

***** #1 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

I would like to send you my upmarket mystery/suspense novel *The Lambeth Chronicle*, set in a small Southern college town, about 75,000 words.

On a beautiful Saturday morning, Professor Mike Rawls discovers the body of a colleague hanging in the stairwell of the campus cathedral. The coroner declares it suicide, but the grieving widow, Marla, has other ideas. Marla Ballesteri, a nurse with experience in psychiatric care, convinces Mike that her husband, a therapist, has been murdered by one of his patients. But her evidence comes from an illegal search of her husband's patient files. Mike turns to his close friend, Rollie Glass, a retired psychotherapist. When they discreetly analyze the patient files and identify two strong suspects, they become the target of a campaign of violence that threatens their own lives. When Rollie disappears, Mike and his wife, Fran, an edgy bank vice president and Tae Kwon Do student, search an isolated farmhouse, where they find not only Rollie, but much more than they could have imagined.

I have spent most of my career teaching at a small Southern college, so the setting of the novel is very familiar to me. My literary/historical novel, *A Late Flooding Thaw*, was published by Moon Lake Publishing in 2005. My mystery/suspense novel, *Sacrificial Lam*, was published by The Wild Rose Press in March of 2017. One of my stories was a finalist for Carve Magazine's Raymond Carver Prize. Another story was short-listed in the Glimmer Train open fiction contest. My stories have appeared in several anthologies, most recently *Yonder Mountain: an Ozark Anthology*, from University of Arkansas Press. I have studied with Jonis Agee in Santa Fe, and with John Dufresne in Taos, and with Ellen Douglas and Alice McDermott at Sewanee. I am active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Goodreads, and BookBub. I also have a writer website. To help promote my last novel, I built a street team of about twenty people.

Because you are also interested in historical fiction, I want to mention that I also have a historical fiction manuscript (about 105,000 words) I am preparing to shop, about two young women in the Depression-era Ozarks who idolize Amelia Earhart and struggle to escape the narrow moral and family confines of small-town life.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you will consider *The Lambeth Chronicle*. I have included the first five pages below as per your guidelines. The complete novel is available on request.

Sincerely,

***** #2 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

I am seeking representation for my YA fantasy novel, *RUIN OF GODS*. Complete at 82,000 words, it is written as a stand-alone but has the potential to be a series. It will appeal to fans of Morgan Rhodes *Falling Kingdoms* and Amy Tintera's *Ruined*.

Eighteen-year-old Nadia, heir to the throne of Annassi, dreams of becoming a member of the King's Guard: a rank no other woman has held. But that dream disappears when her father declares he will abdicate his throne to her sooner than expected. During a surprise attack at her Name Day celebration, Nadia narrowly escapes after witnessing her parents' murder, but not before her father shares a cryptic symbol marked on his arm and an urgent message she doesn't understand.

With help from Caz, leader of the First Defense, and Keiran, prince from a neighboring kingdom, she takes refuge in a nearby village where she learns she is an Immortal, a descendent of the original protectors of the land. She also discovers a secret sect of soldiers is killing off Immortals, but only those marked by the disgraced and imprisoned god, Vaas, whose symbol she now bears.

Determined to save herself and others like her, she sets off to find the leader of the sect.

However, she discovers the group has acquired the only weapon that can kill a god. If they find Vaas, they will kill him. If Vaas dies, every Immortal bearing his mark, including Nadia, will die,

too. As Nadia races to find Vaas first, her friendship with Caz grows stronger, but so does her distrust of Keiran. With the line between allies and enemies blurred, Nadia must decide who to trust and whether rescuing a fallen god will save the kingdoms or destroy them all.

I am a member of SCBWI and The Writers League of Texas. I also lead an online peer critique group through Inked Voices.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

***** #3 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

When I was five, a 7.3 earthquake rocked Bakersfield, California and changed my life from one of carefree optimism to one filled with fear. My mother, emotionally traumatized by the event, responded to a knock at the door by a Jehovah's Witness. Mother was baptized a year later over the objections of my father, a foul-mouthed atheist.

In my memoir, *The Knock*, I intimately describe the impact that believing Jehovah would soon destroy all nonbelievers had on my mental, emotional and physical health while I transitioned from an innocent child, to adolescent, to depressed adult against the events of the 50s, 60s, and 70s. It's a story of my struggle to come to terms with the "truth" I had been taught, my doubts, and finally, my inelegant fade from that life when I started over in a world I knew nothing about.

