

SLO NightWriters

WORDSMITHS



September 2021

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President's Letter

by Janice Konstantinidis

Dear Fellow NightWriters,

Greetings yet again from Paris, fellow NightWriters. I am very grateful to be spending such happy times with my family. As some of you know, I have been unwell for some time. I am happy to say I am recovering.

The year marches along! I see signs of fall as I walk about. I wish I could say the coming season brings better news about the pandemic. For now, we must be careful and make sure we are vaccinated. We aren't sure when we will be able to hold public meetings again; we will keep you informed. When we do meet again, it is very likely it will be at the United Church of Christ as before, but in their sanctuary while the meeting hall is undergoing renovation.

I hope you continue to keep your spirits up and continue to write. My mind is filled with ideas for my writing.

We will be holding elections in November. I hope we can fill our board with eager and motivated members. We have much unfinished business given the lack of opportunity to do more during Covid. Please read and consider the election information in this issue

Wattlebird

A Wattle Bird, feathers askew,
was asked if he knew what to do;
when coiffeurs were flighty,
and somewhat unsightly,
he said he'd fix them with glue.

Janice Konstantinidis



Please stay well and safe. One of our members, Ruth Starr, is very unwell in the hospital. Her spirits are low. Anyone who knows Ruth and who is on Facebook, please flood her page with love and hope for her recovery.

Janice Konstantinidis



© Lorraine Flakemore

Photo by Lorraine Flakemore

General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, September 14

Judythe Guarnera

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Judythe Guarnera

Using the Five Senses - Add Descriptive Dimension to Your Writing

Most writers know that description—of setting, characters, action—can make or break a story.

In this presentation, Judythe will cover general information on description, including show vs. tell and then go into detail about a tool which can convert ordinary, prosaic, non-memorable writing to exciting writing that readers won't want to put down.

Writers and readers take in information through the five senses: sight, taste, sound, smell, and touch, but approximately 83% of our knowledge comes to us visually. What about the other 17%? What about audial learners or those who need tactile stimuli to learn? Prepare to be surprised about which of the five senses leaves the deepest memories.

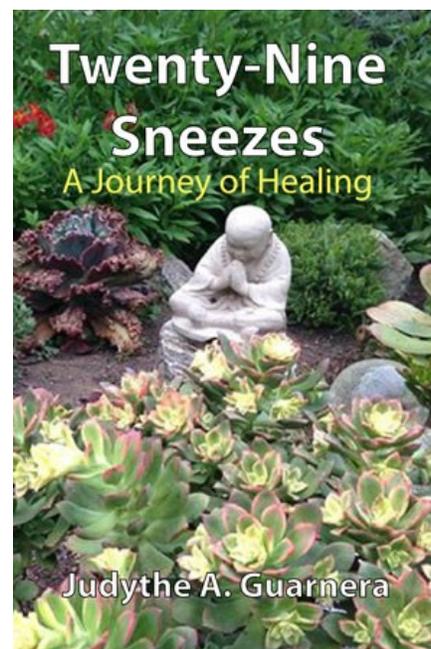
Yet, despite our different ways of learning, we often expect our readers to respond to just visual descriptions. Check your own writing to see if most of your description isn't visual.

Judythe confesses that her desire to learn more about how to use the other senses to enliven her writing is what inspired her to research this topic and share it with you. Her goal is to inspire you and herself to enliven our writing by using all five senses in whatever genre we are writing.

Bio:

Now 82, Judythe Guarnera declares herself too old to die young, which she considers a benefit to her writing. She's happy with her one published novel and now focuses on short stories, memoir, and essays because they provide instant gratification when her time might be limited.

Judythe, the former editor of the *NightWriter* column in Tolosa Press, and editor of four anthologies, has been published in nine anthologies, including four in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Her novel, *Twenty-Nine Sneezes*, is available on Amazon in paperback and on Kindle. Within the next few months, she hopes to begin releasing three books—collections of her shorter writings which cross a variety of genres.



General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, October 12

Forrest Gander

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Forrest Gander

Is There A Relationship Between Poetry and Ecology?

As globalization draws us together and industrialization and human population pressures take their toll on natural habitats, as species of plants and animals flicker and are snuffed from the earth, it may be worthwhile to ask whether an ethnocentric view of human beings as a species independent from others underpins our exploitation of natural resources and sets into motion dire consequences.

