



The Florida Writer

December 2024 • Volume 18, Number 6

An Inspiring Weekend
to Remember

A Three-Part
Structure for Memoir

A Guide to the Top
Story Structures



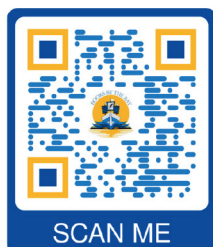
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EDITOR
Mary Ann de Stefano

PRODUCTION EDITOR
Tanya Grae

QUERIES & SUBMISSIONS
mdestefano@floridawriters.org

ADVERTISING
mdestefano@floridawriters.org

PUBLISHER
Florida Writers Association
127 W. Fairbanks Ave. #407
Winter Park FL 32789
floridawriters.org

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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 attached submission document.
- Follow all “Additional Requirements” listed below.

Additional Requirements

- To be eligible for publication, you must be a member of the Florida Writers Association
- 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.
- Include your name and contact information within the attachment.
- Photo image files must be high resolution, 300 ppi, jpg or png format, and sent as an attachment, not embedded in a document.
- Email your submission to mdestefano@floridawriters.org

Prompts & Deadlines

- **February 2025 Issue** – Deadline: January 1, 2025
Prompt: No prompt. Submit your best work and be sure to follow the submission requirements.
- **April 2025 Issue** – Deadline: March 1, 2025
Prompt: Your piece starts with the question: “Do I know you?”





Online Content I Subscribe To

Mary Ann de Stefano

Editor

I subscribe to a lot of email newsletters. Many publications pique my curiosity at first, but then don't hold my interest over time, and I unsubscribe. Probably the main reason I end up unsubscribing is when the content is too I-focused rather than audience focused. I crave newsletters that inform me, inspire me, move me to action, or make me think, and I am turned off by those that persistently sell or self-promote.

Frankly, the newsletters that feed me in some way are much more likely to translate into a financial transaction with the sender at some point, because I feel as though I have a relationship with that person, value what they do, and trust them.

Here I'll describe some of the online content I subscribe to. It passes my tests for authority and substance and has continued to serve me for a long time.

Jane Friedman's Free Newsletters

janefriedman.com/free-newsletters

Friedman has been educating people about writing and the publishing industry for a long time and much of her content is free. (The above link takes you to descriptions for three free newsletters.) She is probably one of the most trusted experts in the industry. Her blog content is well curated, and I've learned a lot from her *Electric Speed* newsletter and online classes.

She shares so much content, it reminds me to remind you that not every issue of even your favorite provider's publication will be of interest. To save your valuable time, develop the skill to scan your emailed content quickly to see if it contains something that deserves your attention before you continue to read more deeply. Often, well-formatted newsletters will help you to do this by employing smart titles and subtitles in bold type.

Writers Beware

writerbeware.blog

Writers have to be one of the groups most often targeted by scammers, so it's a good idea to stay informed about some of the traps. *Writers Beware*, sponsored by a nonprofit and run by volunteers, was founded in 1998 and is concerned with

“tracking, exposing, and raising awareness about schemes, scams, and other bad practices in the publishing industry, with the aim of providing writers with tools to protect themselves from exploitation.” Do I read all the many updates I receive? No. But I do scan them quickly to see if they may be relevant for me or my contacts. Sometimes I'll take a deeper dive into a post, and I know to research the site when I hear of writers receiving questionable offers. Victoria Strauss generously allowed me to reprint one of her blog posts to share it with members in the April issue of this magazine. Strauss and *Writers Beware* are so well-known and trusted that recently a scammer has been impersonating them!

Story Club with George Saunders Substack

georgesauanders.substack.com

Saunders is the author of twelve books. His story collection *Tenth of December* was a finalist for the National Book Award and his writing appears regularly in *The New Yorker*. His newsletter is all about exploring the short story. He assigns a stories and exercises, subscribers respond, and he is amazingly generous with his own thoughts, feedback, and interactions. I don't know that I could have ever qualified for the MFA program at Syracuse University where he teaches, but in these online discussions (written) I feel almost as though I am almost getting a bargain priced MFA education because the content is so enriching. “Story Club” is \$50/annually and there is a free version with less content if you want to check it out.

Give yourself permission to try out online content subscriptions, then unsubscribe if it doesn't serve your needs. The Internet is exceedingly rich, but can easily overwhelm, too. 🙄

Mary Ann de Stefano is President of the Florida Writers Association and editor of *The Florida Writer*. An independent editor with 30+ years' experience, she works one-to-one with writers who are developing books. Her *MAD's Monday Muse* is a popular weekly email. Mary Ann is mad about nurturing creative and community spirit. madaboutwords.com





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News in Brief

86 New Members September/October

Lyric Adams • Grant Allen • Akilah Arnold • Susan Bartlett • Patty Bethers • Dennis Boyer • Ed Braddy • Estelle Bright • Alliya Chao • Isabelle Clark • Lucas Cox • Francis Dcruz • Brody DelBoccio • Evelyn Dingler • Bill Dixon • Anna Dlugasch • Cynthia Downing • Olivia Durgin • Kevin Ellington • Haley Elliott • Ashlynn Elliott • Effie Emigh • Chloe Ferguson • Christy Ferguson • Skye Geoffrey • Jada Georges • Catherine Gianopulos • Rebelle Gishler • Aubrielle Gordon •

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New!

We know that members are always looking for opportunities to sell their books. Now, we have a new resource for you. Check out our new list of Florida book fairs on the website. It's a work in progress. If you know of other events in the state where authors can connect with readers, let us know. floridawriters.org/florida-book-fairs

Speakers Bureau

Looking for ways to increase your visibility and connect with more readers and writers? Join FWA's Speaker's Bureau. floridawriters.org/speakers-bureau





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CLEARLY LEGAL

Good Publishers, Bad Publishers

by Anne Dalton, Esquire

Florida Writers Association's annual conference ended with a spectacular Publishing Perspectives Panel (with Q&A), moderated by Rick Bettencourt, FWA Director. During that session, a question arose as to how to ascertain a publisher's legitimacy. Below are some self-help tips for you to answer that question.

The first tip is to look at the publisher's address on the contract. Is the publisher based in England, Canada, or another foreign country? That could present several challenges. It is probable that such country's law, not American law, would apply to the entire contract. This means that if you have an issue with the publisher, you would have to hire an attorney who is versed in that other country's law. Further, if the contract allows you to audit certain royalty records, you will need to hire a financial expert in that other location. Also, if your publisher disappears, you will have to initiate a search in that foreign country.

The next tip involves an American publisher. Look at the publisher's name, both on the first page and the signature page to find what state is its home base. Every state has a website listing the LLCs' fictitious names, and corporations registered in that state, generally found under "[Name of State] Department of State." For example, in Florida you would search "Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations." Do a search on the state's website for that publisher's name under all three categories. If it does not appear anywhere, alarm bells should sound. If the name appears but the listing is not currently valid, alarm bells should also sound.

If the publisher's listing is currently valid, then do a search on that same website for the name of the person signing the contract and, separately, the name of your

contact person (if they are different). If that search turns up multiple prior publishing corporations, LLCs, or fictitious names, alarm bells should sound. If that search turns up multiple legal entities which have nothing to do with publishing, that also should be alarming. Would you really want to enter into a contract with someone who also owns and runs a pest control company, a cleaning business, a lawn cutting business, and/or other work unrelated to publishing?

Finally, do a search for the county in which the publishing company is located. For example, my office is located in Fort Myers, Florida. You would search "Florida, Fort Myers, county." That would bring up "Lee County." Once you have the name of the county, go on the website for "Clerk of Courts, Court search" or the local equivalent. Put in the name of the company, LLC or fictitious name and see if they have ever been sued or have been the plaintiff in a lawsuit. Separately, perform the same Clerk's search, using the name of any person affiliated with that organization and see if any lawsuits come up.

