

The Just Write Life



A Note From the Editor

By Lisa Forsyth

It's been a pleasure to serve as the Just Write Chapter newsletter editor these last few years. I've enjoyed getting to know more about you and your accomplishments. Whether it's through celebrating your writing contest wins, announcing your published works, or featuring your motivational articles, we've created a worthwhile publication that inspires each of us to keep working toward our writing and publishing goals.

With that said, this will be my last newsletter as editor. Thank you to everyone who contributed over the years. I hope Ann will select a new editor so the traditions of celebrating our victories and inspiring each other can continue.

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Chapter Officers

- Ann Gordon, President
(ann@gordoncomputer.com)
- Mechelle Morrison, Vice President
(mechellemorrison@gmail.com)
- Tim Keller, PR and Voting Proxy
(writerscache435@gmail.com)
- David Armstrong, Website

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Here's to another year of putting one foot in front of the other, one word, paragraph, and page at a time. Continue writing and sharing remarkable things. The world needs your unique perspective and talents!

Sincerely,

Lisa Forsyth



New Members

We would like to welcome these new members to Just Write:

- Kelly Drake
- Charity Nelson
- Linda Parrish
- Ken Hardman
- Carol Nicolas

New Critique Guideline: A Reminder

See the attached documents for tips on delivering a well-rounded critique. We've included these documents before, but as we're always acquiring new members—and reminders for the rest of us can only help—we're providing them again. When taking part in our critique sessions, please refrain from passing another's work through an AI grammar program while ignoring other fundamentals of good storytelling such as character development/arc, POV consistency, pacing, etc. We need that human touch to give more in-depth feedback than Grammarly or Hemingway can provide. A huge shoutout to all of you who follow this guideline and take the time to provide comprehensive reviews!

A Warning

By Shawn Pollock



You may remember that I submitted a story to our critique group last fall called "Untold Vietnam," about soldiers in the Vietnam War encountering mermaids. I wrote it because a journal had put out a call for mermaid stories. Even though I submitted the story to the journal, fantasy is not my forte and I had little confidence that I had written anything they would want. 'It's too different,' I told myself. 'They'll never go for it.' I figured that as long as I had a completed story, I might as well put it to work. I uploaded it to the

reader magnet site Book Cave and scored some email addresses for my mailing list. Eventually, I got a rejection from the journal, which was just what I expected.

Well, I found out much later that they actually HAD accepted my story. Out of 500 entries, mine made the cut. However, they did their due diligence and found my story on Book Cave, which violated their submission policy and so they rejected it on that basis.

There are two takeaways here: first, have confidence in what you write. Don't be afraid to put it out there. Second, and more practically, if you do submit something, make sure it's not present anywhere else. There may or may not be fine print in the submission guidelines regarding this (I honestly don't remember if the journal said anything about it and never would have thought that Book Cave counts as a simultaneous submission), so it's better not to risk it. A reader magnet is a useful thing, but it doesn't compare to being published. ✦

Upcoming Events

The Pre-Quill Conference

Date: April 29, 2023

Location: SLC Marriott University Park and Online

For more information, visit the League's website [here](#).



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Upcoming Events

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LUW Contests

New The Palette Awards

The Palette Awards is a contest celebrating the best in book cover design. Both traditional and self-published books are eligible. Credit must be given to the designer if one was used. See the League’s website for deadlines and more information.



Writing Contests

The Quills Awards (published novel contest), the Typewriter Awards (published short text contest), and the Olive Woolley Burt Awards (unpublished short fiction, non-fiction, and poetry contest) are now accepting entries through May 12th, 2023.

Last year our chapter had winners in each of the three writing contests. Now is the perfect time to consider what you would like to submit and to send those submissions through our critique groups for some pre-contest feedback.

For more deadline information and contest rules, see the [League’s contest website](#).



