

WAG Digest

Volume 17—Issue 2

Poetry Play: The Journey of Finding Surprise, by Aliesa Zoecklein

April 12, 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Millhopper Branch, Alachua County Libraries

• 3145 NW 43rd St. Gainesville, FL 32606

Inside this issue:

April Mtg. 1

May Mtg. 2

Marketing Mtg. April 10 3

June Mtg 4

BACOPA LITERARY MAGAZINE 5

POETRY FESTIVAL 7

WAG BRAGS 9

OVERCOME Self Doubt 13

Classes 17

Calls for Submissions 22

Contests 24



Come join us on Sunday, April 12, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. when Aliesa Zoecklein will talk about poetry.

Zoecklein's poems have been published in *New Feathers Anthology*, *Bacopa Literary Review*, *Thimble Literary Magazine*, *River Heron Review*, and other journals. Her chapbook *At Each Moment, Air* won the [Peter Meinke Poetry Prize](#) and was published by [Yellowjacket Press](#).

"The thrill of writing poems is in the discovery," Zoecklein says, "so I love to talk about how we can journey ourselves toward that surprise. I'll share some practices I use when first searching for my poems and then drafting."

She will offer ideas about how to keep our initial attempts playful and wide-ranging. And how, if we're lucky, these practices can dispel resistance or boredom. She'll also discuss how shaping the poem—deciding on line breaks,

for example—can help open the poem in a generative way.

"I am always learning anew how to trust language to lift me toward what I don't already know. I look forward to exchanging ideas and taking the group through one or two fun exercises.

Zoecklein taught writing for twenty-five years at Santa Fe College. Happily retired, she lives with her wife in Gainesville, Florida, where she writes, gardens, and studies Spanish.

The program is free and open to the public.

Strategies for Writing and Developing Environmental Scenes by Benjamin Coward

May 3, 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

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



Come join us on May 3 at the Millhopper Library when author Benjamin Coward will share strategies for drafting, writing, and fully developing environmental scenes. Drawing on his background in Environmental Science, he has interwoven environmental issues throughout his published books. And he has much to share concerning the importance of environmental scenes, whether in fiction, memoir, or other nonfiction books.

He will reveal how we writers can use environmental scenes to enhance the story line, plot, and character movement. He will share scene-writing tips that will help engage readers and draw them deeper into the story, thereby helping them better understand the world around them.

Coward earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from Southern New Hampshire University. He is originally from the Saint Louis area in Missouri. He moved to Florida in the spring of 2013 to further his education. He lives in Gainesville with his wife, Julia, and their two-year-old daughter.

Like all of WAG's Sunday programs, this one is free and open to the public.

NOTE: This program is being held on the **FIRST Sunday in May since Mother's Day falls on the second Sunday.**



E-mail Marketing Without the Overwhelm

By Jolene McFadden

April 20, 2026

10:00 am—11:am by Zoom

<https://writersalliance.org/event/email-marketing-without-the-overwhelm/>

Starting & Maintaining Your Newsletter

Attend the marketing coalition meetings by Zoom.* The program will be presented by Jolene MacFadden.

Description: Build on 2025's newsletter session with practical, sustainable strategies for authors who feel they "should" have a newsletter but don't know where to start or how to keep it going.

Key Points:

- Reality check: newsletter frequency myths (monthly is fine!)
- What to actually write about: 5 evergreen content formulas
- Free platforms comparison: Mailchimp vs. MailerLite vs. Substack vs. BookFunnel
- The "3-sentence newsletter" approach for busy authors
- Growing your list with no budget: practical tactics
- Newsletter vs. social media: why email still matters
- Permission-based marketing: staying legal and respectful
- Sample newsletter templates (simple formats that work)

Worksheets/Handouts:

- "Your First Newsletter Template" – fill-in-the-blank newsletter
- "12 Newsletter Topics You Can Use Right Now" – idea generator
- "Newsletter Schedule Planner" – monthly planning sheet
- Platform comparison chart with features & pricing

Resources:

- Free: MailerLite (up to 1,000 subscribers)
- Free: Substack (with newsletter hosting)
- Free: BookFunnel for reader magnet delivery
- Free templates: Newsletter swipe file (examples from successful authors)
- Tutorial: Setting up your first campaign (step-by-step guide)

*Join us by Zoom!



Always the same link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81913659127?pwd=a1hTQWl1WVphTUxBOWdVWE9oV2ljQT09>

Meeting ID: 819 1365 9127

Passcode: 119030

Trauma, Part II: Trauma as a Character in Writing

By Kathy Connor Dobronyi

June 14, 2026 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm
Millhopper Library



<https://writersalliance.org/event/character-development/>

Few people reach adulthood without experiencing some painful, emotional, and traumatic events. Yet, for us authors, those trying events can become a treasure of knowledge and understanding that we can use in our writing.

Come join us at the Millhopper Library at 2:30 p.m. on the second Sunday in June for a second look this year at using trauma as a resource in your writing. WAG member Kathy Connor Dobronyi will share her personal stories of trauma and the stories of her characters to help you write about trauma.

