

#### Welcome to

# Write On! NORTH SHORE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Linking North Shore writers since 1993.

We respectfully acknowledge the Coast Salish Peoples, including the x<sup>w</sup> mə θ k<sup>w</sup> ə ý ə m (Musqueam), S<u>k</u> w<u>x</u> wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and sə lilwə ta<del>i</del> (Tsleil-Waututh), on whose unceded ancestral lands our community of writers supporting writers is grateful to live and work.



Presidents Message

What's the fun of writing all by yourself?

Writers spend lots of time alone, like I am at this moment composing my initial 2024-25 President's message. But unless you're composing a discourse on the physics of time (an old friend expects me to read his paper on this topic), creative writing demands engaging with people to observe their triumphs and troubles, to commiserate, as well as to offer and receive advice. Writers need writing groups with authors who range from accomplished to hopeful, to bounce their words off one another and see what sticks or repels.

Last fall, we invited members to join writing groups according to their interests: fiction, memoir/biography, and poetry. We had success! One group is still going strong with three members benefiting significantly from feedback on their respective novels: a road trip and two thrillers. Others also benefited on their short fiction and memoir. Go ahead, find your fellow writers, and caffeinate and converse.

If you are interested in joining or forming a writing critique group this fall, please email me at <u>willkoch@telus.net</u>. If we have enough interest, we'll put together an introductory session where you all can meet.

Bill Koch

Board of Directors

President: Bill Koch Vice President: Frances Peck Secretary: Calvin Wharton Treasurer: Steve Rayner Membership Coordinator: Frances Peck Speaker Coordinator: Lisa Bagshaw Library Liaison: Wiley Wei-Chiun Ho Webmaster and Publicity: Carmen Farrell Directors-at-Large: Trish Gauntlett, Melanie Dorchester, Erin MacNair



(alendar

Sept 19 - Dec 19: All are welcome to Erin MacNair's Silent Write-in Sessions. Drop in on Thursdays from 9am – 2pm in the Delbrook Community Recreation Centre's Art Studio. (The last hour is discussion and question period.) Bring a computer if you want, otherwise pen and paper will be provided.

**October 12: Saturday Morning Write-in** from 10am - 12pm (always the second Saturday of every month). Log in, roll up your sleeves, and write in the company of other NSWA members. Host: Melanie Dorchester.

**Oct 16 - Nov 6**: Drop into Erin MacNair's **Flash Fiction Workshop**! Four Wednesdays from 6pm – 8pm at the Delbrook Community Recreation Centre. Bring a computer if you want, otherwise pen and paper will be provided along with light snacks and refreshments. <u>https://www.nvrc.ca/programs-memberships/find-program/tiny-</u> <u>explosions-writing-flash-fiction</u>

Oct 21: NSWA Monthly Meeting (delayed a week because of Thanksgiving), is at 7pm in the Teen Room (2nd floor), North Vancouver City Library. Speaker Inspiration Series: Lisa Bagshaw will interview guest speaker Megan Williams, CEO and founder of The Self Publishing Agency.

**Oct 30: Calvin Wharton's Poetry Workshop!** 7pm - 8:30pm at the North Vancouver City Library. This is a joint NSWA and NVCL event. Please register at: <u>https://www.nvcl.ca/events/mining-garden-</u> <u>finding-unexpected-inspiration-new-poems</u>.

**November 9: Saturday Morning Write-in** from 10am - 12pm, the second Saturday of every month. Log in, roll up your sleeves, and write in the company of other NSWA members. Host: Melanie Dorchester.

Nov 18: NSWA Holiday Party is on Monday, November 18th at 6pm. Please bring your holiday spirit to Queens Cross Pub (2989 Lonsdale Ave, North Vancouver).

**Nov 30: Submission deadline** for calendar events, writing successes, poetry/prose, artwork/photography, ongoing contributors, and anything you want in the Winter Write-on! newsletter.



