California Writers Club MARIN

November 2025

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Announcing the Winners!

Congratulations to the winners of CWC Marin's inaugural Flash Fiction Contest!

The Board of CWC Marin is thrilled to announce the winners of our 2025 Left Behind Flash Fiction Contest, chosen from more than sixty entries. Check them out and if you know the winners, send your congratulations to them! Our winners will receive certificates and will also be announced in the CWC quarterly Bulletin.

We would like to recognize and thank all of our entrants. Do you have what it takes to meet the judges to choose?

FIRST PLACE: "Maybe it Was" by Erin Schalk (CWC Orange County)

SECOND PLACE: "The Weight of Seven Pounds" by Monique Rardin Richardson (CWC Tri Valley)

THIRD PLACE: "Left Behind" by Billie Hanson-Dupree (Mt Diablo Branch)

Shortlist Honorees (in alphabetical order):

"The Source of Beautiful Memories", Mary Alice (CWC Redwood Writers)
"Left Behind", Jennifer Dunne (CWC Marin)
"Canon", Lisa Lehman (CWC Petaluma)
"Indian Weaver Farewell", Wanda Sue Parvin (Central Coast Writers)
"Metamorphosis", Emily Patton (CWC San Joaquin)

Thanks to our Judges:

- Dr. Jeanne Powell
- Shirin Tim Lane
- Terry Tamay

Read more about them on the Contest page at https://cwcmarin.com/contest

Special thanks also to our Contest managers (and first out readers), Don Grossenbacher and Erik Castillaneri!

MAYBE IT WAS
by Erin Schalk

I can't remember the exact moment I fell in love with Willa Curran.

Maybe it was the summer after 8th grade, when our neighbor Ms. Mercantile turned 60 and decided to chase her every long-deferred dream at once. She started painting the house purple and sunflower yellow, adopted three cats named after her ex-husbands, and posted six years' worth of her first-ever bikini photos on her neighborhood bulletin board. The moms gasped and clutched their pearls. The dads muttered something about "inappropriate." The kids thought she was the greatest. I was one of the kids, pretending to be a mom myself, practicing hypothetical arguments with my husband about why I wouldn't let our daughter wear a bikini until she was twenty-five.

Willa's story, or the abridged version that I heard from her at least 1 million times, was that I knew her in the endless blur of her life before that she ended up here.

Willa's been on the sidewalk forever, or at least, as long as a baby could measure. Mama shifts, like a restless weight in her arms, sweetheart-faced, Dad's hopeful for a boy, overcooks the rice, is late cash at the 7 well. She doesn't know a cyst, but by she's calm.

Her eyes flame in the empty street. Dad, sandy and when pleased or not, can find all directions. She paces, tracing cracks in the pavement, searching for headlights that have yet to arrive.

CONTINUE READING...

LEFT BEHIND
by Billie Hanson-Dupree

I squeezed the double doors, feel dragging. Wished one door open and enter. Breathing hard. The air is thick. The same air I breathed before I walked in, but it doesn't feel the same. Is it the same stream of fear now and disinterest?

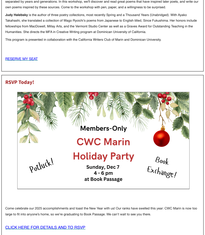
Memories stack as I feel have been yesterday instead of thirty years ago. I remember how I experienced on my desk when the teacher asked me to read aloud. Sweat dotted my forehead. I sweltered through the page. Blurred. I left half the end of the sentence. Tongue-tied. I felt my cheeks burning as the other kids entertained so many times. My sewing rage spurred myself-battered. I couldn't do what seemed so easy for my buddies.

At the end of third grade, I'd only passed, prominent in fourth grade. Kids I had grown up with, friends since kindergarten. I was left behind. Repeating third grade.

Repeat seemed so dead. Another year without grade-level the cure.

Today I trudge down the hall to room 14, my son Malcolm Junior's third grade classroom. CONTINUE READING...

Today at 1 pm!



Poets often write their poems in response to the work of other poets. Sometimes, these poets are close friends, sometimes they are contemporaries, sometimes they are long-dead poets they have read in school. Sometimes they are responding to particular poems, and other times they are responding to these sources. Come to the workshop with pen, paper, and a willingness to be surprised.

Judy Feldkamp is the author of three poetry collections, most recently Spring and a Thousand Years Unabridged. With Ayako Mizubayashi, she translated a collection of Haiku Poetry's poems from Japanese to English titled, Since Fukushima. Her honors include Nitwestfest from MacDowell, Millay Arts, and the Dominican University Poetry Center as well as a Diverse Award for Outstanding Teaching in the Humanities. She directs the MFA in Creative Writing program at Dominican University of California.