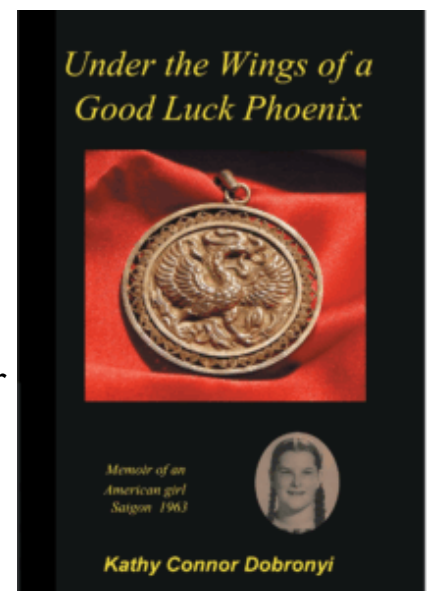
Trauma is a word we often hear, yet its true nature is frequently misunderstood and underestimated. There are three levels of trauma: acute, chronic, and complex, a combination of the aforementioned. There is no single definition of trauma; it can be different things to different people.

Kathy has lived with complex trauma from a childhood of abuse and war. In her writing, she uses the memory of her time in Saigon, where she experienced terrorist bombings at an American theater and other facilities where Americans congregated. She also witnessed human immolation and heard the bombs and gunfire during the overthrow of the South Vietnamese President on November 1, 1963.

Kathy is not a therapist or a clinician. She is a retired high school teacher, a storyteller, and a writer. Using stories from her life and the lives of her characters, she shares the different facets of trauma and healing.

Although she wrote articles for trade journals and developed lesson plans used by the Folgers Institute, she never considered herself an author until she was asked by a local newspaper editor to write her story:

***Under the Wings of a Good Luck Phoenix:
Memoir of an American Girl in Saigon
June 1963 to March 1964.***



SUBMIT TO BACOPA LITERARY MAGAZINE

DEADLINE APRIL 30, 2026

A Top Prize of \$200
and an Honorable Mention
of \$100 will be awarded in
each of the five categories:

- Fiction
- Creative Nonfiction
- Formal Poetry
- Free Verse Poetry
- Visual poetry



Want more information? Go to our Submittable
page and submit your work:

[https://
writersallianceofgaines-
ville.submittable.com/submit](https://writersallianceofgainesville.submittable.com/submit)

Contest Rules

- \$2 Submissions Fee (*WAG members are exempt*)
- \$200 Award and \$100 Honorable Mention in each of five categories
- One 2026 Best of WAG Award for Writers Alliance members in each category. Awardees will be highlighted in the journal itself, featured in our Editors Blog and social media, and invited to read at our annual journal debut event, as well as being considered for the cash awards in their submissions' categories.

Authors submit to **only ONE category** (see next page).

- Submissions to more than one category can result in disqualification.

Bacopa Literary Review does not accept previously published material in any category of submissions.

For descriptions of categories, please see next page.

BACOPA LITERARY MAGAZINE-cont.

Submission Guidelines

DEADLINE APRIL 30, 2026

BACOPA



Literary Review 2025

Writers Alliance of Gainesville

Category Descriptions

Fiction (up to 2,500 words): *Bacopa Literary Review* is looking for engaging and original pieces of short fiction capable of capturing and engaging the reader. 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, and food writing).

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.

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.

Visual Poetry (1 poem): 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. Textual imagery, calligraphy, font, concrete, blackout, found, shaped syntactic and non-syntactic, asemic--the visual aspect should be integral to the poem. Surprise us! Please submit only one visual poem.

WAG Member Submissions: 1 piece in any of the above categories, submitted via the fee-free 2025 WAG Member Submissions [portal](#). Members, please be sure to note which of our five genre categories your submission fits in your cover letter.

SUBMIT HERE: <https://writersallianceofgainesville.submittable.com/submit>

ARTSPEAKS

Bringing
Poetry & People
Together

AMERICA 250 - 4th Annual BARD & Broadside:

North Central Florida Poetry Festival Celebrating 250 years of American Independence through Poetry

North Central Florida's Premier Poetry Festival is the only festival in North Central Florida dedicated to the art of poetry in all its many diverse forms. Held in the beautiful city of Gainesville, Florida. For more information, please check out the Artspeaks Bard & Broadside Website: <https://www.artspeaksgnv.org/bardandbroadside>



Thu, Apr 09

MUSEUM NIGHTS / UF Harn Museum of Art Auditorium



Sat, Apr 11

WORD SLAY: "Standing On Words" / Alachua County Library Headquarters

Sun, Apr 12

POETRY READING

Apr 12, 2026, 2:00 PM

Millhopper Branch Library ,

3145 NW 43rd St, Gainesville, FL 32606, USA



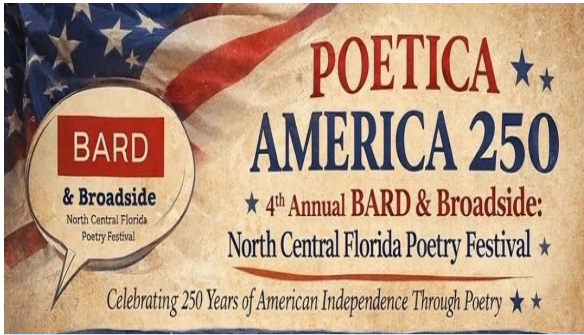
Tue, Apr 14

Proclamation: National Poetry Month / Alachua Board of County Commissioners

Apr 14, 2026, 11:30 AM

Alachua Board of County Commissioners,

12 SE 1st St, Gainesville, FL 32601, USA



AMERICA 250 - 4th Annual BARD & Broadside:
North Central Florida Poetry Festival
(cont.)

