

SCBWI




# SoCal NEWSLETTER

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KathrynRammell - [kathrynrammell.wordpress.com](http://kathrynrammell.wordpress.com)

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**LOCAL ARTISTS FEATURED ON EVERY PAGE!**

# I SOLD MY MANUSCRIPT!

## What, There's More To Do?

By Heather Buchta

**My agent was on his way to the DMV. I was snowboarding. That's when I got the offer on the fifty pages he had submitted. I was stunned.**

"So what happens now?" I asked him, laughing. "I've never gotten this far!"

Fast forward to July, when I sent in the completed manuscript — where the journey starts for most. Here is what happened afterwards. Be warned: it's not glamorous. The work of an author is rewarding, yes, but also arduous, tedious, and humbling.

In August, I received the first editing letter. It was a LONG letter, so I'll summarize, skipping the praise. My editors delved into the relationships — Jake and Hannah, Jake and Lovette, Lovette and her parents, Lovette and her best friends, Lovette and her brother. As an unpublished author, you may be asking, "But what does that look like?" Here's an edited excerpt:

"JAKE/HANNAH - ...To us, the most important purpose Hannah serves is presenting Lovette with a direct foil, in showing her that Jake has this internal world that he's sharing with someone else. And Lovette craves that intimacy with him.

"To fix this, we wondered if it made sense to have Jake and Hannah break up (recently) before Jake's move, but have them still be close friends. They still talk...support each other, but it would remove...Jake...getting so close to Lovette while in a relationship. ...wouldn't require a major rewrite, as the Jake/Hannah dynamic... still clearly present...still causes Lovette the same concern/motivation that this draft includes."

Add about three pages to this, and you've got

an idea of the first editing letter. Oh, I also needed to cut 10k words.

Usually authors have eight weeks to revise. I had one month. So I buckled down, dissecting and reworking, stopping two hours a day to get outside and run and work out. I ate at my laptop. Four weeks later, I exited the writing cave and sent in the second draft.

But don't put your whiskey glass in the sink just yet. A month later, I received another three-page editing letter. In addition, the manuscript now had 856 line edits.

Four weeks and I sent in the third draft. They loved it but still sent a grip of line edits. I made the changes, and the manuscript was off to copyediting.

My first copyedited manuscript came back with 3,287 comments that I had four days to accept or stet—meaning "ignore the edit. Leave as is." A week later, Penguin Teen announced the cover reveal. I sent in a photo for the back flap.

January 27. I received the full interior for *Beyond the Break* with a different copyeditor's proofread marks and queries. It was a beast, and on PDF. Not a fan of Adobe Acrobat Pro, so I took notes by hand. Here are some cool design things I never knew:

1. **Stacks:** three identical words stacked in a row above one another (such as "the" or "and"). No go. Add or subtract a word or change a sentence.
2. **Widows:** when the first line at the top of the page doesn't reach the halfway mark. No go. Add words until it reaches the halfway point, or cut text from previous page to pull it back.

Heather Buchta is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University, where she majored in communications. Her first novel, *Beyond the Break*, was published in 2020.

Website: [www.heatherbuchta.com](http://www.heatherbuchta.com) Instagram: [@heather\\_buchta](https://www.instagram.com/heather_buchta)

3. **Last page of every chapter** must have at least five lines.

4. **None of the above** shows up until you're at this stage, so even if you write the perfect manuscript, you STILL have editing at this point.

After digging through it and sending it back, I received a much cleaner second pass of the full interior with queries. I learned the term "PE," which means that these marks were caught in the previous edition and design should make them here. I took notes on the entire manuscript by hand, then Nathaniel called me for an on-the-phone revision. Yes, long convo.

And then... one more entire manuscript run-through. More of the above. My nit-picky self, checking for redundancies. And a major error that we caught at the last minute.

### It was finally released to print! Cheers!

Four weeks later, the galleys arrived (Advance Reader Copies).

One month before publication, I received the comprehensive marketing/publicity plans for *Beyond the Break*: a three-page kick-butt doc outlining their strategy to get eyes and interest on my book. Also, I learned that you get a free box of your books if you're the author! Ha ha.

June 2: Book Pub Date! Popped some champagne and joined my friends on IG and FB Live.

### Three things I learned from this journey:

1. **I never thought about this before** I spent (how many?) all-nighters revising. Whether the book wins awards or is horribly-written and cringe-worthy, it

took a helluva lot of work by that author and editor. Be kind in your reviews. Constructive, yes. But kind. They're human. In the words of Ben Franklin: "Speak ill of no man, but speak all the good you know of everybody."

2. **Don't be married** to your manuscript, unless you're fine with never getting published. Be willing to tear it apart and cut it back to its skeleton, or (gasp) shelve it and move on. You're a writer. Trust your talent to create something new, not just fight for the old. Marry the goal of getting published.

3. **Learn to laugh** at imperfections. I teach grammar. Even with three full proofs and a copyediting TEAM, plus me and Nathaniel, my 75-year-old mom(!) found two glaring grammatical errors in the final on-the-shelf version (no, I'm not telling where). Sip your whiskey and laugh. You made a freaking book that's at a bookstore!



Lisa Johnston Hancock - [lisajohnston Hancock.com](http://lisajohnston Hancock.com)

# Yoga AND WRITING

By Ilana Rogel-Wieder

Ilana is the owner of Beyond Fitness Yoga. She has been practicing yoga for the last 20 years. Ilana received her M.F.A. in Theatre, where she was trained as an actress, director and storyteller. Ilana is on the SCBWI SoCal Region planning committee.

Her yoga website is [www.beyondfitnessyoga.com](http://www.beyondfitnessyoga.com) Twitter: @llanaRW1 Instagram: @ilana\_rw

## It might surprise you that yoga and writing have something in common.

In fact, yoga practice and creative writing share many similarities. Also, many lessons learned from yoga can be applied to creative writing.

Have you ever stared at a blank page? No ideas come to mind? Then you decide to walk the dog or do a chore around the house and suddenly ideas begin to flow? Most likely these activities helped you clear your mind and become open to the creative world inside you. Yoga can aid with writer's block by cultivating a deeper awareness and insight to what goes on within us. The meditation aspect of yoga also helps clear the mind and makes it more receptive to new ideas.

Four of the many yoga lessons that can be applied to writing are:

### 1. Breathe

In my yoga classes, I often remind my students to breathe. Without breath, the poses become a circus act. Breath is the foundation of yoga. It helps lower blood pressure and clear the mind. When writing, you can take a moment to breathe deeply and allow inspiration to flow.

### 2. Practice, Not Perfect

You will often hear me remind my yoga students that it is a practice, not a perfection. I like to think of writing in a similar way. When I let go of my need to have a perfect story, I can allow myself to make mistakes. Yoga teaches me that, much like the poses on the mat are constantly evolving, the words on the page are constantly improving as well.

### 3. Discipline

Daily yoga practice teaches us discipline. A mantra I like to remind my students is, "Even a little bit can make a world of a difference!" Every time you show up on the mat, even if it's just for 10 minutes, you create a discipline that soon becomes part of your routine. Similarly, every time you write, even if it's just one paragraph, you create a discipline that affirms your creative endeavors and helps you come closer to your published book.

