

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



Ink Spots



The Newsletter of Fremont Area Writers

The "Centennial" Branch of the California Writers Club

Nancy Guarnera – Editor-in-Chief

inkspots@cw-c-fremontareawriters.org

Vol. 4 No. 10 November 2025

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



Visual Prompt

Photograph by nguarnera

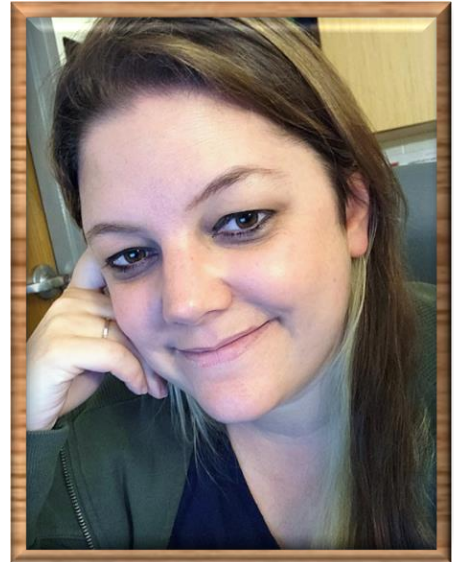
November General Meeting

* November 22nd * 2 to 4 PM * ZOOM * FREE *

Writing Characters with *Emotional Resonance*

with Guest Speaker

ERIN L. SWANN



Characters with emotional resonance jump off the page. They grab the reader by the heart and won't let go, even after the last page has been turned. If you'd like your characters to be this unforgettable, don't miss Erin Swann, guest speaker at the FAW general meeting November 22, from 2pm to 4pm on Zoom. It's FREE and open to all CWC members and the public.

We may not remember what was written, but when a book touches us emotionally, we will never forget how it made us feel. That idea has been attributed to various authors. Erin Swann will take us on a journey that doesn't just portray a protagonist's emotional evolution, but helps us incite an emotional response in our reader as well. Her presentation will include writing exercises to help participants explore the various levels for achieving characters with deep emotional resonance.

Erin Swann writes speculative fiction. Her stories have been published in a wide variety of magazines, including *Flash Fiction Online*, *Andromeda Spaceways Magazine*, and *Factor Four Magazine*. She has been a finalist for the Page Turner Awards and a six-time honorable mention winner for the Writers of the Future Awards. She teaches online writing courses for Authors Publish that focus on reader connection and emotional investment. Her live lectures on "Show and Tell" and "Emotional Investment" can be accessed online for free at authorspublish.com/lectures.

In addition to her writing, Swann is an artist and has worked in art education since 2008. She lives in Maryland with the love of her life, two "amazing" step-daughters, and five adopted cats. Her blog and artwork are available for viewing on her website swannscribbles.com. When she's not writing, teaching, doing her art, spending time with her family...look for her in the kitchen cooking or baking something delicious. But, if it's between 2 and 4 AM, she's probably recording story ideas.

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!



Scott Davidson
FAW President

President's Message

I just realized that this is probably my last President's Message of the year, since we take December off. I write this in early October, and it doesn't seem a lot like Christmas. Except for the catalogs that are beginning to stream in, that is.

Our one December activity is the Holiday Party, which will be held December 13th at 6 PM. Members will get reminders and directions. Not a member? You can always join. Just go to the Join Us page at <https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/join-us/> and join either online or send a check to the address given on the page.

It is good to remind you that we have about one event for members each week, and they are all free thanks to the support of those who

have joined FAW. The second Saturday is the Write-In. The third week has a lunch or dinner which members and their guests can attend. The fourth Monday has the Salon, and the fourth Saturday has the general meeting with a guest speaker. If you haven't attended one of these, you are invited. They are fun, and most of them will help you exercise your writing muscles. More details on the Write-in, the Salon, and the General Meeting are right here in Ink Spots.

Some of your writing muscles are well developed. Twenty-two of the of the 70 entries to September's Flash Fiction contest came from FAW members. Great job!

