

# NightScripts



August 2023

Connie Palmer Dodson, Editor



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## Writing Prompt:

**Does this scene inspire a story for you?**

**Write a short story of 1000 words or less and get it to me by August 31st 2023. I'll print my favorite in the September issue.**

**One entry per member.**

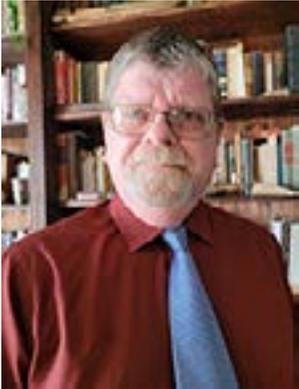
**You can also just use the image to spark a scene or a story.**

**If you submit it to me don't forget to title your story. Put Writing Prompt in the subject line and submit it to: [editor@tulsanightwriters.org](mailto:editor@tulsanightwriters.org)**

# WRITE ON

## Why Enter Writing Contests?

By our President, Merle Davenport



Many writers ask, “Why should I enter a writing contest? What’s the point?”

For some, entering a contest can be a distraction. For others, it seems pointless. Before you decide not to enter a contest, consider the following advantages.

1. You can earn money. Some contests don’t pay much, but it’s more than you had before, right?
2. You get inspired. Deadlines and writing prompts can serve as important motivations to write. It may even spark that idea you need to flush out your next novel.
3. You get bragging rights. Nothing is as rewarding as being recognized as a good writer. Contests are a great way to show the world your skills. Besides, you can add it to your accolades for your next query letter to sell your novel.
4. You can get published. Not all contests include publication, but some do. Getting published is the first step to launching your writing career. Just remember what great Christmas gifts your published articles would make.
5. You get noticed. Others will see your work and recognize a great artist in the making.
6. You get to do something new. Many contests will give you a prompt to write about. Others want you to write in a certain genre. Contests are your opportunity to branch out and write something outside of your comfort zone.
7. You can enter multiple pieces. The stories you think are amazing, are not always the ones others enjoy. By entering several stories, you can discover what people like. You may even

discover that your dud of a story is really a hidden gem waiting to get noticed.

8. You get invited to award ceremonies. As you start winning contests, you will be invited to ceremonies to accept awards. It’s a great way for others to celebrate your writing skills and gain recognition.

9. You get acquainted with deadlines. If you are not published, or if you self-publish, you may not have deadlines to meet like you would if you were working with a big-name publisher. Contests can familiarize you with meeting deadlines instead of writing whenever your muse strikes.

10. You get to hone your writing skills. This is the best reason to enter contests.

- Receiving comments on your stories from other writers is invaluable. Other writers can see what you need to improve that others might miss.

- Developing your plot in a short story forces you to choose your words carefully. You don’t have the space to wander. You must tell the beginning, middle, and end of the story with an economy of words.

- The more often you enter a contest, the more you will see your stories score better and better. This will show you that you are learning the craft of writing.

- As you improve your writing skills in the contests, you will find that your skills will also improve in other works, including that novel you’re working on.

The bottom line is that entering contests can be very helpful to your writing career. Find some inexpensive contests and start writing that masterpiece.

# THE WRITE TOUCH

## DIFFERENT GENRES

By our Vice President, Kathryn Helstrom



You know what you like to read, and so does your audience. Readers search for what they like. Knowing how to classify your material will bring readers to you. It is important to know your genres: what's being published now, what's selling well, what's new

and trending. There is so much inspiration out there!

How many genres are there? Some list five basic genres: Fiction, Nonfiction, Drama, Poetry, and Folktale. Amazon also lists five categories: Genre Literature and Fiction, Women's Literature and Fiction, Thrillers and Suspense, Literary Fiction, and American Literature. Each of these has many subgenres, most of the subgenres have subgenres of their own, and all of them have Short Story or Essay as a subgenre.

Let's start with Fiction. There are a variety of subgenres, beginning with The Classics. These are stories published some time ago, and are now recognized as fine literature. We all aspire to create something that will one day be labeled Classic. They come from many different genres ranging from The Hobbit to Murder on the Orient Express to War and Peace.

Here is a partial list of Fiction genres. Some subgenres are listed as well. There is not space enough to include them all here. Imagine an etcetera after each paragraph below.

**Adventure:** The protagonist goes on a journey or a quest, either personally or geographically. Subgenres include Echna (old Irish tales of the Otherworld), nautical fictions, castaway stories, and lost worlds.

