

OCTOBER 2024

# Fresh Ink



INLAND EMPIRE  
CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once upon a time, our branch hosted annual retreats with keynote speakers, lunch and writing workshops. However, there are many writing workshops in our area, and our board is without a dedicated Program Chair. Booking monthly speakers is taking our time! As an alternative, we encourage participation in the annual Culturama workshop at Mt. SAC Community College in Walnut. Over a decade, the event has morphed from a quaint writer's weekend to include visual arts and this year--cosplay! Some classes are on-line, some are on zoom. All are free. Dates are as follows:

Friday, October 25th, Saturday October 26.

Friday, November 1, Saturday, November 2.


To find the schedule, and to register for free on Eventbrite, google "11th Annual Culturama."



Some members miss the camaraderie of our small retreat and driving to Walnut is too long for others. Accordingly, the board is exploring ways to gather at different locations. Until then, for the rest of 2024, we have two more 4th Saturday presentations and we have a holiday party at my house on December 8th, 12:00 to 3:00 pm.

'Tis start of the busy season. Let us all continue to make space for our writing projects!

Write on,  
Judy Kohnen

 Mt. San Antonio College  
1100 North Grand Avenue  
Walnut, CA 91789

# EDITOR'S NOTE

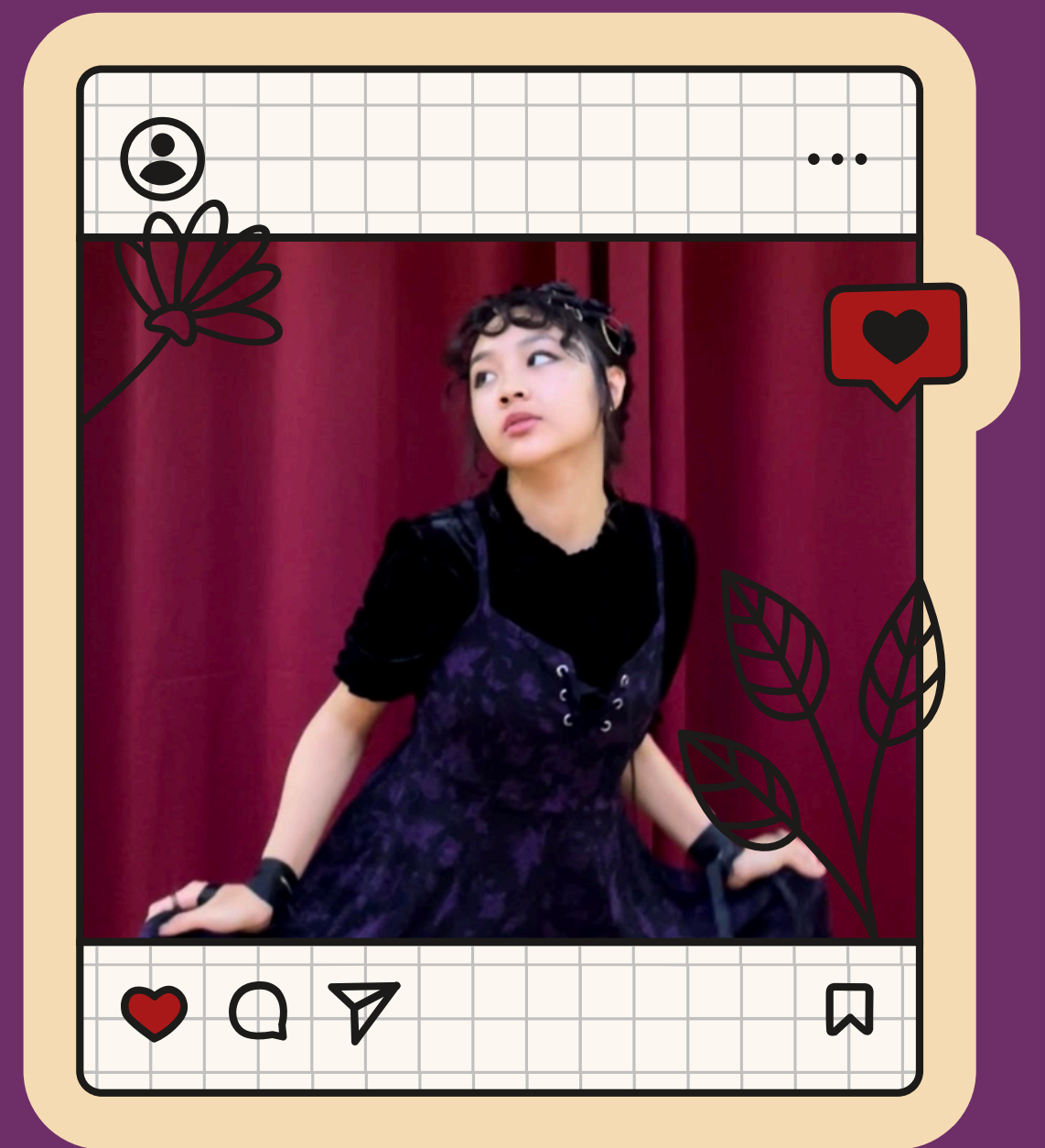
This issue was edited using  
*Canva*

Anything Under the Moon

Greetings reader,

Autumn is upon us at last! Even though SoCal's triple-digit degree weather doesn't quite set the mood...

This month I experimented with darker design elements to suit spooky season. I'm delighted to have received more submissions (one prose, six poems), thank you! And for those who have yet to contribute to Fresh Ink, I encourage you to write what you want to read. During my three months as editor, I haven't rejected a single submission. Keep that in mind.



@abigail\_handojo

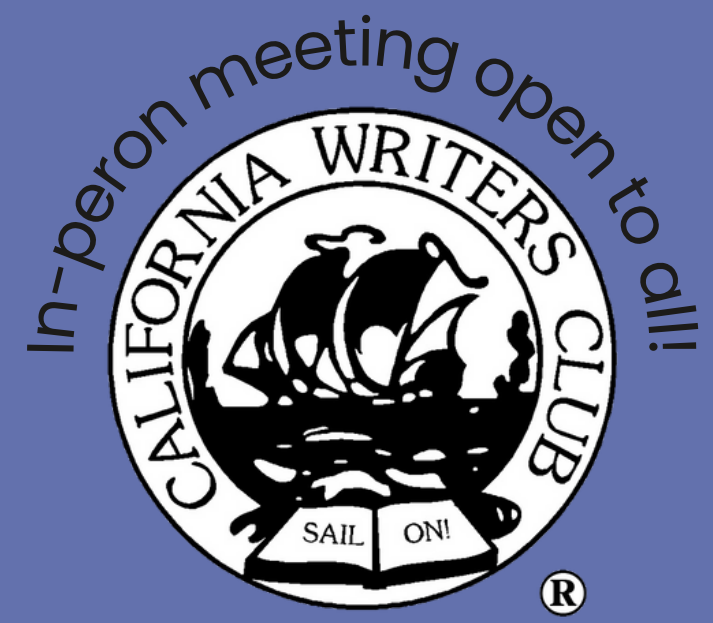


The theme for October is Missing. Missing as in lost? Missing as in lacking? Missing... something you've never had? Someone you loved? Someone you were? Be sure to read until the end to see how our members interpreted this theme. If there's any month for contemplating philosophical questions, it's this one.

Bubble bubble toil and trouble,  
Abigail Elina Handojo



Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 10:00 am  
 Ovitt Family Library  
 215 E C St, Ontario, CA 91764



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

HOW TO GET PUBLISHED ON AMAZON is a three-part book series that I developed from what I learned through the writing and self-publishing process of a dozen books. Volume 1 is a series of writing exercises that introduces the beginning writer to the craft of writing. Volume 2 focuses on self-publishing and marketing your manuscript and will be the focus of our discussion. Volume 3 defines various literary principles and provides examples from my literature.

