



# The Valley Scribe

Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Branch  
of the California Writers Club



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## Mandy Jackson-Beverly Presents: Modern Ways To Publish A Book

By Heather Bradshaw, CWC-SFV Speaker Chair

The San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is pleased to welcome author, teacher and podcast host, Mandy Jackson-Beverly, as the keynote speaker on Saturday, March 4 at 1:00 pm via Zoom, with a presentation titled “Getting Your Book Published in the Modern World”.



Huffington Post. She is a book reviewer for the New York Journal of Books, a writing coach, and public speaker, and teaches workshops at writer conferences and online via Teachable.

Book Publishing in the Modern World is a popular workshop that has been taught mul-

Describing herself as a bibliophile who enjoys reading both non-fiction and fiction, Mandy’s own stories are either short essays drawn from her life or dark tales drenched in magic, the occult, and complex characters of the human and supernatural kind. She writes about the darkness lurking around us and the light that keeps it at bay. Mandy is the author of *The Creatives Series: A Secret Muse, The Devil and The Muse, The Legend of Astridr: Birth, and The Immortal Muse*.

iple times via Zoom at the London University as part of its creative writing program. During the presentation, Mandy explores traditional, hybrid, and independent (self) publishing and gives writers the knowledge to help decide which style works best for them.

Topics covered include:

- Traditional Publishing
- Hybrid Publishing
- Indie (self) Publishing
- Editing
- Distribution
- Agents

During the Covid pandemic, Mandy launched The Bookshop Podcast, which is committed to helping independent bookshops thrive, as well as illuminating the wonders of words on a page and the local authors who write them.

Mandy will share the PDF file of the slides after the workshop is completed.

Born in Pyramid Hill, Victoria, Australia—population 419—Mandy grew up around the rugged coastline and rolling hills of Tasmania. In her early twenties, she relocated to England and discovered the tantalizing London fashion scene and fell in love with the creative collective concept.

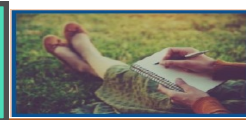
Currently, Mandy lives in Ojai, California. When she’s not writing, reading, interviewing guests, or caught down a rabbit hole of research, she’s cooking, painting, tending to her vegetable garden, or on walkabout. To learn more about this engaging speaker:

Later in Los Angeles, Mandy found her creative freedom among the thriving, no-holds-barred visionaries of the music video world where she worked as a costume designer and stylist for an array of creative dynamos including photographer Herb Ritts; directors Joel and Ethan Coen, David Fincher, Diane Keaton, and Julien Temple; and music icons David Bowie, Madonna, George Michael, Tom Petty, and Tina Turner – to name a few!

[www.mandyjacksonbeverly.com](http://www.mandyjacksonbeverly.com)

*Please note that all members of the CWC-SFV will receive a Zoom invitation to this presentation. Members of other CWC branches and guests should contact President and Zoom host Anat Golan-Wenick at [sfv.cwc@gmail.com](mailto:sfv.cwc@gmail.com) by noon on March 3rd at.com for an invitation. We regret we cannot accommodate late requests.*

Mandy has taught high school art and theater, Advanced Placement art programs, and contributed blogs to The



Along with the annual wildflower bloom, March is Women's History Month and includes the holidays of Ramadan, St. Patrick's Day, and a little known observance on March 1 designated as Zero Discrimination Day, first celebrated in 2013 by the United Nations HIV/AIDS Program and UNAIDS. The following year, the UN and other global organizations officially celebrated the day in an effort to promote everyone's right to live a full life with dignity, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, skin color, height, weight, profession, education, and beliefs" <https://www.wincalendar.com/Zero-Discrimination>.

The same article notes, "Zero Discrimination Day aims to celebrate individuality, inclusion and human rights, while promoting tolerance, compassion, and peace." I kinda love this, as it relates to a writing project in which I recently participated.

At a CWC Presidents' meeting last summer, I noted that the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), a world-wide organization to which I belong, had developed a policy regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), for the purpose of reaching out to underrepresented groups in the children's book industry. I suggested that CWC develop its own DEI policy with the purpose of reaching out to underrepresented groups to enhance learning, networking, and business opportunities for all writers and people in the writing industry. Subsequently, the CWC Central Board appointed an *ad hoc* committee to develop and write a system-wide DEI policy.

I volunteered to serve on the committee, along with Brian Gaps (CWC Orange County) and Gloria Pierrot-Dyer (CWC Sacramento). It was a joy to collaborate with Brian and Gloria on this important policy statement, which was approved by the Central Board to become part of the CWC's Policies and Procedures. Kathy Highcove dedicated a beautiful page in the February *Valley Scribe* to highlight the policy; but in recognition of Zero Discrimination Day, I'd like to share it again.

"As writers, we recognize the immense and storied power of the written word to inspire or crush, save or destroy, enrich or mislead, and to contribute to the advancement of peace and understanding. However, past inequities have served to exclude or limit the voices of certain segments of our society, a practice which has deprived our world of valuable perspectives. Therefore, we encourage individual branches to honor and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through any means by which they interact with their members and communities, including but not limited to programming, publications, board representation, and outreach."