Bard & Broadside Website:

<https://www.artspeaksgnv.org/bardandbroadside>



Fri, Apr 17

FREE FRIDAYS CONCERT, ft. Wester Joseph and House Party / Bo Diddley Plaza



Sat, Apr 18

SWAMP-BERRY JAM / VECINOS

Apr 18, 2026, 6:00 PM

VECINOS, 208 W University Ave, Gainesville, FL



Sun, Apr 19

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS / The Lynx Books



Sat, Apr 25

POETRY at THE PLANETARIUM / Kika Silva Pla Planetarium



Sun, Apr 26

SIDNEY WADE: Featured Poet / Alachua County Library Headquarters

WAG BRAGS

Congratulations to WAG Member Charlotte Porter for multiple recent publications:

As Charlotte writes:



“I have had two stories accepted--one shortie in *After/Thought Literary* and the other, longish, in *storySouth*. I recommend both journals. The editors, thoughtful and prompt, give gracious feedback.”

Check out the storySouth journal here:

<http://storysouth.com/>

And this is where you can read the *After/Thought Literary* journal:

<https://afterthoughtliterary.com/>

W*R*I*T*E



For many WAG Members, writer Joan Carter was a sheer blessing. She helped so many WAG members get their books ready for publication, checking every piece. And she was always a sweet, funny member of every group. Recently, our former president, Susie Baxter, found this old picture of Joan and we are delighted to share it with all the WAG members who remember her so fondly.

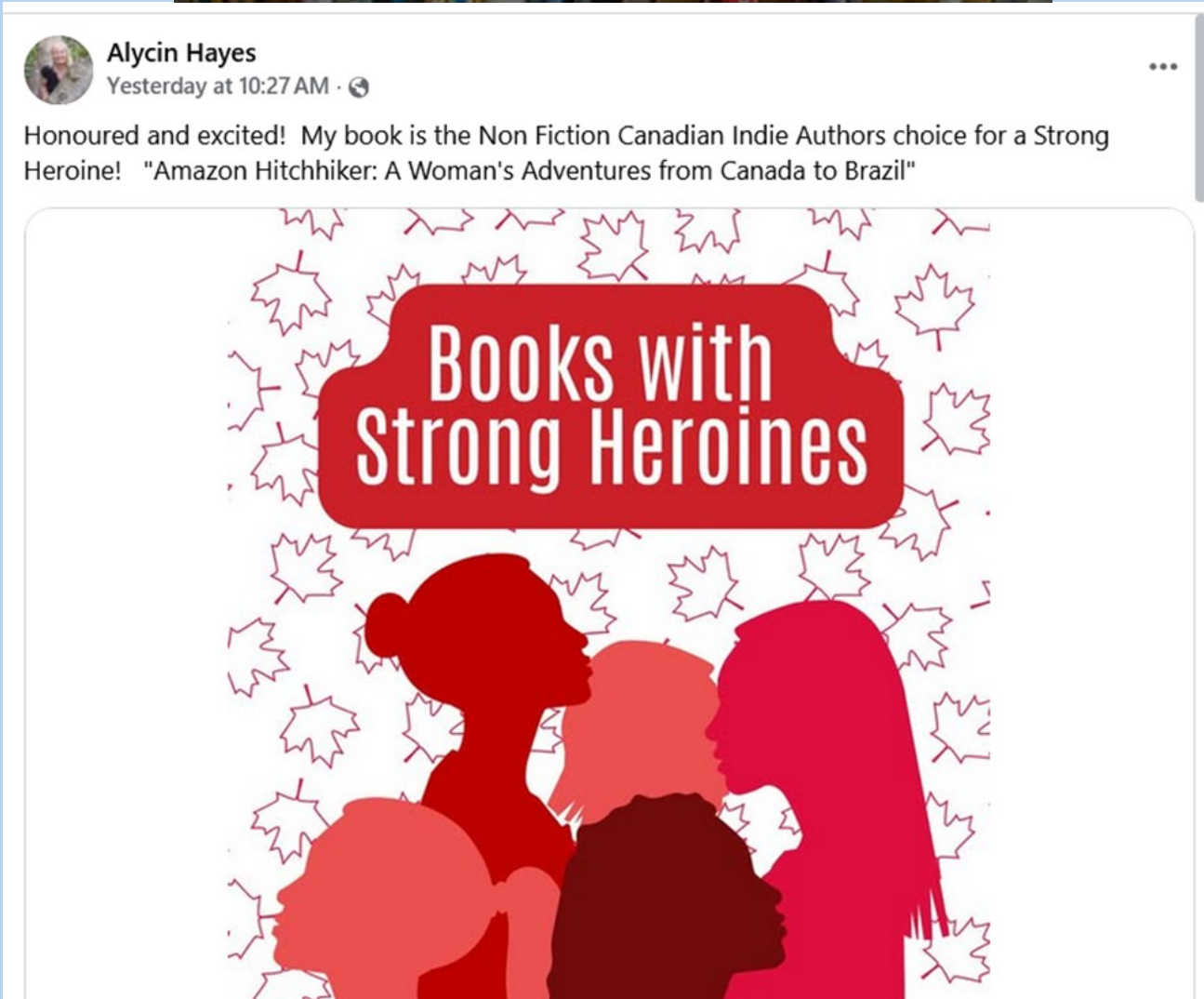
Thank you, Susie! And wherever you are, we remember you fondly, Joan. Party on, Joan and Jay!



