

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HER-STORY



Ink Spots



The Newsletter of Fremont Area Writers

The "Centennial" Branch of the California Writers Club

Nancy Guarnera Editor-in-Chief

inkspots@cwc-fremontareawriters.org

Vol. 4 No. 3 March 2025

Visit us at <http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org>



Visual Prompt

Photograph by nguarnera

March General Meeting

* March 22nd * 2 to 4 PM * Zoom *

METAPHOR:

The Poet's Way of Looking at the World

with speaker

Patricia "Pat" Doyne



In school, you may have read "*Fog comes in on little cat feet*" and become aware that words can have meanings beyond the literal. As writers, we want to use all the powers of words to make our writing clear, strong and unforgettable. That means we need to hook into figurative language in all genres—non-fiction and fiction, as well as poetry. Simile, metaphor and personification make exposition more clear, tangible, and relatable.

In this workshop, award-winning poet and FAW member, Pat Doyne will remind us of famous metaphors used in science. She will give examples of metaphor used to enhance plot, characters and setting in fiction, and will encourage participants to create, and then share, metaphors for specific purposes.

This is a chance to experiment with language you might use—or modify—in your own writing. Whether you write memoir or science fiction, metaphor has a place. After all, what is "*the dark side*" but a metaphor?

Pat Doyne is a member of FAW and has served as branch Secretary since 2022. She writes poetry and prose, is an artist, and a Taiko drummer. She earned her MA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State in 1976 with her book of poetry, *Regeneration Isn't Always Spontaneous*. In 2024, Pat joined California Poet Laureate, Lee Herrick and Hayward Poet Laureate, Bruce Roberts for a poetry reading at the Hayward Library.

Her prose and poetry has appeared in various publications: CWC publications – the last three *Literary Reviews*, *Vision and Verse*, *The Smalls*, and several different branch anthologies. Her poetry has recently appeared in the *2024 Northwind Treasury*, and the *2024 Winners' Chapbook* from Voices of Lincoln. Her work has been published in several volumes of San Leandro Writer's anthology *Everything Has Its Place*, and in *Ekphrastic Workbook 2023* and *2024*. In addition, Pat's poetry has won awards from Dancing Poetry Contests, Ina Coolbrith grade contests, Fremont Cultural Arts Council, and Pen Women. She is a regular contributor to the online magazine *Synchronized Chaos*.

This presentation is FREE to everyone. To get your link for this event, email a request with "FAW Zoom" in your Subject line to scottfrombayside@yahoo.com. You'll receive a link on or before the day of the meeting.

You can learn more about **Fremont Area Writers (FAW)** at cwc-fremontareawriters.org. FAW is one of 21 branches of the **California Writers Club (CWC)** calwriters.org. All CWC branches welcome new members.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!



President's Message

In like a LION?

As I write this, it's too early to predict, but the way the craziness is happening with the weather these days, it's probably not too far-fetched to anticipate that likelihood.

I hope all of our creative geniuses known as FAW members are using these unprecedented happenings worldwide as fodder and prompts to stoke your imagination fires to maximum levels. No topic can be too over-the-top this year, don't you agree?

TERRY TOSH
FAW President

Let's all get cooking, and make some phenomenal new progress this year. I'd like to see record project launches and great out-

comes for your efforts. Let's dream GIGANTIC this year and shoot for the outer limits of our potential.

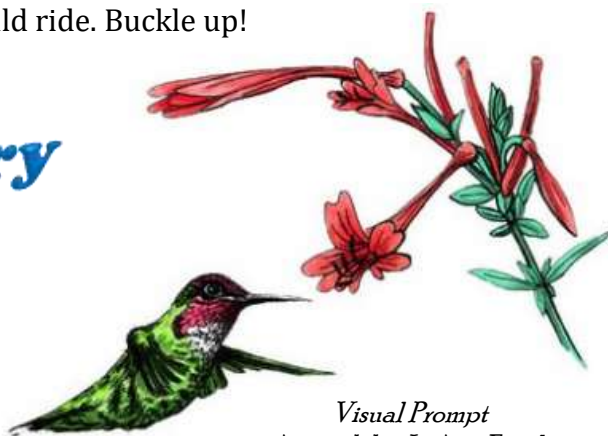
Plenty of new opportunities for participation being shared throughout the CWC branches and associated organizations, so take advantage of as many as you can manage, and I look forward to celebrating with all of you on your victories and beyond. This could be the year that you finish your story, article, poem, book—and see it in print! Imagine that...

Again, let me encourage everyone to expand your horizons and skillsets by volunteering to join committees, board chair positions, mentoring or even being mentored. Let's skyrocket our creative talents to new heights as we zoom through this rapidly moving year, together.

Here's to a wild ride. Buckle up!

Yee-Haw!

Terry



*Visual Prompt
Artwork by Jo Ann Frisch*



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A Word from Our Editor



Nancy Guarnera
Editor *Ink Spots*

Welcome to our March 2025 issue. We hope you enjoy it!

It's March! We've played with time again (someday maybe we won't have to spring forward or fall back), Spring is coming, and folks are picking out green outfits for the 17th and keeping an eye out for leprechauns. Lots of people are fasting, or at least giving something up for a period of time, and celebrating holy days associated with these rituals.

For me, the most memorable thing about March, is that it's Women's History Month. I prefer to use Women's Her-story Month, for reasons that seem obvious to me. If they're not obvious to you, start by reading **page 13** in this issue. If you still have questions, send me an email and I'll do my best to explain. In the meantime, I hope some (if not all) of you will spend some time this month exploring the contributions women have made to humanity and share what you discover with others. As with his-story, if women's stories are not told, they will be forgotten. In all of human history, there may not have been anyone as accomplished as Hildegard von Bingen, a 12th century

Benedictine Abbess, who could easily have put Da Vinci and Michelangelo to shame had she not died and been forgotten until the 20th century. Her legacy is vast; it runs the gamut from writing books and composing music to designing and overseeing the construction of two abbeys along the Rhine River. In her 70s, she went on a walking tour around Europe giving public speeches about religious corruption when it was against the law for women to speak in public. These are mere scratches in the surface of her contributions to human culture. If you don't know about this woman, she is worth every minute you can spend learning about her.

Also in this issue is a new section — **\$\$\$ Contests \$\$\$** — which will be devoted entirely to pending writing contests. In this issue, some of the deadlines are looming, some are coming up in late spring and early summer. If you've been thinking about submitting work to a contest, check out **pages 14 to 17**. This section will continue with deletions and additions as they happen. Another new section, **Info-Nation**, made its debut in last month's issue. It will focus on information that lives outside the realm of publications, webinars, writing organizations, etc. that you'll find in Notes from the World. This is general information of interest to writers. For example, last month's information submitted by Tish Davidson included an article on scammers who prey on writers and a second piece about things no longer covered by copyright in 2025 and are now in the public domain. For those of you who may have missed it in last month's issue, you can find it reprinted on **page 18** in this one. If you have information relevant to writers in general, please submit it for possible publication. Last but not least, look for our four new members on **page 12**. We're growing folks! If you have the opportunity, please help us make our new members feel welcome. **NG**

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

(Please see attachment with complete guidelines in separate email.)

