

# *The Quill*

**The Monthly Newsletter of the Monadnock Writers' Group  
October 1, 2024**

*Supporting Writers Since 1984*

The Monadnock Writers' Group is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.  
PO Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458

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

[www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/)

[monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com)



**Welcome to the Monadnock Writers' Group!** Since 1984, the MWG has provided community, inspiration, and support to the writers of the Monadnock region. All are welcome! Our membership includes writers of every variety: from poets to journalists, from mystery writers to playwrights, and from career writers to those just getting started. We meet on the third Saturday morning of each month, September through June, at the Peterborough Town Library, unless otherwise noted. Monthly meetings start at 9:45 a.m. and go to about 11:30 a.m., but times can vary. Meetings include a 15-minute meet-and-greet, announcements, a ten-minute reading from a member, and a main speaker sharing professional writing experience and answering questions. Coffee and light refreshments are provided. Our monthly Speaker Series is open to the public and free of charge. Our speakers are instructive and inspirational for writers of all literary forms, genres, and levels of experience. For more information, please go to our website at [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org), or join our Monadnock Writers' Group [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/).

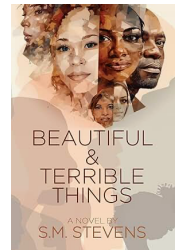
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## **MWG NEWS**

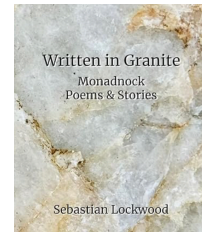
MWG's ***Smoky Quartz*** team is looking for volunteers to help review submissions, coordinate the editorial process, and produce issues for our online journal. Bring your editorial or production skills (WordPress or MS Word) to our friendly online meetings. Please contact Deborah Murphy [deborahvmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:deborahvmurphy@gmail.com) for information about joining the editorial team or Linda Thomas [lindajean.nh@gmail.com](mailto:lindajean.nh@gmail.com) for information about joining the production team.

***Beautiful and Terrible Things*** by S.M. Stevens has been awarded an Honorable Mention in the Fiction - Social Issues category of the Readers' Favorite International Book Award Contest, and it was a Finalist in the American Fiction Awards, General Fiction category. The Readers' Favorite

review of the novel says, “*Beautiful and Terrible Things* brilliantly articulates contemporary social issues. Through vivid descriptions and dialogue, the author creates emotionally rich, often tense, and heartwarming scenes. [This] is a compelling literary novel with resonant themes and characters that stay with readers after the last page is turned.” (More on Sue below.)



**Sebastian Lockwood** has released *Written in Granite*, an anthology of 14 poems and four stories. Folded in with the text are a series of paintings and photographs that reflect the themes of the poems and stories. Many of the poems are woven into the short stories. The stories are set in 1862 in the Fox Tavern at Hancock Inn, NH. Three of the stories feature three famous women, two of whom knew each other. Emily Dickinson as "The Woman in White" and "Rooks & Indian Pudding" and Helen Hunt Jackson in "The Woman with an Owl On Her Head" knew each other well and were powerful friends. Fly Rod Crosby was an extraordinary sportswoman and fellow sharpshooter with Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane.



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## RECENT EVENTS

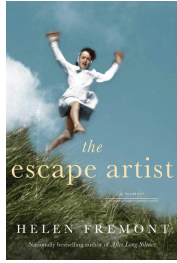
Sadly, our September meeting scheduled for the James Baldwin Library at MacDowell on September 21 had to be canceled due to a COVID case on the MacDowell campus. We hope to reschedule for later in the year!

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## 2024-2025 MEETING & SPEAKER SCHEDULE

**October 19:** Young Adult (YA) novelists **Terry Farish** and **Lochan Sharma**, co-authors of the recently released YA novel *Go Home*, will speak to the group about their collaboration and writing process. Farish's other books include *The Good Braider* (an American Library Association and *School Library Journal* Best Book winner), *Either the Beginning or the End of the World* (winner of a Maine Literary Award), and children's books *A Feast for Joseph* and *The Cat Who Liked Potato Soup*. <https://terryfarish.com> **Lochan Sharma** was born in Nepal. His family was registered at Timai refugee camp after they were exiled from Bhutan. Lochan and his family moved to the U.S. in 2009 and live in Concord, NH. He is a pre-med student at Keene State.





