

The Writer's Guide to
Publishing in Literary Magazines and Entering Contests

By Ayelet Tsabari

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A Letter from Betsy Warland

Building a community for emerging writers is one of our goals in The Writer's Studio at S.F.U. When I first thought of creating a submissions manual, Ayelet Tsabari (TWS 2007 graduate) immediately came to mind. I had noticed Ayelet's well-considered and fruitful approach to submitting her work to journals, magazines and competitions. Too, I noticed that Ayelet is community-minded; happy to share the insights she has gained from submitting her work as well as those of other writers in TWS.

Ayelet liked the idea and, with the crucial help of a donation from Yosef Wosk, we had a viable plan. Once we had a solid first draft of the manual, it struck me that we should make the manual available not only to TWS writers and graduates, but also to any writer who might find it useful. So, if you are one of those writers who chooses to download this PDF of our manual for your personal use – welcome to our community of writers.

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Introduction

“To write what is worth publishing, to find honest people to publish it, and to get sensible people to read it, are the three great difficulties in being an author.”

Charles Caleb Colton (1780-1832)

What Are Literary Magazines?

I remember the first time I stumbled upon a literary magazine. I was browsing in a local magazine shop when I came across a shelf tucked in the back of the store, lined with small thick-spined magazines with artsy covers. Intrigued, I picked one and flipped through it, breathing in the seductive new-book smell. I was delighted to find that it was filled with words upon words: prose, poetry, essays. Even the ads were literary, promoting other magazines, books, contests and workshops. It was love at first sight. I had to have it.

I came back a few days later for more, starting a modest stack on my bookshelf that since then grew to outrageous proportions. I promised myself that one day (when I took my writing more seriously) I would send my writings to one of these magazines, and a few years later I did.

Some years after that I actually got published in one.

A literary magazine is a periodical dedicated to literature. Created by and for writers (and I guess some people who just love to read), literary magazines celebrate the craft of writing. They are to writers what Vogue is for fashionistas. They are both a trade magazine and an emerging writer's best market, all in one little unassuming package. They're also a good place for established writers to publish new writing and draw attention to their work before launching new books. And they make great reading material!

Most literary magazines in Canada are published by a university or college (for example, *Event* is published by Douglas College, *Prism* is published by UBC); others are published by a collective or an individual (*Room*, *sub-TERRAIN*). Literary magazines publish short stories, poetry and essays along with literary criticism, book reviews and interviews. Some also include photo essays, comics and art (*The Capilano Review*, *Sub-TERRAIN*, *Geist*, *Matrix*, *This Magazine*).

Contributors to literary magazines vary from first-timers to established authors. Many well-known Canadian writers began their careers in literary magazines. Even if you don't submit, reading literary magazines is a good way to keep up-to-date with new writers, be informed of upcoming deadlines and events, read about your craft and expand your writing community. Some magazines hold launch parties, readings or workshops, where you get to schmooze with local writers, contributors to the magazines and editors, and make new contacts.

Online Literary Magazines

Online literary magazines made their first appearance in 1996. At first they were dismissed by purists as inferior to their printed siblings, but nowadays they are gaining recognition and are viewed by some as the future of literary magazines. Their advantages are obvious: they are free, easily accessible and have potential to reach a larger readership. Canadian online literary magazines are still few and far between, and some of the more prominent ones also have print editions. (Examples of hybrid magazines: *Broken Pencil*, *Geist*, *Border Crossings*, *Memewar*.)

Why Should I Submit?

- The obvious reason: writing is meant to be shared and it's always nice to see your name in print!
- The process of preparing submissions, researching markets, working with deadlines, negotiating with editors (and even the fine art of dealing with rejections) are all skills you need to acquire in order to become a professional writer.
- Literary magazines will often pay you a small sum for the publication.
- Having publishing credits helps when submitting to other magazines and may get publishers' and agents' attention when submitting full manuscripts.
- Once you get a number of published pieces under your belt, you can apply for grants.
Canada Council for the Arts (<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/writing/>) requires a minimum of four texts of fiction **or** 40 pages of non-fiction **or** 10 published poems in literary magazines, recognized periodicals or anthologies published by professional publishing houses. *BC Council for the Arts* (<http://www.bcartsCouncil.ca/programs/>) requires 120 pages of fiction or non-fiction **or** 40 pages of poetry.

- Once published, your short story (fiction) can go on to be nominated for the *Journey Prize* (<http://www.mcclelland.com/jps/>), a \$10,000 prize awarded annually to a new and developing writer of distinction for a short story published in a Canadian literary publication. The shortlisted stories appear in *The Journey Prize Stories*, published annually in the fall by McClelland & Stewart.
- Your poetry, fiction or non-fiction can be nominated for the *National Magazine Awards* (<http://www.magazine-awards.com/>), an annual event that recognizes excellence in Canadian magazines, or for the *Western Magazine Awards* (<http://www.westernmagazineawards.ca/>), an event that celebrates editorial excellence in western Canadian magazines. You can also submit your published piece for these two awards yourself.
- One TWS writer had her published piece picked up from *Event* magazine (<http://www.douglas.bc.ca/visitors/event-magazine.html>) by *Utne Reader* (<http://www.utne.com/>), a magazine that prides itself on re-publishing the best of the alternative and independent press. *Utne Reader* also accepts individual submissions of previously published material (non-fiction only).
- Many anthologies wouldn't mind picking your story up after it is published in a magazine. In fact, mentioning the publication in your cover letter may give it preference.

How to Submit: the Nitty-gritty

Submitting to Literary Magazines

When is the Right Time?

“How do I know when a piece is ready? When it walks up and slaps me across the back and says, ‘Good job! Looks like you’re done. You deserve to go shopping.’ Sadly, this is also the way a piece likes to distract me from digging deeper. (Pieces are tricky like that.) Sometimes it’s a definite feeling: ‘Stick a fork in me, ’cause I’m done.’ Other times it’s desperation: ‘I cannot look at this one more time.’ Writing practice builds awareness. This is also where writing groups come in most handy; other writers will help you assess it and see with a fresh perspective.”

Eufemia Fantetti, TWS07

Once you have a taste of what it means to be in a dedicated and productive writing group, it is hard to give it up, which is why many TWSers continue to meet after graduation. Your fellow writers, bless their souls, will often let you know if your piece is ready to submit to magazines. Workshop your piece at least once and get it as polished and tight as you can before sending it out.

Which Magazine is the Best Fit?

Don’t send your piece to every literary magazine you know of, or you might be wasting your time and ink. Study the market. Read magazines. Literary magazines vary in style and flavour so you should take the time to know them before finding the ones best suited for you.

- Browse through magazines in the library and in magazine and bookstores, or check the magazines’ websites, where you can read featured writing. Look for pieces that are similar to yours in terms of style, tone, length and subject matter.
- Join the Facebook groups that many magazines have nowadays. They inform you of new issues and related events. Attending the events will give you the chance to speak to editors and peers and to get a feel for the magazine and the people behind it.

- Keep up to date with calls for submissions by bookmarking writers' resources websites such as *Places for Writers* (<http://www.placesforwriters.com/>) and checking them daily.
- Look up submission guidelines on the magazines' websites. Their guidelines will specify length, genres and style. Bookmark the guidelines on your computer or print them out and place them in a binder, and highlight length required, deadlines and other specifics so you can browse through them when you have a piece ready and decide where it would fit.
- Don't forget to check for reading periods. A reading period is exactly what it sounds like: a period when editorial staff read submissions. Some go on hiatus at certain times (like the summer) or take breaks between issues to keep the volume of submissions more manageable. Submissions sent at a time of hiatus will be returned unread.
- Check for 'theme issues.' Some magazines have special issues that your piece or style may be perfect for (such as sport, religion, bad jobs). Others only accept writing from certain kind of writers: *Room* only accepts writing by women (<http://www.roommagazine.com/>); *Rice Paper* accepts work by Asian Canadian writers (<http://www.ricepapermagazine.ca>).
- Talk to your writing group and peers. If they are anything like you, they probably have a stack of literary magazines at home and have an idea of where your piece and writing style is suitable for. Consult your mentor and teacher as well.

