

## FLASH FICTION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to our winners and to all the contestants who entered!

(Photo on page 2)

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	Deborah Bean	"The Visiting Professor"	\$150.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	Leah Hinton	"Blue"	\$100.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	Edgar Collier	"Everything Changed"	\$75.00
Honorable Mention	Seth Eckholm	"Dream Game"	\$50.00

Each month, we will publish one of the winning stories in our newsletter.

### Second Place Winner

#### BLUE

By Leah Hinton

"Wear the dress. You look good in blue. It's your favorite, anyway." Dot sits on the edge of my unmade bed and forces her wide foot into my boots.

"Blue's the color of joy. And don't stretch those out."

"It's part of the deal. You got white boots, and I got brown. So we can share," she reminds me.

I slip my dress over my head. Nerves bubble my stomach. I swallow back a burp and look in the mirror. I'm a faint shade of green. I brush my hair, fifty strokes on each side from my scalp to the ends, which falls just past my shoulders.

I put the brush back on my bureau, knocking over my bear, Teddy. I can't balance him back like I had him, so I throw him on the chair next to the Barbie doll Grandma got me for Christmas.

"We need to tell Mom and Dad," Dot mutters, slicking glossy-pale-almost-white lipstick across her bottom lip.

"No, Dot. Not yet." My palms sweat. My chest fills with worry.

"Who knew my baby sister had it in her? I never would have guessed I'm the good girl between us." She closes her compact with a harsh click.

The boys honk as they pull onto our gravel driveway. I race from my room, Dot on my heels. The screen door slams behind us. Bobby waves from his dirt-brown '66 Dodge Dart. If it were mine, I would paint it blue like the sky. Blue like his eyes.

Gene jumps out, moving to the backseat. I automatically get shotgun. Perks of dating the driver.

I'm in love with this boy. My cheeks burn pink as I try not to stare at him. I pull at the hem of my skirt. He rests his hand on my leg like it belongs there. I smile. Everything will be ok.

We hit William Cannon and head west. Bobby shifts in and out of Austin traffic. Smooth. Like he's flying a plane. He's handsome. Strong. Mine.

I rest my hand against my stomach. I hope he's mine.

"I love you," Gene whispers to Dot in the backseat. She kisses him.

I can't help but be jealous.

Bobby told me he loves me, too. The night we did it. I was scared, but I wanted him to know I love him. I didn't know Gene and Dot hadn't done it yet. I think she's mad at me for being first. She shouldn't be. She didn't have to put out to hear him say I love you.

"We're going to run away together. Go to Corpus. Get hitched. Y'all up for a road trip." Gene announces like he just won a prize.

"Not without Mom and Dad." The words fall out of my face before I think to shut-up.

"Way to ruin things," Gene says, knowing Dad doesn't like him.

"They won't sign for you." I clamp my hand over my mouth. Our secret is out. Part of me is relieved. The stress of keeping the secret was wearing on me.

"I lied. I'm not 17," I blurted out.

"What?" Bobby looks confused. His face turns angry. "How old?" he asks through gritted teeth.

"I turned 14 in March. Dot's 17," I add, as if that makes it better.

"I knew, and I never thought it mattered, Bobby," Gene said.

"Of course it doesn't matter to you. You have no goals. You're fine staying here forever. I'm nearly 21. I've got dreams. It could all disappear because I've been dating a child." Bobby slams his hand against the steering wheel.

His words tear a hole in my soul. Tears burn the back of my eyes.

"Stop the car," I yell.

He pulls into the Woolco parking lot. I get out and throw-up on the hot Texas asphalt.

Bobby shifts the car into park and gets out. He holds my hair with one hand and rests the other on my back, cursing under his breath. I feel like I can't breathe.

"I'm sorry, Lanie. I don't mean to hurt you. No wonder your dad looks at me like I'm a jerk. I would too, if I were him. And Christ, Lanie, I can get in real trouble if the Army finds out about this. You're too young."

