

The Florida Writer

April 2021 | Volume 15, Number 2



5 Story Mistakes Even Good Writers Make

Understanding Third-Person Point of View

How Paying It Forward Pays You Back



Promoting Literacy

Dear Florida Writer,

Have you ever wondered what the difference is between the Florida Writers Association (FWA) and the Florida Writers Foundation (FWF)? Well, wonder no more!

- The Florida Writers Association (FWA) is a membership organization that serves writers of all genres and levels through opportunities to improve their writing craft and learn about how to succeed in the publishing industry. Members can network with agents and industry professionals at the annual conference, join critique groups, attend local and regional meetings, submit articles to the organization's magazine, and enter their work into the prestigious Royal Palm Literary Award competition.
- The Florida Writers Foundation (FWF) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization founded to promote literacy by providing grants to diverse literacy-based programs throughout Florida. The grant funds are made available through corporate and individual donations and a variety of fundraising events and are administered through grant application by a Board of Directors throughout the year. Donations made to the FWF are tax-deductible under current IRS regulations.
- The FWF and FWA are both non-profit and volunteer-based organizations but with different goals and commitments. The Florida Writers Foundation (FWF) looks forward to sharing more with you in this space in the coming months with this year's schedule of fundraising activities and events.

Thank you for your support and participation.

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The Florida Writer

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Celebrations

We publish announcements for members who have good news to share.

- Submit a one-paragraph announcement written in third person.
- Maximum word count 100
- You may include one headshot or a photo of the front cover of your book to accompany your announcement, but it is not required.
- One entry per issue, per person
- Type “Celebrations” and month of the issue you’re submitting to in the subject line of your submission email.
- Follow all “Additional Requirements” listed below.

Paragraphs

We publish selected creative writing by members who respond to the issue’s prompt.

- Prose, poetry, and excerpts from longer works that can stand alone are welcome.
- Maximum word count for prose, 700; maximum line count for poetry, 50. Title is included in word count.
- You may include a headshot to accompany your entry, but it is not required.
- One entry per issue, per person
- Type “Paragraphs” and month of the issue you’re submitting to in the subject line of your submission email.
- Include a one-line bio, no more than fifteen words including your name within your submission document.
- Follow all “Additional Requirements” listed below.

Additional Requirements

1. To be eligible for publication, you must be a member of the Florida Writers Association
2. Send your entire text submission as an attached Word doc. Do not embed any of the text that is part of your submission in the email.
3. Include your name and contact information within the attachment.
4. Photo image files must be high resolution, 300 ppi, jpg or png format, and sent as an attachment, not embedded in a document.
5. Email your submission to tfw@floridawriters.net

Prompts & Deadlines

June 2021 Issue – Deadline May 1, 2021

Prompt: An emotional tie to a piece of clothing

August 2021 Issue – Deadline July 1, 2021

Prompt: Write a piece that includes the phrase “there’s no turning back now.”





21 Ways Not to Finish a First Draft

Mary Ann de Stefano
Editor

Writers can come up with a lot of reasons for not finishing a first draft, and some of them even sound plausible. But the real reasons are usually the head games we play with ourselves.

1. Fall in love with the thrill of new ideas, but don't fall in love with the work it takes to execute them.
2. Need to begin at the beginning and make it perfect before you move on.
3. Wait to find the time to write.
4. Leave the work before you can get through a difficult patch of writing.
5. Abandon the current writing project for a new and better writing project.
6. And then abandon that project for another one.
7. Seek praise from others, show embryonic work, and then be broken by how people react to it.
8. Write as if you're being watched.
9. Decide too soon what the piece is about, don't allow yourself to wander off the trail you've set, and feel trapped into pursuing your original idea.
10. Compare your writing to the writing of others.
11. Judge and discount your work prematurely—early in the draft or even before you get anything down on paper.
12. Talk about it instead of writing it.
13. Think about it instead of writing it.
14. Think you need to write in a certain order. "I can't write the next scene—chapter, line, paragraph—until I write this one."
15. Think it should be easy.
16. Think it's easy for other people but not for you.
17. Think you've got to get it right the first time.
18. Think you'll run out things to say.
19. Think your writing doesn't matter.

20. Think you need to know in the beginning how it all turns out in the end.

21. Romanticize writer's block.

Does any of this sound familiar?

I have, at one time or another, told every one of these stories to myself about my writing. And sometimes I still do. But I'm getting better at recognizing what I'm doing—telling myself stories about how I'm going to fail.

Let me be blunt and honest here about the last item on the list: Romanticizing writer's block. We might feel we're members of some cool writer's club even when we're not producing work if we can say we have writer's block. (Heck, movies are made about it.)

But we don't feel quite so cool when we admit to what writer's block really is—crippling fear and anxiety. In fact, every item I've listed above is an avoidance behavior rooted in fear and anxiety.

But once you cop to being scared, and understand that it's normal to feel anxiety about a writing project and fear that it's not good enough, it can get easier to move forward in spite of those feelings.

It would be healthier, I believe, if writers would talk honestly with each other about how scary and difficult the writing process can be, instead of romanticizing the idea of writer's block.

Here's how to finish that first draft: Get comfortable with discomfort.

When you start a new writing project, you can't be sure how it will turn out. No one is, not even the pros.

Remember: It's a draft. You don't have to get it right the first time.

Uncertainty is inherent in the writing process. Notice your discomfort, but keep your distance and don't let it grow into the kind of fear and anxiety that overtakes you and stops you from writing what you are meant to write. ↗

Mary Ann de Stefano has been the editor of *The Florida Writer* since 2013 and in 2021 was named the Florida Writers Association's Vice President of Administration & Membership. An independent editor with 30+ years' experience, she works one-to-one with writers who are developing books. Visit madaboutwords.com.





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Florida Writers Conference & FWA Youth Conference are open for registration. Details on floridawriters.org.

Annual Conference News

Registration is open for the Florida Writers Conference & Florida Youth Conference. Early birds get the best price. Details on floridawriters.org

You Can to Be a Featured Member

Don't forget to sign up for the drawing to be the Member Book of the Month each month. You can also nominate a member to be the Member of the Month featured on the home page of our website. The links for both of those signups are in the monthly e-newsletter. And remember to support your fellow members by buying the Book of the Month and leaving a review!

Join Our Team of Bloggers

Write posts to appear on FWA blog and be mailed to 2600+ subscribers. Increase your visibility and exercise your writing skills. Requirements: Ability to write blog posts that have clear take-aways about the craft and business of writing; are SEO-ready; and follow our submission requirements. Email contactus@floridawriters.org or check the Member Center for more details.

90 New Members in January/February! Welcome!

Dave Andrae, Marlana Antifit, John Arnold, Prudy Board, Becky Bohan, Daniell Brown, Nancy Buscher, Vincent Casale, Joseph Cavanaugh, Anne Clancy, Eileen Collins, Joanna Cook, Thomas Corboy, Dulce Maria Corrales, Nieves Cuervo, Patricia Daly, Frank De La Cruz, Edwina Dorch, Jennifer Farmer, Carole Fontaine, Katherin Garland, Rebecca Gautreaux, Toni Gitles, Jan Golden, Ana Guardado, Raymond Hall, Pam Heady, Bruce Heasley, Jesse Hernandez, Catherina Hill, Linda Hodges, Amy Hueston, Kristy Hunter,

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How Paying It Forward Pays You Back

Arielle Haughee
Executive Vice President

The concept of “pay it forward” was first introduced by author Catherine Ryan Hyde in her aptly named book *Pay It Forward*. In short, the concept means to do a good deed for someone else before receiving any payback. This concept fits in perfectly with our “writers helping writers” mission. Besides the initial act of kindness, there’s also another positive outcome from paying it forward—the support will come back around to you later. There are many ways to do this in the writing community. Here are five:

Book Purchases and Reviews

I can’t tell you how many times I see authors posting on social media with their book links. “Buy my book!” What if we stopped focusing so much on our own book sales, and focused on helping others? This is something I think we all can be better at as writers, supporting our fellow authors.

Make an effort to buy a book from someone in the writing community. Be sure to share on social media that you purchased it, and then share your review. This will not only remind other writers they should be doing the same, but also make sure the book’s author is aware you supported them. If you make a habit of this, the writing community will quickly take note, so when your book comes out, you’ll get plenty of support.

Beta Reading and Critiques

Volunteer to be a beta reader or give a critique for someone’s writing. It’s good practice for you to be on the other side first. Not only are you paying it forward, you’re also establishing trust with other writers. Oftentimes people will offer to trade critiques. Be sure to jump on this chance to make a connection. If you spend time giving feedback on other writers’ works, when you need a critique, the favor will be returned.

