

**August Keynote** 

# In A Flash: The Art and Craft of the Short, Short Story Presented by Andrea Firth

Jamal Khan

When: Monday, August 14, 6:30PM Where: Triton Museum, 1505 Warburton Ave. Santa Clara

**Admission:** \$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers.

Flash—stories less than 1.000 words—is enormously popular. Google "Flash Fiction Contests" and the first result lists 109 places to submit. But while Flash may be easier to read, it is by no means easier to write. The daunting task of packing profound meaning within an economy of space has elicited enormous literary achievements in poetry and songwriting, and flash is no exception. As Edgar Allen Poe once observed, "A short story must have a single mood, and every sentence must build towards it." During our meeting, Andrea Firth will teach us why and how short prose, whether fiction or nonfiction, is changing the way we tell stories. Andrea will provide us with a deep introduction to this prose form with stories from 6-words to 100, 400, and more. We'll read and analyze a range of shorts, stories, and essays, and see how to engage readers in a small space by eliminating excess and keeping what's most essential. We'll explore how urgency, conflict, and a twist are keys to the form.



And we'll see how voice, language, point-of-view, and structure contribute to the overall impact. We will leave ready to write your own short pieces with ideas for where to submit them.

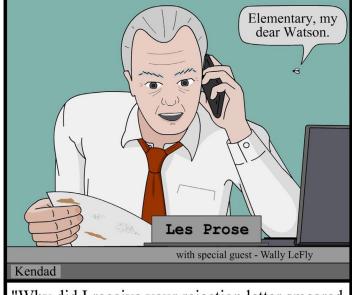
Andrea A. Firth is a writer, journalist, editor, and educator living in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is an Editor at *Brevity* Blog and the cofounder of Diablo Writers' Workshop where she teaches and provides editorial consulting. Andrea was a finalist for *The Missouri Review's* 2021 Perkoff Prize in nonfiction, and her essays are published in *Brevity* Blog, *Dorothy Parker's Ashes, The Coachella Review, Motherwell, Please See Me* and elsewhere.



# August

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Open Mic	5
6	7 Board	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Club Meeting	15 WritersTalk submission deadline	16	17	18 Open Mic	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

# Les Prose by Kendad



"Why did I receive your rejection letter smeared with peanut butter, Play-Doh, and dirt?"

# View from the Board

Chris Weilert

July 11, 2023 Board Meeting

### Edie Matthews, President

The newest members were introduced to the Board: Alice Wu will be the Treasurer and Una Daly will be the Web Editor.

Trenton Myers is the recipient of the prestigious Jack London Award.

The Board meeting is moving back to Monday nights and will continue on Zoom.

There is a continuing effort to find replacements for our long-term board members who want to step down.

## Jamal Khan, Vice President

In August we have Andrea Firth and a presentation on short stories. In September, Jill Lublin talks about Guerilla Marketing.

### Trenton Myers, Treasurer

Account Growth: 5.7% since May.

### Inga Silva, Membership:

As of June 30, 61 members have renewed.



## Bill Baldwin, Open Mics

continue on the first and third Fridays. (Zoom) Recent Open Mic stats: June 16 - 11 readers and 11 readings

July 7 - 10 readers and 10 readings

We are still doing all our open mics via Zoom.

### Open Discussion:

Adding a monthly calendar to the newsletter. Continued improvement of meeting location.

The next board meeting will be August 7, 2023 on Zoom. SBW members are always welcome at Board meetings. To attend a board meeting, send an email to Edie Matthews at pres@ southbaywriters.com.v

## **President's Message**

Edie Matthews

## Following the Footsteps of Success

Many successful authors acknowledge that they've been inspired by other writers. Consequently, whether you're a neophyte or a published writer, we can all learn and be inspired by other people's creativity and their journey to success. So, you may want to catch the documentaries about writers that are periodically shown on PBS.

Recently, I watched *Elmore Leonard: "But don't try to write."* I became a fan of his after coming across him in the '80s. I even attended a mystery writers conference in Phoenix when he was the keynote speaker.

