

# *All Authors Magazine*

*Issue 8*

*The Beat of the Pen*



# All Authors Magazine, Issue 8

## The Beat of the Pen



### Intro I Hear a Drum



I hear a drum. A drum 'ratta tat tatting' which is what my heart hears. The sound causes waves of rhythm to move me, to make me one with its reverberation.

Ratta, tat. Ratta tat. Ratta, tat, tat.

Music to my soul, it is. Water to my internal desert. A fusion of need and desire. A melody which I cannot escape. It soothes me, it comforts me, it makes me feel whole.

Then again...

Ratta tat. Ratta tat. Ratta tat, tat.

My heart falls into the magnificence, syncing to its pulse. My mind whirls into another place and time. The inevitable beauty that I find therein takes me away and I do not falter.

It is I, and I am it—we are one.

I am one with the beat of the drum.

This strumming is intoxicating and yet, I find no reason to stray away. It is exhilarating and I allow myself to stay—to bask in the rapture that it brings. We are one.

I am the beat of the drum.

Ratta tat. Ratta tat. Ratta tat, tat.

Such is the heart and the mind of a writer. The music that we sing cannot be heard but felt. It cannot be played, but told. It is in our blood, and we show our pictures and play our symphony in words.

We are the drum, the drum in the pen, the pen is our soul.

And, we dance. We dance to the Beat of the Pen.



## The Case of the Lost Art of Romancing the Words

Issue 8 “The Beat of the Pen” combines the ambiance of January (bringing in the New Year) and February (love and romance). For our special article, Y. Correa visits us again to see if Romancing the Words still has a place in modern literature.



Today I am investigating

The Case of  
the Lost Art of Romancing the Words

If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times...

I'm a hopeless romantic. A true sap, hidden under a cast iron exterior.



Okay this picture of Iron Woman was a bit much, but I couldn't resist.

Most people meet the strong woman and think that I'm as hard as they come, but there are some things that melt the hard surface of this strong woman. Yet out of all of the things that move me and touch my heart, there isn't a single thing that can leave an impact within me like words.

I've always been sensitive to words. Now that I think about it, when I was younger everything that people said mattered to me. As I grew older I learned that everyone has their own opinion, and learned how to not take everything that people say to heart. In other words, I grew out of being the naive little girl who was always hurt by the things that people said.

But one thing never changed...

The impact of the written word.

Something that most people do not know about me is that I am dyslexic. I don't go around advertising it like a gold medal. As the matter of fact, for many years I was humiliated by that fact. Moreover, I was scared to tell anyone do to the prospect of being treated differently—like a developmentally disabled individual. I didn't want people to take pity on me or act as though I could not understand what was going on around me.

It's funny how that works, because lots of people tend to equate dyslexia with mentally challenged. Not the same thing folks. Not the same thing at all!

The difference between you and I is that your mind probably processes things in numbers or letters, whereas my mind processes facts in pictures. I tell my best friend all the time “Remember I'm more of the visual sort. Show me rather than tell me.” I love her so much because she gets it, so she does exactly that, she shows me, and thus I understand.

Truth be told, I've always been one of the sharpest tools in the shed, if you will, but due to my difficulty reading—especially during my younger years—I tended to be shy and reserved in many aspects.

Many years have passed since then and many, many things have changed. However in retrospect, I now realize that due to my nature, my writing style was born. A style that is visual and implements keys words to develop an unshakable image in the reader's mind.

Now, back to what I was saying.

I remember when I was a child, whenever it was time to read aloud in class I'd have a panic attack. Whenever I had to read something aloud in Sunday School I'd just tell the Sunday School teacher that the bible was too complicated for me, and then she would pass the portion to someone else. Whenever we had spelling tests, I always failed.

I remember clearly one year, my mother had had her fill of my failing spelling tests and opted to take it upon herself to teach me the spelling words. It was NOT fun, to say the least.

Picture. The word was "picture". I could not, for the life of me, spell that damn word. As the matter of fact, it was the hardest word on the list that time round. My mother got so frustrated at my not being able to spell it that she whooped my butt like there was no tomorrow.

Guess what? I still couldn't spell the word, and still got it wrong on the test. I didn't learn how to properly spell picture until I was in middle school.

That was one among many challenges.

It took me years to decipher the difference between dose and does, liar and lair, hair and hail... gosh, so many. This doesn't include my difficulty telling the difference between many lower case letters.

Sometimes my mind still has troubles every now and again causing me to ask for someone to help and tell me what letter I am looking at.

Little tricks like "righty tighty, lefty loosey" reminds me of the difference between the lowercase B and D. As well as a few other methods that I've learned throughout the years.

I was made fun of by people that did not know or understand my challenge, even by my ex-husband. I never told him of my problem to be sure. I was too ashamed. He never knew. That's probably why he'd get a rise out of teasing me, but it hurt nonetheless.

All that aside, even with all of my heartache in that scenario, I learned to cope. I taught myself many devices that I used even to this day to spell things properly and read smoothly. While some may not understand what I'm going to say, I think that being bilingual helped me profusely. In Spanish, language 95% of the time is spelled, said and read phonetically. I adapted that method, memorized many things and learned how to use phonetic pronunciation to my benefit.

However...

A very long time ago, when I still couldn't read, I fell in love with books. I was very young. Somewhere between 5 and 7 years of age when I fell in love with books—with words.

I remember visiting the library, grabbing a picture book then sitting in a corner somewhere with it. A smile plastered across my face. The first thing that I would do was to smell the book (I still do—I can't help it, there is something so special about the smell of books), then opened it up and stared at the colorful images for hours at a time. I memorized every color, every curve, then I'd look at the words next to the images and wonder what they said. With a finger I'd trace the curves of the letters, and try my best at pointing out the few letters of the ABC's that I had memorized. There was something so dreamy about it to me.

Whenever I was nose deep in a book, even if I couldn't read it, I was in my own little world. A happy world where all of my problems couldn't follow. Suffice it to say that I had a very hard childhood.

Has said book monster been so hungry at any given time that he pesters you to the point of screaming, only to then pick up a book and want to throw it out of the window leaving the book monster growling for more? Better? Deeper? More interesting? Something... just, better!

This is how I've been feeling for far too long now. I attribute this to my love affair with words. I am in the absolute, an intellectual being. I have a thirst to know more, to reach further, to get to the heart of the issue. I want to learn, to know, to be satisfied in my curiosity and thirst for profundity. More than that, I find that I only obtain that when literature surpasses the norm.

What do I mean by "the norm" exactly?

I mean when authors play with words and deliver a harmonious balance of well written story telling and complex yet captivating literary skills. There is something so delightfully gratifying of a series of well-selected words used to describe something.

This is also where my writing style stemmed from. Yet, I find myself in quite a predicament.

The skill of romancing the words has been lost in today's society. Writers have become accustomed and content with producing book after book of simplified text that does nothing for a person like me.

"This is Scott. See Scott jump. Scott jumps high. Scott leaves."

WHAAAAT?!

Then there is the other extreme. The other extreme is the writers that think that every single sentence MUST contain 3-5 very complex words that no one will understand unless they look it up.

Please do not misconstrue this with me saying that I'm against the dictionary. On the contrary, I wish that some people would use it more often.

But there is such a delicate balance that needs to be struck in order to romance the words that simply isn't found any more. What's worse is that whenever I do it in my writing, people read my material and do not understand it and look at me like I have a penis on my forehead.

Whatever happened to the days when things like "Conscience is a word that cowards use, devised to keep the strong in awe." by William Shakespeare?

Or, "To mourn a mischief that is past and gone is the next way to draw new mischief on." By the same man.

Then there is Augustine of Hippo's quote "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."

Or when Charles Dickens said "Procrastination is the thief of time, collar him."

Such excellence in those words—words that brought forth exactly what the author wanted to say without resorting to shallow examples.

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Just yesterday I read this, and I quote "When he locked onto my arm like a pit bull."

I'm sorry to say that but is the most pathetic excuse for a simile that I've ever, ever read.

It was around that time when my love affair with words—even though I could not read them—started.

Later on in life, with my slowly progressing vocabulary and the ability to read, my love for words grew stronger. I realized that words could say so much if you knew the true meaning of each one.

I made it a point to learn words, discover them, then contemplate what they meant and how they applied to day-to-day life.

It was funny because as a child, growing up in the church I was taught that the word vanity meant pride. It wasn't until much later on in life that I learned that vanity and pride are to extreme opposites.

Vanity means emptiness, whereas pride means to be full of oneself. It was epiphany moments like that that would change everything for me. It completely altered the interpretation of Solomon's famous words in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 1: 2 reads:

“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”

I was taught that this meant “Pride of all prides, says the Preacher, pride of all prides! Everything is prideful.” I was instructed that this meant that we should be modest, and submit to whatever the Preacher said.

It wasn't until later on in life that I realized that what it actually was say was “Emptiness of emptiness, says that Preacher, emptiness of emptiness! All is empty.” Meaning that nothing has true value on this earth.

Now, I'm not saying that I fully agree with that theory either, but I do realize that the alteration in the meaning of the word, also altered my perception of the text.

This is why I love words... this is why I have a love affair with them. Because, if one is able to get to the root of the word and what it truly means, then one can bring forth a picture in one's mind that transcends all expectation.

I admittedly am a late bloomer in the writing world. Whereas some writers have been writing since they were young to one degree to another, I, due to my dyslexia, did not. I was always reading—I still read a lot. But writing? I never thought that I could be an author, much less string together enough words to make an impact. Until one day ... the day I decided to write my first novel.

I was flabbergasted at the words as they came pouring out of me and onto the page. To THIS DAY, whenever I look back to those works I think to myself “Wow! I wrote that! It came from me!” Even still I am amazed.

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However, my dear reader, there has been a hole in my heart in these last few years. I feel like a lover whom has lost their soul mate in many ways.

Please allow me to tell you what that is ...

It is, “The Case of the Lost Art of Romancing the Words”.

If you're an avid reader, you are going to understand where I'm coming from in the following.

Have you ever felt the burning need to quell the book monster that lives deep down inside?

“... pit bull.”? Really? Where is the poetry in that? Where is the love?

Some months ago I read a book that had a line that said, and I quote “... it made her eyeballs glow.”

Again... WHAAAAT?!

Eyeballs glowing, in an erotica? Is she freaking ET, is he? I was like “What the hell am I reading here?” shock plastered across my face.

I can't!

I just can't!

This is freaking depressing!

Yet, this is exactly what today's literature has resorted to!

Shoot me, why don't you!?

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My reading experience needs to entice me, seduce me, make me fall in love with the story by using words that ring like music to my ears. I crave a story that will enamor me with its beguiling selection of words and make me swoon with the rhythmic, poetic intoxication of its verbiage.

You know how people moan and fuss about how hard it is to find that “special someone”? The battle is just as hard with finding a good book.

Please writers, for the love of all things holy, make me roll into a tizzy of emotions when I read your story. MAKE ME FALL IN LOVE WITH IT! ROMANCE ME!

Some would argue and say that simplicity is key to writing a good book, but I beg to differ. I would dare to argue back that striking the sensitive balance between simplicity and complexity is the key to good literature.

I mean, whatever happened to putting together a few select words that make an instant impact? Has it been outlawed? Cause it sure as hell feels like it.

Can you believe that I've been given side eyes for writing things like ...

“Time just whisked by like a whistling wind: a wind that carried her with it. Like a misty ghost she hovered in the Thereafter, waiting to be called. With time almost nonexistent in her less than physical state, she'd acquired too much time to think. Had she been wrong in writing the prophecy? Had she moved too quickly in anger?” ~ MarcoAntonio & Amaryllis

And “Difficult. Impossible. Intricately gargantuan was their situation! How would they survive this? How could they escape? The sisterhood was an alluvion of transcendental beings, which flooded the room in a tsunami of vengeance. Circling them, they held hands and then began to chant, desire and will power their only tool.” ~ MarcoAntonio & Amaryllis

As well as “Wispy ringlets danced in the sky in a million different colors—some unrecognizable. Soft blue and majestic puffy cotton-balls filled the space behind it. A backdrop of celestial azure with a rainbow of circles aplenty curtaining atop. A single sphere of bright light swayed to and fro above it. A luminescent orb with a life of its own.” ~ Camielle's Lights

Or “A screenless, splendor of fluorescent images that floated over your head like an opera of electrical charges, easily manipulated with your mind and fingers.” ~ A.L.O.M. Episode 1

Yet when people write something like “When he locked onto my arm like a pit bull.” everyone seems to be okay with it.

Lets just say that I’ve become increasingly let down with today’s written material and what passes for “an amazing book” in this day and time.

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You ever feel like a relic, like a dying breed?

I mean, I get it... I realize that I’m getting up there in age. I’m reminded of that fact every single day by my kids, but does old also mean outdated? I am saddened to say that in this time, it does. If you’re not doing what everyone else is doing then you’re considered obsolete.

My good friend told me today that one day my picture will be displayed in a museum wall, and under it there will be a plaque that says “Y. Correa, the Last Word Romantic.”

She, much like I, think that people like me are a definitely a dying breed. That in today’s world people do not and cannot understand the beauty that can be found in words, and much less how to use them.

To me, each word is a stroke from a paint brush, each one with its own color and purpose. When the image is done, every stroke would have created a splendor, a feat of the mind that exceeds all expectancy.

“I am the Van Gogh of words.” I whisper to myself in secret and then do my best to portray that in written text.

However this theory of obsolescence is something that my mind can’t comprehend. It just can’t. Or, perhaps, it’s that I refuse to accept it. I reject that logic, I defy it; because if that were the case, then Shakespeare would no longer be looked upon as an exemplary model of timeless literature.

Yet with the vast amount of books publicized a year and the growing need to quell my desire for a good read, more frequently I’m exposed to horrid examples of “literature”. Is this what the world is coming to, that mediocre, detestable pieces of writing are now being considered timeless and spectacular?

I worry for generations to come when the only prose they’ll know is a 3 page pamphlet covered in “text speech” and cartoons.

Nonetheless, call me a relic if you wish, I won’t mind it, because the more I fail to see good writing in today’s world, the more I will continue to Romance the Words.

Mystery Solved.

## What NOT to read

Hi there esteemed Followers! Mini Truth here. Welcoming you to this edition of What NOT to Read.

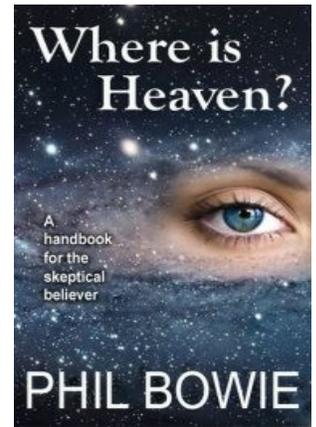
For this issue, I explore why “Where is Heaven” made it on my What NOT to read list.

Where is Heaven? by Phil Bowie  
Amazon

There is so much I need to and want to say about “Where is Heaven?” that I honestly haven’t the remotest idea of where to start.

That being said, I suppose the best tactic would be to start at the beginning; that being the blurb.

Like any reader, before diving into a book or opting to purchase one an individual looks at the cover first (the cover was nice—an eye peeking through the universe—pretty cool) and then the person reads the blurb. Here it is.



*“A near-death experience proved inspirational for Phil Bowie. A firm believer in God but a long-time skeptic concerning the believability and practices of the world’s major organized religions, he has gathered a lifetime of experiences, proven facts, and conclusions from the best and brightest minds on the planet in the writing of this book. If you’ve ever doubted what you’ve been taught about religion and the Bible, this book will give you true, fact-based answers you can firmly believe. Among other insights, it will tell you where heaven really is.”*

### WHAT A MISLEADING BLURB!

However, today I’m going to do things a little bit differently than I usually would. Today, for efficiency purposes, I’ll tell you about my overall thoughts on the book first, then dive into the pros (not that there were many) and cons.

Back to what I was saying above.

When one reads the blurb the first thing that comes to mind is that this story will be a type of biography. One that would take the reader on an adventure to ultimately discover where heaven is. As, due to the title and the blurb, that is what’s most clear.

Well, let me tell you folks, that ISN’T the deal at all! Not even close.

Let’s do the math shall we ... ?

In the introduction the author sort of reiterates what is said in the blurb, and in the first chapter the author dives a tad into his Christian upbringing. THAT along with many 3 or so more memories, were thrown here and there throughout the book, was ALL that there was in regards to any type of biography. THAT was it! This took up approximately (tops) 10 pages of a 340 page book.