As a reminder: Diversity refers to differences among the people within a given setting, like a writers club. Equity means that all programs are fair and impartial, providing equal opportunities for all people. Inclusion is ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Roger Lubeck, president of the CWC Central Board, wrote in the Winter, 2022 CWC Bulletin: "In the board's discussion of this policy statement, we recognized that these words are only a start. What is required are actions at the club level and especially at the branch and member level. Methods to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion will be the responsibility of every branch."

Thus, as CWC-SFV begins its spring membership drive, I'm asking each of you to help us implement this policy. The San Fernando Valley is adjacent to one of the largest cities in the world, yet our membership hardly reflects the rich diversity of our locale. Here are a few ideas to help you participate in implementing CWC's new DEI policy.

- Reach out to other writers or "people who have always wanted to write," from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, gender identities, religions, physical and cognitive abilities, educational backgrounds, socio-economic levels, and professions. (I recently told a grocery clerk about the club and wrote down the website for him on the back of a register tape.) The CWC-SFV does not want to be the "best kept secret" in the Valley!
- Do you belong to another club that publishes a newsletter? Share an electronic copy of our Speakers' Schedule and ask them if they would like to include it in their next newsletter. If you need a copy, it's on page 3 in today's *Valley Scribe*.
- Do you frequent a coffee shop, an ethnic restaurant, community center, or bookstore with a community bulletin board? Inquire about pinning up our Speakers' Schedule.
- Visit a public library with a dozen copies of the Speakers' Schedule or the *Valley Scribe* and ask to display them on a table or in a rack with announcements about other community events.
- Do you use Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or other social media? Copy and paste the speaker's article from our website into your own social media.

If you have other ideas about how we can implement CWC's new policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, please let me know. You can always reach me at [karen.gorback@gmail.com](mailto:karen.gorback@gmail.com). Meanwhile, keep writing, be well, and enjoy the marvelous month of March!

# CWC-SFV SPEAKERS 2023



**ANGIE CHATMAN**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> 2023 @ 1PM (ZOOM)**

**“The First Drafts Club.”**

As with any product, your story needs beta testing. Having a carefully chosen critique group is necessary to iron out any wrinkles in your text. Pushcart prize nominated writer and WEBBY award winning storyteller, Angie Chatman, will discuss the criteria to use so that you can get help to polish your piece for publication.



**LAURA JENSEN WALKER**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> 2023 @ 1PM (ZOOM)**

**“Writing by the Seat of my Pants: From Memoir to Mysteries.”**

A Self-described ‘pantser’, Agatha-nominated and bestselling Amazon author, Laura Jensen Walker, will share her journey (including mistakes) of writing memoirs and mysteries by the seat of her pants. Visit [laurajensenwalker.com](http://laurajensenwalker.com) for more information on this sought-after speaker and her work.



**MANDY JACKSON-BEVERLY**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> 2023 @ 1PM (ZOOM)**

**“Getting Your Book Published in the Modern World.”**

This workshop by author, teacher and podcast host, Mandy Jackson-Beverly, explores traditional, hybrid, and independent (self) publishing and gives you the knowledge you need to decide which style works best for you and your books. Visit [mandyjacksonbeverly.com](http://mandyjacksonbeverly.com) for more info on this popular speaker.



**LUZMARIA ESPINOSA**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup> 2023 @ 1PM (INPERSON / HYBRID IF AVAILABLE)**

**“POETRY: A Method of Reflection, Reconsideration, and Revision of Your Thoughts, Beliefs, and Actions.”**

Ventura County’s Poet Laureate, Luzmaria Espinosa, will read some of her poetry and share how her own life experiences, culture and community activism have shaped her work.



**ADAM PLANTINGA**

**SATURDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> 2023 @ 1PM**

**“Writing Realistic Police Procedures.”**

Writing a crime novel? 21-year police veteran and Agatha-nominated author Sgt. Adam Plantinga will talk about various aspects of real-life police work crucial to writing a crime-related novel or screenplay.

Visit [adamplantinga.com](http://adamplantinga.com) for more information on Adam and his work.



At our February Zoom meeting, CWC-SFV hosted author Laura Jensen Walker, who spoke on “Writing by the Seat of my Pants – From Memoir to Mysteries.” Laura is an Amazon bestselling and Agatha-nominated author of “Murder Most Sweet.” She also wrote “Good Girl: A Memoir.” Catriona McPherson, bestselling author, remarked that “Laura Walker’s indomitable spirit will make you stand up and cheer.” Publishers Weekly indicated that “Deadly Delights” is “entertaining...lively characters complement the twisty plot.”

A self-described “pantser,” Laura told the audience that she once tried making an outline (a no-no for inveterate pantsers) before writing one of her books “and it was a disaster...I had to throw out 15

chapters.” She added that she loves writing by the seat of her pants: “I love the freedom...and the excitement...pantsing is an exciting way to write...I want to surprise the reader...and I’m surprised too.” She feels that pantsing “works for me...I start writing and the story unfolds...and I keep learning and stay open to possibilities.” She added that she jots down notes as she thinks of them on her phone “and I’m writing to the eleventh hour.”

Tied to her background in journalism, Laura indicated that she edits as she goes along. At the same time, she had sterling things to say about the editors she has worked with: “They’ve all been wonderful, especially the developmental editors. In fact, she has had such good experiences with editors that she compiled a list of editors she especially enjoyed working with for other writers to consider when looking for an editor.

“...here are a few freelance editors I highly recommend...I agree that the Writer’s Market Guide is also a good resource for finding both editors and agents...Zoe Quinton ([www.zoequinton.com](http://www.zoequinton.com)) is an amazing editor and literary strategist, but her editing services are often booked out months in advance.” Laura also recommended Beth Jusino ([www.bethjusino.com](http://www.bethjusino.com)) and Barb Goffman ([www.barbgoffman.com](http://www.barbgoffman.com)): “I haven’t worked with Barb, but many of my mystery author friends have, and highly recommend her...specializes in crime fiction.” She also suggested Lorincz Editorial Services (Holly Lorincz at [www.literaryconsulting.com](http://www.literaryconsulting.com)).

She was clearly in favor of joining critique groups “but you always need to remember that it’s your book...I usually do what they say because I’m willing to improve...but sometimes copy editors might want me to change something that’s my humor.” She stated that she has written 12 novels, with 10 published, and has her own process of self editing: I find all the clichés and overused words...and the last thing I do is get rid of these things...one time I checked my computer for how many times I used ‘said’...and it was too many times...I got rid of them.”

Laura described herself as a morning person who may get up at 5 a.m. to write: “Sometimes I write for 14 hours a day...then I got burned out...it’s my self-imposed deadline...one thing I like to do is print out a hard copy of my draft and then edit...I want to turn in clean manuscripts...I hate mistakes and misspelled words.” At the same time, Laura is able to define her own strengths and weaknesses: “Logic is not my gift...sometimes I read my stuff to my husband...he points out things that don’t make sense, and I try to figure out a work-around.” When it comes to modern technology, Laura admitted that she is not a tech whiz: “I finally found a way to make sure I didn’t lose something I wrote...I save all the time, and then I send that day’s version to myself in an email...that way I can track when I wrote what...finally, I make a folder that just has research questions...I type them in as they come up, but then I keep writing the story...later, I’ll do the research and maybe then go back and change something I’ve written.”

Even though she’s a pantser, Laura felt that she was good at planning. She cautioned writers that “there’s not one right way to write...the right way is what works for you...every person is different...you need to take it one step at a time.” Even though Laura has worked as a journalist and has written ten nonfiction “humor” books (with her most popular about her life as a breast cancer survivor), Laura reported that she loves fiction “but at first I was afraid to pursue it.” She told CWC authors to remember that a novel “is all about the story.” When asked what she thinks of plotters, Laura came back to her original statement: “What works for you.”

Asked about what she does when she “gets stuck,” Laura smiled and said she just types “blah-blah-blah” and keeps going. She doesn’t let herself get bogged down while putting her new and fresh ideas to paper. The first draft is just to get the stories out. She feels that she can always refine things later. When her ideas are down in print, she is free to research and make any changes that fit.

Laura also recommended the “Emotional Thesaurus” (downloaded from Kindle) in order to give lots of alternative words to emotions. She added that networking is an excellent way to find resources. Finally, she recommended making a “reverse outline” of your story after you’ve written it in order to catch timeline problems.

Laura’s thoughts and recommendations were well received by CWC writers and will serve as thought-provoking, practical, and useful concepts for everyone in the field.

## CWC CRIME WRITERS: INVESTIGATE THIS EVENT!

If you write crime or mystery stories, and would yearn to learn more about the crime book trade, the California Crime Writers organization offers the perfect opportunity! Now that the evil COVID shutdown is history, the Crime Writers group has revived their annual conference. It will be held in Culver City, CA., on June 10 and 11, 2023. This group's conferences have been popular events in crime writer circles.

For all the info, read their flyer shown below:



## The California Crime Writers Conference 2023 is now open for Registration!

Sign up now 2023 California Crime Writers Conference on June 10 & 11, 2023. Click here to go straight to our [Registration page](#). And check out the hotel for the event, the [Hilton Los Angeles](#), Culver City, 6161 W. Centinela Ave., Culver City, CA.

Plan on joining us for two intense days of incredible information, inspiration, and networking for any crime writer at any stage in your career. We will have panels for the beginner who has barely written that first line to established professionals looking to step up their game, plus workshops and some exciting surprises. [Register now](#) to take advantage of our Early Bird rate of \$375. Yes, we know that the price has gone up. So did the hotel conference fee. This is the lowest we can charge without losing money on the event, and the price will be going up in January.

### Our Guests of Honor!



**Rachel Howzell Hall**

Rachel Howzell Hall is the critically acclaimed author and *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize finalist for *And Now She's Gone*, which was also nominated for the Lefty-, Barry- and Anthony Awards. A *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Good Sister* with James Patterson, Rachel is an Anthony-, International Thriller Writers- and Lefty Award nominee and the author of *They All Fall Down*, *Land of Shadows*, *Skies of Ash*, *Trail of Echoes* and *City of Saviors* in the Detective Elouise Norton series as well as the author of the bestselling Audible Original, *How It Ends*.



**Deborah Crombie**

New York Times bestselling author Deborah Crombie is a native Texan who writes crime novels set in the United Kingdom. Her Duncan Kincaid/Gemma James series has received numerous awards, including Edgar, Macavity, and Agatha nominations, and is published in more than a dozen countries to international acclaim.

### Announcing ConsultFest

It's your chance to have real editors look at your work and help point you in the right direction. Available only to conference attendees, [ConsultFest](#) will give you a one-on-one session to discuss whatever you want to discuss whatever you'd like, so that you can get the answers you need to get your career going. [Buy your session now!](#)

### More Surprises Coming!

In addition to our usual line up of great programming, we've several new and fun activities to make your weekend the best ever. These will be for attendees only, so [make sure you register now](#).

### Health and Safety Statement

The CCWC will take place indoors. In accordance with the recommendations of the L.A. County Department of Public Health, **we will require proof of vaccination to attend the conference**. Closer to the start date, we may ask every registrant to email us a copy of their vaccination certificate. Vaccinated registrants who have difficulty emailing copies of their certificates may bring their certificates with them when they check in. In consideration of your fellow attendees, please avail yourself of the most recent booster shot for which you are eligible before the event. Whether to wear a mask during the conference will be left to the individual attendee. We reserve the right to change our policy in the event that the public health situation changes. Thank you for your cooperation.

Questions? Shoot us an email at

[info@ccwconference.org!](mailto:info@ccwconference.org)

# LIMERICKS

By Michael Edenstein

A quantum physicist Schrodinger  
Postulated a real humdinger  
In a box a cat  
Might be where it's at  
Putting our small brains through a wringer.



There was a fellow from Russia  
A grizzled theater usher  
What do you know  
He moved to Juneau  
Where he's a famed dogsled musher



There was a dear woman from Ghana  
Who one day slipped on a banana  
She quickly went splat  
on 12 pounds of her fat  
Presently she's a paid schmaltz canner

Once an old radical Harley  
imbibed twelve gallons of barley  
It wasn't his fault  
'Twas blended with malt  
Harley found his jail time gnarly

There was an old poet named Mick  
Whose writings were awfully slick  
He's no longer sought  
Because he was caught  
Posting an obscene limerick



"A ten-ton mastodon was sent  
To The Bronx from the Orient  
It created a mist  
Every time it pi\*\*ed  
And a cyclone when flatulent

A college professor named Harvey  
Thought that marriage was "Marvey"  
Until in due course  
She got a divorce  
Now the poor fellow is "Starvey"



# Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord Review – The Pandemic Wars

By Elaine L. Mura

*Republished with the permission of Splash Magazine*



Kristina Wong – Photo by Jenna Selby/La Jolla Playhouse.

When Kristina Wong formed a group called the Auntie Sewing Squad (ASS) – a collection organized through Facebook of mostly Asian women who arranged to sew masks for at-risk people, front-line workers, and vulnerable communities at a point during the pandemic when nobody could find masks anywhere. Eventually, the assemblage grew into 800 participants across 33 states – including children and her own mother – who donated more than 300,000 masks. Inspired by her experiences with the group, Wong developed an award-winning solo show. *KRISTINA WONG, SWEATSHOP OVERLORD*, which is currently at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, a co-production of Center Theatre Group and East West Players (with additional support from the Skirball Cultural Center). To add a dollop of frosting to the cake, for her efforts, Wong was one of six recipients of this year’s Doris Duke Artist Awards, an honor indeed.

Initially, Wong performed bits and pieces of her idea and streamed them during those isolated COVID days in 2020. In September 2021, New York Theatre Workshop opened its first post-shutdown season with Wong’s show; and soon she was a 2022 Pulitzer Prize finalist for

drama. Even though it’s set during the pandemic, Wong does not consider this a pandemic show, but rather an exploration of left-over and perhaps unresolved feelings from the COVID era coupled with the inestimable power of community: “By remembering, we have a chance to recover that small window to ask, ‘What could we have done differently?’...I’m afraid that maybe we are leaving this more pissed off, more bitter, more jaded, more angry.” Wong sees her show as a therapeutic and healing place for audiences, a safe haven for them to recall and relive experiences that may have left them with mixed and unexplored reactions to their enforced seclusion and the losses which they sustained.

From the moment that Kristina Wong stepped onto the stage, fireworks began to crackle and dance. With an energy that defined Wong’s performance, she turned the pandemic upside down as she wove her personal stories together with the events that all of us experienced during those fateful pandemic years. Set in Los Angeles – which Wong thankfully revisits at the Kirk Douglas Theatre – *KRISTINA WONG, SWEATSHOP OVERLORD* tells the tale of a frustrated performer living in COVID times, when every theater is dark and everyone is relegated to a self-imposed quarantine. What to do?

Happily, a creative and quirky mind like Wong’s was bound to come up with the perfect solution: why not put her sewing skills to good use by making masks to fill the looming shortage everywhere? And what if there was a shortage of elastic for the masks? Perhaps bra straps would do just as well. And why not enlist family, friends, and everyone she knows to get involved? Little did she suspect that all those “aunties” would soon grow into a whopping 800 over 33 states – and that the Auntie Sewing Squad would produce 300,000 masks before they retired their sewing machines?

