



The Write News

June 2025

A Monthly Newsletter
Denis Hoye, Editor

Mt. Diablo Branch

June 14th 2025 An Afternoon With Brian Copeland



Brian Copeland is an American actor, comedian, radio talk show host, playwright and author based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Copeland has been the opening act for artists such as Ray Charles, Natalie Cole, Aretha Franklin and Ringo Starr. For more than 18 years, he hosted a radio program for San Francisco radio station KGO. His program formerly aired weekdays from 2pm–4pm.

His one-man play, “*Not a Genuine Black Man*,” went on to become the longest-running solo show in San Francisco theatrical history, recently celebrating its 1,000th performance.

His debut thriller, *Outraged*, was released in April, 2024. The second ‘Topher Davis’ thriller, *Shadows of Justice*, was published in April, 2025.

[Please Register for this Meeting](#)

As this meeting may have a larger attendance, please register early. No on-the-day registrations.

Share His Career & His Writings

Come and hear Brian discuss his multifaceted career, his writings and his new thriller, detective novels: *Outrage* and recently published *Shadow of Justice* with two more to follow.

Scheduled for June 14th, 2024

- 10:30 am Sign-in table opens, Networking and Social Hour; Brian’s books will be on sale.
- 11:45 am Buffet Lunch
- 12:35 pm Business Meeting
- 1:00 pm Main Presentation

Location

Zio Fraedo’s Restaurant
611 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, California

Cost

\$30 Members and \$30 Non-Members.

Includes a buffet luncheon. Pay at the door or online with PayPal when registering.

President's Message

I cannot believe it, but we are already at the end of another year. Yes, our June meeting will be the last general meeting of this year. And we have a special program for you to enjoy. Brian Copeland, local author, comedian, and personality will be joining us for an hour on June 14th. Michael Barrington will interview him. So, this is one general meeting you shouldn't miss.



I know we all have a life to lead, but such occasions as this come along rarely. Coming to this meeting could mean you will not have space in your schedule to write on that day. I'll admit it might happen to me. However, do I follow up with scathing self-criticism and judgment? Not at all. I take the opportunity to open myself to a chance to hopefully learn. Even if a distraction from my writing is caused by someone who may not be as good as I (there are a few), there is no reason to think I cannot learn a lesson in the situation.

By the time this newsletter is published, the Board will have held their annual planning meeting. I have a feeling it will be a lively and challenging session. I promise that we are trying to overcome old issues that resist solutions and adopt new ideas that need refining. I will inform you of all significant decisions and if necessary, I will solicit your opinions, when we are divided. Despite the planning meeting being in the rear-view mirror when you read this, I would invite all members to contact me with ideas and thoughts. I will raise issues that you submit to the Board in future meetings.

Over the summer, there will be a break from the general monthly meetings; we will restart in September. Meanwhile, there are still activities to keep you entertained and engaged. In the next few months, we will maintain the schedule of the following :

Open Mic on Zoom.

Short Stories Group in person.

Writers Connection in person.

I wish you all a great summer and hope that the creative juices will continue to flow. But, if you decide to take a break, I suggest you do so totally and relax. There is something rejuvenating about clearing the mind and allowing fresh perspective the room to come to fruition.

Dream on, write on, and cherish being a writer.

Barry

CWC Mt. Diablo Branch

Board of Directors

President—Barry Hampshire
president@cwcmtdiablo.org

Vice President—Michael Barrington
vp@cwcmtdiablo.org

Secretary—Dita Basu
secretary@cwcmtdiablo.org

Treasurer—Margie Witt
treasurer@cwcmtdiablo.org

Webmaster—Marlene Dotterer
cmdotterer@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor—Denis Hoyer
writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org

Backfence—David George
georgedavegeorge7@comcast.net

Elisabeth Tuck
helpfuleditor@cwcmtdiablo.org

Lyn Roberts
openmic@cwcmtdiablo.org

Dot Edwards
membership@cwcmtdiablo.org

Linda Hartmann
ekphrasis@cwcmtdiablo.org

Quynh-Uyen Trinh
youngwriters@cwcmtdiablo.org

Suzy Orpin
outreachchair@cwcmtdiablo.org

Andrew Benzie
writerstable@cwcmtdiablo.org

Mt. Diablo Branch Mission

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

Upcoming Events

- June 13, 2025, 3 pm, Friday: Sit in on a Zoom Board Meeting
- June 14, 2025, 10:30 am to 2:00 pm, Saturday: Mt. Diablo Monthly Meeting, An Afternoon with Brian Copeland
- June 18, 2025, 7 pm to 8:30 pm, Wednesday: Open Mic on Zoom
- June 20, 2025, 12 pm, Friday: What's Your Story: Walnut Creek Library, Las Trampus Room, the third Friday of each month
- June 25, 2025 12 Noon to 1:30 pm, Wednesday: Writers Connection, Chicken Pie Shop

