

June 2017



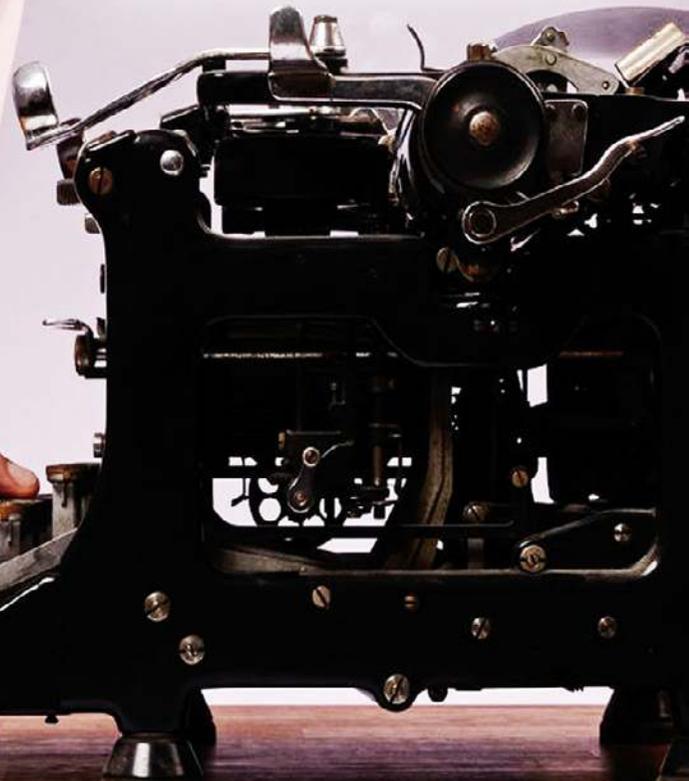
# BOOKS N PIECES

Digital Magazine

*A FREE Digital Publication for Writers and Readers, Artists & Musicians and more!*

## Inside This Issue

**Author Interviews**  
**Editorial • Artwork**  
**Book Samples**  
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**...and much more!**



<http://www.BooksNPieces.com>



**Inklings**  
*A few words from the publisher*



June 2017

Dear Reader:

Thanks for your support as we publish our third issue—and hopefully many more.

The strength of any publication lies in both its readers and contributors. At first, like all things, creating a new publication is an experiment of style and format, trial and error, testing and expanding until the right balance is met. We're not there yet. But we will be.

Books 'N Pieces is not just a writer's magazine; it is also for poets, artists, musicians and more. We encourage you to submit material that you would like to see published. We'd love to have regular columns, open to our readers to write. The day that we can sell advertising we will be able to pay our contributors for their efforts. In the meantime, the best we can do is offer exposure for your efforts. Between my Twitter following [@Misterwriter](#), [Facebook/AltPublish](#), websites [AltPublish.com](#) and [BooksNPieces.com](#), and our email subscribers, we have a healthy readership.

In each issue I'd like to see interviews, stories, book reviews, sample chapters, writing tips, artwork, script pages, music (linked to sources), interesting products, fun items such as cartoons and more. We're not just a publication for beginner writers; many of our readers are published writers who enjoy a good story as much as the next person. And from the feedback I have received, there is excitement that we have this publication, at no cost to our subscribers. We have chosen a variety of formats including PDF, e-Pub, .mobi (Kindle), as well as flip formats like issuu. We'll also be available on Kindle for purchase, a convenient way for added exposure, although you can get it **FREE** by signing up for a [free subscription](#). And we're looking at making **print copies** available via Amazon.

Enjoy this issue. Please let me know your thoughts, what you liked, did not like, would like to see and more. You can reach me at [editor@BooksNPieces.com](mailto:editor@BooksNPieces.com).

Best wishes,

William Gensburger  
Writer/Publisher  
[AltPublish.com](#)

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# SHORT STORY

## PANIC or DESPERATION

by Robin Melhuish

**N**erves jangling, he waited; praying that everyone had gone home. He made his way through the dim foyer. Avoiding the lift, he scurried across to the emergency stairs, not daring to risk a chance encounter with any stragglers leaving work late in case he'd misjudged his timing. The memo from Washington that had crossed his desk earlier had rekindled his hopes of finding something, anything, to rescue the situation.

A link between the parties; which, if he could get it, would maybe relieve the pressure, and just maybe make them leave him alone, but without that proof, he dreaded to think.

He eyed the stairs with dread, knowing the two floors up were going to be a challenge. He wasn't built for athletics. With his heart near bursting, he heaved himself around the first corner of the staircase, the blood rushing in his ears sounding like the noise of ship's diesels in his head. His sweaty hand, gripped his father's old service revolver. He dreaded using it, but hoped it would still work if he did need it. Gasping for air, he reached the second bend in the staircase and paused; it was a blind corner, dark uninviting. The shot that rang out from above almost made him lose control. He grabbed his groin in fear, a shot, just a single unmistakable explosion; the loudness of it stopping the humming machines in his head for a moment.

He held his breath, waiting, the old pistol wavering wildly in front of him as he held it out. There was a noise, a door opening, and slamming, a scuffling sound on the stairs above him; someone coming. Fast steps running down towards him. A dark body careered round the corner, the collision unavoidable, taking both of them by surprise. Winded, he dropped his gun to a grunt from the dark form that had collided with him. His gun fell, clattering to the floor, the noise echoing in cadence with the thumping of his heart as it bounced down the stone stairs. He was more afraid than he'd been in all his life, sweat coursing his down his face and neck. The soft curse that came next froze his blood.

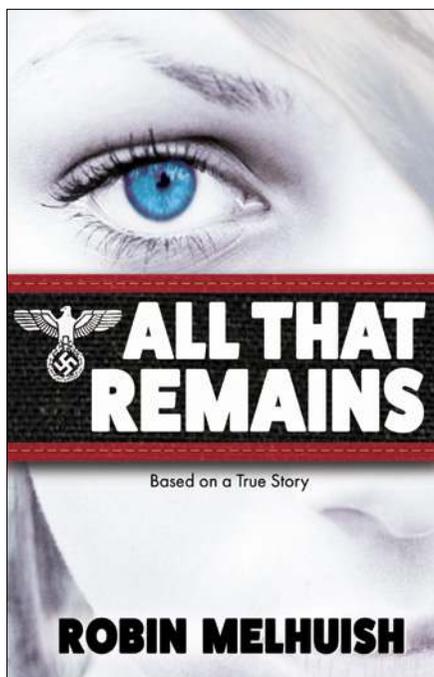
'Get out of the way you fool!' A woman's hoarse voice barked from the darkness. He froze. 'Fringie! I told you to get out,' the voice rasped. 'Go before I kill you!'

Panic-stricken, he fled down the stairs as she aimed her gun at his head. The "Go before I kill you," echoing in his brain until he regained the cold air outside in the street. He sagged, hands on knees, sobbing for breath, grateful, at least, that his bladder had held. He checked behind him, there was no sign of her. The sound of approaching police sirens galvanized him into walking again.

With his breath returning to more like normal now he made his way to the tube station trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. His hands still trembled as he pulled his phone out and dialed the emergency number. No answer, he left a message and threw the phone under a passing bus, wondering why he'd bothered. He was on his own; he knew that. There was nothing else he could do; which just left him wondering how she knew him. The voice seemed somehow familiar, a young voice maybe. The, "Go before I kill you", still echoing in his head as he took

the stairs to the ticket office. He'd never felt so drained, or so completely adrift. 🖱

*Robin Melhuish was born in the Hertfordshire UK. He graduated in Analytical Chemistry before being head-hunted by a company to work in Germany where he deepened his childhood hobby of collecting German stamps. Traveling widely in the Far East and Europe, visiting historical locales and meeting people led to the writing of All That Remains, released by Alt Publish, June 2017. Robin and his wife Yasmin, live in North Cypress.*



Read:

## **ALL THAT REMAINS**

by Robin Melhuish

Deep in the Soviet Occupation Zone of defeated Germany, in 1945, a baby girl is born and abandoned.

From the shards of war she discovers the uncomfortable truth.

The uncovering of the official lies about the capture of Himmler's Nazi fortress, leads to a hunt for the proceeds of the biggest undetected robbery in history.

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**AVAILABLE JUNE 9, 2017**

**ARTS**

# Sketches

by Lauren Jefferson





## FILM REVIEW:



# ALIEN: COVENANT

In all the Alien movies, a hapless crew—civilians/scientists/miners, backed by a corrupt corporation—encounter one planet or another and voila – they become the breeding vessels for our favorite xenomorph varieties.

Enter Covenant, which offers typical Alien fare with a minimal splash of Prometheus, certainly not enough to satisfy those of us who enjoyed the former film.

Prior to Covenant's release, an Online short promo explained the immediate aftermath from Prometheus, filling in some blanks that were not explained in Covenant, yet necessary to understand the jump between films.

I won't reveal any spoilers but to say that if you just want an Alien film, this one does not disappoint.

