

Welcome to

Write On!

NORTH SHORE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Linking North Shore writers since 1993.

We respectfully acknowledge the Coast Salish Peoples, including the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and sə́lilwə́təʔ (Tseil-Waututh), on whose unceded ancestral lands our community of writers supporting writers is grateful to live and work.



President's Message

This comes to you from my laptop fresh off our annual holiday party at the Queen's Cross Pub. NSWA filled the second floor for tasty food, friendship, and the door prize draw ... and I almost forgot the beer, cider, and wine. Thanks to Christine Cowan and Barbara Reardon who continue to graciously organize this annual event.

We have a lot to celebrate with our membership still hovering over one hundred, a new website in progress (thanks to Carmen Farrell and others for their work on this project), and the varied writing accomplishments of our membership. As well, we should be grateful for the regular communication to our members of literary and educational opportunities (thanks to Frances Peck for her sorting these opportunities into regular emails) and the beginning of our guest speakers series (thanks to Lisa Bagshaw, our star interviewer).

Your board works diligently arranging library space for speakers and Dare To Be Heard (thanks to Wiley Ho), publishing this newsletter (thanks to editor Sylvia Leong), and next spring's writing contest, the planning for which is now in progress (thanks to Erin MacNair and Doug MacLeod).

Then there are the behind-the-scenes contributions of Steve Rayner (treasurer) who somehow keeps us solvent, Calvin Wharton (secretary) who makes sense of our chaotic board meetings, and Trish Gauntlett and Melanie Dorchester (directors-at-large), who provide wise counsel. Now, we can now all take a deep breath celebrating our achievements and settling into the starting blocks for the festive season.

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



Team of Volunteers

Writing Contest Committee: Erin MacNair, Doug MacLeod, Trish Gauntlett, and Libby Soper

Holiday Party Coordinators: Barbara Reardon, Christine Cowan

Dare to be Heard Host: Rotating

Saturday Write-in Host: Melanie Dorchester

Proofreaders: Rosemary Gretton, Steve Rayner

Newsletter Editor: Sylvia Leong

Calendar

DEC 11: Crafting your memoir — a free *Writing with Writers* workshop from 6:30 - 8pm. Join NSWA member Lillian Au and memoirist and instructor JJ Lee for a craft-based discussion of how they shaped Lillian's essay "Arviat," featured in the new Christmas book, *Upon A Midnight Clear*, into a poignant tale about loneliness. Co-hosted by NSWA and the North Vancouver City Library. [Details and registration online.](#)

DEC 11: Dare to be Heard — 7pm, North Vancouver City Library. (Page 7)

DEC 14: Saturday Morning Write-in — 10am - 12pm. Zoom. (Page 5)

JAN 8: Dare to be Heard — 7pm, North Vancouver City Library. (Page 7)

JAN 9 - Feb 13: 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.

JAN 11: Saturday Morning Write-in — 10am - 12pm. Zoom. (Page 5)

JAN 15: NSWA Writing Contest opens! — (Page 6)

JAN 20: Monthly meeting — 7pm, North Vancouver City Library.

JAN 20: Speaker Series — Guest: Caroline Adderson. 7 - 8:30pm, North Vancouver City Library. (Page 8)

JAN 29 - Feb 12: 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. Spaces limited: [Sign up here!](#)

FEB 8: Saturday Morning Write-in — 10am - 12pm. Zoom. (Page 5)

FEB 12: Dare to be Heard — 7pm, North Vancouver City Library. (Page 7)

FEB 24: Monthly meeting — 7pm, North Vancouver City Library.

FEB 24: Speaker Series — Guest: Kirsten Pendreigh. 7 - 8:30pm, North Vancouver City Library. (Page 8)

FEB 28: Submission deadline for the Spring *Write-on!* newsletter. (Page 30)

SATURDAY MORNING WRITE-INS

WITH HOST MELANIE DORCHESTER

Dec 14 * Jan 11 * Feb 8
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.

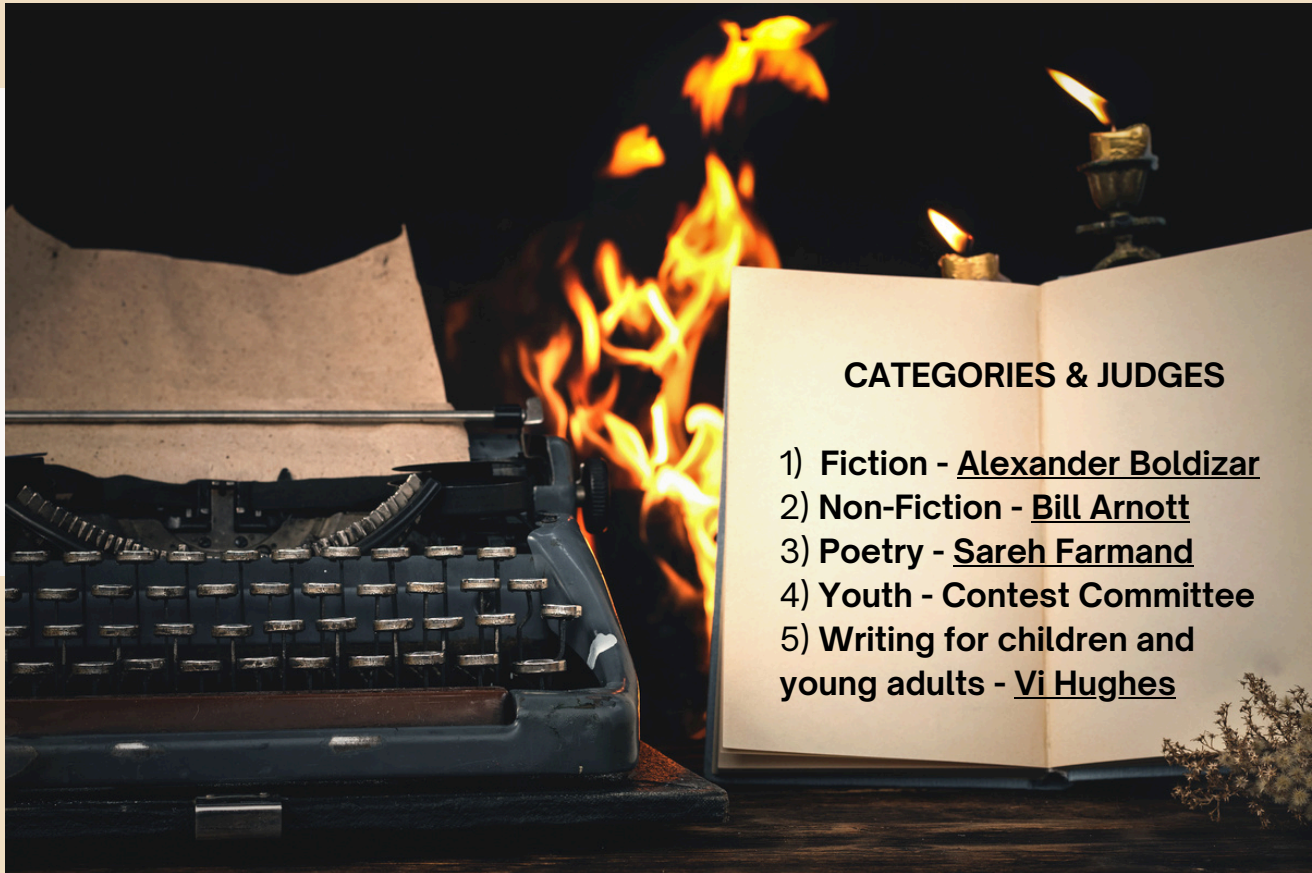
At the midway point and again at the end of the session, insightful and helpful writing tips are often shared. Participants often marvel at how much they can write in such a short time.

