From the editor

BY SHARYN HEAGLE

We hope you enjoy the new look and feel of your Byline magazine. This issue is the last in our 2015-16 program year. Our new programs begin in September. But note the date and details of our Summer Social, July 10, 2016. This is a great opportunity to meet fellow writers in a congenial atmosphere, to network and share stories. And the food's terrific too.

You may notice that Byline is a bit thicker this month. We've added an extra poem and an extra short story for your reading pleasure on these wonderful, lazy, hazy summer days. These stories and poems were winners in our 2016 National Capital Writing Contest. Read them for enjoyment, but also consider them examples of the quality of material the judges look for when choosing finalists for the contest.

Dr. Bob Abell has resigned as publisher of Byline, and we want to thank him for his several years of service as publisher of Byline, and wish him well as he moves forward in his writing career.

I take this opportunity to encourage you to get involved with CAA-NCR. Look at the executive list and you'll see a couple of places where we need volunteers to help make our 2016-17 program year the best it can be. Also, many suggestions and ideas for some of our best programs – podcasting, continued on page 2
FROM THE EDITOR

continued from page 1

video-casting, writing circles, youth program, etc. – and our evening speakers and workshop leaders, have come from members who have stepped forward and said, “Why don't we develop THIS program.” And the best of these have further taken on the leadership of the programs they suggested. It's these sorts of members who help an organization grow and thrive.

So what are you waiting for? CAA-NCR would welcome your contribution. Contact me at sharyn_40@yahoo.com, and give us your ideas and yourselves. We don't expect a lifetime commitment. Give us what you can.

Summer Social

A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

JULY 10, 2016
3:00 until the bonfire burns out
At Sharyn’s country home,
3622 Campbellcroft Rd., Osgoode

POT LUCK

• Read from your work, published or Otherwise
• Bring your books and give folks an opportunity to purchase a copy.
• Network, meet old friends and discover new ones.

All are invited: CAA Members, Non-members, friends or family, 18 years or older.

Contact Sharyn to let her know your culinary contribution, or for directions to her home. Bring a garden chair for outside relaxation, weather permitting.

If you need a ride, we’ll try to accommodate.

Shades of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela

BY ALAN C. FLEMING

WHAT INSPIRES a person to write?

“I stepped outside my comfort zone. Confidence crossed over with me.”

To understand peace, love and happiness one has to live for it. To find inspiration to write, you need only to think with a pen in your hand. Now that you have the answer, what are you going to do with it? This is how I found inspiration.

September 2004 I walked the Camino de Santiago de Compostela for the first time. The Camino has since stayed within me. Like an apostle of the Camino, I often encourage others to do the same, to walk the journey. Everything in life, no matter what, becomes a worthy journey.


While walking the Camino, September 2012, I became inspired to write, to do more travelling and most importantly to stop and smell the roses. With a rusty heart from life’s blisters and bruises, I began to realize just how important it is to be one’s own best friend.

Much of my poetry happens in isolation as internal dialogue where both my heart and soul interact. It is from deep within, at origin of tears, where words emerge before leaping forward to become poetry.

I enjoy writing as an exploration of perspectives. I believe energy forces never stop interacting within the psyche of a person. As a poet I can play on both sides of perspective. As artist I am able to paint different scenarios using creative imagination. We are all carpenters of journey, each of us building stairways to next levels of understanding.

Sentiments become important factors when harvesting outlook. I stay with premise, happiness is found, not waited for.

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THE ACT OF DISCOVERY
BY GILLIAN FOSS

Pulling weeds, like digging the meaning of words from their context, separating the roots as they lift from soil to land in the basket of leftovers waiting to be discarded.

Once cleared, new plants are chosen: hydrangeas here, a clump of columbine, fall asters to keep the sub-context for the glow of a new poem.

The words their own colours, each syllable freshly watered into bloom – a flower of meaning to be accepted as truth. Besides, the wind-waving grasses edge the bed like a fringed shawl whispering, wondering new interpretations.

I wait impatiently to hear an explanation for the discarded images while I dip my trowel into the dictionary digging for meaningful discovery.

BIO: Gill Foss is a long-time member of CAA currently enjoying life in the country. After writing freelance feature articles for The Canadian Safety Magazine and two local newspapers, she now concentrates on poetry as a founding member of Ottawa's Field Stone Poets.

BEAUTIFUL RAINBOWS
BY ALAN C. FLEMING

You gave me beautiful rainbows. You gave me many. I am sorry if I gave you only storms.

