

WAG Digest

Volume 12—Issue 2

SUNSHINE STATE BOOK FESTIVAL

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Inside this issue:

Meetings 1

Marketing Coalition 2

WAG Brags 3

Publishing Scams 12

Improving your Final Draft 19

Conferences And Classes 21

Submissions and Contests 23

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Welcome to the 2022 Sunshine State Book Festival—bringing readers and writers together again.

Meet and engage in person with nearly 100 authors who will be happy to sign your books at our 2022 festival, being held at the spacious Oaks Mall in Gainesville, FL.

FREE ADMISSION -
Saturday, April 9, 2022

11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
at the Oaks Mall

Sunday, April 10, 2022

1:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Matheson Museum

See More information on the WAG Brags Page 5.

Great volunteer opportunities available.

Win free books.

Creating an Author Portrait that Increases Book Engagement — Adrienne Fletcher

Date: May 15

Millhopper Library, Meeting Room A

Time: 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

3145 NW 43rd St, Gainesville, FL 32606



It would be nice if a book description alone influenced people to take a book home. The truth is, humans are very visual beings, and although one may not even realize it, a lot of decision-making on selecting a book, or deciding to purchase it, comes from the book's cover design and author portrait.

On Sunday, May 15, at 2:30 p.m. Adrienne Fletcher, owner and head photographer of [Adrienne Fletcher Photography](#), will discuss (1) why planning an author headshot with intention is important, and (2) the top things to consider when doing so. These include aspects such as book topic, author persona, ideal reader, image background, what to wear, and body language. Adrienne will do a deep dive into exactly what to consider for each step of the process so that creating a headshot that adds value to a book cover feels less stressful, less uncomfortable, and more intentional.

With a BFA in photography from Savannah College of Art and Design and a Master's Degree in PR from the University of Florida, Fletcher has spent over 15 years mastering the art and practice of photography, and over 10 years working with individuals and teams on marketing, branding and strategic planning. This unique background allows for the perfect blend of high-quality fine art with a marketer's eye for detail in her work for her clients.

Marketing Coalition Meeting

April 2, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

On Saturday, April 2, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., WAG authors will meet for another roundtable discussion of marketing strategies. The meeting will be held in person at the Library Partnership, 912 NE 16th Avenue, Gainesville, FL. Alycin Hayes, author of [Amazon Hitchhiker](#), will moderate the discussion.

Join us and share what strategies have worked for you as well as those that haven't been worth the effort.

All WAG members are invited.



Name the WAG
Blog—and WRITE
for the WAG Blog

WAG BRAGS

NAME-THE-WAG-BLOG Contest!!!

CLEVER WORDSMITHS NEEDED

The WAG Blog is *all about* writing and writers. It needs a new, exciting name, combining some of the following concepts:

- 1) captures the essence of what the blog is about.
- 2) is simple and succinct, catchy and classy.
- 3) possibly conveys a sense of place (Gainesville).

Ideally, you will use only three words maximum.

Examples: Gator Bytes, The Pelican's Quill, etc.

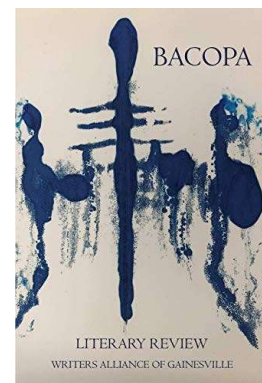
The contest opens March 28, 2022 and ends April 20, 2022.

**The winner receives a
\$25.00 gift certificate
for use at Book Gallery West.**



Send your ideas to
BlogEditor@writersalliance.org

SUBMIT TO BACOPA! OUR WRITERS ALLIANCE LITERARY MAGAZINE IS OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS:



Dear WAG Member,

You are cordially invited to submit your work to be considered for publication in the 2022 edition of the Writers Alliance's journal, *Bacopa Literary Review*.

The submissions period runs April 25-May 23, 2022. There is no fee. This year we will have a \$200 Award and an Honorable Mention in each of six categories: Fiction, Creative Non-fiction, Humor, Formal Poetry, Free Verse Poetry, and Visual Poetry.

Here are the Content Guidelines for this year's submissions categories:

Fiction (up to 2,500 words): *Bacopa Literary Review* is looking for engaging and original pieces of short fiction capable of capturing the reader's attention and keeping them engaged. Unique descriptions, vivid language, and original ideas are appreciated. Use precise language, make sure your work is as polished as possible before submitting, and most of all, enjoy the writing process!

Creative Nonfiction (up to 2,500 words): We publish true stories, written beautifully, and based on the author's experiences, perceptions, and reflections in the form of personal memoir or literary essay (for example, nature, travel, medical, spiritual, food writing).

Humor (up to 2,000 words): Make us laugh in any literary form intended to be humorous. This can include personal essays, satire, poetry, short fiction, grocery lists, manifestos, or modified insurance policies.

Formal Poetry (1-3 poems): Sonnets, villanelles, pantoums, haiku, and other established forms. We are seeking words that illuminate the human condition, tell us something new, or just entertain. Send us your best. **Please note the specific form of each poem you submit.** All voices are welcome, and we are interested in reading poems on all themes and subjects. For *Bacopa Literary Review 2022* we have a special request for formal poems that explore issues of health, well-being, and sickness, from the serious to the funny, by and for Black people, Indigenous people, persons of color, and their communities.

