

M PEN IN HAND

Maryland Writers' Association

Winter 2012
v25 n1

marylandwriters.org

"There is No Quick-and-Easy Writing Machine You Can Buy:"

an Interview with Maryland Filmmaker Kevin Kangas

Anne Arundel County native Kevin Kangas has written and directed five horror films (the award-winning *Hunting Humans*, *Fear of Clowns*, *Fear of Clowns 2*, *Bounty*, and the forthcoming *Garden of Hedon*). Besides making films (his own, and commercially), Kevin has worked as a script reader for a Los Angeles agency, as a comic-book store owner, and as a video-editing instructor. Kevin has also written many other screenplays, including *Red Fish Blue Fish* for Tom Proctor, which is in pre-production. MWA member and Annapolis Chapter Publicity Co-Chair **David Joyner** talks with Kevin about the ups and downs of writing for film.

David Joyner: You love comics. Which came first, the comic-book store or your filmmaking?

Kevin Kangas: My Empyre Comics store pre-dates my start in filmmaking. The store wasn't profitable enough to fund any of my movies, but I did sell most of my comic collection to raise the original \$11,000 for *Hunting Humans*. That money was used to hire the director of photography and so on. I always said that I'd let the store keep going as long as it paid for itself. Until recently, it paid for itself and allowed me to do a few other things. Recently, keeping the store afloat has started to dip into me, and I won't let that happen. I love comics but I don't love them enough to go broke.

I've thought of making a movie based on a comic, but comic book intellectual property is expensive to license. I've also thought of writing my own comic-book-style movie, but I don't have an interesting slant to add at this point. If that occurred to me, I would do it, but right now, no. I debate about writing a story with an urban realism, a *Daredevil*-type movie, verses one which requires a lot of special effects. In the back of my mind it is there.

DJ: Can you share some thoughts on the writing process for your movies?

KK: There is no easy way to become a good writer besides writing a lot, and over a long period of time. That is the thing a lot of people are not understanding.

When I was a script reader, I would see submissions that were not even spell-checked! My rule of thumb was if you the writer don't make me want to read past page 10, I will probably stop.

They paid \$75 per script "coverage." Basically, coverage is a specially formatted script report that you mail back to the agents. It is two or three pages, with a paragraph for the script summary, and options to recommend the script, the writer, or both. For example, if you circle "recommend writer," then you are suggesting that the agents ask the writer for another script but pass on this one. You liked the writing but not the script itself. Lastly, there is a section with your thoughts on whether the script works or not. In this part, you analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the script.

In the two-and-a-half years that I did that job, where I read one to four scripts a week, I only saw two good scripts.

continued on next page

Meetings and Events

MWA Board

The MWA Board usually meets on the third Sunday of even months at Ukazoo Books in Towson from 3:00-5:00 p.m. In the event of a holiday, the meeting takes place on the fourth Sunday of that month, unless another date is posted on our website. Board meetings are open to all members.

Chapters

The **Annapolis Chapter** meets the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 in Room 205 of the Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, Constitution and Greenfield Streets, Annapolis, MD, (410) 263-5544. For information about upcoming meetings, e-mail mwa@marylandwriters.org or visit the chapter website at www.annapolismwa.wordpress.com.

The **Baltimore Chapter** meets on the fourth Monday of every month (except December) at 7:00 p.m. at the Towson ARTS Collective, 410/406 York Road, in Towson. For information about upcoming meetings, e-mail mwab@marylandwriters.org or visit the chapter website at www.mwabaltimore.org.

The **Carroll County Chapter** meets on the second Saturday of every other month at various locations in Carroll County. For information, e-mail reginasokas@rocketmail.com or visit the chapter's website at www.carrollcountymwa.org.

The **Howard County Chapter** meets on the third Thursday of each month (except November and December) at 7:00 p.m. at Sunrise Senior Living, 6500 Freetown Road, in Columbia. For information about upcoming meetings, e-mail mwahc@marylandwriters.org or visit the chapter website at www.mwahocowriters.com.

