

## FLASH FICTION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

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

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

### Honorable Mention

#### DREAM GAME

By Seth Eckholm

Jake exited the subway staircase. A thunderous dunk rattled the steel rim across the street as a group of spectators exchanged high-fives and nods of approval. Adrenaline coursed through Jake's veins as he eyed the talent, size and raw athleticism on the basketball court. He counted nine players warming up and knew instinctively his dream pick-up game would soon unfold. As he approached, all eyes turned on Jake. The loud mouth on the court spoke what others were thinking. "Are you lost, white dude?"

"Just looking for a game."

"Did you hear that, fellas? Old geezer wants to run with us. What are you thinking, man? This ain't no church league."

Jake expected and needed the taunt. At age forty-three and barely six feet tall and 165 pounds, he belonged in a church league, not on a street-court in lower Manhattan with guys half his age and twice as athletic. But it was precisely this environment filled with smack talk, showmanship, and brutal competition that he craved; it brought out the best in him.

"You only have nine guys; I make ten. Let's play one game to seven and then evaluate."

Loud Mouth showed no interest so Jake appealed directly to his pride. "Why don't you pick four, and I'll take the four you don't want."

"Get serious, man! Who you think you are walking into my place like you own it? You want a game. I'll show you a game. Gonna kick your sorry white ass back to suburbia."

The size and skill advantage clearly went to Loud Mouth and company, but by letting Loud Mouth pick his players, Jake hoped the four leftovers would play hard to prove themselves. Jake shook hands with his teammates and memorized their names: Slim, Corey, DJ and Biff.

Feeling no chance of losing, Loud Mouth let Jake shoot from the top of the key for ball. Even though a make meant Jake's team got the ball first, Jake intentionally fired an air ball that missed far right.

"You're even more pathetic than I imagined, Old Man."

Amused by the comment, Jake handed the ball to Loud Mouth and play began with a quick feed inside to the big guy who had four inches on his defender, Biff. The big guy faked right, spun left and effortlessly slammed the ball through the rim to take a 1-0 lead.

Jake inbounded the ball to Slim and hustled down court. Loud Mouth assumed Jake couldn't shoot so he slacked off defensively. Wide open, Jake begged for the ball, but Slim would not pass it. Instead, he forced a pass to DJ that was intercepted by Loud Mouth for another easy basket in the opposite direction, 2-0.

Slim inbounded the ball to Corey. Jake stood all alone, but Corey ignored him. He passed to DJ who launched a bad shot. Jake anticipated the miss, re-bounded the ball and put up a 10 footer that found the center of the basket, 2-1. Jake's teammates exchanged surprised looks. There was hope; the old geezer was slightly better than worthless.

Annoyed by Jake's fluke basket, Loud Mouth dribbled down the court, crossed over from left to right at the top of the key, and drained a bomb from well outside the two-point line to extend the lead by three, 4-1. "How'd you like that, Old Man?"

Jake smiled and knew it was time to take control. Slim wanted to inbound to Corey, but Jake clapped loud, demanding the ball. Reluctantly, Slim gave it to him. A point guard in college, Jake thrived on bringing the ball up the court and creating scoring opportunities. Seeing a lane to the basket, he punched the ball through his legs then around his back and penetrated the narrow gap in the defense. DJ's defender moved to stop Jake which freed DJ for an easy shot. Jake flipped the ball around his back to DJ who knocked it down, 4-2. Jake's impressive showmanship generated more high-fives and cheers from the growing crowd, all curious to see how David versus Goliath would play out.

Trying to one-up Jake, Loud Mouth gambled on a risky bounce pass. Jake got his hand in the passing lane, stole it clean and dribbled down for an uncontested layup, 4-3. A spectator in his twenties yelled, "You the man, Old School!"

Loud Mouth's team answered with a two-point shot from the left corner to widen their lead, 6-3. The odds strongly against his team, Jake relished the role of underdog; it made victory even sweeter. Again, Jake brought the ball up the court. While looking at Slim, he snuck a pass to Biff who was near the basket. Instantly surrounded by feisty defenders, Biff threw it back to Jake. Remembering Jake's air ball and confident in his team's lead, Loud Mouth dared Jake to shoot. "Show me your lame jumper, Old Man." On cue, Jake swished a picture perfect two-point jump shot from 25 feet to close the score within one, 6-5. The crowd cheered even louder.

