



Writerstalk



South Bay Writers

Newsletter

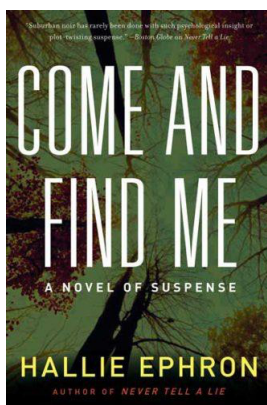
November 2022



**“Crash Course on Writing a
Mystery”
with Hallie Ephron
Submitted by Jamal Kahn**

Nothing hooks a reader like a masterfully written mystery. Anthony Horowitz has observed, "As far as I'm concerned, you can't beat a good whodunnit: the twists and turns, the clues and the red herrings and then, finally, the satisfaction of having everything explained to you in a way that makes you kick yourself because you hadn't seen it from the start." Although meticulous planning is critical, the writer must place equal importance upon spontaneity and intuition. Alfred Hitchcock emphasized the latter aspects of the craft

when he said, "One must never set up a murder. They must happen unexpectedly, as in life." During our monthly meeting on November 14, Hallie Ephron will guide us through the writing of a gripping mystery.



New York Times bestselling author Hallie Ephron, Edgar Award finalist and five-time finalist for the Mary Higgins Clark Award, writes books readers can't put down. Her newest suspense novel, *Careful What You Wish For* (2019), was described by *Publisher's Weekly* in a starred review as "outstanding." Her novel *You'll Never Know, Dear* (2017) is set in South Carolina. It tells the story of a little girl's disappearance and the porcelain doll that may hold the key to

her fate. It was named a finalist for the Mary Higgins Clark Award, an Earphones Award winner, and one of the "Top 10 Mystery and Suspense" audiobooks of 2017 by Audiofile.

Hallie teaches writing at workshops and writing conferences across the country and abroad. A revised and expanded edition of her *Writing and Selling Your Mystery Novel* (Writers Digest Books) is widely available. It was nominated for Edgar and Anthony awards. Lee Child called it "the best how-to guide I have ever seen — I just wish I could have read it twenty years ago." An award-winning crime fiction book reviewer, Hallie wrote an ON CRIME column for the *Boston Globe* for more than ten years. Her sister, the late Nora Ephron, wrote and directed "Sleepless in Seattle" and wrote "When Harry Met Sally."

When: Monday, November 14 at 7pm

Where: Zoom Online Platform (link forthcoming)

Between The Lines

Edie Matthews, SBW President



Birds-eye View of Thanksgiving

I only remember one time sitting down to Thanksgiving dinner with my mother and three brothers. In fact, it was one of the few occasions the dining room table was cleared off enough for us to eat together.

Usually the table was cluttered with a pile of clean clothes, toys, and newspapers. Plenty of newspapers! At least one of my brothers had a paper route delivering William Randolph

Hearst's Los Angeles Herald Express. Our favorite. We'd declare, "They have the best comics!" Blondie, Prince Valiant, Sad Sack, Li'l Abner, The Katzenjammer Kids, etc.

Dinner wasn't served on plates. No, we ate off of stainless-steel army trays. It was a spontaneous suggestion by my mother, and all of us loved the idea! I wanted each section of the tray to have an item in it—even if it meant dividing up the vegetables.

When asked what part of the turkey I wanted, I asked for the leg. I thought there would be a fight over it. But no one else cared. For several years, that was my choice; until finally, I wised up. It was too much to eat.

One year after Thanksgiving, my mother bought multiple cans of pumpkin pie on sale. On Sunday, she started baking. She made the mistake of opening too many cans. The kitchen was like a pie factory as she toiled away. Finally, late in the afternoon, she announced, "We're

having pumpkin pie for dinner." We kids were delighted. "I made it healthy by adding extra eggs," said Mom.

All week after school, we'd beelined to the refrigerator for a piece of pie. As you can imagine, with four kids, snacks in our house were scares, and before the week ended, the pie was gone.

Yes, we were poor. My mother never let us forget it, fretting aloud about the bills. But it rarely bothered me. There were lots of kids worse off. Besides, we lived in the largest house on the block, a craftsman style with a huge river-rock chimney and

spacious porch. Coming home to that impressive structure provided a sense of security.

Our Thanksgivings changed after I got married and had a children. For decades we hosted family and friends. Typically, we'd have 20 guests—once I recall 28. Setting the table was a production. Tablecloths were stretched out over two-to-three tables joined together. I used my best dishes and freshly polished silverware.

The previous day, my husband and I spent hours making desserts: cheesecake, pumpkin-cake roll, and three-to-four types of pie. He did all the chopping and rolled out all the crusts. I'd cook the giblets in advance and prepare all the ingredients for stuffing. Next morning, I was up at 6 a.m. stuffing a 20-pound bird and getting it in the oven. We'd sit down to eat at two or three in the afternoon.

After dinner, the men and kids went to the nearby school for their annual basketball battle. They'd return several hours later eager for dessert. In the evening, we'd divide into teams and play Trivia Pursuit.

My friends, we all have a birds-eye view of our lives. These experiences don't need to be researched. They are waiting to be included in your writing and provide color in your fiction or enhance your memoir. Take a minute and recall: What do you remember about Thanksgiving?

California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
www.southbaywriters.com

SBW Officers

President –Edie Matthews pres@southbaywriters.com

Vice President-Jamal Khan vp@southbaywriters.com

Secretary-Chris Weilert
secretary@southbaywriters.com

Treasurer-Trenton Myers
treasurer@southbaywriters.com

Member at Large1-Tatyana Grinenko member-at-large1@southbaywriters.com

Member at Large2-Alfred Jan member-at-large2@southbaywriters.com

SBW Representatives

Central Board-Bill Baldwin WABaldwin@aol.com

NorCal-Bill Baldwin WABaldwin@aol.com

SBW Committee Chairs

Facebook Adm-Carolyn Donnell cdonneltx@yahoo.com

Hospitality-Vacant

Membership-Inga Silva ingasbwmembership@gmail.com

Member News-Marjorie Johnson
membernews@southbaywriters.com

MRMS Admin-Marjorie Johnson
mrms@southbaywriters.com

Newsletter-Gerri Forte gerriforte@outlook.com

Programs/Workshops-Jamal Kahn

vp@southbaywriters.com

Publicity & Public Relations-Tatyana Grinenko

pr@southbaywriters.com

Web Master-Vacant

Web Editor-Tatyana Grinenko

webeditor@southbaywriters.com

Contributing Editors

Bill Baldwin

Carolyn Donnell

Marjorie Johnson

Jamal Khan

Ken Roberge

Marty Sorenson

SBW Events

Open Mic-Bill Baldwin WABaldwin@aol.com

SBW Mission

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing
and in the marketing of their work.