My target readers are the 1.2 million former Jehovah's Witnesses hungry to know they're not alone and there's hope. The subject is timely. Leah Remini recently produced a TV special about the practices of Jehovah's Witnesses. A movie by Daniel Kokotajlo about a young girl who is shunned by her family was nominated for a BAFTA award. The top selling books currently in the market are the *Reluctant Apostate*, by Lloyd Evans and *Shunned*, by Linda A. Curtis.

I held executive positions in the financial services industry, then in sales and marketing of consumer goods. I've been interviewed on television and have spoke nationally. Currently, I head the Eureka Springs chapter of the Village Writing School and I lead an active Critique Circle. I continue to take writing workshops to improve my craft.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

***** #4 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

The Girl with the Black and Blue Doll is my coming of age memoir, complete at 116,531 words. My story is that of growing up in a dysfunctional family on a three-generation family farm in 1950s/60s Massachusetts.

Mummy made me grow up fast, but so long as supper was on the table, Daddy didn't care. Mummy said I was too big for my britches, when all I ever wanted was a swing in an elm tree, a library card, and the warmth of a hug.

Readers will experience a roller coaster ride of sighs, frustration, chuckles, shock, and relief as they follow me over hill and dale from timid farm girl to independent young woman with a mind of my own. As I rise to meet the daily trials that fuel my anxiety and depression, my smiles and successes become more frequent.

My memoir covers age three through my college years, when I finally find my way before the backdrop of the Hippie Movement and the Vietnam War. Most chapters are short but vivid. The

story flows from scene to scene in a manner consistent with engaging today's digital age readers who may have shorter attention spans.

Comps are Augusten Burroughs' *Running with Scissors* and Jeannette Walls' *The Glass Castle*. Children fendng for themselves in risky situations—that's what we're about.

My memoir serves to point out by example that the key to stopping the cycle of emotional and/or physical childhood trauma is to stop the dysfunction before it goes on to the next generation.

Target audience: adolescents, teens, young adults, youth-at-risk, their parents, teachers, therapists, and those who enjoy an entertaining memoir.

I have been writing my Author blog, Facebook Author page, Twitter and Instagram posts since 2014, and have published in several online blogs and print media on writing and travel.

I produced an award-winning children's television program in Fayetteville AR, was an Arkansas Artist-in-Education, and taught Art to children and adults in under-served areas for 25 years. Public speaking is one of my very favorite activities.

***** #5 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

I read on (xxx) that you seek elegantly written memoir. *The Full Catastrophe: A Love Story* is a 98,000-word memoir that explores the search for family, resilience, and the power of love in the face of a relentless litany of roadblocks and tragedy.

I'm 11, then 12, when my parents' terminal illnesses end their lives only 10 months apart. I'm sent to a dramatically different life in a village hours away with my aunt, who loves me but has little use for homemaking or sentimentality, and her undertaker husband, who spends his evenings drinking Schlitz in his boxer shorts. Their four sons live by their own rules, and I am left to figure things out for myself. Though I excel academically, my need to create a family of my own wins out. I want, as Zorba declared, "the full catastrophe," and I'm determined to make it happen. How can I know I'll end up with a catastrophe of a different sort?

Devoted to my children and a marriage destined to fail as those I love continue to die, I watch the family I've worked so hard to build self-destruct under the weight of a contentious divorce. Multiple factors, including isolation, emotional abuse, addiction, ADHD, and the poorly made decisions of youth, alter the course of each of our lives. None of us pays as dearly as my oldest son, who dies at age 20, leaving us to figure out how to go on without him.

Determined to thrive, I draw on my love of music and language, embrace the spirituality I've sought since my youngest years, learn to see the world through new eyes, and ultimately find the family I've sought. My penchant for seeing life as a series of cinematic moments and self-preserving sarcasm reassure the reader there are better days ahead.

Readers who seek a story of hope and redemption and who enjoy getting inside the mind of the narrator as she fights her way through seemingly insurmountable obstacles will be drawn to this memoir.

A retired speech-language pathologist, I have read essays on WAMC Public Radio and in memoir series at The Arts Center of the Capital Region. My work has appeared in *Adoptive Families Magazine* and the *Albany Times-Union*, online at ModernLoss.com, AdoptiveFamilies.com, FriendsinAdoption.org, and as blogposts on TheFHFoundation.org.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to sending my manuscript your way.

