



No. 20: January 2021

## Upcoming Dates

**January 18**

Guest Speaker  
*Karma Brown*

**February 2**

Dare to be Heard

**February 28**

NSWA Annual Contest  
Deadline!

**March 15**

Guest Speaker  
*Tetsuro Shigematsu*

**May 17**

Guest Speaker  
*Janie Chang*

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](http://www.nswriters.org)

# Write On!

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

## President's Message

*Janine Cross*

Happy New Year!

I hope this, my inaugural president's message, finds you all healthy, safe, and enjoying all things literary. Having laboured up the precipitous inclines and down the steep ravines of 2020, we're all now poised upon the ledge of a New Year, and while there are certainly more peaks to ascend, and mist obscures a little of the view, there *are* aspects to be enjoyed from our current vantage point.

A world of resources and opportunities for writers has bloomed online this past year. Hitherto prohibitively expensive courses, seminars, and far-flung conventions have been made available at sharply reduced prices and are now accessible from the comfort of our own homes. I'm very happy to report that the NSWA is taking advantage of this new Zoom world.

We've launched a new website where prospective members can easily find us and where existing members can connect, share their work, and receive valuable feedback via our Critique Boutique feature. Our new Write-

In initiative brings members together via Zoom to alleviate the isolation of writing alone and promote the exchange of ideas in a supportive, informal environment. Our usual monthly meetings have smoothly transitioned to the online platform, with a line-up of bestselling authors and journalists scheduled for Zoom appearances in the coming months. Would you like to schedule time to chat with fellow NSWA members outside of a scheduled event? Let either me or Wiley, our newsletter editor, know, and we can set up a Zoom meeting for you!

Mirroring the year we've all just experienced, writing can be fiercely challenging. Despite those challenges – or perhaps even *because* of them – utilizing this new virtual world to stay connected and fuel our creative passion is akin to the process of writing a novel itself: To paraphrase E. L. Doctorow, it's like driving a car at night; you may be able to see only as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way. I invite you all to pile into the virtual NSWA station wagon and travel through the adventure that is our new and changing landscape together. ■



## A Note from the Editor

Welcome to a new year of writing.

I think it's safe to say that the year just passed has been trying, worrying and weird – all challenging emotions but ones which should help to spur us on as writers, to catalyze our experiences into tangible scenes and stories. Judging from the various submissions to our current newsletter, I am happy to report that creativity is very much alive and well.

For those of us needing a little boost: read, read, read. Help support our local, indie bookstores and visit our wonderful libraries. I can make two recommendations of excellent reads from guest speakers who generously shared their time with our organization in 2020: *The Beguiling* by Zsuzsi Gartner and *The Certainties* by Aislinn Hunter. Both authors are brilliant and inspiring in their writing and teaching.

I hope to read your writing soon! Please send me your writing news, poems, short stories (fiction and non-fiction) and entries for our next 100-word challenge on the theme: Things that make you go hmmm.

Don't forget to submit to 25<sup>th</sup> NSWA Annual Writing Contest now open for submissions until February 28<sup>th</sup> (winning entries to appear in the summer edition of our newsletter).

Here's to a fresh new year of hope and writing.

*Wiley*

Wiley Ho  
Editor, NSWA Newsletter

**Deadline for next newsletter: March 1, 2021**

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## 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](mailto: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.

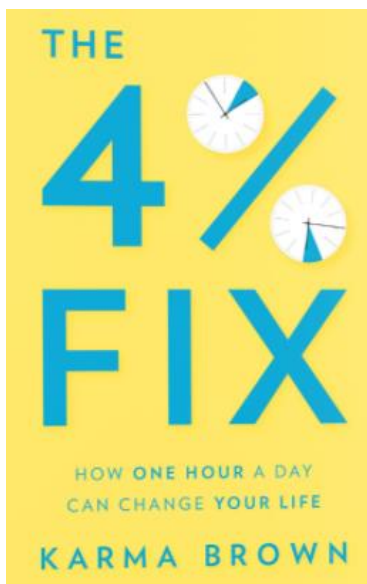
## Upcoming Meetings and Guest Speakers

*January 18*

**Guest Speaker  
Karma Brown**



**Karma Brown** is the bestselling author of four novels and a National Magazine Award winning journalist. Karma will be discussing her non-fiction book, *THE 4% FIX*, which is about the latest research regarding time management, goal-setting, and strategies that work. She'll share with us how we can each use just one hour – only 4% of our day – to change our lives.