In this presentation, I will discuss what I did on the road to writing and publishing my first book, my second book, my third book, and so forth. I will share a broad spectrum of information, including publishing, audiobooks, advertising, marketing your book, marketing yourself, press releases, and conclude with several examples from my literature. I will share my tools of the trade in an effort to help you develop your own strategy for getting your manuscript published.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John J. McBrearty, "Colonel Mack," is a retired Lt. Colonel with over 32 years of military service. He is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the Valley Forge Military Academy and College (AA), Temple University (BA), and American Public University (MA). John served as an Assistant Professor of Military Science at both California State University and Claremont McKenna College. To date, John J. McBrearty has twelve published books to his credit. Upon his retirement, John was recognized for excellence by President Barack Obama.



Email: [johnwriteshistory@gmail.com](mailto:johnwriteshistory@gmail.com)

Website: [www.johnwriteshistory.com](http://www.johnwriteshistory.com)

Amazon Author's Page: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/John-J.-McBrearty/author/B0BNFDG3VF?>

OCTOBER 2024 MEETING

WHAT'S COMING UP

# AUGUST 2024 MEETING PROGRAM REVIEW

## **Critique Workshop by Constance Cassinelli**

### **Program Review September 14, 2024 by Elisabeth Anghel**

The Critique Workshop took place on Sept. 14 at Ovitt Library under the leadership of Constance Cassinelli.

Judy Kohnen, the club's president, opened the meeting by introducing Constance, a long time member of the club and the leader of Critique group. She is the author of two books, *Cayenne and the Diablo Kid* and *Caro Nicola, Promise Kept*.

The floor in the meeting room was organized with five tables, each seating a number of people and one moderator. There were 17 participants total.

Constance gave clear and detailed instructions about what materials to bring, the format of the story on paper, what kind of observations to make about the materials presented for critique, how to deliver the critique observations to the writer, general etiquette during the meeting.

She recommended bringing copies of the material that one wants to be critiqued. It could be a fragment from a larger piece or a short story standing on its own not to exceed 4 pages or 1600 words. The material should be typed on Times New Roman font, 12 pts size, two lines spacing, one inch margin to allow for notes on the sides, no indent on the first paragraph on the page, use italics when writing inner-thoughts.

The activities started with a critique demonstration of a piece submitted by Constance and evaluated by Judy. After the demonstration, every table group was ready to start their own exercise. Every participant will give a copy of their writing to people at the table. They will take turns reading their story and listen to comments. Here are recommendations for review: punctuation, grammar, questions about the content, nouns, verbs, order of events in the story. Use the margins to make written comments and return the paper work to the writer.

The reading of a piece, observations and related conversation should be in congenial terms of interest and understanding. The output of the process should be considerate, gentle, positive, encouraging and constructive.

Constance recommends that should be six people at a table for maximum efficiency. Sometimes there are two tables during the regular Critique Workshops at our club. The workshop is scheduled the second Saturday every month at 10 a.m. at a designated location separate from Ovitt Library. Call or email Constance in advance if attending the workshop. This way she will know how to organize the floor and the participants will know how many copies to bring for critique. Everyone is invited to bring their own best work and enjoy an atmosphere of creativity and encouragement. The meetings are open to the public.

Constance Cassinelli email address: [cassinelli100@hotmail.com](mailto:cassinelli100@hotmail.com)

# MEMBER *Spotlight*

## KELLY LEWIS

Meet your webmaster!



Judy: Kelly, thanks for sharing your experiences with us today!  
When did you first start attending the California Writers Club?

Kelly: Oh, my gosh, it was 2010!  
I can't believe it's been that long.  
I stumbled upon the group by chance while  
browsing in a bookstore, and I'm so glad I did.

Judy: That's amazing!  
What drew you to the group initially?  
What was your primary objective in joining?

Kelly: Honestly, I had this desire to write,  
but I was clueless where to begin.  
The CWC offered guidance and support,  
which was exactly what I needed.

Judy: And did you achieve your goal?

Kelly: Yes, I did! But what's kept me coming back  
all these years is the community's continuous  
education, inspiration, and energy.

Judy: That's terrific!

Besides attending meetings,  
what other roles have you taken on within the club?

Kelly: I've helped with recruiting  
new members and presenters, event planning.  
This year I took on a new role as Webmaster,  
and prior roles included Secretary and Publicist.

Judy: Wow, you've been quite involved!

What advice would you give to fellow writers?

Kelly: My top writing tip is to write now and edit later.  
Also, don't give up – stay with it, even on the bad days.

And when receiving critiques,  
accept them gracefully and use what's helpful.

Judy: Excellent advice!

Are you using any new writing tools or taking classes currently?

Kelly: Not at the moment, but I'm  
always open to exploring new resources.

Judy: What's your current writing project?

Anything exciting in the works?

Kelly: Actually, I've been thinking too much  
and not writing enough!  
But I'm eager to start a creative memoir  
documenting my mother's life experiences.

Judy: That sounds fascinating!

We look forward to seeing your progress, Kelly.

Thanks again for sharing your journey with us!





# benefits of IECWC

## MEMBERSHIP



- ALL AGES are welcome!
- Entrance into monthly meetings
  - (in-person or remotely through Zoom)
- Access to monthly speakers on topics related to the craft
- Exposure & practice by submitting to our monthly literary newsletter, FRESH INK
- Network with other club members
  - (various levels of expertise, mentors)
- Participation in Critique Groups
  - (in-person or remotely through Zoom)
- Your OWN PAGE on our Club website at no additional cost
  - Highlight your bio, photo, website, social media, and published books
- Opportunities to serve on the board or on committees of our branch
- Camaraderie among other writers at all levels, all genres, and all ages!
- Partake, volunteer, and/or help plan our Spring and Fall Conferences which are provided at little (or sometimes no) cost to our members
- Annual opportunity to showcase your work at Open Mic events.
- Annual opportunity, each January, to attend/appear on our Panel of Authors
  - Members who were published the year before
  - Learn/share advice on the publication process, ask/answer questions, and buy/sell your books on site
- Annual opportunity to submit, read, and assist with judging the competitive Statewide CWC Literary Review, with readership of about 2,000 members and their readers and associates
- Simultaneous Co-Membership into California Writers Club
  - Our state-level parent organization at [www.calwriters.org](http://www.calwriters.org), with additional volunteer opportunities

- Read/advertise in the Tri-Annual CWC Bulletin available online, free of charge
  - Access to news from the other CWC Branches throughout California, gaining perspective about other serious, mostly published, writers, editors, Web designers, graphics experts, etc.
- Potential for your writing to be chosen to be displayed in the Southern California Writers Showcase at [www.socalwritersshowcase.com](http://www.socalwritersshowcase.com)
- A wonderful addition to your curriculum vitae or resume!
- Access to the monthly IECWC Blind Review Team
- Utilize our FACEBOOK PAGE to get your works word out to the public interested in writing

