



No. 21: March 2021

Upcoming Meetings

March 15

General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Tetsuro Shigematsu

April 19

General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Kevin Spenst

May 17

General Meeting with
Guest Speaker
Janie Chang

June 21

Year-end social
TBC

Meetings via Zoom
until further notice
(links will be emailed
to members prior to each
meeting)

Check out our beautiful new
website with new features for
members!

www.nswriters.org

Write On!

Newsletter of the North Shore Writers' Association
Linking North Shore writers since 1993

President's Message

Janine Cross

I hope this spring edition of our newsletter finds you all productive, happy, and well!

But what if it doesn't?

You do not have to be good.

What if, like me, you're struggling with guilt for all the time spent writing when there are so many other tasks demanding your attention?

You do not have to walk on your knees

For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.

Our current circumstances can exacerbate the challenges faced by writers—isolation, self-doubt, rejection, and feelings of futility (to name just a few).

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

At times, I've floundered wildly to overcome the fear that I will never get published again. In my floundering I've tried dozens of things to improve my writing. Some of them have only increased my uncertainty. But many have not.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are moving across the landscapes, over the prairies and the deep trees, the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, are heading home again.

I remind myself to keep honing my definition of success so it isn't just limited to winning big literary awards, publication by a New York conglomerate, or becoming famous. Success is an email from a friend who's read what I've written and says: *I see you. I hear you. I feel that.* Success is breaking out of ruts by writing something new: a poem, a letter, a pun, a rant. Success is focusing on the work—the deep pleasure of creation—instead of the result.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things.

I don't know the intentions of Mary Jane Oliver (1935 – 2019) when she wrote her poem *Wild Geese*, but I'm fairly certain she wasn't thinking about publication by a New York conglomerate. Instead, it feels as if she were exulting in creating, in saying *I see you. I hear you. I feel that.*

I'm very grateful to belong to the NSWA, to read in the pages of this newsletter works from writers who are expressing their joys and despairs as part of a literary community that sees and hears and shares. May we all continue with our individual and collective successes! ■

A Note from the Editor



*Oh, Spring! I want to go out and feel you and
get inspiration. My old things seem dead. I
want fresh contacts, more vital searching.
- Emily Carr*

Spring is a favourite time. With the local mountains covered still in wintry beauty, the air is coming alive with new birdsong, and green shoots are playing peekaboo with the sodden earth. Perhaps more than the season itself, it is the anticipation of spring that brings the energy.

Many of the pieces in this issue reflect a common theme – a long and exhausting winter that seems to have spanned the whole of last year, and which we can't wait to outstrip even as it drags on. Yet, like the inexorable turning of the seasons, our collective imagination reaches for new light. It reminds me that writing is a powerful tool to help us through times of crisis – to emote, express, escape and ultimately emerge, bewildered and blinking at a novel sun. (Yes, I had fun with the alliterations.)

I am glad that many new members have joined us. I look forward to receiving your poetry, prose or writerly news for our quarterly newsletter.

Let's keep writing and re-emerging, friends.
Wiley Ho
Editor, NSWA Newsletter

Next newsletter submission deadline: June 4

Table of Contents

President's Message	1
A Note from the Editor	2
Newsletter Submission Guidelines.....	2
Upcoming Meetings and Guest Speakers	3
A Special Welcome to New Members	4
Critique Boutique	5
NSWA Saturday Write-in	6
Dare to be Heard	7
North Shore Writers Festival	7
B R A V O !.....	8
100 WORD CHALLENGE	9
Nonfiction	10
Poetry.....	14
Bulletin Board	16
Events Calendar	17
Executive 2020-2021.....	17
The Last Page	18

Newsletter Submission Guidelines

- Submissions from NSWA members only please.
- Send writing news (recent publications, book launches, notices, etc.) and your creations (poems, short fiction or non-fiction pieces up to 600 words) to editor@nswriters.org, or by mail to NSWA, PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3.
- Writing that appears in the NSWA newsletter is eligible for submission to the NSWA writing contest.
- Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality and reliability of their content.
- Check your submissions for spelling, grammar and punctuation prior to submission. Word attachments are preferred over email text. Accompanying images welcome.
- Publication in *WRITE ON!* is at the discretion of the Editor, in consultation with the Executive.

Disclaimer: Any views contained in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the NSWA

Upcoming Meetings and Guest Speakers

Monday
March 15

Guest Speaker
Tetsuro Shigematsu



Described by *The Georgia Straight* as “one of the city’s best artists,” **Tetsuro Shigematsu** tells stories across an array of media. He is an author, playwright, broadcaster, and filmmaker. A former writer for CBC Television’s *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, in 2004, he became the first person-of-colour to host a daily national radio program in Canada when he took over *The Roundup* on CBC Radio. His solo-work, *Empire of the Son*, has played in 18 cities to over 20,000 people, and was described by Colin Thomas as, “one of the best shows ever to come out of Vancouver. Ever.”