Join Us

Renewal fees are \$45 for membership through June 30. Dual
membership dues are \$25, student membership dues are \$20

New or lapsed membership dues are \$65. Contact
ingasbwmembership@gmail.com, sign up online at
southbaywriters.com or send a check to CWC South Bay Writers
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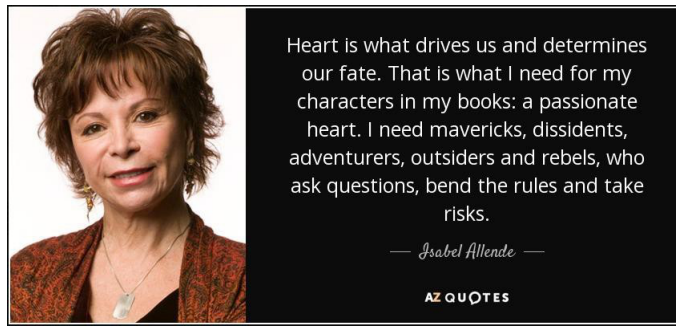
WritersTalk – Managing Editor
Geraldine C. Forté (aka Gerri)



Members, as we embark upon the Thanksgiving season, please remember that it is a privilege to be able to say “Thank You”. I thank you so much for submitting your creative works for publication in our newsletter. It is good to see our works in print, and *WritersTalk* provides you with an opportunity to share your work with the members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club.

Please continue to submit your work and information about your activities. Please submit your articles and photographs by the 15th of the month, and **please set them in 12-point Times New Roman font**. Material that is received after the 15th of the month will be considered for the following month’s publication

Writing Tips from Isabel Allende Comprised by Patricia Collins

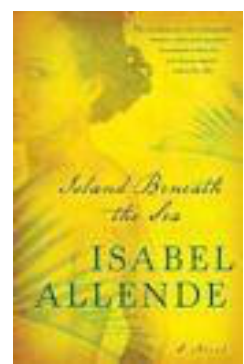
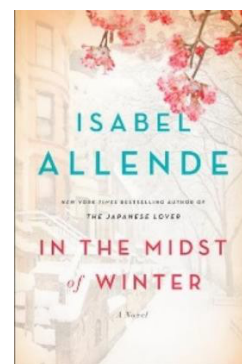
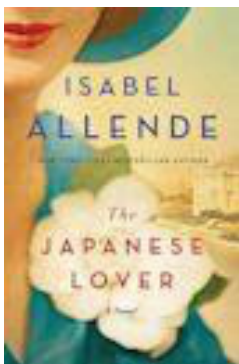


Isabel Angélica Allende Llona, born in Lima, Peru, of Chilean heritage, has given us the gift of her magic realism novels that appear in both Spanish and English. She has lived in California since 1988 and has dual Chilean-American citizenship. She has been awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Chilean Prize for Literature, as well as over thirty other awards for her contributions. She is currently the most widely read author of Spanish-language literature.

The following set of writing tips is taken primarily from Fred Johnson's "7 Ways Isabel Allende Can Help You Improve Your Writing," <https://www.standoutbooks.com/isabel-allende-writing-advice>. Johnson notes that he's taken these seven ways from Allende's eager sharing of her "methods, rituals, and tips."

1. **Stay vigilant.** We can't always anticipate, especially when writing fiction, what we should write about. The story must be compelling. What many less experienced authors may fail to do is to pay attention to what is going on around you, carefully notice offhand remarks, stay aware of your surroundings when traveling through a place or seeing it off in the distance. Any of these small observations may spark an idea that becomes an inspiration for a story.
2. **Don't be afraid to begin.** While brainstorming, planning, and gathering information are important, those activities can come to take on a life of their own. Long before over-thinking the entire work you want to write, you need to start writing. Allende thinks of this planning paralysis as self-sabotage. As so many authors come to understand, we cannot always know at the start what our characters will do; their thoughts and behaviors can be a surprise to the writer who is the medium through which those characters come to life.
3. **Write every day.** Writing, according to Allende, is often a difficult process, with much of that due to the reality that writing is laborious. Waiting for inspiration means not doing the work of writing. By analogy, she notes that athletes must train every day if they are to be prepared to succeed. The comparison with writing is clear.

4. **Allow yourself to fail.** Avoid the romanticized stereotype of writers that they are struck by the lightning of inspiration and proceed to write brilliantly. Even world-famous authors such as Allende have experienced rejection. Johnson quotes her: “For every good page, you will have written twenty pages that end up in the trash. It doesn’t matter.” The writer’s responsibility is to scrutinize their writing and to excise those twenty pages, recognizing the “diamond” amidst the “coal.”
5. **Find the right word.** Languages and cultures differ in their preferences for expression. Spanish, a romance language, says Allende, “allows for a more flowery way” of writing than works written in English. When writing in English, recognize the responsibility to be more concise and precise—a guideline that took hold when Hemingway showed the way. Choose individual words with impact, words that need no adornment because the denotation and connotation hit the nail on the head. Question the need for adjectives if the right noun can convey all that’s needed.
6. **Keep showing up.** Yes, get started and write every day. However, a writer may have difficulty continuing with this routine when the work continues for months (or years). The muse can’t show up if you’re not writing. In fact, that muse probably won’t show up until you’re deeply into the project. When all is going well, Allende tells us, there will be “a moment, a magical moment, at some point, when...you don’t need the effort [anymore]” because, like dancing, you reach a point when your conscious effort becomes a natural act.
7. **Know when to call it a day.** Avoid overcorrecting. There comes a point when writers can get in their own way, wordsmithing until the words no longer flow. Writing with an online document editor makes it extremely easy to overcorrect. Instead, consider putting your manuscript aside—even for a long as a few months. You will return to it with a fresh eye. You may not even notice the little places that you previously thought needed improvement...and you’ll be glad you stopped when you did.