As part of our attempt at outreach, we are now on Meet up, an app which allows you to find events to go to and lets us publicize FAW events. It's working—we got a visitor to the September meeting from it. We started a group called "Fremont Area Writers" on Meet up. Please join the group—I think we get more visibility the more members we have. To do so, just go to [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) and set up a free account, then navigate down to the Groups area and search for Fremont Area Writers. You can also look for interesting events.

Have a great holiday season, and we'll see you at the Holiday Party in December.

Keep writing and thinking,

Scott



Visual Prompt
Artwork by Jo Ann Frisch



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A Word from Our Editor



Nancy Guarnera
Editor *Ink Spots*

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

Holiday season has officially begun! Those of us bitten by the “Let’s go Shopping” bug have already begun to purchase goodies of all kinds—EDIBLES: fancy cookies, candies, chocolates, baked goods, turkeys, hams, legs of lamb, a goose, tofurkey, wine, and booze; GIFTS: clothes and accessories, the “must have” gadgets and toys that some of us may get into fights over as supplies dwindle; DECORATIONS: trees, wreaths, wrapping paper, seasonal tchotchkes, ribbon, etc. We’ll spend way too much on “on sale-originally-over-priced” items and suffer from sticker shock when the credit cards come due in the new year.

Of course, these are the folks whose jobs are currently secure and who aren’t dependent on government assistance for food. They will celebrate the holidays—the most wonderful time of the year—as they have in the past. Their stress levels will elevate over the next two months until some of them are too exhausted to enjoy the celebration when it

finally arrives. But, for them, their holiday season will be pretty much as it has been for years.

But this year isn’t “the usual” for everyone. Millions of us are beginning to feel the effects of the government shutdown, now the longest in our country’s history. Children, the elderly, the unhoused, veterans, military personnel and their families are among the hardest hit. Living paycheck-to-paycheck with NO PAY CHECK is obviously not sustainable. Loss of food and health care benefits are the reality for many of us this year. Loss of housing looms for many, as well. It boggles the mind that we—Americans—are allowing this to happen in our country—‘the best’ (and richest) country in the world. It seems unimaginable that millions of American children will wake up on December 25, 2025, and not only have no present to unwrap, but possibly no food to eat, as well. This is the stuff of nightmares.

It’s time to wake up and think about what these holidays are really about. **Halloween:** remembering our loved-ones who are no longer with us. **Thanksgiving:** seems like this one should be obvious—being grateful for all we have. **Christmas:** the birth of an enlightened one who beseeched us to love each other.

So, perhaps this year, instead of over-spending on more ‘stuff’ than we need (and can probably do without), we could use our bounty to help those less fortunate than we are. We can find the joy of the season by sharing the love of the season with those who need it the most. Peace can be found in giving. We know the saying ‘it is better to give than to receive.’ Having been on both sides of this dynamic, I have found that giving with love (of my time, my talent and my treasure) is both more satisfying and rewarding than anything I have ever received...except, perhaps, love. And that I will accept with an open heart every time it is offered. When I give with love, love comes back to me pressed down and overflowing.

May you have a happy, healthy holiday season filled with love, peace and joy. *ng*

NOTE: There will be a December issue of the newsletter, but it will be *Ink Spots*-lite. Just the essentials.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

DEADLINE: the 10th of the month prior to publication (December 10th for January’s issue – this is negotiable)

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 docx 12 pt Cambria for prose & 12 pt Calibri for poetry JPEGs for artwork and photos (300 dpi)

If you’d like the full set of guidelines, email inkspots@cwcfremontareawriters.org and request it. Thanks!

FAW – November Meetings

Fremont Area Writers “Fourth Saturday”

General Mtg on Zoom

Saturday November 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: Erin Swann Writer, Novelist, Teacher (p.2)

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

Fremont Area Writers “Tuesday before 4th Saturday”

Board Meeting on Zoom

Tuesday November 18th 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 – November Meetings

Fremont Area Writers

“Second Saturday”

Social Write-In on Zoom

Saturday November 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 November 24th 7:00 – 9:00 PM

