



The Write News

A Monthly Newsletter

Elisabeth Tuck, editor

May 2021

VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING

May 8, 2021

**9:30 Sign-In - 9:45 Breakout Rooms – 10:00 Writer's Table – 11:00 Business Mtg.
Speaker 11:15 – 12:15**

Register online at <https://cwcmt Diablo.org/current-cwc-mt-diablo-meeting/>
Once registered, you will receive a link to join the Zoom meeting.

Be the Hero of Your Writing Process

featuring

Kendra Levin

Weaving together secrets from bestselling authors, tips from psychologists, and her own experiences as an editor and life coach for writers, Simon & Schuster editorial director, Kendra Levin will share valuable advice for creating a regular writing practice that's designed specifically for you. Kendra will reveal how the *Hero's Journey* model of myth-making offers tools that can help you to write regularly—and feel good about it—not just today, not just tomorrow, but for years to come.



Empowers Writers to:

- Connect more deeply with your work.
- Listen more closely to your inner wisdom.
- Strike a healthy balance between writing and everything else going on.
- Turn challenges into opportunities for growth.
- Lead more fulfilling lives.

Kendra Levin is an editor, author, and certified life coach who has worked in the publishing industry for nearly twenty years. Currently Editorial Director of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, her career has also brought her to Penguin Random House and Scholastic, where she has edited *New York Times* bestsellers and award winners across all age categories of children's books. A regular contributor to [Psychology Today](#), Kendra is the author of self-help book [The Hero Is You](#) and has spent over a decade coaching writers and other creative artists. Visit her at kendracoaching.com and follow her [@kendralevin](#).

\$5.00 for members - \$10.00 for guests

By registering you consent to be recorded during the meeting

President's Message: Linda Hartmann

Write the Waves



Greetings Fearless Writers, and welcome to the month of May!

Scholars may differ, but many agree that the **month of May**, was named after the Roman Goddess Maia, who looked after the growth of plants and was closely identified with the earth. Maia was the daughter of Atlas, lover of Zeus, and mother of Hermes. Her son, Hermes, was known for having superhuman strength, the typical powers of an Olympian, **with** durability, stamina, and **agility, immortal** and resistant to all diseases. Wouldn't it be fascinating if all inhabitants of the earth had that magical gene? Atlas, Maia's father, not to shrug, was busy as he held up the sky (though often depicted as the earth.) Imagine writing a biography of your family if you were among these mythological characters.

As she looks after the growth of her plants, Maia reminds me of my sister, who has an inordinate number of indoor and outdoor plants. She has been bringing her outdoor plants into the basement workshop areas to keep them from the unexpected snow happening in the Midwest now, in May, an obstacle to their growth. Doesn't that sound like an exciting story character, or like Maia? Bringing the outdoors in may not be so surprising, as we have been enduring a pandemic, but we now look with hope toward a future of safely going out again.

The month of May brings up additional ideas for me, along the lines of looking after my commitments, spring cleaning, sorting through the computer, organizing my documents and files better, and doing the same in my home. For writers, it may bring up looking after some characters we have in old files and drawers whom we have not visited or cared for in a while. Have we thought about where they are going? What are our plans for them? What are our goals for ourselves?

The month of May also brings up thoughts of the fiscal year ending soon for our branch and a new one beginning in July. I remind you that the members will not be having a formal meeting during July and August but will reconvene in September. You will continue to receive news of events you may want to attend with sister branches or others during this time.

May also means it is time to begin planning for the remaining year. We will have a slate of officers to be voted on and are looking for members who may want to take on an open position within the branch. Please join me and some other board members to discuss available positions and how you might step up your involvement by staying after Kendra Levin's presentation **on Saturday, May 8th**, for a short post-meeting discussion.

Stay connected, stay well, and keep writing!

CONTENTS

- p. 3 Attend a Board Meeting; Writers Table Nancy Branka
- p. 4 News and Salutes Joni Keim; Upcoming Speaker
- p. 5 Become the Newsletter Editor and See Your Name on the Internet.
- p. 6-9 Things to Do: Free Talk on Professional Presentations by CWC State VP Roger Lubek; Ft. Collins Sisters in Crime features CWC Member George Cramer; Open Mic Night; Member Susan Lakin's Class on Writing the Novel
- p. 10-13 **2021** Young Writers Contest Winners
- p. 14-15 Young Writers Contest 2020 First Prize Winner's Story
- p. 16 Young Writers Contest Donor Page

Attend a Board Meeting



This is YOUR branch. Extra minds and hands are always welcome.