New members are always welcome.

(Zoom link distributed to the NSWA membership via email)

NORTH SHORE WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

29th ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST



CATEGORIES & JUDGES

- 1) Fiction - Alexander Boldizar
- 2) Non-Fiction - Bill Arnott
- 3) Poetry - Sareh Farmand
- 4) Youth - Contest Committee
- 5) Writing for children and young adults - Vi Hughes

OPENS JANUARY 15, 2025 - DEADLINE MARCH 15, 2025

Submit only original work that's never appeared in another publication or on the internet. Winners announced in April at the North Shore Writers Festival, and published on the NSWA website and newsletter.

ADULT CATEGORIES:

\$100 - First Place Winners
\$75 - Second Place Winners
\$50 - Third Place Winners

YOUTH CATEGORY:

\$75 for ages 11 and younger
\$75 for ages 12-18

\$10/entry for NSWA Members
\$15/entry for non-members
\$5/entry for youth (under 18)

For more information:
<https://www.nswriters.org/annual-contest/>

DARE TO BE HEARD

ROTATING HOST

Dec 11 * Jan 8 * Feb 12
7pm

(Second Wednesday of every month.)



Open mic format!

Writers read their work aloud in a friendly and supportive environment.

Not a critique group.

A relaxed and informal setting for writers to share with fellow writers. Second Wednesday of each month, at 7pm, at the North Vancouver City Library.

(A NSWA workshop.)
Open to the public.

Lisa Bagshaw's Speaker Series

Coming Soon ...

Don't miss January's and February's Speaker Series guests!

January 20, 7 - 8:30pm,
North Vancouver City Library.

Caroline Adderson is an award-winning writer of fiction for adults and children, most recently Giller-listed for her short story collection, *A Way to Be Happy*.



February 24, 7 - 8:30pm,
North Vancouver City Library.

Kirsten Pendreigh is a poet and children's author from Vancouver. Her children's books celebrate our early instincts to care for the plants and creatures that share our planet. Kirsten's two nonfiction books, *WHEN A TREE FALLS*, and *WHAT FISH ARE SAYING*, come out in 2025. Kirsten's poems are found in Canadian literary magazines and anthologies including *Best Canadian Poetry 2021*.

Lisa Bagshaw's Speaker Series

Megan Williams of The Self-Publishing Agency



Is There Still a Stigma in Self Publishing?

Not according to owner and founder of The Self-Publishing Agency, Megan Williams. And definitely not according to the turnout of members and guests for her speaker series in October. If standing room only is any indication, the self-publishing opportunities are of great interest and value to writers. And Megan did not disappoint. She was generous with her heart and knowledge, humorous, engaging and completely compelling.

I was fascinated by Megan because she isn't just a savvy businessperson in the publishing world, she has walked the talk having successfully written, published, promoted, and marketed her book. In what can only be described as a serendipitous series of events, Megan, who was not a writer, shared how she was beckoned to write the story of her husband's passing, by him, after he passed. She found a note in his diary that he left for her that read, "Write this story." As she says, "being coachable, I knew I had to write it." From *Our Interrupted Fairy*

Lisa Bagshaw's Speaker Series

Tale, Megan started us off by reading out loud an emotional chapter called *The Threesome* about the love story of Chad, Megan, and Myeloma. It is a heartwarming and wrenching story, written in the voice of a young woman and young man who have found love but must share it with the mistress of cancer.

I wanted to know how she wrote and published such a successful book having never been a writer. After a happenstance meeting with a *New York Times* best seller who advised her to write one thousand words a day, she completed the manuscript in one year. She hired an editor from the *Globe and Mail* and spent a year pitching her story to publishers and networking. When the traditional publishing houses weren't responding, Megan researched all there was to know about self-publishing and decided to take the risk. Once she published her book, she networked with key influencers in media and was a guest on prominent local radio and TV shows. When she couldn't get into bookstores because she didn't have a publisher, she cold called Chapters and Indigo and convinced them to sell her book and allow her to do in-store signings. Following every thread of opportunity and believing in herself she printed and sold more books and appeared on more radio and television stations across the country and in Seattle.

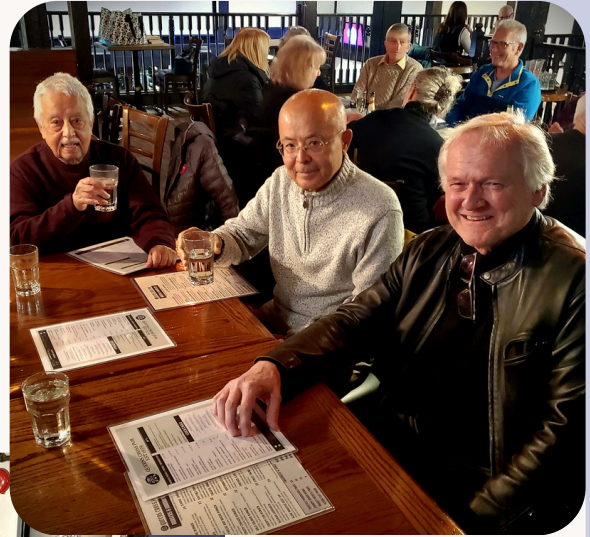
She became a self-taught expert on self-publishing. Word got out and people started seeking out her advice for their own books and eventually, seeing the opportunity, she designed a successful business model to help other authors experience success in the self-publishing world. All the publishing opportunities that she and her team offer are customized to the needs of the author. The Self-Publishing Agency offers editors, designers, social media plans, and press coverage. Within 9-15 months your book goes to market. The entire audience, myself included, was in awe of Megan's persistence, commitment, creativity, and hustle. We learned a lot from her story and were motivated and inspired to keep writing and publish our books.

