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# Tropical Writers



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## **Behind the Scenes...**

What wonderful literary treats we enjoyed at this month's meeting. Many thanks to our own Elizabeth Martin and Hélène Young who provided an inspirational talk on 'The Nuts and Bolts of Novel Writing'. We loved their conversational style, which encouraged us to chime in at any time so that by the time the meeting closed everyone's 'burning questions' on everything from plotting to publishing were answered. It is so refreshing to have such selfless members who share their literary journey for no greater reward than the joy of contributing to and motivating our group.

Our thanks also go to Dr Dosia Reichhardt from James Cook University for giving our poets many tips on how wide-ranging the scope of a tropical poem can be. Her suggestions ranged from paintings in a tropical gallery to humorous political satire. Dosia also recommended that writing three completely different poems will give you the best possible chance of having your work selected for the anthology. Short story writers may also like to keep this tip in mind.

As we had many members absent through illness or other personal reasons Dosia has kindly offered to forward some notes, which we will pass on once received.

Next month will be a regular meeting where there will be more scope for reading and critique. Please bring along something to read, being mindful of the maximum reading time of ten minutes. For something different, you may choose to try your hand at Flash Fiction. With the advent of the internet, editors are looking for shorter works, more easily read on a computer screen. These works are generally between 300 and 1000 words long. Then again, Micro Fiction might appeal to you. Its length is between 10 and 300 words. In the meantime get involved in the forums on our Tropical Writers website ([www.tropicalwriters.com](http://www.tropicalwriters.com)). If you aren't already a member of the forum page, go to 'forums' and then click on 'create a new account'.

Yours in writing,

*Carol Libke*

### Poetry Tips from Dosia

Thanks to Dr Dosia Reichhardt for attending our meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss her role as the selector and editor of poems received for our 2011 anthology. Dosia reassured poets that all genres of poetry will be welcome and that grammar and punctuation rules will simply follow conventional standards. She will send selections back for editing only if they are unclear.

### Congrats to Dave Delaney

Dave displayed the proof copy of his latest book of poetry, soon to be published by ASA Publishing Company in America. It is titled *Out of Australia* and is a compilation of Dave's work, from the less-polished poems of his early years as a poet, to his recent award-winning poems. It is not easy to get poetry published, much less in another country, so this is a huge accomplishment. We are very proud of Dave. Congratulations!

## Workshops

### Exciting News for Regional Members

In acknowledgement of the difficult time experienced by some during the cyclone season in Queensland, the Queensland Writers Centre (QWC) wants to focus on the strength of communities. They are thrilled to announce that they will extend free programming to regional members. This means that members can enroll in the following workshops free of charge:

Month	Event	Tutor	Location
May	Project Management for Writers	Monique Beedles	Cairns
September	Get Started with a Life of Crime	Pam Newton	Cairns
October	Writing Popular Fiction	Annie Gracie	Rockhampton

Any members who have already enrolled in these courses will be contacted to arrange a refund. Bookings can be made online as usual, or call QWC on (07)3842 9922 for more information.

## Quick Guide to Anthology 2011

Submit up to 3 stories or poems for 1 submission fee  
 Maximum 4000 words per story  
 Submission fee: \$5 TW members; \$8.00 non-members  
 Submit now to deadline – 30 June 2011  
 Font: Times New Roman 12 point  
 Pages numbered: in header – top right  
 Title on each page: in footer  
 Submit via email attachment  
 Author details in body of email (not on manuscript)  
 Submit to: [tropical.writers@gmail.com](mailto:tropical.writers@gmail.com)

For full submission guidelines, email Sally for a copy:  
[tropical.writers@gmail.com](mailto:tropical.writers@gmail.com) or [smcd46@bigpond.com](mailto:smcd46@bigpond.com)

## TW Scheduled Talks on Writing

### Scheduled Talks at TW Meetings 2011

At our AGM in Feb., members expressed an interest in having speakers talk to our group on writing. The Committee has scheduled the following talks in the months to come. The speakers will address the group at the following times on our meeting dates:

Month	Topic	Speakers
June 4	Regular Meeting	
July 2	Interactive Poetry	3:15 – 4:00 pm Margaret Macissac

## Competitions

**Imagining the City: Brisbane Short Story** As part of a project investigating urban planning and the gentrification of inner city landmarks, QUT researchers developed six characters to help inform the design of city apartments. Use the short story form to develop your chosen character. Six winners, i.e. one per character, will be chosen by a panel of three judges. The winners will receive \$200 prize money and have the opportunity to further workshop and edit their story with the view of publishing as part of an anthology.

