

# The Report



FALL 2018

#weareowfi

[owfi.org](http://owfi.org)



# OWFI Report, Fall 2018

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The Report is the newsletter of the Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc., and is published three times per year. Submission guidelines are available upon request and questions or submissions should be directed to the newsletter editor.


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Please send changes of address to [treasurer@owfi.org](mailto:treasurer@owfi.org)

Founded in 1968, the Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc. (OWFI) is a non-profit federation of writers' groups dedicated to promoting higher standards for the written word. We believe that the literary profession has come of age and merits a fair share of the critical acclaim so generously lavished on other worthwhile arts. OWFI shall seek to coordinate and encourage professional writing within and without its organization and promote the recognition of outstanding contributions to the written language.

### Contributing Writers

- Staci Mauney
- Kathleen Park
- Maria Veres



**REMINDER**

Make sure you've cashed your checks from the 2018 Contest!

You have six months from the check date to cash your check!

# Letter from the President

Writing is solitary work, but that doesn't mean we have to go it alone.

When we work together, our skills improve, and we become better writers as well as better people. OWFI is a community of writers who encourage and support each other, and the most amazing thing is that this organization is made up entirely of volunteers.

The annual OWFI conference is a place for writers to gather and meet new friends, reconnect with old friends, and improve their writing skills. At the 2019 OWFI Turning the Page Writing Conference, we'll have opportunities for all that and more! Since the last *Report*, we've added faculty to our slate of speakers, editors, and agents. You don't want to miss any of the fun things happening at the conference! For information about registering for the conference, see page 10.

The annual writing contest opens December 1! Have your prepared your entries yet? To learn more about the contest rules and categories, see page 11. When you're ready to enter the contest, go to [www.owfi.org/contest2019/enter/](http://www.owfi.org/contest2019/enter/).

I've entered the writing contest almost every year since I joined OWFI in 2007. This contest has been a source of tremendous growth for me as a writer. I've used the feedback I've received from judges to make my stories stronger. In some cases, I've grown a thicker skin when the judge wasn't as kind or tactful as he or she could have been. I don't always agree with the judge's remarks, but I've discovered I can always learn something.

Why should you enter the OWFI writing contest this year? Let me count the ways.

1. Financial sense. Where else can you enter 34 categories for one low price of \$30?

2. Valuable feedback. Our judges are encouraged to provide feedback. The OWFI writing contest is one of the only contests around in which feedback is offered.

3. Word count limits. Each category has a word count limit, which encourages you to tighten your prose.

4. Deadlines. For the procrastinators out there, writing contests are invaluable because they can teach you how to meet deadlines.

5. A real audience. A real person will read your work.

6. New genres. Writing contests are the perfect time to try writing for a different genre. This point is especially applicable to the OWFI writing contest since you can enter all the categories offered one time for the same price.

7. Longer application period. We've heard your requests for a longer application period, and you will once again have two months to submit your entries. Start polishing them now to meet the February 1, 2019, submission deadline!

8. Improved confidence. Entering the writing contest will improve your confidence. Even if you don't win, you've been brave enough to put your work out there for someone else to read. You deserve all the kudos in the world for taking that step!



Keep writing, OWFI!

*Staci Mauney is the OWFI President for 2018-2019*

# The 2019 OWFI Conference needs YOU!

## OWFI's Banquet Table's Reservations

- Reservations are open now, online only.
- You DO NOT need to reserve a table in order to have a seat at the banquets. If you are registered for the banquets, you are GUARANTEED a seat.
- If you have a large group that wishes to be seated together, make your reservations early.
- The maximum number of tables a group or individual may reserve is a total of TWO.
- Table reservations are \$25 per table, per night. They are a fundraiser. Each table seats 8.
- If you have a reserved table, PLEASE wait at the door to be seated.
- For questions or more info please contact [vck@cox.net](mailto:vck@cox.net)

## OWFI Contest Category Sponsorship

Your generous contributions to sponsor OWFI's contest categories are greatly appreciated.

- \$105 full sponsorship: categories 1-29: Unpublished Manuscripts, \$55 for partial sponsorship.
- \$60 full sponsorship: categories 30-34: Published Books.
- \$500 full sponsorship for the Crème de la Crème category; the group or individual sponsoring the Crème de la Crème category receives one free banquet table, front and center, for both nights.
- \$70 full sponsorship for the Crème de la Crème trophy.
- Sponsorships can be made online at [www.owfi.org/contest2019/sponsor](http://www.owfi.org/contest2019/sponsor) or by mail

Make checks payable to **Oklahoma Writers' Federation Inc.**

In the memo section, write, **Category Sponsorship**. (DO NOT indicate which category on the check)

Mail your check to:

Contest Category Sponsorship Chair  
Vickey Malone Kennedy  
721 East Boyd Street  
Norman, OK 73071

**On a separate sheet of paper include the following:** a sponsor name, contact information (email & phone number), and a list of three (3) categories you'd like to sponsor.

- Please indicate if the sponsorship is in memory or honor of someone.
- For questions or more info contact [vck@cox.net](mailto:vck@cox.net).

## 2019 Conference Committee Chairs

We rely on our volunteers to help make our conference a success. If you want to join us—and make some great friends while you're at it—check out our list of Committee Chairs below. You can contact our Conference Chair if you have any additional questions.

Banquet Table Reservations Chair  
Vickey Kennedy

Basket Wars Chair  
Jayleen Mayes

Book Room & Author Signing Chair  
Christine Jarmola

Buzz Sessions Chair  
Ruth Weeks

Centerpiece Chair  
Peggy Chambers

Contest Category Sponsorship Chair  
Vickey Kennedy

Costume Contest Chair  
Heather Davis

Famous Author Banquet Slideshow Chair  
Jennifer McMurrain

Fundraiser Chair  
Ariel White

Pitch Room Chair  
Adrean Messmer (Connor Orion)

Registration Chair  
Vickey Kennedy

Scholarship Chair  
Myloe Yeager

Shepherd Chair  
Gina Hoffman

Virtual Workshop Chair  
Linda Apple



# Meet the 2018 Crème de la Crème Winner

Meet OWFI member Pepper Hume. She won the best of contest award this year, the coveted Crème de la Crème award with her piece, "Ghost Maker."



*OWFI: How did you feel when you heard your name called as the Crème de la Crème winner?*

Pepper Hume: Surprised! How could my little 640 word short-short outshine larger pieces that involved so much more... of everything?

*OWFI: Tell us more about your winning entry.*

Pepper Hume: "Ghost Maker" is a grim little glimpse into the mind of a casually amoral, unrepentant serial killer. I have no idea where it came from, but you gotta wonder what goes on in the mind of such a person.