These are all self-help tips that can be easily performed from the privacy of your computer. Happy hunting! ✍️

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, proudly serves as General Counsel and Special Advisor to the President of the Florida Writers Association and is an FWA Lifetime Member. She is licensed in Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania, and her credentials can be viewed at www.daltonlegal.com. Contact her at adalton@daltonlegal.com.





Florida WritersCon 2024: An Inspiring Weekend to Remember

by Paul Iasevoli

Did you catch the wave? Did you enjoy the warm, easy feeling of camaraderie with fellow writers? If you answered yes, then you know we are family...

Those fractured lyrics buzzed in my head as I dashed from venue to venue to reassure myself and our Florida Writers Association's staff that all was running smoothly through the three days of events: From the Friday afternoon hands-on workshops to the Sunday morning panel, this October 18–20 was one of the most successful conferences FWA has ever had. But, in case you missed it, let me offer you a brief recap.

Friday morning started with the NextGen Experience, chaired by Michael Farrell, VP of membership and FWAY chair. The day for youth members ages 9–17 got underway with four workshops on topics ranging from plotting a story to punctuating a sentence. After each presentation, the floor was open for questions. The enthusiasm in the young audience was palpable as hands shot up and our guest speakers cordially and concisely answered questions from the audience of eighty.

Friday progressed to the afternoon sessions for adult members with workshops on everything from metaphors to marketing. But the festivities really kicked off at our Friday night mixer, with a champagne toast, food galore, and a welcome address from yours truly, who *truly* enjoys seeing our members mingle and connect with their fellow writers from near and far. But wait, the best was yet to come...

Saturday included a great breakfast, fifteen inspiring workshops, a delicious lunch, and FWA president Mary Ann de Stefano's welcome address. Afterward, our keynote speaker Richard Blanco, Obama's 2013 inaugural poet and recipient of President Biden's 2023 National Humanities Medal, enthralled the audience with an hour of poetic jubilations. From what I've been told, Richard Blanco is the first keynote speaker to receive a unanimous standing ovation in our conference history—not only is he a brilliant poet, but he's an excellent orator with the capacity to inspire an audience of writers.

Later that afternoon, not only did Blanco have a chance to sign his most recent book, *Homeland of My Body*, but our Collection 16, *Metamorphosis* authors had

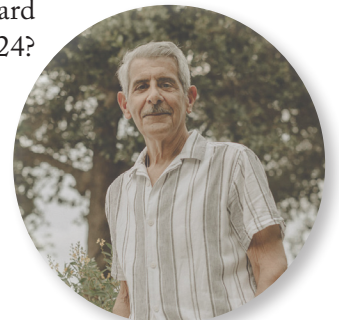
their signing next door. If you haven't yet purchased the Collection, it's available on Amazon for a limited time at the introductory price of \$12.99. The link can be found on our home page floridawriters.org. This year's book is filled with heartfelt stories of love, loss, hope, and happiness. And, for those of you who've asked, next year's Collection 17's theme is New Directions/New Dimensions. So, buy a copy of *Metamorphosis* to get a feel for what we're looking for in our yearly anthology of our membership's best writing.

Saturday was topped off with another mixer followed by the main event: The Royal Palm Literary Awards where Chair Elaine Senecal, Laurie Andrews, Alison Miller, and emcee extraordinaire Bill Opperman showcased the best writing of our members from Florida and beyond. The Crystal Ballroom was vibrating with anticipation as the winners were announced and crossed the stage to grasp their trophies until the grand prizes were awarded. You can check out the 2024 winners at floridawriters.org.

Bleary eyed but nonetheless bushy tailed, Sunday morning our members met up for breakfast followed by a panel of five publishing experts moderated by Rick Bettencourt. The session ended with a lively Q & A, closing remarks from Mary Ann, and lots of tearful goodbyes. After all our state had been through with hurricanes from west to east, tears were anticipated, but our resilience showed in Florida WritersCon 2024—I cannot tell you how many members pleaded with us not to cancel the conference since we all needed to get away from “real life” for a while. This conference was a timely respite that not only inspired us to follow our literary dreams but also proved that we are family: a family of *writers helping writers*.

So, we put this year's Florida WritersCon into the record books and look forward to 2025, but can we top 2024? We'll try.

Paul Iasevoli is an author, editor, and member of Florida Writers Association's Board of Directors.



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Breaking Point, Back Story, Resolution: A Three-Part Structure for Memoir

by Jennifer Landau

According to writer Jessica Ciencin Henriquez, many effective personal essays follow a three-part structure: breaking point, back story, resolution. This format works well for memoir, too.

When writing your memoir, you begin at the point when something in your life has shifted and can no longer be ignored. You fill in the backstory—which is not your entire life story—that illuminates the breaking point. Then, you move your reader toward some form of resolution that offers closure, if not always catharsis.

Beginning at the breaking point

Salman Rushdie's National Book Award-nominated memoir *Knife* opens with a literal breaking point: The author is stabbed multiple times by an assailant while giving a speech at an outdoor amphitheater about, of all things, how to keep writers safe. Rushdie is nearly killed. Among his injuries: a broken jaw.

At the start of Maggie Smith's memoir *You Could Make This Place Beautiful* she is searching through her husband's briefcase after he returns from a business trip. She finds a postcard addressed to a woman who lives in the town he just returned from. He tells the addressee that he doesn't know the type of pinecone they picked up on their walk, a pinecone he then brought home to the young son he shares with Smith.

Sloane Crosley begins her memoir *Grief Is for People* with a one-two punch. Her apartment is burglarized when she is out running errands and, she tells us, exactly a month later her former boss and best friend Russell dies by suicide.

Starting a memoir at the breaking point immediately draws in the reader. In these three examples, many questions spring to mind. Was the attack on Rushdie related to the fatwa that the Ayatollah Khomeini had issued when Rushdie published *The Satanic Verses*

thirty plus years ago? And why was there no security at the amphitheater? What made Smith decide to root through her husband's briefcase that night? Did they have a fight before he left? Was there previous infidelity? Was Crosley singled out for a burglary or was it just a conveniently open window? And what led to her best friend's suicide?

We read on, looking for answers.

When considering the breaking point in your own memoir, think back to what led you to write your story in the first place. That's likely fertile ground. The events don't have to be as dramatic as an assassination attempt or suicide, of course. But something has to happen that makes the reader wonder what led to this inflection point.

Keeping your backstory on track

Rushdie's and Crosley's books are slim volumes, just over and under two hundred pages, respectively. Smith's memoir comes in at more than 300 pages, but many of those have a single paragraph or even a single line on them. All three write with surgical precision and use backstory solely as a way to serve the forward momentum of their memoirs.

In *Knife*, Rushdie takes us back to the night before the stabbing to show us what he calls "his last innocent evening." He takes us back to his younger years, too. There is mention of the fatwa for context, but he doesn't linger there. We get a portrait of his drunk and abusive father, but only to show the reader that this chaotic relationship made it difficult for Rushdie to find stability in his personal life. That is until he meets his fifth wife, Eliza, who will play a major part in Rushdie's grueling rehab. He is showing us their courtship and the life they built together to show the reader how hard he's worked to find a sustaining love. And all that he has to lose should he not recover.



Smith uses backstory to show the cracks in the foundation of her home. Her husband, a one-time playwright, is jealous of Smith's success, especially after the poem that gives her memoir its title goes viral. When Smith calls home from a work-related trip she feels her husband's anger at her taking time away from her duties as a wife and mother. As she puts it, "I didn't feel missed as a person. I felt missed as staff."