An open mic format for writers to read work aloud in a friendly and supportive environment. Not a critique group, it's a place to share writing with fellow writers in a relaxed and informal setting! **2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7PM NORTH VANCOUVER CITY LIBRARY** 

September II

October 9

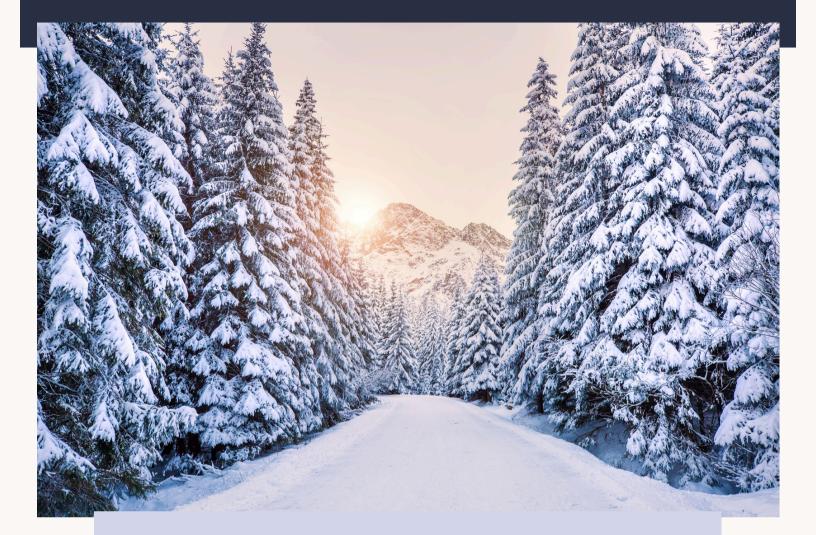
November 13

December II

## Don Preston Board Room

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

nswriters.org <u>A North Shore Writers Association Workshop</u>



# 2024 Holiday Party

Monday, November 18th 6pm

### Queens Cross Pub

2989 Lonsdale Ave, North Vancouver

## SATURDAY MORNING WRITE-INS

WITH HOST MELANIE DORCHESTER

10am - 12pm Second Saturday of every month.



Imagine yourself seated in the comfort of your own home, ready to write.

But nothing happens?

The friendly but focused eclectic Saturday morning write-in may be a good fit for you! After a brief check-in to share recent writing news, questions, concerns, and individual writing plans for the morning, we do a writing warm up, then get to work.

At the midway point and again at the end of the session, insightful and helpful writing tips are often shared. Participants often marvel at how much they can write in such a short time.

New members are always welcome.

(Zoom link distributed to the NSWA membership via email)

### WRITING! REVISING! AGONIZING!



#### GET YOUR SUBMISSION UNDERWAY FOR THE

### NORTH SHORE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION 29th ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST

January 2025

All submissions must be original material that has not appeared in any other publication, or on the internet. Winners are announced in April during the North Shore Writers Festival, and published on the NSWA website and newsletter.

Fiction \* Non-Fiction \* Poetry \* Writing for Children & Young Adults

Details coming soon!

Bravo! Brava!

## Erin MacNair

Erin MacNair's story, "It is Certain" is slated for publication in the fall ghost story issue of *Conjunctions Magazine*. The "Revenants" issue is co-edited by Joyce Carol Oates and Bradford Morrow, and features literary heavy hitters Margaret Atwood, Isabel Allende, Joyce Carol Oates, Stephen Graham Jones, and Carmen Maria Machado.

Erin, we couldn't be happier for you!

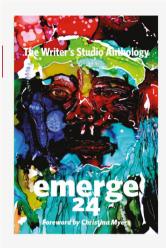
Erin will be the Artist in Residence at the North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission in the Fall of 2024. She finished a short story collection with the generous support of the Canada Council, and is now working on a novel. You can find her at <u>erinmacnair.com</u>.

Erin says, "Write what you want to know." Find out more about her writing process: <u>publicationcoach.com/erin-macnair</u>.



Bravo! Brava!

## **Carmen Farrell**

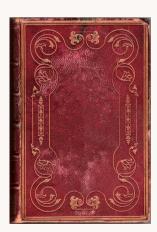


Carmen Farrell's creative nonfiction/fiction blend, "Jess and the Banshee: An Excerpt" will be published in SFU's *Emerge 24* anthology on October 9th.

The <u>Emerge 24 book launch</u> is part of the Vancouver Writers' Festival on Granville Island on October 27th. The event is sold out, but tickets are free and a last minute stand-by line can usually be accommodated.

Carmen Farrell's creative nonfiction "Better Not Tell You Now" (longlisted in FBCW's 2023 contest) will appear in the fall issue of the renowned <u>Grain Magazine v.52.1, a literary journal</u> of the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild known for publishing engaging, diverse, and challenging work.





