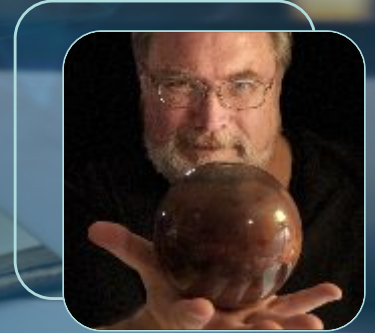


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Media TalkBack

THE ART OF WRITING AND STORYTELLING



Skill India
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The Art of Writing and Storytelling

Table of Contents

- 01 **Poetry - A Rhythmic Literature**
- 02 **The Origin Of Poetry**
- 03 **Poetic Forms**
Haiku, Free Verse poems, Cinquains, Epic Poems, Acrostic Poems, Sonnets, Ballad Poems
- 04 **Prose - Introduction and Function**
- 05 **Types of Prose**

Not many media loudspeakers are announcing much about how the game is played in the writing world. Honestly, in the era of explosive social media, the need for such an inclusive feature of writers is even more relevant and enriching... The connect to actual knowledge corpus shall be nothing but solidified. Many congratulations to Media Talk back! You allow writing and writers to talk back, literally.

- Urmi Rathod





06 **Difference between Prose and Poetry**

07 **The Power of Storytelling**

08 **Writing Styles**

Narrative Writing, Analytical Writing, Persuasive Writing, Expository Writing

09 **Boost Your Creative Writing Skills**

10 **Career Opportunities for Writers**

11 **Exclusive Interviews by**

Mr. Jonathan Maberry (NY Best-Selling Author and 5 Times Bram Stoker Award Winner), Mr. Anjum Rajabali (Well-known Indian Screenplay Writer) Ms. Pubali Chaudhuri (Well-known Indian Screenplay Writer), Ms. Ruby Dhal (Author & Speaker), Ms. Aparna Athreya (Founder, StoryTriangle), Ms. Indira Chandrasekhar (Founder, Out of Print Magazine), Ms. Medha Sharma (A Perpetual Paradox), Ms. Nidhi Agarwal (Founder, Stories and Beyond), Ms. Deepika Murthy (Pika Nani), Ms. Lauren Bowman (Author and Poet), Ms. Shilpa Goel (Author), Ms. Megha Rao (Performance Poet), Ms. Vinati Bhola (Writings of Vinati), Mr. Khwaja Musadiq (Poet of Blues), Mr. Mohit Wadhwa (Founder, Writers Pocket), Ms. Urmi Rathod (Urmi Rumi), Ms. Vaishali Shroff (Author and Storyteller), Ms. Mukti Masih (Co-Founder, AVM Pictures) and Punarmrityu



It is tremendous that Media Talk Back, the monthly magazine of the Media and Entertainment Skills Council, is drawing attention to the Writing Industry and the importance of writing in the Media and Entertainment Industries. Such focus may well result in interesting collaborations between different industries in media and entertainment.

- **Indira Chandrasekhar**





Message from **Chairman**

Mr. Subhash Ghai

Known as a Showman of Indian Cinema; Mr. Ghai is an Indian Film Maker, producer, Director, Script Writer, renowned Educationist. He received the National Film Award for Social film Iqbal. He is an Executive chairman ad founder of MuktaArts.

MESC is a new revolution & evolution to the whole education system of India with full emphasis for skillbased education rather than memory based education.

It's one of the finest initiatives by the Govt. of India and I'm proud to be associated with MESC with a serious responsibility to develop a new generation of skilled man in every field. It is especially important in our sector of Media & Entertainment, to explore & think beyond obvious. I'm humbled & thankful to everyone who has entrusted me with this great responsibility of taking the council in the right direction for the next generation and I am sure that we have a good team to achieve our targets at the earliest.

I also would like to take this opportunity to motivate all the aspirants in the Writing and Storytelling Industry and would also, urge them to keep themselves constantly engaged in the industry as professionals and mentor to groom the new talent. I strongly believe the future of the entire M&E industry lies in the way we keep on skilling, upskilling, and reskilling our own self. Let the passion and dedication continue to make India the Skill Capital of the World

Message from **CEO**

Mr. Mohit Soni

I extend my gratitude and regards towards everyone who supported and contributed in the creation of the 22nd edition of the Media TalkBack monthly magazine - The Art of Writing and Storytelling which is specifically focused on one of the Most Important and Surreal Part of Media Industry.

Through this, you will get an insight on one of the biggest aspects of the Media & Entertainment sector with informative articles, information on career opportunities and one on one exclusive interview with some of the top professionals from the industry providing valuable lessons from their own journey, upcoming projects, do and don'ts to have a successful career, etc.



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Sumit Bhardwaj

Poetry

A Rhythmic Literature



Poetry, literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm.

Poetry is a vast subject, as old as history and older, present wherever religion is present, possibly—under some definitions—the primal and primary form of languages themselves.

Poetry is the other way of using language. Perhaps in some hypothetical beginning of things it was the only way of using language or simply was language tout court, prose being the derivative and younger rival. Both poetry and language are fashionably thought to have belonged to ritual in early agricultural societies; and poetry in particular, it has been claimed, arose at first in the form of magical spells recited to ensure a good harvest.



The Origin of Poetry

Poetry has a long history - dating back to prehistoric times with hunting poetry in Africa, and to panegyric and elegiac court poetry of the empires of the Nile, Niger, and Volta River valleys.

Who wrote the first work of poetry, and is it something that a collector can seek out in an antiquarian bookstore? The Epic of Gilgamesh often is cited as one of the earliest works of epic poetry, dating back to the 18th century B.C. Consisting of Sumerian poems, it's a text that was discovered through many different Babylonian tablet versions during archaeological excavations. Other examples of early epic poems might include the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the latter of which has become an important narrative in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology throughout regions of Asia.

Petrarca, for whom the Petrarchan sonnet is named, is perhaps one of the most famous early writers of the sonnet. Following his work in the 14th century, other poets created variations of the sonnet, but it became best known as an English poetic form through the work of William Shakespeare in the 16th century.

Where did the poetic form lead after the sonnet? Elizabethan poetry of the 1500s soon shifted into Restoration poetry and a marked turn away from the sonnet.

Early poems in the Eurasian continent evolved from folk songs such as the Chinese Shijing; or from a need to retell oral epics, as with the Sanskrit Vedas, the Zoroastrian Gathas, and the Homeric epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey. Ancient Greek attempts to define poetry, such as Aristotle's Poetics, focused on the uses of speech in rhetoric, drama, song, and comedy. Later attempts concentrated on features such as repetition, verse form, and rhyme, and emphasized the aesthetics which distinguish poetry from more objectively-informative prosaic writing.

Other ancient epic poetry includes the Greek epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey; the Avestan books, the Gathic Avesta and the Yasna; the Roman national epic, Virgil's Aeneid (written between 29 and 19 BCE); and the Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Epic poetry, including the Odyssey, the Gathas, and the Indian Vedas, appears to have been composed in poetic form as an aid to memorization and oral transmission in ancient societies.

Poetic Forms

Haiku Poems

Traditionally, haiku poems are three-line stanzas with a 5/7/5 syllable count. This form of poetry also focuses on the beauty and simplicity found in nature. As its popularity grew, the 5/7/5 formula has often been broken. However, the focus remains the same - simple moments in life. For more, take a look at these rules for writing haiku.

The haiku developed from the hokku, the opening three lines of a longer poem known as a tanka. . The form gained distinction early in the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) when the great master Bashō elevated the hokku to a highly refined and conscious art. He began writing what was considered this “new style” of poetry in the 1670s, while he was in Edo (now Tokyo).

For Example - Matsuo Basho

An old silent pond...

A frog jumps into the pond,

splash! Silence again.

Autumn moonlight-

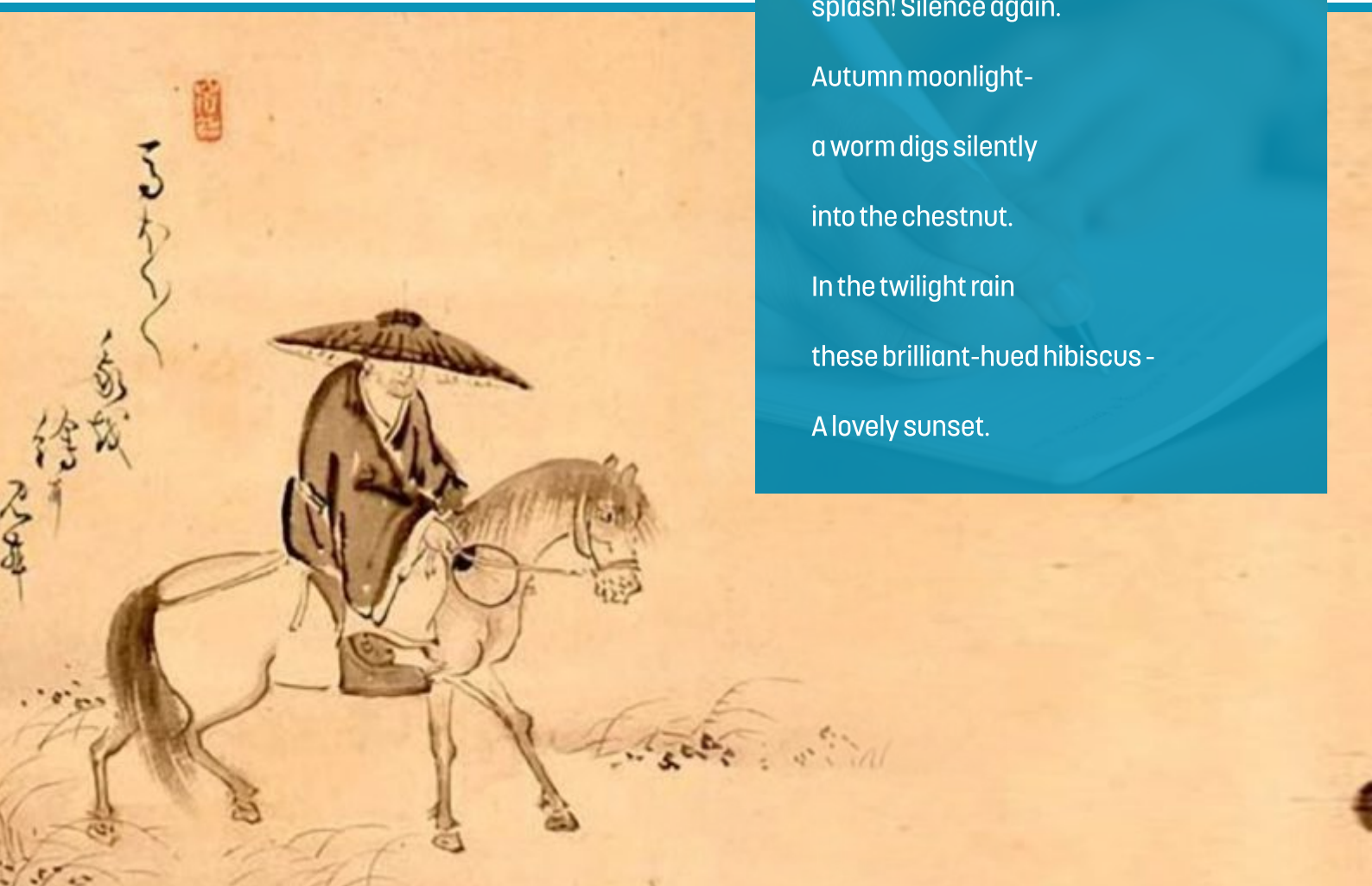
a worm digs silently

into the chestnut.

In the twilight rain

these brilliant-hued hibiscus -

A lovely sunset.



Free Verse Poems

Free verse poems are the least defined. In fact, they're deliberately irregular, taking on an improvisational bent. There's no formula, no pattern. Rather, the writer and reader must work together to set the speed, intonation, and emotional pull.

Free verse contains some elements of form, including the poetic line, which may vary freely; rhythm; strophes or strophic rhythms; stanzaic patterns and rhythmic units or cadences. It is said that verse is free "when it is not primarily obtained by the metered line.

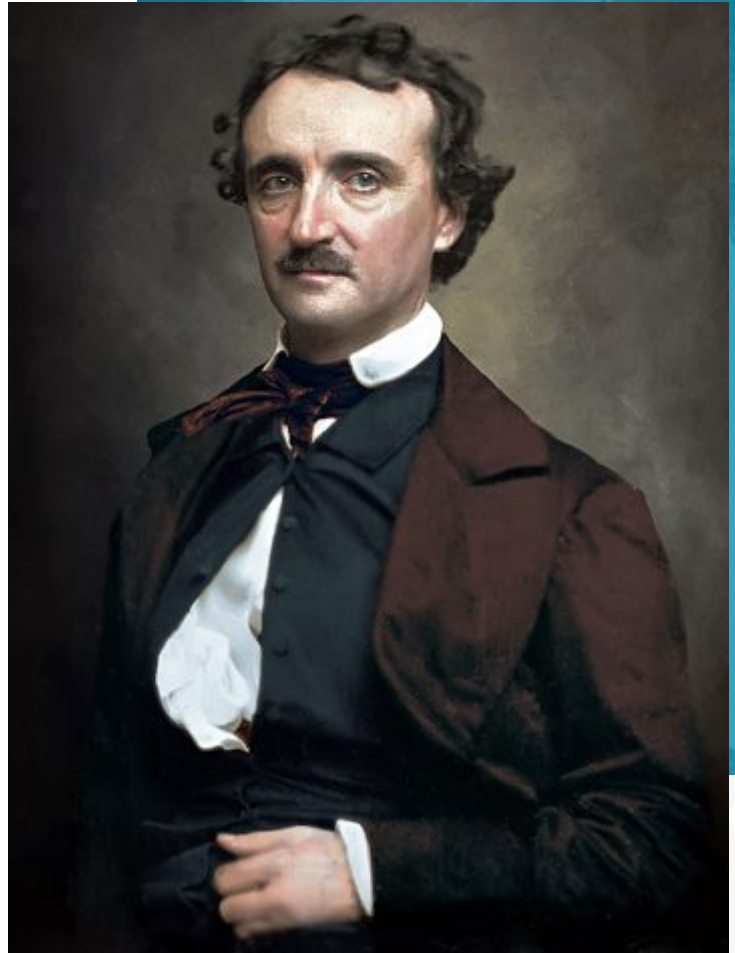


Cinquains

A cinquain is a five-line poem inspired by the Japanese haiku. There are many different variations of cinquain including American cinquains, didactic cinquains, reverse cinquains, butterfly cinquains and crown cinquains.

For Example To Helen by Edgar Allan Poe

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

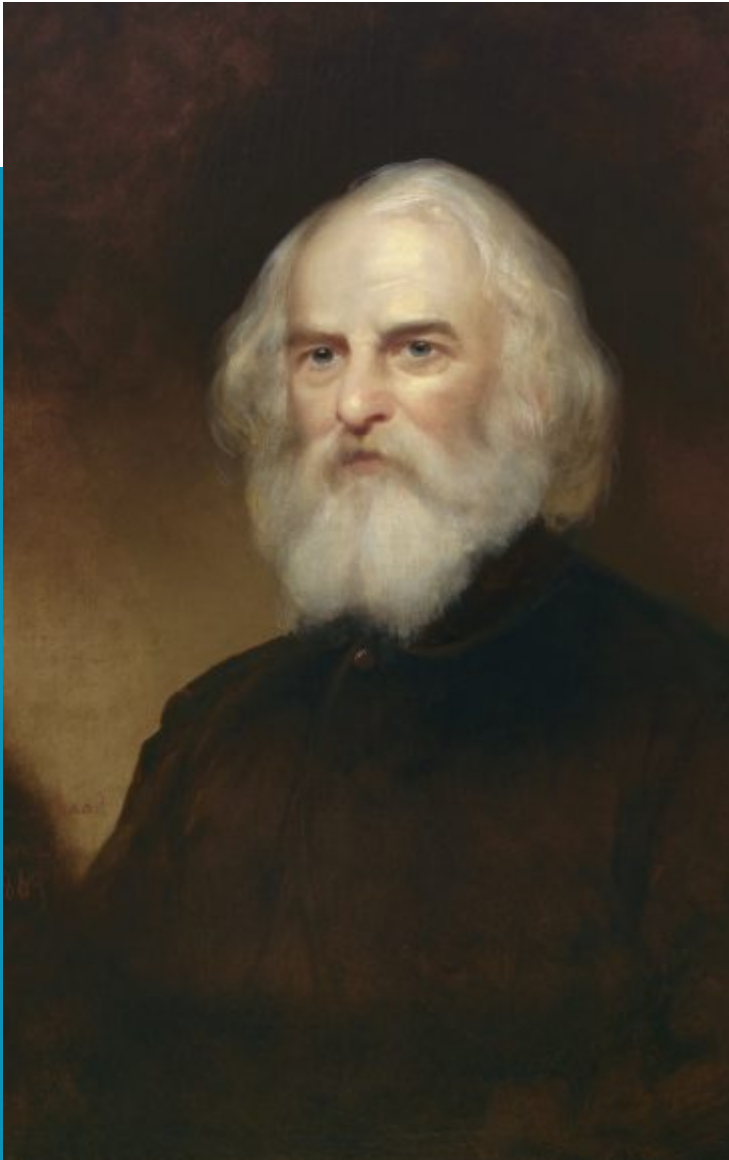


Format for writing a Cinquains

- ★ Line 1: One word (a noun, the subject of the poem)
- ★ Line 2: Two words (adjectives that describe the subject in line 1)
- ★ Line 3: Three words (-ing action verbs-participles-that relate to the subject in line 1)
- ★ Line 4: Four words (a phrase or sentence that relates feelings about the subject in line 1)
- ★ Line 5: One word (a synonym for the subject in line 1 or a word that sums it up) Alternative Line 5 for older poets: Five words (a phrase or sentence that further relates feelings about the subject in line 1)

Epic poems

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.



For Example -
"The Song of Hiawatha"
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

By the shore of Gitchie Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the doorway of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

An archetypal epic poem typically:

- ★ Is written in a formal style
- ★ Contains third-person narration and an omniscient narrator
- ★ Frequently invokes a Muse who provides inspiration and guidance to the poet
- ★ Frequently invokes a Muse who provides inspiration and guidance to the poet
- ★ Takes place in an era beyond the range of any living memory
- ★ Typically includes a journey across a variety of settings and terrains
- ★ Features a hero with immense bravery and resolve
- ★ Includes obstacles and circumstances that are otherworldly and even supernatural—pitting the hero against nearly insurmountable odds
- ★ Looks with concern to the future of a civilization or culture



Acrostic Poems

Acrostic poems, also known as name poems, spell out names or words with the first letter in each line. While the author is doing this, they're describing someone or something they deem important.

An acrostic is mostly applied in poetry, but can also be used in prose or word puzzle. This word or alphabet is often connected to the theme of the poem. It is deliberately inserted to make readers discover the layered message. It also acts as a mnemonic device that can quicken the pace of the memorization process. Acrostic poetry can be written in any meter, or free verse form, with or without a rhyme scheme. However, the most common types of acrostic poems are those in which the initial letter of each line forms a word, and is often capitalized.



For Example - "Alexis" by Nicholas Gordon

Alexis seems quite shy and somewhat frail,

Leaning, like a tree averse to light,

Evasively away from her delight.

X-rays, though, reveal a sylvan sprite,

Sonnets

Although William Shakespeare sensationalized sonnets, the word, "sonetto" is actually Italian for "a little sound or song." This form has grabbed poets by the heart for centuries. It began as a 14-line poem written in iambic pentameter. Although flourishes have been made over time, the general principle remains the same.

For Example -

Sonnet 116, from the master himself, William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove.

