



Whether you are a published author or a writer-wanna-be, this e-zine is for you. Here, you will find articles, announcements, book reviews, poetry, and information about the craft and business of writing, publishing and book marketing written by our readers. Our goal is to connect the writing and publishing community through networking that benefits both.

AUTHOR'S CORNER BY YVONNE PERRY

Happy Valentine's Month! I hope you will be celebrating love somehow, some way this month. Remember to love yourself in the process!

The year is off to a great start. Our staff of writers is finding more opportunities to widen their skill set. We are now working with three publishers to provide editing services and book promotion. Plus, our podcast continues to be a hit with authors and readers. Already our podcast is booked into April. We have some exciting guests and books this month, so be sure to take a look at the WITS Podcast schedule.



I hope you enjoy this issue filled with great tips for making your writing more productive and enjoyable.

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Blog Site: <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com>

Three Things Necessary to Make Writing Good and Powerful

By Yvonne Perry

There are writers who are creative types. They can let ideas and thoughts flow freely and create a story from their wild imagination. Misplaced commas, missing periods, and misspelled words don't get in their way.

Then, there are the logistical, mechanical types like me, who have to edit and perfect every word in every sentence before going on to the next paragraph.

It takes both kinds of writers to cover fiction and non-fiction.

While my fiction friends can weave a tale to take me on a reading fantasy, I doubt I would enjoy reading their book if someone didn't edit for them. Right-brained writers need left-brained editors!

Perfectionist types do well with non-fiction books like self-help, medical or scientific research, political issues—those “serious” genres—because they pay such close attention to detail. They will most likely have their bibliography completed long before they are satisfied that the copy is ready to be released to a publisher or printer. We are our own worst critic! We could take a lesson from right-brained writers.

I have three tips that I believe are necessary to make writing good and powerful. These apply regardless of which type of writer you may be:

1. **Write to your target audience.** Fiction or nonfiction, keep your reader in mind. What age, education level, interests and expectations do they have? Deliver to the customer. This is especially important if you are a freelancer writing for a client. Know their market and their business well enough to be their customer or employee.
2. **Let your creativity flow.** Don't let the double period typo at the end of a sentence distract you while you are still creating the text. You can always go back and correct punctuation and spelling when you are finished.
3. **Have someone proofread for you.** If I let a piece sit for a few days before I come back to it, I will catch most of my errors, but I still appreciate having someone proofread my work before it goes out.

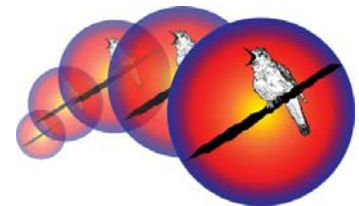
Remember, the more you write, the better you get at it. So, make time to do what you love and write to your heart's content!

NIGHTENGAL NUGGETS: Soup-to-Nuts Publishing Service

by Valerie Connelly

Nightengale Press has developed an all-inclusive SOUP-TO-NUTS PUBLISHING SERVICE.

Whether you are an author of a fiction title, a non-fiction title, a children's book or a business person who needs a book to support your business, you need the editing, proofreading, layout and design, and printing and production of your book to just happen.



Every author is looking for a quality publishing partner who knows the industry and can be trusted to deliver a quality book for reasonable prices. You need someone who meets agreed-upon deadlines, works with integrity and can manage the project soup-to-nuts, so you are free to handle your many marketing responsibilities with the confidence that your book will be a top quality work. In short, you need all the publishing services in one place, so you can focus on marketing your book and not the work of publishing your book.

FACT #1: Books are rarely publication-ready when they leave the hand of the author. Books always require careful editing and proof-reading to make them all they can be before they are designed and printed.

FACT #2: Most authors don't have the time and resources (editing and proofreading can cost several thousand dollars at the customary hourly rate) to seek out and pay for all the people they need to help them publish a book. So, they skimp on some important items, such as editing and proofreading. Typically, writers think they can self-edit, and there are many who encourage them to do so. However, there is

nothing better for a book than a pair of trained eyes which are not emotionally and intellectually immersed in the book.

Nightengale Press takes the worry and work out of the process. You will need to approve some things as the book develops, but you won't be bothered by a pesky account rep asking you to spend hours and hours finding your own typos.

Read more about SOUP-TO-NUTS PUBLISHING SERVICE at <http://nightengalepress.biz>

Walk 'N Roll Dog Touches the Heart of Valentines

A media release written by Yvonne Perry

Author Barbara Techel and her paralyzed dog, Frankie, appear at book release party to help others gain compassion for the physically challenged.

ELKHART LAKE, WI — Author Barbara Techel's idea of a Valentine's Day celebration has a dog-eared expression that doesn't include a candlelit dinner, red roses or romantic music. Barbara is celebrating the holiday with her pooch and the launch of her first children's book, Frankie the Walk 'N Roll Dog.

February is the month of love and that includes our love of animals and pets. Barbara Techel's love for her furry friends is so great that she has written a true, inspirational book about Frankie—a dog whose life started like any other dog walking on all four paws. When a spinal injury left her paralyzed, Frankie was custom-fitted for a doggie wheelchair. Now she is able to "walk 'n roll."

Barbara receives compassionate reactions whenever she is out with Frankie in Elkhart Lake. People are fascinated by the little dog with tires and they frequently ask Barbara what happened to the dachshund. The warmth, kindness and encouragement from strangers, as well as family and friends, led Barbara to writing the dog's story. While the book is geared toward children, people of all ages love the story.

Struggling with a physical challenge can be overwhelming to people and animals alike. But, this little wiener dog has a zest for life that will have you cheering and believing that all things are possible.

"I wrote Frankie, The Walk N' Roll Dog to give hope and inspiration to all who face challenges," says Techel. "My lifelong love of animals led me to realize that Frankie's paralysis was an opportunity to spread a positive message."

Friends of the Library is sponsoring the event to be held at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake on Saturday, Feb. 23, 2008 from 1:00 -3:00 p.m. Before the book signing, Barbara will give a brief lecture, a selected reading, and answer questions. And most importantly, Frankie will be there in her new satin quilted heart coat to promote her book. Refreshments will be served.

Since 2005, Barbara's column "For the Love of Animals" has appeared in the Depot Dispatch. Her column shares stories of the daily antics and lives of all her four-legged companions and other furry friends. Barbara received an honorable mention award in a contest sponsored by best-selling authors Linda and Allen Anderson of www.Angelanimals.net. There is a possibility that her story will appear in the Anderson's fall 2008 book.

Barbara hopes that Frankie's story will help anyone realize they always have a choice as to how they will overcome a challenge. Frankie will leave an everlasting and loving paw print on your heart this Valentine's Day.

You can read more about Barbara on her Web site <http://www.joyfulpaws.com> or blog with the author at <http://www.joyfulpaws.typepad.com>.

WITS Podcast Schedule February 2008

February 1

Steven Clark Bradley is a former resident and South Bend mayoral candidate. He has lived in 34 countries, including Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey. He has a master's degree in liberal studies from Indiana University. He speaks French and Turkish. He has been an assistant to a prosecutor, a university instructor and a freelance journalist. Steven is the author of *Nimrod Rising*.