Later this fall, Carmen Farrell's hybrid poetry/creative nonfiction piece, "Speaking Ges" will be published in *filling Station*, a Calgary-based literary magazine with a reputation for publishing unconventional and avant-garde work.

Congratulations on your publishing trifecta, Carmen!

Carmen Farrell, a recent graduate of The Writers Studio at SFU, writes about inclusion and diversity and how visions of a normal life collide with reality. You can find her at *carmengfarrell.com*.

Bravo! Brava!

## **Dhana Musil**

Dhana Musil has an essay published in the *Huffington Post*. And it's getting a lot of traction!

**Congratulations Dhana!** 

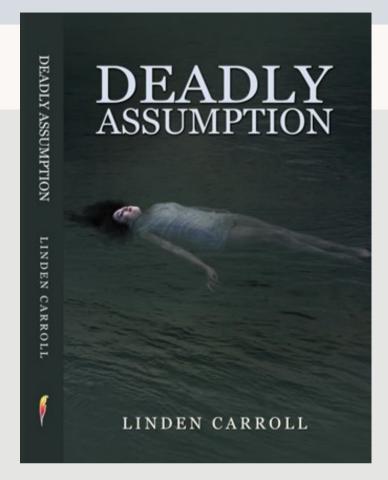
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/bodybuilding-bikini-competitiontransformation\_n\_66c67e6fe4b0f1ca4693afaf

The year Dhana turned 50, she trained for and entered a bodybuilding competition. When she's not writing, she can be found weightlifting, paddle boarding, hiking with Nala (Border Collie mix), or spooning her favourite snack, coconut manna, straight out of the jar.

You can find her at <u>dhanamusil.com</u>.



### LINDEN CARROLL



Linden Carroll is excited to share the November 8 2024 release date of her latest historical novel, *Deadly Assumption*. Available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Booktopia, Waterstones, Indigo.ca, and booksellers internationally in ebook, audio, hard and soft covers.

*Deadly Assumption* is a generational saga of suspected homicide, never-ending love, and emotional trauma, the loss of loved ones, and the fight to recapture those closest to the heart.

With a root setting in England, the story is rich in history encompassing Canada, Germany and France, spanning the period prior to World War 2 into the 1980s.

Please find Linden at <u>lindencarroll.com</u>.

### BILL KOCH



On the Bus Downtown

Friday afternoon standing room only

I put down

my book my phone and look around

#### A boy

not yet a man trendy Gen Z dangling jewels from multiple ear piercings John Lennon glasses bucket hat and designer sweats uses the toggle control like a Nintendo pro on his motorized wheelchair backing into the disabled space to passengers' admiration

Thirty-something woman Cloth bag draped over shoulder Gatorade in one hand extra-large pizza box in the other Molecules of mozzarella and tomato sauce drift down the aisle filling noses reminding all of late-night deliveries

Girl all in pink barrette beaded bracelet iPhone cover and jacket five ear piercings and a wireless ear bud swaying to private music

Two ladies chat in Russian across the multi-generational multi-lingual multi-origin bus aisle

Until one

grey overtaking blond in her careless ponytail grocery bag wagon clutched against her legs the canvas surface painted with

apples oranges

peppers

starts reading a Russian crime novel lurid primary colours leaping from cover

How do I know? Cyrillic script on the pages silhouette of a handgun in the header

All on a bus downtown.

Bill Koch

### JOYCE GOODWIN



#### The Loon.

On a lonely lake with only leaping silver trout for company a solitary loon calls out touching a wild place in my heart giving voice to my soul. An unearthly cry, only the wolf with its own long howl can stir the spirit of uneasy ancestors in such a way. a celestial call reaching every desolate soul. an exquisite sadness sending songs in a symphony of spheres towards the stars, this is music of the universe. Moonbeams on water reflections of silver metallic light a terrestrial path for a cry and howl longing to know we are not alone in this vast land we call Canada.

### BILL KOCH



#### What Do You Do?

On an August afternoon filled with contented curiosity, we paddled our dented, scratched canoe across the channel to a small island. My wife Grace and I had often stared out the window of our summer house, wondering who lived on the two-mile-long strip of arbutus, fir and oak trees without ferry service, stores, or other amenities.

