



NOVEMBER 2025 -- PDF VERSION



SUPPORTING WRITERS OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION SINCE 1955.



Welcome Greetings –

We are a professional association whose purpose is to foster, encourage, and educate writers and independent publishers representing all genres, from all ages, and writing at every stage in their careers. We offer monthly meetings featuring opportunities to network with other writers, skill-building workshops, and presentations by regionally recognized authors, editors, agents, and publishers.

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Monday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at 5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks in the Fellowship hall (straight back from the road, through the gate in the white fence). Visitors are always welcome.

We also offer less formal Writers' Mingles where all writers are welcome. Our Mingles currently meet the third Saturday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Denny's Restaurant in Roseville (corner of Sunrise and Douglas).

SSWC is also known for its well-designed, professional "critique groups" where other writers provide intensive feedback for various creative works while in progress. Critical revision is often an essential step in creating a successful work.

Our professional library and monthly newsletter provide additional member resources.

Network and share with other writers. Be informed. Be inspired. Join us!

 DON'T MISS!

NOVEMBER 10, 2025



“From the Bedroom to the Page: Writing About Sex”

Lynda Smith Hoggan is Professor Emeritus of health and human sexuality at Mt. San Antonio College in Southern California. Her first book, *Our Song: a Memoir of Love and Race*, was published in 2022. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Westwind* *UCLA Journal of the Arts*, the anthology *Art in the Time of Unbearable Crisis*, and more. She is working on a sequel to her first book and also blogs at www.lyndasmithhoggan.com.

“From the Bedroom to the Page: Writing About Sex” is a presentation by a professor of human sexuality who has curated a collection of sexual scenes in creative writing. Lynda will discuss the following issues in writing about sex:

- A disclaimer re: adult materials
- What constitutes sex in creative writing?
- Reasons to/not to include a sex scene(s)
- Factors in theme, character development, mood
- Importance of genre and language
- Group members' experience in reading/writing about sex
- Curated readings and discussion.

Monday, November 10, 2025, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

5501 Dewey Drive, Fair Oaks (in the Fellowship hall -- straight back from the road, through the gate in the white fence).

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\$1000 Writing Scholarship!

Awarded by Sacramento Suburban Writers Club
The 2026 Scholarship for High School Seniors is now open for submissions



Read all the details at:

<https://www.sactowriters.org/2026-scholarship>



And submit your work early to:

scholarship@sactowriters.org



Awards Banquet: May 11, 2026, Monday eve

Deadline: April 17, 2026

Events & Happenings

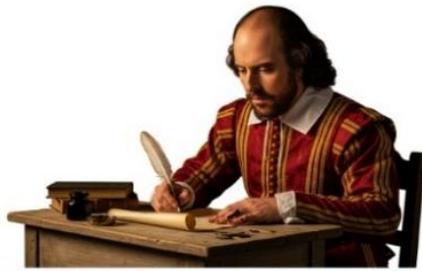


FOR A CURRENT CALENDAR OF EVENTS, GO TO



<https://appaloosaradio productions/newslet-events-and-happenings/>

**MEETINGS
MINGLES
CRITIQUE GROUPS
AUTHOR EVENTS**



Writing Tips and Techniques

Some Tips for Captivating and Engaging Short Stories

Crafting an engaging short story is both an art and a skill. The key to captivating your audience lies in creating vivid characters, a compelling plot, and an emotional resonance that lingers long after the last word. Begin by brainstorming ideas that excite you personally, as genuine enthusiasm often translates to a more engaging narrative. A strong opening—whether it's an intriguing question, a mysterious event, or a dramatic moment—helps hook the reader from the very first sentence.

When writing short stories, remember that brevity is your ally. Focus on a single central conflict and use concise language to convey meaning without unnecessary filler. Develop your characters through their actions and dialogue, allowing readers to infer their personalities and motivations. Effective use of setting can also enhance the atmosphere and support the story's tone, drawing readers deeper into your world. Don't be afraid to experiment with structure, perspective, or genre to find the best way to convey your message.

KEY IDEA -- every great short story begins with a single compelling idea—so start writing and let your creativity take you on an unforgettable journey!

Some helpful links:

- **Writer's Digest:** How to Write a Short Story
- **Reedsy:** Write an Engaging Short Story
- **MasterClass:** Short Story Writing Tips.