There's room at the board meetings for observers, the maybe-I'd-like-to-get-involved-ers, advisors, and the just plain curious. This is your branch too, and volunteer organizations can always use new ideas. To join us go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/> and select webmaster. Fill out the form and ask to receive an invitation to the meeting.

Next board meeting: Saturday, May1, 1-2:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Writers Table

May 8 – Nancy Branka: *Writing Tech Tools for Authors*

Beyond Scrivener: A Basket of Emerging Tech Resources for Writers



There are a number of new tools (and a few that have been around for a while) that have been found to be really helpful in the writing process (and fun to try out!

Categories could include:

- Dictation/transcription, like Otter AI
- Research/note-taking, like Roam Research
- World building, like Campfire Technology
- Cover design, like 99 Designs
- Writing AI, like GPT-3
- Voice cloning for narration, like DeepZen
- Getting more from your reading, like Readwise
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[CWC-Writers-Table-May-2021-1Download](#)

Upcoming Writers Table

June 12 – Karen Stephen: *Creation and Value of Book Trailers*

[CWC-Writers-Table-flyers-June-2021Download](#)

Volunteer to Lead a Writers Table

These are short (40 minutes or so) informational or practice session on the craft of writing. Hosted by Mt. Diablo members, these sessions cover topics of interest to writers. Share a writing, publishing, editing, research, etc. skill. Contact John Schembra: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writerstable/>

Member Events, News, and Salutes



If you have a new publication, a book launch, an upcoming media interview, please write up a short announcement and let us put you in the newsletter. Gather up a picture of yourself or your publication and to submit, go to: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/>
If you have hobbies or interests alongside your writing, you may find publications that would like articles on those pastimes. If so, let us know so we can celebrate you.

Joni Keim

The concept for this **new book**, *The Checklist for Naturally Beautiful Skin*, now available on Amazon first appeared as a chapter in *Natural Skin Care: Alternative & Traditional Techniques* in 1996, published by North Atlantic Books in Berkeley. An updated version appeared again as a chapter in the 2nd edition in 2018. Because the information is the foundation for all successful, personal, natural skin care programs, the concept merited being the single focus in a book of its own, including updated information. Some of the material is a bit technical but I hope you will find it interesting, if not fascinating.


The Checklist for Naturally Beautiful Skin covers the internal and external factors that influence the health and appearance of our skin, such as nutrition, lifestyle habits, gut health, stress, sleep, skin care products, and skin care routines. The internal factors are often neglected in personal skin care practices—the focus being on the external factors of cleansing, toning, moisturizing, etc. However, both are essential for either one to be truly effective.

Integrating both internal and external elements for skin care may require learning new material, trusting the process, changing old habits, and making a commitment. In other words, it takes a bit of work. Is it worth the effort? I think so. Who doesn't want to feel and look their best?

Your skin reflects your internal health, so natural *skin* care is also natural *health* care. It may be that natural skin care brings you to a healthier lifestyle, and the rewards are abundant and amazing. May this book encourage you to take good care of yourself, and may your radiance and vitality be an inspiration to those around you.



Upcoming Speaker for 2021

June 12 	Liz Tucker <i>Writing Deeper into Theme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Theme and Why is It Important? • Plot versus Theme • The When, Where and How of Developing and Deepening Theme • Exercises to Unearth and Explore Theme in Our Work
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Mt. Diablo takes a break in July and August. The board is still there if you hear of or experience a good speaker. Go to <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/> to recommend the person

Things to Do

OPPORTUNITY: Become the Newsletter Editor Get YOUR name on the internet

As with other volunteers in the branch, I have been doing this task for several years and it's time for someone else to put their flair into the publication which is posted on our website then searchable on the internet.

I have enjoyed compiling this newsletter and recently have figured a way to make it easier, however, after at least 7 years I wholly believe it's time for new blood. I was branch president for a while but when Marlene became president, she brought so many new and great ideas. The newsletter is more than ready for change.