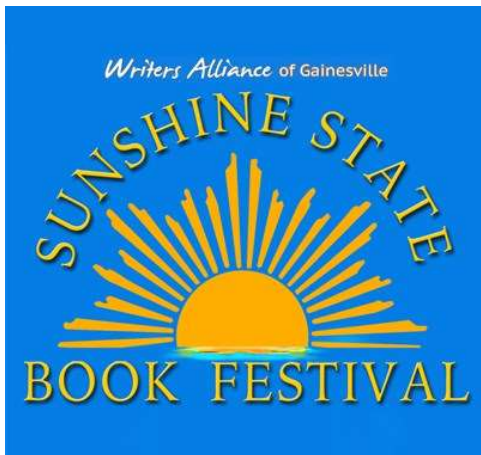
Free Verse Poetry (1-2 poems): Free verse, visionary poems, the strange and unusual. Absurd, thoughtful, experimental, political, romantic, funny, entertaining. Give us your best work, unfettered, unrestrained, free from forms--or make up your own form. All voices are welcome, and we are interested in reading poems on all themes and subjects. For *Bacopa Literary Review 2022* we have a special request for free verse poems that explore issues of health, well-being, and sickness, from the serious to the funny, by and for Black people, Indigenous people, persons of color, and their communities.

Visual poetry (1 poem): In a new category for us, we are seeking visual poems. At the moment we can only accept images in black and white that can fit within a 6 x 9-inch page size. We don't know what we are looking for, surprise us! Please submit only one visual poem.

Please carefully read and follow the full submissions guidelines on our [Submittable page](#). See [Bacopa Literary Review Editor's Blog](#) (<https://bacopaliteraryreview.blogspot.com/2022/02/our-2022-editorial-staff.html>) for more about our editors, featured contributors, information about the kind of work we seek. We look forward to reading your work!

REMEMBER—SUNSHINE STATE BOOK FESTIVAL

APRIL 9 and 10th



The 2022 Sunshine State Book Festival is completely indoors and will be held rain or shine.

April 9, 2022, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Oaks Mall,

April 10, 2022, 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Matheson History Museum

Win Free Books

Hourly prize drawings during the Saturday festival.

SSBF Rack cards are available to distribute to libraries, schools, bookstores, or wherever readers can be found. Contact Pat Caren at pmrc423@gmail.com.

Looking for volunteers:

Saturday, April 9, 2022, Oaks Mall

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Check in and opening: Put up signage and tablecloths on tables.

Assist registrar with check in.

Help authors unload their books and find their tables.

Run errands. Help as needed.

11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Hospitality: Greet visitors and hand out programs.

Take surveys.

Watch authors' tables when they need a break.

Run errands. Help as needed.

2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Hospitality and Closing: Greet visitors, hand out programs.

Take surveys.

Watch authors' tables when they need a break.

Run errands. Help as needed.

At closing time, gather and pack tablecloths and signs.

Sunday, April 10, 2022, Matheson History Museum

12:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday Hospitality: Greet visitors, direct parking, hand out programs, serve refreshments. Help as needed.

Sign up at <https://www.sunshinestatebookfestival.com/>

Ancient City Poets



EVENT ONE

FRIDAY, APRIL 8

PoetFest Kick-off Open Mic

hosted by Flagler College English Department

Relámpago Coffee Lab

74 Spanish Street

St. Augustine, FL 32084

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Sign-up sheet available at 6:30 p.m.

EVENT TWO

SATURDAY, APRIL 9

Inaugural St. Augustine PoetFest

Flagler College

Ringhaver Student Center

50 Sevilla St

St. Augustine, FL 32084

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This year for National Poetry Month (April) Ancient City Poets have partnered with the English Department of Flagler College and the St. Johns Cultural Council to present a day-long celebration of creative writing and reciting on Saturday, April 9th, the day after the Henry Rollins spoken word tour stop at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall. This weekend of events on the campus of Flagler College, in addition to a month-long haiku contest, and an April 24th open mic reading will be St. Johns County's local recognition of National Poetry Month.

For more information, see

<https://www.floridashistoriccoast.com/events/st-augustine-poetfest/>

WAG Brags

From WAG Member **Connie Biddle Morrison**:

I am excited to announce that the first few episodes of my Kindle Vella Story, Anna's Journey, are available to read at

https://www.amazon.com/Annas-Journey/dp/B09TZRHS27/ref=sr_1_4?crid=2KM5P04C6RZXT&keywords=anna%27s+journey&qid=1647314852&s=digital-text&srefix=%2Cdigital-text%2C69&sr=1-4



Anna's Journey
By Connie Biddle Morrison

The first three episodes are free.

Anna's Journey is a fictional tale about a widowed senior citizen who escapes from one of those "old folks' homes" where she has been placed by her stressed-out daughter after she got lost one too many times. I invite you to follow along as Anna tackles one obstacle after another and searches for her lost Buddy. With her friend's help, she struggles to get back to her normal life, save Buddy and evade those guys in the white coats.

Congratulations, Connie—we can't wait to read it.

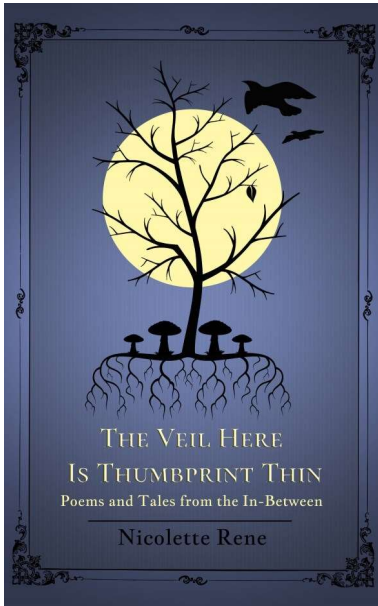
And just a reminder, the June WAG meeting will be about how to upload your files to Kindle Vella. Stay tuned for more information!

W*R*I*T*E

Check out Ronnie Lovler's article in the Main Street Daily News, *Florida Finds, The James Museum*. This is Ronnie's first article on special Florida places to visit. You can find the article here:

https://www.mainstreetdailynews.com/local_living/florida-finds-james-museum-andy-warhol/article_65d6bab4-416b-11ec-bb11-27892d61ce3d.html

WAG Brags



Congratulations to **Nicolette Rene** on the publication of her new book, "The Veil Here is Thumbprint Thin: Poems and Tales from the In-Between:

Shadows embody smoky truths revealed in slivers through the corners of our eyes. To visit these places is to reach behind our conscious mind, shake hands with the natural world, and brave the squishy place between hope and despair.

