

NightScripts



February 2024

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. The winning entry will be printed in the next issue and edited by Ally Robertson from Wild Rose Press.

One entry per member.

Don't forget to title your story. Put Writing Prompt in the subject line and submit it to: editor@tulsanightwriters.org
Full details on page 3.

You can also just use the image



WRITE ON

Valentine's Day!

By our President, Merle Davenport



Romance is in the air and woe to anyone who forgets his/her lover on such an important date. If you listen to the ads, you might get the impression that the only important day in the entire month of February is Valentine's Day. Perhaps that's

because it's hard for the big box stores to increase sales with Groundhog Day, President's Day, or Ash Wednesday. In fact, I can't recall a single stuffed groundhog sold on February 2nd.

My personal favorite holiday this February is Fat Tuesday. This delectable holiday is always the day before Ash Wednesday. For those of you who did not grow up near a Polish community, you are missing out on a wonderful celebration. According to tradition, the entire house needed to be cleaned before Ash Wednesday. Then special fruit-filled cakes are sprinkled with powdered sugar. It's more cake than donut, but very similar to a Bismark otherwise.

Others celebrate Fat Tuesday with Mardi Gras parades. Carnival and Mardi Gras have been used as a background setting for more thrillers and mysteries than I can count. Massive numbers of celebrants with masks ... what a great way to have a lot of suspects amid the mayhem.

Don't forget that Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, the forty days before Easter. What a great background for a story of a man who gave up smoking for lent. He's irritable and argumentative as he makes every effort to eliminate tobacco from his life.

I miss hearing the apocryphal story of honest George Washington, born on February 22nd, who cut down the cherry tree. "I cannot tell a lie. I cut it down with my trusty ax." Or what about the tall, lanky Lincoln, born on February 12th, who held his brother upside down so he could put his muddy footprints on the ceiling of their log cabin?

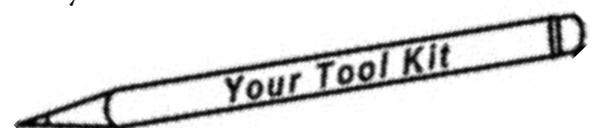
Let's not forget that February 10th marks the Lunar New Year, also known as the Chinese New Year. It can be another great setting for a murder mystery complete with firecrackers to cover up the sound of gunshots. Or it could serve as a backdrop for a chance meeting of star-crossed lovers.

Of course, this year there is an extra day in February. In some places in America's past, that day was referred to as Sadie Hawkins Day. The one day when a woman was allowed to ask a man to marry her. On any other day, she had to wait for the man to ask.

Why are these holidays important?

All stories need a good setting. Some settings serve as a casual backdrop for the action. Other settings become part of the story itself. Regardless of what role your setting plays, a few well-crafted sentences about a holiday can help immerse the reader deeper into the story as the characters become more three-dimensional and more relatable.

Use the holidays to add a little more flavor to your plot. It may surprise you how easy some scenes are to write when you include the other February holidays.



Happy February NightWriters

By our Vice President, Heather Westover

Happy February NightWriters! For those of you who may not know me yet, my name is Heather Westover. I grew up in South Dakota as a wheat farmer's daughter before my husband's job moved us to Oklahoma almost 34 years ago. We have 5 daughters, 4 grandchildren, and another one to make her debut any day now!

I have worked in education for the last three decades, but this year will be my last. I will be leaving it behind to pursue my career of writing, editing, and author coaching on a full-time basis once the school bell rings the final time for me in May. I have published two books: *Growing Old: One Lucille Ball Moment at a Time* debuted as a #1 New Release in Amazon and won the OWFI Best Non-Fiction Book award last year at the 2023 conference. *A Walk Through December*, a compilation of short stories, one for each day of the month was released in November of 2022 as eBook, paperback, and a first for me, on Audible as well! This Valentine's Day, the second book in the *One Lucille Ball Moment at a Time* series will be released! *Being Married: One Lucille Ball Moment at a Time* is the second and hopefully next #1.

For all aspiring writers, one of the most puzzling things is to crack the code on expanding your reader base. Maybe on the first book or two you can count on great support from friends, acquaintances, and family, but at some point, if you aren't writing in their favorite genre their support will drop off as well.