The islet was one of twenty or so large and small islands plopped like green puzzle pieces on the surface of the Salish Sea. Fragile electrical, internet, and phone lines connected its hundred residents to civilization. An informal water taxi ran at odd hours, operated by a grizzled alcoholic whose office was a barstool and cell phone. He would stumble out at any hour, yank his outboard to life, and deliver anyone anywhere for beer bucks.

Otherwise, the hidden souls who lived there used their own boats for supplies. In July, floats and part-timers with Gucci boat shoes and cargo shorts descended on their rustic but well-furnished waterfront cottages, tied sailboats to anchored floats, and left on Labour Day. A schoolteacher we once met lived in a tumble-down cottage with leaky roof and rowed every day from the island across rough water to inspire first graders, then back home in darkness and rain.

"What a life." Grace declared. "Wouldn't want it for myself."

We floated to a stop on a shale bank and tied the canoe to a stump. A gravel lane meandered northward among A-frames and cabins, some with water access, others hidden in the forest. We trudged through dusty gravel as water squished in our rubber mesh sandals. The scent of woodfire filled our noses. The chittering of eagles and rustling of wind-blown fir trees filled the air.

Grace asked me, "What do these people do for a living; how do they manage?"

I shrugged. "Kind of comforting, knowing you've disappeared and are hard to reach. Feels good to me."

"I like the quiet but not the isolation." She glanced anxiously at a cabin decomposing in the forest.

The roar of warring water swelled near the north end of the island. Roiling whitecaps eroded clay cliffs on either side. Wise boaters avoided the narrow channel. To the northwest, a view opened between two peeling red arbutus to reveal log barges and sail boats bobbing on choppy water.

A man sat, elbows propped on faded knees of dusty jeans, on a sun-bleached bench above the cliff. Rising mist from the waves curled his shoulder-length hair.

The roar of water filled our ears.

I yelled, "Hi."

He hesitated as if he hadn't heard.

"Hello, how are ..."

His head swivelled, steely eyes and cheeks patterned by sunburn and patchy whiskers. His lips turned up in an indifferent smile. "Hello," he answered in an anywhere accent. His gaze returned to the white water.

After a moment, Grace asked, "Do you live on the island?"

He smirked sideways at us and nodded.

"We were wondering what people on this island do for a living." She hesitated. "It's so isolated."

"Oh, probably lots of things." he muttered, then turned to the view.

"What do you do?"

He stood and considered us as if we were problem children. "Counterfeiting." Then, without another word, he strode into the woods.

She flicked a look of alarm at me. "What did he say?"

"That he was a counterfeiter that ... you know, he prints phony money."

"But ..." she took a step back along the gravel, "shouldn't we ..."

"Just let him go. Remember what I said about why people disappear on isolated islands?"



#### Bill Koch

DRIBBLE \* DRABBLE

A drabble is a short work of fiction of precisely one hundred words in length. The purpose of the drabble is brevity, testing the author's ability to express interesting and meaningful ideas in a confined space.

When writing a drabble isn't challenging enough, you can try your hand at writing a dribble, which is a story told in exactly 50 words.

Submit your dribble and/or drabble to <u>editor@nswriters.org</u>. Please send both a Word document (in case I need to send it back with edits) and a PDF (to retain your spacing).

Deadlines: Sept 30, Nov 30, Feb 28, Apr 30



## GET PUBLISHED!



Please closely follow the guidelines when emailing your submissions to <u>editor@nswriters.org</u>. Submit both a Word document (in case I need to send it back with edits) and a PDF (to retain the spacing).

DEADLINES: Sept 30, Nov 30, Feb 28, Apr 30

EVENTS: Invitations to book launches, author readings, writing workshops, or resources to share with fellow members. Please include: what (event), when (date and time), where (location), drop-in or registration (link), and any other information you think may be needed.

BRAVO! BRAVA!: A short blurb about your writing successes (recent publication, writing awards, etc.).

POETRY OR PROSE: 50-word or 100-word challenge, or up to 600 words of fiction, nonfiction, or an excerpt from a larger work. No opinion articles please.

ARTWORK OR PHOTOGRAPHY: Please send high-quality JPG or PNG files.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Only submissions from NSWA members will be accepted.
- Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and reliability of their content.
- Please write your submission the way you'd like to see it in the newsletter.
- Please check spelling, grammar, and punctuation prior to submission.
- Writing that appears in the NSWA newsletter is eligible for 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.

