

Vision: A Resource for Writers
Issue # 39
May/June 2007



Featuring:

A Workshop by Holly Lisle

An Interview with Jim Hines

Writers: On the Road with the Visual Arts By Nanette J. Purcigliotti

How to Write Science Fiction By John B. Rosenman

Net Benefit By Anne Lyle

And Much More!



The logo features the word "Vision" in a large, bold, yellow font. To its right, the words "A Resource" and "For Writers" are stacked in a smaller, brown font. The entire logo is set against a light yellow rectangular background.

In this issue:

TOC2

About This Issue4

From the Editor:5

Workshop: Asking the Right Questions From Holly Lisle’s Create A Plot Clinic ...7

Writer Quest -- An Interview with Jim Hines..... 14

Writers: On the Road in the Visual Arts29

How to Write Science Fiction34

Net Benefit: How (And Why) to Set Up Your Own Website38

Avoid the Last Minute Rush When Submitting Seasonal Manuscripts.....45

Making Maps with Microsoft Word™.....48

The Audience in my Head.....52

Think Like Your Characters -- Think Like Your Readers.....55

Typing your Character61

Mar's Market Report #21.....68

Finding Freelance Writing Jobs.....74

Grammar with Gargoyles -- A Review of The Deluxe Transitive Vampire78

New on the Shelves82

Submission Guidelines86

Masthead92



About This Issue

Issue # 39 May/June 2007

With the coming of spring and summer (at least in the part of the world where I put Vision together), I have noticed a renewal of articles and a surge in spirits among the writers who contribute. This issue is a good example of those seasonal changes -- it seems as though many of the contributors are feeling the joy of stepping away from winter's confinement and spreading wings to new horizons.

In this issue we have all kinds of new, wonderful articles to help you with your writing, including a workshop that is a chapter out of Holly Lisle's new book on writing. We have a wonderful interview with Jim Hines, and great articles on different aspects of writing, from the link between visual and written art to articles on examining your characters and getting their actions and motivations clear.

I hope you enjoy the current issue, and I hope you'll take the time to consider writing for Vision!

From the Editor:

Spring

By Lazette Gifford

Copyright © 2007 by Lazette Gifford, All Rights Reserved

It is finally starting to look like spring here. We still had snow at the beginning of April, but now flowers are out, trees are turning green, and the grass needs mowed. It's hardly fair that the moment things look better it gets to be more work again.

Maybe that's an analogy for writing, now that I think about it. Once you get the first draft done you have that far too short time of elation, and then realize there's more work to do precisely because it is done. Time to start doing the mowing and weeding -- all the editing work that comes before you can send a story out. It can be quite frustrating when you first look at it.

But it sure looks good and feels better when it's done.

So for those of you who are gardeners, think of your editing as that part after you sow the seeds and when the plants are starting to grow. You want to get out there and make certain there aren't any weeds choking the best plants off, and that the pretty flowers have good light so they grow well and are noticed.

And a gardener knows a steady covering of flowers may look lovely at a distance, but it's often the individuals, standing out against something other than

more flowers, that make something truly lovely. It can't all be flowers or else the single flower is lost in the crowd.

Your story is your garden. Next year you'll plant a different one with new flowers and maybe a few more thorn bushes, but this year you have this one to work with. Time to start weeding!

Workshop:

Asking the Right Questions

From **Holly Lisle's Create A Plot Clinic**

By Holly Lisle

Copyright © 2007 by Holly Lisle, All Rights Reserved

(Holly Lisle Create a Plot Clinic is available for sale [here](#). If you like this, you'll love the book! -- Zette)

Holly Lisle's Create A Plot Clinic starts by introducing what plotting is and what it isn't, gives you to twenty tools to use to plot your novel, includes structures to use with your novel and how-to guides for creating and revising your plot before you write, while you're writing, and while you're revising. Every section includes an explanation, a demonstration of how to use each tool or technique, and an exercise to move your plot forward. If you work your way through the book, you'll have a working start-to-finish plot by the time you're finished.

Tool 1: Question

Developing characters, building worlds, creating languages, and building plots are always more about asking the right questions than they are about getting the right answers.

The starter questions for plot can be simple and story-related:

- What happens first?
- Why does that happen?
- Who made it happen?
- What went wrong?

You can direct questions at your characters:

- Who are my characters?
- What are their needs?
- What are their problems?
- Who are their enemies?

Your questions can be more personal:

- What scares me?
- How can I use that?
- Who would be more afraid of that than I am?

- Where could I put this person to drive that fear to its worst possible pitch?

Your questions can be romantic:

- Why is the hero alone?
- Who would be the heroine he would be most attracted to?
- How could I keep him from being able to reach her?
- What could make him do crazy things to catch her attention?

Or they can be historical, or suspenseful, or mysterious, or wacky, or whatever it takes for you to get answers that lead you toward the book you want to write.

The trick with asking questions is to start with a good one, and the trick to starting with a good question is to figure out what makes a question good.

I was always pretty good at asking questions—it was a technique I refined in childhood, much to the chagrin of my parents. But nursing was where I learned how to do patient interviews, and discovered why my childhood questions had gotten such good results...sometimes. (I'll bet cops are taught to ask the same sorts of questions nurses are.)

The Good Question

- **A good question is always open-ended**, and can never be answered with a “yes” or “no.”

You want to get your subconscious talking. You want it to get involved, to spill all sorts of interesting bits of information into your hands. You don't want to ask it “Is Bob my hero?” and have it tell you, “No.” *No* is not a helpful answer. So you rephrase the question to, “What does Bob do in the first part of the story?”

Then your subconscious is forced to think of useful answers like, “Maybe he could start fires. Or if you don't like that, he could be the guy who steals the heroine's purse in the first scene. Only maybe she could have seen him first, and think he's really cute, and then when she isn't looking, he steals her purse.”

I didn't have any idea for a story—any story—until I asked that question. Didn't know who Bob was, either. But I let myself answer that question, and now I have the stirrings of an idea about Bob. A vague glimmering of the plot to come. But onward.

- **A good question focuses on a broad topic** that lends itself well to expansion into a vast array of subtopics and details.

Narrow questions are easy to ask. “What did Bob do in the Smith Building?” is a narrow question. You get one and only one answer from that. “Bob stole Lucy's purse.”

“What goes on in the Smith Building,” however, is ripe with possibilities. The Muse sits there for a moment and thinks. And then it says, “Well, the main floor is the lobby, where there used to be an elevator attendant, a receptionist, and a guard, but the place doesn’t have any of those anymore, and public restrooms and a seedy little music store that gives lessons and takes trade-ins—their stock is mostly shabby second-hand stuff. But the guy who teaches guitar is really good. And the other half is a second-hand bookstore, and the guy who owns that is about a hundred years old. And the second floor has munchies machines, and the bathrooms are down the hall, and there are offices—”

“What kind of offices?”

“Hmmm. A video producer who’s supposedly legit, but who’s doing some pretty creepy stuff down in the basement...”

“There’s a basement?”

“Apparently so. And there’s a bottomfeeder law office at the end of the hall, right next to the public restrooms. And a detective agency with two detectives working in it. Partners. They’re just getting started, and money’s really tight. And an empty office—the guy who worked out of it committed suicide—he was a broker, and he got caught churning. The owners haven’t managed to find anyone to rent the place yet. Might be because they haven’t patched the bullet hole behind the desk. And the third and fourth floors are walk-up apartments. Only about half of them are rented, because of the neighborhood, you know.”

- **Approaches the thing you really want to know sideways**, never directly. It avoids accusation and the making of assumptions.

Never put your Muse on the defensive. You want your Muse to think it's your buddy, not the enemy. (Don't make the mistake of actually believing it's your buddy, though, or it will stab you in the back and take off for Bermuda with your hero or heroine and the rest of your book.)

For current purposes, you might as well consider your Muse a hostile witness or a possible criminal being accused. You want to know the whole story here, and the Muse has it, or at least big parts of it, and it knows where it can get the rest. So you don't ask, "What can you tell me about what Bob was doing in the Smith Building last Friday at 3:27 AM?" The answer to that one is "Nothing." Trust me. The answer to that sort of question is *always* "Nothing."

What you want to ask is something like, "Bob seems a little odd to me. Has he ever seemed a little odd to you?"

Everybody seems a little odd if you think about it, and by asking the question that way, you're building a bit of rapport with your Muse, getting it to let its defenses down, encouraging it to say things that it knows won't really hurt anything. Like, "Well, he does collect rubber bands. Makes great big balls with them. And he likes to put on makeup, but only in his bedroom. He isn't one of those guys who goes public with it. And I know he likes to trap things. You know, rabbits and foxes and stuff."

And now you know that Bob would have a reason to be interested in the contents of a woman's purse other than for the money, that he has intentionally killed things—this may or may not be harmless, depending on what he does with them—and that he has an odd interest in rubber bands, which may or may not become a creepy plot point somewhere along the road. Ask yourself, what does he do with big rubber band balls?

After you figure out your question and ask it, don't say anything else.

Staying silent creates tension, and both people and Muses will blurt out some amazing things if you just ask your question and then wait, sitting still and not filling that silence with anything.

Exercise: Question

Come up with a list of five questions you want to ask about your plot. Ask them, and write anything and everything that comes to your mind when you start getting answers.

Holly Lisle Create a Plot Clinic is available for sale [here](#)

Interview:

Writer Quest -- An Interview with Jim Hines

By Russell Gifford

Copyright © 2007 by Russell Gifford, All Rights Reserved



Vision was fortunate to catch writer Jim C. Hines for this issue's interview.

Jim is the author of the trilogy of stories featuring humorous

misadventures of Jig, the runt goblin, now published by DAW Books.

Starting with GOBLIN QUEST, which hit the shelves in November of last

year, GOBLIN HERO is publishing this month (May 2007). The story follows

Jig into a messy situation where if the

bad guys don't kill him, his own pals might! The Jig trilogy will close with GOBLIN WAR in 2008.