How do you chase that elusive new reader? Many people today will tell you that social media is their most favorite place to expand their base. Others may tell you that email campaigns are a more effective way to reach new readers. Still, others will swear that only publishers will be able to get you the exposure you truly need, and yet there's still the option of doing it like a politician! The old-fashioned way of shaking hands and making a personal connection.

I do a combination of all of the above. I travel to different women's shows and sell t-shirts with catchphrases from my books, along with maintaining active social media accounts and advertising on Amazon as well as the major social media platforms. I do have to admit that the most enjoyable way to expand my reader base though is just to carry books with me and bless random people as I see them throughout the day. I have gifted them in libraries, airports, gas stations, elementary schools, and many other places. I challenge you to gift one of your works today! The smiles are a very rewarding payment!



Save the date for this year's Lit Fest!

Be sure to check out the 2024 Tulsa LitFest, brought to you by the Center for Poets and Writers at OSU-Tulsa, Fulton Street Books, Whitty Books, Tri-City Collective, and a host of other organizations that comprise Tulsa's rich and diverse literary arts community. For Tulsans by Tulsans!

Follow Tulsa LitFest on [EventBrite.com](https://www.EventBrite.com), stay tuned to our social media pages, and bookmark tulsalitifest.org for updates.

COVER PROMPT WINNER

Send in the Cardinals

By Donna Le

Another cold, dreary day begins. Janice adds creamer to her coffee and shuffles over to the window hoping to catch sight of any signs of life in the yard. It's become hard to shake the doldrums, especially with the drab weather that has set in. Retirement was supposed to be filled with golden days of enjoyment.

Her eyes fall on the statue lying in her once vibrant flower garden. The man of stone has become a tired sentinel. She doesn't know if he can be resurrected. Not today, for sure. He's become a symbol of her lonely existence. She can't deal with that, either.

Janice sighs and molds her hands around the coffee mug—David's mug. She used to frown when he'd clump it down on the table. She preferred her dainty, rose-decorated cup. Lately she finds some warmth, comfort, and a little peace from clutching the awkward cup. Somehow it keeps his memory present for her.

She regrets not having bought birdseed before the streets became hazardous. Too late, now. A dusting of snow covers icy patches on the streets and sidewalks. Janice shivers and drinks her now lukewarm coffee as she fights off memories of David and their tending to the birds and backyard wildlife. David was like that, buying the high-dollar birdseed that attracted a variety of songbirds that livened the drab days of winter.

Janice stares out the window, ignoring her desire to freshen her drink, to get the day started. Her movements are sluggish. She still feels the shock of how rapid David left after his medical diagnosis. They had so many plans that now lie broken and useless.

David wouldn't want this for her. This moping. This wasting time.

Janice walks to the sink and the mug kerplunks onto the counter. She really should attempt some positive step. Her brow wrinkled in thought, she makes her way to the door that leads into the garage. Maybe a bit of birdseed lingers in a bag or

a bucket. The garage is cold and dark. She flips on the light switch and starts her search. David wasn't a saint, but his garage didn't deserve to become so cluttered. She promises herself that the first warm day she'll begin cleaning it. The cold makes her fingers stiffen, and she's ready to abandon her search, but she spies a familiar plastic bag with a green label. It's half-full of birdseed. She smiles, pleased her perseverance has paid off.

Back in the house, she trades her slippers for fur-lined ankle boots and pulls a coat over her pajamas. How icy is the backyard? David would want her to take her cellphone in case she fell. She'd

have some way to call for help. She slips it into her pocket before gingerly stepping out the back door. The steps are slippery, and she debates walking all the way across the yard to scatter the birdseed. She takes a deep breath and makes her way to the flower garden that shamefully has been neglected these past few months. She throws a few handfuls of birdseed. A good amount sticks to her cloth gloves. Nevertheless, she's pleased with the results.

It's so cold, she doesn't linger. Before going, she looks at the statue with heaviness in her heart. Her world seemed to be crumbling, just like it. She tucks the thoughts away, fighting tears as she trudges back to the door. She's so tired of crying. Her mood plummets, matching the gray clouds that dominate the sky.

