



# MENTORING WRITERS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7 APRIL 2021

**WRITING  
KNOW  
HOW**

**Worldbuilding  
Questions to Ask**

**POETRY  
CORNER**

**When Poetry is  
Dark!**



# WELCOME

What's happened since  
our last Newsletter?

The Launch of the Mentoring Writers Summer 2020 Writing Competition book *The Mystical Treehouse* went really well. The book is being recognised across the world with orders being received from the USA, Australia and of course here at home.

Our youngest entrant in the book, Willow Bowen, has become a bit of a celebratory as she has been recognised at her school and has been featured advertising the book in the Weston Mercury Newspaper. Well done Willow.

The Mentoring Writers Resource Box Podcasts are doing quite well and the unique downloads are continuing to steadily increase. We also now include audio versions of the 'In Conversation With... Interviews' with the latest interview audio podcast going live on 13th April.

The YouTube Channel is also planned for expansion and we shall be uploading interesting and informative snippets for your review.

The latest 'In Conversation With... Colin R Parsons Interview' has gone live, so check it out to hear Colin's viewpoint on a variety of subjects.

Don't forget to check out inside the Newsletter for details of the Mentoring Writers Summer 2021 Short Story Writing Competition. It is open to all writers - is for all ages - free to enter - and will again be judged by an independent panel of judges. There are three styles of writing so either check the website or email us for details. More info inside the newsletter.

That's it for now folks. We will, fingers crossed, have some exciting news to announce before the end of the month so keep checking our social media and website. We are very excited by the possibilities?

*Ann Brady*

# CAN YOU HEAR ME?

A collection of poetry



Yami Gray

**One of the things I have discovered about young people is their ability to enjoy being frightened. They seem to have no sense of fear when it comes to what they read.**

**This is highlighted more when it comes to youngsters writing stories or poetry. And there is no-one like young poet Yami Gray who always appears to bring darkness into her writing .**

**Yami is a young British/Australian who wrote a number of poems which were published through the Kids4Kids.co.uk organisation and today we give you an example of her writing.**

## POETRY CORNER

### DEPTHS OF THE NIGHT

Back into the depths of night  
Bruised and torn I blunder  
The demons laughing with delight  
As in the darkness, I stumble

Roaming far and roaming wide  
Wherever I may be  
Always travelling in the dark  
No one, only me

In the darkness, a cliff is found.  
Below the cold crisp sea  
Fast and hard I'm falling down  
But in the sky, I wish to be

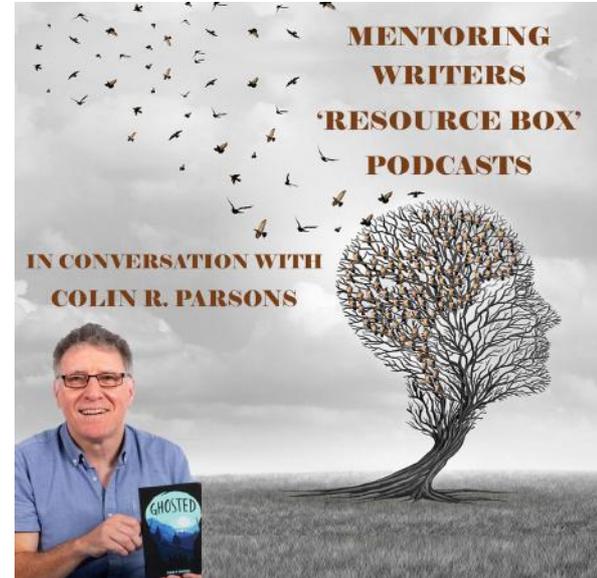
So back into the depths of night  
Torn and cold I stumble  
The demons giggle with no slight  
As in the blackness, I blunder.

c Yami Gray 2018

# IN CONVERSATION WITH... MR COLIN R PARSONS

Ann was delighted this month to be In Conversation With... Mr Colin R Parsons. Colin is a prolific writer across a variety of genres for children and adults, has a vast amount of experience in doing school visits and also has an extensive selection of mini YouTube videos which are aimed at helping writers of all ages along their writing journey.