### 4. Empowering

Both yoga and writing can be hard work and both can be empowering. At the end of a yoga session, I often remind students to be grateful for the opportunity and the ability to practice yoga today. I often remind myself to be grateful of the opportunity and the ability to write part of a story each day. Cultivating a grateful heart can be empowering, to know that I am following my passion.

My dreams beckon me to the mat and to the page and I follow them blissfully. For I know that it is through regular yoga practice that I can achieve inner awareness and peace of mind. And it is through regular writing practice that I can achieve fearless and inspiring stories.



Erica Presley - [www.ericamae.net](http://www.ericamae.net)



## Podcast Highlight

By E. L. Tenenbaum

E. L. Tenenbaum, aka our amazing Esther and social media maven, is the author of the End Ever After series, the Sapphire Legend series. In addition to giving unselfishly of her time and talent to the SCBWI Newsletter and critique group. She also produces and co-hosts the Oh My Word! Podcast. More about Esther at: @ELTenenbaum Podcast host @oh\_my\_word\_podcast Take a book off the shelf at [ELTenenbaum.com](http://ELTenenbaum.com)

### SOUNDBITES

Hello Fellow Chapter Members!

The following (almost exact) quotes are from BONUS! episodes of my podcast Oh My Word!, which are usually interviews spotlighting all kinds of people from the book world, librarians, writers, agents, editors, and more! The particular soundbites below are (I hope) helpful and encouraging little pieces from four of our Tahquitz faculty members and three debut authors.

And, just to shout out, that wonderful intro music was composed by Tim Burke! (See all podcasts episodes [here](#) and keep an eye out for those marked BONUS! or visit [this YouTube playlist.](#))

### “When you’re sending out a novel to agents, you should feel like that’s as good as

it can be for you, like ‘I have done the best work that I can on this.’ The shocker is that after you do get an agent, and they’re like ‘No, actually, there’s a lot to be done.’ I think for me that was one of my most challenging maybe growth points in my journey as a writer was to go beyond what I could do.”

**Hanna C. Howard** – [Set the Sun on Fire with Hanna C. Howard](#)

### “I feel like every experience that I’ve had somehow makes its way into my writing, and I don’t mean if I got to the grocery

store, then I’m gonna write about going to grocery store. But I mean, that little tiny interactions, little nuances of people, little ways that the world works and operates and moves, I feel like all of those things go into writing.”

**Cassie Gustafson** – [Braving the Ink with Cassie Gustafson](#)

### “The more I got into the YA community, the more I was able to get an idea of what agents were active and successful in that community...

When I turned my head toward traditional publication that was the deciding factor was having critique partners and kind of mentors that were willing to be brutally honest about what needed to be done in my work.”

**Ashley Schumacher** – [Bending Toward Hope with Ashley Schumacher](#)



Anne Dawson - [annedawsonillustration.com](http://annedawsonillustration.com)

“Comp titles are an art and I do enjoy them...I think a good comp title is published within the past five to ten years, so you want it to be recent, and you definitely want the genre to match. So, age range, type of books, that has to match, and then, the way that I pick comps is that I think, what do I love about this book? What’s my elevator pitch? What’s my key selling point? If I had five seconds to tell someone about this book, what would I highlight? Would I talk about the voice? Would I talk about the character? Would I talk about the plot? And then I try to find books that kind of mirror that... no one’s trying to reinvent the wheel here, we’re all trying to build on each other.”

**Sara Schonfeld** – [Digging In with Sara Schonfeld](#)

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## Podcast Highlight

By E. L. Tenenbaum

CONTINUED

**“Personally, I never quite understood why authors hold agents in such high regard**

when it should be the exact opposite...If authors stopped writing, agents would be unemployed immediately, but if agents disappeared, writers would still keep on writing.”

**Alec Shane** - [For Love of the Pitch with Alec Shane](#)

**“There is a difference between the technical craft of writing and the art of storytelling,**

and there are certain books that maybe are not as well-crafted in terms of

the writing but the storytelling captures something intangible.”

**Gretchen McNeil** - [#AuthorTrending with Gretchen McNeil](#)

**“When I work with a client, I want to be able to have something to offer to them**

and so when I read a manuscript, if I'm falling in love with it, I'm also thinking, 'Okay, how else can we strengthen this? What's already working and how can we amplify that? What am I loving and are there parts where the things that I love in this manuscript have gone way a little bit, can we bring that back in?'"

**Michaela Whatnall** - [Where I Want To Be with Michaela Whatnall](#)



Samantha J. Wrinkler - [sjwinklerart.com](#)

# Letter From ILLUSTRATORS

By Lisa Hancock

Lisa Johnston Hancock is a children's book illustrator and artist. Her award winning illustrations have appeared in art galleries, on book covers, magazines and in picture books such as Yellow-Speckled Blackbird and Sophie's New Song. She is on the volunteer committee for her local SoCal chapter website: [lisajohnstonhancock.com](#) instagram: [@lisajohnstonhancock](#) twitter: [@LisaJHancockArt](#)

Dear Writers,

We are staying busy on the Illustrator side with new additions to our group lineup such as monthly prompts, book club, portfolio hot seat & presenters. **The first prompt**, "First Crush" inspired by Valentine's Day, was a huge success with over 10 submissions. This month's prompt, "A Rainy Spring Day" is sure to be a hit as well. These prompts were created by the Illustration Committee with a portfolio focus in mind. The goal is to have new pieces to add to our website portfolio that will entice potential agents and/or publishers. Each work should evoke a particular mood, and including children as the subject matter is a bonus because, after all, we do create work for kids.

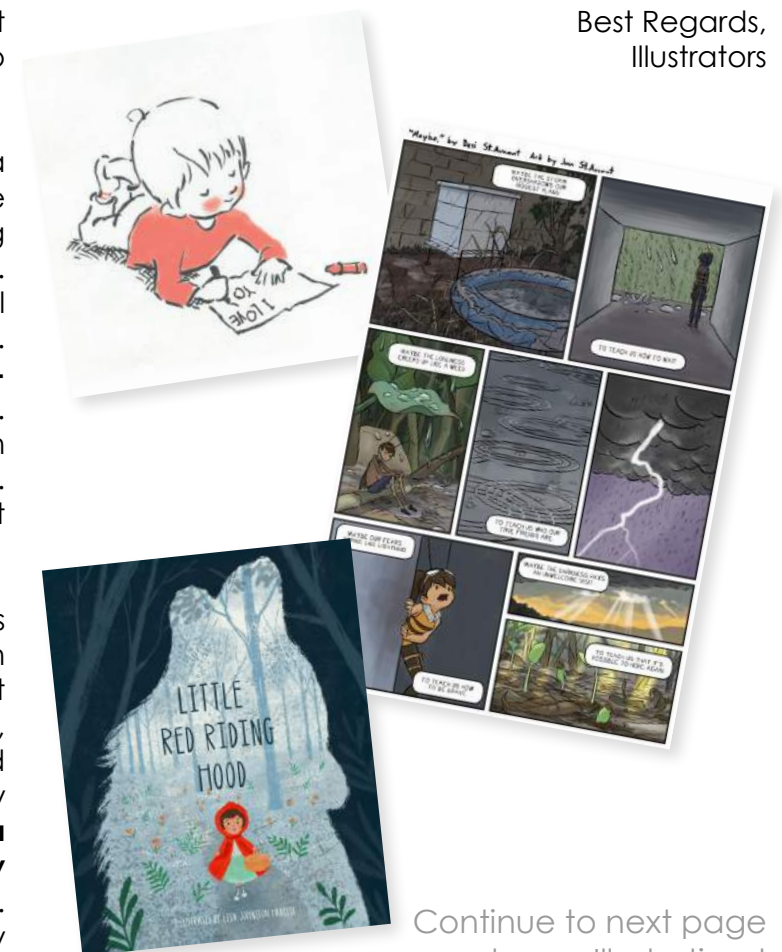
Thus far our **book club** has reviewed Amulet, a graphic novel and The Storm Whale, a picture book. The reviews have sparked interesting discussions about the book as an entire package. Not only should the illustrations create successful page turns but the words are just as important. On that note, we will soon be forming a **spin-off of the Illustrator Meetup for Author/Illustrators**. This group will be specifically for those who wish to both write and illustrate children's books. We will meet every three months, with the first meeting on April 24.