Under the skilled direction of Chay Yew, Wong takes the audience through her sometimes convoluted – and frequently hysterical – problem-solving techniques through the advent of life-saving vaccines – and beyond. What of antivaxxers? What about Black Lives Matter? What about January 6? What of an epidemic of anti-Asian violence? The audience gets to take a journey down memory lane with Wong – sometimes laughing out loud and sometimes wiping a tear away. This is an odyssey through isolation, death, love, community, and a kaleidoscope of conflicting emotions – but, above all, hope. Wong has reached the epitome of her skills as a performer and as a person who has faced adversity and come out the other end the better for it. This is Wong’s not-to-be-missed solo voyage which everyone is invited to take. It will tweak audience memories and perhaps help heal old scars. At the same time, *KRISTINA WONG SWEATSHOP OVERLORD* will entertain and cheer up a COVID-fatigued audience with a message of community and hope.



The Aunties’ Gift Quilt – Photo by Elaine L. Mura

*KRISTINA WONG, SWEATSHOP OVERLORD* runs through March 15, 2023, with performances at 8 p.m. on Friday (2/17), Saturday (2/18), Sunday (2/19), at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday (2/22), at 8 p.m. on Tuesday (2/28), Wednesday (3/8), and at 2 p.m. on Saturday (3/11). There are student matinees at 10:45 on 2/21, 2/22, and 3/1, as well as an American Express Card Member performance at 8 p.m. on 2/23, an ACCESS performance at 2 p.m. on 3/11, and LA Theatre Community Night at 8 p.m. on 2/28. The Kirk Douglas Theatre is located at 9820 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232. Tickets start at \$30. For information and reservations, phone 213-628-2772 or go [online](#).

If you would like to read the full collection of Elaine Mura’s reviews, simply Google her name. Elaine L. Mura and the title of the magazine on your social media.



Kristina Wong – Photo by Elaine L. Mura

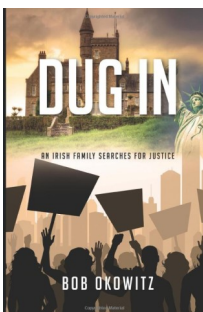


**IN HONOR OF ST. PAT'S DAY, CWC-SFV  
MEMBER BOB OKOWITZ, GRANDSON OF IRISH  
IMMIGRANTS, SHARES A FEW IRISH JOKES.  
ENJOY!**



1. Reilly is walking through a graveyard when he comes across a headstone with the inscription "Here lies a politician and an honest man." 'Faith now,' exclaims Reilly, 'I wonder how they got the two of them in one grave.'
2. Donncha is shocked at finding out all his cows are suffering from "Bluetongue." 'Bejabbers,' Donncha murmurs, 'I didn't even know they had mobile phones.'
3. Gallagher is in Boston and he is waiting patiently, also, he is watching the traffic cop on a busy street crossing. The cop stops the flow of traffic and shouts, 'Okay pedestrians'. Then he allows the traffic to pass. He did this several times, and Gallagher is still standing on the sidewalk. After the cop has shouted 'Pedestrians' for the tenth time, Gallagher approaches him and says, 'Is it not about time ye let the Catholics across?'
4. 'Why do you Irish always answer a question with a question?' asked President Franklin D. Roosevelt. 'Do we now?' came New York Mayor Al Smith's reply.
5. Finnegan sells Michael a donkey, some weeks later they met in a pub in Killarney and Michael says, 'Hey, Finnegan, that donkey you sold me went and died.' Finnegan just sips his Guinness slowly and retorts, 'Bejabbers, Michael, it never done that on me.'
6. Murphy lost a hundred dollars on the Melbourne Cup, a famous Australian horserace. He also lost another hundred on the television replay.
7. Kieran O'Connor always slept with his gun under his pillow. Hearing a noise at the foot of the bed, he shot off his big toe.'Thank the Lord I wasn't sleeping at the other end of the bed,' Kieran said to his friends in Donegal's pub. 'I would have blown my head off.'
8. O'Gara was arrested and sent for trial for armed bank robbery. After due deliberation, the jury foreman stood up and announced, 'Not guilty.' 'That's grand,' shouted O'Gara, 'Does that mean I get to keep the money?'

Source: [Short Irish Jokes](#)



Please take a look at Bob's book:  
Dug IN: An Irish Family's Search for Justice  
[Amazon.com : dug in Bob Okowitz](#)





# BRUMAL RAGE, A RENGA POEM

The wind has roared through  
Slicing with one hundred knives  
Dread weapons of winter  
Dead branches lay scattered  
Leaving the asphalt littered

Pine cones, needles, twigs, flowers  
Alongside trash and flotsam

Winter can be most cruel  
To nature's finest creatures

Lemons, rubbish, and trash cans  
Dance about this mountain's peak

The east wind unsatisfied  
Continues to strew tree limbs

Murdering with frigid blasts  
That which survives its maraud

A renga is a Japanese collaborative genre of poetry, in which multiple poets alternately contribute stanzas to the poem. The renga came into existence after two people started writing a tanka (a traditional short Japanese poem) together, and it became a favorite pastime even in ancient rural Japan.

<https://wordwool.com/renga-poem>

*brumal*—relating to winter; wintry

*maraud*— roam in search of things to steal or people to attack

# The Friends and Family of Lillian Rodich, Celebrate Her 95th Birthday!

Lillian Rodich, a long-time member of the CWC-SFV, poet-laureate of *The Valley Scribe*, an author of countless stories and poems, a writer who inspires her readers, continues to create new work in 2023!

## Her autobiography:

A different kind of timeline: My activities during the same year.