View from the Board

Bill Baldwin

SBW Meeting Minutes 10/12/2022

Board Members present:

President: Edie Mathews

Vice-President: Jamal Khan

CWC-Central Board rep/NorCal/Open Mic/Meetup:
Bill Baldwin

Facebook Admin: Carolyn Donnell

Member-at-Large: Alfred Jan

Membership Chair: Inga Silva

Writer's Talk Editor: Gerri Forte

Absent: Secretary – Chris Weilert, MRMS –
Marjorie Johnson, Treasurer – Trenton Myers,
Member-at-Large/Web Editor/PR – Tatyana
Grinenko

Meeting began 7:02 PM.

Edie Matthews, President

This month's speaker is Jennifer Givhan,
talking about Revision.

November will be Hallie Ephron presenting
"a crash course for mystery writers."

In December, Edie will host our annual
holiday potluck party on Sunday December
11, probably from 3 to 6 in the afternoon.

In January we plan to meet live at a
historical house in Santa Clara. However,
the Headen Historical House has a space
limit of fifty people. Other possible future
meeting places include:

- Mariani's,
- the Sunnyvale golf course,
- or other local golf courses.

In February we are considering a workshop
in addition to the monthly meeting

We plan more writing contests. Perhaps in
January we can publicize one on "Pets."

Bill Baldwin, Central Board/NorCal
No recent meetings of Central Board or

NorCal, but we should give more attention
to the Bulletin, the Literary Review, and
California Writers Week (the third week in
October).

Carolyn Donnell, Facebook

We have gotten some comments on our
publicity page. We are still not sure how to
get our
website un-blocked by Facebook.

Gerri Forte, Writer's Talk Editor

Because our printer is located in Florida
(Hurricane Ivan), the newsletter was mailed
out late, but should arrive in
the coming week (some people have already
received it).

We've had some feedback on the current
newsletter layout, such as:

- how much space should we
allocated to the various sections?
- Do we want a smaller Contest
section?
- A shorter View From the Board?

Publicity Discussion: People have asked how to
know if you're up to date on monthly
payments. Probably need to ask Trenton. Could we
include a contest/submission tab on website?
Edie suggests we review computer-related costs:
web, Constant Contact, etc.

Inga Silva, Membership

Our branch membership is now down to 79.

People have reported issues with zoom and
Paypal.

Bill Baldwin, Open Mic

On September 16 we had 9 people and 9
readings.

Meeting ended 8:15 PM.

Next Board Meeting:

Wednesday, November 9th Zoom.

Off The Shelf

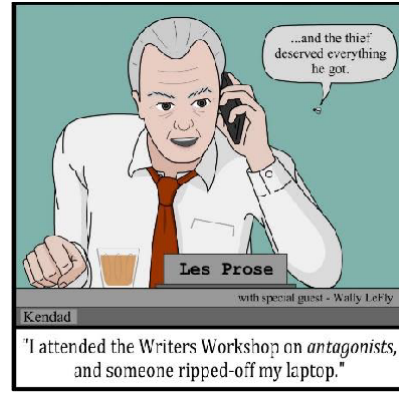
Edie Matthews



"Bruno, what the heck have you signed us up for?!"

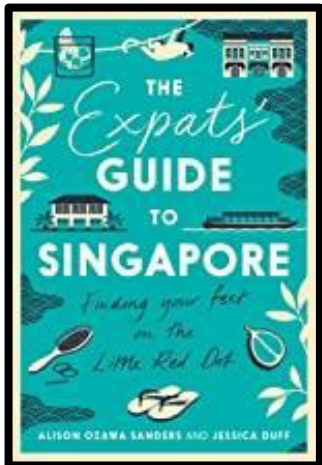
Les Prose

Ken Roberge

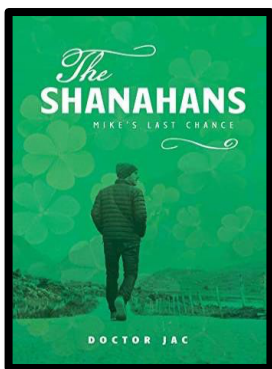


member News

Marjorie Johnson

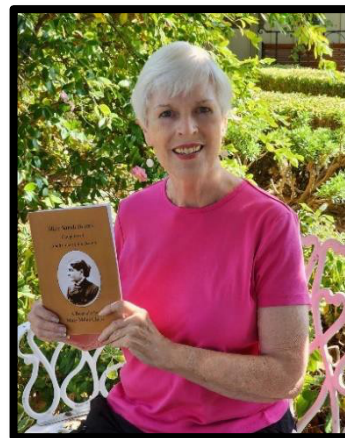


New member **Alison Sanders** writes, "I just had a flash fiction piece published in *Cleaver Magazine*." See "Eighteen" by Alison Sanders at cleavermagazine.com. She also has co-authored a self-published book, *The Expats' Guide to Singapore*.



Dr. Jac Fitz-enz, a human resources expert before retirement, published 12 nonfiction books; two won the Society for Human Resources Management's Book of the Year Award. Dr. Jac has written several

Intelligence Officer: *Rough Waters*, *Undaunted Lovers*, and *Spies With Benefits*. His current work, the first of a new trilogy, is titled *The Shanahans: Mike's Last Chance*. Dr. Jac sent me a copy—it takes place in Ireland and I can tell you it's up to his already high standards. I hope that he will submit a book announcement for *WritersTalk*.



This month, **Mary Chiao** sent WT a book announcement for her biography of Miss Sarah Brown (daughter of abolitionist John Brown) who lived right here in Saratoga, and **Luanne Oleas** sent an article about her book-signing event in Salinas in conjunction with her high school class's 50-year reunion.