Now, I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking to yourself, “Wow. So if that is all there is about the author’s personal experience, then surely the rest of the book explains where heaven is. Because, honestly, what else can it be?”

Oh, my beloved reader, how wrong you are.  
Let me go ahead and tell you what it’s not ...  
It’s NOT what you thought at all.

An enormous percentage of the book was religion bashing. Yup, you got that right... the author went out of his way to trash all forms of organized religion, and took a keen pleasure in insulting Judeo Christian/Catholic/Western Christian beliefs. The irony is that in the bit that he speaks of his Christian upbringing, he narrates about it in such a fond tone, as if they were the best memories he's ever had. There is also the fact that the author tells us time and time again how strong his faith in God is (Wait until you find out what this is all about!).

Had it been anything like me, who had a terrible experience in my Christian upbringing, I might've said, "Well, I can kind of see where he's coming from." but that wasn't the case at all.

The other parts of the book consisted of religious politics, current news, science lessons, technobabble and literary lessons.

Some of the things that were completely unnecessary in this book were the constant veering off on tangents of miscellaneous things like Dante's Inferno, the God Particle (also known as the Higgs Boson), the astronomy lessons, the religious & political mumbo jumbo, and so much more. No seriously, the author would constantly change direction and deviate onto things that just made absolutely no sense—babbling on for pages and pages.

Now here is where the book REALLY kills me ...

I was only at about a quarter of the book when the author tells us where he believes heaven is.

The answer?

In the memories we leave behind of ourselves. In the hearts and minds of others. Essentially, we live eternally in the hearts and minds of our loved ones and the people we impact in this world. THAT is supposedly heaven.

After the author relates where his opinion of heaven lies, he opts to tell us where he believes hell is.

The answer?

On earth.

The next thing was telling the reader who God really is.

The answer?

The Higgs Boson (The God Particle) ... or at least that was my interpretation of all of this mumbo jumbo.

*Side Note:*

*Before I go on, I'd like to interject something here really quickly.*

*Those of you whom follow my reviews know that one thing that really irritates me is when an author gets offended about a review that I did of his/her book, and then reaches out to me in spite.*

*Now, I need to put this out there ...*

*It IS NOT my fault that YOUR book is written in such a way that the above is my understanding of it. IF THAT WAS NOT YOUR INTENTION, then you should have worded it differently or been clearer in your prose, so as to give me a better understanding of what was written.*

THAT is all I will say about that.

Let us proceed.

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Reader, I'm sorry to say it, but I HATE, HATE, HATED THIS BOOK! And, I'll tell you why. What most people do not know about me is that I am an avid student of anything mythological, biblical, historical and scientific. Therefore, I know just about everything there is to know about religion and how history and science affects many religious beliefs. Due to this I was able to judge this book by utilizing my profound knowledge of such things. I'll tell you this, as a science buff I hated it ... as a history admirer I hated it ... as a biblical enthusiast I hated it ... and as a history fan I hated it. There was NOTHING I liked or enjoyed about this book whatsoever.

Not even I when I tried to rationalize the fact that this was supposed to be his, quote-unquote, "personal experience with God."

People, you're reading the review of a fellow skeptic, and a even as that, I hated it.

Now maybe I should start up some bullets on some other things that were fantastically wrong with this book. Maybe I'll give you my one "pro" first.

PRO:

The spelling was good.

CONS:

It is truly a damn shame, when the first thing you notice about a book is the never ending, run on sentences. Before you pick this book up, be sure to prepare yourself for a race. It's EXHAUSTING! Some sentences were up to 1 and 2 paragraphs long! I kid you not. I have pictures to prove it. (To see the images please visit [The Review Board](#).)

Then there was the "And-a-topia." I noticed right off the bat the incredible amount of "ands" in the writing. Some sentences having even up to 7. Due to this, curiosity took over, and I really wanted to know exactly how many there were throughout the book, so I searched them. 3,729 'Ands' in a single book! (insert wide eyes gasp here) Whaaaaat??

Tons of odd sentence structure. Things that seem off in some sentences.

Bizarre placement of certain phrases and comments. Like, for example, on one page the author is writing about some more religion bashing, then suddenly says that he is going through the book for edits at that very moment and noticed something else interesting on the news. And the sentence that immediately follows is that he's doing yet another overview on the book and noticed an additional thing on the news. (To see the images please visit [The Review Board](#).)

The writing is the epitome of "preachy writing". It almost feels like the author is trying to impose his beliefs on everyone. Very presumptuous.

There were times when the author seemed to think he was being funny as there were a few one-liners here and there. He wasn't.

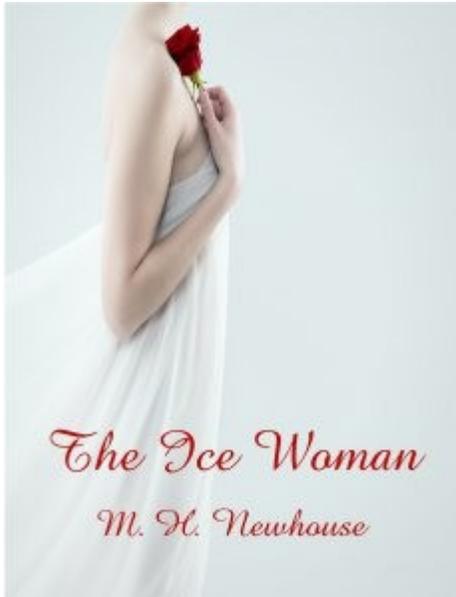
For such an adamantly professed believer in God, I find it strange that this author preaches throughout the book like Billy Freaking Graham about random religious crap, then says that heaven is in our heads, hell is on earth, and God is a cell. I mean, really, what's the freaking point in believing in God at all if that's the case?! I'm just saying!

Guys, I could seriously go on for days about the faults in this book, but I think I've said enough. I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone. Well, maybe my worst enemy if I wanted to be mean.

## Review Rendezvous

In this issue, Mini Truth is doing a bit of double duty. She is the guest reviewer on Review Rendezvous.

Disclaimer: Due to space limitations, most of these reviews have been abbreviated. For those which have been abbreviated, a link will be provided to the full review.



### ***The Ice Woman by M.H. Newhouse***

**Genre: Short Story**

**Available: Amazon**

Abbreviated Blurb (for Full Blurb, visit Goodreads): Why does a man devote his time each Christmas carving the statue of the beautiful Ice Woman? That is the question a devoted son is determined to understand when he reluctantly leaves his family in Florida to spend the holidays with his father in snowy Maine. In the hushed silence of a Christmas Eve snowfall, the echo of a woman's laughter may be a miracle, or only a dream. Who is the ice woman? Is his father crazy, or is the son about to discover the secret of eternal love and holiday joy? Share your holidays with someone you love and the Ice Woman.

Review: "The Ice Woman" is a heartwarming story about a man who lost his mother several years ago to cancer and now finds himself having to travel to Maine to stay with his elderly father for Christmas. His father, in honor of his mother, makes an ice statue of her every year at this time of year.



This is a very short story and will only take you 5 minutes to read but will leave an impact even after you've read the last word.

It's a truly wonderful little story that I'm certain I'll pick up and read time and time again.

Try Not to Die: At Grandma's House, #1 by Mark Tullus & Anthony Szpak

Genre: Fantasy (Create Your Own Story)

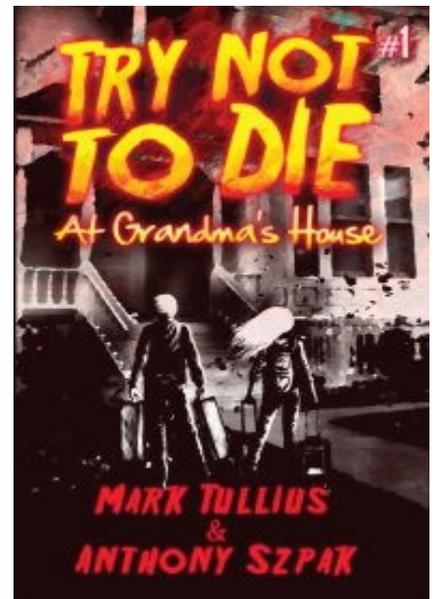
Available: Amazon

Blurb: It's Grandma's House – quiet, cozy, nestled on a little mountain in West Virginia. What could possibly go wrong? A lot, actually. So watch your back. Choose wisely. One misstep will get you and your little sister killed.

To survive, you'll battle creatures, beasts, and even your grandparents as you unravel the mystery of your older brother's death in this interactive, graphic novel.

Abbreviated Review (For full review, visit Goodreads): "Try Not to Die: At Grandma's House" is the story of a young man named David and his family. It's a tragedy and an adventure. It's also a "create your own story" book. It's a youth and young adult story, written in first person, present tense.

The premise: At first we find David and his family in a debate. David has a strong albeit precocious voice. The author succeeded in portraying his personality well in the prose.



Mom, Dad, David and little sister Samantha are debating as to who should drive the car. After much deliberation Dad takes the wheel. This choice will ultimately lead to a tragic accident—that's when the adventure begins. After the plot is set, the author takes you on a round and round journey of cause and effect.

This, to me, is one of those books that has me torn. I by no means disliked it, however I have some feelings and thoughts about how it could have been better.

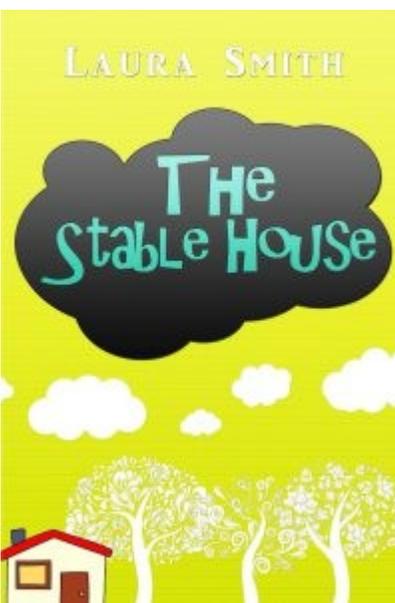
Let's start with the Cons:

- 1) My number one strife with the story was that I felt like the "freedom of choice" aspect wasn't properly portrayed. Time and time again, at the end of each chapter the reader was given the option to make a choice. Contingent on the choice a specific scenario would follow—this was good. What I did not like was that if by some chance there was an accident at the end of that chapter then the author would redirect the reader to the previous chapter and coax them to make another choice. The missed opportunity here was that the author slacked on the potential of giving the book several different endings, thus truly offering the story the opportunity to be read time and time again with various different outcomes.
- 2) Personally I'm not an advocate of first person, present tense. There is something about that writing style that I feel lowers the quality of literature.
- 3) While the story was meant to be a graphic novel, there wasn't much in the way of graphics. Typically graphic novels are supposed to have lots of imagery, liken to a comic book. There was really only one image every two to three chapters.

Time for the Pros:

- 1) Character development was great. Once could see the progression of each character.
- 2) The writing syntax was fairly immaculate. I only found one mistake.
- 3) The story was engaging and kept you reading.
- 4) The author never failed in making it adventurous. The hook was good.
- 5) This would be the perfect story to read if you're a person with a Gamer mentality, as in essence it WAS definitely more of a game. As the title implies "Try Not to Die".

In summary, this story was good and entertaining, as any good Youth/YA story should be. I do recommend it if you are not completely opposed to the things I mentioned.



***The Stable House by Laura Smith***

***Genre: Middle school memoir***

***Available: Amazon***

Abbreviated Blurb (For Full Blurb, visit Goodreads): It's 1995, and 11-year-old Heidi Williams is just getting used to junior high school when tragedy strikes. One night, her house catches on fire, and she and her parents and adopted brother, Danny, are forced to move into an old rundown house while their house is reconstructed. Heidi is separated from her only friends: her elderly neighbor, Violet and her niece Jenny. She has no clothes or possessions, and everyone at school stares at her like she's some kind of a freak. While in her new neighborhood, though, Heidi meets Dorothy, the girl next door who befriends her and takes Heidi on new adventures while at her temporary house. What starts as a tragedy turns out to be one of the best things that could ever happen to her.



Abbreviated Review (for Full Review, visit Goodreads): "The Stable House" is the story of a younger girl by the name of Heidi whose family is displaced due to a fire that consumed their home.

The story is meant for children/youth ages 10-12, and is written in first person. The narrative is simple and easy to follow—as it should be for children of that age. Now, that being said, this review will consist of two parts.

Part 1 will be my thoughts of this book as a kid.

Part 2 will be my suggestions and the general review as a professional.

### Part 1: Youthful Truth

Upon diving into “The Stable House”, my first thought was, “Wow. This book is a little over 300 pages long. Would I read a book this long if I were a kid? No. Probably not.” Just the size alone is enough to intimidate any child of the targeted age group.

My second thought was, “When is it going to get to the point?” Viewing the story through the eyes of a child, I felt as though the pacing was really slow, and any kid of the targeted age would easily lose interest and potentially not finish what could be a good read.

There was also extensive amounts of information. Many scenes seemed to drag for quite some time, without there being any real hook. In addition, while Heidi was the heroine, many times she felt dry and dull. Her prose, though written well, were somewhat boring. The other characters were believable, but some were lackluster.

### Part 2: Adult Truth

A) The book does need some editing. It wasn't horribly bad, but there were some things that needed work.

B) The wordiness of the book was a consistent downfall throughout the story. It also explains why the read is so lengthy. I would suggest removing some of the unnecessary details. This will help in two ways.

1) It will shorten the read, thus making it more attractive to the targeted age group.

2) Will give more room to the imagination, which is something that kids prefer.

C) The formatting was a little off, especially in the beginning of the chapters. The chapters started at the very bottom of the page. I would suggest reformatting those.

“The Stable House” is an endearing read, and has great potential. With some work and rethinking—maybe even some illustrations—I can see lots of kids reading this story and being impacted by it.

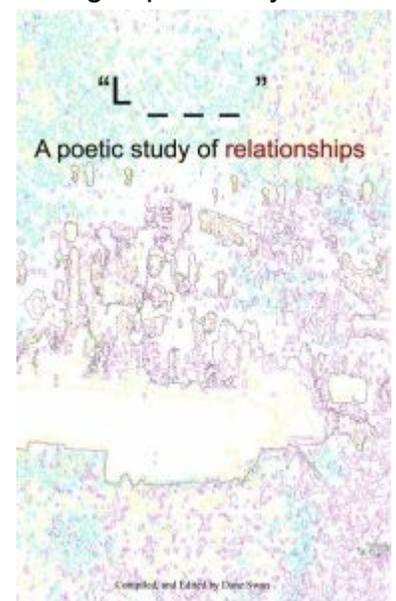
### **“L \_ \_ \_” A poetic study of relationships edited by Dane Swan**

**Genre: Poetry anthology**

**Available: Amazon**

Abbreviated Blurb (for Full Blurb, visit Goodreads): “L \_ \_ \_”: A poetic study of relationships is the first in a series of collaborative projects that poet Dane Swan is loosely calling his “mixtape culture” series. For “L \_ \_ \_” Dane invited members of his online social network to send their work on relationships. This anthology is the culmination of a project that has taken numerous months, and features the unique voices that the award winning poet admires. Poets from Canada and the US inspired by nature, urban environments and island roots create the diverse work of this collection. The result? A powerful collection that travels from Gothic to urban verse, experimental work and everything in between.

Abbreviated Review (For Full Review, visit Goodreads): In all truth, I have mixed thoughts about this book. The bad part is that the bad outweighed the good. However, before I get ahead of myself, let me tell you a little bit about it.



“L\_\_\_: A poetic study of relationships” is basically a compilation of several poems, thoughts, images, short stories and the like that are all combined by a single thread. Relationships. In actuality this is a book that can be considered to range from “Oh I get it” to “What the hell was I just reading” but that is the point. I understood this very well.

As a lover of poetry and the arts, the basis of this book, at first glance, was incredibly attractive to me. As I surmise that it would be to anyone who share my interests.

Nevertheless, upon opening the book and diving into it, my excitement was quickly sedated. My desire was to bask in a written museum, if you will. But I was let down.

#### PROS

- \* I enjoyed the idea of the work. I was really attracted to the original theme and the fact that this work surpassed your ordinary “love” themed poetry book.
- \* I enjoyed the originality of the title.
- \* There were a few stand out pieces that I actually enjoyed.
- \* I also enjoyed that many different poets, artists and writers contributed to the work.

