**Patchwork Farm Retreat**

**Manuscript Intensive - Suggested guidelines MSS Review**

**Patricia Lee Lewis - 2017**

**Manuscript review.**

A. Primary reviewer: We will choose in advance a primary oral reviewer for each manuscript. The primary reviewer will have 15 minutes to bring our attention to strengths and difficulties in the subject manuscript, as described below; the rest of us will follow with our comments.

B. To review a manuscript within the circle - 1.5 hours:

1) to bring us into the voice of the piece, the author reads a paragraph from the manuscript she submitted;

2) she says what she is most interested in hearing about from the group;

3) the primary reviewer—will take about 15 minutes and begin by:

a) responding to the author’s interests;

b) saying what she believes is working well in the manuscript;

c) pointing out particular changes that in her opinion would strengthen it;

d) if she wishes to, reading a short section of her cover letter to the author.

4) going clockwise around circle, the next readers repeat short versions (about 5 minutes each) of step (3), but, except for emphasis, try not to repeat the previous speakers’ points;

5) author has taken notes and asks questions of speakers,  to clarify points they made;

6)  to end the review, in any order, as each writer is so moved, she will read aloud a sentence or short paragraph from the author’s manuscript which she particularly loved.

C. We will of course be free to amend the guidelines at any time during the day, according to group needs. I will facilitate the intensive.

D. Part of the purpose of addressing our oral comments to the author is to hear how others read and receive the manuscript. In addition, the author will have opportunity to ask clarifying questions of each commentator; and, equally important it is often possible to say out loud what it is hard to convey in written comments—for example, how moved the reader is by a certain place in the writing.

E. Each review is dedicated to one author so that she can hear how her work is perceived, but not so that she can defend it. What is on the page is on the page, and she will benefit from knowing what we understand and what resonates with us, and what is getting in the way of that.

F. As responders/commenters, we may want to refer to our own comments on the page and in a cover letter. This may seem repetitive to the author, but what is repeated is often of particular importance, and speaking aloud a written comment may benefit other responders. We learn from each other how to read, comment and edit the work of other writers—and our own.

G. To keep all members of our group safe enough to write and say whatever needs to be said, when we respond to a manuscript we follow the AWA method. We say what is working, what is strong, what we remember about the piece, before addressing what will make it stronger. We hold everything we hear in confidence;  consider all pieces as fiction; talk only about what is on the page; refer to the character/voice/narrator, mentioning the author only when making comments about craft.