

WRITER'S INK

THE WRITER'S WORKSHOP OF

BLOOMINGDALE

MAY 2009

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our May workshops will be on May 9th and May 23rd, 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

“Lush grass had been peeled away **like pieces of an orange rind** and tons of topsoil surrounded the strip, mounded in triangles smoothed by a bulldozer.”

“The show was over, so she had kicked off her pumps and molted her pantyhose **like a garden snake**.”

“Judy waited for the crowd to move, her eyes on the cigarette butts that stuck **like a nightmare forest** from the sand.”

“Santoro stood up, turned to the second row, and gestured **like Vanna White** to Dr. Patel, reducing the distinguished medical examiner to the status of a free refrigerator.”

Source:

Scottoline, Lisa. *The Vendetta Defense*. HarperTorch, 2001. pp. 131, 234, 242, and 274-5.

COLUMN TWO PERSONALS

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



ALL ABOUT ALLITERATION

“Forbes spoke with **fanged ferocity**.”

Source:

Seewald, Jacqueline, 2007. *The Inferno Collection*. Thompson Gale, p. 36.

“Yet, behind **her head**, beyond the open window, was a **perfect panorama** of Florence below a **serene summer sky**.”

Source:

Nabb, Magdalen, 2008. *Vita Nuova*. Soho. p. 30.

BLOOD AND THUNDER

The deadline for submissions to *Blood and Thunder: Musings on the Art of Medicine* is May 15. Go to <http://w3.ouhsc.edu/bloodandthunder>, then go to the SUBMIT page, and follow the instruction.

STRENGTHENING SCENES

Now that you know the three types of scenes, from the April newsletter, here are some recommendations to strengthen them. (Let's review: Setup, verifying, and flashback scenes.)

If your scene is too slow to get started, it may be because of "excess exposition." Try getting characters – preferably more than one – onstage and interacting by at least the second or third paragraph. If they are in conflict with each other, even better. The explanation of how they got there can wait.

If your scene feels "too talky," it may be because of "excess dialogue." Try interspersing the dialogue with actions, gestures or characters' thought that can break up the talkiness and also replace some speech. For instance, instead of saying, "I'm furious at you!" one character throws something at another."

If the reader cannot visualize concrete details, it may be because of "White Room Syndrome" (everything happening in a blank setting). Try adding details of setting, choosing those that underscore the mood of the scene as a whole (happy, melancholy, comical, et cetera).

Source:

Kress, Nancy. *Writer's Digest*. Nov/Dec 2006, p. 92.

COMPOUND NOUN

"That **Sam-I-am!**
That **Sam-I-am!**
I do not like
that **Sam-I-am!**"

Source:

Dr. Suess. *Green Eggs and Ham*.
Beginner Books, Random House, Inc.
1960. p. 9.

INSIDE WRITING AND PUBLISHING

Member John Flaherty attended the free seminar at the Bartlett Public Library District, entitled Jennifer Flannery—Literary Agent, and wrote the following review:

A Literary Agent

Jennifer Flannery is a literary agent for authors who write children and young adult's books. She started off by telling us that the publishing business is very bad at this time. Because it is so hard to get anything published at this time, she was reluctant to present this seminar.

She gave us a brief history of her career. She started as an editor for a large publisher. After five very bad, unhappy months, she was fortunate to snag Gary Paulson, an author of children's books. She spoke very highly of Gary; and after representing him, launched her career. He is the successful

author of many books. At this time she has between thirty and thirty-five clients and is hesitant about taking on new clients.

She stated that to be a successful author, you must have an agent. That is a personal advocate for your work. She knows a lot of editors who respect her opinions, enabling her to get an audience for your work. If you go directly to the publishers, what will happen is that on Friday afternoon, the editors will start to scan a large pile of submissions that have been thrown on the query table.

She knows what will interest the editors. She also line-edits everything that she submits to the editors, so the material is in good shape. This reduces the editors' work, which they like. The respect editors have for her goes a long way in getting the material published.

She is looking for a new voice, something special, and something that is not the usual stuff.

The way to get started is to send her a very good query letter; one that will grab her attention, so she will ask you for more. She can usually tell by the query letter if she is going to like your work. The query should be four or five paragraphs, no longer, and just use a single page. Her guidelines follow:

1. Tell how you found her.
2. Tell her why you are good and why she should consider you, (previous publishing).
3. Summarize your story in three to five sentences, (story of your story).

4. Mention if this is an exclusive submission or if it's been sent to others.

5. Thank her for spending time reading the query letter.

Because publishers use their own illustrators, do not plan or waste any time on drawings. Don't even describe what you want in the illustrations. That upsets the editors. The primary characters in children's books should always be children. Their age is the age of the children that will read the story. Also she is not fond of writers' groups. Everyone gets so friendly in these groups that they fail to be honest and/or critical of each other's submissions.

She receives hundreds of queries every week, so she is selective and most everyone is rejected. But don't be discouraged. Keep trying. Keep trying.

In the late spring of this year, she will be forming a list of agents that she likes in genres other than children's books. You can get a list of these agents by sending her a SASE. She will not accept any inquiries, queries, or requests of any type via e-mail. She has no web site.

Her address is:
Flannery Literary
1155 South Washington Street
Suite 202
Naperville, IL 60540

KEEP WRITING!

From: Mary Ann Lufkin
malufkin@comcast.net
Writers Workshop of Bloomingdale
2007-2008 all rights reserved. Materials here are the property of the author(s).