Lisa Bagshaw, Speaker Coordinator

Megan can be reached at The Self-Publishing Agency:
megan@theselfpublishingagency.com

HOLIDAY PARTY 2024

QUEENS CROSS PUB



A big thank you Christine Cowan and Barbara Reardon for organizing this event!

Bravo! Brava!

Erin MacNair

Erin MacNair is a writer from North Vancouver, BC.

Her short stories have recently been published in *Conjunctions 83: Revenants, The Ghost Issue*, edited by Joyce Carol Oates and Bradford Morrow, and in the Canadian speculative magazine *Augur*, Issue 7.3. Her work is also in the upcoming anthology from *Exile: Through the Portal--Tales from a Hopeful Dystopia*. Her story “Nesting,” first published in *Prairie Fire*, was shortlisted in the 2024 Masters Review Reprint prize.

Erin co-hosted the first North Shore Story Slam with co-host Dhana Musil, at the Delbrook Recreation Centre on November 24th.

You can find her at erinmacnair.com.

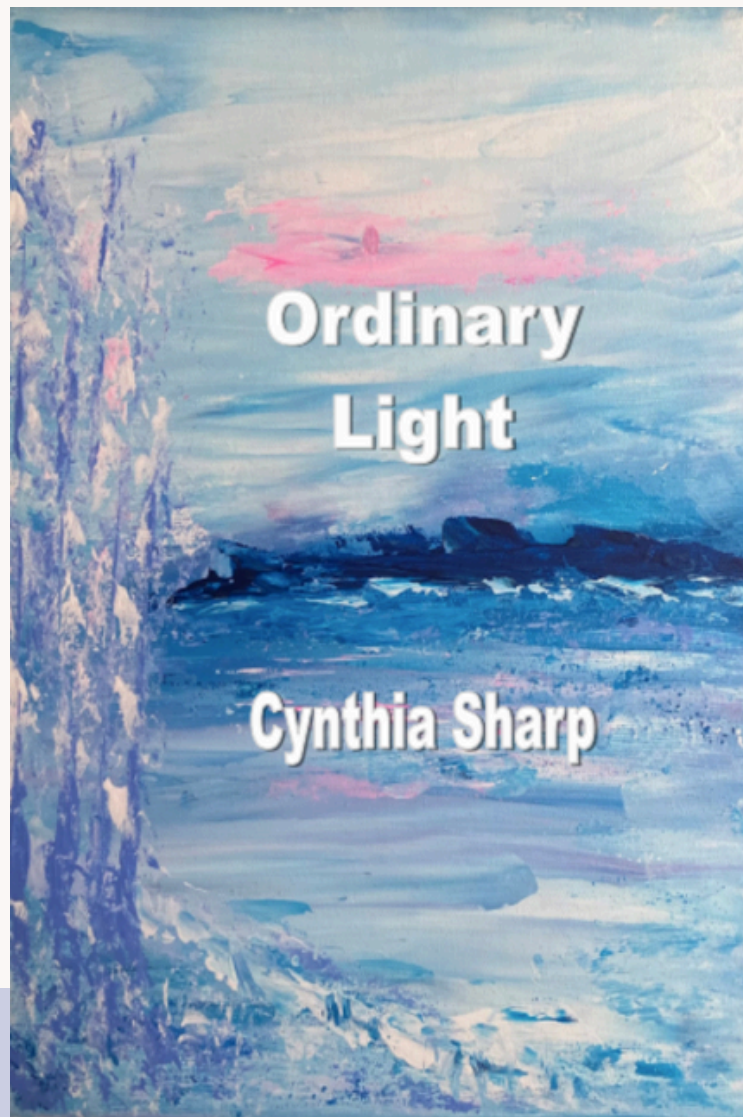


Bravo! Brava!

Cynthia Sharp

Cynthia Sharp has been having a wonderful time offering readings and eco-oriented writing workshops throughout the Lower Mainland and is looking forward to meeting local writers at her spring readings at the Powell River Public Library in April 2025 and the Salt Spring Island Public Library on May 1, 2025. Her latest eco-poetry collection *Ordinary Light*, a first-prize winner in the SCWES Book Awards for BC Authors, is in North Shore Libraries.

North Vancouver City Library * North Vancouver District Library



Linda Mangnall's Q and A with ...

Lisa Bagshaw



Lisa Bagshaw is best known within the NSWA as our speaker series host and board member. Lisa selects and interviews guests who offer information and inspiration, elevated by Lisa's insightful questions and uplifting personal style. She is also the host and producer of Bold Leaps, a 26-episode series on CHEK TV. She is a philanthropist with UNICEF's Women UNlimited and recently returned from Bangladesh and the Rohingya Refugee Camp. Lisa is currently writing her memoir about growing up with a facial deformity in a culture that values perfection and what she risks in pursuit of her dreams.

Q: Since 2022 you have hosted the NSWA speaker series. You select speakers who inspire and teach us. What can we look forward to in 2025?

The NSWA audience is the best. They are interested, respectful, kind, and generous. I try to provide a wide range of guests in a variety of genres be it poetry, thriller, romance, historical or memoir. I choose people I find interesting who can motivate us to write and publish. 2025 will be more of the same!

Q: Your television series, Bold Leaps, was a personal risk that you self-financed to pursue your dream of being a broadcast journalist. What insights can you offer writers who may consider self-publishing?

Linda Mangnall's Q and A

When you embark on any new journey such as getting published (or launching your own TV show) be prepared to work your ass off, take risks, and see the commitment through. Publishing in any way is an act of great risk and faith and will always be rewarded in unimaginable ways. Once your work is out there, use it as a platform. You never know where it might lead you.

Q: You recently exited a stellar 25-year career in media sales. Winning a NSWA creative non-fiction contest and attending the San Miguel Writers' Conference were turning points on your memoir-writing path that has been paused. Are you continuing the work on your memoir?

My memoir is about growing up with a facial deformity and the ways that experience influenced my life choices. After a memoir-writing hiatus while I worked on *Bold Leaps*, I am now refocused and completing JJ Lee's memoir courses. This will get me primed to return to San Miguel in February where I hope to pitch my work to literary agents.

Q: What childhood book made an impression on you?

I was brought up in a strict Catholic family in the 60s, and it was instilled in me and my sister (not my brother) that the goal of life is to be married. Hence, *Cinderella* had a big impact on the direction of my life and the pursuit of a husband. I am currently in recovery from both Catholicism and the aforementioned pursuit. I loved the book *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans. I loved her bravery, and she inspired me to be brave.

Q: Why did you choose to join the NSWA?

I joined for the people, the community, and the opportunities and have enjoyed them all profusely.

Learn more about Lisa at www.boldleaps.ca

Linda Mangnall is a career and lifestyle writer. If you know a member who would like to be featured in our Q&A, contact Linda at Lindamangnall@icloud.com.

North Shore Authors' Collection



On November 15, 2024, writers from across the North Shore gathered at a reception to launch the 2024–2025 North Shore Authors Collection.