Smith is also clear about the details she won't share. She does not recount the scene of her and her husband telling their children about the divorce, for example. Here she is able to set boundaries for the memoir, while also drawing the reader close. The moment her children find out, she says, "isn't for you." We are outside of her story, but also her confidantes.

Crosley gives us a brief description of the ring and amulet that were stolen and an only slightly longer one of the grandmother who passed them down: "abusive and creative about it." The jewels matter because they are Crosley's mother's sole inheritance and because Crosley connects their loss to her friend Russell's suicide. She fantasizes, even after he's dead, that he will be the one to recover them.

Crosley goes on to paint a portrait of Russell as a charismatic, but troubled man. He had problems with his partner, with his conduct as a publicist at a major publishing house, with a wider literary scandal, and with a penchant for collecting that turns to hoarding. On the last night Crosley sees Russell alive, he recounts a fight with his partner who told him, "Whatever happens don't kill yourself." Unsurprisingly, that conversation haunts the author: "My friend was telling me something and I didn't listen. For how long had he been telling me?"

When building your backstory, think of the clearest path to the breaking point. You don't have to be spare, but you don't want your readers to feel like they're following you down a series of dead ends. Too many sidetracks and they may lose trust in you as a guiding hand. If you are using the beat sheets method from *Save the Cat*, you can think of the breaking point as an "all is lost" beat and build out from there.

Reaching for a resolution

Resolutions in memoir are by their very nature artificial because, except in the case of posthumous works, life continues. As Smith moves through the messy dismantling of her marriage, she acknowledges that her healing is a work in progress. She hopes that by the time her memoir is published she will be in "a place of forgiveness."

Crosley seeks resolution by traveling to Australia to jump off a cliff, a feat she failed to complete a decade earlier. She stops herself at the edge of the cliff each time, a move known as suicide drills. Here she reveals her actual motive for returning: to see something of what her friend Russell saw as he "peered into an abyss." She takes out half a gold chain, all that remained after the burglary, and throws it over the edge of the cliff. This is where Russell is, she decides, even if she never

goes back again. Months later, she finds the other half of the chain behind a bookcase in her apartment. But Russell's half is still at the bottom of the ocean. Their separation continues.

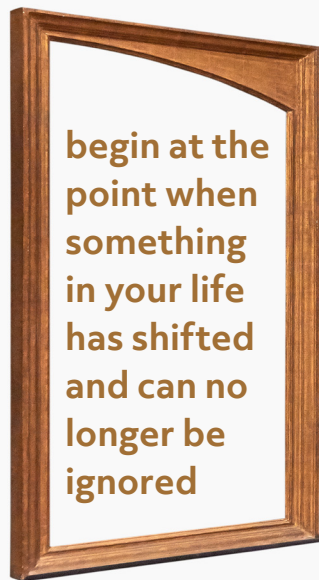
Rushdie has the tidiest ending. He literally returns to the scene of the crime thirteen months after the attack. He stands outside the jail where his assailant is being held and then goes back to the amphitheater to recreate the scene for his wife. He makes peace with the attack and with his life. "We're done here," he tells Eliza. "Let's go home."

However you choose to resolve your memoir, make sure that it feels true to the story you've been telling rather than tacked on. Readers crave closure, not manipulation.

Be clear about where you've planted yourself at the end of your memoir's journey. Are you still in the thick of it? If so, be upfront about that. It's a tricky stance, but workable, and can make your memoir feel alive on the page. If you're ten years past the events of the memoir, you'll likely have more perspective. Just guard against tying everything up in a pretty bow. Even the most joyous endings have echoes of what came before. Find this balance and you'll be sure to leave your readers satisfied. ✎

This article was originally published on janefriedman.com/blog and is reprinted here with permission.

Jennifer Landau is a writer, editor, and Author Accelerator-certified book coach with a master's degree in creative writing from New York University. Her essay "Without Me" was published in *Literary Mama* and featured on the award-winning *Writing Class Radio* podcast. As a book coach, she works with women writing memoir and literary and upmarket fiction, with a particular focus on caregivers who need accountability, feedback, and support on their creative journey. You can find her at jenniferlandau.com.





A Guide to the Top Story Structures

by NY Book Editors

Like a solidly built house, every good story has a framework. The most basic framework is three-part with a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning sets up the characters, while the middle confronts the characters, and the ending resolves the conflict. But, as brilliant as the basic story structure is, many other storytelling frameworks or templates exist.

Your best template will depend on various factors, including your book's genre, target audience, and personal storytelling preferences.

But what if you're just stuck with the same framework because you didn't know there were others you could use? And what if the framework you're using isn't the best way to structure your stories?

We've written this guide to rescue you from succumbing to the potential tragedy of choosing the wrong method to tell your story. In this guide, we'll go over the most popular storytelling frameworks to help you analyze the benefits of each. By the end of this guide, you'll ideally have a broad understanding of the different story structures commonly used in literature. The goal is to identify the one to help you tell the story perfectly.

Let's get started.

What is a Story Structure?

A story structure is a framework you use to organize your narrative. You can build a story in any way you choose; start with the beginning or the ending. Alternatively, you can jump into the action immediately and follow it up with the back story. You can follow one character or multiple characters. You can obey a linear timeline or jump around to maximize your pacing and tension.

There are so many different ways to attack a story. Before we break down the different types of story structures, it's best to define what a story is in the first place.

A story is a narrative that recounts a series of events. Each contains the following elements:

A Plot — I'm intentionally leaving this section brief because the structure of your plot will vary depending on your overall story framework. However, the primary thing to remember about your plot is this: It is what happens in the story. It's the sequence of events that develops the story.

Characters — A story will be determined by the characters who drive the actions and build the events. Without characters, you're dead in the water. You don't have any agent who will create or respond to the events you've made. Characters can be humans, aliens, animals, or other entities. But all valid characters must have unique motivations that cause them to act and respond to an action. The best characters are well-defined and have personalities and backstories to which the reader can relate. They have desires that cause them to act in ways that either serve their best interest or harm them.

Conflict — A conflict is a problem within your story. You'll likely have one major but multiple minor conflicts, and the central conflict will be the most significant event in your plot. It will include how the characters respond to and then resolve (if possible) the problem. However, you will also have smaller subplots that can resolve before and after the main plot. These can be internal conflicts, such as a character's inner



struggle with fear or reluctance to act. The best stories lean into these conflicts. They explore what could be lost if the dispute is unresolved. By examining the crisis, the reader will feel more invested in how you resolve these conflicts (or, heaven forbid, leave them unresolved).

Setting — The setting is the when and where of your story. It's the environment where your characters live and interact. When well-developed, the setting becomes its own character in your story. It has a personality, and the characters create and react to it. The setting is the physical location of the events, but you can also use it to construct the story's atmosphere or general mood. It can also contribute to the conflict in your story. For example, a hostile environment can introduce another source of tension for your characters. A peaceful environment can also build a source of stress, where the character tries desperately to protect that space from potential devastation.

Now that we've looked at the main elements that make up a story let's take a step back and discuss story structure from a big-picture point of view.

Your chosen story structure will help you tell a series of events carried by a string of characters in the best way possible to meet your goal.

Every author has a purpose in storytelling. This goal is the main takeaway you want your reader to have when they finish your story.

Your goal will come packaged as the "theme" of your story. A story's theme is its meaning or message. It's the purpose you have in telling the story. Of course, all accounts should aim to be entertaining. But they also have reasons for being. Why tell this story? What should the reader understand about life or the human condition? Identifying your goal in telling a specific story is the first step to choosing the best structure. Once you identify the message you want to impart, you can better decide which story structure will make the most sense for delivering that message.