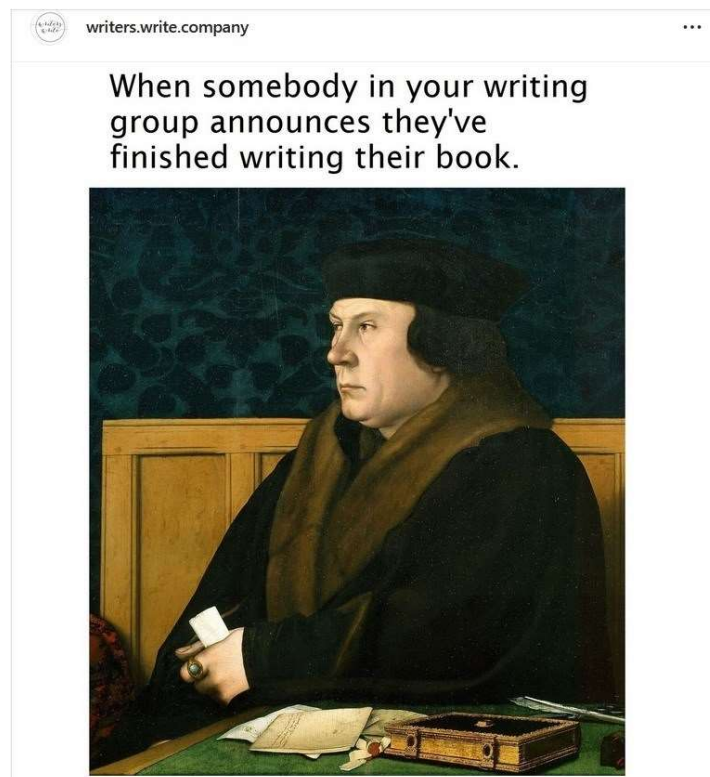
These short stories and poems attempt to draw back the veil, so that we may bathe in the pool of myth, descend into the other-world, and, if all goes well, reemerge cleansed.

From the afterlife to mushroom lore, crow antics to Florida springs and fossils, these four tales reach into the depths of emotional darkness to unearth a glimpse of light.

The book is available here on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.com/Veil-Here-Thumbprint-Thin-Between-ebook/dp/B09SZRS4BC/>

W*R*I*T*E



Wag Brags—Looking for Beta Readers

Like to read?

Did you know that WAG has a Beta reader program?

Being a beta reader is different than being an editor. You get to read work that is not yet published and help the author with overall questions. Does the story flow? Did you spot a plot hole? Did you find the characters convincing? Was there a spot that dragged?

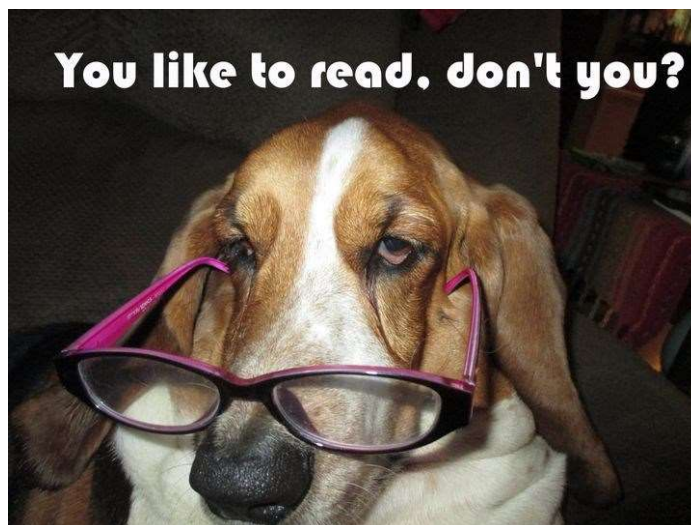
If you sign up to be a beta reader, you can state your reading tastes-- like sci-fi? You'd be matched up with a sci-fi author. Like history? Mystery? Cooking? Short stories only? You would not be matched with something outside your interest parameters.

Free book. You'd be helping an author. No obligation. Busy this month? Okay, we'll go on down the list. You can opt out at any time.

Interested?

And if you are a WAG author looking for a beta reader, just shout.

For more information or to sign up, follow the link: <https://writersalliance.org/enjoy-reading-beta-reader/>



W*R*I*T

Wag Brags

Congratulations to WAG Member **Cynthia Bertelsen** on winning ANOTHER award for her books. As Cynthia explains about her book, *Stoves and Suitcases*:

My award for Best in the USA for Food Writing from the World Gourmand Cookbook Awards.



The following web address links to the awards announcement. My book, *Stoves & Suitcases*, is listed on page 32. It's an international award, and my book is short-listed for Best in the World for Food Writing, to be announced this spring in Paris. The awards have been given over the years to a number of people whose names might be familiar to WAG members, such as Nigella Lawson of the UK, who is listed right above me.

<https://www.cookbookfair.com/images/pdf/Gourmand%20FOOD%20CULTURE%20nominees%20November%2015%202021.pdf>

Wag Brags

Alycin Hayes has received more acclaim for her fascinating new book, *Amazon Hitchhiker*. Check out this interview! Alycin says:



I just received notice that a Book cover designer & blogger from Bulgaria has posted an interview she did with me regarding my new book, *Amazon Hitchhiker*.

