

# FellowScript

Inscribe Magazine • May 2023

Inspiring  
Christian Writers  
Canadawide

Why I Write Fiction  
Chiante Duncan

Reading Great Fiction  
Allison Lynn

Content Writing & Creative Expression  
Chantelle Plant

Sensations  
Ellen Duffield

What's the Real Reward?  
Colleen McCubbin

Writing Blind  
Scott Fitzsimmons

Just Write  
Terry Marple





Watercolour Painting –  
“From Destruction to Diamonds”  
MaryAnn Ward

*“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”*

*Psalms 91:1-2*



Then the Lord  
reached out his  
hand and  
touched my  
mouth and said  
to me, "I have  
put my words in  
your mouth."  
Jeremiah 1:9

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## From the Editor



My bookshelves, both virtual and physical, overflow with unread novels—not to mention those I continue to buy. (And my favourite authors keep writing more books. But, hey, I'm not complaining.)

Fiction isn't merely an escape, although that's not always a bad thing. Long ago I learned that novels could teach us lifechanging lessons—even if that's not why we picked up the book.

I didn't always feel this way, however.

Way back when I was a teenager, I was "much too spiritual" to read Christian fiction. (I'm not sure why I felt that way, considering I grew up reading Nancy Drew and other stories.) In my early 20s I discovered Janette Oke—and that changed everything.

Granted, her *Love Comes Softly* series is a far cry from the Christian fiction I now read, but it did change my mind about the genre. Thankfully, there have been trailblazers like Janette Oke over the years.

There are likely hundreds of thousands of people who, although they would never pick up a Christian nonfiction book, might be willing to read a faith-based novel with relatable characters and a compelling storyline. And they just might inadvertently learn something about the Lord and their relationship with Him—or lack thereof—in the process.

Some of our wonderful InScribe members write fiction. There are those who do so for children, some for young adults, and others for adults of all ages. Although these categories are necessary for marketing purposes, I enjoy a well-written children's book or YA novel as much as I do one written for women my age.

Many thanks to each contributor to this issue of *FellowScript*! I can't tell you how much I appreciate every one of you—contributors and subscribers alike—whether you write fiction or not, whether you read novels or not.

In the August issue, we will explore "The Many Faces of Nonfiction."

—Steph Beth Nickel



## President's Column



One of the beautiful things about InScribe is that feeling of family. When we meet online or in person, we connect on a level with fellow writers in the Kingdom that defies the time we have known each other.

I have never met Caran Jantzen, Alan Anderson, Stephanie Nickel, Ramona Furst, or a myriad of other InScribers in person, but I feel

like they are family—family I have known for a long time.

Before I stayed at Diane Ablonczy's last summer, I had never met her or talked to her before. It was a lovely time, and I find, from time to time, my mind drifts to wondering when I will stay there again. (How presumptuous!)

I have known Connie Inglis through InScribe and Writers Café for several years, and rarely a day goes by that I don't think of her. I also think often of older former members, like Elsie Montgomery, Carolyn Aarsen, and Nathan Harms.

I enjoy watching the dialogues in our Facebook group and reading the blogs and articles. They all help me understand who we are as individuals and collectively as an organized family—not like the mafia though! My favourite interactions are the cold calls I make sometimes and the instant connection some of you have with me. It's amazing how long we can talk without ever having met one another.

I miss all the writing groups I have been part of, especially Writers Café in Edmonton and my original Caronport group from eons ago with Deb Elkind, Karen Martens, Hilda Reed, and others. We laughed, wrote, and published. I even had a radio show back in those days! The way we clicked in that group led me to be published many times over that year even though I was slogging my way through a Master of Arts Degree at the time. Writing for *Decision*, *Western People*, *Companion*, and other magazines seemed easy to achieve with the support and encouragement of others.

If you are not part of a dynamic writer's group, why not reach out? We can give you some direction about starting one in your area ([caledomiaspirit@gmail.com](mailto:caledomiaspirit@gmail.com)). They are fun and you often find companions who want to present or attend an InScribe WorDShop or attend our Fall Conference with you. If nothing else, you will get some motivation to write.

I cannot encourage you enough to venture to our InScribe Fall Conference this year in the beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley. It's a valley where you will meet history, mystery, and God (<https://inscribe.org/events/fall-conference/>). Fall is the most excellent season to be there. The only rival for me would be Muskoka, ON, in autumn. I know this fall something special will come to those in attendance.

So, stretch your faith this fall and fuel up your tank, hitchhike, or fly, and you will find a family feeling you will not soon forget.

I hope to meet you in person this year and long to know how we can help you succeed with your works.

—Sheila Webster



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Nov Issue: Words of Note  
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Read the submission guidelines online at: [www.inscribe.org/fellowscript/](http://www.inscribe.org/fellowscript/)

Deadlines for submission:

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We prefer complete manuscripts emailed to: [fseditor@inscribe.org](mailto:fseditor@inscribe.org) as .doc, .docx or .rtf attachments. *FellowScript* also welcomes letters, feedback, comments, and news about your writing.

Payment is provided on publication for work that exceeds 600 words. Editors may edit or condense material accepted for publication. Payment details are available at <http://inscribe.org/fellowscript/>

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## Feature Article

# Why I Write Fiction

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– Chiante Duncan

I have never liked writing nonfiction as much as I like writing fiction. Nonfiction is too personal. It digs too close to things that may hurt me, threatening to bring them to the surface and expose them to air, where they will sting and burn like paper cuts.

I don't write to hurt. I write for joy. And for me, joy is writing a story about far off, made-up lands, characters going on grand adventures, battling it out against

with the guilt (or don't, just depends on the character!). They, in old age, contemplate the horrible way they lived their life or the unspeakable things their parents did to them when they were children. Literary fiction is the stuff of pain and suffering. Don't get me wrong. I don't think there's anything wrong with writing about pain and suffering. Everyone will tell you that until you have conflict, you don't have a story. Pain and suffering are the reality

in a story which gives "a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief." The eucatastrophe makes room for a story to reflect on something deeper than pain and suffering. For Tolkien, and for me, the ultimate purpose of stories is to point beyond the borders of the story to something more, something true.

The eucatastrophe is the most important part of stories because it confronts evil, suffering, and pain, and it conquers. In speculative fiction, this is the dawn of the day rising upon our heroes as they emerge victorious in their battle against the enemy; it is the crowning of the rightful heir upon the throne who will set all to right; it is reconciliation of feuding families through the long-awaited throwing down of weapons. I write fiction that I might include a eucatastrophe that reflects an empty tomb and the conquering of sin and death—the greatest eucatastrophe in the most important story.

**Chiante Duncan** is a Canadian writer finishing her Bachelor of Arts in History (Honours) at Briercrest College. While not working on her thesis, Chiante loves spending time with her husband, Dawson, and catering to the whims of her two cats, Little Kitty and Lump.



the forces of evil. I just want to write my stories about quests, pirates, and plots to overthrow evil kings.

Okay, so you may have guessed, I don't just write fiction. I write speculative fiction. And believe me, there's a difference.

I'm in a creative writing class right now. And I thought the title, "Creative Writing Workshop: Fiction," meant, you know, fiction. Made-up stuff. The knights and horses kind of stuff. You can imagine my dismay when I discovered that fiction is a nebulous word and depending on how you use it, has two very different meanings. We are not doing the kind of fiction I love, the kind of fiction I write, the kind of fiction that stirs my imagination and brings me joy.

No, we are reading and writing *literary* fiction. You know, the stuff that resembles nonfiction? The stuff about normal people *not* going on grand adventures in far off, made-up lands. The characters in literary fiction cheat on their spouses and deal

of the human experience, and we can't, and ought not, avoid writing about these things. In fact, if I tried, it would only make me a liar. And I don't write to be a liar.

But what I don't like about literary fiction is the lack of redemption. So few of the stories we read in preparation for writing our own literary fiction had any sort of resolution. Of course I know literary fiction is a wide genre, and there are bound to be stories that do include redemption. But as my general observation about the genre, the conflict, broken relationships between characters, pain, and suffering never have any sense of closure. There is no hope for the characters dealing with the trauma of abuse, infidelity, and death. This deficiency is significant. It lacks what I believe is the most important aspect of story. Literary fiction lacks the *eucatastrophe*. This is a word coined by J.R.R. Tolkien from his essay "On Fairy Stories." He unpacks it as the "sudden joyous turn"

*"Direct me in the  
path of your  
commands,  
for there I  
find delight."  
Psalm 118:35*

# Reading Great Fiction to Write Better Nonfiction

—Allison Lynn

Of the 50 books I read in 2022, 31 were pure fiction. The rest were a healthy mix of nonfiction, memoir, poetry, and devotionals. But it's pretty clear that fiction is my favourite! I love a pulsing thriller with just-one-more-chapter twists and turns. I love an emotional, character-driven journey that breaks my heart. I'm particularly obsessed with historical fiction, using story to teach me about Colonial America, WWII blackouts, and Chinese foot-binding. But the one thing I don't do with fiction? Write it!

I write memoir, articles, songs, devotionals, but never fiction. (And yes, for these purposes, I'm including songs, plays, and poetry as nonfiction. Allow me some creative license!)

I don't write fiction, but let me tell you this: obsessively reading fiction makes me a better nonfiction writer.

## Dialogue Feeds Songwriting

Great dialogue has a rhythm and reality that pulses as we read it. Great songwriting should feel the same, especially when we look at the storytelling genres of Country, Folk, and Musical Theatre. We want to hear a real voice, unique to a single character, speaking to us in such a way that drives the story forward.

## Sharp Scenes Shape Memoir

One of the greatest challenges with memoir is this: "What part of my story do I tell?" In *A Man Named Otto*, we meet Otto at the worst point in his life. We could easily have met him 20 years before this moment, but Fredrik Backman chooses this time for a reason. Each chapter shares a specifically chosen interaction. This is a great lesson for memoir writing. When do I start my story? What scenes do I choose to include? Which do I leave out?

