



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 29  
Number 11  
November 2021

Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

NOVEMBER SPEAKER

## Thaisa Frank

Jamal Khan



Thaisa Frank

### Finding your writer's voice

Your writing style should be as unique as a fingerprint. Deriving inspiration from the masterworks of the past is certainly helpful. However, it is only when you delve deeply into your intuitive mind that your own voice can emerge. Don't chase after fleeting trends. Stephen King has criticized "the deliberate turning toward some genre or type of fiction in order to make money." According to him, it simply won't work. "People who decide to make a fortune writing like John Grisham or Tom Clancy produce nothing but pale imitations, by and large, because vocabulary is not the same thing as feeling, and plot is light-years from the

truth, as it is understood by the mind and the heart." Ralph Waldo Emerson put it more bluntly: "Imitation is suicide." How can you ensure that your writing radiates authenticity? In our meeting on 08 November, Thaisa Frank will guide us through the process of finding your writer's voice. (Non-SBW members, please write PR@southbaywriters.com to request a Zoom invitation.)

*Continued on page 5*

Monday

08 November

7 PM!

OCTOBER SPEAKER RECAP

## Alejandro Adams

Bill Baldwin

The question we burn to have answered: How to break into Hollywood? Alejandro Adams, our October speaker, suggested some pointers for this Holy Grail-like quest. Indubitably, this modern-day enterprise can be compared to the medieval saga.

Indeed, Adams suggested that if you want to succeed in Hollywood you must prepare for adventure: an unexpected plot-twisted maze. Adams warned that his presentation was not for beginners. He went straight to an intermediate/advanced approach to screenwriting, not so much how to write for television as to how to pitch for it.

Cut to the chase. Regardless of how screenwriting may or may not have changed, the industry itself has changed over the last decade or two. It is now much more visual. Execs want information quickly, material quickly. They make decisions quickly. This affects how you make your pitch.

Avoiding the specialized "industry" terminology, it comes to this: present a short, direct, visual pitch. Keep the wording brief and to the point. A few direct sentences, with gripping images.

Don't get attached to your title or the details. Execs want flexibility, adaptability. If you are aiming for a six-episode series, say so right out,

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# Between the lines

Edie Matthews  
President, South Bay Writers



## Thanksgiving drama

Holiday aromas filled the house. After a week of planning, cleaning, and cooking that included an assembly line of baking pies, nearly everything was ready for our Thanksgiving festivities. Then calamity struck.

Potato peels clogged the kitchen drain. Oh no—I visual-

ized a mountain of dirty dishes, utensils, pots and pans piled on the counter. My husband brought out the trusty plunger and made a valiant effort to clear the drain. No luck.

Now what? I turned to the phone directory, crossed my fingers, and found a 24-hour emergency service. While dialing, I inspected the sparkling silver and shimmering goblets on the table, festooned with flowers and candles. Plates and napkins were arranged precisely one inch from the edge. Twenty-three chairs surrounded two adjoining tables, extending from dining to living room. In less than an hour, family and friends would arrive.

Finally, a harried dispatcher answered the phone. She quoted a reasonable holiday rate and said that a plumber was in the area and could be there shortly. I glanced at the wall clock. My guests were due in 45 minutes. There would be some overlap, but hopefully my sink would be functioning before we sat down to eat.

Martha Stewart instincts kicked in, and I started the gravy. No matter what, dinner would be ready.

Thirty minutes later, the phone rang. It was the dispatcher. The plumber had found our street but was having trouble locating the address. I described our house, white trimmed with blue, at the end of the block with the numbers above the mailbox and on the curb in reflective paint. I raced out, waving him down, carrying a white dishcloth like I was surrendering.

He lugged in a contraption, cordoned off the area like it was a crime scene and began feeding a flexible metal snake down the drain. Hunched over his task, he assured us that he'd have the pipes cleared shortly.

The doorbell rang. Family and friends began arriving. I served appetizers and jokingly explained away our little inconvenience. My brother brought along his camera and snapped my picture and the plumber's, who displayed plenty of plumber's cleavage.

Even though we stalled dinner nearly an hour, Dave, (we were on a first name basis now), cleared the drain.

Continued on page 6

California Writers Club  
South Bay Branch

www.southbaywriters.com

### SBW officers

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### SBW events

Open mic—Bill Baldwin  
WABaldwin@aol.com

### SBW mission

To educate writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work

### Join Us!

We have a membership category that fits you. Renewal dues are \$45 beginning June 2022. New member \$65, dual membership \$25, student membership \$20. Contact ingasbwmembership@gmail.com, sign up online at SouthBayWriters.com, or mail your check and application to CWC-South Bay Writers, PO Box 3254, Santa Clara CA 95055

## WritersTalk

The monthly newsletter of South Bay Writers, the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### Managing editor

Renée J Anderson

### Deputy editor

Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

### Contributing editors

Carolyn Donnell  
DeWayne Mason  
Ken Roberge  
Marty Sorensen

### Submissions

SBW encourages writers at all levels to submit their creative work, essays, and reportage for publication in *WritersTalk*. Send submissions and proposals to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Submissions and proposals must be either included in the body of the email or attached as a Word file. Please double-space. No paper submissions or scanned PDFs. Graphics should be high-quality JPGs or PNGs. Submissions will be copyedited, and may be sent back for revision. Managing editor reserves all rights to selection.

### Word limits

**Member announcements** (200 words, see below)  
**News/Essay/Reportage** (please submit proposal by 1st of month; draft due 15th of month)  
**Opinion/Letters** (300 words)  
**Fiction/Memoir** (1000 words)  
**Poetry** (200 words)

### Deadline

Submissions open year-round  
Issues close 15th of month prior to publication

### Member announcements

An announcement is of interest and value to writers, does not provide direct economic benefit to its originator, and is published free of charge

### Reprints

Authors retain all rights to their work. *WritersTalk* gratefully acknowledges authors' permission to publish their work here. Contact individual authors for permission to reprint

### Advertising

Announcements of workshops, conferences, and events from other branches of California Writers Club are welcome in *WritersTalk*. CWC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, and *WritersTalk* cannot accept advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. No political advertising

### Change of address

ingasbwmembership@gmail.com

### Circulation 109

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November 2021

# WritersTalk needs a new editor

Renée J Anderson, Managing Editor



I didn't want to be here already. I thought *WritersTalk* would be a significant part of my life for years to come. Unfortunately, I have been fighting neuro-myelitis optica spectrum disorder since April 2021, and I now need to step away to focus on well-being, my future, and time with my family.

This makes a grand opportunity for one or more of you out there to take over a damn fine little newsletter and make it your own. It can be as easy or as chal-

lenging as you want to make it.

**What's invoved?** Collect the monthly club business and columns: Member News, View from the Board, upcoming speaker, speaker recap, Presidential Message, contests. Collect submissions and publish them. More is up to you!

**What else is invoved?** Participate in monthly Board meetings. Work with contributing editors, who are here to help you succeed. Write a monthly column about writing, or any topic of interest to you, though this is not required.

**Do I have to use InDesign?** No. Use any platform you are comfortable with. Have a look at other branch newsletters and see what other editors are doing. If you are interested in InDesign, I can help get you started.

**What else do I get out of it?** So much. What better way to get to know the members of your club and put your creative spin on the news that goes out to them? It's more than just networking. It's creativity and conversation.

**Do I have to do this alone?** Definitely not. Many are here to help. There is no rule that says there must be only one managing editor.

**How much work is it?** As much as you want to put in. Some months I lavished 40 hours a week on *WritersTalk*, but in theory one can easily spend less, perhaps only 5-10 hours a month.

**How much creative license will I have?** Again, as much as you like. Perhaps you will want to play it safe and simply collect and print the monthly required pieces. Other authors send these to you; you arrange them in a nice PDF, then forward to PR and our printer for publication. I enjoyed thinking about theme issues, working closely with authors and editors, and writing the outgoing emails announcing new publication. So much is your call.

**How much training is involved?** I will be on hand to provide assistance in InDesign and answer questions. But you will be surprised how quickly you become comfortable and get acclimated. This is a fantastic opportunity to put some valuable editorial and managerial skills on your CV. Why wait? Your club *will* support you. Write Edie and get on board! [pres@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pres@southbaywriters.com).

WT



Holiday memories and impressions  
Due 15 November  
max 750 words

[newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)



# View from the Board

Marjorie Johnson



All the usual suspects met on Zoom for the October Board meeting. Our names and email addresses are listed in *WritersTalk* on page 2. Again, no motions made. Much discussion and heard of-icer and committee chair reports.