Another series, this time designed to set fairy tale stories back a few hundred years, is next on Jim's hit list, starting with THE STEPSISTER SCHEME. These are scheduled for late 2008 or early 2009.

Hines made his first professional fiction sale in 1998 with "Blade of the Bunny," an award-winning story chosen for Writers of the Future XV. His short fiction has since appeared in over 30 magazines and anthologies, including *Realms of Fantasy*, TURN THE OTHER CHICK, and SWORD & SORCERESS XXI.

His anthology HEROES IN TRAINING, co-edited with Martin Greenberg, is due out in September of 2007 from DAW. So, as you can guess, Jim Hines is a very busy fellow these days!

Jim lives in Michigan with his wife and two children. Vision interrupted him hard at work plotting a sequel to THE STEPSISTER SCHEME, and asked him if he would share some insights on writing and getting published with the readers of Vision. He graciously agreed, and the resulting interview offers some important thoughts for writers everywhere.

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

Jim: I started writing back in 1995. I had a friend who wrote fantasy stories, and I thought I'd try it myself. I was in college at the time, and a semester later, I had written a very long (and very bad) fantasy novel about a wisecracking elf wizard. I had a lot of fun doing it, so I thought I'd keep going.

At the time, I didn't have any real visions for a writing career. I did think it would be pretty cool to sell a book and run around signing autographs while basking in

the adoring glow of my millions of fans. Mostly though, I just enjoyed writing and wanted to improve and write more.

Vision: Any "if I'd known then what I know now" thoughts? Are there things you could have done that would have made it easier for you to reach this point in your career?

Jim: Be more patient, and have more faith in myself. I spent a few years marketing *Goblin Quest*, and then gave up. There were several top publishers I didn't even bother to submit to. Instead, I ended up selling it to a smaller press. Five Star did wonderful things for me, and I'm grateful that they got me started. But they're a specialty market, and their print runs are far smaller than places like Tor and DAW and Ace.

If not for a fluke of luck, the book would have stayed with Five Star, and that would have been the end of it. Instead, I ended up with offers from not one but two major publishers. The book really was good enough. Had I continued pursuing publishers and agents, it's very possible I would have broken in several years sooner than I did.

Writing is hard. It's painful and frustrating, and it's easy to give up. But after what I went through, I believe very strongly in aiming high and sending your work to the top markets. Sure, there's a greater chance of rejection, and the process can be very slow. But if you don't send it, you're basically rejecting yourself.

Vision: Any things you can recommend to would-be writers that you think could help them move forward in their careers? Are there skills you should have sharpened, habits you wish you would have developed? Did you have any special background or training that helped you?

Jim: I think the best thing I ever did was to marry a counselor. Writers are nuts. If you're not nuts when you start, just give it a few years. I can't say that my wife keeps me completely sane, but she helps.

I went to grad school and got a Master's degree in English, with a concentration in creative writing. Those two years taught me a lot about critically analyzing a text, and it did wonders for my non-fiction writing. I also taught Freshman Composition as a graduate assistant, so I learned a lot about teaching. But



working with other writers in critique groups and the Writers of the Future workshop did a lot more for my fiction skills than graduate school did.

I made plenty of mistakes along the way, but I think the things I got right were to push myself to write almost every day, and to seek out feedback from people who were both skilled and honest enough to offer useful criticism.

Vision: The first book in your Goblin series, GOBLIN QUEST, featuring Jig the runt goblin, arrived on the shelves last year from DAW. When did you develop this storyline? How long has it taken to reach the point of actual publication?

Jim: I wrote GOBLIN QUEST at the end of 2000. I spent the next few years collecting rejection letters before selling it to Five Star, a small publisher that produces very nice hardcovers for the library market. Their edition came out at the end of 2004. Then, after a bit of messiness and sheer dumb luck, my agent and I sold GOBLIN QUEST and GOBLIN HERO to DAW. So it was about six years from writing the book to seeing it in the bookstores.

Vision: Your newest saga of Jig Dragonslayer's life, GOBLIN HERO, is due out this month (May 2007) again from DAW. The preview I read looks fun and funny, but Jig is in the middle of a mess! What's the trick to keeping people reading a series? Or is it more challenging to keep it interesting to you, the author?

Jim: One of my biggest fears is that the series would become stale or repetitive. I think it's important to allow the characters to change and grow. Jig will always be a cowardly little runt, but he learns a lot in the first book, and it wouldn't be right to pretend otherwise. He's gained some new powers and earned a bit of prestige, so people treat him differently. Not necessarily *better*, mind you, but differently. Which means GOBLIN HERO has to tell a different story than GOBLIN QUEST. Likewise, the third book will tell a very different story than the first two.

Everything has consequences. I try to give each book a true ending as opposed to a cliffhanger, so that if I'm hit by a bus tomorrow, I won't leave my readers feeling ripped off. But there are always unanswered questions, and each new book builds on the consequences of what came before.

Vision: Was this the first continuing series you've written? Did it start out as a series when you first conceived of Jig's story? How many more stories do you see in Jig's future?

Jim: GOBLIN QUEST was originally a standalone novel. I had no idea if it would sell, or if it would be successful enough to warrant a second book. But Jig and his fellow goblins are a lot of fun, and I kept asking myself questions . . . like how would the other goblins treat a runt who actually survived an adventure? At this point, DAW has purchased three books: GOBLIN QUEST, GOBLIN HERO, and GOBLIN WAR. I've also written four goblin short stories.

I have no immediate plans for more books in the series. As I mentioned, I don't want things to get stale or repetitive. I also don't want to be "that goblin guy" forever. On the other hand, the end of the trilogy leaves Jig in a very different situation, one that has a great deal of potential for fun and exploration. (Fun for me, at any rate. Jig will probably hate it.)

Vision: The Jig Dragonslayer stories certainly have large amounts of humor, and seem very accessible to all ages. Do the stories reflect the vision of the story you started with, or did the humor evolve over time? Did you purposely feel you'd

written a story that could be enjoyed at many age levels, or is that just your nature?

Jim: I had no particular age group in mind when I wrote the story; I just wanted to write from the monsters' perspective, and I loved my nearsighted goblin runt character. I've been a little surprised at how the book has been received. My youngest fan (that I'm aware of) is seven years old, but I also have great grandmothers telling me how much they enjoyed the book.

The humor has definitely evolved a bit. GOBLIN QUEST has a fair number of gaming jokes. That wanes a little in the second and third books, as the stories become more complex. But they're goblins, and goblins are always fun. Humans shake hands as a gesture of respect and friendship. Goblins do it to check how much meat you've got on your bones.

Vision: You mention you have written four goblin short stories. Are those published, or soon to be published? Are they Jig stories? If so, where would someone find these?

Jim: Don't you know it's dangerous to ask a writer to promote his own stuff? But since you asked. . . .

"Goblin Lullaby" came out last fall in the DAW anthology FANTASY GONE WRONG. In a lot of ways, that one was my favorite. It tells the story of baby Jig (inspired by my then-four-month-old son). It also introduces a few of the

characters from GOBLIN HERO, and even sets a few elements into place for GOBLIN WAR.

A short story named "Goblin Hero" will be out Very Soon in BASH DOWN THE DOOR AND SLICE OPEN THE BADGUY. This one tells how Jig and his fire-spider Smudge first met.

"The Haunting of Jig's Ear" will be out later this year in *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine*. The title is self-explanatory, if a bit goofy.

Finally, I sold "School Spirit" to the Wizards of the Coast anthology MAGIC IN THE MIRRORSTONE, which is scheduled for 2008. That's the only goblin story that doesn't include Jig. Instead, we follow Veka and find out what happened to her after the events of the second goblin book.

Vision: Your bio says your fiction has appeared in thirty magazines and anthologies. Thirty? Over five years? Ten years? No matter which, it seems like a heck of an achievement! So, your writing career obviously did well in the time between 1998 and the book. Can you talk about that a little bit? And where did "Blade of the Bunny" fit into this apparently very productive output?

Jim: "Blade of the Bunny" was my first professional sale. I came away from Writers of the Future with the naive expectation that all of the top markets would now be fighting over me. After all, I was a Writers of the Future winner! Sadly, most editors turned out to be perfectly willing to reject a WotF winner.

I've always aimed high with my short fiction. My first submission to *Fantasy and Science Fiction* was back in 1995. (After 41 submissions, I still haven't cracked that market. But someday Gordon Van Gelder *will* send me a contract, darn it!) Anyway, my approach was to send my stories to all of the top markets and work my way down until I sold it or ran out of markets. This meant I could have 20 or more stories out at the same time, which was a good feeling.

Around 2002 or 2003, I changed strategies. I wanted to build a name as a writer, and that meant I needed to get into the pro markets where you had much wider distribution. At the time, SFWA defined pro markets as those paying 3 cents/word, so I adopted that as my cutoff point.

The effect was immediate: I got started collecting even more rejections. But it worked for me. I had to push myself as a writer, and I gradually got to the point where I was writing well enough to sell to places like *Realms of Fantasy* or *Sword & Sorceress*.

These days I'm not doing as much short fiction, and I'm not quite as militant about pay rates. I sold one of the goblin stories to *Andromeda Spaceways* because I love those guys, and it's a fun magazine, even if the pay rate is significantly less than *F&SF*.

Vision: So, is the short fiction market still the way to 'break in?' (Since you still went the way of the small press, it does not sound like it was a huge help to you getting into the novel arena? Or not? Did it help you get an agent?)

Jim: Write what you want to write. None of the agents I talked to knew anything about my short fiction work.

I do think short fiction can teach a lot about the craft of writing. You learn dialogue and plotting and character development and world-building, and it's far easier to rewrite and analyze a 4000-word story than it is a 100,000-word novel. At the same time, novels and short stories are different beasts. Writing a short story won't teach you how to juggle a novel's worth of subplots, or how to foreshadow events six chapters ahead of time, or how to control pacing over 20 chapters.

