of the images produced by the unconscious I associate with Freud, several tiny Zuni fetishes that connect me to the earth my feet tread and to which I will someday return.

This workshop will provide an opportunity for discerning between the kinds of support offered by Zeus or Apollo or Hephaestus, by Athene or Aphrodite or Hekate, or by some other member of the Greek pantheon or of another tradition that speaks more directly to us. We will talk but we will also write. We may write TO a divine presence or write as inspired BY such a presence. We will implore, we will praise, we will give thanks.

### Jacqueline Feather, *Writing Into The Gap: Untold Stories*



The writer always moves into the unknown. It is always an act of heart, brain, courage, loneliness and love. But what happens when even the Silence....is silent?

This is a hands-on writing workshop with exercises intended to approach gaps, memory and imagination from unanticipated angles. It is a chance to drop into the quiet stillness, put the critic aside, and go exploring...into desire, dream, or darkness.

Entering the unknown, dismembered, or dormant places of memory the writer seeks to recover and illuminate - by pen, image, word - hidden stories, bringing with them their textures, tastes, or tears and, in doing on, widening and deepening, illuminating, their creative inner landscape.

### Maureen Murdock, *Myth & Memoir*



Myth owes its longevity to its power to express typical human emotions that have been experienced throughout successive generations. Memoir owes its popularity to its ability to portray these same enduring feelings in a contemporary individual's life. Myths use symbols and gods and goddesses to explore such themes as heroism, betrayal, the search for the mother/father or for love, and the cycles of death and rebirth. Memoirs explore the very same themes in the stories of our every day lives. Memoirists are our contemporary mythmakers. This workshop includes discussion of: 1) The elements of memoir writing, 2) Mythic themes and structure, 3) Readings of contemporary memoirists who explore mythic themes, 4) Writing exercises to begin the process of writing memoir.

Photo: Maureen Murdock

**Retreat Location:** Santa Barbara Old Mission, 2300 Garden Street, Santa Barbara

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