## Historical Fiction Teaches Research

One of my favourite parts of any historical fiction is the Author's Note, our behind-the-scenes glimpse into how the author researched the novel. *The Lost Melody* by Joanna Davidson Politano is set in a



fictional Victorian asylum. One of the characters, Frederick Harford, encourages our heroine, Vivienne, to play piano for the other patients. In the Author's Note, we learn that Harford wasn't just a real person; he was actually a pioneer of music therapy! This kind of detailed research is a great lesson for our nonfiction writing. Dig beneath the surface, find the hidden gems, and weave them into articles and blog posts.

## Well-Rounded Characters Deepen Playwriting

There's a dangerous and dull brand of theatre called "talking heads," in which the playwright creates a cast of flat characters that are all talk and no action. They're essentially a structure to debate opinions. Great fiction inspires us to create fully fleshed-out characters. Give them a backstory, listen for their unique voices, and let them take you to unexpected places.

## Detailed Description Inspires Poetry

In *The Girl Who Could Breathe Under Water* by Erin Bartels, Kendra describes that glistening moment between sunset and moonrise as "Magic Time." Isn't that perfect? Her evocative details fully immersed me in that sacred moment. Great descriptive writing allows us to see, taste, and smell a fictional world. When you find a passage like this in a novel, write it on a blank page and allow it to inspire a new poem.

## Fiction Allows a Fresh Approach to Truth

Finding and defining truth is an increasingly difficult thing in our world. Fiction allows us to leave competing voices and our personal biases behind and witness truth via story and character. We experience imagination through Anne Shirley, fear through Annie Wilkes, and the fight for justice through Atticus Finch. When we experience truth through fictional settings and characters, it allows us to distill it to its essence. Then, when we approach sharing truth through our nonfiction writing, we can come to it with a fresh perspective, fewer of our own prejudices, and a broader sense of empathy.

I encourage you to fill your To Be Read List with lots of fiction. Include a variety of authors, genres, and styles. Soak it all in, and then, let it shape and broaden your own nonfiction writing!

Allison Lynn's blog, *Adventures of a Starving Artist*, is still going strong at [www.AllisonLynn.blogspot.com](http://www.AllisonLynn.blogspot.com) Allison and her husband, Gerald, form the award-winning music duo, Infinitely More. Her true stories are featured in



four 2022 volumes of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, including *The Magic of Christmas*. [www.InfinitelyMore.ca](http://www.InfinitelyMore.ca)



# The Intersection of Content Writing and Creative Expression

— Chantelle Plant

When I started my business, Chantilly Comfort Wear, I had no business knowledge or experience. From the outside, it seemed to be a perfect and seamless way to use my creative gifting in sewing and clothing design. I quickly learned how much I needed to learn!

Something that surprised me was how difficult I found content creating and writing. Writing has always been my escape—and sometimes the only way I can process and express my thoughts and feelings. I watch as the words flow out of me like a colourful song. My soul is finally able to break free from the bars I lock it behind and dance gracefully through my story, pointing out the beauty and sorrow all around me. I can feel deeply, love passionately, and think intellectually without fear of offending or boring my peers. When this process starts, I can spend all night writing pages and pages of poetry, essays on theology, and short stories. There are no word limits and no thought to which words will create the experience I'm hoping for.

I was quick to discover that writing creatively and writing content for a business are two very different skills. For the past three years, I have used trial and error to figure out

how to portray my heart for my business and the impact my products can create. I do not want to be long-winded or salesy. The challenge is knowing how to show my own unique voice in a way that still makes sales. Every word needs to be strategic. My writing technique to this point had



been to simply “let the words flow,” but that doesn’t work with content writing. Additionally, each specific area of content writing has different rules. Website product descriptions need to be short and to the point—while threading in the unique flavour of your business. Just a whisper of the creator’s voice should come through. Too many descriptors and you start to lose credibility. Too few descriptors and you don’t paint enough of a picture. Which key features of the product need to be featured? What do my customers care about? For my products, I’ve chosen to highlight the soft feel of my clothing and the

longevity and versatility that come from the high quality of the material and design. The experience that I hope shines through is freedom, that sigh of relief when you put on clothing that just *feels* good. I’ve chosen this because that’s where my products shine, but also, it’s what my customers

and I value.

It’s important that both our customers’ and our personal values are considered when designing products. The intersection of the two is what creates a product that the creator can stand behind and be passionate about—and a product that meets a need so it can continue to make enough sales to keep the business running. For social media posts, the opportunity for creative writing is greater. Even that has been a huge learning curve for me. I have poured out my heart on posts and thought there was a good balance between sharing my passion and sales but then watched that post completely

flop. Other times, just a simple “Hey look at this new thing I’m testing out!” got a better response. It’s never consistent. But that’s the beauty of learning: it’s a beautiful mess. Enjoying the journey is necessary in order to persevere through both the triumphs and the mistakes.

If creative writing lets my soul dance to the music of my life, content writing is a dancer on a music box. There is still beautiful music, but the dancer is twirling in a tight circle, dancing to a song strategically chosen for it. Both are beautiful and both are skills that need refining and growth. Most important, though, is that both are dancing.

## Chantelle Plant

runs her business out of Saskatchewan, Canada, while she homeschools her four beautiful children. You can find her business at [www.chantilly-comfortwear.com](http://www.chantilly-comfortwear.com) Chantelle loves animals, being in nature, writing, sewing, baking, creating, and spending quality time with her family and friends.



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## Feature Article

# Sensations

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— Ellen Duffield

Mango and lemon silk wafting in long tresses from bamboo poles... The scent of jasmine and marigold...

Richly embroidered with gold and silver threads, the delicate silk slid through my fingers as I tried again and again to gather and tuck it in place. Finally, I pulled the tasseled bell pull and a tiny woman with gently graying hair at her temples helped me dress with deft and delicate movements.

Outside the pastel beams of the setting sun stroked the brilliant colours of the tents, blending them with the now emblazoned horizon. Men in white cottons lit thousands of tealights along pathways. Every pond and fountain sparkled with floating candles. Flower petals strewn casually on the grass captured the purples of the sun in their cupped hands while bees made their final tour of the garden before retiring.

It was magical.

The bracelets on my wrists and ankles felt cool and jingled as I walked. The rings on every finger and toe made me laugh. At home I rarely wore jewelry. Here, I was alive with it.

This was what my “urban tired,” fast-paced life was lacking, beauty that fed my senses and my soul.

I chose a lime from the fruit table, shunning everything sweet and familiar in favour of that which would startle. The juice was refreshing and tart, poignant. Filling my scarf with papaya, star fruit, and limes and sprinkling them with flower petals, I made my way to the waterfall. Submerged lights reflected up through churning waters at the base of the cascading fountain, and white moths circled above them.

I sat on the straw mat, feeling the rough texture of it through my light clothing. My breathing slowed. Yet, I sat upright

and alert, taller than I ever had been before.

Sometime later, tea arrived on a bamboo platter with rice paper napkins and a fine china cup. I drank it very hot, delighting in the heat of it rushing through me. How long had it been since I had truly felt? What processes—perpetual or infrequent—had driven me this away? Or had it merely been left behind like so many other childlike things? I felt delight, deep,



powerful delight—and wonder. How long had it been since I had been in awe?

The music in the distance blended with that of the chimes hidden in the trees. I tried to separate the sounds and count the chimes, but they seemed infinite. Was anything truly infinite? I sipped more tea and breathed in deeply. Where had I come from? Where was I going? I allowed these questions, lurking beneath the surface for months, to come fully out now. They did not frighten me.

How could I hold onto mystery in the midst of the mundane? How could the rest of my life's journey reflect the beauty of this retreat?

Later, I chose the boat closest to the dock because it was draped in white. The pole splashed through the shallow water and pushed against the muddy bottom. Even-

tually, I got the hang of sliding it noiselessly into the water so as not to disturb the surface or startle the fish. This forced me to move ever more slowly, something I had not intentionally done in years. Each pole stroke was a conscious decision to do life differently, to find strength in fragile things, to peek into tiny wonders, and to gaze boldly at life's mysteries. Eventually, the boat stopped in the shallows of the opposite bank. I stepped out into the cool

water and climbed up on the grassy knoll. Suspended between two willowy trees was a hammock. I reached into my bag and pulled out my plumed pen and journal...

**Ellen Duffield** is the Coordinator of the Paul Magnus Centre for Leadership Studies and Adjunct Professor at Briercrest Seminary, as well as a mother and grandmother. Reading and writing are her favourite hobbies. In fact, she admits to planning trips around out of the way bookstores. Her most recent writing



experiment is a novel set in a seaside village, a place she created so we could all go there.



# What's Your Real Reward? Award-Winning Fiction from a Publisher's Perspective

— Colleen McCubbin

InScribe President of *FellowScript* and Acquisitions Editor, Sheila Webster, asked me to write an article about award-winning fiction from a publisher's perspective. I've researched, interviewed, drafted, outlined, and then written at least 10 other things. Why couldn't I land this thing?

Perhaps it's comforting to hear that the publisher has trouble finishing her own writing. We all need help. I called a friend. The last thing I wrote was a "Dear Author" letter inspired by a group coaching replay. The letter format is a good fit. I had a couple of specific authors in mind as I wrote. It was an overflow of love.

Perhaps that's why this article wasn't solidifying. I couldn't "see" my audience, my avatar if you will. I don't really have an avatar. I see the authors who are working with Siretona: Connie, Nicola, Charity, Robert, and Travis, who all joined Siretona in 2020 and have learned along with us when we were beginning to figure out full-time publishing.

