

Saturday Writers Newsletter

September 2017

Saturday
Writers



Writers Encouraging Writers Since 2002

A Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild

A Nonprofit Organization / Corporation

www.saturdaywriters.org • info@saturdaywriters.org

Post Office Box 2093 • Saint Peters • Missouri • 63376

'Book and Author Marketing' to be the Topic of Saturday Writers' Guest Speaker Amy Collins on Saturday, September 30

How Libraries And Bookstores Pick And Buy The Books They Carry

Want your book in more libraries and bookstores? Not sure HOW books get on their shelves? Want to know the process AND how YOUR book can get into bookstores and libraries all over the US?

Whether you're a new writer yet to be published or a multi-book author, getting onto the shelves of libraries and bookstores is often a dream. It can also be a maze of unknowns. Done correctly, your books will be purchased and available to your readers. Miss some steps and you may be limited to a donated copy to your local library. On Saturday, Sept 30, Amy Collins will walk us through the exact details and process authors need to get their books onto these coveted shelves. The process is not hard and you can get onto the shelves of the stores and libraries you

have been aiming for. You just need to know the rules and what they are looking for. This session will cover:

- What bookstores and libraries need to work with you,
- HOW books get from your hands onto their shelves,
- What you need to do and say to approach librarians and bookstore staff,
- A complete overview of the retail side of the publishing industry that will help you get into stores and libraries.

Amy Collins is the President of New Shelves Books, one of the largest book sales and marketing content providers in the US. As a former Book Buyer for a chain of bookstores in New York and Sales Director for a large publishing company, she has spent her career

working with Barnes & Noble, Target, Costco, Books-A-Million, and



AMY COLLINS

Wal-Mart. She is a trusted expert, speaker, and recommended sales consultant for some of the largest book and library retailers and wholesalers in the publishing industry. In the last 20 years, Amy and her team have sold over 40 million books into the bookstore, library, and chain store market for small and midsized publishers.

When not in the office, her focus is on the working poor and poverty

Continued on page 2—See Collins

Nicole Evelina Discussed The Art of Writing Historical Novels at Our Saturday Writers' August Meeting

At our August 26th meeting, Nicole Evelina delivered an enlivened talk on her favorite topic—Historical Fiction. Her love of historical fiction is revealed in the fact that she traveled to England three times while researching and writing her Guinevere's Tale series and by dressing in period clothes while on tour promoting her historical novel, *Madame Presidentess*.

Nicole walked us through the



NICHOLE EVELINA

elements of Historical Fiction, providing a hand-out as a reference. (if you're a member and didn't get one at the meeting, check your email—Jeanne sent it out along with the notes she took). She covered everything from "what

is it?" to "how do I research?" and everything in between. She also shared some of her personal experiences with a family member

Continued on page 4—See Evelina

Saturday Writers Meeting and Events for Saturday, September 30, 2017:

- 10:00-11:00 a.m.—Members Only: Works-in-Progress Café. Visitors are welcome to sit in and listen.
- 11:00-1:00 p.m.—Regular Meeting: Business Items then Guest Speaker

Amy Collins

"Book and Author Marketing"

Visitors Welcome: \$5.00 at the door
Doors open at 10:45 a.m.

- 1:30 p.m. Lunch—Everyone invited to continue networking at a restaurant to be determined each month and announced at the general meeting.
- 2:30-5:45 p.m.—Write-In: Room 212, Spencer Road Library

From the President's Desk...

Why a Critique Group?

As you may have noticed, Saturday Writers offers quite a few ways you can get your work critiqued. We started with the Works-In-Progress group held before each monthly meeting, and have since expanded to provide other opportunities for those with different needs. We have a weekly group that meets at Cupcake Amore, a monthly poetry group at Spencer Road Library on the 2nd Saturday of each month, a children's/YA author group, an email group for those who would rather stay home, and a few novel critique groups.

Is this overkill? Do you wonder why we push the critique groups? That answer can be summed up in 327 words. Oh, wait. My critique group said I can probably cut that down a bit. How about four words: To improve your writing. Or better yet, To reach your goal.

Whether you are the type who isn't sure your work is worthy of being read, or the type who feels everything you write is a golden masterpiece...you need other eyes on it.

Sure, there are some mistakes and issues that you'll catch when re-reading and re-writing your own work (which I hope you're doing consistently), but just like the color-blind woman who painted her walls red thinking it matched the green curtains, writers can be blind to their own mistakes.

The secret to getting the most out of a critique group is to have the right attitude toward the team. Understand that this is not a group of angry people, gathering

to lay your writing on a virtual altar, pulling out their sharpened tongues to shred your beloved document. Rather they are friendly fellow martyrs, willing to put their own children on the block in the expectation of walking away with an even better, more perfect child. As you should be.

The critique group is a team, working together to help all parties achieve their goal—the best possible writing. When you critique another's work, always keep in mind that it is not a matter of right and wrong, just a process of making suggestions on what you think might improve the work. And when you are being critiqued, remember the same thing—these are only suggestions on ways to improve your work. Accept and give in that spirit, and you'll all be blessed with a better final product.

Every story or poem is unique to its creator. No one else writes what you write. So keep putting your thoughts and imagination on paper. There is no substitute for that first step. But once that's done, consider a critique group to help polish the rough gemstone of that early draft into a polished jewel. You will find after a short while that even your first drafts are better—improved by a subconscious that's been listening when your team spoke, and now guides your hand to avoid repeated mistakes.

And with the help of your peers, your work may well be the next prize-winning story, the next publisher-accepted manuscript, or even the next best-seller.

Keep writing!

— Brad Watson, President



Collins—Continued from page 1 elimination, and she spends a great deal of time personally and professionally working with and training women from disadvantaged backgrounds. A member of the Rochester Women's Giving Circle, she donates not only her time, but a portion of her company's profits to grant-based charities that work to alleviate the cycle of poverty.

Amy, a publishing expert, is also author of the book *The Write Way*. She is a singer in a Celtic blues band on the weekends and is saving for a new motorcycle (the current one is not fast enough).

—Jeanne Felfe

Thank you

Saturday Writers gives a special thanks to Ann Bearden for volunteering to be Saturday Writers' representative on the St. Louis Writers Guild Gateway Con 2018 Planning Committee.

