



The Valley Scribe



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

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Happy
St. Patrick's
Day!

CHRISTOPHER VOGLER WILL LEAD US THROUGH THE HERO'S JOURNEY

By Heather Bradshaw, CWC-SFV Program Chair

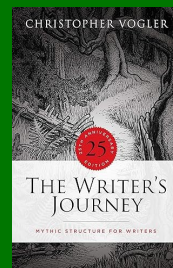


CHRISTOPHER
VOGLER

The San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is pleased to welcome author Christopher Vogler, as the keynote speaker on Saturday, March 2nd at 1:00 pm on Zoom with a presentation entitled, *The Hero's Journey Through Stories and Life*.

The *Hero's Journey* is designed to help you structure and organize your story using a technique that Chris developed in his years as a story analyst and researcher at Disney. His approach to storytelling and screenwriting is based on patterns of mythology and fairy tales inspired by the work of mythologist Joseph Campbell. During his talk, Chris will introduce his 12-stage method of organizing a story for maximum connection with the audience and emotional impact. His system for story and character development has been proven on countless Hollywood productions, but also has given meaning and guidance to people in many different walks of life.

Born in Missouri, Chris grew up on a farm outside St. Louis, studied journalism, made documentary films for the Air Force space program, and attended the USC School of Cinematic Arts, before entering the film industry as a script reader. At the Walt Disney Company he wrote an influential memo on story structure that went viral and deeply influenced Hollywood thinking.



Chris's work has become the cornerstone of many college writing programs and has had a wide influence in Hollywood and around the world. His 12-stage guide to story structure has inspired artists and writers and has become a kind of orientation device for people facing challenges or trying new things. He has worked with major directors and movie stars to give their stories some of the magic of myth and the wonder of fairy tales.

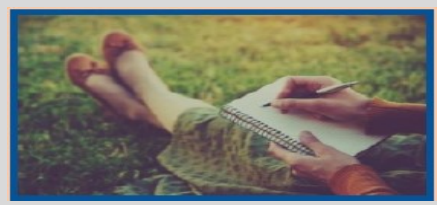
Projects he has influenced include Disney's *THE LION KING*, *HERCULES*, *FANTASIA 2000*, Fox's *FIGHT CLUB*, *COURAGE UNDER FIRE*, *VOLCANO* and *THE THIN RED LINE*. He is a proud former member of the Story Analysts Guild and present member of the Motion Picture Editors Guild.

Chris is an inspiring and entertaining speaker who will give you new ways to enjoy movies and understand the journey of your own life. His wonderful book *THE WRITER'S JOURNEY* has been called "the screenwriter's bible," though of course the book is for novelists too!

Looking forward to seeing you there! Please come ready with your questions!

All members of the CWC-SFV will receive a Zoom invitation to this presentation. Members of other CWC branches should contact Zoom host, Anat Wenick, by noon on March 1st at SFV.CWC@gmail.com for an invitation to register. Guests may purchase admission at www.cwc-sfv.org by noon on March 1st. After purchasing admission, guests will receive a Zoom invitation. We regret we cannot accommodate late requests.

Karen's Corner



The Name of the Game

Dear Members: Welcome to March!

Along with the return to Daylight Savings Time on March 10 (Hooray), St Patrick's Day on March 17, and the official start of spring on March 19, the month brings CWC members another important day to remember. Mark your calendars for March 7—the deadline to submit your prose or poetry to CWC's first, ekphrastic anthology titled *Vision and Verse – A Fusion of Poetry, Prose, Art and Photography*.

If you aren't familiar with the term, *ekphrastic* refers to a poem or prose related to a work of art. John Keats' "Ode On a Grecian Urn," is a well-known example. And if you attended our September, 2023 membership meeting, you heard a lecture by ekphrastic poet Hiram Sims, who clearly explained this literary art form. (Thanks, Heather Bradshaw, Program Chair Extraordinaire.)

You can view the art prompts, as well as the submission form, for *Vision and Verse* at <https://calwriters.org/vision-and-verse-ekphrasticbok-submissions/>.