What TWSers Say about Finding the Right Magazine

"I prefer having a visual on my query – either meeting the editor or a board member, or visiting the office. Somehow this helps me catch the vibe of the publication much easier than reading all the back issues and becoming intimidated by the contributors' list. The biggest surprise has been that the journals you love aren't the ones you should be submitting to, necessarily. Your writing doesn't always match the in-house style. Crushing but liberating. I take from that the lesson to submit to any and everything, even in the U.S."

Elee Kraljii Gardiner, TWS06

"The key to getting accepted is to write on the topic of interest to the journal and to know the editor. Editors are sometimes giving talks, other times they

can be found at Word on the Street events, publishing events or at conferences. The relevance of the piece seems to be more important than the quality of writing, which isn't to suggest you can send crap. Your piece might be well written, but if it doesn't relate to the aesthetic of the journal, or isn't on a topic that has particular resonance at the time of reading then it will fall by the wayside. If you feel your reading of the submission guidelines on the topic are stretching the editors' expectations, acknowledge this and propose how you envision the piece fitting in with the topic.”

Lora McElhinney, TWS08

Simultaneous Submissions

“*Carousel* allows/supports simultaneous submissions! This is a position which is **artist-positive** at its core, and it's one which we hope will catch on within the publishing industry. Demand it from every editor you correspond with! We believe it is unfair for literary magazines to restrict the flow of the work of any potential contributor by demanding a unique submission. We will not contribute to the slowing down of your options; we want to help create options!”

Submission Guidelines,
Carousel magazine

Unfortunately many magazines still don't accept simultaneous submissions (submitting the same piece to a few different publications at a time). Editors have their reasons. They don't want to waste time and staff resources going through the lengthy selection process, and then choose your piece (based, in part, on how it would fit with the rest of the issue), only to find out it was already accepted elsewhere. Unofficially, many editors and publishers understand that if we waited patiently for a response from each magazine before sending it out again, we may be eighty by the time we get anything published!

The practice of forbidding simultaneous submissions came about in a time where magazines had more staff and the response period was closer to six to eight weeks. However, things have changed and nowadays most literary magazines are understaffed and swamped with

submissions, and the response period is up to six months, in some instances more! This is exactly why some writers simply ignore this rule and submit to as many magazines as possible.

If you're uncomfortable with "breaking the rules" (or just don't want to submit to magazines that employ such a strict policy), you can choose to submit only to magazines that accept simultaneous submissions. If the magazine's guidelines don't forbid simultaneous submissions, you are safe.

Of course, there's a certain risk involved with submitting simultaneously, which is why you must follow these two rules strictly:

- 1) If you submitted a piece to a contest, you can't submit it anywhere else or your piece will be disqualified.
- 2) If your piece gets picked at one magazine, you must inform the other magazine of your acceptance (even if that magazine didn't allow simultaneous submissions; editors know that writers often do it anyway and would expect you to notify them). Send a brief polite letter to the editor informing them you are withdrawing your submission.

Mention the title of your submission and the date you submitted it and thank them for their consideration. Don't send simultaneous submissions unless you intend to keep records of your submissions. Without keeping records, you may forget who you need to notify, and may end up appearing unprofessional if another magazine decides to accept your work after it has already been accepted elsewhere. At this early stage of your career, making an editor of a literary magazine mad may not be your best move.

The Formatting

When your story is polished and workshopped, and you have found a perfect place for it (or a few), now what? Read the magazines' guidelines closely for their formatting specs and follow them. Adherence to these guidelines will speed up the evaluation process. Here are some general guidelines:

- Your piece should be double-spaced and typed in a 12 point font (nothing fancy: Times New Roman, Arial) on one side of the page. Use 8.5 x 11 inch standard white bond paper.
- It's best not to staple the pages together, but attach with a paper clip.

- When submitting a story, centre the title a third of the way down on the first page, with your name below it. Include a word count at the top right corner of the first page and your address at the top left corner.
- When submitting a poem, have the address on the top left and have only one poem per page.
- Have the title and your surname (and maybe even your contact information, such as e-mail) at the bottom of each page. Number the pages and make sure you write the total number of pages (1 out of 5 and so on). It is not unusual for a piece of writing to change a few hands in the magazine's office and pages can easily get misplaced.
- Some magazines receive online submissions. If they do, read their guidelines to see if they'd like a Word document attached (in which case, title the document with the piece's title and your last name) or if they'd like the piece to be copied and pasted into the body of the message.

The Cover Letter

"I volunteer for a literary magazine and the best piece I ever read was accompanied by this tiny little intro. The writing spoke for itself. "

Carmen Joy King, TWS08

Sure, your writing is what's going to make it or break it, but a professional cover letter can get you noticed. Keep it short and succinct. Don't attach a resumé. Find the appropriate editor name to address it to (fiction editor, poetry editor).

The letter should include the following information:

- **Your full contact information:** full mailing address, e-mail address and phone number typed at the top left.
- Start with the **title, genre and length**. Let them know if you're submitting for a theme issue. If you have an idea for which section of the magazine it's suitable, let them know. It shows you're familiar with the magazine and have done your research.
- A short (two to three sentences) **biographical statement**. Mention previous publications (if they were in the same magazine, name and date them), awards and honours (shortlists too). Don't mention minor publications (school paper). Don't tell them you love their

magazine. Don't say you've never been published. If you've never been published, mention writing programs you've attended or published writers you've worked or studied with. (For example: "I'm a graduate of SFU's Writer's Studio, where I studied under Wayde Compton and Betsy Warland.") If you're a current student at TWS, and are going to be published in *emerge* (The Writer's Studio anthology), you can say: "My work is forthcoming in the SFU anthology *emerge*." In any case, keep it very brief.

- **Name dropping:** mention your 'in': someone from the magazine who asked to see your writing or suggested you send it.
- If they accept **simultaneous submissions** and you've sent the same piece to other magazines, be clear about it in the cover letter and assure them you'll notify them if it is accepted elsewhere.
- If you do not want your manuscript returned, say so in your cover letter ("please recycle the manuscript....") and either include a small **self-addressed stamped envelope** or ask to be notified by e-mail. Some magazines don't respond by e-mail, in which case you have to include the envelope if you want to hear back. If you'd like your manuscript back and they indicate that they return manuscripts, include a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage for the return of the manuscript. The envelope must be large enough to contain the manuscript.
- End with a friendly closing: "**Thank you for your consideration;** I look forward to hearing from you."

A Sample Cover Letter

Your name

Street address

City, Province

Postal code

Phone number

E-mail address

01/01/10

Magazine Editorial Board

Street address

City, Province

Postal code

Dear Editor's Name,

Enclosed please find [The Goods], a 3,000 word short story submitted for your consideration, suitable for the [blah blah] section of your magazine.

I have been recently shortlisted for [literary contest name]. My work has appeared in [name of magazine] and is forthcoming in the anthology [name of anthology].

I welcome your editorial comments and enclose a SASE for your reply. If you are unable to accept my work at this time, please recycle the manuscript.

Please be advised that I have submitted the story to other magazines.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Submitting to Contests

“Some people think contests are a waste of time, or too competitive. I say ‘Submit!’ It’s a built-in deadline. What have you got to lose? Besides the entry fee that you could have spent on martinis. Invest in yourself. Do the research the same as you would for regular submissions and look for contests that would be most appropriate for your work.”

Eufemia Fantetti, TWS07

Many literary magazines hold annual writing contests. Other contests are hosted by writers’ festivals, conferences or websites. Some writers avoid submitting to contests, and for valid reasons: most contests require entry fees, around \$20 to \$40, and the competition is often stiff, so it may be harder to win a contest than it is to get published. Not to mention it puts your piece “on hold”: you can’t send it anywhere else while waiting for the results.

There are some upsides to contests too:

- Fortune and fame! Winning a contest pays better than publishing, and let’s face it, it looks nice in your cover letter and writer’s bio. Also, if you get shortlisted, the magazine may still choose to publish your piece at a later date. Even if you don’t get your shortlisted piece published, your name will appear on the shortlist, in print and on the Web, and that too will look good in cover letters and bios sent to other magazines. A shortlisted piece will also have a better chance to get published with a different magazine.
- If you work better with deadlines, you can use contests’ deadlines as a motivator. Then, if your piece doesn’t win, you can send it to magazines.
- Most entry fees include a free subscription to the magazine, so if it’s a magazine you enjoy reading, you have nothing to lose!
- Finally, submitting to contests helps our literary magazines to stay afloat, and as you can imagine, many magazines are staffed by volunteers and rely on government funding, which is dwindling. Consider your fee a vital contribution to a good cause!