*February 22*

**Guest Speaker  
TBC**



*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.



1 HOUR PHOTO  
SHIGEMATSU TETSURO

Tetsuro will be leading us through a workshop entitled “*All the Feels.*” You know emotions when they hit you. Your eyes mist with tears. Your heart aches with sorrow. Your breath quickens with desire. Human emotion is the electricity that powers our existence. But how do we harness this energy to capture our readers? This session will be run as a meeting, so you will be on camera and microphone unless you turn them off.

**North Shore Writers' Association**  
**25th Annual Writing Contest**

**Categories**

**Fiction**

**Nonfiction**

**Poetry**



**Contest Fees:**

**NSWA**

**members:**

**Adults \$15**

**Non-members:**

**Adults \$20**

**All Youth \$10**

**Prizes:**

**1<sup>st</sup> \$100.00**

**2<sup>nd</sup> \$50.00**

**3<sup>rd</sup> \$25**

**Youth \$50**

**Details at:**

[www.nswriters.org/  
annual-contest/](http://www.nswriters.org/annual-contest/)

**Contest deadline:  
February 28, 2021**



The silver lining in our COVID winter of discontent is that there's lots of time to stay at home and write. What a perfect opportunity to take part in the 2021 NSWA Annual Writing Contest! You can win cash prizes and have your work published in the 2021 Winners' Edition Newsletter.

Normally, NSWA members help promote the contest by distributing posters and bookmarks. There is no in-person January meeting to put these materials in your hands, so we need to rely on other methods to spread the word. If you are in contact with non-NSWA writers or organizations who should know about our contest, please encourage them to check out our contest details at [www.nswriters.org/annual-contest/](http://www.nswriters.org/annual-contest/).

We're looking forward to another successful contest and we thank you for your help. Good luck with your submission!  
– Doug MacLeod, NSWA Writing Contest Coordinator

**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:**  
**Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, May 4, Jun 8**

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

**Time:** 7:00 pm

north shore  
**WRITERS  
FESTIVAL**



- Where Readers and Writers Meet -

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

More details coming soon.

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](http://www.nvcl.ca)*

## NSWA Monthly Write-in You're invited!

**January 9<sup>th</sup> 10 am – Noon via Zoom**



(Photos: Unsplash)

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 break halfway through and a wrap-up at the end. You'd be surprised at how much writing you can do in two hours. Join us for our next session on *January 9<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon*. Look for a Zoom invitation in your email a few days before.

## A collage of recent virtual meetings in 2020



Workshop on Story Structure with Zsuzsi Gartner November 15<sup>th</sup>



Holiday Hangout Dec 9<sup>th</sup>

# The Critique Boutique



**Introducing the NSW Critique Boutique** ([www.nswriters.org](http://www.nswriters.org) access from Members tab)

**The purpose of the Critique Boutique** is to provide a forum for NSWA members to give and receive feedback on their writing from other members. The NSWA believes that writers supporting writers through the exchange of constructive critiques is a powerful tool for improving our craft.

## **Members wishing to have their writing critiqued:**

1. May post up to 2000 words per submission;
2. Email the submission as a Word document to [webmaster@nswriters.org](mailto:webmaster@nswriters.org);
3. A brief description of the submission should be supplied, especially noting any sensitive content (e.g., violence, sexuality, or possible trigger issues);
4. Include a 1-2 sentence summary of what your submission is, to help inform your readers in their critique;
5. Date and title your submission, and include an email address where readers can send you their comments & feedback;
6. Each posting may stay up on the site for a maximum of three (3) months, after which they will be removed;
7. By posting their submission, the member agrees to waive any and all claims for damages or libel against the NSWA or its members;
8. If you find a critique helpful, consider thanking the reviewer by email;
9. If you receive a critique that you don't like, simply delete it. Remember, it is only one person's opinion; and
10. If you find a critique nasty or unfair, contact Vice-president Rod Baker (see below).