DEADLINE: the 10th of the month prior to publication (March 10th for April's issue)

Please submit all submissions as attachments • Use a separate email for each type of submission

Send all submissions to: inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org

Make sure your name is on each piece you are submitting not just in your email

WORD doc or dox 12 pt Cambria for prose & 12 pt Calibri for poetry

JPEGs for artwork and photos (300 dpi)

FAW – March Meetings

Fremont Area Writers

“Fourth Saturday”

Membership Mtg on Zoom

Saturday March 22nd 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Meeting is open to CWC/FAW members and the public and writers of all skill levels are welcome

Speaker: Pat Doyne Poet, Writer, Artist, Taiko drummer (p.2)

*For details on Zooming, contact Scott Davidson at
scottfrombayside@yahoo.com*

Fremont Area Writers

“Monday before 4th Saturday”

Board Meeting on Zoom

Monday March 17th 4:00 PM

Meeting is open to FAW members to observe their Board in action. Comments and questions from members will be addressed at the end of the meeting, with prior notice.

*For details on Zooming, contact Scott Davidson at
scottfrombayside@yahoo.com*

FAW – March Meetings

Fremont Area Writers

“Second Saturday”

Social Write-In on Zoom

Saturday March 8th 2:00 – 3:30 PM

*Get to know others through personal writing with prompts.
Members receive a Zoom invite. Non-members should
contact Scott Davidson (see below) for an invite.*

*For details on Zooming, contact Scott Davidson at
scottfrombayside@yahoo.com*

Fremont Area Writers

“Fourth Monday”

Writers’ Salon on Zoom

Monday March 24th 7:00 – 9:00 PM

*Open to FAW members and the public.
Share, listen and support writers as they read their work.
For a Zoom invitation link contact Tony Pino (see below).*

*For details on Zooming, contact Tony Pino
up.dragonfly.com@gmail.com or 510-745-0761*

KUDOS – *Members' News*

If you have an accomplishment related to your writing, or some other creative aspect of your life, and would like to share it with FAW members in this space, please send it to inkspots@cwc-fremontareawriters.org, or submit it through the **Shout Out for Ink Spots** link at cwc-fremontareawriters.org. Just scroll down the home page until you reach the red **Shout Out** link and click on it. Please do your best to keep it to **100 words or less**. Put **FAW — Shout Out — Your Name** in the Subject field of your email to us. If you don't, your email may get lost in the mail. Thanks!

KUDOS to Jackie Freitas who celebrated her 90th birthday on February 14th. When asked how achieving that particular milestone felt, she replied, "Being 90 is such a gift and so different from being 89! I'm both amazed and so grateful for having reached 90." She is now dreaming of publishing a book of her poems and would love suggestions, if anyone has something they'd like to share. **Happy Belated 90th Birthday and Congratulations, Jackie!**

KUDOS to Evelyn LaTorre who, on the February 19th was featured on CBS-TV News programs speaking about Mission Peak Village, which is to be built in the Irvington area of Fremont. The cohousing community consists of 32 future condo owners who will know their neighbors before they move in and will have 3 to 4 meals together in the complex's dining room. Evelyn appears in the middle of this 3-minute segment. To watch this segment, copy and paste this link in your browser [youtube.com/watch?v=18Atg1Vb8q4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18Atg1Vb8q4).

Evelyn will be the keynote speaker on April 4 for the Pen Women (Pat Doyne, FAW Secretary, and Jo Ann Frisch are both members) composed of artists, writers, and a musician or two. Her topic will be, "Write Your Memoir." The group meets in Castro Valley. **Congratulations, Evelyn!**



Visual Prompt

Photograph by Evelyn LaTorre

FAW & CWC Information

— PLEASE READ —

FAW Needs You **Help Wanted** FAW Needs You

The following non-elected Board positions need to be filled:

Hospitality Chair

welcomes, introduces, contacts, & encourages newcomers to join FAW

Service Coordinator

finds & assigns helpers to assist FAW committee heads

Membership Chair

collects new member info & updates CWC data base, coordinates w/ FAW Treasurer

Please speak to a Board member if you are interested in one of these positions or in being of service to FAW in some other capacity. Check the last two pages in this issue for contact info.

Consider advertising your book(s) in the CWC Bulletin!

The CWC Bulletin is evolving!

The Bulletin will be published 3 times in 2025.

As many as 1,800 people statewide...maybe more...can see your Ad

NEW DEADLINE is April 1 for issue out on April 15

Ad Sizes and Prices Vary

For more info go to – <https://calwriters.org/bulletin/#ad>

The Best of the Best: CWC Literary Review & Vision and Verse

calwriters.org/literaryreview/

calwriters.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/VisionVerse.pdf

Now available to members to download in PDF format for FREE

XXXXXXXXXX



**NEW
FROM
CWC**



THE SMALLS

The Smalls includes selections from the California Writers Club 2024 “Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose.”

Now available for \$10 on Amazon

FAW & CWC Information

– PLEASE READ –

2025 Jack London Award for Service – Branch Level

Nominations are Now Open

The California Writers Club was started in 1909. There were many literary luminaries of that time who were in some way connected to the organization. Jack London was an honorary member. Every odd year the Jack London Award is bestowed upon a member who has given exemplary service to their branch. Members are encouraged to offer nominations to the Board, which votes to choose that year's recipient. A member can only receive the award once. Generally, the awards are given in October at a special CWC event to honor the recipients. Since CWC and its branches are volunteer organizations, (*none of us are paid*) this award (*and the Ina Coolbrith Award for exemplary service at the state level bestowed in even years*) is an important way to acknowledge members' commitment and thank them for volunteering.

This year Scott Davidson (2023) and Nancy Guarnera (2021) are taking nominations for the award since both are prior recipients and no longer eligible. If you are an FAW member and would like to nominate someone for this award, please contact Scott Davidson (scottfrombayside@yahoo.com) and/or Nancy Guarnera (nguarnera16@comcast.net) and let them know who you would like to nominate and why. **Please submit your nominations by March 31.**

Previous FAW Awardees are: *Bob Garfinkle (2009), Myrla Raymundo (2011), Carol Hall (2013), Art Carey (2015), Shirley Ferrante (2017), Jan Small (2019), Nancy J Guarnera (2021), and Scott Davidson (2023).*



DEADLINE: MARCH 15

Art and Photo Contest

VISION & VERSE II

A Fusion of Art and Writing

- ❖ *A CWC members-only Art and Photography Contest is open to all CWC members.*
- ❖ *Winning art and photos will appear as visual inspiration for CWC's second ekphrastic book.*
- ❖ *\$10 submission fee for each piece of art or photograph submitted*
- ❖ *Submissions must be in jpeg format*
- ❖ *Go to: <https://calwriters.org/vision-and-verse-ii/> for more info and additional guidelines*

FAW & CWC Information

2025 FAW GENERAL MEETINGS TOPICS & SPEAKERS

MARCH 22ND 2-4PM ZOOM

Metaphor: The Poet's Way of Looking at the World

Pat Doyne, Poet, Writer, FAW member

APRIL 26TH 2-4PM ZOOM

Writing Dialog to Reveal Character and Move the Story Along

Robert Dean Johnson, Author, Teacher
www.rdeanwriter.com

MAY 24TH 2-4PM ZOOM

When and How to Use Subplots

Cab Tran, Writer, Publisher, Teacher

JUNE 28TH 2-4PM ZOOM

Memoir Writing & Business Fundamentals

Mary Beth O'Conner, Author, Teacher
www.junkietojudge.com

JULY Picnic TBA

AUGUST 23RD 2-4PM on ZOOM

Beat the Bots: A Writers Guide to Surviving & Thriving in the Age of AI

Jane Cleland, Writer, Editor, Teacher
www.janecleland.com

SEPTEMBER 27TH 2-4PM ZOOM

Querying: What Agents Want to Hear in a Query

Irene Zabytko, Writer, Novelist, Filmmaker

OCTOBER 25TH 2-4PM ZOOM

Point of View (POV)

Lyndsey Ellis, Writer, Novelist, Teacher
www.lyndseyellis.com

NOVEMBER 22ND 2-4PM ZOOM

Writing Characters with Emotional Resonance

Erin Swann, Writer, Novelist, Teacher
www.swannscribbles.com

DECEMBER Holiday Party TBA

ALL General Meetings are on the 4TH SATURDAY of the month.

