

## [The Write Place at the Write Time](#)

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Come in...and be captivated...

  

### Writers' Craft Box

What this section is intended to do:

Give writers suggested hints, resources, and advice.

How to use: Pick and choose what you feel is most helpful and derive inspiration from it- most importantly, **HAVE FUN!**

What a Writers' Craft Box is: Say you're doing an art project and you want to spice it up a bit. You reach into a seemingly bottomless box full of colorful art/craft supplies and choose only the things that speak to you. You take only what you need to feel that you've fully expressed yourself.

Then, you go about doing your individual project adding just the right amount of everything you've chosen until you reach a product that suits you completely. So, this is on that concept. Reach in, find the things that inspire you, use the tools



"Arts and Crafts" N.M.B Copyright 2008

that get your writing going and see it as fulfilling your self-expression as opposed to following rules.

Writing is art and art is supposed to be fun, relaxing, healing and nurturing. It's all work and it's all play at the same time. A Writers' Craft Box is whatever your imagination needs it to be- a lifeboat, the spark of an idea, a strike of metaphorical lightning, a reminder, or simply the recommendation of a good book. Feel free to sit back and break out the crayons. Coloring outside the lines is heartily encouraged.

## *Writers' Challenge!*

This edition of Writers' Challenge was a collaborative effort between staff and the finalists of our October contest: Janine Lehane, Ginger Peters, and Cheryl Sommese (*for info on the contest and results, visit our associated blog, Inscribing Industry accessible via menu tab link*).

Given the themes of this issue, working together to meld different ideas for a good purpose, seems rather appropriate. We present to you a Challenge to begin again, with a reward engineered to nurture the growth of that which nurtures. We hope you join us "at the start," entering to win a chance to make your mark.

### PROMPT

On the inside cover of *The Inner Sky: Poems, Notes, Dreams* by Rainer Maria Rilke, (translated from the German by Damion Searls, David R.

Godine Publisher, Boston, 2010) there are these centered words to center the reader, acting as a genesis for inspiration (note that the format differs from the full text of Rilke's "Notes on the Melody of Things"):

*We are right at the start, do you see.  
As though before everything, With  
a thousand and one dreams behind us and  
no act.  
I can imagine no knowledge holier  
than this:  
that you must become a beginner.  
Someone who writes the first word after a  
centuries-long  
dash.*

In keeping with the idea of beginnings, March 20th marks the start of a new season with the spring equinox, a time when the sun is directly over the equatorial line, moving in a northward fashion. Each year, to commemorate the astronomical event in its balance of dark and light, many celebrations take place around the world with various customs, and a general theme is typically invoked. In 2017, the spring equinox theme is *transformation*.

Using this line, "Baptized by the light, I emerge from this wearing the colors of every dynamic dream that forged this new incarnation," craft a poem, short story, painting, collage, photo, or short film about transformations and new beginnings in nature, in people, or in an abstract, universal sense.

For paintings, collages, or photos, the text of the line can appear on the final image as an addition or can be somehow incorporated into the actual image; using segments of the line as a title is acceptable as well. For short films, the line can be shown, spoken, or represented in the title.

We seek entries that can apply these words and these concepts to the ordinary and the extraordinary. You may show the perspective of a person, place, thing, or feeling.

Poems: 30 lines max.

Short fiction: 1500 words

Painting: One 300dpi jpeg image

Photo: See above

Collage: See above or utilize a digital collage site, providing link (ex.

Polyvore)

Short film: 2 minutes max, uploaded to an entrant's YouTube channel for easy viewing.

#### PRIZE

In the spirit of positive action to make a difference by supporting the causes and charities that better our world, we will donate \$50 in the name of the winner to a reputable, altruistic organization of their choice. There's no better time to give back to what you believe in. Use your creativity to create what you wish to see. Happy creating and good luck, entrants!

## *Thoughts on Writing and Reading from Our Writers Who Are Devoted Readers*

**Bless** (*prose poem*)

by Ginger Peters

Bless the pens that have sadly run out of ink from all the times I have used them to express an idea or the times I've used them to alleviate the stress that came when the idea didn't come at all.

Bless the endless number of notebooks I have filled with ideas. A few good ones, but many scratched out with a big sigh.

Bless the afternoon glass of wine to celebrate the thought that just might catch someone's attention or to just enjoy the buzz of the alcohol, when the thought wouldn't even catch a cold.

Bless Stephen King for all the ideas he has so generously shared and all the stories he has written, prompting so many would-be writers, such as me, with that one breath of hope and that one horripilation of inspiration.

Bless my dysfunctional family's antics all through the years of my life. The delusions, the quarrels, the jokes, the tears, the forgiveness, the anger, the always love, and the many ideas that have come to mind due to all of our craziness.

