

California Writers Club

Serving Greater Los Angeles

THE SCRIBE

Established in 1986

Vol. XXII, No. 8

www.calwriterssfv.com

October 2008

OCTOBER 11TH - 1:30 P.M.
4935 BALBOA BLVD. ENCINO

Painting with Broad Strokes

By: Scott Alixander Sonders

We've invited the best Valley artists to share an extraordinary escapade called "ekphrasis." The artists are given the written works from thirty of our writers and instructed to choose one each a manuscript from which to inspire and create an original artwork.

This will happen, spontaneously, on October 11th. If one of your literary masterpieces is chosen, you'll have on the spot but semi-permanent celebrity.

The wordsmiths in our audience will then choose an artwork from which to compose a paragraph or a poem. From those, three prizewinners will be selected.

Painting by: Toby Salkin



One of those could be you!

We'll have easels, paints, pencils, and paper everywhere. We'll have a party - and proof that "a picture is worth a thousand words."

And as Rod Stewart said, "Every picture tells a story, don't it?!" ♡♡

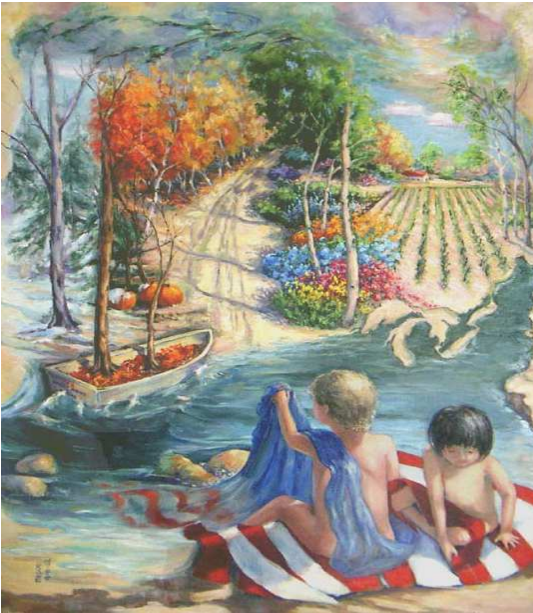
Russell Wolvek



Anita Van Tellengen



Marylin Blutter



Dori Marler



REWIND

Writer's Blocks Smashed

By: Leila Morris

Kicking off our new season was a presentation that many attendees said was one of the best they'd heard on the writing process. Psychotherapist and successful writer, Dennis Palumbo, discussed how to overcome the emotional blocks to creativity. Palumbo gave three simple rules for creative writing:

1. You are enough to be the writer you want to be.

Many people complain, "If I had only been born during X period or studied Y." People think that the party is happening somewhere else. Your party is happening right now. Go home and write.

2. Work with what you are given.

Everything you have experienced is grist for the writing mill. Don't wait for inspiration. The world gives you inspiration every second. All writing is autobiographical. Mine your own experiences. The more specific to your own life and the personal your writing is, the more people can relate to it.

3. Writing begets writing.

Doing research and worrying about writing is not the same as writing. Write until you come up with a solution to a problem in your story.

Palumbo said writer's block can be a good thing. "I never met a writer who worked through a block and did not become a better writer," he said. Hack writers never have blocks because they don't challenge themselves.

Palumbo also said to find out what is behind a writer's block. Some of his patients discovered their writer's block was about making sure not to outshine a troubled sibling or maintaining an image from childhood.

Many people are reluctant to reveal history that could hurt a loved one. He said to just change some facts to disguise the characters. Palumbo wrote "My Favorite Year," which was based on his family except he made them Jewish instead of Italian. His mother saw the movie and wondered what crazy family it was based on.

He noted that most people procrastinate as a way to ward off shameful self-exposure. Some truth is going to be revealed about you. You are putting your mind and heart out for people to evaluate. Write what is true for you and what scares you. What is true in your heart is true for everyone. A Palumbo's quote to remember: "A good day of writing is when writing gets done."