Events

There’s nothing worse than having an event where no one comes. Make an effort to attend events online and in person if you can. Be sure to talk with the author, introduce yourself and ask them questions about their work. Once you do this for several different authors, they’ll be highly likely to support you and your events.

Social Media

This is probably the easiest thing to do. Befriend and follow other writers on social media. Share their blog posts, book releases, and events. It’s free to do and as easy as pressing a button. Writers are great about sharing other writers’ content if that person always shares their things. This will be a great help to you later when you have a book release and a bunch of other writers share about your book.

Your Attitude

We all know how emotional the writing and publishing journey can be. It can also be very lonesome. When you see or hear about another writer feeling low because of rejection or the challenges of the writing process, show support and work to lift them up. This will certainly be returned the next time you are feeling low. No one else understands the ups and downs of a writer’s life like another writer.

And on the flip side, celebrate the successes of other writers in your community. Envy can be an overwhelming emotion, but work to support others in all stages of their careers, even when they are riding a high. I learned who my true friends were not when I was having a low, but when I started being successful. If you show support when other authors are doing great, you’ll get support back when it’s your turn to shine.

The writing community is a wonderful place to get connected and make lasting friendships. You’ll have more success in the long run if you work to support other authors first by buying their books, giving them reviews, attending their events, and cheering them on. All the support you give will be given back to you when it’s your turn. Spend time paying it forward in the writing community and you’ll most certainly be paid back. ↗

Arielle Haughee, owner of Orange Blossom Publishing, is a five-time RPLA-winning author, editor, speaker, and Executive Vice President of the Florida Writers Association.





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CLEARLY LEGAL

Conference Workshops and Common Copyright Misperceptions

by Anne Dalton, Esquire

Even in these days of inflation, I wish I had a nickel (okay, a dime) for every time a writer tells me with great assurance that they can re-use materials they received at a conference without a copyright problem. The conversation often starts like this: "I paid for and attended this great conference workshop. My fee lets me use all the materials and information provided, yes?"

When you pay your fee, you receive a "license" to attend the event. That license generally *only* covers your ability to attend. If the presenter indicates that you can utilize his/her materials, then you are receiving a "license" to do so, but only in whatever way the presenter indicates.

For example, sometimes a presenter states that materials and the workshop itself may be viewed subsequently for personal use. "Personal use" does not include your posting part or all of it on social media or in your own works. It means that you can refer to it after the conference to refresh your general knowledge of the subject matter.

Alternatively, some presenters indicate that "non-commercial use" is acceptable. Many writers feel that, since their books do not make a profit, whatever they do can be considered "non-commercial". That is not the case. If you are selling your works, it is reasonable to assume that you are (or desire to be) in the commercial world, even if you do not make money. Even if you give away your works, any publication of copyrighted material on your social media

sites might be construed as attempting to drive traffic to your site. This is especially true if you monetize your site.

But it's not all gloomy news. You might be able to utilize third-party factual material. For example, I often include handouts from the United States Copyright Office in my copyright presentations. My use of those handouts does not give me a copyright interest in them, and attendees are free to use them.

Conversely, I also hand out my own fair use mind maps. While the underlying materials consist of prongs of fair use, the way that I aggregate and display that information is subject to my copyright. Therefore, my mind maps cannot be re-used without permission.

If you have any questions about this, please contact your presenter either before, during or after the presentation for clarification! ↗

Comments contained in this article are informational only and do not constitute legal advice. Please seek the advice of an attorney of your choice regarding specific factual issues.

Anne Dalton, Esquire, has provided business and personal legal services to writers and other creatives in all phases of their creative development for 44 years. She proudly serves as General Counsel and Director Emerita to the Florida Writers Association and is an FWA Lifetime Member. Anne is licensed in Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania, and her credentials can be viewed at daltonlegal.com. Contact her at adalton@daltonlegal.com.

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Sometimes it's too easy to get caught up in the so-called rules of writing and forget what's really important. Here's how to avoid the traps that can steer your story off-course.

5 Story Mistakes Even Good Writers Make

by Steven James

In fiction, story matters more than anything else.

Yet too often authors forget this and, in their zeal to impress readers or wow editors, pepper their writing with distracting devices that only end up undermining the story itself.

Never let anything get between your story and your readers. Here are five of the most common ways even the best writers veer off-course—and simple strategies for avoiding them.

1. Overdoing Symbolism/Themes

A few years ago, I picked up a literary novel that everyone was talking about. In the first chapter there was a storm; in the second, someone was washing his hands; then a character was crying; then there was a baptism. I remember thinking, okay, I get it. Your image is water, and your theme is cleansing—now get on with the story.

Problem was, from that point on, guess what I was doing?

Yup ... looking for the next way the writer was going to weave a water image into her story. And she delivered, scene after predictable scene.

As a reader I was no longer emotionally present in the story. I'd become a critic, an observer. And that's definitely not what a storyteller wants her readers to do.

The more your readers are on the lookout for your images, your themes, your symbolism, and so on, the less they'll be impacted by the real essence of your story.

Does that mean that themes and images don't have a place in your work? Not at all. But it does mean that rather than building your story around that theme (love, forgiveness, freedom, etc.), or advice ("Follow your dreams," "Be true to your heart," etc.), or a cliché ("Every

cloud has a silver lining," "Time heals all wounds," etc.), it's better to drive your narrative forward through tension and moral dilemmas.

So, instead of using the theme "justice," let the events of the story pose a more engaging question: "What's more important, telling the truth or protecting the innocent?"

Rather than giving the advice, "You should forgive others," let your story explore a dilemma: "How do you forgive someone who has done the unthinkable to someone you love?"

Let your story do more than reiterate the cliché, "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few." Instead, challenge that axiom by presenting your characters with situations that raise the question, "When do the needs of the few outweigh the needs of the many?"

Respect your readers. Assume that they're as smart as you are. If you can easily identify your own imagery, symbolism, themes and so on, expect that they will, too. And as soon as they do, they'll be distracted from the story itself.



2. Trying Too Hard

There's nothing less impressive than someone trying to be impressive. There's nothing less funny than someone trying to be funny. Eloquence doesn't impress anyone except for the person trying so hard to be eloquent.

So look for places in your story where you were trying to be funny, clever, or impressive, and change those sections or remove them.

Some writers shoot for humor by writing things like, "she joked," "he quipped," "he mentioned in his usual fun-loving way," and so on. Don't fall into this trap. If your dialogue is really funny, you don't need to point that out to your readers. (And if it's not as funny as you'd intended, you don't need to draw attention to the fact.)

Some authors resort to using a profusion of speaker attributions. Their characters chortle, grunt, exclaim, reiterate, gasp, howl, hiss, and bark. Whenever I read a book like this, I find myself skimming through the dialogue just to see what the next synonym for said will be. Readers get it. They know you own a thesaurus. Just tell the story.

In the same way, drop antiquated or obscure words unless they're necessary for character development or maintaining voice. This isn't to say that you can't write intelligent, incisive, challenging prose, but any time the meaning of an unfamiliar word isn't immediately obvious within the context of the story, choose another word that won't trip readers up. This is especially true as you build toward the climax, since the pace of the story needs to steadily increase.

Similarly, avoid the temptation to impress your readers with your research, your plot structure or your knowledge of the flora and fauna of western North Carolina. When readers pick up your book, they're not preparing for a spelling bee or a doctoral dissertation or a medical exam; they're hoping for an entertaining, believable story that will transport them to another world and move them on a deep, emotional level.

Textbook literary devices fall under this same umbrella—they're too contrived. Writing something like, "She cautiously closed the closet door and crept across the carpet," might have impressed your English professors, but it does nothing to serve readers in today's marketable fiction. As soon as readers notice the alliteration, they'll be distracted—and whether they're counting up the number of times you used the letter C or rolling their eyes at your attempt to be clever, they've momentarily disengaged from your story. And that's the last thing you want them to do.

Believe it or not, you don't want readers to admire your writing: You want them to be so engaged in the story itself that they don't notice the way you use words to shape it. Anything that jars readers loose from the grip of the story needs to go, even if it seems "literary." Weed

out figures of speech that don't serve the mood of the scene. For example, if you're curled up with a book and are deep in the midst of a chapter depicting an airplane hijacking, you wouldn't want to read, "The clouds outside the window were castles in the sky." Not only does the superfluous description undermine the suspense, but castles carry a positive connotation that further disrupts the tension. If you can't resist the urge to use a figure of speech when writing a scene like this, choose one that accentuates the mood: "The jet plummeted through the dungeon of clouds."

Over the years I've heard of authors who've written books without punctuation, or without the word said, or without quotation marks, or by using an exact predetermined number of words. To each his own. But when these artificial constraints become more important to the author than the reader's experience with the story is, they handcuff it.