To receive a link to zoom meetings, send a request with "ZOOM LINK" in the Subject line to the email below, and you will receive a link during the week before the meeting.

scottfrombayside@yahoo.com

PLEASE NOTE: While it's not required...if a topic is of interest to you, consider checking out the speaker's website, if available, before the meeting. There may be gold waiting for you there!

FAW & CWC Information

CWC REPORT

FEBRUARY 16, 2025 MEETING

Submitted by Evelyn LaTorre, CWC Representative

MEMBERSHIP

The California Writers Club has added 450 new members over the past year. We've also lost members, so the total number (by counting only once the 72 members who belong to two branches) is 1,895. Branches range in size from 40 to 185 members. Fremont has 47 members. CWC is fiscally solvent, and our non-profit status was barely maintained resulting from a changed CWC mailing address.

BRANCH BENEFITS

If branches need financial assistance for speakers, workshops, or other activities, contact Treasurer, Bill Baldwin and President, Roger Lubeck and complete a form requesting up to \$250. Any branch's activity would need to be open to and benefit all branches.

JACK LONDON AWARD LUNCHEON

The luncheon will likely be on Sunday, October 19, at a hotel in Burlingame or San Jose. Branches need to send the names of their nominees to Roger soon.

CWC SURVEY RESULTS

Twenty per cent of our membership, or 587 members responded, which is good and more than a sampling. When the total results are compiled, they will be sent to members from the President's office. The survey gives an overview of our membership: 1) how long respondents have belonged, 2) how many publications they have (from 0 to 15 books in the past 10 years), 3) opinions regarding CWC publications (i.e. the *Lit Review*, *Vision and Verse*, *The Bulletin*) such as a desire for greater diversity of topics, etc., and 4) how satisfied members are with their branches and CWC in general.

THE BULLETIN

Bill Van Patten, from the San Joaquin Valley Writers, will take over compiling the CWC Bulletin from Joyce Kreig. He envisions a shorter publication sent out three times a year. He's requesting two to three associate editors who would be responsible for a "Member Highlights" and an "Upcoming Events" column, gathering a "Featured Essay" about writing, and finding a "Featured Creative Work," for each issue. Bill also envisions a "tidbits, tips and more" column. The next issue, expected after April 1, will spotlight the results from the survey.

NOMINATIONS FOR CWC POSITIONS

A nominations chair and committee are needed to search for a new President, VPs, and Member-at-Large. The new terms will begin July 1, 2025.

Mark Your Calendar

2nd Thursdays: "Writers Helping Writers"

Sponsored by the SF Peninsula Branch of the California Writers Club

"Playing with Poetry"

with **Kate Adams**

Poet * Writer * CWC-SFP Member

When: Thursday, March 13th 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Where: San Mateo Public Library, 55 W. Third Avenue

At the October 2024 "Writers Helping Writers," poet Kate Adams had us take a close look at line breaks and the lines themselves. She displayed lines and used them to build a quatrain. And she had participants use their own lines to create blank verse.

What type of verse will she play with in March? Find out. Come play with poetry and receive some very valuable poetic energy.

Kate Adams is a Bay Area writer living in Mountain View, California. Her work has appeared in *Centennial Review*, *Zyzyva* and the *Sand Hill Review*. Her poetry and fiction have won awards from the Massachusetts Artists' Foundation. Learn more about her and her poetry at Mad Manor Press.

Kate is currently serving as poetry editor for *Fault Zone*, the CWC San Francisco peninsula branch anthology, which has won national awards.

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting is open to anyone. Membership in CWC is not required.

FOR MORE INFO: cwc-sfpeninsula.org Events Menu

Welcome!

New FAW Members

Karen Haughey – Art

Irene Marshall – Resumes and Blogs

Richard McCallum – Unknown

Marla Zarrow – Fiction and Poetry

CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HER-STORY

A Celebration of Amazing Women

Throughout human her-story, women have been making significant contributions in all fields of human endeavor—art, literature, music, politics, science, philosophy, medicine...the list is endless. Women have been there working, creating, inventing, exploring side-by-side with their male counterparts; though often times receiving no credit for their work and typically far less pay, if any. It's as if women were, and still are, invisible. Writer Virginia Woolf acknowledged this invisibility in her well-known quote, "*For most of history, Anonymous was a woman.*"

The more we know about the contributions that women have made throughout time, the richer our own lives become. If you haven't taken some time to get to know women of accomplishment in your own field, or in other fields that you are fascinated by, women's her-story month is a great time to start. Check your local library and your television for special events focusing on women. Talk to the women you know—friends, family and acquaintances—ask them about their lives...you may be amazed at who that woman is sitting across from you, and what she's accomplished in her life.

Here's a list of some of my favorite women from different fields, time-periods and cultural backgrounds. Perhaps some of these amazing women will interest you enough to find out more about them and others. *ng*

HYPATIA (c.350–370 to March 415AD) Neoplatonist philosopher, writer, astronomer, and mathematician • lived in Alexandria, Egypt a major city in the Eastern Roman Empire • taught philosophy and mathematics • influential with the political elite • known as a wise counselor • brutally murdered by a mob of Christians acting on rumors that she engaged in satanic practices • murder was likely politically motivated

VICTORIA (CALIFORNIA CLAFLIN) WOODHULL (September 23, 1838 to June 9, 1927) Suffragist, writer, politician, feminist • a leader of the American women's suffrage movement • ran for president of the United States in the 1872 election • nominated by the Equal Rights Party • women could not vote until 1920 • she and her sister were the first female stockbrokers • 1870 opened brokerage firm on Wall Street • had three husbands • advocate for "free love" – meaning the freedom to marry, divorce and bear children without social restriction or government interference • magnetic healer, spiritualist, journalist, publisher, editor

NTOZAKE SHANGE (October 18, 1948 to October 27, 2018) award-winning African American playwright, author, poet • best known for her Obbi Award-winning play *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*, a 20-part "*choreopoem*" which she coined to describe her groundbreaking dramatic form combining poetry, dance, music, and song • Black feminist– addressed issues of Black power and race in her work • founding poet of the Nuyorican Poets Café • taught creative writing at university level

