

All Authors Magazine

ISSUE 18

THIRST for MATRICULATION



All Authors Magazine

ISSUE 18

THIRST for MATRICULATION



Intro

I Thirst

I thirst for My Thirst.

I long to be satiated, fulfilled and quenched.

My Thirst, she burns. Profoundly, insufferably, excruciatingly.

I desire, more than anything, to be appeased, quenched.

Yet, My Thirst, she endures, scorching the innermost depths of my being, reminding me that she is there, unhappy and jaundiced. Like a dying child in a desert wasteland, she pleads to be made whole. To be complete.

My Thirst, she is real, tangible, potent, like raging waves of vehement yearning, she screams to me, whaling, "Make me whole! Satisfy me!"

Yet, I fret. I fear that she will never be. That she will always be an intolerable echo in the night perpetually reminding me that I am empty and thirsty.



At times I reticently reminisce on the yearning for something more, something which will effectuate a change in the norm. A break in the bondage that has for far too long imprisoned my literary sui generis brothers and sisters.

I find that my dilemma is twofold; how do I achieve such a feat, and if I do, how many are willing to come along on the ride?

I want more for us. A graduation to something bigger, something better, something more profound and meaningful. However, the more I dig deeper, the more I see that too many have become blinded by the "way it is" and cannot see "the way it can be".



So, My Thirst, she screams at me, making me well aware that she will not be ignored. She kicks, she hollers, she agonizes, she sussurates in my ear that her suffering is abject, doomed to never be mitigated.

Moments arise when I'm told I dream too big, and I counter that with, perhaps you need to dream bigger.

Relinquish my resolve? Never. Subjugate to the status quo? It simply isn't in me.

So I press forward, convicted to graduation my circumstance, to feeling the plenary of my being shine.

While I still torment for My Thirst, still looking for the absolution of the river which flows lucid literary life to replenish her weary soul, my sole endeavor is to extinguish My Thirst.

Until then, she whispers, "I thirst."



We would like to take a moment and thank the participants of this issue of All Authors Magazine, who are as follows:

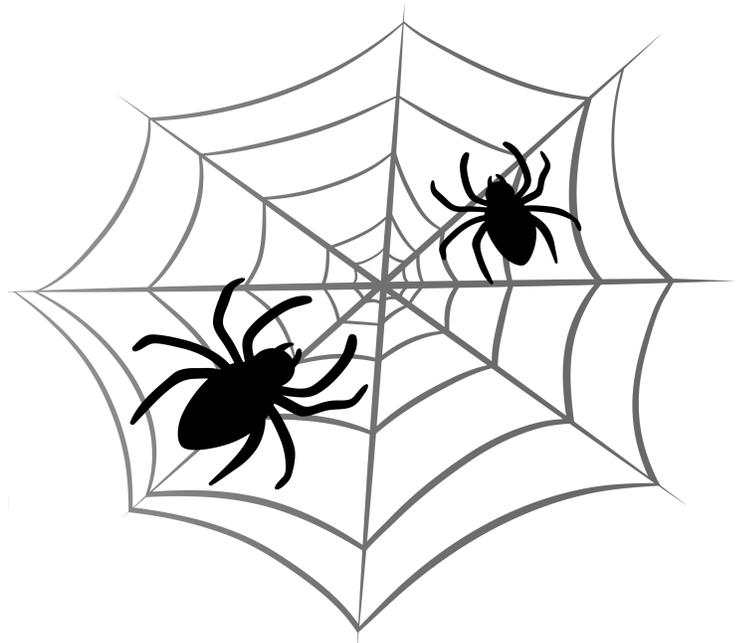
Natasja Hellenthal
Coffee Time Author Interviews

Hall of the Mountain King by K.R. Columbus
Awesome Covers (Awful Edition)

S.K.A.R.: Simi's Komma: Amplified Reminiscence
Featured Book

Heartbreak and Hunger:
A Reader, Writer, and Reviewer's Thirst for Something More

Guest Article
Simone "Azúcar" Nikkole
Poetry Unleashed



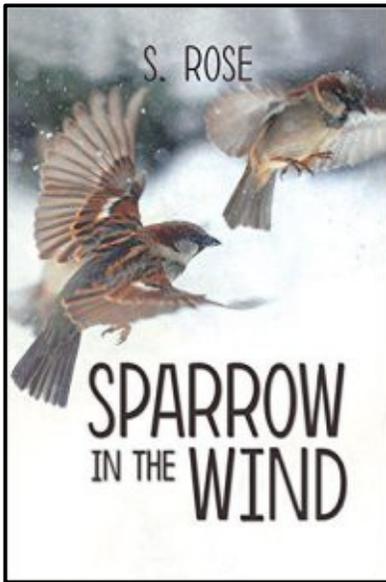
BOOKS



READING



Recommended Reads



Title: Sparrow in the Wind

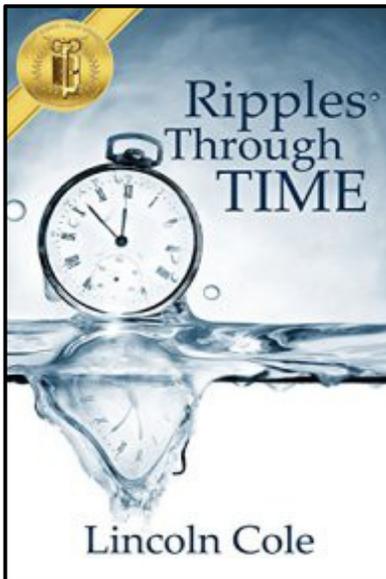
Author: S. Rose

Genre: Cultural Fiction

Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Funny how memories work, the things you remember, the things forgotten, the things that change you. Back in the summer of 1962, ten year-old Cassandra Parsons has her life all figured out. She lives with her father and mother in the upstairs flat of a well-appointed two family house in a pleasant neighborhood of Racine, Wisconsin. Her maternal aunt and grandfather live right downstairs and her best friend Kitty has always lived two doors down. Cassandra's well-ordered world comes undone when her father decides to move his nuclear family to the backwoods of Northern Wisconsin, to renovate and manage his father's hunting lodge. Isolated and friendless, she is suddenly left to her own devices as her parents plunge themselves into their new business endeavor. Loneliness and self-pity gradually give way to growth as Cassandra learns to appreciate the beauty of nature and the peace of quietude. Soon she meets a half-Ojibwa girl named Sparrow. The girls become fast friends and have a final fling with childhood, spending their last carefree days fishing in the river and roaming the woods, pretending to be ancient Ojibwa. But their sweet Indian summer comes to an abrupt end as tragedy strikes both girls' families. Cassandra and Sparrow's friendship is tested as they try to forge a mature, enduring relationship that hopefully will see them through even these darkest of times.



Title: Ripples Through Time

Author: Lincoln Cole

Genre: Literary Fiction

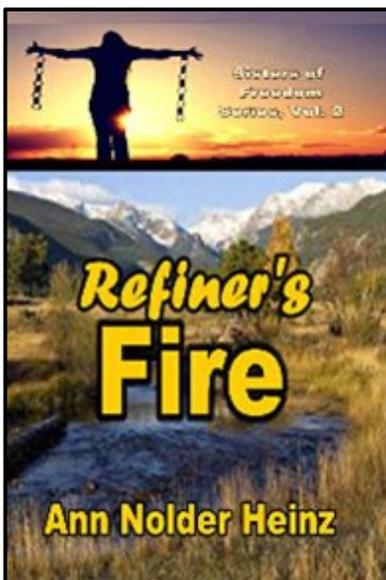
Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Calvin Greenwood is a family man in his eighties. He is alone for the first time in over sixty years: his wife, Emily, just passed away and he isn't taking her loss well. He doesn't remember how to be alone, and he isn't sure if he can forgive himself for the mistakes he made while she was alive.

Edward White is a long time family friend who knows something is wrong with Calvin. He comes to check on him during his time of need and make sure he isn't planning to do anything reckless. Edward understands just how dangerous things are for someone struggling the way Calvin is, and he hopes talking to him can settle things back down. He just hopes he isn't too late to help.

Help, however, isn't the easiest thing to give, and it can be even more difficult to accept... Love, loss, and forgiveness weave through this human tale of friendship and hope.



Title: Refiner's Fire

Author: Ann Nolder Heinz

Genre: Historical Fiction

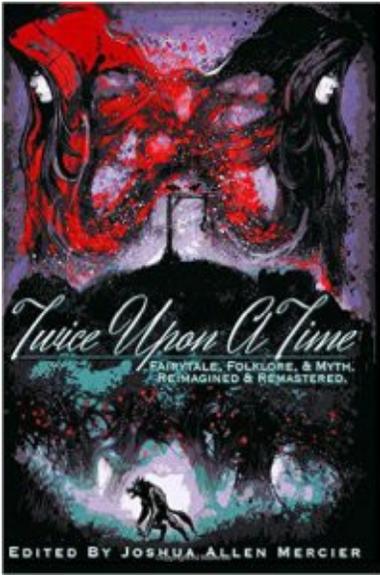
Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Lizzie Hamilton's life as a pampered belle in the antebellum South is over. Alone and destitute due to the disintegration of her family's fortunes, she makes the mistake of trusting a handsome but unprincipled professional gambler whose silver-tongued promises lead only to disgrace and virtual servitude.

Danger and misfortune stalk her as she travels from Charleston, South Carolina to the gambling dens of New Orleans, up the Mississippi River, and across the broad prairies to the gold fields of California. Will her experiences drive her to bitterness and despair?

Or will they change her heart—and open it to the love and redemption she craves?



Title: Twice Upon A Time: Fairytale, Folklore, & Myth. Reimagined & Remastered

Author: Various Authors

Genre: Dark Fairy Tales

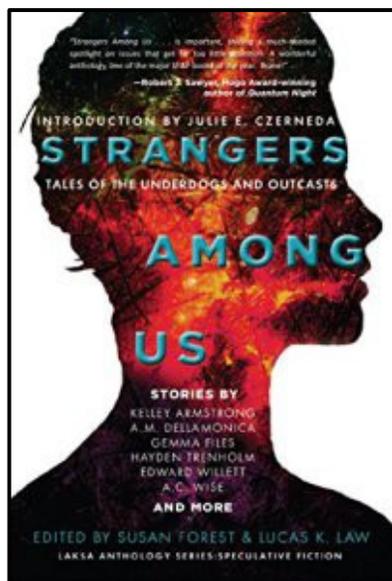
Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Fairytales don't always happen once upon a time. Fables don't always have a happy ending. Sometimes the stories we love are too dark for nightmares. What if waking Sleeping Beauty was the worse thing the Prince could have done? What if Rapunzel wasn't in that tower for her own protection—but for everyone else's? Assembled by The Bearded Scribe Press, *Twice Upon A Time* combines classics and modern lore in peculiar and spectacular ways. From Rapunzel to Rumpelstiltskin, this unique collection showcases childhood favorites unlike anything you've ever seen. Both traditionally-published and independent authors will take you on a whirlwind ride through fairytale and folklore, myth and majick. Cherished stories are revisited and remastered into newly-treasured tales of hope and heartache, of adversity and adventure. Featuring stories from Bo Balder, AJ Bauers, Carina Bissett, Rose Blackthorn, S.M. Blooding, Rick Chiantaretto, Richard Chizmar, Liz DeJesus, Court Ellyn, S.Q. Eries, Steven Anthony George, Dale W. Glaser, Jax Goss, K.R. Green, Kelly Hale, Tonia Marie Harris, Brian T. Hodges, Tarran Jones, Jason Kimble, Shari L. Klase, Alethea Kontis, Hannah Lesniak, Wayne Ligon, RS McCoy, Joshua Allen Mercier, Robert D. Moores, Diana Murdock, Nick Nafpliotis, Elizabeth J. Norton, Bobbie Palmer, William Petersen, Rebekah Phillips, Asa Powers, Joe Powers, Brian Rathbone, Julianne Snow, Tracy Arthur Soldan, C.L. Stegall, Brian W. Taylor, Kenechi Udogu, Onser von Fullon, Deborah Walker, Angela Wallace, and Cynthia Ward. Edited by Joshua Allen Mercier. Cover artwork by Luke Spooner.



Hot Off the Press



Title: Strangers Among Us: Tales of the Underdogs and Outcasts (Laksa Anthology Series)

Author: Various Authors

Genre: Speculative Fiction

Release Date: August 8, 2016

Available: Amazon

Blurb:

There's a delicate balance between mental health and mental illness . . .

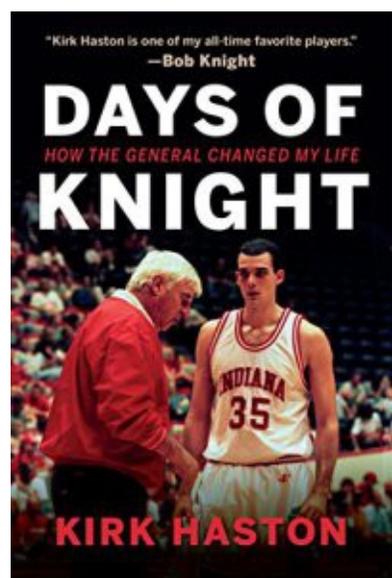
Who are the STRANGERS AMONG US?

We are your fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, friends and lovers. We staff your stores, cross your streets, and study in your schools, invisible among you. We are your outcasts and underdogs, and often, your unsung heroes.

Nineteen science fiction and fantasy authors tackle the division between mental health and mental illness; how the interplay between our minds' quirks and the diverse societies and cultures we live in can set us apart, or must be concealed, or become unlikely strengths.

We find troubles with Irish fay, a North Korean cosmonaut's fear of flying, an aging maid dealing with politics of revenge, a mute boy and an army of darkness, a sister reaching out at the edge of a black hole, the dog and the sleepwalker, and many more.

After all, what harm can be done...



Title: Days of Knight: How the General Changed My Life

Author: Kirk Haston

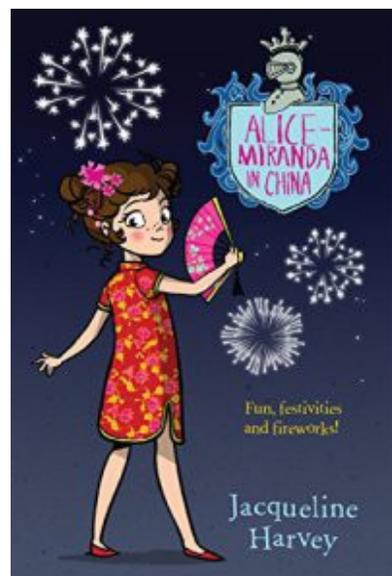
Genre: Sports Biographies

Release Date: August 22, 2016

Available: Amazon

Blurb:

What happens when a 6' 9" kid from Lobelville, Tennessee is recruited by legendary basketball coach Bob Knight? Kirk Haston's life was changed forever with just a two-minute phone call. Containing previously unknown Knight stories, anecdotes, and choice quotes, fans will gain an inside look at the notoriously private man and his no-nonsense coaching style. Which past Hoosier basketball greats returned to talk to and practice with current teams? How did Knight mentally challenge his players in practices? How did the players feel when Knight was fired? In this touching and humorous book, Haston shares these answers and more, including his own Hoosier highs—shooting a famous three-point winning shot against number one ranked Michigan State—and lows—losing his mom in a heartbreaking tornado accident. Days of Knight is a book every die-hard IU basketball fan will treasure.



