

The Just Write Life

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President’s Article

A Priceless Literary Device

by Ann Gordon

Metaphors and similes are used extensively in poetry and advertising. Their purpose is to compare one thing to another, not only to evoke a memory or to connect with the reader, but to set a mood or paint a picture. They work wonders in fiction too by adding color, interest and variety; well-placed metaphors and similes can bring magic to a page.

When I start reading a book replete with metaphors, I can hardly put it down. Publication and acquisition editors prefer manuscripts from authors who *skillfully* use metaphors. I think you’ll find that most Pulitzer Prize winners use these literary devices well. But note my use of the adjective *skillful*. A bad metaphor or two can make the reader abandon the book.

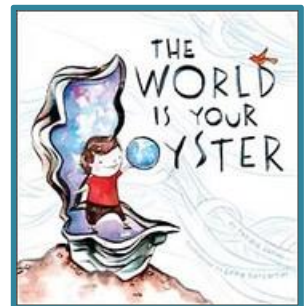
A best-selling author, Marcus Sakey, pens great metaphors and similes that make his prose vivid and exciting. These are some from his book Brilliance:

“Gentlemen.” The voice behind them was cotton padding over hardened steel. It snapped the schoolyard moment like a twig.

Orange hate radiated in waves off Bryan’s face.

“We terminate the Brilliants. We’re lifeguards at the gene pool.”

The flames flew outward, like the spray from a sunset ocean, orange and yellow and blue.



Try inserting a well-written metaphor in each chapter of your book (whether fiction or nonfiction), especially in the first chapter. Remember to keep your metaphors short (too many words can ruin the mood), stay away from trite phrases, and make sure the passage flows (that it doesn’t sound contrived). And be careful! Just because you understand your metaphor, doesn’t mean others will. It does need to make sense to the average reader.

For impressing publishers, readers, and contest judges, this literary device is well worth mastering.

Upcoming Events

The Quills Conference will be held at Marriott University Park, Salt Lake City, and streamed online for virtual attendees.

Come learn from industry professionals what you need to be successful in your writing and publishing pursuits.

Whether you're looking for traditional publishing or exploring indie publishing, find insider tips from top professionals.

Visit <https://www.leagueofutahwriters.com/quills-conference> for more information.

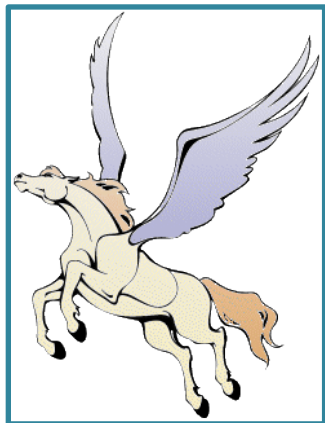


*"It's no wonder that truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction has to make sense."
- Mark Twain*

Links to Websites

Two interesting websites for authors

by Ann Gordon



1. Need a literary agent? Do you want a writing and publishing website that can answer lots of questions for you? Then check out the Agent Query website at: <https://www.agentquery.com/default.aspx> The site contains a mix of information and links for aspiring authors.
2. If you like Spec Fiction, and especially if you write it, PLUS if you have a lot of time to follow in the intriguing links, give this website a try: <https://www.fawns.ca/blog/> This site lists Open Submission Calls for each month. I clicked 'July's Jamming Open Submission Calls' and (as advertised) I found a bunch of no-fee, good paying places to send my stories. A lot of these July Calls were for scary stuff—I don't know if the lists are always like that. Still, I'd love to spend a week clicking links on this website.

*"I rewrote the ending of Farewell to Arms 39 times before I was satisfied."
- Ernest Hemingway*

*"The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do."
- Thomas Jefferson*

Member Article

8 Ways to Overcome Writer's Block

by Nicole Klunder

Have you wondered why you come up blank? Lack of time and energy getting to you? Are you questioning your entire identity as a creative? You may be struggling with writer's block—a condition where an author can't produce new work or their creativity shuts down. It may feel like an impossible task to continue writing words, but don't worry. Take a step back.



Image by fabrikasimf on Freepik

Try these eight ways to pull you out of your rut!