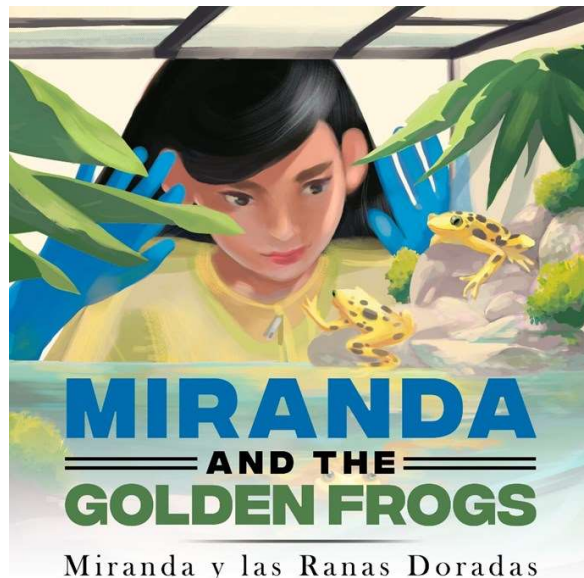
Please feel free to use it in the next WAG newsletter if you like.

<https://www.artofdonika.com/post/amazon-hitchhiker>

W*R*I*T*E

Congratulations to **Bonnie Ogle** for the publication of her new book, *Miranda and the Golden Frogs*:

Miranda's daddy showed her pictures of the Golden frogs. In Panama, where she lives, the people love them. The frogs had bad luck. Can Miranda help them? *Miranda and the Golden Frogs* is a bi-lingual, true story for young readers.



PUBLISHING SCAMS

<https://blog.reedsy.com/scams-and-publishing-companies-to-avoid/>

Posted on Aug 21, 2019

Author Scams and Publishing Companies to Avoid

Becoming a published author is a fantasy shared by almost all writers. And as with almost any widely-shared ambition, there are also folks out there looking to make a quick buck by exploiting those dreams — whether they involve securing a book deal or going the indie publishing route (<https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-self-publish-a-book/>).

The publishing world has its fair share of scammers and disreputable companies. At Reedsy, we regularly hear from authors who, despite being well-informed and educated people, have fallen prey to these scammers. In this post, we'll take a closer look at common writers scams and show you how to identify the publishing companies to avoid on your journey to publication.

Vanity Presses

“Oh, my! There's a publisher who wants to release my book!”

Not all publishers are created equal. For every Random House, there is some guy in a random house, convincing authors that they hold the key to publishing success. But before you sign on the dotted line, stop for a second and ask yourself what they're offering.

Most reputable publishers share the same business model: the publisher acquires the rights to publish and distribute the book by paying the author an advance. The publisher will then cover the costs of editorial, design, and marketing. Once the book is published, the author will receive a royalty for every copy sold (after the author's total royalties have covered the advance).

Notice how, at no point in this process, the author hands any money to the publisher? Vanity presses, on the other hand, will not only not offer an advance, but they will also play on the vanity of authors in order to make them bear some (or all) of the costs of publishing.

What to expect from vanity presses

Here's the ugly truth: Vanity presses don't rely on book sales to pay the bills. Their end customer is the author who's willing to pay for services like editing and design. Think of them as the equivalent of Bialystock & Bloom from Mel Brooks' *The Producers* — they can make as much money from a flop as they can from a hit.

PUBLISHING SCAMS



As a result of the vanity publisher's business model:

- Their editorial standards tend to be lower. They will happily work on titles they believe won't sell.
- Editorial and design work will likely be outsourced to one of the lowest bidders.
- Their book marketing efforts tend to range from meager to non-existent.

Vanity presses will often infer that they can sell your book to major chains. Usually, this means that they'll list your book with a wholesaler, like Ingram — which means that booksellers can order it. That's not the same as it being actively sold into stores.

Self-publishing companies to avoid often do the following:

'Upsell' the author where possible. Initially quiet about marketing/publicity/creating an author website, a vanity publisher will then try to charge authors extra fees for these services.

- **Entice the author into entering paid contests.** A vanity publisher will try to get authors to pay for contests, claiming they've been "selected" to enter.
- **Withhold royalties until they 'break even.'** Their side of the production costs can be any number they pick, as they can name any price they want for "admin costs."
- **Require the author to buy a certain number of copies.** Unreliable publishers may say that you need to have at least 50 or 100 copies to sell at book signings. But because they choose the cost-per-copy, they can add a convenient "admin cost" to the price.

PUBLISHING SCAMS

This is not to say that traditional publishers are perfect. But with the traditional business model, publishers are incentivized to release *quality* books and foster long, healthy relationships with authors.

Important note: There are many companies out there calling themselves "assisted self-publishing companies". They operate in a similar model as the one we described above for vanity publishers (i.e. you pay for all the production and marketing services). However, some of them are actually reputable and known for providing quality services at reasonable fees and offering solid advice and handholding through the process. We recommend you do extensive research when you encounter such an organization and watch for any signs that could indicate a vanity publisher in disguise.

Hybrid Publishers

"So it's either I pay for everything upfront and I keep all royalties, or I try to get a publisher who'll give me an advance but then take almost all my rights?" Well, no, not anymore. The publishing landscape is ever-evolving and there is now a third kind of 'publisher': hybrid publishers. The idea is simple: authors participate in the costs of production, but in exchange, get a greater split of the royalties. Most hybrid publishers will advertise a 50% split on both costs and royalties. For a first time author, this might seem like a great idea — so long as the company has the intention of creating quality books.

The problem is: many vanity publishers have decided to surf on the "hybrid" wave and disguise themselves as such. They'll take on any submissions they get, ask you for a bunch of money upfront for editing and design (all the while assuring you it's only really 50% of the costs), and make a profit off of that. Which means they don't really care afterward how the book sells.

How to identify a *reputable* hybrid publisher

Every time you encounter a hybrid publisher, you should be asking the following questions: How much do they charge authors in general for their 50% share of the editing and design costs?

Compare this to [market rates](#) and make sure they're not fooling you.

