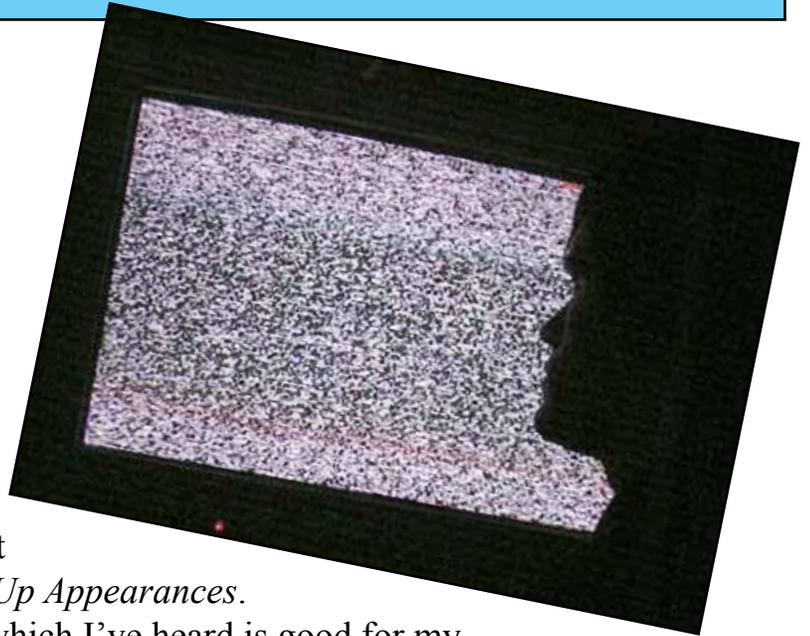




Soothing the Static

by Terri Elders



After a recent stretch of rejections, I questioned if the time I invested in writing and submitting stories would be better spent watching the English TV comedy *Keeping Up Appearances*. Hyacinth's antics always give me a laugh, which I've heard is good for my heart. Rejections reward me only with heartache.

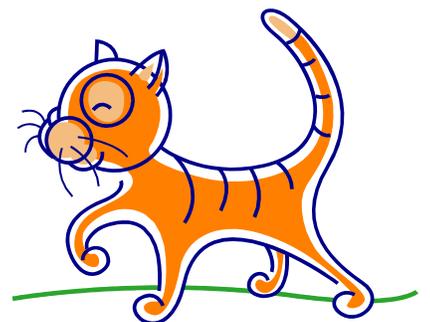
So why bother? I'd settle for becoming a couch potato. Then one day as I plucked yet another Netflix *Appearances* DVD from my mailbox, I realized that I'd rather sit down to write than sit down to watch. I missed the physical act of marveling as my very own words begin to fill a page. I've been writing since junior high. I'm too addicted to quit.

I'm thrilled with the entire process of writing. It's like a relationship: a courtship, an engagement, a marriage and a long life together. An idea strikes—like love at first sight—followed by research, creating characters, selecting scenes and revising. I find the whole process more fun than assembling a complicated jigsaw puzzle or selecting ingredients for a savory stew. I get a toe-to-topknot tingly turn-on by putting together a story.

Chuck Wendig—who writes the blasphemously funny blog *terribleminds*—devoted one of his famously X-rated columns to whether it's high time to give up writing. If you're offended by four-letter words or hilarity, don't click on this link: <http://terribleminds.com/ramble/2011/06/08/six-signs-its-high-time-to-give-up-writing>.

To spare you shock and an overdose of laughter, I'll sum up what Wendig claims are the major clues that you should throw in the towel:

- You'd much rather talk about writing than do actual writing.
- You spent your time doing everything but putting words on paper.
- Your production levels are "poop noise."
- That teetering tower of rejections threatens to crush you and your cats.
- You got the wrong idea about writing.



