

Philadelphia's 55th Annual Great Books Fall Institute

Pendle Hill, 338 Plush Mill Road, Wallingford, PA 19086

November 7 - 9, 2025

Growing Up



Foster, Claire Keegan
The Bear, William Faulkner
The Lover, Marguerite Duras
The Last Samurai, Helen DeWitt

This year, we are returning to Pendle Hill { <https://pendlehill.org> }, a twenty-four acre Quaker retreat, west of Philadelphia, midway between Swathmore and Media. Pendle Hill has slightly raised their rates, and we responded accordingly: Single Occupancy \$440; Double Occupancy \$400; Commuters \$260. All rooms and buildings are non-smoking. Alcohol is not served, but BYOB is allowed in individual guest rooms and private rented spaces. We will provide libations for Saturday night's social activity. Parking and WiFi are complimentary. There are no televisions. Check-In is Friday after 3:00 pm; rooms are available after 4:00 pm. Currently, no Covid restrictions apply. Yet, we will adhere to up-to-date protocol recommendations from the CDC and Pennsylvania.

Accommodations: There are six rooming houses. A few offer en suite bathrooms while most share family style. For more information please consult: { <https://pendlehill.org/host/preparing-for-your-stay/> } and { <https://pendlehill.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Campus-Accessibility-2023.pdf> }. Food, for the most part, is made from scratch, with organic fruits and vegetables used extensively. All meals include gluten free and vegetarian and vegan options. The kitchen can offer plain chicken or tofu, boiled eggs, tuna, or hummus: { <https://pendlehill.org/stay/dining-room-meals/> }.

On Friday evening, we will explore Claire Keegan's novella, *Foster*. It portrays young girl in County Wexford, Ireland being sent to live with foster parents on a farm while her mother gives birth. Keegan's narrative has received acclaim, winning the 2009 Davy Byrne's Irish Writing Award.

On Saturday morning, we will explore William Faulkner's classic novella, *The Bear*. This work traces a young man's development in the context of an annual hunting trip, as well as his later attempts to reckon with his family's fraught history of racial and other abuses.

On Saturday afternoon, we will look at another classic, *The Lover*, by Marguerite Duras. This semi-autobiographical novella relates the story of a young French girl's affair with a wealthy Chinese man in 1920's colonial Vietnam. It explores themes of love, desire, and power dynamics, and is known for its lyrical prose and evocative portrayal of a forbidden romance.

On Sunday morning, we will address a highly acclaimed contemporary novel, *The Last Samurai*, a first novel by American writer Helen DeWitt. It explores the relationship between a single mother, Sibylla, an American expatriate, who works as a freelance typist, and her son, Ludo, who live together in a small flat in London. From a young age, Ludo proves to be a child prodigy who embarks on a quest to find his father. As a substitute for a male influence in his upbringing, Sibylla plays him Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*, which he comes to know by heart. This novel was shortlisted for the 2002 International Dublin Literary Award and the *Los Angeles Times'* 2001 Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction, and was longlisted for the 2001 Orange Prize for Fiction.

Travel: The facility is within a 10-20 minute walk of the SEPTA Regional Rail in Wallingford which travels along the Media Wawa Line into Philadelphia, as well as the SEPTA trolley which goes to the Springfield Mall, 69th Street, and Philly along the 101 Route. For other travel directions, consult: { <https://pendlehill.org/stay/directions> }. Local attractions include the walking path at Pendle Hill, the stunning Swarthmore College campus, and the quaint towns of Swarthmore and Media with their cafes, restaurants and shops.

Registration

Fees are very reasonable for a two-night stay with good accommodations, six meals, pleasant conference rooms, and delivery of books.

Cost: \$400 per person for double-occupancy; \$440 per person for single-occupancy; and \$260 for commuters. On request, we can try to arrange roommates.

Registration Limit: Only the first forty-five applicants are guaranteed. Therefore, please register as soon as possible.

Cancellation: Anyone cancelling before October 24, 2025 will have \$100 deducted of their registration.

Information: **John Dalton** (610) 608-7711, jd5258875@aol.com &
John Taylor (215) 283-7351, john.taylor219@verizon.net

Registration Form: Because of complications with holding registration onsite, we have opted for the full payment as deposit. Make checks payable to: **Fall Institute**. \$400.00 per person double occupancy; \$440 per single occupancy; \$260 per commuter.

Complete and mail with payment to: **John Dalton, PO Box 424, Newtown Square, PA 19073**

Print Name (s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ **Cell:** (____) _____

Email: _____

Roommate Preference _____

Special Requests (if possible):

Emergency Contact:
