

WAG Digest

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WAG Meeting (online)

**Shelley Fraser Mickle:
Research in Writing**

August 2, 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Join us for the next Zoom meeting on Sunday, August 2, with local author Shelley Fraser Mickle.

Guest speaker Shelley Fraser Mickle will talk about her research for the recently released book, *Borrowing Life: How Scientists, Surgeons, and a War Hero Made the First Successful Organ Transplant a Reality*.

Borrowing Life is “an extraordinary work,” says *New York Times* bestselling author Jill McCorkle. “Shelley Fraser Mickle has not only provided a detailed, fascinating documentation of the world’s first successful organ transplant, but she has also painted the lives of those involved—doctors, patients, family members—so vividly

that the reader is completely enthralled and



emotionally invested in their grieved losses as well as their successes. The result is a beautiful tribute to medical science as well as to humanity.”

Mickle has been writing professionally for fifty-plus years. Her words include novels, radio commentaries, and now narrative nonfiction and biography. Her first novel was a *New York Times* Notable Book, a *Library Journal* top ten; her second novel became a CBS movie; and her third *The Tuning Hour* was taught in all Alachua County schools as a suicide prevention program. More recently, her children’s nonfiction book *American Pharoah* was selected by the New York Public Library as one of the best nonfiction books for children in 2017.

Local Author Series – Marie Q. Rogers.



Author Marie Q. Rogers asks you to imagine yourself taken without warning from all you know—family, home, friends—to a distant world where people possess abilities you didn't know existed. Such is Fern's experience in *Trials by Fire*, the first book in Rogers' two-book science fiction series, *The Long Road to Namai*.

Trapped in a house fire, Fern's only means of escape is by a paranormal gift called "wrashiru." But once safe, she's unable to return home. Her rescuers are highly psychic but lead a primitive lifestyle, hiding from the alien race that had enslaved them. While dealing with homesickness and grief, Fern struggles with a new language, unusual customs, and unrequited love. Her efforts to fit in often fall short, and she suffers from isolation and depression. Despite this, she becomes a contributing member of the community. In the end, she performs a vital act that saves lives.

Among the author's many interests are edible wild plants and herbs, and her knowledge of wild-crafting came in handy in writing this book. You may find her rambling the back roads, exploring historical sites, and enjoying the mountains. When not traveling, she lives in the woods of North Florida, putting the finishing touches on several novels. Her short pieces have appeared in *Bacopa Literary Review* and *Pilcrow & Dagger*, and she posts creative nonfiction on her website, marieqrogers.com.

ZOOM Meeting—
August 15, 2020
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

For Zoom Information, please see the WAG Website at www.writersalliance.org.



WAG Brags

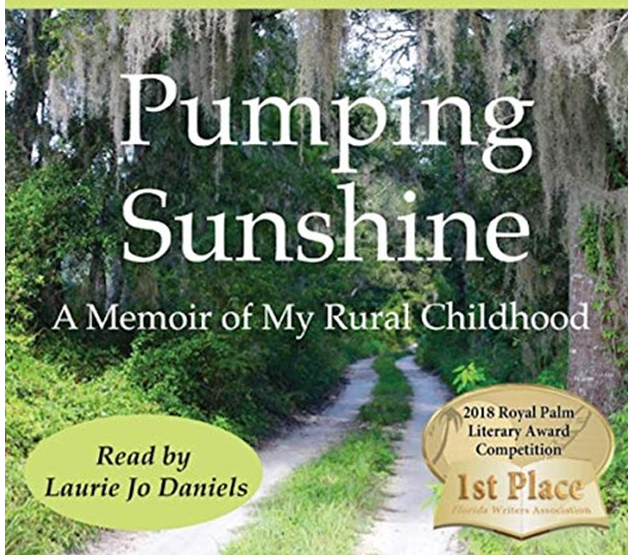
Congratulations to writer Felicia Lee, who has been very productive during the present quarantine. Check out her 3 newly published stories:

My short story "Every Day Is Thursday" will appear in the gothic horror anthology "Bodies in the Library" from Flame Tree Press in August <https://www.flametreepublishing.com/bodies-in-the-library-short-stories-isbn-9781839641862.html>

My short story "We All Think We're Still Nineteen" will appear in the anthology *Borderlands 7: An Anthology of Strange Fiction*, to be released in the fall <https://www.borderlandspress.com/shop/authors/thomas-f-monteleone/borderlands-7-edited-by-olivia-f-thomas-f-monteleone-signed-numbered-limited-edition/>

Last but not least, my short story "Always My Baby" appeared in the online magazine *Trigger Warning*: <https://www.triggerwarningshortfiction.com/always-my-baby/>

Susie H. Baxter



Susie Baxter's awarding-winning book, *Pumping Sunshine*, is finally available on Audible. If you're looking for a special read (or listen) check out this memoir about growing up in real Florida.