The very day I read Wendig’s piece, a woman sent me a note. Our stories had appeared in the same anthology years ago. She wrote that she followed me on Facebook and envied my announcements about acceptances. She described herself as a “One Hit Wonder.” She asked how did I get so lucky.

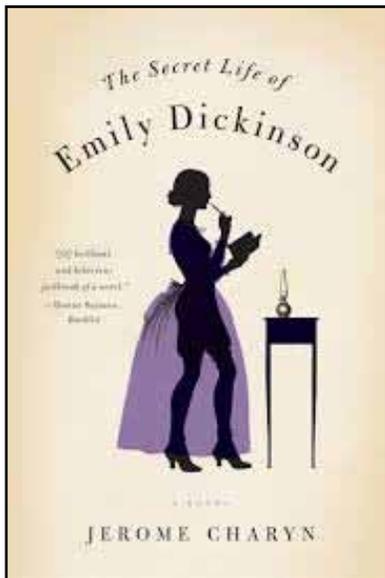
“Because I, too, have had those wistful moments, wondering about how others succeed,” I replied immediately. Here’s my secret: I submit far more than what ever gets published. Sure, my pieces have appeared in over a 100 books. But I have written at least that many stories that have never seen print. I refer to them as my orphans. Periodically I revisit them, polish them up and resubmit.

She responded truthfully. “I’m certainly not polishing enough. I have a horrible mindset that writing should come out perfect, the first draft...like magic.”

No. It’s in the rethinking and revising that most of the fun really lies. That’s what might make the difference between telling ourselves “I *want to be* a writer” and “I *am* a writer.”

You’ve probably heard these laments:

- “Readers are a vanishing breed.”
- “There’s too much competition.”
- “The market has dried up.”
- “Books and magazines are relics of the past.”



If all these allegations are true, then what keeps writers writing? I queried several published writers. I started with the most accomplished and prolific Facebook friend I have, **Jerome Charyn**, author of *I Am Abraham: A Novel of Lincoln and The Civil War* and *The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson*. *Newsweek* has described Charyn as “a contemporary American Balzac.” He’s produced over 50 books. Now in his 70s, Charyn knows the book business well.

He messaged right back: “Readers were always a vanishing breed. You write to sooth the static inside your own head. I’ve finished a book of short stories, *Bitter Bronx*, which will be published by Liveright in June. In February 2016, Bellevue will publish *A Loaded Gun: Emily Dickinson for*

the 21st Century, about another writer who was her own audience.” (<http://jeromecharyn.com>)

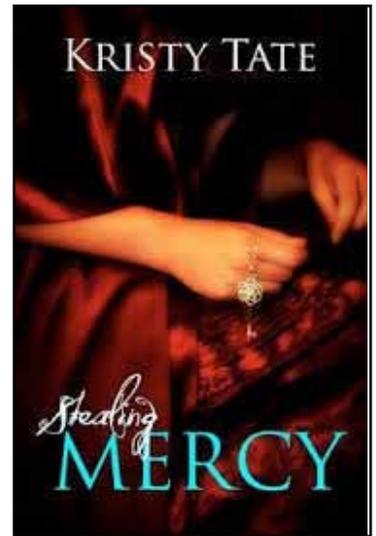
A writer who was her own audience...who wrote to soothe the static. Let’s consider Emily Dickinson. She didn’t anticipate being on any bestseller lists. She didn’t expect to become rich. No, Emily just wrote. And wrote. And wrote. No complaints. No whining about markets. No fretting over potential rejections. She wrote. She was her own audience. Today’s “Emilys” don’t have to stuff their work in a dresser drawer. There’s always a place to submit it. You can write for yourself...and for others, as well.