"I shouldn't have lied. I'm so sorry. I wanted you to talk to me. I didn't know I would fall in love with you." I try to explain. Salty tears fall unchecked.

Bobby holds my face in his hands and stares at me for a solid minute, like he is weighing his options.

"To hell with it." He picks me up and spins me around. My dress rides up showing my underpants. "I love you, Lanie. Marry me. Before I ship off to Vietnam."

"What about your dreams?"

"They're nothing without you." He offers up the lie, and I take it. "Everything is going to be ok," he whispers against my forehead.

I want him to marry me because he loves me. Not because of a lie. Not even because of our baby. I rest my hand against my stomach. He can't know yet. Not now.

He'll be back from his tour in a year at most. President Nixon promises to end this war. After the baby, I can get my GED. Bobby is all that matters. By then he'll really love me. Everything will be ok.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Ma'am."

I'm brought back to the present, no longer lost in memories.

"Excuse me, Ma'am. For your husband's service to his country." A uniformed man shoves a flag in my hands and salutes.

Gunfire rings through the air, making me jump. Once. Twice. Three times.

Blue howls, tears streaming from her eyes. She looks like her daddy. I hold her against my chest and kiss her.

"Everything is going to be ok," I whisper against her forehead.

Another lie.

I hand her my bear, Teddy, and throw a fistful of dirt on my husband's grave.

### Meet the Author – Leah Hinton

Leah attended her first WGT meeting last September and picked up a flyer about the flash fiction contest. Although she has a trunk filled with unpublished book manuscripts, screen and stage plays, and children's stories, she was unfamiliar with the concept of flash fiction and thought it might be fun to try.

Leah has never liked stories with a Hollywood happy ending. Instead, she feels we all have areas in life that fall short of expectation. That was the inspiration for her flash fiction entry. "Everyone seems to think life was easier way back when," she said. "I argue it was different, not easier."

Leah says she always has her nose in a book, whether writing it or reading it. Married with three children, four dogs, a bird and a horse, a myriad round of carpool and coffee shops, she blogs, writes and puts her soul on paper. She credits reading Steven Pressfield's *The War of Art* with her determination to fight the resistance and has been committed ever since to going pro. As for how she juggles it all, Leah said she and her husband are like an old punk band. "There's something there even if no one else can hear it."

'Blue' is Leah's first ever writing contest entry. The WGT is pleased to welcome her as a new member and looks forward to what the future has in store. Safe to say, it won't be tidy with a pretty pink bow on top.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE WRITERS GUILD OF TEXAS

### Encourage Educate Engage

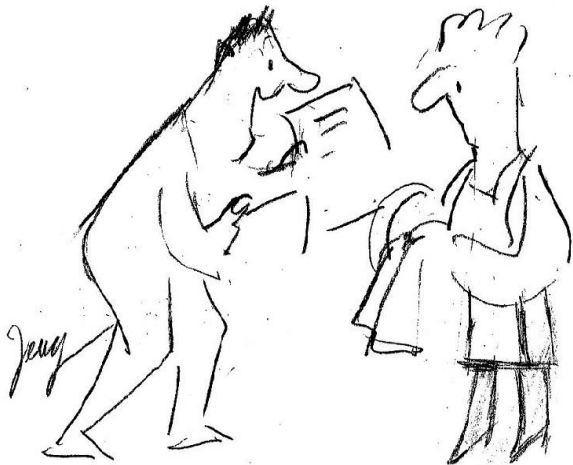
Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.