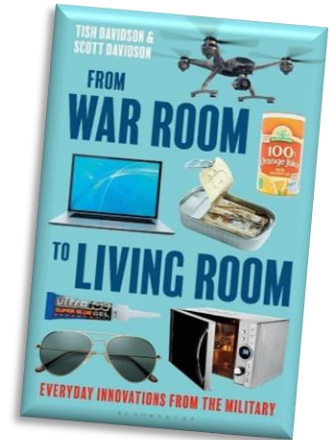
*Open to FAW members and the public.
Share, listen and support writers as they read their work.
For a Zoom invitation link contact Tony Pino (see below).*

*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@cwcfremontareawriters.org, or submit it through the **Shout Out for Ink Spots** link at cwcfremontareawriters.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 Tish & Scott Davidson whose book *From War Room to Living Room: Everyday Innovations from the Military* has been nominated by Bloomsbury, their publisher, for an Association of American Publishers PROSE Award. PROSE Awards recognize books and reference works of "extraordinary merit that make a significant contribution to a field of study." Books can only be nominated by the publisher in the year the book was copyrighted. **Congratulations, Tish and Scott!**



KUDOS to Evelyn LaTorre who was a keynote speaker for the annual DKG (key women educators) conference on October 11. The theme was "The Power of Words: Everyone Has a Story." Over 70 women educators from throughout the area gathered at the San Ramon Community Center where Evelyn presented "Writing Your Memoir." The topic was well-received and participants were anxious to read Evelyn's two memoirs after hearing her talk. **Congratulations, Evelyn!**



*"Dance above the surface
of the world.
Let your thoughts
lift you into creativity
that is not hampered
by opinion."
— Red Haircrow*

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Photograph by Terry Tosh

FAW & CWC Information

— PLEASE READ —

Mark Your
Calendar

You're Invited to...

Fremont Area Writers Social Luncheon
Wednesday November 12th at 11:30 am
Andersen's Bakery in Union City

Details will be e-mailed to members.

Feel free to bring a guest.

FAW Needs You Help Wanted FAW Needs You

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

CWC & NorCal Representatives Wanted

We are looking for a California Writers Club Representative and a NorCal (Northern California Branches) Representative. Evelyn LaTorre has held both these positions for a number of years and is planning to step down as soon as we've found replacements. For more information about these positions, contact Evelyn at elatorre@aol.com.

You can also contact Scott Davidson at scottfrombayside@yahoo.com.

Hospitality Chair

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

Service Coordinator

finds & assigns helpers
to assist FAW committee heads

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.

FAW & CWC Information

2025 FAW GENERAL MEETINGS TOPICS & SPEAKERS

NOVEMBER 22ND 2-4PM ZOOM

**Writing Characters
with Emotional Resonance**

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



• HOLIDAY PARTY •

• December 13th 6:00 PM Place – TBA •



All General Meetings are on the 4TH SATURDAY of the month
(no meetings in July & December).

*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 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!*



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

NARRATIVE MAGAZINE

For general submissions to the magazine:

www.narrativemagazine.com/submit-your-work

Fall 2025 Story Contest

1st Prize: \$2,500 / Deadline: November 21st

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

Story of the Week

www.narrativemagazine.com/story-week-guidelines

Six-Word Stories

www.narrativemagazine.com/sixwords

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 our clients earn a full-time income from book royalties.

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

Our Twentieth Annual

Black Orchid Novella Award Contest



Portrait of Nero Wolfe by Kevin I. Gordon

Does your sleuth measure up to this master?

We are looking for original works of fiction in the traditional deductive style exemplified by Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe. Your entry must:

- Contain no overt sex or violence
- Emphasize the ratiocinative skills of the sleuth
- Not include characters from the Nero Wolfe series

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, 2026. The winner will be announced at The Wolfe Pack's Annual Black Orchid Banquet in New York City on December 5, 2026.

Please visit **www.nerowolfe.org** for official rules, procedures and guidelines.

For questions, contact Jane K. Cleland, Chair of the BONA contest, at **Jane@janecleland.com**.

*If no acceptable candidates are received, AHMM and The Wolfe Pack reserve the right to declare no winner for any given year.