This collection, curated by the North Vancouver City Library, North Vancouver District Public Library, and West Vancouver Memorial Library, spotlights local writers by housing their books in a special annual collection in all three North Shore libraries.

A shout-out to NSWA Speaker Coordinator Lisa Bagshaw, who gave a rousing speech at this year's reception.

Warmest congratulations to the NSWA members who are part of the 2024–2025 North Shore Authors' Collection!

Marie-Claude Arnott

B.R. Bentley

C.S. Cowan

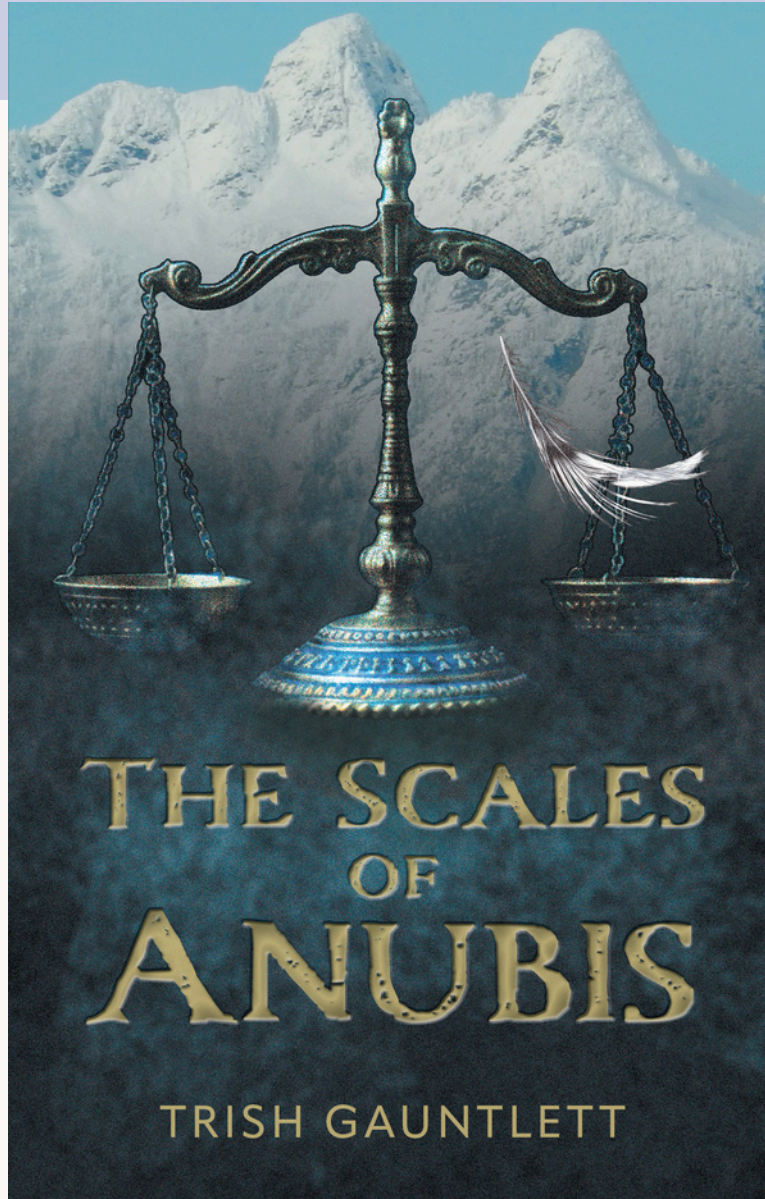
Trish Gauntlett

Cathy Kuzel

Rachel McGuire

Christine Read

Want your book in next year's collection? Check online in May 2025 for next year's intake.

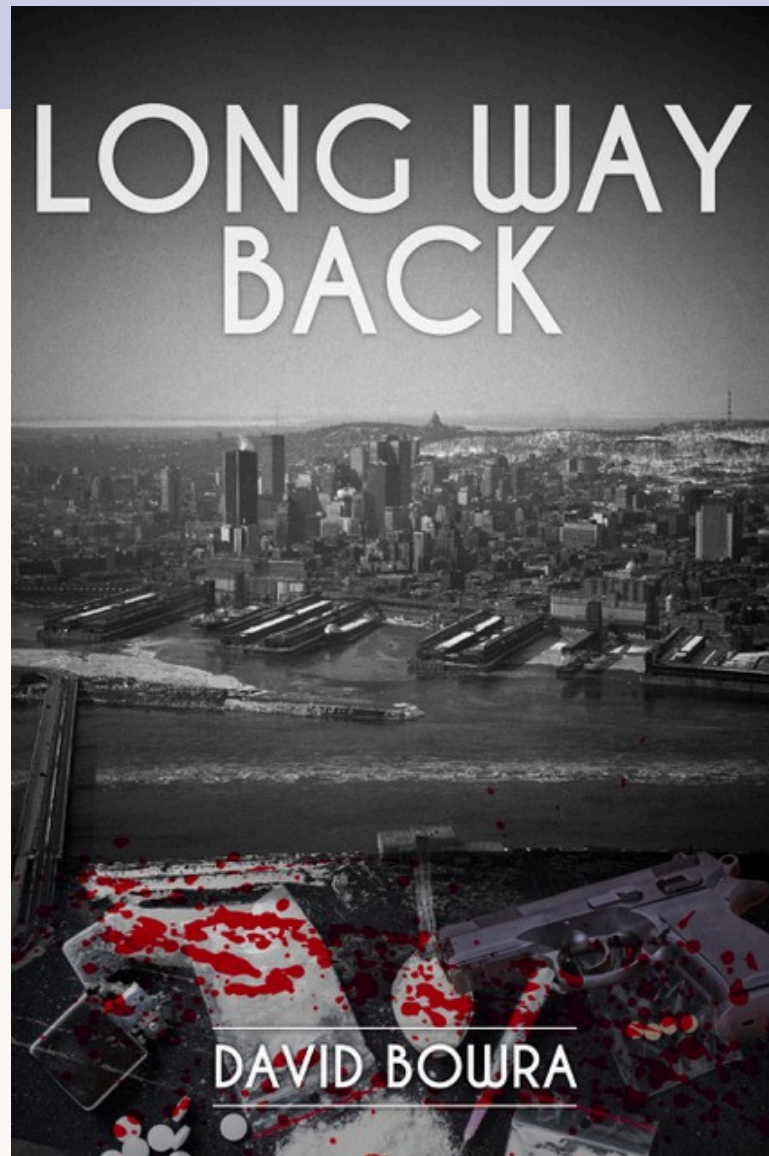


The Scales of Anubis

by Trish Gauntlett

In the North Vancouver village of Cascade Canyon, a rare edition of *The Tomb of Tut Ankh Amen*, by legendary archaeologist and Egyptologist Howard Carter, is left at Keeley Carisbrooke's thrift store. Hidden inside is an old letter containing a strange and tragic secret. As a pattern of deadly events spirals from 1920s upstate New York to the present day in the Pacific Northwest, the close-knit community of Cascade Canyon comes together to protect and defend each other against extraordinary dangers and to help Charles Deeds, antiques expert and owner of the mysterious book, in a quest for truth and justice.