In Covenant, bound for a planet on the far end of the galaxy deemed hospitable and ready for them to colonize, the crew of the vessel of the same name (Katherine Waterston, Billy Crudup) is awakened early only to be diverted to another world, one broadcasting a song delivered by Dr. Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) from the last film, which they interpret as an emergency call.

This crew includes an updated David synthetic named Walter (Michael Fassbender in both roles), identical sans the complicated emotionalism and a different hairstyle and speech



pattern.

Needless to say that this world is quickly revealed to be a dark place, the remains of the Engineer home-world, and a sinister tale of what happened to Dr. Shaw and David. And, of course, a hostile alien, a neomorph, forces the crew into a struggle for their lives.

If you've watched any Alien films before, you know how this one ends.

When Ridley Scott released the last movie in the Alien franchise: Prometheus, it seemed as though I

was in the minority who found the film to be meaningful and thought provoking with its allusions to religion, our creators, the Engineers, who had come to seed life on Earth, only later to attempt to choose to destroy it.

They had setup a biological agent on a barren world, keeping the pathogen from their own home world, and, readied to launch to our planet and finish us off, instead fall victim to their own creation.

Without recounting the whole tale, the Internet was abuzz with the religious symbology of their change of heart resulting from the crucifixion of their emissary back a few thousand years. Google "Prometheus meanings" for more information.

With many familiar elements from the original Alien movie, as well as the vastly improved technological element of film making, there are no dull moments, if you came to find answers left over from Prometheus, there are few to be found and, in the discovery, some disappointments how the story evolved. The original Alien, way back a few decades before the end of the last

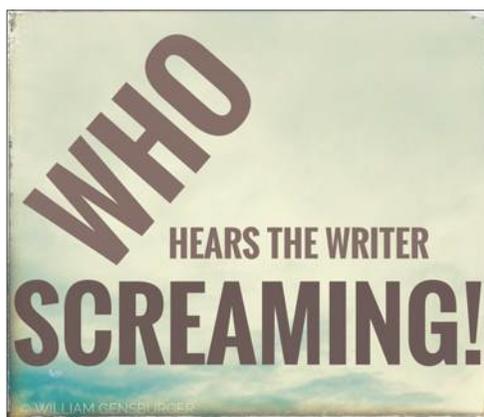
century, was shocking, gritty and raw, exposing audiences to the scariest of all things, emerging from the chest amidst a torrent of blood and guts and screams.

Audiences tend to lose the shock value quickly, and following *Aliens*, *Alien 3*, *Alien Resurrection*, aside from the *Alien v Predator* offshoot, we've become numb to the chest bursting, metallic acid-drool of the creatures. Like many horror films, these scares simply replace people and setting, film to film, until audiences just stop caring.

In the *Alien* franchise, despite a universe of accessibility and an abundance of technology, the storylines always fall back to greed, whether by profit in the attempted exploitation and weaponization of the creatures, as in the earlier films, or the foolish attempt of Peter Weyland (Guy Pearce), to gain immortality from the Engineers.

I believe *Covenant* failed to live up to the scope offered by *Prometheus* and settled instead, into a more comfortable and familiar zone. But that seems to be what audiences want, in which case there will be no disappointments. That and the remaining four films Ridley Scott promised before his tale returns to the original *Alien* storyline. 🖱️

Directed by Ridley Scott



# A Letter Untitled

by Lauren Jefferson

**A certain song in a certain hour** always reminds me of that day in Paris, the morning I got sick? Remember? My nose was running all the way to the Palace of Versailles, and you'd given me the rest of our baguette aux lardons for the train ride on over to the bigger train that would take us to Antoinette's home. I kept sniffing, loud and whimpered, and I caught an elegant Parisian darting sharp eyes at me. But you kept me close and you kept me safe. It rained so hard that day. It rained so hard that we had to learn the word for "umbrella" – *parapluie* – so that we could buy one from the local shop. I would mutter *Rochechouart* under my breath on occasion, reliving a flood of pride from when your father had praised my pronunciation. My French r's were lovely, just grand. The baguette didn't last long. We were almost there, you said.



Versailles was beautiful. I almost cried like I did when the doors of the *Sacré-Cœur* opened and nuns ushered us into the basilica's warm embrace. Here, and there, I felt at home. You immortalized our time at Versailles with a photo of me looking into the Hall of Mirrors, just as you'd immortalized me at the English bookshop.

I felt so beautiful in front of a wanting camera in your hands. I felt precious, like Versailles. You don't know this but the moment you took that picture with the mirrors was the

moment in which I'd wanted to tell you I loved you, again, for a last and final time, but I had appropriately held back.

We found farming cottages dotted on the outskirts of the garden's groomed monolith so we said hello to the queen's friendly cows, her pup-eyed goats. Quilts of grass poured into a maze of centuries-old fence posts and haunted escapes meant to house the gardeners; things the other tourists did not know or want to explore. And we got deep, so incredibly deep, into Antoinette's garden that we'd reached a vineyard of some sort, idyllic greenery you'd find in landscape paintings or children's books.

I thought for a moment we'd catch enchanted ghosts amongst the flowers, the kind we had hoped to catch in a cat-crawled cemetery, immense and gothic, the day before. And I was terrified to disrespect the palace rules, to follow you into forbidden ivy aisles. But you said it was okay and so I trusted you and took your hand, and we walked for a forever, toward a latticed center. We reached a mossy clearing scattered with broken pottery. No one was here for a half mile all around. Just us. In all the universe, here and above, it was just us. I danced and laughed. We dizzied ourselves, drunk on the freshest air we'd ever tasted. I found a bench outside the clearing and you laid your head on my lap. I rubbed at the same strand of black hair looped around your ear. You fell asleep and murmured things from a lost and hurting boyhood. I smiled down at you and murmured things from an awakened maternal core.



We stayed there long past our stolen welcome. On the plane ride home, you made me cry. I had let a stranger borrow the pen we had used to check off boxes for the

US government, things like, no, we had not touched Antoinette's exotic cows and that, no, we were not harboring viruses of an illegal variety, and you hated me for the pen allowance, silenced me with such cutthroat glares that I felt small and weak. I had taken rocks from Versailles, dulled purple gems hoping to birth amethyst, and I felt nervous that our government would confiscate them.



It has been two years since precious Versailles. I treasure the memory just as I treasured a human with a heart that could no longer hide rust with fool's gold. In those two years I have strayed from the French and wandered into Spanish. I have learned to say *mi corazon se duele* (my heart, it hurts) and I have learned to retract this statement with *todo esta bien* (all is well).



I have promised to return to Paris.



I have promised to never return to you. 🖐️

## SHORT STORY

# After the Leaves

by William Gensburger

**“I miss the leaves on the trees,”** Sam said. He was the first to speak, mostly bothered by the unbearable stillness after the family awoke. “You never really appreciate things like that until afterwards.”

“Melly was in the lead,” Dad said, “her hair long like a waterfall - gosh, do you remember how much she would brush it every day? I used to worry that it would all fall out and she’d wind up bald like me.”

Kari giggled at the image, then stopped as she remembered. “It’s not fair, daddy.”

“It’s not fair,” Dad said, kissing her lightly on the forehead. “But it is real, sweetheart. Always remember the real.”

And Kari played the ‘real’ back again, the explosions, the smoke, thick and biting at the throat, the air shrouded with dust and chemicals and burning at the eyes, and the screaming, seemingly endless screaming like some twisted chorus. And somehow she had managed to fall asleep and by the time she awoke, the ‘real’ was still there except for the screaming that had been lost.

“Stop being such a baby,” Melly had snapped at her, mascara running down her face and mingled with ash and soot. Her eyes had dark red spider veins and her eyebrows had been singed, stubby black hair sticking straight up with small blackened blobs at the end. Kari remembered staring at it wanting to

touch the ends.

“Lucky for us we had the cabin,” Dad said, “so we knew where to go. But of course, the roads were broken and even if they were intact, the cars would have blocked the way. Good thing we always went on weekend hikes. Good thing we knew what to do or we’d be lost like the rest of them. When I was a boy, your grandpa would tell me that there were only two types of people in the world...”

Kari jumped in. “Smart people or dead people.”

“Exactly. I guess we were the smart people.”

“Was Melly not smart?”

Dad thought on this, rubbed the stubble on his face and considered his answer. His eyes were swollen, red veins like tree roots spread across the whites. “Melly was smart,” he finally said. “She was just unlucky.”

Kari left it at that, although she wanted to say that luck seemed irrelevant now that the leaves had fallen.

“But you are very smart,” Dad told her. “And Sam, too.”

“And Mommy would have been smart, also.”

Dad smiled. “Mommy was the smartest of all of us.”

“I miss her everyday,” Kari said.

“Everyday,” Dad whispered. “Think you can sleep?”

Kari shrugged. “Can Sam finish the story, tonight?”

Dad kissed her again and went to get Sam. Kari stared at her room while she waited, her eyes tracing shapes in the ceiling until they drifted to her shortwave radio in the corner. It was too early to talk with Stephanie. Stephanie was also smart, maybe even smarter than the rest of them since she was alone now. But they could only talk for a short time otherwise the generator would run out of gas faster. Ten minutes was all she was allowed. Ten minutes to say the world of words. Ten

minutes to hug and hold and cry. She wished they could scoop up Stephanie and bring her to their cabin, but there was no way. Kari knew she would never meet Stephanie.