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

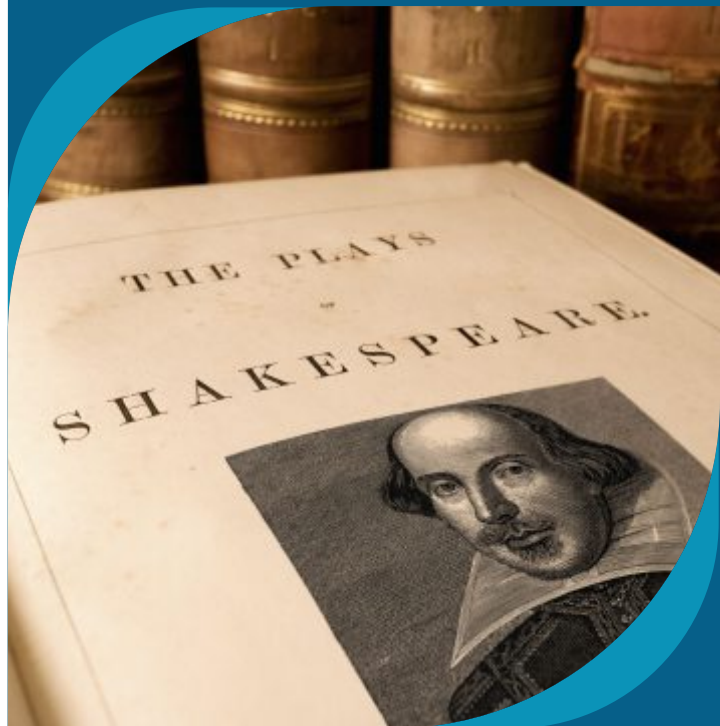
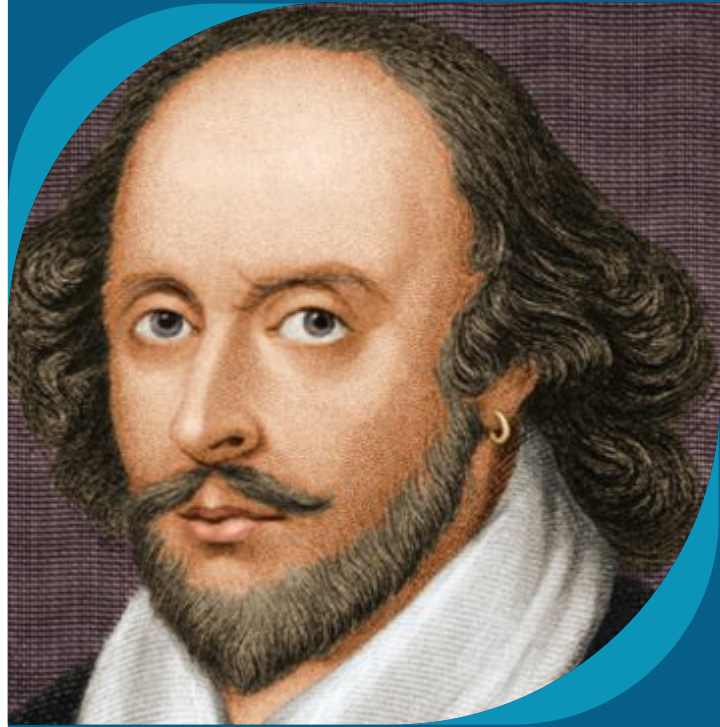
Within his bending sickle's compass come;

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me prov'd,

I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.





Ballad Poems

Ballad poems also tell a story, like epic poems do. However, ballad poetry is often based on a legend or a folk tale. These poems may take the form of songs, or they may contain a moral or a lesson.

The Importance of Ballad

Ballads are perhaps the most ancient of all literary forms - the earliest works of literature that we know of are all mythological epic poems that tell the stories of the culture that produced them. Today, a ballad is still a great way to combine two separate forms of literature - like a novel or play, the ballad tells a story with characters and a plot line; but at the same time, it has the meter and rhyme of a poem. This combination of art forms lends ample opportunity for creativity and individual expression.

For Example - The Ballad of Reading Gaol by Oscar Wilde

He did not wear his scarlet coat,

For blood and wine are red,

And blood and wine were on his hands

When they found him with the dead,

The poor dead woman whom he loved,

And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men

In a suit of shabby grey;

A cricket cap was on his head,

And his step seemed light and gay;

But I never saw a man who looked

So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked

With such a wistful eye

Upon that little tent of blue

Which prisoners call the sky,

And at every drifting cloud that went

With sails of silver by.

Prose



What is Prose?

Prose is a form of written (or spoken) language that usually exhibits a natural flow of speech and grammatical structure—an exception is the narrative device stream of consciousness. Works of philosophy, history, economics, etc., journalism, and most fiction (an exception is the verse novel), are examples of works written in prose. It differs from most traditional poetry, where the form has a regular structure, consisting verse based on metre and rhyme. However, developments in twentieth century literature, including free verse concrete poetry, and prose poetry, have led to the idea of poetry and prose as two ends on a spectrum. rather than firmly distinct from each other; the American poet T. S. Eliot noted, whereas "the distinction between verse and prose is clear, the distinction between poetry and prose is obscure"

What Is the Function of Prose in Writing?

Fulfill a story's promise - In literature, the basic purpose of prose in writing is to convey an idea, deliver information, or tell a story. Prose is the way a writer fulfills her basic promise to a reader to deliver a story with characters, setting, conflict, a plot, and a final payoff.

Create a voice- Each writer has their own way of using language, called a writer's voice. Using prose in different ways helps writers craft and show off this voice. Take Charles Dickens' voice in *David Copperfield* as an example: "New thoughts and hopes were whirling through my mind, and all the colors of my life were changing."

Builds rapport through familiarity- Prose is often conversational in tone. This familiarity helps connect readers to a story and its characters. Jane Austen was known for her straightforward, accessible prose. Take this line from *Emma*: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her."



Types of Prose

Nonfictional prose- Prose that is a true story or factual account of events or information is nonfiction. Textbooks, newspaper articles, and instruction manuals all fall into this category. Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, composed entirely of journal excerpts, recounts the young teen's experience of hiding with her family in Nazi-occupied Netherlands during World War II.

Fictional prose- A literary work of fiction. This is the most popular type of literary prose, used in novels and short stories, and generally has characters, plot, setting, and dialogue.

Heroic prose- A literary work that is either written down or preserved through oral tradition, but is meant to be recited. Heroic prose is usually a legend or fable. The twelfth-century Irish tales revolving around the mythical warrior Finn McCool are an example of heroic prose.



Prose poetry- Poetry written in prose form. This literary hybrid can sometimes have rhythmic and rhyming patterns. French poet Charles Baudelaire wrote prose poems, including "Be Drunk" which starts off: "And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace or the green grass of a ditch, in the mournful solitude of your room."



What Is the Difference Between Prose and Poetry?

Prose

- ☑ Follows natural patterns of speech and communication
- ☑ Has a grammatical structure with sentences and paragraphs
- ☑ Uses everyday language
- ☑ Sentences and thoughts continue across lines



Poetry

- ☑ Traditional poetry has deliberate patterns, such as rhythm and rhyme
- ☑ Many poems have a formal metrical structure—repeating patterns of beats
- ☑ Incorporates more figurative language
- ☑ Poems visually stand out on a page with narrow columns, varying line lengths, and more white space on a page than prose
- ☑ Deliberate line breaks

The Power of Storytelling

Everyone loves a good story. And that's not just my opinion – researchers have shown that our brains are hardwired to enjoy and remember stories. Many blog posts recommend storytelling to investors, but they often fall short on one crucial question: how do you tell a good story?

Every great story follows a structure which involves “A Setup, The Struggle and The Solution”.



The Setup

Ask your audience questions: Questions are powerful because they create a curiosity gap. For your questions to land, make sure you use the word 'you' in them.

- ☑ Have you ever met...?'
- ☑ Do you know much about...?'
- ☑ Hands up if you have ever...! (Great for groups.)

Place your audience in the scene: Your goal isn't to retell; you want your audience to relive it with you. Place them into the scene with you, to fire up their imagination.

- ☑ 'I was with a group of people.' versus
- ☑ If you had been there, in that group of people.' or
- ☑ Imagine yourself in that group of people.'

Make the characters relatable: Every story has characters. They could be your teammates, your customers, even your competitors. To make a character relatable, you can compare them to someone your audience is likely to know; perhaps their boss, a common entrepreneur profile, or even a celebrity.

- ☑ Cindy is a bit like Monica from Friends, in that.



The Struggle



Make the problem seem familiar: Just like comparing the characters to familiar people, you can compare the problem to something your audience is familiar with. This is why you have to do your homework on your investors – so you can use the information to relate to them.

☑ It's just like when you...!

Replace 'I' and 'we' with 'you': When you talk about your business, there's a tendency to overuse the word 'I'. A powerful technique of storytelling is to replace 'I' with 'you'. For example, compare the following sentences:

☑ I saw this all the time.'versus

☑ You see this all the time.'Or:

☑ When I spoke to other CEOs, I learned that . . . !
versus

☑ 'When you speak with other CEOs, you'll learn that .

Use dialogue in the present tense: Dialogue makes people seem real – and people like to hear about other people. It also lets you take things from the past and talk about them in the present tense, which creates a sense of urgency. Here are a couple of examples to see the difference:

☑ I knew I had to do something.'versus

☑ My board member looked straight at me and said, "Dave, you have to do something!"

Use specific details: Statistics are attributes of a sample. But in your story, you want to present real, observed values. Details about location, time and money can bring your story to life. Again, some examples to contrast:

☑ Customers take on average 2–3 hours to . . .'versus

☑ James actually sat down with a stopwatch and measured how much time it took to . . . and it took him – an expert – 2 hours and 48 minutes.'

Use the 'pregnant pause': It's in moments of silence that the audience can really check in with their feelings. Use a dramatic pause to emphasize the significance of a certain point in the story:

☑ She came to me in tears. [Pause] That's when I knew...!

Prompt the audience to feel: The goal of your story is to create an emotional impact, not just a logical one. So at the most emotionally intense moments in your story, ask your audience to imagine how they would feel in that situation.

☑ How would you feel if you . . . ?'

☑ Imagine what it feels like when . . . !



The Solution

Introduce the solution as a question: Before you tell them about your product or solution, ask the question, 'What if ...?' Again, open the curiosity gap before you fill it.

- ☑ What if there were a way to...?'

Let someone else be the hero: Don't assume that you have to be the hero of your story. Giving credit for the solution to someone else can be a powerful way to come off as both humble and relatable to your audience. You can credit a mentor, a book, a teammate, another product, or even a stranger.

- ☑ It was at that point that her husband, sitting behind her, chimed in and said something profound...!

Physical gestures: Using motion – hand gestures, facial expressions, body posture, even just walking around – is an advanced technique. However, done correctly it can add to the narrative and make your story even more memorable:

- ☑ We took our client's productivity from 60% [hand position one] to 80% [hand position two].'



Career Opportunities for Writers

Contrary to popular beliefs, writing is a lucrative and vast career with multitude of specialties within every single type. People who have developed writing skills have opportunities open for them in fields and industries such as...Content writing for magazines, scientific journals, e-commerce and newspapers, academic writing, technical writing of IT industries and others, copy-writing, social media writing, Seo writing, ghost writing for authors, translating novels, poems and short stories, novel writing, poetry writing, writing scripts and screenplay for movies and TV series, short story writing, play writing for theatrical performances, and the list simply does not end.



If you're planning to make a career as a writer, there are so many job roles that you would find fascinating. Although, everyone wants to write about different things but you'd have to start somewhere. Apart from being a poet, author or blog writer, there are corporate job opportunities that you can look forward to. Below mentioned are some career opportunities for those of you trying to build a career in writing –

Reporter

Primary duties: A reporter researches news stories and then writes about their findings for news publications, including online publications, newspapers and magazines, to inform the public of what is happening in the world and their local area. Reporters working for broadcast stations may also present their stories on television or over radio. Many reporters specialize in a niche area of news, such as sports or entertainment.

Requirements: Many reporters have a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, Communications or a related field. In these programs, they develop skills in writing and editing, storytelling, audience engagement and research. Those who specialize in broadcast reporting may improve skills in public speaking and on-camera presence as well.

Grant writer

Primary duties: A grant writer identifies sources for funding and writes persuasive proposals to secure those funds for their foundation or non-profit organization. They must follow each donor's grant requirements when developing their applications.

Columnist: Many reporters have a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, Communications or a related field. In these programs, they develop skills in writing and editing, storytelling, audience engagement and research. Those who specialize in broadcast reporting may improve skills in public speaking and on-camera presence as well. as fashion, politics or sports. In addition to their work writing columns, many columnists also write books and share their expert opinions on television and radio programs.

Requirements: These writing professionals may earn a bachelor's degree in English, journalism, communications or a discipline related to their niche writing field, such as political science or fine arts. Higher education is not always required as some columnists may secure employment after years of working in the field they write about.



Communications officer

Primary duties: A communications officer follows their employer's marketing plan and branding guidelines to write promotional content, including press releases, brochures and newsletters. They must use their employer's preferred voice when creating their content.

Requirements: These writing professionals may earn a bachelor's degree in English, journalism, communications or a discipline related to their niche writing field, such as political science or fine arts. Higher education is not always required as some columnists may secure employment after years of working in the field they write about.

Requirements: Many social media marketers have a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, Communications, Public Relations or a related field. They are typically required to have a strong command of a variety of social media platforms, including the best practices for each. Depending on an employer's needs, this role may be entry-level and accept candidates with limited professional experience but relevant skills in planning and organization, copywriting and customer service.

Social media manager

Primary duties: A social media manager develops a social media strategy for their clients or employees in keeping with business brand guidelines. They then write original social media posts and leave comments on behalf of businesses to engage with their followers. Many also utilize analysis tools that track audience engagement and collect user data, which they then use to optimize their content to better fit the needs of their audience and market to new users as well.

Communication specialist

Primary duties: A communication specialist checks and coordinates corporate and marketing materials before they are distributed. They make sure all content is free of errors, factually accurate and written in their employer's preferred tone and voice. While they do not usually write new content, they are a key part of the writing process.

Requirements: These professionals typically earn a Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Marketing, Technical Writing or a related field. They should have excellent editing skills with respect to spelling and grammar as well as content organization.



Types of Writing Styles

Narrative Writing

Writing that is characterized by a main character in a setting who engages with a problem or event in a significant way.

Things to keep in mind -

- ✓ Character organization
- ✓ Crafting Entertaining Beginnings
- ✓ Elaborative Plot
- ✓ Suspense and Conflict
- ✓ Interesting Theme
- ✓ Satisfactory ending

Analytical Writing -

Analytical writing shows the thought processes you went through to arrive at a given conclusion and discusses the implications of this. Analytical writing usually follows a brief description and focuses on answering questions like: 'why?' 'how?' and 'so what?'

Things to keep in mind -

- ✓ Pro/con statements
- ✓ Choose a side
- ✓ Relate examples to your reasoning
- ✓ Make a concession point
- ✓ Never agree with the argument

Expository Writing -

Expository writing is used to provide a reader with explanations, the steps in a process, or reasons to back a thesis. It is defined by its logical sequencing, thesis, and transitions. It is written with the assumption that the reader does not have any prior knowledge about the topic that is being discussed.

Things to keep in mind

- ✓ Consistent Structure
- ✓ Present a clear thesis
- ✓ Clear presentation of Steps and Reasons
- ✓ Conclusion

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive Writing - Persuasive writing intends to convince readers to believe in an idea or opinion and to do an action. Many writings such as criticisms, reviews, reaction papers, editorials, proposals, advertisements, and brochures use different ways of persuasion to influence readers.

Things to keep in mind

- ✓ Choose a side
- ✓ Understand the audience
- ✓ Do the research
- ✓ Identify the most convincing evidence

Boost Your Creative Writing Skills



Don't underestimate your reader

Before you tell them about your product or solution, ask the question, 'What if . . . ?' Again, open the curiosity gap before you fill it.

Edit!

Don't rely on your computer's spell checker. If you make a typo, the computer will not warn you if you've still spelt a valid word.

Give Your Characters Life

Characters are vital to your story so treat them with care and give them that breath of life that you, the writer, have the power to give. Give them unique characteristics; make them believable by making them have a purpose, motivation and conflicts to resolve.

Use Strong Words

You want your writing to sound decisive, so use words that get the point across.

Show Don't Tell.

Fiction is for entertainment, so entertain your reader! Give them an excuse to escape into the reality that you have created. Show your reader the world that you've created, don't just tell them about it.

Check your Commas

While commas can be effective many inexperienced writers tend to sprinkle their sentences with them.

Grab their Attention from the Start

You get the reader's attention and reel them in for the rest of the story. Try something powerful to kick-start your story.

Give Your Reader a Satisfactory Ending

You can leave the reader speculating or wondering why at the end of your story, but try to resolve as much as you can. If your reader finishes the last sentence and is still asking questions about what happened to who and why, then you still need to tie up the loose ends.

Sober up

Think of writing as going out to a bar: you go out, the lighting is dim, it's noisy, maybe you drink too much but you meet a person who's attractive,

Challenge Yourself

Are you trying too hard to write in a specific genre or style? Do you only write short stories or novels or poems or movie scripts? Give that creative muscle a workout and try something different. It will be a refreshing exercise for your mind and you might be surprised by the result. If you don't succeed then you have still learnt a valuable lesson.

Advertising manager

Primary Duties: An advertising manager writes marketing plans for their clients or employer and helps creatives create advertisements according to the plan. They work closely with art departments and copywriters to develop advertising content.

Requirements: Advertising managers usually have a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, Advertising, Communications, Public Relations or a related discipline. Since they are typically in charge of leading teams of creative professionals, employers may require candidates to have relevant professional experience in marketing and advertising, copywriting or designing, in addition to some leadership experience as well.



Copywriter

Primary duties: A copywriter writes copy for a variety of materials and mediums, including blogs, online articles, websites, advertisements and social media. They rely on their engaging and persuasive writing abilities to encourage consumers to use a business' products or services.

Requirements: Many copywriters have at least a Bachelor's Degree in English, Journalism, Communications or a related field. Some may be able to secure employment without a degree but with a strong portfolio of written work. These professionals are often required to have skills in writing and editing, storytelling and audience engagement.

Public relations manager

Primary duties: A public relations manager works to make their clients or employer maintain a positive public image. They write press releases, speeches and marketing content to encourage good press and counter negative publicity. They also encourage other writers, including journalists and bloggers, to write positive content about their clients or employer.

Requirements: These professionals typically earn a Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations, Business, Communications or another related discipline. Many go on to pursue a master's degree in those disciplines or others, including fundraising, public health or nonprofit management to further refine their practice and increase their earning potential.

Executive assistant

Primary duties: An executive assistant performs administrative tasks for a business executive, which can often involve writing. Some of the things executive assistants are responsible for include writing briefs, preparing documents for business reports and writing thank you notes for business contacts.

Requirements: Many employers may prefer candidates to have a bachelor's degree, though candidates who have years of relevant experience can secure employment with a high school diploma or GED or an associate degree. These professionals typically use skills in writing and editing, customer service, research and audience engagement when completing writing tasks.

Content marketer

Primary duties: A content marketer spends most of their time writing branded articles, including blog posts, scripts for web series and social media posts. The content they create may be obviously centered around a business or be more subtle, incorporating mentions of the employer or client in more general related content.

Requirements: These professionals may work for a company or in a freelance capacity. For a company, their employer may require candidates to have a Bachelor's Degree in Technical Writing, Marketing, Communications or a related field. Those who work freelance may find clients without having a degree but a strong portfolio of work.