Back inside, Janice drapes her coat on a kitchen chair, pulls off her gloves, and changes back into her slippers. By the time she pours a fresh cup of hot coffee, topping it off with creamer and sugar, she's drawn back to the window, seeing a few sparrows and juncos enjoying the new offerings.

She pulls a chair close to the window and settles in, committing some time to see what might transpire. Just for today she's making a difference
(Continued on page 5)

Nightwriter News

DUES ARE DUE

By our Treasurer, Linda Berrey

It's time to renew your Tulsa Nightwriters membership for 2024!!

Memberships are \$25, cover a calendar year and are due each January.

New members who joined on or after September 1 are covered for the next calendar year.

Everyone else needs to click on the link below and get on the roll!!

Or if you prefer to pay by check, you may mail it to Tulsa Nightwriters, PO Box 702874, Tulsa, OK 74170, or bring it to the Feb. 20 meeting.

There are great plans brewing, and you won't want to miss a single speaker, workshop or moment of inspiration.

[Renew Online Here.](https://tulsanightwriters.org/membership-application/)

<https://tulsanightwriters.org/membership-application/>



We're Hosting a Live Lit Night!

March 28th

Heirloom Rustic Ales

Join us as we host an OSU Center for Poets & Writers Live Lit Night at Heirloom Rustic Ales. We'll take submissions soon to consider for the readings by Tulsa NightWriter members. We'll follow up the readers with an open mic time, so think about a piece you want to share with the world!

"A book is made from a tree. It is an assemblage of flat, flexible parts (still called "leaves") imprinted with dark pigmented squiggles. One glance at it and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, the author is speaking, clearly and silently, inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time--proof that humans can work magic." --Carl Sagan

February Meeting Tuesday, February 20th



Intricacies & Pitfalls of Writing Non-Fiction

Heather Nuttall Westover, author of Amazon's #1 New Release in Christian Women's Living, *Growing Old: One Lucille Ball Moment at a Time*, will share the intricacies and pitfalls of writing non-fiction.

As the new VP of Tulsa NightWriters, she will also share with us her vision for where she hopes to see NightWriters grow to be an organization that works for and with each other to become better authors in the future.

There will also be break-out sessions where we work in groups on a piece of your choosing to enhance our collaboration skills.

Continued from pg 2 -Send in the Cardinals)

for someone—for some of God's creatures. Janice makes a mental note to shop for a book that will help her identify common Oklahoma backyard birds. Her spirits are lifting.

A flash of red appears. Her heart soars with excitement. Leaning closer to the window, she counts the cardinals as they land in nearby tree branches, surveying the scene. Tilting their crested heads, they drop from the branches like leaves falling gracefully from the trees. They join in the feasting, their beautiful red color a striking contrast to the brown and white background. Three cardinals make such a difference to her heart.

The muffled tune of her cellphone interrupts the backyard show. Janice locates the phone in her crowded coat pocket. Maybe it's her daughter checking on her. No. "Potential Spam" declares the

phone. That is one nice feature of the so-called Smart Phones. Janice touches the red dot on the screen, rejecting the call. She sticks her hand back into the pocket and stares with disbelief at what she finds. She remembers it now, a little trinket David had once given her—a keychain with a cardinal figure, complete with a few keys she no longer used. Long forgotten, the cardinal keychain suddenly meant so much to her world. She clutched it to her heart, tears welling up in her eyes. Happy tears, this time.

David's presence filled the room. She went to the window. The cardinals had gone, but the one in her hand remained.

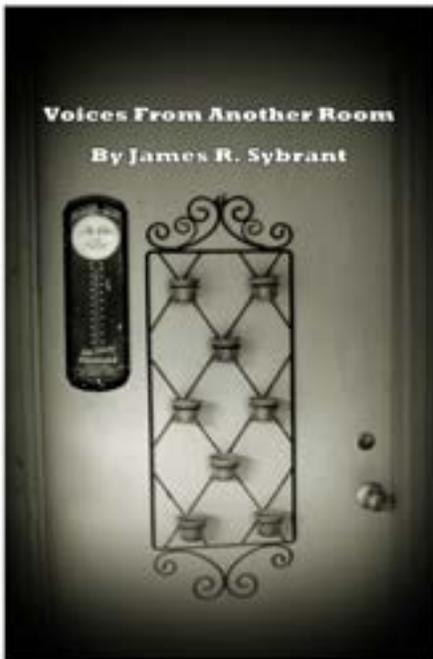
Janice spent the rest of the morning making plans about a spring garden and reclaiming the statue. She found a spot on her nightstand to prominently display the keychain. She'd see it first thing every morning and the last thing every night, a reminder for the tough times, to send in the cardinals.