Pumping Sunshine

A Memoir of My Rural Childhood

By: [Susie H. Baxter](#)

Narrated by: [Lauri Jo Daniels](#)

Length: 11 hrs and 45 mins

Unabridged Audiobook

Release date: 07-23-20

Language: English

Publisher: [Susie H. Baxter](#)

Regular price: \$24.95

Member price: \$17.46 or 1 credit

"We live so far in the backwoods, we have to pump sunshine through hollow logs," young Susanette's daddy says, when asked where the Howell family lives. Their cracker house, which has never been slapped by a loaded paintbrush, sits on a small tobacco farm near the Suwannee River in North Florida, 18 miles from the small town of Live Oak - a town that was, at the turn of the 19th century, the fifth largest town in Florida and the largest inland city in the state.

Susanette brings this time and place to life with humor and innocence as she struggles to understand her own embarrassing situations (which occur mostly at night) and overcome the apprehension she feels as her world begins to change. This family's frugality and can-do attitude and the community's coming together when the Suwannee River overflows its banks, destroying homes and crops, will amaze and warm the heart.

WAG Brags

A NOVEL A QUESTION OF FAMILY

Congratulations to Jessica Lyn Elkins on the publication of her new book, *A Question of Family*. As Jessica explains:

Here is information on my recently published book, *A Question of Family*. This novel follows the characters from my first book, *The Friend in Question*, (2015). Available on Amazon and from iUniverse Bookstore online. The Kindle edition will be released soon. My other books are *A Coyote Taught Me Poetry* (2016) and *The Storyteller in the Park* (2018).



JESSICA LYN ELKINS

A Question of Family:

Myra Martin escaped a criminal husband and multiple addictions with the help of her adopted brother Tommy and her childhood friend Katherine Brooks. Bound together by family ties and dangerous secrets, the three friends operate a guest ranch in northwestern Wyoming. When Katherine's daughter brings her fiancé to meet the family, buried truths come to light that could disrupt their lives. An old photograph reveals a suspicious connection between Myra's and Katherine's former spouses. Unpredictable events lead to a perilous confrontation with a powerful man. Will the search for the truth finally free the family from their past or might it completely destroy their future?



WAG Brags

*W*R*I*T*E**

Congratulations to Marie Q. Rogers, who writes:

My Young Adult novel, *Trials by Fire* has been selected as a semi-finalist for the Royal Palm Literary Award. 😊

Remember, join Marie via Zoom to discuss her book on August 15 from 2:30 to 4 pm. Information is available on the WAG Website, www.writersalliance.org.



You fail only if you stop writing. —Ray Bradbury

 The Write Practice

Wag Brags

Want to be involved with a pod? The fiction group Split Peas is looking for new members. They currently meet via Zoom— According to their leader, Fran:

Split Peas are looking for new members. Beginners are welcome – we meet via Zoom on alternate Tuesdays at 3 o'clock. For further information, please call Fran Sweeney at 472-2072.

What are Critique Pods?

Pods are small, supportive groups (3–7 members) that meet regularly to critique one another's work. Each pod has a leader who keeps meetings on track and maintains communication with members. The members:

- Meet at least once a month
 - Write in the same genre
- Point out what works and what doesn't, nourishing one another's growth

W*R*I*T*E

Congratulations to Julie Robitaille on the publication of her new book, *Spring of Fire* (Cory Marin Book 5), available on Amazon.

A town threatened with extremist violence. One woman is tasked with defusing the threat. Can she uncover the truth before her town explodes in violence?