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Maryland Writers' Association

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MWA Officers

Elected Positions

President: Nicole Schultheis

Vice President: Fernando Quijano III

Secretary: Gail Johnson

Treasurer: Vacant

Program Chair: Sonia Linebaugh

Membership Chair: Eileen Haavik McIntire

Communications Chair: Vacant

Conference Chair: David Placher

Publications Chair: Ann Arbaugh

Development and Long Range Planning

Chair: Vacant

Members at Large: Lauren Flax, Ally E. Peltier

Appointed Positions

Editor, *Pen in Hand*: Paul Lagasse

Critique Group Coordinator: Barbara Diehl

Novel and Short Story Contest Coordinator:
Sonia Linebaugh

MWA Books: Ally E. Peltier, Gary Lester

Webmaster: Carl Rauscher

Archivist: Eileen Haavik McIntire

Bookkeeper: Edith Goldman

Chapter Presidents

Annapolis: Rolf Renner

Baltimore: Gary Lester

Carroll County: Regina Sokas

Howard County: Louise Harris

Submissions

Pen in Hand accepts submissions from MWA members and nonprofit organizations. Feature stories and fiction: 300-400 words. Poetry: up to 100 words. Authors retain all rights except first publication. Query for guidelines and editorial calendar: Paul Lagasse, peninhand@marylandwriters.org.

Kevin Kangas Interview, cont'd.

DJ: After the script is written, what is next?

KK: The idea for a script has to contain an original twist. Then you write and rewrite the script as many times as needed. That script must be polished and rock-solid before going any further. Next, I start writing a shooting script.

The shooting script is divided into sections, where all camera shots from all scenes in one location are described, with lighting setups, then camera shots for all scenes in another location are described, and so on.

In addition to the shooting script, I might have some storyboards for more complicated scenes, action, or scenes with many characters and lots of dialogue. For example eyelines, for continuity between cuts, can be very complicated, and storyboards help you remember if a

character is supposed to be frame left or frame right.

DJ: Any general advice for anyone interested in pursuing filmmaking?

KK: Good equipment is becoming more affordable. The problem is that people don't spend any time learning the craft. Some would-be filmmakers think that there isn't any talent to writing. In reality, there is no quick-and-easy writing machine you can buy, like you can with a quick-and-easy camera.

###

David Joyner teaches at the United States Naval Academy. He has published several technical books and papers. He maintains a webpage at www.wdjoyner.org and dreams of one day publishing a work of fiction. He lives in Arnold with his wife Elva, two dogs, and a cat.

A NaNoWriMo Character Speaks

by Ann Arbaugh Sarah

Hi everyone. Ann is putting ice on her sore, overworked hands and she asked me to write this article. She was part of NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) 2011. I'm Sarah, a children's librarian in Carroll County and the heroine in Ann's novel-in-progress. It was a tough road for us. We stayed up late some nights, got up early some mornings, and sometimes spent all weekend inside. We've been writing the story of how Ian and I met. She's a good listener.

We started on my story over a year ago and then put it aside for other pursuits. I did convince Ann to take her second trip to Scotland in July 2011. That's where I met Ian the second time. She took lots of photos and a few videos. NaNo was our time to really work on the story.

Thank goodness there was enough caffeine to get us through. It was a wee bit funny to watch her keep up with me during word sprints. She'd set the timer and type as fast as possible. Her best was about 900 words in thirty minutes. I was impressed.

Shh. I haven't told her all of what happened in Scotland. A woman has to keep some secrets to herself.

Funny things happen during NaNo. We

got stuck one night near the end of the month. Ann was way behind. I needed to take a break, so I let Ann write about something else. She started with the comment "and now for something completely different than Scotland." Let me tell you, things got worse from there! I thought she was doing NaNo to cultivate her Nora Roberts side and it turns out Ann has an inner Stephen King/Dean Koontz waiting in a dark corner of the basement. Who knew?

