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Southern California Writer's Association

November 2020

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Have you subscribed?

Check out our new YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

Through this year of challenges SCWA has risen to new heights with a wide range of talented presenters who will inspire, educate, and motivate writers and readers alike through our online programs.

Our best and brightest authors and guest speakers' presentations have now been uploaded to our own YouTube channel. Our content includes the Hump Day Book Tours, Pub Shops with insights into book publishing and marketing, and our monthly author spotlights and workshops.

We appreciate your support so please visit, comment, and SUBSCRIBE so you're the first to know when a new video is posted. There's always more great content to come from SCWA, the Perennial Writers' Conference!

President's Message for November 2020 from Larry Porricelli

"If you are going to talk philosophy in a story, make sure the audience knows there's a ticking time bomb underneath the floor."

—Alfred Hitchcock

Dear Readers and Writers,

Alfred Hitchcock was a master of suspense, tension, and drama. If you watch a Hitchcock film, those elements are present in every scene, even the comedic. Those elements are key to the success of our stories, and without them, readers fall asleep.

If you view Hitchcock's film, *Notorious*, there is what I call *literary drama*, drama without heavy action, but nonetheless oozing with agonizing tension in the last scene of two people attempting to sneak down a staircase. Literary drama is the opposite of the drama in *The Birds*, where birds randomly attacked and pecked at heads and faces.

We have special events at SCWA that we hope enhance your skill in all areas of the writing craft. Please check them out. There has to be one you will not only enjoy, but also can grow your skill. In addition, we offer weekly inspiration in Hump Day, and monthly featured writers, and wonderful opportunities to be published.

One is the SCWA Monthly Writing Contest. It is a 1000-word contest that we have offered since 1988, and we will publish the monthly winner in our

SCWA Newsletter. Submissions should come to me at lorenzo212@gmail.com.

Additionally, we are seeking submissions for an anthology of very short, 250 word, stories for a new anthology called *Blame It On the Osso Buco*. Each story should be accompanied by a recipe for a dish or drink or appetizer or anything that you eat that excites you. The recipe needs no relationship to your story.

As you know, we have published an anthology of short stories, *It's All in the Story*, and *Blame It On the Osso Buco* will also be published online and in print. It is being edited by author Nancy Klann, and we would like a good number of entries. Hone your short story and send it to klanncy@aol.com.

Again, there are many options for you as members. Please look for the Membership Special we are having right now and renew or sign up! We are able to continue our efforts through those membership dollars, and they are so important.

Thank you,

Larry Porricelli

SCWA EVENTS THIS MONTH: NOVEMBER 2020

- ❖ **SCWA ZOOM November Writer's Spotlight:** November 21, 10 a.m. PST. This month, **Joe Ide** joins us to talk about Writing the Killer Crime Novel. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- ❖ **SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR:** Every Friday at 4:30 p.m. Join us with your funny hats and Coronatinis for good news and good cheer. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- ❖ **SCWA CRAFT CHAT:** The video for **Janis Thomas'** Storyteller's Toolbox will be posted in the SCWA Members Only Facebook page in November. It's the perfect refresher for NaNoWriMo.
- ❖ **SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR:** There are no Hump Days in November. You can access previous interviews on SCWA's Facebook page or see it LIVE streaming on at 10:00 a.m. PST

"A writer is a world trapped in a person."

—Victor Hugo

every Wednesday in December, and also on the SCWA Facebook page.