Proposal writer

Primary duties: This professional assesses requests for proposals issued by businesses and writes proposals to help their employer secure contracts. These persuasive documents must demonstrate how a proposal writer's employer can meet another company's needs.

Requirements: Proposal writers are typically required to have a Bachelor's Degree in English, Journalism, Communications or another related field. Some may complete coursework in fields related to the type of proposal writing they do, such as business, healthcare, nonprofit organization or politics.

Content strategist

Primary duties: A content strategist develops, creates and manages online content including website content and blogs. These professional writing jobs require a good understanding of search engine optimization and website analytics and how to apply them to make online content engaging and effective.



Requirements: These professionals typically secure employment with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Marketing or a related field, as well as a few years of relevant experience in planning campaigns, conducting market research and applying analytics to content creation.

Professor

Primary duties: Professors lecture university or college students in their chosen discipline and spend some of their time writing lesson plans, conducting independent research and writing about their findings for their own or academic journals. Professors also write grant proposals to secure funding for their research.

Requirements: Most professors are required to have a doctorate in their field. Some educational institutions require publication in peer-reviewed journals or other relevant publications, as well as teaching and/or relevant field experience.

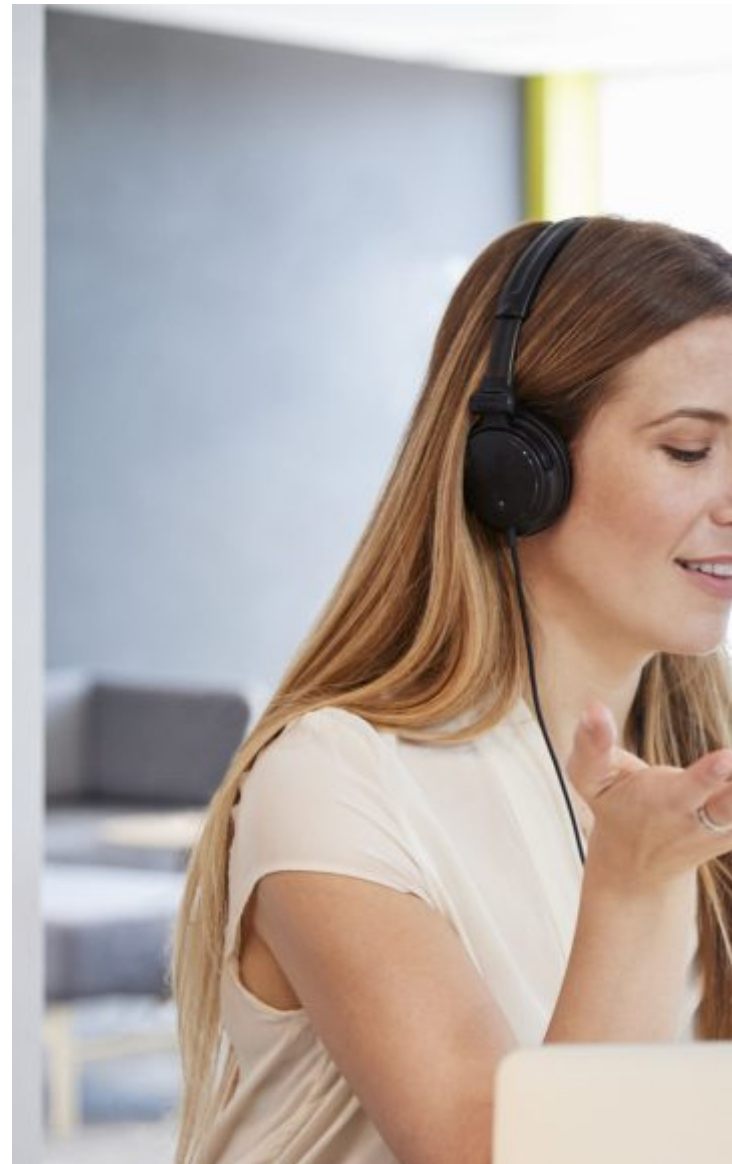
Director of communications

Primary duties: A director of communications is responsible for developing a business' communications goals, branding and style guidelines. They also oversee and help create content that follows these requirements, including press releases, newsletters and other marketing materials. It is one of the high-level careers in writing that pay well.

Requirements: These professionals are required to have at minimum a bachelor's degree, though most have a master's degree or higher in public relations, communications, marketing, business or another relevant discipline. Also, many employers prefer candidates to have a certain amount of relevant professional experience.

There are more than many opportunities that one could not imagine that you would find in this field, but one requires to sincerely look for it. In today's fast-paced age of internet, content has become an important way for brands to promote and endorse their company and products. And

this requires hiring employees with efficient writing skills and knowledge base. On the internet, the content is the core and everything revolves around it. Therefore, creating valuable and engaging content is what everybody is looking for, and this is where writing is required. Every single activity of planning a project requires clear ideation and jotting down of a plan, which is an on-going process for writers: reading, thinking and writing. Candidates who have creative inclination are required in every type of industry, hence, the opportunities are massively growing.





Before you start your literary career, read literary journals and magazines, read literary fiction by Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Albert Camus, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, Milan Kundera, J.D. Salinger, Virginia Woolf, as well as Ian Ryand, Stephen Kings, and other writers. Also, as important as reading those classics are, do not miss out on the current novels out there in the market like *The God Of Small Things*, *White Tiger*, *Life Of Pi*, *Eat Pray Love*, *P.S. I Love You*, etc. For every genre that you would want to write in you would also need to read the authors of those respective genres.

JONATHAN MABERRY

NY BEST SELLING AUTHOR

JONATHAN MABERRY is a New York Times best-selling and five-time Bram Stoker Award-winning author, anthology editor, comic book writer, magazine feature writer, playwright, content creator and writing teacher/lecturer. He was named one of the Today's Top Ten Horror Writers. His books have been sold to more than two-dozen countries.

He writes in several genres. His young adult fiction includes *ROT & RUIN* (2011; was named in Booklist's Ten Best Horror Novels for Young Adults, an American Library Association Top Pick, a Bram Stoker and Pennsylvania Keystone to Reading winner; winner of several state Teen Book Awards including the Cricket, Nutmeg and MASL; winner of the Cybils Award, the Eva Perry Mock Printz medal, Dead Letter Best Novel Award and more



Q1. How did you start your journey as a writer?

A. I've always wanted to be a writer. Even when I was a little kid -before I could read or write-I'd tell stories using toys. I wrote for school papers, and then landed a scholarship to Temple University in Philadelphia, with the intention of becoming an investigative journalist. Midway through my time there I switched focus from newspaper writing to magazine features. Beginning in 1978 I wrote for all kinds of magazines, though with a marked bias toward those based on martial arts and self-defense. That was part of the 'write what you know' advice young writers are often given, and I've been practicing martial arts since age six. However I expanded my focus and wrote about science, travel, skydiving, music, theater, parenting, and other subjects. Later, while teaching at Temple University, I wrote textbooks for my classes (Martial Arts History, Women's Self-Defense, Jujutsu, etc.), and transitioned from textbooks to mass market nonfiction books, mainly on the subject of supernatural predators in myth and folklore. The research I did on those books inspired me to try my hand at fiction that used folkloric monsters, and I published my first novel -*GHOST ROAD BLUES*-- in 2006. That shifted my interests from exclusively nonfiction to mainly fiction. I got into comics later. I'm currently writing my 41st novel since 2006.

Q2. What elements should a short story contain compared to works of longer fiction?

A. Short stories are built around simpler plots, fewer characters, less build up and backstory, and a more centralized crisis. Short stories are meant to hit the ground running, and to share only those bits of information that the reader must know -whereas in novels there is room to be more expansive. Unlike novels, short fiction doesn't always need to have an ending that wraps everything up. And, short fiction allows much more experimentation in terms of theme, genre/sub-genre, and so on. You can take gambles with a shorter piece that are much riskier in longer works -and that's true from a sales perspective as well as a creative one.

Q3. What are you currently working on and looking forward to work on future?

A. I'm juggling a few projects right now. I'm writing my first epic fantasy novel, *KAGEN THE DAMNED*, which begins a new series of me. I'm also doing a superhero graphic novel for DC Comics (details are still under wraps); I'm editing *WEIRD TALES* Magazine; and I'll be co-editing a new anthology (also under wraps pending an official announcement). I'm working with producing partners to pitch a TV series based on one of my anthologies; and I've got some short stories due in the new few weeks. 2021 started busy and is likely to get even busier, as I have at least two more complete novels to write this year. I wrote four novels last year.

Q4. You have written over 40 plus books/novels. How do you come up with new ideas every time?

A. Ideas are everywhere if you know how to look. Writers minds are wired differently than non-writers. Where someone else might see a crow on a windowsill and think no further than a bird on a perch; a writer asks why is the bird there? What does it want? Is it a warning about a coming evil? Is it the familiar of a sorcerer or witch? And so on. We can take anything at all and play the game of 'what if?' with it. This is one of the reasons I read so much about science, history, and politics. Most of my novels and a fair number of my comics and short stories began with an article on some interesting point. For example, back in 2010 I read an article about how melting permafrost and polar ice might release ancient diseases trapped so long in the ice that modern man has no natural immunity. That started me down the 'what's the worst that could happen?' path, and resulted in the *V-WARS* series of novels and comics -and the resulting Netflix show. Writers become trained observers, but there's a useful kind of predictive pessimism in that. It's not that we are truly pessimistic, but we can get into that headspace in order to take any item and work it into a dynamic plot.

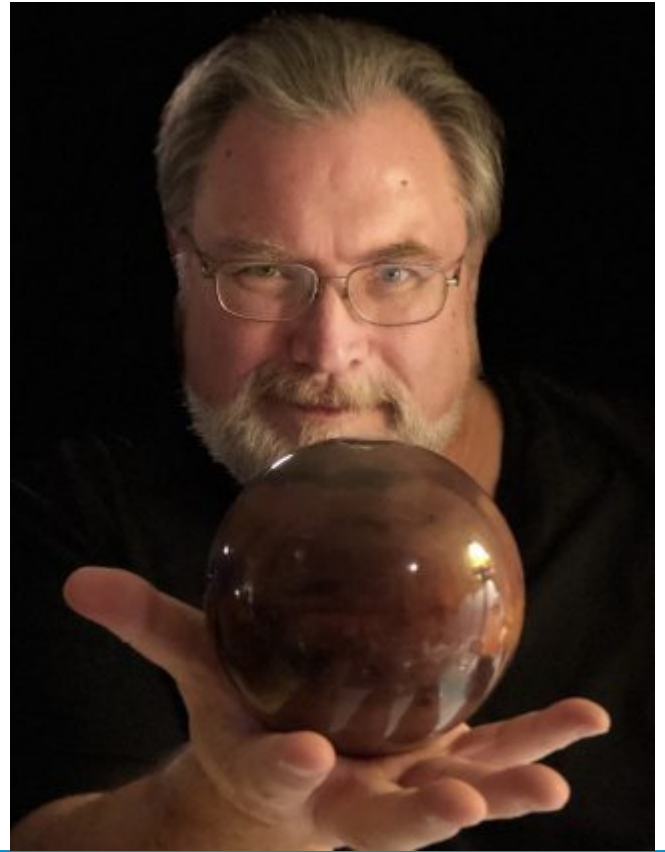
Q5. What pitfalls should a writer avoid when editing the final draft?

A. The biggest pitfalls are not having an outline and editing before the draft is done. For the former, there are a lot of folks who hate plotting and don't want to know how their story is going to end; they want to be surprised. The challenge with that is that it's much harder to stay on track to write a cohesive story. Also, if you do know how it ends, then you can build in hints, motif, subtext, and other elements that engage the reader's imagination, too. Also, without a plot there's a tendency to write scenes that, while fun, don't really serve the story, and which are likely to have to be cut later.

for editing during a draft, it's a common rookie mistake that leads to more rewriting than actual new writing, and it can mire the book in mud. Rewriting too soon also plays into the writer's natural insecurities about the quality and substance of their writing, which is classic self-sabotage.

Q6. What did you do with your first advance?

A. I typically do a lot of research. I read extensively on whatever nonfiction topic is at the heart of my novel (genetics, nuclear power, pandemic outbreaks and response, political brinkmanship, etc). Then I look for experts I can interview to help me refine my understanding and insight so that I can construct a plot as deeply rooted in the real world as possible. This allows me to build my 'fiction' on such a strong scaffolding of truth that it's harder for the reader to know where science ends and fiction begins.



I begin my research as soon as I have a solid idea for a book. Since I write multiple books a year, I'm always engaged in some kind of research. Some of that is done well before writing because I'm still shaping the story idea, and accurate information helps with that. But there's also a lot of 'spot research' done while writing. Anything from the most popular makes/models of car in a given city, to the menu at a restaurant where characters are meeting, to translations of words and phrases, to the top speed of a certain kind of jet.

Q7. Which is your personal favorite book and author? And why?

A. That's a tough question because I have different favorites for various reasons. My favorite living author is James Lee Burke, author of the brilliant, biting, and insightful Dave Robicheaux mystery novel series set in Louisiana. Burke manages that rare and difficult task of combination literary-style prose with very gritty action.

My favorite authors who are no longer with us are Ray Bradbury and Richard Matheson, both of whom were mentors of mine when I was a young teen. They taught me so much about how to be a good writer as well as a good person. One Christmas they each gave me signed first editions of one of their most important works. Bradbury gave me *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES* and Matheson gave me *I AM LEGEND*. Those books were incredibly influential for my understand of how to write and how to use stories as a conversation with the reader.

Q8. If you had to choose among your books to be converted into a movie, which one would you pick?

A. Well, right now *ROT & RUIN* is in development at Alcon Entertainment. But I think my Joe Ledger thriller novels would make very good action movies. The series began in 2009 with *PATIENT ZERO* and the 12th in the series, *RELENTLESS* will be out in July of this year. I'll be writing the 13th, *SHRIEK*, soon. The series deals with a psychologically compromised former cop who leads a Special Ops team against terrorist who use cutting-edge technology as weapons. Each novel deals with a different aspect of science: *PATIENT ZERO* (a weaponized prion disease that creates a zombie-like bioweapon); *THE DRAGON FACTORY* (transgenics), *THE KING OF PLAGUES* (funding terrorist attacks in order to profit from swings in the stock market), *ASSASSIN'S CODE* (genetically-engineered assassins and the monetization of religious conflict), *EXTINCTION MACHINE* (an arms race based on reverse-engineered technology from crashed UFOs), *CODE ZERO* (militarizing and radicalizing disenfranchised teens into an army of terrorists), *PREDATOR ONE* (GPS hacking, drones, and autonomous drive systems), *KILL SWITCH* (directed energy weapons and an attempt to build transdimensional gateways), *DOGS OF WAR* (weaponized rabies using pertussis as a delivery system), *DEEP SILENCE* (artificially-induced earthquakes), *RAGE* (a bioweapon that creates a temporary rage state), *RELENTLESS* (dark web, militia groups, and a concierge service for international terrorism), and *SHRIEK* (sound-based weapons).

Q8. Has social media helped you connect with your readers?

A. Nothing sexy. I paid bills. I was broke when my first novel sold. Though, admittedly, I did take my wife out for a very nice dinner.

Q9. Have you ever experienced a writer's block? How did you deal with it?

A. I don't believe writers block exists. Writers who say that they encounter it most often are those who are trying too hard to make their first draft read like a polished final draft. They are imposing unrealistic expectations on themselves. First drafts should be done quick and dirty –get the story out of your head and onto the page. That process taps into the part of us that is instinctive –we're either storytellers or we're not. Once the essential story is down, no matter how flawed and clunky, we then shift mental gears and approach the revision with an entirely different process. Craft. That's something we learn. The skills of craft include figurative and descriptive language, point of view, person, pace, timing, dialogue, metaphor, and so on. These are things we learn in order to refine our stories. Writers who understand that these are separate stages of the writing process never get writers block.

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Another reason for the myth of writers block is a lack of structure. I know some folks rail against the sacrilege of writing an outline for a novel. They don't consider that to be how an 'artist' does it. Blah blah blah. A story must have some internal logic or it is simply writing without a point. The plot needs to be nothing more detailed than bullet-points for the logical flow of one event to another and on to the best and most interesting conclusion. A plot doesn't have to be set in stone, either. However having one gives a write a place to start, a direction to follow, and some guideposts along the way so they don't wander off on a tangent that has no value to the final project. I also think that many writers believe in the block because they're trained to. It's part of the process of mythologizing the process of writing that the writer is more of an artiste than he or she is a professional. I was trained as a journalist and came to fiction much later in my career. But could you imagine being a reporter and telling your editor that you're blocked and can't turn in the story on last night's house fire? Or that the political debate you're covering didn't 'speak to you'. Just write it in whatever fractured, clunky, awkward form it takes. If it comes out wrong, so what? That's why we learn the skills of revision.

Q11. Has social media helped you connect with your readers?

A. My fiction career got started just after social media became a thing. I was on Friendster and MySpace when my first novel came out. I used those extensively, along with AOL chatrooms and other services. When Twitter, Facebook, and the others debuted, I joined them, too. I didn't rely on just making appearances at local bookstores. With Social Media my reach wasn't limited by geography, time zones, or anything else. And I found I enjoyed it. I've since made so many friends –fans, colleagues, etc–that I might otherwise have never met. It allows me to become part of the conversation about books, Pop culture and more. And it gives me more immediacy and agency over the messaging related to my books. It's also allowed me to be 'me', rather than just a name and photo on a dust jacket. Social media also allows me to teach classes, stage book launches, host panel discussions, and visit schools all over the world.

Q12. If you were locked out on an island where you were allowed only three books, which all would you choose?

A. I'd pick three of those oversized 'complete works' books –Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe, and World Poetry.

Q13. What literary pilgrimages have you gone on?

A. I've done a lot of travel since my fiction career began, and they've taken me to places I'd always longed to visit. I was on a month-long book tour of Wales, England, and Scotland; I visited Tuscany for the massive Lucca Comics and Games; I was keynote at the Kauai Writers Conference in Hawaii. I have more places I yearn to visit –France, Egypt, India, Japan... More specifically, in my travels I got to visit Shakespeare's house; the Tate Museum in London where so many Pre-Raphaelite paintings are displayed; the museums in Florence; the Arawak indigenous sites on Aruba; and others.

Q14. What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?

A. For me, the real challenge is always finding enough time to get everything done. I'm a high-output writer and I take on a lot of projects. Sometimes the real world (family, pandemics, etc.) get in the way of productivity and then I have to scramble to find more hours in the day.

Q15. If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?

A. If I had a magic wand I'd eliminate the human tendency toward intolerance. No many of the world's ills begin with hatred of that kind.

Q16. How was it like to win the Bram Stoker Award?

A. It was a surreal experience. My first novel, *GHOST ROAD BLUES*, was nominated for two Stoker Awards –Best First Novel (which I won) and Novel of the Year (which I lost to Stephen King). It was enormously validating because I'd written that novel somewhat on a lark –just to see if I would enjoy writing fiction, which had never been my driving passion. It encouraged me to continue, and now I've become a successful writer of novels, short stories and comics. I'm not sure that I would have stuck with fiction had I not won that award for my first published novel.

Since then I've won four more Stoker Awards, an Ink Pot (the award given by the San Diego Comic Con), three Scribe Awards (for media tie-in writing) and other accolades. But that first award mattered –and still matters–the most.

Q17. According to you, what is the most important thing one needs to be a horror/fiction writer?

A. Writing horror is a very personal thing. We have to be unafraid to open the doors to the dark cellar and dusty attic of our mind. If we write about the things that have affected us, traumatized us, made us afraid, then the honesty of that will show up in the writing. My first novels had subplots dealing with emotional and physical abuse. I was a badly abused child, and writing about those things –although through the proxy of fictional characters–was wonderfully cathartic. Honesty with one's own emotions is the really 'secret' trick to writing compelling and successful horror.