His most recent work, *1 Hour Photo*, published by Talonbooks, won a Jesse Award for Significant Artistic Achievement, and was nominated for a Governor General’s Award. Tetsuro recently signed a book deal with Penguin Random House to write his memoirs.

Tetsuro will be leading us through a workshop entitled “*All the Feels.*”

Monday
April 18

Guest Speaker
Kevin Spenst



For Poetry Month, we have **Kevin Spenst**, a Pushcart Poetry nominee and the author of *Ignite*, *Jabbering with Bing Bong*, and over a dozen chapbooks.

Kevin’s work has won the Lush Triumphant Award for Poetry, been nominated for both the Alfred G. Bailey Prize and the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry, and has appeared in dozens of publications. He co-organizes the Dead Poets Reading Series, and teaches Creative Writing at Vancouver Community College.

www.kevinспенst.com

Monday
May 17

Guest Speaker
Janie Chang



Janie Chang writes historical fiction with a personal connection, drawing from a family history with 36 generations of recorded genealogy. She grew up listening to stories about life in a small Chinese town in the years before the Second World War and tales of ancestors who encountered dragons, ghosts, and immortals. Her first novel, *Three Souls*, was a finalist for the 2014 BC Book Prize and Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. Her second novel, *Dragon Springs Road*, was a Globe and Mail national bestseller. Both were nominated for the International Dublin Literary Award. Her third book, *The Library of Legends*, released in May 2020, is a Globe and Mail national bestseller. www.janiechang.com

North
Vancouver

City Library

The North Shore Writers' Association

thanks the North Vancouver City Library for their generous support of our ongoing activities and special events, and also for their support of all local writers and readers. The Library plays an active and varied role in the cultural life of our community. For more information and to find out how to participate, go to: www.nvcl.ca

A Special Note to New Members

It's been over 25 years since a group of interested writers gathered at the North Vancouver Lucas Centre for a newly announced event sponsored by the NV Schools Continuing Education program. This inaugural event was hosted by Peggy Trendell-Whittaker (now a deacon at St. Clement's Anglican Church). Peggy talked about her vision for forming the North Shore Writers' Association to a turnout of about 25 eager writers. She asked for volunteers to form a board of directors and some hands-on work. Then the group wrote for a stint of 10 minutes. After only one meeting at a member's home, the NSWA moved to the Capilano Library (The Potlatch Room) for the next 17 years. About six years ago, NSWA moved to our current location (pre-pandemic) on the third floor of the North Van City Library at Lonsdale and 14th Street. For the record, there are still three or four of our current members who were part of the august crew who founded our association. Janine Cross, our current President, is one of the founding members!

In normal years, we meet monthly at the NV City Library from September to November before winter break, and then January to May. Our June meeting is traditionally a "pot-luck" event at the Silk Purse's oceanside venue. Each regular meeting offers a short bit of business, an opportunity for members to announce book launches, a short break for wine and chat followed by a guest speaker. The speakers are selected carefully to cover a range of writerly interests, from established authors and poets, to writing teachers and coaches. They share their stories and tips on publishing, writing craft, and offer insights and inspiration to stay motivated with our own projects.

In this challenging COVID year, we have continued to bring our members together virtually, via Zoom. You are warmly invited to participate in readings at Dare to Be Heard on the first Tuesday of each month, join our regular meetings with guest speakers on the third Monday of each month, participate in our brand-new Critique Boutique to give/receive feedback on drafts (see page 6), join in the monthly Saturday Write-ins, and submit your writerly news, prose and poetry to be included in our quarterly newsletter. Our Editor Wiley Ho welcomes member submissions for consideration (see page 2 for submission guidelines).

Last, you will receive regular emails from Carl Hunter, the NSWA Membership Coordinator, with upcoming NSWA and local writing and reading events, writing contests and Zoom links. Periodically, Carl also forwards notices from the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Authors Association and other writing organizations, which reciprocate the signal boosting.

So, congratulations on joining a nurturing writing community on the North Shore! Dig in!

Welcome, one and all,
Carl Hunter
Membership Coordinator



The Critique Boutique



The Critique Boutique is a new initiative to help writers get that all-important feedback on their work. To check this out, go to the members' section of our website, select the Critique Boutique tab, read the guidelines, and upload up to 2000 words of your work. This is also a chance to hone your critique skills by giving feedback to others.

