After the Siege: Writing War Truthfully
AWP 2020

Moderator: J. A. Bernstein
Panelists: Ru Freeman, Mai Der Vang, Brynn Saito, Piotr Florczyk

I. Moderator remarks and introduction (Five minutes)
II. Panelist remarks (20 minutes)
III. Probable questions (25 minutes):

1.) What drew you to war as a subject for writing?
2). What kinds of risks do you think a writer takes in writing about war?
3). How, if at all, does one overcome or respond to these risks?
4.) Would you classify yourself as a “war writer,” or have you ever been called that?
5.) Do you see any problems inherent in that label?
6.) Do you think that writing about the trauma of war is different from writing about other kinds of trauma? How?
7.) Do you think it’s possible to universalize the experience of war or trauma, or are they particular to certain groups or communities?
8.) What obligations, if any, do you feel in writing about war? How might these obligations differ from those felt in writing about other subjects?
9.) Do you think that women or non-binary writers have been able to access war as a subject in the same way as men? Do you feel that is changing?
10.) Do you ever see war writing as an act of testimony? What are the risks or rewards of that approach? Does it ever limit who can write about war, or claim a kind of authenticity?
11.) Have you found that war as a subject compels you to write in a certain mode, such as poetry, fiction, nonfiction, or drama, or to find an alternate avenue of expression, such as visual art?
12.) Do you find that the literary marketplace shapes writing about war, or alters it in any way? Has this direction changed, and where do you see it heading?

IV. Audience Q&A (Remaining time minus two minutes)
V. Closing remarks (Two minutes)