

WRITE ON!

Newsletter of the North Shore Writers' Association
Linking North Shore writers since 1993
No. 30: February 2023

Message from the Editor

I have a confession to make. I haven't been writing or reading as much as I would like to. And as Newsletter Editor of a writing association, I feel particularly sheepish about it.

I've read twenty-three online articles on how to transition my baby from purees to finger foods, if that counts.

The wonderful part of the NSWA is that the community inspires me to read more than just feeding guides and Instagram captions. Parsing through your submissions gives me hope that despite the busyness of life, we can find the time to flex our literary muscles.

Be sure to email editor@nswriters.org with your poetry, prose, and/or artwork. As well, the NSWA Annual Writing Contest is now underway. I do hope you'll consider entering.

Warmly,
Tiffany Budhyanto

P.S. Here's a photo of my little one with a board book. I hope he'll stay a lifelong reader (and one day, a writer).



Upcoming Events

Monday, February 27, 2023

Guest Speaker

Sareh Farmand

7:00-8:30 pm

North Vancouver City Library

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

NSWA Annual Writing Contest
Deadline (see p. 3 for more detail)

Monday, March 20, 2023

Guest Speaker

Tara McGuire

7:00-8:30 pm

North Vancouver City Library

Monday, April 17, 2023

Guest Speaker

Cea Sunrise Person

7:00-8:30 pm

North Vancouver City Library

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2022-2023 Board of Directors

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Newsletter Submission Guidelines

You may submit any of the following:

- A blurb about your recent publication, or writing news (e.g. book launches, author readings, writing awards)
- Your poetry or prose (up to 600 words, fiction or nonfiction, and it can be an excerpt from a larger work)
- Artwork or photography (please send high-quality JPG or PNG files)
- Writing workshops or resources to share with fellow members
- A submission to our 100-word challenge

Please note:

Only submissions from NSWA members will be accepted.

Poetry, short fiction or nonfiction. No op-ed articles please.

Email your submission to editor@nswriters.org.

Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and reliability of their content.

Please check spelling, grammar, and punctuation prior to submission.

Writing that appears in the NSWA newsletter is eligible for submission to the Annual NSWA Writing Contest.

Publication in the *Write On!* newsletter is at the discretion of the Editor, in consultation with the Board of Directors.

NORTH SHORE WRITERS ASSOCIATION

27th ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST

FICTION
NONFICTION
POETRY



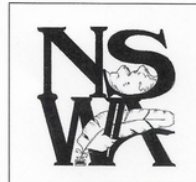
Prizes:
1st \$100
2nd \$75
3rd \$50
Youth
\$50

Details at: [nswriters.org/
Annual-contest/](https://www.nswriters.org/annual-contest/)

Fees:

NSWA Adults
\$20
Nonmember
Adults \$25
Youth \$15

**Contest Deadline
February 28, 2023.**



The 27th annual NSWA writing contest is now underway!

With categories in fiction, non-fiction and poetry, and a special youth category, this contest is perfect for writers of all ages and inclinations. First prize in each category is \$100 (\$50 for the youth prize). **Deadline for entries is February 28, 2023.**

Please share this contest with everyone you know!

Full details and submission requirements are <https://www.nswriters.org/annual-contest/>.

Dare to be Heard

The first Monday of each month at 7:00 PM
with host Rosemary Gretton
Next meetings: March 6, April 3

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? Dare welcomes writers in all genres, at all stages of the writing journey, and interested listeners too. Dare provides an excellent and gentle space for writers to share poetry, prose—and support!

Join Zoom meeting:
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82829546937?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82829546937?pwd=YUNIUGc0dGs0Y2xIZVEwa2I5TldRQT09)
[pwd=YUNIUGc0dGs0Y2xIZVEwa2I5TldRQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82829546937?pwd=YUNIUGc0dGs0Y2xIZVEwa2I5TldRQT09)
Passcode: Dare



Saturday Morning Write-in



The second Saturday of each month
Feb 11, March 11, April 8, May 13
10:00 AM–12:00 PM
with host Doug MacLeod

Writing doesn't 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. Grab a hot drink and let's write together via Zoom!