Some of you may remember Daniel Kalla, an ER doctor and award-winning author who came to speak to NSWA members, in the good old days, when we had in person meetings. When asked what he found most helpful in producing his best-selling books he replied. "After I had been writing for a while, I sent a chapter of my book to another author. The feedback I got was so helpful, I sent every chapter I wrote for people to critique."

Studies show that friendships and social connections provide intellectual stimulation and emotional support through hardships. Staying in relationship with others provides us with a sense of belonging that helps buffer us against stress.

Friendly eyes on our work are really helpful before our writing goes out to the world. Try the Critique Boutique! It's free and friendly help for your writing. Stay connected and write yourself through the pandemic!

I am an admitted critique junkie and was once a member of three such writing groups. I have cut back now and am only a member of two! Any questions, please email me at rodvbaker@gmail.com. Keep connected, keep safe, keep writing!

Rod Baker
Critique Boutique Organizer

Access The Critique Boutique at www.nswriters.org:

1. **Go to Members tab and log in**
2. **Post your work to receive feedback**
3. **Offer critique to others' work**
4. **Learn and have fun!**

Saturday Morning Write-in!

Second Saturday of the month

*Next sessions: March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12
10 am – 12 pm via Zoom*



Writing doesn't always need to be a lonely activity. Why not write with other writers? Working together gives us energy and discipline that we can't get toiling at our desks alone. One Saturday morning each month a group of North Shore writers write together via Zoom.

We start by saying hello to one another, complete a short warm-up exercise and then get down to working on our individual projects. There's a 5–10-minute break halfway through and a wrap-up at the end. Sharing of work is optional. You'd be surprised at how much writing you can do in a couple of hours.

Join us for our next session on March 13th, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon!

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=WjM2UVA3V0ZFZlRNNnovbXFVK01Sdz09>
Passcode: NSWA

Upcoming hosts:

March 13: Joan Boxall

April 10: Martha Warren

Dare To Be Heard

Now **first Tuesday** of each month!



If you're a writer and want to read your work to a non-critical audience, why not attend the next Dare to be Heard Literary Evening from the comfort of your own home? Dare welcomes all different genre writers at all stages of the journey and interested listeners, too.

Ordinarily, Dare meets at the NV City Library, but during these extraordinary times and until further notice, we will meet virtually via Zoom on the **first Tuesday of each month**.

Dare to share!
Hear you there!

Upcoming sessions:
Apr 6, May 4, Jun 1
Time: 7:00 pm

Venue: Zoom (link will be emailed to members in advance of each session)

Host: Elly Stornebrink

north shore
**WRITERS
FESTIVAL**



- Where Readers and Writers Meet -

After an unexpected hiatus in 2020, we have news that the 2021 North Shore Writers Festival is going ahead!

SAVE THESE DATES: April 12-17.
VENUE: Online

NSWA will be hosting a session on Saturday, April 17:

Writing for Young Adults
with Eileen Cook and Jackie Bateman

Watch for updates at www.northshorewritersfestival.com.

B R A V O !

Congratulations to **Erin MacNair** for Honourable Mention in *Pulp Literature's* 2020 Raven Short Story contest! "***It Can Be Done with Words***" is set to be published in the Spring Issue (#30). Erin also has a speculative fiction piece coming out in the 2021 spring issue of *Prairie Fire Magazine*. *Detour Ahead*, an online lit mag showcasing stories of navigating Covid, has published her nonfiction piece "***Zoom Meeting in Progress.***" As well, two of her short stories, "***Where Things Rise, Unannounced,***" and "***The Chemistry of Unhappiness,***" published in *EVENT* magazine, are now featured on the podcast *Fresh New Shorts*. Listen at: [Fresh New Shorts Podcast \(podbean.com\)](https://podbean.com). Way to go, Erin!



Brava to **Joan Boxall** for her recent article "***Cycling Without Age: Wind in the Hair, And All That***" published in *Inspired 55+ Lifestyle Magazine*. Her article can be accessed at: seniorliving.com/2021/02/25.



Joan also shares an inspiring piece about her recovery from hip surgery on page 13, entitled "***Hip Revision, Balance Regained.***"

Hats off to **Sharon McInnes**, NSWA's former Executive member (2018-2019), on her recent writerly accomplishments. Her short story "***Various Functions of Fire***" took first place in the fiction category in the Victoria Writers Society 2020 Competition and was made into a podcast on *Stories Less Spoken*, which can be heard at [Episode Three: How to Escape \(buzzsprout.com\)](https://buzzsprout.com). Sharon's piece starts at minute 21.

