

# Saturday Writers Newsletter

April • 2021

Saturday  
Writers



Writers Encouraging Writers Since 2002

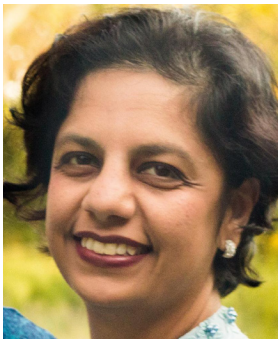
A Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild

A Nonprofit Organization / Corporation

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## Need Help with Ideas, Planning, Starting Your Short Story? Ekta Garg Tells All at Saturday Writers Meeting April 24



Ekta Garg

Writer, podcaster, and editor Ekta Garg will speak to Saturday Writers at our April 24 meeting about where to begin. We will learn

how to plan out and start writing a short story, including suggestions about where to get ideas and

writing prompts for basic writing instruction.

Since 2005, Ekta has written and edited about everything from healthcare to home improvement to Hindi films. She's a freelance editor, writing contest judge, a book podcaster, and a moderator for two online writing groups. Ekta also manages The Write Edge (<http://thewriteedge.wordpress.com>), posting short stories, book reviews, and parenting adventures.

—Sarah Angleton

## SW Refreshed by Poetry Nap with Speaker Mimi Herman at March Meeting

"I don't believe, ever, poetry should be a secret club that you need a password to come in. I really believe that poetry should be layered and complex, but available, accessible."

—Mimi Herman

Poet, novelist, and screenwriter, Mimi Herman is also a Kennedy Center teaching artist, teaching teachers how to integrate the arts, particularly writing, into the curriculum and providing writing residencies across the country. She and her partner also host Writeaways in exotic and virtual spaces, because sometimes writers just need to get away.

Mimi introduced us to a free tool—a Google app called Jamboard—for collaboration, brainstorming, and organizing information at any point in the writing process. During our session, Mimi created a board for us and demonstrated how to organize details on a topic. The one we created, brainstorming bodies of water is available here: <https://bit.ly/3u6bLY7>.

She then told us to write "I am..." and our favorite body of water.

What followed was a firsthand

Continued on page 5—Herman

### Welcome to Saturday Writers

Due to social distancing, until further notice all meetings and events will be held via Zoom and recorded. Recordings will be provided to members via email.

Join us on the last Saturday of each month, January through September, to hear speakers share their knowledge of all things writing. Membership is \$35.00 per year. **Guests are welcome to attend our virtual meetings for free.**

**Zoom Instructions:** You can join an online video meeting via Zoom from your smartphone, computer, or tablet. Follow the prompts and allow your device to access your camera and microphone. Click on this link for the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84805532643>

When the box requesting the password pops up, type in 561472

The meeting ID is 848 0553 2643 if needed.

#### April 24 Meeting

- 10:00-10:45 a.m.—**Members only** workshop **VIA ZOOM**. Topic: Canva Design Tools with Rose Callahan.
- 11:00-1:00 p.m.—Regular meeting **VIA ZOOM** for business items and our guest speaker.

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From the President's Desk . . .

## Building a Deck . . . er . . . Story

My back neighbor is having a new wooden deck built around their pool. I watched a worker tear out the old one a week ago. Today the whir of saws and the thwack of hammers fills the air. Each worker seems to have a task, a plan if you will, almost as if they'd mapped it all out beforehand.

Well, of course they had a plan. Who would build a structure without one? An architect is a lot like a writer who plots their story from beginning to end. This type of writer knows who is going to do what to whom and when before they put pen to paper. I applaud those writers. I've tried it that way, but by the time I got to "the end" all the energy I had for the story was gone.

Why? Because I'm a gardener, not an architect. I dig holes and drop in baby plants, apply fertilizer and water, and wait. Beautiful plants reward me for my efforts. I do not have well-manicured gardens. Instead, mine are wild, much like my writing.