Two of that original group did well in The Word Awards 2022. Connie Inglis and Robert Stermscheg entered their adult novels, and it was an exciting day when we learned their books had been shortlisted along with Fred Ash's children's book. Three of our authors on the list! What an honour! Two of them went on to win in their categories, a double honour. The Word Awards is not a popularity contest. Their comprehensive scoring system helps the judges to be as objective as possible in evaluating the quality of writing and design. They also require book entries

to achieve a minimum score in order to be shortlisted. You don't automatically get a first, second, or third. If only one entry was good enough, that's the only one that wins, and even then, the objective score might only earn an Honourable Mention. There is integrity in the "Finalist" and "Winner" seals that authors can place on their books. Other awards will have different systems and standards, fees and prizes. Even if an author's book doesn't place in a contest, simply entering is an act of courage. In contests like The Word Awards, judges send the authors their reports, providing valuable feedback for future writing.

Winning and being shortlisted for awards also boosts an author's credibility when approaching media, booksellers, and readers. Contest publicity may increase a title's visibility. None of this automatically leads to more readers and book sales, but it can be leveraged for that!

Speaking of readers, they may be the most important prize of all. Marcia Laycock is one of our authors. I first became aware of her when reading *One Smooth Stone*, a novel with such a cliffhanger that I immediately wrote to Marcia about the sequel. I had to wait a few years but was not disappointed when *A Tumbled Stone* was finally released.

I didn't know that *One Smooth Stone* had won the "Best New Canadian Christian Author Award." I just knew it was riveting and left me craving more. It also led to a connection with the author who is now a treasured friend and a colleague.

Marcia credits contests with her develop-

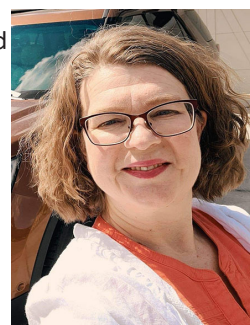
ment as a writer and author. "Without the help and encouragement from the feedback I got in those contests I believe it would have taken me a lot longer to move forward in my writing career."

Award-winning and award-worthy are two different things. While awards are an affirming achievement, they could also be distractions from the real goal, finding readers. Judges are readers, but not necessarily your audience/avatar.

Awards can be great, but avid readers are even better, people who rave about you, write reviews, eagerly anticipate your next novel, pre-order it, tell others about it, even give it away as a gift. If you have a growing following of avid fans, then you're a winner in your readers' eyes. What difference will it make to enter awards contests? Consider what is your best use of time, energy, attention, and money, and what is best for your reader. As Kristine Kathryn Rusch suggests in *Discoverability (1)*: all authors should ask, *WIBBOW?*

*Would I be better off writing?*<sup>1</sup> I love how Paul addresses his reader-listeners in Philippians 4:1, "...my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown." Do you feel this way about the readers God has entrusted to you? Yes, craft prize-worthy fiction, enter contests, and accept awards, but the real reward is the readers you entertain and inspire. Could they be your joy and crown?

**Colleen McCubbin** is founder and Chief Creative Officer of Siretona Creative, a hybrid publishing company based in Calgary, AB, with authors and editors around the world. After publishing 20+ books by other people and recording two music albums, Colleen is finally writing her own book!



1. Kristine Kathryn Rusch. *Discoverability: Help Readers Find You in Today's World of Publishing*. WMG Publishing, 2014.

## Will You Choose Hurtful or Helpful Words?

— Pat Gerbrandt

I don't care if you're sorry!

The man's anger was directed at a young girl of about five or six. It forced its way past the family group near the Walmart entrance and lodged in my heart. Anger at the abuse and a sympathetic helplessness tangled inside me.

Did that little girl hear what I heard? Did she grow up believing her father didn't care about her? Did she also hear that an apology is useless?

Careless words spewed in anger have incredible power to harm. I struggled to begin my column with this negative example. However, sometimes I need to face the ugliness, realizing how it affects others. Even though I know the difference between criticism and critique, I confess I struggle to control my tendency to correct. Setting high standards for myself and working as an editor are not excuses for being critical. Maybe it is just as well



I didn't speak to that father. I needed to learn from his sad example.

Isn't it refreshing it's not only hard words that teach us? Do we hear affirming ones? "You helped me." "I feel safe with you." "Your writing is genuine."

Which simple words have cheered you today? Were you inspired to keep on going in a difficult situation? Recognizing the power of words spurs us on to use them effectively, one-on-one, in our writing for publication, and when speaking in public.

The Bible urges us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute" (Proverbs 31:8) and to "...encourage each other and give each other strength" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).<sup>1</sup> We have amazing opportunities to use the gifts we are given.

Addressing wrongs and promoting the right requires words, used powerfully. God, grant us discretion to choose our words carefully, wisdom to benefit others, and courage always.

Pat Gerbrandt's office window affords glimpses of birds in maple and birch trees as she writes devotionals (*The Upper Room*) and her memoir. Coaching others and editing happens there too. Walking or biking, time with family and friends, and backyard or campsite bonfires provide refreshing. She enjoys music and card-making.



1. The Holy Bible, New Century Version®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

## YA Column

## Tips on Creating Fiction

— Mary Anne Focht

I have been interested in writing as a pastime for about ten years.

I've watched and read a lot of anime and manga. So, I'm sure it influences some of my thoughts. One of the projects inspired by these reads is a fiction work about high school drama.

Sheila Webster has told me about hybrid genres, and I am sure that is what I write. I usually picture the main character as myself and many emotions are real because I've felt them.

I find writing fiction easier, and I can go further with it than nonfiction. It also doesn't make me as vulnerable; I don't feel as exposed.

My tips at this point are:

1. Mix reality with your fiction.
2. Don't limit your imagination.
3. Work on a couple of different projects. It helps overcome writer's block.
4. Let yourself keep writing when it's flowing. Do the dishes tomorrow (or the next day).
5. Share your work with another person.
6. Write with a friend.
7. Don't forget research to make scenes or places more believable.
8. Read, read, read.

Keep writing; it's good for you!

Mary Anne Focht lives in rural Saskatchewan. She loves helping with babies, reading voraciously, movies, and diamond art or knitting. She is enthusiastic about travel and has achieved two of her four dream destinations.





# Devotional Partnering with God in Our Writing

— Sandi Somers

“The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me;  
his word was on my tongue.”  
2 Samuel 23:2

I was once asked, “How much of what you write depends on God? Is creativity like the inspiration of Scripture, where God breathed the words in and through the lives of the authors?”

This question is relevant, especially as our current and upcoming FellowScript issues focus on writing fiction and nonfiction.

The Lord has a message for us to give our readers. He wants us to receive His inspiration and empowerment so that we can “prepare the way for the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3), writing into the needs of those in our broken world.

So, how can we receive God’s inspiration and empowerment?

All our writing begins with a prayer for the Spirit to inspire us. I was reminded of John Milton’s prayer as he began his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*.

*Sing, Heav’nly Muse...I now  
Invoke thine aid...  
Instruct me, for Thou knowest...  
What is dark in me  
Illumine; what is low, raise and support.*

Like Milton, we can begin our writing by asking God’s Spirit to illumine our hearts and minds with His own hidden treasures. To infuse us with His wisdom, creativity, and power. Because the Spirit resides in us, He motivates and empowers us, breathing into us His ideas, concepts, and messages so that we will know how to write our stories. In this way, we become co-creators, partners with Him.

For me, the Spirit often breathes His creative ideas into my mind when I spend quality time with Him in the morning. As I read and reflect on the Scriptures and devotional readings, the Spirit illumines my mind almost immediately with flashes of insight, an idea, the outline of an article, a particular theme, a new paragraph to add to my writing project for the day... He an-



swers questions about structure, organization, Scripture, sometimes even keywords that brighten my writing. On these days, my writing flows easily.

At other times inspiration, ideas, and words don’t come so easily, and so, my writing is like hitting a wall. I need to wait longer for the Lord, continue to pray, even for days, until God’s message breaks through.

When I’ve prayed for the Lord to illumine my mind and spirit and guide my daily writing, He has prompted me to bathe all aspects of my writing in prayer. He invites me to talk with Him about the larger visions of what my writing can become, and He encourages me to dare to trust Him. Bathing my writing in prayer also involves praying for the Lord to meet the needs of my readers.

In a world broken by abuse, breakdown in families and relationships, economic hardships, health issues, fear, anxiety, and so much more, God has a unique purpose for each piece of our writing.

We who are fiction writers know that we can tell truths in a unique way, at times tucking redemption into a story like a whisper. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, “Any amount of theology can now be smuggled into people’s minds under the cover of fiction without their knowing it.”<sup>1</sup> As writers who are Jesus followers, we can pray to prepare the way of the Lord for both

believers and pre-believers. What story of redemption does God want us to include? As we partner with God, we need to write with all the skills God has given us, writing honestly and with compassion. We know that His Spirit is on us, pouring wisdom and love into our words so that our readers will experience the gentle touch of Jesus, a touch that will impact their lives both now and into eternity.

*How has the Lord encouraged you to engage more deeply with Him as you write?*

*As you prepare for your next writing session, in what ways can you bring your questions and needs to God?*

Prayer: Holy Spirit, I invite you into my writing today. I ask You for clarity on (the issues I bring to You). Illumine my heart and mind. Reveal to me what You want me to write. And may I honour and glorify You.

**Sandi Somers** writes essays and devotionals on how God reveals Himself to us in both small and strategic ways. Her current spiritual development, which leads into her writing, draws on the relationship between our dependence on the Lord and how He inspires us to deepen our message.



1. C. S. Lewis, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/84334-any-amount-of-theology-can-now-be-smuggled-into-people-s>

# Vivid Verses

## Hope

– Isabel Didriksen

Hope came  
in the form  
of a rabbit  
this morning  
Grey sky  
light snow  
dreary  
-20  
Not spring!

But God  
showed  
me hope  
in His own  
special way  
Our resident  
rabbit  
hopped across  
the snow  
No longer  
pure white  
Today  
he's more brown  
This means  
the  
snow will  
melt away  
This means

he will be  
back to his  
normal self  
for summer.  
There is hope  
Spring IS coming!

Where is the hope  
for us  
in these bleak days  
of the Covid-19 virus?  
Will we be  
our normal selves  
by summer?  
We can only hope so

But  
there  
is a  
brighter hope  
Beyond today  
God's promise  
of  
eternal life

"He is not willing that any  
should perish, but have eter-  
nal life" (John 3:16).