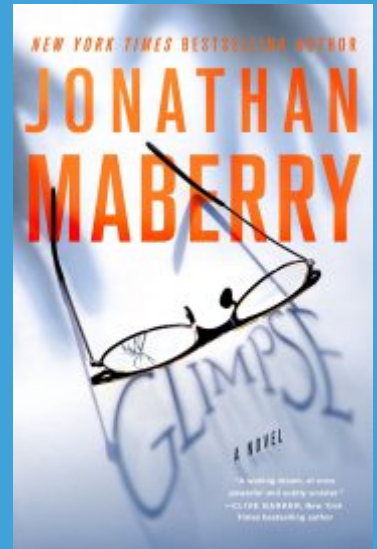
Q18. What advice would be on the top of your list for an aspiring author?

A. There are several important things to know about becoming successful as a writer. Things I wish I'd know earlier in my career.

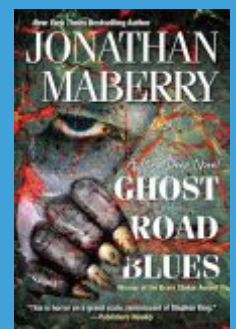
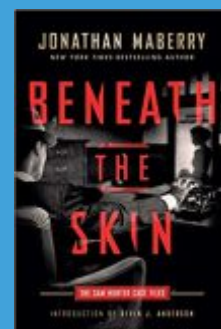
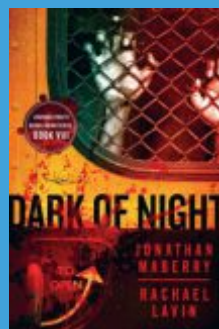
First –be very good at what you do. Having a natural gift for storytelling is great, but you need to learn the elements of craft. That includes figurative and descriptive language, pace, voice, tense, plot and structure, good dialogue, and many other skills. Good writers are always learning, always improving.

Second –learn the difference between 'writing' and 'publishing'. Writing is an art, it's a conversation between the writer and the reader. Publishing is a business whose sole concern is to sell copies of art. Publishing looks for those books that are likely to sell well. There is absolutely no obligation for anyone in publishing to buy and publish a book totally on the basis of it being well written. It has to be something they can sell. A smart writer learns how to take their best writing and find the best way to present it to the publishing world, and then to support it via social media once it's out.

Third –you are more important than what you write. A writer is a 'brand'. That brand will, ideally, generate many works –books, short stories, etc. Each work should be written with as much passion, skill, love, and intelligence as possible, but when it's done, the writer moves on to the next project. And the next. Fourth –finish everything you start. Most writers fail because they don't finish things. Be different. Fifth –don't try to be perfect. First drafts, in particular, are often terrible. Clunky, badly-written, awkward, filled with plot holes and wooden dialogue. Who cares? All a first draft needs to have in order to be perfect is completeness. It is revision that makes it better, and makes it good enough to sell. So, don't beat up on yourself if your early drafts are bad. Everyone's early drafts are bad. Everyone.



Notable Work by Jonathan Maberry





Mr. Anjum Rajabali

Well-known Indian Screenplay Writer

Q.1 How did you start your journey as a writer?

A. Honestly, it happened by pure accident. I had never considered screenwriting as an option and had no understanding of it either. My close friend, Baba Azmi the cinematographer wanted to direct a film and so kept pushing me to write for him. For the sake of friendship, I tried my hand at it. I liked doing it, and so decided to pursue it.

Q.2 What do you find most challenging aspect of writing and how have you overcome that challenge?

A. Screenwriting is in equal measure an art and a craft, depending on intuition and intellect. So, while our formal education trains us to use our intellect, the challenge is to free up our intuitive creativity. For that, it is essential to keep the fear of failure at bay, to trust our hidden ideas, and to relax our control over our creativity. Ironically, it took me a lot of hard work to relax.

Q.3 Tell us about your work with Progressive Writers Group.

A. The formation of PWG was a response to the anguish and exploitation that screenwriters, especially the new ones, were experiencing in the film industry. Unfair contracts, low fees, no guarantee about credits, arbitrary termination. It is to fight this that some of us seniors came together to form PWG. We decided to do this by getting into the union - the Screenwriters Association - and steer it towards collective bargaining as also create initiatives to help aspiring and new writers improve the calibre of their craft.

Q.4 Do you have a genre that you prefer to write in?

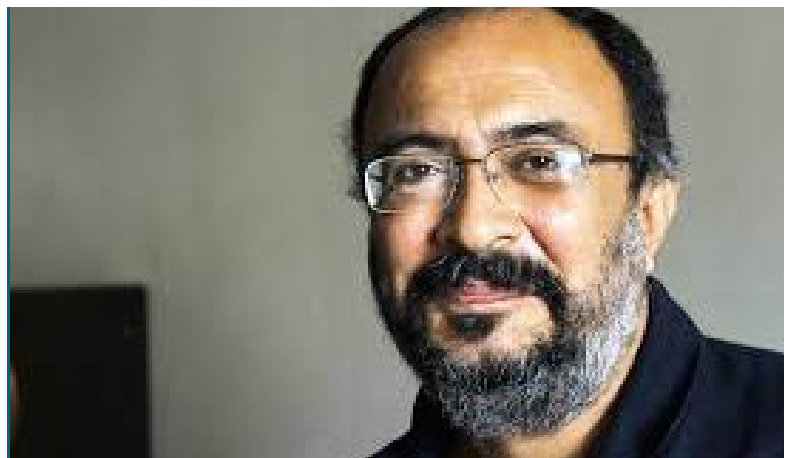
A. As a viewer, I enjoy every genre. However, as a writer I'm attracted to dramatic stories where internal conflict, relationship issues become critical to the plot.

Q.5 What writers have influenced you and why?

A. From literature, there have been a vast number of influences including Shakespeare, John Le Carre, Manto and many others. Mythology has been central to my reading interests. Among screenwriters I have liked the work of Vijay Tendulkar, Robert Towne, Billy Wilder, among others.

Q.6 Do you have a writing routine?

A. Since I am also a teacher, a script consultant and fairly active with union initiatives, I have to apportion pre-determined hours for writing. Generally, I enjoy working early in the day, so I try to begin writing around 5.30 AM to get some of it done before the formal day begins. On non-teaching days, I do put in more hours.



Q.7 How do you come up with new ideas?

A. Since a script can take anywhere between six months to a year to complete, the idea has to be of deep interest to the writer. So, before settling on an idea, I have to be profoundly moved by it. Generally, ideas come from what is it that is bothering me deeply. My issues with society, the pain of someone, my own internal conflicts..

Q.8 How have you grown as a writer over the years? What do you know now that you didn't know when you started out?

A. Oh, it's been a very long and arduous journey of 29 years. As one grows as a human being, so does one's writing, I guess. Directly speaking, I have grown in confidence in my understanding of the screenwriting craft and in my faith in my own intuition.

Q.9 What is the most exciting or enjoyable thing about screenwriting?

A. Screenwriting, by itself, is a very exciting subject, and the process of writing is very enjoyable. One of the more interesting aspects of writing a script is the challenge to reveal more by showing less. The brevity that screenwriting demands is difficult to achieve but that struggle is what makes it exciting.

Q.10 While writing screenplays for Hindi films do you write it in intervals or do you write the whole thing at once?

A. If you're writing an Indian film, then I'm afraid that you have to consciously factor in an interval point. One has to carefully leave a residue in the viewer's mind so that s/he maintains at least a modicum of connection with the story during the break. And then, post-interval, one has to facilitate the re-entry of the viewer into the narrative experience in the first scene itself.

Q.11 What advice would be on the top of your list for a screenplay writer?

A. Above all, practice practice practice. The more you write, the more you not only understand the craft, but increase your confidence, free up your creativity and open yourself up to more and more ideas.





Ms. Pubali Chaudhuri

Well-known Indian Screenplay Writer

Q.1 What inspired you to be a screenplay writer?

A. It was more of a meandering journey that led me to screenwriting. I grew up with storybooks and accordingly studied literature in my undergraduate years. Film studies was my secondary subject then and that was part of my early education in cinema as a subject of theoretical study.

I did seem to have a proclivity for writing and it was my Baba who suggested that I should take up writing professionally. That led to writing for newspapers and eventually a job with the Times Internet division as a content writer, right after college. But I quickly got bored of that kind of corporate work environ. I tried my hand at live events production at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad and then came back to Calcutta with a job with an advertising production house. This is where I learnt the nuts and bolts of how films are made.

It was only after I was sacked from this job (!) that I wondered what to do next. In any case, I moved to Bombay thinking that I would continue to work in ad films. One of my close friends was already studying direction at Film & Television Institute of India and he mentioned that the Institute had just started a screenplay writing course that I can consider.

So I appeared for the written exam and fell in love with campus during the admission interviews; it was monsoon and FTII looked lush and inviting. So I thought that I can always go back to ad films or whatever else it takes to pay my bills after a year on campus.

That was 2005.... And here I am, still sticking it out with the adventures in screenwriting!

Q.2 What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a screenplay?

A. Research is an ongoing process for fiction writing. What would be the last name of a person who comes from Himachal? What is part of daily cuisine for a character from Andhra? What do investment bankers really do? What is the harvest time for apple orchards? What is bitcoin mining? How to make a bomb? A writer's google search can throw up some of the most odd questions ever!

The extent of research depends on the subject of the story. Lately I've been dabbling with historical fiction and that's one area where you need extensive research. Mostly research is reading oriented for me- whether books or online; I rarely have the luxury of visiting a location for research. Occasionally I will reach out to subject experts and consult them when it comes to specialised fields such as history or science.

Q. What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?

A. Hmm... writing is difficult. Period. At least for me. Fighting the procrastination and getting started on the blank page feels like moving a mountain. Not knowing what happens next in your story is nerve wracking. Rewriting has its own share of miseries. Actually, I don't know which is the easy part! Perhaps the initial flush of a new idea and building a character is where one feels unfettered.

But perhaps the hardest part in screenwriting, in the real world, is working with feedback from collaborators, that you do not agree with. I don't know if that qualifies as part of the artistic process but it's certainly part and parcel of being a working screenwriter. Of course, sometimes feedback helps you improve your story but quite often feedback comes less from a space of artistic concern and more from a practical business point of view. And that can be hard to reconcile with what you want to do artistically.

Q. How do you recharge your creative batteries?

A. The actual act of writing happens in isolation. So, in a pre-pandemic world, I would typically step out and meet friends and that would be my way to unwind. But that scenario has become some kind of flashback event, thanks to the pandemic!

My husband suggests that I watch silly comedies to take my mind off the 'dark intense' type stories that I gravitate towards, both as a viewer and writer!

As uncharacteristic as it may sound, I think the one activity that lets me truly live in the moment is when I dance. I used to train in dance in what seems like a past lifetime; now I will just break in a jig all by myself to some of my favourite music tracks.

Q. According to you, what is the most important thing one needs to be a screenplay writer?

A. I'd say imagination and an eye for detail are two essential qualities for the artistic part of the work. But the screenwriter in a film industry is hardly an artiste working in seclusion. So in terms of realpolitik, I would say grit. It takes a lot of determination to not only create a fictional universe out of thin air but also to face repeated rejections from the outside world when you take out your material. I think you need to be completely obsessed with the idea of cinema and storytelling to stick it out as a screenwriter.

Q. What are you writing next and when does one get to see the next Pubali Chaudhuri written film?

A. We should go to an astrologer or a tarot card reader to find the exact answer to that! I always quote from the Gita (in fact the only thing that I know of the Gita!) that working as a screenwriter is very much like following Krishna's advice to keep working without expectation of results. Deadlines are almost incessant but a few commissioned projects that I'd worked in the last few years didn't move forward.

Currently I am focused on two of my original scripts which a couple of directors have shown interest in, an adaptation of a Bengali novella with an advertising film maker wanting to make his debut feature film, and developing two original web series ideas that I am hoping can be pitched to OTTs/ producers in a couple of months.

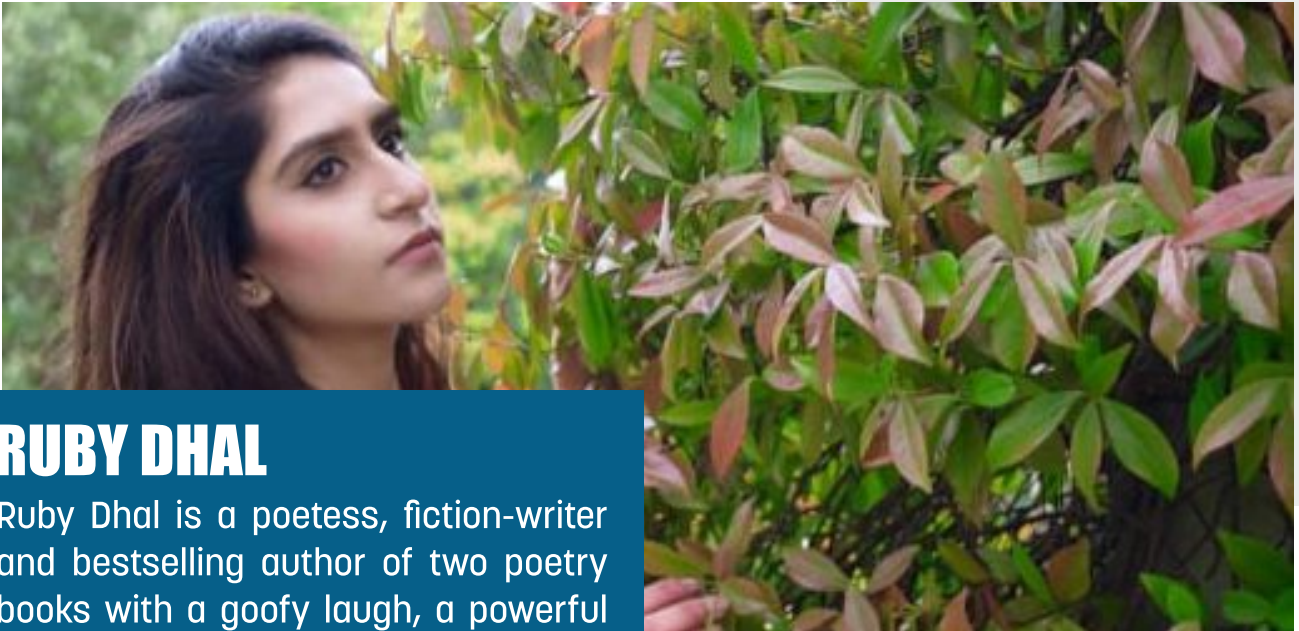
Q. What pitfalls should a writer avoid when editing the final draft?

A. Given the number of rewrites we tend to do till we arrive at a final draft, I would say it's very important to ensure that you have not turned into an automated robot just addressing feedback to get the draft out of your way! In all likelihood, you have killed many a darling, as the saying goes, in your journey to arrive at a final draft. But do see if your original intention and the very core of the story - the reason why you chose to write it at all, hasn't been thrown out along with the bathwater. I suppose the important thing is to deliver on craft - page count, crisp dialogues, taking out redundant scenes etc while retaining the soul of your story.

Q. What advice would be on the top of your list for an aspiring screenplay writer?

A. It will sound like boring advice - but read read & read some more. Oral and written storytelling precedes cinema by thousands of years. Learn from what has come before you. And something that I have to remind myself as well from time to time - creativity works best in an environment of play. Writing, like any other career in the arts, is a hard job. But my hunch is that we lose our spark when it becomes more 'work' and less 'play'. As writers we are naturally good at playing 'pretend' - so pretend that it's play even when it's, pretty literally, back breaking work!





RUBY DHAL

Ruby Dhal is a poetess, fiction-writer and bestselling author of two poetry books with a goofy laugh, a powerful and opinionated voice, a constant habit of tripping and falling over furniture and two degrees in Philosophy.

Q1. What literary pilgrimages have you gone on?

A. Because I write poetry/prose and am yet to complete my novel, I haven't taken any literary pilgrimages yet. Sometimes I think my whole itself has been a literary pilgrimage because everything that I write about is either from my experiences or lessons that I've learned through adventures, pain and a variety of occurrences in my life – both positive and negative.

A pilgrimage essentially is a journey that you take alone – one that enlightens you and helps you uncover things about yourself and my whole life has pretty much been a journey to self-discovery. I use this journey to not only learn more about myself but to write things that will help others in discovering themselves too.

Q2. Does writing energize or exhaust you?

A. It really depends. I think too much of anything is exhausting. I write every single day, but I ensure that only a few hours of my day are wholly consumed by intense writing. I like to take breaks as well – so I go to a café for 3 hours in the morning and write 1.5-2k words and then go to the gym (taking a two-hour break) then return to the café. When I return to the café, I focus on less mentally exhausting work – responding to all my emails/ inquiries, writing some poetry, writing an article for my blog or doing research for my book/Instagram page.



I believe that writing too much isn't good for anyone and will inevitably result in a mental burn-out. That's why it's important to write in fractions/ a few hours a day or a few days a week. For instance, if you're someone who likes to spend all day writing then take a day off in-between or write for 3 days straight and take 2 days off. Regular breaks between intense creative work like fiction/non-fiction writing is essential to let your mind reboot itself and be more energized.

Q3. What are common traps for aspiring writers?

A. The first trap is letting self-doubt control you. A lot of the time when we try to do something that's unconventional or not 'the standard norm' the first thing we feel is doubt - will we be able to complete this, will it work, what if we fail, what if everyone laughs at us, what if we're no good? This has the potential to prevent a lot of great art from being created and it's something that I was victim to in my initial months when I first made the decision to focus on my writing. The first trap is letting self-doubt control you. A lot of the time when we try to do something that's unconventional or not 'the standard norm' the first thing we feel is doubt - will we be able to complete this, will it work, what if we fail, what if everyone laughs at us, what if we're no good? This has the potential to prevent a lot of great art from being created and it's something that I was victim to in my initial months when I first made the decision to focus on my writing.

Stop doubting your art and your ability. Don't think about the future and whether it will or will not work. Just focus on what you're doing right now and aim to get it completed. It doesn't matter whether it's good or bad, what matters is that it's yours and yours only. First drafts always suck. They really do. So, don't let your first draft or the first read-through produce a seed of self-doubt in you. And if it does, don't water it. Crush it under your foot and focus on your art.

The second trap follows from the first one and this is the negative impact of other people's lack of understanding of what you're trying to do. Not everyone will be able to comprehend your art, your purpose or what you want to do with your life. The mechanic structure of society is such that the herd isn't capable of grasping things that fall out of the typical study, graduate, get a job, work 9-5 until your 65 and then retire. Anyone who tries to step away from this herd mentality and untangle themselves from the suffocating capitalist ideals that have been passed down to generations is seen as 'the other'.

This is especially the case for creatives, artists, musicians and writers who prioritize their creativity over money or material possessions.

The point is that other people - due to their lack of understanding of your goals, dreams and creative purpose - will try to bring you down both directly and indirectly. They will question you, misinterpret your plan and do things that come from ignorance rather than malicious intention and bring you to the point of self-doubt.

All I have to say about this is that you need to hold on to your creativity and ignore what other people have to say about security and income and safety. Step out of the box and out of your comfort zone and write what your heart tells you to write. Don't succumb to self-doubt or to other people's ideals of having a 'decent, safe' life.

Q4. Do you want each book to stand on its own, or are you trying to build a body of work with connections between each book?



A. My first 3 books, 'Memories Unwound', 'A Handful of Stars' and 'My Hope for Tomorrow' are a product my healing journey. They represent the different mental and emotional battles that I was facing during my healing and are most effective when read together, even though they don't form part of a series.

'Memories Unwound' was written when I was in the darkest place during my healing and I was trying to find the strength to move on from what I'd experienced.