How to Increase Your Chances

- Check the deadline. Do you have enough time to polish your piece and workshop it with your writing group or writing buddies?
- Read the guidelines. Does the word count work for you? Do you write in these genres?
- Read the magazine or review the website hosting the contest. Does your style match theirs? Is the magazine or site reputable? Would you be proud to have your work published there?
- Look up previous winning entries. Note the quality and style of the writing.
- Research the judge: is it an author you're familiar with? Study their website, their bio, and once again, consider your own style and if it would appeal to the judge.

Formatting

When submitting for contests, omit your name or contact info from the entry, but have it on a different sheet, together with the title of the piece, the genre and a word count. Have the title appear at the bottom of each page and number the pages. Add a SASE if they request one. Don't forget the cheque, and make sure that your bank account has the funds as the magazines sometimes take a while to cash the cheque. A friend who had her entry fee cheque bounce now sends money orders with all her contest entries to assure it doesn't happen again!

Your contest cover letter should look something like this:

TITLE OF YOUR PIECE

Genre

Word count

By Your Name

Street address

City, Province

Postal code

Phone number

E-mail address

Organizing your Submissions

“I used to be terrible at keeping track of submissions but I’m better now. When I first started submitting I didn’t really think I needed to keep track. All my stories were going to be snapped up immediately, so why bother?”

Robin Evans, TWS09

Writers have a reputation for being disorganized. A stereotype, you say? Think about the last time you dug through stacks of papers piled on your cluttered desk in an attempt to find a paper napkin you had written something really important on. Well, brace yourself, because if you’re going to do a lot of submitting, your desk (and your desktop) is going to get much messier. Find a system that works for you and keep track of your submissions so you can follow up if needed.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Open a new project (**Excel spreadsheet**) in your MS Excel program. Across the top, under the A,B,C, etc., begin typing headers: title, genre, word count, magazine, date, follow-up date and reply. Fill it in with the appropriate information.
- Create a **submissions binder**, if you’re a traditionalist and prefer to have something solid in your hands, and divide it by either titles or magazines. If you divide by titles, file a hard copy of your submission, with the date and magazine(s) it was sent to and when you expect to hear back. You can also file the appropriate cover letters and responses. If you divide by magazines, under each magazine you can file a printed copy of the magazine’s guidelines, highlight their word count, reading periods, whether they take multiple submissions and other specs. Then file submissions you made to that magazine, with the date you sent it and any correspondence you’ve had with that magazine.
- Create a **final submissions folder** on your computer for final submissions you’ve sent. This is important because once you get accepted, magazines will ask for a digital file of your piece. Title the submission file with the name of the piece and the magazine it was sent to (for example: *the story – room.doc*) so you’ll find it easily. You can also save the corresponding cover letters in that folder.

After Submitting: Now What?

You did it! You wrote and rewrote, mulled over every semi-colon and comma, polished it until you could see your reflection in it, researched the market and found a magazine that was just right for you, typed a killer cover letter, and put it in the mail. You deserve a pat on your shoulder and a beer!

Now all you have to do is forget about it and go about your life. That's right. Move on. Start another project. Don't think about it too much (except for occasionally visualizing your name and story title in the magazine). It often takes up to six months to get a reply. Just write some more, then submit more, and if you keep doing it, you'll always have some writing out there, waiting to be published.

How the Selection and Editorial Process Works

(Or in other words: how long will I be waiting?)

Probably a long time. The process varies from magazine to magazine. Here's an example of how it's done at *Event* magazine, written by Sarah Turner, a TWS alumna who worked as an assistant to the managing editor at *Event*.

“Literary journals are underfunded and understaffed. Editors and managing editors have a lot of work to do besides just reading submissions – like applying for grants, doing design and layout work, and maintaining an active subscriber base. Be patient when waiting to hear back from them. Submissions go to a first reader first. These first readers significantly reduce the number of submissions that make it onto the genre editor's desk. If your piece comes back really quickly, it probably didn't make it past the first reader. At *Event*, about 50-75% of manuscripts are 'quick rejects.'

“After manuscripts are put forward by the first readers, the genre editors look at them. The poetry editor selects the poetry manuscripts. The

fiction editor chooses her favourites (maybe five to ten every couple of months) to take to the fiction committee. The fiction committee discusses each one in detail and votes on whether or not to publish. The final decision rests with *Event's* editor, Rick Maddocks.

“The editor works with the writers to polish the manuscripts. I was surprised to learn that sometimes pieces which were quite rough when submitted were chosen due to the 'spark' or 'energy' that the editor saw, and then polished to *Event's* standards.”

Sarah Turner, TWS06

Following Up

Waited long enough? It is perfectly acceptable to follow up on your submission after ninety days (unless they specified a period of time in which they expect to notify you, in which case, once that period has passed with no reply, you can follow up). It would be wise to give the magazine a couple more weeks, a grace period, just in case they're experiencing delays. The letter (or e-mail) should be simple and straightforward, something like:

Dear Editor's Name,

I'm writing to inquire about the status of [Title], submitted to your magazine on May 24, 2009. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your time,

Your Name

If they ignore your follow-up, it is safe to assume they rejected your piece and you should forget about it. Move on. Submit the piece to other magazines.

Rejections

“Here’s a great exercise for coping with rejections: name one writer who has never had their work rejected. Just one. Don’t limit yourself to Canadians, go global if you think that will help. Heck, go galactic: find a Vulcan writer who hasn’t been rejected. Those folks are Type-A perfectionists...and you thought you took rejections hard.”

Eufemia Fantetti, TWS07

Putting yourself out there and getting rejected is a humbling experience. But you shouldn’t take rejections personally. Instead, think of your rejection slips as badges of honour. They are a testimony for your efforts. Remember – a very small percentage of all submissions get published. Maybe your piece didn’t reflect the tone of the magazine; maybe it was close, and was rejected by one final editor. Rejections are a part of a writer’s life. And I promise you this – they become easier with time. I find that now I spend very little time (an hour at the most!) wallowing in my sorrow before I move on. When I began submitting I spent days questioning myself, my writing abilities and the existence of a supportive universe. As my pile of rejections grew, I figured it must be a sign from the Writing Gods that I should quit writing altogether and take up gardening or macramé. Today I know better. Rejection may hurt but why would I want to hurt myself more by not doing what I love best?

Rejections vary.

- **The generic form:** a standard form letter that regrets to inform you...
- **Rejection with a personal note and/or feedback:** very good news! The editor saw something they liked in your piece and bothered to compose a feedback. This is very encouraging! What you do with the feedback is up to you. We’ll get to it after we discuss the next kind of rejection.
- **Rejection – unless you do what we tell you:** not really an ultimatum, but a suggestion to change your piece according to the editor’s feedback (for example: change the ending) and send it back for reconsideration. Don’t be offended or discouraged; be flattered that they take your work so seriously that they initiate dialogue about it. What should you do?

As with the other type of rejection (rejection with feedback), you need to follow your gut. It often depends on who gives the feedback. If the editor is a published author, have you read any of their writings? Are you a fan? Other times the editors are MFA students who work as fiction or poetry editor of a university-based literary magazine. Like you, they are emerging writers with limited publication credits. Whoever the editor is, be grateful for the time they spent on your feedback or suggestions, but take it with a grain of salt. Consult your writing group and your mentors. Has your piece been rejected many times or are you just starting to send it out? Does the feedback or suggestion ring true? Maybe it's worth a try?

- **Rejection with an open invitation:** almost always follows a personal note and feedback. Nothing nicer than having the editor add: "I would love to read more of your work!" It's the best next thing to an acceptance letter. Do take them up on the offer and consider them when sending out submissions. But wait a little while; don't be too eager and immediately send them the next thing you have ready. Wait a few weeks or months, and find something that is a good fit for that particular magazine.

