

WRITER'S INK

THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF

BLOOMINGDALE

MARCH 2009

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our March workshops will be on March 14th and March 28th, 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

“As she leaned forward, her hair, black **as a buzzard**, formed a razor-sharp wing across her cheekbone.”

“Mr. Jenks, a thinnish man somewhere in his sixties, had many vices: greed, avarice, a manipulative character marked by a crust of blandness, **like a beef Wellington made from gristle...**”

“The three policemen, ranged about the garderobe, looked in their dark uniforms, **like narrow black monoliths.**”

“Jury watched the swan, stationary **as a paper cutout pasted against the water.**”

Source:

Grimes, Martha, 1995, *Rainbow's End*, Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 9, 12, 33, and 37.

COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

(Please send any Column Two Personals submissions to my e-mail address for inclusion in the next month's newsletter.)

WHAT AGENTS HATE

Voice and Point of View:

“A pet peeve of mine is ragged, fuzzy point of view. How can a reader follow what's happening? I also dislike beginning with a killer's POV. Who would want to be in such an ugly place? I feel like a nasty voyeur.”

--Cricket Freeman, The August Agency

“An opening that's predictable won't hook me in. If the average person could have come up with the characters and situations, I'll pass. I'm looking for a unique outlook, voice, or character and situation.”

--Debbie Carter, Muse Literary Management

“Avoid the opening line: ‘My name is...’”

--Michelle Andelman, Andrea Brown Literary Agency

Source:

Sambuchino, Chuck. “What Agents Hate: Literary Reps Vent About Their Chapter 1 Turn-offs.” *Writer's Digest*, October, 2008, pp. 24-27.



COMPOUND NOUNS (PART DEUX)

“Compound nouns ending in “out” are typically solid”:

bailout
blackout
blowout
breakout
burnout
buyout
fallout
handout
lockout
phaseout
printout
readout
sellout
shutout

(Exceptions: cop-out, fade-out, time-out.)

“Compound nouns ending in “over” are typically solid”:

carryover
changeover
crossover
hangover
holdover
layover
leftover
pushover
rollover
spillover
switchover
takeover
turnover

(Exceptions: going-over, once-over, voice-over.)

“Compound nouns ending in “back” are Typically solid”:

cutback
feedback
flashback
hatchback
kickback
payback
setback
throwback

Source:

Sabin, William A. *The Gregg Reference Manual, 9th Ed.* Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2001, p 200.

COMPOUND ADJECTIVES

“Our friend Bunny’s a Wiccan, but too softhearted for anyone outside of **liberal-lefty** Cambridge to call a witch.”

“The plant, which had seemed like a **stone-and-brick** monolith from the street...”

Source:

Simon, Clea. *Cries & Whiskers.* Poisoned Pen Press, 2007, pp. 9 and 11.

INSIDE WRITING AND PUBLISHING

It was good to see several of our members in attendance at the free seminar: Mixing Fact and Fiction in Your Writing, by Robert Goldsborough, at the Glen Ellyn Library on January 29th. Beside myself, there were Marjorie, John and Kim.

Mr. Goldsborough started off with examples of classical literature that mixed fact and fiction, i.e., *War and Peace* and *A Tale of Two Cities.*

Robert presented the audience with a brief professional and literary autobiography. He

used to be a police reporter for the Chicago Tribune. So it is no accident his protagonist in his murder mystery series, Steve “Snap” Malek, is a crime reporter; and Colonel McCormick makes a cameo appearance in one of his novels.

He stressed the importance of intensive research in this genre, such as hours sifting through microfilm at a library (and not getting sidetracked or including too much research, which slows the flow of the narrative). He also researches court transcripts. He looks for interesting figures to weave into his plot, working them naturally into the storyline, not forcing them. He has the historical characters behave as they do in real life.

The author stressed that historical characters are not in huge portions of his novels, rather they are “anecdotal”. When pressed for a percentage, he said 8 percent. He believes historical characters “lend a certain amount of realism to the era.” He also believes, “a good story should have a few cul-de-sacs;” not everything has to move the story. He likes to use facts to depict mood, such as costs and amusement parks. He utilizes the *Random House Dictionary*, to research when a word started to be spoken. He does not create footnotes.

Several audience members were concerned with libel lawsuits. (My advice would be to consult with an attorney.) Robert insisted that he treated his historical figures with respect and never had a legal issue.

Mr. Goldsborough was an animated speaker and handled a rude audience member (who stormed out) with élan. A downside for me was his citing of only male authors. I noticed this trend in last year’s seminars. He gave the impression that women never mix fact and fiction in their writing or that he

never reads books authored by women. I’m sure that was unintentional, although it is a definite pattern.

LIMERICK

A limerick is a five-line anapestic poem (weak-weak-strong) (beats or feet) in which lines 1, 2, and 5 have three beats and a rhyme, while lines 3 and 4 have two beats and a rhyme:

A man with a chest cold named Bill
Ingested a nuclear pill.
The doctor said “cough,”
The damn thing went off,
And they picked up Bill’s head in Brazil.
--Anon.

Source:

Vaughn, Michael J. *Writer’s Digest*.
Nov/Dec 2006, p. 95.



KEEP WRITING!

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