Current Contests

Our contest year is nearing completion. Judges are currently busy working on the final themes, choosing the last set of writings that will be included in our anthology. At the September meeting of the Saturday Writers we will announce the results for the latest contests:

- Poet Laureate's Contest
- Any Sin/Virtue Goes - Poetry
- Any Sin/Virtue Goes - Prose
- President's Poetry Contest - Members only
- President's Prose Contest - Members Only
- President's Flash Fiction Contest - Members Only

Good luck to those who submitted to these.

SPECIAL NOTICE

If you are not receiving your electronic copy of the newsletter, please email your request to:

Jeanne Felfe at
jeanne.f@saturdaywriters.org.

Be sure and sign up for our October Workshops. See page 7 for details of our Guest Hosts and the Workshop Topics!

October CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October Workshops at the St. Peters Cultural Art Center

The following workshops will be presented on four different evenings from 6-8:30 p.m.

- Tuesday, Oct. 3 – Liz Schulte – Authors and Social Media
- Wednesday, Oct. 11 – Christina Gant – Memoir
- Thursday, Oct. 19 – Kelley Allen – Poetry
- Thursday, Oct. 26 – Anthony Clark – Story Crafting

See page 7 for more details on sign-up information.

Open Mic

Thursday, September 21,
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Mic begins at 7:00 p.m.

At Rendezvous Café,
217 S. Main St., O'Fallon.

A great opportunity to read your work in front of your fellow writers. Swallow that lump in your throat. Release that hidden performer. Share a few pages of prose or some lines of poetry.

Poetry Symposium

Where we meet to discuss poetry, read our work, receive suggestions for improvement (if solicited), stimulate and encourage our fellow writers. Free and open to the general public—adults only, presented by R.R.J. Sebacher and Bradley Bates.

Under the auspices of Saturday Writers, a chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild, www.saturdaywriters.org. At: St. Charles City-County Library, Spencer Road Branch, 427 Spencer Road, St. Peters, Missouri. Second Saturday of every month in perpetuity, at 11:00 a.m. in room 210.

Start Preparing for our Holiday Celebration

Saturday, December 9, is reserved for our final gathering of the year—our annual Christmas party at the Arts Centre. After the members-only Works-in-Progress meeting at 10 a.m., we will start the festivities at 11 a.m. with our normal pot-luck fare and fellowship. As usual, we plan to have a 50/50 drawing and a few silent auctions. If you have any great stuff to donate to the auctions, please contact our Silent Auction Coordinator, Heather Hartmann.

Who knows what else may happen. Maybe a song? A slide-show? The next contest theme announced? New officers presented? Anything could happen.

So be there.

Wednesdays in O'Fallon Works-in-Progress Café

It's exciting to hear new writings from our Works-in-Progress members. Novels, poems, short stories, essays, and memoirs are discussed each Wednesday at Cupcake Amore on Hwy K in O'Fallon, MO, at eleven a.m. Saturday Writers members are free to join us for a two-hour session to improve your work or receive validation of ideas. Some of the discussions are very lively. Honesty and support for your work helps to improve the finished product. Come join us. You'll like it, I'm sure.

—Bill Spradley, your host.

Saturday Write-In

Our monthly reminder that on Saturdays we host a write-in at the Spencer Road Library, room 212, from 2:30-5:45 p.m. All writers of any kind are welcome to join us in a quiet room, apart from daily distractions, to work on their current projects. Bring your laptops or pen and paper and join us for a productive session. (A little chocolate is provided to keep you going.)

Children/YA Author Writing Group

At Saturday Writers Children/YA Author Writing Group our goal is to encourage, support and challenge one another as we craft these stories for young minds. If you write or want to learn more about board books, picture books, easy readers, chapter books, middle grade or YA books, this group is for YOU! We will also learn and talk about the industry and publishing world.

Our meetings will be held at Barnes & Noble Cafe, 320 Mid Rivers Center, St. Peters, MO, 63376 on the following dates:

- Thursday, September 28
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- Thursday, October 12
10:00 a.m. – Noon

Previously scheduled
Childrens/YA Workshop
of Thursday, October 26
IS CANCELLED!

No Meetings in November or December due to the Holidays. We will announce the next meeting at the January 2018 Chapter Meeting.

If you have any questions please contact Nicki Jacobsmeyer at Nicki.J@saturdaywriters.org. Complete information and guidelines for group can be found at <http://saturdaywriters.org/childrenya-author-writing-group.html>.

Our Once-a-Month Works-in-Progress Café

The monthly Works-in-Progress Café is an opportunity for active members to read their prose or poetry and receive feedback from fellow writers. Visitors are welcome to sit in and listen. See the Saturday Writers website for details about presenting your work.

October

SATURDAY WRITER EVENTS THIS MONTH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 October Workshop Liz Schulte Authors and Social Media	4 O'Fallon Works-in-Progress Café	5	6	7 Spencer Road Library Write-In Missouri Writers Guild Trivia Night
8	9	10	11 O'Fallon Works-in-Progress Café October Workshop Christina Gant Memoir	12 Children/YA Author Writing Group	13	14 Poetry Symposium Spencer Road Library Write-In
15	16	17	18 O'Fallon Works-in-Progress Café	19 October Workshop Kelley Allen Poetry	20	21 Spencer Road Library Write-In
22	23 NaNoWriMo Introductory Meeting Spencer Road Library Room 112 (lower level) from 7-8 p.m.	24	25 O'Fallon Works-in-Progress Café	26 October Workshop Anthony Clark Story Crafting	27	28 Spencer Road Library Write-In
29	30	31 NaNoWriMo Begins at Midnight	1 O'Fallon Works-in-Progress Café	2	3	4 Spencer Road Library Write-In

Evelina—Continued from page 1

of Victoria Woodhull (*Madame Presidentess*) who didn't particularly care for anything in the novel. As Evelina said, "It happens, so make sure your research is spot on accurate."

Historical Fiction basically carries on the storytelling tradition of the bards. In general, it covers anything set at least 50-60 years in the past. The Historical Novel Society (HNS) defines it as a work that must have been written at least 50 years after the events described OR have been written by a person who was not alive at the time of the events. What this means is that a work must be written via research. Good historical fiction, regardless of the subgenre, is specific and the story can only have taken place in that time period and place.