JULIA MORGAN (January 20, 1872 to February 2, 1957) award-winning American architect and engineer • designed as many as 800 buildings in California including: Los Angeles Examiner building, the YWCA in SF's Chinatown, Riverside Art Museum, Asilomar Conference Grounds, Mills College El Campanil, the Wynton Hearst Estate in Siskiyou county, and Hearst Castle at San Simeon now a CA State Park, and CA & National Historic Landmark • first woman admitted to the architecture program at l'Ecole nationale superieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris • pioneered the aesthetic use of reinforced concrete in her structures, proved to have superior seismic performance in the 1906 & 1989 earthquakes • first woman to obtain a CA architecture license & to receive American Institute of Architects highest award, the AIA Gold Medal

ST. HILDEGARD VON BINGEN (1098-1179) German Christian mystic • Benedictine abbess • polymath proficient in philosophy, musical composition, herbology, medieval literature, cosmology, medicine, biology, theology, natural history • counseled nobility throughout Europe • known for her spiritual concept *Viriditas*– "*greenness*"–the cosmic life force infusing Nature, and *Sapientia*–Divine Wisdom–specifically Feminine Divine Wisdom • composed *Ordo Vertutum* ("Order of the Virtues) in 1151, today, considered by some to be a precursor to opera • in her 70s toured Europe on foot speaking out against corrupt clergy at a time when it was against the law for women to speak in public • wrote & illustrated major theological texts • **ROCK STAR/GOAT**

\$\$\$ CONTESTS \$\$\$



TOPIC
"Love
Makes
The
World
Go
'Round'"

Fremont Cultural Arts Council Flash Fiction Contest

at Half Price Books in Fremont

Saturday, April 19th

10 AM to 5 PM

Winners announced after 5:30 PM

Submission Deadline: April 14th

Entries must be received by Midnight

By email: date & time stamped By snail mail: postmarked

Guidelines



Entrants may submit up to 3 pieces of poetry or prose. NO FEE! Only one award per person.

Entries should be in 12 pt. type or larger (easy to read) and must fit on one side of an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper when printed.

Word count: 300 words or less, including the title. Entries with no title will be assigned one.

No names should be included on the front of your entry. If emailing, include your name in the email. If snail mailing, write name on the back of the entry or on a second piece of paper.

Entries will be judged by the public visiting the bookstore that day. Cash and gift card prizes.

Entries should be appropriate for a general readership, which may include children.

Please, nothing offensive. No plagiarism. FCAC reserves the right to disqualify work that does not adhere to the guidelines.

Email submissions to: Fremont Cultural Arts Council at fcacwriters@gmail.com

Snail mail to: Fremont Cultural Arts Council or FCAC, PO Box 1314, Fremont, CA 94538

For additional info about the FCAC Flash Fiction Contest go to: fremontculturalartscouncil.org

\$\$\$ CONTESTS \$\$\$

Narrative Magazine

Winter 2025 Story Contest

\$2,500 1st place – Deadline: March 31st

www.narrativemagazine.com/winter-2025-story-contest

For general submissions to the magazine:

www.narrativemagazine.com/submit-your-work

Six-Word Stories

www.narrativemagazine.com/sixwords

Story of the Week

www.narrativemagazine.com/story-week-guidelines

Poem of the Week

www.narrativemagazine.com/poem-week-guidelines

Photography

www.narrativemagazine.com/photography

DEADLINES: Continuous...check your category

TCK Publishing.com

TCK Publishing Mission Statement

“To build a sustainable book publishing company that helps as many authors as possible fulfill their dreams.”

Our mission is to help all of our clients earn a full-time income from book royalties.

2025 TCK Publishing Poetry Awards Contest • Deadline: 6/30/2025

Prize: \$1,000 honorarium and publication on TCK Publishing website

TCK has various contests throughout the year and accepts submissions of both fiction — all genres and markets — and non-fiction.

FREE classes and webinars

<https://www.tckpublishing.com>

\$\$\$ CONTESTS \$\$\$

THE Wolfe Pack + Alfred Hitchcock's
MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Proudly Announce

THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL Black Orchid Novella Award Contest

ACCEPTING ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS!

Each entry must be an original, unpublished work of fiction in the traditional deductive style exemplified by the Nero Wolfe series that:

- Does not include characters from the original series
- Emphasizes the deductive skills of the sleuth
- Contains no overt sex or violence



**FIRST PRIZE: \$1,000 and publication in
Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine***

Entries must be 15,000 to 20,000 words in length, and must be submitted by May 31, 2025 • Please visit www.BlackOrchidNovella.com for official rules, procedures, and guidelines. • The winner will be announced at The Wolfe Pack's Annual Black Orchid Banquet in December 2025. • With questions, contact Jane K. Cleland: jane@janeclendland.com • *If no acceptable candidates are received, AHMM and The Wolfe Pack reserve the right to declare no winner in any given year.

\$\$\$ CONTESTS \$\$\$

WERGLE FLOMP HUMOR POETRY CONTEST

First prize - \$2,000 Second prize - \$500 Third prize - \$250

Top 13 poems published online

Winner receives 2-year Duotrope gift certificate (\$100 value)

NO FEE to enter

Contest welcomes published and unpublished work.

Your poem may have up to 250 lines. One poem only, please.

Deadline: April 1, 2025

Submit at <https://winningwriters.com/our-contests/wergle-flomp-humor-poetry-contest-free>



NORTH STREET BOOK PRIZE

Awarded to for self-published or hybrid published books



PRIZES:

Grand Prize - \$10,000

First prize Top Prizes in each category - \$1,000

1 honorable Mention in each category - \$500

All prizes include additional free marketing services

SUBMISSION FEE: \$85 per book

CATEGORIES: *Mainstream/Literary Fiction, Genre Fiction, Creative Nonfiction & Memoir, Poetry, Children's Picture Books, Middle Grade, Art Books, (see website for exclude categories)*

DEADLINE: *July 1, 2025*

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES:

https://winningwriters.com/our-contests/north-street-book-prize?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=North%20250301&utm_content=North%20250301+CID_56fd473ac6dc5758e91bdffefe7082ef&utm_source=&utm_term=North%20Street%20contest

***“Create dangerously, for people who read dangerously.
...[Write] knowing in part that no matter how trivial your
words may seem, someday, somewhere someone
may risk his or her life to read them.”***

— Edwidge Danticat

INFO – Nation

WARNING:

Scammers Preying on Writers Is on the Rise

by Tish Davidson

There has been an uptick in scammers preying on self-published and aspiring writers. Most of these scams are based overseas leaving little recourse to writers who have been scammed and lost money. Before you sign anything or pay anyone money to publish your book, represent you to agents, publicize your book, or sign you to a contract, check **Scam Alerts** at authorsguild.org/resource/publishing-scam-alerts/. This site is maintained by the **Authors Guild**. The website is accessible to all, even if you're not a Guild member.

Writer Beware offers another list of publishing scammers at writerbeware.blog/scam-archive. Writer Beware also maintains a separate agent impersonation list. This is a particularly noxious form of scamming, because it hurts both the writer and legitimate literary agents. The list can be found here writerbeware.blog/2024/03/15/the-impersonation-list/

Remember: There are legitimate businesses that help writers self-publish, and there are legitimate public relations companies that will promote your book for a fee. But, if it sounds too good to be true, look before you leap, and your bank account will thank you.