Momentum on their side, Jake's team stopped their opponents from scoring and wisely put the ball in Jake's hands. Jake dribbled up the court, passed off to Slim and set a back screen on Corey's defender. Corey cut to the basket, and Slim hit him for an alley-oop lay-in to even the score, 6-6. The crowd erupted.

Loud Mouth panicked. Trying to win it himself, he dribbled the ball off his foot. Corey picked it up and passed ahead to Jake. Feeling like the college player of old, Jake exploded off his left foot, rose above the rim, and slam dunked the game winner. Jake heard the crowd chanting, "Old School, Old School, Old School..."

"Man, I love this game," Jake thought to himself.

With a hint of respect, Loud Mouth approached Jake. "I want a rematch, Old Man."

"You bet, Loud Mouth, but there are five other guys waiting to play. You're a game out."

(993 words)

### Meet the Author – Seth Eckholm

Seth had never entered a writing contest before hearing about the Flash Fiction Contest at a WGT meeting last fall.

He loves basketball and played every day growing up, which was the inspiration for *Dream Game*. Once his high school and college playing days were over, Seth sought out 'pick-up' games where he could find them – churches, high schools, colleges, recreation centers, YMCAs and parks. He particularly enjoyed playing at inner city playgrounds, similar to the scene in the story.

Seth credits attending WGT meetings for tips that helped him write this story. He says *Dream Game* was a lot of fun to write, and thanks the WGT for the meetings and the contest.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE WRITERS GUILD OF TEXAS

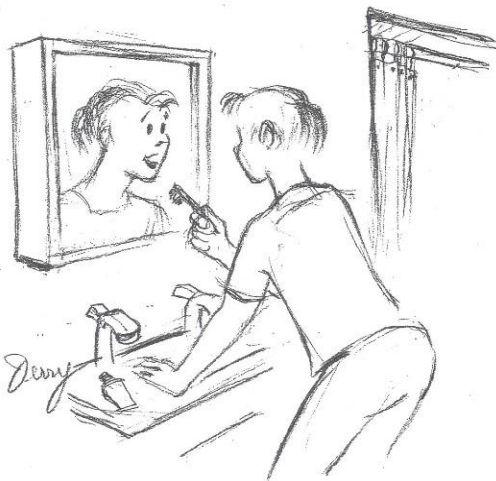
### Encourage Educate Engage

Meetings are held the third Monday of the month at 7 pm.

- June 16-17 **Kate Forsyth Event**, "Cactus and Kangaroos"  
 June 19 An annual favorite – the **WGT Writers' Read-In**  
 July 17 WGT members **Rainer Bantau and Kathryn McClatchy** bringing 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  
 October 7 WGT Fall Workshop with Cindy Dees  
 October 16 **Jaye Wells** walks us through "Fighting Demons: Internal vs. External Conflict"  
 November 20 **Joe Milazzo** - Poet, Writer, Editor and Educator returns  
 December 18 **Annual Holiday Party** and announcement of 2017 WGT Flash Fiction Contest Winners

Mark your calendars now and don't miss out!

## "Weiss-Cracking" by Jerry Weiss



(Dreams of Glory)

"So, Connie Smith. You won't take \$50,000 for your first novel. How about \$100,000?"

## The Board of the Writers Guild of Texas 2017-2018

<b>President</b>	Julie Mendel
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## YouTube for Authors

by Guest Columnist Amy Tasukada, WGT member and author

Spend three minutes in the writing community and you'll hear about needing an author platform. After five minutes you'll hear about every social media platform out there and soon think you'll need to take pictures of what you ate for breakfast last week. YouTube, however, is the quickest way to connect with your readers.



So many social media platforms want to boil down your words to a limited number of characters or a single picture. Blogs are good for longer discussions but if you want your readers to really connect with you than

outside meeting you in person YouTube is the answer.

**The biggest problem I see when writers start a YouTube channel is they don't know their why.** In most cases authors start YouTube to connect with read and find people who will like your books. Let me tell you a not so big secret. Readers don't care if you met your word count goal for the day. They have even less on an interest in if you do the snowflake method while writing or pants the whole way through (unless you write non-fiction books about writing.)