Joan H. Carter

WAG BRAGS

Congratulations to WAG Member Alycin Hayes who sent us the following information:



Canadian Indie Authors
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J1
Canada

<https://canadianindieauthors.ca/>

WAG BRAGS



WAG Member Felicia Lee has provided us with information about an oncoming free event:

Launch Strategies That Fit You

If you're planning a book launch this year, this is worth your time.

Twin Flames Studios is hosting another phenomenal live expert panel on April 14 called:

Launch Strategies That Fit You: How to plan a successful book launch based on your strengths, platform, and audience. A bigger book launch is not always a better book launch. In fact, many authors overextend themselves trying to execute strategies that don't match their strengths, their audience size, or their real-world capacity.

This expert panel discussion will focus on:

- What a minimum viable book launch actually looks like
- How to scale realistically
- Where authors commonly overinvest effort
- How to support steady growth after launch week

If you're weighing decisions about your book launch strategy, this event will help you think more clearly about your options. It's live on Tuesday, April 14 at 2 PM Eastern - bring your questions for the Live Q&A!

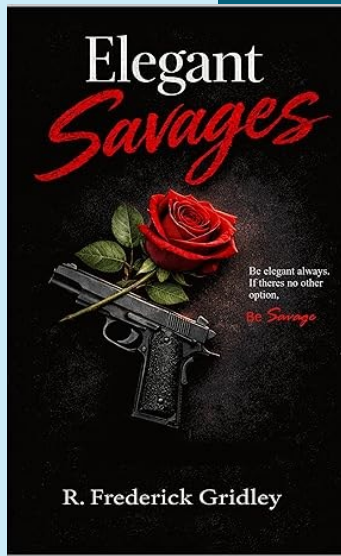
Reserve Your Seat [here](https://twinflamesstudios.com/launchstrategies/) and you'll also get the replay if you can't attend live. If a book launch is on your horizon, you'll find this conversation very useful.

Thank you for the information, Felicia!



WAG BRAGS

WAG BRAGS



Congratulations to WAG Member Fred Gridley whose new book, *Elegant Savages*, is now available on Amazon.

Elegant Savages is a character-driven psychological novel about survival—physical, emotional, and moral.

A man forged by trauma and discipline becomes entangled with a damaged family attempting to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of violence. None of them are prepared for what follows: not the external dangers that emerge, nor the internal fractures that begin to surface. Trust becomes the greatest risk. Protection becomes the most dangerous promise.

As old wounds reopen and hidden threats gather momentum, each character must confront what they are willing to become in order to survive—and what they refuse to sacrifice, even when survival demands it. Realistic, intimate, and unflinching, *Elegant Savages* is a story of trauma, restraint, loyalty, and redemption. It explores the thin line between civility and savagery, and the quiet discipline required to remain human when the world offers every reason not to.

R. Frederick Gridley has lived the kind of life most people only read about—then wrote the book on it. A former Air Force communications specialist, firefighter paramedic, rescue diver, pilot, skydiver, and experienced Captain of sail and power vessels. Frederick's adventures span the skies, the sea, and everything in between. Whether bracing a seizing passenger during a commercial flight's final descent or staring into the abyss along the wall in Grand Cayman, he's the kind of man who shows up when it counts—and remains calm when others cannot.

His book is available here: <https://www.amazon.com/Elegant-Savages-Strength-Dangerous-Healing-ebook/dp/B0GP22CSFC?>



Self-Doubt is a Writer's Biggest Antagonist

By Sakina Leduc-Akbar

March 5, 2026 from



**Berkeley
Fiction Review**

Proudly publishing fiction since 1981.

You take a seat at your desk, a cup of tea on one side, and a Moleskine notebook on the other. Outside, rain patters softly against the window, and before you is a blank page on your laptop, staring expectantly in your direction. Everything is set up perfectly, and yet the words you write pale in comparison to the vision you had in your mind. The dialogue is stilted, the descriptions fall flat, the voice of the protagonist feels off. Your project feels like a hopeless disarray of words, but you're lacking the skills to fix it. You shut your computer and swear off writing for the day, letting your self-doubt prevail.

We all have bad writing days, and sometimes taking a day off from the keyboard is the solution to this blockage. However, a prolonged inability to commit yourself to writing might be a symptom of a more complex problem, like the dilemma of the blank page. For many writers, the blank page is a space of endless possibilities, a slate where an outline steadily takes the shape of a narrative, where the first strokes of character begin to emerge. While this infinite freedom to create can be exciting, there's also a daunting element to this process. This is because the blank page is a host for an entirely different character; not the kind you daydream about, but the twisted narrator that never fails to point out where you fall short in your craft—the critic, a harsh creature hell-bent on destroying a story as it first begins to sprout.

My half-hearted attempts at writing a great epic tale proved to be unsuccessful

My stories began as mere scribbles on sheets of paper stapled together. I wrote in hopes of recreating the enthralling adventures I loved reading about, and had never conceptualized how insecurity could prevent me from creating. I started writing prolifically at eleven, and took to Google Docs to recreate the stories that had been circling in my mind, from renditions of my own life, to great fantastical adventures at mythical academies. I wrote in every genre and put to paper anything that came to mind. And though I always toyed around with the idea of writing a novel, it appeared to me an intimidating feat, and one which I knew would require high commitment to a single project. My half-hearted attempts at writing a great epic tale proved to be unsuccessful. I struggled to get past the introduction. My first few chapters would sputter on for dozens of pages, but never found anything close to a

Self-Doubt is a Writer's Biggest Antagonist, cont.

resolution. Character conversations were halted mid-sentence when I lost motivation. I wrote voluminous descriptions of great sweeping forests, only to leave the next paragraph blank. By the time I made progress, I had moved onto other projects.