Have you ever felt that the world was guided in ways that are beyond man's control? The constant changes in the world since the time of Nimrod 4,000 years ago until today (and all the events that have shaken the world) have been to bring the universe back into the hands of the Prince of Darkness, Lucia. Lucia ruled, the world with his Watchers before it was all ripped from his grasp when man was created. *Nimrod Rising* paints a diabolical picture of how the Prince of Darkness executes his evil plot to take the world back by force. He wants to destroy civilization in the process. From the Great Builder Nimrod in 4000 BC to today (666 generations later), you can ride the storm of *Nimrod Rising* and experience the death of a world and the birth pangs of another. You will swear it is really upon us!

To read more about Stephen Bradley please visit his website www.stephenbradley.net

February 8

Nikki Leigh shares insights on book promotion as she introduces her book *Book Promo 101 – Basics of Book Promotion*. She created this book to share her promotional background with authors. It includes tips and suggestions to help the beginning book promoter or the more experienced promoter. There are review questions at the end of each chapter to help the author to learn more.

The author speaks from her many years of experience in promotional and marketing work. She offers her own expertise and she collected quotes from some of the best people in the business when it comes to getting their books "out there" and getting them noticed by reviewers, the press, and readers' groups. The book explores the mentality and process behind promotional work and discusses a wide variety of ways to promote books - many free or low cost techniques.

This book was written in a teaching format and has review questions at the end of each chapter. There are many easy ways to promote and easy questions for the author to answer. More complicated promotional options are included along with more complicated questions to help the author learn and experiment with their book promotion.

Feel free to check the site for more information and contact Nikki with questions nikki_leigh22939@yahoo.com

February 15

Karen Arlettaz Zemek grew up with two foster sisters and a foster brother. She is a secretary at a law firm and lives in Parma, Ohio, with her husband, Gerard, and two nice cats, Moe and Spunky Doodle. She enjoys bowling, tennis, playing games on pogo.com and selling on eBay. Karen has served the Lord Jesus practically her whole life by being involved in many church ministries.

The short, funny stories in this book about my dad, his family, his cats and the strange things he did are all true. Many of us deal with aging parents so can relate to a lot of things in this book. You will smile, chuckle and may even laugh out loud but also will find parts very touching that may bring a tear to your eye. Get

ready for a quick, easy, emotional read and learn to cherish the people in your day-to-day life. Karen Arlettaz Zemek wrote this book in memory of her father, Harrington "Harry" Arlettaz.

For more information, visit <http://www.outskirtspress.com/myfunnydadharry>

February 22

Christine Blake will be joining Barbara Milbourn on Writers in the Sky Podcast to discuss her book *Woman Redeemed*. Christine holds a Masters Degree in Multi-Cultural Education from National University and a Bachelor in English from the University of San Diego. While at USD, she also studied Theology, Logic, and Philosophy as well as completing her fifth year in Education. With these degrees, she has taught literature and writing for many years.

Woman Redeemed is the "every woman" story that embraces the feminine influence on history and celebrates the strength of women in community with one another. Mary Magdalene is a product of a multi-cultural region: empowered by the tales of Roman women and grounded by Jewish heroines of traditional stories. She is a universal symbol of renewal and redemption. As such, Mary Magdalene transcends Judeo-Christian tradition and personifies femininity at its most enduring and inspiring. Tracing her decline through the temptations of this multifaceted world and her attempt to deny her femininity to succeed in a male-dominated society, we explore her difficult, yet familiar, cycle of sin, forgiveness, and reawakening. Finally, as she witnesses the Resurrection, she gains an awareness of the divine in the world and the beauty of women, including herself.

Web site: www.womanredeemednovel.com. The book is available on Amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com

February 29

Charlotte "Charlie" Hudson is a 22-year career military veteran and wife, freelance writer and author. During her extensive military career Hudson was deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and to Haiti in support of Operation Uphold Democracy. She retired from the Army in 1995 as a lieutenant colonel. She and her husband, Hugh Hudson, recently moved to South Florida where they can enjoy their love of scuba diving.

Hudson's first novel, **Orchids in the Snow**, was written after she retired from active duty. Her novels, **Shades of Murder** and **Shades of Truth**, invite readers to the fictional town of Verde Key, Florida for an intriguing story and a great cast of characters. Her first book-length non-fiction, **The Parent's Guide to Business Travel: Practical Advice and Wisdom for When You Have To Be Away**, is an easy reading book for any parent who has ever faced work-related family separations. Her latest novel, **Shades of Gold**, returns readers to Verde Key for an intricate tale of obsession, greed and plenty of underwater action.

It's a typical spring in the Florida Keys. An old man takes his boat out at night looking for Indian spirits; a Prop Master for a film studio is preparing for a location shoot; a troubled young man who refuses to believe his wife no longer loves him is determined to get her back.

The word is out that Hollywood is coming to Verde Key to capture local scenery, above and below water. Chief Taylor considers it to be an invasion, the mayor is counting the

Listening to Writers in the Sky Podcast on a computer is easy.

Just click this link:

<http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com> and go to my blog.

On the right sidebar there is a list of archived shows. Click on the interview you would like to hear and it will open a post that has a link to open the audio file.

I appreciate all the positive feedback you send me about these shows.

For information about being a guest on Writers in the Sky Podcast, see

http://www.yvonneperry.net/WritingPackages.htm#Publicity_Packages

economic boost and Police Detective Bev Henderson is happy to hear that her friend, Chris Green, has been hired to give scuba lessons to the handsome lead actor and other members of the cast.

Chris' excitement is tainted when her ex-convict estranged husband appears in town, a new wedding ring in hand. As tension mounts into a bloody encounter, Bev begins to question what seems to be an open and shut case of tragic obsession turned violent. Are three dead people, who apparently have nothing in common, linked to a secret from the 1940s?

Log on to www.charliehudson.net to read chapter one for free. Shades of Gold can be purchased through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, www.Outskirtspress.com or by asking your favorite bookstore to order it.

THE WRITER'S VOICE

by Mary E. Martin

Sometimes critics speak of a writer's voice. But what do they mean? I think of it as a goal to be achieved on a very long road. It's that uniquely personal "way" you have of expressing yourself to the world in word and thought—the sum total of yourself as a human being. You might say it's the Holy Grail of writing.

But how and when do you find your voice? I remember when one of my sons was in grade eight. His English teacher complained to me that he had not yet found his own writing voice. Astonished, I said, "He's only twelve. Surely you know that writers spend their lives seeking that voice and then perfecting it?" Before you find that Grail, I think there are many steps and stops along the way.

I remember attending a writing class when I was not very far into writing a first draft of *Conduct in Question*, the first novel in what eventually became *The Osgoode Trilogy*. I was truly amazed to hear the teacher say that he usually revised his work twelve times—on average. My God! I thought. You mean three times won't cut it? And so, began a very long journey through countless drafts of three novels, featuring the protagonist lawyer, Harry Jenkins.

