



The Write News

June, 2026

A Monthly Newsletter
Denis Hoye, Editor

Mt. Diablo Branch

General Meeting — June 13th, 2026 Feature Presentation

**Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA **

9:30 – 10:00 Sign-in table opens 11:00 – 12:00 Feature Presentation

10:00 – 11:00 Celebration Activities 12:00 – Meeting ends—optional activities until 1:30



Part 1 — 10 am to 11 am

It's a party! Celebrate our chaotic, but successful, 2025-2026 year of new adventures.

Part 2 — Feature Presentation 11 am to 12 am



Hakim is an OG L A Street Poet, an editor & publisher of books, chapbooks & 'zines. Longtime featured poet in Los Angeles, he currently is working on starting Featured Readings in Vallejo & Benicia. Hakim is currently being

considered for Poet Laureate of Benicia.

Hakim's presentation will cover Poetry in its many forms. He will discuss self-publishing and will explore the fascinating adventure of taking things in your own hands.

Attendees Will Be Shown:

- The history of modern chapbooks
- Layout, structure, working with printers
- Promoting your work
- The limitations of online publishing platforms

Stay after the meeting until 1:30 for optional events.

Meeting attendance is required to participate in optional activities.

Location: Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA

Cost: \$15:00 for Members; \$20.00 for Guests.

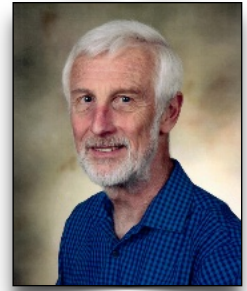
Registration deadline: June 6th at 12:00 p.m. or pay a \$20.00 (includes a \$5 late fee). Walk-ins pay \$20.00. Pay online when you register or cash/check at the door.

Register at: <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/meetings-and-workshops/>

(Coffee/Tea and Pastries Included)

President's Message

We are fast approaching the end of another CWC year. It has been quite a year, but overall, I feel it has been a successful one. We started the year, holding monthly meetings at Zio Fraedo's, and ended the year with meetings at Pleasant Hill Senior Center (sometimes at the Community Center). While changing venues, we also reconfigured the meetings' format. This period of transition caused a few headaches, but nothing was a show-stopper. I am pleased with where the club finds itself today and am grateful that our branch does not face some of the challenges that other branches report.



Over the last year, the Open Mic sessions and the Writers Connection gatherings have continued to be well attended, and members find them useful and enjoyable opportunities for socializing with other writers.

The Short Story group is working on its second anthology and has formed a separate Short Story Critique group.

Recently, a Poetry group has formed and presently meets at the end of each monthly general meeting. They took advantage of the time we have in the Senior Center after the main meeting finishes at noon.

I would encourage any group of writers who share an interest to meet at the Senior Center after the monthly meeting, as we have the space for an additional 90 minutes (starting at noon). One additional option that is available at this time is a drop-in Critique group. Bring a couple of pages for review. Normally, Wayne is willing to facilitate this group, but if he cannot, I will.

Remember, starting this year, we have a shorter renewal season – just July and August.

I hope you all have an excellent, healthy, and productive summer. Next year's programs will start with the general monthly meeting on Saturday, September 11th, 2026.

Write on, be brave, and delve deep to find those nuggets that will stand your writing apart from others.

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 Hoye

writenews@cwcmtdiablo.org

Backfence—Marlene Dotterer

backfence@cwcmtdiablo.org

Elisabeth Tuck

helpfuleditor@cwcmtdiablo.org

Lyn Roberts

openmic@cwcmtdiablo.org

Dot Edwards

membership@cwcmtdiablo.org

Linda Hartmann

ekphrasis@cwcmtdiablo.org

Anne Marie Gouveia

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 12th**Mt. Diablo Board Meeting**

3:00 pm — 4:30 pm PDT

Zoom Meeting

June 13th**Mt. Diablo Monthly Meeting**

10:00 pm — 12:00 pm PDT

Pleasant Hill Senior Center

320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill, CA

[Register for Meeting](#)**June 9th****Open Mic Night**

7:00 pm — 8:00 pm

[Register for Zoom](#)**June 19th****What's Your Short Story**

12 pm — 2 pm PDT

Walnut Creek Public Library

Las Trampus Room

1644 N. Broadway

Walnut Creek, California

[What's Your Short Story](#)**June 24th****The Writer's Connection**

12:00 PM — 2:00 PM PDT

Chicken Pie Shop

1251 Arroyo Way

Walnut Creek, CA

[Writer's Connection](#)

Open Mic Night on Zoom — June 9th

Meeting from: 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm | Online event

Details: Join us for Open Mic Night! *NOTE: Your RSVP on Meetup does not register you for this event. Register online.