Emily Dickinson

That's why **Kristy Tate** self-publishes. She says she realized that she could reach an audience beyond just family and friends. Kristy has written over a dozen novels, time travel romances and mysteries, including the *Rose Arbor* series. (<http://kristystories.blogspot.com>)

Here's why Kristy writes: "I am a writer because I write. I am a successful writer because people chose to read my stuff. I guess this means I became a successful writer when I first began writing for my high school newspaper. And I guess this means that I won't stop writing when I make the New York Times bestseller list. Some people write one phenomenal book and are done. But for most writers, I think there's always another story lurking, waiting for daylight. How that story finds readers is just another part of the process."



More writers explain why they continue to soothe the static:

"Writing is the way I process life. It isn't a choice, it's a necessity."

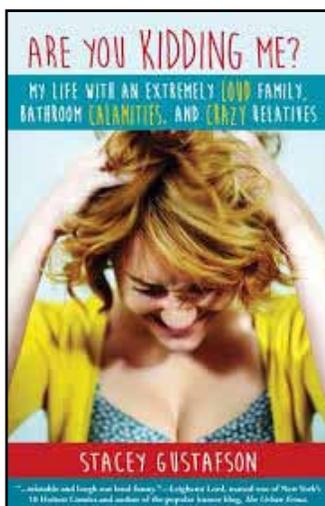
~ **Samantha Ducloux Waltz**, *Blended: Writers on the Stepfamily*, Redbook/Cup of Comfort love story contest grand prize winner ("Supersized Love," 2010) and NYMB contributor (www.pathsofthought.com)

"I continue to write and draw because this is my way of telling the world that I existed even if only a few read my thoughts."

~ **Phil Yeh**, *Dinosaurs Across America, Even Cazco Gets the Blues*; publisher, *Uncle Jam*; artist and the "godfather of the American graphic novel"; and 2009 San Diego Comic Con Ink Pot award winner (<http://www.wingedtiger.com>)

"Write with no expectations. Do what you want, take classes to improve your writing skills, sign-up for Webinars if you'd like to, but be realistic. I've tried many different approaches since 2009, and I don't want to sell The Dream. I am happy, because I believe The Dream is not about money."

~ **Sonia Marsh**, *From Freeways to Flipflops, My Gutsy Story* (<http://soniamarsh.com/home/blog>)



"I bundled up all my frustrations and oozed them out onto paper, one pain-in-the-ass problem at a time and it felt good. When I share my work, people laugh and can relate. I'll continue to write because I like to make people laugh."

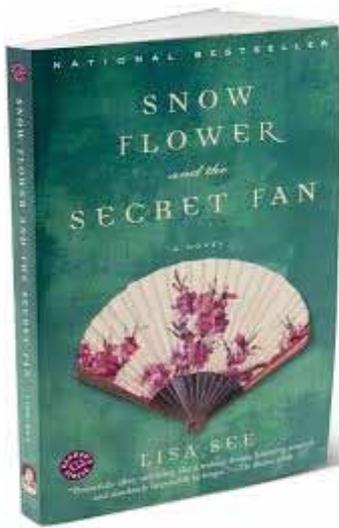
~ **Stacey Gustafson**, *Are You Kidding Me?* and NYMB contributor (<http://staceygustafson.com>)

"The hunt for my ancestors became the catalyst that launched my writing journey. Of course, countless other reasons motivate me to locate *le mot juste* and pen my mini-memoirs, but the idea of leaving my footprint for posterity to find was the impetus that first compelled me to bang these keys."

~ **Erika Hoffman**, *Sasee Magazine* contributor and NYMB contributor

“If you are a true artist, you won’t be able to stop yourself from writing anyway. It comes naturally and there’s not much anyone else can do about it.”

~ **Eve Gaal**, *Penniless Hearts* and NYMB contributor (<http://www.evegaal.com>)



“I write, because when I don’t I have terrible nightmares. I figure this must mean that when I’m writing my unconscious is working so hard that it has to rest at night. When I’m done with a novel, I sleep well for a while then the bad dreams once again make their appearance. My husband wakes me up and says, ‘It’s time for you to start a new project!’”

