

August 2026

FRESH INK

*Inland Empire
California
Writers Club*



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am humming our August newsletter theme "Under the Sea" as I write. In *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel made the heartbreaking choice to trade her voice to Ursula the sea-witch to pursue her dream. For much of the story, Ariel could see the world she longed for—but without her voice, she couldn't tell her own story.

Writers face the opposite challenge. We already have a voice. Every time we sit down to write, we reclaim that voice. We unlock memories, imagine new worlds, ask difficult questions, and discover truths we didn't know were hiding inside us.

In July we kicked-off our 5-month **Master the Art of Writing a Story** workshop. Whether you're taking your first steps as a writer or polishing your tenth manuscript, every story begins with finding the courage to speak—and then putting those words on the page.

Somewhere beneath the surface is a story only you can tell. Our "stories in one sentence" sound like the following, (apologies if I am off the mark with my editing):

- A daughter races to rescue her famous-chef father after his sailboat—and everyone aboard—vanishes without a trace.
- A naïve young man must leave the father he loves to save the family farm.
- An ambitious killer discovers that every murder creates a new reason to commit the next.
- A survivor with prophetic visions hunts the serial killer who nearly ended her life, only to find that his wealth and influence may make justice impossible.

All stories begin with a willingness to discover the voice only you can share. Remarkably, our club has over twenty stories in the works. I am so excited. I will send out a spreadsheet for those of you who want accountability. The next session discusses character traits. You can follow via email or in person.

Judy Kohnen

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue was edited using
Canva



Hello Readers!

It's hard to believe that it has already been a full year since I took over the Fresh Ink newsletter. Time has flown by! Over the past year, I've learned so much and truly enjoyed creating each issue. Thank you for your patience as I experimented with new layouts and designs. I hope you've enjoyed reading the newsletter as much as I've enjoyed creating it.

As much as I've loved publishing a newsletter every month, it's time for a change. This August issue will be the last monthly edition of Fresh Ink. Beginning in September, the newsletter will transition to a quarterly publication schedule. I wanted to let you know a month in advance so everyone has plenty of time to prepare for the new schedule.

Quarterly Publication Schedule

Issue	Submission Deadline
September	August 20
December	November 20
March	February 20
June	May 20

This month's **"Under the Sea"** theme is all about slowing down and finding ways to stay cool during the August heat. I had a wonderful time creating this ocean-themed issue, and I hope you enjoy all of the fun underwater designs as much as I enjoyed putting them together.

I was also thrilled to receive so many submissions this month. Thank you to everyone who shared their work—your creativity is what makes Fresh Ink so special.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and I look forward to continuing to share Fresh Ink with you each quarter.

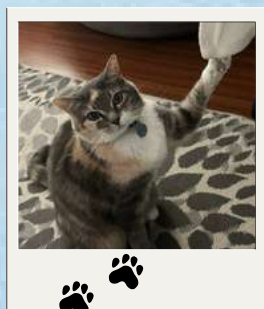
Ink to page, tales unveiled.

Anaïs Hamel



@globetrotteuse99

Litchi in her attempt to get my attention while I was working on the newsletter got her claw stuck.



Master the Art of Writing a Story

A 5-MONTH MASTERCLASS: IDEA TO PUBLISHED AUTHOR

Whether you're a beginning writer learning the fundamentals or an experienced author refining a manuscript, this workshop offers practical tools, writing exercises, discussion, and opportunities to learn from one another.



A WORKSHOP FOR EVERY LEVEL



FOUNDATIONS TRACK

will learn the building blocks of storytelling, including premise, genre, character, point of view, dialogue, revision, and publication basics.



MASTER CRAFT TRACK

is invited to participate in our monthly Show & Tell discussions by bringing published books, completed manuscripts, or works in progress to demonstrate how craft techniques work in real stories. Share excerpts, discuss revision choices, and help connect writing theory to practical applications.

THE 5-MONTH ROADMAP

JULY

Turning Ideas into Stories

Date: July 25, 2026
(3rd Saturday)



Focus:
Condense complex plots into a single-sentence pitch (logline) to keep your writing focused.

FOUNDATIONS TRACK:
Connect your story to universal themes using simple, powerful creative prompts.

MASTER CRAFT TRACK:
Map your current WIP onto a strict 3-act structure.

DELIVERABLE:
Lock in a 1-sentence story premise using a structural formula.

AUGUST

Character Drives Plot

Date: August 22, 2026
(3rd Saturday)



Focus:
Build multidimensional characters whose flaws and choices directly cause the story's main conflict.

FOUNDATIONS TRACK:
Map out the foundational wants, needs, and flaws of your protagonist and antagonist.

MASTER CRAFT TRACK:
Use psychology to create internal desires that clash with external behavior.

DELIVERABLE:
Draft Act 2 and Act 3 obstacles that flip character situations from positive to negative.