How to Make Yourself Feel Better

- Read <http://literaryrejectionsondisplay.blogspot.com/>. *Literary Rejections on Display* is a funny site that deals with literary rejections. One TWS writer told me she checks this site every day! You can subscribe to it to read other writers' rejection slips or post your own anonymously. You won't believe some of the rejection slips people are getting!
- Start a rejection contest with your friends. At the end of the year, whoever got the most rejection slips (which probably means they submitted the most!) gets something special – a night out, a gift. Figure it out!
- Do something artsy with your rejection slips. I know one author who used to tack them on her office walls to remind herself that she's been trying. How about making a collage out of them? Or a papier-mâché?
- Eat ice cream while watching videos of kittens and bloopers from sitcoms on YouTube.

What TWSers Say about Rejection

“I submitted a lot of pieces last year. I knew it would be difficult to deal with the rejection so I started a rejection contest, so I could tell people I had been rejected without receiving pity. I got the most rejections and I didn't have one piece accepted. If I still feel committed to the piece after the rejection I look at it again. Time has passed and I have more distance from my writing of the piece or my last edit and can see things that I would like to change. It can be helpful to get feedback on the piece, sit with that for a while and rework the piece, your approach or focus.”

Lora Mcelhinney, TWS08

“I must be a glutton for punishment but I love rejection slips. I keep all of my rejection slips. I look at them as proof that someone has actually read my stuff. You can learn a lot from rejections – some journals, like *The Antigonish Review*, take the time to give you helpful feedback. Those rejections are like gold to me.”

Robin Evans, TWS09

“In one of my rejection letters, the editor said that she wanted to start dating again after reading it. It was about a weekend love affair I had with an older married man (which was hardly my idea of ‘dating’). It didn't get published, but she was there in that hotel room. Mission accomplished.

“I have quite a few rejections and to be honest, I thought it would hurt a lot more than it did. I was just so pleased with myself that I put in the effort to actually write something, edit it a thousand times, put it in an envelope and send it out to be judged. That seemed to be the point, anyway. Plus now that I also give rejections (as a volunteer at *Room*), I have GREAT respect for the writer's volition. Rejection makes acceptance all the sweeter.”

Carmen Joy King, TWS08

“Rejections – I don't keep them anymore. I just remind myself that every ‘no’ is one step closer to ‘yes.’”

Gurjinder Basran, TWS06

“I've heard a handwritten note included with a rejection slip should be taken as a sign of encouragement. My first such note was in response to a story sent in to a Canadian literary journal. The editor wrote that while my ending offered some satisfaction, I'd best scrap the first nineteen pages — of twenty — and start over. It felt good shredding that, and mailing my story right back out to another journal.”

Pascal Milelli, TWS05

How to Keep Going

"It's not that I'm smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

Albert Einstein

"If you want to have a career in writing, you have to read and write every day. It's boring advice because everybody says it, but everybody says it because it's true."

Lisa Moore
PRISM international

You've been sending submissions out for a few months, with limited success, and you're starting to feel a bit deflated and weary. What's the point, you wonder. How long is this going to take? You need something to keep you going because submitting begins to feel like an unpleasant chore and you can't help but wonder if this writing business was all a bad idea.

Consider this – those who persevere are those who make it. No one ever said it was going to be easy. Keep writing and your time will come!

Consider this – sending things out regularly is the only way to keep yourself out there. Nothing will ever happen unless you keep trying.

And don't forget the reason why you started doing this in the first place. You love to write. Writing is your passion. It's not really about getting published! It is not what's going to make you a writer. To be a writer you have to write!

Discipline

So did you get yourself a writing group yet? I cannot stress more how invaluable they are. If you aren't in a writing group yet, try to gather some of your writer friends, join an existing one (the Federation of BC Writers lists some of the most prominent ones on their website) or join an online writing group.

As a member of a writing group you're expected to submit every week or two or monthly, so you're always writing. If your writing group only does workshopping, consider expanding its functions to include keeping track of submissions. You can decide on a quota of submissions per month and make sure you all keep them. You can discuss your progress at the beginning of a meeting, or do it via e-mail. It could be a great way to motivate each other. Even if you don't have a writing group, or when your writing group is no longer a good fit for you, you can have one fellow writer as your submissions-buddy, set goals and follow up on your submissions record via e-mail or on the telephone.

What TWSers Say about Discipline

"I need something present and assaulting – like the reminder I set up on my Blackberry calendar with submission deadlines set to ring two days before and the day of. I try to submit three things a month. It is insanely time-consuming. It feels like flossing. I cherry-coat it by organizing submissions at my favourite café when I am too tired to write."

Elee Kraljii Gardiner, TWS06

"This little quote has helped me through some tough times: 'The pain of discipline is short, but the glory of fruition is eternal.' I'd say clear away any ideas or images you have of yourself as a 'writer' and just write because you love it. I used to write because I had no choice, it was urgent...not because I thought I would get published. I'm trying to return to that place now. Discipline and motivation flow from that passion, that urge. It's all the glory of 'the writer' that has, in the end, inhibited my creative process."

Carmen Joy King, TWS08

"I use an online calendar for key writing or contest dates. Google's is nice because you can invite others to events or send reminders and then sync it to your Blackberry."

Gurjinder Basran, TWS06

“I try to submit something every month. My online writing group keeps track of submissions, acceptances and rejections – we can be a little competitive about it, which helps us get stuff out there. We share our rejection slips and our successes and encourage each other to ‘send it out again.’ I found my online group by doing a Google search – there are tons of them on the Web. You really have to check them out to see if they work for you and it takes commitment to posting and feedback to get the best bang for your buck. The one I participate in is small and not open to the public – it is a group of us that came together after a larger open-writing forum closed its doors six years ago. Members are from all over the globe. I have heard of local groups doing it too as an extension to their face-to-face meetings.”

Robin Evans, TWS09

Staying Connected

Join writers’ organizations, attend readings, festivals and book launches. Keep taking workshops and seminars. Talk to people wherever you go, meet emerging writers, established writers and editors. You will expand your community and be inspired while creating new opportunities for yourself.

Volunteering for Literary Magazines

A good way to learn about the editorial process, while raising your profile in the literary community, is to infiltrate the magazine world by volunteering at a literary magazine. Vancouver is home to a few well-established literary magazines. Contact your favourite magazine and ask if they need volunteers. Find the magazine’s booth at an event like *Word on the Street* and ask them in person. Two examples of local magazines that are always on the lookout:

- *Room* (<http://www.roommagazine.com/>) relies heavily on volunteers. The Growing Room Collective is a group of volunteers who handle all the editorial, production and administration of the quarterly magazine.

- *Geist* (<http://www.geist.com/>) has positions available for volunteers and interns. They are looking for volunteers to commit to four hours per week or interns for 12 or 20 hours per week (depending on length of position).

What TWSers Say about Volunteering for Literary Magazines

“Betsy told me the *Room* collective was looking for members and I talked to an editor of the journal at a round table discussion she was on. I applied by e-mailing her my answers to the questionnaire they had on their website for volunteers. Once I was on the collective I took on a few responsibilities that I get to share with more experienced members. I'm still honing my skills as a submissions reader, but so far I am most interested in work that has a distinct voice, that plays with the ambivalence of anything in language and that really seems like I've never read this before. I know a lot of readers on the collective who don't read past the first paragraph if the piece is not immediately interesting to them.”

Lora Mcelhinney, TWS08

“I met Ian Cockfield, *Event*'s managing editor, at a conference put on by the Writers' Union. We started chatting about *Event* and I asked if he needed any help around the office. He said sure, and that was that. My main job was opening manuscripts as they came in and routing them through the various stages of the editorial process. I also sent rejection letters (which sucked!) and helped out with contest advertising. After volunteering for four months, *Event* got some extra funding and they were actually able to offer me a very part-time paid position.

“Volunteering was a great way to see the inside workings of a literary journal, to get to know some people in the literary arts community, and to be exposed to the world of submissions.

“The best thing I learned at *Event* (for my own writing and submitting process) is that even great fantastic writing gets rejected. Ian told me that of the approximately 1,000 submissions they get a year, they can only publish about

one percent. That figure is a bit depressing, but it also makes receiving an offer of publication or even a personalized rejection letter an amazing accomplishment.