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

Tom Howard / John H. Reid Fiction & Essay Contest

TOTAL PRIZES: \$12,000 1st prize each Story and Essay \$3,500

SUBMISSION PERIOD: October 15, 2025 – May 1, 2026

GENRE: All styles & themes – fiction and nonfiction

SUBMISSION FEE: \$ 25 per submission • unlimited number of entries • Length: 6K words max

SUBMIT TO: winningwriters.com/our-contests/tom-howard-john-h-reid-fiction-essay-contest



WERGLE FLOMP Humor Poetry Contest

DEADLINE: April 1st (now accepting submissions)

GENRE: Humorous Poetry (published or unpublished)

NO FEE!

PRIZES: \$3,750 in prizes

INFO & SUBMIT TO: winningwriters.com/our-contests/wergle-flomp-humor-poetry-contest-free



Visual Prompt

Photograph by Terry Tosh

*"I hope that someday
when I am gone, someone,
somewhere, picks my soul up
off of these pages
and thinks,
"I would have loved her."*

— Nicole Lyons

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 Thursday Murder Club

by Richard Osman © 2020

I found this a fun read. Four friends, of a sort, meet in the Jigsaw Room at Coopers Chase, "Britain's First Luxury Retirement Village." They don't consider themselves friends, "Oh we're not friends, dear." Ron is chuckling. "Christ, no, love, no, we're not friends. Do you need a top-up, Liz?" Elizabeth nods and Ron pours. Ibrahim agrees. "I don't think *friends* is the word. We wouldn't choose to socialize; we have very different interests. I like Ron, I suppose, but he can be very difficult." Ron nods. "I'm very difficult." "And, Elizabeth's manner is off-putting." Elizabeth nods as well. "There it is, I'm afraid. I've always been an acquired taste. Since high school." "I like Joyce, I suppose. I think we all like Joyce," says Ibrahim. "Thank you, I'm sure," says Joyce.

You've now met the members of the Thursday Murder Club. Written in a similar style to Agatha Christie's Tommy & Tuppence books, if you like those, you will enjoy this.

They usually work to solve old murders, but they've had a recent murder to investigate. They ingratiate themselves into the graces of the police officers investigating the crimes—oh, did I say one murder? No, another followed soon after the first. Are they connected? Then, someone discovers un-coffined bones in the cemetery that the owner of Coopers Chase plans to move as a part of real estate deal, but he's murdered so.... The story takes twists and turns and has red herrings. At 361 pages, this is a delightful tale and a quick read.

(Editor's Note: Now a movie streaming on NetFlix with Helen Mirren, Pierce Brosnan, Ben Kingsley, and Celia Imrie.)

Review by Joyce Cortez

A Million Miles: My Peace Corps Journey

by Jody Olsen

This riveting memoir follows a curious and dedicated public servant from her abandonment at age three, through seventy-six exciting and emotionally joyful and painful years. Jody and her new husband join the Peace Corps in 1966 and are sent to Tunisia. There, she teaches ESL to a class load of 200 middle schoolers, gets stranded in the desert, and after learning basic Arabic, teaches family planning to Tunisian women. As with most Peace Corps Volunteers, the cultural differences she encounters make her question her own religious assumptions and identity.

Despite viewing herself as a timid introvert, Jody takes on increasingly challenging opportunities—always open to serving in the Peace Corps. During six decades she raises two children, obtains a Doctorate in Social Work, and works in the Peace Corps positions of Country Director in Togo, Regional Director of Asia-Pacific, Chief of Staff, Deputy Director, and finally as Peace Corps Director (2018-2021). The latter, just as Covid-19 hits. How she and her dedicated staff, working remotely to evacuate 7,000 Peace Corps Volunteers from 61 countries in 10 days, reads like a suspense novel.

Jody intertwines her personal journey with her professional one. She explores the dynamics of her strict Mormon family (including reuniting with the mother who abandoned her), the death of her brother, and divorce after her husband's coming out. The intertwining gives the reader a narrative that reflects a life of service, leadership, and cross-cultural understanding. A must read for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers—and anyone who cares to be inspired by a fascinating life.

Review by Evelyn LaTorre (Peace Corps Volunteer — Peru 1964-66)

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/32-flash-fiction-markets/)

[https://authorspublish.com/
12-places-that-publish-writing-about-
writing-and-publishing/](https://authorspublish.com/12-places-that-publish-writing-about-writing-and-publishing/)

[https://authorspublish.com/
25-magazines-accepting-creative-
nonfiction/](https://authorspublish.com/25-magazines-accepting-creative-nonfiction/)

[https://authorspublish.com/
40-specialized-manuscript-
publishers-that-accept-direct-
submissions/](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, Nov 22 from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PT

"Mastering Plot Twists"

Captivate readers by integrating plot twists, moments of heightened danger, & plot reversals (TDR).