### JOIN or RENEW at:

<https://iecwc.com/membership-meetings/>

**Active**  
**\$65**

**Supporting**  
**\$65**

**Student**  
**\$15**  
ages 8-22

**Renewal of Membership**  
**\$45**

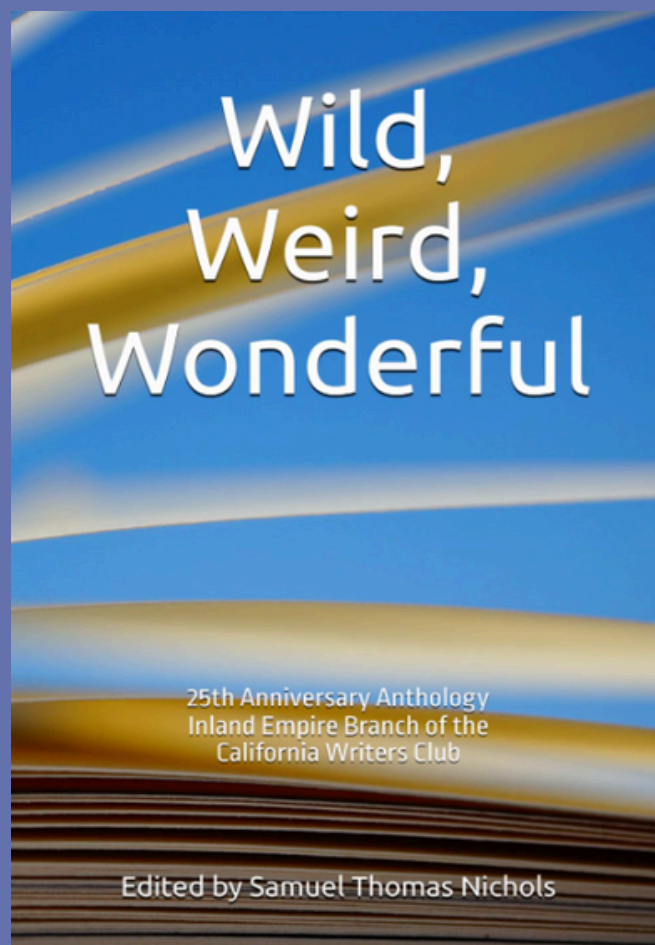
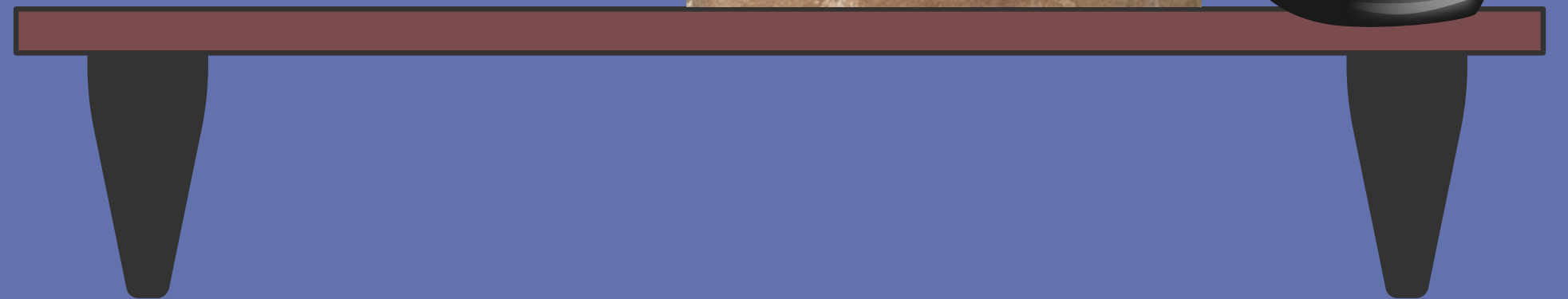
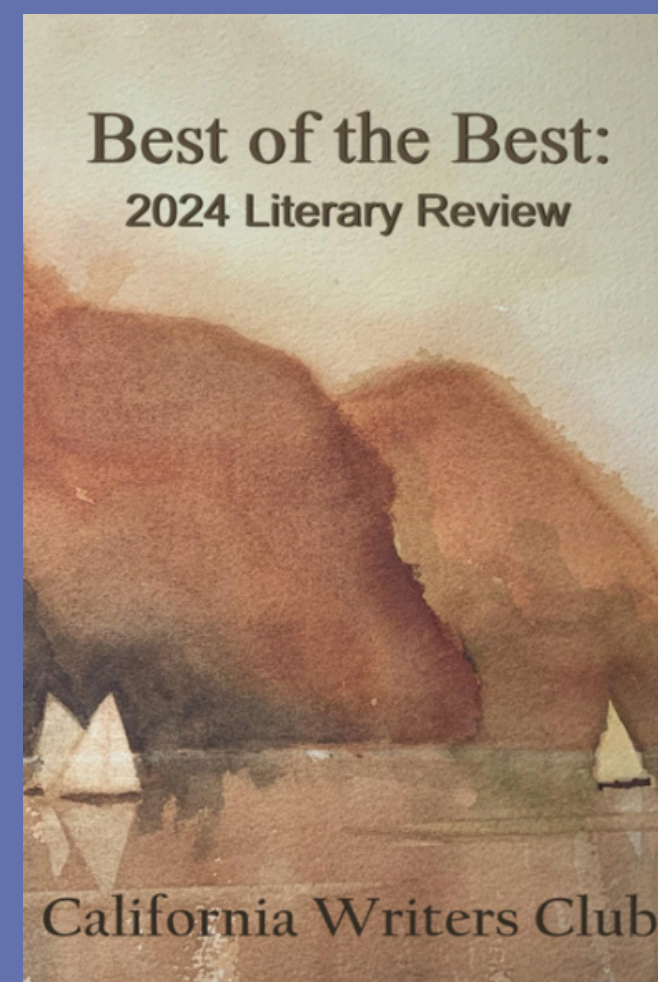
Renewal deadline September 30.  
On October 1, CWC shall drop all delinquent members from the rolls. If dropped, you must pay the new \$65 member enrollment fees.

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## CWC's Best of the Best: 2024 Literary Review

A collection of poems and stories selected from Branch publications. This 300+ page collection is on sale for **\$15.00** on Amazon. There are stories and poems from 20 of the branches.

<https://a.co/d/45iqsdm>

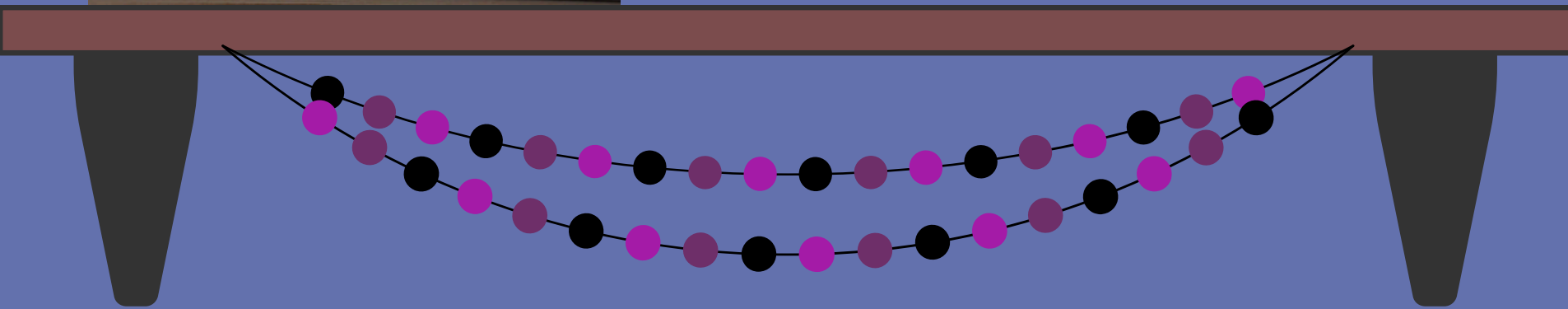


## Wild, Weird, Wonderful: 25th Anniversary Anthology Inland Empire Branch of the California Writers Club

<https://a.co/d/0SVxuPT>

This collection includes short stories, poetry, memoir, nonfiction, memoir, original drawings and photographs, and one novelette entitled *Murder in Huckleberry Heights*.

This anthology contains the varietal work of eighteen members of the Inland Empire Branch with several genres being represented.