The **portfolio hot seat** was created for illustrators who wish to receive feedback from peers on their website portfolio. We had our first hot seat review last month and it was extremely helpful, sparking discussions on style consistency and which platform is the most user friendly. Every few months we have the **pleasure of a presenter, a talented fellow member or non-member industry professional**. Presentations are on various topics. Marcela Cespedes gave a presentation on how

writers and illustrators can work well together when self-publishing. Susi Schaefer presented what to do after the book is finished and gave points on how to promote your book and Chuck Grieb presented on his tool, Clip Studio Paint with a demo on how he creates his graphic novels. In May we will have Mike Lowery as our guest speaker so we will be reviewing his book "The Search for the Slimy Space Slugs," for our book club in April.

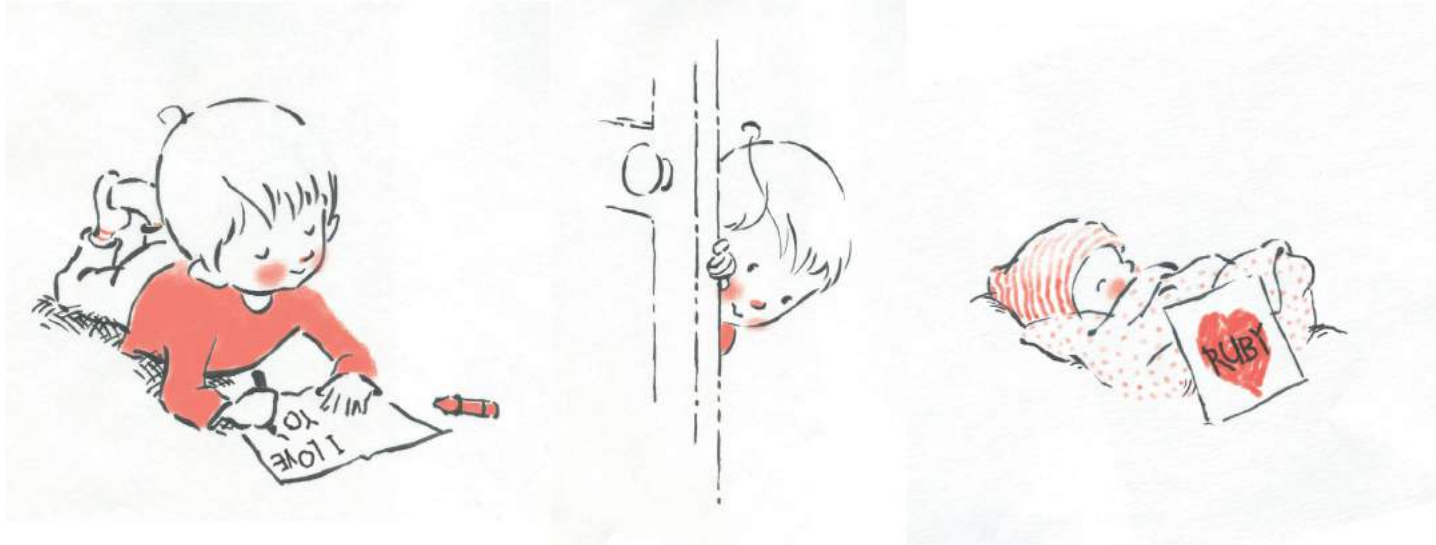
We have had so many fun and exciting things happening in our Illustrator Group this year and we look forward to hearing from the Writer's Group!

Best Regards,  
Illustrators



Continue to next page  
to see Illustrations!

January prompt "First Crush" We created a "spot illustration" that is Valentine's day themed



Anne Dawson - [annedawsonillustration.com](http://annedawsonillustration.com)



Cynthia De La Torre - [cynthiadelatorre.com](http://cynthiadelatorre.com)



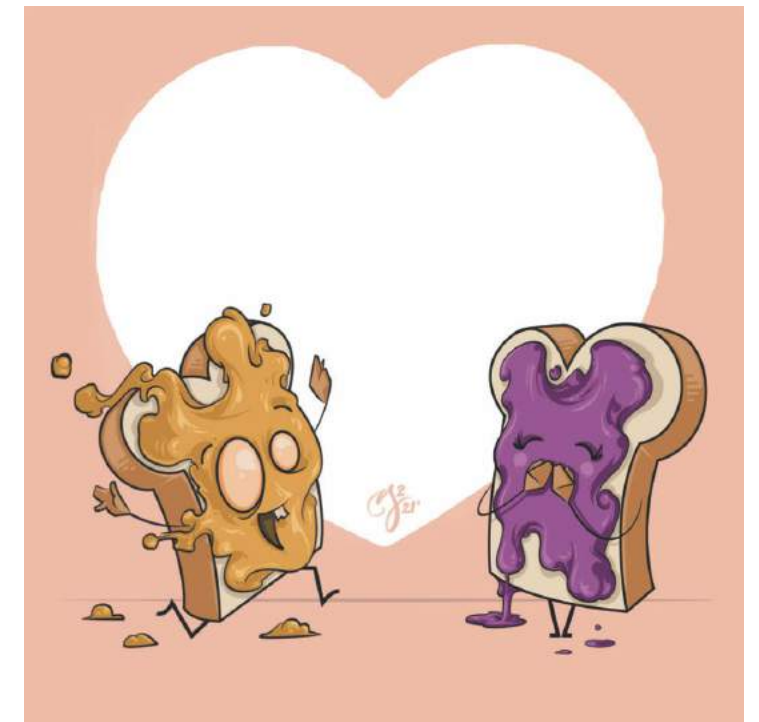
Lisa Johnston Hancock - [lisajohnstonhancock.com](http://lisajohnstonhancock.com)



Shiho Pate - [shihopate.com](http://shihopate.com)



Samantha J. Wrinkler - [sjwinklerart.com](http://sjwinklerart.com)



