

Low-Residency MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults faculty information:

Kelly Easton

<http://www.kellyeaston.com>

Biography:

I started as a playwright, but always intended to write fiction when I began to raise a family. Theater informs my work in my emphasis on language, character, and dialogue, and in my love of improvisation. I wrote my first novel, *The Life History of a Star*, as an adult book, but when a publisher suggested that it be published as young adult, I felt a light bulb go off in my head: I wanted to write for children and teens. I've written nine books for children and young adults. Despite the fact that they are character driven, most of my books were motivated by theme, political statements I felt a need to make. I love satire and humor as a medium to bring a message. You can sow a seed of commentary when people are laughing that will last long after they read your book. For my teaching and publishing history, please see my website.

I Am Happy to Work with Students in the Following Genres/Areas:

All areas of fiction: picture books, young and middle readers, and young adult novels. I'm happy to read your nonfiction, but it is not a genre in which I work.

Other Things to Know About Me as an Advisor:

Primarily, our work together is a dialogue. I'm very open to you taking risks as an artist, and trying out new styles of writing, new voices. Conversely, revision is 80% of writing; therefore I'm a rigorous editor and will encourage you to bring your work to publishable form. The best thing you can learn from the program is how to edit. I also like to focus on the business with you, since, inevitably, that is where you are headed. I accept packets only by mail, and like to have a phone conference at least once during the semester.

Books of Mine I Recommend That You Read:

The voice of my work varies greatly, so I'd choose one from each of the following three lists:

1. *Hiroshima Dreams*, *Walking on Air*, or *Aftershock*.
2. *The Life History of a Star* (diary), *White Magic*, or *To Be Mona*
3. *The Outlandish Adventures of Liberty Aims* (2009), *Canaries and Criminals*, or *Trouble at Betts Pets* (all for 8-12 year olds).