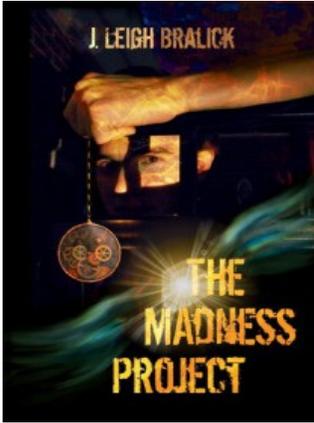
#### CONS

- \* It felt, read and looked like a simple “Cut & Paste” work that one would do on his or her computer.
- \* There was a significant amount of editing that was needed. I realize that certain poets write in a specific style, and I respect that very much. However, I was looking beyond artistic style and noticing lots of flaws in syntax.
- \* Due to the poor construction of the works, a lot of the works I just could not mentally process (not due to the meaning of the work, but the delivery) and I did not care enough to read it again.
- \* Also, as you flip through the pages there is no rhyme or reason to the organization of the book.

All in all, I was not impressed or pleased with the way this book was put together and I feel as though it gave the contributors a huge injustice as many of these works had great potential. I truly think that this book calls for a complete revamp.



Let's Celebrate! Let's Read!  
Recommended Reads



**Title:** *The Madness Project (The Madness Method, #1)*  
**Author:** J. Leigh Bralick  
**Genre:** Fantasy/Steampunk  
**Available:** Amazon, CreateSpace

**Blurb:**

No one really knows Prince Tarik Trabinis. Not even himself.

He was born with a dual heritage—his royal title from his father, and from his mother, the gift of magic that would make him an outcast of society...if society ever learned the truth. For sixteen years Tarik kept his nature a secret. But on the eve of his seventeenth birthday, he is asked to help uncover the truth about the Rivanic Clan—an underground society of mages led by the enigmatic and charismatic Rivano.

Using his ability to change his appearance, Tarik must slide into the dregs of society to learn the truth that could save or destroy everything he has ever loved.

Hayli wasn't born on the streets, but with her magery gift, the streets were the only place she could ever call a home. Afraid of her shape-shifting ability and ashamed to be a mage, Hayli only wants to belong in the Hole, a misfit crew of street rats who live deep in the south streets of Brinmark. But when Rivano takes notice of her gift, she must finally decide who she is, and what she wants to be.

When Tarik and Hayli's worlds collide, they find themselves enmeshed in a dangerous web of lies and deceit, crime and violent ambition. Hayli must decide how far she will go to save the people she loves, while Tarik must learn just how much he would sacrifice in order to learn the truth.

But what they will face will challenge everything they thought they knew, and make them question the true meaning of loyalty and betrayal, love and honor.

**Title:** *The Universe Builders: Bernie and the Putty*  
**Author:** Steve Lebel  
**Genre:** YA Sci-Fi  
**Available:** CreateSpace, Amazon

**Blurb:**

What if God got a C- in Universe Building 101?

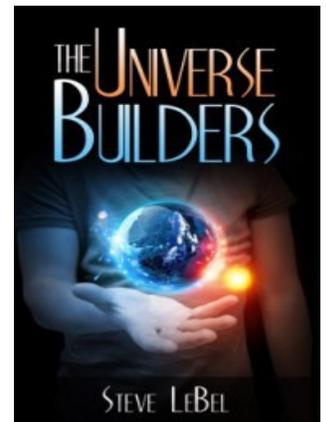
(Well, not our God, of course. One of those other guys ...)

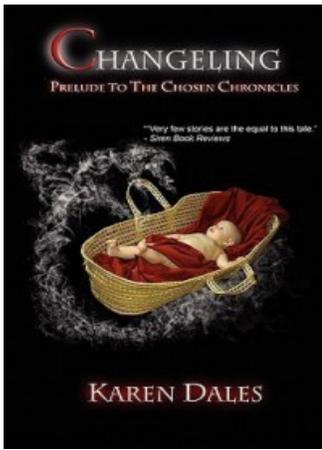
Dive into a humorous fantasy world unlike anything you have imagined. A world of gods and goddesses who build universes for a living. Are they all-powerful and all-knowing? Well, not exactly...

As Bernie graduates from God School, he is thrilled to land his dream job as a builder of universes. His first assignment is to build his own universe. Determined but unsure, bright but without confidence, Bernie forges ahead, only to find problems everywhere. Mysterious asteroids, unexplained volcanoes, shifting continents and more lead him to suspect sabotage. But who could sabotage his universe? Only another god could do that.

It's god vs. god, guile vs. goodness, where only one of them plays by the rules. Bernie must find a way to outwit his vicious foe. If he fails, it will cost him everything.

A fascinating tale of good vs. evil and a young hero on a journey of self-discovery in an original, humorous, fantastic wrapper.





**Title:** *Changeling (The Chosen Chronicles, 0)*  
**Author:** *Karen Dales*  
**Genre:** *Horror*  
**Available:** *CreateSpace, Amazon*

**Blurb:**

Demon or Angel? Human or Chosen? Mortal or Immortal? Delve into the origins of the Angel of Death.

Abandoned at birth and left to die, alone in the forest, the Angel is found by the local healer. In loving secrecy he is raised unnamed and unknown lest his strange appearance bring down the wrath of the local villagers.

He grows up, cared for by Auntie until her fearful predictions come true. Discovered in his secret grove, his life is transformed, evoking demons that demand more than he can give.

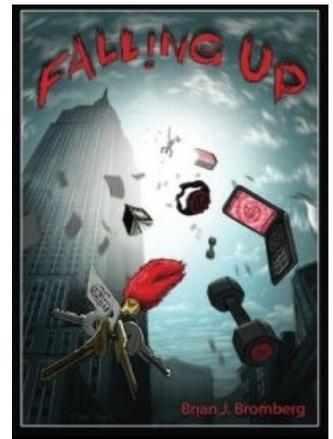
Unable to save the lives of those he loves he flees to live alone, away from those who would do him harm.

It is alone, exiled by humanity that he comes across the one who would change his life forever, to become – The Angel of Death.

**Title:** *Falling Up*  
**Author:** *Brian J. Bromberg*  
**Genre:** *Satire*  
**Available:** *Amazon, CreateSpace*

**Blurb:**

Gregg Freeman is living the American Dream ... in reverse. For he can't be the Great American Writer of his dreams unless he feels sufficiently tormented enough to have something to say. But that's his problem. He's too comfortable to have anything to say. Instead, he's got a high paying corporate day job, a sexy pseudo-girlfriend, a posh New York City apartment, and as such, complete and total Writer's Block. So when his best friend Alvaro drunkenly suggests the Muse of Misery best inspires artists, Gregg takes him at his word, embarking upon a systematic campaign to destroy everything in life that has plagued him with stability, comfort, contentedness, or joy.



His job? His bank account? Sex? Sobriety? All of it must go. The worse his life, the better his work. But how far will Gregg allow himself to fall so that his creativity may rise? Pretty damned far, as it turns out. For it's hard to hit rock bottom when you believe you're Falling Up.



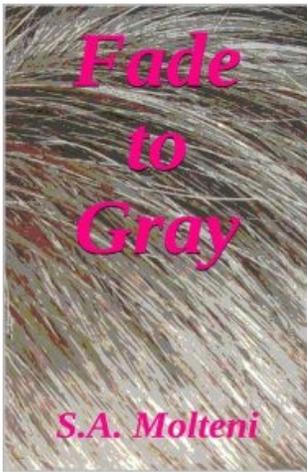
**Title:** *Don't Water the Marigolds*  
**Author:** *James Sinclair*  
**Genre:** *General Fiction*  
**Available:** *Amazon, CreateSpace*

**Blurb:**

Childless widow Deirdre is living a quiet and uncomplicated life. That is, until she makes the fateful decision to take in lodgers. Flighty Sharon and her young son Kevin, soon turn her careful order into chaos.

This is a story about a quintessentially British little-old-lady, and a neglected boy. Deirdre is a woman who avoids confrontation and conflict at all costs. Kevin is a boy whom trouble finds all too easily. Thrust together by circumstances, they both have to adjust and find a way forward.

This is an amusing, at times wrenching, and heart-warming tale of two unlikely companions, who have to find a way to unite in order to face what life throws at them.



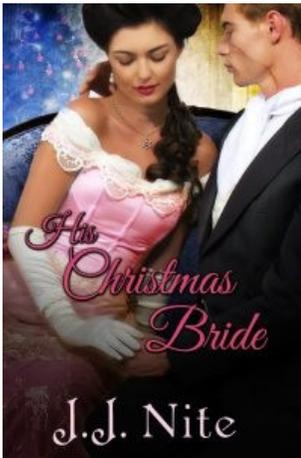
**Title:** *Fade to Gray*  
**Author:** *S.A. Molteni*  
**Genre:** *Short Story*  
**Available:** *Amazon*

**Blurb:**

Fade to Gray is a hilarious account of one woman's attempt to transition to gray as easily and as quickly as possible.



## Hot Off The Presses



**Title:** *His Christmas Bride*  
**Author:** *J.J. Nite*  
**Genre:** *Romance*  
**Release Date:** *November 17, 2014*  
**Available:** *Amazon*

**Blurb:**

Hugh Alexander, Earl of Kerry, returned from the war physically and emotionally scarred. He is determined to never set foot inside of a ballroom again, convinced that no one would want him anyway. Hugh isolates himself and says it is only until he heals, and then he meets Annabelle. She doesn't appear to be effected by his appearance and is quite beautiful. If only she wasn't a maid in his household.

Annabelle has lived and worked in the Earl's townhouse her whole life. She knows nothing about her family and since her mother's passing ten years earlier, has no one to ask about them. Annabelle unwittingly helps Hugh find his will to recover and encourages him to open himself up to his family again. While she doesn't yearn for anything more, there is a secret that, if brought to light, could destroy everything she knows to be true.

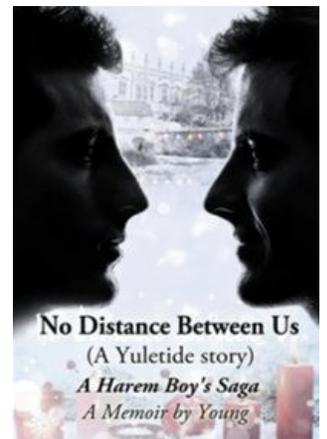
Can the new friendship and budding feelings Annabelle and Hugh have for one another be enough to overcome an uncertain future? Or will they be forever lost to each other?

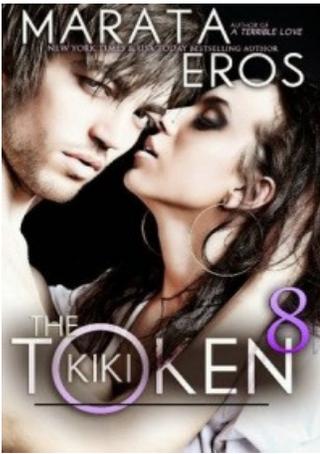
**Title:** *No Distance Between Us: A Yuletide Story*  
**Author:** *Young*  
**Genre:** *Coming-of-Age Gay Memoir*  
**Release Date:** *November 21, 2014*  
**Available:** *Amazon*

**Blurb:**

This provocative story is about a young man who was initiated into a clandestine sexual society. He was spirited to the Middle East, from his UK boarding school. He attended the Bahriji School (Oasis,) in The United Arab Emirates in preparation for serving in Harems for the wealthy and elite.

It is also a love story between the young man and his 'Valet' who served as his chaperone and mentor during the boy's Harem service.





**Title:** *The Token 8: Kiki*  
**Author:** *Marata Eros*  
**Genre:** *Erotica*  
**Release Date:** *November 28, 2014*  
**Available:** *CreateSpace, Amazon*

**Blurb:**

One Promise.

Kandace “Kiki” King lives a dream life. Rising above the ashes of a neglected childhood, she’s graduated from a prestigious Seattle university to obtain her pre-law degree. Her best friend, Faren, has overcome tragedy and found her happily ever after.

Kiki’s not looking for love.

The Lie.

Love has other plans. After Thorn’s revelation about the ties of their past, Kiki feels as though she’s been set adrift. When Mick McKenna’s billionaire friend shows interest, she dismisses him. Her exotic dancing paid for her lifestyle. What does Chet Sinclair know about sacrifice and hard work?

A Truth.

Until they discover a similar appetite. For the first time in her life, Kiki feels helpless against the pull of a sexuality she doesn’t understand, couldn’t anticipate, yet hungers for. Will she allow herself to succumb to what Chet Sinclair offers?

Or is the oath she made to herself in danger of being broken?

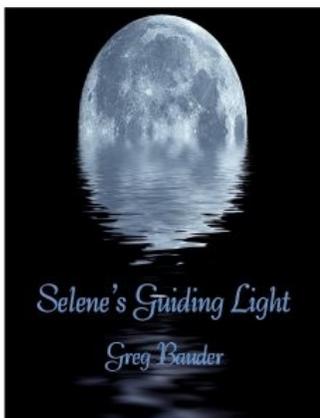
**Title:** *Campanelli: Sentinel*  
**Author:** *Frederick H. Crook*  
**Genre:** *Futuristic Sci-Fi*  
**Release Date:** *December 1, 2014*  
**Available:** *CreateSpace, Amazon*



**Blurb:**

It is 2110 and migration to the colony planet, Alethea, has depleted Earth of billions of people. As a result, migration has been declared illegal by all world governments. Human trafficking becomes highly profitable for organized crime and their influence reaches beyond the Earth’s atmosphere. Many starships returning from Alethea are diverted from the scrapping process and secretly refurbished, allowing the population to shrink further.

Frank Campanelli is a blind Chicago Police detective who depends on his fully functional bio-electronic implants to see and do his job. After assisting on a botched infiltration of a top human trafficking network, he and his partner, Marcus Williams, are transferred into the CPD’s Organized Crime Division to head the newly formed Sentinel group and bring down the Ignatola family business.



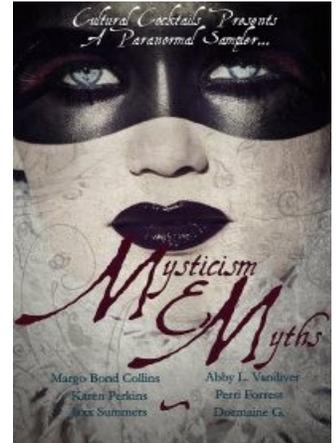
**Title:** *Selene’s Guiding Light*  
**Author:** *Greg Bauder*  
**Genre:** *General Fiction*  
**Release Date:** *December 1, 2014 (ebook)*  
**Available:** *Amazon*

**Blurb:**

Selene’s Guiding Light sees the grieving Don tumble through the cosmos of psychosis, while clinging to his reality that maybe there is life for him after Ariel’s death. With his guide, the moon-goddess, Selene, he seeks the answers we all search for regarding the meaning of love, life and the mysteries of the universe. With Selene, he unlocks many doors to his life, but only encounters more beyond.

Throughout this sequel to *The Temptress Ariel*, Don is challenged to bring to light the enigma surrounding Ariel's passing, while dealing with the dragons of his past that have left him in full, deluded schizophrenia—or an awakened consciousness. He awaits a New Earth while he wanders downtown Vancouver's eastside ghetto, where the two merge into one when justice meets the rogue corporations' and politicians' actions, which have literally left the sick and poor out in the cold.

**Title:** *Mysticism & Myths: A Paranormal Sampler*  
**Author(s):** *Margo Bond Collins, Perri Forrest, Dormaine G, Karen Perkins, Jaxx Summers, Abby Vandiver*  
**Genre:** *Paranormal, Anthology*  
**Release Date:** *December 15, 2014*  
**Available:** *Amazon*



**Blurb:**

MYSTICISM & MYTHS is a collaboration between some of the hottest new authors around...

~~~~~  
Bound By Blood (A Night Shift Novella) by Margo Bond Collins  
Sometimes the monsters in the night are real.  
Sometimes they live right next door.

~~~~~  
Isa: Gift of the Baloma by Perri Forrest  
Isa: Gift of the Baloma is a fantasy tale created from a myth that derives from the Trobriand islands (today officially known as the Kiriwina Islands).

~~~~~  
Micco, Anguta's Reign by Dormaine G.  
Revelation can be a disheartening truth.

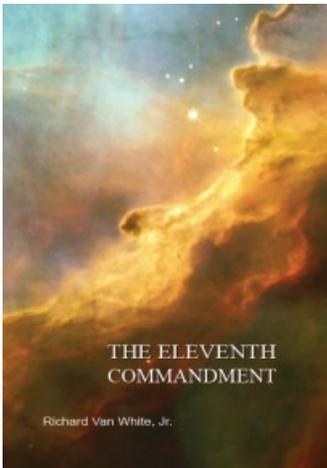
~~~~~  
Cursed: A Yorkshire Ghost Story by Karen Perkins  
She's back. This time no one is safe.

~~~~~  
Carnem Levare by Jaxx Summers  
We are born, live and eventually leave the mortal world.