It is said that a carpenter must have proper tools and this is true of any craftsmen—writers included. And they must be skilled in the use of those tools after long years of practice. So what are the tools of the writer?

Many of us spend hours choosing just the right computer and clearing away a quite space of our own to write. Certainly, we need pens and paper and lots of good light. Oh, and an ergonomic chair. Fine, so far as it goes.

But what else is needed? What are the real tools of the writer? Dare I say, a strong, fundamental grasp and passionate love of the language, a broad vocabulary and a sense of grammar, are necessary? This does not mean a writer must be able to cite a rule for every sentence they write, but they must have such a fine grasp of their tools so that their proper use is automatic. After all, they are only tools with which to express one's view of the mystery of life and they should not get in the way of the flow of thought. Unfortunately, I have seen writing in its most formative stages, where the lack of knowledge of sentence structure is appallingly absent. [My children have referred to me as a member of "the grammar police."] Surely, mastery of these essentials must be the very first step on the journey, before one can even begin to explore and express one's thoughts and passions.

But this takes us only so far. We have to develop a sense of so many things; namely, plot sequencing, character development, and dialogue, just to mention a few. On top of all of this, we need an idea or many ideas. We need inspiration, plus an attitude of flexibility and curiosity, which permits abandoning a line or direction and picking up a new thread.

I have often been asked if I write on a scheduled basis—so many hours in the morning etc. The answer is NO. I only sit down to write when I feel I have something to say. For me, I do a lot of “writing” in my head.

Consequently, when I do sit down to write, I rarely suffer writer’s block. Perhaps that sort of block is really to prevent us from running “on empty” when we have nothing to say. Sometimes, you have to sit back and let the well fill up again. I’ve been asked if I make a plan or outline of the novel before writing it. I am amazed that anyone could do that! For me, it’s a process of growing the characters and the events over time. I do, however, make a chart of where I’ve been.

These are just a few items I’ve found along the path to finding the writer’s voice. But here’s one thing I do try out with each passage. I read it out loud to myself. Why? If you read your work aloud—just to yourself—then something quite magical happens. Your inner ear comes alive. Remember humankind has told stories long before anyone could write. The first story-telling was undoubtedly around the campfire. I find when I read aloud then all the bumps and awkwardness are immediately spotted. I might have read [with my eyes] a certain passage fifty times over and would not have picked up what the voice registers instantly on the ear. Don’t forget, language was first in the spoken form and there is something within us which hears the false or awkward. If you do this with all your writing, you will quickly become aware of your clumsy wording. Eventually, you will sense the cadence and the rhythm of your prose. And that, for me, is part of the writer’s voice. And, by the way, I did read this aloud. Hope it sounds okay.

Mary E. Martin grew up in Toronto where she began practicing law in a small estates firm. In 1999, she became a full time writer and photographer. Her own writing The Osgoode Trilogy, in the legal suspense genre, was greatly inspired by her law practice of twenty-eight years, which she says gave her a window on the world and humanity. Visit Mary at www.theosgoodetrilogy.com and www.authorsden.com/maryemartin

Do you want to get more mileage out of your book marketing dollars?

WITS publicity packages are affordable and effective ways to market your book. Yvonne Perry offers you the benefit of the knowledge she gained from her own book marketing experience. Choose from publicity packages containing book trailers, article marketing techniques, online media releases, author interviews, book reviews and more.

Our writing packages are a great deal for anyone needing online publicity.
See http://www.yvonneperry.net/Writing_Packages.htm

NETWORK WITH US

Add your announcement or brag about your writing accomplishment. Tell us about your book or business. Share information and ideas or send articles or advertorial for the next issue to writer@yvonneperry.net. Here are some announcements from our readers this month:

Linda Della Donna, author of www.griefcase.blogspot.com, founder, director of www.griefcase.net, is now host of her own weekly cable TV program. Della Donna, as you recall, discovered her writing niche after the death of her husband, Edward Schier. A Platinum author, her free ezine articles, for widows only, and

all individuals going through the grief process, can be found at www.ezinearticles.com. Look for her upcoming cable TV show to debut in February. Della Donna will interview guests going through the grief process, highlight resources, and answer questions. Della Donna's message to widows of the world--We're not alone!

The Corner Cafe is a small critique group looking for new members. If you are a writer looking for readers and honest critiques of your work, willing critique other writers in return and can commit to regular participation, then contact the moderator for a copy of the group's guidelines. You do not need to be published. You do need to be able to make constructive comments on the material you critique. Contact cornercafe-owner@yahoogroups.com.

Book Promo 101 - Learn the Basics of Book Promotion

Print format to be available by March 2008 - to know when the books are available you can sign up for Nikki Leigh's mailing list - nikki_leigh22939@yahoo.com and put "Mailing List" in the subject line. An announcement will also be posted on her blog - www.muzesmusings.blogspot.com. You can also visit Muze's Musings and click on the link near the top left corner to subscribe to her blog.

If you can't wait - the e-book version of the book is currently available. For more details and for links to purchase, visit: www.nikkileigh.com/book_promo_101.htm

The print book is about 200 pages and the book is oversize - 8" x 10". This format was chosen because the book can be used as a promotional workbook.

Pastor Two Bears book *Lessons from the Desert* is now available.

<http://outskirtspress.com/webpage.php?isbn=1432715283>

Eliz Joyner, author of *Love Renewed: Looking Into the Heart and Soul of the One You Love* has a book for true romantics and those wanting to increase intimacy and communication in their relationship. See www.loverenewed.net.

Missing my Body Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Taryn Simpson has written an inspirational story about Jason Walker's courageous battle with a severe form of Muscular Dystrophy. Jason is a Duchenne survivor with incredible faith, character and determination that far exceeds his years. He hopes to inspire others facing similar difficulties. Feel free to email Jason at jasonwalker8217@yahoo.com or visit <http://www.cureduchenne.citymax.com/jasonwalker.html> to see photos and learn more about Jason. After reading this story, you will come to know what it is truly like to live as a quadriplegic and to be missing your body.

Order the paperback book (\$11.89) or download the eBook (\$5.00) at <http://www.lulu.com/content/684054>

Promotional Opportunities and Author Virtual Book Tour Site

Nikki Leigh has launched a new book blog tour website (www.inspiredauthor.com/promotion) where

there are opportunities to learn more about writing and promoting. There are also a variety of authors to learn more about each month. There are several ways for authors to promote their books. First register on the site to create your profile page. While you're on the site, check details about being a site sponsor and feature author opportunities. Any questions, contact author Nikki Leigh at nikki_leigh22939@yahoo.com.