So, without further ado, let's dive into the different story structures.

The Three-Act Structure

The three-act story structure is perhaps the most famous structure on this list. And that's for a good reason. It's clean and easy to apply to most stories. In this structure, the story splits into three parts:

Act 1, or the setup: The reader meets the main characters, their world, and the tone of the story

Act 2, or the confrontation: The main character(s) encounter a conflict that they must respond to

Act 3, or the resolution: The conflicts resolve, but not always happily



You can find one such example of the three-act story structure in the novel *The Hunger Games*. In Act 1, we meet Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark, the main characters who will create a series of events to make up the story. We're also introduced to the setting of the dystopian world that these characters find themselves in. In Act 2, we encounter the conflict, the competition (the central conflict), and the many other external and internal conflicts that each character has along the way. In Act 3, the conflict

resolves, and we see how the characters respond to this resolution.

The Hero's Journey

The hero's journey structure is one of the most popular narrative structures. Joseph Campbell is the first recorded instance of this structure, also known as the monomyth.

In this structure, the reader follows a hero (or protagonist) through a series of events. From the initial call to adventure through the inevitable conflict confronting the hero along the way, the reader experiences the journey with the characters. This structure is so widespread because it requires self-reflection and discovery. It asks the hero to overcome obstacles along their path to a great adventure. Readers



can easily empathize with heroes as they see themselves as heroes in their own stories.

Hero story structures are everywhere, but one of the most famous examples is Frodo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. The reader follows Frodo as he makes the harrowing quest to Mordor.

The Circular Structure

This structure is a circle, not a straight line. In this structure, the story ends and begins in the same place. But that doesn't mean that the story hasn't taken us anywhere. An example of this story structure is *The Odyssey* which begins and ends with Odysseus at home in Ithaca. However, the story takes us on an epic journey focusing on Odysseus' search for his sense of self.

You can use the circular story structure to highlight life as cyclical and its lessons repetitive. It can demonstrate how often we grow within the cycles of life. There is a definite sense of balance and completeness in this story structure.

The Frame Story Structure

In the frame story structure, you tell a story within the context of another, broader story. It's a story within a story.

An example of this structure is the story "One Thousand and One Nights." In this story, the Persian queen Scheherazade tells one story a night to her husband, the king, to delay her execution. The collection of stories that she tells (which are in the frame) includes Aladdin, Sinbad, and Ali Baba.

The frame story structure can be the perfect framework for telling your story if you want to add a greater sense of depth to context to the main story.

You can use the stories within the frame to provide an enhanced perspective on the message you're hoping to share.

These are the most common story structures available. In the coming posts, we'll explore more story structures, such as linear, non-linear, and multiple plotlines. However, as you can see from the above, you're not stuck in one framework; there are several.

Which story structure should you use? Challenge yourself by trying a different story structure. Pick one from the above list and see if it works. It's a good exercise in creative thinking. There's no perfect structure, just the one right for you.

Final Thoughts

Now that we've come to the end of this guide, do you have a greater understanding of the different story frameworks most commonly used in literature? And which frameworks are your favorite? ✍️

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then just follow him!

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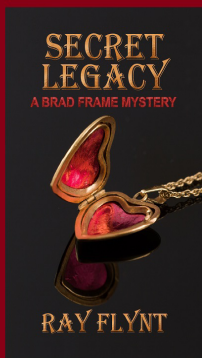


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TWO MYSTERIES IN ONE

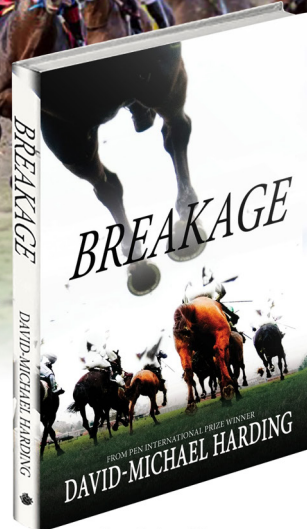
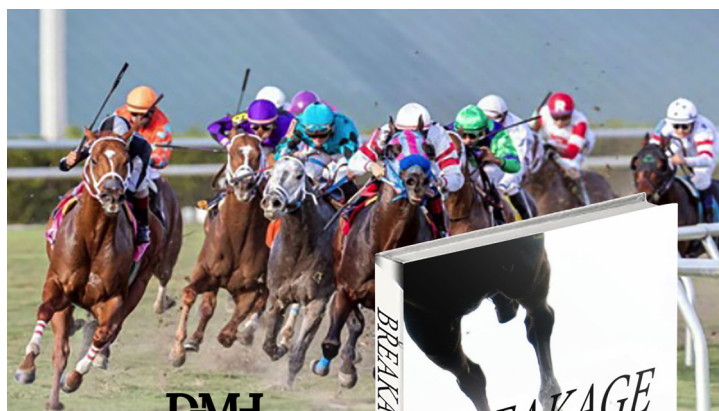
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Donnie Chariot is the most gifted thoroughbred horse racing handicapper in the country. He single-handedly sets the morning betting lines across the country.

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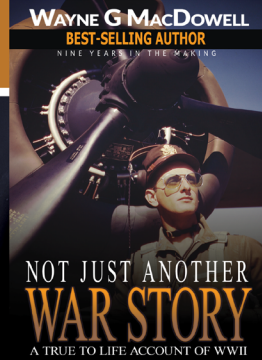
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It is the spring of 1942 and as Steve Carmichael celebrates graduating from the University of Florida, it is clear to every young man in America that a war is on. Six months have passed since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and ordinary citizens stand united, ready to fight against the tyranny of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.

REVIEW

"This is one of those rare books you won't be able to put down. The thorough and realistic descriptions of various situations made me feel like I was a part of the action. When missions were being flown, I felt like I knew the characters and found myself hoping they make a certain decision or cheering them on. It gave me a much better appreciation for what the airmen, as well as the ground crews, went through during WWII, including the emotional attachments that developed not only between people, but with the aircraft." D. SAMUEL

Steve grew up on a cattle ranch in Kissimmee, Florida. His two passions: baseball and flying. At the age of 11, his father, Ray, purchased an old mail-route biplane, and within a year, Steve was soaring with the birds. It was an easy decision for Steve to join the Army Air Corps and pursue his desire to pilot the B-17 Flying Fortress. In flight school, he meets his future copilot and best friend, Howie Van Dyke. Stationed overseas in Chelveston, England, with the Eighth Air Force, they form the tight-knit crew—Pappy's Pack in the 305th Bomb Group. Action-packed air battles ensue as they fight deadly flak and German Luftwaffe in the skies of occupied Europe. Though they must complete a total of 30 missions before earning a trip back to the States, a young British nurse named Maggie captures the attention of Steve, and he finds himself torn by both the uncertainty of love and the business of war.

A story of hope, dreams, and love in a war-torn world. Available online in both print and digital and at your local bookstore.

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Turkey in the Swamp

Nancy Lee Bethea

My dad may have been the most untraditional traditional father known to man. He knew how to play in life's gray areas ... safely. A master of semantics? Yes. A splitter of hairs? Sometimes. A father who knew how to leave an inheritance richer than money? Absolutely.

"Turkey in the Swamp" remains my favorite family legacy of his, which began over three decades ago.

Held the day after Thanksgiving at Washington Oaks State Park, my dad invited all extended family members and friends to share food, football, and fun in the park. We enjoyed the Thanksgiving leftovers, hiked, took pictures in the rose garden, played football, and sat and talked. Golden November light settled over my family members like a soft, oversized sweater that day. I recall my big brother, Michael, carrying my then 7-year-old nephew pretending he was the football! I remember playing with my nieces and nephews, all of whom have jobs and families of their own now.