His determination to become a writer is admirable.

Since he was married with children, he would rise at 5:00 A.M. and write for two hours before going to his job in an ad agency. He wrote westerns, a popular genre in the fifties when there were over thirty cowboy-theme shows on TV. Leonard lived in Detroit, so to familiarize himself with the western frontier, he subscribed to Arizona Highway. Success was not immediate, and despite the numerous popular magazines that featured the genre, he faced a torrent of rejections.

Leonard wasn't a fan of "litera-ture" with its metaphors

and descriptive passages. So discovering Ernest Hemingway was a revelation. Most books had pages dense with words and descriptions, but Hemingway's novels were straight forward, unembellished, with lots of white space on the page. For inspiration, Leonard often read excerpts of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which he considered to be like a western. Unbeknown to Hemingway, he became a mentor to the aspiring writer.



Some have criticized Leonard for relying on so much dialogue. He responded, "I don't write the parts that people skip."

As he achieved success, Hollywood came calling. I suspect all the dialogue made his work easy to turn into films. However, after adapting a number of his works for temperamental directors who would change it afterwards, he stopped trying to please them. He'd sell them the rights, but he refused to work on the screenplay.

As the popularity of westerns faded, Leonard



transitioned to crime fiction.

In addition to numerous short stories, he wrote 47 novels. All of his books became films, TV shows, or at least had been optioned. They include Out of Sight (George Clooney), Hombre (Paul Newman), Mr. Majestyk (Charles Bronson). Get (John Shorty Travolta). and the TV series Justified (Timothy Olyphant) based on the novel City Primeval.

In 2013, Elmore Leonard, the king of crime fiction, died at 87.

PBS is currently airing two series that feature writers.

*Southern Story Tellers* who draw from a wealth of kooks, oddballs, eccentrics, and the distinctive environment, plus *Footsteps* with Gyles Brandreth which follows the lives of classic English authors like Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and the Bronte Sisters. Check your TV schedule, or if you're a member of KQED, you can watch these shows online on Passbook. You too may find a mentor.

# June Barbeque

Brigitte Doss-Johnson





E die hosted our annual gathering and the weather even cooperated. A nice breeze kept us cool under the umbrellas and the trellis. Her son barbequed all the chicken before the party and members brought many delectables, especially the blueberry cream cheese pie. We had a special guest, Audrey's date, John Steinbeck. Yup. He was sharp in cardboard glory, though sometimes he was a little too relaxed. Through the magic of networking, a new member who had been speaking with a longtime member, relayed a "Seven Degrees of Kevin Bacon" type connection to Audrey. (An ex-step-relation to Steinbeck.)

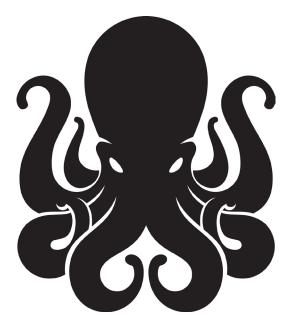




Since Audrey's PhD is based on Steinbeck, she was keen to find more info.

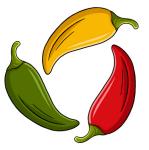
You never know what fun you'll have at our functions. I hope you'll come next year!

# July Writing Prompt: Tongue Twisters!



Crazy krakens quarrel snatching shellfish Catching conches for their lunches Crazed krakens cracking conches Crunching cockles munching shellfish Selfish shellfish snacking krakens Selfish krakens snack no more Only shingles left on shore Shortsighted krakens quarrel for sure

-Amanda Senior



Peter picked a peck of perfectly plump purple peppers, passionately preserving piquancy in a pot of pomegranate puree.

-Carolyn Donnell



Change charged attack Jack!

Nancy's making more messes near Molly.

-Brigitte Doss-Johnson



# **Off the Shelf**

Edie Matthews

"To tell the truth, I had no idea what the theme of my book was until I read the Cliffs Notes."