Join Zoom meeting:
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=MUNTcFNkMWRxOXpRWIBHRHA2VUZpQT09)
[pwd=MUNTcFNkMWRxOXpRWIBHRHA2VUZpQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87105551221?pwd=MUNTcFNkMWRxOXpRWIBHRHA2VUZpQT09)
Passcode: Write

Upcoming Guest Speakers

Our Speaker Coordinator Lisa Bagshaw has put together an incredible lineup of guest speakers for the upcoming year. Here are our upcoming speakers. All NSWA members are welcome to attend. The following events will take place on the **3rd floor of the North Vancouver City Library at 7pm.**

Monday, February 27, 2023

Sareh Farmand will talk about her first published work of poetry, *Pistachios in my Pocket*. Sareh is a published poet and graduate of Simon Fraser University's The Writer's Studio. Her debut full-length poetry collection tells the story of her family's escape from Iran during the Iranian Revolution and their experiences as first wave Iranian immigrants to Canada.



Monday, March 20, 2023

Tara McGuire's book, *Holden After and Before, Love Letter for a Son Lost to Overdose*, is her first volume-length work. It is a hybrid work in memoir and fiction exploring grief and the opioid crisis in the aftermath of the death of her son, Holden.

Tara McGuire is a writer, voice-over actor, and former broadcaster. She is a graduate of The Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University and holds an MFA from The School of Creative Writing at The University of British Columbia.



Monday, April 17, 2023

Cea Sunrise Person will speak about her two highly acclaimed memoirs, *North of Normal* and *Nearly Normal*.

In the late 1960s, Cea's charismatic grandfather, Papa Dick, uprooted his family to the Canadian wilderness in his attempt to abandon civilization. Cea has spoken about her unusual life story at a TEDx talk, a high school program for underprivileged students, and a men's prison, to name a few audiences. She has also taught memoir writing at Capilano University.



Christina Myers' Success Is Not By Chance

by Lisa Bagshaw



We were on the edge of our seats listening to [Christina Myers](#) share her writing secrets at the January Speaker Series.

Long-listed for the 2022 Leacock Medal for delightful and touching debut novel *The List of Last Chances*, and awarded for editing the anthology *BIG, Stories About Life in Plus Sized Bodies*, Christina was generous and engaging while answering questions about her writing process, character development and compelling dialogue.

She no doubt has vast experience in all aspects of writing, from fiction to non-fiction, teaching, publishing, and promoting but I was particularly fascinated with her debut novel *The List of Last Chances*. I couldn't put it down, fell in love with all the characters, and still can't get the story out of my mind.

"Where did the idea to write this novel come from?" I asked.

She laughed and said, "It just came to me."

"What, like a flash of inspiration?"

"I'm afraid so."

Ahh, we should all be so lucky. Inspiration strikes, the book just writes itself and wins awards. Basically.

The setting is two women in vastly different stages of life, in a car on a road trip across Canada. Kay, 72, is wise and determined, and Ruthie, 38, is a little lost but also determined. And David, Kay's son, is overly protective and concerned about his mother. Although he is not physically on the road trip, he is most definitely with the two ladies every step of the way. He is at the other end of the country, the supposed destination. Ruthie has been hired (by David) to drive Kay to David. What could possibly go wrong?

And here's where Christina masterfully develops complexity between the characters. Kay, fearful of losing her freedom makes a list of things she wants to do on the road trip before her limited destiny of living with her son. It is Kay's last hurrah of sorts. Ruthie, the safe-keeper of Kay, is trying to do her job the right way, the way David tells her to do it. David, is trying to do the right thing for his mother by keeping her safe and doing what he thinks is best for her.

Everyone is working out their own issues which is brilliantly revealed through clever and realistic dialogue. Kay is facing her mortality, Ruthie is starting to see that life is not black and white, and David is questioning his thinking.

"How do you develop such endearing characters?"

She said she draws upon composites of people she has met in her own life as well as parts of herself, and then puts them together to interact in relationship with each other, to create full and complex characters.