For more information, visit:

All Readers (fiction and non fiction) - <http://inspiredauthor.com/promotion/?q=Readers+Are+Welcome>

Feature Authors - <http://inspiredauthor.com/promotion/featured-author>

Member Authors - <http://inspiredauthor.com/promotion/be-registered-author>

Site Sponsors - <http://inspiredauthor.com/promotion/how-and-why-be-sponsor>

Nikki wants to give you a free promotional page on her new book tour site. It's very easy and you will have a full page to promote your book, your blog, your newsletter, your business or something else. For more details, visit

<http://muzesmusings.blogspot.com/2008/01/i-want-to-give-you-free-promotional.html>

Congratulations to Loree Gold, who had a story ("In Touch With My Inner Elf") published in *CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL, CHRISTMAS IN DECEMBER*. The book is available in all bookstores, amazon.com, and other online bookstores.

On January 18, 2008 Usiku (pronounced oo-SEE-koo) was nominated for a 39th NAACP Image Award in the category of Outstanding Literary Work – Poetry. *ELOQUENCE: RHYTHM & RENAISSANCE* is the first title published by Usiku and Usiku.net. "ELOQUENCE is a rejuvenated journey of art, inspiration and life. Within its pages are possibilities and an immeasurable Spirit."

The NAACP Image Awards honors projects and individuals that promote diversity in 44 categories, including the arts in television, recording, literature, and motion pictures. A special committee of 300 industry professionals and NAACP leaders selected the nominees. The 39th NAACP Image Awards will air live on Fox Thursday, February 14th, 8:00 PM ET. Usiku.net is an online provider of hardcover and electronic books. Read excerpts at www.usiku.net.

February 1 - Nikki Leigh to be interviewed by Melissa Alvarez

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/MelissaAlvarez>

(Listeners can listen to the interview, but be sure to visit www.blogtalkradio.com before the chat begins to have access to the interview. It is also posted later for people who cannot be at the chat.)

February 8th - Nikki Leigh is interviewed by Yvonne Perry

The interviewed will be posted at <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com/> and available for listeners on February 8th.

Nikki Leigh participated in an interview with authors, Phil Harris and Carolyn Howard Johnson and you can listen in by visiting - <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/pharris/blog/2007/12/12/DECEMBER-17TH-PROMOTE-PROMOTE-PROMOTE>

The Jaguar Legacy

by Maureen Fisher

A Paranormal Romantic Suspense where ancient danger stalks the jungle on velvet paws ...

www.BooksByMaureen.com

Strong Enough for a Man ... But Written for a Woman

Despite baffling panic attacks that devastated her career, journalist Charley Underhill barges in on a Mexican archaeological dig, bent on sniffing out a juicy exposé that will restore her reputation and earn enough money for her mother's life-saving treatment. Haunted by past betrayals, Dr. Alistair Kincaid isn't about to let a smart-mouthed reporter leak word of his latest discovery, an ancient Olmec city, to the press. A battle of wills and wits ensues. Strands from a past life intertwine with the present, drawing the couple into a vortex of chilling evil. Torn between redeeming her soul and betraying the man she loves, Charley faces impossible choices.

Endorsements

"THE JAGUAR LEGACY is a terrific paranormal romantic suspense thriller starring two likable lead protagonists..." — Harriet Klausner, Top Amazon Reviewer

"An intricately woven tale of mystery, romance and the supernatural. Maureen Fisher has redefined paranormal romance, breathing life into magnificent characters and scenarios that demand to be applauded. ... Thoroughly researched, highly entertaining and well written, this one is DEFINITELY a keeper!" —Euro-Reviews

"Mysticism, a suspenseful plot, complex characters and a sizzling romance set apart this intriguing tale. Fisher's fully developed characters and steamy romance will keep you turning the pages..." — Romantic Times Book Review

"Outstanding and Powerful! The Jaguar Legacy by Maureen Fisher had me hooked from the first word to the last. Fisher has woven ancient mysteries, past lives, and pure evil, into a story that left me begging for more. These characters were so well-developed, the storyline so well-written, the setting so perfectly described, that I felt I knew these people and followed them along their journey into darkness. I eagerly await Maureen Fisher's next release..." —Cheryl Malandrinos, the Book Connection

"Hilarious banter, scorching sexual tension, gripping suspense, mysticism—The Jaguar Legacy has it all! Page-turning paranormal romance as hot and steamy as the jungle setting" —Sharon Page, author of Blood Red

"A skillful mix of intrigue and the paranormal, The Jaguar Legacy is a fast-paced, sexy thrill-ride of a tale that combines danger, magic and romance for a highly entertaining read" — Kathryn Smith, USA Today Bestselling Author of Night of the Huntress

"The Jaguar Legacy has it all. A lush, exotic setting that feels so real you'll believe you're there, characters that come alive on the page, and a superbly intriguing story. You won't want to put this book down. I highly recommend Maureen Fisher's The Jaguar Legacy!" —Opan Carew, author of Swing and Twin Fantasies

THE WRITING LIFE: Ways to Use Metaphors

By JJ Murphy

Making comparisons is a way to increase our understanding.

Metaphor, a Greek word translated as *carry something across*, is a way of comparing two things without using the words *like* or *as*.

As a writing tool, metaphor can create word pictures in the mind of the reader in a number of ways. Here are a few:

1. Translation. One of the most practical uses for metaphor is to help a reader understand something that is abstract. Consider the following two sentences when determining which has greater impact:

a. *He was angry.*

b. *He narrowed his eyes, drew his thin lips across his teeth and flared his nostrils, emitting a low, but audible growl.*

2. Efficiency. Consider these sentences:

a. *She lived in a small, cramped, dark place, far away from people; no one came to visit.*

b. *Her home was a prison.*

3. To create meaning for a new concept. We use metaphors when referring to many computer-related products and services including, *World Wide Web, mouse* and *virus*.

4. Parts of speech.

a. Verb: The words that lifted her spirits sank his hopes.

b. Modifier: Coldness gripped her heart and wrung it.

c. Adjective/adverb: Joe is a voracious reader devouring several books a week.

d. Prepositional phrase: He studied the landscape with a hunter's eye.

You know a metaphor has impact when it can communicate an idea, the phrase makes sense, it sticks with the reader and it is true to the reader's experience.

Writer and naturalist JJ Murphy, <http://www.WriterByNature.com>, offers creative nature curriculum, wild food recipes, fiction, poetry, articles and writing services for individuals, entrepreneurs, small businesses and ecologically aware companies.

BOOK PUBLISHING: Why You Should Write a Book Proposal (Even if you Plan to Self-Publish)

by Diane Eble

Do you dream of writing a book? Do you also dream of getting published? If so, here's a tip that will save you tons of time, energy and probably even money:

Don't write your book first!

You read that right. Don't write your book first. Instead, focus first on writing what's called a book proposal.

A book proposal is simply your plan for your book. You wouldn't build a house without a blueprint, would you? Writing a book is a huge investment of time and energy, sometimes money as well. Just as you would not build a house without a blueprint, neither should you start writing a book without a plan.

Your book proposal will cover what your book is about, who your audience is, how you plan to market it, what other books are out there like it and how yours is different. It will include a chapter-by-chapter outline as well.

I liken writing a book to painting a room. When painting a room, the most time and energy goes into the preparation. You wash the walls, you put masking tape around the trim, you fill in the dings and sand it smooth. Then you cut in the trim.