Buy The Scales of Anubis



Long Way Back

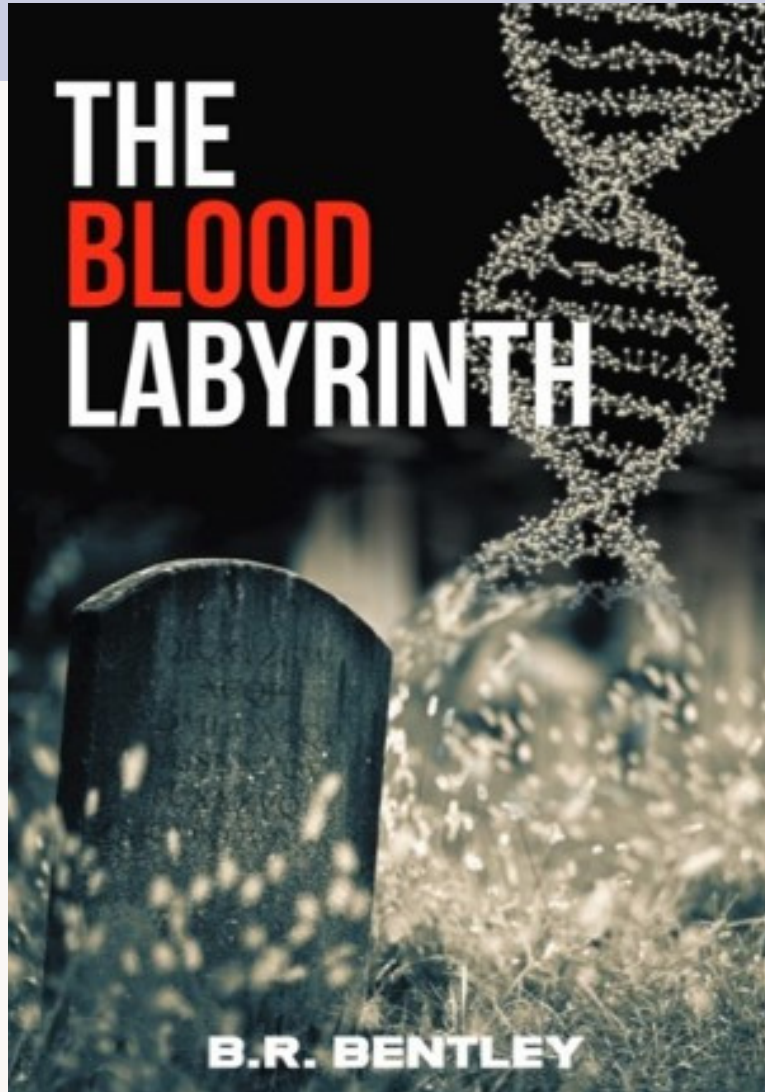
by David Bowra

Alan Davis was a gangster in a previous life. Now under witness protection, he's recruited by the RCMP to help tackle drug trafficking at the Port of Montreal.

Driven by his desire to show his estranged daughter that there is some good in him after all, he goes undercover and penetrates the gang that controls the port. But not everybody is convinced by his act, and Davis must act quickly to keep his cover and complete his mission.

As his plan unfolds, he realizes that he's not only putting himself in danger — he's risking those he cares about too. Forced to choose between good and evil, he discovers that there's not much difference between the people who hired him and the real villains. Is he prepared to risk everything for the mission?

Available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble

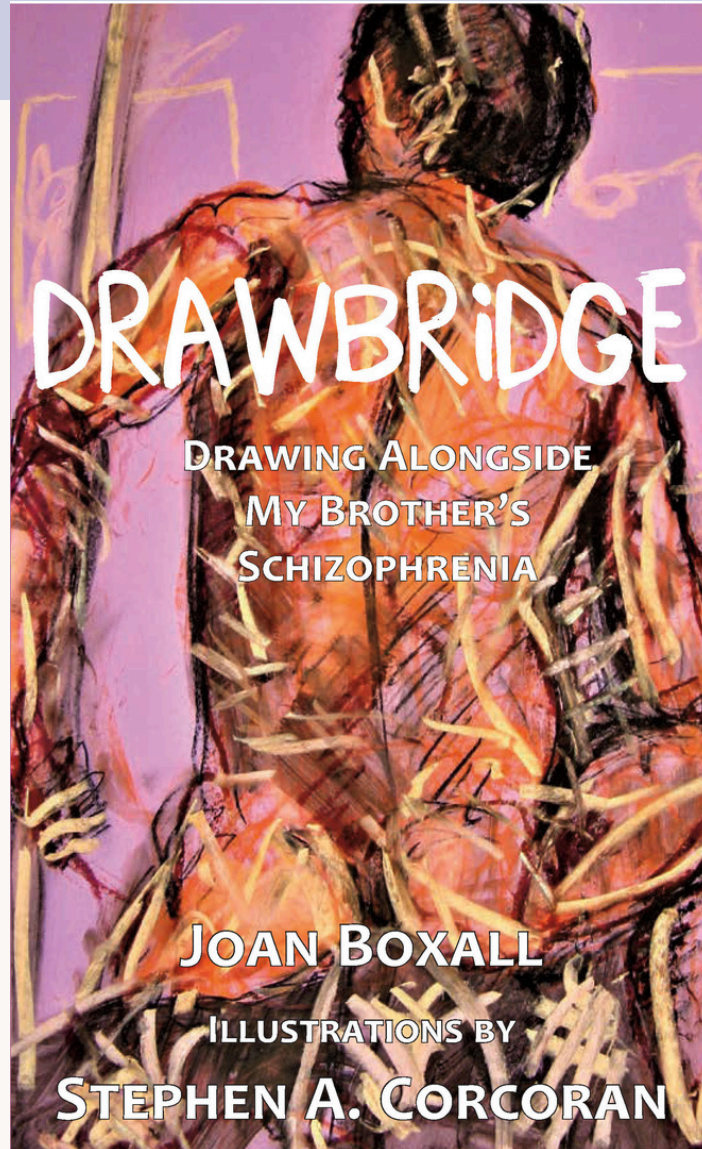


The Blood Labyrinth

by B.R. Bentley

Seventy-four years after the suspicious death of an unidentified man at a South African beach, the police open a cold-case investigation into the crime. Sixteen thousand kilometers away, a Canadian woman begins a search for her biological family. When a public database DNA match connects her search to the police investigation, it triggers an alert at the British spy agency, MI6. Inspired by real events, *The Blood Labyrinth* is B.R. Bentley's latest captivating international mystery.