'A Handful of Stars' was written at a brighter time in my journey where I was not only finding strength, love and happiness but I was uncovering more about myself and what I wanted from my life.

'My Hope for Tomorrow' is a result of my coming into my skin as a woman and a writer. This book is the beginning of me discovering my writing style and the kind of work that I want to do in the community and the world.

Q5. What kind of research do you do, and how long do you spend researching before beginning a book?

A. For my non-fiction/poetry books I don't spend too much time researching - I spend more time reading to understand my target market and the kind of content that they would enjoy. This is because I have first-hand access to what resonates most with my readers through my social media platform and based on their responses - I delve further into those themes by reading articles and books on them.

For my debut fiction novel, I have done a lot of research. I dedicate one day/afternoon a week to researching essential topics that I'm speaking about in my book and sometimes if I'm on a particular topic i.e. mental health, pharmaceuticals or a particular culture then I take a break from the writing and research into it first before I write about it.

Because my debut novel has a lot of POC characters, there is a lot of research to do at different intervals. I always do the relevant research before introducing a new character.

Q7. Tell us about 'Dear Self'

A. 'Dear Self' is my first self-help book and is going to release in November 2020. It's available to pre-order now so I highly recommend getting this book. It's my most favourite book out of the bundle because it's the one that I'm most vulnerable in. I'm a lot more honest in this book about the things that I've experienced, and I talk vocally about exactly what happened when in my life and what I learned from it.

I wanted to be as honest as I could with my readers so that I could demonstrate the importance of finding your strength in your vulnerabilities. This book is so close to my heart and I'm extremely proud of it. I hope that it can do for my readers what it did for me when I was writing it.

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Q9. Are you working on a new book?

A. Yes, I am! It's taken me years and 4 books (poetry, prose and self-help) to finally focus on finishing my debut novel. I haven't thought of a name yet - I'm really bad with titles - but it's a romance-thriller, something completely different to the kind of content that I share with my readers on my social media platforms.

Q10. How do you select the names of your characters?

A. Growing up I didn't have access to books with POC characters with inspiring or relatable stories. As an Afghan-Sikh girl living in the UK, the access to Caucasian fiction was abundant but none of those stories were ones that I could find myself in. I almost felt alienated when I read those books and I made it a mission to write novels with POC characters that other young Ruby's could relate to.



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For this reason, all my characters of POC and I choose names that have been constantly mis-pronounced and mis-spelled and make them the focal point of my story.

Q12. What are the best platforms one can indulge into to develop a fanbase?

A. I built my readership on Instagram and I think it's a great platform for writers to develop a base. Other platforms - which isn't limited to writers but all kind of creatives - include Youtube, Twitter, Facebook etc.

Q13. What is your advice to the aspiring writers?

A. Write what you want to write. Don't focus on what other people are doing or saying. Just follow your own heart. Follow your own creativity and let yourself write the story that resides in you. And never give up. Keep going. You can do this.

APARNA ATHREYA

Founder, Story Triangle

A Venture of Kid and Parent Foundation

She is a computer science engineer and worked in the software industry for 15 years in organizations like IBM, Infosys, and Cognizant Technologies before moving into the field of training and development.

She trains, presents at and consults with various corporates such as Accenture, Amazon, Ingersoll Rand, Price Waterhouse Cooper, Verizon, Tata Hitachi and institutions such as ISBR business school, Jain University, Garden City University and so on.

She trains and delivers consultancy across various genres of applied storytelling including Leadership Development, Entrepreneurship, Personal Brand Storytelling, Business Communication, Diversity and Inclusion and in STEAM education.

She is a TEDx speaker on Storytelling and Multiple Intelligence. She has written articles on self development for corporate professionals and about storytelling, Education and parenting in various media such as Polka Café, Primary Plus magazine and CHILD magazine.

As a Convenor at CII-IWN, Karnataka chapter (Confederation of Indian Industry - Indian Women Network), she trains and develops women leaders across Industries. She is a Master trainer and a faculty member at various institutions where she conducts workshops in creative education.

Aparna is a nominated member of the Canara Bank Financial Advisory Trust (CFAT) where she consults on financial literacy and development in the rural and semi-urban sector.

Her organization's work extends to core education in areas of lifeskill development and emotional regulation in schools and in sports academies (Gopichand Academy, Hyderabad and Swimming Matters, Bangalore).

She has been featured in YourStory as a leading entrepreneur and Super Woman in Radio One. Her organization has been covered in newspaper dailies such as Deccan Herald, Times of India and Bangalore Mirror.

She was featured as a forerunner in woman entrepreneurship in The Hindu Metroplus on women's day 2016. She has been awarded the Women Achiever's award in Canara Bank in 2016, Women Entrepreneur Award in Garden City University in 2018 and Lion's Club award in 2019.



Q1. If you could go back and give your younger self some advice, what would it be and why?

A. I once heard an Indian mystic talk about the symbolism of the triangle. He spoke of the extraordinary symbolism this simple form holds in the Hindu tradition as the union of Shakta and Shakti. In the Greek philosophy, the triangle is seen as a delta glyph and is symbolic of a doorway.

A story triangle represents the coming together of the three most important entities in a human experience that creates magic – the teller, the listener and the story itself. I am a firm believer of the power of stories for the growth of people as individuals, organizations and as nations.

Story Triangle is an organization that works with organizations across industries to harness the power of storytelling in order to create engaging, compelling and inspiring human-to-human experiences.

Q2. What inspired you to start with storytelling?

A. My brush with storytelling began while I was climbing up the steep corporate ladder in the IT world. In order to get away from the breathless pace of work, I began volunteering for the CSR activities of the corporate I worked at. On one such occasion I had gone visiting as a volunteer to an urban slum for an educational project that my organization was sponsoring. There, the NGO workers requested me to interact with the children. I suddenly found myself looking at 50 children staring back at me. As I was not from education I couldn't think of anything academic. In fact the only thing that I could think of was to tell a story. You see my childhood was filled with endless stories that my grandmother had told us. So, I hesitantly began telling the story of a mouse that had a dream.

I was not prepared for what came next. The children were in a trance as they listened almost as if they had been transported to the forest along with the little mouse. And when I finished my story there was a great pause and then it began; the thunderous applause! I had never felt anything like that before. I couldn't stop smiling and thinking about the children. Little did I know then that that day was going to be a turning point in my life and career. And that is how my passionate affair with storytelling began!

Q3. What do you think we should keep in mind while telling a story to the audience?

A There are three important questions that a storyteller needs to ask before telling a story. Why should I be telling this story to my listener? How will this story connect with my listener? What will my listener take away from this story? As is obvious from the questions, the most important thing a teller needs to think about is the listener and the truth that the story holds.

Q4. Tell us about the Kid and Parent Foundation?

A. Kid and Parent Foundation is an education services organization that works with children, parents and educators to create an ecosystem that is most suited to drive immersive learning and holistic development. Our work extends to urban schools, universities, NGOs and grass-root level communities. The work we do includes educational leadership development, curriculum development, teacher training, children counseling and working with parenting communities. We are deeply committed to creating rich immersive learning experiences through Storytelling, Theatre, Music, Art and Critical thinking.

Q5. How do you deal with different sets of audiences you come across while Storytelling?

A. This question reminds me of a Zen Story I deeply resonate with. "Once, there was a new student of Zen who approached his master and asked how he should prepare himself for his training. "Think of me a bell," the master said. "Give me a soft tap and you will get a soft tinkle. Strike hard and you will receive a resounding peal." So it is with storytelling. Stories are like the bell.



Q6. What's your favorite Story Book and Why?

A. Being a firm believer that the world is filled with more stories than there are fish in the ocean, this is a really tough question. However, if I were to pick one Story Book, it would be the Ramayana. Each time I read it, I come away with something precious. I believe that this magical story holds the greatest truths of life. Ramayana can keep a toddler as mesmerized as it can a grandparent. Like my son would say, I think Ramayana is Epic (pun intended!).

Q7. What do you think are the important qualities to be a storyteller?

A. While people often think that it is the ability to speak that makes a good teller, it is indeed the ability to listen that is one of the most important qualities of a storyteller. I believe the other important abilities are empathy towards the listener, authenticity of the teller and passion. Put them together and you will know that all it takes is a LEAP (Listening, Empathy, Authenticity, Passion) forward to be a great storyteller.



Q8. What are the top platforms one could promote their work on?

A. Hundreds of years ago, in the village square would burn a fire around which would sit the village folk while listening to storytellers recounting their tales and showing off their prowess. Today the fire has been replaced with pixels and urban storytellers have changed the way they recount their tales. Storytellers typically promote their work on digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Podcasts, LinkedIn and Radio.

Q9. What is the most memorable moment in your career?

A. I often walk away with precious moments in my work with children. But one moment that will always stay with me happened in the middle of a traffic jam in Bangalore. I was stuck in an endless cycle at the traffic signal when I saw two children walk from car to car begging for money. I stopped them as they passed by my car and as I normally would do, asked them why they were not in school. They told me that they didn't find school worth going to and it was too boring and meaningless to attend. I had 120 seconds for my traffic lights to turn green and two bored children in front of me. That was enough for me to narrate the story of an elephant that once hated going to the Jungle School. As I went through the story, the children listened with their eyes wide with wonder. I finished in time with the traffic lights turning green. As I waved at them and drove away, the older girl called out behind me "My sister says she is ready to go to school now". I will always remember the look of joy and wonder written all over the face of that little girl in my rear-view mirror!



Q10. What would be your advice to those who aspire to become storytellers?

A. My advice to aspiring storytellers is best captured with this beautiful story

Once an enthusiastic Martial art student went upto his teacher and asked "Master, if I work hard, how soon can I master it?" His teacher replied, "Ten years." "But sir, if I work even harder and devote myself to it?" "Twenty years", came the reply. The student persisted, "But master, what if I throw myself into practice, and immerse in it? How long would it take then?" "Oh, in that case thirty years!" The confused student said "But sir, I don't quite understand!" Said the teacher, "You see, when one eye is fixed on the goal, you have only one eye on your path"

Storytelling is a wondrous journey and successful are those who enjoy the path.





INDIRA CHANDRASEKHAR

Founder, Out of Print Magazine

Dr. Indira Chandrasekhar is a scientist, a fiction writer and the founder and principal editor of Out of Print, one of the primary platforms for short fiction published in India. In 2020, Out of Print celebrated its 10th year by bringing out a curated anthology of 30 stories that were published by Context.

Indira's own short stories have appeared in anthologies and literary journals across the world. She co-edited the anthology, Pangea, Thames River Press, of short stories from around the globe. A collection of her short fiction, Polymorphism, was published by HarperCollins.

She is curator of literature for the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival Mumbai, India's largest multicultural city festival, and participates in the curation of other literary festivals around the country

Q1. How did you come up with the concept of Out of Print Magazine?

A. There are two parts to the concept of Out of Print Magazine, (1) it is a literary journal and (2) it is an online journal.

Out of Print is a literary journal and platform for short stories in English or translated into English from the Indian subcontinent. The motivation for creating a journal came from being a writer myself. At the time, when looking for magazines to place my own short stories, I recognised that there was a dearth of high quality, professionally edited spaces in which to publish short fiction. I decided that it would be worth trying to start one myself. That was ten years ago!

Out Print is an online journal and exploits the new digital media for its platform. There were multiple reasons for making that forward-thinking choice. The digital space offers a wide reach – upon release, the journal is immediately accessible in Kashmir, Kanyakumari, Lahore, Dhakka, Colombo, Kenya, New York, Hong Kong and London, bringing together writers and readers from across the Indian subcontinent and the diaspora. The new medium encourages young writers who are familiar with digital spaces. Older, more established writers are not averse to sharing their work on the new platform.

In nice reversal, we are celebrating ten years of publishing fine short fiction from the 'virtual subcontinent' by appearing in print. An anthology of 30 stories, selected from a decade of the magazine has just been published to high acclaim by Context, the literary imprint of the mainstream publishing house, Westland-Amazon. [Fig.1.Out of Print Ten Years.Front Cover. Fig Caption: Cover of the anthology Out of Print : Ten Years, Context, 2020. Image, Chitra Ganesh.



Q2. You have published a great number of stories in Out of Print. What do you enjoy the most about your role as an editor?

A. The process of curation and publication of Out of Print brings great satisfaction. Selecting stories from our many submissions, refining each story to make it, in our opinion, sharper and cleaner and more impactful, and putting together a collection for each release of the magazine, these, to me, are important and meaningful contributions to the literary community. [Fig 2.0ofP39.10 Y.png . Fig Caption: Magazine Cover, Out of Print 39, September 2020 shows the covers from ten years of the magazine. Design Yamuna Mukherjee, Kiri Design.

Coming across a good story that touches something in one, that really is quite thrilling, and I am always excited when that happens.

The other aspect that I enjoy very much is working with a story - trying to really see what the writer is conveying through it, understanding the strength of the narrative and making it stronger. It is almost a process of co-creating from behind the scenes, and a great privilege.

Q3. Where do you want to see Out of Print magazine in the next 5 years?

A. We will continue to champion short fiction from the Indian subcontinent.

An important aspect of our collection is the quality of our translated works. We hope to feature special editions of translations from different regions curated with expert guest editors.

We also hope to hold live, online or hybrid sessions involving different writing communities in different parts of the nation to encourage young writers and serve the cause of literature.

Q4. For someone who has just started writing, what all should they keep in mind?

A. To develop ones skills as a writer, it really is quite important to immerse oneself in reading the work of other writers and understanding different ways in which they present their work.

Short stories, for example, require attention - they attempt to convey very strong emotional or psychological content with few words. It is easy for an inexperienced writer to dissipate the power of their writing with too many subplots or unnecessary descriptive embellishments. Then, there is the process of trying to understand what the short story mantra of 'show not tell' actually means. Reading curated content like work published in a magazine such as Out of Print, helps to develop a young writers skills, and helps them express their passion.

out of print

the short story on line ●

ISSUE 40 DECEMBER 2020



ART: VIBHA GALHOTRA

Q5. Out of Print magazine consists of so many stories but why not poetry?

A. We have to use our skills - I feel like smiling saying this to the magazine published under the umbrella of the the National Skills Development Council. In the case of Out of Print, our skills, and our passion lies in short fiction.

Q6. According to you, what is good writing?

A. There is no simple answer to that question. What is a good film, or a piece of theatre, a good costume, or a good song.

Writing should have integrity. Readers respond to the emotional honesty of a piece of writing be it serious of funny, real or speculative fiction, short form or novel. [Fig 4.0ofP40.December 2021.png. Fig Caption: The December 2020 issue of Out of Print reflects the anxieties inherent in the time of Corona. Cover image by Vibha Galhotra.

Q7. What advice would you like to share to an aspiring writer?

A. Work hard at developing your skills and craft so that you are truly able to convey and communicate the stories that are seething within you.

Q8. How do you decide on how much information you reveal to the reader and how much to withhold?

A. Thank you for that important question. How much to reveal, how much to withhold - that is a critical aspect of good craft.

out of print
the short story on line



Different writers work in different ways. For example a murder mystery may begin by showing who the murderer is, and the story might be about leading the reader through the discovery process. Alternatively, the reader might be kept in the dark, and only discover the murderer in the end when the author explains what happened.

Writers may enjoy experimenting and trying various ways of revealing a story. But these experiments need a degree of skill and craft. This skill and craft is acquired in so many ways.

Recently when speaking to Vivek Shanbagh, he spoke about how one of the things experienced writers used to do, almost a responsibility they bore to literature, was to encourage and mentor younger writers. This still does happen in different ways, and it is invaluable. However, there also are newer ways of following developments in literature that complement the old. And a platforms such as Out of Print or Granta or Hans that offer curated content of high literary quality are a gift to writers. [Fig 3.0ofP 16.September 2014.png. Fig Caption: The September 2014 issue of Out of Print featured writers Annie Zaidi and Tanuj Solanki who went on to win major awards, poet and writer, Nabina Das and others. Cover image by Heraa Khan.

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MEDHA SHARMA

A Perpetual Paradox

Medha Sharma is an Indian based writer and poet who believes in empowering people to heal collectively over borders, oceans and time zones through story-telling and poetry. She's also pursuing her undergraduate degree in medicine. Her poetry recently appeared in the Kingdoms in The Wild. You can read more of her work on her Instagram @aperpetualparadox.



Q1. At what age did you begin writing poetry?

A. I first turned to poetry at the age of seventeen. Back then I desperately needed to make sense of my very complicated world and poetry served as a form of escape for me. I used to write simply as a way to verbalize my feelings and use them as a medium to connect to myself and the world around me. Even today I write for the same reasons. Words make everything bearable.

Q2. Who's poetry are you intrigued by?

A. I love the weight that words hold and their ability to move without physical touch. Reading and writing poetry has been a key part to my healing. I absolutely adore the works of Warsan Shire, Nayyirah Waheed and Key Ballah and Nikita Gill. Their words feel like a deep exhale. So honest and felt. Through their poems I discover a bit more about myself, every time I read them. Their words have changed my life so many times.

Q3. What do you try to communicate through your poems?

A. Everything that I write serves as an offering from my own personal story and the lessons I have gained along the way. Most of my poems revolve around the themes of womanhood, heartbreak, self-love and healing. Through my work I want to help others and myself come to terms with the past, celebrate the present, and dream a better future.

Q4. Where do you see yourself in next 10 years?

A. I see myself as someone healing the world using both her words and her hands. Most people don't know this about me but I'm also a second-year medical student. I take both these processes seriously and cherish the experiences very much.

Q5. Is there any difference between the old age poets and the modern-day young poets? If yes, what and which one do you prefer personally?

A. There are several differences between the two with regards to the use of language and structure. For example, a lot of traditional poets prefer using rhyme scheme but modern-day poets don't usually use it. They put much more emphasis on developing new methods and forms of self-expression to get their message across. Classical poets definitely have their own charm but I personally feel more drawn to the works of modern-day contemporary poets because I find their work to be more captivating and tender.

Q6. What does "A Perpetual Paradox" really mean? How did you come up with this name?

A. "Perpetual" means infinite or endless and the word "paradox" is used to refer to a contradiction. When put together, it means an endless contradiction. Sometimes it seems as if everything stands still but in reality, everything is constantly moving and changing and shifting. That is what my understanding of the human experience is. I started sharing my work on Instagram but was too shy to use my real name. At that point in my life, writing was the only place where everything made the most sense. So, I chose the name "A Perpetual Paradox."

Q7. Can you describe the time when you first realized that poetry was something you absolutely had to do?

A. Poetry has always been one of the ways I have expressed myself. It gave me an outlet to understand and embrace my pain. We all carry different wounds and poetry is a powerful salve to heal those wounds. It gives your pain a way to exist outside of you. Writing poetry made me realize that sometimes putting out your pain on a piece of paper is necessary to heal those wounded parts of you. Initially it was just a hobby for me but overtime it slowly grew into something more magical. It became my passion. The deeper I stepped into it, the more universal I found my story to be. And that's what has kept me going.

Q8. What do you think is the best part about being a poet?

A. Your poetry is a reflection of who you are. Everything that you are will be conveyed through your writing. It will force you to be honest with your story. That's the thing about poetry. It demands truth. And when you speak your truth, it is so freeing.

Q9. Any tips on how to promote your work for aspiring poets?

A. Just write. There are no rules in poetry. Read anything that excites you. Share your work on social media if you feel called to do so but try not to fall into the trap of writing to get likes or followers. Don't put unnecessary pressure on yourself to create or you'll just end up disappointing yourself. Remind yourself why you started writing in the first place. It takes a lot of courage to share a piece of you with the world but at the end of the day, vulnerability is what makes us stronger.

