



Chattanooga Writers' Guild

News & Updates

Greetings, fellow writers! Along with freezing temperatures and delayed school starts, Tuesday morning's arctic blast also blew in allergies. I don't know what exactly I'm allergic to, but whenever the weather changes here in Tennessee, I find myself surrounded by a pile of tissues, bereft of the will to leave the couch. Thus, I've done *a lot* of reading this week, mainly to my younger child who apparently inherited my overzealous immune system.

I've read three middle-grade books, one YA, and about a dozen picture books. I also threw in some fairy tales, Aesop's fables, a comic book, and some board books for old time's sake. There were books from my childhood, my parents' childhood, and books published only this year. A few of the books were written in lyrical poetry, and the advanced books were text-only, which meant I had to work twice as hard with my character voices in order to keep my daughter's attention and guide her through the wordier parts.

About halfway through this Read-o-Rama, I had an epiphany. Many of you, I'm sure, yanked this lightbulb chain a long time ago, so it's ok to sigh at me in three seconds. My epiphany was this: *You don't have to be the best writer in order to be a writer.* Fear of not being the best at something has held me back in myriad ways, especially in writing. But after reading a full school curriculum's worth of reading in one week, it occurred to me that everything I was reading was published, distributed, sold, and in people's houses all across the country, if not the world. And none of it was *the best*. Some of what I was reading defied all of today's trends and broke all of an editor's "rules." And yet, here was this author's work, in the hands of a mother and her child. The author's dream had come true, and it didn't matter that the book hadn't won any awards, or that it was now out of print. The story was being shared from one generation to another. The words were living on. Your words can do that, too. Don't let your fear of not being the best stop you from sharing what you have.

I'm Kate Landers and I need more tissues. Tell me about your favorite childhood book at newsletter@chattanoogawritersguild.org.

*Thank you to **Summer Awad** for a fantastic program on Tuesday!*

Summer shared her personal background story and journey as an author, and covered spoken word and play-writing. It was a very compelling presentation!

Our Christmas party will be held on Tuesday, December 10 at 6 PM at First Christian Church, 650 McCallie Ave, 37403. There will be a potluck dinner, games, open-mic, music,

and more! More details to come.

Word to Know: **nikhedonia, n.**

The feeling of excitement or elation that comes with anticipating a victory or success.

As she watched her opponent foolishly move his rook to F2, she was filled with nikhedonia.

Mad Blab

How to play: Say the following nonsensical sentences aloud and try to guess the name of the famous literary work you're saying. Answers at the bottom.

**Grime ant bun niche mint
Thud hire rhea fa yawn curl**

<p>The rain pounds furiously against the window.</p>	<p>The rain pounds furiously against the window. Furiously, the rain pounded against the window.</p>	<p>The rain pounds furiously against the window. Furiously, the rain pounded against the window. The window was pounded furiously upon by the rain.</p>
<p>The rain pounds furiously against the window. Furiously, the rain pounded against the window. The window was pounded furiously upon by the rain. The window and the rain, upon and against, were and was pounds and pounded furious and furiously.</p>		<p>It was a bright and sunny day.</p>

Member Spotlight with Heather Davis

When did you first consider yourself to be a writer?

Though I had been writing since I was a teenager, I came to dedicated creative writing later in life – only about 3 years ago now. I was in the latter stages of cancer recovery and began writing narrative poetry and short stories as a promise to myself that once I was fully recovered, I was going to pursue things I'd put off for far too long. I didn't quite wait until I was fully recovered – I started writing as a means of catharsis – and I began submitting to local publications. When Mr. Turczyn published my first narrative poem in what was then the Knoxville Mercury, I felt I could "officially" call myself a writer.

What other activities do you enjoy? I also began doing spoken word and performance poetry at a few Knoxville open mics the same time I began publishing, and I absolutely love it. I was a complete novice, but I just kept going and practicing. About a year and half



after I started, I was blessed to be chosen by Rhea Carmon, an inspiration and now mentor of mine, to be a member of the 5th Woman 2018–2019 Cohort and was chosen as a permanent member of the 5th Woman Touring Collective a few months ago. I am also a radio DJ and produce and host a show called Knox Community Well Be on WOZO Radio, 103.9 FM in Knoxville. The show is a passion of mine, very close to my heart. I interview groups, organizations and individuals who are doing work in their local communities, as well as creatives and academics. I am also a PhD student in Human Geography studying health inequalities which takes up all of my other spare time. but which I love.

What is your process for planning out a story or poem? I am a "burst" writer – the only thing I've ever planned out is a story I've been working on for many years. I'm still in the process of learning the craft and learning that I need to understand the terminology and techniques, but for the most part, I write what is really 'nagging' me – an idea or issue or even feeling that won't leave me alone and is looking for an outlet. If that starts to happen, I often stop what I'm doing where ever I'm at and find something to write on – a napkin, a slip of paper, whatever is at my fingertips (like most writers) – and write it out. But I do have a time that I prefer to write if I can wait to do it and that is late at night, usually when I should be sleeping or preparing for work in the morning.

What writing project are you working on at the moment? Currently I'm working on a performance project with Rhea Carmon and another member of the 5th Woman for a performance we are doing on December 1st for the New England Foundation for the Arts. I am also working on adapting a spoken word piece of mine into a another publishable poem to submit soon.

What is the best concert you've ever been to? As sappy as this sounds, I feel like I get to be at the best concert I've ever been to every week – as a DJ I have the privilege of interviewing lots of musicians, singers and songwriters – including Dove and Grammy award winners – and they often do live performances on my show. There's nothing quite like that – getting to watch them perform up close and personal. Also, they frequently invite me along to their live performances, and that is always a treat.

Who do you nominate for next time? I don't know if you've already showcased Ann Thornfield Long, but if you haven't I would like to nominate Annie.

Mad Blab answers: Crime and Punishment; The Diary of a Young Girl

STAY CONNECTED