So here we are, at the end of November. All word counts were verified and we won. Ann took a little break, but now she's starting in on edits for the first three chapters. And starting to plot strategy for NaNoWriMo 2012. Can't we at rest for at least a month? Ann? Oh, she's fallen asleep. It was a long month.

###

Ann Arbaugh is a member and Past President of MWA. She's also the incoming Treasurer and Hospitality Co-Chair of the Maryland Romance Writers. She's written poetry, articles, essays, and is working on her first contemporary romance Love Overdue. Ann read a portion of Love Overdue at the 2011 Baltimore Book Festival.

Fiction Craftsmanship: Dialogue

by Tom Glenn

People talking together is surprisingly difficult to convey persuasively in fiction. The writer must keep the pace moving and, at the same time, create the illusion of real speech. The operative word here is illusion. Real speech set down in a narrative is repetitive, confusing, irritating, and boring. Here are some practices that make for crisp and effective dialogue:

- *In speech attribution, use "said."* "Said" (or "says" if you're writing in the present tense) is preferable to any other verb of speech except, occasionally, "asked." All others, like murmured, grunted, joked, sneered, or wondered aloud, etc., call attention to themselves and feel like overwriting—unless you want a comical effect. "Hiss" is a special case. It should be limited to quotes that contain lots of s sounds, e.g., "Stop sniveling and slithering around like a snarly snake," she hissed. Besides, "hiss" sounds comical.
- *Eliminate interjections.* With rare exceptions, words like "well," "um," and "oh" take up space and add nothing.
- *Keep eye movements and sighs to minimum.* Inexperienced writers employ them too often. How often have I read: She sighed and looked away. "Must you go?"
- *Keep conversations clipped and brisk.* Beware of pauses, hesitations, too many gestures or too much action by the

speakers. Rarely have one speaker repeat what another has said. Telescope the speeches. Allow speakers to express themselves in incomplete sentences. One writer recommends cutting the first two or three words from every quote.

- *Alternate quotation attribution.* The four standard attribution methods are: (1) the common attribution, the ubiquitous "she said," (2) action before the quote, (3) action after the quote, and (4) no attribution when it is clear who is speaking. Constantly vary them. Use quotes with no attribution no more often than three times in a row—the reader will lose track of who's speaking.
- *Eliminate as many modifiers as possible.* Adverbs like "slowly," "loudly," "softly," "gently," and "rapidly" are especially toxic to good dialogue. Let the words in the quotation tell the reader the speaker's tone of voice. And use action by the speaker to show how the speech was delivered. My favorite example: She slapped me. "Get out." Nary a descriptor in sight.

###

Tom Glenn's work has won many literary awards, among them prizes in four different MWA annual novel contests, including a grand prize and first prize for mainstream/literary.



Little Patuxent Review Social Justice Winter 2012 Issue Release

Little Patuxent Review launches its Winter 2012 issue around the subject of Social Justice on January 28, 2012 with a reading at 2:00 p.m. at Oliver's Carriage House in Columbia, MD. This issue had record-breaking submissions from writers, poets and artists from around the country; and features the art of Theaster Gates and interviews with Tony Medina, poet, activist and professor at Howard University, and American Book Award winner Martin Espada.

LPR's Social Justice issue includes work by MWA members Ann Bracken, Melinda Bennington, Kathleen Hellen, Patricia Jakovich VanAmburg, and Jill-Ann Stolley.

Mark your calendar for Social Justice readings at The Writer's Center in Bethesda on March 3 and a special partnership reading with the Enoch Pratt Library Contest winner at the CityLit Festival on April 14. More readings are being scheduled for 2012. Look for announcements and updates at littlepatuxentreview.org.