**cry openly
loudly
hideously
cry as much
as your grief
allows you to
weep as many
tears as it takes
for you to convince
yourself that you
are still alive
no matter how
shaky your fingers
get you must
remember to
stitch your wounds
back together
one by one
this is how you
will you will get
comfortable with
your grief.**



Nidhi Agarwal

Founder, Stories and Beyond

Ever since she was young, Nidhi has been a voracious reader and attributes her grit and drive to her reading habit. An engineer who took up her Executive MBA at IIM Calcutta, was by chance nudged into the family business, but she had a greater calling. She saw her passion for books calling her to the realm of education. So she dived in, and has since the past 4 years created waves of impact in her community and has aspirations to chase her larger mission.

After numerous years of research, teaching and multiple certifications in learning techniques, Nidhi is the creative bedrock of the brand. Nidhi loves solving crosswords and word puzzles every day to boost her mental stamina and to stay sharp.

She has been covered frequently by the likes of Times of India, The Hindu, Yourstory, Tell a Tale and Dainik Bhaskar



Q1. How did you come up with the concept of the Stories & Beyond?

A. I am a book-crazy adult who loves to explore children's books. The dearth of good children's books in brick-and-mortar bookstores, the paucity of librarians who can recommend books and finally the constant distractions that keep a child away from books were the key reasons that laid the foundation of Stories and Beyond.

Q2. What inspired you to start with storytelling?

A. I believe the universe is made up of stories and not atoms. Storytelling is the most effective way to transcend generations, erase borders and create connections with others.

Q3. What do you think we should keep in mind while introducing new characters in a story?

A. I encapsulate a memorable character trait. Introduce them gradually. The first time they come into the scene, include their name and have them do or say something that distinguishes them from the others. Over the first few pages/chapters, readers will learn about them and remember who's who.

Q4. How do you deal with different sets of audiences you come across while Storytelling?

A. The body language and actions can convey more than the words. I deliver a bilingual storytelling with lots of actions. No matter what you say, it's always how you make the audience feel is what matters.

Q5. What's your favorite Story Book and Why?

A. My current favourite is a picture book named "The Name Jar". It's a book that talks about the challenges of growing up in a culture that's not your own. In this book Unhei, a Korean girl decides to change her name to fit into an American classroom.

Q6. What do you think are the important qualities to be a storyteller?

A. Love for books and love for children are your credentials to become a successful storyteller. It's a job of responsibility because the fate of a story lies in the hands of a storyteller...One poor narration leaves a bad taste in the young minds.

Q7. What are the top platforms one could promote their work on?

A. Good work travels through a word of mouth but constant good work travels at the speed of light. Social Media platforms are cluttered with information but can be used to showcase your talent.

Q8. What is the most memorable moment in your career?

A. Every time I narrate a story, I create a memory of the story in a child's mind. This memory lasts longer than my performance. I love being a part of their childhood.

Q9. What would be your advice to those who aspire to become storytellers?

A. Humans are born storytellers. Just pick up one story and get ready to enchant your audience.



LAUREN BOWMAN

Lauren Bowman is a 33-year-old writer born and raised in north Florida, USA. After receiving a minor in Creative Writing from Florida State University, Lauren focused more on short stories, essays, and technical writing until, feeling the need to better understand who she was, where she was going, and what she wanted from life, she began to explore the power of poetry.

Her debut collection of poetry and prose, *The Evolution of a Girl*, was born from this period of exploration, growth and discontent that so many of us face while attempting to understand where we fit into this world. Lauren's writing is blunt, bold, and speaks with raw honesty about her personal struggles with relationships, self-acceptance, and self-love.

Lauren's work seeks to encourage others to learn from and rise above their own difficulties and doubts, and to find a place of reflection, empowerment, and acceptance.

Q1. If you could go back and give your younger self some advice, what would it be and why?

A. I would tell myself to trust my instincts. If it doesn't feel right, it isn't. Through my experience, I've never had my instinct tell me something wrong--I've just never been good at following it.

Q2. What do you think is the best part about being a poet?

A. My ability to connect with people when I struggled so much with that before. I feel like I now have a language that others understand. It's also a wonderful way to put my feelings in a form that I can literally read through and better understand.

Q3. Where do you draw inspiration from?

A. When I first started writing poetry, it was really all about me looking into a mirror and trying to understand who I was and why I wasn't happy. In doing that, I had to take a deep dive into my relationships with others and my relationship with myself. For my upcoming book, I really pulled a lot of inspiration from nature--our connection to it, our lack of connection to it, how that feeds into our unhappiness as a society. I really tried to find joy in the little things and place emphasis and why those things matter so much.

Q4. Tell us about your upcoming book.

A. It's titled *What I Learned from the Trees*. As I mentioned before, it really looks at our connection with the natural world and how we've become so consumed with things that don't really matter, that we've become disconnected with ourselves and with each other. It really dives into why we are so unhappy. Why we treat each other the way we do. What we are afraid of. How our relationship with ourselves influences our relationships with others. How all of these things are connected to how we fit on this planet.

Q5. Among your work, which one is closest to your heart?

A. That's kind of like picking a favorite child, but my piece "Do not measure me by..." always comes to mind because it is what I consider my first "poem". It was the first piece I was truly proud of.

Q6. What's your favorite poem and why?

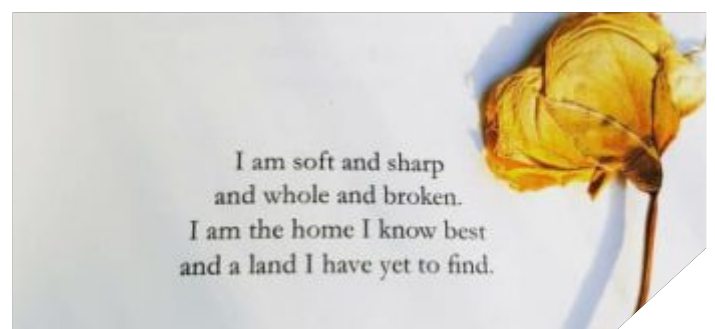
A. Mary Oliver is by far my favorite poet, and her piece "To Be In With, The Sweet Grass" always hits me.

Q7. Do you write to express your feelings or about the things you experience? How real is your poetry to your life?

A. If the poem isn't about me directly, it's about someone very close to me. My poetry is a direct line to my mind, my heart, and my life. It's me in my rawest form.

Q7. What advice would be on top of your list for aspiring poets and writers?

A. Be authentic. Read as much as you write. Always remember that first and foremost you are writing because it's your art--your way of expression. Don't let others influence that too much. Your voice does matter. Your story does deserve to be told. Don't stop--even when it hurts or gets difficult or you feel you aren't accomplishing anything--don't stop.





Ms. Deepika Murthy

Pika Nani

Pika Nani was what Deepika Murthy called herself as a child. She wanted to become a writer and realized this dream with her first book, *Little Indians: Stories from across the country* (2013). When she is not writing, she can be found talking about writing to children in various schools.

Q1. What is the significance of the title of *Shrilok Homeless: The Ultimate Adventures*?

A. Shrilok Homeless is our own desi Sherlock Holmes. He is an orphan who runs a tea stall on the streets of Mumbai and solves cases with the help of his best friend Rohan Doctor. This is the second book in the series and the fast-paced thriller puts the detectives to the ultimate test - hence the ultimate adventures.

Q2. What is the most difficult part about writing for you?

A. The most difficult part is getting started on a new book. The initial few days of putting my ideas to paper and wondering if it will work can be stressful. But once the story takes off, it becomes a much smoother ride.

Q3. What is your work schedule like when you are writing?

A. Pre-pandemic, I would write for 4-5 hours from morning to afternoon while my daughter would be at school. Now with online classes and my husband's work from home, I have to consciously make time for writing throughout the day.

Q4. How many plot ideas are just waiting to be written? Can you tell us about one?

A. There are many ideas, but just one or two concrete ones. One of them is for a funny detective story for younger kids. Let's see if it works out into a book.

Q5. What famous author do you wish would be your mentor?

A. I have always admired Ruskin Bond's writing style and would love to have him as a mentor.

Q6. How many bookshelves are in your house?

A. We have three bookcases, but they are clearly not enough! You will find books stacked all around the house on side tables, wall shelves and TV unit.

Q7. What was one of the most surprising things you learned in creating your books?

A. The surprising thing is that story ideas can come from anywhere, you just have to keep your eyes and ears open. And one idea can lead to another creating a ripple effect.

Q8. How do you develop your plot and characters?

A. I usually start with the characters first. I had first envisioned Shrilok and Rohan as Sherlock and Watson, a detective duo who solve crimes in Mumbai. I try to figure out their characteristics, backgrounds, how they meet etc. I then outline the plot and add the sub-plots and other details as I write. The book has ten different cases, so there are ten plots and numerous sub-plots.

Q9. How much 'world building' takes place before you start writing?

A. My stories are set in realistic locations, so it's more about capturing the flavour of these places. For example, *Shrilok Homeless* plots are set in famous cities like Mumbai and London. I have tried to paint a picture of these cities - from their landmarks, crowded streets to their vibrant people. My first book *Little Indians* has stories from fifteen states of India and it takes you on a journey across our country.

Q10. What advice would you like to share with an aspiring writer?

A. Now is a great time to be a writer, as there are more opportunities than ever to get published. The only advice I would like to give is to have patience. Good ideas take time to brew. One day you could be writing pages and pages and on another you could be stuck on one sentence. As long as you keep making progress, one day you will have a book with your name on it!

SHILPA GOEL

Shilpa Goel is the author of *Poetic Letters To God*. From being clueless about life to finding a purpose, poetry has been her greatest asset. Shilpa has compiled and edited five anthologies of poems and short stories about romance and travels. Her work has been published in eight anthologies. Shilpa shares her poetry, prose, and quotes regularly on Instagram (@meetlife240) and has readers from all over the world. She has been listed among top 10 on the list of 31 Modern Poets You Should Follow by glowhabits.com

Poetic Letters to God is her debut poetry book which reflects her love for both: God and poetry. Besides writing, she loves reading, playing with the crafts, travelling, and being surrounded by nature.

Q1. Tell us about yourself.

A. Hi, I am Shilpa Goel. I am an author, poet, blogger, and editor. I was born and brought up in Delhi. I have written the book *Poetic Letters To God* and my poems have been published in eight anthologies. I have also compiled and edited five anthologies of poems and short stories based on romance and travels. Other than writing, I love reading, painting, journaling, cooking, and being in nature. I believe in God and destiny because my life has taken a course I had never dreamed of. Right when I was feeling lost in life, poetry found me and held my hand. I have been writing for more than half-a-decade now.

Q2. What was your first poem or writing piece?

A. My first piece was a poem that I had written for my mother when I was in 11th grade. I had titled it 'The Magic Masala' for it described the traits of my mom and the bond I share with her.

Q3. How do you think poetry is evolving these days?

A. We live in an instant world of Instagram and other social media; our patience is decreasing each day. You have to capture a person's attention with the first two lines or they scroll and move on. Sometimes, they scroll even without glancing at long poems. Short poems and laconic prose are most admired on social media these days. But people who truly love poetry still love to read and write long-form poems, being mesmerised by the beauty that each line of a poem unfolds.

Also, poets these days are sticking more to free-style poetry or making rules of their own rather than following the other known poetic forms. I, too, believe that free-style poetry allows emotions to flow better.

Q4. How do you think one should begin displaying their work?

A. When we create something, there's usually a lot of self-doubts and fears involved when it comes to displaying our work. I'd suggest one to start sharing their work with someone they trust the most and know that this person won't drag them down at any cost.



I know such people are rare. I am blessed to have one such person—my best friend, who not only read all my work initially but also gave me the courage to share my work on social media. If you don't feel comfortable in sharing your work with known people, start a social media account under a pen name and let the world read your work. Believe me, people on social media are far more supportive of talent. You will receive criticism when your work start reaching more and more people, but never let it stop you from creating but help you be better at it. Take small steps. Overnight success doesn't last for long.

when you love someone,
their name itself becomes an emotion.

shilpa goel



When you love someone, their name itself becomes an emotion.

when god's reserved a diamond for you,
he'll make other stones reject you.

-shilpa goel



When God's reserved a diamond for you, He'll make other stones reject you.

clouds can only cover the sun for some time,
they just can't steal its shine.

-shilpa goel



Clouds can only cover the sun for some time, they just can't steal its shine.

don't look for love in his words,
he shows love in a million little ways.

shilpa goel



Don't look for love in his words,
he shows love in a million little ways.

Q5. What websites did you use to build-up fan-base?

A. I had started writing poems on allpoetry.com in the beginning but I only posted a few poems there. It taught me how to use writing prompts. I then started sharing my writings on Instagram and never looked back. I didn't know about InstaPoets back then. I was initially even embarrassed to post words on a photo-sharing platform but I did anyway because I just wanted to. The only support I had on Instagram was from my internet friends. Slowly, I took it further to Facebook, Twitter, and now Pinterest as well. While I share my writings on all these platforms, my focus remains on Instagram, that's where my loyal readership is.

Q6. Who is your inspiration?

A. I am inspired by God, nature, situations, emotions, and when it comes to a person who inspires me, it's Chef Vikas Khanna, who is a poet himself. Reading his and his fans' poems, I too got interested in writing poetry and somehow, I ended up making it my career. He also wrote the foreword for my debut poetry book.

Q7. What would you consider to be the most life changing moment of your life?

A. I think it was in October 2014 when I got my hands on the book *The Secret*. When I bought that book, I had no clue what's in it. I had not even read the blurb before buying it. I just wanted it because someone had once told me it was their favourite book. I was not an avid reader then and I didn't know much about book selection. I wanted this book, so I got it. But when I read it, I got answers to so many of my questions and I changed the way I looked at life. It taught me how powerful my thoughts are and it made all the difference.

Q8. If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?

A. Discrimination based on religion, gender, race, caste, and what not! People are forgetting that our Creator already made each one of us different and unique, then why categorise a portion of people and create unwanted differences to treat one category better than the other?

Q9. What should we expect from you next?

A. I am working on a poetry book and a novel simultaneously. While I have already published a poetry book, writing a novel is a fun yet more challenging task. I cannot tell anything about the novel yet because it is still unfolding, my poetry book is based on the theme 'acceptance' as that's what I sought all my life but found it within.

Q10. What advice would you give to an aspiring writer?

A. I advise aspiring writers to write their heart out without worrying about what others want to read. Your words will reach the right audience on their own. Sometimes, while trying to chase followers or fame, we forget that our authenticity matters the most. Creative writing is personal. It reflects your perspective, your imagination, your thought-process, your emotions, your observations. No one can look at the world the way you do and that should reflect in your writing. Let your art reflect your soul.

MEGHA RAO

Megha Rao is a confessional performance poet, surrealist artist and podcaster. Her work has been featured on platforms such as Penguin Random House India, Firstpost, The Open Road Review, New Asian Writing, The Alipore Post, Spoken Fest, Why Indian Men Rape and Thought Catalog. Megha is a postgraduate in English Literature from the University of Nottingham, UK, and is currently spending her time between Mumbai and Kerala.



Q1. When did you realize you wanted to be a performance poet?

A. Roshan Abbas from Kommune told me that if I didn't perform my poems, he was going to give them to other poets to perform. I didn't like the sound of that, so I packed my bags and moved from Kerala to Bombay impulsively - I needed to give this a shot. For six months, I performed, getting triggered by my own poems and never truly in love with it as much as I was with writing.

And so one day I stopped going on stage, and it felt like a big break-up. It's when I began to miss it did I realize I wanted this. When I was ready to restart, I knew I wasn't going to stop ever again. This wasn't a hobby or a phase, this was the closest I could get to living my poetry.

Q2. Tell us about your new book "Music to Flame Lilies".

A. It's about a young woman chasing a call from her dead best friend back to a small village in Karnataka. I grew up hearing folklore about this place from my family, and apparently my great grandfather was a black magician, so it all fell into place easily. My mind was going wild with all the ghost stories they were telling me, and I couldn't resist making a book out of it. It's lyrical in style, it's for readers who enjoy poetry.

Q3. What are you currently working on?

A. Teething. It's my first poetry book and I am obsessed with it. I wake up and go to sleep with this world in my head. Three children from Kerala, a concept album around their lives. Every poem is connected. It's all so earthy and innocent and special. I couldn't possibly be in love with anything or anyone as I am in love with this collection right now.

Q4. What do you consider to be the most memorable moment of your life?

A. Spoken Fest 2020. Right after my performance. I remember walking down from the stage after screaming my Lungs out and running all the way to the back of that ground and lying on the grass, facing the sky. I was alone, there were lights everywhere and stars above me. It was a private moment and I was feeling...epic. Alive.

Q5. Do you ever get nervous when you perform? How do you cope up with it and come forward in confidence?

A. I'm always anxious and excited. I just end up drinking a lot of water and telling myself I have this one chance to kill it and that in this one moment, I am a superstar and I can't possibly mess up. I keep remembering this quote by C. Kenedy: I feel small. But so are stars from a distance.

Q6. What books are close to your heart?

A. To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee and The Godfather by Mario Puzo are my favorite classics. The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy is my all-time favorite book. I also have a soft spot for Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie.

Q7. Your previous books, "A crazy kind of love" and "It will always be you" are based on love stories. Are they based on true stories or imagination?

A. Just a sixteen-year-old girl's fantasies. I feel like I've outgrown that kid, but I love everything I've written, so I find myself going back to them once in a while and smiling at the innocence.



Q8. How do you build up characters in your stories?

A. They're all different versions of me. Our journeys are personal and the trajectories are based on all my realities and what-ifs. They grow with me. Which also means I make sure they're as flawed as I am, because I need to relate to them, and so do the readers. With the new poetry book, Teething, I see a return to childish playfulness and vulnerability. The characters are young and old, just like I am this year.

Q9. Do you think it's safe to choose poetry as a profession in today's world?

A. It's risky, it's not impossible. I'm a full-time poet now, and I still wonder who I would have been had I not taken the plunge. There's this uncertainty of where I'm headed tomorrow. A dead-end? A black hole? A technicolor dream? The sky? The possibilities are endless. It feels like one big dance to me. I always promised I'd be brave and I'd take chances, so here I am.

Q10. What would you like to say to an aspiring writer/poet?

A. Write your poems. When this lifetime ends, you'll never be able to make art ever again. So just write, write your poems.



Our Reality

We are not what we appear on our Instagram stories or on WhatsApp statuses. We are the ones lying on our bed, the room engulfed in pitch darkness, our face buried deep inside our pillow, sobbing uncontrollably, muffling our voice with our palm cupped on our mouth, struggling for a breath yet wishing not to take another breath.

We are not what our perfectly filtered selfies speak of us on social media. We are those anxious, self-loathing eyes staring back from the mirror at our imperfections, when we wish to be perfect not able to acknowledge that those same flaws make us beautiful.

We are not those laughing emojis we send over chats. We are those lonely souls talking to ourselves on papers with ink and crumbling them into balls, tossing into the bin, yet still afraid of pouring all of ourselves on those bits of papers.

We are not what we show to the world, we are what we are afraid to show even to ourselves.

faces are never
ugly or beautiful,
minds are.

shilpa goel



Faces are never ugly or beautiful, minds are.

Poetic Letters To God

Scars

You healed the wounds
but left the scars,
maybe You already knew
that we humans need
a reminder for everything,
even for the lessons
that we learn the hard way.

You healed the wounds but left the scars, maybe You already knew that we humans need a reminder for everything, even for the lessons that we learn the hard way.

we are not what
we show to the world.
we are what
we are afraid to show
even to ourselves.

shilpa goel



We are not what we appear on our Instagram stories or on WhatsApp statuses. We are the ones lying on our bed, the room engulfed in pitch darkness, our face buried deep inside our pillow, sobbing uncontrollably, muffling our voice

VINATI BHOLA

Vinati Bhola is an internationally published poet based in Delhi, India. She works as a lawyer but falls back on poetry time and again to keep up with the monotony of everyday life. Writing since the age of thirteen, she believes poetry is so much more than romanticizing emotions.