When I begin a new story, I have a character in mind. They've appeared from wherever such things come and tapped me on the shoulder. They request—no demand—my attention and give me just enough of their story to make me drool with



anticipation for what's going to happen next. They are usually kind enough to give me a glimpse, no matter how small, of how the story will end.

I am a discovery writer, following the tidbits on the trail that winds through my garden of words. I am as shocked as my readers to learn that character ABC has been wrong about something that has shaped her entire life. I get giddy chills thinking about it.

This wild and woolly way of writing works for me. It keeps me interested and engaged. Outlining and plotting feel too much like work.

I know many architects, aka plotters, who love flipping through pictures online and creating Pinterest boards, depicting their characters and what they wear. Me? Never. I simply can't work that way. Each writer must find for themselves what works for them. When you read that you must write every day to be a real writer, stop and question this so-called rule. Perhaps you work better in large blocks of time (like me). And when told you must outline and plot out your story, ask whether this works for you. If you've tried outlining and it never seems to work for you, it may not be that you're using the wrong plotting tool—it might be that you too are a gardener. If you've tried the seat-of-your-pants method and it makes you want to pull your hair out, could it be that you're really an architect and need the structure of a developed plan?

Find your own path to writing stories. But if you want a new deck, hire an architect and not a gardener.

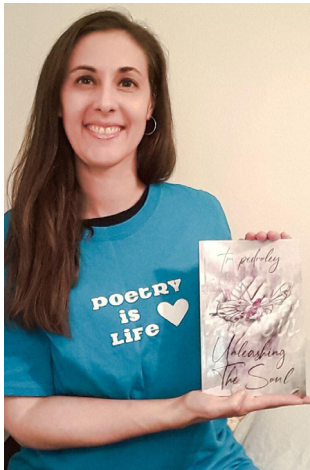
—Jeanne, Felfe, President

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## Member News

**Tara Pedroley**, frequent winner in SW monthly contests and participant in open mics, achieved a milestone by releasing her first poetry collection, *Unleashing the Soul*, on April 6. "It's taken three years to accomplish this, and it has been quite the emotional journey. There are a few poems that still pull at my heartstrings when I read them, even though I've edited this book so many times." Her book is a collection of poems "based on life lessons, including love, loss, and everything in between." Tara expressed her deep gratitude to all who helped her on the journey



to completing the book, especially Sybil Wilson, cover artist; SW member Brad Watson for editing services; and Kathleen Kirnbauer Mahoney for photos within the book.

*Unleashing the Soul* is now available on line at [www.amazon.com/dp/B08SH41ZVT](http://www.amazon.com/dp/B08SH41ZVT)

"Willful Woman," **John Marcum's** third micro memoir to be accepted for the Readers Write section of *The Sun Magazine*, will appear in an upcoming issue. "The theme is Girlfriends. My submissions have all been 500-600 words. There was no money for these, just a year's free subscription."

His success with *The Sun* has inspired John to branch out farther. "I've started a blitz—entering stories for possible publication in *Master's Review*, *Craft Literary*, and *Fractured Lit*. These online publications offer free submissions and pay money. Most are flash fiction or memoirs, under 1000 words for their anthology publications."

What's the Big Idea?

## The Shape of Our Minds

The name of the first-place winner of SW's February prose contest should be familiar to many. Donna Mork Reed found favor with the judge for her entry, "Lumps and Bumps." This heartfelt story explores a woman's insecurities with her body and the agonizing fear of finding a breast lump.

The subject matter is familiar to many, and the way Donna expressed intimate insights moved me to tears. While the story is fictional, she says she drew upon other personal challenges she's faced and incorporated those intense feelings into her story. In her normal light-hearted humorous way, she added, "Isn't that what we're supposed to do?"

Because she has placed frequently in many of the SW contests, I asked Donna to share some insight as to how she has become so successful. "I owe all of my success to practice, practice, practice. I write, I enter the contests...sometimes I win and lots of times I don't, but that doesn't stop me from trying again (and again and again...). I am hoping with each story my writing is improving, that I am learning from mistakes and catching errors faster."