Writer's Helping Writers Fundraising

CWC's motto is "Writers Helping Writers." We know that a struggling writer occasionally needs a little help. Our WHW fund is available to any member who needs help with paying for a meeting or workshop, or with membership costs. Just visit our website and complete this form <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/whw-form/>

Our WHW committee will discreetly review your request. When approved, you will receive a coupon code to use when renewing your membership or registering for a meeting or workshop. Your information is not shared anywhere.

CWC Fundraising

As we approach the end of our fiscal year (7/1/2024-6/30/2025), we wish to acknowledge our generous donors to one (or both) of our established funds.

Writers Helping Writers supports writers who may need financial help to attend meetings or pay for membership. We thank the following members for their donations to this worthy cause: Al Garrotto, Ann O'Connell-Nye, Bob Lane, Jerry Blair, John Schembra, Linda Hartman, Marianne McBride, Nancy Chan, Patricia Northlich, and William Yarborough.

Young Writers Contest supports Contra Costa County middle school students with cash prizes in short story, poetry, essay/personal narrative, and humor. Contest submissions are free. We will celebrate and present awards in May and thank the following members for their donations: Al Garrotto, Ann O'Connell-Nye, Bob Lane, Jerry Blair, John Schembra, Linda Hartman, Marianne McBride, Nancy Chan, Patricia Northlich, and William Yarborough.

Please consider donating to one of our funds either at a meeting or via our website at

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/writers-helping-writers/>

<https://cwcmtdiablo.org/young-writers-contest/>

California Writers Club is an IRS 501-3c designated non-profit educational organization. The Mt. Diablo Branch EIN Number is: 94-3068331. Please consult your tax advisor for the deductibility of your donation.

Thank You To All Who Support This Important Writers Fund

CWC Mt. Diablo Open Mic on Zoom

Wednesday, June 18, 2025 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM — Online event

Details: Join us for Open Mic Night!

Sign up to read a five-minute segment from something you've written, a work-in-progress, something already published, or that sheaf of poems you hid under the bed for the last year. Share it with writers and readers at our 90-minute Read Fest!

Not ready to read your work to a crowd? That's okay, we need an audience, too. Come and hear what others have to say. When you register, let us know if you want to be a reader. The first seven people to sign-up will be given a slot to read for five minutes.

If we have more than seven requests to read, we'll start the list for the next event. We'll have time for discussion, but please remember, this is not a critique session! Talk about what you liked, not what the author can do better. This event is open to the public. Please bring your friends!

Note: Your RSVP on Meetup does not register you for this event. Register online at:

<https://cwcmt Diablo.org/event/open-mic-on-zoom/>

The Writer's Connection

Wednesday, June 25th, 2025, 12 Noon to 2 pm

Come share what is happening in your life as a writer: the successes, the rejections, anything goes. Want to read something, wonderful, bring it along. Let us know about any book or story you are reading, like it or not, share it with us. Had a rejection that meant something, tell us about it. Want to give a book away, do so. From 12:00 Noon to 1:30 pm. Be seen, Be noticed, Be there!

Join us at:

The Chicken Pie Shop
1251 Arroyo Way
Walnut Creek, California 94523

Prompts for June's Writer's Connection

1) There is an urban legend floating around about a taxi that doesn't take you where you want to go, but where you need to go. Write about a character that gets into this taxi. Where do they go and why?

2) Your character committed a murder decades ago. It was investigated but went cold after a couple of years. Suddenly a detective shows up at your door asking some questions.

[Please Register for The Writer's Connection](#)

New Resources from Authors Publish

[12 Agents Who Want Your Thriller and Suspense Novels](#)

[11 Fiction Magazines Paying up to \\$450](#)

[25 Publications that Pay \\$1,000 and Up](#)

[30 Magazines Publishing Hybrid Writing](#)

What's Your Story Come, read and enjoy listening

Place: Walnut Creek Library, the Las Trampas Room:

1644 N. Broadway, Walnut Creek, California

When: 12 pm, June 20, 2025, the third Friday of each month.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY? is a place to join other writers to read your short story aloud, or enjoy listening to others. Meetings are held the 3rd Friday of every month.