*OWFI: How long have you been writing?*

Pepper Hume: Probably 15 years. I started a novel, got the first chapter and the final denouement down and realized I hadn't a clue how to get from one to the other! So I started writing short stories, thinking if I could learn to sprint, I could graduate to long distance. That approach has actually worked for me.

*OWFI: Are you in a writing/critique group? Are you a member of an affiliate group?*

Pepper Hume: Oh yes! A critique group

is imperative! You learn from each other's mistakes, together! I was in a rather large, vigorous group in Texas almost from the beginning. We would work through one member's book start to finish over several weeks. I now meet monthly with four other writers of different genres. I started out with Woodlands Writers Guild in The Woodlands, Texas. Now I'm with Bartlesville WordWeavers.

*OWFI: How do you keep yourself accountable to your writing?*

Pepper Hume: Mostly I depend on my critique group! I write very sporadically. I may go for days without opening the word processor. But if something is hot, I don't do anything else for days. My muse is capricious and a bully!

*OWFI: Best writing tips?*

Pepper Hume: READ!! Watch movies, serious TV shows and pay attention to how things develop. I read my own work out loud (alone). Anything I stumble over must be fixed. Trust your subconscious. I find setting word count or time goals counter productive! Just filling pages with words doesn't make drama. What made "Ghost Maker" a winner was winnowing it down tighter and tighter, even well below the category word limit.

*OWFI: What are you planning next?*

Pepper Hume: I am polishing my second novel for publication. That first one is still brewing, I have two others under construction. Shorter pieces will crop up along the way... like "Ghost Maker." I work on whatever demands my attention. When one story line cools, I turn to another.

*OWFI: What do you do for fun when you're not writing?*

Pepper Hume: I dabble a bit in theatre on the local, non-professional level. My lifetime career was designing costumes and scenery. I've discovered Korean historical drama TV series online! Fascinating and beautiful! Some really nice plotting.

*OWFI: What is your favorite OWFI memory?*

Pepper Hume: Since I've never managed to attend the conference, I'd have to say that winning Crème de la Crème this year is IT!!!

*OWFI: What are your past published or not yet published works?*

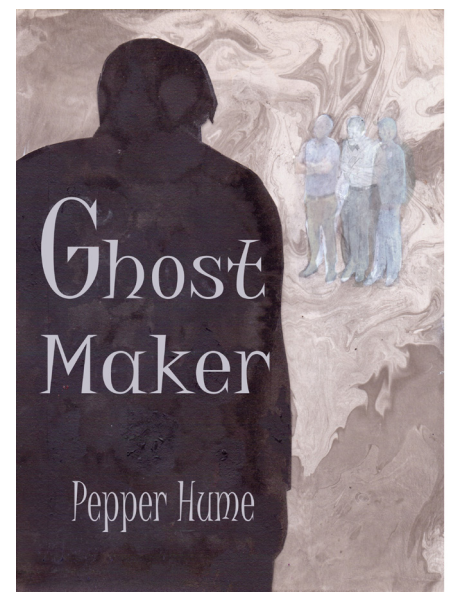
Pepper Hume: Published: "Buzzsaw" in an anthology of short stories, "K.J. McDuff" on "Theme of Absence" an online magazine, and assorted essays and articles in small Texas venues. Unpublished: Workshop readings of three plays, novel *So Many Faces*. Not yet ready for publication: novels *Wisteria* and *Icarus Redeemed*. One play and all three novels won money at OWFI.

*OWFI: Who are your favorite authors?*

Pepper Hume: Anne McCaffrey, Douglas Adams, Spider Robinson

*OWFI: Anything to say to the next Crème de la Crème winner?*

Pepper Hume: It's all a ~~crap shoot!~~ (Probably can't say that) so subjective. What one year's judge doesn't like, may win its category next year. Prizes are nice, so enjoy the recognition, but don't let it affect your writing.



# Guest Column

## Changes at Amazon: Should We Be Scared?

As authors, we can't ignore Amazon, and many of us wouldn't want to. It has allowed us to publish more easily and reach more readers than we ever could before. But as this giant company continues to evolve, not all the news is good news.

Here's a roundup of recent Amazon changes that affect authors. Be aware that this isn't a complete list. Since Amazon shifts direction frequently and quietly, other developments may happen even as you're reading this.

Create Space, Amazon's print book self-publishing platform, has merged with Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). All Create Space books are being automatically migrated to KDP. Most indie authors won't notice a difference in how we publish, market, and price our print books. Royalty rates in a few European markets are lower on KDP, but everything else remains the same—for now.

Kindle Scout, a program designed to recruit talented new authors, no longer exists.

Amazon has stopped offering self-publishing assistance services like formatting and

cover design. These services weren't a great value, and the quality was uneven (which explains why they weren't very profitable for Amazon). As authors, we can do just fine without this help.

Amazon has started its own traditional publishing platform, Amazon Books. Although any new publisher creates new opportunities for authors, other smaller publishers may be squeezed out of business by this huge competitor.

Third-party sellers are now allowed more freedom to market on Amazon's website. This means other companies can bulk-buy remaindered or discounted books and then re-sell them to consumers as "like new"—meaning that you, the author, don't receive the royalty you should have been paid for the sale of a new book. (For a fuller discussion of this, see "From Amazon Publishing, A Change That Hurts Authors" by Douglas Preston, *New York Times*, October 17, 2017.)

Authors or publishers must now pay to have their books appear in the "recommended for you" or "you might also like..." areas

of a customer's screen. Without this paid advertising, your book won't be showcased to potential buyers.

What does all this mean? For now, Amazon remains one of the easiest places for readers to find our books, and it offers a low-cost, convenient way for indie authors to publish. But going forward, we can't count on this company to protect our best interests as authors. We need to stay in control of our careers and keep other options open, whether that means selling to more readers directly, advertising and promoting elsewhere, or exploring different publishing and printing options.

Amazon is an essential part of most authors' sales strategies, but it should remain just that—a part of the sales strategy, not the whole package. The future is too shaky for us to rely on any one source for all our readers and income.

*Maria Veres is the author of three books of poetry and several nonfiction e-books. A former OWFI officer, she teaches at Francis Tuttle Technology Center and owns a content writing business. Visit her at [mariapolsonveres.com](http://mariapolsonveres.com).*

### #GratefulforOWFI Instagram Challenge

1. A person you see every day
2. NaNoWriMo project
3. View from your workspace
4. The last book you read
5. Website or blog
6. Favorite quote
7. Someone who inspires you
8. A place that makes you happy
9. Writing friends
10. NaNoWriMo word count
11. Favorite fall food
12. Something you're listening to
13. Favorite fall activity
14. Something that makes you smile
15. NaNoWriMo word count
16. Favorite book cover
17. Favorite animal
18. Writing goals
19. Book signing
20. Celebration
21. Family
22. Thanksgiving memory
23. Favorite thing about fall
24. Favorite review
25. Favorite book outside your genre
26. Something you can't live without
27. Writing routine
28. A book that changed your life
29. Artwork you own
30. Final NaNoWriMo word count

### Join in on the fall fun with our newest challenge #GratefulForOWFI

Post pictures on each day in November on the given day's topic (eg. November 16 post a picture of your favorite book cover).

