

The Writer's Wire

Women Who Write: A Place, a Space, a Voice

January 15, 2015



WOMEN WHO WRITE, INC.

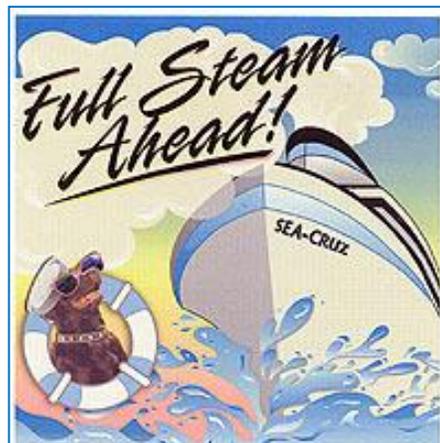
Encouraging, supporting and educating women who aspire to write

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FULL STEAM AHEAD



Here we are well past New Year's Eve with all its resolutions—write more poetry, update the blog more regularly, or finish the manuscript—topping your list of literary pledges for 2015. I hope that attending more Women Who Write monthly meetings is also high on your priority list. What an amazing year we had in 2014, with our membership increasing and our meetings averaging fifteen to twenty or more people in attendance. The many poems, short stories and works-in-progress that I've had the privilege to hear have been jaw-dropping and inspiring! We have

certainly lived up to our newly coined tagline: A place, a space, a voice.

As I look back over the past year, I feel privileged to have led our group monthly in meaningful critiques, and so many of you have shared everything from children's stories to soul-searing poetry. One form that has emerged over the year, and seems to be gaining popularity, is blog entries. A number of you have given voice to causes and concerns, and shared reflections and revelations. An old phrase from the 1970s comes to mind when I think back on some of what was shared: "Beautiful, man!" These shared passages are gob-smacking amazing and bone chillingly thoughtful. I *love* that so many of you are finding your voice online in the blogosphere. And of course, traditional (whatever that may be) poetry and prose is still very much welcome.

We will provide practical writing advice and education this year with an expanded one-day writers' conference to be announced for summer, our annual retreat, and a series of one-topic workshops to begin in the spring. Of course, we always encourage everyone to take advantage of the rich and varied writing workshops and conferences available throughout the state, and we look forward to keeping you up to date on all our community of writers in Kentucky has to offer. If you haven't been to a meeting in a while, don't let the weather stop you this winter. We are always ready to listen and share the first Thursday of the month. I look forward to sharing an exciting 2015 year with you!

—Jessica Luetzow

IN THE NEWS: JUDITH OWENS-LALUDE

Women Who Write member **Judith Owens-Lalude** has a busy agenda for February; she will be appearing at several events related to Black History Month, as well as hosting readings of her own work.

On **Feb. 2** at noon, she's participating in an African American Read-In at Jefferson Community & Technical College (downtown) at the John T. Smith Library.

On **Feb. 10**, 1 p.m., she's speaking at the Louisville Genealogical Society: "In Search of My Ancestors: From Kentucky to Africa and Back."

On **Feb. 16** at 7 p.m., she's participating in a reading at Westport Free Public Library, 1800 Westport Rd.

On **Feb. 21** at 2 p.m., she's reading from her children's books at Carmichael's Bookstore, 1313 Bardstown Rd.

Finally, on **Feb. 24**, 3:30 p.m., she's doing a reading for kids 11 to 14, at Westport Public Library.

See details at

http://jcamilleculturalacademy.com/?page_id=934.

ABOUT WOMEN WHO WRITE

Membership: Our goal is to encourage, support, and educate all women who aspire to write. Our group is diverse and dynamic, and includes writers who are just starting out, those who are newly published, and those in the middle of their careers.

Regular meetings are from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at the Highlands-Shelby Park Library, Mid City Mall, 1250 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, Kentucky.

WOMEN WHO WRITE BOARD

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MUFFIN TOP: A LOVE STORY

Movie Screening Benefits Women Who Write



Mark your calendars for Feb. 12 and plan to attend [Muffin Top: A Love Story](#) for a special event to benefit Women Who Write (theater to be announced). Starting at 7 p.m., we'll gather, give away prizes, prime the audience for fun, pitch Women Who Write, and have a great time.

The film rolls at 7:30 p.m.

Muffin Top is the kind of hilarious romantic comedy that happens when women write and direct movies. The film has more women behind and in front of the camera (as a percentage) than any other movie in the past three years. It's time to put the chicks back into flicks.

