

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

Manuscript Consulting

Laura Van Prooyen is an outstanding writing consultant. She's both honest and encouraging in her remarks, pointing out what works and offering practical suggestions for improvement. She also has a strong talent for looking at a manuscript through the eyes of an acquisitions editor, explaining how to arrange the material so the reader is hooked from the very first page. I fully recommend Laura for writers who want to take their craft to the next level.

[Richard Cole](#), client and author of [Catholic by Choice](#) (Loyola Press), [The Glass Children](#) (University of Georgia Press) and [Success Stories](#) (Limestone Books)

Laura Van Prooyen is both insightful and kind. Her critique was illuminating. After her global reading, I felt like I had the awareness I needed to take this work to the next level. I highly recommend working with her!

Kelly Fordon, client and author
of *Garden for the Blind* (Wayne State University Press)

Military Workshops

I work in an Intensive Outpatient Program with service members who have a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis. In October 2014, Laura joined our group to lead the narrative component of the treatment process. Laura's goal, from the beginning, was not to transform these wounded warriors into writers; rather, she offered them a creative way to express emotions related to the trauma of war they've been trying to avoid for years. Her work with the soldiers has been successful beyond all expectations. During each six-week cohort, the patients eagerly anticipate Laura's weekly session. This is a tough group to penetrate, but Laura, using a simple approach, is helping these heroes to express and release their emotions through writing. She is a vital part of our treatment team.

Roy Gissendanner
Psychology Technician
Intensive Outpatient Program
Clinic of Behavioral Medicine at Brooke Army Medical Center

K-12 Teaching/Training

Laura Van Prooyen taught this summer's Martha Spoor Young Writers' Workshop (2015). I was impressed by the quality of the workshop when I saw the students in action during the session and in the writing they read at the culminating reception. As an audience, we were moved by their pieces and by the joy they obviously experienced in the workshop with Laura. These middle-school students really connected with her. They felt safe to explore themselves in both playful and significant ways. The workshop was a great success!

Frank E. Alfaro, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education
Alamo Heights ISD, Alamo Heights, TX

Laura Van Prooyen taught a “Reading and Writing Poetry [for teachers]” workshop at my school. I was impressed with her presentation. She had all of the teachers engaged from the moment we did our introductions. Laura is creative and possesses thorough knowledge of working with students at all levels. Her ability to translate poetic ideas into tangible curriculum illustrates an appreciation of the teaching profession. She is friendly and is giving of her time to help teachers be successful in their classrooms using her fantastic ideas.

Gregory Smith
4th Grade Teacher
Bryker Woods Elementary, Austin TX

During our workshop, Laura created a cocoon of creativity for all. Despite the looming demands of the week before school, our teachers were 100% engaged in reading, analyzing, and writing poetry. Laura tailored each session for the age level of our students and provided practical easy-to-use materials that have transformed poetry instruction at our school.

Dee Susong
Special Education Teacher
Bryker Woods Elementary, Austin, TX

Students

Ms. Van Prooyen was my teacher for two years. I'm so glad she was my first creative writing teacher. Not only did she teach me the importance of adding a metaphor, but also she taught me kindness through acceptance and empathy. She is always honest about the quality of work written in her classes and gives great feedback. In her creative writing class, no poem is a bad poem without a little elbow grease.

Francisca Vargas, 11th grade student
Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art + Design

Professor Van Prooyen was one of the most influential professors of my college career. Not only was she passionate about what she taught, but she also made her students feel the same passion for the subject. We had a small class, only five students, but by the end, I know we all enjoyed studying and writing poetry. I received thorough feedback on my work that helped me improve and let me know she really cared about how well I did. Professor Van Prooyen's teaching style was very personable, and I was treated as more than just a student in her class.

Allie Colantoni, English Major: Writing Concentration
Dominican University
ENG 339: Advanced Poetry Writing

Walking into English 250, I already had a lot of experience with poetry, but I would say that from this class my love for poetry grew. Professor Van Prooyen challenged the whole class to develop a greater awareness of poetry in the world; students were encouraged to see outside poetry performances, to watch movies on poets, and even to begin to write their own poetry. We covered many different types of poems and poetic terms; yet, I never felt like I was lacking information, because the professor was always thorough in explaining the material. I gained many new skills in writing about poetry and about analytical writing in general. As an English Major and as an admirer of poetry, I was excited about this class, the material, and the professor; she encouraged

us and supported us in all of our endeavors.

Nicole Schultz, English Major
Dominican University
ENG 250: Introduction to Poetry

Professor Van Prooyen made my Introduction to Poetry class enjoyable by creating an atmosphere that was interesting both to English majors and to students fulfilling a literature requirement. Her class helped me appreciate poetry more; never before had I considered the choices a poet makes in writing, or how those choices could reveal the poem's meaning. Aside from being knowledgeable in the subject, Professor Van Prooyen was passionate about teaching our class and cared about everyone's success. She was approachable, encouraged us to pursue our interests, and used teaching methods that allowed for learning in a variety of ways. Overall, my interest and knowledge in poetry greatly increased.

Ann Bartek, Biology Major
Dominican University
ENG 250: Introduction to Poetry

Private Workshops

I enjoyed how Laura had us read poems, short stories and flash fiction (which I didn't know existed before!). The writing exercises were a highlight of this course for me; they were really helpful. I was surprised by how much I could learn through the workshop process not only about my own piece, but also about how different readers view something. Laura's teaching style is open-minded, yet steady and calm, so I felt like I could really write whatever I wanted, but that she would actually read it and take seriously anything I submitted.

R. Hoogstra
Unleash Your Creative Self, private six-week workshop for adults

Something magical happened in that room last night! Laura coaxed ideas and feelings and stories out of six very different women with very different lives. Everyone came away feeling energized, inspired, and, yes, even competent as writers. What a great experience and a great workshop!

Fran Veters
Program Director
American Association of University Women
San Antonio Branch