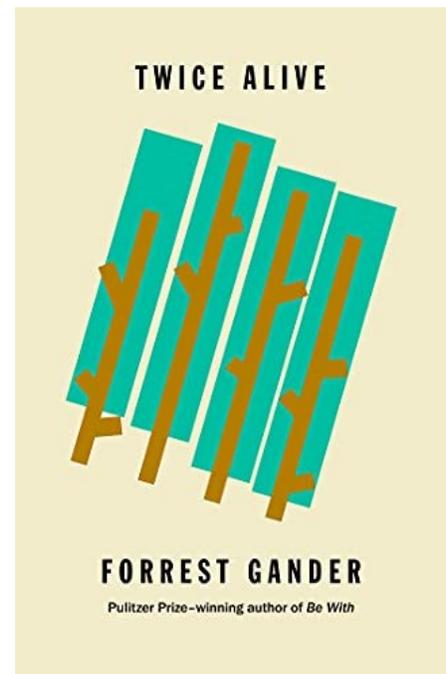
What we have perpetrated on our environment has certainly affected a poet's means and material. But can poetry be ecological? Can it display or be invested with values that acknowledge the economy of interrelationship between human and non-human realms? Aside from issues of theme and reference, how might syntax, line break, or the shape of the poem on the page express an ecological ethics? If our perceptual experience is mostly palimpsestic or endlessly juxtaposed and fragmented; if events rarely have discreet beginnings or endings but only layers, duration, and transitions; if natural processes are already altered by and responsive to human observation, how does poetry register the complex interdependency that draws us into a dialogue with the world?

Forrest will also talk about his experience as an editor of the poetry series at University of California Press and of Lost Roads Publishers, and to delve into literary subjects of interest to members.

Bio

Forrest Gander, a writer and translator with degrees in geology and literature, was born in the Mojave Desert and taught at Harvard and Brown Universities. Awarded the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for poetry for [Be With](#) and fellowships from the Guggenheim, Whiting and United Artists foundations, Gander has most recently published [Twice Alive](#), a book focused on human and non-human intimacies. Gander translates books by poets from Spain, Latin America, and Japan. He lives in California.

Find out more about Forrest Gander at: www.forrestgander.com



General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, November 9

Miguel A. Casellas-Gil

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Miguel A. Casellas-Gil

A Behind the Scenes Look at Earned Media to Build Your Brand

Getting the media's attention is just the first step when it comes to promoting your book or your brand through print, online, TV, radio, and podcast interviews. How you leverage your media successes is the real key for getting the most mileage out of the power of the media.

After all, you can't just wish and hope the right people will see your great interview or notice your quote in a magazine. You gained enormous credibility when the media recognized that you have something important to say. Now It's up to you to incorporate those media appearances into your marketing and let people know that when the media needed someone who could speak with authority on your area of expertise, they turned to you.

Miguel Casellas-Gil, Creative Director & Strategist at [Advantage Forbes Books](#), will take you behind the scenes and show you how PR professionals get the media's attention and leverage the results.

Bio

Miguel Casellas-Gil is a vibrant, creative, and passionate communications specialist with over 15 years of public and media relations experience.

Prior to joining News & Experts (Part of Advantage Forbes Books), Miguel worked in public relations for over a decade, managing national and international clients, including Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and not-for-profit organizations.

At News & Experts, Miguel has helped authors and professionals in multiple industries build and amplify their personal brand and authority through the power of the media.

As the Creative Director and Strategist, he oversees the creative strategy and execution of publicity campaigns, generating results with the most important news organizations in the US like The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, The New York Times, CNN, and Fox. Around the globe, Miguel has developed relationships with editors, journalists, and producers in The Times & Sunday Times, Financial Times, Capital, South China Morning Post, The Daily Telegraph, CNBC Asia, and Bloomberg Asia. Miguel holds two bachelor's degrees, one in Marketing from the University of Puerto Rico and the second one in Corporate Communications from the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico.



General Meeting Previews

Tuesday, December 14
Open Mic

5:15 pm: Join the Critique Table

6:30 pm: Open Mic for SLO NightWriter Speakers

Your Chance to Tell Your Story and Share with Fellow NightWriters

We are holding an "open mic" event on December 14, 2021. This is an opportunity to talk about the work you are doing, books published, poetry readings, story telling and more. This is an event by our members for our members and a great way to reconnect in the aftermath of Covid-19. The event will be conducted on Zoom.