## Books

– Isabel Didriksen

Books!  
Books!  
Books!  
No end  
of books  
Filling shelves  
In libraries  
stores  
homes  
But one book  
is the  
most important  
The Book of Life  
Is  
your name  
recorded  
in it?  
That is  
your only hope.

Do you want your faith to be reflected in your writing? Discover these interviews that can give you a word of encouragement as a Christian writer. *Writers on Writing* is a collection of 35 interviews from writers of faith exploring where they get their ideas, what they like best about writing, and what inspires them.

In *Writers on Writing* you'll discover:

- A snapshot into the personal lives of faith writers
- What it means to be a writer with a Christian worldview
- A word of encouragement in the ministry of writing
- Deeper insights into how the writing process unfolds
- Writing advice, suggestions, and guidance



If you like writer profiles and unique accounts, you'll love this collection of interviews emphasizing the diversity and passion of Christian writers. Buy your copy today! <https://amzn.to/3TP2DFr>

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# The Power of Poetry: Mining Memories

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– Carol Thornton

Each of us has forgotten more than we can ever hope to remember. Those things we do recall may carry significance worth exploring. A memory from my childhood may have been retained because it contains a truth that can be teased out, or my younger self was confused or puzzled by something in the adult world she didn't understand. This can be valuable raw material for a poem, and I'll give you an example.

My father asked whether the following poem was true. He didn't remember this event.

I know that something like it happened. When I remembered the event, I could sense why it was important to me. I can't be sure every detail I wrote was correct, but my dad and I both recognized that the child in the poem craved her father's attention and there were times when he was too busy to notice her.

## I'm still not sure

My dad walked dreamy-eyed from chore to chore  
toiling from sun to moon.  
I walked beside him wondering where he was,  
sought phrases that might reach into his silence,  
make him talk to me.

One afternoon he joined our game of scrub  
in the shadowed cool  
behind the grey machine shed.

He pitched with easy grace  
relaxed and present in the game.  
I stood at bat. The ball came hard.  
I checked my swing.  
The ball smashed into my face  
numb at first  
until heat spread, stinging, throbbing.  
I felt lips thicken, press against my teeth.

He loped toward me  
game forgotten as he held me  
brushed the hair out of my eyes

gingerly touched my cheek.  
"I didn't mean to."  
The game was over.

I'm still not sure  
if I didn't step into the ball.

Do you have a memory from childhood that might be worth exploring in a poem? In that memory, what are the colours and textures? What do you hear or smell? What emotions does it evoke? What do you feel in your body? Here are some ways you can look for those memories:

- Lie down somewhere comfortable and close your eyes. In your mind, walk slowly through a place you knew very well as a child, noticing as much as you can.
- Sit with the memory of a difficult experience from your childhood.
- Ask a sibling for a favourite memory of you.
- Remember or imagine being alongside your mother or father and helping them work on a task.
- Listen to a song you loved.
- Think about your favourite food, game, toy, or pet.
- Did you ever stand up for a friend who was bullied or have someone come to your aid?
- And, of course, you can look through old photographs.

Once you've come up with a memory to explore, write down as many details as you can remember. Think about what the memory is trying to tell you, what the theme of your poem should be. You might

do some freewriting to see what your subconscious reveals.

When you're ready, begin to construct a poem. Choose the most apt nouns and verbs to bring the poem to life. Are there appropriate metaphors or other poetic devices you can use?

This week in my writing group, we spoke



about making stories more realistic by giving our characters an experience we've lived through or putting them into a place familiar to us. This issue focuses on fiction. You might like to mine the imagined childhood of one of your characters and write a poem from his/her point of view.

**Carol Thornton** is co-author of *Writer on Fire: Poetry Prompts to Ignite the Poet Within*. She studied Creative Writing at the Universities of Oxford and East Anglia (MA). Her work has been published and won awards in Canada, US, UK, Ireland, and Romania and long-listed for the CBC Poetry Prize.





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# Writing Blind

– Scott Fitzsimmons

I never considered myself a writer. My mom was the writer, whether she wrote articles for our local magazine, was an editor, or talked about writing a book. She was the writer in our family! Like a real writer, she read quite a bit, but I did not. Writing small things, on occasion, I did enjoy. I remember some of the stories that I wrote in elementary school, and essays became almost fun when I understood the process. I never did journal, but I did write letters that I never intended to send. As an adult, I wrote an article or two for different publications, but I was a radio guy. Speaking was my preferred choice of communication.

I looked back at some of my writing and found I had done a decent job. It still wasn't my favourite thing, and I often found it hard to get started. I also didn't understand the process of writing a book—probably because I had not read many. So, I didn't truly grasp how things should be put together.

**Technology** is something I love, as is finding better and easier ways to do things, especially after I lost my sight due to a recent battle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Many of the technologies I had used previously were easier to adapt to because of my experience with them. While going through my three-year “adventure” with leukemia, someone suggested I write a book. I loved the idea! It was always in the back of my mind, but the treatment for and recovery from cancer meant I was busy, and thoughts can easily get scattered or put on the back burner.

Every time I started to write something, there was another obstacle that would interfere, and I would have to overcome. Once things started to settle down, I wanted to get my thoughts out so I wouldn't forget. Since I had been working with Google Drive previously, it just made sense to go there and start. I was thinking a little too highly of myself and my abilities when I went to try to use the software after losing my sight. There were many different features on my phone and

laptop that were not as easily accessible because I couldn't see.

I started working briefly with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), and they coached me on things I could use to help me with my laptop and my phone. We purchased a program called Talking Typing Teacher, which helped me learn how to use the computer and know where the keys are.

This was not hard because I had gone through typing training in high school and afterward to try and use the home row on a QWERTY keyboard. I had done it on my own in my early 20s and attempted to type properly for three consecutive months. I did not enjoy it and never really got the hang of it. I was, however, fast at hunting and pecking. I had learned where the keys were, which made those three fingers work moderately fast.

When I attempted to use my phone to type, I was able to find the letters I needed quite easily. I learned how to use voiceover on the phone, which wasn't easy. There were definite changes that I had to get used to, and now, anyone who uses my phone when it is on voiceover mode will need to shut it off for it to work for them. It is quite different.

Using the computer was not an easy task, however, because, while I knew where the keys were, I didn't know how to access the programs I needed to start writing. I had my family open the file for me, but typing wasn't easy because I couldn't tell when I had made a mistake. When a laptop has a program called Narrator that is equivalent to voiceover mode on a phone and voice mode on a MacBook, it is simpler. However, I find the Windows version is not as user-friendly, and there isn't much support on YouTube.

That made me go back to my phone, but the problem was the speed of getting the information out. When I was told about dictation, things sped up exponentially.



The only problem with dictation is that you are at the mercy of the program that is listening to your voice and transcribing your thoughts. At first, this was a challenge that I was going to take on and learn how to edit. I found some videos on YouTube that instructed me about how to do these things, but they were never as simple as the instructor claimed. When everything goes right, I'm quite happy! When I'm wrong, it's a jumbled mess. I know that, with more experience, each aspect will be less challenging. I have plenty of time since I can no longer work. I started the first chapter of my book by using dictation and attempted to edit it on the fly. That was a disaster. Double checking what I had written and trying to make it right was not happening the way it should. I do know how to navigate the document, but editing what needed changing—not so much. I didn't want to lose these memories or ideas when I was busy trying to fix a sentence in the middle of a paragraph.

I find that focusing on the editing part really distracts me from keeping my thoughts clear. Once I start to dictate, and just accept what comes out, I can get my ideas down and ask for help afterwards. Google has some features in Google Docs that make editing much easier. Someone can scan a document quickly to keep the project moving. In my experience, that way you get all your information out, and once the first edit is complete, it is more understandable. As a radio personality, I learned to con-

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## Writing Blind Cont.

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vey my thoughts through speech quite effortlessly. So, I just kept going, and before I knew it, I had written over 20 chapters in six months!

I knew someone would have to go through these to refine what was transcribed. A writer recently told me that the first step isn't making everything happen at once but just to get your ideas out and piece it together after. Without intending to, that's what I stumbled on by trial and error. I was able to do more than I originally anticipated.

A secondary worry was having enough content to fill a book. False worry! I have more than enough and will be trimming down much of the content that isn't necessary to finish the project.

I still struggle with editing through voiceover mode. Maybe I need to be more patient with the process. I do, however, know that this has become an enjoyable learning process for me. I'm getting more done than I anticipated, and it's something I look forward to each day. I block out time and make sure I keep my thoughts moving so they don't get left behind.

As I am new to being visually impaired, I'm still learning when, and when not to, ask for help. It is a common thing to not ask for help because I don't want to burden someone. However, people often want to help when they can. I struggle with when to ask my family members if they can help, but find, when I do, they are generally very happy to help.

Through patience, I have realized that writing is not as hard as I thought it would be, and even though I sometimes get chances to use my voice on the radio, I would now call myself a writer. There are obstacles that make it more difficult to finish the process, but the thoughts and ideas and creativity are still there. It's just a different way of making it happen.

If you are someone who wants to write but are overwhelmed at the thought of making it happen when you can't see, here are some tips from my fledgling

experience:

1. Spend a good amount of time thinking about what you want to do. For me, much of this is based on my cancer battle and the loss of my sight after a stem cell transplant. I knew that my past had a lot to do with my attitude at the time. So, it gave me a lot of content to work with. Whatever you want to do, know what you are focusing on.  
I used to do public speaking—and still do on occasion. I always spent most of the prep time processing my thoughts in my mind. That was very helpful when my vision left because I had already begun the process of piecing together what I was going to say. It ended up being better, more precise, and I also found I was more dynamic as a speaker when I wasn't concentrating on my notes. I feel it's very similar when putting a book together. Find your focus. Then put your thoughts down. Some people prefer recording their thoughts, but I really enjoy putting my thoughts on this digital paper and having my phone read it back to me.
2. Don't let your pride get in the way. I know this is something that is part of the process of losing your sight. So, you may have already learned a certain level of humility when it comes to asking for help. But remember this: chances are someone is going to have to go through your dictated thoughts so you can move forward to the next step of your writing project. Find someone who can help you refine the writing process and fix the errors that your dictation program put in.
3. Be patient. This is not as cliché as it sounds. When I'm not patient, when I get excited about something but don't keep up that level of enthu-

siasm, I tend to lose track and lose interest. As I have gone through this journey, I've learned I can only do so much. My family members have busy lives, but getting their help for 10-15 minutes here or there can make the process continue.