Saturday, Dec 20 from 10:00 to 11:00 AM PT

"Nurturing Your Creative Spirit: Feel Better, Write Better—Listen to the Pros"

Rediscover the joy in your writing practice. Master the art of sustainable creativity.

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!

Free Talks 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** and follow her on Instagram: **@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://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 is a refuge. When the world betrays us,
we authors find asylum in our literary realms.
Our wordlandias are our revitalizing saunas."*

— Merlin Franco

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER

On September 27th, the **Fremont Cultural Arts Council** held their **Fall Flash Fiction Contest** at Half Price Books in the Fremont Hub. The public was invited to submit up to three short written pieces of 300 words or less for consideration, on the specific topic—***A Friendly Ghost***. Each writer could submit up three entries. The submissions were posted at Half Price Books and then from 10 am to 5 pm customers were encouraged to vote for their top five favorites. Ballots were counted and the winners were announced at 5:30ish. This year, 13 FAW members submitted 22 entries.

FAW is a co-sponsor of this community event.

This page & the following 4 are all FAW pieces submitted to the Flash Fiction Contest mentioned above. Look for more of these in the next issue.

Shecky, the Friendly Ghost



by Scott Davidson



Announcer: Let's hear it for Shecky, the friendly, funny ghost!

Shecky glides to the center stage and microphone, singing "I Ain't Got Nobody."

Shecky: I just flew in from Vegas, and boy is my ectoplasm tired.

Shecky tries to wipe his wispy brow, but his hand goes right through it.

Shecky: Right, I don't sweat anymore.

The audience is silent.

Shecky: Hey, I slayed my last audience. That was just before they slayed me.

You know, folks, I never get a break. My last live album was doing great. Then my act went from streaming to screaming. Hey, I got more reaction the last time I played a cemetery.

I never get any luck. I figured I was dead, but at least I was rid of my mother-in-law. Then she joins me the next week. She's my biggest fan. There she is in the back row. The one who looks like a cumulus cloud. Just jokin', Ma.

I love you. *Aside.* When is ghostbusters getting here anyway?

Death ain't going to stop me. I'm broadening out into drama. I auditioned for the ghost of Hamlet's father. I got Yorick.

I'm supposed to be dead here, not the audience.

You know it's tough when your dressing room's a casket. Though it's plusher than the last place I worked. That place was tough. When they told the audience I had died, they applauded.

Hey guy, don't bother to heckle. Your insults will go right through me. Get it? Right through me. Wait, I'm supposed to be the one going Boo!, not you.

Okay, let's get started. An angel and a devil walk into a bar...

What? Get that exorcism stuff away from me!

Shecky vanishes in a puff of smoke as the band plays him off.

Through Sickness and Health

by Alina Nazareth

When should you let go of the person you vowed to never leave?

I watch Jack, sitting slumped in the perfect, wing-backed chair, which we picked out together. I want to reach out to him and tell him that we will get through this. But my mother-in-law, Susan, walks into the room and reaches out to him instead. He shrinks away from her, and I feel an unholy satisfaction. Maybe she can't replace me after all.

She walks into my kitchen and we are forced to share the space. She switches on the light and I turn it off. She gets annoyed and switches it back on. I realize I am being petty and I give in. Yesterday, I had lasted for seven on-offs, today just three? I was going soft.

"I'll make you some chili later," Susan says.

"Priya hates your chili," Jack responds.

"I don't know why, since it's exactly like those damn curries she made."

No, it's not! Unable to stay silent, invisible, I rebel by throwing the house into complete darkness.

"You may be right," Susan says to her son, sounding a little scared.

Jack perks up. "Ya? You no longer think I am crazy?"

"Nope," she responds. "There she goes again, your friendly little ghost. She always had a tendency to overreact."

Jack laughs. The first echoes of happiness in almost a year ring through the house.