I spent the last month crafting a short poem for one of the CWC prompts. While I don't often write poetry, I've always enjoyed the challenge of telling a story in free verse. For me, poetry is the most difficult, complex form of storytelling, much like a tile mosaic, where each word contributes to the whole. No room for fluff.

Whether my submission is selected for the anthology or not, I thoroughly enjoyed the exercise and learned to write an ekphrastic poem. Maybe it's not Keats, but I feel pretty good about it.

On the topic of learning, many of you know that I've been teaching writing classes through Conejo Valley Adult School in Thousand Oaks for several years. Each class is unique and lots of fun. On March 8, I'll be teaching "Show, Don't Tell," followed on March 15 with "Writing Dazzling Dialogue." For more information, please contact Conejo Valley Adult School at 805-497-2761 or visit <https://conejoadulted.org/catalogs>

Whether trying a new genre, attending CWC membership lectures, or taking classes, lifelong learning is the name of the game! I'll see you on March 2 when our speaker will be Christopher Vogler to discuss "The Hero's Journey."



**Karen Gorback, Ph.D.
CWC-SFV President**

SYNITHIA WILLIAMS BELIEVES THAT LOVE IS PART OF EVERYONE'S LIFE

By Elaine L. Mura, Ph.D., CWC-SFV Vice President/Secretary

At our February meeting, South Carolina romance writer Synithia Williams, started her presentation by asking both her Zoom and MPTF audiences to participate in an informal question-and-answer format. We agreed. Program Chair, Heather Bradshaw, presided over the presentation. The following content was garnered from Synithia's interactions with her CWC-SFV audience members. The title of her talk: "Black and in Love."

Synithia was born and raised in the small South Carolina town of Newberry, where there were no book stores or other resources common in urban centers. When she was 13 years old, she began to read Harlequin romances, which she found in the library and flea markets. By high school, she had written two romance novels.

In 2010, she really got into writing romances but also found a stable job in local government to pay the bills. Finally, she decided to try to get published, picked a partially completed novel and finished it (which took all of 2010 and 2011). But, as Synithia opined, things were different at that time. She was working full time with two young children and only really knew about traditional publishing.

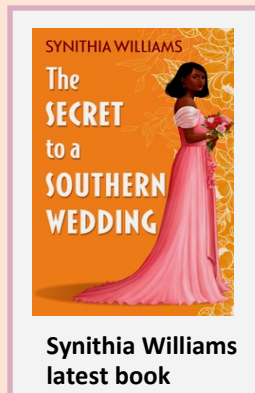
She also discovered that black romances were hard to find and she needed help to learn how to get an agent and publish her stories. Eventually, she joined the Romance Writers of America and finally found an agent and a publisher (*Crimson Romances*). She published her first book in 2012. Synithia proudly reported that she has since published 29 book and three novellas since that first publication.

After presenting her background and early writing history, she asked to continue her talk with an informal question-and-answer format. Synithia replied to the first question that she chose the romance genre because she wanted certain things that the genre offered: "I grew up with soap operas...I like to write about people with issues...usually a Southern girl goes away and then comes back home to the South." If nothing else, Synithia described herself as highly structured. While she feels that research is important, she also feels that seeking perfection may hobble a writer.

She stated that life needs romance, that people face challenges, and that we all like a happy ending. She reported that ideas for books come from everywhere for her: "There are so many different angles ... my inspiration comes from 'What if?'" She emphasized that black romances are romances and that race isn't really important because there are no differences between races in the concept of love: "Everybody can relate to people falling in love, but there are cultural differences."

Synithia indicated that she never wrote for a particular audience: "I just wrote books that I wanted to read...my audience found me." Her audience took a chance on reading a new romance author's stories but they found that her stories are "... soapy stuff...and sexy!" Synithia

reported that she also belongs to a writers' club, where she gets helpful feedback. She said that she makes enough money on her books to finance conferences and other small goodies; she added that she is paid advances. She stated that she has six more years before she retires from the South Carolina Government system – and then she'll write full time.



Although she tends to write book series, she noted that each book can stand alone. She said that her main characters are usually black "because I'm a black woman in America." However, some of the characters in her books are also of other races and backgrounds. She cautioned against stereotyping characters.