Make sure you tag each post with #gratefulforowfi and #owfi19.

If you don't have an Instagram, don't worry; this challenge works great on Facebook. But make sure your challenge posts are public so we can all share in the fun and see.

If you have questions, contact Ariel White on Slack or email at [editor@owfi.org](mailto:editor@owfi.org).

# The Affiliate Rewards

The Affiliate Rewards program runs from May 1 to April 30. In order to participate in the Affiliate Rewards program, an affiliate group must be a group in good standing. This means that the affiliate group has five current members who are also current members of OWFI.

Points Awarded	Affiliate Expectations	Maximum Points Possible per Year
10 points	Updating your affiliate club's information on the website every 6 months.	20 points
10 (5) points	Your club's full complement of delegates attends a Board meeting. (Only a fraction of your delegates attends a Board meeting.) You must have at least one possible delegate.	40 points
8 (2) points	At least 5 of your affiliate group's members participate in the annual OWFI writing contest. (One of your affiliate group's members participates in the annual OWFI writing contest.)	8 points
5 (2) points	Your affiliate group sends at least 5 members to the annual OWFI conference. (Your affiliate group sends at least 1 member to the annual OWFI conference.)	5 points
5 points	Your affiliate group enters a basket into the Basket Wars auction held during the annual OWFI conference.	5 points
5 points	You have the appropriate number of delegates on OWFI's #delegates Slack channel at each check on May 1 and November 1.	10 points
1 point	Updating our Affiliate News section with news about your affiliate. Maximum of one per month.	12 points

Every affiliate club is expected to participate in OWFI activities. This rewards program is intended to encourage and reward participation in OWFI by its affiliate groups. Affiliate groups may earn up to 100 points per year.

Members at Large are invited to participate as well. For the purposes of the Affiliate Rewards program, Members at Large shall count as members of one, very large affiliate group led by its delegates.

On May 1, points for the previous year will be tallied. The affiliate group with the most points shall be declared the Most Active Affiliate of the year. Ties will be permitted.

Points reset every year on May 1. Instead of accumulating points, affiliate groups will accumulate Years in Compliance. Affiliate groups will receive rewards after 5, 10, and 25 years of compliance. After 25 years, an affiliate will become a Historic Affiliate, which will be forever remembered in the annals of OWFI, even if the affiliate group breaks up in the future.

If you have any further questions regarding this newly implemented program, contact OWFI on Slack or on the website. For more information, go to: [www.owfi.org/arp/](http://www.owfi.org/arp/).



**VIRTUAL WORKSHOP**  
 Building Strong Characters  
 with Darcy S. Pattison  
 November 29th at 7 PM

For more information and to sign up go to  
[www.owfi.org/virtualworkshops/](http://www.owfi.org/virtualworkshops/)



# Affiliate Spotlight: Green Country Ruff Ritters & Mid-Oklahoma Writers

One of the best benefits of OWFI is the many affiliate groups that are associated with us. This month, we're taking a closer look at the Green Country Ruff Ritters and Mid-Oklahoma Writers.

**Green Country Ruff Ritters**  
FB Fan Page: [www.facebook.com/GreenCountryRuffRitters](http://www.facebook.com/GreenCountryRuffRitters)



**Mission:** Green Country Ruff Ritters strives to help aspiring and published writers via critique sessions, craft workshops, and sharing information regarding contests, submission calls and writing related resources.

*OWFI: How long has your affiliate group been active and how often do you meet?*

Green Country Ruff Ritters: Circa 1979 (1980). Second Saturday of the month, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Patrick Lynch Public Library, Poteau, OK

*OWFI: Who is your next speaker?*

GCCR: The next meeting will be November 10, 2018, and the group will be discussing the Call to Adventure from The Writers Journey by Christopher Vogler. The discussion will be facilitated by President Vinita Eggers.

*OWFI: What are the benefits of joining ?*

GCCR: Monthly mini-workshops, monthly critique group and fellowship with writers

who understand the advantages and disadvantages of being a writer.

*OWFI: How many active members?*

GCCR: 11

*OWFI: Anything else?*

GCCR: Elections were conducted via email and in-person votes in September. The slate of elected officers for 2018-19 is: Vinita Eggers, President; Nancy Lewis, Secretary; Shirley Rodgers, Treasurer. Volunteers are as follows: Debra Martinez, Program Director; Vinita Eggers, OWFI Delegate.

*OWFI: What are some of the ways your group has contributed to OWFI since becoming an affiliate member? (ex. volunteering at conference, sponsoring a contest category, becoming a conference sponsor, etc.) ?*

GCCR: President Vinita Eggers volunteers as Treasurer of OWFI since January 2015. GCCR has sponsored contest categories for many years, has donated to the Scholarship Fund, and donated items to Basket Wars. Founding member Paula Gorgas volunteered as Category Coordinator and Category Judge for the contest. Member Connie Blaylock has volunteered as Category Coordinator and Category Judge for the contest for many years.

*OWFI: Are there any titles or upcoming releases from your members?*

GCCR:

- *Toby the Toad Wants to Leap* by Mary Michelle Turner
- *Low Moral Compass* by Joe Harwell (Available Winter 2019)

*Thanks to Vinita Eggers and the Green Country Ruff Ritters for answering our questions!*

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## Mid-Oklahoma Writers

FB Fan Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Mid-Oklahoma-Writers-MOW-116553011783446/>

**Mission:** Development of creative abilities of members, promotion in literary achievement, and sharing common interests with other writers.

*OWFI: How long has your affiliate group been active and how often do you meet?*

Mid-Oklahoma Writers: Before 2000. (We meet (7:00-9:00 p.m.) on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the Family Center behind Eastside Church of Christ, 916 South Douglas, Midwest City, Oklahoma.

*OWFI: Who is your next speaker?*

Mid-OK: Marla Jones, Doodle and Peck Publishing on November 13, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

*OWFI: What are the benefits of joining?*

Mid-OK: (We are) a small, cozy group without cliques. Novice and published writers benefit from attending meetings where they learn about the writing process and marketing from professionals in the industry and share their own expertise in the writing field. Visitors are always welcome.

*OWFI: Do you hold any annual contests?*

Mid-OK: Yes. Annual contest for MOW includes three categories: poetry, short-short story, and nonfiction. A fourth category may be added each year by a vote of the membership.

*OWFI: What are some of the ways your group has contributed to OWFI since becoming an affiliate member? (ex. volunteering at conference, sponsoring a contest category, becoming a conference sponsor, etc.) ?*

Mid-OK: Serving as OWFI Treasurer and on the OWFI Board of Delegates, volunteering at conferences, co-sponsoring a contest category, etc.