**Bildungsroman:** From the German word *bildung* (education) and *roman* (novel), it deals with

a person's formative years or spiritual education. A "coming of age" story. Although often in a contemporary setting, these can be historical, adventure, religious, or other subgenres.

**Crime/Detective/Mystery/Suspense:** A crime is committed and the consequences that follow. Subgenres include campus murder mystery, historical mystery, gong'an (Chinese traditional), and occult. True Crime is a separate category under Nonfiction.

**Fantasy:** Imaginary worlds, often inspired by folklore and myth, can be high fantasy (epic characters and themes), urban (present-day), prehistoric and medieval, and paranormal. Themes can be comic, dark, heroic, mythic, sword and sorcery, superhero. Fantasy is probably the most diverse of all the categories.

**Historical Fiction:** A story set in the past, generally from 50 years ago all the way to ancient beginnings. Subgenres include biography, romance, religious, mystery, military, plantation slave narrative, and others.

**Horror:** Stories that shock or frighten the reader. Besides vampires and werewolves and monsters, subgenres are psychological, paranormal, erotic, gothic, cosmic, occult, and splatterpunk (extremely graphic and gory).

**Religious Fiction:** This is a fast-growing genre, and depending on where you look, the definitions are quite different. The one common thread is that religion and inspiration are essential themes. Sub-genres are varied as well, including romance, science fiction, and historical, and may be Christian, Islamic, or Jewish.

**Romance:** Two people fall in love, usually with an emotionally satisfying conclusion. Besides historical romance, there is medical romance, erotica, paranormal, and several other subgenres.

**Science Fiction:** Futuristic settings in outer space, time travel, or parallel universes.

(Continued on page 5)

# Flash Fiction Contest is underway!

[It's online Click Here for all the details.](#)

**Deadline Extension - August 31, 2023**

Or use the following link in your browser:  
<https://tulsanightwriters.org/flash-fiction-contest/>

## What does your brand say about you?

Saturday, August 19th, from 9am to 1pm

In this four-hour workshop, you'll learn the importance of your brand as an author – from what it means to have a brand to what it says about you to agents, publishers, and even the public who buys your work. You'll learn your brand is more than just the look of your website and your social media posts, but also your finished work – down to the layout, editing, and cover design of your book.

Be sure to bring your laptops for the interactive portion on social media, where you'll learn some of the basic design principles which will help your posts garner more attention.



### [GET TICKETS HERE](#)

#### **Cost:**

General Public \$25

Tulsa NightWriters Member & Students \$20

#### **Presenters**

The team from Zealot Branding, a Tulsa-based full-service branding and marketing agency, will lead this hands-on workshop.

# Welcome Wagon

Give a big Howdy to our new members.

Jason Wright, Tulsa  
 Carole Avila, Arkansas  
 Jacqueline Winchester Tulsa  
 Holly Rehberg Broken Arrow



(Continued from Page 3)

Sci-Fi can be post-apocalyptic, alien invasions, dystopian, or space opera. Cyberpunk and Steampunk are also included.

Thriller: A story that induces strong feelings of excitement, anxiety, tension, suspense, fear, and other similar emotions. Subgenres are mystery, spy, legal, psychological, techno, and medical. Many other genres can also be categorized as a thriller, based on the level of suspense and tension.

Westerns: Set in the American “Old West,” in the 1800s, mostly post-civil war. These can be adventure, romance, or other subgenres.

Women’s Fiction: This genre usually has a strong female protagonist, stories in which the plot is driven by the main character’s emotional journey. It includes romance, chick lit, matron literature, and other subcategories.

There are still other genres. Meta fiction, also known as romantic irony, uses self-reference to draw attention to itself as a work of art while exposing the “truth” of a story. Apocalyptic literature depicts visions of

the end times as revealed by an angel or other heavenly messenger. Mathematical fiction is a genre in which mathematics and mathematicians play important roles (Good Will Hunting is a crossover). Alternative history, slipstream, LGBTQ+ fiction, and tragicomedy are a few more. The list goes on.

Finally, many of these genres can be targeted to children, juvenile, or young adult readership. It is very common to combine genres, so your novel might include two or more genres.

We all need to continually research online for current and detailed information. When discussing your work in social media, use the hashtags identifying any and all genres that apply to your manuscript. Connect with authors in your genres. Read their books. Sign up for their newsletters and podcasts.

The Tulsa NightWriters has a list of people who are interested in joining critique groups. These are often (and ideally) centered around a genre. To get connected sign up at <https://tulsanightwriters.org/critique-groups/>.