When asked about agents, Synithia pointed out that her very first agent never succeeded in getting her published: "My first few books I got on my own." However, after she switched to another agent who was also a romance writer, she found the perfect fit: "Your agent has got to love your books and want to get them published...your agent should be your cheerleader... otherwise, your agent won't work to see your books published.

In terms of process, Synithia indicated that she finishes her first draft before editing. She writes and ignores details at the time "or I wouldn't even finish...then I can make revisions." She described herself as a plotter: "I create a plot board with 25 or 30 squares...then I post key points in different colors (like pink for the heroine and blue for the hero)." She added she uses a software program called "Plotter." She also uses photos for different scenes in her books which help her describe her settings effectively. Her actual writing is in Word.

Since she has a full-time job, she uses her lunch breaks at work to think about that will happen in a chapter. Then when she comes home, she always begins to write around 9 p.m. and writes approximately 1,000 words a day. For her last book, she used a dictation program.

Our speaker's future plans include writing a full-fledged paranormal book. She firmly believes that writers should join organizations in the area where they live. She also recommended the Writer's Digest as a resource. Before seeking a publisher, she emphasized that it was critical to examine the website and see what publishers are looking for. Since Synithia self-published three books, she felt that it was also a good idea to investigate all options available to the writer at the time. She remarked that it has become harder for the writer now than it was in the past: "Your publisher used to take over many of the details like book covers and publicity...now you have to do a lot of that yourself... writers now are supposed to be content creators." She suggested that writers not ignore the local press and social media

Synithia Williams' presentation was well received by the rapt CWC audience as she navigated members' questions and added some excellent suggestions.

CWC-SFV MEMBER DAVIDA SIWISA JAMES SHARES HER GOOD NEWS



Hello CWC-SFV members:

I want to share some exciting news about my upcoming release *Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill: Alexander Hamilton's Old Harlem Neighborhood Through the Centuries*.

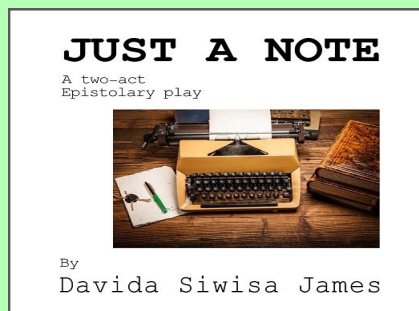
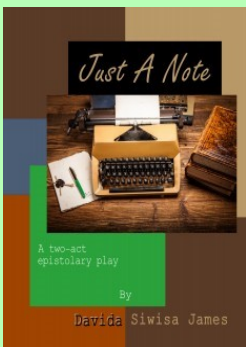
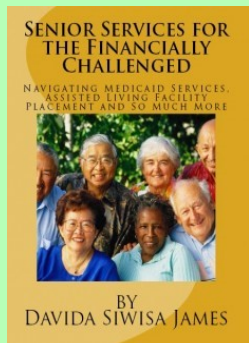
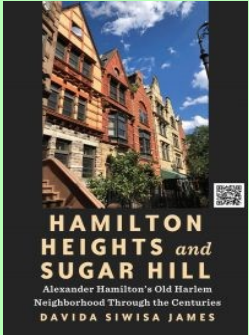
I was invited to give a book talk - which has now turned into a book launch - to an organization called [Untapped](https://untappedcities.com/insiders/) New York Insiders. I will be the presenter on March 27th at 9:00 a.m. PST during a one-hour webinar for this organization that has 77,000 followers on its newsletter and a nationwide membership.

Anyone who is not an Insider and would like to register for the webinar can sign up for a membership using the discount code **JOINUS** and receive their first month free! Otherwise, the virtual membership is just \$10 a month and can be canceled at any time. The link is below. Untapped did a beautiful job on the event page. Please take a look at the website

<https://untappedcities.com/insiders/events/hamilton-heights-book-launch/>

And in support of the book, I was recently invited to do a reading and signing on Sunday, June 16th at Hamilton Grange National Memorial, Alexander Hamilton's old home that he built in 1802. This is a huge honor and will no doubt be a highlight of my "mini" East Coast book tour in June. *Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill* is available for presale through major outlets.

