

Byline

Writers Helping Writers

Winter
2019

Canadian Authors Association - National Capital Region

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Our Next Meeting

**Writing: For Theatre,
For Novels**
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
7:15 p.m.

McNabb Recreation Centre,
Meeting Room B

Melissa Yi will share her expertise in writing for theatre and show us how it can enrich other forms and genres.

Melissa is an emergency physician and award-winning writer. In her newest crime novel, *DEATH FLIGHT*, Dr. Hope Sze battles murder on an airplane. Previous Hope Sze volumes were recommended by the *Globe and Mail* and *CBC Books* as best suspense novels of the season.

<http://www.melissayuaninnes.com/>

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

By Arlene Smith
President, CAA-NCR

"If there is nothing new under the sun, at least the sun itself is always new, always re-creating itself out of its own inexhaustible fire."

– Michael Sims, *Apollo's Fire: A Day on Earth in Nature and Imagination*

When the year 2020 dawns in a few weeks, we will begin a year-long countdown to the one hundredth anniversary of the Canadian Authors Association.

Founded in 1921 by a group of prominent authors, the organization was the first to lobby for writers' rights. It was instrumental in the 1924 copyright legislation and pushed for the new Copyright Act in the 1980s. Over the years, the CAA has continued to do their part to ensure that Canadian writers retain rights to their intellectual property and are paid for the use of their works.

MAKING IT WORK AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

All of that is essential, but another important service CAA provides is support for the creative process of our writers. When members make connections, receive constructive feedback and learn from more others, that's what keeps them engaged. That's the kind of work I hope that our local National Capital Region branch of CAA can continue to do.

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BUT WE NEED MORE HELP

This will be **my last year as president** of the organization for two reasons. First, I've been involved at the executive level of the branch for many years, and I need a break. Second, every organization benefits from regular infusions of fresh energy and ideas, and that won't happen with me stuck in the way!

I'm passionate about the Canadian Authors Association and what it has done for me personally. I would not be a paid professional writer if it weren't for the support, connections and learning I have received through CAA.

I want it to continue to thrive. Going forward, we'll need a strong executive. I invite you to consider how you might support making that happen.

Enjoy a productive winter of writing. May the inexhaustible fires of inspiration keep you warm, and power your work, and our CAA branch.



Canadian Authors Association
National Capital Region

Website

<http://canadianauthors.org/nationalcapitalregion>

Email

NCRadmin@canadianauthors.org

NATIONAL CAPITAL WRITING CONTEST 2019

FIRST PLACE - POETRY

Judge's Comment

"An original and beautifully crafted 7-stanza, free-verse poem that moves from the innocence of infancy and childhood with its unquestioning openness, to magic to the coalface and the cold reality of adulthood. The poet conveys illusion and disillusion with memorable images and phrases." —JC Sulzenko

The Girl Who Grew Up on Faerie Tales

By Sylvia Adams

When she was born, her parents looked for a name
that was all soft colours and ribbons;
they wrapped her in cotton wool and placed her in a basket
that sang to her at night.

Portraits on the wall had eyes that followed her everywhere
but in the kindest of ways, making certain she didn't
stub toes and fall, that monsters stayed under the bed,
that the crystal on the table was always full of summer.

Her parents never told her
anything; still, it didn't occur to her
there were things she didn't know.

She thought everyone knew that in winter
the pine trees were sugar-coated;
the clouds were duvets of slumber
that showered the world in dreams.

Her pets never died; they got old and went away
but never without leaving notes on her pillow;
they wrote from Faraway Lands
where they were happy but missed her.

To this day she doesn't know what country
she came from or how to go back or why.

She's knee deep in snow and no jacket is warm enough,
no scarf is thick enough, although perhaps in the world
she steps out to meet, one is just long enough
that she'd pull, pull, lest it loop through the rafters
and tighten around her neck.

DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE

By Barbara Florio Graham

Authors and entrepreneurs know how important a website is. Social media is fickle, often falling into and out of favor, but a website consistently speaks for you.