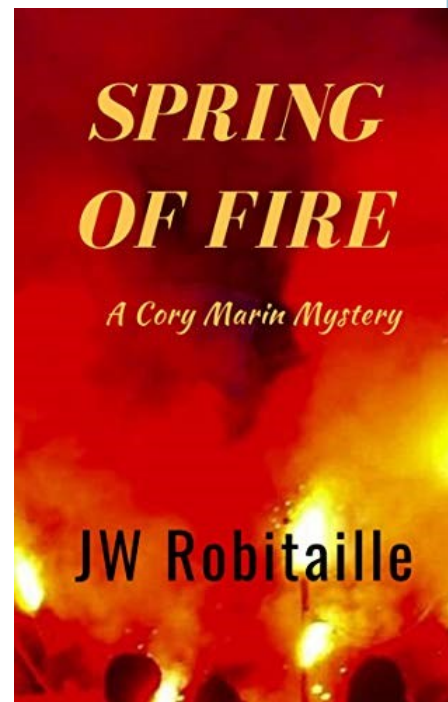
Sgt. Cory Marin wants to bask in the glow of her pregnancy, but when an extremist preacher threatens to burn the Koran and books of the devil, national attention falls on her peaceful college town.

Spring of Fire is the fifth book in the Cory Marin Mystery series. If you like strong female characters and stories ripped from the headlines, then you'll love JW Robitaille's *Spring of Fire*. Order this gripping page-turner today.

"Once again Cory Marin engages the reader in a crime mystery that is both timely and riveting." Amazon Reviewer

Get your copy here:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08BZYFJH3>



How Do Publishers Decide Which Books to Bet On?



How do
Publishers Decide
What to Publish?

Posted on [July 8, 2020](#) by [Anne Trubek](#) |

Today's guest post is excerpted from [So You Want to Publish a Book?](#) by Anne Trubek ([@atrubek](#)), founder and publisher of [Belt Publishing](#).

Each book a publisher launches is its own miniature, stand-alone start-up. Every book is a gamble. Publishing could have a game table on the floor of a Vegas casino, nestled between blackjack and roulette. Bet on which title will earn out, and which will fail. When a title doesn't break even, the casino swipes the chips off the table. But when a bet wins, it can make up for all those losses. A few bestsellers can support a press despite many money-losing titles.

So how do publishers decide which books to bet on? There's lots of risk involved when you take a look at a few words sent via email and decide that those words might, in one to three years, end up selling enough copies to earn back the money that you spent to make those words into a book, and then earn a little more so the publisher can take a little bit of money home herself.

How do Publishers Decide? (Con't)

Publishers ask two main questions, and they're the same two questions any capitalist or gambler asks: how much should we stake, and how much might we profit? To answer those questions, most publishers do a ridiculously complicated set of projections on a profit and loss spreadsheet (P&L). This process involves guesswork into a number of different categories: how much a book will cost to print, how many copies will sell, how many ordered copies will be returned, how much the author will receive in an advance, what the list price will be, what trim size it will have, how much money it will take to market and publicize the book, whether it will be hardcover or paperback, if it will appeal to distributors who help sell the title to accounts like Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and independent booksellers.

Some of these numbers are based on actual data, some are good estimates, and some are inferences based upon past experience. But most of them are magical fairy dust wishes. A P&L is basically a work of fiction, make-believe cells that tally up all the costs and revenue for a project that will not hit the market for another few years. It makes the decision to publish a book look more like a sound business plan than a gut instinct that a little ball will fall on number thirty-one on the wheel, but in truth, roulette may be a good metaphor. It's silly, really, but it's the practice of the industry.

Complex and chance-centric as they are, P&Ls provide crucial insight into the business of books. Even if they are often inaccurate or useless for publishers, they are key for anyone interested in the cogs of the industry, and those who assume publishers de facto profit from the labor of writers.

Allow me to walk you through one Belt Publishing P&L that we created to decide whether or not to publish a book called *Cleveland in 50 Maps*. I have fudged some of the numbers so I don't reveal the actual pay for various contractors, but the whole is still pretty accurate. I also chose a title that was written in-house by staff, which means there were no royalties or advances. We also entered these numbers before we had a manuscript, or a printer quote, or any of the numbers we entered into the cells. We simply guessed. Like I said, a P&L is a work of fiction.

In the top section, we entered our prospective trim size, list price, publication date, and page count for the book.

Title:	Cleveland in 50 Maps				
Author:	Crissman/Tachovsky/Wilson	Trim Size:	8x8	Advance:	\$0
ISBN:	9781948742559	Retail Price:	\$30.00	Print Royalty (list):	0%
Pub Date:	15-Oct 2019	Page Count:	144	Ebook Royalty (net):	0%

Then we made up some sales numbers—this was one year before the book actually went on sale. We guessed our distributor would order 2,500 copies for this book. Of those, only 1,875 would actually be sold because of the dreaded returns system. (Any book can be returned by a store or distributor to the publisher for full credit.) We hoped for a robust 600 copies that we would sell directly to consumers because we are based in Cleveland and have a lovely crew of fans who understand how important direct sales are to our business model. Under that number we excitedly entered zero returns. Then we added a modest number of ebook sales. (This title is heavy with graphics, and ebooks are notoriously graphic unfriendly.) Usually royalties and advances would be entered here as well, but this book was a special case in that regard, and our costs were lower here as a result. You can see where we would have entered them in the column reserved for advances and royalties.