Whenever you break the rules or keep them, it must be for the benefit of your readers. If your writing style or techniques get in the way of the story by causing readers to question what's happening, analyze the writing, or page back to earlier sections in order to understand the context, you've failed.

You want your writing to be an invisible curtain between your readers and your story. Anytime you draw attention



to the narrative tools at your disposal, you insert yourself into the story and cause readers to notice the curtain. Although it may seem counterintuitive, most authors looking to improve their craft need to cut back on the devices they use (whether that's assonance, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, similes or whatever), rather than add more.

3. Failing to Anticipate the Readers' Response

A plot flaw is, simply put, a glitch in believability or causality. When a character acts in a way that doesn't make sense, or when one scene doesn't naturally follow from the one that precedes it, readers will stumble.

Imagine your protagonist hears that a killer is in the neighborhood and then, in the next scene, decides to spend a cozy evening in the kitchen making homemade pasta. Readers will think, What? Why doesn't she lock all the doors and windows, or call the police, or run to her car and get out of the area? Thus, at the very moment where you want them to be drawn deeper into the narrative, your readers pull away and start to question your character's actions—and, to some degree, your storytelling ability.

As soon as an event isn't believable, it becomes a distraction. So ask yourself at every plot point: "Is there enough stimulus to motivate this action?" And then make sure there is. Always anticipate your readers' response.

Try to step back and read your work-in-progress as objectively as you can, through the eyes of a reader who has never seen it before. If you come to a place where you think, why doesn't she just ... ? or, wait, that doesn't make sense ... that's where you have some revising to do. And the solution doesn't have to be complicated. Often you can solve a plot flaw in your story simply by having your characters point it out. If your protagonist says something like, "I couldn't believe she would do such a thing—it just didn't compute," readers will think, Yes, exactly—I thought the same thing! There's more going on here than meets the eye. The more you admit that the scene has a believability problem, the less readers will hold you responsible for it.

With this in mind, you should also make sure every special skill or gadget needed in the climax is foreshadowed earlier in the story. Coincidences drive a wedge in believability. Foreshadowing removes them. So if the diver suddenly needs a harpoon to fight off the killer barracuda and he reaches down and—how

convenient!—just happens to find one, readers won't buy it. Show us the harpoon earlier so it makes sense when it reappears at the climactic battle.

4. Using a Hook as a Gimmick

Many well-meaning writing instructors will tell you that you need to start your story with a good "hook" to snag your readers' attention. And they're right—to a certain degree.

While I was teaching at one writing conference a woman gave me her story for a critique. It started with an exciting car chase. I said, "Great, so this is an action story."

"No," she told me. "It's a romance. The woman goes to the hospital and falls in love with the doctor."

"But it starts with a car chase and explosion. Readers will expect it to escalate from there."

"I had a different opening," she admitted, "but my critique group told me I needed a good hook."

It may have been true that her story needed a better hook, but she landed on the wrong one. Hooks become gimmicks if they don't provide the platform for escalation.

Too many times a writer will grab readers' attention early on with a scene that's clearly been contrived just for that purpose, without introducing the characters or the setting of the story. Consequently the writer is forced to insert excessive backstory into the next scene—thus undermining the forward momentum of the plot. Take your time, trust your readers, and craft a hook that orients them to the world you've created. Then drive the story forward without having to explain why you started it the way you did.

5. Leaving Readers Hanging

Never annoy your readers.

Sometimes I read books in which the author withholds key information from readers, presumably in an effort to create suspense. But failing to give readers what they want doesn't create suspense, it causes dissatisfaction.



For example, don't leave a point-of-view character in the middle of an action sequence. If, in the final sentence of a chase scene, you write that your protagonist "careened around the bend and crashed into the cement pylon jutting up from the side of the road," readers will turn to the next chapter wanting to find out if she is conscious, dead, etc.

But if that next chapter instead begins with another point-of-view character, one in a less stressful situation, readers will be impatient. They don't want to wait to come back to the woman in the car (or maybe she's in the hospital by then) a chapter later.

If readers are tempted to skip over part of your story to get to a part they want to read, you need to fix that

section. As you write, constantly ask yourself what the readers want at this moment of the story.

Then, give it to them—or surprise them with something even better. ☀

This article originally appeared in Writer's Digest and is reprinted here with permission.

Steven James is a national best-selling novelist whose award-winning, pulse-pounding thrillers continue to gain wide critical acclaim and a growing fan base. He is the author of the groundbreaking book *Story Trumps Structure* as well as the award-winning guidebook used by thousands of novelists, *Troubleshooting Your Novel*. *Publishers Weekly* calls him "[a] master storyteller at the peak of his game.



Steven James's latest book is a near-future sci-fi thriller called *Synapse* that received starred reviews from both *Publishers Weekly* and *Library Journal*.

"Animated by themes of hope, love, and belief in the afterlife, James's thrilling story of greed and corruption will win over readers." —*Publishers Weekly*, Starred Review

"James (Every Wicked Man) delivers a thought-provoking look at the definitions of humanity, belief, and faith in this timely near-future sf thriller." —*Library Journal*, Starred Review



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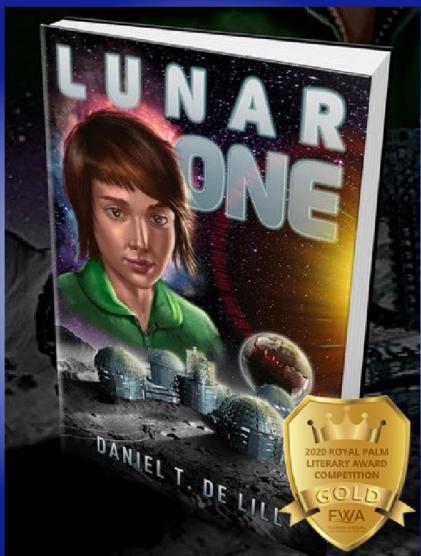


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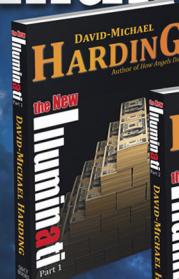
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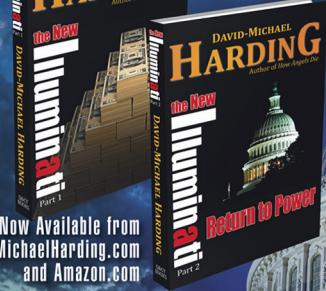
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Understanding Third-Person Point of View: Omniscient, Limited, and Deep

by Tiffany Yates Martin

For most writers, first- and second person POVs are fairly straightforward (though in the point-of-view family, second might be the eccentric uncle no one quite knows how to engage with).

But third-person can be the family troublemaker, so sensitive and mercurial with all its facets: third-person omniscient, third-person limited, deep third-person. (And don't even get me started on objective third-person—that guy! Living off the grid somewhere in Montana...)

Yet besides chummy, easygoing first-person, third-person POV dominates the current publishing market, so it's helpful, as with any difficult family member, to learn to navigate its many moods. And the two biggest bugaboos are uncertain POV and slipping POV.

The Basics of Third-Person POV

Imagine you are Ant-Man. For non-Marvel nerds, he's a superhero in a special suit that makes him tiny and able to flit anywhere, including inside of people.

- **Omniscient third-person POV.** You-as-Ant-Man can fly anywhere in the world, even into people's minds, as well as forward and backward in time. You know anything anyone has ever known—both personal experience and empirical fact. You have access to all the knowledge of the universe, like a god.
- **Limited third-person** (also called close third). Ant-Man is on a tether to a single character—you can't break free. You can go inside her head and be privy to all her thoughts, but no one else's. Yet as an external observer you can also offer objective commentary on the character and know more than she knows.

- **"Deep" third-person.** This is a subset of limited-third. This POV still confines Ant-Man to a single person at a time, but now you have gone subatomic and live deep inside the character—taken over by her to the point where you think her thoughts, feel her feelings, share her experiences past and present, even talk like her at every moment. In essence you've become her, so you can only know anything that she knows: what she sees, hears, feels, experiences, does, remembers.

Using POV with clarity means understanding and not violating the parameters of whichever one you've chosen. Uncertain or shifting POV will make your reader feel ungrounded, unsettled—and unable to deeply engage in the story because we don't feel we have firm footing in it, even if we can't place exactly why.

Using POV Consistently

This is where imagining your access as Ant-Man may help prevent POV slips.

In omniscient POV: The narrator can indeed flit into any perspective, but the narrator doesn't "become" any character. That means you can reveal anyone's thoughts and reactions—and also comment on them, and also provide perspective that they may not have. You can also offer external observations on all characters—their appearances, expressions, reactions, etc.

