

## WAG Digest Volume 13—Issue 6

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# WAG's ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Saturday, December 9, 4:00  
– 7:00 p.m. at the Matheson  
History Museum, 513 East  
University Avenue,  
Gainesville, FL 32601.



The Writers Alliance of Gainesville has held a holiday party for many years where our local authors get a chance to read from their work, and we share refreshments with members and the public. If you'd like to read, send your materials (5-7 minutes) to Wendy Thornton at [floridawendy54@gmail.com](mailto:floridawendy54@gmail.com) and we'll let you know when you can read. The time is limited, so readers will be kept to a specific number.

If you'd like to bring a snack to share, please do so. We'll have plates, cups, silverware, etc. and various snacks and drinks. We hope you'll join us for this fun event. Since the event is free and open to the public, please make sure your materials are "public-friendly" – i.e., no politics, violence, or bad words. You do not have to write about the holidays, but we do want people to enjoy the readings as well as the comradery. Looking forward to seeing you there!

# Writing Accurate Historical Fiction by Ray Allen Smith

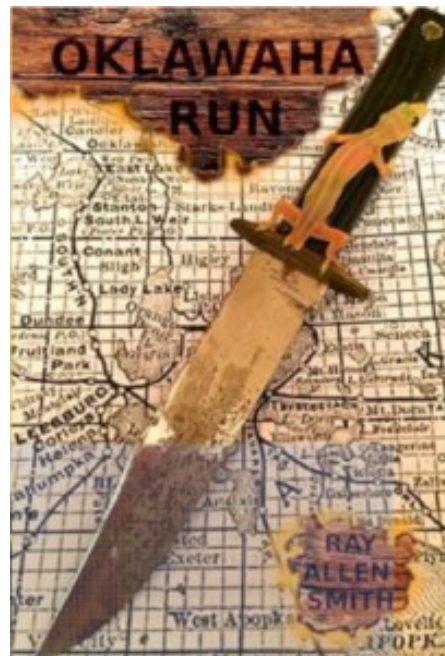
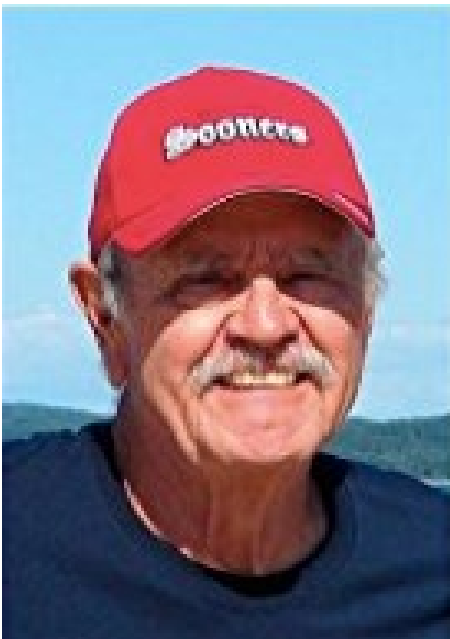
**January 14, 2024,  
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm**

Millhopper Branch,  
Alachua County Libraries  
3145 NW 43rd St. Gainesville, FL 32606

Mark your calendar! On Sunday, January 14, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., **Ray Allen Smith**, author of historical novels based in Florida, will give a talk on how to write accurate historical fiction.

Smith molds his words into poetry and short stories. According to him, he came to Florida in the early 1970s to sample fishing and boating. His years in Miami were studded with motoring and sailing throughout the Keys and Bahamas. A move to Leesburg put him back in the woods and ponds. Still an outdoorsman, he tempers the Florida sun with stints at the computer.

His books include *So It's Been Told: Tales From The Riverside* (2015) and *Oklawaha Run* (2018).



One reviewer (Indiana reader) said of *Oklawaha Run*, "I couldn't put it down! If you like historical Western thrillers (good ones like Olmstead's *Savage Country*) and/or post-civil war Southern drama (such as *Cold Mountain*) this book is for you. It combines those two genres with the interesting twist of locating the story in Florida (a place the author obviously knows intimately.) Most people don't associate post-civil war south with Florida—but it is. Most don't associate Florida with logging or cattle drives—but they were there. And it is written in beautiful poetic language with a superbly fast-paced plot. What a delightful combination of characteristics! I highly recommend it."