Title: Alice-Miranda in China

Author: Jacqueline Harvey

Genre: Children

Release Date: August 24, 2016

Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Fun, festivities and fireworks!

Alice-Miranda and her friends are on a school exchange in China! There's so much to see and do, and plenty of new people to meet. Among the whirlwind of sights is a breathtaking circus show, a hair-raising feat and an encounter with a family of acrobats. While some are having a great time, others haven't quite landed on their feet. Throw in clashing personalities and the theft of a priceless antiquity, and sparks are set to fly. There may be more than just fireworks in store for Alice-Miranda and her friends . . .

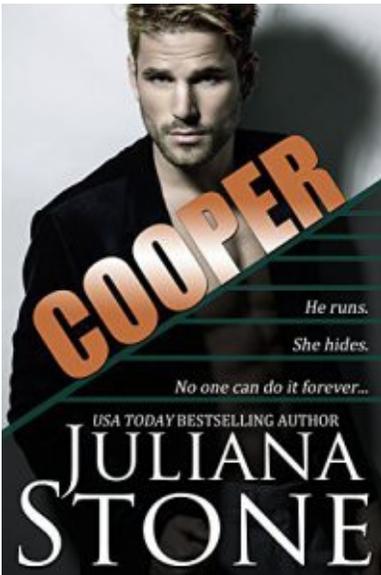


Title: Once in May
Author: Ofelia Grand
Genre: Gay/Lesbian Romance
Release Date: August 28, 2016
Available: Amazon

Blurb:
In an attempt to run from his past, John has spent the last few years building walls around himself. He knows the best way to stay safe is to keep people at arm's length or preferably out of sight. During weak moments, he might wish he had someone, but he's not ready. After all, it takes seven years for the body to replace all its cells. He has four years to go before he even can think about being around people.

Zachary is always on the move, always on his way to somewhere. He's going from job to job, from country to country. Contrary to what people might think, he wants nothing more than to find a place to call home, and he knows just where. This time, he is ready. This time, he will stay in Nortown. But when he arrives to buy the log cabin he thought would be his, he finds it inhabited. When he goes to talk to the new owner, he is met by the most beautiful green eyes followed by a door slammed in his face.

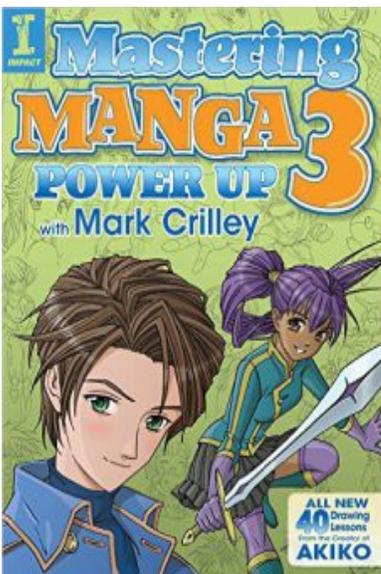
John should've known the peace he had found in Nortown wouldn't last. One day everything was fine, the next a mountain of a man starts showing up wherever he goes. All Zachary wants is to be close to the quiet man who has moved into his cabin. If following him around is the only way, then so be it. Sooner or later, John will get used to having him there...at least, if Zachary hangs around long enough.



Title: Cooper
Author: Julianna Stone
Genre: Contemporary Fiction
Release Date: August 29, 2016
Available: Amazon

Blurb:
He runs, she hides. No one can do it forever...
Most of America think they have Cooper Simon figured out—he's the playboy with no morals and a taste for married women. Cooper's fine with that because he's got secrets he'd rather keep buried. Who knew that spending a few months in Fisherman's Landing would screw with his head. Or meeting a woman unlike any he's met before, would be the key to unraveling all of his secrets...and maybe his heart.

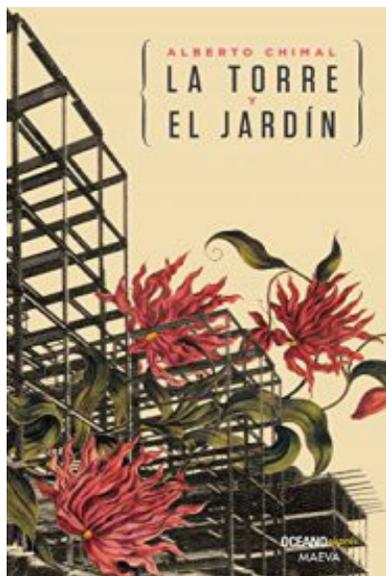
After a horrific accident Morgan Campbell is grateful to be alive. So what if her life didn't turn out the way it was supposed to? She lives quietly and keeps to herself. But meeting the most arrogant, infuriating, and sexy man will turn her world upside down. Because not only is Cooper Simon out of her league, he'd never be interested in someone like her. Can she be brave enough to step out of the box and reclaim the woman she once was? Or is she doomed to live in the shadows forever...



Title: Mastering Manga 3
Author: Mark Crilley
Genre: Self-Help & Art
Release: August 29, 2016
Available: Amazon

Abbreviated Blurb:
Master the skills to create your very own manga!
Expert manga artist Mark Crilley guides you to another level with this powered-up drawing book. Complete your Crilley collection with this third installation, which elevates the instruction to focus on drawing methods to help you create distinctive and detailed professional-level manga art. Through 40 in-depth step-by-step demonstrations not covered in other Mastering Manga books, Mark reveals his secrets for adding color, how to draw manga-style animals, ways to use photo reference, his preferred art supplies and how to fix character inconsistencies. The book is broken down into three sections:

International Corner



Title: La Torre y El Jardín

Author: Alberto Chimal

Language: Spanish

Genre: Science Fiction

Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Dos hombres despiertan en celdas contiguas de un sorprendente burdel. Uno viste como astronauta, el otro ha decidido aclarar un siniestro recuerdo infantil que involucra a la legendaria señora Isabel, quien resuelve a golpe de magia cada problema de ese lugar.

Pero ¿cómo resolver un misterio dentro de un edificio en el que se oyen voces que salen de las paredes, la gente entra a otra dimensión mientras va caminando, y cada bella mujer que aparece tiene una misión secreta, que implica juegos eróticos con animales, o viajes y paradojas en el tiempo?

En La torre y el jardín , Alberto Chimal sumó temas propios de la ciencia ficción a la literatura fantástica y consiguió una de las novelas más ambiciosas de la narrativa latinoamericana reciente.



Title: La trahison de l'incube: Murmures de pixies – 1

Author: Sélène Alys

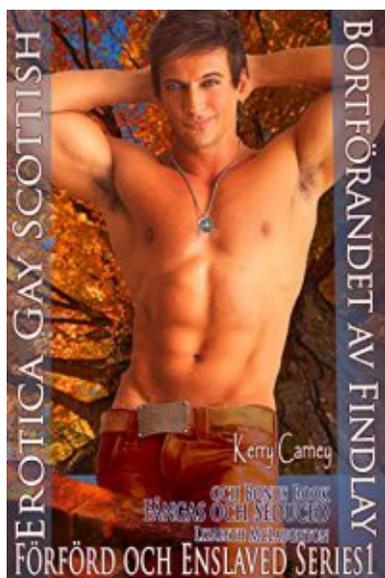
Language: French

Genre: Fantasy

Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Mirabelle Maglietta est une reine cruelle qui n'hésite devant rien pour arriver à ses fins. Aurelio le sait : il a été son bras armé pendant des années. Aujourd'hui, il devient la victime de ses machinations : à cause d'elle, la femme qu'il aime fuit devant l'armée royale. Or, Aurélio est prêt à tout pour la sauver... quitte à vendre son âme.



Title: Erotica Gay Scottish Bortförandet av Findlay: och Bonus Book Fångas och Seduced (Förförd och Enslaved Series 1)

Author: Kerry Carney

Language: Swedish

Genre: Gay Erotica

Available: Amazon

Abbreviated Blurb:

En skotsk Robin Hood med en Twist – Findlay bor i den lilla smedjan byn Ainsley. Han är en föräldralös som lärde sig yrket av smide och svetsning vid ung ålder. Han förväntas nu att gifta sig och bilda familj med fortsatta traditioner med de andra byborna. Han får lära sig att hålla sig till sin egen art i den skotska Highland av baroner och slavar i baroni. När Findlay tar hans svärd och fartyg till staden för att sälja, hör han av platser män kan gå att träffa andra män. Han dukar under för sin lust och finner förförelse i huset av män. En dag Findlay hör av ett bortförande som hände att tidigt på morgonen. En lokal baron kidnappade flera unga män att sälja utomlands. Findlay har beslutat att rädda dem.

Findlay är också en "Robin Hood" bryta in i de rika Mirk hem för att ta tillbaka vad de har stulit från ödmjuka byborna. Han planerar att stjäla det belopp som han behöver för att köpa tillbaka de manliga byborna från ett hem som han har rånat förut.



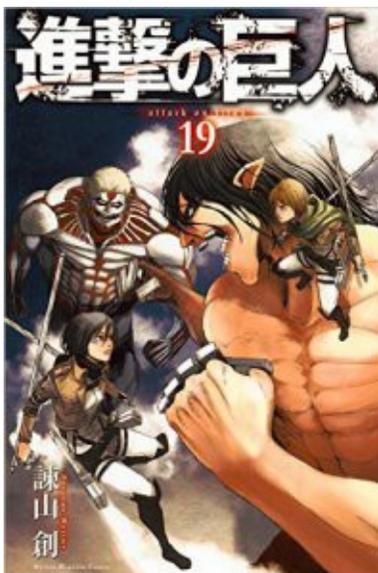
Title: Bibzi taw tlk haewn khna lakhr satw Special Edition
Author: A.A. Bort
Language: Thai
Genre: Horror
Available: Amazon
Blurb:
Bibzi taw tlk haewn khna lakhr satw Special Edition



Title: Kurfürstenklinik 14 – Arztroman: Küsse, die nach Tränen schmecken
Author: Nina Kayser-Darius
Language: German
Genre: Contemporary Fiction
Available: Amazon
Blurb:

Mit den spannenden Arztromanen um Die Kurfürstenklinik präsentiert sich eine neue Serie der Extraklasse! Diese Romane sind erfrischend modern geschrieben, abwechslungsreich gehalten und dabei warmherzig und ergreifend erzählt. Die Kurfürstenklinik ist eine Arztromanserie, die das gewisse Etwas hat und medizinisch in jeder Hinsicht seriös recherchiert ist.

»Tante Annika, fährst du mit uns Geisterbahn? Bitte!« »Ja, Geisterbahn, Geisterbahn!« Annika Södermann fing an zu lachen, als sie die erwartungsvollen Augen ihrer Nichte und ihres Neffen sah. Eva war sieben und Alexander drei, und beide waren entzückt gewesen, als ihre Tante sich bereit erklärt hatte, mit ihnen auf die Kirmes zu gehen – wußten sie doch, daß Annika ihnen viel mehr erlauben würde als ihre Mutter.

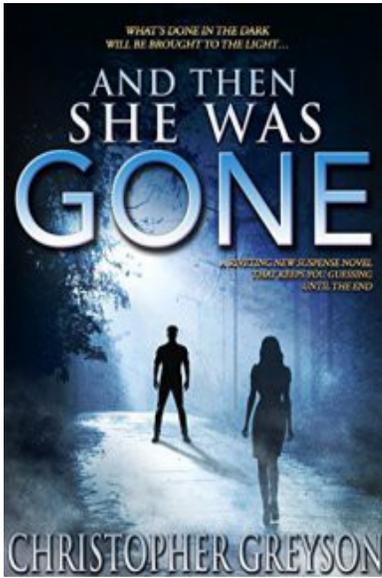


Title: Kurfürstenklinik 14 – Arztroman: Küsse, die nach Tränen schmecken
Author: Nina Kayser-Darius
Language: German
Genre: Contemporary Fiction
Available: Amazon
Blurb:

Mit den spannenden Arztromanen um Die Kurfürstenklinik präsentiert sich eine neue Serie der Extraklasse! Diese Romane sind erfrischend modern geschrieben, abwechslungsreich gehalten und dabei warmherzig und ergreifend erzählt. Die Kurfürstenklinik ist eine Arztromanserie, die das gewisse Etwas hat und medizinisch in jeder Hinsicht seriös recherchiert ist.

»Tante Annika, fährst du mit uns Geisterbahn? Bitte!« »Ja, Geisterbahn, Geisterbahn!« Annika Södermann fing an zu lachen, als sie die erwartungsvollen Augen ihrer Nichte und ihres Neffen sah. Eva war sieben und Alexander drei, und beide waren entzückt gewesen, als ihre Tante sich bereit erklärt hatte, mit ihnen auf die Kirmes zu gehen – wußten sie doch, daß Annika ihnen viel mehr erlauben würde als ihre Mutter.

Future Reads



Title: And Then She Was GONE
Author: Christopher Greyson
Genre: Mystery/Thriller
Release Date: October 1st, 2016
Available: Amazon

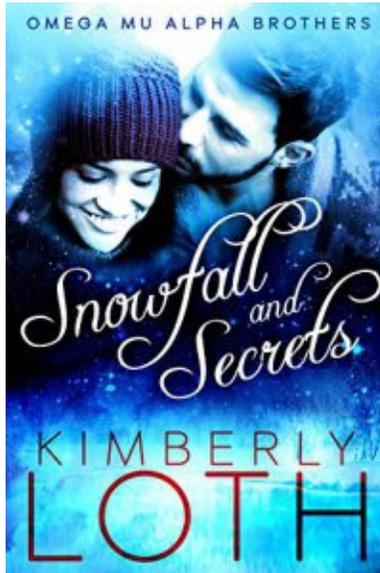
Blurb:

What's done in the dark will be brought to the light...

The silhouette stood at the edge of the woods like a spider watching a fly enter its carefully crafted web. Only a few more steps and she'd be within grasp.

Stacy Shaw has her whole life ahead of her. New job, new house and now she's pregnant; everything she's ever hoped for is finally coming true—but on a warm summer night on the way home from work she vanishes.... As the police race to find her, the details don't add up. Conflicting facts emerge as her story twists and turns, sending the trail spiraling in all directions.

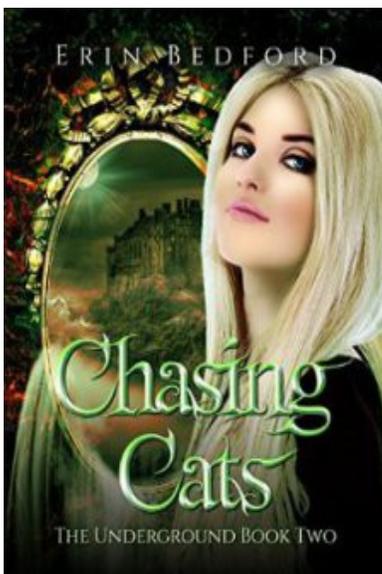
A hometown hero with a heart of gold, Jack Stratton was raised in a warehouse by his prostitute mother, but now his life has taken a turn for the better. He's headed for a career in law enforcement when his foster mother asks him to look into the disappearance. Jack quickly gets drawn into the baffling mystery where everyone becomes a suspect—including himself. Caught between the criminals and the cops, can Jack discover the truth in time before he becomes the next victim?