One more piece of good news to share: I will be signing at The L.A. Times Festival of Books at USC on April 20-21: Gold Zone, Booth 166. Please stop by!





LIMERICK LESSONS

By MPTF Outreach Chair Phyllis Butcher

Each issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine features a contest for its readers. The objective is to write a limerick based on the photo of a prior issue's cover. A minimal set of guidelines for writing a limerick is given, and, as I discovered, it's not quite as easy as it would seem. Before accepting the challenge I decided to do a bit of research about these pesky little poems, and perhaps find some limerick tricks in the process.

Within its definition, Wikipedia also offers a succinct commentary: "A limerick is a form of verse that appeared in England in the early years of the 18th century. In combination with a refrain, it forms a limerick song, a traditional humorous drinking song often with obscene verses. It is written in five-line, predominantly anapestic trimeter with a strict rhyme scheme of AABBA, in which the first, second and fifth line rhyme, while the third and fourth lines are shorter and share a different rhyme." Got that? Here's an example:

There was a Young Lady whose chin
Resembled the point of a pin:
So she had it made sharp,
And purchased a harp,
And played several tunes with her chin.
-- Edward Lear



It is understandable that because of the limerick's absence of erudite or noble origin, its evolution into bawdy and ribald verse was not surprising. Donald Robert Perry Marquis was an American humorist, journalist and author who has been credited with defining three distinct types of limericks: "Limericks to be told when ladies and present; limericks to be told when ladies are absent but clergymen are present are—LIMERICKS." In deference to the ladies and clergymen in *The Scribe's* readership, I shall not present an example of Mr. Marquis' Types One or Two. But I think I'm ready to try my hand in the Type Three Category. Here we go:

Anna's leaving Indiana,
Indiana's not for Anna.
She hates the cold,
The town is old,
Anna's moving to Tarzana.



Well, that wasn't so difficult. Now that I'm on a roll, how about a sequel?

Anna wants to leave Tarzana
Tarzana's not the place for Anna.
The traffic's far from quick,
But the earthquake did the trick,
Anna's moving back to Indiana.

Saturday Evening Post, just tell me what page! However, to put candor before high-fives, writing limericks can sometimes be a test of endurance and determination. Those AABBA'S can take their toll. So just relax and enjoy the experience.

I must admit it's tricky,
It sure won't be a quickie.
One and Two and Five rhyme,
Three and Four their own rhyme,
And there's your limericky!



WANTED: A COPY OF THIS CWC-WV 2009 ANTHOLOGY



Our branch of the CWC, has been meeting at the MPTF since 2006, nearly 20 years! And we have published several anthologies, filled with creative work from hundreds of club members. The editor of the 2009 Collage anthology, William (Bill) Hitchins, is currently living in Sacramento. Bill is an experienced writer and publisher. He preceded me as editor of the club newsletter, when our club was titled the West Valley branch of the California Writers Club.



PHOTO: KEN WILLIAMS
Signing in for the last meeting of CWC/WV's first year in June are (clockwise from the top): Dave Watterberg, incoming President; Art Yawler, Membership Chairman; Bill Johnson, outgoing board member; Bill Hitchins, In Focus Editor and DJ Johnson, outgoing President.

In this 2008 photo, Bill Hitchins is in the foreground, signing a ledger.

Bill would love to show the Collage anthology to his family. Unfortunately, he lost his copy of Collage. He recently sent an appeal to Marganit Lish, a member of our group in 2009, asking her to help him find a spare Collage anthology. Marganit has a copy but wonders if anyone who reads this newsletter might have an extra copy of Collage.

If you were a member of our club in 2009, perhaps you have a copy of this book gather long dust in a bookcase or closet and would like to send it to Bill, who is now bedridden and in elder care. If so, please contact Bill's friend and correspondent, Marganit Lish, at: mmlish@hotmail.com

DON'T FORGET!

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

Twenty years ago, the Academy of American Poets wanted to increase awareness and appreciation of poets in the United States. They were successful. In 1996, the United States established April as National Poetry month.