Lillian Rodich

Years on this planet	95
Years a daughter	56
Years a granddaughter	35
Years Public Education	12
Years University Level	6
Years Practice Teach	1
Years Employed Teaching	26
Years Retired	21
Years a wife	51
Years a Widow	21
Years a mother	70
Years a grandmother	42
Years Folk dancing	45
Poetry Inspiration	25

Books published 1985 to present.

*Listen Teacher (Limited Edition)*

*Wild Women of Words (Group Anthology, Limited Edition)*

*\*On the Wings of Words (Published and Still in Circulation at present)*

*Do Not Break the Circle (Published and Still in Circulation at present)*

Years as member of CWC Over 10

Presently lives alone, semi housebound

Volunteers teaching poetry.

Involved in an active writing critique group.

Continues writing and mentoring other writers.



The birthday girl prepares for her big day.



Lillian Rodich, surrounded by friends and well-wishers, at her 95th birthday celebration.

\* [On the Wings of Words: A Poetic Journal \(1\): Rodich, Lillian Isenberg: 9781682229859: Amazon.com: Books](#)

*Lillian,*

Dreams of ballet inspired your body to move with grace and statuesque form. The mantra was and is to remain strong, flexible and regal. The dream expected success and if you faltered you were to pick yourself up and move again. Life has tested that mantra.

You are a dancer, a poet and an educator. This is your soul, your heart. You reach out. Your poet's heart dances with words, with rhythm, and the picture comes alive.

Your readers, your students, your friends hear your words and see your pictures as they move before our eyes. We hear the rhythm, see the space, the twirls, smell the beauty, feel the heartache and understand the dashed dreams and blessings. Your word spatula paints in subtle hues and vibrant colors. The tone soothes and quiets or fires arrows at revelations. Yet you gently remind us — less is more.

You want to see all of our poems bound. One day I will bind mine in large print for you to see and hear. You touched my heart and allowed me to paint scenes with words. You have been my poet mentor extraordinaire and I love you for all your kind support, special friendship and inspiration.

Love,  
Your friend and student  
Andi Polk





Forever Friends and Soul Sisters,  
Lillian Rodich and Leslie Kaplan

## My Sister ... Ms. Lillian

She's from the West Coast  
I'm from the East  
We met as strangers  
At a writer's club meeting  
Nothing in common we both thought  
Except good chemistry  
As we got to know each other better  
Astonishing coincidence happened  
She said she thought I was a "movie Star"  
That's funny because I grew up star struck  
And always wanted to go to Hollywood  
And be a Movie Star

Well I finally got to Hollywood where we met  
Two widows with late husbands named SY  
Perfectly paired as two Virgo's and two Capricorn's  
Raised by Russian immigrant parents  
Both learned to speak Yiddish  
Ms. Lillian's birthday January 7th  
My Sy's birthday January 7th

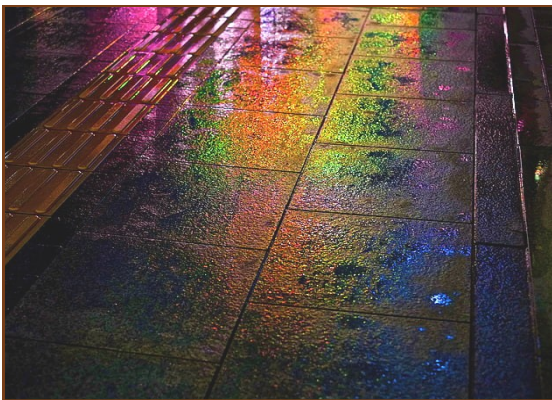
Two Capricorn's known to be very compatible with  
Two Virgo's born in September

Me and Ms. Lillian each having husbands with the same  
name

And so the connections kept renewing  
Whenever we got our histories together  
We love the same musical Broadway shows  
Our views on politics are similar and correct

I have found a sister  
I love her and she loves be back.

Leslie Kaplan



## **TANKAS**

**twilight invites birds  
to nest on high dark branches  
soon wings spread with flight.  
their shadows paint sky's canvas**

**leaf flutters from tree  
twists and turns within wind's whim  
then rests on Earth's bed  
drying to dust as it sleeps**

**sun shines on pink buds  
setting them ablaze in red  
crimson roses bloom  
perfumed promises of Spring**

**sounds of dawn muted  
while rain and thunder explode  
footsteps splash puddles.  
rainbows reflect on sidewalks**

**by Lillian Rodich 2023**

# The Eyes Have It

By Phyllis Butcher



I was just a few steps away from dropping off a package at the UPS Store (bless Amazon for making returns *so* easy) when a voice behind me called out, “Phyllis?”

I turned to see a handsome gentleman exiting the salon next door. At first glance I didn’t recognize him, which was evident because he repeated my name.











“Phyllis!” This time I recognized the voice and I knew it belonged to Paul, a fellow MPTF volunteer. And what was my response?