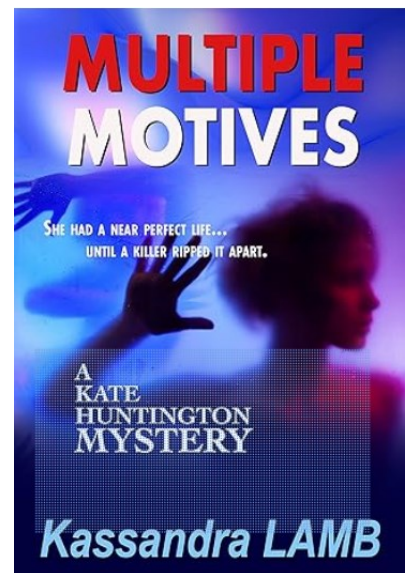
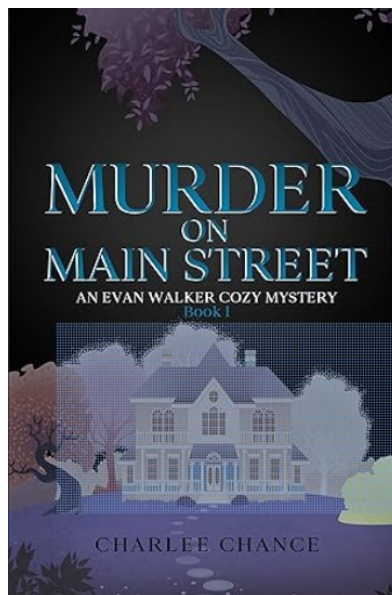
# Great Programs coming up for the Writers Alliance. Mark your Calendars!

## Fifth Annual Sunshine State Book Festival Gainesville, Florida January 26-27, 2024

Bringing Readers and Writers Together

Sunshine State Book Festival (More information on the following page)

**Kassandra Lamb—Writing  
Accurately About Mental  
Health Issues**



Kassandra Lamb, a retired psychotherapist/college professor turned mystery writer, will speak at the Mill-hopper Branch of the Alachua County Library at 2:00 p.m. on February 11, 2024. In her talk, she will clarify several misconceptions and misrepresentations she has encountered as a reader of fiction.

She has authored 36 novels/novellas in three mystery series and a romantic suspense trilogy, plus a guide-book for novice writers, *Someday Is Here! A Beginner's Guide to Writing and Publishing Your First Book*. Her latest Kate Huntington series book is *The Twelve Heists of Christmas*.

You can read more about Lamb and her books at <https://kassandrалamb.com>.

*Writers Alliance of Gainesville*



## **Fifth Annual Sunshine State Book Festival**

**Gainesville, Florida**

**January 26-27, 2024**

**Bringing Readers and  
Writers Together**

Come and enjoy a day of browsing—books by 200 local and regional authors

An opportunity to meet outstanding authors who write in many genres

Authors from around Florida and the nation will gather at the Hilton University of Florida Conference Center on January 27th, from 10 am to 5 pm to sell books and talk about their work

Festivities include guest speakers, giveaways, storytelling, and more

Find festival information [here](https://sunshinestatebookfestival.com/) (<https://sunshinestatebookfestival.com/>)

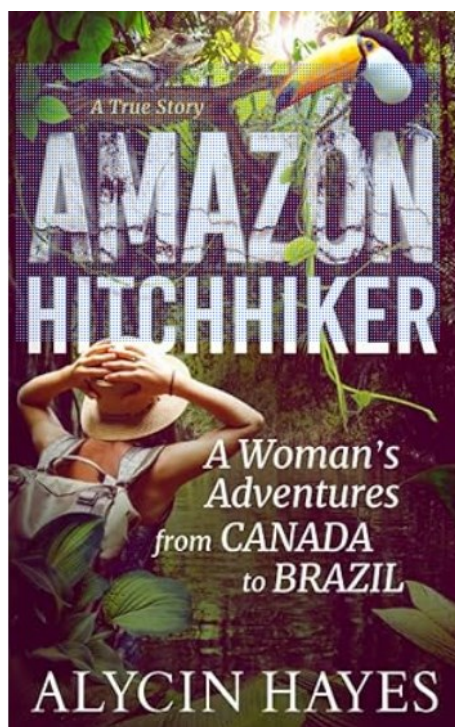
Be sure to bring the kids for story time—from 12 am to 4 pm on Saturday

### **Hilton University of Florida Conference Center Gainesville**

1714 SW 34th Street, Gainesville, Florida, 32607

Want to volunteer? We could use some help managing our book drawing, and we need volunteers for Friday night and Saturday to direct the crowds, help the authors find their way around, etc. If you're interested in being a volunteer, sign up on our Website at <https://sunshinestatebookfestival.com/volunteer/>

## WAG BRAGS



Alycin Hayes will be a guest on the New York Metropolitan Opera's next podcast of "[Aria Code](#)". She will be talking about her adventures in the Amazon basin described in her memoir "AMAZON HITCHHIKER."