*OWFI: Are there any titles or upcoming releases from your members?*

Mid-OK:

- *Truth for Today, My Friend Frank, What If Stories* by David Roper
- *River Bend, The Potbelly Pig Promise* by Barbara Shepherd
- *By My Blood, Lady of the Doves* by Marie Warner
- *Wicked Sunset, Bringer Unleashed* by Jaz Primo
- *The Ringleader, Legend of Fury* by Bonnie Lanthripe
- *Fifty Shades of Gray Hair, Road Rage* by Catherine "Katey" Johnson



# Spotlight Member at Large

Member at Large: **Karri Roberts-Allen**  
Member Since: 2017  
Website:  
[www.buzzsprout.com/175499](http://www.buzzsprout.com/175499)  
Twitter: @BlitzedBookClub  
Instagram: theblitzedbookclubpodcast

I have always wanted to write but it wasn't until my 20s when I actually started putting pen to paper and now I'm addicted.

*OWFI: Tell us about yourself.*

Karri: I'm an aspiring writer who is finishing the last edits on my first manuscript. I love reading and co-host a podcast called The Blitzed Book Club where we review books while enjoying an alcoholic beverage based on the book. I have always wanted to write but it wasn't until my 20s when I actually started putting pen to paper and now I'm addicted. I'm also a mom, registered nurse, and animal lover.

*OWFI: What are you reading right now?*

Karri: *The Road Back* by Marla Machado

*OWFI: What advice would you give to other writers?*

Karri: Never give up.

*OWFI: When do you find time to write?*

Karri: I have to carve out time. I do not write every day. That just isn't realistic for me. I love getting up early on my days off, putting on comfy clothes, and spending the morning at a coffee or tea shop writing.

*OWFI: Would you like to share a project you are currently working on?*

Karri: I am currently working on a sci-fi story focused on the aftermath of a massive medical outbreak. It follows college girl and her struggle adjusting to the changes in her mind, body, and the world around her. It explores the concept- "What would you do if you woke up and realized you were the bad guy in your own story?"

*OWFI: How has OWFI helped you in your writing endeavors?*

Karri: I have learned so much since I joined OWFI. I attended the 2018 conference and it was truly life changing for me. The speakers were amazing and full of knowledge. The other conference attendees I met were all welcoming. I made some great friends and was even able to join a little unofficial critique group!

*OWFI: If you could go back in time, what year would you travel to?*

Karri: The 1800s-I love the clothes and the idea of living on a large farm.

*OWFI: Share two or three things from your bucket list.*

Karri: Visit every state in the US. Have a book published. See an elephant in the wild.

*OWFI: Tell me five things that I'd see when I walk in your front door?*

Karri: Probably my dogs and cats ready to force you to pet them. My wall of decorative crosses, my piano covered in stacks of books I want to read, and my glass back door leading to my deck where I love to spend summer evenings.

*OWFI: What's your favorite book/movie of all time and why did it speak to you so much?*

Karri: *The Clan of the Cave Bear* by Jean M. Auel. It's the first book in the Earth's Children series. I read it as a teenager and fell in love with the main character, Ayla. Ayla experiences horrible injustices and losses but is able to grow and become stronger despite her circumstances. It is the first book that I loved so much that I read



the whole series. That book made me love and appreciate reading in a way I never had before.

*OWFI: Anything else you would like OWFI readers to know about you or otherwise?*

Karri: I co-host a podcast, The Blitzed Book Club. If you like books, booze, and three women embarrassing themselves for the sake of entertainment, it's the podcast for you.

*Thanks to Karri Roberts-Allen for answering our questions this month!*



# 2019 Conference Faculty

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Meg Gardiner

## PRE-CONFERENCE SPEAKER:

Tamara Hart Heiner

## AGENTS:

Paul S. Levine

Session: Go from Fingers to Keyboard  
to Dollars in the Bank

Gabrielle Piraino

Amy Brewer

## EDITORS:

Ally Robertson

Session: Fine-Tuning Your Manuscript  
Before Submitting (Or Self-Publishing)

Melissa Ann Singer

Session: Instant Feedback on Your  
Opening Scene

Shannon Iwanski

Session: People First Language:  
Shaping Readers' Perceptions of  
Characters

Vivian Zabel, 4RV

## SPEAKERS:

Angela Christina Archer

Session: Elements and Rules of  
Writing Historical Novels

Session: The Best of Both Worlds:  
Being a Hybrid Author

Cecelia Wilson

Session: Backstory of *Back to Bremen*

Session: Art of Writing, Confidence  
and Practicing, and Needing  
Persistence and Work to Find a  
Publisher

Tim Tingle

Rene Gutteridge

Session: Screenwriting for Novelists

Session: The Screenwriting Life

C.M. Healy

Session: Being Self-Published, but  
Looking Professional

Session: Self-Published Marketing:  
Doing It on Your Own

Eric Reitan

Session: There's No Such Thing as  
Writer's Block

Session: Openings That Don't Suck  
(But Do Suck You In)

Grace Wagner

Session: An Introduction to Poetry of  
Witness and Documentary Poetics

Session: The Technical Side of Poetry:  
An Introductory/Intermediate  
Workshop on Poetic Devices and Form

John T. Biggs

Session: Let Magic Realism Work Its  
Spell on Your Fiction

Session: Writing by the Seat of Your  
Pants

Jennifer McMurray

Session: All Things E-Book: The Art  
of E-Book Writing, Formatting, and  
Public Relations

Session: Book Cook: How to Bake the  
Perfect Book.

Linda Boulanger

Robin Patchen

Session: Small Edits, Big Impact:  
Literary Devices and Simple Tricks to  
Improve your Prose

Session: Writing When Life Gets in  
the Way

Sabrina A. Fish

Session: Fantasy World Building:  
Where to Begin

Session: Building an Author Platform:  
Before & After Publication

Natasha Tinsley

Find the most up-to-date  
conference information online at  
[www.owfi.org/conference2019/](http://www.owfi.org/conference2019/)  
and faculty updates at  
[www.owfi.org/conference2019/faculty](http://www.owfi.org/conference2019/faculty)

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[smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and search for Oklahoma  
Writers' Federation, Inc. (OWFI).



# The 2019 OWFI Writing Contest Information, Rules & Entry Procedures

## General Contest Information

The 2019 OWFI writing contest will open for submissions on December 1, 2018. **Entry fees, online entry forms, and individual manuscripts must be either sent or uploaded on or before February 1, 2018, at 11:59 p.m.**

The annual OWFI contest is only open to paid OWFI members and full-time students.