- Do they have a track record of producing well-reviewed, successful books? Buy a few of the books that the company has published and gauge not only their editorial standards but the quality of their print items.
- Will they actually distribute your book? Many vanity presses will make your title available to booksellers, but do they have sales reps that will actively try to get them into stores?
- Are there any hidden costs lying in wait? Talk to authors who were published by the company in the past and ask them for their experience.

To learn more about what constitutes a *reputable* hybrid publisher, check out these criteria set out by the Independent Book Publishers Association. (<https://www.ibpa-online.org/page/hybrid-publisher-criteria-download>)

The potential danger with hybrid publishers

At Reedsy, we've always believed in the *idea* of hybrid publishers. It seems logical, and fair, to have a business model at the intersection of self-publishing and traditional publishing. However, *in practice*, we've seen too many authors get burned by hybrid publishers who looked reputable at first glance.

PUBLISHING SCAMS

Here's the main problem with this business model: publishing is a hit-based business, and you don't have a hit every year, let alone every month. So let's imagine that a reputable hybrid publisher goes through a rough spell, and is suddenly getting short on cash. What is the first thing they'll be tempted to do? Raise their *fixed income*, i.e. the income they receive from authors participating in the production costs. The impact on cash flow will be immediate and certain, and it's a much easier thing to do than to *try to sell more books*. Many authors won't question whether what they're paying upfront is 50%, 80%, or 120% of the *actual* production costs — they'll just be happy they're getting a 'publishing deal'.

Agent Scams

Just a quick note: reputable agents work on commission. If you're dealing with an agent that requires [querying authors](#) to pay a 'reading fee' or suggests that you pay for editorial services (provided by them, or an affiliated company), then your spidey-sense should be tingling pretty hard.

Research your agents before you query them: see which authors are on their list and if former clients have something to say. If an agent contacts you unsolicited, don't let flattery get the best of you — find out what they really want. Or, even better, check if they're a member of the [Association of Author Representatives](#) (AAR), a professional organization that maintains some of the industry's highest ethical standards.

Self-Publishing Companies to Avoid

Self-publishing, by definition, means that you're doing it yourself. But there are companies out there who can give you a hand... or reach into your pocket if you don't have your wits about you. Here are a few things to look out for:

Companies who will “publish you with Amazon”

The great thing about publishing with major retailers is that it's almost always free! And unless you're 100% technophobic, you shouldn't have much of a problem [uploading your book](#) to Amazon or Kobo or Apple Books within a few quick minutes.

There is often value in working with a professional to [optimize your blurb and your metadata](#) or [perfecting your author bio](#), but getting your book listed on Amazon is not something you need to pay for.

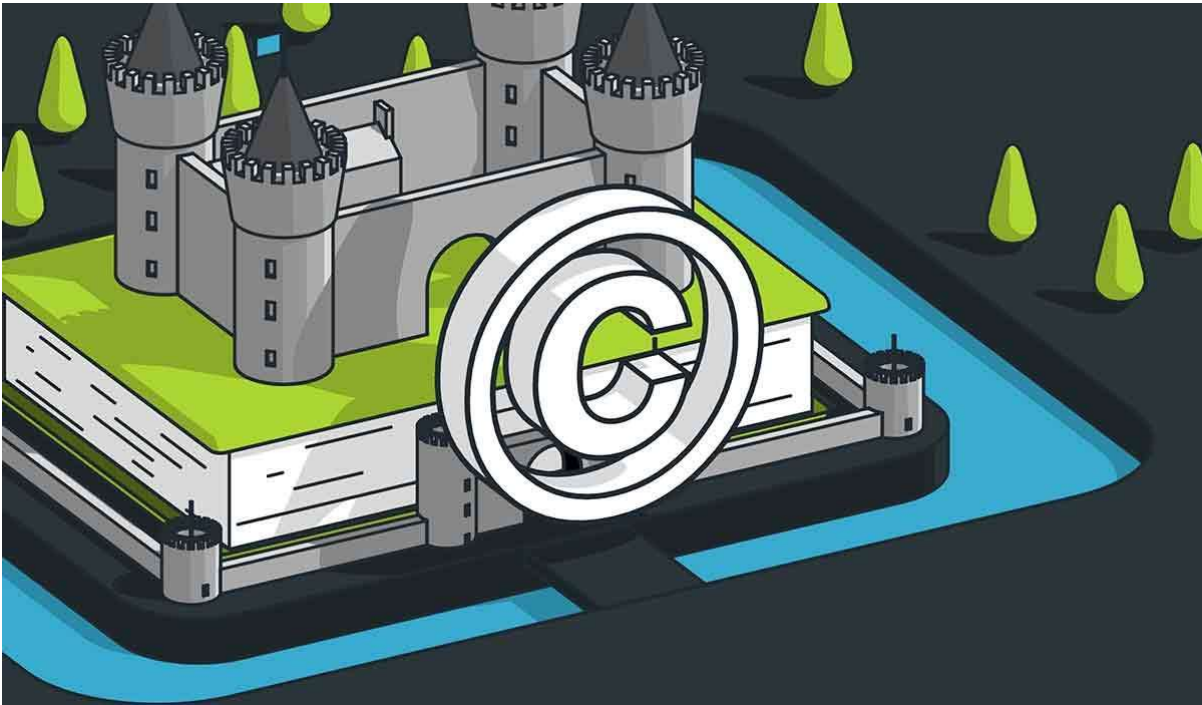
Services that will get your book an ISBN

Getting an International Standard Book Number (or [ISBN](#)) is not like joining the Illuminati: you don't need some special introduction. Any author can buy one for \$125 through [Bowker](#) in the USA or [Nielsen](#) in the UK: agencies that issue ISBNs and cannot profit from their sale.

To be honest, most online retailers use their own identification codes these days. If you decide not to get an ISBN, you'll probably be fine. But if you simply must have one, don't pay more than you need to.)

