

Vision

A Resource
For Writers

Issue # 37

January/February 2007

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Refining an Outline: The Pointy Stick Method
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Masthead

Vision is published bi-monthly and pays .005 (one half) cent per word. I will be happy to look at any articles that will help writers. We pay one half cent per word for material.

Guidelines for Vision

If you have any questions, or would like to propose an article for an upcoming issue, feel free to drop a line to either of the editors below. We look forward to hearing from you!

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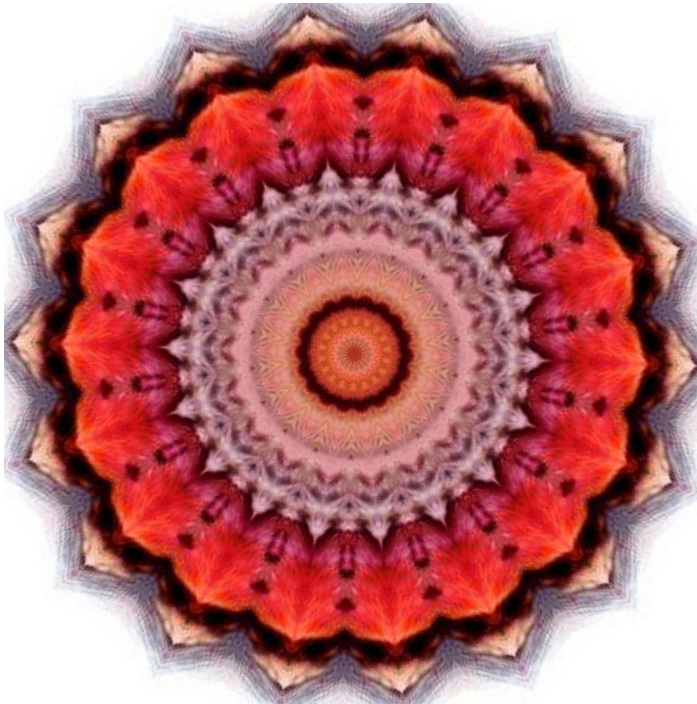
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About This Issue

Issue # 37

January/February 2007



With this issue, Vision begins the seventh year of production. We're starting out strong with several interesting articles covering everything from outlining to the use of poisons in writing fiction. Our interview this month ends with a question that only you can answer!

We have several more interviews lined up, and I can already see this is going to be an interesting year of articles.

Once again, I'd like to thank Margaret McGaffey Fisk and Ellen Wright for their invaluable help in getting these issues put together and edited. Thank you, also, to all the writers who have sent articles for Vision and shared what they've learned with other writers who might be looking for just the answers they have found.

So, welcome to another year filled with workshops, interviews, and articles on all aspects of writing. I hope you continue to find articles that help make writing a little more interesting and fun for you. And I hope, as always, that you'll consider offering a few tips of your own

From the Editor:

Another New Year

By Lazette Gifford
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Well, I can't say I'm sorry to see 2006 go. It was not the best year I've ever had, though I did well enough in writing and I improved on both it and my (very amateur) art work. I wrote quite a bit, and at the end I managed to still get my average of 2 submissions a month. Nonetheless, 2006 will not go down as one of my better years. I failed in several of my important writing-related goals, including the one to prepare and send more novels out in submission packages that year. Life conspired against me.

But here we are at the start of a new year. Anything is possible at a time like this, and I love the feeling that I can just leap into a new beginning for my writing career.

It's a state of mind, and I purposely foster it every year. It's easy to reach December 31st and look back at everything that didn't work out quite right, and in doing so go into the new year with a bleak outlook. I refuse to do it. I spend the last month of the year finishing up every project that hasn't already been completed. I clear away everything. And then, on January 1st, I start out with a

brand new story. No ties to the past, no worries about what I didn't do right, or what failed. This is a new year, and I have a whole new chance to do it right.

Each year is a brand new adventure.

So welcome to 2007. I hope it's a good year for all of us!

Workshop: The Lost Sense

By Lazette Gifford

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Andrea walked home from school on the cool November afternoon. Above her, geese flew, their arrow formation heading southward through a cornflower blue sky dotted with fleecy white clouds. Dead leaves, yellow and brown, crunched loudly beneath her feet, marking her passage with the snap of each step.

She rolled a small piece of peppermint candy across her tongue -- the taste sharp and sweet -- and reminding her of the holidays to come. She wished time would pass faster. Grandma and Grandpa would be home for the holidays. She couldn't wait.

The scent of wood smoke hung in the air as she neared home. She kicked at more fallen leaves and then raced the rest of the way to the small house at the end of the street.

As humans, we perceive the world in five senses, but often there is one or two of our senses that get lost in our writing. Sight, sound and scent are prevalent in

most works. Taste comes in sometimes... but touch is often forgotten in common scenes.

And yet we feel everything, all the time -- from the brush of soft clothing to the press of fingers against slick, cool keyboard keys. We are mostly unaware of our sense of touch until something unusual draws us to it: unexpectedly cold bath water, ruffled fur on a cat's back, sticky candy left to melt in a coat pocket.

This lost sense can add something special to your story -- the right 'touch' at the right time, so to speak. However, in order to use the sense of touch in your story, you have to be more aware of it in your own world.

Step # 1

Reach out with your hand and touch three different things. What makes them feel alike? What makes them feel different? What words come the quickest to you?

Zaphod the cat has what we call rabbit fur around here -- softer and silkier than most cat pelts. Beside him sits a white teddy bear with uneven fur that feels like brushed cotton, while the red bow around his neck looks silken, but feels like a finely woven rough net.

Because touch is so constantly with us, it goes unnoticed until we find that extraordinary moment -- the vibration of the ground when a train is passing nearby, for instance. And this is how it should be for your characters as well.

Too much tactile description feels unnatural to the reader, and should only be used often if you are painting an extraordinary character for whom touch means more than it does to the normal person.

We notice touch mostly in the moment when it presents change from the norm. Warm tea on a cold day combines both taste and touch... but how often do we hold the cup for warmth, breathe in the scent of the tea, and only taste it at the last?

Most often we also think of touch in terms of antonyms:

- hot and cold
- sticky and slick
- slimy and powdery
- rough and silken
- wet and dry
- soft and hard
- pain and pleasure

Step # 2

Write a scene contrasting two forms of touch -- either from the list above or some other combination you can come up with. Find at least two different words for each 'touch' that further defines the experience.

She poured tea into the cup on the tray and handed it to him. The cup felt startling cold at first, but in moments the fragrant tea began to warm the fragile porcelain, changing it from icy cold to pleasantly warm, and offsetting the chill of the old house.

The addition of these new descriptions can be subtle, electrifying or sensual. It can blend into another sense descriptions or stand out on its own.

Many stories can benefit from a bit of tactile description. Try looking through one or two scenes of our own and see if you can't find somewhere to add a few extra 'touches' to bring out a new layer in description.

Step 3:

Find something of your own where you can add a little bit of tactile description and create more description and depth for a scene.

*The trees became shadows again. He found it far more difficult to stay connected to the world when everything shifted to shades of black and grey. He wanted the green back, and blessed the little flying flowers moving across his blurred vision, drawing him back from wherever his mind tried to wander. **He gently brushed his hands against the slick damp bark of every tree that came within reach, welcoming the solid reality as another tangible link to the real world.***

Keep the idea of touch in mind while you write and look for ways to describe the world around your characters using this extra sense. Just remember, like in the real world, characters are not going to be constantly aware of everything they brush up against or touch. Reserve this sense for the moment of something extraordinary -- the first touch of a human hand against an alien plant, something unexpected felt in the dark

Successful Business Writing: An Interview with Geoffrey James

By Russell Gifford

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Geoffrey James has written over a hundred feature stories for national publications including *Wired*, *Men's Health*, *Business 2.0*, *SellingPower*, *Electronic Business*, *Computer Gaming World*, *CIO*, *ComputerWorld*, *NetworkWorld*, and *The New York Times*. He is also the author of seven books, including *Business Wisdom of the Electronic Elite*, published by Random House, and *The Tao of Programming*, from InfoBooks. The latter is

quoted as a "canonical book of computer humor" on hundreds of web sites.

Before becoming a full-time writer, Geoffrey worked as a software architect and marketing executive for large computer firms. He has extensive experience in broadcast media and since 1994 has made his living as a writer. In this interview, he shares his roadmap to success as a freelance writer, his views on the business of writing, and a touch of his finely honed sense of humor.

Vision: Your writing credits are impressive. The list of markets you have placed articles includes many big name national publications -- *Wired*, *Men's Health*, *Computer Gaming World*, and *The New York Times*, to name a few. But you are also a successful author of non-fiction books on business practices, specifically with the computer and software industry. Which came first, the books or the articles?

GJ: Before starting freelancing full time, I had written five books: one technical, one historical, and three books of short computer-oriented humor. In 1994, I quit my job as a marketing executive to write a business book, planning to make money as a management consultant and public speaker. In the process of promoting that book, I ended up writing a number of articles and soon found that it was easier -- and more suited to my relatively reclusive character -- to make money writing rather than speaking.

Vision: Where did your writing career begin? What got you started? Was there a magazine that you desperately wanted to crack, or a story you wanted to tell? Or

was it all about the money? What was the push that moved you from marketing, or software engineering, to writing and journalism?



GJ: I started writing at age 4.5 -- an elaborate cartoon that involved domestic conflict, murder, and suicide. My first book was published when I was 6. I recently completed a novel but, after

having it read by several editors, discovered novels apparently require something called a "plot." (Who knew?) Business writing is basically grunt work, although I do like writing about sales technique, because honing my sales skills makes freelancing a lot easier.

Vision: Are there any articles that still stand out in your mind as big achievements, or is it all about 'what's next' with you? Is there a market you're still wishing you could place a sale with? Are the articles simply spin-offs created during the research for the books? Or are the books expanded extensions of the articles?