# COVER PROMPT WINNER

## RESERVING JUDGEMENT

BY JOYCE HANEWINKEL

To avoid road construction on my normal drive to town, I took a detour. It was less than a mile from my home, yet I had never passed this way before. Braking at the stop sign, a sorry sight captured my attention. I glared at a torn and tattered flag perched precariously through rusted security bars that covered the window of a neglected old house. A heavy sigh escaped me as I slowly shook my head. As a Veteran, I wondered: How could someone display our flag in such a disrespectful manner?

The house was perched on a corner lot in rural Oklahoma. Its black paint was faded and peeling. The floorboards of the front porch curled up at indiscriminate intervals and the wooden steps sagged precariously.

I lingered at the intersection passing judgement on the occupant for the dejected display of our country's proud symbol. Then, I scrutinized the entire scene before me. This ramshackle house had once been someone's beloved home. The empty flower boxes on the porch railing had once held flowers. I could see the browned lifeless remains. The bricks that edged the flowerbed lay askew. The tree that had once supplied shade was now a broken trunk in need of removal. Yes, how could this happen?

Rolling through the intersection I saw the fingers of a gnarled hand pull down the ends of the metal blinds exposing a whiskered chin.

I drove to the grocery store to refill my pantry. Having lost my ninety-three-year-old father the previous year, the image of that gnarled hand and whiskered chin at the window haunted me.

After loading the groceries, I eased into a line of cars waiting to exit the parking lot. Inspiration struck like a fast-moving bug against a windshield as I idled in front of the Sutherlands home improvement store. Easing out of the parade of cars, I parked in front of the store and began my mission.

\*\*\*

Back in my car, I angled across the lot to Sonic and purchased two lunches to go. Ten minutes later I pulled into the rutted drive of the forlorn house with the bedraggled American flag. The

Sutherland purchase remained in the backseat while I shouldered the car door open and carried my purse and the lunches up the front steps. My index finger depressed a yellowed button, but the recalcitrant doorbell remained silent. I knocked crisply and waited.

A shuffling sound resonated from behind the door, the doorknob slowly turned, and the hinges creaked eerily. The wizened face of a proud man protruded from the narrow gap.

"Yes?" He asked.

"Hi. My name is Julie. I'm your neighbor. I have an extra lunch and was hoping you'd help me out. You see, I don't want to eat alone today. Would you have lunch with me?"

His lips parted in a broad grin. Eyes sparkled. "Well sure. Come on in."

He stepped back and eased the door open. A window-unit air-conditioner purred from its housing in the adjacent wall. The room was so tidy it reminded me of military barracks. The furniture was old and worn but of good quality. He led me to a small, antique, clawfoot table which displayed two matching plastic, floral placemats. Then he methodically collected paper plates and squares of paper towels.

I unloaded the paper bags, and the scent of onions, french-fries, and cheeseburgers infused the air. I glanced at him. "Mister—"

"Clint. No need for mister."

"Alright then Clint, I hope you like cheeseburgers."

He licked his lips in anticipation. "That I do."

We ate in comfortable companionship.

"Tell me, Clint, are you a Veteran?"

He spoke softly but articulately. "I am. Why do you ask?"

"Well for starters," my head swiveled taking in the rooms, "your house is arranged in military precision, then there's the American flag outside."

He winced. "I should do something about Old Glory out there. I don't get around so good anymore. It's a shame I let her get into such a state, but I just don't manage the steps very well."

(Continued on next page)

His shame became my own. In the future, I should withhold judgement until I have all the facts.  
 “Well, I can take care of that after we eat.”

During our impromptu lunch I learned that he had retired from the Army after thirty years of service. He had a love for our country which was rivalled only by the love for his wife who had passed two years earlier.

“Clint, do you have a Phillips head screw-driver?”

“Yes, why?”

“I brought you a surprise.”

“You did, why?”

“From one Vet to another, I like to see Old Glory waving proudly. So, I picked up a new flag to replace the old one. Would it be all right if I mounted it to your porch railing?”

His eyes shone brightly as he raised his head.  
 “I’d like that very much.”

“I can give the old flag to the boy scouts; they’ll dispose of it properly.”

He nodded approvingly.

He edged onto the porch and watched as I attached the bracket to the railing at the top of the stairs. When I inserted the flag, Clint’s stooped frame unfurled. He stood at attention and gave a precise salute which he held at the corner of his eyebrow. I stepped back and saluted as well. Of its own accord, the Pledge of Allegiance spilled from my mouth and Clint joined me in recitation. His voice was raised in a powerful declaration of respect for our flag, our country. Mine, however, faltered with emotion.