**November 16:** Award-winning *New York Times* bestselling author **Helen Fremont** writes memoirs, essays, and short stories. Her memoirs *After Long Silence* and *The Escape Artist* were both best-sellers. *After Long Silence* describes her emotional journey upon discovering as an adult that her Eastern European emigre parents were Jewish, not Catholic. *The Escape Artist* was selected as a *New York Times* “Editor’s Choice” in 2020, recommended as one of the “Best New Books” by *People* magazine, and named a “Reader’s Choice” by BookPage. Her short stories and essays have been published in *The Harvard Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *The Marlboro Review*. <https://www.helenfremont.com>

**December 21:** Our second **Member Read-Around** of the year has the same rules as in June...please come, share your writing, and try to keep your selection to ten minutes, so everyone will have a chance to read! Our Read-Arounds are always surprising, humbling, entertaining, and inspiring. Come learn what your fellow MWG writers are working on! We will meet at the Peterborough Town Library at 9:45 a.m.

**January 18: Rebecca Dinerstein Knight** is the author of the novels *Hex* (Viking, 2020) and *The Sunlit Night* (Bloomsbury, 2015), the bilingual English-Norwegian collection of poems *Lofoten* (Aschehoug, 2012), and the forthcoming nonfiction project *Notes to New Mothers* (W. W. Norton). Her screenplay adaptation of *The Sunlit Night* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and is now a major motion picture. Knight has reviewed restaurants for *The Village Voice* and novels for *The New York Times Book Review*, and her essays have appeared online in *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, and the *New York Times*. <https://www.rebeccadinersteinknight.com/>



**February 15:** Journalist and novelist **Paul Hertneky** is the author of *Rust Belt Boy: Stories of an American Childhood*. Over 34 years, Hertneky has written stories, essays, and scripts for the *Boston Globe*, *Athens News*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *New Hampshire Union Leader*, *NBC News*, *The Comedy Channel*, *Gourmet*, *Eating Well*, *Traveler’s Tales*, *The Exquisite Corpse*, *National Public Radio*, *Public Radio International*, *Adbusters* and many more. <https://paulhertneky.com/>



*We are still working on the rest of the spring schedule. Stay tuned!*

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## CALLS FOR SUBMISSION



The *Chestnut Review for Stubborn Artists* accepts poetry, prose, and flash fiction. Prose submissions are free of charge for Black and indigenous writers. For more information please go to:

<https://chestnutreview.submittable.com/submit>.

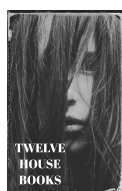
*Wild Peach Magazine* is a new magazine seeking work by unpublished and emerging creators, and features profiles and interviews with all kinds of people that thoughtfully explore the varying approaches to being a human. They are looking for fiction, nonfiction, poetry, interviews, reviews, and art. The first issue will be published in November 2024. <https://wildpeach.org>.

*New England Review* welcomes submissions in fiction, poetry, nonfiction, dramatic writing, and translation in all genres. *New England Review* gives readers a vital snapshot of the literary moment, four times a year, in its richness, complexity, and diversity. They publish poetry and fiction in a variety of shapes and styles—some renovating old forms and others inventing new forms altogether—alongside a range of nonfiction, including personal and lyric essays, cultural revaluations, travelogues, and more. <https://www.nereview.com/ner-submissions//ner-submissions/>

*Portrait of New England: A Literary Magazine*. As New England residents, current or former, we don't need to think back to high school literature to understand the concept of setting. We live it—we breathe it—every day. From the illustrious communities nestled in the mountains of Vermont to the bustling Metrowest of Boston cupping Walden Pond in its palm, we embody a sense of place so overt, so historic, that few other geographic areas can rival it. If it's beautiful creative writing, send it in. Open for submission until October 31. <https://portraitne.com/>

*The New England Quarterly* is a journal of scholarly essays. Essays should approach their topics historically, but can range broadly from literature to politics, art, economics, the environment, and so on, in any period or region of New England. In addition to traditional scholarly essays, they also accept submissions for special features including their Reconsiderations, Innovations in Teaching, New England Now, and Memoranda and Documents features. For more information go to <https://newenglandquarterly.org/write-for-neq/>.