Q1. If you could go back and give your younger self some advice, what would it be and why?

A. My advice to my younger self is something that I have suggested to many aspiring poets and writers who've reached out to me: Do not doubt your art. Do not question it. As long as it is making you happy, as long as it is feeding your soul, do not be ashamed of it. Do not leave its hand when life gets a bit rough.

Because with a desire to seek validation for every little thing on social media, it is but important to not let it affect us if the world grapples with our work.

Q2. What do you think is the best part about being a poet?

A. The best part is that poets can speak directly to your most intimate thoughts in just a few lines. It's like a superpower, poems have the ability to transcend all sorts of limitation and carry meanings as heavy as a social message or as light as a new love.

Q3. Where do you draw inspiration from?

A. Of all the things, I draw inspiration from fleeting moments of our everyday life which may seem insignificant but are actually not. I say this all the time, because I need this message, this mantra to reach as many people as possible: Poetry is so much more than romanticizing emotions. *It is an art, as simple as breathing and as complex as living.*

Q4. What does Udaari mean to you?

A. Udaari to me is a beautiful journey, something which started off as a ridiculously unachievable idea at the back of my mind is now sitting on the bedside table and in the hands of many beautiful readers from across the world. Honestly, there is nothing more magical in my life right now.

Q5. Among your work, which one is the closest to your heart?

A. It's almost like asking a mother to choose her favorite kid. Every poem that I have written has helped me at some point or the other, but one poem which really picked me and many others along the way is this:

but darling
you are a river.

the rocks will
break you.
the valleys will bend you

but you will never
stop
because that is
what you do.

you flow.

Q6. What's your favorite poem? And why?

A. It keeps changing with times, but at the moment I'm devouring Warsan Shire's work and this following excerpt from one of her poems is so relevant today:

later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?

it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere.

Q8. You're a corporate lawyer. How do you find time to work on poetry?

A. If you'd asked me this question before pandemic my answer would have been different, but today, with everyone grounded at home, one of the few good things that have come out of these distressed times is that I am able to devote more energy to poetry, so much so that my second book is finally taking a coherent shape.

Q9. What are you currently working on?

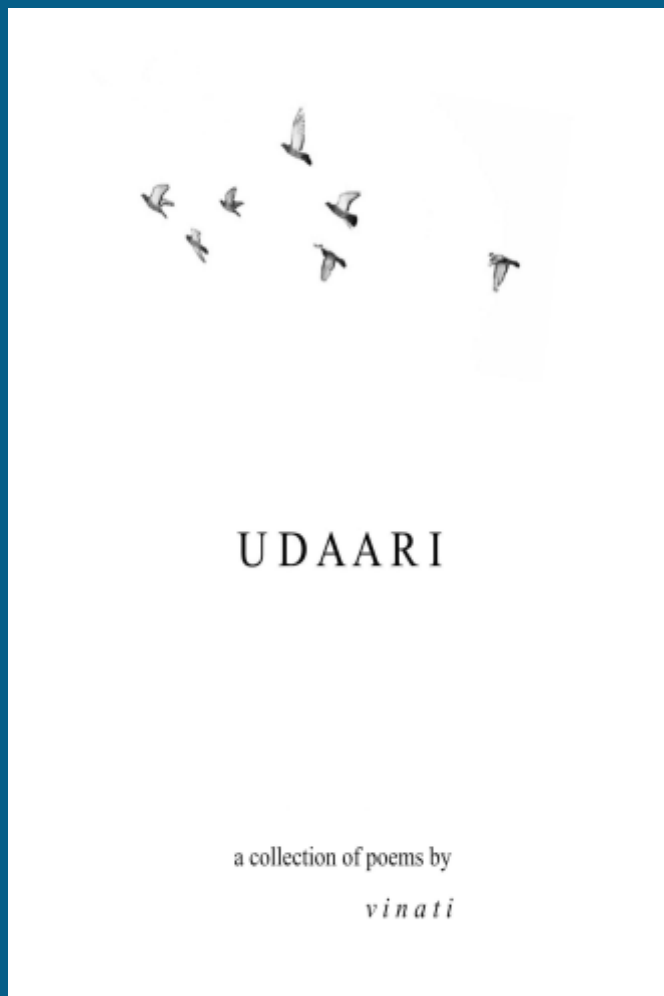
A. I'm working on my next book which will also be a collection of poems but with a lot of new elements and flavors.

Q10. Do you write to express your feelings or about the things you experience? How real is your poetry to your life?

A. It is real to a great extent but honestly, more often than not my poems are infused with a tinge of empathy than experience. The world, the people, the stories around me have a greater influence on my work than my own life experience.

Q11. What advice would be on top of your list for aspiring poets and writers?

A. As a thumb rule, your work should belong to yourself first and even if it is a bad poem or a bad piece of prose, write it because the best way to move forward is to keep unclogging the mind and letting the words free.





KHWAJA MUSADIQ

Poet of Blues

Although most people know me as Khawaja Musadiq, my name is Musadiq Hussain. I am 23 years old and I was born in Srinagar, Kashmir and consider myself extremely fortunate to be a part of such rich culture and tradition. I completed my schooling from Tyndale Biscoe and Mallinson Educational Society and then moved to Bangalore to pursue my degree in Computer Science Engineering, where I am currently waiting for my terminating (8th) semester exams. Winning a contest, large number of followers or being featured in magazines and newspapers is not a measure of my success. I think one of my biggest achievements is that I have been able to connect with such incredible people. People who have connected with my writings and have shared their beautiful experiences. People who have expressed that my words made a difference in helping them deal with a situation. My ultimate goal will continue to be able to reach out to hearts through my words, to educate and create awareness on issues that make people feel lonely and finally to continuously better myself as a person.

Q. What influenced you to start writing poetry?

A. Poetry is a limitless experience. Like the beauty that pervades my Kashmir. Being born in Kashmir was like being raised in the lap of a poem. There is an aura of art that permeates everything. We are all born poets. It is poems that come seeking us – igniting our hearts to spread the flame of love and hope.

Poetry for me takes various forms. I regard poetry as a spiritual journey, connecting hearts and souls of people along the way and making me discover the wonders of mine. Poetry helps us to heal and grow. When I write I experience a divine explosion in my veins, helping me to find my reflection on the pages of my diary. It is a pilgrimage of words.

A few years ago while discussing the political situation in Kashmir with my dear friend and brother, Ubair, I penned down my first poem - Paradise Lost. I realised writing, even though temporarily, enabled me to release a burden from my heart. I discovered a heightened sense of freedom for my emotions to fly, even if they had broken wings. And thus began my pilgrimage through words.

Q. What was your first poem and what inspired you to write it?

A. As said earlier, some years ago, me and my friend Ubair, contemplating over our motherland's fate during war thought of writing something about what stays with most of the Kashmiris, till they are victimized to death. My first poem was "Paradise Lost." The name resembled to Milton's paradise lost, and so did the idea. Just that Milton talked about man's first disobedience and I've mentioned man's persistent disobedience over the years.

Q. How is poetry important for the society?

A. Poetry like any other form of art is an expression of what it is to be a part of this universe. It embraces the good, the bad and the ugly of our existence.

Modern day poetry offers a relatively easy medium for members of our society to express themselves. It has become a platform for people to raise their voices on myriad issues.



Poetry comes to rescue when the burden of emotions, piling upon our hearts, becomes unbearable. Words become the yarn through which we spin songs of our heartbeats. Poetry provides the link between the lyrics and the melody of our existence.

Sometimes in our private lives, poetry becomes a crystal ball to answer the questions raised by our tormented souls.

Q. What difference would you like to bring forth by your poetry?

A. Gratification in doing something mostly stems from the fact it has been deemed meaningful by others. A lot of things have definitions but poetry offers us a beautiful chance to add further meaning to those definitions. Be it love or grief, religion or politics, science or rituals, fear or hope, survival or suppression and the list goes on. Poetry allows us to redefine everything by constantly expanding our horizons.

Creating and spreading awareness about the things which we all feel is something that I endeavour to achieve through my writings. Many a times we find ourselves terribly lonely in what we experience. But reading someone's poem makes us realise that we aren't alone. Those shapeless thoughts now formed into a poem helps us find companionship in what we feel and how we feel.

I wish for my poems to become that invisible friends that we all wish for. I continuously hope that my words help my readers to create meaning when they can't find in their existence.

Q. What's the most important thing one needs to be a poet?

A. I would believe a combination of empathy and observation is probably one of the most important requirements to be a poet. The gift of observing minutest of things and the ability to feel deeply with a great sense of comprehension will set aside a poet from the rest.

Q. Who's your favourite poet and which is your favourite poem?

A. I am a great admirer of the works of Agha Shahid Ali, Rumi and Charles Bukowski, and my friend Ubair Fayaz Fazili. Every poet is unique, I do not have a favourite poet, at least not yet. I still want to explore more international writers, especially poems written in Persian, Spanish and French.

Once again picking a favourite poem would be like finding my favourite drop of water in an ocean. But one of the poems that recently touched my heart was 'The Quiet World' by 'Jeffrey McDaniel'.

Q. Tell us about your channel "poetofblues". How did you come up with the name?

A. Gazing at the sky and then finding its colour reflected in the water made me realise that poetry is nothing but our reflection. Alphabets like primary colours are finite but the former in the heart of a poet and the latter in the soul of a painter creates infinite number of ways by which they can express themselves.

Blue being my favourite colour became the colour of the poem of my reflection and hence the name poetofblues.

Although blues is synonymous to some degree of melancholy, the name poetofblues is not intended to be limited to shades of sadness only.

Q. Is your inspiration to write visual, musical or does it begins with a mere idea?

A. poem happens to me with an idea, a meagrely scanty idea. An idea, you would want to do nothing about. The idea happens first, followed by this sharp poem. This poem, so subtly sharp that you'd want to give away your life for the same.



Q. Which form do you usually like to work on?

A. Art shouldn't be measured by any academic or technical standards. In fact some of the most magnificent pieces of work have been created when individuals chose to break free from traditional way of doing things. There are tools to aid creativity but creativity cannot be an extension of a set of rules. It is something that is limitless. There exists no rational or logic to art. It is just a free flux of what stirs in your heart.

Also I would like to highlight that art isn't always created to attract audience. We all interpret and relate to everything in our life based on our own set of experiences, our beliefs and values and our learning.

I do not manipulate my writings to meet any standards or cater for a targeted audience. I believe I first write for myself and then share it with other readers. If I had to choose a form or style to define my style of writing it would be closest to free verse.

As previously mentioned I continue to experiment with my expressions, I like to explore intricacies of emotions and subjects. I aim to write straight out of my heart, sometimes leaving certain words as raw as possible without resorting to flowery language. I think that's what makes writing easy and not a tough job.

Poetry by Poet of Blues



p.s: If you are looking for some other poems, you can find them on my Instagram page. Sent these because there might be space limitation in the magazine.

01 every time you break
my heart
each piece contains
the same amount of love
as the whole of it.

if this isn't a miracle
then what is?

every time you walk away
you fill more love into me
tell me how can i then believe
when you say
that you don't love me?

02 my heart is a city devoid
of people - people who are
alive.
there are a lot of you
I have buried in here!

03 one day
in autumn: you and i
will again be together.
and from that day
no one will talk about
the reds, the yellows
or bare branches,
but; only about us.

04 I wonder
in what language
does darkness talk to light.
because, one means
the death of other.

05 in my country.
roses that grow
never reach
the hands of lovers.
but just the skin
of graves.

-mourn.



Mr. MOHIT WADHWA

Founder, Writers Pocket

Writer's Pocket is a publication house that first started out as an Instagram page on February 15th, 2016 by 2 college students. We began with the aim of providing a platform for amateur writers and budding poets.

As a publication house, we publish novels and stand-alone collections of short writings by debut authors.

content. While those were the challenges in publishing, our Instagram page was receiving massive growth. In the early years, as we did not know much about how the publishing industry works, we faced many challenges in terms of the quality of the books that we delivered and the approach that we had towards the clients.

We also publish new anthologies of short stories, poems and other forms of writing every month. Every piece of content in our anthologies is submitted by young writers from all over India.

If you want to check out any of the books published by us, you can visit www.writerspocket.com or search for us on Amazon!

Q1. How did you come up with the concept of writer's pocket?

A. 4 years back, there weren't many platforms to promote amateur writers. That is when I had the idea to come up with a platform for them and simply showcase the content to a wider audience. It was then that we decided to expand ourselves into the publishing sector. As there were limited publication houses and it was not easily accessible for most of the writers, we decided to make the publishing services accessible to as many people as possible.

Q2. What kind of challenges did you face during the early years?

A. In the initial years of Writer's Pocket, we struggled with the growth and putting a word out there about us since not many people considered publishing their content. Rather, people were not confident if their content was actually worth enough to be published. For us, it was one of the major challenges to make them believe in their

Q.3 What changed in the publishing industry during Covid-19?

A. While we had to stop our printing units and shipping of the books was not possible, I believe that Covid-19 has turned out to be very beneficial for us since many writers were able to work on their dream of writing and publishing a book.

Not only did Covid help in the publishing industry but it also increased our reach and audience, and that has helped us in signing new writers.

Q.4 Where do you see the publishing industry in the next 10 years?

A. Currently we are noticing a shift in the preference of readers from paperbacks to e-books. And we believe that in the span of 10 years, majority of the readers will be preferring e-books over paperbacks.

While we notice this preference change, we also believe that many of the current publishing houses won't be able to survive this change and that's where I believe that Writer's Pocket will be able to capture maximum market.

Q.6 What are the major things you keep in mind while publishing a book?

A. Unlike most of the self publishing platforms out there who are publishing for the sake of publishing a book, we follow a proper screening process where we read the content and decide if we should be publishing the book or not.

I believe that's an integral part of publishing as we have to make sure that the reader actually gets something out of the literature that we are publishing.

While these aren't even the things to be mentioned as publishing shouldn't be looked at as a money making field rather something that we preserve for our future generations.



Q7. What kind of books are a trendsetter these days?

A. Since our early childhood, we have been observing that most people preferred a full fledged novel of 300-500 pages. However, such books are currently preferred by a very limited audience. Most of the readers' preferences have changed to quotes or poetry books than novels.

I believe that people like to read something that consumes less time while conveying the idea and that has caused the shift in preference.

Q8. What has been the Proudest moment of your life?

A. I have always had these dreams of owning companies which are very popular and have thousands of people working. While having a dream is easy, I never thought how it can ever turn into reality until we started Writer's Pocket.

I believed in the initial years that I alone will be able to make such a company until I realised that without the people I work with, I can never turn any of my dreams into reality.

I feel proud every single day because of the people who work with me. These are the best people one could possibly have and if you have them together under a roof, you can make anything in the world happen.

Proudest moment for me are the team meetings that we had before Covid where I simply sat in the corner and looked at everyone enjoying the work they do while still cherishing that pizza slice in their plate. It was the proudest moment for me as I always wanted to create a place where people actually enjoy what they do rather than considering it a burden.

Q9. What advice would you like to share with future aspirants?

A. The only piece of advice I'd like to give is, believe in what you write and never underestimate your words. Having said that, I would also like to add that you shouldn't be bothered about what your close circle of people think about your writing because there is a huge audience out there who is waiting to read and love your content. Keep writing.



URMI RATHOD

Urmi Jain Rathod is a mom, runner, a published author and a freelance content writer who loves to write for herself when not helping clients win at marketing. She is a passionate poet & running her podcast and YouTube channel helps her soul find meaning. She also does poem gifts for people who feel unable to express themselves in poems with the belief that her words can make someone's day!

Q1. What inspired you to start writing?

A. Well, I was always a person of many words- written though, more than spoken. This resonated so much with me that when I was a radio presenter, I did that for a year for the kicks of it but felt the need to switch to the writing department by the second month on air! I understood writing was something that was my vocation because it gave me joy and others were quite wowed by anything I wrote! Sometimes I felt confused because I'd had literally put that together in 10 mins or so... so that motivated me more. I guess that's the story... My parents are amazing poets so I guess it encouraged me to explore the same as well.

Q2. How long have you been writing?

A. I've been actively writing since I was 7! I wrote my first sher (which was obviously raw and childish) during a game of pretend play with my mother and I wrote it under a pen-name too! She has that piece of paper still... But yeah, it's always been there, in and out. As a career, you can say I began writing in 2010 when I joined radio. It's been a beautiful 10 years+ now.

Q3. Have you always wanted to be a writer?

A. Not really. I've been here and there. I've been interested in being a teacher, a doctor, a fashion designer, an advertiser, a teacher again and many other things throughout the years. Writing was always on the side, if I may mention, because what comes easy to oneself doesn't get noticed that much. It's taken for granted. Like a given. So I guess it's my situation and timing that made a writer out of me.



Q4. What, in your opinion, are the most important elements of good writing?

A. Good writing will make the reader feel the same Emotions that are the cause of the writing. Without any effort. Beyond the boundaries of personal limitations and understanding. Good writing is executed using correct language, both grammar and vocabulary. Good writing follows rules but not to the extent that emotions melt away and only the structure with rules remains.

Q5. What advice would you give a new writer, someone just starting out?

A. I don't have anything to say. Who am I to advise someone when I'm learning something new at every step still! But yes, it's a simple equation that you get what you put in. So if you put weariness and mechanical efforts into writing, that's what you get. If you put your heart into it, that's what shows too. So continue being human with writing and enjoy the process.

Q6. What is the most difficult part about writing for you?

A. It's the moment when I have an idea but I have no expression for it - it's the most difficult part. Good writing is like labour: you must give it ample gestation, nurture it within you and painfully endure. Then give birth. And present it to the world. This process is tough because there is a lot of waiting, persevering and constantly evolving. It's a wonderful process, yes, but difficult.

Q7. Tell us about your upcoming poetry?

A. My upcoming poems are all in process for my YouTube channel where I have begun reciting on camera and my Podcast where I record and put them up. It's a wonderfully satisfying way to showcase my work and show what I can do with words... It is extremely satisfying to do this beyond my usual marketing writing and consulting which I do for brands. This is for me. So yes, I'm very excited about them. The theme overall is more to do with love and relationships, me and mine.

Q8. Is writing your full-time career? Or would you like it to be?

A. Yes it is my full time career. I am associated with brand and graphic design studios who constantly need content on various forms like for brand communication, promotional tools and simple consultancy on how they can talk to the customer effectively. It's a highly satisfying career where I get to say things on the behalf of the brand.

Q9. What was your favorite part, and the least favorite part, of the publishing journey?

A. I like the fact that in today's publishing scene, anyone can be a published author by a payment of a couple of thousand bucks to see their name in print. Anthologies have gone into publishing big time, and they are like a crowd funding scheme, so pay your way in is the norm.

Unfortunately, all publishing seems to be working this way now. You get your book printed for a cost, recover it trying to sell the books and honestly, it's stopped being such a big deal. Houses won't even entertain you unless you are a big name. But you can buy the privilege. Strange that.

Q10. Tell us about your podcast.

A. It all started in the month of April, year 2020 - the grand year of change! I have been writing poems for years together and for the first time, I shared something with a dear friend and work associate who knows my radio background. He read through it and suggested I do a voice over for the same. The result came out so astonishing he pushed me hard to find out how to start a Podcast. Nobody I know does this yet so it took me some research. But when I started it finally, and began broadcasting it people began listening and appreciating!! I've received 2500+ listens on the Podcast on Anchor and Spotify (links given below) in less than a year and we are talking Hindi and (sometimes) English poetry who seemingly has a strained consumer market (as in, these things are usually not very readily accepted by everyone).