Best,

***** #6 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

I am pleased to submit my suspense novel, *Maze of Indigo*, complete at 78,000 words. In *Maze of Indigo*, idealistic public health worker Lara Lombard draws the short straw when she is assigned to accompany the Global Council's high-maintenance Goodwill Ambassador to the opening of an important health clinic in Tanzania. When a boy there goes missing, Lara must make a choice: return to the safety of her desk job in Geneva, where she has always believed she can make the most difference; or confront lifelong fears to help find the child while risking her life and that of those she loves.

With the help of the local women, a Maasai shaman's riddle, and Theo — a rough war photojournalist with a troubling past — Lara must enter the dangerous labyrinths of the local mines, the world's only source of the precious stone tanzanite. As she plunges further into her quest, she goes up against powerful interests to uncover a web of lies and deceit ... and worse. Now she must ask herself how much she is willing to risk to save the boy and reveal the whole truth to the world.

Maze of Indigo has series potential and touches on important social issues such as child slavery and corruption inside international aid agencies. It offers the suspense and emotional vibrancy of *The Constant Gardener*, as well as the vivid setting and compelling heroine of *The Informationist*.

I found the inspiration for this story while living among the Maasai in Northern Tanzania. I have been working at the United Nations in Geneva for sixteen years, implementing projects that take me all over the world, and where I speak four different languages in the course of a day — including with my ten-year-old twins.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

***** # 7 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

Imagine yourself, a lord at the court of Portugal's King Pedro. Now you must kiss the hand of Inês, newly crowned queen — and six years dead.

I am seeking an agent for *Death in Coimbra*, a completed, professionally edited 104,000-word work of historical fiction based on real people set in Portugal (1325-1364). Driving this upmarket historical are hallucinations induced by grief (Oliver Sacks) whereby the visions of a murdered wife compel her husband's actions.

King Pedro argues with an abbot over the crowning of the Lady Inês as his queen for she has been dead and buried for six years. Pedro must have Inês recognized as queen for their sons to inherit the crown. As Henry VIII of England needed sons, so does Pedro.

Long before Pedro met Inês, his father nearly lost the kingdom to a bastard half-brother. Pedro grew up at court under his father's rigid moral code. Pedro obediently marries an appropriate woman and promptly falls in love with her lady-in-waiting, Inês. Alas, Inês is a royal bastard, unsuitable to wed. Pedro's father banishes Inês from Portugal to a Castilian nunnery. Pedro unearths no trace of her.

When his most appropriate wife dies, Pedro turns to Inês's brother for help. He weds Inês without royal permission. His father and the court will not acknowledge the marriage, driving the couple to live in Coimbra. Unknown to Pedro, jealous gossips claim Inês plots against the kingdom's interests. One cold January morning as Pedro enjoys a hunt, his father arrives to oversee the murder of Inês in front of their children. In the dark night of her death, Pedro swears two oaths to Inês: to make her queen and to bring her the heart of the retainer who took her life.

Before Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, Pedro and Inês lived and died. Readers of Elizabeth Chadwick and Sharon Kay Penman will enjoy this legend. Target markets include fans of medieval settings, persons of Iberian heritage seeking stories from their culture, and American tourists (900,000 in 2018, *Wall Street Journal*) and British tourists to Portugal. This novel is the first in a proposed series centered on Portugal's murderous, rebellious, and fractious royals.

Death in Coimbra is a debut novel. My undergraduate degree is in medieval history. I discovered the story when I toured Portugal and came upon the couple's stunning sarcophagi. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

***** #8 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

SKI LIFT SECRETS is a contemporary adult fiction novel of 110,000 words. It has the allure of an ephemeral vacation setting like Elin Hilderbrand's beach reads; except it's a ski saga. It details behind-the-scenes work at a luxury ski resort: think Stephanie Danler's *SWEETBITTER* on the slopes. There is also a mysterious subplot revealed through alternative voices overheard on the ski lift, similar to Liane Moriarty's police investigation snippets in *BIG LITTLE LIES*.
Collins Lift 9:30 a.m.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, but you know how everyone gossips in the lodge. Anyway, Evie apparently knows something the Mount Superior Lodge managers are trying to keep on the DL. That's why she's getting all the best shifts. I even heard they offered her a single room, but she turned it down because she actually likes her roommates. Lame. No one turns down the prospect of privacy up here. I suppose now that she's hooking up with that hot ski instructor she's getting plenty of privacy at his in-bounds cabin. What an epic first season she's had. Whoa... looks like they're about to open Backside. Want to wait in line or take one more lap first?"