I don't think short fiction is the path to novel success as much as it used to be. Short fiction can certainly help, of course. A query letter that mentions sales to *Asimov's* and *Analog* is going to get a closer look by a would-be agent or editor.

Someone who works as an agent or editor would be a better person to ask, but in my opinion, the best way to break in as a novelist is to write a really good novel. And if that doesn't work, write a better one. (In most cases you'll also need to learn to write a really good query letter.)

Vision: Besides heroic and humorous fantasy, what genres do you write in, and why? And would you like to try your hand at any others?

Jim: My novels with DAW are all quirky fantasies. My fourth book, *THE STEPSISTER SCHEME*, is a bit more serious than the goblin trilogy, but it's still a lot of fun. I've written much more widely in my short fiction, though. I've done

the occasional science fiction story, dabbled in horror, and done everything from classic sword & sorcery to the alternate history piece I'm working on right now. I do like to push myself to try new things, but I also have a lot of fun writing lighter, humorous stories.

Vision: Who has influenced your writing?

Jim: Um ... everyone? Even when I hate a book, I try to learn from it, if only to say, "I have to make sure I don't do that." I love Ursula LeGuin's skill with language. I love the way Spider Robinson evokes a sense of wonder in some of his books. I love the way Peter David can put humor and tragedy on the same page, and make you feel them both. Zelazny does a wonderful job with the sheer marvelousness of his worlds. Julie Czerneda has taught me a lot about developing better alien characters. And from Snoopy of Peanuts fame, I've learned to persevere through rejection.

Vision: Are there common mistakes you see new writers making? What suggestions would you give them?

Jim: I've run a fair number of writing workshops at conventions and such over the years. A lot of the things I see most clearly are mistakes I make myself. Starting the story too early is a big one. One of the suggestions I make most often is to cut the first 5 or 10 pages. In a novel, sometimes I cut an entire chapter or more. The beginning needs to grab and hold a reader's interest, especially if you're a new writer. If you're Stephen King, people will keep reading

because they trust you. For a new writer, if you don't grab the editor after the first page, they may not read the second.

Vision: Do you see the Internet as a good tool for upcoming writers? How should they be using it, if it is?

Jim: Like a lot of things, the Internet can be both a wonderful tool or an awful one. At a bare minimum, I believe every author needs a professional-looking web site with contact information. It doesn't have to be big and fancy, but if someone wants to pay you \$100 to speak at a local college or interview you for the local paper, you want them to be able to contact you.

In terms of promotion, I've posted the first chapters of my books, as well as some "Easter Eggs" and deleted scenes. I maintain a presence at LiveJournal and MySpace, as well as some Yahoo! Groups discussion lists, all of which give me the opportunity to interact with readers and writers. The down side of all this is that time spent online is time not spent working on your fiction. . . .

It's easy to go overboard with promotion, which can alienate the very people you're trying to attract. MySpace pages that are absolutely nothing but a commercial tend to annoy me. Lots of authors will also spam mailing lists and discussion forums with information about their books. "Oh, you're talking about pizza? Well, the protagonist of my book, MARY SUE AND ME eats lots of pizza, so you should all read it!" I've had far more success simply being myself,

chatting with folks, and letting them ask me if they're interested in learning about my books.

Vision: How has writing changed who you are or how you see the world? Are there themes that matter most to you?

Jim: The most obvious change is that it's harder for me to read a book or watch a show without critiquing the writing. For a while, I couldn't sit through a movie without muttering about foreshadowing or poor character development or how the writers were deliberately manipulating our sympathies. I've gotten a bit better. I still do a lot of analysis, but I've learned to keep my mouth shut and not bug everyone else about it. Mostly.

As for themes, family has become much more important to me over the past years, and I'm seeing that reflected in my writing. The Stepsister Scheme will be dedicated to my daughter when it comes out, and one of the themes of the book is three women creating a new family after escaping the nastiness of their old families. The short story I'm currently writing has family dysfunction dripping from every page. (It also has elves with semi-automatic weapons, but that's not really thematic, just nifty.)

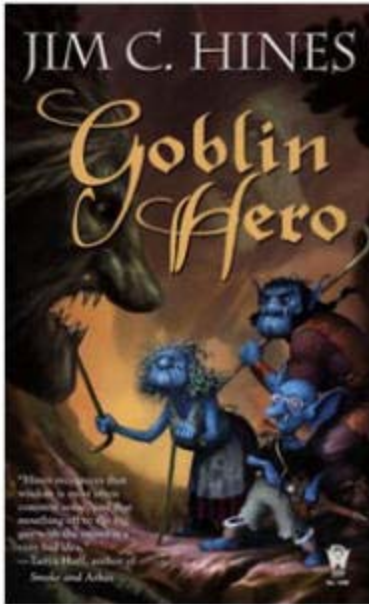
Vision: What is your average day like? Do you write every day?

Jim: I took a job for the state back in 2001, because I knew it was the kind of job that would mesh with my writing goals. It's a lower-stress position, which means I'm not mentally burnt out at the end of the day. For six years now, I've used my

lunch hour to work on my writing. I can do close to 1000 words during lunch on a good day. (Let's not get into what the bad days are like.)

I have two young children at home, which means it's difficult to write in the evenings or on weekends. If I'm on a deadline, I can usually squeeze in an extra hour here or there, but the lunch hour has been my primary writing time. One hour a day, five days a week can add up to a lot of words over the course of a year. As long as you're consistent, you'd be surprised at how much writing you can get done.

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?



Jim: Goblin Hero, the second book in my goblin series, just came out on May 1. We're hoping to get Goblin War into bookstores in early 2008. DAW will also be publishing The Stepsister Scheme in late 2008 or early 2009. I'm hoping Stepsister will be the first in a new series of butt-kicking fairy tale princess books. I'm disavowing any knowledge of the Disney fairy tale movies, and going back to some of the earlier stories. Cross those with Charlie's Angels, and you'll get a rough idea what the books are like.

For the future, mostly I hope to keep on writing. And if I'm very fortunate, readers will keep on buying what I write.

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

Jim: I want to say thanks to Lazette for inviting me to come talk to your readers. To everyone, I generally hang out over at <http://jimhines.livejournal.com> or <http://www.jimchines.com>. Stop by and say hello!

Writers: On the Road in the Visual

Arts

By Nanette J. Purcigliotti

Copyright © 2007 by Nanette J. Purcigliotti, All Rights Reserved

Writers are possessed with the gift of painting words on a page. In the course of history it has been noted that some writers, in the process of their imaginings, have worked out their action plot, emotional plot, voice, and whatever else they needed to do to make their book work, by literally drawing themselves into the visual arts, thereby freeing their Muse to a heightened force.

A prime example of one writer on a spiritual quest with a passion for writing and living life in the visual arts was Jack Kerouac. His book, *On The Road*, sits next to my computer. Why? Because he opened my eyes to see how connecting to the visual arts can free the Muse within your soul. *On The Road* freed his generation of writers and artists to smell the flowers and he freed future generations of writers and artists with his Beat Culture. His words are alive on the page as he painted his words with all his five senses.

On the Road shows how music played a part in his writing. "Once there was Louis Armstrong blowing his beautiful top in the muds of New Orleans before him

the mad musicians who had paraded on official days and broke up their Sousa marches into ragtime.” And, “The crazy flowers bloom there too.” And, “The music picked up. The bass-player hunched over and socked it in, faster and faster.” *On the Road* brought Jack Kerouac into the limelight in the literary world. New York University was the first university to recognize Jack Kerouac as “a giant of American letters.” NYU produced a show of his legacy and some of Kerouac’s artwork was featured. Kerouac had an on-going journey connecting the different aspects of his passions; his love of music and of painting and of poetry; and letting his passions connect its rhythms and connect it all to his writing life. “Jack played his particular style of crashing “Beethoven-esque chords,” and it is all there in *On the Road*.

Some writers find that by expressing themselves in the visual arts whether it be a hands on project, visiting a museum, viewing a Broadway show, or listening to music, their writing comes to life with their novelist's eye and later the images, the colors, the scenes, play into the novel they are working on or free their Muse to invent another book.

Joyce Carol Oates, the award-winning author of many books expressed her passion for the visual arts. In her non-fiction essay, *Life, Vigor, Fire: The Watercolors of Winslow Homer*, published in *Writers on Artists*, she described one of Homer's marine paintings in her own painterly words. “If the quintessential watercolor bears a relationship to any literary form it’s surely to the lyric poem: a work which, in Robert Frost's words, rides on its own melting, like a piece of ice

on a hot stove." She added, "White paper breaks through transparent washes to suggest the dim reflections of the sky; all colors are muted—browns, blues, greens, black." I read her book, *Black Water* and couldn't help reflecting on the idea that Winslow Homer's painting was in her mind's eye when she wrote *Black Water*.

Eudora Welty's best selling memoir, *One Writer's Beginnings*, which I treasure, shows Welty's relationship to art in her early years. "In a children's art class, we sat in a ring on kindergarten chairs and drew three daffodils that had just been picked out of the yard; and while I was drawing, my sharpened yellow pencil and the cup of the yellow daffodil gave off whiffs just alike. That the pencil doing the drawing should give off the same smell as the flower it drew seemed par of the art lesson."

Lazette Gifford, Editor of *Vision* stated in her article, *Workshop: The Lost Sense*, "In order to use the sense of touch in your story, you have to be more aware of it in your own world." Welty used her senses to tell her stories in her own world.

Isabel Bishop was foremost a painter. With her novelist's eye for detail she wrote an essay in *Writers on Artists* on the art of Gregorio Valdes. "The sky was blue at the top, then white, then beautiful blush pink, the pink of a hot, mosquito-filled tropical evening." She painted her words. Bishop used her painterly senses to tell her stories and all aspects of the visual arts worked to her benefit.