FICTION

Excerpt from... Naked Hemingway

By: Thomas Prosser

I'm in a slaughterhouse just outside of Madrid. It's six a.m. I'm watching Matador kid finish practice. He is killing steers. He wipes his sweaty brow with a bloody hand and says, "Twenty-five enough, no? The owner lets me kill all the bulls I want. Once I killed eighty-five bony bulls. It felt like stabbing concrete. I sprained my wrist good that day."

The kid's a mess. He's wearing a red raincoat that used to be black. His scarlet *multea* cloth is still dripping with blood. It looks like the devil's rug in hell. "I've been coming here Thursday mornings since I was fourteen. I'll be nineteen next week if I make it past Sunday. Good odds, no?"

The workman hoses down the bloody cement. I can hear the kid's sneakers squeak as he walks down the hall. "I use to wear rubber boots, but I slipped last year and broke my leg. Dead bull, eight hundred pounds, landed full on it. Hurt a lot. Now sneakers."

The kid throws all of his bloody laundry into the shower stall. He gives it a blast before wringing it out and hanging it up on a hook

on the far wall by his locker. "I will be only one short minute."

Not quite. Thirty-five minutes later he finishes combing his hair. He is now elegantly dressed in a \$250 blue suit.

"You look sharp."

"Si. God treated me O.K., no? We go out through the back door. Try to sneak away from the fat foreman."

Caught! El Gordo sees us before we can escape.

"A moment of your time. I need eight tickets for dear, dear relatives from ... ah ... Segovia—your biggest fans." "I'll try."

The foreman smiles a greedy, greasy smile and moves on. The kid whispers, "I wouldn't mind once in a while, but that guy holds me up every week for tickets for dear relatives from all over Spain. I think he sells them. Oh well, nothing is free."

We go out through the rear door and practically fall over three gypsy grandma hags. They are dressed in dirty black-widow dresses. They are sitting on the steps chatting and munching donuts. They are nearly toothless. Their lips are covered with white powdered sugar. Each is drinking out of a tin cup. "Bull's blood. They figure it helps keep their looks and vitality." **{continued→}**

“Oh, that smell!”

“They don't bathe much.”

“No, that!” I gag.

“Oh. You mean the smell from the stockyards!” As he says this, he inhales the awful stench like it was pure Montana air. He stretches his arms over his head to work out a kink or two and to celebrate a day's work done well at his office. We climb into his new Mercedes.

The kid's animated and in great spirits.” I never eat breakfast, except on Thursdays. I always get a huge appetite after my workout. Let's go to the café and eat three big steaks.”

Food is the last thing on my mind. It has been a brutal morning. For all I know, it will be weeks, if not months, before I'll be able to eat sirloin steak. “I already ate. I've got some work to do.”

“Oh, how disappointing,” he says, looking only a little less wounded than one of his recently departed sparring partners.

“I want to write about my impressions of you and this morning's activities. I need to set them down on paper while they are still fresh in my mind.”

The promise of more fame soothes his angst, “Oh, very good. We'd better hurry back so you can start at once.” ◇◇

VIEWPOINT

The Day My Mom Got into My Diaries

By: Regina Apigo

I acted nonchalant, but my ears honed in on my mom's words. I knew she could have only known those details she uttered from, *gasp*, reading one of the diaries in my desk.

I was in 10th grade. I had been writing blissfully in my diaries for years. I shared silly stuff on the pages-- how Masis dumped his peas, applesauce and chocolate milk on his pepperoni pizza and ate them all. I also turned to my diary when frustrated. I told it how my teacher ruined *The Catcher in the Rye*. The crucifix, he said, was made of wood, and therefore, symbolized Jesus.

I told my diary, our dining table was also made of wood, and so couldn't wood just as easily symbolize food? I also confessed to my diary about the boys I had crushes on. Actually back then I was certain I *looooved* them, a new one nearly every month.

The ink flowed from my Bic pens with a beautiful lack of self-consciousness. That all ended one day when my mom said something that made me realize she had read one of my diaries.

It wouldn't be an understatement for me to say it felt like a brutal violation to have someone peer into my innermost thoughts *without* permission.

That day would change the way I wrote for years to come. My handwriting in my diary went from bad to a virtual piggy scrawl. But just in case my mom still broke the seemingly undecipherable code, my previously simple and clear diary prose became choked with mysterious, incomplete sentences. I even started writing in Spanish. But then I realized my sister also knew Spanish. And what if *she* read my diaries too? The horror. The horror.

College didn't help. Clear thoughts became obfuscated with language meant to impress high-falutin' professors. With college and then writing jobs, room for writing my own private thoughts became pushed aside.

Then one day I found myself at home with my first baby. I made a decision. I would write once again just for myself, as I once had. Yet this new diary was unlike any I had had before. I put out a few pages of scrap paper each morning. I wrote anything I wanted, and this time, promptly ripped the pages and threw them away.

If *nobody* was ever going to see these pages, I could write the way I once heard author Sandra Cisneros say at a book fair:

"Write," Cisneros said, "especially those things that are too dangerous even to think."

I still write these pages in the morning and throw them away. Sometimes thoughts from the pages become kernels for stories that end up for publication. Yet what I am struck by is my profound need for a private core, a core that has no ear open for the possibility of an outside audience, a core that can reach that state of blissful unawareness I once achieved regularly and easily with those early diaries. ♦♦

CWC TEAM

Scott A. Sonders, Executive Director

George Hirai, Scribe Editor

Leila Morris, Secretary

... and Newsletter Design

Venita Louise, Membership

Natasha Bern, Treasurer

Larry Fazio, Events Manager

Lenora Smalley, State Rep

Bruce Zacuto, Sergeant-at-Arms

Mike Austin, Development

Tanya Hall, Public Funding

Gordon Durich, Publicity

Pauline Williams, Programs

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The editors are soliciting creative works for the November issue of our literary journal, *THE SCRIBE*. Submit your essays about writing, memoirs, short stories, film/book/stage reviews, humor pieces, and excerpts from longer works.

See revised guidelines below where we increased the word limits for your creative work.

Photos: If your work is published in *THE SCRIBE*, then we'd like you to send portrait or candid shots of yourself, to accompany your work. We find photos of members enhance the newsletter and increase your name recognition.

The submission deadline for the November issue of the *Scribe* is 10-21-08. Email your submissions to George Hirai, our *Scribe* Editor, as Word.doc attachments. Email: cwcsvf@gmail.com.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Articles about writing, essays, memoirs, excerpts from fiction/non-fiction, and general features. Not to exceed 700 words.

Reviews of fiction, non-fiction, essays, and film. Not to exceed 400 words.

Poetry. Not to exceed 35 lines, approximately 250 words. Poetry reviews. Not to exceed 150 words.

Occasionally, on an as needed basis, we may extend word limits listed above.

The Editorial Committee determines articles to be published in *Scribe*.

There is no charge to members for *Scribe* submittals. There is a \$15 "reading fee" for non-member submittals.

All submittals are to be e-mailed to *Scribe* Editor, George Hirai (cwcsvf@gmail.com), as MS Word "attachments" - not as a text message. ♦♦



Some of our writers gang...



October Monthly Meeting

CWC:

Serving Greater Los Angeles Writers

Saturday, October 11

1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Encino Community Center

4935 Balboa Blvd.

Encino, CA 91316-3437

Directions:

Just north of Ventura Blvd. and
adjoining the east end of Encino Park.

Plenty of free parking.

☀ **REVEL IN YOUR** ☀
15 MINUTES OF FAME:
☀ **OPEN MIC** ☀

Barnes & Noble

16461 Ventura Blvd. – Encino

October 17th

Sign-ups begin at 6:45PM

For info or advance sign-ups, email:
cwcsfv@gmail.com

CWC-SFV

Encino, CA 91416

www.calwriterssfv.com

Email: cwcsfv@gmail.com

*© 2008 – All material on these pages,
including text and graphics, may not be
copied or used for any purpose without
express written consent from the*