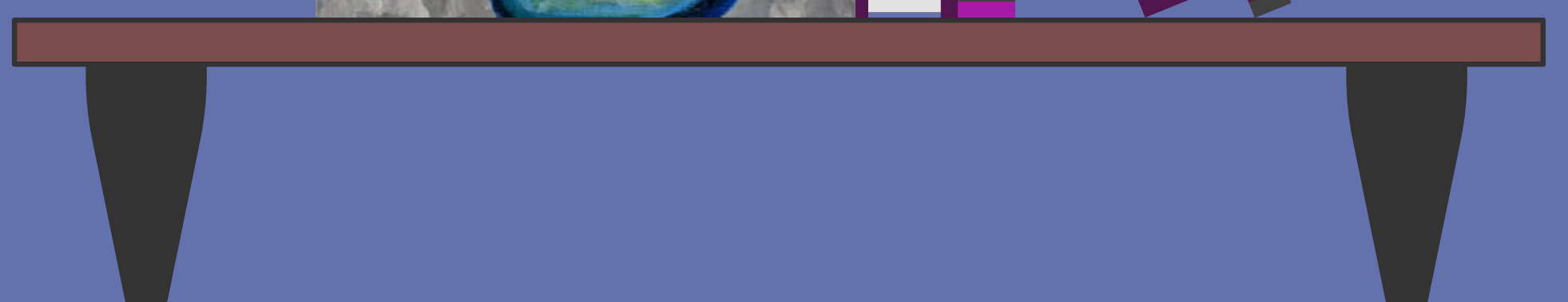
## Vision & Verse: A Fusion of Art, Photography, Prose and Poetry

The multi-talented artists and writers featured within these pages have come together to create a dialogue between their respective mediums. This collection showcases the beauty of visual art married with the magic of the written word.

<https://a.co/d/2zu0Afx>



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S



# Kudos Koiner

The Friends of the Claremont Library asked nine authors to participate in celebrating National Authors Month. I was one of them, so was our new member Parker.

Before the event was over someone asked if there were any clubs/groups to support writers. Several suggestions came in. I pitched IECWC and of course mentioned the critique group using the example of taking a short story and was told, "Oh No, this is not a short story but a novel." "It became Episode one of Cayenne and the Diablo Kid," I said as I held up my book. Good pitch.

Constance

Saturday  
September 28,  
2024

@Claremont Helen  
Renwick Library  
10 am-12 noon

The event was  
organized by the  
Friends of the  
Claremont Library.



Congratulations  
**Constance Cassinelli!**  
She was invited and  
represented the IECWC at  
a local event in Claremont  
that celebrated National  
Authors Month.

# HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK TO SOCALWRITERSSHOWCASE.COM

- You must be a member in good standing
  - AKA submitted application & paid your dues
- Maximum length of submissions: 500 words
  - You can add 1 link to your website
- Software: Microsoft Word (.docx) file attachment
- No indents, columns, tables or bullet points
- Subject line must read: SUBMISSION FOR SOCAL SHOWCASE
- In Body of email: list (1) your name, (2) your branch name, and (3) title of work
  - Also in the Body, include this permission: "I am submitting this for use on the CWC South website and confirm that I am a member of a Southern branch of the California Writers Club. I further confirm that it is my original work and all rights to its use belong to me. CWC South may use this on its website, archive it for future use on its website or choose to not use it, however the rights I grant are non-exclusive and I retain the right to sell it, allow its publication elsewhere including simultaneously, and all other rights to its use. CWC South is not paying me for its use. CWC South may not sell it or authorize its use outside of the CWC South website without"
- Send email & attachment to the current branch President, Judy Kohnen.
  - She will verify membership and will forward it on to be published.



Visit [www.socalwritersshowcase.com](http://www.socalwritersshowcase.com) to familiarize yourself with the categories of content.

- Short fiction: "flash fiction" - stories with beginning, middle, end
- Memoir: short memoir pieces or vignettes about our past
- A Writer's Life: ideas, humor, tips to keep your writing going
- Craft: "how-to" articles related to writing or marketing your work

Most work is accepted by the Editor if it is of appropriate quality. The site is updated monthly, but there may be a backlog in a category. Once your work appears on the site, it stays on the site for 6 months. After that, your name and the title of your work will appear on the Archive List page by month. You retain the copyright for your submission. Our website copyright notice: Articles or stories appearing on this website submitted by members are copyrighted with all rights reserved by their respective authors. Note that some contests/publishers will consider posting on a website to mean that the piece has been previously published and perhaps ineligible for a contest or future publication, so keep that in mind.

Fourth Saturdays:  
Poetry at the Claremont Library

PROUDLY PRESENTS A READING BY

NANCY MILLER GOMEZ & SARA ELLEN FOWLER

2:00 PM Saturday, August 24, 2024

NANCY MILLER GOMEZ is the author of *Inconsolable Objects* (YesYes Books) and the chapbook *Punishment* (Rattle chapbook series), a collection of poems and essays about her experience teaching in prisons and jails. Her work has appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Adroit Journal*, *TriQuarterly*, *New Ohio Review*, *The Rumpus*, *Massachusetts Review*, *VerseDaily*, and elsewhere. With Ellen Bass, she co-founded an organization that provides writing workshops to incarcerated women and men; she has taught poetry in Salinas Valley State Prison, the Santa Cruz County Jails, and Juvenile Hall. She lives with her family in Santa Cruz, CA.



SARA ELLEN FOWLER is the author of *Two Signatures* (University of Utah Press, 2024), winner of the 2023 Agha Shahid Ali Prize in Poetry (selected by Joan Naviyuk Kane). A recipient of a 2023 California Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship, Sara holds a BFA in Fine Art from Art Center College of Design and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of California, Riverside. Publication credits include: *The Offing*, *X-TRA Contemporary Art Journal*, *Gigantic Sequins*, and *Cream City Review*, among others.

This reading will take place at the Claremont Helen Renwick Library,  
208 N. Harvard Ave. in Claremont, CA.

Please check your email and our Facebook page for updates;  
[follow local covid protocols](#) (masks, distancing) as needed.

Presented in association with

The Claremont Helen Renwick Library & the Friends of the Claremont Library

Save the date for  
upcoming readings:

- Saturday, Oct 26 @  
2:00pm: Lory  
Bedikian & Anna  
Leahy
- Saturday, Nov 23 @  
2:00pm: Poets About  
Town open mic

Fourth Saturdays: Poetry  
at the Claremont Library

Poetry With Purpose Open Mic  
dates for the rest of 2024:

- September 28
- October 26
- November 30
- December 28

All 5-7 pm  
Rival Coffee Co.  
24865 Hospitality PL Bldg E  
Murrieta, CA 92562

\$10 admission fee  
Purchase tickets at  
[eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or at the door.

**Poetry With Purpose**   
Hope Service non profit

@ Rival Coffee Co.   
24865 Hospitality Pl Bldg E  
Murrieta, Ca 92562

5-7 pm  
Last Saturday  
Every month

I'LL BE THERE I'LL BE SQUARE






★  Join us for Poetry Night, an enchanting celebration of the written word where the magic of language comes to life!

Admission is \$10 at the door. All proceeds go towards supporting our dedicated teachers and our Educator of the Month program.

More info: <https://3030publishing.com/poetry-with-purpose/>

# SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WRITERS BRANCH

## Announcing our 2025 Anthology

The San Joaquin Valley Writers branch is pleased to announce the theme for its next anthology, to be published in the fall of 2025: *Beginnings & Endings*.

It is human nature to conceptualize the world consisting of beginnings and endings. This duality permeates almost everything we see, imagine, feel, and hope for. Beginnings and endings can be real and tangible such as birth and death, marriage and divorce, the first and last day of school. They can be metaphorical, perhaps not even visible, such as a thought that blinks into existence only to disappear just as quickly from someone's mind, or a first impression of someone or something that changes over time. Beginnings and endings can be fast, sudden, or they can be slow, gradual. They can be far apart or blend into each other. Maybe a beginning is also an ending and vice versa. Send us your stories, memoirs, essays, or poetry in which a beginning and/or an ending takes center stage or is the background for something else. Show us the human experience through images, dialogue, verse, but no matter what, with beautiful words. And maybe, just maybe, show us a new take on beginnings and endings.