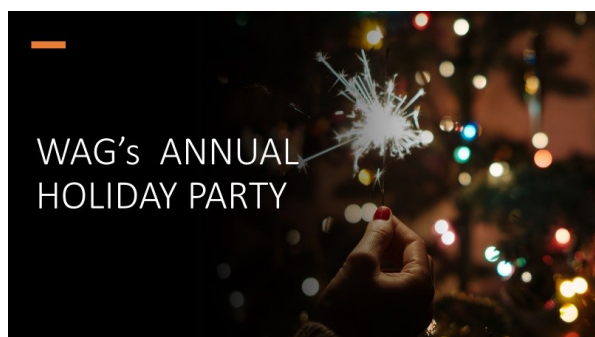
This podcast will focus on the final aria in the Metropolitan Opera's production of "[Florencia en el Amazonas](#)" by Daniel Catán which opened November 16th, 2023. This magical opera sung in Spanish takes place on the Amazon River and is based loosely on Gabriel García Márquez's book "Love in the Time of Cholera." When the podcast is posted (in a couple of weeks, the link will be available here:

<https://www.wnystudios.org/podcasts/aria-code>

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

Congratulations to local poet Susan Ward Mickleberry for the upcoming publication of her poetry book, *Flying to Asmara*. By Roadside Press. More information about the release date will be available soon.

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



Sign up to read for WAG's ANNUAL Holiday Party — Contact Wendy at [floridaendy54@gmail.com](mailto:floridaendy54@gmail.com).

# WAG BRAGS



Congratulations to former WAG President  
Jess Elliott who sent this info:



**Jiko Bukken**

J. Elliott

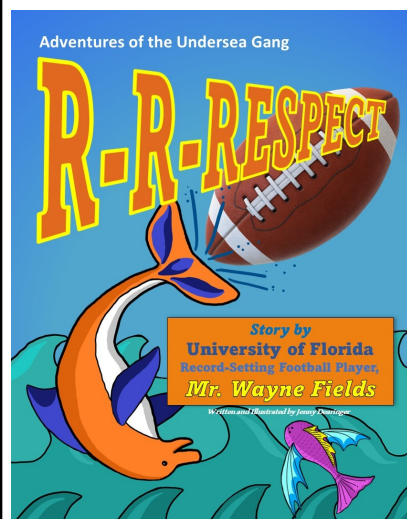
J. Elliott has finished her first ghost story novel, *Jiko Bukken*, a slow-burning story about an exchange student who rents a haunted onion of a house in the historic district of Gion, Kyoto, Japan.

The book is live on Kindle Vella and will be out soon in paperback and Kindle. Check it out here:

<https://www.amazon.com/kindle-vella/story/B0BFXCXW1Q>

We don't know how you do all you do! Great work, Jess!

And congratulations to our current Writers Alliance President, Jenny Dearing, whose new book is



out now on Amazon: Jenny Dearing is proud to announce the publication of *R-R-Respect*.

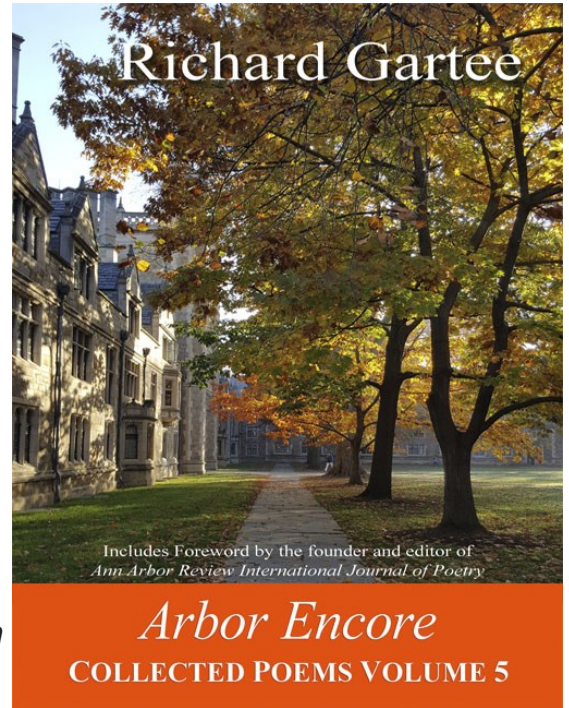
*R-R-Respect* is the second book in her Children's Book series, *The Adventures of the Undersea Gang*. Following the theme of social/emotional learning, *R-R-Respect* is about learning the value of respecting others, and how respect garners respect in return. As the main character, Wayne the Dol-