**Eddie Matthews** Led a discussion on where to meet in person. China Stix is again open to groups but closed on Mondays. Christmas party in person, possibly Eddie will host: TBA. We heard the sad news that Gisela Zebroski, who hosted many SBW Christmas parties, passed away suddenly from a stroke the week of 27 September.

**Jamal Khan**, Upcoming meetings  
**08 November** Thaisa Frank, "Finding Your Writer's Voice"  
**December** Holiday party, TBA

**Trenton Myers** Overall, we saw a 0.5% decrease in funds since August. Per Eddie's request, I looked at our average monthly costs year-to-date and landed on \$428/mo. When looking at the month-over-month standing costs, I captured averages, excluding one-off payments (e.g., contests, lit magazine) and our quarterly dues to the state treasury: newsletter \$200, speaker fees \$100, Constant Contact \$45 (we can discuss the proposed plan reduction), Meetup dues \$44, PO Box fee \$24, and InDesign \$20.

**Renée J Anderson— MRMS:** A couple of records have mysteriously vanished. We don't know why. Sandy Moffett doesn't know why. Everything is restored now. Marjorie checking that all our print subscribers are still current members. **WritersTalk**, proposed discussion items (none discussed due to time):

- Using the website for certain items instead of *WT*
- Whether to cut costs in general
- Whether to limit page count for *WT*
- Whether *WT* should go all-digital
- Whether to support of other CWC branch events
- Renée stepping down after December issue

Prices from printer (based on 90 copies; including postage, but not international): 16 pages: \$153.45; 20, \$169.65; 24, \$203.85; 28, \$220.05; 32, \$236.25.

**Bill Baldwin Open Mics** continue on first and third Fridays. Attend this popular venue by contacting Bill Baldwin at WABaldwin@aol.com.

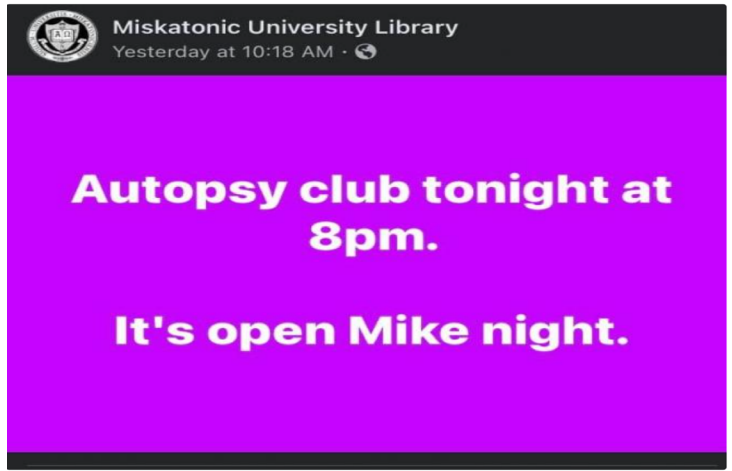
**Carolyn Donnell** Nothing new. Our website is still blocked by Facebook. Check us out on Facebook.

**Tatyana Grinenko— Website.** I've run into an error (says server is down) when uploading new *WritersTalk* images the last two times I tried. I've changed it to an SBW logo that we already have on the site for now and have the October issue linkable from the home page, but will need to upload an actual picture of *WT* to our other areas. I'll give it some time and retry; I've seen this happen before and it just takes some time. **You can get an SBW meeting invite by contacting Tatyana** (pr@southbaywriters.com), who will add your email to her publicity and Constant Contact lists.

**Inga Silva**, 101 members.

The SBW Board meets again **Wednesday, 03 Nov at 7 PM**. November regular meeting **Monday, 08 November**. Everyone is welcome at Board meetings. Contact Eddie at Pres@SouthBayWriters.com for a Zoom link. We need your ideas about where and when to meet when in-person meetings resume.

**Also, we need to hear from any members interested in taking the reins of WritersTalk. Should WT go digital? Your thoughts, please.** **WT**



Submitted by Marty Sorensen.

Khan, Continued from page 1

Thaisa's *Heidegger's Glasses: A Novel* (Counterpoint, 2010) takes place in the mythical haven of an underground mine during WWII, the safety of which is threatened forever. It was reissued in paperback in 2011 and sold to ten foreign countries. She is also the author of *Sleeping in Velvet* (Black Sparrow, 1997) and *A Brief History of Camouflage* (Black Sparrow, 1992), both on the bestseller list of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Thaisa has received two PEN America awards, and her stories have been widely anthologized. She has published critical essays on writing and art, and wrote the afterword to the most recent edition of Voltaire's *Candide, Zadig, and Selected Stories* (Penguin, 2009).

Thaisa has also co-authored *Finding Your Writer's Voice: A Guide to Creative Fiction* (with Dorothy Wall, St Martins, 1994), translated into Portuguese and Spanish and used in numerous writing programs. Thaisa has taught writing in the graduate departments of San Francisco State, the University of San Francisco, and the University of California as Visiting Associate Professor of Creative Writing.

## News you can use



**Biteable.com.** Make a video—It's free. Want to promote your new book, but don't have a fancy, crack advertising team? Biteable puts bite-size studio-quality video pieces at your fingertips, so you can make your own "book trailer" to upload to your website and help readers learn about your book. Anyone can do it. Give it a try! **biteable.com**



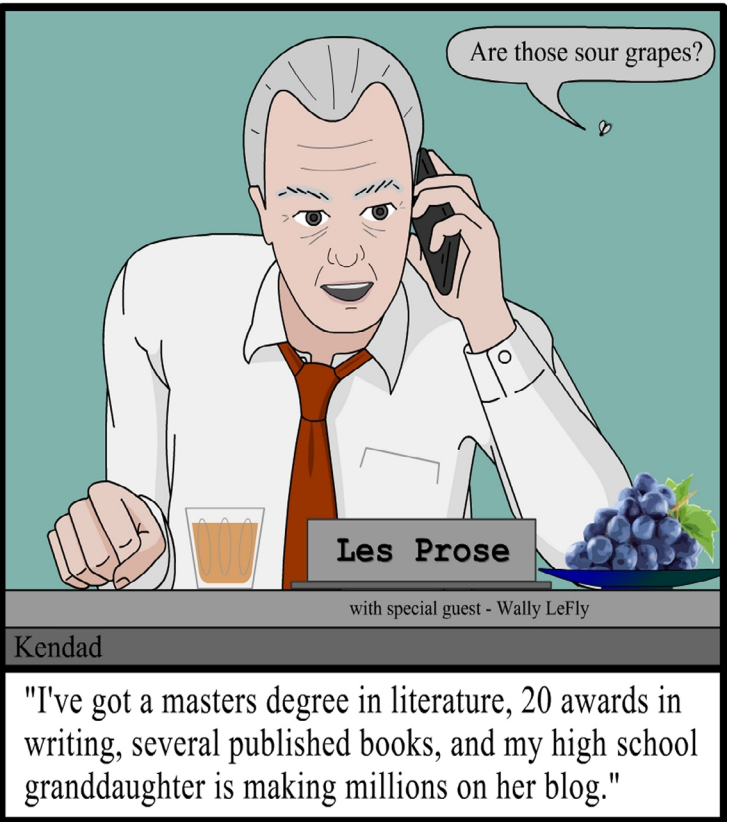
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**Podcast: Happier in Hollywood** Veteran TV writers Liz Craft and Sarah Fain demystify Hollywood by making career and personal struggles universal. Friends since high school and

## Les Prose Comics

Kendad



writing partners for seventeen years, Liz and Sarah have survived and thrived in Tinseltown's male-dominated entertainment industry, guided by blind optimism and a Midwestern work ethic. Along the way they've learned a lot about kicking @\$\$, kicking more @\$\$, and office yoga. **WT**



## Member News

Marjorie Johnson

**Penelope Cole** has pieces in three different CWC anthologies. She writes that her short story, “Night School Outing,” will appear in Napa Valley’s forthcoming anthology; her memoir “Grab the Cats and Run” in Redwood Writers’ new anthology, *Beyond Distance*; and her memoir “Turtle Liberation” may be in SF Peninsula’s *Fault Zone: Reverse* (cross your fingers).