Details and entry forms can be downloaded from

<http://www.urbaninformatics.net/2010/11/04/imagining-the-city-brisbane-short-story-competition/>

Competition closes 5pm Wednesday 8 June 2011

### Sentences - Annual Literary Competition 2011

SECTION 1 Open Short Story - 2,500 words

SECTION 2 Open Poetry - 30 lines

Entry Fee = \$5.00 for one entry and \$12.00 for 3 entries

Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> = \$200, 2<sup>nd</sup>=\$100, 3<sup>rd</sup> = \$75.00

Entries close on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011

No entry form necessary. **Name and address on separate sheet please**

Results published on website [www.bridgefoundation.com.au](http://www.bridgefoundation.com.au)

Entries to : The Bridge Foundation, P O Box 9279, Sale,

Victoria 3850

## Workshop

**The NQ Romance Writers Roadshow** - Visit

<http://www.romanceaustralia.com/> for more information and registrations forms. You may also contact

[rwroadshow2011@gmail.com](mailto:rwroadshow2011@gmail.com) with any queries.

**WHERE:** Cairns Colonial Club

18-26 Cannon Street, Cairns, Queensland

**DATE:** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011

**TIME:** 9:00 am – 5:00 pm for Seminar

6:30pm for Roadshow Dinner

## Upcoming Events

### Tropical Writers Next Meeting Date

Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at La Porchetta, Grafton St., 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.



### Reading on Air

Tropical Writers who have stories or poems in Cracks in the Canopy are invited to read LIVE on air with Sharon Molloy on her program on Saturday mornings at approx 7.00am. You will be allowed to read for FIVE minutes only - so be sure to practice reading within that time frame. Contact Diane Finlay for more information.

## Editor's Corner\*

Welcome to the Editor's Corner. Each month I will give you two sentences that require an editor's red pen. Test your editing skills by correcting the sentence. If you need a little help, scroll down to the end of the newsletter and look for the answer in the box titled, Editor's Mark.

Here are your two sentences:

1. Ann had never, and certainly would not even consider, writing anything that could be regarded as being in bad taste.
2. The letter that John sent was literally steaming with anger.

The 'first person point of view' is the "I" voice.

This voice is reassuring to the reader because we know he survives to the end (otherwise he couldn't tell us the story).



In both the narrative and immediate 1<sup>st</sup> person, the voice of the 'I' character must be unique.

Readers must believe that the 'I' character is a real person.

## Writers on Writing

### First Person Point of View

by Sally McDonald



As we discussed last month, the 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view is the 'I' voice. There are two different ways to write in this voice: the *narrative 1<sup>st</sup> person* and the *immediate 1<sup>st</sup> person*. The narrative 1<sup>st</sup> person is often referred to as the 'natural storytelling voice' because it is the author telling us about something that happened in the past: *When I was ten, my dad gave me a new bike*. The advantage of this voice is that it is comforting because we know the speaker is well and he is not going to die in the cyclone that happens in Chapter Four. Therefore, it's not a good voice to use if your aim is to build suspense about your main character's survival. This point of view has another major limitation: it can only tell one side of the story. An 'I' narrator can't tell us what Sue is feeling unless she tells him. The only thing that an 'I' narrator can tell the reader is what he personally witnesses, feels or experiences.

In *immediate 1<sup>st</sup> person*, the 'I' character describes events as they are happening. Sometimes the story is told in present tense to intensify the urgency: *I peep out of the hole, terrified the monster is still hovering nearby. I sense something watching me*. In this voice suspense can build, especially if it is done in the present tense.

In both the *narrative* and *immediate 1<sup>st</sup> person*, the voice of the 'I' character must be unique. Whether the character is fictional or is the author, the narrating voice must show us what the character is really like, how he talks and how he reacts to things.

In this example of *narrative 1<sup>st</sup> person*, the author tells us about an event that happened when he was ten: *When I was ten, my dad gave me a new bike. For most kids, it would have been a happy occasion, but it worried me because it wasn't like Dad to do such a thing*. This is the voice of the adult author narrating the story, and although it is comforting, we do not get a strong sense of the ten year old character.