Check out the Mentoring Writers Resource Box YouTube Channel and the audio version on our Podcasts or via our website. The links are below.



## OUR LINKS

Website:

[www.mentoringwriters.co.uk](http://www.mentoringwriters.co.uk)

MW Resource Box Podcasts:

[www.mentoringwriters.libsyn.com.website](http://www.mentoringwriters.libsyn.com.website)

YouTube Channel:

Mentoring Writers Resource Box

*Cool picture, Ann! Thanks for the invite, I enjoyed our interview.*

**Colin R Parsons**

# WRITING KNOW HOW?

## WORDBUILDING QUESTIONS FOR YOU?

When writing, one of the most important elements is to ensure you ground your story in a believable setting. This doesn't just relate to fantasy, but to any genre. Worldbuilding is an ideal way to help you figure out how your characters fit into the bigger picture, or to learn what their motivations are. Now I realise that it can perhaps seem frustrating to spend a lot of time on building an elaborate world for your novel, especially if you then have to cut out most of the fascinating history and background in the final draft. Regardless, having that knowledge is still important as it helps to create more fully rounded out characters and plot. Remember Hemingway and his iceberg theory of writing where one imagines that 80-90% of a story actually occurs below the surface!

So before you start writing ask yourself how much do you know about the world of your novel? It might not be as much as you think. In order to be sure of yourself we've devised 20 important questions you should ask yourself when creating the background for your story. We wonder how many of these you can truthfully and honestly say, 'Yes I got them all right?'

1. How long has your world existed?
2. How did your world originate? Do the people who inhabit your world have a creation myth, or a scientific explanation for how it came to be?
3. What are some important historic events in your world? How did they contribute to the geographic or social structures that exist in your world's present day?
4. What is considered a curse word in your world? What is considered sacred, and what is considered profane?
5. What holidays does your world celebrate?

# **WORDBUILDING QUESTIONS FOR YOU? CONTINUED.....**

- 6. Does your world have a religion? Do the people in your world put their faith in some other sort of power or institution?**
- 7. If your world has religion, is there one main religion, or many religions? Are the main religions of your world monotheistic or pantheistic?**
- 8. What resources are in your world? What are the imports/exports? Which resources are rare and valuable, and which are necessary or common?**
- 9. What is the structure of your world's government?**
- 10. What is the geography and climate of your world?**
- 11. What are the seasons of your world?**
- 12. What kind of calendar system does your world have? What's it based on (lunar cycles, a monarch's rule, etc.)?**
- 13. What are the distances between important places in your world? Draw a map if you want to!**
- 14. What is the class or social structure of your world? Where in that structure does your main character fall?**
- 15. What language(s) do your characters speak? Is language ever a barrier to communication?**
- 16. What are some details you can use from real-world places that are similar to your world to make it feel more believable?**
- 17. What does your world smell like?**
- 18. What are some of the main dishes the people in your world eat?**
- 19. What are the limitations of power, energy, or magic in your world?**

# WORDBUILDING QUESTIONS FOR YOU? CONTINUED.....

20. What kinds of objects or ideas are familiar to the people of your world? What kind of objects or ideas are strange or outlandish to them?

If you get overwhelmed looking at the big picture, why not try building your world from your character's perspective. Start by imagining what their room looks like? Then, what does their house look like? What kind of neighbourhood do they live in? How does their neighbourhood fit in with the rest of the town or city they live in? And what part of the country is that city in? Carry on until you have built up your characters complete outline.

The most important things to remember when worldbuilding is that even though you are creating a larger scope for your world it should still be fun for you, and also that the worldbuilding you do should help deepen a reader's connection with your character or drive the plot forward.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

Despite speculation that the organisers of London Book Fair would confirm the show would go ahead in June, they have in fact now delayed their decision until the end of April. With the way things are progressing we cannot see a live event taking place this year.