“Hey squirt,” Sam said, breaking her thoughts. “My turn, Dad said.”

Kari smiled at him. “I love you, Sammy,” she said. “Do you know that?”

Sam nodded. “Always did.” He sat down on the bed.

“Where’d Dad stop at?”

“Smart people...”

“Oh that! Okay. Well we make it to the cabin even though it took us days and days. Melly was sick then and Dad had to carry her the last part which is why Dads are always strongest of all.

And then finally we got here.”

“I used to hate coming here,” Kari said. “I hated hiking. It was so boring.”

“Yeah, but then Dad let you have his old shortwave and you liked it after that.”

Kari shifted on the bed. “The radio is so cool. Every kid should have one.”

“Maybe one day it’ll be a law that every kid has to have a shortwave,” Sam told her.

“So after we got to the cabin,” Kari said, “you and Daddy went to check on the supplies that we had left last summer.”

“Exactly. Dad was afraid that we had not stocked up like we should have and that there might not have been enough food.”

“And no one else had broken in.”

“Dad had his shotgun by his side and we walked around the outside first, looking for footprints, but there weren’t any.” Sam brushed his long hair back over his head. “Dad told you to see

who was on the shortwave...”

“...and that was when I found Stephanie,” Kari interrupted. “She was all alone over there.”

“Well, New Zealand is ....” He stopped, looked down at the wooden planks of the floor, at the dust that covered it. He wanted to just go to sleep and not have to think about it anymore but Dad had said that they’d sleep soon enough and needed to be alert for now. “It’s almost time to talk to Stephanie, isn’t it?”

“I hope so,” Kari said. “But you’ll have to carry me over there - I don’t want to fall again.”

From outside Dad started up the generator.

Gently Sam pulled the covers back and lifted Kari effortlessly. Sam was the strongest of all of them, she told herself. Nothing could knock him down.

He put her down on the chair and pushed it closer, then leaned over to plug in the shortwave radio. Kari waited for it to come alive before slowly turning up the volume and adjusting the frequency. Dad walked in behind them and put his hand on Sam’s neck and pulled him closer, kissing him on the top of his head. Silence.

“November Seven, Pesky Montana Skunk. This is Kari. Stephanie, can you read me?”

Silence. Dad’s hand gripped tighter.

“November Seven, Pesky Montana Skunk. This is Kari. Stephanie, can you read me?”

Kari looked back at them. She was already thinking the worst.

“Try again, honey,” Dad told her.

“November Seven, Pesky Montana Skunk. This is Kari. Stephanie, can you read me?”

Silence.

“Daddy, what if something happened to her? What if she didn’t make it?”

Dad just stood there, their eyes locked. It wasn’t too much to ask for. Just a little more time. His little girl deserved that much and he wanted nothing for himself.

The room suddenly erupted with static and a child’s voice said, “Kilo Bravo Three Helo Tango Sam. This is Stephanie. Hi Kari. I’m so glad to hear your voice.”

And the three of them began to laugh hard and deep and their laughter filled the cabin with life. 🐾



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# Sketches

by Lauren Jefferson



# **SUBMISSIONS:**

Books 'N Pieces Magazine is accepting submissions for publication in the following categories:

**FICTION**  
**NON-FICTION**  
**POETRY / SONGS**  
**PAINTINGS & SKETCHES**  
**MUSIC (available on the digital edition only)**  
**EDITORIALS**  
**GAMES AND PUZZLES**  
**BOOKS REVIEWS**  
**BOOK PREVIEWS**  
**WRITING TIPS**  
**A WRITER'S LIFE (how you write and live)**  
**and more....**

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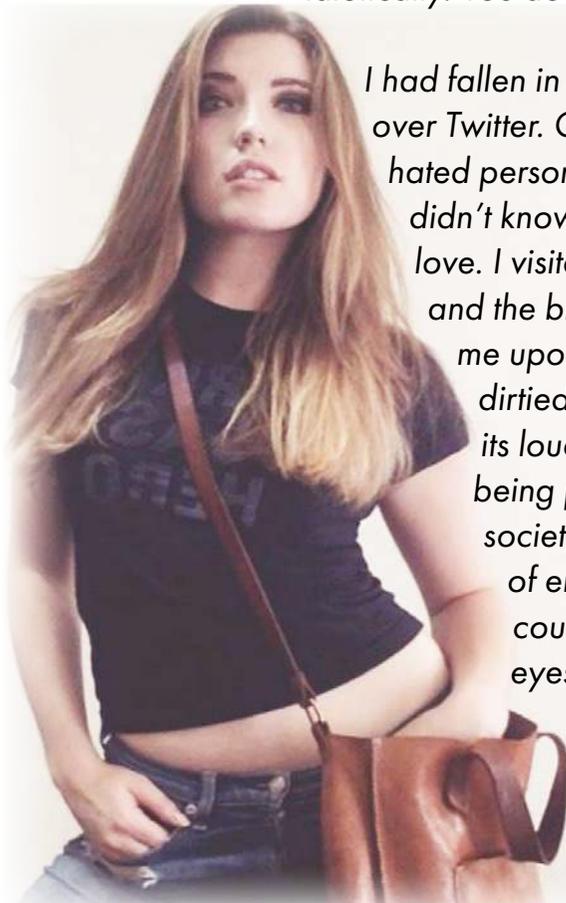
## INTERVIEW:

# Lauren Jefferson

Author, Artist, Screenwriter, ScriptDoctor, Blogger

**Q: You moved to LA while you were quite young. What were you hoping to find in LA and did you find it?**

*A: I moved to LA when I was barely twenty. When you're that age - not that I'm too far removed from 'barely twenty' as far as demographics are concerned - you do things spontaneously, idiotically. You do things for strangers.*



*I had fallen in love with a virtual stranger over Twitter. One of Hollywood's most hated personalities, actually. But I didn't know the difference. I was in love. I visited LA for that kind of love, and the breath got knocked from me upon seeing Hollywood's dirtied palm fronds, its murals, its loud and proud way of being peculiarly removed from society, and yet its own brand of en vogue all at once. LA could do no wrong in my eyes; it was disgusting, and artistically so. I had never seen anything like it and I knew right then and there that I would never leave.*

*I remember standing in a Banana Republic at Beverly Center, on the receiving end of a call with my mother. She asked if I liked LA and I told her that I sincerely did not want to leave, and that I probably wouldn't leave the next time I 'visited.' She seemed disappointed. But when you know, you know - y'know? I ended the phone call by stating that I would much rather live out of a rotten box on the streets of LA than return to a bland apartment in my home state, Michigan. She had simply said, 'Oh,' as if she'd learned I'd developed a cancer.*

*I wasn't hoping to find anything in LA. I made it my god, and was receptive to anything it offered me. I prayed to it, learned from it, found myself beaten black and blue by it. But I have found everything to which I was receptive: Love. Heartbreak good enough to write about. Artistic misery. Brilliant spats with brilliant artists. Relationships with the most interesting people in the world. Relationships with the famous, the infamous, the in-between. I've aligned myself with a particularly swashbuckled family found off the Sunset Strip and nowhere else. A chosen family. What did I hope to find? Stability where there is none.*

*And I got it.*

**Q: You've written short stories, worked an Online novel, film scripts, been a script doctor, editor for others, artist and model, all while holding down a day job. What attracts you to writing and how do you feel it has progressed (Style, tips, etc)? Which of the various elements have you enjoyed the most?**

*A: I'm attracted to writing simply because it's my outlet. Some people start bar fights. Some people paint landscapes. I like to pick out the prettiest combination of words to relay the most*

accurate interpretation of humanity I can possibly provide for people who cannot otherwise take a direct look at my thoughts.

I consider myself to be a strong communicator - as a communicator I enjoy making sure people know exactly what I mean. Writing can be an exact science in that way, or it can become an open-ended interpretation left up to the reader. So, in a way, it's a tool for me and something of an ongoing study in how to communicate in ways that are unexpected, and therefore, more powerful.

Stephen King mused in *ON WRITING* that writing is literal telepathy. And he's right: I can describe to you the most beautiful vase in the world, and you'll have to picture that to comprehend it and move on. Where writing gets interesting is when I wax poetic about this vase, and then I mention at the very, very end that, oh, by the way, inside this vase lives an entire community of microscopic extraterrestrials transmitting every detail of your life to a far-away planet that is currently planning your demise. Writing is telepathy but it's also artful timing.

I enjoy using both of these elements but I'd say I enjoy the mental mouth-feel of the words themselves. Saying something is not nearly as powerful as how it is said - and I find that while I'm not a poet, I like to treat everything I write with my own sense of rhythm and meter. Writing is a form of music for me.