Kudos go to **Alison, Dr. Jac, Mary, and Luanne**. I hope to hear from more of you soon. Please send your

novels based upon his years as a U. S. Naval

writing news to me at membernews@southbaywriters.co

October speaker RECAP

Bill Baldwin



We were honored to hear Jennifer Givhan's advice on revising novels. Her slide presentation (available to attendees) demonstrated how to revise your work and get it published, while honoring your personal vision. Her approach can transform your story, how you see your story, and how you see yourself.

Jennifer wrote her first novel, *Jubilee*, for a NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month). She wrote 80,000 words in a month. Her second novel *Trinity Site*, took three years. At that point she got a contract for three novels.

River Woman, River Demon, her third novel has—very exciting for her—taken off and been picked up for Amazon's Book Club.

Along the way, she has mastered how to select point-of-view, tell which scenes weren't needed, and avoid Backstory Dump in her opening chapters.

Never give up on your drafts. Love them and revise them like a caring mother.

To succeed you need to develop grit—learn how to persevere. Don't give up—learn to transform your manuscript. To do this, approach your draft from a new perspective.

Re-envision “killing your darlings” with a four-step alternate approach: Don't throw a tantrum. Don't get *too* attached. Know what to fight for, and how to fight. Don't give up on your beloveds.

Be like a child playing with blocks. Get to know your story from *that* perspective. Know when the story starts and find the Beating Heart of your story.

Find the “3 R's” of your story: your *reason* for the story, who your *readers* are, and what makes you *resilient*. Know why you are writing!

Jennifer follows the advice of Darcy Patterson, who differentiates “Incremental Revision” from “Quantum Revision” (aka “Creative Destruction”).

“Incremental Revisions” are small, specific changes that you often hear about in writing advice columns: removing adverbs and adjectives when possible, filtering language (e.g. changing “she smelled gasoline” to “the smell of gasoline filled the room.”). Consider hiring a copy editor (if you are self-publishing).

“Quantum Leap Revisions,” on the other hand, tackle major, comprehensive changes such as point-of-view, genre, writing style, combining two books into one, and expanding scenes.

Quantum Leaps can uncover synchronicities that can transform. Re(en)vision your story and see it anew. Never be afraid to see your writing (and yourself) in a different light.

Some tips for “Creative Destruction.” Look at your work from the *reader's* perspective. Set up a structure that connects character with story. “Embrace the Murk!” Take notes and let the Quantum Leaps occur to you.

Find readers you can trust and welcome their feedback. Understand, however, that you usually will have to decode their comments.

Find the Heart of your writing: why does the Protagonist *care*? Only *then* begin to polish.

Focus on constructing your dialogues, scenes, and worlds. How would this story look as a film? Can you make your writing more visual? Aim for *immediacy*!

Collage of October Meeting Participants



Congratulations to this year's winners of our Annual Halloween Costume Contest!
They will each receive a Barnes & Nobles Gift card

SCARIEST - AUDRY LYNCH AS CRUELLA DEVILLE



**LITERARY - LUANNE OLEAS
THE HANDMAID**

**FUNNIEST
LINDA KING - JESTER**



**ORIGINAL GERRI FORTE
MAYA ANGELOU**

**BEAUTIFUL
PENELOPE COLE - SCHERAZADE**



Member Compositions

He Asks How the Garden Grows *Monte Lorenzet*

To be perfectly frank, Joe
we're up to our asses in grasses
and filled to our gizzards with lizards
The rats are driving us bats
while the bees all died in a freeze.

The ants are up in our pants
the crowses, ruining the roses
the flies getting in our eyes
and the owls, raising our howls.

I can't forget the rabbits
and all their bad habits
not to mention the birds –
but I lack the right words.

We've lost our loafers to gophers,
shooed Quixotes of coyotes
and seen so many
snakes
we're doing double takes
and starting to fear the deer.

So, how's the garden you ask?
Well, I guess it's doing OK though
frankly we long for the fall, Joe
oh boy do we long for the fall!

French Bulldog *Liz Newman*



Big bat ears, Frito toes
curious hippo puggy nose
bulldog baby wants to play
then she growls and runs away.
It's the French in her, they say

King Arthur: "The Forever Legend" *Marjorie Johnson*

Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh monk and scholar, is best known for *The History of the Kings of Britain*, an illustrated manuscript written in Latin in the twelfth century. More than 1,000 copies were sold to medieval monasteries and royal courts, a "best-seller" only second to the Bible. His text gives an account of King Arthur's life.

The September 2022 *Smithsonian* magazine revives the debate of how much of the story of King Arthur is truth versus fiction in "The Forever Legend" by Joshua Hammer with photographs by Jooney

Woodward. (See also "Was King Arthur a Real Person?" on smithsonianmag.com.) Members of South Bay Writers will find a fascinating read.

In the 1980s, with a study group from Wilderness Travel, my husband and I visited Arthur's castle Tintagel in Cornwall and sights attributed to Merlin in Wales. The attached picture shows Merlin's Grotto (the cave on the left) and the narrow footbridge we crossed to the ruins of Tintagel. A quarter of a million tourists visit what's left of Tintagel each year.



Whether Arthur was a real person or not, the stories of Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table have captivated our imaginations for a thousand years.

Facing My Book-Event Demons

Luanne Oleas

It was a great opportunity. It was a triggering event. I had been invited to do a reading in my old hometown on the weekend of my 50th high school reunion. Never had I both anticipated and dreaded an event in equal measures.



The site of the reading was a bookstore that didn't exist when I used to live in Salinas. A month before the event, I dropped off some books for the bookstore owner to sell and to get a feel for the place. It was in an older part of town that I knew well. In fact, it was a building that formerly had housed an office supply business where I bought my first manual typewriter that I used to write my first book. There was something poignantly sweet about that.

The coincidences continued. It was a half a block from three places where I had worked. Two locksmith shops and the local newspaper. It was a half a block from where my father worked and where my husband and I had our first date. I could almost hear the Lion King theme about the circle of life.