You gave me hugs, you gave me kisses. You gave me plenty. I am sorry if I gave you only thorns.

You gave me happiness, you gave me joy. Mostly you gave me hope. I wish you would have given me tomorrow.

BIO: In book one, Moon Above My World, inspired while walking the Camino de Santiago, Alan incorporates personal tears of journey as background to deriving mindset. From there he narrates on a variety of themes and encourages you to read his poetry without prejudice, without focusing on the fiction of its creative content, to let yourself be victim to this sometimes rebellious way of thinking.

To read a selection of Alan's poems, open www.amazon.com Type the name of his book Moon Above My World in the search box. When the icon appears, click on the paperback and then click on the 'Look Inside' feature.

Since it is becoming increasingly popular among Canadians, Alan invites communication from anyone planning to walk the Camino de Santiago. For information about Camino or tips on preparing for the 800 km walk, contact Alan by email, or find him on Twitter @alancfleming

Alan Fleming lives and works in Ottawa.

SHADES OF THE CAMINO
continued from page 2

We are each distinctly different, despite our souls having so much in common. My poetry explores a multitude of themes, including: heartbreak, closure, relationship, morality, physical aging, death, spirituality, sexuality, love and romance.

Walking Camino de Santiago de Compostela gave me the freedom to examine life from another perspective.

2015 NCWC Poetry Honourable Mention
HIGH SCHOOL REUNION
By Sylvia Adam

We are stirring up the dust of one another’s lives, echoing scuffs of schoolyard gravel, a querulous bell, God save the auditorium, how it has shrunk. Those four years decades on, compressed:
Saturday pub night to start our weekend, tours of the new addition, hour-long lineups for lunch; the photo gallery immortalizing those who made it big: a mayor, a golf pro, a mustachio’d Mikado. No sign of those who once looked good in their clothes, who now make their clothes look bad. They sent regrets. No trace of the girl who suddenly left mid-year after throwing up in the washroom, or the boys caught in a snowbank with loot from the principal’s office. An evening of tapas and dance for those who can hold their liquor but not their curiosity. Some will stay overnight, tucking in muse and memory reliving tender pledges and acne’d valedictions. Some make a career of returning, call it Annual Vacation, clinging to sameness they never found abroad. We thought we were writing the history of the future thought we knew where the laurels would rest. But the yearbooks tell their own story: Jack, Tom, Barry, Marilyn, Cathy, Joan, the Home-Coming Queen who never came back; the senior choir tenor who went to The States not even mentioned on Facebook; the few who stayed, kept the town on the map, now living out the long grey cliché of retirement: mornings with weather, a beer gut and no alarm clock; McDonald’s at noon on Wednesday, to relive impossible touchdowns. Saturday, seven pm: islands of ethnic foods from online recipes, lineups tangled with lineups: the old math teacher, revered, wipes his mustache, groans, and collapses beside the pickled eggs. Someone calls 911, someone starts CPR; twenty minutes pass before paramedics arrive. Someone remarks that the hospital is just across the street: We could have carried him there… Those who look good in their clothes forgive him for throwing us all off schedule, killing the live auction.

The orchestra billows forth, wooing the early departures toward the converted gym where a line of wooden chairs hugs the gymnasium’s wall in tea-dance ambience where wallflowers used to sit in hopeful regimentation. But most of the chairs are empty now, and the dance floor yawns in shadows till a couple of balding husbands steer their ladies through the paces of a mellow, swanning two-step. Here and there a hug, a promise to email photos. Reunion requiescat. Early awkward closure. No parents at home watching the clock – offspring perhaps, hoping the old folks endure, while they themselves look ahead to a distant reunion weekend when they’ll still look good in their clothes, remember how to dance.
JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

Join the CAA-NCR Facebook group page to receive updates on meetings, workshops, author activities and other news of interest to writers. Add your suggestions or comments about our programs, or share your news.

Are you on our mailing list?

If you wish to receive our bi-weekly email updates, send your information to Arlene Smith.

CAA-NCR is on Twitter

Follow us @caa_ncr for writing tips and connections with other Ottawa area writers.

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Our April Meeting - Sheryl Bennett-Wilson

EXPOSE YOURSELF! WAYS TO GET ATTENTION FOR YOUR BOOK WHILE REMAINING FULLY CLOTHED

BY DAVID TURKO

On Tuesday evening, April 12, the National Capital Region Branch of Canadian Authors Association welcomed guest speaker Sheryl Bennett-Wilson. After brief introductions and a welcome to new members and guests, Sheryl began her presentation on “Expose Yourself! Ways to get attention for your book while remaining fully clothed.”