130+ Poetry Writing Prompts

- Pick any object in your room and write a poem about it.
- Write a poem about eating a tasty pizza.
- Look outside your window. Look at the sky - How do you feel
- Write a 7-day poem. This is a poem where you write one line a day until you have a whole poem by the end of the week.
- Continue this poem: Lights in the night sky...
- From the perspective of a falling leaf.
- Tiny people living in teacups around your house.
- The sound of buzzing bees at a picnic.
- A bad dream or nightmare you recently had.
- Sitting at the beach on a nice Summer's day.
- Write an ode to your school bag.
- Write a poem about eating lunch at your school's cafeteria.
- From the perspective of a brain-eating zombie.
- About the monster under your bed.
- The smell of breakfast in the morning.
- Write a poem about a dancing pencil in your room.
- Deep underground there lives...
- The sound of car horns and sirens in a busy city.
- Lost alone in the desert.
- Creating your own Frankenstein monster.
- The fireworks on New Year's Eve.
- Meeting a group of talking monkeys in the jungle.
- The smell of fresh air at your local park.



Jeannie Stark Turner

Answered

It Snowed Today in Rancho Town

I prayed and prayed
for rain all day,

Please, rain, please,
don't stay away.

We need you so! We
want you here!

Drought and famine,
these we fear.

And then, oh then, the
rain came down. It
watered all our dusty
town.

It filled the lake, it filled
the stream,

All has come true,
our fervent dream!

But, oh!

What's this?

The grass is
growing—

And now

I've

got

to do the

mowing.

It snowed today in Rancho
town

Or so it seemed to me Small
bits of white came from the
sky What could these white
bits be?

I looked around and saw the
sun

Still shining in the sky

But still the snow came
falling down I really
wondered why

*If it is snowing why am I
mowing?*

The thought flew through my
mind

Well, I am mowing and it is
snowing

Must be a different kind

And then I looked and saw the
tree

The plum tree in full glory

That tree had made a
Blossom Snow

And so thus ends my story





NEW BEGINNINGS

by Karen Sepahmansour

Richard tapped his foot on the beige carpet while sitting at his desk. He looked out the window viewing the sunshine from his parents' comfortable Santa Barbara home. He stretched his legs that barely fit under the desk chair in his bedroom and listened to the old clock above the mantle of his bed ticking.

As he was rubbing the temples of his black wavy hair, his mom brought in the cap and gown. It was ironed perfectly as she usually did with his other clothes whenever he had a date or needed something to wear for his internships.

"Are you getting ready?" she inquired.

He didn't know what to say. *Ready? Ready for what?*

Frank, his dad walked in, "You better hurry up, son. We're going to be late and parking will be a disaster."

Richard looked at his dad's serious, eager face hoping to find a good job like his dad had, twenty years with promotions as an engineering manager in the same company. He recalled last week's family dinner when his dad showed him and his mom the letter of promotion and raise.

Richard's apprehension grew when his parents told him he had one month to not only get a job, but to find an apartment. He recalled the words his mom asked, 'What will you do?'

When he glanced at both parents last week, he hoped that they would acknowledge his own reply. "I was thinking of getting a graduate degree and staying for a while longer."

His father frowned and answered, 'No way, it's time for you to get a job.'

His words were ingrained like cement in his mind. His dad meant it and had gotten fed up with his unpaid internships. The unpaid internships made him feel like he wasted hours when he should have saved money.

Richard fumbled with the gown while they waited outside in the living room. He was looking forward to seeing his best friend, Ben, the one he always enjoyed playing basketball games with on weekends. He looked at the basketball in the corner of his room, then smiled, wondering if those days would come back. There was an uncertainty, like the day his palms were sweaty when he had to make a speech to his engineering class for the first time last year.

#

At the graduation ceremony, his assigned seat was next to Ben, his best friend sitting next to him. "Heh, Bro, what's up?"

He looked up at his friend and said "Hello!"

"What's that hello with the frown on your face?" Ben leaned over in his chair.

Richard asked him, "Can we talk on the way over to your house?"

Ben opened his eyes widely, "Sure dude. My parents are getting the graduation party ready at their house. My apartment is too small."

#

After the ceremony and accolades, their parents met them both for fruits, punch, and cookies in the auditorium. They said their goodbyes and no parents were coming to Ben's party except for Ben's parents. Ben scurried, "Hurry up dude, get in the car. My parents want me to help them set up the chairs."

#

Richard sat down in the comfortable gray Camry that Ben's parents bought him his junior year in college. Ben already had a job as a programmer in Compo, a computer company, and he also had his own apartment. Richard recalled the day that his best friend was hired and that same week he rented his own apartment. Richard remembered that day when his own ex-girlfriend, Laurie asked him, "When are you going to get a job?" Richard remembered how inferior he felt about his own lag in employment and living situation.

While stopping at the red light, Ben asked his friend, "What did you want to talk about dude?"

At first, Richard's face reddened since he was feeling a bit down about what his father said. In addition, his girlfriend did not want to be with him after they dated for two years. However, he didn't want to worry him too much and was embarrassed about some indecisiveness he often had. His friend had encouraging words, not only to him, but to their other college friends as well. "Well, to tell you the truth, I was at first thinking of applying for a graduate degree but my parents would not have it. Mom and dad gave me one month to get a job and an apartment."