But at fourteen, my mindset shifted. I felt called to truly commit to writing something lengthier and more ambitious than nondescript beginnings. I had recently finished my first novella, and with the COVID lockdown, there seemed no better time than now to launch my literary project. I had no intention of bringing my writing anywhere in particular, or of having any serious readers besides family members—I only wanted to be able to write *The End*. The quality of my writing wasn't a concern, I was creating stories for my own amusement. So, I wrote ravenously, cycling through thousands of words each night, fueled by the desire to know what happened next to my protagonist. It was in these moments of pure creative immersion that I fell in love with writing novels, and would write nothing else for years.

The critic had sunk its claws into my skin.

The criticism I got at the end of the program was not what I had anticipated. From my nonexistent author's voice, to the muddled storyline, there seemed to be no shortage of deficiencies in my writing pointed out to me. Were my characters flat, lifeless little things? Did my writing have a voice at all? I always believed characterization was my strength, that it was impossible a piece of writing could be entirely devoid of a voice. Now I was not so sure. My awareness had shattered whatever impartiality had ever pervaded my writing process, and slowly I became aware of each little inadequacy in my work. I reread my story, hyper-aware of my word choice, questioning every sentence for its quality, unable to see past its failures. This attitude transferred back to my other work. When I returned to my novel, I wrote chapters only to reread them in revulsion the next morning. My attempts at rewriting resulted in a draft more abhorred than the pages that had existed beneath it. I could not move forward without a deep shame following me, infecting the sentences and threading themselves in the intrinsic material of my story. The critic had sunk its claws into my skin and artfully nestled itself in my brain—it was here to stay.

I told myself that upon entering college, I would put aside my writing for the time being to focus solely on school. This came after a long summer of tinkering around with rewriting the same scenes over and over again, hoping that I would eventually power through this sense of paralysis and reach an “aha” moment where everything clicked. I struggled to feel satisfied by my characters' development, and constantly questioned my ability to craft their narratives, and as a result, was unable to move past the first few chapters. I even went so far as to start other novels, but found their development even more disheartening than my main project. I didn't want to face the truth that it was not the story, or some deeply engrained logistical problem I was having trouble seeing which was giving me trouble, but my own feelings

Self-Doubt is a Writer's Biggest Antagonist, cont.

towards the work. Though I never would have admitted to this at the time, I was convinced there was something intrinsically unfixable with my writing that no amount of rewrites could solve. My patience had worn thin during those three disappointing months spent at my desk; I grew to hate my characters, and began to lose sight of why I had written them.

Drowning my self-doubt, all I could think to do was set the entire practice of writing aside, and wait for that nonexistent stroke of inspiration to get me unstuck. I told myself taking a step back from writing was a good thing, that something as futile as my silly stories couldn't possibly take precedence over the transformative academic journey I was preparing to embark on. Really, what I was trying to persuade myself was that I wasn't cut out to write my book, and I would be doing myself a disservice by wasting any more time with my own stories rather than devote myself to scrutinizing other texts. And it worked. I do not think I wrote one word of my story during freshman year.

The sensation writing fiction once brought me was unparalleled.

At the time, I did not understand that it is normal for a writer of my age to still be in search of their voice, that I was still defining my own literary tastes, and that I should not let this deter me from the story. During my sophomore year of college, I returned to my novel not because of any renewed outlook on my writing, but to quell a feeling of incompleteness that only writing could fill. In all my close-reading papers I wrote over my freshman year, and over nights spent scrutinizing Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* to Shakespeare's *Othello*, I found that the sensation writing fiction once brought me was unparalleled.

Haphazardly, I enrolled in a creative writing class at UC Berkeley, which would allow me to continue writing and sharing my novel. I wanted to give my book one last shot; believing fully it was damned in some essential way, but knowing that there was something about this story which kept tugging at me, and which kept me from shuffling it aside. It wasn't until I received positive feedback for the very thing which had crumbled my perception of my writing—my writer's voice—that I came to realize my perception of my own writing had been severely distorted. The criticism I had received years ago wasn't a permanent decree of my writing weaknesses, nor a stain on my pride which could never be removed, but a temporary point from which I could work to improve.

I still have a long way to go with rewriting my novel, but I no longer believe that being vulnerable with writing has to be a degrading activity. Choose what feedback to take and leave, and remind yourself that criticisms are there to point out areas of potential. I wish I could have told myself to think about what my novel could be, rather than mull over seemingly unfixable problems with my own skills.

Self-Doubt is a Writer's Biggest Antagonist, cont.

For one, the voice of my writing took years to develop. I was able to find my unique style through reading books in genres I never would have picked up when I was sixteen. The same goes for characterization; I hadn't understood that the solution to many plot holes lay in the process of merely looking within your protagonist and solidifying their motivations. Good characters are built from asking yourself questions, considering their journey from all angles, and accepting that the most memorable, beloved fictional beings are never produced instantaneously. I always remind myself that no matter what you're writing, you are growing. Chances are, being aware of areas that are weaker in your craft will help you improve them rapidly. To craft a story with the critical monster hovering over your shoulder is a form of literary torture in itself, but the worst thing you can do in the face of self-doubt is remain idle.