The quality of the paint job depends largely on doing these preparatory steps well.

Once you do all that, you're ready to roll on the paint with your roller. That's the easy and quick part.

Writing the book proposal is like preparing the room. That's 90 percent of your work. Once you've done the proposal, actually writing the book will feel like rolling the paint onto the walls.

A great book proposal is absolutely necessary if you want a traditional publisher (also called a commercial publisher) to publish your book. They will not even look at a manuscript unless they've seen a proposal and offered a contract. (Same is true with finding a literary agent. They will want a book proposal, not the manuscript. Having a great proposal shows agents and publishers you know how to play the game.)

Even if you plan to self-publish, I still strongly suggest you write your book proposal first. Because it will force you to think through your book, you will end up writing a better book. You will have asked--and answered--all the key questions that underlie a successful book.

If you'd like further help on asking--and answering--those key questions, check out the downloadable coaching session called "Jump Start Your Book: 12 Questions You Must Answer to Write a Book that Sells" at <http://www.wordstoprofit.com/JumpStartYourBook.html>.

For VIP access to an interview with 8 top publishing executives who reveal what makes publishers take notice of your book proposal, go to <http://www.wordstoprofit.com/proposalsecrets.html>. To get your publishing questions answered, check out the many articles and resources at Diane's web site at <http://www.wordstoprofit.com> and blog at <http://www.yourbookpublishingcoach.com>.

FEBRUARY POEMS



Katherine Mansfield's Unattainable Wish

By Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Katherine Mansfield wished

she could be all that I am capable
of *being*, Did she reach that leaf
at the end of the twig, there, there!
in a forest of high-grown
trees, and if she didn't
does it matter? Do we grasp
such a tender bud only
when we finally merge
with others' souls who
also reach for a fervent moment?
If she did realize *being*, touch it
taste it, would she have known?
Would she have reached still again
without having celebrated the pleasure
of her best moment?

Carolyn Howard-Johnson has published a chapbook of poetry with Finishing Line Press. Tracings was honored for excellence by the Military Writers' Society of America and the book was named to the Compulsive Reader's Top 10 Reads list. It is available at http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1599240173/ref=cm_arms_pdp_dp She blogs on War. Peace. Tolerance. And Our Soldiers. <http://www.warpeacetolerance.blogspot.com>.

Window Frame

By Janet Grace Riehl

The bird show is Mother's main entertainment
while she reclines on her plush throne.

Something...that delights her.
The show playing outside the window
links her to a past she no longer remembers.

Technically, that is.
Her mouth can't form the words
to tell of bird trips around the world,
spotting scope slung over her shoulder
and binoculars superglued to her hands.

But, she knows.
I can see it.
"The birds," she murmurs,
and, her face lights up.

The sun, higher in the sky now,
still a blinding ball in the heavens.
But yellow, not orange.
There's not much display this morning

as it rises above the fog.

Of course we know the sun
isn't really rising.
This phrase...is a remnant
from when we thought the world was flat.
And, if we sailed...too far,
we'd drop off...the edge...of the world.

This excerpt is from WINDOW FRAME by Janet Grace Riehl published in "Sightlines: A Poet's Diary" and dedicated to Ruth Evelyn Johnston Thompson, Janet's mother (January 4, 1916-May 1, 2006)

Last Wish

By Dennis Martin

I've made wishes on a star,
Thrown pennies in a fountain,
Looked deep into a wishing well
To make my longings known,
Rubbed lamps expecting swirly smoke
To conjure up a set of three,
Even lifted silent prayers
When I was all alone.

Children's play, these expectations,
Careless folly edged with greed,
Birthday wishes blowing candles,
Secrets no one else may know.
Pull a wishbone with your sister
Hoping for the shorter stem,
Or was it the longer?
Can't remember in truth.
It was so long ago.

Whatever divine sorcery
Can make a fervent wish come true,
My wish, my one last wish would be
Just one more day
 To spend with you.

A Connected Awareness

by Hal Manogue

Captivating Laughter
Is
The Face of Love
It Drips Between the Crevices

Of Knowing
Each Giggle Rings
A Bell of Freedom

Vibrations
Match Themselves in Numbers
Crossing the Vastness of Nothing
In Synchronicity
Carrying DNA in Mystical Strands
Of Being

A Connected Awareness
Kisses Itself in Dreams
Falling
Into The Well of Oneness

Embracing
The Essence of Remembering
The Dance of Friendship
Begins
Where It Left Off

Holding Love
In Magic Memories
And Moments in Absolute Bliss
Dripping In Delight
The Energy of Consciousness
Brings
Thoughts to Life
And
Purpose to Love

Howard (Hal) Thomas Manogue, was born in Philadelphia, and is a forerunner to the Indigo children, a now age term for misfit with an intuitive nature, a desire to know his truth with a gift of giving and sharing. Hal retired from the shoe industry after 35 years of soul searching, and discovered his real soul. He enjoys art, music, philosophy, psychology, nature and people. His poems have been published by: Mystic Pop Magazine, Children Of The New Earth Magazine, New Age Tribune, Seasons Of The Soul Newsletters, Lightship News and Writers In The Sky Newsletters. His essays can be found on www.ezinearticles.com and www.selfgrowth.com. Hal's Blog and Website: <http://halmanogue.blogspot.com/> www.shortsleeves.net He lives in Franklin, Tennessee.

PUBLISHING WITH LULU.COM

By Dennis Martin

The biggest reason I prefer Lulu.com is because it is free. There are no up-front costs for publishing. I do my own editing and formatting before submitting a book. They accept my MS Word formats and convert them to a PDF file. I can download or preview the PDF file, make corrections in the formatting on my PC and then upload it again until I have a satisfactory product. Uploading takes only a few minutes (if that).

There are limited cover options, but I have been able to find suitable cover packages in their library. Uploading cover art is a bit confusing. I tried it a time or two with little success.

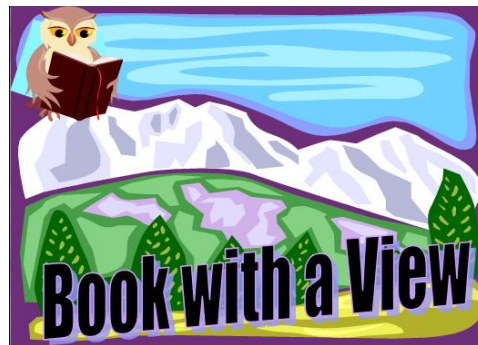
Editing and promotion packages are available for a modest price. ISBN numbers are also available. A distribution package that includes a custom storefront, global availability, Bowker's listing, and an ISBN is \$100.00. You also get a discount on any books you order for yourself.

Naturally, the success of the publication is dependent on the authors own promotion efforts. I don't know if the more expensive promotion packages offered by Lulu are really effective. Haven't tried them. I doubt if anyone ever got rich selling books this way, but who knows. Anything is possible.