**Marjorie Johnson:** I have many published articles on the Fibonacci and other recurring sequences. Every few days, the website Research Gate (researchgate.net) notifies me of citations of my work. In July 2021, “The first 330 terms of Sequence A013583” had reached fifty reads, a milestone. The sequence number refers to *The Online Encyclopedia of Integer Sequences*, and the article appeared in *The Fibonacci Quarterly*, February 2001. Mathematicians can’t resist an unsolved problem.

*The Fibonacci Quarterly* has published continuously since 1963. If you think they must be running out of ideas by now, look up the art of John Edmark with Google. Edmark is a math professor at Stanford, and he uses the Golden Section ratio, a kissing cousin of the Fibonacci sequence. For example, see “Creating the never-ending bloom” on YouTube.

**Evie Preston** writes, “Once I mastered the websites and links to this WOW! Women on Writing YA course, I entered a new world (for me) of fiction writing. Writers seem always up for a challenge, and I immediately learned that the YA novel I’ve been nurturing for many years is really a middle-grade story, and that it’s really easier to be a planner than a (seat-of-your) pants. This six-week online course offers webinars, a phone conversation, and excellent instruction taught by Margo Dill, a teacher, writer, editor, and publisher. You’re never too old to try something new, I keep telling myself. Thank you, Carolyn Donnell, for listing wow-womenonwriting.com with WT Contests & Markets.”

**Dave LaRoche** has a short story, “The Dried Rose,” published in the fall issue of *October Hill*: [drive.google.com/file/d/1NDgnVhPOMkEXLbwTpE6jXYGX4JESN9Sa/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NDgnVhPOMkEXLbwTpE6jXYGX4JESN9Sa/view)

Let’s hear from more of you. We live vicariously when we help you celebrate your writing accomplishments. Please send your writing news to [membernews@southbaywriters.com](mailto:membernews@southbaywriters.com). **WT**

**Matthews**, Continued from page 2

Several times, I invited him to take a break and join us, but he preferred to keep working, saying, “It will be cleared shortly.”

Four hours later, Dave was still under the sink. His snake had jammed and he couldn’t retrieve it. He called for backup.

Meanwhile, my adult son had invited several new friends from work to drop by. We answered every doorbell with “Are you the plumber?”

The third time, my son’s friend said, “No, but I noticed a plumbing truck driving up and down the street.”

Again, I rushed out waving the white dishcloth.

Plumber Number Two, a more loquacious fellow, proceeded to tell us how one time, instead of the snake going down the pipe, it traveled up the air vent onto the roof and took out the television cable.

“Excuse me,” I said, “our cable TV went out two hours ago.”

All of the men went out to investigate. Sure enough, the snake stretched across the roof, entangled in our cable wires.

After climbing on the roof, the plumbers finally got the snake freed, and rerouted it down, clearing the drain. My husband said not to worry about the cable, he’d reconnect it.

Again, I offered some of our Thanksgiving feast. Plumber Number Two readily accepted, and Dave acquiesced. I prepared plates heaped with turkey and all the trimmings, along with a generous slice of pumpkin pie topped with whipped cream. It occurred to me that at least the pilgrims didn’t have to worry about TV cables and clogged sinks.

Wishing everyone a Joyful Thanksgiving and **WT**

## Off the shelf

**Edie Matthews & Betty Auchard**

reprinted from *WritersTalk*, January 2013



**“I don’t care WHO you are!  
You need a library card!”**

## Submit to the 2022 CWC Literary Review

*Elisabeth Tuck, CWC State Secretary and Managing Editor, 2021 Literary Review*



*Elisabeth Tuck*

The submission window for is now open, t h r o u g h 15 January 2022, with the goal of the printed book being in hand in June. A schedule like this is what we had for years until Covid interrupted. We’re trying to get back to what seemed to work well. Submissions will be one per submitter. Categories are poetry, fiction, non-fiction, memoir, and humor. Humor doesn’t have to be a special category. You can write a humorous memoir, poem, fiction, or non-fiction.

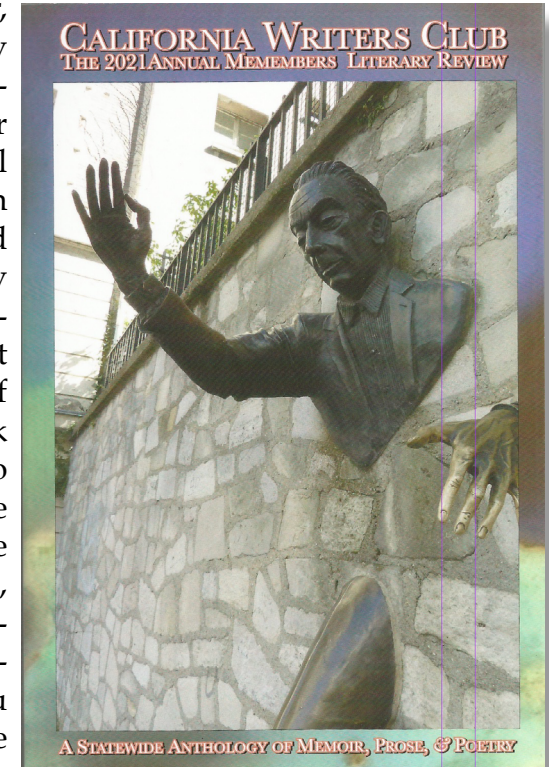
Again, as we did for 2021, we will have a team of experienced poets judging poetry. Anita Holmes, a talented poet, from the Southern California High Desert branch will manage poetry and I will manage prose. Anita will gather poets to judge poetry, and I welcome anyone interested to contact me about judging prose. We will have guidelines for judging. You may also submit if you judge since submissions aren’t judged in the branch they came from. Judges do not know the author or the branch. They’re just reading for the best of what we expect will be an excellent set of submissions this year. If you submit, you may choose to have or not have judges’ feedback sent to you when the contest is over.

The new state president, Roger Lubbeck, is from the Redwood branch. They produce a branch anthology annually, so he’s experienced in finding good submissions. My advice is, READ and FOLLOW the submission guidelines just

as you would for any outside contest or journal. The first CWC advice I ever heard was my first meeting, where Penny Warner advised just that: Read and follow instructions. At the time, people sent paper manuscripts. She warned against colored paper, fancy script, bribery presents in the envelope, &c. Just write your best piece. Some helpful hints are: Even though you have worked hard on a piece, put it away for a while before rereading. After a while, read it aloud so you can hear if there are problems. Ask another good writer to read your piece and give you feedback. If you are weak on punctuation, spelling, &c, take advantage of MS Word’s highlighting to warn you of problems. Do some research on punctuation you’re not sure of, or find an editor willing to help. Members of my critique group have agreed to review some submissions before they are sent in. I hope anyone in the branch who feels comfortable reading others’ work will raise their hands to help their fellow branch members. I will help anyone who feels they have polished to the best of their ability but still wants confirmation or comments—if I have time. The wise writer will plan ahead and not wait until the last minute.

We should begin to see the 2021 issue in mailboxes soon if not already.

PS: Yes I have been informed there is an error ON THE COVER of all places. Well. Volunteers are human.



*The 2021 CWC  
Literary Review.  
Arriving in mailboxes  
everywhere.*

**2022 submission  
portal opening soon!**



Tobias  
Inga Silva

The wind was strong. It stung his cheeks. It sneaked up his sleeves and chilled him to the bone. Tobias drew his black wool coat closer and walked swiftly up Clement. The Blue Danube Coffee House was open, and he could think alone there without Felecia. Felecia was like honey, sticky, sticky on him, on his life, on his dreams. He'd have to get rid of her soon, but how?

Tobias sat in the corner on a white mesh chair. He studied the art on the wall, unimpressed by all of it. None of it was as good as his work. None of it. Not the picture of the old Chinese man with the compelling stare. Not the picture of a happy crowd on New Year's Day. Not even the abstract paintings of various flowers. None of it. He was sure.

Felecia, that's why he came to think. Felecia, the woman he had to get rid of. He loved her in the beginning, her almost alabaster face, her enormous azure blue eyes, and her long, black, spiral-curled hair. It was the hair that led him to destruction. Yes, the hair and those eyes that made him feel like he was doomed to drown in the ocean like Icarus. She was beautiful but now she was driving him mad. Mad!

When he worked in his studio, she'd sit quietly at the window watching him, then she'd start humming, "Hush, little baby ..." or she'd wash the dishes, clattering the plates, humming the tune over and over. These were normal things for her. He was sick of her—sick of waking up next to her, sick of her plain healthy cooking that was "good for him," sick of her meticulous appearance. Her perfection was his destruction. Artists need the unpredictable to be good. All he could paint these

days were the drab streets with the drab people of San Francisco. Her presence destroyed his art.