Sheryl began by elaborating on her background as a Producer for CTV – a position which she held for sixteen years – and explained how her previous work experience influences what she does now for publicity. Working as a producer, she would see all sorts of requests come across her desk for airtime – whether that be for famous authors or smaller stories.

Simply writing a book and publishing it is only half the battle. Sheryl explained the lengths she went to when hired to promote various self published titles. She started by suggesting reaching out to small newspapers in the area, or newspapers local to where your story is set. The smaller the better – quiet community papers are often itching for stories to fill their pages. When pitching your story, she suggested explaining who you are, what you wrote, and how it relates to the community. Should the article be published, you immediately reach a wider audience and have people reading about your book.

Reaching out to locally independent bookstores was also a suggestion of Sheryl’s. Schedule a reading, tell everyone you know about it, and create buzz around your work. Other people you didn’t invite may hear about it, and the more traffic you get, the more sales you can convert.

Sheryl emphasized that Facebook is an absolute must. More people are connecting now through social media and this is something to be capitalized on. Simply creating a page and never posting on it is not enough. Sheryl stressed that a Facebook page can not be stagnant. Continuously post to remind your readers who you are and that you are still writing. She suggested even linking news articles to current issues that relate to your writing – anything that will keep readers engaged.

In the end, it is all about being strategic and doing your due diligence. Sheryl explained it is not the same process for everybody and the perfect publicity campaign involves a unique blend of everything she discussed. These days there is more content than people know what to do with, and it is becoming far too easy to get lost in the crowd. Sheryl offered strategies to help stand out and draw more readers to your work. Her website highlighting her freelance work can be found at http://www.wordsforsale.ca/ for further reading.

BIO: David Turko holds a degree in physics which he puts to good use by poorly answering bizarre questions about time travel and extra dimensions. He has worked in a television writing room, and is now a freelance writer. His debut novel is currently under consideration for publication. He also loves mornings except when he is expected to be awake for them.
Jean Houston leads students through the temples, tombs and pyramids of Egypt in a quest for a new planetary spirituality. The myth of Isis and Osiris becomes a catalyst for the healing of old wounds related to love.

Copies available from Borealis Press, at Singing Pebbles bookstore on Main Street across from Saint Paul University in Ottawa, or from Anne Kathleen.

The amazing story of human nature under treacherous conditions.

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http://www.heritagehouse.ca/
NATIONAL CAPITAL WRITING CONTEST (NCWC)  
2016 Awards Night

On Monday, May 9  
Canadian Authors Association - National Capital Region  
celebrated the finalists in our 29th annual writing contest.  
We recognized first, second, third place, and honourable mentions in  
Short Story and Poetry categories.  
Look for these poems and stories in upcoming issues of Byline magazine, beginning  
with “What the Chipmunk is Thinking,” “Benny & Margot Forever,” and “High School  
Reunion,” in this issue of Byline.

POETRY

First place: “Green Shift”- Gill Foss, Carp  
Second place: “High School Reunion” - Sylvia Adams, Ottawa  
Third place: “Feeding the Flowers:- Helen Gamble, Perth

Honourable Mention: “Christmas Baking” - Lee Ann Eckhardt Smith, Richmond ON  
Honourable Mention: “A Piece of Scotch Plaid” - Gerry Mooney, Nepean  
Honourable Mention: “Preparing for Winter” - Gerry Mooney, Nepean

SHORT STORY

First place: “What the Chipmunk Is Thinking” - Lynn Jatania, Kanata  
Second place: “The Step-Mother's Story: We Never Called Her Cinderella”  
Tony Bove, Kanata  
Third place: “Leveller” - Adrienne Stevenson, Ottawa

Honourable Mention: “Mask Island”- Josephine Bolechala, Barry's Bay  
Honourable Mention: “Benny and Margot Forever” - Adam Heenan, Ottawa  
Honourable Mention: “A Stone in the Temple” - Arlene Somerton Smith, Nepean

See pictures from the event on page 9.
2016 NCWC Awards

Monday, May 9, 2016 at the Main Branch of the Ottawa Public Library

Lynn Jatania reads from "What the Chipmunk Is Thinking."

Tony Bove’s “The Step-Mother’s Story: We Never Called Her Cinderella” took second place.

Lee Ann Eckhardt Smith’s poem “Christmas Baking” received an honourable mention.