### So what do readers care about?

They care about your stories, what inspires you, and other books similar to yours. Nearly every week I do the #ManuscriptMondays and talk about what happening in the story. One time I described how a loud motorcycle whizzing by inspired me to have one of my characters join a motorcycle gang. The biggest thing that draws new readers in would be when I review other books similar to my genera.

**If you feel like taking the dive into YouTube, remember to create videos with your why in mind.**

Amy Tasukada, author of *The Yakuza Path*, a Japanese influence gay fiction series, lives in North Texas with a calico cat called O'Hara. As an only child her daydreams kept her entertained, and at age ten she started to put them to paper. Since then her love of writing hasn't ceased. She can be found drinking hot tea and filming Japanese street fashion hauls on her YouTube channel.

### Connect with Amy on...

Website: [www.amytasukada.com](http://www.amytasukada.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/amytasukadaofficial>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amytasukada>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/amytasukada>

**Do you have news to share?** Release date for a new book? Signed with an agent? Book-signing event coming up? We want to know and help you spread the news via the WGT Mentor newsletter and through WGT's social media on our Facebook page and website. Please contact Marsha Hubbell at [mhubbellwriter@outlook.com](mailto:mhubbellwriter@outlook.com) with your updates.

## Member Blogs

If you are a member in good standing, and you blog about writing and/or the writing life, we have a spot for you here each month on the WGT Facebook page

**For more information, please contact Marsha Hubbell at:**  
[mhubbellwriter@outlook.com](mailto:mhubbellwriter@outlook.com).

## One Contest Win Leads to Another

By WGT Guest Columnist, Leah Hinton

Leah Hinton entered the WGT Flash Fiction Contest last fall. It was her first contest, and she won second place for her short story "Blue." Feeling a bit more confident, she entered the Mount Hermon Writers Conference and won a scholarship, which included mentoring with bestselling author James Scott Bell. Here is her account.



I was visiting my parents the week after Christmas. I received a text from a friend. She said, "You should enter the Mount Hermon Contest." Ding. Ding. Bells went off. I had forgotten all about it.

"Sure. When is the deadline?"

"Tonight at midnight," she said.

No pressure there. My parents were taking a nap and my children were watching a movie, so I decided I would see what I could come up for a

contest entry while the house was quiet.

The entry was the first five pages of a fiction or non-fiction piece. I had doubts. I was writing this in less than an hour on my mom's sofa without a notion of what I wanted to write. I let the inner storyteller out and reminded myself I had done pretty well in the WGT Flash Fiction Contest. I decided that maybe that second-place win wasn't a fluke, and I would perhaps be talented enough to pull something out of my hat.

**I wrote my submission off the cuff. I'd love to say out of sight, out of mind, but from the moment I hit send, I was waiting and waiting, convinced nothing would come of it.**

On the day the announcement was supposed to be made I stood in my kitchen and thought perhaps I'm not a writer. I was stirring a pot of chili when my phone buzzed. I learned I was a full scholarship winner. I was so excited I nearly let the chili burn (which in my house is criminal). The winnings included room and board and conference costs.

The Mount Hermon Writers Conference (MHWC) celebrated its 48<sup>th</sup> year this 2017 conference season. MHWC hosts writers from all over the world. Mount Hermon is nestled in the red woods outside Santa Cruz, California offering an idyllic artist atmosphere.

The conference is geared for writers at every skill level, and for every phase of a writer's career for writers of both secular and Christian works of fiction and non-fiction.

The conference attendees have access to free manuscript review, seven major morning tracks, 42 workshops, 1-on-1 mentoring, night owl sessions, individual appointments with editors and agents, agent/acquisitions editors meet and greet, free consultations with a professional critique team, and full access to editors and agents during each of the meals.

**One of the highlights of the MHWC was my time spent in morning mentoring with James Scott Bell.**

I had entered a second submission to the mentoring track team to earn the opportunity to work with James Scott Bell. He took on four writers for the conference. We spent the entire morning sessions each day writing and critiquing and brainstorming together. I was particularly excited, because Mr. Bell writes thrillers, as do I.



James Scott Bell is the author of the #1 bestselling book for writers, *Plot & Structure*, and is considered one of the top writing coaches in the country.

My afternoons, evenings and late nights were left for other programs

Besides participating in many of the workshops offered, I also bought the audio recordings of the full conference so I wouldn't miss a thing.

I learned so much about myself through this process.

Writing was never considered a noble pursuit in my house.