"Felecia," he asked her without hesitation, "I need a break from you. I can't work. Couldn't you go home for a while? You know, go visit your parents in Sausalito or your uncle in Marin? I have no place else to go, you know that. We need distance, a break from each other."

"Tobias, how can you say that?" she said, smoothing out the wisps of his hair that had fallen across his forehead. "How can you say that when you know I love you." She kissed his cheek.

He sighed deeply and went back to his oils, but he couldn't paint. If he ran away, where would he go? No money. No family. No anybody. The studio was all he had. He had enough to live on until June. He'd kill her. That's what he would do, but how? Poison her—no, too traceable. Stab her—no, too gory. Shoot her—too noisy and he couldn't afford a gun. How? He couldn't run her over either because he'd given up his car when he moved to San Francisco. There had to be some way. Frighten her: that's it. He'd frighten her out of his life. Yes, that would be better. He took a long slug of his coffee, then walked over to the pay phone and dialed home.

"Hello."

It was Felecia, her sickly sweet voice. The voice that prickled his ears. He put the face cloth he used for a painting rag over the receiver and whispered in a dry, mean voice: "I'm going to kill you. I'm watching you." He breathed heavily.

"Who is this?" Felecia sounded scared.

Good! He hung up. In his mind's eye, he could see her long black tendrils, held back with combs, gently spread down her back over her shoulders as she sat on the stool near the phone. I hope she's scared!

When he arrived home, the door was locked with the chain too. It worked!

"Felecia, what's the matter? You seem upset."

Her blue eyes studied his face. Her eyes narrowed with tears, and she ran to his arms.

"A call . . . I had a terrible call and it frightened me."

He held her in his arms and comforted her. Later that night, she woke up screaming, "Go away! Go away!"

A week later, he called again. This time he said, "Felecia, watch out. I'm going to kill you soon." She slammed the phone.

He took the bus home and found Felecia, hovering behind the door when he entered the apartment.

"I had another one of those calls." She could barely talk between sobs and tears.

"Oh Felecia, maybe we should call the police. Get protection."

"I did. They said, 'change your phone number.' I think I'm going to get a gun."

"If someone wants to kill you, they might use it on you. You should go home. It's probably some crazy guy, who likes to scare people."

"I feel safer with you." She cringed in fear, squinting her eyes. Maybe now she would leave. Maybe now he would have his solitude.

On the day of his third call, he had decided he would stay out all night, like he did on occasion. Felecia never questioned him. But after the threat-

ening calls, she wouldn't like it. That would be good. He left her a note.

He began the day taking a bus to San Francisco Park. He'd brought his sketchpad and drew the Scented Garden, a pond, and children playing in the open area. Just the thought of her leaving was improving his art.

After he finished his day of drawing, he found a pay phone. He rasped his voice. "Felecia, I'm going to kill you tonight. . . . Tonight."

She slammed the phone down.

He spent the rest of the day bar hopping, almost until dawn. When he went home, he hoped his bed would be empty. He caught the early bus. He got off down the street, climbed the steep hill, then the stairs, and then attempted to unlock the door, but it was already unlocked. He checked the bedroom—no Felecia. He checked the bathroom—no Felecia. Finally, he walked to the back of the house into his studio, hoping she was gone.

The moment he found her, he knew she was dead. Her blue eyes were frozen open. Fear crept up his legs, his arms, his entire body. He felt numb dialing the police. He would be free, but this was not how he expected it to happen.

A week later, a knock on the front door awakened him.

"This is the police, open the door."

He was naked, now sleeping the way he liked to. He slipped on his jeans and a sweatshirt, then answered the door.

"You're under arrest."

"For what?"

"The murder of Felecia Judd."

"What? I didn't kill her."

The red-headed cop shifted his weight, smoothed his mustache with fingers, then read him his rights.

"But why?" He didn't have a good alibi. He'd spent most of the night hopping from bar to bar. He'd be easy to blame. He just wanted to be left alone.

\* \* \*

Years passed in jail. The public defender had failed to get him a "not guilty" conviction, and he received a long sentence. Today, they had moved him to a different jail. He was getting a new cellmate named Fenster—what a name. He hated the jail. But maybe the new cellmate might be better than the old guy who coughed all night at the other jail.

Fenster arrived. He was meticulously groomed except for his hair. His hair had long tendrils springing from an outgrown haircut. He smoothed the locks of disorderly hair back in place. Tobias watched him while pretending to be drawing, and that's when he noticed Fenster's eyes, the azure eyes that made Tobias feel like he was going to drown in the ocean.

No. He wouldn't let them bother him. It was just his imagination. Fenster smiled and smoothed his hair again, climbed up to the second bunk, and then began to hum, "Hush little baby . . ."

Then he noticed Fenster's eyes, the azure eyes that made Tobias feel like he was going to drown in the ocean.

No. He wouldn't let them bother him. It was just his imagination. Fenster smiled and smoothed his hair again, climbed up to the second bunk, and then began to hum, "Hush little baby. . . ."

**WT**

19:34



GO INTO THE STORY

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Scott Myers

@GoIntoTheStory

Screenwriter (K-9); DePaul professor; Black List screenwriting blog; Writers Digest "Best of the Best" Scriptwriting Website; author "The Protagonist's Journey"

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More than EVER, we need good storytellers. Put a human face on The Other. Shed light on a Deeper Truth. Engender Empathy. Fan the flames of Hope. Motivate people to Act. Make us Laugh. Make us Cry. Make us Thrilled. Make us Think. But mostly, make us feel our Shared Humanity.

109 1,190 3,548



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Writing a Logline for a Character Driven Drama: What's your Protagonist? What is the distinctive issue they're confronting, the source of their conflict? What is at the emotional core of your story?

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Writing a Logline for a Character Driven Drama

1 8



Scott Myers

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One way to test a story concept, ask: Is it big enough to be a movie? Can I "see" the trailer? Will people pay twenty bucks for this movie?

[#screenwriting](#)

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WRITERSTALK

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WRITERSTALK

November 2021



## The road to inspiration

Mike Shipp

An aspiring writer must first travel the Road to Inspiration. Samuel Clemens knew it. Jack Kerouac dug it. And Steinbeck did it when he ran out of things to say. As part of my apprenticeship I was going to hitch across the country collecting colorful stories like a kid on an Easter egg hunt.

People warned me about the dangers of hitchhiking. My mom was worried sick. My dad thought I was an idiot. A friend said I was going to get my ass kicked for having long hair. But I was having none of it.

In hitching, as in any art form, one develops a personal style. No negative thoughts. No bad vibes. I believed in good karma and wearing a clean white t-shirt. I believed in smiling and only putting my thumb out for select cars. You had to be *worthy* of my company. It was my philosophy of the on-ramp.

I only met nice, good-hearted people on the road—until two guys gave me a lift then robbed me at gunpoint for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

I was somewhere on I-80 in northern California, headed east, standing in the shade of the only tree for miles. The last guy to drop me off was some kind of farmer. Looking back, I was too eager to get moving again.

The two guys picked me up in an old Chevy Impala. I got in the back seat with my backpack. The driver had a crew cut, and the guy riding shotgun had a butch. Both their necks were sunburned

deep red. The driver said he was going to Auburn. I said thanks. Everything helped with the Flow.

"Where you headed?" he asked.

"Nebraska."

"What the hell's in Nebraska?"

"Gonna go help my gramps on the farm."

"What's he grow?"

"Alfalfa and corn."

"You ever been to Nebraska, Eddie?" Butchie Boy asked.

"Only once, and that was enough. All the women are built like linebackers."

They laughed like it was the funniest thing in the world. I kept my mouth shut.

It was hot, and the windows were cracked open. After a while, Eddie asked me if I had any grass. I said I did, and got ready to roll one. I got a paper lunch sack out of the backpack, took out my two-finger bag, and lay the sack on my lap to use as a rolling tray, then broke apart a nice bud and rolled a big fat joint.

I passed the joint up to Butchie Boy to light. He rolled down his window, and took three or four deep hits before passing it to Eddie. I slipped the bag into my sock.

It's a good thing to trust your fellow man, but being stupid isn't too smart.

We passed the joint around until it was a roach Eddie threw out his window.

"That's some stoney \$#!t!" he said.