Sylvia Adams reads “High School Reunion.”

Adrienne Stevenon reads from “Leveller.”

Arlene Somerton Smith received an honourable mention.

Gerry Mooney received two honourable mentions.

“Green Shift” by Gill Foss was First Place winner in the poetry category.

The winners wait to read their entries.

Read Adam Heenan’s “Ben and Margot Forever” in this edition of Byline.
What the Chipmunk Is thinking

BY LYNN JATANIA

ANGELICA SITS AT THE dining room table, cup of sweet, milky tea cupped in her hands. This is her time, these precious few hours in the middle of the day when the kids are at school and Mr. and Mrs. Jackson are still at work. Dinner already simmering on the stove, laundry folded and put away, nothing to do but sit in front of the big glass sliding doors and admire the gardens, Mrs. Jackson’s pride and joy even though Angelica does most of the work.

The chipmunk is on the back step again. He’s stolen one of the cherry tomatoes from the vegetable patch – Mrs. Jackson would probably be furious, but Angelica figures there’s enough to spare. The way he nibbles away at it is just adorable. Her brothers would love him – especially John Carlo, although now that she thinks of it, he’s nearly 11 by now, and even in the Philippines he must be into video games and school dances. A cute chipmunk on the back step could hardly compete.

If she is very quiet and moves slowly, she can get close, maybe close enough for a photo before he dashes off. It’s something to send to her mother, at least. These days her life is so different from home and yet so repetitious she’s run out of news to share. Six months, more or less, before she’s an official landed immigrant and able to get her own place. Until then, it’s tea in the afternoon and chipmunks on the back step, and that’s what passes for a good time.

This chipmunk looks young; maybe this is his first year of life. How long do chipmunks live, anyway? And do they winter here? She should look it up. Tomatoes are well and good for summertime but he probably doesn’t even realize what’s coming in just a couple of months. She herself thought winter was going to be delightful, and it is, at the start. But it’s also heaviness, boots and coats and hearts, and months of reminders that this is not your home. Maybe this year, her second time through, will be better.

She thinks she’ll sneak a few peanuts into this week’s grocery run. ***

Seymour has lived in the house next door his whole life. It was his childhood home, and he was barely out of his teens when his mother got sick. Between him and his father they were able to make her comfortable, and it wasn’t too much longer before cancer struck twice. With both parents gone, there was no need to move on. He stayed, along with every item his parents had ever collected, adding his own clutter to the pile. There’s no point in keeping things tidy when he can easily find everything he needs if it’s all just laying about, he tells himself.

Since he stopped working a couple of years ago he hasn’t had much going on. Crosswords in the daily paper, his walker group at the mall, old Petticoat Junction episodes on DVD. Occasionally he heads out to the diner for breakfast with Victor and Julius, two recent widowers from the street who don’t know jack about taking care of themselves. Why, just the other day Victor had to call to ask him how to heat up a can of soup. They’re lucky to have someone like him to tell them how it is.

That bugger of a chipmunk has been digging holes under the shed again, he notices, cup of black coffee in hand as he looks out into his weedy backyard. He keeps plugging them up but the damn creature keeps coming back. He’d pour concrete around the base but his back isn’t really up for it anymore. Maybe some cayenne pepper sprinkled around the area will do the trick. Laced with arsenic, he chuckles to himself. Friggin’ rodents. ***

The pile of peanuts sits on the back step, awaiting another visit from the chipmunk. Angelica has decided to call him Biko, after John Carlo’s favourite dessert back home. Biko often joins her now for afternoon tea – still too nervous to have her on the step with him, but content to have her sit just inside the sliding door, sipping

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while he nibbles. Sometimes she takes his picture with her phone – it’s become kind of a pet project, sending updates on Biko to her mother – but other days they just sit in quiet companionship.

She’s been reading about chipmunks and it turns out they sort of hibernate, hiding in a tunnel-like burrow over the winter, sleeping a lot, but occasionally waking to snack on food stores. So she’s been bringing home peanuts, and sometimes sunflower seeds too – he seems to like them. She loves the way he tucks as much as he can into his fat cheeks and then dashes off, under the fence. She’s not sure where he’s planning to hide up for the winter – she worries, but she’s done all she can. When he passes into the next yard she must trust him, release him, believe he will be okay.

She’s told him about winter and how it can be hard your first time. She has warned him that he’ll have to look out for himself, that no one will help him, although she belies that by sometimes trying to hone in on the chipmunk like a rock guitarist. She can’t resist the occasional pile of treats, and smiles to herself, thinking of him cozy in his den somewhere, surrounded by peanuts.

