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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Memories. Memoir.

On September 28, 2013, Ana Castillo, award winning novelist, poet, essayist and playwright, will offer a Memoir Writing Workshop at the Southwest Festival of the Written Word in Silver City NM. Castillo teaches memoir writing at Northwestern University and at workshops around the country, most recently in Taos, NM. Her Silver City course will be held at Bear Mountain Lodge. The cost is \$125 and enrollment is limited.

"What is memoir and why would you want to write one?" you might ask. William Zinsser, author of the classic *On Writing Well*, offers this as an answer: Memoir is personal history but "not big history, rather stories (that) will often have less to do with their subject than with their significance - not what you did in a certain situation, but how that situation affected you and shaped the person you became."

He writes in one of his articles that one of the saddest sentences he knows "is 'I wish I had asked my mother about that.' Or my father. Or my grandmother. Or my grandfather. As every parent knows, our children are not as fascinated by our fascinating lives as we are. Only when they have children of their own-and feel the first twinges of their own advancing age-do they suddenly want to know more about their family heritage and all its accretions of anecdote and lore."

Jeannie Miller, publicity chair for the Southwest Festival of the Written Word, notes that "In Silver City, we're proof of the modern family diaspora: children and grandchildren often live a half continent away. We may not get many chances to share our stories in person. A memoir helps overcome that distance." She adds, "Not to mention that memoir is one the today's most popular forms of writing."

Writing teachers like Holly Lisle cite writing your story, your memoir, as the best way to get into writing and finding a voice. "You are selling your unique perspective on life, your unique collection of beliefs, fears, hopes and dreams, your memories of childhood tribulation and triumphs and adult achievements and failures . . . your universe. . .The only thing that readers cannot get anywhere but from you is . . . you. Which means you have to put yourself on your page."

Ana Castillo describes the workshop she will conduct at the Festival this way: "The workshop will consist of exercises, which help us to know how to get started. We'll talk, we'll laugh, we'll cry. We'll vent. And then, we'll learn to get rid of all the

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sentimentality and leave on the page what is important for the reader to know about your memoir."

"Castillo has the reputation of not fooling around," observes Miller. "This is a writers' workshop that means business. And the fact that it will take place in the intimate and welcoming setting of Bear Mountain Lodge is one more reason to take the class."

Space in the workshop is limited and Miller encourages writers to contact chair@swwordfiesta.org or call 575-654-6803 to reserve a place at the table.

The public is invited to the free Festival opening keynote address by Castillo at the Global Resource Center auditorium on the Western New Mexico University campus Friday, September 27th at 5:00 pm. Her topic will be "Two New Books and How They Came to Be in an Anti-Print Age".

The Southwest Festival of the Written Word is Silver City NM's first literary festival. It takes place September 27-29. Over 50 writers and publishing professionals will offer 30 informative sessions for writers and readers of all ages.

All events and sessions are free and open to the public except for the Memoir Writing workshop which is \$125 and the Festival's Saturday evening event "Dining with your favorite Southwestern Writers" at the Murray Hotel for which tickets cost \$30. Denise Chavez will be the keynote speaker at the dinner.

Please visit www.swwordfiesta.org for full schedule information and bios on all the presenters.