Although I have been steadily making progress on my novel this year, I am still not immune from doubt. I am weary and critical; I question my artistic decisions constantly, and scrutinize my work sharply. I write slowly, at the speed of a tortoise, lingering on every word and wondering at its placement, its perception, its purpose. The age when I wrote purely for myself is gone. But I have come to accept that the creative process is not always a glorious experience. Rather, it is an uphill battle, a constant questioning of one's choices. You have to be alright with feeling uncomfortable with your story, because in between those moments of despair, when the critic tries to gnaw away at the flesh of a novel nowhere close to done, some little glimpses of brilliance will occur in between, and it's those moments that keep me going. So, even with the noise of the self-doubt monster, I like to imagine my novel in its completion. And I run straight towards that vision.



Classes and Conferences



<https://janefriedman.com/how-to-know-when-youre-ready-to-submit-with-jessica-strawser/>

ONLINE CLASS—How to Know When You're Ready to Submit

20 questions for your novel or memoir

Register now (\$25 early / \$35 late)

INSTRUCTOR Jessica Strawser

DATE & TIME Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 1 p.m.–2:30 p.m. EDT

IDEAL FOR Novelists on the verge of querying agents and publishers

ACCESSIBILITY Closed captions automated by Zoom; transcript provided with recording

What you'll receive: 1) **Video recording**—Whether you attend live or not, you receive the recording. You can stream for 30 days or download it to watch forever. 2) **Audio recording download**—We also separate out the audio, especially nice for listening during a commute or a long walk. 3) **Transcript download**—We use ElevenLabs to generate a transcript and then lightly edit it. Search the class by keyword. 4) **Slides in PDF form** **How do I attend the live class?**

This class uses Zoom webinar technology. You will join through your Internet-connected computer or mobile device. When you register, you will receive information via email on how to join the class. **If you don't receive it within 1 hour of registering, please [contact us](#).**

- When: Wednesday, May 6, 2026
- Time: 1:00–2:30 p.m. Eastern Time / 10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Pacific Time

Fee: \$25 through May 3, 2026 / \$35 if you register after May 3, 2026

The webinar is broadcast via the internet with live audio delivered through your computer or mobile device speakers. The visual presentation is displayed directly from the presenter's computer to your computer screen. The Q&A is managed through a chat-style submission system with questions read and answered by the presenter for the entire class to hear.

Closed captions are provided during the live class. We use Zoom's automated closed caption service (powered by Otter), which is about 80%+ accurate.

Refund policy

If you attend the live class and/or watch the recording, and it does not meet your expectations, [contact us](#) for a full refund, no questions asked.

Classes and Conferences

Jane Friedman: What Writers Need to Know About AI

Creative Writing

By Zoom—Nov 15 2026

\$75.00 USD—Sun 2:00 - 4:00 pm (EST)

Description

Like it or hate it, artificial intelligence is an inescapable feature of work and life for writing and publishing today. The tools and services you use already incorporate AI functionality, including Microsoft Word, Zoom, SuperHuman (Grammarly), Gmail, Google search, and Google Docs. Eventually, AI will be an accepted and normal part of the writing and publishing process.

In plain English, Jane will explain how AI is already being used (for both good and bad purposes) and how authors can prepare for the future regardless of their position on the technology. (Don't worry, the world will still need writers and editors in a world with AI.) For those concerned about their intellectual property and copyright, we'll look at the most prevalent types of fraud or infringement, and what you can do if you find yourself affected. And for those open to using the technology themselves, Jane will show key tools and methods for augmenting your process in a way that's ethical and legal.

Developments and concerns surrounding AI are constantly shifting, as will the content of this session. It will clarify as needed the current status of copyright lawsuits against the AI companies, the latest concerns surrounding AI tools, and any other breaking news that affects writers and publishers.

About the instructor

[Jane Friedman](#) has spent her entire career in the book publishing industry, with a focus on author education and trend reporting. Established in 2015, her newsletter The Bottom Line provides nuanced market intelligence to thousands of authors and industry. Her latest book is *THE BUSINESS OF BEING A WRITER, SECOND EDITION* (University of Chicago Press), which received a starred review from *Library Journal*. In addition to serving on grant panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Creative Work Fund, she works with organizations such as The Authors Guild to bring transparency to the business of publishing. Learn more at [JaneFriedman.com](#).

Restrictions—Participants must currently be 18 years to 110 years old.

Registration period Registration starts on 02/03/2026 and ends on 11/14/2026.

Classes and Conferences

<https://writersdigestuniversity.mykajabi.com/store>



How a Book Becomes a Movie: What Authors and Screenwriters Need to Know

Jeanne Bowerman

APRIL 23, 2026 | 1:00 PM ET

As a screenwriter, Jeanne Veillette Bowerman has adapted other author's work, including a Pulitzer Prize-winning book, and she's also worked closely with authors, guiding them on how to navigate Hollywood. She'll dive deep into the processes to help writers come to the negotiation table well-informed.