~ **Lisa See**, *New York Times* bestselling author: *China Dolls*, *Singapore Girls* and *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* (<http://www.lisasee.com>)

“I have never considered not writing. It’s more about prioritizing and focus for me. I have resolved to focus, finish and submit more work to publishers in the year 2015.”

~ **Bobby Barbara Smith**, author, songwriter, performer/musician and NYMB contributor (<http://www.bobbybarbarasmith.com>)

“I think of writing more as an addiction than a discipline. It tethers us to our real lives, no matter how big or small, and makes us examine them.”

~ **Joyce Ann Newman Scott**, author, actress. NYMB contributor (<http://joycenewmanonline.com>)

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

- **Why Do People Still Bother to Write Books?**

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lisa-earle-mcleod/why-do-people-still-bothe_b_1244707.html

- **Writing is Hard Work, Why Bother?** <http://goinswriter.com/hard-work>

- **Just Write the Damned Book Already**

<http://www.josephfinder.com/writers/tips/just-write-the-damned-book-already>

- **Why You Shouldn’t Be a Writer**

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/susannahbreslin/2012/06/12/why-you-shouldnt-be-a-writer>

- **How to Write a Book—The Short Honest Truth**

<http://scottberkun.com/2007/how-to-write-a-book-the-short-honest-truth>

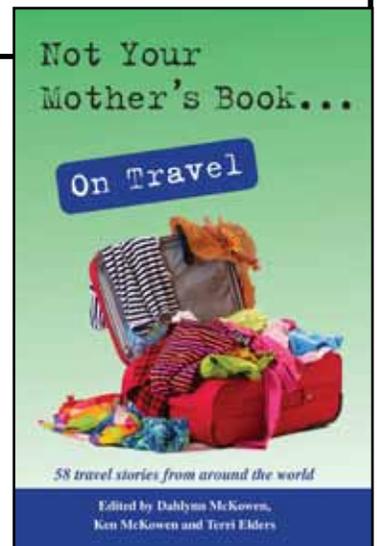


About Terri Elders...



Having recently escaped the harsh winters of Colville—a small town located close to the Canadian border in eastern Washington state—**Terri Elders** has returned to her former home region of Southern California. She has been a featured columnist for *The Wow Principles* numerous times and never fails to introduce the newsletter’s readers to a fresh take on the craft of

writing. Terri, who is now enjoying a much warmer tropical climate and the kinship of many SoCal writers, is the co-creator of *Not Your Mother’s Book...On Travel*. She blogs at <http://atouchoftarragon.blogspot.com>.



Giving Motherhood a Microphone!

Received the following from Ellie Grossman, author of *Mishegas of Motherhood* (<http://www.mishegasofmotherhood.com>) and NYMB contributor:

“We are gearing up for our 3rd annual ‘Listen to Your Mother—St. Louis’ event, to take place on May 9, 2015.

Would your authors/readers be interested in submitting an original essay about motherhood? The St. Louis event will give them each a unique opportunity to take their words from the “page to the stage!” We’re looking for all types of stories, from heartbreaking to hilarious and everything in between, as long as motherhood is the theme. It is an incredible experience for the speakers and the audience. Plus, money is raised for local causes.”

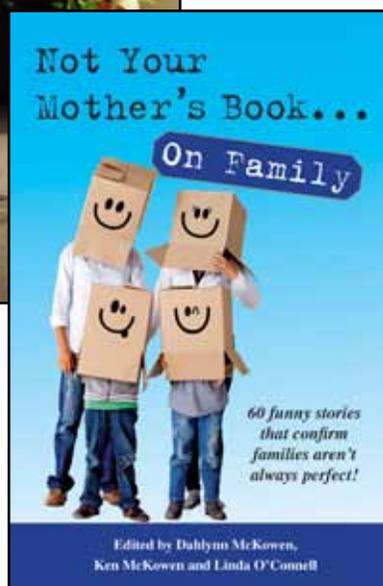


The story submission deadline and auditions for the St. Louis event is February 16, 2015. Here is the direct link for that show: www.listentoyourmothershow.com/stlouis

If you’re not based in St. Louis, don’t despair! There are more than 30 cities that carry LTYM events. Click here for more info: www.listentoyourmothershow.com.