According to this model, we would net about \$42,000 in sales from this title. Eventually. There is no timeframe on this P&L; it covers the life of the book. Most sales occur in the first ninety days after publication, but a book that becomes a strong backlist title can continue to sell well, if at a slower pace, for years afterward. For Belt's cash flow purposes, we want to hit our net sales number about twelve months after publication, which is about twenty-four months after we create the initial P&L.

INCOME	TOTAL
Gross Sales-Units	3,150
Returns-Units	-625
Net Sales-Units	2,525
Gross Sales-Dollars \$	\$51,250
Returns-Dollars \$	(\$9,375)
Misc. Income (rights, etc.)	
Net Sales-Dollars \$	\$41,875

Most sales occur in the first ninety days after publication.

Continued Next Page

How do Publishers Decide? (Con't)

But wait: that \$41,875 figure isn't profit. It's simply the sales. We still need to count up our expenses, estimating what the book will cost us to make and sell.

EXPENSES	TOTAL
Print & Production	\$18,500
Distribution Fees	\$7,081
Royalties	\$0
Unearned Advance	\$0
Marketing Costs	\$1,500
Other Costs	\$0
Total Cost of Goods	\$27,081

The single largest production expense for most books is printing. Paper is expensive! In our P&L, we estimated that this full-color, hardback book of 150 pages would cost \$10,000 if we printed 3,000 copies, or about \$3.33 per copy. This is a much higher per-unit cost than our more common 200-page paperbacks, which cost between \$1 to \$2 per unit.

Cleveland in 50 Maps also had a higher retail price of \$30, compared to the \$16.95 we usually charge for our paperbacks.

We estimated that our distributor, who helps us sell copies, would receive about \$7,000 for their work on our behalf. (Remember: these are not real numbers, but accurate ballpark estimates. The amount a distributor charges a publisher cannot be revealed publicly.) We added another \$1,500 to our production expenses to publicize the book—sending press releases to local media and bookstores to let them know about it and organizing events to promote and celebrate the title.

How Do Publishers Decide?

(Con't)

But wait—there are more expenses! We have to pay an editor, a copyeditor, a proofreader, a cover designer, an interior designer, and others who contributed to the book. We also need to figure in the cost of securing permissions for images. If we are going to make advance copies of the book to send to media and booksellers, we also need to add in those costs, as well as the postage required to ship them.

Below, you can see the hypothetical costs for all of these components of book production. Note that the P&L doesn't include the costs of a publisher (me!), or office space, or the labor to ship copies. These are considered overhead and might be included in a flat percentage at other publishing houses. But to keep my explanation as simple as possible, I have not included those.

PRODUCTION COSTS	
Editorial	
Editing	\$2,000
Copyediting	\$500
Proofreading	\$500
Indexing	\$0
Photography/Illustrations	\$500
Contributor Payments	\$1,000
Design	
Cover	\$500
Interior	\$3,500
Typesetting	\$0
TOTAL	\$8,500

MARKETING COSTS	
Galley Printing	\$0
Shipping	\$0
Publicity	\$1,500
Other	\$0

PRINTING COSTS	
Quantity	3,000
Cost	\$10,000
Unit Cost	\$3.33

TOTAL UNIT COST (including Production)	
Production Cost	\$8,500
Printing Cost	\$10,000
Quantity	3,000
Effective Unit Cost	\$6.17

Add all of those numbers together and the total projected cost to bring *Cleveland in 50 Maps* to readers is \$27,081. And if all these numbers prove true, we will make a profit of \$14,794, a 35 percent margin. Again, this was all conjecture when we initially created it. But it turned out to be fairly accurate to reality. This is not always the case. Some P&L projections wildly diverge from actual P&Ls. The single key factor is sales. If we had projected we were going to sell 3,000 copies of *Cleveland in 50 Maps* and only sold 200, we would have lost money. And this often happens. As I mentioned earlier, conventional wisdom says it happens about 80 percent of the time.