**Toad Press.** The Toad Press International Chapbook Series publishes contemporary, exciting, beautiful, odd, and avant-garde chapbook-length translations of poetry and prose. Toad Press is an imprint of Veliz Books. <https://toadpress.blogspot.com/>



**Twelve House Books** is an independent publisher of literary fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry, with a distinct focus on the dark and unruly; magic and the sublime. Publishing from an idyllic yet peculiar suburban neighborhood such as those celebrated by so many storytellers, Twelve House Books champions literature of the odd, weird, uncanny, majestic, and holy. High on the wanted list are Ghost Stories,



Quirk, Narrative Poems, the Sublime, the Numinous, Hardboiled Noir, and stories about American Suburbia or set in Los Angeles. Your work doesn't fit that vision? Send it along anyway, because it could be just crazy enough to work. <https://twelve-house-books.org/>

**Barnstorm Journal** publishes previously unpublished nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and experimental work, and accepts submissions on a rolling basis. They also accept visual art which accompanies each written piece published. <https://www.barnstormjournal.org/submit>

Founded in 2020, **Sea Crow Press** is home to an eclectic collection of creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. At Sea Crow, they believe the small press plays an essential part in contemporary arts by amplifying voices that might otherwise go unheard. Their books celebrate our connection to nature and each other while charting a positive direction for the future. Sea Crow Press is international with a focus on its New England roots. They welcome emerging writers and experienced authors. <https://www.seacrowpress.com/submissions>



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## LOCAL EVENTS FOR WRITERS

**Readings by the Gardens and Toads Writing Group**, Tuesday October 15, 2024 at 7pm - 8pm at the Hancock, NH Town Library. Since 2019, a group of folks from the Hancock area have been encouraging each other as writers, whether writing poetry, memoir, or brief spontaneous responses to offered prompts. We call our group Gardens and Toads (we'll explain). The writers include: Susan Mann, Lynn Estep, Steve Schuch, Judy Lister, Sara Gervasio, Diana Muxworthy Feige, Cathleen Calmer, Denny Caldwell, Martha Yates, Lilla Lyon, and Pam Erdmann. We are closing this summer's circle with many of the writers sharing their pieces in prose, poetry, maybe song. Please join us! <https://hancocktownlibrarynh.wordpress.com/>



**Poetry at the Loom** will host two New Hampshire poets, Alice B. Fogel, former NH Poet Laureate and author of *Falsework*, and Meg Kearney, author of *All Morning the Crows*, at the Chesham and Harrisville Community Church (the "Brick Church"), 13 Canal Street, Harrisville, on Sunday, November 10, at 4:00 p.m. All are welcome, no charge! <http://theloompoetry.com/>

**Poetry at The Root**, an open mic night for poets in Temple, takes place on the last Thursday of every month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. The event is hosted by Brian Evans-Jones, former Poet Laureate of Hampshire, U.K., and winner of the Maureen Egan Award from *Poets & Writers*. He writes about poetry and creativity at The Poetry Place. Read your own poems, read poems by your



favorite poets, or come to support the poets by listening to the poems—everyone is welcome! You can warm up at the fire, listen to the live music, hang out with other poets and poetry lovers, and enjoy the night. <https://www.writebetterpoems.com/poetry-at-the-root>



**Monadnock Underground Open Mic.** The Peterborough Town Library and Monadnock Underground host a monthly open mic night for writers of all genres and levels of experience, usually on the second Thursday of the month. Poetry, prose, something you're not even sure what it is - bring it on down! You can sign up when you arrive at 5:30 p.m. In an effort to keep things relaxed, loose, and informal, they try to avoid fixed rules like maximum length, and simply ask that readers be mindful of how many others are signed up to read and the fact that they have a hard stop at 7:00 p.m. <https://peterboroughtownlibrary.org/event/9879820>

The **High School Creative Writing Club** is run by Avenue A Teen and Community Center, a project of The Grapevine in Antrim. The Creative Writing Club is open to all teens. Students are encouraged to express themselves, tackle difficult issues, and offer support to one another. The club also supports performance, bringing art into the community by hosting readings of student work in local bookshops. <https://avenueatc.org/>



**The New Dawn Writers Group at the New Dawn Arts Center**, 84 Main Street, Ashburnham, MA, holds Tuesday night workshops on fiction, memoir, and poetry, plus open mic nights, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. MWG member Fred Gerhard runs the poetry workshop. Please click the link for more details on specific dates. <https://www.newdawnarts.org>

**MacDowell Downtown** is a free series of presentations by MacDowell Fellows that are open to the public. They take place on the first Friday of the month from March to November in downtown Peterborough. Each season of MacDowell Downtown features a wide array of programming, including film screenings, readings, artist talks, interviews, musical performances, and more. MacDowell Downtown begins at 7:30 p.m. typically at the Monadnock Center for History and Culture in Peterborough. <https://www.macdowell.org/events/2024-macdowell-downtown>.