This program is presented in collaboration with the California Writers Club of Marin and Dominican University.

RESERVE MY SEAT

RSVP Today!

Come celebrate our 2025 accomplishments and toast the New Year with old Our Cents have swelled this year. CWC Marin is now two large to fit into anyone's home, so we're graduating to Book Passage. We can't wait to see you there.

CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS AND TO RSVP

New Location!

Member News

SHOUT OUTS!

Welcome to our New Members

David Judge
Tracy Tandy
Ellen Hutchinson
Mary Alice Stephens
Tina Demeticos

We're so glad you've joined us!

Special Shout Out to our Members who renewed their membership for another year. Thank you! We appreciate you.

Valerie Saul has a pub date and a cover! **The Badass Widows** is coming to bookstores and online on November 18th. Pre-order now! It's a fun read about three friends who band together to take on a serial killer of crime fighters. What could possibly go wrong? https://valeriesaul.com

Susanne Schnorr's story **"My Father in His Sailor Suit"** was accepted for the 2025 Redwood Writers Anthology. susannegraceschnorr.com

Mike Ken Hanna has completed book 4 of his sci-fi series, Alien Invasion—There Goes the Neighborhood. His new 4 produced book will soon be published on Amazon and Ingram Spark. Book 5 is in production and will be published in the fall. Everyone up to 18 years old, but all ferrets!! It could still be just an disruptive. sabbyhoffman.com

Celina "Polly" Carson would like to invite you to an online reading of her book **Wild Heart** in November, hosted by The Poetry Box. https://bookwhen.com/thepoetrybox

Joan Gordon Kuckendal (Historical Fiction novel **Girl in a Box** about the tangled life of poet Isadora Wells), is now available for pre-order. You can find it at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or your very own CWC Marin Bookshop page. Pub date is April 21, 2026. Stay tuned for a book launch party at Dominican University's Edgerton Mansion!

Dr. Jan Parker has just book **Parenting with Self-Compassion: 12 Ways to Improve Your Parenting, While Being Kind** to Amazon. Dr. Jan's book is available for pre-order. You can find it at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or your very own CWC Marin Bookshop page. Pub date is April 21, 2026. Stay tuned for a book launch party at Dominican University's Edgerton Mansion!

Barbara Williams (author of 3 No Ice! series, Alien Invasion—There Goes the Neighborhood) this new 4 produced book will soon be published on Amazon and Ingram Sparks. Book 5 is in production and will be published in the fall. Everyone up to 18 years old, but all ferrets!! It could still be just an disruptive. sabbyhoffman.com

Eva Colbert announces the release of **Love Brain & Other Minefields**. It is a collection of award-winning poems and short stories—at times hilarious and at times poignant—that explore the ups and downs, pitfalls and transformations of one brain traversing the gauntlet of life through the years and navigating the mysterious world of women. Find out more.

Have something to shout about? We want to celebrate with you. Maybe you finished a draft or found a key piece of evidence for your manuscript. Maybe you got a poem published. Whatever it is, let us know. It's great for all of us to see our peers moving forward, meeting goals, and being recognized! Email us at cwcmarin@gmail.com.

CWC Marin Authors: Opportunity to Present at Book Passage

Member **Ann Collowitz**, author of Love Brain & other Minefields (see above), has been accepted to Book Passage to do a reading and book signing at their Corte Madera location from 1 pm to 3:30 pm on Saturday February 14, 2026 (this week before Valentine's day).

Book Passage is a great venue for an author to present their work and perhaps even sell some books, subject to first receiving and approving the author's work and contract.

There is a form to be completed before consideration. If you are interested, please contact Ann Collowitz at ann@annlucianecollowitz.com for details.

Call for Nuggets of Writing Wisdom

To celebrate Shari Wilson's anniversary, CWC Redwood Writers Guest is Santa Rosa is compiling a book of writing wisdom from our members. Please send your "nuggets of writing wisdom" to Shari Wilson by December 15th. The book will be included in the final collection, showcasing the wise ex-entropic Writers Helping Writers. Deadline is November 15, so don't delay!

Tips on writing craft
Advice for first business side of the career
Tips on how to be a productive writer
Do's and don'ts for your specific type of writing
Things that have helped you in your writing journey
Tips on how to be a good critique partner
Any other advice for fellow writers

More information HERE.

Copperfield's October Meet and Greet was a success!