## **Short Stories**

# **Muscling Up**

Reena Kapoor



Outside I stood hesitating. I'd just dropped off my car at the shop, after arguing with my old mechanic, a tiresome and reliable curmudgeon. I'd been going to him since I bought my first car after college. Familiar sites that kept me anchored even as I'd traveled such a long distance from the girl I used to be. I'd grown up a couple of streets over. But there was nothing there for me anymore. My parents were both gone.

I looked across the street at my old bus stop. That's the route I used to take to high school. The bus ride would take three times as long as it would if I simply jumped in an Uber. *Take the slow route today*? I had the time. I was in between jobs. And perhaps something else? I found myself crossing the street.

Rare for me to indulge the past. The graveyard of memories and lost dreams is a dangerous place to play. Ghosts show up. Sometimes they insist on crossing over into life. No room for that. Most days I adhered to such caution but today... I think the new therapist was planting notions in my head. *I really should fire him.* 

I have zero regrets about my life or choices. And where they've landed me. A noted lawyer, still young-ish, now invited to a prestigious university position working closely with my idol in constitutional law. It does mean moving away from this area where I've spent most of my life. When I got the call with the offer I was over the moon. But within days a hollowness wormed in. It made me furious. Who could be such an ingrate, so peevish in the face of such opportunity? I needed to fix it. I could hardly show up in my new position with anything less than a thousand percent to offer.

Hence the therapist. At first, I did most of the talking. But then instead of offering me practical

answers, the therapist strayed off into orthogonal places. He suggested I may be avoiding ...how was it he put it? Ah yes, *making lasting human connection, real commitment.* Not that I hadn't been accused of that before. But that wasn't the problem I was seeking answers for. *Besides, I'm no recluse*, I countered. *I see plenty of men. I just don't get too attached. I can't afford entanglements...* That strategy had saved me a lot of senseless distraction and heartache. Besides, I hadn't gotten where I was professionally without sacrifice.

The therapist listened quietly, probing here and there. Once again, offering nothing for my real conundrum. *I really needed someone new.* 

Then recently after one of his endless *What Why How...* sessions he surprised me with something even more random, *Let's work on helping you rediscover your love muscle!* 

I'd laughed out loud at the terminology. *Seriously? That almost sounds obscene.* 

Given his eastern European accent (maybe Israeli? can't tell), I wondered if his terminology was victim to literal translation-ism from another language; a condition I was only too familiar with, having grown up with immigrant parents who raised me in Hindi and English with mixed metaphors, colloquialisms and a whole lot of translation-ism-afflicted phraseology. So here I was two weeks later, standing at a bus stop, and chuckling at the idea of reviving my *love muscle*.

The bus arrived, slowed to a stop. As I ascended the steps, it felt like I'd entered a portal into a parallel world that operated at a fraction of my life's speed. I found myself a window seat. A gentle breeze kissed my cheek. I let myself surrender to this forty-five minute suspension of life. Scenes from years past were now whizzing past the bus window. School, college, law school, work, losing both parents too soon, work, work, work... The old bus continued snaking through familiar streets. We went past a flaming field of California poppies. When I bought my first house, I used to have fresh flowers on my dining table every week, just like my mother used to. But that habit had faded too. Once I move for the new job I'll have flowers again, I vowed!

A calm descended on me and with that I started humming an old love tune. Soon another voice joined my humming, with words. I turned around to look. A man probably in his late 70s, or perhaps older, was singing and swaying with the tune. He smiled. The kind of smile I hadn't seen in a long time. When lawyers smile, often our smiles don't make it to our eyes. We women lawyers even more so, trying to outdo the men on every front. *Geez! Where are all these thoughts coming from?* 

The old man and I carried on humming and singing. The rest of the bus acted as if this was the most natural thing in the world. Some nodded at me but mostly people got on and off without comment. I repeated stanzas to keep it going. As my stop neared, I didn't want it to end. But I had to. I stood up and gave the old man a little bow. He waved at me, laughing.