DAVID ARMSTRONG

Award-winning
Author

David will read a chapter,
discuss how he wrote this
book, and answer questions

Book Launch

David Armstrong is hosting a book launch for his latest nonfiction work, *A Walk with the Master: One Person’s Journey to Christ*. Congratulations, David!!



Kaysville Library
215 N Fairfield
Kaysville, Utah

Wednesday, 5 April 2023
7:00PM - 8:00PM

Book Giveaway

A limited number of books,
personalized and signed by the
author, will be given away at the
event.

Deciding What's Possible in Your World

By Ann Gordon

Now that I have a little more time for my own writing, I first want to complete some of my most promising unfinished stories. The challenge now is: Which of these twenty stories should I tackle first?

I opened the folder containing notes and versions of my story about some little aliens who landed in the sandy red desert of SE Utah. When I started the story, I thought the location would be easy since I've lived in the area for decades; plus, I like science fiction. This incomplete sci-fi story features a small UFO that's hiding in an abandoned uranium mine south of Moab. The ship lost its power source, and the aliens are trying to utilize the energy from the ore remaining in the mine. Supposedly, when they get enough power, they'll continue their travels through space.



To add some human elements, I created a guy who lives about forty miles away from the mine and loves to walk the desert. One day he stumbles into this lonely mine to find the small ship. He doesn't tell his friends about the encounter, but he regularly returns to the old mine. Eventually, the guy begins to change and no one in town knows why.

That's pretty much where I stopped writing a few years ago. As a notorious pantsner, I don't have an outline for the remainder of the story. I've tossed a few ideas around, but I just wasn't sure what to do or what I could do after that midpoint. In reading several articles about writing spec fiction, I realized why I stumbled across a writing block I couldn't get past.

It's because I never did any prewriting. Before I began writing, or at least early on in the process, I should have determined which supernatural or alien powers these visitors would have (besides the ability to get here from another solar system). Did they move like humans and have similar capabilities? Or were they able to fly?

Thus, in the middle of the story, I had been stopped by questions like:

- Can these aliens become invisible if they want?
- Do they have genders? Since they're in space suits, how could anyone tell?
- What do they usually eat?
- Can they levitate, or can they make people and other objects levitate?
- Do they have ray guns that can make stuff, even people, evaporate?

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Since they are essentially ship wrecked, will they continue to hide in the rocky tunnel because they are afraid? Or will they brazenly wander the desert? What if they run into a coyote? Would they fight, kill, flee, or disappear?

As they are written now, the first chapters of this story are exciting, and reviewers have given me positive feedback. Despite that, I've been stumped for years, unable to proceed. Now, I don't think I would have been so blocked if I'd employed sci-fi prewriting, establishing the parameters and possibilities for my new world before I ran into a wall. I still don't need to plot the rest of the story, but I believe the problems that stopped me could have been easily resolved if I'd established the parameters for my world before I became so involved with the story.

Free Writing Resources

- Michelle C. recommends this free writing course from Daniel David Wallace to become a plotting expert: <https://danieldavidwallace.com/character-first-story/>
- Ann G. recommends:
 - ◇ This great article for fiction authors titled, "Why Fiction Writers NEED to Write Short Stories" by Cameron Thomson. <https://writingcooperative.com/why-fiction-writers-need-to-write-short-stories-185355bffc2e>
 - ◇ Julie Duffy has a writing podcast titled: "Story A Day." She writes articles about how to write a story a day; she also has a podcast of the same name. She posts a lot of her stuff on YouTube too. Her latest episode is, "How to Be a Writer Even When You Don't Feel Like Being a Writer." <https://storyaday.org/episode281/>
 - ◇ I'm still on the fence regarding ChatGPT and similar AI authoring tools. It still sounds like cheating to me. However, I'm interested in AI tools that can generate background patterns and graphics for newsletters, book trailers, websites, etc. On Medium.com (I read their articles every week) I found this article about the many AI solutions available to meet graphic, video and other design needs. <https://medium.com/@free-thinker/forget-chatgpt-you-will-not-regret-using-these-ai-tools-in-2023-7c2a39cc4901>

"Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere." — Anne Lamott

Who's Penned What

A List of Published Works



Tell Me a Tale of Resurgence

Brooke Stayrook

Fantasy

Two lovers pulled apart for thousands of years have found a way to be reunited in euphoric bliss. Unfortunately, a powerful adversary comes knocking.