She straightens up, brushing dirt from her hands, and squeezes out of the crawl space back into the main backyard. She looks around at the threadbare grass and thinks maybe her gardening time would be better spent on this side of the fence. It’ll have to wait until tomorrow, though, since it’s just about quitting time; the school bell will ring in a little less than half an hour.

The old man is coming out of his sliding back door with a steaming mug in each hand, closing the screen with his elbow. She’ll have to gulp her tea, but she can’t leave without drinking it, not after he made such a big show about having bought tea bags and milk, just for her. It’s a small kindness, but a kindness just the same, and just for a moment she feels nurtured.

From the corner of her eye she sees a streak of brown and black stripes, bolting across the yard. For some reason, the old man drops the mugs.

Suddenly Seymour is tripping down the steps, spilled coffee and tea merging into a river across the deck, racing to the edge of the shed where the shovel leans against the siding. He’s aware that he’s swinging the shovel like a crazy man, chopping at the chipmunk like a rock guitarist smashing his instrument during the second encore, but he can’t let this chance get away from him. His heart
is pounding and his back is screaming, the rodent zipping between piles of patio stones, shovel clanging and thudding, his own voice shouting words unfit for mixed company, but he’s forgotten he’s not alone.

He’s got it cornered now, down at the edge of the fence behind the shed, and the shovel comes up just as a face looms in front of him. Small hands wave in his face, a kind of wailing sound surrounds him, and he’s confused, but it’s too late to stop the downward swing. Shovel meets head and she goes down like a sack of potatoes. The chipmunk darts away and there’s blood dripping into the earth.

Dammit. He can’t begin to fathom what she had been thinking. This is what happens when you let strange creatures into your backyard.

* * *

Angelica sits in the passenger seat of Seymour’s car, body rigid, eyes locked on a spot on the dashboard. She’s been silent since the hospital, barely managing to nod while the nurse explained how to change the dressing on her stitches, not listening as the pharmacist explained to the old man the dosage for the pain medication. As if he was the boss of her. She chafes just thinking about it. At least he managed to call Mrs. Jackson and arrange to send the kids home with friends, but that hardly makes up for it.

He’s awkwardly holding out the little white paper bag, and she reaches over and snatches it from his hand.

“Look, I’m sorry about the whole thing,” he says.

“Okay,” she says, through gritted teeth, but makes no move to get out of the car. More silence.

“Why on earth did you do that?” he finally says, looking at her.

Her eyes widen as she turns to glare at him, and she winces a bit as her eyebrows arch, feeling the stitches pull above her eye. “Why did I…? Why did you…?” she trails off, then with a crisp click of her tongue she’s pulling on the handle, hopping out of the car, stomping off to her front door. There’s something she needs.

A minute later and she’s at his door, rapping impatiently. When he answers Angelica thrusts her phone in his face, accusing and explaining and justifying, and he flinches back — sure, now his reflexes work just fine. Idiot.

The phone is open to a photo of a chipmunk, its bright black eyes looking straight at the camera, cheeks puffed out with treasures, pile of peanuts at its feet. He peers at it cautiously, as if it might explode, then he nods slowly. He opens the door a little wider and motions her inside.

A fresh cup of coffee, a fresh cup of tea, a box of tissues dug out from underneath a pile of unfinished newspaper crossword puzzles on the coffee table. Seymour has even cleared a spot for her on the couch, sheepishly moving aside books and blankets and cast off sweaters from nights spent falling asleep in front of the television. He’s a little embarrassed at the clutter but she doesn’t seem to notice.

They don’t talk about the chipmunk. He’s a little embarrassed about that too, and he doesn’t want to upset her again — he’s not sure how many tissues are left in that box. But there’s lots of other things to say, stories haltingly told of family back at home, of plans for a new life, of surprisingly big ideas from such a small girl. He’s impressed. Bravery comes in many forms.

He’s surprised how disappointed he feels when she stands up — it’s time to pick up the kids and get dinner going. He reaches out his hand and she grants him a wan smile as she takes it, and they shake hands as if they’re closing a business deal. “Why don’t you come back tomorrow after lunch,” he says, “And I can help you look at those college applications.” She nods, creating an odd lump in his throat. This is what happens when you let strange creatures into your house.