While Donna doesn't write every day, she tries to write at least several times a week, especially when a contest deadline nears. Much of her crafting of ideas is done mentally at night when sleep evades her. Every November, she devotes time to the annual NANOWRIMO (National Novel Writing Month) challenge of completing a 50,000-word novel in thirty day. So far, she has drafted "a Christian



Diane How

romance, a sci-fi, a paranormal YA (young adult), a historical YA, and a YA about a pandemic that will now never see the light of day because I wrote it the November before the actual pandemic hit...and it is prophetic enough that no one will want to print it." Donna also is in search of an agent for the six children's picture books she's written.

I asked Donna if, as an employee of St. Louis County Library, she had any insider information to share. "St. Louis County does have reciprocity with St. Charles, so you don't have to live in the county to get a card! We have books you can download and listen to if you are pressed for time like I am. We have magazines such as *The Writer*, *Writer's Digest*, and *Poets and Writers Magazine* (you can download these on the Libby app FREE from the library.) We also have online learning FOR FREE. One is through Gale Courses, and I just checked—under creative writing there are 24 classes you can take RIGHT NOW. Definitely worth a look. There is also InLearning with Lynda content to learn how to use various programs, such as Word, Excel and so forth. I use Word to write, but I track my entries with an Excel spreadsheet. Also, due to the pandemic, many of our in-person programs are now virtual. Most of our author events can be attended virtually."

It sounds like there's something for everyone, and with the next SW contest quickly approaching, the library may have just the resource you're looking for.

Donna shared one last piece of advice. "So... just get writing. Do it. Do it now. Do it often. You can't win if you don't enter. You can't enter if you don't write."

Thanks for the lessons, Donna. You've inspired me to stop worrying about the shape of my body, and to focus on the shape of my mind.

—Diane How

## February Contest Winners

**First Place:** Donna Mork Reed for "Lumps and Bumps"

**Second Place:** Susan Gore Zahra for "Christmas Surprise"

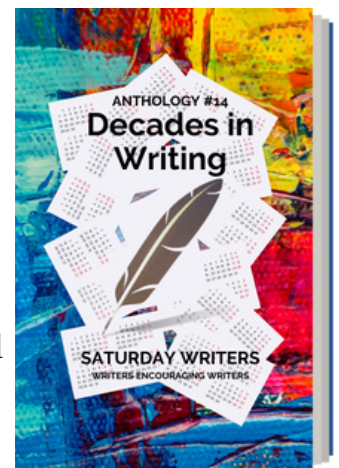
**Third Place:** James Ladendecker for "A Hat Full of Memories"

**Honorable Mention:** Jeffrey Czuchna for "Making a Baby"

**Honorable Mention:** Cheri Remington for "When Daisy Met Jack"

## It's Here!

Saturday Writers 14th anthology, *Decades in Writing*, is now available. If you wish to pick up your copies from Diane How, SW treasurer, you can order from the SW webpage for the current price of \$20, and contact Diane at [talltales1@msn.com](mailto:talltales1@msn.com) or [diane.h@saturdaywriters.org](mailto:diane.h@saturdaywriters.org) to arrange pickup time. If you prefer to have your copies delivered, order directly from Amazon at: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08YL4941V>



# How To Use Amazon “Clean” Links

With so many of our authors stepping into the publishing world, I thought a quick lesson on Amazon links might be useful. When you search for anything on Amazon, a URL is displayed. Many authors don't realize that imbedded within that URL/link are tracking codes that identify various things, which Amazon uses to understand where sales come from. If you, as an author, search for your book to provide a “buy link” to someone, it's critical that you only share a “clean” link.