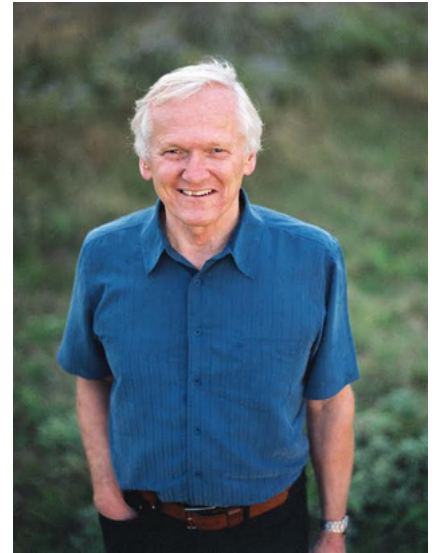
Like a conductor in a symphony, Christina teases out complex human issues in a delightful, humorous, and readable context through character development, dialogue, relationships, and relatable themes.

Which themes were from Christina's own life? That's one secret she wouldn't tell.

Q&A with Steve Rayner

by Linda Mangnall

Steve Rayner is an A-List member of the NSWA, a wink to his careers as an architect, airline pilot, artist and author. Originally from Kent, England, Steve lives with his family near Edgemont Village where he finds inspiration for his writing and artwork in the natural beauty and people surrounding him.



We've had some fun with the fact that your varied occupations each begin with an A. But artist and author are primarily taking up your time now. You are an Associate Member of the Federation of Canadian Artists and have been featured in two solo exhibitions. How does art fit into your lifestyle?

Drawing and painting is something I was introduced to by my father, so it has been a lifelong interest. My art projects are always on the go. For me, the rewards of writing are slow and sometimes undefined, whereas my painting provides more immediate rewards. I am always working on pieces to sell and show.

Is there a theme to your artwork?

My work focuses on place and light. I aim to convey the sensation of being in a place and most recently I have been working on movement within rivers and creeks.

You have also completed a novel and are working on a sequel. How does writing fit into your lifestyle?

I write very slowly, and almost seasonally, as different times of the year enable me to write more than others. It has taken me about six years to formulate my ideas from handwritten notes to my completed novel. I am now searching for my path to publication. It takes time. But I find the writing process a form of relaxation, so I accept this as part of my dilettante personality.

What can you tell us about your novel?

My novel is a mystery thriller that is set in the Pacific Northwest and draws upon my knowledge as a pilot and artist. At least, I hope it is thrilling!

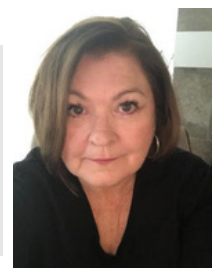
You call yourself "a great fan of the North Shore Writers Association." What appeals to you about the NSWA?

I joined the NSWA about five years ago after attending an excellent workshop. I find the ideas interesting and the people friendly. I like the fact that the membership includes a range of people, from published writers to people interested in learning more about writing. I became treasurer three years ago and continue to find the group a constant source of encouragement and inspiration.

Learn more about Steve at: steverayner.ca

Write On! Member Q&A Feature

Linda Mangnall is a career and lifestyle writer who recently moved back to North Vancouver. She joined NSWA to connect with other creative people who are drawn to our coniferous-scented community. If you would like to be featured in our Q&A, contact Linda at Lindamangnall@icloud.com.



BRAVO!

A CELEBRATION OF OUR MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho was recently featured in a podcast, which you can [listen to here](#). Listen to readings and interviews with Wiley Ho and JT Maruyama, two writers published in PRISM's fall themed issue 61.1. Congratulations, Wiley!



Joan Boxall (pictured above) has a new blog post called "In the Desert" she'd like to share with NSWA members! You can read it [here](#).

In December, **Rod Baker's** new book, *The Shilling Thieves: Five Tales of an English Childhood*, became available as an e-book on Amazon. It recounts the joys and challenges of growing up as a baby boomer in England. If you prefer bending the corner of a page to mark where you've finished reading, the print book will soon follow.

Kudos to **Linden Carroll**, whose two historical fiction novels, *OLIVE* and *FULL CIRCLE*, were featured in the North Shore Authors Collection for 2021/2022 year. Both novels are structured on historical fact and actual life events. Linden is currently working on a third book.