But the best part was the music. Our family is a musical one, and all five of my older siblings played an instrument in the school band or sang in the school chorus. At that first "Turkey in the Swamp," my dad pulled out his ukelele, strummed a few notes, and then sang new lyrics to the old folk song, "Turkey in the Straw."

Since then, we have held "Turkey in the Swamp," also known in our family as "The Day After," at the beach, at other state parks, and at family member's homes. A few years ago, we wrote new lyrics for "Turkey in the Swamp" My nephew's wife, my niece's husband, and I then performed the song for all our family members. Well, we tried to perform it, but we laughed so hard, we had to start over several times.

More than thirty years have passed since that first gathering. Since then, we've added and lost family members from marriages, divorces, births, and deaths. We lost my dad in 2013.

This year, we are looking forward to another "Day After" get-together at my nephew's house. We will welcome new babies, celebrate one sibling's recent retirement, and empathize with my husband's recent cancer diagnosis.

It's a family tradition that gets sweeter as time goes by. And that's the best kind of holiday tradition. 🦃

Nancy Lee Bethea leads the Creative Writing program at LaVilla School of the Arts in Jacksonville.



“

A memoir forces me to stop and remember carefully. It is an exercise in truth. In a memoir, I look at myself, my life, and the people I love the most in the mirror of the blank screen. In a memoir, feelings are more important than facts, and to write honestly, I have to confront my demons.

ISABEL ALLENDE





Modern Traditions

Bob Ellis

I'm seated under the oak at the center of our backyard, carefully planning the murder of my Grandpa Bill. It's December 8th, my butt is numb, frozen in the snow, and I'm joined by my father, mother, and sister, Lisa. Baffling, considering Grandpa Bill passed on five years ago.

Grandpa Bill was raised Catholic in Detroit, his family celebrating both Christmas and the newer Kwanzaa. Grandma Grace grew up Jewish in the Detroit suburb of Oak Park, with presents distributed during Hannukah. After high school, Bill worked at the Hamtramck assembly plant putting fenders on Chryslers, Dodges, and Plymouths. Bill and Grace had made it to the middle class.

In the 1960s, a blended family like Bill and Grace's residing in suburban Livonia was still rare: a Black man and a white woman, a Catholic and a Jew. When they entered the local bars lining Plymouth Road, no joke's opening lines covered all the possible permutations. Grandpa Bill was seldom called upon to fight tormentors; a large, amiable man, he got along with everyone. Grandma Gracie could cook up a dream, making them a popular couple.

Bill and Grace Harris refused to kowtow to friends and relations who suggested they pick just one of the established holidays to celebrate in December. Difficulty selecting a single holiday for omnipotence was not the sole driver of Grandpa Bill's eventual rejection of December's traditional festivals.

No, the huge financial cost of subscribing to the holidays' presents was the problem. The obligations of Christmas with many gifts on one day, combined with the multiday, multi-gift expectations of Hannukah and Kwanzaa, broke the man. After my dad and his four brothers and three sisters were born, the unfortunate man required over one hundred presents each year just for the children, plus the gifts he exchanged with Grace, their parents, and many siblings.

Bill's epiphany came one desperate November, the year the auto-plant strike depleted his savings. With poverty looming, Grandpa was actively pondering new belief systems when he viewed Huntley-Brinkley discussing how the Bodhisattva, seated under a peepal tree, finally gained enlightenment, becoming the Buddha on a long-past December 8th.

The next day, pawing through *The Detroit Free Press* at lunch, a co-worker informed Bill that December 8th was

designated, for some unknown reason, "Pretend to be a Time-Traveler Day." They had had a good laugh over that.

"What kind of idjit would celebrate pretending to travel back in time?" his co-worker asked.

As the pair stopped guffawing, Bill had his epiphany.

"I might," he mysteriously replied.

That evening, Bill went home to his family of nine in their modest suburban house. "I've an announcement. We will no longer celebrate Christmas, Hannukah, or Kwanzaa, all redolent with their crass commercialism and insistence on presents."

My father said he stared in alarm at his brother, Allen, and it wasn't just over Grandpa's use of big words they would need to look up later.

"From now on, we have our own unique Harris family holiday. December 8th will be 'Time-Traveling Bodhi Day.' We will sit under a tree and imagine travelling back into the past to attain enlightenment. This day will make us focus on becoming better human beings and eliminate the season's emphasis on exchanging presents."

Dad said he and his siblings wailed, and it wasn't only from the loss of holiday loot. They pictured themselves sitting under a tree in December, especially once snow covered the ground.

* * *

My parents now live in Grandma and Grandpa's old house, and the tradition continues. The family convenes on December 8th under the now-big oak my grandfather planted back then. There are no presents for any of us, so we silently sit and contemplate how traveling back in time and killing Grandpa Bill would restore joy and social conformity, not to mention Legos and remote-controlled cars, to our lives.

Problems remain; we must murder Grandpa after Grandma gave birth to their last child so I and my cousins will be born, but before Grandpa can create "Time-Traveling Bodhi Day" and eliminate December presents. This requires mindful concentration on logic, cause and effect, and ethics, all keys to gaining enlightenment.

Grandpa sure knew what he was doing. ✨

Bob Ellis, retired exec, has lived on three continents and swum in all the oceans.





A Time-Tested Christmas Memory

Alice Klaxton

As a child growing up in Hancock, New Hampshire, I was the product of French-Canadian parents who thrived on the customs of the old country. One such custom was the holiday treat of staying up way past my bedtime on Christmas Eve, going out very late at night to attend Midnight Mass, then heading back home for an incredible feast of assorted meat pies, pastries, and cakes, the aroma of which could be inhaled from blocks away. Mother would cook for days creating the treats that gained her notoriety throughout the entire French community.

There was a certain glow about Mom on those days. She didn't seem to mind all the hard work. I remember her face being beat red as she tirelessly put one pie after another into that old black stove in the kitchen, and into which only she knew how long to leave them in. Dad's job here was pretty much relegated to bystander, but when it came to the best looking, positively gorgeous, green Christmas pine tree, it was all about Dad. He had that natural instinct for knowing just which one to cut down from the many growing in the woods out back. It was the very first thing you saw and smelled as you entered our home on Christmas Eve.

The guest list for this occasion included grandparents, aunts, uncles and various cousins from both sides of the family. Mother's four girls were required to take a nap after dinner so as not to fall asleep during Mass, and no matter what the weather, we drove, or sometimes walked, to our local Catholic church and were firmly planted in our seats by eleven thirty sharp. Our job, as dutiful children, was to behave during the service. Then, and only then, we would be allowed to open one gift before going to bed, saving the rest for Christmas morning.

The next task on Christmas Eve became the responsibility of my older sister and I to keep my two younger siblings well behaved during Mass, lest the transgressions of the one should reflect negatively on all four of us. Not an insurmountable task, but it did require our utmost diligence. Mary, the youngest, convinced she was the next Petula Clark,

was a screecher. Keeping her mouth shut was paramount to our success. It was always the same procedure. Be good and you would reap the rewards and be allowed to stay up late and visit with relatives, some of which we saw only once a year. Misbehave, and suffer the consequences.

We were also allowed to wear our finest Christmas duds on that night before anyone else did on Christmas day. They never looked the same after that night though. It seemed the sparkle on those brand-new Christmas outfits was sacred to that particular occasion alone.

Once inside the church, Dad would go in first, followed by the four girls, and then Mom on the end, lest one miscreant needed to be removed in a hurry. When the Mass was over, homeward we trekked to enjoy the festivities. This was a night of celebration never to be forgotten.