“Paul! I didn’t recognize you *without your mask!*” Yep! Here’s the irony. I met Paul just over a year ago when he began volunteering and we were still under the thumb of the dreaded Covid. At that time we were all wearing masks and were basically reduced to recognizing one another by voice and—ah, yes—the eyes. So, when Paul called out to me it was the first time I had seen him without a mask, and which was why his face from the eyes down did not register—fortunately only for a moment. This brings us to the importance and significance of our eyes for recognition and communication. With respect to the first subject, let’s look at a few facts. A 2021 study determined that the average person knows about 5,000 faces, from friends and family to the checker at Ralph’s.\* We recognize familiar faces even if their names escape us. Further, it found that even with masks covering the lower portion of their faces, the participants in the study still found recognition surprisingly easy, and identified familiar faces in masks with almost 90% accuracy. Wow!

Picture for a moment a photo of one of your friends. While you may think every detail in the face is essential to recognize him or her, the eyes have it—end of discussion. Attempts have been made to bring eyebrows into the mix, but while they may impart emotional expression they have not been proven to be a governing factor in facial identification (fear not, Boris Karloff, you’ll always be in my heart).

If you are still with me—the foregoing may be much more information that you care to digest—we should move on to communication, and how we learn to do this with our eyes. William Shakespeare once wrote: *The eyes are the windows to your soul*. What might that mean? The short answer is the concept that we can interpret someone’s emotions and even their thoughts by what we perceive by looking into their eyes. In a story I’ve just read, as a writer I was drawn to this sentence: “She greeted people, expressed thanks, and apologized, all with her eyes rather than with words.” It has been suggested that our understanding of eyes runs very deep and emerges very early. Think of tiny babies, who look at a face and immediately concentrate on the eyes. Our eyes communicate much more than we can possibly realize. A quote from Psychology Today:

*“Eyes soften in love, harden with anger, widen in fear, narrow in suspicion, roll in exasperation, glaze with boredom, and weep in sadness.”* While this assessment may not be totally reliable or perhaps controversial, there are undoubtedly many stimuli that may be reflected in our eyes. Can you think of some that would telegraph these emotions? Here are a few thoughts.

-  LOVE: Looking into the eyes of the little guy you just adopted at Petsmart.
-  ANGER: You opened your bill from The Gas Company.
-  FEAR: The meter maid is just pulling away and there’s a piece of paper under your windshield wiper.
-  SUSPICION: Something is obviously wrong with the bathroom scale
-  EXASPERATION: You were put on a “brief hold” twenty-two minutes earlier.
-  BOREDOM: Standing line at the DMV.
-  LYING: My dog ate the bill from the Gas Company.
-  STRESS: The deadline assigned my article for *The Valley Scribe*.
-  HAPPINESS: Someday soon, I’ll see my CWC-SFV friends on the MPTF campus!
-  SADNESS: \_\_\_\_\_ (Fill in the blank)

All of the above said, wouldn’t you agree that our “peepers” play an enormous role in both recognition and communication? Yes? No? I do believe the eyes have it!

\*Source : [People Know 5,000 Faces on Average, Study Says | Sci.News](#)

IF YOU'RE A POET AND YOU KNOW IT, OR IF YOU HAVE A YEN TO WIELD A POETIC PEN, REMEMBER THAT **APRIL** IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH! RIGHT NOW – **MARCH**—IS THE PERFECT TIME TO RESEARCH POETRY PUBLICATIONS AND SPRING POETRY CONTESTS.

All National Poetry Month information on this page is provided by the Academy of American Poets at <https://www.poets.org/>

Founded in 1934 to support American poets at all stages of their careers and to foster the appreciation of contemporary poetry—the producer of Poets.org, Poem-a-Day, National Poetry Month, and more.

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## National Poetry Month April 2023



Artwork by Marc Brown. Line excerpted from the poem "Carrying" by U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón, from *The Carrying* (Milkweed Editions, 2018). For more free poetry resources, visit [Poets.org/npm](https://Poets.org/npm).



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## National Poetry Month

Launched by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996, National Poetry Month is a special occasion that celebrates poets' integral role in our culture and that poetry matters. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world, with tens of millions of readers, students, K–12 teachers, librarians, booksellers, literary events curators, publishers, families, and—of course—poets, marking poetry's important place in our lives.

Thanks in part to our [National Poetry Month partners and sponsors](#), each April the Academy is able to offer activities, initiatives, and resources so that anyone can join the celebration:

Order (for free) and display the official [National Poetry Month poster](#)  
Read about [30 ways to celebrate National Poetry Month online and at home](#)

Read about [30 ways to celebrate National Poetry Month in the classroom](#)

Join the Academy of American Poets for its [virtual Poetry & the Creative Mind gala](#)

Find online poetry readings and events on our [Poetry Near You calendar](#), and add your own

