

# WRITER'S INK

## THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF

### BLOOMINGDALE

#### APRIL 2009

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our April workshops will be on April 11<sup>th</sup> and April 25<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

“The sky was a seamless blue, **empty as a murderer’s heart.**”

“Even hanging way back, trying to be invisible, he stuck out **like a neon tongue.**”

“Or perhaps it was simply her certainty that death was closing in on her that made time **hammer like a waterfall on the stubborn boulder of her life.**”

“The carpet was worn, but tastefully so, **like a dowager princess.**”

“Awe prickled over Serena’s skin **like electricity.**”

Source:

Lowell, Elizabeth, Moving Target, 2001, Avon Books, pp. 1, 1, 2, 7, and 16.

“Gravel sprayed up from the sides of Greta’s car **like water before the bow of a ship...**”

Source:

Malmont, Valerie, S. Death, Lies, and Apple Pies. Dell, 1997, p. 74.

#### COMPOUND ADJECTIVES

“Fresh legal pads lay unnoticed in the center of the table with sharpened pencils piled in a **ready-for-business** logjam, and the **state-of-the-art** grey conferencing phone went untouched.”

“Some rowhouses sported flagstone stoops, some were of **old-fashioned** marble, and many were made of brick.”

“The **new-car** smell was too close to formaldehyde.” (It’s a murder mystery.)

“Next on the screen was a **well-dressed** businessman, wearing a **three-piece** suit and sitting behind a huge glass desk.”

“The truck, a light, **old-model** pickup, was traveling west on the **double-lane** overpass when it skidded on a patch of ice, due to driver error and road conditions.”

“She pointed a **crimson-lacquered** nail at him.”

Source:

Scottoline, Lisa, The Vendetta Defense. HarperTorch, 2001. pp. 70, 83, 129, 236, 465, and 456.

“Aren’t you the writer of that **haunted-house** book?”

“I went to the sink to get her a glass of water and noticed an **aqua-colored** mason jar sitting on the **butcher-block** counter..”

“How’d you like those **glow-in-the-dark** tomatoes?”

“...and **low-hanging** tree branches stretched bony fingers toward the car and made **teeth-grating** scratches on its side.

“I walked toward a stand of **crimson-leafed** maple trees...”

Source:

Malmont, Valerie S. Death, Lies, and Apple Pies. Dell, 1997, pp. 45, 53, 58, 74, and 81.

### COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

Congratulations to Chris Aument who won 25<sup>th</sup> place in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Writer’s Digest poetry competition for her poem, “Cold Comfort,” which will be published in their *Competition Collection*. She also won \$50 worth of *Writer’s Digest* books.



### DUTCHISMS

**Dutch treat or going Dutch:** Sharing expenses.

**Dutch Uncle:** A Dutch uncle tells the truth, even if it hurts.

**Double-Dutch:** A jump rope game with two ropes.

**Dutch oven:** Iron pots, developed in the early 1700s in England and Holland, suited for one-dish meals.

**Dutch Bob:** A squared-off haircut for little children.

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### FICTION: STRENGTHEN YOUR SCENES

#### TYPES OF SCENES

**SETUP SCENES:** Scenes where needed background information is provided that “sets up” the character’s subsequent actions (motivation).

**VERIFYING SCENES:** Scenes that show your characters acting out the lives you’ve given them and establish skills and abilities that are important to your plot.

**FLASHBACK SCENES:** Use sparingly and only when the action taking place in the past is strong enough to warrant dramatization (otherwise use narrative) Transitions must be adequate; generally handled with a change in verb tense.

Source:

Bell, James Scott. *Writer’s Digest*. Nov/Dec, 2006, p. 91.

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## INSIDE WRITING AND PUBLISHING

### “Telling and Selling Your Family’s True Story”

Caryn Lazar Amster’s seminar on February 4 at the Wheaton Public Library was listed as a presentation on “Telling and Selling Your Family’s True Story.” Surprisingly, however, it was more than just about memoirs.

As a self-published author, Caryn really emphasized aggressive marketing. Marketing skills apply not only to self-publishing but to other aspects of writing. For example, she stressed the importance of presenting an outgoing personality at book signings and, at earlier stages, the courage and skill needed to approach publishers.

Caryn’s personality was the major component of the presentation. Her enthusiasm and intelligence are a great combination. Her willingness to share knowledge and information won warm response from the audience.

Some of this sharing was in the printed list of resources she made available and in the opportunity to be added to the mailing list for her newsletter. This newsletter usually fills twenty-five pages of information and potential contacts. Apparently, through this newsletter, reunions have occurred for many people who had lived in the South Shore of Chicago area during the era in which Caryn’s family story unfolds. The title of her book is The Pied Piper of South Shore, but it is hard to find. Due to her marketing skills, the first edition has sold out. At present a reprinting is in progress.

Caryn currently is spending less time as a writer and more time advising potential writers in their quests for

success. She is very available at [Caryn@CMAPublishing.net](mailto:Caryn@CMAPublishing.net) and seems to be generous in sharing information.

Some of her “tidbits” of advice included:

- 82% of the population think they have a story inside of them
- Everyone is an expert on their own story
- 5% of a writer’s effort is in writing a book
- 95% is in marketing the book
- Understand why you want to write
  - Is it to honor your family
  - Is it to enjoy memories
  - Is it cathartic
  - Is it to make money
  - Is it to be famous
  - Is it because you have a message for the world

Caryn stresses the importance of writing regularly. Do not edit as you go, just write. To quote the author, “Put your butt in your chair and write.” Her final words were “Don’t die with your music still in you.”

Reviewed by Marjorie Lee

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### KEEP WRITING!

From: Mary Ann Lufkin  
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