PUBLISHING SCAMS

Copyright Registration



Did you know that if you don't register the copyright of your book, literally anybody could claim it as their work and profit from it?

Now, that's entirely false, but you'd be surprised how many people believe it. Authors own the copyright to their works before and after they publish them. In the US, registering that copyright simply provides a few statutory rights when it comes to claiming damages — and it should only cost you \$35 to apply for it online (as of March 2018). For more details on how to register your copyright, you can [check out this comprehensive guide](https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-copyright-a-book/). (<https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-copyright-a-book/>)

Publicity and PR Companies

Marketing a book is something that most authors struggle with. (For a primer on the topic, [check out this guide](https://blog.reedsy.com/book-marketing-ideas/). <https://blog.reedsy.com/book-marketing-ideas/>) So it's no surprise that there are people who will offer to solve your publicity and PR problems for a low, low fee. Some of these companies might be able to place guest posts and reviews on blogs that nobody visits (and only exist to host content for swindled authors). Other companies won't even be that subtle: they'll just take the money and run.

- When you're searching for a [marketer](#) or a book publicist, make sure you can see their online profile and verify their previous experience.

PUBLISHING SCAMS

However, it's not just authors with a book to publish who are targeted by scammers. Some people have found a way to get money out of writers at the very start of their writing careers.

The Filipino Publishing Scam Network

In the past few years, dozens of companies have been sprouting up and aggressively targeting authors who have previously self-published or worked with small presses. A solid chunk of these companies are based out of the Philippines, using fake addresses in the US to give the impression of legitimacy. A lot of their focus is on selling marketing service ("Is your book not selling? We can make ads or create trailers that will skyrocket your sales!") at a ridiculous price.

Their M.O. is always the same:

- They will contact you unsolicited;
- Their websites will be a little bit crummy and utilize stock photos and/or paid actors;
- They will have a list of their authors and the books they've published — but those books will look like garbage and have no reviews on Amazon because they've been uploaded to dupe prospective clients.

Victoria Strauss at Writer Beware has been [keeping tabs on the names of these companies](https://accrispin.blogspot.com/2019/08/from-philippines-not-with-love-plague.html) so check out her post if you do get solicited by phone or email. (<https://accrispin.blogspot.com/2019/08/from-philippines-not-with-love-plague.html>)

Writing Contests and Awards

Writing contests are a great way to reach an audience, solidify your writing credentials, and even make a little money in the form of prizes. There are, however, competitions that are little more than money-spinning enterprises. And you can usually sniff them out by the fact that their prizes are not really prizes.

Some contests will publish winning entries in a magazine or an [anthology](#) — which is great. But sometimes, 'winning' authors will be obliged to pay an 'editing fee' for that privilege — which is not great.

There are also some competitions in which the prize might be a trophy. The catch here is that the author will be expected to pay for the cost of the physical prize. This isn't necessarily bad — unless you mind paying \$80 for a slab of acrylic that dozens more have also 'won' that month.

In short, read the fine print. To find contests that have been vetted, you can look through this directory of [the best writing competitions](https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/). (<https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/>)

PUBLISHING SCAMS

What's the best way for an author to stay safe?

Research is the answer. With the internet, you can find out if 99% of companies or services are reputable within a few minutes. Here are some specifics to help you spot which publishing companies to avoid:

Google it. A quick search will at least show you the company's website and examples of the previous work. If you're unable to find anything, or if something smells fishy, then you might want to stay away.

Check with fellow authors. Author forums are a great place to find critique partners, tips on cover designers, and to vent about anything and everything. They're also where you want to go if you have any questions about a service. Head to a forum that's large enough and at least one author will have encountered the company in question.

Be wary of unsolicited offers. If a company or service contacts you out of the blue by email or phone, the chances are that they bought your number. Reputable companies with a track record and positive word-of-mouth don't tend to cold-call.

Ask questions. As we've mentioned, some reputable companies will require authors to pay money up-front for services. But before you commit to anything, make sure you know exactly what you'll be getting for your money, what isn't included, and what their provable track record looks like.

Yes, there are a lot of predators working in the publishing field, but they're nothing to lose sleep over. So long as you're careful and approach opportunities with a critical eye, you will find no problem navigating around the sharks in this business.

And of course, if you have any questions about reputable companies or publishing scams, drop us a note in the comments below or drop us a line at service@reedsy.com.



<https://writersrelief.com/2020/09/10/5-writing-tips-to-improve-your-final-draft-writers-relief/>

You've been writing, editing, proofreading, and rewriting your short story, poems, or novel. At long last, you're at the point where you feel your WIP (work in progress) is done! Pat yourself on the back, do a happy dance, get a celebratory snack—but don't start submitting just yet. The experts at Writer's Relief know that there's a good chance you still have more work to do before you're ready to submit to literary editors and agents. Use these writing tips to improve your final draft and boost your odds of getting published.

Writing Tips To Improve Your Final Draft Before You Make Submissions

Let your work sit untouched for a few days. This may seem counterintuitive, but it's a crucial step to get yourself in the best headspace for editing. While some writers jump into edits the moment they've typed "The End," it's better to put the draft aside for a few days, weeks—or even longer. You'll come back to your draft with fresh eyes and will be able to see any needed changes you didn't notice before.

5 Writing Tips To Improve Your Final Draft

Ask someone to read through the draft. Whether you have a friend or family member who's a grammar geek, or a standing relationship with another writer or [critique partner](#), it's helpful to have another reader review your draft. By the time you've finished a draft, you're so close to the work that you may find it hard to remain objective, and you may miss plot holes, clunky lines, or passages begging for character development. An outside reader will notice these discrepancies and ask questions you might not have considered—but an editor or agent definitely would.

