



APRIL 2023

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 4
www.southernwriters.org

- pg. 2: President's Message
- pg. 3: Welcome New Members
- pg. 5: April Events
- pg. 6: Featured Speaker: Lisa Cupolo
- pg. 7: Hump Day
- pg. 8: LitUp OC
- pg. 9: Highlights: Antoine Wilson
- pg. 12: Resources for Writers
- pg. 16: Member Benefits
- pg. 17: Board Members & Terms of Use



Southern California Writer's Association

April 2023

- **President Larry Porricelli's Message**
- **April Featured Event: Lisa Cupolo: 10 a.m. at the Regency San Juan Capistrano Theatre**
- **Hump Day: Every Wednesday 10 a.m. on SCWA's Facebook Group page**
- **Debby's Room: Continuing in April on Wednesdays 10:20 a.m. on the SCWA Facebook Group page, on the Rooms tab**



Have you subscribed?

Check out our fancy new URL for the YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

President's Message for April 2023 from Larry Porricelli



“Brevity is the soul of wit.”

Hamlet, by William Shakespeare

The Great Gatsby is a mere 189 pages.

Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* is 195 pages.

Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* is 127 pages.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is 181 pages.

James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* is 159 pages.

Shirley Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in a Castle* is 146 pages.

Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* is 142 pages.

Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* is 128 pages.

Albert Camus's *The Stranger* is 123 pages.

Nella Larsen's *Passing* is 122 pages.

James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* is 112 pages.

Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskerville* is 112 pages.

Anna Kavan's *Ice* is 158 pages.

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is also 112 pages.

John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is 107 pages.

Leo Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* is 128 pages.

Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* is 154 pages.

Jean Toomer's *Cane* is 158 pages.

Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* is 159 pages.

Francois Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse* is 160 pages.

Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* is 192 pages.

Herman Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor* is 160 pages.

I have listed these classic novels because they are all under 200 pages. The authors are well known, and their works have influenced literature forever. Many were the first to include a diverse range of topics previously shaded and character's minds and motives in a style that made them classic. In these books you find inspiration for your writing style, your story, your characters, your themes. All these books and many others are still in print and sell many each year. Perhaps you can add to the list.

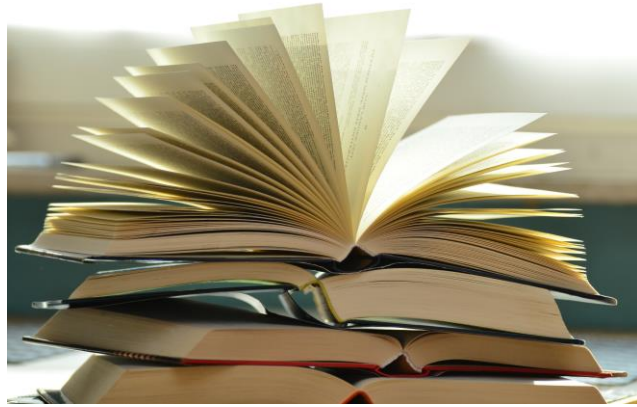
The value of a single word is evident in each of the books listed above. Take that thought first to your heart and then to your mind, and it will flow onto to the keyboard. Writing isn't about length or a specific number of words, no matter what so-called experts tell us. Writing is a wonderful journey birthed and nourished in our spirit and so great that our excitement overflows our minds and fills the pages of our novel. The novels listed speak loudly that less is many times more.

Thank you,

Larry Porricelli
President, SCWA

Welcome New Members to SCWA!

Mark Biagini
Barbara DeLong
Mary Castillo
Susan Leonard



Have you explored the SCWA website lately?

- **Sample the books written and published by SCWA members in the SCWA website bookstore:**
[www.https://www.southernwriters.org/member-bookstore/](https://www.southernwriters.org/member-bookstore/)
- **Get to know our members: explore member profiles**
- **Dig into our newsletter archive for highlights of our monthly speakers and events**

Have you explored the SCWA YouTube videos?