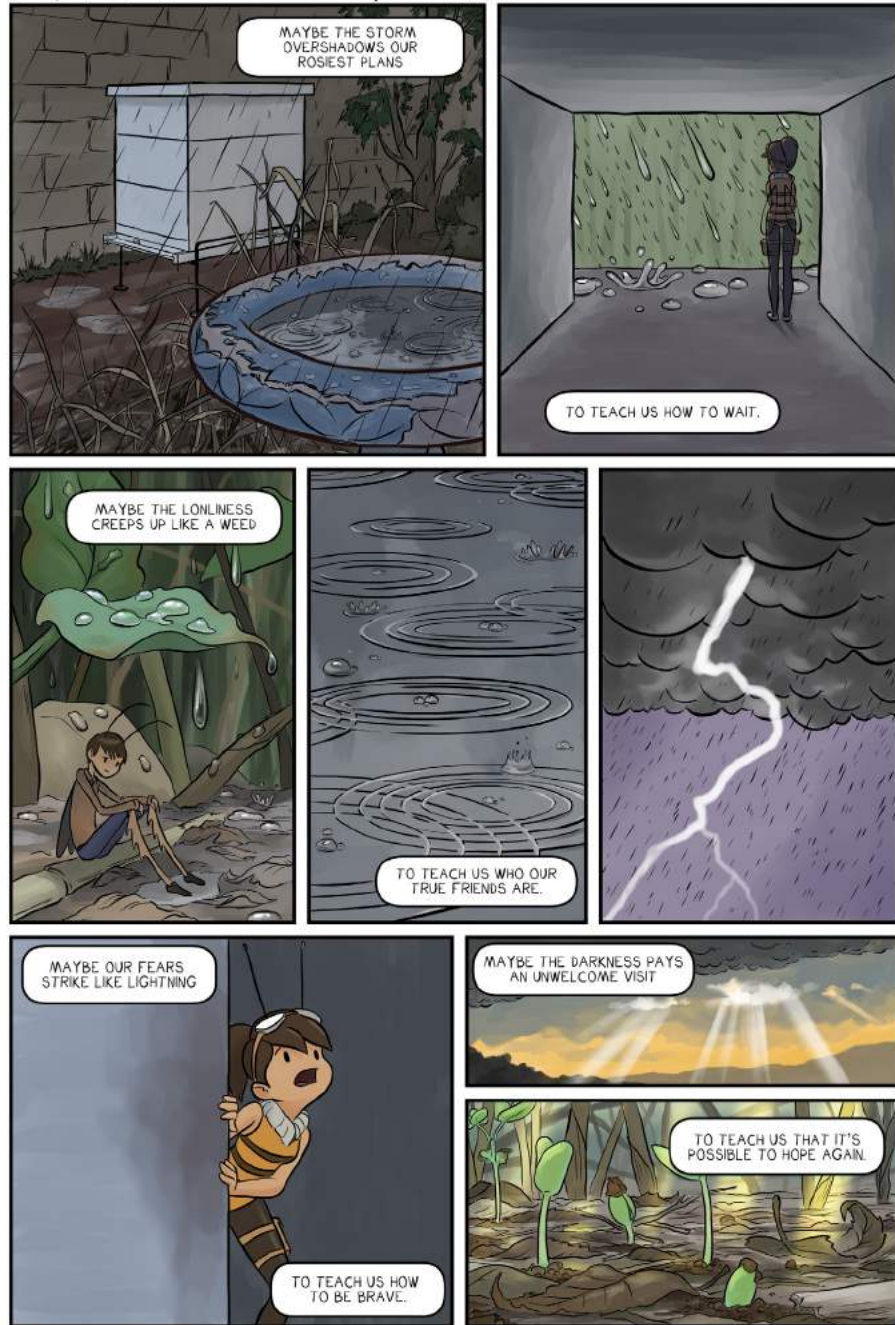
Michael Stiles - [stilesofart.blogspot.com](http://stilesofart.blogspot.com)



Susi Schafer - [susischaefer.com](http://susischaefer.com)

February prompt "A Rainy Spring Day" We created illustration that provokes emotion

"Maybe," by Desi St.Amant Art by Jon St.Amant



Jon St. Amant - [jonsaintamant.com](http://jonsaintamant.com)

Samantha J. Winkler - [sjwinklerart.com](http://sjwinklerart.com)



Moni Ritchie Hadley - [moniritchie.com](http://moniritchie.com)



Irina Mirskaya - [irinamirskaya.com](http://irinamirskaya.com)



Lisa Johnston Hancock - [lisajohnstonhancock.com](http://lisajohnstonhancock.com)

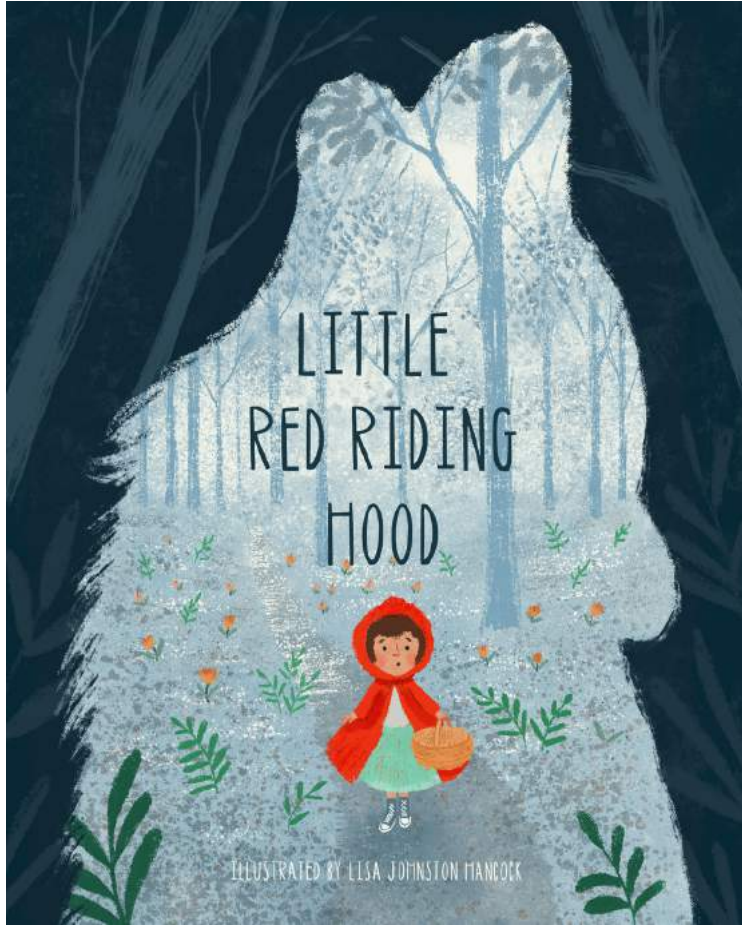


Nina Podlesnyak - Instagram - [@StoryInColors](https://www.instagram.com/StoryInColors)