As for my day jobs, I've got a hefty list for sure. But each and every job I've taken has pushed me to find more writing material, to perceive every experience as a possible story. I've been incredibly lucky to find tons of real-life heroes and villains, people who have legitimately had me questioning if I were living out a strange story myself where I happened to be the only (fairly)

reliable narrator.

Writing progression happens when you accept that being a writer is a lifelong commitment, that you will never be as good now as you will be when you're Cormac McCarthy's age. I've progressed but it's been almost nominal when you consider that so much more will happen to me, shape me, etc., and will influence my writing in more complex ways.

**Q: What is the genre you prefer?**

A: As a kid I was raised on Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury - healthy doses of horror and sci-fi that fed into a rabid interest to explore my personal life, and observances about others, in such a way that reality could be exploited in the abstract. I'm still fascinated by science fiction but lately I've leaned more on writing about personal experiences, implying certain emotions and frames of thought to grapple with my own presence of being, or hitting things head-on to get to the point. Regardless, it's strategic embellishment of reality, and I find it similar to a rite of passage in learning to find fairytales where someone might only see a stretch of Skid Row.

Experimenting with narrative nonfiction has been extremely cathartic. Experimental writing in general, actually, has given me Pollack levels of expression I didn't think possible.

**Q: Social media plays an important part in your life and promoting what you do. How does it influence what you do or do not do as far as your writing?**

A: I'm in a love-hate relationship with social media. I love it because it allows me to share my works (writing, art, etc.) in their

infancy, and get a real-time reaction from people whose opinions matter to me. It's allowed me to connect with working writers, for the screen and otherwise. It's created a support system to fall back on when creative roadblocks have me hitting a wall.

Twitter in particular is a legitimate community with working parts, enemies and allegiances, people hungry for good art. In time, a writer just starting out can collect a following and collaborate with others on real projects. It's not just a silly app, it's an actual tool that I stand by, a networking machine when you fully integrate into 'film Twitter.' It's the reason I found myself, and my first script, in several fancy offices as a 21 year-old with nothing to lose. And it's powerful. It's intoxicating.

It can get dangerous, though, in that thousands of virtual strangers collectively decide who they think you are and what you have to offer based off of a tiny photo and a series of 140-character public messages. When you stray from that deduction, Twitter feels it has agency to question you, publicly, or not-so-publicly with coded asides. When you emphasize that deduction, Twitter will exploit it so much that you feel you have no choice but to continue emphasizing it - but 'better,' and with a dainty apology as if to acknowledge behavior deemed borderline unacceptable. It's a disgusting roundabout, a clique; a necessary evil. It didn't influence me as much before - I have a tiny following compared to the pro's of the industry but it's still over 1,400 real and breathing people keeping tabs on me. I used to be free-flowing with words, free-flowing in my intensity; my emotions used to be pure kindling for the exploratory fire I had going with voice as a writer. Now I'm a little careful. In fact, I was at a crippling standstill trying to wrap up the editing and self-publishing of my collection of writings simply because some of what I had written a couple years ago could be misconstrued as 'too this' or 'too that' for a public arena

that has, at times, tried to skewer me.

Social media is, hands-down, the sole reason I have been able to collaborate with some amazing people, so I recommend it to anyone trying to put their writing out into the world - but use it to organize real-life meet-ups. Don't rely on it, and don't let it define your voice.

**Q: You have a collection of short stories coming out. Could you share some information on that?**

A: **UNSAFE PLACES** is four years' worth of writings, from the beginning of my life in Hollywood all the way until now, where I'm adjusting my voice, acquiring more grown-up emotions, growing up in general. I've included my favorite pieces of fiction, narrative nonfiction, letters to people who have unwittingly carved me as a human being, etc. It's grimy and murky. A creative diary, if you will. Its namesake story inspired me to go all-out with that kind of grime, to dig deep and hone everything that's created me as a writer. Everything I wrote for **UNSAFE PLACES** either made me cry, or relieved me of a spiritual burden; it's extremely personal, a ball of energy I've been mouldering, and I want people to see how I've used that energy. It marks the end of a phase of my life where I was submitting myself to a poisonous brand of whiplash but still kept going for the sake of adventures being handed to me - the stuff of writing gold.

**UNSAFE PLACES** is about having sacrificed myself to Los Angeles knowing it would skin me alive. It's about that sacrifice, and using it to fuel an intense masochistic desire to still yet cut deeper, to make all the blood and gore beautiful in the end.

*It's not pretty but it wasn't supposed to be.*

## **Q: What do you see in your future? Writing?**

*A: I'm involved in so many projects and ideas at the moment that I can't say for sure - I just know that I've found peace with accepting each day as it is and as it comes. A tarot reader once told me, after he had pulled the Fortune card for me, that I would be 'very, very happy.' He laughed, even, almost as if he were experiencing my future good tidings. I would have 'nearly everything' I could ever want. And then his face suddenly fell - he decided one more card was needed. He touched each deck and found one predicting 'disappointment.' I would be happy, then, but I wouldn't have 'absolutely everything.'*

*Sounds silly but I think that goes for everyone who does their best to create a full life - you reap what you sow, but the Universe has its own path for you no matter what.*

## **Q: Anything else that you would like to share - shameless plugs, etc.**

*A: I'm still proofreading scripts when my schedule allows for it, and I write/draw on commission. Information can be found on my blog, which is a bit scarce now that I'm pulling posts from it to use for **UNSAFE PLACES**.*

[Editor note: You can follow Lauren on Twitter – [@laurjeff](#). She is also on [Instagram @laur\\_jeff](#) and her Blog [laurjeffwrites.com](#) We thank Lauren for honest answers to some personal questions, and look forward to reading her anthology of stories.]



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## **EDITORIAL:**

# *Can You Hear Me?*

For many, reading a novel is no longer possible. Time constraints in our lives, often leave us without sufficient time to get immersed in a novel. As a result, the market for paperbacks and even e-Books has been unpredictable.

Enter the audiobook market. Available on CD or as a digital download, audiobooks represent an ever growing marketshare of literary sales. Listening as a background task, whether driving a car, while waiting somewhere, or even in the evening from the comfort of a chair, it is easier to listen to a story, not unlike our childhood when bedtime stories were read to us. Now, a professional narrator reads the tale, voice fluctuations offering character parts, intonations, moods, emotions and more.

Many authors are rapidly discovering that there is a vast market in audiobooks. Last December, the New York times reported a 21.8 percent decline in e-Book sales, although paperback sales increased by 6 percent. All the while, audiobook sales rose 35.3 percent. With a decline in leisure reading – a 2015 study found only 43 percent of Americans had read for pleasure – the surge in audiobooks clearly fills a need.

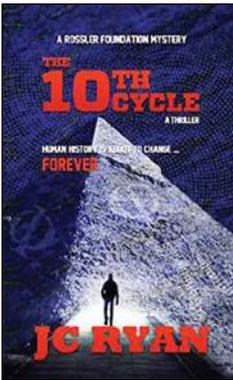
Author, Mike Wells, a prolific writer, believes that audiobooks offer a distinct advantage. “What many folks discover after they try one or two of them is that the experience is quite different than reading, and that it has one unexpected advantage: the ice cream “cone” itself tastes good, too!” he writes on his Website. “A great narrator can add to the drama as the story unfolds and the overall

impression that various characters make.”

Mike is the author of well over twenty page-turning novels. Having focused before on e-books (he doesn't publish print copies,) he has started releasing many in audiobook format, auditioning narrators before selecting one he believes matches the style of the novel.

You can hear Book 1 of his *Lust, Money & Murder* series FREE at <https://soundcloud.com/mikewellsauthor/lmmbk1full>.

Check out ALL of Mike Wells' eBooks and Audiobooks at <http://amzn.to/2rGBNoC>



Recently, I joined ACX, the audiobook arm of Amazon. After submitting a few auditions, I was offered the job to narrate *The Tenth Cycle*, by JC Ryan.

The process is straightforward, although you do need to have some decent equipment, mostly, a decent microphone and a quiet place to record.



As you record each chapter, there are some technical requirements for the narration to meet the quality of ACX. ACX predicts about 6 hours of time is invested for every hour of finished recording, and I suspect that is accurate.

The pleasure of narration is the interpretation of the voices for the characters. Quite quickly you fall into a pattern and flow as the

novel proceeds.

While it is time consuming, payment is based, either on a shared royalty, or a flat-rate per finished hour (the actual end product). As tempting as a full-time career might be, one must also remember sore throats and a desire to no longer engage in conversation as side-effects, although minimal.

If you are interested in learning more, visit [www.ACX.com](http://www.ACX.com).

