



JAE BRODERICK

WRITER PORTFOLIO

# JAE BRODERICK

## BIO

Jae is an award winning author, director and motivational speaker hailing from St. Catherine, Jamaica. She fell in love with the theatre watching pantomimes in Kingston which led to dancing in Chicago, acting in Los Angeles and directing in New York City before returning to her one true love: words. Some of her favorites include *jubilee*, *notwithstanding*, *onomatopoeia* and *crepacuore*. Her least favorite word is *enervate*, for reasons she is happy to discuss.

Jae works with clients in creative and business fields to shape their words in both the stories they tell themselves about themselves and the stories they tell the world, whether in print or on stage.

When she isn't working Jae can be found practicing her backhand or on a plane to somewhere new because "writers need to experience things" but also life is short and amazing.

Learn more at [jaebroderick.com](http://jaebroderick.com).



**BBC**

**MAS**

**BMI**

**K&L GATES**

**THE RIVETER**

**MAESTRA**

Jae is a stone cold expert on what makes a good book, and yet her coaching is light touch, discerning, effortless and powerful at the same time. I never ever could have done the necessary work in bringing this book forward without her.

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## SERVICES

Narrative Fiction + Non-Fiction

Ghostwriting

Memoir Ghostwriting

Script Consulting

One on One Coaching

Dramaturgy

Rate: \$400/hr

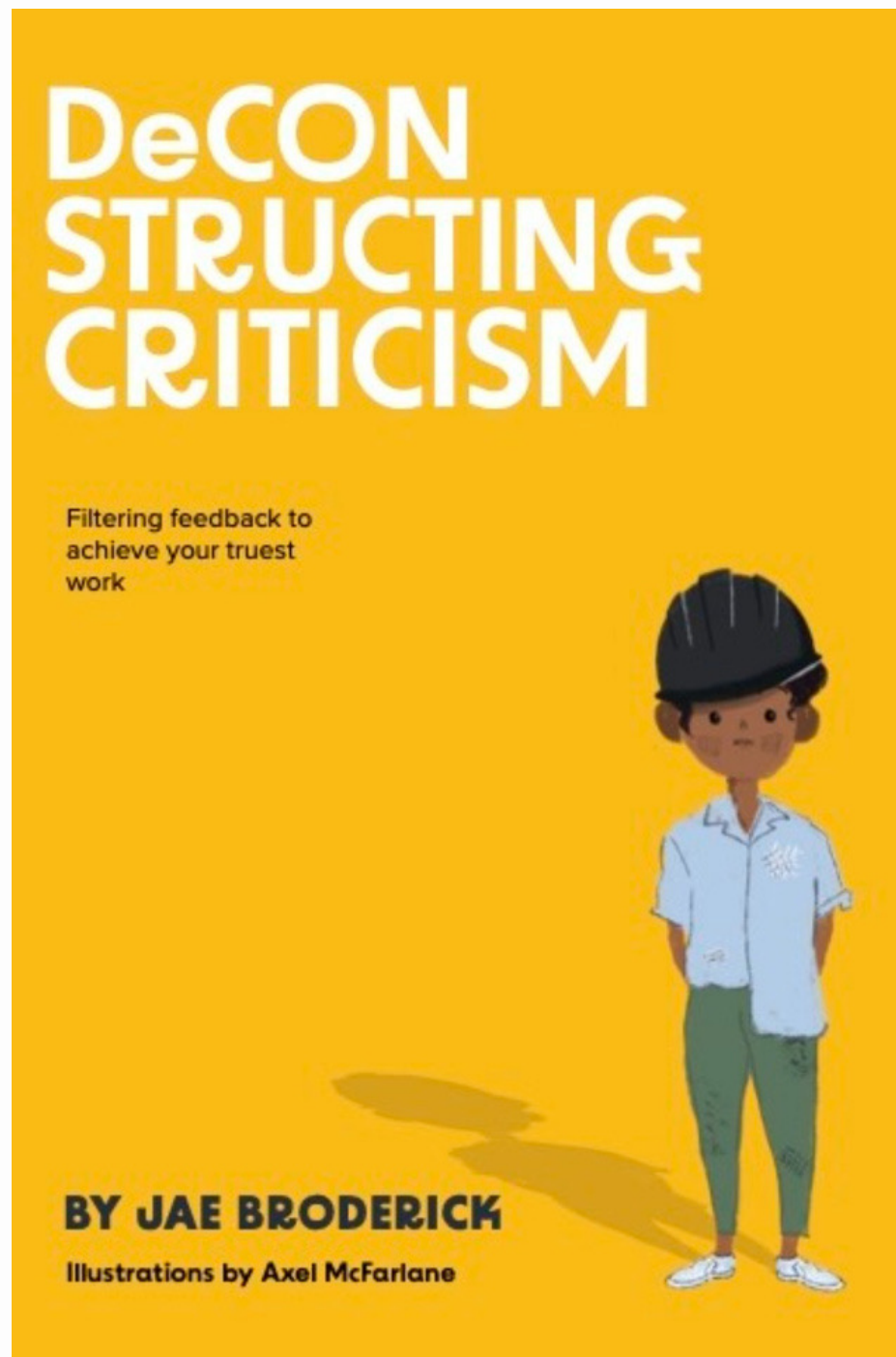
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# 01 Narrative Non-Fiction: *DeConstructing Criticism*