SEPTEMBER

Writing for an Audience: Genre

Date: September 26, 2026
(3rd Saturday)



Focus:
Align your book layout with genre expectations to fulfill your promise to the reader.

FOUNDATIONS TRACK:
Learn the "one-sitting" rule and transition from writing for yourself to editing for others.

MASTER CRAFT TRACK:
Analyze Amazon categories and check your book metrics (word count, popularity) against market standards.

DELIVERABLE:
Put your book through the "Bookstore Test" to target the right shelf.

OCTOBER

Dialogue and Point of View

Date: October 26, 2026
(3rd Saturday)



Focus:
Choose the perfect narrative point of view and make your characters speak with clear purpose.

FOUNDATIONS TRACK:
Master 1st vs. 3rd person limited and cut out boring "real-life" greeting pleasantries.

MASTER CRAFT TRACK:
Weaponize dialogue with subtext, double-meanings, silence, and hidden agendas.

DELIVERABLE:
Eliminate narrative clutter and passive voice to match scene urgency.

NOVEMBER

Revision, Publishing, and Finishing Strong

Date: November 28, 2026
(3rd Saturday)



Focus:
Navigate the technical phase of self-publishing, formatting, and launching.

PRODUCTION:
Format eBooks, design genre-compliant covers, and hire development/copy editors.

DISTRIBUTION:
Set up an Amazon KDP account, pass the digital tax interview, and pick royalty tiers.

DELIVERABLE:
Mine Amazon auto-complete data for 7 high-traffic backend search keywords.



WORKSHOP LOCATION & TIME

Ovitt Family Library
215 E C St, Ontario, CA 91764
(3rd Saturday of the Month)
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Come Write with Us!

OPTIONAL LUNCH

Eden Garden Fusion Grill
392 E A St, Upland, CA 91786
Join us after the workshop for lunch, conversation, and community!



Create. Connect. Grow. Tell better stories.

WRITERS HELPING WRITERS

Master the Art of Writing a Story

A 5-MONTH MASTERCLASS: IDEA TO PUBLISHED AUTHOR

Practical tools. Writing exercises. Discussion.
Learn from one another. Grow together.



SHOW & TELL
Advanced writers bring published works or WIPs to share and discuss.

TWO TRACKS. EVERY LEVEL.



FOUNDATIONS TRACK

Learn the building blocks of storytelling: premise, genre, character, point of view, dialogue, revision, and publication basics.

Perfect for Beginning Writers



MASTER CRAFT TRACK

Dive deeper into craft and story structure.
Participate in monthly Show & Tell discussions.

Ideal for Experienced Writers



Third Session
SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2026
10:00 AM – NOON

AUGUST – CHARACTER DRIVES PLOT

- ✓ **Focus:** Build multi-dimensional characters whose flaws and choices directly cause the story's main conflict.
- ✓ **Deliverable:** Draft Act 2 and Act 3 obstacles that flip character situations from positive to negative.



WORKSHOP LOCATION
OVITT FAMILY LIBRARY
215 E C St
Ontario, CA 91764



OPTIONAL LUNCH AFTERWARDS
Eden Garden Fusion Grill
392 E A St
Upland, CA 91786



Turn ideas into stories. Stories into pages. Pages into polished work.

LET'S WRITE!



JUNE 2026 MEETING REVIEW

The Healing Power of Art Recap by Ben Alirez

Saturday, June 27, 2026
Ovitt Family Community Library
215 E. C St., Ontario, CA 91764



Opening Announcements

President Judy Kohnen opened the meeting with important details about the club, its past, its present, and hopefully—its future. Because IECWC is struggling to maintain a healthy group of volunteers, the club may be forced to restructure some of its practices. It remains to be seen.

Guest Speaker Gabriella De Leon

An educator with twenty-five years of experience, Gabriella began writing during the pandemic. Her work is aimed at preserving the history and lessons of the past, especially for future generations. She has already gained notable recognition, such as:

- Featured at **The Cheech Museum**
- Contributor to **MathicalBooks.org**
- Featured on **Bookelicious.com**
- Profiled in **Multilingual Educator Magazine** (2023)
- Winner of the **Southern California Board of Teachers of the Arts (SBTA) Monte Innovation Award** (2023)

She currently has three novels and one children's book in development.

My Story Through Art: Gabriella's Family Narratives

Gabriella's creative work is deeply rooted in her family's history, expressed through writing and visual art.

1. Children of the Revolution

A retelling of her grandfather Enrique's initial arrival by train to Needles and the Garces Hotel. Gabriella's husband Zenneth DeHaan read a powerful excerpt describing those first moments and the troubled past he left behind.

2. Colorado River Boys

A narrative set in 1941 from her father Onesimo De Leon's point of view as a young boy. Gabriella shared her own painting of the Colorado River that accompanies the story.

