WAG Digest Volume 14—Issue5

Award-Winning Author Lana McAra



Your Deepest
Darkest Secrets
Are the Key to
Your Next
Bestseller

The Englewood

Medium:

SHAKEN
BUT NOT STIRRED

Inside this issue:

October 1 meeting

Uocoming Events

Poetry 3
Contest

Marketing 4 program

Glainesville 5 Reads

Actors
Warehouse 6

WAG Brags 7

Publishing || Advice

Classes and |5

Calls for

Submission 6

Contests 18

Award-winning author and writing coach Lana McAra will speak at the Millhopper Library at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 13, 2024. The topic? "Your Deepest Darkest Secrets Are the Key to Your Next Bestseller." McAra won the Christy Award, the Book Excellence Award, and the Literary Titan Silver Book Award for her historical novel *Reaping the Whirlwind*, which she wrote under the pen name Rosey Dow.

McAra writes transformational romance stories that explore personal development. She has created a career that combines her love for writing with her dedication to shining light into a dark world. Her forty-four published books show her commitment to elevating consciousness and vibration around the globe. Lana's journey has led her down a remarkable path from the duality of strict religion to singularity and awareness, with a lot of life lessons along the way.

Her most recent novel, <u>The Englewood Medium: Shaken But Not Stirred</u>, stands as her most personal work to date. She tells the story of a woman with a stalker, a situation she personally experienced in 2014. It shows how to take back your personal power and stand up for yourself.

In addition to being a prolific author, through her interviews on various <u>podcasts</u> and platforms, McAra inspires individuals to embrace their personal sovereignty and find their own true path.

Bacopa Literary Magazine: Readings at the Millhopper Library

Sunday, Nov. 10, 2024

2:30pm - 4:00pm — Room A, Room B

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



Join us for readings from the Writers Alliance-sponsored literary magazine, *Bacopa*. If your work was accepted for this year's Bacopa and you'd like to do a reading for this event, please contact Wendy Thornton at floridawendy54@gmail.com.

Come out and listen to our local authors share their amazing work.



DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY AND READING

MATHESON MUSEUM, DEC. 15, 2024

Readings will be held on this date at the local Matheson Museum. If you'd like to read, contact floridawendy54@gmail.com. More information to come soon!



Great Programs coming up for Writers Alliance Members to participate in. Mark your Calendars!

PEACE ON AND WITH THE EARTH Peace Poetry Contest

Peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.

- The Earth Charter

Presented by the Writers Alliance of Gainesville, the Climate Collaboratory, and River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding

All WAG Members are Invited to Participate Submissions accepted Oct 1-15.

Top 5 poems will be published on the Hogtowne Quill in November 2024.

Selected winners will be invited to read their poems at the Unity in Community March at Bo Diddley Plaza on November 17th, 2024.

Submission Guidelines

- · Use the theme of Peace On and With the Earth and the quote from The Earth Charter as your guide.
 - · May be in any form of poetry including free verse.
 - · Up to 500 words.
 - Please include your name on your submission.
 Submit to: president@writersalliance.org by Oct. 15.



Climate Collaboratory





The Pros and Cons of 3 Self-Publishing Platforms: KDP, Draft2Digital, and Ingram Spark

10:00 - 11:00 a.m., Monday, Oct. 21, 2024

WAG MEMBERS, Connect by Zoom (link below) at 10:00 a.m. on October 21 for the Marketing Coalition meeting.

<u>Jolene MacFadden</u> will discuss the pros and cons of publishing platforms **KDP**, **Draft2Digital**, and **Ingram Sparks**, including the marketing tools each provides to help authors promote their books.

The Marketing Coalition was established to help WAG authors market their works. We meet on the third Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. by Zoom, and the Zoom link is always the same:

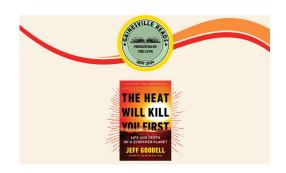
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81913659127?pwd=a1hTQWI1WVphTUxBOWdVWE9oV2ljQT09

Meeting ID: 819 1365 9127

Passcode: 119030

We hope to see you there.

