

WRITER'S INK

THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF BLOOMINGDALE

OCTOBER 2008

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our October workshops will be on October 11th and October 25th, from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

Format rules are: Minimum, 12-pt. font and double spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.

METAPHORS

Another English Lit lecture I slept through:

“The **metaphor** is an implicit rather than an explicit comparison. It does not use the words “like” or “as” in its construction. The two things compared often seem very different, and the linkage often surprises and delights as well as it enlightens.”

“And she balanced in the delight of her thought,
A wren, happy, tail into the wind,
Her song trembling the twigs and small branches.”

(Theodore Roethke, *Elegy for Jane*)

“Little boys lie still, awake,
Wondering, wondering,
Delicate little boxes of dust.”

When a comparison of two things generally is repeated and extended throughout a poem, with repeated instances of imagery, it is called **extended metaphor**. When the comparison is particularly unusual or fanciful, it may be called a **conceit**.”
Source:

A Poetry Handbook, by Mary Oliver, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994, pp. 102-103.



COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

Visit member, John Flaherty's blog at: <http://johnwriting.blogspot.com>, to view his Mary Brigid stories.

SIMILE SPOTLIGHT

“Old Werner Klar, with flowing white hair and furrowed brow, kept appearing and disappearing **like an evanescent ghost.**”

“All of them had their own individual vineyards, long and narrow, stretching **like a spread of stiff fingers** up the sloping fields.”

Source:

MacInnes, Helen, Prelude to Terror, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978, pp. 168, and 221-222 respectively.

“There was damn near a fight, words rattling off **like a spray of machine-gun bullets.**”

(This is a spy novel, notice the martial vocabulary.)

“Rumors rise **like dust storms** in this part of the world.” (Middle East)

“There!” Marchand pointed to one of the neat small squares that were dotted over the layout of the valley **like a scattered flock of sheep.**”

Source:

MacInnes, Helen, Cloak of Darkness, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987, pp. 24, 60, and 265 respectively.

HYPHENS

“Use a hyphen to separate two or more words or parts of words that together mean one thing:

- ✚ Whole numbers or fractions written in two words: Forty-four; one-quarter.
- ✚ Words that have the prefixes co-, ex-, self-, or all- added before the word: Ex-wife; self-study; all-star.
- ✚ Proper nouns that have any prefix added before the word: anti-American; pro-Italian; mid-Atlantic.

Source:

Glatthorn, Allan A., Willa F. Spicer, The Young Writer’s Handbook, 1983, Science Research Associates, Inc., p. 54.

“AGENTS AND EDITORS”

A summary by John Flaherty

The literary magazine, *Poets and Writers*, is running a series of interviews with literary agents and editors of fiction, short stories and poems. The following are excerpts from the interviews:

“Through the Eyes of the Editors:
Stephen Corey”

Editor, Stephen Corey of the *Georgia Review* commented on what is wrong with the majority of submissions that he receives.

In the last twenty-five years, submissions to him totaled some 200,000 poems, 50,000 short stories, and

fifteen to 20,000 essays. He says that these statistics are misleading and unnecessarily intimidating, because the bulk of all this material is not good at all. In spite of creative-writing programs, spellcheck, summertime writers' conferences, writing mentors, and online writing workshops, there is no increase in the available pool of good work.

Generally the essays submitted are not essays but rather autobiographical narratives that read more like sentimental journal entries than thoughtful and rigorous considerations of experiences. Everyone has experiences, but we as writers must make something of them, in both language and ideas.

He is strongly critical of the publishing industry. He feels that they have worked overtime to eradicate the short story form, as have some of the writing programs, in favor of the novel.

His strong advice to the aspiring writer is to slow down. One good story a year for twenty years and you will be on the short list of the finest writers of all time. Slow down!

Spend a lot of time reading the good stuff. Dissect it! Read for fun and also be reminded of what not to do.

Source:

"Through the Eyes of the Editors." *Poets and Writers*, V16:3, May/June 2008, pp. 54-55 (www.pw.org/magazine).

Nat Sobel

Nat Sobel is an agent at Sobel Weber Associates, which is one of the top boutique agencies in New York City.

The most interesting question Mr. Sobel was asked was how he found clients. He said that he found them in literary journals. He subscribes to a large number of journals, and he is constantly searching for new talent. He could not say exactly what it is that grabs him; but whatever it is, he can see it in the first page and even in the first few paragraphs. Then he has to read all of the material. The thing that he loves most about his job is finding new talent.

Frankly, he does not think much of the Master of Fine Arts programs. It is okay if you want to be a liberal arts teacher, but it is more important to get out and live and then write about it.

Source:

Ferrari-Alder, Jofie. "Agents and Editors." *Poets and Writers*, V.16:3, May/June 2008, pp. 41-47, (www.pw.org/magazine).

Janet Silver

Like the two previous interviewees, Janet Silver commented on what she looks for in a new writer's work.

She looks for character-driven fiction. Every aspiring storyteller has to realize that it is all about personal taste. She criticized the creative writing programs in that there is a common style in these programs that is easy to recognize. The importance of reading great fiction is to

learn from it; and the best writers around are the greatest readers.

She gave an example that is fairly common. It is a story of a young woman who is alone in a big city for the first time. In the early part of the story, she looks at herself in a mirror and the author describes her. That is, he gets his description of her into the story. Another common strategy is to use a dream to get the characters fears and inhibitions into the plot. If the author uses a number of dreams to do this, then she closes the manuscript.

Source:

Ferrari-Alder, Jofie, "Agents and Editors," *Poets and Writers*, V. 16:4, July/August 2008, pp. 26-33 (www.pw.org/magazine).

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

From Mary Ann Lufkin
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