Don't stress over writing to market, because the market is a fickle fiend. If you've always loved a particular period in history, or are fascinated by a long-dead historical figure, write the story. Make the story relevant to modern readers by basing the conflict on problems basic to humanity that don't change over time.

There are many types of Historical Fiction. Straight historical fiction is any story that doesn't contain elements of other genres—biographical and literary



are two examples. There are many sub-genres: fantasy, romance, mystery, multi time—period/timeslip, YA, and alternate history. Sub-genres tend to sell better because they appeal to a larger base.

A novel can be based on actual people, but many readers prefer stories with fictional characters set against a backdrop of great historical events. If you choose to write about real people, be sure your research is accurate, and be prepared for the possibility of some long-lost relative coming out to challenge your version of the story.

Historical fantasy and alternative history will have more fiction than fact, while biographical will often be heavy on fact. Did you know that you can change the "facts"? You can, but if you do, have a good reason and explain it in the author's notes. Keep in mind that you are writing a novel and don't overeducate your reader by delving into info dumps. You will be doing a lot of research, but only about 5% will end up in your finished novel. However, don't waste the rest—blog it as a means of marketing your upcoming or newly minted creation. Provide whatever information you decide to include in a way your POV character would naturally learn it or think about it. Dialogue is a good way to accomplish this, but beware of using the "As you know..." type of dialogue to relay information. If the characters in the scene already know the

Continued on page 5—See Evelina

Evelina—Continued from page 4

information and one is telling the other about it, it's a dump.

Series sell well, but make sure you don't leave your



readers hanging off a cliff—each book should stand alone. That doesn't mean stand-

alone books are inferior. Often a single book is all that is needed to tell your story, and even a novella may be enough.

Understand that research informs plot and forms the skeleton of your story. It's up to you to add the muscle—the details, motivations, dialogue. Research is used to bring the world and story to life. It also helps the readers understand the attitudes of the time period. It is your roadmap through your story. The list of what you could research has no end, but here are some things you might not have thought of:

Religion, food, clothing, housing, child-rearing, attitudes toward/treatment of women and minorities, class system(s), military, expectations of the sexes, allies and enemies, work (not everyone in a medieval setting was a queen, king, or knight), medicine, hygiene, views on death and dying, transportation (including how long it took to get anywhere), worldview/values, and entertainment/leisure.

There are equally as many ways to research, but one big warning: If you use the Internet, triple-check everything. Wikipedia might be a place to start, but it is not the place to end. There are primary, secondary, human, and first-hand sources to be considered (see the hand-out for a list). If you saw it in a movie, research, research, research—Hollywood often gets it wrong.

When trying to bring the past to life, characterization is huge. Keep your characters interesting and complex and make sure they behave in a way that's consistent with the time period. Be aware of descriptions. For instance, green eyes and red hair were very rare and people were shorter. Men, if physically fit, tended to be farmers or some type of worker where strength was required. Go beyond the clichés—herbalist, midwives, queens, kings, monk, nun, knight, prostitute, Indian princess, cowboy.

Accuracy matters—even those niggling little details because readers want to be fully immersed in your world. They will point out inaccuracies, such as

traveling that takes too little time; referring to pockets or zippers before they were invented; or referring to tomatoes, potatoes or chocolate during a story set in medieval time.

Also, don't shy away from tough subjects—people were mean to slaves, wet nurses existed, and some things that happened might be horrifying.

Don't try to recreate period speech. Use dialect and slang sparingly. Be careful that modern speech/words don't slip in. For instance, "okay" wasn't in common use until WWII.

Finally, *Evelina* covered some tips: Take your time, bite off one piece at a time, enjoy your writing (it will show if you don't), ask the experts (most love to share what they know), hire an editor who is familiar with your time period (they will catch things others won't), and use a combination of Beta readers—some who know nothing of the time period and those who know a lot.

Recommended Reading:

- *Get Started in Writing Historical Fiction* by Emma Darwin
- *Historical Fiction Writing: A Practical Guide* by Myfanwy Cook
- *How to Write and Sell Historical Fiction* by Persia Wooley
- *Medieval Underpants and Other Blunders* by Susanne Allyen
- *The Information-Literate Historian* by Jenny L. Presnell
- *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* by Martha C. Howell
- *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth
- *Writing Historical Fiction: Advice for the Digital Age* by Marilyn Weymouth Seguin

Nicole Evelina is a historical fiction and romantic comedy writer whose four books have won nearly 20 awards, including two Book of the Year designations. Her most recent novel, *Madame Presidentess*, a historical novel about Victoria Woodhull, America's first female Presidential candidate, was the first place winner in the Women's US History category of the Chaucer Awards for Historical Fiction. She is currently working on her first non-fiction book, *The Once And Future Queen* (2018) which traces the evolution of the character of Guinevere in Arthurian legend from her Celtic roots to the present day, and *Mistress Of Legend* (2017), the final book in her Guinevere's Tale trilogy. You can find her online at <http://nicoleevelina.com>.





Nicki Jacobsmeyer

What's the Big Idea?

The past two contests have been fruitful for Donna Mork Reed. Not only did she win July's poetry contest with

White-Tailed Deer but she is an August winner for her prose, To Trying Again. I've had the opportunity and enjoyment of interviewing authors every month for this article. Hopefully you will agree that they have inspired, educated, and motivated. When I read Reed's responses to some of my questions, I sat speechless (I know what you're thinking, 'Nicki Jacobsmeyer, speechless? Never!'). Her blog-like responses were helpful, raw, and heartfelt. Reed allows herself to be vulnerable in her responses which shines through in her story. She left me inspired to share with you, in her words, her thoughts about her winning story, To Trying Again.

"I didn't have anything written for the contest, so I tried to come up with something. I usually start with googling the term, read its definition, see if there are idioms or sayings or old stories using the term/idea. I also sometimes do bubble diagramming, where you put the word in the middle, then put down all the terms/ideas/random thoughts you can come up with from the middle bubble, and then spoke off from those bubbles. I've gotten a few ideas this way.