"No \$#!t," said Butchie Boy. "I got cotton mouth real bad. Wish I

**It's a good thing  
to trust your fellow man,  
but being stupid  
isn't too smart.**

had a cold beer. You got any beer in your pack, kid?"

"No, I wish," I said.

We all laughed like we were best friends. We were in the foothills now, and radio reception was spotty. Eddie and Shotgun started giving each other quick looks. I got a funny feeling and it wasn't just paranoia. In a bend in the road, the car pulled onto the shoulder, and Butchie Boy turned around and pointed a handgun at me.

"Gimme the sack," he demanded. I froze.

"You heard me hippy. I want the grass."

I pulled the lunch sack from the pack and it slipped from my fingers to the floorboards.

"Leave it!" he ordered. "Get the f%ck out!"

I got out, the car raced away, and as soon as it disappeared around the bend, I sprinted across the highway to the other side and up into the trees to hide. I knew they would be pissed and come back and it didn't take long.

The car roared back, threw a rooster tail of dust as it U-turned across the dirt divider and skidded to a stop where they had dumped me.

The driver got out and shouted. "We're gonna kill you motherf%cker!"

The other guy ran gun-in-hand into the trees. Two shots rang out then he returned to the car. They couldn't see me, but I could see them. They cussed me out up one side and down the other. They weren't quoting Shakespeare.

They left, looking frustrated. I stayed put, afraid they'd come back for a sneak attack. I lay in a patch of nettles, considering hitching home, not wanting to cross paths with those two red-neck goons again—but I had already promised Gramps.

Finally, I grew a pair, and ran across the highway to the east-bound side.

I did not wave my arms around trying to catch a ride because I didn't want to look desperate. Desperation is the kiss of death in hitching. Nobody in their right mind is going to pick up a crazy person on the side of the road. I walked facing away from traffic with my left thumb out. A car honked, passed by slow, and pulled over. Red Mustang.

I didn't even check out the driver before climbing in.

He was a young guy with curly brown hair touching his shoulders. He didn't ask me where I was headed, and I didn't ask him where he was going.

I promised myself to never get in a car with two guys with short hair ever again.

"Thanks for stopping, Brother," I said.

He pulled out a doobie tucked behind his ear.

"Want to burn one, man?"

"No thanks," I said. "I'm good."

WT

## ESSAY

### Metaphysical (In response to Chris Weilert)

Marty Sorensen

In October's *WritersTalk*, fellow South Bay Writer Chris Weilert wrote, "Metaphysical really means: I don't know the answer." That sent me to DuckDuckGo.com for a search of "metaphysical," which I don't remember since reading Aristotle's book, and in there it just meant the next part—the one after "Physics." The results of my internet search are interesting: "ultimate cause" and "the supernatural" show up, along with "existence" and "Nature," but there's another result I wasn't expecting.

In his book *Hitchcock*, Francois Truffaut (director of *Breathless* and *The 400 Blows*, star in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*) wrote, "It might be said that the texture of your films is made up of three elements: fear, sex, and death. These are not daytime preoccupations, like in films that deal with unemployment, racism, poverty, or in the many pictures on everyday love conflicts between men and women. These are nighttime anxieties, therefore, metaphysical anxieties." Hitchcock is the ultimate metaphysical filmmaker. Hitchcock's fundamental subjects are the distressing feelings that human beings cannot escape in their sleep, no matter how successfully they repress them when awake. Not just anxieties. That is why, one hundred years after he began and forty years after he died, Alfred Hitchcock's films remain, in their way, inescapable.

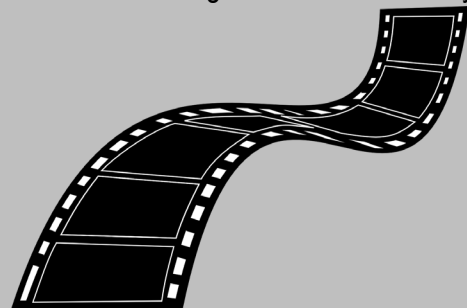
James Gray (director of *The Yards*, *The Immigrant*, *Two Lovers*, *We Own the Night*), in a documentary about the filmed conversation between Truffaut and Hitchcock, speaks about *Vertigo*, with Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak: "I think Kim Novak coming out of the bathroom is the single greatest moment in the history of movies. Everything that cinema is about comes together in the most beautiful way, which is, yes it's a fantasy, but the fantasy is real to *him*."

When your fantasy is real to *you*, it's metaphysical.

An interesting aside: Hitchcock shot *Psycho* in black and white because he didn't want to splatter Janet Leigh in bright-red blood. It would have been too much for the audiences back then.

The documentary *Hitchcock/Truffaut* features several directors, including Martin Scorsese, talking about Hitchcock's work. You can find it on [kanopy.com](http://kanopy.com), a movie streaming service for older films available on TV apps, or online with your Santa Clara County Library card. Unfortunately, it's not available through the San José library.

WT





New Azuredonia – Excerpt  
Meghan Farley

Originally submitted to *Grist* – Imagine 2200: Climate fiction for future ancestors

Tita awoke just as the sun was beginning to lighten the sky. It was the fleeting moments of pre-dawn when the sun was just below the horizon and would be rising soon, a transcendent time that she loved and tried never to miss. The living walls of her cozy mycelial home grew translucent around her to let in the growing light and the ceiling above her bed began to blossom and bloom, opening like a flower to reveal the pinks and blues of the early morning sky. A current of fresh morning air filled the room.

It was Tita’s birthday, October 20, of the 200th year of the 3rd millennium, and she was turning 80. Reaching the age of 80 was both strange and wonderful. At times she still felt like a child inside, though her hair was gray and the lines around her eyes were deep: she felt alive with purpose and vigor, and her body still did its job satisfactorily – most of the time.

Placing her feet on the floor beneath her knees, she waited for her smart slippers. They did possess a type of intelligence all their own, they knew their job and performed it without being asked. She never did understand how they worked, knowing only that they were bioengineered to seek out their owners, mold perfectly to feet, and regenerate for cleanliness and daily wear and tear. As she felt their gentle nudge, she raised her feet one at a time and they slipped into place.

The morning sky was mostly clear with only faint wisps of clouds, but she knew, there would certainly be light showers later in the day. For it always rained, at least a little, on her birthday. She selected her midweight dress with the long sleeves, letting the sensual drape settle on her body. The fabric was a linen blend imbued with biointelligence that interacted with her body temperature and the air to keep her comfortable and dry no matter what the weather might do. The dress also shifted colors and patterns to match her mood, and this morning it turned a lovely shade of mauve shot through with threads of indigo. It was going to be a good day.

She examined herself in the mirror. Her silver-grey curls fanned out in all directions, like a halo,

and her well-earned laugh lines served to accentuate her deep golden-brown eyes. She had the upright posture of a dancer and a mischievous twinkle in her eye. She smiled at herself.

A soft, familiar rap at her front door: Henri, her beau who came to visit every day. He was eleven years her junior, which their friends loved to tease them about but made no difference to them. To Tita and Henri, they were the same soul in two bodies.

Tita was a storyteller and historian by trade, meaning she did it out of passion and in service to others, not for money – as money was a thing from times past, now seen only in museums and referenced in old stories. Henri was a gardener who specialized in cultivation and propagation of new fruit, which were discovered regularly in the lush and verdant world that they now called New Azuredonia.

Henri carried flowers and a basket of cooked grains, greens, and an aromatic fresh fruit Tita had never seen before. Henri lay everything out on the table, and they kissed their hellos and shared a long embrace before sitting down to tea and breakfast. The new fruit had a bright green skin and a spicy scent, reminiscent of nutmeg. The flavor started mouth-wateringly sour then turned sweet. The flesh was two shades lighter than the skin, which was thin and edible. Its juice dripped from their fingers.

Tradition for birthdays in New Azuredonia was to give thanks to your parents – or the parental figures in your life – for without them you would not have a birthday to celebrate. Tita’s parents were both deceased, so her tradition was to go to the cemetery. It may seem morbid to some to start one’s birthday in a cemetery, but New Azuredonians did not see it that way. Life and death were all part of a great dance they felt lucky enough to be a part of, each phase of the journey as beautiful as the last, including death. The cemetery was on a hill overlooking the city, with a view clear to the sparkling sea.