Missed it? It's ready for replay on SCWA's YouTube channel and on the FB page anytime. <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

If you're interested in these and all SCWA events, please check out our website for membership details at:

<https://www.southernwriters.org/>

SCWA Writers' Showcase, November 21, 2020
Joe Ide
Writing the Killer Crime Novel

When: November 21, 2020

Time: 10:00 am PST

Where: Zoom, RSVP for your link at:

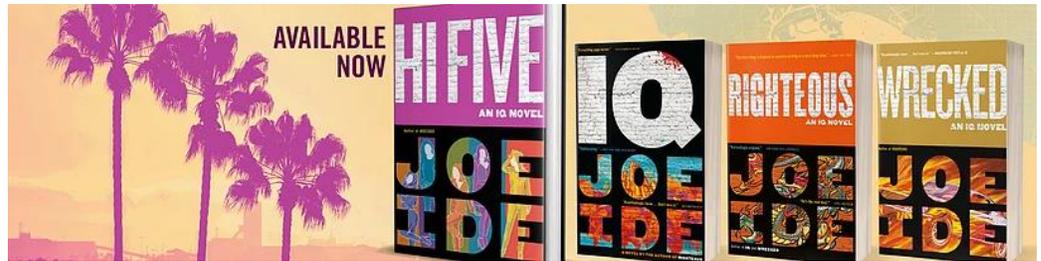
<https://www.southernwriters.org/meetings/>

Cost: Members \$10.00

Nonmembers \$15.00



JOE IDE is of Japanese American descent and grew up in South Central Los Angeles. Joe's favorite books were the Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes stories. The idea that a person could face the world and vanquish his enemies with just his intelligence fascinated him. Joe went on to earn a graduate degree and had several careers before writing his debut novel, *IQ*, inspired by his early experiences and love of Sherlock. Joe lives in Santa Monica, California.



Are you an aspiring writer who is serious about becoming a novelist?
Critically acclaimed author Joe Ide discusses:

- Ingredients that make one story compelling and another fall flat.
- Methods for creating dynamic characters and dialogue that's sharp, smart and entertaining.
- Building action scenes, as well as the basics of rewriting.
- Publishing field: the gatekeepers, who they are and what they expect.
- What publishers are looking for and what they'll reject out of hand.
- Other practical questions like: "I'm about to write a 300-page novel; how do I start?" "Prologue or no prologue?" "I'm stuck. What do I do now?" "How do I write twists and turns?" "What am I looking for when I'm rewriting?" "How do I develop my 'voice'?"

Please go to Southerncalwriters.org to register for Joe Ide.



Special November BOOK CAMP
For Members Only doing NaNoWriMo 2020
Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. PST

SCWA members participating in the 2020 National Novel Writer's Month, better known as NaNoWriMo, are welcomed to join a small group to find encouragement, inspiration, and incentive to get your word count flowing. Go to the SCWA Members Only Facebook page. Click on ROOMS and click to join the Book Camp. See you Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

Any members in the middle of writing are welcome to stop in. It's not necessary to be part of NaNoWriMo to join us.

SCWA Book Camp Special: For participants of October's Storyteller's Toolbox, private coaching from Janis Thomas is available for a significantly reduced fee:

SCWA Members: \$30 per hour

Nonmembers: \$50 per hour



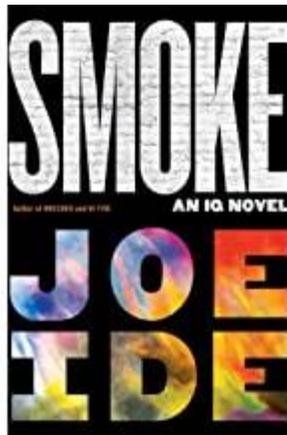
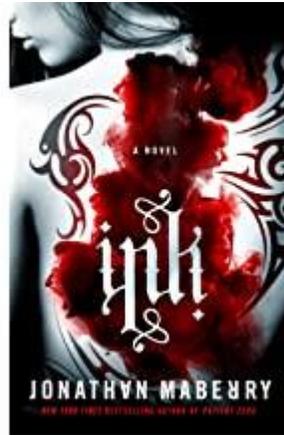
Janis Thomas is the author of *What Remains True* (Lake Union, 2017) and *All That's Left of Me* (June 2018). She has written three critically acclaimed humorous women's fiction novels, *Something New*, *Sweet Nothings*, and *Say Never*, which was chosen by Chick Lit Central as one of the best books of the year.



New York Times bestselling author **Jonathan Maberry**, named one of Today's Top Ten Horror Writers, and award-winning mystery writer **Joe Ide** read excerpts and talked about the writing life with Maddie on October 27 for one of Lit Up's most compelling meetings.

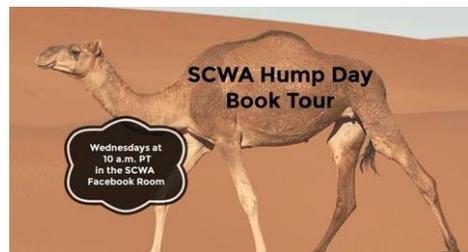
Find the replay on LIT UP Orange County's page on Facebook. You won't find a better session on creating indelible characters than these two talking about their passion for writing, "That thing you have to do."

For more information about these events and others like, it please email Maddie Margarita at maddie@maddiemargarita.com.



Hump Day
Book Tour

LIVESTREAMED
Every
Wednesday
10:00 a.m.



SCWA Hump Days will resume in December. Look for replays on SCWA's Facebook page and on SCWA's YouTube channel. Subscribe anytime at <https://bit.ly/2I890Db>

Recent Guests include:

Janelle Brown Mary Anna Evans Kaira Rouda Laurie Stevens Matt Coyle
 Glen Erik Hamilton August Norman Tori Eldridge Ava Homa Naomi
 Hirahara LA Chandlar Greta Boris Joe Perry Thomas Perry Suzanne
 Redfearn Chris Reich



Many more to come!

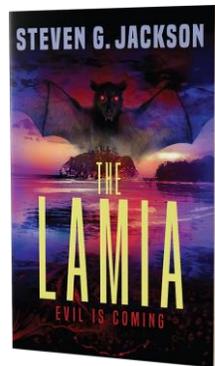


CELEBRATE ALL THE GOOD NEWS!

Sharmyn McGraw's Book One: *Dying to Date* of her new series is nearing launch. Get a sneak peek with Chapter One by signing up on Sharmyn's website: www.sharmynmcgraw.com

Darlene Quinn's book *Webs of Power* has been chosen by the Braille Institute to go into audio book production with an award-winning narrator for the visually impaired, with a Braille version to follow.

You can see the fabulous book trailer for *Webs of Power* on the SCWA Facebook page.



Steve Jackson, author of *Zeus Payload*, *The Lamia*, and *The Night Hag* has just posted his 2020 edition of his Top 25 World's Most Thrilling Restaurants on his website at: <https://bit.ly/3IfAQMr>.

The Lamia will release soon.

D. P. Lyle has a story in a new *Suspense Magazine* anthology coming soon. Look for *Nothing Good Happens After Midnight* coming November 17. You'll see stories by other bestselling authors, including Hand Phillippi Ryan, John Lescroat, and others,

SCWA Writers' Cookbook Call for Submissions

*****CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS*****

Open to all SCWA Members

We Want Your Recipes. AND YOUR WORDS!

Please submit your recipes and related short fiction for our upcoming Southern California Writers Association story inspired cookbook. Submissions will be selected based on story quality, recipe quality, and the story's relation to the recipe.

Working titles include

Blame It on the Osso Bucco

Eat Your Words

You Have the Write to Eat

Needless to say, title suggestions are welcome.

We're looking forward to producing a flavorful collection, with a healthy dash of your writing dexterity. What self-respecting writers' organization would build a cookbook without an assortment of clever stories included?

Each entry must contain both the recipe and a story, which can be in these categories: mystery, horror, sci-fi, cozy, humor, poetic, crime, mythology, or fable. Remember, this is a writers' cookbook so think of your recipe as your muse. We encourage your story to have a sense of connection with the recipe.

Due to limited space the **story/poem should be 250 words or less.**

The cookbook will be professionally published by SCWA and promoted with all the marketing might at our disposal. Proceeds will further help fund our events, speakers, scholarships, and publication of books, including this one.

We encourage all who want to join in to submit up to two recipes in a Word file along with their stories to Nancy Klann at klannancy@aol.com. (Please put Recipe in the subject line.)