- If it appears to be ordinary, a cookie-cutter template which more resembles a Facebook page than a professional site, you lose credibility immediately.
- Your website can also fail to work for you if you have few links or a menu that's hard to navigate.
- You need to test your site on different browsers. I recently tried to access the website of a small publisher only to receive the error message that the site couldn't guarantee a safe connection. If that happens to your site, get technical help immediately to resolve it.
- You're unlikely to run into that kind of problem if you don't have a shopping cart or credit card option on your site. I decided, when I first created SimonTeakettle.com, that I would not include personal information on my site, or any payment options. Instead, I have a "disguised" email address, substituting the @ sign for (at) and ask anyone who wants to contact me to email me to obtain my mailing address so they can send me a cheque. I've had a few purchasers find that odd, but most comply. If someone wants to use direct transfer from their bank to mine, I send that information via secure email.
- If the prime reason for your site is to sell things, you may want to make it easy for buyers to pay you, but you may sacrifice the very traffic you need to expose what you're selling to a wide audience.

WAYS TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE

1. Consider a blog on your site. Then, when you drive traffic to the site from social media, your blog becomes a prime attraction. If it's fun, useful, provocative, or informative, visitors will go to your site to read it.

But you have to post regularly, keep the writing short and lively, and often include photos or links.

The blog on my site is written by my cat, contains many links to cat information on other pages on the site, and lots of photos. He often mentions my books, and links to those pages on the site.

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Recent Meetings

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

First Page Challenge

Our opening meeting of the season featured a repeat of last year's successful challenge. Our guests, writer [Jeff Ross](#) of Algonquin College and writer/editor [Stacey D. Atkinson](#) provided their critiques of the first pages of the work of six participating writers. There was lively discussion! This may well become a standing feature in our program.

Tuesday, October 8, 2019

Writing Workshop

In October, we challenged attendees with different workshop topics, based on [Writing Fiction](#) by Janet Burroway and [On Writing](#) by Stephen King. Writers had a chance to apply some of their tips in exercises during the meeting. We also played a few rounds with [Rory's Story Cubes](#) to come up with new ideas for stories. A fun evening.

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

Polishing Your Manuscript

November's presenter, Nerys Perry, gave a stimulating talk on polishing a manuscript for publication. She provided a handout of her slides, which branch members may request.

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Writing: For Theatre, For Novels, with [Melissa Yi](#)

The author of the Hope Sze mystery series will share her expertise in writing for theatre and show us how it can enrich writing in other forms and genres.

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Elizabeth Radmore

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Poetry Night

DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE

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2. A blog isn't much help unless you have a huge number of followers. The way to increase those is to collect email addresses for a mailing list, and keep subscribers happy by regularly offering free things to them. This is a lot of work, and may not be worth the effort unless you see results. An actual newsletter sent via email may be more effective.

3. Your index page is prime real estate. Don't waste it with a huge photo of yourself, your family, your pet(s) or even your latest book. Divide it into sections so visitors can quickly see the pages they may want to click on, without having to search through a menu. You might want one section for your books, with a photo of the cover of your latest book on the index page. Another section could be your "About the Author" page, with a small photo of you. Other sections can feature other things you want to highlight. You can see how I've done this on my site.

4. Use tabs across the top of the index page to provide another way for visitors to access various pages. Include a Contact tab, with as much contact information as you're comfortable providing. Keep in mind that if you include your mailing address and/or phone number, these may be harvested by companies who want to bombard you with junk mail, spam, and robocalls. I use a secondary email address for my website, so as soon as I receive email using that address, I know where it came from. The subject line will then usually tell me if it's spam or legitimate.

5. Give everybody your website URL. Put it on bookmarks, business cards, and on all your emails. Use every social media post as an excuse to mention your site. A great way to do this is to keep adding interesting information to your site and then mentioning that in social media posts.

6. Offer reasons to bookmark your site and visit often. I have many pages of facts that I collect from various

sources and update regularly. I also have resources for writers and entrepreneurs, which I also keep current. All of the links in resources pages heighten my Google ratings. My cat also has a Fan Club which has more than 130 species from 55 countries on six continents. This started as a whim, but has proven to be a major source of website traffic. There are links to the people who sent me photos, to animal welfare organizations all over the world, and, of course, links back to my cat's blog.

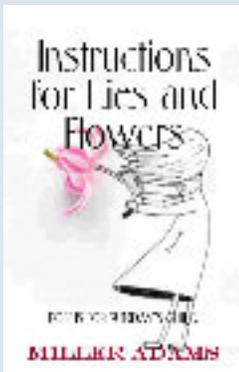
7. Use Meta Tags on all your pages. These are words or phrases that describe a page's content and don't appear on the page itself, but in the page's code. My website creation program, WebExpress, lets me add these by going to the menu at the top of the page and add key words without using HTML. Search engines use meta tags to scour the web for content.