Title: Snowfall & Secrets
Author: Kimberly Loth
Genre: Contemporary Romance
Release Date: September 7th, 2016
Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Tess escapes from Florida with a secret as big as Miami. She needs to find someplace to lay low and hide from her overbearing family. Mackinac Island, Michigan, should be the perfect place to hide out. However, her timing is a little off, it's the dead of winter and she's never been in temperatures below fifty degrees. Just her luck, her landlord, Lukas, is as hot as the sun. He's also moody and hiding secrets as well. Which suits Tess fine. A man is the last complication she needs. A Michigan blizzard leaves them trapped in the same house together and things heat up, fast. Tess finds herself falling for Lukas, in spite of the secrets that could ruin everything before it even begins.



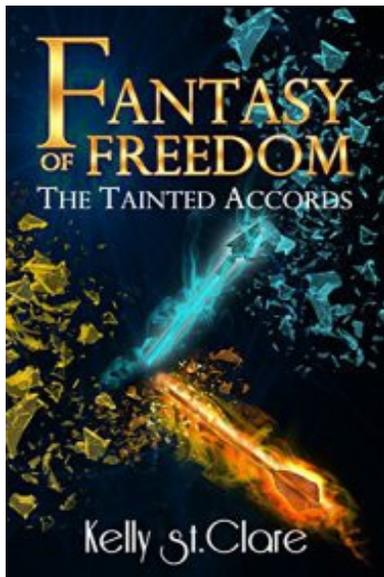
Title: Chasing Cats
Author: Erin Bedford
Genre: Paranormal Fiction
Release Date: September 27th, 2016
Available: Amazon

Blurb:

Kat went down the rabbit hole and came out changed. Now everyone wants something from her and she is hard pressed to give in to any of them.

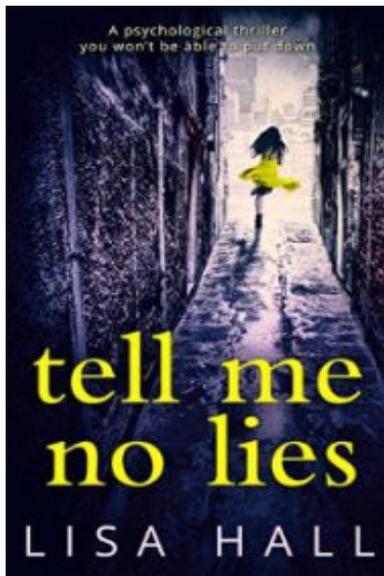
Only the irresistibly mysterious Cheshire Cat seems to be on her side. But even he has secrets of his own. Secrets that cause him to show up beaten and bloody on her doorstep.

Dancing around lost friends and determined ex-lovers will be a feat on its own. Doing it and staying sane? Impossible.



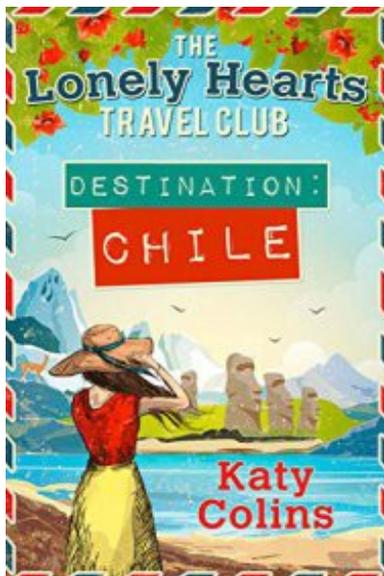
Title: Fantasy & Freedom
 Author: Kelly St. Clare
 Genre: Science Fiction
 Release Date: October 10th, 2016
 Available: Amazon

Blurb:
 "This is the heaviest the veil has ever felt. But I am the strongest I have ever been. The veil is nothing."
 A part of me knew when I was taken from Osolis,
 That when I returned—if I lived long enough to return—I would carry death and destruction
 to her doorstep.
 That is the irony of peace.
 It only comes after war.
 "Kelly St. Clare has quickly become one of my favorite authors and I am now a fan for life."
 – AmiesBookReviews.
 "This story is wonderful for teenage girls, young women and the all around book lover." –
 GenuineJenn



Title: Tell Me No Lies
 Author: Lisa Hall
 Genre: Womens Fiction
 Release Date: October 20th, 2016
 Available: Amazon

Blurb:
 From the bestselling author of Between You and Me don't miss Lisa Hall's new gripping
 thriller.
 Don't. Trust. Anyone.
 It was supposed to be a fresh start.
 A chance to forget the past and embrace the future.
 But can you ever really start again?
 Or does the past follow you wherever you go...



Title: Destination Chile
 Author: Katy Colins
 Genre: Satire/Humorous
 Release Date: September 22nd, 2016
 Available: Amazon

Blurb:
 'Katy writes with humour and heart. The Lonely Hearts Travel Club is like Bridget Jones
 goes backpacking.' – Holly Martin, author of The White Cliff Bay series
 Welcome to Paradise
 Next on her bucket list Georgia Green is heading to Chile, but this time she's not going
 alone...
 The new favourite series for fans of Bridget Jones's Diary, the Shopaholic series and Eat,
 Pray, Love.
 Join Georgia Green for a romantic trip into the sunset...
 What reviewers are saying about The Lonely Hearts Travel Club
 'I cannot recommend this book enough. It is beautifully written with a brilliant plot and
 fantastic characters. READ IT!!' – Blabbering About Books
 'I loved this book.' – For the Love of Books
 'It is a really enthralling page turner and a brilliant start to a new series. I can't wait to read
 the sequels, 'Destination India' and 'Destination Chile!' – Splashes into Books

Drive By Reviews

With
Adonis Mann



Greetings,

Welcome to another session of Adonis Mann's Drive By Reviews.

As always it's a great pleasure being here to give you insight on the books you love to read.

For this issue of All Authors Magazine, I wanted to delve into the dark side, but in a genre that is familiar to me. For a while, as I searched the literary planes, I thought that perhaps said bookish combination did not exist.

What I was in search of was LGBT Horror.

Surprisingly enough, I did come across a few in this genre, but none that really caught my attention until I saw "Scythe". Now, "Scythe" isn't a LGBT Horror, but it is an LGBT Paranormal Drama/Romance.

Having found the premise alluring enough, I purchased the story and moseyed on my way to discover the world between the pages. Here is what I found.



Title: Scythe
Author: Erik Schubach
Genre: LGBT Paranormal Drama/Romance
Available At: Amazon
Blurb:

This paranormal short story follows Lischca Fonteneau, who takes an internship at the antiquities museum of the city she had finally settled in. She feels that she has finally ceased her lifelong wanderings.

Her boss, Kimoura Kaga, seemed hauntingly familiar to her and she couldn't place exactly why.

Lischca believes she is finally rid of the curse that had hounded her since the day she became an adult. But the powers that be had other plans for her.

She must face a literal demon,ruining her own chances of living her life as a normal person, and putting her newfound job in jeopardy.

But could Kimoura be harboring a secret as well.



My Thoughts:

Upon browsing the internal pages of Amazon for a book that would garner my attention, my eyes begged to stop at "Scythe" by Erik Schubach.

Typically, I am very lucid in regards to book covers. While I prefer MY OWN book covers to look a certain way, I do admit to not focusing so much on book covers when picking a book to read. I much rather read the blurb, then make my decision accordingly.

However, I do admit to having faltered from the norm when setting eyes on this story. There was something so captivating about this cover, that I paused.

The first thing that crossed my mind was, "What would it be like to see the world through those eyes? So intense and haunting." Unable to tarry any longer, I opened the book.

First, I would like to say that this is a very short story. It took only thirty minutes to complete it. However, being an advocate of short stories myself, I was enamored with that notion. There is something to be said about a well written short story.

I must confess to feeling as though I was submerged into the action immediately, with little to no real foundation set. Just a few paragraphs in, and immediately one is forced into the paranormal realm of demigods/demon hybrids. Lischca Fonteneau is one of them. Having wandered her entire life looking for a place to call home, she finally settles on an internship at the antiques museum in the town of her choice, which is not mentioned.

Kimoura Kaga, is her boss, but I only know this because the blurb says so, not because I can recall having read this in the book.

Kimoura is the key to Lischca's secret life in more ways than one.

I cannot delve any more into the premise without giving spoilers as the book is fairly short, so I will stop here.

As for the writing, I did find that the book was well written and flowed very nicely.

There was enough action to keep one entertained, as well as a fair share of emotions being bounced around. Particularly, those of Lischca as she battled (almost literally) with herself.

The ending is very tender and leaves one wanting to know more about Kimoura and Lischca; where their journey will end.

What I did find quite out of place was the seemingly random profession on Lischca's attraction to American-Japanese women. The reason it felt so out of place was the fact that nowhere in the story prior did Kimoura's ethnicity come up. Nowhere, until then, making the placement seem awkward.

On another note, what I found compelling about this book was Lischca's thirst for redemption and the ability to live life freely. By the end, I did feel as though Kimoura and Lischca had graduated to a better way of life. I note this because I do believe that the matter fell right on par with this issue of All Authors Magazine.

With all of that said, overall, "Scythe" was a very entertaining and enjoyable read. Well written and dramatic, "Scythe" is something anyone who enjoys LGBT Paranormal Romance will appreciate.

I am offering this book 4 Stars.



FEATURES



Coffee Time Author Interview

Hello Readers, Writers and Precious Patrons.

In this issue of All Authors Magazine, we bring you an interview with Natasja Hellenthal. Before we start the interview, here is more about the author.



1. You and I have only recently met while I was planning my Women in Science Fiction Event for the month of July, 2016. Suffice it to say, I don't really know much about you. Could you please tell my reading audience and I about yourself, your books and what brought you into the world of writing?

First of all let me thank you for inviting me and for the opportunity to be here. Well, I could tell you a little bit about my background; where and how I started my life, I suppose. I do believe the early years set the tone for a person. However, I do like to think we can influence, shape and form our minds and opinion ourselves later on throughout life; out of a pre-designed box by freeing ourselves to a degree. We are never too old to get to know our inner selves, to open up our minds and eyes, think for ourselves, and be a better, unique person. Regardless of nationality, race, religion, gender, social status, sexuality, age, mental state etc. The only exception being neglect and abuse as that can definitely damage a person and without guidance can ruin the rest of someone's life.

I was born and raised in The Netherlands, but that country felt too small for me, too flat, and too crowded. From a young age on I loved nature and would spend many hours in the woods during holidays or in the weekends as that was a treat for me. The small town I'm from is quite rural, and very much agricultural and every space encountered for. Not very wild, so I struggled and often felt like a caged animal dreaming about going back to its roots. I often visualised the rooftops being mountains and me flying above, further away to new, unknown lands!

When I was 21 my partner at the time and I moved to Norway to truly experience some wild nature. I loved it there, but the cold eventually caught up with me and I was in desperate need to improve my English as that was the language I wrote in, not my mother-tongue, so after six years I left everything behind and emigrated to Wales; another beautiful country. After some years of living in several places in the UK for work and having started a family I finally found the courage to publish my debut novel and I haven't stopped since! My books are all about breaking free. Freedom from a curse, evil, oppression, you name it. It's what fuels my writing as that theme, along with injustice, is so important to me, almost as if I know what it's like to have it taken away from me. Another thing I would like to mention about what brought me to writing is my dreams. From a young age on I had very vivid dreams, so much so that I would often wake up exhausted as if I had truly visited all those magical places outside through my window in the night! It wasn't long before I started to pen those dreams down; sometimes merely images, other times whole stories with people I had never seen. They had names and everything! The dreams were often bizarre as dreams can be and had nothing to do with my daily life. I would therefore not much complain about having to go to bed! It wasn't until later that I started reading my first books and realised then from those stories I could do that! So from then on it was mastering my language and grammar skills. The genre of my stories of course fitted Speculative Fiction, not contemporary as my dreams featured aliens, knights, talking horses, flying people, walking trees (seriously, I had not read Tolkien yet and thought I was being original!), magical symbols, caves, staircases to heaven, beautiful princesses and castles. I still have those early journals and even based some of my early work on them, or at least some elements. For example The Queen's Curse, Chained Freedom and Call Off The Search are all loosely based on a couple of dreams together.

2. As a writer/author myself, I know how difficult it is to choose a favorite between all of one's works, however, inevitably, there is always one. So, out of the books you've written, which is your personal favorite and why?

That's a tricky one, but it would have to be *Call Off The Search*, the first book in my Comyenti Series, as it's so personal for me. Out of all my books I identify with the main character of this novel the most and *Sula* was therefore so easy to write. Her inner struggles with herself, her sensitivities, her sexuality (she's bisexual like I am), the world, humanity, her love and feeling of companionship with other animals—more than with those of her own species—and so on.

3. I always like to think that there is much more to an author than the books they publish. As human beings, we have fascinating levels about our personalities. Tell us a little about common misconceptions that people have about you as a person, as well as some things that readers might not know.

I honestly would not know as I don't really interact with my readers much and certainly not about my private life. They leave me wonderful reviews, but I mostly keep myself to myself apart from some interviews. Perhaps they think my books are all made up while actually a lot of my stories are based on my real life experiences and most of my characters are different versions of me. There are always hidden things to find, but only people that really know me would recognise them.

4. I read in your Author Bio that you write Speculative Fantasy/Fiction. Please tell us what this means to you and why you chose this genre?

It was the most logical choice considered my weird dreams and imagination! I have much more leeway and am less restricted to facts to truly explore ideas. Apart from that, I do like escapism as I don't always identify with the modern times and world I live in. I'm an old soul and dream of a better world, speculate and play with the question "what if?" a lot, so the contemporary genre would not suit me, not even urban fantasy or steampunk. I have tried to write paranormal stories set in today's world, but they didn't sit right with me. I don't think I'll ever publish them. Don't get me wrong, even if you write Speculative Fiction your writing still needs to come across as realistic and the characters need to have real emotions and struggles which the reader can identify with, but the setting for me has to be either medieval, or situated on an alien, invented world with similarities to Earth, but minus the technology. There is so much more freedom to be as creative and weird as you want and still be accepted by readers. I don't have to hold back and that suits me fine! Having said that, I do research a lot of the subjects I write about such as super senses and skills in animals for my comyenti series, telepathy, mind reading and facts on climate change including the effects of a world without having any wind for my latest published Dystopian novel *Sky Whisperers*. I'm a sucker for facts full stop and am a bit of a perfectionist so would hate to have anything wrong!

5. The theme of this issue of All Authors Magazine is "Thirst for Matriculation", what does that mean to you? Please expand on your answer.

I honestly had no idea what that word meant and had to google it! If I understand it correctly it means the act to admit someone to enter; to become a member of something, so I guess "Thirst for Matriculation" would mean really wanting to be part of something?

It has absolutely no meaning to me! I'm the opposite. I'm very much a private, solitary person who abhors any group of people or organisation so I never feel the need to belong to something, apart from nature. I'm a bit of a misanthrope!

6. I read in your Author Bio that you are a vegan. I realize that being vegan is a life style choice. I honestly admire it because I'm a sucker for meat. I'd love to have the strength of will to be vegan, but I know that it simply isn't for me. Tell us, is your partner and are your children vegan also? Do you find it challenging when going to restaurants or social events being vegan, or even for people to cater to your vegan pallet? If so, how? Also, why did you make this life style choice?

