Call for Papers for an Edited Anthology of Creative Nonfiction and Poetry
Syracuse Veterans' Writing Group

The Syracuse Veterans' Writing Group (SVWG), established in March of 2010, invites submissions for an edited anthology of creative nonfiction and poetry authored by members of the Syracuse Veterans' Writing Group. The anthology is meant to showcase the work of the SVWG for a general audience and also provide members with an outlet for publication and distribution that goes beyond our group's website. After compiling and editing the manuscript, we will be seeking a publisher from a small literary press. We look forward to producing a high-quality literary volume (both print and an ebook version) that will showcase the work of our group and be available for purchase at our future readings and events as well as linked to our website.

Who can submit:
Current and former members of the Syracuse Veterans' Writing Group.

What to submit:
We invite submissions of group members' previously unpublished best work, as in work that has been workshopped, edited, and that represents some aspect of the military experience. Pieces to submit may include:

--high quality creative nonfiction pieces, may submit pieces that range from approximately 1,000 words (4 pages) to 3,000 words (12 pages). 1-2 pieces may be submitted depending on length

--high quality original poetry. 1-3 poems may be submitted depending on length

Please note that there is no guarantee that all submissions will be chosen for the volume.

If you have any questions about what to submit, please consult with Ivy or Eileen at one of our monthly meetings.
Pete McShane will also assist with the editing of the volume.

Deadline for submissions will be March 1, 2014
Please submit manuscripts in MS Word format to Ivy Kleinbart at ikleinba@syr.edu
Writing Prompts for January 25, 2014

Prompt #1: Make a list of pieces you might want to submit to the anthology. Take a look at those pieces if you have them with you or think back to what you consider their strengths and weaknesses. What revisions might be needed to prepare the pieces for submission? Sketch out some notes toward revisions. Below are some ideas toward considering revision strategies.

Alternately, if you don’t yet have a list of pieces to submit, make a list of 3-4 topics you might want to write about and start mapping out/writing toward a piece.

Revision Strategies
As you work on revising a piece of writing for publication, consider these revision strategies. These strategies can be used independently of one another, but in some cases, you might find it useful to try more than one strategy on a given piece of writing.

Revision Strategies for Poems

1. Begin with a poem that feels very tightly crafted but isn’t achieving what you want it to. Drawing on the central experience that informed the poem, give yourself 30 minutes, and write a short nonfiction piece in which you explore this experience in prose. Then, after taking a break, write a totally different version of the poem.

2. Line Editing Strategies:
   a. Read your poem out loud, and circle at least three places in the poem where you feel you could make the language more interesting by replacing a noun or verb with another word that is more suggestive, surprising, or imagistic.
   b. Circle any clichés and work to replace them with a more literal description of what you imagine or remember.
   c. Comb through your poem, and cross out every possible word that is not essential to the meaning of the poem.
   d. Circle words that repeat, and work to eliminate these points of repetition.

3. Write two different versions of your poem—one in which the lines are very long, and one in which the lines are very short. In the process of re-lineating, add/subtract language as needed.

Revision Strategies for Essays

1. Add a few scenes to long passages that feel mostly narrative or explanatory to help the reader better understand what you experienced. Scenes draw the reader
into a specific moment in time, and recount something that happened. Creative nonfiction writers use scenes to help recreate experience for the reader. Scenes include setting (time/place/situation), description, dialogue (if needed), and action: they SHOW rather than TELL. They often begin with phrases that cue the reader to the fact that a scene is beginning. Here are a few examples of cueing lines. Use one of these lines, or write some of your own cueing lines to get warmed up, and then start your scene:

a. “I remember one time when…” or “The first time I…” or “The last time I…”
b. “If I close my eyes, I can still remember…”
c. “Even now, I can hardly talk about…”
d. “I wish it hadn’t happened this way, but…”
e. “She/he would always…”

2. Locate an important character in one of your essays that feels a little underdeveloped, and spend time adding to your description of this character. Develop a scene that is intended to reveal something important about this character. In addition to describing the person’s physical appearance, explain how he/she talks, walks, sits, moves, etc. Consider the character’s facial expressions, hand gestures, the look in his/her eyes, and the way he/she smells. Describe any nervous ticks or repetitive behaviors, common reactions or responses, and even the way the character breathes, eats, spits, etc. Consider adding a little bit of dialogue to one of your scenes to let the reader “hear” this character’s voice.

3. Ask yourself: What is this essay really about? Try answering this question in writing three different ways. Then put a star beside the answer that most satisfies you. Next, consider the way you’ve chosen to begin and end this essay. How do the beginning and end “speak” to each other, and how do they relate to what this essay is really about? How could you tweak the beginning and ending in order to lead the reader more directly into a sense of what this essay is about? Your thinking about these questions may lead you to completely rewrite the beginning and end of your essay, or you may only have to make subtle changes in order to accentuate key ideas, questions, and connections.

4. Consider the transformation of the main character in this essay, which may be you or someone else. Who is this person at the end of the essay, versus the person we meet at the beginning? What is the central reason for the change? Again, your answer may be subtle or profound. Work to further illuminate this character’s transformation, either through additional reflective writing or through the addition and development of scenes.
Prompt #2: Recall a specific memory of enduring extremes of temperature or climate during your military service… OR, write your best “snow” story.

Prompt #3:. Choose one of the following quotes, and use it to trigger a memory piece or a perspective piece about the military in general, or about a specific experience you had in the military:

Remorse is a violent dyspepsia of the mind.
---Ogden Nash, poet (1902-1971)

Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility.
--James Thurber, writer and cartoonist (1894-1961)

Memoir is not an act of history but an act of memory, which is innately corrupt.
--Mary Karr, (b. 1955) poet and memoirist

To be capable of embarrassment is the beginning of moral consciousness. Honor grows from qualms.
--John Leonard, critic (1939-2008)

Compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind.
--Albert Schweitzer, philosopher, physician, musician, Nobel laureate (1875-1965)