Also, Sharon's short story, "***The Neighbour,***" which she read at Dare to be Heard and received feedback for, was shortlisted for the 2020 FBCW BC & Yukon Short Fiction contest, then took second prize in the fiction category in the 2020 Muskoka Authors' Association contest. Then, Sharon was approached by Caitlin Hicks of Some Kinda Woman, who made it into a podcast, renamed "***Joe.***" Here is the link: <https://www.caitlinhicks.com/wordpress/joe-by-guest-author-sharon-mcinnnes/>. These days, Sharon calls Cumberland home and is a member of the Comox Valley Writers Society, serving on the newsletter committee. Sharon says "Hello to everyone at NSWA!"

Your Newsletter Editor **Wiley Ho** is pleased that her short story "***Blind Luck***" will be included in *Chrysanthemum Voices of the Taiwanese Diaspora Volume II*, due for release in 2021. Wiley also contributes regularly to the **North Vancouver Recreation and Culture's** blog **Active Living**, interviewing community members and showcasing local talent, community resources, and everyday heroes. Here's a recent article [Love Your Public Library | North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission \(nvrc.ca\)](https://www.nvrc.ca)



100 WORD CHALLENGE

on the theme **Things that make you go hmm**

Just Hmming Along *Rod Baker*

Hmm is the space when you look before you leap,
the brake that stops you buying something too cheap.
Hmm creates the pause to peruse a situation,
making sure you've considered all the information.
Hmm slows down angry feelings when you want to kill,
gives time, allows some breathing, gonna help you chill.
However, hmm is the space, where I rarely abide.
I get enthusiastic, fired up, bubbling inside,
grab the wheel, spin my tires, go smokin' outa sight.
Really shoulda learned that hmm-ing space is right,
but just dashed off this poem, in a flash of blue light.

Things That Make You Go Hmm *Linden Carroll*

Human intelligence is the highest in our world. Hmm!
Take the car for example (as far away as possible
please). The new and improved vehicle rolls off the
assembly line. "Yes, it's mine" we cry gleefully
grabbing it. It's a deserving gift having fought so
valiantly through almost insuperable computer issues.
Accolades to us!

Fully computerized, this car drives itself. How
ingenious is that? Yes! This bright, shiny brainchild
fulfills all our hopes and dreams. We are as joyful
children again.

Do we really need a car that steers and brakes for
us? Hmm.

Things That Make You Go Hmm *Bridget Smith*

"Mum, you have the sense of humour of a 9-year-old
boy!"

Nothing captures the attention of a youthful
audience more than talk of boogers. I am a teacher
and thus little fazes me. It is no wonder that my

sensibilities and humor have adapted over the years;
I need to relate to my audience and capture their
undivided attention. Young boys vault out of their
seats with excitement when the topic veers towards
anything slightly 'gauche'. Nothing says "all eyes on
me" better than a discussion on how it is so cold in
Quebec that, at -20, your boogers freeze!

Facial Recognition *Karen Bower*

She is so familiar, My Bubble Woman. This woman I
know well. We connect through a reflected glance
multiple times each day. My mental image of her with
parts she doesn't like edited out.

Yesterday I encountered the other type of facial
recognition: The need to renew my Driver's Licence
and Care Card. Remember the last step? The new
photo? "That's a good one," the clerk said, and turned
it for me to see.

OHMYGOD! It ensures I, and My Bubble Woman, the
morning and evening bathroom mirror buddy, will be
posted on a Terrorist Watch List!

Next 100 Word Challenge:

Wanderlust

- ✓ Strictly 100 words max (excluding title, if any).
- ✓ Hyphenated words, contractions and acronyms count as single words.
- ✓ Inclusion of theme words optional.
- ✓ Fiction, non-fiction and poetry are all welcome.

Submit your 100-word masterpiece to
editor@nswriters.org
or by mail to

NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3

Deadline September 1, 2021 (Fall Newsletter)

"When forced to work within a strict framework the
imagination is taxed to its utmost - and will produce
its richest ideas. Given total freedom, the work is
likely to sprawl." - T.S. Eliot

Nonfiction

Hip Revision, Balance Regained

Joan Boxall



First off, when balance is disturbed, my writing Muse muffles.

Shooting from a 26-year-old hip replacement, my decrepitude spoke to me. At first, in quiet tones. Then, louder and more persistently. As a result, I became aware it was time to regain balance with hip revision surgery.

In the ensuing paragraphs, I wish to communicate what an old hip might sound like, while providing some lesser-known hip facts.

“I’m overdue...for a re-do,” it murmured. Then its larynx came unleashed.

The surgeon had suggested that my askew [total hip replacement](#) might give out. And yet, I was functional, so we waited.