What to Do

If you would like to participate, please send an email to our Program Director, Steven Mintz, at smintz@calpoly.edu. Please include a short statement about your presentation. Contact Steve if you have any questions.

Notices

Speakers Needed for 2022

Our Program Director, Steven Mintz, would like to invite members to speak at one of the meetings in 2022. One purpose is to showcase the amazing talent we have in SLO NightWriters. Addressing the members is a great way to share your ideas, accomplishments, and passion. It also is a networking opportunity. We hope that our monthly meetings will be held in-person in 2022 at the usual meeting site, Covid permitting. The United Church of Christ at 11245 Los Osos Valley Road in SLO. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month.

What to Do

If you are interested in speaking, please contact Steve Mintz at smintz@calpoly.edu and provide a couple of sentences about your topic. Also, be sure to include one or two dates that you are available.

If you know of someone in the community who would be an excellent speaker, please contact Steve and, if possible, provide their email address or phone contact.

Notices

SLO NightWriters Board Election Information

BACKGROUND

SLO NightWriters is several years overdue holding elections for primary board positions:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Our current officers have been wearing multiple hats to cover vacant positions, in addition to coping with the stresses of the pandemic. SLO NightWriters needs your support to function in the future. A description of each position appears below.

CANDIDATES AND NOMINATIONS

If you would like to run for one of the elected positions, simply send an email to slonwmembership@gmail.com with your name and the position you are seeking. We will place your name on the candidate list, and we will contact you with further information.

If you know someone who you think would make a good board member, please submit their name. Nominations will be kept anonymous and the elections committee will contact them to see if they are interested.

Candidates will have the opportunity to submit a 250 word statement to be published in the newsletter, on the website and to be distributed through email.

ELECTION SCHEDULE

Open nomination period:

September 14 to October 19

Publishing and Review of Candidate Statements:

October 19 to November 9

Election day:

November 9 at Zoom meeting

ELECTION COMMITTEE

The election committee established by the board includes:

- Tina Clark
- Steve Derks
- Pat Gimer
- TBD (volunteer needed)

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the election.

OTHER SLONIGHTWRITER POSITIONS

In addition to the elected positions mentioned above, there are several unelected positions open in the NightWriter organization. These positions are appointed by the board. They can become voting positions on the board if the member has a willingness to participate in board activities. Please email slonwmembership@gmail.com if you have an interest in filling one of them.

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

All board positions (elected and appointed) have one vote each on the board. Although each of the elected positions below have their specific responsibilities, their primary responsibility is to participate in board activities to develop plans and programs for the benefit of the organization.

PRESIDENT

The President serves as the official representative of the organization and ensures compliance with our bylaws, board policies, and state and federal requirements. The President presides over all meetings and is responsible for overseeing committee and chairperson appointments and activities.

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Notices

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VICE-PRESIDENT

The Vice President performs the duties of the President in his/her absence and performs other duties as assigned by the President or the Board.

SECRETARY

The Secretary keeps an accurate record of meeting minutes and presents minutes for examination and approval at subsequent meetings. The secretary also handles correspondence as directed by the President and Board.

TREASURER

The Treasurer handles all financial matters for the organization including maintaining complete and accurate records of all financial transactions and coordinating the preparation of state and federal filings. The Treasurer presents monthly reports of all income and expenditures for examination at each Board meeting and serves as an authorized signatory on all accounts.

Member Requests for Help

Sue McGinty needs an experienced person to format her latest novel, including copyright material and front and back covers. Respond to SueMcGinty@aol.com.

Greg Koby needs support reading and editing essays he has written. Respond to slonnewsletter@gmail.com.

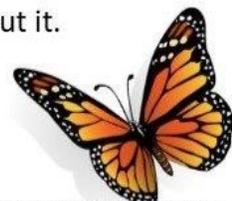
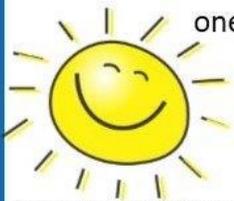
Sunshine Corner

Need a Little Sunshine?

Into every life a little rain might fall, times when we long for sunshine, but no one notices.

NightWriters would like to send a card to any of its members who are ill, have lost a loved one, had surgery or an accident, but we don't always hear about it.

So, Fellow Writers, we need you!