Public Domain News for 2025

by Tish Davidson

Copyright provides protection for creatives, but it does not last forever. On January 1, 2025, many familiar books, plays, art, and music first published in 1929 lost copyright protection. This leaves authors free to quote from these **books** and use the **artwork** or **music** without permission of the publisher. Some of the works losing copyright in 2025 include William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Hemmingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, the character Popeye, musical compositions like *Singing' in the Rain* (but not the movie), Gershwin's *An American in Paris* and many art works. There are some caveats. Characters are only out of copyright as they were portrayed in 1929. Popeye, for example, can be portrayed with super strength, but you will have to wait until 1931 to use his super spinach eating. Other considerations include the fact that the work must be published, not just created, in 1929 to become copyright-free. Art works created in 1929 but not publicly exhibited (the equivalent of publishing art) are still protected. And many character names and some images continue to be protected by trademark laws even after they are out of copyright.

Yes, it's complicated, but a good resource on what works lost copyright protection in 2025 and the nuances of copyright law is available to from the **Duke University Law Center for the Study of Public Domain** at web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2025/. Note that the information Duke Law provides is applicable only to versions of works copyrighted in the US. Even if you never plan to use any of the copyright-free material, the site is interesting reading and provides a wealth of information about copyright law.

If you do decide to use material that may or may not be copyrighted, make sure to do your due diligence. The last thing anyone wants to face is a lawsuit for copyright violation.

Book & Movie Reviews

Here's your opportunity to share your favorite books and movies. They can be just for fun, ones that changed your life, books on writing craft, etc. If you decide to submit: **360 max. word count doc file**. Please email to the **Ink Spots** email address and put **FAW—Book/Movie Review—Your Name** in the Subject field.
(The opinions stated here are strictly those of the individual, and do not represent either CWC or FAW.)

THE EMPTY BOWL:

Pursuing Truth in a Messy World

by **Rikki West**

The author's childhood in a Catholic home, with her intelligent, humorous, alcoholic father, begin her lifetime of struggles which she describes as, "Being around his depression was like having an asthma attack. Never room for me to breathe." This is but one of many exacting descriptions that bring home the reality of her world.

Her life becomes even more chaotic when she succumbs to alcoholism herself. Rikki attends AA meetings and overcomes the disease. She figures out her sexuality, obtains two college degrees, finds work, makes meaningful friendships, and births a daughter. Then, she loses jobs, relationships and a house, and tries to keep from contracting "like one of those roly-poly bugs."

Throughout much of her adult life she deep dives into Transcendental Meditation, Buddhism, yoga and other spiritual practices, trying to understand life's deeper purpose and find "a contented somebody inside herself." West's book is a thought-provoking, personal and spiritual self-reflection that many will find relatable.

Review by Evelyn LaTorre

The Bookshop Ladies

by **Faith Hogan**

This is a mystery, but not a murder mystery. In the early part of the story, a husband and wife are driving home from his retirement party and meet with an accident. The last words the wife hears from her husband are, "I have a daughter."

What a shock! They had a close and loving marriage,

VERITY

by **Colleen Hoover** © 2018

I'm embarrassed to say I read this book. A romantic thriller, it sounded interesting—a struggling writer, Lowen, accepts the job offer of a lifetime, writing the remaining books in a series written by a highly successful author Verity. She's been injured and is unable to finish the series. Lowen discovers an autobiography in Verity's office and is shocked by what she reads. She's falling in love with Verity's husband—who is kind, considerate, and loving—and what she now knows would hurt him, but he deserves to know the truth, doesn't he?

You're four chapters, and about 68 pages, into the book before you know Verity's autobiography is overflowing with sex. The bedroom door in this book is WIDE open. If you're like me and skim those parts and say, "Yada yada" through them, it makes for a quick read of 314 pages.

It's a story within a story. The story is compelling. At points it's tender. At other points it's horrifying and scary. It sits you on the edge of your seat, waiting for what's to come. What comes takes you by surprise, not once, not twice, but thrice.

I may be embarrassed, but not sorry to have read this book.

Reviewed by Joyce Cortez

READ MORE BOOKS + WRITE MORE REVIEWS

she thought, but were never able to have children.

At the reading of the will, an expensive painting is left to an unknown female. Is she the daughter or the lover? She decides to deliver it personally and things turn out far differently than she could have ever imagined.

A wonderful read that takes place mostly in Ireland.

Reviewed by Anita Tosh

Notes from the World

*HEAR YE!
HEAR YE!*

Check out the
Poetry Foundation

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/poem-of-the-day>

Register to receive
a free poem each day
& all sorts of other
cool poetry stuff

AUTHORS PUBLISH

<https://authorspublish.com>

Check here for lists of publishing opportunities (*Please vet before submitting*):

<https://authorspublish.com/32-flash-fiction-markets/>

<https://authorspublish.com/12-places-that-publish-writing-about-writing-and-publishing/>

<https://authorspublish.com/25-magazines-accepting-creative-nonfiction/>

<https://authorspublish.com/40-specialized-manuscript-publishers-that-accept-direct-submissions/>

... and many more ... a newsletter and free webinars on craft....

FREE Online Workshops w/ JANE CLELAND

Award-winning author Jane Cleland offers **FREE** Zoom workshops on the craft of writing for writers of every skill level. Jane takes you behind the curtain and shares her years of experience with writing craft and its many intricacies, as well as the world of traditional publishing, with its agents, editors and publishers...Oh my! Register in advance at janecleland.com/events. You'll receive a link for the workshop shortly before, and on the day of the event. Don't miss these...register early.

Saturday, Mar 15 from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PT

"A Literary Agent Tells All: Join Industry Insider, Agent and Author Jessica Berg"

Learn about polishing that big idea, crafting compelling queries, and heading toward success.

Saturday, Apr 19 from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PT

"Fact-Based Storytelling: How to Use the Truth to Create I-Can't-Put-It-Down Urgency in Any Genre"

Discover how using the truth can be your ally.

Jane Cleland is an award-winning author who writes both fiction and nonfiction. Her fiction includes the long-running Josie Prescott Antiques Mystery series, published by St. Martin's Minotaur and *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. Her non-fiction includes the Agatha-Award winning best-sellers, *Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot* and *Mastering Plot Twists*. She's a Contributing Editor at *Writer's Digest Magazine* and the chair of the Black Orchid Novella Award (BONA). Cleland teaches writing at the university level, and offers free monthly webinars on the craft and business of writing.

Register on Jane's website to receive a Zoom link.

<https://janecleland.com/events/>

winningwriters.com
contests with big \$\$\$ prizes

Notes from the World

* CONTESTS * * NEWSLETTERS * * ETC. *

Writers Weekly. Free newsletter. 24-hour short story contest once each quarter. Topic and word length revealed after signing up. Limited to 500 entrants. \$5 entry fee. Also lists some paying markets for fiction and nonfiction. writersweekly.com

Winning Writers. Free newsletter. Lists free contests (many age or location restricted) as well as pay-to-enter contests. Lots of poetry contests. winningwriters.com

The Write Life. Website. Lists free contests (with a few exceptions.) Includes book, short fiction, essay, and poetry contests. Many contests are very specific, e.g. book by first generation immigrant, book of military fiction. thewritelife.com/writing-contests

Poets & Writers. Website. Searchable contest database with filters for cost, genre and deadline. pw.org/grants

Submishmash Weekly. Free newsletter. A curated arts newsletter with select publishing opportunities including contests, publications seeking submissions, and artist residencies. Run by the submission platform Submittable.com.