The break-up came in the *yarling*: a combo of yawn and snarl. Crackle-pops reverberated.

“Don’t be afraid of it,” said a physio friend. “Be pro-active.”

X-rays proved it was yarlier and more off-kilter than most 26-year-olds.

A bit about hips:

- [Os coxae](#) is not oxymoronic for the ‘Year of the Ox’.
- Hands on your hips, you’re gripping the [iliac crest](#): the summit of a mountain ridge: one of three fused hip bones.
- In the valley are the pubis, and behind it, the ischium or ‘sit bones.’
- Rivers of veins, nerves and arteries flow through a pelvic canyon (obturator foramen).
- The [pelvic ischium](#) contains the ball-socket joint.
- In this weight-bearing core of breathing, posture and spinal stability, 20 muscles cross paths.
- Of over 250 primate species, only one primate is reading this while taking a load off two bi-pedaling legs.



If ‘hip were on the wall’ (as a proverbial ‘fly’):

Surgeon: (to his team) “Now that we’re in, this *mal-aligned* liner has to go.”

Yarler: “Are you removing my ‘voice box’, doc?”

Surgeon: “Let’s get behind the socket. Scoop out the eroded bone.”

Yarler: “E-ro-ded, as in ‘ro-de-o’?”

Surgeon: “Cowboy, plastic bits in bloodstream turn bone to marshmallow ([osteolysis](#)).”

Yarler: “Bucking broncos.”

Surgeon: “Repack it with [synthetic bone](#).”

Yarler: “Syn-the-tic? I’m too young...too gen-u-ine...”

Surgeon: “Stem and socket look good. Leave the titanium.” (tug, tug)

Yarler: “Whoa, heavy metal.”

Surgeon: “Unscrew the old femoral [head](#).”

Yarler: “Wha’????”

Surgeon: “Nice fit. Okay. [Stapler](#)...”

Yarler: (lip-and-hip synching) “New head, new muffler, syn-the-tics...”

Surgeon: “A more secure...and silent joint.”

In conclusion, my *yarler* hushed as I lay with gel packs cooling enflamed tissue. From here on in, more and more equilibrium. Less and less *yarling*. Muse-infused! Hip revision: balance regained. ■

**The author wishes to clarify that every hip revision differs. She is now one-month post-op, doing rehab exercises, and moving more and more silently.*

*** This piece germinated from a NSWA Write-in on Zoom. Write with writers! You never know what can flow! Joan will be hosting the March 13th session from 10am – 12pm (see page 7 for details).*

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN AN ‘INFODEMIC’ AGE

by Allan Maynard, MSc.

I am pleased to now be a part of a group of engaging, dedicated writers. I am retired after a nearly 40-year career in the field of environmental science. Motivated by the rise of misinformation and disinformation around science matters, especially prevalent during the global pandemic, I felt compelled to create a blog site to contribute clear and concise scientific information on topics such as plastics pollution, toxic exposure, climate change and the Covid-19 crisis and to also debunk the pseudoscience that can be associated with such topics. See link – at end of article.

As an introduction – the following is an excerpt from an early article called - “When Science Knowledge Becomes Inconvenient. (<https://environmentmatters.ca/2020/02/08/when-science-becomes-inconvenient/>)

EXCERPT - The benefits of science have become so ubiquitous that we can fall prey to taking these amazing advances for granted. Globally, life expectancy has more than doubled since 1900. Communication is now almost instantaneous. Many killer diseases, such as smallpox, which killed over 300 million people in the 20th century alone, have been eradicated. We can identify sub-atomic particles and simultaneously understand vastness; that our planet revolves around one of a hundred billion stars in our galaxy that is one of a hundred billion galaxies in the universe.

Despite the obvious advances we enjoy in our everyday lives, there can be selective skepticism and even disdain of some scientific knowledge. There’s no doubt that we live in a bewildering world in which we have to decide what to believe and what not to believe. And that does not come naturally to us. Consider the case of Galileo in the early 17th century when he proclaimed that the earth spins on its axis and orbits the sun. This was heresy. He was rejecting the doctrine of the church but also asking people of the day to believe something they could not see. A person standing on the famous Ponte Vecchio bridge in Florence could observe the sun seemingly moving around the earth. Galileo’s findings were abhorrent to the church and he was put on trial and forced to recant.

With the case of Galileo, the science was inconvenient. It upended the beliefs of the day. In the last number of decades, science information is upending more than just beliefs – it is upending many of the pillars of our economy. The tobacco industry is a multi-billion dollar (over 600 billion) global enterprise. It is thus not at all surprising that the industry would fight hard against the scientific evidence that linked cigarette smoking to health issues such as lung cancer and heart disease. Confronted by such compelling (and thus highly inconvenient) peer-reviewed scientific evidence, the tobacco industry, beginning in the 1950s, used sophisticated public relations approaches to undermine and distort the emerging science. And it worked for almost two decades.