~~~~~  
The Life Keeper by Abby L. Vandiver  
The bloodline of Romania, older than the legend of the vampire, the strigoi are vile, evil creatures who suck the life from the people of the villages that line the impenetrable forests of the country.



## Future Releases



**Title:** *The Eleventh Commandment*  
**Author:** *Richard Van White, Jr.*  
**Genre:** *Science Fiction*  
**Release Date:** *January 6, 2015*

**Blurb:**

The Eleventh Commandment: "Prevail together or surely perish together."

The mighty Ambros clan have reined over the Imperium for many centuries, having first seized power following a series of brutal intergalactic wars known as "The Wasting" that ravaged the universe for hundreds of years, destroying entire star systems, sterilizing planets, and decimating populations with natural and engineered plagues. Only through absolute control and their strict adherence to The Eleventh Commandment have the Ambros been able to bring about centuries of interplanetary peace and economic prosperity. But at what cost? Rigid conformity and homogenization?

Now, after many years of study at the Academy on Tempel where he's been carefully groomed as the next leader of the Imperium, Pfizer Ambros is returning to Earth to join his family in inaugurating the Omnividome, a multi-galactic instalink connecting every being in the Imperium. His mother, Emperor-Executrix Anastacia Ambros, intends the Omnividome to usher in a golden age of planetary autonomy and unprecedented intergalactic collaboration. But many fear that a new era of autonomy and self-determination will bring back contentiousness, greed, war and worse—a second Wasting.

There are dark forces that want to see this happen, forces that seek to destroy the Ambros and everything they have built. Pfizer and his family are about to discover that even for the most powerful clan in the universe, a single day can change everything.

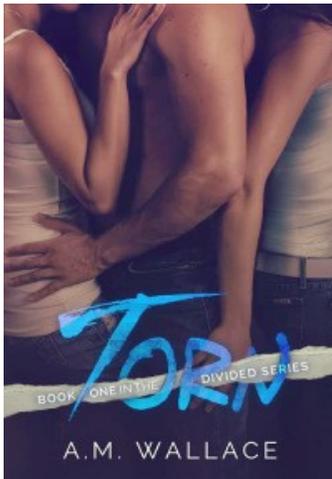
**Title:** *Buried in New Orleans (Ripsters Series)*  
**Author:** *Chris Myers*  
**Genre:** *YA Paranormal*  
**Release Date:** *January 13, 2015*  
**Available:** *Pre-order on Amazon*

**Blurb:**

Jolie's best friend Drew has always been special, despite the fact he's dead. But what she uncovers in New Orleans may mean the end of him.

Almost a year ago, Drew made a suicide pact with his girlfriend April Savoie. Jolie and Brit drag him back to New Orleans where it all happened to find out why he cannot crossover. While they make their way to the French Quarter, April's younger sister Addy steals a death speaker stone from the voodoo queen of New Orleans.

Even though her heart belongs to Drew, Jolie must face his ex-girlfriend. She will also have to find her old babysitter, the voodoo queen, before she exacts her revenge on Addy, and most of all, Jolie must return Drew to his rightful place before it's too late.



**Title:** *Torn (Divided Series, Book One)*  
**Author:** *A.M. Wallace*  
**Genre:** *New Adult*  
**Release Date:** *February 18, 2015*

**Blurb:**

Marcus has his life pretty much figured out at twenty five years old. He's got his career on track, a nice house just outside of the city, and his lifelong best friend, Hannah, by his side at every turn. The only problem is that he has been fighting with himself to tell Hannah how he really feels. How she's all he's been able to think about since he was old enough to have those feelings. What he doesn't know is that Hannah is facing the same inner battle with herself about him. She fantasizes about a life with Marcus.

Will Marcus or Hannah be able to tell each other how they feel about one another? Will they be able to make a life together or does fate have other plans?

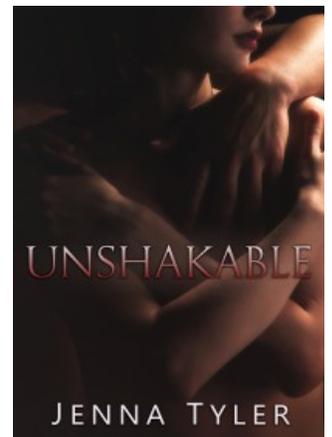
**Title:** *Unshakable*  
**Author:** *Jenna Tyler*  
**Genre:** *Romance*  
**Release Date:** *March 30, 2015*

**Blurb:**

When I first met Decker Davis, I thought there was great potential for a happily ever after, but things didn't work out as I had hoped. Life kept getting in the way, or stupid decisions were made by one of us. The ups and downs and ins and outs constantly replayed in my head, giving me hope that, one day, it could really happen.

Eric Reed walked into my life when I needed another distraction; a void filler. It was a void that had yet to be filled by anyone else. His bad boy appearance set my panties on fire but, deep down, I knew he wasn't the one I wanted to end up with. My thoughts always got the best of me, setting up any relationship I attempt for failure. The wish was still there that Decker would come back to me. That he and I could finally be together forever.

My name is Dani Scott. Nothing good in my life has ever come easy. I've had to fight for all that I have, and I will continue to fight for all that I want.



## International Corner



**Title:** Ebook For Kids: Good Night Jungle (Collection Of Books for Children)  
**Author:** Leela Hope  
**Genre:** Children's  
**Language:** Spanish

**Blurb:**

¿A tus hijos les preocupa ser los únicos que le temen a la oscuridad? Es tiempo de alistarse para ir a la cama y Leonardo el león inteligente y sus amigos, todos tienen objetos especiales que necesitan tener con ellos cuando se van a dormir. El juguete favorito del rinoceronte para dormir se ha perdido y sus amigos lo ayudan a buscarlo por todas partes. ¿Podrán los amigos encontrar el juguete antes de que sea hora de ir a la cama?

¿Larry se despertará a tiempo para ir a la cama? Una historia para niños de todas las edades y también para los padres. Disfruta de la historia y sus ilustraciones. Aprende lo que se necesita para disfrutar de una buena noche de sueño.

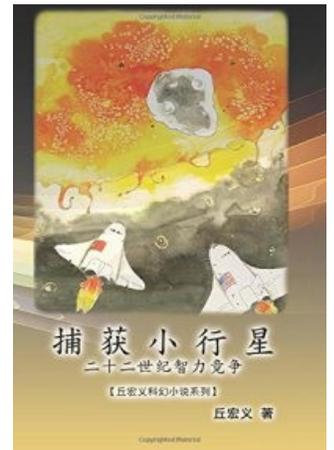
**Title:** Capture asteroid: Competitive Intelligence [Hong-ye Chiu twenty-second century science fiction series]  
**Author:** Hong-ye Chiu  
**Genre:** Science Fiction  
**Language:** Chinese

**Blurb:**

本书以 2125-2148 为时间背景。于 22 世纪时，全球资源殆尽，小行星为唯一可能去采矿的地方。于 2132 年美国情报局发现中国有庞大太空舰队 在酒泉太空港上待发，大起恐慌，去旧档案查，发现中国早于 2125 年开始远征太空的计划。因而白宫召开紧急会议讨论。美国太空名科学家张戴维（第四代中国 移民）在会后审视数据及间谍人卫侦查到的图片，发现中国新创「新天地资源」公司在研发数十亿吨（数千个百万吨）黄色炸药核爆装置。核子专家布郎杰认为这种 核子装置不可能用在战争上。也发现庞大太空舰队是中国新「新天地资源」公司的计划。

美国不久发现这庞大舰队利用金星重力协助奔向小行星花神 8 号。美国总统 立刻拨款发射间谍人卫去花神 8 号追踪。发现中国舰队到了花神 8 号后，用全自动机械人建立开矿基地。美国也直起直追。也准备去花神 8 号上建立基地开矿。因此 中美开始了和平而激烈进行的竞争。

注：花神 8 号小行星 8 Flora 是离地最近的最大小行星，约 140 公里 (90 英哩) 大小。离地球一百八十余亿公里 (百余亿英哩)。上有丰富重铁 - 镍矿，推想其它的重金属矿也很多。



**Title:** My billionaire, my marriage and I (Book 1)  
**Author:** Mina Shepard  
**Genre:** Romance  
**Language:** French

**Blurb:**

Si l'on m'avait dit qu'avec LUI, la vie deviendrait si intense... L'avoir rencontré, c'était plus palpitant qu'un voyage dans un pays exotique, plus excitant qu'une journée de shopping le premier jour des soldes, plus fou que d'avoir gagné le gros lot au Loto, plus exquis que tous les éclairs au chocolat, les mille-feuilles et les macarons réunis en une seule pâtisserie. Mieux que tout ce que j'avais vécu jusqu'à maintenant.

Mais à l'heure où je vous parle, j'ai peut-être tout perdu...

Laissez-moi vous raconter. Je vous conseille de vous installer confortablement et de vous asseoir, car l'histoire qui va suivre est assez incroyable, mais elle n'en est pas moins véridique.

Voilà comment j'en suis arrivée là...

**Title: Rosen & Dornen**  
**Author: Sage Marlowe**  
**Genre: Gay Erotica**  
**Language: German**

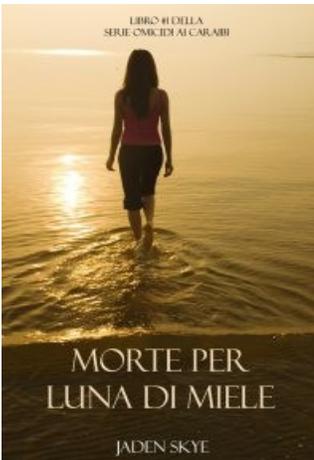
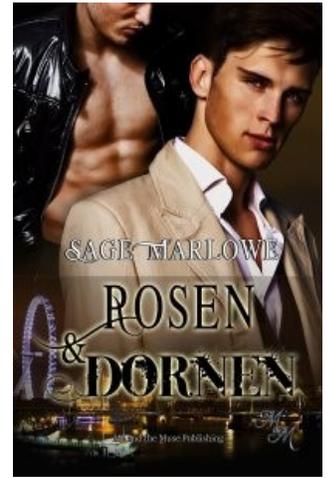
**Blurb:**

Als Bestsellerautor Chester Banning Insiderinformationen über das Leben eines forensischen Pathologen benötigt, stößt er auf ein faszinierendes, jedoch unwilliges, Studienobjekt in Form des sündhaft attraktiven Dr. Nicolas Sheridan.

Nach einem heißen, aber etwas beunruhigenden One-Night Stand entpuppt sich Sheridan als ebenso unnahbar wie er faszinierend ist und er ist eindeutig nicht daran interessiert, ihre Liaison zu vertiefen. Chester jedoch ist bereits dabei, sich als über Kopf zu verlieben, und gibt nicht auf, bis es ihm gelungen ist, Sheridans Panzer aus Eis zu knacken. Was er darunter entdeckt, ist ein Mann, der durchaus zu Liebe und Zuneigung imstande ist, aber in einem Netz aus Lügen und häuslicher Gewalt gefangen ist, das ihn veranlasst, Bestrafung zu suchen, indem er sich selbst verletzt.

Chester weigert sich, zuzusehen, wie Sheridan weiter auf dem Weg der Selbstzerstörung entlang irrt, und gibt ihm all die Liebe und Unterstützung, zu der er fähig ist—aber dann entdeckt er die schreckliche Wahrheit über Sheridans Vergangenheit.

Ein homoerotischer Liebesroman für Erwachsene mit explizitem Inhalt. Enthält Szenen von und Hinweise auf häusliche Gewalt / Missbrauch, Selbstverletzung und erzwungenem Sex in einem nicht-erotischen Kontext.



**Title: Death To Honeymoon (Book # 1 Of The Caribbean Series Homicide)**  
**Author: Jaden Skye**  
**Genre: Mystery**  
**Language: Italian**

**Blurb:**

Sull'aspra e selvaggia sponda orientale di Barbados, Cindy e Clint si stanno godendo la loro luna di miele dei sogni, quando il paradiso si trasforma rapidamente in inferno. Cindy si vede portare via il suo amato, annegato in un anomalo incidente in mare. La polizia del luogo dichiara subito che si è trattato di un incidente, e insiste sul fatto che è stata una corrente improvvisa. Ma Cindy, rimasta sola, non è convinta.

Cindy deve tornare a New York, nella casa sua e di Clint, ora mezza vuota, e affrontare i suoi suoceri, che non erano mai stati d'accordo col matrimonio e che avevano fatto di tutto per rovinare il fidanzamento e le nozze.

Deve fare i conti con le maldicenze, i pettegolezzi e le tacite accuse che arrivano da loro, mentre cerca di venire a capo del suo dolore e di ciò che è veramente successo a Clint.

Cindy riceve per posta la foto anonima – diretta a Clint – di una donna che non aveva mai visto. Man mano che tenta di sbrogliare l'intricata matassa, scavando sempre più a fondo tra le mail e i documenti di Clint, si accorge di quanti aspetti del suo passato Clint le aveva tenuto segreti. Si rende conto che non conosceva davvero l'uomo che amava. E si rende anche conto che Clint era stato ucciso.

Scava sempre di più, fino alle profondità della grossa compagnia petrolifera per cui lavorava Clint, la DGB, e inizia a portare alla luce informazioni che non avrebbe dovuto scoprire, arriva troppo in là. Presto la sua vita è in pericolo. E durante la fuga, realizza che l'unico modo per ottenere risposte e salvarsi la vita è tornare dove tutto era iniziato: Barbados. Mentre si addentra nella parte più misteriosa e nascosta dell'isola, nel cuore dei villaggi, rimane sconvolta nello scoprire quello che era veramente successo a suo marito in luna di miele.

Ma a quel punto, potrebbe già essere troppo tardi.

**Title: Meteor**  
**Author: Chinsui**  
**Genre: Fantasy/Short Stories**  
**Language: Japanese**

**Blurb:**

奇妙な、不思議な、シュールな夢をつづった短編集。

星の降る街 『「今夜は星が降るでしょう。外を歩かれる方はお気をつけて、傘も破れてしまいますからね。多忙な方も早めのご帰宅が無難です』

花火 『「週末は花火大会ですよ」そう隣の婆さんが言った。「だからこの間降った星の、あんまり見てくれが良くないのがあったら市庁舎まで持って行きなさいな』

列車 『老人はとても老人らしい様子をしていた。長年の日焼けがすっかりしみついた肌は皺だらけで、棒きれのようなからだに粗末な服を着ている。何日も列車に乗っているのも薄汚れているのはお互い様だ。』

キャベツ畑でつかまえて 『ブラシカはひとりきりで町外れに住んでいた。たったのひとりだ。ほかには誰も居ない。』

海辺のまち 『ここでの暮らしはもはや日常と化しており、かつての日常は非日常となっていた。穏やかな午後一陣の風が吹き込むかのように、恋人は私を見つけた。』

梵香 『「おい」 突然、背後で男の声がして私は凍りついた。』

沈香 『僕は少女の髪に触れた。柔らかな直毛を梳き、少し持ち上げ、青毛の馬より美しいその艶を見る。こちらを向いた少女の頬は柔らかく、陶器の人形のように滑らかで、ほっそりした顎までの曲線を愉しんでいると、少女はくすぐったそうに目を細めた。』

smoke on the water— 『夜の帳が下りると、湖の一角に人が集まりだす。大きな灯火と、それを囲む人々が手にした小さな灯火とが、昏がりにゆらめきながら浮かび上がる。私の持つ灯火も、歩調に合わせて気怠く揺れている。』

異形 『辺りをぐるりと見回してみると、人々は私を見て逃げていく。足下がふらつき、体は大きく軋んで痛む。刀を握る手は形を変えて男のような骨格になり、自慢の白い皮膚は灰色に色を変え始めている。』

浴室 『僕は居間のソファで、先にワイングラスを傾けていたのだが、なかなか出てこない様子を見に行くと、バスタブには泡が溢れているだけで、彼女は居なかった。』

砂嵐 『何も食べていなかったせいだろうか、私のからだはふわりと風に乗れ、飛ばされていく。』

蓮巻 『「好い味だろう。君の女性の趣味にぴったりではないか」 そう云って彼は葉巻を切り、うまそうに喫いはじめた。』

螺旋階段 『階段を上っていた。長い長い階段で、ちっとも先が見えてこない。』

黒 『ああ、ここで死ぬのだと、ただ思った。』

見えない 『その女性の名は忘れてしまっていた。ただ、懐かしい面影のあるやさしい顔を見ていると、子供の時分には常に感じていた高揚感が、何十年ぶりだろうか、首をもたげてくる。』

蹴りたいお腹 『僕は或女性に恋心を抱きました。』

梅 『季節はずれの梅が咲いていた。季節はずれ、というより季節おくれ、という感がある。4月の梅だ。』

桜 『どうして桜を見に行こうなどと思ったのかは自分でもわからない。そもそも桜が見たいのかもわからない。ただ咲くというので外に出たのである。』



## Coffee Time



Hello everyone and welcome to Y's Coffee Time! Today we'll be conversing with Author Andrew Boyd.

