

# WRITER'S INK

## THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF BLOOMINGDALE

### OCTOBER 2009

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our October workshops will be on October 10<sup>th</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

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

---

#### SIMILE SPOTLIGHT

“...thrilled at the sight of my new car waiting, its finish **as smooth and lustrous as the inside of a seashell.**”

“...and the car shot across the boulevard **like a bullet.**”

Source:  
Buchanan, Edna, 1995. *Suitable for Framing*. Hyperion. Pp. 25 and 55.

“I dodged their questions **like a boy playing tag.**”

Source:  
Chevalier, Tracy, *The Lady and the Unicorn*. P. 76.

“Black scratching, a minuscule handwriting, sometimes digging into the page, other times gliding lightly **as a swan on a lake.**”

Source:  
Deere, Dicey. 2004. *The Irish Village Murder*. Wheeler Publishing. P. 136

---

#### TROCHAIC OCTAMETER

Eight trochaic feet (strong-weak) per line:

**Once upon a midnight dreary,  
while I pondered, weak and weary...**

**--Edgar Allan Poe**

Source:  
Vaughn, Michael J. “Poetry: Meter/Why Meter Matters. *Writer’s Digest*. Nov.-Dec. 06, p. 95

---



#### STORYTELLING WORKSHOP

By: Jill Spealman

I skipped Writer’s Workshop on September 12 to attend a workshop about using storytelling in nature interpretation at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle. Ten of us were led by Brian “Fox” Ellis, a professional storyteller, teacher, writer, and nature interpreter in learning how storytelling can breathe

life into nature talks and walks. Since I often focus on nature writing, I thought this workshop might provide some new ideas.

Fox opened by telling us a story that was told to him by his professor at Oberlin College. It was all about how new cottonwood trees can root just by inserting a stick in the ground. Without us realizing it, the story modeled the scientific process: hypothesis, method, result. Of course, there was a lot of embellishment to the story including a big thunderstorm, wind, mud, memories, and a challenge from a parent.

Fox then challenged us to tell our own stories. We first took a moment to close our eyes, relax, and think about a nature story we might be able to tell. We were encouraged to draw on our own cultural experience for a possible topic. I'm half Czech, so I thought about mushrooms, the wonderful puffball mushrooms I saw last fall in the woods after heavy rains. Then we paired up, briefly introducing ourselves to our classmates.

Finally, we shared our story. I described how the puffballs changed over four months of woodland walks—from white mini-globes, to decrepit brown blobs, and then to magical spore vaults. We were encouraged to use gestures, vocal inflections, and facial cues. This was the “think, pair, share” technique and we all agreed it was effective and fun.

Fox was a wealth of inspiration with quotes from other authors and his own stories. He encouraged us to see the world from the point of view of beings who don't

speak, such as plants and animals. Fox's goal is to inspire folks to awaken to a deeper understanding of who they are within their relationship to human history and the natural world around them. You can learn more about Fox at [www.foxtalesint.com](http://www.foxtalesint.com).

---

## THE COLON

The colon is used as a signal to point out that something is coming – that the idea or concept that was mentioned is now coming up in the sentence. The meaning of the sentence implies that something more will follow, and the colon signals that information.

Examples:

The following dates have been mentioned: May 5, June 3, and July 12. We used these people: Nelson, Johnson, and Riggs.

My question is this: Were you on the board at the time?

Source:

Wakeman-Wells, Margie. “The Colon.” *Journal of Court Reporting*. March 2009, p. 57.

---

## COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

Thank you to everyone who critiqued my article “Not Your Mother’s Marketing Plan”, which was published in the September 2009 *Journal of Court Reporting*, pp. 25-31.

Mary Ann Lufkin

---

## WORD OF THE MONTH

By: Adeline Dobbins

biannual \bye-AN-yuh-wul\ adjective

1: occurring twice a year

\*2: occurring every two years

### **Example:**

The report recommended that we begin conducting a more-frequent annual safety review rather than our current biannual review.

### **Did you know?**

When we describe something as “biannual,” we can mean either that it occurs twice a year or that it occurs once every two years. So how does someone know which particular meaning we have in mind? Well, unless we provide them with a contextual clue, they don’t. Some people prefer to use “semiannual” to refer to something that occurs twice a year, reserving “biannual” for things that occur once every two years. This practice is hardly universal among English speakers, however, and “biannual” remains a potentially ambiguous word. Fortunately, English also provides us with “biennial,” a word that specifically refers to something that occurs every two years or that lasts or continues for two years (and which your editor prefers).

Source: Merriam Webster.

---

## KEEP WRITING!

From: Mary Ann Lufkin

malufkin@comcast.net

Writer’s Workshop of Bloomingdale  
2007-2009 all rights reserved. Materials  
here are the property of the author(s).

---



Xian, China