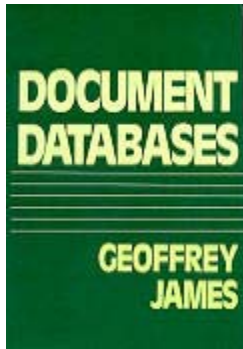
GJ: I used to want to write for the "big" magazines until I learned, the hard way, that prestige of publication is directly proportional to size of editorial sphincter. Unless you're promoting a consultancy, writing a business book is a chump's game. The only way that you can make money writing a business book is to rent out chapter 7 to the CIA so that they can use the middle paragraphs to send secret messages to field operatives. (I'm convinced that nobody ever reads past chapter 1 of any business book.) Seriously, you need to get a \$50k to \$100k advance to make a business book pay as well as an equivalent number of magazine articles.

Vision: Is writing a sideline, or your main source of income? If so -- does it pay the bills? In your experience, can people get into this business and expect to

sustain themselves as writers? Can it replace the dollars you made in your previous job?

GJ: You're kidding, right? On a *bad* year, I only break six figures. On a good year, I gross \$200k. I make much more money writing than I ever made as a programmer or marketing executive, even though I was quite successful in those fields by most standards.

Vision: What does it take to achieve that? Can you break down how many article manuscripts you have in the mail on a normal month, or how many books you need to produce? Or does your business model have other income streams?



GJ: At this point, all my income comes from writing. I make sure that I sell at least \$10k of writing a month, minus whatever ongoing work (like columns) I've previously sold. Making those numbers means spending a certain amount of time each day corresponding with editors and composing story pitches. I make sure that I invoice at least \$500 a day, on average. That means writing at least 500 salable words a day. I would never waste my time writing an article on spec.

Vision: How do you choose topics for your articles or your books? Do you specialize in certain subjects? How much time does it take to research and write an article for your typical sale? What about the timeline for producing a book?

GJ: I base my story pitches on 1) whether I have credibility in that market; 2) whether it a subject matter that's at least mildly interesting to me; 3) what the magazine is currently publishing; 4) the upcoming editorial calendar; and 5) discussions with the editor about what they're looking for. It usually takes about an hour to make a sale (couple of phone calls, emails, story pitch). For an article, I usually budget 500 words a day, which includes research.

Vision: Do you prospect for non-fiction markets? Or are you focused on the book sale? Any suggestions for our writers that could help them tackle some of the big non-fiction markets? Is there a good place to start?

GJ: I've fielded a few book proposals for subjects that interest me personally but my agent can't seem to sell them, even though identically-themed books seem to always appear two years after my proposal was panned. The way to start in non-fiction book markets is to write for small trade magazines. You might not get much per word, but you get experience that can be leveraged into better things.

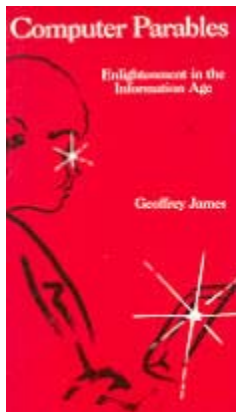
Vision: Did you start with a strategy in mind for becoming a 'writer'? You made it, so it must have worked, right? Or did you succeed in spite of your self?

GJ: I always wanted to write for a living and I wanted to work at home, so I saved a year's income and took the leap.

Vision: How often do you write? Do you set aside time daily? If so, how long do you write? What is your average day like?

GJ: I do the bulk of my writing from noon to five. The mornings are pretty much about reading the news, surfing the web and messing around. I usually take a nap in the middle of the afternoon.

Vision: Has the writing business changed since you started? Is it better or worse?



GJ: Magazine ad pages are down and work is moving onto the Internet. Web sites pay less per word but demand less research, so it's a wash. There's some growth right now in corporate newsletters. Only about .1% of the population can actually write a coherent paragraph, let alone an entire article, and writing can't be outsourced to India or China. Freelance writing can be a great career with good job security, even though in most people's minds the job title "freelance writer" ranks somewhere between "struggling musician" and "starving artist" in terms of earning power and job prestige.

Vision: When did you know you wanted to be a writer? Has your career progressed the way you thought it would?

GJ: I originally thought that I had the potential to be a great writer. I now realize that my skills are adequate for making a good living, but not much beyond that. Sad, but true.

Vision: How have you changed since you started writing? Has writing changed who you are or how you see the world? Are there article subjects that matter most to you? Are they the same ones as when you started writing?

GJ: I get bored pretty easily which is why I've changed careers pretty frequently. The biggest change in my personality is that, after spending 12 years freelancing, I could never, ever, ever return to cubicle land. I like helping individuals to be more successful, which is the focus of my business writing today.

Vision: What do you read? Who has influenced your writing?

GJ: I regularly read the *New Yorker*, the *NY Times*, and the *Atlantic Monthly*. My favorite fiction author is Jack Vance. The best book I've read recently is *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*. I'd rather poke myself in the nostril with a rotten chicken bone than read a business magazine.

Vision: Are there common mistakes you see new writers



making? What suggestions would you give them?

GJ: The most common mistake is thinking that freelancing isn't a sales job. In the first year, freelancing is 100% sales; once you're successful it becomes about 25% of the job, but still the most important part. It amazes me that very few freelancers grasp this basic fact. Even fewer bother to find out what sales is all about and how it's done. At minimum, freelancers must understand how to cold call, how to write a sales proposal, and how to close a sale. If this sounds like something you don't want to learn and do, you'll never be successful freelancing. Suggestion: If you're going to freelance, get comfortable spending long amounts of time in your own company. If you have to take your laptop to Starbucks in order to keep from feeling lonely, you won't last a year.

Vision: As a software engineer, this question may seem strange, but -- as a writer, do you see the Internet as a good tool for upcoming writers? How do you use it in your writing? What about marketing?

GJ: The Internet greatly reduces the amount of time it takes to get good sources for articles. It makes it easier to check out a publication and get background on the editor to whom you're pitching a story. It makes it trivial to find out what else has been published on a subject. Other than putting up a web page for editors to

check out your bona-fides, the Internet is useless for marketing freelancing services.

Vision: What do you have coming out that we should look for? What sort of things do you plan, or hope, to write in the future?

GJ: Right now, I'm just trying increase my sales ratio and get more extra work to pay for a second adoption. So I'm not really focused as much on career development at this point as I am at increasing my client base and profit margin. My most recent "labor of love" is an animated feature film called *Borg War*, which I created, all by my little lonesome, using computer games. It's had a quarter of a million downloads to date and was nominated for a couple of minor awards.

Vision: Thank you for taking this time for this interview. Any last words you'd like to say to our readers?

GJ: Actually, I have a question. Would you readers out there be interested in a book that explains exactly what you need to do to make big money freelancing? I've learned all the tricks. and if a writer as minimally talented as me can do it, I figure that anybody can do it.

(Readers: Is the answer yes, you would be interested in such a book? Email me and let me know, and I'll pass the words on to Geoffrey James!
zette@cableone.net)

Refining an Outline: The Pointy Stick Method

By Nicole Henderson

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Sometimes, I write an outline for a new project, look at what I've written, and am perfectly happy.

Then I actually read the words, and the work begins. It's like sitting down in front of a campfire. For a moment, I am content. In the next breath, I start poking away with a pointy stick, trying to make the fire burn hotter and brighter. It's time to get out my stick, and make my outline glow.

To avoid simply staring helplessly at an overwhelming list of scenes, I use a simple method -- my pointy stick -- to get my mind working in the direction I want to go. I outline in a spreadsheet, because that's what works for me, but this would also work with note cards or a simple list.

I start by identifying my POV characters on each scene. I usually note the POV character when I initially write the scene entry, but this is the time when I take a quick look at each scene, and decide if my first instinct was the correct one.

Next, I make a list of my subplots (or story threads, or plot layers, whichever term you prefer, or best applies to your outline). I assign each a keyword, and go

through the scenes again, marking which subplots (including the main plot thread) surface in each.

Now each scene has a scene description, a POV, and a listing of plot threads. In a spreadsheet, I use a column for each type of information; on a note card, I might put the POV in the top right corner and the plot threads in the top left.

Now it's time for the elbow-grease.

I go down my list of scenes and make sure POV is distributed the way I want it. (The antagonist, a relatively minor character, shouldn't have four POV scenes in a row, for instance, and the primary narrator should have enough coverage to be identifiable.) I reshuffle scenes or add blank lines/cards with a suggested POV wherever I think they're needed.

I repeat the process with plot threads, checking to make sure the main plot doesn't get swamped in the middle, that I didn't let a subplot trail off into nothing, that my plot threads surface often enough that a reader can keep track of them, and that I don't group too many scenes from the same subplot in one spot.

Again, I reshuffle and add blank lines/cards, noting what plot layer they should be associated with.

Then I fill in the blanks, and leave the outline alone for a while. I sleep on it.

Bake cookies. Go to my day job. Visit my parents.

When I have some distance, I re-read the outline, checking out the plot threads and POV to make sure they still look good. I add more scenes if I feel a plot thread needs more coverage. I look for places where a single good decision would have averted conflict, and make sure there are good reasons the characters don't make those decisions. (I want to avoid dialog like this in the first draft: 'I'm not going in there -- I'm terrified of carp!' 'What? The koi pond three scenes ago didn't bother you.' 'It's a new phobia. Required by the plot.') I look for any other plot holes I can spot, for missing transitions and for anything else that feels wrong. I annotate, add scenes, and scribble ideas on post-it notes.

If the outline as a whole feels too short, then I look for a potential new subplot (either something that's already in the background, or something I could add in), and decide how to fit it in with new and existing scenes. If there's not enough action, I add a new obstacle, conflict, or complication. Then I fill in the blank scenes, and start the process again.

It can take a few iterations to get an outline I can live with, but I finish off with a last look at POV and plot threads, to make sure they're still balanced. Then I tuck my pointy stick away, ready to settle in to the business of putting words down on paper.

When I'm done, my outline isn't perfect. But it does burn hotter and brighter, giving me a much better view of the story I'm about to write.

Are You a Writer?