Andrew, thanks so much for joining me today at Coffee Time. It's great to have you. I have a nice hot cup of coffee with your name on it.

Hello, Yasmin! Thank you for having me with you for Coffee Time!

I always like to start with this question... Please introduce yourself. Could you please tell the reading public who Andrew Boyd is and what he does in the writing world?

My name is Andrew Boyd, and I am a poet, writer, author, blogger, friend, confidant, and a pretty alright guy. I was born, raised, and currently residing in Philadelphia, PA. I have written four poetry books and working hard editing my Erotic Thriller.

How has being Philadelphia born and bred shaped your views and mannerisms?

Seeing that I am a product from The City of Brotherly Love, I have embraced many people in my Life. Being the product of my parents, I was taught to have Integrity, Respect, Honor, Dignity, be my own individual by Leading and not Following. I was taught Chivalry by my parents at a very young age, and I have carried that with me to this day.

Do you feel that your upbringing impacted your views on the literary world and what it should and should not be like?

I firmly believe that my upbringing indeed played a major role in my literary world. I was taught to be Open and Honest with my feelings (despite my late blooming in that aspect; better late than never), and it earned me A LOT of Respect from those who read as well as heard me at Open Mics. I learned early to shoot from the hip when it comes to writing, and it has served me very well. My upbringing also taught me that even though your voice may not be heard, AT LEAST you can see said voice when you see it in print.

Do you feel as though poetry came to you naturally, or was it something that you perfected with time?

Strangely enough, writing as a whole is a natural occurrence for me. I was surprised that I had the talent when I was in elementary school. Poetry for me began in college. From there, I learned different styles which complimented my messages.

Do you think poets have to fight harder to get received by the writing community as well as the reading community?

I feel that they are, due to what I have observed. With poetry, there are multiple personalities attached to each letter of each word, in each line, in each stanza, and each completed product. For example, there are poets who know where their breaks are as it pertains to their writes, and we as readers have NO CLUE where their sentences begin or end. Also, poets have been known to be the "Divas of the Literary World." I can say this because not only have I seen this on multiple occasions, I am a Diva myself. Acceptance is an integral part for ANY writer's desire for acceptance and reception.

Do you want to expand your writing arsenal outside of poetry? If so, are there any genres that tickle your fancy?

Indeed! As I have mentioned before, I am hard editing my erotic thriller. Aside from that, I am brain storming a children's series that may be written in the future.

What are some things that being a reviewer as well as an author has taught you?

I have learned a few things:

Be thorough in your proofreading and editing. The SMALLEST Item that is out of place can AND WILL ruin what you are trying to accomplish.

Some reading material is not for everyone. Within the first few sentences, whether it is poetry or stories, we as readers and reviewers will know if we are going to hang in there long enough to not try to inflict personal bodily harm, or have some cake and tea while our feet are propped up on a table while we are reclined enjoying ourselves with someone's compelling write.

Write something that is outside of the box. It may be that ONE THING that may put you on the map and have repeat business as far as book sales.

Apart from writing is there anything else that you enjoy? Any hobbies or things of the sort?

I am a video gamer as well as a card player. They are quite relaxing, and allows my mind to write as I keep busy having fun.

Random Question One: Who has better superheroes, DC or Marvel?

Tapping into my inner geek, I see ... lol!

I personally am a DC Comics guy. Don't get me wrong: I TRULY Enjoy Marvel, yet there is something about the DC Universe that feels right superhero wise. I find myself reading and watching more DC Comics items as opposed to Marvel.

Random Question Two: If you could be any superhero who would it be and why?

As I said before, I am a DC Guy. In this case, I will have to venture over to Marvel and say Wolverine. A Healing Factor that can stop virtually any disease coupled with immortality is pretty darn sweet! A skeletal construct made of Adamantium along with claws made of the same metallic material helps as well.

This was sweet, as well as the coffee. How was your cup?

Quite satisfying. Thanks.

Andrew, I appreciate your stopping by. How can we find out more information about your future projects?



Feel free to explore my Amazon Author Page, like my Facebook Author Page or interact with me on Twitter @AuthorABoyd.



## Author Interview

For Issue 8: The Beat of the Pen, our Featured Author is Will Swardstrom.

Will, thank you for joining us here today at All Authors Magazine. We're very happy to have you. Whenever we pick an author to interview, we try to pick authors whose work we find interesting. Suffice it to say that your work (and the many titles under your belt) have peaked our interest. \* giggling \*

All Authors Magazine is a magazine created by authors, for authors and our motto is "Advocating all authors, reaching all readers". One of the things we aim to do is introduce amazing talents to the literary world. We believe that you are among them.

So, today we are going to pick your brain in the hopes that our readers/followers learn more about the person behind to books.



First, we'd love it if you could tell us a little bit about yourself. Could you tell us who you are and what you do behind the scenes? Please, introduce the world to Will Swardstrom.

The world of Will Swardstrom is not terribly complex. I live in Southern Illinois with my wife of nearly 15 years and our two kids. Our daughter is 10 years old going on 32 and we recently completed the adoption of our four-year-old son from a developing country in Africa. I have been teaching high school social studies for seven years after a short career as a small town sports editor.

After reading Hugh Howey's *WOOL*, I decided perhaps I could really complete my longtime goal of writing a novel. After starting in January of 2013, I finished that summer. Since then, I've written another novel and numerous short stories and novellas.

This Issue of All Authors Magazine is themed "The Beat of the Pen": it is our oath to the love of writing. What does this mean to you?

To me, the love of writing means you have to keep it up even when you don't feel like it. Love isn't just the heartfelt emotion you feel a few times a year thanks to Hallmark cards. Love is taking care of a loved one after they can't take care of themselves. Love is finding the light when all you see is darkness. Love is pushing through even when you don't feel like it. The same thing goes for writing. There are days when it gets hard and you don't feel like sitting down with a pen and paper or at the keyboard, but love means you push through.

Per Amazon.com you have about 11 published works, so this begs the question, how long have you been writing?

I've been writing for my self-publishing career since January 2013. Most of those are shorter works, but I have written two full-length novels as well. And as of the date of writing this (Dec. 1, 2014), I've actually got 12 titles up at Amazon and will have up to 14 within the first couple weeks of January.

One of your works has really peaked my interest, it's "Baking with Swords". This seems to be a collaborative work. Could you tell us something about it?

Baking with Swords is a special work to me. I shelved some other things I was working on to put it together. I was working up a short story I was just going to sell on its own. Then, my brother Paul asked if he could tack a story of his own on to it. Since his story was going to be just as long as mine, I didn't feel right in taking all the credit, so I split it up and then asked my sister if she wanted in.

Each story is different and unique. Paul's is a fantasy/supernatural tale, Betsy's is realistic with a whole lot of supernatural thrown in, and my story is an end of the world story. Given that, we had a whale of a time coming up with a name for the book, but since my sister married a "Baker," we decided Baking With Swords would be a good (off-the-wall) name. I'll always treasure it as it has the first published stories by my siblings.

Here is a good question; with the influx of the many authors who respond to bad reviews, how does Will Swardstrom feel about bad reviews and how do you cope with them?

Bad reviews are tricky. When I first started, I was devastated when I got a bad review. In fact, one of the first reviews of my first short story is a strange, yet positive review, but offered only one-star. I complained to Amazon, but they never took it down. Then I just learned to laugh it off. Obviously not everyone is going to like everything, so you have to try to find some sort of good in the painful words and get better as an artist.

Authors need to be careful not to respond to bad reviews. A review for an anthology I was in got a bad review based on some perceived political content. The reviewer was misinformed and some of the other authors tried to correct him (or her – I guess I don't know!), but all it did was cement their position against us and probably convinced him not to buy our books from there on out. Which is a shame – there shouldn't be anything that would keep anyone from reading your work.

How would you describe your writing style as it pertains to your genre(s)?

My writing style is accessible and easy. I like to think of myself as a science fiction author, but perhaps speculative fiction is a better title. I'm not a scientist, but I do love science fiction. If you ever read anything with very technical details in my books, you'll know I was replaced by a robot or I got a lot better as an author.

Because of that, I really try to focus on the characters. If nothing else, when you read my books, you'll find fairly-well developed characters that will move the story along.

Alright ... for fun ... you are forced to pick 3 books that you want turned into movies (that haven't already been), said books cannot be your own, which would they be and why?

First up, I've got to say Foundation by Isaac Asimov. (Which in a strange twist, is being developed by Jonathan Nolan for HBO.) I obsessed over Asimov's stuff when I was a teenager and that book is one that I love reading over and over.

WOOL by Hugh Howey for obvious reasons – it got me into writing for myself and I've also penned a number of stories set in the WOOL Universe. And lastly, The Martian by Andy Weir – what a fantastic book. The details and hope in the face of hopelessness are what make it what an amazing book.

Chocolate or vanilla, winter or summer and why?

I'm going to pick vanilla. Partly because I like to be contrary, but also because when I was in high school, I had a part-time job at Wendy's. I used to make myself a Biggie Frosty at the end of my shifts (hint – they haven't and still don't sell a Biggie Frosty). Back then, it was just chocolate, so I've taken to liking vanilla a little more in the years since.

And ... summer. The heat really doesn't bother me too much. I spent four years of my childhood living in a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona, so the sweltering temperatures of the summer months are not unbearable. I remember one day when it reached 122 degrees Fahrenheit. That was a bit hot – but it was a dry heat.

Who were the people that influenced you the most in life, your real life heroes, why and how?

My mother was perhaps the person who had the most influence on my life. She was a teacher before us kids came along and always pushed me and my brothers and sister to be whoever we wanted to be.

And my son. Just four years old and already he's probably been through more than most people should have any right to. We just adopted him but he was abandoned and orphaned before he was three years old, living on the streets and unwanted. The fact he made it and is doing well – in fact, thriving – in our country, is a testament to the person he is growing into.

Where did you grow up and what was your childhood like there?

I grew up in a variety of places. Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, but moved around to a number of places for short periods – California, Arizona, Illinois, Virginia, before my family settled back in Michigan. That was really the first place I remember before we left when I was going into third grade. Then we lived in Glendale, Arizona for four years before we eventually moved to Naperville, Illinois. That's where I went to junior high and high school and my parents still live there today.

My dad was a telecommunications engineer and the market for his job was sometimes quite volatile, so we had to move a lot. I really enjoyed living in Arizona a lot – I sometimes wish I could have stayed longer, but some of my best friends are from high school and I would never have met them had we not moved to Illinois.

Given the option to do one thing—and one thing alone—for the rest of your days, what would that be and why?

Like DO one thing? I suppose that would be to eat bacon pizza. But, if you are talking about an occupation or something like that, then I'd go with writing. Right now, teaching is great, but the more and more the government gets involved with it, the worse it gets. Writing is freeing. I can write about whatever I want; I have so much freedom and creativity in what I do. We are meant to create. I can't create a desk, or a shelf, but I can create what may be used on that desk or shelf.

There has been a zombie apocalypse, you only have whatever is on your writing desk to help save your life; what are those things, and would you survive?

Yeah ... I guess I might not survive. I don't really have a writing desk at the moment. I don't really have a dedicated place to do my writing, so I take my laptop wherever I can get anything done. Sometimes it's from my recliner, sometimes from my kitchen table, sometimes (like right now), it's from a chair at my mother-in-law's house.

But, to play along, I'll say what is directly to my right is a large metal vase that is filled with stuffed dog toys, and to my left I have a lamp with a floral lamp shade. Not too sure how the lamp would help, more than a swing or two, but the vase is probably good for quite a while. It is probably two-three feet tall, and I could put virtually my entire arm inside. I could use it as a club and take a couple of heads with it.

But, would I survive? I doubt it. I would probably end up as zombie fodder fairly quickly. Going back to high school, I typically received an "E" in P.E. – for Effort. Since that was more than 15 years ago and physical activity has declined from there over the years, I'm going to doubt I would survive the first hour or two.

Name one place you've always wanted to go and haven't? Why do you want to go there?

Oh wow. Just one place? There are so many – the Great Wall, Alaska, Stonehenge, Paris, Giza, Hawaii, Machu Picchu, but I guess if I had to go with one off the top of my head, I'd go with the ancient redwood trees in California – to marvel at their size and their age. To see a living thing that has been around since before Christ was even walking the earth would be awesome and thrilling.

Out of your 11 works, you can only choose one to become a movie, which one would it be and why?

I would choose Ant Apocalypse. I think it has the most potential and even if it didn't make it in the theaters, it would have a chance of being a cult classic for years to come. Sometimes those movies are better off than ones that make fistfuls of money in their first run. To be remembered forever is far better in my opinion. Like Sandlot. Didn't do great in theaters, but has so many great lines and is almost deemed a must-see kids movie today.

I find that us writers develop a remarkably close relationship with our characters. Has that happened to you? If so, with which ones?

All of them? Just kidding...sort of. Really, the protagonist in my Dead Sleep series – Jackson – is modeled after me in many ways. Him and Kristina Walsh are both firmly entrenched in my mind and doing something awful to them actually is somewhat painful for me. In fact, when I was finishing the first book with them, I was probably 90-95 percent done when I stopped for a couple weeks. I know what I wanted to write, but finishing was difficult. I didn't want to stop their story. I knew I had a couple sequels planned, but part of me knew once I put it on paper there was no uncertainty to their tale left – it would be finished once and for all.

Wow, it's been great fun picking your brain Will! Thank you so much for being with us today. Would you please take this opportunity to tell us what you are working on now, as well as share with us where we can connect with you?

I have a number of short stories that are working their way out. Whether they would be stand-alone releases or for some kind of anthology is yet to be determined. But, once my life settles down a little bit, that's when I will really get back to work on the third novel in my Dead Sleep trilogy. I have about a third written, but life took over and I haven't had much of a chance to finish in a while, so that's going to be Priority #1 in the new year.

I do most social media on Facebook – look me up there. There aren't a lot of Swardstroms, so finding me shouldn't be too hard.

I do tweet, but the next best place would be my blog: [willswardstrom.wordpress.com](http://willswardstrom.wordpress.com).

Thanks so much!

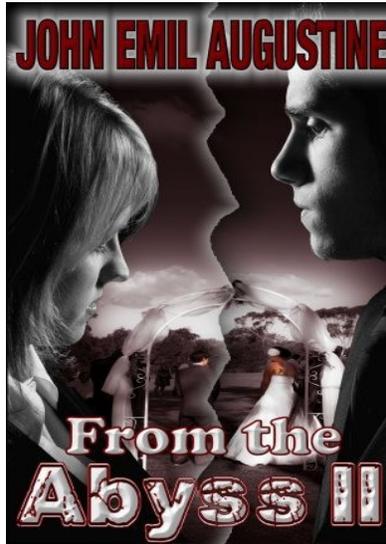
Amazing, thanks again for being with us today as the Featured Author of All Authors Magazine, Issue 8.

## Featured Book

*From the Abyss II*

By

*John Emil Augustine*



### **Blurb:**

*John Augustine, having plummeted into an emotional abyss following an abusive marriage, finds himself picking up the pieces and moving on. However, with a four year old son, John changes strategy and takes his dating online. Though he has reservations, he ends up finding the perfect girl who also has a four-year-old son...and who is willing to travel. During their courtship, John makes other life changes as well, quitting touring to buy a house and begin a Master's program. Unfortunately, time and money become thin, and John takes on a second job and a few loans while his new wife moves in and looks for work.*

*Meanwhile, John's ex-wife hatches a smear campaign against his new family and gives John an ultimatum: his son or his new family. John begins to buckle under the mounting pressure, while his wife ends up feeling alienated and lonely in a strange new town. A complicated life will come crashing down on John, and he will be forced to decide between what is important, and who and what he can forever live without. His children will learn what kind of dad John really is, and his family will be forever redefined when John makes the most difficult choices of his life. Will his choices knock him back down, or will John emerge from the abyss?*



### Excerpt:

I remember one time in particular, we were dropping Charles off near the entrance of Target. Jan and Andy were in the Blazer as we had just come back from seeing a movie. I can't even remember what was said or what the problem was, but there was Cindi, true to form, just outside the main entrance to Target, screaming at the top of her lungs that I had forgotten to bring a pair of Charles's pants or something like that.