Copies of the *Little Patuxent Review Social Justice* issue will be available at local booksellers in Howard County and

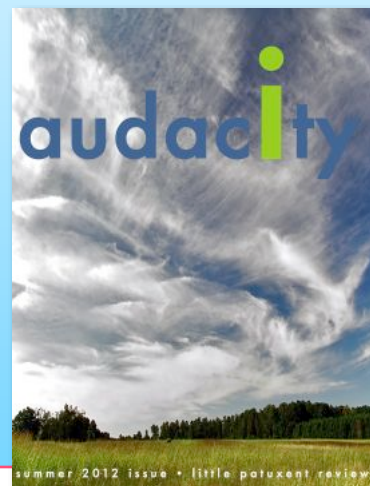
online for \$10/issue. Subscriptions and student discounts are also available. Go to our website for more information: littlepatuxentreview.org/sales/annual-subscriptions/.

Little Patuxent Review Summer 2012 Audacity Issue Call for Submissions

Audacity defines the best and worst within us. It is boldness or daring, accompanied by confident or arrogant disregard for personal safety, conventional thought, or other restrictions. It is also effrontery, insolence, or shamelessness.

Little Patuxent Review invites you to explore the various aspects of audacity for our Summer 2012 issue. Submit well-crafted poetry, prose and artwork between December 1, 2011 and March 1, 2012 through our online submission system. See the guidelines on our website (littlepatuxentreview.org/submissions/) for details.

Be bold, be daring. Be anything but boring.



President's Message

by Nicole Schultheis, MWA President 2010-2012

Dear Members,

We're halfway through another successful year. We survived the Baltimore Book Festival in September, maintaining a booth presence despite a Friday downpour which threatened to drench all of our books and supplies and chased away attendees on opening day. But the sun finally came out, and we managed to sign up quite a few new members on Saturday and Sunday, and had a lot of fun besides. We held an early morning panel discussion on critique groups at the CityLit tent, and many MWA members read from their works or took part in other events at the festival.

MWA has a new Carroll County chapter, presided over by Regina Sokas. Plans are also underway to revitalize the Frederick chapter, with new volunteers and members pitching in to get things going again. Meanwhile, chapter interest continues to grow in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

Our poetry anthology, *Life in Me Like Grass on Fire*, continues to sell well and receive lots of social media attention. Through the efforts of editor Laura Shovan, MWA Books, and participating poets, readings have taken place all over the state of Maryland. Yet another printing has been ordered. Thanks to efforts of Lalita Noronha, WYPR's Aaron Henkin interviewed anthology poets and recorded their readings, which aired on WYPR in December.

The next Maryland Writers Conference will take place October 20, 2012 at University of Baltimore. Our return to a Fall date was presaged by an increasingly busy Spring calendar. Check www.marylandwritersconference.org for keynote speaker news. We'll also post instructions for aspiring presenters to submit proposals for consideration by conference organizers.

Nicole Schultheis
MWA President December 2011

MWA Regrets the Passing of Dr. Deborah Edelman

Public Health expert and author Deborah Edelman, Ph. D. passed away on November 10, 2011. Possessed of a lively and courageous spirit, Deborah served as MWA's Program Director during 2009-2010. In early 2010, Deborah organized a reading of love poetry that would inspire MWA to solicit poetry submissions, edit, and publish an anthology entitled *Life in Me Like Grass on Fire* (MWA Books 2011). Surviving an earlier bout of breast cancer, Deborah had continued to remain active with MWA until recently. Many years before succumbing herself, Deborah lost a sister to the disease. After Deborah's demise, Sonia wrote members of MWA's Executive Committee: "We feel the mystery keenly when a familiar voice falls silent." Deborah had recently remarried, to Joseph Davis. She also leaves behind daughters Julie and Lucy Roland, who attend Baltimore's Bryn Mawr School.