By Scott Warner

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I used to wonder, "Am I a writer?" I felt like Pinto from *Animal House* with an angel and devil on either shoulder. Mine said, "You'll win the Pulitzer!" and "You're a loser!" And left me none the wiser.

You may be asking yourself the same question. But if you answer "yes," when does self-confidence become delusion? How do you know what you know? Apparitions can't help you.

You may see yourself as the literary equivalent of the Hollywood sweater girl working at the soda fountain. You might be encouraged by the praise of mentors, the odd hand-written rejection slip, or the dogged support of a loved one. The answer, you may think, is confidence. And you're partly right.

You might think the answer is easy. Many years ago I read a simple statement by the novelist John Braine that stuck: *a writer is a person who writes*. While technically accurate, the same logic doesn't make anyone wielding a brush an artist. Many a failed writer has been impaled on Braine's words. But they might help.

I stopped asking myself the question a year ago. I've been too busy writing and too busy getting published. Self doubt is natural, and judgment is an editor's job. But that trivializes the question. The answer is important if you want to know it.

The trouble is, "Am I a writer?" is a chicken-or-egg question. Once you *are* a writer, the answer is irrelevant except in a historical sense. And until you are, you don't know enough to answer it. If you asked a soothsayer you might get the sensible retort, "Why do you ask?" The reason you ask, especially in the middle of the night while staring at a blank computer screen, is motivation.

- If you receive a rejection for a story you've lost a pint of blood over and you answer "Yes," you'll send the story to another editor and write another one.
- If a loved one thinks that your writing is a waste of time and you answer "Yes," you'll pull the barbs from your heart and keep writing.
- If you feel that you're tapped out with nothing left to write and you answer "Yes," you'll pull something new from the depths.

Are you a writer? Sure, if you keep writing. That's what motivation does. It pulls us up when we can't see the edge.

Football coaches are quintessential motivators. The great Vince Lombardi said, "The spirit, the will to win and the will to excel -- these are the things that endure." Desire, Lombardi is telling us, is more important than destination.

Put simply, "Am I a writer?" is a form of the question "Do I have the will to succeed?" And while self doubt is a part of who we all are, that isn't a reason to ignore this serious question. Your will to write alone is what endures. It's why you finish one project and start the next. And since it comes *from* you, your desire is unique.

Here's how Robert Heinlein put it in 1947:

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you write.
3. You must refrain from rewriting, except to editorial order.
4. You must put the work on the market.
5. You must keep the work on the market until it is sold.

Heinlein's use of the word *must* is all about inner drive. He doesn't say, "Finish what you write" but "You *must* finish what you write." His words imply an application of will. Lombardi and he are saying the same thing. Your focus should not be on the goal but on what it takes to get there.

So you ask "Am I a writer?" to test resolve. What's the *real* answer? Is there one?

Of course, there is. Paid professionals don't doubt their standing. A surgeon doesn't stop in the middle of an operation to ask, "Am I a doctor?" And he or she

doesn't return to the office to check a diploma on the wall. But one day the surgeon may wake up and wonder, "Do I want to keep doing this?"

The point where your certitude overcomes faith will be different from others. In general, the tipping point is reached when you have a sense of self-judgment that a profession requires for work. In your case, this might be when you know that an editor accepts what you've written. It might be when your novel is made into a movie. Or it might be when you write on your tax return "Writer" where it says "Occupation."

Degrees and jobs are signposts on the road to most professions. Recognition comes from the admiration and dependence of peers and reciprocal confidence in doing your job well and ably. You become a professional writer, in short, when you *know* that you write like a professional.

If you don't know that yet, the question "Am I a writer?" probes your insides to see what's there. Do you have what it takes? There are, after all, plenty of writers out there who are more talented and more likely to succeed. Does that matter? Your passion for the act of writing does. In fact, it's all that matters, and it's what will keep you going.

This may not stop the angel and devil from whispering on your shoulders. But keep writing and you won't hear them.

Are You a Writer: Take Two

By Lazette Gifford

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It's far too easy for people to worry about the philosophical question of what makes a writer -- or any other kind of artist -- and let it fester in their minds. It's the kind of question that sows doubt and allows others to dictate some outside focus or goal, often artificial, that the person has to achieve before he can allow himself the lofty title of writer.

In the real world of writing, it doesn't work that way: The answer is in the action, not in how the action is accepted by others.

A writer writes, yes -- but he or she also finishes projects, which include editing and submitting if publication is the goal. All the worldbuilding, note-taking and talk about writing does not make a person a writer. Neither does having file folders full of unfinished projects. Blogging, chatting on line and letter writing does not make a writer, except sometimes in the form of a journal writer.

For some writers, publication is not the goal. Some people will tell you that you're only a writer if you've made a sale. There are two problems with this definition. The first is that there is no sudden, overwhelming difference in the writing between the moment the person reads an acceptance of a story and the moment before. Publication is an external verification of ability only. It may be

the goal, but it is not the definition of a writer. The second problem is that anyone who died before their material was published could not have been a writer during their lifetime... which is logically impossible.

Another problem with the question of 'Are you a writer' is that it assumes there is a single answer that will work for all writers. Obviously, writers are not all the same, and the break point most writers consider is often the before and after of publication acceptance. There is an easier way to think about this: You are a writer, and then you are a *published* writer. Both do the same level of work, and there is no huge change that takes place from one moment to the next just because an envelope held an acceptance rather than a rejection. The change has all come in the steps the writer took to learn the craft.

Writers improve their craft throughout their careers, both before and after publication. One does not achieve 'writer status' and then suddenly have everything learned and laid out for the rest of their work. Every book, story, poem and article is a learning process and an adventure.

There are people enough who will tell you why you're not a real writer: you don't write the proper genre, you don't take it seriously enough, you write too quickly, you don't write enough, you don't suffer enough for your art, or a dozen other reasons that have nothing to do with what you do as a writer. Don't add to the negative, outside voices.

Worrying about whether or not you are a writer is a waste of precious writing time and energy better put to creating a new story. Don't analyze being a writer -- become one. Go write something.

How to Poison your Fictional Characters

By Michele Acker

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Do you have a fictional character you need to kill, but you don't want them strangled or shot or stabbed with a knife? Do you want your murderer to kill them without letting anyone know what you plan to do or who your killer is? Try using poison. It's easy to get, easy to use, and even easier to cover up. Maybe your killer could slip some poisonous mushrooms in the victim's salad. Or place a cobra in her bed while she's sleeping. If you set it up right, your killer could commit murder and get away with it, at least until you want him to get caught. No guilt, no jail time, no regret. It's only fiction after all. In the pages of your novel or short story you can poison anyone you like, and instead of sending you to prison, people will cheer you for your resourcefulness and imagination.

Unlike other forms of murder, poisoning is fast and easy and doesn't require strength or a good aim, and if it's done properly, by the time the person realizes he's been poisoned, it's too late, he's already dead. What could be better?

Care to have one of your characters try her hand at murder? Following are a few different types of poisons, their effects on the body, and suggestions on how they might be worked into a plot.

- **Hemlock:** All parts of the plant are poisonous. Eating a salad made with hemlock leaves would be enough to cause death. Hemlock causes a gradual weakening of the muscles and intense pain as the muscles deteriorate and die. Though sight might be lost, the mind remains clear until death occurs. Symptoms begin in thirty minutes, though it takes several hours to die. Quail often eat hemlock seeds. They are immune to the poison, but the flesh from just one of these birds will paralyze a man. Why not have your killer prepare his guest a meal of quail that has recently fed on hemlock seeds? It would appear to be an accident.
- **Oleander:** A common flowering shrub. All parts are deadly, including the nectar, smoke from the burning plants, and the twigs. Like digitalis, the poison is a cardiac stimulator, causing sweating, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, unconsciousness, respiratory paralysis, and death. It begins reacting immediately. Have your fictional killer use the twigs to skewer hot dogs at a barbeque.
- **Rhododendrens and Azaleas:** Common flowering shrubs; all parts are poisonous, including the flowers' nectar. It causes nausea, drooling, vomiting, slow pulse, low blood pressure, diarrhea, seizures, coma, and death, and takes about six hours to begin. Honey made from bees that have fed on rhododendrons, azaleas, and oleanders is poisonous. Cause a town-sized epidemic by having an innocent, well-meaning character bottle and sell poisoned honey.

- **Arsenic:** A classic poison, arsenic is an element. Most often found as a white powder, called arsenic trioxide, it's generally swallowed. Arsenic causes severe gastric distress, burning esophageal pain, vomiting, and diarrhea with blood. If the victim is given a high enough dose so that death occurs quickly, the autopsy will find only an inflamed stomach and possibly a trace of arsenic in the digestive tract. The poisoning can also occur over a period of time as small doses are regularly given to the victim. Since arsenic is an element, it doesn't break down, but remains in the victim's hair, fingernails, and urine. Any death occurring after several days will show arsenic in the liver and kidney. Long term poisoning causes burning pains in the hands and feet, a numbing sensation throughout the body, swelling and skin irritations, hair loss, weight loss, cramps, vomiting, nausea, visual impairment, and eventually heart failure. Though scientists have found ways to detect arsenic poisoning, it still remains a popular form of murder.
- **Cyanide:** Some forms of cyanide have industrial uses, while hydrocyanic acid occurs naturally in a variety of seeds and pits, including peach, apricot, apple, wild cherry and plum. Apricot pits are used to make Laetrile, an anticancer drug. Cyanide can be swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin and interferes with the red cells' abilities to extract oxygen, causing an 'internal asphyxia'. The victim literally suffocates to death as he breathes in oxygen he cannot use. The effects occur almost instantly when the cyanide is swallowed, causing immediate

unconsciousness, convulsions, and death within fifteen minutes. During an autopsy, a bitter-almond odor can be sometimes detected, but only by a few people. After death, the victim's blood may be cherry red in color and the skin pinker than usual. Fruit smoothies anyone? Or how about a fictional 'doctor' who mixes and bottles her own form of Laetrile?

