

next month's
theme is...

Belated April
fools!
This month's
issue is in
reverse!



growth

Vernal Renewal

Samuel Thomas Nichols



What is renewal? I pondered this Sunday morning
Tucked between the Ides of March and St. Patrick's Day
It's certainly not vacuuming outdoor traces adorning
Where four-legged felines blazed a new broken highway

From parts unnamed to food bowls in the dining room
Then up in the easy chair for a midmorning snooze
Perchance to dream of orange calicos or roses abloom
Or the mighty fine treats left in their human's shoes

But the sun is shining through forty degree skies
And opening the curtains is high on the list
Where I wondrously take in and gratefully apprise
The miracles of rebirth out there in the midst

Where green-backed hummingbirds flitter and swoop
Fearlessly down to feeders and slurp up the nectar
Brewed with the attention of the most precious soup
Coddled with care from a magnanimous rector

And out there beyond, where the green makes a carpet
Finches and wrens vie for the morsels of insect and seed
Too tiny to register within my own orbit
Here in this season when the mature prep to breed

Even the old butterfly bush springs back from the dead
Just when I thought it had birthed its last flower
And the late season tulips struggle out of their beds
Praising the sun and asserting life's power

In spite of this beauty, my mind segues to weeds
Who penetrate thru soil and mulch in search of the light
To power the fuse through which they all feed
Bestowing stooped tribulations among their delights

Each morning is precious for life borne of renewal
For every commencement heralds an end
And though it seems contrary, the intent isn't cruel
It's just life's way of wishing goodbye to a friend



The Atlantic

Sue Andrews

America, the foreign land
Liberty's torch across the sea
It beckoned you, or was it me
Where you once longed to be.

The love we shared 'cross distance shores
Could not keep us apart
You flew to me, then married me
But soon you broke my heart.

'Twas then I knew it was not me
That brought you to my side
The country full of hopes and desires
Did more than hurt my pride.

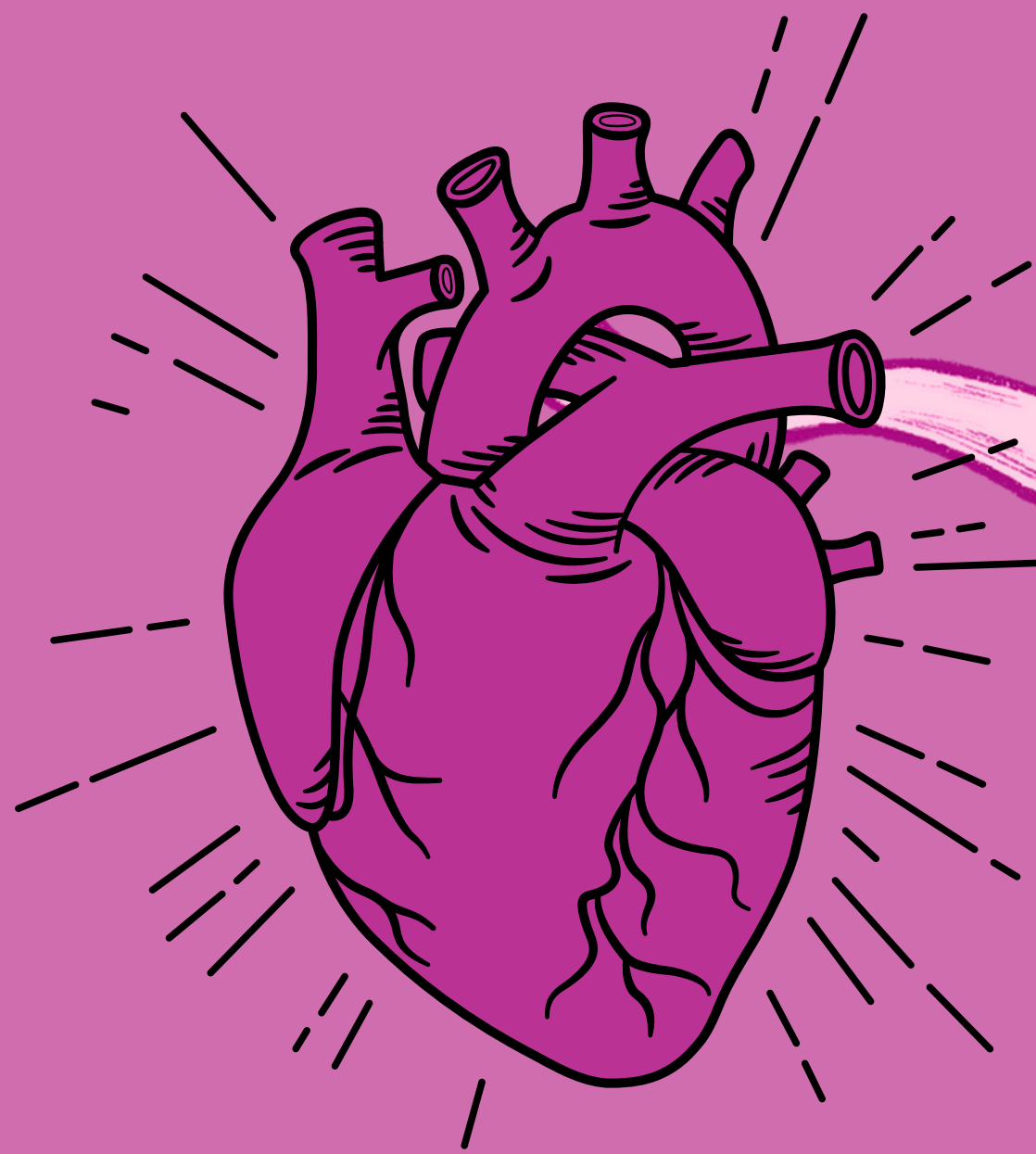
You flew back to your native land
Left nothing in your wake,
But my love with broken promises
Was more than I could take.

America, the beautiful
The land where dreams come true
Our short-lived love on a card of green
Meant nothing to me, just you.

(6) The day you left and disappeared
I can't remember when
But forty years and counting
Since I ne'er heard from you again.

I do not miss the fighting
The drunkenness and fuss
I'm glad the drama's over
A dream left in the dust.

Do not be sad old love of mine
Wherever and with whom other
I only wish you well and happiness
Like I've found with another.



A Mystery of the **HEART**

By Shirley Petro

The heart holds mysteries that holds us hostage. We cannot sense it. It beats but can kill us at any time, yet we pay little attention to it. Even though it lives right there inside our chest. How simple to ignore the steady beating. Then one sad day, an alarm peals out, shocks you, attacks you. **B**ut you knew the heart would have to do that, didn't you?

So do not complain. It is the key that will open the door to your special Resurrection. Or it may leave you prostrate on your bed, with a pounding heart that will not cease thumping hammer-like inside of you. **T**hump. Thump. Relentlessly. For hours. Not unlike Poe's Raven rapping, rapping at my chamber door. No key to fit it now. The vital organ created to sustain you gives up on one in exquisite pain.

You get scared- no help from anyone. Finally, the higher self-intervened knowing you are ready for the real game to begin. The secret cure is to send love to the offender. Like a mom kissing her child's boo-boo to make it all ok. That's it! **S**end much love to the heart. Makes sense, does it not? It worked for me.