phin says, "When you give Respect, you get respect back!"

Written with former University of Florida Gator Football Player, Wayne Fields, children also learn the value of respect as a Leadership skill. You can pick up a copy of *R-R-Respect* and *Spotted Fish and Striped Fish Find Treasure* on Jenny's Amazon webpage, [www.amazon.com/author/jeniferdearing](http://www.amazon.com/author/jeniferdearing).



## WAG BRAGS



From Local Writer Richard Gartee:

I am writing to let you know that *Arbor Encore*, my fifth book of poetry, has just been published.

Also, if you're in the Gainesville area, I have two upcoming December events. Read on...

***Arbor Encore*** Over the course of my writing career, I had over three hundred of poems published in anthologies, chapbooks, five collections of my poetry, and most especially in the renowned *Ann Arbor Review: International Journal of Poetry*. I considered the poems selected by the editor of *Ann Arbor Review* to be some of my best work. But unless you had back issues of the magazine, these poems weren't available to you. With the release of *Arbor Encore*, the entire body of my poetry published in *Ann Arbor Review* is united in one collection. [Learn more here](http://www.gartee.com/ae_page.html). [http://www.gartee.com/ae\\_page.html](http://www.gartee.com/ae_page.html)

### Upcoming Gainesville events for Richard Gartee

Meet me **December 2, 2023 2:00 to 4:30 PM** at Theatre of Memory, 1705 NW 6th St., Gainesville, FL where I will sign copies of *Arbor Encore*, [The Hippodrome First Fifty Years](#), and [all of my novels](#).

Join me **December 9, 2023 4:00 to 7:00 PM** at Matheson History Museum, 513 E University Ave., Gainesville, FL where I will read two selections from [Arbor Encore](#) at a poetry reading by several members of Writers Alliance of Gainesville.

Warmest wishes,

Richard

And don't forget, if you want to read for the December 9th Meeting at the Matheson Museum, our holiday party, contact [floridawendy54@gmail.com](mailto:floridawendy54@gmail.com). All materials will be vetted in advance of the event because it is free and open to the public. Hope to see you there!



## Just Publishing Advice

This article is reprinted courtesy of “Just Publishing Advice”  
by Derek Haines. Please check out his website here:  
<https://justpublishingadvice.com/>

# Learn From Writers – The Easy Way To Improve Your Writing

By Derek Haines - Updated November 17, 2023

Writing is an art, and you never stop learning and practicing. One of the most effective ways to improve your writing skills is to learn from writers.

By that, I don't mean copying or stealing a writer's technique or style. But you can look at the different techniques, structures of sentences, or how some writers use words in a special way to convey thoughts.

Every writer has a unique style and voice. However, it's not always easy to define why certain writers are more readable or memorable than others. Sometimes, it can be as simple as one sentence in an entire novel that makes you think..

## My one-sentence moment

I always learn from writers and continue to do so. But I can vividly recall one sentence I read when I was young that stood out and really made me stop and think.

With my fascination for science fiction, it's hardly surprising that it was a line by Douglas Adams. *The ships hung in the sky in much the same way that bricks don't.*

This short sentence contains so much but in so few words. He compares a futuristic alien spaceship with common earthly bricks, which is incongruous. It is also a double negative, with a comparative clause, *in the same way*, that defies any logical similarity.

The sentence is absurd, which I'm sure was the intention. But it is the structure, the economy of words, and the simplicity of the vocabulary that illustrates how short, simple sentences can be so effective in writing. He used a similar structure in the line, *Time is an illusion.*

*Lunchtime doubly so.*

**Cont. on next page**

## Learn From Writers: Cont.

Adams was a master at creating very short and memorable sentences, such as *Don't panic*, and *Mostly harmless*. He proved that I didn't always need to strive to write extra-long sentences of elegant prose.