8. Consider including pages on your site with information about your background, publication credits, a list of speaking engagements or interviews, and testimonials. All of these should contain links. I never trust a testimonial signed by "Lisa in Chicago". Mine include full names and clickable links to URLs for the person's business or book.

For many years I've been selling a database of Canadian libraries with purchasing power. I have never paid for an ad, because buyers find me from a simple Google search. That lets me know that my website is working for me.

Get yours to work for you, too. 

BIO: Barbara Florio Graham is an author and book consultant whose website, <http://SimonTeakettle.com>, is named after her famous cat and is full of free resources for writers. This article was first published in *Freelance Writer's Report*, a monthly newsletter only available to member of the Writers-Editors Network.



Instructions for Lies and Flowers: Poems for Sunday's Child

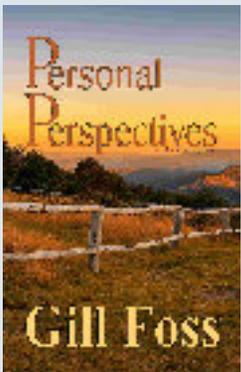
By Miller Adams

Crowe Creations
November 2019
ISBN: 978-1-927058-62-6
www.amazon.ca

Personal Perspectives

By Gill Foss

Two Acres Press
September 2019
ISBN: 978-1-9992560-0-5
www.amazon.ca



33RD ANNUAL NATIONAL CAPITAL WRITING CONTEST

Sponsored by the Canadian Authors Association – National Capital Region

Could your poem or short story be published?

For our 2020 contest, we will publish a 20/20 anthology with the top 10 stories and the top 10 poems. (Authors will retain all rights.)

Deadline: **Friday, February 7, 2020** at 23h59/11:59 PM.

Open to all Canadian citizens, or landed immigrants, living in Canada.

First place: \$300

Second place: \$200

Third place: \$100

Three honourable mentions for each category.

Finalists will be announced in late spring. Awards Night will be Tuesday, May 12, 2020.

Entry Fees: Poetry: \$5 per single poem; Short Story: \$15 per single story.
We will accept payment via Interact e-transfer, Paypal or cheque.

Contest Rules

The contest is blind-judged.

The creator's name or other identifiers must not appear on the submitted content.

Judges' decisions are final.

Short Story

maximum 2,500 words, in English, unpublished

Poetry

maximum 60 lines including title and blank lines
in English, unpublished
no Haiku

More details: [2020 National Capital Writing Contest](#)

Re-filling your well

How taking a break from writing helps your writing . . .

By Arlene Smith

When we think of writing, we think of output.

An empty page becomes a full page, a blank screen comes alive with images, or radio static transforms into the hypnotic voice of a well rendered short story. Writing, we think, means getting the words out.

But there is another side to writing.

Experienced writers know that for there to be *output* there needs to be a steady stream of inspiration and new ideas flowing *in*.

In order to transmit, we need to receive.

The paradox of writing is that to write more, we sometimes need to not write. “*Stop a moment, cease your work, look around you,*” Tolstoy said. In moments of idleness, when we step away from the page, we stumble upon what we need to solve a story development problem.

Jane Austen plotted her literary novels while stitching needlework projects. Stephen Spielberg came up with his award-winning cinematic ideas while driving on the freeway. A daily four-mile walk gave Stephen King time to work through difficult plot twists. “Boredom can be a very good thing for someone in a creative jam,” King wrote in *On Writing*. “I spent those walks being bored and thinking about my gigantic boondoggle of a manuscript.”

Even scientists recognize that creativity is a push-me-pull-you activity. Physicist Fritjof Capra arrived at his most inspired theories in relaxation after intense intellectual activity when, “*the intuitive mind seems to take over and produce the sudden clarifying insights which give so much joy and delight.*”

Reading the work of others helps us improve.

Read on the bus, on your breaks at work or while in line at the bank. Listening to audio books counts. Any way that we can submerge ourselves in words helps to develop our writing craft. Every book, especially the ones we don’t enjoy, teaches a writing lesson.