"This time, I hadn't gotten to the bubble process yet, and I thought about pride. I thought, am I prideful? What in my life has happened due to pride? And it sort of went from there. I thought back on my previous marriage and wondered how much of the divorce was caused by my own pride. And then the 'what if' comes into play. I am forever asking what if. What if my car were to crash into the bridge? What if my phone rings and it's my husband's boss telling me Dave's plane crashed? What if I win the lottery tonight? You know, the

random 'what ifs' which come at you pell-mell. I assume most writers have this going on. If not, please don't call the sanitarium.

"Anyway, I thought, what if my husband had succumbed to his cancer six years ago. And what if my ex was to call me up and want to meet? Would I be able to put my anger aside and face him? Have I learned anything from all the time and life history which has gone on since? I don't know the answers to any of those questions, because this is, after all, fiction. This story is one possibility. Maybe there is an alternate universe where this very thing is happening. In all likelihood, I would probably tell him to go jump in a lake and not meet with him, but if I were the bigger person and actually have learned to put away pride and such, I would do as the woman in the story.

"I've always heard to write what you know. And I always thought it meant what you know, as in, I know how to be a librarian. Well, how boring! Who would read that? Growing up on a farm, I knew how to stack hay and work hard. Well, who would read that? Pretty boring, too. But the last few years, as I've actually started pursuing my dream of becoming a real writer, not just a closet theorist, I've realized it actually means to write what you know into the stories. I can write about emotions because I know them. I can write about internal conflict because I know it. I can write about fears and pain and dreams because I know those. The story doesn't have to be biographical or nonfiction, but I can use my own internal knowledge and weave it into the fictional story (a hopefully much more exciting story than my real life), and the truth behind it makes the story feel real and draws the reader in.

"And when you are done writing, search your document for the term 'that' and 'was' or whatever your go-to lame terms are, and rewrite any you find to improve the writing.

Apparently 'that' and 'was' are two of my favorite terms; I use them to death and they are the death of my stories. Edit, edit, edit. Get your critique partners to read it and point out things you don't see because you are too close to the story. Read it out loud. Put it in different fonts. Just seeing it in a different light will often bring to the forefront things which need to be changed to improve the story."

— Nicki Jacobsmeyer

THE MISSOURI WRITERS GUILD PRESENTS
TEST YOUR SMARTS FOR THE ARTS!
TRIVIA NIGHT
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7
DOORS OPEN 6PM, TRIVIA BEGINS 7PM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ST. LOUIS
6501 WYDOWN BLVD. CLAYTON, MO 63105
WWW.MISSOURIWRITERSGUILD.ORG

SILENT AUCTION!
50/50 DRAWINGS!
BEER & WINE PERMITTED
\$25 PER PERSON
\$200 PER TABLE OF 8

Missouri Writer's Guild is hosting a Trivia night October 7.

It's a smaller gathering of only ten tables so reserve your spot now. Jeanne has already paid \$200 for a full table of eight for Saturday Writers' members. If you want a seat at that table, you'll need to pay \$25 to her, by or at our September meeting. Email her at Jeanne.f@saturdaywriters.org to reserve your spot. OR if you want to put together your own table of fellow writers, you can register at <http://missouriwritersguild.org/>

Beer and wine are permitted but will not be sold at the event.

Also, SW will be putting a basket together for the silent auction. If you have anything to donate, please let Jeanne know – books, tea, coffee – really anything. And Jeanne needs a basket if anyone has one they'd like to donate.

— Jeanne Felfe,
Missouri Writers Guild Liaison

October Workshops Here We Come

Although our September 30th meeting is the last regular meeting of 2017, the year of writing is far from over. One of the things Saturday Writers is known for is encouraging writers. In fact, it's our motto. To that end, each October we feature multiple workshops to help our members build on their already impressive skills. We try to provide a variety of subjects to meet the interests of all of our members.

The following workshops will be presented on four different evenings from 6-8:30 p.m. at the St. Peters Arts Centre. Yes, we know—6 p.m. is supper time—so feel free to bring a sack supper. Snacks will be provided.

Tuesday, October 3 – Liz Schulte – Authors and Social Media

Wednesday, October 11 – Christina Gant – Memoir

Thursday, October 19 – Kelley Allen – Poetry

Thursday, October 26 – Anthony Clark – Story Crafting

SW Member Pricing:

All 4 for \$70.00, when purchased together
Any 3 for \$55.00, when purchased together
Any 2 for \$35.00, when purchased together
\$20.00 each when purchased separately

Non-Member Pricing:

All 4 workshops for \$90.00, when purchased together
Any 3 for \$70.00, when purchased together
Any 2 for \$45.00, when purchased together
\$25.00 each when purchased separately

NOTE: Space is limited - sign up now to reserve your spot!

Reservations and payments can be made via:

- Paypal at – saturdaywriters.org/2017-writing-workshop-registration.html
- Cash or check at the September meeting
- By mailing a check to:
Saturday Writers
Fall Workshop Series
Post Office Box 2093
Saint Peters, Missouri 63376

NaNoWriMo Is Near

National Novel Writing Month is fast approaching, and for those of us who want to participate, we need to be making final preparations. But have no fear, Saturday Writers is here to help.

As you know, NaNoWriMo is your chance to write a 50,000 word fiction work in 30 days. As overwhelming as that sounds, it is completely doable, and several of our members have even completed the challenge in half that time.

To help you prepare, or help you decide if this is for you, we have scheduled a NaNoWriMo introductory meeting at Spencer Road Library, room 112 (lower level), on Monday, October 23, from 7-8 p.m. We will discuss the basics of NaNoWriMo, give some hints and tips on how to meet your goals, and help if you need information on how to sign up.

Once November arrives, we will once again extend our Saturday Write-In hours at Spencer Road Library. Every Saturday in November, the room will be open from 1:30-5:45 p.m. for all writers, giving you extra time to work on your manuscript.

The last day of November, Thursday, November 30, we will open Room 263 in the Spencer Road Library Commons area from 3-8:30 p.m. to give extra time for those who need to push for that final goal of 50,000 words. At 8:30, a time of rejoicing will be had by all.

Join us for a rewarding time of completing that novel you've always wanted to write, but never thought you had the time for.