In the fall of 2021, when we were all still shaking off the remnants of our Covid trauma, I was approached by the creator of Maestra and offered the opportunity to teach a workshop of my choosing. Is there anything you feel strongly about that could be of help to our members? Maestra is an organization which supports women and nonbinary people in the musical theater industry and their members are, in fact, a force of immensely talented writers and musicians working on Broadway and across the globe. Frankly, I was in need of their advice. What could I possibly help them with? Then I remembered something.

Pre-pandemic I had been accepted into the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop, a two-year program that is widely regarded as the premiere training ground for emerging musical theatre composers, lyricists, and librettists. The workshop has produced a long list of EGOT, Peabody and Pulitzer award winners so it is not an exaggeration to say that every person in that room believes they are the next Lin Manuel Miranda — and could very well be. It's the kind of place that would make a really good reality show. All the ingredients are there: talent, ego, stakes, drama, conflict and a ticking clock.

We met weekly in a glass encased boardroom with stunning views of lower Manhattan, the Statue of Liberty beckoning in the distance. My fellow writers hailed from the city's boroughs, America's cities, Europe and Australia. They brought with them years of training and impressive résumés. All of us understood how important it was to have made it to that room. I, Jamaica-born and America-raised, was fresh off a successful run of my first musical, FORA, at the much beloved but now defunct New York Musical Theater Festival.

After a much needed sabbatical I had moved back to the city in order to join the Workshop. Flat broke and sleeping on a friend's couch, I was determined to make this gambit work. On that first day I smiled ear to ear brimming with confidence, having no clue that a self-doubt tsunami was heading my way.