It was the first time Jan and Andy had heard Cindi in full-on Cindi mode, and it scared the hell out of both of them. Charles and I were used to it, but Jan was so taken aback that she really got worried that Charles was not safe with her.

"I wish I could say I agree, and we should do something, but there's just no way," I told her as we drove out of the parking lot.

"Look at all the witnesses. You don't think everyone who turned their heads thought she was a safe person to send a child with?"

"It doesn't matter. I would have to prove to a court that she is unsafe, and I just don't have any hard evidence."

"I am absolutely sick to my stomach. I think that was the worst thing I have ever seen."

"I agree. That's Cindi for ya. I'm a dad, honey. I can't fight her. I will lose every time. She'll turn it on me, the court will believe her, and then I'm out."

"There has to be something we can do. We have to do something."

"Yes, but what? Hire an attorney? We can't afford to hire someone just to report that Cindi screams. No judge cares about that."

"We have to document it."

"Cindi screamed at me in front of Target today. Then what? That makes a judge have to do what according to the law?"

"Nothing, I guess. I had no idea she was so awful. It's almost unimaginable."

"Yeah, I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy, and that's Cindi!"

"Uh! At least she's as bad as your enemies get."

"She's the only enemy."

"At least Charles is in therapy."

"Yeah. Sorry you have to deal with this."

"No, it's ok. Today was just shocking. I had no idea someone could behave like that."

"You don't know the half of it."

"Good. I can't handle any more right now."

Cindi was just an ominous cloud hanging over us that, if the temperature were just right, could rain down sewage everywhere. She could recharge that angry lightning of hers and come back storming whenever the dew point dropped. There seemed to be neither rhyme nor reason to that drop. And when it happened, I knew life would instantly become more difficult.



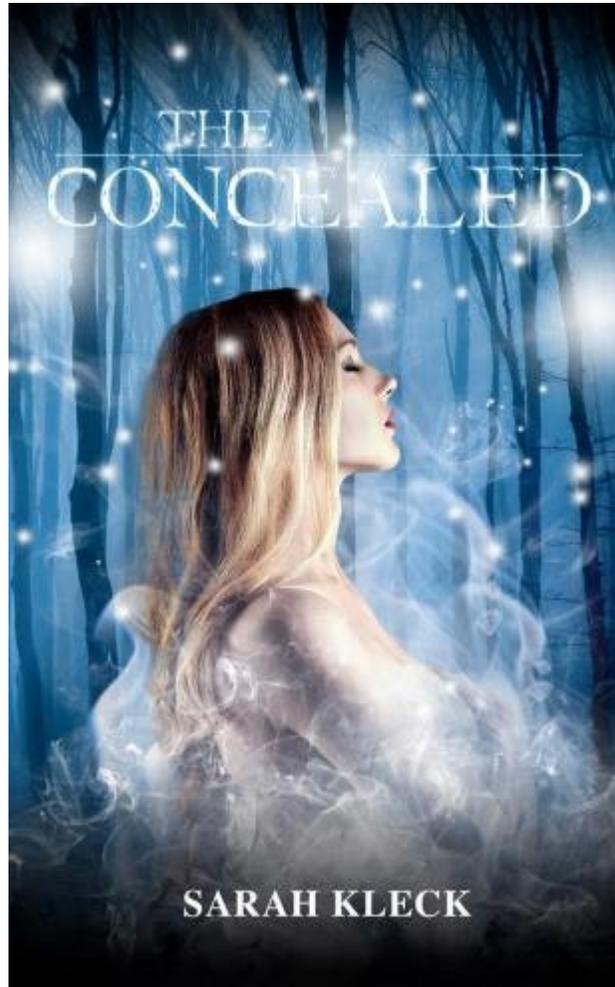
***For more about From the Abyss II visit:***

***John Emil Augustine's Official Website***

***Amazon.com***

## Awesome Covers

For this issue's Awesome Covers, we are proud to feature *The Concealed* by Sarah Kleck.



Genre: Adult Paranormal

Blurb: Evelyn Lakewood, an orphan, is crushed after the death of her beloved sister Zara. But the nineteen-year old enrolls in Psychology at Oxford in honor of Zara.

There, Evelyn first becomes friends with vivacious Sally and seemingly charming Felix. But the encounter with Jared Calmburry, whose incredibly beautiful blue eyes immediately captivate her, fundamentally changes her life. She is immediately drawn to this mysterious stranger around whom unusual things happen and who simply disappears every time Evelyn tries to confront him about his puzzling behavior. After finding a mysterious book with a unique symbol on its leather cover in the university library, her curiosity is perked. She doesn't know what to make of it but Jared's best friend Colin Sullivan encourages her with cryptic hints to continue her search for evidence. When she discovers the same medieval symbol is worn by hostile professor Karen Mayflower and engraved on another faculty member's seal ring, she realizes that an ancient secret surrounds Jared.

Available: Amazon



Where did the inspiration for the cover come from?

THE CONCEALED is kind of Arthurian Fantasy/Paranormal Romance and so I thought about some symbols pretty fitting to the story. Mist, for example, is an important element in the Arthurian legend – everybody knows the mists of Avalon – so I rapped the woman in wafts of mist. The blond woman herself looks like my protagonist Evelyn. Forest and winter are also very important components in the story. All I had to do was to combine all these elements in one cover.

Do you feel that it reflects the story well?

Absolutely! The novel was also published by a publishing company in Germany. The cover they created doesn't reflect the story at all in my opinion. I'm really happy with the English version.

Did you design it yourself or was it designed by another party?

I did it together with a friend of mine. He is a graphic designer and implemented my imaginations to that great cover.

Given the choice, would you change anything about it?

No, not at all. It took a lot of work and time and I'm very happy with the result.

Was this the original cover to this book, or was there one prior (like a first edition)?

THE CONCEALED has been published in Germany in September, so I have two covers for the same story.

Does this cover reflect your artistic preference?

Absolutely.

Sarah Kleck, thank you for taking time to share your Awesome Cover with us this issue!



## **Guest Article**

### ***Writing, Connecting and Changing the World***

***By S. J. Brown***

Every author has something that drives them to write: the story that evolves in their head and won't quit until they get it down or the interest that leads to research and a tale that needs to be told. It may be the desire to share what life has taught them. Sometimes it is simply to challenge themselves. Writers are limited only by their inspiration and imagination.

I was inspired to write my first published full length manuscript by a simple comment made at an exhibit. I had been relaying the story behind getting an image of a black bear. When I finished talking I was tapped on the shoulder by a fellow author. His comment to me was simply "Girl you have to write this sh\*\* down."

I hadn't considered writing about my experiences in the field, but he was right, I needed to be reminded of the golden rule of writing, "write about what you know." It simply had never occurred to me that people would be interested in what really happens when wildlife and wildlife photographers meet. I had successes and failures, a few close calls and some heartwarming moments to relay. I put aside a project I had been working on. Then several months and three drafts later I finished the last chapter.

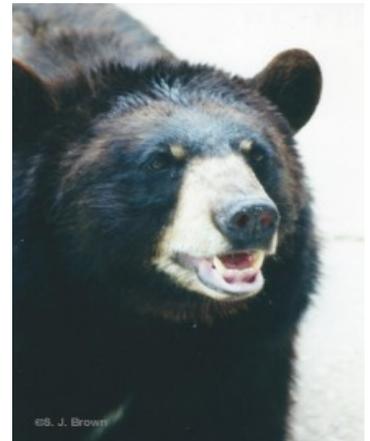
When I began writing in high school my motivation was to get a passing grade, then I discovered I enjoyed writing, and had a knack for it.

While others groaned at essay questions on a test, I secretly loved them. This was a chance to put a spin on my limited knowledge of the subject and eek out a better grade. A few encouraging words from an English teacher prompted me to explore the possibilities that a writing career could provide.

Later the thought of connecting ink to paper to people intrigued me. Having someone I never met read my words and react to them pushed me to write more. I had limited success early on, then life intervened and my writing career was put on hold. I needed to earn more money than a beginning writer could bring in. There were bills to pay, mouths to feed, and obstacles to mount. It would be several years before I found myself sitting in front of a typewriter tapping out a how to book on running a small business. After years of giving out free advice to people I had decided to sell them the information.

Then I picked up a camera and blended my passions. As a wildlife photographer and author all my writing begins with me. My encounters in the field, trial and error in the publishing world, and my real life experiences. All of these become articles, essays, blogs or chapters. My typewriter was retired long ago and my words now eminent from a computer screen.

Like most writers I have more than one project in the works. The success and enthusiasm for my first full length book prompted me to start another. After my mother passed away, my sisters asked me to put the finishing touches on a book she had been working on. My mother's memoir prompted my sister and I to tackle a memoir of our own. Then life pushed me to start yet another project. Yes, like most authors, I also have one more project in mind that I haven't begun yet and one completed that is looking for the right publisher.



Which project I work on is dictated by a number of factors. My mood, what words are coming to me, my scribbled notes, inspiration, and deadlines. Then there are days I don't work on any of them; instead I grab my camera and leave the real world behind to pursue critters large and small.

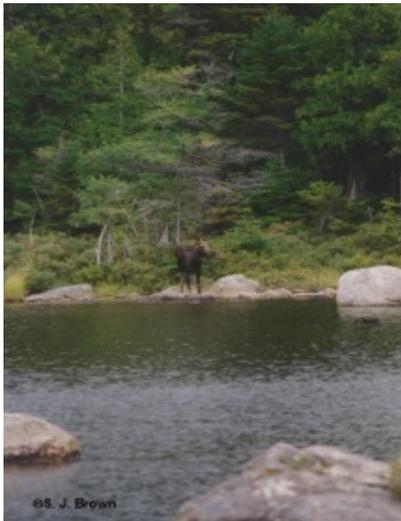
Writers don't work a set schedule, or get nominated for employee of the month. Being a writer really is a career choice, a choice that sometimes chooses you. This career includes struggling with rewrites, research, publishers, marketing, and formatting. Then deadlines, word counts, and yes, more rewrites, get added to the mix. Good writing takes work and dedication.

There are untold numbers of individuals in the world playing with a career in writing. The expanded resources offered by the internet has prompted these numbers to rise dramatically in recent years. While this increases the number of published works available today it can reduce the readers chances of finding quality work they enjoy. In the end the quality of the work reflects the amount of time and effort that goes into it.

That perfect wording, story idea, or plot twist always seems to come when we are otherwise engaged. Simple tasks like doing the dishes, laundry, or taking out the trash are often interrupted by that "need to remember that" thought. It could be the tediousness of these tasks allows our creative juices to flow. Or perhaps it just takes time for that particular thought to develop. All writers have notes in their pockets or random words on an always open computer document. I have added a tape recorder to my car for when those moments of inspiration occur while I am on the road.

Most writers have something to say. It might be that you lose yourself in their fantasy, real life can be that hard, or let me teach you something new. Each of these genres appeals to a different audience. For writers, finding and expanding these audiences is the often the hardest part of their work. Most writers are solitary people who shy away from crowds, but marketing our work forces us to emerge from our own little world and mingle with the public. There are interviews, book signings, promotions, press releases, and speaking engagements. Here is much more to being an author than putting words on a page.

Why do I write? To share my passion, to connect people to the natural world, to inspire others to pursue their passions. Hopefully my words introduce others to the natural world, nudge them to follow their dreams or try something new. I wasn't born with a love of nature, it evolved over the years and became part of me, just like my writing skills have expanded and worked their way into my everyday life.



The subject I am most passionate about is wildlife. I welcome critters to my yard, and search them out in a variety of locations. Moose reside in the north, while manatees swim in the warm waters to the south. In the west there are Big Horn sheep and prairie dogs. Eastern locations include horseshoe crabs and untold numbers of shore birds.

I will trudge through briars, climb trees, or get in a boat (even though I can't swim). I will bundle up and challenge the cold and snow to capture migrating birds on film and perhaps get that perfect image. I have been lost in the woods, caught in the rain and in the wrong place at the wrong time. All this gets me closer to my goal. My goal is to connect with wild critters in their world and record that moment to share with others.

Success for me doesn't include big checks and insane sales numbers. It includes critters, wild places and yes, even people. Seeing a child's face light up when they view one of my images is better than any check. No sales numbers can compare to a conversation I had one afternoon at an exhibit.

I was approached by a man in his early 20's with a large smile on his face. His first words to me were "you don't remember me do you?" I had to admit I didn't. He had been in a class at a local high school where I gave a presentation. During these presentations I use my images to distract the students while I educate them on the finer points of the natural world. I relay the stories behind getting those images and share some of the pitfalls of the publishing industry. When I give such presentations my first goal is to keep everyone awake. Let's face it, about a third of the class doesn't want to be there and another third have no interest in wildlife or publishing, so this is always a tough audience.



As I begin speaking one by one they perk up in their seats, just a little. A few might chuckle as I explain how getting a butterfly image can sometimes be more difficult than that alligator image they oohed and aah-ed over. A couple more seem to be interested when I talk about laying on the ground to get a rattlesnake photo. One or two students may ask questions during the presentation. Hopefully most of them view wildlife in a different light by the time the bell rings.

This particular young man mulled over my words and images the rest of that day. On the bus ride home he remembered an old camera his mother had packed away in a closet. By days end he was in the yard approaching his first critter.

He chuckled as he informed me he was scared to death of animals, but he loved the feeling of the camera in his hand. He marveled at the images of flowers, sunsets, and people he had created. He wasn't yet quite sure what his favorite subjects were, but he knew they weren't animals: domestic or wild.

Although he won't be pursuing a career in wildlife photography he is searching for his niche in the world from behind the lens. He realizes the impact a single image can have and he strives to produce just such an image. His photographs may one day grace the covers of national magazines or inspire others. He also now has respect for the wild world around him. All because I kept him awake in school one day. The combination of my writing skills and wildlife images placed me in that classroom.

Yes, writers can change the world around them one person at a time. That escape they provide into a fantasy world of mystery, vampires, villains, or heroes can make the seemingly insurmountable challenges of everyday life more bearable. The encouragement and support they give to one another is invaluable. The stories shared with children at bedtime forge lasting memories and bonds that will stay with them forever. Life lessons put down on paper can help others maneuver through difficult situations and realize they aren't alone. The endless hours of research that go into a textbook can educate someone on the finer points of nature, finances, law, or saving lives. I believe everything is connected and everyone has an impact on the world; writers simply expand that impact to include people they have never met.

Connect with S.J. Brown on

[Goodreads](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Website](#)

## ***A Queen's Ramblings***

### ***My Ink Drips Passion***

***By:***

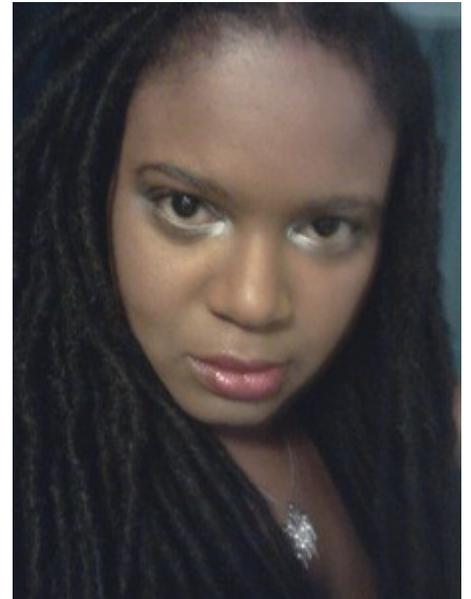
***Queen of Spades***

I spend my moments of quiet in episodes of introspection, laced with shards of intensity. On occasion (read many occasions) I tiptoe on extrospective travels. It is those times when the air is cloudy and to expect turbulence during the flight. The moodiness of individuals is akin to motion sickness or covering one's eyes, praying the plane lands safely.

My beat has always been about passion throughout my life. Whether in school or at work, my goal is to put out optimum performance. Yet in this climate, there are more examples appearing which demonstrate that productivity is no longer at the top of the chart when it comes to expectation.