- **Strychnine:** Not as fast-acting as cyanide or arsenic, strychnine is a colorless powder with a bitter taste that can be slipped unnoticed into a strong drink. The symptoms begin in ten to twenty minutes with the victim's neck and face becoming stiff. Then the arms and legs begin to spasm and soon the whole body is in an arched position with the head and feet on the floor. Death occurs from asphyxiation or sheer exhaustion from the convulsions. After death, rigor mortis sets in almost instantly, leaving the body in a convulsed position. While this poison is popular in movies and literature, it's seldom used in real murders.

- **Methanol:** Methyl alcohol is distilled from fermented wood, unlike ethyl alcohol, which is distilled from fermented grain -- and it is considerably more toxic. Commonly found in perfumes, antifreeze, paint removers, and varnish, if ingested, it metabolizes into formaldehyde in the body. Methanol damages the liver, kidneys, and heart and causes the lungs to take on fluid and the brain to swell. Once the formaldehyde becomes present in the body, it can cause fatigue, headache, nausea, vertigo, back pain, severe abdominal pain, dizziness, vomiting, and blindness. Rapid and shallow respiration, cyanosis, coma, falling blood

pressure, and finally death occur from respiratory failure. A person can ingest methanol and not feel any symptoms for twelve to twenty-four hours, which is much too late to save them. In order to survive, a victim must be treated within two hours of ingestion. In some parts of the US, moonshine is still made illegally. Perhaps your antagonist could mix wood shavings in with the mash (grain), either accidentally or on purpose, causing as many deaths as your plot dictates.

- **Amanita Mushrooms:** Abundant in both America and Europe, these extremely toxic mushrooms vary in color from pale green to white or light brown, though the most well-recognized color is bright red with white spots. They can be found in damp, sandy soil, dry pine woods, and even wooded lawns. Once ingested, they produce hypoglycemia and degenerative changes in kidney, liver, and heart muscles. Since symptoms are slow to develop, usually six to fifteen hours after ingestion and sometimes as long as forty-eight hours, the victim will not only eat the entire mushroom, but won't know anything is wrong and therefore won't seek medical attention until it's too late. Once the symptoms appear, the victim will feel a sudden onset of extreme stomach pains, violent vomiting, intense thirst, and bloody diarrhea. He will remain conscious almost to the end before finally lapsing into a coma and dying. The damage to the liver is so severe that in some cases, the only way to save the victim is with a full liver transplant. Mushroom burger anyone? How about your fictional

murderer placing a nice helping of sautéed mushrooms over his victim's steak?

- **Toxic Reptiles:** There are many different types of poisonous reptiles, some more lethal than others. While it may be too dangerous, or too obvious, for your antagonist to slip a snake into his victim's bed, it might be possible for him to buy or steal the venom of said reptile. The poison could then be stirred into a drink, added to food, or even injected. How about a blow dart? Old-fashioned, maybe, but certainly effective. Unless the victim knew which snake or other reptile the poison came from, there would be no possibility of administering the correct antivenin. Venom from the cobra family of snakes, cobras, mambas, and coral snakes (along with a few others) progressively paralyzes the nervous system and causes death within two hours if the antivenin isn't given. Symptoms usually start within fifteen to thirty minutes and begin with pain, swelling, a drop in blood pressure, and convulsions. Death occurs once the poison reaches and paralyzes the respiratory muscles. Venom from the adder family of snakes, puff adders, boomslangs, bushmasters, and various other vipers causes symptoms similar to cobra bites, as well as bleeding from the gums, chills, and fever. A bite on the hand will be followed within thirty minutes by a swollen arm and purple skin. The victim will perspire heavily, vomit blood, bleed from the nose and eyes, lose vision, and collapse within an hour. Death is inevitable unless the correct antivenin is given quickly.

There are many other poisons, too many to list here, and most of them are available to the average person. Anything can become a poison in the right quantities, even air. Inject a syringe full of nothing into an IV line to stop a patient's heart or block the blood to his brain. Want your character to commit suicide and can't decide what to use? Have her down a bottle of Tylenol. That'll do the trick.

Are you thinking of writing a historical and don't know what

Travel Writing: From a Bloggin' Byline to a Payin' Byline

By Roy A. Barnes

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Sign up for an account at one of the countless blogging sites that have overrun the internet, and type out a personal globe-trotting recollection. Presto: you can indulge in travel writing! Yet to be someone who can honestly proclaim that they've been paid to write about their journeys is a totally different travel-writing ballgame.

When publications pay you for your travel writing, it means that your work has stood out amongst the zillions of submissions that converge upon editors' desks. Money isn't something publications part with automatically. It's quite unlike the blogging community creed, where the writing may not earn you a wooden nickel for your efforts.

Becoming a travel writer who can make enough money to pay the bills is a gradual process. The following tips will help you get started in this rewarding quest.

1. *Travel writing is not a get rich quick scheme.* How much time are you willing to devote to the monotonous researching of paying markets or the tedious drafting

and redrafting of articles and queries, while honing your craft so that it meets the specific needs of the media that will put some dead presidents in your pocket? Your financial and family situations will certainly be a factor in determining this.

2. *Thoroughly study publications' submission guidelines.* They often give you a good idea of what the media are looking for, helping you to target your completed articles or works-in-progress in the right direction. Keep the words "cross-over market" in mind when writing an article. Your feature on kid-friendly museums in London could be marketable to a variety of family-themed publications. An article about volunteering abroad could also be sold to an educational-based magazine or website.

3. *Subscribe to online market, contest, and writing tips newsletters.* Many of them are free or charge a nominal subscription fee. Check out Fundsforwriters.com, Writersweekly.com, and Writingfordollars.com for starters. The links they provide will lead to many sources. Many of the advertisements at writing e-publications are for other online writer newsletters that feature paying market sources, which in turn lead to even more resources to aid you in travel writing.

4. *Look for travel publications at libraries.* Order free trial issues of magazines; you can study first-hand the feel and scope of many travel publications without depleting your wallet.

5. *While traveling, get as many free brochures and booklets as you can* to add to your reference library. Keep a diary of your trekking experiences, which can be the foundation for personal experience essays to submit to contests, literary journals, and anthologies that focus on travelers' tales.

6. *If you don't already own one, purchase a camera for use in your travels.* You'll want a decent digital (at least 5 megapixels) or 35mm camera. Appropriate photos increase your odds of getting published. When developing your film, it's best to order double prints and a CD copy of your pictures, especially if your camera isn't a digital model. This way, you will be prepared to submit via email and/or post.

7. *Check your details.* Before submitting your writing to an editor, revisit the websites of the places you've written about to recheck their times of operation, admission prices, new exhibitions, etc. Make sure your article is as up-to-date as possible. Keep in mind that it might take weeks or months for an accepted article to appear online or in print. If you want to write a seasonal article, it's best to research editorial calendars and deadlines so you can make a timely submission.

Getting that first paycheck takes more than casual dedication. It means being persistent in the face of rejection. It means being willing to diligently seek out the appropriate markets. And most of all, it means being willing to write with more discipline and focus.

Roy A. Barnes writes from Cheyenne, Wyoming. His travel articles for pay have been published by such mediums as Transitions Abroad, Live Life Travel, The Traveler, and GoNOMAD.com. His writing-themed articles have been featured at The Busy Freelancer, Absolute Write, Writing for DOLLARS, and The Dabbling Mum.

Getting Your First Sale

By Suzan L. Wiener

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Do you crave that first sale? Do you envy other writers who seem to get their work published effortlessly? Believe me, published authors work hard to get their poetry, etc. into publications. Even if they seem like they are overnight successes, they aren't. Years of revising and submitting again and again go into that occurrence. Some writers have had their work rejected many times, but still keep trying. Nothing is easy and nothing is a free ride. That is the difference between a published writer and a non-published one. The one who is willing to persevere and continue sending in manuscripts despite rejections is the one who will eventually be published.

After three years of trying to get published in *Modern Romances* with my poetry, I finally can say: "I made it!" I was just about ready to give up when the acceptance came in my mailbox. It was almost as if someone didn't want me to quit, because it was that day I had seriously made the decision to stop sending them my work. I thought for sure I was getting nowhere, but I had noticed that an editor would write a nice "Try again" on my rejected poems. That meant something to me and I'd keep them nearby so I knew I was making progress. I did get discouraged quite often, but my husband and my writer friends helped me continue. Even when I didn't have faith in myself as a writer, they did. When at

last I saw my work in *Modern Romances* magazine, I realized all the rejections had paid off. How? By teaching me my craft and constantly improving my work. I paid more attention to rhyme, meter and other aspects of my poems. I created more exciting conflicts in short stories and watched my grammar and spelling to make sure it was as good as it could be.\

I also studied the work of other poets and short story writers who interested me and were regulars in their publications. I made my work original, letting it stand on its own. I learned a lot from them as to form and style. And, even though the editors never commented on any rejected pieces except for that occasional, "Try again," I felt they helped me enormously -- to study and learn in order for me to become a published poet.

Of course, if I had given up, my poetry would have stayed at the beginner's level, which meant my work might never have seen publication. The old saying "A winner never quits and a quitter never wins" recounts a very important lesson. Perseverance is the path to seeing your work online or in print.

Following these tips below will help you to get your first sale and many more of them as well.

- Don't just wish that you could be a published writer, make that wish come true by doing your homework. Research your markets and create riveting characters. Make editors want to buy your stories, and readers want to read them all the way through.

- If you don't have a writer's group in your area, get together online with one already in existence or form your own.
- Read all the books you can on being a published writer. Here is a link to find well-known books that will help you in your quest to see your work in print:
 - <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0743455967/002-0748285-4355235?v=glance&n=283155>
- Don't send in your work the moment you write it. Instead, stay away from it for a few days and then come back to it. You will probably find things in it that can be revised and typos you didn't see before. You will have a fresh outlook on it.
- Most importantly, if your dream is to be a writer, be one. Don't just daydream or hope that it will come true. It won't! You have to be the springboard to make it work.

If you follow the above tips, you are bound to see your first sale. You will know the thrill of holding your first check in your hands. I know how it feels first-hand, and it's wonderful.