“I was also reassured by the amount of really bad writing out there! I know it sounds terrible, but I think that most TWSers are regularly producing material that is better than a lot of what is submitted. So I don't feel as shy about putting my work out there.”

Sarah Turner, TWS 06

“I went to the Jamboree put on by Betsy and TWS at the Carnegie Centre and had previously mentioned to her that I was looking for volunteer experience. (Lesson: ATTEND FUNCTIONS, ask around and tell people what you're looking to do, especially to TWS peers, adjuncts, alumni and Betsy!) At the Jamboree she introduced me to a Joy Gugeler from *Room* magazine and said I was interested in volunteering. (Lesson: learn and remember names.) Coincidentally, they had just lost a few members and were looking to fill the positions. (Lesson: ‘Oh hi [important member of magazine], I'm [your name]. I've read your magazine (for) [a few times/months/years]. It's such a pleasure to meet you – I loved your article on [subject]. I'm really interested in learning about the inner workings of the [magazine/publishing world]. Here's my card...’) Get in touch with that key connection and be tenacious. BE TENACIOUS!

“*Room* is a unique magazine because it has a rotating editorial collective of women and every member of the collective gets a chance to edit an issue if they're inclined. Being in a collective also means that the tasks that keep the magazine going are, ideally, shared equally by each member. I interviewed to be a member of the collective and was subsequently asked to join. (Lesson: be available and flexible, willing to go the distance to meet key people.) Each member must attend meetings once a month as well as read submissions and mark them as ‘accepted’ or ‘rejected.’ I came into the collective at a time when there was a vacuum in its marketing area and so I

volunteered to head the marketing department and attacked all sorts of tasks right off the bat. (Lesson: be tenacious and put yourself out there in order to prove you're enthusiastic and willing to do the work.)”

Carmen Joy King, TWS08

Other Ways to Share Your Work

“That's very nice if they want to publish you, but don't pay too much attention to it. It will toss you away. Just continue to write.”

Natalie Goldberg
Writing Down the Bones

“Your ambition as a writer is to give voice to the deep, inchoate vision of the world that resides dynamically in your unconscious. That's what you must keep focused on; that's the only ambition worth anything to you as an artist. The desire to give voice and the desire to be published sometimes feel like the same thing, but they're not.”

Robert Olen Butler
From Where You Dream

Getting published in literary magazines is not easy. We've all heard tales of famous writers who never got published in their lifetime or were just about to give up when they got their big break. Don't put all of your eggs in the literary magazines basket. There are other ways to get your work out there.

- **Public readings:** TWS Reading Series is a good way to be heard and get immediate feedback from your audience, one thing you can't do with the written word. You and your writing group can put on your own readings. TWSers have put on readings in venues such as 32 Books, Rhizome and Café Montmartre.
- **Blogs and Web publishing:** blogs are becoming more and more popular nowadays. Successful bloggers have gone on to publish books based on their blogs. Having a blog is a great way to have your writing published in a direct unfiltered fashion.

- **Small, independent or new literary magazines** are often hungry for content. Same goes for **online magazines**, as they often don't have quite as many submissions as print magazines. They may not be able to pay you, but it will boost your confidence and will add to your writer's resumé.
- **The less-literary market:** your creative work may be suitable for a local magazine or newspaper. Many TWSers have published articles and non-fiction pieces in news and lifestyle magazines. Maybe you have a good travel story, or you know someone you'd like to interview. Maybe you're about to do something worth writing about or have an opinion you'd like to share. Find something you're passionate about and look for magazines that may be suitable.

The process for submitting writing to non-literary magazines involves sending a query letter. The query has to sell the piece and you as a writer. You generally have to begin with a "hook," something that will grab the editor's attention from the very first line. In short, it has to answer three questions: Why this piece? Why now? And why are you the best person to write it? The query letter must also be extremely well written, as it is a way for the editor to judge your writing skills. You might want to workshop the query letter with your writing group. For more about writing a query, read "How to Write a Successful Query" by Moira Allen. <http://www.writing-world.com/basics/query.shtml>

What TWSers Say about Sharing Their Work

"I submitted a lot last year but didn't get anything published. I have had a lot more success with my performances. Many of us have oral traditions in our communities, cultures and ancestry. One's relationship to this, difficult or not, makes for a great subject for writing and holds fantastic tools. People are starved for great performance, but great performance is neither grandiose nor simplistic. It is vulnerable, true and unique."

Lora Mcelhinney, TWS08

“Every time I submit to an online journal or news site, I get published, and I have JUST as many readers or more than a literary journal. Ride the wave...and get your name out there.”

Carmen Joy King, TWS08

“I feel it is important for me to trust and follow my instincts, write what inspires me, and find a match for it, a place where it fits. I’ve gained experience and confidence in pursuing my public voice by having been published in *Canadian Immigrant* magazine, having recorded a segment on CBC Radio, and through my regular contributions to *Grassroots*, the international publication for the Inner Peace Movement of Canada. What I’ve been sharing with the world so far has been my own personal journey and others’ success stories. I don’t know what the future holds, but I’ve learned that inspiration and intuition can lead to synchronicity and exciting opportunities. I’m learning to trust the process and unfold my spirit through my writing, and when the time is right, I’ll be looking to play in a bigger literary sandbox.”

Mandana Rastan, TWS08

Testimonials

“The first time I ever sent out a ‘complete’ piece, it got published and I got paid! The article was about garbage – I sent it to *Adbusters* and a few months later, an editor wrote to me and said they'd like to use it (and oh, would I mind 25 cents US a word?). I was thrilled beyond belief. I sent another piece to *Adbusters* last summer and it got published and now it's being re-published in a university textbook and used in a provincial exam in Quebec. It also got cited in the *Toronto Sun* and spread all over the Internet. Honestly, I had NO idea it would spread like that. However, I've also sent pieces out to journals and magazines and only had one bite. Still, overall, I'd say my average has been pretty high despite what everyone told me to expect.”

Carmen Joy King, TWS08

“My first published poem was submitted because a fellow TWSer sent out an e-mail impossible to ignore – all the info was right there and all I had to do was click 'attach' and 'respond.' I have tried to duplicate that for myself by gathering info and printing a hard copy of the deadlines/guidelines for my desk so it is a visual reminder each time I sit down to write.”

Elee Kraljii Gardiner, TWS06

“Last year I have had some success with publishing. I found Duotrope's Digest (<http://www.duotrope.com/index.aspx>) to be an invaluable tool for both tracking your submissions and figuring out where to submit. They have a database of over 2,400 current fiction and poetry publications. They have a wonderful search system which allows you to look for publications under the headings of genre, theme and pay scale. They have a submissions tracking page where you can keep track of what you have submitted, how long it takes to get a response and whether or not you were accepted or rejected. This tracking system also lets you know the usual response time from the various publications. I used this to find a few good online publications and a couple of

magazines that looked interesting (all in the U.S.). My tracking page says: ‘Your overall acceptance ratio is higher than the average for all users. Congratulations!’ I believe this was because I was very careful to target publications that looked like they would be interested in my type of writing. One was a new or as Duotrope lists them ‘fledging’ online magazine, the other a fairly well-established online magazine. I started with the fledging one not knowing the editor had a well-established site as well. She was very supportive, really liked my work and took three pieces for the fledging site and later took two for the more established site. Oh, and did I mention Duotrope is free! They offer the option of donating and if you can please do because they offer an invaluable service. It saves so much time.

“In addition to this I also took advantage of my Metis status and submitted to a Metis magazine called *New Breed*. I had three pieces accepted by *New Breed*. I highly recommend looking into any publications that specialize in a particular community that you are a member of as they are often looking for good work to publish.

“Lastly, I heard through a friend that *Quills* was looking for something from her. She had published with them in the past and wanted more of her work even though the deadline had passed. I took a chance and sent something in that same day. It was accepted in their most recent publication.”

Jonina Kirton, TWS07

“The novel that I was working on in TWS 06 was shortlisted for the Amazon.com's search for the next breakthrough novel in 2008, an international contest with Penguin. I found out about the contest in the *Globe and Mail*. Good reason to read the paper! I was also named in the *Vancouver Sun*'s speculative article ‘2008 – Ones to watch’ as a writer of interest and promise.

