

NightScripts



November 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 the end of this month. I'll
print my favorite in the next
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**

WRITE ON

Conference Recap

By our President, Merle Davenport



Congratulations to all who participated in the 2023 Craft of Writing Conference!

Whether you were a speaker, an agent, an attendee, or a volunteer, you helped make this conference a resounding success. In fact, we had participants from as far away as Texas, Missouri, and Arkansas.

“This was the most fun I had in ages.”

“You are so friendly here. Where can I join?”

“This is so different from my writing club.

Can I come to your meetings on zoom?”

These are just a few of the comments we received about the conference. Everyone I talked to seemed to be enjoying the great speakers we had, the wide variety of genres that were represented, and the comradery of fellow writers. The only negative comment I heard was that several wanted the conference to extend for the entire weekend.



Remember, this was a conference with a lot of “firsts.”

It was the first time we partnered with OSU and the Center for Poets and Writers. Thank you, OSU, for allowing us to use such wonderful facilities for our conference!

It was also the first time we offered a “Pitch Room” for those who had a manuscript ready for

publication. Thirty-five “pitches” were made, which kept all of our agents very busy.

It was the first time we ever included a box lunch for all participants. In the past, we let people go into town for lunch. This time, we offered lunch to everyone in attendance. The result was a lot of conversations between new and old friends. What a great way to network among fellow authors.



This was also the first time we have charged people to attend the conference. The extra funds allowed us to offer a great venue for the conference as well as cover a lot of expenses (like lunch) that helped make the conference a success.

In addition, this was the first time we had well over 100 people in attendance. Although this provided a few challenges, it also allowed us to offer so much more than we could in the past.

Despite the unprecedented attendance and other “firsts,” everything ran smoothly. This is due to the efforts of two people: Kathryn Helstrom, the conference coordinator, and Ana Maddox, our communications director. Both of these ladies played an integral role in the success of the conference. Everything from decorations to nametags was on their “to do list.” Please join me in giving a huge round of applause to them.

Next year?

All I can say is that it will be amazing. Ana Maddox has agreed to be the Conference Coordinator for the next conference. She is already collecting a team and making plans. Expect it to be bigger and better than ever. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to pass them along.

THE WRITE TOUCH

State Your Theme

By our Vice President, Kathryn Helstrom



What is the life lesson that your protagonist is going to learn in your story? Social status is not the best of all worlds (Titanic)? Love can disrupt and even destroy lives (Wuthering Heights)?

The Theme is based on a universal concept such as love, prejudice, corruption, death. It is about the human condition. But the Theme of Your Book is what your protagonist learns about it. Whatever she goes through in the pages you are producing, she will be changed by it. Almost always, she doesn't go on this journey knowing that she will change, or that she even needs to change. But your readers need to know, right up front.

Having a mastery of your theme in the beginning gives you the sense for your scenes, your dialog, your settings. Remember to hit at the theme at some points, and then hammer it home in the closing scenes. But first you must state it, so your readers get a hint of where you are taking them.

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Usually, a character (not the protagonist) makes a statement or poses a question in one of the early scenes. For example, Gandalf famously says, "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you

might be swept off to," in The Fellowship of the Ring.

The theme must be suggested, subtly inferred rather than blatantly announced, somewhere in the early chapters. The more thought-provoking you make it, the better.

Then, your characters can dance around it, ignore it, deny it, and even mock it, for the bulk of your story. But in the end, they are changed by it, willingly or unwillingly.

Then, your characters can dance around it, ignore it, deny it, and even mock it, for the bulk of your story. But in the end, they are changed by it, willingly or unwillingly. The opening scene, the image you provide at the very first, shows the reader how the protagonist was before, and the ending scene shows the reader how the protagonist is at the end. The door has been closed and the reader is satisfied.



Thank You

Kathryn
Helstrom
for all your
hard work on
the
Craft of Writing
Conference.

COVER PROMPT WINNER

BEAU'S BAYOU

BY JORDAN DODGE

Crickets chirped beneath a veil of misty darkness, and the waters, otherwise calm, sloshed behind the rudder of an old rusted boat. Close to shore, the dingy's speed slowed, and one of the two grubby men jumped onto the shore to pull the boat in.

"Damn," the old man, still in the boat, said. "I lost my keys." He patted his pockets.

"Think they fell out on the island?" the other man asked.

The man in the boat looked around his feet, hoping he had just misplaced them. "Agh! Come on," the man grunted.

"We might as well go see," the young man on shore said. "We're not getting far without em."

"Get back in. We'll make it quick. I don't want to miss supper."

The two men floated across the still waters in the darkness to the little island, which sat near the middle of the large lake.

"Bring that shovel. And the gun. Just in case," the man said.

Once again, the boat approached the shore, and the younger of the two men jumped out to pull the boat onto shore.

"So much damn trouble in life and death," the older man spat. "I'll look around here, you start digging out Beau. Maybe it fell in with him while we were diggin. Make it quick."