Please email me, Judythe Guarnera: judy.guarnera@gmail.com and let me know when someone you know needs a little sunshine.

Notices

Monthly Online Zoom Meetings

During the pandemic isolation, we are offering online meetings and presentations via Zoom (see page 3 for details of our September 14 General Meeting). We encourage interested visitors to join us. The meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month. The Critique Table will begin at 5:15 pm and the General Meeting will begin at 6:30 pm.

If you have any ideas or comments about our online presentations, please contact our Program Director, Steven Mintz, at smintz@calpoly.edu

Visitors are always welcome. For details, visit our website: www.slonightwriters.org

How to Join the Monthly Zoom Critique Table

1. If you desire to have your work critiqued, send your chosen two pages to Terry Sanville (tsanville@sbcglobal.net) by the Saturday before the meeting.
2. Login to the monthly Zoom meeting a few minutes before 5:15 pm on the day of the meeting using the link below, the link on our website, or the link provided in the email that is sent to members. You are welcome to join us even if you just want to listen and hear the critiques.
3. If you have any specific issues or questions you'd like covered at the Critique Table, just let Terry (tsanville@sbcglobal.net) know before the meeting.

The Zoom Meeting Link

[Click HERE to join the Zoom meeting](#)

Submit Stories, Photos and Ads to the Newsletter

We will publish advertisements for NightWriters' books and book writing-related events. This advertising is Free For Members. Please provide the graphic (book cover or other graphic) for the announcement.

We will also accept original photographs, and unpublished Flash Fiction between 400-800 words from current members. Excerpts from published works, if they stand alone as their own mini-story, are also acceptable. We are also interested in articles, kudos and event notices. And if you have any other ideas for content, please let us know.

Send all submissions as attachments to: slonnewsletter@gmail.com, and put NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION in the subject line. We're all writers... so, take advantage of this opportunity to be published in your newsletter.

TIPS AND TIDBITS

by Judythe Guarnera

STORY PLOT: PLOT POINTS, PLOT HOLES AND POTHoles PART 2



Here's hoping you read last month's column so you can jump right in today—be sure to avoid the potholes. If you didn't read it or need a refresher...

Let's review basic descriptions from last month's column.

- The sequencing of a series of events is the plot.
- A plot point is any incident, episode, or event that "hooks" into the action and spins it around in another direction.
- A plot hole is something a writer wants to avoid. A plot hole shares characteristics with potholes, which can result in considerable damage being done to a car's frame and can cause accidents when the car spins out of control.

Last month I shared the image of a car spinning out of control when encountering a pothole to a reader spinning out of control when plot points are out of whack. Plot holes show up when the writer paints his protagonist into a corner.

Tip: Keep a journal of the plot points as you insert them into your story to avoid the jarring a reader experiences when they hit a plot hole.

TYPES OF PLOT HOLES:

Out of Character

The previous column cited as an example of a "character plot hole," one where a super honest person robs a bank. This leads to an easily created "out of character" plot hole.

Here's another example. A senior who has had a four point GPA throughout his high school career and has been carrying an 'A' in AP Calculus, flunks his mid-term. Unless the author provides a reason—perhaps his mother is dying or his father has become an alcoholic and is beating him—readers might have difficulty sticking with the story, because they don't believe this could happen. They can now read on and another plot hole has been avoided.

Incomplete communication

A neighborhood grandmother has heard rumors that a teen living next door has been breaking into the houses of his newspaper route clients when they are on vacation. Grandma has a soft spot for the teen, whom she's known his whole life, and knows his family are great people. Her dilemma is whether to risk a friendship she values by alerting the parents so they can fix the problem.

Grandma invites the mother over for tea and strikes up a conversation with her. She tells her about someone stealing, adding clues she hopes mother puts together. The goal is for the mother to note the connection, fix the problem while never realizing that Grandma knew it was her son stealing. Friendship is maintained.

The best solution here would be a direct conversation between the two families. Because of a legitimate fear of losing the friendship, Grandma says nothing. The reader

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is frustrated, saying, “Why the heck didn’t she just tell them what she knew?” This might be said while the reader is tossing the book aside—never to pick it up again—especially if there are too many other plot holes.

The story spins in the wrong direction in the plot hole and gets jarringly off track.