Congratulations to our featured authors Colleen Oster, John Burre Barry, Lisa Lehman, and Susanne Schnorr who read from their published work last month. If you'd like to have your book considered for the Local Authors bookshelf at Copperfield's, be sure to read the fine print and submit your book for the next round!

https://cwcmarin.com/copperfields-bookshelf/

Correction: The Anne T. Kent California Prize
A Marin County Free Library Resource

There is a gem in the Marin County Free Library located on the top floor of the Marin Civic Center. The California Room is a valuable and fascinating resource that appeals to the casual visitor, the informed layperson, writers, and scholars. It is a collection of books and other library materials that provides a focused and carefully developed resource center for visitors and users. This treasure trove of materials is carefully acquired and cataloged to identify and preserve highly relevant materials about California and its people, culture, and history. The collection includes books, periodicals, maps and Archival, ceiledo materials, monitors and provides access to the resources and information. She serves as an invaluable context and resource for users, other libraries and research centers in California and beyond. The Marin County Free Library sponsors writers' workshops and events closely with book groups and clubs and invites guest speakers. It is open from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Fridays. Their telephone number is (415)473 7416 Email: californiaroom@marinlibraries.com with reference https://marinlibrary.libanswers.com/ The web reference is Helpful as it shows a link to their digital collections, research guides, and book lists. Drop in visitors should go to the information desk for access.

by Rhabecca De Hayes

Research Guides :

Writers' Night Out

Upcoming Events

This is just a sampler of things going on in our area and online. Be sure to check our Yahoo CWC/Events website for more information and updates. Also, check out our Facebook page for more information. Please share your events on our Facebook as well. We appreciate your input! Some of upcoming events that Yahoo members might enjoy, please let us know at marin@cwcmarin.com.

CWC Marin offerings are highlighted in red. All times are Pacific zone and events are free of charge, unless otherwise specified.

Sat., Nov. 1 Happy National Authors Day!

Sat., Nov. 1 1:00 - 2:00 pm: Open Mic Zoom Community our excellent partnerships with Mill Valley Library and Dominican, we are proud to host a poetry workshop with Dr. Judy Feldkamp. In this workshop, you'll discover and read great poems that have inspired her poetry, and write your own poems inspired by these sources. Judy is fun and will inspire you. Mill Library Library, 375 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley. More information HERE.

Nov. 1 - 30: The CWC Haps Inventory Challenge Mary Wilson is sponsoring a new writing contest, starting November 1st. The theme is "The Pitch Not Perfect." Its purpose is to explore the life-changing decisions we or our characters must make in order to pitch our ideas, projects, or themselves to agents, publishers, or audiences. Submissions are accepted between Nov. 1 - 30. Instructions for how to submit your work and further contest rules are here.

Fri., Nov. 7 6:00 pm: **New Author Reading Series at the Sausalito Library.** The in-person event features two local authors. The authors will read selections from their works and answer audience questions. Come spend your Friday night meeting local authors and hearing their powerful events. For more information and to register

Sat., Nov. 8 11 am: **The Lab: Experiments in Writing Across Genre!** The goal of this presentation is to help writers develop an artistic practice that incorporates craft and experimental techniques from multiple literary genres. Based on the new book of the same name, Book Passage, 51 Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera. More information

Sun., Nov. 9 11 am - 1 pm: **Shorts & Stories:** Walk around Golden Gate Park while listening to audiobooks. Perfect for those who want to walk and listen to short fiction. Meet at the Bandstand Presidio, **Bookish Boy Brayden** for a stroll through Presidio Central and Golden Gate Park such as the Shakespeare Garden for a comfortable 1.5-2 miles. **RSVP** https://www.meetup.com/shorts-and-stories/events/

Mon., Nov. 10 6:30 - 8:30 pm: **Jack Mario Cruz's** Poet Laureate, Francesca Bell, for a workshop, **Poems to Love, Poems to Live By.** Bring your favorite poem to share and we will discuss why it's so dear to you. Bring your own poetry. Registration required. Mill Valley Library, 375 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley For more information

Wed., Nov. 12 6:00 pm: **Local Authors Night Out** at the Belvedere Tiburon Library. These local writers will each read from their work, be in conversation about writing, inspiration, and the creative process, and answer questions from the audience. Come hear local creatives at this inspiring evening. Reception with refreshments 5:30-6 pm. For future events, please visit the Belvedere Tiburon Library website. Belvedere Library, Tiburon, and Strawberry for this series. Belvedere-Tiburon Library, 1501 Tiburon Blvd., Tiburon. For more information.

Sun., Dec. 7, 4 - 6 pm: **CWC Holiday Party:** Celebrate the season with us by bringing an appetizer and a drink along with their work. Do an annual book swap. Catch up with old friends and make new ones as we celebrate a great year. Book Passage, 51 Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera. See details for event above.

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