Looking for the mound of dirt he had displaced an hour ago, the young man rested the wooden handle of the spade against his shoulder as he navigated the moonlit knee-high grass with his other hand rested on the grip of the holstered revolver. He trudged until he felt his boots sink into the fresh pile of dirt. With a sharp scrape, he plunged the point of the shovel into the earth and began heaving chunks of dirt into the air, paying attention to the sound of the airborne dirt, hoping to hear the jangling of keys. The young man got about twenty shovels full when, perhaps on the twenty-first shovel full, a strange thud resonated. The young man felt a sharp pain in his right forearm. He looked down at his hand. It looked fine—no blood or bruises. He clenched his fist several

times. It still hurt, but he grabbed the shovel and kept digging.

After several more scoops of dirt, the young man saw the excavated body with blue lips and bright red ooze, which still seeped out of the hole in the curly brown-haired head. Though, most of the blood had been absorbed into the dirt, which also covered the rest of his body in a thin layer like it would on a coal miner. Beau, the owner of the body, wore a full-body navy blue jumper with his name stitched in cursive white letters below his left shoulder. It was very similar to the uniform the young man wore, only the young man had the name "Luke" stitched onto his.

Luke got down and sifted through the dirt with his hands to look for the keys. Luke reached over Beau to move him out of the way, when Luke noticed what it was that made the strange thud while he dug. The shovel must have severed Beau's hand. Beau's right hand lay next to his lifeless body. But that wasn't a problem; he wouldn't be needing it anyway. Luke cringed then grabbed the independent hand by the fingers and pushed it aside along with Beau.

He bent down to keep looking when a terribly strange feeling filled his body. An odd coldness and wetness draped itself over his skin, and for a moment, everything went black and Luke could not move. It wasn't just dark; it was nothing. And it felt to Luke as if all the warmth in his body had suddenly been sucked out of the tips of his fingers. His arms and legs were rigid and unmoving, stricken with rigor mortis.

A flash of life burst back into his body, and he took a deep breath of the musky air. While he was unconscious, he must have fallen. He was face-down shoulder to shoulder with Beau, or what was Beau, and the uncomfortable pain tingled in his arm again. In a confused and frustrated state, Luke shoved Beau aside to get himself up. But Luke felt a boot and a pair of hands jet into his own back.

"What the..." Luke said as he turned, expecting to see the old man. But there was no one there.

(Continued on next page)

Welcome Wagon

Give a big Howdy to our new members.

Aubrey Green, Collinsville
 Kendra McNack, Pryor
 Jean Anne Roberts, Tulsa
 Lauri Jones, Bristow



(Continued from Page 4)

The strange feeling happened again. Luke blacked out, this time with an awful sharp headache above his left temple. It felt as if his whole body had been dunked into an ice bath so cold that he would freeze into a brittle stone statue. Luke tried to move his arms, his fingers, his toes—anything. But nothing worked. Then, he felt a warm touch against his face; it was reassuring—it was probably the old man, come to see him lying in the dirt—to pull him out. But Luke couldn't see—it was all still dark. First, the warm hand felt his forehead, and then it pulled his eyelids open. The darkness disappeared. Standing above his frozen body was himself, or his body at least, like looking into a mirror.

The body above him laughed a wicked laugh and said, "Thanks, Luke." Luke's eyes fell shut again, and he heard the scrape of the shovel against the earth. Bits of wet earth cascaded over his motionless body until the weight of it pressed him all around with a strong cold wet hug.

"I got em over here," the old man's muffled voice called out with the jangling of keys.

"Oh good," Luke heard his voice say from above.

A gunshot rang from above, and Luke heard the groans of the old man.

The boat sloshed away into silence, and the eerie song of the crickets filled the night.

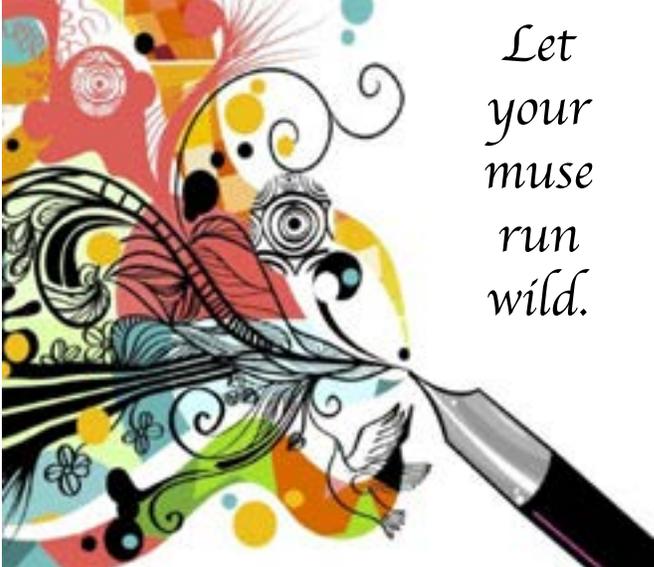
"If a nation loses its storytellers, it loses its childhood." —Peter Handke

BULLETIN BOARD

EDITING SERVICES

- * Proofreading
- * Copy Editing
- * Developmental Editing
- * Summary

Contact Julie Kimmel-Harbaugh
juliekh314@gmail.com
 918-720-4866 (cell)