Strange Timing

Using the example above, it seems evident that the conversation should happen before the police arrest the boy. Grandma tells her husband she’s going to the neighbors because she’s heard the police are about to make an arrest. Grandma never shows up and there’s a disconnect. The boy is arrested. But, if hours later, it’s discovered that Grandma was run over by a motorcycle as she crossed the street and is hospitalized, the reason enables the reader to accept the outcome as one of life’s unexplained moments.

“Why not?”

Have you ever read a book with a huge controversy in it, one where the reader sees the solution which is ultra-obvious—but the protagonist misses it completely? You want to shout at him, “Over there, over there behind the piano.” You, as a reader, may be so frustrated that you set the book aside and never finish it.

Just before your frustration peaks, you find out that the protagonist is partially blind and often misses things right in front of him. Suddenly you understand and now you’re ready to root

him on until he perhaps trips over it. Another plot hole avoided.

Identifying plot holes

This isn’t an easy task; it takes time, patience and practice which lead to skill. The easiest way to begin is to read the work of others. I don’t know about you, but it’s much easier for me to see mistakes in other’s writing than in my own.

While you’re reading a good book, ask yourself questions like the following:

- Given the story line and the personalities of the characters, does it make sense what they are doing?
- Does the timing make sense? Are things happening when and in the order you would expect to solve the conflict?
- Does it make sense that the author kept information from the characters? Does the author have a reason that makes it okay?
- If the story seems to be snowballing toward an inevitable event, and it takes a sudden detour, has the author provided a logical reason for the change?

When you begin to identify plot holes in what you’re reading, take a look at your own writing and see if you might be doing the same things—and fix them.

In the Rhythm of Writing
Judy

THE WRITER'S CORNER

by Judythe Guarnera



Do We Have an Opportunity for You! Or What?

Last month we introduced a trial column in *Wordsmiths* to increase the presence of members' writing each month. This is, after all, your newsletter and each of you *love* to write and from what we've heard, *love* to be published.

If you submit, you'll receive a free edit and then will be published in *Wordsmiths*.

Did you know that being published in a writing organization's newsletter is something you can cite on your writing resume? Many publications are looking for published authors and may well give your work a more careful look.

As someone who has written a novel and many short pieces, I know how much my skills have improved writing short work. It's easier to see your mistakes and fix them.

This month's Prompt:

If Superman came in and replaced your principal for a day, what would school be like?

You can write from a teacher or a student's perspective.

Respond to the prompt for the October issue by September 15.

Guidelines:

Entries must be double-spaced, Times Roman 12 pt., at least 100 words and no more than 500 words. Please spell-check your work before submitting. Stories may be fiction, non-fiction, essay, memoir. Be funny, serious, angry—whatever.

Be sure to add your name and contact email.

Send submissions for the October issue to judy.guarnera@gmail.com by September 15.

Be sure to put "Newsletter Writing Prompt" in the subject line.

Moved or Changed Email?

Please notify NightWriters of any change in address or email: jkon50@gmail.com.

Join NightWriters and send dues or renewal checks (payable to SLO NightWriters) to: SLO NightWriters, PO Box 2986, Paso Robles, CA 93447. Or join/renew online through our website: www.slonightwriters.org and pay with a credit card.

Kudos, Kudos, Kudos...

Terry Sanville

Terry Sanville's short story, *After Winter*, will be published in the May 2022 edition of [The Bookends Review](#) magazine, an online publication that puts out an annual anthology.

Have Kudos to Crow About?

Do you have an article or story published, or soon to be published, in a local, national or international print or online magazine?

Or a book published?

How about a review, or an award, honor or recognition of your writing?

If so, we'd like to know about it. To have your literary kudos included in *WordSmiths*, send an email to slonnewsletter@gmail.com by the 20th of the month.

Have You Checked Out Our Website Lately?

Control Your Own Information

Post your bio, picture, book covers and ordering links. Contribute a writing blog post-free publicity!

MEMBER SITE LINKS

List your website(s) and blog(s) with live links — makes it easier for the public to find you and helps build your platform.

BOOK REVIEWS

Get your book reviewed. Write a review—it's a valid publishing credit.

WRITERS SERVICES

Do you have a writing or professional skill? Get listed on our new Services Page.

FACEBOOK

Become a "Fan" of NightWriters! Visit NW's Facebook page and sign up today! Also, link your Facebook page and your websites and blogs to NW sites.