Growing up, art was discouraged, even frowned upon. It got in the way of existing. You were meant to get a job, put your head down, and work 'til you died.

I hid my writing when I was young and disavowed my true love of writing to live a 'normal,' as in acceptable, life. But a love like that never goes away. This conference proved to me that I have something worth sharing, and I should keep writing. The feedback was amazing. I didn't go (to the conference) to pitch a thing, yet walked away with big publishing houses asking for full manuscripts of books I haven't even written yet.

**A challenge was issued by an acquisitions editor. She asked me to write a non-fiction inspirational, about my own life experiences, in under 250 words using only one-syllable words.**

I went back to my cabin and wrote the piece before bed. I found her the next morning, tapped her on her shoulder, and told her I had it ready. She loved it, and it went to press three days after the conference was over and has made the final cut for an anthology coming out this fall.

**I'm building that ever necessary platform, and I'm going to keep learning.**

Even though it has taken me the bulk of my adult life to get back to writing, I am meant to be in the trenches. I will keep writing and entering contests and communing with other writing artists. It's not just what I do. It's who I am. [www.AuthorLMHinton.com](http://www.AuthorLMHinton.com)

James Scott Bell is the winner of the Christy Award for Excellence. He writes in both the traditional and indie publishing realm. He was the first writer to have a self-published work nominated for the prestigious International Thriller Writers Award. You can catch his blog at [www.killzoneblog.com](http://www.killzoneblog.com).

For more information on the Mount Hermon Writers Conference, visit their website at [www.writers.mounthermon.org](http://www.writers.mounthermon.org).

## Queen of Fairy Tales

Friday, June 16th

### Kate Forsyth Cactus & Kangaroos Readerathon

**When:** Friday, June 16, 2017; 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

**Where:** Half Price Books, Flagship Store, 5803 E. Northwest Hwy, Dallas, TX 75231

**What:** Attendees of this event for readers will receive:

- Choice of one novel, either *Bitter Greens* (available in paperback) or *The Wild Girl* (available in hardback)
- Time to meet and greet Kate, and have her sign your book
- Entry for a door prize drawing
- Opportunity to meet other local authors of similar genres

**Purchase tickets at [www.WORDwriters.org/register](http://www.WORDwriters.org/register)**

- Prices are \$49 each
- Seating is limited. Only 100 tickets are available. Don't wait!



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The Writers Guild of Texas and WORD are proud to present internationally best-selling, Australian author Kate Forsyth for a two-day event June 16-17.

## Learn from a Master Storyteller

Saturday, June 17th

### Kate Forsyth Cactus & Kangaroos Writers Workshop:

**When:** Saturday, June 17, 2017

- Morning session, 9:00 a.m. - noon  
*Keeping the Reader Turning the Pages – The Importance of Pace, Suspense, & Surprise*
- Afternoon session, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. *Building the Fictional World*

**Where:** Richardson Woman's Club, 2005 N. Cliffe Dr., Richardson TX 75082

**What:** Attend Kate's 3-hour workshop and receive:

- Choice of one novel, either *Bitter Greens* (available in paperback) or *The Wild Girl* (available in hardback)
- Time to meet and greet Kate
- Entry for a door prize drawing

**Purchase tickets at [www.WORDwriters.org/register](http://www.WORDwriters.org/register)**

- Morning or Afternoon workshop is \$99 each
- All-day, including both workshops, one book, and lunch, is \$169
- Seating is limited. Don't wait!



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## KATE FORSYTH IS COMING TO DALLAS!

Kate Forsyth has helped countless people to connect and communicate by harnessing the seductive power of storytelling. She will entertain, embolden, stimulate, and surprise her audience at each scheduled event.

"I like the way these tales are so old, and yet still so powerful and relevant to us now," Kate said. "They are filled with beauty and enchantment and strangeness, taking place in worlds in which anything is possible, and yet on a deeper level they are psychological dramas in which desires and longings and fears which are universally human are played out and resolved.

"I also like the way they speak in an archetypal language of symbol and metaphor, like dreams, or poetry, or paintings."

**Purchase Tickets at [WORDwriters.org](http://WORDwriters.org)**

**For more information visit [www.wgtonline.org](http://www.wgtonline.org)**

## Cactus & Kangaroos Writers Workshop with Kate Forsyth

"A Master Class of Storytelling"



Saturday, June 17th