“The only site I frequent is Places for Writers (www.placesforwriters.com) – it tends to have all of the contests and calls on it. As a novelist, there are few novel contests so one should consider revising

excerpts of their novel so they read like they are self-contained pieces which can then be entered into general fiction calls.”

Gurjinder Basran, TWS06

“When I started submitting I’d been told by many people that contests are not worth it. You can’t do simultaneous submissions with contests and they cost money. But I decided to do it anyway. I was just starting out and was thinking big. I wanted to win. I decided to try contests for one year and if I had no success abandon the idea and submit only to magazines. That first year I won a prestigious contest and was shortlisted to another. I submitted my winning piece to an anthology and it got accepted as well. In fact, in my first year, I had a better track record with contests than I did with magazine submissions! Now I submit to both magazines AND contests. I like contests because I work well with deadlines. Sometimes I send a piece to a contest or two, and if it doesn’t get picked up, I send it out to magazines. For example, a piece I wrote for a postcard contest ended up being published in another magazine.

“I try to submit at least one piece a month. I send my writings only to magazines I think would fit my style and my specific piece of writing. *Geist* has a very different style than say, *Room*, so I may not send the same piece to both of them. I do simultaneous submissions, but I’m sometimes still hesitant with magazines that are dead-set against it (though I find the no-simultaneous-submissions rule absurd). Some months I have spurs of submissions and I end up sending many pieces. At one point last year, I had about 12 different pieces floating around. It felt really good to be out there, even if at the end only one got published. Four other pieces got good personal feedback with their rejection letters. I consider this a huge success.

“When I get a rejection letter, I usually go over the piece to see what can be improved. If there’s feedback included, I consider it. But even if I don’t change it according to the feedback, every time a piece is rejected I make some changes to it. Sometimes they are minor, other times, major. One story of mine was shortlisted to a contest once but still, I couldn’t seem to get it published

afterwards. Eventually I got a rejection letter with feedback from an editor of a magazine that I liked, and something about it rang true. I made a major change to the story and recently sent it out again. I still have the older version of the story, so I reserve the option to go back to it if I ever decide to.

“I usually workshop and polish pieces endlessly before submitting, and I rely heavily on friends’ and peers’ feedback. It’s not unusual for me to send out version number 15 (I hesitate to call it a draft, since sometimes version 15 is only slightly different from version 14...). A piece of mine has recently been shortlisted to a contest, and I had eight different readers to thank for that. I first workshopped it with my writing group, then with four other friends individually, then finally with SFU’s Writer in Residence. The final draft of that piece was probably number 20!”

Ayelet Tsabari, TWS07

“In fall 2007 I took a writing course with Daniel Wood at SFU and was so inspired by his teaching, personality and success as a multiple-award-winning freelance magazine writer that I wanted to learn more about him and his career. One of our course assignments was writing a magazine proposal. I decided to write mine on the instructor, and that led to an interview and article, which I submitted to *WordWorks* (The Federation of BC Writers’ magazine) for the Spring 2008 issue.

“I had already met Fernanda Viveiros, editor and executive director of the Federation of BC Writers, at the Surrey International Writers’ Conference in October, which is also where I first met Daniel Wood and found out about his course at SFU. At a Federation writing workshop in November, I asked Fernanda if she would be interested in an article on Daniel Wood. She was very encouraging and supportive. I was given a deadline and was all set for my first big literary article – 5,000 words.

“I feel I learned a lot and grew as a writer from this process. I started with what I had gathered from my research and interview, but then, of course, as the story expanded, I ended up working further with Daniel, feeding the

article with new strands and quotes from interviews with his editors, publishers, photographers and former journalism students. I found creating an outline quite useful. Filling in the gaps and sewing the pieces together was fun, challenging and exhilarating. Having a deadline kept the fire burning.”

Mandana Rastan, TWS08

“The first story I sent out won second prize in a national magazine competition. I’d written it while attending The Writer’s Studio, and workshopped multiple drafts with Steven Galloway and my mentor group. It’s not uncommon for a decade’s worth of rejection slips to precede a first publication, and my freaky good fortune was not lost on me.

“I have no set method in how I submit; intuition and enthusiasm usually prevail, and deadlines keep me motivated and organized. This goes for literary competitions and for sending work out to my writing group every six weeks or so. I’m a big rewriter and can tweak forever; deadlines keep this from getting ridiculous.”

Pascal Milelli, TWS05

“I’ve had my personal essays appear in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*, and two anthologies, and I won second place in the 2006 The North Shore Writers’ Association Contest. I have a tendency to attribute these publications to a rash of ‘good luck,’ but in truth, my handful of accomplishments has more to do with persistence and finding the perfect fit.

“With the *Globe and Mail* I knew exactly what they were looking for; I’d been reading *Facts and Arguments* for years, I kept strictly within the word limit, and I edited the crap out of those 1,000 words with writing groups until I never wanted to read ‘I Married a Stuntman’ again. Most important, the topic appealed to a wide audience: people curious about nuts like my husband who smash cars into walls for a living.

“When I saw the call for submissions for *Faith Lost and Found* in the *National Post*, I knew I had a good story with my experience of writhing on

the floor as a thirteen-year-old born-again Christian. In the process, I learned a couple of important lessons: never submit without assuming it will be in print, and never put my e-mail address at the bottom of an article. The dozens of angry e-mails and appeals for my return to Jesus poured in, and instantly, that hypothetical audience I'd always written for became a living, breathing bunch of people with feelings and opinions and backgrounds that differed from my own.

“Submitting gives me something to structure my writing around, and each time I send something away, it gives me something concrete to look forward to. A rejection letter, more often than not, which I have a special file for, but then there's that phone call or e-mail saying my work has been accepted, and the adrenalin rush rivals ones I've had on some particularly fine rock climbs and mountain bike rides, and, of course, the birth of my two children. That's when I know I'm on the right track.”

Jan Redford, TWS07

Appendix 1- Important Links

Writers' Markets

There are many great resources for writers available on the Web. These sites are updated frequently with calls for submissions, events and contest deadlines. The beauty of these sites is that they go beyond the scope of local and Canadian literary magazines and reach out to American and international markets. *Places for Writers* sometimes posts calls from New Zealand, Hong Kong and Mexico!

Places for Writers is many emerging writers' favourite. I have it set as my home page, so I never miss a call. Since 1997 they have been posting writing contests and submission calls as well as publishing information and links to great Canadian writers and organizations.

<http://www.placesforwriters.com/>

Duotrope's Digest is a free writers' resource listing over 2,475 current fiction and poetry publications. Use it to search for markets that may make a fine home for the piece you just polished. Other features include a free online submissions tracker for registered users. The site makes several updates per day, and the current listings are checked every ten days to ensure the most up-to-date database humanly possible.

<http://www.duotrope.com/index.aspx>

The Canadian Writers' Contest Calendar is an annual book that contains 80 pages of detailed information on Canadian writing contests and awards, organized month by month according to their deadline dates. This reference makes much-needed information available for writers and gives them an incentive to polish and disseminate their work. The website is a bit messy and not user-friendly, but the book is simple and straightforward. You can order it online for \$21.74.

<http://www.cwj.ca/cwcc.htm>

The Federation of BC Writers' website lists deadlines and calls for submissions, events, workshops and readings in B.C.

<http://bcwriters.com/awards.php>

The Writers' Circle of Durham Region's website offers a calendar of events, contests, submission deadlines and workshops across Canada. The events and deadlines are arranged on a colour-coded monthly calendar. When you move your cursor over the calendar it opens a drop-down box with more details about the contest or event. Very user-friendly!

http://www.wcdr.org/wcdr25/?page_id=1029

Canadian Literature's website features a comprehensive list of Canadian literary journals.

<http://www.canlit.ca/>

Book News is the Vancouver International Writers Festival's weekly newsletter about the literary scene in Vancouver and beyond. Each issue includes the latest literary highlights locally, provincially, nationally and around the world. You can find news, acknowledgments and many events within the weekly e-mail so if you want to be in the loop, subscribe today.