Literary artists throughout the ages have been drawn to express themselves in different mediums. The brand new brilliant novelist, Marisha Pessl is another example of a gifted artist who likes to “sweep out her mind” and says, “It’s so nice to have the silence, to just express things visually.” Her book, *Special Topics in Calamity Physics*, earned the New York Times 2006, 10 Best Book Awards. When Pessl’s not writing she moves into another mode and takes up the paintbrush. “When you’re painting for yourself, you have no one to please. But yourself.”

To sum up, the writers who can move into the visual arts to free their Muse and hear the music and smell the flowers and view the painting allow the visual arts to refresh their life as a writer.

For me, writing is hard work. There are no easy paths to getting published. Writers must follow submission policies, query letters, networking, and in some cases, critique group issues. If your work is rejected you can finger paint or listen to cool jazz and let your Muse refresh your soul and your book.

In the end, taking time out to experience the myriad doors open in the visual arts can be a rewarding experience for writers. When your book is published, you can smell the flowers, hear the music, and view the painterly images of your words in your book; for all the world to read.

North Point Press . San Francisco

ISBN: 0-86547-340-4

OFFBEAT, COLLABORATING WITH KEROUAC,

David Amran, Thunder's Mouth Press . New York

ISBN: 1-56025-362-2

ISABEL BISHOP, Helen Yglesias, Foreward By John Russell,

Rizzoli, New York

ISBN: 0-8478-0976-5

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

Archives, Friday, February 9, 2007

POSSESSED; It's Like Nothing, Really

Vision: A Resource For Writers (Issue #37 January/February 2007) Lazette

Gifford, Editor

How to Write Science Fiction

By John B. Rosenman

Copyright © 2007 by John B. Rosenman, All Rights Reserved

Believe it or not, some folks are afraid of writing science fiction, and think they can't do it. How, after all, can you explain a cyclotron or bioengineer an improved breed of humans if you're not a scientist? And as far as creating a scientifically-correct alien world is concerned, just forget it. Leave it to the experts like Larry Niven and Poul Anderson, right?

Relax, it's not that difficult.

The first thing to know is that like people, science fiction has cousins and often intermarries with them. In other words, it overlaps with related genres, especially fantasy, both light and dark. Sometimes, it even becomes hard to decide whether a narrative is science fiction, fantasy, or science-fantasy. Is Ann McCaffrey's popular Pern series fantasy or science fiction? Yes, you've got dragons, which make it fantasy. However, you're also given a scientific explanation for the dragons, which makes it science fiction. Take your pick.

Want another example? Okay, suppose you're a fantasy writer who likes unicorns. Now, do you want to become a science fiction writer without first earning a Ph.D. in nuclear physics or biochemistry? Simple. Without going into *too* much detail, create your unicorns in a laboratory and transport them to a distant, Earthlike world (just call it Terra). Is the result fantasy or science fiction?

Well, using one diagnostic device, if you get there by a flying carpet, it's fantasy; if you use a spaceship, it's science fiction; and if you take a taxi, it's slipstream or contemporary fiction. To be more sensible, where you put it in the bookstore depends on whether the events are based primarily on the paraphernalia of science fiction (faster-than-light drives, black holes, laser weapons, etc.), or of fantasy (dwarves, elves, magical spells, etc.). Just remember that if you want to write *soft* (as opposed to *hard*) science fiction, you don't have to be too technical, and that if you write fantasy, you can write science fiction as well.

What, then, *is* science fiction? Sometimes it's called speculative fiction, and many agree *it's the most conceptually rich genre there is, filled with endless possibilities*. Science fiction can take place anywhere – in the present, the past, the future; on this world, or on others; in this universe, or in others – even a universe in a drop of water! Wherever it occurs, though, science fiction presents an alternate reality based to a lesser or greater extent on current science. Often, as in stories of time travel and faster-than-light drives, you have a writer *speculate* about what people could do if they could transcend certain "fixed" natural laws. In other works, or *hard* science fiction, you have systematic extrapolations of current knowledge into the future – e.g., Anderson and Beason's *Assemblers of Infinity*, which concerns nanotechnology or the creation of microscopic machines.

Besides being speculative, science fiction causes people to ask questions. For example:

Are there any particular roadblocks in writing it? While you don't have to be a scientist, it certainly helps to be one if you go into the nuts and bolts of building a fusion engine or space station. Still, diligent homework can compensate for your deficiencies, just as certain mainstream writers like James Michener have exhaustively researched places like Texas and Hawaii. Just remember *not* to make assumptions based on ordinary experience. For example, in an early draft of my novel, *Beyond Those Distant Stars*, I had ships colliding in space and making one hell of a racket. Wrong! Space is a vacuum, and you wouldn't hear a thing. Nor, unless you put him in suspended animation or jump through hyperspace, can you have a starship captain visit another galaxy and return to embrace his wife. Because of the principle of "time dilation," it's widely accepted that your captain would age more and more slowly as he approached the speed of light and that his wife would be long dead. Indeed, he might find his great-great-grandchildren waiting for him!

How does one prepare to write science fiction and avoid such mistakes? Easy – write, write, write; read, read, read. Join a writer's workshop which emphasizes intelligent critiquing rather than mutual praise. Read the masters, Dozois' annual *The Year's Best Science Fiction*, and subscribe to the best magazines like *Asimov's Science Fiction*. Above all, remember that good writing is good writing regardless of genre. Often, it has some kind of early "hook" to interest the reader. For example, here's how I began my story, "Rounded With A Sleep," which appeared in *Galaxy*: "The ship came down like the breath of God, jets blasting the ground and echoing off distant mountains." In all other respects,

good science fiction contains the same elements you find in Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky: well-rounded, interesting characters that act and grow; intriguing, ingenious plots; good, even poetic language; skillful dialogue, rich symbols, subtle foreshadowing, etc.

Can too much technical stuff bore the reader? Yes, it can, unless it's the rare reader who likes it. Even in most hard science fiction, the story comes first. In an interview I did with Mike Resnick for *Dark Regions*, he said that if "science and technology intrude upon the human values of a story, to that extent the story may succeed as science fiction, but it fails as fiction." To him, "a writer's two primary jobs are to entertain, and to elicit an emotional response." Resnick does both superbly in his popular "Kirinyaga" tales. With masterful economy, he lets you know you're in a tribal land relocated to an orbiting space station without bogging you down in detail. Story and characters are primary, and he maintains a delicate balance, telling you just enough, and no more, than is necessary.

Let me end with the cardinal rule about writing any kind of fiction: almost always, *Show, Don't Tell*. Like Resnick, look at exposition with a critical eye, cut it whenever the story can tell itself, and you'll be on your way – who knows, perhaps even to the stars.

Net Benefit: How (And Why) to Set Up Your Own Website

By Anne Lyle

Copyright © 2007 by Anne Lyle, All Rights Reserved

This article follows "Image Counts: Your Professional Website" by Linda Adams, which appeared in Vision Issue 11 (September 2002). That article addressed the basics of site design; here I shall be considering hosting options.

Why have a website?

Maybe you're still wondering if you need a website. Won't creating and maintaining it eat into your precious writing time? Well, yes, a little, but the benefits can far outweigh the costs.

Although web-based stores like Amazon are the main place that people will find your book online, the Internet has become such a central feature of 21st-century communication that you'll look a little old-fashioned if you don't have your own web presence. Many agents (and publishers) nowadays expect you to be business-savvy enough to exploit the Web to promote your books (see <http://misssnark.blogspot.com/2005/10/author-websites.html>), and loyal readers will appreciate news "from the horse's mouth." Even if you've yet to have a manuscript accepted for publication, a website can be out there working on your behalf. For example, it's a good way for an agent to find out a bit more about you

without having to ask directly. If that sounds a bit like cyber-stalking, you have to remember that most agents (and editors) have encountered writers who take anything more personal than a form rejection as a prelude to acceptance. Not only do they not want to get your hopes up, they don't want to be inundated with questions about your work and why it hasn't been accepted yet. An anonymous trip to your website avoids potential awkwardness.

Of course you can always put off setting up your website until you are ready to start submitting work to editors and agents. Working on your new site can be a great way to take your mind off your anxieties whilst waiting for a response!

What about a blog?

In the last few years, blogs have exploded into the mainstream of Internet culture, and there are plenty of sites offering free blogging software (the two best-known are probably [LiveJournal](#) and [BlogSpot](#)).

Blogging is an easy way to try out having a web presence without having to know anything about web design or HTML. You just sign up and post your entries via a simple web form. There are lots of ready-made templates, so you can personalise the design of your blog and have it looking professional even if you have no artistic skills whatsoever!

One caveat on blogs: there's nothing worse than a blog that doesn't get updated. In [a 2003 survey](#), two-thirds of the blogs that were included had not been updated for two months, i.e. had been temporarily or permanently abandoned. To

avoid this happening to your blog, you need to have a definite purpose in mind. For writers, an obvious use is to serve as a public progress report, for yourself as much as anyone else. Or it can be a place to have fun with writing, to work through patches of writer's block, or just to build up the discipline of writing every day. Do beware of posting fiction intended for submission, however; publication on an open blog can negatively affect a piece's chances of being accepted elsewhere. Why would a publisher pay for something that's already freely available online? (Exceptions have been made, but they are special cases and unlikely to apply to the ordinary novelist.)

Also, the majority of blogs are read by only a few people, typically the friends or family of the blogger. Unless you have a large and loyal group of friends -- or until you have a substantial fan-base! -- you are unlikely to get many comments. In fact, I have turned the comment feature off on my blog, so that it isn't littered with depressing '0 comments' notices. Maybe one day I'll have enough traffic to make turning it back on worth it...

Free websites

If blogging's not your thing, or you want a 'proper' website with content laid out however you want it, you may be tempted by a free web host, many of whom have been around since the mid-nineties. However, I would strongly advise against it.