But once in a while—oh, say, one out of five times—a book’s sales far outstrip expectations. Books that sell far more than projected are the backbone of publishing. For example, pretend that instead of \$14,000, we netted \$100,000 from *Cleveland in 50 Maps*. Every title holds within it that possibility (as opposed to, say, a restaurant serving steak: it might make profit from every filet mignon it sells, but it will never sell just one steak that quadruples that profit.) And in publishing, that one jackpot can cover many bad bets.

The ability to bet more money on more books is a key difference between independent presses and conglomerate ones. Usually, a conglomerate press can bet a \$100,000 advance to an author three years before a manuscript is due, and five years before the book will be published, in the hopes that it might sell enough to profit the company \$1,000,000 another two years after that, when the money from sales actually comes in. If they lose the bet, they can write off that advance, and all the other expenses, as a loss. Usually, though, an independent press can neither wait that long nor risk that much money. For authors with contracts for conglomerate houses, the advantage is that they receive more money up front. But the disadvantage, more often than not, is that failure is built into the deal—most authors will never sell enough copies to receive royalties after the book is released. With independent presses offering smaller, more realistic advances, chances increase that an author might outstrip expectations and receive royalties.

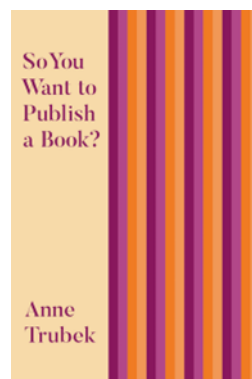
Basing all your business decisions on spreadsheets that are created years before any of the actions the numbers signify occur may not be the healthiest or most accurate method. And at Belt, we regularly make decisions based on non-P&L factors; often, we skip this step entirely. Sometimes, we publish a book because the staff thinks it would be *really fun* to do so, or it is right up our alley interest-wise, and even if we may not profit, we likely will not lose money on it. Often, we “take a flyer” on a book by an author with no platform or previous publication track record, but who writes such a compelling proposal we want to give them a chance. Other books just seem so “Belt-y”—they represent exactly why we decided to start the press—because they tell an untold regional history or because they are intellectually rigorous without being pedantic—that we have to publish them to stay true to who we are.



Anne Trubek

[View posts by Anne Trubek](#)

Anne Trubek is the founder and publisher of [Belt Publishing](#), and writes the popular newsletter “Notes From a Small Press.” She is the author of *The History and Uncertain Future of Handwriting* and *A Skeptic's Guide to Writers' Houses*, and the editor of *Voices from the Rust Belt*, *The Cleveland Neighborhood Guide-book*, and *Rust Belt Chic: The Cleveland Anthology*. She lives in Cleveland.



Jane Friedman

<https://www.janefriedman.com/how-do-publishers-decide/>

Calls for Submission

Pensive: A Global Journal of Spirituality and the Arts

Deadline: November 15; submissions reviewed and accepted on rolling basis

New online publication based at Center for Spirituality, Dialogue, and Service (CSDS) at Northeastern University in Boston. Seeking work that deepens the inward life; expresses range of religious/spiritual/humanist experiences and perspectives; envisions a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world; advances dialogue across difference; and challenges structural oppression in all its forms. Seeking work for feature section on Black Lives Matter. Send unpublished poetry, prose, visual art, and translations. Especially interested in work from international and historically unrepresented communities. No fee; currently non-paying. Submit 3-5 pieces via Submittable or via email to . Questions? Contact Alexander Levering Kern, co-editor or visit pensivejournal.com.

Red Planet Magazine Submission Call

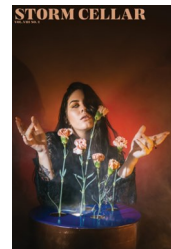
Deadline: Rolling

Red Planet Magazine is an independent literary magazine emphasizing a theme of speculative fiction, and is open for submissions year-round on a rolling basis. Contributors receive a digital copy of the issue in which their work has been featured. Please visit www.redplanetmagazine.com for additional information.

Call for Submissions: Storm Cellar

Deadline: Rolling

Storm Cellar, a journal of safety and danger, seeks amazing, adventurous new writing, art, and photography. Indigenous, Black, POC, gender nonconforming, women, LGBTQIA+, disabled, neurodivergent, fat, poor, and border-straddling authors encouraged. Midwest connections a plus. Specific, strong, and strange voices welcome: surprise us! Full guidelines at stormcellar.org/submit and submission manager at stormcellar.submittable.com.



