

# Just Write Newsletter ~ Vol. 6, No. 9 ~ November 2017

*Just Write: The At-Large Chapter for the League of Utah Writers*



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## Writing Quotes

“Many people hear voices when no one is there. Some of them are called “mad” and are shut up in rooms where they stare at the walls all day. Others are called “Writers” and they do pretty much the same thing.” – *Ray Bradbury*

“When you sit down to write, write. Don’t do anything else except go to the bathroom, and only do that if it absolutely cannot be put off.” – *Stephen King*

“Inspiration is wonderful when it happens, but the writer must develop an approach for the rest of the time.” – *Leonard Bernstein*

## Chapter Officers

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## New Members

Welcome to our new members: David Armstrong, Camille Smithson, John Cullen, Amber Ard, Spring Scoville and Liz Whittaker. We’re excited you have joined us in Just Write!

## Conferences, Workshops, Events

### ► **Memoir and Me – 2-part Workshop at SL Community Writing Center**

Learn how to create a written snapshot of your life in this memoir-writing workshop and learn how to translate your experiences to the page. This two-part workshop will be held December 6 & 13 (Wednesdays) from 6 to 8 p.m. SL Main Library: 210 East 400 South. \$20 for both days.

- ▶ **LUW 2018 Winter Workshop:** January 13th in St. George. More information to come about this writing workshop. Discounts for League members and students.  
<https://www.leagueofutahwriters.com/events>
- ▶ **LTUE – Life, the Universe, and Everything:**  
The *Symposium on Science Fiction and Fantasy* originated at BYU. LTUE is a three-day writing conference comprised of panels and presentations on writing, art, film and other facets of speculative fiction. WHEN: February 15-17, 2018. WHERE: Provo Marriott Hotel & Conference Ctr. COST: Cost for the 2018 symposium ranges from \$5 to \$99. Learn more here: <http://ltue.net/>
- ▶ **U of U Creative Writing Bootcamp:** Includes exercises designed to give you plenty of material for your own stories, esp. Flash stories, plus other writing advice. Fees range from \$5 to \$134.  
[https://continue.utah.edu/lifelong/class/llwrc\\_842\\_creative\\_writing\\_bootcamp](https://continue.utah.edu/lifelong/class/llwrc_842_creative_writing_bootcamp)
- ▶ **LUW 2018 Spring Conference:** April 14th at the SL Community College, 4600 Redwood Road, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Discounts for League members. Details will be published later.  
<https://www.leagueofutahwriters.com/events>



### **Editorial: Sending Our Books into the World**

For most of us, the reason we attend writing classes, workshops and conferences, why we get up early in the morning or stay up late at night is because we want to write and publish a book. Many Just Write chapter members have already published, and I invite them to share their stories with us, including how they wrote the book, what obstacles they faced, and how they published their work.

I asked Brenda to tell us about her experience writing and publishing *Blemished Beauty*, which won a Silver Quill award in the League's 2017 Published Book contest.

#### **Member Article: Writing & Publishing My Novel by Brenda Hodnett [brendahodnett@gmail.com]**

I was shocked when I opened Ann Gordon's email telling me I had won the Silver Quill Award for my novel, *Blemished Beauty*. For the next hour I jumped around the house. After years of wondering if others saw the value in the story, I received validation. It felt wonderful.

#### **Learning to "Just Write"**

Nine years ago I took a writing class based on *The Right to Write* by Julia Cameron. The best thing I learned from the class was that I could "just write" (the same two words of the wonderful LUW chapter I belong to). The concept of "just writing" allowed me to write something that wasn't particularly good when it first came out. All I had to do was get it on paper; I could clean it up later. This method liberated me. Now I had the courage to write the stories floating around in my head. I still tend to write with more emotion when I write this way.

I'm a stay-at-home mom but it can still be difficult to find quiet time to write. I wrote *Blemished Beauty* during two NaNoWriMo sessions. I didn't have a detailed outline before I started, but in hindsight this would have been helpful.