– Disgruntled Mount Superior Lodge employee

I've worked six winters in Alta, Utah. I started as a server like my MC, but have worked my way up into lodge management. During my off seasons working on Nantucket, I've gained an appreciation for the beach reads inspired by that destination. I believe the winter equivalent is missing. Many of our lodge guests seek downtime relaxing near the fireplace but don't want to pick up a heavy tome. *SKI LIFT SECRETS* was written with these guests in mind. It gives local insight about lodge and resort life and, with a hint of mystery, this page-turner can be read during a weekend ski trip. With 4.5 million people visiting the Wasatch Mountains each year in Utah and many more in Colorado, Montana, Idaho, and the East Coast resorts, this is a market of readers waiting to be tapped.

Before finding myself a management-level ski bum, I was a high school history teacher and asylum immigration officer. Both positions gave me experience writing, but now that I'm writing fiction my, day-job is an endless source of plot inspiration.

Thank you for your consideration and... think snow!

***** #9 *****

March 27, 2019

Dear Agent Panel:

Persephone's Children chronicles a biracial woman's odyssey through the past as a way to move forward after escaping domestic violence. Through a series of 15 thematically linked and structurally inventive lyrical essays, my memoir explores the politics of skin colour, the rhetoric of race, and the familial and cultural mythologies that seek to define, silence, and hold Black women hostage. Pop-culture combines with mythic figures such as Persephone, Demeter and the Marvelous Sugar Baby, speaking to the ties that bind and legacies of loss, motherhood, daughterhood, intergenerational trauma, resiliency, identity and belonging. With an expected completion date of Fall 2019, I foresee Persephone's Children as being 65,000 words.

The daughter of multiple diasporas, including the Transatlantic Slave Trade, I grew up on the Canadian Prairies, searching for self and belonging within a family and community divided by race. Too Black. Too White. An identity in a constant fight—my biracial heritage left me an outsider, an exotic other vulnerable to predation and the accompanying self-blame and self-destruction. Were it not for writing, my writing community, and my three daughters, I sometimes question if I would have survived.

Using non-linear narratives, inventive frameworks, lyricism, memory, family lore, photographs and historical documents, Persephone's Children examines the impact of intersectionality on the lived experience of Black women. Hybrid prose weaves the personal with the political as a way to reclaim personal narrative and speak truth to power.

Readers of Terese Marie Mailhot's Heart Berries: A Memoir, David Chariandy's I've Been Meaning To Tell You, and Elissa Washuta's My Body Is A Book Of Rules, will come to this book for its emotional honesty and creativity. Embracing hybridity, Persephone's Children shines new light on liminal spaces, pushes against the traditional boundaries of memoir, breaks new ground in our understanding of Canadian history and dismantles the tropes, myths, misogyny and racial stereotypes women of colour traverse daily.

My fiction and creative nonfiction have received awards, and publication in Canada and Great Britain. Writing from Treaty One territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, I'm a long-distance student with the esteemed Writers' Studio at Simon Fraser University. Enclosed please find a sample chapter, an author biography, and SASE for the convenience of replying. I'd be honoured to forward my manuscript proposal for your review.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

***** #10 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

My young adult fantasy novel, Lights of Merrowist is 94,000 words. It is a standalone novel but has the potential to become a series. The book combines elements of Slavic mythology with high stakes magic and adventure.

Cath Rochester was four when she realized she could walk through flames. She was six when she felt the slithering heat of fire inside her and turned a field into an inferno. And she knows what it means to possess magic: enslavement or execution. There is no other path. The only

magical beings allowed in Merrowist are the Tovenaar, enslaved and traded as conduits of electricity.

But Cath's power is not electrical, it's fire and brimstone.

For sixteen years she has managed to hide her powers from everyone. Until the day she uses them to save her twin brother. Now everyone knows, and Cath expects death. Shockingly the punishment is worse than she imagined. She must marry the Crown Prince.

She intends to resist but learns that the life of her family depends on her agreement. Not just to the marriage, but to rendering her mind completely to the Head of Magic, Contessa.