I just want to get my work out there, make it available, accessible and affordable to anyone who might be interested. Lulu seems to be the most cost effective way to accomplish that. Most of the POD services want \$500.00 or more to set up your book and they can take several weeks to get them ready for press. With Lulu I can publish almost immediately.

Dennis Martin began writing plays and submitting them to the local Playwright's Festival when he turned 40 years old. He has written 13 plays –several of which have been presented as staged readings in the Baltimore Playwright's Festival. Dennis has written over 800 poems and self-published a book of poems titled "Love and Passions" available at www.iuniverse.com and major online bookstores as well as six other poetry collections and three novels available at www.lulu.com/dsmartin. Read more about Dennis at <http://www.iwritesome.com> or blog with him at <http://iwritesome.blogspot.com>.

FEBRUARY BOOK REVIEWS



Shades of Gold

Author: Charlie Hudson

ISBN: 978-1-4327-1440-6

Publisher: Outskirts Press.com

Genre: Fiction/Mystery

Publication Date: 2007

Pages: 267

Price: US \$12.95/CAN \$13.95

Paperback

Review by Yvonne Perry www.yvonneperry.net

Shades of Gold is MY Favorite Shade!

Murder mysteries are a dime a dozen these days but Charlie Hudson's "Shades of Gold" combines many hues to produce an intriguing blend of colorful characters. In Hudson's latest work, she weaves a complex yet coherent and comprehensive tale.

Hudson's style is reminiscent of a "CSI" episode with many subplots. Her character development is personable, describing not only their physical appearance, their vocations, and interpersonal relationships, but she allows you inside the character's head to see what makes them tick. All this could become very tedious but Hudson pulls it off with a cohesiveness of a consummate storyteller.

Drawing from her personal life experience as a U. S. Army veteran and avid scuba diver, she employs her knowledge to detail life upon the sea and beneath its depths.

The fictional town of Verde Key Florida comes alive with Hudson's vivid descriptions even as her characters perish. She wasted no time setting up her story, as someone is found dead in the very first sentence. Before long there are four dead bodies and detective Bev Henderson ceremoniously begins her unrelenting quest of trying to solve the mystery behind the four seemingly unrelated deaths. From Boston to Chicago, LA to Miami, Bev leaves no stone unturned. She elicits the help of her friend Chris Green, dive instructor and owner of a local dive shop, who incidentally was hired to give lessons to a Hollywood star. Yes, Hollywood has come to town. Some consider it an invasion while others will prosper from the big spenders. But just as in real life some behind the scene characters are not always as they seem.

From the wife-beater found with a butcher knife in his chest, to the town eccentric that apparently drowned in the mangrove islets, to the Hollywood film crew special effects member shot dead in the dive shop, to the estranged ex-convict husband tragically taken out by a police marksman, the action is non-stop. What erupted in the quaint little vacation town? A story from the past, ghost wandering the out islands, a Hollywood movie on location, secret night dives, romantic and lustful interludes, all intertwine to reveal one most unexpected tale of fortunes lost and fortunes found.

This is the third book in the "Shade" series and has a delightful tone that blends well with the first two—Shades of Truth and Shades of Murder—while working well as a stand-alone book.

I am looking forward to a recorded personal interview with this author on Writers in the Sky Podcast February 29, 2008. See her book trailer on Youtube: http://youtube.com/watch?v=97hY_Vbu6z0.

AIDS Orphans Rising: What You Should Know and What You Can Do To Help Them Succeed

Sister Mary Elizabeth Lloyd, M.P.F, Ed. D.

Loving Healing Press (2008)

ISBN 9781932690477

Reviewed by *Richard R. Blake* for Reader Views (12/07)

There are alarming statistics that warn "every 14 seconds a Child Headed Household is formed." Sister Mary Elizabeth Lloyd has written a guidebook to help alert concerned citizens of the magnitude of the problem and to provide the reader with answers the questions: "What should I know, and what can I do to help them succeed?" A Child Headed Household is defined as: children who have survived the death of their parents from AIDS. These households are made up of "little brothers and sisters struggling to stay alive and remain together as a family." There are often three to eight children per household.

Sister Lloyd is quick to point out that the current view taken by most that these are victims dependent and powerless must be replaced with a vision of how these children have the courage to take control of their

economic hardships, deprivations, and exploitation in positive ways so that they can remain together as family. It is this determination that became the motivation for Sister Lloyd to write this book.

All regions of the world are impacted by the enormity of the plight of these children. India, alone, is faced with 3,700,000 children orphaned. Statistics indicate that China has 2,300,000. Other countries around the world afflicted with the same dilemma bring the total orphaned children to over 16,000,000.

The book provides a broad selection of photos which depict bright-eyed children, resilient, with endurance and with promise, doing their best, struggling to stay together, taking the role of adults in caring for younger siblings.

Each chapter of the book offers suggestions for actions for the reader to take as members of a growing world community of concerned citizens. Comprehensive references with additional web links to organizations working with these children offer solutions which help insure that these children will survive, and will succeed.

Sister Mary Elizabeth opens her final chapter with a challenge for the reader to respond to Mother Teresa's call to action: "If I look at the masses, I will never act. If I look at the one, I will."

"Aids Orphans Rising" will grip your heart. The needs will linger in your consciousness long after you have read the final word and closed the covers of the book. Sister Mary Elizabeth Lloyd has presented the case for these children. Now it is up to us, the readers, to decide which suggested action steps we can take to help them succeed.

[Read interview with author](#)

[Buy book at amazon.com](#)

Flying Out of Brooklyn

Beverly Magid

iUniverse (2007)

ISBN 9780595455867

Reviewed by *Paige Lovitt* for Reader Views (12/07)

The year is 1943, and Judith Weissman's apartment neighbor has just committed suicide. Judith is not happy, and this incident makes her take a closer look at her own life. Her marriage, family relationships and work are very unsatisfying. She yearns to be living the dreams that she had as a teenager. When Bobby, the object of Judith's high school crush, returns injured from the war, Judith reaches out to him. The secretiveness of the relationship gives Judith the illusion that life seems more vivid and that she finally feels alive. As Judith suffers through a serious tragedy in her family, she realizes what is really important to her and she learns who she can really count on.

"Flying Out of Brooklyn," is a coming-of-age novel about a young Jewish woman from a Brooklyn neighborhood. Beverly Magid wrote this story in such vivid detail that I felt I was looking at it through Judith's eyes and feeling it through her heart. Judith is a woman that is desperately seeking a change in her life. She makes some choices that are really not in her best interest, yet she must experience the repercussions so that she can learn from them and discover what really is important and what really matters. It was interesting for me to be able to know that Judith was making poor choices, yet understand why she did. I liked watching Judith learn from them and grow.

I enjoyed how Magid incorporated into her story, what was happening at the time. While men were away at war, women were working in once male-dominated fields. They were proud to be able to play a role in the war, and to be able to gain higher paying employment. They were working really hard and proving themselves, yet they still had to deal with issues of sexism and in some cases, racial prejudice. Families also had to deal with rationing and food shortages. Magid also incorporates aspects of the Jewish culture into the story to add richness and dimension.