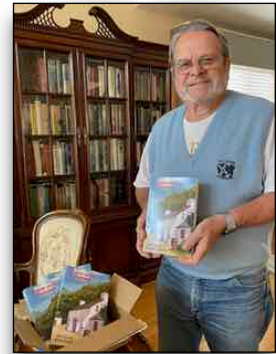
*Sigh, I'd hoped to be done editing for my
Book launch in June, but alas, life interfered!*

Book Launch — Four Mile House by Michael Barrington

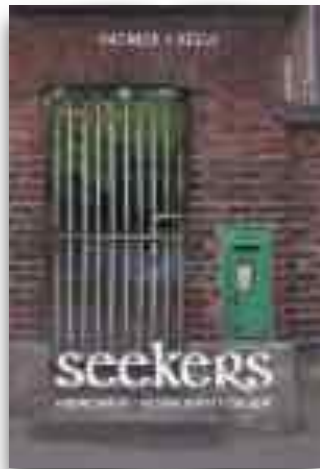
Michael Barrington's 12th book, *Four Mile House* was published May 10th. Conor Mason and Livia Coglione are two very different personalities, he a former seminarian turned successful veterinarian, she a beautiful Irish-Italian surgeon with a meteoric career. He is quiet, sensitive, introverted, she, outgoing and flamboyant. A chance encounter leads to a roller coaster of emotions and unexpected romantic and professional complications.

Four Mile House, is a story of mutual attraction, friendships, and love. It takes us from their first awkward conversations through a tragic upheaval in their idyllic life, to self-discovery and a return to their Irish roots. Their lives become dramatically intertwined with those of three other couples. Lyrical, expansive and hauntingly evocative, as we follow the characters through England, France, Switzerland, and Ireland, they will stay with you long after the last page.

[Purchase Four Mile House here](#)



Book Launch — Seekers by Patrick J. Kelly



"A compelling story of rebellion, survival, and the perseverance of Irish culture." Kirkus Reviews

In 1880s Ireland, as political unrest brews and the call for independence grows louder, two young artisans, John Kelly and Margaret Marrey, dare to dream of a better life. But their hopes are soon shattered by a tide of violence, betrayal, and upheaval. From the turmoil of the Land War and the shadowy rise of the Irish Republican Brotherhood to the shock of the Phoenix Park murders, John and Margaret find themselves swept into history's grip. When exile separates them, Margaret must summon extraordinary courage to reunite with the man she loves. *A tale of resilience, sacrifice, and the unbreakable bond of love in a land on the brink of change.*⁷

Patrick J. Kelly is a new CWC member in the 2024-5 season. He is the author of the Irish family saga novel, '*Seekers*' (pub. 2024). Currently, he's exploring new genres. He's written Science Fiction short-stories, Horror, and is currently writing an over-the-horizon Techno-Thriller centered on the arrival of aliens. His horror flash fiction story, '*Death Do Us Part*' earned an Honorable Mention from Writers of the Future in 2024. He's a graduate of the University of Dayton (Physics) and Loyola University (MBA). He resides in Danville with his wife.



[Purchase Seekers Here](#)

A Book Reading — Finding Max by Jennifer Wallig

May 31 @ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm PDT

Barnes & Noble — 1192 Locust Street, Walnut Creek, California

“Sometimes we don’t know what we need until we find it”.



Join us for the official launch of *Finding Max*—the award-winning memoir by Jennifer Wallig, recipient of the Literary Titan Gold Book Award. In this powerful and emotional true story, Jennifer shares her journey to uncover her father’s birth family, revealing long-hidden secrets and the healing power of truth.

Come hear the author speak about the inspiration behind the book, the challenges of tracing hidden histories, and the triumph of love and resilience. A must-attend event for memoir lovers,

genealogy enthusiasts, and anyone who believes in the strength of family.

As a teen, Jennifer Wallig learned that her father was adopted, turning what she thought she knew about her family history—and identity—upside down. Her life had been turbulent as the child of divorced parents inundated with their own struggles. These revelations changed everything.

[Purchase this at Jennifer Wallig](#)



Book Launch — PIZCO by Jill Hedgecock

New Historical Adventure: *Pizco*

Set in 450 BC Peru, *PIZCO* follows a teenage outcast forced on a dangerous journey up the Amazon after being captured by a rival tribe. Rich in culture, danger, and discovery, this coming-of-age tale explores identity, survival, and the meaning of belonging.

Now available—don’t miss this gripping new release!

PIZCO is Hedgecock’s most powerful adventure yet—an emotional and physical journey through the Amazon in 450 BC, where a young boy confronts grief, identity, and survival in a gripping, heart-stirring tale of resilience and hope.