4. Find the right program for you. I jump back and forth between programs because they all have strengths and weaknesses. Google is my preferred, and they have fixed things that made it not as easy to use. Find something you are comfortable with and practice. Also realize you do not know everything, and you will not be able to do everything.
5. Lastly, enjoy it! You won't go far if you let the little things frustrate you. I know that for a fact! I find when I can laugh at my mistakes, it makes it so much easier for me to keep my head clear when trying to get my thoughts out. Frustration also makes it harder for people to want to help you.

You'll get frustrated at obstacles. It's a fact. But don't take those frustrations out on those around you. Remind yourself that this can be something that brings you great joy and an even greater sense of value. Find ways to laugh at your mistakes and learn from the obstacles. Persevere and you will be able to put out a project of which you are super proud! Happy writing!

**Scott Fitzsimmons** is a radio professional who spent over 20 years in the broadcast industry. After losing his sight, he traded his microphone for a pen. Scott lives in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, with his beautiful wife, Sharlene, and three beautiful kids: Sadie, Jackson, and Owen.



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# The Gift of Fiction

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—Tracy Krauss

I love curling up with a good book. Time melts away as I'm transported to another realm. That's the power of fiction.

Stories draw us in and have the power to change lives, often in a way that mere facts cannot. They spark our imagination and help us connect with the world, bringing different perspectives and exposing us to places that we can't necessarily experience on our own.

As a Christian writer, I see huge opportunities to minister to others using fiction. Jesus told stories to get His message across. So, I know I'm in good company. People often respond to fiction on an emotional level without even realizing it. Truth wrapped in a story is less threatening and more easily received. It also allows the writer to address relevant topics without being too heavy-handed or judgemental. The story does the convicting.



Of course, not everyone agrees. Some people genuinely prefer nonfiction to fiction. They choose magazines over novels and documentaries over movies, and there's nothing wrong with that. What I take issue with is when fiction is presented as a waste of time.

A story doesn't always have to have a moral buried within. There doesn't always have to be a practical side. As human beings, sometimes we just need to be entertained. God placed us on this earth to enjoy life. Happiness is a gift. "That each of them may eat and drink,

and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastes 3:13).

Since we were created in the image of God, fiction is an expression of God's infinite creativity placed within us. Like any artistic pursuit, fiction has value in that it is an expression of who we are as humans. This makes me happy!

**Tracy Krauss** has more than 30 novels, books, and stage plays in print. Her work strikes a chord with those looking for thought-provoking romance with a twist of suspense and a touch of humour. It's "fiction on the edge without crossing the line."

She currently lives in Northern BC.



## *Vivid Verses* Invocation

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—Terry Ruth Eissfeldt

i  
mere clay  
empty  
and without  
mine own light  
entreat Heaven  
to come  
illuminate

I  
True God  
Complete  
Purest Light  
gave it all  
for you  
to know Me  
Yielded clay  
Supple flesh  
Open heart  
Spirit-led

i  
but flesh  
corrupt  
and earth bound  
invite Spirit  
to breathe  
on dry bones

I  
made man  
Righteous  
Empyrean  
left Spirit  
to guide  
and comfort  
Yielded clay  
Supple flesh  
Open heart  
Spirit-led



# Why I Write Children's Fiction

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— MaryAnn Ward

Only one reason adequately defines my propensity to write fiction—compulsion. Though ideas swarm through my thoughts like schools of fish, bringing those ideas to reality feels more like snagging a shark by its dorsal fin than writing.

Other amazing fiction writers lure me into their fictitious nets with grace and ease, holding me captive with the ebb and flow of their creative currents. They pull me ever deeper into the worlds of words they manufacture with seamless ease.

The intense work of character development, historical research, and plot planning all feel so overwhelming. But God persistently nudges and then pushes me into the swirling ocean of fiction.

Perhaps a children's book would be a tad easier, I falsely reason.

Snatching one small guppy-sized idea from the idea pool, I dive in. Even after two years of character development and graphite sketches of each character, I procrastinate.

Then compulsion rushes with tsunami force, obliterating all my excuses. These familiar words resonate with me, "For when I preach the gospel (or write), I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach (or write). Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel (or write)! If I preach (or write) voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me" (1 Corinthians 9:16-17).

Maybe some day I will reach the voluntary stage. But for now, God compels me. So, I plunge in without raft or oar, tackling the plot. The tight restrictions of page and word count of children's picture books force a fast pace. No

children clarity in a world void of anything clear or resolved. Within the sanctuary of fiction, children unlock the unchanging principles of faith. They develop skills to solve problems and bring order to lives adrift with havoc.



room for elaborate settings and backdrops here. I'm allowed only a few short sentences to introduce characters and establish the conflict.

With every turn of the page, the writer and illustrator play like dolphins, leading the reader into stormy seas. Adult fiction allows the reader to ponder ultimate outcomes and thirst for sequels. They prefer to be set adrift to create their own imaginary endings. Young children, however, demand clear resolution and a satisfying ending to their story. The author must deliver! Perhaps the compulsion to write fiction for children plunges deeper than I first anticipated. Perhaps it rises from the desire to offer chil-

Through fiction, young readers envision themselves as heroes and heroines—bold and empowered. Within the pages, young hearts dare to believe good still overcomes evil and love rises above hate. Fiction offers the renewal of hope and dreams.

The compulsion to write fiction also flows along predictable ocean currents of truth. Drawing all those who open the pages to believe and trust God as He is. Through innocent messages and imagery, the simplicity of design captivates hearts, bringing them closer to God. Children's fiction disarms the wary once wounded by religious pretense. When examined more closely, every fishy idea swarming in

the pool of children's fiction engages not only a child's concerns but also my own. In writing children's fiction, one engages the universal territory of fear and struggle shared by children and adults alike. And so it must. The best children's fiction flows from the conscious and subconscious grappling of themes we all contend with. The scope changes with age but not the universality. So, why do I write children's fiction? Out of compulsion? Yes! But there is more. I know that God has released every idea fish swarming through my thoughts. He knows just how far each little idea will travel and the impact it will create in lives young and old.

**MaryAnn Ward** resides in Regina, SK, with her husband of over 50 years. Condo living and "retirement" have released this wife, mother, and grandmother to the full-time pursuit of author, illustrator, publisher, and prophetic artist. Bible teaching, speaking, and pastoral ministry round out her free time. Find more at [maward.ca](http://maward.ca)



## Feature Article

# Just Write

—Tracy Marple

I opened a box of my mother's things. It was full of different pieces of my childhood, the things that moms don't throw away. A single tiny shoe. A tattered hair ribbon. A picture I coloured in Grade 3. A Kindergarten report card that said, "Tracy doesn't talk to anyone." Another from Grade 2 that said, "Tracy talks too much."

In the midst, I found a discoloured ruled notebook, the kind with double-ruled lines, one inch deep to give room for small hands practicing the imperfect lines and curves that help put thoughts to words.

I opened it and remembered. I remembered just writing. I remembered the freedom, not worrying about getting it right. The only instruction was to write whatever was inside me. It made me wonder when I had stopped.

We all do it, I suspect. We worry about what others will think. We don't want it to suck. We wait until we get it exactly right. Until the mood is right. Until the house is tidy and the space just so. Until the next best *New York Times* bestseller idea is at our fingertips.

For 1,000 reasons, we don't write. We intend to. We mean to. Just as soon as we have time. Just as soon as... You fill in the bank. I read the date in my journal: March 1, 1977. I was 6.

*I do not wot to go to bad wont to wot to wot T.V. you cant sack me and tan dan cam him and dad gov me a likcn*

*I am wacg T.V. and wend I worse wocg. T.V. my com cold me to go to school.*

*The barbee is prty adn hos yelo bar lik me*

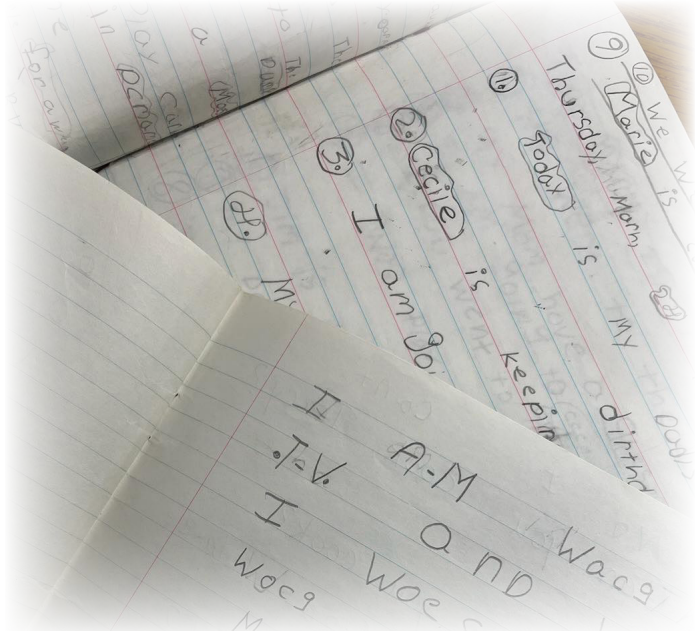
I can only guess at some of what I was saying. Some, I can make sense of. Some, your guess is as good as mine.

There were no red marks pointing out the errors. No comments. There were no marks at all from the teacher. I thought about this and realized her silence, lack of comment, was profoundly significant. These quietly championed my effort, proclaiming that whatever was there, whatever I had written, no matter how flawed, imperfect, unimportant to the rest of the world, mattered because it was from inside me.