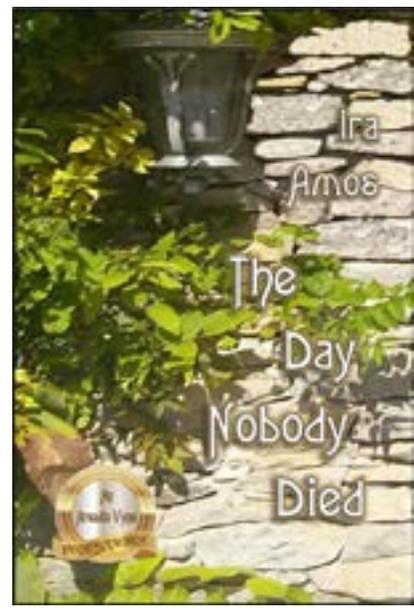


*Let
your
muse
run
wild.*

Writing Our Hearts Out: Writing Workshop and Retreat

Special thanks to Tulsa Nightwriters for helping to get the word out about our grief writing workshop on Oct. 14. Offered by former Tulsa Nightwriter Britton Gildersleeve and member J B Hunt, the half-day event at Hardesty Regional Library was also led by Jan Howard. All three women are widows and former Tulsa World newspaper reporters. "Writing Our Hearts Out" is part of an ongoing program to help address the need for healing due to COVID and other losses. Watch for additional dates in 2024.

J B
 For details about future workshops contact JB Hunt at jbnicholsonhunt@gmail.com



Derek Bullard's alter ego, Ira Amos, recently published his second novel in the Arcadia Vyne Mystery Series titled *The Day Nobody Died*. Available on Amazon or through www.jameskaypublishing.com

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NightScripts Submission Guidelines and Wants

From Members: Currently accepting ads (for books and services), articles, short stories (500-1000 words), poetry, and event information.

Submit To: editor@tulsanightwriters.org
Deadline: Last Day of the 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

A Thank You from Carolyn Steele

It took a multitude of people working behind the scenes and the generosity of area merchants to make the 2023 Craft of Writing conference a resounding success. With that in mind, please remember the following merchants that donated to the give-away when doing your Christmas shopping.

Toni's Flowers at 36 th and Harvard has been gracing Tulsa homes and special events with their beautiful flower arrangements for the last 40 years. After brightening the registration and information tables during the conference, two lucky attendees took home a special reminder of the day. Right now, Toni's is a veritable fairyland of gifts for the holidays.

Mecca Coffee located at 1330 East 41 st Street boasts nearly every type of coffee bean in the world. Whether you stop in for a quick cup of coffee or scan their wall of coffee beans for a new flavor to take home, there is more than coffee to tempt the taste buds. Spices galore from Vietnamese cinnamon to Royal Peppercorns, or an array of Balsamic vinegars and olive oils combine to make a gourmet cook out of anyone.

Greeted by recordings of bird songs, Wild Birds, Unlimited brings the outside, inside, when you enter their store. They carry a variety of quality birdseed for our avian friends, as well as feeders and, most importantly, squirrel guards. Located at 5960 S. Yale, the store is bursting with books, fun gifts for the bird lover.

Rustic Cuff jewelry store literally sparkles with numerous beaded bracelets, leather wrist bands, and gold or silver cuffs inscribed with initials, school emblems, or special sayings. Don't forget the guys on the Christmas list. You'll find something for them as well, when you visit their store at 5202 So. Harvard.

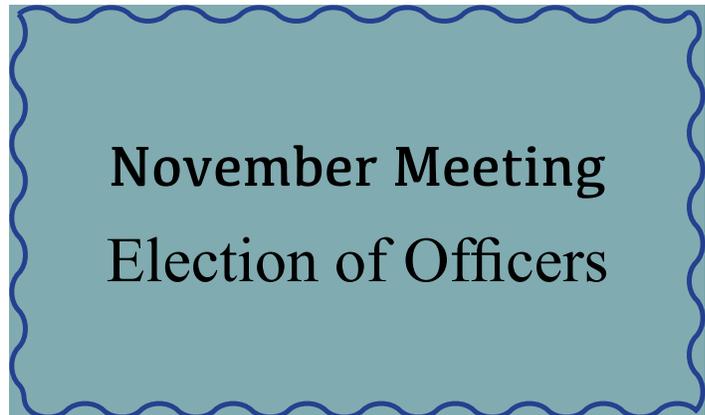
2023 TNW Board & Meeting Information

Merle Davenport
President
President@tulsanightwriters.org



Tulsa NightWriters will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 21, 2023, location information below.

Kathryn Helstrom
Vice President
VicePresident@tulsanightwriters.org



Bill Wetterman
Treasurer
treasurer@tulsanightwriters.org



Directions

Carolyn Steele
Hospitality Director
hospitality@tulsanightwriters.org



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 150. 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.

Ana Maddox
Communications Director
communications@tulsanightwriters.org



Connie Palmer Dodson
Newsletter editor
Newsletter Email:
editor@tulsanightwriters.org
Personal Email:
write.conniepalmer@gmail.com