Planning for 2007

A Look at Writer's Goals

As 2006 came to an end, I again asked what the many people at Forward Motion planned for their writing in the new year. Here's a listing to give you a view of how a wide diversity of writers face the idea of a new year of writing. Reading through it, you'll likely realize that you're not alone in your hopes, plans, and worries.

2007 is a good year to make your own plans!

Zette's Plans:

In 2007, I plan to return to editing more of my older material and get it out in submissions. This was the plan for 2006, as well, but it didn't quite work out as well as I had hoped. I intend to put more of my efforts into it this year, though.

Oh, and I'll write a few new things, too. (grin)

WorthyWoman's Plans:

1. Do what is in my power to not get sick so often or so long!
2. 200,000 words this year -- even if I have to count e-mail! (Not really!) That should get me finishing the novel that I intended last month, along with some other projects that I haven't detailed yet.

Mamarose 1900's Plans:

Finish 50 Ways. That's it. Once I've done that, I'll figure out what to do next.

Silvara's Plans:

Well, I'll still be in grad school. I plan to finish my second novel in 2007 and edit it. I also plan to work on some short stories to submit. There probably won't be as much time as I would like for that sort of thing with school and work, but I'm going to try to do it anyway.

Freewriter003's Plans:

I'll be participating in NaNoWriYe 2007, with a personal goal of 350K new words, mostly novels and short stories. But, since I've never gotten anything past the first draft before, I also hope to get at least two novels (my recent NaNo and at least one more that I write) edited into final draft form over the course of the year.

My other big project is that I want to write, edit, and publish a collection of children's stories. I plan to self-publish through Lulu, as I really only need one copy; I'm planning it as a birthday gift for my niece in June. That's a lot of work though, and I want it to be good, so if I need to, I'll push it back to a Christmas present (I'd rather take the time and make it a quality gift than just rush to get it done before her birthday).

Colorbird's Plans:

I plan to write another 300k next year (matching what I've done in 2006), work more on editing old stuff, and hopefully get one thing ready to submit. I wanted to submit this year but it didn't happen. I also want to finish my 2YN.

Snitchcat's Plans:

Finish this year's NaNo. It's been in the works for a very long time and it needs to be polished and out the door. (^_^)

Headofwords Plans:

I've been living overseas for the past three years, (Italy, now Japan), and have experience coming out of my ears. I have two scrappy novels, a handful of less than inspiring stories and a wad of slightly satirical articles out of that time, but the turmoil and a thousand other things to do, like learning foreign languages, have put my first love, writing into freefall. Next year is the year I'm going to drag it up from the embers and reignite it.

mz Plans:

- #1 Get a faster internet service.
 - #2 Buy and study Publisher's Lunch.
 - #3 Take on a writing workshop.
 - #4 Complete only ONE new novel and concentrate on magazine articles for my bread and butter.
 - #5 Search for the holy grail...er...agent.
-

Satu Plans:

I plan to try and keep my momentum after NaNoWriMo, and to keep writing every day. To outline and draft a new story with the characters from my NaNo, with an eye towards publication. To revise the short stories I wrote this year and see if and where I can submit them. Today I've started outlining another idea that popped into my head during NaNo, and I plan to have a draft of it finished before next November.

(Update: Instead of those two ideas, I'm actually going to participate in 2YN and, at the same time, work on an old old novel idea.)

Finally, I plan to get more involved in Forward Motion, and to continue to learn about writing!

Luminessence Plans:

Write the last of *Nothing So Pure*, if I don't get it done by the end of December. I also plan to revise it, and possibly begin submitting.

Revise *Lessons* (my NaNoWriMo novel).

Participate in NaNoWriYe 2007. Not sure what my goal will be yet; probably somewhere around 400k words for the year. I want to keep being as prolific as I've been lately, and get a couple more novels written.

I might submit a short story or two, just to get something out there, but novel-writing is my priority.

MarFisk Plans:

Well, there's goals and plans. I'm going to try once again to clear off some of my edit pile.

I want Heart of the Crystal out making the rounds (doing the "final" edit now so should be doable).

Everyone else wants Selkie edited .

I'd like to get a second novel edited at least and it would be nice to get another out making the rounds.

I want to finish Becoming Home (the romance I started as my second NaNo novel), and I plan to write at least one more novel next year, though I have no idea what.

Besides that, more short stories written, edited, polished, and out the door.

Bonniers Plans:

Write first draft of Michael's story -- not young adult despite the teenage cast. That should take around 3-4 months.

Third-pass edit of Joey and get it to beta readers. I'm hoping for 2-3 months on this.

Write some new short stories. Edit old short stories. Get them out into the cold cruel world.

Second draft edit of, um, what was it now? Right. *Gerry and Dan's Robbery Service*, a.k.a. the dragons story, a.k.a. as my 2YN. If this takes as long as Joey's second draft did, I'll be writing well into 2008.

In my copious free time, look at *Not Forgetting* and see whether it's worth making one more try at making it publishable.

Plan a NaNoNovel so I can not work on it for the third year in a row.

Valeriecomer Plans:

Having not (quite) achieved my goals for 2006, it seems crazy to set them higher for next year, but, well...

Assuming I will finish **Squid** yet this week:

Finish revising **Quest to be Queen**. This is first edits--send it out to critters.

Revise **Marks of Repentance**, second batch of edits. Hope that it will be ready to use as agent bait.

Write something. Perhaps my 2006 2yn project, **Puppet Prince**? Jhonal started nudging me just before Nano, but I stuffed a sock in his mouth and made him wait.

Revise something else. This year's Nano? Another pass on **Quest**? Third round of **Marks**?

Do Nano. No idea with what.

Add water. Stir. Repeat. Go crazy.

Jill Webb Plans:

I should finish *Flowers* by the end of the year so I can start the year with a rewrite of *AfterQuest* and finish *AQ3* before delving into full scale edits of *Flowers*.

If all that gets done, there are another three novels to start!

Suelder Plans:

My plans for 2007:

- finish The Basiltine Guild (Nano novel), if I haven't by the end of December.
- Revisit Kristava's tale and outline it - finding the plot holes and filling them. I've got 330K written and still no ending.
- Open the Guild and Kristava's tale up for crits.
- Learn about editing and start that task

I'd like to move toward publishing Kristava's tale and The Basiltine Guild, but I think that there's a lot of work to do first.

dsgood Plans:

One short story a month at least rough-drafted.

Send out any which I decide are ready.

One novel chapter a month first-drafted.

e jim shannon Plans:

I've got two novels planned plus a novella.

David Bridger Plans:

Find a great agent to help me sell *fugue*, for starters.

Take *The Orphan Age* from initial concept through to submission.

Outline one short per month until September and 16 more in the October outline marathon, to prepare 25 themed shorts with a story arc for nano.

Raise the poetry bar and submit to the best quality magazines and reviews.

Amendment:

I've signed up for 2YN 2007 so that'll replace the shorts (the third item above).

I'll see how it all goes before deciding whether or not to do nano next year.

Bondgirl Plans:

I'll be having a baby in April, so I expect to not get much done for a couple months there.

However, in the beginning of the year, I'd like to outline and get a first draft hammered out for the chick lit novel I'm researching for right now.

When I can get back to work after the baby comes, I want to get my rough draft of *Sev and Jalia* tamed into something resembling a respectable draft, and start the editing and rewriting process with that.

Ideally, I'll be querying agents for S&J by sometime in the fall, and editing the new novel while I'm waiting for my rejections to come in.

I also would like to get some short stories published, so I should probably take the first step and produce some new material.

TNelson Plans:

Let's see-2007-hmmmm

Get Wilderness Heart edited, rewritten, or whatever needs to be done to get it submitted.

Find an agent

Research for a couple of plot bunnies hanging around

Prepre for Nano 2007

First time Nano

jschara Plans:

I plan for 2007 to be a year of finishing, revising, and polishing. I have three novels to clean up -- one still needs to be finished. I have agent research to complete and queries to begin sending.

This will keep me on track for being ready to write when I retire -- which looks like it's coming up in 2008. After retirement, I have some GI Bill money to use, so I'm looking into going back to school -- most likely for a PhD in Philosophy. That will take three years of concentrated effort, and if writing the dissertation doesn't completely screw me up for fiction work, I think I'll have a better process to work with in preparing and plotting fiction.

Next month calls for library time to search the UMI dissertation database to see what's been done and what I can build upon that interests me and ties in with philosophy and adult education (what my master's is in and what has to tie into the PhD program -- because the PhD program has to work with a master's in a different field, and I don't want to get a second master's.).

And, of course, continuing the habit of working on writing every day -- the whole purpose of this year's NaNo (30 Days to Regularity) when I started it.

Jonc Plans:

I plan to finally try for another chance at publication (this time on purpose, not by pure chance like recently...). I am, at this moment, writing the climax to *Love Like Blood*. I just need to write one more final chapter, then do the rewrite. I plan on sending it out early next year!

Now for other projects? Hmm...I do plan on getting my own freelance writing career up and running...

Oh, and starting a new book! Not sure which backburner idea I'll use, but we'll see...

Drake Tesla Plans:

Finish 'Magic in Translation', my NaNo novel.

Do a first pass edit of 'Translation'.

Join a crit circle (here or elsewhere) to hone my skills. Well, bash them into some sort of shape.

Prepare a minimum of two novel-length outlines and the associated worldbuilding and character work.

Begin another novel.

Stay in the habit of daily writing.

Maripat Plans:

Finish up my NaNo novel. (Which is also the same story I started in the 2YN class.) Start sending out queries to agents.

Shana Plans:

I plan to do a lot of focusing on revision. I have drafts of four books that need to be worked on so I can get them out the door. Also I hope to write the first draft of two more novels.

KSimm38 Plans:

Old Man Zuckerman, a short story, has already been submitted to *Strange Horizons*. If it is not accepted there, then 2007 will be a process of submissions for me. I would like to finally get something published professionally.