Just a reminder—the Lynx Bookstore and Writers Alliance collaboration on Gainesville Reads was rescheduled thanks to Hurricane Helene. If you're interested in attending, the new dates and information are below. Remember, you can buy the book at the Lynx in advance.



Saturday Oct 19th, 2024

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM Gainesville Reads

• The Lynx

RESCHEDULED: Gainesville Reads: Jeff Goodell and Jane Gilbert on The Heat Will Kill You First

Join us for our capstone Gainesville Reads event! Author Jeff Goodell will join us for a conversation with Miami's Chief Heat Officer, Jane Gilbert, on The Lynx patio.

The talk will take place from 4pm-6pm.

Join us at the GFAA Gallery for an afterparty following the event to enjoy art, conversation, and community connection. Hors d'oeuvres provided.

RSVP Here: https://thelynxbooks.com/events/562720241019

And yes, we do appreciate the irony that this environmental reading was rescheduled thanks to a hurricane. Truth is stranger than fiction.



Find us at

The Lynx Books 601 South Main Street Gainesville, FL USA 32601

The **Writers Alliance of Gainesville** (WAG) promotes, encourages, and supports aspiring and experienced writers. Most of our programs are free and open to the public. To learn more about WAG benefits writers, click on How WAG Can Benefit You or watch this video

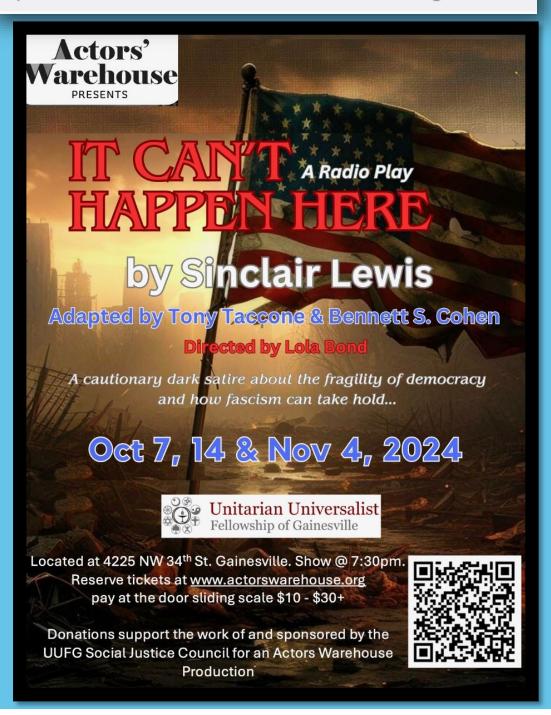


Registration is now OPEN for the 2025 Sunshine State Book Festival, 1/31/25-2/1/25 at the Best Western Gateway Grand off I-75 at Gainesville's 39th Ave. exit.



Register here today!

https://sunshinestatebookfestival.com/author-registration/

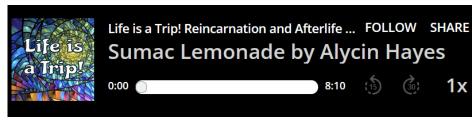




Congratulations to Alycin Hayes who was invited to read her work for a podcast! Check it out below.

Just Released!

Alycin Hayes was invited to read her latest short story "Sumac Lemonade" on the "Life is a Trip!" Podcast.