\$89.99

April 23, 2026

1:00-2:30 PM ET

Classes and Conferences

<https://writersdigestuniversity.mykajabi.com/store>



How to Research Agents and Publishers Like a Pro

Jane Friedman

May 7, 2026 | 1:00 PM ET

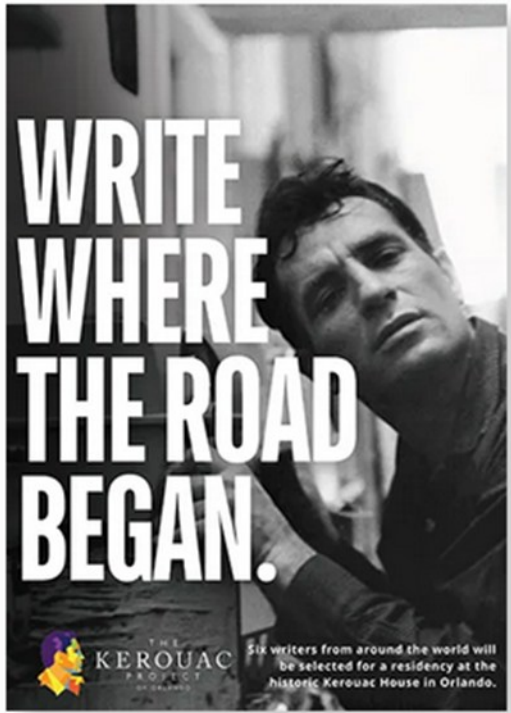
In this live webinar, you'll learn not only how to research agents and publishers using a variety of online resources but also how to evaluate fit and reputation so that you don't unwittingly end up with a schmagent or a publisher that's really a self-publishing service.

\$89.99

May 7, 2026

1:00 PM ET

Classes and Conferences



Write at Jack Kerouac's Residency in Orlando for Seven Weeks

Deadline: April 14, 2026

Write where Jack Kerouac wrote *The Dharma Bums*. The Kerouac Project residency of Orlando, FL offers the house to yourself, \$600 grocery stipend, utilities paid. Finish your project in seven weeks. Six time slots available per year. We accept: Fiction, Creative Non-fiction, Poetry, Plays, Screenplays. Fiction and Nonfiction can be in graphic narrative form if preferred. Spend seven inspired weeks in the Orlando home where Jack Kerouac lived when *On The Road* was published.

Open to poets, novelists, playwrights, screenwriters, memoirists, short story writers—new or seasoned. BIPOC and LGBTQ writers especially welcome. You'll get free housing + utilities, a \$600 grocery stipend, dedicated writing time, and enter a welcoming literary community. Participate in a farewell reading, two workshops, and optional literary events around central Florida.

Applications due April 14, 2026, but we've been known to extend it.

Website: www.kerouac-project.com.



Calls for Submissions

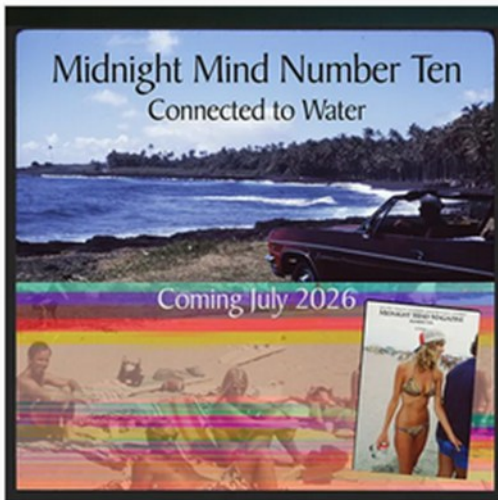
Split Rock Press Seeks Poetry Chapbooks

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Split Rock Press seeks poetry chapbooks that explore the environment and the evolving relationship between humans and the natural world. We're especially interested in work that engages the ecological, political, and cultural dimensions of place—land, water, climate, extraction, conservation, stewardship, displacement, and belonging. Manuscripts should be 15–30 pages.

Submissions accepted via Submittable only. There is a \$12 reading fee. Simultaneous submissions OK. Selected authors receive 20 contributor copies and a 50% discount on additional copies. We encourage authors to read our books and journal, *Split Rock Review*, to see if their work aligns with our press. For more info and guidelines: www.splitrockreview.org/submit.

W*R*I*T*E



Midnight Mind is Going to the Ocean. Get In!

Deadline: May 10, 2026

Midnight Mind is going to the pool! Or ocean. Or hot tub. Get in with us! Americans contemplate life choices while staring at the ocean. Annnnnnd we use it as an opportunity to drink beer and surf and get sunburned.

Issue #10 will explore our connection to water: from pool parties to powerboats to quiet rivers to late night illegal fountain

swimming. Let's hear stories of failure, fear, and redemption as we negotiate the pool, ponds, lakes and rivers of our lives. We are also looking for essays on authors or books/films/music that fit the theme. The water is nice! Get in at **Midnight-Mind.com**.

Calls for Submissions



Oyster River Pages Opens for General Submissions

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Oyster River Pages is open for submissions of short fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and visual art, January 27-May 15, 2026. We look for language and stories and

images that move us out of ourselves and into other spaces, and are especially eager to publish pieces that engage with the work of marginalized and decentered people—Black and Brown creators, LGBTQ+ creators, and creators of all levels of dis/ability. See www.oysterriverpages.com/submit for details.