Beyond that, I've got four more ideas for short stories I would like to develop, write, and edit. Hopefully these, too, will be worth publishing.

I also hope to pull out the cast-aside novel I worked on for so long -- until I decided it was crap -- dust it off, and restart with a better handle of what I want to do with it. While it may not be the most ambitious goal, I hope to have a complete outline of the novel by the end of '07.

Fetu Plans:

1. Get *Warrior Angel* out the door to Berkeley before the end of January.
2. Get *Feel My Voice* out the door to St. Martin's before the end of February.
3. Start writing *Wolf of Whitechapel*. That is my obsession. It will most likely take

18-24 months to complete, thought I'm not sure right now if that will include edits or not.

#3 is subject to change pending a contract for either #1 or #2, of course.

anavicenteferreira Plans:

Continue submitting Dragon's Blood
Edit The Unraveller
Write and edit The Waif
Submit short stories and articles to several paying markets
Start querying agents

I clausewitz Plans:

My plans for next year covers maybe only the first half--and it consists of writing and finishing the first draft for *Gilded Lilies* followed by a massive revision on Bailo's story to get it to a crittable (if not outright publishable) state. In the process I may also write short stories and articles as well, but I won't count them among my primary or mandatory goals.

witchofbreithla Plans:

So many things, so little time...

I plan to edit my NaNo novel (which should be finished in December) and send it out to beta readers.

While it's out, I plan to finish the first draft of *Witches* (assuming I can get it back on track).

Do a final polish on the NaNo story.

Start querying agents.

Write and submit two shorts.

Start drafting *Witches II*.

I'd better get started, huh?

Miah 79 Plans:

I plan to

1. Finish writing *Where Does the Sky Begin*
 2. Get married in April
 3. Edit *Where Does the Sky Begin*
 4. Join all the Word Count Dares, and maybe before the year is out actually hit that 1000 words a day goal.
-

Justinvs Plans:

Since I'll be editing the novel I sold early in '07, I'm desperately trying to finish the revisions on the novel I wrote last year. After that, I might start another YA novel, or take a couple months first to build up my short story reserve and then jump into the novel afterwards.

Oh, and I have a play to write between now and February.

In other words, I'll be busy.

AriCuryll Plans:

- *Continue daily writing--goal 25,000 words/month
- *Be more active here to maintain my motivation and learn new things!
- *Finish writing *Ordinary Girl* if I don't finish in December
- *Write 5 short stories and submit them
- *Get *Ordinary Girl* into final form and ready for submission
- *First half of year make a plan for moving into freelance work
- *Second half of year start implementing freelance plan
- *Start another novel
- *NaNoWriMo 2007

Astlin Plans:

After spending the last year in an unexpected (and depressing) slump after finishing my first novel, my plans for this year are getting back into the writing zone and finish my second novel, which will be my languishing 2YN, Bear Riders. The plan after completing it is simply starting the next one.

Xiuhcoati Plans:

January 1st-31th

Let my NaNo novel rest and work on Unforgivable Sin instead. Goal of 50,000 words for the month.

February 1st-28th

Go over NaNo novel again and submit for critique

March 1st-31st

Fix all critiques and do another go over. Begin working on perfect query letter.

After March...finish up anything I was too lazy to do in the first three months. Try to publish my story, and pick up Unforgivable Sin again.

Cosmic Lightning Plans:

I'll be mostly writing Dragon and probably editing Max as well...

I'd like to have something fiction published by the end of this year, so I'm going to be working on a bunch of short stories and refining my skills with short stories (Read: I'm not very good, must get better.)

Also planning to write a few nonfiction articles, and I have to find a place to publish the ones I've already written

Hepzibah Plans:

Actually revise one or both of my two NaNoWriMo novels (the one from 2005 is still in first-draft stage). Finally, finally finish the romance novel. And try to get in the habit of writing, if not every day, then at least most days.

Crimson Angel Plans:

Continue to write every day.
Try to hit 400k for '07.
Finish Pirouette if it's not done this month.
Start Pirouette rewrite/figure out trilogy
Finish Obsidian.
Start agent hunt.
Write one new novel -- something that's in the queue waiting patiently.

Magicalbookworm Plans:

Hopefully I'll finish editing Run this month but if not that is on the list for 07.

I think I'll try and edit for most of 07 along with some writing projects. I would like to finally start writing my 2yn novel. Hopefully finish a book that is half done, along with two others in the series.

Plus I would like to get a few ideas into outline form before the next Nano!

Meowkitty04 Plans:

I have a writing project I'm planning out right now. It's requiring a lot of research, and I'm working on it when I can. I'm hoping to get a good ways into it, if not finish it, sometime in 2007. I was also hoping on doing 2YN. On something else. We'll see ...

RavenCorbie Plans:

Now that NaNoWriMo is over, I plan to get back to my 2YN... although I'm very, very behind.

I also plan to work on another idea I just had (it came to me in the middle of my last frantic spurt of NaNo) that has to do with Snow White.

What I'd like to do is somehow combine the two of those, but I'm not really sure how. If nothing else, I may end up doing two 2YNs, but one of them (the Snow White one) being unofficial.

I'm also planning on editing last year's NaNo.

I don't want to plan too much more, though, because I'm worried I'll get overwhelmed and not get any of it done. After all, last year's plans came to nothing.

RedFox Plans:

I want to revise/finish my Nano 2006 project and, if feasible, get it submitted to an agent.

I also have the germ of an idea for a sequel, which may end up as Nano 2007 if I'm not tied up working on the first one

BJSteeves Plans:

I have two novels started, and due to personal issues, these were in suspension for some time. My goals for 2007 is to finish at least one of them, hopefully both. Maybe I can do a vision article or three also.

Weird Jim Plans:

I hope to do far more writing on my gold rush novel. Most of what I did last year was research. I'll set no goals, though, as every time I do, something seems to step in my way.

cherrylmills Plans:

My plans involve doing my best to not get distracted by short stories. I have 3 novels to revise, two to finish drafting, and of course, plans for a couple more.

So my 2007 motto is "All novels, all the time."

Robboy Plans:

My hopes are to continue writing be it poetry, or prose. I hope and wish to be able to spend more time with my writing, and I pray for the day of a system about myself, so my writing won't be so haphazard.

Myrddin Plans:

have one goal next year: To finish this \$%#@#*%#& first draft. If all goes well, I'll finishing editing/rewriting/polishing too.

But I will finish. Oh, yes. I will.

Now, to get busy... I still have 60k more words to write (around a kid, family, and job) before I start slaying my darlings.

Doable only if I get off my rear.

Blythe025 Plans:

Finish stuff. Write a lot of new words, too. But the main focus is to finish what I write.

Wolfsfury Plans:

My writing plan for 2007 says one thing.

Write 500 words a week. More is a bonus.

If I actually finish something that would be a greater bonus, but for now I am aiming at the writing itself.

Yappo Plans:

Start and finish editing of Frays in the Weave and start submitting it to agents.

Start and finish first draft of A Weave in Shreds.

Short stories on top of this plus the occasional poem would probably be hobby projects than something aimed at a pro market

Mwiseman Plans:

Goals for this year's NaNo novel:

Finish the draft

Edit/revise the draft

Rough outline of the rest of the series

Other goals:

Do an edit/rewrite on three screenplays

Submit revised screenplays

Edit/revise "Annunaki" and "True Tom", two short stories I've been working on

Possibly adapt "Annunaki" into a script for a short film

Outline first book in "Imago Dei", another series I've had bouncing in my brain

Write other stories and poems as ideas form

Submit at least one story a month (!!)

Do NaNo again

Yes, yes, I know--a very ambitious plan. But by god, I've determined that next year will be a seminal year for my writing, and I'd rather shoot high than shoot low.

EDIT TO ADD: Forgot to say that I'm thinking of signing up for Orson Scott Card's "Uncle Orson's Writing Boot Camp" next year. (O.o) He lives in Greensboro, which is like two hours from where I live. And it's fairly affordable, and only a week long. Pretty good bargain, compared to a lot of the "writing boot camps" that are out there. Plus I really love Scott Card's writing, he's one of my fave authors.

mistri Plans:

1) Brainstorm and outline a new book

2) Write said book - then edit, polish and begin to submit it.

3) In the meantime, also submit the novel that I finished editing this year, sending it to my list of agents, and then possibly publishers too.

- 3b) If there's time, begin outlining and writing a second book for the year.
- 4) I want to not stress too much about doing shorts on top of full-length books. Not everyone is a short story writer.
- 5) Ideally I'd grab myself an agent and book contract, but I'm going to focus on the novel writing.
-

den plans:

Well, I've got a story idea written on an envelope taped in a prominent place, and I intend to write it...I'm also going to be moving, so my plans for writing out a non-fiction day-by-day story of my life kinda' fell flat...

hoshikaze Plans:

Depends on how '06 finishes up. I'm doing FiMo with this years Nano novel, and I'm hoping to finish the draft before the year ends. I've got 85549 words so far between November and December, and I planned out the last 10 or so scenes to write to finish the draft.

Once its '07, I'm going to set my nano '06 draft aside and work on a novel I started a few years back in my fiction class. I may finish a complete draft of that before going back to my nano, or I might just work on that project for a set amount of time to get some distance from my nano so I can revise (maybe around March or April). My nano's the farthest I've ever gotten in a project, so I'm really looking forward to finishing this draft then revising to get a halfway decent 2nd draft.

infofreako Plans:

Finish some "in progress" pieces, edit the NaNo06 in a major way, take part in 2YN, and keep submitting my completed novel to publishers.

Kswope Plans:

Well, for one, I'm planning to take the 2YN class in 2007.

I'd like to take last year's NaNo and ... well, trash it and start all over again. Heh. I'm kind of hoping the lessons I learn from the class will help with that.

I want to get at least one thing finished and out the door, even if it's only a short story.

I plan to make myself write at least a little bit every day. I've been very bad about that.

And, of course, NaNo in November. Which should be interesting. Maybe I'll manage to come up with something worth writing.

Oh, and research for another project I've been wanting to work on.