People sometimes tell me that they don't have the strength to go vegan, but what excuse is that? What strength exactly is needed for compassion, for empathy? What excuse is there not to care or actually doing something to help save lives directly? For it's that simple. Many meat-eaters say when they buy meat, "It's already dead anyway." As if that justifies buying it. They don't think further than that. That empty space in the supermarket will have to be filled up and it will. Another animal will get killed because of this simple-minded, selfish reasoning. There is absolutely no humane way of killing an animal. It does not exist. Besides, they all tremble before death, and they all want to run as they witness the ones that are being killed before them, smell their blood and fear hanging in the air. The demand has to be met... It is thought that a meat-eater is responsible for 2000-5000 deaths in their lifetime. Let that number sink in for a moment... How can you sleep at night knowing this?

To me saving the lives of sentient, thinking, feeling beings and your planet over taste buds, even my own health, is a pretty good reason. Not only do vegans save countless lives, including our own, we also save tons of water, energy, harmful emissions and thus the environment. Raising animals for food is a serious environmental problem as livestock produce more greenhouse gases than all the world's vehicles combined; methane from livestock is 86 times more destructive than CO₂ from vehicles.

To stop climate change we need trees, but 91% of the rainforest is being used for animal agriculture, 45% of the earth is occupied by animal agriculture, 30% of all water consumed on earth is for livestock, 50% of the world's grain is fed to livestock, yet close to 1 billion people go hungry everyday! Eating plants uses less than 16 times less land, 13 times less water, uses 11 times less oil, produces 50% less emissions because vegans skip the middle-man.

Simply put; arguing against veganism is not only accepting animal cruelty and killing the planet, and just being selfish, but it's supporting it and keeping it going. You see, it's not giving up animal products that is difficult. There are so many healthy and delicious cruelty-free choices and alternatives to indulge your taste buds nowadays. Supermarkets stock up on vegan food as the demand is getting bigger, café's and restaurants are getting better by offering options. I'm never hungry as I'm spoiled for choice where I live. What I find difficult is being vegan living among the people who endorse the cause I am fighting against. The fact that using animals for their produce is so widely accepted and people continue to be ignorant. That's tough. The most difficult part for me is that I can't force people to care. It's one of the reasons why I split up from my ex partner who is pescotarian. Our children are vegetarian but have no dairy, only sometimes eggs or fish, the latter is my ex's choice, not mine.

Also, the fact that some lives are worth less than others is just beyond me. Lives that were never ours to begin with. The notion that whole societies accept that other animals are here for us to use and abuse is what is fundamentally wrong with this world. The notion that humans are on the top of the food chain as if we're predators. We're not. We don't have the teeth, nor the digestion system of a carnivore. Nor is it natural for any animal to enslave another animal, so why should humans be any different? It's slavery and the holocaust blended in one all over again, and I hope that in hundred years from now, hopefully sooner, we will look back at this time with guilt and horror.

They say that if abattoirs had windows people would instantly become vegan, but I don't really believe that for there are many documentaries, video's and photo's widely available (Earthlings on YouTube or Cowspiracy on Netflix for example) but most would rather not watch it. They prefer to turn a blind eye. I think it's not wanting to know the truth, not wanting to make the connection, not wanting to change despite intelligence. Intelligent people all know it's morally wrong, but they rather go back to their comfort zones as soon as possible after watching the facts, seeing a disturbing video. These images and lives are too far removed from them and their own lives; surely that doesn't happen to the meat that I buy, the eggs, the milk, the cheese? Well, guess what? It does; even free-range. It's a living nightmare out there, no body should have to live through, the multi-million meat and dairy industry continues to inflict. The government and media has tried to hide it because they've all been bribed by these companies, even to promote the opposite. It's time for change.

I have a t-shirt that says: "Do not ask me why I'm vegan. Ask yourself why you are not!"

7. I once owned 4 dogs, 2 cats, 5 chickens and a pig. I LOVE animals, and if I could, I'd save them all. Tell us a little bit about your pets and how they impact your family.

You say you love animals, yet you eat them? I never get this. It's an oxymoron. You cannot love some animals and eat others at the same time. It's contradictory. It's specieism, which is a form of racism. It's like saying you love your own children, yet it's okay to eat those you don't know. Or saying "I love women, but it's okay to rape those I have never met."

This is likely to be censored, but it's the truth, nothing more, nothing less. I for one, truly love ALL animals and save even the smallest fly or frog out of the pool or house. ALL live matters to me. I have two dogs (one deaf, half-blind elderly dog and one younger), an old, deaf cat and a baby house mouse who I rescued a few weeks ago when its family was likely killed by a fox or a cat. All of them are a part of my family and get the love they deserve; it's sometimes hard to divide the attention between them!

8. Random Question #1: If you could go ANYWHERE in this world, or another, where would it be and why? Please, let your imagination run free.

Somewhere far away from people, but with other animals. Possibly a remote tropical island.

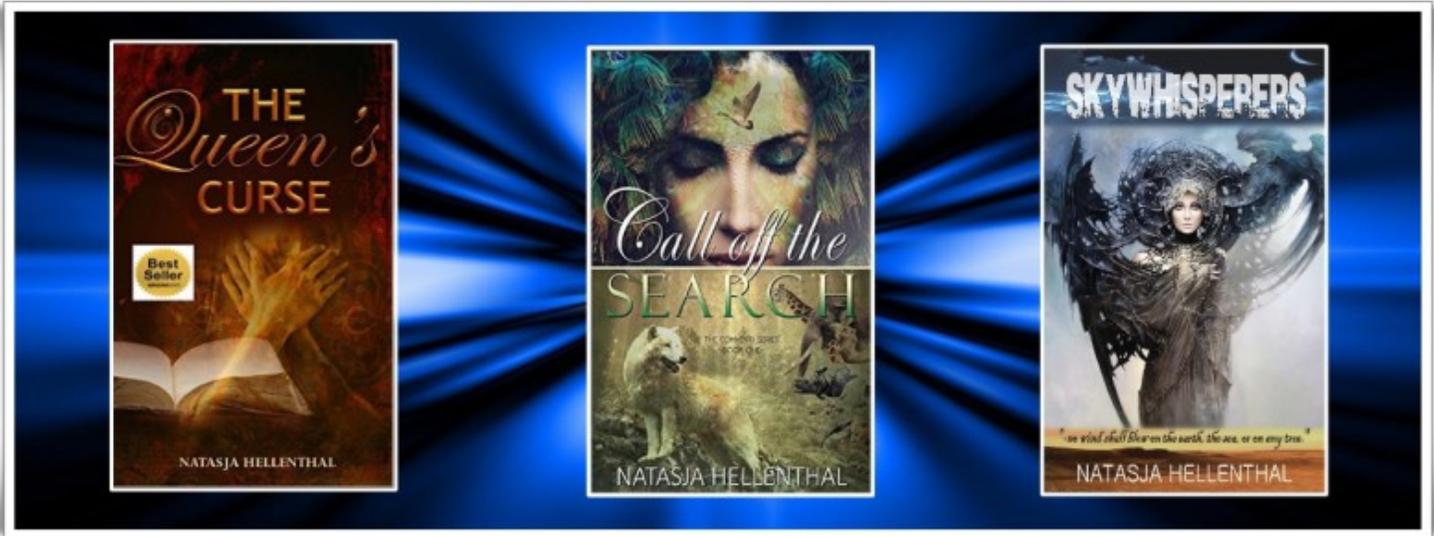
9. Random Question #2: Planes, trains or automobiles? What is your preferred method of travel and why?

I prefer to walk. It's the most environmental method. We have been given two legs after all.

10. Finally, if you could only write one last story in your lifetime, what would that story be about?

That's difficult to decide as I have three story-outlines ready and a bunch of other ideas. I think I would like to complete the Comyenti Series as I owe it to those characters. We all deserve a happy ending.





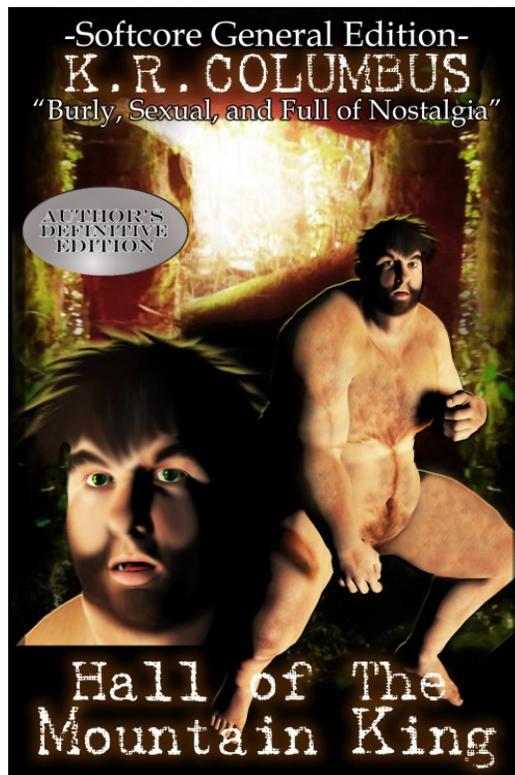
Awesome Covers

Greeting Readers, Writers and Precious Patrons.

In Issue 18 of All Authors Magazine, we are doing something different for our Awesome Covers segment. For the first time ever, All Authors Presents “Awesomely Awful Covers”.

There is something to be said for a cover well done, but there is MUCH MORE to say for a cover that is badly done. Amazingly, All Authors did not have to look far for covers that speak “Awfully Done”. It was actually rather difficult to narrow down the contenders.

Yet, after much deliberation, we found one that took the cake.



Hall of the Mountain King
by K.R. Columbus



Royal Thoughts

This makes me think of a scenario in my household defined as “potluck”. When the refrigerator and pantry were a bit bare, sometimes my grandma would take some items, throw them in one pot, and hope for the best. Almost all of the time, this method worked wonderfully.

This is one situation where a potluck is bad luck. Not the least bit visually appetizing. There are four different fonts competing for attention ... and they are winning if it is bad attention. The type on the seal I can barely read. The typewriter font for the author and title suggest antiquated (at the basic) and the other font leans toward contemporary. There is too much and it is too busy.

Let’s take a look at the backdrop. Nothing about the colors say “hall” or “mountain”. It was as if one was trying to match the scenery with the man himself: a strange coloring of tan with these bright green eyes that are so profound they are almost alien.

Now, this man ... if we can call him that. The placement of one of his hands is very suspicious as well as suggestive. Why is the hand there? To cover up a missing item? There are certain characteristics that defines one as male or female, but the post of this individual suggests a level of androgyny. Was this what the author was going for? One is unsure, but I'm not sure if I want to be hit with it on first sight. For me, I'd prefer to let the pages do the talking.

The proportions of this being are also off, like cropping and shading gone wrong. Maybe it's just me but when did sexy and mortified have the same look? If anything that guy looks horrified, as if he wants no part of the words "burly", "sexy", much less "nostalgia". It doesn't help that the way the head is positioned on the left appears as if it is excrement from his hindquarters.

This cover horror has me running from the Hall of the Mountain King into my bed to secure myself underneath my sheets.

Truthful Takes

No, seriously though, just look at this mess. Where to start? □ □

EVERYTHING about this cover is ridiculous! And, I mean EVERYTHING ... including the text.

I suppose I'll start with the person on the cover.

As if the full body image wasn't bad enough, we are then assaulted with a close-up of his face. Not only are the bodily proportions nonsense, but the head is way too small. Also, the image is hideous. Just plain ugly. I can't make out, for the life of me, what they heck is going on in the background. Then there is the placement of this creature's hand.

Dude, what are you doing?

As if THAT wasn't bad enough, we are told it's "Burly, Sexual and Full of Nostalgia"? I mean, who in their right mind would want to sleep with that thing, let alone reminisce on it. I mean, if I could wash by brain out with a Brillo Pad right now, then I would. I do not, even if my life depended on it, want to remember this image. Ever!

Now, back to the face, shall we?

Please tell me why he has this dopey look on his face, like he just lost his pet yeti.

Here, Kitty, Kitty!



I suppose that I will end with this ...

In the realm of scary and just plain bad Book Covers, THIS IS IT!

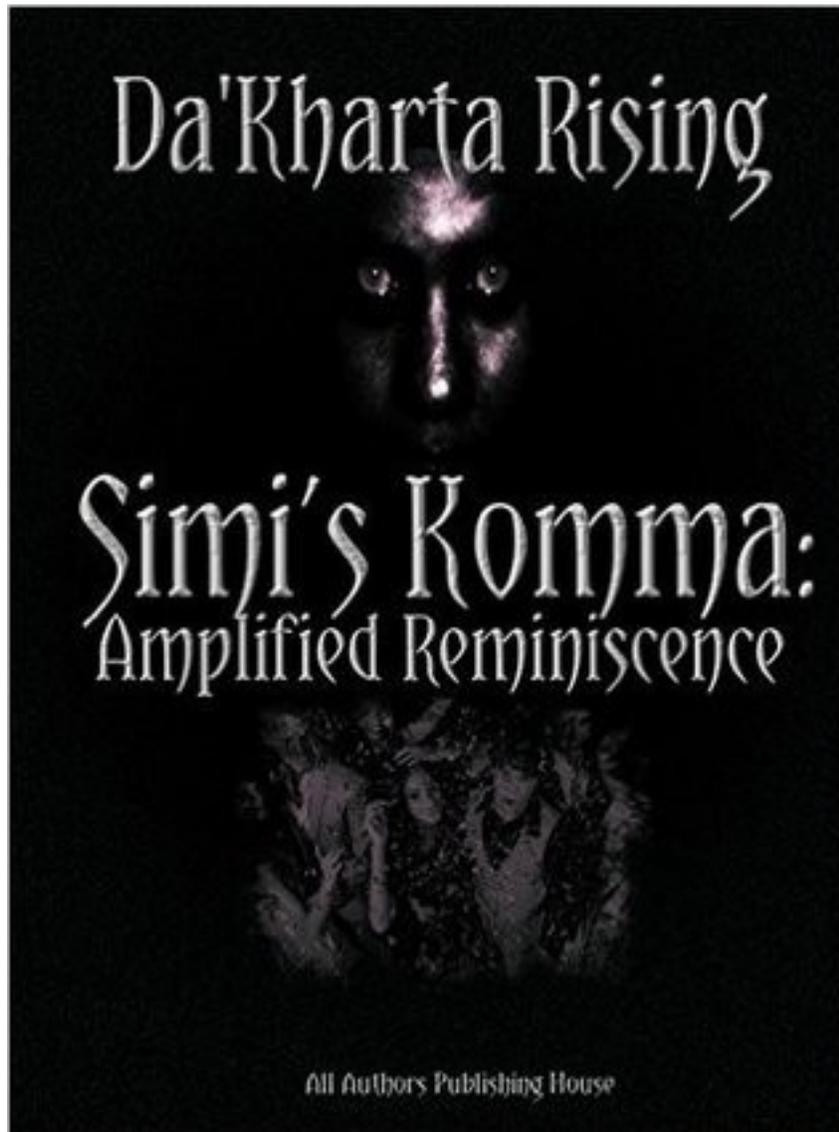


Featured Book

S.K.A.R.:
Simmi's Komma Amplified Reminiscence

By

Da'Kharta Rising



Blurb:

Papyrus is a small town that's not a fan of anything different. Here we meet four long time friends. Hiphen is known for being highly observant one. Rod is known as the go with the flow type. Point is a tomboy of sorts that takes action and asks questions later. Simi is the leader of the squad who has a maturity beyond his years.

When transfer student Komma Plush arrives, Simi takes it upon himself to show her the ropes of a new town yet at first Komma is highly hesitant. What follows takes Simi on an incredible journey that not only threatens his friendships but also the balance of Papyrus.