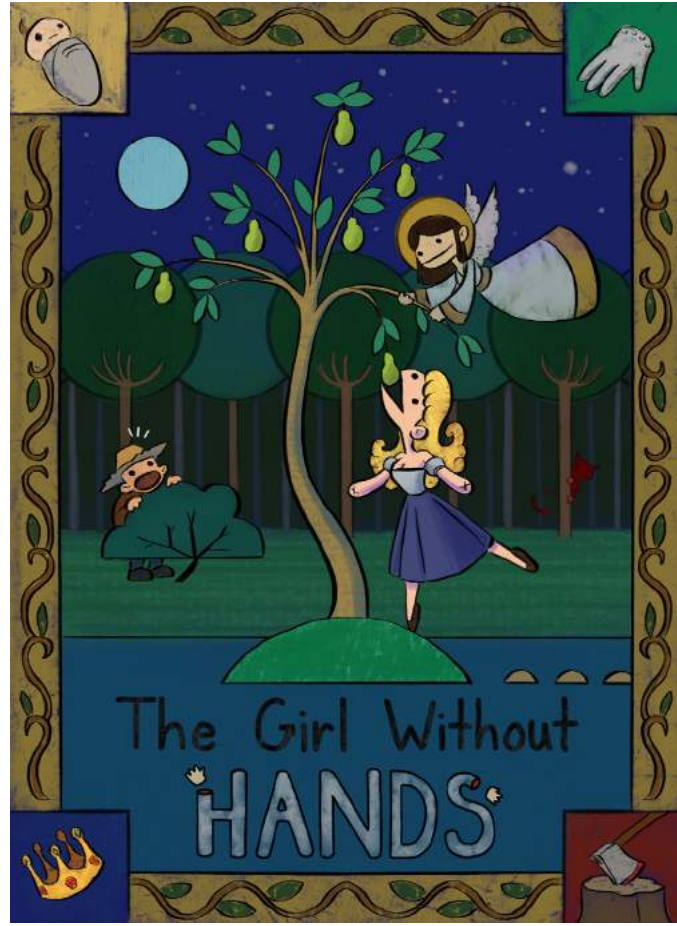


Kathryn Rammel - [kathrynrammell.wordpress.com](http://kathrynrammell.wordpress.com)

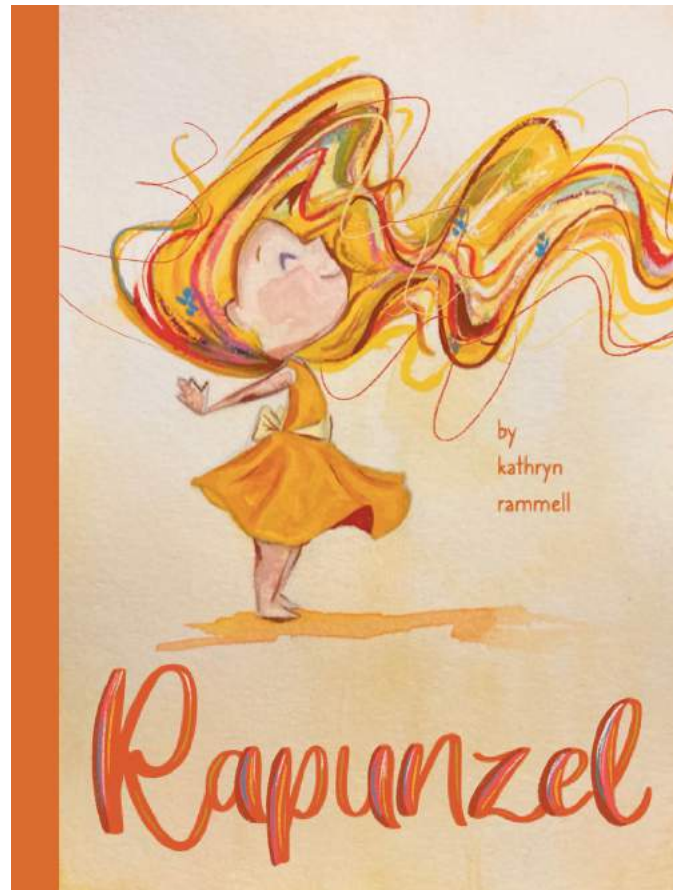
March prompt "Fairy Tale Book Cover" We created book covers baed on a Fairy Tale



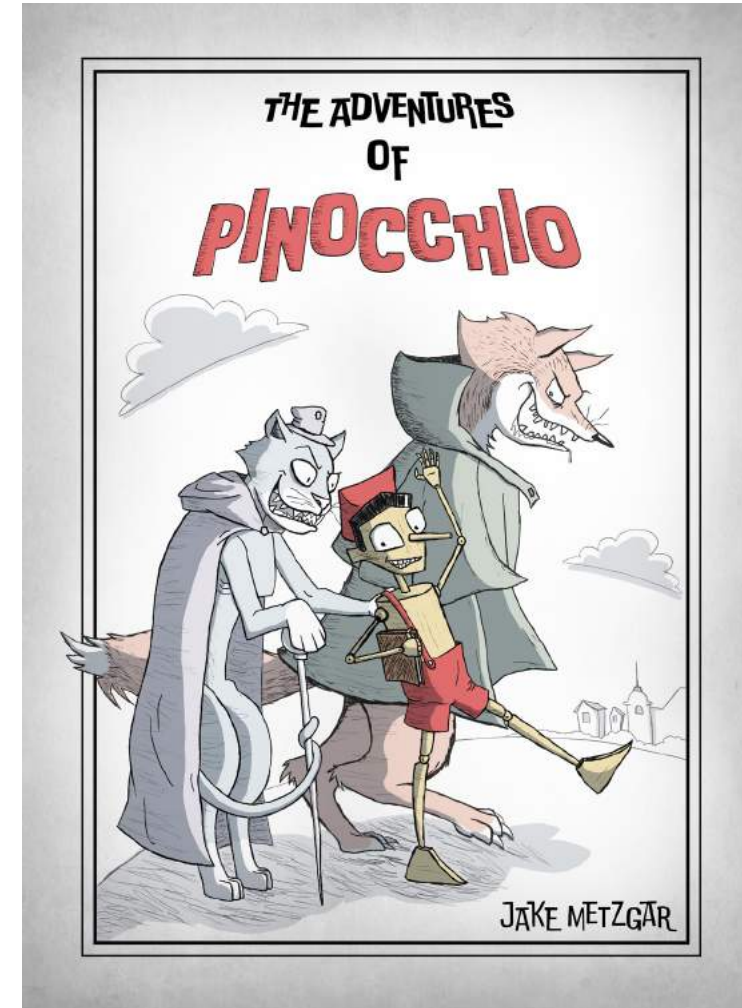
Lisa Johnston Hancock - [lisajohnstonhancock.com](http://lisajohnstonhancock.com)