She opens her mouth to speak, as if she has something more to say, but then thinks better of it, and turns to go. Seymour can guess what she needs, but it’s still a little too fresh, and there are plenty of days ahead to assure her that the little beast is safe on his side of the fence, that they will winter together, the three of them.

* * *

Here is what the chipmunk is thinking: ZZZZZZZZ.
THIS TIMELESS AND poignant story portrays Will Nicol’s internal struggle to regain his sanity after five years in the WW1 trenches of Flanders Fields and explores the central themes of lasting love and friendship. Will’s journey plunges readers into the moral ambiguity of war, his recuperative convalescence with Trappist monks and his courage in confronting his memories and demons, as he searches for redemption.

Shmelzer’s debut novel has received the endorsement of Col Rakesh Jetly, Chief Psychiatrist for the Canadian Armed Forces, who said: “Anne Shmelzer displays an acute understanding of the warfare experience. She shines a light on the early emergence of PTSD and creates a vivid image of Will Nicol’s internal struggle to regain his mental health. From the battlefields of the Western Front to his reintegration into society, A Marginally Noted Man takes us on an emotional journey that is difficult to put down. This is a great read!”

Anne’s passion for writing was first nurtured during her childhood, which was spent between Toronto and Madoc Township, and further enhanced through her experiences as a psychiatric nurse, musician and poet.

*A Marginally Noted Man* is available through the publisher’s website railwaycreekbooks.ca Amazon (link), Kobo (link), and iBook stores (link). Print editions are also available at Perfect Books and Books on Beechwood in Ottawa, The Book Nook in Perth and Novel Idea in Kingston.

**Kelly Buell - Editor**

Kelly is a professional journalist, writer, proofreader, editor, and blogger.

She can edit works of any length and genre, and enjoys critiquing, reviewing, proofing content as well as line editing.

As a seasoned freelance journalist, Kelly can offer a fresh perspective on writing for publication, approaching editors and publishers and insights on the writing life.

[Contact Kelly](mailto:kelly@byline.ca) or see her [Blog](http://byline.ca).
This is the third of four articles about how you can increase your creativity to achieve your goals. It would be best to read these in order, beginning with the introduction which appeared in the Fall, 2015, Byline. Each article deals with a different concept.

These articles are not structured the same as the online course I teach. Do consider taking that tutorial, which is customized for you, with specific comments on assignments. I offer it on a flexible schedule, to suit your busy life. Go to my website to see the full description and testimonials: http://SimonTeakettle.com/tapping.htm.

This time I’m going to address specific challenges many writers face.

Dealing with writer's block

There are several ways to trick your brain into increasing synapses between the right and left sides. These techniques are useful not just for helping to generate ideas, but also to help with minor memory problems.

If you've already tried the obvious ones: going outside for a run, or taking a shower, try a couple of these:

Do any exercise that requires you to move your arms across your midsection. The action of having your right arm reach to your left shoulder or chest, while your left touches your right side, helps your brain to do the same thing. This can be part of an exercise routine, or just done at your desk.

You could continue this by touching your fingers to the opposite feet, either standing or sitting. As you do this, visualize the problem you want to solve as a picture or diagram, without using any words. Having instrumental music playing can help with this exercise.

There are some silly things that can also help. Wear your watch upside down, brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand, walk upstairs backwards (hold onto the railing!), or wear mismatched clothes around the house, even wearing a piece of clothing backwards. Remember Celine Dion's white pantsuit at the Oscars?

New research suggests that when your brain is a bit tired, left-brain work is more difficult, but you will be less effective at keeping out distracting information – which is what you need in order to have an insight. So maybe you need to tackle any writers' block at the end of the day, instead of when you normally do your best work.

I happen to be a night person, so I always schedule routine things in the morning, heavy research or important tasks in the afternoon, and keep a pen and pad beside my recliner in the evening. I often get ideas for articles at the end of the day, and have written many prize-winning poems in the shower I take at night!

Because I go to bed late, and sometimes can’t “turn off my brain” when I try to get to sleep, I make sure that if I find the solution to a problem, or figure out how to start a piece of writing, I am able to dictate it into the tape recorder I keep by my bed.

There are all kinds of tricks you can use if you just want to remember an idea that strikes you as you’re falling asleep. One I use often is to toss something I can reach onto the bedroom floor. When I wake up in the morning, the item from my bedside table helps me recall what I wanted to remember.

Some routine activities, like driving, give your right brain a chance to activate because your left brain is busy looking right, left, ahead, and into the rear view mirror. I keep a small pad and pencil in my car visor so I can scribble when I stop at a light.