Bless the editor that paid me a whopping \$8.00 for my first story, "The Pie Man," that was crudely written, but appeared in my first publication and made me proud to begin my journey in writing.

Bless the windy, cold days that I am unable to go outside due to a medical condition officially called Trigeminal Neuralgia, also known as the "suicide disease," that keeps me hovering over the pen and paper all through the late fall and winter months.

Bless the darker side of my life that keeps me coming up with ideas that might touch someone or make someone shiver.

Bless the full moon as it appears in the dark sky at night and keeps the bright light shining through my bedroom window. Bless the night sweats, the nightmares, and the weird dreams I have from time to time. Bless nature in all its beauty and awe, but bless nature in all its cruelty and lust.

Bless all the writers from beginningless times that have toiled with frustrations and rejections, but would not or could not ever give up trying for that bolt of lightning idea that might just set them on the rocky road of future acceptances for their tedious work.

And, bless the world of the creative ones. Keep them bright and clear. And, bless me to keep on running out of ink and having to buy new notebooks, because the ones I have are all filled up with ideas, both brilliant and ignorant. Bless me to touch one editor's mind and to possibly touch one reader's emotions, perhaps making one tiny star glimmer just a wee bit more.

Bio: Ginger Peters is a freelance poet and writer living in Santa Fe, NM. She has sold poetry and non-fiction to a variety of magazines over the past twenty-five years. She enjoys family, friends, walking, yoga, and is a member of the Thubten Norbu Ling Buddhist Center in Santa Fe. She tries to live by the philosophy of loving kindness, compassion, and growing in wisdom.

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What Do I Do Now?

by Bill Mesce, Jr.

“Art begins in a wound,” John Gardner wrote in his *On Moral Fiction*. Gardner was referring to the artist’s own psychological and emotional wounds. But for some—for many—the last 15 months represent a national trauma, a wound to the collective soul of the country, and some feel the need, the compulsion to, a la Gardner, respond.

But how?

We who gather here are writers, and in an era when an entire generation is glued to a screen just 2.5 by not quite six inches, has compressed prose into emojis, and would just as soon spend time watching animal videos and sports fails, what could we say to them that they will hear? That they’ll even notice exists? What can we say in a time when an entire bloc of the populace adopted a narrative which played to their paranoias and stoked their anger?

Maybe—heresy here for the particularly angry and fearful—what we have to declare in this moment solely for this moment isn’t that important. After all, when was the last time a piece of prose affected the national consciousness? The time when an entire generation would take up a *Catch-22*, Castenada’s Don Juan Matus books, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, *Siddhartha*, *Atlas Shrugged*, *Portnoy’s Complaint*, et al. is long gone, replaced by an appetite for Harry Potter wannabes and paranormal romances.

So, what good can we do? What good are we?

Perhaps, just for the moment, the answer to both is elusive.

But I would argue that good writing—writing with resonance, writing that lasts beyond the events of the day, which digs past the headlines to the underlying universals and eternal—is not about the moment, even as it echoes the moment.

We don’t watch Shakespeare because we’re interested in what 16th century Englishmen thought, but because Shakespeare’s gift as a writer was to find in his observations of the people of his time those elements of humanity—both light and dark, good and bad—which have always been with us, and, evidently, always will. Fitzgerald may have written *The Great Gatsby* inspired by the “Lost Generation” of the 1920s, but we still read it today because the light at the end of Daisy’s dock is still, over 90 years later,

a potent symbol of that which we think we want but which won't, in the end, satisfy.

Pen a screed about what this new change of government means to you, and whatever cathartic value it offers for the moment will pass, and a year or so down the road it will seem just that—a ranting screed, forgettable, a spontaneous response to a contemporary situation and no more.

But record these days, exercise the storyteller's art not simply to vent, but to examine, explore, to try to understand the how's and why's, even to warn, and the work has value for moments yet to come. Wrote Gardner, "...it is the universality of woundedness in the human condition which makes the work of art significant as medicine or distraction."

Bio: New Jersey resident Bill Mesce, Jr. is an award-winning author, screenwriter, and playwright. He also spent 27 years in various positions in the Corporate Communications division of pay-TV giant Home Box Office. Since 2010, he has taught as an adjunct instructor at several colleges and universities in New Jersey. Work in recent years includes titles such as *Precis*, *Reel Change: The Changing Nature of Hollywood*, *Hollywood Movies*, and *the People Who Go to See Them*, *Inside the Rise of HBO: A Personal History of the Company That Transformed Television*, and *No Rule That Isn't a Dare: How Writers Connect with Readers*.



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