The Writer. Website and free newsletter. Listing of mostly pay-to-enter contests. writermag.com/contests

Fan Story. Paid site. Seven-day free trial. \$9.95/month or \$69/year. Feedback on writing you post and almost daily contests that can be entered at no additional fee. fanstory.com

Gotham Writers Workshop — FREE —

The **Gotham Writers Workshop** in New York City has put together the **Inside Writing** series of free talks about writing. Now in its fifth season, the workshops cover a variety of tools necessary to writers in today's world. The format varies from season to season. Best of all, you get to listen and learn from other writers!

Seasons 1 - 5 are archived at:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIOByuSHCqP7V9mSsoqU5Fojjys2LsvYi>

Inside Writing: A recent Special Episode discussed the importance of using "sensitivity readers" as part of your editing process.

Check out these **free** talks on writing!

Call for *Romance* Submissions

Belonging Books, an inclusive, feminist publishing house, began accepting submissions in June 2020. Submissions can be of all lengths from and about minorities—people of color, people with disabilities, religious minorities, LGBTQ+ people, etc.—and non-traditional romance.

Mission: diversify and modernize the genre.
belongingbooksonline.wordpress.com

FREE Online Workshops

scriptwriters check out
roadmapwriters.com

Notes from the World

Reedsy Learning

FREE

*Writing Classes,
Webinars and a Blog*

https://blog.reedsy.com/learning/courses/writing/show-dont-tell/?utm_source=mailparrot&utm_campaign=learning_show_don_t_tell

Reedsy has lots of free classes and webinars for writers, as well as many archived blog topics.

Check it out!

GENRE WEBSITES

Sisters in Crime sistersincrime.org (*also open to men*)

Mystery Writers of America mysterywriters.org

Romance Writers of America rwa.org

Golden State Romance Writers
goldenstateromancewriters.org
(*open to all genre fiction writers*)

Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association
sfwa.org

Inspire Christian Writers inspirewriters.com

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators
scbwi.org

Women's National Book Association wnba-books.org
(*also open to men*)

Academy of American Poets poets.org

Poetry Society of America poetrysociety.org

National Association of Memoir Writers namw.org

American Society of Journalists and Authors asja.org
(*nonfiction writers*)

CineStory cinestory.org (screenwriters)

Scriptwriters Network scriptwritersnetwork.com

Historical Novel Association historicalnovelsociety.org

Horror Writers Association horror.org

FundsforWriters.com

Chosen 101 Best Writing Websites by Writer's Digest for the last 20 years in a row.

One of the web's best experts on **grants/fellowships/scholarships/awards/contests** for writers.

The subscription is FREE.

Do like 27,000 others and simply go to **FundsforWriters.com** and sign up. We'll keep your contact information private.

Look forward to you joining us!

fanstory.com

Contests with cash prizes you can enter this week!

Take a look at this site. Lots of interesting contests. Many are very short...not necessarily easy, but as short as a one line poem, or a 50 word flash fiction story. Some may have deadlines fast approaching, others you'll have time to contemplate.

Fee Site. Seven-day free trial. \$12.95/month or \$155/year. Feedback on writing you post and almost daily contests that can be entered at no additional fee.

FAW Members on Social Media

● Angelica G. Allen

Angelica is a Seventh-Day Adventist Christian author of **Millennial Fiction and Poetry** books, genres targeted to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to millennials. These SDA Christian genres were created by the Fremont, Bay Area native, and are defined as having Seventh-Day Adventist symbolism, coded languages, lyrical writing, illustrations, and emotional storytelling in her U.S. Copyright. You can learn more about these books on her Website: angelicagabriellaallen.com. Like her author Facebook page [@AngelicaG.Allen](https://www.facebook.com/AngelicaG.Allen) and follow her on Instagram: [@AngelicaGAllen](https://www.instagram.com/AngelicaGAllen) where she posts a new poem in her Reels section every Wednesday!

● Cherilyn Chin

Cherilyn is a professional aquarist and marine biologist. For the past 12 years, she's maintained her award-winning blog, "**Ocean of Hope: Marine Animals Voice Their Wishes on Ocean Conservation Issues**," and has 8,500 followers on Twitter. She also writes children's fiction and non-fiction books about the ocean. She's a website developer, strategic content copywriter, and digital marketer at **Wordsmith for Wealth**.
<https://oceanofhope.net>; Twitter: [@protectoceans](https://twitter.com/protectoceans); <https://wordsmithforwealth.com>

● Terry Connelly

Twice a week Terry posts her own writing ranging from essays, personal stories, poetry and short fiction. On her second blog she posts prompts twice a week, to help get you started. tconnellyswritingposts.com and connellyswritingprompts.com

● Evelyn LaTorre, EdD

Evelyn loves to travel and write about her experiences. Besides travel adventures, the blogs on her website share the first chapter of her prize-winning book, *Between Inca Walls*, her adventures in other countries, and her cousin's drowning on the Costa Concordia cruise ship. Her second memoir, *Love in Any Language*, shows how a shotgun wedding turns into a bulletproof marriage. It won a Book Excellence award. You can also find recent recordings of her interviews. Website: <https://www.evelynlatorre.com>.

● Dave M. Strom

Check out Dave's creative and tech writing blogs and his videos at: <http://davemstrom.wordpress.com/>
<http://davemstrom.weebly.com/> <http://www.youtube.com/user/davstrom>

● Anita Tosh

Anita writes YA Christian fiction often with a focus on the "end times." She's recently published her third book, *The Book of Jeremy*. It's now available for sale. Website & Blog: booksbyanita.com
Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/111394698919>
YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn2Eh1NyNnca6V0pAZNUSRA>

"...writing stories is one of the most assertive things a person can do. Fiction is an act of willfulness, a deliberate effort to reconceive, to rearrange, to reconstitute nothing short of reality itself. ...Being a writer means taking the leap from listening to saying, 'Listen to me.'"

— Jhumpa Lahiri

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER

The Drifter

by Joyce Cortez

The scene: The highway unrolled before him, a pathway straight into the dull summer haze.

I was a drifter. I'd finished a job baling hay for a farmer in a little town. Let's see what I can find further down the road. I stuck out my thumb and hoped for a smooth, comfortable ride from someone.

Cars passed me and a pickup truck or two. A semi came down the road and slowed to a stop. I climbed aboard and said, "I'm just going wherever I end up."

The truck driver was a big man. Muscular. The guy looked as if he were sizing me up. He didn't say much, but asked about my family and why was I on the road.

"No family," I said. "And I like adventure and meeting people. The fresh air doesn't hurt, either, except when it rains." He laughed at that.

We traveled a bit. He turned off the highway and we went down a dark country road that didn't look much traveled. He stopped.

"End of the road," he said. "Your adventure is about to start. You look like you got jack rabbit legs."

My pulse quickened. "What're you talking about?"

"I'm talking about hunting you, little jack rabbit."

He shoved me out of the truck. I fell, hurting my hip. He snatched the shotgun attached to his rear window.

"Run," he said.

I backed up and turned, limping off, looking for hiding places or anything I could use as a weapon. I heard him cock the gun. A shot blasted behind me. I ran faster, despite my hip pain.

A cabin lay ahead. Was that his or could I find shelter there? I ran for it and forced open the door. Any guns? Could I lift a chair to clobber him with? It was a one-room shack. No place to hide.

He followed me in.

"Write about the emotions you fear the most."