And it did not require her correction or approval.

It took me weeks to finally write the beginnings of these thoughts

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."  
Colossians 3:23*



after being invited to put pen to paper. Somewhere along the way, I had forgotten. I started caring too much what others thought and less about what I loved. I needed a reminder, permission to divest myself of the fear of failure, and instead, embrace the freedom to write again.

Fear of failure holds us hostage, don't you think?

My invitation is to set yourself free. Give yourself permission. Don't stress about getting it right. Don't worry if your spelling sucks or your grammar is barbaric. There are programs and people for that. Don't make another excuse.

Just write!

Write what's on your heart, what's in your soul. What do you think? What do you feel? What will happen to your insides if you don't write? Don't worry if it never gets published or sees the light of day or is seen by another soul. Do this for you.

You'll see your words in all their imperfection and beauty, and something inside you will dance and sing. Whatever is there, whatever you have written, no matter how flawed, imperfect, unimportant to the rest of the world, matters because it came from you.

*Writers' Prompt: Set a timer for two minutes and write whatever comes to mind. You just never know what might happen.*

**Tracy Marple** is a writer who lives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She works as a seniors' care coordinator, is a mom of eight fully functional humans and gramma to ten gorgeous littles. Tracy's life goals are to read all the books, drink all the coffee, and tell all the stories that need to be told.





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# A Note from a Coach: Created to Create

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– Charity Mongrain

**O**nce upon a time. Four of the most popular words used to draw us into fantastical fictitious tales.

**In the beginning.** Three precious words draw us into the most important account that empowers writers to write anything, including creative fiction. A few paragraphs into the event, the scribe captures the words of the Creator, our God, discussing His plans.

“Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26).

This verse always brings a smile to my face. God, the very One who spoke the world into being, who made the stars in the sky and breathed life into man, made us in His image. We are meant to be creative.



Professor K was an unlikely character to pound this idea deep into my soul. This high school English teacher quickly became my favourite and the most impactful person during the last two years of high school. He had been a drama teacher in years past. So, his classes were never boring. Professor K challenged us to be responsible for our education, not to be spoon-fed, but to read for ourselves. That

is how he got the nickname “Professor.” He made us feel so mature. The K was due to his name, Kaganich, being just too difficult to say or spell.

A self-professed atheist, he may have known more about the Bible than a few of my Sunday school teachers. He taught us that all stories could be boiled down to one: the epic story of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden.

He told us that we should tackle every story with that in mind. It was at the heart of every tale. When he would dissect a book, he would have us look for the redemption thread in it.

In those two years, my faith actually grew in English class more than I felt it did in church.

Professor K helped shape my ability to focus while reading and writing fiction. To

see the story within the story. So, are there stories that don't fit Professor K's box? Every reader must answer that for themselves.

Writers can use words to build worlds that don't exist, describe people who aren't people, animals who talk, trees that walk, water that dances, and rain that burns. We can break the laws of physics and make gravity do odd things. We can FLY!

Our imaginations set the limits on what we can write. Growing our imaginations is one of the keys to great fiction.

Where to begin? Start with a prompt. There are so many online. I'll give you one now.

“I didn't see it coming.”

Go from there. You can start the story with that line or use it somewhere in the first paragraph. You can tell the story from any person's point of view. Just sit down and start writing, no editing. Set the timer for 10 minutes and GO!

Perhaps you will be surprised by what your pen leaves on the page. Or you may enjoy it as a thought exercise.

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I want to leave you with one last thought: be discerning in what you offer your readers. There are so many fiction genres that a writer can choose from. Here is a verse that I don't ponder enough, but it is a good reminder for all of us when making decisions.

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Charity Mongrain** wears many hats, literally and figuratively. A writer, certified consultant, and leadership coach living in Edmonton, Alberta, she serves as the Lead Author Coach for Siretona Creative, a Canadian Boutique Publisher with an international reach. She is also a pastor and the Executive Director of Changed for Eternity Ministries.





## Feature Article

# The Maze

— Ellen Duffield

**M**y rented Fiat crunched over limestone chips as I rounded the corner and saw the castle through the trees. Smaller than I had expected. Infinitely smaller. Had I traveled halfway around the world for this?

No one met me at the door and there was a faint musty smell as I turned the rusty key in the old lock. Eighteen-foot high, floor-to-ceiling windows on five of the six walls were draped with rich floral tapestries. A dozen pillows smothered the head of the gigantic bed. I threw them off immediately and hid the stuffed peacock in the only closet I could find.



The ensuite bath had a tub on giant bronze lion paws. Tiny windows cranked open to reveal clay roofing tiles on a Mary Poppins style roof. Dare I climb out? Grasping the narrow windowsill with one foot on the tub, I stretched the other up just as a very official knock sounded on my door. I hesitated... Stepping down, I opened the door to find a dinner menu and bouquet of magnificent greenery—every manner of bough and branch, the aroma of forests after a rain, and blue spruce, prickly hemlock, and holly, interspersed with boxwood and white pine. Positioning it on the mantle, I allowed the pine boughs to overflow. The window! Hovering on one foot, I squeezed out the tiny window onto the tiled roof. The tower stretched up another

20 feet. Catwalks ran off in three directions. I walked bent over, eyeing the rusty fittings and fragile struts. Quite a distance from the castle was a long hedge that must have been the outer wall of the maze. I sat down.

The stiffness in my joints and the darkness in the air suggested I had sat for an hour or more. I felt my way along, terrified of a misplaced step.

Dinner was already in front of the fireplace, which was no longer warm. No matter. It tasted delicious. Perhaps anything would have. The flames in the fireplace had burned to embers. I watched

them for several peaceful moments. Tomorrow I would tackle the maze for the first time.

A marshy area made it impossible to get a sense of its size, and there was more than one entrance. Each with eight-foot high, green walls and soft grass underfoot. I would master it the first day. I'd find the trick. I started by memorizing corners, keeping track by the sun overhead. Every few minutes, I retraced my steps to ensure I could get out. Cautious.

I did not conquer the maze that day, or the next day, or the next. It became a metaphor for the frustrations that had brought me. Late at night, I sat on the roof and schemed. But time was almost up.

Early one morning, I headed for the maze.

This would be my last attempt. Frankly, I'd lost the zeal for victory. Under the spreading branches of a massive maple, I half-heartedly plotted a strategy then looked up into the canopy. A flash of insight. I needed a fresh perspective. Having never been a tree climber, I was clumsy at best. It was foolish. What if I fell? I climbed on. Clutching for handholds in the deeply textured bark, I often cut my fingers. No matter. I climbed. Reaching the highest point I could trust my weight to, I carefully nestled into a nook and strained to see the maze. When the wind blew the branches, I could see different bits and piece them together.

An amazing sight: two hundred feet across and a beautiful network of passageways and dead ends. Try as I might, I could not chart a course that took me through it. Each of the entrances was plagued with the same problem: they led in circles. Frustrated, I turned to climb down when I noticed someone had been here before me. Carved in the branch were these words: "The faster we run in circles, the sooner we come back to that which we sought to flee."

Now that was worth a fresh page in my journal. I scrambled down the tree...

**Ellen Duffield** is the Coordinator of the Paul Magnus Centre for Leadership Studies and Adjunct Professor at Briercrest Seminary, as well as a mother and grandmother. Reading and writing are her favourite hobbies. In fact, she admits to planning trips around out of the way bookstores. Her most recent writing experiment is a novel set in a seaside village, a place she created so we could all go there.



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# Bringing Fictional Stories to Life

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– Kathleen Friesen

Fiction is literature created from the imagination, not presented as fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation. Types of literature in the fiction genre include the novel, short story, and novella. The word is from the Latin *fictiō*, “the act of making, fashioning, or molding.”

From my earliest memories, I have loved stories. When my older brother came home from grade one with *Fun with Dick and Jane* books, I insisted he read them to me and then attempted to pick out words. Somehow, I had to make those stories mine.

My mother enjoyed sharing that, when I finally got to attend school, I came home and declared I wasn’t going back. I’d been

there a whole day and hadn’t learned to read! (Patience never was my strong suit.) Fast forward many years, and I still love stories. Reading or writing, fictional stories help me relax, escape, and work out problems. While self-help books have their place, fictional stories slide in under our pride and reveal what we may not be ready to acknowledge. “Fiction reveals truth that reality obscures.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Our best example for using fiction is our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus used parables, simple stories, to portray truth in understandable terms. Using everyday objects and familiar activities, He taught heavenly concepts, like the parable of the sower and the seed. His audience was familiar with all things agricultural. So, He touched them where they lived.

As writers, we try to do the same. No matter what kind of story we write, we use a combination of our own experiences, research, and creativity to bring our fictional story to life—and to touch readers’ lives for the glory of God.

**Kathleen Friesen** writes contemporary stories of faith in which characters overcome tough trials and deep heartaches. Her desire is for her readers to see themselves in the characters of her stories and to realize that Jesus Christ is the true hero.



As Christ’s ambassadors, we know how important it is to present our best to the watching world. Not to be fake but to grow in Him and be on our best behaviour. To “be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

The most credible believers aren’t those with outwardly rigid, rule-following lives. Or even the ones who wear their heart for God on their proverbial sleeves with lots of Christian language.

The most impactful believers are those whose compassion, helpfulness, and integrity are deep and real. Those who, when they mess up spiritually, are gutted by failing their God. They don’t fear

His rejection; they long to please Him. They’re concerned their misstep has reflected poorly on Him. Instead of covering up, they let others see the

sincerity of their repentance. Then they get back up and accept the Lord’s forgiveness, relying on Him to help them do better next time.

In the same way, Christians who write fiction must choose between crafting idealized role models who never sin and allowing “naturally imperfect” protagonists into the pages of their work. Whether we’re writing Christian characters or mainstream “good guys,” we want them to set good examples, to be strong, wise... perfect.