-ditor's (Note

Hello NSWA Members! Sylvia Leong here.

While my independent nature usually renders me unemployable — drum roll please — the North Shore Writers' Association is letting me edit their newsletters! A massive thank you to Tiffany Budhyanto for passing the torch and smoothing my way.



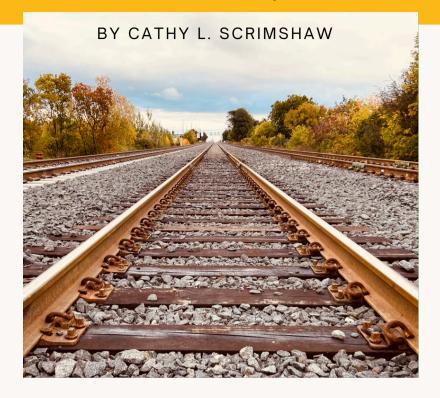
#### ABOUT ME

Nature and her four seasons are an incredible influence on my creativity, while North Vancouver, past and present, inspires my fiction. When not in the rainforest snapping photos and searching for fairies, I spend my time snuggled in bed with my laptop writing a ménage à trois of romance, historical, and grounded fantasy.

To date, I have three published short stories under my belt, and another short fiction won third place in Vancouver's 27th Annual North Shore Writing Competition. Not to mention, I hold the prize for the most drafts needed before my writing is readable.

I'm a therapeutic personal trainer and a devoted environmentalist. You can find me with my husband drinking wine in our cottage in the sky. Or more probable, because we never answer our door, at <u>slleong.com</u>.

The Last Pages



Recently, instead of flying, my husband and I took the overnight train to Edmonton to visit my brother. I experienced firsthand why passenger trains have provided such rich material for novelists, especially mystery novelists like myself.

From our cabin, we were urged to the observation car for the 'all aboard' party, intended to promote socializing, complete with sparkling wine and appies. Everyone went along enthusiastically, getting into a party mood. There were Scots from Aberdeen and Glasgow, Brits from Manchester, London and Oxford, Americans from Sacramento and New York, Torontonians heading home, and many others.

Before long, ideas began to percolate.

The Glaswegian lady was traveling solo, taking a break from her marketing job at a literary festival and drinking steadily from her own private stash of whisky. Opinionated and vocal, she didn't let anyone else get a word in. Overbearing? A little. Frustrating? Definitely. Hmm. Did she ever let anyone else speak? What if someone she lived or worked with snapped, and decided to put a permanent stop to her put-downs and self-importance?

The Man in Cabin D, next to ours, never actually appeared. A woman always came and went from the cabin on her own. But he existed. Voices floated through the wall, one male, one female. Was he ill? Injured? Obsessively anti-social? A kidnap victim? Shades of Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, but with a gender twist.

Two retired Via Rail engineers, paying passengers now, were clearly enjoying life-long love affairs with the train. During their endless stories of journeys past, they'd occasionally stop abruptly, smile at each other, and change the subject — usually just as the tale was getting interesting. Trade secrets? Passenger misdeeds? Political intrigue played out on *The Canadian* that only the employees knew about? Not exactly *Murder on the Orient Express*, but the seeds of multiple mysteries wafted about.

The Via Rail staff were just as interesting.

The dining car maître d', wearing black tie and a polished smile, fussed over us all with practiced charm and a world-weary gaze. No request was too much to accommodate. When my husband asked for a Phillips screwdriver to fix a wheel on our suitcase, the waiter didn't miss a beat. 'No such tool on board, sir,' he said. 'We use a butter knife for repairs in the kitchen. Will that do?"

It did.

What else might they produce if asked? And for what purpose? My imagination soared.

Just as the engine runs on fuel, the sleeper cars run on trust. You can lock yourself in at night, but there is no way to lock your cabin door from the outside. When you go to the dining car or the lounge car, anyone can access your cabin. That didn't bother us. But just think — what if you came back to find a well-groomed or, better yet, wild-eyed stranger, lounging in your chair, brandishing a ... (fill in the blank).

I'll definitely ride the rails again.

It's so much more fun than flying.



BY CATHY L. SCRIMSHAW