### It's not only famous writers

A lot later in my writing life, I was intrigued by why some article and blog writers were more readable and engaging than others. I discovered that many of the most successful often used the second-person point of view.

Online article writing is often about offering solutions to problems for people. Using sentence structures with, **you**, helps make a piece of writing personal and aimed at the reader. Look at the following two sentences as an example.

*I always find ideas and learn from reading other writers. (First Person)*

*You can always find ideas and learn from reading other writers. (Second person)*

It's a very simple change that is so easy to use. But it is a powerful little tool to help you make your readers feel more involved and that you are writing with them in mind.

Another writing hint I discovered was from reading newspapers online. But it wasn't so much about writing but about formatting.

Unlike print newspapers, I noticed that the paragraphs in online papers were very short.

When you read news online, you'll often find that most paragraphs are, in fact, only one or perhaps two sentences. Doing this makes text much easier to read and absorb than long, heavy paragraphs.

As with so many facets of writing, it's often the small things that can make a big difference.

### Read a lot, but remember to analyze

It goes without saying that you are reading every day. You don't need to read Dostoevsky or Hemingway to pick up tips and ideas.

Any books, magazines, newspapers, or even social media posts can often contain one or two sentences that catch your eye.

**Cont. on next page**

## Learn From Writers: Cont.

Also, take notice of how they structure sentences and paragraphs, use punctuation, or how they use vocabulary to convey their ideas.

Only today, I read a passage that contained this phrase: *It was a long time coming.*

For me, I would have used the present perfect, without hesitation: *It has been a long time coming.*

But when I thought about it for a little while, using the past simple was a quicker, less complex, and clearer way to write.

The only problem with being a bit too analytical when you read is that you can lose some of the pleasure of reading.

Sometimes, it's better to simply read for enjoyment or information. But once you develop a habit of analyzing what you read, it can be hard to break.

Try to strike a balance.

### Innovate, don't imitate

When you start to understand some of the techniques other writers use, try using them.

It's not about copying or stealing their work but rather practicing some of the techniques you notice.

For example, if you like a writer's use of short, punchy sentences, try using a similar technique.

Another unusual writing technique is not using quotation marks in dialogue. Tim Winton's novel *Cloudstreet* is an example of this form. It's not for every fiction writer, but it's certainly worth investigating.

When you become more comfortable with techniques like these, you can start to innovate. Use them as a starting point, and experiment and develop your own style around them.

**Cont. on next page**

## Join a writing group

It might seem old-fashioned now, with everything seemingly available online at our fingertips.

However, joining a writing group or community can be incredibly beneficial.

Not only will you have the opportunity to read and critique the work of others, but you'll also get some feedback on your writing and face-to-face.

Discussing your writing with other writers can provide invaluable insights into your strengths and weaknesses and help you improve.



## Summary

Learning from other writers is one of the most effective ways to improve your writing.

Sure, you can read famous and prominent writers and authors, but often, some of the best new ideas pop up from everyday reading.

All it takes is a moment to think and say to yourself, hey, that's an interesting way to phrase that.

Reading is the best, easiest, and fastest way to improve your writing skills. Every little bit you learn helps in developing your unique voice and style.

Forget about studying literary devices and grammar rules; just read.

**For more articles on writing, please check out the Website:**

**<https://justpublishingadvice.com/>**

# Classes and Conferences



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Third Annual St. Augustine PoetFest, April 11-13**

St. Augustine, Florida 11/01/2023 - The Ancient City Poets have once again partnered with Flagler College and the St. Johns Cultural Council for the 2024 edition of the St. Johns Cultural Council is scheduled for 10 am to 5 pm on campus at Flagler College April 12 (Friday) and April 13 (Saturday) with a Beat Poet Summit off campus on Thursday April 11 in the evening, and an off campus English Department open mic in the evening on Friday evening, April 12.

More information will be available here as the event gets closer:

<https://www.facebook.com/StaPoetFest/>

<https://www.instagram.com/stapoetfest/>



Photo by [hannah grace](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Classes and Conferences



[Apply Now for the Looking Glass Rock Writers' Conference](https://www.lgrwc.org)

**Application Deadline:** December 31, 2023

Located in the mountains of western North Carolina, the May 16-19, 2024 **Looking Glass Rock Writers' Conference** will explore the theme “A Sense of Place” with faculty Pam Houston, Dorianne Laux, and Jason Mott leading workshops on nonfiction, poetry, and fiction writing. A partnership between the Transylvania County Library and Brevard College, the annual conference consists of writing workshops for select participants and community readings by the workshop leaders.

