

Writers' Notes

WOMEN WHO WRITE, INC.
NEWSLETTER DEC 2025

“Only in the winter, in the
country, can you have longer,
quiet stretches when you can
savor belonging to yourself.”

— Ruth Stout



Women Who Write, Inc.

Since 1988

womenwhowrite.org



Fright Write Open Mic

By Kim Crumrine

On October 26 we held our open mic at the Metro Cafe in Denville. Dana Punzo organized a terrific event. It was cleverly called *Fright Write* and was attended by witches, goblins and ghosts alike. Just kidding! Well actually, it was attended by 3 beautiful witches... and many other wonderful friends and writers.

It was a boooooo-tiful fall day. People were walking their costumed dogs, leaves were crunching under our feet and the sky was bright blue. A perfect day to gather and share!

There was a chill to the air, but inside it was warm and full of fun. We had around 10 people read their works. Many had a "Halloween" theme which truly kept us on the edge of our seats.

There were unbelievably amazing door prizes... so many that almost everyone won something! And there was also coffee, tea, wine, snacks and Cafe Metro's delectable desserts. I couldn't wait to have their famous homemade gluten free carrot cake. It did not disappoint! So many treats, without any tricks!

If you haven't been to a WWW Open Mic event, I hope you'll attend the next one. It's a truly comfortable environment with such supportive listeners. We hope to have a Valentine's themed one in February for all who LOVE to write.



Author Talk - Liz Alterman

By JulieMac



One thing I can say about Liz is GENEROUS (and knowledgeable) and GENEROUS! She has a spirit of kindness and a smile for days making her workshop extra accessible and interesting. I am not exactly writing a memoir. I'm writing a show that is basically a memoir, but is a performance piece. Still, I figured there is ALWAYS something new to learn or something old to be reminded of and I am so glad I attended!

Because after what I learned from Liz, I guess I AM writing a memoir.

Try something new and different, she said
The personal is universal (I learned that in the stand-up world).
Invite the reader (audience IN).
Use ALL the senses.
What's the central theme? The WHY??
Take them on a JOURNEY.



Well, that's the deal whether on a stage or on a page.

I especially loved her telling us to WRITE. Don't worry about where it goes, if it fits, does it work.
Simply WRITE it!

It may become an essay or a poem or a part of the bigger story. You won't know yet so if it wants to be written, WRITE IT.

The story may be legion but your telling of it is unique.

There will be plenty of time for editing later. Let those words fly before you clip the wings!

Thanks, Liz and thanks WWW for the marvelous opportunity to learn!

Author Talk - Amor Towles

By Kate Cutts

If you, as a writer, could sit at the feet of an author whose work you so admired you'd travel across the country to do so, who would that be? This year, I discovered Amor Towles. Starting with *A Gentleman in Moscow*, then moving backward to his second, then first works, and finishing with *A Table for Two*, his most recent published collection of short stories, I found his writing to be intentionally plotted, with exquisite prose, leaving me satisfied at the conclusion—happy ending or not. When I learned he would be in Nashville, TN giving a public lecture for the Nashville Public Library, I marked my calendar in case it was a time I was travelling south. My luck panned out, and I persuaded my son to attend with me. It was an entertaining event, and my son laughed and listened as much as I. Mr. Towles was interviewed by Pulitzer Prize winning biographer, Jon Meacham. The two had more to say about reading, writing, and life than I can capture, but here are a few take-aways that will fit into our Writer's Notes:

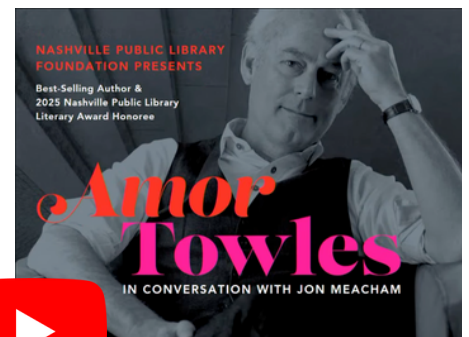
Amor describes his process kind of like this: He'll design a book for several years—where he's just filling notebooks with ideas about the book, by hand, writing about the settings, the people, the events all before he writes an outline— then he starts to write the book which takes a couple of years. His daily practice is to be at his desk M-F at 8:30, to write on his computer, the linear story, until lunch. At noon he dines alone and edits his work by hand or starts writing the next section for tomorrow by hand.