I'm going to use my book, *Bridge to Us*, as an example. If I search, the URL/link is:  
[https://www.amazon.com/Bridge-Us-Love-Found-Novel-ebook/dp/B07VTQXD54/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=3V9Y1GZQEJ24B&dchild=1&keywords=bridge+to+us+felfe&qid=1616081352&srefix=bridge+to+us%2Cdigital-text%2C168&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Bridge-Us-Love-Found-Novel-ebook/dp/B07VTQXD54/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3V9Y1GZQEJ24B&dchild=1&keywords=bridge+to+us+felfe&qid=1616081352&srefix=bridge+to+us%2Cdigital-text%2C168&sr=8-1)

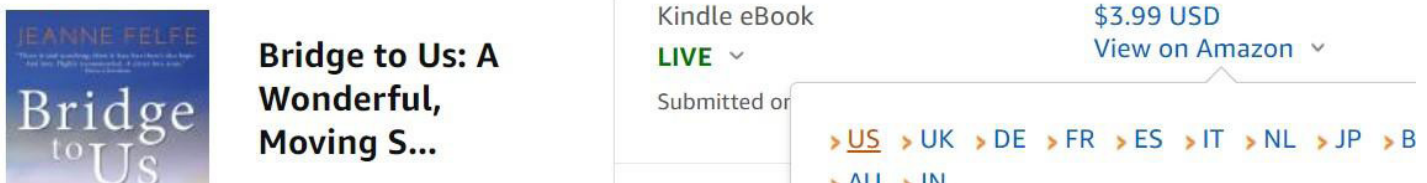
What??? Imbedded within, you can see how I searched—“bridge to us felfe”—looks innocent enough, right? But wait! The rest of that gobbledygook identifies that *I* did the search. If I share that link and someone who knows me uses it to buy the book, it could connect the two of us in Amazon, and that person might not be able to leave a review. Not good.

So what's an author to do? Only share “clean” links. The clean link for this book is:  
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07VTQXD54>

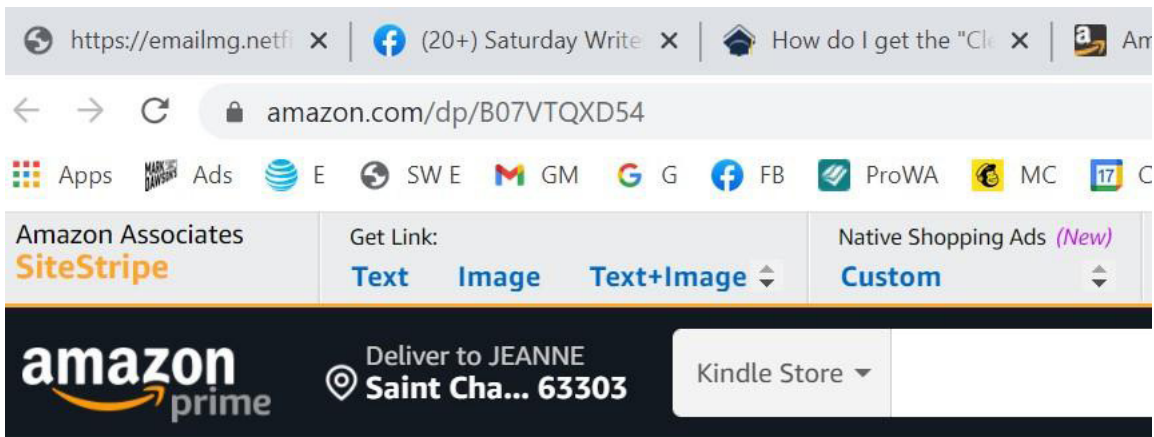
How do you get one of these? Well, you could just do a search and cut out all of the information except what you see—that last number is Amazon's ASIN, which is like an ISBN, but their own proprietary identifier.

OR, you can use KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing) to collect it for each of your books. I suggest storing this “metadata” in a Word document, along with other pertinent marketing related information. Log into your KDP account.

For each book, hover over the View on Amazon (under the price) and click on the country.



A new screen will be displayed with a “clean” link in the URL.



Simply highlight the URL and copy (by pressing Ctrl C) and paste it (by pressing Ctrl V) into your Word document.