## **Members wishing to offer critique:**

1. May do so by downloading the Word document from this site;
2. You might consider using 'Track Changes' under the Review tab for your comments;
3. All comments should be empathetic and respectful, with the view of helping the writer improve their piece. A balanced critique recognizes both the positive aspects of the submitted work, as well as considerations for change;
4. Email your critiques directly to the writer, not to this site; and
5. Members agree not to distribute any submission to any third party.

## **Critique Tips:**

As you read the work, comment on what works/doesn't work for you as a reader and why. Complaints about submissions or critiques should be emailed to the NSWA Vice President, Rod Baker at [rodvbaker@gmail.com](mailto:rodvbaker@gmail.com)

# BRAVO!

Brava to **Bernice Lever** whose poem *“Carless and Carefree, I Celebrate”* was awarded Honourable Mention in “Broadcast”, pub. Polar Expressions Publishing (annual contest for Canada-wide poets). Her poetry also appears in Black Moss Press [link](#).

For 2021, Bernice looks forward to collecting many more poems into another book of poetry. She wishes everyone “Good health for the new year!”

[www.colourofwords.wordpress.com](http://www.colourofwords.wordpress.com)



Bravo to Patrick Hill who wrote a book in 2020! **A New Life in Canada** was born after 63 years of living in the country! Patrick currently has three books ready for publishing.



Congratulations to **Joyce Goodwin** for her poem *“The Spirit of Trees”* which was published December 9<sup>th</sup> on the website of the North Shore Artists’ Guild NSAG (poem appears on p. 13).

Well done to all writers who participated in the **2020 NaNoWriMo** challenge during the month of November!



**NaNoWriMo**

**A collective BRAVO to all you wordsmiths out there - sung and unsung. Write on!**



**Share your writing news by sending an email to [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org)**



# 100 WORD CHALLENGE

The challenge was to produce a story or poem, in 100 words or less,  
on the theme: **A knock at the door**

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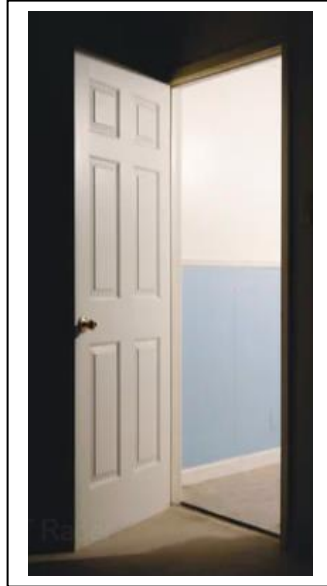
## **A Knock at the Door** *Marlene F Cheng*

Go away. I've not prepared.  
I am not ready.  
There are many sorry insensitivities.  
Hundreds of kindnesses to repay.  
Thanks to bestow.  
Go away.  
Give me time.  
Shoo, you hear.  
Make way.

Only the wind on the knocker.  
Thank God.

Where's my cloak?  
No time to waste.  
Many amends to make.  
Not tomorrow.  
Today.  
Many amends to make.  
Today.

Shoo, you hear.  
Make way.



## **Crime and punishment** *Rod Baker*

A knock at the door brings men's gruff voices  
My father is saying, "Roddy's made bad choices."  
"I'm here because there's been complaint.  
It's up to you parents to teach restraint."  
"His friends led him on," my mother is saying,  
"We'll keep him at home, stop him from straying."  
The village policeman remains unimpressed  
"Bring him down to the station. That would be best."  
"He's only nine," pleaded mum, "He's in bed asleep."  
"He has to learn, madam." Mum starts to weep.  
"What if he brought the gooseberries back?" said Dad, "and I gave him a bit of a smack?"

## **A Knock at the Door** *Karen Bower*

Christmas lights twinkle, radiate joy into Dark December.  
Carols filter through red lacquered door festooned with pine wreath and glitter glazed red and gold orbs.  
Leaden arm and gloved hand reaches across a chasm of dread to knock.  
Pause, mid-air, weighty with concern.  
Impossible to erase old memories, pain seen too often.  
This task the worst.  
Breathing heavily. Deliver the blow.  
Wait. Breath held.  
Door swings wide reveals smiling faces eager to welcome.  
"Detective! So glad you could join us."  
"But why the long face?"  
"OH NO!"  
"Please, please tell us you're not here for *that*."