At the head of the clan was Memere Leda, who with her conspicuous head of blue hair would announce her arrival like the second coming, as if to say that now the party could begin. I remember, one such year, my poor Memere left home and arrived at our soiree without her false teeth. She felt terrible. We all tried to tell her it didn't matter, but it took the childlike wisdom of my little sister Beth to assuage her fear and embarrassment by telling her, "It's gonna be okay, Memere. Mama says they all grow back, and the tooth fairy will bring you lots of money tonight." Coming from such a loving source, and safe in the knowledge that the tooth fairy would do a land office business, Memere then resumed her normal posture in the group.

These are the holiday memories I have retained, represented in the people and places I knew growing up and who continue to haunt me, in the most delightful of ways. ✨

Alice Klaxton has retired to Florida to enjoy the sun and her love of writing.



The Rutabaga Wars: A Holiday Tradition of Food and Fracture

Lee Ann Stevens

As a child, I wanted my family to be more interesting. To have foods and traditions that defined us as something other than what we were: a typical 1960s suburban family with four kids, two parents, and a station wagon with wood-grained trim. I wanted to at least be like the neighbors, who were Italian. Their pot of spaghetti sauce made from an ancestral recipe simmered on the stove all day, with aromas of garlic, onions, meat, and herbs reaching my nose through their open windows as I rode by on my bike.

“As a child, I danced the Highland Fling at the Scottish Club,” my mother offered me as consolation, as she demonstrated a few moves in the kitchen. Her father had emigrated to the U.S. from Glasgow with his family when he was 12, but while the connection to Scotland was close, the only evidence was that my grandfather wore a Scottish tam and preferred orange marmalade on his toast.

On the other side of the family was the Scandinavian connection. Occasionally Lefse would appear in our refrigerator, a Norwegian potato flatbread that my father would smear with butter, sprinkle with sugar, and proclaim to be heavenly as he ate it. And he always wanted my mother to make Fattigman, also known as poor man cookies, during the holidays, but she resisted because she was health conscious and they’re deep fried.

Her resistance to frying Fattigman paled, though, in comparison to the father-son battles over rutabagas that

were waged at every holiday meal. After the turkey was carved, and the side dishes were passed around, my father would insist that my brother have some of the mashed rutabagas that were always on the menu. Orange and slightly bitter, I liked the taste and its contrast to the sweeter side dishes, but my brother, usually an adventurous eater, hated it.

I don’t know my father’s history with rutabagas—perhaps it was a connection to his mother who died when he was 11—or maybe it was a food his Norwegian grandparents served. Rutabagas are a popular staple on the Scandinavian table—mashed with carrots and potatoes, baked into casseroles, made into soup. A cross between a cabbage and a turnip, rutabagas can be grown in cold climates and stored through long winters.

Whatever the source of my father’s love for rutabagas, he had a strong need for us all to appreciate them at every Thanksgiving and Christmas meal. But my brother’s equally strong resistance to eating them turned every holiday meal into a battle scene. I guess family traditions can come in all flavors, and ours was bittersweet. Today, I continue to enjoy rutabagas, and my brother reports that he likes them too, so this tradition anyway, has not stood the test of time. ✨

Lee Ann Stevens writes about her life and times from her home in Port St. Lucie.

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The road to hell is paved with adverbs.

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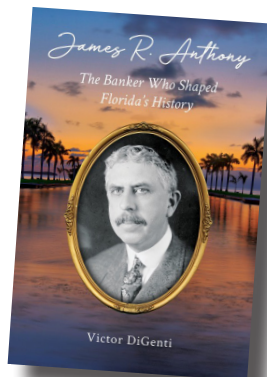
Alborada (Dawn): A Cross-Cultural Memoir in Poetry by **Nylda Dieppa** received the coveted 2024 Juan Felipe Herrera Best Poetry Book Honorable Mention award by International Latino Book Awards. From the dawn of her first crush to the rise of her longing to belong and be loved, Dieppa shines daylight on the anguish and delights of growing up and parenting. Her lyrical and narrative poems highlight the shadows of culture shock, sorrow and betrayal, illuminating the deliverance from midnight's despair to the hope and wholeness of a new day's dawn. Available at orangeblossombooks.com/store/p53/alborada.html. More info: nyldadieppa.com and "Word Sketches" nyldadieppa.com/subscribe.



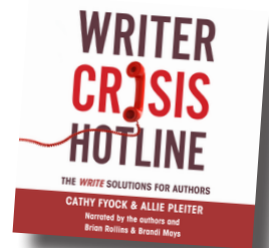
Ocala's *Good Life* magazine featured seven short stories submitted by **The Freedom Writers Group** in the September/October 2024 issue. Stories of love, laughter, and loyalty from the pets that shaped their lives included "Frankie" by **Aviva Merion**, followed by "Natasha's Garden" by **Angie M. Mayo**, "Lassie & Dawn" by **Rachel C. Thompson**, "Suki" by **Carrie Schachter**, "Tempest & Orion" by **Anthony V. LaPenta**, "My Son Baron" by **Gail Corley**, and "Pay Attention" by **Carol Jones**, Freedom Writers group leader. The group has been invited to submit additional nonfiction stories for future issues.



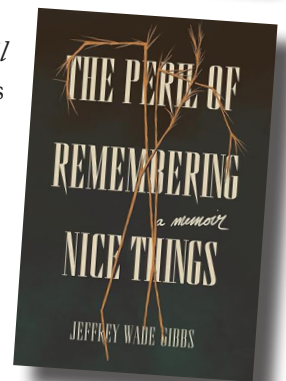
Biographer and ghostwriter **Victor DiGenti** has blended Florida's 1920s history with the real-life tale of James R. Anthony and his rise from Georgia farm boy to the "King of Chain Banks," controlling nearly 60 Florida banks. *James R. Anthony: The Banker Who Shaped Florida's History* (Windrusher Hall Press) introduces us to iconic developers like Henry Flagler and Carl Fisher, as well as pioneers, politicians, and sketchy con men. Anthony observed it all, working and profiting through the good times and moving on before the economic balloon burst in 1926. Available on Amazon in either eBook or paperback at bit.ly/4feWCaA.



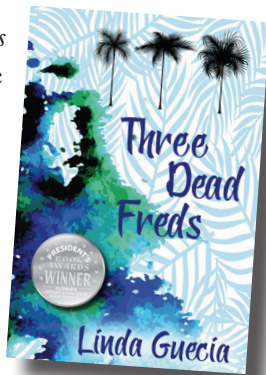
Cathy Fyock is celebrating the launch of her audio book, *Writer Crisis Hotline: The Write Solutions for Authors*. For more information, visit amzn.to/40mSTHR.



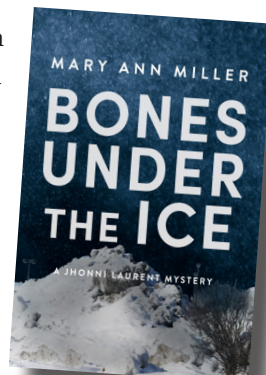
Jeffrey Gibbs memoir, *The Peril of Remembering Nice Things* was released on October 22nd. Twenty-five years ago, at 5:00 AM, Robert Gibbs left the old hotel in Starke, Florida, wandered down to the train tracks running through the middle of town, and waited for the morning freight to deliver its killing blow. What drove the intelligent and handsome Southern charmer to suicide? What demons pursued him from the sinister history of the South? In *The Peril of Remembering Nice Things* Jeffrey Gibbs explores the answer in a true story *Kirkus Reviews* calls, "A gripping, insightful reckoning with America's original sin."