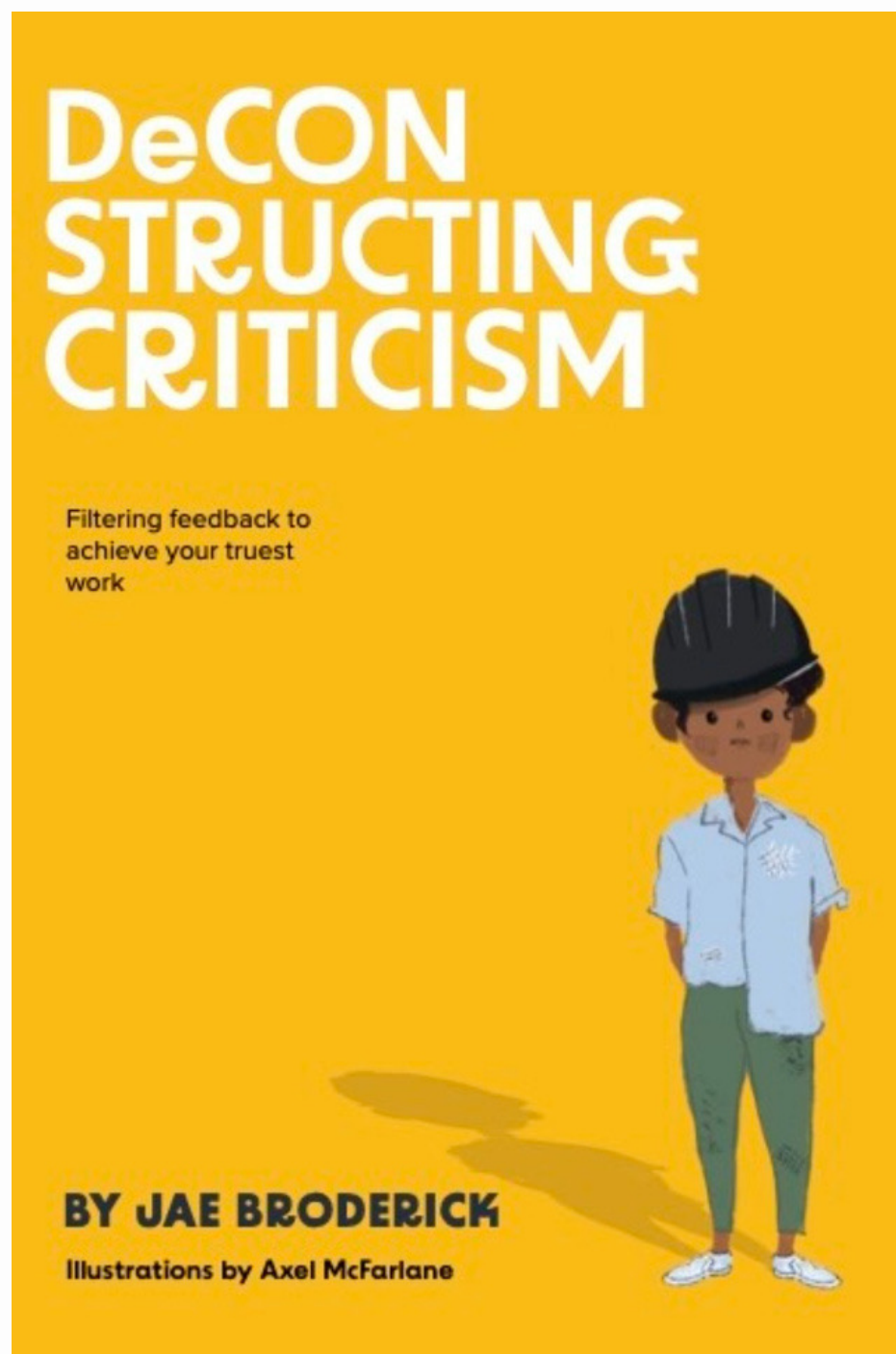
The way BMI works is that a lyricist and composer are randomly paired and given a topic on which to write a song. The duo then collaborates on music and lyrics, recruits singers, presents the song then receives feedback from classmates and the BMI moderators. The first song I presented was met with silence by my fellow writers then ripped to shreds by the moderator. I've never felt so small. Standing in the cold of that moment I prayed for the proverbial giant hole to open up and swallow me. It did not. I was forced to marinate in the salt of my wounded ego and broken expectations then stumbled home in a daze.

For my second song presentation, the critique was less harsh and the experience slightly less horrendous — but only slightly as at the last minute our singer cancelled and I had to face my phobia of public singing. As I sighed helplessly and reached for that first note I felt sure that BMI was trying to kill me. But I sang and I lived. I wanted to quit but I didn't.

I hit the third song out of the park.

In the second year of the program a fellow lyricist approached me after a presentation and expressed, rather wistfully, how much she admired the way I took criticism. What did she see? To my mind I hadn't done anything remarkable that day but she saw something different.

## 02 Narrative Non-Fiction: *DeConstructing Criticism*



Although we'd started the program at the same time, somewhere along the way I had found my filter. That is what I remembered. That is what I taught in that first Maestra workshop and that is what we'll be exploring in this book.

As a writer I've had marvelous feedback that unlocks something in my brain. I feel understood, elevated by the discourse and cannot wait to get back to the page and write again. I've also had confusing feedback where I get caught in the space between my intent and it's perception. The essence of my creation gets lost and I have to muddle my way back to the center of the piece. I have also had horrendous feedback. Cutting, unhelpful, and personal in a way that causes me to question both the validity of the assessment and the motive of the assessor.

What these experiences taught me is that giving criticism is a skill, but it is a learned skill - which means that not everyone has it. As a creator it is up to you to learn how to parse the various opinions that get thrown at your work because no one understands your vision better than you do. When we deconstruct criticism it means we are, first, dismantling the definition of what criticism is, then utilizing specific tools to filter it. This process creates a kind of code, breaking down critique into ones and zeroes, smaller, more actionable ideas that are easier to assess. I truly wish I'd had these tools on that first day of BMI.