— Brad Watson

SW Authors at the August 26 Literary Festival at Foundry Art Center



Cory Miles



Sherri Nielson



Nicki Jacobsmeyer

Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners of our July prose contest, "From Pride to Humility."

1st place – Donna Mork Reed – "To Trying Again"

2nd place – Tammy Lough – "Twice a Dark Moon Night"

3rd place – Sue Fritz – "The Diva"

Hon. Mention – Diane How – "Hidden Treasures"

These were announced at our August meeting and will now be in our 2017 anthology.

If you are listed above, please forward a digital copy of your winning entry to info@SaturdayWriters.org.

Mother's Smile

By Marcia Estep

Unlike Mona Lisa, there's no mystery, in this smile

The smile begins with a twinkling of the eyes

Uplifted cheeks

It greets me like the beauty of first light and

The joyful singing of morning birds

When I enter her presence.

I am bathed in the rays of her caring heart

Her radiating love, encompasses me

At my birth, when we first gazed into each other's eyes

Moonlight met sunlight

Mama's warmth enveloped me

Her love responded to my every need

She protected me

Held me under her umbrella

Cradled me in rainbow's promise

Filled my world with joy

Now during the winter of her life

I brush her hair like she once did for me

Admiring the beauty of her pure white crown

I realize, how much I've been blessed

Knowing forever I'm centered in her corona

Living in the spectrum of the prism of her smile

About the author: *Marcia has been a member of Saturday Writers since 2012. She moved from California, her original home state to Missouri to be near her daughters and grandchildren.*

She has lived in Hawaii, Indiana, and Mississippi. She has been writing poetry since seventh grade. She is currently writing a memoir about her early years in California.



Writing On The Road

I could sit in the middle of Sunset Boulevard with a typewriter on my knees. Temperamental, I'm not.

—Louis L'Amour

I suspect this is not the case for most of us. While my music varies by day and topic, I do have a favorite spot and a time of day that works best for me. Most of us figure out what works for us at home.

But what happens when you're on the road?

For a year plus I traveled with my wife, Sheryl, while she worked as a travel therapist. Her company sent her on 13 week assignments at facilities that needed a "substitute therapist." So we decided I would pursue my dream of being a novelist while we saw the country together. I quit my job and we purchased a 35 foot fifth-wheel RV. We loaded up our two 70-pound fur babies, and headed off for our first full-length assignment together.

I purchased an RV friendly bulletin board, set up an office in the pantry, and a desk on the table. Our first campground in the hills outside Marathon, New York, was exactly what we had been looking for. It was owned by a great couple who lived on site and took personal interest in every camper. Since the only real amenity was a pond in which swimming was not allowed, and there were no close-by attractions, the campers were mostly older, retired couples. Thus, no screaming kids. Indeed, the only noise was the occasional diesel pickup pulling in or out, hauling a rig, or the soft hum of an electric golf cart. An idyllic setting—beautiful pond, forested hillsides, and dairy farms.

My first morning of this new lifestyle, my wife left for work early and I watched a few minutes of the morning news before sitting down at the table to put pen to paper, or rather liquid crystal to display. I had been working for about fifteen minutes, the acoustic styling's of Gene Simmons blared from the RV speakers. The creative juices trickled down my chin in an ever increasing flow.

Down the hill from us, one of the weekend campers pulled out. I never heard their diesel engine fire up. After all, I was locked-in listening to my muse (I call her Calliope). Fear not, my 70 pound property manager, Lucy, heard the diesel. The hair on the back of her neck stood up like a Mohawk and her air raid klaxon sounded.

Lucy's brother (and my wife's personal body-guard), Yankee, stirred from his nap (after all, it's a lot of work keeping mommy safe, so one MUST catch a nap when she isn't home). Surely there must be some sort of terrorist threat for Lucy to be carrying on so. A rhythmic bark came up from below some sub-basement. The camper shook much like your car bouncing to the beat from the hip-hop-mobile next to you at a red light. That scared off the terrible diesel-dragon and all was safe in the camper kingdom again. Lucy turned off her klaxon, wagged her tail, and rubbed against me to elicit praise for the warning. Meanwhile, the ISIS threat averted, Yankee returned to studying the backs of his eyelids.

Oddly, while all of this was going on, Calliope slapped me and stormed off in a huff. It took twenty minutes to coax her back. Since she had this truly wonderful story, she did come back and once again dictated.

The flow rate was just picking up when an old couple

pattered past on their electric golf cart. Calliope rattled off her tale while I listened intently, clicking away at the keyboard. The property manager heard them through her sleep-induced haze (protecting the property from that diesel-dragon had been hard work). Once again the Mohawk sprouted and the alto siren rang. Once again the sub-basement awoke. The little ankle-biting midget the lady carried on her lap also decided to add his sharp soprano flute.

This time, no amount of cajoling would bring Calliope back.

There was a period of trial and error. Eventually I discovered that most of the communities we stayed in had libraries that opened early enough to

work with my most creative times. Calliope learned to ignore all but Lucy's loudest announcements of danger to the property, so we could work in the camper when local libraries were not open.

Quakertown, Pennsylvania, is where I learned to sit by the pond early in the morning and write the old fashioned way—pen and paper. The pond in the Quakertown campground was as peaceful a place as I found.

I learned that Calliope loved musical variety. My best work was done with Simmons, Mercury, Johnson, Beethoven, Copeland, and Holst sharing their muse through my ear-buds.

Few writers take after Louis L'Amour. So while on the road you have to find the compromises that allow you to work.



Doug is an enrolled agent with eighteen years of experience assisting clients with their tax-related questions and problems.

—Douglas Osgood,

EA Writer and Tax Expert

Poetry Terminology

Accent

Stress placed on a syllable indicated by strong -, mild u, or long - and short u vowel sounds.

Alliteration

Repetition of consonant sounds.

Anaphora

Repetition of a word or phrase at beginnings of lines.

Assonance

Repetition of vowel sounds.

Ballad

Narrative poem with four line stanzas. The second and fourth line rhyme.

Ballade

Early French form, not to be confused with ballad.

Blank Verse

Unrhymed iambic pentameter. Most of Shakespeare's plays are written in this.