I have held on for so long because doing this is **fun** in many ways:

- I've come to know and care for many branch members.
- I pretty well know what's going on in the branch and to an extent, statewide.
- The board is very supportive.
- Others write the articles and stories. I fit them in.
- I've learned about non-profits.
- I've learned and been able to experiment with new, minor technical skills (all I use are a laptop and MSWord!)
- I've had fun with free clip art.
- I get to read the entire newsletter!
- I get to insert cartoons, jokes, and editing hints.



I will only continue through June this year (the branch doesn't meet or publish a newsletter in July or Aug,) but I welcome anyone even vaguely interested to **step forward now**, ask questions, and let's talk about possibilities. I will wholly support anyone who steps up. I have the job tasks documented. There's a documented newsletter policy. The job is flexible. I will support you as little or as much as you'd like. I will volunteer to edit the newsletter before you send it for publication. Lyn Roberts has been a great help to me in that respect (when I finish in time to ask for her help) and Al Garrotto, another good editor, has volunteered to edit.

Twice in the past couple of years I've almost talked someone into taking this over. The first switched to a branch nearer her home; the second became our current president instead!

Contact me at <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

Discussion on Next Door about trash scattered in street after garbage was picked up. Many respondents were quick to blame the garbage company. Then someone replied:

It may be that fritters got into your trash overnight.



Things to Do (cont'd)

Speak or Listen at Open Mic Night



The votes are in and it's unanimous:

Open Mic Night is

FUN and Inspiring!

Be prepared to have your socks knocked off,
because when you hear
what our own member-authors have written,

you'll be **amazed**

blown away, actually, by the talent in our club.

See for yourself.

Come **read**

for yourself by signing up for a JUNE date!

Next Open Mic Night is Thursday, May 20 from 7- 8:30 p.m.

on Zoom of course.

Register online at

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/register-for-open-mic-night/>

Or just open the website <https://cwcmt Diablo.org> and click on the link.
It's that easy!



by **Lucinda Jackson**

Having Trouble Finding Time to Write? Try **Shut Up & Write** (SU&W) with the group branch member Lucinda Jackson attends:

I wrote my first book and am now finishing my second at Shut Up & Write, a FREE, on-line ZOOM (during the pandemic) meet-up for anyone—from beginner to pro—who wants to write! No one will critique your writing—we just write together. We exchange ideas and goals for 15 minutes, then we shut up and write for 90 minutes; then meet back up to share any methods, challenges, successes, and opportunities—or just chat. Get support and TIME for your writing.

Join me EVERY MONDAY from 3:30 to 5:30 PM. Other CWC members often attend.

Where: This link shows you the Zoom info and more:

<https://www.meetup.com/shutupandwriteSFO/events/sjgbtrycccbpb/>

Or search for chapters all over the world that fit your schedule. SU&W is in over 50 countries!

<https://www.meetup.com/pro/shut-up-write>

SU&W is a **no-fee**, safe way to get your writing DONE! I highly recommend it!

Things to Do (cont'd)

Save the date for the next Ft. Collins, Colorado, Sisters in Crime (SinC-CO) book club meeting, via Zoom, **Wednesday, May 19 at 10:00a.m. to noon. SF Time is 9-11 a.m.** We'll discuss

The Mona Lisa Sisters by guest author and CWC member **George Cramer.**

Margaret Mizushima, author of the Timber Creek K-9 Mysteries
President, Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America

Zoom link:

Topic: SinC-CO Book Club: Fort Collins (May)

Time: May 19, 2021 10:00 AM Mountain Time (**9-11 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time**)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86285707006?pwd=dmtwR2NKbTJRajcwK2YyRWVXemVVQT09>

Meeting ID: 862 8570 7006

Passcode: 841403

One tap mobile:

+16699009128,,86285707006#,,, *841403# US (San Jose)

+12532158782,,86285707006#,,, *841403# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

- +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/keFYqGn9tD>



Members' (Short) Works

Members, See your writing in print!

Send your **short** works (up to 750 words, preferably less) to be included in the Mt Diablo branch newsletter to: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>



Be Interviewed These interviews help Mt. Diablo Branch members get to know you, your work, and your thoughts about writing and the writing process. If you would like to be interviewed, let us know through this link: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/newsletter/>

Things to Do (cont'd)

The Alamo Womens Club

AUTHORS' FAIRE WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021 at the Round Hill Country Club

Robert Dugoni will be the moderator. He is a critically acclaimed *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and #1 Amazon bestselling author, selling more than 6 million books. Please check out our participating authors' books.