Now you have a “clean” link to share with friends and family and to use in all advertisements.

# DEADLINE SATURDAY April 24!

## 2021 Contest Theme: Shapes

**Prose:** 2021-word limit

**Poetry:** 50-line limit

**Begins:** 3/27/21

**Prose Deadline:** 4/24/21

**Poetry Deadline:** 4/24/21

### April Theme:

**Triangles:** equilateral, isosceles, obtuse, acute, right-angle, etc. There are three sides to every story and poem due this month. Use your acute observation powers to make your plot twists at right angles, avoid making your resolution too obtuse. And above all, avoid bad puns.

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## Upcoming Events

Watch your email for instructions about how to participate, whether as reader at an Open Mic or as attentive audience in the comfort of your own home.

### April

**Open Mic:**

Monday, April 19, 7-9 p.m.

**Mini-Workshop:**

Saturday, April 24, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

**General Meeting:**

Saturday, April 24, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

### May

**Open Mic:**

Monday, May 24, 7-9 p.m.

**Note: Date of Mini-Workshop/General Meeting**

**Mini-Workshop:**

Saturday, **May 22**, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

**General Meeting:**

Saturday, **May 22**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

### June

**Open Mic:**

Monday, June 14, 7-9 p.m.

**Mini-Workshop:**

Saturday, June 26, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

**General Meeting:**

Saturday, June 26, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

*Herman—Continued from page 1*

experience of relaxing our way to great writing as Mimi guided us through a progressive relaxation exercise. Mimi took us on a visualization journey in which we floated out into the world to glimpse the water around us. In our wanderings we slowly sank and merged to become one with the water itself. Mimi posed question after question that opened our minds to consider water from the perspective of each of the five senses and to think about water as if personified. We reached far and wide, examining and exploring water's relationships, histories, opinions and experiences. By the time we were guided back to alertness, our minds were teeming with thoughts both practical and fanciful. We were *READY* to write, so when we were directed to compose a poem about water, beginning with the line "I am..." we wrote without hesitation, inspired by our journey and the time we spent as water.

We split into breakout sessions to share our poems. When we returned to the larger group, some shared a single line from their poem. It was wonderful to hear the variety of directions and the styles of writing inspired within the group. Perhaps a few of these will find their way into this year's anthology. April is definitely the month to shine the light on poetic thoughts.

Mimi read to us from her poetry collections, *Logophilia* and *The Field Guide to Human Emotion*. She believes poetry should be layered and complex while remaining accessible. Her poetry struck a chord as it highlighted the human experience and inspired both laughter and tears.

We learned some of her favorite poets and discussed Writeaways as well as her thoughts on publishing and submitting work. If we are looking for a publisher or agent, she directed us to the Poets & Writers website: <https://www.pw.org/>. Mimi strongly encouraged us to become members of the Association of Writers & Writing Programs, which provides community, opportunities, ideas, news, and advocacy for writers and teachers of writing: (<https://www.awpwriter.org/>). One final fun tool she shared is a digital "magnetic poetry" app that could entice and inspire the most reluctant poets in the crowd: <https://magneticpoetry.com>.

You can contact Mimi at:

[mimiherman@gmail.com](mailto:mimiherman@gmail.com) or

<https://www.mimiherman.com/about-mimi>. She

recommended *Poets & Writers* website ([www.pw.org](http://www.pw.org)) as a good place to find literary journals and small presses for submitting your work, as well as for finding agents.

—Cheri Remington

## “A Plan”

I woke to the sound of mumbling and noticed it came from my lips. As I wiped chin drool and glanced around, I wasn't sure how I ended up tucked all warm and cozy in the fetal position, but I took this as my sign. *You gotta get away.* The time had come. The end of my rope had dwindled to the last frayed string, pinched vice-like between my two blanched fingertips.