Nielsen Books & Consumers Survey has revealed that e-book sales rose 16% year on year in 2020 to their biggest total yet. A record year for book sales saw 95 million e-books were sold in 2020, alongside 257 million print books and 23 million audiobooks.

“As Australia and New Zealand retailers continue to look for opportunities to serve their consumers in a more efficient manner, Ingram Spark have expanded growth of their print-on-demand facility down under. More details to follow soon.

The Society of Authors is asking any Author who has worked with or been approached by publishers asking fees for services to take part in a survey about their experiences. This is following a number of complaints. So if you can please contribute.



# MENTORING WRITERS

## Summer 2021 Short Story Writing Competition

### OVERVIEW

The competition is open to all writers of any age regardless of experience.

We will welcome a short story of between 2000 & 2500 words on any subject. All stories should be suitable for readers of any of the three ages listed - from MG (12 years) and upwards. We shall be judging the stories on three levels - Ages 12 to 15; Ages YA (16+), and Older Adults. If there are enough quality entrants we will be producing a short story book for each of the three categories.

### APPROACH

\* As the writer you can choose the topic you wish to write about. However, we request that your stories bear in mind the level of the age group you are writing for.

\* For the two upper age groups you must write between 2000 and 2500 words max.

\* For the younger age group we will be open to less words within the story but would request that there be a minimum of at least 1000 to 1500 words or above.

\* If you are stuck for ideas for your subject matter then check out our list below for some suggestions and ideas.

\* You may enter up to 5 times in each entry



Use this link for the full details: [www.mentoringwriters.co.uk/competition.html](http://www.mentoringwriters.co.uk/competition.html)

## HOW DO I GET PUBLISHED?

First you have to write a good book. Then you either enter it into the **TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING MACHINE**, which is to say, get an agent and have that agent shop the manuscript around to a gaggle of editors.

Or you Fling it into the **SELF-PUBLISHING MAELSTROM**, which is to say, you get a cover, and format it so it doesn't look like hot poop on a clean window and then catapult it up onto the self-publishing marketplace of your choice and wait for the money or non-money to flow in

## CAN YOU READ / REVIEW and EDIT MY STORY?

Yes I can but there is a cost and a time limit. Both will depend on the number of words written, the grammatical and punctuational errors found and whether or not the story makes sense. You would need to email me details with a synopsis of the story and a word count.

## IS THERE SUCH AS A THING AS TOO MUCH BACKSTORY?

Backstory is the subtext for the context of the main story. The deeper it is, the deeper the subtext can be. So there really isn't such a thing as "too much backstory." The best rule of thumb for knowing when and how much backstory to share is to try to refrain from sharing anything but hints about the backstory until the moment when the reader absolutely needs to know in order for the main story to work and progress.

### CONTACT DETAILS

Website: [www.mentoringwriters.co.uk](http://www.mentoringwriters.co.uk)

Email: [contact@mentoringwriters.co.uk](mailto:contact@mentoringwriters.co.uk)

# Q & A

## CAN MY ANTAGONIST BE NON-HUMAN?

Although you often get more mileage out of personifying your antagonistic force, you don't have to. The most important thing to remember about antagonistic forces is that they are nothing more or less than an obstacle between the protagonist and his goals. As long as that obstacle is thematically pertinent, that's what's most important.

## HOW DO I WRITE A GOOD CHARACTER?

The character is everything. Good characters needn't be likable but they should be liveable – meaning, we must be willing and able to live with that character for all the pages of the story. They should appear consistent yet also evolve, and should change yet still be recognisable as that character. Above all else, they have to be interesting.

If you have a question that you would like answering then please drop us an email and we will respond accordingly. We may also use the question in future editions of the Mentoring Writers Newsletter.