This gave me a lot of motivation! My husband pointed out that not everyone can hear and imagine and so my appeal was limited. He suggested I must begin a YouTube channel so that my kind of Content goes down even better with the crowd. I began making videos, and that became a very good platform too. As YouTube opens app-in-app on WhatsApp, it's quicker and lesser number of clicks to view my poems. I am full of gratitude for these men to have pushed me to begin sharing what I feel with the world! Thanks to the Podcast and it being a good showcase platform for me, I have even started offering poem gifts where I write a poem as a gift from the giver's perspective to the receiver. It's like an ode for special people in life. In this age of digital everything, gifts must be such that they don't take more than a few GBs on the phone and don't require any maintenance or physical space.



VAISHALI SHROFF



Vaishali Shroff is an award-winning children's author and columnist. She likes to write stories about subjects that are challenging yet pertinent such as mental health, touch without consent, and act as icebreakers to initiate difficult conversations. With over 200 published stories, her popular books include *The Adventures of Padma and a Blue Dinosaur*, recipient of the 2019 Best in Indian Children's Writing (BICW) award, *Raindrops*, *Ari*, *The Missing Bat*, *The Strange Case of Nayantara*, *The Boy in the Dark Hole*. Her work is also published by the prestigious Oxford University Press (UK, Asia, India), and her latest title, *Sita's Chitwan*, by Penguin Random House India. She's been invited as a speaker at literature festivals across the country. She lives in Mumbai with her husband and two sons and nothing brings her greater joy than seeing her kids, sprawled across the sofa, the bed, the floor, reading at all times of the day.

Q1. Tell us about your greatest achievement.

A. I don't think I have achieved my greatest yet. While I still have many more books to write and more work to do for children's literature, I am proud that my book, *The Adventures of Padma and a Blue Dinosaur*, the only book written exclusively about Indian dinosaurs, won the BICW 2019 Award (Best in Indian Children's Writing). Also, my titles, *Ari* and *Raindrops* have been published in Pakistan by Oxford University Press, Pakistan. But my biggest achievement yet is when a mother came up to me after a book interaction saying, 'I wish you had written *The Strange Case of Nayantara* much earlier so my daughter would have been saved from being physically abused. Or when a boy came to me with my dinosaur book saying, 'I want to become a paleontologist because of you!'

Q2. What's your favorite thing to write about?

A. I love to write about undiscovered places, untold histories and about children's issues that need a voice. I like to explore gaps in our curriculum and what children would love to learn and know more about and write it in a manner that children understand clearly and read with rapt attention.

Q3. Who do you draw inspiration from?

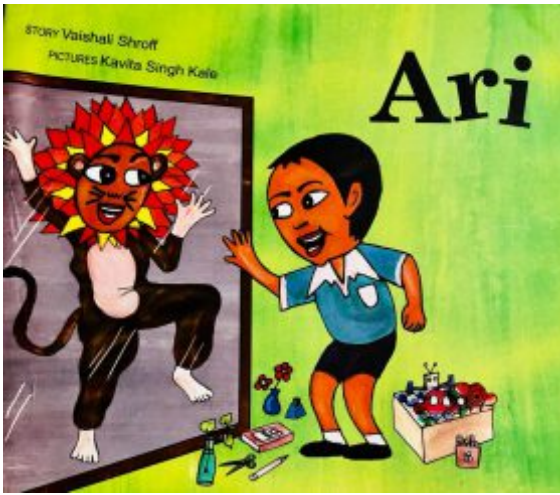
A. Everything around me. My childhood. My experiences. My children. Places I travel to. People I know. Strangers! I find stories in the most unexpected of things. I wrote my first book *Raindrops* when I was looking out of the window on a rainy day. I wrote the dinosaur book after seeing a real dinosaur egg at a fossil site in Gujarat. I wrote *Ari* based on my childhood experience of being unable to tell my teacher how much I loved acting on stage. I wrote *The Missing Bat* on my visit to Kashmir and on discovering that it's so much more than what the media tells us. My forthcoming titles have similar yet varied back stories of inspiration.

Q4. What influence/impact do you want your books and stories to create?

A. According to me where the book ends is where the story begins. A story takes many forms because every reader perceives the story differently and learns different things from the same book. For instance, my book *The Strange Case of Nayantara* is about touch without consent and even if one child learns to speak up for himself or herself and say No to others, I have achieved my goal. Same with my latest book, *The Boy in the Dark Hole* that explores the darker emotions in children and talks about how they can go from their dark place to their happy place! Every book that I write must lead to deeper thinking and actions that promise a better future, a better world. I like to invoke thoughts of kindness and empathy towards the world we live in through my work and I hope I have been able to achieve that to some extent.

Q5. How long does it take you to write a book?

A. It depends. Picture books don't take much time to write once you have etched out the characters and plot. Longer books take anything between six months to a year, sometimes even more, to write. I am currently working on a book that required me to travel, but because of the lockdown, it has taken a backseat and will take much longer than I had anticipated.



Q6. Which book you recently admired the most?

A. I read some picture books by Eklavya Publishers recently and they are like hidden gems—The Sea in a Bucket, Guthli, Payal is Lost. The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf left a deep impact on me as a writer and as a reader. I would also highly recommend No Talking by Andrew Clements and Wonder by R J Palaccio.

Q7. What is your work schedule like when you're writing?

A. I am a morning person. I generally write from 5:00 am to 8:00 am every morning. Then, through the day, I do all sorts of admin work like calls with editors and email exchanges, sessions and workshops, and in the night, I catch up on some reading. I have two sons so the day goes by looking into their affairs.

Q8. What do you like to do when you're not writing?

A. When I'm not writing, I'm usually reading or listening to music. I love reading with my kids so I try to do that whenever possible. I also need to invest a lot of effort to market and sell my books, so I'm also constantly looking for ways to do that.

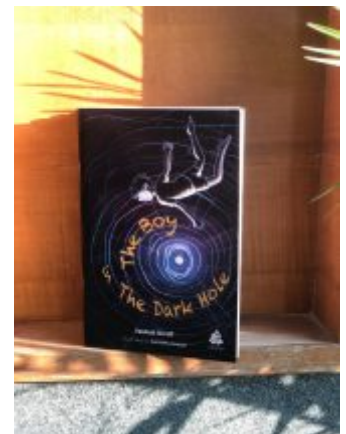


Q9. Could you demonstrate the challenges you faced in the early years?

A. I started writing for children when access to editors and publishers and reaching out to them was not that easy. I don't have a background in literature so I had to read and study a lot to educate myself with the writing, editing, and publishing processes. But I took every challenge in my stride and told myself that if I want to write and publish books eventually, I cannot give up. I accepted rejections and learnt a lot from them. At one point, I did feel that maybe writing and publishing is not for me because a few of my manuscripts got rejected but soon I learnt that I just had to believe in my work and send the stories to other publishers who may be interested. A manuscript that may not work for one publisher could be a bestseller for another. Rejections also helped me to improve my work and become better at my craft. Also, it's important to be patient—with yourself, so you don't rush into any story, ensuring that they are well researched and engaging for readers and with publishers because they may take time to get back to you.

Q10. What advice would you like to share with upcoming writers?

A. Write about what you feel strongly and passionately about because then the writing will be honest and the readers will feel it. It could be anything, fiction or nonfiction—you need to believe in your subject and your ability to execute it. Look for unique angles and perspectives to present your story to the readers. Even a folktale that has been read and written hundreds of times may sound fresh and engaging if it's written from a new point of view. Write something everyday. It could be a diary entry or a few lines on a new experience you had or a place you visited. It helps your writing to flow easily and helps you improve your craft. Last but not the least, read. Read a lot. Reading is like nurturing your mind and soul, and supplying the essential nutrients of words, thoughts and ideas to your brain that you need to write.



MUKTI MASIH

Mukti Masih has been writing since age eight. She is one of India's most well-known freelance content writers, listed as among Top 10 Freelance Writers in 2018, 2019 and among the Four Most Trustworthy Writers in 2020. She has spent 15 years in writing in general and 11 years as a freelance writer in particular. She loves the works of Jane Austen, Ruskin Bond, J K Rowling and Ravi Zecharias and admires contemporary bloggers on Medium and Thought Catalog. She has written all forms of writing: blogs, articles, newsletters, white papers, research journals, fiction, poetry and so on. Mukti loves travelling, reading and singing in her free time. She is a chai-totaller who wishes to write a Chai Memoirs Book one day. Apart from writing for several private companies, she also contributes in Entrepreneur, YourStory, Thrive Global and Thought Catalog. Her personal blog is <https://muktimasih.com>.



Q1. How did you begin your journey as a writer?

A. I composed a random song when I was like 4 years old - my mother told me this. We still have an audio cassette in which I am singing this song, I don't understand what words I was using but it sounded like Hindi. I wrote my first English poem at age eight. It was called 'Our Earth Is A Ball'. The whole writing part came naturally to me since I began writing journals and diaries describing my daily life. I contributed to my school magazine. But the breakthrough happened when during my Hindi Class in Standard XI, my teacher asked me to create a Hindi sentence. When I shared what I wrote, she said: "I see a writer's genes in you." This language teacher Late Mrs Vijaya Bakshi and my father Vishwas Masih encouraged me to pursue journalism eventually.

Q.2 You have written over 12000 blogs. How do you recharge your creative batteries?

A. I am more of a quality person than quantity. So when I say I wrote 12,000 blogs, I am pretty sure I have written more than that but I don't count every writing as blog writing or content writing. I believe the writing that allows me to simplify things for my readers, lets me speak my heart and helps me grow - is true writing. I recharge my writing batteries by reading other writers, books and observing how people write. It's actually a very good way to tell myself: You are still not there! That's good enough motivation I guess. Pre-pandemic times, I used to travel every 3 months to recharge my mind.

Q3. Tell us about the most memorable moment of your life?

A. It's hard to pick one. But I would rather share an important turning point in my life. I grew up in a Christian family where Bible reading and going to church were a normal part of my life. I often took all this for granted. My career was pretty much sorted at the time. I would do a graduation in commerce, a PG in Journalism and then take up a job in a local English daily. In my first year of college and the session hadn't even begun. I was 17 years and 7 months old. I attended a Youth Camp in MHOW - 30 km away from my hometown Indore. It was what the church called "The Bible Camp". During one of those discussions I felt like - what the hell am I doing with my life? So when the speaker (this amazing lady Mrs Snehlata David) called: Is there anyone who wants to give their life to Jesus Christ today? Pray in your heart or raise your hand. I felt like Jesus Christ himself sent me a private message. So I prayed that I wanted to give my life, my talents to God the Christ. Since then, all of my life's decisions have been weighed by one question: Is it God's will? Believe me, I have mostly never regretted life's major decisions since.

Q4. If you could tell your younger writing self anything, what would it be?

A. Take yourself a little less seriously and learn from other writers. In my younger years I think I was full of pride about my writing skills. I would have loved to tell my younger self to be more humble and more open to learning.

Q5. What kind of content writing do you do?

A. I have done pretty much all kinds of writing but 60-70% of my clients have been IT companies creating apps, websites, software solutions etc. I also write for e-commerce companies such as LetsShave, travel companies, educational institutes, hotels.

Q6. What kind of research do you do before writing a blog?

A. My research process is kinda long. I first study the brand's language - colours, logos, marketing material, USPs. If all this is not available, say in case of a new business, I ask a lot of questions. I try to find out their strengths, their limitations, how the company wants to project itself and so on. Then I go on to study competitors - how they are different from this company, how they are presenting themselves to the world. I read a lot during this process: research journals, market analysis, competitors' websites and white papers. But most importantly, I make 'user profiles' - the profiles of the customers of my clients. All this homework helps me create content that's 90-95% accurate in terms of the client's expectations.

Q7. What is the best part about being a blogger?

A. You can write whatever the hell you want, however you want (in case of personal blogs). You can learn and grow so much while writing for others (in case of clients' blogs).

Q8. What has been the most difficult thing you had to write?

A. There was this medical/surgical company that was offering AI-powered online diagnosis of health. They had built a product where they would send accurate analysis of someone's state of health through DNA samples. By far it was the most difficult because I hadn't heard something like this before, I found very less reference material to read and the medical journals offered so much irrelevant information - it was mad.

Q9. What are your favorite literary journals?

A. Not so much as literary journals but more like some digital magazines that I admire. I love how writers of Thought Catalog write. I Admire arre.in - it's such a refreshing kind of writing and satires. I also like Huffington Post and Thrive Global. But mostly I read a lot of fiction books. Most of my inspiration comes from there.

Q10. What advice would you like to give to an aspiring blogger?

A. Challenge your own style of writing. Be your own biggest critic. Observe how others write but develop your own unique voice. Focus on improving writing and your own content than followers or readers. Followers spoil your growth in writing, so be mindful of that. Keep your enemies closer.



Punarmrityu

Nupur Aswani, popularly known by her pen name Punarmrityu is an Indian freelance writer, lyricist and content writer who has been writing since she was 10 years old. She is a passionate gothic poet who writes about the dark twists in life and death. She writes while listening to classical music (Bach, Mahler, Shostakovich, and more) and loves reading haiku poems, books unfurling nature of the universe and gothic literature. She writes in three languages - English, Hindi and Urdu. Her work is available on Instagram @Punarmrityu

Q. How did you start your journey as a writer?

A. I wrote my first poem in fourth grade and I was really fascinated by literature books. At first, I didn't know why I was writing but by the time I was 15, I knew writing was something I was born to do. I wrote lyrics for my school band and poems for myself.

Q. What are you currently working on and looking forward to work on future?

A. I try to write a new poem every day. Apart from that, I am also working on a book based on Ethics of Free-will and Desires.

Q. Which is your personal favorite poem and poet? And why?

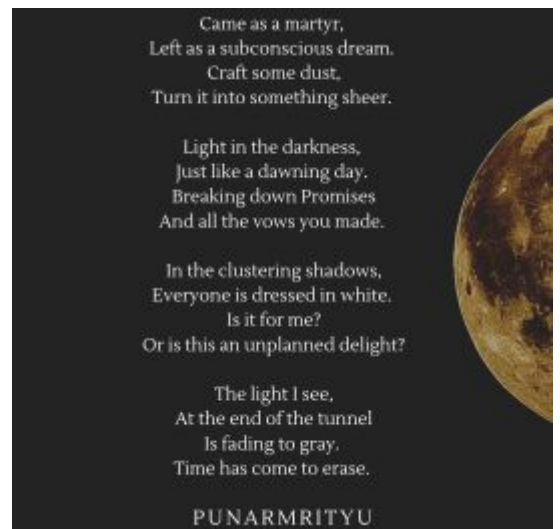
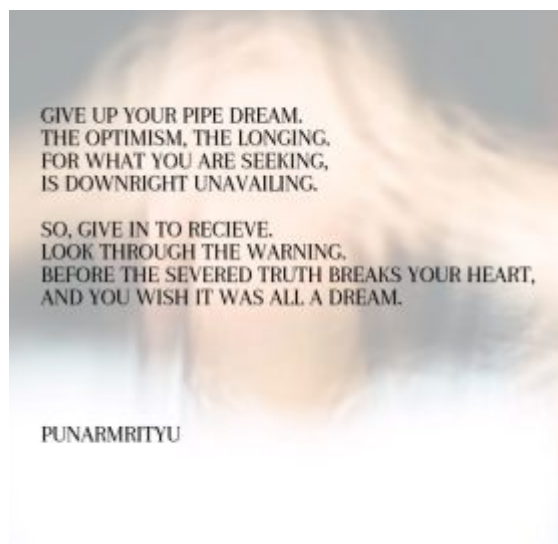
A. The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri is my favorite poem so far because of the detailed structure and the element of realism. My favorite Poet is Edgar Allan Poe because of his incredibly unique gothic writing style.

Q. Has social media helped you connect with your readers?

A. I don't have a lot of followers on Social Media yet although my aim is not to be famous. It's simply to write. It brings me relief. I do appreciate when my readers are able to connect or relate with my poems.

Q. If you were locked out on an island where you were allowed only three books, which all would you choose?

A. Inferno by Dante Alighieri, Brief Answers to the Big Questions by Stephen Hawking, and If tomorrow comes by Sidney Sheldon.



Q. What is the most difficult part of your artistic process?

A. It's a long hard road to be able to express your experiences and emotions through writing. It's both a blessing and a curse to feel everything so deeply. It could make one sad but once you start to find joy in overcoming your feelings without being controlled by them, you could always come up with a beautiful piece of art. To go through that journey in itself is the hardest part of the artistic process.

Q. What advice would be on the top of your list for an aspiring author?

A. It's not going to be easy, it might take a long time for you to attain what you're looking for. Although, not giving up should be the motto when you're passionate about something. Read more, write more and don't worry too much about the result. Write from your heart.



MESC INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Facilities available to MESC members

- Access to certified skilled manpower
- Training and Certification of existing/new manpower
- Design of training programmes as per the requirements of the industry
- Networking Opportunities
- Newsletter/Journal
- Conferences and events of the MESC Sector Skill Council
- Role in designing the National Occupational Standards of the Sector
- Publication of member articles in MESC's publications circulated across the industry
- Policy Advocacy

Annual Membership Fees Rs 1,000/-

Lifetime Membership Fees : 10,000/-

MEMBERSHIP FORM

1. Full Name _____ Name of the Organization _____
2. Type Media House Animation/ VFX Studio TV, Film & Production Education Trainee Other (Pls specify)
3. Segment Small Medium Large Other (Pls specify)
4. Address for Communication _____
5. Phone No _____ Email Id: _____
6. Website (If any) _____
7. Membership type: Annually Lifetime

Single Point of Contact (for Organizations)

- Name _____
- Designation _____ Landline No _____
- Mobile No _____ Email Id: _____
7. Segment of interest Instrumentation Automation Surveillance Communication (Broadcast)
 8. Mode of Payment NEFT Cheque Cash

Signature

Name of the Bank: UNITED BANK OF INDIA
Bank Account Name: MESC
Bank Account Number: 359018039336
Contact: 9999194676

Branch IFS Code: UTBI0TNM709



MESC CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Facilities available to MESC members

- Access to certified skilled manpower
- Training and Certification of existing/new manpower
- Design of training programmes as per the requirements of the industry
- Networking Opportunities
- Newsletter/Journal
- Conferences and events of the MESC Sector Skill Council
- Role in designing the National Occupational Standards of the Sector
- Publication of member articles in MESC's publications circulated across the industry
- Policy Advocacy

Annual Membership Fees Rs 5,000/-

MEMBERSHIP FORM

1. Name of the Organization _____
2. Type Media House Animation/ VFX Studio TV, Film & Production Education Trainee Other (Pls specify)
3. Segment Small Medium Large Other (Pls specify)
4. Address for Communication _____
5. Phone No _____ Email Id: _____
6. Website (If any) _____

Single Point of Contact (for Organizations)

- Name _____
- Designation _____ Landline No _____
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MEDIA TALK BACK

MESC Monthly Magazine

We initiated "Media Talk Back" in the month of August 2017 covering Special Edition to instigate specific emphasis on the Sector discussing the career opportunities and ideas for self-employability. The magazine today has more than 2 Lakh subscribers along with about 50,000 print circulation covering the key and most influential stakeholders. It consists of interviews from top professionals giving tips and tricks to make it big in the industry. Also, it Features articles and insights from famous personalities

With Media Talk Back, you can grab an insight to the evolving growth of the industry.

The magazine circulates amongst not only keen influencers but also reach among schools, colleges and universities. We look forward for your extended support towards Skill India Mission by way of contributing as an advertiser/editor.

The monthly magazine has 23 successful editions and even has an open opportunity for you to advertise your business around the country.



E-magazines are also available on MESC website www.mescindia.org/magazines

Media Talk Back

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