This might seem an odd stance to take, when free blog hosting is perfectly acceptable to me. However, you have to bear in mind that a) a blog is expected to be informal, and b) ordinary people are not expected to be able to install or write the software needed to run a blog. A conventional website, on the other hand, is expected to show a degree of seriousness and professionalism. And now that paid hosting is available for only a couple of dollars (or pounds, or Euros) a month, even being an impoverished writer is hardly an excuse any more for choosing a free alternative.

The other issue with free hosts is that many of them claim copyright of all content posted on their servers (or at the very least, all content posted on publicly accessible pages). If you are tempted to get one of these accounts to practice on before paying for hosting, check their terms and conditions very carefully!

Commercial hosting

As mentioned above, nowadays you can find plenty of commercial hosting packages to suit even the tightest of budgets. As I'm in the UK, the examples below are British companies, but you can get similar -- or even cheaper -- deals from companies based in the US and Canada.

A quick word first about server operating systems: the majority of web servers run on Linux, as it's cheaper and more secure than Windows. If you're just writing simple HTML pages, either operating system can easily cover your needs. So, unless you need specific Windows programming languages or databases (which

is unlikely for a writer's personal site), I recommend choosing Linux hosting if possible.

Ready-made websites

If you're not very technologically savvy and don't want to learn to use web design software, you can get a ready-made site template, similar to a blog but with the ability to have permanent webpages. They are not the cheapest option, but you are paying extra for ease of use. In some cases, you may get additional features apart from the webpages you write, such as an integrated blog, forum software, feedback forms, etc.

For an example, see InstantSite from Pipex: <http://www.123-reg.co.uk/instant-site>. Note that, in the case of this service, you need to buy a domain name as well, and fees are based on the number of 'static' pages on your site (i.e. excluding database-driven pages such as blogs).

Shared hosting

If, on the other hand, you want to design the pages yourself, you can get a much broader package for about the same price as an instant site, and of course a lot more flexibility in design and layout. A basic shared hosting package should offer the following as a minimum:

- * The ability to host HTML pages. Most will also allow either PHP (Linux) or ASP (Windows) pages for dynamically-generated content (if you don't know what that is, ignore it!)

- * A number of free POP3 mailboxes, plus webmail (rather like a Hotmail account, but using your own domain name)

- * Web statistics, so you can see who is visiting your site. For example, <http://www.123-reg.co.uk/web-hosting/>

The above will probably be enough for a lot of writers, but for only a little more each month you can get a package with a whole slew of extra features. My website is hosted with [UnitedHosting](#), which provides, for 5 GBP a month (\$8), all the features of a basic shared hosting package plus several databases, blog and forum software, remote login, and loads more.

As with most things in life, you get what you pay for. I find that the best value comes from companies who are reasonably well established, but who aim their products at general users and not big companies with deep pockets!

A caveat regarding domain names: a lot of small companies offer free domain names with their packages. This is a tempting deal, but I can't entirely recommend it. If the company goes bust, you may have to go through a lot of hassle to get control of "your" domain name so you can carry on using it. This is not to say that small companies are bad, just that putting all your eggs in one basket can lead to problems. I know; it happened to me several years ago! Since

then, I have registered domains with an established company and simply "pointed" them at my inexpensive web hosting account. Now if I need to move a site from one company's servers to another, I can update all the redirects via my registrars' website, instead of being dependent on the helpfulness of the hosting company (and let's face it, I wouldn't be moving away from them if I was happy with their service!).

Conclusion

Having a web presence has gone from being the exception to the rule; you just need to choose the approach that's right for you!

* * *

About the author

Anne Lyle has been creating websites since 1997. She is currently a programmer for [Ensembl](#), an online genome browser used by scientists and medical researchers around the world. You can find her personal website at <http://www.annelyle.com>.

Avoid the Last Minute Rush When Submitting Seasonal Manuscripts

By Suzan Wiener

Copyright © 2007 by Suzan Wiener, All Rights Reserved

Are you a writer who waits too late to send out seasonal submissions such as material for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, etc.? If you follow the tips listed below, you won't be upset because you missed a deadline, and you will have a better chance of getting your work accepted by sending it out in a timely manner. When I first started out as a writer, I had the misfortune of missing out on acceptances because I didn't get my work in on time -- but not anymore. Instead of waiting for the last-minute rush to write submissions for seasonal material, why not write it year-round in your spare time? This way, when it comes to sending material out, you will be a jump ahead of the competition because you will have it ready to be mailed. You can even address the envelopes beforehand to help speed the process along.

1. File each piece in a separate folder marked in large, red letters with the month it should be sent, the holiday, and the target publication. Check the folders on a weekly basis, so you don't miss important deadlines.

2. Check *Writer's Market* to see how far in advance each magazine needs seasonal material. Some need it as far as six months to a year ahead of time. Write out each market's lead time and keep it by your computer or typewriter.

3. Keep a list of the holidays and writer's guidelines handy to know when each publication's holiday deadline is approaching. It is good if you store them all in one loose-leaf folder, which saves time and effort.

4. Have a calendar handy so you can check the holiday and remember the lead times for each publication. If you show them consistency in giving good seasonal items they can use, the editor could start relying on you for those items.

5. Always look for unusual holidays to write about, such as Kwanzaa. If you don't know about that particular special occasion, then research it. Search engines like Google are a big help in that respect. You will be glad you did when you get that most-welcome check for your submitted work.

6. Make sure not to send a religious poem to a magazine geared toward fashion and vice-versa. You have to know your target audience to make sales. (See my May, '05 article "Target

Your Audience" in *The Writer's Ezine* for more information about targeting your audience.)

7. Pretend you are working at a particular publication. In doing so, you will read the publication more thoroughly and know what specific types of seasonal items the editor accepts.

Following the above tips can help you to get more acceptances and that is what every writer craves.

Making Maps with Microsoft Word™

By Cindy Clark

Copyright © 2007 by Cindy Clark, All Rights Reserved

If you are writing fantasy or science fiction novels, chances are you might need to make a map. This is not just for the readers, but to also help you know where your characters are going. This can also save you time on finding names of towns when you're in the middle of writing and from double and triple checking your facts when you go back to edit.

You don't have to be a mapmaker to make such a map. If you have Microsoft Word on your computer, you can easily make any kind of map with the extras that Word has to offer. Going to the auto shapes on Word you can draw any kind of basic land mass. You can draw the land mass or just a portion of it using the curve in the lines.

You can start with dividing your landmass into nations. To do this you can use drawing tool to draw your borders in a full line or a dashed line. If you don't need to have other nations shown, then just draw the outline of the nation you need to show.

Now it will be time to add in what makes it look like a map. You can find extra clip art items in the more auto shapes section. Looking through this you should be able to find a pine tree clip art picture. It will be colored, but you can change it to white. (If you have a color printer you can use color, but Word isn't great with

using different ranges of color.) Using this tree as a symbol, you can create large forests for your world.

Once the forests are in place, you can start deciding where you want any type of hills. You can make this using the symbol with a small arch. You can leave grasslands blank, or to be colored in later. If you plan on having a desert can make a small symbol that looks like a heat wave to show that it is sand. For a mountain range start with triangles, using more than one you can make it look like a large or a small mountain range. You can also make the triangles smaller or larger to show a different it size. Adding in rivers and lakes can be done the same way you did your borders and you can change the thickness of the rivers lines, or double the line to make it look like a large river.

If you aren't sure you have the map the way you like it, don't worry because you can always change something if you have a better idea. Now you can start adding in your capitals with a star clip art, (or any symbol you pick). Cities can be shown with a small circle and villages can be shown with a diamond. You don't have to use these symbols; there will be many you can pick from in Word. However, make sure you do have different symbols for each type of city you decide use for your map.

Once that is done it'll be time to add in your city names. You don't have to worry about naming all the cities and villages, but you should name the ones your characters are going to and might mention during the course of the novel. Extra names could come in handy later and it might be worth the time to fill in as many

city names as you have placed on your map. Writing the names of the cities is easy with the use of the text box. Make certain the text box is set for clear and has no lines, then move the text box to where you want the city names to be at.

Now is the time to decide if you want to color your picture on you computer. If you have a good graphic program you can copy the map and paste into your program to color it there. If you don't have a a good program, or aren't sure if the color will be right, print it and color it with some color pencils. You might not think that it'll make much of a difference but looking at a color map vs. a plain one might give it a professional feel.

If you aren't working on a science fiction novel then you can still use a map to help you. If you are working on a novel that involves traveling to different planets then why not make a star map? Start with small circles that show the planets and then add in transfer routes, private routes, large ship routes or anything else your novel needs.

Another idea to try is to make a city. This might be harder, but if a good portion of your novel takes place in a city, then having a map can be useful. First you have to decide on a basic shape, from a circle to square, or maybe even an odd shape that works for you. To make it look even more real you can add on small extras to make the city look like it's been built onto. Next place your main castle, palace or other important buildings. Then do the major streets shown by a double line. Any side's streets can be shown with a single line. None of the streets have to be straight; they can wind in and out.

Buildings can be shown by squares, but not all buildings are the same. Adding a couple squares together can make a different shape. Using Word's auto shapes can help you create more shapes. Next label streets and buildings, although you might end up labeling more once your novel continues. You can always go back and reedit the map to add in the new names.

The more maps you end up making, the better ideas you'll have for making better ones. The best thing about making a map on the computer is that you can change things. Move a city around, make a river turn in a different direction and make a larger lake. Add in islands and other extras. Even if you do print your map and decide to change something later you'll still have a hard copy on your computer you can change and print out again. Plus, if you do have a printed copy you can have it near by while you write, just in case you or your characters get lost.

The Audience in my Head

By Jessica Corra Tudor

Copyright © 2007 by Jessica Corra Tudor, All Rights Reserved

I don't consciously think about who I'm writing for while I'm writing. That would be like allowing my Inner Editor off her leash and letting her invite friends. I do all my planning and editing with an audience in my head, however. I find that in the pre- and post- writing stages, thinking about my audience proves valuable.