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## MEET A MEMBER: S.M. STEVENS

This month, we feature MWG member Susan Gebo, who writes under the pen name S.M. Stevens. Sue writes contemporary novels designed



to make readers laugh, cry and think. Her most recent novel, *Beautiful and Terrible Things*, was released by Black Rose Writing in July. Her novelette *The Wallace House of Pain* won a First Place prize in the Chanticleer International Book Awards, Shorts category. Sue has had a long career in PR and marketing for global companies, small businesses and nonprofits including the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston and the *U.S.S. Constitution* Museum. Before retiring to Washington, N.H., she worked in the solar energy industry. Visit her website at [AuthorSMStevens.com](http://AuthorSMStevens.com).

(Please email Jess at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) if you'd like to be featured in a future issue.)

### ***The Quill Questionnaire***

#### **How long have you been writing?**

I've been a business writer my entire career, so for decades! I first tried my hand at fiction 15 years ago, when I was laid up for three months with a broken pelvis. That convinced me I could craft a novel-length project, and I've been writing novels (along with shorter forms) ever since.

#### **What are you working on right now?**

I have three major projects going, which is very exciting! I am finishing up the launch phase of my contemporary novel *Beautiful and Terrible Things*, which came out in July. I am querying a new novel about a cranky, outspoken grandmother (think *A Man Called Ove*, or Elizabeth Zott in *Lessons in Chemistry*), who harbors a series of intense secrets from her children. And, for something completely different, I am co-writing a true crime memoir with a friend.

#### **Who are some of your favorite writers?**

Toni Morrison is my absolute favorite as she makes the words sing and soar. I find myself re-reading passages immediately just to savor how her words fit together like musical notes. I also love a lot of contemporary authors like Kristin Hannah, Jodi Picoult and JoJo Moyes, who tackle societal issues while entertaining.

#### **Do you have a writing routine/process that you stick to?**

No. One of the benefits of starting out as a business writer is that I'm used to writing whenever time allows. So my writing session might be 10 minutes or 10 hours. I do have a tendency to wake up at 3:00 a.m. with a scene going through my head, though, which sends me rushing to the computer for an unplanned writing session!

#### **What is your favorite/least favorite thing about writing?**

My favorite thing is touching readers in some way, maybe even helping them. One reader thanked me for writing *The Wallace House of Pain* because she lived that story. A therapist told me she gave *Horseshoes and Hand Grenades* to a client she thought might find solace in it. And in a book club last night for *Beautiful and Terrible Things*, people said it opened their eyes to some of the social justice issues facing the world today. That kind of feedback is hugely gratifying.

My least favorite thing? That would have to be promoting my work. I have a PR/marketing background so promotion comes easier to me than some. Still, after a few months of concentrated promotion, I'm sick of it and can't wait to get back to writing.

### Excerpt from *Beautiful and Terrible Things*

Xander steered Charley right at the fork onto his preferred hiking trail. They continued in silence for a quarter mile or so.

Charley usually drove to State Park on her days off and jogged the flat trails, but she'd never climbed its one small mountain. It was as if she'd entered an entirely new world: the earth's perfume, the chorus of birdsong, and the stout evergreens standing sentinel were unfamiliar in their new configuration.

Xander peered up at the tree cover. "*Jade leaves and saplings, white birches slashing the green, shooting to the clouds.*" He looked at Charley, smiled warmly, and returned his attention to the trail ahead.

Charley followed him up a short set of crumbling wooden logs fashioned into a rudimentary staircase. "What was that? You sounded like you were in a trance, or someone was speaking through you."

Xander laughed, presumably at her melodramatic observation. She joined him, thrilling in the simple forgotten pleasure of laughing at oneself. "While I prefer your interpretation, the truth is much more pedestrian. It's a haiku. I make them up as I meander through life."

Charley scratched her nose. "Haiku. I remember those. I'm terrible at poetry, but those were so short, they weren't as intimidating."

"Yeah, that's why I like them. They're not intimidating."

She was pretty sure he was making fun of her. She stopped to stick her finger into her running shoe for a quick dig at her eczema and to adjust the band-aid on her heel. "Why do you like them then?"

"They're elegant in their structure and, properly executed, deeper than their simple surface would suggest." He smiled at her encouragingly. "Give it a try. Five syllables, then seven, then five."