He purposely goes back and forth between typing and writing by hand, since we now know that neurologically hand writing lights up different synapses in the brain and you think very differently when you write by hand. He says he comes up with ideas when he writes by hand that he wouldn't if he were typing at the keyboard.

When asked to give a word to aspiring writers, he gave a few tips: he says the best advice he can give is **"Read, Write, Repeat."** And, **"The way to grow as a writer is to write from as many different perspectives as possible."** Also, **"Inspiration is what happens when you show up at the same time every day. The worst thing a young writer can do is wait for inspiration to show up."** On revising he says, **"Draft one will have about 1/3 of the work removed. Cutting is like sculpting. The first draft is like the block of stone and you chip away until you reveal a David."** (These may not be exact quotes, forgive my paraphrasing.)

If you wish to watch for yourself check out this url:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/HcggK3lvoyw>

You'll hear me laughing and clapping the whole way through.





Take A Look Inside

Hello members of WWW. My name is Joanne Jackovino and I am a long time member of our wonderful organization. I am presently writing a book of prayers which is called *Take A Look Inside*. The prayers come from the heart and are meant to bring comfort to those who read them. The collection includes angel prayers, mantras and spiritual reflections.

I hope to have the book published on Amazon soon. I would like to give any one who is interested a free PDF copy of *Take A Look Inside*. Please contact me at. magicfrog@gmail.com if you would like to receive a copy.

I hope to be able to share my thoughts and prayers with you.



Inspiration

By Ann Frommer / Intro by Kim Crumrine

Author Raymond Carver once said "There are significant moments in everyone's day that can make literature. That's what you ought to write about."

We never know where inspiration will come from...or when. You can sit at your computer and brainstorm until your coffee is cold...or an idea can strike as you're living your life. That is part of the mystique, allure, challenge, fun and reward of writing! Ann is sharing with us the backstories- the inspiration behind- her novels, and why she felt compelled to write them.

Ann Frommer's latest novel, *Boomer, Working Dog* was inspired by her son, Greg's last visit to New Jersey.

Greg, a former IT guy, wanted to make a career change. Inspired by his friend to spend some time with him in Colorado, he decided to stay longer and find work building houses.

He loved working with his hands, enjoyed the outdoors and the money was good. Eventually his work was recognized and was offered a job in Leadville, Colorado.

Greg, always an animal lover who grew up with, and later owned dogs during his young lifetime. Checking on "Craig's List" he found a chocolate lab, the remainder of a large litter. That adorable pup, whose big brown eyes, snuggly body and nub of a tail that wagged endlessly was meant to be his close companion. He named this four legged bundle of energy, "Boomer".

cont. →

Inspiration

By Ann Frommer

Boomer accompanied Greg almost everywhere he went.

The last time they visited New Jersey, it began to snow. Ignoring my pleading to stay longer, Greg took his seat and then, without any hesitation, Boomer jumped into the passenger seat ready to go. He knew where he belonged and knew what to do, to be there with Greg, protect him and keep him company and alert for the long drive.

I knew, then, the story of Boomer and his dedication to Greg had to be written.

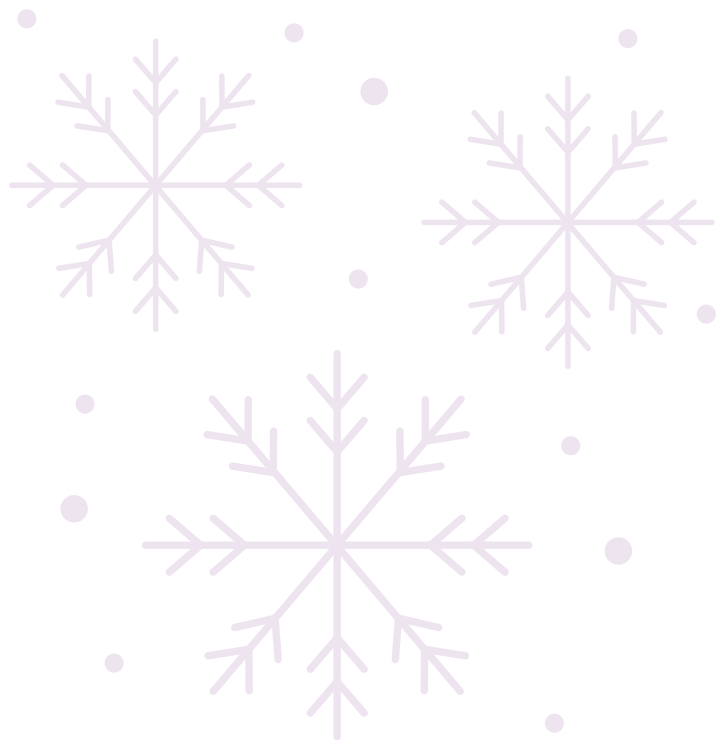
And her story, *Christmas in Her Heart*, was inspired just before Christmas one year.