## **A Knock at the Door** *Linden Carroll*

A knock at the door urged her to answer, albeit she stood mesmerized upon seeing the handle turn. They were trying to break in! "Let's play hide and seek. I'll come and find you," she said, hiding her child in a cupboard.  
Wedging a chair under the door handle, with knife in hand she waited, cold sweat trickling down her spine. Without warning, the intruders left.  
The next day's newscast advised of a house-breaking gang's apprehension. A woman three doors down the street lost her life that night, upon answering a knock at the door.

## **Knock at the Door**

*Peter Fenlon*

There was a knock at the door. I didn't want to answer. I didn't trust it, so I waited silently. There was another knock, and then a pause, before I heard her voice. She spoke my name. Not the name they called me at work, not the name my alcoholic parents gave me a few years before the car accident. It was a different name, one that pulled me from the inside out. My true name. There was a knock at the door. I didn't answer it, but my soul did.

### **Emily Yu**

A knock on the door, it was a fraudster knocking on the door.

This fraudster drops court documents that contain other people's court file number and plugged my name and address in the court document as the style of cause.

The fraudsters are putting me as a victim for someone else's court file number and the court liabilities associated with that court file number. I

shocked. The fake news is stalking me. I am a fraud victim; the fake news is misleading the public and make the public believe that I am responsible for other people's court file responsibility.

## **A knock at the door**

*Cathy Scrimshaw*

Shirley House sat at her desk in her new office and sharpened her six pencils for the third time, then re-arranged her two notebooks for the fourth time. It was important to look neat and organized. And she would not depend on electronic devices like others did nowadays. No, *she* would rely on her wits and observational skills, like Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple.

She sat back and surveyed the room with satisfaction. Now all she needed was a client and a crime to solve. Then, her prayers were answered. There was a knock at the door.

## **Next 100 Word Challenge: Things that make you go hmmm**

- ✓ Strictly 100 words max (excluding title, if any).
- ✓ Hyphenated words, contractions and acronyms count as single words.
- ✓ Theme word(s) inclusion optional.
- ✓ Fiction, non-fiction and poetry are all welcome. Have fun!



*Submit your 100-word masterpiece to [editor@nswriters.org](mailto:editor@nswriters.org)  
or by mail to  
NSWA PO Box 37549 Lonsdale East, North Vancouver, BC V7M 3L3  
Deadline March 1, 2021*

## Non-Fiction

### **A Knock at the Door**

*Linden Carroll*

They had arrived in this country in December bringing with them a wealth of hopes and dreams. Their naivety in coming to such a freezing, snow-ridden environment was ludicrous. The Maritimes of all places was known for its hardships with little hope of finding work, not to mention the severe hostility of its winters. Quebec had proved even more so with record-breaking snow that year. Her husband had been forced to take a job driving trucks between Nova Scotia and Quebec and was now reported missing in a storm. Police and rescue teams were out looking for him and had been for three days.

She had rented a cheap ground-floor apt in a triplex. Her little daughter's toys were scattered to make it look lived-in as the rooms were virtually devoid of furniture and possessions, although there was more than many immigrants had upon arrival in Canada. A good financial buffer, strictly budgeted to last a long period of time, was only to be spent with the utmost discretion and only on the barest of necessities.

A knock at the door broke the silence. Hastening towards it, she stopped mesmerized as she watched the door handle turning. Judging by the sounds emanating through the door there were several intruders outside. She realised to her horror that they were trying to break through the lock. Frantically taking hold of her daughter's hand, she hid her in the bedroom cupboard. "Let's have fun and play hide and seek and don't you move until I come and find you," she said trying to keep the fear out of her voice.

Grabbing a knife and wedging the back of a kitchen chair under the door handle, she stood in sheer terror, a cold sweat trickling down her spine. Why in God's name had she brought them here? There was no help available and her loneliness all-consuming as mentally she travelled back to that tiny island sitting in the Atlantic Ocean.

Her senses were invaded by the soft drone of the cuckoo's song as it echoed through the mist rising above the woods and fields at the onset of dawn. A soft rain drifted through the early morning haze cleansing and enhancing the air with a gentle woodsy aroma. She felt again the warmth of the summer's sun reflecting off the red bricks of the rose-covered rancher which had been their beautiful little home, a dichotomy between that and the ugly, freezing hovel she was now renting. The cuckoo would be heard in a few weeks, followed by the roses leafing out and valiantly forming their buds. They would be sadly missed assuming, of course, that the night would be survived.