Cover Prompt Contest Rules

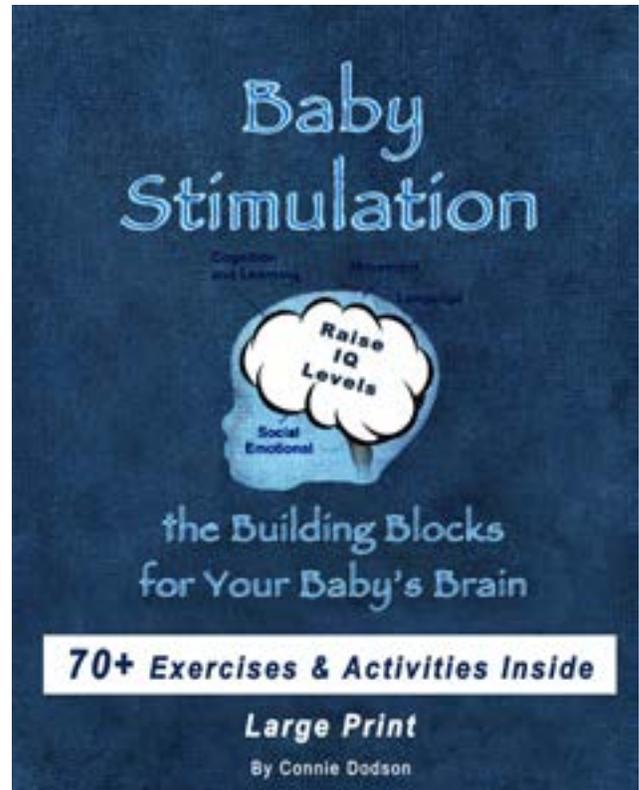
Use the cover photo as a prompt to write a short story of 1000 words or less. Entry is due by the end of that month. The winning entry will be printed in the next issue. Please make sure your entry is free of typos and is as polished as possible. As with most contests, edits will not be made to your entry prior to publication.

You must be a member of Tulsa NightWriters to enter. One entry per member. Your entry must have a title. Submit entry to: editor@tulsanightwriters.org and **Put Writing Prompt in the subject line.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS



A Collection of Short Stories
Available on Amazon.com
Kindle and Paperback



New Release
[Available Here On Amazon](https://a.co/d/dc4XMxe)
<https://a.co/d/dc4XMxe>

Welcome Wagon

Give a big Howdy to our new members.

Beth Cassody, Tulsa
Ben Johnson, Tulsa



BULLETIN BOARD

EDITING SERVICES

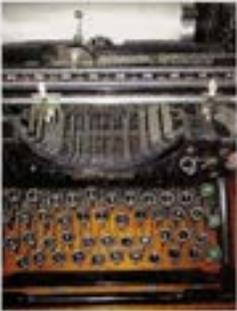
- * **Proofreading**
- * **Copy Editing**
- * **Developmental Editing**
- * **Summary**

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

“You should write because you love the shape of stories and sentences and the creation of different words on a page. Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write.”

--Annie Proulx

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Email to begin the conversation:
montgomery.editor@yahoo.com

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

2023 TNW Board & Meeting Information

Merle Davenport
President
President@tulsanightwriters.org



Tulsa NightWriters will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, February 20, 2024, location information below.

Heather Westover
Vice President
VicePresident@tulsanightwriters.org



*“No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader.”
--Robert Frost*

Linda Berrey
Treasurer
treasurer@tulsanightwriters.org



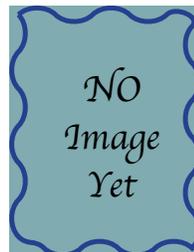
Directions

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 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.

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