And for the past twenty years, the Academy of American Poets' website Poets.org serves as a hub for information about local poetry events during the month. The organization also provides free educational resources to teachers for classroom celebrations and activities, and publishes an annual festival poster. Since 1998, National Poetry Month has also been celebrated each April in Canada.*

In the April Scribe, I hope to put a spotlight on poems and our own club's poets. I would welcome poetry submissions in the first two weeks of March. If you'd like to participate, send your work to my email address: kghighcove@gmail.com

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT



This is a photo of Ken Kendall, a new member of our writers club. Ken may be surprised to see his face on this page, but I needed to correct a mistake I made in the February Valley Scribe: I introduced Ken Kendall as Allen Kendall.

How did this mix-up happen? Ken has published books under his pen name, Allen Kendall, and I got confused. Only human ...

Ken is a good sport and thought the misnomer rather amusing. No big deal. Whew, I thought.

I hope Ken enjoys making new SFV writer friends and I'm sure we will all enjoy getting acquainted with Ken Kendall.

LIGHT-HEARTED LIMERICKS

By CWC-SFV Members

Limericks

By CWC-SFV Member
Michael Edelstein

Al Einstein a fellow quite witty
Pondered long on relativity
He said, "Just between us
I know I'm a genius
But I can't think here in the city."

Today when reviewing the news
I find it difficult to choose
Who's best to lead us
And who's sure to bleed us
I must say that I am confused.

The world today's in a puzzle
With whom would you like to nuzzle?
They all seem such strangers
Present us with dangers
So many should wear a muzzle.

Lots of cases now before The Court
Judging is not just another sport
I hope that SCOTUS
Sits up and takes notice
And steers straight 'tween starboard and port.

Each year there's a million new books.
"You writers are a bunch of kooks"
Said the agent snidely
As I listened idly
"But I love how the money looks.

Limericks

By CWC-SFV member
Pirhiya Goldstein

There once was a small Kangaroo
Who lived with his mom in a zoo
Carried in a pouch
He always cried "ouch"
And his mom hopped and yelled "ouch" too.

There once was a small horse named Pride
Who took his master to seaside
Children on the beach
Pride snatched their peach
Master did not know where to hide.

There once was a book with no end
That soon was a loyal best friend
To one dreamy girl
With long golden curl
Kissing the book, hours she'd spend.

There once was a boy with green eyes
Who wanted to fly the blue skies
That brought so much joy
To his father Roy
Who gave him a plane twice his size.



A MESSAGE TO ALL CWC MEMBERS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

**Submissions are now open for the CWC 2024 Ekphrastic Book
Vision and Verse, a Fusion of Poetry, Prose, Art and Photography
SUBMISSION DATES: Feb 1, 2024 - March 7, 2024**

The first phase (Art Contest) of our 2024 ekphrastic book event has been completed. Editor Les Bernstein and Judge Cheryl Maeder selected 15 images out of the 276 submitted works of art. The selected art can be viewed on the Cal Writers website: [Vision and Verse Art Contest Winners | California Writers Club \(click on link\)](#) In the second phase of the Vision and Verse ekphrastic book project, for 2024.

We have opened the submissions page for poetry and prose designed to be paired with the selected artwork. Ekphrastic writing is a literary reaction to a selected artwork. It is a way of using artwork as a writing prompt that is designed to inspire and ignite imagination. Here are the guidelines for submissions:

1. Choose up to three selections and write a poem or a prose in response to a selection.
2. *Submission period February 1st-March 7th*
3. Times New Roman, 12-point font.
4. Format as a Microsoft Word Document.
5. Place the artwork number and title at the right top of the poem or prose.
6. Your name is not to appear on the page or the file.
7. Prose submissions must be under 300 words.
8. Each submission must have its own title and file.
9. Enter the title(s) for your poem or prose (up to three) in the title submission box.
10. Enter (drag) each file into the file submission box.
11. The file name must include the artwork number and title and whether the submission is a poem or prose. For example: CWC ekphrastic submission poem for artwork # 1 Welcome.
12. Please include an under 50 words biography written in 3rd person.