Workshops are limited to 12 participants and scholarships are available. Acceptance is competitive and based on manuscript evaluation. There is no charge to apply. For more information visit [www.lgrwc.org](https://www.lgrwc.org).

# Classes and Conferences



**February 23, 2024:** Celebrity Author Gala  
6-9pm, Ritz Carlton Amelia Island;  
<https://www.ameliaislandbookfestival.org/>

**February 24, 2024:** Authors' Expo and Readers' Extravaganza  
10am - 4pm, Fernandina Beach Middle School.  
Exhibiting Authors Registration is open.

Photo by [Markus Winkler](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## **Calls for Submissions**



### **Eucalyptus Lit: Now Seeking Submissions**

Eucalyptus Lit is a new online magazine of poetry, prose, and hybrid genres. They publish a wide variety of writing, but they especially like confessional writing and, “simple, pretty things.” They’re looking for authentic writing that “plays with language in beautiful ways.”

Eucalyptus Lit will be published four times a year. Their first issue, which you can read online to get a sense of what they publish, features writing by seventeen contributors. The issue also includes two interviews, one with established author Ace Boggess, and one with emerging author Brian Guan.

Eucalyptus Lit accepts submissions year-round. Poets may submit up to five poems. Authors of prose may submit up to three pieces, totaling 5,000 words or fewer. Authors of hybrid or experimental writing may submit work with video or audio under three minutes, and work with up to five pictures. Submitting authors can expect a response within four weeks.

Eucalyptus Lit plans to nominate authors published in the journal for the Pushcart Prize and *Best of the Net*. They also promote the work they publish on social media.

Eucalyptus Lit accepts submissions via email, not online or by post. They accept simultaneous submissions but ask that authors withdraw writing published elsewhere. They do not accept previously published work.

Eucalyptus Lit only accepts submissions that follow the guidelines they’ve posted online. Please read these guidelines in full before submitting.

If you would like to learn more or submit to Eucalyptus Lit, please visit their website [here](https://www.eucalyptuslit.com/submit). (<https://www.eucalyptuslit.com/submit>)

## Calls for Submissions

DRIFTWOOD PRESS

A digital and print literary magazine and small publisher offering the best in fiction, poetry, comics, and visual art in a new, bi-annual edition.

### **Driftwood Press** **In-House Contests** **+ Additional** **Submission Opportunities**

**Deadline:** January 15, 2024 (In-House Contests)

*Driftwood Press* is happy to share a plethora of submission opportunities for writers and artists! Our In-House Short Fiction & Poem Contests, in which every work submitted is considered for publication as winner or runner-up, is ending soon! For our yearly print anthology, we are looking for poems, short stories, comics, and visual art that will wow our readers with innovative language and strong craft. We are a paying market, and our published writers also get to take part in bespoke interviews about their work! *Driftwood* is also on the hunt for amazing book-length titles to grow our catalogue, so if you have a novella, poetry collection, comic collection, or graphic novel manuscript, we would love to read it! Visit us [here](https://driftwoodpress.submittable.com/submit) (<https://driftwoodpress.submittable.com/submit>) for our Submittable page, and we encourage you to follow us on social media (@driftwoodpress) to learn about even more submission opportunities!

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### **Exploration and Recovery:** **Mental Illness and The Awakenings** **Review**

**Deadline:** Year-round

*The Awakenings Review* is an award-winning literary magazine committed to publishing poetry, short stories, nonfiction, and photography by writers, poets, and artists who write from experience with mental illness: either in themselves, family members, or friends. Located in the Chicago area but international in scope, our print publication is one of the nation's leading journals of this genre. By its nature, mental illness is a troubling, distressing, and painful experience. At *The Awakenings Review* we love to get works of renewal and healing, a positive outcome to your suffering and distress. We are currently accepting submissions for our

## Submissions

### Apricity



Website: <https://www.apricitymagazine.com>

Genres Published: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction

Formats: Online, Digital, Print, Audio, Video

Submission Guidelines: <https://apricitymagazine.submittable.com/submit>

Reading Period: Sep 1 to Apr 30

Response Time: 3 to 6 months

Charges Reading Fee: No

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### Epiphany

Website: <https://www.epiphanyzine.com>

Genres Published: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Translation

Subgenres: **Graphic/Illustrated**

Formats: Online, Digital, Print, Audio

Submission Guidelines: <https://www.epiphanyzine.com/submit>

Reading Periods: Nov 1 to Jan 1

Charges Reading Fee: Yes

Accepts Unsolicited Submissions: Yes

Accepts Simultaneous Submissions: Yes



### Editorial Focus

*Epiphany* publishes fiction, nonfiction, poetry and art from both established and emerging writers and artists.