1. **Plan a Time and Create Habits.** Whether it be ten minutes or a half hour. Start small at first. Put your phone down and do it! I noticed that I was getting distracted easily from day to day. I didn't focus enough on what I wanted to accomplish and we all know that time is everything! Focus on the fact that we have plenty of time in front of us, it's just a matter of using it to the best of our abilities and not be wasteful with it.
2. **Try Writing Prompts Weekly.** These can be fun! I feel there is always something you can write. Writing prompts help with the practice of writing. I have a few unfinished pieces but it gets me to create, play with new ideas, themes, words and different types of characters. It helps me focus on what my abilities are as a new writer.
3. **Make a Priority to Read Daily.** I find inspiration in my reading sessions. I recently touched poetry and horror and had a whole new vision. You can too! Maybe change up what you are reading. From a new author to genre to novels, short stories or flash fiction, there is a lot out there.
4. **Diversify Your Writing Portfolio.** That means using other hobbies to help your writing. I often restart my creative process by focusing my attention on something else, even if I am just journaling, doing research, or editing someone else's writing. When I return to the original project, I can see it clearer.
5. **Commit to 3-5 Days of Exercise per Week.** Get active! Getting the blood flowing in your body can help with clearing the mind. The most important thing is to do what you love! Whether it be a cardio session, hike, bike ride, yoga, or a high-intensity workout, you will feel refreshed! Those scenes might even come to you then!
6. **Eat Nutritiously.** How you feel comes directly from what you put in your body, every meal, every day. Log your food and drink choices in a journal for tracking food and mood. Make changes accordingly.
7. **Start in the Middle.** Add a chapter or scene to the story you're creating. I do not always know what I will work on next because I just focus on the writing and getting it on paper. Later, you can put it in order and really design your world and plot. We all have different approaches to this. I feel less pressure this way. Do what works with your schedule. I tend to create a rough outline of ideas for settings, random scene ideas and quotes, and then get to writing. Whatever strikes me, I JUST WRITE!
8. **Optimize Your Toolkit.** Continue learning the craft by taking classes, refreshing skills, or joining critique groups. It can reset your mind and inspire you to write more or something completely different. Connect! The sky has no limit.

Don't beat yourself up. Be kind. Give yourself a break and have faith. It will come back.

Who's Penned What



Nicole Klunder has a poem in the *So We Meet Again* anthology through LUW Romance.

[Purchase the anthology on Amazon.](#)

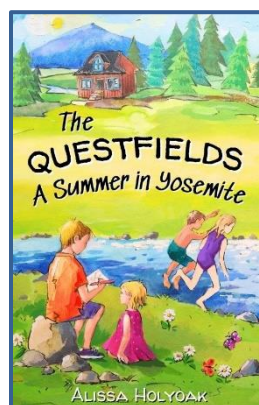
Dragonbreath and Prejudice

by **Erica Richardson**

Ela would much rather scrub scum from dragon scales than learn to dance at a great feast, and the last thing Zane wants is to fall in love, especially with a dragonkeeper.

This newly-released *Pride and Prejudice* retelling weaves dragons, dark magic, dual perspective, empathy, and mental health themes into Jane Austen's beloved classic.

[Purchase on Amazon.](#)



The Questfields: A Summer in Yosemite

by **Alissa Holyoak**

After losing their home, the Questfields head to Yosemite National Park to fix up a crumbling cabin in exchange for summer lodging. There are swimming holes to discover and trails to blaze. But where will they go in September? Twelve-year-old Miles sets out to answer that question, hatching a plan that can't fail – *if* he can get his brother and sister on board.

[Purchase on Amazon.](#)

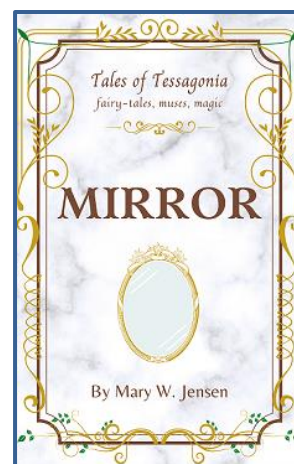
Mirror

by **Mary W. Jensen**

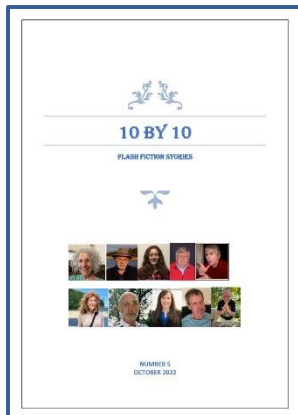
Mirror is a fairy-tale retelling novella, book two in the *Tales of Tessagonia* series.

Korina idolizes the mother she rarely sees. What she doesn't realize is that her mother's attention is much more dangerous than her neglect. Korina must survive in order to find her own happily ever after.