Sign up to read a five-minute segment from something you've written. It can be a work-in-progress, something already published, or that sheaf of poems you hid under the bed last year. Share it with writers and readers at our 60 - 90 minute meeting.

Hosted by: Marlene Dotterer

[Register for Open Mic on Zoom](#)



What's Your Short Story — June 19th

Meeting from 12 pm to 2 pm.

If you are reading:

- Time yourself beforehand. Practice! A 2,500 word story will typically take 10/12 mins to read. The 15-minute limit is firm.
- We will use a microphone.
- Michael will introduce each reader. He/she will read the title and the genre.
- Feedback, if requested, will be given. Note: feedback includes your allotted 15 minutes. Note, your reading time will be shortened.
- If time permits, we'll have final questions.

Come, Read, and enjoy listening at CWC Mt. Diablo's Short Story Reading Group
This is not a critique group. A reader will be given feedback only if requested.

- On average six/seven readers will be allocated 15 mins max. to both read their short story and receive feedback.
- There will be no 'walk in' readers.
- But walk in listeners, YES.

[Register for What's Your Story Group](#)



The Writer's Connection — June 24th

Meeting from: 12 Noon to 1:30 pm

Writers Connection is a social place where like-minded people, hapless authors, and creative geniuses can come together and chat about the one thing they all have in common: the compulsion to write. It is open to any CWC member, published or not, interested in a freewheeling, nonjudgmental, welcoming, and relaxed environment. Content will include a potpourri of any writing or associated topics: news items, agents, publishers, bouquets & brickbats. Membership is open-ended, limited only by space, and people may come and go as they please.

Short readings are welcome. Please Register so we can have the venue prepare a large enough table for us – Food and Beverages are encouraged and are on your own dime! Delicious!

Join us at:

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



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

Membership Renewals

Yes, a cheerful reminder that another year is passing, looms on the horizon. CWC's annual Renewal Season approaches. However, there are some changes this year that you need to be aware of.

In the past, the renewal period has stretched from May to September, with the Central Board purging the roles of non-renewing members in early October. This is changing this year.

The ability to renew your membership will be available for just two months – July and August. Membership for people who do not renew in these two months will be dropped in early September. If any member tries to renew on or after September 1st, they will not be able to do so and must reapply as a new member, with the associated additional initiation fee.

There has been some talk at the Central Board level regarding increasing membership fees. Our Board has strongly fought against such a proposal. All members statewide will continue to pay \$45 for renewal, and if anyone is late, the additional \$20 re-initiation fee will apply.

The shortening of the renewal period will hopefully focus members to renew promptly, rather than letting it languish without any sense of urgency. In the past, the fluidity at the start and end of the renewal period has caused several Board members additional, frustrating work in finalizing the branch's annual budget.

Remember, the Board consists of members like you, and they are invested in providing a program that meets your needs. This is an opportunity to show your support for the Board and their work by scheduling your renewal in early July.

To encourage you to do this, we will collect the names of all members who renew in July. We will then hold a drawing for two members to receive discount coupons covering the cost of one meeting each.

Thank you for reading this. I'm sharing this now so everyone has heard of the new procedures before it becomes a surprise.

Renew early (in July).

Thanks,

Barry

Some more Interesting Reads for Writers

[10 Best Books on Writing](#)

[The Complete Guide to Article Writing Format](#)

[Writing Tips for Crafting an Essay or Compelling Article](#)

[All About Literary Agents: Finding an Agent and What to Expect](#)

[How to Use Email Marketing to Sell More Books Directly to Readers](#)

[Examples of Book Advertising That Drive Sales](#)

[How Authors Can Ask Smarter Questions](#)

[15 Rules for Negotiating a Large Book Sale](#)

[Optimizing Your Amazon Meta Description](#)

[How to Get a Self-Published Book into Bookstores](#)

[Complete Novel Planning Template For Fiction Writers](#)

Writers Helping Writers

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

We wish to acknowledge our generous donors to one (or both) of our established funds through Nov 8th for this fiscal year (7/1/25-6/30/26).