Only Love has the power to heal.

If a VPN is something people want, there must be a lot of them? Yes, there are many choices when it comes to VPNs. Personally, I have been using Private Internet Access (<https://www.privateinternetaccess.com/>) for many years now. They have been voted the best for the last ten-years and I have been renewing in two-year increments. They have servers all over the world should your research take you to such exotic locales as Bulgaria, Croatia, or even the Ukraine. I usually connect to the much less exotic destinations like Phoenix, Arizona.

Not too long ago I started noticing that Mozilla was delivering ads to me concerning their Mozilla VPN product. While I have no direct knowledge using their VPN, I have been using their Firefox and Thunderbird products for - yes, a very long time. I trust Mozilla enough to say that the next time my Private Internet Access VPN comes up for renewal, I will take a careful look at the Mozilla VPN. And, rather than listening to me go on about the VPN I'm familiar with, here are some recent 2025 reviews from trusted sites you can peruse for yourselves:

<https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/best-vpn/>

<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-vpn-services>

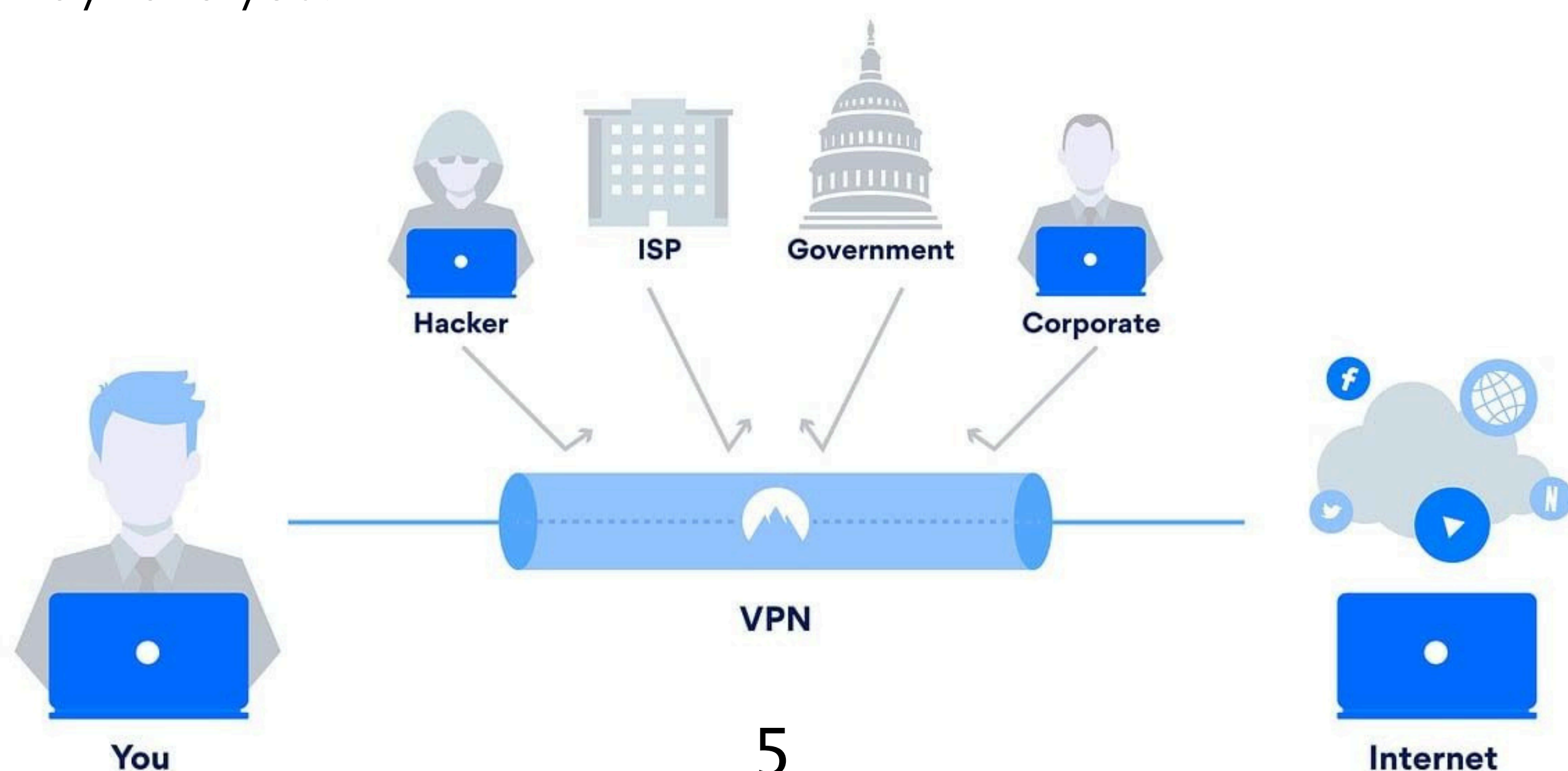
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/best-vpn/>

<https://www.techradar.com/vpn/best-vpn>

<https://cybernews.com/best-vpn/>

There is one caveat in using a VPN in that some websites will deny you access when it is on, just like some deny me access because I have an Adblocker installed as an extension to Mozilla Firefox, along with two other privacy measures. I usually choose not to visit these websites, which are trying to collect my personal information (such as my computer's IP Address) to sell to other third parties. No, thank you. I can tell you that most websites such as banks, financial institutions, the DMV, and others won't deny you access but will occasionally ask you to solve a CAPTCHA, or other puzzle to prove you're human and not a bot. But, if you should want access to a denied website, it is a simple matter (two mouse clicks) to disconnect the VPN and to reconnect it (two more mouse clicks) when you're done with that site. Just be sure and shut down anything running you don't want the NSA, or the Chinese, to know about before you disconnect the VPN. Big Brother is, after all, always prying and continually snooping.

For those who might have been wondering, there is no way to build a dirty bomb from household chemicals. Happy, and safe, browsing wherever your writing research may take you.



USING A VPN *or* Keeping away from Guantanamo Bay

by Samuel Thomas Nichols



At our January 25, 2025, Author Panel several variations of the question: “As a writer doing research, how do I avoid being tracked by the government and possibly bringing trouble upon myself?” Which is an excellent question for those of us who might be asking how to build a dirty bomb from household chemicals in order to attack Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle? Or, how do I take those pesticides out in the garden shed and poison Southern California aquifers? Or that long-standing favorite: How do I murder my neighbor/lover/friend/enemy without getting caught?

For decades we’ve known the government has been, cough-cough, spying on us. As the son of a man whom the FBI had under surveillance for years after Tail-gunner Joe slipped from his rampage of fame, I developed a sense for wiretaps and discretion. As early as the 1970s, we suspected that we were being surveilled by the NSA with a sophistication that made J. Edgar Hoover look like an amateur. Of course, this was all denied until someone with enough courage stepped forward and said enough is enough. Thank you, Edward. While we may not be able to thwart the measures of the NSA, we can hide our browsing from them through the use of security measures such as VPNs.