This book is not an end-all-be-all on how to dodge the stings and arrows that can accompany criticism because every experience, however unpleasant, has value. It is not about audience criticism. It is not about media criticism. It is not, primarily, about your your Inner Critic, although that component is touched upon in these pages.

DeConstructing Criticism is an exercise in listening. A conversation. A primer for decoupling your feedback from your sense of self-worth and silencing your Inner Critic long enough for you to get some work done. As people who make things, understanding how to refine this skill is critical.

By the way, I've recounted the story of my traumatic first BMI presentation to various people who were in the room that day.

No one remembers it.



# 03 Short Fiction:

## *Junie*



Junie hurried along the tarmac watching her pigtails bounce in the shadow the hot sun threw before her. The crisp ribbons from this morning that had begun to droop were buoyed aloft now and again by the tropical wind. Two by two her classmates dotted the field and chattered excitedly towards the grand ark of invention that was today's field trip. But Junie was solemn and focused. She had been looking forward to this for weeks.

How many times she had lain in her front yard, measuring the wingspans of birds and butterflies only to see an air-plane jut across the cloudless sky and into her view, noiselessly rising up up up into the blue, immeasurable, carrying the lucky few who could afford its passage. Today it was her turn. For although the wheels would not leave the ground her imagination had already taken flight. The gleaming silver land locked machine was the answer to her every fervent wish.

Junie climbed the metal stairs pausing briefly at the top before looking back with longing, as she had seen her Uncle Handel do, then waved sadly to no one in particular before disappearing inside the belly of the plane and rushing past her best friend Marlene to grab a window seat.

"Noooo!" Marlene whined, pushing her mouth as far away from her face as she could. "Hush! We can switch when I'm finished" Junie countered, having no intention of doing so. She turned her attention out the window.

Years from now she would remember this moment. This day. For many of the children on this trip it would be their first and only time on a plane, and it was enough. The closest they would come again would be watching, hearts breaking, from the airport's gallery as a friend or relative departed, or less frequently, returned. Even their teacher, Ms. Frazier, had only left the island once - on a weekend trip to a neighboring country, a sojourn which she had spent the better part of a year saving up for. At the time she had felt sure she would fly again, but it had not turned out be so.

Just across the road from the landing strip there lay an empty field where on Saturday nights natives would park their cars, sit on hoods, and lay on roofs to watch the planes land and shout exuberant welcomes to the unseen passengers within. Sometimes the under bellies of the flying machines passed dangerously close to the parked ones below it, leaving behind a shimmering heat the ocean breeze blew away like memory. The glittering stars, roar of engines and thrill of flight combined to create its own unique brand of romance, as troubadours sang of bygones in tunes wafting from the radios.

That night as her mother removed the ribbons from her hair, Junie spun a tale of the day ripe with fantastic embellishments, and her mother smiled, knowing that her little daughter's mind was sharp, vast and open and that the wishes it spoke were more than she could ever hope to give.

# 04 Narrative Fiction: *Documenti*



*Puglia. 2025.*

Zia said it was because of the grapes. That the flies infecting every corner of the *città* were drawn south by the fertilizer *i contadini* used to sweeten the soil. Acres and acres of vines laden with fruit were slowly ripening under the Mediterranean sun, too bitter to eat but perfect for wine. The farmers covered the vines to avoid the many enemies that lay waiting to spoil the crop. Rain, wind, rot and pests.

But the flies were patient. Persistent. They seemed ambivalent about the grapes and chose instead to cosplay mosquitoes. Hovering, circling, dodging, disappearing just long enough to be forgotten then reappearing as a barely perceptible touch on bare skin that vanishes long before flailing hands fanned the air where they had been. They did not bite. They only bothered. There was no peace.

At the Ministero della Giustizia where we waited outside the guard's window there were no flies. There, in that blessed stillness, Zia was trying to convince the guards to allow me, an American, to visit my Italian cousin in *prigione*. The guard began shaking her head almost as soon as Zia started.

*“Mia nipote vive a New York e non...”*

Shake shake shake...the guard looked towards her colleague.