— Laurie Halse Anderson

"Write what should not be forgotten." — Isabel Allende

Kittygirl Xmas Catnip

by Dave Strom

THE SETTING: SURFVILLE, CALIFORNIA. CHRISTMAS DAY. KITTYGIRL'S BEDROOM. 5:50 AM

"ATCHOO! ATCHOO! ATCHOO!" sneezed eight-year-old Katsuko "Kittygirl" Kimura. She kittycat-quick sat up in bed, awakening from dreams of chasing supervillains like mice through forests and meadows full of sweet-smelling flowers and spicy-scented trees... "SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF!" Was she still dreaming? She still smelled those heartbeat-speeding-up scents. Where were they coming from?

ONE MINUTE LATER!

Kittygirl's big glowing eyes drank in the living room, her kittycat vision lighting it up like bright full moonlight. She had tracked that smell, so mysterious, sweet, heady, kinda hypnotic. She felt dreamy, she'd barely felt her feet as she daintily, silently padded down the stairs... into the living room... near the Christmas tree... sparkly and blinky, FLASH FLASH FLASH... she raised her hand... pawed at stars dancing before her... SNIFF, SNIFF, SNIFF!

That plant next to the Christmas tree! Kittygirl crept up to it. SNIFF SNIFF SNIFF! Ooo, that smell! It made her feel warm, tingly, a little bit dizzy... and happy and giddy and pouncy! She read the label on the clay pot that the plant grew in: CATNIP. Kittygirl had not heard of that before.

BLINK! BLINK! BLINK! went the Christmas tree. SPARKLE, SPARKLE, SPARKLE went the tinsel hanging from its branches, casting more dancing rainbow stars into Kittygirl's wide, glassy eyes. TINKLE, TINKLE, TINKLE went ornaments, tickling Kittygirl's sensitive ears.

Kittygirl's eye pupils expanded. Her glowing eyes lit the tree like car headlights. It taunted her with swinging superhero-ornaments...and supervillains! Ice Cream Guy! Harry Headbutt! The evil lunch ladies! Evil-laughing at her! Kittygirl extended her slice-through-steel claws: SKNIT! She wiggled her hips, tippy-toed her feet, posed for perfect pouncing posture. She breathed faster, faster...SHE POUNCED!!!

TWO HOURS LATER!

Tears squeezed out Kittygirl's green eyes. Her head dipped with shame at ruining her first Christmas with her new dad and brother. "I'm super-duper sorry."

Thirteen-year-old Johnny patted her back. "Kat, it's okay. You didn't mean it."

Kittygirl sat at the living room table, empty plates before her, her mom and her brother. They turned and stared at Christmas branches, tinsel, and ornaments scattered all over the floor, couch, chairs, walls. Thank goodness the presents were intact.

"Not your fault, Katsuko," said her mom in her sharp Japanese accent. "Dad and Johnny thought you'd like catnip. Dad's throwing it in the trashcan outside."



FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)



Kittygirl felt more tears. "I liked it too much. I was weak."

Johnny blurted, "Kat! You're more super! Like our hero!"

Kittygirl looked up to Johnny's goofy grin. "How?"

"Doncha get it?" He grabbed her shoulders. "You've got a kryptonite! Just like..." His eyes got dreamy. "Super Holly Hansson!"

WOW! Kittygirl hugged and kissed Johnny: "MMM-WAH! Best Christmas present ever!"

BAM! The kitchen door slammed open! Santa Claus barged into the room, head topped with a chef hat! "HO! HO! HO! Here's my four-story Christmas Pizza!"

"SNIFF, SNIFF, SNIFF! Cheesy, tomatoey, and anchovies! Kittygirl had taken the pills that let her digest cheese! She purred so loud the plates rattled. "Best new daddy ever!"

This piece was inspired by an FAW Write-in prompt.



BETH

by Anita Tosh

Part 1

Chapter 1



My legs ached and my fingers felt like they were frozen to my handlebars. I hoped I wouldn't have to stop quickly. I wasn't sure I could move my fingers. Whoever thought gloves without fingers was a good idea? I didn't want to be a wimp and complain to Carl, my new husband. He was used to long bike packing trips, I wasn't. For me it felt like I should be getting to the other side of the universe any minute.

My thoughts drifted back to our incredible wedding the day before. So much had happened that it now felt like it was a long time ago.

My sister, Ruth and I had a beautiful double wedding in a redwood grove. We decorated with lots of homemade flowers, bows and archways. The ceremony went perfect, but when our pastor declared, "You may kiss your brides," bombs shook the earth, people screamed, and chaos broke out all around. Carl may have been the only one to keep his head. He hurried me to his SUV in a lot close by then backed his sage colored Hyundai Tucson up to our gift table and quickly scooped everything up with the tablecloth and stowed it in the back.

We stopped by the big blue van that all my family was crowded into and told Dad that we were going to our apartment.



FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)



We had one night in our new apartment. Then reality hit.

We had no water or utilities in our apartment. The bombs must have messed that up. We couldn't even flush the toilet! We kept each other warm that first night. The candles were kind of romantic. But the next day we saw vans picking up our neighbors and taking them away. I pictured the Jews boarding trains that took them to concentration camps. We knew we didn't want to join them. Carl and I worked feverishly to prepare everything so we could leave by midnight.

While we packed, we timed the drones that flew by. Like a high-tech gestapo, they buzzed by every three minutes, eliminating anyone disobeying the lockdown order with a loud boom.

God get us out of here!

Thanks to my generous uncle Dave, we had night vision goggles. He was known as the "conspiracy theorist" of the family. Most people thought the things he talked about were just plain crazy but Carl and I realized his predictions had been right. He had been warning about an attack on the USA and here it was. About two weeks before our wedding he came by with his gift and made his apologies for not attending the upcoming wedding.

"I've waited as long as I can. My place is ready up in the Sierras and I'm going to high-tail it out of here. To tell you the truth, I'm surprised I had time to get my place together. World War III could break out any minute. I'm praying God will hold it back till after your wedding."

As he left he said, "I'll be praying for you." A shiver went up my spine and I fought back tears as I gave him a good-bye hug, wondering if I would ever see him again.

With a lump in my throat I croaked, "We'll be praying for you too."

Andrew's Choices

Reflections on Some of Life's Transitions

(A semi-memoir)

by Terry Tosh

Andrew had a bad night. This wasn't news, really. He'd had occasional bad nights most of his nine years of life as far back as he could remember.

Several years previously, Andrew had been having somewhat decent nights and days.

It had been fairly nice not having that guy around; the one that seemed almost as if it might work-out good this time. He had lost count of just exactly how many guys his mom had introduced into their lives over the years. This one could have been the friendliest one so far, if Andrews' memory was serving him properly. He wasn't 100% sure his brain hadn't been affected by the last one that had slammed him in the head when he'd complained about not liking mashed turnips. Who likes mashed turnips, anyway? No one sane, that's for sure.



FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)



Anyway, once the latest one had started showing his true colors, typically after a few "little brewskies," he'd become even nicer to Andrew, and offered to take him out to shop for anything Andrew might like to have.

"Your mother doesn't need to know everywhere we go," he'd whisper, as he'd pull into the liquor store parking lot. Then, upon returning home with a new toy or two, Andrew would retreat to his room to play. That went ok, until that night when he'd awakened to the loud voices and sounds of crashing as the aquarium (he'd gotten on one of those trips to the store) went tumbling off the pedestal and his pet fishes went flopping around on the floor. Andrew watched in horror as they met their doom under wobbly legs as the man lunged forward to swing a porcelain china figurine toward the head of Andrew's mother. Andrew had burst out the door and ran away as fast as he could go.