The contest offers cash prizes in twenty-nine (29) unpublished manuscript categories and trophies in five (5) published book categories. Unpublished manuscript prizes are \$50 for first place, \$35 for second place, and \$20 for third place in each of the twenty-nine (29) categories. All entries are judged by published authors, agents, editors, or other publishing professionals. Judges are asked to provide feedback on each entry.

For more information, please visit the website at [www.owfi.org](http://www.owfi.org)

### Eligibility Requirements (Published and Unpublished Works)

1. Entrants must be **paid** members of OWFI **or** full-time students.
  - Students must provide verification of student status by taking a picture or otherwise obtaining an image file of the student's school-provided ID card and uploading with their main contest entry form.
  - OWFI membership dues are \$25 per year for Affiliate Club Members and \$30 per year for Members at Large and can be applied for here.
  - If entries are co-authored, all members of the writing team must be eligible by OWFI membership or student status. The team will be considered a single entrant and must pay a separate entry fee for their co-authored entries.
  - This entry fee is separate from any fees that the members of the writing team must pay in order to enter as individual authors.
  - Published anthologies and compilations of works by multiple authors entered in the Trophy Award categories are considered co-authored entries.
2. No manuscript that has won a cash prize (first, second, or third place) in a previous OWFI contest may be entered again. **EVER.**
3. Contestants who win first place in an OWFI Contest Category may not enter that same category the following year.
4. Unpublished entries for Categories 1 through 7 and Categories 9 through 29 must have been unaccepted for publication at the time of submission.
  - If accepted by a publisher after entry, the submission will be considered valid.
  - Works that have been posted on a blog, website, or other online venue (except for critique purposes) are considered published and are not eligible for entry in this contest.
  - Submissions to Category 8 – Blogs that have been posted on a blog or website are eligible, however; the entry will be

treated as if it were unpublished.

5. Books entered in Published Book Categories 30–34 must have a copyright year of 2018.
6. Judges may not enter the category that they are judging.
7. Category Chairs may not enter the category that they chair.
8. Contestants, whether entering as a team or as an individual, may enter a category only once.
9. No manuscript may be entered in more than one category.

### Entry Procedures

1. Entrants must pay a \$30 **NONREFUNDABLE** entry fee, which covers administrative costs and awards. This entitles participants to enter once per category (e.g., you can enter one piece into each of the 34 categories, but you cannot enter more than one piece into any one category).
2. **ALL** submissions must be entered via the online entry form. An automated confirmation email will be sent as a receipt of your entry.
  - Electronic manuscripts should be attached to the online entry form and will be sent to the indicated Category Chair.
  - For printed books submitted to Categories 30-34, this online form will alert the indicated Category Chair that an entry is on the way via snail mail and will provide the contestant with the appropriate mailing address.
3. Print **or** e-books can be entered in Published Book Categories 30-34. Print books entered in Categories 30-34 should be snail-mailed in an envelope the correct size for the book to the address provided in the confirmation email along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE).
  - Entries submitted without the SASE, and not picked up at the conference, will not be returned.
  - *Contestants who plan to pick up their printed books at conference may omit postage, but still need to include a self-addressed envelope.*
  - *The addressee and return address on the return envelope should both contain the contestant's mailing address.*

# The 2019 OWFI Writing Contest

## Information, Rules & Entry Procedures

- *Paperclip the return envelope to the entry, along with a printed copy of the confirmation email.*

4. All entries, electronic and printed, must be postmarked by February 1, 2019. OWFI is **not** responsible for lost entries. If an entry is submitted via the online form and an acknowledgement is not received within 24 hours, please contact the webmaster. Contestants are urged to upload entries at least two weeks prior to the deadline to assure that entries are received on time.

### Manuscript Preparation and Formatting

1. No author's name, pen name, or other identifying information may appear on **any** page of a manuscript entry. **Doing so will result in disqualification and no refund of entry fee.**

2. Electronic entries for Categories 1–29 must be in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format.

3. E-books for Categories 30–34 must be .pdf, .mobi, or .epub formats.

4. All unpublished manuscripts must be editor-ready. This includes the following:

- Manuscripts should be double-spaced.
  - *Exceptions: Poetry and book synopses may be single spaced.*
  - Spacing for book outlines, overviews, and tables-of-contents should follow industry standards.
- Headers:
  - *On the first page, every manuscript must have the category*

*number in the upper right-hand corner. Directly beneath the category number should be one of the following:*

- *For poetry entries, the number of lines.*
- *For book-length prose entries, the number of pages entered.*
- *For short works of prose (e.g., picture books, short stories, articles, etc.), the word count. You can calculate the word count either using a word processor or by multiplying your number of pages by 10 words per line by 25 lines per page.*
- *For entries in multi-genre categories (see Category Descriptions), it is highly recommended that participants note the genre of their entry in the upper right-hand corner of the first page, below the word, line, or page count.*
- *On all other pages, place a header listing the title and page number.*
- Use an easy-to-read 12-point font such as Times New Roman or Courier New that results in approximately 250 words or 25 lines per page. Fancy fonts other than italics are not allowed.
- Play, film, or TV scripts must follow industry-standard formats.

If you have additional questions, ask the general contest chair or chat with us on Slack.

For more expanded formatting rules and guidelines go to:

<https://www.owfi.org/contest2018/rules/formatting>

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### Filename Requirements

Before uploading your manuscript, follow these guidelines for naming the manuscript file that you intend to upload. Several examples follow.

**cat[category number][manuscript title without spaces or accents]**

1. Suppose that you are entering a piece entitled “The Rats of Penzance.” This is a short, humorous piece, and you are entering it in “Category 18 – Prose Humor.” Your file is in .docx format. You would therefore save your file as `cat18theratsofpenzance`, and your file extension will automatically attach, naming your file:

- `cat18theratsofpenzance.docx`

2. Suppose that you are entering a poem entitled “Morning’s Dew.” This is a long, rhymed poem that has formatting you want to keep just right, so of course you used .pdf format. Your category is “Category 3 – Poetry, Rhymed (Long).” You would therefore save your file as `cat3morningsdew`, which will name your file:

- `cat3morningsdew.pdf`

3. Say you have a .mobi of your published thriller, *Le Murder Café*, and you want to send it to us. Your category is “Category 34 – Published Fiction Book.” You would therefore save your file as `cat34lemurdercafe`, which will name your manuscript file:

- `cat34lemurdercafe.mobi`

If you have any trouble with this, or have any questions, please contact the general contest chair or chat with us on Slack.



# 2019 OWFI Writing Contest Categories

## Categories 1-29: Unpublished Manuscripts

### CATEGORY 1 POETRY, UNRHYMED-SHORT

Any theme, any form. A poem is characterized by intense, compressed language. Every word is carefully chosen. A poem can tell a story, create an image, or evoke an emotion. In all cases, it is an artform and should go beyond plain prose to evoke something deeper. Sixteen (16) lines or less.