While there had been many technological advancements in transportation (teleportation was now the exclusive mode of long-distance travel), for getting about locally, walking and bicycling were simplest. There was also a local magnet-propelled

aerial tram for traversing the city, or just to take in the view. In addition to daily exercise, this slower pace of travel offered opportunity for social interaction, a vital part of daily life for New Azuredonians.

Henry and Tita walked leisurely uphill, Henri carrying some flowers Tita had picked. Their path led them through the city streets, and they took their time greeting friends and neighbors. Everyone had a birthday wish for Tita, who was well loved.

Eventually they entered a segment of the food forest, the giant green ring around the city. A crafted path wound through it, made of materials from the recycling and repurposing projects of the 2070s and ‘80s. They mused about the artifacts at their feet.

A smaller path branched off, jutting steeply uphill, away from the food forest and depositing them in a grassy meadow alive with the hum of insects. The cemetery lay within the meadow. The people had learned nearly five generations ago the poetry and importance of recycling the human body. Only the bones that remained were laid to rest here. Everything was done to keep the meadow natural and undisturbed. Burial plots were small, no bigger than a breadbox; markers were modest.

Tita’s parents, grandparents, and great-grandmother Rosa were all buried at this cemetery, and she and Henri visited each of them, offering thanks. All her other great-grandparents had died too young, before this custom and type of burial had been established, so they did not have places here, but Tita remembered them just the same.

The ritual complete, Tita looked at Henri and smiled. “You know what comes next, right?” The joy was audible in her melodic voice.

Every year on Tita’s birthday, children from the city would gather at the southern pavilion in the food forest to hear Tita tell the story of New Azuredonia and how it came to be. Tita loved watching the children’s faces as they listened to her tell it.

Henri extended his elbow to her. “Shall we head there now? It must be about time.” Tita smiled, her heart full of joy. They stole one last look at the sea, sparkling in the sunlight.

When they reached the southern pavilion, more than a hundred people had gathered. The crowd was mostly parents with young children, but there were a few groups of teenagers and a handful of young adults who were still learning their trades and looking for inspiration from their elders. Tita’s neighbors and a couple of Tita’s very oldest friends were there, spread out on benches and blankets.

Tita let Henri escort her to the steps of the pavilion and kiss her, then climbed the three low steps to the stage. The pavilion had been constructed by artists using materials from another age, no longer needed but nonrecyclable. It had the look of an old ship at sea. Tita looked like the ship’s figurehead, heading out on a voyage to unknown lands.

Tita greeted those who had gathered, then began the story of New Azuredonia.

“180 years ago this planet that you and I and all of humankind live on was not called New Azuredonia. It was called the Earth.”

❧❧❧

Tita looked up and through the trees’ canopy saw the rain clouds she had been expecting. It would not be long before their food forest was in for a deep nourishing drink, and it was time to wrap up her story before her audience got caught in the shower.

“When I was five years old, in the year 2125, the use of any kind of money was abolished. Going forwards goods and services could only be given away or traded for other goods or services. Basic needs such as housing, food, water, and medicine were already established as basic services and public goods, so money was not a daily necessity anyway.

“It was my parents’ generation who founded the Institute for Trade Development. This is where all of you young ones will go to learn your skills, crafts, and trades. That is your way to give back and engage with your community and the world. Each of you have a very important role, and New Azuredonia is counting on you. I trust you will each find something that speaks to your heart, and that you will do it with love.”

A breeze kicked up, rustling the leaves in the canopy above, telling of the shower’s imminent arrival.

“Now then, I do believe we are about to get some rain. Let us all go home before we get soaked. Thank you for being here with me on my birthday and listening to the story of New Azuredonia.”

Tita descended the short flight of stairs to a group of friends who wanted to give her hugs and special birthday wishes. They said their goodbyes just as the first few fat drops began to fall. Once the last few had left, Henri scooped Tita up in his arms and planted a big wet kiss on her mouth. They walked back to Tita’s house arm in arm, as rain puddles formed a drop at a time on the dark, humus-rich soil of New Azuredonia.



## Making sense of life and death—Or die trying anyway!

Reena Kapoor

We think of death as merely the opposite of life, and in a fundamental and temporal sense it is. But mortality is one of life's key features—it defines it and gives it value. To exist as a living creature is to know—or at least sense—that life's dark twin awaits.

For humans, without the awareness of our tenuous existence there would be no meaning. We want to live in ways that refuse acknowledgement of our mortality. Yet when left unaddressed, such conditions can lead to bigger afflictions such as midlife crises, indulgence in too much plastic surgery, and purchasing ridiculous cars.

The wiser among us ([dailystoic.com/stoic-response-grief/](https://dailystoic.com/stoic-response-grief/)) learn to live with the knowledge of mortality while not being consumed by it. The rest of us, if lucky, find such equanimity mostly when we are “over the hill” (the decade that comes after whichever one I find myself in). I've often thought wisdom is the ability to hold two or more seemingly contradictory ideas in our heads at the same time, while perpetually working toward a balance depending on context. A proper acknowledgement of mortality can help us reclaim our time, our life, and our relationships ([inc.com/melanie-curtin/want-a-life-of-fulfillment-a-75-year-harvard-study-says-to-prioritize-this-one-t.html](https://inc.com/melanie-curtin/want-a-life-of-fulfillment-a-75-year-harvard-study-says-to-prioritize-this-one-t.html)), so we can focus on what gives us meaning. Maybe plastic surgery and fast cars can do that too!

It is precisely the awareness of death that enables meaning in our lives. A life without end would be bereft of value, pointless, unbearable. Without death, time would have no meaning and procrastination no value connotation. Life would just be an interminable, incessant drum beat of repetition without respite. It is the fact of mortality that assigns a finite sentence and consequently a sweet centering on our pursuits, our love, our ambition, and our experience of joy. That brings with it some sadness—not to be confused with depression—and a sense of focus.

It is also our inability to properly deal with our ultimate biological nature that makes us demand that ends—to stories, relationships, and of course to people's lives—

be unequivocally happy. No unhappy endings, no loose ends please, we insist. A happy end is an understandable demand, but what about a life's meaning? When Robin Williams, Anthony Bourdain, and Kate Spade took their own lives, it was sad and shocking. That's because we can reasonably surmise they had to have been in deep despair. How devastating for those who loved them and wished they could have helped. Grieving and mourning are not only legitimate but essential parts of healing.

Yet even in that grief, we could remind ourselves that their deaths did not define these people. Nor should their deaths take away from their lives, which were full, productive, defined by talent and ambition, and meaningful. With their creations, each of them enhanced many lives. They created something that did not exist before them. They loved many, had deep friendships, and lived doing what they loved. A more befitting remembrance would be a celebration of their lives instead of an obsession over the nature of their deaths.

Our twin obsession/avoidance of mortality leads to other miseries. We seek closure where none is possible. We make departure for those who want to leave with dignity nearly impossible (especially in cases of painfully afflicted people who want to be relieved of misery) and a life sentence for those who love them.

Ironically, it is when we are over-the-hill-is that we tend to be happier, more liberated, and more in touch with our true natures ([businessinsider.com/what-age-are-people-happiest-2017-12](https://businessinsider.com/what-age-are-people-happiest-2017-12)). This is not a given, of course, but if we mostly remain aligned with reality and maintain some semblance of self-awareness, then freedom from distraction and minutiae can be our reward. Yet this is also the period when encounters with losses and deaths become more common. Even the body delivers unwelcome signals almost daily. These unpleasant reminders heighten our awareness of the shortness of time.

The best we can do is let our awareness of mortality sweeten our *here and now*. Dogs do this without contem-

plation (we believe) of their mortality, but we humans have some conquering to do. Many find solace in religion, and that is fine too. And this is how and why *hope* becomes our instrument for traversing this doomed existence.

I write this meditation for and in September, for this is the month of my father's birthday. This will be the first time we celebrate after his passing ([arrivalsanddepartures.substack.com/p/grief-exacting](https://arrivalsanddepartures.substack.com/p/grief-exacting)). Not a day goes by that I don't think of him ([arrivalsanddepartures.substack.com/p/the-dhobi](https://arrivalsanddepartures.substack.com/p/the-dhobi)). His photo rests by my desk, where his memory reminds me of his huge heart and blessings. His passing has also made me oddly more, and simultaneously less, demanding of life, of time, and of relationships—all of it in ways that I needed to be. His passing left me grieving, but every day the memory of good times with him gets bigger than the grief. That's how he would have liked it.