## The Beginning to the End in a Nutshell

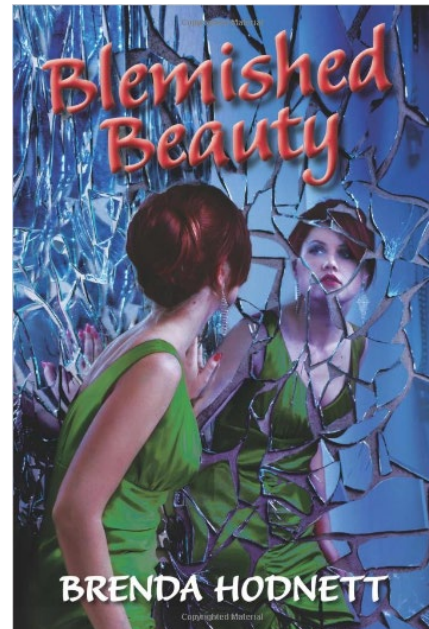
From the time I started writing *Blemished Beauty* to the time I turned it over to an editor was a little over a year. I spent four to five months actually *writing* the story and two to three months *editing* it. I pitched it to an editor who worked for a publisher based in Fort Collins. I wanted to try traditional publishing because my previous self-published book on Amazon didn't sell well. The editor took over three months to read the manuscript before pitching it to her publisher. Within a week I signed a contract with Crystal Publishing!

The publisher provided an editor and graphic design artist, which I thought was great although the process of getting the book ready for print took eighteen months. I wondered if this was normal. Originally I believed that once I found a publisher my "author problems" would be over, but they had just begun. The long process of communicating and keeping the numerous drafts straight proved frustrating.

## What's in a Name ... or a Title?

The novel went through more than six title changes. My working title was *Acne Girl*, since the main character's insecurity involved her acne. My editor and my husband liked the title, but the publisher didn't. When I discovered that 9 out of 10 people shrunk away in disgust to the title *Acne Girl*, I knew it had to change. It took over two months for all of us to agree on a title. We finally settled on *Blemished Beauty*, although I thought it sounded a little fluffy.

The cover design followed. When the publisher sent it to me, I didn't like it. On the cover the protagonist wore a rather revealing dress, which was *not* an accurate depiction of my shy, self-conscious character. So the graphic artist transformed the dress and added the shattered mirror. I love the cover now.



## What I Learned about the Writing Process

I learned four things about my writing process.

### 1. Consistency

If I had set a consistent time to write every day, I could have completed another novel in the same time I wrote this one. NaNoWriMo helped me form a more consistent writing schedule. I highly recommend it.

### 2. Try new ways to craft a story

I love the "just write" way of crafting a story, of discovering what the character will do as I pen a scene. Now I'm learning to "outline" as well. Mark Saltzman, an Emmy award winner I know, suggested outlining my story according to plot lines. He explained that if there are three plot lines, outline it in such a way where there are never two scenes together with the same plot line. It seems that most writers do this naturally, but I'm making it more of a conscious decision.

### 3. Know when to take and not take advice

Participating in writing groups is huge. My good and bad writing become much clearer when I share it with other writers. I've learned to carefully consider all writing advice.

### 4. Return favors

I've learned to show gratitude for those who take time to review my writing, and I'm glad to return the favor. By helping others, we help ourselves.

### **What I Learned about the Writing Process** *(continued)*

The most important lesson I learned about the publishing process is that I'm responsible for promotion whether I'm self-published or not. This might be different with larger publishing companies, but they still don't blog, build email lists, create newsletters, or handle social media.

This means I can't wait for people to "get around" to finding my book. I need to advocate for it by developing connections with readers and influencers.

### **What I Learned about Myself**

1. Creating stories is a part of me and I need this in my life.
2. Some people don't care about my writing, but I can find those who do.
3. Just because someone doesn't like what I write doesn't mean it isn't good.
4. Even if my writing is good, I can always make it better.
5. Regardless of hard feedback, or how long it takes me to see progress, I don't want to give up!

### **The Silver Quill Award**

I am so honored to receive this award. It tells me that my work is worthwhile.

### **Online Resources**

- ▶ **Should You Self-Publish or Traditionally Publish?** by Jane Friedman  
<https://www.janefriedman.com/should-you-self-publish-traditional/>
- ▶ **Self-Publishing vs. Traditional Publishing - The Final Countdown:** on PublishDrive.  
<https://publishdrive.com/self-publishing-vs-traditional-publishing/>
- ▶ **How John Locke Sold 1 Million eBooks in 5 Months:** by Scott Lorenz, Westwind Comm.  
<http://www.westwindcos.com/how-john-locke-sold-1-million-ebooks-in-5-months/>



*Ann*