Let’s remember our characters are works in progress, as are we. They need room in the story and beyond to grow and develop.

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## Naturally Imperfect

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– Janet Sketchley

Our readers can walk with them to glean hope or even a spiritual principle or truth. Get to know your characters. Let their actions and reactions show their strength—and their vulnerabilities. Don’t stick a flaw in at random. Make it relevant to the plot and/or theme: a lie they believe, a wound to heal, a habit to break.

Let them make mistakes, learn, and grow. Allow them to be real—naturally imperfect.

**Janet Sketchley** is an Atlantic Canadian writer who likes her fiction with a splash of mystery or adventure and a dash of Christianity.

Why leave faith out of our stories if it’s part of our lives? You can find Janet online at [janetsketchley.ca](http://janetsketchley.ca)





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# 4 Rules for Rewarding Author-Editor Relationships

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— Nina Faye Morey

You've probably heard some scary stories from writing friends and acquaintances about their experiences with freelance editors. Consequently, you're dreading the thought of working with an editor on your own manuscript. On the flip side, editors often regale their friends with ghastly stories about working with freelance writers. Let me offer you some rules of engagement to help ensure your experience with the editorial process is a rewarding one.

## Rule 1: Be Reliable

Be a conscientious and dependable writer to work with. If you book a tentative date with an editor before you've completed the final draft of your manuscript, do your utmost to meet that deadline. This also applies to any deadlines for revisions along the way. Yours is not the only manuscript your editor has scheduled in their calendar. If you intrude on another author's time, the quality of both your books will likely suffer as the editor will be unable to give either manuscript their undivided attention. Also, the scheduled completion dates may need to be pushed back. So, you've not only messed up their schedule but also decreased their expected income for that period. Being unreliable is not the best way to begin your author-editor relationship.

## Rule 2: Be Respectful

A fruitful writer-editor relationship is built on mutual trust and respect. Every writing project will require at least some changes, if not several, before it's ready for publication. An editor's goal is not to change your voice or the vision of your book, but to help you perfect them. The outcome will depend on you sending the editor your best draft and then being open to their feedback. If you find yourself feeling resentful or infuriated during the editorial process,

give yourself time to cool off before you make any caustic comments to your editor in an email, text, or phone call. Use this additional time to give more careful consideration to your editor's suggestions or questions before responding. Then you won't find yourself regretting vitriolic remarks that you'll need to apologize for later.

reminder of the due date in your calendar. If you know your payment will be late or you need to set up a payment schedule, let them know right away.

I hope these four rules of engagement help you develop a good rapport and a solid, longstanding relationship with your editor. You'll be grateful when you want to hire them again that you made the extra effort.



## Rule 3: Be Reasonable

Editors like to play by the rules. But if you have good reasons for deviating from the style guidelines or grammar rules, don't hesitate to disclose them. A good editor will be open to your questions and listen to your explanations. They'll be willing to bend the rules a bit as long as you're convincing. While grammar and style rules exist for a reason, they can occasionally stifle a writer's voice. As a creative person, it's okay to be a rebel and bend or break the rules from time to time. It's your editor's job, however, to let you know when you've taken these liberties too far.

## Rule 4: Be Responsive

If you're happy with the end result, don't forget to thank your editor. Also, remember to acknowledge them in your book. When you receive your editor's invoice, either pay it immediately or schedule a

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This is the fourth and final column in my Editor Phobia series. I hope you've found this series interesting and informative, and I wish you success in fulfilling your dream of publishing your book.

**Nina Faye Morey** is a writer, editor, and speaker who divides her time between Saskatoon and Edmonton. Her writing has appeared in InScribe anthologies and numerous journals. She's a former *FellowScript* editor-in-chief and Barnabas Award recipient. Currently, Nina is *FellowScript's* Columns Editor and Managing Editor of InScribe's upcoming anthology, *Creativity & Chaos*. <https://writerinkwell.weebly.com>





# The Freedom & Fascination of Creating Fiction: A Life of Words

– Graeme Connell

I love words. They have been my life throughout 70 years of school, career, and post career. For 43 of those years, I mostly wrote the words of others or for others. That's just the life of a newspaper journalist, editor, and public relations writer. True, there are distractions, like witty community columns or fun speeches for company spokespersons. Post career, though, I changed. Did I have a voice, and more importantly, did I have a voice as a writer who happens to be a Christian? An unschooled, ordinary individual who did not discover the Bible until he was 34 and went on to teach adult Sunday school and midweek Bible studies. I turned my hand to fiction and the exhilarating enjoyment an author gets in creating characters who live normal lives. Characters who might attend church, pray, talk about Jesus, share their frustrations with God, or challenge God about His existence. Everyday questions. No theology involved. No parade of scripture. Fiction allows the imagination to flourish and, in my world as a writer who happens to be a Christian, allows me to get the idea across that there might be something to this fellow Jesus and a life of faith. As an author, I encourage readers to see what belief looks like by showing them how my characters express their faith. Fiction, including contemporary Christian fiction, allows characters the freedom to have ordinary, everyday lives. They can

gnash their teeth, get wild and raucous, jump for joy, give a hug, or cry with utter sadness or complete frustration. In other words, they show real human emotions. I love to read books in which I can disappear into the fictional world of story. There, I learn so much about people and places, habits and pursuits. As storytellers, we create characters to encourage and embolden our readers, no matter what their day might hold. We can create romance or mystery, adventure or action. Our imaginations can provide escape from a sour day or peace to a satisfying day. Just like their characters, fiction writers sometimes have to dig themselves out of deep and difficult holes. I often wake in the middle of the night with my characters telling me what needs to be done. I listen to my idle thoughts through the day. I hear Jesus directing me when I'm looking out the window, lying on the floor, doing exercises... The story might come when I'm out walking or pushing a shopping cart around the supermarket. My wife is an artist and I love watching her work. She creates amazing pictures with her coloured pencils, watercolors, and acrylic paints. Each painting is a work of fiction. She makes the story live on her paper or canvas, whether it is a flower, a couple of seagulls, cows in a field, or a piece of shell or tumbleweed washed

up on the beach. It is all God's creation, produced to entertain, inform, and give pleasure to the viewer.

I see the fiction in art exploding from how inspiration and imagination are expressed through colours and lines on a sheet of paper. In writing, there is freedom and fascination in watching characters leap from our keyboard onto the page. Plausible backstories, creative solutions, intense emotions, tragic events. The fictional winds blow in many directions. The writer harnesses these to express the love of God through story.

As authors, we have an amazing opportunity to show readers the reality of living a contemporary Christian life by showing them the choices characters make through simple unadorned stories (i.e.: works of fiction).

**Graeme Connell** is currently writing his fifth novel. His careers began in New Zealand and moved on to Antarctica, Fiji Islands, Canada, and the United States. His novels have been set in Antarctica/New Zealand, Calgary, the Alberta foothills, and Alberta's east-central prairie. He lives in Calgary, Alberta. Email: [graemec@telus.net](mailto:graemec@telus.net).



*"... Lord, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words  
of eternal life."  
John 6:68*

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# Call for Submissions – 2024 InScribe Anthology

## The Benefits of Contributing to an Anthology

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InScribe is publishing a new anthology titled *Creativity and Chaos: Artistic Endeavours for Trying Times* to be released in the fall of 2024. The theme of this anthology is based on Ecclesiastes 3:1, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” This anthology will feature a collection of work focused on how creators use their artistic endeavours to cope with difficult and chaotic times in their lives. The goal is to provide inspiration, hope, and encouragement to the reader.

This is InScribe’s fifth anthology. Our previous anthologies include *InScribed: 30 Years of Inspiring Writers* (2010), *7 Essential Habits of Christian Writers* (2015), *Christmas: Stories & More* (2017), and *Easter: Stories & More* (2021).

Here are some of the comments readers and reviewers have made about our previous anthologies:

“For fifteen years I’ve been honoured to be associated with and recommend this wonderful fellowship of writers by the name of InScribe. This anthology is proof that their talent pool is wide and deep. In it you will find stories that inspire, comfort, and entertain. You will read of faith and family, joy and hope, laughter and sorrow. –Phil Callaway, bestselling author and speaker, *InScribe* book endorsement

“A beautiful collection of essays, stories, and poems by the writers of the InScribe Christian Writers Fellowship. The pieces are widely varied on themes and approach, but all aimed to provide inspiration, encouragement, and practical support.” –Allison Lyn, *7 Essential Habits of Christian Writers*, Amazon review

“A book that makes a difference not just at Christmas but all year round.” –Murray Pura, award-winning author, *Christmas: Stories & More* book endorsement

“Powerful stories of the writers’ lives help me see how I, too, can know Life and overcoming Power in the midst of challenging current events.” –Judith Rempel, *Easter Stories & More*, Amazon review

### Benefits of Contributing to an Anthology

- **Increased Name Recognition.** Your name may not appear on the cover, but it will in the table of contents, your byline, and your author bio. You’ll add a publication credit to your author bio, resume, and bibliography; your Amazon Author Page; and marketing/promotional websites and materials. Being published beside more established contributors who bring along their own audience will increase your visibility and raise your author profile with readers, editors, and publishers.
- **Introduction to New Audiences.** Whether you’re a writer,

poet, artist, or photographer, contributing to an anthology offers you an opportunity to experiment with an entirely new style, subject, or genre, introducing you to new audiences.

- **A Team of Professionals to Assist You.** You’ll be supported throughout the creative process by our team of professional authors, editors, artists, and photographers who’ll work with you to enhance and promote your artistic endeavour(s). Collaborating with other InScribe members strengthens your connections and broadens your network of creative friends and potential mentors.
- **Free Publishing and Marketing of Your Work.** Just let your creative juices flow, focusing on your writing, drawing, painting, photography, etc. InScribe takes care of all the editing, formatting, designing, layout, proofing, printing, publishing, distribution, marketing, and promotion. Although you won’t receive reimbursement, you’ll also not be responsible for any publication costs.
- **Increased Readership and Amazon Rankings.** Amazon’s rankings are based on how often you’re published and how many sales you’ve generated. If you want your books to be seen in Amazon searches, contributing to anthologies is a way to gain more readers and achieve higher rankings.