Here is a link to the Book and Submission Guidelines page on the CWC website:
[Vision and Verse Ekphrastic Book Submissions \(click on link\).](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Les Bernstein lessieb13@yahoo.com

All the best, Roger

Roger C. Lubeck, CWC President
Les Bernstein, Editor in Chief



MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?



A Message from CWC-SFV Member-at-Large, Gary Wosk

As Spring 2024 nears, the CWC-SFV Board of Directors is seeking feedback from our members to determine which programs and services to retain and possibly expand.

It's not too late to fill out and return the CWC-SFV 2024 Survey which was sent out to our members via email. Please fill out the Google survey by Wednesday, March 6, to let us know your thoughts and ideas on how to make the club even better.

And it's easy, only takes between two to five minutes to complete, plus including your name on the survey is optional.

The survey poses questions intended to determine whether the club is meeting your needs. The survey covers such topics as in-person and Zoom participation, overall likes and dislikes, speakers, volunteering and serving on the board and others.

Members can also express their concerns in the form of one hundred or fewer word answers.

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who has already responded. The input members provide to the Board will lead to the tailoring of programs and services that more closely reflects their responses.

Over the years, the CWC-SFV Board of Directors has reached out to its members

in informal settings to gauge your interest in what we offer. With the availability of the latest in technology we can now dig much deeper.

The Board will share the results of the survey with our members on a date to be determined.

Again, thank you very much for participating in this endeavor. The survey form can be found at:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdc1h2Px9WrMF3Lk3kErG UvMclMpdlLpmHe8COFYi6db7gMw/viewform?usp=sf_link

The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "CWC-SFV MEMBERSHIP SURVEY". The form contains the following questions:

- Name: _____
- How long have you been a member of CWC-SFV?
- Do you plan to renew your membership next Fall?
- Do you regularly attend monthly meetings?
- What are your current likes and dislikes about the branch?
- Would you volunteer for the branch as a board member?
- If you no longer drive to the Saturday meeting, what has changed?
- What changes would you suggest that have not been addressed in this survey?





VALLEY WRITERS



A BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

Whether you're a published author or "have always wanted to write," please join the CWC-SFV for monthly meetings at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Wasserman Campus in Woodland Hills. Meetings begin at 1 pm. Presenters will join us either in person or via Zoom on the huge screen in The Saban Center for Health and Wellness. You'll enjoy networking with other writers while learning more about the craft and business of writing. For more information and single lecture prices, visit <https://www.cwc-sfv.org>. Presentations are free for CWC

September 9, 2023



Join poet, photographer, author Hiram Sims as we explore the power, history and significance of the Ekphrastic poetry. We will identify homemade images and artwork that will be the basis of writing new poems. (Zoom)

October 7, 2023



A LONG STRANGE TRIP - A WRITER'S JOURNEY

NY Times bestselling author, Jonathan Maberry, will discuss how writing horror got him started in his writing career, share insider tips, fresh perspectives on the changes in the publishing trade, and strategies for getting in gear and getting in print. (Zoom)

November 4, 2023



Best-selling author Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin, (aka crime writer Sam Blake), will discuss exactly what the industry is looking for and how best to submit your work. She will show you how to improve your pitch and build your author platform. (Zoom)

December 2, 2023



Best-selling author Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin, (aka crime writer Sam Blake), will discuss exactly what the industry is looking for and how best to submit your work. She will show you how to improve your pitch and build your author platform. (Zoom)

January 6, 2024

A COMPLICATED LIFE



Author, lecturer and BBC presenter, Paul Lewis, will talk to us about prolific Victorian author Wilkie Collins's incredible work ethic and his colorful private life. (Zoom)

February 3, 2024



BLACK AND IN LOVE

Romance author, Synithia Williams, will talk about why she started writing romance novels and why she likes to focus on black love in her award-nominated stories. (Zoom)

March 2, 2024



THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Inspired by mythologist. Joseph Campbell, screenwriter, author and educator Christopher Vogler, will show us how to use the hero's journey to improve our creative writing. (Zoom)