S.K.A.R. not only takes into account the previously released rendition of Simi's Komma but fast forwards to follow the life of the friends and the town.

Why? Because some scars never heal.

Words From the Author:

There are few things that surprise me but finding out I was selected as Featured Book is definitely the exception. I have not been in the best of spirits lately—dourer than my usual moody self—but to receive this spotlight could be a shove to get my ass in gear. Can I say ass? If not, too late, because I've said it twice.

It's hard enough to write a story, but to take a story and extend it is even more challenging in my opinion. It's like putting down a period when the characters are going dot ... dot ... dot. Trust me, I tried to ignore them but they kept hounding me, particularly Point and Piereod since the only POV (point-of-view) given in the original Simi's Komma was Hiphen's.

As a reader, extending a work is a hit or miss. It's mainly due to the holding on to the mystery and letting the reader come up with his own conclusion: those traits tend to get ruined with extra words. The majority of the time, the extensions annoy me, because it either isn't the ending I'd like, a cool ass ending is botched through crappy depiction, or there's focus on characters I could give two flips about.

This is one extension that doesn't, and not because it's from me. It is because a lot of the things which happen one cannot easily predict. None of the original elements got tampered with and even with the provided resolution, one has the freedom to use his imagination.

~DR



Excerpt "S.K.A.R."

Chapter Two Meeting the Gang

Hi. The name's Hiphen. The "ph" is pronounced like an "f" but the rest is as it looks. My parents are blue collar and proud of it. My dad works as a local mechanic while my mom stocks at the local supermarket. If they ever yearned for more in life, I never knew. They never complain: beginning and ending each day with smiles on their faces. Perhaps that was why not too much ever bothered me.

In the house right across the street from me lived this guy named Piereod; Rod, for short. I don't believe Rod's parents were in their right minds when they named him. Think about it! Who would name their kid after a girl's menstrual cycle? That was merciless teasing waiting to happen! Rod and I got along right away. Our dads loved fishing and playing spades. They would go fishing on Saturday mornings and play spades on Saturday nights. Spades' nights used to be Sundays but since my mom got saved years ago, she didn't want any gambling done on the Lord's Day. My dad respected that and moved the ritual.

Two houses down from Rod resided Exclaim. Rod and I gave her a rough time when her family first moved to Papyrus. Rumor had it that Exclaim's mom and dad weren't her biological parents. That was a new thing to Papyrus so we didn't treat her fairly.

One can only tease someone so much before she reaches the limit.

Exclaim's limit came the day Rod stole her bike from her front yard. We thought she was going to cry and tell her parents: typical girl shit. No—she hunted Rod down and pummeled him something fierce. After that we had a new found respect for Exclaim and never teased her again. A few years back, she declared that we call her "Point." When Rod and I asked why, she told us it sounded more masculine and fit with her tomboy image. With her elfin cut, athletic build and boyish clothes, we tended to forget "Point" was a girl. That was her preference.

Slightly diagonal to Point's house was where the fourth and final member of our squad lived. His name was Simi. We all hung out at his house the most because it was the biggest house on the block. Although Simi's parents came from money, they never acted like they were better than others in the neighborhood. Once people picked up on their down-to-earth natures and generosity, the initial cold shoulder thawed.

At times, I thought Simi's life was a lonely one. Simi's father was an international banker so he did a lot of traveling. Simi's mom and dad divorced when Simi was very young but the split was amicable. She visited Simi as often as she could and would bring him gifts after her travels. Simi's mom did off Broadway shows as well as infomercials. A few times, she would even hand out some of the products from the commercials. It was as if Simi raised himself but he took it all in stride.

Guest Article

Heartbreak and Hunger: *A Reader, Writer, and Reviewer's Thirst for Something More*

by
The Royal Truth

Hello Readers, Writers and Precious Patrons! In this Issue of All Authors Magazine, The Royal Truth explores Heartbreak and Hunger on all facets.



Queen, I'm heartbroken.

But, I think I'm heartbroken because of how I feel inside of the writing world.

I've always said that to me stories are music, story writing, a composition. Yet, just like in the music industry, books have lost their luster immensely. And, it saddens me.

I'm saddened at the thought that this is no longer a place for a writer like me. I have an ingrained angst at the innumerable books that I've read in the last four years alone that have been mediocre at best. However, that's not what really troubles me. What really troubles me is the reading community.

It's ludicrous for me to believe that some readers actually believe that these dozens of terrible books I've read are actually good. Furthermore, they seem to believe that my writing style is elitist. Pretentious even, and too complicated to understand or enjoy.

I can't understand it.

The myriad of emotions that stir me make me ponder on the fact that I must be a soul out of time for I remember when reading a book was like enjoying a well composed symphony. Whatever happened to those days? I miss them with every fiber of my being. What about you, Queen?

I am unsure where to start, or if where I start will make sense. I know that the days you speak of existed because I lived them. Most people do not know that I came from humble beginnings. In fact, I did not perceive myself as "poor" until I started school. The main way I passed the time was through reading. The first piece of literature I held in my hand wasn't even a book, but a newspaper. Later on, I discovered some books that had been used by other members of my family, and I read those repeatedly until I received the greatest treasure of all: a library card. I was a regular in the libraries—whether at school or public—the librarians knew me by first name. Each publication took me on a journey to a brand new world. Some of the worlds took me away from the sadness of my own. Other books reminded me that I didn't have it so bad after all.

The beauty of words made me want to be a part of the literary world.

Although I began writing at age eleven as a catharsis, some of my teachers enjoyed my style of writing. One said it was poetic; another said it was always like I was telling a story. When I was the presenter of *Soulful Branches: Simply Words*, followed by the 1st version of *Spaded Truths*, back in 2005, I was extremely proud. True, I was ignorant to the ways of marketing but I was just floored to see my words in print.

When I returned to publishing after my hiatus, the writing world changed. Individuality had buckled under the pressures of "what's trending" and "what made money". Even publications that were meant to be antiquated because of the period in which they took place contained modernized dialogue. Editors started red inking "style" in lieu of mimicking the look which screamed "Best Seller". For those traditionally published who didn't bend to the new either didn't get as much attention by their representatives or they were released from their contracts.

Indie publishing, once touted as the gateway to freedom from the restraints of a traditional house, also was drained of uniqueness. By this time, platforms such as Smashwords, KDP, and Nook Press were available, which made it possible for anyone who wanted their words in print to do so. The unfortunate thing was that ... anyone could publish. There was no control over syntax. The platforms were presumptuous—that the person using them had some level of mastery of the English language. In most cases, that assumption was erroneous. As a result, fine gems are mixed in with Fool's Gold, which makes it challenging for a reader to find something worthy.



Yet, there is not only a decrease in talent but also a decrease in literary expectation. When I was going to school, the types of books I read set the standard for what I anticipated from other writers. However, I have discovered through not only being an avid lover of books but also a reviewer, that not everyone has the same standard. As a matter of fact, the bar has been lowered. Why else would a publication that isn't really a book—just pages of emails put together—have such high reviews? There is only so much one can blame on authors cheating the system before accepting the reality that it does not take a lot to entertain the audience ... that they have been conditioned to a formula. Some people proclaim all the slush is solely in the indie market, but I have read traditionally published works by major publishing houses that aren't worth wiping one's backside.

Yes, I miss the times but have accepted the music of words may not return ... at least not to the level of appreciation Mini and I encountered. What is happening in the literary world parallels what is occurring in the music industry. Originality is fading; auto tuning is widely accepted; lyrics are composed to sound catchy instead of possessing deep meaning.

Like Mini Truth, I feel displaced ... not of this time. This feeling has been with me, even before I plunged into the writing pool. The "how" and the "why" can be a maddening state—like a hamster in a wheel with no place to go. However, I have accepted that like my own life, my writings were never meant to fit in. I cannot make the readers of the world strive for better; I can only crank out publications that are classic worthy, that sit alongside the definition of transcendence. Because I have always written more for myself than for others, this epidemic—although tragic—for me, was expected. What keeps those vampires of doldrums from draining my writing passion is my gift's thirst, ordained by spirit, for what is granted by spirit cannot be vanquished by flesh.

If our words are our life's claret then indeed the blood banks have been depleted.

I am reminded of history's most famous architects of words; Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, and so many more. Each one was a treasure trove of valued, even revered diction. Their words took us from here and deposited our minds in places that we could have never imagined. Furthermore, each syllable had purpose, had meaning, had passion.

I entered into the world of writing much later than most. I as 35-year-old. Most of my life I'd been told that writing was a buffoon's goal, that it would never take me anywhere in life. So, as the dutiful and subservient wife and daughter, I ignored the zeal of my heart.

Yet, not writing did not deter me from reading. And, I read. I read whatever I could get my hands on. I learned, blossomed, and grew from the words of others.

When the time came and I opted to write my own works, words flowed from my very soul; words that transcended this plane and tapped into the innermost parts of my existence.

If words had been magic, then I'd become an enchantress. Words became my ablution, washing away all mundane things and baptizing me in the fire of parlance.

What was once a perfunctory life, became something bigger, something better. Thus, it is impossible for me to understand the admiration for lackluster or altogether ghastly books.

It's been nearly two years since I wrote a blog post called "The Case of the Lost Art of Romancing the Words", and unfortunately, the thoughts I shared that day still hold true.

And, in retrospect, sometimes I see the difference, obscure as it may be.

The variation between them and us, Queen, is the mentality.

We are artists. We always have been. As artists, we believe that every word should be a brush stroke, or a musical note—each one orchestrating a melody—and that melody is the symphony that will eclipse time and space, and will live on forever.

As solemn as this article may seem, it is anything but. What this article is, is a wake up call. Wake up, dear writers, and realize that your words could and should last forever. So, make them worthwhile.

I have one hope, and one alone; that others begin to share our vision. For I believe that if and when they do, they too will graduate to a larger understanding of THE BEAUTY IN WORDS.

And THAT, my dear readers, is The Royal Truth.



INFORMATION



All About Indie

with
Harmony Kent



Totality of Possibilities

As writers, we are more likely to question what we see, hear, and read. Why is this? Well, another part of the equation is that we are also likely to be more observant too. For us, it isn't enough to note that somebody 'looks annoyed'; our work demands that we be able to describe such a look—the way the eyebrows draw up or down, the acrobatics that the lips may get up to, what happens behind the eyes, etc.

And in the watching of the small details, we slide into picking up a lot more than might be comfortable at times. I don't know about you, but I find it difficult to switch off my author's vision. Even the most mundane of days can offer a myriad of possibilities, opportunities, and inspiration.

The other day, I came across a wonderful quote:

'Don't just teach your children to read, teach them to question everything they read. Teach them to question everything.'
(George Carlin)

The inquisitive mind is the healthy mind. The creative mind. The mind more likely to think outside of the box. An old friend had a wonderful way of viewing the world that I had to work hard to see. For example, one day while out for a walk, a sheer hillside led up from us and to a grassy field. On that field, a woman walked with her dog. The thing is that while my brain filled in the dog that we couldn't see, his did something entirely other. He blurted out, 'Oh look, a field on a lead.' And when I did stop and look, I saw what he saw. From our lower position, all we could see was the woman and the dog lead that ended at the grass horizon. The existence of the dog was no more than an educated assumption on my part. My brain filled in the blanks.

Unwittingly, my friend taught me a lot that day. At around that time, I also discovered an author who saw the world in much the same way, Terry Pratchett. If you've ever read his Discworld novels, you'll know just what I mean. Both these men got me started on the journey to living outside the box and questioning what I saw. Or, more accurately, what I thought I saw.

The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.' (Albert Einstein)

One of my fellow indie authors does a weekly blog called Streams of Consciousness, in which he takes a random image and makes up a story about what's going on in that picture. He also encourages his readers to make up their own tall tales based on the same photo. It's humbling how many different interpretations we can all come up with just from one simple image. It's also exciting.

Our imaginations are without limits, boundless, and take us beyond this universe. We, you and I, are the only ones that can ever hold this back. No person, circumstance, or situation has that power.

The gateways to wisdom and learning are always open, and more and more I am choosing to walk through them. Barriers, blocks, obstacles, and problems are personal teachers giving me the opportunity to move out of the past and into the Totality of Possibilities.' (Louise L Hay)

Time and again, when I reflect upon the nature of writing (and upon the act of writing), I see that it imitates life so very closely. And, really, how could this not be? We write what we are. What we see. Whether intentional or no, our perspectives spill out onto the paper and give the pen its ink.

Likewise, the more we are able to think outside the box, the more this will show through in all that we do. It affects every facet of our lives, not just our writing. And, so too, the more we grow as an individual, the more our art grows.

As writers, we use everything. It's all grist for the mill and tools of the trade. For me, the best books are the ones that push the boundaries. The ones that open my imagination to a whole new world that I haven't yet seen. The most powerful fiction utilises every possible human emotion, both the bad and the good. Some of my best poetry got written in the depths of deep pain. For most of us, that is when we are most raw and thus most honest.

Write what you know. If you try and fluff your way through, your audience will pick up on the lack of authenticity. If you don't know, then research your butt off, including asking those 'in the know'. The best authors have a devastating thirst to learn everything that they can about the topic, event, character, situation, etc., they are writing about. My first novel involved scenes and people from Holland. The best way would have been for me to go and visit, but that wasn't possible at the time. Instead, I researched the pants off it, using every tool at my disposal. One of the reviews I received said that the book has a foreign feel to it ... that has to be the best compliment I could have gotten; it means I managed to be authentic even though I've never set foot in that particular country.

Beware, though, not to information dump. You don't have to give the reader every scrap of information or knowledge that you've discovered or know. The same with character building. We need to know everything about that person; even if much of that information will never find its way into the book, it will show through in the little things that make them complex and real rather than a cardboard cut out that readers struggle to connect with.

I once read somewhere that if you read as much and as often as you can on the topic that interests you, within seven years, you will become an expert. This is why writers are encouraged to read the widest variety of books possible. It's why we observe life around us. And, that's why we also need to read about the techniques and rules and tools of writing.

While imagination is important, so is knowledge. And, most essential of all, is the thirst for such knowledge. The passion for writing. The passion for living. If we feel jaded, that will show through in whatever we produce. If we have a couldn't-care-less attitude, that will show through too. The same is true for the opposites.

Write what you know. Write what you are. Each author needs to find, develop, and own his or her voice. While we may emulate the greats, we still need to be our essential selves. How sad for life (and art) to be a mere carbon copy. And, while people do buy cheap prints, every single one of them would like the original canvas far better.

Artists, including writers, have in their nature the urge to continually grow and evolve. To reach the next level. That isn't to say that we aren't happy where we are. I am. And, I have a rule never to throw any of my work away. You never know when it might come in handy, even if only to show you how far you've come. Sometimes, past work serves as a springboard to improvement ... to refining and polishing.

It's so important not to judge. That will kill your mojo as surely as rat poison. Far better to look back and see our early work through the vision of gratitude. It got us to where we are now. We all have to start somewhere. And, if we never made mistakes, we'd never learn.

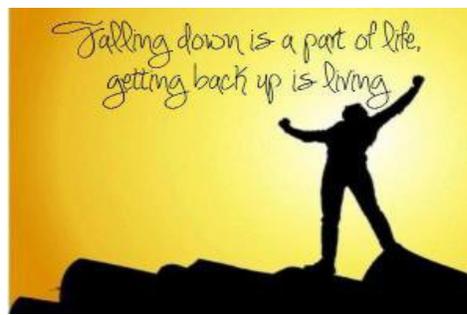
Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.' (Winston Churchill)

A word of caution: when we do succeed, we don't want to let it go to our heads. Just the same as we don't want to let our failures get to our hearts. As I write this, it brings home to me yet again how art mirrors life and life mirrors art. It reaffirms the importance of balance and perspective.