LINKEDIN

Connect with NW on LinkedIn. Help build your author platform with writing professional connections.

The One and Only Susan Tuttle

by Dennis Eamon Young

Can it really be more than a month now since Susan has been gone? It seems as if she were always there over my shoulder, sharing the space of the muses with Hemingway and Dickens. One would lean in and whisper, "let's get another paragraph out of that scene", while the other would bristle and yell, "Cut that down to one bleeding sentence-no more!" Then Susan would laugh, lean in, and gently remind me to add more sensory markers and not bury the dialog.

This scenario still plays out, here in my writing cave in the depths of night, but no longer can I show her in person what I had written and work it into the writing exercises of the coming week. No, never more. She left us over a month ago now, drifting off to an eternal sleep, or perhaps to inspire a much wider circle of aspiring writers.

Susan always seemed to be working on many short stories, novels, and series at any given moment. She was unique in the variety of her writings, but I doubt that anyone else could pick up the scattered threads and finish them to her satisfaction. Her voice was clear and steady, whether she was singing at church or guiding her characters through a storm of malevolent episodes. She exhibited a strong and well-motivated character in writing, editing, or teaching.

Having been given up and then adopted as a child, she lived her life under the North Star of her intrinsic search for her identity, in all facets of her life creating strong

personal and intra-personal identities to those who came into her path, helpful to a fault, a friend always at the ready, giving clear vision to those of us who may be struggling to find our 'voice' in our writings.

When I first joined SLO NightWriters, I was blessed enough to find an open spot in the South County Critique group with such great influences as Judythe Guarnera, Evy Cole and Susan Tuttle. When I presented my first work for the group to critique, everyone was quite enthusiastic and kind. When it came to Susan's turn, she also exhibited that response, but then added that "As pleasing as your piece is, it is not a story. It reads more like a lovely travelogue, but has no tension, no antagonist, no drama." I was a bit crestfallen, but Susan outlined what was needed and how to bring those and many other elements to bear, always encouraging.

Through the years she has been an unwavering influence upon me and so many other writers. She has left a gaping hole in the writers' firmament that may never really be filled and yet it will ever be a well that so many of us can go back to, replenishing those insights and lessons as we progress. I was about three days away from sending her my first book for editing and would have truly enjoyed her input, working together on that manuscript. I can hear her now, urging me forward.

(Continued from page 16)

rotten bubble gum. She pulled out another—Raid-scented and purple. “Here,” she said, with a catch in her voice. “Your legacy. *Nightwood’s Call.*”

She grabbed me in a hug and my own eyes stung—as I felt real grief for our Aunt Doreen.

Critique Groups Are Up and Running

Are you looking to join a Critique Group? Many have begun to meet in person again or have been meeting on zoom and are looking for new members. Check out the website listing [SLO NightWriters - SLO NW Critique Groups](#) to see if one is a good match for you. (Make sure to refresh your browser to make sure you are seeing the most current listing – there are five groups listed.)

President: Janice Konstantinidis
Vice-President: Vacant
Secretary: Leonard Carpenter
Treasurer: Steve Derks
Program Director: Steven Mintz
Membership Coordinator: Jim Aarons
Critique Group Coordinator: Tina Clark
Social Media/Publicity Coordinator:
 Meagan Friberg
Contest Director: Vacant
Welcome Committee: Vacant
Sunshine Chair: Judythe Guarnera
Website Master: Janice Konstantinidis
Web Assistant: Steve Derks
Newsletter Editor: Steve Derks
Photographer: Vacant
Hospitality: Mary Silberstein

We Need Your Help

The success of non-profit organizations like SLO NightWriters depends on its members. We all have talents other than writing that any organization could make use of. NightWriters has many special opportunities for members to get involved, working “behind the scenes.” If you’d like to assist in any capacity, email: jkon50@gmail.com.

Aunt Doreen's Legacy

by Anne R. Allen

My cousin Veronica still talked with her mouth full.

"It's so tragic that Aunt Doreen died here all alone," she said as the cookie crumbs fell down the front of her black funeral outfit.

I agreed it was sad. Aunt Doreen didn't seem to have had a lot of friends. Except for a few Stratford Cosmetics sales ladies, nobody but family had showed up for her memorial service.