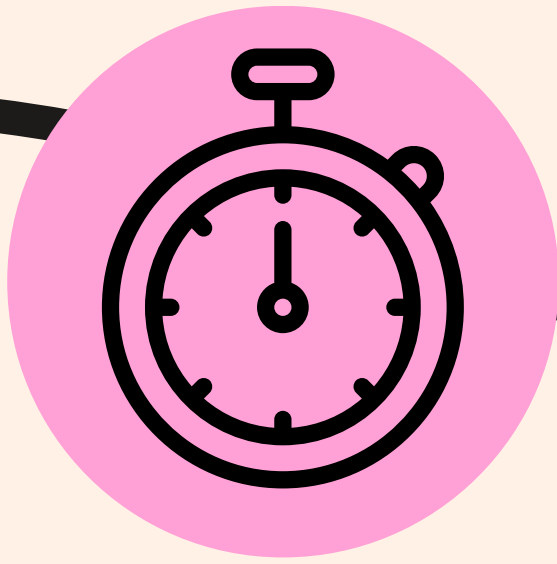
Participation is open to all CWC members in good standing. Submission information and guidelines can be found on our website at [www.sjvalleywriters.org/publications](http://www.sjvalleywriters.org/publications) or by using the QR code to the right below.



## 2025 ANTHOLOGY ANNOUNCEMENT

# Deadlines

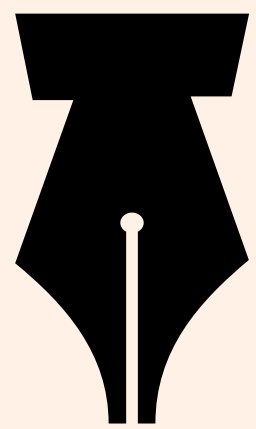
Submissions are due the **15th** of every month



## Content Limits

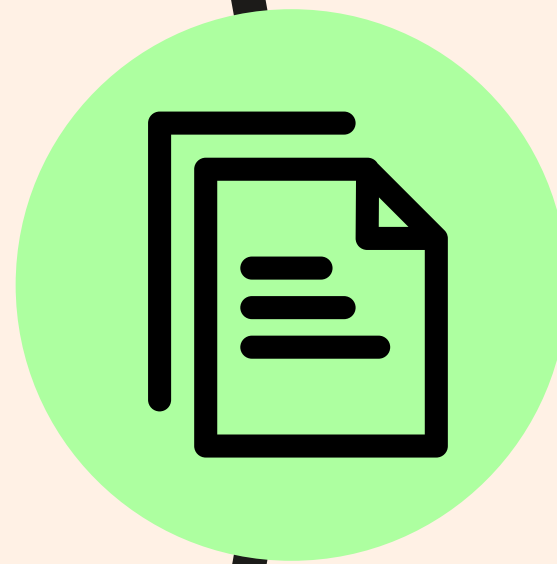
**Submissions with the following will not be considered:**

- Excessive or gratuitous violence (violence for violence sake)
- Excessive or gratuitous profanity
- Excessive or gratuitous sexual situations or pornography
- Political or religious agendas that are meant to persuade or denounce



# FRESH INK

*guidelines*



## Form

- Prose word count <1,200
- No line count on poetry

Send as an attachment  
Google or Word document  
Times New Roman  
12pt font



## Photos

Accompanying images are optional

We can only publish digital images that **do not violate copyright**

You are encouraged to submit photos you have taken



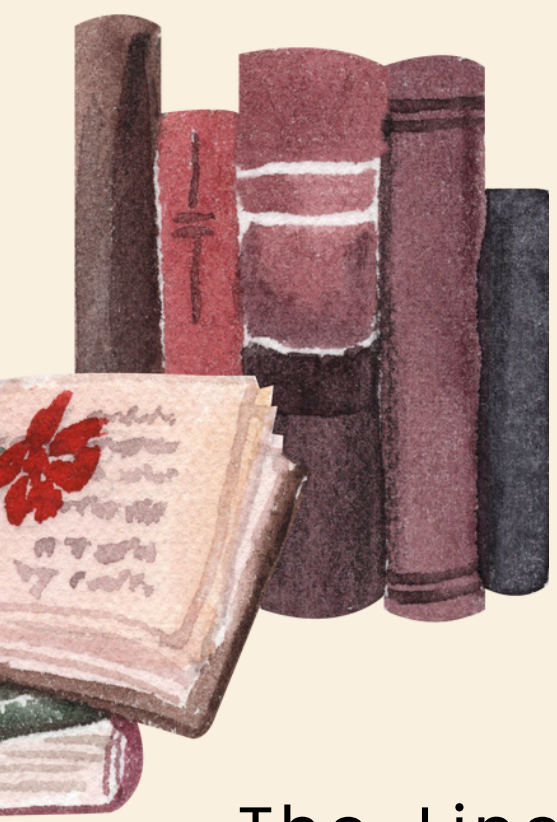
## Email

Share with Abigail Handojo at [iecwcfreshink@gmail.com](mailto:iecwcfreshink@gmail.com)

Subject line must read "FRESH INK - month"

Replace "month" with your target month for publication

Check your email periodically for suggestions from the editor



# Poetry Musings

SAMUEL THOMAS NICHOLS



## Missing, a Poetical Theme

The Line Fire has been raging for three days now and I have studied our northern scene, where I understand over 1,700 firefighters are currently battling. This morning, when I first looked out across my backyard toward the mountains, there was one colossal billow of smoke rising into the troposphere due north of us. This grayish plume grew lighter as it rose and was topped by a snow white cloud reminiscent of the cumulus often stacked alongside our mountains. Later, a second billowing plume appeared a little to the west of the first observed. Later still, as we sat for lunch, those separate surges merged into one expansive column. It is now mid-afternoon and there are no plumes, billows, or columns to be seen anywhere, as our entire northern view is a gray blanket of smoke and ash. The mountains are missing, there are no flames to be seen, and there seem to be a few more birds taking advantage of the feeder in the backyard. And, though it flew quickly across the yard, I believe I saw a Steller's Jay, which would be a refugee from the nearby mountains rarely seen like his common cousin the Scrub Jay.

I enjoyed the *Fresh Ink* this morning and noted that the theme for the October issue is *Missing*, which got me to thinking about connections between *poetry* and *missing*. While it is true that there are more poems (and songs) about missing him or her than I would care to enumerate, that is not where my thoughts first went. With the constant reminder of the Line Fire assaulting our nostrils and lungs, my first concerns were for the wildlife, friends, and neighbors. Our former town of Running Springs has been evacuated, along with many others, and my wife and I still remember the horror of the September 1997 City Creek fire that decimated homes above ours on Allview and below ours on Ferndale, while the flames missed our Knollview house.

Ingrid Wendt begins her 1987, *Singing the Mozart Requiem*, with a poem in which she is on a wilderness hike and finds the sign of robins, grasshoppers, coyotes, rabbits, bears, and wild turkeys, among others. She is concerned by what she sees and by what is missing along her path and, in the penultimate stanza, she writes:

*One by one leisurely along  
the edge of the field, the creek, up the hill into trees,  
the edge of extinction, beyond*

Whereupon her leisurely stroll, she has witnessed what was and what may be again. Her poem concludes:

*All powers of observation. Purposeful.  
As if there were others to take their place.  
As if all of us had all the time in the world.*



I've heard it said and seen it writ that all we ever really had was time. Yet, it takes the passing of decades before some of us understand just how few trips around the sun we have.

Denise Duhamel, a favorite contemporary poet of mine, wrote about a different kind of missing. In her 1993 book of poetry, *Smile*, she writes in her poem, *Fear on 11th Street and Avenue A, New York City*:

*Now the papers are saying pesticides will kill us  
rather than preservatives.*

- - -

*I fear the children I know will become missing children,  
that I will lose everyone I need to some hideous cancer.*

I find it interesting to consider that she worries about losing everyone she needs rather than everyone she loves. Is it to say that we need those we love, or that we love those we need?