Robert Dugoni, Moderator	Mystery, spy, etc.	https://www.robertdugonibooks.com
Rhys Bowen	Historical fiction	https://rhysbowen.com/
Tim Tigner	Spy and espionage	https://timtigner.com/
Simon Wood	Mystery	http://simonwood.net/
Lee Goldberg	Detective	http://leegoldberg.com/

Ticket sales will begin in September.

If you have questions or would like us to include someone else in our notification, please let us know!

Jerilyn Strong and Sandi McKae

Co-Chairs, AWC 6th Annual Authors' Faire

jeristrong@gmail.com

Editor's note. Robert Dugoni is worth skipping work or any other responsibility for. He spoke at our branch 7 or 8 years ago--an excellent, knowledgeable, and approachable speaker.

"Dos and Don'ts of Professional Presentations"

On **Tuesday, May 25, at 6 p.m.**, CWC Vice President Roger Lubeck, PhD, will speak on preparing and giving professional presentations

Roger is immediate past president of the Redwood Writers branch, president of It Is What It Is Press. Roger's publications include: ten novels, two business books, short stories, poems, two contest-winning stories, two produced ten-minute plays. His blog is <http://www.rogerinblue.com>.

Roger will share his insights as to what makes an effective professional presentation based on his 25 years as a business speaker and workshop leader focused on leadership and management combined with 15 years of teaching university classes on psychology, and 10 years conducting workshops on writing, self-publishing, and book promotion.

Because this topic is so essential to the overall Mission Statement of the CWC in assisting writers to market their work, we are offering this Zoom presentation at no charge to the state-wide membership of the CWC. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 6 pm.

Registration for this **free** meeting is required and may be made with this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScv53EcgAbnFuE2RAfdqDPq7fA2RBtHslQ4fJ3QboS5X83Ehg/viewform?usp=sf_link or by visiting www.hdcwc.com

Things to Do (cont'd)

8 Weeks to Writing a Commercially Successful Novel

Intensive, online 8-week course taught by **Susan Lakin** member of South Bay branch of the CWC (and former speaker at Mt. Diablo.) This is a combination lecture/critique group structure, so that you can apply what you learn in real time in your own scenes while critiquing other writers' scenes.

Enrollment opened April 15, and the course begins May 24.

<https://cslakin.teachable.com/p/8-weeks-to-commercial-success/>

Fiction writers need to go beyond the obvious: compelling characters, writing that nails genre, scenes that “show, don’t tell,” an engaging (preferably riveting) story, and meaningful conflict that creates tension. Hugely successful books have elements that cause them to rise to the top of the pile and inspire readers to encourage friends to read them.

If writers nail these 8 elements we are going to dive deep into, their novel will stand high above the masses published every day.

- 1) **High Moment and Character Change:** You have to know the purpose of your scene, build to a key moment at the end (last lines) of your scene, which creates change in your character.
- 2) **Micro-tension** on every page. All of which point to the secrets and twists to come. What you are not saying simmers under the surface of your scenes. This will make or break your story. Discussion of critical action-reaction cycle.
- 3) **Nuances of deep POV**, including **unique voices** for every character. It's important to establish character mood, mind-set, and motivation right from the start.
- 4) **Sensory detail.** Use and go beyond five senses, using specific wording to set mood and tone for the scene. What the character processes through her senses should reveal important things about *her* and not merely convey information.
- 5) **Emotional manipulation**—you must know how you want your readers to feel and how to get them there. And you need to **learn how to show emotion in three key ways.**
- 6) **High Stakes!** High, believable personal and public stakes that ramp up to the climax.
- 7) Purposeful **backstory** in the right amounts and the right places.
- 8) Tight, distilled **dialogue.** It makes or break a scene. We'll look at "on the nose" dialogue and discuss dialogue mechanics. Characters rarely say what they mean, but what they need seeps through.

During these 8 weeks you will learn what it takes to write purposeful scenes that are carefully constructed to accomplish the important work of advancing your plot, creating and building meaningful tension, revealing crucial character bits, and manipulating your readers' emotions so they will feel what you want them to feel.