~William Gensburger

**"I write because I  
must keep  
breathing!"**

~ William Gensburger

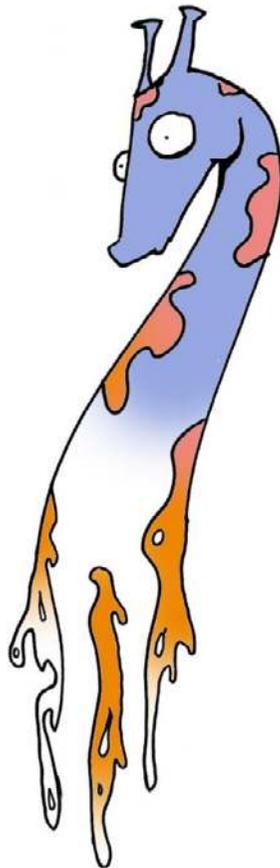
*"If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it. Or, if proper usage gets in the way, it may have to go. I can't allow what we learned in English composition to disrupt the sound and rhythm of the narrative."*

*—Elmore Leonard*

**ARTS**

# Sketches

by Lauren Jefferson



# INTERVIEW:



## Jas T. Ward

“Welcome to my worlds, take a seat, get to know me and the characters and I assure you... You’ll be glad you did.”  
~Jas T Ward

Jas T. Ward has always used writing as a necessary escape. With a past marred by a difficult childhood and domestic violence as well as being homeless as an adult, Ms. Ward lost her creative voice when she lost her soul mate to suicide. Finding that creative voice once again in writing in social media via blogs and creative writing groups, Ms. Ward gathered other writers & founded Dark Hunter Nights, which has over 2,000 members & is one of the largest and longest-running fan fiction groups on Facebook.

Through her work with Nights, Ms. Ward developed characters that were diverse, different and unique. Fans of the group encouraged her to use her literary talents and give her characters life in books, and The Shadow-Keepers Series was born. Ms. Ward quickly became known for writing books filled with action, drama, laughter, darkness and unimaginable plot twists, and her books have won awards from various blogs and other outlets. A bestselling author on both Amazon & ARomance, Ms. Ward has been described as the Robin Williams of authors: so damn funny and talented, but with a darkness that calls to you, causing you to want to know more.

Ms. Ward’s books have also been reviewed by Ind’Tale Magazine, and have been nominated for the magazine’s prestigious RONE awards for the last three years, each time a finalist. LUST, Book 2 of The Shadow-Keepers Series, was the recipient of the following awards from Rant & Rave Book Blogs Preditors & Editors Reader Poll: Best Dark Fantasy 2015, Best F/F Romance 2015, & Top 10 Reads of 2015.

While her fans enjoyed the dark, twisty romance of The Shadow-Keepers Series, they believed in Ms. Ward’s potential to write other genres, and challenged her to write a contemporary, traditional romance. She completely failed, but the result was Love’s Bitter Harvest; and just like that, a style was born – Romance: The Ward Way. True to the style that her fans

adore so much, Ms. Ward's romances are funny, unpredictable works with twisted turns to keep the readers guessing; after all, the path to love isn't easy.

While her first passion is writing and reading, Ms. Ward also enjoys networking with other authors and helping those who are just starting their careers in the crazy world of indie book publishing. She is an ever-positive presence on social media, offering encouragement and advice to her fellow authors. She is a founding member and administrator of the Girls Gone Writing/GGW Reader Group on Facebook, which has over 4,000 members and is a drama-free place for everyone – readers, authors, bloggers and fans alike – to talk books.

Born and raised in Texas and spending time living in Kentucky, Ms. Ward spends her days and nights writing as therapy to deal with life and all that it brings—from the past and present. And hopefully finds joy, laughter and fun to mix in with the dark. Something her readers have come to love in her works. She is the proud parent of three very independent grown children and grandmother to three delightful grandchildren.



**Q:** They say that the best writers come from difficult backgrounds, their survival and understanding blending into their work. Having read your bio, do you believe that this is true?

*A: I believe that without a doubt in my case. After having a painful childhood and then a trauma filled adulthood, there was one single survival tool constant in my life—writing. I will be honest in saying that whenever I go into writing a project, I forcibly tell myself to include some light in the tale. I remind myself to do all I can to add some humor, some adventure and some fun. No one wants to stay in the dark for too long without a glimpse of hope. Isn't that what makes the bad a bit easier to take? Knowing it will get better, even if how that will happen doesn't seem possible.*

**Q:** What does your writing routine look like? Fixed or flexible? Set time and place? Paper and pen or computer?

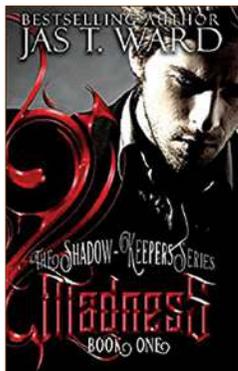
*A: I would LOVE to say it's fixed, organized and practiced. But I would be lying. I write whenever it hits me and often times when it's not possible to do. Driving... scene hits my head and it gets put on the phone until I get home. Grocery check-out line? Doesn't everyone run lines of dialogue out loud,*

even when surrounded by other people? But I guess that means I'm flexible too. I don't put any limits on my creativity in hopes that it, in turn, doesn't place its own.

As far as paper and pen or computer - Computer. I can't read my own handwriting. And my mind goes way faster than my hand can keep up. I'd be exhausted, not to mention the condition of the poor pen and paper when I was finished.

**Q:** You describe your books as dark, Gothic romances with a paranormal edge. What made you come to this style - evolution of your work to this point? How different is this style from straight romance, and how do you find the readership differences?

**A:** When I started writing, it was pure story telling when I thought of a new character or events. The books evolved from that activity as life did the same getting past some personal tragedy. They say to write what you know—well, life is all about the good and bad, so it started weaving its way into my writings.



When I released my first full novel, Madness, my style was a “forced” evolution in a way. I was writing fan-fiction with an Online writing group on Facebook and I thought it was time for a character by the name of Reno Sundown to die and wrote his death.

I had no idea of the reader firestorm that would follow. Readers sent me tons of hate mail via Facebook Messenger, posted protests on my wall and even started a petition to bring him back—which had over 1500 signatures. It was that event that made me realize that readers not only wanted the dark, twisted rides I could provide, but our characters and their stories were real to them and their raw emotions were as well. Readers not only enjoyed my dark, twisted yet fun tales—they demanded them.

Please don't misunderstand me - the style of dark, gothic romance is still full of heart. The comparison I like to make is when you go see a romance movie, you can sit back and have warm fuzzy emotions which is, at times, needed by the readers. You can see the ways a happily-ever-after can happen and you want to root the couple on.

With my books, and others that lean toward the dark, you're more of on the edge of your seat, angry and upset, and demanding a happily-ever-after, even if it appears there is no way one could be possible.

**Q:** What's your view of print versus digital? Preference and why? And what about audiobooks?

*A: I personally, love print. Something about having the book in your hands and turning the pages, hugging it close during the good scenes and tossing it aside during the bad. I haven't been able to get into audiobooks. I think part of the problem is I hear and see the characters in my head as I read—I don't want someone else's manifestation messing with that. As far as from an author's stand-point—if a reader is reading or listening, it's all good.*

**Q:** Do you write through then edit or edit as you go, or both?

*A: I have tried both methods, but since I don't even go in with an outline, it's pretty much strap in, see where the story takes me. Edit when I type "The End".*

**Q:** You founded Dark-Hunter Nights which, along with other writers, boasts a large membership. To what extent do you believe this has helped promote your works and attracted new readers?

*A: I would have never published a single book without Dark-Hunter Nights. We are a fan-fic group dedicated to bring the works of Sherrilyn Kenyon's series by the same name to life. I loved those books and found that many others did too. It not only helped me develop writing skills, but is such rich ground to grow my own books from.*

*Reno Sundown, the character that started it all when I killed him, was created there, and still "lives" there. With the evolution of my Shadow-Keepers series, the group has grown and is now known as the Dark-Hunter Nights & Keepers. People fan-fic write MY books, MY worlds and MY characters—because they have come to want to be in my world of The Grid. That is immensely awe-striking and they do such amazing jobs bringing the characters to life. Heck, Reno gets more requests for autographed books than I do!*

**Q:** Do you make enough sales to sustain yourself strictly though writing?

*A: Alas, I'm not there yet. But I also am the sole paycheck in my household. I told myself when I make enough in book sales to equal my corporate salary by 1.5 times, I would turn in my notice. I'm not there yet, but with each book I get so much closer. It will happen. Of that, I have complete faith.*

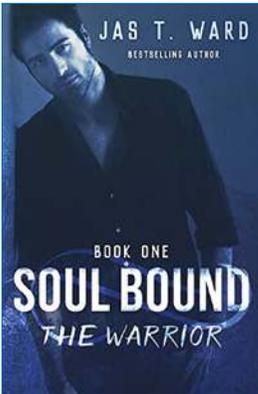
**Q:** What advice do you have any advice for writers and those who believe they have a writing voice?