The bus stopped and I started to get off. The bus driver yelled, *Hey lady!* I turned to look at him. He grinned, *I've been wanting to tell a girl that for a long time. Your song - it's one of her favorites. You just gave me the courage! THANK YOU!* Before I could say a word, a few people from the bus cheered.

The bus drove away. That same bus that had carried me every day for all those years. High school was the last time I'd been in love. In this very town. I stood at the bus stop sobbing. Was this the "love muscle"? Perhaps a little debilitated but alive. I started to call my therapist.

On Campus Marty Sorensen



On the college campus, the baseball coach exclaimed in the stadium, "A pitcher is worth a thousand nerds," and the student activist jumped with red paint on the set of Juilius Caesar in the college amphitheater and screamed, "The cast is dyed," while a chemistry student watched the green effervescent bubbles in the beaker and exclaimed, "Knowitry in potion."

# California Writers Club The Bulletin

# Advertise in the Bulletin

Each issue of The Bulletin — published four times a year — reaches close to 2,000 published and aspiring writers, in 22 branches throughout the state. And it is published on calwriters.org.

We are accepting writing-related advertising from businesses, CWC members, and individuals who wish to reach our target market at reasonable prices.

Four tiers of ads are being offered:

Business card size (2" x 3.5") ads for \$35.

Index card size (3" x 5") ads for \$60. These will be interspersed throughout *The Bulletin* as appropriate.

 $5'' \times 7''$ \_size ads for \$90 placed at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief

We will make available one and one only full-page vertical or horizontal ad  $(7" \times 10")$  for \$200. All ads submitted must be self-edited, print-ready, and will be published as received. We reserve the right to decline material deemed inappropriate at

the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief.

All ads must be emailed as a .jpg file attachment to advertisingcwc@gmail.com and a copy sent to editor@calwriters.org.

A physical copy of your ad must be enclosed with the postal mailed payment. Please include your return address, email address, and telephone contact number.

Deadlines for Branch news submissions are the same as for advertising:

March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

Each CWC Branch is eligible to submit one  $5 \times 7$  ad to publicize a branch conference that they are sponsoring, and this ad will be published free of charge.

Questions? Call Bob Isbill at (760) 221-6367.

Checks or money orders for submitted ads must be made payable to CWC Central Treasury and mailed to:

HDCWC

17645 Fisher St.

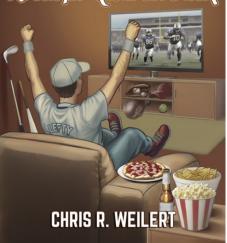
Victorville, CA 92395

## **Member News**

Marjorie Johnson



# Deep Thoughts from a Recliner Quarterback



Chris Weilert has a book coming out in august: Deep Thoughts From A Recliner Quarterback. This is what he wrote for the back cover:

I have quarterbacked many games from my living room and never lost. I have sustained no injuries while watching except for indigestion. I will give you my thoughts and opinions on all sports, even though I might not have ever played them. All sports fans have an idea about what they think they have witnessed. Experts and pundits and all those paid to tell you everything about sports will only convince you of something if you see it with your own eyes. Yet we must listen to the talking heads to feed us information when it isn't needed. We, as sports fans, have everything at our disposal: statistics for anything, analytics, injury reports, betting lines, waiver wires, etc. When it comes down to it, it means little until the game or sport is played. Anything can happen on the playing field and that is why we watch. It's entertainment, our chosen form to relish.

Most of us have logged hours and hours watching this stuff, and you would think we would know a thing or two. I have received a lifetime of knowledge from the hours absorbing the conquest of athletes performing. Now you can read the thoughts from a guy in a comfortable chair taking all of this in.

Poet & short story writer Reena Kapoor's flash fiction "*Prayer Beads and Samosas*" has been selected by the Flash Fiction Forum. Reena will be reading it at their upcoming 10th anniversary celebration in San Jose on August 23rd.

