

Jessica's Writerly Items Ahoy!

Read These Books on Craft:

- *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* by Steven Pressfield
- *What It Is* by Lynda Barry **and** *From Where You Dream* by Robert Olen Butler
- *On Writing* by Stephen King **and** *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott
- *The Braindead Megaphone* by George Saunders
- *How To Become a Famous Writer Before You're Dead* by Ariel Gore
- *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* by Janet Burroway
- *The Art of Fiction* by John Gardner
- *The 38 Most Common Fiction Writing Mistakes (And How To Avoid Them)* by Jack M. Bickham

Read These Short Story Collections of Wonderfulness:

- (All titles before maple leaf are Canadian): *Pleased to Meet You* by Caroline Adderson, *Bird Eat Bird* by Katrina Best, *Mad Hope* by Heather Birrell, *Play the Monster Blind* by Lynn Coady, *Long Story Short* by Elyse Friedman, *All the Anxious Girls on Earth* by Zsuzsi Gartner, *Ladykiller* by Charlotte Gill, *The Broken Record Technique* by Lee Henderson, *19 Knives* by Mark Jarman, *Pretty* by Greg Kearney, *Meet Me in the Parking Lot* by Alexandra Leggat, *Oxygen* by Annabel Lyon, *Light Lifting* by Alexander MacLeod, *Open* by Lisa Moore, *Buying Cigarettes for the Dog* by Stuart Ross, *Black Coffee Night* by Emily Schultz, *This Cake Is for the Party* by Sarah Selecky, *Bang Crunch* by Neil Smith, *Young Men* by Russell Smith, *Bats or Swallows* by Teri Vlassopoulos 🍁 *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* and *Pastoralia* by George Saunders, *No One Belongs Here More Than You* by Miranda July, *Honored Guest* by Joy Williams, *The Dog of the Marriage* by Amy Hempel, and any collections by Raymond Carver, Ernest Hemingway, Lorrie Moore, Dorothy Parker, and Ali Smith

Visit These Online Resources:

- www.nomediakings.org (author & DIY guru Jim Munroe: see "Books" under his "Do-It-Yourself Articles" section)
- www.sarahselecky.ca (author Sarah Selecky: subscribe to her inspiring writing-related letters)
- www.doretta.com/how-to-submit-to-literary-magazines/ (author Doretta Lau's super-helpful—and free!—PDF)
- www.placesforwriters.com (great resource for writers looking to submit their work)

Do these Things:

- Invest in a pen and a notebook that you love, and use them, a lot.
- Go to other writers' readings, and politely pay attention. If there's an open mic, bring something to read, but make sure to keep it *short* (2 or 3 minutes max), or the audience will probably not like you. And if you enjoyed something somebody read, let them know. That will make them happy.
- Attend small-press, comic & zine fairs (better yet—make a zine and bring it to exchange, or book a table to sell and exchange it), attend writing workshops and talks, and start your own writers' group.
- Join Facebook and Twitter (but only if you have interesting things to say and are interested in what other people have to say) & get your own blog or website (keep it simple if you're not design-inclined).
- Before submitting to literary magazines, read what they publish, then send your stories to the places most likely to publish them. Read & follow submission guidelines. Include a short cover letter giving the story title & word count (+ brief bio if requested), addressed to the correct (and correctly spelled) editor. Number your story pages. Include your name & contact info on every page (except with blind-judged contests & grant applications). Double-space and use a one-inch margin. Use black ink in an easy-to-read, 12-point font on plain, white paper. Do a spell & grammar check of your cover letter and story, and/or ask an eagle-eyed person to look them over. Include a SASE for mailed submissions. Keep track of your submissions, e.g. in Word or Excel table (when & where sent, and the response).
- Always be gracious about rejection—especially personalized rejection notes, which are like gold! Make sure to follow up and submit more work to those publications that want to see more of your writing. Include a brief thank you to the editor who wrote the note, and mention the title of the story you submitted previously.
- (From Stephen King's *On Writing*: "You can't make them like your story, but you can at least make it easy for them to try to like it.")