It was several days later that he was summoned to the office of the nice Director of the local Boy's Club. The one who had provided Andrew a safe place to hang out for a few days while things were being "sorted out".

"You can go back home now, things have been resolved." Reluctantly, Andrew followed his mother and her guy out of the facility.

Just days later, as Andrew was exiting the school building at lunchtime, his mom was standing there waiting for him. That was unusual. She never came to the school. She was a waitress, and worked most school days. She just held his hand and quietly said, "We're going away, don't ask questions, and don't worry. Things will be fine."

Things weren't fine. Even after the sudden relocation, Andrew felt totally weird. He'd been enrolled in a new school, in a strange city, in the middle of a school year. He knew no one. He did his best to adapt; studying extra hard to catch up to the different programs being learned. No one in this classroom seemed interested in getting to know this odd, quiet kid that appeared out of nowhere.

Several days passed. Before he knew it, his mother had reunited with the man and he'd moved in to the new place with them. Maybe it would turn out ok this time. Andrew managed to get out of the house as often as he could to go for strolls or to do errands when asked. Things were calm for several more days, then the slurring voice came through the fog of sleep in the middle of the night, and the sound of arguing and strife returned.

Oddly, before he knew it, Andrew found himself, once again, sitting at his familiar desk, in the familiar surroundings of the familiar schoolroom he'd vacated just weeks before. The teacher was a bit dumbfounded, as she hadn't known what had happened and had left his stuff untouched, sitting in the desk as he'd left it.

His life seemed to be one transition after another. This time, however, the man never returned. Andrew's mother never talked about him nor did he ask. Andrew had experienced enough changes, and this one seemed like a good one.

Andrew, however, couldn't have known at that time, that his life would be a series of transitions from that time until years later, in a location many states away from this one. He'd told himself he would never put his own children or wife through such drama. Once he'd broken away on that last fateful night, he'd never looked back.



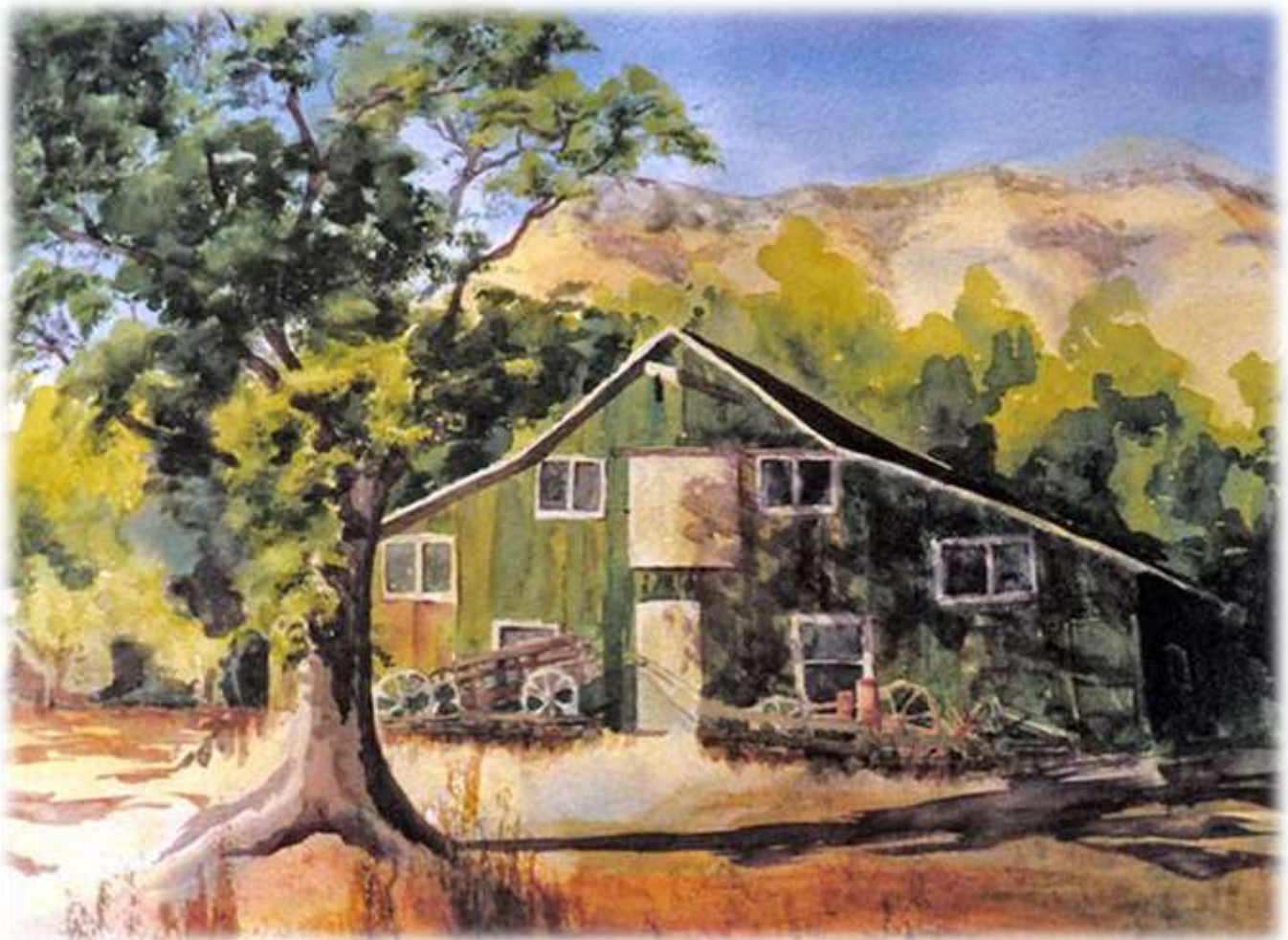
FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER (Continued)



He'd gotten himself enrolled in a trade school, found a solid blue-collar job that paid decent, and a dream-come-true soulmate who was steady and supportive.

Recently, he had celebrated 50 years of wedded bliss, was retired and living in the same house they'd purchased just a few years after he'd made that break all those years ago.

Transitions aren't something to which he'd really given much thought, but, yeah, there could be good ones, too.



Visual Prompt

Artwork by Jo Ann Frisch

“Write the kind of story you would like to read. People will give you all sorts of advice about writing, but if you are not writing something you like, no one else will like it either.”

— Meg Cabot

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FREMONT AREA WRITERS

- 2009 Bob Garfinkle
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- 2013 Carol Hall
- 2015 Art Carey
- 2017 Shirley Ferrante
- 2019 Jan Small
- 2021 Nancy J Guarnera
- 2023 Scott Davidson

BOARD MEETINGS

**Date and Time: On ZOOM at
4 PM the Monday before the
Fourth Saturday
General Membership Meeting**

FAW Chairpeople



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& Promotions



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Webmaster



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FAW MISSION STATEMENT

Fremont Area Writers educates writers and the public by providing:
Forums for educating members in the craft of writing and marketing their works and
Public meetings, workshops, and seminars open to all writers and the general public
to facilitate educating writers of all levels of expertise. (*Article II Section 1:1.1 and 1.2 FAW Bylaws*)