Instructions about the evening's agenda for the reading were vague. I knew another author would be there, a poet, also from my graduating class. For an overthinker like myself, I wanted time limits, a minute-by-minute schedule of events. What length should my reading be? Should I plan to talk about the book? Before or after the reading? For how long? The bookstore owner said she liked to keep it

loose. Just a "get to know the author" with a short reading. No specifics. Yet the event was scheduled to last from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm. What was supposed to happen for three hours? Later I learned there would be a band. At one point, the owner said the band would take a break, maybe about 7:00 p.m. Wine and sweets would be provided.

Of course, nothing like that happened. Well, the wine and cookies appeared, but the band was a no-show. However, loud music came from the band playing at the bar next door. Unfortunately, there wasn't a microphone in the bookstore. I hoped I could read loud enough to be heard.

The reading itself had been marketed to community members and my former classmates. Initially, I wondered if my high school insecurities would emerge. Sometimes we assume we are the same person we were in high school, just older. However, there's an underlying truth that we are far from who we used to be. One of my biggest fears was that I wouldn't recognize anyone, offending my audience right off the bat.

I tried doing a quick refresh by looking at my old high school yearbook. Other than finding the poet who would also be reading, it didn't help. My high school class had 500 members. I had heard 76 had died, so I was pretty sure they wouldn't attend. Over 100 were on the missing list put out by the reunion committee. That still left 300 or so. As it turned out, only 25 or 30 people showed up. Fortunately for me, they wore name tags. Apparently, I wasn't the only one who needed them.

We socialized for about an hour, recalling shenanigans from the past. Someone announced that the crowd was getting hungry and wanted to leave, so we should start reading. I imagined someone would take charge, make introductions, and give an idea of what to do. Nope. I suddenly found everyone staring at me with a "do something" look.

"Thank you all for coming," seemed to be a good launch point. That, and a thank you to the bookstore

staff and the organizers. Then, gulp, what next. I launched into my connection with the area. About working nearby. About watching the annual Rodeo parade from my dad's second-story office window. About flying a kite from the top of a six-story building where I used to work, at one time the tallest building in town.

Reading an excerpt from my book came next. I had selected a portion of the second chapter which involved the main character arriving in Salinas and starting a job at the local airport. I felt that would be relatable for my audience. I wasn't comfortable, but it was working.

The reading itself was the easiest part except the physical act of holding the book. It seemed to get heavier with each paragraph. I wished for a podium. I managed to relay the main character's story of coming to town and taking the last exit off the freeway, describing the two mountain ranges that framed my tale and the row crops that covered the wide valley floor between them.

When I finished, I noticed no one had left. I took that as a good sign. I initiated a question-and-answer period, but there was only one question. It was about when I used to work for the local paper. I answered it and looked around. Nothing. So, I explained what most people ask about my book. Why did I write about a crop duster? I touched on my husband's career as an ag pilot and how he had served as the subject matter expert for my book.

His work stories were more interesting than mine. As a locksmith, I would often be called to the location of someone's house or car to let them in. Sometimes they were drunk. On the other hand, my pilot husband and his coworkers would take the door off the airplane, fill baggies full of flour, and fly out over the bay to flour-bomb whales. His stories always seemed more interesting. In the vein of "write what you know," I decided I would also include something else I knew. How a new priest could upset traditions in a small town. Though both characters were very different men, they both reveled in defying conventions.

The audience turned out to be very supportive. Sometimes, I think we all are children at heart. We just want someone to tell us a story. That was easy enough to do. The event changed from an anguish-inducing experience to an uplifting one. And people bought books, which really helped. They even wanted them signed!

The following night was our formal reunion dinner. I had forgotten it was being held at the old Elks Lodge, which happened to be by the airport at the far end of town. My husband and I drove down the freeway, took the last exit, and headed toward the airport, just like the main character had in my reading. The city had changed so much since the 1970s, but the view from the airport was exactly as portrayed in the book.

"Tony analyzed Salinas from the freeway overpass. The city seemed to be laid out with all the forethought of a cow pissing on a flat rock. The Salinas Valley sprawled between two ranges of rolling hills, the Gabilans for the sunrise and the Santa Lucias for the sunset.

Tony guided his yellow convertible off Salinas' last freeway exit and pulled over for a cheap fill-up. He unfolded his cramped legs and his empty wallet. The view from the gas pump consisted of an airport and endless rows of crops beyond the city limits. He shackled up at the Overnighter Lodge by the Fast Gas at the end of the runway. The next day, he cruised down the barren road toward Salinas Municipal Airport."

For a few brief moments, it was if I had stepped into my own book. I was living the dream of being a real author. What had started as an intimidating experience turned out to be one of the more memorable moments of my life. I'm sure I'll still feel some trepidation at subsequent readings, but I'll have the knowledge that it can be an exhilarating experience too.

The Testament of Gulnoor
Abridged Chapter from
The Sinceria Cookbook Extraordinaire: A Recipe for Life
Geraldine Cynthia Forté (published 2021)

I married early, age 16, to a man named, Soban whose name means “to return to Allah or to repent”. My Soban was unfortunately caught in the dichotomy of being a traditional Afghan man and a man of the American culture. He worked hard, but he always felt that he was limited in his opportunities due to his religion.

His style of clothing was not accepted by the other workers, nor was his beard, and his reluctance to eat certain food items in the workplace cafeteria. He brought his noon time meal from home, and he would pray a Muslim prayer prior to eating. The mentality of the coworkers was so low that they admonished him as being flippant and unapproachable. He began to drink socially after work hours to appease his feelings of isolation during the day. He also began to vent his frustrations upon his wife, me.

In Muslim culture, it is perfectly acceptable for a husband to physically chastise his wife. If the chastisement became too aggressive, the wife could consult her father, brother and other men in the family who would avail themselves to “talk” with the husband.

These “talks” only ignited Soban’s anger and disillusionment with himself and his predicament. His physical attacks became more frequent and more destructive. Finally, when I could take no more, I ran away to the abode of my parents.

Tearfully, I explained to my eldest brother, Bahlul, and my father that I was mortally afraid of my

husband and feared that my life was in danger. The bruises on my face, arms and hands were nothing in comparison to the bruises on my back that my mother required me to show to them. I showed them where two of my back molars had been knocked out by repeated punches of his fist to my face.