“*It’s through this oddly remote master-disciple relationship that a writer learns his business,*” Pierre Berton said. “*Read everybody, read everything, from the back of corn flakes boxes to the works of Homer.*”

Keep an Open Mind

“*Why do I get my best ideas in the shower?*” Albert Einstein wanted to know. Exceptional ideas—the stories we love, the art we appreciate, the music that moves us to tears—seem to come to those at leisure, relaxed, and free of intent. Great ideas swirl about us in the universe, perched and anticipating an opening, waiting for someone to take a break from the busy-ness of output and production long enough to let down the defences and allow the brilliance to enter.

Great writers over the centuries, from William Blake to Robert Frost, spoke of inspiration coming through them, not from them. An open mind, a mind at leisure, allows brilliance to enter.

Give yourself permission to not write.

Walk the dog, curl up with a book by the fire, daydream at your desk. It might not feel like writing, and it won’t look like writing to your neighbour, your family, or your boss, but it is a necessary, paradoxical, part of writing.

Give yourself permission to do it, and if anyone asks what you’re doing, tell them you’re working.



MISS JULIE'S HOME FOR WAYWARD GIRLS

By Lynn Jatania

This is day one hundred and thirty-seven that I've been here at Miss Julie's, with the other inmates. That's what we like to call ourselves, inmates, 'cause even though we're free to come and go and whatever, none of us ever likes to go out. It's hot and most of us are uncomfortable enough walking from here to the toilet, which I have to do sixteen times a day now, so who wants to walk all the way to Mac's Grocery, which is a good half hour each way, and then ten minutes farther on if you want to get some KFC? And everyone staring at you all the time with your big round belly and no wedding ring? Most days it's just too much effort.

So here we sit. We got an old TV, so old that you gotta waddle over to it to change the channel on the dial, but it still gets the shows and we can watch our stories every afternoon. I got a pack of cards and sometimes I can get a game of Crazy Eights going. I tried to teach the other girls Bridge but it was too much for them. Their condition does lead to a bit of addle mindedness, there's no doubt about it, but it's clear I could whoop them at Bridge even if they were in their right minds so there really isn't any point in pushing it.

There's another girl here, Kelly, it's actually her second time here so she knew a little better what to bring. She has some knitting needles and she's teaching us all how to knit. I'd rather play cards myself but it's something to pass the time. Most of us are in the scarf making stage. We just make scarves, longer and longer until Kelly tells us that's enough and then she

ends it for us. I'm sure I don't know what I'll do with all these scarves in the heat, but it keeps my hands busy, and you know, idle hands and all that, as Miss Julie is always saying.

So every day me and the girls sit in the common room on the old couch—the last one in has to sit on the big stain where Jess broke her water last year. I wasn't here for that one but it's legend, and keeps getting passed on from girl to girl so the story never gets old, never dies. Whenever a new girl comes there's always a crackle of anticipation in the room as we all lean forward to see who will get to tell her the story first. Bonus points if you can get her sitting in the spot before you spill the beans.

I have a lot of bonus points.

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Cameron is my boyfriend and I'm luckier than most of the girls because he still comes around to see me every now and again. He brings presents, too. He's big on the environment so he doesn't believe in the collection of things but he'll bring me a container of ice cream or a chocolate bar or something else sweet. He was really good about it when I had to move here. At first he was all, *why bring a child into this world when we're just ruining the planet and condemning it to a pathetic life in an apocalyptic future?*

I always did think he looked especially cute when he talked like that. When he gets really passionate

National Capital Writing Contest 2019

Second Place - Short Story

Judge's Comments:

"I was immediately captivated by the voice of the narrator, falling into her perspective as she filtered the world around her and interpreted the other characters that moved in and through her confinement."

—Jean E. Pendziwol

his dreadlocks kind of shake back and forth and there's this earthy smell that comes out of them that is just ir-re-sis-table.

(Usually when I mention this around the common room, I get a round of high-fives because when Cameron comes to visit, let's just say I'm not the only one who likes to sit and listen to him tell us about global warming and whatever.)

Anyway, when I decided to have the baby in spite of the coming apocalypse, he wasn't mad or anything. I mean, he does continue to point out that the kid will probably have to fight for food and the whole balance of the earth will be thrown off because there probably won't be any bees or polar bears left by the time the kid is grown, or something like that. You'd have to ask him.