Finding sufficient variety in your style so that everything doesn't sound the same

There's something toddlers do that you probably did as a child as well. Remember taking pots and pans out of lower cupboard and banging them with kitchen utensils? I recall having a toy drum as a pre-schooler, and marching around the dining room table drumming to the beat of a march that introduced one of my mother's favorite radio programs.

continued on page 15
Drumming is a very effective way to establish or change the rhythm of your writing. Many successful authors write with earphones delivering jazz riffs to their ears. The advantage of jazz is that the rhythms are often varied, with a slow tempo in one piece, then a blazing tumble of notes in the next.

Improvise your own percussion instruments. If you don't have metal pot lids you're willing to bang on, pick up a few at Value Village. Worn or stained wooden spoons or plastic spatulas can substitute for drum sticks, as can wooden or plastic rulers, pencils, or sticks.

Use a whisk or a fly swatter as a “brush” on your improvised drum or cymbal. Employ wind chimes, bells from your Christmas decorations, and a wooden box to simulate a wood block.

Vary the rhythms, including marches, three-beat waltz tempo, a quickstep or fox trot, a tango, cha-cha, or samba. Read passages aloud to the drumbeats, and see what happens!

BIO: Barbara Florio Graham is an award-winning author, publishing consultant and marketing strategist. Her popular workshop on creativity has won accolades from participants all over the world, and is now taught as an online tutorial. See the wealth of free information on her website: http://SimonTeakettle.com.

Canada’s Anti-Spam Legislation: A primer for writers and branch communicators

Wednesday, June 29
7:00–8:15 p.m. EDT

Presenter: Anita Purcell, Executive Director, Canadian Authors

Do you use email, social media, electronic newsletters, or text messaging to promote or market your books, events, services, or products? If you do, and you haven’t taken serious steps to ensure that you’re in compliance with this new legislation, this webinar will help you understand the rules, how they apply to you, and what you should do to avoid stiff penalties and civil actions.

Registration DEADLINE: 3:00 p.m. EDT Wednesday, June 29, 2016

Register through the CAA National website.
EN WENT TO THE window and looked out at the crosses of grey and green that the buildings and streets made. He saw the sun but did not feel the humidity as he looked out at the city. Then his eyes moved upwards towards the horizon and he looked at the flat line it made against the blue.

The hallway was quiet except for the soft sound of the air passing through the vents along the ceiling. He slid his fingers into his pocket and withdrew his phone again. There were no messages and so he called the last number and looked around to see if anyone was close to him. The hallway was empty and still.

“Hello?” Margot answered.
“Hey,” Ben said quickly. He looked out the window again and waited.

“Are you at work?” she asked.
“Yes,” Ben said. “What are you doing?”
“I just got home from class.”
“Oh,” he said. He waited again and she said nothing.
“Is everything okay?”
“Let’s talk tonight,” Margot said.

Her voice was calm. Ben moved closer to the window and leaned against it so he could look down at the street. He was not very high and he recognized the woman who was walking beneath him. The woman looked at her phone and then lifted a cigarette to her lips as she walked down the path.

“No.”
“Okay,” Ben said. “I’ll be home around five.”

Ben slid the phone back into his pocket against his thigh. A woman and a man came down the hallway. The man looked at him and waved briefly with a flick of his hand. They passed by and Ben turned and watched the frame of the woman, noticing her slender waist above her skirt and her legs underneath. The woman’s skirt wavered in the sunlight when she moved and then the pair of them disappeared down the next hallway and Ben was alone again. He thought about them after they were gone. He thought about how strange it was that they were fine while he felt like he was going to die.

Ben left work early and walked quickly. He listened for once to the conversations people were having around him and found them as strange as the woman and man from the hallway. People were going on with their lives; they were laughing and they were talking. Everything continued around him while he walked quickly, feeling like he had done something wrong. He walked four blocks and waited in the bus shelter out of the sun. The air was hot inside but he waited anyways and when he got on the bus, he sat down and thought about how pointless it was to pay bus fare. He felt dead already.

Margot was on the couch when he went inside. She looked up at him without an expression and then she leaned over so she could put her laptop on the coffee table. The air was cooler inside and Ben felt it on his neck where the sweat had run.

“Hey,” he said.

“Hi,” she said and stood up. Then she moved swiftly into the kitchen where he followed and watched her pour coffee into a mug. The air was sweet with the smell and she filled the mug to the top before looking at him.