- **We love sharing our content!**
- **SCWA Writers Online is FREE to all with over 100 Hump Day interviews with bestselling authors led by Maddie Margarita**
- **See SCWA's workshops and videos of our featured speakers from our monthly meetings**

<https://www.youtube.com/SCWAWritersOnline>

SCWA Events This Month: April 2023

- SCWA's Featured Speaker for April will be LISA CUPOLO. Saturday, April 15. Regency Theatre, San Juan Capistrano
- SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: Every Friday at 4:30 p.m. PT. Join us with your funny stories and libations for good news and good cheer. New members showing up weekly.
<https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR: Join us every Wednesday on SCWA's Facebook page. And check out the ones you have missed on SCWA's YouTube channel:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southernwriters>
- Debby's Room: Continuing through April. Every Wednesday at 10:20 a.m. PT. Join Debby Putman and Dot Caffrey for casual conversation about the writing craft and anything that you wish to bring for discussion. Click on the Rooms tab for Debby's Room on the SCWA Facebook page.

Have you missed an SCWA event? We will upload replays as they are edited and ready on SCWA's YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

For information about SCWA membership and these events please go to <https://www.southernwriters.org/>

Featured April 2023 Speaker: Lisa Cupolo Creating Meaningful Conflict in Your Story

Come for the program. Stay for the surprises!

Is your story or book missing something? Does your story drag? Do you have writers' block? Join **Lisa Cupolo**, winner of the W.S. Porter Prize and author of the critically acclaimed *HAVE MERCY ON US*, as she talks about writing and creating meaningful conflict in any story.

LISA CUPOLO

Lisa has been a paparazzi photographer, an aid worker in Kenya, a script doctor in LA, and a literary publicist at HarperCollins in Toronto. Her stories have been published in *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Narrative*, *The Idaho Review*, and others. She holds a BA in Philosophy from The University of Western Ontario, a graduate degree in Portrait Photography from The London Institute, and an MFA from the University of Memphis. She has lived all over the world, but currently resides in Southern California, where she teaches fiction writing at Chapman University.



For tickets and information about SCWA membership please go to <https://www.southerncalwriters.org/>

When: Saturday, April 15, 2023

Time: Continental Breakfast 9:30 am Speaker at 10:15 am PDT

Where: Regency Theatre (adjacent to the San Juan Capistrano Train Station), 26762 Verdugo Street, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Admission: Members \$25.00

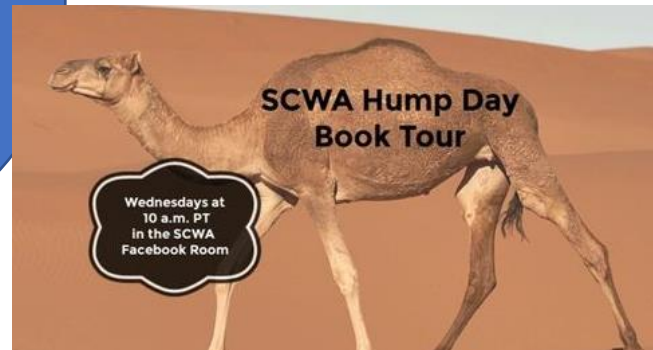
Nonmembers \$35.00

Your safety and health are important to us. *We welcome vaccinated members and guests.*

You must register by Friday, April 14, 2023, at 12:00 pm.



Join us every Wednesday at 10 a.m.



Hump Day episodes stream on SCWA's Facebook page. Look for our SCWA group on Facebook. Scroll through the posts for the most recent guests. When we are LIVE, click on the Events tab to join us!
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southerncafwriters/events>

Debby's Room follows Hump Day at 10:20 for casual conversation about books, writing, and life as an author. Find it on the SCWA Facebook page.





LIT UP!

A Conversation with Orange County Readers and Writers; a monthly salon with authors reading and discussing their book hosted by Maddie Tighe Margarita

New authors—new works—new worlds. Find your next favorite author or become a new fan. LIT UP Orange County is currently accepting submissions from authors interested in sharing their work with Orange County readers and writers. Submissions should be fiction or memoir, 6-8 double-spaced pages, and engage our audience. Interested writers please contact @MadelineTigheMargarita for more details!