But if the narrative slips into anyone's direct point of view, it's a POV shift that can subtly disorient readers. And if you-as-narrator zoom around characters' perspectives too much, you're "head hopping," jumping from person to person in a way that can be dizzying for the reader, like someone relentlessly channel-surfing.



In limited third-person: You-as-narrator are still a separate voice or “character”—an observer, a reporter on events rather than experiencing them directly, but imagine there’s an invisible electric dog fence around your single POV character. While you can know and report on what that character thinks and feels, the only way you can convey any other character’s inner life in this POV is through the interpretation of your point-of-view character, based on what he observes in others and around him: external reactions like their expressions, gestures, demeanors, tones, etc.

Also, in limited-third person you the narrator can observe something she misses, like the keys dangling from his hand, or the fleeting sneer across his face, or the way he watches her when she’s not looking. You’re always in the room with her, but not always inside her. (In omniscient you can see all of that, including the keys behind the other character’s back, where he’s been, and what he’s actually feeling.)

you’re still a separate person in limited, attuned to your POV character the way you might know your spouse’s or child’s every nuance of emotion.

In deep third, if your POV character is unaware of something, you are unaware. If “she didn’t notice the spider creeping ever closer to her foot,” then you can’t mention it in deep third or you’ve slipped out of POV—she doesn’t notice means you can’t notice either. You are her. Everything is oriented from and filtered through her/your point of view.

You can withhold knowledge or keep secrets from the POV character in omniscient and limited-third—she doesn’t know everything you, as a separate person, know. But in deep third there are no secrets—only what you-as-POV-character choose to share. This can get tricky with stories that rely on “reveals” (which is all stories, really), in that you have to find organic ways to obscure information from readers that aren’t misleading them about something the character is fully aware of.

In deep third: You’re confined by that same dog fence with all the same rules as limited-third, except that there is no separation between you and the POV character—you live exclusively inside her. You-as-narrator are, in effect, the point-of-view character, living those events firsthand—like first-person point of view, but with he/she/they pronouns—and so every word of the story is filtered through her perspective: her vocabulary, her phrasings, her knowledge and experiences, etc., as if you’re channeling her.

When head hopping or POV slips occur

Head-hopping in limited and deep third results from breaching the boundary of any other character’s inner life while in your single subject’s POV. Your POV character can’t know another character is feeling sad or angry, for instance—but she can infer it from what she observes about him: a drawn face, clenched fists, a sharp tone, word choice, etc.

Because you-as-narrator are separate in limited-third, you could observe that your POV character is blushing, or offer perspective on the blush she may not fully realize. That’s not a POV slip because you can choose to flit into and out of your character. Sometimes there’s a sliver of difference between limited and deep-third—but

For instance, one character can be hiding her pregnancy from another—and you-as-author may want to keep it a secret from the reader too. But in deep third you must do it within the internal truth of your character—in other words, she is fully aware of it, but you’ll have to reveal a partial truth that misdirects the reader: “The moment he walked in her hand flew to her stomach, but she made herself drop it to her side. She didn’t want him to see how nervous she was.” We’ll likely initially assume an upset tummy from nerves—and only later will we realize its meaning as the full truth is revealed.

The more technical bits of POV

In handling a character’s thoughts, feelings, and reactions, in omniscient point of view you often need to orient the reader to it with descriptor words: “she thought,” “he felt,” “she heard,” “he decided,” “she wondered,” etc. In limited and deep third generally you don’t need the descriptive tags—we know we’re in this single character’s POV, so by default anything observed, known, sensed, thought, experienced, etc., is done so by them.

In all three points of view direct thought—meaning real-time, present-tense, first-person inner dialogue—should reflect the character's immediate perspective: her vocabulary and way of speaking, regional speech patterns of her background, feelings, etc. In deep third remember that you are the character, so additionally every word of the story should be framed in her vernacular and frame of reference (except other characters' dialogue, of course).

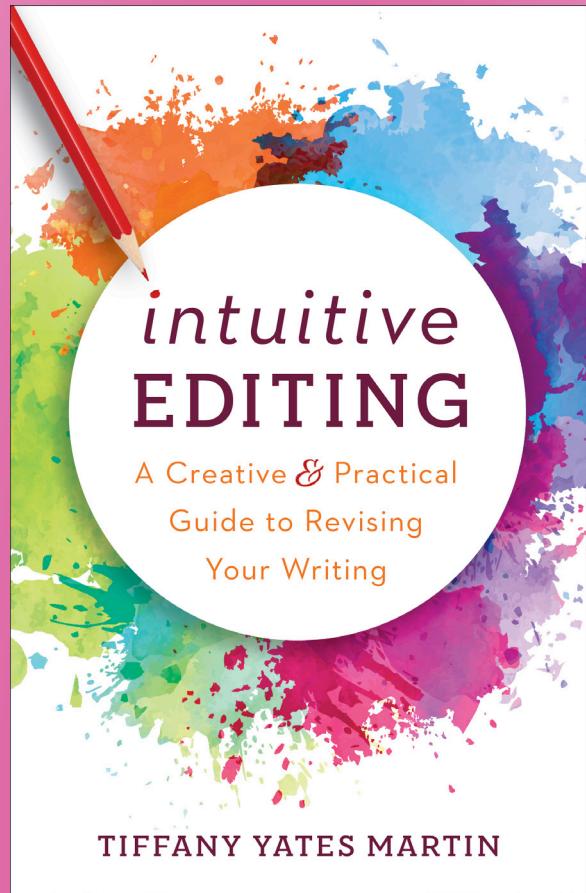
Using limited-third and deep POV doesn't mean you can't have multiple POV stories, but within each scene of the story, point of view should be confined to a single character. If you want to offer another character's perspective, just start a new section after a space break—or a new chapter—and then apply these same POV parameters to the new POV character's perspective.

Parting advice

If you're feeling overwhelmed, don't worry. Point of view can be a dauntingly broad—and deep—topic and, making it even tougher to pin down, for every hard-and-fast "rule" of POV there are authors who've successfully shattered them—like Toni Morrison's seamless shifts from omniscient to limited-third throughout *Beloved*, or Kevin Kwan's rampant head-hopping in his bestseller *Crazy Rich Asians*. In storytelling the only rule is, Does it work?

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Tiffany Yates Martin has spent nearly thirty years as an editor in the publishing industry, working with major publishers and *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today* bestselling and award-winning authors as well as indie and newer writers, and is the founder of FoxPrint Editorial and author of the bestseller *Intuitive Editing: A Creative and Practical Guide to Revising Your Writing*. Under the pen name Phoebe Fox, she's the author of six novels, including the upcoming *The Way We Weren't* (Berkley). Visit her at foxprinteditorial.com or phoebefoxauthor.com



Developmental editor Tiffany Yates Martin has spent her career in the publishing industry honing practical, actionable techniques to help authors evaluate how well their story is working, where it might not be, and how to fix it.

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Quick Guide to Guest Blogging

by Penny Sansevieri

In the ongoing effort to sell more books in a saturated market, more and more authors are competing for book bloggers' attention, so you'll really have to step up your game when approaching them. Most bloggers have inboxes overflowing with requests for reviews. You're one in hundreds, or maybe even thousands. Taking this into account, what can you do to get their attention?

Make their job easier.

I'm seeing more bloggers open to having authors submit guest posts than ever before. Bloggers are busy; asking for a review is asking them to do more work but offering to provide content for their site—now that can seem like a mini-vacation! Guest blogging is a great way to network and build relationships while still getting your books and your brand in front of their audience.

Here are FAQ about guest blogging that will help you navigate these terrific media opportunities.

Is guest blogging worth my time?

In a word: ALWAYS. Even when the blog isn't a perfect fit for your book, it's absolutely worth your time to submit a guest post. Every opportunity you have to reach a new audience and sell more books is worth your time. Additionally, the more links you have to your site and your book, and the more times your name is mentioned, the better you will do in search engine performance. And as I always say, opportunities build on each other. So take advantage of every opportunity. You never know what doors they may open.

How long should my guest blog be?

If the blogger hasn't shared specifics, then a good target range is 600 to 800 words. Can you go over or under? Most likely. But this isn't a time to share a 5,000-word post unless you've specifically run that past them. Similarly, 300 words may be too short. So shoot for the target range, and if you've got more to say, offer to do a follow up.

What format should I use?

Word documents are preferred, with minimal formatting. Don't send PDFs, and don't send it embedded in an email message.

Do all my posts need to be unique?