Writers from across the North Shore gathered in late fall to celebrate the launch of the 2022-2023 **North Shore Authors Collection (NSAC)**. The collection, presented by the North Vancouver City Library, North Vancouver District Public Library, and the West Vancouver Memorial Library, inspires, supports, and celebrates the literary talent of North Shore authors by showcasing locally created content in all three North Shore libraries for one year. Learn more here: [2022-2023 Collection - North Shore Authors Collection](#).

Several NSWA members are part of the 2022-2023 collection:

Trish Gauntlett - *The Gods of Thought and Memory*

Joyce Goodwin - *Fragments: A Poetry Mosaic*

Douglas MacLeod - *On the Edge of Wilderness: Tales from Hazelton and the Kispixox Valley*

Frances Peck - *The Broken Places*

Alicia Peters - *Ben and the Big Green Garden*

Submissions for 2023-2024 will be accepted beginning in May.

(Written by Alicia Peters)



"Evolving the Story of the Immigrant and the Outsider" (an excerpt)

by Wiley Ho

NSWA member and previous newsletter editor Wiley Ho recently wrote a wonderful article for *WordWorks*, the magazine of the Federation of BC Writers. Below is an excerpt:

Good writing often emulates what's come before, but great writing speaks to the future by challenging the status quo and advancing social discourse. This is especially true for stories about the outsider—of immigrants and minority groups—where stereotypes have grown not only stale but harmful.

As interest increases for narrative abundance, the time has come at last for more diverse storytelling. Stories about outsider groups share themes of alienation, exile, disadvantage and underrepresentation. Writing beyond what already exists then becomes an urgent and worthy consideration for every writer working today.

I have been pondering how to do justice to my own outsider story, how best to avoid cultural clichés to tell an immigrant story that is not a mere echo of the stories that have preceded mine. My family was one among thousands of families that migrated in the 1980s and 90s from Taiwan and Hong Kong to countries like Canada but then became transnationally split for economic and political reasons. I am working on a book about growing up in such an “astronaut family.” It is a specific, yet familiar, outsider story.

As a first-generation immigrant and writer of colour, I struggle with issues of representation. Will readers from a different background understand where I’m coming from? Will readers of a similar background recognize my story? How can one story represent a whole social phenomenon?

Though it would be easier to lean on cultural tropes to establish a quick connection with my reader, the story I wish to tell must stand apart from other diasporic stories. This is because every wave of migration is carried on specific currents of circumstance and chance, and breaks on shore in its own unique moment...

Read the [entire article here](#).

EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS



Poetry date night: Journal jot to poetic response

In collaboration with the North Shore Writers Association, the Writing with Writers series returns in 2023 with a Valentine's Day themed poetry workshop. Local author Joan Boxall will guide writers through a journal entry (yes, attendees will do one) to poetic responses. Be prepared to mix, mull over and mulch your journal entries into poetic drafts on this poetry date night. We are at our best when we begin again and come together as poets; don't be shy.

The workshop is open to writers of all ages and abilities; no previous experience is required. Please bring your own notebook and writing utensil. A handout will be provided.

Author bio: Joan Boxall is a teacher turned creative non-fiction (CNF) writer. She has a bachelor's degree in physical education with an English and French major from the UBC. As a TESL-trained instructor (VCC) she taught adult newcomers in Vancouver and North Vancouver.

February 8, 2023 at 7:00-8:30 pm. [Register here!](#)



Calling all Vancouver Indie Authors!

The Vancouver Public Library has a collection of self-published books by Vancouver authors! If you are a self-published author, visit vpl.ca or ask a library staff member to add your book or e-book.

'RESCUE ME' READINGS WITH AUTHOR CATHALYNN LABONTÉ-SMITH



Rescue Me takes you behind the scenes of some of North America's riskiest search and rescue operations. Author Cathalynn Labonté-Smith shares real-life stories as told by volunteer members of Search and Rescue teams, who find the lost and rescue the injured in the most extreme conditions and situations the wilds of North America throw at them. From rescuing avalanche victims in blinding snowstorms, to climbing into vehicles teetering on cliff edges to free passengers from mangled metal or crossing wafer-thin ice to save an injured cross-country skier, these thrilling first-hand accounts will forever change how you prepare for your next outdoor adventure. Labonté-Smith uncovers everyday dangers, from the unexpected risks of familiar urban settings to the extreme conditions in North America's wilderness. Deserving of a place both on your bookshelf and in your backpack, *Rescue Me* is a must-read book that could save your life.