This time when the men met with my husband, the “talk” took on a different countenance. My father and brother severely beat Soban and promised “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”. For each bruise that he inflicted upon my body, they would inflict two bruises upon his body. For each tooth that was dislodged from my mouth due to his abuse, they would dislodge two teeth from his mouth.

Soban let them know that he was not afraid of them and that what transpired in his house between he and his wife was no longer any of their business. Seeing that the “talk” was not to garner any type of resolution, my father and brother firmly threatened to end his life if he ever admonished me physically in that manner again.

It was exactly one week later when Soban encountered Bahlul alone in the parking lot of a grocery store, confronted him inquiring how brave he was to face him alone without the father, pulled out a dagger, and plunged it into my brother’s chest! He ran away from the scene, leaving my dear brother to bleed on the asphalt. Other shoppers had witnessed the ordeal, and the police and medics were called immediately. My dear brother, Bahlul whose names means “one who smiles often or one who does a lot of good deeds” died that day. He would never smile or do a good deal again.

I was in shock! I was still in shock during the traditional Afghan funeral service that typically lasts several hours. The men had the task of washing my dear brother’s body with water and then wrapping him with clean white cloth. They had to be very careful because if even one tear drop had fallen on Bahlul, they would have to start the cleansing routine all over again. Bahlul was then put on the traditional carrier and taken to the

graveyard followed by the relatives, friends, neighbors and scholars.

When Bahlul's coffin was lifted above the shoulders of the men and passed from hand to hand, I thought that my heart would stop. I wanted my heart to stop, but it kept on beating. Every man there desired to put the carrier on his shoulder for the journey to the grave site where after prayers, Bahlul was put into his grave peacefully with his head facing Mecca. After my brother's body was buried, there was the traditional funeral at the mosque. For 40 days there was unending grieving and prayers.

Bird Brains *Chris Weillert*

My peaceful morning was disturbed by squawking coming from the sky. A hideous noise that I became all too familiar with. The damn crows were flying in circles over my house. This being a new level of harassment by these hooligans.



I knew if I managed to make peace with them, they might forgive me. Their beef is that I am rude to shoe them off when all they are doing is hanging out in my yard. They started defecating on my car along non-stop pecking on my roof.

When their leader flew down and sat on a tree branch in front of my home, I felt inclined to apologize for my behavior. Instead, I doubled down and threw a stick at him. He turned his head with his big black eyeball peering at me and laughed because of my feeble throw fell short. Okay, the war was on. I wanted to send them back to the witches they belonged to, but I needed a plan.

Soban was eventually captured trying to leave the United States via Mexico, and he is in custody. He has been charged with Felony Manslaughter, and he may spend the rest of his life in prison. I don't care what happens to him. If I could only go backwards in time, I would make different decisions that may not have resulted in the death of my loving brother.

I tell this story to you because you do not have to accept someone physically assaulting you. The laws in this country protect you from this type of violence. Do not call upon the loved ones in your family to do the job of the magistrates. Let the offender be prosecuted to the full extent that the law of this country will apply. Let your loved ones continue to live and love in peace.

All the suggestions mention deterring their presence by removing their food source. Well, that would be impossible because taking out my lawn wasn't an option the family wanted me to perform. I read about crows not liking shiny and reflective objects. Now I finally realized why a neighbor had shimmering computer disks hanging in their fruit trees. I once scoffed at those neighbors for trying a cockamamie endeavor which looked not only ridiculous but also like a waste of time.

I soon found myself riffling through my CD collection of any old music which would be easy to part with. My CDs of bagpipe tunes and karaoke hits would be the first to be sacrificed. Those were painless choices. Next up on the chopping block, would be any music from the 1980s that displayed album covers of musical acts with absurd haircuts. I gathered a group of CDs that not only would irritate the crows but also downsize a possession destined as garage sale fodder.

I hung the plastic disks in the tree in the cover of night so they would be waiting for crows in the morning sun. In addition, I didn't want my neighbors to see me doing this and having to explain why I would get rid of such good music.

The next morning, there wasn't any sign of the crows. So far, the *Psychedelic Furs* did their job in

keeping the gang of infuriating peckers away. Low and behold the solution worked well for the next five days. All of my self-praise for fixing another household problem ended on day seven. I went outside in the morning to discover my lawn was laden with tufts of grass. The crows came back with a vengeance while looking for grubs in the soil below my green grass. My neighbor came by while I picked up the remnants of the crow food orgy. He asked me why I put CDs in my tree followed by a hearty chuckle. I responded by stating the CD idea came from him. When he got done giggling like a schoolgirl, he said, "I have fruit trees, you have an elm. Those crows are smarter than you." Whatever omen I had placed on me would continue.

*Psychedelic Furs are a post-punk band founded in London in February 1977.

E FOR ELEPHANT EMU EGG

Shipra Shukla



Once upon a time there was a very large animal who had a tail at both ends, one in the front and one at the back. Isn't that funny? How do

we know which is the front and which is the back when the front is called a trunk? Shouldn't it be at the back? Anyway, let's go on. So, this very large creature also had very large ears which were as big as fans and when they flapped, it did keep him cool.

One day the elephant decided to walk to the river and drink some water as it was a very hot day, and it was feeling very thirsty. As this creature with the very large body, two flapping ears and two tails was walking to the river, he met a very big bird who was sitting on the ground. It was funny looking bird with a big beak, large eyes and a big bunch of feathers just like a cushion.

The bird looked at the big creature walking by and started laughing. It said, "Hello! What are you? Are you a mountain or are you a building?"

"Oh! But what are those two things hanging, one in the front and one at the back. How do you know which way you are coming or going? And what are those two big flapping fans on either side of your head? Can they make you fly? But that's not possible because your body is too big even for those fans. You must be an alien! Ha ha ha!"

The elephant looked at the funny bird sitting on the ground and said with dignity, "I'm an elephant. I'm very strong but very gentle or I would have wound my "thing" which is actually a trunk around your neck and sent you flying into the air which is actually what you should be doing since you look like a bird. Why are you sitting on the ground, pray?"