Brought back sharply to the present, in abject fear, she strained to hear every sound and prayed silently for a miracle. Miracles did happen, a fact she was always to nurture, because quite suddenly silence reigned and calmness overtook her. Retrieving her daughter from the cupboard she held her tiny body so tightly that the child squealed partly in joy and partly because she could hardly breathe.

The newscast the next day advised of a house-breaking gang's apprehension. A woman three doors down the street had lost her life that fateful night; knifed to ribbons upon answering a knock at the door.

The years have taken their toll and the mature woman ponders a question: Who would have believed that such a memory, buried so deeply beneath the carapace of the mind, could be resurrected years later simply upon hearing a knock at the door? ■

# Poetry

## **Peace Day**

**Bernice Lever**

(from "Imagining Lives," pub. 2012)

Just a clean surface  
on everything and everyone  
to be noticed and absorbed  
as the first time:

so be curious again  
thrillingly open to all,  
just an hourglass focus of stillness;  
- memory locking wonder -  
entering moonrise or waterfall  
by choice, feeling your heart  
warming or weeping,  
truly awake to living.

## **Have you Ever**

**Bernice Lever**

(pub. 1972 in *Chatelaine* magazine)

Have you ever  
thought that the blind  
have no colour  
prejudices,  
and the deaf care not  
for speeches,  
etc.  
But even lacking our five  
overrated senses,  
we have the choice  
to hate  
or  
to love.

## **Altered State**

**Joyce Goodwin**

It is a cold hallucinatory state, living on ice  
centuries deep with permafrost moving  
sacred places, old as the planet, as the Inuit.  
Stones huddled on cracked wasteland  
are messengers with news of life or death,  
signposts towards shelter or the abyss;  
soaring portals signify entry to worlds beyond  
this place, where cold burns skin, sears souls.

Midnight sun promises heat, creates illusions,  
where dogs are half wolf, half human;  
women sing throat songs, paying homage  
to the spirit creatures, protecting them,  
breathing carved life into soapstone,  
antler and bone, telling stories without words,  
weaving myth and memory.  
Within hidden worlds, life and death walk  
side by side, towards a white horizon  
where humans become spirit.

## **THE SPIRIT of TREES**

**Joyce Goodwin**

Trees the spirit and soul of forests  
are spun together by breath of wind,  
translucent wings and spider silk;  
they emerge from a tangle of roots  
bearing poetry and songs of earth,  
giving voice to a chorus of life.  
Within the bark of old trees, secrets  
are kept but new layers of unfolding  
growth reveal the beauty of renewal,  
the gift of knowledge and a promise  
of understanding and of hope.

## Tamarack Covid Warrior

*Joan Boxall*

Tamarack or  
*Hackmatack* in our Native Land is  
Good for snowshoes—(the miracle of walking on water)  
Tough, waterproof, durable

*Larix Laricina* aka  
Eastern Larch in Latin  
Grows fast and strong in a  
Pacific-Northwest-boggy sort of way

A deciduous conifer—  
Whirls in 20 species of  
Cone-bearing flowers—  
Clustering soft blue-green

Needles of gold muster—  
Needless of 170-million-year-old roots—  
Are shed and fall—  
Evolving with resolve

Neither losing snow-clad limbs  
Nor yielding to pest or fire—  
Tamarack  
Is a Covid warrior who

Bears me up  
From acidic soil  
From blue-green asphyxiation  
To golden resuscitation

I, knock—  
You, late  
(Mimicking Nature, you give me a shot)  
Inoculate



Photo: Joan Boxall

Joan Boxall is the author of *DrawBridge: Drawing Alongside My Brother's Schizophrenia*,  
Caitlin Press ©2019 <https://caitlin-press.com/our-books/drawbridge/>

Check out Joan's latest writing on art and inspiration in *Inspired* magazine online, "Creativity Does Not Retire": [CREATIVITY DOES NOT RETIRE | INSPIRED 55+ Lifestyle Magazine \(seniorlivingmag.com\)](https://seniorlivingmag.com/creativity-does-not-retire/)

## Feature Artwork

Many of our NSWA members are multi-creative! Besides writing, our current Treasurer Steve Rayner paints gorgeous landscapes. Here is a sampling from his Winterscapes collection.