[Learn more on Brooke's website.](#)

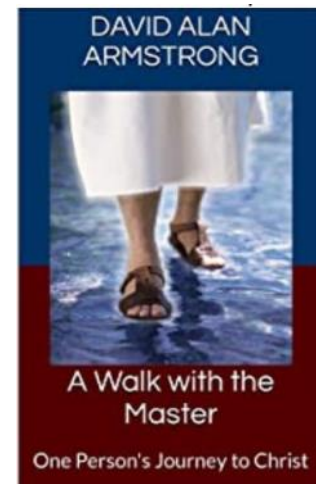
A Walk with the Master

David Alan Armstrong

Genre: Nonfiction/Spiritual

Author David Alan Armstrong presents his personal statement of conversion to Jesus Christ as his Redeemer within the context of his membership in the LDS church.

[Purchase on Amazon.](#)



“Love Song to Weber State”

Josie Hulme

Genre: Essay

Josie's essay is featured in Weber State's literary journal *Metaphor*.

[Download the issue here.](#)



Who's Penned What

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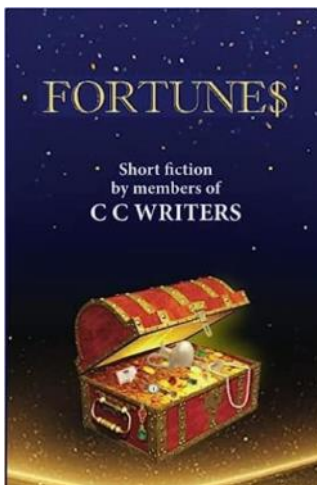
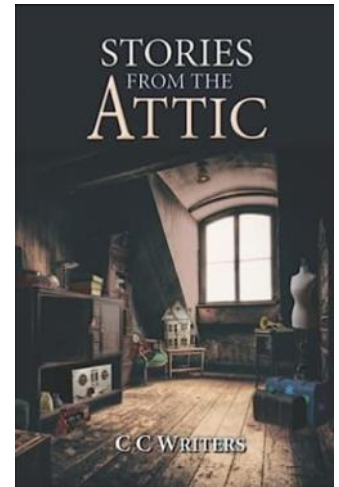
“Grandmother’s Gift”

Nancy Roe

Short Story

What memories and mysteries are in your attic?

[Purchase the anthology on Amazon.](#)



“The Gift that Keeps Giving”

Nancy Roe

Short Story

What would you do with sudden riches?

[Purchase the anthology on Amazon.](#)



Linda Smith’s sonnet “Pandemic Winter” will be published in the LUW’s 2023 anthology. Contrats, Linda!!

Knowledge is Power

By Nicole Klunder

Knowledge is empowering! I have recently experienced a tremendous amount of positive connection, empowerment, training, and have loaded all of the necessary information in my toolbox and within myself.

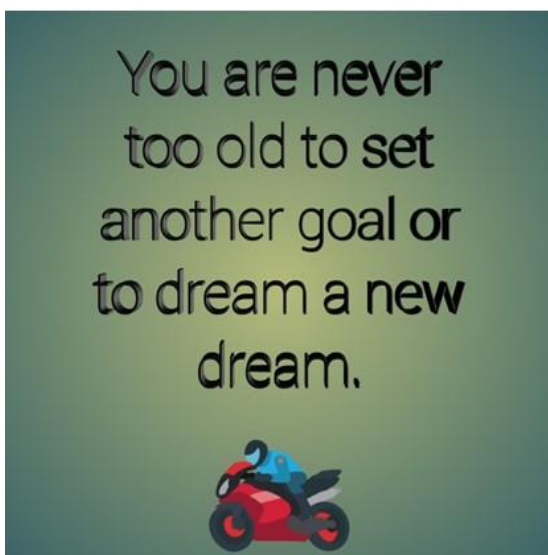
Fear is a crippling mechanism. All of our power and ultimately our decisions are through our minds.