"I like that scent you're wearing," Veronica said. I knew she was trying to make nice, but it was kind of pushy how she sniffed my neck, like we were still ten-year-old best buddies. It had been a decade since we'd even exchanged a Christmas card. "It's way nicer than that god-awful Stratford perfume Aunt Doreen used to give you." She gave a phony laugh. "What was it called? 'Night Won't Fall'; 'Night Must Fall'; Night... something."

"*Nightwood's Call* was the name."

I grabbed the last chocolate chip cookie as the Stratford ladies vultured around Aunt Doreen's battered dining table. "Aunt Doreen decided it was my 'signature scent.' It smelled like it could kill cockroaches."

We should have been grieving, but I just felt weird and numb. It's always sad when somebody dies, but Aunt Doreen was pretty old, and she'd never had a relationship with us kids—except to send us that tacky perfume at holidays and birthdays.

"At least yours came in a cool purple bottle." Veronica was still talking to me, but her focus was on Aunt Doreen's knick-knack shelves. She was scoping them out like an early bird at a garage sale. "The perfume she chose for me came in a jar shaped like big, pink lips: *Kiss Me Quick*. It smelled like bubble gum." She opened the doors to the china cabinet. "Nothing here but these stupid sales awards." She counted the plastic trophies. "She was the district's top seller for...what,

twenty years? Where did it go? She never spent a dime, from the looks of this dump. She must have saved up quite a nest egg."

OK, Veronica was cutting to the chase. The two of us had inherited Aunt Doreen's estate, which didn't appear to be much. But the family always suspected there was more.

"That old girl's got loot hidden away," Mom used to say. "Probably stashed in that cellar." Aunt Doreen kept a big padlock on the cellar door and never let anybody go down there.

As if she'd been reading my mind, Veronica pulled a key ring from her pocket. "I found these in the desk. One's gotta get us into that cellar. Wanna check it out?"

It seemed tacky to disappear in the middle of the funeral reception, but I wasn't going to let Veronica snoop around without me.

We finally got the rusty lock open, and I flicked on my purse flashlight as Veronica led the way down some creaky old stairs. I could barely breathe—the place had the strangest smell.

"What do you think we're looking for?" Veronica said. "Piles of stocks and bonds? Jars of coins, put up like canned peaches?"

I beamed the flashlight around the dirt-floor room, which was lined with rows of shelves, crammed with stuff. Not jars or stock certificates. Something papery and pink: Stratford Cosmetics bags—all full. Hundreds of them. Veronica pulled one out, still stapled with an invoice. Never opened. No customer name.

We realized the truth at the same moment.

"Oh, my god," Veronica said. "She bought all this...herself?"

"One way to be district seller of the year." I felt a little sick.

Veronica ripped open a bag and pulled out a jar shaped like big fuchsia lips. It stank of

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NightWriters REVIEW BOARD

As writers, we need to read in order to see what others are doing. We also find out what works and what doesn't, what we need to avoid and what we want to incorporate into our own bag of skills.

So, as long as we're reading, why not read other members' books and write reviews for them? It's a win-win for everyone: we learn by reading, and authors garner those all-important reviews for their work.

NightWriters has set up a Review Board, where we connect member readers with member writers' new works. Below you will

find a listing of members who are willing to read and review (on Amazon, Goodreads, or their other favorite review site) specific works by other members. You must be a NightWriters member in good standing to take advantage of this board. If you have a new book for review, just contact the reader (s) listed here, and arrange to have a book sent to them. Please check carefully to make sure your genre fits the genres each person reads. Have fun!

Review Board Members*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Genres</u>
Jim Aarons	jim@jeadv.com	historical fiction
Mark Arnold	markarnoldphd@gmail.com	historical, sci-fi
Judith Bernstein	ryewit@live.com	memoir, creative nonfiction
Steve Bowder	sbowder@live.com	historical novel
David Brandin	dbrandin@earthlink.net	political, historical, general, sci-fi
Tina Clark	outsidetheglasstjc@gmail.com	sci-fi, creative nonfiction
Ruth Cowne	abuela10@att.net	memoir, flash fiction
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Jody Julkowski Nelson	jjnteacher@gmail.com	fiction, creative nonfiction
Jennifer Rescola	jkrescola@charter.net	autobiography, novels
Brian Schwartz	brian@selfpublish.org	nonfiction
Mary Silberstein	luvlamas@gmail.com	poetry, fiction

****To be added to our Review Board listing, write to: slonnewsletter@gmail.com and put Review Board in the subject line.***