Afterward I mounted the steps to say goodbye. “You know, you remind me of my father. He would have been about your age.” Instinctively, I stepped forward and embraced him.

A wisp of a sigh escaped him as he leaned into me, patted my back, and said, “Stop by anytime.”



Our Annual Craft of Writing is coming up October 21st and we are looking for sponsors! There are various levels of sponsorships from being our lunch sponsor to a simple ad for the program.

View sponsorships levels online here: <https://tulsanightwriters.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/TNW-Conference-Sponsorship-Package-Options.pdf>

or

[Click Here](#)

## August Meeting

**7 p.m. Tuesday,**

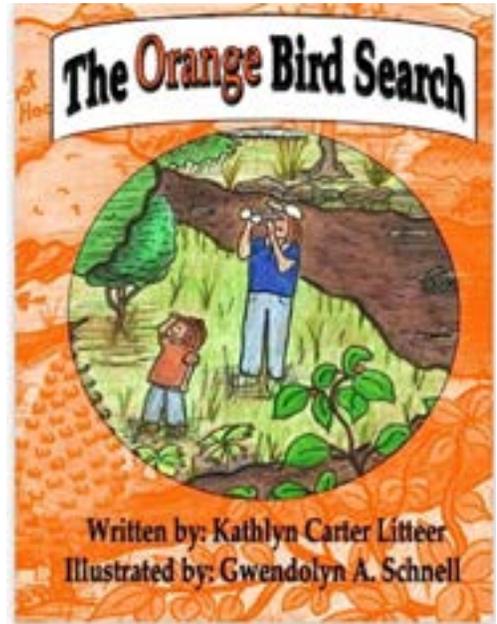
**August 15, 2023,**

Resources for Writers:  
 From Design to Writing  
 & Even AI

In this digital age, resources for writers are available everywhere you look. Sometimes it can be overwhelming to know which ones are best to use. In this meeting, we’ll cover a multitude of options that are available to you, both free and paid, and which ones can help you in which areas. From organizing your writing to finding an editor, from designing your social media posts to how AI can be helpful – we’ll cover a wide swath of resources.

Come prepared to take notes and ask questions!

# BULLETIN BOARD



Write Something Today,  
Don't Delay.

[Available Here on Amazon](#)



Mugs  
Mousepads  
Notebooks  
Journals



If you don't see your genre in our online store, send us an e-mail...  
- We can custom design!

[GiftsForAuthors.etsy.com](https://GiftsForAuthors.etsy.com)

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

## NightScripts Submission Guidelines and Wants

From Members: Currently accepting ads (for books and services), articles, short stories (100 - 200 words), poetry, and event information.

Submit To: editor@tulsanightwriters.org  
Deadline: Last Day of the Previous Month  
Specifications: Please format your text as follows:  
Times New Roman, 12 pt  
Single Spaced  
Attach as a doc or pages  
Attach graphics and / or photographs

From Non-Members: Paid Ad Space Available,  
contact editor@tulsanightwriters.org

**\$10  
Entry**



**\$10  
Entry**

**Fifth Annual**

**La Viness Short Story Writing Contest**

[www.jespiddlin.com/writingcontest](http://www.jespiddlin.com/writingcontest)

**First Place - \$100  
Second Place - \$75  
Third Place - \$50**

**Submissions accepted July 1st through August 31st.**

# 2023 TNW Board & Meeting Information

Merle Davenport  
President  
President@tulsanightwriters.org



**Tulsa NightWriters will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday,**

**July 18, 2023,**

**location information below.**

Kathryn Helstrom  
Vice President  
VicePresident@tulsanightwriters.org



## August Speaker

Ana Maddox

on

**Resources for Writers: From Design to Writing & Even AI**

See page 7 for additional information.

Bill Wetterman  
Treasurer  
treasurer@tulsanightwriters.org



## Directions

Take the I-244 to downtown Tulsa, and exit on Detroit. If you are coming from the west, the exit for the OSU campus is on the LEFT.

From Detroit Ave., turn right onto JH Franklin Road. You will see the Auditorium and Conference Center (North Hall) on the left. You can park in Lot E (first parking lot on left), or across the street in Lot D. We meet in Room 153. Look for signs posted at both entrances.

Parking is free and open to the public. It is a very short walk, and handicapped accessible. Campus security patrols the parking lots regularly.

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