What, you ask, is a VPN? Well, a Virtual Private Network is a Network Architecture that uses various communication protocols to secretly, and securely, connect your computer to servers at a remote location that encrypts your browser requests and routes them out into the wild and returns those results back to you encrypted and anonymous. That is, your IP Address (your computer’s physical address, comparable to your street address) gets shielded from prying spyware, be it that of the NSA or Chinese ne’er-do-wells.

What about the browsers themselves? Don’t they track me? Yes, they track everything you do, including the ones who say they only use the information for your security. There are alternatives to Chrome and Bing and the others that track. Personally, I have been using Mozilla Firefox (<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>) since it became a thing back in – let’s just say it was a long time ago. Then, couple Firefox with a search engine like DuckDuckGo (<https://duckduckgo.com/>) and you can rest easier in the knowledge you’re not being tracked.



Seasons through a California Lens

Vermilion, emerald, amber and brown
Took my camera outside then turned around
The glorious tree colors I knew wouldn't stay
But God had made a most glorious day!

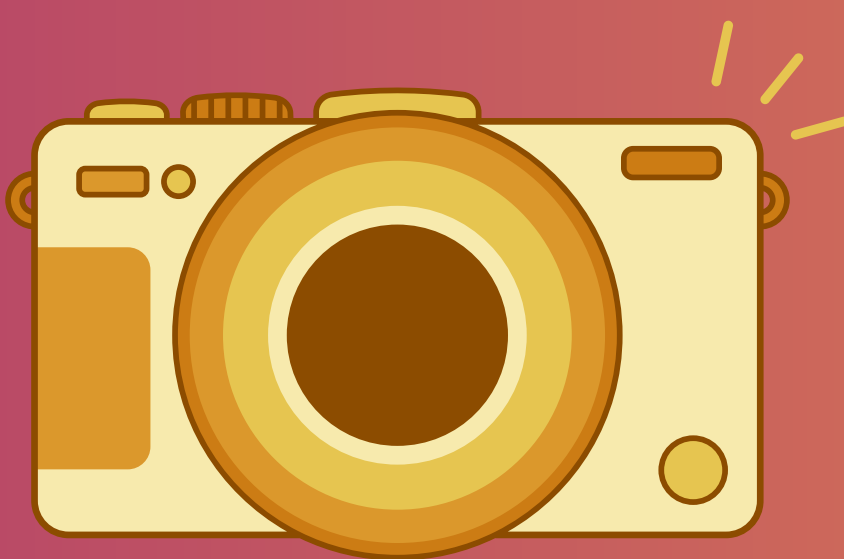
I could not believe what I had just seen
The variety of colors including lush green.
Later that day, from own my back yard
The most wonderful sunset seen from afar.
Apricot, fuschia, saffron and navy,
The winter skies had evoked noble paisley.

The Christmas week rains held more weather surprises
Snowcapped mountains unleashed more disguises.
I got out my camera like a kid with a toy
Who'd think December clime could conjure such joy?

A few months had gone by as I stood by my fence
Happy to see that Spring heeded hence
And with cool breezy mornings what should come near
But a family and herd of white-tailed deer.

I captured on film a most wondrous sight
Never before had appeared in morn light.
These beautiful creatures rarely been seen
Separated only by our pool's fenced-in screen.

California has more than its hot summer weather
One must be viligant to capture and tether.
So keep on exploring, snapping what God had brought
You'll truly find treasures only nature had wrought.



Poetry & Photography
by Sue Andrews





A Question renewal

A man stood at the door at eve
he spoke as one who cares.
He wore a ring upon his hand

I breathed; holding air
The questions lay on his lips
Asking for shelter for the night.

I looked over his shoulder
Gazing at a star that hid its light
Like a man carrying a torch

Asking me to stare again at the sky,
"What will the night see, between you and I?
I stared at him, could this be my bard?

As one who speaks words true
A tongue feels that to retard,
Asking me to begin something that feels like new.

Shirley Petro

Here, excerpted from the *Forerunner*, is Gibran's *The Dying Man and the Vulture*:



Approach, my hungry comrade;
The board is made ready,
And the fare, frugal and spare,
Is given with love.
Come, and dig your beak here, into the left side,
And tear out of its cage this smaller bird,
Whose wings can beat no more:
I would have it soar with you into the sky.
Come now, my friend, I am your host tonight,
And you my welcome guest.

In my younger days, I thought that as I neared the end, I would simply wander off north of US 321 into the forest of the mountains of western North Carolina to a place where I once felt at home with the spirits of my ancestors. That idea of renewal is now packaged with the whole body donor card in my wallet, which is yet another form of renewal.

Time and ideas are in a constant state of flux. Today is a Sunday, just four days away from the vernal equinox, wherein I perceive a world where one person's idea of renewal is another's conceptualization of death, and I am reminded by poets, both ancient and contemporary, that it has always been so. Perhaps it's naïve to *Imagine* (John Lennon, 1940-1980) a renewal in which *we all just get along* (Rodney King, 1965-2012) but wherever one finds renewal, one always finds hope tethered to its apotheoses.

Perhaps one of the most stirring poems of renewal I've read (if not the most) is Carl Sandburg's *Grass*, which I have used before in this feature. Its message to me has been one of the sad forgetfulness of those killed just, it seems, for daring to be alive. Yet, not an April 20th goes by without my grieving that tragic day in 1999 and so, in farewell, I leave you with my bootlegged version of *Grass*, after Carl Sandburg:

Pile the fifteen bodies high at Columbine and admire my prowess.
Shovel them under and let me work.
I am the grass; I recycle all.

And pile the seventeen at Marjory Stoneman High School.
And the twenty-seven at Sandy Hook Elementary.
And the twenty-one at Robb Elementary in Uvalde.
And the scores more you no longer remember.
Shovel them under and let me work.
I am the grass; I reuse all.

Twenty-five years, fifty years, the centuries pass:
What place is this? Where are we now?
I am the grass; I repurpose all.





The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath.
Nought we know dies: shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning? Th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

Adonais (pronounced A - Doh - Nay - Iss) may be dead, but in the words of Shelly, John Keats (1795-1821) continues to be renewed in college classes, poetry readings, and in comfortable chairs in front of the fireplace year after year.

Throughout the centuries, cultures who lived close to the elements were acutely aware of the cycles of death and renewal that existed on our planet and, without that knowledge, would have surely perished. Today, we often denigrate these societies of hunter gatherers and rural farming communities, as being uncivilized or savage, but the wisdom they accumulated over the centuries was second to none. These pagan peoples had music, song, and poetry, of which little survives or is readily available. A rather modern version at least eight-hundred years old is the ballad *Barbara Allen*. This song has evolved into hundreds of versions and may be the most recorded song to date. Of all of the versions my favorite is the one sang by Emmy Lou Harris in the film *Songcatcher* (2000). Here are the final three verses on death and renewal:

"Oh Mother, oh mother, go make my bed
Make it both long and narrow
Sweet William died for me today
I'll die for him tomorrow."

Sweet William was buried in the old churchyard
And Barbara there anigh him
And out of his grave grew a red, red rose
And out of hers, a briar

They grew and grew to the old church gate
Where they could grow no higher
And there they tied in a true love's knot
The rose wrapped 'round the briar



Call me sentimental, but I get a lump in my throat each time I hear Emmy Lou sing this ballad.