3. Dukes of El Garces

A continuation of Onesimo's journey as an adult. Because Gabriella often accompanied her father to the barbershop as a child, she heard many amazing stories from Korean War veterans, including:

- **David Villafana**, survivor of the Bataan Death March. He lived through three years of imprisonment, in part from the nourishment of native cactus plants. Sixty years later he would finally be recognized for helping others survive the terrible ordeal.
- **Rudy "Rey" Mejia**, awarded the distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest honor for valor in combat.
- Her father **Onesimo**, who served on special weapons development teams during the Korean War, a highly sensitive and clandestine program known as the Combat Development Experimentation Command. It was a commission he served in secret, even to those closest to him and family members. He also wore the "*Vision to Victory*" patch, whose significance was only recently declassified.

Family Origins and Regional History

Gabriella's family is from Barstow, California, by way of Needles and the Mojave Desert.

- The family helped build the historic **El Garces Hotel** in Needles, though early settlers like them were not allowed inside the posh hotel and luxury passenger depot.
- The building is now called the **El Garces Depot** and has been restored as an event space. In 2024, Gabriella was invited by her cousin—now a councilwoman—to share her family's story in the very venue their ancestors were once prohibited from entering.

Other notable figures from Needles include:

- Margaret Garcia, prominent artist
- Charles Schulz, creator of the long-running comic strip *Peanuts*

Art, Memory, and Legacy

Some of Gabriella's "*De Leon Tree of Life*" illustrations are from her father's gravesite and her children's book *The Red Bicycle*, which symbolizes the American dream through the metaphor of a 1940s Schwinn bicycle. Artwork by her mother, Anita De Leon, was also featured during the presentation. Anita was herself a gifted painter.

Her father worked for the Santa Fe Railroad and was also multilingual. Gabriella credits her near-verbatim memory and storytelling ability to him. To her great fortune, her father left behind journals and photos.

Her first writing prize came in 1981 while she was in fifth grade. The piece was titled *El Colibri* (the hummingbird). She later studied at Mexico City's Museum of Anthropology.

Books that inspired her

- *Family Pictures* by Carmen Lomas Garza
- *Bless Me, Ultima*, and *The Farolitos of Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya

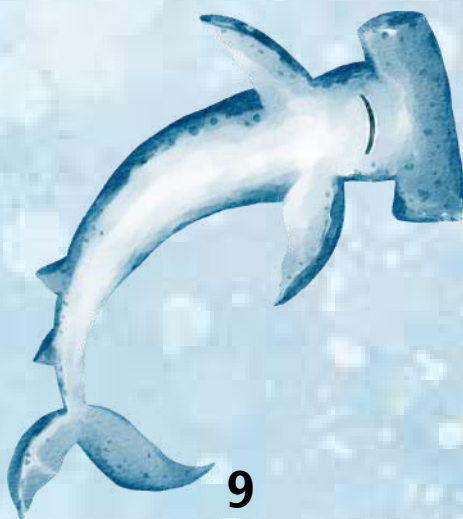
The poem "*Nopalitos*" by Gloria Anzaldúa has also greatly inspired her, as it masterfully illustrates how all people are connected.

Chicano Fly Boy

Her uncle Lorenzo was drafted into World War II and served as part of the crew for the Memphis Belle, the famous Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. Equally remarkable was the fact they were awarded medals by King George of England himself. A story so unimaginable that Gabriella jokingly calls herself the "Queen of crazy stories that are actually true."

El Regalo / The Gift

In closing, Gabriella shared her reservations over signing a publishing contract with Scholastic. Despite a flattering offer from the leading publisher, a family lawyer advised her that doing so would mean relinquishing story rights, including her meaningful illustrations. A revelation that led her to ultimately decline the contract. She further emphasized her creative works aren't money-driven, but a personal revolution, a way of preserving family history and enabling future generations to better understand the struggles of the past and where they come from. Creative works expressed through art, storytelling, and education.



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

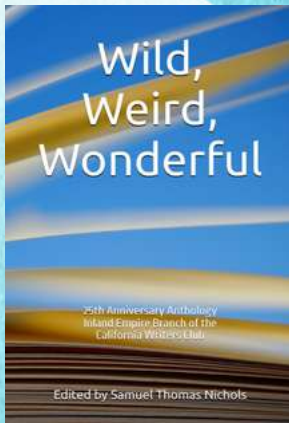
Renewal deadline August 31. On September 1, CWC shall drop all delinquent members from the rolls. If dropped, you must pay the new \$65 member enrollment fees.