If you're lucky enough to get invitations to do multiple guest posts, then good for you. But what if you're short on time? Can you repurpose a blog post? This is a tricky one. Although some bloggers may not care, a good rule of thumb is to make each post at least 20 to 30% different from other guest posts you submit. You can write about the same ideas, but posts shouldn't be identical.

Why? Well it does two things. One, it shows each blogger that you really appreciate the opportunity by crafting something for them that no one else is getting. Two, it allows each of them the SEO value of unique content. And each blogger will appreciate it. And if you're going to do this, I'd recommend asking the blogger first. I do a lot of guest blogging and I'll always ask if a piece I've already written can be repurposed.



Should it be professionally edited?

Never send anything out into the world full of typos. It reflects badly on you, and it looks lazy. The blogger is also not planning on editing it for you. If you don't have an ongoing relationship with your editor, see if there's someone else with a critical eye who can do one pass on your piece before sending it off.

Should I include a bio?

Yes. If you don't the blogger may just pull a bio from Amazon, social media, or your website. And while that isn't terrible, it may not be particularly current, or it's not the impression you want to make on that audience. So start from scratch and include a few sentences about who you are, what you do, and where you find inspiration. Have other titles? Mention that. Have a website? Include it! And don't forget to link to your Amazon book page!

Should I include images?

Unless otherwise specified, absolutely. Send them as separate files so the blogger doesn't have to cull them from the word document. Make it easy. At minimum, include an image of your book's cover. If you've got some fun images that help tell the story, send them as well.

What topics sell more books?

This is the \$10,000 question. If you write nonfiction, it may be easier to answer. You know your topic well and should be able to come up with something that's timely and sets your point of view apart, both qualities that help sell more books!

If you write fiction, know that bloggers love sharing anything that really enhances their readers' experience. So narrow down what makes you or your brand unique and find a way to turn that into a creative "insider" look at an author's life. The audience likely doesn't know you or have a vested interest in your books—but they are fans of your genre. So put yourself in their shoes, and really focus on topic ideas that cater to your genre and what makes its readers tick.

Should I share the final post?

Absolutely! Once your guest post goes live, be sure to share it on your own networks. It will again let the

blogger know you appreciate the opportunity, and you'll send some of your readers there. Book marketing is about sharing the love. And bloggers will remember. If you get an opportunity for one book, and you let them know how much you appreciate it, they'll be more likely to help you out on future books. Also, I recommend posting a comment on the post once it goes live. Just a quick "thank you for featuring me" is always greatly appreciated.

Be on the lookout for comments.

One thing you never want to do is post and ditch. So don't let a blog post go live and then never visit the site again. If the blogger has a busy website, you're likely going to get comments on your post that you'll want to respond to, even if it's just "thank you for your feedback!" Good book marketing etiquette is to post a quick comment so the blogger knows you are as engaged with this post as their readers are. Plus this is a great long-term strategy to sell more books, as going the extra mile makes you stand out in a sea of authors vying for reader attention.

Putting it all together

Ultimately, writing a guest post is a great book marketing tool for your arsenal and definitely worth your time as an indie author. Put your best foot forward. That doesn't mean that you have to spend hours crafting every post, but you should make it meaningful. After all, the blogger took the time to offer you a guest post, so you should take the time to make the most of the opportunity. They didn't have to offer you anything. In fact no one owes you anything, so be sure to thank each blogger for every opportunity you get to share with their audience. Doing so will help you build a terrific foundation for a long term and mutually satisfying relationship.

Get writing! ↗

Penny C. Sansevieri, Founder and CEO of Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. She is an adjunct professor teaching self-publishing for NYU. She was named one of the top influencers of 2019 by *New York Metropolitan Magazine*. To learn more about Penny's books or her promotional services, visit amarkeティングexpert.com.



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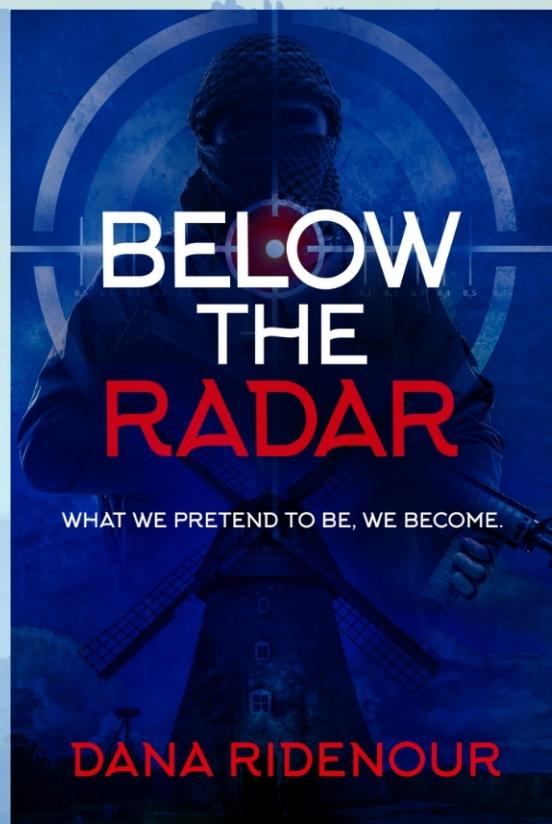
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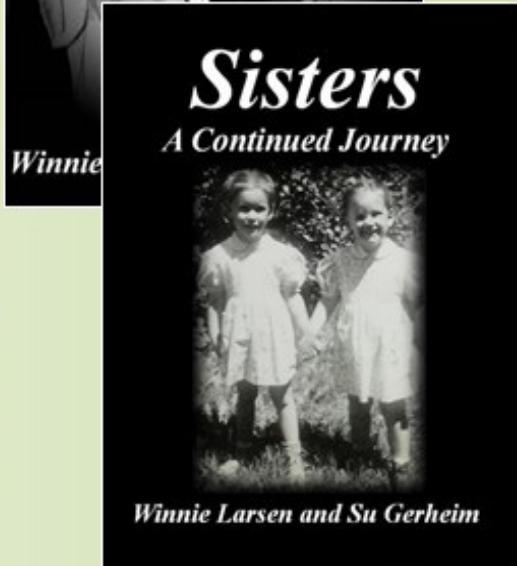
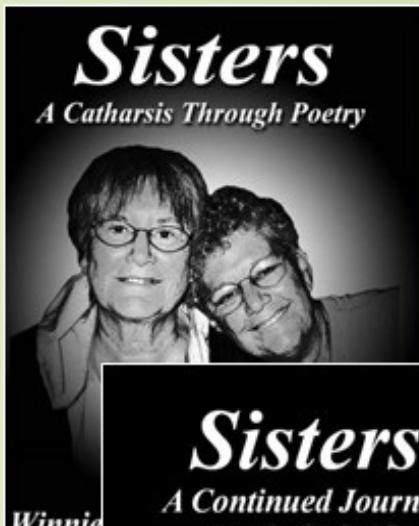
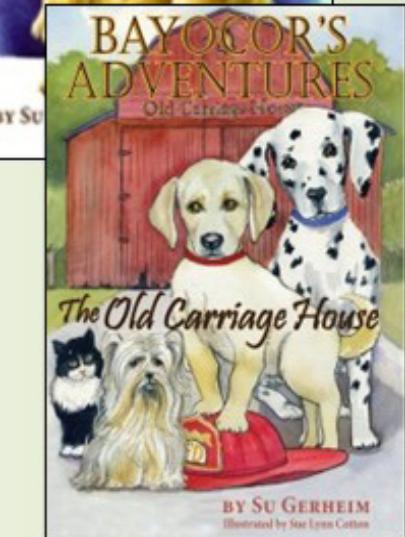
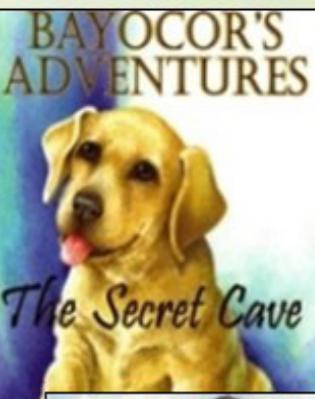
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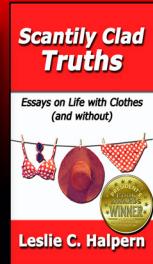
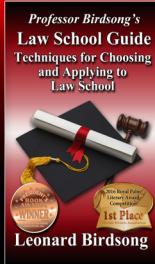
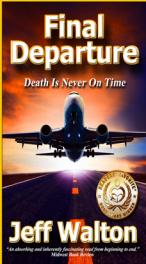
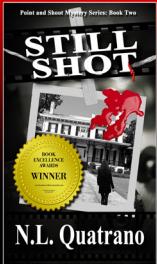


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Escape from Pompeii

by Robert Alan

Plates rattled as another tremor rumbled beneath the floor of the temple. Except for Cassia, High Priestess of the Temple of Isis, the faces of the young women around the table registered fear.