There are so many things that might go missing. Robert W. Service, the Scottish-Canadian, who was the *Bard of the Yukon*, and who wrote many humorous and otherwise entertaining poems, such as *The Cremation of Sam McGee*, lamented in his book, *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man*, regarding other missings:

*I run like a man wot's missing a train - from The Black Dudeen  
For a parcel o'lead comes missing me head - as previous  
John came home with a missing limb - from The Twins*

Doesn't seem like lots of things go missing in a war?

Poets and songwriters write often about missing a loved one. Sometimes it's a sad affair and sometimes it's just a matter-of-fact. I think many of us are familiar with John Waite's 1984 #1 hit, *Missing You*, as later covered by Alison Krauss in 2007. In this song, the lyrics start off with a sense of missing and longing, but soon he tries to convince himself that *I ain't missing you at all*, which he repeats several times. Not unlike 10CC's 1975 hit, *I'm Not in Love*.

Sometimes the idea of a person missing can be a bit humorous, or at least dished up with a bit of irony. Joe Hill (*Last night I dreamed I saw ...*), the Swedish-American labor activist and songwriter, does just that in his song *Scissor Bill*. Now, *Scissor Bill* isn't just one person, you see, he's that odd man out you meet nearly everywhere you travel, not unlike Arlo Guthrie's *last guy* from *The Pause of Mr. Claus* (aka, *The FBI Song*).

Here, from Joe Hill's *Scissor Bill*:

*Scissor Bill, he's a little dippy,  
Scissor Bill, he has a funny face.  
Scissor Bill, should drown in Mississippi,  
He is the missing link that Darwin tried to trace.*



Yet, sometimes the poet avoids the theme of missing a loved one, as death was nothing more than a trivial event. Robert Frost, the New England Poet and four-time Pulitzer Prize winner for Poetry, wrote many poignant poems of rural life. One that disturbed me as a young man, and has the power to do so yet, was *Out, Out*, the story of a boy called upon to do a man's work on the buzz saw, as there was no one else. The buzz saw bucked and took the boy's hand and the poem ends:

*And then - the watcher at his pulse took a fright.  
No one believed. They listened to his heart.  
Little - less - nothing! - and that ended it.  
No more to build on there. And they, since they  
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.*



Another poem that showed a cavalier attitude towards death was by Randall Jarrell, that I found equally disturbing. In the five-line poem *The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner*, the gunner himself speaks to us from beyond regarding his experience, *six miles* above the Earth. His parting line for us is:

*When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.*

Edward Arlington Robinson, yet another favorite poet of mine, writes about Mr. Eben Flood, a man who had outlived his friends and his usefulness. He has experienced the pain of change and, where grew, the no longer recognizable trappings of life. He is a man alone, missing his past and missing his long gone friends, who has turned to the jug and his ghosts for comfort in a domain in which he is no longer respected or, for that matter, even wanted. In the concluding lines of *Mr. Flood's Party*, Robinson writes:

*There was not much that was ahead of him,  
And there was nothing in the town below  
Where strangers would have shut the many doors  
That many friends had opened long ago.*

There is no limit to what the theme of missing may be conveyed through lines of poetry and in the lyrics of songs. Google "missing poems" and you will be bombarded with poems about missing someone, him or her, of longing, grieving for a lost loved one, or momma. It was many pages of scrolling before I came across a poem called *Missing Dates*, by William Empson, which was a Villanelle that lamented his missed opportunities. Sometimes it is good to skirt the obvious in a theme and to explore the less pursued variants for the often missed gems.

# THE DAY-DREAM HERO

*Peter Hall*



He was bold.

He was brave.

He was a hero.

But only in his dreams.

In reality, he was just a zero.

At least that's what he thought he was.

Often, he would dream that he was big and strong.

Often he would believe that he was afraid of nothing.

Often he would wish that he could do whatever he wanted.

Often he would wish that everyone would give him a parade, just for existing.

Often he would dream that if he were about to die, that it would be in a blaze of glory.

Often he wished that his death would happen, just like he imagined it.

Often he dreamed, he wished, he felt, that he was making love to a beautiful woman.

A woman who wanted him, and him alone.

Often he wished that wherever he went, women would follow.

But all too often, his dreams would end, and his wishes would not come true.

All too often, the weightlessness of his dreams would end, and he would fall.

All too often, he would fall back to reality.



*Peter Hall*

# The Quiet Rebel

He was quiet.  
He was thoughtful.  
He was a rebel.  
He flouted authority,  
and yet he obeyed authority.  
He obeyed authority,  
but with extreme mediocrity.  
Others thought of him as peaceable.  
He thought of himself as unnoticeable.  
He only spoke when spoken too,  
and rarely was he ever spoken too.  
He liked it that way,  
and he hated it that way.  
Sometimes he thought he was invisible.  
Everything was visible,  
but only he was invisible.  
If he was invisible,  
then he was uninteresting,  
and if he was invisible,  
and uninteresting,  
then he could be spying,  
He should be spying!  
Because spying would be fun!  
And he rarely ever had fun!

All he ever did was work!  
Work!  
And when nobody was looking,  
pretending to work.  
He wanted to escape, to be free.  
But to be free, would expose him.  
And he didn't want to be exposed.  
He liked to hide,  
and he liked to seek,  
but he could neither seek while hiding,  
nor hide while he was seeking.  
It would have to be either or,  
and he hated either's and or's.  
This then would require some thought,  
he was at a fork in the road,  
and he didn't know which to take,  
"either or," he said.  
"Either or," he repeated.  
And he hated either's and or's.  
Either quit being quiet,  
and make some noise.  
Or keep being peaceable,  
and stay invisible.  
He hated either's and or's.

# COMBAT ESSAYS AMERICAN HISTORY

*A Veteran's Perspective*  
*Volume II*

*by John J. McBrearty*  
*Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)*



*Bahkan School Project before construction.*



*Bahkan School Project after completion.*

## *Chapter 3* *Opening of the Bahkan School*

May 27, 2004

Wednesday, May 26, 2004, will forever be a significant event for our Armor Battalion as it participated in the re-opening dedication ceremony of the Bahkan Elementary School in Central-Southern Iraq. Attendees included Major Adam Strek, Chief of Staff of the 1st Battle Group from the 1st BCT (Brigade Combat Team), MND CS (Multinational Division Central-South), Polish Army; Major John J. McBrearty, Executive Officer of the Armor Battalion; and Muhamed Abas Jasum, the Mayor of the Village of Bahkan—as well as a host of local villagers and eager students from the institution.

This school represents the opportunity for the children of the Bahkan Village to receive a solid educational foundation, which will positively impact their future prosperity and quality of life. This project also represents the unity of effort with the coalition forces supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. This project was a joint effort with the Polish, American, and Iraqi people, all working together for a common goal that positively impacted the Bahkan community and surrounding villages. Once the project was funded, local contractors were hired to construct the school. The result was "par excellence," stated Mayor Jasum.

The dedication ceremony was held at the school's entrance on a hot afternoon. Major McBrearty and Major Strek flanked Mayor Jasum. Mayor Jasum cut the ribbon as Major McBrearty and Major Strek held it in place, signifying the unity of efforts in this worthwhile project. A large round of applause erupted following the ribbon cutting. The audience included American and Polish Soldiers, local villagers, and students.

Following the ribbon cutting, the mayor and the two majors exchanged words. Through an interpreter, Mayor Jasum expressed his sincere gratitude to the Poles and Americans for their gracious support of their community. Major McBrearty stated, "The future of Iraq will someday be in the hands of the children of this school, and we are delighted to have made a difference in their lives. This is one small step towards a prosperous future for the Iraqi people." Major Strek stated that he and his soldiers were also pleased to have assisted with the project as he handed out many soccer balls, basketballs, and footballs.