In the meantime I try to make all the girls in the house recycle and up until a couple of weeks ago I was really careful to always put it out, but now I sometimes have trouble sleeping and then I oversleep in the morning and I miss it. But a new girl came this week called April and she listens hard when Cameron comes by and I think I can get her to take over the recycling job soon, which will help us all, or so I understand it.

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My parents came by the other day. They try to come when they can, but they work and they've got my little sisters to look after so they're pretty busy. They always say how lucky we all were that I got a spot here, and I suppose I am. Miss Julie is nice and there's no way I'd be up to doing any school like this. So I'm off on a "little holiday," so they say, but it's a holiday that's mostly boring and mostly tiring and not nearly as fun as they seem to think it is.

Miss Julie came in while they were here to say hello, she does like to act like a good hostess when the parents are visiting. Not that she isn't a nice lady, don't get me wrong, but she does have a special level of smile for when someone's parents come by. She had some paperwork for us to look over. My mom got a funny sad look when she was reading it over and my dad pressed his lips together real hard. Which I do not get, because it isn't even their kid. The other parents who will be taking this one are paying for my "little holiday" so it seems like it's a fair trade. Otherwise I'd be stuck at home all this time with my friends looking at me with pity and my mom looking sad all the time.

Now that the papers are all signed, we are good to go. Flag down the ship! Ready for landing! That makes me giggle, but I try to hold it in because it's very confusing for my parents with their tight lips and sad eyes.

Tanisha had her baby the night before last, and I don't know if she won the lottery or what, but she says she is going to keep it. A little girl. Miss Julie doesn't like it when there are babies in the house as it starts giving the other girls *Ideas*, she says, and you can hear the capital letter. But it's right in your contract that if you

are going to keep it you get to come back for the first four weeks until you get things straightened out, so she's back and so is the baby.

She's real cute too. It's hard for me to hold her because my own belly gets in the way but when she's in her baby chair I can chat with her and talk about life. I mean, not that she's looking because she's mostly sleeping and whatever. But it's kind of nice to have the company, like having a pet. All the girls are the same way, and some of them get real starry-eyed when Tanisha comes around.

Well, maybe not one. Daisy has the room next to Tanisha and she isn't so much excited about the baby. Daisy says she cries all night and it's true that both Daisy and Tanisha have been looking a little red around the eyes lately. Maybe Miss Julie should consider having *more* babies around so we all can be exposed to a little of the bad stuff. I personally wouldn't mind.

•

I had a surprise visitor yesterday. Sherwin is Cameron's best friend and he was always real nice to me when Cameron and I were going out. Well, I say *were* like we're done going out, but we haven't broken up or anything, so I guess we are still a couple, only it's hard with the distance and me not feeling much like messing around these days. Anyway, Sherwin came by to say hello and I was surprised because I didn't think anyone really knew I was here, but I guess he found out from Cameron or my mom or something.

I felt kind of weird about it because Sherwin and I always used to talk movies, that was our big thing, like what was coming out and who was in

what and we'd make lists of what we wanted to see. But I haven't kept up with it and I haven't been to the movies to ages, I only have the TV stories to talk about, which seemed like a crappy second best. But I still told him a bit about them, and he really perked up when we got to *Days of Our Lives* because there is a great storyline right now about twin brothers in love with the same woman, and everyone in the common room joined in when I got to that part and helped me re-enact several scenes because Sherwin seemed really interested.

Then he told me all about some movies he'd seen lately, I had him tell me the whole plot of that new one that stars Chris Pine because I love him, he's my on-screen boyfriend. And we played a few rounds of that movie game where we challenge each other to name a movie starring a certain movie star, like Michael B. Jordan or Daniel Craig, and we go back and forth until one of us can't name another title, and between you and me, I think he maybe let me win this time.

Right at the end before he left, he did mention that Cameron has won a scholarship to study whales in Newfoundland for the summer, and that he might not be around as much. And I totally get that, because the whales are really suffering and it's important to save them so my kid can see a whale someday, and not have to just read about them in books. So I admire what he is doing to make the world a better place for all of us and it's totally the right call and definitely the most important thing right now.

Definitely.