<http://www.writersfest.bc.ca/community/booknews>

Poets and Writers is an American magazine that connects your poems, stories, essays and reviews to the right audiences by researching hundreds of literary magazines (mostly American) in their database. Here, you'll find editorial policies, submission guidelines, contact information – everything you need to direct your work to the publications most amenable to your vision.

http://www.pw.org/literary_magazines?apage=*

NewPages is an American site that offers a comprehensive list of major American literary magazines, calls for submissions and contests. It also features news, information and guides to independent publishers, creative writing programs, independent bookstores, alternative periodicals, independent record labels, alternative newsweeklies and more.

<http://www.newpages.com>

Every Writer's Resource is an American site that offers, among many resources, a list of major American online literary magazines.

<http://www.everywritersresource.com/bestonlineliterarymagazines.html>

Books

The Canadian Writer's Market (17th Edition, by Sandra Tooze, McClelland & Stewart) contains the most comprehensive listings available for magazines; journals; trade, business, and professional publications; newspapers; book publishers; literary agents; awards, competitions and grants. This useful guide also offers practical advice on everything from manuscript preparation to libel law. However, the 17th edition was published in 2007, so much of the information could be outdated by now.

Writing Groups

Face-to-Face

Federation of BC Writers lists many local writing groups on their website.

<http://bcwriters.com/writing.php>

Online

Critters Bar is an online writers' forum. Members post their own writing, which other members read and post comments on (critiques). The sites also hold regular writing challenges, discuss writing techniques, and have a community area where members get to know each other better.

<http://www.crittersbar.com/>

Zoetrope Virtual Studio is a website that accepts submissions in a few creative disciplines. Submitting work to the Virtual Studio puts you in the middle of a thriving creative workshop designed to help refine your craft. You'll receive invaluable feedback from other members, collaborate and network with other artists, and market your services to potential buyers.

<http://www.zoetrope.com>

TheNextBigWriter is an online writing workshop and community that provides writers with the feedback, motivation and advice needed to achieve their writing goals.

<http://www.thenextbigwriter.com/>

Festivals

Vancouver International Writers Festival is one of North America's premiere literary events, held annually over six days in late October. The Writers Festival attracts the world's best writers to Vancouver. Internationally renowned and undiscovered authors mingle with 14,000 readers of all ages in intimate, interactive and informal settings on Granville Island.

www.writersfest.bc.ca/

Word on the Street is a book and magazine fair celebrating literacy and the printed word. Held on the last Sunday of September at the downtown Library Square, Word on the Street promotes books and authors with free exhibits, performances and hands-on activities for a wide range of ages and interests.

www.thewordonthestreet.ca/

The Surrey International Writers' Conference is a three-day event running every fall and featuring over 70 workshops conducted by over 40 presenters. Be sure to register in advance as the conference has sold out for the past several years.

<http://www.w.siw.ca/>

The North Shore Writers Festival is an annual festival of readings by Canadian authors that takes place in North Vancouver's libraries every April.

<http://www.northshorewritersfestival.ca/>

Grants

<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/writing/>

<http://www.bcartscouncil.ca/programs/>

Awards

<http://www.magazine-awards.com/>

<http://www.westernmagazineawards.ca/>

Appendix 2 - A List of Major Canadian Literary Magazines

The Antigonish Review

The Antigonish Review is a quarterly literary journal published by St. Francis Xavier University. It features poetry, fiction, reviews and critical articles from all parts of Canada, the U.S. and overseas, using original graphics to enliven the format.

<http://www.antigonishreview.com/>

Arc

As a national magazine whose exclusive focus is poetry and poetry-related reviews, interviews and articles, *Arc* occupies near-exclusive terrain: it has the longest publishing history of a poetry-only literary journal in the country, and maintains a commitment to extensive critical discussion of poetry as a form, of work by new poets and new work by established poets.

<http://www.arcpoetry.ca/>

Brick

Brick is one of North America's oldest and most respected literary magazines. Published twice yearly out of Toronto, it is known as a journal of literary non-fiction focusing on literature and the arts. They publish essays, interviews with writers and cultural commentaries. *Brick* prizes the personal voice, and celebrates opinion, passion, revelation and the occasional bad joke.

<http://www.brickmag.com/>

Border Crossings

Border Crossings is a quarterly cultural magazine published in Winnipeg. Its subject is contemporary Canadian and international art and culture, which it investigates through articles, columns, reviews, profiles, interviews and portfolios of drawings and photographs.

<http://www.bordercrossingsmag.com/>

Broken Pencil

Broken Pencil is an online and a print magazine published four times a year. It is one of the few magazines in the world devoted exclusively to underground culture and the independent arts.

Broken Pencil offers reviews, groundbreaking interviews, original fiction and commentary on all aspects of the independent arts.

<http://www.brokenpencil.com>

The Capilano Review

The Capilano Review has a long history of publishing new and established Canadian writers and artists who are experimenting with or expanding the boundaries of conventional forms and contexts.

<http://www.thecapilanoreview.ca/>

Carousel

Carousel is a hybrid literary and arts magazine. They are interested in representing both new and established artists, with a specific focus on positioning Canadian talent within an international context. The magazine may be seen as a place for creative cross-pollination between global and Canadian creators.

<http://www.carouselmagazine.ca/>

Contemporary Verse 2

CV2: The Canadian Journal of Poetry and Critical Writing is produced quarterly in Winnipeg. As one of few literary magazines in Canada dedicated exclusively to the publication and promotion of poetry, CV2 publishes a selection of poetry and critical writing about poetry, including interviews, essays and reviews in an accessible format to entice people to read poetry.

<http://www.contemporaryverse2.ca/>

The Dalhousie Review

The Dalhousie Review was founded in 1921 by Herbert L. Stewart, professor of philosophy at Dalhousie University. In a "Salutation" printed in the very first issue, Stewart described the new publication as a "journal of criticism." Stewart wanted to situate the *Review* between the specialized scholarly journal on the one hand and the popular press on the other.

<http://dalhousiereview.dal.ca/>

dandelion

Alberta's oldest literary magazine, *dandelion* publishes innovative and culturally informative poetry, prose and visual artwork twice a year. Each issue endeavours to document a very distinctive and contemporary taste.

<http://www.dandelionmag.ca/>

Descant

Now in its third decade, *Descant* is a quarterly journal publishing new and established contemporary writers and visual artists from Canada and around the world.

<http://www.descant.ca/>

Event

Now in its 37th year of publication, *Event* is a celebrated literary journal where new and established talent – in fiction, poetry, non-fiction and critical reviews – will be encountered. *Event* also serves as a touchstone for writers seeking advice and critique. *Event* is also home to one of the longest-running annual non-fiction contests in Canada.

<http://www.douglas.bc.ca/visitors/event-magazine.html>

The Fiddlehead

The Fiddlehead is a perennial, always vital, journal, published in the Maritimes. Canada's longest-living literary journal, *The Fiddlehead* is published four times a year at the University of New Brunswick.

<http://www.thefiddlehead.ca/>

Geist

Geist is a non-profit literary magazine of Canadian ideas and culture. Established in 1990, *Geist* explores the lines between fiction and non-fiction, and presents new views of the connective tissues of Canada by bringing the work of Canadian writers and artists to public attention.

<http://www.geist.com/>

Grain Magazine

Grain has published the best new writing from Canada and abroad. *Grain* has grown up with a generation of literary magazines, and is proud to be alive and flourishing after nearly 30 years.

<http://www.grainmagazine.ca/>

The Malahat Review

The Malahat Review, established in 1967, publishes quarterly and features Canadian and international poetry and fiction as well as reviews of new books by Canadian writers.

<http://www.web.uvic.ca/malahat/>

Matrix Magazine

Matrix is a literary journal operating out of Montreal and Concordia University that features essays, fiction, comics, poems, music and literary reviews.

<http://www.matrixmagazine.org/>

Memewar Magazine

Memewar is a free cross-disciplinary magazine published in print and online. Committed to creating conversations between disciplines, *Memewar* publishes poetry, short stories, essays, reviews and visual art by seasoned and emerging contributors.