So who is my audience? For me, it's my twin sister and my husband, whose tastes are worlds apart. My twin sister is analytical, acerbic, and secular. My husband is quick-witted, religious, and handsome -- and also brutally honest and very picky. I ask myself, "Would they both read it?" This is what keeps me balanced. What offends my husband is no big deal for my sister, and vice versa.

How is this helpful to me as a writer? Doesn't trying to balance both sides just mean I'm pretty boring? You'd think so. I look at it another way: readership appeal. Not everyone is going to want to read a historical thriller with fantasy elements, but if they did, would they read mine? The readership extremes are represented in my head by my audience. Rather than limiting me, they often prompt me in better directions. For instance, it would offend my husband if a character outright cursed. How else can I show his frustration?

It's not so different from the characters floating around in my head as I plan the story. It's one thing to look at an action and ask if a character would really

perform it. It's another to ask if it's something anyone would want to read. My audience is my objective yard stick, because as a writer I don't have an objective bone in my body.

I know someone will argue with me, "But I write for myself! Why should I bother with other people's opinions?" Well, aside from a desire to publish, you mean. I know writers who are their own yardstick, and write things *they* would want to read. I can't do that. I'm a really picky reader and I am also a very poor judge of my own writing, as many writers are. So what I think is brilliant and original... well, I'm more likely to see its flaws when I run it by my sister and husband -- in my head. Note that my audience contains people I know very well; I can assume the responses they make in my head are what they would really say because I know them so well.

Considering other people's opinions may keep you from spending a lot of time with a piece that is ultimately not going anywhere, no matter how cool you think blue pixies are.

While I'm not going to tell you that pieces you write may not be worthwhile, because we learn from everything we write, I am going to say that if we're critical upfront with our work -- objectively, truly critical -- we'll probably spare ourselves some heartache and wasted time, and maybe even become better writers for it. If you take yourself seriously as a writer (especially if you plan to submit your work), you should consider your readership. Even if you ultimately reject having one in your head (enough voices already, maybe?) you should still ask the

question, "Would anyone read this besides my mom?" It may seem obvious but then again, maybe not. And since I'm the last person who can answer that question about my work, I leave it up to my husband and sister.

(Or maybe I just like to see them argue...)

Think Like Your Characters --

Think Like Your Readers

By VS Grenier

Copyright © 2007 by VS Grenier, All Rights Reserved

Children don't care about plot, setting, or a book full of suspense. Well they do, but only after the characters bring a child into your story. Let's think about that for a moment—

Do you remember wanting to go on escapades with Pippi Longstocking? Longing to escape down the river with Huck Finn? Or solve a mystery with Nancy Drew or the Hardy Boys? These characters became your friends and you want your characters to befriend the children who read your books or stories, too.

Potential story characters are all around you. You just need to open your eyes to see them walking to school, shopping in the mall, bike riding or skating down your street. If you close your eyes, you see them in your memory -- the child you once were, the friends you remember from your childhood, the children you've raised or the children you've known. The point is you can draw from these potential characters to make your story characters more life like.

Believable characters aren't thought up and written down in black and white. They're born from real people and are revealed to readers through your craft of storytelling. When you do this well, your reader will identify with your main character, and they'll feel that character's fear and elation as he/she struggles to succeed in the book. The reader will believe the other characters in your story are either there to help or stand in the way of your main character and as the characters in your story grow and change, the reader will share that growth. To make this magic happen, you need to believe in the characters whose story you're writing. You need to know them intimately. And you need to *show* them to your reader.

So how do you go about showing your characters to your reader? For me, I start with the physical traits. First you need to have fat, plump, round, fleshy characters. You need to know how your character looks to understand how they feel, behave, or see themselves in their own flesh.

One thing I learned being a buyer in my former life is that if you want to be successful you need to dress the part. Well the same thing goes for your characters. You need to dress them for their part in the story.

For example: My character has blonde straight hair. Cut shoulder length and is pulled back in a ponytail. Their eyes are small, close together and are dark midnight blue in color with dark brown eye brows perfectly plucked. They're of average height, wide in the hips, and perfectly proportioned all around. Their lips are dry and they wear braces with purple rubber bands. They have three

earrings in the left ear and two in the right. The clothes my character wears are tee shirts with $\frac{3}{4}$ length sleeves, jeans, plain white tennis shoes and crew socks.

From this description you may think this is an A student, a tomboy perhaps, or even a loner. The person I used was myself; I was an average student, I knew many people but kept to myself outside of school, I was in then drama club, and yes I was a big time tom boy.

Now that we have a round, plump, fleshy character we need to give them a name. Picking a name can be one of the hardest things for me. I tend to look at names in a stereo-typical way.

For example: My name happens to be Virginia Ann, which sounds very southern, but I was born and raised in California. I was named after my aunt and so my name really has family history to it. Remember naming your character is like naming your children. You don't want to give them a name they can't live up to or doesn't fit the way they look or act in your eyes.

Finally you need to make them act and feel like a real child. One way to do this is to ask them questions about themselves. Here are few questions I ask my characters:

1. Who do you want to be when you grow up?
2. What is important to you?

3. Do you have brothers or sisters?
4. Do you get along with your parents?
5. Are both your parents living?
6. What subject do you like in school?
7. Who is your favorite teacher?
8. Worst teacher?
9. What sports do you like?
10. Can you play a musical instrument?
11. What do you hate?
12. What do you like?
13. Who's your best friend(s)?
14. Like to eat and drink?
15. Favorite saying?
16. Movies, T.V. shows, and music you like?
17. What's the worst thing that has happened to you?
18. The best?

19. What do you do for fun?

20. Any pets?

21. If you can have anything what would it be?

22. What would you change about yourself?

After I interview my characters as fully as possible, I then put them in a situation with each other. This may be a scene I end up using for my story, but mostly it's just an exercise to see how they relate to each other. Then I take each character and put them in a scene with a stranger on the street or at the mall. This gives me a better idea of how they talk, act, and feel about different environments.

Showing how your characters feel when they interact with other characters in the story gives you dialogue and vivid descriptions of what's going on inside your character's head. Just remember when you start to move them around to add in flaws. Children know they're not perfect and they don't expect your characters to be. Also, make sure your characters are not falling into a stereotype.

For example: A teenager, who wears all black, has purple hair, a pierced nose, and combat boots doesn't mean they are a trouble maker or a loner. Maybe they are an advocate for animal's rights, someone who plays the piano, or they're on the chess team. This isn't far from the true nowadays anyway. I worked with people who looked just like this when I was a buyer in teen fashion (Hot Topic/Torrid). They were business savvy, smart, straight A students when in

school, who just happened to love punk music and didn't let the norm tell them how to dress.

As you develop your characters, *trust them* to let you know how they feel about a situation and use their dialogue, thoughts and actions to express their feelings. Believable children's characters act, think, feel and speak as "real kids" do.

Typing your Character

By Garry E. Ward

Copyright © 2007 by Garry E. Ward, All Rights Reserved

There are many guidelines for creating characters. They ask about the character's height, hair color, eye color, hobbies, work, politics, and religion. Obviously they ask about the character's role in the story. All of these questions have simple and specific answers.

Jack is six foot two, has dark hair, brown eyes, does woodworking in his free time, is a police detective, is conservative in his politics, belongs to a mainstream religion, and has a goal: try to jail as many street gang members as he can.

Jane is five foot two, blonde, has blue eyes, likes to travel in her free time, is a professional social worker, is politically liberal, formerly belonged to mainstream religion but is now uncertain, and has a goal: try to reform as many street gang members as she can without jailing them.

We have a lot of information, but not much about their actual personalities. At least not much beyond the traditional, cardboard tough cop vs. softhearted social worker.

Most character questionnaires will have an entry for personality, but unlike the clear cut responses to the other questions, this one isn't so easy to fill out.

Friendly? Morose? Curmudgeonly? How do you describe their personalities so that you'll know how they act, react and interact?

The answer I found to that question wasn't in a book on writing, but in a self help book called *Type Talk*. This book is about improving your life by understanding the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator for personalities, but I have found it useful for designing character personalities.

The Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator uses four BI-valued attributes to describe 16 general personality types.

The attributes are:

- Extravert / Introvert. Represented as E or I
- Sensing / Intuitive. Represented as S or N
- Thinking / Feeling. Represented as T or F
- Judging / Perceiving. Represented as J or P

Each of these attributes gives a clue as to how a person, or in our case, a character will behave and react.

Extravert / Introvert

We're all familiar with the people who are comfortable in crowds, thrive on attention, and charge full tilt into public view. We're also all familiar with the people who gravitate to the edges and corners of crowds, shrivel under attention and avoid the public view like a vampire avoids sunlight.

This attribute reflects how the character will interact with the world around him or her. This attribute also isn't a one or the other; just as real people aren't. Some Introverts move towards Extravert behavior as the size of the group shrinks. Some Extraverts begin to be more introverted as the size of the group goes up.

What else can the Extravert / Introvert attribute tell us about a character? For one it will affect what the character likes to do when not working at their primary job. Extraverts will have hobbies that involve others. Introverts will have hobbies that they can do by themselves. In the two characters I mentioned earlier, Jack is into woodworking, Jane is into travel. Even if Jane travels by herself, she will still be going to new places and meeting new people. She may travel with a tour group of strangers. Jane obviously is an Extravert. Woodworking, unless we're talking about barn raising, is generally something done by one person in the privacy of their workshop. No crowds, no distractions. Jack is an Introvert.

What else can we glean from this for our writing?

Jack, as an introvert, hates distractions and interruptions. They derail his thought processes and make him lose focus. He retreats to his workshop to think. He may carry a small knife with him so that he can 'think and whittle' every once in a while. His whittling knife may prove useful in the story later, since it is common knowledge that a cop will carry a main and backup gun, but not many will also carry a knife. He hates being in court and testifying because it focuses attention on him.