[Purchase it Here](#)



Scammers Preying on Writers is on the Rise

by Tish Davidson from the CWC Fremont Area Branch

There has been an uptick in scammers preying on self-published and aspiring writers. Most of these scams are based overseas leaving little recourse to writers who have been scammed and lost money. Before you sign anything or pay anyone money to publish your book, represent you to agents, publicize your book, or sign you to a contract, check Scam Alerts at authorsguild.org/resource/publishing-scam-alerts/. This site is maintained by the Authors Guild. The website is accessible to all, even if you're not a Guild member.

Writer Beware offers another list of publishing scammers at writerbeware.blog/scam-archive. Writer Beware also maintains a separate agent impersonation list. This is a particularly noxious form of scamming, because it hurts both the writer and legitimate literary agents. The list can be found here writerbeware.blog/2024/03/15/the-impersonation-list/.

Remember: There are legitimate businesses that help writers self-publish, and there are legitimate public relations companies that will promote your book for a fee. But, if it sounds too good to be true, look before you leap, and your bank account will thank you.

Public Domain News

Copyright provides protection for creatives, but it does not last forever. On January 1, 2025, many familiar books, plays, art, and music first published in 1929 lost copyright protection. This leaves authors free to quote from these books and use the artwork or music without permission of the publisher. Some of the works losing copyright in 2025 include William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Hemmingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, the character Popeye, musical compositions like *Singing' in the Rain* (but not the movie), Gershwin's *An American in Paris* and many art works. There are some caveats. Characters are only out of copyright as they were portrayed in 1929. Popeye, for example, can be portrayed with super strength, but you will have to wait until 1931 to use his super spinach eating. Other considerations include the fact that the work must be published, not just created, in 1929 to become copyright-free. Art works created in 1929 but not publicly exhibited (the equivalent of publishing art) are still protected. And many character names and some images continue to be protected by trademark laws even after they are out of copyright.

Yes, it's complicated, but a good resource on what works lost copyright protection in 2025 and the nuances of copyright law is available to from the Duke University Law Center for the Study of Public Domain at web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2025/. Note that the information Duke Law provides is applicable only to versions of works copyrighted in the US. Even if you never plan to use any of the copyright-free material, the site is interesting reading and provides a wealth of information about copyright law.

Writers' Critique Groups

What are they and how do they work?

by Wayne Reznik

Think about joining one now, over the Sumer months!

Purpose of a writers' critique group. Support in a substantive way to enhance the writing skills and creativity of its members. It may be easier to be a critic than a creator but practicing both fosters both. To promote a rewarding experience for participants, we offer some guidelines below. These provide an efficient means for a shared understanding and expectations for the group process and feedback etiquette.

Logistics and process. Critique group members should advisably come to a consensus in advance regarding:

- The frequency of meetings (e.g., alternative weeks or monthly)
- The length of meetings (e.g., often 90 minutes)
- Their location (e.g., a reserved room at a library or homes of members)
- The processes for submitting writing for review and feedback
- The group's experience may warrant changes.

Composition

- Critique groups can consist of members who seek a group for a particular genre, a couple of genres or a broader mix. There are advantages to each of these.
- The range of writing experience and skills often varies in a group; this has some advantages for all.
- The number of members in critique groups usually ranges from 5 to 8.

What kind or stage of writing is to be submitted for feedback

- Groups vary in the range of writing for their submissions for feedback. Some permit first drafts, others prefer a more polished piece. Still others accept either. Allowing early drafts fosters a supportive environment for beginning writers and earlier versions of possible works.

Who submits their writing for feedback

- Many groups use a simple rotation approach per meeting for selecting two or three its members to submit without pressure. Others rely on or allow volunteering.
- The number of submissions per meeting will depend on the group's decision about how much time is desired for feedback for each piece.
- Guidelines are recommended for length of a submission such as the number of words, or pages of double-space text.

How to submit and present your piece

- Many groups have submissions emailed to members a week or so in advance of a meeting when it is to be reviewed. This enables opportunities for a better digestion of the piece and consideration of the feedback members may want to offer. These emails can usefully include a brief description of context (e.g., chapter 1 of a murder mystery novella) and can also specify a particular aspect of feedback desired in the in-person review.
- Some groups also have the submitter read out loud, all or part of their piece, at the meeting for review. This practice aids in the enjoyment, appreciation, comprehension and revelation of some features of the writing that may not be as easily accessible by silent reading.