When I was but a young man still in my teens, I read Kahlil Gibran extensively, as did many of my friends, who collectively also read the Buddha, burned incense, hung black light posters, and practiced yoga. Gibran had included a poem in the *Forerunner* that I found to be a powerful homage to the ideal of renewal that I often wondered if it was in me to embrace when it was my turn to *face the final curtain*.

Poetry Musings

SAMUEL THOMAS NICHOLS

Renewal

We dwell upon a planet in a constant state of renewal in many more ways than we might ponder as we journey through the days gifted to us. Often, we consider our annual vernal equinox when spring renewal reminds us that life always seems to find a way to celebrate another commencement. But, how often do we consider how our planet constantly recycles itself over the unfathomable distances of time? We are reminded of these powerful forces always at work through earthquakes, volcanoes, and geysers like *Old Faithful*, who delight the senses though they are but a harbinger of the potential devastation and renewal that lurks beneath the earth's upper crust. As elementary school students, we all knew that South America and Africa were two pieces of the same jigsaw puzzle, but had no conception of why until college and the *Theory of Plate Tectonics*, as in this excerpt from that poem by Kemi Alabi:

She tells me Paris is all glitter and ash this time of year,
red-velvet gloved and scowled. Tells me Cape Town paves its streets with wings
that shimmy for stray coins. Says she's got a naked man waiting
in Havana and his neighbor owes her seven cigarettes.
She's been studying plate tectonics. Whispering spells for Pangaea.
Lighting candles for the Great Rift Valley with bootleg magma
from Kilimanjaro. Branding Himalayas to her calves'
Appalachia. Speed testing smoke signals hitched to waves.

The earth melts, mixes, through double toils and troubles while her fires burn and her cauldron bubbles until element upon element is refreshed and renewed and then spewed out across her surface to be harvested and re-assimilated into life.

The spring renewal itself is a bittersweet, albeit natural, event that is a constant reminder that, while death is inevitable, so too is birth, yet one that is never promised for the individual. I know of no better spokesperson to marry the feelings of glad tidings with the woe of loss than Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) in his *Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats* (1821), as presented here in the eighteenth and twentieth stanzas:



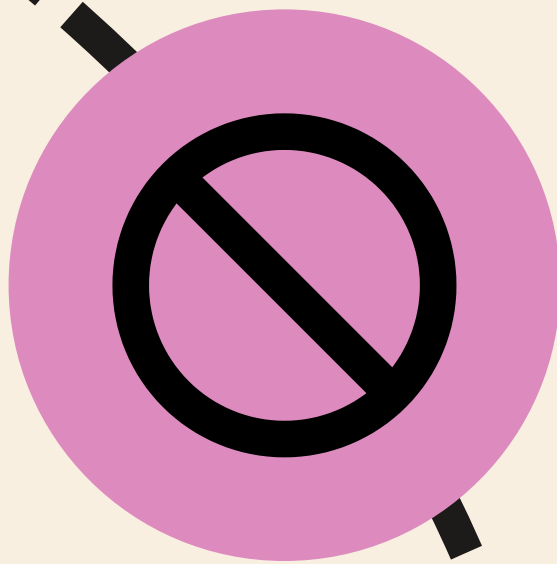
Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year.
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, re-appear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
And the green lizard and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

Deadlines

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

For example:

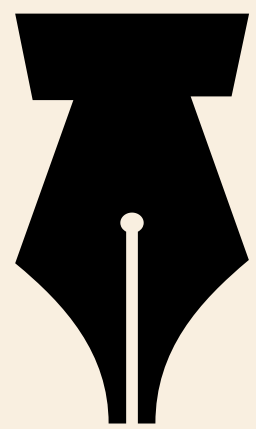
The deadline for May's issue is April 15th



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**

Subject line must read "FRESH INK - month"

Replace "month" with your target month for publication

Check your email periodically for suggestions from the editor

Vision & Verse II:

a Fusion of Poetry, Prose, Art and Photography

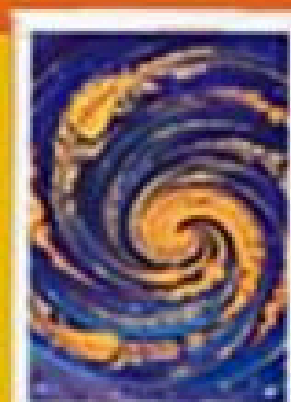
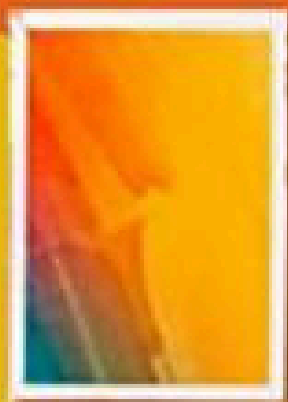
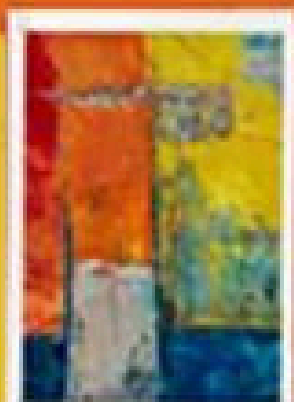
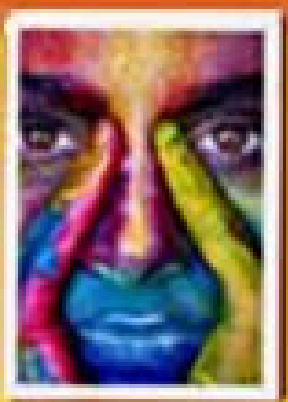
The California Writers Club is excited to announce we will be accepting submissions for poems and short prose to appear in *Vision & Verse II: a Fusion of Poetry, Prose, Art, and Photography*.

We are asking our CWC members to submit poetry and prose to be wed with the selected artwork. After selecting a piece of art that inspires you, dare to be great and go beyond the ordinary. Let your imagination and words soar.

for more information visit
<https://calwriters.org/vision-verse-ii-ekphrastic-book-submissions/>

Vision & Verse II

A Fusion of Art and Writing



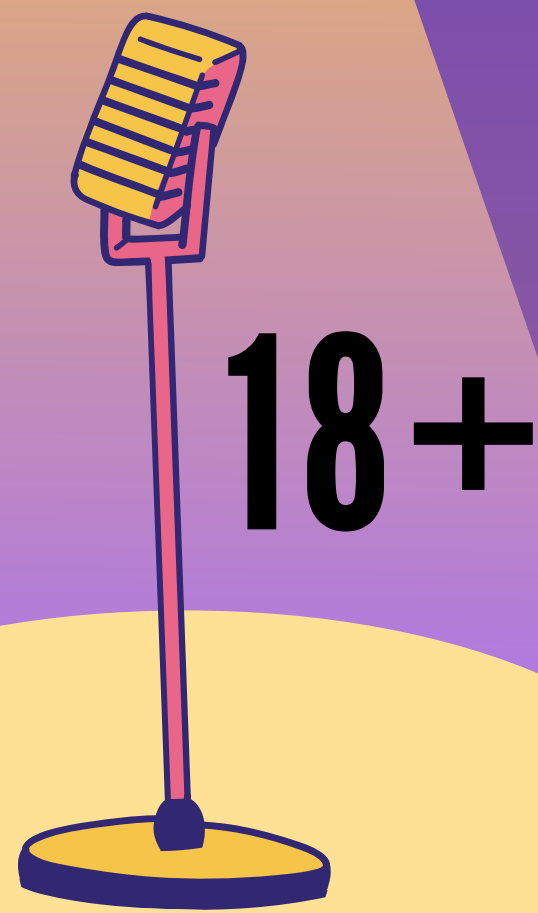
Submission period April 15 to May 15



OPEN MIC STORYTELLER NIGHT



Wednesday, April 9, 2025 from 6–8pm
Ovitt Family Community Library
215 East C St, Ontario, CA 91764



Love storytelling?