She frowned and he studied her. She was different now and much more beautiful. Margot looked angry and sad and her skin was smoother than before. He looked down at her legs that sprouted beneath the white shorts she wore and he saw how long they were and how tall and soft and lean she was. Her hair was dark and it hung to her breasts in loose curls.

Ben pressed his body against the frame of the doorway into the kitchen and their eyes met. She was standing in the sunlight that flowed in through the kitchen window and where it touched her she shone brighter.

“Do you want me to get anything?”

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She had blue eyes that were very intense and she had them half closed because of the light from the window.

“How was work?” she asked.

“Shit,” he replied.

“Well, I want to talk,” Margot said. She crossed her arms beneath her breasts and Ben looked at her. “I think that we both want different things right now. I talked with Sophie earlier and I’m going there for a bit and then I’m going to send my brother and my dad to get my things on Saturday.”

Ben pushed himself away from the doorframe and stood with his feet flat on the floor. He crossed his own arms and exhaled loudly and then shook his head.

“Where are you going to go?” he asked. His voice sounded loud to him and he breathed in again and held it. He knew by the heat in his cheeks that his face was red.

“You said some things last night that were hurtful but they made sense,” she frowned. “I said some things too.”

Ben stood with his jaw clenched and he shook his head from side to side. Margot was staring right at him now and when she had spoken her voice had been very calm. He wondered at that. It made him think of the people on the street and the couple in the hallway at work.

“We both know how we feel now,” she said slowly but firmly. “I don’t think there’s any coming back from it.”

Suddenly her eyes and face reddened and Ben felt his do the same. He had been angry and now the anger was gone and all of his emotions were in his chest.

“I was mad last night,” he said softly. “That’s all.”

“I know,” she answered.

It hurt more to see her like that but it hurt less in a way to see her soften and to hear it in her voice. She shifted so that she was leaning with her hip against the counter now, letting the muscles in her legs relax. Ben looked down at her feet pressing against the cool kitchen tiles and then he studied her legs again.

“We were just upset,” he said. “We didn’t mean everything.”

“I think I did,” Margot said. There were tears on her cheeks and she wiped at them, smearing them across her tanned skin. “I did, in a way.”

Ben turned then and walked into the living room, pressing his hands against his face and then sweeping them over his head. His hair pushed up between his fingers and he felt the sweat from the walk. The window in the room was large and dirty, covered in a pale film of white blandedness that had thickened with time. He looked out at the blurred, dulled red bricks of the house across the street. Then he heard Margot come into the living room with her bare feet padding across the floor. She set the coffee mug on the coffee table and let herself fall back onto the couch again. When Ben turned she had her computer on her lap again. She was looking at the screen and chewing her fingernails. Her index finger hung from her mouth like a fishhook.

“Just stay here tonight,” he said. “We can talk later after we’ve calmed down.”

“No Benny.”

“Please?”

“No,” Margot said.

He was standing near her now. She looked up at him with her eyes less red than before and she shook her head. Then she looked back at the screen and kept shaking her head slowly.

“I’m going out,” Ben said finally.

Outside it was hot again and he walked to the store and went inside. The man greeted him and Ben nodded without making any expression. The store smelled old and the floor was stained and creased with the pressure of many footsteps. Ben bought a pack of cigarettes and a small lighter and the man spoke to him. Ben said he was fine and then smiled at the thought of it.

He was still thinking of it when he walked out and lit the cigarette and looked up at the sky. He breathed in quickly and breathed out slow and then looked down the street where the building was and he imagined that Margot was still sitting there on the couch and then he felt the weight of it all.

He looked up at the blue and up at the trees. The leaves were turning orange in the evening sun. He swore harshly when he finished the cigarette and let it drop. Then he began to walk and think about the times with Margot that were good.

**“Ben and Margot Forever”**

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Get valuable feedback on your work and improve your writing through critiquing that of others.

**Participation is FREE to CAA members.** Non-CAA-members may join for $75 for the year.

For more information, contact the coordinator.
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• Showcase Canada’s incredible literary talent through our literary awards, ezine, website, social media, conference – and whatever other media we have at hand

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The Canadian Authors Association (CAA) is a national organization with a local presence dedicated to promoting a flourishing community of writers across Canada and to encouraging works of literary and artistic merit. We do this by

• providing opportunities for professional development

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• increasing public awareness of Canada’s writing and publishing environment

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BYLINE
DEADLINES

Byline is a quarterly publication of the National Capital Region Branch of the Canadian Authors Association.

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