*Silhouette* © Steve Rayner



*Way Down* © Steve Rayner

## Bulletin Board

### STORYBOX IN SESSION CONTEST



#### Let's talk about writing.

Writing is hard, and it can be isolating. From prose to process, finding our voice, and everything in between, we love writing but it tortures us. *Storybox in Session* provides support for writers at any level to talk about their craft. One-on-one. This is a consultancy service where you get undivided attention during an online session that's designed just for you. Come prepared with questions, stumbling blocks, or simply talk through some of the elements of storytelling. You can also send a piece of work in advance to go through. Talk about character development, style, pacing, context, marketability, and anything else you wish.

#### About the host of Storybox in Session.

Jackie Bateman is an author and screenwriter who has hosted many workshops and public talks in Vancouver. She has published three award-winning novels: a character-driven, psychological suspense trilogy set in Scotland. The books are being developed into a television series called *Thirst*. Her first feature script *Salome Magic* is now in development, and she has also written and directed two short films.

#### **CONTEST: Write a Goodbye to 2020.**

**Deadline: January 31, 2021**

NSWA members are invited to submit a 'Goodbye to 2020' in 20 words or less. What a year. It can be funny, serious, ironic, dramatic, poetic, or anything else. A winner will be chosen to receive a free 30-minute *Storybox in Session*. Good luck!

**Enter through the web site contact form using the subject line 'Contest Entry':**

[www.storyboxinsession.com/contact](http://www.storyboxinsession.com/contact)

## Bulletin Board

### DEEP STORY *Design*



[www.deepstorydesign.com](http://www.deepstorydesign.com)

*Happy New Year!*  
*from April*

A fresh new year is a great time to renew your commitment to your writing. And writing in community increases productivity, accountability, and general well being. I invite you to join me for one of these new year online writing events.

The Drafting Circle ~ Jan 11th to Apr 5th  
Mondays, 2 pm to 4 pm, for 3 months

Writing Together Sessions ~ Tuesdays starting Jan 19th  
Tuesdays, 10 am to 1 pm, drop in as available

Saturday Writing Retreats ~ Jan 16th, Feb 13th, Mar 20th  
Saturdays, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, one day per month

*Email me for more info:*

[deepstorydesign@gmail.co](mailto:deepstorydesign@gmail.co)

*Wishing all NSWA writers a joyful, creative, productive new year!*



The [NSWA Facebook page](#) is up and running! Check it out for upcoming NSWA events, information of interest from other literary groups, and notices of member book launches and readings. It's a great place for our members to publicize their latest writing news. Several outside groups have already contacted our members through it!

Do you have something to share on our NSWA Facebook page? Please send it (edited and ready to copy/paste) to Janine at [janinecross@shaw.ca](mailto:janinecross@shaw.ca). Photos must be in jpg or png format.

(Note: In order to give everyone a chance to be featured on the page, new books by NSWA authors will be posted only once on Facebook and will not include external links.)



## Executive 2020 - 2021

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***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/Archivist***

Wiley Ho

***Webmaster***

Kelly Hoskins

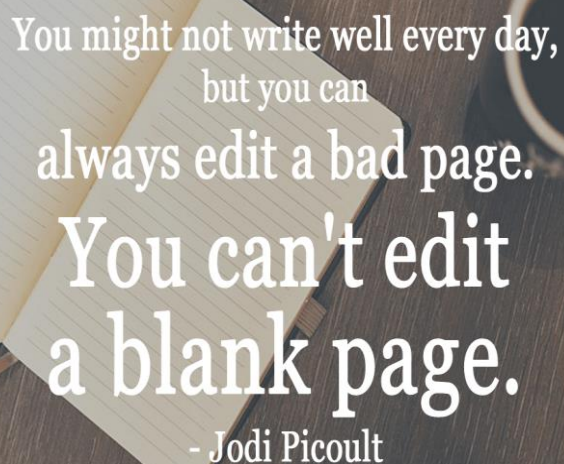
***Writing Contest Coordinator***

Doug MacLeod

***Member At-large***

Barbara Reardon

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



You might not write well every day,  
but you can  
always edit a bad page.  
You can't edit  
a blank page.  
- Jodi Picoult

