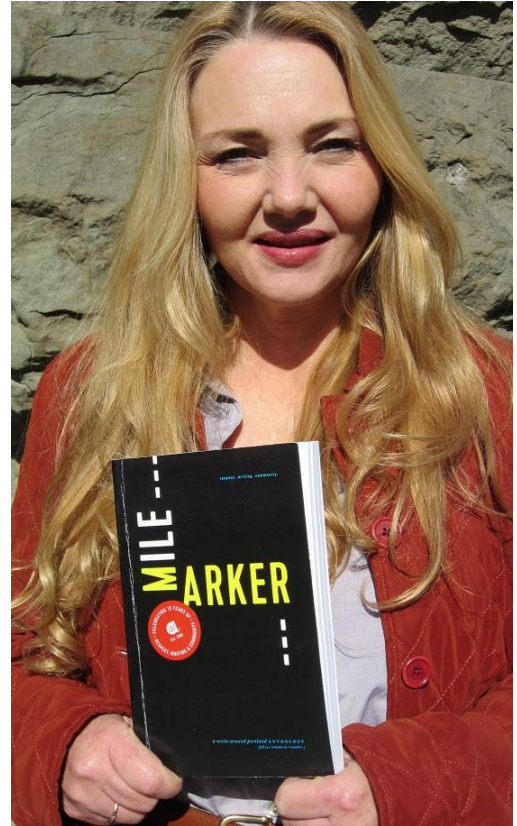


Molly grew up in Milwaukie, Oregon, until age ten when her father moved the family to Portland to be closer to his work. It was around this time Molly began to discover her love for writing as she wrote lyrics and skits for her church. She grew up in Southwest Portland attending Wilson High School where she was very active in the drama department and wrote lyrics, poems, and short stories. After high school she began working at (and later attended) Portland Community College where she discovered her love for philosophy, eventually earning her degree in the subject. When she isn't writing in her journal, she can be found painting abstract art, rearranging her room to express her love for interior decorating, and swimming.

**How did you first hear about Write Around Portland, and what drew you to the workshop?**

I first heard about it when my brother was involved in 1999. His name was Joel, and he was my big brother. He always wrote too and always wanted to be a writer and so he is how I first heard about it. TPI (Transition Projects, Inc.) helped me get involved in the community, and Write Around Portland was one of the programs they got me involved in. The writing helped because I can get out of my head. I can just visualize the happy ending I want, what I want for my community, and what I want for the good things.



**How did you become connected with TPI, and what was your experience like?**

In 2007 I got a divorce, and it was final in 2009. For two years I worked a minimum wage job. I had been a stay-at-home mom the whole time I was married. In 2012 I lost my full time job, and that is when I became homeless. There was just a lot of grief and a lot of pain. I got on a list for Jean's Place, which is part of TPI which is housing for homeless women and it helps them get back on their feet. I went into Jean's Place and I stayed there for four months, did really well there, and started rebuilding my life. I got a grant from Jean's Place through TPI and went on to the Hamilton West Apartments where I serve as a representative on the advisory committee and work with a program called Give to Get. I am meeting people from all the different buildings and brainstorming how to make the community better.

**What was your experience like when you started attending the workshop?**

We are at TPI in the big boardroom, and Cara was our facilitator, and I just fell in love with her. She was awesome. She led the group with such integrity for the work; I could tell she was very serious about the writing. It was the first time I was ever in a group of writers and the energy was amazing. I just loved the fact that we could always listen to each other's writing.

**What was your group like?**

The group dynamic was such that many of the women were dark writers; other people like myself would write about fantasy, you know, riding off into the sunset, and some would write about their experiences. Everyone just had a really different flavor, so what was really interesting to me was [seeing] how certain people go to certain kinds of genres. Everybody

really just got along and we looked forward to it each week. All of the writers were, I thought, amazing writers, and I felt very blessed.

**How did you see your writing change?**

In my journal writing [before Write Around Portland] I was always writing, you know, about my problems and things, but in the workshop I found I started getting into fiction and fantasy. [Our facilitator] Cara really brought that out in me. I went into fiction and a lot more dialogue and I started writing about characters and I found everybody liked it and some people said “Wow! You are so good at dialogue!” So that really gave me confidence.

**Was there any time in the workshop where you thought, “Wow, this is hard?”**

I think, because I am kind of shy, it was very hard at the beginning and still is. As a writer you are very vulnerable. Any time you write, you are revealing a part of yourself that usually is closed up in your journal, that is for your eyes only, and isn't up for critique or interpretation. So that was really hard at first. It felt like taking a layer of clothing off of me!

**Let's talk about the anthology release party. How was your experience with that?**

I was so happy. I loved it. I hadn't spoken in front of a group to share my personal writing since high school, so I felt like I had accomplished something that was really important to me because I thought I had a fear of speaking in front of people, but once I did I realized I didn't [have a fear]! I didn't feel very nervous, and I think it was because we were all in it together, supporting each other, all listening to each other's voices and our stories. It felt more like a big Thanksgiving dinner; it felt like real family.

**How did it feel to be published in the anthology?**

It felt so wonderful to have my name next to my writing in a book. My favorite place in the city is the library and every time I walk in there I think, “These are all writers. I am surrounded by all these people who had a dream of becoming a writer and were published. And now I am one of these people!”

**Would you recommend Write Around Portland to other people?**

Of course! Even people who had never written before in my group totally enjoyed it, so I would recommend it to everybody, anybody. It's a wonderful program.