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

Kudos Page

Sue Andrews continues to reach exciting new milestones in her writing journey. Her award-winning book is now featured at the Long Beach Main Library and several branch libraries with its 2027 Eric Hoffer Book Award seal. She recently participated in an interview with actor Juan Carrigan on the Writers Airwave Network. Looking ahead, Sue is preparing for an exciting Times Square showcase, where film clips featuring her books will be displayed from Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve. Congratulations, Sue, on these well-deserved achievements, and best wishes for your continued success!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8aQi-pDX-k>





Kudos to **John J. McBrearty** for an exceptional month of inspiring and educating others through his books, YouTube presentations, and mentorship. His commitment to preserving military history, encouraging veterans to share their stories, and providing practical guidance for aspiring authors reflects a lifetime of service beyond the uniform. Thank you for continuing to inspire others to write, learn, and leave a lasting legacy.

Check his work and chanel via the link below
<https://www.youtube.com/@JohnWritesHistory>



August Videos releases

2026-08-02

How did I Publish my 1st Book
<https://youtu.be/AM3JzehCHvQ>

2026-08-03

How to Write Your Life Story
<https://youtu.be/eTYcaT5GaYg>

2026-08-06

Purpose Beyond Uniform
<https://youtu.be/pgCAWQnS7O0>

2026-08-09

Publishing a Book: Pay or do it yourself?
<https://youtu.be/yrdfGOnfFMg>

2026-08-12

A.I. An Author's Friend or Foe?
https://youtu.be/WtfA8-9z_r8

2026-08-15

From Home to Hell
<https://youtube.com/shorts/EzXDL9YnsPs>

2026-08-21

What is the big deal with book reviews
<https://youtu.be/dtzFizDAHnU>

2026-08-21

Combat the Brutal Truth
<https://youtu.be/rGpIXqnliLA>

2026-08-28

Leadership Before War
<https://youtube.com/shorts/Vv0AaLIDjT8>

PRESS RELEASE



Lost in Conversation: poetry collection **By Abigail Handojo**

Lost in Conversation is sea glass, grief, smile lines, sunsets, heartbreak, and healing bundled into a poetry collection. Every word carries raw, human emotion and artistically composed vulnerability. Abigail experimented with form and visual elements, crafting an interactive chapbook for curious readers. This collection acts like a body of water, revealing the best, worst, messiest, and most precious parts of a person.

Check it out on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/07smAgAD>

Old Lady Running **By Ann Casas**

Old Lady Running is a powerful and intimate collection of short stories that explore what it means to cross invisible thresholds—into aging, into reinvention, into deeper truths. Drawn from years of lived experience, writing classrooms, and life-altering moments, these stories move between fiction and memory, humor and heartbreak, grief and grace.

This is a book about continuing—about running toward creativity, toward language, toward the self that is still unfolding.

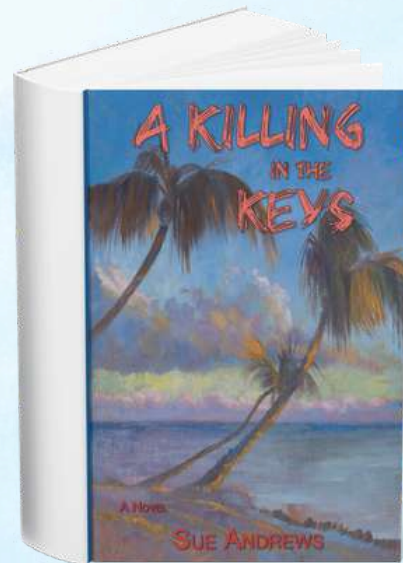


Check it out on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/024npJ32>

PRESS RELEASE

A Killing in the Keys **By Sue Andrews**

Jacksonville Judas' beloved hero, Wade Nevlin, has retired to Key West to forget his painful past in Jacksonville, rife with loss. After a friend introduces him to AA, Wade fulfills his dream of starting a charter boat company aboard the Beverly, named after his cherished, late wife. His new life includes a cadre of new friends, a charming cottage and his beloved dog, Sandy,



Check it out on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/0e1aHjoR>

From Home to Hell **Combat Journal 1** **By John J. McBrearty**



From Home to Hell chronicles the earliest days of a National Guard battalion's deployment to Iraq—arrival, uncertainty, and the slow realization that nothing familiar applies anymore. Written in real time, these journal entries capture the psychological shift from civilian certainty to combat reality. This abridged edition introduces the raw, unpolished voice that defines the series and sets the foundation for what follows.