Maddie's most recent LitUp OC opened 2023 at Muzeo Museum and Cultural Center's Open Book series for a perfect Sunday afternoon with **Jonathan Brown, Leonard Syzmczak, and Carol Latham.**

Catch up with Maddie's entertaining interview. Find the replay on Facebook on Madeline Tighe Margarita's page.

HIGHLIGHTS March 2023 Speaker: Antoine Wilson

Antoine Wilson is the author of the novels *Mouth to Mouth* (2022), *Panorama City* (2012), and *The Interloper* (2007). Antoine's *Mouth to Mouth* was featured on President Obama's Reading List. His other work has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *StoryQuarterly*, and *The Best New American Voices*, among other publications. He is a contributing editor of *A Public Space*.



The Surprising Revelations and Rewards of Revision

The day after St. Patrick's Day, many SCWA members were still dressed for and celebrating St. Patrick's, as was our speaker, Antoine Wilson. He checked our knowledge of Irish literature and its authors with several questions. First, in what language was *The Book of Kells* written [with four Christian gospels in 800 A.D.]? In Gaelic? Nope. Latin.

"On which city was Bram Stoker born, the one who wrote *Dracula*?" Answer: Dublin. So Irish lit can go from the Bible to a legendary vampire. Our meeting's Irish atmosphere reminded Wilson of his first nudge to writing when only a boy. A big crime had occurred in Los Angeles where the Wilson family lived. The murder [?] took place at the well-known Molly Malone's Irish Pub on Fairfax Ave. Antoine's father wanted his son to write a novel about it.

Thus, at a young age, Antoine Wilson absorbed the goal of writing novels. As an adult, however, Wilson realized writing is one thing, but **revision** is a different breathing and living critter. Our speaker presented his ups and downs with it, what he's learned about those problems and about himself, and how to revise effectively.

One of Wilson's first endeavors was finished years later to become *Mouth to Mouth*, "the story of a writer whose rise in the art world won't acknowledge the dark side of ambition." Wilson was "not an outliner" but now does so after the first draft. He enrolled in a writing workshop where he was told "in six months you'll finish your novel." Actually, he spent eight months on the first chapter with eight drafts. Then his first chapter became a short story.

His next step was to read books about revision and the danger of being a perfectionist. You're more critical of yourself if you've read good literature—but we all need to read good lit. "Close the door—with no one looking over your shoulder. Nobody else can see what a bad writer you are." But then he realized that any draft he wrote/writes won't be the last: he'll also find *good* things he likes even though he doesn't always know where some of those fresh ideas come from.

During revision, a process of *exploring*, *shaping*, and *polishing*, you need to get distance because you can never be your own naïve reader. "Why is this in here?" Workshops help; also have your computer read your rough draft to you. Wilson says he "learned more from critiquing other people's stories than from their critiques of mine." Sometimes you need to put your draft away "for three weeks or three months." At one time he went back and forth between two books he wound up quitting. For one that he refers to as his "Island Book, a nonfiction that refused to turn into fiction," he acceded, "No, this isn't going to work." It is now in a drawer.

Wilson recommends *Stein on Writing* by Sol Stein, which helps moving from *vagueness* to *specificity*. Also, he likes Matt Bell's *Refuse to Be Done: How to Write and Rewrite a Novel in Three Drafts*." He uses Scrivener's app to organize his materials and a thesaurus to get its words "on the tip of his tongue" because we all have a listening vocabulary versus our speaking vocabulary. For the reader we need to "move from information to experience." In other words, "Show, don't tell."

Wilson admires those writers who find a situation that they can show reflects life. What's the underlying meaning of why *this* character is telling the story? Examine how you structure your story. "Most of it is scene and summary. What's the rhythm?" "Follow the energy. Be alert to those reactions of your own curiosity." The ending of the novel always relates to its beginning. By the end of your revision, you'll know for sure how the beginning should be written. "All the previous shadows look different."

At the end, Wilson was asked when he's ready for the professional editor. He uses "a good writer friend" and usually three others who critique his novel beforehand. He couldn't recall how many drafts he usually has.