*“Per favore, è solo per un’ora...”*

Shake shake shake...then rapid Italian no amount of duolingo could help me understand. Zia was working hard to get me into prison.

*Please let her in this prison.*

*Please let her see her family.*

*Per favore.*

Something about Zia's pleading made my stomach turn. The irony was too much. When my plane took off from JFK I'd felt relief in leaving America and her chaos behind. The country was trapped in a death spiral and we all knew it. Some watched mournfully. Others cheered. It was as though the civil war had never ended. Perhaps it had not. I'd envisioned spending the next month bouncing between the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, making side trips to Spain and Switzerland, basking in the glory of Rome and vino vino vino. But instead of escaping a prison I found myself outside one.

*Per favore.*

The guards wanted *documenti*. I offered my passport but it wasn't enough. They needed something to prove that Zia and I were family.

Such a document did not exist.

## 05 Narrative Fiction: *Documenti*



Zia was an outside baby. My father's father had an affair with Zia's teenage mother and promptly discarded her when she fell pregnant. Zia moved to England with her mother then Italy on her own. It wasn't until 40 years later that Zia learned she had a brother. They enjoyed a mostly joyous decade-long reunion until he died suddenly. Between them there had been remembrance and resemblance, but no *documenti*.

I shrugged to let Zia know that it was ok to give up. Her eyes apologized. I smiled my thanks and went outside.

The prigione lies mere steps from the seaside. What cruel irony is this? To smell the sea but never feel it. I sit on a bench, close my eyes and listen to trickling water. Not of the sea but the fountain before me. It is a monument built to commemorate soldiers lost in World War II. Their names etched in stone and remembered for posterity. I felt a sudden anger rising.

*What is posterity without monuments?*

*Where is our proof of life?*

Opening my passport I stared at the face it held. Lineage remembered in my mother's nose, my grandmother's cheekbones, my father's eyes.

My great grandmother was born in St. Mary, Jamaica. Just two generations out of slavery.

Birth announcements came by word of mouth in conversations between neighbors going to and from the river. My grandmother was born in Oracabessa under a British flag. She remembers waving to European tourists as they passed through on their way to parts of the island she would never see. Her birth certificate says she was born in January, but her mother told her she was born in July and since she is far more Leo than Capricorn they chose a day and celebrate her in the summer. Among her generation few know their real birthdays.

My mother was born in Jack's River eight years before the island gained its independence. In those days births were registered in government offices a days' journey away. If a friend of a friend were traveling to the city they may be so kind as to register your child's birth for you. And if in the chaotic swirl of buses, trains, dust and a hot sun they forgot the name you'd requested, you said thank you and accepted the name that was given.

All but one of my grandmother's six children migrated. They took what *documenti* they had and spread across the globe like so many before them. Europe, England, Canada, America, but not Africa. Although they came from distinct cultures they were dismayed to find the world had merged their histories into a tribe called Hue, and that their experiences would differ in accent but not in meaning.

## 06 Narrative Fiction: *Documenti*



Last night as the bells rung out in the square I had observed with delight the ancient rituals. *Nonna* and her sisters huddled together nodding and speaking at once, children playing football under a full moon and old men surveying the scene in a synchronized *passeggiata*. *Zia* moved through all of it like a swan. Hips softly swaying, Hermes scarf slung across her shoulders, high heels barely touching the cobblestoned streets, eyes gazing at nothing in particular, her gait an armor designed to protect from the silence that hung in the air after her unanswered *buona seras*.

No one sees how furiously the swan kicks beneath the surface just to keep going. That glide comes with a cost. We who know, know.

I was born in a hospital.

I am only five generations out of slavery and my *documenti* will not save me.

*Zia* emerged from the Ministero della Giustizia her eyes haunted by what I had not seen.

“How is Cousin?” I asked.

“She’s depressed. She wants to come home.” *Zia* said.

I’ve been in Italy for a week and I still don’t know what Cousin did. *Zia* has a way of talking in circles

then changing the subject to food. Works every time. I link my arms with *Zia*’s and we walk together.

Family.

A light breeze blows as we head towards the parking lot, followed by a halo of flies.





## CONTACT JAE

**E-mail**            [jae.broderick@gmail.com](mailto:jae.broderick@gmail.com)

**Website**           [www.jaebroderick.com](http://www.jaebroderick.com)