In the *immediate 1<sup>st</sup> person*, this same event could be told from the voice of the ten-year old: *When I was ten, my dad gave me a new bike. Most kids would've been happy, but I was scared. It meant somethin' was up. Our dad never had nothin' to do with us kids*. As you can see, this voice gives us a bit more information about the character: he doesn't trust his dad, (maybe he's been let down before), his family is probably uneducated, he's wary and he's a worrier.

Why do we know all this? Because we are drawn into the intimacy of this character's voice. From this *immediate 1<sup>st</sup> person* point of view, we have developed insight into who the character really is.

If you choose to write in the first person, it's important to write in the voice of the *character*, not the author (unless the author has a unique and engaging voice). Readers must believe that the 'I' character is a real person. The best way to do this is to reveal his character through his speech patterns, vocabulary, feelings and reactions.

## Poetry Talk

## When Cinema Gives Us Poetry

by Sally McDonald

Sometimes cinema gives us an insight into another medium like poetry. This is usually done in 'period pieces' such as the recent film, *Bright Star*, which depicted the last three years of life of 19<sup>th</sup> century poet, John Keats. Unfortunately that movie showed us more about the love affair he had with Fanny Brawne than it told us the love poems he wrote for her.

In *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, John Hannah (playing Matthew) reads WH Auden's poem 'Funeral Blues' at the funeral of his lover. (You can view the scene of Hannah reading it on You Tube if you type in "poem in Four Weddings..."). No one who sees this scene will ever forget it. For me, it means I will never hear this poem again without hearing a Scottish accent! I don't know the circumstances that inspired Auden's poem, but it may well have been written for his dead lover since it is such a heart-wrenching expression of grief. The final line is a summing up of his despair – that nothing now can ever come to any good – and we are left stunned by the depth and strength of this poem.

**Funeral Blues**

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead.  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

WH Auden

I have two luxuries  
to brood over in my  
walks, your  
loveliness and the  
hour of my death. O  
that I could have  
possession of them  
both in the same  
minute.

[John Keats](#)

A thing of beauty is a  
joy forever: its  
loveliness increases;  
it will never pass into  
nothingness.

[John Keats](#)

\*\*\*

A poet is, before  
anything else, a  
person who is  
passionately in love  
with language.

[W. H. Auden](#)

A poet can write  
about a man slaying  
a dragon, but not  
about a man  
pushing a button  
that releases a  
bomb.

[W. H. Auden](#)

**Editor's Mark**

1. Ann had never, and certainly would not even consider, writing anything that could be regarded as being in bad taste.

If we omit the words, ‘and certainly would not even consider’, we are left with; ‘Ann had never writing anything...’ This is clearly using the wrong verb tense; the correct verb tense should be: ‘Ann had never written anything...’ Therefore, in order to include the phrase about Ann not even considering, the sentence could read like this: *Ann had never written, and certainly would not even consider writing, anything that could be regarded as being in bad taste.* A better way to word this sentence would be: *Ann had never written anything that could be regarded as being in bad taste, nor would she ever consider doing so.*

2. The letter that John sent was literally steaming with anger.

Technically it is incorrect to use the word ‘literally’ when using a metaphor because the definition of ‘literally’ means that the words are being used exactly as they are meant, without the use of metaphor or allegory. If you say it was “steaming with anger”, the word ‘steaming’ is meant as a metaphor to show how angry John was. In order for the letter to be ‘literally’ (or really) *steaming*, John would have to be cooking it over a pot of boiling water.

**Tropical Writers of Far North Queensland: Mission Statement**

As writers we gather to support each other in our shared need to write. We learn from each other, help each other and critique each other’s writing with respect. We encourage each other to reach individual goals and rejoice in each other’s successes. Most of all, we nurture the creative muse in each of us and share a mutual understanding of that strange creative force that compels us to take pen to paper: In short, we gather to celebrate our individual creativity and our collective energy.

**Critique Etiquette**

Responsibilities of the Writer
Ask for feedback on the specific area of writing you want help with.
Be able to articulate what you are attempting to do and ask your readers if it works.
If possible, supply the readers with copies of the writing beforehand so that they can give considered feedback.
Respond to critique with respect.
Responsibilities of the Reader
Only give feedback related to the specific questions asked for by the writer
Find out what the writer is trying to accomplish and direct feedback to that.
Take time and care to consider thoughtful feedback.
Give critique with respect.

**Tropical Writers of Far North Queensland**

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