Calls for Submission

Parhelion Accepting Fall Submissions

Deadline: September 30

Parhelion is accepting poetry, fiction, flash, and creative nonfiction submissions for our Fall 2020 issue. Our growing magazine represents an eclectic mix of voices from all over the country, with styles ranging from traditional to innovative. We are passionate about discovering new writers! For more information about *PLM*, [check out our website](https://parhelionliterary.com/). (<https://parhelionliterary.com/>)

Club Plum Literary Journal Seeks Literary Horror for October Issue

Deadline: October 1, 2020

Submissions open for creepy and dark flash fiction, prose poetry, and art for the October 16th issue of *Club Plum*. Blood and monsters are welcome as long as you write them well, as are things felt but not seen. Fear in the silent spaces. Not quite sure if it is horror? Send it along. Staunchly non-horror pieces are welcome for this issue as well, but send sappy elsewhere. Send sad. Send strange. Send beauty that is destined to doom. See clubplumliteraryjournal.com for submission requirements.

NYQ Books Seeks Submissions for a New Anthology about Faith

Deadline: February 2, 2021

NYQ Books is seeking submissions for an anthology to be titled *Without a Doubt: poems illuminating faith*. Submissions will remain open until February 2, 2021, but may close early should the anthology fill. We are seeking poems that explore faith rather than tell. We seek poems that demonstrate a new and fresh understanding of faith. Poems that rise above religion and redefine spirituality. Poets from any spiritual tradition are welcome. Nontheists and Freethinkers are encouraged to submit. Historically marginalized voices are especially welcome. We are not looking for poems that proselytize. Please see [our webpage](https://www.nyq.org/books/) for complete guidelines. Nontheists and Freethinkers are encouraged to submit. Historically marginalized voices are especially welcome. We are not looking for poems that proselytize. Please see [our webpage](https://www.nyq.org/books/) for complete guidelines. <https://www.nyq.org/books/>



Contests

Deadline Extended for the Francine Ringold Awards for New Writers

- **Deadline: August 15, 2020** The deadline for the Francine Ringold Awards for New Writers has been extended to August 15th. The Ringold Awards offer prizes of \$500 and publication for fiction and poetry, and are open only to writers with two or fewer previous publication credits in their genre. For poetry, submit up to five pages; for fiction, one short story, 5,000 words maximum. The contest is open internationally. All finalists will be published and paid at our normal rates. Each entry must be accompanied by a \$12 entry fee. Manuscripts may be mailed or submitted online: nimrodjournal.submittable.com/submit. Visit artsandsciences.utulsa.edu/nimrod/francine-ringold-awards/ for complete rules.

W*R*I*T*E

Fiction Southeast Story of the Month

- Submissions accepted year-round. Each month, the editors will select one short-short story (under 1,000 words). The winning story will grace the front page of the website for the entire month and will be listed on the Stories of the Month Page, as well as the Fiction Page. The reading fee will be \$10, and the winner will receive \$50. Submit here: fictionsoutheast.submittable.com/submit/163713/story-of-the-month.

Black Warrior Review 2020 Contest: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Flash

- **Deadline: September 1, 2020** Biannual print journal *Black Warrior Review* seeks 2020 contest submissions. Winners will receive publication and cash prizes (\$500 for flash and \$1,000 for poetry, fiction, and CNF). Judges: Mayukh Sen (nonfiction), Paul Tran (poetry), C Pam Zhang (flash), and Lucy Corin (fiction). Open until 9/1. Submission fee: \$15 for fiction, nonfiction, and poetry; \$6 for flash. Complete information available at bwr.ua.edu.

FishFood Short Story Contest

Deadline: August 31, 2020

FishFood Magazine is accepting submissions for its very first short story contest. Stories must be under 1,000 words. There is no set theme, so feel free to get as creative as possible. The winner of the contest receives \$1000 plus publication of the story in *FishFood Magazine*: www.fishfoodmagazine.com.



Writer's Alliance of Gainesville

A not-for-profit Florida corporation

p.o.box 358396

gainesville/florida/32635-8396

[352-336-8062/wagmail@cox.net](mailto:wagmail@cox.net)

The Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG) promotes, encourages and supports aspiring and experienced regional writers. This goal is accomplished via WAG monthly meetings, public readings, ongoing small critique groups, a literary journal, writers' contests, and collaborations with schools and civic organizations to foster creative expression through the written word.



GRANT SNIDER