[Purchase on Amazon.](#)



Who's Penned What *(continued)*



The Question of Those Panties

by **Linda Allison**

A short fiction piece, workshopped within our group, was published by 10 by 10 Flash Fiction.

[Read it here.](#)

Alberta's Hair is Pink

by **Linda Allison**

A CNF piece, workshopped within our group, was published in Bright Flash Literary Review.

[Read it here.](#)

Haley Cavanagh's nonfiction adulting self-help book, *Adulting: The Ultimate Cheat Sheet*, has been contracted with Cedar Fort Publishing.

Awards



Tori La Rue

Storymakers First Chapter Contest
Third Place in Nonfiction

New Members

Welcome the following new members of Just Write:

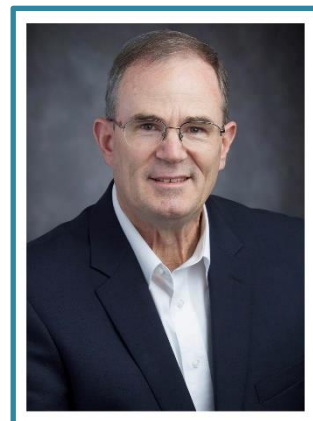
- ❖ Shandra Burnett
- ❖ Mariah Hawkins
- ❖ Victoria (Tori) La Rue
- ❖ Haley Cavanagh (welcome back)
- ❖ Lynn McBrien (welcome back)



Member Spotlight

Kenneth R. Hardman

As a youth, I was a slow reader with little interest in writing other than following my mother's tendency to write poems and songs. Later as an engineer I learned that crafting well written documents was profitable and produced similar satisfaction as solving engineering problems. I also felt inclined to keep a journal. It wasn't until midlife I discovered the joy of recreational reading and creative writing. One determined day I blindly dove into the ocean of *Moby Dick* by Melville but had to be as strongminded as Captain Ahab to keep chasing my whale, my desire to love reading. While turning the pages of *North and South* by Gaskell, I was fascinated with her descriptive and narrative power and decided to follow. I became a student and promoter of meaningful prose.



Most of my writing was non-fiction, after all, I'm an engineer. Why would I be interested in fiction? As I continued to search, I learned the great power of fiction to explore, encourage, and reveal character. On a cool fall morning in southern Utah, I spent a couple hours in Zion National Park sitting on a bench in the Grotto with my laptop writing a near-future hard-sci-fi story, *Rescue on Angels Landing*. I loved everything about the experience: the setting, the story, the fresh air, the fictitious characters, the twists, and the technology. As I gazed up and down Angels Landing and imagined myself a decade or two in the future, the story just flowed. I wanted to do more. My projects now include creative non-fiction, historical fiction, and hard sci-fi. Perhaps 'fantasy' is yet on my horizon. Some links to samples of my writing:

- Rescue on Angel's Landing, STEM Magazine link: (see pages 28-32)
 - <https://www.stemmagazine.com/gFEB22nascar/viewer/desktop/>
- Rescue on Angel's Landing, STEM Magazine full story pdf:
 - <https://www.stemmagazine.com/Rescue.pdf>

New Editor Introduction



A Note from Your New Editor

My name is Nancy Roe and I kill people for a living (I'm a mystery writer). I moved to Heber, Utah in July 2020. I've been married for thirty-three years and have two kids, my papillons Addison and Max.

I'm an award-winning author and professional formatter. I have self-published eight books and am currently working on my next mystery. I have also written stories for several anthologies.

In August 2021, I received the Gold Quill Award for my book, *The Accident*, and First Place for the first chapter of my novel, *Butterfly Premonitions*. I also served as a panelist at the Killer Nashville International Writer's Conference, speaking on the subjects of self-publishing, minor characters, and dialogue.

I'm a member of The League of Utah Writers, Just Write Chapter, Sisters in Crime, Guppy Chapter, CC Writers, Writer's Circle, and Advertising Chair and Newsletter Chair of the Newcomers Club of the Greater Park City Area.

I look forward to working with fellow members for *The Just Write Life* newsletter. You can contact me at newsletter.justwritechapter@gmail.com. Happy writing!

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

"The verb is the heartthrob of the sentence. Without a verb, a group of words can never hope to be anything more than a fragment, a hopelessly incomplete sentence, a eunuch or dummy of a grammatical expression."

- Karen Elizabeth Gordon

Chapter Officers

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