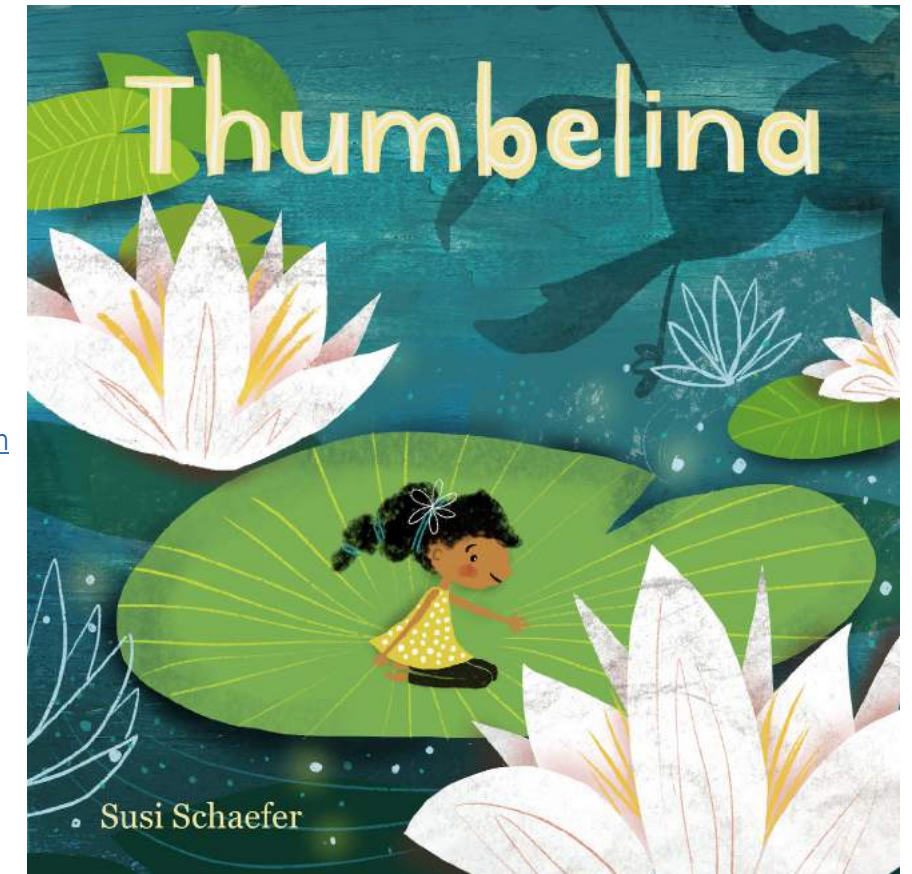
Jon St. Amant - [jonsaintamant.com](http://jonsaintamant.com)



Kathryn Rammell  
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Jake Metzgar [behance.net/davidjacobmetzgar](https://behance.net/davidjacobmetzgar)



Susi Schaefer - [susischaefer.com](http://susischaefer.com)

# MIKE LOWERY THINKS

## You Should Keep A Daily Sketchbook

A few notes from two decades of keeping a journal

By Mike Lowery



In college, a professor tasked my class with a semester-long project. It was to keep a daily sketchbook journal. There was only one rule; you had to work in it for at least 30 minutes a day. You could draw, paint, or collage in it. You could write notes about your day or a poem about unrequited love, anything you wanted, as long as it filled up the pages and took thirty minutes or more per day.

We were all assigned a hard-bound, 8x10" sketchbook with heavy-duty pages that could handle ink, watercolor, and unintentionally-comically-terrible ideas for songs about bad breakups (this was college, remember). I found the process to be redundant at first. We were already drawing all the time for actual class assignments, so I didn't get why we had to add MORE DRAWING on top of that. So, I started keeping a sketchbook because it was required to pass a class. And then, slowly, it began to become part of my daily routine.

And now, 21 years later, before my day of drawing for clients begins, I sit down to draw in my sketchbook.



Mike Lowery is a New York Times bestselling illustrator and the author of many books for kids. He's also a collector of super-weird facts, which he draws every morning in his sketchbook. His current series "EVERYTHING AWESOME" is available now from Scholastic. He lives in Atlanta with his wife and two kids.

You can see more of his work on Instagram at [@MikeLoweryStudio](https://www.instagram.com/MikeLoweryStudio) And [www.mikelowery.com](http://www.mikelowery.com)

### I FOUND MY VOICE.

After college, finally free of the requirement of keeping a daily sketchbook, I took a trip with a friend to San Francisco, and in a small bookshop, I spotted my first Moleskine journal. I bought it SOLELY to make notes about our trip, but jeez, it was so small I could take it everywhere. So I did. And I realized that probably the most valuable thing that I picked up in college was this simple need to write and draw in a dedicated place every day. That tiny book turned into my new sketchbook. It looked pretty different from that bulky thing I'd carried around in college, but in practice, it was the same thing.



### I started keeping a sketchbook with me all the time.

The art in my sketchbooks has evolved (thankfully) in those two decades, but my overall way of keeping one has remained mostly the same. I use my sketchbook as a place to make notes, draw scenes from my day, record my life, and try

out new art supplies. It's helped me figure out HOW I like to draw and what materials I want to use. I played with art supplies until certain pens or brushes clicked, and this is how I found my illustration style.

### THE 30-MINUTES-A-DAY SKETCHBOOK CHALLENGE.

This is the point in this little article where the focus turns from me to **YOU**. I want you to start keeping a daily sketchbook. I'll give you the same rules my professor gave me back in the '90s. Just work in it for at least thirty minutes a day. Draw, write, or collage. Make a comic. Illustrate a recipe. Sit and draw people in a public place (maybe wait until the pandemic is over to do this, or you won't get very good at drawing noses and mouths). Buy some new pens or reunite with art supplies you'd once loved. Or, like me, try out new stuff that you bought that's been sitting, untouched, in a drawer.

Start with one week and then see if you can draw every day for a month. If you only spend 20 minutes one day, you have to make it up with a page that takes 40 minutes the next day.

Find the time to do it. Wake up a little earlier if you can, or draw when everyone else is asleep. Maybe, like I've had to do once or twice, you'll need to delete a time-sucking crossword or candy-crushing app on your phone, but you can do it.

Still feeling stressed about it? Here's a tip that will help: DO NOT POST EVERY PAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA. Sketchbooks aren't for showing off. They're a place where you need to allow yourself to grow and make mistakes. If you're posting your progress every day, your internal

Continue to next page



# MIKE LOWERY THINKS

## You Should Keep A Daily Sketchbook

A few notes from two decades of keeping a journal

By Mike Lowery

CONTINUED

editor is going to start taking over, and you'll be too nervous about making imperfect art, and you'll never leave your comfort zone and try new stuff. Sure, occasionally post, especially if you need your friends to keep you encouraged; just don't feel obligated to post every mark you make.

### HOW TO START

I recommend starting with a new sketchbook. Pick a sketchbook that isn't too big to carry around with you but not too small. I don't carry those small Moleskine journals anymore because a) the paper is weird, and b) I didn't have enough room to experiment. Also, pick something with heavier paper that can handle wet media.

On the first page of your brand-new sketchbook, which is generally regarded in the art world as the most intimidating part of your entire life, jump right