Alycin Hayes

https://www.lifeisatrippodcast.com/sumac-lemonade-by-alycin-hayes/?

fbclid=lwY2xjawFFPyRleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHRI2IBWDsYmpxEARYHhNwcSpcJP6AAnxveMi5YUvL1N kHiKrPu6ErjEvnA aem Oh0r68p8ahiYrj 9w1wJEw

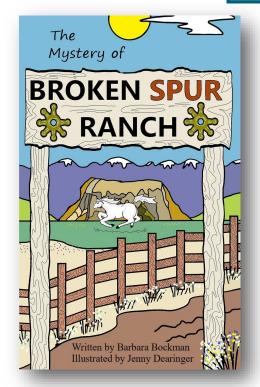
If you have a past life story you want to share and are interested in submitting it to the Life is a Trip Podcast, go to this link for writing tips and requirements Turn Your Story Into a Story - Brownell Landrum (https://brownelllandrum.com/turn-your-story-into-a-story/)



Alycin Hayes

Website: EchoHillProductions.com

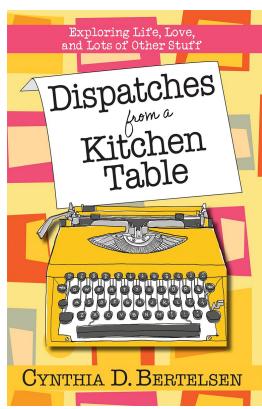




If you're planning to be at the Sunshine State Book Festival on January 31, check out Barbara Bockman's new children's book, *The Mystery of Broken Spur Ranch*. You can get her book on Amazon (https://www.amazon.com/Mystery-Broken-Spur-Ranch-ebook/dp/B088339FQG?ref_=ast_author_mpb) or pick one up at the Book Festival.



*W*R*J*T*E*



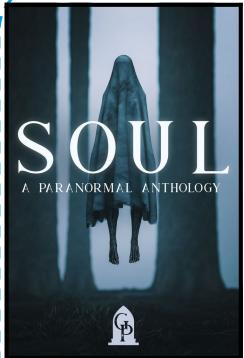
Congratulations to the multi-award-winning Cynthia Bertelsen, who sent this information:

Cynthia D. Bertelsen won a bronze medal from the Florida Authors and Publishers Association for her book - Dispatches from a Kitchen Table: Exploring Life, Love, and Lots of Other Stuff - in the Autobiography/ Memoir category.

From Amazon: Dispatches from a Kitchen Table is a portrait of Life in its many tangled facets, from a lush vegetable garden in childhood to the discovery of cookbooks to the upheavals of the COVID pandemic.

Written in the novelistic and personal style Cynthia Bertelsen is known for, each of the over 100 essays centers on the impact of food on people, society, or history.

You can buy the book here: https://www.amazon.com/Dispatches-Kitchen-Table-Exploring-Other/dp/1734557958



And the multi-talented, award winning WAG Author Felicia Lee writes:

"Thrilled to share that one of my short stories will be part of the upcoming "Soul" anthology from Graveside Press — so keep your eyes open for it if



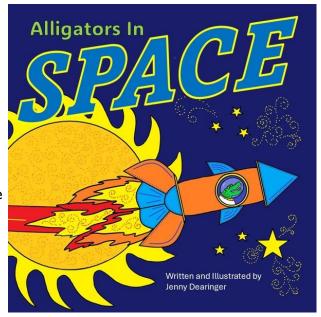
you're in the mood for some creepy Halloween reading!" (https://graveside-press.com/product/soul/) Yup, it's that time of year! Congratulations, Felicia.

*W*R*J*T*E*



Check out WAG President Jenny Dearinger's new children's book, *Alligators in Space*. Not only did she write it, but she even created the illustrations! Her book is available on her website:

https://jennydearinger.com/jennys-childrens-books



Ready for some Halloween reading? Michael Urban's new book explores the many haunted lighthouses across America. As Michael explains:



My newest book came out July 28 and its title is, *They Did Not Go Into the Light: A Travelers' Guide to Haunted Lighthouses*. This book guides you to lighthouses with directions and locations to each beacon. There are over 700 lighthouses in the United States and no lighthouse is identical. Did you know each lighthouse is different? The characteristics of each lighthouse are the Night Marks, Day Marks, and some Fog Horns. This book takes you on a journey across America along its beautiful coastline exploring 66 + 6 Haunted Lighthouses. From the tip of Maine, travel south to the Florida Keys, circle the Gulf Coast, enjoy the West Coast haunts, and then end your journey at the Great Lakes. Six additional cute lights were added as a bonus. The history of the lighthouse along with its characteristics, the location of each lighthouse, directions to the lights, and if open to the public, and

most importantly the Ghost Story that accompanies each guiding light are in driving order along with old and current pictures. Available on Amazon in Kindle, Paperback, and Hardback formats.

https://www.amazon.com/They-Did-Not-Into-Light/dp/B0D7TRXFI5/

*W*R*J*T*E*







Publishing Advice from a Serial Submitter to Literary Magazines

October 2, 2024 August 28, 2024 by

Amy L. Bernstein (https://amywrites.live/)

Over the last several years, I've spent oodles of time submitting short stories, essays, poetry, and novels to literary magazines, contests, and publishers. We're talking scores of hours devoted to searching, formatting, and submitting my stuff directly to the publishing gods (I'm excluding agents).

This is where I tell you that all that effort paid off, and I have a ton of author bylines to show for it.

But no. The truth is, roughly 99% of my submissions are rejected.

Does that mean I'm a terrible writer? Not necessarily. My odds just about track industry averages. Indeed, the I% acceptance rule is fairly consistent, whether you're submitting short fiction or a novel. And memoir is arguably the toughest sell of all.

There's a disconnect here somewhere, isn't there? If the odds are so stacked against the average author, why bother submitting anywhere, ever? Why not go out and buy a pack of lottery tickets instead?

Well, it's simple, really. Unless you plan to self-publish everything you write, you have no choice but to give editors and/or guest judges a chance to evaluate your work on its merits.

If you don't play, you can't win.

And if you are allergic to competing, then maybe getting published isn't for you.

What I do have to show for all the time I've spent submitting is a checklist to help authors manage the submission process in ways that mitigate "bright shiny object" syndrome, so you don't submit to anything and everything that crosses your path. The outcome is never in your control—so you may as well do whatever you can to make the process work for you to the greatest extent possible.

I'm focusing here on short stories, novelettes (under 20,000 words), novellas (under 40,000 words), poetry, and (to a more limited extent) creative nonfiction, such as essays. For advice on submitting book manuscripts to traditional publishers, see this set of articles (https://janefriedman.com/?s=small presses).



Publishing Advice from a Serial

Submitter (cont.)

1. Devise a submission strategy that reflects your goals

Before submitting anything you've written (and polished!), think hard about what you hope to achieve on behalf of your writing career. That will help you narrow the submitting field as you seek out publications that will potentially showcase your work in ways that matter to you most. Simply getting published is not always an end in itself; where you publish, the formatting and distribution, the gatekeeping—these all matter in shaping your credentials as an author over time.

The company you keep

What literary company do you wish to keep? *The New Yorker* only accepts 0.14% of unsolicited submissions, while other publications accept half or more of submitted work. Are you aiming for an elite literary outlet from the get-go (and willing to wait for it) or are you willing to climb the literary latter, beginning with less prestigious outlets in order to build publishing credentials from there? Do you want to "play" in an international literary community, or is the U.S. just fine?

These aren't trick questions and there is no single right way to do this. But your submission strategy will feel less random, and possibly even less fraught, if you can rationalize your reasons for submitting as an ongoing part of the process.

For instance, if short stories are your chosen métier, and you wish to become known for that—with an eye toward getting a book published—you'll want to identify the best outlets for short stories, and continue submitting your very best work to better and better outlets. That puts a big fence around your submission universe. And as your track record improves (you move from lesser known to better known outlets, presumably as your writing improves), editors may pay closer attention to your submission, giving you a tiny edge. (This is by no means guaranteed, but your publishing history counts for something.)