Purchase amazon Audio Book Here:
<https://a.co/d/0a6EdiAH>



Help Wanted

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO FILL
IN THESE BOARD POSITIONS!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
JUDY KOHNEN JUDY.KOHNEN@GMAIL.COM

**PROGRAM
CHAIR**

SECRETARY

Deadlines

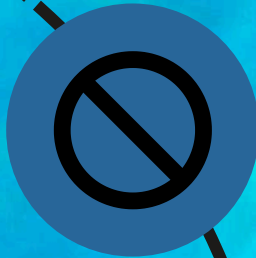
Submissions are due the 20th of every month



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



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**

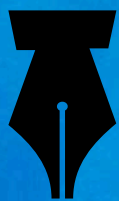
You are encouraged to submit photos you have taken



Email

iecwcfreshink@gmail.com

Check your email periodically for suggestions from the editor



**FRESH
INK**

guidelines

Poetry Musings

By Samuel Thomas Nichols

Under the Sea

Who doesn't immediately think of a Trinidadian-accented crab belting out a catchy calypso/reggae number when they hear the phrase *under the sea*? With the Disney Company's elated reincarnation of Hans Christian Andersen's tragedy of a nameless young mermaid, the phrase has devolved into something of a cliché. But, not all clichés are trite, and as Sebastian, the crab, wants us to believe that life under the sea is sweeter, we know that darkness lurks:

Below the thunders of the upper deep;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides: above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.



I get a thrill imagining Vincent Price reading *The Kraken*, by Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), which describes the mythical kraken (that many now know from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise) in terms of its surroundings and never the beast itself. Tennyson doesn't mention tentacles, teeth, or any of the fearsomeness that we've come to know, but yet there is that same terror in Tennyson's description that pursued Captain Jack Sparrow and untold sailors across the centuries.

The often peaceful surface of the sea belies what malevolence might lie in the fathoms below, but one doesn't have to look far for grim reminders. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) reminded us of the perils of warfare under the sea in his booklet *The Fringes of the Fleet* (1915), which contained the poem *Submarines*:

The ships destroy us above
And ensnare us beneath.
We arise, we lie down, and we move
In the belly of Death.

The ships have a thousand eyes
To mark where we come...
But the mirth of a seaport dies
When our blow gets home.



I don't believe Kipling found reasons to rejoice following the dark days of WWI, and his output seemed to lack the prewar humor and lightness, such as found in his poetry or his *Just So Stories* (1902) for children. Decades later, another author beloved for his witty writings for children, and adults, would appear. Shel Silverstein's (1930–1999) poem *Mermaid* (circa 1966), tells of a sailor's romance with a mermaid he spied from a whaling ship on his first day at sea. The mermaid pulled the sailor under the sea to her seaweed bed, where he loved her:



From her head to her waist, but the bottom part was a fish
Oh her hair were green as seaweed her eyes were blue and pale
And I loved that girl with all my heart
I vowed we'd never part
But ... I did not like the tail

Soon, though, a millionaire sailed by and enticed his mermaid love away with a diamond ring, but, as Silverstein tells it, the poor sailor's heartbreak was short-lived because:

... her sister swam on by, and set my heart awhirl
For her upper part was an ugly old fish but the bottom part was girl
Yes her knees are pink and rosy and her toes are small and frail
Her body it's a work of art and I love that girl with all my heart
And I don't give a damn about the upper part and that's how I end my tale

Now, you might suppose, sweet little mermaids (like Disney's Ariel) are not monsters that roam the deep, but they, like fairies, continue to infect many a young man's dreams. Even though, as William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) warns:

A mermaid found a swimming lad,
Picked him for her own,
Pressed her body to his body,
Laughed; and plunging down
Forgot in cruel happiness
That even lovers drown.



I understand that the Irish are as fond of their merfolk as they are of their selkies, which are shapeshifters that can take human or seal forms by removing or donning seal skins. Merfolk and selkie folk can both be friendly and helpful or cruel and vengeful, and both seem to prefer being under the sea away from humans who have their own dark depths, as suggested in these excerpts:

I put on
the body-armor of black rubber
the absurd flippers
the grave and awkward mask.

There is a ladder.

I go down.
Rung after rung and still
the oxygen immerses me
the blue light
the clear atoms
of our human air.

And now: it is easy to forget
what I came for
among so many who have always
lived here
swaying their crenellated fans
between the reefs

I came to explore the wreck.

This is the place.
And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair
streams black, the merman in his armored body.
We circle silently
about the wreck
we dive into the hold.
I am she: I am he

We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear.



When I first read *Diving into the Wreck* (1973) by Adrienne Rich (1929–2012) I took it literally, escaping back to my youth and diving into the wreck of the S. S. Dominator off the coast of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. In fact, I read it that way for some time before being told that there was much more to the poem than simply diving under the sea to explore a shipwreck (not to mention wonderful words like *crenellated*). I then read the poem as a metaphor for diving into the wreck of oneself, but even that was later judged lacking and, during the pursuit of the Equal Rights Amendment, the poem evolved into a treatise on women's oppression. Whatever Ms. Rich intended, it remains a powerful statement that's available to read in its entirety on [poets.org](https://www.poets.org).

The sea titillates the imagination, and conjuring what lies below can be soothing or frightening, depending upon one's perspective at the time. For Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864):

The Ocean has its silent caves,
Deep, quiet, and alone;
Though there be fury on the waves,
Beneath them there is none.