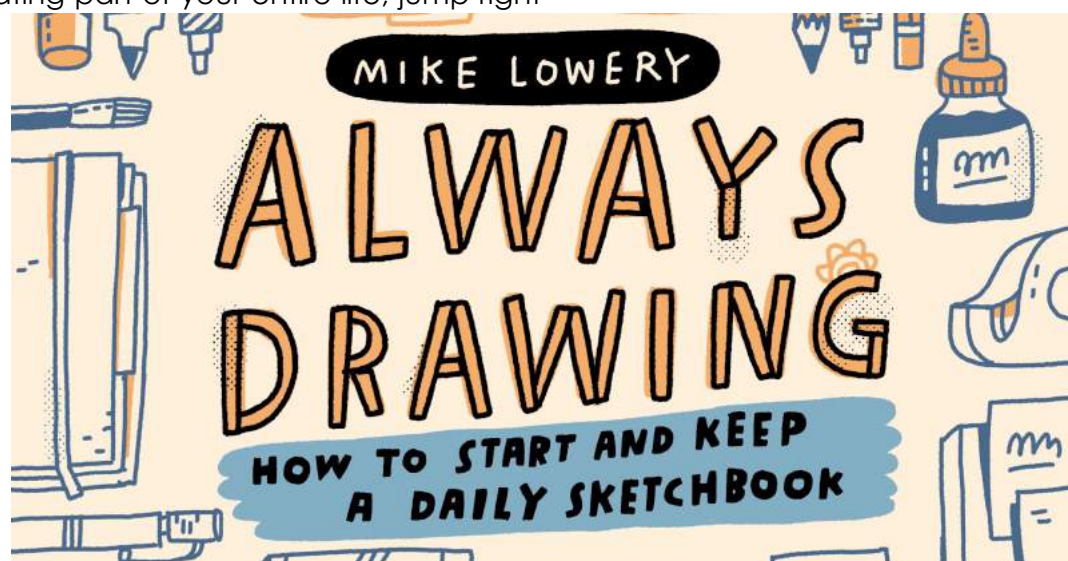
in with a drawing about you. It could be a self-portrait if that's comfortable for you, or it could just be a full page of doodles of things that you like.

And then keep going.

### WHAT SHOULD I DRAW?

If you're following this challenge but you can't think of anything to draw, I made something that will help. It's a monthly list of drawing suggestions called [STUFF TO DRAW](#), and you can download it [here](#) for free.

You can also check out my series of classes on SKILLSHARE, all about keeping a daily sketchbook. (If you're new to SKILLSHARE, you can watch my classes for [free with this link](#).)

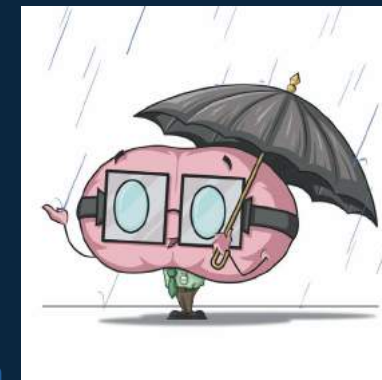


Thanks for the wonderful information, Mike! **We are looking forward to your presentation in May. All SCBWI SoCal chapter members are welcome to this illustrator event.** If you would like to attend, please email our Illustrator Coordinator, Cynthia De La Torre, at [SoCal-IC@scbwi.org](mailto:SoCal-IC@scbwi.org).

## Ask the Librarian

By Kelly Powers

Michael Stiles - [stilesofart.blogspot.com](http://stilesofart.blogspot.com)



### Something I get asked often is the market forecast for new horror/paranormal books.

Let me reassure you. Aside from the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books, horror is the most sought-after genre in my library. As a burgeoning reader, cut my eyeteeth on *Goosebumps*, and spent much of my teens buried in *Fear Street* novels. R.L. Stine is my hero and Jonathan Maberry my mentor. So it's no secret that I love horror and the need for good horror and paranormal books is as strong as ever. If you are writing for this genre and ready to start shopping your books around, here are my comp picks for you, ordered by theme: Slasher, Monster, Paranormal, and Paranormal Romance:

*#MurderTrending* by Gretchen McNeil - Falsely accused of murdering her stepsister, seventeen-year-old Dee Guerrero fights to survive the paid assassins on Alcatraz 2.0, the most popular prison on social media. In the near future, citizens can enjoy watching the executions of society's most infamous convicted felons, streaming live on The Postman app. But Dee refuses to roll over and die for a heinous crime she didn't commit. Her newly formed posse, the Death Row Breakfast Club, needs to prove she's innocent before she ends up murdered for the world to see. That's if The Postman's cast of executioners don't kill them off one by one first.

*Rot and Ruin* by Jonathan Maberry - In the zombie-infested, post-apocalyptic America where Benny Imura lives, every teenager must find a job by the time they turn fifteen or get their rations cut in half. Benny doesn't want to apprentice as a zombie hunter with his boring older brother Tom, but he has no choice. He expects a tedious job

whacking zoms for cash, but what he gets is a vocation that will teach him what it means to be human.

*Lockwood & Co.: The Screaming Staircase* by Jonathan Stroud - A sinister problem has occurred in London: all nature of ghosts, haunts, spirits, and specters are appearing throughout the city, and they aren't exactly friendly. Only young people have the psychic abilities required to see—and eradicate—these supernatural foes. Many different Psychic Detection Agencies have cropped up to handle the dangerous work, and they are in fierce competition for business.

*Clockwork Angel* by Cassandra Clare - Sixteen-year-old Tessa Gray travels to England in search of her brother, only to be abducted by the Dark Sisters, residents of London's Downworld, home to the city's supernatural folk. She becomes the object of much attention—both good and bad—when it is discovered she has the power to transform at will into another person.

### About Kelly Powers

As E.L. Tenenbaum pointed out in her 10.5 bonus podcast episode last year, there is no such thing as "just a librarian," and the SoCal region newsletter is fortunate to have a librarian contributor whose superpowers include being an extraordinary cataloguer, reader, recommender, genre expert, article writer, critiquer (not a real word, but still a super-power), inventory manager (can't run out of books), and someone who suffers from bibliophilia – may she never recover.



# MEMBER NEWS

By Desi St. Amant

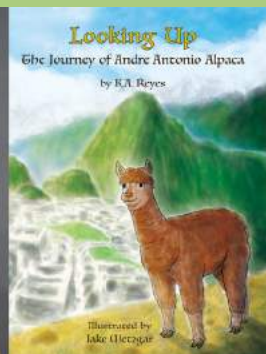
Jon St. Amant - [jonsaintamant.com](http://jonsaintamant.com)



**Lori Polydoros** signed a contract and is working on a non-fiction biography collection called *Aftershocks: 15 Women that Rock Earthquake Science* as a part of a series for Chicago Review Press called Women in Power. Website: [www.Loripolydoros.com](http://www.Loripolydoros.com)  
Instagram: @Lori\_polydoros  
Twitter: [Polydoroslori](https://twitter.com/Polydoroslori)



**Shiho Pate** has been contracted to illustrate The Animated Periodic Table, including an untitled sequel for Miriam Farbey with Scholastic, who purchased world-wide rights for this project. Young readers will be introduced to the building blocks of our world through informative text and comic illustrations. Publication is set for fall 2021; Deborah Warren represented the artist.  
Website: [shihopate.com](http://shihopate.com)  
Instagram: [@shihopate](https://www.instagram.com/shihopate)



**Jake Metzgar** illustrated an educational book, *Looking Up*, written by K.A. Reyes through Haven Press Discovery, and published on February 1, 2021.  
Instagram: [@jakemetzgar](https://www.instagram.com/jakemetzgar)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/jake.metzgar.9/](https://www.facebook.com/jake.metzgar.9/)  
Portfolio: [behance.net/davidjacobmetzgar](https://www.behance.net/davidjacobmetzgar)  
Purchase the book [here](#)

**E. L. Tenenbaum's** short story, *StarStuck* was published in the March edition of *After Dinner Conversations: Philosophy/Ethics Short Stories For Long Discussions* magazine.  
Twitter and Instagram: @ELTenenbaum  
Website: [eltenenbaum.com](http://eltenenbaum.com)  
YouTube: [E. L. Tenenbaum](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8L7Tenenbaum)



**The Bilingual SCBWI SoCal Critique Group** meets on the first Saturday of every month, from 9 to 11 AM. Though held in English, the group is for Latinx writers to share their experiences. The contact is Nydia Armedia: [narmendia33@gmail.com](mailto:narmendia33@gmail.com)



**Desi St. Amant** is a high school English teacher and an aspiring middle grade novelist. Send your member news to her email at [dstamant07@gmail.com](mailto:dstamant07@gmail.com).