"High Priestess! The tremors are becoming more frequent! What should we do?"

"Pass the fish," Cassia replied, as if nothing had happened.

Cassia took a healthy portion of fish from the platter. "Tell me, girls, why do we worship the goddess Isis?"

Lucilia, oldest of the acolytes, ventured, "Isis offers us a place in the afterlife, the other gods do not."

"Well spoken, Lucilia. The goddess Isis is our protector, and healer. It is Isis that gives life, takes life, and, at her pleasure, can restore life."

Sabina, youngest of the acolytes, raised her hand. "High Priestess, I've heard from my uncle in Rome that there is another group of people who call themselves Christians, and whose God grants a place in the afterlife to all his followers."

Cassia waved a dismissive hand. "The Christians are one of many sects that have come to Rome from the eastern provinces... But enough of this. Have you girls finished preparing for next week's ceremony?"

"Yes, all is ready."

"And who can explain what we will be celebrating?"

"It was one hundred years ago that the Emperor Caesar Augustus brought the Trinity Stone and its guardian to our temple."

"That is correct. When Rome and Egypt were united, our temple here in Pompeii became the home of the Trinity Stone and its guardian."

"High Priestess, tell us of the stone," pleaded Sabina.

"The stone is a gift from Isis. It's the conduit through which she speaks to us, not in words, but in deeds. It is the—" Cassia was interrupted by a tremendous blast that shook the entire temple.

One of the older girls jumped to her feet and ran to the door. "High Priestess! Come quickly! The mountain is on fire!"

Fear gripped Cassia as she looked north where Mount Vesuvius stood dark and menacing. "Lucilia, come with me. Quickly!"

Cassia took Lucilia to the statue of Isis positioned in a niche above the altar. "Watch closely," she instructed, grasping the horned crown atop the head of Isis, and pulling. There was a soft click, and the altar door swung open revealing a small wooden coffin. Carefully Cassia opened the coffin exposing the small mummy nestled within.

"Is that the guardian?"

"Yes, Lucilia, that is the guardian—and the Trinity Stone."

"What stone? I see no stone."

Very gently, Cassia lifted the mummy's right hand, revealing a small wooden box. She took the box out, held it in front of Lucilia's face, and opened the lid.

Lucilia gasped when she saw the shimmering triangular crystal nestled inside the box. "Is that the Trinity Stone? It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen!"

"You are the oldest, Lucilia. Take the coffin and travel toward the coast. You will find many people and ships evacuating to the west. You are a priestess in the Temple of Isis. They will surely grant you passage."

Cassia picked up the small coffin, wrapped it in a blanket and exited the temple. Lucilia followed. A large ox-drawn cart loaded down with evacuees rumbled by. "Sir!" Cassia called to the driver. "This young girl is on a sacred mission in the name of the goddess Isis. I beg you, grant her passage."

"Very well! Climb on back, and be quick about it, that mountain could go at any moment."

It had taken all night for the refugees to reach the coast. Now Lucilia watched the distant mountain from the deck of a Roman galley as it traveled west under full sail. The deck was crowded with refugees fleeing the terrible wrath of Mount Vesuvius. Suddenly a collective cry went up, as the mountain seemed to vanish beneath a massive boiling black cloud of smoke, ash, and fire. Thirty seconds later an earsplitting concussion reached the galley, sending everyone cowering to the deck. Lucilia lay curled up, wedged into a sea of humanity, tears flowing from her eyes, and the blanket wrapped coffin enclosed tightly in her arms. 

Robert Alan lives in Panama City, Florida.





The Mother I was Supposed to Have

by Robert E. Marvin

At the bus stop
My worn through sneakers stop short of the covered bench
Her bleached hair, short skirt and spiked heels tell her age better than the lines in her face
I take a step closer
She looks up
Our hands tremble
Mine holding out a child's card I've tried so hard to fill with love
the one I'd made for Rachel, who'd given me life thirteen years before
the one who's never loved me back
Hers, smell of men and twisted dreams
they reach for a gift from the daughter she should have had
the one standing a heartbeat away
Our eyes meet
Mine fill with love for my should-have-been mother
the one who would have read "Good Night Moon" to me as I waited for sleep
the one who never would have made me wait until I was seven and could read it to myself
Hers fill with pain
from bedtime stories forever left unread
from a million hugs and kisses never given, and never received
We cry
Me for the life I've never been allowed to have with her
my real life
not the fake one, the make-believe one, the one I'll always remember
She for her broken life that never should have been
a life of abuse, a life of addiction, a life without love
One that having me would have changed in every way
We leave each other
Me boarding the bus for home,
wondering why my soul had been given to the child in Rachel's womb
and not to the daughter she never had
She clutching the card to her heart
watching me go, watching my bus disappear into the traffic, forever lost.

Robert Marvin has been published in *Writer Advice*, *Writer's type*,
FWA Collections, and *The Florida Writer*.



Reflections by Jim Ramage

There comes a time in each of our lives when we reflect on our past. We think of those times when we walked away—or didn't walk away—from a thing. A thing that we just watched, without getting involved in it, thinking that it did not affect us. Realizing later that that thing did not leave us unchanged.

It happened to me on a cool Saturday morning. My two-year-old son was laughing and giggling from his perch, his baby seat dangling on two hooks draped over the top of the pickup seat. His unobstructed view of the world, including untethered access to Daddy, allowed him to tickle and be tickled, to see people and cars and form his own, unknown to anyone else, opinions of the world. This morning the sun was shining on an apparently amusing world as we sat patiently waiting for the traffic light to change.

Just as I finished counting his ribs for the umpteenth time, a horn sounded behind me and I glanced up to see a green light. Ooohh, you ungrateful person I thought, as I started forward into the intersection, glancing in my rearview mirror. We were in a small South Georgia town where everyone knew everybody and where I thought I probably knew that impatient, horn-blowing slob.

I did know her. I also knew her husband who was standing outside the car and was in the process of smashing in her window with his fist. That couple was known in town for fighting like cats and dogs. I'd heard that he'd just gotten home from a short stint in prison for burglary. She was a waitress and mother of two or three kids. More than likely alcohol was involved. I told myself I didn't need to intercede. She had blown the horn to attract attention. There were lots of people around. Now, with my truck in the intersection, I continued to the Piggly Wiggly.

I heard the sirens pass by and another shopper say that she guessed they were breaking up that fight down the street between Jerry and Leanne. I pushed the buggy down the aisle of the store and told myself again that I had done the right thing. My son kicked his feet on the buggy and pointed to all things colorful on the cereal aisle. The police were there, and all was right with the world.

It wasn't much of a fight to break up. Leanne was bleeding to death in the front seat of her car. Jerry, drunk as I'd suspected, had dragged Leanne half-way through the window of the car and slashed her throat. The children in the back seat of the car had watched their father kill their mother.

Leanne dead. The quiet girl in the middle of the fourth row from the door of homeroom was now quiet forever.

Jerry, the tall, gregarious, receiver on our high school football team that had looked at me so many times in the huddle, smiling and saying to just get it close and he'd catch it, now charged with murder and going back to prison for the rest of his life.

And the children? What happens to them? None of the relatives were well-off. His parents lived in a rented trailer, father was an abusive drunk, mother a timid woman, older brother in prison for robbery, and God only knew where the daughter was.

Her parents were just another middle-class couple trying to make ends meet. She had a brother in the Army, a sister married and living in Atlanta, another sister still at home.

Sometimes, when I'm back in that little Georgia town, smaller now, thanks to the closing of factories that provided jobs for people that have long since moved away, I drive through that intersection. There's no traffic light anymore. The State DOT removed it decades ago. Piggly Wiggly is gone, replaced by Dollar General. But the memories are still there, replaying themselves in my head again and again, and the same question comes up once more.

Could I have made a difference? *

Jim Ramage lives in Yulee, Florida when he's not someplace else.



Autumn Passion and Poison

by Dan Tardona

There is something about the crisp mountain air while hiking in the Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee that stimulates all kinds of passions. While these mountains are a wonder any time of year, autumn is particularly breathtaking. Brilliant reds, yellows, orange and various shades of browns wake and refresh your soul. Autumn with its romantic display of colors can fill the heart with passion and love. The colors, sweet smells, the look and feel of life allow Cupid even far from February, to reign supreme in the hearts of the young. It was on one such day that I was roving the trails that Cupid decided not only to be a match maker but a prankster.