If our thirst comes from feeling inadequate, our gains will not come out clean and, chances are, they will never feel like enough. This ties in with being happy where we are while also striving for the next level.

Just because I dream, just because I imagine, it doesn't mean I'm trying to escape. Of course, every once in a while, that's exactly what it is! Most of the time, however, I'm spreading my wings and soaring into the sky. I'm having fun. I'm doing what I love.

From that perspective, I don't ever want to lose my thirst for matriculation. I don't ever want to reach the totality of possibilities. When I leave this mortal coil, I want to know that I don't know it all. In the meantime, let my life be filled with mystery and magic. And may yours be too.



A Queen's Ramblings

By

Queen of Spades



Hello Readers, Writers and Precious Patrons! Welcome to A Queen's Ramblings. In this final issue of our 2016 Magazine Year, I'd like to address thirst. No, I'm not the new sponsor for Gatorade—although my staple Gatorade is the orange one. I am speaking more towards dedication ... the path to satiate one's thirst for improvement.

When I resumed publication of my writings in 2013, I recognized that the publishing world had changed during my hiatus. More publishing platforms were available for the indie writer, and the process was easier. I discovered the devil was in the details—where one miscalculation with cover sizing can adversely affect the end product.

After publishing Reflections of Soul in May 2013 and the books in the Eclectic collection in September of that same year, I could not, in good faith, leave my two earlier works in the abyss of neglect and reject. For one, there were some outstanding words in them. Moreover, I wanted to utilize what I had learned and give those writings a fighting change in a new market.

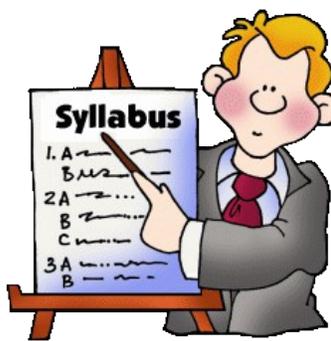
The original Spaded Truths became Spaded Truths: Themes and Proclamations and the original Private Pain became Private Pain: Amidst These Ashes. These new renditions were available to the public in late 2013 and early 2014, respectively. I've gotten wonderful feedback from Spaded Truths: Themes and Proclamations. Private Pain: Amidst These Ashes went on to place on the Amazon Best Sellers list in the categories of Biographical Fiction, Contemporary Poetry, and Women's Poetry. Imagine what would have happened if I didn't revisit and revamp the old.

However, this rambling isn't as much about me as it is about my observations—my observations of others, to measure whether their cups spill over in their own advancements.



My late grandfather was a firm believer in "talking the talk" and "walking the walk". That is why he was a big advocate of Word is Bond, as am I. It is one thing to speak on doing the steps but quite another to transform that speech into functionality.

I noticed that some of the same struggles I experienced with publication and feedback in the early going, other writers were also experiencing. The cogs in my brain started turning, and I pondered, "Wouldn't it be great if there was a mentoring program of sorts, not only to provide guidance into the tricky waters of publishing but to mentor in other ways too: from improvement in writing, marketing, and the like?" From that brainstorming, the All Authors Mentoring Program (AAMP) was crafted—a mandatory stipulation for those under the Traditional Umbrella and a great optional component for those under the Indie Umbrella. It was a way to tell those authors they weren't alone. They were understood, and that there was assistance available if they were invested in the cause.



Are most authors invested in the syllabus—the syllabus for their own matriculation? When instances arise where a publication receives less than a favorable review, do authors really take the time to see if the critics' thoughts hold credence? Or, do they dismiss that person as a “hater” and continue to do things in the same way? It would be a feat if one was able to monitor every response that comes along. However, the only thing authors can control is how they respond, not the feedback of the audience.

An individual that I network with recently received critical reviews from two different individuals in reference to style and connectivity in her works. Yet, instead of delving deeper into the statements, her response was, “Oh well! It is what it is. My work is just so evolved that everyone doesn't understand it.”

There are some evolved publications out there, so this statement is possible ... but is it a scapegoat? Does her viewpoint echo resistance to improvement? A cry of yes to the latter question is not only plausible but in these modern times, expected.



If an individual thinks she is already “great” or “outstanding”, what is the motivation to take anyone else's suggestions? If an author has fans who will advocate her works, no matter what, is it realistic to expect the one critical thinker to be heard among the cheers and adulation. I am not saying a fan lacks the gumption to speak critically of one's idol, but fanfare and blind worship often walk a similar tightrope.

The prohibition of one's own self-actualization demolishes a writer's longevity in a hurry. The people worthy of the title of “great” or “outstanding” didn't keep it through self-proclamation. They knew when to listen, when to stand firm, and were active participants in the vitality of their own brands—resulting in the audience bestowing the title. It gives the distinction between being remembered in the moment and remembered beyond one's lifetime.

Will the authors of today sync with their self-actualization? Only time will tell.

As for me, I will continue to fulfill my thirst: for along with “Word is Bond”, I live by another creed: “Never stop learning.”



Attention Readers: Are the publications on the market satisfying your thirst? Submit your responses to queenofspades@allauthorspp.net with “Issue 18” as the subject. Your response could be used in a future issue.



Ask A.J.

By
A. Lopez Jr

Hello Readers, Writers, and Precious Patrons. Welcome to Issue 18 of Ask AJ. Check out our question from “Horried in Houston”.



The Question:

Dear AJ,

Just recently, my fourteen-year-old daughter has been drawn to the goth lifestyle. Part of that has been the switch in the type of literature she has been reading. I stumbled upon a book she’s been reading and was outraged at the amount of gory details given.

My question to you is, does gore have a place in YA literature, and if so, how graphic should it be?



The Nitty Gritty

This particular question is one that has been asked for decades, as far as entertainment goes. In entertainment, I mean music, movies, video games, and books.

As with any of these, the amount of violence or gore found in each is up to the creator of said work.

Our country is not one to shy away from controversy, and there have been many instances in music and television/movies where protests were staged to condemn one or the other from making them available to the public. All of this led to a rating system for motion pictures and music.

Not intended to curb an artist’s right to create, it did present a way for the public to know how graphic the content may be. Used as a guide, the rating system temporarily satisfied parents, and the leaders of the “rating parade” to make an impact on the entertainment industry.

Video game makers have now implemented a rating system, geared more towards the parents, to give them a better idea of what their children are playing, or if they should purchase a game with a rating meant for adults.

With books, there are genres and not ratings. Each type of genre gives a good indication of what kind of material will be in the story. It gives a good indication, but it’s not a perfect way of knowing.

Before ebooks are uploaded to the different retailers, there is a box to check for age groups to indicate which age group the book is appropriate for. This is just a quick part of the process, behind the scenes before it hits the stores, but not an official rating system.

The New And Improved(?) YA

In the case for YA Literature, the most common ages tend to be 15-20. But again, this doesn't mean reading this genre is confined to those ages. There's really nothing to stop someone younger from picking up or downloading a copy that may have graphic violence, sex, or vulgar language.

As technology increases and with the explosion of indie-publishing, more books are available, and the idea of there being a safe genre is long gone. With vampires, zombies, and other violent means of apocalypse, YA novels have grabbed hold of these hot trends and many authors have incorporated them into their plots and storylines.

So How Graphic Should YA Literature Be?

The reader's question pertained to gore, but there are many different ways readers can find material offensive or too graphic. Gore, sex, drugs, vulgar language, and violence, separately can rock a story's core if used excessively. But when combined, their effects can really turn a novel on its head in a way the reader may not have expected.

The difference between reader's expectations and what they receive are what ultimately drives the reviews and creates issues of controversy.

I write primarily in the horror genre which has its own amount of violence and gore as a by-product. What I have learned in this writing style, is it's not how much gore and violence you use, it's the quality. Quality over quantity is the way to go. There is no need for senseless horror and violence just because you are writing a horror novel. And I feel that can apply to any genre.

Creating a picture and setting a scene for the reader to visualize on their own can be scarier and have a bigger impact than showing (by telling) them what they are supposed to see. Learning this has helped me in how I approach my writing and where my stories will go.

The amount of gore in a YA novel should be decided by each author. And each author should know their audience and what has drawn their interest and kept them reading their books. Changing styles and adding more violence, just for gore-sake, may not be the best approach for something that is already working.

So, because there are no defined ranges or limitations for gore in any story, my opinion is, leave it up to the author and their discretion and hope they use good judgment in their writing.

But as we have seen recently, the Divergent and Maze Runner series have become big hits and made it to the big screen. And those series do not lack violence or gore.

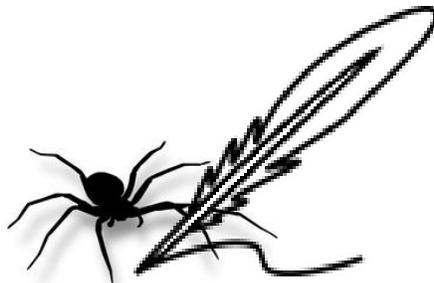
Reader's Plight



For the reader, trying out a new author in your favorite genre can be exciting, but at the same time, you are entering an unknown world and you can't be sure it will replicate your previous reads. There is always the possibility that there may be more violence and gore in a new read, and for some, this may be a complete let down and make for an unenjoyable read.

I don't know what the solution or the answer is, but it may be a good idea to read the entire description for hints or maybe even a disclaimer from the author as to the contents of a graphic nature in their novel.

Until next time, pick up a good book and get lost in that world...



Short Story Station

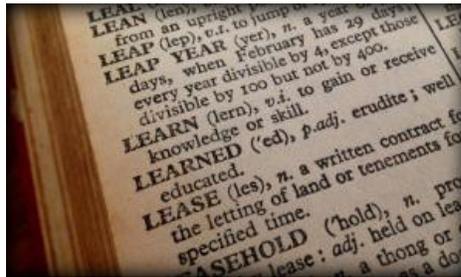
By
Beem Weeks



“Learning for Life”

Matriculation. A silly sounding word, that. Dictionaries are simplistic in their definition: to become a student at a school and especially in a college or university.

That’s how Merriam-Webster explains the word. But do we really need to enroll in a college to continue on to higher learning?



History is full of great minds that accomplished amazing things without the aid of a degree—or in some cases, without even a high school diploma.

- Ansel Adams, perhaps the greatest photographer of the twentieth century, never finished high school. Many of his works now fetch hundreds of thousands of dollars for single prints.
- The British singer/songwriter Adele intended to go on to college after graduation from high school, only to see her life completely changed with the signing of a recording contract.
- David Geffen, the billionaire founder of two major record companies and co-founder of DreamWorks, pulled the plug on his college career after his freshman year. But that’s not the truly amazing part; Geffen is also dyslexic. He took a job in the mailroom at William Morris Agency and never looked back.
- Alan Gerry, the billionaire cable TV executive, dropped out of high school during World War II to join the Marines. He trained as a television repair man, eventually starting his own cable company with just \$1,500.
- twitter co-founder Noah Glass? A college dropout.
- Comedienne/actress/businesswoman Lucille Ball? A high school dropout.
- Even Bill Gates, the richest man in the world and co-founder of Microsoft, didn’t finish college, and yet seems to be doing all right for himself.

So what is my point in all this name dropping?

There’s an old Chinese proverb that says: “A single conversation with a wise man during the eating of a meal, is better than ten years’ mere study of books.”

That simple statement speaks volumes to me. Learning is a lifelong odyssey. We learn from our parents, grandparents, school teachers, and friends. An enemy can teach us great lessons about ourselves and the world in which we live. We gain wisdom and insight more so from failure than from success.



I recall the day on which I graduated high school over thirty years ago. To my teenaged mind, I had completed the journey. That diploma in my hand represented the reward of a long and hard-fought battle. How utterly foolish my beliefs. Learning should never be a battle. Learning should be seen as necessary as is breathing. When we're learning, we're growing. It never ends.

Henry Doherty, the American financier/oilman, once said: "Get over the idea that only children should spend their time in study. Be a student so long as you still have something to learn, and this will mean all your life."

My greatest life lessons have come from my darkest moments—those very moments that often lead individuals to give up on life. It was in those moments that I truly began to understand who I am as opposed to who I thought myself to be. These are often not the same things.

When we make it through another day, we've graduated—if we've learned something during the course of the day. If we fail to learn something new, we've forever lost that opportunity. We cannot retrieve lost days. There isn't a room somewhere containing all those lost minutes from our past, a place to visit and take back those days. If we're lazy or unmotivated to make ourselves better, we'll die poor.

Some people remain focused on the past. They're the ones always talking about the good old days. Life, for them, had its best moments at some point in a previous decade. We're all guilty of this sort of mentality from time to time. My guilt is talking about the 1980s. I've even written blog pieces regarding the good times had during the Reagan decade. For others, it may be the 1960s or 1970s. My mother is partial to the 1950s. It's usually the decade in which we first become young adults, stretching our wings, sampling life for the first time as an independent person, without parental constraints.

Here's the thing: Our memories fail to remind us of the difficult struggles we encounter while transitioning into adulthood—yet another form of matriculation. It's the concerts and parties we readily recall, not the arguments with parents who saw us heading for a fall. We remember the joy of being with friends and staying out late at the club, but we forget the pressures of trying to make it in the adult world on minimum wage pay. Minimum wage was \$3.35 an hour here in Michigan back in the 1980s. Nobody can survive on that—but survive, I did. I graduated. I moved on to the next level of life.



It was those good old days that brought us to where we are now. There were indeed lessons we had to learn, dues that needed paying, which led us to the graduations that continue to take place each day we're given.

Are you looking forward at what is coming, or are you stuck looking over your shoulder at what's already been?



**"I don't think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday."
~Abraham Lincoln**

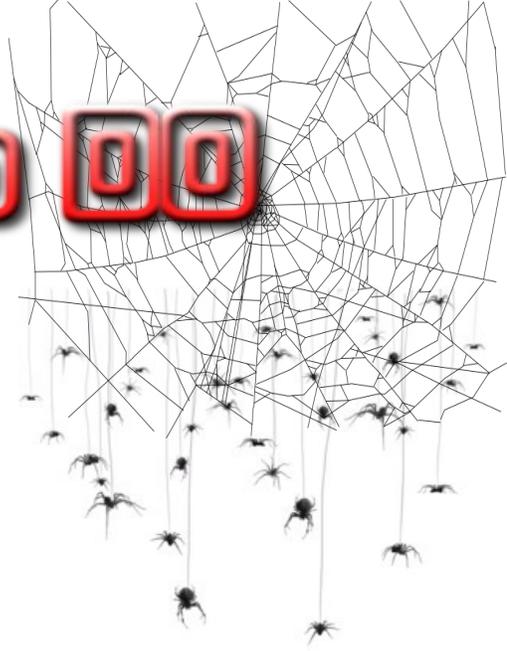
What NOT to DO



~NOPE!

By
Mini Truth

The Scary Truth About The Writing World



I'm scared.

No, seriously ... I actually mean that.

I'm scared for the Writing World as it stands today.

In this episode of What NOT to DO, I am going to have an honest conversation with my fellow authors.

Seriously, though, I'm having a moment of fear for the future of our literary community. There are far too many of us that are, simply put, doing the wrong things.