Seasoned storytellers or
new writers – everyone's
voice is welcome!

Bring and share your own
5-to-10-minute story, or
simply listen as others
take the mic to share
theirs.

No prior experience is
needed, bring your
creativity and a love for
storytelling!

The DVWG tradition of celebrating
beautiful words and phrases
continues with our ninth annual
poetry event. Guild members will
have an opportunity to read up to
two poems and share why their
selections are meaningful to them.



POETRY MONTH



OPEN MIC



Saturday, April 19, 2025 at 9:30–11:30am
Hemet Public Library
300 E Latham Ave, Hemet, CA 92543

Email the poems to
DVWritersGuild@gmail.com
by April 14, 2025.

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 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.

Congrats **Ben Alirez** for publishing his book *El Gato's Crusade*.

Ben Alirez's latest novel, *El Gato's Crusade*, is scheduled for release by March 30th. It is a coming-of-age story about a teenage boxing sensation who becomes entangled in gang violence and personal loss. Fast-paced and brimming with action, it is about faith and hope, light and darkness—love and friendship.

kudos korker

Link to purchase:
<https://a.co/d/hQPqB3>

Paperback:
\$14.99

An emotional powerhouse!

A coming-of-age story inspired by faith and hope, *El Gato's Crusade* is about light and darkness—love and friendship. The search for purpose and meaning.



BEN ALIREZ co-authored a young adult novella with Paul Langan entitled *Brothers in Arms* in 2004. Since retiring after thirty years with the City of Los Angeles, he has been a member of the Inland Empire California Writers Club. His literary works have appeared in four anthologies and featured in the Employees Club of California and Kindle Vella.

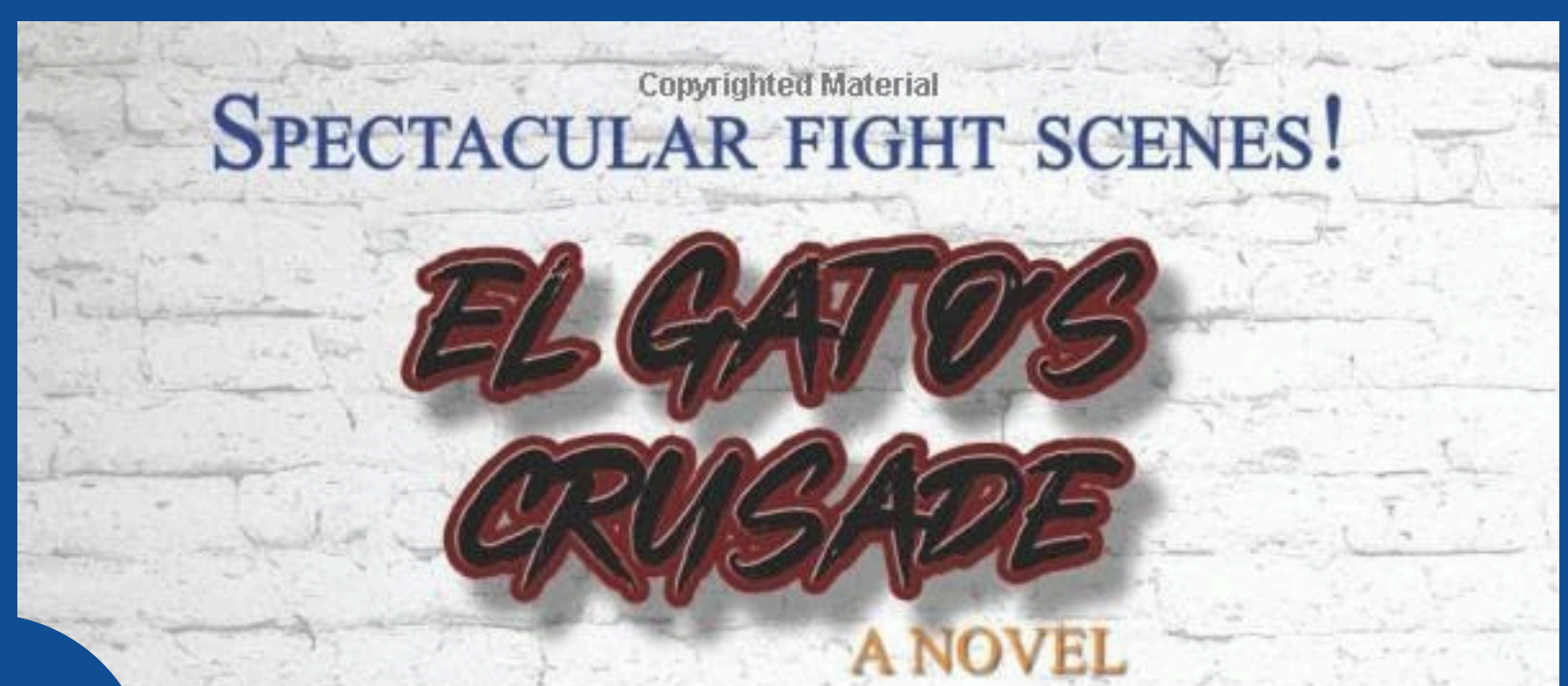
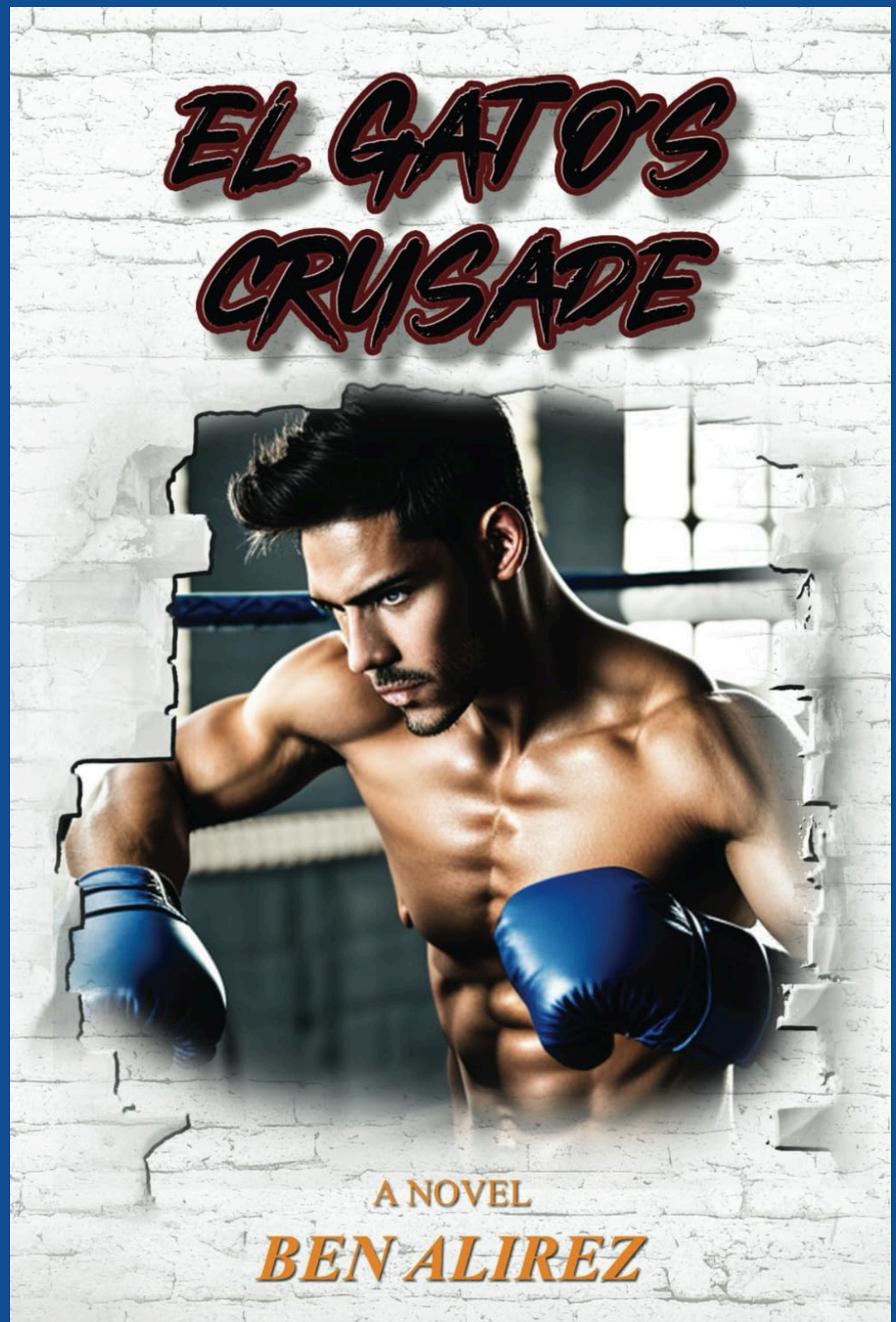
In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ben also authored *Embers of Innocence*, a novel about the virus that changed the world.