W*R*I*T*E*



Mountain Jay Books: Call for Submissions for Online Journal

Deadline: Year-round

Steller's Weekly is the online literary journal of Mountain Jay Books—a Colorado-based publishing and bookbinding company. Our mission is simple: to **elevate literature** by championing emerging voices and hand-binding works of literary art. If you are a fiction writer who has never had a short story or novel published before (personal websites excluded), we'd love to help build your writing resume! Please submit your short stories of less than 5,000 words via mountainjay-

books.com/submit. At the end of each year, twelve stories will have the opportunity to be published in our annual paperback anthology, *Stories with Altitude*, so send your best work!

Contests

Epiphany Breakout! Prize

Deadline: April 15, 2026

Entry Fee: \$10

Cash Prize: \$1,000

E-mail address: epiphany.magazine@gmail.com

Website: <http://epiphanymagazine.org/opportunities#breakout>

The logo for Epiphany magazine, featuring the word "epiphany" in a lowercase, bold, sans-serif font. The "i" in "epiphany" has a vertical bar through it, resembling a semicolon. The logo is set against a light yellow rectangular background.

Two prizes of \$1,000 each and publication in *Epiphany* are given annually for a poem or a group of poems and a short work of fiction or nonfiction. Using only the online submission system, submit up to five poems of any length or up to 5,000 words of a short story, novel excerpt, or essay with a \$10 entry fee by April 15. Visit the website for complete guidelines.

Epiphany, Breakout! Prize. Sara Lippmann, Editor in Chief.

W*R*I*T*E*



FLASH TAKES FLIGHT contest

Deadline: May 1, 2025

Welcome to Flash Takes Flight! We are excited to announce our second annual flash fiction and flash creative nonfiction contest for the chance to win cash prizes as well as publication in the *Santa Clara Review*!

The first prize winner will be awarded \$200, the first runner-up will be awarded \$100, and the second runner-up will be awarded \$50. The contest winner will be published in the 2026 fall issue of the *Santa Clara Review*. All other work

will be considered for publication. We look forward to reading your submissions! santaclarareview.submittable.com

Contests



FLANNERY O'CONNOR AWARD FOR SHORT FICTION

More than seventy short-story collections have appeared in the Flannery O'Connor Award series, which was established to encourage gifted emerging writers by bringing their work to a national readership. Since the first prize-winning book was published in 1983, the award has become an important proving ground for writers and a showcase for the talent and promise that have brought about a resurgence in the short story as a genre.

Winners are selected through an annual competition that attracts as many as three hundred manuscripts. Submissions are open from April 1 to May 31 each year. Winners of the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction include such widely read authors as Ha Jin, Antonya Nelson, Rita Ciresi, and Mary Hood.

Only online entries are accepted via this [portal](https://dhjkhxawhe8q4.cloudfront.net/georgia-press-wp/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/03163807/FOC-Submission-Guidelines.pdf). Go [here](https://dhjkhxawhe8q4.cloudfront.net/georgia-press-wp/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/03163807/FOC-Submission-Guidelines.pdf) (<https://dhjkhxawhe8q4.cloudfront.net/georgia-press-wp/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/03163807/FOC-Submission-Guidelines.pdf>) for submission guidelines.

W*R*I*T*E*

2026 Cow Creek Poetry Chapbook Prize

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Submissions are now open for the **2026 Cow Creek Chapbook Prize**, a national poetry chapbook contest hosted by Pittsburg State University. We welcome poetry in all styles and on all subjects. If your poems challenge and capture the imagination, we want to read them. The winning poet receives a \$1,000 prize and 25 author copies of their published chapbook. Submit 15-30 pages of poetry with a \$15 entry fee. Simultaneous and multiple submissions are welcome (each manuscript must be submitted separately). Individual poems may have been previously published, but the chapbook must be an original manuscript. **Deadline: May 15.** For full guidelines and to submit, visit: www.cowcreekchapbook.org.



Contests

Driftwood Press Fiction & Poetry Contests **Judged by Diamond Forde & Beth Nguyen!**

Incoming Deadline: July 15, 2026 (Adrift contests);

Year-round (general submissions)

Driftwood Press is happy to share a plethora of submission opportunities for writers and artists! Our Adrift Short Fiction & Poetry Chapbook Contests, in which every work submitted is considered for publication as winner or runner-up, is open! Our guest judges this year are Diamond Forde (poetry) & Beth Nguyen (fiction)!

For our yearly print anthology, we are looking for poems, short stories, comics, and visual art that will wow our readers, accepted as both contest and normal submissions. 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! We also offer a premium poetry option for one-week responses.

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!



Contests



[\\$2,000 Prize + Publication](#)

Deadline: May 18, 2026

New Letters invites you to submit a short story, essay, or poems to the New Letters Literary Awards. Winners in each genre receive \$2,000 and publication in *New Letters*. All entries are considered for publication and must be unpublished. Winners will be announced mid-September 2026. Essay and fiction entries may not exceed 8,000 words;

poetry entries may contain one to six poems. Multiple entries are welcome. For complete guidelines, visit www.newletters.org/submissions.

Contest Submissions

To enter one of *New Letters* annual contest, click the appropriate link below:

The *New Letters* Literary Awards (Deadline: May 18, 2026)

[\\$2,000 Patricia Cleary Miller Award for Poetry](#)

[\\$2,000 Robert Day Award for Fiction](#)

[\\$2,000 Conger Beasley Jr. Award for Nonfiction](#)





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.



Hogtowne Quill



Writers Alliance of Gainesville blog