I highly recommend this novel. I know that “Flying out of Brooklyn” will be enjoyed by adults of all ages and ethnic and religious backgrounds.



[Read interview with author](#)

[Purchase book on amazon.com](#)

666: Who Can you Trust These Days?

Book Title: Nimrod Rising

Author: Steven Clark Bradley

ISBN Number: 1-4241-8985-3

Publisher: Publish America

Pages: 593

Reviewer: Yvonne Perry www.yvonneperry.net (1/08)

It's a book you can't help but admire as much as you hate its topic. I admire the author, Steven Clark Bradley, for taking on such a task.

One thing I asked myself throughout the book is: Is this story fiction or is it true? One can only hope it is fiction, but the evidence paralleled by world events says there's a good chance that what we are seeing may really be the end of the world. But, who knows? And, who will be here to witness it, anyway?

I admitted to the author that I get an eerie feeling and unsettled dreams after reading this book. No wonder. It's a scary nightmare to think that we may be witnessing events such as those in the book as they unfold in modern day social and political events. The book opens with a vivid description of a world gone wild. Money, governmental control, media, chaos, war, rampant fear, and terror are noted.

Bradley gives reason for the condition of our world by taking us back to when it all began—the day Nimrod was born in 4,000 BC. Who is Nimrod? The son of Cush, the great-grandson of Noah. You remember these guys from Bible class, right? If you know anything about the book of Revelation and the seven seals, you will have a strong reason to believe that world events are a result of unseen warfare in the invisible realm.

It all started with the division of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. Remember Adam, Eve, the snake, the fall of man, the apple, the Tree of Life, Lucifer—the morning star better known as Satan? It is clear that the story is based upon a belief that the figurative Garden of Eden (the Christian version of creation) is for real, but I don't take these things literally. To me, they are analogies, metaphors, and such. Sure, I believe in energy both negative and positive and I know they have an effect on me. But entities? Okay, maybe there are angels and demons. But, I prefer to stay in my safe little cocoon where all is love and there are no divisional lines of religious doctrine or dogma. But, this book won't let a reader stay there. The 593 pages of text disturb my ability to ignore world events.

Cush, after defiling his teenage daughter, rejoiced as she brought forth his son. This infant of incest would become the savior of Lucifer and his evil subjects. This devil child, called Nimrod, would rebel and fight against Elyon (God, Jehovah) in an organized effort to control the hearts of mankind. The book tells the story of the fall of the Tower of Babylon; and thus, the war of good and evil is distinctly in progress. Through death, life, rebirth, reincarnation—whatever you want to call it, Nimrod comes to life 666 times in various human forms throughout history. It is now 666 generations later. That means the Antichrist is in the world now.

In Bradley's story, another sinister entity named Abbadon possesses the US Vice-president Manassa Dormain—a man whose son was conceived similar to Rosemary's baby/the Virgin Birth story. There were drugs involved so it is not clear even to the mother how it really happened. Drugs do play a part in this story. Big pharmaceutical companies and government cohorts control the issue of all substances. The masses are experiencing severe rage-like symptoms known as TORS (Terror Offense Reflex Syndrome). The only drug to treat it is available only through the government. Sounds like the FDA, but I regress. The son of Manassa Dormain, Shepard Michael, has been put into a mental institute because, like his father, he sees future events before they happen. The book continues with Manassa helping Shepard play his role in the fight for world power—good trying to prevent catastrophe and evil trying to create it. I won't give away the ending, but it would make a good movie with all the drama it entails. You never know who is on which side, so beware of those angels in disguise!

I felt overwhelmed not only by the subject matter but by the mere size of this book. To top it off, there were dreams and visions interjected that blurred the lines of reality. You should not read this book while drinking alcohol. That would be like trying to read the newspaper while watching a James Bond movie. You've got to pay attention to the details or you'll get caught up in the action.

Steven Clark Bradley will be my guest on Writers in the Sky Podcast February 1, 2008. Be sure to listen online at <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com> as he shares more about his book, how he wrote and published it and how he is marketing the book.

Whose Dad is this?

Book Title: My Funny dad, Harry

Author: Karen Arlettaz Zemek

ISBN Number: 978-1-4327-1417-8

Publisher: Outskirts Press

Publication Date: 2007

Book Length in Pages: 156

Price/Currency: \$12.95 USD

Reviewer: Yvonne Perry www.yvonneperry.net (1/08)

I had flashbacks of my grandfather when reading Karen's book about her father. Those idiosyncrasies that characterize a man raised in the early 1900s reminded me of the fun times I had with my grandfather. He was such a quiet person. One never knew what he was thinking. I decided after reading My Funny Dad, Harry that I am not supposed to understand all the crazy things he did; I only need to accept them as part of who he was. I envision Harry and my grandfather somewhere in the afterlife having a conversation about the good old days.

Busy with his hands, ever creating something from whatever material was available, seems to be Harry's way of passing time. Whether in the woodworking shop, or trying his hand at being a locksmith, Harry always managed to provide a descent living for his family. His family included foster children that were raised alongside his own children. He was so unconcerned about what others thought of him, he didn't even wear a tuxedo to his own daughter's wedding. Well, that's just the way Harry was.

Harry was always busy, so it was no surprise that he had to have his hands into the derby race when his daughter participated in AWANA. And, the man loved cats. This was way before anyone thought of having pets spayed or neutered so there were always plenty of furry critters hanging around the house or maybe I should say the kitty condo he made for them. Did I say the man loved cats?

The book has humor aplenty, but there is also a sad side of the story when Karen's mom, Harry's wife, Lenore became sick. But, this was just another chance for Harry to come to the rescue and show his love for his family. He would not allow his beloved wife to be admitted to a nursing home. He personally took on the daily care for her and did not once leave her alone. He made sure someone was with her if he had matters outside the home to tend to. After a stay in the hospital Lenore finally passed on. A few months later, Harry, never admitting his loneliness, fell and broke his hip. After three weeks in the hospital he made an amazing recovery. You have to wonder if perhaps it was his concern for all those cats living alone at his house that sprang him to life again. During his recovery, he came up with a new way to do the things he used to do including weeding with a mechanism he created that didn't force him to bend over. Such an inventor, that Harry!

Harry had a system of organization that would not be matched even by those popular design shows you see on TV where a "professional" organizer comes in and puts an end to clutter. Harry saved everything and everything had a place. He even "dated" his food. I bet you never heard of a man doing that! When remembering birthdays, he even put the person's year of birth on the calendar. Probably just wanted to see how old they were.

At age 89 after living a full and loving life, Harry joined his wife in heaven. Karen was the one who found him lying between the toilet and the tub in his bathroom. She made sure he was buried in his brand new underwear she found neatly arranged in his dresser drawer. The package still unopened. I felt for her. I wanted to cry, but I knew that Karen was a strong person. Not that she wouldn't grieve for her dear dad, but that she had a handle on life and a faith that would keep her chin up through the sale of her dad's house.