Cacophony

Use of dissonance to create disharmony.

Caesura

Break used in poetry to indicate a pause or silence in place of the punctuation used in prose.

Conceit

An extended metaphor.

Confessional Poetry

Poems based on the personal life of the poet.

Connotation

Emotional and additional meanings of a word that shade its literal dictionary definition.

Couplet

Two consecutive lines of rhymed verse.

Criticism – Critique

Judgment and analysis of a poem.

Denotation

Literal dictionary definition of a word or phrase.

Diction

Choice and pronunciation of words that is influenced by country, region, ethnic group, economic, mood, and many other considerations.

Didactic Poetry

Poetry used to teach or inform, usually political, religious, or moral lessons.

Elegy

Poem of mourning or grief.

Ellipsis

An intentional omission of something understood, sometimes indicated by a three point punctuation mark ... or ***.

Enjambment

Where a line of poetry may be carried over into the following line.

Envoi

Poem that deals with sending the poet's work out into the world.

Epistle

Poem in a letter form, as in the Bible.

Epistrophe

Repetition of a word or phrase at the end of a line.

Epitaph

Short verse concerning life and death of a person or persons.

Epithalamion

Poem concerning marriage.

Foot

Multiple syllables forming a metrical unit of rhythm in poetry.

Form

The shape and structure of a poem.

Found Poem

A poem that uses reshaped existing text. An example would be a news article or a grocery list.

Free Verse

Poetry with no external requirements. The poet must impose his or her own form on the poem.

Haiku

A type of Japanese poetry that English poets try to loosely attempt to duplicate. Variants are Haibun, Tanka, Renga, among others.

Hemistich

A half-line of verse.

Hyperbole

Inflated and exaggerated description used to make a point. It can be overdone, in which case it becomes bombast or humorous, depending on the situation.

Hyphaeresis

Dropping a letter from the body of a word, as an example: over into O'er the land of the free.

Iamb

A two syllable metrical foot. The first syllable unstressed and second stressed.

Iambic Pentameter

Traditionally considered the normal line for an English poem. Much of Shakespeare's work is in iambic pentameter.



—R.R.J. Sebacher,
SW Poet Laureate

Red Hawk

Sometimes my soul will no longer be contained
It rends and tears itself from a gaping wound
In my chest, emerging as a red hawk
It can change into a ruby red kite
Trailing the knotted rags of my woes
Diving and swooping in acrobatics
So amazing they may happen
Only in a magic realm
Seeing this in its proper
Perspective against the sky
These worrisome rags
Dissipate as mist
Always to return
As a hawk

Entering and nestling in my chest at times
A blazing bolt rising as a golden phoenix
Into the sun, burning off all impurities
As ashen scales blown away by
The sheer force of its acceleration
Turning snow white and silvery
In the moonlight with cold
So intense it is like
Dry ice vaporizing
With heat all frail human
Concern from itself
Dissipate as mist
Always to return
As a hawk

R.R.J. Sebacher ©

The Poet's Toolbox...

The Art Of The Prose Poem

Another view of a poem to help guide the final writing of a draft to a submission or into a contest:

- It is like a poetic essay, but not since the regular poetical form is still present.
- There can be stanzas of the prose form if easily found to exist, or one can keep it in full poetic prose.
- Seeing words in a light not usually used by poets can help to figure out how form and breath merge into a more casual and normal way when reading aloud.
- One habit I get into is to make the last word(s) end a line as I wish for the line to end.

For example, here is a prose poem I wrote, and I use a prose poem by Joseph Stroud to set them up to see similarities and differences with an unpublished prose poem and a published one.

“Breckinridge”, by Bradley Bates

The night before the struggling began, the stars blinked, and we wished the sun rose to relieve the depression. We didn't ski in Colorado until the sun rose, and the slopes cured a passion for sport. We loved the constant workout skiing, the way the heart beat against the chest and feeling it, it became something to continue feeling with short spurts of rest on the lift to another hill that bumped us with knees bent and legs motioning back and forth. Moguls were everywhere. The blood rushed through us, a sense of completion, the way powder covers the entire landscape. At the end of the day, we met at a bar sizzling their own slopes.



“Elsewhere”, by Joseph Stroud in his book *Country Of Light*, Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press. 2004. p. 92

My father picks up my brothers and me at the swimming pool. He is angry and smells of gin. We get in the car. No one speaks. He drives back to the wedding party to get my mother. “An aunt takes me aside, puts her hands on my shoulders—“Your father is a good man. Remember this. Sometimes we don't mean to do the things we do.” In the car, my mother sits up front. Against her cheek she holds a towel wrapped around ice. We drive across the hot L.A. Basin. We are on the freeway, among the other cars with families inside. We are all driving, from somewhere, to somewhere else.

—Bradley Bates

Resources For Additional Prose Poem Information

For additional information regarding Prose Poem Construction, visit these two addresses. For ease of entry to get to the info: Study.com, and/or study.com/academy/lesson/prose-poems-definition-famous-examples.html. The second one ending in html is probably the easier of the two. There is an intro to Prose Poetry—it is a hybrid genre of writing. “Prose poems occur when someone writes prose using poetry techniques. Prose, is anything written down that does not possess any poetic meter.” Poetic meter “is the rhythm of a poem.” Poetry also works with an “Image-Base.” Prose Poetry “is poetry that is not written in verse and contains other poetic attributes, such as rhythm and

metaphors.”

Prose—“Written in paragraphs”; “Tells a story rather than describes an image or metaphor”; and “Generally has characters and a plot.”

Poetry—“Written in verse”; “Written in poetic meter”; “Focuses on image-driven metaphors”; “Might have a narrative, but it might not or it might be harder to understand.”

Prose poetry—“Looks like prose (written in paragraphs)”; “Focuses on images”; “Includes instances of poetic meter”; and “Contains language play, such as repetition.”

Shown in the article above are two examples of prose poems.

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Contact us at:
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Saturday
Writers 

In My Opinion...

Who or Whom...

Long trails awinding are a speciality of the English language—vocabulary, syntax and all. Rules overlap rules. At the July meeting of the St. Louis Writers Guild I asked for help.

The President made a kindly announcement that anyone adept with “who and whom” should please see Larry. Result?