*John McBrearty, Mayor Muhammed Abas Jasum, and Maj. Strek of Poland, 2004.*

The Iraqis served up soda pop and danishes to their American and Polish guests. Discussions included the school and its impressive improvements, future projects for the area that could include road and drainage improvements, and their mutual interest in peace. Mayor Jasum noted that this was finals week at the school, and Major McBrearty made light of the situation by stating, "Mayor Jasum, you have hit upon a universal nerve; the dreaded 'finals week' is equally discomfoting for our American youth as it is for students all over the world." This was met with a room full of laughter as the atmosphere was joyous and celebratory.

This project exemplifies how Iraqi people can work towards a better future. Local contractors working at the school did a fine job. The school was identified as a primary school in need of renovation by the local Iraqi leadership. This need was brought to members of the 300th Area Support Group and the 2nd of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (82nd Airborne Division), who contracted local contractors to refurbish and expand the school in the Bahkan Village. Later, the Armor Battalion supervised and inspected the completion of the project and assisted the Poles with settlement payment. This project not only improved the school but also employed 15 local Iraqis. The cost of the project totaled 50,729.00 dollars. Because the work was done locally, the money went where it was most needed: into the community the project serves.



*MAJ McBrearty with local leaders during Bahkan School construction.*

This is also a fine example of multinational efforts successfully coming together to benefit the Iraqi people and world order. First Lieutenant Romm Fernandez serves the Armor Battalion as S5 Civil Affairs Officer and has become a significant part of the Battalion's mission in Iraq. He states, "It is great to see three different countries coming together in this community. If the Polish, the Americans, and the Iraqis can get together and build this school, the Iraqi people will learn from this experience and make Iraq a stronger nation."

The Bahkan School Project included fixing and beautifying the existing primary school. Four new rooms were added as a new intermediate school and an administrative office. Local contractors also installed new electrical wiring, fans, air conditioning, lighting, windows, doors, two drinking fountains, furnishings, and a new concrete pad with basketball hoops. With several hundred students in attendance, the school's children are primarily from Bahkan, Boomkahlif, and Botran villages. Construction started in April 2004 and was completed on May 17th, 2004.

As the June 30th date for Iraqi sovereignty is rapidly approaching, the Bahkan school project is just a milestone for great things to come in the Armor Battalion's area of operations. Working together with the local Iraqi civil and political leadership, this part of Central Southern Iraq maintains a secure environment free from criminal retaliation, persecution, and intimidation. The Armor Battalion will continue to help the Iraqi people build not only schools but a prosperous, secure, democratic nation where individual rights are protected.



*Bahkan School Project – Classroom*



*Bahkan School Project – with school children and local Sheik.*

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## Book Reviews

**"COMBAT ESSAYS** by LTC John J. McBrearty is a masterpiece worthy of a doctoral dissertation."

Peter J. Gravett  
Major General  
U.S. Army (Retired)  
★★★★★

### **COMBAT ESSAYS**

#### **AMERICAN HISTORY - A Veteran's Perspective, Volume II**

What makes this book fascinating is that it discusses a selection of academic texts on American military history by a combat veteran who speaks with the authority of someone who dedicated his life to defending this country.

Lieutenant Colonel McBrearty's reflections always maintain a personal perspective through photos and the selection of texts he pontificates so eloquently about. McBrearty speaks as a direct participant in the history he writes about.

The book is truly a compelling and thought-provoking read!

"This book is a testament that quantifies the concept of citizen soldiers making a difference."  
News of Delaware County

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

The earth and sky are the Lord's canvas  
The magnificence of His creation  
Is reflected  
In the change of seasons

Sunrise and sunset  
Are framed in darkness  
Then the world is transformed  
Into variegated colors  
Especially in the fall

The dark yellow of the Indian Summer sun  
Turns dark green leaves into blades of mustard, sienna, and rust  
Then, as it beats down on the hard brown earth,  
The winds blow the now dry sepia leaves  
Into a carpet that covers it.

Soft thermal breezes caress the land  
Apple trees on the mountains  
Sprout their ripe red, green and yellow fruits  
Ready for picking  
At the end of September

The October sky  
Mellow by day  
Somber at night  
Seems dense and heavy

Soon the Blood Moon  
Lights the heavens  
A vermillion lantern  
Suspended over the world

Giant sunflowers grow and turn their faces to the sun  
Golden, ochre and russet marigolds  
Burst into our gardens  
Burgundy Chrysanthemums  
Deep purple dahlias  
And sweet alyssum  
Flourish

Bright orange pumpkins are ready  
In time for Halloween

Bask in autumn joy and wonder  
God must love His season's colors  
Worship the glory of His handiwork

# AUTUMN PALETTE

*Ann Casas*





# TWO Sonnets

By Samuel Thomas Nichols

With October's theme being *Missing*, I looked back at some of the poems I've written based on the Writer's Digest Wednesday Poetry Prompts offered by Robert Lee Brewer.

One of these prompts was on July 21, 2021, which was to write a *Missing Poem*. Well, I thought about it at the time and what I decided on was a kind of generational missing, as in missing the proverbial mark or point of it all. As a high school junior, I remember falling for a girl, a classmate, that resulted in a relationship that was ostracized and ultimately failed because there were too many generational and cultural hurdles to overcome. That *Missing Poem* prompt I titled *Missing a Chance*, at perhaps, a happy ending.

The other prompt that caught my eye was on June 16, 2021, and it was to write a poem *In the Name of <Blank>*. What was on my mind at the time was fire. In the year 2021 California suffered a total of 8,835 wildfires, which the California Air Resources Board(1), and others(2), determined were due to climate change in the State of California. Now I often get delayed writing on the Wednesday Poetry Prompt, and don't recall a particular named fire at the time, but ever since we moved from Running Springs to Yucaipa in 1997, both are new and former residences have been frequently plagued by the threat of wildfire. Thus, *In the Name of Fire*, is in memory of those threats.

## *Missing a Chance*

Down by the boardwalk a wandering by  
Strolled two young lovebirds a wondering why  
Parents pass judgment on their choice of mates  
When happiness is just their choice of fates

"She's not good enough for the son I bore  
What can I say about the clothes she wore"  
"He's never going to be a Mister Right  
I see in his eyes he as dull as night"

When a boy loves a girl who loves him back  
The armor is there to withstand the flack  
Launched from the cannons of reprobation  
Fueled by the powders of expectation

Down by the boardwalk goes a true romance  
That will endure with only half a chance

## *In the Name of Fire*

Smoke and ash rises as the forest burns  
Animals panic and then they perish  
In the bowels of terror while flames churn  
Consuming the woodlands that we cherish

Thousands of blazes, millions of acres,  
Year-in and year-out they're born to destroy  
Larger they grow as climate shifts nature  
Where death and disease will surely be cloy

The vagaries of weather wreak havoc  
As Earth is spinning now out of control,  
The future looks bleak for this our planet  
And soon many will have no where to go

In the name of fire we pray for rain  
To descend upon the forest and plain

(1) "Wildfires & Climate Change". California Air Resources Board. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/wildfires-climate-change>

(2) Field, Rebecca Miller, Katharine Mach, Chris. "Climate Change Is Central to California's Wildfires".

Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/climate-change-is-central-to-californias-wildfires/>

The theatre has emptied  
Devoid of warm bodies  
Crammed with “what-was”  
And “what-will-be”s

Sorrow stands center stage  
A Ghostlight in an otherwise  
Curtain-cloaked place  
Left on for spirits like me

Not undead, still dying  
Weeping on my knees  
At the feet of a veiled lady  
Clothed in melancholy

Endurer of wind and weather (1)  
But victim to time  
The Sweetest She Deceased  
The Cruellest She Alive (2)

Do I need to build a house (3)  
Of willow planks  
Near her gate  
For my soul to live in  
And shout her name  
To the mountains  
Day and night

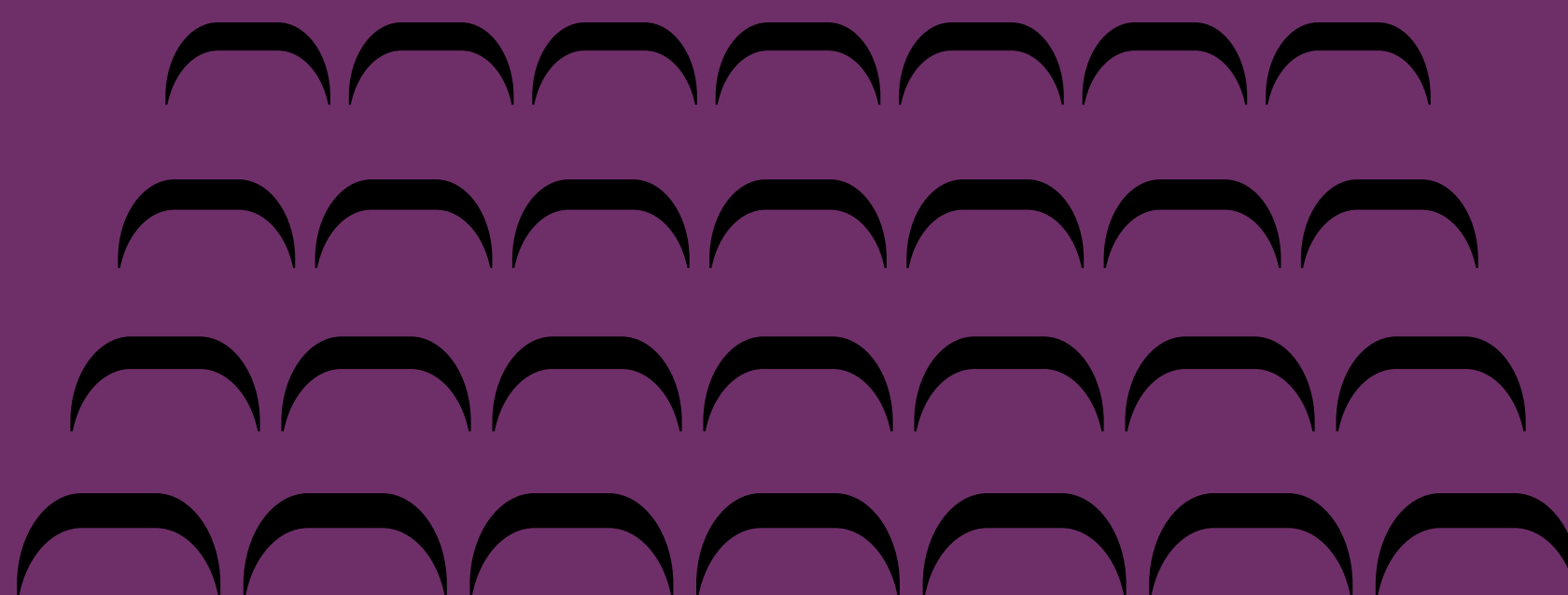
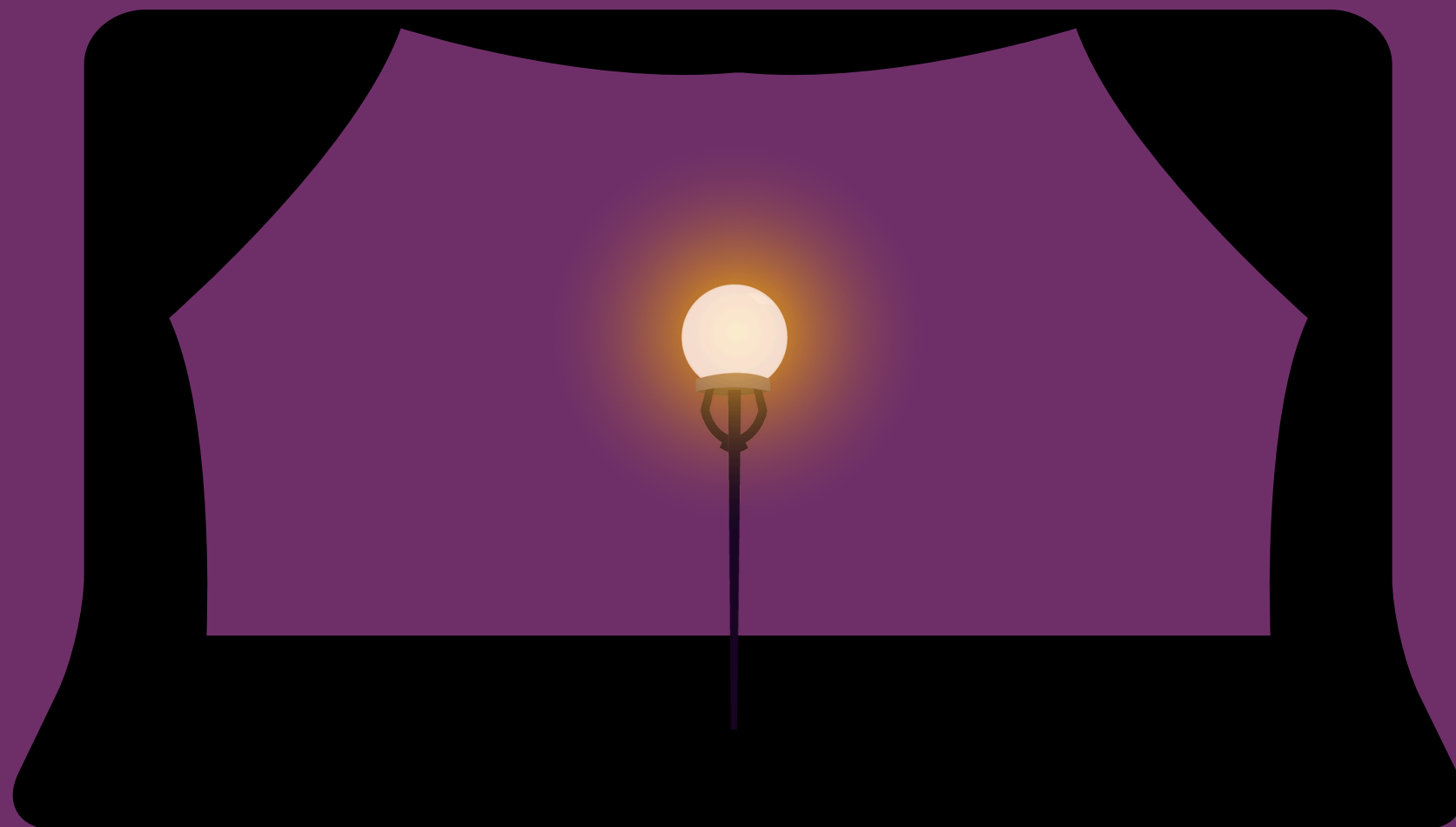
Until I perish from unrest  
Post-play depressed  
Because I’ll never get to be  
This lady again  
My family and friends  
Are sick of the same old song  
Thundering through  
The theatre I haunt

“Pity me!” (4)  
For loving my cast  
For missing my character  
To a dramatic degree (5)

Shakespeare only knows  
Which of us mourned the most  
The Ghostlight stands there still  
Flickering with “what-you-won’t”  
And “what-you-will”

# (Ghost) Light Left On

Abigail Elina Handojo



## References:

William Shakespeare’s play *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*

- (1) Olivia Act 1, Scene 5 Line 226
- (2) Viola Act 1, Scene 5 Line 229
- (3) Viola Act 1, Scene 5 Lines 258-265
- (4) Viola Act 1, Scene 5 Line 266
- (5) Olivia Act 3, Scene 1 Line 127

## Concept:

Legend of the Ghostlight

A light left on in the center of the theatre overnight for both practical and superstitious reasons. For late-comers, the light served as a sign that the show/play had ended. For tech crew, the light illuminated the space so they wouldn’t injure themselves in the dark. The light was also said to ward off evil spirits or help guide ghosts whose home is the theatre.

Next month's  
theme is...  
Gratitude