[Sign up for Poem-a-Day](#) and enjoy a free daily poem in your inbox

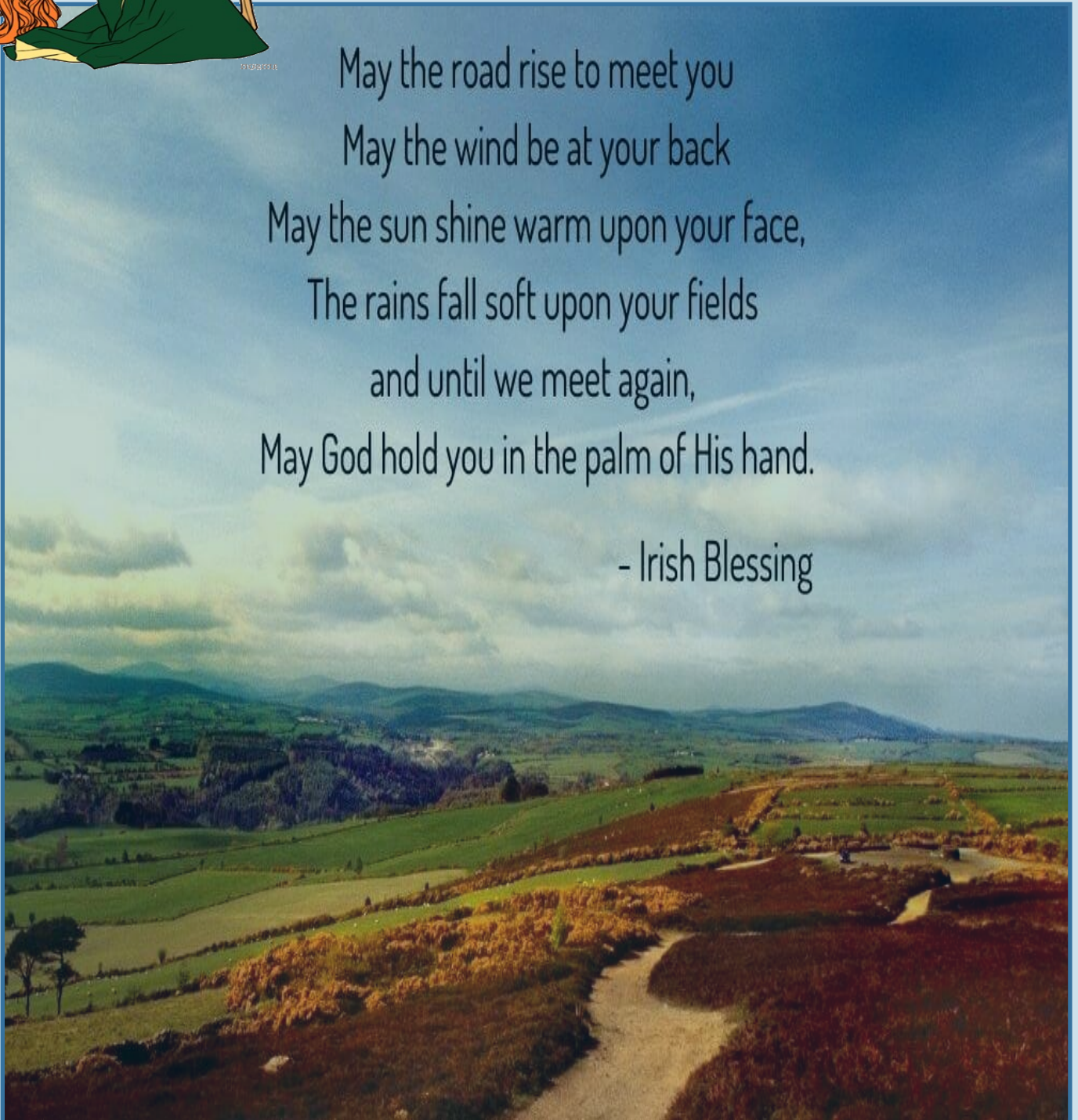
Follow the thousands of celebrations taking place on social media with the official hashtag [#NationalPoetryMonth](#) and follow the Academy of American Poets on Twitter and Instagram [@POETSorg](#)



Lets take a moment to  
read, once more, this  
lovely Irish blessing.

May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be at your back  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields  
and until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

- Irish Blessing





# CIAO



**I have been having the opportunity  
to poetically assess the past and present,  
from the better (not worse) side of humanity.**

**I have been an advocate of the elderly,  
acknowledging time flows and friendship grows.**

**I realize I am luckily centered as a happy me.  
It is from the standpoint of my goodwill and dignity.  
This is why I am usually feeling swell and aging well.  
My heart and spirit continue to keep bouncing along.  
Optimistically, I desire to accomplish somewhat more.**



**Ciao (hello and goodbye), until we communicate once more.**

**© Norman Molesko 2023  
Ambassador For Seniors**



## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The California Writers Club has been in existence for over 100 years, and the SFV Branch for over 20 years. Our mission is to encourage excellence in writing, fiction, non-fiction and poetry, as well as to reach out into our community and mentor writers at all stages of their writing journey. We hold Zoom meetings on the first Saturday of each month from 1 PM to 3 PM. Meetings are free for all members.

Our meetings feature presentations from published writers, editors and other writing industry experts speaking on topics ranging from how to improve our writing, overcome writer's block, get published, and promote our work.

In addition, we host six critique groups which meet monthly or bi-monthly to give CWC-SFV members feedback from their CWC-SFV peers. They meet in person, on Zoom, or in hybrid groups.

For information and reviews on prior monthly speakers please go to monthly editions of the Scribe at [PUBLICATIONS | San Fernando Valley Writers \(cwc-sfv.org\)](https://www.cwc-sfv.org/publications)

For further information about the CWC-SFV critique groups, contact Marlene Bumgarner at: [marlenebumgarner@gmail.com](mailto:marlenebumgarner@gmail.com)

If you would like to learn additional information about our San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club, please check out our website at:

[CWC-SFV.org](https://www.cwc-sfv.org)

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