# Juicy TIDBITS

By Desi St. Amant



**Cynthia De La Torre** signed with Anna Olswanger of the Olswanger Agency last October.  
Instagram: [@cynthiadelatorre](https://www.instagram.com/cynthiadelatorre)  
Twitter: [@CynthiaDLT11](https://twitter.com/CynthiaDLT11)  
Website: [cynthiadelatorre.com](http://cynthiadelatorre.com)



**Lisa Hancock** just signed with an agent: Ana Crespo at East West Literary.  
Website: [www.lisajohnstonhancock.com](http://www.lisajohnstonhancock.com)  
Instagram: [@lisajohnstonhancock](https://www.instagram.com/lisajohnstonhancock)  
Twitter: [@lisajhancockart](https://twitter.com/lisajhancockart)



**Desi St. Amant** and **Jon St. Amant** are now represented by Janna Morishima from New Leaf Literary.  
Jon: [@jonsaintamant](https://www.instagram.com/jonsaintamant) (Instagram and Twitter),  
YouTube: [Mistersaintamant](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMistersaintamant)  
Website: [jonsaintamant.com](http://jonsaintamant.com)  
Desi: [@desistamant](https://twitter.com/desistamant) (Twitter)  
Website: [desiwrites.com](http://desiwrites.com)



**EJ Lagerberg's** scary short story, *Miniwashitu*, is short-listed for the Haunted States of America contest sponsored by Godwin Books, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers & SCBWI. Further announcements forthcoming.



Marie Chan is a recipient of the BIPOC Scholarship (sponsored by Christopher Paul Curtis) for the 2021 SCBWI Winter Conference, for her excerpt from her picture book biography, *Mamie Tape: A Chinese American Girl's Fight for the Right to Go to School*.  
Blog: [calmmamabear.com](http://calmmamabear.com)  
Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook: @calmmamabear

# Grammar NERD

By Tim Burke

Today's foray leads us into the world of the ... **APOSTROPHE**. There are a couple of important issues to be clear on.

1. Normally, the apostrophe shows possession.

Examples:

That is Igor's hump = The hump belongs to Igor.

The dragon's lair = The lair belongs to the dragon.

Those are the three amigos' horses = Those horses belong to the three amigos.

If we are only **talking about one person or thing (singular)**, we use 's after the word even if there's already an s at the end of the word.

Examples:

The space monster's attack

Farley's Fritos

Mr. Jones's error

Silas's hurdy-gurdy

If we are **talking about more than one (plural) and there's already an s**, then we simply add the apostrophe after the s.

Examples:

The girls' motorcycles

The dogs' bones

The Smiths' home

If **no s at the end of the word**, we add 's.

Examples:

The women's parachutes

The mice's maze

**Practice.** Rewrite using an apostrophe.

1. That's not the hidey hole of the iguana. 2. Do you have the number of Sean?
3. Where is the book belonging to Gladys? 4. The laughter of the boys echoed.
4. The positioning of your feet will make a difference.

## About Tim Burke

Regional Advisor for the SCBWI SoCal chapter, Tim Burke also teaches ESL in the classroom and has his own private tutoring company. Tim writes adventure tales for the MG and YA audience with slashes of humor, a bit of a dark side, and a few robots and dung beetles thrown in for good measure. Tim is also the regular and generous contributor of our grammar column.

Check out Tim's wild and wacky site at: [www.timburketales.com](http://www.timburketales.com)

## ANSWERS

1. That's not the iguana's hidey hole. 2. Do you have Sean's number?
3. Where is Gladys's book? 4. Your feet's positioning will make a difference.

2. **Its** versus **it's**

This situation is the exception—the apostrophe does **NOT** show possession.

Its is the possessive I have **my** book. You have **your** pen. The dog has **its** bone.

*It's means it is* It's hot today = It is hot today. It's very difficult = It is very difficult.

Easy approach: replace the word with it is. If it makes sense, then use it's.

Examples:

Its not my problem. Change to "It is not my problem.

" Ha! It works so I want It's.

CORRECT: It's not my problem.

The dog wants it's dinner. Change to "The dog wants it is dinner."

Doesn't work so I don't want the apostrophe.

Correct: The dog wants its dinner.

**Practice.** Choose *its* or *it's* for the blank.

Do you think \_\_\_going to rain?

2. He told me \_\_\_ super cheap, but if you include \_\_\_ charger, the price nearly doubles.

3. We lost \_\_\_ cover, so \_\_\_ incredibly dusty.

## ANSWERS

1. it's 2. it's / its 3. its / it's

3. Plurals and the Apostrophe

If you want to show more than one (plural), just add the s—generally DO NOT use an apostrophe. (There are exceptions which I won't bore you with, but it is a great rule of thumb that will save your butt most of the time).

Examples:

WRONG. Hey, there are the Smith's. I see three bear's in my car.

Happy birthday from the Jones's.

CORRECT. Hey, there are the Smiths. I see three bears in my car.

Happy birthday from the Joneses.

# Funny Quotes About WRITING

“Substitute “damn” every time you’re inclined to write “very”, your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.”

- Mark Twain

“If you have any young friends who aspire to become writers, the second greatest favor you can do them is to present them with copies of *The Elements of Style*. The first greatest, of course, is to shoot them now, while they’re happy.”

- Dorothy Parker

“A synonym is a word you use when you can’t spell the other one.”

- Baltasar Gracián

“It is perfectly okay to write garbage -- as long as you edit it brilliantly.”

- C.J. Cherryh



Shiho Pate [shihopate.com](http://shihopate.com)



JON ST. AMANT 2021

Jon St. Amant - [jonsaintamant.com](http://jonsaintamant.com)

Mark your calendar for

## 2021 WRITER ILLUSTRATOR DAY

### ≡ OCTOBER 2ND ≡

SCBWI SoCal Region presents a full day of excitement! Learn from, and speak with editors, agents, and art directors! Contests, awards and more! Keep a lookout for further information coming soon via email and the [website](#).

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

### NEWSLETTER CHAIR

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### MEMBER NEWS COORDINATOR Desi St. Amant

Desi St. Amant is a high school English teacher and an aspiring middle grade novelist.

Send your member news to her email at [dstamant07@gmail.com](mailto:dstamant07@gmail.com).

### PROOFREADER Christine Henderson

A two-time Author of the Month for her stories in Highlights magazine, Christine Henderson is currently revising her first middle grade novel. During the school year, Christine works as an instructional aide for the Corona-Norco school district. Twitter [@cm\\_henderson](https://twitter.com/cm_henderson).

### PROOFREADER AND TECH ADVISOR Niki Blois

Niki Blois is a YA writer who works in marketing and moonlights as an editor. She writes about witches, mermaids and traveling storytellers. Twitter [@nikiblois](https://twitter.com/nikiblois)

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