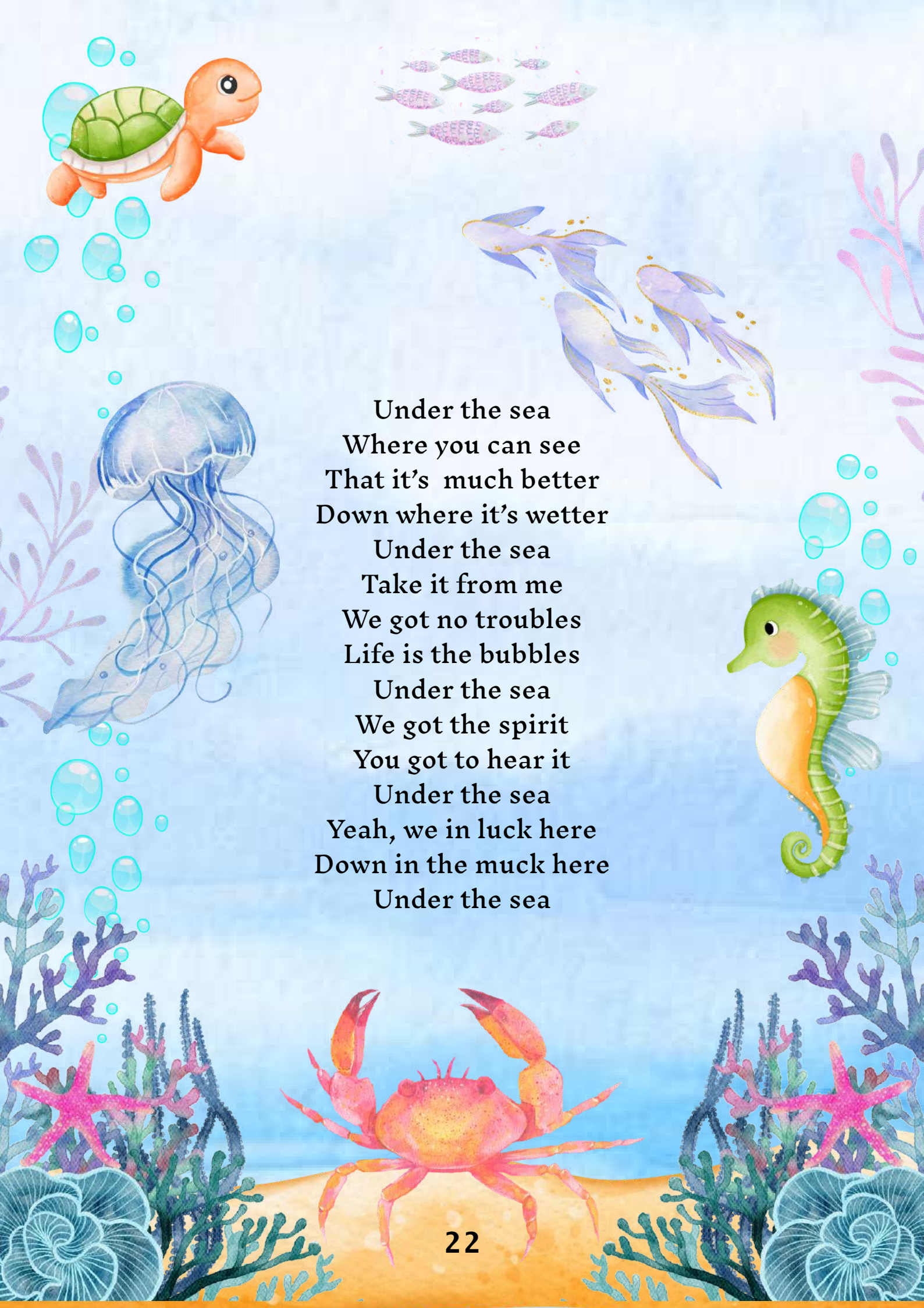
The awful spirits of the deep
Hold their communion there;
And there are those for whom we weep,
The young, the bright, the fair.

Calmly the wearied seamen rest
Beneath their own blue sea.
The ocean solitudes are blest,
For there is purity.

The earth has guilt, the earth has care,
Unquiet are its graves;
But peaceful sleep is ever there,
Beneath the dark blue waves.