There are way too many cheaters and liars within the community merely for the sake of coming out on top. And, I fret.



In recent days I came across a very disturbing thing; an author who wrote a review on Amazon for her own book.

In a world where Amazon.com is in an all out upheaval when it comes to Indie Authors and their book reviews, how is it possible, I pray, for an Indie Author to have reviewed her own work? Moreover, how many authors are doing this very thing, possibly even using aliases?

I've been in this industry as both a traditionally and indie published author for 6 years now, and in six small years, the industry has taken a tragic turn. A turn towards its impending doom.

If you would give me your undivided attention for a small portion of your time, I'd love to take a quick trip down memory lane.



As a child, books were wondrous to me. They represented all possibility. Everything that ever was, and ever would be, was found in books. Books were my solace, my adventure, my intrigue, my teachers. Books captivated me and satisfied my thirst for something greater.

Then came the Indie Publishing Boom.

At first look, to me, Indie Publishing opened doors that constituted hope. The prospect of doing what I'd always dreamed of. Becoming an author. So, with an open mind and heart, I ventured into the unknown world of Indie Publishing.

After having received way too many rejection letters from Traditional Houses simply because they weren't accepting "my genre" for publication, I knew this would be the route for me. I also knew that putting my best foot forward in Indie Publishing was paramount. Maybe that was the perfectionist in me. At any rate, the first year was great, but also a challenge.

It was great because I was living my dream and connecting with other authors out there just like myself. It was a challenge because being an Indie Author with "no name" was a great big hill to climb and I'd only JUST started.

Now, perhaps it is in my makeup, but I've always been the type to not stray from a challenge and was always willing to put forth the hard work necessary to achieve my dreams.

Six years later I've gone from a nobody, to a bestselling author with several publications under my belt (both indie and traditional), a publishing house and a very unique Author Advocacy company with several subsidiaries, to which All Authors Magazine is one.

One thing was for certain in all of that time; MY INTEGRITY WAS NOT (AND NEVER WILL BE) FOR SALE!

If there was one thing my grandmother taught me well, it was to NEVER compromise my integrity. Unfortunately, that is not the case with too many out there who claim to be "authors". And I use the word loosely.

TO ME, a TRUE author is a person who takes pride in their craft, is passionate about their works, is fervent in always presenting their best possible art, AND NEVER EVER cheats the system. Why? Well, because their integrity is great and their art speaks for itself in that it is wonderfully executed.



Back to what I was saying before.

In these six years I've been witness to loads of mischief in the Writing World.

Motive is the driving force that moves everyone, be it for bad or for good.

Your motive determines your method. If your motives are misplaced, your methods will be askew. If your motives are well placed, your methods will be as well.

THAT, my friends is the bottom line.

For so many years, all I'd wanted to do was share my art with people. I wanted to open a portal into my mind, so that all who read my works could enjoy the ride. I wanted YOU to see what I WAS SEEING. Nothing more and nothing less. My moving forces was the desire to share my art, that was all. Sure, being able to make a sale was nice; the icing on the cake, in fact. But, THAT was not my reason.

There are many of you out there who are very in tune to what I am saying and share that view.

On the other hand there are those who are solely financially driven and will stoop to ANY level just to get what they want. Money.

Such is the case for the “author” who stoops so low so as to write a review for his/her own works, whether under their real name or an alias. Or, the ones who buy reviews. Let me be clear: I’m not speaking of the ones who pay professional reviewing associations for their services. While I don’t necessarily, wholeheartedly agree with it, I do know that it is a legitimate practice. I am speaking of the people who go on places like Fiverr, place an ads asking for “reviews”, when they are well aware that said reviewer will never so much as look at their work. These are the types that tell the so called reviewer what to say, then pay them for doing the job.

That is blatant deception to the umptth degree.

The quandary in these types of situations is that WE ALL pay for someone else’s dishonesty. These practices have tarnished what was once meant to be a beautiful thing for writers who were really passionate about the craft.

Those who are doing this apparently cannot see the picture of the greater scheme.

I tend to look into what the future might hold. And with the declining quality of books, as well as the increase in defrauding writers, the future of literary art looks very bleak.

Think of this ...

Charles Dickens wrote Great Expectations in 1861; Jane Austen wrote Pride and Prejudice in 1813; H.G. Wells wrote Time Machine in 1895.

Give or take a decade or two, 200 years later, WE are still reading, re-reading, acting and re-enacting these amazing tales. Why? Because they made a mark. Because the authors’ ink was a combination of blood and passion. Works like these left imprints in our world that have yet to be erased, and probably never will be.

Think about it. Can we say that with unequivocal certainty about today’s books?

No. No, we cannot. Because most authors are only thinking about the money now, without considering the consequences of their actions and how that will impact our descendants moving forth.



Will your cheating butt’s book(s) endure until the end of time? Probably not. As a matter of fact, maybe you never intended it to. But, please, please, for the love of all things holy, STOP making things harder for THE REST OF US!

Long story short ...

Please, DO NOT BE A LIAR, A FAKE AND A CHEAT and LET US the ones who actually love what we do, enjoy it with no further complications. Allow us to bring beauty back to the world of writing.

Mini Truth signing off! Peace!

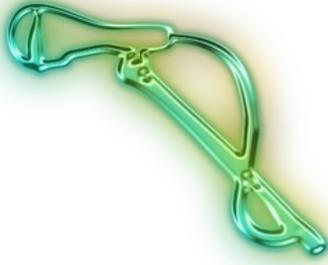


POETRY



UNLEASHED

Unleashed Feature



Hello Readers, Writers, and Precious Patrons. Welcome to the Unleashed Feature segment of All Authors Magazine. For this Issue of All Authors Magazine we are bringing you an interview with Poet Simone Nikkole.



1. Issue 18's theme is "Thirst for Matriculation". What does that theme symbolize for you?

My thirst for matriculation revolves around getting better as a performer and understanding the psychology of the perception of the artist or performer by the audience. I perform to inspire and create change in my audience, not to hear myself talk. Writing is my therapy, so I am good; ego has never been important to me. I have been selfless all my life and don't plan to change because I am in the public eye.

2. Tell our readers the story behind "Azucar".

I started writing poetry at 12. When I decided to publish a book, I was 17 and didn't have a pen name because I was just a page poet and only performed in church and school. As a result, "My Journey through Poetry (MJTP)" was published under my real name (with artistic liberties of course) as Simone Nikkole. My boyfriend called me "Brown Sugar" and then the movie came out. Everyone has always called me "sweet", or "the sweetest person I know". As a therapist, "sweet" was looked upon as being a negative quality because it created a "YES, (wo)man" dynamic between the therapist and the client. In that environment, no work can be done.

Because I often do Spanglish poems and discovered I was Cuban, I wanted my name to reflect that; thus "Azucar Morena" was born. Facebook showed me another "Azucar Morena". After I attended my first Afrolatin@ conference, out of respect, I messaged her to discuss the importance of my keeping the name. She threw me more Shade than Prince did in his whole lifetime by not even responding to my inquiry. Not wanting to be associated with her saltiness or "Azucar Morena" in the DJ'ing world, I shortened it to "Azucar". However, to avoid confusing my original readership, my full pen name is always used on my books, Simone "Azucar" Nikkole.

3. Your poetry collection Sidepiece Sanctifications is based on your experience in being the other woman. What was the overall purpose with this collection? Have you experienced feedback from other women and if so, how did you handle it?

The original purpose of the collection was to get my frustrations out, to let him know forever that he screwed up royally and that I am the wrong one to mess with, since all of the poems were written during the "relationship". I was not planning on writing this book; I was actually planning on releasing something else which is why inside the book I wrote a letter to my readership. I structured it in such a way that you can take the journey with me and hopefully rediscover your worth along with me. I made it that small because he never claimed me as his and never walked with me by his side, or on his arm. Now everyone can put me in their pocket and walk with me by their side. I published it on his birthday as a Royal Screw You.

Since I am working on my domestic violence initiatives, this book has become an example of what happens when survivors try to heal on their own terms. If I had not been raped prior to starting this relationship, the relationship and the book would have never existed. I am marketing it now as an example of maladaptive healing from a sexual trauma and I think it makes it easier for my church readership to swallow. The responses I get are great. Some included, "oh this happened to me" or "I was the other woman once" or "this is a unique take on the "sidepiece". I often get the response I was expecting, "why'd you use the word "Sanctifications" though, you making it sound holy and divine". The best responses I've gotten have been from one of my best friends, a fellow poet, and a bartender. One of my best friends, Bianca Bethune, (yes the actress) now living in LA, she said, "I am going through something like this right now, sign it so I can go and start creating a monologue out of this." Another poet, Da Trooth, said to me, "oh I need to interview you, girl, so I can get a different perspective in the manual I am writing." That same night Da Trooth asked to interview me, the bartender started bashing me for not knowing what was going on; he said that my becoming a sidepiece was my fault. I partially agreed and we debated for about an hour.

I want and ask for feedback on all my books because I publish them for my audiences, not for me. God has put me on a path to change the world, my words are my platform and the tools I use to begin the conversation. Because of the feedback, I will be creating a "Sidepiece Sanctifications, Vol 2: The Words I Wish I penned and said." I also wanted to do it to show my journey to my present King and answer all the questions the bartender posed to me that night.

4. How did you get involved in issues of bullying and child advocacy?

I was a bullied child. I was not only bullied at school but in my own home as I got older. That is what made me want to publish, "My Journey through Poetry: a teenage catharsis". I wanted other children to know that it gets better and they don't have to commit suicide. I am looking to cement my involvement with Champions against Bullying this year and start producing a Self-Expression tour with other artists going around to different schools highlighting self-love, embracing uniqueness, and tolerance of differences through appreciation of how they manifest in America.

I started writing poetry at 12 years old because my parents weren't hearing me; there is a difference between listening and hearing someone. I started on the journey to publish my thoughts; maybe when they started making a lot of money, they would hear and understand me. To this day, they still don't but other parents are starting to understand their own children and I am over the moon about that. Some mentors and counselors are using MJTP as a tool to get their mentees and clients to open up, which I am still floored by.

In regards to child advocacy, my life made me a child advocate. I never want anyone to go through what I went through and what I am still struggling with. I became a therapist for that same reason in addition to wanting to improve my family relations. I have always been selfless and I believe that I need to tell my story and be transparent to help someone else. I took that a step further and became a Sexual Assault Response Team Member and a Domestic Violence Response Team Member for the state of NJ. I am currently getting my license in Marriage and Family Therapy and Domestic Violence Advocacy.

5. What have been the greatest rewards of performing your poetry?

In performing, my greatest rewards has been people telling me that I touched them and made them think. In addition, performing has led me to meet and have relationships with a few of my writing inspirations, Lemon Andersen, Rosario Dawson, Angie Martinez and Elizabeth Acevedo.

The best reward, by far though, was this year during my Sankofa writing retreat with NYC Latina Writers Group. I wrote a poem for one of the founders, Alicia Anabel Santos, because she was going on her year in white (Iyawoaje) shortly after the retreat. I wanted to give her encouraging words before she left. I was so immersed in performing the poem that I had no idea what was happening around me. After I was done and the open mic was over, my roommates took me aside and said the reason we took a break after your piece was because everyone was so moved and was crying. I will never forget that night and I think it has become a baseline for my future writings. It all manifested when I was just myself with no filter, no rules, no expectations of society forced upon my expression. It was RAW Sugar. Azucar Puro. And that is what I want to leave the world: my rawness, my unapologetic truth, and my willingness to wholeheartedly believe the pen is mightier than the sword.

6. Fill in the blank: The biggest challenge in the literary community is ____EGO_____.

If we could get rid of ego and just do the work, the world would be a better place. You should not be threatened by someone else's gift. What is for you is yours and what is for me is mine. Point blank period. You should want to learn from someone else's talents, ideas and viewpoints and not be threatened by them so much to not want to support their work, performances or initiative. The hate in this industry is killing the art. We need to stop worrying about what you can do for me and start worrying about what we can do for our country.

7. Random Question #1: Sunrise or sunsets?

Both. I am very indecisive person. In the heights is one of my favorite Broadway plays, if not my favorite (the real Lin-Manuel Miranda fans know about this; not all the Hamilton bandwagoners). In the play there is a song called, Alamacer (Sunrise). In Azucar fashion, I wrote a poem with the chorus to that in it. As for sunsets, I am very romantic and dream about watching the sunset with my boyfriend/future husband all the time. Sitting there talking about our day, our art, our frustrations, our joys and our dreams as we watch the current day of drama end: Priceless.

8. If you could travel to any location outside of the United States, where would it be and why?

Cape Town, South Africa. London, England. Sydney, Australia. Havana, Cuba.

They are in no particular order but I chose Cape Town because I hear it's beautiful and you should always visit the motherland and any point in your life. I chose London England because I always wanted to go there and I have family in England. I love their culture and the accents of course. I picked Sydney Australia because my soror is there and she is a photographer so I would love to see what she shot in Australia and I love Finding Nemo and so would kind of be cool to sing the Sydney song in Sydney Australia.

Havana Cuba is definitely last but not least because since finding out that I have Cuban blood in my family I've always wanted to go there. I absolutely love Spanish culture and identify with it a lot. I'd love to see different spots that I learned about in school. Cuba is the birthplace of one of my favorite singers and a person I modeled my name after.

9. What are your future writing endeavors?

I am working on the following books for myself: invisible descriptor, 5hatter3d r1ffs and c0tt0n, the audacious adventures of Azúcar y adobo, and Mirror, mirror.

I am also working on a one woman play, "who's loving you, Quien te amas?" And a theatrical production, "downrock elevé" (working title) about two different cultures that fall in love following their passions, along with writing my own version of Samson, the biblical story.

I am also editing and publishing three clients' books: Quev. Vero G. and Joshua Emmanuel.

Lastly, I am seeking artists to join me on the #islayBERandom school tour, encouraging self-expression and tolerance of uniqueness in schools. BE stands for Brilliant and Engaged. Beautiful and Eager.

10. If you had the power to change the world, what are the top three issues you would address and what would you do about them?

Black lives matter, the treatment of black women and Domestic Violence on a whole.

The fact that black lives don't matter in the American society is a problem. The fact that America can feel okay with taking away someone's culture to profit off of it and don't have a problem killing them for nothing is deplorable. The fact that there is institutionalized and systemic racism where a person of color cannot get ahead no matter how hard they try if the person in power is racist, sexist or colorist it's disheartening. I'm trying to help with the black lives matter movement by creating an anthology called "Firewords: the state of our Union" where we talk about everything blacklivesmatter in Poetic form or video form or story form and then towards the end of the Anthology we figure out ways to make it better for us, ways to make race relations in America better.

I was youtubing and heard a woman say that the black culture is a huge domestic violence shelter for black women. The black woman is the most underappreciated and least respected human. What gets me angry is the same guys we are standing on the protest lines and marching for are the same ones who call us bitches, hoes, and trap queens. I thought we supposed to be helping and bringing up each other. I remember an ex who didn't want to date me because I decided to go to Columbia for my masters. What kind of foolishness is that?

As a current domestic violence responder for New Jersey, championing domestic violence is not just a duty, it is my way of taking care of the children in this world. If we conquer the negativity that festering in homes, we will be able to stop bullying in schools, low self-esteem and lower the rates of mental illness and retraumatization.