April 6, 2024



PUTTING THE FUN BACK INTO WRITING

Kirsten Casey is a California Poet in the Schools, creative writing teacher, and the current Nevada County Poet Laureate. She wants you to enjoy writing, even if you feel undisciplined and blocked. (Zoom)

May 4, 2024



Poet, writer, and activist, Luis Rodriguez, will share his poetry and discuss the transformative experience of writing his memoir: *Always Running, La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.* (Zoom)

June 1, 2024

COACH WOODEN AND ME



Author and award-winning columnist, Woody Woodburn, will discuss what we can learn from his memoir, *WOODEN & ME: Life Lessons from My Two-Decade Friendship with the Legendary Coach and Humanitari-*

Black Cypress Bayou Review – What Goes Around

By Elaine L. Mura, Ph.D.

CWC-SFB Vice-President and Secretary



Angela Lewis, Kimberly Scott, and Brandee Evans in BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU - Photo by Jeff Lorch

Penning by Kristen Adele Calhoun and directed by Tiffany Nichole Greene, **BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU** makes its world premiere at the Geffen Playhouse in 2024. A combination of mystery, murder, and family secrets, this play received the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. Playwright Calhoun clearly has the creds to weave this tale: “I trace my roots at least seven generations back (on both sides) to Deep East Texas. We are of red clay, big sky, an illogical hope in better days, and the audacity to bring those days to bear. I am grateful to the people of this place – like my grandparents...for showing me that all of our survival is connected. I am grateful for the communities of care they created in the midst of unthinkable horrors. I am grateful for the shout, the rocking chair, the wail, the altar call, the belly laugh, the garden, and all the tools they passed down with no name but deep power.”

For the uninitiated, Black Cypress Bayou is a 23.3 mile swamp along the Black Cypress River close to Jefferson, Texas. Over the years, it has morphed into a recreation area, but in the past it probably harbored lots of covert, clandestine, and sometimes chilling confidences and their enigmatic skeletons just waiting in the closet to be let loose on the world.

The time is August 2020 – in the heart of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic – and the place is Deep East Texas. Vernita Manifold (Kimberly Scott) has called her girls together, ostensibly for a little fishing in Black Cypress Bayou. But it seems that Mama has other plans that her daughters, LadyBird Manifold (Brandee Evans) and RaeMeka Manifold-Baler (Angela Lewis), can’t even begin to suspect. First of all, what’s that white man’s severed head doing in Vernita’s laundry basket? Especially since that white man is their hated and feared enemy – a man who has cheated and lied in order to gain power, money, and land which rightfully belongs to its African-American residents, a man whom their family has been battling for years. And who is that security guard who calls herself Taysha Hunter (Amber Chardae Robinson) and turns up at unexpected and inconvenient times? The heat of the Bayou summer evening will soon begin to sizzle.

Director Greene skillfully helms this tale of love, hate, legacy, revenge, and letting go with the able assistance of the talented all-female cast. Lawrence E. Moten’s scenic design is just about perfect for the story, laden with twisting cypress trunks and shadowy Spanish moss dangling from their branches and a dark river sluggishly flowing nearby. Not to be outdone, Mylette Nora’s costumes burst from the gloomy shadows spotlighted by Donny Jackson’s lighting and Everett Elton Bradman’s sound and music. Each element of the bayou is treated with care, lending authenticity to the ladies’ mysterious surroundings.

BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU will appeal to lovers of subtle mystery with growing suspense who question how the

past resonates in the present – all with a soupcon of the supernatural thrown in. This is a small, intimate play raising lots of big, important questions – with some humor casually tossed into the mix.