Research publishing industry guidelines for [your genre](#). Though you should never write solely to satisfy trends, it's also a good idea to make sure your writing is following the current publishing industry standards for length, topics, and format. No matter how strong your writing is, a literary journal editor or literary agent may simply have to pass it up if it falls too far outside the submission guidelines. If you're writing prose, take the time to research how long pieces should be (whether they're stories, essays, or books). If you're writing poetry, find out whether editors are interested in rhyming poetry, prose poetry, free verse, or other forms. Knowing if your draft meets the criteria for the markets where you plan to submit will ensure you're sending your work to the right places!

Cross your t's, dot your i's, and check for typos. You say you've proofread? Okay. Proofread again. We can't say it enough: Proofread, proofread, proofread! Though a single spelling or grammatical error isn't likely to make or break your draft's chance of publication, multiple errors and typos probably will. Even if you're a naturally gifted grammarian, it's easy to make small mistakes or typos as you're writing. If you've already proofread and aren't finding any issues, try reading your piece aloud—you'll be more likely to catch errors the eye flits over while reading! Again, ask someone with grammar skills to review your work for you. The [Writer's Relief proofreading experts can help](#).

And The Best Tip For Improving Your Final Draft...

Know when to stop. It's tempting to keep returning to your piece to edit... and edit...and edit. Maybe you wake up in the middle of the night with a brilliant new idea you want to add, or you find yourself spending days trying to reword one pivotal line. While editing your draft is always necessary, eventually you have to [stop editing and start submitting](#).

After You've Submitted Your Final Draft

Once your final draft is polished and submitted, you can do another happy dance, get another cookie—and start working on your next project! Don't sit waiting and worrying about responses. Move on to writing your next draft, and use these tips to make sure your final draft is always your very best work. Remember, the more well-written submissions you send out, the better your odds of getting your work published!

Atlanta Writers Conference

Bringing the top literary professionals to you!

May 6-7, 2022

Now Open for Registrations

**[https://atlantawritersconference.com/
about/](https://atlantawritersconference.com/about/)**

Do you want the chance to earn a contract directly with a publishing acquisitions editor or with a literary agent who will represent you to publishers?

Do you want editors and agents to tell you what you're doing wrong and doing right in your manuscript, synopsis, and query letter?

Would you like to discuss your writing project with editors and agents to see if there's any interest in the marketplace?



**Mystery Writers
of America**

SleuthFest

• craft seminars, pitch sessions, manuscript critiques, panel discussions

**We are excited to welcome you to sunny
South Florida for SleuthFest 2022 on Ju-
ly 7-10, 2022!**

- SleuthFest kicks off Thursday evening with **Freddie's Noir at the Bar**.
- Friday and Saturday are filled with **workshops** by our SleuthFest faculty, **craft talks**, **panels**, and **forensic classes**.
- Agents & Editors will be accepting **pitches**.
- Friday evening is the **Guest of Honor Gala**.
- Saturday evening is the **Fla-Mingle Cocktail Party** and **Razzle-Dazzle Raffle Drawing**.

Upcoming Classes—

<https://ss2.sfcollge.edu/ar/communityEd/AR3000StuCrslistingFE.jsp#/?>

SF SANTA FE COLLEGE

WRITE YOUR MEMOIR—SUSIE BAXTER, WAG

If you wish to write about your life for yourself, your family, or for the world, this course is for you. Participants will write short stories about everyday life, the people who influenced them, and life-changing events. Can't remember the details? Handouts and charts will aid recall. Classmates will have a chance to share stories, though it is not mandatory to take part.

ENG0048.1F6

4 Sat., starts 04/23/2022, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Instructor: Baxter, Susie

ONLINE-ZOOM

Fee \$49.00

INTRO TO SCREENWRITING—GARY GORDON—WAG

This class is an introduction to the basics of writing a screenplay. You'll learn to think about your protagonist and antagonist, plot your story in a screenplay format, and avoid some of the classic mistakes made by beginning screenplay writers. You may even achieve writing the first ten or fifteen pages (or the first act). Participation will be encouraged, as discussions are part of this class.

ENG0053.1F1

Number of Weeks: 5

Days: Mo

Starts: 4/11/2022, 6:30 PM - 8:45 PM

Instructor: [Gary Gordon](#)

Location: SF - NW CAMPUS S-220

3000 NW 83rd St

Course Fee: \$69.00

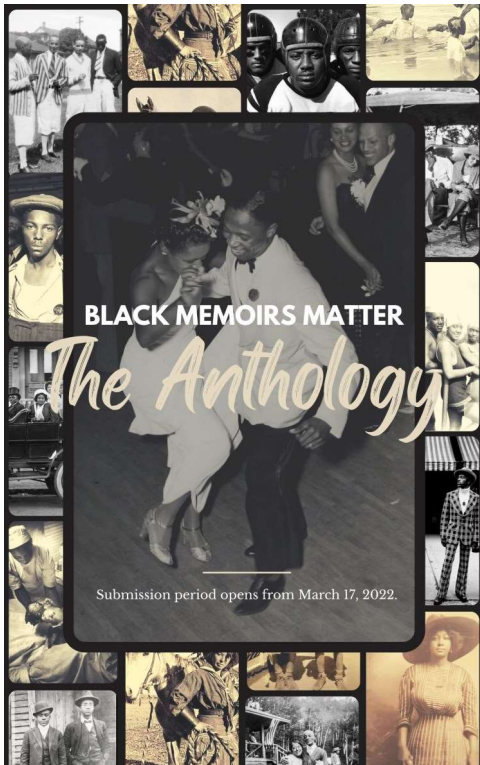
Notes: Bring a laptop or tablet, a paragraph to a page about your favorite movie: what it is and why, and any screenplay writing you've done or started.

Classes at
Santa Fe
College

Calls for Submission

Memoir Magazine is committed to sharing stories that need to be told. That's why we are publishing:

Black Memoirs Matter: *The Anthology*



The Black Memoirs Matter Anthology will highlight crucial creative nonfiction by writers of African descent. Submissions are open to all writers of the African Diaspora, regardless of country of origin or residence.