- March 20 **Shawn Scarber** tackles the 'Dramatic Dilemma and Character-Driven Fiction'
- April 1 **Annual Spring Workshop with authors Melissa DeCarlo and Rosemary Clement-Moore.** 'The Language of Dialogue' will help writers amp up their stories.
- April 17 **Brian Smith** returns with strategy to writing series novels.
- May 15 **Leslie Linton** will walk us through editing your novel.
- June 19 An annual favorite – the **WGT Writers' Read-In**
- July 17 WGT members **Rainer Bantau and Kathryn McClatchy** bring their secrets for writing a successful blog.
- August 21 **Alan Bourgeois** shares 'Marketing, Renegade Style.'
- September 18 **Daniel Wells** takes us into the world of Screenwriting.

Mark your calendars now and don't miss out!

## "Weiss-Cracking"

by Jerry Weiss



Yes, it's a rejection letter.  
But it's from the *New Yorker!*

### The Board of the Writers Guild of Texas 2016-2017

<b>President / Cartoonist:</b>	Jerry Weiss
<b>Vice President:</b>	Julie Mendel
<b>Secretary/Newsletter Editor:</b>	Marsha Hubbell
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Rainer Bantau
<b>Membership Chairman:</b>	Randi Holloway
<b>Program Coordinator:</b>	Alex Efenbein
<b>Communications Chairman:</b>	Gary Bowers
<b>Website Chairman:</b>	David Douglas
<b>Photographer:</b>	Gary Bowers
<b>E-Critique Coordinator:</b>	Kathryn McClatchy



Photo by Gary Bowers

### 2016 Flash Fiction Winners

(WGT president Jerry Weiss, Honorable Mention Seth Eckholm, Second Place Leah Hinton, First Place Deborah Bean, Flash Fiction Coordinator Kathryn McClatchy. Not pictured Third Place Edgar Collie.)

\*\*\*\*\*

### A Serious Writer Never Stops Learning Their Craft [writingworkshopsdallas.com](http://writingworkshopsdallas.com)

A Writers Workshop in Dallas, Texas for fiction writers, poets, screenwriters, and non-fiction writers. Short story manuscript editing. MFA application support and consultation.

Writing Workshops Dallas is an independent writing school for hardworking writers who want to strengthen their voice, develop a greater understanding of craft, and forge a path to publication along the way. We offer multi-level writing courses, seminars, and individual consultations to fiction writers, nonfiction writers, and poets.

No matter the stage of a career, there is a place for any writer at Writing Workshops Dallas. Our classes are inclusive and intentionally small, offered four times a year, beginning in January, April, July, and October. All workshops are held at The Mix Co-Working Space in East Dallas.

Blake Kimzey is a graduate of the MFA Programs in Writing at UC Irvine and the recipient of an Emerging Writer Grant from The Elizabeth George Foundation. His work has been broadcast on NPR, performed on stage in Los Angeles, and published widely in Australia, England, France and the United States. He is a much requested speaker and has presented several times here at the WGT, as well as the DFW Writers Workshop, DFW Writers conference, and other creative writing classes in the area.

For more information visit Blake Kimzey at:  
<https://writingworkshopsdallas.com/>.

## The Making of a Page-Turning Thriller

With C.L. Stegall

(Photos by Gary Bowers)

The WGT kicked off the New Year with local author and WGT member C.L. Stegall speaking on the making of a good Thriller. A Thriller is a "genre of fiction in which tough, resourceful, but essentially ordinary heroes are pitted against villains determined to destroy them, their country, or the stability of the free world." Whether writing spy fiction, war fiction, adventure or detective fiction, "what makes a thriller memorable is depth, not just action," Stegall said. "And the stage is set from the very first scene by throwing the reader into the action."

Tips to remember: The protagonist should always be moving forward ... until they get knocked back. And always present a solid story.

### Suggested links to learn more:

<http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/the-5-cs-of-writing-a-great-thriller-novel>  
<http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/guide-to-literary-agents/how-to-write-a-great-thriller-6-pieces-of-advice>  
<http://www.josephfinder.com/writers/tips/thrillers-to-learn-from/>  
<http://www.jerryjenkins.com/story-writing/>  
<https://hollyisle.com/pacing-dialogue-and-action-scenes-your-story-at-your-speed/>

For more information about C.L., check out [ww.clstegall.com](http://www.clstegall.com).