Jane, as an extrovert, can focus on things easily and isn't distracted by background noise and interruptions. She does some of her best thinking in the coffee shop or even a bar. She loves being on the street and interacting with the people there. She hates being stifled alone in her office with just piles of paperwork. She comes alive in court on the witness stand.

Sensor / Intuitive

This attribute describes how characters gather information.

Sensors deal in the precise and clear cut. Sensors observe that it is 2:57, not just before three. They deduct not infer: a person has been in a bar, a person has been drinking beer, therefore, that person will have a measurable blood alcohol level. Sgt. Joe Friday's "Just the facts, ma'am." is an example of a Sensor's attitude. Sensors deal with one thing at a time.

Intuitives won't be as concerned about precision; gaps can be filled in. Asked the time, they'll tend to give it relatively, like "mid afternoon" or "close to supper time". They infer rather than deduct: a person has been in a bar, a person has been drinking beer, so a person might catch hell from their spouse upon arriving home. It isn't so much the exact words that people say but what meaning can be found in the words, the intent of the words. Intuitives see possibilities more than realities.

For our two characters, Jack is a Sensor. He, like Sgt. Friday, deals with the facts. He sees blood on the ground, the broken window and knows that a burglar

cut himself breaking in. The person standing over a body with a bloody tire iron in hand is obviously the killer.

Jane is an Intuitive. She will also see blood on the ground and a broken window, but can see someone tripping and falling into the window. She can see someone being pushed into the window. Sure, maybe a burglar cut himself breaking in, but there are lots of other ways for the window to have gotten broken and blood having gotten on the ground.

Thinking / Feeling

The Thinking / Feeling attribute guides you determining how your character makes decisions. The Thinkers are the ones who keep their heads when everyone else is losing it. They're more interested in truth and fairness than in making everyone happy. They'll even focus on clarifying a point before moving on to the next issue. Feelers can't see a decision as fair and truthful if it hurts anyone's feelings, they consider some points as beyond clarification, will always be concerned about how a decision will affect others, and are more concerned about getting people to work together than determining which person is right and which is wrong.

Jack is a Thinker; his decisions are clear and precise. He gathers the information and makes a decision based on it. The chips will fall where they fall. Break the law, pay the price. Obeying the law isn't optional.

Jane is a Feeler; her decisions are based on the consequences she perceives of those decisions. A kid that made a poor choice doesn't deserve jail but needs help. If she decides to turn someone in, then no one on the street will trust her in the future which will compromise her ability to do her job, so she doesn't. She may keep trying to get the criminal to turn himself in, but she won't turn him in.

How does this affect them in our story? Obviously, Jack would expect her to turn in someone she knows has committed a crime and when she doesn't, they're going to be at odds.

Judging / Perceiving

The Judging / Perceiving attribute guides us in determining how our characters will orient themselves in their lives.

Judgers are structured; the everything has a place and it damn well better be in that place, make lists, pay attention to the list and perhaps even make a list of lists to organize their lists. They proceed through life in a direct, orderly fashion. Distraction and delay are more than just frustrations, they're down right painful to them.

Perceivers are spontaneous and adaptive. Even if they start out with a plan, that plan is likely to sketchy and ambiguous. The unknown fascinates them; doing something the same way a second time borders on unbearable boredom. When reality throws a wrench into the works, they're the first ones to recover from the surprise. If one goal is unreachable, they'll move on to another goal.

Jack is a Judger. Like his woodworking, he follows the plans, he gets the result he wants. Same for his police work; he follows the procedure and he'll get the criminal off the street and into jail, which should make society safe.

Jane is a Perceiver. Some people just get crushed in the machinery of society; sometimes you have to save the person even if it means the gears of social order end up slipping once in a while.

Again, for our story, because Jack and Jane have different Judging / Perceiving attributes, they'll come to exactly the same plot point, but each will react to it differently and that difference will drive their interaction on to the next plot point.

An interesting aspect of this is neither Jack nor Jane end up being 'evil' in the classic bad guy sense, yet one of them will be the protagonist and the other will be the antagonist. The same story can be written in two ways, one with Jack as the protagonist and Jane the antagonist then again with the roles reversed.

Not sure why a character is doing what they're doing? Not sure how a character should response to some situation? Consider these four attributes for the character and you'll understand them better.

Reference:

Type Talk (Dell, ISBN 0-440-50704-9, Kroeger and Thusen, paperback).

Market Report

Mar's Market Report #21

By Margaret McGaffey Fisk

© 2007, Margaret McGaffey Fisk

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	Literary and Genre Fiction
Title	The Pedestal Magazine
Editor	John Amen
Address	None
Sub Email	http://www.thepedestalmagazine.com/Submit2.asp
Specifics	Looking for high-quality literary fiction, and genre works that either cross genres or comment on themselves. Stories should be character-driven and psychologically acute. No reprints are accepted and reading periods are detailed on the guidelines.
Requirement	Short stories up to 6,000 words, flash up to 1,000 words, book reviews between 850 and 1,000 words, and no length restriction on poetry
Payment	\$30 per poem, \$0.05 (5 cents) per word for fiction, and \$0.02 (2 cents) per word for book reviews.
URL for site	http://www.thepedestalmagazine.com
URL for guidelines	http://www.thepedestalmagazine.com/submit1.asp

Genre	Pulp Fiction
Title	Spacesuits & Sixguns
Editor	David L Duggins
Address	None
Sub Email	submissions@spacesuitsandsixguns.com
Specifics	Looking for contemporary pulp fiction, straightforward story-telling that emphasizes the action. All genres are accepted including horror, science fiction, detective, adventure, mystery, and sword and sorcery.
Requirement	Up to 4,000 with that as the soft top.
Payment	\$0.03 (3 cents) per word up to \$100
URL for site	http://www.spacesuitsandsixguns.com/
URL for guidelines	http://www.spacesuitsandsixguns.com/submissionguide.html

Genre	Speculative Fiction
Title	Coyote Wild Magazine
Editor	MacAllister Stone
Address	None
Sub Email	Submissions@coyotewildmag.com
Specifics	Looking for stories and poems that contain fantasy, science fiction, horror, or wild-card elements; is thought-provoking; and can shock, surprise and make readers speculate. Non-fiction critical and humorous essays are also welcome, but they should be queried first.
Requirement	Fiction up to 10,000 and query if longer, flash up to 1,000, and no length specified for poetry and non-fiction
Payment	\$0.01 (1 cent) per word for fiction and non-fiction, and \$10 for poetry.
URL for site	http://coyotewildmag.com/
URL for guidelines	http://coyotewildmag.com/CoyoteWildGuidelines.html

Genre	Mainstream
Title	Workers Write
Editor	Not listed
Address	Blue Cubicle Press P.O. Box 250382 Plano, TX 75025-0382
Sub Email	clinic@workerswritejournal.com
Specifics	Looking for fiction stories about specific types of workers. The theme for each issue, along with the deadline, is listed on the guidelines.
Requirement	Between 500 and 5,000 words
Payment	Between \$5 and \$50 depending on length and requested rights
URL for site	http://www.workerswritejournal.com/
URL for guidelines	http://www.workerswritejournal.com/

Genre	Literary
Title	Burst
Editor	Kevin
Address	None
Sub Email	burst@terra-media.us
Specifics	Looking for thought-provoking, literary submissions, both fiction and non-fiction, for mobile device delivery.
Requirement	Under 700 words
Payment	\$10 per submission
URL for site	http://www.terra-media.us/burst/index.html
URL for guidelines	http://www.terra-media.us/burst/about_us.html

Website Review:

Finding Freelance Writing Jobs

By E. Edward Roberts

Copyright © 2007 by E. Edward Roberts, All Rights Reserved

Do you use the web to find freelance writing jobs? It seems like it should be a simple thing, considering a Google search on "Freelance Writing Jobs" brings 130,000 clicks! But before you shout 'Alright! We've struck a goldmine!' you might want to examine a nugget or two.

A quick review of some of these links will show you the downside of search engines' habits of selling the top locations to the highest bidder. Using Google as an example, the majority of the links on the first page are sponsored links, meaning Google was likely paid for 'top placement' locations.

Most of these links offer very little to the freelancer in search of *paying* gigs. That isn't to say these websites aren't *helpful* for freelance writers. Many of them offer excellent resources, including tutorials, information sheets and articles on becoming a freelance writer – but very little on finding potential *paying* freelance jobs.

That doesn't mean there aren't some good ones out there, though. Here are a few sites I've found that post paying freelance gigs, and directions on how you can find those listings since it isn't always obvious.

I will also review a few other sites that claim to be great places to find freelance writing work, and tell you what I've found.

First Stop – journalismjobs.com

OK, freelancing is not the primary focus of www.journalismjobs.com so there are usually not many potential freelance or telecommuting jobs listed each week. Generally, there are only between five and ten actual jobs to check out. But like anything else, you don't need hundreds of freelance jobs - all you need is one willing to give you a try! (Equally important, these are usually real writing jobs, so they will pay!)

Finding the freelance listing

Journalismjobs.com has four search fields across the top when you enter the job search area. The last one is keyword search. Click into the white box and type the word freelance. The hundreds of jobs originally displayed are now likely to be closer to ten. Some of those might be a false positive, meaning it found the word freelance but it was in the phrase "Not a Freelance position." But it only takes a moment to determine if this is the case.

Now, open another Internet window, or a new tab, and return to www.journalismjobs.com. This time, type the word "telecommute" into the keyword search. This may bring up more jobs, or it might find only the ones in the original search, which is why we needed to open two windows to cross check these listings.

But even if all the jobs are duplicates, www.journalismjobs.com offers you jobs at a much better pay rate than the "Freelance" websites seem to offer!