Carroll County Chapter

by Jo Donaldson, Chapter Secretary

Ally E. Peltier will speak at the next meeting of the Carroll County Chapter on Saturday, February 11, at 1:00 p.m. Ally is an editor, writer, adjunct professor in Maryland, and publishing consultant. She will give a basic overview of pitching, querying and proposing, as well as some general tips on how to get in the right mindset for selling yourself and your work. She'll also offer tips on following submission guidelines and building a platform.

The April meeting will alert people to our **Carroll-Bulwer-Lytton Flash Fiction Contest**. Details will be forthcoming.

In October, writer **Stephanie Dray** spoke at the Little Professor Book Center, Sykesville. Dray sold a historical fantasy about the life of Cleopatra's daughter, to Berkley Books. Under the pen name Stephanie Draven, she sold a paranormal romance series to Harlequin's Nocturne line. Then in December, **LeRoy Lad Panek**, an Edgar Award-winning author, was scheduled to lead a discussion of the art of the detective story and building suspense at Birdie's Café, Westminster. To learn more about the Carroll County Chapter, check out our new website, www.carrollcountymwa.org.



Howard County Chapter

by Carolyn Sienkiewicz, Chapter Secretary

With the hectic holidays behind you, it's time to treat yourself to some writer self-care. One of the best ways to do that is to attend a Howard County Chapter meeting this winter.

Come enjoy the company of other writers, share your experiences, make new contacts and (hopefully) be enlightened by the evening's topic. We meet the third Thursday of each month (except November and December) at 7:00 p.m. You can always check our web site, mwahocowriters.com, to see what we're cooking up.

Last September, Chapter members were treated to simultaneous duelling presentations on the topic of self-

publishing. In one room we were fortunate to have **Eileen McIntire**, co-owner of Summit Crossroads Press, while in another we had the pleasure of hearing from **LM Preston**.

The October meeting was all about legal questions for writers. Business attorney **Andy Hall** of David A. Hall Law Offices addressed the business end of writing, including copyrights and contracts.

In November a survey went out to members subscribed to the *mwahoco* Yahoo group. The Chapter board has used the survey results in conjunction with other feedback to plan for an enticing program for the New Year. Make it one of your resolutions to join us.



##

Annapolis Chapter

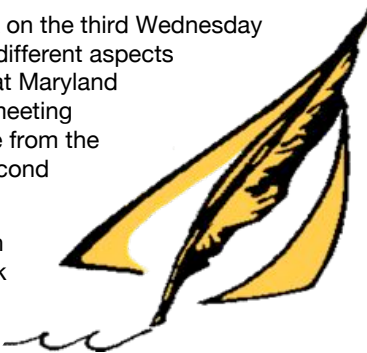
by Kat Spitzer, Chapter Secretary

Come out and join the Annapolis Chapter of MWA on the third Wednesday of each month, where you can network and learn different aspects about the craft and business of writing. We meet at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts, Room 205; the perfect meeting place for inspiration. Buy a steaming cup of coffee from the coffee shop on the first floor and join us on the second level.

Our presenters continue to excite our members. In September, **Mary Bargteil** gave an impressive talk on the growing importance of social media to market your writing. In October, **Loris Nebbia** riveted the group with her experiences in self publishing. In November, **Tracy Kiely** discussed the popular murder mystery genre, while in December screenwriter **Khris Baxter** discussed writing for movies "from soup to nuts." Our members have found great value and inspiration from these speakers.

We are looking forward to the winter, when we will engage in other fascinating and important topics. Baltimore Sun columnist **Susan Reimer** will be our January speaker, and in February we'll welcome Annapolis-based writer **Charles O. Heller**.

We look forward to seeing current members and new faces there!



2012 MWA Writing Contests Update

by Sonia Linebaugh,
Program Chair

Good news!

Because the Writers Conference date has been moved to October 20, 2012, the writing contest dates have changed too.

Here's the latest:

Novel Contest: Great Beginnings

You'll be judged on the first 7,000 words of your novel.