Linda O’Connell (co-creator of Not Your Mother’s Book...On Family) was honored to be part of the St. Louis cast in 2013.



The 2014 “Listen to Your Mother—St. Louis” cast includes NYMB contributors Ellie Grossman (top row, middle, head on another’s shoulder), Laura Edwards Ray (far right, black jacket and long dress) and Sioux Roslawski (front row, yellow sweater and red hair).

This just in from *Writer's Digest*:

“WritersMarket.com lists thousands of magazines for writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, writing for children and more. Here are three recently updated magazines:

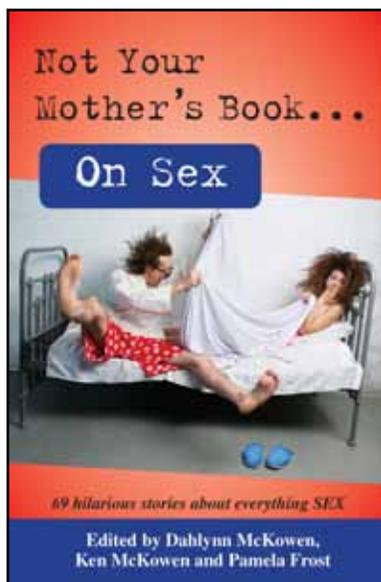


- **American Cinematographer** (www.theasc.com) is a monthly magazine devoted to the art and craft of cinematography. Writers should query with clips first. Magazine pays \$400-\$1,500 for nonfiction features.
- **Farm & Ranch Living** (www.farmandranchliving.com) is a bimonthly magazine aimed at families that farm or ranch full time. Pays up to \$300 for photo-text packages focused on people—not products and profits. Writers should submit complete manuscript on spec.
- **Texas Monthly** (www.texasmonthly.com) pays very competitive rates. This regional monthly magazine focuses on issues concerning Texas. Writers should query first.

WritersMarket.com lists more than **8,000** publishing opportunities, including listings for contests, magazines, book publishers, literary agents, conferences and more. Log in or sign up today to start submitting your work.”

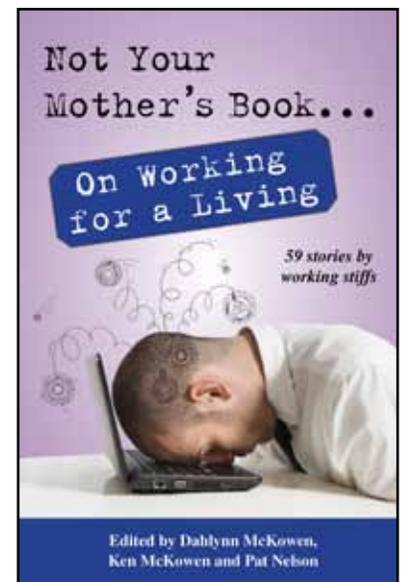
NYMB Update

A funny thing happened; many of the contributors in the newly released *NYMB...On Working for a Living* book also have stories in the upcoming *NYMB...On Sex* title. For this reason, we have decided to market both books together. Yes, more bang for our buck. Plus, the “sex” mention in the press release has a better chance at catching the media’s eye in this world of fast-paced news cycles. The press releases will be distributed nationwide through the month of February.



If you are an *On Sex* contributor, watch for a media/PR email package from Dahlynn. She will send it as soon as we receive a firm book release date from our distributor.

Because overall book sales have been slow for NYMB, no new NYMB books are on Publishing Syndicate’s 2015 production schedule. Please spread the word and help promote/sell the series—with an increase in sales, we can add more new NYMB titles to the 2015 schedule. Thank you so much.



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