Linda Guecia's *Three Dead Freds* is a Silver Medal winner of the Florida Authors and Publishers Association President's Book Award under Adult Fiction: Mystery/Suspense. This story is about vulnerability and endurance. It takes place on tiny Amelia Island, Florida, as comfortable as a flannel blanket yet as tangled as a spider's web. And in keeping with the necessary dichotomies of life where the sun shines in the rain, there's silence in music, youth in old age, lies in truth, hate in love, savagery in civilization, and evil in good.



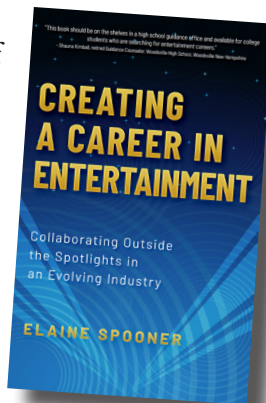
Bones Under the Ice by **Mary Ann Miller** won the Silver Medal in the Mystery/Crime Fiction category from the Royal Palm Literary Awards. The book is the first in the Jhonni Laurent series and in it, the local female sheriff uncovers an embezzling scheme while searching for the killer of a teenage girl whose connection to a century-old feud threatens to implode the small farming community and whose death reminds the sheriff of her own family demons.



Paul Iasevoli is happy to announce that his minimalist poem, "Things Left by the Dead" has been published in the November-December issue of Cathexis Northwest Press [cathexisnorthwestpress.com/nov-dec-2024]. This is Paul's third poem accepted by the online journal. You can read Paul's other poems and short fictions for free from links on his website pauliasevoliwords.com.

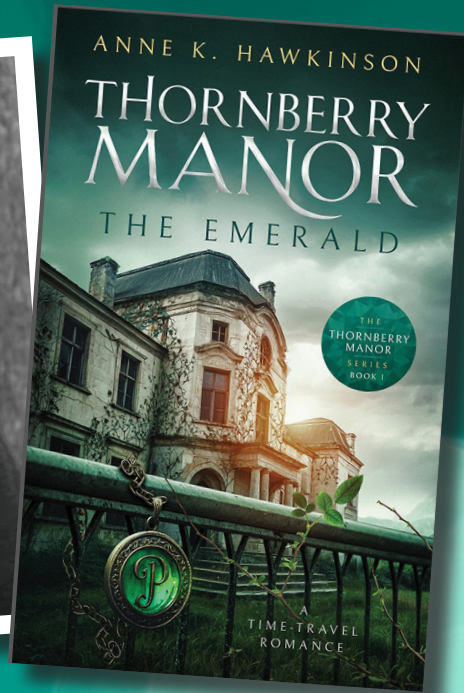


Announcing the publication of *Creating a Career in Entertainment; Collaborating Outside the Spotlights in an Evolving Industry* by **Elaine Spooner**. The author, a technology change agent in Hollywood for over thirty years, met professionals during Hollywood's digital revolution as she experienced it at Internet startups, 21st Century Fox, Warner Bros., Disney, and Universal. The chapters include success takeaways, interviews from behind the screens, and advice from experts. The stories are set in professions including animation, production, performing, technology, game design, and marketing. Get more information at elainewritesmedia.com or email the author at elainewrites3022@gmail.com.



Chris Kneer's debut financial thriller, *Bluebird*, was published on October 24. *Bluebird* is the first installment in a series known as the Cigar City Thrillers. When Jason Miles is accused of masterminding a massive tax fraud scheme, he is forced to go on the run—jeopardizing everything he knows and everyone he loves. As his pursuers close in, a shocking betrayal leaves Jason alone to either win or die. Kneer is a long-time banker and Florida-based author whose stories are set in and around Tampa Bay. The book is available at chriskneerauthor.com or most online retailers.





Celebrating Anne K. Hawkinson

The Florida Writers Association is so very fortunate to have a number of remarkably dedicated volunteers. Anne Hawkinson is one who goes above and beyond. We celebrate her as a long-time contributor to the FWA blog.

Anne began writing posts for FWA's first blog created way-back-when by Chris Hamilton. She stuck with writing for us through the next two iterations of the blog, providing monthly posts that are consistently delivered on time and address the craft of writing in interesting ways.

Anne has decided to step away from writing for the blog now, but not before saying that if we need something she will step in again. And not before delivering her 200th post for the FWA blog.

Yes, Anne has written 200 blog posts for FWA!

Anne is a prolific and award-winning author. Her books include *The Ghost Writer*, *The Mystery of Moz Hollow*, and the Scotland's Knight series. Soon to be released, *The Emerald* is the first in her four-book Thornberry Manor series.

Here Anne explains how she became a writer:

"I was lucky, growing up in a family that valued learning. By the time I entered kindergarten, I knew how to read, print, and write in cursive. Bedtime stories were a mainstay, and trips to the local library were as common as those to the grocery store. I couldn't have known then, but they were instrumental in my becoming a writer.

"My grown-up self writes historical romance/drama stories that I hope will find their way into the hands of an eager reader, ready to embark on an adventure that I've imagined, crafted, and tucked between the covers."

Learn more about Anne and her writing at annehawkinson.com.

Thank you, thank you Anne, for all you have done to support FWA and the writing community. We appreciate you!



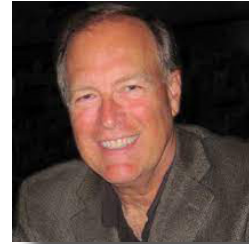


Royal Palm
Literary Awards

Published Book of the Year

*Strange Timing:
A Story from the Files of Alexander Strange*
J.C. Bruce

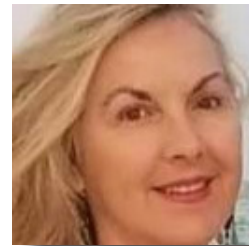
J.C. Bruce is a Florida journalist and author of The Strange Files series of mysterious adventures, which features Alexander Strange, America's only full-time reporter covering news of the weird.



Unpublished Book of the Year

Before the Thunder
Katherine Nelson-Born

Katherine Nelson-Born's New Orleans roots flavor writing refined in MFA and PhD studies and now seasoned by decades as a Floridian, serving as Northwest Florida Poet Laureate 2020-2023.



Best Children's Book

Dressing for Dreamtime
J.E. Rogers

Jeanne E. Rogers is an award-winning author who writes under the pseudonym J.E. Rogers. By anthropomorphizing unusual animals, she teaches children about endangered animals and environmental issues.



Best Short Prose of the Year

"Five O'clock Shadows"
Scott Rosch

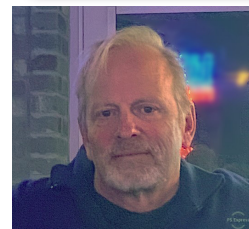
Scott Rosch is an award-winning writer of fiction. His third book, *Alligator Jacks*, won the 2023 RPLA Gold for best unpublished suspense thriller.



Best Poem of the Year

"A Later-In-Life Love"
Steve Biersdorf

Steve Biersdorf has written professionally as a general assignment reporter, editorial writer, PR flak, freelance grant writer, fiction writer, and poet. He is a resident of Gulf Breeze, Florida, and an alum of Florida State University.



NextGen Writing Excellence Award

"Mitten's Story"
Charlotte Ledwell

Charlotte enjoys art, reading, and writing. She loves drawing tiny people or animals and making little stories about them.