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So this morning I woke up feeling different, kind of like I had to be sick but nothing came out, although it was chili night last night and between you and me, Miss Julie is good at a lot of things but making chili is not one of them, so I didn't eat very much. I thought I'd feel better after some breakfast, but I did not, and then I thought I'd feel better if I went to the bathroom, but I did not.

Then the cramps started and I didn't think the couch could take any more stainage so off to the hospital we went.

Miss Julie called my parents and my mom even took the day off work to come down and be with me, which was really nice especially since Cameron is already gone. She held my hand and wiped my brow when it was really hurting. Miss Julie had some things to do but she came by to see how it was all going and I was glad she was there, because she is very no-nonsense, Miss Julie. *None of that mumbo jumbo*, she'll say, when one of us girls starts whining or complaining. So I toughened up and I could tell she was proud of me, and I worked hard.

After it was all over, the other people came and took the baby and that was okay. I mean, it wasn't the greatest thing. But I have work to do

in this world, Cameron says it is up to the young people to turn things around and save it, and my mom really wants me to finish school, and putting two and two together I could really make a difference. I didn't want to see him, the kid I mean, so I just took a deep breath when it was all over and told my mom I wanted to go to sleep and she left me alone for a while. Luckily I am pretty good at going to sleep in stressful situations as that is how I have always dealt with pressure in the past, I even fell asleep during an exam once because I hadn't studied much and I could tell it was going badly and it was all too much so my body just kind of gave up.

Same thing this time.

•

When I woke up I was surprised to see Sherwin in my room. I mean, I didn't think anyone could just walk in to a hospital or whatever. He told me he'd asked my mom to call him when it was time and then he came down to see if I was doing okay. And I'm not going to lie, I was not really doing okay, and Miss Julie was not around and so I found it very hard to not be all mumbo jumbo in that moment.

But Sherwin was great and pulled

up his chair right next to the bed and just held my hand tight, and passed me tissues every time I had totally soaked through one, just one tissue after the next with no comment at all. Eventually I couldn't cry any more but we just sat together holding hands and it was very friendly, and I felt like maybe things were going to be okay, just having someone from home who made it seem like I could go back and be me again and everyone would be cool with it and it would all work out.

I won't be going back to Miss Julie's because I didn't keep the kid and that's in the contract too, if you don't keep it you can stay with her for a few more weeks but the cost is on you and my parents are ready to just take me back home and help me rest up. Maybe I'll go by to tell the girls goodbye because I will miss them, and I was halfway through a really nice blue scarf that would look sharp on Sherwin, but on the other hand, if I never see that stained couch again it will be too soon. There's a kind of smell in the air of being stuck, all those inmates shut in and just waiting, waiting, waiting.

My waiting time is over. It's time to go home.



Call for Submissions

We are seeking **writing-related articles** (600 to 1000 words) about the process, profession or business of writing, or insights into the writer's world. Brief reports on writing conferences or workshops are also eligible.

For additional details, please see the [Byline page](#) on our website (scroll down to Submissions).

We publish fiction and poetry content from the [National Capital Writing Contest](#), but we occasionally have space for additional short fiction (up to 2500 words) and poems (up to 60 lines).

We do not publish memoir or other non-fiction.

Send submissions to [Byline](#).

Deadlines:

Fall Issue: August 15

Winter Issue: November 15

Spring Issue: February 15

Summer Issue: May 15

Byline Advertising Rates

FREE

- Members are entitled to a free 1/8-page ad.
- News or book reviews are free for members.

Member Rates:

Single issue:

- 1/8 Byline page: FREE
- 1/4 Byline page: \$15
- 1/2 Byline page: \$30

One year: **4 issues for price of three**

- 1/8 Byline page: FREE
- 1/4 Byline page: \$45
- 1/2 Byline page: \$90

Non-Member Rates

Single issue:

- 1/8 Byline page: \$15
- 1/4 Byline page: \$30
- 1/2 Byline page: \$50

One year: **4 issues for the price of three**

- 1/8 Byline page: \$45
- 1/4 Byline page: \$90
- 1/2 Byline page: \$150

Byline is distributed by e-mail to our extensive CAA–NCR mailing list. To have your name added contact:

NCRadmin@canadianauthors.org



Canadian Authors Association National Capital Region

Executive and Coordinators

Please feel free to contact any of the following
with suggestions or concerns

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Membership: Christine Beelen
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