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: LaVonne Taft, Nancy Chan, Barry Hampshire, Robert Poirier.

Young Writers Contest supports Contra Costa County middle school students with cash prizes in short story, poetry, and essay/personal narrative. Contest submissions are free. We celebrate and present awards in May and thank the following members for their donations: Colleen Gonzalez, Nancy Chan, Barry Hampshire, Robert Poirier.

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.



Happy June, tis summertime, now's the time to write, time to celebrate the light, by taking fresh ideas, our new reflections, grand imaginations from dreams to make connections of word after word after word to bake ingredients one page at a time into a story that truly shines.— DPH

Be Interviewed in the Write News

Here's a chance to sit down with a cup of coffee and your fellow Writers. We want to learn about you. Choose questions from the list below to tell us about yourself. Try to include a mix of personal and professional.

Interview questions with sample answers in color

1. *What do you like about writing? The process of developing a story by creating distinctive, interesting characters through dialogue and action, creating descriptive settings, and developing page-turning plots.*
2. *What part of the writing process is most difficult for you? Finding the time to write and avoiding distractions or the right environment to write.*
3. *Are there any resources, tools, or events that you have found especially helpful for writing or publishing? My current writing group, writing books and magazines, Writer's Digest courses, and other writing courses.*
4. *What are you currently working on? Fiction novel; genre – crime/spy thriller; entitled Czech Mate (placeholder).*
5. *Who or what has influenced you the most as a writer? Elmore Leonard, Graham Greene, William Boyd, Michael Connelly, Steven King.*
6. *How have your background, previous work, and/or experience contributed to your writing? I'm a retired lawyer, having worked for an international corporation for 35 years.*
7. *Approximately how long have you been a CWC member? Just joined a few days ago.*
8. *How has your CWC membership helped you or your writing? Too early to tell.*
9. *Do you have published works? Not yet.*
10. *Do you have any advice for new writers? In writing a first draft, "Don't look back until you've written an entire draft, just begin each day from the last sentence you wrote the preceding day. This prevents those cringing feelings and means that you have a substantial body of work before you get down to the real work which is all in . . . the edit." (attributed to Will Self)*
11. *How do you define success as a writer? Getting published.*

[Enter Your Q&A Here](#)

Articles of Interest & Places to Submit

[Literary Market Place](#)

[Writer's Market: The Most Trusted Guides to Publishing](#)

[Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market 33rd Edition](#)

[Magazine Submissions for June](#)

[Book Submissions for June](#)

Poetry Session
12:00 – 1:00, Sat, June 13th
at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center

Our group will hold our poetry meeting immediately after the General Group meeting, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm. We will begin by reading poems submitted by group members. Each participant will read their poem limited to five minutes. After this, we will discuss and agree on additional items to include in future sessions. Some reasons to participate:

- Do you wish to have a poetry writing sprint?
- Do you wish to concentrate on poetry craft?
- And remember these ground rules:
 - The poem belongs to the poet.
 - We respond to what *is*, not critique.
 - Silence is a valid response.
 - Confidentiality is absolute.

We will discuss any and all suggestions for new ways to make this an ongoing, engaging, and productive forum that supports creativity, collaboration, and the continued growth of our group. Just come to listen or to read your poetry. You are welcomed!

Mt. Diablo's 2026-2027 Branch Officer Election Nominations

At the June CWC Meeting, the attending membership will elect officers for the Mt. Diablo Branch Board for the upcoming 2026-2027 CWC year. Currently, the slate is as follows:

- President: Barry Hampshire (incumbent)
- Vice President: Michael Barrington (incumbent)
- Treasurer: Marjorie Witt (incumbent)
- Secretary: Beatrice Weber

Would YOU like to be a Branch Officer?

All members of the club can nominate themselves or another member for any of these four officer positions. If you have a nominee whom you feel should be added to the slate for any of the above roles, please first confirm that the nominee is willing to stand for the office.