Buy [The Blood Labyrinth](#)



Drawbridge

Drawing Alongside My Brother's Schizophrenia

by Joan Boxall with art by Stephen A. Corcoran

How do you establish trust and meaningful connection with a sibling who suffers from schizophrenia? In an attempt to rekindle her relationship with her estranged brother Steve, Joan meets him at the Art Studios in Vancouver, where he takes part in art classes for individuals with a mental illness in a safe, supportive environment. This marks the beginning of a remarkable journey into the healing power of art.

The Canadian Authors' Association has chosen the *DrawBridge* book cover for their Xmas 2024 jigsaw puzzle! Stocking stuffer for the puzzler in your family?

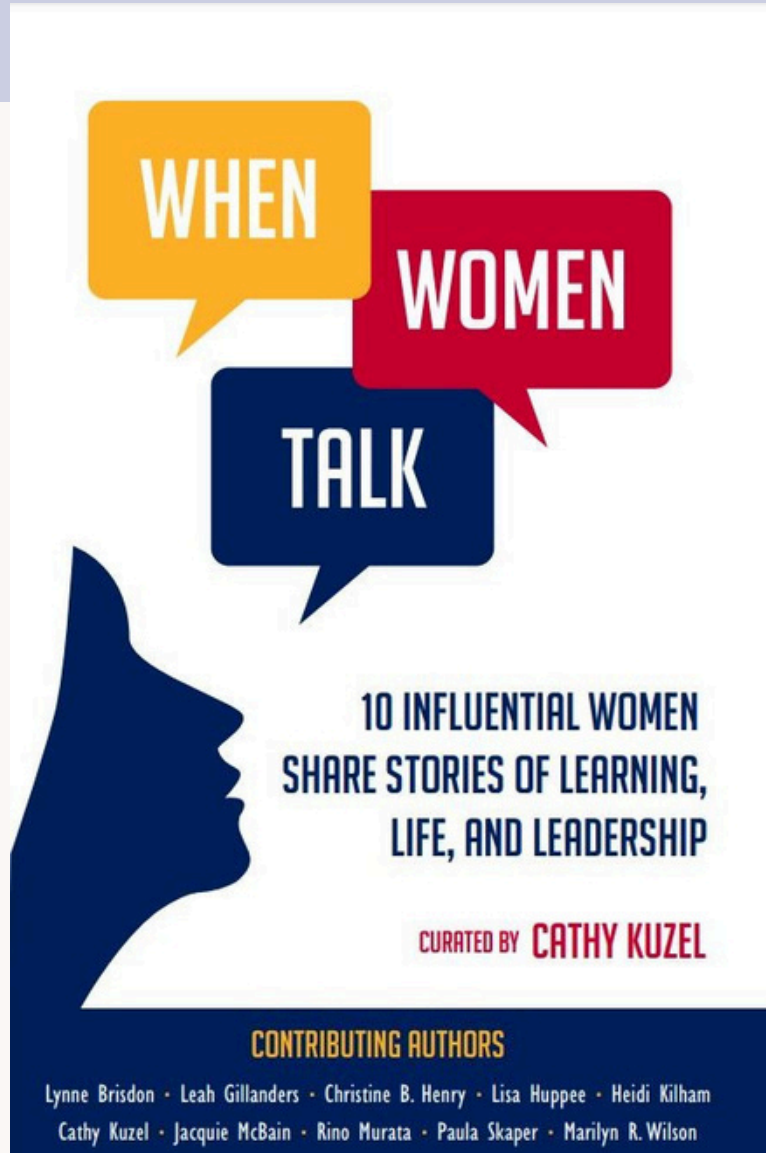
Buy Drawbridge



Upon a Midnight Clear

edited by JJ Lee

Upon a Midnight Clear is an anthology of true stories from writers across Canada. Edited by JJ Lee, the tales are about Christmases gone wrong. Two of the stories are by North Shore writers including my story "Arviat." The stories are sometimes funny, sad, and always poignant. They feature dashed holiday hopes, Christmas catastrophes, and slender, heartbreaking shards of joy. It is a sequel to 2023's *Better Next Year*. (Submitted by Lillian Au.)



When Women Talk

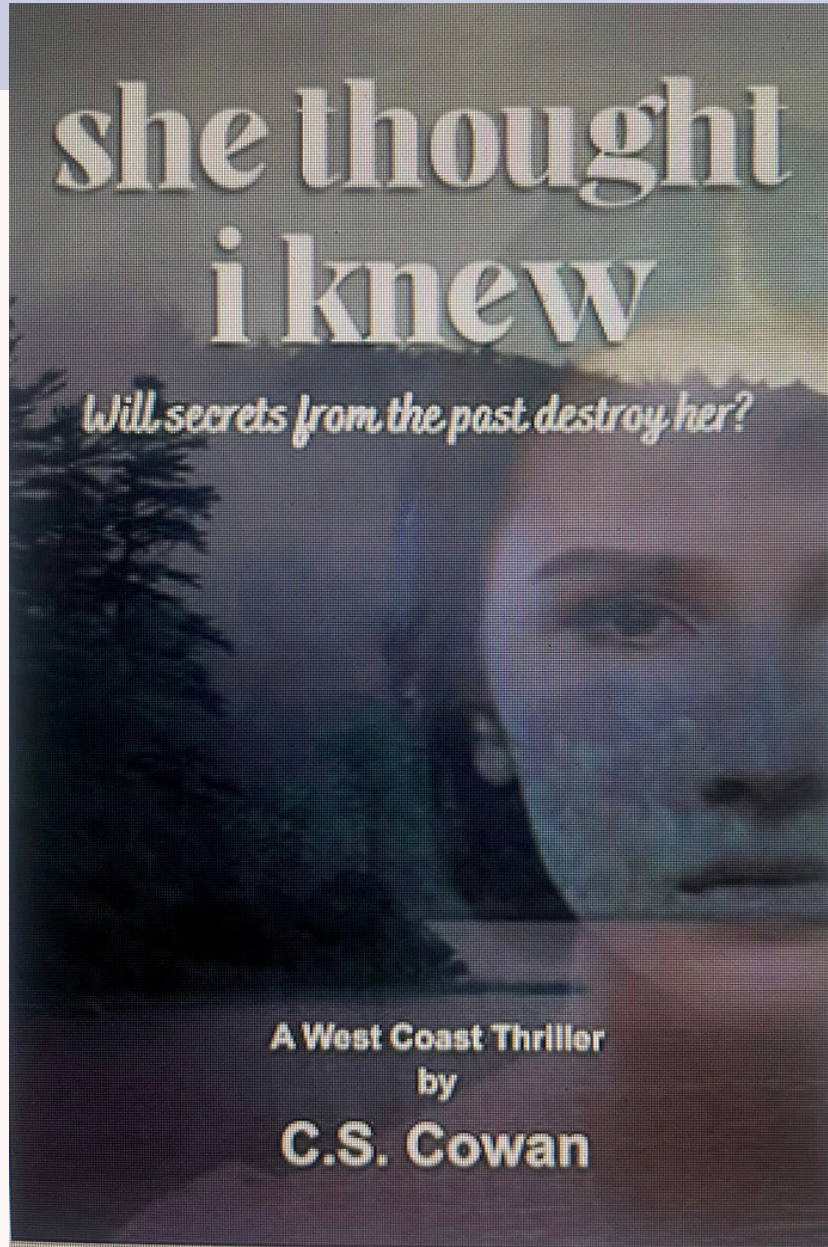
curated by [Cathy Kuzel](#)