## Member Blogs

If you are a member in good standing, and you blog about writing, we have a spot for you here each month or on the WGT Facebook page. For more information, please contact Marsha Hubbell at: [mhubbellwriter@outlook.com](mailto:mhubbellwriter@outlook.com).

### *I'm Sorry, You Broke My Sense of Disbelief*

By Scott Bell, Author and WGT member

Blog: [www.snapshot4hire.com](http://www.snapshot4hire.com)

Originally published: [anewlookonbooks.wordpress.com](http://anewlookonbooks.wordpress.com)



Our heroes, stuck on a boat with a ten-ton nuclear bomb, have only seconds to live. Using one air tank and a chair, they dive into the ocean and sink to one hundred feet. The nuclear device explodes above them. Horror! But wait, the heroes are not harmed by the explosion because, you know, the water absorbed the blast. They rise to the surface, float for hours in radioactive water, are rescued at the point of hypothermia, and

go on to complete their mission to save the world. No bends, no radiation poisoning, no vaporization, no being crushed to the size of peanuts by the pressure wave, or parboiled by the roasting heat'

You think I'm making this up? No, another author did, in a book I won't name for fear of embarrassing the writer.

Watch TV lately? In a forty-two-minute television show, more evidence is mishandled, more suspect's rights violated, and more logic is leaped than in all the precincts in all the cities in the world. Hey. It's television. We get it. Jamming your gun up a suspect's nose and getting answers is much better for ratings than typing out a warrant and explaining probable cause.

As viewers, we've come to expect a suspension of disbelief over the Grand Canyon of special effects and splashy, outlandish action. Incredible stunts. Visually stunning exploits.

Should books be any different? The trend would suggest the answer is no. In a mindless competition with visual media, we thriller writers seem compelled to be more extreme, more intense, and unfortunately, more stupid than our visual partners in crime.

Stretching reality is fine. It's make believe, right? But when does stretching dissolve into farce?

With a thriller set in the real world, the author has a duty to get it right. Readers expect some logic. Physics that resemble the real world. Guns that don't run out of cartridges. Should we subject our characters to some extraordinary trials? Absolutely. Stretch the truth at times? Sure. Invent some technology? Yep, as long as it conforms to a reasonable extrapolation of current science. But, technology can't be used as magic. CSI people can't link a tiny fleck of paint to a 1962 Dodge Dart with a dent in the left front fender. Video cameras can't zoom in on a nostril hair from a reflection in a rear-view mirror six blocks away. Ducking behind a handy wall will not save you from a nuclear blast, and Rocky can't really get pounded to ground beef for six movies and not drool while playing with Crayons.

Big explosions are fun. They light up the screen and get the heart pumping. But authors have an audience with different expectations, and by the act of reading is mentally engaged with the story. There are no commercials in a book. No time limits. No requirement to wrap up the crime before next week's episode.

In other words, no excuse not to get it right.

### Available Books:

*Yeager's Law* by Red Adept Publishing  
*Yeager's Mission* by Red Adept Publishing  
*April's Fool* by Dirertir Publishing