Forward the nominee's name and a brief description of the qualities that make them an appropriate candidate to Quynh Trinh, Nominations Chair, through the "Contact us" link on the Mt. Diablo branch: website. <https://cwcmtdiablo.org/contact-us/>

Alternatively, members can add a nominee to the slate just prior to the election at the June meeting. Again, the potential nominee should have confirmed they are willing to stand. We look forward to the election of the officers who will guide the club over the next year.

-Quynh Trinh, Nominations Chair

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Next Generation Short Story Awards

Submit your stories for the 2027 Next Generation Short Story Awards

•**Submissions accepted:** Unpublished short stories and poems (5,000 words or less)

•**Categories:** 30+ different categories

•**Deadline:** Thursday, February 25, 2027

•**Entry fee:** \$25 for the first category entered and \$20 for every additional category entered for the same story

Winners' Prizes: Winners in each category receive \$75 cash prizes, gold medals, digital stickers, social media coverage, literary exposure, story publication in

an Anthology of Winners, and a complimentary copy of the Anthology of Winners. Three Grand Prize Winners will be selected from all entries and awarded \$500 for 1st Prize, \$300 for 2nd Prize, and \$200 for 3rd Prize, and will be invited to attend the Next Generation Indie Book Awards gala ceremony.

Finalists' Benefits: Finalists in each category are given digital stickers, literary exposure, and have their name and title of story mentioned in the Anthology of Winners. A copy of the Anthology of Winners is available to purchase at half price, and silver medals are available to order.

[Submit Your Stories Here](#)

Two Critique Opportunities for Writers

If you're looking for thoughtful feedback in a supportive setting, your CWC branch is offering two separate ways to connect with fellow writers and strengthen your work.

Drop-In Critique Group Sessions

Following the General Meeting at Pleasant Hill Community Center | 12:00–1:00 p.m.

Do you want feedback from a small group of friendly writers on a writing idea or a piece you're currently working on?

These sessions will immediately follow the CWC branch meetings on the second Saturday of each month through June. Just stay at the Pleasant Hill Community Center from **12:00 noon until 1:00 p.m.** for a **Drop-In Critique Group Session**. A group facilitator will be present.

Participants may:

- Discuss a writing idea
- Ask specific craft questions
- Read aloud approximately **1,000 words** (or more, time permitting) in any genre

Both beginning and experienced writers often find this an encouraging way to receive supportive suggestions. This session is open to **non-CWC members**, provided they attend the earlier branch meeting.

This group is facilitated by [Wayne Reznik](#)



Welcome to a New Member

New Ongoing Memoir Critique Groups Forming

In-Person | Concord–Walnut Creek Area — Time & Date (TBD)

New ongoing, in-person Critique Groups are forming in the Concord–Walnut Creek area with a focus on memoir in its varied forms, including:

- Short-story memoir
- Personal and memoir essays
- Braided or mixed memoir pieces
- Memoir incorporating research or historical context

The schedule and frequency will be determined by participants with coordination with **Beatrice Weber**. The branch helps you to find and form critique groups, but these are autonomous and are not operated by or under the authority of the California Writers Club or its Mt. Diablo Branch. Also members can discover a critique group facilitated by Patrick Kelly for those interest in Science Fiction. You can reach him at: **Patrick Kelly**.

Critique On a Hot & Humid Day



Editing Fiction and Memoir Writing

- If you've ever looked back at something you wrote and asked yourself, "What was I even trying to say there?" ... you already know how important editing is. Let's take a closer look at how editing can shape storytelling in both fiction and memoir writing, and why it's about more than just grammar. We'll show you how the right edits can make your writing clearer and more impactful while staying true to your voice. We'll also cover helpful resources you can take advantage of to make your editing solid.
 - Why editing matters
 - A slice of life: the micro-memoir
 - Refining your work's structure and clarity
 - Three stages of professional editing
 - Fiction editing vs. memoir editing
- Editing is rarely a straight line

[Try This Article on Editing & Memoir](#)

Why Every Writer Should Try Poetry

As a writing coach, when I mention how liberating poetry might be, there's pushback. I share the five reasons why every writer should at least try poetry.