Plus it has a star-studded cast. Check it out:

- Marissa Jaret Winokur (Tony winner in *Hairspray*)
- Diedrich Bader (*Drew Carey Show*)
- Melissa Peterman (Barbara Jean in *Reba*)
- David Arquette (of *Scream* fame, or as we know him, the former Mr. Courtney Cox)
- Dot Marie Jones (*Glee*)

The movie has the first all-female soundtrack in rom-com movie history. The song "Beautiful," by award-winning artist Michelle Featherstone, is featured in the trailer and the film. The song succeeds in underscoring the all-too-familiar yearning for self-acceptance.

Cathryn Michon, director and star, wrote the film with her partner and husband, W. Bruce Cameron (author of *8 Simple Rules for Dating My Teenage Daughter*, *A Dog's Purpose*, and the new *The Midnight Plan of the Repo Man*).

When people purchase tickets to the film online, they will be given the opportunity to also make a donation to Women Who Write.

Our thanks to WWW member Bonnie Jean Feldkamp for coordinating this event.

PUTTERING IN POETRY?

PLAY WITH A PANTOUM

The pantoum is a form of Malaysian poetry with interwoven quatrains. The second and fourth lines of each stanza reappear as the first and third lines of the next stanza. A pantoum can contain any number of stanzas. The final line often repeats the first line. Though the words are the same, ideally the meaning of lines shifts slightly when they are repeated.

Stanza 1 A B C D

Stanza 2 B E D F

Stanza 3 E G F H

Stanza 4 G I (or A or C) H J (or A or C)

As an example, here's a pantoum Susan Lindsey shared at Women Who Write. Take a look and then try the form yourself. Bring your effort to the next meeting. We'll have plenty o' pantoums to ponder.



October Sky

Slate clouds cluster in the eastern sky
Like plump, velvet cushions.
Clipped from the fuller arc,
A scrap of rainbow clings to the earth.

Like plump, velvet cushions,
Gray clouds perch atop coral and pink rolls.
A scrap of rainbow clings to the earth.
Lightning zigzags across the river.

Gray clouds perch atop coral and pink rolls.
Bad weather chases good.
Lightning zigzags across the river.
Thunder rumbles overhead.

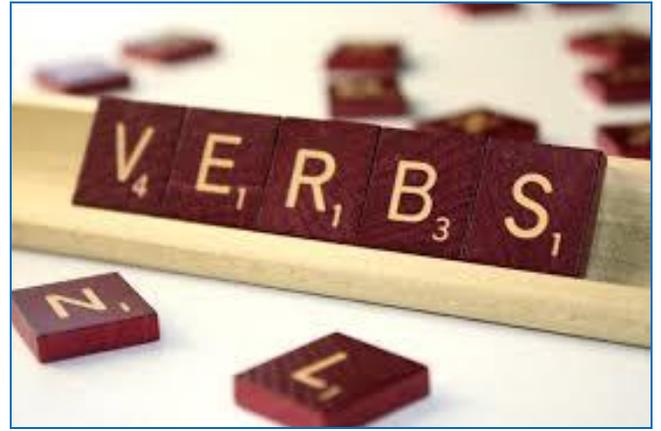
Bad weather chases good
As autumn follows summer.
Thunder rumbles overhead.
Slate clouds cluster in the eastern sky.