*NOTE: Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.*

### CATEGORY 2 POETRY, UNRHYMED-LONG

Same description as Category 1 at left, but longer. Seventeen (17) lines or more.

*NOTE: Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.*

### CATEGORY 3 POETRY, RHYMED-SHORT

Same description as Category 1 above, but written in rhyme. Any rhyming form may be used. Sixteen (16) lines or less.

*NOTE: Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.*

### CATEGORY 4 POETRY, RHYMED-LONG

Same description as Category 1 above, but longer and written in rhyme. Any rhyming form may be used. Seventeen (17) lines or more.

*NOTE: Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.*

### CATEGORY 5 ESSAY (ANY SUBJECT OF CONTEMPORARY INTEREST)

Essays are personal opinion pieces using narrative form to convince the reader of a certain point of view or, at least, to better understand the author's point of view. There are formal, fact-driven essays (George Will) and informal, lighter essays (Erma Bombeck). Bear in mind the quality and logic of the argument and how well the author uses facts, reasoning, and literary tools such as analogy to convince. Sometimes an opinion can be presented, a point of view expressed, or an argument driven home in a novel or unusual way by telling a story, seeming to take the opposite point of view, or constructing a fable with a clear moral at the end. Limit 2000 words.

### CATEGORY 6 TECHNICAL AND/OR HOW-TO ARTICLE (ANY SUBJECT)

This category is made up of two different genres that both aim to educate readers in different ways. Each style presents a problem, describes why it matters, then provides the solution—and sometimes offers a call to action. Technical Articles are generally longer and cover a narrow but serious subject in great depth; they rely on more than one expert (often including the author) to provide information that educates and informs a specific target audience. While the article may be scientific, it should also be readable and easy to understand and absorb. The reader should come away with useful information. How-To Articles are often shorter edutainment—1500 words may be too long!—lighter fare that may rely on the expertise of the author alone. These articles not only educate and inform, they also provide specific and detailed steps for the reader to accomplish the stated goal (e.g., how to bake cookies, make a craft, prepare a devotional, or write a novel). A central theme follows through to the end. Help the judge by noting “Technical Article” or “How-To Article” on your manuscripts. Limit 3000 words.

### CATEGORY 7 FEATURE ARTICLE: NONFICTION (ANY SUBJECT)

These are the articles listed prominently in a publication (e.g., magazine, newspaper, online, etc.) covering a subject of great interest to that medium's target audience. The article must clearly have a reason to exist and not simply serve as a vehicle for advertising. Nor should it be a vehicle for presenting the author's opinion about a particular topic. (For opinion pieces, see the “How-To,” “Inspirational,” or “Essay” category descriptions.) More than just the facts, a feature article uses a great hook, expert quotes, and a bang-up conclusion to convey its topic. The author's voice and style give the piece life. Limit 2500 words.

### CATEGORY 8 BLOG: NONFICTION

Personal reflections, comments, opinions, or even journalistic pieces posted to a website. Entries can be published or unpublished; however, all active links must be removed. Limit 1100 words.

*NOTE: All entries in this category will be treated as unpublished.*

### CATEGORY 9 INSPIRATIONAL ARTICLE

Entries to this category should concern a personal experience or struggle that provides inspiration or hope to others. A profile or personal story should touch the reader in some way, impart a valuable message, and/or educate the reader in some way. While this piece can be religious in nature, it is not mandatory. The piece should strive to inspire and motivate the reader. It may be a vehicle

# 2019 OWFI Writing Contest Categories

for presenting the author's opinion about a topic that has personally affected him or her and may also include a call to action. The author's voice and style give the piece life. Limit 3000 words.

## CATEGORY 10 MEMOIR/NOSTALGIA: SHORT STORY

Memoir is first-person, narrative nonfiction that focuses on one specific aspect of the writer's life or experience. Nostalgia focuses on down-home occurrences reflecting the past; these pieces evoke a fond remembrance of a time gone by, or memories of childhood. Limit 4000 words.

## CATEGORY 11 FLASH FICTION

An extremely short but complete work of fiction. As with longer stories, a flash fiction story must contain the four elements of fiction: setting (which is usually implied rather than fully described), one or more characters, a conflict, and a resolution. Because of length limitations, these stories often make use of suggestion and innuendo. This is fiction in its barest, most essential form; every word must move the story forward. Stories submitted in this category should be targeted to an adult audience. Limit 500 words.

## CATEGORY 12 SHORT-SHORT STORY (ADULT): FICTION

A short short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme or one climactic event, developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. Limit 2000 words.

## CATEGORY 13 JUVENILE SHORT STORY: FICTION

A juvenile short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel and with a subject matter aimed at children. They often revolve around a single theme or one climactic event, developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. For readers ages 7–9, limit 600 words. For readers 8–12, limit 1000 words.

*NOTE: Entries must have the target audience's age range below the word count on the first page of the manuscript.*

## CATEGORY 14 YOUNG ADULT SHORT STORY: FICTION

A young adult (YA) short story (subject matter aimed at readers 13–18) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme or one climactic event, developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. Limit 2000 words.

## CATEGORY 15 SHORT STORY (ADULT): FICTION

A short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme or one climactic event, developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. Limit 2000 to 4000 words.

## CATEGORY 16 SCI-FI/FANTASY SHORT STORY: FICTION

Science fiction includes stories in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles contribute in a significant way to the adventure. Often the novel assumes a set of rules, principles, or facts and traces their logical consequences. Fantasy includes stories in which magical, otherworldly, or supernatural elements are a central part of the plot or setting. Many fantasies take place on imaginary worlds. Characters may be something other than human or may possess magical powers. A sci-fi/fantasy short story (genres limited to sci-fi and fantasy) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme or one climactic event, developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. Help the judge by noting "Sci-Fi" or "Fantasy" on your manuscripts. Limit 5000 words.



# 2019 OWFI Writing Contest Categories

## CATEGORY 17 HORROR SHORT STORY: FICTION

A horror short story (subject matter aimed at scaring the reader) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme or one climactic event, developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. Limit 5000 words.

## CATEGORY 18 PROSE HUMOR: FICTION OR NONFICTION

Prose humor is exactly that—a piece of writing meant to evoke humor. Everyday experiences can resonate with the reader, and common interest stories, when written in a clever and entertaining voice, bring forth a smile. The humor piece should also meet the criteria of its form: column, short story, article/feature, or essay. Manuscripts submitted in this category should be targeted toward an adult audience. Limit 2000 words.