People fled like frightened fawns. The help I did get was every good thing but one: Correct.

I had bought a book recently. In it I read the following sentence. No, I didn’t either. Discretion leads me not to quote. I’ll rewrite the sentence, but keep the germane stuff intact.

“It seemed that no one had seen anyone like her, except the few who knew Elizabeth Short, the Black Dahlia, whom some said she resembled.”

There are two problems here. One, the easy one, is that the author is telling us that the “she” of “like her” looked like those few who knew the Black Dahlia. This is an odd state of affairs, so odd that the reader must reread and sort things out.

The second problem is more difficult. It is found in “whom some said she resembled.” The “whom” rang wrongly on my ear. But why? What was wrong? Was the problem “whom”, or my ear?

The answer came to me, or I to it, slowly. I did not possess the knowledge or the confidence to ask the proper question. I could not get the right answer because I could not ask the right question.

So, I wandered for hours unto days unto weeks, lost in the mazy trails of the Mother Tongue. Along the way I met the copula, or linking verb, seen in the separate above sentence with “seemed,” and found out what the copula can do. I found out and, I confess, forgot.

Then cases, from ablative to vocative, in name-changing and shape-shifting forms that all but engulfed me. And declensions. Forget the Valley of Death. Declensions, though few now, lead to the Vale of Tears.

Clauses, too. Oh, did I meet up with clauses! Clauses such as the relative, which are either defining or nondefining (put another way, restrictive or nonrestrictive); clauses coordinating or subordinating, and a horrid hybrid identified first by the Fowler brothers around the time of the St. Louis World’s Fair: the insubordinating clause; plus clauses adjectival, adverbial and substantival.

A sentence from Margaret Shertzer’s *The Elements of Grammar* made me yearn again for the recess bell. “When a dependent adverbial clause precedes a main clause, a comma is generally used.” Don’t blame Shertzer! It’s a fault of mine. Something in me finds such words coated with Teflon, and tincture of pedagogue. The one and only clause I like anymore is Santa Clause.

I wandered among the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the Fowlers *The King’s English* and Kingsley Amis’s *The King’s English*, Bill Bryson’s wonderful *Bryson’s Dictionary of Troublesome Words*, and even Lynne Truss’s too-cute-by-

half Eats, *Shoots & Leaves*.

Bryson and Amis moaned about the problems posed by “who” and “whom.” Their moans gave respite to my wanderings, good humor to my search. Amis concluded his entry on “whom” with “try to forget the word altogether.”

Bryson dealt with the problem of “whom” in friendly, (in the best sense) fatherly, and clear-cut prose. Further, he assures us that writers such as Churchill, Dickens and Shakespeare have been “flummoxed” by who and whom.

In all good humor, then, here is one of my first important finds. By definition, “whom” is the objective case of “who.”

The Fowlers had good humor and testicular fortitude. They took on and corrected errors by Trollope, Huxley, Poe, Dickens and many another heavy hitter. The brothers seemed to hold a certain scholarly antipathy toward someone named Susan Edmundstone Ferrier (a Scottish novelist), and explicitly toward the “curious, bizarre style of Emerson’s.”

But a sentence of Charlotte Bronte’s, which they cited for its holding an error, gave me the first inkling that my ear was not wrong.

“To how many maimed and mourning millions is the first and sole angel visitant, him Easterns call Azrael.”

Fully stated, the Fowlers tell me, that last clause would be the archaic (even then) “he whom.”

Grateful as I am to the Fowlers, later on I disagreed with them when they wrote about the “gross error” found in a use of whom. An error yes, but surely not a gross one. They cited several writers, to show this misstep. Whose error will I choose? I choose Dickens.

Instinctively apprehensive of her father, whom she supposed it was, she stopped in the dark.

I stop now, to partially reset the scene. “Whom some said she resembled” from the sentence that bothered me is, I believe, a relative clause. whether defining or nondefining doesn’t really matter. Why? If you’re still with me, you’ll soon see.

In Chapter II—under “Case of the relative.”—the Fowlers laid down the rule. I finally found it. Actually, though, I stumbled over it. Still—

Eureka!

Here they are now, just eleven words from the Fowlers: ... a relative subject must stand at the beginning of its clause.

“Whom” by definition cannot be the subjective. “Who” is the subjective case (also/and/or nominative case, and in a real emergency, the vocative). Remember what I said at the beginning about rules overlapping rules? By the way, in case you care, and I see no reason why you should, this reference is as pretty an example of “narrative arc” as you are likely to find in this month’s newsletter.

Speaking of months...July’s writing prompt was *Pride*. I am sinfully proud my ear found that problem at the get-go.



Larry Duerbeck

Proofreading Your Work

Editors and contest judges read for about ninety seconds, or about one page, before tossing a story into the rejection pile. The longer the editor or judge reads, the better your chances are of getting your story published. Misplaced commas, run-on sentences, your favorite adverb appearing three times in the first paragraph, or mismatched subjects and predicates can put a story on the fast track to rejection. Proofreading your work before sending it improves your chances of keeping the editor or judge reading.

The goal of proofreading is to pull out the weeds and cultivate the best writing you are able to produce. Here are some tips and tools to help find and yank out those weeds among your words.

Print a hard copy, pull out a colored pen or pencil, and read your piece out loud. Better yet, read your story while someone else listens and marks trouble spots. Joining a critique group provides more willing listeners than your family or friends.

Is the word on the page different from the word you read? When you read a word other than the word you wrote, look for the cause of confusion. The substituted word may rhyme with the intended word or start with the same letter, a visual slip. Sometimes a two-bit context makes your brain see a two-bit word instead of the ten-buck word as written. Or vice versa.

Do you gasp for breath reading a long sentence, or race through several short sentences on a single breath? Try rewriting with different punctuation until the words flow smoothly as you read aloud.

Search for those favorite words you use without realizing you have used them in every paragraph. My favorites are “only” and “just,” words that are rarely necessary one time, much less four or five times in a flash fiction story. I use the “Find” option in the Edit menu to search and delete these and other words I notice as I read aloud.



Susan Zahra

Use spell-checker and grammar-checker functions to flag possible errors. Use them with discretion and without autocorrecting. The wrong homonym can slip through, for example. Yes, I know that should have been “through,” but my spell-checker is satisfied with “threw.”