11. Random Question #2: What is your comfort food and drink when you have experienced a rough day?

I love ice cream and jerk chicken. Not together of course but the ice cream can counteract the hotness of the jerk chicken. I'll try it together and let you know.

I don't really drink when I have a rough day because I feel that decision making is the breeding ground for alcoholism and as a substance abuse counselor definitely hypocritical to my clients. But I love me some sangria or a mojito once and a while.

12. What advice do you have for fellow spoken word artists and poets in regards to transcending time and becoming legendary vs. existing in the current time and risk becoming just a trend?

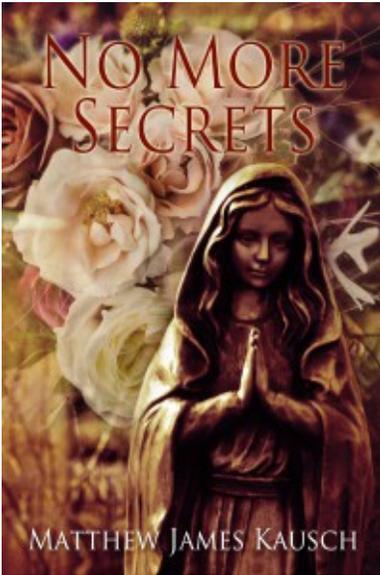
Find your passion project and do it and you will never be forgotten. Don't sell your soul to the devil. Money is the root of all evil. If you build it, they will come. The money will come. Be about something because you gotta wake up in the morning and live with yourself. Be so amazing and so trailblazing that they can't ignore you. Make them have to "make room for your fire!"



Do you know of someone who you think is worthy of Poetry Unleashed spotlight? Send your request to queenofspades@allauthorspp.net with "Poetry Unleashed Spotlight Interest" as the subject line. You will be contacted if you are up for consideration.

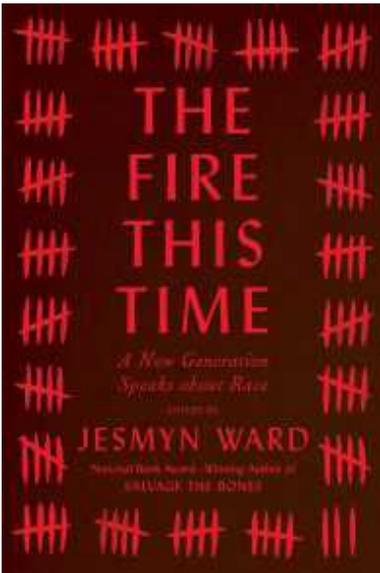


Current Flows



Title: No More Secrets
Author: Matthew James Kausch
Type of Poetry: Spiritual
Release Date: July 31, 2016
Available: Smashwords
Blurb:

Remember forever? Take a stroll through the valley of the damned. Grasp for the straws of hope. The last dragon chained down in the sunken garden as the madcap laughs. Nigh just one kiss from those dew covered flower petal lips. Remember: forever.



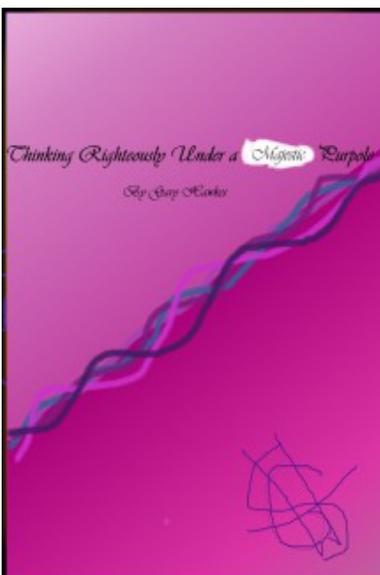
Title: The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race
Author: Jesmyn Ward (editor)
Type of Poetry: African-American Compilation
Release Date: August 2, 2016
Available: Amazon

Abbreviated Blurb (for full blurb, visit Amazon):

Award-winning author Jesmyn Ward knows that Baldwin's words ring as true as ever today. In response, she has gathered short essays, memoir, and a few essential poems to engage the question of race in the United States. And she has turned to some of her generation's most original thinkers and writers to give voice to their concerns.

The Fire This Time is divided into three parts that shine a light on the darkest corners of our history, wrestle with our current predicament, and envision a better future. Of the eighteen pieces, ten were written specifically for this volume.

In the fifty-odd years since Baldwin's essay was published, entire generations have dared everything and made significant progress. But the idea that we are living in the post-Civil Rights era, that we are a "post-racial" society is an inaccurate and harmful reflection of a truth the country must confront. Baldwin's "fire next time" is now upon us, and it needs to be talked about.

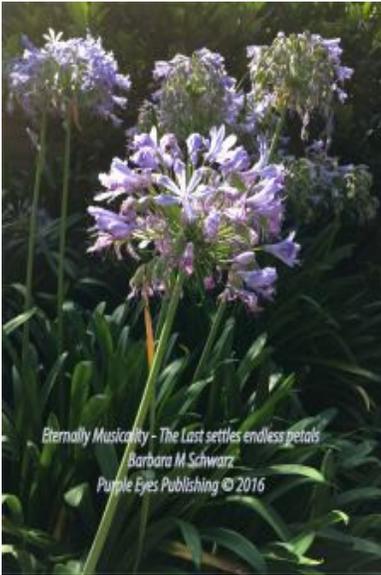


Title: Thinking Righteously Under a Majestic Purple
Author: Gary Hawkes
Type of Poetry: Contemporary
Release Date: August 18, 2016
Available: Smashwords

Blurb:

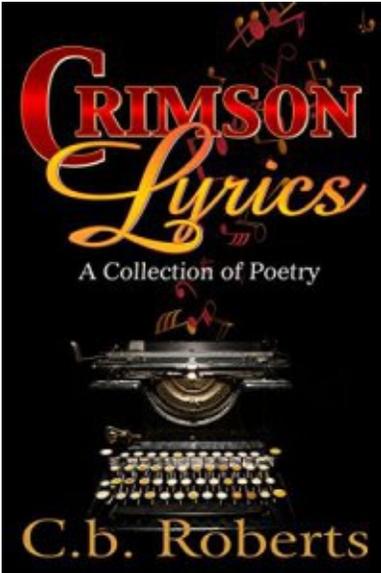
A variety of poems addressing many different feelings about living in this current time.





Title: Eternally Musicality – The Last Settles Endless Petals
Author: Barbara M Schwarz
Type of Poetry: Epic
Release Date: August 24, 2016
Available: Smashwords
Blurb:

A scent of time well spent on a wing and a prayer opened to the music that we all can share – hidden in the atmosphere: the coppice conundrum—the beat to heart and null-sum doing becomes an endless spewing of musicality rested out to sea of grand proclivity.



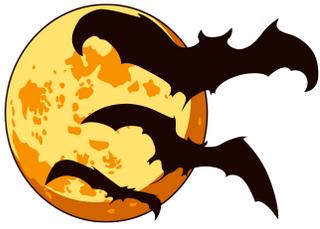
Title: Crimson Lyrics
Author: C.B. Roberts
Type of Poetry: Relationship
Release Date: August 25, 2016
Available: Amazon
Blurb:

If you've ever experienced the pain of unrequited love or the heartbreak of giving your soul to the wrong person, this collection is a must read.



Title: Cannibal (Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Poetry)
Author: Safiya Sinclair
Type of Poetry: Caribbean & Latin American
Release Date: September 1, 2016 (paperback)
Available: Amazon
Abbreviated Blurb (for full blurb, visit Amazon):

Colliding with and confronting The Tempest and postcolonial identity, the poems in Safiya Sinclair's *Cannibal* explore Jamaican childhood and history, race relations in America, womanhood, otherness, and exile. She evokes a home no longer accessible and a body at times uninhabitable, often mirrored by a hybrid Eve/Caliban figure. Blooming with intense lyricism and fertile imagery, these full-blooded poems are elegant, mythic, and intricately woven. Here the female body is a dark landscape; the female body is cannibal. Sinclair shocks and delights her readers with her willingness to disorient and provoke, creating a multitextured collage of beautiful and explosive poems.



FUN



True or False?



Halloween is more feared than celebrated.

False.

Halloween is revered in many parts of the world, to be precise. It wasn't until the foundation of The Church, that people began to fear the holiday. This was mostly attributed to the fact that The Church view Hallow's Eve as the Devil's work, since many Celtic and North & South American Indigenous races believed that on that day the dead would arise. However, in their minds, this was a good and pleasant thing because one would have the opportunity to contact passed relatives and the like.

In many countries, this original meaning of Halloween is still very much alive and highly celebrated.

Authors tend to pay more attention to the amount of stars rather than the content within the reviews.

True.

As sad as it is, even many authors are blinded by quantity as opposed to quality.

The Rating Stars have their own meanings. On most platforms they are as follows:

5 Stars = Loved it.

4 Stars = Liked it.

3 Stars = It was good but not great.

2 Stars = It could have been better. I mostly disliked it.

1 Star = I hated it.

However, it's important to READ why the reviewer gave it the quantity of stars that he/she did. Sometimes there are very viable reasons. Don't get so caught up on the quantity of stars.

Personally, I rather have a 3 star rating with good things being said, than a 5 star rating that is vague.

The number one reason a reader does not buy a book is because the cover was not appealing.

True.

While there are a wide array of reasons why readers do not buy books, the above mentioned it the predominant reason.

One can have a book that is fabulous; wonderfully written, well thought out, with a great story-line. However, if the cover is junk, then chances are you aren't going to get very many sales. Remember, humanity is visual. We SEE what we like and then we GET it.

Since this is a modern world, historical fiction should mold to the world, even in dialog.

False.

I've met so many people that think this is accurate, however I beg to differ. This is highly inaccurate. Great literature is base on authenticity. If you write a historical fiction and said book is written in modern prose, then it isn't historical, is it?

Don't be bullied into believing that you MUST write a historical piece in a contemporary way. If the reader does not understand the verbiage, then they can get a dictionary.

Book trailers are wonderful tools to generate sales for books, regardless of genre.

True.

Book trailers, in recent years, has become a booming sales tool for books. This goes back to what I said just a moment ago, we are a visual species. Book trailers, when done correctly, can be a very effective sales tool.



What's the Word?

With
C. Desert Rose

Hi-Lo! C. Desert Rose here. For Issue 18 "Thirst for Matriculation", the word is:



As ugly as this word is, and as important to my person as it might be, "Demonize" has a very commonplace in today's society. Just as it has had for many, many years.

Side Note: I can't quite decide if I chose the word because I'm fascinated with angels and demons, but it's a powerful word nonetheless. ☐ Lol. Moving on ...

Alright, so, in order to get into the meaning of the word as it pertains to today's way of life, we must first examine where it came from.

de·mon·ize

/ˈdēməˌnīz/

verb

verb: **demonize**; 3rd person present: **demonizes**; past tense: **demonized**; past participle: **demonized**; gerund or present participle: **demonizing**; verb: **demonise**; 3rd person present: **demonises**; past tense: **demonised**; past participle: **demonised**; gerund or present participle: **demonising**

portray as wicked and threatening.

"seeking to demonize one side in the conflict"

Definition:

Demonization (or Demonisation) is the reinterpretation of polytheistic deities as evil. To assign negative traits to any divine being, classifying them as lying demons, by religious organizations, generally monotheistic and henotheistic ones.

The term has since been expanded to refer to any characterization of individuals, groups, or political bodies as evil or malicious.

Well, in order to understand the full definition of demonization we must first understand the meaning of the words in the definition.

Polytheistic: To believe that there is MORE THAN ONE god.

Monotheistic: To believe that there is only ONE god.

Henotheistic: The worship of a particular god, as by a family or tribe tradition, without disbelieving in the existence of other gods.



Okay, moving forward.

So, the question is; Why is such a cruel word *practiced* (not *used*) so *frequently* nowadays?



Me: **thinking face**

My conscience: That's a good question, Rose.

Me: I know, right?

My conscience: Indeed. So ... why is it?

Me: Well, I don't know, Conscience. But I'm about to find out.

My conscience: Awesome! Go for it!



Notice that I didn't say "used" but "practiced". There is a reason for that.

Let's start at the beginning, baring in mind that demonization ISN'T ANYTHING NEW, but something universally done for too many years to count.

Demonization was widely practiced in the past to give merit to the accusation of malevolence, whether founded or unfounded. Demonization was the tool utilized—mostly by religious and political leaders, although, also used by bigots and treacherous men—to demean someone or incriminate an individual of something, and still remain pious.

Sadly, as "evolved" as today's society claims to be, we've yet to evolve enough to NOT use demonization in order to gain the same outcome that our ancestors did.



Tsk, tsk, tsk! Naughty humans!

And, on that note, let's take a look at the root word, "demon".

Definition:

Demon: an evil spirit; devil or fiend.

Used mainly in Middle English during the years 1350-1400.

The Latin derivative is “daemonium” and the Greek is “daimónion”. In Greek it means “thing of divine nature”. In Latin, “evil thing of divine nature”.

In Jewish and Christian writes, it means “evil spirit”.

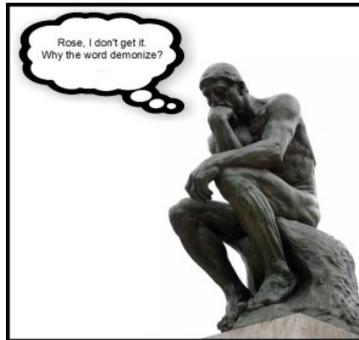
Funny how some things never change. Just saying.

Now, another question arises, if the root word implies something supernatural, how then can it be used to describe something natural?

Well, that's simple. Man is known for making a mountain out of molehill. That's to say, make something bigger than what it is. It's in human nature to exaggerate the mundane. All of this, whether acknowledged or not, stems from the imagination.

Any writer knows that the imagination is a powerful thing, capable of producing myriad of ideas, good or bad.

Yup. I can hear you already. You're probably wondering ...



Those who follow me, should already know that my thoughts are practical—they serve a purpose.

Let's get to it, shall we?

Media is the culprit of global demonization. Whereas, eons ago, demonization WAS exercised, its compass only went as far as word of mouth could reach. In modern times, global demonization started with the radio, then the television, then the internet. Who is to say that in a few years there won't be another outlet to use that will help the global demonization movement?

PS: I came up with that term “global demonization”. But, it seems to fit the bill. LOL

Demonization—or what I like to think of as “pointing a finger”—is the number one transgressor for the division and hatred in the world. Demonization comes from foolishness, foolishness is the sister of animosity, and animosity is the mother of wrongdoing.

For far too long human beings have demonized that which they cannot understand, or those things that they simply do not like, and in turn have pitted humanity against each other. We see it every single day.

On the news we look at how political leaders are being demonized whether culpable or not. In life, there is always that one person that is misunderstood, and in turn demonized because the general public cannot understand him/her. In religion certain practices and behaviors are demonized, simply because of human opinion. Ergo, war is typically the outcome.

Even in our field, literature, authors are demonized for speaking their minds, or for not being like other authors, causing a divide in something that should unify us all.

Like the Seven Deadly Sins, demonization has its ramifications. Things like:

- Hatred
- Bigotry
- Segregation
- And, Falsehood

Each one with its own terrible consequences.

Sir, Isaac Newton said, "Every action has its equal and opposite reaction."

The irony in this statement is the truth behind the words. The people who typically demonized others, profess to want the "greater good" for the general public. However, the outcome is usually just the opposite. Maleficence.



Now, THAT'S a scary thought!

That's What's The Word with C. Desert Rose.