"Yeh," Ben nodded as he drove through the green light. "Don't you think it's about time?"

Richard hesitated, "I have only had unpaid internships at companies."

"Yeh," Ben agreed. "But don't forget the subjects you have studied. You took a double major of business and computer programming. That's impressive. Why don't you apply at Compo or some of the other companies?" Ben added, "Your parents have always done so much for you. Maybe that was not such a good idea. Don't you think?"

There was a silence and then Richard responded, "Yes, I do not even know how to cook. Laurie made fun of me the day I invited her over for soup and it was in a can."

"Are you still seeing her? I thought that you liked her."

"Yes, I do like her but, no. Remember, I told you when she went to northern California a few months ago?"

"Yes." Ben made a right-hand turn.

"She decided to go to school there and I have not heard anything from her since. I think she has a new boyfriend there. She was upset with me for still being at home." Richard rubbed his sweaty palms thinking about how he helped his ex-girlfriend pack, and she never even thanked him or gave him a kiss goodbye. He continued, "She mentioned a David who was going to the same college as she. I asked her about it, and she said they both had been writing to each other and he wanted to see her. She met him at her cousin's party last year."

Ben pedaled the gas. Did you ask her if she was leaving you for him?"

"I was getting cues like when she told me she needed time away for a while."

"Sorry, Buddy, I know you cared for her." Richard smiled, knowing that his best friend understood him.

"Still do. I could say nothing, and I was too sad to let her know how I really feel, especially since she seemed to be excited about seeing the other guy."

"Gotcha. That must have hurt."

Richard nodded and said, "Yes."

#

Ben looked at his friend at the next red light. "Dude, you better get your resume together. I'll help you. Forget the can soup. I have all kinds of recipes from Dad. He cooks too. My fiancé, Anne, knows so many good recipes. I have been trying them out because I can't always expect her to cook. She is working too. You can learn."

"I am nervous about looking for my own apartment."

"You probably will have your parents cosign initially. Will they?"

"I hope so."

Richard closed the car door. "Thank you, Buddy for the encouragement." He patted Ben's back and smiled as they walked towards Ben's parents' home.

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from our Archives

Never Lose Your Writing—Articles and Books Are Just Too Important!

By M. L. Anderson

Save. Save. Save again. This can't be repeated often enough. Once your file is gone, maybe, just maybe, it can be retrieved. But if it can't, what do you do? Cry? That may be the only thing left. So, to prevent crying your life away, save, save, and save again.

- Save it to Google Drive or Carbonite (some cost) or other back-up site in the cloud (more to come in a future article, but you can figure it out).
- • Save it on your hard drive then: Save it somewhere else on your hard drive. (Not enough. Computer crashes or is lost or stolen? It's still gone.)
- • Save it on a CD (are those even around anymore?)
- • Save it on a "thumb drive" and put that somewhere safe.
- • Save it then email it to yourself. What was that last suggestion? Email it to whom? Yourself? Yes.

Save it frequently while working on it, then every week or two, or every time you work extensively, add more, or edit your story, save it and email it to yourself ... or even to a trusted relative or friend.

That way, if your computer goes Kaput!, you can open your email or contact your go-to person, and retrieve it. You don't have to rent space in the "cloud" or buy expensive equipment or pay for backups that are out there somewhere.

Just email it to yourself.

Done. Not lost forever.

Still available.

Re-found.

Continue with story or article.

Smile.

Continue with story or article.

Smile

LEAVES

'Twas only yesterday the leaves were green
More shades of just one color I'd ne'er seen
They'd been such beauties with delightful sheen And now they're gone

But, oh, what's happened in the still, cold night?
The colors now, they fill me with delight
The sunshine of the autumn sky is bright

And all is changed

The new-toned leaves that grace the once-green trees
Are dancing gayly in the autumn breeze
It seems their one desire is just to please

And so they do

Like early Christmas lights those leaves do glow Like candy treats from heaven sent
below
They're twirling, dancing, for the autumn show
They bring us joy

The day comes that the vibrant colors leave
Their beauty as they fall makes my heart grieve
They'll all be on the ground by time it's eve And so it goes

They flutter from the trees without a sound
Their brilliant hues now carpet all the ground
And there was not a single soul around
When it occurred

It seems they love the ground the way they fall
Like they are heading for an autumn ball
Or harking to an unseen, unheard call
The end is near

Some people think those leaves are dead, they say,
But when you see them dancing on their way

Especially when it is a windy day
You know they're not

They've left each tree so dimly, starkly bare
And now, poor trees, they've nothing left to wear
But I'm so glad the trees don't seem to care Just stand alone

Jeannie Stark Turner