This strategy (now called “the tobacco strategy”) has been adopted in many other situations when scientific evidence becomes inconvenient. For the fossil fuel industry, climate change denial is arguably the most well-funded, most organised PR campaign in history. After all, trillions of dollars of assets will have to be left in the ground if the world moves towards renewable energy and away from energy based on fossil fuels.

The well-funded obfuscation of science represents a unique challenge for communicating scientific consensus that upends important economic engines. This is why I have decided to do my part in communicating the facts with my blog. We cannot address what we don’t know.

Feel free to share my blog site. <https://environmentmatters.ca>

Winter's Last Stand *Irene Nevill**



“Nature apologises for the late arrival of spring; this is due to the late departure of winter...”

Circumstances beyond control, and all that. Yada yada yada. But that’s about to change, we hope.

The season of “mists and mellow fruitfulness” was frozen out prematurely by Jack Frost and company. After beauty came the beast – and the beast won’t budge. Not even an inch (or should I say centimetre?). We’ve been trapped in this snow globe for what seems like forever. Nice weather for polar bears, though! And amazing icicles!

“In living memory”, “since records began”, “challenging times”, “keep calm and [insert as appropriate]” have become mantras. Our timbers have been shivered for too long. But winter doesn’t care; winter’s in control; winter’s in the driving seat.

We’ve had enough. It’s time to take a stand against old Iceheart. Are you with me?

Here’s the deal, Frosty. Give us a break, eh? Pack up your polar vortexes and your weather bombs and take yourself off to Australia. They’re frying over there.

They are? And I’ll be welcome there?

You bet!

And I can waltz with Matilda?

She’ll welcome you with open arms.

Cool!

Boomerangs? Barbecues?

Yep.

Koalas, kookaburras, kangaroos?

And camels. But watch out for the crocs and the funnel-webs.

Will do.

Have fun!

Winter’s sayonara is short and sweet. Blossom time is here at last. Woo-hoo!



** Irene Nevill (active NSW member 2011-2017 and former Newsletter Editor, lifetime honorary member) sends her very best wishes to the NSW, from her current home in London, Ontario.*

Poetry

BRACKENDALE EAGLES

Joyce Goodwin

Icy winds whip the Squamish River,
churning white water rattles stones
along the banks, trees of crystal bone,
host hundreds of motionless birds, sculpted
it seems from the frozen limbs they inhabit.

Beneath the leaden sky, a silver thrashing
of salmon draws quickened eagle eyes;
then ravenous raptors spurred by hunger
and prehistoric memory, swoop with talons
curled, to claw the pink flesh of survival.



"Raptor" by Joyce Goodwin

IQ vs EQ

Linden Carroll

A high intelligence quotient is great for the mind,
But emotional intelligence too serves mankind.
Text books and lessons all have their place,
But emotion and instinct may be ahead of the race.

In the quest for knowledge and progression of our
race,
One has to wonder if 'smart' sets the pace.

'Progression' a word that must cause debate,
Human debris deposited at an alarming rate.
Paper waste and mechanical part
All serve to detract from nature's fine art.

Emotional intelligence comes from inside,
Focused on effects on which these matters ride.
Emotional intelligence extends more compassion
and care
Towards the emotional needs of which we all share.

High IQ tends to rate mathematics and market value
trends;
Does not extend wellbeing of which emotion lends.
When dealing with science and finance versus
human need,
Emotional intelligence weighs heavy, but statistical
analyses exceed.

Spiritual joy and wellbeing versus economical figure
and fact
Need to be weighed and balanced to be on the right
track.

Each has its place for us to explore;
To open our minds and open the door
To greater understanding, perspective and benefit
spread wide

'HEART' versus 'BRAIN' - Ours to decide!

Future Interrupted
Jannette Edmonds

It was all there, the future, the path forward
But a cosmic foot stomped on the brakes
And here we are, hanging like marionettes,
Arms askew, eyes darting, looking for our safe place.

Not foreign anymore, this suspension
Of all the bulwarks that sustained us,
Shock of the new replaced by a resignation,
That surprises us all, when close enough to see.

Will we ever again feel kinship with our past,
Or will we examine it as detached archeologists,
Mining the rubble of a pre-Covid existence
To find proof of a life of parties and travel plans?

Masks and air hugs and hunkering at home
Are who we all are now, the novelty worn thin
By months of predictions and statistics and fear.
Heightened alert is non-sustainable in this new reality.