Linda Jo Martin Plans:

The Scribe of Irohila - fourth revision, cover letter, and synopsis

River Girl - third revision

Ciara and the Fairies - third revision

The Seagull Rebellion - second revision

The O'Callaghans - finish first revision

Escape - first revision

The Alyssa Project - second revision

Far Out - first revision

NaNoWriMo 2007 - Fourth book in the Ancient Civilization Series

Alisel Plans:

For 2007 I'm hoping to do the 2YN, First Year.

I'd also like to write (almost) every day, in the order of 25,000 words a month.

I'll start out completing the first draft of my Nano 2005, Dawn.

After that I'll rewrite Halfsoul, my 2006 Nano.

Then there's preparing and writing the first 50,000 + words of Dreamwriter, my 2007 Nano. (I'm not going to finish it in 2007 though, it'll be around 120,000 words.)

I also hope to do a very rough draft of my children's book The Stone Altar.

sbarret Plans:

Well, like others here, I didn't quite meet my 2006 goals (have to go dig up that thread somewhere and update it! lol)

So my more moderate goals for 2007

- 1 - Submit "Face of the Enemy" to a publisher.
- 2 - Submit to the two glbt specific anthologies coming out.
- 3 - Write another book.

#3 is a bit vague right now, because I have to decide what book to write next. #1 needs a sequel. But I also have an existing novel that could be edited and submitted (less writing, more editing) and yet THAT one needs a sequel too.

Maybe my 2007 goal should be to write one-off books that don't need sequels!

Mirinae Plans:

I want to stay focused on one idea for more than a week. I've got all these ideas, but they're not meshing together -- they all want/need to be separate stories -- and I need to just pick one and stick with it

schweinsty Plans:

1. Finish my six unfinished short stories during the January part of holiday break.
2. Write a short every week and send it out, along with the ones in my slush pile.
3. Finish my novelettes and screenplay this year.
4. Up my daily writing from 500 to 1000 words/day.
5. Completely outline the three novels I've got floating in my head, and start writing at least one of them.

With any luck, I can do all that, find a job, and maintain a 4.0 GPA

WOO Plans:

Finish *Fortune's Fool*, Part 2 and get it out to beta readers.

Finish *Mara's Search* and get it out to beta readers.

Do more querying for *Fortune's Fool*, Part 1, tentatively retitled as *Witness to Treason*.

Finish *Rising Star*.

Work on *California Dreamin'*

Hana Standish Plans:

- 1) I plan on taking part in 2YN 2007/2008 to start with.
- 2) I want to finish something (anything) that has publishing potential.
- 3) Finish worldbuilding and outline something in my "Maccon" universe so I can start writing it.
- 4) Write regularly -- 3500 words + per week.
- 5) Start writing short stories rather than worldbuilding for novels (see #2)

f.silvi Plans:

- 1 - edit my NaNo 2006
- 2 - start 2YN
- 3 - write daily
- 4 - learn as much as I can about writing and publishing

I have a couple of ideas kicking around and one that I just started. These will keep me busy for a while.

GeorgieB Plans:

I plan to finish "The Jade Earrings", a novel that I thought I had finished for the 2006 NaNo. When I re-read the story, a couple of plot holes were apparent, so I've got to fix those, and in the process of doing that add a couple of chapters and scenes.

I also am enrolled in the 2YN starting next month and plan to use that to work on a possible sequel to Jade Earrings.

I'll also finish the second part of a two-part article for a writing group (not-web based) that I belong to.

Artiste Plans:

2007? Already. I never seem to meet my goals but maybe this year I'll hit my stride.

- Finish PDAS 1st draft
- Get halfway through Jane
- Submit a short story
- Not procrastinate by spending time on the boards and playing spider solitaire

That's a lot for me

JoshWatermanMN Plans:

Concentrate more on my writing and stick with it, for one thing.

I should finish my WIP, "Heritage," a 100K word horror novel sometime early in the year.

I hope to start up my next novel after that, It is all outlined and everything, just need to put flesh on the bones.

I want to do a few short stories this year. Again, outlined, just need to be actually written.

I am hoping I am accepted to participate in Zette's 2YN workshop.

I was going to add a few other things, but now that I see them in type on my computer screen, I see I have PLENTY to keep me occupied. Not sure I can finish them all, but reach for the stars, and all of that . . .

Market Report

Mar's Market Report #19

By Margaret McGaffey Fisk

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Publication announcements from members of online writing communities are valuable resources for writers at the beginning of their careers. Though the communities may contain members at many levels of publication, overall, markets listed in these announcements tend to be open to new writers.

All the markets presented in this column came from a publication announcement. I receive announcements from various sources including Vision; The Critter's Workshop; and Online Writing Workshop for Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror. These announcements are all available online. They list markets at varying levels of payment or reputation, so if you use these resources, be careful to research the market yourself before submitting. Even the list below should be used as a signpost rather than a definitive answer about any market because situations do change. Reputable sites such as [Ralan's SpecFic & Humor Webstravaganza](#), [Quintamid Market Database](#), and [Duotrope](#) are good places to get the latest news. They have been known to have information not yet listed on the publisher website. However, always check the publisher's guidelines as well.

While not all the markets that appear in this column offer "pro" rates, they all provide some compensation. In my opinion, offering payment is an indication of the editor/publisher's commitment. In many cases, markets with some compensation are more likely to stay around because they have considered the economics of running a publication.

Genre	Dark Fiction
Title	Book of Dark Wisdom
Editor	William Jones, Editor
Address	Dark Wisdom P.O. Box 389 Lake Orion, MI 48361-0389 USA
Sub Email	submissions@darkwisdom.com
Specifics	Looking for dark fantasy, horror, and dark science fiction stories that are well written and examine the human condition. Though they appreciate Lovecraftian tales, they want original works. They do not want explicit bloodshed, violence, or sex if only present to shock the reader. Any location and time period is fair game once the above criteria are met.
Requirement	Up to 5000 words for short stories but they do accept queries for anything longer, though novella or serial works are not of interest. Flash and short shorts are welcome. Also accepts dark poetry up to 150 words.
Payment	Fiction is \$0.05 (5 cents) per word up to \$250 and poetry is \$0.05 (5 cents) per word with a \$5 minimum.
URL for site	http://www.darkwisdom.com
URL for guidelines	http://www.darkwisdom.com/guidelines.htm

Genre	Horror
Title	Withersin
Editor	Misty Gersley
Address	Withersin Magazine PO BOX 892665 Temecula, CA 92589-2665
Sub Email	Withersin@hotmail.com
Specifics	Looking for original, polished horror that inspires fear and is unique. Traditional horror figures should be used originally if at all.
Requirement	Between 1500 and 3000 words firm
Payment	\$0.05 (5 cents) per word
URL for site	http://www.withersin.com
URL for guidelines	http://www.withersin.com/index.php?pr=Guidelines

Genre	Satirical Speculative Fiction
Title	Blood, Blade & Thruster Magazine
Editor	Lucien Spelman, Editor
Address	None
Sub Email	submissions@bbtmagazine.com
Specifics	Looking for speculative fiction, horror, science fiction, and fantasy, including light-hearted satirical approaches.
Requirement	Up to 10,000 for short stories
Payment	\$0.005 (1/2 cent) per word
URL for site	http://www.bbtmagazine.com/
URL for guidelines	http://www.bbtmagazine.com/submission.htm

Genre	Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror
Title	Aurealis Magazine
Editor	Ben Payne, Editor Robert Hoge, Editor
Address	None
Sub Email	submissions@aurealis.com.au
Specifics	Looking for all kinds of science fiction, horror, and fantasy short stories. Though the stories do not have to have an Australian focus, some Australian elements are preferred as long as they are truly part of the story. Non-Australian authors are asked to query first.
Requirement	Short stories between 2000-8000 words
Payment	Between \$20-\$60 Australian dollars (approximately \$15.75-\$47.28 US) per 1000 words.
URL for site	http://aurealis.com.au/index.php
URL for guidelines	http://aurealis.com.au/submissions.php

Genre	Science Fiction/Fantasy
Title	SCYWEB BEM
Editor	Cameron Harne, President Kris Schenk, Editor
Address	Riamac Group attn: SCYWEB BEM POB 691298 Charlotte, NC 28227
Sub Email	None
Specifics	This is an audio publication and it is seeking mostly science fiction, though fantasy is accepted. Horror is not wanted.
Requirement	Up to 8500 words per story.
Payment	\$0.01 (1 cent) per word with a \$10 minimum and \$50 maximum per story
URL for site	http://www.scywebbem.com/
URL for guidelines	http://www.scywebbem.com/html/submissions.html

Website Review:

Duotrope's Digest Online Market Listing

by **Bonnie R. Schutzman**

© 2007, Bonnie R Schutzman

This is the first in a series of reviews covering various online marketing databases available for fiction writers. Websites to be covered include: Duotrope's Digest, Ralan's Webstravaganza, Quintamid, Spicy Green Iguana, and the Literary Magazine Stand. If you have a favorite site you would like to see covered, please send the pointer to the Features Editor at margaretfisk@fmwriters.com.

A Word about Using Marketing Databases

Marketing databases can point you to publications that might be suitable for your fiction, but they won't substitute for your own research and judgment. Before you submit, be sure to:

- Check the publication's website.
- Read and follow the submission guidelines.
- If at all possible, read at least one issue of the magazine. If you can't locate or afford sample publications, at least read online sample stories.

Not all market listings are updated regularly. They may contain outdated information and pointers to publications that no longer exist. Large popular listings, on the other hand, may receive status information from editors before the information reaches the publication website. Always double check the listing, and when in doubt, query.

Most market listings are operated by one or two individuals who maintain and share the information at considerable expense and personal effort. Consider donating towards the expenses of the listings you use.

Duotrope's Digest (www.duotrope.com)

Duotrope's Digest (duotrope.com) is a free database of markets for English-language poetry and fiction of all lengths. In addition to a searchable database of more than 1400 publications, Duotrope offers a submissions tracker, a calendar of upcoming deadlines, and detailed statistical information about markets and submissions. All services are free, though the submissions tracker is available only to registered users. Registration is also free.