CONTESTS, MARKETS & GRANTS*

- [Folio Fiction Contest](#): Pieces up to 5,000 words with the theme of conflict. First prize: \$1,000. Entry fee \$15. No deadline provided.
- [Sixth Annual Spirit First Poetry Contest](#): Poetry submissions of any length with themes of meditation, mindfulness, silence, stillness, or solitude. First prize: \$200; second, \$150; third, \$100. No entry fee. Deadline Jan. 31.
- [The Meadow Novella Prize](#): Fiction from 18,000 to 35,000 words. First prize: \$500 and publication in journal. Entry fee \$15. Deadline Feb. 1.
- [Top of the Mountain Book Award](#): \$1,000 first-place prize for unpublished fiction and creative or narrative nonfiction. Entrants also receive at least one critique/score sheet with comments. Entry fee \$25. Submissions accepted until Feb. 1.
- [Indiana Arts Commission grants](#): Career development grants up to \$2,000 for Indiana residents through the Individual Artist Program. Deadline 4:30 p.m., Feb. 6.
- [Harpo Foundation Native American Residency Fellowships](#): Two one-month residency fellowships to Native American artists at Vermont Studio Center; includes room, board, and \$500 travel stipend. Deadline Feb. 15.
- [Chicken Soup / Volunteering](#): *Chicken Soup* is seeking stories up to 1,200 words on volunteering and giving back. Writers of selected stories receive \$200 and 10 free copies. Deadline Feb. 15.
- [Orison Poetry Prize](#). \$1,500 and publication. Submit manuscript of 60 to 100 pages. Deadline Feb. 15.
- [BioStories Essay Contest](#): Theme is “elders.” Essays up to 3,000 words. Winner receives \$250 and publication. Entry fee \$10. Deadline Feb. 16.
- [Harriet A. Rose Legacies Contest](#) for writers over 55; accepting poems, stories, essays, or memoir. Limit 1,500 words or up to five poems. Reading fee: \$10 per five-page entry. First prize: \$100; second, \$50. Deadline Feb. 20.
- [Ginosko Flash Fiction Contest](#): Submit up to two pieces no longer than 800 words each. Prize: \$500. Entry fee \$5–10. Deadline March 1.
- [Stella Kupferberg Short Story Prize](#): 750-word maximum. \$1,000 and online publication. Entry fee \$25. Deadline March 15.
- *The Notebook*'s spring theme will be “difference.” See complete submission [guidelines](#) for details. Deadline April 1.

(Continued next page)

- *Creative Nonfiction's "The Weather" Essay Contest*: Seeking true stories—personal, historical, or reported—about weather events. First prize \$1,000; runner-up \$500. Entry fee \$20. Deadline April 13.
 - *"My Turn" essay / Newsweek*: Accepting totally original, unpublished pieces between 850 to 900 words long. Use a tone that is engaging, personal, congenial and conversational, but not excessively informal or slangy. Pays \$1,000. Expect strong competition.
- *Check contest websites for rules and details.



EVENTS FOR WRITERS

- Jan. 17, 5:30–8:30 p.m., **New Southerner reading**, The Bard's Town, 1801 Bardstown Rd., Louisville; features the work of finalists and semi-finalists from the publication's recent literary contest. Free and open to the public.
- Jan. 22 and 29, and Feb. 5, 7 p.m., **Double Vision: Collaborative Exhibit of PYRO Gallery Artists and Louisville Poets**. Visit [PYRO Gallery](#), 909 E. Market St., Louisville, on Thursday nights to view art created by local artists and hear the works of the local poets who inspired the artists.
- Feb. 6, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., [Kentucky Writing Workshop](#), Holiday Inn Louisville East. Chuck Sambuchino, *Guide to Literary Agents*, presents multiple sessions and several literary agents will attend to meet with authors. \$99 with optional \$29 pitch sessions.
- Feb. 7: [Tennessee Writing Workshop](#), 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hyatt Place Nashville / Brentwood. A nearly identical event to the Feb. 6 Louisville event. \$129 with optional \$29 pitch sessions.



- March 7: [Kentucky Women's Book Festival](#), Ekstrom Library, University of Louisville. This year's event features Maryjean Wall (*Madam Belle: Sex, Money, and Influence in a Southern Brothel* and *How Kentucky Became Southern*), Kelly Cogswell (*Eating Fire: My Life as a Lesbian Avenger*), Julie Kibler (*Calling Me Home: A Novel*), Tatiana Wells (the Hilary Adams mystery series), and other great women writers. The event is free and open to all. An optional lunch is \$10.

POWER YOUR WRITING WITH ROBUST VERBS

By Susan E. Lindsey

"Kill the adverbs," Mark Twain declares.

"How can I convey what I mean?" the writer whines.

To minimize use of adverbs, use strong, specific verbs. You could write that a character quickly (or slowly) walked to the door. But think of the vast array of other verbs for "walk," including bolt, lurch, lumber, plod, strut, pace, sprint, stroll, tread, stride, march, dash, and saunter. All of these give the reader a much more vivid picture.

William Zinsser wrote, "Probably no other language has such a vast supply of verbs so bright with color. Don't choose one that is dull or merely serviceable."¹

I recently made a list of great verbs I found in a nonfiction book I was reading. The list included clot, erupt, gnaw, hack, hiss, jolt, ooze, pluck, pop, scuttle, shudder, smash, squabble, thrum, and wince. Try this exercise with one of your favorite books—you will be amazed at the list you can generate.

Verbs are the engine of good writing. They propel the story forward, fill the book with action, and keep the reader engaged. Don't choose wussy, everyday verbs that need an adverb to support them. Power up your writing with strong verbs.

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¹ William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, (New York: Collins, 2006), 68.