WISDOM AND INSIGHT become more valuable when shared. Here, ten women share their compelling stories of how they faced, with courage and resilience, seemingly insurmountable challenges and change. You'll be inspired to discover how they:

- broke gender barriers to succeed in business,
- learned to challenge their own assumptions,
- overcame abuse and negative conditioning,
- found purpose and fulfillment in a truly creative life, and
- embraced technological change, and much more.

Buy [When Women Talk](#)

North Shore Authors' Collection



she thought i knew

by C.S. Cowan

Criminologist Maeve Rosetti returns home to the Sunshine Coast to assist her estranged sister in the search for her missing daughter. In the process, painful events in the siblings' past are unearthed. As the clock ticks Maeve must confront her demons, but when a body is pulled from the water, she fears the worst.

she thought i knew heaps secrets upon secrets, leading to an ending you won't see coming.

Available on Amazon

TRISH GAUNTLETT



Shapeshifter

We walked along the seawall
deep in talk
and I, uneasy with the rise and fall of honesty,
called you metamorph, shapeshifter.

You laughed to please me, mystified, amused perhaps
but deep inside your sub-atomic core a pattern shifted imperceptibly
like sand disturbed by spray.
And on we walked while conversation slid away to silence
and raced back hard and roaring.

You would not rest in comfortable places.

I called you quicksilver, mercury.
You shook your head in reckless disbelief
but something ancient, sleek and cunning
stirred at the heart of cells and twisted on itself in evolution.

And so we reached the turning point
and faced about to trace the pattern back,
each overlapping step untelling what was told,
until it seemed that we had come full circle to the place where we began,
untouched, unmoved, unchanged.

But we had not.

Within the dark primordial cave
a pulse began to beat
and something given life by truth and lies
began its climb towards the light.



Children of the Rising Sun

Yesterday I drove thirteen hours, fast: gauging the corners, gearing down, avoiding drift, accelerating, pursuing, passing. Speed keeps me focused, sharp, vital, intense — pulls me back to a time when I was younger — when I raced motorcycles.

Five a.m. I awake with a dry mouth at a cheap motel in Lloydminster. Last night I grabbed Chicken McNuggets with fries and ate them in the car — avoiding the COVID pandemic. My back twinges as I stoop to grab my backpack and push through the door into the chill dry air. A few truckers are starting their rigs. I slam my car door shut to keep out the hammer of diesel engines and the acrid blue smoke billowing in their headlights. As my wipers peel off the frost, my body conforms to the familiar shape of my seat — like it never left. I adjust lumbar support, buckle up, and ease onto the street. Six hundred kilometres to Lac Laronge. Minus five Celsius. Watch for ice. A string of garish strip malls slip behind me as I head east into the black void of the prairie.

I pull off the lid and grab a handful of peanuts from the can on the passenger seat. My hand forms a fist and shakes a few into my mouth. Fifteen years ago, I broke my wrist rollerblading around Stanley Park; my wrist can't twist enough to put them all in at once. It's ok. They last longer this way.

ROD BAKER

The radio yields nothing but scratchy country music. I gobble more peanuts and lick the salt from my lips. On day three of solitary travel, I've become my car — the whine of tires on blacktop, shooting along a narrow channel of light, across an endless dark plain. The empty road is dead straight. I accelerate and strain to focus. Yesterday, I saw a bull moose strut across the highway oblivious of traffic.

After two hours of dark driving, I rub my eyes and blink at a distant incandescence. Not the sharp pinpoint lights of an approaching vehicle, but a dim glow growing brighter. I watch spellbound as the startling metamorphosis from dark to light fills my windshield: A giant golden disk is rising over the edge of the planet, giving shape and colour to grass, trees, fences and yellow hay bales hunkered low in fields. A goshawk perched on a post swivels its head as I whoosh by.

The faint warmth of the sun touches my forehead; the same rays that bring life to plants, creating food for insects, fish, reptiles, birds and mammals. All energy, all living things — the earth's children — depend on sunlight.

But it's the giant fireball's daily appearance and disappearance that matters — warming and cooling — evenly distributing the solar rays. Not until this minute, on this road, with the new rising sun streaming fresh light across the land, do I grasp how essential both day and night are to life on earth — a fine-tuned balance. Without revolving, our planet would burn to a crisp on one side and freeze on the other.

Fresh with appreciation, I pull into an Esso station just north of Prince Albert, fill up with liquid solar energy, and walk into the store.

"How are ya this morning?" says a young, dark-haired cashier.

"Good, thanks."

She smiles.

I smile back. "We're all children of the rising sun."

She looks down at the cash register. "Will that \$42 be on your credit card?"

I buckle myself in, reach for another fistful of peanuts, and ease onto the highway. I'm relishing ... the sunlight!

HEATHER CLENDENING



Best Christmas

Searching back through twenty years of celebrating Christmas, they all blur together. The same tinsel-adorned tree guarding piles of bounty, the same turkey dinner, the same fleeting joy of discovering I got everything I asked for again. Year after year until what I gave meant less than what I would get.

Except for the Christmas when I figured it out. When it dawned on me that the babe in the manger at Mass was more than a pretty doll. That what I was seeing on the 6:00 p.m. news was not a movie. I wondered what would happen to those little kids who looked so sad. I knew they lived far away and their country was at war. I forget with who but they had no clothes or food and they lived on the street. When the newsman said they were orphans I realized how lucky I was to live in Canada and to have a mom to take care of me.

What could I do to help, I thought. I knew my family did not have extra money, that we were living “month to month.” So I would have to find a way by myself. For two days I thought and thought. Then just before we got out of school for Christmas holidays I saw the “box for the poor” on Sister Mary’s desk. The “box” was the answer. Now I just needed to make some money.

HEATHER CLENDENING

As I listened to my classmates singing Xmas carols I knew what to do. My brothers and sisters and I would sing for money. Borrow the little box for the poor from Sister Mary's desk, walk the 20 blocks from our little two-bedroom military house to where all the rich people lived, and we would sing for them.

