



# Experimental Life Writing:

How we live is how we write

with *Tim Atkins*

## **COURSE LENGTH:**

long course: 11 weeks

**TYPE:** online, synchronous (live)

**LEVEL:** all writing levels are welcome

## **SCREEN TIME:**

2 hours/week

## **WRITING TIME:**

2 hours/week

**START DATE:** 11 October 2026

**END DATE:** 20 December 2026

**TIME:** 7PM UK time (7–9:15)

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Sundays:**

**11 October – 20 December**

See below for detailed weekly outline.

## **THE LIMIT OF MY LIFE IS THE LIMIT OF MY LANGUAGE: DO WORDS DESCRIBE A LIFE OR CREATE ONE?**

### **About the course:**

What is life? What is writing? Who, these days, lives anything even close to a straight life? With this idea in mind, *Experimental Life Writing* provides the tools and the environment for us to explore our lives through a variety of innovative forms—and the experimental forms with which we can reshape and reimagine our lives. We'll read a wide range of writers: Bernadette Mayer, Konrad Bayer, Eleni Sikelianos, Kobayashi Issa, Kevin Killian, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī, Lyn Hejinian, and Ntozake Shange, amongst others, and see how their chosen experimental forms allow them to shape their lives through writing. In-class lectures, readings, workshop exercises, discussions and close readings all make up important parts of the module. What is life? Start writing and find out.

### **What to expect:**

The course will mix a multimedia-based lecture with a workshop. You will write and get feedback at each lesson; at the end of the course, you will have created a portfolio of experimental poems.

This course will look at different ways of describing and/or imagining a life through looking at different experimental poems and forms.

Some of the forms and ideas include:

- List poems

- Constraint
- Found text
- Text & image
- Hybrid forms

Please note you have to be over 18 to join our courses.

## Course Outline:

Sunday 11 October: What is Life? What has writing got to do with it? Key writer: Joe Brainard

Sunday 18 October: Form as an organising tool: Key writers: Lyn Hejinian & Ron Silliman

Sunday 25 October: No ideas but in Things: Key writer: Kevin Killian

Sunday 1 November: Life as landscape: Key writers: Eleni Sikelianos & Christopher Dewdney

Sunday 8 November: Life as torture, Life Writing as Complaint: Konrad Bayer

Sunday 15 November: Word Order = World Order, Part 1: Key writer: Bernadette Mayer

Sunday 22 November: Word Order = World Order, Part 2: Key writer: bill bissett

Sunday 29 November: Haiku Life: Key writer: Kobayashi Issa

Sunday 6 December: Is nothing sacred? Is everything sacred? The (im)possibility of the beyond. Key writer: Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī

Sunday 13 December: The Journal as a creative tool.

Sunday 20 December: End of Life Class! Summing up & sharing.

## Concessions:

Please send relevant documentation should you wish to apply for our concession rates or one of our bursaries. We offer a discount of 25% or more to anyone eligible. You can read more about the eligibility and how to apply in the 'Support' section of our website. Please email us at [admin@experimentalwriting.school](mailto:admin@experimentalwriting.school) if you need further help or have any questions.

## About Tim Atkins:

Tim is the author of many books, including *Atkins Collected Petrarch* (a Times Literary Supplement and Salon.com book of the year), *Folklore* (A Daily Telegraph Book of the Year), *Deep Osaka* (a photobook), *Koto Y Yo* (all from Crater Press), *On Fathers < On Daughtys* (Boiler House Press), *25 Sonnets* (The Figures, USA), *Petrarch* (Book Thug, Canada), and *Horace* (O Books, USA). He is also the author of a play: *The World's Furious*

*Song Flows Through My Skirt* (Stoma Press), and a novel *The Bath-Tub* (forthcoming from Boiler House Press). He has read and performed his work in the Houses of Parliament (for Pussy Riot), in concert at the Victoria & Albert Museum, and all over North America and Europe. His work has been translated into Spanish, Japanese, Catalan, French, and Lithuanian. *Mother*—a collaborative film-poem made with Graeme Maguire—was a finalist at the Cyclop International Videopoetry Festival and at the Rabbit Heart Film festival in 2014. He has been a member of the summer faculty at The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University, and a member of Carla Harryman's Poets' Theatre in San Francisco. He also acted in many of Kevin Killian's poet's plays in San Francisco between 1993-5. His poems have appeared in many anthologies, including *The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem* (2018), *The Reality Street Book of the Sonnet*, and Faber's *The Thunder Mutters* (edited by Alice Oswald). A collaboration with his daughter, Yuki Lily Matsubayashi Atkins, *A Girl Is A Machine Made Of Birds* was published in 2019. He is the co-founder and editor of the long-running international online poetry journal, *onedit*. His most recent book *Nothing Conclusive Has Yet Taken Place In The World The Ultimate Word Of The World And About The World Has Not Yet Been Spoken The World Is Open And Free Everything Is Still In The Future And Will Always Be* was published by Crater Press in June 2022. Also in 2022, a volume—called *Apropos of Nothing*—of interviews and critical texts by American, Canadian, French and English poets and scholars was published on his work. His most recent work (in progress) is *Autobiographical Incident Sonnets*, a work of Buddhist fiction. A teacher with over 20 years' experience, he won Innovative Teacher of the Year awards at UEL every year from 2010-2016, and in 2019 was voted Best University Lecturer by the student union at Roehampton. Students who he has taught Creative Writing to include the award-winning authors Danielle Jawando and Nathanael Lessor.