Categories: Mainstream/Literary; Young Adult; Science Fiction/Fantasy; and Historical (Mystery/Suspense/Thriller and Romance will return in 2013)

Novel entries accepted by e-mail:
May 15-June 30, 2012

Short Works Contest

Fiction: 3,000 words; *Non-Fiction:* 3,000 words; *Poetry:* Up to 50 lines in 1-5 poems.

Short Works entries accepted by e-mail: **June 30-July 30, 2012**

By March 1, 2012, all the contest details will be posted on the MWA website at www.marylandwriters.org and on the MWA's Facebook group.



Creative Writing/Member News

To Edgar

by Samantha Kymmell-Harvey

Angel Bird

by W.M. Rivera

La Castañeda, Mexico's former national insane asylum; dismantled in 1968.

I volunteered to do some good for nothing,
Donated time to the Quakers' cause: to aid
Those lost in Castañeda's looney bin:
Eight Wards: bare bones, raw concrete, men,
Women, children, even epileptics
(Their heads in stitches dousing bloody floors!). --

The Quaker team in disarray, no plan,
No place to start. They looked up for a sign.
I sent them home; assumed the mission
Mountains of boxed gifts for Christmas
Just past; walked into the Children's Ward, stood
Toward center, called for ten to help me out.

They gathered in a room apart; I picked
Recruits, then turned to close the door and start.
I couldn't. There she stood, against my strength.
I pushed again. No luck. She simply chirped.
I let her in. Why not eleven, not just ten!
Until the end she stayed. -- I handed out Christmas cards,

Flip-flops -- in January-cold La Castañeda --
Whispered to the crazed, moved from one to one.
Sadist wardens crowded them in tight line-ups:
They strike one badly, a nervous woman waving,
Blood already on this charity purpose;
I warned away the clubbers. -- Then in the Men's Ward,

the ten kids gone, except for my tweety girl,
I face two half-wit criminals, their smiles
Gold-toothed, intentional. What now?! Tweety
Steps in front of me. Expecting blood, more
Blood, I watch as her hisses halt them. Ferocious
Hawk, she backs them off, this angel bird.

What could have been was not. She saved the day,
My synecdochic ass. Was it ESP, or luck?
I let her in. Why not eleven, not just ten.

###

Born in New Orleans, W.M. Rivera has a new book titled Buried in the Mind's Backyard (2011, Brickhouse Books, Inc.). Under the names William Rivera and William McLeod Rivera, his early poetry appeared in the Nation, Prairie Schooner, the Kenyon Review, the New Laurel Review, and elsewhere. Recent poems have appeared in the California Quarterly, Gargoyle, The Ghazal Page, The Curator Magazine, The Broome Review, and Third Wednesday. He is a retired professor and a specialist in international development.

Your tears beckon me from beneath the snow and my soul awakens. My sweetest and most loyal love, I still have not slipped from your memory! Desperately grasping the stone wherein my name was carved, you call out. I answer, though you think it only the mourning dove. You crumble, my bouquet of red roses crushed against your chest. Then draining your flask of its contents, you place my flowers on their pillow of stone. My love, what has become of you? And as I follow you home, you stumble, teetering, arguing with whomever you like. Never do you notice me, my arm tucked in yours, begging you to stop this madness.

In the corner, I sit at the piano where I used to sing so merrily; where amidst an aria my blood rushed forth. Oh dearest, that scarlet was Death's cruel signature, lest we dared to hope. You are at your desk hunched over your words, pen in one hand and wine in the other. I'm watching, longing to turn over your ink so I might write my existence in its puddle. I am here! Your Lenore! Your sweet Annabel whose seaside kingdom drowned in my blood.

Your weary eyes rebel, blurring the words on your page. Unable to resist any longer, you finally rest. In the dying flicker of the candle's flame, I hold my face to yours. "My love!" I whisper, laying a hand on your cheek.