**Contact Information** [epiphany.magazine@gmail.com](mailto:epiphany.magazine@gmail.com)

## Contests



### Interim Poetics: The Test Site Poetry Prize

**Deadline:** December 15, 2023

Interim will choose two winning books for the series—one title publicized as the winner of *The Test Site Poetry Series* and the other as the *Betsy Joiner Flanagan Award in Poetry*. Both winners will receive a \$1,000 award and their books will be published by the University of Nevada Press. Submit by December 15, 2023.

[www.interimpoeitics.org/test-site-poetry-series](http://www.interimpoeitics.org/test-site-poetry-series)

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### 2024 Press 53 Award for Short Fiction

**Deadline:** December 31, 2023

The 2024 Press 53 Award for Short Fiction will be awarded to an outstanding, unpublished collection of short stories. **Reading Fee:** \$30. **Award:** \$1,000 cash advance, publication, and 53 copies.

**To Enter:** Submit online with Submittable or by mail from September 1–December 31, 2023. Press 53 short fiction editor Claire V. Foxx will serve as the only judge. Winner and finalists announced by May 1, 2024; advance review copies sent to major reviewers and outlets; publication in May 2025. Complete details at [www.Press53.com/award-for-short-fiction](http://www.Press53.com/award-for-short-fiction).

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### Mississippi Review Prize

**Deadline:** January 1, 2024

**Entry Fee:** \$15

**Cash Prize:** \$1,000

**E-mail address:** [msreview@usm.edu](mailto:msreview@usm.edu)

**Website:** <http://sites.usm.edu/mississippi-review>

Three prizes of \$1,000 each and publication in *Mississippi Review* are given annually for a single poem, a short story, and an essay. Current or former University of Southern Mississippi students are ineligible. Submit three to five poems totaling no more than 10 pages or a short story or essay of 1,000 to 8,000 words with a \$15 entry fee (\$16 for electronic submissions), which includes a copy of the prize issue, by January 1, 2024. All entries are considered for publication. Visit the website for complete guidelines.

*Mississippi Review*, Mississippi Review Prize, 118 College Drive, #5144, Hattiesburg, MS 39406. (601) 266-4321. Adam Clay, Editor in Chief.

## Contests



### Black Caucus of the American Library Association Literary Awards

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Cash prize—\$1000

Email— [gladys.bell@hamptonu.edu](mailto:gladys.bell@hamptonu.edu)

**Website:** <http://bcala.org/awards-and-news/literary-awards>

Four prizes of \$1,000 each are given annually for a poetry collection, a first novel, a book of fiction, and a book of nonfiction (including creative nonfiction) by African American writers published in the United States in the current year. The awards honor books that depict the “cultural, historical, or sociopolitical aspects of the Black Diaspora.” Publishers may nominate books published in 2023 by December 31. There is no entry fee. Visit the website for a list of jurors to whom books should be sent and complete guidelines.

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

### Tupelo Press Dorset Prize

Deadline: December 31, 2023

Entry Fee: \$30

Cash Prize: \$3,000

E-mail address: [kdarling@tupelopress.org](mailto:kdarling@tupelopress.org)

Website: <http://tupelopress.org>

A prize of \$3,000, publication by Tupelo Press, and 20 author copies is given annually for a poetry collection. The winner also receives a two-week residency at Gentle House in Port Angeles, Washington. Shane McCrae will judge. Submit a manuscript of 48 to 88 pages with a \$30 entry fee by December 31. All entries are considered for publication. Visit the website for complete guidelines.

Tupelo Press, Dorset Prize, P.O. Box 1767, North Adams, MA 01247. (413) 664-9611.



**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.

Writers Alliance—[www.writersalliance.org](http://www.writersalliance.org)

Sunshine State Book Festival—<https://sunshinestatebookfestival.com/>