Members' Showcase: OPEN for your Submissions

Did you know SCWA will publish excerpts of your work in our MEMBERS' SHOWCASE on the SCWA website? Yes, we will.

We want to show your works-in-progress, excerpts from your published book, first lines, favorite paragraphs, and anything you would like to share in any genre, even a page of rants from your journal.

The range of creativity among our members is impressive. Take a look at some of the fine work our members have already shared and then share some of your own.

<https://www.southernwriters.org/members-showcase-2/>

Here are the details:

- Send the work you'd like to showcase, for instance, first lines, an excerpt, an essay or a poem or something else (up to 1500 words). Include your byline (your name, the name of the book it is from, if applicable, and your website).
- All current SCWA members are eligible.
- You retain your copyright.
- Submit for free!
- Send to scwashowcase@gmail.com

Take a look at the Showcase entries by many of our members. It's a terrific way to get acquainted!

Highlights: October 2020 Karen Dionne “Six Things I Learned from Writing My Breakout Book”



“Six Things I Learned from Writing My Breakout Book”

Some time after author Karen Dionne published her second book, her publisher dropped her. That downer plus others, including having run into scammers, was one of many times when this author considered quitting. However, her reaction was “No, I haven’t reached my goals yet.”

Her agent sent her next book, *The Marsh King’s Daughter*, “to thirty-six editors, and twenty-nine publishers answered back soon.” This fourth book took off like a rocket, published simultaneously in hard cover and in soft cover with translation rights in twenty-six languages, a CD-audio, and large print edition. It’s “known not just for its story but for good writing.” It earned Ms. Dionne a seven-digit payment and also shot through awards. It’s now in development as a major motion picture with an Oscar-winning cast, financed by Black Bear Pictures. Meanwhile, she published her fifth book, *The Wicked Sister*, on July 4, 2020. “Don’t quit,” this determined author says.”

When Ms. Dionne began *The Marsh King’s Daughter*, she didn’t know the manuscript would be a thriller. “I wasn’t bound by any constraints.” She switched the setting at the last moment from an urban one to the back country of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where she and her husband in the late 1970s had homesteaded on ten acres in and lived for thirty years. They were thirty miles from the nearest town and ten miles from the nearest homestead. Even though this peninsula is 29% of Michigan’s land, it had only 3% of Michigan’s population.

This green wilderness was perfect for Ms. Dionne’s plot of a male prison escapee, a master tracker and hunter, who had kidnapped a young girl, taken her deep into unknown areas, and kept her isolated even after she gave birth at sixteen to a female child. When the daughter, Helena, is twelve and has never known any other people, she runs away but figures out her

father's machinations. The setting details are crucial. Ms. Dionne said she and her husband had "knowledge deeper than Wikipedia."

Following are the six factors Ms. Dionne learned while writing this book.

1. **"Begin with character:** Character is less likely to be a stereotype. Characters shape the story at the developmental stage; instead of reacting to events, they cause them. The backstory can become the front story." Below are the first four sentences of *The Marsh King's Daughter*.

"I was born two years into my Mother's captivity. She was three weeks shy of seventeen. If I had known then, what I do now, things would have been a lot different. I wouldn't have adored my Father."
2. **"Explore writing techniques you haven't used before.** Get the basics down, but don't be afraid to try something new. No writing is ever wasted. In the process, you might discover you're a better writer than you thought." You can try "dual timelines, tense shifts, multiple flashbacks, directly addressing the reader, incorporating a fairy tale for structure, and introducing two imaginary characters." Ms. Dionne here said her agent loved the book but didn't think she had written it.
3. **"Listen to your gut.** Is the book you're working on going to knock people's socks off? If not, why not? Can this be fixed? Or would your career be better served by setting it aside in favor of one that will?" "Taking risks matter." Ms. Dionne put her current writing aside and went to this one. "Think about why a book made a strong impression on you. Figure out how to make it amazing."
4. **"It's all about emotion.** In order to resonate with readers, a book has to touch them on an emotional level, and not an intellectual one. Particularly in a psychological thriller, it's less about what happens in the story, and more about who it happens to." Some readers thought *The Marsh King's Daughter* was a memoir. You need "larger-than-life characters in situations where they have to make impossible decisions."