I was hiking a lesser traveled mountain trail one day when I came upon a young couple. The air was cool with a slight fall breeze that put a pleasant chill in the air. But, suddenly, there right next to the trail was a young couple partially naked and in a passionate embrace in plain view. Needless to say, they did not immediately notice my presence. They were lying in a large patch of the trifoliate leaves. I discreetly cleared my throat in order to draw their attention and upon seeing me, they jumped up and began frantically putting on their clothes as I turned slightly to give them some privacy.

My first thought was to just simply turn and walk in the other direction, but I knew that I needed to tell them something. "Folks, I know it's a beautiful mountain fall day, but I need to warn you about something. And couldn't you have found a place to love each other that was not in full view to any passerby?"

"We thought no one was around the area when we arrived," the young man explained.

"And that beautiful patch of soft ground cover just looked like the perfect place." the young lady blushingly replied.

I stared at the ground shaking my head desperately trying not to erupt into an uncontrollable fit of Rabelaisian laughter. After a long pause and a slight touch of humorous tingle in my eyes, I looked at the and said, "No I'm not going to report you or anything, but you are in serious trouble."

"I don't understand" the young man stammered.

"That patch of soft green ground cover on which you chose to embrace is a plant called Toxicodendron radicans, more commonly called Poison Ivy" I gently replied. Obviously this pair of love birds had forgotten the old saying, leaves of three, let it be. To some people even a slight touch of this plant can cause terrible consequences I thought to myself. "Neither judge nor jury on this earth could come up with a punishment worse than that which you two will soon receive," I replied biting hard on my lower lip.

"Can't we go home and quickly take showers to wash it off?"

"Approximately how long did you embrace each other in the poison oak?" I asked.

"Time flies when you are, you know, embracing" the young man replied.

To which I again silently cursed Cupid and bit my lip even harder. "Are either of you allergic to poison ivy or oak?" I asked.

"Not as far as we know, but my mother is," the young lady blurted out.

"Here's what you do," I said. "Go home, take warm showers, and pray that you don't break out in blisters. Place all your clothes separately from any other, wash them separate from anything else. If you begin to itch and blister you might want to see a physician and explain what has happened to you. You could get deathly sick from this; you both know that?" I warned.

They shamefully nodded their heads.

"Good luck to you both! And take a botany course," I yelled as they ran for their car.

I was genuinely worried for them, yet somewhere inside I knew they'd survive. I also knew I had just witnessed an insane scene that would be woven into a tale that I would tell over and over again for the rest of my life! ☺

Dan Tardona is retired and lives in Jacksonville, Florida with his friendly cat Shilo.



1 Good Café by Darhlene Zeanwick

*Dancing through Pepín's wide-open front door,
A big ole chicken entered and clucked its way across the living room floor.
It was mud-baked and crackling as it chucked its body back and forth.
Then flinging, even slinging, as she morphed
Into a waddle,
Pecking a leftover from the night before: A Don Q bottle.*

Laughing, Pepín came and with a sway of her wrists she had la gallina estúpida, the stupid chicken, flapping violently out the front door. Hands to hips, she addressed me sternly and did so with an accent for which I had not been prepared. I looked up from what I thought was a kid's book.

"Aye'am ju granma," she said with her lips pursed out a mile revealing the golden twinkle of one front tooth. She then pointed at me with her Marlboro, "Soy mamá de tu mamá. Me llamo Pepín."

I felt like the chicken she just flung out the front. I sat frozen, looking into her ancient, round eyes as I said, "Mama?" (without the accent on the second syllable). Was my real mother giving me up?

"Pepín!" she spouted again, poking the air repeatedly with her Marlboro. She was puckering strangely as she enunciated emphatically, "Ma. Ma. Pe. Peen." Then, shaking her head and laughing some more, she walked away down her dark hallway where she walked past an empty, plastic fifth of rum on the floor.

I hadn't bargained for another language when I agreed to visit Puerto Rico. I had no idea that other languages existed. I mean, well, I guess I did because half my family's Hispanic, but no one had ever addressed me in Spanish before.

I had no vision of what the mother of my mother would look like either. They certainly didn't look alike.

Pepín was a dark, rugged, olive-skinned, whittled old Taíno woman with the ever-bouncing belly of a Hispanic Santa Claus. She always wore a flowered house dress and leather flip flops that looked as ancient as the wrinkles in her face. Her black hair: wavy, thinning, neglected.

She came back from down the hall with a can of Café Rico and began fiddling in the kitchen, lifting a stained coffee sock over a large pot of hot water, dumping heaping tablespoons of grounds into the sock.

My mother was sitting at Pepín's Formica table, staring at me from the kitchen with some disdain. She had a 1950's pop model look with the face of Patrick Nagel's "Sunglasses" woman. Chic. She was my María of *West Side Story*: dark features, porcelain-white skin; named Sory (short for Soriris) with a roll on the R as though there were many R's. She spoke with a lisp too, pronouncing her S's and other letters like the digraph TH and her T's like S's.

She didn't approve of her own accent, although it sounded fine to me. Then again, I grew up with that accent, so... She mouthed at me from across the living room, Put. Down. The. Book.

I did, then scurried to sit at the table with my back facing Pepín, when a wide-rimmed, overflowing cup of pure blackness suddenly appeared below my nose. Steam emanated from five circles of oil, floating rings bouncing on the inside of my cup.

She turned around, waved her hands under her chin, and with lips pursed, she was emphasizing the syllables "Le" then "Che." She said it again and kept repeating it louder, louder as if I couldn't hear.

She added, "Me-elk," then "Quieres meelk?" then "Tienes meelk, then "Niña?" and other words I could not understand until I was stupefied into a frenzy of words, not one of which was intelligible to me.

I looked back down at the quiet rings in my cup, next to which also appeared a small pitcher of hot milk. "Bueno?" Pepín said with all smiles.

I looked up her, then spied that old chicken on the sofa.

I smiled and babbled my first Spanish word, "Bueno."

We said it together, "Bueno."

"Gud, berry gud," she sang as she waddled away down the hallway. ☀

Darhlene Zeanwick is a freelance writer publishing from Davenport, Florida.



Mathematician to Artist – An Alzheimer’s Journey

by P.C. Zick

Alzheimer’s breathed a new life into my brother, Marvin.

I knew a different man during my childhood where Marvin controlled his surroundings by using a sharp analytical mind and an even sharper tongue. Seventeen years older, his intellectual capacity scared me. He discoursed on philosophy and ripped into mathematical theorems. But he was also my older brother, playing Santa Claus when he came home from college to give me a bit of childhood in a household filled with adults.

He lorded over my other brothers and me as the reigning first-born son. I feared him, loathed him, and revered him all in one big bundle of mixed baby sister emotions. He was sometimes difficult to love during those years, but as I grew older, we developed a mutual respect.

A decade before his death, he began to lose his sophisticated vocabulary, and his short-term memory took a hike. He morphed into a new person as the doctors diagnosed his disease.

My brother became as endearing as a lost little boy in the woods, unsure how he got there but curious about the leaves on the ground. He returned to the state of grace found only in the very young—before the world intrudes and demands defensive walls. I never knew him as that young child until he began his Alzheimer’s journey.

He learned to trust his wife, Joyce, as she navigated the perimeters of a world where her husband became her child. In her quest, she enrolled him in an art class at the local senior center to help occupy his days.

In that class, the new Marvin emerged. With inhibitions gone and defenses no longer impeding his path, he let loose with reds, oranges, yellows, blues, and greens as his creative expression exploded on canvas.

“I was a mathematician, and now I am an artist,” he told Joyce after one class.

His artistic creations stripped away many of the assumptions held about Alzheimer’s. Many “experts” told Joyce that it would be an exercise in futility to enroll him in art classes. They said Alzheimer’s patients lose the ability to draw or paint because of their lack of visual and spatial acuity. Marvin’s art teacher, Mary, did not consult

the experts. She treated him as a man with much to say but without the verbal ability to express it.

After three years, Marvin had painted more than twenty Arizona landscapes—miracles on canvas.

I visited Marvin’s class after he died. “You look just like him,” Mary exclaimed when we were introduced.

“No one has ever told me that before.”

“For three years, I studied his face,” she explained. “I watched to see if I could discern what he needed as an artist since he couldn’t tell me. The angles of your faces are exactly the same.”

She mixed the colors for him, and then she would hand him a palate knife covered with paint. I asked about a photo that showed my left-handed brother painting with his right hand.