Hawthorne romanticizes the idea of an eternity in death under the sea, finds in it an eternal peace, and yet overlooks the horrors that the sailors endured before claiming their solitary graves where the sea is peaceful, dark, and deep (apologies to Robert Frost). I recently watched the movie *Titanic* for the first time and discovered good-natured familiarity in the ending where they all came together under the sea on that sunken monolith having a grand ole party, which is both the beginning and the end:

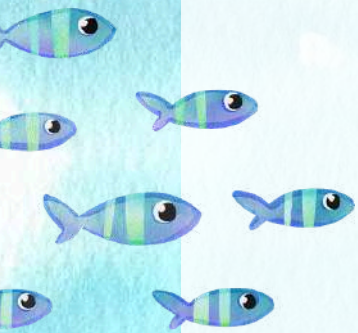


Under the sea
Where you can see
That it's much better
Down where it's wetter
Under the sea
Take it from me
We got no troubles
Life is the bubbles
Under the sea
We got the spirit
You got to hear it
Under the sea
Yeah, we in luck here
Down in the muck here
Under the sea

Under the Sea

By Theresa Handojo

Left or right
Up or down
Hiding behind
To be free
Under the Sea





Concerto no. O, (Ocean)

By Abigail Handojo

A vital vessel for vital vessels,
Like loving you is in our blood,
Sea salt sweat, saliva, alive,
You are a flood of life
We do not need to look far
To find the fountain of youth in you

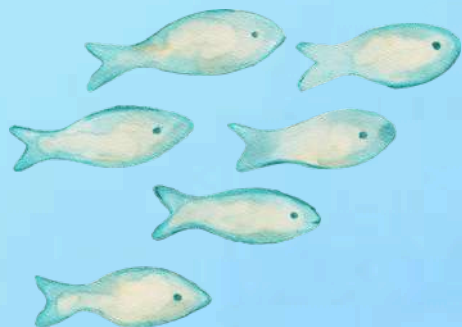
Cradling ships, smoothing surface tension,
Regulating our nervous systems
Orchestrating our brain waves,
You re-tune the dissonant,
Rinse out the stress
Remind us where it all began

The o (o) r (c) i (e) g (a) i (n) n

Instrumental for our mental health,
We visit you like we do a therapist,
Dependent on you for mindful resets,
Or perhaps you're a parent providing
For fragile creatures and coral reefs,
Care digging twelve thousand feet deep

Expansive yet all-encompassing,
Unexplored yet welcoming,
Constant yet ever-changing

Whether you wear classic blue, sunset gold,
Glittering green, or crystalline nothing
Whether you're salty, shiveringly cold,
Cleansing, or soothingly refreshing
In the symphonic balance of the world,
You sustain us like a concert master would.



Deep Dive

By Parker G. Emerson

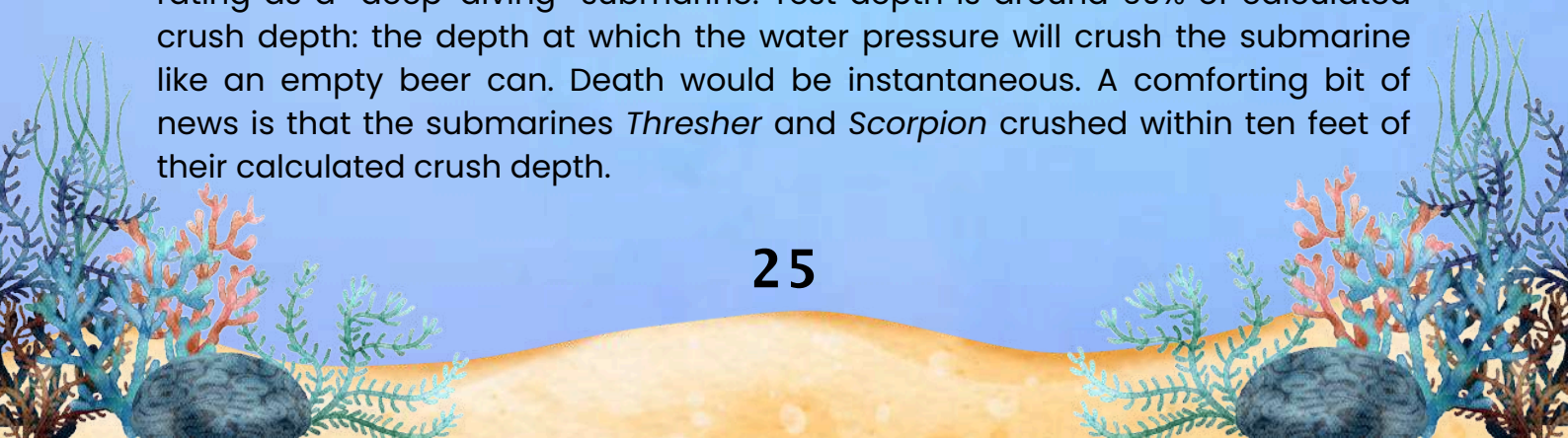
Few people know what it is like to dive deep into the ocean. Scuba divers frequently go to depths of 90 or 100 feet, and very occasionally as deep as 250 feet, but rarely any deeper. Such dives are rather quick, usually lasting less than ninety minutes from beginning to end. Of that time, only five to ten minutes are spent at depth. Most of the time is consumed in a slow ascent to avoid the painful and sometimes deadly effects of rapid decompression—the “bends.”