Grammar-checker advised me to change “reads” to “read” in the first paragraph sentence beginning, “The longer the editor or judge reads.” Apparently it believes all compound subjects are wedded in plural bliss.

Several applications are available to check spelling, grammar, and style. Some are available free online. I reviewed Grammarly, Hemingway, and Autocrit by running intentionally mistake-ridden text through them. Grammarly was as hit-or-miss as my spell-checker and grammar-checker.

Hemingway and Autocrit are designed for fiction writers, and focus on readability rather than spelling and grammar. Hemingway rated reading grade level, complexity of sentences, and adverb count. Autocrit offered similar analysis with encouragement to pay for a monthly subscription.

All of the apps reviewed discourage ever using passive voice. In *Between You and Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*, Mary Norris, long-time copy editor for *The New Yorker*, writes that spell-checker will never replace the copy editor because it does not recognize context. She refers specifically to homophones, such as “threw” and “through,” but this applies to active versus passive voice as well. “The project was completed ahead of schedule by a production team working around the clock” might cause customer service and PR staff to uncork the champagne to celebrate. “A production team working around the clock completed the project ahead of schedule” might cause the CFO to uncup the antacid while calculating the cost of all that overtime. Whether to use the active or passive voice in a sentence depends on who will be reading and what is important to communicate.

Invest in learning or relearning the rules. A good dictionary and access to

the rules of grammar and punctuation have yet to be replaced by computer apps. Here are some tools to help recognize the weeds among your words.

- *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* has been the gold standard in publishing for decades. The online version is available at www.merriam-webster.com. The definitions are comparable to the print version.

- www.grammarbook.com offers easy, free access to rules for punctuation and grammar. It is the online version of *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*. Both have lessons with clear examples and quizzes to help you develop skills.

- If punctuation is your nemesis, Carole Tipton’s articles in *Saturday Writers Newsletter* issues of February, March, April, and May of 2016 provide rules and examples. They are available online by going to saturdaywriters.org, Newsletters menu, and clicking on the archives button.

- *Between You and Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*, by Mary Norris, is part grammar book, part memoir, and delightful to read, even for a reluctant grammarian. St. Charles City-County Library, St. Louis County Library, and St. Louis Public Library all have print, ebook, and audio books available.

- Take a writing class. Both St. Charles Community College and St. Louis Community College offer classes in all aspects of writing. The difference between a writing class and a workshop or conference is that you have writing assignments that are read and critiqued. In a workshop, you may have the opportunity to write a paragraph or two, read it aloud, and hear a couple of comments. Class assignments allow you time to think, write, and revise, and then receive a response that has been thought out, written, and possibly revised with as much care.

- Pay the extra fee to have a contest submission critiqued or to have a story professionally copy edited. Copyediting is more expensive, but more detailed; it gives you a better idea of how an editor might read your story.

—Susan Gore Zahra

When Your Character Deserves a Good Killing

As writers of crime, drama, psychological thrillers, romance, etc., there comes a time when we need to, or just plain old want to, kill off a character. If you choose for him or her to kick the oxygen-habit with poison, here are a few fun tips to get you motivated.

The classic git-err-done poison is good ole reliable arsenic. For one thing, traces of arsenic are already present in all human tissue because it is found in so many common household items from wallpaper and wallpaper paste, to paint and many pesticides. Strut your killer's fine self into any home improvement store and have him or her snatch up some rat poison. So, when he plops a dollop of this white powder into his victim's coffee, the poor guy's digestive system goes haywire. After multitudes of explosive green-apple grizzlies, he assumes room temperature in 4-24 hours. The killer can pass the time reading the prize-winning 2017 *Saturday Writers Anthology*. By the time he checks on his victim, he will likely be colder than a blue ice-pop and ready for a dirt nap.

Another fun poison is cyanide. Plus, the house will smell more like a funeral parlor blend of carnations, stargazer lilies, roses, chrysanthemums, and Victorian woods than the previous arsenic sewer-swamp stench. Bonus: cyanide or (hydrocyanic acid) acts fast and occurs naturally in a lot of seeds and pits. Think peaches, apricots, apple, wild cherries, and plums. Kill smart and set a bowl of almonds on the countertop so when the forensic snoops show up, they will assume the characteristic bitter almond-odor of cyanide comes from a rotten almond hiding out on the bottom for when mother-in-law comes a-calling. Try the following just for a moment of gut-splitting hysterics: crouch low for a second.

.. And then pop up quick like a toasted blueberry bagel because that is how you are going to feel once you have succeeded with your plan. Do it again! It was just as much fun the second time, wasn't it? Cyanide gas swallowed or inhaled can cause immediate unconsciousness, convulsions, and death within one to fifteen minutes, or a wee bit longer unless you shoot him, too. Lizzie Borden, axe-murder and dismemberer extraordinaire, was also a coffee connoisseur who exchanged prussic acid (a form of cyanide) with the sugar in Mom and Pop's server set. Sweetened the deal, didn't she?

Strychnine, aka Dog Button, may not be the fastest acting poison on the planet, but if you love a thrill, this is your poison of choice. Strap on a Go-Pro and tape this wild roller coaster ride so you can watch the hysterical antics over and over on a bad TV night. Picture this: He will jackknife his body up, down, and all around, over, and over like a man learning a Salsa dance step with Mexican jumping beans taped inside his tighty-whities. Swing yer podner 'round and 'round . . . Until mercifully, the coroner bastes this formaldehyde turkey.

Strychnine is a colorless, crystalline powder and tastes bitter. It is best if your killer sprinkles it over the victim's food. The fruit, by the way, is quite attractive. A side note, if he is spending way too much time caressing the mandarin oranges and whispering, "Whazz your name?"—Get him to munch on a handful of blossoms or seeds which have a weak, curry powder



Tammy Lough

odor, and in 10 to 20 minutes, wallah, he will become living-challenged and in one to three minutes, wins the grand prize: A brand new toe tag!

I hope you feel more confident killing off a character in your book. Aim to please, unless you are talking about murder. Then, aim to kill. Why?

Because Writers Write!!!

— Tammy Lough

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