



Chattanooga Writers' Guild

News & Updates

Greetings, fellow writers! We are post-Thanksgiving, so it is now officially okay to discuss the Upcoming Holidays. Whatever your religious persuasion may or may not be, this month is probably going to send waves of stress crashing over you, followed by undertows of guilt.

Why oh why did I have to pick the boss's name for Secret Santa? Is Theresa still a vegan? How do you cook Tofurkey? Will Mom find out I re-gifted that vase? Does Aunt Shirley remember what I said about her mashed potatoes last year? Did I buy the right wine? Why are there so many people at this store at 3:30 on a Tuesday? Don't you people have jobs?? How many versions of Jingle Bell Rock can there possibly be??? And just where in Santa's Wonderland of Woe does that cashier think she's going?!?!

I don't handle stress very well.

Which is why I read the ends of books first.

Here's what I do: I get about two or three chapters in - enough to learn all the main characters' names and have a general sense about what the problem is. Then I skip to the last chapter and skim over it, looking for their names. If they're a main character, they're probably going to have something to say in those last few pages. If they're absent, there's a good chance they died or were otherwise written out of the story. Yes, of course I learn of spoilers and twists this way, but I am perfectly fine with that. Knowing what's going to happen doesn't ruin anything for me. In fact, it lets me enjoy the story *more* because now, knowing that, say, Best Friend Clara doesn't make it to the end, I can just kind of relax and accept her TB diagnosis with grace. *She's not going to make it.* I already know that, so now I don't have to worry about her. I learned she was going to die before I was emotionally invested in her, so it's easier for me to read that scene now. If her death were to come as a shock to me, there's a good chance I'd have to put the book away for a while. (When I read the truth about Snape, which J.K. Rowling cleverly hid in the middle of the book, I read the scene three times in a row and then lay in bed crying for half an hour before moving on.)

Also, knowing the end result of a problem doesn't spoil the book for me at all, because now that I know that the characters ended up *where* they did, I can spend the whole book figuring out the *why* and *how* of it. It's the same sort of intrigue that a Rubik's Cube holds: I know what the end will look like. Now I just have to figure out how to get there.*

Do *you* read the end of books first? If not, how can you STAND the not-knowing? Let me hear from you! NoogaNewsletter@gmail.com.

Reader KJ Hunter participated in NaNoWriMo and reached out to say:

This is my third attempt at NaNoWriMo. The first two years, I had a combined total of--wait for it-- 650 words! This year, I've smashed that dismal record and while I'm still behind, I'm not far from it at 21,000 words at the half-way point. I'm not yet sure if I'll hit goal, but I'm not stressing - it's farther than I've gone before so it's a win in my book! This will be my first novel, part one of a trilogy,

It's an adventure-fantasy, and I can't wait to revise and edit!

Thanks for letting us hear from you, KJ. Hope you reached your goal!

Our Holiday Party is coming up!

We will be emailing an invitation to all current members SOON! If you'd like to be on the list, make sure you have paid your dues for 2019. Visit chattanoogawritersguild.org and click on the Buy Now button if you haven't already.

CWG Taboo

Last month, all CWG Critique Groups were invited to participate in a game of Taboo, in which they were given a Prompt word (*Thanksgiving*) and four Taboo words (*food, turkey, family, and pilgrim.*) They were challenged to write about the Prompt word without using any of the Taboo words. The North Georgia Writers Group sent in several terrific entries! My favorite, by **Devereaux Chivington-Stebbins**, is below, and the rest of them are available to read by clicking on this [link](#).

Beatta Broadbeam's Thanksgiving Day Diary

6:25 Ziggy needs to go potty. Let him out, put on coffee, get to work. 10:00 Tofurkey in oven, smells like the real thing. Roz insisted, I worry no one else will like it. 12:07 Grandpa Jones and Bud arrive. I hand out beers, they settle in front of TV. 1:22 Roz shows up, late - "I gained 2 lbs! I'm not eating." Take off the jack boots and weigh yourself again, daughter. 1:47 Dinner is served, we gather around the table and say grace, *including* Roz. Wonderful! 3:45 Usual screaming match between Jimmy, Jack, and Bud. Bud storms out, Granpa and Jack get drunk. 6:00 Big Game and big meal render the men comatose. Vino and Clint Eastwood movie marathon for Roz and me. Thank you, Lord, for all things great and small.

Thank you for playing!

Mad Gab

Here's how to play: Read the following nonsensical sentences aloud and try to guess the title of the famous literary work you're saying. Answers at the bottom.

Thick crate cats bee

Deli fur ants

Ache law quirk ore inch

CWG Winter Writers Workshop

Our next workshop will be held Saturday, January 26, 2019, from 9 AM to 5 PM at Chattanooga Community College. We will have sessions featuring craft and lectures in Poetry, Fiction, and Non-Fiction. Save the Date! More details to come!

Member Spotlight with Helga Kidder

What was your first job? At 14 - maid for everything at a restaurant - I learned first hand how to kill a chicken.

Tell us about your muse or source of motivation. My first source of motivation to write

poems was my mother's death in 1987. She was my muse for the first two years.

What is your biggest time-waster? Watching old movies.

Tell us about a poem that startled you or had an impact on your life. When I began writing poetry I discovered that I had a voice that people listened to.

What other hobbies do you enjoy? I enjoy playing tennis three times a week - It allows me to WIN every once in a while.

What object in your life have you had the longest and why do you hang on to it? My mother's hand-cranked coffee mill. It gives me a sense of continuity.

What does your writing area look like? Filled with sticky notes, books piled high on tables, unfinished poems.

What are your writing goals for 2019? I hope to discover new subjects to write about in a new way.

What is your favorite thing to eat on a cold December day? Fresh-baked sweet yeast braid.

Who do you nominate for next month? Cynthia Young.



A poem by Helga:

Thanksgiving

... writing is like breathing and like prayer

Elizabeth Christy

No time to wait for accolades,
you glide into the moment
that drives you to write,
the way wind rides the day
and pens its story.

Think of black-eyed susans
staring boldly into the sun,
goldfinch feeding frenzied
on thistle, rain
soothing drying leaves.

You tongue words, sweet
or sour puckering the mouth,
bite into a poem with the zest
of a salami and pickle sandwich,
cruise the finish-high of a tiramisu
or seven-sins chocolate cake.

Think of little rivers
burbling through gaps and rills
where language roils,
tugging on words, whirling syllables
like fall leaves.

You move words on the page, listen
for the tiny bell that rings
if a word snaps into the gap

of the puzzle that shapes your life –
a claret-red camelia bloom in November,
poetry its centered golden eye.



Word to Know

Supercilious: adj. Self-important. Pompous.

The *supercilious* quarterback took all of the credit for the victory.

Mad Gab answers: *The Great Gatsby*, *Deliverance*, *A Clockwork Orange*

*I've never put together a Rubik's Cube in my life.

STAY CONNECTED