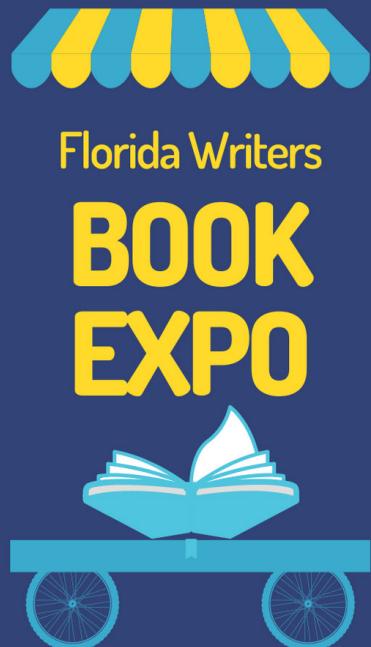
“He painted with either hand,” she said. “I would hold out the knife, and he would decide which hand.”

“He would start by touching the knife to the canvas repeatedly,” a fellow student said. “I’d watch in fascination because it looked like nothing and then this beautiful mountain would appear.”

A few weeks before Marvin died, Joyce hosted an art show of his paintings at their home, inviting Mary and his classmates. In a photograph from the event, the former mathematician turned artist stands tall with his paintings giving testimony to the dignity regained through trust and faith. ☰

P.C. Zick writes contemporary fiction and creative nonfiction and lives in Tallahassee, Florida.





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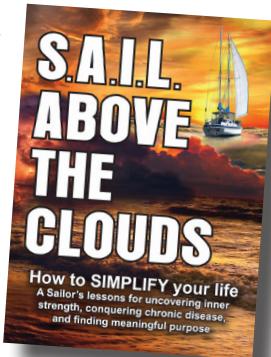
Animal rights advocate and author **Pat Brooks** is thrilled to announce the publication of the second installment in her Miss Marble series of illustrated chapter books for young readers. When the heroine of *Miss Marble's Extreme Adventures* makes an uncharacteristically risky decision, it backfires into a firestorm of misadventures. Pulled home by her heartstrings, the courageous feline becomes trapped in an unrelenting rollercoaster of hair-raising events. The series is available on Amazon or through Pat's website www.misspatsbigbookadventure.com



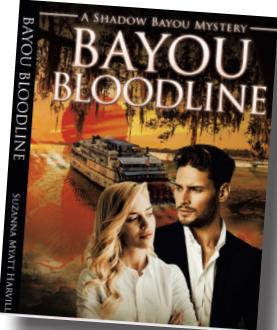
Jessie Erwin's manuscript *Anvind the Mighty* was awarded first place for middle grade fiction in the 2021 Florida SCBWI Rising Kite Awards. The SCBWI Florida annual Rising Kite Writing Contest celebrates Florida's best unpublished writing for children.



Carole Fontaine has released her first book, *SAIL Above the Clouds, How to SIMPLIFY your life*. She shares her twenty-year adventure of living aboard a sailboat in Florida. Packed with incredible true stories, at times humorous, other times terrifying, it is also an inspiring tool of self-discovery where the author explores how to simplify life and her journey back to health after a debilitating illness. Her inspirational story was featured in the *Kennebunk Post*, the February issue of *The Village*, and the French *Le Courrier de Floride*. Fontaine sailed to Maine where she is working on the sequel.

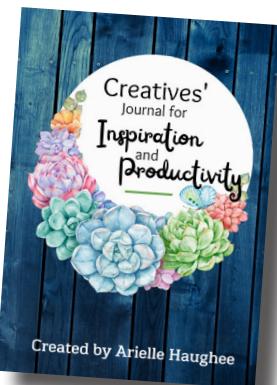


Suzanna Myatt Harvill returns to Shadow Bayou with *Bayou Bloodline*. When Rachelle Toussaint's twin brother dies mysteriously, she returns to New Orleans to run the family's cruise line. She believes his death was neither an accident nor a suicide. He was murdered.



Lieutenant Marcus Laborde conducts the investigation and is captivated by Rachelle. His efforts are sidetracked by the slughters of young prostitutes, victims of a slaver network. Rachelle forms an unlikely alliance with a Voodoo traiteur and suspects her boats are a pipeline for the slavers to move women about the country, thus putting her own life in danger.

Congratulations to **Arielle Haughee** for the publication of the *Creatives' Journal for Inspiration and Productivity*. Creative pursuits are seldom easy, but they are some of the most fulfilling endeavors in life. Staying inspired year-round can be a real challenge, and so can turning your creative energy into productive time. Stay on track each week by prioritizing and tracking actionable tasks. Keep your creative flow going with focus questions designed to heighten your mood and encourage artistic exploration. Each month you'll reflect on your progress and figure out what to adapt for next month. Dive even further into your creative potential!



Paul Iasevoli's flash fiction "The Cellar" was published online in the February issue of *City.River.Tree*. It will also be featured in the journal's annual print anthology issued in December. You can read the story for free at cityrivertree.com/2021/02/09/054-the-cellar-paul-iasevoli/



Celebrations!

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Cocoa Beach author **Marc O'Brien**'s short story "Exhibiting A Modeling Attitude" appeared in the January 2021/Issue 6 edition of the international literary online magazine *Quillopia*. In the selection written for the publication's "Amour Propre" theme, innocent successful entrepreneur strength confronts the social relationship frustrations during the cold wintry loving February month. "Using short or flash fiction is a wonderful presentation platform for sensitive matters to be discussed," said Florida Writers Association member and Barry University Graduate Marc O'Brien, "it is a quick read, and if simply done the reader may have an enjoyable experience before moving onto another piece."



High Tea with Ophelia by award winning author **Eleanor Tremayne** asks her readers to join five characters who have stepped out of the pages of literature to join them in exploring the ancient city of Saint Augustine, Florida. The mysterious Ophelia, from the play *Hamlet*, is the first to appear to Sabriel Shelley, the owner of a local bookstore, soon to be joined by Holly Golightly, Scarlett O'Hara, Gabriella Girard, and Daisy Buchanan. History is weaved into a literary tapestry, both fascinating and memorable.

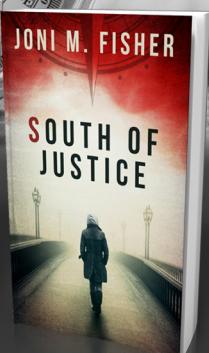
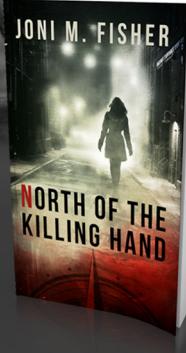


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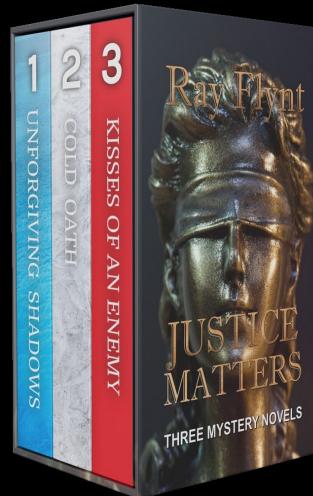
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RAY FLYNT is a lifetime member the Florida Writers Association and recipient of two Royal Palm Literary Awards in 2018 for *COLD OATH* and *YARD GOAT*. A native of Pennsylvania, Ray retired from a diverse career in criminal justice, education, the arts, and human services, all of which informs his writing. He is a member of Mystery Writers of America and active with their Florida Chapter.

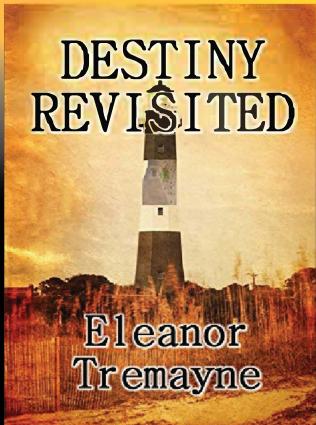
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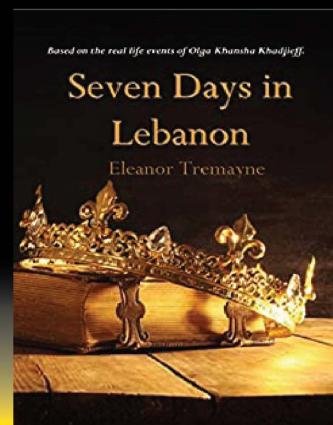
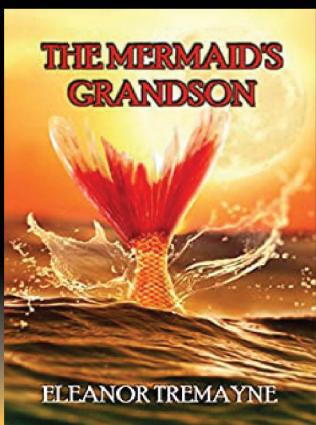


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