*A: Write. Don't think about it, discuss it, dream it, wish it—just write.*

*Sit down and put one word, then another. Just write. I see so many young writers who focus on the rules and the structure, and “how are you supposed to do this” and other issues related to writing, that they don’t write. The best advice I ever heard from the one and only Stephen King, and I share it with all that come to me for the same—Just write. Make a garbage copy and get it done. From beginning to end. It won’t be pretty and no one will ever see it. But at least you got it done. Then go back and make it amazing. Then worry about the do’s and don’ts. Just get that accomplishment of saying you wrote a book. And write.*



Excerpt from **Soul Bound: The Warrior**  
by **Jas T. Ward**



*Five Years Ago*

*His eyes were cast down and fixated by the dried blood on his hands.*

*Laura’s blood.*

*The brightness of the fluid hours ago on his hands was dark now after the crushing passage of time—how much, Jace had no idea. Perceiving its passage proved impossible.*

*“Mr. Camden? Do you know why you are here?”*

*He heard the officer speak and Jace fought through the heavy sorrow to look upward to seek out the man.*

*“Yes. My wife is dead.” His flat voice devoid of emotion. Perhaps when the soul became overwhelmed, it just numbed out to react in order to protect itself. The two detectives looked at each other and stepped away to speak in whispers as Jace’s eyes returned to his hands. The only thing not covered in dark crimson were the silver bracelets of the cuffs encircling his wrists and linked to the table.*

*Splatters of Laura’s blood were gruesomely dark against the white of his shirt, a rip near the cuff, a grass stain, and dirt from when they tackled him in the yard.*

*Why had he been in the yard?*

*The events of the day and night were fuzzy as if his mind was wrapped in flannel, surrounded by wool and refused to expose itself in the coldness of*

reality.

“Mr. Camden?”

The burly looking detective came in close to brace his arms on the table and met Jace’s eyes when they lifted upwards. The countenance of the detective was cold and calculated—a glare of blue with bright white compared to Jace’s own—which were dazed, bloodshot and exhausted in his mirrored reflection behind the detective.

“I will ask this question very simply. Very slowly so you listen and answer correctly. We clear?”

Jace’s brow furrowed as he nodded and his brain tried to form sparks of understanding but they had gone dark from the horror of all it had been forced to deal with.

The detective stated each word slowly and accented each word as if he thought Jace a child. “Did. You. Kill your wife?”

Kill? They had made vows—to have and to hold. In sickness and in health. Two souls bound together as if one. To love and live with that bond... Not kill. Not end.

He blinked at the officer as he ran his tongue along his busted bloodied lip, his eyes skidded downward to stare at the blood and he croaked hoarsely, “Yes. Because I couldn’t stop it.”

\*\*\*\*\*

The trial of Jace Camden closed today with a hung jury. Mr. Camden was accused of allegedly murdering his wife rather than the socialite killing herself. This is the second trial in which a jury had not been able to reach a decision and no further actions are going to be pursued by the District Attorney’s office according to statements released earlier today. The family of Mrs. Camden, daughter of prominent investment mogul James Frasier, has released a statement that they will continue to find justice for their daughter by any means possible, convinced Mr. Camden’s hand pulled the trigger...

The same Jace Camden sat in the discharge room of the county jail with his back where the television once again spewed out information without a care to the ears forced to listen to it. As he stared down at his leather-laced loafers, he picked at a stray thread on the cuff of his shirt, impatient to be set free.

What an ironic thought that Jace could not be free from one night six-months ago when his world tilted on its end and flipped over to one he no longer recognized. A world which remained in its inverted condition right outside the county jail’s doors. Jace wearied with the heavy burden of the challenge to even try to right it. He knew there wasn’t a chance of that—to do so meant one had the mental ability or physical strength to attempt the effort.

Jace had neither.

*He was just tired, frustrated, and battered beyond the point of wanting to make anything right. He truly just wanted to disappear and hide. Hide from himself, hide from this fucked up world, but more than anything?*

*We're going home baby. Just you and me.*

*Hide from her.*

*"Camden. Let's go."*

*Jace lifted his head as he mentally shook off the sensation like ice creeping up his spine at the whisper of her voice in his head. It could be worse. She could have appeared right in front of him to taunt him with a body which no longer existed and only he could see. With kisses sickening him and with touches feeling as if she had frozen him cold from the inside out. Her voice in his head mild in comparison, really, so perhaps he shouldn't complain. After all, he had been given plenty of time to contemplate, curse and try to rationalize it all—courtesy of the justice system—but emotionally; too scary of a place to venture into. Every time he tried to go back to the night when his whole life imploded into itself, some sort of self-preservation trigger flipped and halted any forward movement. Time, he kept telling himself; he just needed more time to recall it all with clarity. To answer the questions not only others had asked but the ones he needed to desperately know as well. He just couldn't. Not yet.*

*And maybe if he could do so, he could mourn. He could feel the guilt. And he could handle the fallout of his life remaining from his actions that day.*

*"Stop it. Not yet," Jace mumbled to himself and ran shaky fingers through his hair.*

*He'd seen things his whole life. From a childhood in which his own mother thought her child must be demonic when her small son told of monsters hanging on to strangers in a grocery store. And then the child grew to adulthood after being committed twice by the time he reached eighteen—only to be released when the law could no longer keep him; only to find his mother had given into her own demons and committed suicide a month before. But none of it had conditioned him to deal with what had happened to Laura. What he had allowed to...*

*Jace glanced once more at the television to divert where his mind headed and saw they had moved to the weather of the sweltering Houston summer as he stood to stretch when his name was called. Good, he thought and once again felt blessed by the media's habit of keeping a topic hot until another came swiftly along to cool it into oblivion. Sick of hearing about himself; the sooner it sank buried under whatever gossip or local event came along to do so, the better. As he shuffled through the door, the weight of exhaustion nailed down to his soul. Its burden threatened to overtake him as he was*

handed the bag containing personal belongings taken when arrested feeling light compared to that of his past.

The weight of it Jace would have loved to drop. If Laura's family would ever allow him to.

Jace was an intelligent man. He knew his hope would be doomed to be choked to death with suffocating doubt proven by reality, over and over again. They'd never let him go. Neither would she. But could he expect anything less? No, because death may be final? But love doesn't give a shit.



**Releasing from JTW Publishing: June 13, 2017**

Buy Link: <http://amzn.to/2sfBVcO>

Goodreads Link: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/31868157-soul-bound>

## Jas T. Ward's Social Media Links

Goodreads: <http://bit.ly/JASTWARDGR>

Website: <http://www.authorjastward.com/>

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

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

Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2qCgWyz>

Blog: <http://authorjastward.blogspot.com/>

Dark-Hunter Nights & Keepers Fan Group: <http://bit.ly/DHNIGHTS>

Girls Gone Writing Reader Group: <http://bit.ly/GirlsGoneWriting>

[Editor's note: We'd like to thank Jas T. Ward for taking the time to be interviewed. Like many of the authors we interview, you can see how prolific they are, and how they cultivate a following. Please do use the links to check out Jas' work.]

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# ALL THAT REMAINS

Based on a True Story

"A gripping story that grasps the reader in the first few pages. Robin has a special gift for guiding his readers through a historically accurate maze."

~Kurt Koontz, Author, "[\*A Million Steps\*](#)"

## ROBIN MELHUSH

# PRODUCT REVIEW:

## *Kaweco Fountain Pens: Classy*



1883 saw the launch of the Heidelberger Federhalterfabrik (dip pen factory) by the gentlemen Luce and Enßlen. But only in 1889 the name occurs in the direc-



tory of Heidelberg, Germany. Wooden dip pens are produced; fountain pens and golden nibs are imported by Morton, New York.

Kaweco has a range of fountain pens that includes the smallest fountain pen available—when opened and the cap screwed on, it becomes a regular sized fountain pen.

I own three Kaweco fountain pens, including the Liliput and the Dia. The

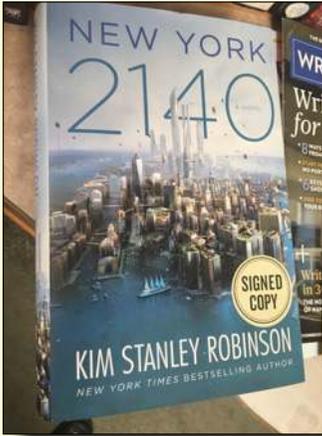
pens write smoothly, are well balanced in your hand and offer an assortment of nib sizes. I tend to favor broad or bold nibs.

Priced affordably, if you like fountain pens, I can recommend Kaweco. Visit <http://amzn.to/2rlvnIH> to see an Online selection or visit the Kaweco website at <http://www.kaweco-pen.com>.



# BOOK GIVEAWAY:

Would you like to receive a new, autographed copy of **Kim Stanley Robinson's** novel, *New York 2140*?