- Challenging ruts
 - Saying what's not the page
 - Saying old ideas in new ways
 - Playing with form
 - Creativity reignited
- [Why Every Writer Should Try Poetry](#)



Poetry First

Poetry comes from the heart,
 from the inside out
 thought of as joy or sadness
 seen as it blossoms or with
 no splendor ever seen.
 Its joy is expressed as
 a springtime flower or
 as despair in a cloudy sky
 crossing one's vision
 Not changing one's jibe.— DPH

A Short Story by Robert Poirier

AB Negative

Astrid's pregnancy process started when she noticed a 3x5 card on the hostel bulletin board. A wealthy family was looking for a healthy, young, fertile woman who could commit to a year-long surrogate pregnancy in return for \$10,000 a month and a bonus of \$125,000 at delivery. The major stipulation was that the carrier had to have an AB negative blood type.

Astrid, an education visa holder since her arrival in San Francisco with her parents from Sweden as a teenager, and orphaned since her parents died in an auto/bus accident a few years before, had just finished her second year of pre-med at a local university.

Her blood type was AB negative, the scarcest ABO blood type at less than 1 percent of the population. She survived financially by selling her plasma every two weeks, spending 90 minutes hooked up to an apheresis machine that separated the plasma from her blood and returned the red cells and platelets to her body. This, along with the insurance settlement from the accident, paid for her long-term hostel dorm room for university students, with money left over for food and incidentals.

She gave that up when she completed the interview, passed all the medical tests, and signed a contract that included fast-tracking her green card process. The family installed her in a luxury high-rise apartment off Market Street, provided around the clock caregivers, a personal chef, an obstetrician who visited twice a week, and a personal trainer who worked out with her twice a day. All the staff except the obstetrician rotated out every month.

She was also told the reason for the surrogate pregnancy. The family had an infant with AB negative blood who would need multiple surgeries when she reached puberty. The father, who was also AB negative, was donating platelets, which were frozen at -112 degrees Fahrenheit for two-years storage. Having an AB negative sibling would be additional insurance.

It was the beginning of the second trimester when Astrid realized she was in trouble. The pregnancy was going well. She was increasing her English fluency, and she was being well-taken care of. But an offhand reply from Alpha, her primary caregiver, to Bravo, the other caregiver, frightened her.

Bravo whispered, "What happens to her when the baby is delivered?"

Alpha replied with a gesture rather than a spoken reply. He surreptitiously slid his finger across his throat. She caught the gesture in a reflection.

A few days later, she received a visit from the family attorney, who explained what would happen if she did not fulfill her contract with the family.

"You are currently here on a student visa while awaiting your green card," he said. "The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency has agreed not to enforce your deportation so long as your pregnancy contract is in effect. If you violate the contract, you will be placed in an upscale detention facility until you deliver the baby. At that time, you will be separated from the child and deported. Do you understand this, or do you need an interpreter?"

Astrid replied simply, "Yes, I understand."

The next day she asked to speak with the attorney.

“I would like to make a few changes to the contract,” Astrid said. “I want unrestricted access to the internet, an individual banking account where I am the sole owner, all the money accrued so far will be placed in this account, and I will be permitted to attend Wednesday and Friday noon Mass at a Catholic church near this apartment. This is not negotiable. If these changes are not allowed, I will self-abort. Do you understand this, or do you need an interpreter?”

The family agreed to the terms with the stipulation that she wear a civilian ankle monitor when she left the apartment.

She had forty thousand dollars in her checking account at the start of her third trimester. It was time for her to make her move.

From past visits, she knew the Catholic church, with its stone exterior, acted like a Faraday cage, effectively blocking the ankle-monitor GPS signal. It also blocked the ankle-monitor removal signal. The ankle-monitoring team recognized it would essentially be a non-tracking device for the time Astrid was at Mass, usually from noon to one PM.

Astrid set up an appointment with the Consulate General of Sweden on Market Street for 1215 on Wednesday. She left the church wearing a long, dark hoodie left in the recycled clothes section in the vestibule. The hood covered her blonde hair. A pair of discarded sunglasses completed the disguise for the three-block walk to the Swedish consulate.

At the consulate interview, she explained, in Swedish, that she had lost her passport after her parents died, that she was afraid of the child’s father, and that she wanted to be in Sweden for the birth.