Revision has taught Antoine Wilson another deep factor of how his mind works. Earlier he had said he was not an outliner. He's learned that his "creative brain" is not as quick or spontaneous as his usual brain. That's why his ideas to use in a novel get better as he proceeds through its stages: "the flowers of afterthought." As a result, Wilson demonstrated that the whole revision process is not only constructive but quite enriching.

Mouth to Mouth was finally published in 2022 by Avid Reader Press / Simon & Schuster. It was a *Time* Best Book of the Year and declared "One of Barack Obama's Favorite Books of 2022." Other novels of his are *The Interloper* (2007) and *Panorama City* (2012).

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

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RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

How do you find your way through the ocean of resources available online for writers like us? Check out this sampling of what we have found to be of interest. Links are included so you will be able to investigate further.

One of the best resources and newsletters we've found is **Publishing ... and Other Forms of Insanity**. Lists include agents looking for genre submissions, publishers open to unagented submissions, information on conferences, contests, and all things publishing.

Erica Verrillo has written seven books and published five. She learned all about self-publishing: marketing, literary agents, book promotion, editing, pitching the book, getting reviews, and everything you need to do to get it right.

Here's a sample of the lists and tips from her March newsletter:

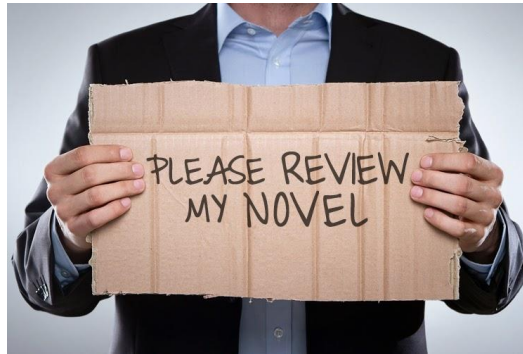
- 7 New Agents Seeking Romance, Kidlit, Memoir, Speculative Fiction, Nonfiction, YA, LGBTQ, and more
- Should You Hire a Professional Book Cover Designer?
- 20 Awards for Self-Published Books
- Hold On To Your Copyright!

And a few from her April Newsletter:

- 59 Writing Contests in April 2023 - No Entry Fees
- Random House Canada has opened its submission policy exclusively to LGBTQIA2S+ and BIPOC writers. Unagented and unsolicited work can be sent directly to RH Canada editors at randomhousecanadasubmissions@penguinrandomhouse.com
- Top 12 Sites for finding Reviewers

Don't overlook the tabs above the content entries. Erica Verrillo compiles incredibly valuable resources for all genres.

<https://publishedtodeath.blogspot.com/>



Make a Writer Very Happy!

How to Leave a Review for Your Friends' Books

- Log in to your Amazon account
- Go to the products page, then select the book
- Scroll down to the Customer Reviews section and click on "Write a Customer Review"
- Rate the book
- Write your review and "submit"

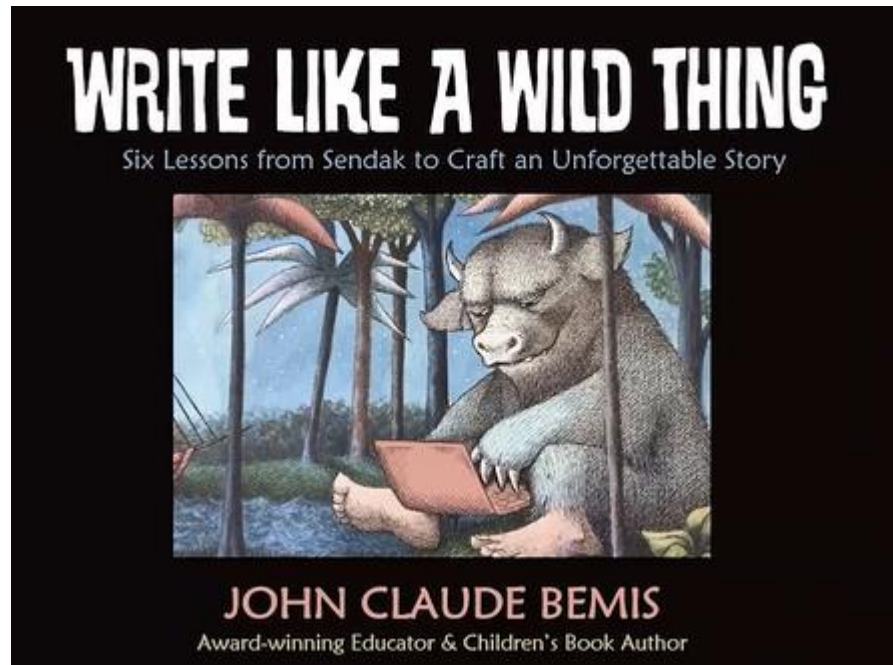
You'll see: "Thanks for your review"