It was just before Christmas. My husband, Bob and I were visiting my good friend and former nursing classmate, Joyce. Joyce lived in Bethlehem, PA.

Joyce suggested we visit the Hotel Bethlehem; she said it was bought by several fraternity brothers who attended one of the local Ivy League colleges. I was in awe of the decor. The lobby was lined with decorated trees, each by a different designer. Everything spoke “Christmas”.

While Bob rested with a Sudoku and Joyce read, I interviewed the woman at the reception desk. She gave me a full history of the hotel and a brief tour. Part of the tour was the ballroom. That was it! I pictured an orchestra and dancing...folks in formal attire. My reaction was, “I want a going away party!”

The book details parts of Hope Fuller’s (Hope is the main character) life and ending of her life.



Published Author Book Discussion

By Lois B. Dornfeld

On September 28, 2025 the members of Women Who Write were treated to a very inspirational and informative zoom session with member Laura Daniels.

Laura told us about her published book of poems titled *Gentle Grasp*. She shared several of her beautiful poems along with her creative process.

For example, in her poem “Double Crossed” Laura uses an extended metaphor about dance, which is really about cancer. Her poem “Gentle Grasp” became the title of her book. The photo on the cover of her book is a beautiful pink peony from Getty Images. Laura found the photo on istockimages.com. It cost \$35 to buy the license for the picture from Getty Images. She also pointed out that you can get free images from pixabay.com and unsplash.com.

Laura decided to publish *Gentle Grasp* by choosing 20/25 of her poems that were previously published. She hired a friend in Canada to edit her poems and put them in a good order. Laura told us that she was rejected by the first publisher, but accepted by Kelsay Books. Kelsay Books is a traditional small publisher that charges a small fee for manuscript submission reviews.

Laura explained that small publishers such as Kelsay Books pay royalties for books sold. Her book is available on Amazon and she is able to get her book discounted but not for free.

Laura gave us a wealth of information including three websites where a writer can publish with no fee:

→  Submittable

→  CHILL SUBS®

→  Duotrope®

Check out Laura’s website at:

lauradanielswriter.wordpress.com

where you can read her monthly “Wednesday Wanderings”

Laura has led several expressive writing workshops at Mary’s Place by the Sea, a place for women with cancer to heal mind, body and soul.

She is founder of the Facebook blog: The Fringe 999 and editor of The Fringe 999 Poetry Forum which is an online platform dedicated to fostering a vibrant community for poets and poetry enthusiasts. It offers a space for sharing and discussing poetry, providing resources and support for both emerging and established poets. The forum features a variety of content, including original poetry, discussions on poetic techniques, and information about upcoming poetry events and workshops.

Laura is currently working on her second poetry collection tentatively titled *Wayfinder*. Look for it in 2026.

Memoir Recommendations

By Kim Crumrine

It's always a good idea to read examples of the genre you're writing. I work on children's books and spend a lot of time in the kids' section of the library, perusing the shelves, studying the flow and format of the gems I find. I feel this helps me be a better writer/illustrator.

Liz Alternman's wonderful memoir workshop held on October 19 at the Madison Community House, was not only full of helpful tips but she offered several recommendations of memoirs worth reading to help and inspire you as you craft your own.

She read a page from Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*, to show how a memoir can be moving and beautifully written. The book which won a Pulitzer Prize for Biography, is written with such heart and detail, pulling the reader right in.

Matthew McConaughey's memoir *Greenlights* uniquely includes his personal journals to tell his story. Liz discussed the various ways a memoir writer can approach structure, and cited his book as a creative way to do so. Other suggestions might be to include recipes, emails or poems.

Maggie Smith's memoir, *You Could Make This Place Beautiful* includes the data Google Maps might capture to impart context and meaning. A snapshot, like a photo of a small bike leaning against a porch can say so much about what was happening at that time.

Liz also mentioned that both *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls and *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed have excellent opening pages. It's essential to invite the reader in and keep the reader close with authenticity and vulnerability.

Reading these books may help you as you write the memoir only you can write. As Marion Roach Smith said, and Liz quoted,

“It's about something and you are the illustration.”