This sloughing off of a way of life is happening
Slowly, imperceptibly, almost on a cellular level
As it plops us here, upon this page
Reminiscing, but not remorseful as the parade
Of our lives changes
course, into a future
Interrupted, redefined.



Photo: Unsplash @drew_beamer

Bulletin Board

The Bulletin Board is a space for you to network with fellow NSWA members and share notices of upcoming writing events and opportunities.

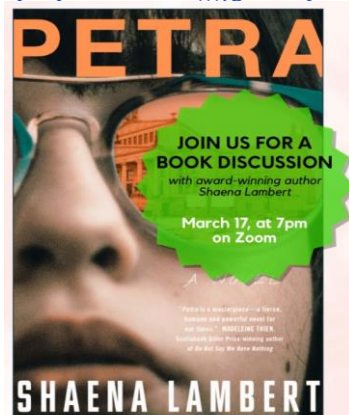
Email your suggestions to editor@nswriters.org
(or by post to NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, NV V7M 3L3)



Catch Vancouver Writers Fest's free author readings and interviews! So many inspiring authors and works to choose from! Visit www.writersfest.bc.ca/

The North Vancouver Greens are delighted to invite you to an event with award-winning author **Shaena Lambert**. She will be conducting a Book Club evening to discuss her new book, **Petra**, chosen as CBC's Best Fiction of 2020. This will be on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, at 7pm on Zoom.

Register in advance for this meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZAlf-yvqD8pHtF4EwMhJlJig2xWQK_YkLZ3



Royal City Literary Arts Society **RCLAS**

Call For Submissions

Write on Contest 2021

Submit Today!
Cash Prizes!
Ezine Publication!
Bragging Rights!

Deadline April 1

Submission Rules:

- 3 Categories:
 - Non-Fiction (1500 words max)
 - Fiction (1500 words max)
 - Poetry (1 page single spaced max)
- Fee per submission (one story or one poem) \$10 RCLAS members; \$20 non-members
- Annual RCLAS Membership \$35 a year.
- 1st prize - \$150, 2nd prize - \$100, 3rd prize - \$75 (plus 3 honourable mentions) per category
- Maximum three submissions per person (in any one or all three categories).
- Winners and honourable mentions published in RCLAS E-Zine, Wordplay at Work.
- Previously published work accepted as long as author retains copyright.
- Past Write on Contest winners/honourable mentions: DO NOT resubmit winning story or poem.
- Non-winners/non-honourable mentions may resubmit story or poem.
- Cover letter to include Name, Address, Email, Phone, Category, Title, Payment option (see below).
- Blind judging (submissions to judges are anonymous).
- Submit only as a Word Document (Font Times New Roman, Size 12)
- DO NOT include your name or identity on your word document. Double check and delete "author" in your word doc file properties. This is important.
- Current Board Members are not eligible to submit.

SUBMISSION and Payment OPTION 1:
To PAY: Use the PayPal link found on our website www.rclas.com
EMAIL entry and cover letter to witeon@rclas.com. (THIS IS NOT OUR PAYPAL ACCOUNT)

SUBMISSION and PAYMENT OPTION 2:
Mail your cheque or money order to:
Royal City Literary Arts Society
Box #308 - 720 6th Street
New Westminster, BC V3L 3C5
AND email entry and cover letter to witeon@rclas.com

(DO NOT mail in your submission. Poems and stories will only be accepted by email.)
For further information Email: witeon@rclas.com

For details, visit [2021 Write On! Contest | \(rclas.com\)](http://2021WriteOnContest.com)



2021 Victoria Writers' Society Writing Contest

Fiction, Creative Non-fiction, Poetry
Open to residents from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands

Deadline: 01 May 2021

Prizes for each category: 1st \$300.00
2nd \$200.00
Two Honourable Mentions per Genre

Entry Fee: \$20 VWS Members/\$25 Non-Members

Judges: Tricia Dower - Fiction, Yvonne Blomer - CNF, Barbara Pelman - Poetry

For details, visit [VWS Writing Contest | Victoria Writers' Society](http://VWSWritingContest.com)

Executive 2020 - 2021

President (and Director)

Janine Cross

Vice-President (and Director)

Rod Baker

Secretary (and Director)

Christine Cowan

Treasurer (and Director)