Young Writers Contest

Young Writers Contest Table of 2021 Winners

Link to the submissions which placed:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/2021-winners/>


<u>Poetry 6th Grade</u>	<u>Poetry 7th Grade</u>	<u>Poetry 8th Grade</u>
<p>1st Place Name: Emma Singh, <i>The Whale</i> Teacher: Emily Vizzo School: Seven Hill, Walnut Creek</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Lila McCrary, <i>LEFT Behind</i> Teacher: Elizabeth Noreña School: Prospect Sierra, El Cerrito</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Jack Christian, <i>Rain</i> Teacher: Melissa Dessoye School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Charlotte McCracken, <i>The World is Ours</i> Teacher: Kirsten Woods School: Seven Hills, Walnut Creek</p> <p>Name: Melia Minglana, <i>Perspective</i> Teacher: Heather Still School: Sequoia Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> 	<p>1st Place Name: Anya Houston, <i>The Melody of Growth</i> Teacher: James Flowers School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Sienna Wong, <i>A Life That Mattered</i> Teacher: Margaret Roberson School: Diablo Vista, Danville</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Isabella Bian, <i>The Girl in the Bedroom Next to Mine</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Madeleine Roytfeld, <i>When Sun Meets Ocean</i> Teacher: Stephanie Davenport School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>Name: Hannah Sadhig, <i>The Wet, Wet Rain</i> Teacher: Stephanie Davenport School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>Name: Anika Sherer, <i>Dancing in the Rain</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker School: Dorris-Eaton, Walnut Creek</p>	<p>1st Place Name: Marilyn Jia, <i>From Me to You</i> Teacher: Leslie Detter School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Chloe Cheung, <i>I Wish I Could Tell You</i> Teacher: James Flowers School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Bella Vuong, <i>First Kiss</i> Teacher: Ernesto Minglana School: Sequoia Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Kate Wang, <i>The Nature of Jellyfish</i> Teacher: Sydney Maxwell School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon</p> <p>Name: Audrey Xi, <i>Resplendent</i> Teacher: Melissa Parker School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon</p> <p>Name: Adri Walker, <i>Of Machinery and Men</i> Teacher: Julie Scarpelli School: Seven Hills, Walnut Creek</p> <p>Name: Saoirse Hansen, <i>Not Just Jam</i> Teacher: John Scioscia School: Pine Valley, San Ramon</p>

Young Writers Contest (Cont'd)

Young Writers Contest Table of 2021 Winners

Link to the submissions which placed:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/2021-winners/>

<p>Personal Narrative 6th Grade</p> <p>1st Place Name: Rachel Richardson, <i>Believers</i> Teacher: Julia Herrington School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Advait Sethuraman, <i>Nature's Gift</i> Teacher: Caresse Nguyen School: Windemere Ranch, San Ramon</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Georgia Paulsen, <i>Look Out for Bears</i> Teacher: Heather Still School: Sequoia Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Georgia Paulsen: <i>A Bee Attack</i> Teacher: Heather Still School: Sequoia Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> <p>Name: Antonia Altamirano: <i>The Grip of Love</i> Teacher: David Wright School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>Name: Jake Kwok, <i>COVID—A Silver Lining</i> Teacher: Julia Herrington School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>Name: Lila McCleod, <i>More Than Just Butterflies</i> Teacher: Melissa Dessoie School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p>	<p>Personal Narrative 7th Grade</p> <p>1st Place Name: Maryam Kermani, <i>The Color of Clouds on a Perfect Day</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Saanvy Desai, <i>The Pearls That Cost Me Gold</i> Teacher: Charlotte Vaughns School: Iron Horse, San Ramon</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Hailey Ayers, <i>How Reading Changed My Life</i> Teacher: Whitney Mazzotti School: Los Cerros, Danville</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Polina Efimova, <i>The Invisible Girl</i> Teacher: Mari Weiss School: Seven Hills, Walnut Creek</p> 	<p>Personal Narrative 8th Grade</p> <p>1st Place Name: Soumya Pradhan, <i>Sweet Contentment</i> Teacher: Randal Hart School: Windemere Ranch, San Ramon</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Bella Vuong, <i>Forever in My Heart</i> Teacher: Ernesto Minglana School: Sequoia Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Wendy Bo, <i>Hold My Hand</i> Teacher: James Flowers School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Dawson Weer, <i>The Ski Trip of a Lifetime</i> Teacher: Ernesto Minglana School: Sequoia Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> <p>Name: Emma Wong, <i>Symphony in 2020</i> Teacher: Susan McGill School: Orinda Middle, Orinda</p> <p>Name: Noor Ahmed, <i>Swept Away</i> Teacher: James Flowers School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>Name: Gillian Davis, <i>Casual Homophobia</i> Teacher: Julie Scarpelli School: Seven Hills</p>
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Young Writers Contest (Cont'd)