"Well, you did compare her amazing curries to your chili." He gets up from the chair, and for a minute we stand face to face – one seeing, and one only feeling the presence of the other.

"Hi Priya. I've missed you!" He smiles and walks right through me, sending a welcoming warmth down my dead spine. Our marriage lives, even if I don't.

Just as Beautiful

by Paul K Davis

"You are so beautiful," I blurted out.

"Oh, really?" Lydia responded, from across the restaurant table. She continued, "You weren't even looking at me!" She turned, to see who I was looking at, and then fixed her gaze on me. Her silence demanded that I explain.

I looked again at my image of my late wife, as if to expect a comment. She had been appearing

like this every time I was with another woman. We had frequently said to each other that, when one of us passed, we wanted the other to be free to develop a new relationship, but the ghost seems not to have gotten the message. I wanted to ask her if she might approve of Lydia, but I couldn't figure out how without making it apparent, to Lydia and others in the restaurant, that I was talking to a ghost, or simply crazy.

Lydia asked, "Have you decided what to order?"

(Continued on next page)



The Friendly Visitor



by Knuti VanHoven

Just after Jen's son had stormed out, her doorbell rang.

Rushing to answer, she slammed her shin into her ottoman. She bent, feeling for blood, knowing she should have expected that. Ralph's love of booby traps had never been "just joking." He was an impatient man who usually greeted her by snarling, "Why aren't you dead yet?" And, meant it.

Praying that he hadn't returned, she opened the door.

Relief: it wasn't him. Instead, safety. She smelled her Friendly Visitor's shampoo.

She stepped back to let Karen inside, then led her into the kitchen, pondering as she filled the tea kettle, "I'm not complaining, but don't you always come on Fridays? Still, I'm glad you're here. 'Sbeen an awful mornin'..."

"Well, things just improved!" Karen assured her happily, adding, "Skip the tea, girlfriend, 'cause after six years' visiting, I finally get to be **your** hostess! You'll love it!" Jen paled, feeling for her phone. "I gotta ask Ralph if 's OK..."

Jen gasped - because for the first time in thirty years she did! She **saw** grays swirling, merging into a colorful view of her kitchen and Karen, grinning!

Amazed, she blurted out, "I'll get my sweater!" and turned to dash upstairs, but came back almost immediately.

"Karen?" she could barely speak. "Karen? There's a body at the foot of my stairs and... I think it's mine."

Karen sobered. "I know, Jen. But it's alright. You don't **need** it anymore, so you left it behind," adding softly, "You're finally **free**."

Jen inhaled slowly. An emotion she barely remembered filled her more completely than air ever could.

Bewildered, she looked to Karen, who whispered "That's **happiness**."

And Jen smiled.



Just as Beautiful

(Continued from previous page)

"Oh!" I exclaimed. "Sorry. No decision yet."

"Indeed. No decision, and no attention either."

I started perusing the menu.

Then my wife spoke, for the first time in a year and a half, "Go ahead, tell her how beautiful she is. Don't tell her she's more beautiful than I was, but perhaps she's just as beautiful."

So, despite my anxiety, I told Lydia, "You are just as beautiful as my late wife was."

"Aha!" she responded. Then, "I'm a widow too, and you are just about as handsome as my late husband was."

The ghost smiled, and vanished.



Grandpa's Pies



by Nancy Guarnera

My grandfather was a baker. He started as an apprentice and worked his way to the top. Eventually, he opened his own bakery and supplied our town with all the bread, pies, cakes, and pastries it could eat. His favorite, and the thing he was best known for, was pie. His pies were famous in our part of the state; people would drive miles for one of them.

Fruit pies, mince pies, cream pies, meringues, even meat or fish pies...it made no difference, they were all the best you'd ever tasted. Everybody had a favorite. And Gramps made sure his customers were always happy.

His fillings were to die for, but, "The thing that makes the pie," Gramps once told me, "is the crust. Nothin' worse than a soggy crust."

Most folks don't care about the intricacies of pie making, but I was curious. I asked him to

teach me how to bake. He took me on and I learned a lot from him. Being with him and learning the art of baking was magic.