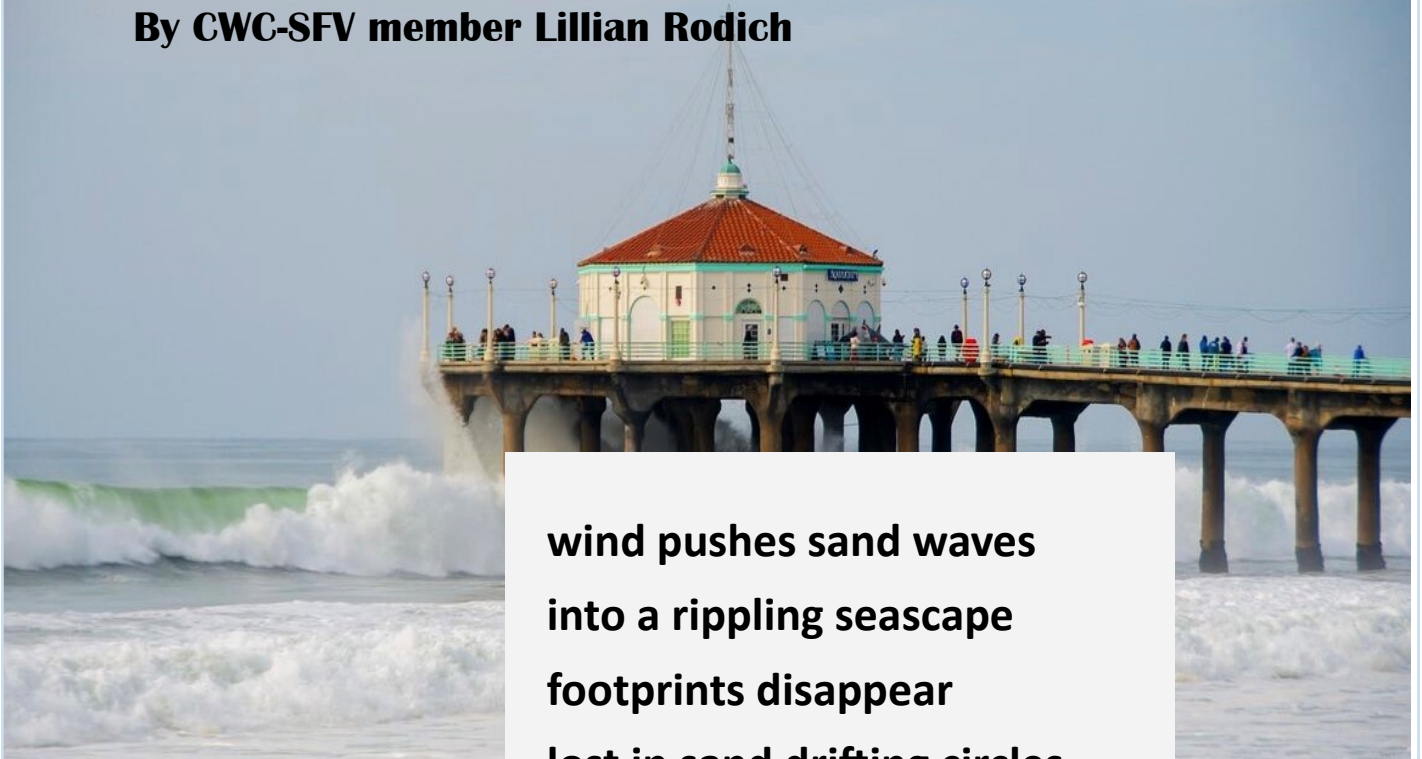
BLACK CYPRESS BAYOU runs through March 17, 2024, with performances at 8 p.m. on Fridays, at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturdays, and at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sundays. The Audrey Skirball Kenis Theater is located in the Geffen Playhouse, 10886 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Tickets range from \$39 to \$129. For information and reservations, call 310-208-2028 or go [online](#).



Brandee Evans and Angela Lewis – Photo by Jeff Lorch

MARCH WINDS

By CWC-SFV member Lillian Rodich



**wind pushes sand waves
into a rippling seascape
footprints disappear
lost in sand drifting circles**

**one barren tree bends
naked within gusting wind
strong trunk deep roots hold
tall silhouette remains free**

**ladybug quivers
lifted away in Wind's arms
small toy thrown about
clinging to fragile petals**



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**CWC-SFV CLUB INFORMATION AND
SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

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 meetings at the Saban Health and Wellness Center at the Motion Picture & Television Fund (MPTF) in Woodland Hills 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 \(cwc-sfv.org\)](#)

If you are interested in additional information about our San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club, please check out our website at: [CWC-SFV.org](#)