Young Writers Contest Table of 2021 Winners



Link to the submissions which placed:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/2021-winners/>

<p>Short Story 6th Grade</p> <p>1st Place Name: Arya Prakash, <i>Bri and Ly-ly</i> Teacher: Stacy McKenna School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Selina Lai, <i>The Spirit World</i> Teacher: Jason Ahn School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Ria Ramchandani, <i>The Whispering Lake</i> Teacher: Kristy Lomando School: Pine Valley, San Ramon</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Shree Sabbineni, <i>The Quest of a Revolution</i> Teacher: Stacy McKenna School: Dorris-Eaton, San Ramon</p> <p>Name: Sophia Fermin, <i>One in a Million</i> Teacher: Mrs. Heule School: Adams Middle, Brentwood</p> <p>Name: Laila Shahsavari: <i>The Bully</i> Teacher: Katherine Palmer-Collins School: Orinda Middle, Orinda</p> 	<p>Short Story 7th Grade</p> <p>1st Place Name: Madeleine Roytfeld, <i>The River's Gift</i> Teacher: Stephanie Davenport School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Emily Engebretson, <i>Lonely Standing Ovation</i> Teacher: Nancy Vargas School: Pleasant Hill Middle, Pleasant Hill</p> <p>3rd Place Name: J. E., <i>The Helping Fountain</i> Teacher: Mari Weiss School: Seven Hills, Walnut Creek</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Anisha Raghu, <i>A Second Chance</i> Teacher: Nicole Nishihira School: Windemere Ranch, San Ramon</p> <p>Name: Liam Hancock, <i>Running from Time</i> Teacher: Jennifer Risher School: Charlotte Wood, Danville</p> <p>Name: Brooklyn Carr Heuer, <i>One Voice</i> Teacher: Annie Rodriguez School: Eagle Peak Montessori, Walnut Creek</p>	<p>Short Story 8th Grade</p> <p>1st Place Name: Serafina Hwang, <i>A Forced Removal from the Closet</i> Teacher: Helena Lamb School: Foothill Middle, Walnut Creek</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Natasha Yee, <i>Skin Deep</i> Teacher: Mrs. Daly School: Stone Valley, Alamo</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Emma Chigbu, <i>Beauty Sleep</i> Teacher: Marcy Batza School: Gale Ranch, San Ramon</p> <p>Honorable Mention Name: Neetra Chakraborty, <i>The 500 Words</i> Teacher: Mitchell Jensen School: Windemere Middle, San Ramon</p> <p>Name: Sydney Mielcarski, <i>Growing Through Concrete</i> Teacher: Mari Mielcarski School: Homeschool</p> <p>Name: Chetana Senthil, <i>Dear Gracie</i> Teacher: Mitchell Jensen School: Windemere Middle, San Ramon</p> <p>Name: Krisha Singhani, <i>#Reality Check</i> Teacher: Marissa Gillette School: Diablo Vista, Danville</p>
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Young Writers Contest (Cont'd)