Feedback logistics

- In a simple sequence or otherwise, each member should have an equal opportunity to offer feedback and suggestions.
- The group should decide in advance how much time is allowed for each member's feedback.
- Advisably, the group appoints a timekeeper to keep the process on track.
- The submitter may ask for clarification of a comment but is otherwise encouraged to be silent during the critique.
- After the round of feedback, the author can ask and discuss some of the points. This phase should also be brief, abiding by the time allowed.
- Based on the experience of the group, adjustments to various aspects of the process may be modified.

Scope and kind of feedback

- The feedback offered should be respectful of the writer and rendered in constructive terms that address the piece overall or its major aspects, and any area requested by the submitter.
- Unless clearly requested by the author, do not present or offer a rewrite.
- Some groups encourage adopting a critique template that identifies widely recognized features of skillful writing. Such a template can be used in various ways as decided by the group. More advice and an example of such a template can be found below.
- Not warranted in the feedback session is a sentence-by-sentence revision of punctuation or word changes. So-called "micro-editing" suggestions, which can undeniably be helpful, are best offered to the submitter via emailing or with a hardcopy after the in-person feedback meeting is completed.

Receiving Criticism

- There is no absolute census as to what constitutes perfection, especially given the broad diversity of reasons for writing and its readers.
- Please do not take the criticism personally.
- What you do with the feedback is your call but strive to be open-minded and allow yourself to consider the range of comments.

Study group critique session

- A variant for a ‘regular’ critique group session is for members to decide to have a meeting, every so often, that focuses on a topic, skill, approach, technique or other aspect of writing.
- Examples: “Let’s agree to read a piece by well-respected author of our choosing and analyze how they so skillfully come up with surprise endings.” “Let’s have a session on approaches to shifting POVs, including interiority, in the story. We can bring in some examples to learn better how to do it without losing the reader.”
“Let’s do some homework on openings, the story doesn’t have to be the same: One of us can do a soft entry; another one can craft a scenic sensory setting. Who would like to offer a tense scenario. Someone else could provide some larger context to engage us in whatever the story is. And someone else can focus on the character. Maybe this fun exercise can aid in expanding our skill set for options to starting Act I.”

Use of a Critique Template

- Minimally, it can serve as a consultation resource for submitters and reviewers, but feedback should not be confined by it.
- To avoid alienating members and discouraging participation, the use of such a template should not be treated as a report card or rigid checklist.
- Preferably, it will serve as a useful mindful tool for improving writing skills, for revising and for aiding with the clarity of feedback.
- One such template will be available on this website in the near future.

For more information, resources and to sign up for a critique group, [Click here](#), scroll down to fill in the form.



Art Embraces Words
Lafayette Library, Art and Science Room
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd
Lafayette, CA 94549
2:00 – 3:30 PM with reception following in courtyard

2025 DATES:

- **Saturday July 12th**
- **Saturday October 25th Costumed Halloween Event**
<https://lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-words/>

Art Embraces Poetry

Town Hall Theater
3535 School St.
Lafayette, CA 94549
1:30 – 3:30 PM with reception following
with a 3-minute Open Mic session from 2:30-3:30 PM!

2025 DATES:

- **Saturday, August 26rd TBD**
<https://lamorindaarts.org/art-embraces-poetry/>

Poetry For The Ages

Town Hall Theater
3535 School St.
Lafayette, CA 94549
12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM Enjoy complimentary coffee, tea, and cookies

2025 DATES:

- **Tuesday, October 7th “All Hallow’s Eve”**
<https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/commissions-committees/public-art-committee/programs>

Regarding Titles, An Essay by F. L. Lucas

It's regularly remarked that movie trailers are often better than the movies they promote. Personally, I feel that a trip to the cinema is almost wasted if I don't arrive in time for the trailers. The cynical explanation of this phenomenon is that all the best moments in the movie are shoe-horned into the trailer and the rest of the running time is just filler, more or less. This might sometimes be the case, but I think there is a more interesting explanation. I think the very format of trailers gives them an appeal that movies can't have, since a two-hour long trailer would be unbearable.

Typically, what a movie trailer seeks to convey is a sense of excitement, since it is trying to get you excited about seeing the movie itself. This it achieves by various devices: a rapid succession of scenes, images of people and things in motion (ironically, often in slow motion, which simply makes it more dramatic), brief and often intriguing snatches of dialogue, unusual camera angles and lighting, and in general by a kind of exaggeration of ordinary cinematic techniques. What you are left with is a sense of compression, of concentration, which it is impossible for a full-length film to achieve, by its very nature.

I think this fact about trailers also applies to a rather similar art-form — that is, the art of the title. By "title", I mean the titles of movies, books, stage-plays, music albums, paintings, computer games, and so forth. But mostly I am thinking of the titles of books and movies. (I took movie trailers as my point of departure, because I thought my remarks would make more sense that way.)