It was a brilliant night, clear and cold, that Christmas Eve of long ago when the five of us trudged through snow-covered sidewalks, walked up to fancy houses, rang the doorbells and started singing. First house, "Silent Night", second house "A Babe in a Manger" and on and on through "We Three Kings" and "Joy to the World" until the little box was stuffed full of coins and dollars.

What a Christmas. Mom was so proud of us once we explained where we had been, after her worry and anger at us being "missing" on Christmas Eve disappeared. It was our family's best Christmas, it didn't even matter that we didn't get many presents. We could hardly wait till we got back to school, to see the look on Sister Mary's face when we gave her the bulging money filled box for the orphans.

That was the year that I learned not only how to give but how to have honour. It would have been so easy, and I was tempted, knowing my family had so little money, to skim a few coins and dollars for ourselves. But I kept seeing the faces of those kids and I couldn't do it.

Thus began our family tradition of giving to those more needy. We still have our fine turkey dinner and our beautifully decorated tree adorned with lights and tinsel. But instead of giving each other gifts we pass a "bigger box" around the table and fill it brimming full of dollars. Then we send the money to a new generation of little kids in war-torn countries. And yes, we still sing Christmas carols to our neighbours but no one pays us anymore!

Changing Seasons

by Rod Baker

Wiggly winds tug off coats of brown,
tumble-spin, swirling, dropping down.

Dried flakes of summer
carpet the ground.

A brush of crimson in her hand,
the autumn artist stencils in
a fiery palette on the land.

Patchy fog, a shorter day,
sure signals of the season's end.

Birds circling, flocking, heading away,
escaping winter's cooling trend.

A scrape of coldness in the air
the land becoming barren, bare.

Bears returning to their lair.

And me, I shuffle through the leaves
hands in pockets, collar up,
slowly changing like the land,
soon to sip at winter's cup



GET PUBLISHED!



Please follow the guidelines *exactly* when emailing your submissions to editor@nswriters.org.

- Write your text exactly the way you want to see it in the newsletter.
- Submit *all* information in *one* word document or email.
- In your email's subject, mention the newsletter section you're submitting to . (For example, Subject: Dribble/Drabble, NSWA Spring Newsletter).
- Submit high-quality JPG or PNG files for artwork or photography.
- Contributors are responsible for the accuracy, originality, and reliability of their content. Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation prior to submission.
- In today's ADHD online world, it's prudent to provide a link taking the reader *directly* to where they can buy your book, register for your workshop, etc.
- Only submissions from NSWA members will be accepted.
- 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.
- Deadlines are Sept 30, Nov 30, Feb 28, and Apr 30.

CALENDAR EVENTS: Invitations to book launches, author readings, writing workshops, or resources to share with fellow members. Please include: name of event, date and time, location, drop-in or registration (link), and any other needed information.

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

DRIBBLE/DRABBLE: 50-word or 100-word challenge.

POETRY OR PROSE: Up to 600 words of fiction, nonfiction, or an excerpt from a larger work. No opinion articles please.

Healthcare for Writers

Since I introduced myself in the last newsletter, I've hummed and hawed over what to do with this space. One night, awake at 4am, I realized how I can be helpful.

Each season, I'll have a new healthcare tip for you to implement into your writing routine.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Meaning, proper ergonomics, or "good posture" at your desk will go a long way to keeping your body happy.

- Adjust your chair's height so your hips are at 90 degrees. Knees should be at 90 degrees as well, with feet flat on the floor (or on a book if needed).
- Elbows need to be at 90 degrees with straight wrists and relaxed fingers.
- Position your monitor an arm's length away, with its top at your eye level. Your chin should be parallel with the ground, with the hole in your ear over your shoulder.
- Starting at your tailbone and travelling upward, envision your spine growing tall as though a string is attached to the top of your head pulling you upwards. Then relax into the four gentle curves of your spine. (No, your spine is not supposed to be straight).
- In opposition to this photo, feel free to keep your clothes on!



Along with her severe writing addiction, Sylvia Leong is a former healthcare professional who uses her education and experience as both a nutritionist and therapeutic personal trainer.

Want more healthcare tips? Check out: [Leong Orthopaedic Health](#)

The Last Pages

BY CATHY L. SCRIMSHAW



I have a confession to make. I love winter.

While most people are dreaming of tropical beaches and longing to escape the west coast winter, I find endless sun and heat boring, enervating instead of energizing. When temperatures rise above 20 C, I'm seeking a cool place to hibernate, not a patio party. I usually end up complaining about the season rather than enjoying it.

But winter? Bring it on! Give me dark skies, cold temperatures, the skeletal branches of trees reaching up to stormy clouds, people so bundled up their faces are barely visible, and my energy levels soar and my imagination goes into overdrive.

Most of my inspiration for characters—and for plots—comes from people I run into while out walking with my collie, Glee. As almost everyone loves Lassie, most stop to chat and meet the dog. After years of this, I've built up quite a mental store of character ideas from observing lots of real people.

There are the many elderly ladies who routinely walk the neighbourhood mid-mornings; two of the characters in my still-unpublished mystery novel are composites of this group. The real-life ladies are strong, resilient, independent. They live alone now in houses previously shared with their late husbands, determined not to bow down to old age, infirmity, or the adult children who want them to move into 'something easier for you.'

The Last Pages

They're not out in the heat of summer, for obvious reasons. But in winter, as I watch them stride along, undeterred by rain, blustery winds, or even snowy sidewalks, I know there are dozens of stories there. They've lived a lot, loved a lot, they're fearless, and they're nowhere near ready for rocking chairs.

They're great inspiration for fictional characters.

Then there are the other walkers, the ones I run into during early morning or late afternoon walks. During summer it's light. They're easily seen. No deception possible, no threat sensed. Not so in winter. It's dark now at those times of the day. I have my flashlight with me, but I rely on Glee to tell me when someone, or something, is nearby. She always does, and I'm always more alert. Still, other people, dressed in their uniform dark jackets and jeans, hoods up or black toques pulled down, seem to emerge from a black void right in front of me, always apologetic in case I'm startled (I'm not usually), always looking more mysterious, and potentially ominous, than they do in summer.

On these occasions, my imagination can easily start racing. How easy it would be for someone – male or female – to take advantage. A quick move, an unexpected blow, an expert shove as an early morning delivery truck is going by, is all it would take for a tragedy to occur, or a crime to succeed. Add in wind, driving rain and, best of all, swirling fog, and the victim doesn't stand a chance.

What a great start to a murder mystery.

So, be like me. Enjoy this season. Let your imagination soar in the gloominess of winter. After all, summer will be here again all too soon – and you'll have to go to that patio party.

BY CATHY L. SCRIMSHAW