Your eyes open, intoxicated with sorrow. For a brief moment, you see me and remember. Then blinking, waking from your reverie, you are alone once more. Only the raven watches, perched on the branch outside your chamber window.

I stroll through the dirty streets humming, watching the city's lost slip into shadow. They are calling for you, my love. Sliding through the wrought iron gate, I see the wilting roses at my graveside. It won't be long now, dearest. I shall wait. Sleep comes easily when I know you'll come back for me.

Evermore.

###

Samantha Kymmell-Harvey lives in Baltimore and writes gothic fiction. Her work can be found in Underneath the Juniper Tree and Fantastique Unfettered.

Would you like to see your poem, short-short story, or essay in *Pen in Hand*?

Our ideal is to match *Pen in Hand* to the needs and interests of MWA members.

Submissions should be in unformatted text and included in the body of an e-mail message. Please include a brief bio. If line art or halftones will accompany your submission, please specify that in your e-mail and the editor will provide formatting guidelines. Include "PIH" in the e-mail subject line and send to editor Paul Lagasse at peninhand@marylandwriters.org.

Watch What You Eat

by Catherine Solomon

Hunger makes you do dumb things.

I headed to my kitchen and opened the refrigerator door. Nothing. I closed the door in disgust. I frowned and opened my cupboard. It was equally bare. My stomach growled angrily but my eyes suddenly widened as I spotted a can of tuna fish. I grabbed it, opened the lid and dug in with a fork.

I chomped away at the salty fish. It might give me high blood pressure but I quickly gobbled it anyway.

Naturally I choked.

I dropped the tuna can to the floor and coughed repeatedly. I caught a glimpse of a cat trotting into the kitchen. Since when did I have a cat?

Who cares I was dying?!

I laced my hands together and rammed them into my stomach then chest but still no success. Why didn't I study the Heimlich maneuver?

I dropped to my knees, grabbing at my neck as I saw the cat come closer to me, this time followed by two cats. I fell back to the floor, withering in horror as I choked on the food in my air passage.

I glanced in horror at the cats -- five now -- descending upon me and then looked over at the offending food. My last thought was that I hadn't actually eaten tuna fish, at least not the one made for humans, for the image on the can was of a cat's head; its tongue licking its whiskers.

As the cats walked closer to me, meowing in unison, eyes glowing with hunger; I closed my eyes and died.

Denise held her fork midway to her mouth, a frozen look on her face. "Wow; that's a seriously sad story, Sheila. Ooh, say that three times fast!"

"Ha-ha. You are not a friend."

"Hey, maybe those dreams mean you need a cat."

"So she can chow down on my body because I died eating all her cat food?! I hate cats."

"Maybe the dream was about you feeling unsafe living by yourself. Get a roommate who can account for you so your dead body isn't stinking up the apartment building."

"Thanks, Denise, that's what was bothering me so much. I'll be dead, screw my neighbors breathing comfort!" I cut into my salmon and realized it smelled like tuna. I put my fork down. "Maybe it means I should stop watching that Animal Hoarders show before bed."

###

Catherine Solomon is a licensed attorney with experience in professional legal writing as well as blogging. Her work has appeared in the local Baltimore magazine, B. Her entries in the Maryland Writer's Association annual Novel Contest have earned praise for their witty dialogue. She has also submitted work to various other contests, including New Age Voices (where she made it to the semi-finals) and Next Big Writer. Find out more at www.crazyonpaper.blogspot.com.

The Cows of Eastern Europe Limericks

by Mare Cromwell

There once was a cow from Hungary.
Oh, the hay that she ate, she was hungry!
Yet the milk she produced
Could have fed forty moose,
And clothed the whole village with new dungarees.

There once was a cow from Romania
With a polka-dot hide that was zania.
She glowed in the dark,
Her milk beyond mark,
The joys of nuclear fallout stainia.