By the way: If you're wondering how to distinguish the elite (most selective) publications from the rest, there is no single source, but many reliable lists point the way, such as this (https://cliffordgarstang.com/2024-literary-magazine-ranking-fiction/) and this https://winningwriters.com/resources/erika-krouses-ranking-of-500-literary-magazines-for-short-fiction).

Formatting and distribution

Some publications are digital-only, while others produce both online and print versions that you (and others) can order through the publisher's website. Some are distributed by major book distributors like Baker & Taylor, which means libraries and bookstores may stock them. Some literary journals take tremendous care to surround print work with original art, while others do little more than post text and slap on a table of contents. Think about how you want *your* work to show up—and where—before you submit.

The recognition factor

Some literary publications annually submit their best pieces (as determined by the editors) for prizes such as the Pushcart Prize and the O. Henry Prize. If being eligible to compete for this type of recognition is important to you, then check to see whether the publication you're submitting to does this on half of their contributors. Many do not.

Publishing Advice from a Serial

Submitter (cont.)

2. Study the fit

The most common mistake submitting writers make—and a huge source of rejection—is the lack of fit between your literary offering and the publication. Note that a huge distinguishing factor among literary publications is the voice they prefer, and whether that voice is genre-dependent or even values-dependent. Be sure you understand this before you submit. For instance, make sure you're intentional when submitting to a queer literary publication, or a left-leaning culture magazine like Drift, or any other outlet with a specific set of interests. Read several published pieces online before submitting, to make sure your voice is a likely fit.

Likewise, tailor your genre-heavy work to outlets steeped in that genre, ranging from, say, Nightmare Magazine (horror) to Clarkesworld for short science fiction. As obvious as this sounds, writers too often overlook a publication's milieu—and end up submitting work that isn't remotely a fit.

3. Follow the publisher's directions—exactly

Another major reason for rejection can be traced to a failure to follow directions. Read the directions two or three times before submitting. I often copy the submittal guidance onto a Word file, so I can consult it while gathering pieces (such as a hyper-short bio) or reformatting my document (e.g., separate title page, double-spaced, name in the upper-right corner). If they explicitly state that they don't want stories over 5,000 words, do not submit your 7,500-word piece and hope for the best.

Frankly, prepping a submission can be a time-consuming pain in the neck. But if you wish to be taken seriously—and evaluated on the strength of your writing—then do exactly as requested. And keep in mind you have a choice here: If the directions are particularly onerous, ask yourself if this is a strategically important outlet for you—and therefore worth your time.

Poetry can be especially tricky. The lines are often single-spaced (not double) and the line and stanza breaks need to be crystal clear. If a poetry outlet accepts a PDF, that will ensure your line structure is preserved.

4. Track open-submission windows

In a perfect world, every literary magazine would accept work at identical intervals and respond to authors within the same, reasonable timeframe (less than a year!). But that's not our world. As part of your submission strategy, use your calendar or task list to note when the submission window opens and closes for a publication you are targeting. Some submission periods run the length of a season, some are open for only a few days.

To find who's open when, search sites such as <u>Submittable</u>, <u>Chill Subs</u>, the Community of Literary Magazines and Presses (<u>CLMP</u>), <u>Authors Publish</u>, and the fee-based <u>Duotrope</u>.

5. Build a relationship with publications accepting your work

Rather than celebrating a one-and-done when your story or poem is accepted, consider ways to deepen your relationship with that publisher. A number of literary journals also function as presses that accept book-length manuscripts. (A case in point is Able Muse.) And many run paying contests



Publishing Advice from a Serial

Submitter (cont.)

In addition to their general open-submission periods. Begin a conversation with the editor who accepted your work. Express your gratitude and explore what else they may be open to from you.

Strike while the iron is hot! (Here's some inspiration along those lines.)

6. Keep rejection in perspective

Submission and rejection are opposite sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other.