Carolyn Donnell's poem has been accepted into Redwood Writers' latest poetry anthology, *Phases*. Her poem, *Keyboard Memory*, was chosen out of over eight-hundred poems submitted by one-hundred-sixty-one poets! Congratulations to Carolyn! *Phases: Redwood Writers 2023 Poetry Anthology* is now available on Amazon.

Please share your writing news by sending it to membernews@southbaywriters.com.

# **Contests and Markets**

LOCAL (PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS) AND OTHER CWC BRANCH RESOURCES: <u>https://calwriters.org/cwcbranches/</u>

NAME	DEAD	URL	COMMENTS
	LINE		
Redwood Writers	Sept 16	https://www.redwoodwriters.org/	Personal essays
SF/Peninsula Branch.		https://www.cwc-sfpeninsula.org/writers-	Lists other resources
		resources/writing-contests	
Fremont Area Writers		https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/	See Writers Resources tab
		resources-writers/	
The Literary Nest			visual art to theliterarynest@gmail.com
Catamaran Literary		http://www.catamaranliteraryreader.	West Coast quarterly literary/visual
Reader		<u>com/</u>	arts journal

#### Other Contests and SubmissionS (including sites that list contests.)

Name	Dead	URL	Comments
	line		
Zoetrope Short Story	Opens	https://www.zoetrope.com/contests/	Short Fiction
	July 1	stories-2022/	
Zoetrope Cinema	Sept 5	https://www.zoetrope.com/contests/	FINAL DEADLINE is Sept. 5,
		screenplays-2023/	11:59:59 PST.
The Missouri Review 33rd Annual	Oct 1	https://missourireview.com/contests	Check their website for futures
Jeffrey E. Smith Editors' Prize			contests
Authors Publish		www.authorspublish.com	Lists contests, etc.
Winning Writers		https://winningwriters.com/	free newsletter
Funds for Writers		https://fundsforwriters.com/contests/	Subscribe to newsletter
			hope@chopeclark.com
Chicken Soup For The Soul		https://www.chickensoup.com/story-	
		submissions/submit-vour-storv/	
Trish Hopkinson		https://trishhopkinson.com/	blog
Freedom With Writing		https://www.freedomwithwriting.com	
Sequestrum		https://www.sequestrum.org/	Themed and general
			submissions
Writer's Digest		https://www.writersdigest.com/	Contests year round. Also
-		writers-digest-competitions	classes/webinars

#### POETRY CONTESTS, SUBMISSIONS, AND RESOURCES

Name	URL	Comments
Academy of American Poets	https://poets.org/academy-american-poets/american-	Lists contests/ submissions
	poets-prizes	
Writing Matters	www.randalssanctuary.wordpress.com/2020/08/11/	30 Publishers of Poetry
	publishers-of-poetry-books-chapbooks/	Books & Chapbooks
Up the Staircase Quarterly	https://www.upthestaircase.org/	'
Poets & Writers	https://www.pw.org/grants	
Poetry Society of America	https://poetrysocietyofamerica.submittable.com/submit	
The Thimble Magazine	http://www.thimblelitmag.com/submissions/	quarterly online journal.
Poetry Foundation	www.poetryfoundation.org	
Poetry Pacific	www.poetrypacific.blogspot.com/	Published and unpublished.
Everywriter	www.everywritersresource.com/best-poetry-prizes/	
Reedsy	https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/chapbook/how-to-make/	lists reputable chapbook
		contests
Gyroscope	https://www.gyroscopereview.com/welcome/guidelines	4 issues a year
Poetry Soup	https://www.poetrysoup.com/poetry/contests/	

Facebook pages/Groups (Our Facebook group for members is South Bay Writers Club) Poetry Center San Jose-PCSJ Poetry Exchange Poetry Lounge Willow Glen Poetry Project Cupertino Poet Laureate Santa Clara County Poet Laureate Los Gatos Poet Laureate National Poetry Month-write a poem a day challenge California Poets The Poetry Salon Online Rattle No Fee Calls for Poems Contests and Markets compiled by:



Carolyn Donnell

The writing contests and markets listed serve as information. South Bay Writers neither vets nor endorses any listings. Please practice safe handling of your stories and information.