It takes years to get really good. We didn't have that time. In fact, we never got to his pie recipes. One day he wasn't feeling well, and a trip to his doctor revealed stage four pancreatic cancer. He was gone within weeks. The whole town came to his funeral. Without Gramps, the bakery closed and an era ended.

Gramps was a great guy. I miss him, and his pies. Yesterday, I woke to the smell of his caramel apple pie. I ran to the kitchen and there was the pie on the table. I live alone. I sure didn't make it in my sleep.

Today, it was cherry and sitting next to it were his recipes, written in my grandfather's hand.

HOLIDAY SPIRITS

by Richard E. McCallum

We glide out of the old farmhouse window. Thunder roars, lightning flashes. Our souls cleanse. An apple tree struck by lightning years ago—disfigured, splintered, thought dead—still bears fruit.

Life.

'Twas the night after a day. Alighting above the blossoms, Sarah asks, "Richard, why do we return? They never invite us in." Lightning bugs swarm, their pulses defining our presence.

"We disrespected my family's holiday traditions," I say, brightening just enough to spook

the bugs. "Families reuniting, spanning centuries; we embarrassed our relatives and friends."

"We were stupid," she replies. Her glow has faded over the decades, yet she looks beautiful in a flowing essence, "I thought the place was abandoned," hair brushed back and sparkling. "Partying teens."

"Sarah, we shamed Grandma's bed," I admit. My own glow flickers as I struggle to appear presentable. "While our so-called friends ransacked this place."

(Continued on next page)

FREMONT AREA WRITERS' CORNER *(Continued)*

HOLIDAY SPIRITS *(Continued from previous page)*

"I didn't even know your last name." Sarah reddens. "I remember we went out on the roof. It was raining." She twirls. "We danced naked."

"A bolt of lightning struck the tree. Knocked us off."

"Yet we keep returning," she smiles. "Perhaps someday they'll accept us back."

We float to the entrance and strobe. No response. Sarah says, "We've been coming here every Holiday season for decades." As we turn to leave, she continues, "We've matured, haven't we, Richard?"

"Yes. I commit to you."

"And I to you. And I love and respect them all."

"As do I."

The passage opens. Warmth spills into the cold dark—gratefulness, friendly ghosts, welcoming smiles. My father appears.

"Richard, son, so good of you and Sarah to join us," he says. "I just arrived myself, after a long delay. I opened a space for you two."

We shine with love and friendship.

The Barn

by Richard E. McCallum

The multiple pathways in the barn are demarcated by the collections alongside. Bats startled by our glow fly past us and into the farmhouse causing chaos and panic among the celebrators. We navigate through the assemblages: old cars, a movie projector from the forties, stacks of pictures still framed, steamer trunks full of silk outfits, National Geographic's dating back to the 1920s, and early turn of the century machines and tools. The smell reeks damp and musty.

Our brilliance reflects off the pupils of living creatures who stare at us before scampering away. Each footstep navigates over old wooden planks, the support level unknown. Ladders lead up to rafters; but who dares to climb to the summit? A hoarder's dream of heirlooms awaits the collector of needful things.

We make it to the outhouse, or commodes, as they were really 'in house' being stationed at the very end of the barn. Three holes carved out of

the wood structure provided for the family to sit together. A large diameter oval and another of medium size sets about two feet off the floor, and a small circular opening allows access for children. Sarah transverses through the swinging door, "I wish you, me, and a child of ours could sit together here." I, respectively, provide a dim night light just outside. She comes out, and proclaims, "I lost the need."

After the tour of the barn, we ascend using the old, narrow way. We pass through without interruption. Heading towards the room assigned to Sarah, we notice the door alongside lurks ajar.

"Who sleeps in there?" She questions.

"My grandparents. 'Grandad gets too frisky,' Grandma says, 'to have anyone sleep in there with us.'"

Sarah laughs, "Well good for the old folks."

Visual Prompt

*Artwork by
JoAnn Frisch*



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- 2025 Terry Tosh

BOARD MEETINGS

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

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FAW PURPOSE 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]
Monthly public meetings, workshops, and seminars open to all writers and the general public
to facilitate educating writers of all levels of expertise. (*Article II: PURPOSE Section1: 1.1 and 1.2 FAW Bylaws*)