Contessa, a Vedmak witch and descendant of the infamous Baba Yaga, plans to weaponize Cath's powers. She wants to use Cath to exact her revenge against her ancient enemy Kashay the Deathless (Ash), leader of the Tovenaar rebellion. Ripping out his stone heart just wasn't enough for her ruthless appetite.

But Cath struggles with controlling her magic. During her first battle with the rebellion her raging powers nearly kill everyone. Cath no longer wants to remain Contessa's 'pet.' Desperate to keep her family safe she knows she must get them out of Merrowist. Her only option is to make a deal with a Vila demon to block Contessa from her mind, but only for seven days. Cath must decide if she is willing to save those closest to her, even if it means losing herself. Comparable titles for Lights of Merrowist include Rebecca Ross' The Queen's Resistance or Sarah J Maas' A Court of Thorns and Roses.

I currently work as a Teen Librarian and College Instructor with a Bachelors in Russian Studies and a Master of Arts in History.

Thank you for your consideration,

***** #11 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

I'd like to invite you to consider for representation my novel based on true events, If Trees Could Talk, is evolving at 69,000 words. Channeled by genetic memory, Annie Marg's reporter father's paintings and reporter mother's journals are clues for their daughter's deep self-exploration that led to discover the roots of her heritage and a century of Chicago unsung luminaries.

Her family had secrets—many of them—and even though everything she did seemed like a mistake (she was the seventh of nine in an Irish Catholic artistic family that streamed like a flock of birds), she discovered those secrets herself, led by a genetic memory she didn't understand for years. She started wood carving in elementary school and later discovered they were loggers in upstate New York. Having a horse in high school taught her about their family's name McKillip, that means horse lover. Studying Irish music, on the side, told her of our County Antrim story, left behind by teenager John McKillip who sailed to Montreal in 1832. Wistful explorations included climbing ice covered mountains to discover they have a mountain named for them, building a dry wall and log cabin unearthed her unknown century-old homestead in the Adirondack wilderness. Viet Nam War protests churned up Civil War losses, WWII service, and draft cards. Her insatiable intuitive search guided her to sculpt at Yale, and gather oral histories, maple sap and organic harvests. The fictional story (from 1957-2012) dives into investigations of her family's narrative past. In her adventurous quest to know more, she learned not only where she had come from—a long line of artists—but to bounce back, just like them.

During my search, I've been published in Scholastic Magazine, Chicago Magazine and World Book Encyclopedia. "The Gift of Art" was published by Yale Print and Publishing in 2016 and "Transforming Nature" by MIT Press in 2018. I live in Oak Park with my husband and dog and occasionally, three grown children.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

All best,

***** #12 *****

Dear Agent Panel:

I hope you'll be interested in my historical novel, IRRECONCILABLE ENEMIES, which is set between 1941-1945 and is based on true stories of the Polish underground resistance, St. Maksymilian Kolbe, and the prisoner resistance movement in Auschwitz. The manuscript is complete at 128,000 words and will appeal to fans of Martha Hall Kelly's LILAC GIRLS and Devin Murphy's THE BOAT RUNNER.

Wit, strategy, and perception make fourteen-year-old Maria an expert chess player and an even better member of the Polish underground resistance. She enacts clever charades to outwit the Nazis prowling around Warsaw—until one goes wrong and gets her entire family sent to Auschwitz.

Following registration at Auschwitz, Maria discovers her family's bodies and realizes her registration was a mistake. Now she's the only young girl in a place of unimaginable brutality, where guilt is her sole companion. Even her most incisive scheme can't fix what she's done. When the sadistic camp deputy, Fritzsich, discovers a girl was registered, he permits her to live for his own twisted amusement. Maria longs for death, but she befriends Father Kolbe, a humble Franciscan friar who encourages her to survive in honor of her family.

Maria's strategy is simple: Live. Fight. Survive. But when she investigates her family's execution and discovers Fritzsich insisted on killing them himself, she yearns for justice. Maria learns of a prisoner resistance movement which plans to battle for liberation. If she joins, she could regain her freedom and get justice for her family, but if she's caught, she's certain she won't escape execution a second time. Fritzsich is the most vicious opponent she's ever faced, and one wrong move is all that stands between victory and defeat. Maria may have met her match.

My research for this novel included traveling to Warsaw and Auschwitz. In 2016, I graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing, and this past March, I attended the 2019 Alabama Writing Workshop. Thank you so much for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,