I think the titles of books and movies, just like trailers, often have an appeal quite distinct from, and sometimes superior to, the works that they "promote".

In his much under-praised Autobiography, G.K. Chesterton asserts that every wilderness looks bigger when seen through a window. Our own Patrick Kavanagh, in a phrase that is well-known in Ireland because it comes in a poem featured on the English syllabus, said that "through a chink too wide there comes in no wonder". I think both of these claims are very true. And I think that good titles, just like good trailers, are windows through which the landscape outside looks bigger, narrow chinks which let in floods of wonder.

But-- and this is an important point, and one which motivates me to write on this subject-- good titles don't just excite us about the books and films that they label. Good titles excite us about life itself, and do so in a manner different from anything else in the world. At least, I have always found that powerful titles have this effect on me, and I suspect that they have it on other people, as well. I have often found that, at times when I feel dull or uninspired, or when the world itself seems dreary to me, some evocative title will come to my mind and give me a new zest for existence.

I will have to start giving examples, won't I?

I work in a university library, and we hold copies of the academic theses submitted to the various departments of the university. One of these theses caught my eye, because I liked the title so much. (Quite a few have snappy titles, actually.) This one concerned the experience of gay teachers in Ireland, and it bears the magnificent title: *Echoes Down the Corridor*.

Now, I don't know about you, but that title makes me shiver with pleasure. I think it almost defies analysis, but here goes, anyway.

First of all, it is dramatic. It not only takes a moment from the flux of everyday life, but it takes a particular evanescent and fleeting moment.

The moment it evokes is almost ghostly. And something inside of us thrills to words like echo, whisper, shadow, phantom, ghost, silhouette, rumor-- words whose very vagueness or faintness makes them, paradoxically, all the more vivid.

(Incidentally, I should admit that the word "corridor" is a word that I find very exciting. After all, a corridor is an exciting place. Anybody could walk down it at any moment. It seems to invite whispered conferences, chance meetings, glimpsed figures turning a corner. If you think this is a far-fetched idea, ask yourself why "the corridors of power" is a much more powerful phrase than "the halls of power" or "the chambers of power".)

Now, imagine if the writer of *Echoes Down the Corridor* had chosen a more prosaic title instead. Imagine if he had used his sub-title, *An Examination of the Lives of Gay Teachers in Ireland*, as the main title. In that case, wouldn't his work seem strangely diminished in importance? It would seem business-like, dutiful. But the lyricism of *Echoes Down the Corridor* seems to raise the whole thing to a higher level, to lend it a larger significance.

And this, I think, is true of all acts of naming, and of bequeathing a title. Adam in giving names to all the animals, we dimly feel, somehow shares in God's creative power. Giving a name to a child is an act of immeasurable significance and poignancy. Parents who choose to give names to their babies when those babies don't survive birth are making a very touching declaration of love. Giving a name to a season of a particular year — The Summer of Love, the Winter of Discontent — gives them an air of heightened importance, and even (I would claim) a heightened reality. In the famous line from Shakespeare, the poet is said to "give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name."

Naming does not only identify. It creates. It exalts.

Here are some of my own favorite titles. Many of them are titles of books I've never read and films I've never seen. Sometimes I've hated the book or the film but loved the title.

Porterhouse Blue, by Tom Sharpe. (A great book that I only read because I was attracted by the title. The book itself is a bawdy farce, and an excellent one, but a million miles away from the contemplative novel of ideas that the title seemed to suggest.)

Ice Cold in Alex. Cider with Rosie. Goodbye to All That. A Dry, White Season

No Tigers in Africa! (a memoir by a producer of a famous Irish TV documentary series, which often went to Africa for its stories.)

Like a Tree Planted (a biography of an Irish priest). Snow Falling on Cedars. The Growing Summer by Noel Streatfeild. A Girl in Winter by Philip Larkin. Take a Girl Like You by Kingsley Amis.

The Jungle is Neutral by Freddie Spencer Chapman. Sex, Lies and Videotape. The Wonder Years. The Breakfast Club.

On Golden Pond. The Philosopher on Dover Beach by Roger Scruton. All the Way to Bantry Bay by Benedict Kiely (a travel book on our shelves at home.) Postcards from the Edge. Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean.

My Dream of You by Nuala O'Faolain. Who Will Love Polly Odlum, by Anne Marie Forrest? (a chick-lit book I saw a colleague reading once). Not Without My Daughter. Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil.