I tossed my laptop, iPad, two notebooks, pens and a bunch of this 'n that in a bag, made a reservation for a four-night hotel stay, and took off for the Lake of the Ozarks. No matter that I had under one hundred dollars in my wallet and needed gasoline, but that's why dollar stores were invented. I would surround myself with a sweet and salty snack bliss. A junk food junkie's 5-Star buffet.

After checking into the hotel, I unpacked the laptop and plugged it in while filling the ice bucket and placing creature comforts around me like a mother hen gathering her chicks. Then, I promptly ran over the laptop cord with my electric wheelchair—a sidekick due to multiple sclerosis—causing it to pull from the wall and bend/break the all-important tip that gives the laptop life. This act of stupidity rendered it useless and irreparable. I sped to the front desk asking for the nearest electronics store. Jeff City? Was she serious? I returned to my room, thankful for the backup iPad. Unfortunately, I had failed to email my latest WIP to myself, so I didn't have an updated manuscript at my disposal. I needed to have a short “Tammy talk” this instant. I mouthed into the mirror: *Stay sane.*

Something was missing from my life and I knew it. A plan. I thought



Tammy Lough

about it for several minutes and gave it a name: *THE PLAN*. I liked it and decided it was a keeper. *THE PLAN*

manifested itself into a purchase I had previously made and thankfully brought along. It was a soft-covered, rose-pink *Law of Attraction Planner* by Frederik Talloen. I figured it would suffice as a place to write *THE PLAN*. I got curious and flipped it open, got curiouser yet and filled out My Life Statement, My Mission Statement, and perused the entire Law of Attraction Roadmap. After reading the Questions to Empower Your Day along with the Evening Power Questions, I knew this wise author was on to something and was grateful he chose to share. I couldn't wait to read more of his words. His ability to pull me into this workable tool was like tying a gift with a ribbon of hope. Was I really holding a workbook of sorts that could help me make the correct decisions and switch on the “AHA” bulb?

He listed about 40 Action Steps to Feel Better and Increase Your Emotional Vibration and then multiple steps for selfcare, giving back, and areas in which to bring entertaining activities into your life while working through the daily grind. Most activities were in the price range of free—my magic words.

I could continue to gush about this *Law of Attraction Planner*, about the continuing pages on goal setting, creating harmony, deciding my most valued wants and needs with worksheets to figure how to make it happen, etc., but I truly felt this tool helped to set my life in a positive path akin to with what my mind, body, and soul were thirsting for: A plan with a solid direction in a time when life's rug had been swiped from

under my wheels and the future path curved like a question mark. When bad people do mean things, get a plan and fight back.

YOU ARE WORTH IT!!!

Thanks for the listen. Writers write!

—Tammy Lough

### Saturday Writers Officers

**President:**

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**Vice President:**

Pat Wahler

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**Secretary:**

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**Treasurer:**

Diane How

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### Volunteers/ Chair Positions

Assistant Treasurer: Denise Scott  
Children's/YA Author Critique:

Sue Fritz

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TBD

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Hospitality Chair: Bob Weismiller

Assistants: Diane How &

Ryan Cort

Information Table: Tammy Lough

Membership Chair: Denise Wilson

Members Online Critique:

Susan Moreland

Newsletter Editor:

Susan Gore Zahra

Newsletter Assistant:

Sherry Cerrano

Pre-Meeting Saturday

Works-in-Progress Café &

Creative Writing Salon:

R.R.J. Sebacher

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Rose Callahan

Speaker/Workshop Chair:

Jeanne Felfe

Social Media Chair:

Heather Hartmann

Assistant: Rose Callahan

Website Maintenance:

Heather Hartmann

Assistant: Rose Callahan

Wednesday Works-in-Progress Café:

Jim Ladendecker

Write-In Chair: Brad Watson

Youth Outreach Chairs:

Nicki Jacobsmeyer & Sue Fritz

Our meetings will be conducted using Zoom until further notice.  
For access information, please contact [Jeanne.F@saturdaywriters.org](mailto:Jeanne.F@saturdaywriters.org).