I am still perfecting the art of slowing down yet wasting no time, reducing my focus to fewer people and projects, yet having infinite time for love and for learning. I am also reminded of this quote by Gandhi:

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” In this spirit of honoring life without denying our mortality, I present this ode to life, love, and hope in this too-short existence. It is for my father. **WT**



New SBW member Reena Kapoor.  
Blog: [tinyurl.com/5ya6rttb](https://tinyurl.com/5ya6rttb)  
Author: [tinyurl.com/km4skbf4](https://tinyurl.com/km4skbf4)  
Plays: [enacte.org/wow-we](https://enacte.org/wow-we)  
Instagram: [@1stardusty](https://www.instagram.com/1stardusty)  
LinkedIn: [tinyurl.com/4ubmkpas](https://tinyurl.com/4ubmkpas)

### immortals

Reena Kapoor

never asked any god to measure the darkness  
no maps nor trails to count these paths  
and when I make that final leap  
it will be whence I came, just ashes and rocks

shaky impermanence one day will vanish  
a temporary memory for those who follow  
so will you and each who's here today  
even myths we embrace, all baubles hollow

behold skies, brooks, and beauty profound  
tall pines, warm beaches, or nodding flowers  
trees that lean out, embrace the sun  
maddening beauty journeys on forever

few were promised gods and avatars  
or only one who would be the end all  
and they asked for allegiance and all your  
faith  
for an outcome of peace before the final fall

yes, I will be gone, and so what?  
the answers unshaken, always been the same  
perhaps my echoes, my thoughts live on  
just a fading memory or not even a name

but I gave my love when I lived as one  
grew a garden, tended life, and shed a tear  
lived with dignity, found in gratitude  
every moment's essence I held dear

if I made one life happy, one flower bloom  
if I held a hand that felt safe in mine  
if I soothed a soul filled with darkness,  
despair  
such small victories made my journey divine

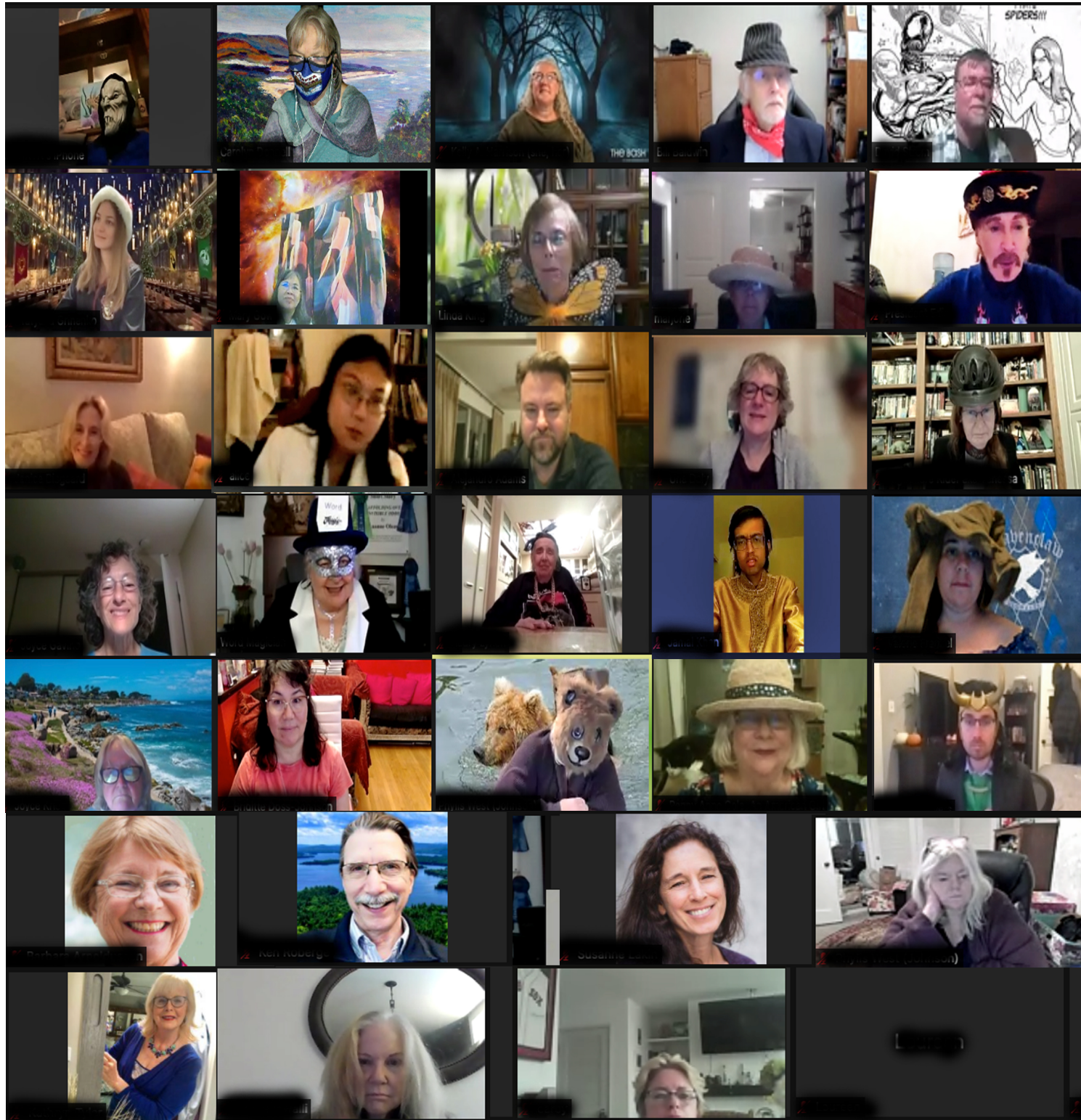
for I found the only god that I know  
the best of our trials and travails of our days  
the longest journeys, the harshest climbs  
such unlikely heroes, for demons we slayed

it's alone a wonder this time, this life  
my consciousness alive to a deep awe  
for all that's in an accidental universe  
that we came to be here and just now!

and the end will come and render life precious  
immortality would abandon it without price  
a life of hope, fire, learned grace  
it's yours! in you! here, now! in this life!



# October meeting with Alejandro Adams



**Baldwin**, Continued from page 1

and include a brief description of the series overall and each individual episode. Quickly!

Cops & crime? What does it feel like? Elmore Leonard? *Catch Me If You Can* (Amblin, Dreamworks, 2002)? Both at the same time, somehow? (The famous template: "Elmore Leonard meets *Catch Me If You Can*.")

Toss this quickly to the exec and see if he or she is "in." If so, illustrate all the ways the story appeals—"Based on a true story!" Use graphics and quick sentences to convey the tone and richness of your tale. ("The sniper is faking it." "He was searching for something: his mother, legitimacy, a legacy.") Call forth a quick volcano of material. Convey what this story feels like. Pitch it, then ask: What actors could pull this off? Suggest someone, and demonstrate how they would be suitable. (Jeffrey Donovan, a charming, colorful character? Mention some of his roles.)

Quickly summarize the specific episodes you have in mind, including their themes—childhood, marriage, scheming, &c.

Think minimal: poetry rather than prose. Strip away the unnecessary. Suggest where this series might live. FX? HBO?

Demonstrate that you understand the current marketplace. Demonstrate that your series isn't dated. Demonstrate that your concept is flexible. Avoid any verbiage that kills your momentum. Be lean, be mean. Leave the audience with a sense of wonder, a sense of "where is this going from here?"

But—how do you even get to this



point? How do you end up sitting with a Hollywood executive to begin with?

Forget the agents and managers. Go straight to the Deciders.

But how? Why should they talk to you?

Network. Meet people. ("People who know people!") An old business strategy. Don't bother with a lengthy proposal that gets thrown on a pile of five hundred others and tossed eleven months later. Get to know the people who know the people who know the Deciders! Much faster to get to them this way.

Have your ideas reviewed online first. Find sites that will evaluate your pitches and score them (for a reasonable fee).

In any case, think sparse, immediate gut appeal. Conjure an immediate image of your series—one that appeals to current audiences. Know that audience. And by the way, cop shows, violence, the sordid and ugly do not appeal right now. Offer aspiration and hope.

Take a breath. Determine how to present your proposal directly, quickly—on the back of a napkin.

And go for it: Make that pitch. Hollywood is waiting.