<http://www.memewaronline.com/>

The Nashwaak Review

The Nashwaak Review publishes original poetry, short fiction, travel pieces, essays, articles and reviews. They also reproduce photography and paintings in black and white. Their covers are by living Canadian artists and are reproduced in full colour.

<http://w3.stu.ca/stu/about/publications/nashwaak/nashwaak.aspx>

The New Quarterly

An award-winning journal with a sense of fun, *The New Quarterly* publishes a lively mix of fiction, poetry, interviews and talk about writing. Their mandate is to introduce a new generation

of Canadian writers, to share their delight in a story well-told, and to take readers inside good writing.

<http://www.tnq.ca/>

one cool word magazine

one cool word is an independent art and literary magazine dedicated to giving Vancouver writers, artists, musicians and scoundrels an outlet for their mad visions.

<http://www.onecoolword.com/>

Other Voices

Other Voices is a journal of the literary and visual arts published twice a year in Edmonton.

<http://www.othervoices.ca/>

Prairie Fire

Prairie Fire is a quarterly magazine that looks like a book. Each issue is loaded with stories, poems and articles. It's a great way to read the latest from your favourite authors long before their next book is published.

<http://www.prairiefire.ca/>

PRISM international

PRISM international is a quarterly magazine out of Vancouver, whose mandate is to publish the best in contemporary writing and translation from Canada and around the world.

<http://www.prism.arts.ubc.ca/>

Quills

Quills Canadian Poetry Magazine is an annual publication displaying Canadian poetry only. It is privately funded and sold in bookstores all across Canada.

<http://www.quillspoeetry.com/>

Qwerty

Qwerty is a journal of poetry, short fiction and visual art published two to three times each year by the Department of English at the University of New Brunswick. *Qwerty* is run by graduate students from the English Department at UNB.

<http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/QWERTY/>

Riddle Fence

Riddle Fence is a Newfoundland-based journal of arts and culture, published three times yearly. *Riddle Fence*'s mandate is to publish high quality essays, poems, short fiction, reviews, interviews and artwork.

<http://riddlefence.com/>

Room

Room is a space where women can speak, connect and create. Each quarter they publish original, thought-provoking works that reflect women's strength, sensuality, vulnerability and wit. *Room* offers a smart female spin on the issues and powerful forces that impact contemporary life.

<http://www.roommagazine.com/>

sub-TERRAIN

sub-TERRAIN is a stimulating fusion of fiction, poetry, photography and graphic illustration from uprisng Canadian, U.S. and international writers and artists. Published three times a year.

<http://www.subterrain.ca/>

The Vancouver Review

The Vancouver Review is a quarterly of new writing and reviews published by the Vancouver Review Publication Society, an incorporated non-profit society with charitable status.

<http://www.vancouverreview.com/>

West Coast Line

West Coast Line publishes work by writers and artists who are experimenting with or expanding the boundaries of conventional forms and contexts. They are interested in work engaged with

problems of representation, race, culture, gender, sexuality, technology, media, urban/rural spaces, nature and language.

<http://www.westcoastline.ca>

Online Magazines

Joyland.ca

Selected by the CBC as part of the Top 100 of 2008, *Joyland.ca* has been called "the go-to spot for readers seeking the best voices in short fiction." *Joyland* is dedicated to finding a new way to publish short fiction. They have chosen several editors to select and post stories by authors in a given locale.

Nthposition.com

An online magazine/ezine with politics and opinion, travel writing, fiction and poetry, reviews and interviews, and some high weirdness.

TheTyee.ca

Though not a literary magazine by definition, *The Tyee* is one of Canada's leading online magazines and British Columbia's online source for news, views and culture. It is definitely worth looking into. Though the focus is on news, they do publish stories about culture, essays and commentary.

Appendix 3 – Contests’ Deadlines

Please check the websites for specific guidelines and deadlines, as these do change. Good luck!

January

January 30 - *Prism* Magazine Fiction Contest.

<http://www.prism.arts.ubc.ca/>

February

February 1 – *The Malahat Review* Novella Prize, alternating with The Long Poem Prize.

<http://web.uvic.ca/malahat/>

February 14 – *Writers’ Union of Canada* Postcard Story Competition

www.writersunion.ca/

February 28 – *SLS (Summer Literary Seminars)* Literary Contest (fiction and poetry)

www.sumlitsem.org

March

March 21 – *Other Voices* Magazine Fiction and Creative Non-Fiction Contest

<http://www.othervoices.ca/>

April

April 1 - *Grain* Magazine Short Grain (Poetry and Fiction) Contest

<http://www.grainmagazine.ca/>

April 15 - *Event* Magazine Non-Fiction Contest

<http://www.douglas.bc.ca/visitors/event-magazine.html>

April 24 – *Writers’ Union of Canada* Writing for Children Competition

www.writersunion.ca/

May

May 1- *The Malahat Review* Far Horizons Award for Poetry

<http://web.uvic.ca/malahat/>

May 15 - Lush Triumphant: *sub-TERRAIN's* Literary Awards (fiction, poetry and non-fiction)

<http://www.subterranean.ca/>

May 31 - *The Antigonish Review* Sheldon Currie Fiction Prize

<http://www.antigonishreview.com/>

June

June 15 - *Room Magazine* Fiction, Poetry, and Creative Non-Fiction Contest

<http://www.roommagazine.com/>

June 30 - *The Antigonish Review* Great Blue Heron Poetry Contest

<http://www.antigonishreview.com/>

June 30 - *Arc Magazine* Poem of the Year Contest

<http://www.arcpoetry.ca/>

June 30- *Eden Mills Writers Festival* Literary Contest (fiction, poetry and playwriting)

<http://www.edenmillswritersfestival.ca/>

July

July 1 – *Prism Magazine* Annual Earle Birney Prize for Poetry

<http://www.prism.arts.ubc.ca/>

July 2 – *This Magazine* Great Canadian Literary Hunt (fiction)

<http://www.thismagazine.ca/>

July 3 – *The Federation of BC Writers* Literary Writes Competition (category changes yearly)

<http://bcwriters.com/>

July 15 - *Matrix LitPop Award* (fiction and poetry)

<http://www.matrixmagazine.org/>

August

August 1- *The Malahat Review* Creative Non-Fiction Contest

<http://web.uvic.ca/malahat/>

September

September 4 - *Surrey International Writers' Conference* Writing Contest (fiction, non-fiction, poetry and writing for young adults)

<http://www.siwc.ca/>

September 15 – *Qwerty* Magazine Upper Left Writing Contest (fiction and poetry)

<http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/QWERTY/>

September 21- *Other Voices* Poetry Contest

<http://www.othervoices.ca/>

October

October 9 - *Descant* Magazine Winston Collins Prize for Best Canadian Poem

<http://www.descant.ca/>

October 25 - *Vancouver International Writers Festival* Poetry and Short Story Contest

<http://www.writersfest.bc.ca/>

November

November 1 – *CBC Literary Awards* (short fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction)

<http://www.radio-canada.ca/prixlitteraires/english/index.shtml>

November 1- *The Malahat Review* Open Season Awards (poetry, short fiction and non-fiction)

<http://web.uvic.ca/malahat/>

November 3 – *Writers' Union of Canada* Short Prose Competition for Developing Writers

www.writersunion.ca/

November 4 - *Vancouver Courier* Annual Fiction Contest

<http://www2.canada.com/vancouvercourier/index.html>

November 15 - *Geist* Magazine Postcard Contest

<http://www.geist.com/>

November 30 – *Prairie Fire* Fiction, Poetry and Non-Fiction Contest

<http://www.prairiefire.ca/>

November 30 – *Prism* Magazine Non-Fiction Contest

<http://www.prism.arts.ubc.ca/>

December

December 1 - *Fiddlehead* Magazine Writing Contest (fiction, poetry)

<http://www.thefiddlehead.ca/>

Author's Bio

Ayelet Tsabari was born and raised in Israel and lives in Toronto. Her book of short stories, *The Best Place on Earth*, is forthcoming with HarperCollins in 2013. She is a two-time winner of *Event's* Creative Non-Fiction Contest, and her writing has appeared in magazines and anthologies in Israel, Canada and the U.S. She is a graduate of Simon Fraser University's Writer's Studio, and the MFA Program at Guelph University.