You have to "just come down to being honest [caper vs psychological defense]." The daughter was close to her father, and even though she understands why the father had done what he'd done, at twelve years old she chose to leave. Ms. Dionne said she "didn't want to write that scene but had to."
5. **"Universal themes:** You want your novel to do more than intrigue or fascinate readers; you want to touch them deeply. One of the best ways to achieve that is to give them a commonality with the character that they can relate to." "At heart, *The Marsh King's Daughter* is a father-daughter story."
6. **"Novels should be novel.** You want your novel to feel fresh, surprising, and unexpected." "Anyone can break out at any time." Ms.

Dionne reluctantly made eight to ten pages of a chronological outline but knew it wouldn't be effective. Thus, she developed a dual timeline.

The novel starts fifteen years after the daughter's escape from home. It has alternating chapters set in the past and the present. The past covers her escape from the marsh and her father. The present covers Helena's return to search for her father and return him to prison. At one point, she thinks, "No one is my father's equal when it comes to navigating the wilderness, but I'm close."

Later, Ms. Dionne found that getting "out of the head space" of *The Marsh King's Daughter* was difficult. In fact, she says she started her next book, *The Wicked Sister*, two dozen times before she could continue.

Among other responses to questions from Maddie Margarita, SCWA Program Director, Ms. Dionne says, "The first page tells a lot. The question becomes not **what** happens but **how** it does." Also, her first draft is spare. Labeling herself a perfectionist, she has to force herself to slow down because of poor handwriting, So, she writes one chapter, then types it.

Ms. Dionne and her husband have/had a furniture upholstery shop, and she hoped to make retirement possible by publishing novels. She's not only a nature photographer but also the co-founder of the online writers' community, Backspace Writers, and on the board of the International Thriller Writers. She said she's made ten times more income than hoped!

Our speaker was very happy her husband could quit upholstery. He thought she'd quit writing after the first book. No, she was happy with the family and writing and could handle the pressure. Her second book sold, and she was paid. All along, she "had a financial goal in mind." Karen Dionne's message for all writers: "Rejections mean nothing but that you're in the game."

For clarity, these are Dionne's books: *Freezing Point* (2008), *Boiling Point* (2011), *The Killing: Uncommon Denominator* (2014), *The Marsh King's Daughter* (2017), and *The Wicked Sister* (2020).

For more information, see www.karen-dionne.com,
<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/authorpage/karen-dionne.html>

Glenda Brown Rynn

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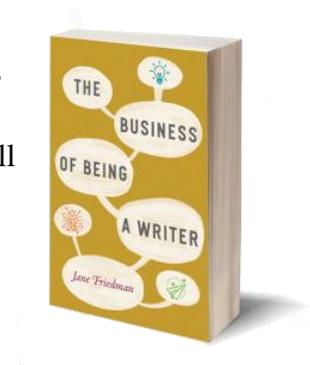
RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

How do you find your way through the ocean of resources available online for writers like us? Check here for a sampling of what we have found to be of interest.

LINKS will be included so you will be able to investigate further.

For information on where to submit your work: Check Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity at www.publishedtodeath.blogspot.com. An excellent, up-to-date list of publishers accepting unagented manuscripts, agents seeking clients, and literary journals calling for submissions.

MOST RELIABLE: www.janefriedman.com Jane has a long history in all areas of book publishing and has a solid reputation for being the best go-to for writers of all levels.



WRITERS HELPING WRITERS: www.writershelpingwriters.net has many one-of-a-kind tools and resources for writers. Newsletter available.