Steve Rayner

Memberships and Member Relations

Carl Hunter

Library Liaison

Sonia Garrett

Speaker Coordinator

Janine Cross

Dare to be Heard Host

Elly Stornebrink

Newsletter Editor and Archivist

Wiley Ho

Webmaster

Kelly Hoskins

Writing Contest Coordinator

Doug MacLeod

Member At-large

Barbara Reardon

***A hearty thank-you to all our
volunteers for their dedication and
hard work!***



Photo: Unsplash

**"It's a helluva start, being able to recognize
what makes you happy." - Lucille Ball**

Events Calendar

March 13	<i>NSWA Saturday Write-in</i>
March 15	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Tetsuro Shigematsu</i>
April 6	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
April 10	<i>NSWA Saturday Write-in</i>
April 12-17	<i>North Shore Writers Festival</i>
April 19	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Kevin Spenst</i>
May 4	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
May 8	<i>NSWA Saturday Write-in</i>
May 17	<i>NSWA General Meeting with guest speaker Janie Chang</i>
June 1	<i>Dare to be Heard</i>
June 12	<i>NSWA Saturday Write-in</i>
June 21	<i>Year-End Wrap Up Party TBC</i>
July – August	<i>Summer break</i>
September 20	<i>AGM and Election for 2021 – 2022 Executive</i>

The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw



Like most of you, this pandemic has really restricted my life. There's a lot I can no longer do. But that doesn't mean I'm doing nothing. I'm actually doing a lot.

Like, re-engaging with my neighbourhood.

Most people living on my block transitioned, almost overnight, to working at home. Tough, at first, for many. It meant new methods of functioning. But, as people always can, everyone adjusted. For me, as a habitual dog-walker, I'm actually seeing more people each day. Pre-COVID, I would run into other habitual dog-walkers, and we'd pass the time of day for a few minutes, then go on our separate ways. That held true for the first few months of COVID. The only difference was that now we were chatting at a social distance.

But then, in addition, all my work-at-home neighbours starting making appearances outside. Instead of coffee breaks and lunch breaks, they were taking walk breaks, or yard work breaks. And they were anxious to talk to a real person, not a digital image on Zoom. At pandemic-appropriate distances, of course.

We all knew each other already. It's a friendly block, our street. But now, there was an added impetus to

bond with each other. And even after a year of restrictions, we're still stopping to chat. Faces are still lighting up when we run into each other. We've developed a real sense of belonging to a community.

Then there's the joy of re-discovering the telephone. Not the kind of phone you keep in your pocket, that people seem to use for everything but talking. I mean the old-fashioned, practically antique model on my desk that is only good for conversations. I'd forgotten how much enjoyment it is possible to get from luxuriously long telephone conversations. Since meeting for breakfast or lunch is out for the present, I'm keeping in touch with old friends this way, and it feels good.

Forget about that early bread baking craze and the yeast shortage—I've become a COVID knitter! I've really taken to it since self-isolation became a reality. So far, I've finished a multi-coloured scarf and am halfway through a delicate-looking, oversized shawl. I'm never going to win any speed contests, but I'm finding the process incredibly relaxing. It's almost as good as meditation, at least for me. When I find myself beginning to feel anxious or overwhelmed by the coronavirus realities of day to day living, I pick up the knitting needles and do a few rows, and then I feel calm again, ready to deal with whatever the day throws at me.

Although I'm not a huge fan of Zoom, the pandemic has forced me to get comfortable with this new way of interacting. I've watched presentations I would never have been able to attend under pre-pandemic conditions. My extended family has put Zoom to good use as well. In our childhood, we gathered at my grandmother's house in Mission for Sunday dinners and holidays. In adulthood, we're all

spread out, so with travel restrictions making the usual annual trips taboo, we now gather via Zoom. Without having to leave our present-day homes in North Dakota, Oregon, Edmonton, Kelowna, North Vancouver and Pender Harbour, we get together for happy hours on a regular basis. Why didn't we think of this before? No matter. We do it now.

And my writing? I find I'm becoming more creative, not less. As Agatha Christie once said of her own early years, there's nothing like solitude to prompt one into making things up. I'm enjoying working on my writing projects more now than I have for a long time. With few distractions, I'm able to focus more completely on my own work.

There's an old saying that when life takes one thing away, something else is often given to take its place, if we just look hard enough for it. I think the greatest gift I've been given in the last year is my new-found appreciation of life. Now we really do know how easily and quickly everything we take for granted can be ripped away from us. I've learned how important it is to cherish and make the most of each moment as it comes.

This pandemic will end at some point. I hope, when life in the public sphere is fully open again, I don't lose that new-found appreciation. And as much as I'm looking forward to a return to live events, visiting and travel, I hope I maintain the new skills and habits that have enriched my life throughout COVID, and don't remember only the trials and difficulties.

Until that time comes, though, I'll continue to follow the public health guidelines to protect myself and the people around me. Because, during a pandemic, safe really is better than sorry. ■