## CATEGORY 19 PLAY, FILM, OR TV SCRIPT

One, two, or three acts. As in all categories, entries must be unaccepted and never optioned or produced by the time of submission. Help the judge by noting "Play," "Film," or "TV script" on your manuscripts. Formatting must follow accepted industry standards. Submit complete synopsis and opening scene(s). Complete submission limit 30 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 20 PICTURE BOOK: FICTION OR NONFICTION (FOR AGES 1–8)

Picture books are large, art-filled books for children, which are primarily targeted to ages 1–8, but are also appealing to older kids and even adults. They are designed to bring information and/or entertainment to life for young eyes, and the text must be minimal. These books have a beginning, middle, and end. Picture books do not necessarily feature a character, but when they do, the protagonist must solve his or her own problem, and the problem should be something significant. Often a picture book portrays a concept such as numbers, letters, the weather, colors, etc. Picture books may also evoke a mood, such as a bedtime story. These books should be engaging and present the topic in a fresh, childlike way. (Show, don't tell!) Limit 750 words.

## CATEGORY 21 MIDDLE GRADE BOOK: FICTION OR NONFICTION (FOR AGES 8-12)

Same as Category 20, yet written for children ages 8–12. For fiction, think *Hank the Cow Dog*. Submit the first consecutive chapters; a complete synopsis or outline; prologue, if any; and/or a nonfiction proposal (per industry standard). Limit 20 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 22 YOUNG ADULT NOVEL: FICTION OR NONFICTION (FOR AGES 13 AND OLDER)

This category has the same rules as all books. For novels, write compelling stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. For nonfiction, provide accessible and interesting content that informs, inspires, and/or educates. For novels, think *Harry Potter*; the main character should have an important problem he/she struggles to solve. The story should engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by the story's end. These often deal with the tribulations of growing up. Nonfiction should focus on providing information that educates and informs the reader. Review the various novel and nonfiction book categories for further descriptions. Help the judge by noting "Novel" or "Nonfiction" on your manuscripts. Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis or outline, and/or nonfiction proposal (per industry standard). Limit to 20 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 23 MAINSTREAM NOVEL: FICTION

A successful mainstream novel tackles subjects of universal appeal, driven by characters and plots that find acceptance in the "mainstream" of readers. This category is large and diverse. Think Jodi Picoult, John Grisham, Harlan Coben, etc. Genre novels such as science fiction, mystery/suspense, romance, and historical fiction should be entered in their appropriate categories. Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. Complete submission limit 25 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 24 ROMANCE NOVEL: FICTION

The romance novel follows strong, vivid characters on their journey of discovery and emotional conflict to a shared and satisfying conclusion. No plot point, setting, or event takes precedence over the one central theme: the relationship between the two main characters. The end must leave the reader believing the protagonists' love will endure for the remainder of their lives. This category includes all forms of romance, including historical romance. Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. Complete submission limit 25 pages (or less).

# 2019 OWFI Writing Contest Categories

## CATEGORY 25 HISTORICAL NOVEL: FICTION

Historical fiction encompasses novels set anytime in the recent or distant past, such as ancient Greece, the Middle Ages, or World War II. These novels are time capsules of an era and/or culture—the setting serves as a character in itself. Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. Complete submission limit 25 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 26 MYSTERY/SUSPENSE NOVEL: FICTION

This category is made up of two broad categories. Mystery novels are all about “whodunit.” These books have a strong hook/murder and a cast of suspicious and compelling characters, and readers compete to solve the puzzle before the author reveals the answer. Whether told in first person or third, mystery novels showcase the main character as he/she follows a maze of clues and incidents leading to the Big Reveal. Detective and police procedural, espionage/spies, amateur sleuth, series or stand-alones, a winning mystery novel is a tightly-woven question from beginning to end. Suspense novels and related thrillers also require a strong hook that often includes a murder/death involving a strong main character and a compelling cast. But unlike mysteries, suspense/thrillers more often focus on “how-dunit.” The antagonist may be an individual, organization (government), or thing (virus) known to readers from the beginning but often hidden from the protagonist. Suspense novels and thrillers may be first person but are more often third person, and often employ more than one viewpoint character. The main character may be the good guy or the bad guy. Whether a medical, psychological, techno, legal, or other sub-genre, the winning suspense novel is action-driven from beginning to end. Help the judge by noting “Mystery” or “Suspense/Thriller” on your manuscripts. Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. Complete submission limit 25 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 27 SCI-FI/FANTASY NOVEL: FICTION

This category is made up of two totally different genres. A science fiction novel is one in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles contribute in a significant way to the adventure. Often the novel assumes a set of rules, principles, or facts and then traces their logical consequences; A fantasy novel is one in which magical, otherworldly, or supernatural elements are a central part of the plot or setting. Many fantasies take place on imaginary worlds. Characters may be something other than human or may possess magical powers. Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. Complete submission limit 25 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 28 HORROR NOVEL: FICTION

Fiction intended to scare, unsettle, or horrify the reader. Historically, the cause of the “horror” experience has been the intrusion of an evil or, occasionally, a misunderstood, supernatural element into everyday human experience. Any fiction with a morbid, gruesome, surreal, or exceptionally suspenseful or frightening theme has come to be called “horror.” Submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. Complete submission limit 25 pages (or less).

## CATEGORY 29 NONFICTION BOOK (ANY NONFICTION BOOK)

This category is made up of an enormous range of divergent topics, all of which seek to educate, inform, entertain, and sometimes inspire. Narrative nonfiction follows the form and style of various fiction genres (think *The Perfect Storm* and *First, Do No Harm*). Depending on style, biographies and autobiographies or family histories may fall under the narrative nonfiction umbrella, which basically consists of any “true” subject told in a narrative form. The author often has a personal stake or shared experience in the story. This form requires a strong viewpoint character(s), story problems, and satisfying resolutions. The length of the complete work parallels similar works of fiction. Memoir is first-person, narrative nonfiction that focuses on one specific aspect of the writer’s life or experience. Nostalgia focuses on down-home occurrences reflecting the past; these pieces evoke a fond remembrance of a time gone by or memories of childhood. General nonfiction more commonly presents technical, self-help, or how-to information; inspirational works; or otherwise fact-based material derived from an author’s own expertise and research and outside expert sources. Style varies widely, but in all cases content must be presented in a pleasing and accessible format. Chapters are typically broken up with sidebars, bulleted lists, photos/illustrations, tables, and other value-added materials and may include direct quotes, footnotes, etc. The length of a finished work varies widely, from short, illustrated gift books (under 20,000 words) to encyclopedia-length reference books (over 150,000 words). Help the judge by noting “Narrative” or “General” on your manuscripts. For narrative nonfiction submit the first consecutive chapters and prologue, if any, with a complete synopsis. For general nonfiction submit any representative chapters and include a chapter outline or book proposal per the industry standard (i.e., overview, market analysis/competition, table of contents, etc.). Limit to 30 pages (or less).



# 2019 OWFI Writing Contest Categories

## Categories 30–34: Published Books (Trophy Awards)

All entries in the following categories must have a copyright year of 2018. E-books, self-published books, and traditionally published books of any length are eligible.