We are excited to read Memoir and Creative Nonfiction on all aspects and subject matter of Black Life from many countries and cultural backgrounds.

Our goal is to chronicle the global Black Experience through memoir. At the same time, we are looking for universal truths that transcend race, like mental health, self-love, parenting, etc.

Your memoir submission word count should range anywhere from 500 to 4,000 words in length.

Your essay must be written in the first person. It can explore any aspect of your life experience; it may or may not specifically deal with justice or race.

Tell us your story! Tell us your grandparent's story!

<https://memoirmag.submittable.com/submit>

Submissions

Sequestrum Literary Journal

Theme: Optimism

Accepting: Fiction. Nonfiction. Poetry.

Deadline: 4/15

Give us a mystery with some hope. Poetics with ambition. Humor is fine too. Heck, we'll even take revenge. Revenge is optimistic, right? Send your best today.

<https://www.sequestrum.org/themed-submissions-optimism>



“The function of the artist is to make people like life better than they have before.” –
Vonnegut

Yes. We know how un-literary “optimism” sounds. To be clear, we aren’t looking for any sickly-sweet submissions. But we’ll read heartbreak if we get a little redemption. Give us a mystery with some hope. Poetics with ambition. Humor is fine too. Hell, we’ll even take revenge. Revenge is optimistic, right? **We want tense, imaginative, literary-quality writing that doesn’t end with gout/the sun being a dried-out prune.** That’s all. Quality writing means original, challenging writing. This is a challenge. We know you’re up for it. As always, wow us. Thrill us. Never bore us. We’re eager to read your best. Deadline 4/15.

We’re trying to keep things simple. Themed submissions are a call for the sort of writing we’re hungry to read. As our tastes change, so will our themes. We’re hoping to be surprised. We’re hoping to find exactly the stories and poems we’re looking for. We’re hoping to fall in love with writing we never realized we needed.

Send away. We’re eager to read your best.

W*R*I*T*E

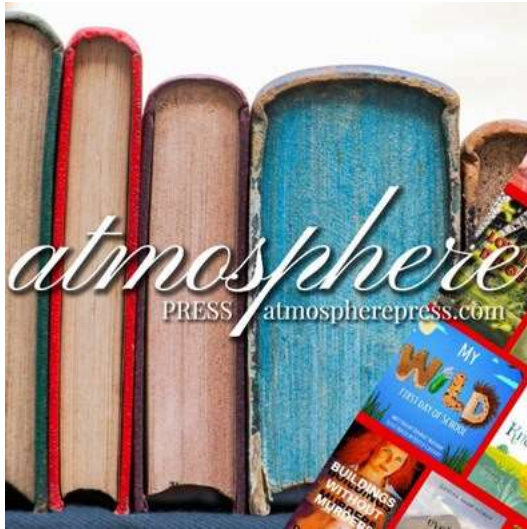
Submissions

Plant-Human Quarterly seeks Poems and Essays for Upcoming Issues

Deadline: Year-round

Plant-Human Quarterly reads year-round. We seek unpublished or published poetry and essays that explore the myriad ways writers manifest their relationship to the botanical world—whether through heavily researched pieces, keen observation, or more intuitive ways of knowing and interacting—that attempt to communicate across boundaries and approach a plant’s-eye-view of the world. Send no more than 5 poems or an essay of no more than 1,500 words (flash essay or essay excerpt). Past contributors include Ellen Bass, Forrest Gander, Kimiko Hahn, Brenda Hillman, Jane Hirshfield, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Pattiann Rogers, Scott Russell Sanders, Arthur Sze. Submission guidelines: otherwisecollective.com/phq-submissions.

*W*R*I*T*E*



Atmosphere Press Reading Book Manuscripts
in All Genres

Deadline: Rolling

Atmosphere Press currently seeks book manuscripts from diverse voices. There's no submission fee, and if your manuscript is selected, we'll be the publisher you've always wanted: attentive, organized, on schedule, and professional. We use a model in which the author funds the publication of the book, but retains 100% rights, royalties, and artistic autonomy.

This year Atmosphere authors have received featured reviews with *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, and *Booklist*, and have even appeared on a giant billboard in Times Square. Submit your book manuscript at atmospherepress.com.

Calls for Submissions



Greetings Raconteurs!

For our spring contest edition, Raconteur is going home. **We want to know - what does home mean to you?** It could be the people, pets, potted greenery, or the frayed wallpaper peeling in just the right spots. If you have lived in the same place for decades or led a nomadic existence, we want to know what your space means to you. - **50 WORD LIMIT!**

1st Place: \$150 + 1 year e-subscription to Raconteur Magazine.

2nd Place: 1 year e-subscription

3rd Place: 1 year e-subscription

Entry Fee: \$3 Patron Pledge

Extended Contest Deadline: **April 30, 2022**, 12:00PM (ET)

Be sure to include "HOME" in the subject line for your submissions. For further contest details please go to:

<https://www.raconteurmag.com/contests>

W*R*I*T*E

Contests

Calling All TV Writers



Are you ready to pitch your TV Pilot to a panel of industry professionals?

Here's your opportunity! Submit your **90-second verbal pitch videos** to be considered to pitch live during the **ISA Virtual Pitch Panel** on May 19th, 2022. Past industry panelists have included execs from **Warner Brothers, MGM, Zero Gravity, CSP Management, 1993, SAGindie, Lit Entertainment Group** and more. Several ISA Pitch Challenge winners have gained representation, had meetings with execs and had script materials requested after pitching at the event.

<https://www.networkisa.org/contest/view/tv-pilot-pitch-challenge>

W*R*I*T*E



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

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.

W*R*I*T*E

“You might not write well
every day, but you can always
edit a bad page.

You can't edit a blank page.”

- Jodi Picoult

FreedomWithWriting.com