The first thing you see when you enter the Duotrope.com website is the search form, which is what makes Duotrope such a valuable marketing research tool. From here, you can search the database for the fiction markets most suited to your work. The database is divided into categories for short fiction, novels and collections, and poetry. Within those divisions, you can search by attributes such

as length, genre, pay scale, theme, submissions requirements, and publication type.

Duotrope returns a report summarizing the markets that match your criteria, along with a second report that includes markets that may be close to what you need. Clicking on the links take you to a more detailed summary of that publication's needs and requirements, including a summary of the editorial needs, a reproduction of the cover of a typical issue (if relevant), and a link to the publication's website. You also have access to statistics about the publication's acceptance rates and response times.

Duotrope's database includes all genres, from Westerns to romance to literary fiction and experimental poetry. Several new titles are added every week. Markets range from online reviews and tiny poetry journals that offer no payment or only a token payment, to many major magazines including the *New Yorker* and all the major SF/F publications.

Duotrope's information is updated frequently and all links are checked regularly.

Registered users of Duotrope's Digest can use the submissions tracker to monitor where they have submitted manuscripts, how long the manuscripts have been under consideration, and whether it's time to send a follow-up query. The list can be sorted by any attribute. For instance, if you sort by story name, you can see where each story has been submitted. Sorting by market title lets you see which markets you submit to regularly, or show you when you have forgotten

to keep up with a promising market that responded positively to your previous submissions. The submissions tracker also allows you to mark publications as favorites, put titles on your ignore list so they will not be displayed in search results, and track upcoming deadlines for themed issues you would like to submit to. Registration is free.

You can subscribe to a weekly mailing of updates for short stories, poetry, or novels/anthologies. The mailing details new markets added to the database in that area, upcoming deadlines for themed publications, and markets that have recently opened or closed to submissions. This last is especially useful for those submitting to literary journals that often don't read for part of the year.

Duotrope's biggest strength is its large, searchable database of frequently updated information. The search cuts research time significantly over scrolling through long listings. The listings are highly reliable, which reduces the time you need to spend validating and checking. The submissions and deadline tracking help you manage your deadlines and keep your stories out to their appropriate markets.

Book Review: Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print

Reviewed by Erin Hartshorn

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"After twenty years and a hundred books, I at least realize that I don't *know* how to write a novel, that nobody does, that there *is no right way to do it*. Whatever method works -- for you, for me, for whoever's sitting in the chair and poking away at the typewriter keys -- is the right way to do it."

Thus ends Lawrence Block's introduction to *Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print*.

He makes it clear from the very start that what he has written in this book is merely his opinion (unless he is quoting someone else, in which case it's their opinion). And some of his opinions are quite interesting.

One such opinion is that if you want to write a novel, the novel, rather than the short story, is the place to start. He contends that skill and ideas are less important with a novel than with short stories -- not that they are unimportant, but that a paragraph of poor prose in a novel is less of a problem than it is in a short story where it takes up more relative space.

He also tackles deciding which novel to write, developing plot ideas, and developing characters, with examples of how he has approached each. Ideas, he believes, arise in the mind "when the conditions are right," and then he gives

concrete example of how to make conditions right: read the kind of things you want to write, pay attention (including an anecdote about how he created the character of Evan Tanner), remember what you're looking for. I'd have to say that his chapter on developing plot ideas resonated with me the most; his anecdotes are similar to my own collection process for plot bunnies. I may never write like Mr. Block (which is good, since I'd rather write like me), but in some ways, my mind functions like his. I find that comforting.

His emphasis on individual patterns in writing continues throughout the book. The chapter on outlining states near the beginning, "There is no right way to do this -- or, more correctly, there is no wrong way. Whatever works best for the particular writer on the particular book is demonstrably the right way." He includes quotes from Willo Davis Roberts, Tony Hillerman, and Richard S. Prather on their outlining habits to show how different attitudes can be. (Show, don't tell.)

Other good advice comes in his chapter on "Getting It Written." Concern yourself with the work of the day. Don't worry about what comes next, or whether you'll be able to sort out tomorrow's problems. If nothing seems to come out right, write it anyway; you can throw it out later.

I don't agree with everything he says; nor should I, if I am to follow the advice of "whatever works." For example, he says that when he puts aside a book for a week to work on something else, he's setting it down forever. That's not true for

me with all projects. With some, if I don't maintain momentum, they won't be completed. With others, I can set them down and pick them up again many times before I reach "The End." It all depends.

This book is a fun read and can be useful for someone looking for specific pointers on process, alternative methods of working, or just glimpses of how one author thinks about writing. I recommend it for everyone.

Remember: whatever works -- always good advice.

Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print by Lawrence Block

Writer's Digest Books paperback copyright 1979, paperback first published 1985.

ISBN 0-89879-208-8

Submission Guidelines

Here are the things to consider when you're writing an article for Vision:

- Read the guidelines (below) and follow them. If you have a question about the guidelines, email me at zette@cableone.net and ask.
- Don't write an article and send it off without proofing. In fact, read it more than once. Let it sit for a day or two, even if you are running late. I would rather have a well-edited late article than a messy one sent on time.
- I want anything that has to do with writing, from how you think up a story to finding a proper pen. If you love writing and have anything at all that you can offer to other writers, consider writing 500-2000 words for one of the upcoming issues. I am interested in all facets of writing, from first-person experience articles to genre-specific how-to's and informational articles about your area of specialization – whether that be history or science or nursing or long-distance running – and how and where your specialty can be used correctly by writers. Write something that will help other writers, and I'll be interested in taking a look.
- Do you have favorite writing-related books or web sites that you think could help fellow authors? Consider writing a short review of them.
- Did I mention reading the guidelines?

Writing for Vision is a lot easier than most people assume, and a few of our writers have gone on to sell material they first published in **Vision**, or to use the 'sale' as part of a resume to get a job at some other publication.

So, let's work together and get the next issues done.

Oh, and do go read the guidelines...

Starting in 2004. Vision began paying half a cent per word for articles. That's not much money, and I'm going to be asking a lot for that half cent -- both ezine rights as well as the right to publish anything we choose in a POD 'Best of' Anthology at the end of the year. By printing the anthology, we hope to make back the funds that I will be putting into Vision to buy the articles and perhaps even make enough to fund the following year's article acquisitions.

I will be limiting the number of articles bought, and 2000 words (\$10) will be the cut off point for payment. All the other guidelines remain the same. I will be looking for articles on theme-related, general writing and genre topics. If you have some suggestion that you think might help another writer, consider writing it into an article and submitting it to Vision.

We strive to maintain professional standards. Manuscripts must be professionally formatted, as free from spelling and grammatical errors as you can make them, and in what you perceive to be final draft form. We will not welcome

massive rewrites of a piece after we have accepted it – when we accept it, we consider it pretty close to finished, and will only edit it to our standards. If we feel that it need massive rewrites, we won't accept it.

If you have any questions, or wish to query about an article, email

Vision@lazette.net

Please note that [Margaret Fisk](#) is now the Features' Editor and will handle all the review articles.

Guidelines:

Articles must be at least 500 words with 2000 words as the 'soft' top. I'm willing to go over that count if the article needs it, but payment stops at 2000 words.

Check your spelling and grammar! Also, if you are from a country that does not use US spelling conventions, let me know in the email. That will stop me from making several 'corrections' before I realize they aren't mistakes.

PLACE YOUR TITLE AND YOUR NAME AT THE TOP OF THE DOCUMENT. I hate having to go search through emails, checking attachments, to figure whose article I'm actually reading.

Title

By

Your Name

Use one of these fonts: Courier, Courier New, Times New Roman, Verdana or Arial, 12pt.

Double space your manuscript.

Do **not** indent .

I would like submissions to be made in either Word Doc files, or .rtf files, and as attachments to the email. (I believe that WordPerfect allows .rtf saves, doesn't it?) If you use Works, a regular file will do, although (at least in the 4.5 version I have), this program also allows for an .rtf file save.

A plain text copy (.txt) can be sent, but be certain to mark any italics like this: **before and after the section in italics**, and bold likes this: **_before and after anything in bold._** If you cannot do attachments, use the body of the letter as the last resort.

Indicate book titles with italics. And yes, that means if you are doing a Word doc or rtf that you can use actual italics and not an underline to indicate italics. (This is not common submission procedure, but it's far easier for me since I can cut and paste to my wysiwyg web page editor.)

Do not use an underline for emphasis. Underline on websites indicates a link, and people often send emails to say the link is not working. Use italics or bold.

NO HTML code except for links, and those written in this fashion:


<http://www.whatever.com/this.htm>

Provide the ISBN #s and publishers for all books mentioned or reviewed. Do this by adding the title, author, publisher and ISBN# at the bottom of the file. The same is true for articles -- be certain to cite them.

An additional note to Word users: Turn off the 'smart quotes' option in Word, which can be found under Tools-AutoCorrect and then the tabs AutoFormat while you type AND Autoformat. Also uncheck the symbol replacement for --. While Smart Quotes look really neat on the screen, they sometimes translate to funny little squares that cannot be taken out with the 'find-replace' feature, but have to be hunted down by hand. If you are submitting anything electronically, you will very likely hear back from the editor on these. And remember -- a lot of print publishers are now asking for electronic copy for their end as well.

We've been receiving very good articles, and I hope that all of you look at the list of upcoming issues at the bottom of this page and choose something you feel comfortable with writing about.

We are also still looking for general genre-related articles. If you would like to write an article on how to research romantic settings, the proper use of codes in spy thrillers, etc., let us know. The genres we like to cover in each issue are:



- Fantasy
- Historical Fiction
- Horror
- Poetry
- Romance
- Science Fiction
- Suspense & Mystery
- Young Adult & Children
- Young Writer's Scene

I'm always interested in any writing-related articles!

Thank you!

Lazette Gifford

Managing Editor

Questions? Queries? Submissions? [Email me](#)