



Spring 2022

It's Not the Dog



Blame the homework, not the dog, for the tardiness of this newsletter. I confess I surrendered to how much life was happening. Since the last newsletter, I moved, adjusted to teaching in OSU-Cascade's Low Residency MFA in Creative Writing, finally was able to hold the eleventh annual Writing Down the Baja in Todos Santos after COVID delays, and hung on for dear life to my own writing practice. I hope this catch-up bulletin finds you in good health and spirits. May Scott Nelson's photograph of Fort Rock provide some high desert Rx as we find our way in this troubled world.



Deadline for Submissions Right Around the Corner!



The submission deadline for the Waterston Desert Writing Prize is **Sunday, May 1, 2022**. **Learn more** about guidelines and details by visiting the High Desert Museum website. Emerging, mid-career and established nonfiction writers are invited to submit proposals for a book-length nonfiction manuscript about deserts anywhere in the world. Spread the word! In addition to a cash prize of \$3,000, the winner is also awarded a two-week residency at PLAYA, an artists and scientists campus located on the shore of Summer Lake in Oregon's Outback.

Now in its eighth year, the primary objective of the Waterston Desert Writing Prize is to recognize literary excellence in nonfiction writing about desert landscapes anywhere. The annual awards ceremony, held at the High Desert Museum each year, will be a two-day literary celebration with readings by the Prize finalists and winner as well as special presentations by this year's guest judge (TBD) and [Kevin Fedarko](#), author of *The Emerald Mile*. **Mark your calendars for September 22 and 23!**

Letters and Notes

Deschutes River Conservancy will hold its annual Riverfeast Dinner and Auction on May 20, 2022. Pianist Malik Friedman and I will weave together original piano and poetry created especially for this event as one of the evening's live performances. Proceeds will support Deschutes River Conservancy's restoration of stream flow and improved water quality in the Deschutes River Basin. [Tickets are on sale now at this link.](#)



Renewal

35th Summer Fishtrap Gathering of Writers

July 11-17, 2022



Imagine a week filled with workshops, craft talks, readings, and the opportunity to cross creative paths with other writers! All this and Wallowa Lake and Mountains too. I return as part of a diverse faculty guaranteed to hone your craft and propel your writing in new and unexpected directions. Choose a workshop in your favorite genre: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, memoir, or short story. Workshops are limited to 13 participants. See you there! [To register, visit the Fishtrap website.](#)



Fall 2022 "Writing in Place" Nature Writing Intensive Writing Ranch and High Desert Museum Team Up September 8-12, 2022

As part of the High Desert Museum's commitment to incorporating the

literary arts in its exploration of the high desert, this year's long weekend nature writing intensive will be complimented by field trips with naturalists and geologists, as well as evening presentations. The weekend is held at PLAYA, an artists and scientists residency campus on the shore of Summer Lake in Oregon's Outback. Lodging and dinner is included. Limited to 10 participants. [For reservations visit the High Desert Museum website.](#)

It's Not What You Think

Sex in the 70's? The real truth about Valentine's Day? Death cleaning? [All this and more at this link on the Source Weekly website.](#) Feedback welcome! Send your thoughts, reactions and opinions to [this email address.](#)

Writing Down the Baja 2022 Recap and 2023 Dates!



The eleventh annual "Writing Down the Baja" in Todos Santos, BCS, Mexico did not disappoint. The rigorous daily writing workshops were complemented by a series of inspiring evening presentations: Trudi Angell of Bell-Mare Productions screened her award-winning documentary, "La Recua," filmed on the Baja; James Honey of LegacyWorks Group discussed new models of coastal development along Baja California Sur's water-starved Cabo del Este region; Los Angeles screenwriter Sheri Davenport showed two of her short narrative films to help guide the incorporation of dialogue into prose writing.



In addition, an Eco Adventures trip was taken into the Sierra de la Laguna mountains where writers feasted on goat stew and hiked to a nearby waterfall to hear a lecture on the history of the Baja. To provide a sampler of regional cuisine, dinners each night were held either at Serendipity, where participants are lodged, or at area restaurants. As is the tradition, a public reading was held the final Saturday evening with many members of the community attending. The annual anthology of participants' writing is now in production. It is titled *Baja Benediction*, and this year's retreat was most certainly that.

"Writing Down the Baja" 2023 is scheduled for February 19-26. Sign up now! Stay tuned to the Writing Ranch for updated information.

Writing by the South Fork: ONDA Celebrates 35th Birthday!

A Writing Ranch pop-up workshop was held at the South Fork of the Crooked River in conjunction with the Oregon Natural Desert Association's 35th birthday celebration series. To learn more about ONDA, [visit the organization's website](#).



Between Desert Seasons

by Ellen Waterston

On a Sunday, just past San Bartolo,
a bright blue pick-up leaves the highway,
turns toward the mountains
that forms the spine of the Baja.

In the back, six women wear purest white,
black braids swing across their brown skin.
They sing and laugh, their smiles
adorned with gold fillings.

The old man at the wheel,
stunned by his good fortune,
takes the turn with great care
there at the faded *mercado* sign.

They vanish slowly from view
at the top of the hill, dip like the sun
below the horizon in a burst of brilliant
green caught between desert seasons.



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