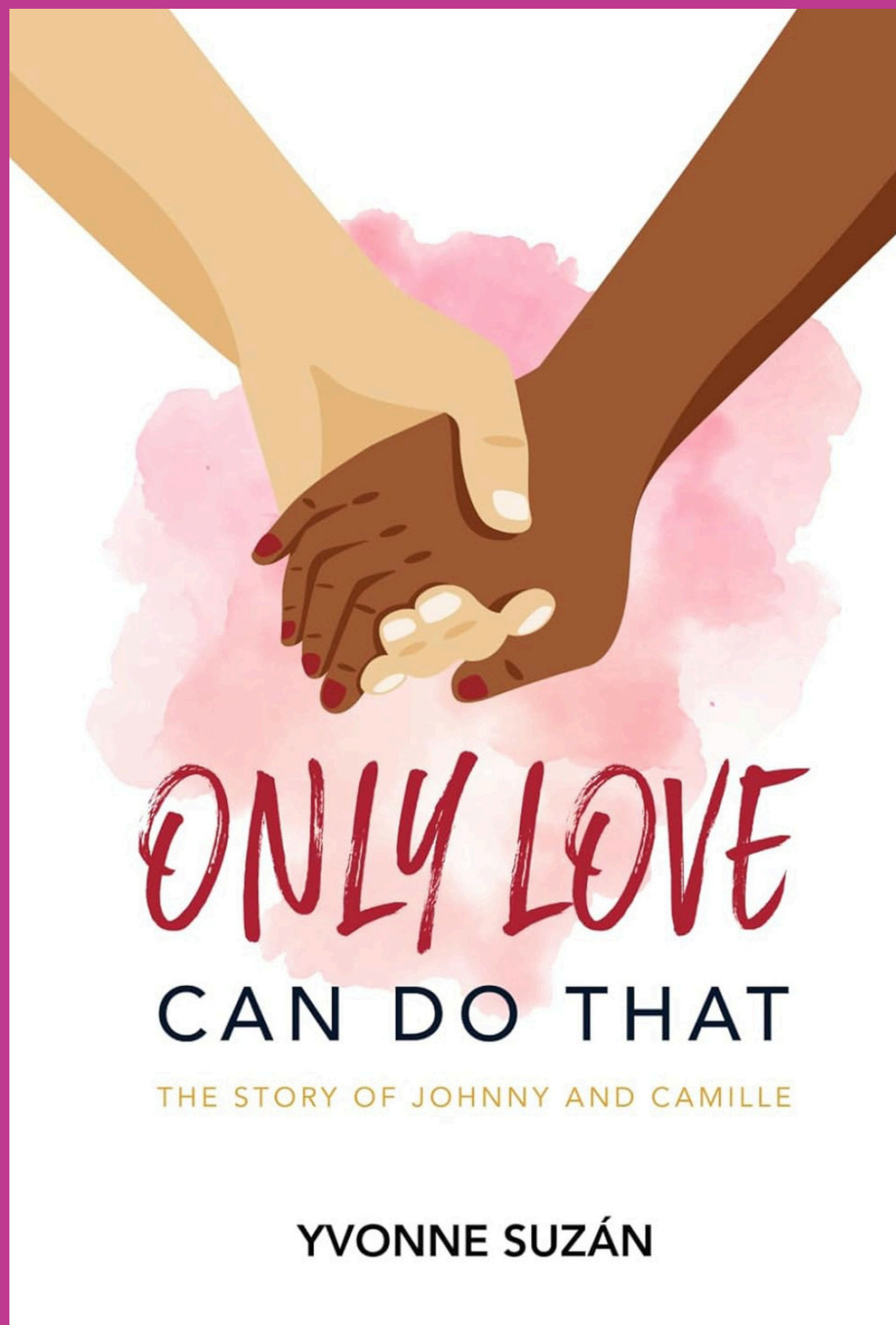
Copyrighted Material

About the Author

Ben is currently serving with the Inland Empire California Writers Club as membership chair, having previously held the office of treasurer. Prior to *El Gato's Crusade*, he co-authored *Brothers in Arms* in 2004, a young adult novella about gangs and inner-city life, and *Embers of Innocence* in 2022, a novel about the devastation COVID-19 left on the world, as experienced through an ensemble cast of characters.

Having worked for over thirty-three years with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Ben is now retired and fully devoted to growing in the craft of writing. And playing pickleball, not necessarily in that order.