Young Writers Contest Table of 2021 Winners

	<p>Short Story 7th Grade Honorable Mention (cont'd)</p> <p>Name: Maryam Kermani, <i>A Letter</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>Name: Margaret McKay, <i>The Cycle</i> Teacher: Lauren Dowd School: Diablo Vista, Danville</p> <p>Name: Audrey Spears, <i>Catherine Finds Her Confidence</i> Teacher: Ben Wayne School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>Name: Rishika Tellamsetty, <i>December</i> Teacher: Sheri Herauf School: Windemere Ranch, San Ramon</p>																																									
<p>Humor All Grades</p> <p>1st Place Name: Kathleen Shang, <i>The Small Life</i> Teacher: Helena Lamb School: Foothill Middle, Walnut Creek</p> <p>2nd Place Name: Chloe Cheung, <i>A Lost Signal</i> Teacher: James Flowers School: Joaquin Moraga, Moraga</p> <p>3rd Place Name: Neetra Chakraborty, <i>Momster at the Gym</i> Teacher: Mitchell Jensen School: Windemere Ranch, San Ramon</p>	<div><p>BOOK BLURBS - GLOSSARY OF TERMS</p><table><tr><td><i>Enchanting</i></td><td>there's a dog in it</td></tr><tr><td><i>Heart-warming</i></td><td>a dog and a child</td></tr><tr><td><i>Moving</i></td><td>child dies</td></tr><tr><td><i>Heart-rending</i></td><td>dog dies</td></tr><tr><td><i>Thoughtful</i></td><td>mind-numbingly tedious</td></tr><tr><td><i>Haunting</i></td><td>set in the past</td></tr><tr><td><i>Exotic</i></td><td>set abroad</td></tr><tr><td><i>Audacious</i></td><td>set in the future</td></tr><tr><td><i>Award-winning</i></td><td>set in India</td></tr><tr><td><i>Perceptive</i></td><td>set in north London</td></tr><tr><td><i>Provocative</i></td><td>infuriating</td></tr><tr><td><i>Epic</i></td><td>editor cowed by author's reputation</td></tr><tr><td><i>From the pen of a master</i></td><td>same old same old</td></tr><tr><td><i>In the tradition of</i></td><td>shamelessly derivative</td></tr><tr><td><i>Spare and taut</i></td><td>under researched</td></tr><tr><td><i>Richly detailed</i></td><td>over-researched</td></tr><tr><td><i>Disturbing</i></td><td>author bonkers</td></tr><tr><td><i>Stellar</i></td><td>author young and photoge</td></tr><tr><td><i>Classic</i></td><td>author hanging in there</td></tr><tr><td><i>Vintage</i></td><td>author past it</td></tr></table></div>		<i>Enchanting</i>	there's a dog in it	<i>Heart-warming</i>	a dog and a child	<i>Moving</i>	child dies	<i>Heart-rending</i>	dog dies	<i>Thoughtful</i>	mind-numbingly tedious	<i>Haunting</i>	set in the past	<i>Exotic</i>	set abroad	<i>Audacious</i>	set in the future	<i>Award-winning</i>	set in India	<i>Perceptive</i>	set in north London	<i>Provocative</i>	infuriating	<i>Epic</i>	editor cowed by author's reputation	<i>From the pen of a master</i>	same old same old	<i>In the tradition of</i>	shamelessly derivative	<i>Spare and taut</i>	under researched	<i>Richly detailed</i>	over-researched	<i>Disturbing</i>	author bonkers	<i>Stellar</i>	author young and photoge	<i>Classic</i>	author hanging in there	<i>Vintage</i>	author past it
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2020 Young Writers Contest First Prize Winner

(In September we will begin featuring the 2021 winners' submissions.)

Under the Waves

by

Madeleine Roytfeld

1st Place, 6th Grade Personal Narrative

Teacher: David Wright

**School: Charlotte Woods,
Danville**

I remember sitting there, the milky white waves calling to me. The sapphire ocean begging me to join it in its beauty. I remember staring back in admiration at the seemingly gentle water, wondering how something could ever be so beautiful. I remember sitting in the midst of pearly white sand, emerald palm trees, and an assortment of seashells, and wondering, *should I follow my temptations into the silky water?* Then, I found no harm in the endeavor. In fact, looking back, I don't know why there was even a grain of hesitation in my 6-year-old self. But looking back on your life does bring back a lot of questions, some that will go on being unanswered. However, I know for a fact that if I had been a little more hesitant, this story would not be in front of your eyes.



I succumbed to my desires and waded into the water. Splashing around, admiring the majestic scenery, it was my internal paradise. I waded deeper and deeper until my parents were no longer in sight, and my feet could not touch the rocky ocean floor. I looked below me as I continued to swim, mesmerized at the sights underneath.