## Events Calendar

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***January 4*** ***Dare to be Heard***  
***January 18*** ***NSWA General Meeting with  
guest speaker Karma Brown***

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***February 2*** ***Dare to be Heard***  
***February 22*** ***NSWA General Meeting with  
guest speaker TBC***  
***February 28*** ***NSWA Contest Deadline***

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***March 1*** ***Newsletter submission deadline***  
***March 2*** ***Dare to be Heard***  
***March 15*** ***NSWA General Meeting with  
guest speaker Tetsuro Shigematsu***

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***April 6*** ***Dare to be Heard***  
***April 12-17*** ***North Shore Writers Festival***  
***April 19*** ***NSWA General Meeting with  
guest speaker TBC***

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***May 4*** ***Dare to be Heard***  
***May 17*** ***NSWA General Meeting with  
guest speaker Janie Chang***

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***June 8*** ***Dare to be Heard***  
***June 21*** ***Year-End Wrap Up Party TBC***

## The Last Page

Cathy L. Scrimshaw

Christmas was quiet this year, as ordered. Just the two of us, three if you're counting our collie Glee, and as gourmet a dinner as I'm prepared to make, along with a bottle of bubbly. It was nice. Totally stress-free, and I'm not just talking about the day itself. In keeping with the times, we decided not to head out to the shops this year. But we didn't deny ourselves. What we did, instead, was order books on-line. Lots of books. From Canadian suppliers, in keeping with the plea to 'buy local'. They all arrived in plenty of time to have a stack to choose from for our holiday reading. And no, I did not wait until December 25 to begin.

Right now, I'm reading non-fiction, a tome big enough to use as a home-defense weapon. It's called *The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings*, and it's about a group of writers, artists, philosophers and historians who, from about the time of the Great Depression through to the late 1950s, met in various places around Oxford, England to discuss ideas and ideals, and critique each other's work. And, since they often met in a pub called The Eagle and Child (nicknamed The Bird and Baby), where their conversations would have been somewhat lubricated by good English ale, I'll bet they enjoyed themselves as well.

I envy them. I really do. Not just for the fact that they met in a pub in Oxford, although, to be honest, that's a big part of it. I've been to England several times, but never to Oxford. It's been on my bucket list for years, and now I know which

pub to find and patronize. No, right now I envy them because they were able to *meet* anywhere. The thought of a bunch of writers sitting around a table, exchanging ideas and talking about their goals, is so appealing – mostly because, of course, I haven't been able to do it for a while. And still won't be able to for a while yet.

Of course, we have our on-line community to tide us over. And that's good. It really is. I'm enjoying attending the Dare to be Heard sessions. It's wonderful to see people's faces (I'd hate to forget what Doug and Sonia look like) and it's even better to hear them talk about what they're working on, and a little bit about what they're doing during the pandemic – which is usually more than what I'm doing. The Zoom meetings fill a void as well. It's always interesting to hear what the speaker of the month has to say. We can always improve, whether it's our writing skills or our time management skills; while so many outside activities are closed off to us, this is a good time to work on our weak points.

But back to the Inklings. They're a good example of why, and how, being part of a creative group, and part of a larger creative community, can play a major role in personal and professional success. While not all of the men involved (and they were quite exclusively male, which could be a good topic for a future column!) are now household names, a few are. And, they are credited by the authors of *The Fellowship* for having a huge influence not just on the course of English literature, especially in the realms of fantasy and science fiction; their work also heavily

influenced the cultural life of the western world.