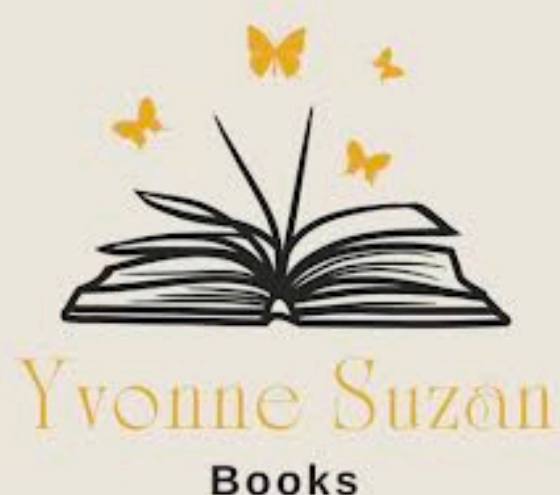




Congrats **Ann Casas**! On February 14, 2025 she published her new book *Only Love Can Do That* under the pen name "Yvonne Suzan."

About the Author
Yvonne Suzán loves to write about... love! A former educator, her life's journey has enabled her to explore the many nuances of that elusive yet most important element that many yearn for and some attain. The passion, suspense, excitement, romance, and commitment it requires challenges her creative spirit, and her travels inspire her to write about people she has imagined falling in love in those exotic locales.

Link to purchase:
<https://a.co/d/hQPqB3>



Discover the first book in an incredible new fiction series about love.

Kindle:
\$4.99
Paperback:
\$9.99
Hardcover:
\$19.99



Johnny and Camille are unwitting trailblazers who fought for love.

Discover the first book in an incredible new fiction series about love. Titled *Only Love Can Do That*, this captivating story by Yvonne Suzán will inspire and move you.

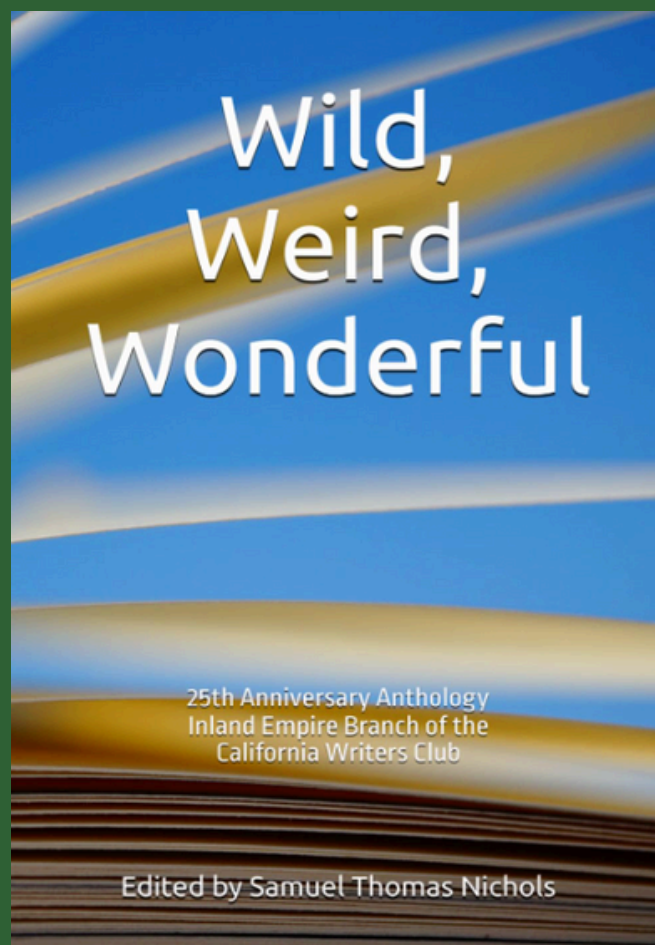
kudos
corner

CWC

THE SMALLS

The Smalls includes selections from the California Writers Club 2024 "Big Contest for Small Poems and Prose." This is a vibrant collection of unique voices chosen from the contest entries.

<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>



BOOKS



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, 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
- 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.



Prompt: Write a limerick

There once was a group of writers
who attended workshops like prize fighters.
They tackled and wrestled
all their words into pretzels
until everything tasted just right.

Shirley Timura provided the next prompt, inspired by one of her favorite poets, Robert Frost. With an “abbaa” structure, the group was tasked with building a five-line poem that featured the last words *bloom*, *night*, *flight*, *plume*, and *room*. More wonderful interpretations were read aloud, including a deep meditative offering from poet Rebecca del Rio and recited by Monica.

Prompt: Write a poem in the manner of Frost.

Inside my head is filled with gloom
unsettled thoughts repeat all night.
Awake, my worries take day-flight
chased by plans and words from my plume.
But...insomnia returns. Oh, my dark room!

FROM YOUR EDITOR:

We also briefly went over Shakespeare’s use of iambic pentameter, a line with 5 iambs (10 syllables) each with a *stressed* and *unstressed* syllable



Returning visitors in the crowd included Kimber Commodore and Alison Sanders. High Desert member CJ Berry was also in attendance, extending Synergy Open Mic invitations to the club and passing out flyers (see attached pic).

Next month, Sam will preside over the open mic poetry which will take place in the large room. Ten minutes will be allotted to each reader, and a microphone provided. Participants need not be a member of the IECWC, but should notify Sam of their intention to take part. Sam may be contacted at: iecaliforniawritersclub@gmail.com

In closing, Judy reiterated the club’s intention to host a play later in the year. Ben Alirez, Cindy Demone, and Sam Nichols will help to establish a general outline. Judy is also soliciting ideas from club members.

Afterward, 11 people continued the camaraderie with lunch at Ontario’s Mule Car Smokehouse and further discussions on the play concept.

MARCH 2025 MEETING

MEETING REVIEW

Poetry Writing Workshop by Ben Alirez

Saturday, March 22, 2025, at 10:10 a.m.
Ovitt Family Community Library
215 E. C St., Ontario, CA 91764



FROM YOUR EDITOR:
I included examples of the
poetry prompts written by
President Judy Konhen for
reference
This month's review is
somewhat structured like
"Poetry Musings"

In anticipation of Open Mic Poetry scheduled for April and National Poetry Month, the Inland Empire California Writers Club hosted a poetry writing workshop in the Storytime Room.

The meeting began with Sam Nichols making club announcements as Judy Kohnen set up the Zoom for club member Monica Aleman, who was taking part remotely. With a few new faces in the crowd, Sam provided a little background on the California Writers Club, including the inspiration it derived from literary giant Jack London.

Prompt: Write a rant poem.
Writing at the Ovitt Library in Four Haikus

Poetry writing
at the Ovitt Library.
Workshop in progress.

Blank piece of paper.
Words! I curse and command them,
"Drop ink on my page!"

Everyone finished—
I listen to the birds singing.
My poem is silent.

I write on paper.
Outside, the grass is greening—
my poem unfurls.

Sam then got the workshop going with some recited poetry and a challenge to the members to write a "rant" poem. Turns out there were plenty of pent-up emotions in the room, for more than half a dozen people contributed with tirades of various lengths and scope.

Abigail Handojo went next, prompting some limerick exercises, which is a short, humorous (and often bawdy) five-line poem that follows an "aabba" rhyme scheme. This time, no less than eight attendees read off their lines, drawing laughs aplenty along the way.



Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 10:10 am
Ovitt Family Community Library
215 East C St, Ontario, CA 91764



JOIN US FOR A POETRY OPEN MIC



In recognition of April as the *National Poetry Month* our Inland Branch of the California Writers Club will be hosting an open Poetry Mic. You do not need to be a member to participate but you do need to get on the roster by emailing your title(s) and expected reading time to Sam Nichols at the email address provided below. Readings should be limited to 10 minutes or less. Readings will be scheduled in the order the reservation requests are received or as deemed appropriate by the organizer.

- There will be a wireless microphone mounted on an adjustable microphone stand to facilitate the poetry readings.
- This will be a mixed audience at a family oriented library with minors in attendance so no gratuitous sex or violence.

Organized by the Academy of American Poets, and introduced in 1996, *National Poetry Month* is an annual celebration of poetry. It seeks to increase the appreciation and awareness of poetry within the United States. Further information may be found on the Academy's website at Poets.org/npm.

Email Sam Nichols at: iecaliforniawritersclub@gmail.com to reserve a spot.

APRIL 2025 OPEN MIC WHAT'S COMING UP

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue was edited using
Canva



Spring has sprung, reader,

April has finally come, and with it: seasonal allergies, unexpected rainstorms, and poetry month! I hope my April Fools' prank wasn't too tough to figure out. Everything in this issue is flipped, so it starts with May's theme and ends with the cover.



@abigail_handojo

As the saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers," and in this Fresh Ink, I incorporated both! The theme "renewal" paints a picture in my mind of a rainbow after the rain or the first bloom of spring. Instead of Easter pastels, I filled the page with rich cantaloupe, fandango, and indigo colors paired with umbrellas and scrolls.

Our March poetry workshop was a success! I enjoyed toiling over syllable counts with all of you.

At April's open mic, we'll recite what we've written.
Hope to see you there!

Faith, trust, and eraser dust,
Abigail Elina Handojo

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Our Poetry Workshop on March 22nd made me sweat! It was a challenge! But also fun and a productive time. My thanks to our club members and their

three writing exercises. Sam Nichols kicked off the session by making us “write a rant poem.” The result was a cathartic, healthy release of energy. We all have different complaints! Shirley Timura has us use the last word from every line in a Robert Frost poem. The results made poetry easy. Abigail Handojo made me work the hardest. I was counting out beats, lines, and rhymes for Limericks without much success. I finished the last line at home.

I sent my three poems to Abigail to be published in Fresh Ink. If you attended, I hope we get a poetry collection in Fresh Ink and our open mic in April. April is National Poetry Month, so let's celebrate! After these poetry sessions, we will study other forms of writing. May will be flash fiction, June is Young Adult literature. Be inspired.

Write on,
Judy Kohnen

CONTACT THE
board

President:
Judy Kohnen
judy.kohnen@gmail.com

Vice President & Membership Chair:
Ben Alirez
iecwcmembership@outlook.com

Secretary:
Elisabeth Anghel
anghelelisabeth@gmail.com

Treasurer:
Sam Nichols
samuelthomasnichols@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:
Abigail Handojo
iecwcfreshink@gmail.com

Hospitality Chair:
Shirley Petro-Timura
timura@hotmail.com

Social Networking Chair:
Cynthia Demone
talk2msm@verizon.net

Webmaster:
Kelly Lewis
kelsolive@gmail.com

Critique Group Coordinator:
Constance Cassinelli
cassinelli100@hotmail.com

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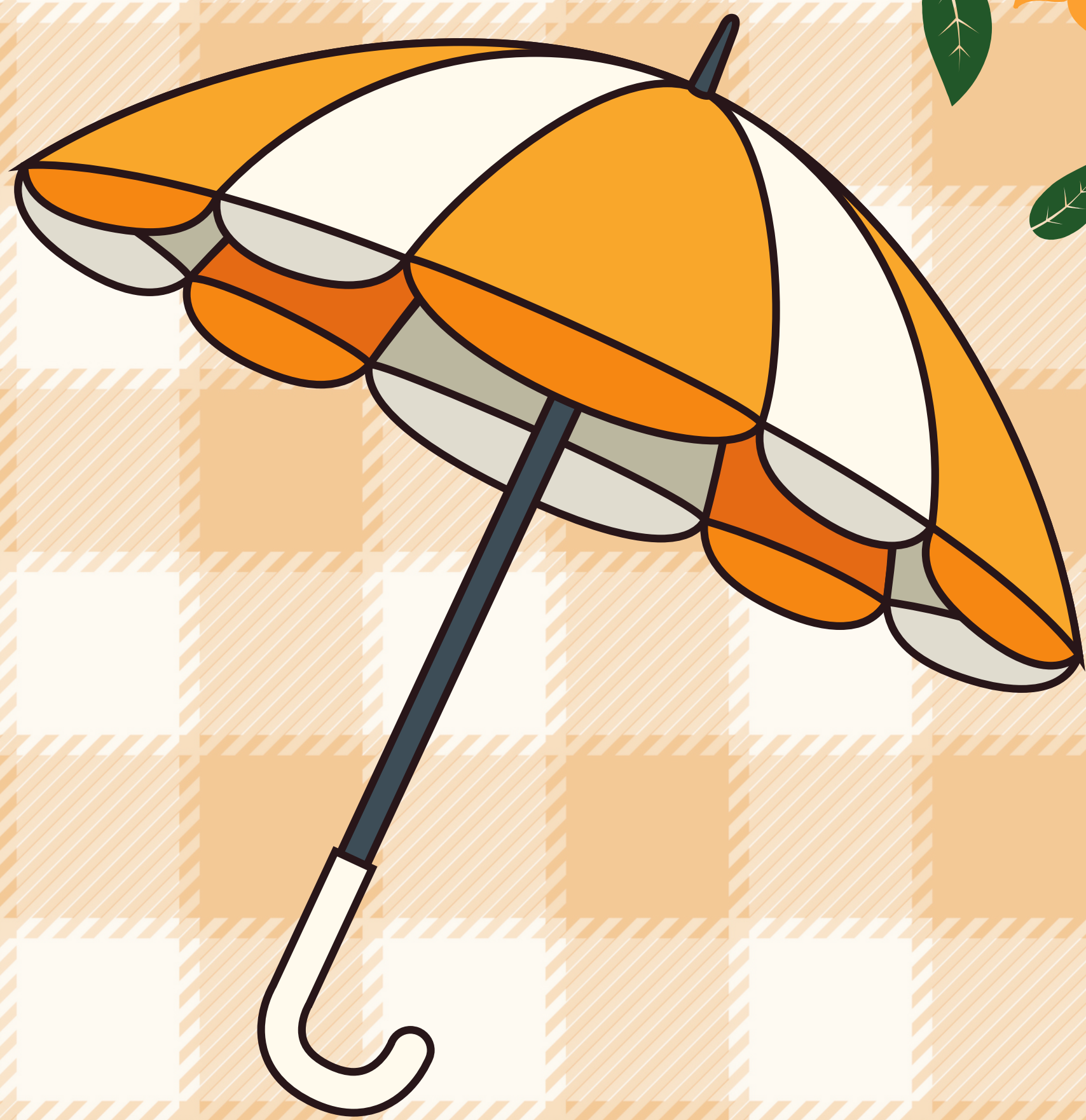
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April 2025

Inland Empire
California Writers Club

FRESH Ink