Saturday, February 18, 2023
2:00-3:30 pm
Powell River Library

Cathalynn's portion of the proceeds from the sale of her book will be donated to Powell River Search and Rescue

Vancouver International Mountain
Film Festival
Sunday, March 5, 2023
10:00-11:30 am
Venue TBD

In conversation with Cathalynn Labonte-Smith and Mike Danks of North Shore Rescue.

Saturday, March 18, 2023
3:00-4:30 pm
North Kamloops Library

In Conversation with Cathalynn Labonte-Smith and Mike Ritchey from Kamloops SAR. Ranger, a SAR K9 will be in attendance. Cathalynn's portion of the proceeds from the sale of her book will be donated to Powell River Search and Rescue.

100-word challenge

Theme: Aging

Age

by Bill Koch

Clank of metal, plop of sweat. Five old guys spinning on bikes and straining under weights. Four young guys milling impatiently around the weight benches, bobbing to the base from their earbuds. “Hey old dudes, why doncha give it up and go for coffee? Why you spending so much time in the gym?”

We stroke and joint replacement veterans look up, smile, and speak. “Old dudes are like those 1960s muscle cars you still see cruising main street. Our tires are bald, suspensions sagging, lubrication leaking, and paint rusting. We shimmy when we pass eighty and backfire when we slow down. But we’ll still be here when your playlist runs out.



Time

by Bill Koch

She climbed Everest and skied through winter snowscapes. We ran the seawall on weekends and taught each other’s kids how to ride bikes. Friends moving in all the ways we could - running, pedaling, swimming, laughing. Four decades after that first 10K, on good days she pushes her walker as I help her pick blackberries from ditches she cannot descend. I lift her out of her chair and coax her upstairs. Her fingers tremble while moving scrabble tiles. Her feet, her hands, even her voice have left her. She is still my friend, we still move together.

Wisdom

by Wiley Ho

I smiled into the laptop camera and wondered if grey hairs show onscreen. We discussed writing for an hour. Afterwards, the podcast host thanked me, and I her for a great conversation. She was green, her gratitude earnest. Her words didn’t sink in until I received her follow-up email, thanking me again for my time and – what? I pushed my chair back, nearly toppling it in my haste to a mirror. I turned up the lights and studied my crow’s feet and frown lines. Yes. I see. Okay. I must graciously accept her kind thanks – for all my “wisdom.”

(You can listen to the podcast which inspired this piece [here](#).)

SUN NEARS THE HORIZON

By Malik Ahmed

Not too long ago, when I was young,
I remember,
I had a head full of hair and
two six-by-six visioned seductive eyes
below my forehead.

My body was fit like that of the athletes.
skin was bright and tight, and I
used to smell just like peppermint.

Spring often came with red tulips in hand,
and approached me on one knee
looking at my face.

Now that the sun nears the horizon,
sliding down the red carpeted western sky
to take an exit-

My body shivers, losing its strength,
And, drying and shrinking like
the shriveled raisins.



PASSAGES by Karen Bower

Regrets? A few
Friends past, and passed
Longings for those passed
Lingering on the laughs
Shared meanings
Remembered with laughs.
Trips taken
More on the list to take
Back to Drumheller, in Spring
Or Lethbridge for Cherry Blossoms
Oregon beaches,
Radar Hill, for Pacific, Vancouver Island, and Mainland vistas
Friendships unexpected, close as kin, lasting
Lessons learned
And to be learned
Treasures found, for self, friends, family
Joy in giving
Remembering the faces thrilled with choices
Familiar faces linger long, though meetings passed
New horizons beckon, always
Much more to learn
Always



Artifacts of Aging
by Rod Baker
(pictured left)

On my seventh birthday, aging meant finally being old enough to have my own cap gun and cowboy hat.

At age fourteen, I graduated from boyhood to manhood by visiting a men's clothing store with my father to purchase some much-coveted long trousers.

Buying a motorcycle propelled me into a new age, where I became free to travel where ever I wished at the flick of a wrist

Aging still provides new artifacts marking my travails through time —reading glasses, hearing aids, antacid tablets, knee pads for assembling 3D Ikea puzzles and a GPS helping me find my way home.