Here are some active links for November:

Authors Publish: Here's a list of major trade publishers who are always open for submissions, among them Workman, Gibbs Smith, Harlequin, Andrews McMeel, and others. It will be best if you go to their websites and look at their current catalogs to assess the suitability of your submission to the kind of books they publish.

<https://www.authorspublish.com/18-major-book-publishers-always-open-to-submissions/>

Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity: Here are seven new agents actively building their client lists. Expanded information can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3pdtaNO>

- Jennifer Herrington specializes in romance, women's fiction, and mystery in both YA and adult fiction.
- Michael Signorelli is interested in literary and commercial fiction as well as nonfiction spanning science, current affairs, sports, and cultural history.
- Melissa Richeson wants picture books, chapter books, mysteries or magic in middle grade, and character-driven stories in young adult.
- Kayla Cichello is seeking everything from heartfelt or humorous picture books to dynamic, unpredictable YA.
- Kim Lindman is interested in representing narrative nonfiction, select short story collections, commercial and literary fiction in adult and young adult age groups, with special interest in contemporary fiction and magical realism.
- Renae Moore is interested in speculative fiction, mystery, thrillers, and select romance in YA and adult books. Renae is always interested in #OwnVoices.
- Paloma Hernando is looking for both graphic novels and prose fiction for YA or adult. She loves romance, particularly queer romance, science fiction that feels fresh, high fantasy, and middle grade with a good sense of humor. She is also interested in nonfiction.

You can find a full list of agents actively seeking new clients here: [Agents Seeking Clients](#).

Always check the agency website and agent bio before submitting. Agents can switch agencies or close their lists, and submission requirements can change.

Writing Contests with no entry fees - November 2020: Another list from *Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity*: <https://bit.ly/32Ltaub>

This list of more than three dozen writing contests for every genre and form, from poetry, to creative nonfiction, to completed novels.

Check the instructions carefully. Some contests have age and geographical restrictions.

Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity publishes a monthly list of writers' conferences that, with the shift to zoom, gives us access to great conferences across the country. These are often underway at the time the SCWA newsletters are generated, so check with their website regularly to make sure you don't miss anything: <https://bit.ly/2UbjEfn>

Benefits of SCWA Membership



WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

- ❖ Active members receive up to 60% off admission to SCWA meetings.
- ❖ Members are eligible for a Free 30-minute consultation from book shepherd Sharon Goldinger on any publishing contract.
- ❖ Discounts are available for active SCWA members for registration for the La Jolla Writer's Conference, and for early registration for the Southern California Writers' Conference.
- ❖ Access to professional network of publishing, business consultants and editors.
- ❖ Participation in SCWA marketing platforms on southernwriters.org and SCWA social media platforms.

SCWA Board of Directors

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Membership: Yann Jackson, ykj3678@gmail.com

**Southern California Writer's Association
Southerncalwriters.org**

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The SCWA encourages open, respectful communication between individuals interested in the craft of writing through a variety of social and traditional media, such as Facebook, SCWA website and emails. Any individual using inappropriate language, discussing inappropriate topics, or commenting in a disrespectful way will be removed from access to any future SCWA communication methods.

The SCWA communication sites should only be used for dialogues related to the craft of writing. Non-writing related topics should be done via other forms of personal communication. Please review the content disclaimer located in the newsletter via the SCWA website www.southerncalwriters.org or on the About page of the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA does not endorse individual opinions placed of any of its sites.

The SCWA receives information on various services, writing contests, and events. As a courtesy, we will forward the information to our members. Unless otherwise indicated, the SCWA does not discourage, encourage, or recommend any of the services, contests, or events. Many of these services, contests and events cost money; therefore, we recommend that you evaluate the opportunities based on your individual situation and interest. Because of our membership email protection policy, please do not forward information to the general membership directly. **We request that all members forward any information to the SCWA President for approval and forwarding to the membership.**

SCWA members wishing to share appropriate writing-related information and resources are welcome to do so via the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA Board members and Newsletter Editor will determine the information to be contained in the SCWA on-line newsletter, which is primarily used for official SCWA information.