The consulate arranged for a new passport, a bank account transfer to a Swedish bank, an SAS flight to Stockholm, and an obstetrician from Karolinska University Hospital to meet her. A nurse accompanied Astrid on the flight. She was in the air before the family realized she was not in the church.

Astrid hired a Swedish family lawyer to contact the family to tell them she would discuss the custody arrangements shortly after the child was born and that no further discussions would be forthcoming.

Her beautiful, AB negative, baby boy was born on schedule. Astrid’s lawyer sent the DNA and blood test results and said the family could visit the child if supervised, provided they transfer the remaining monies agreed to in the contract and provide a monthly stipend for the child’s care.

Astrid asked the Swedish social welfare committee to mediate the final custody agreement terms. The family agreed that Astrid would keep the child for six years, giving her enough time and funds to complete medical school and basic service training. After that time, the family could alternate custody for six months at a time. The family matriarch moved to Stockholm to bond with her new grandson.

Robert Poirier began writing in 2018 with a small creative writing group at the Martinez, California Veteran’s Administration Medical Center. He has since published short stories in the annual statewide California Writers Club Literary Review of 2019 and 2020 and *SURVIVAL: Tales of Pandemic*, a CWC anthology, 2020.



An Interview of Josephine (Jo) Mele

I started writing started as therapy. I was working at Diablo Valley College as the Executive Director of Emeritus College, planning classes, events, and trips for older adults; and caring for a disabled husband at the same time.

I hired Camille Minichino to teach a writing class, went in to observe, and was hooked. I'd found my escape. Writing was much cheaper than therapy, very relaxing, and it could happen at any time I found a few minutes to myself. A Trifecta!



My first book, *The Odd Grandmothers*, was a memoir I'd written for my mother and grandchildren.

After that I wrote "The ABC's of Aspergers" with my nine-year-old grandson who is on the spectrum. It was published in *Parent's Magazine* and well received by teachers, therapists, and Nick's classmates.

My short stories were published in magazines, and then I discovered cozy travel mysteries fit my schedule and interest. I had gained experience by leading groups to Central American, European, Asian, and African countries over the years. Fortunately, I kept journals for each country never expecting to use them as more than memories.

My protagonist throughout the series is a travel director, June Gordon, whose main goal is to return with the same number of people she started out with.

June always ends up with a problem forcing her to visit hospitals or police stations around the world. Friends want to travel with me for the excitement, others stay clear. I keep saying "it's fiction," but my stories must be convincing.

The first book contained two stories, *Bullets in Bolivia*, and *Homicide in Havana*. Since then, I've published nine more books, the latest *Mayhem in Manhattan* will be available in May.

I've finished a book on dogs, no mystery there just stories about the pets I've known and loved and their antics. All my dogs had a sense of humor. I'm waiting for my muse to inspire me to create illustrations or find someone already inspired.

I'm working on *Body at the Berkeley Lab* and am waiting for my characters to tell me who dies and why.

After discovering that securing an agent and getting published could take years, I chose to self-publish. I was old when I began writing and have continued to age. I don't have the time or patience to wait. I can write and publish a book a year, sometimes two, and it makes me happy to see them on my bookshelf.

I enjoy the company of fellow writers at CWC, the Open Mic Zoom meetings, and judging the writing submitted to the *Young Writers Contest*. I have been in the same critique group for over ten years and consider the members my tribe.

My creative writing professor told me that I thought I had a sense of humor, but I didn't, and that writing short sentences was not skillful writing.

I'd bet he never published eleven books.

A POEM BY DENIS P HOYE

Tears of Joy

Tears of Joy
bring smiles
and warmth
tears of remorse
bring ill feeling
and despair.

Two feet planted on
firm ground balance,
while feet left dangling
ponder thin air.

The heart that laughs has known the ache
of nights when hope seemed far away.
The soul that bends but does not break
learns dawn can follow darkest gray.

For every sorrow leaves a lesson,
for every joy, a seed to share.
One tear may fall from grateful blessing,
another from an unanswered prayer.

So let the tears come as they may,
from the wounded past or dreams restored.
They cleanse the road, they light the way,
they'll teach us what we're living for.

With steady feet and lifted eyes,
we face both loss and love's embrace.
Tears of joy are no disguise—they
simply are the soul finding its place.