

## Jessica's Writerly Items Ahoy!

### Read these Books:

(This is a long list, so please feel free to email me for a shorter list of my favourites from below.)



- *What It Is* by Lynda Barry
- *How To Become a Famous Writer Before You're Dead* by Ariel Gore
- *On Writing* by Stephen King
- *Bird by Bird* by Anne Lamott
- *From Where You Dream* by Robert Olen Butler
- *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles* by Steven Pressfield
- *The Braindead Megaphone* by George Saunders
- *The 38 Most Common Fiction Writing Mistakes (And How To Avoid Them)* by Jack M. Bickham
- *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* by Janet Burroway
- *The Art of Fiction* by John Gardner
- *On Directing Film and Writing in Restaurants* by David Mamet
- *Writer's Market* and *The Canadian Writer's Market*
- *How To Be Your Own Literary Agent (Ultimate Insider's Guide to Getting Published)* by Martin Levin
- Short-fiction collections (I like novels too, but reading mind-blowing short stories teaches me more about how to write): *Pleased to Meet You* by Caroline Adderson, *Play the Monster Blind* by Lynn Coady, *Long Story Short* by Elyse Friedman, *All the Anxious Girls on Earth* by Zsuzsi Gartner, *The Dog of the Marriage* by Amy Hempel, *The Broken Record Technique* by Lee Henderson, *19 Knives* by Mark Jarman, *No One Belongs Here More Than You* by Miranda July, *The Girl on the Fridge* by Etgar Keret, *Meet Me in the Parking Lot* by Alexandra Leggat, *Oxygen* by Annabel Lyon, *You Are Not the One* by Vestal McIntyre, *Open* by Lisa Moore, *Buying Cigarettes for the Dog* by Stuart Ross, *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* and *Pastoralia* by George Saunders, *Black Coffee Night* by Emily Schultz, *This Cake Is for the Party* by Sarah Selecky, *Young Men* by Russell Smith, *Honored Guest* by Joy Williams, anything by Raymond Carver, Ernest Hemingway, Lorrie Moore, Alice Munro, Dorothy Parker, and Ali Smith

### Visit these Websites:

- [www.bookninja.com](http://www.bookninja.com) (delightful window to the literary world)
- [www.hunkamooga.com](http://www.hunkamooga.com) (poet and fiction writer Stuart Ross: take his workshops!)
- [www.joyland.ca](http://www.joyland.ca) (excellent short-story website)
- [www.nomediakings.org](http://www.nomediakings.org) (DIY guru Jim Munroe: see his "Indie Books" section)
- [www.placesforwriters.com](http://www.placesforwriters.com) (great all-around resource for writers)
- [www.sarahselecky.ca](http://www.sarahselecky.ca) (fiction writer Sarah Selecky: take her workshops!)
- [www.writersunion.ca](http://www.writersunion.ca) (The Writers' Union of Canada: see their "Getting Published" section)

### Do these Things:

- Invest in a pen and a notebook that you love, and use them.
- Go to readings, check out small-press and 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, start your own writers' group, get your own website.
- Apply for writing grants (if you're not a student). The more you apply, the easier the process (and the better your applications) will get. Ontario writers: Apply to the OAC Writers' Reserve Program. Even if you don't get a grant, you might make a connection with a publication or press that likes your work.
- Before submitting work to literary magazines, read what they publish, then send your stories to the places most likely to publish them. Read & follow submission guidelines, whether submitting by email (if emailed submissions are accepted) or regular mail. Include a short cover letter to introduce the story (with a one-line synopsis and a word count) and yourself (with a very brief bio), addressed to the correct (and correctly spelled) editor. Number the pages of your story. Include your name and contact info on every page (except with blind-judged contests and grant applications). Double-space and use a one-inch margin (single-sided pages are usually the default). Use black ink (in an easy-to-read, 12-point font) on plain, white paper. Do a spell and 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.
- (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.")
- 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.