#### WRITERS BEWARE

Warnings about contests, submissions, etc. <u>https://www.sfwa.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/</u>

Brigitte Doss-Johnson



Remember those Scholastic Book Club order forms from grade school? I remember them from my childhood and when my kids came home with them, I spent a small fortune.

I looked up Scholastic's history for this article. They began in 1920 publishing a small flyer. In the '40s they began their book club. You can read more about their reach on their website – I may order more things through their Scholastic Parent Store.

One of the gems I bought twenty years ago, but took ten years to get around to reading, is Constance Hale's *Sin and Syntax*. I swear this book opened up new pathways in my brain. If you want to sit down and feel fed with grammar nutrition, read this book!

I loved the sustenance it gave me so

much that I even went to the Writers Grotto in San Francisco and took a workshop from Constance Hale. I won a new edition of the book, flipped through my favorite parts, and gave it to my neice. Prizes are nice but I couldn't part with the first edition I had feverishly marked with margin notes. (As I write this, a vision of my puppy scarfing down his kibble popped in my head.) Since I also highlighted the Kindle version, I had to share my winning.

> I know I wrote about Strunk and White two editions ago. I stand by that book still and think of it like an appetizer. And what is an appetizer supposed to do? That little book whet my appetite for more grammar books. I had bought a bunch through Scholastic and now I had the impetus to tackle them.

> Promo material for *Sin and Syntax* says: Today's writers need more spunk than Strunk ..... (You can read the rest of the promo online.) I chuckle at that. Good spunk comes from knowing what you're doing.

My recommendation is to start with

Strunk and then put your bib on for a delectable entrée of *Sin and Syntax.* Now I'm hungry for more grammar.

Rotating Editing Team:

Marjorie Johnson, Ken Roberge, Carolyn Donnell, Dave LaRoche, Marty Sorensen, Edie Matthews, Bill Baldwin.

CONSTANCE HALI

If you are interested in being a part of the editing team, please email newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Submit writing to WritersTalk using this form:



California Writers Club

### **South Bay Branch**

www.southbaywriters.com

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## **SBW Mission**

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. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Dual membership: \$25. Contact Membership Chair, Inga Silva, or sign up online at southbaywriters.com. Or, send a check to CWC-South Bay Writers, P. O. Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055 Note: California Writers Club uses a fiscal year that runs from July 1 through June 30 each year.

Contribute to WritersTalk

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in WritersTalk. Submissions are now being accepted on this form:

#### https://tinyurl.com/writerstalk

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month. Inclusion of graphics are by the discretion of the editor. Short Fiction (1000 words) Memoir (1000 words) Poetry (300 words) Essay (1000 words) Send information about your news or achievements to membernews@southbaywriters.com. Information should be of interest and value to writers that

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Change of Address: Send changes of address to membership@southbaywriters.com or use MRMS.



California Writers Club South Bay Branch P.O. Box 3254 Santa Clara, CA 95055

www.southbaywriters.com

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

# **September Writing Prompt: Nonet**

For the ninth month of the year, write a nonet poem. The first line has nine syllables, the second line has eight syllables, the third line has seven syllables, the fourth line has six syllables, the fifth line has five syllables, the sixth line has four syllables, the seventh line has three syllables, the eighth line has two syllables, and the ninth line has one syllable. Poem can be any subject matter.

Call open only to members of South Bay Writers (or dual member).

Submission deadline: August 15

Send submissions and optional images through this form: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/writerstalk">https://tinyurl.com/writerstalk</a>

# Nonet Sample: Laundry

Brigitte Doss-Johnson

- 9-Even if you don't spill on your clothes,
- 8-your dead skin cells collect in it.
- 7-Even if you don't perspire,
- 6-oils and musk get absorbed.
- 5-You can freeze your clothes
- 4-when preserving.
- 3-Detergent
- 2-prevents
- 1-stink.