Look at the writing world, for instance. In an environment where anyone who knows how to use a computer and follow instructions on such platforms like CreateSpace, Amazon, and Smashwords can claim to be a published author, sapphires get lost among cubic zircons.

Best Sellers are dressed up in numerous over the top reviews and a beautiful cover—only to discover the content is akin to Schlitz Malt Liquor as opposed to Dom Perignon. In the meantime, those authors who may not have the financial or social media backing can have masterpieces that are not seen or selling.



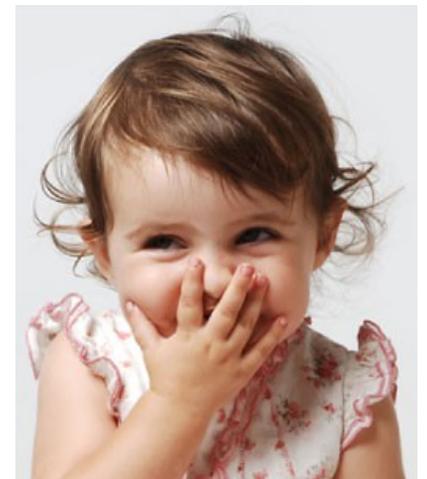
Should those authors who don't have a Street Team or familiarity with Twitter hashtags dare to compete? Do we go and scavenge every article out there on how to crack the Amazon algorithm? Must authors behave like door to door online salesmen, knocking at all reviewers' doors to pimp their advanced reader copies? Or just adapt to the reality that it takes money to make money and spend exorbitant amounts on services just for the names attached?

I am not going to say that marketing is a bad thing. Marketing is one of those necessities. There is more to being an established author than just hitting the publish button. How is anyone going to see it if you don't talk about it? With the presentation of the work, an author has to also craft the narrative in conjunction with the work, unless one is traditionally published and public relations does some of it for you. Even in the later situation, the author may not be completely satisfied with the marketing direction but because of being traditionally published, hands may be tied.



One of the side effects of the marketing race is it threatens to erode passion. Passion for words is the heartbeat of writing. In my experience, I have gotten so spent on developing catch phrases to promote a work that the time I wanted to invest on new projects has evaporated. Sometimes, the vigor will return in a few hours or even a few days. Yet there have been spells when weeks or months have gone by prior to my jotting down new ideas or directions for works in progress.

Many solutions have been proposed to me in regards to the cure. One has involved carving out blocks of time to do just marketing, even to do it at my job. Yet some workplaces do have varying viewpoints when it comes to Facebook and Twitter (aka not approved). Since I have not made enough with my writing to retire in Tahiti, the risk of performing this during my daytime hours is too risky. It's not like the founders of Facebook and Twitter will hire me if I lose my job due to "abusing the Internet policy."



*That's the cue for outright laughter or nervous giggles.*

Eliminating the eight hour workday, that leaves the remainder of the time I have at my home. (Looking around to see if my husband is nearby—okay, the ghost is clear!) It is very different when you are a single person writing as opposed to being a married person writing, or one who has children. Even if your husband is understanding and supportive of the writing, he can have a brat moment. An off day or he just wants your full undivided attention and cannot wait until that last thought hits the computer screen. That can take a few minutes or even a few hours.

After work hours and time with loved ones, finally I can get my social media on! I log into Twitter and see so much on the timeline. People have recently followed me, so I must do research to see if they warrant a follow back. Then, of course, I have to do some retweeting; if I don't, then I'll be accused of not doing constructive marketing. By the time I've done that, forty five minutes have passed. Oops, almost forgot about Facebook! While on Facebook, various messages are in my inbox and invitations to games I like to play.

Maybe if I take a quick break for just fifteen minutes...

So many rounds of Pudding Pop, Candy Crush Saga, and Facebook messages later, over two hours have passed. Gee, look at the time! I have to get some sleep for my work day tomorrow.

Oh well, guess that block of time thing was an epic fail.

AutoTweet services were proposed next. Sure sounds like the way to go, since I don't live off Twitter. However, the weirdest things were sent with my name attached to it. A brand of toaster whose name was unfamiliar to me. Support of an art gallery in Australia.

The nail in the coffin was when an AutoTweet attached to my name advocated an inflatable dildo! Not exactly the best way to attract new people to my writings. Besides, it costs extra money to customize the messages and control the timings—best invested in quality editing services, thank you very much!

The more marketing advice that was submitted, the bigger my migraine. My episodes of writer's block are more soothing than these jackhammers of help. On one hand, I do not want these members of the writing community to deem me ungrateful. Yet on the other hand, I feel like a square peg trying to jam myself in the round hole, pretending to be comfortable and failing miserably.

Another thing failing: producing my writing. I'm not even talking about finishing the pieces—just adding elements to get to the next section in the story. My brain is so thick with strategy that streamlined creativity is buried. All marketing aside, I'm still one hundred percent writer and one hundred percent writer should remain my primary focus.



This year, I have come to a decision. It risks being an unpopular one. Yet I am a snoot for the creative process and where I love to place my energy. It is the only time when my passion feels genuine as opposed to manufactured. This is where I am at my most abundant.

I am taking off my marketing racing shoes. My arches burn in pain; I cannot keep up with the sprinters.

I am waving my white flag. I do not feel comfortable exposing my blood, sweat and tears continuously for less than pennies on the word at McDonald-esque menus of electronic publishing.

Keep fighting the endless battles; I've seen enough collateral damage.

The production is the key. I firmly believe people will keep coming if you have something of quality, regardless of whether it is seen on social media or not. The past writing greats didn't have the Internet vehicle to rely on—they were fueled solely on the finished product and word of mouth. I've always been an admirer of grass roots.

Yet this is the only surefire way to preserve the beat of my pen. Because to survive in the writing game, passion should never have an off switch.

***Beloved RWPP's:***

***Are aspects of the marketing game eroding your Beat of the Pen? Send your tales to [queenofspades@allauthorspp.net](mailto:queenofspades@allauthorspp.net). Your response may be used in a future issue.***



## ***All About Indie***

### ***Moving to the Beat***

***By:***

***Harmony Kent***



From the beat of a pen to the beat of a heart. One pen, one book, can change the world. The pen is the tongue of the mind. With it, we can achieve great things.

However, the beat of the pen isn't enough ... we have to walk the street too. Tap out that same rhythm with our feet. We have to advertise, promote, and be visible. In this modern day and age, what this means to most indie authors is getting on-board with social media.

For a lot of folks, who're already internet-savvy, this probably isn't such a big deal. But, for those who are dinosaurs like me, it can be a daunting prospect. Social Media is a huge city, and it doesn't come with a road map.

As easy as it is to get lost, caught by diversions, and even mugged ... we have to get out there and pound that pavement. Social media can be a great tool for self-published authors. It can be a way for us to advertise our product and ourselves without spending tons of money.

According to Wikipedia: "Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks."

Here are just a few of what is available today ...

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- You tube
- Google plus
- Pintrest
- Linked In
- Blogs

Not to mention sites such as Goodreads, Wattpad, and a whole host of others.



So, do we have to use them all? How much time a day should we spend on these various forums? Is it better to take a leisurely stroll through these streets, or sprint like mad? Each of us has a unique schedule, and various daily commitments to meet. All of which will affect how much time we can realistically spend navigating social media, and still find time to write.

Unless you have a vast amount of hours at your disposal, I would recommend choosing just one main forum that you will post to daily—at the very most two. Which one(s) you choose will depend largely on what appeals to you individually, and where you feel most comfortable.

Whichever of these vast edifices you make your destination, you have to visit every day, or maybe five days out of every seven—at the very least, every other day. Otherwise you'll soon be forgotten. Also, the streets have a habit of changing on you when you're not looking ... a bit like the "magic stairs" at Hogwarts (in the Harry Potter books).

For instance, Facebook is hardly recognisable as the same building I entered not long after it was built. The rooms have changed and undergone significant refurbishment.

The one thing that does seem essential these days, is to have your own website. A place people can come and visit you and check out your books, after they've discovered you on Twitter, or Facebook, or some other street corner. It's a good idea to do like Hansel and Gretel, and leave a trail of breadcrumbs—links between your blog/website and the particular avenue you hang around in most.

My blog is linked to Twitter, Facebook, and Goodreads. Which means that anything I post on my blog, is automatically posted to the above Big Three. Likewise, I ensure my web address is visible on each of these forums. With this amount of breadcrumbs around me, I'm easy to find.

It is a good idea to keep your author photograph (that you use on your bios) the same across the board, so you are easily recognisable from just your picture. If just the one isn't your style, then try and limit it to two or three. And your profile/bio needs to be kept as up-to-date as possible.

Your initial forays onto the street will take up more time than subsequent jaunts. This is because you need to prepare, and will have a lot of concrete and foundations to lay. Once that's done, minimal daily maintenance is all that's needed, and you have more time to stand around and gossip, and wave to your friends.

This social interaction is important, and you need to get it just right. It's no good just standing there talking about yourself over and over again. Ask how your friends are. Let them talk about their stuff too. Help them promote their own books, etc. As with any friendship, in real life, it has to be balanced. Equal give and take ... or even weighted so that there is a little more give than take.



If you went around spamming your mates all the time, they wouldn't stick around for very long. It's just the same with social media. I have yet to meet anyone who actually likes being spammed.

Good etiquette requires that you wave to someone when they wave to you. So, if they follow you on twitter, you follow them back—unless their tweets contain content you don't want to promote (which is fair enough), or if they are spammers. Those you can ignore. The same with Facebook: if someone sends you a friend request, accept it. If someone "Likes" your page, "Like" them back. Goodreads, and all the other forums have similar dictates.

Always answer messages, unless you are being spammed of course. Try and support other folk's events—that way they are more likely to support yours.

You are all in this together. You are not in competition. Mutual support has immense benefits and can stretch a long way. All around the globe, in fact. The miracle of the world-wide-web, and Social Media, means that we can market our books all around the world—not just in our little corner of it.

As we get connected—which will take time, patience, commitment, and perseverance—we soon discover that what at first appeared to be a vast and unmapped city is actually the whole earth. There are hardly any corners of the globe we won't be able to travel to, or that we can't be visited from.

Which calls for a word of warning: once you have posted something, it cannot be undone. Yes, a few of the forums have a facility for you to delete something, but—chances are high—someone will already have seen it, and just as likely reposted it. Never respond to anything in anger ... take time to calm down first. Then, if you absolutely must respond, do so in as professional a manner as you can.

If you get into a street brawl, chances are you won't come out looking too good—even if you're lucky enough to win. Also, more and more, the streets are being policed. When you market yourself, you are building a brand—an author brand. This is a brand that you need to protect at all costs. It is so much easier to build a bad name for yourself than a good one. The sad reality is that bad news spreads a lot more quickly and easily than good.

In the same way we can achieve great things with our pen, we can also do a lot of damage. It's a good idea to choose with care the when, where, and how we spill that ink. No book appeals if its pages are smudged and smeared. To use a well-known quote from Benjamin Franklin: The pen is mightier than the sword. No truer words were spoken, or written. So, before you wield your pen as a lethal weapon, be very clear on what it is you want to achieve.



We've come a long way since the days of quills, ink bottles, and parchment. It used to take time and consideration to pen a response. In the world of instant messaging, emails, and tweeting, it is all too easy to hit that "send" or "post" or "tweet" button without the due consideration we would have given had we still to labour at letters the old fashioned way.

"The strokes of the pen need deliberation as much as the sword needs swiftness." Julia Ward Howe.

On this note, it isn't a good idea to go on social media if you're extremely tired, or drunk. Those are the times you are much more likely to trip over an uneven paving slab or slip on ye olde banana skin.

I find it helpful to set aside a specific time of day to take my strolls and visit with friends. I tend to do this first thing in a morning, and try and limit myself to an hour where I can. Then I do my day's work, which includes time for writing. I have to be disciplined so I don't get too side-tracked by the scenery and conversations. Otherwise I'd never get anything else done. For you, night-times might work better.

Working across many time zones can be tricky, but the best thing is to find a rhythm—a beat—that works for you. Don't be tempted to break into what would normally be your writing time—that's a slippery slope. At the end of the day, the whole reason you pounded the pavement in the first place was to carry your drum with you and bang it. Without something to bang about, what's the point?

Don't let social media distract you from writing.



Let your pen dance across your desk. Let your fingers tap those keys. Let your soul flow with the ink (or pixels). Feel the beat of the pen. One pen, one book, can change the world.



## ***Randomness in Writing***

***The Year That Was***

***By:***

***D. John Watson***



A journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet- Lao Tzu

It really is that simple or that hard, depending on how you look at it and that journey is not always what we expect it to be. Life often takes us where it chooses, like leaves on the current, taking us into the unknown, taking us from point A to B by way of C, L and 12.



A year ago, I was asked to do an article for a new magazine. Now I was a struggling author with one book under my name, no real following, much like now. So this was both exciting and frightening at the same time. As I said in that article, I had an idea what to write about and I had an article I thought I could dust off and polish but it wasn't nearly as long as I needed it to be. However I tend to be a seat of the pants writer, a 'deep ender', the one that jumps head first into the pool without looking at how far down the bottom is. At that time I mentioned that I tend to start with an outline and then somewhere along the way, it gets lost or forgotten. It took some work and for that one, I only had a few days because of the timing but I was confident and I got it done.

After its completion I was excited at having been asked to stay on and do a regular feature. For a writer, this is thrilling as it means that someone is actually paying attention. So I got my own space and the freedom to write what I wanted, I was elated. From the first, I've tried to write in a way I thought was both informative and entertaining, mixing facts with my own personality and sense of humor. And anyone that knows me knows there's a cup of coffee within easy reach, my Muse seems to be fueled by it.

The problem I found was, what do I write about? But I had a couple of months to get ready, so why worry? I trolled the net and various social media groups for ideas and they came. Over the past few months, I've tried to explore areas of the world that is unique to writers. I've looked at the role of secondary characters, what inspires us, my views on writing good action, the impact indie writers are having on the best seller lists and my views on what's like to be an Indie. And slowly, one article at a time, I started to build a resume of printed work. Or at least, e-printed work.

It was around the time of the first article that I began exploring the idea of switching from being an Indie (something I was rather proud of) to going conventional. Sales were bad, well actually DOA is a better term. All of those who'd said they couldn't wait until it was published did wait and are still waiting. So on the advice of some friends, I pulled it all down and took another jump into the deep end of the pool without looking to see how far down the bottom was. I was lucky and got picked up by a publisher and so began the process of turning my book into something better than I could have done on my own. As an indie, all of the work is on you.

Now I had friends, people who would help me with my work. Having a publisher means a professional cover, although I'm kind of pleased with the one a friend had done previously. It means professional proofing and editing and help with promoting. All of the things you have to foot yourself as an indie for larger profits. Don't get me wrong, indie writers are a growing force in the publishing world and for good reason. For me this wasn't the right route.



As I began to explore this new facet of my journey, I knew I had to get my name out there a little more. I'd started a blog when I first published but it was more specialized and only dealt with the world I had created in my series. I'll go back to it someday but for now it's just waiting for me.

But the idea of doing one was still there so I designed one geared to promoting others and Artistic Reflections was born. I started out with interviews geared toward authors, illustrators as well as editors or publishers. Over the past few months I've interviewed authors of children's books, a well known romance author and the man responsible for turning my comic bookish cover idea into a really cool image. And then I started asking for character interviews and expanded again to include book reviews and artwork.

The journey continued.



The next step was to explore short stories and once again surprised by the course of the journey I began posting stories on Wattpad and doing small flash fiction contests. And once again, those choices morphed into other things. I was accepted into two anthologies, one by the editor of the magazine I work for and the other by my now publisher. I had a couple of stories that were good enough to dust off and fit in the theme of the collections and I tweaked and edited until I was happy with the result. The first is coming out in January and the second is being put together now.

Yes the journey is long and the goal might not be what we expected when we took that first step. But it does mean taking that first step. I taught martial arts for several years but my intent when I started out as a student was not to become a teacher.

That was one of those unexpected twists and turns that happens. My goal was to understand what martial arts fighting feels like so that I could portray that effectively in my writing.

This is my journey so far, the first few steps and what will happen in the future. Will I become a best selling author? Will my books translate to a movie? Who wouldn't love that but if I've learned anything, it's that no matter what our desires and hopes are, we will get where we are supposed to be. The next year looks to be even better and I've been fortunate to be a part of a great magazine filled with talented writers and I've grown with it. It was for that reason that I entered the yearly National Novel Writing Month competition. A tall order considering everything else I have going on and my typing speed. Still, I think that no matter what we are, writers, artists or whatever else, we have to continue to push ourselves.