But you can possibly affect your odds, even just a little, by crafting a clear strategy for where you submit, and why. If an outlet that rejects you is important to you, resubmit in a few months (I've done that, and it worked!).

Never forget that this is a terrifically subjective business. An editor who rejects your work has many reasons to do so—and not all of them reflect on the quality of your writing. Many publications received hundreds, if not thousands, of submissions and their publishing quotas for a given issue fill up fast.

In some cases, the editors are looking for a range of subject-matter, and perhaps you've submitted something that's too similar to a piece they've already accepted.

If you continue striking out after months of effort, it may be time to revisit your submission strategy:

- Seek out publications that are less selective (this doesn't mean bad!).
- Double down on assessing where your work fits best, in terms of voice and genre.
- Look for regional outlets that privilege work from your geographic area.
- And subject your work to an independent editor who can give you a professional opinion on whether you're ready to publish.

The good news is that despite all the challenges facing the publishing industry today, literary magazines of all stripes are alive and well—hundreds of them, catering to virtually every taste and style.

With a thoughtful, realistic submission strategy, you will find the publications ready to share your work with the world and help you parlay your successes into a satisfying career.



Amy L. Bernstein

Amy L. Bernstein is the author, most recently, of <u>Wrangling the Doubt Monster: Fighting Fears, Finding Inspiration</u>. She is a multi-genre novelist and certified nonfiction book coach. Find her on the <u>web</u> and on <u>Substack</u>.



Classes and Conferences



Apply Now for the Looking Glass Rock Writers' Conference

Deadline: December 31, 2024

Join the 2025 Looking Glass Rock Writers' Conference next May 15-18 to explore "A Sense of Place." Conference faculty Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle, Terrance Hayes, and Elizabeth Rush will lead immersive fiction, poetry, and nonfiction writing workshops to nurture your creativity and expand your writing. Hosted by the Transylvania County Library Foundation and Brevard College in the scenic mountains of western North Carolina, the conference features selective workshops (limited to 12 participants) and community readings. Scholarships are available, and acceptance is based on manuscript evaluation. Apply for free. For more details, visit www.lgrwc.org.

*W*R*I*T*E*



January 18 – 25, 2025

https://www.writersinparadise.com/

2025 Workshops:

- Supernatural/Suspense/Horror with Michael Koryta (full week) \$950
- Crime Fiction with Laura Lippman (full week) \$95
- Memoir with <u>Andre Dubus III</u> (full week) \$950
- Short Story with <u>Stewart O'Nan</u> (full week) \$950
- Novel with <u>Ann Hood</u> (full week) \$950 / Graphic Novel with <u>Alex Segura</u> (full week) \$950
- 3-Day Poetry Workshop with <u>Didi Jackson</u> (January 19-21) \$495 / 3 Day Poetry Workshop with <u>Major Jackson</u> (January 23-25) \$495
- 3-Day Generative Short Story with <u>Ana Menéndez</u> (January 19-21) \$495
- 3-Day Mythic Structure with Les Standiford (January 23-25) \$495

Book consultations and Writer Talks are also available. Please see the website (above) for more information.

Calls for Submissions



Black Lawrence Press Manuscript Consultations

For over a decade, the Black Lawrence Press manuscript consultation program has offered writers access to award-winning authors who are also experienced educators. Through our program, these authors provide the kind of thorough feedback and in-depth analysis that is difficult to find outside of MFA programs. Within a matter of a few weeks, our consultants respond with full critiques including a cover letter addressing global issues within the manuscripts and an updated manuscript files including detailed suggestions. Participants who submit chapbooks or full-length manuscripts may also schedule phone or Zoom conferences with their consultant at no additional charge. blacklawrencepress.com/manuscriptconsultations/

*W*R*J*T*E*

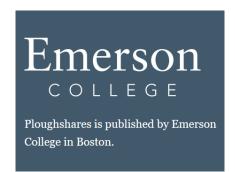
Submit to Ploughshares! Our Reading Period Is Open Until January

Deadline: January 15, 2025 at 12PM EST

Ploughshares is dedicated to finding and promoting the best contemporary voices in literature. Send us your poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and longform works by January 15, 2025, for the chance to appear in a future issue of the journal! Read our guidelines and

submit here: pshares.org/submit/.