**WT**

2021 COSTUME  
CONTEST  
WINNERS

Prettiest  
**Linda King**

Funniest  
**Audry Lynch**

Most original  
**Luanne Oleas**

Literary  
**Edie Matthews**

Scariest  
**Kathryn**  
(non-SBW)

WINNERS RECEIVED  
BARNES & NOBLE  
GIFT CERTIFICATES.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Screen captures thanks to Carolyn Donnell



Contests & local markets

Carolyn Donnell



+NB: NO VETTING has been done by South Bay Writers Club. Listings are for information only. Some contests have been around for a long time and the reputation is known, but some are newer. Please read all guidelines carefully before submitting. And please share your experiences, good or bad.

Let us know if you have any success with any of the contests listed in *WritersTalk*. (Or any other contest for that matter.) Send your writing victories to membernews@southbaywriters.com and any new stories, poems, and articles to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Check out other CWC branches for their current contests, calls for submission, anthologies, &c. See a list of other CWC branches at calwriters.org/cwcbranches/

Members of our Facebook group—South Bay Writers Club—see contest postings and other notifications on the Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/5486894361).

CONTESTS

**Final Draft Big Break Screenwriting Contest.** Grand prize winners receive \$10,000 in cash, an iPad, career coaching, meetings with renowned Hollywood screenwriters and literary managers, and more. **Deadline: 09 Nov (fees apply).** finaldraft.com/big-break-screenwriting-contest/

Writer’s Digest

- **Short Short Story contest.** 1st place \$3000 and paid trip to the *Writer’s Digest* Annual Conference, including a coveted Pitch Slam slot. 2nd \$1500, 3rd \$500, 4th–10th \$100 and all will be published in *Writer’s Digest’s* Sept/Oct 2022 issue, 11th–25th \$50 gift certificate for *Writer’s Digest* gift shop. **Early-bird deadline 15 Nov; regular 15 Dec.**

**Winning Writers, Tom Howard/John H Reid Poetry Contest.** All styles and themes, fiction and nonfiction. Total prizes \$8000. **Deadline 30 Apr 2022.** winningwriters.com/our-contests.

The Missouri Review

- **Miller Audio Prize.** Genres: audio recordings of prose, poetry, documentary, and humor. One \$1000 prize for the winner in each category. **Open for entries year-round.** missourireview.com/contests/audio-contest/.

CONTESTS, CONTINUED

**WOW! Women on Writing, Quarterly Flash Fiction Contest.** 250–750 words. Entry fee \$10, **deadline 30 Nov.** wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php#FlashFictionContest

**16th Annual Black Orchid Novella Award.** 15,000–20,000 words, unpublished only. Entries must be postmarked by **31 May 2022.** Rules and submission guidelines at nero-wolfe.org; write to Jane Cleland with questions: jane@janecleland.com.

LOCAL & CWC

**Also Reprints.** Once a year, *Sequestrum* features the best creative writing of yesterday. In the past, they’ve reprinted work from internationally acclaimed publications alongside journals long defunct or upstart gems on the rise. **Deadline 15 Dec.** sequestrum.org/theme-reprints

**Catamaran Literary Reader.** Santa Cruz print quarterly. “West Coast themes. Writers and artists from everywhere.” Fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, fine art. Submissions year-round with quarterly production cycle. catamaranliteraryreader.com

**CWC–Fremont Area Writers.** Lists many resources on their page, such as contest announcements, publications seeking submissions, freelance jobs, resources for screenwriters, genre organizations, and more. cwc-fremontareawriters.org/resources-writers

**CWC – North State Writers** is planning a fourth anthology. The last one accepted all CWC members. Keep an eye on the status: northstatewriters.com/nsw-anthologies.html

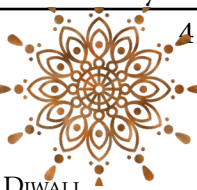


**MWA NorCal Chapter.** Mystery Writers of America, the country’s oldest organization of professional mystery writers. Events, podcasts, blog. mwanorcal.org

**October Hill.** Winter issue 2021. Accepting short stories, poetry and visuals. South Bay member has been published here. **Deadline 15 Dec.** octoberhillmagazine.com/

**Tillism** طلسم: *Magical Words from Around the World.* Seeking submissions of personal posts for this blog. Posts should be inspired by literature, connected to a personal memory, and contain at least one word from a language other than English. tillism.com/submissions/

**Women’s Natl Book Assn–San Francisco.** Events, lecture series, Pitch-o-Rama, Effie Lee Morris writing contest & more. wnba-sfchapter.org

WT

NOVEMBER 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1 VALLEY WRITERS NaNoWriMo BEGINS	2	3 SBW BOARD MTG 7 PM	4  DIWALI	5 OPENMIC	6 NORCAL MEETING
7  DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS AT 2 AM	8 VALLEY WRITERS SBW MTG 7 PM	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 VALLEY WRITERS WRITERS TALK ISSUE CLOSES	16	17	18	19 OPENMIC LUNAR ECLIPSE MOURNING MOON	20
21	22 VALLEY WRITERS	23	 THANKSGIVING DAY		26 BLACK FRIDAY	27
28 HANUKKAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN	29 VALLEY WRITERS	30	1	2	3	4

**NorCal**  
**Central Coast:** 3rd Tuesdays, 6 PM, Juice n’ Java, 599 Lighthouse Ave, Pacific Grove. centralcoastwriters.org

**Fremont:** 4th Saturdays, 2 PM, Zoom. cwc-fremontareawriters.org

**Marin:** 3rd Wednesdays, 6 PM, Zoom. cwc-marin.com

**Mendocino:** 3rd Sundays, 3 PM, Zoom. writersmendocinocoast.org

**Mt Diablo:** 2nd Saturdays (except July & August), 8:30 AM, Zoom + in-person, Zio Fraedo’s Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. cwcmtdiablo.org

**Napa:** 2nd Wednesdays, 7 PM, Zoom. napa-valleywriters.online

**North State:** 3rd Mondays, 6 PM, Veterans Hall, 554 Rio Lindo Ave, Chico. northstate-writers.com

**Peninsula:** 3rd Saturdays, 10 AM, Zoom. cwc-peninsula.org

**Redwood:** 3rd Saturdays, 1 PM, Finley Center, 2060 W. College Ave, Santa Rosa. redwoodwriters.org

**Sacramento:** 3rd Saturdays (except July, August, & December), 1 PM, Zoom. cwcsacramentowriters.org

**San Joaquin:** 2nd Saturdays, 12 PM, Zoom. sjvalleywriters.org

**Tri-Valley:** 3rd Saturdays (except July & August), 2 PM, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard Rd, Pleasanton. trivalleywriters.org

**CWC–South**  
**Coastal Dunes:** 1st Saturdays, 10:15 AM, Community Room, Nipomo Library, 918 West Tefft Street, Nipomo. coastaldunescwc.com

**High Desert:** 2nd Saturdays, 10 AM, Community Church at Jess Ranch, 11537 Apple Valley Rd, Apple Valley. hdcwc.com

**Inland Empire:** 4th Saturdays, except December, 10:30 AM, Zoom and in-person, Ovitt Family Community Library, 215 E. C Street, Ontario. iecwc.com

**Long Beach:** 2nd Saturdays, 3 PM, Zoom. calwriterslongbeach.org

**Orange County:** 1st Saturdays, 10:45

AM, Zoom. calwritersorangecounty.org

**Ridge Writers:** 1st Thursdays, 6:30 PM, Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church, 633 W Las Flores Ave, Ridgecrest

**San Fernando Valley:** 1st Saturdays, 1 PM, Zoom. cwc-sfv.org

**Writers of Kern:** 3rd Saturdays, 9:15 AM, Hodel’s Country Dining, 5917 Knudsen Drive, Bakersfield. writersofkern.com

**CWC–South Bay Writers**  
**SBW regular meetings:** 2nd Mondays, 7 PM. Watch your email for Zoom login details

**SBW Board meetings:** Wednesday before regular SBW meeting, 7 PM. Write to Edie, pres@southbaywriters.com, to request Zoom invite.

**SBW Open Mic:** 1st & 3rd Friday nights. Contact Bill Baldwin: WABaldwin@aol.com

Ads in CWC’s *The Bulletin*  
AdvertisingCWC@gmail.com  
hdcwc.com/advertising-special.html  
calwriters.org





**California Writers Club**

South Bay Branch  
PO Box 3254  
Santa Clara CA 95055

[southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)

**MAIL TO**

Address Correction Requested

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**South Bay Writers  
November 2021 meeting  
Monday | 08 November | 7 PM**

*Thaisa Frank*