Downside: These sites are paying, so they anticipate drawing a seasoned writer. If you aren't one, make that clear in your cover letter – but also make it clear that you can write. That starts by writing a good query letter, and using clips where requested.

Another good website

Another good website for finding potential freelance jobs is Writers Resource Center at www.poewar.com/freelance-jobs. This site has a good listing of jobs that might actually work for you! Better yet, there are many more links on this site which are very helpful to first-time freelance submitters.

Sites that don't work for me

I don't get paid for my writing if I am spending my time on the web looking for jobs. I only get paid if I get the gig, write the article, and submit it. So many of the sites listed as specializing in finding writing jobs leave me cold, as they have tons of pages, and lots of listings – but they pay nothing. The many writing gigs turn out to be looking only for snippets, PR, web copy – and they want to pay nothing.

One gets the feeling these sites are actually designed to lure you in so they can sell you something.

Sites not all that good for freelance jobs (IMHO)

- Sologig.com
- Guru.com
- Freelance.com
- Ifreelance

Why I say these things

Sologig.com sounds like a great idea for freelance writers looking for jobs – but I certainly have never seen anything important start there! Guru.com is the same way. The jobs are small or pay nothing. Freelance.com hasn't connected to anything for paying jobs, either. *However, all of these sites do offer other features beyond their job component that writers find helpful – so don't write them off your writer's list!*

While this next link is similar to the ones above in their job listings, there is a redeeming point to www.freelancewriting.com. It is the one site that every search engine will find when looking for freelance writing jobs. While I have no use for the *freelance job listings* posted there, there are many other great items on this site – especially tips on writing and market related news.

Book Review:

Grammar with Gargoyles -- A Review of The Deluxe Transitive Vampire by Karen Elizabeth Gordon

By Sara Watson Arthurs

Copyright © 2007 by Sara Watson Arthurs, All Rights Reserved

Every writer has heard it a hundred times: spelling and grammar matter. We all know we should use good grammar, and that we need to double-check when we aren't sure.

The problem is that learning grammar is seldom fun. If you've studied a foreign language in school, you no doubt remember dry grammar books listing verb conjugations and tenses. It can get tedious.

The Deluxe Transitive Vampire by Karen Elizabeth Gordon takes a different approach. The full title -- *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire: The Ultimate Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed* -- lets you know what's in store. This isn't like most grammar books.

Look at the table of contents and you'll find it has much in common with traditional grammar books. There's a chapter on each part of speech, from nouns

to adjectives and adverbs. Gordon walks the reader through basic sentence structure, looking at increasingly complex sentences as the book progresses.

What makes the book different is her examples. Gordon uses vampires, bats, and gargoyles as the subjects of her creative sentences.

Consider:

From a section demonstrating the complement of a verb: "The lamia assaulted a *baba* in red boots and demanded a *cigarette* and a *scarf*."

From a lesson on auxiliary verbs: "The rats, *having* heisted the Brie, went in search of a worthy baguette."

From a page on the possessive case: "*Our* mozzarella comes from the most contented or contentious buffaloes."

From Gordon's explanation of the passive voice: "The bat suspended from Loona's hair *was repulsed* by her Nuit Blanche perfume."

Learning grammar Gordon's way is genuinely entertaining. Reading *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire* is like immersing oneself in a gothic story, a world where vampires, lamias, and bats are at play. As the sentences grow more complex, so too do the adventures of Gordon's cast of characters.

As if that wasn't enough, the illustrations add more delight to the study of grammar. Sketches of bats and gargoyles adorn the pages of the book.

Eighteen sources are given credit for the illustrations. They're fun and just a little bit spooky, adding the right gothic touch to the pages. Turning the page to find one of these creatures peeking out at you makes the study of grammar a lot more fun.

The *Deluxe Transitive Vampire*, published in 1993, is a revised edition of *The Transitive Vampire*, published in 1984. I've never seen the original version, but I can tell you that the revised edition is truly deluxe. Gordon examines the stories behind her sample sentences, as in the following excerpt from the chapter on phrases:

"If I say,

The rats in drag, on the lam, struggled with their luggage into the coach,

I'm giving or hinting at an enormous amount of information in these small, oh-by-the-way, throwaway words. The essential subject and predicate of the sentence amount to: "The rats struggled." But look at the drama going on in the four prepositional phrases! There a whole story unwinds: that the rats are fugitives (meaning someone's on to them), dressed in women's clothes (which they acquired, it seems, along the way -- by theft, or barter, or exchange at gunpoint), and are taking their stuff with them in an antiquated vehicle (and where *that* came into the picture could be quite a story in itself)."

In such a way Gordon illustrates the power of words, the way each individual noun or verb can illustrate the story behind a situation. She clearly has a love not

only for grammar, but also for language itself. Through her tales of bats and gargoyles, lamias and vampires, the reader learns to savor the precise choosing of the right words in the right order. And really, isn't that one of the joys of being a writer in the first place?

The Deluxe Transitive Vampire:

The Ultimate Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager and the Doomed

Karen Elizabeth Gordon

Knopf Publishing Group

ISBN 0-679-41860-1

New on the Shelves

[Forward Motion for Writers](#) has many published authors as members. Here are just a few of the currently available materials that they have had published!

Lazette Gifford

Farstep Station

Farstep Station sits on the distant edge of human expansion into space. Although meant to be the stepping stone to further exploration, the station remained understaffed and nearly abandoned for the duration of a long war between the rebels and the fledgling Inner Worlds Council.

From Yard Dog Press!

Book two of the Two-Year Novel Course is now available [Here](#)

Lazette's Poem, *Dirge for a Forgotten Outpost*, is currently available at [Daikaijuzine](#)

Holly Lisle

Talyn

In a world where technology is magic, and war is the only way of life, Talyn is a soldier, one of thousands trained from childhood to protect her country from the monarchist Eastil. Soon, Talyn's honor will be challenged.

WORLDBUILDING COURSE, BOOK II

Non-technical and easy to use, Holly's method will give you a usable beginning culture in about five hours, which you can expand as you work on the book, building only what you need and when you need it.

[Buy it here](#)

Tamara Siler Jones

Valley of the Soul

Detective Dubric Byerly returns in the third and final installment of this medieval fantasy-meets-thrilling mystery, genre-bending series from the author of "Ghosts in the Snow" and "Threads of Malice."

C.E. Murphy

Thunderbird Falls

In this follow-up to "Urban Shaman," Joanne Walker hasn't learned much about her shamanic abilities. But when she accidentally unleashes demons on Seattle, Joanne realizes she should have learned more about controlling her powers.

Wen Spencer

Wolf Who Rules

The popular novel "Tinker" introduced the inventor-heroine of the same name, who lives in a near-future Pittsburgh, which shares an interdimensional border with the land of the elves. In this sequel, the elven noble whose destiny is intertwined with Tinker, finds himself besieged from all sides.

Lynn Viehl

Dark Need

Homicide detective Samantha Brown is a tough, highly decorated cop. But twelve lonely years after she nearly died of a gunshot wound, she aches with a deep inner longing. In pursuit of a deranged killer, her only clue is a medieval cross inscribed "Lucan"-the name of the owner of a new nightclub near the murder scene. Drawn into a seamy underworld, Samantha falls for Lucan-who believes he's a vampire and Samantha is his reincarnated first love.

Paula Offutt

(Site Member HollyRoller)

Butch Girls Can Fix Anything

This lesbian romance novel will be released in January 2007 by Regal Crest Enterprises, Inc. (ISBN: 978-1-932300-74-1). It will be available in lesbian romance venues and online on Amazon and Star Crossed Productions. About the author: Paula Offutt.

Sandra Barret

(Site Member sbarret)

Lavender Secrets

Sandra's debut novel (originally completed for the National Novel Writing Month) will be released in January 2007 by Regal Crest Enterprises, Inc. (ISBN: 978-1-932300-73-4). It will be available in lesbian romance venues and online on Amazon and Star Crossed Productions.

Face of the Enemy

This lesbian science fiction novel has also been accepted by Regal Crest Enterprises, Inc. and is due to be released in November 2007.

Harvey Roberts (Site Member Harvey Roberts) debuts in the Science Fiction Trails anthology from Pirate Dog Press with The Gate to Hell then follows up his entrance with another short story The Great Illdefar that will appear in the August-October 2007 issue of Sorcerous Signals.

Richard S. Crawford (Site Member rscrawford) has a short story, A Most Heinous Man, appearing in Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine.

Kristen Howe (Site Member angelscribe) has continued to find homes for her poetry:

Two poems, Night-time Blaze and English Daisy, appear in the spring issue of Blazevox

The poem Don't Bother appears in the spring issue of Stellar Showcase Journal

An acrostic poem Horn will appear in the May/June issue of Current Accounts

The poem Solar Morn is now out in the Oak

The Storyteller has accepted her poem First Crush for the June/July/September issue.

Jacob Malewitz (Site Member jfmalewitz) has a number of news articles and reviews available on Associated Content. To read his works, go here: [Jacob Malewitz](#)

Cheryl Mills (Site Member cherylmills) sold her short story Petrification to The Late Late Show where it will be the featured podcast on June 2, 2007.

Emily Jo Scalzo (Site Member rosethorne) received first place in Purdue University's annual literary award contest for her short story Whirlwind.

P.L. Logan (Site Member colorbird)'s 55-word story, One Small Change, now appears on 55 Fiction.

Andrea Blythe (Site Member blythe025) has sold her poem Wings to Strange Horizons.

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@cablone.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!](#)

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.

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!

Lazette Gifford, Publisher and Editor

Vision@lazette.net

Features' Editor (Reviews):

Margaret Fisk

margaretfisk@fmwriters.com

Copy Editor:

Ellen Wright

Copyright Information

Vision

Volume Seven, Issue 39

May/June, 2007

Entire contents Copyright 2007, Forward Motion E-press.

All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is expressly prohibited, except that the entire issue may be freely distributed, so long as it remains complete and unchanged.