I liked the photos Karen included in her book. I've met all the kitties and in case I need more information about any one of them, I could resort to Appendix B in the back of the book. I cracked up when I saw the picture of Harry's oven. He was not much of a cook, but having good organizing skills, he made good use of the space as extra storage for small appliances!

Now, you might imagine that a book about someone else's dad might be boring, but the thing I liked best about the book was that it made me remember the good times I had with my own quirky male relatives. Zemek used a chronological method to arrange her material. That was certainly a sensible approach. After all it was a biography about her father's life.

If you want to laugh and cry, this is the book for you. While it is light-hearted, there is a great deal of stronger emotions present as Karen pays tribute to her father. She says it helped her process her own grief. I can see why it would have that benefit for her.

I will be interviewing Karen on my podcast, Writers in the Sky. I look forward to learning more about her writing process, and her publishing experience with Outskirts Press. She will also share some marketing tips with us so be sure to join the author February 15, 2008 or listen to the archived show thereafter at <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com>.

Write What You Know...If You Dare

by Mark David Gerson

Write what you know. How often have you heard that? How often has it frustrated you?

I can't write about a black man unless I'm black.
I can't write about a woman unless I'm a woman.
I can't write about flying an airplane unless I'm a pilot.
I can't write about a gay man or a lesbian because I'm not one.
I can't write about an historic incident until I research it fully and completely.

How much research do you think Leonardo da Vinci did before he painted the Last Supper? Of course, he knew the story, from the Bible. But, there are no physical descriptions of that scene or those individuals anywhere in any credible book.

Da Vinci knew The Last Supper. He knew it as well as if not better than any biblical source written decades after the fact. He knew it in his heart. Not in his head—which would have cautioned him against attempting anything so out of his experience—but in his heart. He had lived the emotions he represented and those emotions are the only truth in that masterful painting.

So you've never experienced the discrimination a black woman or gay man might have felt? Have you ever been attacked for who you are? Have you ever been denied what you believed was rightfully yours? Have you ever felt your personhood and humanity under attack? No? Think back to your childhood. Think back to the emotions of childhood, to the bullies in the schoolyard, to the adults who criticized you.

Do more than think back. Relive and re-experience those emotions. You have lived some of those same emotions you feel you dare not describe in someone else.

Accept the dare. Step up to the challenge. You owe it to yourself to at least try. If any character (however far removed from your life and lifestyle) comes to you and demands that his or her story be told through you, then you can trust that all you need lies within you.

Of course, research may be required. Remember, though, that unless you are writing a dry recitation of history, it's the emotions that will touch and affect your readers and move them to deeper places within themselves. And we all (whether we're black, white, green or purple) draw from the same pool of emotions.

If you can give yourself permission to tap into that pool within you, you will always write what you know. For all you need to know lies within you. Now. At this moment. Write what you know in your deepest heart. Write your fire. Write your truth.

The only knowledge that's unique to you is the knowledge of your heart, the wisdom of your soul, and the force of your passion. Write from those places that no one else can and you will touch readers in ways that no one else can.

Go ahead and write what you know...if you dare.

Excerpt from THE VOICE OF THE MUSE: ANSWERING THE CALL TO WRITE. (c) 2008 Mark David Gerson. The Voice of the Muse book and CD set are available at Amazon.com, www.calltowrite.com and selected U.S. bookstores. Mark David Gerson has taught writing as a creative and spiritual pursuit for more than 15 years in the U.S. and Canada. Author of the award-winning novel, THE MOONQUEST: A TRUE FANTASY, Mark David has also created THE VOICE OF THE MUSE COMPANION, a 2-CD set of guided meditations for writers. Mark David lives in New Mexico, where he's working on a screenplay adaptation of THE MOONQUEST and a sequel to the novel. For more information on Mark David or to subscribe to his free newsletter, visit www.markdavidgerson.com. Mark David was a guest on WITS podcast and you may listen to his interview here: <http://yvonneperry.blogspot.com/2008/01/tgif-david-gerson-january-4-2008.html>

Are You SMART?

By Shelley Lieber, The Wordy Woman

The only way to make continual progress with your writing is to set goals. There's no job description for writer and no standard measurement for advancement. So, it's up to you to establish a framework that defines your goals and strategies for success.

It's a good idea to set a mixture of short- and long-term goals. Ask yourself where you want to be in the next three months, six months, one year, two years, five years and ten years. Dream big dreams and don't let "reason" restrict your vision for yourself.

Use the well-known acronym, SMART, to help you create your goals. SMART stands for:

Specific: Be precise. Instead of "I will write more often," say, "I will write every morning."

Measurable: Write quantitative, rather than qualitative, goals. Make sure you can measure progress, or how will you know when you've attained your goal?

Action-Oriented: Choose goals you can control. Rather than "I will be published in a national magazine by June of this year," write "I will send a query letter each week to possible markets until I am published in a national magazine."

Risk/Realistic: Set goals that will make you stretch your capabilities, but don't set yourself up for failure. If you have a full-time job or small children at home, writing a novel in one month is an unlikely feat.

Timed: Deadlines help you pace yourself to complete your goals within a specific period of time. The publishing world rises and falls on making deadlines, so push yourself to hold firm to your commitment.

Other Tips

1. Put your goals in writing.
2. Post your goals where you can see them or make it a point to read them at least three times a day: when you awake in the morning, mid-day and before you go to sleep.
3. Share your goals with a supportive friend or relative. Your writers' group may be your support group. The act of sharing your intentions releases them to the Universe and also will help keep you accountable--you will want to perform to expectations.
4. Celebrate your successes! When you can cross off a goal or make a checkmark on your list, buy yourself a new journal, pen or book. See a movie or have lunch with a friend. Schedule a manicure or massage.
5. Get back to work after your celebration. Keep going.
6. Be flexible and adjust your goals when necessary. New opportunities always arise and you may find yourself attracted to magazine writing when you thought you wanted to write screenplays. Be open to possibilities that are as yet unseen.
7. Never beat yourself up or consider yourself a failure for not completing a goal in a specified time. Review your setbacks and revise your strategy. Never, never, never give up!

Former New York book editor Shelley Lieber is a publishing consultant and author of 4Ps to Publishing Success: Get Your Manuscript Off Your Desk & Into Print. Subscribe to The Wordy Woman/Publishing Success, her free weekly newsletter for writers, and get two free special reports immediately at <http://www.wordywoman.com>.



Jessica Dockter with *L.E.E. Design* is the graphic designer for the Writers in the Sky Creative Writing Services team. As the designer of this newsletter, she is also available to assist you with your graphic design needs, such as: Professional Photo Retouching • Brochures • Logo Identity & Brand Services • Advertising layout for Newspaper or Magazine • Magazine and Book Cover Design • Postcard • Layout for Catalogues and Newsletters Design • HTML Emails • Design Consultation and more! Visit her Web site at www.leedesign.org. For questions or a quote, call Jessica at 615.681.4401 or email her at leedesign@leedesign.org

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