**Summary:** *As the sea levels rose, every street became a canal. Every skyscraper an island. For the residents of one apartment building in Madison Square, however, New York in the year 2140 is far from a drowned city.*

*There is the market trader, who finds opportunities where others find trouble. There is the detective, whose work will never disappear --- along with the lawyers, of course.*

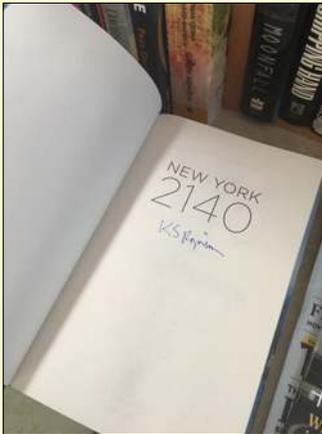
*There is the Internet star, beloved by millions for her airship adventures, and the building's manager, quietly respected for his attention to detail. Then there are two boys who don't live there, but have no other home-- and who are more important to its future than anyone might imagine.*

*Lastly there are the coders, temporary residents on the roof, whose disappearance triggers a sequence of events that threatens the existence of all-- and even the long-hidden foundations on which the city rests.*

*New York 2140 is an extraordinary and unforgettable novel, from a writer uniquely qualified to the story of its future.*

(Summary from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) page)

Alt Publish and Books 'N Pieces Magazine is giving away one, signed, hardcover copy. To enter submit a short story no longer than 2000 words to [info@AltPublish.com](mailto:info@AltPublish.com) (Put 2140 in the subject line). The theme is: *What Will Life be Like in the Future?* **Deadline: July 9, 2015.** **Winner announced in July 15.**



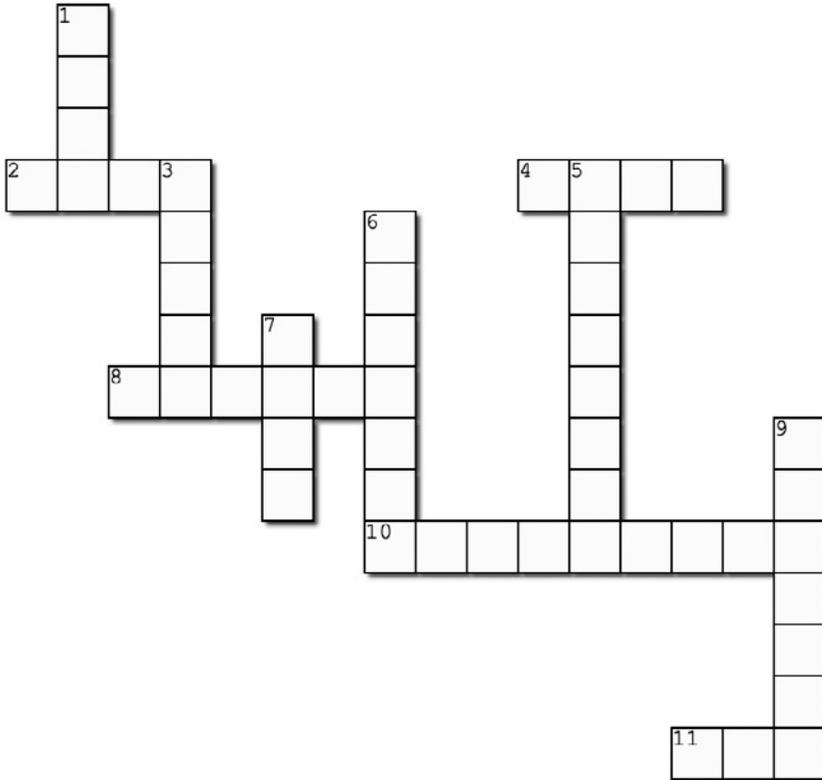
# COMPETITIONS 2017

- The Flash Fiction Award closes Midnight GMT June 11th 2017 | <https://bathflashfictionaward.com/>
- The Dorset Fiction Award closes June 10, 2017 | <http://www.dorsetfictionaward.co.uk>
- Segora Competitions closes June 15, 2017 | <http://www.poetryproseandplays.com>
- The Brighton Prize closes June 30, 2017 | <http://www.brightonprize.com>
- The Saturday Evening Post Contest closes July 1, 2017 | <http://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/fiction-contest>
- Miami Book Fair/de Groot Prize closes July 15, 2017 | <http://www.miamibookfair.com/degroot>
- The Rattle Poetry Contest closes July 15, 2017 | <http://www.rattle.com/prize/about/>
- The Olga Sinclair Open Short Story Contest closes July 31, 2017 | <https://norwichwriters.wordpress.com/the-olga-sinclair-open-short-story-competition-2017/>
- The William Faulkner Literary Competition closes July 15, 2017 | <https://williamfaulknerliterarycompetition.com>

Download the FREE guide to Summer Writing Contests from The Writer Magazine. <http://www.writermag.com/summer-writing-contests>

# CROSSWORD

## A Writer's Life



### Across

- 2. Persius' daddy
- 4. Ink
- 8. Ballpen guts
- 10. Hills Like White Elephants
- 11. Fountain

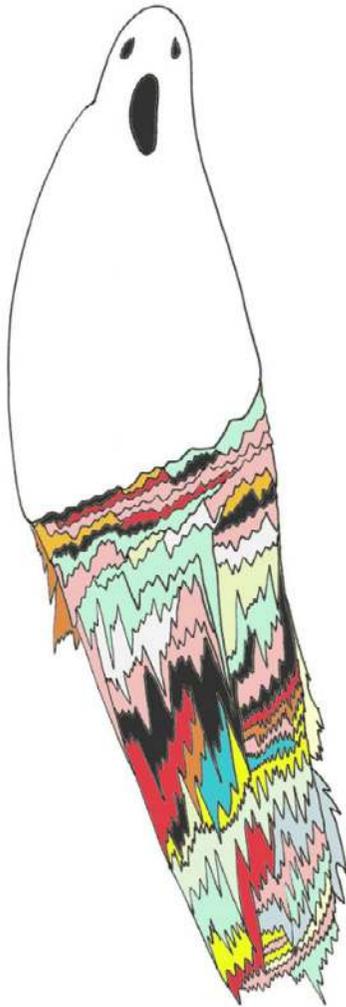
### Down

- 1. Enemy (the movie)
- 3. Odyssey
- 5. Space-time genius
- 6. Alt
- 7. Philip had a twin sister
- 9. Kal's Homeworld and Gas

**ARTS**

# Sketches

by Lauren Jefferson

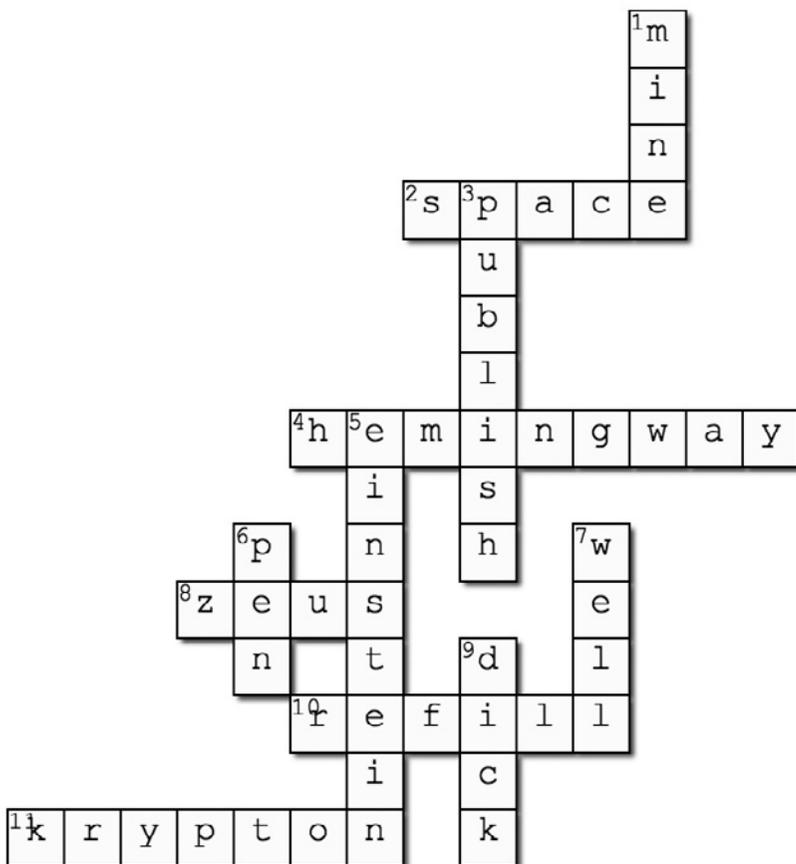


Do you need an illustration for your book, or even a book cover?  
Contact Lauren [Jeffersonlauren1@gmail.com](mailto:Jeffersonlauren1@gmail.com)

# CROSSWORD ANSWERS

## A Writer's Life

### Answers



"TOMORROW WILL BE THE BEST  
YESTERDAY TODAY EVER HAD!"

~ WILLIAM GENSBURGER

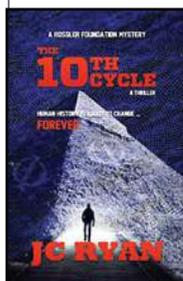
## BOOKS WE SUGGEST



### **Forbidden, Books 1, 2 & 3: A Novel of Love and Betrayal** by Mike Wells and Devika Fernando

While Celeste Sotheby is reluctantly engaged to wealthy English aristocrat Robert Astor, she gets pregnant from a one night stand. Her estranged twin sister, Jayne, an American, comes to her rescue.