The bird said, "I'm an emu and I'm sitting on my eggs. They will hatch in eight weeks. Till then I'll sit here, losing weight as I cannot leave them as other animals can get to them."

The elephant said, "You must be a strange bird because you are sitting on the ground and not in a nest like other birds. You cannot fly like other birds and, if I'm not mistaken, you are a papa emu and not the mama and you are hatching eggs!"

The emu felt very embarrassed hearing what the elephant had to say about him and said, "Maybe, I should not have made fun of you without thinking."

The elephant laughed good-naturedly and said, "It's all right. We can still be friends. I'm going to the river to drink water, and I know you can't leave your eggs, so I'll bring back some water in this "thing" or trunk".

So the elephant did just that. He brought a lot of water in his trunk and sprayed some on the emu too cool him down and some in a hole in the ground for him to drink.

The elephant then went on his way lumbering on his pillar like legs. The emu looked at him from behind and blinked his eyes and thought to himself, "But how does the elephant know which way to go? He has a tail on two ends! Maybe, he just follows his instinct."

CONTESTS AND MARKETS

Carolyn Donnell

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

You can also check other branches for their current contests, submission, anthology, etc. requests. See a list of other CWC branches at www.calwriters.org/cwcbranches/

Members of our Facebook group – South Bay Writers Club-see contest postings and other notifications on the Facebook group.

Listings are for information only. NO VETTING has been done by South Bay Writers Club. 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 any experience you have with them. Good or bad.

WRITERS BEWARE site. Check out this website for warnings about contests, submissions, etc. <https://www.sfw.org/other-resources/for-authors/writer-beware/>

Local (Publishers and Editors) and Other CWC Branch RESOURCES:

SF/Peninsula Branch. If you are a dual member, they are looking to the next Fault Zone The theme is: Detachment.

Submissions open Sep 1 — Dec 31, 2022. <https://www.cwc-sfpeninsula.org/next-issue>

North State Writers They are planning a fourth anthology. The last one accepted all CWC members. Keep an eye on the status at <http://www.northstatewriters.com/nsw-anthologies.html>

Fremont Area Writers lists many resources on their page under Writers Resources tab <https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/resources-writers/>

Redwood Writers Sometime welcome other CWC branch members. Check <https://redwoodwriters.org/contests/>

Catamaran Literary Reader-West Coast quarterly literary/visual arts journal. Fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and fine art. Submissions year-round with quarterly production cycle. www.catamaranliteraryreader.com/

AWP Association of Writers and Writing Programs. See at <https://www.awpwriter.org/contests/overview>

West Trade Review Our Kelly Harrison is an associate at <https://westtradereview.submittable.com/submit>

The Literary Nest-A local online publication. See details for future submissions at www.theliterarynest.com/ Also visual art in high res .jpeg, .gif, or .png format to theliterarynest@gmail.com

Other Contests and Submissions:

Writers Digest Contests. See details for all at <https://www.writersdigest.com/wd-competitions/writing-competitions-pricing-and-deadlines> - SHORT SHORT STORY COMPETITION Deadline: 12/15/22 11:59 PST

WOW! Women on Writing now hosts two quarterly contests: one for fiction writers-flash fiction and one for nonfiction writers-essays. See schedules and information at www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php

Palette Poetry -See submissions calendar at <https://www.palettepoetry.com/calendar/>

Sequester Literary Journal: Theme Reprints Fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Previously published! Deadline 12/15/22. <https://www.sequester.org/theme-reprints>

Winning Writers – Check out their contest sat <https://winningwriters.com/our-contests>

Chicken Soup For The Soul has ongoing submission requests. Currently looking for Funny stories/poems. More information at <https://www.chickensoup.com/story-submissions/story-guidelines>

The Write Life-31 Free Writing Contests:
<https://www.thewritelife.com/writing-contests>

Poets & Writers contests/deadlines:
www.pw.org/content/upcoming_contest_deadlines

Water Dragon Publishing: Check out their website to see what they accept and guidelines.
<https://waterdragonpublishing.com/submissions/>

The Writer Magazine- Lists contests, articles, resources and newsletter.. www.writermag.com/contests/

Booksie 2022 Short Story Competition. all genres and themes. Grand prize winner \$500 cash award Two runners-up \$100 cash. One free week of Promotes Must be a Booksie member but membership is free. See details at <https://www.booksie.com/contest/the-booksie-2022-short-story-competition-28>

The Vincent Brothers Review-Fiction, non-fiction, poetry. Pays a minimum of \$25 per accepted item.
www.vincentbrothersreview.org/submissions/

The Lumiere Review. Accepts poems and prose from all writers, emerging writers, as well as those who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA, or disabled. One \$100 prize each for prose and poetry. No fees. www.lumierejournal.com/

Literary Mama Open for submission year round. Submissions by anyone who identifies as a mother, including those hoping to conceive and those who have lost a child. They also occasionally publish work by fathers. Only previously unpublished work. Details at <https://literarymama.com/submissions>

OTHER RESOURCES

(* = On both the Internet and Facebook.)

MWA NorCal Chapter *-Mystery Writers of America – www.mwanorcal.org/

Women's National Book Association: San Francisco Chapter * www.wnba-sfchapter.org

The Write Life *- Includes L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future contest and 30+ others
www.thewritelife.com/writing-contests/

Hidden River Arts-Book award deadlines listed at www.hiddenriverarts.wordpress.com/

New Pages-lists many contests www.newpages.com/

Poets & Writers * www.pw.org/grants
www.pw.org/content/upcoming_contest_deadlines

Funds For Writers-Contests, submissions, grants, etc. See www.fundsforwriters.com/contests/

Freedom With Writing *-submissions, contests, jobs, and more. www.freedomwithwriting.com/
<https://www.freedomwithwriting.com/freedom/uncategorized/50-1000-for-short-stories-10-calls-for-submissions/>

Authors Publish *-<http://www.authorspublish.com/>

The Best Writing Contests curated by Reedsy
www.blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/