There once was a cow from Slovakia
Who wore many tie-dyed sockias.
She changed them a lot
The colors she sought!
To her farmer's constant shockia.

There once was a cow from south Poland
That one day appeared to be stolen.
She was not in the field
Though the fences were sealed.
Then the farmer found the sink-hole she'd fallen in.

Then there is former Yugoslavia
Where cows are recruited by the Mob-ia.
With their big bovine eyes
And inability to tell lies,
They're better informants than tilapia.

###

In the following order of odd priorities, Mare Cromwell weeds, blogs, cooks, loves to play with stones and occasionally works on her second book. After writing her first book, *If I gave you God's phone number* . . . : *Searching for Spirituality in America*, she's convinced that God has a phone number but she can't give you yours. www.sacreddogllc.com and marecromwell.wordpress.com are two venues to track Mare's eclectic life.

LIMLGOF + WYPR = OMG!

On Friday, December 9, WYPR's *The Signal*, a weekly radio magazine that covers the Maryland arts and culture beat, featured readings from *Life in Me Like Grass on Fire*, MWA's anthology of love poems.

The program featured an introduction by anthology editor **Laura Shovan** and readings by **Dennis M. Kirschbaum, Margaret S. Mullins, Ann Bracken, John Hayes, Nicole Schultheis, Adele Steiner Brown, Lalita Noronha, Barbara Westwood Diehl, Katherine Regan Lenehan, Fernando Quijano III, Patricia Jakovich VanAmburg, Danuta E. Kosk-Kosicka, Regina Sokas, Frank S. Joseph, Marceline White, Kathleen Hellen, Deborah Edeleman** (read by **Laura Shovan**), **Shirley J. Brewer**, and **Sue Ellen Thompson**.

You can hear the complete archived broadcast at tinyurl.com/7r6sjst.

The Back Page

Sue Ellen Thompson Announces Writing Workshops at Maryland Hall

Writing instructor Sue Ellen Thompson will be teaching two writing workshops in March and April at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts in Annapolis. Both classes are being offered through The Writer's Center.

The classes are:

"What Sound Effects Can Do for Your Poems"

Date: March 3, 2012 - 1:00-4:00 p.m.

"Syntax as Strategy"

Date: April 7, 2012 - 1:00-4:00 p.m.

To register or for more information, visit www.writer.org, click on "Workshops," and enter keyword "Sue Ellen Thompson."

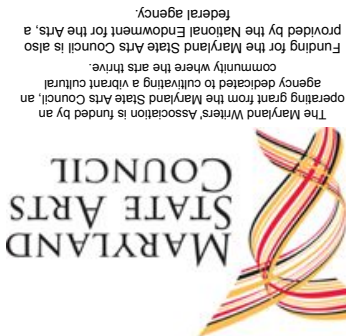
Learn more at www.sueellenthompson.com.

Upcoming Events for January and February



- **Saturday, January 14, 2012, 11:00 a.m. – 1 p.m.**
January's get-together, held in the depths of winter, a time to reconnect after the holidays. Location and speaker TBD.
- **Saturday, February 11, 2012, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**
February, the time of light without heat. Come celebrate the close of winter's cold and enjoy refreshments and community at the same time. Location and speaker TBD.

The Eastern Shore Writer's Association also sponsors the **Bay to Ocean Writers Conference** which will take place on February 25th at Chesapeake College, in Wye Mills, MD. Issue #4 of the *The Delmarva Review*, a literary journal also sponsored by The Eastern Shore Writers Association is currently available at bookstores in the area or may be ordered from the Association's website, www.easternshorewriters.org. As a nonprofit organization, The Eastern Shore Writers Association supports writers and the literary arts across the Delmarva Peninsula. For more information, see the ESWA website www.easternshorewriters.org, or write Hal Wilson, President, ESWA, P.O. Box 1773, Easton, MD 21601.



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