## WORDfest is Almost Here!

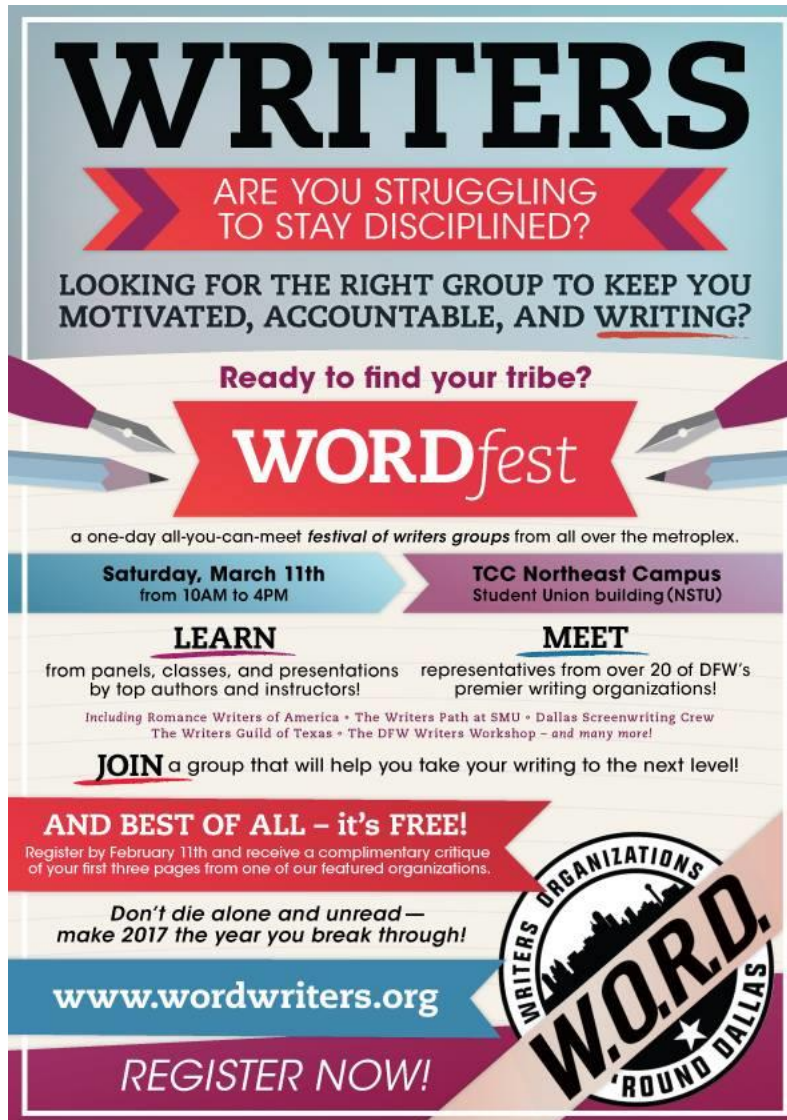
Saturday – March 11

TCC Northeast Campus  
Student Union building (NSTU)  
828 W Harwood Rd  
Hurst, TX 76054

### Opportunities abound in the Metroplex for Writers!

Join us for a day filled with speakers, door prizes, raffles, local authors, and much, much more!

For more information go to: [www.wordwriters.org](http://www.wordwriters.org).



**WRITERS**

ARE YOU STRUGGLING  
TO STAY DISCIPLINED?

LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT GROUP TO KEEP YOU  
MOTIVATED, ACCOUNTABLE, AND WRITING?

Ready to find your tribe?

**WORDfest**

a one-day all-you-can-meet *festival of writers groups* from all over the metroplex.

**Saturday, March 11th**  
from 10AM to 4PM

**TCC Northeast Campus**  
Student Union building (NSTU)

**LEARN** from panels, classes, and presentations by top authors and instructors!

**MEET** representatives from over 20 of DFW's premier writing organizations!

Including Romance Writers of America • The Writers Path at SMU • Dallas Screenwriting Crew  
The Writers Guild of Texas • The DFW Writers Workshop - and many more!

**JOIN** a group that will help you take your writing to the next level!

**AND BEST OF ALL – it's FREE!**  
Register by February 11th and receive a complimentary critique of your first three pages from one of our featured organizations.

*Don't die alone and unread –  
make 2017 the year you break through!*

[www.wordwriters.org](http://www.wordwriters.org)

**REGISTER NOW!**

WRITERS ORGANIZATIONS  
**W.O.R.D.**  
ROUND DALLAS