The Road to Wigan Pier. Stay Me with Flagons (a book about wine; the title is drawn from The Song of Songs). Never Say Never Again. A Man for All Seasons. A Prayer for Owen Meany. Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore. Love and the Russian Winter (a Simply Red album).

Writing out that list (and it could be expanded indefinitely), it occurs to me that there are several things that can make a title stick in your mind.

First of all, and perhaps most fundamentally, a title is rarely appealing if it is not memorable-- which usually means that it should avoid the obvious. Books or movies that take their title from the main character of the story, or describe the subject matter in some very straightforward way, are unlikely to give any special pleasure. Indeed, I've often thought what a wasted opportunity it is, not to give a book or movie some more imaginative title. (Of course, titles that seems straightforward may be subtly ironic or significant-- for instance, Orwell's dystopian novel 1984 seems to have a very mundane title until you read the book and realize that it may not be set in 1984 at all-- that the Party have twisted truth so much that nobody really knows what year it is for sure. But you don't know this until you read the book, so it is not intrinsic to the title.)

Hitting upon a memorable and poetic title, however, is not as simple as coming up with something outlandish. There is a danger of going too far, a danger of falling flat on your face and choosing a title that seems irritating or smug rather than evocative. Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmie Dean, Jimmie Dean comes perilously close to doing this-- but it has just enough poignancy to save it. But titles like The Possibility of an Island, The Sun Also Rises, The Englishman Who Went up a Hill and Came Down a Mountain, and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind do (I think) fall into this pit.

(Sometimes a title is so audacious it gets away with it-- for instance, Who Is Harry Kellerman and Why is He Saying These Terrible Things About Me?, a 1971 Oscar-nominated film starring Dustin Hoffmann.)

I think a good title often tends to use simple and vivid imagery. A Dry White Season is such a vivid description, and so devoid of explanation, that it satisfies the part of our mind that enjoys haikus or still-life painting. The same is true of Snow Falling on Cedars.

A title is often good because it is rather mysterious — though there is a big difference between mystery and obscurity. The Postman Always Rings Twice is mysterious, but we feel that it means something and we are intrigued. A title like Blood Simple or No Present Like Time is simply annoying — we don't know what it means, and we don't care. The difference, I think, lies in the poetry of the first title and the lack of poetry in the other two. In the same way, if we saw a woman with a mysterious medallion hanging around her neck, we would be deliciously intrigued ... but a code made of random words and letters on a cardboard box would leave us cold.

Some titles are powerful because they are poignant. Goodbye to All That is one such-- in fact, I think that any title that begins with "Goodbye" or Farewell" is automatically poignant. Tuesdays with Morrie is a poignant title, as is Life with Father or Cider with Rosie.

Titles that address somebody or contain an imperative are also evocative-- Take a Girl Like You, Throw Momma from the Train, Cathy Come Home, Save Me the Waltz.

I think that this subject is a very important one, obscure and trivial as it may seem. In fact, it is a subject so important to me personally that I struggle to find words adequate for it. And, though I am not simply using book and movie titles as a point of entry, the subject is really much, much bigger than those.

So much for titles.

My deeper subject... my deeper theme-- is one that can only be approached indirectly, as I have done here. I don't approach it indirectly out of craftiness, or reverence, or subtlety. I do so because of its very nature it can only be thus approached. I am not ultimately talking about movie titles or books titles per se. I'm talking about the kind of poetry, the kind of beauty, that you find specifically in such titles... but that has analogues elsewhere.

It is similar to the beauty of imagined pictures in a flickering fire, or the spirit that we hear in a street vendor's cry... "Get your apples and oranges!". It is similar mental sensation that we so often try to describe by saying "it was like trying to remember some half-forgotten song".

It is seen in horizons. It is heard in myths, and legends, and skipping chants, and in nursery rhymes and ghost stories.

It is the feeling that makes every child, at some time or other, day-dream about the world behind the mirror, or the upside-down landscape that they see past their reflection in a puddle.

It occupies the margin between dreams and waking life.

It lives in a snow-globe, in an old wooden street-sign, in a music box. It haunts empty theaters and deserted cinemas. It's heard in music that is softly playing in the background of a restaurant or a shopping center, music that seems overheard rather than heard.

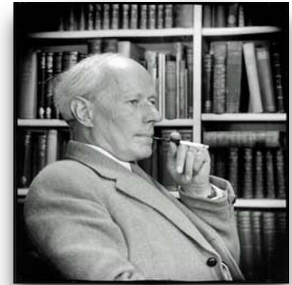
It is the reason nobody ever forgets Plato's Allegory of the Cave once they've encountered it.