Authors Publish

Authorspublish.com will keep you up-to-date on opportunities to submit your work to a wide array of publishers. These articles always contribute to the conversations about writing that we enjoy:

<https://authorspublish.com/why-writers-need-to-read-to-be-readers/>

<https://authorspublish.com/free-lecture-write-like-a-wild-thing-6-lessons-on-crafting-an-unforgettable-story/>



Are you afraid of scams and rip-offs when you consider publishing your book? Writers need never go it alone with a watchdog like Writer Beware to have your back.

Writer Beware's mission is to track, expose, and raise awareness of scams and other questionable activities in and around the publishing industry.



After many years on the Blogger platform, we have finally transitioned to WordPress, which offers much greater flexibility in terms of design, control, and ease of use.

We also have a new, easy to remember web address: www.writerbeware.blog.



LitNuts was created to share the “Best of the Indies” with booklovers.

- Subscribers get a free newsletter featuring only indie books.
- Authors and publishers get an affordable way to share their work with engaged readers.

<https://litnuts.com/> LitNuts promotes *only* books from independent presses and authors. Details on its website:

<https://litnuts.com/pages/authors-and-publishers>

“Half of my life is an
act of revision.”
- John Irving

Benefits of SCWA Membership

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

- ❖ **Active members receive up to 60% off admission to SCWA meetings.**
- ❖ **Members are eligible for a free 30-minute consultation from book shepherd Sharon Goldinger on any publishing contract.**
- ❖ **Discounts are available for active SCWA members for registration for the La Jolla Writer's Conference and for early registration for the Southern California Writers' Conference.**
- ❖ **Access to professional network of publishing, business consultants and editors.**
- ❖ **Participation in SCWA marketing platforms on www.southerncalwriters.org and SCWA social media platforms.**
- ❖ **Opportunities to showcase your book on the SCWA website in our bookshop, Members showcase, and on your profile.**
- ❖ **SCWA Member's Only group on Facebook where we rewind and replay recent featured guests and their presentations.**



SCWA Board of Directors

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Southern California Writer's Association
www.southernwriters.org

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The SCWA encourages open, respectful communication between individuals interested in the craft of writing through a variety of social and traditional media, such as Facebook, SCWA website and emails. Any individual using inappropriate language, discussing inappropriate topics, or commenting in a disrespectful way will be removed from access to any future SCWA communication methods.

The SCWA communication sites should only be used for dialogues related to the craft of writing. Non-writing related topics should be done via other forms of personal communication. Please review the content disclaimer located in the newsletter via the SCWA website www.southernwriters.org or on the About page of the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA does not endorse individual opinions placed of any of its sites.

The SCWA receives information on various services, writing contests, and events. As a courtesy, we will forward the information to our members. Unless otherwise indicated, the SCWA does not discourage, encourage, or recommend any of the services, contests, or events. Many of these services, contests and events cost money; therefore, we recommend that you evaluate the opportunities based on your individual situation and interest. Because of our membership email protection policy, please do not forward information to the general membership directly. **We request that all members forward any information to the SCWA President for approval and forwarding to the membership.**

SCWA members wishing to share appropriate writing-related information and resources are welcome to do so via the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA Board members and Newsletter Editor will determine the information to be contained in the SCWA on-line newsletter, which is primarily used for official SCWA information.