Re-fire-ment for Every Woman of a Certain Age

by Patricia L. Morris

'Fire' all cylinders 'tire' is un-true
Time to game-play secessus¹ anew
This is what the new era's for
Replace old fossil metaphor
Refuse to let them run you aground
Don't let patronizers boss you around
Greedy geezers may stir envy or harm
Upgrade old-world European charm
Here on greener pastures do be kind
Right side of history, don't be left behind

Stories only change through you
Stories only change through you
Stories only change through you
Stories only change through you

Stories come to life through you
Awkward questions you can un-do
Tweak new metaphors must pursue
Refirement², female elders, let's renew.

¹ secessus is latin for retirement

²learned about the concept of 'refirement' from an interview with author Ellen Waterson

Your next newsletter 100-word challenge: Submission must be 100 words or less (excluding title);
Can be prose or poetry; Inclusion of theme words is optional; **Theme: The North Shore**
Email your masterpiece to editor@nswriters.org

On a Clear Day

by Steve Rayner

Acrylic on 12"x24" canvas – Garibaldi backcountry viewed from the peak of Whistler Mountain, with Black Tusk wearing its white winter coat.



Share your writing news

A major perk of belonging to the NSWA is that you can let other members know about your latest books, readings, launches, workshops, contest wins, podcasts, and other news. There are three avenues open to you:

1. If you have **writing-related news** to share, email it to our Membership Coordinator, Frances Peck, at fpeck@shaw.ca. She will include your news in a member email and will send it to our Facebook volunteer for posting.
2. If you have a **published book**, send a cover image to our Webmaster, Kelly Hoskins, at webmaster@nswriters.org. She will include your book cover on the Member Achievements page of our website.
3. As always, you can **submit your writing news AND your creative writing** to our Newsletter Editor, Tiffany Budhyanto, at editor@nswriters.org. The theme and word count for creative pieces are announced in each call for submissions.

The Last Page

by Cathy L. Scrimshaw

Ah, February. For most people, their least favourite month. Some even cringe at the mere mention of the word. February is, let's face it, *dreary*. The trees are skeletal, skies are shades of grey, it always seems to be either raining or drizzly or foggy. When the sun does shine, the light is weak, pale, barely enough to cast shadows. Days are short and nights are, for many, far too long.

Having said all that, I have a confession to make. *I really like February.*

I suppose it might be partly due to aging. While I've never actively disliked winter months, or rain, or shorter days, I find myself embracing those elements of nature as the years go by. For one thing, I don't let inclement weather stop me from doing those outdoor activities I enjoy. I have two sets of rain gear (essential, I think, for life on the west coast), so I always have one dry set to don on my walks with the dog or hikes in the woods. As for the shorter days, well, those work just fine for me, too. It's a chance to light the fireplace at dinnertime. Curl up in the armchair and chill out, watch the flames dance, listen to the crackle and pop of the burning wood. Those things are made even more precious when listening to the rain or wind outside, and knowing that here, in this part of the world, we have the luxury of safety and comfort during the cold, wet months of winter.

But the best part of February is that, since Mother Nature pushes us indoors for much of the month, we have all the time we need to indulge ourselves in indoor creative pursuits.

This is, for me, when I am most productive in my basement office.

The lack of outdoor distractions means I can concentrate fully on writing. And on reading, that essential fuel for writers. I've been enjoying a book every 10 days or so, alternating between some of the great classics and some vintage mysteries as well as modern novels, and reading as critically as I know how. Studying the plots, character descriptions and developments, use of setting, and how those changed from the past to the present is a great way to inspire myself to reach further in my own writing; this month is the perfect time to do that. And I still have enough hours left over to take a few courses or meet up with friends.

All in all, February is a great month.

I'll be taking advantage of it while I can. Because come March, spring will be just around the corner. The weeds will be taking over the garden unless I'm out there on a regular basis. Hiking and weekend jaunts will be beckoning. My mind will turn to which vegetables to grow this year, and to planting flowerpots. Writing will still be first on the list, but the list will, in the spring and summer months, grow again.

So, here's to February. It might be the shortest month, in the heart of winter, but it is one of the best. So, enjoy it while it lasts! The sun will shine again soon enough.