As a successful contributor, you won’t receive reimbursement or royalties for your work, but you will receive a publishing credit and two complimentary copies of the anthology. You’ll also be able to preorder as many copies as you wish at a reduced price, plus shipping and handling, to sell at speaking engagements, book signings, book festivals, writers conferences, book stores, and gift shops; as well as through your website and social media; and more.

**Submissions Deadline:** August 31, 2023

**Submission Guidelines:** <https://inscribe.org/publications-2/inscribepressbooks/anthology2024/call-for-submissions-to-new-2021-anthology/>

**Email Submission(s) to:** [press@inscribe.org](mailto:press@inscribe.org)





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# Finding a Place for Me

– Starla Klinger

Back in the early 2000s, we didn't have cell phones or Facebook to communicate. We only had a landline my sister and I fought over. This meant we wrote letters and cards to keep in touch with those far away. We also wrote notes to give to friends at school the next day.

There was a church my friend attended a few blocks from our house, and one night she invited me to youth group. I had no idea what to expect and felt church was not a place for a girl like me. I didn't know the language and I hadn't read the book. I didn't have fancy clothes, nice hair, or pretty nails, unless you count using whiteout as nail polish. What were these churchgoers going to think of me?

To my surprise, the place was full of youth just like me. The pastor and his wife treated us like people deserving of the gospel and not just some inner-city write-offs. Gifting me my own Bible was a way in which they'd impact my life with written words. They'd become the people to lead me to Jesus and a better life. Not an easier one, as I'd still face challenges, but one that gave me peace in the face of difficulties and hope for tomorrow. This faith would lead me to Bible college, to my wonderful husband, to jobs I never thought possible as a child who grew up on the poverty line, and to becoming a mother. In high school, I decided to take a creative writing class offered by one of my favourite English teachers from the previous year. She gave us an assignment to write a series of letters of our choosing. Enjoying the history lessons in another class, I decided to write a young WWII soldier's letters home. Taking the time to make the letters look old and worn, I presented my project to the class as the mother of a soldier who'd never returned. It felt like bringing a story to life. From that moment, writing became a great joy of mine.

With a mix of poems, stories, blogs, and articles, I find my writing style to be eclectic. Seems fitting if you know my musical, book, movie, and wardrobe tastes. I'm currently writing a book I hope will become a series about our journey as a military family. As a believer, my faith plays a central role in all aspects of my life: marriage, parenthood, volunteer work, writing, and all the things that make me...me.

I'm currently working in communications for our national denomination. Writing faith articles, interviewing movers within the church, and documenting people's stories are aspects of my job I feel honoured to be part of. If my writing can touch one



heart, make one person laugh or feel related to, then I consider that a win.

The Bible is the most powerful book ever written. It documents history, forms the foundation of nations, shows us the character of God, contains a beautiful variety of literary styles, and lays out the lifegiving message of salvation. The written Word has lasted thousands of years, even when the world has tried to ignore it. Why? John 1:1 gives us the answer: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The words we say, hear, and think shape us. What is in our hearts and minds will direct what we write or if we write. What are we filling ourselves with? Everything from the birthday card we send to the book we are working on can leave a lasting impression on our reader. It is my prayer that we, as writers, will invite the Lord to inspire our words and guide us as we create.

As a military wife and mom in her thirties, **Starla Klinger** is at an ever-changing stage of life. She works in communications, is the steward of a little library, and a certified organizational expert, and enjoys painting and nature. God, family, joy, and community are important to her and often the focus of her writing.





## An Intercessor's Vision-Prayer

---

— Lois Trotter

Within each man's being  
Is a vault  
A spacious place  
To be filled.  
Within some  
Lies only emptiness  
Vast chambers  
Waiting for treasure  
Vacant.  
Man's cries echo across

The halls and walls  
Piercing the silence  
Yet in vain  
Does he utter.  
I stood before the Lord  
And He showed me a place  
Where once there was a void  
But because of His grace  
The cries are now stilled  
Nor echoes pierce the room

But songs of life flow freely  
It's a temple, not a tomb.  
So send me Lord  
To stand between  
Yourself and man  
To intervene  
To sing aloud the melodies  
From a heart full of treasure  
To pierce the pall of man's haunted halls  
With the love of God beyond measure.

## To a Wild Rose

---

— Nina Faye Morey

Rising from its wintry heath  
Each rude-bound bud bursts forth  
Freed from fused restraining sheath  
Released by spring-stressed earth.  
These tender newborn buds crowned  
In search of sun and rain  
In briar patch that's thorn-bound  
Oblivious to pain.  
Blossoms of wild rose flowers  
Infused with sweet scent's trace  
Embraced by thorny bowers  
Inscaped with perfect grace.  
Soon cold rain wrung from cloud rack  
Poured o'er their prickly plot

Swelling waves of roily brack  
Spread round the barren lot.  
Flayed and frayed by world-wound winds  
Precious petals strewn  
These wild wind-ravaged rosebuds  
Brought to wrack and ruin.

Previously Published in *The Prairie Journal*  
of *Canadian Literature*, Issue Number 47



## A Mouse

---

— Lorraine Boerchers

"A mouse, a mouse,  
A mouse in the house,"  
Loud voices proclaim!  
Fat and slow,  
But where did he go?  
Under my bed,  
Waiting to nibble my toes?

A mouse in the house  
Is something to dread.  
Scurrying from room to room,  
Through the ductwork  
And behind the baseboards he goes.  
Chasing the sounds of his feet,  
"He is in the ceiling,"

"No, behind this wall,"  
Until "SNAP,"  
He is caught!  
No more through the house  
Will he roam! Good Vibes

---

# Pray for Ukraine

— Mary Folkerts

I pray for the girl  
who had to miss rehearsal  
her dance shoes  
waiting by the  
front door.  
Now she crouches  
underground with neighbours  
smelling of supper  
listening for sounds  
of demolishing dreams,  
sanctuaries,  
and hope.

God of all comfort  
I pray for the mom  
who wonders if she  
left the stove on  
in her hurry  
scrambling to gather  
papers and photos  
filling backpacks for her  
children,  
rushing them past  
tattered homes that yesterday  
stood proud  
to a train  
headed away from the  
chaos.

Oh God, our ever present  
Help  
protect the student who

put aside his  
research paper to  
defend his city,  
his future,  
his home  
unprepared,  
unrehearsed.  
Wanting nothing more than  
what anyone desires,  
peace.

Commander of Almighty  
Armies hear our  
desperate plea  
bring evil men with  
evil plans  
to their knees  
Remove their hearts  
of stone, bring reason  
to mind.  
Shield the innocent  
from terror  
uninvited.

Holy Spirit,  
when words fail us  
bring our groans before the  
throne of God  
intercede for our  
brokenness.  
You promise to hear us  
when we humble

ourselves before You  
and pray.

Why must we always come to the end of  
ourselves  
before we pound on  
your door  
pleading for your attention  
as though you haven't  
noticed us before,  
as though you  
haven't been calling  
to us?  
Be merciful  
God of all  
mercies.

Is this, Holy God,  
what You use  
to shake us out of our  
western ease  
to bring us to our knees  
before you  
to find our need of You  
again  
our own strength and plans  
depleted  
to fill the dusty pews  
once more?  
When we come to the  
end of ourselves there  
is You.



*"Look to the Lord  
and his strength;  
seek his face always."  
1Chronicles 16:11*

# 2023 Fall Contest

## Submission Deadline: Midnight August 15, 2023

– Sheila Webster

- Open to all current members of InScribe Christian Writers' Fellowship.
- Offered each year in conjunction with InScribe's Fall Conference.
- Members are not required to attend Fall Conference to enter the contest.
- Submit only new, original, unpublished work.
- No simultaneous submissions accepted (i.e., do not send same manuscript



to another contest, EXCEPT in the case of submitting same manuscript for the 2024 InScribe Anthology).

- Enter as many times and in as many

categories as you wish, but do not enter the same piece in more than one category.

- Entries must strictly adhere to the guidelines stipulated for each category.
- The required Entrance Fee of \$30 per entry (includes professional critique) must accompany each submission
- Entrance Fee is waived for those 18 years of age and under.
- Cash Prizes and Award Certificates are presented to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each category at the Judge's discretion, and Award Certificates may be presented to Honourable Mentions in some/all categories.
- Judges are chosen from professional writers.
- Entries are evaluated according to a scoring rubric. Rubrics will be posted on the website.
- A minimum number of entries will be required to keep each category open.
- Acceptance of a prize grants First North American Serial Rights to InScribe.



### Categories are:

**Poetry** – any style, up to 40 lines

**Devotional** – maximum 400 words

**Fiction for Children** – maximum 1000 words

**Adult Fiction** – maximum 1500 words

**Personal Essay** – maximum 1500 words

2023 Contest Details, Guidelines, Entry

Form will be posted June 5, 2023

<https://inscribe.org/>

*"Have I not commanded you?  
Be strong and courageous. Do not  
be afraid; do not be discouraged,  
for the Lord your God will be  
with you wherever you go."  
Joshua 1:9*





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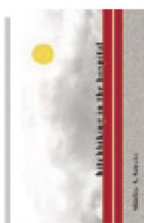


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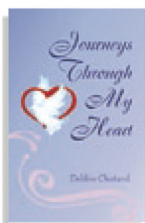


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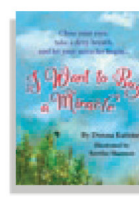


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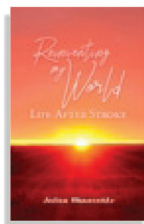


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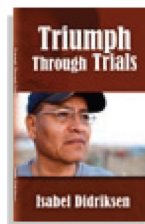


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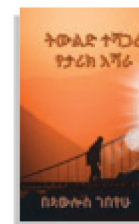


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