[CLICK FOR MORE](#)



### **The Tenth Cycle: A Thriller (A Rossler Foundation Mystery Book 1)**

by JC Ryan

For thousands of years the truth about human history has intentionally been suppressed and exploited. For decades scholars have been saying that the truth about human history will be found inside the Great Pyramid of Giza, but up till now no one has ever been able to find it. Those who tried have been ridiculed and persecuted. Will Daniel Rossler and Dr. Sarah Clarke be allowed to uncover the real and true message?

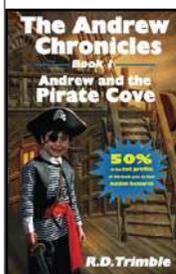
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### **Old Man's War** by John Scalzi.

John Perry did two things on his 75th birthday. First he visited his wife's grave. Then he joined the army. The good news is that humanity finally made it into interstellar space. The bad news is that planets fit to live on are scarce—and alien races willing to fight us for them are common.

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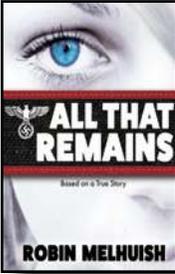
### **The Andrew Chronicles: Andrew and the Pirate Cove** by R.D. Trimble

Say Yoho! Set sail for adventure in the exciting first book of The Andrew Chronicles! Andrew is a seven year old in the second grade. Suddenly and without explanation, he finds himself in a two story flat in 17th century London.

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## UPCOMING 2017 TITLES

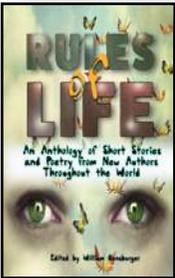
FROM ALT PUBLISH & BEYOND



### ALL THAT REMAINS

by Robin Melhuish

It's 1976, the Second World War has been over for more than 30 years, but still there are rumors of hidden Nazi treasures. Alastair Wainwright, an Englishman and passionate German stamp collector, finds a letter from 1945 that leads him to uncover a trail of love, deceit and corruption that spanned the war years. Finding a letter may not be unusual in itself, but the chances of finding the reply to that letter on Houses of Parliament notepaper is. These two letters may be the clue to possibly solving the last big secret of the Third Reich; the German War Chest, which all but disappeared in 1945. **Publication date: June 12, 2017 | Publisher: Alt Publish**



### RULES OF LIFE

An anthology of short stories and poems from around the world. These stories have been gathered from the recent writing contest sponsored by Alt Publish. With over 400 entries from everywhere around the world, the best have been selected for this anthology.

**Publication date: June 20, 2017 | Publisher: Alt Publish**

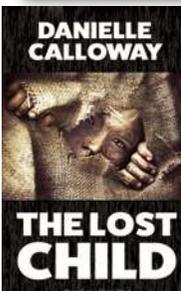


### THE UNFINISHED MAN and other stories

by William Gensburger

This collection of short stories covers a wide range of themes from a dystopic future tinged in Japanese culture, a view of a marriage through the eyes of a dying cat, to the fantasy of the man who must clean up after the superheroes, and many more.

**Publication date: July 30, 2017 | Publisher: Alt Publish**



### THE LOST CHILD

by Danielle Calloway

He was just a small, deaf child, unseen to the world. Escaping from an abusive home, he wanders the streets of a small town in Ecuador, aimless until he is befriended by a police detective and a young social worker who has come to teach the deaf. Based on a true story, discover the journey of his life in a world that has no use for him, and the heart wrenching choice that he must make.

**Publication date: August 20, 2017 | Publisher: Alt Publish**

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# PAGE ONE: *A study tool*

## PROLOGUE

The boy, barely seven years old, was dreaming what was to be the last completely happy dream of his life.

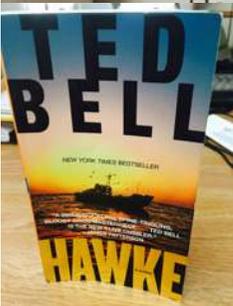
He was sound asleep in the top bunk of his tiny berth as images of his dog, Scoundrel, bounded across his mind. They had taken a small picnic down to the edge of the sea, just below the big house where his grandfather lived. Scoundrel was plunging again and again into the waves, retrieving the red rubber ball. But now some terrible black storm appeared to be howling in from the sea, and there was a voice calling him to come home quickly.

And then someone was grabbing his shoulder, whispering in his ear. *Alex! Alex! Alex!*

Yes, someone was shaking him, telling him to wake up, wake up now, even though he knew it was still nighttime, could hear the waves lapping against the hull of the sailboat, could see the blue moonlight streaming through the porthole onto his bedcovers, could hear the faint whistle of wind in the rigging of the tall mast that towered above the decks.

“Wake up, Alex, wake up!” said the voice.

He rolled over and opened his sleepy eyes. In the light of the tiny cabin he could see his father sitting at his bedside, wearing an old gray T-shirt and a hat that said “Royal Navy.” His father’s jet-black parrot,



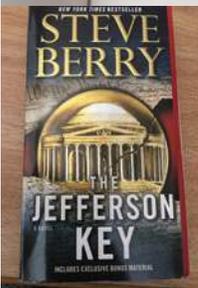
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## PROLOGUE

WASHINGTON, DC  
JANUARY 30, 1835  
11:00 AM

PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON FACED THE GUN AIMED at his chest. A strange sight but not altogether unfamiliar, not for a man who'd spent nearly his entire life fighting wars. He was leaving the Capitol Rotunda, walking toward the East Portico, his somber mood matching the day's weather. His Treasury secretary, Levi Woodbury, steadied him, as did his trusted walking cane. Winter had been harsh this year, especially on a gaunt, sixty-seven-year-old body—his muscles were unusually stiff, his lungs perpetually congested.

He'd ventured from the White House only to say goodbye to a former friend—Warren Davis of South Carolina, elected twice to Congress, once as an ally, a Jacksonian Democrat, the other as a Nullifier. His enemy, the former vice president John C. Calhoun, had concocted the Nullifier Party, its members actually believing that states could choose what federal laws they wanted to obey. *The devil's work* was how he'd debased such foolishness. There'd be no country if the Nullifiers had their way—which, he supposed, was their entire intent. Thankfully, the Constitution spoke

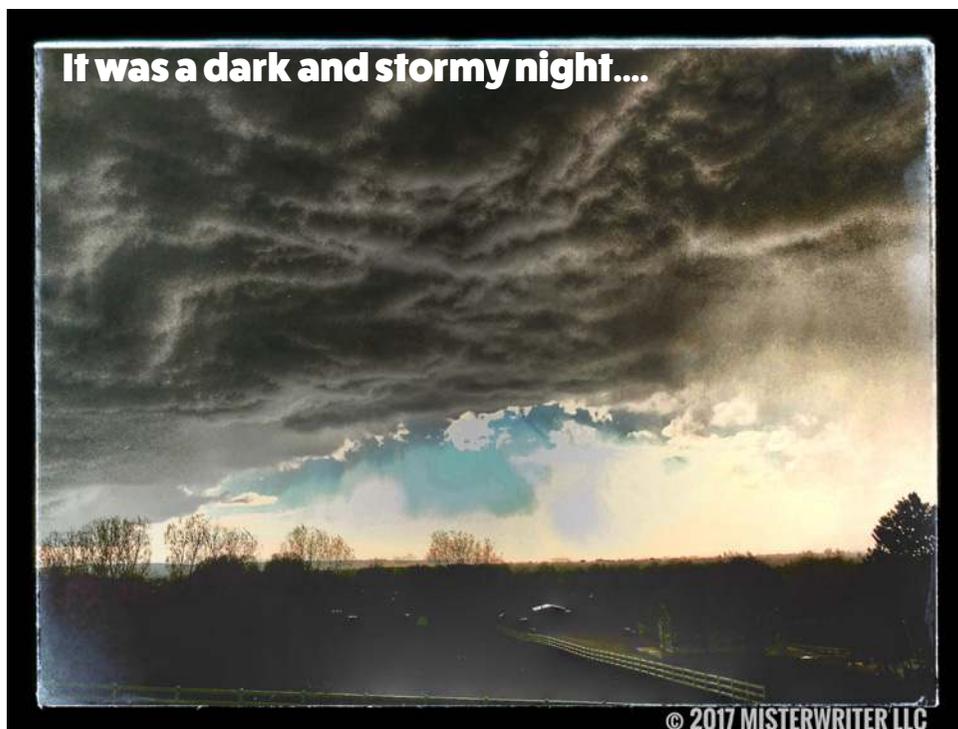


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The value of studying first pages offers an easy, and affordable way for new writers to hone their skills. With millions of books available for readers, grabbing readers from the start is essential.

Comparing the style of different books it becomes apparent how a little pre-planning can ensure that there are no unnecessary words detracting from the reader's experience.

Check out the two examples on the previous pages. Compare your writing to theirs and study the differences in how they open their story. Did you start at an action point or a passive point? Was that description of the landscape essential to the story, or were you just enamored with the words appearing on the page—don't be embarrassed; it is very common to be wordy. Just remember the story is about something happening to someone. It has a start, usually impactful, a mid-point where the character is struggling the most, and a conclusion that will satisfy the reader, for the moment—before the sequel!



June 2017



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