We are afraid of failure, mostly. The simple belief that you can't do something because you never have before or never felt worthy or capable of it.

Why? What happened to patience, taking one day at a time, and the journey of the learning phase?

Fear can put a halt to everything and anything you try to set your mind to. You can decide it's your "choice," but if you "choose" to push away that "fear" and tell yourself you can do it and achieve this, with the support and enthusiasm of others, then you will do it!

And continue your journey of learning and growing. It's all about the journey, right?



I knew years ago, in my twenties, I would do something amazing in my future, though I would never have guessed I would start this writing adventure later in my life! Sure, reading is my ultimate guilty pleasure, and I had a journal as a child where I'd found short stories I'd written, but being a writer was far from my radar.

What's my best advice for making progress on your journey?

Use the people around you. The world is full of beautiful positive connection and if something isn't working for you, make a small change.

Once a small change is made, see what's working and what isn't.

How do you feel?

Show up.

Invest in yourself.

Push yourself from within.

Tell a friend, parent, husband, wife, or maybe a stranger you just met about your goals.

Soak up their positive enthusiasm and support. Even if it's a single word or sentence.

It will light the fire within you, and you will be unstoppable!

Confidence comes when you do hard things!

It might take days, weeks, or even months.

Don't give up!

Keep at it like it's your lifeline.

Once that fire is lit, you will notice positive changes around you.

Connections will feel stronger. The energy authentic.

You will feel happier from within.

People around you will see you differently, and it can inspire them.

You can shine brightly. You will feel that shine within yourself.

There's nothing better than that feeling of inspiring others so they can shine too!

Now get out there and feel the energy!



A Call for Beta Readers

Michelle Chamberlain would like beta readers for her sci-fi novel. Here are the details:

- Title: The Aviator Awakening
- Genre: Science Fiction
- Word Count: 82,036

If interested, please contact Michelle at: michelle.c.1993@gmail.com.



Critique Sessions and Submission Guidelines

Critique sessions run twice a month. Invitation emails are usually sent the first and sixteenth of each month; these invitations include an RSVP deadline. Once the deadline has passed, the spreadsheet with current group information is sent. Each session is generally divided into two or three groups with three to six participants each, depending on how many members participate.

Submissions are then emailed to each member of the participant's group and returned by the end-of-session deadline, usually the fifteenth or the last day of the month. If you want to read a submission from someone in a different group in addition to those in your own group, you may request their work, but please do not expect them to read yours in return.

Fiction and non-fiction chapters, short stories, articles, and poems are all welcome in our critique sessions...query letters too.

Submission Guidelines

- 3,200 words or less (not including any synopses at the beginning)
- Include a synopsis if there are chapters/sections prior to your current submission
- 12-point or larger serif font (such as Times New Roman or Cambria)
- Double or 1.5 spaced lines
- Word document format (.doc, .docx)
- Include your name or initials in the filename
- Submit within two days of receiving the group spreadsheet

Critiquing Guidelines

- Please make at least six suggestions or comments in your reviews (AI grammar programs should not be used)
- Be honest, kind, and encouraging
- Corrections and comments are made using the "Track Changes" and "New Comment" features under the "Review" tab in Word
- Include a note at the end of the document with an overall review or comment
- Ideally, return your reviews by the last day of the session

"A flower blossoms for its own joy."

—Oscar Wilde

Happy Spring :)