Royal Palm Literary Awards

2024 Royal Palm Literary Award Winners

PUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR RUNNERS-UP

- 1st. The Lost Dresses of Italy by M.A. McLaughlin
- 2nd. The Gullwing Colony by Antonio Simon, Jr.
- 3rd. The Hidden History of Amelia Island by Jeff Suwak
- 4th. Searching for Lilly by Eugene R. Milhizer

UNPUBLISHED BOOK OF THE YEAR RUNNERS-UP

- 1st. The Whispering Chamber by Chet Meisner
- 2nd. Rainbow Shakes the Tree by Susan Dobson
- 3rd. The Reality Rescue by David M. Pearce
- 4th. All the Gray In Between by Aimee Hill

PUBLISHED BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Blended Genre

- Gold. The Murder Plague by Scott Michael Powers
- Silver. Rem's Chance by Dave J. Andrae

Fantasy

- Gold. The Gullwing Colony by Antonio Simon, Jr.

Historical Fiction

- Gold. The Lost Dresses of Italy by M.A. McLaughlin

Mainstream or Literary

- Gold. Neena Lee Is Seeing Things by Sheila Athens
- Silver. Seeking Sarah by M.A. Robinson
- Bronze. Godspeed, Cedar Key by Michael Presley Bobbitt

Mystery or Crime

- Gold. Searching for Lilly by Eugene R. Milhizer
- Silver. Bones Under the Ice by Mary Ann Miller
- Bronze. In the Crosshairs: The Body on Leffis Key

Novella

- Gold. Dark Days on Bear Creek, The Depression Years, 1929-1939 by Harry T. Barnes

Romance

- Gold. The Road Home by Carol J. Post

Science Fiction

- Gold. Strange Timing: A Story From the Files of Alexander Strange by J.C. Bruce
- Silver. The Feather's Push by Noel Zamot

Thriller or Suspense

- Gold. Strange Timing: A Story From the Files of Alexander Strange by J.C. Bruce
- Silver. Killer State of Mind by Dr. Leanna Floyd
- Bronze. Mia's Journey by Diane Byington

Women's Fiction

- Gold. The Disappeared by Rebecca J. Sanford
- Silver. Not So Little Things by Kyle Ann Robertson
- Bronze. Neena Lee Is Seeing Things by Sheila Athens

Young Adult or New Adult

- Gold. The Dead Can Be Stubborn by L.H. Davis III

UNPUBLISHED BOOK-LENGTH FICTION

Blended Genre

- Gold. Before the Thunder by Katherine Nelson-Born
- Silver. All The Gray In Between by Aimee Hill
- Bronze. London Knot by K.M. Stull

Fantasy

- Gold. Handsome and Hideous by Maria Fox
- Silver. Witch's Daughter by Kevin Murphy

Historical Fiction

- Gold. Blood of the Inkas by Madeline Izzo
- Silver. All The Broken Angels by Pat Black-Gould and Steve Hardiman

Mainstream or Literary

- Gold. My Life in So Many Words by Tom LaMarr
- Silver. The Last Verse by Eric Kline
- Bronze. Anhinga by Lynn Taylor

Mystery or Crime

- Gold. Rainbow Shakes the Tree by Susan Dobson
- Silver. West Texas Nightmare by Frances Hight and Mark McWaters
- Bronze. The Body in the Malibran Theater by Barbara Marangon

Novelette

- Gold. Bloodhound by Mark McWaters
- Silver. Bad Things Happen in the Dark by Nicci Rothe

Novella

- Gold. Five O'Clock Shadows by Scott Rosch
- Silver. Policewoman: Redux by Steve Biersdorf

Romance

- Gold. Those Who Can, Date by Barbara Meyers
- Silver. The Elevator Glitch by Cassandra Alexander
- Bronze. Return To Me by Stephen Leitschuh

Science Fiction

- Gold. The Whispering Chamber by Chet Meisner
- Silver. The Reality Rescue by David M. Pearce.
- Bronze. Planet of Souls by C.P. Swift

Thriller or Suspense

- Gold. Saving Grace by Richard Drummer
- Silver. Zeruzeru by L. Reynolds Andric
- Bronze. Blue Magic on Mushroom Island

Women's Fiction

- Gold. Chasing Shiny Objects by Marisa Glassman

Young Adult or New Adult

- Gold. Planet of Outcasts, Moon Crusher 2 by Susan Kite
- Silver. The Megaclub Soldiers by Colleen Mueller

PUBLISHED BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

Autobiography or Memoir

- Gold. Lost the Plot: Finding Our Story in a Confusing World by David S. Wisener
- Silver. Exiled, A Refugee's Story by Kenneth R. Overman



Royal Palm Literary Awards

Educational or Informational

Gold. Everglades: Exploring a Wetland like No Other by Anne Edge Ake

History

Gold. The Hidden History of Amelia Island by Jeff Suwak

UNPUBLISHED BOOK-LENGTH NONFICTION

History

Gold. She Soars: Trailblazing Female Pilots in Florida by Bridges DelPonte

LITERATURE FOR YOUTH

Published Children's Picture Book

Gold. Grandpa Heaven by Shutta Crum
Silver. Diego the Donkey by Lolisa Marie Monroe

Unpublished Children's Picture Book

Gold. Avery and Goober by Colleen Reiser Heitmann
Silver. Just Enough Room for Christmas by Robin Currie
Bronze. Cone and Skate by Amy Nicolai

Published Early Reader or Chapter Book

Gold. Dressing for Dreamtime by J.E. Rogers.
Silver. Brothers & Sisters: Friends and Foes by Sue O'Halloran

Unpublished Early Reader or Chapter Book

Gold. Moving Madison: A Texas Love Story by Frances Hight

Published Middle-Grade Fiction

Gold. If You Meet the Devil, Don't Shake Hands by Sylvia Whitman
Silver. Dog Days: An I, Clawed Adventure by Cindy Foley
Bronze. Chocolate Andy by John Hope

ANTHOLOGY

Published Anthology Poetry or Prose

Gold. Popcorn Icons and Other Poems Celebrating Movies by Linda Kraus
Silver. If It Comes To That by Marc Frazier
Bronze. Bone Geometry by Katherine Nelson-Born

PUBLISHED & UNPUBLISHED CREATIVE NONFICTION

Published Creative Nonfiction

Gold. The Shoe, A Cuban Girl's First Days in The U.S.A. by Amarilys Gacio Rassler

Unpublished Creative Nonfiction

Gold. Black Scholarship by Loren Leith
Silver. The Guilt Trip by Bethanie Gorny

PUBLISHED & UNPUBLISHED SHORT ENTRIES

Published Poetry

Gold. Chelyabinsk-65 by Steve Biersdorf

Unpublished Poetry

Gold. A Later-in-Life Love by Steve Biersdorf
Silver. The Four Seasons by Kenneth Boyd
Bronze. Pilgrimage by Karen Wilson

Unpublished Short Story

Gold. Soulmate by Jackie Fenn
Silver. I Have More Questions by Kate Newton
Bronze. Connection by Jane Ellen Freeman

Unpublished Flash Fiction or Short-Short Fiction

Gold. A Fortune Cookie for Breakfast by Sharon Ketts
Silver. Shadow of a Doubt by Barbara Rein
Bronze. A Lunchtime Indiscretion by Clayton Hutcheson

NEXTGEN AWARDS

Unpublished Short Fiction—Age 9-11

Gold. Mitten's Story by Charlotte

Unpublished Poetry—Age 16-17

Gold. Her Words by Andrea Malca



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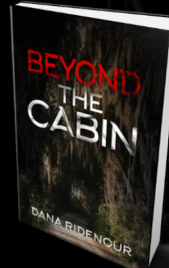
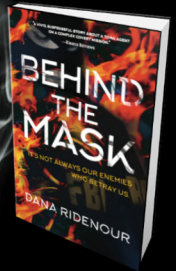
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—AJ Lewis, author of The Amalfi Mysteries

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