Deep Submergence Vessels (DSVs) take two or three people to great depths. However, only a few, such as the *Trieste*, *Deep Sea Challenger*, *Limiting Factor*, and *Alvin*, can go to the deepest part of the oceans: the Challenger Deep. Discovered by the *HMS Challenger* in 1873, it is 35,761 feet deep; Mt. Everest at “only” 29,031.7 feet high would be 1,450 feet underwater. *Alvin*, operated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, regularly descends up to 21,300 feet conducting scientific research around the world. The interior of the crew space on DSVs is kept near sea level air pressure. The DSV descends fairly rapidly (although it still takes two hours or more to reach the bottom of the Challenger Deep) but ascends more slowly to allow the vessel itself to adjust to the decreasing sea pressure.

Fun fact: as of August 2022, only twenty-seven people have been to the deepest part of the ocean for a total of only fifty-eight hours, while twelve have walked on the moon for a total of over seven days.

Deep-diving submarines, like the *USS Simon Boliver* on which I sailed, do not go to the great depths of DSVs, but they operate for months on end with large crews (124 or so in my case) while the DSVs operate for less than a day at a time. The air pressure inside the submarine is kept near that at sea level, so changes in depth will not cause the crew to get the bends even if we surface very rapidly. The unclassified maximum depth for US Navy submarines is “over 400 feet.” Yes, indeed.

We had to dive to test depth at least once per deployment to maintain the rating as a “deep-diving” submarine. Test depth is around 60% of calculated crush depth: the depth at which the water pressure will crush the submarine like an empty beer can. Death would be instantaneous. A comforting bit of news is that the submarines *Thresher* and *Scorpion* crushed within ten feet of their calculated crush depth.



A deep dive is routine but is never taken lightly. At these depths and pressures, when something does go wrong, it goes wrong very quickly and is usually catastrophic.

Prior to going on the deep dive, the entire crew is at their battle station. In the control center, the helmsman, planesman, diving officer, and ballast control panel operator fasten seatbelts so any motions of the ship will not cause them to slip out of place and put the sub in even greater danger. The helmsman and planesman operate the rudder and the fairwater and stern planes using a yoke like that on an airplane. It has a steering wheel which operates the rudder, and the whole yoke can move forward to make the boat dive or backward to make the boat rise. When we have a steep dive angle, we don't want a planesman sliding out of his seat, falling onto the yoke, and increasing the dive accidentally.

We start near the surface at a comfortable speed where the planes and rudder will react quickly, but not so fast that small movements can cause large changes. We post people with flashlights at every place where a pipe or valve penetrates the hull. They check for even the smallest leak as we descend. We close and seal ("dog") all watertight doors, dividing the sub into six watertight compartments. If any one of the watertight compartment floods, we can still get to the surface.

We begin the descent, increasing our depth by twenty to fifty feet and then maintain that depth while everyone checks for leaks. Reports come in, beginning from forward with the torpedo room and proceeding methodically aft, room by room, compartment by compartment, level by level until we finally get to the report from fully aft where the shaft turning the screw exits the boat. Then we descend to the next depth and start the reporting process over again.

A leak report is given whenever it is first noticed and includes first the specific place and then the amount of water coming in. For example, "Leak at MSW-6. One drop per ten seconds." Everyone on the boat knows exactly which valve is leaking and what their reaction will be if it gets worse.

The boat creaks and groans from the compression of the hull as we go deeper and deeper. The sound is surprisingly like that of a large sailing vessel in a moderate wind, with the lines stretching taut and relaxing. Rather comforting in its own way. Creaks and groans are OK. Snaps and cracks are not, and they draw immediate intense scrutiny. Sometimes a leak occurs at one depth only to be sealed at a deeper depth as the hull flexes under the immense pressure.

Finally, we are at test depth where we remain for at least an hour. We methodically check that everything is fully operational in all compartments. We change course several times which changes the stresses on the hull.

Satisfied that we can conduct all operations at test depth, we begin our ascent. This, too, is done in careful steps. Sometimes a leak occurs only as the pressure decreases. The largest leak on any of my many dives to test depth was one drip per second. During the deep dive and even while operating at normal depths, I find the creaking of the boat comforting. I am accustomed to the sounds that indicate things are working normally. I sense changes in depth or speed just by the sounds of the boat and the equipment. The slightest change in any of the sounds draws everyone's attention; and we relax when we identify the cause and the new condition.





Love the Sea View

By Cynthia DeMone

Ebb and grow
Flow and blow
At top and deep below

Bubbles and fins
Tentacles and fish skins
Jellyfish and urchins

Tetras and pickerel
Corals and eels
Zebra fish and mackerel

Schools and shoals
Reefs and atolls
Plus fish filled trawls

Find me the seaweeds
Show me the sea reeds
With seahorse stampedes

I see the waves crashing
Sea bass are dashing
Sea turtles snapping

ONCE UPON A TIME