It is a beauty, perhaps even an ecstasy, so fugitive that it cannot be glimpsed except for the briefest of moments, and even then, not directly. It is never on the surface, never in focus, never to be found in our ordinary stream of time and place-- though it may be seen, or half-seen, in the slow rhythm of decades and centuries, or in the twinkling time-outside-time of sunlight glinting on the ripples of a river on a summer's morning.

Perhaps it has never been expressed more perfectly than in the words of St. Paul: "We see now through a glass, darkly."

“Regarding Titles” by F.L. Lucas

This essay "Regarding Titles" by F. L. Lucas was published in the collection: "The Art of Writing" by the publisher Chatto & Windus in 1955. The British writer and classical scholar was born 28 December 1894 Hipperholme, Yorkshire, England and died June 1967 (at the age of 72) in Cambridge, England. He attended Trinity College, Cambridge and was known for his literary criticism, poetry, drama, fiction, as well as his travel writing. His



In "Regarding Titles," Frederick Laurence Lucas explores the importance of titles in literature and their impact on readers' perceptions and interpretations of a work. He argues that titles serve as the first point of contact between a reader and a text, setting expectations and framing the context for what follows.

Themes and Ideas:

Significance of Titles:

Lucas emphasizes that a well-chosen title can encapsulate the essence of a work, offering insights into its themes, tone, and content. He discusses how titles can evoke curiosity and provoke thought.

Reader Expectations:

The essay delves into how titles shape the reader's experience. A title can create anticipation or mislead, influencing how a reader approaches the text. Lucas examines the balance between intrigue and clarity in titling.

Cultural Context:

Lucas also touches on how cultural and historical contexts can affect the interpretation of titles. He suggests that understanding the background of a title can enhance the reader's appreciation of the work.

Literary Examples:

Throughout the essay, Lucas provides examples from various authors and works to illustrate his points, showcasing how effective titles have contributed to the success of literary pieces.

Much more can be garnered from his work, "The Art of Writing."

[Summarized from Wikipedia](#)

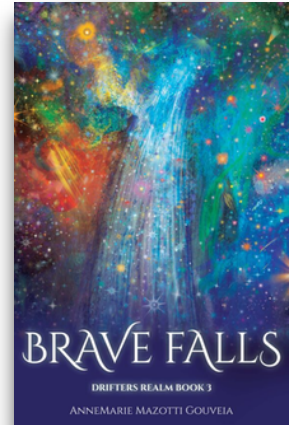
Author Reading — Brave Falls, Dreamers Realm Book 3

Barnes & Noble — 1192 Locust Street, Walnut Creek, California

A thrilling adventure of courage, loyalty, and destiny awaits for fans of Keeper of the Lost Cities and The Land of Stories.

Twelve-year-old triplets: Ori, Roe, and Tora—alongside their older brother Theo—are armed with enchanted backpacks, ancient silver rings, and the mystical Mirror Tree. When their estranged uncle Zane, the power-hungry First City Leader, unleashes dark Guardian forces to conquer the TimeLess, HalLows, and UnKnown realms, the siblings must rise as defenders of Drifters Realm.

With the earth trembling beneath them and the sky blazing with cryptic warnings, they follow a trail of clues through lost libraries, hidden tunnels, wild forests, and a mysterious red-rock desert. Aided by Theo's fierce animal allies and a band of rebellious teens known as the Menace, they must uncover the secrets of the legendary Blue Wall—before their world crumbles for good.



AnneMarie was born and raised in California. She has a vivid imagination and loves writing magical adventure stories that take place in strange lands. She is passionate about reading, art, and family; she is the youngest of seven children, the mother of four children, and a grandmother. She lives in Northern California with her husband and two mischievous cats. Brave Falls is the third book in her award-winning Drifters Realm book series.

May 31, 2025 10:00 AM in
[Purchase Brave Falls: Drifters Realm Book 3](#)

Reasonable Books Presents

Ancient jungles and urban spells; Magical tales of adventure

June 21, 2025 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm

Jill Hedgecock is a book review and pet columnist for The Diablo Gazette and the author of six novels. Her latest release, Pizco, is YA historical fiction that incorporates her experiences in the Amazon jungle.

Follow her at www.jillhedgecock.com

Cheryl Spanos writes short stories and fantasy novels for teens and adults. Her debut novel, Bedlam Bewitched, is a YA contemporary fantasy set in a magical bookstore. She likes fantastical tales that take readers on imaginative adventures seasoned with intrigue, romance, and humor. Find out more at: www.cherylspanos.com. **[Details on the event here!](#)**