Kosmos Quarterly FDR and the Four Freedoms | Deadline, November 15, 2022 Essays and

poetry.<https://www.kosmosjournal.org/contribute-to-kosmos-quarterly/>

Monday Markets and Jobs for Writers Erika Dreifus - Each week Practicing Writing shares no-fee, paying markets for writers of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction: competitions, contests, and calls for submissions.
<https://www.erikadreifus.com/2022/09/monday-markets-and-jobs-for-writers-188/>

Jerry Jenkins blog: guide to writing contests and other resources <https://jerryjenkins.com/writing-contests/>

Electric Lit:- For Emerging Writers
www.electricleadership.com/free-or-cheap-resources-for-emerging-writers/

Fanstory: Fanstory requires a subscription (paid) but have many activities
<https://www.fanstory.com/contestsall.jsp>

Trish Hopkinson - A blog with many resources. No Fee submissions, Publishers who accept reprints, etc.

www.trishhopkinson.com/where-to-submit-reprints/

Writer's Relief - Ongoing contests at writersrelief.com/featured-listings-contests-journals-calls-for-submissions/

Prowritingaid: Lists 23 legitimate, high-quality science fiction and fantasy writing contests that you can enter in 2022 and 2023. <https://prowritingaid.com/science-fiction-writing-contests>

Association of Writers and Writing Programs
www.awpwriter.org/contests/overview

Publishedtodeath A blog that lists literary magazines accepting reprints
<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/2016/01/163-literary-magazines-accepting.html>

NewPages.com is news, information, and guides to literary magazines, independent publishers, creative writing programs, writing contests, and more.
www.newpages.com/classifieds/writing-contests

POETRY CONTESTS AND SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER RESOURCES (see regular contest list as well)

Academy of American Poets <https://poets.org/academy-american-poets/american-poets-prizes>

Writing Matters 30 Publishers of Poetry Books & Chapbooks

www.randalssanctuary.wordpress.com/2020/08/11/publishers-of-poetry-books-chapbooks/

Up the Staircase Quarterly-Submit 3-6 poems in a single document. Submit up to 10 .jpgs for art. No previously published poetry, but previously published artwork is okay. www.upthestaircase.org/

The River Heron Editor's Prize Sept 1 - Nov 30.
Winning poet \$500 plus publication.

Four finalists named and published. \$15 fee for up to 3 poems. <https://www.riverheronreview.com/submit>

Crosswinds Poetry. Reading Period: Nov. 1st – Dec. 31st, 2022 Grand Prize: \$1,000.00 2nd: \$500.00 3rd: \$250.00. 7 finalists receive \$50 honorarium.
<https://crosswindspoetry.com/poetry-contest-submissions/>

Poets & Writers Lists poetry and other contests.
https://www.pw.org/content/upcoming_contest_deadlines_43

Also lists over 1200 literary magazines.
www.pw.org/literary_magazines

Poetry Society of America contest
<https://poetrysocietyofamerica.submittable.com/submit>

The Thimble Magazine-A quarterly online journal.
Primarily poetry www.thimblelitmag.com/submissions/

Authors Publish - Poetry Manuscript Publishers No Reading Fees www.authorspublish.com

Poetry Foundation www.poetryfoundation.org

Poetry Pacific-Literary e.zine-2 issues per year.
Published and unpublished.
www.poetrypacific.blogspot.com/

Everywriter-The Best Poetry Prizes. List of poetry prizes and competitions. www.everywritersresource.com/best-poetry-prizes/

Prospectus: A Literary Offering. Submission Periods: June 1st-Aug 31st & Dec 1st-Feb 28th They welcome unpublished or little-published* poets as well short prose pieces and fine-art images. See information at <https://www.prospectusliterary.com/submissions2020.php>

REEDSY lists reputable chapbook contests (some accept prose) <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-make-a-chapbook/>

Some FACEBOOK Poetry Groups * Some of these groups list other contests

- Trish Hopkinson poet *
- No Fee Calls for Poems *
- Poetry Center San Jose-PCSJ
- Poetry Exchange- Willow Glen Poetry Project
- Cupertino Poet Laureate
- Santa Clara County Poet Laureate
- Los Gatos Poet Laureate- Poetry Lounge
- National Poetry Month
- write a poem a day challenge
- Coffee House Perculator Writing Group
- California Poets
- The Academy of American Poets
- Poetry Pacific
- How Writers Write Poetry Community Group
- SF Creative Writing Institute
- drop-in poetry workshops
- Rattle
- Includes online critiques
- .- Institute For Poetic Medicine
- Open Skies Poet

November is National Novel Writing Month!

National Novel Writing Month (often shortened to **NaNoWriMo** [^{\[1\]} /ˈnænəʊ ˈrɑmoʊ/](#)) is a U.S.-based [nonprofit organization](#) that promotes creative writing around the world. Its flagship program is an annual, international [creative writing](#) event in which participants attempt to write a 50,000-word manuscript during the month of November.^[2] Well-known authors write "pep-talks" in order to motivate participants during the month.^[3] The website provides participants, called "Wrimos", with tips for [writer's block](#), information on where local participants are meeting, and an online community of support. Focusing on the length of a work rather than the quality, writers are encouraged to finish their first draft quickly so it can be edited later at their discretion.^[4] The project started in July 1999 with 21 participants.^[5] In 2019, 455,080 participated in the organization's programs.^[6]

Writers wishing to participate first register on the project's website, where they can post profiles and information about their novels, including synopses and excerpts. Regional volunteers called "Municipal Liaisons" help connect local writers, hold in-person and virtual writing events, and provide encouragement

November Calendar of Events

November 4	Open Mic <u>WABaldwin@aol.com</u>
November 8	Election Day! Your Vote Counts!
November 9	SBW Executive Board Meeting <u>pres@southbaywriters.com</u>
November 14	Speaker Meeting featuring Hallie Ephron <u>pres@southbaywriters.com</u>
November 18	Open Mic <u>WABaldwin@aol.com</u>
November 24	Happy Thanksgiving!





***California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
PO Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055***

MAIL TO:



**South Bay Writers
7 pm, Monday, November 14, 2022
“Crash Course on Writing a Mystery”
With Halle Ephron**