That journey does begin with that first step and we have to have the courage to take it. When I was teaching, we had a question we asked all new white belts. What's the most important color belt there is? Nearly all would say Black. But without the white one, none of the others are possible. I've pushed myself and taken risks, some worked and others didn't but I'm pleased with what I've done this last year and I hope that you are just as pleased with your progress. And I'm looking forward to what the next year will bring. What other stories will find their way into my column, what will my blog look like? Will this be the year my next book finally sees the virtual light of day? But over all, I will continue to try and inform and entertain, that's the job of a writer after all and if I'm successful, then I'm doing it right.

So here's to a new year and new adventures.



# ALPHA OR AND beta

## Ask AJ

**In this issue of Ask AJ, the following question was presented:**

*I published my book months ago. Prior to having it published I had Beta Readers look at it to help me with edits. However, upon seeing some reviews that followed after I published it, I've come to realize that apparently my book is mis-edited. This is causing me to get bad reviews. My question is, what is the difference between a Beta Reader, an Alpha Reader, an ARC reader and an Editor? I was under the impression that they were all the same thing. ~~  
Anonymous*

I really like this issue's question, and with so many terms and phrases that are present in the writing world, working through the murky waters of the behind the scenes in writing can be overwhelming. Who has time to learn all that when you are writing a book?

There are four questions rolled into one, so let's start by sorting them out.

### Alpha Readers

Alpha and Beta readers can be confused in what they do for the writer. In the overall scheme of things, they appear to have similar jobs.

The alpha gets the story first. They are not an editor, in the true sense. They are receiving a very raw copy of the work, and sometimes just the first few chapters.

Their main objective is reading and looking for story structure. Things such as the plot making sense or flowing accurately; character building; how the action rises and falls; and getting a feel for the changes in the setting. Those are just a few, but you get the idea.

The alpha reader isn't necessarily looking for line edits, grammar, punctuation, etc. those can be addressed, but generally those things will be picked up and corrected in the next phase of editing.

The first, raw copy of anything will have errors and typos and really aren't the target of the first reader. The feedback from the AR is to get their opinion on how they story flows and more or less: Does it make sense?



### **Beta Reader**

Being a beta reader is similar to the alpha, but there are some differences.

At this point, the story has gone through that first reading and the raw draft has been updated and or changed according to what the alpha reader and author see. When the beta reader gets it, the story should have better structure and be a smoother read.

A good beginning, middle, and end, a satisfying read throughout, and a seamless story are what the beta reader is looking for. This copy should be read as a completed story – even though it is far from being the final polished work we are striving for.

After the first pass at the story, reading it for the plot and structure, the BR should read again and look for line edits (grammatical errors) should be marked and noted leading into the next round of editing.

In the end, the complete story should be taken in and read as if it is the final draft. Reading it with this mindset will make it easier to pick up on plot and structure discrepancies, while making sure the dialogue fits with the current point in the story.

Alpha and betas should be good, but critical readers in order to provide the best assessment of the novel, novella, or short story they are reading.

### **ARC Reader**

ARC stands for Advance Reading Copy.

These copies of the book are privately passed out by the publisher or author and put in the hands of the readers who will read what could be the final draft of the work. Dust jackets and or covers may not be part of the ARC package. This distribution will be sometimes be months before the final release and go out to reviewers, bookstores and in some cases, magazines.

Some publishers issue what they call 'uncorrected proofs'. These are clearly marked as proofs, and while they may look like the finished product, they are used in the editing process.

ARC's are often seen as prerelease promotional items and the readers will have as close to the finished product as possible.

### **Editors**

Editors can come in many forms and shapes, but the term editor is exactly that – someone who edits a written work.

Developmental editing and copyediting are the two main types of edits that need to be done on a book.

Developmental Editors assist the author with structure, content, and overall presentation. A developmental editor may also help with research and chapter outlines. Their aim is to make the text clear, readable, engaging, and marketable. Putting it in sports terms, they are kind of like a coach.

Copyediting, also called line editing, checks for mistakes or inconsistencies in grammar, punctuation, style, and format. They also read for overall clarity, making suggestions where the text could be improved.

While editors may seem to be the same as beta and alpha readers, there are just enough differences to give them the various titles we have talked about above. Now, that is not to say that one person can't do all three jobs, it is more conventional, and commonplace for each part of the editing process to be done by different individuals, each with their own specific job and focus in mind.



The reader's question asks if all parts of the editing process are one in the same, and with that, have received some bad reviews based on editing errors. In this case, there is a good chance that only a beta reader was used, thus many errors (grammatical) were missed before the book was published.

My advice, when you are ready for the next step before publishing, is to first have the alpha reader have at it. Next, give a polished edition to the beta reader. After more edits and a few rewrites, (we all know rewrites are part of our writing world), hand it off to the editor for a very detailed review of your book. Copy and developmental editing are the real edits and must be done before the book is published.

In closing, I would like to say, no matter how many edits a book goes through, there will always be an occasional missed comma, or misplaced and or but, or different small errors. It is just a fact that there will be mistakes, hopefully very few and far between. I have read books by the biggest authors and have run across a small punctuation error here or there. The thing is, is that I wasn't looking for errors. I was just simply enjoying the stories. It's funny how when you least expect it, you will find mistakes in a written work.

We all want to have a perfectly edited book, but reality always stakes its claim. I know that looking at my own work I have blinded myself to obvious miscues, mainly because I'm too close to my work. If possible, try to find a neutral party to look over your hard work and I think you will be a bit more satisfied with the results.

Above all, keep writing that first draft relentlessly, and we can worry about edits later!

**Do you have a question for AJ?**

**If so, send it to him.**

**[Ask.aj@allauthorspp.net](mailto:Ask.aj@allauthorspp.net)**

**All Authors Magazine**  
**Your home for**  
**In-fun-mation**



# Poetry Unleashed



## Unleashed Feature

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### Poetry Unleashed Featured Poem

For Issue 8, Poetry Unleashed is proud to present this poem by Jimill Sommers. The cry of “Emancipation” represents that the poetic Beat of the Pen is loud and stronger than ever.

#### Emancipation

Today I make this declaration  
I'm tired of my life being a dedication  
to mental degradation  
Tired of contemplating  
deportation of this life of aggravation  
Tired of seeking adulation  
from a nation bent on my defamation  
Waiting for pain dissipation  
Instead of fake distillations  
raining back down on my head  
through mental condensation  
Looking for an explanation  
Seeking truth but lies keep formulating  
Trying to break free of my limitations  
caused by pigmentation  
and other observations of a nation  
that prides itself on obfuscation  
You see  
I know why the caged bird sings  
When you come from Kings and Queens  
but get treated like a peasant  
that shit stings  
and yet to that last bit of hope  
you continue to cling  
That caged bird sings  
melodies of clipped wings  
stolen futures and broken dreams  
A rage against the machine  
Protest is in our genes  
Some have forgotten what that means  
They have become comfortable with the scraps given  
Decided the the oppressors they would forgive  
Give up and give in  
But me I think different  
So they paint me as the villain  
Cause I choose to capitalize on cognition  
Walked a different path of my own volition  
and every dream deferred is my ammunition  
So again Today I make this declaration  
I refuse to live in complication  
I refuse to look to others for confirmation  
Today it will be about my preservation  
and if this happens to be my dying proclamation  
I'll stand up with my chest out and scream it to the nation  
Today I declare my Emancipation

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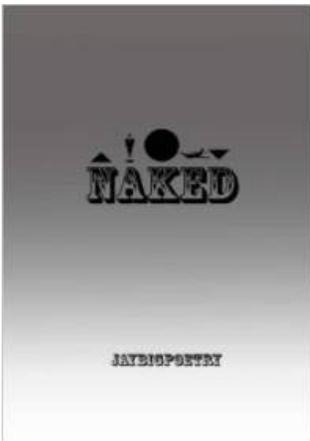
### **About the Author**

Jimill Sommers A.K.A Buddha is a writer from Newark, N.J. He found his voice early in life having written his earliest poetry at the age of six. He was Inspired by poets such as Maya Angelou, Nikki Giovanni and Amiri Baraka. He also found inspiration in the street poets of the Hip Hop world. College educated and a member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Inc., he released his first book of poetry, Renaissance Ramblings, in 2009. He is currently working on his second book of poetry, tentatively titled Blackowt Speaks, and an urban novel.

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### **Current Flows**

#### **Wet With Ink (Current Flows)**



**Title:** Naked (paperback)  
**Author:** JayBig Poetry  
**Type of Poetry:** African  
**Release Date:** November 20, 2014  
**Available:** Amazon

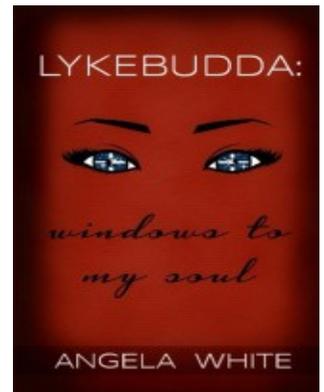
**Blurb:**

NAKED, a compilation book written by JayBigPoetry, a poet from Lafayette, La. This book gives you a group of poems that all vary in topic but narrates the poet's life. The artistry displayed in this book gives amazing insight on things such as sex, family, and reality. It also bares no filter, thus the reason being for the title NAKED.

**Title:** Lykebudda: Windows to my Soul (As the Budda Flows II)  
**Author:** Angela "Lykebudda" White  
**Type of Poetry:** Contemporary  
**Release Date:** November 22, 2014  
**Available:** CreateSpace, Amazon

**Blurb:**

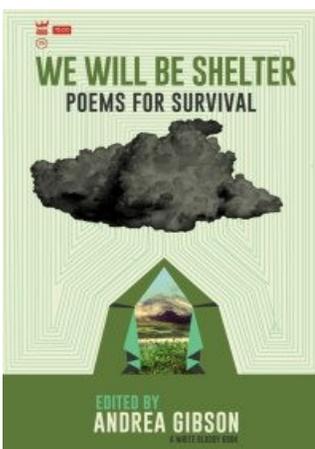
This is the continuance of As the Budda Flows as she shares more intimate pieces of her life. Windows of my Soul is opening her heart before the world. Cut and dry, straight to the point, unapologetically transparent. This book of poetry is for those who love hard with no regrets. Follow the drips of Budda's love.



**Title:** We Will Be Shelter: Poems for Survival (Paperback Anthology)  
**Editor:** Andrea Gibson  
**Type of Poetry:** Societal/Inspirational  
**Release Date:** December 10, 2014  
**Available:** Amazon

**Blurb:**

We Will be Shelter, edited by poet and activist Andrea Gibson, is an anthology of contemporary poems that addresses issues of social justice. Unique to this anthology is its focus on creating positive social change through gorgeous, gusty poetry. Alongside and embedded in featured poems are concrete ways to address social and political issues raised. The goal of We Will be Shelter is to raise awareness, encourage critical self-reflection, and call readers to action.





**Title:** *sky shore sea*  
**Author:** *Kali Tenee'*  
**Type of Poetry:** *Contemporary*  
**Release Date:** *November 22, 2014*  
**Available:** *CreateSpace, Amazon*

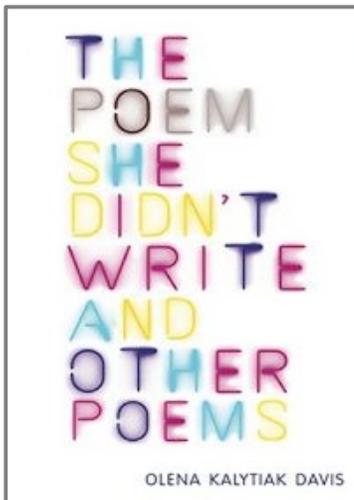
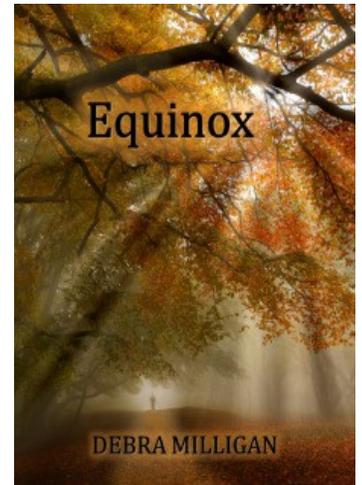
**Blurb:**

A collection of poems written with the mind, body and soul in mind, "sky shore sea" is an inspirational and cathartic exploration of self-discovery. Almost journal-like, the poems become a footprint of the author's journey through life and love. From love of nature, self-love and soul mate love ... this personal work brings about conscious thought as well as one's awareness in the world. "sky shore sea" has one purpose overall ... to connect the readers, not just to the author ... but to themselves.

**Title:** *Equinox*  
**Author:** *Debra Milligan*  
**Type of Poetry:** *Theme Poetry*  
**Release Date:** *December 6, 2014*  
**Available:** *Smashwords*

**Blurb:**

Equinox occurs twice a year, on 20 March and 22 September. It is the autumnal equinox which colors and shades these 20 poems by Debra Milligan. She writes of time: the interludes in life and the transitions, marked by the equinox. These poems speak of the effects of the equinox upon grief, joy, forgiveness, love, parting, faith, solitude, hope, and betrayal, and other moments in our lives.



**Title:** *The Poem She Didn't Write and Other Poems (hardcover)*  
**Author:** *Olena Kalytiak Davis*  
**Type of Poetry:** *Women's*  
**Release Date:** *December 9, 2014*  
**Available:** *Amazon*

**Abbreviated Blurb (for Full Blurb, visit Amazon):**

In her first full collection in a decade, Olena Kalytiak Davis revivifies language and makes love offerings to her beloved reader. With a heightened post-confessional directness, she addresses lost love, sexual violence, and the confrontations of aging. In her characteristic syntactical play, sly slips of meaning, and all-out feminism, Davis hyperconsciously erases the rulebook in this memorable collection.

## True or False?



1. It's a good idea to switch your cover art as often as possible to attract different target audiences.

**False.**

Constantly changing your book cover IS BY NO MEANS a good idea. Perhaps upgrading it ONCE is acceptable as sometimes (especially in the Indie world) our first cover isn't always the cover we want. However, continually changing your book cover is a bad idea because it will confuse your audience.

Let's say you gave Sally Smith the 1st cover of your book cover and she blogged about your book using the first cover. Subsequently, Sally's audience will come to know your book with that cover.

Then you gave Joe Johnson the 2nd cover of your book and he did the same as Sally, only with that cover.

Now, let's imagine this happening on a much larger scale.

What will wind up happening is that when people look up your book and see several different renditions of a cover, they may not connect the title to the cover or the author and think it's another book altogether.

THIS, can potentially hinder book sales as well. Always remember, people are visual first.

2. The more money you spend in marketing, the better you will do in sales.

**False.**

This isn't necessarily true. There are PLENTY of avenues out there for marketing that are completely free, and some that are very affordable/low priced. Take advantage of those.

Spending loads of money does not always equal book sales. The same thing can be applied to book reviewing sites.

3. In a nonfiction book, it is very helpful to have a page citing references whenever they are used.

**True.**

More specifically with a nonfiction book that is Self-Help based. With Self-Help books it is always handy to have references because the reader may want to do his or her own research, and if that is the case, pointing them in the right direction serves 2 purposes.

Serves as a basis for you to prove your point.

Offers the reader more clarity of the message you are trying to convey.

4. It is better that books that are a part of a series have the ability to stand alone.

**True.**

The reason this is true is due to the meaning of the word "Series".

THAT is where the trick lies. The problem is that the writing community has mixed up the meaning of the words "series" and "saga".

A Saga, is the continuation of a story with THE SAME characters and premise.

A Series, is the continuation of a story with DIFFERENT characters and premise, but all residing within the SAME world.

So, if you've written a series, than the story in and of itself SHOULD be a stand alone and finish when the book finishes.

THIS is NOT the case for a saga.

5. Double spacing after sentences is a matter of style and therefore not grammatically incorrect.

**True.**

Grammatical rules vary from state to state, providence to providence and country to country. Not everyone teaches the same exact thing in regards to spacing and the like. While there are some concrete, fundamental rules in grammar and punctuation, there are more minimal things—like spacing—that is completely contingent on style as well as what you were taught. Therefore, adding an extra space between sentences IS NOT grammatically incorrect.