The life and energy of what lay beneath the water was perhaps more enchanting than what was above it. Fish with the most unique colors, ranging from a dark crimson to a beige yellow, swam in different directions, all with individual destinations, yet somehow, perfectly synchronized in a special way. *Life ran like an ocean*, I remember thinking. *Individual lives, individual goals, but still, somehow synchronized.*

Then it happened. I looked up from my underwater dream and heard it before I saw it. The same sound of a crashing wave that drove me to the water. The same splash that transfixed me, the sound a colliding wave made as it hit the ocean. I looked up, in time to see people on the shore cowering in terror, nearby swimmers frantically swimming toward the beach, screams of scared toddlers ringing in my ears. Then, with one gulp, I was swallowed into a whirlwind of fear.

The wave sucked me in like a magnet. I wanted to open my mouth and scream, *I have nothing to give to you, why take me?!* But I couldn't. The wave did not care, so it took me into what I once thought fascinating and showed me that fascination could easily turn to pain. It tossed me around in its currents to a rhythmic beat of trepidation. I collided into a beautiful coral, cutting off part of its top. I cut my head on a rock beneath me, and water filled my goggles and my lungs. I was losing my breath now, I could no longer see or hear, and I was gulping water unintentionally. I saw fish in the distance frantically swerving, no longer was there the synchronization I had previously so deeply admired. I saw traces of my own blood dissolving into the sapphire sea. Tossing back and forth, the once calm, soothing warm water, now seemed to ebb away at my skin, and all I could feel was a cold, terrifying sensation.



2020 Young Writers Contest First Prize Winner (cont'd)

Under the Waves

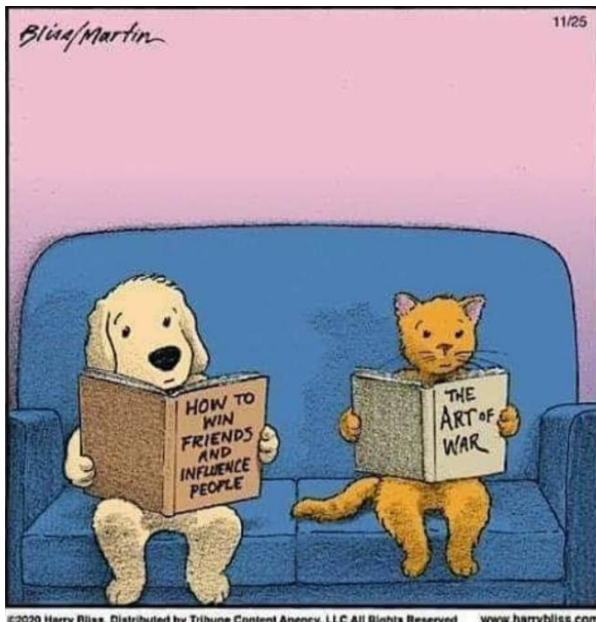
by

Madeleine Roytfeld

I closed my eyes, as if admitting my surrender to the water. I could not face what was happening to me. I closed my eyes, saying, *I surrender*, over and over again until the pain overtook my thoughts.

The next time I opened my eyes the water had calmed, and it cradled me in its currents back to the shore as if I was a baby.

Looking back does bring back questions, but it also brings answers. I guess I could say I learned not to venture far from the safety of my parents, but I also learned that fascination, being enchanted, can make you lose sight of more important things. Dreams are powerful, and while they have the power to do amazing things, they also have the power to destroy the amazing reality we already have. Dreaming big is one thing, a thing that we should all do. But dreaming to ignore reality, while comforting, also has consequences. There is always a point in our lives where we want to ignore reality and wish that it was nonexistent. But sometimes we all have to remember that a dream can take you very far, but it can also take over. For that day I had a stunning reality, until I dreamed so much I lost touch or reality, and that dream became my nightmare.

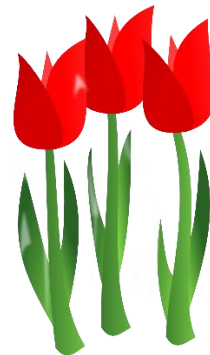


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Contra Costa County middle school students who enter the Young Writers Contest are eligible for cash prizes in short story, poetry, essay/personal narrative, and humor. Contest submission is free. Check our branch website for details:

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In May the Mt. Diablo Branch hosts an awards ceremony to honor the students--if there's no pandemic! All program expenses are supported by individual donations and grants.

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Attention: Young Writers Contest

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