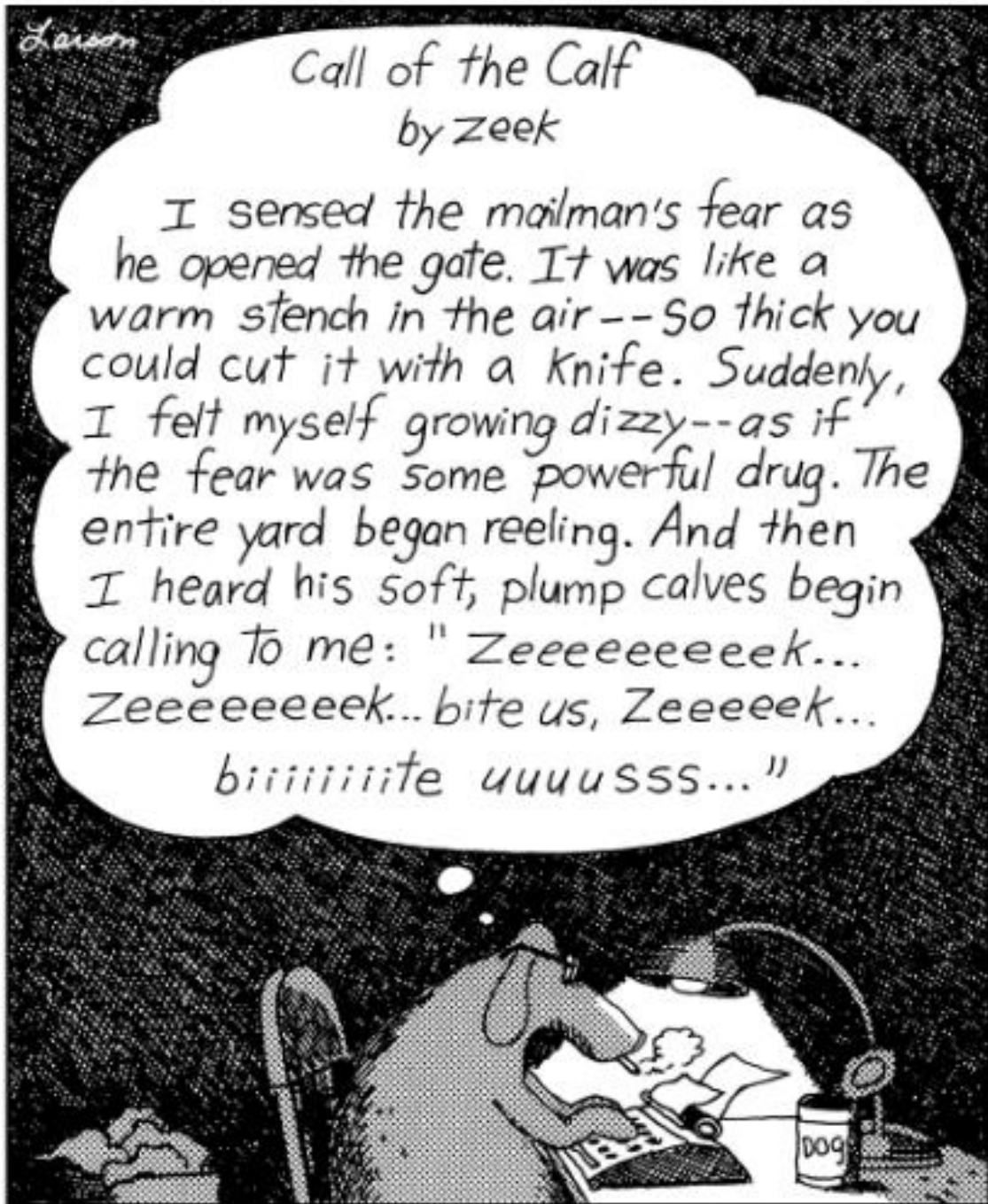
Now, I'm not saying that everyone who joins a writing group or is active in the local creative community is going to change the course of social history. Far from it. We're not all J.R.R. Tolkien, who was one of the leading lights of the group. Nor should we want to be. But I wonder if he, and some of the others, might have struggled just a little bit harder without the camaraderie, intellectual support and the sometimes difficult to handle critiquing of their fellow Inklings. Or maybe they would have struggled a *lot* harder. One thing the book makes clear is how important their fellowship was to all of them; while a few drifted in and out of the group, for most, it was a commitment that lasted throughout their adult, working lives.

Something for us to think about as we enter 2021. Because there is light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. At some point we will be able to go back to our pre-COVID, 'normal' lives. We will be able to meet face-to-face again, in our groups and at the library. Maybe even at the pub. I'm looking forward to it.

In the meantime, see you all on Zoom! ■



Photo: Wikipedia



Creative dog writing