### CATEGORY 30 – BEST JUVENILE BOOK AWARD

Published book of fiction or nonfiction for readers ages 1–12.

### CATEGORY 31 – BEST YA BOOK AWARD

Published book of fiction or nonfiction for readers ages 13–18.

### CATEGORY 32 – BEST NONFICTION BOOK AWARD

Published nonfiction book.

### CATEGORY 33 – BEST BOOK OF POETRY AWARD

Published book of poetry (chapbook or full-length collection).

### CATEGORY 34 – BEST BOOK OF FICTION AWARD

Published book of fiction (novel or short story collection)

## Crème-de-la-Crème Award

A “Best of Contest” award will be chosen from among the first-place manuscripts in all 29 unpublished categories. The winner receives a trophy and an additional cash award.



**NEW THIS YEAR! OWFI Travel Tumbler!**  
Available for PRE-ORDER only.

Must be ordered via the OWFI website  
registration page by March 15th.

No extra tumblers will be ordered. They WILL  
NOT be sold at conference.

Only \$12.00 each!

# Guest Column

## Watching Your Language

### From Wordy and Pompous to Direct and Correct

Just don't be guilty of writing them. Unless, of course, you are portraying a wordy, pompous character in dialogue.

Yes, on my soap box again about professionals whose medium is words and who take a paycheck for using those words, correctly . . . or not. And failing, barefaced, in front of thousands of viewers. Examples abound, from flat-out wrong grammar to the protracted and, well, pompous.

Allow me.

Among the most common ear-graters we cannot escape are those that spring from early corrections by parents and teachers. You, the wee kindergartner, might have said to your mom or teacher, "Me and Lulu want to go out and play."

"Say 'Lulu and I,' not 'me and Lulu,'" said the kind and powerful adult. And so, you did. Whether the phrase came as a subject or direct object or object of a preposition. And what the heck was a preposition, anyway, let alone case? When the day came in the grades when you might

have heard about subjects and objects and the business of prepositions, that teacher, or book, or learned example still didn't have the power of the early and oft-repeated Lulu and I, not Me and Lulu. So now, you, distinguished TV anchor, corporate officer, head of state, gaze into the camera and say, "The ambassador invited the senator, his staff, and Lulu and I to dinner."

You'd never say "the ambassador invited I." This simple trick would have saved you—and will every time! Divide those objects, mind before tongue: Ambassador invited the senator. Ambassador invited staff. Ambassador invited Lulu. Ambassador invited me.

Here's a quick checklist of some protracted, unnecessarily wordy phrases you hear and read all the time. Just don't be guilty of writing them. Unless, of course, you are portraying a wordy, pompous character in dialogue.

Here are a few examples from a (long!) list by Editorial Experts, Inc. called "Simpler Words and Phrases." In no particular order, as you can see.

*Kathleen Park, MA, calls herself an escaped English teacher and a forever lover of words. Send her your grammar-related question: [katie.talks@gmail.com](mailto:katie.talks@gmail.com).*

<u>Instead of</u>	<u>Try</u>
attached herewith is	here's
at the present time	now
be responsible for	handle
afford an opportunity	allow, let
ascertain	find out, learn
close proximity	near
impacted	affected, changed, hit
limited number	few
interface with	deal with, meet
limitations	limits
in the course of	during, in
in a timely manner	on time, promptly
implement	carry out, do, follow
in the event that	if



# Flash Fiction Prompt Winners



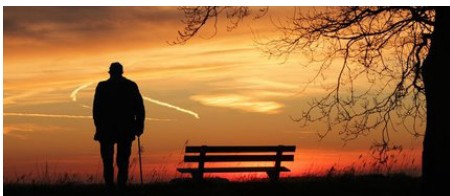
## “Home Again”

by Mary Main

No hand had touched the Lion in years now. Unseeing, it was not unfeeling. It missed the touch of hands on its mouth ring-- soft, pliable hands; tough, leathery hands; impatient hands; peaceful hands. The silence echoed in the abandoned house it guarded. Time passed, an eternity, and the Lion slept, then something awakened it. It could feel the door tilt and hear the voices.

“Careful! Careful now. This door will look perfect on our new house on the hill.”

The Lion sighed. Home again.



## “Sweet Reunion”

by Kathlyn Smith

He stood watching the last rays of the setting sun. Would she come? It had been forty years since he'd last seen her. *The best looking girl at*

*Central High School.* As an eighteen year old senior he'd been totally in love. They'd made plans, lifetime plans.

The war interfered. After training his assignment was a ship in the Pacific. The short leave home before shipping out wasn't long enough. Bonnie wanted to get married, he had to refuse. The future he'd seen with her was now uncertain. He couldn't do that to her. Their parting left them both heartbroken and even now brought a sadness to his heart. When he returned from the war, she and her entire family were gone. No one knew where. He stayed in town for a time, decided he needed a new start and left for the state university. There was no reason to ever go back. Until now.

Time brought him a new town. A career. A new love. But he never forgot.

After his wife's death he began his search. A friend helped him find Bonnie. She had agreed to meet him at sunset on the top of the hill. The same hill where they had shared their first kiss, and their last.

He turned as he heard footsteps. His heart pounded as he watched Bonnie make her way to the bench where he stood. He marveled at her smile. There was another woman with her, and a young lady, too. They remained several yards away.

He reached for her hand, his cheeks wet with tears. Hers were, too. “Bonnie, my sweet

Bonnie. I finally found you.”

She touched his face, her fingers tracing the lines that time had etched there. “Carl, I didn't think I'd ever see you again. Am I dreaming?”

“No, you aren't. This is real. You're real. I waited for you. I couldn't find you...”

“I didn't want to leave, but my parents made me go. They wouldn't let me tell any of our friends, or contact them after the move. I was sixteen, I didn't have a choice.”

“Why would they do that? It doesn't make sense.” He took both of her hands in his.

“Why?”

“Carl, I think you'll understand in just a moment.” She turned and motioned for the woman and young lady to come forward.

“You see, they made me move because I was pregnant... with your child. I'd like you to meet Caroline, our daughter. And this is your granddaughter, Kate.”

“You...you were pregnant? With my baby?” He sat down on the bench and looked at Caroline.

“You're my daughter?”

She nodded.

“I don't know what to think.” He looked at each of them, stood and pulled Bonnie close. “Wait, I do know. This sweet reunion, this wonderful blessing...God has given this chance to us. We've got so many years to make up, that is, if you want to?”

Caroline smiled. “I'd like nothing more.”

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Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc.  
Vinita Eggers, OWFI Treasurer  
Box 61  
Heavener, OK 74937



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OKLAHOMA  
**A R T S**  
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Ludlum Law Firm

Marty Ludlum

[ludlumlawfirm@gmail.com](mailto:ludlumlawfirm@gmail.com)



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