Charley grimaced and shook her head. She watched her feet for a while, her light blue running shoes stirring up dust clouds with each step.

Xander cleared his throat. "*Friendship is precious. Like a brook soothing pebbles, it sings and moves us.*"

Charley stopped and stared at him until he halted. "What?" he said, bouncing on his toes.

"That's really pretty. You have to remember that one. Write it down."

"Why?"

"So you can keep it. And go back and enjoy it. And let other people enjoy it."

"Nope, not necessary. They're meant to be savored fleetingly and by whomever I am with, and perchance the universe if it's listening. Writing them down would diminish their essence."

She couldn't tell if he was messing with her. "How very Zen of you," she said finally, resuming the walk.

“Have you heard tell of the mandalas Buddhist monks create? They construct these massive, byzantine designs that depict the world in divine form. They tessellate them from sand, literally one grain at a time. It can take a team of monks weeks to complete one mandala. And when they’re done? They demolish it. They sweep up the sand and cast it into a stream to bless the universe.” He whooshed his arm in front of him to emphasize the point.

Charley gasped. “That’s why you don’t keep your poems—to bless the world?”

“Please,” he said, “I’m not that worthy.” He slowed his pace and watched the ground before him for a few steps before turning to Charley. “Each step I take disappears in an instant. Each step eats up another small piece of the Earth and my time on it. And we’re content to let each step go. We move on. So the haiku, and the mandala, are like steps upon the Earth that we are content—no, grateful—to have taken, but do not need to dwell upon.”

Charley furrowed her brow. “I think maybe haiku are beautiful because they distill the world’s chaos into a few manageable images.”

He nodded and smiled. The trail climbed steadily now, and they concentrated on their upward progress for a few minutes.

“*Life is full of death,*” Charley intoned as the path leveled, eyes focused on the dirt trail. “*Dead parents, dead grandparents. Everyone leaves me.*” She smiled wryly.

Xander grabbed Charley and enveloped her in a tight hug. She froze. His body heat and salty odor oozed through her clothes and into her flesh and bones, coaxing her into a relaxed, liquid-like state. As quickly as he’d initiated the embrace, he let go and continued climbing.

Charley’s mind wanted to ask why he did that, but her heart said let it go, like their steps on the path. For the first time in years, she listened to her heart.

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## ALL ABOUT MWG

- **Submit your bio as a member of MWG.** Are you a member? If you would like your bio added to the [About Our Members](#) page on the MWG website, please send it to Mary Marchese at [mwgwebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:mwgwebmaster@gmail.com). Maximum 200 words, written in third person, and feel free to include links to your website, most recent publication, listing on Amazon, and social media.
- **Volunteer!** If you would be interested in bringing refreshments, being our ten-minute reader or have ideas for speakers or events, please let us know at [monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com).
- **Send your writing news or announcements to *The Quill*.** If you would like to submit to our monthly newsletter, please contact Jess at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) at least a week before the end of the month. As a member, you may include your author events and announcements.
- **Who are we at MWG?** Established in 1984, the primary mission of the Monadnock Writers’ Group is to offer fellowship and support to professional writers and to those actively engaged in developing their writing skills. To learn more: [www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us](http://www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us)



- **Please explore MWG online.** Visit our website, [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org), for news, member profiles, speakers series information, contests, publications, and more. Find us on Facebook under Monadnock Writers' Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/)
  - **Monadnock Writers' Group membership information:**
    - Annual membership fees are \$30, or \$25 for students and seniors, \$50 for Patrons, \$100 for Benefactor, and \$250 for a Corporate membership.
    - Individual members are encouraged to announce their own projects such as workshops, social gatherings, group support sessions, or whatever the writing-related endeavor. Feel free to take the floor at the monthly meeting, or contact the newsletter editor at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) to send an announcement to the membership in the monthly newsletter.
    - Bring a friend to one of our monthly meetings, and if they join MWG, you will receive a \$20 gift certificate for the Toadstool Bookshop!
    - See the full list of membership benefits here: [www.monadnockwriters.org/membership](http://www.monadnockwriters.org/membership)
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### ***The MWG 2023-2024 Board of Directors***

*President:* Jesseca Timmons, *Vice President:* Rodger Martin, *Treasurer:* Carl Mabbs-Zeno, *Secretary:* Susan Gebo, *Members at Large:* Deni Dickler, Tori Haring-Smith, Maura MacNeil, Mary Marchese, Ronnie McIntire, *Emerita:* Ann Day.