Calls for Submissions



Finding the We in Them, the Us in You

LIVING OUR BLESSINGS: Aging, Mortality & Gratitude, Wising Up Anthology

Deadline: November 30, 2024

Age is a strange place—filled with abundance and scarcity, more fixed and fluid than imagined. Our bodies teach us it is now or never. But our hearts won't stop growing, revisioning. Was all that angst really necessary? Did all that will and drive narrow our focus unnecessarily? Savoring can become a call, a necessary rebalancing. LIVING OUR BLESSINGS: Aging, Mortality & Gratitude, A Wising Up Anthology Guidelines: Electronic submissions, Word or RTF. Stories, poetry, memoir, nonfiction. Prose \leq 5,000 words. Poetry \leq 5 poems. No A.I. Payment in copies. Submit electronically. Submissions: 10/1/24 to 12/31/24. Submit to:

livingourblessings@universaltable.org, Full Guidelines; universaltable.org/wisingup.html

*W*R*J*T*E*



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, art, and photography by writers and poets who write from experience with mental illness 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. We like to see work demonstrating that the writer or poet has found direction in life or can write about the experience of mental illness without being demoralizing. We are currently accepting submissions for our Spring 2025 issue. To learn how to submit, please read our guidelines at

www.AwakeningsProject.org.

Contests





<u>Baltimore Review</u> <u>Winter Contest</u>

Deadline: November 30, 2024

Baltimore Review Winter Contest – No theme! Flash fiction and CNF. Prose poems. One, two, or three works in a single submission, but no more than 1,000 words total. We want to wonder at how you abracadabra so few words into magic. We want to be amazed and maybe a little jealous of how you do that. \$400 awarded in each category. All entries considered for publication, with payment for accepted work at our regular rate. \$8 contest fee. Final judge: Francine Witte. Deadline: November 30. Visit our site, read some of the fine work there,

*W*R*J*T*E*

Cloudbank's Vern Rutsala Book Contest— Submit by Oct 31

Deadline: October 31, 2024

October 31, 2024 is the deadline for the Vern Rutsala Book Prize, sponsored by Cloudbank Books. Contest winner receives \$1,000, publication of the manuscript, and 50 books. Submission can include poetry or flash fiction or a combination of both. Submit via Submittable or by mail. Christopher Buckley is the final judge. Last year's winner was Jeffrey Bean for Everywhere, Everywhere. Visit cloudbankbooks.com for contest details. Revive us with your fire!



Winner of the 2024 Vern Rutsala Book Prize

Contests



The National Indie Excellence© Awards

Deadline: March 31, 2025

The National Indie Excellence© Awards (NIEA) are open to all English language printed books currently for sale including self-published authors, small to midsize independent publishers, and university presses. Now in our nineteenth year, NIEA is a proud champion of self and independent publishing and authors of all genres who produce books of excellence and distinction. Eligible books must have been published within the two calendar years prior to our deadline. Please visit our website for more information about our prizes, awards, and how to

submit: www.indieexcellence.com.

*W*R*J*T*E*

The Reedsy Prompts Contest

Reedsy

Genres: Fiction and Short Story — https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/

Every Friday, Reedsy sends out five writing prompts. Enter your response within a week for a chance at \$250. Winners may also be included in a future issue of Reedsy's literary magazine, Prompted.

6 Entry fee: \$5

Top Prize: \$250

Additional prizes: \$25 credit toward Reedsy editorial services

Beadline: December 31, 2024



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

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

January 31-February 1, 2025

